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Does Emotional Intelligence Predict Personality and Perceived Competence among Professional Dancers?

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ABSTRACT:

Although the portrayal of emotions is the essence of the performing art of dance, there's not much known about how emotional intellect operates or regulates other psychological aspects among individuals engaged in dancing as a profession. The present investigation meant to study if emotional intelligence predicted personality and perceived competence among professional dancers. Association between the three variables and gender differences on them were also examined. One hundred fifty professional male and female dancers from the tricity of Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali (India) participated in the study. The subjects were administered Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence test, NEO Five-Factor Inventory, and Perceived competence subscale of Intrinsic Motivation Inventory. As for statistical tools, correlation, t-test, and multiple-regression analysis were applied along with descriptive statistics. Results of the investigation revealed that emotional intelligence was positively related to the overall personality, dimensions of personality viz. extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness as well as with perceived competence. Also, perceived competence correlated positively with one dimension of personality namely neuroticism. Emotional intelligence emerged as a predictor of different dimensions of personality and perceived competence. Furthermore, gender differences emerged on perceived competence and conscientiousness dimension of personality.

KEYWORDS: Dancer, emotional intelligence, gender, perceived competence, personality.

ABBREVIATIONS: EI = Emotional Intelligence, PC = Perceived Competence

RUNNING HEAD: "Dancers' emotional intelligence"

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INTRODUCTION

Dance as an art form centers on the effective portrayal of emotions and feelings by using the human body as an instrument. While it may take an entire dancing career to hone the skill of projection of emotions, things may work the other way round with engagement in dance positively influencing the emotional ability, efficacy, and sensitivity of an individual over time¹⁻³. Dance enhances the potential of emotional intelligence and holistic learning^{4,5}, as well as emotional regulation and self control⁶. Emotional intelligence (EI), as the ability to process and manage the emotions of self and others, plays a pivotal role practically in various dimensions of human functioning. Scheffer explained EI as a subjective concept which includes an individual's own sense of expression, relationship with oneself and others, self-regulation and motivation⁴. It's a notion that can be developed and nurtured if valued. A conscious and logical connection between thought and emotion which in turn cultivates a positive relation and optimal interaction between self and environment is what makes emotional quality or intelligence⁷.

Christensen et al.^{1,2} suggest that EI operates differently in dancers⁸. Dancers not only better distinguish the emotions conveyed by the other person's body language, but their own bodies also react differently. Kapur & Rawat affirmed high significant differences on EI, quality of life and self-concept among professional dancers in comparison to non-dancers⁹. Researchers have not only found significant positive relations between emotional maturity and life satisfaction but also concluded that life satisfaction among dancers is influenced by their emotional maturity and self-esteem¹⁰. Among the different facets that can be influenced by emotional intellect, personality is one. Within the individual, resides a dynamic organization of psychobiological systems which helps them to shape and adapt to the changing environment, and that's what's termed as personality¹¹⁻¹³. As stated by Feist & Feist¹⁴, personality is a sequence of somewhat permanent traits and unique characteristics, which furnish consistency as well as the individuality of behavior¹⁵.

Personality traits and EI are intertwined, as it is obligatory to understand, manage, and utilize one's emotions for building a strong personality¹⁶. Research evidence suggests that EI correlates positively with dimensions of personality like empathy and self-confidence¹⁷; extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness¹⁸. EI has also been established as a predictor of the dimensions of personality^{17,19}. Apparently, there is a lack of evidence in this context among the dancers of Indian origin. Hence, it would be interesting to analyze how a dancer's EI can influence their personality.

Moving on, perceived competence (PC) is yet another area which is less researched amongst dancers. Perceived competence – a common component of self-concept (or esteem) and self-efficacy²⁰ – is one's own perception of whether they have the required attributes to succeed²¹. PC or self-perceived competence is the idea that an individual has about their competency to perform²². It's an individual's perspective or judgment about their competitiveness, capabilities, and skillfulness. All in all, it's their perception of whether they have or not what it takes to succeed.

EI and self-efficacy, as confirmed by Mouton as well as Hashemi, are significantly correlated^{23,24}. There also exists a plethora of research evidence in support of the positive association of self-esteem and EI^{25,26}. Not only that, research affirms that EI predicts self-esteem²⁷ as well as self-efficacy²⁸. Consequently, it won't be wrong saying PC - being a core element of both self-concept and self-esteem - may also relate positively with EI.

