

An Analysis of Research Trends in Korean Dance Psychology

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This research analyzed the trends in Korea's psychology of dance research by studying master's theses, doctoral dissertations, and papers published between 1975 and May 2020, inclusive, in KCI-registered academic journals. The analyzed data includes titles, published dates, research targets, keywords, and research types. The pool of documents analyzed included 241 master's theses (48%), 72 doctoral dissertations (14.3%), and 189 domestic (Korean) research papers (37.6%). Research types ranged from technical research (76.7%), experimental research (13.5%), analytical research (3.6%), qualitative research (5.6%), to mixed research (0.6%). Research topics were divided into six categories: emotion, motivation, personality, psychology technique, health psychology, and dance/social psychology. It is important to review these papers in detail to see whether the knowledge obtained is applicable to the real dance field. In addition, transforming dance psychology research into a theory-based paradigm focused on the actual dance field will allow us to build dance psychology theories unique to Korean culture and establish a system applicable to the dance field.

Key word: Dance psychology, content analysis, research trends, research

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Introduction

Dance is an artistic behavior that represents human psychology and emotions (Kim, 2004). The act of dance is an expression of emotions and ideas using the human body, which requires a physical and emotional balance to maintain stable psychological conditions (Lee & Park, 2018). The purpose of dance is to express individual emotions, so dancers must be able to control numerous psychological elements that can impact their physical movements (Ha & Kim, 2010). Therefore, a psychological approach to dance is important as the art requires the expression of people's inner psyches (Lee & Park, 2018).

Dance, which contains both artistic and physical activity properties (Ha, 2010), allows people to have physical and artistic experiences from the freedom of expression and contributes significantly to resolving multiple psychological issues. In addition, just as the cathartic role of dance continues to resonate to this day, movement cannot be called dance if it fails to recognize individuality, emotions, and psychological aspects (Won, 2001). Based on such findings, many have voiced concerns regarding the lack of psychological research on dance, and many dance scholars have argued for the need for scientific research on dance psychology (Lee, 1997). As such, a new field that combines dance and psychology, known as dance psychology, emerged. Avid scientific studies are being conducted to pioneer the dance psychology and to establish a sounder academic system to study the field (Kim 1998). Numerous research findings have reported correlations between dance training and its psychological aspects (Lee & Park, 2018).

The number of studies on dance psychology in Korea is rising continuously, and an increasing number of different approaches are being used (Jang, 2005; Park, 2003). However, many have pointed out the problem of applying inappropriate sports-related theories and assessments without due diligence regarding the psychological aspects of dance (Park & Lee, 2003). Sports and dance share a commonality in that they realize a person's ego through bodily movements (Ha & Kim, 2010). However, since there are unique psychological aspects to dance, further research is required to analyze the current domestic dance psychology research trends, clarify realistic problems, and come up with appropriate measures to establish an academic dance psychology system (Jang, 2005; Park, 2003).

Starting with Park's research on dance and psychology in modern society, papers that have studied the trend include Lee's (1997) paper on the psychological aspects of dance, Park and Lee's (2003) paper on research trends in Korean dance psychology, Park and Kang's (2004) psychological analysis on Korean dance psychology research, Jang's (2005) analysis on domestic dance psychology research, and Park's (2007) thesis on dance psychology research accomplishments and challenges. The first paper focused on understanding the trends in dance psychology research was first published in 1995. The field picked up steam in the mid-2000s, where one paper each was published in the years 2003, 2004,

2005, and 2007. Although 15 years have passed, no new research on dance psychology has been published. Therefore, it will be important to understand the research trends in Korean dance psychology and investigate any potentials for improvements to extant systems.

This paper analyzes various research methods used in the field of dance psychology from a variety of aspects to conduct a systematic analysis of Korea's dance psychology field. Understanding the trends and directions for research will be an important challenge to set an academic standard for future dance psychology studies. This research will further solidify the academic basis of dance psychology and promote a balanced growth in dance science.

Method

Sampling

Papers used in this analysis were collected by typing the keywords “dance” and “psychology” in the Korean Education and Research Information Service (KERIS), Research Information Sharing Service (RISS), and Korean Citation Index (KCI) websites. Any studies with unspecified research topics or deemed inappropriate to be categorized as dance psychology were excluded. Domestic journals included only those published in the KCI.

