

**UNIVERSITY OF THE WESTERN CAPE**

**Faculty of Community and Health Sciences**

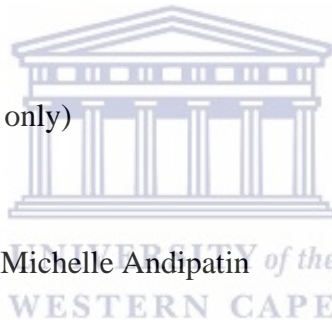
**MA RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Title:** Exploring the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Psychology (Thesis only) at the University of the Western Cape

## **Dedication:**

For my Granny Blanche Tissong, who through her life and her words, motivated and encouraged me to follow my own path and take opportunities she was never afforded.

I love you Granny.



## **Abstract:**

**Title:** Exploring the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

This study focuses and draws on the fields of dance, psychology and the self-concept. Dance is seen as a powerful tool for expression of self. The Self-Concept is one of the most researched constructs in psychology. Previous research has focused on one element of the self-concept, such as self-esteem; this research considered the self-concept holistically, comprising of: self-image, self-esteem and ideal self. The theoretical framework of this research was the Self-Concept, and dance was employed as an intervention or method of researching the self-concept.


The overall aim of this research was to explore the self-concept of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University. This research used a mixed-method approach with the primary method being qualitative. The quantitative research design was a quasi-experimental, one-group pre-test post-test design, using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The qualitative research design was ethnography. A seven session structured dance programme was conducted consisting of various aspects of dance. Non-probability sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used. Data was collected in four phases; quantitative pre-test data collection using the RSES scale; qualitative intervention data collection via observations (field notes and audio-visual recordings); quantitative post-test data collection using the RSES scale; and qualitative in-depth interviews. Informed consent was received through informed consent forms and information sessions prior to the dance programme. There were two steps of data analysis. First was to analyse the quantitative data from the RSES on IBM's Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences, version 25 (SPSS v.25) and Microsoft Excel tools. Second was to analyse the data from the observations and interviews using thematic analysis.

Quantitative data was analysed using a dependent t-test to explore the difference in mean scores between pre-test and post-test scores of participants' self-esteem using the RSES. There was a significant relation between the mean of the pre-test scores for self-esteem ( $M = 22.50$ ,  $SD = 3.648$ ) and the mean of the post-test scores for self-esteem ( $M = 24.33$ ,  $SD = 3.384$ ). The significant average difference was ( $t(23) = -2.949$ ,  $p = .007$ ). These results suggest that there was a statistically significant increase in participants' self-esteem after participating in the structured dance programme. On average, the post-test scores was 1.833 higher than the pre-test scores (95% CI [3.119, .547]). These results suggest that dance can have a significant positive effect on one's self-esteem.

The qualitative results indicated that the overall self-concept of participants was significantly influenced after participating in the dance programme, as participants learnt more about the beliefs they had about themselves, as well as the qualities they possess. Furthermore, participants' felt their self-esteem increased; their self-image was influenced; and they were able to identify and describe their ideal self in more detail, maybe for the first time, or helped them to realise or draw closer to this future self. Therefore, the dance programme, according to participants, did have an influence on their self-esteem; self-image; and had an influence on their view of their ideal self. The statistical findings from the RSES scale positively complemented the findings in the qualitative data.

## Declaration:

I declare that *Exploring the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.



21 November 2019

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Simone Momplé

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Date



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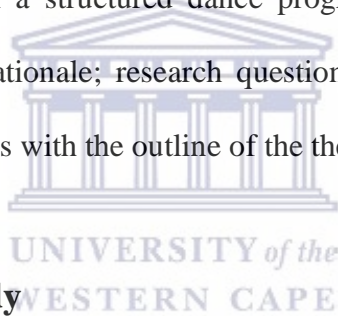
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# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

“When a body moves, it’s the most revealing thing. Dance for me a minute, and I’ll tell you who you are”, Mikhail Baryshnikov (Miami, 2012). This quote alludes to the idea that dance is an act that could bear insightful information about an individual who is dancing, or to an audience who is watching. This has led to my interest in exploring the topic of self in relation to dance. This research forms the foundation of attempting to understand these concepts and their relational connection, more specifically, how an individual’s perception of their self-concept is influenced when they dance and what this influence reveals about the individual. This research project seeks to explore the subjective perceptions of the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme. This chapter unveils the background to this study; the rationale; research questions; research aims and objectives, context to the study and concludes with the outline of the thesis.



## 1.2 Background to the study

This study focuses and draws on the fields of dance, psychology and the self-concept. Dance practices during the period of late medieval times to the mid-18th century were positioned within the artistic, the intellectual, as well as the political societies and movements of that period (Pont, 2008). Politically, it was often seen as a threat of resistance or rebellion which often led to the initiation of uprisings against colonial rulers (Pont, 2008; Reed, 1998). Later, it became a symbol of revival in post-colonial regions, where it had to present itself to itself in a decolonised form, post-conflict (Reed, 1998). Research on dance, in a political framework, sees it as a powerful symbol and tool in creating and changing nationalist ideas in a more creative way than would political debates (Giurchescu, 2001; Reed, 1998). This power dance possesses, uses its artistic nature to take the dancer “out of him/herself”, out of everyday life

and “transport him/her into a virtual world of time and space” (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 110). This indicates the possible impact and influence dance might have on nations. However, this research focusses on the individuals that make up a nation or any population, more specifically, students at a South African University. Besides the political power of dance, dance has been embedded within numerous cultures throughout history (Cross & Ticini, 2012). Evidence of this is still visible today. Hip hop culture (in which dance was one of the elements) was birthed from politics and culture, and thus created a cultural revolution (Roychoudhury & Gardner, 2014). Hip hop dance became a means for, specifically young people, to express themselves freely and to develop a sense of identity and self through the culture of hip hop dance (González, 2016; Nielsen & Rowe, 2012). Dance therefore played and plays an important role in relation to the self-concept.

Historically, self-concept research has been disregarded or overlooked as other concepts claimed more legitimacy, such as observable and measurable behaviour (Owens & Samblanet, 2013; Rosenberg, 1989). It was not until Snygg and Combs assisted the emergence of the self-concept into psychology through focusing on the “internal frame of reference”, that it gained significance in psychology (Rosenberg, 1989, p. 37). Snygg and Combs believed that “people don’t behave on a basis of how things actually are; they behave on a basis of how things seem to them” (Rosenberg, 1989, p. 37). This proposes a significant role of the self-concept on one’s identity and behaviour. An individual’s identity is embedded in their conception of themselves; their status in society; the roles they adopt and the groups they assign themselves to (Kudryavcev, 2016; Turner & Schutte, 1981). Therefore one’s social interactions guide an understanding of how they construct the self (Kudryavcev, 2016). Self-concept has proven its importance through ongoing research but has mostly been limited to ‘classroom settings’ and quantitative methods (Demo, 1992; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Demo (1992) believes that through more qualitative research, we can unravel more of the self-concept by researching it in

its entirety. This research will attempt to explore the self-concept through dance, in a non-classroom setting, through both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

Having a similar history, dance and the self-concept have other complementary traits. Dance has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health, and a positive self-concept has been proposed to be central to adaptive functioning (Butler & Gasson, 2006; Demo, 1992; Lovatt, 2018; Pajares & Schunk, 2002; Schwender, Spengler, Oedl, & Mess, 2018). Psychology, specifically trauma research and contemporary neuroscience, has recognised this connection in the development of dance/movement therapy (DMT) (Behrends, Müller, & Dziobek, 2012; Dunphy, Elton, & Jordan, 2014; Karpati, Giacosa, Foster, Penhune, & Hyde, 2015; Payne, 2004; Shalem-Zafari & Grosu, 2016). “Dance/movement therapy is emphasized as a nonverbal and symbolic method uniquely suited to working with the somatic dimensions of trauma” (Dunphy et al., 2014, p. 191). The main focus of DMT is examining trauma on the psyche, yet dance can be an instrument to explore the self in a non-restrictive/non-pathological way. This research will use dance as an intervention to explore the self in this manner. What seems to be missing from research is an alternative use of dance; to explore aspects of the self that are salient to the awareness through a ‘non-pathological’ approach. Through this, allowing for an opportunity for the individual to make adjustments of any of these aspects of self that might bring discomfort to the individual or cause any dysfunction of the self.

### **1.3 Rationale**

Peter Lovatt, in his findings of a survey he conducted, found the most common reasons that men choose not to dance, related to self-consciousness (Lovatt, 2017b). “Self-consciousness is defined as being excessively conscious of one’s appearance or manner” (Lovatt, 2017b). This points to self-image (the view one has of oneself), as well as self-esteem (the way one feels about one's self), being possibly triggered when choosing whether or not to dance. However,

Lovatt's research has been limited to self-esteem and confidence in dance. Self-esteem is only one aspect of self-concept; self-image and ideal self also need to be considered. The current research seeks to highlight the important role of self-image and ideal self in relation to dance. In this research, I would also like to extend self-concept into the existing body of knowledge within dance as well as psychology; and simultaneously broaden the methodology of self-concept research, i.e. outside of 'classroom settings' (Demo, 1992; Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

Dance, in its true form, can be considered as an expression of self (Cohen, 1962). Dance cannot exist without the person: "Considered a psychosomatic entity, the dancer is the 'soul and body' of dance. He or she is the dance" (Giurchescu, 2001, p. 109). Thus it is essential that research in dance uses dance as a tool for self-expression (González, 2016). Additionally, a great deal of research has been conducted within the 'professional' realm of dance, focusing on those who pursue dance professionally. I will attempt to shift the focus from 'professional dancers'<sup>1</sup> to 'non-professional dancers'<sup>2</sup>. Here, the focus will be on university students in a mentor programme who wish to explore dance for subjective reasons. This research interest is on exploring participants' own understandings of how dance influences their self-concept. Much of self-research has been conducted internationally; locally (in South Africa) self-concept has been researched in sport and physical inactivity (Cozett, 2014; Eusanio, Thomson, & Jaque, 2014; Gore & Cross, 2014; Lovatt, 2018; Owens & Samblanet, 2013; Panaligan, 2013; Savilahti et al., 2018; Schwender et al., 2018), as well as community development.

## 1.4 Problem statement

The researcher encountered two theoretical problems in previous literature. Firstly, previously self-esteem has been the focus of dance research, with self-image and ideal self not

<sup>1</sup> Dancers who seek dance as a career option

<sup>2</sup> Non-professional dancers are not focussed on dance as a possible career option or established in the dance field.

being thoroughly included (Allan, 2013; Lovatt, 2011, 2016). It is important to consider the self-concept holistically in order to allow for a broader conceptualisation of the self. Secondly, the focus on dance as an intervention with specific focus on the self-concept is not well researched, especially outside of dance training (Allan, 2013; Behrends, Müller, & Dziobek, 2012; Duberg, Möller, & Sunvisson, 2016; Lewis, Annett, Davenport, Hall, & Lovatt, 2016; Lovatt, 2011, 2017b; Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

## **1.5 Research questions**

This research was explored through the lens of self-concept, which is the theoretical framework for this research, and was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the measurable difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme?
2. What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-esteem after participating in a structured dance programme?
3. What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-image after participating in a structured dance programme?
4. What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their ideal self after participating in a structured dance programme?
5. What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their overall self-concept after participating in a structured dance programme?

## **1.6 Research aims and objectives**

The overall aim of this research was to explore the self-concept of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

The following objectives were also achieved:



1. To measure the difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors at a South African university prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).
  - a. Hypothesis:  
 $H_0: \mu_1 = \mu_2$  Null Hypothesis: There is no statistical difference between the RSES questionnaire pre-test and post-test scores of participants.  
 $H_1: \mu_1 \neq \mu_2$  Directional Hypothesis: There is a statistical difference between the RSES questionnaire pre-test and post-test scores of participants.
2. To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.
3. To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the self-image of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.
4. To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the ideal self of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.



## 1.7 Context to the Study

This study is located within South Africa, at a historically disadvantaged university (as referred to by the DHET) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014). These historically disadvantaged universities were set up by the apartheid government to produce administration related work, such as social work, education, physiotherapy, arts (without the performing arts) (Bunting, 2006; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014). With the new democracy in 1994, a new university had to be re-envisioned and through a White Paper 3: Higher Education of 1997, the growth of the university was the focus (Department of Education, 1997; Department of Higher Education and Training, 2014). Post -1994, after the White Paper 3, student affairs were neglected, hence we have mentoring programmes which

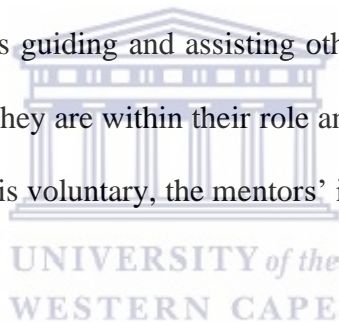
aim to help with the retention and throughput of students and my dance programme was set within the frame of this context. Thus the students who are in this mentoring programme are generally students who are caring for their brothers and sisters (their fellow students).

The participants for this research came from a peer mentoring programme, run at a South African University, which has been in operation since 2006. The main objective of the peer mentoring programme is to assist first-year students to adjust to the university lifestyle and support their transition from high school to university. The mentoring operative structure has mentees, mentors, head mentors and senior student coordinators. Mentors are senior students (second year to post-graduate), who are recruited at the end of each year for the next year, thus new members enter the mentoring programme each year. Mentors receive training to better equip them in their role within the programme. The programme also hosts various functions and team-building workshops throughout the year for these students. At the end of each year, students receive a mentoring certificate based on their active participation in the events of the programme and academic performance. The students who are part of the peer mentoring programme are of various ages, genders, races, years and courses of study, thus providing a broad and diverse cohort of participants for this research project. Since 2014, mentors who are 'non-professional' dancers, have prepared a dance performance at their valediction ceremony. In 2015 they began receiving training from a dance instructor for this valediction performance and it was through this that the peer mentoring programme management saw the possibility of dance in facilitating the mentoring relationship. Dance is a new approach used to assist the adjustment of the students into the programme.

A key point to note is that there is no formal expressive outlet for students in the form of physical activity, such as dancing, being provided by this South African university. With the beneficial connection between dance and thinking, this was considered to be an important contribution to reducing stress among university students, and also improving their thinking

which could contribute to improved academic performance (Lovatt, 2018; Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

My interest was with the students in this peer mentoring programme as they have explored dance since 2015 and formal research on their participation would provide great insights into the fields of dance and psychology. As I aim to shift the focus from ‘professional dancers’ to ‘non-professional dancers’, the mentors in the mentoring programme wished to explore dance for subjective reasons and are generally not established in the dance field. This research interest is on exploring participants’ personal understandings of how dance influences their own sense of self. Therefore, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the self, it is favourable that one has a sense of self, i.e. understands one’s self well. The mentors receive training such as emotional intelligence and generally see themselves as role-models and possessing a good self-concept. Being a mentor involves guiding and assisting others, and because of this, mentors have to constantly reaffirm who they are within their role and this contributes to a good sense of self. As the dance programme is voluntary, the mentors’ interest in dance is authentic.



## **1.8 Thesis chapter outline**

An outline and overview of the chapters presented in this research project are provided.

### **Chapter 2 – Literature Review**

This chapter presents a review of the literature pertaining to the research study, specifically focusing on the literature on the self, the self-concept (the theoretical framework), dance and dance psychology.

### **Chapter 3 – Research Methodology**

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology used in this research project. The research method and design are described, as well as the data collection strategies and the participants involved in this research project. The data analysis processes are explained and the

reflexivity of the researcher is also considered. The research ethics are highlighted and limitations involved in the methodology is addressed.

#### **Chapter 4 – Key Findings and Analysis**

This chapter explores the key findings relating to the aims and objectives of this research project. This chapter is divided into two sections. Section A discusses the quantitative data from the pre-test analysis and it is followed by the intervention – the dance programme and then looks at the post-test findings. The difference between the pre-test and post-test are also discussed. Section B discusses the qualitative data which is an analysis of the data from the interviews and observations. This chapter focuses on answering the research questions set out at the beginning of this research project.

#### **Chapter 5 – Conclusion**

This chapter concludes with how the key findings of this research answered the research questions. This chapter provides the significance of this research as well as the limitations to the research project. Recommendations for future research are also provided.



### **1.9 Conclusion**

In this research, I aimed to explore the self-concept comprehensively in order to work towards achieving the research aims and objectives set out in this chapter. There is an apparent need to conduct research on dance and the self-concept, located in the discipline of psychology, especially with university students. In this thesis, I will highlight this need. This chapter outlines the conceptual framework for this research project and sketches a clear strategy to execute the aims and objectives presented. The next chapter will provide a broader view of the theory of dance and self-concept and previous research on these topics.

## **Chapter 2: Literature review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter provided the outline for this research project with a clear strategy to execute the aims and objectives presented. The aim of the larger project was to explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the self-concept of a group of peer mentors; therefore this chapter will review literature on the self-concept, dance and the relationship between the self-concept and dance. This chapter will also further explore three aspects; self-esteem, self-image and ideal self, which forms part of the theoretical framework of this research which is the self-concept.

### **2.2 Literature on the Self**

The Self can be described as all that one would assign to themselves; or all that one would call ‘me’ or refer to as ‘mine’ (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). This non-tangible, abstract concept has been in conversation since the time philosophers Socrates, Plato and Aristotle referred to the Self as spirit or soul (Pajares & Schunk, 2002).

The formation of Self has been viewed through different theoretical frameworks. One such theory explains that children become conscious of others and who they are before they become conscious of themselves; children, therefore, develop a concept of Self vicariously through imitation (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). This shows how the Self can be formed primarily through one’s translation of how others behave and think about themselves. Pajares & Schunk (2002) emphasise this by stating that “the greatest blessing or tragedy of self and self-belief construction and development – that we become the kind of person we see reflected in the eyes of others” (p. 7). Hence, if we do not become more conscious of our own self-belief as we grow older, we might continue to live our lives based on the concept of ourselves that other people have formed for us. This is important and entails us developing self-awareness to identify the

beliefs that we hold of ourselves. This is referred to as our self-concept and will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

### **2.3 The Self-Concept (Theoretical Framework)**

The theoretical framework of this research is the self-concept. As the overall aim of this research was to explore the self-concept of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University, I was interested in how the self-concept is influenced after participants partake in dance. Therefore for this research, I will dismantle self-concept into its three theoretical concepts, namely: self-image, self-esteem and ideal self. Moreover, dance will be employed as an intervention or method of researching the self-concept and not as a theoretical construct in this research; because as a theoretical construct dance will change the direction of the research which is not the aim of this research.

As the theoretical approach to this research is self-concept, one has to note that there is no universally agreed upon notion of the self-concept, nor a unified theoretical approach to the self-concept. One could identify the differences and similarities in the Western and the African thinking of the self-concept, but that is not in line with the aims of this current research project (Gore & Cross, 2014; Nwoye, 2006). Where the aim of this research is to gain a further understanding of the self-concept of students at a South African university, the focus is on their subjective perceptions, thus how they perceive the effects of dance on the way they see themselves, how they feel about themselves, and how they view their future selves. From this, there is an opportunity to further investigate the idea of an African vs Western self in future research. However, for this research, I am using the self-concept to frame the research project, specifically drawing on the theory of self-image, self-esteem and ideal self (which will be

expanded on below). Previous research has used these concepts (self-concept, self-image, self-esteem, ideal self) to frame research, of which I will draw on in this literature review.