Emotions, in spite of being the core of dancing²⁹, there lack evidence about how they act and influence a dancer's personality and their perception of competitiveness. Research related to the association of these three variables has earlier been conducted on disciplines other than dancing (specifically dancers of India). Therefore, it's worth analyzing if or not dancers' emotional intellect influences their personality and motivation in terms of PC. The dearth of evidence is what led us to come up with the current investigation.

Hypotheses

1. EI will act as a predictor of personality and PC.
2. EI will be positively related to different dimensions of personality.
3. EI will be positively related to PC.
4. Gender differences may emerge on EI, personality, and PC.

EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

Participants

Keeping in mind the objective of the study, professional male and female dancers were contacted from the tricity of Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali (India). For sample selection, purposive sampling technique was used. During the initial telephonic survey phase of the registered dance academies, it was disclosed that tricity had more than 2000 trained dance professionals. About 600 male and female dancers were contacted to rule out the ones who did not fit the rationale and inclusion-exclusion criteria of the study. 200 dancers – including 90 females and 110 males – were found suitable and were asked to be part of the research. 80 females and 98 males were supportive and

agreed to participate. Out of the available 178 dancers, 5 dancers (4 males and 1 female) dropped out in between, reducing the number to 173. From the available 173, a final sample of 150 professionally trained and practicing dancers (75 males and 75 females) was chosen randomly to be a part of the study.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The guidelines for shortlisting a practicable sample that we followed were to include dancers: a) within the age range of 20-30 years, b) certified and professionally trained, to exclude hobby-dancers, c) regularly practicing at least for past five years to ensure continuity. Ex-dancers or irregular dancers (not practicing since past five years), those engaged in physical activity or workout of any form other than dancing, and individuals undergoing any kind of psychological treatment or those hospitalized for any major disease in last five years were excluded from the study.

Behavioral Measures

1. ***Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence test*** (SSEIT³⁰): SSEIT is a standardized 33-item self-report measure of general emotional intelligence (EI), with a 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. The scale has a reliability rating of 0.90³¹.
2. ***NEO Five-Factor Inventory*** (NEO-FFI³²): NEO-FFI is a short adaptation of NEO-PI-R, a measure of the five dimensions of Five-Factor Model (FFM). The questionnaire comprises of 60 items - evenly distributed across five personality domains namely openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism - responded on a five-point Likert-type scale. The inventory has an internal consistency ranging from 0.68 to 0.89.
3. ***Perceived Competence subscale of Intrinsic Motivation Inventory***³³: Intrinsic motivation Inventory (IMI) is a multidimensional scale for evaluating the subjective experience of a being related to the target activity. The scale has seven sub-scales, out of which we used the perceived competence one. Perceived competence is a 6 item sub-scale of IMI (which otherwise consists of 45 items), with a reliability coefficient of 0.70 evaluated with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability³⁴.

Ethical concern

In line with the research ethics, informed consent was taken from all participants before conducting the investigation. Also, the information shared by the subjects was kept completely confidential to respect their privacy.

Statistical analysis

To meet the objectives of the present study, Pearson's product moment correlation and t-test were applied apart from descriptive statistics. Also, Multiple Linear Regression was performed to investigate the significant predictors for personality and PC.

RESULTS

In the regression analysis for dimensions of personality and perceived competence as the criteria (or dependent variables), emotional intelligence was entered as the predictor (or independent variable). For the given sample of female dancers, EI was found to be relevant and emerged as a predictor of overall personality and its two dimensions i.e. extraversion and conscientiousness. Among male dancers, EI was found to be relevant and emerged as a predictor of personality and its three dimensions namely extraversion, conscientiousness and agreeableness; along with PC. Details can be seen in the following table:

Table 1: Shows the regression-analysis for emotional intelligence as a predictor of dimensions of personality and perceived competence among male and female dancers.

Predictor Variable	Standard Coefficient β	t	R ²	F Change
Female Dancers				
Emotional Intelligence	Overall Personality			
	0.50	4.96	0.25	24.65**
	Extraversion			
	0.60	6.40	0.36	40.83**
Emotional Intelligence	Conscientiousness			
	0.62	6.67	0.38	44.53**
Male Dancers				
Emotional Intelligence	Overall Personality			
	0.53	5.38	.28	28.91**
	Extraversion			
	0.44	4.24	.20	18.02**
	Conscientiousness			
	0.54	5.51	.29	30.35**
	Agreeableness			
0.39	3.65	.15	13.32**	
Emotional Intelligence	Perceived Competence			
	0.31	2.79	.10	7.78**
**Significant at $p \leq .01$ level				

Correlation analysis revealed that EI ($r = 0.52^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$) was positively related with overall personality. Among the dimensions of personality, EI correlated positively with extraversion ($r = 0.51^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$), conscientiousness ($r = 0.58^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$) and agreeableness ($r = 0.27^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$). Also,

there came out a positive relation between EI and PC ($r = 0.20^*$, $p \leq 0.05$). PC and neuroticism also correlated positively ($r = 0.18^{**}$, $p \leq 0.05$).

