apunts EDUCACIÓN FÍSICA Y DEPORTES
NÚMERO 163

Published: January 1, 2026
https://doi.org/10.5672/apunts.2014-0983.es.(2026/1).163.02

OPEN ACCESS

Determinants of Body Image in Dance Practitioners: A Cross-Sectional Study

Natalia Fraga-Pena[1*] & Marta Bobo-Arce[1]

[1] University of A Coruña (Spain).

Cite this article
Fraga-Pena, N., & Bobo-Arce, M. (2026). Determinants of Body Image in Dance Practitioners: A Cross-Sectional Study *Apunts Educación Física y Deportes, 163*, 19-28. https://doi.org/10.5672/apunts.2014-0983.es.(2026/1).163.02

Edited by:
© Generalitat de Catalunya
Department of Sports
Institut Nacional d'Educació Física de Catalunya (INEFC)

ISSN: 2014-0983

***Corresponding author:**
Natalia Fraga-Pena
natalia.fragap@udc.es

Section:
Physical Activity and Heath

Original language:
English

Received:
May 27, 2025

Accepted:
September 15, 2025

Published:
January 1, 2026

Front page:
Short track athlete in mid-turn, with maximum speed and focus on the ice.
© coolakov / Adobe Stock.

Abstract

Body image is the mental representation an individual makes about their body. Dance is an artistic and morphokinetic practice, so aesthetics has great relevance in it. However, this aesthetic differs between dance styles. The present cross-sectional study aimed to identify the variables most significantly affecting body image among dance practitioners, including both professional and non-professional dancers. The sample was gathered by contacting the Galician Choreographic Centre, dance conservatories and dance companies from Galicia, as well as dance schools, academies, and cultural associations with dance activities in the province of A Coruña. Participants were required to complete an online questionnaire assessing body image, and individual and sociocultural data. Body image was evaluated using the Spanish version of the Body Appreciation Scale-2 and Stunkard Scale. In total, the sample included 527 adult dancers, the vast majority of whom were non-professional. The findings revealed that body mass index, body-related messages on social media, and receiving negative body-related comments, along with dieting and body transformations, had the most significant negative impact on dancers' body image. On the other hand, receiving positive comments about the body had a significant and positive influence on body image. Additionally, variables such as dance style, sexual orientation, psychological issues, and the practice of other physical activities were also identified as significant contributors.

Keywords: body appreciation, body image, body perception, body satisfaction, dance

Introduction

Body image is the mental representation that an individual forms of their own body, including attitudes and self-perceptions regarding their appearance (Cash, 2012). Appearance in general—and body image in particular—have become determining factors in contemporary Western societies (Cash, 2012). Numerous studies have analyzed the effects of different variables on body image.

On the one hand, there are sociocultural variables such as gender (Aimé et al., 2020), ethnicity and country of origin (Fallon et al., 2014), sexuality (Alleva et al., 2018), economic status, and professional, financial, and academic success (Aimé et al., 2020; Jiménez Boraita et al., 2021). Additionally, environmental influences such as social opinions and social media (Dogan et al., 2018; Heidelberger & Smith, 2018), factors related to diet (Requena-Pérez et al., 2015), and physical activity (Bibiloni et al., 2017; Hartman-Munick et al., 2020) also play a role.

At the individual level, there is a set of variables, such as age (Bibiloni et al., 2017; Swami et al., 2014), personality traits (Ferreira et al., 2018; Wade & Tiggemann, 2013), mental health (Linardon et al., 2022), bodily changes and functionality (Halliwell, 2015), and anthropometric variables such as BMI (Bibiloni et al., 2017; Dogan et al., 2018; Jiménez Boraita et al., 2021) and body fat percentage (Çatikkaş, 2011) which affect to body image.

Parallel to existing beauty standards in societies, which are influenced by diverse cultures, elite sport disciplines are also typically associated with specific body types. Dance, specifically, is an artistic and morphokinetic practice in which body forms and movement serve as objectives, making aesthetics a fundamental component (Mateu Serra & Coelho Bortoleto, 2011; Serre, 1984). The exposure of the body and continuous self-observation in mirrors amplify the focus on physical appearance and body aesthetics compared with other physical practices. Dance serves as a language that contributes to the construction of a dancer's body image through their sensations and interactions with the environment (Requena-Pérez et al., 2015). Numerous studies have analyzed body image among professional dancers across different dance styles, yielding varying results. The influence of aesthetics associated with various dance styles—ballet, contemporary dance, urban dance, ballroom dance, and others—is evident.

For example, several studies have reported that professional ballet dancers express dissatisfaction with their body image, either because they perceive themselves as weighing too much or because they desire a thinner physique, despite having a normal body mass index (Fonseca da Cunha & Messias Machado, 2019; Neves Simas et al., 2019; Santo André et al., 2022). The pressure to maintain an extremely thin body may negatively affect dancers' body image.

