RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED DANCE COMPLEXITY AND CLASSROOM SATISFACTION AMONG STUDENTS OF THE SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DANCE AT SHANDONG YINGCAI UNIVERSITY, CHINA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to find out the current levels of students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction in the School of Music and Dance (SMD), and to explore the relationship between students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction in the SMD. The study used a quantitative research method. The study adopted the questionnaire survey method, with the students of SMD of Shandong Yingcai University as the research object. A total of 210 valid questionnaires were collected in the form of online questionnaires. The study collects data on students' evaluation of the dimensions of perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction. The data were processed and analyzed through descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) with Pearson correlation analysis.

The results of the study indicated that (1) overall student perceived dance complexity was moderately high, with body awareness scoring the highest and dance training scoring the lowest. (2) Overall classroom satisfaction was at a moderate level, with high peer interaction scores and low perceived self-growth. (3) In terms of variability, background variables such as gender, grade level, and family income differed significantly across multiple dimensions of dance complexity. (4) In terms of variability, background variables such as gender, grade level, and family income differed significantly on multiple dimensions of classroom satisfaction. (5) Correlation analyzes revealed a significant negative correlation between dance complexity and classroom satisfaction, especially the strongest relationship between body awareness and peer interaction and self-growth.

Keywords: Perceived Dance Complexity, Classroom Satisfaction, Shandong Yingcai University

Introduction

In the international education trend, dance education has been gradually regarded as a key

pathway to develop students' comprehensive abilities and physical and mental health. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has emphasized as early as in the Dance is explicitly listed as a basic art form alongside music and fine arts, and it is advocated that the professionalization of dance courses be systematically promoted at the secondary and higher education levels. Perceived dance complexity, such as the difficulty of movement mastery, the intensity of emotional expression and the depth of bodily cognition, significantly affects students' satisfaction with classroom participation.

The policy environment for dance education in China is gradually developing and improving. China's emphasis on dance-based arts education continues to grow. In recent years, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, and other relevant departments have issued a number of policy documents to promote the development of arts education (Peng, 2021). The introduction of these policies has promoted the popularity of dance education in colleges and universities, especially the more explicit requirements and guarantees for professionalized and systematic dance education.

Shandong Province has introduced policies to promote the healthy development of dance education. The Development Plan for Culture and Art Education in Shandong Province, jointly issued by the Department of Culture and the Department of Education of Shandong Province, proposes to increase support for art colleges and universities. In terms of dance education, colleges and universities are encouraged to co-operate with culture and art colleges and universities to promote the construction of curricula for dance majors and the training of teachers (You, 2020). There are as many as 30 colleges and universities involved in art majors in Shandong (Jin & Martin, 2019). With the popularity of dance education, the quality of dance courses, teaching effectiveness and classroom satisfaction have become important issues of concern for art education administrators in colleges and universities.

Perceived dance complexity can bring more pressure to students. Balancing the relationship between skill enhancement and artistic perception in the midst of intense training, rigorous scheduling, and preparation for dance performances becomes an important factor affecting students' classroom satisfaction. Research has shown that classroom satisfaction affects students' motivation, academic performance, and their long-term academic development (Gerdes & Lin, 2022). With the development of art education, dance, as a comprehensive discipline, not only requires students to have physical fitness and artistic expression, but also involves skills, theories and creativity, and other aspects of ability, the learning process has a high degree of complexity. By analyzing students' challenges and experiences in dance learning, this study helps to provide theoretical support for the reform of dance teaching and enhance students' classroom satisfaction and learning effects.

Research Objectives

(1) To understand the current levels of perceived dance complexity by students in the SMD.

(2) To understand the current levels of students' classroom satisfaction in the SMD.

(3) To analyze the differences of perceived dance complexity among students in the SMD under different contextual variables.

(4) To analyze the differences of students' classroom satisfaction in the SMD under different contextual variables.

(5) To explore the relationship between students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction in the SMD.

Literatures Review

Related theories

Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) (Sweller, 1988) explains how working memory limitations affect learning. It identifies three load types: intrinsic (material complexity), extraneous (poor instructional design), and germane (meaningful schema construction). Effective learning requires minimizing extraneous load while promoting germane load. CLT is widely applied in education, including arts disciplines like dance, where high intrinsic load arises from motor-skills, expression, and emotional processing. Optimizing instructional design to reduce distractions and focus on core tasks can enhance learning efficiency. This theory provides a framework for analyzing cognitive challenges in dance education, improving both satisfaction and teaching adaptability.

Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) (Oliver, 1980) explains satisfaction formation when actual experiences match prior expectations. In education, ECT predicts student satisfaction with curriculum, teaching quality, and learning environment. When classroom experiences meet or exceed expectations (formed through personal experience and peer recommendations), satisfaction increases, enhancing engagement. This theory is particularly applicable to dance education, where students' expectations about instruction style, program intensity, and performance opportunities significantly influence satisfaction levels when fulfilled (Parmar et al., 2016). ECT provides the theoretical foundation for this study.

Research on perceived dance complexity

Perceived dance complexity refers to the multidimensional challenges in dance learning, encompassing body awareness, the urge to dance, and systematic training. Body awareness involves movement precision and spatial perception (Webb & Geyer, 2019), while the urge to dance reflects intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement (Rose et al., 2022). Training intensity and psychological adaptation further contribute to this complexity (Geng, 2021).

Early studies focused on technical skills, but later incorporated body awareness and emotional drive (Jung, 2023). Recent research highlights training systems and psychological adaptation, emphasizing holistic development (Zhai, 2021). This evolution reflects dance education’s shift toward integrated physical and emotional learning.

Rose et al. (2022)’s Perceived Dance Complexity Scale measures three dimensions: body

awareness (6 items), urge to dance (5 items), and dance training (3 items) using a 5-point Likert scale. This validated tool quantifies students' subjective experiences and informs pedagogical strategies.

Chinese studies emphasize body awareness and intrinsic motivation as key factors (Li, 2023). Gender and training background significantly influence perceptions (Niyomsuk & Polyiem, 2022). Innovative teaching methods can mitigate complexity and enhance satisfaction (Swain et al., 2019), suggesting context-specific research is needed.

Research on classroom satisfaction

Classroom satisfaction reflects students' subjective evaluation of teaching content, peer interaction, and learning environment (Wang & Luo, 2016). Core dimensions: teaching quality (pedagogical expertise), peer interaction (collaborative climate), and self-growth (skill development recognition), directly impacting on learning motivation.

Studies shifted from holistic to multidimensional analysis (Kim & Park, 2021). Key factors: teaching behaviors, curriculum innovation, and instructor-student dynamics (Demers & McKinley, 2015). Dance-specific focus required on physical load and artistic expression (Jo et al., 2023).

This study employs Wang & Luo's (2016) Dance Classroom Satisfaction Scale, which comprises three core dimensions: teaching quality (course organization and instructional methods), peer interaction (collaborative relationship quality), and self-growth (artistic competency perception). The 5-point Likert scale demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha>0.82$) in pilot testing and effectively addresses dance majors' unique needs, including assessment of physical load and emotional experience (Jo et al., 2023).

Chinese dance majors' classroom satisfaction is significantly influenced by integration of artistic-technical content (Jung, 2023) and teacher-student interaction quality, differing notably from general disciplines. Existing studies predominantly focus on single dimensions, leaving the dance complexity-satisfaction relationship systematically underexplored (Zhai, 2021) - the key gap this study aims to address.

Research on the relationship between perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction

Existing studies indicate a dual mechanism in the dance complexity-satisfaction relationship (Firdaus et al., 2022). While physical/technical demands may reduce satisfaction through stress, emotional elements (artistic expression, intrinsic motivation) can enhance engagement (Kim & Park, 2021). Individual differences (skill level, gender) significantly moderate this relationship (Ericsson, 2004).

Shandong Yingcai University's SMD emphasizes practical training but lacks research on perceived dance complexity's impact on satisfaction. This study addresses this gap while supporting the institution's applied talent development mission through curriculum optimization.

