

RESULTS FROM THE "EXPLORING THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG COMPETITIVE DANCERS" STUDY



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To begin, we would like to thank all the dancers, parents, teachers, studio owners and competition owners who made this study possible. We greatly appreciate your time and willingness to participate in our research. Going forward, this research will be used to help better support young dancers and their families in their experiences with competitive dance.

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DEMOGRAPHICS

To date, we have collected data at 12 dance competitions from the beginning of 2018 through the summer of 2019. Through this data collection, we gathered responses from 464 dancers and 682 parents and grandparents that came from 112 different studios across Canada and the United States.

Dancers

Of the dancers who participated in our research, 92% were female and 8% were male. The dancers who participated in the research, ranged in age from 8-18 years old, and on average were approximately 11 years old. With regards to the race of dancers who participated in the study, 83.7% identified as Caucasian, 7.8% identified as mixed or multiracial, 3.2% identified as Asian, and the remainder of the dancers identified as Black, Latino/Hispanic, Arabic, or First Nations.

Parents

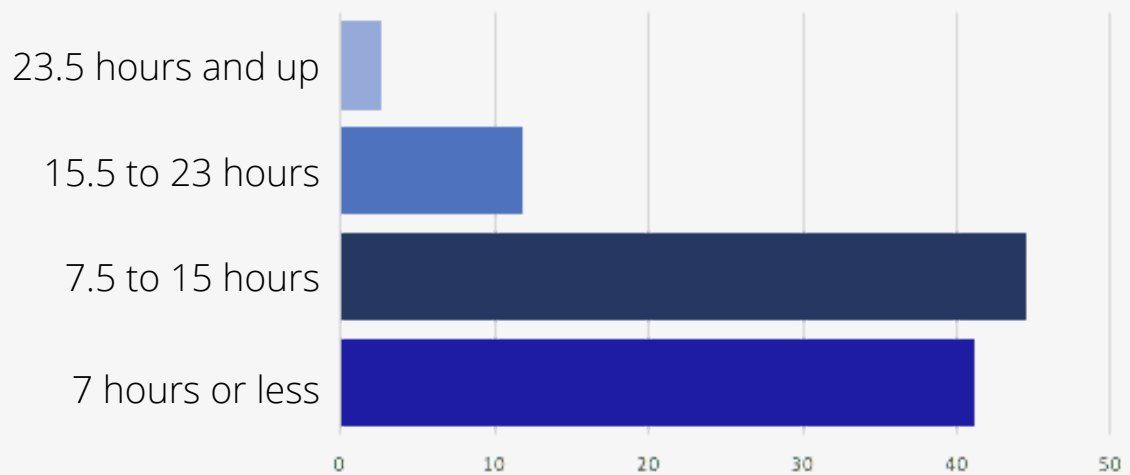
Among the parents and grandparents who participated, 86.9% identified as female whereas 13.1% identified as male. The parents ranged in age from 23 to 65 years old, with an average age of approximately 43 years of age. Grandparents ranged in age from 65-75 years old, with an average age of 69 years old. In regards to race, 86.8% identified as Caucasian, 5.2% identified as Asian and 3.2% identified as mixed or multiracial, with the remainder identifying as Black, Latino/Hispanic, Arabic, or First Nation and Métis.



HIGHLIGHTS FOR DANCERS

DANCER EXPERIENCES

- The dancers reported that they danced as little as 30 minutes per week to as much as 35 hours per week, with an average response of 10 hours per week.



- Dancers also reported performing on stage approximately 25 times in a year, with the lowest response being 1 on-stage performance per year and the highest response being more than 100 on-stage performances in a year

Favourite dance styles

- The top five favourite dance styles reported by dancers were...



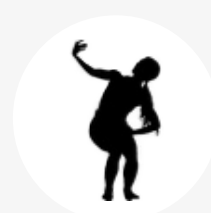
Jazz



Hip-Hop



Lyrical



Contemporary



Ballet

WHY DO DANCERS CHOOSE TO DANCE?

