

Can Recreational Dance Really Bring Health And Well-Being To People?

Mingzhe Ren¹, Yi Meng², Xinwei Zhang³, Miao Hong⁴, Jingdan Wu⁵, Shuiyin Liu⁶, Yifei Zhang⁷, Huini Lai⁸

^{1,2,3,4,5,6} (Department of Marketing and E-commerce, Lingnan Normal University, China)

^{7,8} (Department of Business Administration, Lingnan Normal University, China)

Abstract:

Background: The issue of people's health and well-being has become an important social governance issue for the government, with a focus on the health and well-being. Previous researches have focused on the impact of subjective well-being on people's lives.

Methods: The current study mainly uses interviews to understand the current state of health and subjective well-being among recreational dancers.

Results: This study finds that individuals engaging in recreational dance activities exhibit higher levels of physical and mental health, as well as a greater sense of subjective well-being.

Conclusion: This study suggests that relevant government departments should provide assistance and guidance for the promotion of recreational dance, in order to improve the level of people's health and well-being.

Keywords: Well-being; Mental Health; Physical Health; Recreational Dance

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I. Introduction

Due to rapid social development, people's lives and work have become increasingly stressful, leading to the gradual neglect of the middle-aged and elderly people, which may facilitate their health problems and less well-being. Especially, the elderly lack a comprehensive understanding of society and often neglect health management, making them more prone to physical or psychological problems. The health and well-being of the vast middle-aged people, who are about to enter old age, also need to be paid attention.

With the intensification of people aging, the middle-aged and elderly have become an indispensable group in society, and their mental health issues have received increasing attention. However, in recent years, due to their own chronic diseases combined with other economic, family, and social environmental factors, middle-aged and elderly people have become a high-risk group for mental illnesses such as anxiety and depression. This has seriously affected the quality of life of the elderly people and increased their family's economic burden. In addition to mental health, physical health is also extremely important. Physical health is helpful for middle-aged and elderly people to enhance their mobility and complete specific tasks in their daily lives. It is worth noting that middle-aged and elderly people's subjective perception of their own health may be associated with their subjective well-being. Middle-aged and elderly individuals who are more satisfied with their physical health may experience a stronger sense of subjective well-being. Physical and mental health not only are associated with the subjective well-being of middle-aged and elderly people but also relate to the quality of life of their families and the harmony and stability of society. Therefore, exploring which activities can enhance the

level of health and well-being among the elderly may be highly valuable.

With the continuous improvement of living standards, the cultural life of middle-aged and elderly people needs to be paid more attention. “Cultural retirement” has become a common expectation of the public. In China, recreational dance is one of the most influential cultural activities. As a form of cultural expression, recreational dance refers to fitness cultural activities in public spaces, using dance as the carrier and music as the accompaniment. Recreational dance not only strengthens the body and cultivates one’s temperament but also has low participation costs, is easy to learn, has strong organizational inclusiveness, and a cheerful atmosphere. Therefore, it has quickly become the most popular and beloved public cultural activity for China’s middle-aged and elderly people. Recreational dance provides a stage for middle-aged and elderly people to pursue and showcase beauty, helping them to reconstruct their social networks and giving their aging bodies fresh vitality once again.

Recreational dance is not only popular offline activities among the middle-aged and elderly people but has also become one of the most active and closely followed content modules on short video platforms. On the short video platform “Kuai shou” recreational dance videos garnered a cumulative exposure of 80 billion views within a year, with over 1 billion likes and comments, and the total number of followers for recreational dance creators exceeded 350 million. On the “Dou yin” platform, each of the top 10 viral songs has been presented in dance form by creators. This demonstrates that recreational dance has become an integral part of Chinese people’s daily lives. Especially in the context of “Healthy China,” which aims to improve the health and well-being of the people, recreational dance has become an effective medium for enhancing physical and mental health and subjective well-being.

In summary, this study aims to discover the current state of physical health, mental health, and subjective well-being among middle-aged and elderly people who participate in recreational dance, through interviews with them.

II. Literature Review

Subjective well-being provides an overall assessment of a person’s life state and represents a perceived evaluation of important life domains such as physical health, interpersonal relationships, work, and finances. Therefore, SWB represents the experience of a good life and the assessment of the quality of that experience, rather than the objective facts of the environment in which people live, such as wealth (Netemeyer, Warmath, Fernandes, and Lynch Jr., 2017). This method of defining a good life is called “subjective well-being.” Subjective well-being refers to people’s evaluations of their own lives – both emotional evaluations and cognitive evaluations. When people experience many pleasant emotions and few unpleasant emotions, and they feel satisfied with their lives, they experience rich subjective well-being (Diener, 2000). Therefore, Subjective well-being focuses on why and how a person experiences life in a positive way, including emotional responses and cognitive judgments (Netemeyer, Warmath, Fernandes, and Lynch Jr., 2017). “When people list the key characteristics of a good life, they are likely to include happiness, health, and longevity” (Diener and Chan 2011 p.1). People who experience the effects of high subjective well-being, this well-being often benefits their lives and work.