Methodology

This study employs a quantitative approach to investigate the current levels of students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction in the SMD of Yingcai University. The objectives of this study focus on all the current freshmen to senior students of the SMD in Shandong Yingcai University, totaling 460 students. According to the sample size determination table proposed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), under the conditions of 95% confidence level and ±5% error tolerance, the appropriate sample size is 210 students. In this study, the research participants were surveyed by combing the literature and analyzing related studies, combined with the Dance Complexity Scale (Rose et al., 2022) and the Classroom Satisfaction Scale (Wang & Luo, 2016). Dance Complexity Scale and Classroom Satisfaction Scale. This part of the research questionnaire used Rose et al.'s (2022) Dance Complexity Scale and Wang & Luo (2016) Classroom Satisfaction Scale to design the questionnaire. The Dance Complexity Scale and the Classroom Satisfaction Scale were in the form of a 5-point Likert scale, using a 5-point Likert scale form with 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree

A pilot study was conducted with 30 junior-year students from Shandong Yingcai University of SMD, achieving a 100% response rate. Reliability analysis demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with overall Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.960 for Perceived Dance Complexity (sub-dimensions: Body Awareness =0.908, Urge to Dance α=0.887, Dance Training =0.903) and 0.957 for Classroom Satisfaction (sub-dimensions: Teaching Quality =0.916, Peer Interaction =0.839, Self-Growth =0.884). Since all dimensions have Cronbach's Alpha coefficients exceeding 0.80, the questionnaire exhibits satisfactory reliability across all dimensions, making it a suitable data collection tool for subsequent formal assessments.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of Pretest Questionnaire **1**

Variable I	Cronbach Alpha	Variable	Cronbach Alpha
Perceived dance complexity	0.960	Classroom satisfaction	0.957
◆ Body Awareness	0.908	◆ Teaching Quality	0.916
◆ The urge to dance	0.887	◆ Classmate interaction	0.839
◆ Dance training	0.903	◆ Self-growth	0.884

Results

Demographic Analysis of Respondents

The study revealed the profile of the demographic background variables of students enrolled in the SMD in terms of their gender, grade distribution, whether or not they are class cadres, and their monthly household income. The researcher used descriptive analysis and chose frequencies and

percentages respectively. The results of the frequency analysis of the gender of the participants in the study showed that the male frequency was 103 with a percentage of 49.05% and the female frequency was 108 with a percentage of 51.43%. The number of male and female participants in this study is basically the same, with a balanced distribution of gender ratios.

The results of grade frequency analysis show that there are 50 students in the first year of university, accounting for 23.81% of the total sample; 44 students in the second year of university, accounting for 20.95%; 51 students in the third year of university, accounting for 24.29%; and 65 students in the fourth year of university, accounting for 30.95%. It shows that all four grades are covered in this survey, among which the proportion of university fourth-year students is the highest, and the distribution of grades is more reasonable.

The results of the frequency analysis of whether or not to serve as class cadres show that 96 students served as class cadres, accounting for 45.71%; 114 students did not serve as class cadres, accounting for 54.29%. It can be seen that the number of non-class cadres is slightly more than that of class cadres, and the overall proportion is relatively balanced, which provides a basis for the subsequent comparative analysis of variables.

The results of the frequency analysis of monthly family income show that: the number of students whose monthly family income is less than 5,000 yuan is 66, accounting for 31.43%; the number between 5,001-8,000 yuan is 45, accounting for 21.43%; the number between 8,001-12,000 yuan is 41, accounting for 19.52%; and the number of those with more than 12,000 yuan is 58 people, accounting for 27.62 per cent. On the whole, students' family economic backgrounds are more widely distributed, with all income level groups represented, showing a certain degree of diversity.

Table 2: Basic Information of Subjects (N=210)

Background	Group	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	103	49.05
	Female	108	51.43
Grand	First year	50	23.81
	Second year	44	20.95
	Third year	51	24.29
	Fourth year	65	30.95
Are you a class cadre?	Yes	96	45.71
	No	114	54.29
Monthly income	Less than 5000 RMB	66	31.43
	5001-8000 RMB	45	21.43
	8001-12000 RMB	441	19.52
	Above 12000 RMB103	58	27.62
Total		210	100

Descriptive Analysis on the Levels of Perceived Dance Complexity and Classroom Satisfaction

The study revealed a moderate-to-high overall level of perceived dance complexity (N=210). Among sub-dimensions, "body awareness" scored highest (M=3.48, high level), while "urge to dance" (M=2.97) and "dance training" (M=2.76) remained at moderate levels, indicating students' neutral perceptions of dance motivation and training intensity.

Overall satisfaction averaged 3.17 (moderate level). Sub-dimensions showed consistent moderate ratings: "teaching quality" (M=3.25), "peer interaction" (M=3.34), and "self-growth" (M=2.93), reflecting stable but improvable teaching outcomes.