Regarding individuals who practice different dance styles for non-professional reasons, the impact of dance on body image appears to differ from the previously mentioned findings. It has been observed that advanced contemporary dancers exhibit both greater body appreciation and greater body dissatisfaction compared to beginners (Halliwell, 2015).

The social relevance of this research lies in the issue of body image—the way we perceive our bodies—due to its impact on well-being. Today, numerous body image-related problems can be observed, affecting individuals' self-esteem across various contexts, although some groups experience these issues more frequently. Furthermore, the presence of body image concerns may be linked to eating disorders. Dance, as an artistic practice with a morphokinetic nature, is directly related to body image and self-perception.

From a scientific perspective, there is a lack of comprehensive compilation and in-depth study of the variables that may influence body image in the general population and, more specifically, in dancers. Moreover, while numerous interventions involving different dance modalities have shown that dance can help improve body image, it has also been observed that dancers face body image challenges due to highly demanding and rigid physical standards.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the sociocultural and individual variables that most strongly affect body image in professional and non-professional dancers, to what extent, and whether this impact on body image is positive or negative.

Methodology

Ethical approval for the study procedures and methods was granted by Ethics Committee for Research and Teaching of the Universidade da Coruña (CEID-UDC), in compliance with the University Code of Research Ethics and UDC Guide to Good Research Practice (record number: 2023-014).

Participants

The target group included professional and non-professional adult dancers who practiced any dance style. Pro-dancers were defined as those who self-identified as professionals, spent more than 20 hours per week dancing (corresponding to part-time work), belonged to a dance company or received a salary for this activity, competed, or were dance conservatory students at a professional or advanced level. Non-professional dancers included those who practiced dance for other purposes and did not meet the criteria for being considered professionals. Minors were excluded from the study.

Participants were recruited by contacting, via email and/or telephone, dance companies and professional dance conservatories in Galicia, as well as all dance schools, academies and cultural or neighborhood associations that offered dance instructions or had dance groups in the province of A Coruña. The search for non-professional participants was limited to this province because the number of potential contacts was too large to manage. To collect their names and contact information, a database was created from 23rd November 2023 to 29th February 2024.

Materials and Instruments. Procedure

Information about the purpose and utility of the research, as well as all data handling procedures and participant's rights, was provided prior to participation as part of the informed consent process. Any person who met the inclusion criteria and fulfilled the questionnaire from 5th March 2024 to 30th April 2024 was included in the sample.

The study was aimed at reaching a sample size of 400 dancers, including professional and non-professional ones, as in the Spanish validation study of Body Appreciation Scale- 2 (Swami et al., 2017) which used a sample of 400 participants in each half of the study.

Participants completed a background questionnaire, which included information on demographic and socioeconomic factors, physical characteristics, dance-related aspects, psychological and behavioral factors, body image and external influences, and health and lifestyle choices.

Moreover, to assess body image, and based on the results of a previous systematic review about instruments in body image and dance literature (Fraga-Pena & Bobo-Arce, 2025), two instruments were used: the Stunkard Silhouette Scale (Stunkard et al., 1983), to ask which silhouette best represented participants' bodies and which one they wished to have, and to calculate the difference between these perceptions to assess body satisfaction; and the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2; Tylka & Wood-Barcalow, 2015), translated and validated into Spanish (Swami et al., 2017), which demonstrated adequate internal consistency for both women (Cronbach $\alpha = .90$, 95% IC = .88-.92) and men (Cronbach $\alpha = .91$, 95% IC = .89-.93).

Prior to its application, the questionnaire was reviewed by an expert committee in the field of body and gender. For the data collection, Microsoft Forms platform was used for its simplicity and accessibility.

Data Analysis

For the statistical analysis, the IBM SPSS version 29 program, licensed by the Universidade da Coruña, was used. Data was coded and open-ended questions were categorized for analysis. BMI was calculated from body mass and height data. Regarding dependent variables, the absolute difference between perceived and desired silhouette, and BAS-2 average body appreciation results were calculated.

To perform inferential analysis, all variables with multiple-choice options, and the final statements regarding the relationship between the body and dance, were transformed into dummy variables. To examine the most influential variables on body image, two multiple lineal regressions were performed, taking the absolute difference in Stunkard results and the average BAS-2 score as dependent variables. Univariate analyses were also performed to obtain robust standard errors when homoscedasticity assumption was not met in linear regressions.

The same analyses were conducted dividing the sample into two groups—professional and non-professional dancers—to search for differences in the variables relevant to body image within each group. Logistic regressions were also performed for each of the statements participants were asked about.

