The Power of Dance: How Dance Effects Mental and Emotional Health and Self-Confidence in Young Adults

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THE POWER OF DANCE: HOW DANCE EFFECTS MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN YOUNG ADULTS

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment Of the Requirements for the Degree Of Masters in Dance Education

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Entitled: The Power of Dance: How Dance Effects Mental and Emotional Health and Self-Confidence in Young Adults

Has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master Arts in College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Theatre Arts and Dance, Program of Dance Educator Intensive

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ABSTRACT


The purpose of this study was to investigate the mental and emotional benefits of dance in young adults. The researcher directed and produced a free, one-day dance workshop that served as the format for the research event. The study involved sixty-three dance students, ranging in age from fourteen through twenty-five, including all years of high school, college, and post-graduation. The classes offered as part of this study were geared toward the joys of dance, setting and attaining goals, having an open, growth mindset, and being self-confident. The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research as a means to answer three essential research questions.

Q1 In what ways does dance present itself as an integral art form, particularly for young adults?

Q2 What mental and emotional benefits occur when young adults study dance?

Q3 Will young adults benefit from dance being more accessible?

The study demonstrated the mental and emotional benefits of dance. By participating in the dance workshop, the participants benefitted in several ways that included: increased mental stamina and memory, increased self-confidence, joyful self-expression, emotional exploration, setting and attaining goals, and taking on new challenges. The data gathered from comparing and contrasting the pre- and post
questionnaires and observation rubrics and the immensely supportive evidence elicited from the exit interviews illustrated the mental and emotional benefits of dance.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Goal of Study

As Martha Graham timelessly quoted in her New York times interview, “dance is the hidden language of the soul, of the body” (“Martha Graham Reflects on Dance”). The dance that Graham spoke of takes many forms. Social party dancing, meticulous technical training, experiencing a live dance performance, and participating in a hip-hop cypher were a few examples of dance art. During her 1985 interview, Graham continued, “and it’s partly the language that we don’t want to show.” Through dance, people spoke to convey emotions and narrated stories with their bodies that may not have been communicated verbally. Dancers and audience members alike could move, feel, and think however they were inspired. As Graham alluded, perhaps this was the key to the bountiful benefits of dance: without restrictions and limitations, truly feeling, experiencing, and embodying the art of dance. Dance took over the body and became a cathartic humanizing experience.

It was imperative, particularly for the future of children, that society understood the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of dance on a personal and individual level. As a physical art form, dance had the power to assist with the obesity epidemic and mental health disorders that were plaguing America and its youth. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey reported 20.6% of children in the United States were obese, ages twelve through nineteen. Furthermore, there were “striking racial and ethnic
disparities: 25.8% of Latino children, and 22% of Black children have obesity” (“Childhood Obesity Trends” par. 3). Additionally, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, reported that 6.3 million children ages two through seventeen had anxiety and depression. Seven and one tenth percent reported having anxiety and 3.2% reported having depression (Data and Statistics on Children’s Mental Health par. 3). These statistics drew crucial attention to the health and well-being of youth with the original goal of improving their well-being. One vital purpose of this study was to support the improvement of emotional and physical health in youth through the art of dance.

In order to experience all that dance offered, people had to first dance for themselves in order to embody the power elicited by dance. Eric Jensen spoke to the mental and emotional benefits of dance when he stated that dance, also known as a kinesthetic art form, was a major discipline and that, “the arts promote the understanding and sharing of culture…social skills…promote unity and harmony…[and] enhance cognitive and perceptual skills” (“Teaching With The Brain In Mind” 5).

The researcher proposed that the teenage population would benefit greatly from the powerful effects of dance, as research indicated that young adults struggled greatly with self-confidence, social anxiety, and body image. A National Education Association article reported that 70% of teens said that anxiety and depression were a major problem (Flannery par. 2). Fifty seven percent of teens reported feeling pressure to look good and fitting in socially as top stressors (Flannery par. 10). Every child deserved to experience the power of dance, and as vulnerable and sensitive as adolescents were, the teenage population required the benefits of dance with greater urgency.
The goal of this study was to investigate the effects that dance can have on the mental and emotional health of young adults. The following questions were used to guide the study and its accompanying research:

Q1 In what ways did dance present itself as an integral art form, particularly for young adults?

Q2 What mental and emotional benefits occurred when young adults studied dance?

Q3 Did young adults benefit from dance being more accessible?

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this research study was to assess improvements in mental and emotional health in young adults as a result of participating in dance. Mental and emotional benefits were the focus of this study because the physical benefits of dance are more universally accepted than the lesser-researched benefits of mental and emotional health. The athleticism involved in a typical dance class surpassed any other dance experience. Dance students regularly have benefitted from cardiovascular fitness, strength training, stretching, improving fine and gross motor skills, rhythm, balance, and coordination. All the physical benefits of dance elicited mental and emotional responses, which are also beneficial. Moreover, dancing in an educational setting is a far different experience compared to experiencing dance in social settings.

Dance has taken form in several settings, all of which elicited powerful effects: live performance, parties, clubs, competition, religious ceremonies, and dance classes. In this study, dance took form in organized classes, formally taught by an instructor, in the style of a particular genre, involving technique, choreography, and improvisation. All dance required some degree of physical activity, both personal and social, which involved
a tremendous release of endorphins. This release of hormones in the brain was a catalyst for an emotional response, which is initiated by movement. In this case, the movement was dance. The purpose of the research was to study the emotional responses and their effects in depth in an educational, dance class setting.

**Significance of Study**

The researcher believed that every person, irrespective of other physical traits and demographics, should have the opportunity to experience the power of dance, which was often described as joyful, fun, entertaining, expressive, and healthy. School age children and young adults greatly benefitted from exposure to the art of dance, but the physical, emotional, and mental benefits of dance were poorly communicated and misrepresented in many communities and schools. Of all the arts, dance had the lowest representation in public schools. In fact, as of the 2009-2010 school year, only 12% of the public high schools in the United States offered dance courses (Parsad and Spiegelman 43). That total was even smaller in elementary schools, where only 3% of elementary schools in the U.S. offered dance courses (Parsad and Spiegelman 40).

This study was important because the findings shed light on several of the benefits produced by dance. The findings had the opportunity to benefit and continued to inspire the health and confidence of youth. Exposing more young adults to the powerful art of dance enhanced the quality of their life, especially if they had not yet experienced such a connection in another outlet, such as art, sport, or another extra-curricular activity.

In order for this project to have be deemed effective, it had to grab the attention of contemporary youth. Such a task was not problematic because dance was extremely mainstream. Dance was found throughout numerous facets of recreation and pop culture:
school dances, weddings, parties, private dance studios, dance recitals, dance competitions, and various forms of dance fitness classes had taken society by storm. Entertainment outlets were also flooded by the art of dance: television competition shows, reality shows, movies, YouTube, and social media brands continuously promoted dance.

In a time when the economy was erratic, careers were extremely competitive, and mental health was a hypersensitive subject as it contributed to stability and confidence to succeed in school and the workplace. Young adults were entering college and starting their careers younger and younger because they were able to earn college credits simultaneously alongside their high school diploma. With the pressures that young adults faced, they needed to be able to express themselves effectively. They needed to have positive mental and emotional health experiences and participating in the power of dance was one of those life-changing positive experiences. This thesis study confirmed that dance was effective in bettering mental and emotional health and self-confidence in young adults.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

There are multiple benefits to the art of dance; these benefits are commonly categorized into two realms of wellness: physical and mental. Moreover, the goal of this study was to further breakdown the multifaceted mental benefits of dance while allowing the emotional benefits to exist as their own realm. Eric Jensen, a highly acclaimed educator, researcher, and arts advocate, states that the kinesthetic arts, including dance and theater,

> Provide for our health and emotional expression…may enhance cognition, positive attitudes, and confidence. Ultimately [dance as a kinesthetic art] contribute[s] to the development and enhancement of critical neurobiological systems, including cognition, emotions, immune, circulatory, and perceptual-motor.” (“Arts With The Brain In Mind” 71)

Physical Benefits

While the physical benefits are not the core focus of this study, it is important to call attention to them, as dance is such a physical art form, connecting, and even transcending, the body and mind. Some of the physical benefits of dance include, but are not limited to, improved cardiovascular health, balance, strength, flexibility, coordination and spatial awareness (Lindberg and Budnis par. 6-9). Some professionals say that dance is such great physical fitness, because it incorporates movements on all planes or motion and from all directions. Most daily, pedestrian movement occurs on the sagittal plane, but dance works the body through lateral and rotational planes (Lindberg and Budnis par. 7).
Just as dancing challenges the physical body, increasing the heart rate, burning calories, with an ever-changing center of gravity, dance also challenges the brain.

**Mental Benefits**

In their book, *Thinking with the Dancing Brain*, Sandra Minton and Rima Faber described the mind as doing mental gymnastics while learning complex dance movements. The complexity alluded to contributes to the extremely diverse mental health benefits of dance.

As an advocate for the arts, Jensen clearly identifies the effects of dance on mental health in his book, *Arts With The Brain In Mind*: improved cognitive development, creativity, concept of self, improved learning and competencies, vestibular action, ability to follow direction and instruction, timing and memory, and emotional expression and control (75-80). He mentions “most of the brain is active during physical activity…When athletes achieve excellence in a sport, they are probably using close to 100% of their brain” (72). Most of the brain is working while dancers execute their complex movements: fast decision-making, keen attention, monitored emotions, accessing the past alertness and recognition of surrounding potential problems, creation of immediate solutions, maintaining balance, monitoring facial expression, moving with grace, agility, and coordination, and remember sequencing (Jensen, “Arts With The Brain In Mind” 73). In short, while dancing, the brain is processing extreme multitasking and acting like a flight simulator (Jensen, “Arts With The Brain In Mind” 81).

**Emotional Benefits**

Research argues that emotions, thinking, and learning are all connected. “The classroom and the school provide opportunities for endless emotional experiences, and
students’ brains will be altered by those experiences” (Jensen, “Teaching With The Brain In Mind” 68). Emotions drive attention, create meaning, and have memory pathways (Jensen, “Teaching With The Brain In Mind” 61). This strong, productive combination leads to learning. The brain is far more active and chemically stimulated when emotions are involved. Dopamine and norepinephrine are released during movement and physical activity. These emotional chemicals (hormones and neurotransmitters) enhance long-term learning when administered either before or after learning (Jensen, “Teaching With The Brain In Mind” 79). A frequent theme in dance research is that dance is a “safety valve that releases pent-up emotions, tensions and drives” (Pavitra and Shubrata 107). “The arts transform, so to say, subjective human emotions [into states] leading to internal calm and transcendence from mundane existence” (Pavitra and Shubrata 108). Learning happens as an ending result of these various psychological states.

The more intense the emotional state, the more learning will take place. Eric Jensen suggests this in his book, Teaching With The Brain In Mind (55-6). He believes that teenagers are different and are predisposed to the seek out novelty behaviors. Teens should seek out activities with smaller; more immediate rewards versus activities with larger, deep meaning (31). Though dance choreography can be deep in meaning, movement does offer instant gratification that elicits positive feelings and emotions.