Although self-concept has been researched since the late 1800s, it is rarely used contextually as a theoretical framework in research. However, the idea is becoming more common and more vital, as Gore & Cross (2014) emphasise the self-concept's role in an individual's life, as well as in research. They assert that understanding self-concept change and development allows us to understand the adaptive nature of individuals to social settings, roles and circumstances. This ties into the current research project where my interest is in how the self-concept is influenced after participants partake in dance. However, to understand this, one has to start with a longer trajectory regarding the self-concept. This trajectory will show the development of research on the self-concept; i.e. the genealogy and development of the self-concept. This will be followed by expanding on the development of the self-concept; the overall self-concept; exploring the concepts of self-image, self-esteem and ideal self; and the role of self-efficacy and subjective perceptions.

### **2.3.1 A brief genealogy of the self-concept**

William James is known to be one of the first to publish work on the Self, in the late 1800s (Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Following James' work, Charles Horton Cooley, George Mead and Morris Rosenberg made some advancements in self-concept research in the early 1900s. Cooley developed the 'looking-glass self'; Mead described the Self as a reflexive process, together with James; and Rosenberg saw the self as both subject and object (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003; Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Thus in the mid-1950s, through the work of Rosenberg, Rogers, Snygg and Comb's, the self-concept became central to psychology (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Carl Rogers was one of the most well-known theorists to define the self-concept in social psychology. Rogers defined the self-concept as the beliefs of one's own



nature, distinctive qualities and typical behaviour (Rogers, 1951)<sup>3</sup>. Rogers found the self-concept to consist of one's self-image, self-esteem (self-worth) and the ideal self (Kahn & Rachman, 2000; McLeod, 2008). Rosenberg's definition of the self-concept was; the sum of one's "thoughts and feelings having reference to him-/herself as a particular object" (Owens & Samblanet, 2013, p. 227). As with Rogers, Rosenberg also believed the self-concept included self-image, which he referred to as one's view of themselves, as well as the ideal self (future self) (Owens & Samblanet, 2013). A descriptive definition to be used in my research reads as: 'the self-concept consists of the accumulation of one's thoughts, feelings and beliefs one has about their current and future self, translated through their experiences of being in the world. Thus, how one views oneself (self-image), feels about oneself in the present (self-esteem) and in the future (ideal self).

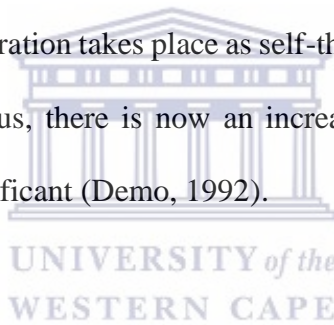
### **2.3.2 Development of self-concept**

The development of the self-concept starts as children act or behave based on the judgements of those with whom they interact (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). As their cognitive abilities develop (2 to 4 years) children begin to see themselves as objects (Demo, 1992). Piaget referred to this time as 'preoperational egocentrism'. This is where children can identify their own perspective, but unable to differentiate between theirs and others' thoughts and feelings (Demo, 1992). As children develop from ages 4 to 11, they learn to identify labelling of roles (self and other); they learn to limit social comparisons and reflected appraisals; they become more positively self-evaluative; and later in childhood, they tend to become more self-critical and doubtful of themselves (Demo, 1992; Owens & Samblanet, 2013). This could be due to the social environment being more important in their lives and they tend to be more self-critical of their abilities and achievements, leading to self-doubt and often decreasing self-esteem (Demo, 1992).

<sup>3</sup> Some older references were used for reference of the topic, such as Rogers (1951) on the Self-Concept.



The adolescent years is driven by psychological, social, biological and developmental changes. By the ages 12-15, adolescents have developed “formal operational thought, sophisticated deductive reasoning, and more efficient, diversified information processing” (Demo, 1992, p. 311). These skills equip adolescents with the knowledge to deeper evaluate themselves while their self-consciousness is high. The self-concept is heavily influenced at this time by internal psychological processes of “inner thoughts, feelings, attitudes, desires, beliefs, fears and expectations” (Damon & Hart, 1982; Demo, 1992, p. 311). The self-image, at this stage, fluctuates due to the physiological and physical changes occurring, such as hormonal productions (Demo, 1992). As this is a time of heightened tensions, especially conflicts with parents and peer pressures; the self-concept experiences the most disturbances especially around 12 to 13 years of age. In late adolescence, self-references are made more to adulthood than to childhood and a new maturation takes place as self-theories are redefined (Demo, 1992; Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Thus, there is now an increase in self-esteem as role-identity development becomes more significant (Demo, 1992).



### **2.3.3 Overall self-concept**

Research on the self-concept displays it as learned, dynamic, organised and displaying emerging qualities concept (Belapurkar, 2016; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). The self-concept consists of three different components, namely: self-image; self-esteem and ideal self (Kahn & Rachman, 2000; McLeod, 2008; Rogers, 1951, 1959). The degree to which one’s self-concept is measured most likely depends on how one adjusts to the demands of life and the emotional stability one exhibits. People with a good self-concept have positive views in life and are able to function better within their society; the inverse can be seen as true too (Belapurkar, 2016). Self-esteem is an important element of the self-concept, as how one feels about oneself influences the way one views oneself. Thus, “self-esteem has emerged therefore as one of the strongest predictors of subjective well-being and is consequently an important element of

mental well-being and quality of life” (Biddle, Fox, & Boutcher, 2003, p. 88). Culture also plays a vital role in the development of the self-concept. As mentioned, self-concept is shaped through imitation within the child; yet in adolescence and adulthood, functioning well in society and culture can also be a predictor (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Kudryavcev (2016) reminds us that culture is initially a tool of personal freedom and later a social concept. He points out how art was more powerful than the strict rules of administration on the people, as it gave them an ideal platform to express their own free will (Kudryavcev, 2016). Thus the self-concept is seen as a social product as well as a social force, according to Owens & Samblanet (2013). They (2013) assert that one is not born with a self-concept, but it is developed from interacting in social environments and those social factors shape the formation of the self-concept (social product); this development of the self-concept is then performed by the individual and produced back into society (social force).

#### **2.3.4 Self-image, self-esteem and ideal self**

Various studies have been conducted on self-image, but these studies have focused on different types of self-image. For example, there is scholarly work on moral self-image (Ward & King, 2018), adult self-image (Ryan & Hoyt, 2018), green self-image (Welsch & Kühling, 2018), negative self-image (Savilahti et al., 2018) and body self-image (Lian et al., 2018). However, this research will focus on the simplest idea of the self-image: the subjective view one has of oneself; from physical to behavioural attributes (Gecas, 1982). Self-image refers to the way in which one would describe the characteristics of one’s self (Butler & Gasson, 2006). Self-image is more of a descriptive concept, whereas the self-esteem is more of an evaluative concept.

One’s self-esteem concerns itself with how much one values one’s self. Baumeister (1998) in Heatherton & Wyland (2003) describe self-esteem as “the evaluative aspect of the self-concept that responds to an overall view of the self as worthy or unworthy” (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003, p. 220). Pajares and Schunk (2002) refer to the formula that William James

developed for self-esteem. It proposes that the success with which we can accomplish our goals is dependent on the feelings we have of ourselves (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Self-esteem is associated with the emotions one has when thinking about different aspects of oneself (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Rosenberg, who developed one of the most widely used self-esteem assessment tools, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES); defined self-esteem as a “set of thoughts and feelings about his or her own worth and importance” (Martín-Albo, Núñez, Navarro, & Grijalvo, 2007, p. 459). Martín-Albo et al. (2007), translated and validated the RSES through a study on university students, found the RSES a justified tool for assessing self-esteem in the university context. Self-esteem evaluates how one feels about oneself in the present moment, thus one’s self-esteem can change over time. The ideal self focuses on the future image one has of oneself, but this also includes self-esteem, which is how one would like to feel about themselves in the future.

The ideal self is the desirable image one has of one’s self, i.e. what attributes one seeks to acquire, or the self-concept one values the most and would truly want to possess (Rogers, 1959; Zentner & Renaud, 2007). Ideal self is influential to the self for these reasons; one, it is a motivation for the individual to strive to a better self or behaviour in the future; and two, the ideal self is an evaluation of the actual (current) self (Zentner & Renaud, 2007). William James in Zentner & Renaud (2007) suggested, “self-evaluations depend on the degree to which the self’s actual successes coincide with the self’s aspirations” (p. 557). Confusion and disorder of the self often occurs when there are discrepancies between ones ideal self and actual self (Eusanio et al., 2014; Owens & Samblanet, 2013; Zentner & Renaud, 2007). These discrepancies could come into effect when the ideal self seems too unattainable from the actual self, or the ideal self has been attained (as the current self) and thus a new ideal self needs to be imagined (Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Linked to this, self-efficacy becomes an important factor in shaping the ideal self, the next section explains this further.

### 2.3.5 The role of self-efficacy and subjective perceptions

Self-efficacy beliefs are very similar to the construct of the self-concept, as they are the beliefs an individual holds of their capabilities, but not necessarily what they truly are capable of achieving (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). This helps individuals understand to which end they are able to accomplish their goals, based on their current knowledge. Self-efficacy is important in relation to self-concept as it ties in with the ideal self, one of the components of the self-concept. Self-efficacy can be seen as a motivating factor in achieving self-actualisation (the motivation for personal development “to reach self-fulfilment, inner peace, and contentment throughout one’s lifetime”) toward the ideal self (Gecas, 1982; Maslow, 1943; Pajares & Schunk, 2002, p. 13; Schwender et al., 2018). This motivation becomes even more important when considering the consequences of withholding these self-efficacy beliefs (Gecas, 1982; Schwender et al., 2018). As when an individual sees no purpose in achieving anything in their lives, they feel their life becomes meaningless and therefore has no desire to achieve self-actualisation or to realise their ideal self. Rogers also engaged the concept of self-actualisation, which he referred to as the “actualising tendency”, where he too believed that humans have a tendency to desire and strive towards self-actualisation (Kahn & Rachman, 2000, p. 296; Pajares & Schunk, 2002; Rogers, 1959). One thing to consider is that when an individual experiences a non-critical environment where they are empathically and genuinely accepted (unconditional positive regard), the potential of individual actualisation is more likely to be realised. In allowing individuals to have this experience, they must feel that they are valued, thus their subjective perceptions becomes important.

The definition of self-concept used in this research is the accumulation of one’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs one has about their current and future self, translated through their experiences of being in the world. This definition allows for a self-reflective process and is shaped by the experiences an individual has had in the world. This means that one’s self-

concept requires the person to be both the subject and the object of reflection: “requires individuals to stand outside of themselves and react to themselves as detached entities of observation” (Owens & Samblanet, 2013, p. 227). It incorporates both emotional responses and cognitive responses due to the dualistic ‘I-me’ concept (Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Research on the self-concept has mostly used survey data as its methods, yet if the self-concept incorporates one’s thoughts, feelings and beliefs, subjective experiences of participants are more effective in exploring this concept further.

The self-concept is a non-physical construct that can be used to define a person abstractly. Dance is seen as a physical activity that embodies an expression of this self. The next section examines previous literature on dance and how it can be used to define the self.

## 2.4 Dance

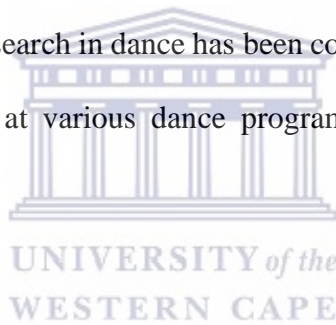
Most people have experiences of dance, whether it was actively dancing or watching dance. Whether this experience was positive or negative, there is an inference that dance can be a subjective experience. Dance is a common physical activity that most people have been exposed to in some form but has not been simple to define. The Oxford English dictionary defines dance as “a series of movements that match the speed and rhythm of a piece of music”, and “move rhythmically to music, typically following a set sequence of steps” (English Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2018). Cohen (1962), says in an attempt to define dance, there are other rhythmical movements of the body that we do not refer to as dancing; for example, if an individual listens to and enjoys music while ironing, would this make it a rhythmical movement of the body? Since Cohen (1962), the term ‘expression’ was found to distinguish dance from other movements and is a repeated characteristic across dance research (Hanna, 2010; Misirhiralall, 2013). Dance, in its true form, can be considered as an expression of self, as dance holistically possesses an expressive trait (Cohen, 1962; Misirhiralall, 2013). Cohen

(1962) goes on to say that because people are naturally expressive beings, and dancers are people, the body movements are naturally expressive too. This brings to mind the idea that another distinguishable characteristic of dance is the human body, which dance uses as its medium (Cohen, 1962; Giurchescu, 2001). Adding to Cohen's view, Giurchescu (2001) stated that dance cannot exist without the person as it is "considered a psychosomatic entity, the dancer is the 'soul and body' of dance. He or she is the dance" (p. 109).

Bresnahan (2015) outlined the many reasons dance is practised and performed, this can include political, social, educational, or even therapeutic. Dance has been researched in-depth, mostly around performance and within specific styles. Dance as a discipline has evolved within the last decade and as a discourse, is a layered subject and object which makes it challenging to define and to unpack (Bresnahan, 2015; Doolittle, Chasse, Makoloski, Boyd, & Yassi, 2016; Giersdorf & Wong, 2016; Hanna, 2010; Lewis, Annett, Davenport, Hall, & Lovatt, 2016; Lovatt, 2016, 2018; Misirhiralall, 2013; Pinniger, Brown, Thorsteinsson, & McKinley, 2012). This can be due to different dance styles requiring different approaches and output, thus making it complex to use as an umbrella for research. The study method of dance studies in schools and universities seem to be strict and narrow. Judges and examiners want to see dance replicated within its style (learned and regurgitated or a 'copy-and-paste' model), leaving little room for self-expression. Dance should ideally be embraced for what it is: "... purposeful, intentionally rhythmical, culturally patterned, nonverbal body movement communication in time and space, with effort, and each genre having its own criteria for excellence" (Hanna, 2010, p. 213). Misirhiralall (2013) displayed the importance of dance research in schools as it brings forth creativity and the aesthetic nature of the arts. Academic research on dance can be seen as both outdated and skewed, making a slow, yet steady re-emergence (Desmond, 1994; Giersdorf & Wong, 2016). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, dance found its place in academic disciplines such as humanities, sociology and history, to name a few (Giersdorf & Wong, 2016;

Misirhiralall, 2013). Credit is due to researchers such as Randy Martin, a dancer, social activist and professor of art and policy, who challenged the politics surrounding dance studies and thus assisted in embedding dance studies within the academia (Giersdorf & Wong, 2016).

An article titled ‘C’mon to My House’ discovered links between house dancing (a particular genre of dance), Freud and Charles Dickens (Sommer, 2001). Sommer (2001) studied the underground-house dance clubs and found four forms of house dancing: Interactive; Performative; Improvisational and that the dancers aimed to maintain a sense of objectivity. Within this article, one aspect central to the underground-house dance scene is a deep sense of community and freedom of expression. Sommer (2001) describes that the term ‘underground’ was borrowed from the ‘underground-railroad’ routes which the slaves used to escape. Thus proving Bresnahan's (2015) statement that dance is utilized for different reasons, or connects to fields such as politics. Most research in dance has been conducted on trained or professional dancers, the next section looks at various dance programmes used in research in both a professional and social capacity.



#### **2.4.1 Dance programmes**

Dance has been used as an intervention in many different studies, to research various phenomena. This research also uses dance as an intervention to explore the self, as a 7-session dance programme. One of the reasons dance programmes are used as interventions in research is because of its dynamic and self-expressive nature (Misirhiralall, 2013). Dance allows an individual to express their thoughts and emotions in a meaningful manner (Misirhiralall, 2013). Thus making it an easy, non-threatening way to explore the self.

Dance interventions commonly focus on a specific dance style, for example, belly dance, ballroom dance, tango, rumba or hip hop (Pinniger, Brown, Thorsteinsson, & McKinley, 2013; Schwender et al., 2018). Each researcher usually has different motives as to why they chose a specific dance style. Gardner, Komesaroff, & Fensham (2008) explains that different dance



styles require different emotions or moods, for example, the rumba requires you to pretend to be in love; to use your imagination and create a story while dancing. The difference with the dance programme for this study was that it was not specific to a dance style, but focused more on exploring dance through the movements of different body parts, i.e. how can you dance using your head or shoulders. There were similarities in the sample sizes used in the dance programme interventions across the research conducted.

Researchers use dance as interventions in research, but once the findings of these research yields positive results for dance, how does one implement dance into society? The current issue is that there is limited access to dance (studios, workshops, schools) within societies; often because of financial costs, distance or a sense of belonging within the dance group (Doolittle et al., 2016; Gard, 2003; Misirhiralall, 2013). Lovatt (2018) addresses this issue by stating that, if there is evidence that dance does improve health and make people possibly live longer, then it is possible that these findings could allow dance sessions to be available to everyone for the improvement of health, with the state paying and providing for the dance session. He adds that for a state to do this, however, there would need to be strong statistical evidence for the enhancement of health through dance (Lovatt, 2018). In taking a stride towards this, a recent web page article revealed that doctors in the United Kingdom will be able to prescribe dance classes for patients with various conditions such as mental health issues, lung problems and dementia (Wingenroth, 2018). Some pilot programmes have already been rolled out, but this “social prescribing”, as they are terming it, will be in full effect by 2023 (Wingenroth, 2018).

#### **2.4.2 A move towards dance and self**

Over recent years, there has been a move towards looking at self through the lens of dance. Patricia Anna Panaligan (2013) believed that developing an understanding of one’s physical or material self (Symbolic Interaction theory) helps develop an individual’s ability to understand themselves holistically. Panaligan's (2013) research seeks to use the Symbolic Interaction (SI)



theory to look at individuals' interactions in different environments and how this affects their self-development. SI theory concerns itself with the way individuals derive meaning through their interpretation of interpersonal interactions (Panaligan, 2013). The constituents of this theory include the material, spiritual, social selves. Cooley also explained this in his theory on the 'looking-glass-self' (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). According to Panaligan (2013), SI forms our interaction and functioning within groups, it helps us to define our roles and symbols. It is out of this forming of symbols and roles that we are able to form shared meaning with others. According to Panaligan (2013), it is through increased interactions with others, that we are able to create further meanings, and one such meaning is the self-concept. Although her research focused on self-concept and self-perception, it made little mention of self-image and ideal self. Moreover, she did not adequately define self-concept and seemed to use 'self-esteem', 'perceptions of self' and 'self-concept' interchangeably.

Panaligan's research did however, open a path into exploring dance and the development of the self outside of the frame of formal dance training. Questioning issues that have been overlooked in prior research, such as: the impact of different forms of dance training on the self-concept; negative critiquing in dance studios and its effect on self-concept; the difference between social dancers' and trained dancers' self-concept; and whether the age of the individual is a factor when starting to dance (trained or social) (Panaligan, 2013).

Programmes have popped up all over the world using dance as a medium to help, specifically young people, with various psychological and mental health issues, such as bullying, low self-esteem and abuse. For example, in New Zealand, Parris Goebel (world-renown choreographer and dancer) and her sisters started a programme called 'Sisters United' (Sisters United NZ, 2017). This is an organisation which provides creative and empowering programming and services to women aged 14 to 21 years old; which include art, music and dance (Sisters United NZ, 2017). Another such programme is YPAD (Youth Protection

Advocates in Dance) of who Leslie Scott, dancer and choreographer, is the founder. Scott aims to help empower young dancers through self-esteem building workshops and also empower parents of dancers about the hyper-sexualisation within the dance industry (EDIFY Movement, 2018). A board of advisories, which include doctors, social workers and psychologists, guide Scott and her team in designing well-informed workshops and programmes (EDIFY Movement, 2018).