From 1975 to May 2020, out of the 528 total papers, which included 255 (48.3%) master's theses, 78 (14.8%) doctoral dissertations, and 195 (26.9%) papers published in domestic journal, 26 papers that were not accessible were excluded. Therefore, 502 papers were categorized based on the title, date of publication, targets, keywords, and research types (Hastie, Ojeda & Luquin, 2011).

Data Classification

The research topics were categorized based on inductive reasoning. The criteria, which divided each study based on important themes, were divided into the basic, subordinate, and superordinate levels based on common themes that constitute lower levels of dance psychology. The research types were further classified into technical, experimental, analytical, qualitative, and mixed research following Thomas and Nelson's (1990) methods.

Table 1. *Categorization of Research Types*

Types	Details
Research Target	Dance level, Types of research targets
Research Topic	Inductive analysis
Research Type	Technical: Questionnaire, correlation developmental study, interview, case
	Experimental: Effects on dependent variables by independent variable manipulation
	Analytical: Meta-analysis, historical and philosophical research, and literature review
	Qualitative: Life history research, case study, cultural technology magazine, grounded theory
	Mixed: Research using two or more research methods

Data Analysis

The information was then subject to frequency analysis and inductive content analysis. The PASW 21.0 statistics program was used to conduct frequency analysis to determine the research frequency and ratios for each characteristic. The target research papers were subject to inductive content analysis to comprehend the research themes. While collecting and conducting inductive analysis, researcher’s subjective opinions may have an impact on the research’s credibility. Therefore, one dance psychologist and two sports psychologists verified the classifications, secured the reliability and validity of the analysis process, and established criteria that met the objectives of this study based on prior studies and references. Then, each researcher verified how much the analysis aligned, and differences in opinion were subject to debate and reanalysis.

Results

Status of academic papers

The numbers and ratios appropriate for categorization for the academic papers and KCI-registered journals in this paper are shown in Table 2. An analysis of 502 dance psychology-related papers published between 1975 and May 2020 showed that the number of the total studies rose from 1990 since the publication of the first paper in 1975. Of all papers, 200 (39.8%) papers were published between 2001 and 2010, and 256 (51.0%) papers were published from 2011 to 2020. There was only one paper published in 1975 but the number rose exponentially in the early 2000s, which has continued to 2020. The result show an exponential increase in interest in dance psychology, and researchers’

various research attempts have contributed to the advancement of dance psychology.

The documents published included 241 (48.0%) theses, 72 (14.3%) dissertations, and 189 (37.6%) papers in domestic journal. To increase the quality of research on dance psychology, numerous follow-up studies must take place. Furthermore, recognition of the importance and the need for psychology studies within the dance field is required along with sufficient support for quality research.

Lastly, the analysis of the research types showed 385 (76.7%) technical research studies, 68 (13.5%) experimental research studies, 18 (3.6%) analytical research studies, 28 (5.6%) qualitative research studies, and 3 (0.6%) mixed research studies. The most common research type was technical research followed by experimental research. Qualitative and analytical research was less popular. Mixed research was the least popular choice, which implies the need to use this method in future studies.

The methodology used in the technical research remains a popular choice because it obtains results by analyzing the majority of samples, which saves researchers a lot of time and money. However, the concern is that technical research-oriented research trends would mean a biased approach to research and a lack of comprehensive study on various phenomena that are hard to grasp without using technical research (Jung, 2015). In addition, mixed research applies multiple research methods to overcome the limitations of a single research methodology. Therefore, mixed-method research is the best approach to use to easily understand complex human behaviors and psychology, which means it could play an important role in establishing an academic definition for dance psychology.

Characteristics of the research targets

To analyze the characteristics of the research targets, all documents were divided into dance levels and research targets. As shown in Table 2, 279 (60.2%) papers were research papers on dancers, taking up the majority. Research studies on non-dancers numbered 169 (36.5%), and mixed research yielded only 15 (3.3%) papers. The research target types included 25 (5.4%) papers targeting preschoolers and elementary schoolers, 58 (12.5%) papers targeting middle to high school students, 145 (31.3%) papers targeting college students, 79 (17.1%) papers targeting the general population, 26 (5.6%) papers on older adults, 66 (14.3%) papers on professional dancers, and 64 (13.8%) papers on mixed populations. While the most popular research target group was college students, there was significant differences in the ratio of studies targeting preschoolers or older adults. Further studies must focus on diversifying the age group that encompasses both preschoolers, elementary students, and older adults to accurately reflect the social trends.