I WANT TO KEEP UP MY CURRENT SKILL LEVEL
DANCE IS INTERESTING
Dance makes me happy
I like spending time with others dancing
Dance is fun
I want to get better at dance *I want to live a healthy life*
Dance is stimulating
I LIKE TO PERFORM
I LIKE THE CHALLENGE

STUDIO ENVIRONMENT

96.5% of dancers said they enjoy working with their teammates

80.7% of dancers felt understood by their dance teachers

68.0% of dancers felt their dance teachers provide them with choices and options

55.7% of dancers felt their dance teachers listen to how they would like to do things

85.4% of dancers felt their dance teachers convey confidence in their ability to do well at dance

76.2% of dancers felt their dance teachers convey confidence in their ability to do well at dance

60.8% of dancers felt their dance teachers try to understand how they see things before suggesting a new way to do things

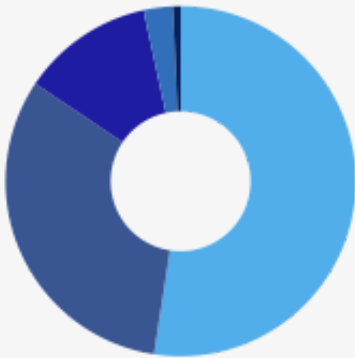
IMPORTANCE: A DANCER'S PERSPECTIVE

	I think that it is very important	I think it is very important to my dance teacher	I think it is very important to my mom	I think it is very important to my dad
That I win at competition	22.1%	23.7%	5.9%	7.6%
That I perform well at competition	67.4%	56.2%	25.8%	12.2%
That I improve from competition	72.8%	64.7%	26.2%	19.5%
That I perform well at recital	51%	49.3%	21.9%	13.9%
That I practice my dance routines	55.9%	79%	32.1%	10.6%

EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE OF DANCE

School

■ All As ■ As and Bs ■ All Bs ■ Mix of Bs and Cs ■ All Cs or Ds



98.7% of dancers said doing well in school was important to them

OVERALL, DANCERS REPORTED FAIRLY HIGH GRADES

EXPERIENCES OUTSIDE OF DANCE, CONTINUED

Activities outside of dance

► The top 5 activities dancers participated in outside of dance were...



- 1 Swimming
- 2 Track and Field
- 3 Visual Arts
- 4 Soccer
- 5 Language Classes

Social media

► 31.9% of dancers said that social media is a part of their daily routine

The most popular forms of social media among dancers were...



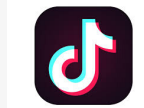
Instagram



Snapchat



Facebook



Tik Tok

HIGHLIGHTS FOR PARENTS

PARENTS' EXPERIENCES IN DANCE

99.0% of parents said they enjoy or totally enjoy watching their child dance

88.7% of parents said they enjoy or totally enjoy recitals

87.2% of parents said they enjoy or totally enjoy competition

60.9% of parents said they get nervous or totally nervous when their child performs on stage

52.3% of parents said they would be upset or totally upset if their child could not dance anymore

14.7% of parents said they would be upset or totally upset if their child made a mistake during a dance