To check whether there were any differences in the body image results, as well as in BMI, weekly dance hours, and weekly physical activity hours, between professional and non-professional dancers, a comparison of means was performed.

Results

In total, 527 answers were gathered. Table 1 shows the principal characteristics of the sample.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Sample

Variable	Mean ± SD
Age	37.4±13.2
BMI	24.0±4.3
	n (%)
Gender	
Women	445 (84.4)
Men	75 (14.2)
Other genders	5 (0.9)
Rather not answer	2 (0.4)
Most common characteristics	
White	501 (95.1)
Heterosexual	422 (80.1)
Finished university studies	317 (60.2)
From rural area	310 (58.8)
< €12,000/year income	187 (35.5)
Other characteristics	
Very perfectionist	236 (44.8)
Diagnosed psychological disorder	49 (9.3)
Physical disability	20 (3.8)
Undergone drastic physical change	220 (41.7)
Following a diet	93 (17.6)
Dieting > 1 year	60 (11.4)
Reasons for physical change	
Health	99 (18.8)
Physiological	59 (11.2)
Family	41 (7.8)
Work	28 (5.3)
Other reasons	42 (8.0)
No response / Don't know	8 (1.5)
Reasons for dieting	
Health	28 (5.3)
Illness	23 (4.4)
Aesthetic	22 (4.2)
Control	19 (3.6)
Ethics	9 (1.7)

Regarding dance style, the most popular category was traditional and folkloric dances, among both professional (47.7%) and non-professional dancers (61.0%). Table 2 shows the results for dance practice.

Table 2
Professional Status, Dance Style, Other Physical Activities and Weekly Practice Hours

Variable	*n* (%)
Professional dancers	
Professional	107 (20.3)
Non-professional	420 (79.7)
Dance style	
Traditional and folkloric dances	307 (58.3)
Modern and contemporary dances	125 (23.7)
Latin dances	96 (18.2)
Ballet and classical dance	53 (10.1)
Street dance	45 (8.5)
DanceSport	23 (4.4)
Fitness / acrobatic dances	10 (1.9)
Oriental dances	8 (1.5)
Afro dances	8 (1.5)
Ballroom / swing	6 (1.1)
Other physical activities	320 (60.7)
Wellness physical activity	270 (51.2)
Individual sports	77 (14.6)
Team sports	14 (2.7)
	Mean ± SD
Dance time*** (h/week)	
Professional	12.2±10.3
Non-professional	3.1±3.4
Physical activity time*** (h/week)	
Professional	3.6±4.9
Non-professional	2.8±3.5

***T-test showed statistical differences ($p < .05$) in both dance and physical activity time between professional and non-professional dancers.

Regarding comments on physical appearance, the majority of participants reported rarely receiving negative ones, while almost half reported often receiving positive ones. Additionally, most of them reported seeing pictures or messages about the ideal body in mass media or on social media either often or very frequently. Table 3 shows the results for the frequency of comments and pictures or messages about the ideal body, as well as the sources of these comments.

Table 3
Frequency of Comments, and Pictures or Messages About the Ideal Body. Sources of Comments About the Body

	Never	Rarely	Often	Very frequently
Negative	196 (37.2%)	283 (53.7%)	44 (8.3%)	4 (0.8%)
Positive	29 (5.5%)	192 (36.4%)	256 (48.6%)	50 (9.5%)
Mass media	15 (2.8%)	52 (9.9%)	200 (28.0%)	260 (59.3%)
Social media	19 (3.6%)	42 (8.0%)	170 (32.3%)	296 (56.2%)

	Couple	Relatives	Friends	Work/Class Mates	Other known	Unknown
Negative	11 (2.1%)	129 (24.5%)	32 (6.1%)	28 (5.3%)	127 (24.1%)	95 (18%)
Positive	211 (40%)	241 (45.7%)	314 (59.6%)	130 (24.7%)	128 (24.3%)	44 (8.3%)

Stunkard Silhouettes

Participants reported, on average, a low difference between perceived and desired silhouette ($\bar{x}$ = 0.98; SD = 0.91), ranging from 0 to 4 out of a maximum of 6, which was observed in both professional ($\bar{x}$ = 0.84; SD = 0.90) and non-professional dancers ($\bar{x}$ = 1.02; SD = 0.91).

As the initial regressions did not meet the assumption of homoscedasticity, Table 4 shows a list of the variables that were identified as statistically significant after re-estimating robust standard errors. In the general sample, the relevance of the variables was assessed based on confidence intervals, as SPSS did not provide *p*-values when applying robust standard errors due to the extreme precision of the model. The models met the assumptions of linearity for both the general (F = 25,511; $p < .001$) and professional samples (F = 32,140; $p < .001$); independence of residues with Durbin-Watson values close to 2 in all cases, normality of residuals and non-collinearity (VIF < 10; tolerance > 0.1 in all cases). ANOVA showed that the models were significant, showing $R^2 = .308$ for the general sample, and $R^2 = .280$ for non-professional dancers, which means the associations were adequate. Regarding professional sample, none of the variables was pointed out as statistically significant after re-estimating robust standard errors.