Table 2. *Types of research and characteristics of targets*

Concepts	Division	N	%
Published dates	1975 ~ 1980	1	0.2
	1981 ~ 1990	0	0
	1991 ~ 2000	45	9.0
	2001 ~ 2010	200	39.8
	2011 ~ 2020	256	51.0
Pool of documents	Master's theses	241	48.0
	Doctoral dissertations	72	14.3
	Domestic (Korean) research papers	189	37.6
Research target	dancers	279	60.2
	Non-dancers	169	36.5
	Mixed population	15	3.3
Research target types	Preschoolers and elementary schoolers	25	5.4
	Middle to high school students	58	12.5
	College students	145	31.3
	General population	79	17.1
	Older adults	26	5.6
	Professional dancers	66	14.3
	Mixed population	64	13.8
Research types	Technical research	385	76.7
	Experimental research	68	13.5
	Analytical research	18	3.6
	Qualitative research	28	5.6
	Mixed research	3	0.6
Total		502	100.0

Research topic

This study confirmed research topic frequency and ratios in domestic dance psychology paper by conducting indicative content analysis and categorizing the documents into ordinary, subordinate, and superordinate levels. As shown in Table 3, the topics can be categorized into emotion, motivation, personality, psychology techniques, health psychology, and dance/social psychology.

Table 3. *Classification and categorization of research topics*

Small Category		Medium Category		Big Category	
Theme	Frequency (%)	Theme	Frequency (%)	Theme	Frequency (%)
Emotions	25 (3.0)	Emotions	25 (3.0)		
Instability	57 (6.9)	Negative emotions	140 (17.0)	Emotions	343 (41.6)
Stress	46 (5.6)				
Negative psychology	22 (2.7)				
Dropout/Exhaustion	15 (1.8)				
Happiness	31 (3.8)	Positive emotions	90 (11.0)		
Psychological well-being	28 (3.4)				
Positive psychology	19 (2.3)				
Fun	12 (1.5)				
Satisfied	88 (10.7)	Positive + Negative	88 (10.7)		
Motivation	58 (7.0)	Motivation	147(17.8)	Motivation	147 (17.8)
Immersion	42 (5.1)				
Self-efficacy	25 (3.0)				
Achievement	13 (1.6)				
Passion	9 (1.1)				
Personality	21 (2.5)	Personality	52 (6.3)	Personality	130 (15.8)
Perfectionist	16 (1.9)				
Confidence	15 (1.8)				
Self-esteem	26 (3.2)	Ego	78 (9.5)		
Body Image	18 (2.2)				
Physical self-concept	17 (2.1)				
Self-identity	17 (2.1)				
Psychology technique training	20 (2.4)	Psychology technique training	20 (2.4)	Psychology techniques	80 (9.7)
Self-management/Response	33 (4.0)	Psychological components	60 (7.3)		
Elasticity	16 (1.9)				
Self-talk, imagery	11 (1.3)				
Mental Health	31 (3.8)	Mental Health	31 (3.8)	Health psychology	50 (6.1)
Well-being/Diet	14 (1.7)	Well-being	14 (1.7)		
Dance injuries	5 (0.6)	Dance injuries	5 (0.6)		
Dance psychology	36 (4.4)	Dance psychology	47 (5.7)	Dance/social psychology	74 (9.0)
Expression	11 (1.3)				
Social psychology	27 (3.3)	Social psychology	27 (3.3)		
Others			36 (4.4)		
Total			824 (100)		

Research on Korean dance psychology included 343 (41.6%) papers on emotions, 147 (17.8%) papers on motivation, 130 (15.8%) papers on personality, 80 (9.7%) papers on psychology techniques, 74 (9.0%) papers on dance/social psychology, and 50 (6.1%) papers on health psychology. Similar to another study arguing that most research focuses on instability, stress, personality, psychology techniques, and health psychology (Jang, 2005), this study proved a similar trend.

