

A Rollercoaster of Emotions: How Non-dancers Understand Emotions that are Communicated Nonverbally through Dance Performances

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ABSTRACT

The following research investigated how non-dancers, or people with no dance experience, understand emotions that are communicated nonverbally through dance performances. The communication theory of sensemaking was enacted to understand and investigate how specific movements and expressions in dance performances evoked emotions in non-dancers. The data was collected through twelve semi-structured, qualitative interviews with college students who had no training or performance history with dance and was analyzed through thematic analysis. Non-dancers were able to identify a wide range of emotions. The results showed that emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and struggle were the most easily communicated throughout dance performances. These emotions were communicated through a variety of qualities and elements of the dancer's movements including energy, direction, and speed of movement, facial expressions, body position, jumps and leaps, turns, and arm and hand movements. The interviews, with guidance from the sensemaking theory, provided insight that the elements and qualities of dance movements communicated emotions to non-dancers because they were correlated to personal experiences and media sources.

INTRODUCTION

The dance industry's market hit an all-time high in 2019 at 4.2 billion dollars (Dance Studio Market, 2021). With dance having been around forever and just recently peaking in terms of the industry's market, it is obvious that people are more interested in it than ever before. Dance and nonverbal communication work together to shape the human experience and contribute to the perception of the surrounding world. Interpretive dance, specifically, is a form of nonverbal communication and human expression that translates specific feelings and emotions into movements (Hava-Robbins, 2002). While this form of dance, along with many others, has been booming in popularity recently, little research explores the communicative dimensions.

Dance relies on the human body to convey messages because it is constantly serving as a medium for communication. The ability of the human body to be a communicative medium is a phenomenon often overlooked in a world consumed by media usage and other daily complexities. Natural and impulsive body gestures and movements have meanings that are interpreted and often universally recognized; they make people feel a certain way and understand things they otherwise may not. Dance is a form of movement that is filled with stories and meanings without using any verbal cues. Because it is so widely understood by people of many different cultures, dance has often been referred to as a universal language (Arsith & Popa Tănase, 2018). This expression of self and emotion, which is an integral part of many cultures, is widely accepted and often celebrated (Guha, 2012). It is up to the audience members to understand and interpret what they are being shown through the nonverbal prompts that dance presents.

The purpose of this study is to develop a deeper understanding of the nonverbal, communicative art form of dance, and the ways it can be used to communicate emotions to non-dancers. Van Dyck et al. (2013) alluded to certain movements, gestures, and facial expressions by dancers being correlated to specific feelings or emotions being felt by the audience members. To extend previous research, this study will investigate how audiences interpret emotions in body movements and facial features in dance. Although the processes people use to decode meanings from body movements may be different, they often lead to similar presumptions of messages (Peick, 2005). This study aims to draw conclusions based on nonverbal communicative patterns through dance movements and facial features. It is vital that dance be studied further to analyze and acknowledge the various ways people with non-dance backgrounds interpret emotions portrayed through body movements in dance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand ways non-dancers interpret messages presented in dance performances, previous research will be discussed to provide background information on how movements in dance and facial expressions act as a means of emotional expression for audience members to interpret. To begin, the importance and relevance of nonverbal communication will be explained to understand ways in which nonverbal cues are used to enhance communication experiences. Then, dance will be examined through the lens of nonverbal communication. By doing this, a deeper understanding of the ways in which dancers utilize specific body movements to add to facial features and portray certain emotions and feelings will be established. Finally, the sensemaking theory will contribute to the understanding of how people make sense of the nonverbal actions they see. The sensemaking theory will examine ways in which dance is able to be interpreted and understood without using any form of verbal communication.

Importance and Relevance of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is defined as nonlinguistic ways people intentionally influence and send messages to others through shared meanings of head and body movements, touch, interpersonal distance, posture, facial expressions, paralanguage, and other physical reactions (Arsith & Popa Tănase, 2018; Hall et al., 2018; Jandt, 2007; Porter, 1969). Because it is essentially every form of human interaction that sends messages to others excluding words, nonverbal communication embodies a large portion of human communication (Peick, 2005). Nonverbal communication is clearly a common denominator in social life because almost every experience and interaction is connected to it in some way (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Hall et al., 2018). Nonverbal communication has a variety of uses, including forming impressions, making relationships clear, regulating interactions, and replacing, altering, and sending complex spoken messages (Jandt, 2007). Because of the prevalence of nonverbal usage, having strong nonverbal skills is a vital part of a human's social competence (Greene & Burleson, 2003). Numerous communication characteristics contribute to the understanding of nonverbal communication, but factors moderating nonverbal messages, nonverbal communication of emotions, and encoding and decoding messages are most important in this study.

Factors Moderating Nonverbal Messages. The ways nonverbal communication sends messages differ based on a variety of factors. Some factors that influence nonverbal communication are culture, age, sex, personality characteristics, and intelligence of the people communicating (Greene & Burleson, 2003). Because cultures vary in customs, norms, and nonverbal display rules, nonverbal cues may have different meanings among different cultures. Age and intelligence relate in the sense that a person who has a deeper understanding of the situation may be able to interpret nonverbal cues more effectively. Someone older is more likely to be more socially competent in interactions than a young child who may not fully understand the situation.

Based on previous research, sex plays a large role in nonverbal communication (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Hall et al., 2018). Women tend to be much more expressive in the way they communicate and use many more nonverbal cues than do men (Greene & Burleson, 2003). On average, women smile and touch more, listen better, use more eye contact, and overall are more responsive (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Hall et al., 2018). Because of these different characteristics among sexes, their ability to send and receive nonverbal information differs, making communication complicated among people of different sexes (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002). In addition to sex, people also differ in their life experiences and upbringing. People may have developed different meanings for particular cues because of their personal uniqueness.

Encoding and Decoding Messages. Nonverbal communication must be intentional in the sense that one person must be trying to send a message to another person to interpret. The sender must consciously encode a message or send a nonverbal cue to another person or group of people. A nonverbal cue is defined as a behavior that does not use words that a perceiver may be able to observe, decode, and respond to (Hall et al., 2018). Encoding, sometimes called nonverbal expressivity, is defined as the process of enacting expressions to represent the internal experienced state of emotion by sending nonverbal cues (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Hall et al., 2018). These cues, if encoded correctly, can invoke meaning and understanding when effectively decoded without the use of any verbal messages. Nonverbal encoding skills pertain to the way people express emotions and convey meanings in a way that is socially and culturally understood by others (Greene & Burleson, 2003). For example, if a person smiles, they are encoding a warm, welcoming, and friendly invitation that is generally understood by most cultures (Jandt, 2007). Encoding all messages in a quality way is very important so messages even as simple as a smile can be understood in the way they are intended to be.