"Body awareness" (M=3.48) was the strongest factor, highlighting students' confidence in movement perception. Conversely, "dance training" (M=2.76) scored lowest, suggesting challenges with training intensity and engagement.

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Perceived Dance Complexity and Class Satisfaction Among Students in the SMD

Dimension	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Deviation	p
Body awareness	Male	103	3.06	0.30	-17.21***	0.00
	Female	103	3.90	0.40		
The urge to dance	Male	103	2.86	1.20	-1.31	0.19
	Female	103	3.08	1.17		
Dance training	Male	103	2.74	1.01	-0.18	0.86
	Female	103	2.77	1.01		
Perceived dance complexity	Male	103	2.92	0.50	-6.18***	0.00
	Female	103	3.34	0.50		

Note: *<0.05, **<0.01, ***<0.001.

Differences Analysis on the levels of Perceived Complexity of Dance among Students of the SMD

The independent samples t-test revealed significant gender-based variations in perceived dance complexity perception (N=210). Female students exhibited significantly higher scores in both body awareness (M=3.90 vs. males' M=3.06, t=-17.21, p<0.001) and overall complexity perception (M=3.34 vs. M=2.92, t=-6.18, p<0.001), suggesting superior kinesthetic sensitivity. However, no statistically significant differences were observed in the urge to dance (p=0.19) or dance training dimensions (p=0.86), indicating comparable levels of intrinsic motivation and training adaptation between genders. These findings necessitate gender-differentiated pedagogical strategies in dance education curricula.

Differences Analysis on the levels of Classroom Satisfaction among Students in the SMD

Statistical analyses revealed significant variations in classroom satisfaction across demographic factors. Male students demonstrated substantially higher satisfaction in peer interaction (M=4.50 vs. females' 2.18, t=43.17, p<.001) and overall satisfaction (M=3.55 vs. 2.80, t=20.62, p<.001), while showing no gender differences in teaching quality (p=.25) or self-growth (p=.83). Grade-level differences emerged only in overall satisfaction (F=3.13, p=.04), with sophomores most satisfied (M=3.44). Family income significantly impacted teaching quality evaluations (F=72.29, p<.001), where lower-income students (<¥5,000/month) reported highest satisfaction (M=3.81). Class cadre status showed no significant effects across all dimensions (all p>.32), indicating uniform satisfaction regardless of leadership roles. These findings suggest the need for gender-sensitive teaching approaches while maintaining consistent instructional standards across student subgroups.

Correlation Analysis between Two Main Variables

The correlation between the variables of this study is significant. All three variables of students' perceived dance complexity showed strong correlations with all three variables of classroom satisfaction. Hypothesis H3 is valid. There is a significant correlation between students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction in the SMD.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis between Perceived Dance Complexity and Classroom Satisfaction of SMD Students

	BA	TUD	DT	PDC	QI	CI	SG	DCS
BA	1							
TUD	.261 **	1						
DT	.332**	.317**	1					
PDC	.476**	.791**	.437**	1				
QI	-.334**	-.411**	-.245**	-.403**	1			
CI	-.722**	-.308**	-.314**	-.368**	-.294*	1		
SG	-.556**	-.102**	-.275**	-.408**	-.219*	-.219*	1	
DCS	-.638**	-.376**	-.354**	-.347**	.336**	.858**	.285**	1

Note: **Significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed). *Significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

BD: Body Awareness, TUD: The urge to dance, DT: Dance Training, PDC: Perceived dance complexity

QI: Quality of instruction, CI: Classmate Interaction, SG: Self-growth, DCS: Dance Class Satisfaction

Discussion

Status of Perceived Dance Complexity among Students in the SMD

Students demonstrated moderate overall perceived dance complexity (M=3.13), with body awareness scoring highest (M=3.48), indicating strong physical control recognition. However, urge to

dance (M=2.97) and training complexity (M=2.76) remained moderate, suggesting need for enhanced motivational strategies and systematic training design in dance pedagogy.

Status of Students' Classroom Satisfaction in the SMD

Students reported moderate overall satisfaction (M=3.17), with peer interaction scoring highest (M=3.34), reflecting positive classroom dynamics. Teaching quality was satisfactory (M=3.25), while self-growth scored lowest (M=2.93), indicating need for more creative and individualized approaches to enhance personal development in dance education.