Pavitra states that children are emotionally inept and do not have the mature capacity to express themselves verbally with coherent articulation; their emotions are bottled up, unresolved, tense, and repressed. “Since earliest times…dance and creative movements are known to reach out to the depth of the unconscious aspects of the mind and effectively mobilize the blocked psychic content (109). Pavitra states that the
aesthetic distance physically between the dancer(s) and audience enables both parties to release emotions, channel other emotions and transform their remaining the emotions.

**Self-Confidence and Self-Esteem**

The research accompanying this study unveiled discrepancies amongst major themes in the research about mental health of young adults. It is common for texts to mention self-esteem and self-confidence. However, in some instances, these terms are used interchangeably. It is important to highlight differences within the concepts and research because there is a distinct difference between the two.

How does dance relate to self-confidence? Judith Hanna states that the success and sense of achievement students feel as a result of creating dance gives them self-confidence and motivation to master other challenges in school (xxi). First, self-confidence comes from knowledge, skill, and practice. “The more experience you have, the more confident you will become” (Ellsworth par. 3). Self-confidence also deals with intrinsic trust and the ability to succeed in new challenges, tasks, and opportunities (Ellsworth par. 4). Someone can be confident in various skills, such as dancing, cooking or painting, but still have low self-esteem.

In contrast, self-esteem is how someone feels about themselves and their personal worth. The term “self-esteem” can be synonymous with “self-worth.” It helps to establish how one thinks, feels, and acts (Ellsworth par. 15). It is commonly thought that dance would contribute to positive self-esteem. However, research might be telling us otherwise. Peter Lovatt, a scholarly dance psychologist, has studied that dancers actually have worse self-esteem than non-dancers. He poses a very interesting question: how can dance be good for one’s health and bad for self-esteem at the same time? (Lovatt 12).
As a popular dance psychologist, the theme of self-esteem is very prevalent in Lovatt’s studies. In 2011, Lovatt studied 14,000 people and their dance confidence—that is their self-esteem in dance. Lovatt found that their age and gender significantly contribute to their dance-confidence self-esteem. Lovatt uses two models of self-esteem in the analysis of his findings. The first model is the Competencies Model. In short, the better a person feels about their performance or skill set, the better they will actually be or do.

According to this model, someone’s self-esteem in a particular area of their life will be influenced by how competent (or good) they feel they are at doing something. So with regards to dance-confidence self-esteem, if someone feels that they are a competent dancer then they will have higher dance-confidence self-esteem than someone who feels that they are a less competent dancer. (Lovatt 77)

The second model described by Lovatt is the Reflected Appraisal Model:

According to this model, someone’s self-esteem in a particular area of their life will be influenced by how they think other people view them. So, with regards to dance-confidence self-esteem, if someone feels that other people think they are good at social and recreational dancing then they will have higher dance-confidence self-esteem than someone who believes other people don’t think they are very good at social and recreational dancing. (77)

Ultimately, Lovatt learned that both males and females have generally higher self-esteem as younger teenagers as opposed to those ages 18-22 (78). In women, the pinnacle age for self-esteem is sixteen. According to Lovatt, the lowest point of self-esteem in women is age sixteen and older (79) and the highest point of self-esteem in women is age sixteen and younger (80). This conclusion supports the claim that it is important to introduce dance to teenagers. Their lives and how they value themselves is rapidly changing. The young, transformative generation needs exposure to positive experiences and interactions. “Dancing is not just a physical activity, it is also a social, emotional, and
cognitive activity. The cognitive, thinking, aspect of dance may also contribute to changing a person’s self-esteem” (Lovatt 182).

Self-esteem has a great bearing on the quality of life and practicing dance can greatly affect that. Dance practice is proven to be a powerful method to enhance the tendency to be conscious and present in everyday life and therefore, participants are mindfully centered, emotionally regulated, and cognitively balanced (Muro and Artero 1198). This directly relates to self-esteem, as Muro states, “women who practice dance can improve their attitude toward the self” (1198). This is self-worth. Hanna continues to support dance’s impact on self-esteem:

Individually can improve their self-esteem through dance by feeling the kinesthetic joy of movement, making physical fitness a part of their lives, and feeling a sense of self-empowerment. The achievement comes through the mind-body integration that is dance—making the body respond to the mind’s dictate while being aware of bodily messages. Teachers work toward promoting student self-esteem by focusing on the whole person, not just the “dance” part. (117)

Dance and School-Aged Children

One goal of this study was to investigate the benefits of accessible dance for young adults. This is at the school level. Minton and Faber, co-authors of Thinking with the Dancing Brain, report that there has been a growing interest in kinesthetic learning and dance integration, using movement to teach academic concepts. Neural growth is stimulated and produced by actions of the body, and in turn, this produces greater neural density. Movement can make learning efficient, which is what children in school need. The brain is stimulated and attracted to change and movement. Using movement as a teaching strategy engages the brain and captures the students’ attention and maintains their interest. Movement inherently generates enjoyment. Therefore, the information
learned while moving is easier to acquire and commit to memory when it is connected to a positive emotional state (16).

While using movement to learn skills or academic concepts is highly beneficial, it is also important for students to understand and appreciate dance as an applied art form. Hanna references this in her book, *Dancing to Learn*, where she states that dance does not exist as an isolated entity; it is not independent. Instead, it is embedded in culture and society; it can be academic—as supported above—personal, interpersonal, and offer citizenship. Dance, as an applied art, sets out to develop students personally and make connections to the world at large (116).

Hanna continues to support dance as an all-inclusive applied art form and delves deeper to share its benefits as a strong educational experience. She describes dance education as being designed for students to promote values, cultivate inner strength needed to withstand negative peer pressure, and develop self-acceptance, aiding in fostering personal growth. Students gain self-awareness and positive identity (116). Dance gives everyone the necessary support for personal development, especially youngsters who have trouble at home (118). Dancing, in an educational atmosphere with professional practices, may provide a familial substitute, a safe, supportive sanctuary and sense of social connectedness, a community, togetherness, sharing space and touch, where students are adopting roles they not experience otherwise.

Nationwide, schools offering dance education are able to correlate student success between participating in dance and other data, such as attendance records, test scores, and graduation rates. Some youth at risk of dropping out of school lack the psychological strengths and skills to achieve academic success. Fiske reports in “Champions of
“Change” that “young people who are disengaged from schools and other community institutions are at the greatest risk of failure or harm. “Champions of Change” report found that the arts provided a reason, and sometimes the only reason, for being engaged with school or other organizations. These young people would otherwise be left without access to any community of learners” (ix).

It is reported that participating in dance class reduced aggressive behavior associated with students from a low socioeconomic background (Hanna 120). Maintaining participation in dance classes further improved self-concept and self-efficacy (Hanna 119). Some international school programs are even referring dance as a therapeutic disciplinary intervention (Hanna 125). Dance produces excitement and requires discipline. The many successes achieved in dance “propels students to academic achievement and productive citizenship” (Hanna 120).

The benefits of dance resonate across the various physical, mental, and emotional realms of wellness. Self-confidence and self-esteem, while they are frequently used synonymously, are in fact different and involvement with dance benefits both. Experiencing dance, as an allied art form and in an educational setting, has immense benefits. The specific mental and emotional benefits were studied in great detail as research was analyzed after an original, one-day dance workshop was directed in effort to specifically study these benefits. The following chapters discuss the methodology practiced while executing the study and trends founds within the data.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research project was to investigate the mental and emotional benefits of dance with young adults that are not otherwise exposed to dance due to socio-economic status, access at the school level, and or community resources. This chapter will describe in detail how the researcher designed her study to answer the three essential research questions: In what ways does dance present itself as an integral dance form, particularly for teenagers and young adults? What benefits (mental and emotional) occur when young adults study dance? What life(style) changes can students make to include dance in their lives in order to reap its benefits. This chapter includes details of the research methods and instruments used to execute the documented research study while working to obtain the researcher’s goal.

In order to assess the mental and emotional benefits of dance on young adults and answer the three essential questions of this research, an original, one-day, dance-workshop research event was directed for a local South Florida community. A variety of assessments were designed, serving as pre- and post-data, generating substantial qualitative and quantitative analyses. The data included pre- and post-questionnaires, observational rubrics, and large group exit interviews. This chapter presents how the research project was designed and how data were analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods.
After the researcher determined the essential research questions and the Institutional Review Board approved the study, a one-day research dance workshop format was developed, and research instruments were designed. The researcher submitted a narrative to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Northern Colorado for approval. The IRB Narrative included a brief description of the project’s purpose, participants, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures, data handling procedures, risks, discomforts, and benefits. Sample consent forms and research instruments were also included in the IRB application. The IRB approval letter can be viewed in Appendix A.

**Workshop Site and Community**

The research event was held at Treasure Coast High School in Port Saint Lucie, Florida. Treasure Coast High School is an institutional member of St. Lucie Public Schools in St. Lucie County, Florida, which is made up of Fort Pierce and Port Saint Lucie. At the end of 2018, St. Lucie County was estimated to hold 321,000 residents, where the median household income was $47,132 and the poverty level was 12.8% (Quickfacts). One of five comprehensive public high schools in the district, Treasure Coast High School is a Title 1 school, with 65% of its student body deemed economically disadvantaged (“0411”).

During the 2018-2019 school year, Treasure Coast High School served 2,819 students. Demographics of the high school’s student population were as follows: 67% minority, 103% English Language Learners, and 305 were under the Exceptional Student Education umbrella. The Exceptional Student Education program provides special education and related services for eligible students with disabilities, including, but not
limited to, autism spectrum disorder, deaf and hard of hearing, physically impaired, and language impaired. 1,852 students received free or reduced lunch (School Profile).

**Study Participants**

There was a sizeable range of young adults that volunteered to dance and be part of this study. The exploratory, one-day, community dance workshop event included fifty-nine females and four males, a total of sixty-three dancers. The participants ranged in age from fourteen to twenty-five years old. The sixty-three participants had varying amounts of previous formal dance training. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the breakdown of the ages of the participants and any previous formal training.

![Figure 1: Pre-Questionnaire #1 Participants’ Ages](image1)

![Figure 2: Pre-Questionnaire #3 Participants’ Years of Dance Experience](image2)
The participants were solicited through simple marketing techniques such as verbal presentation in classrooms at local high schools, word-of-mouth, e-mail communication, social media, and printed flyers. The participants did not have to be enrolled at Treasure Coast High School. Although the majority of the participants were enrolled students or alumni, enthusiastic young adults from any area school or community were encouraged to attend.

Additional support personnel were vital to the execution of the workshop event, although, they did not participate in the research study. Five teachers volunteered their time to teach a variety of dance classes. Two student volunteers, who did not participate as dancers in the event, assisted the researcher by facilitating paperwork and organizing consent forms and research instruments. Treasure Coast High School’s administration and the parents of multiple participants were also supportive throughout the process.

**Workshop Format**

Interested dance research participants were sent to a website, The Believe Project, that held all necessary information for the workshop, including registration, which populated in an online form over the course of two months. Registrations were collected online using a Google Form designed by the researcher. Links to the research event’s website, registration forms, and workshop schedule can be found in Appendix E.