Decoding, sometimes called receiving ability, is defined as the inferences perceived by the receivers of encoded nonverbal behaviors or appearances (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Hall et al., 2018). When a message is decoded, it means an interpretation was made by the receiver. It does not necessarily mean that the intended message of the encoder was received (Greene & Burleson, 2003). Decoding ability is determined by a variety of factors including mood, status, and culture, all of which alter the way people effectively receive messages by changing the lens through which they view nonverbal cues (Hall et al., 2018). The ability to decode messages greatly affects social relationships because it changes the trajectory of the communication that is taking place.

Nonverbal Communication of Emotions. Effectively understanding emotions is crucial to communication and requires empathy, social intelligence, and personal perception (Greene & Burleson, 2003; Shikanai et al., 2013). These qualities make people more responsive to changes in attitude and emotional expression, allowing the decoder to more quickly understand intended messages. Emotional expressions are believed to have developed in people from pre-human nonverbal displays according to Darwin's findings, which began his study of emotional nonverbal communication (Tracy et al., 2015). Since then, six expressions provided the strongest evidence for his claim, including, "anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise" (Tracy et al., 2015, p. 25). These six identifiable emotions are most often interpreted based on facial features including the eyes, eyebrows, mouth, and scrunching of the nose (Tracy et al., 2015). The vast majority of the nonverbal understanding of emotions lies in facial expressions and vocal qualities (Greene & Burleson, 2003). Generally, people are more skilled at interpreting pleasurable facial expressions than unpleasant ones (Greene & Burleson, 2003). In addition to facial messages, body movements can also nonverbally communicate emotions (Duncan, 1969). Differing frequencies of body movement and active body areas, typically translate to different emotions being perceived by people interpreting the messages (Duncan, 1969). Although facial expressions and body movements contribute to encoding messages, it ultimately comes down to the receiver decoding the messages sent to effectively communicate.

Recognizing that emotions are most easily identifiable by the eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth, previous research suggests that the six most identifiable emotions, "anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness, and surprise," are most accurately decoded by facial features (Tracy et al., 2015, p. 25). This study will extend this research by adding dance movements to facial features. In this study, the face of the dancer will express emotions, and the ability of non-dancers to decode emotions based on body movements and facial features will be observed.

Dance as a Communication Method

Dance is the oldest established art and has been used for thousands of years to express feelings through gestures, movements, and facial features as a visual language before a verbal language existed (Huang, 2022). The art of dance breaks down communicative barriers and allows people to build deeper relationships with others and within themselves through nonverbal communication and emotional expression (Arsith & Popa Tănase, 2018; Huang, 2022). Dance does this by using the human body as the medium to communicate through creative performance (Frith et al., 2020; Huang, 2022; Toro Calonje & Lopez-Aparicio Pérez, 2018). The body as the medium can convey more messages and emotional information than any other medium by altering the speed and force of movements (Sakata et al., 2004; Shikanai et al., 2013). The messages and emotions encoded into the performance through body movements usually hold a variety of important meanings to the dancer which will be further discussed in this section along with specific features that are used to convey particular emotions.

Purpose of Communicating Message through Dance. Communicating through dance allows people to express complex ideas and feelings in a creative, nonverbal way that are often difficult to verbally explain (Frith et al., 2020). An example of a complex idea that may be easier to explain through dance is identity. Aspects of a person's identity that can be communicated through dance movements include ethnicity, culture, race, and religion, along with other personal attributes (Hansen, 2006; Oh, 2020; Serlin et al., 2007). Historical identity, for example, often seen in Mexican folkloric dance, recaptures the past and reinforces role expectations for men and women through dance performances (Hansen, 2006). In addition to better understanding one's identity, dance serves to form a deep mind-body connection by expressing and communicating intensely felt emotions (Arsith & Popa Tănase, 2018).

Dance can also be used therapeutically to allow children and people with disabilities or impaired capacity to use nonverbal communication to express how they are feeling when they have difficulty verbally communicating (Nyström & Lauritzen, 2005). It has specifically been used with dementia patients to replace speech while conveying emotions. Toro Calonje & Lopez-Aparicio Pérez (2018) found that people used dance to experience self-expression without fear of judgment from others and a form of communication without needing to speak. As an

alternative to verbal language and an important method of establishing identity, dance has a valuable purpose for many people.

Features of Dance that Convey Messages. Emotions are conveyed by five primary physical elements in dance including, “energy, time, stability, expansion, and regularity” (Sakata et al., 2004, p. 442). By altering these aspects, the audience interprets various messages and understands the movement states differently because of distinct movement features (Van Dyck et al., 2013). Joy, anger, sadness, and fear are most identifiable by distinct movements, so they will be analyzed in this section (Van Dyck et al., 2013; Boone & Cunningham, 2001). Joy in dance is often decoded by many changes in movement tempo, taking up a lot of floor space, turning motions, and movements projecting outward from the body, such as skipping and jumping (Shikanai et al., 2013; Van Dyck et al., 2013). Angry feelings are usually defined by outward movement from the body as well, but they also include speed and force of arm and leg movements, and high activity (Van Dyck et al., 2013). Conversely, sad feelings are decoded by the bending and stretching of the dancer, weak arm movements, and low energy (Van Dyck et al., 2013). Fear is commonly decoded by the use of force, little rotation, and slower movements (Boone & Cunningham, 2001). To further understand these movements, Van Dyck et al. (2013) compared the observed emotions of happiness and sadness. They concluded that in the happy condition, movements of the limbs and hands were generally faster and more impulsive and hand movement was expanded (Van Dyck et al., 2013).

Hands play a significant role in emotional conveyance (Van Dyck et al., 2013). The hands are a very expressive part of the human body, which enables them to be an integral instrument in understanding complex thoughts and feelings expressed through gestures and movements. Because of the intricate movements hands can make, they are used in a variety of cultural dances including Asian, Indian, Balinese, and Javanese dances, as well as numerous others (Van Dyck et al., 2013). The hand’s ability to move at such high velocities while being precise and controlled is most likely the reason they are so expressive. Previous research has proven that facial expressions can convey complex emotions; however, little research exists on how body movements can also contribute to the understanding of emotions by adding to facial features. This study will add to previous research by examining the ability of emotions to be conveyed in dance performances by body movements in addition to facial features. It will analyze characteristics of body movements that reinforce facial expressions, which allow people to associate with different emotions.

Communication Sensemaking Theory

Sensemaking is the process of learning and connecting cues to a previous frame of reference (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Salem, 2007). The sensemaking theory has made much progress since being developed in 1972 by Brenda Dervin and colleagues (Dervin, 1999). It has defined itself as a methodology that addresses the in-between and provides knowledge in a world of gaps (Dervin, 1998). The theory aligns with the assumption that humans desire to have answers and structure the unknown (Dervin, 1999; Allard-Poesi, 2005). As the outside world is constantly changing and evolving, people are sense-making and sense-unmaking to understand themselves, their culture, their society, and their organizations as an ongoing accomplishment (Dervin, 1998; Allard-Poesi, 2005). The sensemaking process is used communicatively by creating an understanding of the nonverbal cues and gestures others are constantly projecting, which happens often while observing dance.