Along with the above mentioned, gender differences were found on PC ($t = 2.61^{**}$, $p \leq 0.01$) and one of the dimensions of personality viz. conscientiousness ($t = 2.04^*$, $p \leq 0.05$). Males dancers were found to be higher on PC ($M = 26.55$) as compared to female dancers ($M = 24.23$). On the contrary, female dancers ($M = 27.24$) were higher on conscientiousness dimension of personality as compared to their male counterparts ($M = 25.27$). No significant gender differences emerged on EI and other dimensions of personality.

DISCUSSION

The present study sought to investigate whether emotional intelligence (EI) predicted personality and perceived competence (PC) among professional dancers. Besides, it also discovered the possible relation between EI, dimensions of personality and PC, along with gender differences on the three. Findings of our study support the hypotheses, and earlier researches are also in line with it.

Results of the present exploration revealed that EI predicts different dimensions of personality namely extraversion and conscientiousness in female dancers, and extraversion, conscientiousness, and agreeableness in male dancers. EI also turned out to be a predictor of PC in the sample of males. Consequently, the hypothesis (H1) that maintained EI would emerge as a significant predictor of both personality and PC has been partially supported in our investigation.

Current findings corroborate with the work of Mandal, and Athotawho affirmed that four personality traits (extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and agreeableness) can be predicted from EI scores^{35,19}. Sindhuja et al.³⁶ observed the main effects of the factors of trait EI on different dimensions of personality and shared that wellbeing and self-control exhibited the main effect on extraversion and introversion, emotionality had a main effect on sensing and intuiting, self-control and sociability reflected the main effect on thinking and feeling, and self-control also had a main effect on the fourth dimension of personality i.e. judgment and perceiving. Two-way and three-way interactions of trait EI factors on personality types were significant, wherein all the factors of trait EI displayed a predictive impact on personality types.

The model of relationship between EI and moral reasoning by Athota, O'Connor & Jackson proposed that EI indirectly predicts moral reasoning with personality as the mediator¹⁹. Basically, they suggest that EI significantly predicts different personality traits (Big 5), some of which in turn predict

moral reasoning. While there is surplus research evidence on personality predicting EI^{16,37}, findings of the current study give the other way round picture, maintaining that EI can also predict personality.

Other than personality, EI also emerged as a predictor of PC among male dancers. Research suggests that all the dimensions of EI predict the basic psychological needs including needs related to competence³⁸. While there lacks evidence of a direct association between EI and PC, present findings can be explained with the help of research, which maintains that EI predicts self-efficacy. Reason being, perceived competence is central to self-efficacy^{20,39}. Self-efficacy and PC are even used interchangeably. As self-perceived competence is associated with self-efficacy⁴⁰ and the latter has been ascertained to be predicted by EI^{41,23}, EI may predict the former as well.

According to Self-determination theory (SDT), competence is one of the three psychological needs, satisfaction of which is essential for intrinsic motivation, optimal functioning, growth, and well-being⁴². In the SDT context, competence (in comparison to autonomy and relatedness) is likely to be higher in dancers, for their skill is always at public display. While feeling competent in dance may enhance positive affect in dancers, low PC can induce threat and negative affect⁴³. As EI has a significant and positive impact on self-determination⁴⁴, PC being part of the theoretical framework of SDT⁴⁵ may also be predicted by EI.

The second hypothesis was also accepted. Results demonstrate a positive association between EI and various dimensions of personality. Our findings are supported by earlier researches^{18,35,36,46}. Significant positive association between EI and dimensions of Big Five personality traits including extraversion⁴⁷, conscientiousness⁴⁸, and agreeableness⁴⁹ has been earlier ascertained, but on sample other than dancers. And as is the case in the present study, the highest correlation of EI with conscientiousness followed by extraversion has been supported earlier as well⁴⁶.

The reason for the positive association between EI and personality traits can be that individuals high on emotional intellect are expected to be more tough-minded, emotionally stable and outward oriented⁴⁶. EI is about how effectively one can understand and control emotions of self and others, and this, in turn, can be one of the major contributors in personality formation¹⁷. Goleman's mixed model of emotional intelligence⁵⁰ clubs together the qualities of EI and traits of personality (which aren't related to either emotions or intelligence). Another mixed model, the Bar-on model of emotional-social intelligence⁵¹ is also closely related to personality theory¹⁷.