With these moves towards dance and self, research on dance and self-concept have also increased as more researchers are interested in the relationship between these two concepts. In the next section, dance and the self-concept are reviewed in detail.

## **2.5 Dance and Self-concept**

Research conducted on dance and self-concept is either limited or complex to decipher. This may be due to different disciplines using different strategies to investigate different areas of the Self and dance. Therefore the research found on dance and self-concept has a broad range of samples, methods, results and conclusions. In a systematic review, Schwender et al. (2018) conducted an overview of 24 studies on dance as an intervention on different aspects of the Self. Results from various studies found that dance could be beneficial and a worthwhile method to strengthen and enhance various aspects of the self (Schwender et al., 2018). One of the motives for this is that dance is not as habitual, in terms of movement, like most sports and daily activities; and it allows for freedom of dynamic movements (Schwender et al., 2018). “Dance gives the opportunity to involve different senses and connects movement to music with self-expression; therefore it is seen as activity that addresses various facets of the personality” (Schwender et al., 2018, p. 2). Thus dance is one of the most ideal methods of researching the self-concept due to it being such an expressive activity.

Some results from research on dance and self-concept have not yielded positive results. For example, in a 16-week research on dance and self-concept and self-esteem, the control group produced a lower self-concept mean score compared to the dance group, and no significant differences were found (Schwender et al., 2018). In a similar 8-week study, no improvement was found in the self-concept of both groups. One study found a positive effect on the self-efficacy of girls in their research of hip hop dance, but not for boys; there is no clear explanation for this (Schwender et al., 2018). Comprehensive research on dance and self-concept is yet to be completed. Furthermore, the three aspects of the self-concept have also been explored in research using dance as an intervention, the next section covers this.

### **2.5.1 Dance: self-image, self-esteem and ideal self**

Self-image is the subjective view one has of oneself; from physical to behavioural attributes (Gecas, 1982). In dance, how one views oneself becomes an important attributor for if and how they will dance. Research conducted by Baptista, Vilela, Jones, & Natour, (2012), focused on the effects of belly dance in fibromyalgia patients as an option for treatment. Using dance as an intervention, this research found that dance can have a positive effect on self-image (Baptista et al., 2012; Schwender et al., 2018). In another study, dance was shown to improve participants' self-image, with the participants initially displaying a poor self-image (Lovatt, 2018). The results of this research does, however, raise concerns for future research, as the researchers realised the 6 weeks of dance sessions may not have been enough to lead to statistical differences in self-image (Lovatt, 2018).

Self-esteem concerns itself with how much one values one's self (Alessandri, Vecchione, Eisenberg, & Laguna, 2015; Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). Research on recreational dance and self-esteem revealed that when people participated in different types of arts-based community projects, which include dance, their self-esteem and confidence increased (Lovatt, 2018). This was confirmed in a report by the "Health Education Authority" in the UK, who found that

among 90 projects, there was 91% enhancement in self-esteem and 82% in confidence (Lovatt, 2018, p. 159). Another research project showed an improvement in low self-esteem within young girls when participating in a dance programme compared to swimming training (Burgess, Grogan, & Burwitz, 2006). In this research, participants were measured three times over a 12-week period (pre-test, mid-test and post-test). For 6 of the 12 weeks, half of the participants had to complete dance aerobic sessions and the other half swimming sessions, both for twice a week. After the 6-week period, the participants swapped and the ones who completed the dance aerobic sessions switched to swimming sessions and vice versa. This is referred to as a cross-over design (Burgess et al., 2006; Lovatt, 2018). Another research investigating the impact of recreational dance on self-esteem found no positive effects, and the results were inconclusive due to its small sample size (8 participants) and weaknesses in its methodology; such as the researcher failing to observe direct changes in self-esteem, and no pre-test of the control group (Lovatt, 2018; Schwender et al., 2018). Lovatt (2018) also addressed communication of emotions in dance, and he found that various research conducted on this topic concluded that emotions can be expressed (by the dancer) and recognised through dance (by the audience). Therefore dance can be used to communicate emotions, which is a basic form of human communication and an essential form of building relationships (Lovatt, 2018). This is significant for future dance psychology research developments.

There is very limited research available on dance and its influence or effect on the ideal self. Some research has linked ideal self to professional dancers or dancers training for a career in dance, others have found that identifying themselves as a dancer is terrifying. In dance, specifically with professional dancers, perfectionism is associated with mental and physical issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety and depression (Eusanio et al., 2014). Perfectionism

<sup>4</sup> Research on dance and self-image; and dance and self-esteem should be placed under the umbrella of dance psychology. This is the type of research that Lovatt has begun to converge and develop into a discourse and field. Thus the reason why I draw so heavily on this researcher.

can be consciously controlled and contribute to an individual's sense of self. It is only when an individual develops perfectionism as a personality trait and constantly strives for the next goal, that they will experience discrepancies between their actual (current) and ideal self. In a competitive environment, dancers rely on the evaluations of others on their performance and this could lead to negative effects on the self, especially self-esteem (Eusanio et al., 2014). Eusanio et al. (2014) suggested that dancers should partake in programmes that focus on the enhancement of self, specifically self-esteem and self-compassion, which could reduce the negative effects on ideal self.

Some people might fear dance or are even terrified of dancing. This might be embedded in the way society has described dance or one's body image when dancing, which is then linked to the belief one has about their ability to dance (self-efficacy) (Sansom, 2017). This is especially true when the type of dance is more technically performed (Sansom, 2017).

### **2.5.2 Dance and Embodiment**

This research is about examining the subjective perceptions of individuals and it is important to note how dance, through embodiment, highlights possible change in the perceptions of self. Neuroscientists, self-help practitioners and dance theorists have all explored the concept of embodiment (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). Some neuroscientists argue that the mind can control the body, but the body does not control the mind (Leaf, 2013). Yet, in other neuroscientific research, considerable advancements have been made with the connection between the body and the mind. Is it possible for the body to be in the mind too? Candace Pert in Beausoleil & Lebaron (2013), termed this psychosomatic network of cognition, emotions and attitudes, the "mobile brain" (p. 136). The way we perceive the Self transpires from this system of awareness of internal, external sensations and our body in location in space (proprioception); from this, the brain maps out the body and creates self-recognition (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). One thing to note about perception (of Self), is that it is formed

by physical cues both in the present and in the body's memory stores. Some childhood experiences, particularly traumatic ones, become stored in the body through implicit memory which causes lasting changes in the right brain; affecting behaviour, interpretation and perception (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). The person could be consciously unaware of these (traumatic) memories. All this research points to the validity and importance of focusing on embodiment.

Embodiment according to Duberg, Möller, & Sunvisson (2016) “refers to the body's emotional feedback system through which the motor system is linked to the cognitive affective system” (p. 2). Adding to the explanation of Beausoleil & Lebaron (2013), Duberg et al. (2016) describes embodiment as the result of humans being both biological organisms and social beings. According to Schwender et al. (2018), there is an embodiment of the mind within the body, which is subsequently embedded within the environment. Through this discussion, the link between embodiment and dance becomes interestingly relevant. Some researchers view dance as the “essence of embodiment, as dance expresses the meaning of an embodied being-in-the-world” (Schwender et al., 2018, p. 2). Thus, it can be said that dance encapsulates all characteristics of embodiment; its' emotional, intellectual and physical aspects through which our understanding and perception of self occurs. This would explain how dance (a physical activity of the body) could create changes in the body – possibly releasing the memory stores in the body – and resulting in perceptions of self possibly being altered as well (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013).

### **2.5.3 Dance as a catharsis**

As mentioned in the discussion on embodiment, individuals can store memories and emotions about themselves within the body, without being aware of it, thus the release of these emotions through dance can be beneficial to the self. Catharsis is a releasing of strong and suppressed emotions, Momplé & Cloete (2018) found that dance allows for this cathartic effect. They

conducted a survey in South Africa prior to launching a dance programme to university students, to inquire about students' views on dance. When asking the students why do they dance (their motivations for dancing), many of them answered that they dance to release (to get rid of) stress, or to relieve (manage) stress (Momplé & Cloete, 2018). This cathartic experience was also found in Roychoudhury & Gardner (2014), where young people felt that they could release and express their emotions through Hip Hop dancing. Additionally, Dunphy et al., (2014), discovered that traditional dance became a power tool for the cathartic release of individual and groups in traditional Timor-Leste ceremonies. The cathartic effect that dance has on individuals is vital for future research on dance and self.

## **2.6 Dance Psychology**

Dance Psychology has recently emerged as a discourse, researching psychological constructs within dance. Dance Psychology studies dancers and dance within a scientific, psychological framework (Allan, 2013; Lovatt, 2018). Peter Lovatt became greatly aware of the growing amount of academic research and literature world-wide, focusing on dance and dancers psychologically. Lovatt established the Dance Psychology Lab in the United Kingdom, run at the University of Hertfordshire. The lab focuses on “Public understanding of Psychology” and one of the focuses of the Lab is the relationship between dance and self-esteem, especially where dance is negatively related to self-esteem (Lovatt, 2016; Oxford Cambridge and RSA, 2015, p. 6). As this is an emerging discourse, the scholarly work on dance psychology is limited and Lovatt is currently the leading scholar in this field. His research focus is on the effects of the dancing environment and self-esteem levels and thus concentrating more on ‘professional dancers’ and whether their self-esteem is lowered or raised in their experience (Lovatt, 2016). Furthermore, Lovatt conducted various studies around dance. He researched the relationship between dance and confidence and termed it ‘dance confidence’ (Lovatt, 2011). He defines it



as “... a measure of domain-specific self-esteem as applied to how a person feels about their social and recreational dance ability” (Lovatt, 2011, p. 668). Lovatt (2011) found a variation of dance confidence in gender and age group. With gender, females dance confidence levels were higher than that of males. With age, female’s levels of dance confidence start high (early adolescence), drop drastically (mid-teens), steadily rise (late teens) and then level off (mid-life). With men, levels of dance confidence start low and steadily rise (late teens to early 20s) and then level off (mid-30s). For women in their mid to late 50s, dance confidence drops significantly; whereas the adverse is true for men, in their mid-60s there a significant increase. (Lovatt, 2011)

Further, Lovatt researched relationships between dance and depression; dance and thinking; dance and problem solving; and dance and genetics (Allan, 2013). In dance and depression research, Lovatt found that partaking in regular dance classes has a positive effect on mood changes of individuals with mild to severe depression (Allan, 2013; Lovatt, 2018). In Lovatt’s dance and thinking research, he found different movements or striking different poses in dance affects the way individuals think about themselves (Allan, 2013; Lovatt, 2018). With dance and problem-solving research, he found that different forms of dance allows individuals to solve various types of problems (Allan, 2013; Lovatt, 2011). In more recent research, a positive increase was reported in self-esteem and confidence in people who participated in community arts-based projects, which included dance (Lovatt, 2017a). As most studies focus on ‘professional’ dancers, such as Lovatt’s dance confidence research, my research project will attempt to shift from this focus and consider psychological adjustments of ‘non-professional dancers’ (Lovatt, 2011).

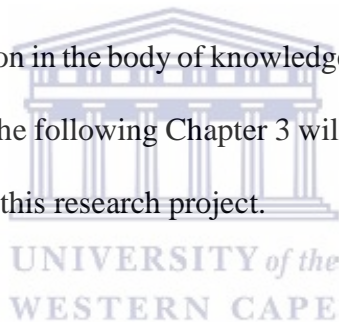
As Dance Psychology is still in its infancy as a discipline, it is yet to develop theoretical constructs which will embed it in the Psychology and Dance fields. Through this research and



follow up research, Dance Psychology will become a fresh and creative way of thinking dance and the Self.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has reflected on some of the key theoretical concepts that are needed to operationalise this study. More importantly, most of the research mentioned thus far on dance self-concept is quantitative, where this research project is using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. I understood that in-depth, subjective perceptions can carry valuable and rich data that is best acquired through the qualitative component. Furthermore, previous research in dance has largely focussed on only one part of the self-concept: self-esteem. I have come across limited research conducted to include the other two parts: self-image and ideal self. This limitation in the body of knowledge on dance and self-concept allows for further research in the field. The following Chapter 3 will discuss the layout of the research methodology that will be used in this research project.



## **Chapter 3: Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the research methodology used in this research project. As this research seeks to explore the self-concept of mentors, I chose a mixed-methods approach using both quantitative and qualitative methods. This provides an opportunity to explore as well as measure aspects of the self-concept. The qualitative nature focuses on gaining insight into the self-concept and its aspects of self-image, self-esteem and ideal self, which outline different behaviours (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). The qualitative data allowed an in-depth understanding of the subjective experiences of participants in this study. The quantitative data measured statistical differences in the self-esteem (one aspect of the self-concept) of participants in this research. The qualitative and quantitative methods were complementary and allowed me to gain a holistic understanding of the self-concept of the mentors participating in the dance programme. In this chapter, I discuss the research method and design; the breakdown of the dance programme; the data collection; participants; and data analysis. Reflexivity; research ethics; and limitations in relation to this study are also addressed.

### **3.2 Research Method and Design**

#### **3.2.1 A brief introduction to mixed-method research**

According to Morse & Niehaus (2009), mixed-methods design is defined as, “a scientifically rigorous research project, driven by the inductive or deductive theoretical drive, and comprised of a qualitative or quantitative core component with qualitative or quantitative supplementary component(s)” (p. 14). Mixed method research is thus often used “to comprehensively address the research question” (Morse & Niehaus, 2009, p. 15). There is great value in applying more than one method to examining social constructs, yet only in the last few years has there been a growth in utilizing mixed method research (Babbie, 2017; Morse & Niehaus, 2009). The main

feature of this type of methodology is that it uses a primary method together with one or more approaches which comes from an alternative second method to answer the research question(s) (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). In the case of this research, the primary method is the qualitative component and the secondary method is the quantitative component.

This research used a mixed-method approach for a single study, using both a quantitative and qualitative methodology. More specifically, a sequential explanatory design was used, which collects and analyses the quantitative data first and then the qualitative data. The quantitative data complements the qualitative data and assists the in-depth analysis and discussion of the findings. This allows a one to make quality inferences of the data collected and analysed. I chose to include the quantitative component to enhance the explanation or findings of the qualitative data. The reason for choosing a mixed-method design for this research was to allow for different analysis of the same phenomenon. Using mixed-methods allowed me to explore the self-concept from both the experiences of the participants (qualitative) and from a statistical perspective (quantitative). This presented more substantial results and improved the strength of the research. Additionally, through the analysis and results of the research, both the quantitative and qualitative data presented equally strong findings, respectively. This, of course, was only evident after the analysis phase of both methods. This mixed-methods approach also set up a solid base for similar future research. The next two sections look at the designs used for the quantitative and qualitative methods of this research.

### **3.2.2 Quantitative (Quasi-experimental design)**

The quantitative method chosen for this research used a quasi-experimental, one-group pre-test post-test design. This design measures one group before and after an intervention; in this research, the participant's self-esteem was measured before and after the dance programme using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) (Marsden & Torgerson, 2012). Only self-esteem was measured quantitatively as it informs the overall self-concept; i.e. in order to

explain how one views oneself, one has to have an understanding of how one feels about oneself, which is one's self-esteem.

### **3.2.3 Qualitative (Ethnography design)**

In addition to the quantitative research design, I also used an ethnographic design to gather the qualitative data. Ethnography, also referred to as participant observation, is when the researcher is immersed within a group for a specific amount of time (Babbie & Mouton, 2001b; Bryman, 2012). Here I observed behaviour between participants and intently took note of the conversations participants had with me (Babbie & Mouton, 2001b; Bryman, 2012). I am a dancer and therefore immersed in the dance field. I have an in-depth knowledge of the construct of dance and thus able to facilitate the research through a skilful lens. In addition to this, I have been working with the university's peer mentoring programme since 2015. I have choreographed various dance performances for the students in the peer mentoring programme since 2015 and also became a research assistant for the programme in 2017. Therefore I know and understand the programme and the context very well; hence the ethnographic design. The intervention in this research was a structured dance programme and is discussed in the section below.

## **3.3 The Dance Programme**

The intervention used in this research comprised of a seven-session structured dance programme that was specifically developed for this research. This intervention explored various aspects of dance, including dance fitness, isolation of body parts, choreography, freestyle, group and solo performances.

Session one was dance fitness, this is a group-exercise styled class where participants merely have to copy the dance moves that the instructor is demonstrating. Dance fitness was chosen for the first session as it is a more social form of dancing and it does not require participants to

learn complicated dance movements or perform in front of an audience. This form of dance class could ease participants into the dance programme and also allowed participants to get comfortable in dancing with a group. Different music was used in this session to cater to different preferences of music and create an environment for everyone to enjoy the session.

Sessions two through five involved isolating of body parts. This required participants to move only one body part at a time. For example, using the head to create different movements in isolation to the rest of the body. The purpose for this was to demonstrate various dance movements one can do with a single body part and for participants to view dance in a different light by learning that there are many movements one could do with the head, etc. in dance. This gave participants a more comprehensive view of dance. The body part isolations were paired as; head and chest, arms and shoulders, hips and abs, legs and feet.

Session six put all of the isolation sessions together to create a choreographic dance using the whole body. Here participants had to learn set movements and replicate it to a piece of music. Choreography is focused on learning specific moves to a song that requires participants to learn timing and beat-matching (their bodies to match the beat of the music). The reason for choreography in the dance programme was because, with learning choreography, participants have to engage different cognitive processes, such as problem-solving, creativity and memory. This is very different to dance fitness, where one simply copies the instructor, choreography requires more conscious effort. At the end of the choreography session, participants were divided into two groups, where half the participants had to perform the routine while the other half were the audience. Both groups had a turn to perform for the other half. This was the first time in the dance programme where participants had or became the audience, but it was brief.

Session seven was the cypher and freestyle performances session. The first half of the session was the cypher and the second half were freestyle performances. A cypher involves people making a circle and one or two people at a time entering the circle to dance to music.

Usually, the people who make up the circle hype the person(s) in the circle while they are dancing. Participants can do any movements in the circle, which is freestyle. Freestyle dancing allows participants to simply dance as they interpret the music and they translate this interpretation through movement, which is dance. This was the first session of the dance programme where participants could do their own dance moves (freestyle) and did not have to be restricted to the researcher's instruction. This brings the elements of self-esteem and self-image to the fore because depending on how participants feel and view themselves will determine how freely they will express themselves through dance. In the second half of this session, participants had to perform in front of the other participants. Their performances could include dancing choreography or freestyle but had to be performed solo while all the other participants formed the audience. Participants could also choose their own music for their solo performance. Through this, the participants were able to experience the role of an audience too. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Dance Psychology also researches the role of the audience, by looking at what happens psychologically when one watches other people dancing (Lovatt, 2018). Hence it was included in the intervention of this research. Participants were therefore also able to explore their self-concept as an audience member.

The purpose of including these various aspects of dance was to gain in-depth insights into the self-concept of participants through various aspects of dance. Participants were therefore able to explore their self-concept through dance, as dance allows the person to express themselves non-verbally (Panaligan, 2013; Sansom, 2017; Varanda, 2014). The structured dance programme was conducted during term three of semester two in the university calendar.

Session one had the highest attendance of participants, 62%. Followed by session two with 59%. Session three and seven both had 56% attendance. Session five had 50% attendance and session 4 had 41%. The lowest attended session was Session six; a possible reason for this is

that students had a lot of tests and assignments due that week. Below is a table of the total attendance of participants for each session (Table 1).