Normality tests showed that neither professional nor non-professional groups followed a normal distribution regarding Stunkard difference results ($p < .001$ in both cases), therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare means. The null hypothesis was rejected ($p = .050$), indicating that there is enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant mean difference between the groups.

Table 4
Variables That Most Affect Body Satisfaction in General Sample and Non-Professional Dancers, Statistical Significance and Confidence Intervals

	General sample			Non-professionals		
	β	*p*	95% CI	β	*p*	95% CI
BMI	.094	<.001	[.094, .094]	.095	<.001	[.064, .126]
Asexuality	2.284	<.001	[2.284, 2.284]			
Frequent negative comments about body	.439	<.001	[.439, .439]	.543	.005	[.161, .925]
Rare positive comments about body	.218	<.001	[.218, .218]			
Positive comments about body from strangers				-.290	.036	[-.561, -.0.20]
Frequent exposure to ideal body images/ messages on social media	-.214	<.001	[-.214, -.214]	-.219	.013	[-.391, -.047]
Dieting for ethical reasons	-.802	<.001	[-.802, -.802]			
Unspecified reasons for physical change	.364	<.001	[.364, .364]			
Diagnosed personality disorder	1.743	<.001	[1.743, 1.743]			
Team sport	-.591	<.001	[-.591, -.591]	-.641	.001	[-1.004, -.279]

Table 5
Variables That Most Affect Body Appreciation in General Sample, Professional Dancers and Non-Professional Dancers, and Statistical Significance

	General sample			Non-professionals		
	β	*p*	95% CI	β	*p*	95% CI
BMI	-0.034	<.001	[-.050, -.017]	-0.040	<.001	[-.058, -.022]
Maximum primary education	-1.379	<.001	[-2.078, -0.681]	-1.167	.001	[-1.879, -.456]
€24,000-32,000 per year	0.228	.008	[.061, .396]	0.244	.010	[.059, .430]
Diagnosed psychological disorder	-.314	.004	[-.526, -.102]	-0.419	<.001	[-.650, -.188]
Prefer not to answer about psychological disorder	-0.488	.003	[-.814, -.161]	-0.707	<.001	[-1.087, -.327]
Physical disability				0.450	.019	[.075, .825]
Never negative comments about body	0.301	<.001	[.171, .431]	0.241	.001	[.095, .388]
Frequent negative comments about body	-0.364	.003	[-.607, -.122]	-0.437	.002	[-.711, -.163]
Negative comments about body from work or classmates	0.307	.034	[.022, .591]			
Frequent positive comments about body	0.275	<.001	[.144, .406]	0.250	.001	[.102, .398]
Very frequent positive comments about body	0.579	<.001	[.360, .799]	0.542	<.001	[.284, .800]
Never viewing pictures/messages in traditional media about body	-0.481	.011	[-.850, -.113]			
Frequent viewing of pictures/messages on social media about ideal body				0.197	.009	[.050, .344]
Very frequent viewing of pictures/messages on social media about ideal body	-0.256	<.001	[-.379, -.132]			
Aesthetic reason for dieting	-0.670	<.001	[-.977, -.364]	-0.833	<.001	[-1.248, -.417]
Control reasons for dieting	-0.542	.001	[-.865, -.219]	-0.674	.002	[-1.103, -.245]
1-6 months diet				0.419	.046	[.007, .831]
Unspecified reasons for physical change	-0.364	.001	[-.587, -.141]			
Oriental dances	-1.005	<.001	[-1.507, -.502]			
Ballroom/swing dance	0.606	.035	[.042, 1.171]	0.717	.014	[.143, 1.291]
Wellness physical activity	0.134	.031	[.012, .256]			

BAS-2

Participants reported, on average, a moderate appreciation of body image ($\bar{x}$ = 3.56; SD = 0.85), on a scale ranging from 1 (minimum) to 5 (maximum). When divided into professional ($\bar{x}$ = 3.54; SD = 0.86) and non-professional dancers ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57; SD = 0.85), the scores where similar.