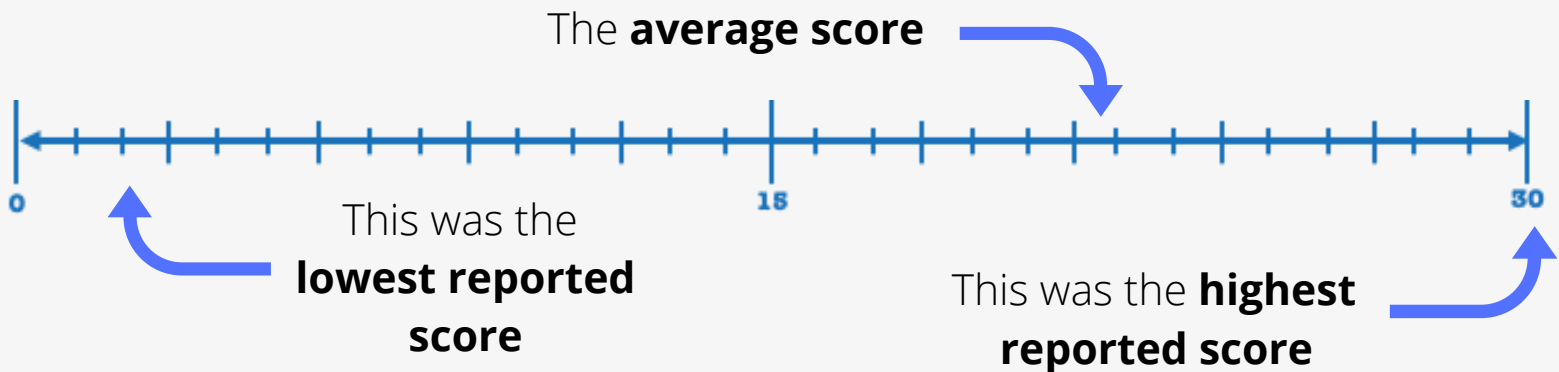
9.1% of parents said they would be upset or totally upset if another dancer made a mistake during one of their child's dances

Popular media tends to portray dance parents, particularly moms involved with dance, as overly invested with their child's dance experiences. This common stereotype of a "dance mom" is someone who puts a lot of pressure on their child to succeed in dance. However, our results demonstrate that this may not be accurate. When it comes to the parents' enjoyment of dance, our results show that their feelings about dance stem more from watching their child dance than from engaging with the competitive aspects of dance. It is also clear that parents tended to be quite supportive of their dancers rather than overly critical, contrary to the common perception of a "dance mom".

DANCERS' MENTAL HEALTH

Self-Esteem

Overall, dancers reported **normative levels of self-esteem**: On a scale of 0-30, where higher scores indicate higher self-esteem and normative scores fall between 15 and 25...



Our results also showed that self-esteem scores among dancers tended to be lower as the number of hours of training per week increased. This does not mean that all dancers who train intensely will have lower self-esteem. It means that there may be a tendency for self-esteem to dip a little as training increases. This is likely due to an increased number of opportunities to receive criticism - both from teachers and from the dancers themselves. It is important to note that even dancers that trained intensely tended to have normative levels of self-esteem.

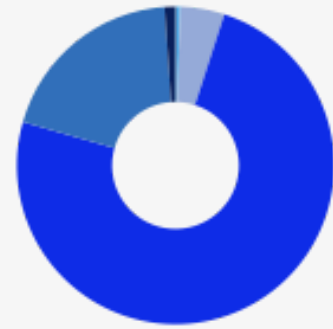
Anxiety

- Overall, dancers reported relatively low levels of anxiety compared to community samples of children in the same age range.
- On average, dancers reported that they had experienced 3 of the 10 symptoms that we asked about
- 37% of the dancers reported that they had experienced one or none of the symptoms

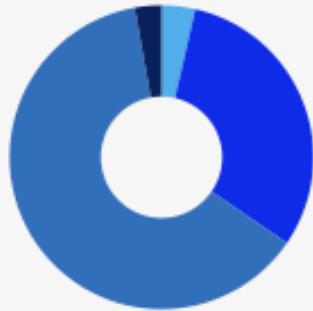
DANCERS' MENTAL HEALTH, CONTINUED

Body Image

Most dancers thought that their body was just right.



■ Much too thin ■ Too thin ■ Just right
■ A little too fat ■ Much too fat



■ Much thinner ■ A little thinner
■ Stay the same ■ A bit fatter

Most dancers said they would like their bodies to stay the same.

Perfectionism

We measured two types of perfectionism among the dancers.



1: Self-Oriented Perfectionism represents a drive to achieve exceptionally high standards that the dancer sets for themselves.

Overall, our dancers reported high levels of Self-Oriented Perfectionism. The average score for Self-Oriented Perfectionism in our study is higher than the average scores for children from the general community.