Session number	Number of participants per session	Percentage %
Session 1	21	62
Session 2	20	59
Session 3	19	56
Session 4	14	41
Session 5	17	50
Session 6	13	38
Session 7	19	56

*Table 1: Total attendance per session*



### 3.4 Participants/Sample

#### 3.4.1 Participants

A non-probability sampling technique was used for this research. Nonprobability sampling is when samples are selected in a specific way (Babbie, 2017). For the peer mentoring programme purposive sampling was used, but for selecting the participants in the programme convenience sampling was used. Purposive sampling is “a type of nonprobability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected based on the researcher’s judgement about which ones will be the most useful or representative” (Babbie, 2017, p. 196). Purposive sampling was chosen for this research due to my interest in the self-concept of students in a peer mentoring programme at a South African university. Convenience sampling is also a type of nonprobability sampling which draws a sample from a specific population, in this case, the peer mentoring programme (Wagner et al., 2012). Convenience sampling was used as participants in the peer mentoring

programme volunteered to be a part of the dance programme. The population of this study were all the students in the mentor programme, thus the sample came from the mentoring programme. As this research aimed to shift the focus from ‘professional dancers’ to ‘non-professional dancers’, the mentors in the programme expressed that they wished to explore dance for subjective reasons and are generally not established in the dance field. This research interest is on exploring participants’ personal understandings of how dance influences their own sense of self. Therefore, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the self, it is favourable that one has a sense of self, i.e. understands one’s self well. The mentors receive training such as emotional intelligence and generally see themselves as role models and possessing a good self-concept. Being a mentor involves guiding and assisting others, and because of this, mentors have to constantly reaffirm who they are within their role and this contributes to a good sense of self.

Participants completed a demographic profile at the beginning of the research project for research purposes (Appendix F). The demographic profiles of the students were as follows: 36 participants signed up for the dance programme, 2 of the participants were not part of the peer mentoring programme, therefore their data could not be analysed. This research had four phases of data collection. The first was the pre-test phase, which saw a total of 34 participants analysed for this research. The second phase was the intervention, the dance programme, in which a total of 30 participants took part (4 participants did not attend any of the dance sessions, but still completed the RSES). No testing took place during the intervention. The third phase of the data collection was the post-test phase, the total number of participants who completed the post-test was 24. The fourth phase was the interviews and 19 participants were interviewed. The pre- and post-test data were analysed separately (refer to section 3.6. Data Analysis). The age range of participants who signed up was between 18 to 45 years old. 33 were female and 1 participant



was male. Regarding the question of race, 7 participants identified as African, 22 as Black, and 5 as Coloured (see Table2).

<b>Demographic</b>	<b>Category / N</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
<b>Age</b>	18	4	11.8
	19	9	26.5
	20	6	17.6
	21	3	8.8
	22	4	11.8
	23	3	8.8
	24	1	2.9
	25	1	2.9
	31	1	2.9
	32	1	2.9
	45	1	2.9
<b>Gender</b>	Female	33	97
	Male	1	2.94
<b>Race</b>	African	7	20.6
	Black	22	64.7
	Coloured	5	14.7

*Table 2: Frequency table of demographic information*

The year of study ranged from first-year to Masters. Students were also representative across faculties at the university (see Table 3).

<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Arts	8	23.5
CHS	4	11.8
Education	5	14.7
EMS	3	8.8
Law	6	17.6
Natural Science	8	23.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

*Table 3: Frequency table of participants' faculties*

### 3.4.2 Recruitment

All mentors in the peer mentoring programme were invited to voluntarily sign up for the dance programme. The coordinator of the mentoring programme sent out an email to all students in the programme to inform them about the research project. In addition to this, I presented the research project in the weekly meetings of the mentors and informed them that they could sign up online if they were interested. Once the students signed up for the programme, I made contact with them and invited them to the information sessions. The information sessions were conducted a week before the dance programme commenced, at a time that suited the students. In the information sessions, the participants received a detailed information letter (Appendix C) thoroughly describing the nature and purpose of this research, as well as the risks and benefits of the research. All participants completed their documentation after the information sessions, where they were able to ask questions and gain clarity on their involvement in the research.

Furthermore, at the beginning of 2018, approximately 620 students signed up to be a part of the peer mentoring programme. By around August, approximately 500 students were retained within the programme. 34 students signed up for the dance programme. The only requirement for students to be a part of the dance programme was that they remain active within the peer mentoring programme.

### **3.5 Data Collection**

This mixed-method research had four phases of data collection. The first was the quantitative pre-test data collection phase; the second was the qualitative intervention data collection phase, the dance programme; the third was the quantitative post-test data collection phase, and the fourth phase was the qualitative interviews. The first step of the data collection phase was to collect the pre-test quantitative data using the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES). The RSES was distributed as a pre and post-test measure (Appendix G). Being a commonly used self-report instrument, the psychometric properties of the RSES displays it as internal consistent, having high predictive validity and reliability properties proven through testing in various settings (Alessandri et al., 2015; Martín-Albo et al., 2007). Cronbach's coefficient  $\alpha$  for the RSES range from 0.93 to 0.97, and the internal consistency (reliability) coefficients for the RSES were exceptional, (Westaway, Jordaan, & Tsai, 2015). Additionally, the RSES self-competence (SC) and self-liking (SL) properties have found to be a positive and valuable tool for assessing self-esteem in South Africa (Westaway, Jordaan, & Tsai, 2015); as well as within university settings (Martín-Albo et al., 2007). "Self-competence (SC) refers to a summation of the first five items of the RSES and self-liking (SL) a summation of the last five items" (Westaway et al., 2015, p. 8). The self-report instrument was estimated to take approximately 1 to 2 minutes to complete and was aimed to assist the researcher to evaluate any difference in the individual self-esteem of the participants. The RSES was able to demonstrate whether the

dance programme influenced the self-esteem of the participants. Whether the participants' self-esteem increased, decreased or remained the same before and after participating in the dance programme. The RSES comprises of a 10-item scale which measures self-esteem by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. The scoring of each question was demonstrated as; "Strongly Disagree" 1 point, "Disagree" 2 points, "Agree" 3 points, and "Strongly Agree" 4 points (Appendix G). Scores will range from 0 to 30 with higher scores indicating high self-esteem (Alessandri et al., 2015). 34 participants completed the pre-test RSES questionnaire. This seemed to be the most appropriate measure, as other measures found on evaluating the self-concept involved probing questions about physical appearance. I was cautious not to impose any leading questions prior to the dance programme, where it is possible that the participants would become (self-) conscious of their physical appearance during the dance programme. Therefore, the RSES was found to be the most suitable measure to assess the self-esteem for this study. The interviews then provided in-depth insights into the self-esteem, self-image, ideal self and overall self-concept of the participants.

The qualitative data was obtained through observations (field notes and audio-visual recordings) and audio-recorded interviews. The observations in the dance programme was the second step of the data collection phase. A list of focus areas for field note-taking (Appendix A) guided me during the observations and was constructed around the research aims and objectives. After every session, I would complete the observational notes while the information was still fresh in my mind. The audio-visual recordings of the sessions assisted the identifying of further nuances and information not detected through the observational field-notes. The observational/field-notes served to complement the interview process, as it guided me to frame

certain questions to a particular participant. Participants also completed a post-test quantitative data using the RSES, which was the third step of the data collection phase.

The interviews were the fourth step of the data collection phase. It allowed me to pick up on issues that occurred during the sessions and relate them to issues raised during the interviews. The observational/field note-taking assisted me in finding themes with participants in each session by noting, for example, who seemed more reserved or more social during a session. The audio-visual recordings of the dance programme also assisted in triggering the memories of participants during the interview process, only when issues raised in the interview related to issues which occurred in a session. During the interviews, the participants were able to watch themselves dance in videos from the solo performances session, this was optional. Here they could watch themselves and reflect on how they felt at that time and how they feel watching themselves. Also, it was recommended that the participants keep self-reflective notes after each session to guide them in recalling necessary information during their interview. This was beneficial during the interview process.

For this research, 19 individual interviews of between 35 to 60 minutes were conducted. These individual interviews were audio-recorded for clarification and transcription purposes. A list of open-ended questions (Appendix B) was prepared, which allowed the participants to express their personal insights, experiences and feelings (Wagner et al., 2012). The prepared questions were centred on the aim of the research and acted merely as a guideline for myself, and from those questions, further questions arose as the interview progressed. All the recorded material of this research was accessible to me only.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

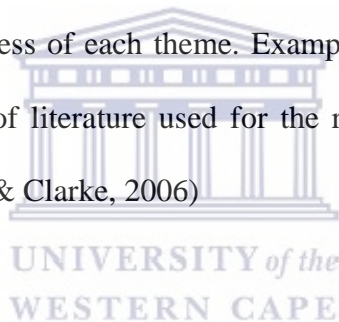
The research had two steps of data analysis. The first step in the data analysis phase was to analyse the quantitative data from the RSES on IBM's Statistical Software Package for Social

Sciences, version 25 (SPSS v.25) and Microsoft Excel tools. A dependent t-test was selected to explore the difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test scores of participants' self-esteem using the RSES. The dependent t-test analysis, also known as a paired t-test, is a statistical test used for testing the significance of the difference between the means of two groups (Babbie & Mouton, 2001c; Kirk, 2013). A test for normality was tested to ensure that the raw data was robust enough to be used in the statistical analysis tests. This was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. In testing the assumption of normality, the pre-test significance value was .132 and the post-test significance was .437. This indicates that the assumption was met, as the *p*-value was higher than  $p=.05$ . If this value is higher than 0.05 the data is normal, if the value is lower than 0.05 the data would thus significantly deviate from a normal distribution. The second step in the data analysis phase was to analyse the data from the observations and interviews using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis finds patterns or themes within the data and draws on conclusions based on those themes. The aim of thematic analysis is to understand the topic through the varied views of the participants' experiences (Babbie & Mouton, 2001a<sup>5</sup>; Wagner et al., 2012).

According to Braun & Clarke (2006), the process of thematic analysis of data is recursive and they have outlined six phases of this analysis. Phase one involves becoming familiar with the data being analysed. I transcribed the audio-visual data and interviews, and also made notes of the non-verbal cues presented by the participants in all the dance sessions. Phase two is the coding of data. I approached the identifying of codes with the theoretical framework (self-concept) as a guide. First I organised the participants' answers according to the research questions, for example, self-esteem, self-image, ideal self and overall self-concept. Secondly, I read each participants answers and organised the answers according to categories, for example, before the dance programme one participant had a low self-concept; or after the dance

<sup>5</sup> Babbie & Mouton (2001, p.492) refer to thematic analysis as conceptual analysis.

programme, the participant saw an improvement in their self-concept. These groups of codes later formed the themes of the research. Phase three is the collecting and combining of information by categorising the codes into themes. Braun & Clarke (2006) suggest visual imagery to better organise the codes into themes. I used different colours to highlight similar codes together on the word document where I had stored the transcribed interviews. Phase four is when the researcher assesses the themes to refine them. Here I interpreted and made sense of the codes with the literature review in mind, which I could then form into themes. The themes arose through logical patterns and/or through the validity of each identified theme. Phase five allowed me to thoroughly assess each theme to identify precisely what each theme entails. I attempted to keep the themes simple and assign appropriate labels to them. Phase six filtered all the themes into a final report. This report was supported by evidence from the data to clearly display the pervasiveness of each theme. Examples from the data also need to be theoretically supported in light of literature used for the research and must tie in with the purpose of the research. (Braun & Clarke, 2006)



### **3.7 Reflexivity**

I am a Masters student in my 30s and I am a female coloured South African. I have been dancing since the age of 15 with various dance schools, in competitions and shows. I was trained in modern and hip hop dance but now focus mainly on hip hop. Currently, I offer group dance fitness classes and choreography for individuals and groups. My experience in the dance industry has made me more aware of the influence dance has on people, which has become the motivational factor for this study. With my involvement in the dance industry (doing music video and advertisement shoots, watching dance competitions, involved in various dance performances and shows, and observing the dance industry from these perspectives), I started realising the exclusivity it holds, which, according to me, didn't allow for much exploration or

expression of myself through dance. It seemed to have already established groups and settings, and if you did not dance the way others in those groups or settings did, then you were met with resistance. Compared with my experience in being a dance fitness instructor, where participants are not necessarily dancers, they are seeking a form of exercise. Before my class would start, I would have some members come up to me to inform me that they couldn't dance and they wanted to almost apologise for this, because I was the instructor and a dancer. This would often be new members to the class, but the regular members would also often tell me that they cannot dance, even though they've been attending the class for months. This surprised me as there was no form of assessment in these classes, unlike what you would find in the dance industry. I would then have to find alternative ways of making the space non-threatening for all participants in the beginning and during the classes, this would often require different strategies for different members. For about 6 years I experienced the contrasts (and some similarities) of both the dance industry pressures and the dance fitness groups 'apologetic' concerns. This experience as a student in psychology and being involved in these varying industries of dance, helped me to understand the participants' experiences when participating in the dance programme for this research. The students were familiar with me in the capacity as a dancer, as I worked with the peer mentors since 2015 to choreograph their dance performances for their end of year valediction ceremony. I also conducted a dance event for their mentee day (one of the programme's events of the year) in 2017. At the time of the research, I was also a research assistant in the mentoring programme, thus there was already a relationship established with the mentors through our interactions within the programme. The fact that I am a student was another level where students were able to relate to me. Additionally, my age fell in the age range of participants in this research. Reflexivity takes place as the researcher critically reflects on his/her personal views of the research context (Mann, 2016). I limited the imposing of any



personal biases through keeping a diary and personally reflecting on my role throughout the research process.

### **3.8 Research ethics**

In this research, the basic ethical principles of scientific research were adhered to as stated by Wagner et al., (2012). Namely: informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, accuracy, and power and social justice. (Wagner et al., 2012).

Informed consent refers to the agreement of the participants to participate in the research without feeling obligated to do so (Wagner et al., 2012). Informed consent was adhered to through consent forms (Appendix D), as well as detailed information letters (Appendix C) and information sessions prior to the commencement of the dance programme. Here the participants were thoroughly briefed on the reasons, nature, risks and benefits of this research and were allowed to enquire about the research. Privacy and confidentiality involve concealing the identities of the participants and not divulging any information which could harm or embarrass the participants (Wagner et al., 2012). Confidentiality was achieved using pseudonyms, and privacy, by protecting the personal and recorded data of the participants. To ensure confidentiality, the audio and visual data is stored in a locked cabinet and all other data on password-protected computer files. All recorded data and information about the participants are strictly secured and accessible by myself, and will be destroyed after five years. Accuracy refers to the factual reporting of data in compliance with the ethical requirements (Wagner et al., 2012). I took great care to not alter, omit, fabricate, contrive or use fraudulent materials throughout the research process. Power and social justice are important to consider in research as it provides fairness for participants of the research throughout the research process (Wagner et al., 2012). In this research, I made sure to consider the participants' roles and well-being throughout the processes of the research from recruitment to analysis of results. I also made

sure to consider all power dynamics between myself and participants including, cultural aspects of power, by being sensitive to all information shared with me.

Throughout this research, I was aware that talking about self carries some amount of risks and did take care to minimise risks as far as possible. The mentoring programme functions within the student support services centre at the university where the research was conducted. These support services assist the students' adjustment to university. Within the student support centre, complementary therapeutic and psychological services are offered to all registered students. The centre also meets the requirements of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). There is an existing protocol in place, of which the students are made aware of in their mentor training and which I could make use of should any psychological discomfort occur. The participant would be guided to a suitably trained professional who would manage the intervention or provide further assistance where necessary. No risks of this nature occurred during the data capturing of this research project. As the participants are registered students, permission from the Registrar of the university was applied for online and approved prior to the commencement of this research. Ethical clearance was applied for and approved by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) before the commencement of this research.

Participants completed indemnity forms before the commencement of the dance programme (Appendix E). The indemnity forms highlighted the possible risks of injury that comes with physical activity, such as dancing. It included a declaration stating that the participant understands the risks and that they are physically fit and do not suffer from any medical or other condition which could prevent participation in the dance programme. The indemnity forms released the researcher from liability, loss or damages connected to the physical demands of the research. No injuries or any other loss occurred during the dance programme.

The video-recordings from the dance sessions will be destroyed after five years, along with all other data captured for this research. All the recordings will be deleted from the secure folders where it was stored. To protect the anonymity of the dancers in the video, I used the VLC media player programme which has a feature to anonymise people in a video (<http://notesonresearch.tumblr.com/post/167461525743/anonymising-and-subtitling-video-with-vlc-and>). These video-recordings were stored on a password-protected folder on a secure computer, as well as on a secure Google Drive folder accessible only by the myself, and viewed by my supervisor and I only.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the research methodology used in this research project and demonstrated the motives for applying this methodology to this research project. I found the method and design to be effective in answering the research questions put forward at the beginning of this research project. In using a mixed-method approach, I was able to gather comprehensive and in-depth data to investigate the self-concept of the participants in this research project. This chapter forms the foundation for the following chapter. Chapter 4 will therefore discuss the key findings and analysis resulting from this research methodology explained in this chapter.

## Chapter 4: Key findings and Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter honed in on the research methodology used in this research project. This chapter addresses the key findings and analysis after applying the research methods and designs of this research. The chapter is divided into two sections. Section A discusses the quantitative data from the pre-test analysis, followed by the intervention – the dance programme and thereafter the post-test findings are discussed. The differences between the pre-test and post-test are also reviewed. Section B addresses the qualitative data which is the thematic analysis of the data from the interviews and observations. This chapter focuses on answering the research questions set out at the beginning of this research project;

- What is the measurable difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-esteem after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-image after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their ideal self after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their overall self-concept after participating in a structured dance programme?

## **SECTION A: Quantitative Data Findings**

Section A discusses the pre-test RSES data analysis, followed by the intervention (the dance programme description) and thereafter the post-test data analysis are discussed. The differences between the pre-test and post-test are also reviewed.

### **4.2 Pre-test RSES Data Analysis**

The quantitative pre-test data were distributed during the information sessions with the participants and 34 participants completed the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).<sup>6</sup> The RSES was distributed as a pre-test and post-test measure (Appendix G). This self-report instrument was estimated to take approximately 1 to 2 minutes to complete and was aimed to assist the researcher in assessing any difference in the individual self-esteem of the participants. The RSES was used to demonstrate whether the dance programme had any influence on the self-esteem of the participants. The pre-test, therefore, can be seen as a 'baseline assessment'. Thus, it was used to discern whether the participants' self-esteem increased, decreased or remained the same before and after participation in the dance programme.

The RSES scores can range from 0 to 30, with lower scores indicating a low self-esteem and higher scores indicating a high self-esteem (Alessandri et al., 2015). I calculated the participants' total scores on the RSES measure. However, questions 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 were reversed scored and taken into consideration when calculating the total scores. Data was analysed using IBM's Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences, version 25 (SPSS v.25). The total scores were inserted into an MS Excel spreadsheet and this spreadsheet was then imported into SPSS to be statistically analysed. Using SPSS statistical analysis, the data was analysed from the RSES, the results are shown in Section 4.4: Post-test RSES2 Data Analysis.

<sup>6</sup> Also, see Chapter 3 for a detailed review of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES).

### 4.3 Dance Programme Description

After the pre-test was distributed and completed, the dance programme commenced the following week. The method used in this research comprised of a seven-session structured dance programme that was specifically developed for this research, in which various aspects of dance were explored. The aspects included dance fitness, isolation of body parts, choreography, freestyle, group and solo performances<sup>7</sup>.