Due to the high number of anticipated participants, the researcher learned that there were too many registered dancers to safely fit in one dance studio classroom. The researcher elected to divide the participants into two groups based on age. Thirty-nine dance participants, ages fourteen through seventeen, took class on stage. Twenty-four
dance participants, ages eighteen and older, took class in the dance studio. A total of sixty-three dancers participated in five consecutive dance classes.

The researcher did not teach any of the workshop classes. This allowed the researcher to monitor the event vigilantly and make careful observations throughout the day. Five local dance professionals were invited to instruct the workshop event as voluntary faculty members; however, they were not involved in any of the data collection or research analysis. With the invitation to participate in the workshop event as a faculty member, the researcher shared her goals for the research study. The faculty members taught two classes, one class in each room, in the following genres: modern-jazz fusion, tap, contemporary, and hip hop.

**Research Design and Instrumentation**

The study consisted of qualitative and quantitative research. Four instruments were used to collect data throughout this dance workshop, research event. The instruments utilized were a pre-questionnaire and a post-questionnaire, an observational rubric for guided note-taking, and group exit interview questions. The following sections discuss the research instrumentation in the order they were executed.

Consent forms were a vital and mandatory part of implementing the study. A ‘standard consent form’ was issued and collected for every participant that was over eighteen years of age. A ‘parent consent form’ was issued and collected for every participant that was under 18 years of age. Sample copies of the consent forms can be found in Appendix C.
Pre-Questionnaire

The researcher created an original questionnaire that the participants completed before classes began the morning of the workshop. The pre-questionnaire can be found in Appendix D, Research Instruments. This pre-questionnaire was completed via printed hard copy with hand-written responses or digitally shared with a QR Code, linked to an online Google form. In order to ensure confidentiality, all participants were given code numbers upon initial check-in that were used on both the pre- and post-questionnaires.

The questions in the pre-questionnaire inquired about general demographic characteristics including age, gender, formal dance training, preferred dance genres, interest in dance and the workshop, and their personal goals for the day. In addition, the pre-questionnaire probed for the state of each participant’s mental, emotional, social, and self-confidence awareness. The researcher adapted numerous questions from a Mindtools survey in order to make the questions appropriate for her research objectives (How Self-Confident).

Observation Rubric
Note-Taking Guide

Throughout the workshop, the researcher took notes using an observation rubric. The rubric was created as a guide to keep observations structured and purposeful. A separate rubric was used for each class, which allowed the researcher to reflect independently on each class, while not fusing different elements of the workshop together when looking for details or trends. The Observation Rubric can be viewed in Appendix D, Research Instruments.

The rubric was an adapted artifact from Shenandoah University (Classroom Observation Rubric). The rubric organized observations into two categories: General and
Student. The ‘general’ section prompted for observations about classroom dynamics and energy coming from the teacher. The ‘student’ section focused on student engagement, socialization, and body language. The scale utilized was as follows: superior, excellent, satisfactory, poor—or needs improvement. These terms were used because it is the same terminology used by the Florida Dance Education Organization. To further cultivate growth and transparency, the researcher enforced consistent language, reiterating the expectations of the state-wide dance community.

*Post-Questionnaire*

The researcher used a post-questionnaire at the conclusion of the workshop to gather additional focused data. As with the pre-questionnaire, the post-questionnaire was completed via printed copy, with hand-written responses, or digitally, shared with a QR Code linked to an online Google form.

The post-questionnaire had thirty questions, versus the pre-questionnaire that only had twenty-one. The post-questionnaire requested that the participant restate their purpose and goal for the workshop. It inquired about the success of the goal and how the participant felt after achieving it. The post-questionnaire reiterated many questions from the pre-questionnaire, with slightly different wording, asking for any change or growth in the participant’s response. Finally, the post-questionnaire had the participants reflect on their favorite class from the day and if they would want more community dance opportunities. The post-questionnaire can be found with the Research Instruments in Appendix D.
**Exit Interview**

The exit interviews were facilitated as two large-group, round-table discussions. The researcher prepared nine interview questions. The same nine questions were posed to each group of participants, rather than a private, one-on-one interview. The participants responded to the researcher’s questions, creating dialogue with the researcher. The interviews were video recorded and used for transcription and data analysis. This allowed the researcher to listen, reflect upon, and document trends amongst the participants’ responses.

The interviews were especially vital for the researcher. Up to this point, the researcher had not been involved in any communication with the participants. Pre- and post- data was collected with the questionnaires, and the researcher observed from the perimeter of the classrooms, silently, and removed from the intimate experience happening within the dance classes. None of which directly involved the researcher and the participants communicating. The interviews allowed the researcher to exchange energized dialogue with the participants, sharing the experiences of the dancers. The researcher was able to connect with the participants in a different role, as a fellow dancer rather than a stark researcher. During the interview, the participating dancers shared their triumphs and tribulations throughout the classes. The accompanying research instruments were not designed for the energized outcomes that the exit interview produced. The exit interviews were invaluable beyond the other instruments because of the extended responses provided by the participants. A copy of the interview questions can be found accompanying the other research instruments in Appendix D.
Data Analysis

The research instruments were proficient in generating data that was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. The observation rubric and exit interview questions were analyzed using qualitative and descriptive methods. The pre- and post-questionnaires had a fusion of question types within them subsequently causing the researcher to analyze them with mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative analysis.

Qualitative Analysis

The researcher’s qualitative analysis was based on responses to open-ended questions in the pre- and post-questionnaires, notes accumulated from the observation rubrics, and participants’ responses during the exit interviews. Each research instrument was carefully read, reflected on, and analyzed for common themes or trends. Strong quoted feedback, capturing authentic, raw feelings at the conclusion of a day of dance, was noted as supporting or denouncing the researcher’s original questions and goals. The strong trends that emerged as a result from this qualitative analysis are discussed in the next chapter.

Quantitative Analysis

Originally, the pre- and post-questionnaires were collected via mixed media, some on paper and some digitally. As the data analysis process commenced, the researcher concluded that all of the questionnaires should have been processed digitally. The researcher decided to input all of the completed questionnaire responses into a Google Form. The Google Form immediately generated the quantitative data, creating bar graphs and pie charts of the information pulled from the respective questions.
There were several strict questions in the pre-questionnaire that isolated important information creating baseline data percentages for specific topics, such as benefits of dance, self-confidence, memory, positivity, and goal acquisition. The same specific questions were asked in the post-questionnaire. By following up with the same questions, the researcher was able to accumulate conclusive data showing change over time and patterns in specific trends aligned with the essential research questions. The transparency of these questions allowed the researcher to draw clear, quick conclusions within the scope of the one-day dance workshop. The full scope and accompaniment of outcomes and trends learned as a result of this study will be presented in the discussion chapter.
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this one-day dance workshop research event was to learn how the mental and emotional health of young adults is affected by dance. This qualitative and quantitative study was created to answer the three essential research questions:

Q1 In what ways does dance present itself as an integral art form, particularly for young adults?

Q2 What mental and emotional benefits occur when young adults study dance?

Q3 Will young adults benefit from dance being more accessible?

Chapter four discusses the trends discovered from the outcomes of the research instrumentation, which included pre- and post-questionnaires, class observations, and exit interviews. Throughout the discussion chapter, participants between the ages of fourteen and seventeen, who took class on the stage, will be referred to as group A. The participants who were eighteen and older, who took class in the dance studio classroom, will be referred to as group B. In addition, students were assigned a code number. When referencing specific participants, they will be called “Student”, followed by their designated code number.

Negative Characteristics of Dance

The mental and emotional benefits of dance were presented as goals of the study. The development and change over time of said benefits were studied in great detail.
Therefore, it was best to discuss the negative characteristics of dance first in order to elaborate on baseline trends revealed by the participants.

The negative aspects of being exposed to dance were discovered as the researcher spoke with the participants during the exit interview. The resounding conclusion was that the participants were nervous and self-conscious while taking the workshop dance classes. These feelings came up as the participants revealed their expectations for the dance workshop event. The dancers in group A were particularly nervous to take classes from established choreographers that they had not worked with before. This nervousness extended into group B as well. When asked if they were nervous about the workshop, the overwhelming majority of the group said “yes” and responded with emphatic body language and facial expressions.

The study participants did experience anxiety in preparation for the event. Although dance could be used to treat anxiety, therapeutic dance was not the focus of this study. The data suggested that group A was nervous to be introduced to new genres of dance. The participants stated in their questionnaires that they felt uncomfortable. It was found that those reported feelings were temporary. Student #50 classified himself as a hip-hop dancer and stated in the exit interview that he was nervous to take contemporary classes because the type of movement was new to him. In the end, he enjoyed the class even though he did not expect to. Student #5 mentioned that she was nervous for the workshop because she knew she was expected to take all five of the classes and was not certain which classes she was truly comfortable experiencing:

I say I was nervous because [the researcher] kept coming back and forth looking at us. I already knew [the researcher] had expectations for us to take all of the classes. [The researcher] came up to me and I told her, ‘I don’t think tap is for me.
It doesn’t fit me.’ What made me nervous was [the researcher] coming in and watching us.

Student #24 stated similar nervous feelings about tap:

I feel it was nerve-racking because it was something I’d never done before, as in tap. Coming into it I was like, I don’t think I’m going to like this, I don’t know anything about tap. So, I ended up learning something new and trying it, instead of being like, eh, I don’t want to try it.

Student #50, Student #5, and Student #24 were direct examples of the connection between nervousness and expectations.

The researcher used an observation rubric to track significant details as she watched each class. The nervousness towards various genres of dance were also present in the observation rubric. She heard students commenting: “Tap is not for me” (Student #24) and “My feet hurt” (Student #56). The common fear of the unknown continued into a contemporary class. The researcher observed that the participants were fearful of new movement. It was clear they were uncomfortable. One of the contemporary teachers presented group B with background information as to why she chose particular movement. She welcomed the participants to input variations of the assigned movement and add personalization of the movement she presented. It was clear to the researcher that the openness of the teacher and her connection established between the participants and movement helped the participants feel more at ease with their experience in her class, settling nerves, and increasing confidence.

In some classes, the researcher noted poor and satisfactory levels of confidence and engagement. This was based on body language observations and participant arrangement within the dance space. It seemed as though the nervous participants were disengaged and placed themselves in the back of the classes. During the tap class, the
teacher noticed the students in the back of the class were not performing and seemed disengaged. She decided to rotate the lines. The step that the teacher and participants were working on got much better. The researcher observed that the tap teacher worked directly with students that did not understand how to do a step. This greatly increased the level of engagement and confidence shown by the participants throughout the tap class. The researcher observed poor levels of engagement and confidence at the beginning of the class. By the end, the researcher moved the confidence, engagement, classroom dynamics, and students taking initiative score to excellent.

Figure 3: Students’ Body Language is Appropriate

Figure 4: Students’ Body Language is Confident
Self-Consciousness

In keeping with the theme of the negative characteristics of dance, the exit interview inquired about these characteristics of dance separately, nervousness versus self-consciousness. It is important to maintain the distinction between the two negative aspects of the non-benefits of dance. Self-consciousness is the emotions “affected by how we see ourselves and how we think others perceive us. They include emotions like pride, jealousy, and embarrassment” (Gotter and Legg par. 1). Participants in both student groups were self-conscious about taking the dance workshop classes. Student #28 said “To meet new people and to dance in front of them is nerve-racking.” Student #15 was nervous and self-conscious about dancing in front more advanced students:

It was very nerve-racking because they were all doing so well, and I’m just over here looking all crazy. Trying to keep up. I felt self-conscious because they were catching on so quick, and I was going so slow. Everyone was going so much faster than me.