Table 5 shows a list of the variables that were brought to the front after regression. The models met the assumptions of linearity for both the general (F = 14.94; p < .001), and non-professional samples (F = 13.90; p < .001); independence of residuals, with Durbin- Watson values close to 2 in all cases, normality of residuals, and non-collinearity (VIF < 10; tolerance > 0.1 in all cases). The homoscedasticity assumption was not met in the professional sample regression, and none of the variables was pointed out as statistically significant after re-estimation using robust standard errors. ANOVA showed that the models were significant, with R^2 of .361 (general sample), and .340 (non-professional dancers), indicating that the associations were adequate.

Normality tests showed that neither professional nor non-professional groups followed a normal distribution regarding Stunkard comparison results (p = .031 and p = .001, respectively), therefore, the Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare means. The null hypothesis was accepted (p = .763), indicating that there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant mean difference between groups.

Statements

Most participants (68.3%) agreed that dance made them feel more and better connected with their bodies. Additionally, 36.1% answered that improving their dance technique made them value their bodies more; 14.2% reported feeling more pressure on their bodies when dancing in a group; 13.5% answered that if they did not practice dance, they felt uncomfortable with their bodies; and 22.2% answered that they did not identify with any of the previous statements. Percentages were higher among professional dancers than non-professional ones for each of the first four statements.

Multiple logistic regression was performed for each of the five statements. In none of the cases was pseudo-R^2 higher than .3, indicating a weak fit of the models.

Discussion

This study investigated the variables that have the greatest effect on body image in professional and non-professional dancers, aiming to identify them, determine the extent to which they affect body image, and understand how they correlate.

The main finding was that, in general, body mass index, comments about the body and social media, and dieting and body changes variables have the greatest effect on the body image of dancers. Other relevant factors were dance style, asexuality, psychological issues, or other physical activity practices (whether they practice and type). Some differences were found between professional and non-professional dancers regarding the variables with the greatest effect.

Body Mass Index

The current study found body mass index to be the most relevant variable affecting body image in both professional and non-professional dancers. These results showed that higher BMI is linked to lower body appreciation and greater discrepancy between ideal and perceived body. Some studies had already identified BMI as a relevant variable for body image in dancers (Fonseca da Cunha & Messias Machado, 2019). However, others have not found it to be a meaningful predictor of body satisfaction (Boyes & Cornelissen, 2024).

Comments About the Body and Social Media

In general, never or rarely receiving negative comments about their bodies, or receiving positive comments about them very frequently or often, had a positive effect on body satisfaction and body appreciation. Conversely, rarely or never receiving positive comments about their bodies, frequently receiving negative comments about them, and very often viewing pictures or messages about the ideal body on social media, had a negative effect on body satisfaction and body appreciation. These results supported the findings of Halliwell (2015), where social media was identified as an influent factor on body image. However, contrary to the findings of Dogan et al. (2018) and Heidelberger & Smith (2018) with adolescent population, the sender of these messages was not found to be significant after the regressions.

Some confusing results were also found. In the general sample, whether the negative comments were made by classmates or workmates was also related to a better body appreciation. Likewise, never viewing pictures or messages about the ideal body in traditional media was associated with worse body appreciation. These findings might indicate that participants do not care about comments and opinions from their classmates or workmates, or that dancers perceived these body-related comments as constructive. Regarding traditional media, the fact that participants may not watch watch it or consciously avoid it to prevent exposure to beauty standards might explain these results.

Diet, Body Changes and Body Functionality

In general, following a diet for aesthetic or control reasons, and having undergone a drastic body change for reasons other than those specified, were related to worse body satisfaction and body appreciation. However, dieting for ethical reasons was positively related to body satisfaction in the general sample. Santo André et al. (2022) also linked restrictive diets aimed at achieving leaner bodies to body dissatisfaction in ballet dancers.

On the other hand, contrary to the findings of Argyrides et al. (2023) in non-dancers, having any physical disability was positively related to a better body appreciation in non-professional dancers. This finding might also be explained by the fact that dancers with any physical disability may appreciate their bodies more for what they are able to do than for what they are not.

Dance Practice

When it comes to dance styles, some disciplines were shown to be relevant to body image. BAS-2 results showed that practicing oriental dances has a detrimental effect on body appreciation, while other disciplines, such as ballroom dance or swing dance, had a positive impact, with similar results in non-professional dancers.

Nevertheless, the results contradict those of Tiggemann et al. (2014) and Walter (2020), in which practitioners of belly dance, an oriental dance, reported better body image results and less body dissatisfaction than non-dancers. Additionally, some interventions involving belly dance with

women diagnosed with breast cancer showed improvements in body image (Boing et al., 2023; Denig et al., 2022). The exposure of the body in this type of dance might explain the low body appreciation levels found in the present study. However, the disagreement with the literature may come from the different characteristics of the samples, as belly dance helped women with breast cancer to regain appreciation of the sensuality and sexual attractiveness of their bodies.