	<b>Dance</b>
Session 1	Dance Fitness
Session 2	Head and chest isolation
Session 3	Arms and shoulders isolation
Session 4	Hips and abs <sup>8</sup> isolation
Session 5	Legs and feet isolation
Session 6	Everything together (choreography)
Session 7	Cypher and freestyles

*Table 4: Outline of the sessions in the dance programme*

The isolation sessions (session 2 to 5) of the dance programme were structured in such a way that participants would first learn how to move the specific body part without moving any of their other body parts. The instructor demonstrated different movements they could do with that body part, at first really slowly, and then sped up the movements with music. This was to allow participants to understand the fundamental movements by breaking it down slowly, and then speeding it up allowed participants to experience the full movement of the body part, and also how to isolate the body part to different types of music (fast or slow tempos and different genres).

<sup>7</sup> Refer to 'Section 3.3: The Dance Programme' in Chapter 3 for a full description of the dance programme.

<sup>8</sup> Abs refers to the rectus abdominis muscles.

The first few questions during the interviews were about the dance programme. These questions helped ease participants into the interview. Specifically; which session was your favourite and why; which session was your least favourite and why; which session did you find the most technical; and which session was the easiest (in terms of technicality). The findings of these questions gave insight into the dance programme and how different participants experienced it. This is important to understand participants' experiences of the structured dance programme, in order to understand their subjective perceptions in the interviews. It was organised in the following themes: Favourite Session; Least Favourite Session; Easiest Session; Challenging Session and None. The findings are discussed below.

### **Favourite session:**

Participants generally had a favourite session and it varied between the various sessions. Why a particular session was a participant's favourite varied; some participants enjoyed a session because of the music, some enjoyed it because of what was done in the session was fun for them, or because the session challenged them.

#### *First session (Dance Fitness)*

Participant 18 (P18<sup>9</sup>) enjoyed the first session because of a song that was played. According to P18 the song, 'Apesh\*t by The Carters'; "... really evokes like great emotions. I didn't feel tired after that." Another participant also enjoyed the first session. According to P10 "I really enjoyed that session. "... I liked the feeling that I was doing something totally new. Something that I've never done." P10 liked the way dance was presented in the first session (dance fitness).

#### *Second session (Head and Chest Isolation)*

For P25, the second session was the most enjoyable. The participant liked the second session because of the simplicity. How dance choreography was broken down into smaller isolated

<sup>9</sup> From here on participants will be abbreviated to P with the number of the participant, e.g. P18.

parts. The participant; “... found it very awkward and fun at the same time.” P20 also found the second session the most enjoyable session. For this participant, the music played a role. According to P20; “*The second one, cos it had some hip hop in it. Cos, I used to be a hip-hop dancer okay, at a very young age, attend some hip sessions in the community, some battles yah, so yah it was quite fun.*”

#### Third session (Arms and Shoulders Isolation)

One participant enjoyed the session where the arms were isolated. This is because this participant thinks; “*waacking and voguing*” [dance styles using mostly arms] is a “*pretty cool dance style.*” It is also because the participant felt waacking and voguing (these are two styles of dance) must have a lot of attitude and she was able to express this “*fierceness.*”

#### Fifth session (Legs and Feet Isolation)

P1 enjoyed the session where the focus was on the legs. P1 believes that this is because; “*I could move more freely.*” P8 also enjoyed the leg sessions and this was because “*it was it just so much easier for me to do that moves ... like I have some rhythm.*” The interesting part here is that the participant said that he/she had rhythm. This might mean that the participant likes dancing or that the participant thinks of him or herself as a dancer. It can also mean that she/he or he has the ability to beat-match.<sup>10</sup> P1 is of the view that the other isolations made him feel stiff, and this is because the focus was not on moving their feet. P7 enjoyed the legs session because; “*it actually kinda helped me cos that week my legs were a bit tight, so yah, the leg session actually helped me cos the next day my legs were feeling much better.*”

#### Sixth session (Everything together – Choreography)

P24 enjoyed the second last session because it connected all the body parts. It seems that P24 did not expect a session where all the body parts would be connected. According to P24; “*My mindset about dance for me changed, and the way you [referring to the researcher] put it, the*

<sup>10</sup> See Lovatt (2018) for a discussion on beat-matching.



*way we were dancing, it was different from the way I thought dancing is. Because you were focused on this part and this part and I thought dance is just moving, yes doing whatever, I thought that is the only thing that you can do being a dancer. But I didn't know that even if you're not sure of dance moves, that you can still dance."*

#### *Last session (Cypher and Freestyle)*

P2 enjoyed the last session because of the freedom it offered. There were no specific moves or choreography the participant had to learn. P2 indicated that; *"I was used to those people, okay, that I would dance in front of. So that's why I enjoyed it."* This raises the question as to whether she would have danced and felt the same way if the crowd were unknown to her. P30 also liked the last session. This was because the participants were able to incorporate their own moves. In addition to this, the participant could; *"incorporated all the moves that we learnt throughout the sessions."* This is the reason the participant; *"felt very comfortable dancing in front of people for the first time"*; especially in a circle (cypher) where she was surrounded by people. According to P30; *"I don't get into circles"* (referring to the dance circle) and yet she did.

#### **Least Favourite Session:**

#### *Second session (Head and Chest Isolation)*

The second session focussed on head and chest isolation movements. According to P10; *"I didn't enjoy it...the one where we did the isolation using the head. I was doing partially what you were doing and as I was doing it, most of the time I was feeling dizzy and then I would just stop and try to bring back my memory and try to do what you are doing."* It seems the only problem this participant had with the second session was that it made her dizzy. In a follow-up question, P10 also reiterated this.

#### *Third (Arms and Shoulders Isolation)*

P8 also did not enjoy the third session as much as the fifth. This was because she was not able to isolate the arms and the shoulders. According to P8; *"It was the one with the shoulders."*

*Shoulders, okay. Yes, because every time I thought I was moving my shoulders, I was actually moving my arms. And, and, so I felt a bit out of place.*” P7 did not enjoy the isolated arms and shoulders movements. The reason being that; *“we were doing the hands ‘cos we were using them a lot of times so yah, they got a bit tired.”* This participant found the third session physically tiring and hence, did not like it a lot. P2 did not enjoy the third session either and it was because she too found it tiring. P18 also did not enjoy the arms and shoulders session because; *“it was really weird.”* P18 believe because of the isolations it wasn't interesting. P30 found the third session strenuous and equated it to a workout. According to P30; *“The arms, ‘cos it was challenging, I mean I don’t usually, I don’t work out. Okay. So that was strenuous, that was a workout.”*

#### *Fifth (Legs and Feet Isolation)*

P28 indicated that the fifth session was the most challenging. The fifth session focused on isolating the legs. According to P28 *“... it was the leg isolations because it wasn’t that challenging. Even with the fast movements, it wasn’t that challenging. Because from the first sessions we’ve been doing movements slowly and then upping the pace, so in the last one it was chilled.”* The reason why this participant did not enjoy it as much as the other sessions were because of the increase in pace in the leg sessions.

#### *Last (Cypher and Freestyle)*

P24 did not like the last session, which was the cypher and performance session. This was because it was expected of the participant to create her own moves. According to P24; *“The last one, the one where we had to like create our own stuff, like a dance for people. I didn’t like that one, because still, I don’t like- I still don’t like- to like dance in front of people alone. So, I was like I’m doing it because I had to do it, but if it was for me, I wouldn’t.”* Another participant, P10, also like the final sessions. For this participant, the freedom of choice was very important. According to P10; *“You had to dance what you wanna dance.”*

### **Easiest Session:**

#### *First (Dance Fitness) and Last (Cypher and Freestyle)*

P30 indicated that first and the last sessions were the easiest. The reason was that the participant was able to use her whole body. According to P30; “*The first one, and the last one, ‘cos I mean you could use your whole body and I had a problem of the isolation, in terms of just move this part, just move your head.*” This participant, in a follow-up question, indicated that she did not like the isolated sessions.

#### *Second (Head and Chest Isolation)*

P7 enjoyed the second session the most. This was because “*we were just using our heads and necks, so yah, okay that was easier for me, okay, cos I can’t dance.*” P2 also found the head and chest session the easiest.

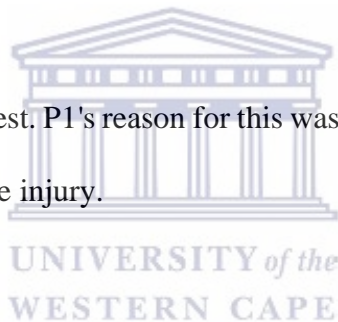
#### *Fifth (Legs and Feet Isolation)*

P1 found the legs session the easiest. P1's reason for this was; “*We use our legs for every day.*” This was despite P1 having a knee injury.

### **Challenging Session:**

#### *Third (Arms and Shoulders Isolation)*

P28 also found the third session the most difficult. This participant said the isolation was also the problem. According to 28; “*Sometimes you realise that oh my gosh- I’m moving them, I shouldn’t be, then I have to stop and then rethink again. And then having to go from left to right and then is it half, is it whole? So, yah, that one was pretty intense.*” P18 too found the third session the most challenging. The difficulty seemed to stem from the isolation. However, for P18 it improved as the session continued. According to P18; “*In the end, we got the whole idea that you actually can work on moving just one part of your body and yah, it’s possible.*”



#### *Fifth (Legs and Feet Isolation)*

Two participants found the fifth session to be the challenging one. The fifth session was about isolating the legs. According to P2; *“The legs because we were doing it fast and I was not following the moves and I couldn’t do some of those moves.”*

#### *Sixth (Everything together – Choreography)*

One participant, P10, experienced the sixth session to be the most difficult. This was the session where all the isolations sessions were combined. According to P10; *“I feel like it was the most technical session because I had to try and remember all of those dances at the same time. We’re no longer using only the arms or the hands or the hips or whatsoever. We have to use it all. Yes. So, yah, that one was the most technical.”*

#### *None*

There was one student who did not find any of the sessions challenging. According to P7, no session was challenging as the instructor made the sessions simple; *“Cos, like you did break it down for us and made it easier so yah. There wasn’t any difficult one.”* Contrary to some of the other participant this student was of the belief that the isolation helped.

This assessment of the dance programme from participants helped to better understand the participants’ expectations of the dance programme, and also their comfort or discomfort of themselves in the environment of the dance sessions. From this data, I could gain insights into how the participants experienced the dance sessions, and at times, how they felt during the dance sessions, as well as their self-efficacy regarding dance. Self-efficacy draws from the theoretical framework of this research which is self-concept. This builds into the next session where the post-test data from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was statistically analysed.

## 4.4 Post-test RSES2 Data Analysis

After the dance programme, a post-test of the RSES scale was administered to the participants. As with the pre-test data, I once again calculated the participants' total scores on the RSES measure taking the reverse scores of questions 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 into consideration. The totals of the RSES were inserted into an MS Excel spreadsheet and this spreadsheet was then imported into IBM's Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 25 (SPSS v.25) to be statistically analysed. A dependent t-test, also known as a paired t-test, was used to analyse the data. A dependent t-test was selected to explore the difference in mean scores between the pre-test and post-test scores of participants' self-esteem using the RSES. Of the 34 participants who completed the pre-test, only 24 participants completed the post-test of the RSES questionnaire. A test for normality was tested to ensure that the raw data was robust enough to be used in the statistical analysis tests. This was tested using the Shapiro-Wilk test. In testing the assumption of normality, the pre-test significance value was .132 and the post-test significance was .437. This indicates that the assumption was met, as the  $p$ -value was higher than  $p=.05$ . If this value is higher than 0.05 the data is normal, if the value is lower than 0.05 the data would thus significantly deviate from a normal distribution.

### 4.4.1 Results

**Table 5**

*Univariate Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Missing		No. of Extremes <sup>a</sup>	
				Count	Percent	Low	High
RSES Pre-Test	34	21.44	4.446	0	.0	0	0
RSES Post-Test	24	24.33	3.384	10	29.4	0	0

a. Number of cases outside the range (Q1 - 1.5\*IQR, Q3 + 1.5\*IQR).

*Table 5: Univariate Statistics*

A total of 34 participants completed the pre-test and 24 participants completed the post-test. As indicated in Table 5, a missing-data analysis revealed that the RSES post-test had more than 10% missing data. Ideally missing data should be <10% of the total sample, but post-test missing data was 29.4%. This was seen as problematic and a pairwise deletion was employed in the dependent t-test data analysis (Graham, 2009). Additionally, there were no significant outliers present, also illustrated in Table 5.

**Table 6**

*Paired Samples Statistics*

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	RSES Pre-Test	22.50	24	3.648	.745
	RSES Post-Test	24.33	24	3.384	.691

*Table 6: Paired Samples Statistics*



Table 6 indicates that the mean of the post-test data was higher than the mean of the pre-test data. Thus there was an overall increase in participants' self-esteem scores after the dance programme. The RSES indicates that the closer the total score is to 30, the higher the self-esteem (Westaway et al., 2015). The total scores of the pre-test data ranged from 12 to 29, compared to the total scores of the post-test data, ranging from 18 to 30, supporting the results of the distribution of means. The mean of the pre-test scores was ( $M = 22.50$ ,  $SD = 3.648$ ) and the mean of the post-test scores was ( $M = 24.33$ ,  $SD = 3.384$ ). Additionally, 16 participants scores increased, 4 participants scores remained the same and 4 participants scores decreased.

**Table 7***Paired Samples Correlations*

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	RSES Pre-Test & RSES Post-Test	24	.627	.001

*Table 7: Paired Samples Correlations*

Table 7 indicates that a significant positive correlation between the pre-test and post-test data exists ( $r = .627, p = .001$ ).

**Table 8***Paired Samples Test*

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
		Mean	n	Mean	Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	RSES Pre-Test - RSES Post-Test	-1.833	3.046	.622	-3.119	-.547	-2.949	23	.007

*Table 8: Paired Samples Test*

Table 8 displays the paired differences in the pre-test and post-test data  $t(23) = -2.949, p = .007$ .

The pre-test and post-test were positive and significantly related. The significant average difference is ( $t(23) = -2.949, p = .007$ ). This suggests that there was a statistically significant increase in participants' self-esteem after participating in the structured dance programme. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected. On average, the post-test scores was 1.833 higher than the pre-test scores (95% CI [3.119, .547]). These results suggest that dance can have a significant positive effect on one's self-esteem.





## **SECTION B: Qualitative Data Findings**

Section A focused on the pre-test, dance programme and post-test analysis findings of this research project. Section B follows with the findings of the qualitative data. The aim of the next Section B is twofold. The first is to look at the changes in the pre-test and post-test scores with the qualitative data. This is to ascertain why there were changes in self-esteem. The second is to discuss the subjective perceptions of peer mentors from the interviews regarding their self-image, ideal self and overall self-concept.

### **4.5 Dance and self-esteem**

One's self-esteem concerns itself with how much one values one's self. The previous section (Section A) showed that there was a positive significant measurable difference in self-esteem after students participated in the dance programme. This section will explore why this was the case by drawing on some of the qualitative data. Here the interest lies in the subjective perceptions of participants and it will be presented in a thematic layout. Four themes emerged from the self-esteem data, these were; confidence, stress relief, expressing of self and overall self-esteem.

#### **4.5.1 Confidence**

Various participants indicated that their confidence levels increased during and after participating in the dance programme. Some participants indicated that prior to their participation that they were shy and not as confident. Here are some examples:

##### Before:

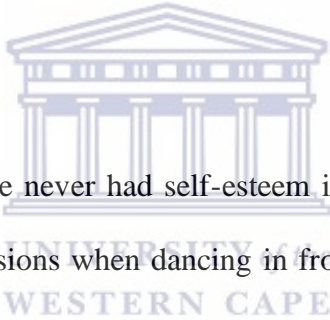
P10 often doubted herself and felt that she did not give herself enough credit when it was due; *“Normally I try to do my best, but then after I did my best, I normally don't come back to myself, congratulate myself.”*

P28 stated; *“I’m a shy person, it’s just that I have to like get out of my comfort zone.”*

P1 explained how shy he was; *“On a scale of 1 to 10, um, I’m very shy, so I’d put myself on a 5. I’m very shy. Um, when it comes to things that I’ve never done in my life like dancing...I’ve never danced before.”*

As is evident, some participants felt that their confidence levels were low. Just like P1, some participants have either never danced before or never danced in front of other people. Yet they decided to join the dance programme and give it a try. During the dance programme they were able to confront these self-esteem issues, which I am suggesting has something to do with ‘inner conflict’. Participants explained what they experienced during the sessions:

During:



P30 stated that although she never had self-esteem issues before, her self-esteem was tested during the dance sessions when dancing in front of people. She was faced with self-doubt; *“... when I’m put in a situation where I have to be in front of people, I do kind of doubt myself. So, then I do kind of question whether...am I really, really confident?”* This participant felt that she had no choice but to become confident, therefore placing herself in a situation where, even though she is doubtful of herself, she had to overcome this fear; *“I have to be confident and just stick to being myself or whatever I planned, because there is no other thing I could possibly do.”*

P28, who also experienced low confidence levels before the dance programme, found the last session (Cypher and Freestyle) especially, to be an opportunity to get out of her comfort zone; *“with the last session it was kind of difficult for me to like go there and*

*dance, but I was like if I don't do it and like, choose a song that's a bit challenging, I will regret it."* P28 also found dancing in front of people to be a challenge, as she had never done it before.

In the observations of the dance programme, I found that in the last session (Session 7), most of the participants, including P28, who seemed shy before, were the ones who chose to dance in the cypher and dance freestyle and thus became confident in this session. This could attest to the fact that the last session was the first one where participants could do their own dance moves (freestyle) and did not have to be restricted to the researcher's instructions.

P24 seemed to view the camera as an additional audience and did not want to be close to the camera, afraid of who might watch it later, even though she was aware that I would be the only one to view the footage; *"... someone's gonna watch that video and look at this girl as someone who can't dance."* This was also P24's second time in the dance programme, and she reflected on how she became more talkative in this dance programme and not as reserved as a previous one she attended; *"no man I'm doing this for the second time, so why must I be scared and down."*<sup>11</sup>

Although participants had varied experiences during the dance programme, mostly they realised that there were certain confidence (self-esteem) issues that they personally faced and wanted to overcome. Many of them shared how the experiences they had during the dance programme left them with a choice of overcoming it or submitting to it. I found that the participants who remained in the programme were generally ready and able to overcome these fears or there was a shift within themselves where they became more self-reflective. Thus, I

<sup>11</sup> In 2017 there was a pilot programme in the mentoring programme in which the participant participated.

found that they either dealt with the issues or they were able to see the issues in a different light – sometimes in a more practical way and then were able to figure out a way forward, or how they will address this issue or fear. The participants who were able to overcome their confidence issues shared their experiences of how their confidence changed after the dance programme:

After:

After the dance programme, P10 felt a lot more confident, bold and feels able to do whatever she feels like doing. She knows that being shy will not just go away, but she feels her shyness has decreased so much that; *“... even if music plays now and there are 150 people and I’m supposed to stand and dance, I feel like I can do that now”*

P18’s confidence increased as she came to realise that dance is not as complicated as she thought; *“now I believe I don’t need to be shy about moving a certain part, like I shouldn’t shy away from just moving my own body...cos dance is really that simple.”*

P18 used the dance programme to feel differently about her body and herself. She expressed how dancing in the sessions changed the way she felt about herself and how her confidence increased; *“So with my confidence, it has changed because now I believe I can do it, I don’t really need to be as great as someone else who I see on TV or something.”*

P24 is an example of not necessarily overcoming her fears, but how she became more self-reflective and understanding of herself better. P24 expressed how she feels happy after the dance programme and understands that she is a work in progress. *“Well, besides doing something, I can do something that I thought I would not be able to do. Like for*

*instance, dance, I never thought that I can dance. So, anything that comes my way doesn't matter what it is, I can do it, as long as I wanted to. As long as my heart is in that thing, so I can do it.*" It is also interesting to note that P24 scored high on the RSES pre-test (27) and post-test (26).