The participants used the two emotionally driven words, nervousness and self-consciousness, interchangeably. The researcher was sure to distinguish between the two as she analyzed her data and associated the trends.

The researcher observed an interesting distinction between the two groups of participants and the nature of their comments about self-consciousness. The participants who commented on self-consciousness in group B were not so concerned about their classmates and the peripheral judgment. This was the primary concern found in group A. Moreover, group B was concerned how their bodies would respond to the volume of dancing being asked of them. It is important to note that Student #28 and #15, quoted previously in the above paragraph, were in group A, the younger teenage group. Student #52, in group B, was self-conscious about picking up choreography fast from new
teachers and styles, “You’re taking someone else’s class, it’s intimidating, and it brings you down if you don’t pick it up.”

In one of the contemporary classes, the teacher was incorporating multiple jumps, hops, leaps, and level changes as transitions throughout her choreography. Student #14 was self-conscious about her weight; she felt as though she could not get as much height throughout the combination compared to the teacher. Another participant, Student #4, also in group B, disclosed that she was self-conscious about her body because she had not danced since high school and just had a baby girl four months before the workshop.

The self-consciousness trend was evident in two subthemes: students were feeling external judgment coming from their peers and students were also internally placing judgment on themselves. The subthemes came to a head when Student #58 reflected:

I was also thinking self-consciously when it came to the hip hop and the contemporary mostly because the instructor. She was really well-known and had a lot of experience, just as the other one was as well [in reference to the hip hop and contemporary teachers], trying to keep up with everybody else at the same time, and looking good, it made you wonder and aware what was going on around me.

As the researcher continued transitioning into the subsequent parts of the exit interview, the participants continued to reconcile their initial self-conscious, nervous feelings regarding the disadvantageous of participating in dance. Student #50 reflected on advice from one of the teachers by saying, “If you don’t try and do it, and you are thinking about how you look and you look bad, then you’re going to look worse than you think. So, it made me think. Let me actually go full out, and I looked better than I thought I did.” In the exit interview, Student #5 said she could have done better but she was too shy—nervous—and concerned about how she looked—self-conscious—instead of being vulnerable and actually putting forth a full effort.
The negative characteristics of dance reigned briefly, but the nervousness and self-consciousness did not last long. The participants’ feelings presented themselves leading up to the event, but only throughout the morning preparations. Once class started, Student #1 confirmed that he was only nervous for about five minutes. His nervousness faded once everyone’s movement in class started and he adjusted to the participants and faculty. It was evident to the researcher that group A was drastically more nervous and self-conscious about the entire event. In this regard, their difficulties were different compared to group B. Group A was nervous and self-conscious about how they would look when engaging with different, new genres of dance with their peers. Group B was nervous and self-conscious about how their physical bodies and mental stamina would respond to the demands of a full day of dancing, especially from professionals they had not danced with prior to this event. The researcher found that the fear of these unknown dance variables weighed heavily on both groups of participants. It will be discussed that the participants’ negative feelings did not discourage them for long.

Mental Health

Although the benefits from the art of dance are vast, it was a specific goal of this research study to target the mental health benefits of dance for young adults. “Mental health deals with issues that relate to the mind or brain; whereas, emotional health deals with matters of the heart” (“Emotional Health vs. Mental Health”). This chapter continues to discuss the specific themes found throughout the research as they relate to the mental and emotional benefits of dance, including but not limited to memory, stress-relief, and self-confidence. This chapter also presents trends that changed over time showing positive growth that was made throughout the one-day dance workshop event.
Benefits of Dance

Throughout the workshop event, the researcher collected data measuring the benefits of dance on young adults. The common trends from this research found that dance helps young adults with their mental health, including information retention, stress relief, and improved self-confidence. The pre-questionnaire asked the participants general questions about the reasons why they dance, if they benefit physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially from dance, and about goals and memory. The post-questionnaire followed up on the same questions and asked if the participants’ experiences at the workshop affected the answers. The post-questionnaire asked about goals, being able to recall combinations learned in class, positivity, and energy after the event ended.

The Red Oak Recovery Center in Leicester, North Carolina, described mental health as dealing with behaviors of the brain and related problems that typically develop as a result of a chemical imbalance of the brain. The pre-questionnaire asked why participants chose to dance, and they responded with several answers that related to the topic of mental health. The answers from the related topic of mental health in the pre-questionnaire, dealing with brain and or behaviors, and why participants chose to dance are listed in Table 1.

Student #14 spoke on the powerful stress-relieving benefit of dance. She compared dance to medicine, like a remedy, solving anxieties, and stated “dancing covers up things that would normally stress me. I feel really good; I feel beautiful.” Student #30 reflected on stressful, bad days by saying, “I’ll be having a bad day, and I immediately start to smile, and my day just flips around completely.” Student #64 referenced using
dance as a cleanser for her mind and soul, stating, “after hitting the dance floor, I am ready to go on, and build on life.”
Table 1: Pre-Questionnaire #5 Mental Health Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code #</th>
<th>Responses Specific to Mental Health Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>It’s a safe place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>I dance to feel happier and free from my other school and mental stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Dance is a limitless form of self-expression. Growing up as a shy kid, acting and dancing gave me the chance to express myself in a way that I wasn’t always able to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dance is an outlet for me. No matter what is going in life, I always have a place to let my emotions out and feel better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Dance is my escape from life. It helps me both physically and mentally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Dance is a way to express myself and it is a stress reliever.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I dance because I have trouble verbally expressing how I feel. Dancing makes me feel free and like myself. It helps with my anxiety because sometimes it’s a lot. I love dance, my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Because I love life; gateway (getaway); makes me feel good; best exercise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>I dance because it is stress relieving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>I dance because I have trouble verbally expressing how I feel. Dancing makes me feel free and like myself. It helps with my anxiety because sometimes it’s a lot. I love dance my life.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Emotional Health**

*Benefits of Dance*

The goal of the workshop event also targeted the emotional benefits of dance, seeking to learn why dance makes people feel good. The sixty-three research participants
were very passionate about this topic. The researcher and the participants used the same research instruments to gather data. The pre-questionnaire inquired about why the participants chose to dance. Several of their responses related to emotional health, as well as emotions they feel while they dance and as a result of their dancing. Their responses are organized below in Table 4.2.
## Table 2: Pre-Questionnaire #5 Emotional Health Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code #</th>
<th>Responses Specific To Emotional Health Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I love to express myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I dance to express my emotions through movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>It’s like an outlet for me and I really enjoy dancing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>It’s really fun and it keeps me energized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dance is an outlet for me. No matter what is going in life I always have a place to let my emotions out and feel better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I dance because it makes me feel good and I can move freely and really express how I feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I dance to express the emotions that I have built up. Whether it be at a dance club, in a studio, or teaching a class, it helps to express the feelings I am feeling at that movement in my life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Express creativity and have fun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Dance makes me happy and it teaches me to challenge myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I dance because it allows me to express myself like nothing in this world can do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>I dance because it frees me from whatever I may be feeling; I can pour out my emotions and be myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>I dance because it’s fun and is a way to escape from problems while having a good time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Dancing is me. It’s the best way for me to express myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Dance is life. I love to express myself and dance is the avenue I choose to express myself through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Express myself in ways words can’t.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are reoccurring words in the quoted selections from Table 2 that created themes amongst the participants’ responses that included: expression, fun, free, creativity, and good. Of the sixteen responses listed in Table 2, eight, or fifty percent, mention the word “express” or “expression”. According to Merriam-Webster’s dictionary, *expression* is an act, process, or instance of representing in a medium; something that manifests, embodies, or symbolizes something else; a mode, means, or use of significant representation or symbolism; the quality or fact of being expressive. The participants’ reoccurring use of the word expression is particularly appropriate when the expression of dance is comparable against the word’s definition. The participants represent themselves and what they were feeling through the medium of dance. Their feelings and emotions manifest and are embodied through “something else,” being dance. The participants’ emotions are significant and represented symbolically through the form of dance.

*Powerful Expression*

In the exit interview, the researcher asked the participants, “Why do you think dance is so powerful?” Their responses supported the goal of the thesis study, illuminating the emotional benefits of dance. Student #48, articulated the theme very clearly, stating, “I feel like it’s a way to express yourself, basically how you’re feeling; it’s like speaking through dance.” Student #51 spoke about her relationship with dance, saying, “I feel like when you dance you get to show whatever emotion you’re feeling. If you’re happy or sad, you can show that through your dancing.” Student #56’s perception immediately connected to #51’s statement, saying, “you can feel the energy around you and through people.”
Expression remained a significant theme throughout the entire research event. It became synonymous with other thematic words, such as feeling and freedom. Student #24 spoke of dance being a feeling:

I feel like dance is more of a feeling, rather than having to know [certain information]. Both of the contemporary teachers mentioned [to us during class] that dance is a feeling and what you make it.

Student #50 continued with the theme of powerful expression. With Student #63, they both spoke about expressing to the public and experiencing dance as a more global, powerful form of expression.

I feel that dance is powerful because it’s a way to express yourself in a way that you don’t how to with words. For a performance, the dance I did, I posted it on Instagram; it was a meaningful dance to me. A lot of people saw where I was coming from through that dance. I don’t really express myself, how I feel, I used that dance to be loud and a lot of people understand me in that way.

Student #63 said,

I feel like when I dance, no one can judge me by the way I dance. You can be walking, and someone could say, ugh why does she walk like that in public, but when I’m dancing you can’t tell me how to dance because I have to put my own spice into it.

The participant responses transcended the goal of the research study as they experienced the deep emotional benefits of dance. They expressed themselves in ways that words cannot and in ways they may have never experienced otherwise. Through expressing themselves, it was observed that the participants connected with themselves on an intrapersonal level, with classmates, and with the powerful art of dance. This connection created a joyful energy that allowed the participants to thoroughly enjoy the process. The themes within the emotional benefits of dance transitioned from powerful expression to energizing fun.
Energizing Fun

The participants were vividly energized throughout the entire workshop and seemed to have endless fun in all of the workshop classes. This was observed through their persistent energy and passionate exchanges of movement and conversation. The participants ended their day physically and mentally exhausted, but also cognitively energized, and nevertheless, yearning for more of what dance has to offer. Student #41 shared her passion cognitively:

Being in the environment, being in the space with everybody, even though we were tired, we all fed off of each other’s energy and the stamina we brought, we see someone else that’s pushing themselves, so even if we’re not getting it 100%, you’re still ready to go. Some of us don’t get to dance like for ourselves like this all the time, in an engaging class, especially in Port St. Lucie.

Another participant, #49, threw her hands up during the Exit Interview and described dance as being a catalyst, an initiator. She exclaimed, “It’s fun! ...dance is like a drive. I push myself. I need to do this, this, and that, just so I can get to dance practice and work, work, work! It’s fun, like, it’s energy, I just love it, I just love it!”