Additionally, in literature, ballet dancers have been shown to experience body image issues, such as moderate-to-severe alterations in body image perception (Da Silva et al., 2016), and body dissatisfaction (Fonseca da Cunha & Messias Machado, 2019; Granha Vasconcellos et al., 2021). However, our results did not find ballet practice to be a meaningful predictor of body image, even though ballet aesthetic standards are deeply rooted.

Concerning professional status, it was expected to be relevant to body image, as professional dancers expose their bodies to a larger audience and their image is an essential part of their career. Despite this, our findings did not find professional status in dance to be significantly relevant to body image. The fact that only 12 out of the 107 professional dancers practiced ballet might explain this discrepancy, as literature has mainly focused on ballet practitioners when it comes to professional dancers (Fonseca da Cunha & Messias Machado, 2019; Granha Vasconcellos et al., 2021).

Psychological Disorder

People who reported having any psychological disorder showed worse body appreciation. Literature has already established that psychopathologies such as depression and anxiety are inversely associated with body appreciation (Linardon et al., 2022).

Other Physical Activities

Practicing team sports was reported to have a positive relationship with body image. Body appreciation was also positively related with practicing activities related to wellness and health. Hartman-Munick et al. (2020) explained that, although sport practice might have a positive impact on mental and physical health, it is important to acknowledge its influence on body image, especially in activities that traditionally encourage certain body types or sizes. Likewise, organized and team sport practice has been associated with positive body image (Vaquero-Cristóbal et al., 2013).

Socioeconomical Variables

Even though evidence has previously supported the relationship between gender and body image (Aimé et al., 2020), the present results did not find any significant relationship. Likewise, age was not related to body image, even though some studies have suggested that maturity might help women accept body changes and, therefore, result in higher body satisfaction in adulthood (Swami et al., 2014). Other studies have indicated that, because feminine beauty standards tend to favor younger bodies, body image might be more positive in younger women than in middle-aged and older women (Bibiloni et al., 2017).

Concerning sexual orientation, asexuality was related to a greater discrepancy between desired and perceived body, consistent with the findings of Swami et al. (2019). Asexual dancers might be especially dissatisfied with their bodies while trying to fit into heteronormative societies.

Finally, concurring with Aimé et al. (2020), achieving primary or elementary school as the highest academic level, and earning between €24,000 and-32,000 per year were also identified as relevant for body image, negatively and positively, respectively. These are classical indicators of social success, and might impact body image, as bodies can also be understood as a status symbol, playing a role in the identity construction and social value of individuals.

Limitations and Stregths

These findings need to be considered in light of some limitations. Firstly, regarding the sample, our target group was limited to adults who danced in Galicia, so the findings cannot be generalized to younger populations, who deal with body image differently, or to other regions, as folk tradition plays a significant role in dance. The large number of institutions offering dance lessons made it unfeasible to manage recruitment across the entire region, so the recruitment of non-professional dancers was focused on A Coruña province.

Secondly, concerning the assessment of body image, even though two validated tools were used, Stunkard scale offers a dichotomous view of genders and bodies, so it might not represent everyone. Additionally, the online questionnaire might have limited access for older adults who are less familiar with technology.

Finally, some regressions did not meet the assumption of homoscedasticity, so robust standard errors were computed to obtain more reliable estimates.

Although certain limitations were identified, the strengths of this study provide a strong foundation for the conclusions drawn. These include the anonymity of the sample collection, a simple and quick questionnaire accessible to anyone with minimal technological skills, a large sample size, the coverage of multiple variables —including the professionalization of dance, which is an innovative approach— and the rigorous analysis of variables.

Likewise, the relevance of the topic must be highlighted: this study provides new findings in the field of body image and dance, which might contribute to improving the wellbeing of dancers. It also raises awareness of a contemporary topic, namely body image, especially in fields with highly labelled aesthetic standards such as dance.

Future Research

Further studies should explore body image in dancers from a qualitative perspective to comprehensively grasp the intricacies of a complex concept like body image, focusing on the most crucial factors. Future research should also include cross-sectional and longitudinal studies with diverse populations across various age groups and geographical locations. Intervention studies on the body image of non-dancers following participation in a specific dance style program are also convenient.

Conclusions

The present study found that body mass index, messages about the body on social media, and comments about the body, as well as dieting and body change variables, have the greatest effect on the body image of professional and non-professional dancers. Additional factors, such as dance style, asexuality, psychological issues, and the practice of other physical activities, were also identified as relevant. These findings contribute not only to the knowledge of body image in dancers, but also to a greater understanding of the importance of context and other variables in this research area.