After the dance programme, P12 felt more confident and recalled a moment in one of the sessions when the rows were switched and some participants did not want to be in the front row; *"I can remember the time when no one wanted to stand in front, (both laugh), and I went to stand in front. Like I first doubted myself, I was like, 'must I go, mustn't I go', but no, I did go. (She laughs). And then I went at the end of the day and that like gave me more confidence, man. There was a lot of other people and yah, I feel my confidence boosted."*



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The dance programme seemed to play a significant role in participants' confidence. When they joined the programme, their confidence seemed to be lower and during the dance programme, they found themselves confronting their confidence issues. After the dance programme, participants found their confidence increased.

#### **4.5.2 Stress relief**

Some participants found the dance sessions to be a place where they can relieve stress (cathartic experience), and others saw it as time to spend with themselves 'me-time', where they could get away from personal or academic pressures. For some, the dance sessions gave them a space to just have fun and share a connection with others who come to the sessions for the same purpose, to dance.

P24 shares how her connection with the group helped her to feel relief in the dance sessions; *“we were connected, if I can put it that way, where it was no longer about dance. There was that, love or friendship or, there was a relationship or love that we had that was different from the beginning.”* She found a sense of belonging in the group. P24 also learnt to not put too much pressure on herself and thus became more lenient with herself; *“I feel like I’m not complete, but I’m a work in progress. I’m fine. I’m me, so yah man, I’m good.”*

During the sessions, P12 explains how she feels; *“I feel good, I feel so like, I don’t even think about other people around me, I just dance. It’s like I’m in a world here, like alone. It’s a nice feeling, the dancing.”* P12 allowed herself to ‘get lost’ or ‘lose herself’ in the dance sessions and to spend time with herself before returning to the reality of her studies; *“Yah, it’s like a break, a break from reality. It gives me just that hour away break. (She laughs). An hour of myself, like enjoying myself and then finish, and then you have to go back assignments and studying.”*

P7 uses dance to deal with her emotions; *“I’m a very moody person, I’ll just use dance to try and just forget about my anger issues or anything that actually makes me moody and just feel better and everything.”* She felt happier during and after the dance sessions. *“... the more I dance, the more happy I am and then I just- I don’t get angry as much as I usually do.”* P7 found relief when dancing, that she was able to release her anger and feel happier. Here P7 had a cathartic experience, which is a release of strong suppressed emotions (Momplé & Cloete, 2018).

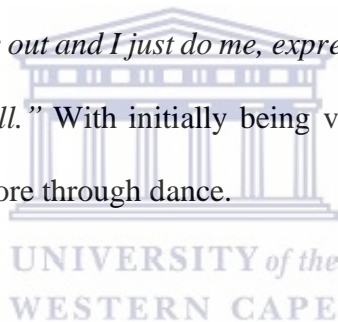
P13 has also never danced before (or stopped dancing) because of what someone said to her when she was younger; *“One time neh, when I was younger, I used to like to dance and I used to do it in front of the mirror, but someone told me something very negative and whenever I’m in a situation where- like the dancing now- I’m always thinking at the back of my head, where did it change? How did it happen that I don’t feel so confident when I’m dancing?! And then I always think back to that day and I’ve realised that, it was actually something my mother said. And whatever my mother tells me, it affects me. It really affects me. Um, and sometimes I’m trying to figure out whatever she told me if that’s the reason why I don’t feel so confident and maybe I’m not really that stiff, it’s just that I don’t have that confidence in dancing or in front of others. Because like I said, when I’m dancing in the room, (her bedroom) it’s different.”* After every dance session, P13 felt good, thus finding relief in the dance sessions. During the semester when the dance programme was conducted, P13 felt overwhelmed with personal issues and academic deadlines. Yet despite feeling so overwhelmed, P13 still came to sessions, she found that the dancing helped her to relax. Therefore, she looked forward to and felt excited to come to the dance sessions.

The dance programme became a place for participants to find relief and release stress and thus feel happier. This theme relates to embodiment, where one knowingly or unknowingly stores emotions in the body (body stores) (Abrahamson & Schulmann, 2017; Nielsen & Rowe, 2012), and through dance, which is a physical activity, were able to release these emotions and find relief, through this cathartic experience. They looked forward to coming to the sessions to just have some time to spend with themselves and escape their academic or personal pressures.

### 4.5.3 Expressing of Self

In describing dance, some participants felt that dancing allows for an expression of self. Cohen, (1962); Dunphy et al., (2014); Schwender et al., (2018) also gave reference to dance being an expression of self; and to dancing using the human body as its medium. In the sessions, I observed how participants were able to let down their guard and become more expressive as they continued with the dance sessions.

P1 never liked dancing, yet, signed up for the dance programme to be more comfortable and confident in dancing. He never liked dancing because he was told he can't move. *"I don't like expressing myself in that category of dancing."* After the dance programme, he felt that dance allowed him to express himself; *"Ncah, [dismissive], now it's like, I don't care like I shut people out and I just do me, express myself. I mean dancing is about expressing yourself after all."* With initially being very shy, and not liking dance, he learnt to express himself more through dance.



These participants understood that in order to allow themselves to dance, they need to let their guard down, or become a bit more open (vulnerable) to the experience and through that found it therapeutic and easier to express themselves. Some participants felt that when they dance, it's just them and no one else. When they are dancing they completely zone out and feel at that present moment as if they don't have any problems.

### 4.5.4 Overall self-esteem

This theme focuses on participants who didn't specify which parts of the self-esteem was influenced but spoke about their self-esteem holistically.



Even though P25 only attended two sessions, she felt that her self-esteem improved with those two sessions. *“It helped a lot.”* To her it didn’t matter how long one was part of the dance programme; *“it doesn’t matter if you attended two sessions or the whole programme. It’s just that when you start, don’t have an impression about something...”*

12

For P20, there was a positive difference in her self-esteem. During the dance programme, she felt excitement when dancing. She found that although her self-esteem was not low before the dance programme, there was still a positive difference; *“I don’t have a low self-esteem, so it actually improved my self-esteem more.”* Interestingly, P20 scored 26 in the RSES pre-test and 27 in the post-test which are high self-esteem scores.

P7 uses dance to deal with her emotions. *“I’m a very moody person, I’ll just use dance to try and just forget about my anger issues or anything that actually makes me moody and just feel better and everything.”* Dancing in the sessions made her feel better and happier. *“... the more I dance, the more happy I am and then I just- I don’t get angry as much as I usually do.”*

The dance programme allowed for participants to evaluate various elements of their self-esteem. Participants were able to find something practical in the dance sessions that facilitated an influence on their self-esteem. In this section, it is evident that participants experienced different emotions during the dance sessions and thus they experienced positive changes in their confidence, stress relief, expressing of self and overall self-esteem. Therefore, the analysis and findings from the qualitative data positively complemented the findings from the quantitative data.

<sup>12</sup> P25 was also part of the pilot group from 2017.

## 4.6 Dance and self-image

Self-image focuses on the subjective view one has of themselves; from physical to behavioural attributes. This was the first personal question asked during the interviews (see Appendix B). In this question, participants were asked how they view their physical self and their behavioural self. In analysing their answers, five themes emerged, namely; physical, behavioural, personality, external, and belief in dancing abilities (self-efficacy beliefs). This section looks at how participants viewed themselves before and after, and the changes that occurred during the dance programme.

### 4.6.1 Physical

Before the dance programme, some participants shared that they did not have an issue with their physical self, and others felt there were physical aspects of themselves that they were not comfortable with or happy about. Some participants also found that they were initially comparing themselves to others. During the dance programme they were either able to confront and resolve these issues, or find coping strategies for a way forward.

P10 did not see her body as the kind of body for dance and also compared her body to others'. She realised that a way to change this was to start internally; *"I just adjusted my comfortability inside my body, such that, I saw myself as like, 'no [says own name], you can do anything, you can dance'."* P10 realised that in order to change the way she viewed her physical self, she needed to change how she felt about dance on the inside. This does tap into self-efficacy beliefs in dancing abilities too, but this will be addressed later in this section.

P1 explained his view of himself; *“physically I mean I have doubts of myself, the way I look and stuff, but um, I learnt that um I can’t change who I am and the way I look, so I have to just accept it and love myself the way I am. So, I’m still in the process of, um, accepting myself the way I look physically.”* P1 learnt to become more accepting of himself physically.

During the dance programme, Participant 18 felt an increase in body confidence. *“During the dance, I felt like my physique was more like ‘bong’, cos I can do all these things with my own body.”*

Some participants wanted to either gain or lose weight, or be taller or shorter, or be more fit. These views the participants had of their physical self were not all necessarily resolved during the dance programme, but many of the participants mentioned how this helped them to either take steps towards working on the specific area, or they learned to accept themselves the way they are. An example of this was participant 28:

*“At first, it kinda seemed like I was unfit to do all these challenging moves.”* During the dance programme, P28 felt; *“... it showed me that I am fit.”* After the dance programme, she came to this realisation; *“Afterwards it was like oh it doesn’t really matter, cos I could do the dance moves. Yah it was challenging but it was good to do them.”*

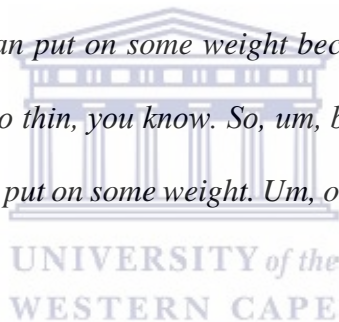
P20 initially was not physically happy with herself. *“I wouldn’t really say I’m happy...this body used to be very petit, you know, slender, flexible, doing the splits...but now the weight and the fat has taken over, so I don’t get to do all the things I wish to do.”* During the dance programme, she felt herself becoming free, even though there was

no immediate change in her physical body. *“I felt like my body was being revived and I could feel free man ... and release some negative energies you know ... so it was quite fun and refreshing for my body.”*

Even though some participants highlighted their physical insecurities, they were still content with themselves.

Participant 2 had this to say; *“... physically, I just love myself, but then I just want to be slimmer.”*

Participant 13 says she is fine with herself. *“I have some insecurities here and there because I feel like, um, I can put on some weight because, um, a lot of people keep on telling me that, um, I am too thin, you know. So, um, because I’m hearing it too much, I feel like physically I need to put on some weight. Um, other than that, I have no problems. I am fine with myself.”*



I found that although participants spoke about their physical insecurities, the dance programme did very little to change these physical characteristics. The changes that did come about were mental awareness or emotional adjustments. They would come to accept their bodies, and consciously and practically work towards making the changes they desire to experience. Mentally, they would also find themselves relaxing, not putting themselves down, comparing their bodies to others’, or altering their beliefs about their body’s abilities.

#### 4.6.2 Behaviour

The behavioural changes that occurred with participants might not have been something they were aware of before the dance programme. But there was a shift in their behaviour after the dance programme, as they realised their behaviour might need a shift. These shifts were both consciously and unconsciously adapted.

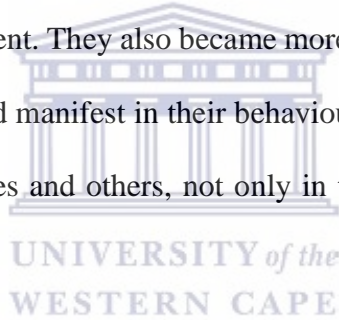
Even though P30 found that she was not comfortable doing the moves and in front of others; *“So doing all of that in front of people that I didn’t even know, it was kind of weird.”* After the dance programme, there was a behavioural change as she became less judgemental of other people. Through her discomfort of dancing in front of other people, fearing judgement, she realised that if she did not judge others, they would not judge her and therefore she would not need to feel uncomfortable dancing in front of others again. *“I got over that, I stopped looking at people and judging them based on their dancing, it was more of ‘no, we’re just having fun, this is a dancing thing and we are all here to dance’. It doesn’t matter how you dance, but the main thing is that we’re dancing and we’re here to dance.”*

P2 saw herself as moody and not very talkative; *“I view myself like- I’m quite like not a talkative person because I think I have so much moods. So, I like my space and have friends that talk too much, so I feel like I’m being awkward you know.”* During the dance programme she became comfortable and non-judgemental due to the environment, where there was more dancing than talking; *“The people and you [referring to the researcher], like, make us feel comfortable and the people, they are not judging.”* P2 felt less moody during the sessions and also learnt to stop judging others.

Before the dance programme, P24 felt she was not confident, but during the dance programme, became confident, open-minded and expressive. She learnt to; “... *like not to be like inside the shell...Even the way you [referring to the researcher] used to explain stuff to us, you know, also opened my mind to knowing that, no man, you can do this, don't think about it, just do it, because you know it. So, like I also learnt those things...*”

P24 felt that behaviourally she became more open-minded through being part of the dance programme, she said; “*I never imagined myself that being part of a dance group, something like that, I've never.*”

Generally, participants did not see behavioural changes as a major issue or they did not have many behavioural issues that needed changing, yet participants often made behavioural changes to adapt to the environment. They also became more open-minded, less judgmental of others, more confident (which did manifest in their behaviours through my observations), and more understanding of themselves and others, not only in the dance programme but in their own lives too.



#### **4.6.3 Personality**

In terms of personality, the dance programme gave some participants perspective on how their behaviour translates into their personality. They became more aware of their personalities and either felt a desire to make some changes or realised their personalities were pleasing to themselves.

P7 explained how she viewed her personality; “... *before the dance programme I had a lot of like self-doubt. Cos I'd...look in the mirror and be like, 'mm, why would a person say they like this person, like come on, there's nothing to like. I talk too much, I laugh*

*too loud, like I'm too hyper and everything'.*” After the dance programme, she became less judgemental of herself and more confident; *“But afterwards I was like, ‘maybe I’m actually better than I think’, ‘cos like a lot of people like people who talk a lot... And like I thought like- I think that a lot of people also like people who laugh too loud ‘cos then, it would make them think, ‘okay, I guess I’m telling good jokes or something”*

After the dance programme, P24 stood firm in her view of her personality, which is that she does not compromise, and she also learnt to express self; *“no more compromising. Just tell the truth. Like, tell how you feel. Yah. Of which I’m not perfect yet, I’m in a like learning process, I’m learning to reach that level. Well, we learn every day, but I decided that I’m changing my personality.”* P24 might not have made immediate changes to her personality, but she made the decision to work on changing her personality and understands that it will be an unfolding process.

P20 also maintained the view of their personality; *“I have a great personality and I react when needs be.”*

Participants seemed to have gained perspective on their personality and made decisions to change if necessary. Some participants felt content with their personalities and saw no need to change. Either way, they were made more aware of their personality and came to understand themselves in relation to others in a group, who are there for a common purpose - dance.

#### **4.6.4 External influences outside of the Self**

The theme of external refers to the influences or situations outside of the individual self that would influence the self-image of the participants, i.e. aspects of the environment. Many

participants mentioned they felt reluctant about dancing in a group where they've never danced before. Two participants' situations stood out where external factors played a role in possibly causing them to view themselves differently:

P13 felt targeted during the dance sessions when she thought people were laughing at her. *"The thing that I thought every session was (she laughs) that um, there were these two girls always standing behind me, and sometimes they were laughing and sometimes they were smiling and I don't know if it's because of me being funny when I made a mistake, then I laughed at myself, or if they also realised that, um, every week there is some mistake that I'm doing."* This participant was the only one to mention possibly being made fun of during the sessions. In my observations, the two friends she is referring to were as nervous and self-conscious about their dancing as she was, but because the two girls were friends, they would laugh with each other about their own dancing. I cannot say for certain whether or not they did make fun of P13, but in her interview, P13 shared that she has never danced since she was about 5 years old when her mom told her to stop dancing (I expanded on this in section 4.5.2). The other two participants did not come for an interview.

P1 was the only male in the group, and after entering the programme on the third session, he shared that he didn't think he'd be the only male in the group. Thus, he experienced his first session as awkward. However, he became more comfortable as the session continued; *"it was very awkward in the beginning, even when I walked in like it was just girls, I was like 'Yoh, okay, but ah, let me just go with it'."* This was an external environmental issue which this participant had to confront within himself. This had an

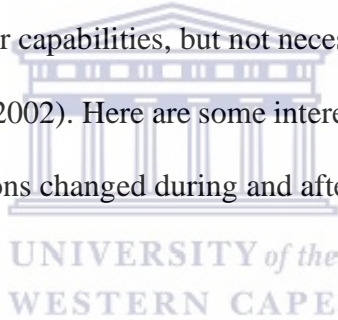


influence on his self-image, even though it was for a short period. He managed to deal with the initial awkwardness to be able to continue with the rest of the programme.

External factors are important to take note of when referring to the self-image, as very often external factors can influence the way one views oneself, either positively or negatively (Owens & Samblanet, 2013).

#### **4.6.5 Belief in dancing abilities (self-efficacy)**

Participants joined the dance programme for various subjective reasons, but knowingly joined on the basis that they would be required to dance, and yet still chose to join regardless of whether they believed they could dance or not. This ties into self-efficacy, which refers to the beliefs an individual holds of their capabilities, but not necessarily what they truly are capable of achieving (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Here are some interesting perceptions participants had on dance and how these perceptions changed during and after the dance programme.



Before joining the dance programme P10 did not believe she could dance because she could not do the moves that other people, such as her friends, could do. This led her to saying; “no [says own name], *I can’t dance, I’m going to embarrass myself*”, *‘like why you wanna do that?’*” As the dance programme commenced, she started affirming that she can dance and confronted those inner fears. “*Coming out from one of the sessions...I met my friend outside...I told her I joined the [dance programme]: ‘so now you’re dancing?!’, I was like, ‘yes girl, I am dancing!’... I didn’t know where that came from and to hear that coming from myself, I felt like, ‘no [says own name], you are dancing, you can dance’...I was dancing on the street...showing her the things that we learnt and I saw myself as: ‘you know what [says own name], either you’re growing up or you’ve*

*encountered a fear that you can't dance or dancing is not that complicated, it's just moving your body, that's all.*" P10 then came to the realisation that dancing is easy; *"I really felt happy and it helped me to not really, um, discourage myself in something that I have not tried out."* After the dance programme, her belief in her dancing abilities changed; *"I felt really happy and before I was like frightened of dancing. I was not gonna just dance randomly...but now I can...you can play music, I can stand up, I can do whatever I wanna do."* P10 was able to realise that her belief that she could not dance was related to her inner fears, and when she realised that dancing is easy, she felt free to be able to dance without limitations, and thus her self-efficacy beliefs improved.

There were some participants like P7 and P13, who found their bodies to be too stiff to dance before joining the dance programme. P13 also believed that her body was too stiff to dance, but during the dance programme, realised that everyone dances differently. *"Dancing is different to everyone. So, um, I might not be able to do a move exactly the way you [the researcher] are showing it to us, but that doesn't mean that I'm not able to do it as well...I can use that to apply it to other stuff in my life as well...so if I'm not able to do something as good as someone else, it doesn't mean that I am not able to do it as well. So, I tried to use that whenever I feel like okay, I'm useless now. Um, I'm not able to do that, then I use that concept."* P13 found that improving her self-efficacy beliefs in dance is a transferable skill that she can apply to other areas where she might not be as confident.