The Sensemaking Process. To understand something, people go through a sensemaking process without even realizing it. The sensemaking process can only be applied to things people encounter and place their attention on (Allard-Poesi, 2005). The process of sensemaking is defined as enacting data, or observing a phenomenon, transforming that data or experience into knowledge, then finally storing that newly acquired information as a part of memory (Salem, 2007). It involves linking newly obtained knowledge to a previous frame of reference and past experiences to create meanings out of situations (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Salem, 2007). By referring to past experiences to create meanings out of new scenarios, people revisit the interpretations that they have developed and learned from previously to create new understandings (Allard-Poesi, 2005). The sensemaking process starts with observing a cue, framing it in similar past experiences, and then making sense of it (Salem, 2007). Since everyone has extremely diverse histories and past experiences, developing universally shared meanings is nearly impossible when using the sensemaking theory (Allard-Poesi, 2005). Although the sensemaking process occurs similarly for everyone, different interpretations are often concluded because it heavily relies on past experiences. The sensemaking process occurs when making any observation, including watching dance performances.

Sensemaking in Observing Dance. Sensemaking focuses on movement and fluidity (Dervin, 1999). As dancers constantly change their facial expressions and the way their bodies are moving, they are encoding messages

they hope to be effectively decoded and made sense of by the audience members. Since dance is full of overdramatic movements, dancers and non-dancers alike, including children as young as four, young adults, and elderly people can decode movements in dance and relate them to an expression they know to make sense of it (Shikanai et al., 2013; Van Dyck et al., 2013; Boone & Cunningham, 2001). Decoding cues that come from frequency, speed, and form of observed movements allow audience members to make sense of what they are observing (Shikanai et al., 2013). Since each emotion has a different meaning, it is defined by different movements which undergo the sensemaking processes in different ways and lead to different emotional understandings (Van Dyck et al., 2013). The sensemaking process holds extreme power in dance because it enables simple movements to express several emotions (Toro Calonje & Lopez-Aparicio Pérez, 2018). This study will add to previous research by understanding how the sensemaking process takes place when participants observe body movements and facial expressions.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The sensemaking theory enables people to develop a perceived interpretation from an observation by linking observed phenomena to past experiences (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Dervin 1998). When it comes to dance and body movements, the sensemaking process is constantly taking place to create an understanding of the encounter being experienced. Humans desire to fill gaps of knowledge, which is an important characteristic in understanding how non-dancers enact the sensemaking process when they are viewing performances (Dervin, 1998). Salem (2007) found that these gaps in knowledge are filled by relating a new event to a memory previously understood by the individual. In terms of dance, this refers to observing a new movement, pattern of movements, or facial expression and developing an understanding through the correlation of an already experienced and understood situation. The sensemaking theory will provide insight into the ability non-dancers have to decode messages the dancer is sending.

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

Dance is rich in nonverbal communication and emotional expression. By altering the five main elements for recognizing emotions including, “energy, time, stability, expansion, and regularity,” messages are continually being encoded for audience members to decode and create meanings out of (Sakata et al., 2004, p. 442). Communication through dance provides an emotional explanation for specific movements non-dancers observe as the performer is communicating an intense number of emotions, feelings, and experiences without using words (Arsith & Popa Tănase, 2018). As Van Dyck (2013) proved, facial expressions and emphasis on different body parts through movement create different emotional understanding in viewers by enacting the sensemaking process to offer emotional explanations of specific actions. The sensemaking process and emotional interpretation work hand in hand to allow non-dancers to develop a sense of understanding when dance performances are observed. This study will combine the two traits that Van Dyck (2013) proved to convey emotional messages, which are facial expressions and emphasis on different body parts through movement. It will focus on body movements in addition to facial expressions to see if non-dancers have the ability to effectively decode messages by enacting the sensemaking process.

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movements enable non-dancers to make sense of emotions?

METHODS

Qualitative methodology with an interpretivist research paradigm was utilized to assess my research. Qualitative methods involve “a theoretical interest in how humans interpret and derive meanings from communication practices” (Keyton, 2011, p. 73). It was vital to interpret and derive meanings in this study since I researched a person’s ability to understand and decode emotions that are presented to them in dance performances. By using qualitative analysis, I developed a strong understanding of the meanings people attach to behaviors (Keyton, 2011). This analysis provided insight into the sensemaking theory and the ways in which non-dancers enact the theory to make sense of the dance performances they are viewing. This study used the interpretivist paradigm because the research was not aiming to generalize results, but rather explore meanings participants place on the communication phenomena they observe (Phothongsunan, 2010). The qualitative research paired with the interpretivist paradigm provided rich results that allowed me to understand how reality is socially constructed and ever-changing in the world of communication (Thanh & Thanh, 2015). The interpretive paradigm guided my understanding of the specific ways in which non-dancers understand the realities they are presented when viewing various emotions in dance performances.

Participants

Participants in this study were five males and seven females who were 20-22 years old and had no background in dance. A dance background is defined as training in any genre of dance or dance performance history. It was very

important that the participants have no background in dance so the results of the research indicate how people enact the sensemaking theory when they view dance movements, rather than how dancers are trained to encode and decode messages in their performances. People who have a dance background are much more likely to understand messages other dancers are trying to convey since they have been trained on encoding emotional messages into dance performances.

The recruitment process involved reaching out to friends and family members whom I know personally and who do not have a dance history. I asked the participants I interviewed for referrals to reach more people and get more participants. Since the only criteria to be a participant were being over 18 years old and not having a dance background, it was not difficult to find a sufficient number of participants for this study.

Measurement

I conducted 12 semi-structured interviews that lasted 30-60 minutes each to collect data for this study. These interviews took place in-person and over Zoom. I showed the participants four separate video clips of a dancer performing, and I asked participants questions after they viewed each clip. The video clips were about 30 seconds each and they were performed by a dancer on the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Dance Team. The video clips didn't have music and they varied in energy levels and variety of movements. The questions asked after the participants viewed the video clips included topics such as emotions felt, correlation of emotions, and previous experiences feeling said emotions.

Procedure

In-person interviews were conducted in casual and informal locations, such as in buildings on campus or at coffee shops. In-person interviews were also conducted in a house, but only when I was interviewing one of my roommates or a family member. Conducting the interviews in-person was advantageous because I was able to assess the participant's body language and facial expressions firsthand. A Zoom video call was another way the interviews were conducted. Zoom video calls were used when there was a great distance between myself and the participant, when a participant was ill, or when for any reason the participant was uncomfortable meeting in person. Both in-person interviews and Zoom video calls were audio recorded so I was able to reference them after the interviews concluded. I assigned the participants a number and a pseudonym to ensure their confidentiality during the study and I made sure they were aware of this.