References

Aimé, A., Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M., Dion, J., Markey, C. H., Strodl, E., McCabe, M., Mellor, D., Granero Gallegos, A., Piatrabissa, G., Alcáraz-Ibáñez, M., Bégin, C., Blackburn, M.E., Caltabiano, M., Castelnuovo, G. Gullo, S., Hayami-Chisuwa, N., He, Q., Lo Coco, G., Manzonie, G.M., Probst, M., Rodgers, R.F., Sicilia, A. & Maïano, C. (2020). Assessing positive body image, body satisfaction, weight bias, and appearance comparison in emerging adults: A cross-validation study across eight countries [Article]. *Body Image*, *35*, 320–332. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2020.09.014

Alleva, J. M., Paraskeva, N., Craddock, N., & Diedrichs, P. C. (2018). Body appreciation in British men: Correlates and variation across sexual orientation. *Body Image*, *27*, 169–178. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2018.09.004

Argyrides, M., Koundourou, C., Angelidou, A., & Anastasiades, E. (2023). Body Image, Media Influences, and Situational Dysphoria in Individuals with Visible Physical Disabilities. *International Journal of Psychological Research*, *16*(1), 78–88. https://doi.org/10.21500/20112084.6014

Bibiloni, M. D., Coll, J. L., Pich, J., Pons, A., & Tur, J. A. (2017). Body image satisfaction and weight concerns among a Mediterranean adult population. *BMC Public Health*, *17*(39). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-016-3919-7

Boing, L., de Bem Fretta, T., Stein, F., Lyra, V. B., Moratelli, J. A., da Silveira, J., Severo do Santos Saraiva, P., Berkmann, A., Lynch, B.M. & de Azevedo Guimarães, A. C. (2023). Can mat Pilates and belly dance be effective in improving body image, self-esteem, and sexual function in patients undergoing hormonal treatment for breast cancer? A randomized clinical trial. *Archives of Women's Mental Health, 26*, 141–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00737-023-01294-4

Boyes, J. E., & Cornelissen, K. K. (2024). The 'ideal' dancer: An investigation into predictors of body image dissatisfaction among male dancers, female dancers and their non-dancing counterparts. *PLoS ONE*, *19*(11): e0313142. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0313142

Cash, T. F. (2012). *Encyclopedia of Body Image and Human Appearance*. Elsevier Science.

Çatikkaş, F. (2011). Physical Correlates of College Students' Body Image Satisfaction Levels. *Social Behavior and Personality*, *39*(4), 497–502. https://doi.org/10.2224/sbp.2011.39.4.497

Da Silva, C. L., De Oliveira, E. P., De Sousa, M. V., & Pimentel, G. D. (2016). Body dissatisfaction and the wish for different silhouette is associated with higher adiposity and fat intake in female ballet dancers than male. *The Journal of sports medicine and physical fitness*, *56*(1-2), 141–148.

Denig, L. A., Boing, L., de Bem Fretta, T., Sperandio, F. F., & de Azevedo Guimarães, A. C. (2022). Effects of belly dancing intervention on sexual function and body image in breast cancer patients undergoing hormone therapy - randomized clinical trial. *Fisioterapia em Movimento*, *35* (spe). https://doi.org/10.1590/FM.2022.35602

Dogan, O., Bayhan, P., Yukselen, A., & Isitan, S. (2018). Body Image in Adolescents and Its Relationship to Socio-Cultural Factors [Article]. *American Psychological Association*, *18*(3), 561–577. https://doi.org/10.12738/estp.2018.3.0569

Fallon, E. A., Harris, B. S., & Johnson, P. (2014). Prevalence of body dissatisfaction among a United States adult sample. *Eating Behaviors*, *15*(1), 151–158. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2013.11.007

Ferreira, C., Duarte, C., Pinto-Gouveia, J., & Lopes, C. (2018). The Need to Present a Perfect Body Image: Development of a New Measure of Perfectionistic Self-Presentation. *Current Psychology*, *37*, 559–567. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-016-9537-9

Fonseca da Cunha, P. R., & Messias Machado, L. M. (2019). Evaluation of nutritional status, satisfaction with body image, consumption and eating behavior of classical ballet students at a dance school in Belem-PA. *RBONE - Revista Brasileira De Obesidade Nutricao E Emagrecimento*, *13*(78), 219–230. Retrieved from: https://www.rbone.com.br/index.php/rbone/article/view/913

Fraga-Pena, N., & Bobo-Arce, M. (2025). Measurement tools in the assessment of body image in the dancing context: A systematic review. *Retos*, *64*, 322–337. https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v64.110431

Granha Vasconcellos, E., Romero de Almeida, A., & Masami Marimoto, J. (2021). Eating behavior and body image of professional dancers associated with perceptions in the work environment. *RBNE – Revista Brasilera De Nutricao Esportiva*, *15*(95), 426–441. Retrieved from: https://www.rbne.com.br/index.php/rbne/article/view/1923