After the dance programme, P1 felt freer to dance and learnt to express himself more. For example; *"... there was a lot of change. Well not really the way I saw myself, cos I'm okay with myself, but I'm more free now...I can dance like more freely."* After never

dancing in front of people and being the only male in a female-dominated group, P1 said:

*“I don’t care what people think around me, I just express myself more than I used to.”*

While there were changes in the way participants viewed themselves physically and behaviourally, another difference that stood out was in their views related to their beliefs around dance and their dancing abilities, which is self-efficacy beliefs. Participants realised they had flawed beliefs of dance and as a result, their views of themselves and their dancing abilities were flawed too. For example, when participants believed dance to be difficult or only meant to look a certain way, they believed that they could not dance or that dance was not meant for them. They would therefore describe themselves as not flexible or too stiff to dance. During and after the programme, when their views of dance started to change, their self-efficacy beliefs in dance improved as a result. Thus, they came to realise that dancing is not as difficult as they thought it to be and that it is simpler. They realised that dance can just be a simple move. Participants started believing that they too can dance, and thus physically started viewing themselves as a dancer and behaviourally started to embody dance. After the dance programme, they would then say that they would dance anywhere and do not care who sees them. They told me how they would dance outside the venue where the dance programme took place with some of the other participants, where other people could see them and that did not bother them. I therefore found a connection between participants’ view of dance and their view of themselves. This finding indicates that participants’ self-efficacy beliefs are important in relation to the self-concept, as it ties in with the concept of ideal self, which is one of the components of the self-concept. This will be further discussed in the next section on dance and ideal self.

## 4.7 Dance and ideal self

The ideal self is the desirable image one has of their future self. For many participants, this was the first time they imagined or described their ideal self in so much detail. They shared how they might have had a picture of this person in their mind, but never really focused on it as much as they did during the interview, yet most participants were able to identify and describe this future self to themselves. This section is categorised into the following themes: physical, fearless/outgoing, communication/interactions, acceptance of self/self-worth, emotional/stress management, confident, happy/content with self, and career/life goals. In some of the responses, some participants described their ideal self in the third person.

### 4.7.1 Physical

It was easy for participants to describe their ideal self in terms of physical attributes. They seemed to easily identify certain characteristics that they would want to alter or gain in future. Here are a few perceptions of participants' physical ideal self;

P24 would like to be taller and not fat. *“Even in the future, I want to be that person. I want to be tall, wearing like those heels. I can't wear slim heels, like the pencil, the stiletto one. Because I feel like they will break, I always wear platforms and, um those thick ones. And yoh, I imagine myself as this lady who is so beautiful.”*

P12 would like to be physically fit; *“Fit girl, all about the healthy lifestyle and stuff. But obviously still having fun, but I mean like you must have a balanced lifestyle and nice, not here getting old and stuff, she must look neat. Like all on point, not like all over the show here.”*

P1 would like to have no acne in the future; *“Handsome, beard, um, grow a bit taller and yah a suited guy.”* The interesting part is that P1 is quite tall already and yet he wants to be a little taller.

It was easy for participants to identify their physical characteristics because they could compare it to their current physical insecurities. There were, however, a few participants who did not want to change anything about their physical selves in their future as they were content with their current physical attributes.

#### **4.7.2 Communication/Interactions**

The question on ideal self was a question some participants found fairly easy to explain and to describe, and this could be because they are not necessarily referring to themselves, but ‘another’ person (their future self).



P30 described her future self; *“she’ll be able to communicate with people more. ‘Cos right now, I just feel like... I dunno, I’m a very awkward person. I feel like interacting with people is a problem, so she is more of a person that is, that can interact with people more. And I’m working on that.”* P30 would want to love & respect others more in future.

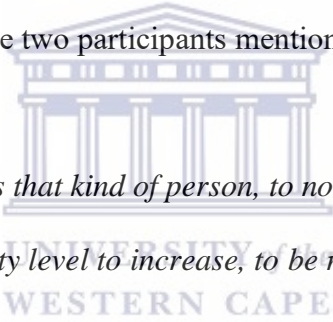
P20 sees her ideal self helping others develop. *“I see myself as this person who let others grow and develop themselves and believe in themselves more. Not to look down at themselves because of what people think. Give them the opportunity to develop their skills, because I’m doing social work.”*

P2 found that being shy will not help her interact & connect with people, so she sees her future self differently; *“So I want to be able to network with people, talk with them, not being shy or something you know. Yah, I want to like, communicate with people, not being shy, yah, you know. That’s the thing, I want to be that person and have confidence, so much confidence to talk with people and not being shy.”*

Some participants linked their description of their future selves to their course of study. Some wanted to overcome their shyness and become friendlier. Other participants felt they would like to be helpful and give selflessly in the future.

#### **4.7.3 Fearless/Outgoing**

In imagining one’s ideal self, these two participants mentioned their desires to be fearless;



P10; *“I wanna see myself as that kind of person, to not fear anything, to always wanting to know – I want my curiosity level to increase, to be much more greater than the way it is now. And yah, I wanna see myself as outgoing as possible.”*

P28 saw her ideal self as helpful, selfless, considerate, confident, not afraid to take on challenges; *“like if she wants to do something, she must go for it and not to overthink it, cos sometimes overthinking things like build a wall and you can’t move forward. I think that would be an ideal she for me.”*

#### **4.7.4 Acceptance of self/Self-worth**

Some participants felt that they would like to be someone who accepts them self holistically or possesses greater self-worth.

P30; *“I definitely wanna be someone that accepts myself like fully. Like, accept and love the fact that I look the way that I look... I need to be that person who just loves how I look and accept the fact that I look that way.”*

P7; *“Well I see like this girl, okay, she has learnt to love herself for who she is and she’s very confident in herself and like whenever bad energy comes by she’ll just ignore it and put a smile on her face and be like, ‘ah, that’s your opinion, I don’t care, as long as I love myself, it’s okay’.”* P7 also understands how dance could help her to love herself more; *“I just hope like the more I dance and the more I attend the sessions I will learn to accept myself and love me for who I am, and not for what people say I am.”* [her voice was shaky with this last sentence]. P7 also reflected on the RSES measure that she completed before and after the dance programme; *“Yah, I remember the one where I think the question was asking about if I’m worthy or something. The first time I thought like, no I’m not really that worthy of anything, but now I’m starting to believe that okay, I am worth actually of a lot of things.”* The statement about worth was number 1 of the RSES, it stated: ‘I feel that I am a person of worth, or at least on an equal plane with others. Here P7 scored 2 in the pre-test and 3 in the post-test. A score of 2 indicates that one agreed with the statement and a score of 3 indicates that one strongly agreed with the statement. Thus, confirming P7 came to a stronger belief that she is a person of worth after the dance programme.

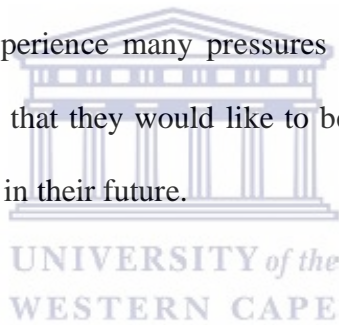
The dance programme made P13 feel closer to her ideal self, and thus she started accepting herself for who she is; *“I started to realise like I think it was after the second session, that’s when I told myself, okay, ‘you aren’t like everyone else, you are different,*

*you are unique and you are gonna do things differently, so accept that and don't be too hard on yourself'. And um, that led to me being happy. If I can put it like that because I accepted it and once you accept things, you are in a happy place. If I can put it like that."*

The dance programme helped some participants get closer to their ideal self and also to realise that they would like to accept themselves more fully in the future. They realise that this will require some time and understand that they need to make conscious efforts to make these changes. They also felt they were too hard on themselves and would like to feel more worthy of themselves.

#### **4.7.5 Emotional/Stress Management**

Participants shared how they experience many pressures at university as well as personal pressures. These participants felt that they would like to be able to deal or cope better with emotional or stress-related issues in their future.



P1 described his ideal self emotionally; *"Joyful. Spreading love and happiness."*

P30 described her ideal self as; *"I wanna be emotionally strong and accept things and accept reality, and I wanna be someone who is very hard working. I still am, but I wanna be very hard working."*


P13 wants to be able to deal better with stress; *"... my ideal self would be, um, able to cope with extreme stress, um, to always remain positive, no matter what life throws at me."*



#### 4.7.6 Feelings of Confidence

Confidence was something most participants spoke about during the interviews. In terms of their future self, participants desired to be more consistently confident in all areas of their lives.

P10 says she wants to be more confident, not only with her body. “... *I want myself to be proud like, to be bold, to be able to say and do and say whatever I feel like doing.*” P10 says; “*I feel like the dance programme helped me to quickly-, it increased the way it is now, that I feel like it enhances that curiosity in me to want to explore...it enhances my curiosity and increased my confidence. To be able to be bold enough and to sign up and come and attend the sessions regularly, it shows a huge improvement to myself also.*” P10 sees dance as an avenue to increase her confidence.



P18 saw her future self as; “*she’s very confident with who she is and how she looks and how she does things... She’s just content with herself.*” The dance programme changed the view of herself and to realise the ideal self; “*Well it [dance programme] has, [changed the way she sees herself], in relations with confidence. My confidence is not the same now. It’s better than how it was before dance. So, yah, it has changed, it has made me closer to this ideal person that I see in my head.*”

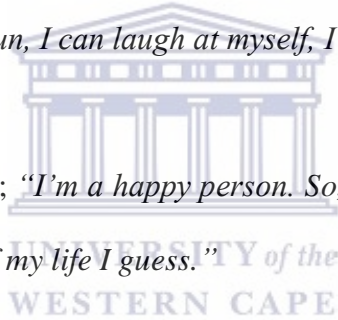
P24; “*Yoh, I will be so confident. Because I will be who I want to be. Yes, so I would really see or view life differently. because I would have the qualities I want, of which I will make me complete*”

#### 4.7.7 Happy/Content with self

This was quite a common theme, where participants desire to either be more consistently happier in the future or simply content with who they are in all situations. Most of them mentioned that they would like to be happier, but these two participants went into a bit more detail and encapsulated the other participants' responses too.

P13 believed that continuing to dance will help her get closer to her ideal self. She realised she must not look around in the sessions as it makes her feel bad. *“I realised that everybody’s different and that you have to accept certain things and that actually led me to, instead of being- not feeling confident, I felt satisfied and happy and then I came here, despite having a lot of work. I came here because, um, it’s like a happy place you know. Um, it’s- it’s exciting, it’s fun, I can laugh at myself, I can learn from others.”*

P1 described his future self; *“I’m a happy person. So, I’d like to take that in my future, just be happy for the rest of my life I guess.”*



#### 4.7.8 Career/Life goals

A few participants identified their ideal self in terms of career or life goals. They would mention being successful career-wise and personally achieving specific things. This theme was easy for participants to identify and explain.

P24’s ideal self-description is different now than it was when she was younger; *“... this thing of me wanting to be a leader and have these qualities, it was never in my mind... I never thought of myself as someone who would like to be involved in things like this.”*

P24 would like to be a leader and possess the qualities of a leader.

P12 wants to be successful and living life; “... *doing ideal job, family, own house, own car, independent, travel, don't wanna work whole life.*”

The number of sessions attended did not make a difference to participants feeling closer to their ideal self. For example, even though P20 only attended 2 sessions, she felt that the dance programme made her feel closer to her ideal self. P25 also found that with having only attended 2 sessions, the dance programme helped her to overcome some of the current issues she was experiencing in order for her to realise this ideal self. P30 says the dance programme made her focus more in detail on the internal ideal self or to realise the ideal self:

P30; *“I think I have a clearer idea, yah, because before, I didn't even really think about this before, but like if I would have been asked the ideal self, like how do I wanna be one day and...it would basically be just about – I wanna be successful. That's that. I wouldn't focus on how I want to be inside, that was just not important. It was more of, I wanna be successful, I wanna achieve this degree...that's that. But the person inside, I wouldn't have said anything about that.”*

With some participants having to describe their ideal self, they recognised that the dance programme either made them realise parts of their ideal self, allowed them to see their ideal self clearer, or felt closer to this future version of themselves. Some participants also shared how they re-imagined some parts of their ideal self to make it more personal as some participants were originally basing their ideal self on someone else's current life, i.e. wanting to be like someone else.

## 4.8 Dance and overall self-concept

On exploring the overall self-concept of participants, it seemed to be one of the most challenging questions for participants to answer. The self-concept refers to the beliefs an individual have about him/herself, as well as the qualities they possess and their subjective definition of the self (McLeod, 2008). In describing their self-concept, participants would define themselves according to an area of their lives, for example, academics or church. As participants shared their subjective perceptions of their beliefs of themselves, there were as many themes as there were participants. Thus for this section, I will share some of the responses participants provided, and how and what influenced their self-concept in relation to the dance programme.

Before the dance programme, P10 was conservative, not confident or bold and outgoing. During and after the dance programme, she tried to be more open and thus became less conservative; *“I felt like, no I can do everything I wanna do, I can be whatever I wanna be and I felt myself as being bold, I felt myself as a confident person. I felt comfortable in my own body. I felt like I can do everything.”*

Before the dance programme, P30 was generally not focused on having fun in her life due to her school workload. During the dance programme, she began to pay attention to her feelings; *“so when I came here and you [the researcher] started dancing, I got to have fun and let loose, then it became something I started to enjoy and I was happy. So, then my feelings kind of came out, you know what I mean. That’s when I started to really pay attention to my feelings for once.”* P30 found that she could translate her emotions through dance; *“So when I came to these sessions, my feelings were there. I could express them with dance moves.”* After the dance programme, P30 became more open to

interactions with others; “... it really helped in terms of the relationships that I had with people. I created new relationships like with people and also my relationships with people just changed and we got to a point where we were comfortable because of what we saw when we were in these dance classes.”

P18 described herself as a sweetheart who does things for others; “so I’m that person, I’m more concerned with other people more than I am with myself. And I’m working on that. I’m a sweetheart, I love dance. I’m not self-absorbed and all that. That’s how I can describe myself.” The dance programme helped her make positive changes in her self-concept; “So it has made me to care, to maybe like put myself first and also, believe in myself more and be confident.”

P2 describes herself as an introvert, yet loves being with people; “I’m an introvert, I’m shy, but I’m a nice person, I love talking with people, but I can’t, you know, go to them and start, but then when the conversation is on, then I’d talk with them.” It is interesting that even though P2 is not easily able to express herself verbally, her confidence in dance increased. The dance programme helped her to see herself differently: “It made me do what I love, like not being shy after the first week, so it did make the change, yes.” P2 believes that now she can dance, in the beginning, she wrote on her demographic profile which asked: ‘What does dance mean to you?; “Dancing brings happiness to me and its fun, even though I actually can’t dance.” Yet in the interview, she said: “But now I can.” Thus, as P2’s view of herself changed, her belief in her dance abilities changed (self-efficacy beliefs).



P28 used to be a shy person, but found a way to use shyness for her benefit; *“I’ve grown into, like, taking the shyness and taking it into, like, hard work or making it boost my confidence or making it something that pushes me.”* Her academics and spiritual aspects were always important to her self-concept.

P7 says she; *“... is this person who is bubbly, she’s this girl who likes to see people happy, she’s this girl who always tries to push away negativity away from other people, but she’s unable to do the exact same thing for herself, cos she hasn’t learnt to love herself fully.”* This is how the dance programme influenced P7’s self-concept; *“I’m starting to learn to feel confident in my own self and love myself for who I am and like have people learn to know who this [says own name] is.”* She adds; *“I want other people to know, okay, I’m not always happy, there are some days where I’m feeling sad and everything and they should actually understand that. Now I think I’m gonna, like, start to let people know the true me and like let them have to learn how to love me, like, this me! The true me! And not just this portrait I’ve actually portrayed in front of them.”* This is interesting, as it shows the desire P7 has to be herself and no longer put up a front for other people. She realises the value she has to give by being her authentic self and to allow other people to adjust to her truth and to stop portraying herself as someone they will like.

P24 described herself as a believer in God; *“I believe in God, so I would be who God wants me to be.”* The dance programme influenced her self-concept with friends from Church, who were amazed that she is dancing now, as she never danced before. The mentalities of friends also changed through her involvement in the dance programme. *“So, I feel like even this dance thing, I changed the mentalities of a lot of my friends, that,*

*'how if [says own name] can dance, how, we can dance too'.*” She added; *“So that’s part of the things I learnt from [the dance programme], that when you do something, put your mind to it. I believe what you [the researcher] said the first day, cos I never believed it: That everyone can dance, that I can dance.”* P24 says the dance programme also helped her to believe in herself more; *“I mentioned that it took me out of the shell. Like it made me to believe in myself, that I can do something.”*

P25 She described herself as content with who she is and confident in herself; *“I am me, basically, what you see is what you get type of person. I try when I want to, but then if it’s not there I don’t force it. I’m very confident in myself and my abilities. I feel good about myself. I am happy with myself, I wouldn’t change anything that I’ve gone through, the challenges and so on. They are part of who I am. That made me the person I am, and yes, some have left a mark, some have not, but it’s the way of life. She’s cool.”*

P12 says she is always happy and outgoing; *“I can be loud sometimes (she laughs), and then sometimes I can be really quiet.* The dance programme had an influence on her self-concept; *“Well during the programme, like while you’re dancing and maybe someone is doing something, then- or like, you have conversation man. For me, when I’m around people I don’t know, I wouldn’t talk, but here I spoke. Like people were speaking and I was speaking, like it was having conversations which never happens really.”* P12 realised that she spoke more to others she did not know in the dance sessions than she did before.

Many themes emerged from the overall self-concept question and as mentioned in the introduction to this section, there were as many themes as there were participants. The themes that did emerge in the participants’ responses in describing their self-concept were around



becoming less conservative and more confident; paying more attention to feelings and expressing them through dance; belief in themselves increased and thus belief in dance ability (self-efficacy) increased too; learnt to love themselves and no longer put up a front for other people; belief in God; the dance programme took them out of their shell and they became content with their self; and understanding that challenges made them who they are.

As participants entered the dance programme, they all had certain beliefs about themselves. In the dance environment, there are many variables and dynamics to consider, i.e. group dynamics – subjective awareness of others; venue; stage – awareness of other people watching you dance; instructor; music and so on. Through all of these dynamics, participants came to view their self-concept differently. Mostly participants developed an in-depth and clearer understanding of their overall self-concept.



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#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The statistical findings from the RSES questionnaire positively complemented the findings in the qualitative data (interviews). These findings indicated that participants' self-esteem increased after participating in the structured dance programme. Therefore, the dance programme, according to participants, did have an influence on their self-esteem. Participants also felt that their self-image was influenced after participating in the dance programme, as they came to hold a different view of themselves. Therefore, the dance programme allowed for participants to view themselves differently, and in a more positive light for themselves. For most participants, they were able to identify and describe their ideal self, maybe for the first time, and also realised how the dance programme helped them to realise or draw closer to this future self. Thus, the dance programme had an influence on the participants' view of their ideal self. The overall self-concept of participants was significantly influenced after



participating in the dance programme, as participants learnt more about the beliefs they had about themselves as well as the qualities they possess. This research analysis and findings were able to answer all of the research questions and achieve all the aims and objectives put forward at the beginning of this research project.

The analysis and findings of this research were conducted within the frame of the self-concept, which is the theoretical framework of this research. The self-concept forms an integral part of an individual's life, as well as in research (Gore & Cross, 2014). They (2014) assert that understanding self-concept change and development allows us to understand the adaptive nature of individuals to social settings, roles and circumstances. This tied into the current research project where I found that the self-concept was influenced positively after participants partake in dance. The self-efficacy of participants regarding dance was also improved as participants developed a deeper belief in their dancing ability, and thus began to view themselves differently as well as feel better about themselves. Self-efficacy relates to self-concept.