The post-questionnaire asked the participants to reflect on how they felt at the end of the workshop after achieving their goals. Eligible responses were: “I feel great,” “I feel okay,” “I feel satisfied,” “I want to take more dance classes,” “I want to continue learning about dance and how it makes me feel,” and “I feel confident.” Figure 3 illustrates the various responses about how the participants felt at the conclusion of the dance workshop. Twenty-five participants responded saying they felt great.
The subsequent question on the post-questionnaire asked why they felt this way after the workshop. Several responses related to the aforementioned question and responses regarding the reason why the participants choose to dance. The compilation of responses can be found in Table 3.
Table 3: Post Questionnaire #6 Responses Specific to Expression and Energy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code #</th>
<th>Responses Specific To Why Participants Felt Energized, Confident, Inspired</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Dancing makes me feel happy and watching other people put their own flavor into their dancing makes me wanna become better and learn from others and dance more.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>I feel energized and I expressed myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Because I love the way it makes me feel and I was never confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Because I want to keep dancing for me and not just everyone else. Plus I feel confident today.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Because I feel amazing after dancing and energized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I feel refreshed. Rejuvenated. Wanting more but grateful for the day and opportunity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Because everyone was confident and pushed you to do your best.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>There were times I felt discouraged and lost (upset), but when I got it, I felt better about myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>The energy and motivation you can get from dancing is something that you can only experience in one way or another. Dance is dance, and it doesn’t matter if you’re good or not. I was just able to dance.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student #44’s response personified the previous two questions with her response, “I felt a sense of confidence that my life took away from me for a while. It brought me back to old memories of doing something that I knew I was good at and was good for me physically and emotionally.” Although her statement mentions benefits that the study qualified as mental health benefits, she was emotionally charged. This participant’s response signaled a nostalgic feeling, an emotional memory stimulated by the senses that embodied pleasant, charming memories. The memories of dance brought her back to a
place during which she was confident and strong, both physically and emotionally. This example aligns with the highlighted research themes and goals.

Evidence from Student #44, and other participants would suggest that dance is powerful. Many experienced emotions triggered by dance that enhance neural activity and stimulated confidence, memory, and joy, and relieved stress. Multiple trends were discussed and displayed including mental health, emotional health, stress relief, memory, confidence, expression, and joy. The power of dance was further evident as the researcher and the participants experienced changes over the course of the day. The changes were aligned with themes already presented.

**Change Over Time**

The research study was successful in measuring trends that showed change over time in regard to mental and emotional health topics, such as stress relief, memory, alertness, focus, and self-confidence. Figure 4 shows the baseline data from two pre-questionnaire mental health questions before the workshop commenced.

At the end of the workshop, participants were asked to complete a post-questionnaire. The questions in the post-questionnaire were designed to follow up on the research goals. This pattern followed suit in each of the trends and are discussed accordingly: mental and emotional health, goals, and self-confidence. The eighth question in the post-questionnaire asked if the participant benefitted mentally from dance throughout the day. Question #13 inquired if the participant thought he/she had a good memory during the classes. Figures 6 and 7 illustrate the participants’ responses and change over time.
Mental and Emotional Health

Pre-Questionnaire
Does dance benefit you mentally (memory, focus, alertness, etc.)

- Pre-Questionnaire: 96.7%
- Post-Questionnaire: 88.9%

Post-Questionnaire
Did you benefit mentally from dance today?

- Pre-Questionnaire: 9.3%
- Post-Questionnaire: 14.8%

Figure 6: Mental Health Change Over Time

Pre-Questionnaire
Does dance benefit you emotionally?

- Pre-Questionnaire: 93.4%
- Post-Questionnaire: 83.3%

Post-Questionnaire
Did you benefit emotionally from dance today?

- Pre-Questionnaire: 6%
- Post-Questionnaire: 16.8%

Figure 7: Emotional Health Change Over Time

The figures above present that the participants did not show a positive gain in general mental or emotional health during the one-day dance workshop. However, they did show change over time in other aspects that contribute to mental and emotional health, such as memory stress relief, and self-confidence. 9.4% of participants showed change in how they view their memory skills. 98.1% of the participants believed they
could recall the combinations learned during the workshop classes. Data shows participants stated that one major reason for choosing to dance was to relieve stress. Dancing to relieve stress was mentioned thirty-two times throughout the pre- and post-questionnaires and the exit interviews. The change over time for self-confidence is discussed in more detail in subsequent pages.

Figure 8: Memory Change Over Time

Participants were also very excited for the opportunity to learn new dance techniques, styles, and choreography during the workshop. In the pre-questionnaire, participants were asked what their goals were for the day of dance classes. Thirty participants responded with enthusiastic remarks pertaining to learning. The table below highlights the spectrum of responses in regard to the mental benefits of learning dance.
Table 4: Participants Goals about Mental Health and Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Code #</th>
<th>Goal Responses Specific To Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Learn things I wouldn’t try or attempt on my own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>To learn at a faster space and to practice musicality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>To learn and understand new technique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To grasp more info on the different styles of dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>To improve myself and learn something new</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Goals

At the end of the event, in the post-questionnaire, participants were asked if they achieved their goals and although the goals ranged in topic, the majority of participants mentioned their goal(s) were centered around learning new information about dance. In the exit interview, Student #58 reflected on learning when she said,

I feel like you always come out learning something from it. No matter your experience or background, you are always learning new techniques, things that can break your boundaries, how you can push yourself. That’s what makes it so powerful because knowledge is power. It keeps pushing me forward.

The post-questionnaire data showed the goals were achieved by 85.2% of the 62.3% of participants that reported they had goals. The remaining 14.8% were in partial agreement for various reasons: participants felt rushed in the learning process, that classes were not long enough, they juggled back and forth with confidence, and they were stressed. Figure 7 illustrates the increase of goals attained over the course of the event.
Moreover, participants even acknowledged that, although they did not have specific goals at the start of the day while completing the pre-questionnaire, their expectations were met. Their responses to the opened-ended questions in the post-questionnaire stated they had an extremely enjoyable time. Some participants did not even realize they had goals until the end of the day when it was time to reflect. In the pre-questionnaire, Student #30 responded, when asked if she had any goals, “I’m not sure; I will figure it out along the way.” At the end of the day, she said the following when asked if she achieved her goals: “I did not have any goals, but I feel that I made progress.” That simple, yet noticeable achievement for Student #30 is the essence of capturing progressive change over time as a result of dance and its mental benefits.

The construction and attainment of goals contributes to the overall positive effect of dance and mental health. Carol Dweck, PhD., writes about mindsets and learners versus non-learners: “Everyone is born with an intense drive to learn…Infants…and children. They never decide it’s too hard or not worth the effort. [They] don’t worry
about making mistakes or humiliating themselves…They just barge forward,” (16).

Dweck’s research correlates directly with the participants’ desire to learn as much as they can from the research event. The participants that set goals for themselves were acting on a natural instinct that contributed to their growth mindset and feelings of success. Student #50 related his mentality to his learning, “I felt it was easier keeping an open mind.

Keeping an open mind helped me be calm and actually enjoy it and see what I can learn from it.” Table 5 lists questions from the pre- and post-questionnaire that reference Dweck’s growth mindset.

Table 5: Growth Mindset Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do/did you keep trying even after others give up?</td>
<td>93.4% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>90.7% (Yes)</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you set goals, do/did you achieve them?</td>
<td>80.3% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>81.5% (Very Often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>+1.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing success early when learning something is/was important. If not, will/did you continue?</td>
<td>83.6% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>79.6% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When you overcome confusion or an obstacle, do/did you think about the lessons learned?</td>
<td>78.6% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>83.3% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>+4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do/did you believe if you work hard, you will/would achieve your goals?</td>
<td>98.4% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>94.4% (Very often &amp; Often)</td>
<td>-4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“People in a growth mindset don’t just seek challenge, they thrive on it. The bigger the challenge, the more they stretch” (Dweck 22). The participants said in their pre-questionnaires that they registered for the event because they wanted to learn and grow. Although there is lagging data trends, the data strongly shows that they thrived and stretched themselves and engaged with the challenge.

**Self-Confidence**

Stress and poor self-confidence can have a large negative impact on learning. Student #42 mentioned similar frustrations in her post-questionnaire, “My biggest obstacle was my mind. I often got inside my own head. My mind was an obstacle because I did not have a lot of experience and messed up. Sometimes I would compare myself to others’ abilities.” The comparison of one’s self to others is extremely prominent in dance. This can be very detrimental to mental and emotional health. However, with proper exposure and healthy environments, dance can assist in the improvement of self-confidence. The one-day dance workshop capitalized greatly on self-confidence. As the research shows, the participants greatly benefited.

Before the workshop began, less than half of the participants reported having high self-confidence. This was alluded to in the Negative Characteristics of Dance section earlier in the Discussion chapter. At the conclusion of the workshop, 75.9% of participants reported “definitely” and “yes” to feeling more positive and self-confident after a day of dancing. Only one participant responded impartially or negatively. Student #42 spoke specifically to the power of dance and growing self-confidence when she said,

For me personally, dance is really powerful. It has helped me. I probably wouldn’t do a lot of things socially sometimes. Dance is the one thing that I can do. And I am not the best dancer by far, but it pushes me, especially today, to try even harder, despite what I think and what people would think of me.
Student #64 said she did not expect to push herself so intensely throughout the day.

Lastly, Student #40 commented on social benefits of dance and how they contribute to her learning and self-confidence:

Dance helped me get out of trouble a lot growing up. Dance made me feel about going to school. I’m going to understand a dance combination and it’s going to make me feel good about myself. But if I go to a math class, I’m going to get yelled and sit there for hour and not know what to do. Dance is that one thing that clicks.

The pre- and post-questionnaires used multiple questions to gather information about self-confidence. Figure 10 illustrates the increase of self-confidence the participants experienced throughout the day. Table 6 outlines the trends found in increased self-confidence. The change over time was calculated with the pre-questionnaire results contrasted against the post-questionnaire results. The positive increase of self-confidence and related changes over time greatly supported the researcher’s goals, studying how dance effects mental health and self-confidence during a one-day dance workshop event.

Figure 10: Self-Confidence Change Over Time
Table 6: Self-Confidence Changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Pre-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Post-Questionnaire</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you consider yourself to have good self-confidence?</td>
<td>45.9 % (Yes)</td>
<td>50% (Yes)</td>
<td>+ 4.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you positive, energized, and confident?</td>
<td>90.2% (Yes)</td>
<td>75.9% (Definitely/Yes)</td>
<td>- 14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you keep trying, even after others give up?</td>
<td>50.8% (Very often)</td>
<td>90.7% (Yes)</td>
<td>+ 39.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiencing success early when learning something is important. If not, will you continue?</td>
<td>47.5% (Yes)</td>
<td>79.6% (Very often/Often)</td>
<td>+ 32.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How you do you feel about the goals you achieved today?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>38.9% (I feel confident)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do your experiences from today affect your answers?</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>63% (Yes)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The changes in self-confidence were also noticed by the researcher as she observed the classes. In her observation notes, the researcher made fifteen mentions of change in confidence levels throughout the day of dance workshop classes. More specifically, the researcher noticed a greater shift in participant confidence (positive classroom energy, assertiveness, and body language) when the faculty member added music to the current step or combination. This was specifically noticed in the tap, hip hop and modern-jazz fusion classes. The boost in the learning leads to success, thus intensifying participants self-confidence.
Accessibility of Dance

As of 2010, 12% of public schools in the country included dance in their course offerings at the high school level (Parsad and Spiegelman 43). That is considerably low compared to the high percentage of secondary music and art programs offered throughout the country. As of 2010, 91% of high schools offered music and 89% of high schools offered visual arts (Parsad and Spiegelman 9). The need for more dance accessibility at the public-school level was proven throughout the dance workshop directed by the researcher. It was part of the researcher’s goal to prove the necessity of dance to be more accessible for young adults, especially in the Treasure Coast region of South Florida.