Halliwell, E. (2015). Future directions for positive body image research. *Body Image*, *14*, 177–189. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2015.03.003

Hartman-Munick, S. M., Gordon, A. R., & Guss, C. (2020). Adolescent body image: influencing factors and the clinician's role [Review]. *Current Opinion in Pediatrics*, *32*(4), 455–460. https://doi.org/10.1097/mop.0000000000000910

Heidelberger, L., & Smith, C. (2018). Low-Income, African American and American Indian Children's Viewpoints on Body Image Assessment Tools and Body Satisfaction: A Mixed Methods Study. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*, *22*, 1327-1338. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10995-018-2513-2

Jiménez Boraita, R., Alsina, D. A., Torres, J. M. D., & Ibort, E. G. (2021). Determinants of body satisfaction in adolescents from La Rioja. *Revista Española De Salud Publica*, *95*, 12, Retrieved from: https://ojs.sanidad.gob.es/index.php/resp/article/view/623

Linardon, J., McClure, Z., Tylka, T. L., & Fuller-Tyszkiewicz, M. (2022). Body appreciation and its psychological correlates: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Body Image*, *42*, 287–296. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2022.07.003

Mateu Serra, M., & Coelho Bortoleto, M. A. (2011). The internal logic and action domain of motor skills in motor expression situations (MES). *Emancipação*, *Ponta Grossa 11*(1). 129–142. https://doi.org/10.5212/Emancipacao.v.11i1.0010

Neves Simas, J. P., Macara, A., & Lopes Melo, S. I. (2019). Eating disorders and associated factors in professional classical ballet dancers in Brazil. *O Mundo Da Saúde*, *43*(2), 472–493. https://doi.org/10.15343/0104-7809.20194302472493

Requena-Pérez, C. M., Martín-Cuadrado, A. M., & Lago-Marín, B. S. (2015). Body image, motivation and academic achievement in young dancers. *Journal of Sport Psychology*, *24*(1), 37-44. https://archives.rpd-online.com/article/view/1406.html

Santo André, H. C., Pinto, A. J., Mazzolani, B. C., Smaira, F. I., Ulian, M. D., Gualano, B., & Benatti, F. B. (2022). "Can A Ballerina Eat Ice Cream?": A Mixed-Method Study on Eating Attitudes and Body Image in Female Ballet Dancers [Article]. *Frontiers in Nutrition*, *8*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnut.2021.665654

Serre, J. C. (1984). La danse parmi les autres formes de motricité. *La recherche en danse, 3,* 135-156.

Stunkard, A.J., Sørensen, T. & Schulsinger, F. (1983). Use of the Danish Adoption Register for the study of obesity and thinness. *Research publications - Association for Research in Nervous and Mental Disease, 60, 115–120.*

Swami, V., García, A. A., & Barron, D. (2017). Factor structure and psychometric properties of a Spanish translation of the Body Appreciation Scale-2 (BAS-2). *Body Image*, *22*, 13–17. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2017.05.002

Swami, V., Laughton, R., Grover, S., & Furnham, A. (2019). Asexuality is inversely associated with positive body image in British adults. *Heliyon*, *5*(9), e02452. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02452

Swami, V., Tran, U. S., Stieger, S., & Voracek, M. (2014). Associations Between Women's Body Image and Happiness: Results of the YouBeauty.com Body Image Survey (YBIS). *Journal of Happiness Studies*, *16*, 705–718. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-014-9530-7

Tiggemann, M., Coutts, E., & Clark, L. (2014). Belly Dance as an Embodying Activity?: A Test of the Embodiment Model of Positive Body Image. *Sex Roles*, *71*, 197–207. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-014-0408-2

Tylka, T. L., & Wood-Barcalow, N. L. (2015). The Body Appreciation Scale-2: Item refinement and psychometric evaluation. *Body Image*, *12*, 53–67. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2014.09.006

Vaquero-Cristobal, R., Alacid, F., Muyor, J. M., & Lopez-Minarro, P. A. (2013). BODY IMAGE; LITERATURE REVIEW [Review]. *Nutricion Hospitalaria*, *28*(1), 27–35. https://doi.org/10.3305/nh.2013.28.1.6016

Wade, T. D., & Tiggemann, M. (2013). The role of perfectionism in body dissatisfaction. *Journal of Eating Disorders*, *1*, 2. https://doi.org/10.1186/2050-2974-1-2

Walter, O. (2020). Can Participation in Belly Dancing Improve Body Image and Self-Esteem in Women Who Have Experienced Sexual Harassment? *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, *29*(6), 748–765. https://doi.org/10.1080/10926771.2020.1725214

Conflict of interest: no conflict of interest was reported by the authors.