Data Analysis

I used thematic analysis from Braun & Clark to analyze my data from the interviews because it offered insight into patterns and meanings through flexible and accessible analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This type of data analysis allows researchers to focus data by identifying shared meanings amongst data sets which was beneficial in concluding my findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). My objective was to find themes that appeared throughout the interviews. I did this by examining key ideas that were consistently brought up throughout the interviews. I printed off transcripts of the interviews I conducted and highlighted specific quotes that pointed to key ideas with different colored highlighters. I then sorted the quotes based on their colored highlight. This process led to me finding themes in the research by organizing the data so I could begin my data analysis.

RESULTS

The responses recorded throughout the interviews brought light to the understanding non-dancers formed when they were shown dance performances. After analyzing, coding, and performing thematic analysis with the interview transcripts, RQ1 revealed four themes. For RQ2, seven themes emerged.

RQ1 asked what emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances? The purpose of RQ1 was to identify the range of emotions that can be communicated through dance performances and understood by non-dancers. Participants had the opportunity to share the emotions they were feeling after viewing four different video clips of a dancer performing. Their responses indicated the emotions that were portrayed to non-dancers through dance performances.

Power in Positivity

All twelve participants indicated that they felt happiness at some point while viewing the dance performances. Sometimes participants explicitly stated feeling happy; however, other times participants used a variety of different emotions and adjectives to describe the happy and positive emotions they were feeling. After viewing one of the clips, Brittany stated, "I feel happy. I feel like the dancer was trying to be uplifting and that made me feel happy."

Grace also explicitly stated how she felt happiness after viewing one of the video clips. She provided this explanation of the positive emotions that she felt throughout the dance performance:

I felt happy when watching her [the dancer] dance. I could tell the dancer was enjoying what she was doing, and I knew she wanted me to feel that way too.

Examples of other words used by participants to describe feelings similar to happiness included spontaneous, tranquil, at ease, calm, content, joyful, lighthearted, excited, open, free, and graceful. Ray explained how he felt joy after viewing one of the video clips. He said, "I feel a calm joy. I just feel joyful with no negative feelings associated." Georgia further elaborated on the joyful feeling she understood throughout the dance by providing this explanation:

Joy is definitely the word that comes to mind after I watched her [the dancer] dance. I feel like this joy came from the freedom and openness she was portraying in her performance. She just made me feel excited with her dance.

Jack used emotions like lighthearted and contentment to explain the happy feelings that he felt throughout the dance performances. He said, "I feel content and calm right now. Her [the dancer's] routine felt very lighthearted which made me feel good, but not overly excited." Jerry elaborated on this feeling by describing the calm feelings he experienced throughout the dance performance:

I feel tranquility. Her dance was very graceful, and everything flowed which seemed as it should be. It made me feel at ease and relaxed in a positive way.

Happiness was widely experienced and communicated throughout the dance performances. This was apparent by the fact that each participant expressed how they felt happiness in some capacity while viewing the performances.

I Feel Defeated

Many of the participants indicated that they perceived sad emotions throughout the dance performances they viewed. Participants explained this negative feeling with the specific emotion of sadness; however, some participants stated that other emotions described the feeling as well. Cole stated, "Her [the dancer's] movements just seemed sad. She just looked drained and nothing about the way she was moving seemed happy. It made me feel sad seeing this." Georgia further elaborated on this negative emotion with this explanation:

It almost felt more than sad. I'd say like depression almost. She [the dancer] seemed hurt and devastated. She seemed helpless in a way. I just feel like I can feel her sadness through the screen.

In addition to specifically identifying sadness, participants identified a few other emotions that refer to types of sadness including, hopeless, helpless, depressed, sulky, devastated, distraught, melancholy, and defeated. Lucy described her understanding of sadness when she said, "Each move just seemed sad and sulky. I could tell she [the dancer] was carrying a darker, heavier feeling like melancholy." Sophie expanded on a variety of negative emotions she felt in this explanation:

I felt all sorts of negativity when watching her [the dancer] dance. She was dancing so sad that I could feel how painful and lonely she felt. I could tell she was hopeless too.

Layla also was able to understand the sadness that was portrayed throughout the video clips. She said, "I feel pretty down after seeing that clip. I feel sad and defeated." Sadness was widely understood by many participants during the dance performance and although usually specifically stated, it was further explained with other negative emotions.

I'm so Upset

Participants expressed how they felt angry during some of the dance performances. Layla stated, "I just feel angry. I could tell that she [the dancer] was angry when I was watching and that made me angry." Jess also expanded on the feeling of anger with this explanation:

The first word that came to mind when I saw this was anger. She [the dancer] looked upset and frustrated throughout the performance. I could definitely tell that she wanted the audience to feel angry as well.

Participants used a few other words to explain the angry emotions they were feeling. These feelings included frustration and violence. Jack stated, "I feel like the dancer is resistant to something and she's frustrated about it." Darryl also expressed how he felt frustration from the performances in his explanation:

The dance is like a mix of desperation and violence. The combination of these two emotions makes me feel frustrated overall.

Participants also experienced a feeling of resistance when they viewed the performances which helped them explain the emotion of anger. Jerry stated, "She [the dancer] was very resistant throughout the dance. It seemed like her resistance was coming out of a place of anger." Grace expressed feeling similar to this in her explanation:

I just felt upset and angry from this dance. I feel like she [the dancer] was mad and trying to push something away. Almost like she was resisting something.

In addition to explicitly expressing a feeling of anger, participants used a few other emotions to explain the upsetting feelings they experienced. These emotions explained the intensity of anger participants experienced while viewing the dance performances.

I Need to Escape

Fear was a commonly understood emotion among the participants. Some participants explicitly expressed how they felt fear while watching the dance performances. Sophie explained, "I was definitely feeling fear while watching her [the dancer] dance." Brittany also clearly felt fear when she stated, "I was feeling some sort of fear. She [the dancer] just looked very scared during the dance so that's what made me feel fearful." In addition to participants explicitly stating that they felt fear, they used other words such as scared, anxious, and overwhelmed to express fearful emotions.

Jess explained how she felt scared as she said, "She [the dancer] seemed scared while she was dancing, and I felt scared too." Darryl also felt this emotion in his explanation:

Scared is the emotion that I felt during that clip. I could tell that she [the dancer] was afraid of something, and fear was surrounding her. That was translated to me when I watched the dance and it made me feel a similar emotion.

The feeling of being overwhelmed was linked to the feeling of fear by participants. After watching the dance performances Grace said, "The emotion that I mostly felt was overwhelmed." Layla also felt overwhelmed and used this explanation to describe the relation between feeling fearful and feeling overwhelmed:

She [the dancer] seemed scared and like she was trying to distance herself from something or someone.

Then, she is trying to figure out what direction she should go and she just gets very overwhelmed because she is fearful of the decision. I felt like I was living through her while watching, so I felt overwhelmed and scared too.

