

Perceived Emotions Through Dance Due to Gender Biases

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Introduction

When viewing dances, we are able to tell which emotions the dancers are trying to portray. Previous work has shown that people are sensitive to the velocity and acceleration of dance movements when interpreting the emotion. Participants were asked to express different emotions like joy, sadness, and anger, and it was shown that velocity and acceleration were at a high when performing movement for anger, and lower for joy and sadness (Sawada, et al., 2003). This is related to how we perceive emotion in dance by interpreting variables such as velocity and acceleration, leading to our conclusion of the emotion projected.

The way we perceive emotions given through dance can be altered depending on which sex is performing the dance. Gender bias is seen in many everyday occurrences including how a man or woman should act. Studying gender bias is a way for us to look at societal norms and conclude whether it is present when dancers are showing particular emotions. Gender stereotypes such as women being more emotional, with exception of anger, can fuel how participants perceive emotions portrayed by different sex dancers (McRae, et al., 2008).

The experiment has participants decide which emotion the male and female dancer are representing which can give us insight on what emotions are being perceived from each gender. The perceived emotions could be found incorrect due to the fact that men and women move differently due to body structure differences, even though they are trying to give off the same emotion (Oliver & Risner, 2018). It could also be due to societal norms that men are supposed to act athletic and be masculine whereas women are told to be feminine and that they need to be flexible (Schupp, 2017). We will give feedback based on the positive emotions chosen for each dancer and determine whether their choices were influenced by gender stereotypes.

Our hypothesis is that participants will conclude that female dancers are dancing with the intent of showing positive emotions, whereas male dancers will be perceived as dancing for negative emotions.

Method

Participants:

This study had 74 participants. The participants were students at The Marion campus of The Ohio State University taking Introduction to Psychology. Of the participants, 46 were females and 28 were males. 17 participants had previous experience with dance, while 57 did not.

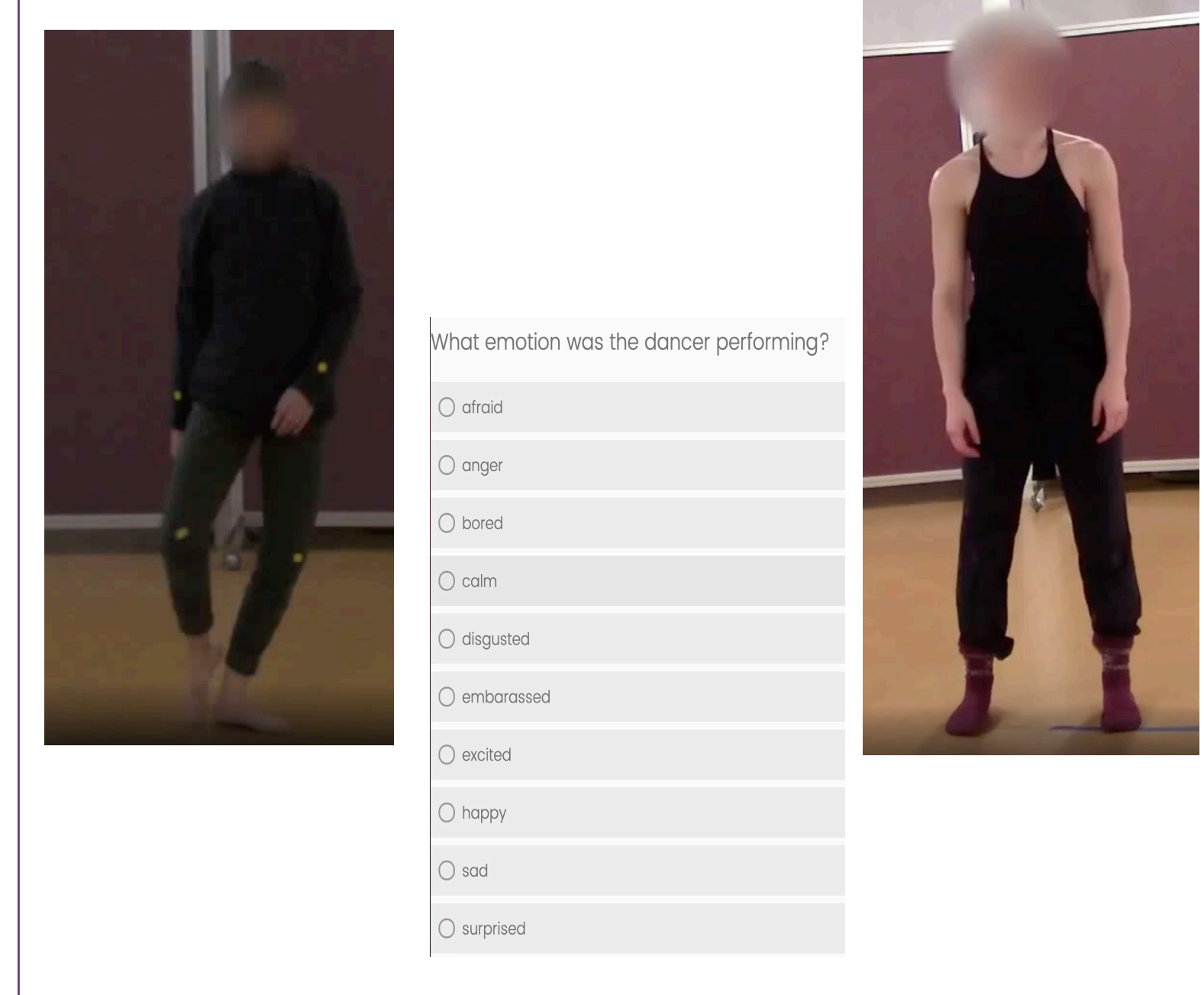
Stimuli:

There were both males and females performing their own interpretation of the emotion through dance. The faces of the dancers were blurred to eliminate any facial expression associated with the emotion. (See Figure 1.) No music was played during the dance. There were 10 emotions: afraid, angry, bored, calm, disgusted, embarrassed, excited, happy, sad, and surprised. There were 20 dances total.