According to the Trait model of emotional intelligence⁵², trait EI or trait self-efficacy is not a cognitive ability. Rather, it's a collection of personality traits about people's perception of their

emotional abilities. Theoretically speaking, trait EI belongs within the monarch of personality⁵³. Van der Linden et al. concluded that the general factor of personality (GFP) correlates moderately with ability EI and overlaps with trait EI⁵⁴. Van Zyl & de Bruin also found EI and personality overlapping⁵⁵. Moving on, the third hypothesis expected EI to relate positively with PC. The results of the present study are in consensus with the hypothesis. Bontempo & Napier reported emotional stability⁵⁶ and other factors like self-esteem, conscientiousness, and openness to experience⁵⁷ as predictors of perceived competence⁵⁸. Spethianazar & Ghasemi confirmed the association between the dimensions of EI and basic psychological needs related to competence³⁸. Reason being, someone high on EI is likely to have a clear and realistic idea of their own competitive tendencies. Environmental factors like social support and feedback from relevant others can also play a role in the formulation of one's competence perception.

Harter's Competence motivation theory⁵⁹ suggests that people are more likely to engage in activities they feel competent about⁶⁰. White's⁶¹ idea of effectance motivation - intrinsic desire to have an enduring impact on the environment (achieved through competence), wherein successful mastery attempts enhance effectance motivation - was further expanded by Harter. Effectance/competence motivation, as a multidimensional construct influences domain-specific mastery attempts along with associated emotions, cognitions, and behavior including PC⁶⁰. The theory calls the construct of PC as the strongest predictor of affective, cognitive and behavioral outcomes. Ekawati ascertained a strong positive relation between EI and competence, along with the partial and simultaneous effect of EI and competence on motivation⁶². This explains the relation between EI and PC.

Interestingly, the results also revealed a positive association between PC and neuroticism. One of the reasons could be achievement-motivation, as individuals with high achievement-motivation have been found to have high neuroticism in comparison to the ones with low achievement motivation⁶³. McCabe et al. found that performance-approach goals (that emphasize to outperform others) are positively related with neuroticism⁶⁴. These goals not only predict better performance but also increase one's belief in their ability to complete a task⁶⁵. Clark & Schroth⁶⁶ found that neuroticism associated positively with extrinsic motivation (which results from external pressure/anxiety), specifically introjected regulation (i.e. doing things to maintain self-esteem or avoid guilt)⁶⁷. Bidjerano & Yun Dai⁶⁸ suggested that people high on neuroticism intensify their efforts to cope with failure-related anxiety or avert the negative circumstances⁶⁷. Fear of failure can be another explanation for the positive relation between neuroticism and competence perception.

Lastly, gender differences showed up on PC and conscientiousness dimension of personality, with male dancers higher on the former and female dancers on the latter. Research works of Nagai & Nomura; Slingerland; Granleese, Trew & Turner also confirmed that boys have higher PC compared to girls⁶⁹⁻⁷¹. Regarding the differences in conscientiousness, results are supported by Mandal's³⁵ research which found females to be higher on this dimension of personality in comparison to males. Also, no gender differences emerged on EI, and the same has been supported by Alghamdi, Aslam & Khan¹⁶.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The current investigation ascertained that EI predicts both personality and perceived competence among professional dancers of Indian region. While EI related positively with the overall personality and its dimensions namely conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness as well as with PC, PC and neuroticism also correlated positively. Gender differences emerged on PC and conscientiousness. The information derived from the present study will add to the existing knowledge base of Indian dance literature and awareness regarding emotional intellect, personality traits and the perception of competitiveness in dancers of India. This knowledge can be utilized by dance educators and instructors to better plan their workshops to promote psychological well-being, physical and mental health, and beneficial lifestyle practices among dancers.

Limitations:

Though this study examined professional dancers of the Indian region, specific dance forms were not taken into consideration. Therefore, generalizing the findings to particular dance styles would be unwise. The sample was taken only from the tricity of Chandigarh, Panchkula, and Mohali (India) and was restricted to the age window of 20-30 years. Hence, future studies can be extended to incorporate different dance styles with wider geographical coverage. Consequently, analyzing comparative groups from diverse societal levels, and addressing the other highlighted limitations in a reproduction of the current investigation may bring up interesting and informative findings to light.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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