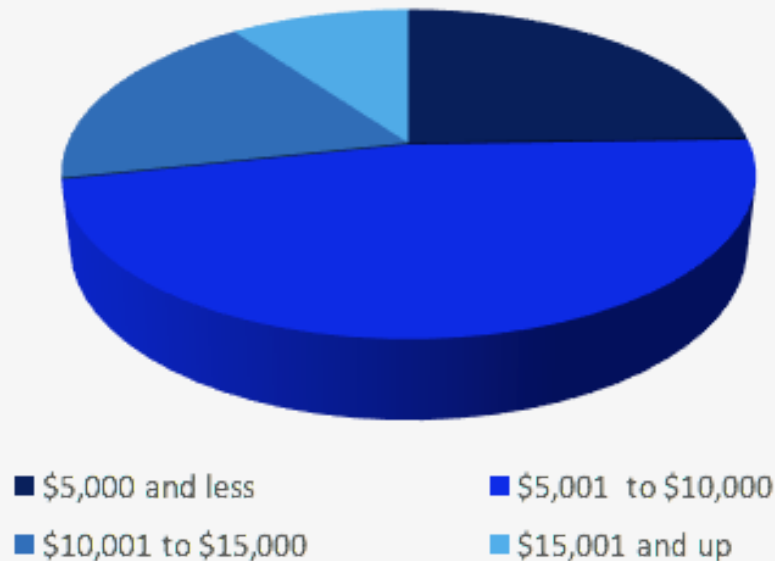


2: Socially Prescribed Perfectionism represents the belief that other people in the dancer's life demand perfection of the dancer.

Overall, our dancers reported relatively low levels of Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. The average score for Socially Prescribed Perfectionism in our study was lower than the average scores for children from the general community.

FINANCES

- ▶ On average, parents reported spending between \$7,500 and \$8,000 on dance per year.
- ▶ Reported overall costs ranged anywhere from \$1,000 to upwards of \$20,000.



- ▶ 66.6% of parents said that the costs associated with dance impacted their decisions about how much dance their child can take on.
- ▶ Our results also showed that higher family income was associated with less concern for the cost associated with dance when making these decisions.

The top five financial factors influencing decisions about dance were:

- 1 Travel to Competition
- 2 Competition Fees
- 3 Class Fees
- 4 Accommodations at Competition
- 5 Specialty Fees

BALANCE

- 55.9% of parents said that balancing the needs of their family impacted their decisions about how much dancing their child can take on.

The top five challenges in balancing dance and family life were:



Leisure Time



Work Schedule



Other sports and activities

Homework and Study Time



Feeding your children



- Here are a selection of comments left by parents about how they address the challenges in balancing dance and family life:

- "Juggling things was more difficult with a younger family but now my older children are driving themselves and can help with driving our youngest dancer. We've figured it out over the years."

- "One must be extremely organized!"

- "We homeschool which makes competitive dancing much easier on our schedules and family."

- "We are fortunate to have someone who assists with meal preparation, otherwise we would never manage two jobs and all this dancing. Parents are great and share driving to and from all classes"

- "We sacrifice."

HIGHLIGHTS FOR DANCE INDUSTRY PARTNERS

CHOOSING A STUDIO

- ▶ 92.6% of parents said they were happy with their current studio
- ▶ Of the parents who said they were happy with their current studio, 58.2% said that they were very happy

The top studio-related factors that influenced parents' choice of studio were...



The top financial factors that influenced parents' choice of studio were...

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 Class fees | 5 Specialty fees |
| 2 Travel to Competition | 6 Accommodations at competition |
| 3 Competition fees | 7 Required additional training |
| 4 Costumes | 8 Dance attire & class uniform |

WE ASKED PARENTS...

What would you like to see changed about your studio?