Anxiety was also linked to fear while participants were describing the emotions they felt. Lucy said, "I felt fearful and anxious from her [the dancer's] performance." Two other participants felt this emotion as well. Ray stated, "Anxiety is the emotion that came to mind while I was watching this dance." Layla elaborated on feeling anxious in her explanation:

A mix of anxiety and fear is what I'm feeling. At times I felt scared throughout the dance but during other parts, I felt super anxious, so I guess I'm feeling a combination of the two.

The feeling of fear was felt and understood in a relatively straightforward manner by numerous participants; however, it was expressed with a few other emotions. In addition to explicitly stating they felt fearful, they reported feeling scared, overwhelmed, and anxious.

Unavoidable Conflict

Many participants explained feeling a struggle of sorts while viewing the dance performances. For example, Sophie stated, "I feel like there's an external struggle going by the way she [the dancer] seemed like she was getting pulled around in the dance. Seeing that made me feel conflicted." Georgia elaborated on a similar feeling of struggle in this explanation:

The types of movements she [the dancer] was making with her body made me feel like there was a struggle going on or something.

For some participants, the feeling of struggle was accompanied by feelings of anger. Jack mentioned, "The dancer seemed like she was trying to create anger with her body. It made me feel like she was angry because of self-struggle going on." This emotion was also explained by participants using words such as conflicted and troubled. Lucy provided this explanation for the conflict she sensed when viewing one of the video clips:

I feel divided and like there is an internal conflict going on. She [the dancer] doesn't know what she really wants. She's trying to concentrate so much, but I can tell she's at a loss for what to do next. Even when it seems like she's getting out of a bad situation, it draws her back in. Seeing this makes me feel the internal conflict she's facing.

The sense of internal struggle, similar to what Lucy elaborated on, was explained by other participants as well. Layla stated, "I feel troubled, but more internally so. I don't feel outward aggression." Jerry also felt troubled as explained in his explanation:

That dance seemed very troublesome. I could tell she [the dancer] was having a conflict. After watching her dance it just left me feeling troubled.

Throughout the analysis, the feeling of struggle became apparent in a variety of ways. Many participants explicitly stated they felt a sense of struggle and other participants noted feeling conflicted and troubled emotions. These emotions, although stated differently, reflected similar feelings.

RQ1 served as an all-encompassing explanation of the feelings non-dancers understood when viewing video clips of a dancer. Emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and struggle were effectively communicated to non-dancers throughout dance performances.

RQ2 asked what qualities and elements of dance movements enable non-dancers to make sense of emotions? The purpose of RQ2 was to identify the specific features in dance performances that evoke emotions in non-dancers. Participants shared the specific features of the performances that prompted emotional understanding. These responses provided in-depth insight to the features non-dancers notice when viewing dance performances to create an emotional understanding.

Energy, Direction, and Speed of Movement

Every participant expressed how the energy, direction, and speed of the movement resulted in the perception of emotions. Lucy interpreted sadness through the dancer's speed of movement and energy levels. She said, "Her [the dancer's] moves were really drawn out, slow, and low energy. She seemed weak because of the limp to her movements and how subtle some of them were. It conveyed melancholy and pain to me. I feel this way when I want to lay down and do nothing." Georgia also developed an emotional understanding from the speed in which the dancer was moving in her explanation:

She [the dancer] was moving so slowly. Her limbs just seemed heavy, like she was really unmotivated and really tired. It just made me feel sad. It reminded me of when someone who was like a grandma to me passed away. I felt this way for about a week.

In addition to sadness, emotions of anger were understood by participants based on the dancer's speed and energy. Darryl explained how the speed of the dancer's movement resulted in him feeling angry when he said, "Her [the dancer's] movements weren't very controlled and at a fast pace. That made me feel angry. If she wanted me to feel sad, she wouldn't be moving as fast." Jess also felt anger because of the speed of the dancer's movements. She provided this explanation:

When she [the dancer] was dancing she used a lot of sharp, fast, and snappy movements. I immediately thought of when I go to work and get frustrated or struggle. I usually react like the way she was dancing.

Cole too felt angry because of the speed at which the dancer was moving. He stated, "When she [the dancer] was moving around it felt powerful and angry. Like the way she was stepping wasn't gentle. She was stomping because she was moving so fast and that made me feel angry and like she was facing an internal struggle. It reminded me of when we lost in the playoffs during my football season. I was so mad." In addition to anger and sadness, participants also expressed how joyful feelings were represented by the speed and energy of the dancer's movement. Jerry described this in his explanation:

Her [the dancer's] movements were uppity and had a lot of energy. She was moving quickly and there were no abrupt stops in her dance. All of the motions seemed to be flowing together which gave me a tranquil feeling.

In addition to speed and energy, the direction the dancer was moving throughout the performance greatly impacted the emotions participants perceived. Georgia stated, "I was just putting myself in her [the dancer's] shoes and she just felt like she was being dragged down by sadness because of the way she was moving toward the floor when she was dancing. The way she moved downward made me picture a sad and abusive relationship." To elaborate on the metaphorical and physical feelings of being pulled, Ray provided this explanation:

It appeared as if she [the dancer] was being pulled around almost by something that wasn't herself. It was like she was being controlled by something else, and she didn't exactly have control or know what her next move was going to be. It made me feel fear by the way she was being jerked. It reminded me of when I get anxious because I'm uncertain and fearful of what is going to happen next.

Similar to Ray's explanation, numerous other participants explained feelings of being pulled around. In addition to the dancer being pulled downward, participants indicated that moving in a backward direction represented emotions. Ray stated, "The way she was crawling backward and looking around made me feel like she was fearful of something. It was almost like she was running away from something or being surrounded." This feeling of being trapped was also described by Jess in her explanation:

The dancer looked like she was trying to escape by the way she was running away. It looked like she felt like she was trapped in a friendship. I felt like the relationship the dancer was portraying was suffocating and toxic because it seemed like she was wanting to get out by the way she was running away. It looked like she kept getting pulled back in. It felt very overwhelming.

Lucy further described how the direction the dancer was moving indicated feelings of fear and reluctance. She provided this explanation detailing her feelings after viewing the performances:

The fact that she [the dancer] was changing directions frequently made me feel overwhelmed, reluctant, and scared, especially when she was walking backward. I feel like walking backward isn't a very willing thing people want to do.

Explanations like Lucy's were commonly described by other participants. Jerry described a similar emotion when he stated, "She [the dancer] was motioning of running away and trying to escape like she was paranoid and afraid. It reminded me of when I'm watching a horror movie or when I'm under pressure and I want to escape the situation." Brittany provided this explanation, also reinforcing this emotion:

When she [the dancer] was running backward it seemed like she was trying to escape something. She seemed scared and like she was trying to get away, but something was trying to pull her back in.