Physical health refers to the overall state of a person’s body, including characteristics such as being free from disease and a certain level of health. Traditionally, the standard for a person’s health was the absence of serious illness. However, with the improvement of living standards, health experts have expanded the definition of physical health involving assessments of various factors such as nutrition and diet, physical activity, alcohol and drug use, rest, and sleep (Diener and Chan, 2011).

Mental health is widely described as a state in which an individual recognizes their own abilities to work effectively, cope with normal life stresses, and contribute to society (Khalid and Syed, 2024). More specifically, negative mental health includes conditions such as anxiety, depression, anger, chronic stress, pessimism, and dissatisfaction with one's personal life. On the other hand, positive mental health may manifest as optimism and having a sense of purpose in life. Individuals who experience positive emotions behave differently from those who experience negative emotion (such as being anxious) and also enjoy better health (Diener, 2013).

III. Methods

1. Research Method: This study utilizes face-to-face interviews to gather the perceptions of the respondents regarding mental health, physical health, and subjective well-being.
2. Research Subjects: Middle-aged and elderly recreational dancers.
3. Research Content: This survey focuses on the current state of health and subjective well-being among middle-aged and elderly recreational dancers, as well as the positive impacts brought about by recreational dance.

IV. Result

Through interviews, we find that dancers participating in recreational dance liberate themselves from the burdensome and monotonous household chores by engaging in these activities. They meet like-minded friends and establish close relationships with their dance partners, which helps to reduce the low mood caused by household labor and contributes to the development of positive emotions. And participating in recreational dance helps dancers forget unpleasant things and alleviates the loneliness caused by their children not being around. Recreational dance is beneficial to improve dancers' sleep quality. Recreational dance makes participants happier, healthier, and fills them with more expectations for the future, such as older interviewees planning to go on trips. Recreational dance can help improve participants' attention, mainly in terms of remembering music rhythms and dance postures. Through recreational dance rehearsals, participants' memory has improved. Recreational dancers are generally satisfied with their current lives. Participating in dance activities and chatting with dance partners brings recreational dancers joy and relieves anxiety. Recreational dance is helpful to make more friends, and people can share their lives with each other, establishing harmonious relationships. Recreational dance also helps to strengthen dancers' physical fitness, which keeps them energetic. The interview results show that participating in recreational dance can bring numerous benefits to the participants, contributing to the enhancement of both health and subjective well-being.

V. Conclusion

Most of the respondents reported significant improvements in their physical health after participating in recreational dance. Engaging in recreational dance activities not only benefits physical health but also has a more positive impact on mental health. Middle-aged and elderly individuals who actively participate in recreational dance have a noticeably better assessment of their physical health compared to before they started participating. Through these activities, everyone gets exercise in recreational dance activities. The moderate rhythm and intensity of recreational dance provide a foundation for improving the physical health of the participants. The positive psychological effects experienced by actively participating middle-aged and elderly individuals help them achieve an emotional stability, enabling them to better handle negative emotions, reduce feelings of sadness, anxiety, and other negative emotions, thus experiencing more positive emotions such as well-being and satisfaction. In terms of interpersonal relationships, participating in recreational dance helps to establish and maintain new relationships, which can provide support and encouragement, diminish the sense of social marginalization felt by middle-aged and elderly people, and further enhance their individual subjective

well-being.

Individuals with good mental health typically have a more comprehensive self-awareness, understanding their own needs, aware of their strengths and weaknesses, which enables them to make decisions that are more in line with their own situation, enhancing their subjective well-being. Recreational dancers can experience the charm and heritage of culture through dance. This sense of cultural participation can strengthen personal identity and cultural pride. It makes participants more easily satisfied with life because they are able to more effectively tap into their personal potential and feel growth and progress. Currently, for many people, recreational dance provides a positive goal and motivation, giving them the desire to improve their health.

When people are able to participate in various activities more freely and enjoy life, it naturally increases their subjective well-being. A healthy individual often promotes the establishment of a positive self-image which positive self-perception helps to enhance personal self-confidence and self-esteem, thereby increasing subjective well-being. A healthy people can improve the quality of life, allowing people to work more efficiently and enjoy leisure time better, thus feeling more satisfaction and happiness.

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