When asked if they would like to see more dance opportunities available within the community, the participants replied with resounding, sincere affirmation during the exit interview. Everyone in both participant groups said, “Yes,” followed by “Please, every two weeks.” On the post-questionnaire, only two participants replied stating they were impartial. The remaining 96.3% of participants stated that they positively wanted more dance opportunities available for young adults. Student #47 called the workshop “an eyeopener. Every speech that every teacher said was an eye opener. Like wow, this is real.” Student #41 echoed the previous sentiment by saying, “Some of us are teachers, or taking dance at the college, or whatever, but it is still different for us to be able to do an engaging class, especially in Port Saint Lucie; there is not that much.” Student #47 replied with a personal comment, after which an overwhelming number of participants vocally agreed with her,

I would like for you [the researcher] to do more of these [workshops], because after we finished the workshops, I told [my friend], this was really fun, I wished we could do this a lot and take more classes. Sometimes I can’t because I don’t have the money. You have to pay a lot for dance classes. And this was free. And
that’s why I came. And that’s why I would appreciate if you could do more stuff like this.

Student #24 supported Student #47 in terms of her views regarding financial commitments and dance affordability.

When you dance at a studio…it is so much money…and sometimes people don’t have that. Like, I didn’t have it, and that’s part of a reason why I stopped dancing at a studio. You get more opportunities dancing [elsewhere]. You grow and learn when you have a different variety rather than it just being straight something that you always know.

Student #16 warmly concluded when she said, “it was really beneficial, and I would want to see more stuff like this.”

![Figure 11: Post-Questionnaire #29 More Community Dance Opportunities](image)

The exit interview was very conclusive in learning how deeply the participants appreciated and benefited from the dance workshop. The post-questionnaire gathered further conclusive evidence to solidify the participants’ feelings at the end of the research event. This is displayed in figure 12 and figure 13. Post-questionnaire item #28 exemplifies the essential research questions for the entire workshop research event. When asked if they would like to keep dance in their lives on a more regular basis, the majority of participants replied “yes, for multiple reasons”. It is important to note that participants were allowed to select more than one answer. The “multiple” reasons referred to the options listed by the researcher, two of which aligned with the essential research
questions: yes, for mental benefits, or yes, for emotional benefits. One hundred percent of participants acknowledged that they would like to keep dance in their life for various reasons, including mental and emotional benefits. 94.4% of participants responded that they would attend another dance workshop in the future.

![Figure 12: Post-Questionnaire #28 Desire for Keeping Dance More Regular in Life](image)

![Figure 13: Post-Questionnaire #30 Attend Dance Workshop Again](image)

**Dance as a Universal Language**

It has been stated around the globe and throughout the decades that dance is a universal language. No matter the nationally spoken language or socioeconomic status, dance transcends all barriers and connects individuals on a myriad of levels. In its purist form, dance can do no harm. The participants in a one-day dance workshop research event became a testament to such an ageless passion. Through her study, the researcher
found tremendous support for her goal of studying the influence dance can have on mental and emotional health and self-confidence.

In the beginning, the participants had anticipatory feelings of nervousness and self-consciousness. These feelings proved to be fleeting as those moments of insecurities left them nearly as soon as their feet hit the dance floor. Participants mentioned they were nervous to dance with strangers, afraid of judgment from classmates, and nervous about learning styles that they had never been introduced to before. Student #58 spoke about being very aware of her surroundings because the teachers were prominent in the dance industry. She also struggled with trying to keep up with her classmates, while still looking good which was very overwhelming and awakening.

The participants experienced a variety of emotions throughout the day. Their mental stamina was challenged in ways that the participants did not know they could even deal with. Several participants mentioned specific classes were challenging, such as tap and lyrical dance. However, throughout all the adversity, nerves, self-doubt, stress of new choreography and new faces, the participants persevered. One of the contemporary lyrical classes proved to be challenging, yet prosperous.

During the lyrical class, the researcher noted the lyrical teacher was emphasizing the beauty of the differences among the participants and their various interpretations of their movement. As a whole, the participants were struggling connecting to the choreographed phrase work, however the teacher was not noticeably frustrated by the challenge. She was helping the students embrace their differences and allowing them to adopt the movement to fit their body however it seemed natural for them. She did not want the movement to be a mere extension of herself; she wanted the dancers to truly
embrace their individuality and explore new discoveries within her choreography. The teacher wanted this exploration to be authentic so it would inspire other participants to move freely. In doing so, the entire class of dancers embraced the challenge and was inspired by others. Ultimately, the participants reported success with the lyrical class even though it was an arduous learning process, during which understanding relationships had to be built and dance confidence had to emerge while egos were tempered.

As the day concluded, the participants were energized, inspired, and confident. They wanted to keep dance a part of their lives, in whatever means necessary. Student #37 said, “Throughout the day I felt more inspired because of all the classes and learning new things you feel more inspired to keep going.” Student #50 was reminded of what dancing really was and the day allowed him to experience the joy and power of dance more than he did in his recent past. Student #39 seemingly danced in her seat when she said, “I feel like dance is a universal language. No matter what you’re doing, you’re going to be connected to someone. Someone will be like, Wow, I understand, I get it.”

The one-day, dance workshop, research event studied the mental and emotional benefits of dance. Pre- and post-questionnaires, researcher observations, and exit interview reflections were studied immensely. In doing so, the researcher found several themes and trends characterizing the data. Select negative characteristics, nervousness and self-consciousness, also emerged as resulting trends in the data analysis. The impact of the non-benefits of dance did not exist as a challenge for long. The mental and emotional benefits of dance prevailed significantly. Mental and emotional health and their counterparts—self-confidence, memory, and goal achievement—all showed change over time. The joy of self-expression was especially powerful during the one-day dance
workshop. The power of dance was confirmed to benefit the mental and emotional health
and self-confidence in young adult participants.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

An original, one-day dance workshop event was designed as a research study to identify the powerful benefits of dance and how these benefits impact young adults. The concluding chapter of the thesis redefines the purpose of the study, restates the research questions, reviews the methods used to conduct the study, revisits the outcomes of the study, discusses implications and limitations of the study, and shares suggestions for future research.

**Research Purpose and Questions**

As the purpose of this study was to investigate the mental and emotional benefits of dance in young adults, the study involved sixty-three dance students, ranging in age from fourteen through twenty-five, including all years of high school, college, and post-graduation. The researcher directed and produced a free, one-day dance workshop that served as the format for the research event. Five local dance professionals were invited to be on faculty for the dance workshop. The sixty-three participants took five dance classes in various styles. Although it can be common that mainstream dance classes focus on cutting edge choreography and mastering skillful technique combinations, the classes offered as part of this study were geared toward the joys of dance, setting and attaining goals, having an open, growth mindset, and being self-confident.

The study incorporated both qualitative and quantitative research as a means to answer three essential research questions.
Q1 In what ways does dance present itself as an integral art form, particularly for young adults?

Q2 What mental and emotional benefits occur when young adults study dance?

Q3 Will young adults benefit from dance being more accessible?

This study has demonstrated the mental and emotional benefits of dance. Although the data did not show literal positive change over time in regard to mental emotional health on the day of the event, growth was measured in several aspects relating to mental and emotional health. By participating in the dance workshop, the participants benefitted in several ways that included: increased mental stamina and memory, increased self-confidence, joyful self-expression, emotional exploration, setting and attaining goals, and taking on new challenges. The data gathered from comparing and contrasting the pre- and post-questionnaires and observation rubrics and the immensely supportive evidence elicited from the exit interviews illustrated the mental and emotional benefits of dance.

To further study the mental and emotional benefits of dance, it would be important to repeat this research event periodically throughout the year. This would allow for more collection of data to illustrate change and growth over time. It would also be interesting to include participants that have even less of a dance background, from a community where fewer schools and community businesses offer dance classes.

Review of Methods

The researcher employed both qualitative and quantitative practices in her research methodology. She designed four research instruments: pre-questionnaire, post-questionnaire, class observation rubric, and exit interview questions. The pre- and post-
questionnaires were answered independently by each participant. The researcher used the classroom observation rubric as a note-taking guide to observe each group in all five classes. The exit interview questions were presented as conversation starters to the two groups of participants. Group A included participants who were ages fourteen through seventeen, while group B included participants who were ages eighteen and older. The researcher met with each group separately for the exit interview. Each group interview lasted about twenty minutes.

**Implications of Study**

It is evident that dance is beneficial and impacts mental and emotional health and self-confidence. However, even with all of the positive trends, discussions, and detailed research, the benefits of dance are not often mainstream knowledge, and, as a result, public school dance programs do not exist as frequently, compared to those of music and art. As of 2009, national data reports that only 12% of high schools in the nation offer dance classes during regular school hours (Parsad and Spiegelman 43). This is very minimal and does not substantiate the massive impact dance can have on young adults.

The trends found in the data imply that dance may have a greater effect on emotional health compared to mental health. Nonetheless, self-confidence, as it relates to both mental and emotional health, was greatly impacted by dance during the study. The participants often spoke about dance being so powerful because it allows them to express themselves and say things with their bodies that they cannot say verbally. It is a form of communication that is expressive, joyful, and unifying.

The mental health components may need to be studied in a more longitudinal format in order for the participants to become more aware of the mental health benefits of
dance. The participants did not report positive change over time when it comes to mental health (i.e. focus, alertness, and memory). Yet, when specifically asked, participants reported having a good memory throughout the course of the event and may have been able to recall the learned combinations. The researcher observed inconsistencies with body language throughout the classes. This was an indication of poor focus and insecurities throughout the event.

It could be implied that the inconsistent body language and poor situational focus was a result of fatigue as the event schedule was very extensive. Each of the five classes were an hour and ten minutes long, making the length of the workshop five hours and fifty minutes. That does not include short water and snack breaks between classes nor a lunch break. Each class presented brand new material from a faculty member that was passionate, fully energized, and ready to dance. For those participants that were new to the structure and intensity of a dance class, this could have been extremely overwhelming and exhaustive—physically and mentally, therefore, dampening some of the positive benefits. With only minor negative results from the study, the benefits of dance are still clear and powerful.

**Limitations of Study**

Although the study did yield positive trends supporting the mental and emotional benefits of dance and its impact on self-confidence, it is important to examine some limitations from the study: potential participant bias, complexity of the research event, and weak research instruments.