- The most common theme was that parents would like to receive clearer, more consistent communication from their studio owners
- Other concerns included...
 - "More space for large group practices"
 - "Better office organization"
 - "More time for warmup and working on choreography earlier in the season"
 - "More encouragement for teamwork and conflict management"

What do you value most about your studio?

- Below are a selection of quotes that reflect some common themes from the parents' responses to this question:
 - "The way the kids build each other up. They are always cheering for each other"
 - "The full commitment that is made to fostering a love of dance and an attitude where all dancers push themselves to achieve their very best"
 - "How everyone cares about each other. It is like a second family!"
 - "We love our teachers and studio director. They are fabulous, age appropriate and encourage our kids to be the best they can be."

COMPETITION EXPERIENCES

TOP 3 STYLES FOR GROUPS



TOP 3 STYLES FOR SPECIALTIES



Scores vs Comments

▶ **76.5%** of dancers said **their score** is important to them

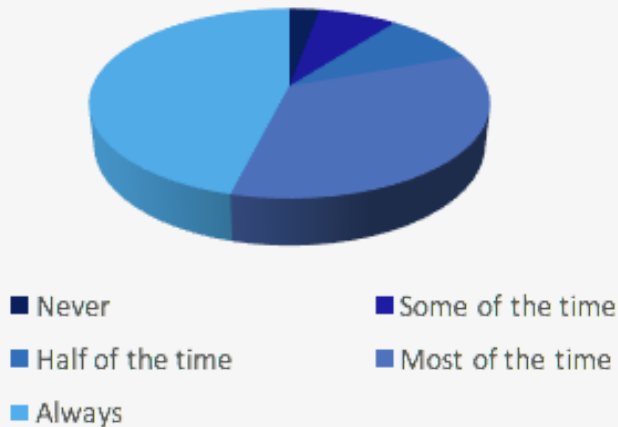


▶ **91.8%** of dancers said **the judges' comments** are important to them



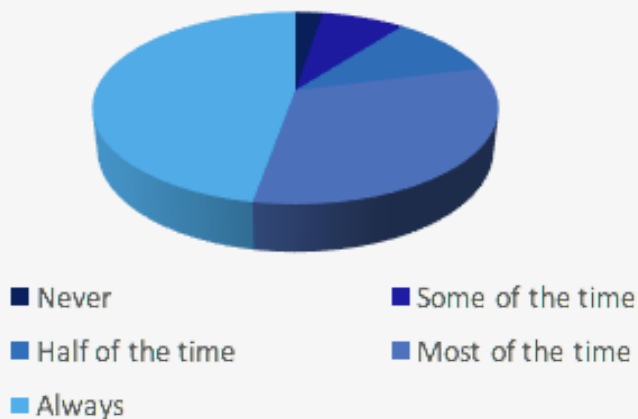
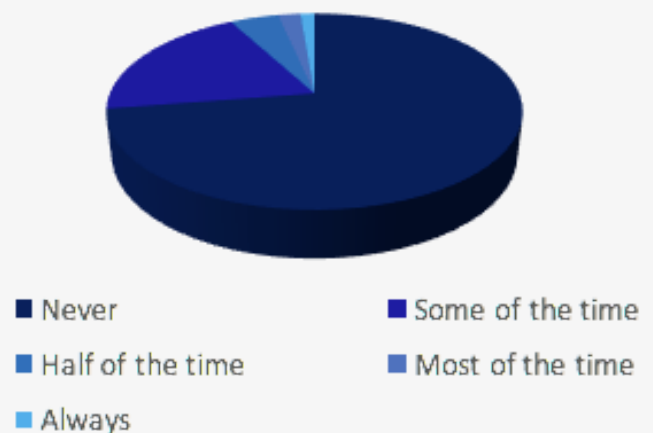
COMPETITION EXPERIENCES CONTINUED

Costumes



Most dancers liked the way their bodies look in their dance costumes.

Most dancers never felt uncomfortable about the way their bodies look in their dance costumes



Most dancers thought their dance costumes were just right for their body



THANK YOU

To our incredibly
supportive dance
industry partners