Procedure:

Each participant started by reading an instruction page on what videos they were going to see and how to respond to what they saw. The participants were then asked how well they thought they would do defining what emotion was being portrayed in each dance. One video would play at the top of the screen and participants were allowed to watch the videos multiple times. Underneath the video was a list of emotions that was kept in order throughout each video, although the videos were randomized for each participant. (See Figure 1.) After the participants viewed all 20 videos, they were asked general questions such as their gender, if they had any dance experience and to explain if they did, and then asked how confident they were in their answers for each dance.

Figure 1. Stimuli and survey example



Discussion

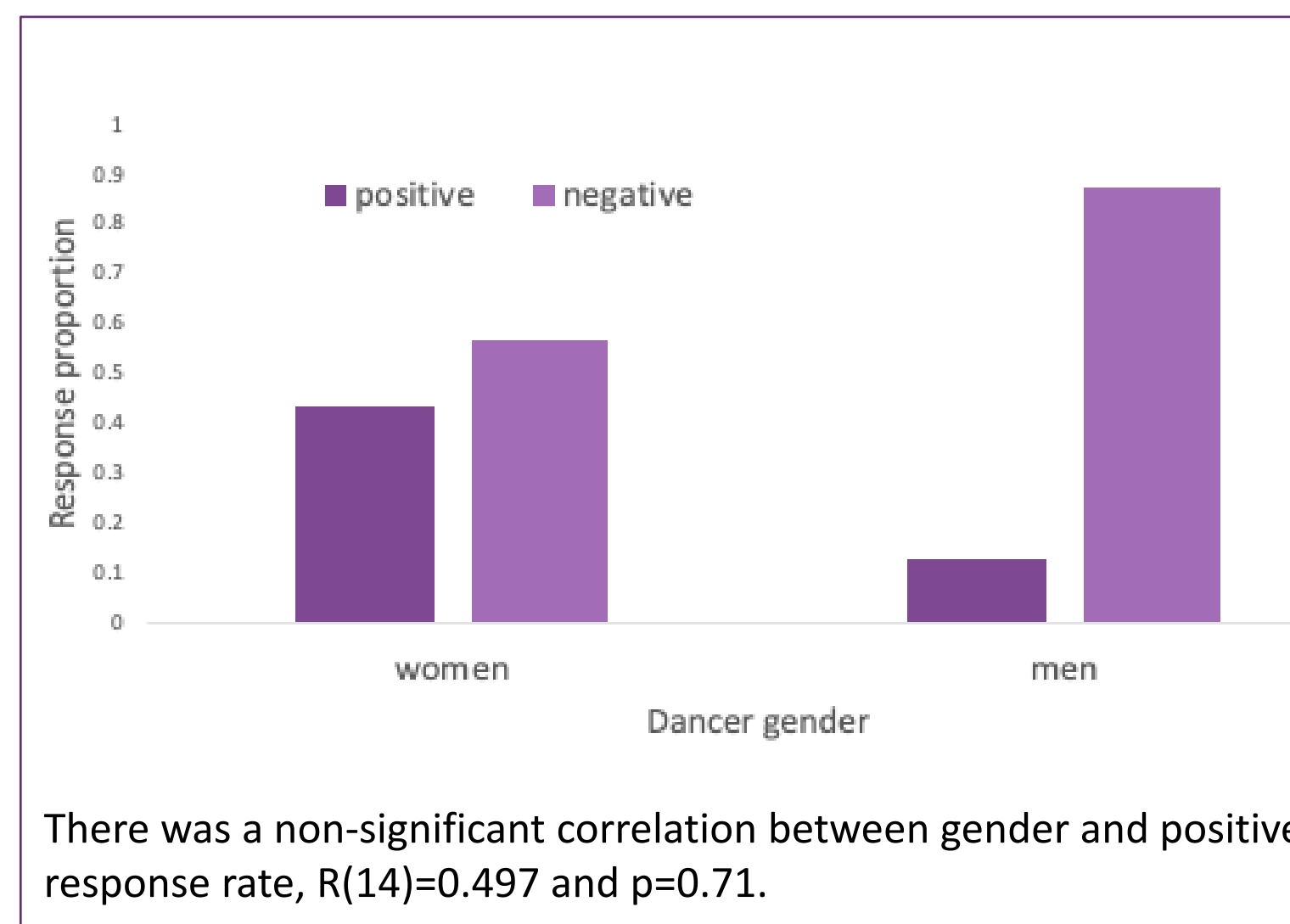
Through our research we discovered a pattern that followed our initial prediction. The trends of the data leaned more towards positive emotions being interpreted from female dancers versus male dancers, and negative emotions being interpreted by males versus females. This data does support our hypothesis. These results were insignificant but did show a pattern similar to our prediction.

Future Work

Our results were skewed due to there were more negative emotions than positive emotions. In future studies it is suggested to have an even number of both positive and negative emotions.

There are certain biases set to gender. This is how gender stereotypes are formed. How do these biases play a role in this study? In a future study it could be beneficial to ask participants what their biases are on gender stereotypes. It could also be beneficial to ask participants to remove their bias when participating in this study. There is room for error, as it is hard to completely remove bias.

Results



References

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