Sixty-three young adults participated in the one-day, dance workshop research event. One hundred and two participants originally registered for the event. A greater
number of participants would have created more data to analyze, and the researcher
would have had a wider array of participants with varying backgrounds. There was a
large difference between the expected numbers of registrations and the final number of
participants that actually appeared the morning of the event. This difference could be
because the event was free. There was no financial obligation accompanying the
registration. Just because someone was interested and registered did not necessarily mean
they felt obligated to attend. Adversely, the researcher did not want to exclude any
interested dancers because of added financial stress. The entire premise of the study was
to share the power of dance with young adults, with no strings attached. Nevertheless,
this did cause unforeseen limitations for the researcher.

The researcher was the sole director of the entire event and did not teach any of
the workshop classes. She did not engage with the participants during the event and only
facilitated the exit interview. A potential bias of this study may have occurred because
the majority of the participants were current students or alumni who had worked with the
researcher before. On a positive note, this created an environmental dynamic rooted in
trust and passion. The majority of the participants already knew how and why the
researcher advocated for dance and her position on the power of dance. This unspoken
understanding could have swayed the overall tone of the study, the day of the event, and
the final outcomes.

The research instruments were strong and gathered great amounts of helpful,
supportive information. The exit interview proved to be the most invaluable research
instrument in terms of authentic, specific qualitative data, prompted by well-crafted
interview questions and specific, passionate responses from participants. The
questionnaires were the weakest of the research instruments, as they gathered a mixture of information, not all of which was necessarily valid for the purposes of the research questions, such as, asking about the participants’ favorite class of the workshop, favorite genre of dance, social benefits of dance, and participants’ personal intrinsic motivation. Some questions were not geared towards mental or emotional health. After some trial and error, the researcher learned that some questions were targeted more towards personality traits and work ethic.

The class observation rubric was also misleading. The criteria being measured by the rubric assessed the dance classroom environment and engagement therein instead of gauging the mental stamina and emotional capacities of the participants. It could be argued, that if the participants’ engagement is poor and socializing is inappropriate—as listed on the observation rubric—then their mental stamina is poor as well. The rubric was not explicit in that sense. The researcher was able to interpret some data and trends from the observation rubrics, but they did not yield the amount or type of results she was expecting.

The format of the research study was very complex. The researcher created a vast study and executed it on a large scale. The day was long, perhaps too long. The participants were exhausted by the end of the third class, after which, class management became more taxing. Instead of scheduling five classes, the researcher may have gotten more polished results if the day was not exhaustive. A dance workshop schedule with three or four class may yield more positive, conclusive results in some areas. The location of the event had very poor Internet connection. This became troublesome when the participants were attempting to complete the pre- and post-questionnaires digitally. This
meant that the researcher had to transcribe answers from pre- and post-questionnaire paper forms into digital forms. As a result, all data was stored in the same platform, providing a more thorough analysis for the researcher. The researcher knew of this potential frustration and should have planned differently. The event schedule and various methods of data collections added to the already complex study.

The complexity of the study did not stop at the scheduling and the paperwork. The researcher conceded to getting carried away with design elements that were not important to the study. For example, renaming the workshop event for the public to be different from that of the thesis and changing the design of the research instruments. The researcher should have focused on the substance of the research rather than the design of the event. The entire process of creating, designing, implementing, and directing the dance workshop event was extremely successful and well-received by the participants and the community. If given the opportunity to conduct the study and the event again, the researcher would design a more focused event in which all research components are cohesive and succinct.

**Suggestions for Further Research**

This thesis study supported the goal that young adults benefitted greatly from the powerful exposure to dance. It was discussed that the mental and emotional benefits of dance are as follows: memory, expression, joy, goal achievement, and self-confidence. These mental and emotional health factors are not the only benefits of dance. The list is grand: physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual, just to broadly list a few. Because the benefits of dance are so vast, it is suggested that further research inquire about one dimension of human well-being, rather than multiple. The researcher recommends
studying mental, emotional, social, and physical benefits separately. Several components of mental and emotional health can seem convoluted and overlap, but if they are studied independently of each other, the detailed design of the study will be much more organized and effective.

Furthermore, the researcher is curious about the study taking place over a longer period of time and in multiple locations. Rather than just collecting data from one day, a longitudinal study could incorporate three dance workshops—one day each, over the course of a season. This would yield long-term data, charting more authentic growth over time. Studying different regions’ responses to dance would also be informative. For example, how do young adults, from urban Miami, Florida, benefit from dance compared to young adults in rural Saint Lucie County, Florida? What region shows a greater benefit from dance? Why? The possibilities are intriguing.

Lastly, the researcher suggests putting more of an emphasis on publicity and marketing. Although sample size is not the main concentration of a thesis study, a bias did present in this study’s final participant pool. The researcher relied heavily on colleagues sharing the event’s information to interested students and community members. The researcher was disappointed by the lack of sharing once promised by the colleagues. Implementing another study would be even more successful with a more creative timeline, focusing on one realm of health, and being more disciplined with marketing and recruitment.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, the original, one-day dance workshop event was a successful research study. The researcher, participants, and faculty members alike, all exemplified
the power of dance. The mental and emotional benefits, the corporeal powers embodied by dance, were celebrated amongst the participants for several weeks following the event. The researcher concluded the original research goals were achieved and the essential research questions were answered. Through detailed methodology and analysis, the researcher learned that memory, mental stamina, goal achievement, expression, joy, and self-confidence are all attainable when dance is provided to young adults. There cannot be a price tag put on the invaluable power of dance. For youth, dance has been shown to be attainable, beneficial, and powerful. Dance is an integral, universal art form.
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APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER
DATE: November 19, 2018
TO: Amber Salo
FROM: University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB
SUBMISSION TYPE: Revision
ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: November 15, 2018
EXPIRATION DATE: November 15, 2019
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

Thank you for your submission of Revision materials for this project. The University of Northern Colorado (UNCO) IRB has APPROVED your submission. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on applicable federal regulations.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require that each participant receives a copy of the consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of November 15, 2019.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

If you have any questions, please contact Nicole Morse at 970-351-1910 or nicole.morse@unco.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.
APPENDIX B

TREASURE COAST HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL’S APPROVAL LETTER
October 2, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

I am the principal at Treasure Coast High School. Miss Amber Salo is the dance teacher at our school. As a candidate for the Masters of Art in Dance Education at the University of Northern Colorado, she will be completing a thesis research project using current students as human participants. She will be directing a one-day dance workshop to study the mental and emotional benefits of dance. Miss Amber Salo has my permission to facilitate the project on our campus involving current students and other students from local area high schools.

Proper documentation and permission will be secured from parents.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance. You can contact me at susan.seal@stlucieschools.org or via phone at 772-807-4310.

Sincerely,

Susan Seal
APPENDIX C

CONSENT FORMS
The goal of this thesis research project is to create and direct an original one-day dance workshop to share the mental and emotional benefits of dance with you. It is presumed that you may not otherwise have regular exposure to dance because of socio-economic status and or access at the school level.

You will participate in four dance classes of various genres. Attendance in each class is paramount to your success and it will be documented for research analysis. In addition to this consent form, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire before and after the event. The pre-questionnaire will ask about information regarding dance experience, preferences, self-confidence, and social experiences. The post-questionnaire will ask about experiences and feelings during the dance workshop classes and personal self-confidence and interest in dance at the conclusion of the day.

You will be assigned a participant code that will align with your attendance, questionnaires, and any observational notes the researcher makes throughout the workshop. You will wear a wristband throughout the classes that indicates your involvement in the research. There will be other students taking the classes that are not participating in the research.

Lastly, it is also possible that you will be asked to participate in an interview at the conclusion of the event. The interviews and dance classes may be videotaped to support the notes taken by the researcher. Be assured that the researcher intends to keep the contents of these recordings private, unless you give permission below for their use as an instructional aid or promotional material for future dance workshop events. Your name would never be used.
At the end of the event and when research has concluded, we would be happy to share your data with you at your request. We will take every precaution in order to protect your anonymity. The researcher will be the only person to know the name connected with a participant number and when data is reported, his/her name will not be used. Data collected and analyzed for this study will be kept in a locked cabinet in the home of the researcher and in the advisor’s office at the University, which is only accessible by the researcher and the advisor.

Potential risks in this project are minimal. As with any type of physical activity, risks include fatigue, localized muscle soreness, and the potential for strains and sprains of joints of the lower extremity. If you become too fatigued or uncomfortable, you may choose to stop and rest. In the unlikely event of an injury, we will contact appropriate medical authorities. Please let the volunteers know if you have any injuries or disabilities that may affect your participant while in dance class. Extreme care will be taken to ensure that you are positively critiqued, and that the dance workshop environment is safe and supportive.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910. Thank you for your commitment to this event, assisting the research, and celebrating the power of dance with us.

Sincerely,
Amber Salo

__________________________    __________________________
Subject’s Name                  Researcher’s Name
                      Date                    Date

__________________________    __________________________
Subject’s Signature             Researcher’s Signature
                      Date                    Date

** Please initial below if you give permission to the researcher to use video footage (interview and dance class material) for instructional and/or promotional purposes,

__________________________
Initials

** Please initial below if you have any physical injuries or disabilities that may affect your participation in dance class.

__________________________
Initials
PARENT CONSENT FORM FOR HUMAN PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Project Title:  *The Power of Dance: How Dance Affects Mental and Emotional Health and Self-Confidence In Young Adults*
Researcher:  Amber Salo
Phone:  772-828-1835   E-mail: ambersalo@gmail.com

The goal of this thesis research project is to create and direct an original one-day dance workshop to share the mental and emotional benefits of dance with your child. It is presumed that your child may not otherwise have regular exposure to dance because of socio-economic status and or access at the school level.

Your child will participate in four dance classes of various genres. Attendance in each class is paramount to his/her success and it will be documented for research analysis. In addition to this consent form, your student will be asked to complete a questionnaire before and after the event. The pre-questionnaire will ask about information regarding dance experience, preferences, self-confidence, and social experiences. The post-questionnaire will ask about experiences and feelings during the dance workshop classes and his/her personal self-confidence and interest in dance at the conclusion of the day.

Your student will be assigned a participant code that will align with his/her attendance, questionnaires, and any observational notes the researcher makes throughout the workshop. Your child will wear a wristband throughout the classes that indicates his/her involvement in the research. There will be other students taking the classes that are not participating in the research, they will not be wearing a wristband.

Lastly, it is also possible that your child will be asked to participate in an interview at the conclusion of the event. The interviews and dance classes may be videotaped to support the notes taken by the researcher. Be assured that the researcher intends to keep the contents of these recordings private, unless you give permission below for their use of the
video as an instructional aid or promotional material for future dance workshop events. Your child’s name would never be used.

At the end of the event and when research has concluded, we would be happy to share your data with you at your request. We will take every precaution in order to protect your child’s anonymity. The researcher will be the only person to know the name connected with a participant number and when data is reported, his/her name will not be used. Data collected and analyzed for this study will be kept in a locked cabinet in the home of the researcher and in the advisor’s office at the University, which is only accessible by the researcher and the advisor.

Potential risks in this project are minimal. As with any type of physical activity, risks include fatigue, localized muscle soreness, and the potential for strains and sprains of joints. If your child becomes too fatigued or uncomfortable, he/she may choose to stop and rest. In the unlikely event of an injury, we will contact appropriate medical authorities. Please let the volunteers know if your child has any injuries or disabilities that may affect his/her participation while in dance class. Extreme care will be taken to ensure that the students are positively critiqued, and that the dance workshop environment is safe and supportive.

Participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate in this study and if you begin participation you may still decide to stop and withdraw at any time. Your decision will be respected and will not result in loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Having read the above and having had an opportunity to ask any questions, please sign below if you would like to participate in this research. A copy of this form will be given to you to retain for future reference. If you have any concerns about your selection or treatment as a research participant, please contact Nicole Morse, Office of Research, Kepner Hall, University of Northern Colorado Greeley, CO 80639; 970-351-1910. Thank you for your commitment to this event, assisting the research, and sharing your child with us for a wonderful day of powerful dance!

Sincerely,
Amber Salo
Child’s Full Name (please print)  Child’s Birth Date (month/day/year)

Parent/Guardian’s Signature  Date

Researcher’s Signature  Date

** Please initial below if you give permission to the researcher to use video footage (interview and dance class material) for instructional and/or promotional purposes.

___
Initials

** Please initial below if your student has any physical injuries or disabilities that may affect their participation in dance class.

___
Initials
APPENDIX D

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

1. How old are you?
   a. 13 – 15
   b. 16 – 18
   c. 18 – 21
   d. 21 +

2. What is your preferred gender identification?
   a. Female
   b. Male
   c. Prefer not to say
   d. Other

3. Do you have any continuous formal dance training (enrolled in an college program, after school program or private studio)? (Dancing in public school is not formal dance training.)
   a. None
   b. 0 – 2 years
   c. 3 – 5 years
   d. 6 – 8 years
   e. 8 – 10 years
   f. 10 + years

4. What is your favorite dance genre?
   a. Ballet
   b. Modern
   c. Jazz
   d. Contemporary
   e. Tap
   f. Hip Hop
   g. Ballroom/International
   h. Other: __________________
   i. None of the above
   j. I do not have one
5. Why do you dance? Short answer response in the area below.

6. Why are you participating in today’s workshop?

7. Do you have goals for today’s dance classes?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

8. If yes to #7, what are your goals for today’s dance classes?

9. Does dance physically benefit you? (ie. strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, cardiovascular...)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

10. Does dance benefit you mentally? (ie. memory, focus, alertness, etc.)
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes
11. Does dance benefit you emotionally? (ie. confidence, self-esteem, self-image, etc.)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

12. Do you think dance is socially beneficial?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

13. Do you consider yourself to have good self-confidence?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

14. Do you consider yourself to have a good memory?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Sometimes

15. Are you positive, energized, and confident about the dance classes today?
   a. Very
   b. Yes
   c. Somewhat

16. Do you keep trying, even after others give up?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

17. When you set goals, do you achieve them?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all
18. Do people give you positive feedback on your work and achievements?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

19. Experiencing success early when learning something is important. If not, will you continue?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

20. When you overcome confusion or an obstacle, do you think about the lessons learned?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

21. Do you believe if you work hard, you will achieve your goals?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

Thank you very much for attending our dance workshop today and completing this pre-questionnaire. It is very important for thorough research purposes that everyone completes two questionnaires. Please make sure to complete the post-questionnaire before your departure today.

Sincerely yours in dance,

Miss Amber Salo
POST-QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why did you dance today? Did you dance today for a particular reason? Why did you choose to participate in today’s dance workshop?

2. Restate your goals for today’s dance classes from the pre-questionnaire.

3. Did you achieve your goals for today’s dance classes?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Partially

4. Explain your response to #3. How did you achieve your goals today? Why do you think you did or did not achieve your goals today?
5. How do you feel about the goals you achieved today? Select all that apply.
   a. I feel great
   b. I feel okay
   c. I feel satisfied
   d. I want to take more dance classes
   e. I want to continue learning about dance and how it makes me feel
   f. I feel confident

6. Why do you feel this way? Please explain your choice from #5.

7. Did you benefit physically from dance today? (ie. strength, flexibility, coordination, endurance, cardiovascular...)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

8. Did you benefit mentally from dance today? (ie. memory, focus, alertness, etc.)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

9. Did you benefit emotionally from dance today? (ie. confidence, self-esteem, self-image, etc.)
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

10. Do you still think dance is socially beneficial?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe

11. Do you consider yourself to have good self-confident?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Sometimes
12. Do your experiences from today affect your answer to #s 7 - 11?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Partially

13. Did you consider yourself to have a good memory today during classes?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Partially

14. Do you think you could recall the combinations learned from today’s classes?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

15. Are you more generally positive, energized, and self-confident after today's classes?
   a. Definitely
   b. Yes
   c. Somewhat
   d. Not really
   e. Definitely not

16. Did you keep trying today, even after seeing others getting frustrated?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Partially

17. When you set goals, did you achieve them?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

18. When you faced something challenging today or had a difficult time, did you feel hopeless and negative?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all
19. Did people give you positive feedback on your work and achievement/performance today?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

20. Experiencing sometime positive and successful early in this process was important. If not, would you have continued?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

21. When you overcame an obstacle, did you think about the lessons learned?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all

22. What obstacles did you face today?

23. What lessons did you learn today, if any?

24. Do you believe that if you work hard, you will achieve your goals?
   a. Very often
   b. Often
   c. Sometimes
   d. Rarely
   e. Not at all
25. Are you happy you chose to attend today’s dance workshop?
   a. Definitely
   b. Yes
   c. Somewhat
   d. Not really
   e. Definitely not

26. What was your favorite class today?
   a. Modern Fusion (Monica)
   b. Tap (Kim)
   c. Contemporary (Crystavia)
   d. Lyrical Hip Hop (Sonya)
   e. Hip Hop (Aryan)

27. Why was this class your favorite class?

28. Would you like to keep dance in your life more regularly? Select all that apply.
   a. Yes, for physical benefits
   b. Yes, for mental benefits
   c. Yes, for emotional benefits
   d. Yes, for social benefits
   e. Yes, for self-confidence
   f. Yes, for multiple reasons
   g. Doesn’t make a difference to me
   h. Dance is already in my life regularly

29. Would you like to see more dance opportunities available for young adults in our community?
   a. Definitely
   b. Yes
   c. Somewhat
   d. Not really
   e. Definitely not
   f. Impartial
30. Would you attend this dance workshop again?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe

It is with sincere gratitude that I thank you for completing these questionnaires and participating in my research. I will not disappoint you! I will be sure to share my findings with you and let you know when my thesis is published.

Sincerely yours in dance,

Miss Amber Salo
## Class Observation Rubric / Note-taking Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Range</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SUP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td>Classroom dynamics are positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher encourages interaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher is passionate / energized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arts are encouraged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td>Engaged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inspired</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Taking initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body language is appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Body language is confident</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Observations / Notes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXIT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Did you have any expectations about the experience? Teachers? Classes? Dance itself?

2. Were you nervous?

3. Were you self-conscious? If yes, in a positive way? Or a negative way?

4. Do you feel differently about dance after having taken today’s dance classes?

5. What was your favorite part of today’s dancing?

6. Why do you think dance is so powerful?

7. Do you feel better, mentally or emotionally, after dancing?

8. Will you try to keep dance in your life? Why? Or why not?

9. Would you like to see more dance offered at your school?

Other questions may arise based on the dancer’s responses and observations made during the classes. This would be very impromptu. The notes made on the Note-taking Guide/Observation Rubric will inform any additional interview questions.
ADDENDIX E

RESEARCH EVENT ARTIFACTS
DANCE WORKSHOP PROMOTIONAL FLYER

THE BELIEVE PROJECT

SATURDAY • MARCH 23RD
TREASURE COAST HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM & DANCE STUDIO
1000 SW Darwin Blvd. • Port St. Lucie

Check In at 9 am • Classes Start at 10 am
Festival Performance at 6 pm
Ages 14 & up
the-believe-project.weebly.com
For More Information Contact Amber Salo:
amberzah@gmail.com
DANCE WORKSHOP REGISTRATION FORM

Dance Workshop Registration

This form is registration for Amber Salo's dance workshop (The Believe Project) serving the Treasure Coast of South Florida. This is in conjunction with the University of Northern Colorado as a formal thesis research project for candidacy in a masters degree program.

The workshop will be held on
Saturday, March 23, 2019
9:00 am
Treasure Coast High School
1000 SW Darwin Blvd.
Port St. Lucie, FL
34953

* Required

1. Email address *

2. Participant's (Dancer) First Name *

3. Participant's (Dancer) Last Name *

4. Phone Number (with area code) *

5. Birth Date *

Example: December 15, 2012

6. Gender *
Mark only one oval.

☐ Female
☐ Male
☐ Prefer not to say
☐ Other: __________________________________________
7. Age *
   *Mark only one oval.*
   - [ ] 14
   - [ ] 15
   - [ ] 16
   - [ ] 17
   - [ ] 18
   - [ ] 19
   - [ ] 20
   - [ ] 21
   - [ ] Over 21

8. Parent/Guardian’s First Name (only if under age 18) *

9. Parent/Guardian’s Last Name (only if under 18) *

10. Parent/Guardian’s Email Address (only if under 18) *

11. Parent/Guardian’s Phone Number (only if under 18) *
12. What high school are you affiliated with? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Centennial High School
   - Fort Pierce Central High School
   - Lincoln Park Academy
   - Port St. Lucie High School
   - Treasure Coast High School
   - Martin County
   - Indian River County
   - Fort Pierce Westwood High School
   - Indian River State College
   - Other college
   - Other high school
   - Other middle school

13. Do you have any dance experience? *
   Mark only one oval.
   - Yes
   - No
   - Maybe
   - 0-2 years
   - 3-5 years
   - 5-8 years
   - 8-10 years
   - 10 years +

14. What are you interested in participating in? *
   Check all that apply.
   - Just dance workshop classes, no research
   - Workshop classes AND the research
   - Workshop classes AND the festival performance
   - ALL COMPONENTS: Dance workshop, the research, and the festival

A copy of your responses will be emailed to the address you provided
# DANCE WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

## WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

### REGISTRATION / CHECK-IN

9:00 – 10:00 am

*Back Entrance of TCHS Performing Arts Hallway, off of Tulip Blvd.*

**Dancer placement in either room will be determined the week before the workshop**

**Research participants will complete consent forms and pre-questionnaires, if not already completed**

**Fit for tap shoes upon arrival**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>In CLASSROOM</th>
<th>On STAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 9:45 am</td>
<td>******</td>
<td>Aryan’s Large Group Warm-Up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 11:10 am</td>
<td>Monica – Modern Fusion</td>
<td>Kim – Tap</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15 am – 12:25 pm</td>
<td>Kim – Tap</td>
<td>Monica – Modern Fusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:25 – 1:00 pm</td>
<td>[Lunch Break]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 – 2:10 pm</td>
<td>Sonya – Lyrical Hip Hop</td>
<td>Aryan – Hip Hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15 – 3:25 pm</td>
<td>Crystavia – Contemporary</td>
<td>Sonya – Lyrical Hip Hop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 – 4:40 pm</td>
<td>Aryan – Hip Hop</td>
<td>Crystavia – Contemporary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DANCE WORKSHOP ONLINE RESOURCES

Promotional Event Website: the-believe-project.weebly.com

Event Highlight Reel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Df2ZlhZ6fk0