As portrayed throughout these examples, energy, direction, and speed of the dancer's movements play a significant role in the way the participants understood emotions in dance performances. These sorts of movements allowed non-dancers to create meaning and comprehend the emotions the dancer was trying to communicate to audience members.

Facial Expressions

Each participant identified facial expressions as a feature that allowed them to interpret emotions in dance performances. Facial expressions allowed the participants to interpret a wide variety of emotions in the dance performances. Brittany explained the positive feelings she felt from the dancer's facial expressions when she stated, "I'm just happy and I can tell she's [the dancer's] happy too by her smile and facial expressions." Cole also explained the happy feelings he felt after viewing the dance performances in this explanation:

She [the dancer] was smiling and made eye contact with the camera. This made the dance feel personal and it made me feel happy.

The dancer's sad facial expressions were also helpful in the participant's understanding of negative feelings. Britany shared the sad feelings she felt during the dance performances when she stated, "I felt sad because her [the dancer's] face looked sad the whole time and she never seemed happy." Georgia elaborated on the sad emotion she felt when she watched the dance performances when she said, "Her [the dancer's] face looked serious and empty which sort of made me feel depressed."

Fearful emotions were also commonly understood throughout the dance performances by the dancer's facial expressions. Georgia explained her interpretation of some of the facial expressions when she stated, "Her [the dancer's] face looked very scared and startled. It made me feel distraught." Other participants reflected on similar experiences to this.

In addition to happiness, sadness, and fear, anger was also interpreted by participants through facial expressions. Sophie stated, "Based on her [the dancer's] face, I'm feeling angry. She has a mad look to her." These examples outlined the extensive list of emotions that facial expressions conveyed throughout dance performances. Participants identified happiness, sadness, fear, and anger as the emotions that were most commonly understood by the dancer's facial expressions after viewing dance performances.

Body Position

The way the dancer's body was positioned throughout the performances was one of the performance aspects that non-dancers used to understand emotions in dance performances. Many participants commented on the way the dancer curled up in a ball during the dance. Darryl stated, "I feel sadness and pain. The way she [the dancer] was limp in some of her movements and curled into a ball represented her sadness. Why else would you go into a ball? She has to be sad." Jess elaborated on this in her explanation:

She [the dancer] was rolling on the floor a lot and then she tried to get up, but then she curled up in a ball. That just made me think of when you're going through a heartbreak or something. I felt her devastation because this is how I reacted when I got my heart broken too.

Lucy also felt emotions by the way the dancer curled up into a ball. She provided the explanation:

The dancer had a specific move that she did that made her look like she was limping. Then she curled up into a ball representing sadness. I felt this emotion when I split up with my first significant partner. All I wanted to do was lie in a ball and cry like the dancer did. The dancer wasn't physically wounded but it definitely seemed like her heart was damaged and that's what I felt too.

In addition to the way the dancer positioned her body, non-dancers indicated the dancer's position relative to the floor as a way to understand the emotions that the dancer was portraying. Brittany stated, "Her [the dancer's] body

position was very, very low to the ground so that's kind of why I felt sad during her dance." Jerry elaborated on a similar feeling in his explanation:

She [the dancer] had a hard time getting off the floor and her positioning overall during the dance was so low to the ground. This gave me a feeling of loneliness.

Grace shared a personal experience that she thought of when she viewed the dance performance. She stated, "I felt a deep sadness when she [the dancer] couldn't get off the floor. It reminded me of my freshman year when I was going through heartbreak, and I was really struggling. I felt like I couldn't help myself and didn't know what to do."

Ray shared a similar experience that related to the dancer's use of the floor in his explanation:

The way she [the dancer] immediately just fell to the ground reminded me of the Packer's 2014 NFC Championship game. It was just a really bad experience that's going to haunt me forever. I was feeling so happy that my team was going to the Super Bowl, and then I had my heart ripped to shreds when they lost at the end. I just wanted to lay on the floor like she was. The way she was lying there reminded me of the sadness and helplessness I felt when I knew there was nothing I could do about the game.

Layla summarized what the floor movements meant to her when she said, "The way she [the dancer] was shuffling and limping around on the ground really made me feel sad and helpless. I've seen some of my friends who've gone through really hard things like heartbreak act like this. They seem so desperate and depressed, and I think that makes it hard for them to move."

Many participants expressed how the way the dancer positioned her body and the way the dancer interacted with the floor played a large role in the emotions they experienced. Specifically, participants reported how movements close to the ground and the dancer's body curling into a ball reminded them of sadness and heartbreak.

Jumps and Leaps

Jumps and leaps performed throughout the dance allowed non-dancers to be able to interpret emotions communicated by the dancer. Participants commonly associated leaps and jumps with positive emotions. Grace stated, "She [the dancer] was doing a lot of leaps and that just reminded me of happiness." Jack felt a similar way when he observed the dancer jumping because he associated the movement with other motions he has seen in media sources. He described his emotions in this explanation:

The way she [the dancer] was jumping with her arms out kind of felt like she was frolicking through a meadow as you see in TV shows. She seemed so free and happy. It gave me a good feeling.

The jumps the dancer did throughout the performance also stood out to Layla as she commented, "Her [the dancer's] jumps just seemed joyful. Watching that just made me smile." Happiness was also felt by Sophie in this explanation she provided after watching the dance performances:

She [the dancer] was doing a lot of jumping and stuff. Usually, when you are sad you are not jumping around. The jumping just gave me a happy vibe.

Participants collectively felt strong positive emotions when they viewed the dancer performing jumps and leaps. The participant's feelings of happiness and joy were sometimes correlated to movements seen in media sources.

Turns

Observing the dancer spin and turn throughout the dance performance enabled non-dancers to feel emotions from the performance. Darryl stated, "The spins made me feel happy. I don't know why you would spin if you were feeling any negative emotions." Ray used a personal example to explain positive circumstances he would spin during in this explanation:

It [the turns] made me think of when I'm eating a really good bowl of chicken mac and cheese with hot sauce. In that moment I just feel happy and content with life. If I could do the spin on one leg like she [the dancer] was doing I probably would do that then.

Jess also felt positive emotions when she observed the turns in the dance routine. She stated, "The way she [the dancer] was spinning and did quick turns reminded me of joy. It just created a good feeling. She was very happy." Lucy explained this feeling as well in her explanation:

I think the way she [the dancer] was spinning around created a feeling of openness. The spins just gave a free feeling and that's what made me feel happy.

Jess detailed where her feeling of happiness stemmed from in her understanding of the turning motions that the dancer performed. She provided this explanation of the role media sources played in her understanding of the turns:

Connecting the turns to a rom-com, whenever someone is spinning they are very joyful. People spin when they have big smiles on their faces or when they are falling in love in movies I watch so I'd say media sources are probably a good place where I got this understanding from.