Differences in the Perceived Dance Complexity among Students of the School of SMD under Different Background Variables

This study identified significant gender differences in classroom satisfaction, with male students reporting higher peer interaction (M=4.50 vs. 2.18, t=43.17, $p<0.001$) and overall satisfaction (M=3.55 vs. 2.80, t=20.62, $p<0.001$), while no differences were found in teaching quality (p=0.25) or self-growth (p=0.83). Grade-level differences were minimal, with only overall satisfaction showing marginal significance (F=3.13, p=0.04), where sophomores scored highest (M=3.44) and seniors lowest (M=3.11). Class cadre status had no significant impact on satisfaction (all $p>0.32$). Family income significantly influenced teaching quality perceptions (F=72.29, $p<0.001$), with the lowest-income group (<¥5,000/month) most satisfied (M=3.81) and the middle-income group (¥5,001-8,000) least satisfied (M=2.73). These findings highlight the need for gender-sensitive teaching approaches, targeted support for senior students, and equitable resource allocation to address economic disparities in satisfaction.

Relationship between Perceived Dance Complexity and Classroom Satisfaction of Students in the SMD

Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation between students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction ($r = -0.347$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher complexity perceptions were associated with lower satisfaction. This suggests that when students perceive dance content as overly complex—potentially due to technical difficulty, heavy training loads, or comprehension challenges—it may trigger anxiety and frustration, reducing learning enjoyment and achievement. Conversely, moderate or low complexity perceptions facilitate confidence and positive feedback, enhancing overall course acceptance. In dance education, where physical skill and artistic expression are emphasized, students' self-assessment of mastery directly influences their learning experience and classroom evaluations.

Conclusions

1) Frequency analysis: From the results of descriptive statistics, students' overall evaluation of dance complexity was at a moderate level ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 0.54$). The body awareness dimension was perceived the strongest ($M = 3.48$). Dance training scored the lowest ($M = 2.76$). This suggests that students were more sensitive to body self-awareness in dance class, but still felt a greater sense of stress

and challenge with the intensity and content of professional training. In terms of classroom satisfaction, overall student ratings were also moderate (M = 3.17, SD = 0.45). Perceived peer interaction was relatively high (M = 3.34). The perception of self-growth was slightly lower (M = 2.93), reflecting that there is still room for improvement in the current dance classroom in promoting students' comprehensive development.

2) Comparison of Differences: The study revealed moderate levels of dance complexity perception (M=3.13) and classroom satisfaction (M=3.17) among students. Body awareness showed the highest complexity scores (M=3.48), while dance training was perceived as most challenging (M=2.76). In satisfaction dimensions, peer interaction scored highest (M=3.34), whereas self-growth ratings were comparatively lower (M=2.93), indicating potential areas for enhancing holistic student development in dance education. These findings suggest students demonstrate strong bodily awareness but experience notable training pressures, while classroom environments successfully foster peer interactions but could better support personal growth.

3) Analysis of Classroom Satisfaction Differences: The study revealed significant gender differences in classroom satisfaction, with male students demonstrating substantially higher scores in both peer interaction (M=4.50 vs. females' 2.18, $p<0.001$) and overall satisfaction (M=3.55 vs. 2.80, $p<0.001$). Grade-level analysis showed sophomore students had the highest satisfaction (M=3.44, F=3.13, p=0.04), while seniors reported the lowest (M=3.11). Family income significantly influenced satisfaction, with students from lower-income families (<$5,000) showing the most positive evaluations of instruction quality (M=3.81) and overall classroom experience (M=3.33) (both $p<0.01$). Interestingly, class cadre status did not significantly affect satisfaction ratings across any dimensions (all $p>0.05$), suggesting uniform classroom experiences regardless of leadership roles. These findings highlight the importance of considering demographic factors when designing dance curricula to enhance student satisfaction.

4) Correlation Analysis: A Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant negative correlation ($p < 0.01$) between all dimensions of students' perceived dance complexity and classroom satisfaction. The highest negative correlation coefficient was found between body awareness and peer interaction (r = -0.722). It suggests that when students are more sensitive to their perception of their physical state, they are more likely to be nervous or anxious about interacting and cooperating. The total dance complexity dimension was moderately negatively correlated with teaching quality (r = -0.403). This indicates that students' agreement with the effectiveness of teaching decreased when they perceived the dance content to be more difficult. Overall, the higher the complexity of the dance, the students' classroom satisfaction tended to decrease.

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