Specifically, emotion-related studies focused on negative emotions (17%), positive emotions (11.0%), and emotions in general (3.0%). Such results exhibit that people show more interest in studying negative aspects that may hinder dance performance than focusing on defining more general emotions. Studies on motivation can be further divided into motivation (7.0%), immersion (5.1%), self-efficacy (3.0%), achievement (1.6%), and passion (1.1%), which all point to the importance of providing motivation to ensure continued participation and prevent any futility. Research on personalities focused on personality (2.5%), perfectionism (1.9%), confidence (1.8%), self-esteem (3.2%), body image (2.2%), physical self-image (2.1%), and self-identity (2.1%). This shows that in dancing, knowing and valuing oneself is very important as it is about expressing a person's emotions.

Psychology techniques, which is one of the popular fields in dance, includes psychology technique training (2.4%), self-management/response (4.0%), elasticity (1.9%), and self-talk/image (1.3%), which focus on the application of psychology technique training and efficacy verification to exert a direct influence on a dancer's performance. Studies on health psychology have recently gotten more popular, including the topics of mental health (3.8%), well-being/diet (1.7%), and dance injuries (0.6%). More studies are focusing on dance participation in terms of mental health and well-being in dance training. However, a lack of research in this area implies additional insights may be required.

Lastly, studies on dance/social psychology include dance psychology (4.4%), expression (1.3%), and social psychology (3.3%), which tend to focus on social psychology changes through dance participation. It is expected that research that focuses on how dance training is a great opportunity for people to obtain fundamental qualities as members of society will be more popular in the future (Flook, Repetti, & Ullman, 2005; Francois, & Shephard, 2010).

Discussion

This research analyzed 502 papers on dance psychology to study the trends in dance psychology research in Korea. This paper conducted a content analysis based on the date of publication, the thesis type, characteristics of the research targets, and research themes. It analyzed the necessary tasks for further academic advancement in dance psychology by observing the research trends in Korea's dance psychology field.

To understand the characteristics of the research targets, the analysis divided papers into groups of dance levels and research targets. The results showed that most papers focused on younger groups aged between 10–40. Although this result was already proposed by Jang (2005) in his/her analysis of Korea's dance psychology research, the trend continues today. Although more diverse research target types are available today, considering how the study was conducted almost 15 years ago, the problem still lingers today. This means that Korean dance psychology researchers must expand their research to cover wider age groups to study various psychological characteristics of dance and human movement. However, compared to 2005, when almost no studies on dance leaders existed, the current trend exhibits an increase in this field. This means that further studies must be conducted across different classes of people to build academic standards for dance psychology to pioneer happiness and to improve the quality of life through dance.

Analysis of research types showed that the technical research method was the most popular choice. As mentioned, the problem with reliance on a single methodology can result in a significant contraction in research topics. Although all researchers applied the most appropriate methodology suitable for their studies, a greater diversity in approaches would provide flexibility in applying different theories for different dance training situations to build vast research coverage. In addition, a more balanced approach regarding qualitative research is needed to define more scientific research and dance psychology's systemic theoretical structure centered around the real dance field. Therefore, it is important to apply and verify relevant theories to the dance field to establish a dance psychology research paradigm and expand research areas.

Lastly, the analysis of the collected research showed that studying emotion was the most popular research topic. This is because dance is still perceived as an art that expresses human emotions, and the most important challenge is studying the process of dance training and appreciation (Lee 1997). In addition, research themes were heavily skewed toward the topics of emotion, motivation, and personalities. This partially aligns with the research results posited Ryu (2004) and Jang (2005). Currently, there are more topics being studied, as Ryu (2004) and Jang (2005) have pointed out, but the overall trend still remains the same. Dance psychology is making great academic advances as a result of frequent interactions with sports or sports psychology, but it is time to decide the research topics and research processes that are unique to dance psychology.

We can approach the phenomenon using interpretive, critical, and empirical methods. Future empirical research must be conducted using this paradigm in dance psychology. To understand the dance field in greater depth, diversifying the approaches is required. Furthermore, more interpretive and critical efforts and a change in perspective of researchers on the identity and functions of the literature are needed.

Future direction

Although dance psychology is advancing at a fast pace, there are many challenges to be addressed, including literature identity, research areas, and methodologies. To this end, one must take a detailed look at whether the knowledge acquired from the research is applicable to the dance field. A change in the paradigm anchoring the dance psychology research field that is based on faithful theories would help us build dance psychology theories suitable for studying Korean culture and its applicable institutions.

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