Turns and spins throughout the dance routine were frequently recognized and correlated to positive emotions by non-dancers when they were observing the dance performances. These feelings were sometimes a result of association with personal experiences or media sources, both of which shaped the perception of the movements by the non-dancer.

Arm and Hand Movements

The way the dancer moved and positioned her arms and hands throughout the dance performances indicated emotions to non-dancers who were viewing the performances. Arm and hand movements successfully communicated many different emotions to non-dancers. Cole felt happiness by the way the dancer's arms were moving. He stated, "Her [the dancer's] arm movements were very light and gentle. They just felt happy." Georgia felt similar emotions. She elaborated on the happy feelings she felt from the dancer's arm movements in this explanation:

Her [the dancer's] arms and hands were open wide, and she conveyed that same sense of openness with her movement which felt very free. I feel like by the way she had such open arms she was bringing joy into her. It just made me feel joy by the way she seemed to be so transparent and vulnerable.

The participants also indicated that the pushing motions the dancer performed throughout the routine portrayed emotions. Lucy stated, "The way she [the dancer] lifted herself up by pushing her hands down was very symbolic of a positive, high feeling. It made me feel like she was giddy and high on life; like she was in love." Other participants understood physical pushing motions as representative of a variety of different emotions as well.

Although positive emotions were commonly understood by arm and hand movements, the dancer's arms and hands communicated negative emotions as well. Layla described how the way the dancer used her arms made her feel a sense of resistance. She stated, "She [the dancer] looked like she was pushing someone away. It just looked like she was trying to resist something." Jess described how the dancer's hands also played a role in creating this emotion in her explanation:

She [the dancer] was using her hands to push something away from herself. Almost like she was trying to block things out with her movements. It made me feel isolated in a sense.

Similarly to Layla and Jess, numerous other participants commented on emotions they felt after the dancer used her arms and hands to seemingly push things away throughout the dance. In addition to happiness and resistance, feelings of frustration were communicated by the use of the dancer's arms and hands. Lucy explained a part of the dance when she felt upset by the way the dancer's arms were moving. In her explanation she stated:

There were some movements where she [the dancer] threw her arms up in the air very forcefully and then pulled them down abruptly and those moves made me feel frustrated.

Aside from arm movements, the dancer's hands specifically played a vital role in the participant's ability to distinguish emotions. Many non-dancers expressed how the way the dancer's hands moved and how they were positioned contributed to their understanding of emotions similar to anger. Brittany stated, "I felt angry by the way she [the dancer] would clench her fists and punch them out." Layla explained a similar feeling in her explanation:

She [the dancer] was very abrupt with her hand movements. I could feel her anger by the way it looked like she was punching things.

The expressive ability of the hands also enabled participants to understand positive emotions in the dance performances. Jess stated, "Her [the dancer's] hand movements were very flowy and opened wide when she was dancing. They made the dance seem happy." Hand movements were interpreted in a variety of ways depending on how they were oriented throughout the performance.

The way the dancer's arms and hands were positioned relative to the dancer's head also played a large role in communicating different emotions to the participants. Participants specifically explained how the dancer's hands were positioned to the head portrayed emotions of overwhelmingness, uneasiness, frustration, sadness, and fear. Jess stated, "She [the dancer] kind of combs her hair back in the dance. I feel like I do that a lot when I'm overwhelmed so that's the emotion I felt." Lucy also commented on the emotion she felt when the dancer grabbed her head in this explanation:

There was a lot of head grabbing which implied to me a feeling of confusion and uneasiness regarding what was happening in her mind. The way she [the dancer] was wrapping her arms around her head gave me the impression that she wanted to bury her thoughts and wanted her mental energy to just stop.

Other negative emotions were understood by the dancer's hand and head interactions as well. Jack stated, "The way she [the dancer] was holding her head showed she was frustrated." Ray felt sadness through movements of the hands and the head in his explanation:

The way she [the dancer] put her face into her hands and put her head down made it seem like she was crying into her hands. It felt like a heavy sadness.

Fear was also felt by participants because of the way the dancer was using her hands in the performance. Jerry stated, "She [the dancer] put her hands on her head like she wanted to escape something and something was scaring her. It was like she was trying to cover herself because she was scared." Jack elaborated on a similar feeling in this explanation:

The way she [the dancer] put her face into her hands like she was hiding herself reminded me of fear. It looked like she was trying to defend herself.

The arms and hands were important features that participants observed to understand emotions in the dance performances. They allowed the participants to recognize a wide variety of different feelings through their precise and expressive nature.

RQ2 demonstrated the range of different components that are used by non-dancers to derive emotions from dance performances. The participants, who have no previous dance history, described numerous emotions they felt from a wide range of aspects of the dance performances. These indications highlighted the diverse and numerous channels that are used by non-dancers to understand emotions communicated through performances.

DISCUSSION

This research served the purpose of identifying the emotions that are communicated to non-dancers throughout dance performances and understanding the elements and features of the dancer's performance that enabled the non-dancers to develop those emotions. Sensemaking in combination with the dancer's movements created feelings of a wide variety of emotions in the participants. The following section will explain the many interpretations derived from this research.

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

Five themes emerged to answer research question 1. The first theme was 'power in positivity,' which encompassed the range of positive emotions that were understood by the participants. The second theme, 'I feel so defeated,' referred to the feelings of sadness that were acknowledged by participants after they viewed the dance performances. The third theme was 'I'm so upset,' which reflected feelings of anger that were felt by the participants through the dancer. The fourth theme, 'I need to escape,' explained the emotions of fear that were communicated to the participants throughout the dance performances.

The fifth and final theme, 'unavoidable conflict' alluded to the feelings of struggle and conflict that participants understood during the dance performances.

The five themes of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and struggle, which were observed by participants, encompassed a wide range of emotions that were perceived and understood by participants upon viewing the dance performances. Previous research found that joy, anger, sadness, and fear are most identifiable by distinct movements (Van Dyck et al., 2013; Boone & Cunningham, 2001). As this study expanded on previous research by incorporating the understanding of both movements and facial expressions, participants felt emotions of struggle or conflict in addition to the emotions previous research noted as identifiable by distinct movements. This implies that facial expressions may play a role in the communication of the emotion of struggle or conflict, extending previous research.

As the themes emerged and were analyzed, it became obvious that feelings of happiness were described by participants using a variety of emotions. Participants described happiness using many feelings such as uplifting, spontaneous, tranquil, calm, content, joyful, lighthearted, excited, open, free, and graceful. Conversely, the emotions of sadness, anger, fear, and struggle, were described by the participants using a less extensive list of feelings, implying that these emotions are more clearly and specifically communicated through dance performances. Previous research states that generally, people are more skilled at interpreting pleasurable facial expressions than unpleasant ones (Greene & Bursell, 2003). This study extends previous research by highlighting the fact that facial expressions may be the reason that happiness was communicated through a wide variety of emotions whereas feelings of sadness, anger, fear, and struggle were communicated more specifically.

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movements enable non-dancers to interpret different emotions?

Six central themes became apparent upon analyzing the transcripts from the participants for RQ2. These themes, energy, direction, and speed of movement, facial expressions, body position, jumps and leaps, turns, and arm and hand movements were recognized by participants because they communicated emotions in the dance performances. Many of the interpretations that participants formed from the movements can be understood by the use of the sensemaking theory.

The sensemaking theory explains a process of learning and connecting cues to a previous frame of reference in order to develop an understanding (Allard-Poesi, 2005; Salem, 2007). In this study, participants used sensemaking to

decode nonverbal cues and gestures that the dancer was projecting by relating observations to their previous experiences. Participants explained how they observed similar qualities and elements in their personal life and in media sources. By referencing personal experiences and media sources, participants utilized sensemaking to interpret different emotions that were communicated nonverbally by the dancer in the dance performances.

Movements present in the dance performances communicated a wide variety of emotions to participants. Previous research indicates that joy in dance is often decoded by turning motions, and movements projecting outward from the body, such as skipping and jumping (Shikanai et al., 2013; Van Dyck et al., 2013). Many participants associated jumps, leaps, and turns with positive emotions, supporting previous research. Participants also indicated that facial expressions and hand and arm movements indicated positive feelings, which extends previous research. Sensemaking was used by participants to describe joyful moments they have experienced in the past and how they reacted to those experiences by jumping and turning, which they observed in the performance as well. Sensemaking was also used by participants when they referred to movies they have seen where characters have acted in these ways during joyful moments.

Previous research explains that the bending and stretching of the dancer, weak arm movements, and low energy conveys sadness (Van Dyck et al., 2013). Participants understood feelings of sadness by the dancer's slow movement and her weak hand and arm movements after they observed the dance performances, which supports previous research. Previous research was extended in this study by participants also correlating facial expressions, the dancer's body position close to the floor, and her body curling into a ball to feelings of sadness. Sensemaking was used by many participants to explain how when they were going through a heartbreak, or when they saw somebody they were close with was going through heartbreak, they often wanted to lay down and curl in a ball.

Anger was understood by participants by the dancer's facial expressions, high energy and speed of movement, and hand and arm movements. Previous research indicates that angry feelings are usually defined by outward movement from the body, high activity, and speed and force of arm and leg movements (Van Dyck et al., 2013). The participants' observation of facial expressions contributing to feelings of anger extended previous research. The feeling of struggle and conflict was understood by participants with dance elements that are similar to the elements that represented anger to participants, such as facial expressions and arm movements. The feeling of struggle was not explained in previous research, therefore; the findings of this study that pertained to struggle extended previous research.

Previous research explained that fear is usually decoded by the use of force, little rotation, and slower movements (Boone & Cunningham, 2001). Participants indicated that feelings of fear were understood by the dancer's facial expressions, the direction she was moving, and her weak arm movements. Observations of the dancer's facial expressions and the direction the dancer was moving pertaining to fear extended previous research, and the observation of her weak arm movements implying fear supported previous research. Sensemaking was used by participants to indicate feelings of fear by referencing media sources. Many participants explained they observed characters act in similar ways as the dancer did in scary movies which is why they correlated the dancer's movements to fear.

These findings are important and relevant to the general public because they explain the role nonverbal movements play in communicating emotions. Even though this study was specifically analyzing dance performances, it highlighted the range of messages that can be communicated by nonverbal communication, which people use and observe every day.

CONCLUSION

Emotions in dance are portrayed to audience members, including non-dancers, through numerous channels during dance performances. The sensemaking theory plays a large role in explaining the ability of non-dancers to interpret emotions from a dancer's movement by relating the motions to personal experiences.

Individuals can use this data to better understand the power and importance of nonverbal communication as it relates to dance performances. Nonverbal communication plays a vital role in everyday life and dance performances highlight the numerous feelings that can be communicated through the body's movement.

There is much more to be learned about how specific movements and facial expressions communicate various emotions through dance performances. Since information on the communicative ability of emotions in dance is limited, further research related to the relationship between dance performances and nonverbal communication is highly suggested.

LIMITATIONS

Limitations of this study include a lack of diverse interviewees and a small sample size. Interviewees were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study and their qualifications to be a member of the research. Interviewees were obtained based on proximity and connections to other interviewees. Interviewees were primarily heterosexual, Caucasian, 20-22 years old, and lived in Wisconsin. A more diverse sample in terms of sexuality, race, age, and location may lead to a wider range of responses. Since interviews ranged from 30 minutes to an hour, only 12 people were interviewed in this study. Interviewing more people may lead to a greater number of responses to provide a wider variety of perspectives. It would be beneficial for future studies to have more diverse responses and a larger sample size.

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APPENDIX

Interview Protocol

Rapport Questions:

Hi how are you doing today?

How is your semester and school year going so far?

What is your experience with dance?

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

Video Clip 1: <https://youtube.com/shorts/LDSt6bWodMY?feature=share>

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

1. After viewing the clip, what emotions are you feeling?
2. Why do you think you felt that emotion?
3. What emotions do you think the dance was attempting to create?

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movement enable non-dancers to make sense of different emotions?

4. What characteristics of this performance made you feel the emotion you felt?
5. In your everyday life, when else have you experienced this emotion?
6. Did you correlate a different experience to your observation?

Video Clip 2: https://youtube.com/shorts/pfAFaER_ihg?feature=share

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

7. After viewing the clip, what emotions are you feeling?
8. Why do you think you felt that emotion?
9. What emotions do you think the dance was attempting to create?

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movement enable non-dancers to make sense of different emotions?

10. What characteristics of this performance made you feel the emotion you felt?
11. In your everyday life, when else have you experienced this emotion?

12. Did you correlate a different experience to your observation?

Video Clip 3: https://youtube.com/shorts/rISBoCP4T_M?feature=share

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

13. After viewing the clip, what emotions are you feeling?

14. Why do you think you felt that emotion?

15. What emotions do you think the dance was attempting to create?

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movement enable non-dancers to make sense of different emotions?

16. What characteristics of this performance made you feel the emotion you felt?

17. In your everyday life, when else have you experienced this emotion?

18. Did you correlate a different experience to your observation?

Video Clip 4: <https://youtube.com/shorts/JgZOL-QcoWM?feature=share>

RQ1: What emotions do non-dancers decode when viewing dance performances?

19. After viewing the clip, what emotions are you feeling?

20. Why do you think you felt that emotion?

21. What emotions do you think the dance was attempting to create?

RQ2: What qualities and elements of dance movement enable non-dancers to make sense of different emotions?

22. What characteristics of this performance made you feel the emotion you felt?

23. In your everyday life, when else have you experienced this emotion?

24. Did you correlate a different experience to your observation?

Do you have any other information that you would like to add that you believe would help with the research study?

Do you have any further questions for me?