Participants joined this dance programme for different, subjective reasons. Some wanted to just come dance, some wanted to join for community and some just to have fun. Even though their intentions for joining the dance programme was not to alter their self-esteem, self-image, ideal self or overall self-concept, they found that participating in the sessions played a role in influencing these aspects of the self. They also came to realise that making active changes to various parts of their self-concept seemed to be as powerful as making the decisions to change.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

### 5.1 Introduction

In conceptualising the topic for this research, I filtered it from the broad frame of the self to the self-concept and further down to its aspects, self-image, self-esteem and ideal self. My interest lay in how people view themselves, feel about themselves and envision their future selves. I wanted to see how dance played a role in these concepts. Yet through the data collection, many themes emerged piquing my interest, which I did not necessarily foresee. In this chapter, I discuss the findings in more detail from chapter 4 and link it to theory, more specifically, the theoretical framework, the self-concept framework.

The overall aim of this research was to explore the self-concept of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University. There were four objectives in this research project:

- To measure the difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors at a South African university prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.
- To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.
- To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the self-image of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.
- To explore the subjective perceptions of how a structured dance programme influences the ideal self of a group of peer mentors at a South African University.

The research questions were in line with these aims and objectives and are addressed in this chapter starting with self-esteem (quantitative and qualitative results), self-image, ideal self and overall self-concept.

- What is the measurable difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-esteem after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-image after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their ideal self after participating in a structured dance programme?
- What are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their overall self-concept after participating in a structured dance programme?



This chapter includes an overview of how these research questions were answered and a conclusion of results. The significance, limitations and recommendations for future research are also discussed.

## **5.2 Discussion of Results**

### **5.2.1 Self-esteem (quantitative and qualitative results)**

#### **5.2.1.1 Quantitative**

The self-esteem was researched both qualitatively and quantitatively and showed statistically significant increases from pre-test to post-test. The first research question was: what is the measurable difference in the self-esteem of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme? To answer this question, the quantitative

approach of this research used the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which was distributed as a pre-test and post-test measure; and was analysed using MS Excel and SPSS analytical tools. Results show the mean of the pre-test scores was ( $M = 22.50, SD = 3.648$ ) and the mean of the post-test scores was ( $M = 24.33, SD = 3.384$ ). Thus, there was an increase in the total mean scores of participants. Additionally, there was a significant positive correlation between the pre-test and post-test data ( $r = .627, p = .001$ ). The pre-test and post-test data were also positively and significantly related. The significant average difference was ( $t(23) = -2.949, p = .007$ ). This suggests that there was a statistically significant increase in participants' self-esteem after participating in the structured dance programme. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected. On average, the post-test scores was 1.833 higher than the pre-test scores (95% CI [3.119, .547]). These results suggest that dance can have a significant positive effect on one's self-esteem.

#### **5.2.1.2 Qualitative**

The qualitative approach of this research used interviews where participants shared their subjective perceptions of how the dance programme influenced their self-esteem (as well as self-image, ideal self and overall self-concept, which will be addressed in the sections to follow). The quantitative data was the secondary method of this research and was found to positively complement the qualitative component, which was the primary method. In combining the findings of the qualitative and quantitative data on self-esteem, this was able to answer the second research question which was: what are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-esteem after participating in a structured dance programme? Four themes emerged from the self-esteem qualitative data. These were; confidence, stress relief, expressing of Self and overall self-esteem.



## *Confidence*

Participants indicated that they felt more confident during and after participating in the dance programme. Some participants shared that before participating in the dance programme, they were very shy and some have never danced before or even in front of other people. In the structured dance programme, they had to confront this shyness or low confidence, as well as not having danced in front of others. In the previous chapter, I suggested that this was related to the concept of 'inner conflict' (see endnote) where one has to confront what arises and assess oneself when one feels a resistance towards something, for example, dancing in front of others (in this case) (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). This confrontation and assessment is the conflict I refer to that is faced within and the individual needs to make a decision whether to deal with it, ignore it or suppress it and move on. During the course of the dance programme however, there was a shift in participants' confidence and they felt an increase in confidence. This increase in confidence was in relation to their physical Self, their dance abilities as well as in relation to their social interactions. More specifically they overcame self-doubt; engaged in more self-talk to boost confidence; confronted fears to get out of their comfort zone; or started being more aware of their issues relating to or affecting their confidence, in order to reach new levels of confidence. After the dance programme participants gained in-depth insights in understanding that they won't simply stop becoming shy overnight, but that it will take time and they are willing to make the changes towards becoming more confident overall. These insights were not based on surface-level thinking, and it is important to note this, as I assume it indicates that dance can allow for in-depth and honest reflections for the individual who is willing to make permanent changes in their confidence (or other aspects of self-concept). However, in this research, dance was the tool which guided them to understand that it is possible to make those changes. It seemed they were able to tap into what changes they need to make and what steps to take in order to do so. There was also an indication of an

understanding of their independence, as they came to realise that they need not look to other people to inform their confidence. It is important to note how the subjective perceptions of participants become significant in how they interpreted their experiences through dance. Participants got to view themselves through a process of evaluation, demonstrating how dance influenced aspects of their self-esteem and to improve the self where necessary. Since self-esteem is the evaluative part of the self-concept, it informs the self-concept of self-worthiness (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). When thinking about different aspects of oneself, self-esteem is usually involved and this became evident when participants found confidence to be a concern for themselves. The evaluation that participants went through led them to realising their confidence increased through the dance programme, and what they need to continue implementing to maintain this new-found confidence levels.

### *Stress Relief*

Students at university often feel overwhelmed due to academic pressures, and other external and internal pressures and this can often lead to anxiety, specifically in students in historically Black universities in South Africa (Pillay, Edwards, Sargent, & Dhlomo, 2001). In the interviews, participants shared with me how they found the dance sessions to be a place where they can release stress and escape personal or academic pressures. There are not many extramural activities or structured leisure-based groups at the university that allow for a cathartic experience. Students who are not part of a choir or another team sport need to find alternative ways of relaxing or relieving stress. Pillay et al.'s (2001) research on university students in South Africa suggest that one-sixth of university students experience symptoms of anxiety so severe that clinical consideration is given. This all points to catharsis being a fundamental process for the stability of the overall self-concept. The cathartic experience occurs when strong and suppressed emotions are released (Momplé & Cloete, 2018). In the findings of this research, participants found dance became a place where they could experience this catharsis.

More specifically, they could release tension moods, such as anger and often felt happier after the sessions. Another form of this catharsis was what some participants referred to as ‘me-time’. They found the dance sessions to be a time they got to spend with themselves or a space to get lost in themselves or zone out from their realities for a while. Linked to this cathartic experience is the concept of embodiment. Embodiment acts as an emotional feedback process which informs the cognitive functions of the emotional body stores (Duberg et al., 2016). Being in their own space in the dance sessions, allowed participants to zone out of the reality to deal with their emotions; or release their stresses around their academics. While some participants found the space of the dance programme to be a space for them to spend time with themselves, others found it a space to engage with others in the group. They found this connection to be more than just a group dancing together, relationships were formed whether or not they spoke to each other not. According to Lovatt (2018), dance can be used to communicate emotions, which is a basic form of human communication and an essential form of building relationships. With this in mind and through my observations, this group dynamic was interesting to witness as participants came into the dance programme not knowing each other and bonds were formed, mostly non-verbally, through dancing in the same room over time. As they shared with me in the interviews, they might not have known each other’s names, but there was a common understanding as to why they are here (to dance), this also allowed them to not be concerned any longer as to who was watching them when they were dancing. Often a simple glance and perhaps some laughter as they were dancing would connect them. This created a shared sense of belonging within the group for many of the participants. Many felt excited to come to the sessions to be able to have fun, with themselves and each other for at least that hour. This finding of stress relief through catharsis is a valuable one in understanding the effects of dance on an individual and should be taken up through further research, specifically within the South African context.

### *Expressing of Self*

As participants found the dance sessions to be a form a stress relief or a space to get lost and find themselves at the same time, this could have led to participants being better able to express themselves as they released the thoughts and ideas of being judged by others. Some participants felt they were able to truly express themselves as they danced during the dance sessions. Together with my observations, I found participants being able to let their guard down and become more expressive of themselves. This was especially true for the last session (Cypher and Freestyle – session 7) where participants had to perform in front of the others of the group. Everyone participated in the performances at the end of the session. During the interviews, participants explained how they felt before they had to perform and even though they were nervous or scared to do so, they made the conscious choice to get up go for it. Here it was often surprising to see how the participants truly expressed themselves. They might have been nervous, but they used this opportunity to show themselves and just have fun. The rest of the group cheered them on as they performed, some participants shared how they sometimes didn't even hear the music because of the cheering, but that did not matter as it gave them even more energy to perform. The group dynamics therefore, became important as they felt safe in a space to express themselves using dance as a tool. This proves how dance can become another form of communication and alternative means to allow one to 'meet' themselves. The cypher and freestyle session was the final session and one where participants had to confront different experiences, such as performing in front of others or being an audience member for the first time in the programme. As mentioned in Chapter 3, this session brought elements of self-esteem and self-image to the fore, as how they felt about themselves and viewed themselves determined how freely they will express themselves through dance. This was the rationale for including these elements of dance in the programme. One participant also shared how dancing was never their favourite activity, yet by participating in the dance programme, they learnt to



express themselves through their dancing. Another participant shared how this expression of Self was therapeutic for her.

### *Overall self-esteem*

This theme arose as participants gave a general overview of their self-esteem and did not refer to specific parts of self-esteem as above. Here participants shared how their overall self-esteem was positively influenced through participating in the dance programme. Participants who attended only a few sessions (2 or 3) in the dance programme, still found an improvement in their self-esteem. This showed that it did not necessarily matter how many sessions participants attended, it was more the fact that they had the opportunity to dance in the freedom of the space made them feel better about themselves. Also, even though some participants expressed that they did not relate to having low self-esteem before the dance programme, they still found an improvement in their self-esteem. The dance programme also allowed participants to use dance to evaluate different elements of self, to be more self-reflective. Overall, dance made participants feel happier after attending the sessions. Many shared how they would dance in the street outside the venue with other participants of the dance programme, even if they did not know their names. This translates into how a non-verbal activity, such as dance, can guide individuals to better relate to others and thus feel better about themselves.

Self-esteem is the underlying element of the self-concept, as how one feels about oneself influences the way one views themselves. Biddle, Fox, & Boutcher (2003), emphasise the importance of self-esteem by seeing it as an important indicator of one's subjective and mental well-being, as well as one's quality of life. Thus, it was important to research the self-esteem both quantitatively and qualitatively, to gain a holistic overview of this significant element of self-concept.

## **5.2.2 Self-image**

Where self-esteem is the evaluative part of the self-concept, self-image is the descriptive part (Butler & Gasson, 2006). Participants had to describe themselves as they viewed their current characteristics. The third research question was: what are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their self-image after participating in a structured dance programme? I was interested in understanding how participants viewed themselves before, during and after the dance programme and how dance influenced the changes in their view of self if any. Self-image data was collected via the interviews and the observations. From the self-image data, five themes emerged. These themes were; physical, behavioural, personality, external, and belief in dancing abilities (self-efficacy).

### **5.2.2.1 Physical**

The first theme, 'physical', indicated that there were some changes in the way participants viewed themselves. One of the aspects of self-image concerns itself with how people view themselves physically. Thus participants described their self-image in terms of the physical. Prior to the dance programme participants might have felt very aware of their physical selves in comparison to others, as after the dance programme many participants no longer felt the need to compare themselves to others in terms of their physical self anymore. What is important to raise here is that dance is a physical activity and it uses the body as its medium (Giurchescu, 2001). Thus the way one views themselves physically plays an important role in the way they dance. Through participating in the dance programme, participants became more content with their physical insecurities and felt more confident to be within their own bodies. This led to participants relaxing more and not putting themselves down, or altering their beliefs in their body's abilities to dance, for example (this also links to self-efficacy beliefs discussed under the theme of belief in dancing ability).

### **5.2.2.2 Behaviour**

‘Behaviour’ is another aspect of defining self-image (Owens & Samblanet, 2013). Here participants either consciously or unconsciously adapted their behaviours during the dance programme. As they danced, participants became more conscious of their behaviour throughout the dance programme (in the sessions), but also in general as part of their self. This led to participants making some behavioural changes such as; becoming less judgemental of others, becoming more comfortable in the social environment, becoming more open-minded, positively adapting behaviour to the environment, and more being understanding of themselves. One of the factors leading to behavioural change was feedback from others, more specifically the only male in the group of females had to address this, he came to realise it was something he needed to overcome. Behaviour was generally not a major concern for participants as they did not feel a need for major adjustment of their behaviours, however, their behaviours during the dance sessions did change in adapting to the dance environment. This was found through observations and confirmed through the interviews.

### **5.2.2.3 Personality**

As participants became aware of their behaviour through dance, so too did participants become more aware of their personalities. Personality builds on from behaviour, thinking and self-esteem. According to Schwender et al., (2018), dance addresses the personality through its connection with self-expressive movement to music and its involvement of various senses. Through increased awareness of their personality, participants either felt a desire to make some changes to their personalities or realised their personalities were pleasing to themselves. Not compromising on themselves and learning to express themselves more was something one of the participant’s experienced. Some participants also realised they had a great personality or learnt to maintain their self-love. They understood that to be able to maintain self-love, they need to be less judgemental of themselves and more confident. Generally, participants were

made more aware of their personality and came to understand themselves in relation to others in the dance group, who were there for a common purpose, to dance. Personality was not a major theme, but it was relevant to understand what participants gave more consideration to make changes in the self-concept, yet they were mostly content with their personalities.

#### **5.2.2.4 External influences outside of the Self**

External refers to the external influences or situations that would influence the self-image of the participants. Many participants mentioned their reluctance to dancing in a group where they've never danced before. Here one participant felt like a possible object of ridicule during the dance sessions, as she thought some of the other participants were laughing at her. This experience was linked to a previous situation in her own life when she was younger where she was told she should not be dancing and that she couldn't dance. This became a major impact in her life, especially when it came to dance. This participant shared that it was her mother and that since she was told this as a child, she did not dance again until this dance programme (age 21). Here this participant took an external factor that happened to her and internalised it, this is related to embodiment. Thus during the dance programme, she once again felt as though external factors, such as others possibly laughing at her, was directed at her. This can be perceived as an external trigger. External and internal sensations play a role in the way one perceives themselves, this perception is formed from physical cues in the present and in the body's memory stores (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). In Chapter 2 I mentioned that some childhood experiences are stored within the body through implicit memory which affects behaviour and perception (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013). This is where embodiment becomes vital in the development of the self-concept, and dance becomes vital in creating change through embodiment. Another participant experienced an awkward start to the dance sessions as he had to deal with the fact that he was the only male in the dance programme. External

factors are important to look at when assessing self-image, as very often incidents that occur outside of oneself can influence, positively or negatively, the way one views oneself.

#### **5.2.2.5 Belief in dancing ability (Self-efficacy beliefs)**

An interesting theme that emerged from the self-image section was ‘belief in dancing abilities’ or self-efficacy beliefs, which relates to the self-concept (the theoretical framework of this research). Participants joined the dance programme for various subjective reasons but ultimately joined on the basis that they would be required to dance and yet still chose to join regardless of whether they believed they could dance or not. During the dance programme, they came to the realisation that they could dance and that dancing is easy. One participant was able to realise that her belief that she couldn’t dance was related to inner fears she had. When she came to realise that dancing is easy, she felt free to be able to dance without limitations. Participants realised they had flawed beliefs of dance and as a result, their views of themselves and their dancing abilities were flawed too. During and after the programme when their views of dance started to change, their beliefs of their dancing abilities changed too. When participants believed that they too can dance, they then physically started viewing themselves as a dancer and behaviourally started to embody dance. I therefore found a connection between participants’ view of dance and their view of themselves (self-image). Although this was not part of the formal research questions, it was found that self-efficacy beliefs were improved through the dance programme. This was a significant finding as I have found in my experience that people will inform me (the dance instructor) that they cannot dance before walking into a dance session or class, almost apologising for not being able to move like me or the others in the group (this was discussed in the Reflexivity section in Chapter 3). This was one of the observations I found which led me to undertake this research. Why would people apologise or inform the instructor before the class that they couldn’t dance as if they should be excused for it? Further questions would follow in my mind, how do they define dance? Why do they feel

they must dance a specific way? They are still choosing to come and dance, so why would they apologise for it? They did not believe they could dance and this possibly led them to not believe in themselves. Through the findings in this research, I came to understand that this was the case with these participants too. They came to believe more in themselves as they started realising that dancing is not meant to look a certain way and that the way they move is good and it is dancing. To add to this finding, it would have been of interest to ask participants how they define dance and why they felt they couldn't dance. This would give further insights into their views of dance. Self-efficacy ties into the self-concept through the self-image and plays a role in shaping the ideal self.

### **5.2.3 Ideal self**

Self-esteem is the underlying element of the self-concept, as how one feels about oneself influences the way one views oneself in the present and future, i.e. ideal self (Biddle et al., 2003). The fourth research question was, what are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their ideal self after participating in a structured dance programme? Ideal self was the part of the self-concept where participants had to describe the way they envision their future self, physically or behaviourally. For many participants, this was the first time they imagined or described their ideal self in so much detail. This is the part of the self-concept that is not that well researched in self-concept research, thus the themes that emerged assists future research in understanding the ideal self in detail from participants' subjective perceptions. This section had many themes due to the varied way each participant described themselves; physical, fearless/outgoing, communication/interactions, acceptance of self/self-worth, emotional/stress management, confident, happy/content with self and career/life goals.

#### **5.2.3.1 Physical**

It was fairly easy for participants to identify certain characteristics that they would want to alter or gain, such as fitter body, being taller or smaller, having no acne, etc., as they could compare

it to their current physical insecurities. There were however a few participants who did not want to change anything about their physical selves in future as they were content with their current physical attributes. Self-image is the view one has of oneself at any one time (actual self) and ideal self is the view one has of oneself in the future, thus this would be ever-changing as one is always striving for a better self (Zentner & Renaud, 2007). In linking the ‘physical’ theme of ideal self to the ‘physical’ theme of self-image (covered in section 5.1.2), it would be fair to assume that if participants became content with their physical current self-image and felt more confident to be within their own bodies, then they felt it possibly unnecessary, at this point, to view themselves differently in future. In relation to dance, participants self-efficacy beliefs increased where they came to believe they could dance (as mentioned in previous sections), and as Eusanio et al., (2014) and Zentner & Renaud (2007) point out, self-efficacy becomes important in shaping the ideal self. They (2014), (2007) add that when ideal self has been attained as the current self, a new ideal self needs to be imagined.

### **5.2.3.2 Communication/Interactions**

‘Communication or interactions’ were also a theme found in ideal self. Some participants linked their description of their future selves to their course of study. Some wanted to overcome their shyness and become friendlier. Other participants felt they would like to be helpful and give selflessly in the future.

### **5.2.3.3 Fearless/Outgoing**

Participants also imagined their future selves as becoming ‘fearless or outgoing’, the second theme of ideal self. Here they found fear to be something holding them back and found that if they overcame issues of self-esteem in the dance programme, then they will be able to overcome more for themselves in future. They felt they wanted to be more selfless or considerate of others and not afraid to take on challenges.



#### **5.2.3.4 Acceptance of self/self-worth**

Some participants felt that they would like to be someone who accepts themselves holistically or possesses a greater self-worth. Self-worth is related to the self-esteem which is the evaluative part of the self-concept (Heatherton & Wyland, 2003). The dance programme helped some participants get closer to their ideal self. They realised that this will require some time and understand that they need to make conscious efforts to make these changes. They also felt they were initially too hard on themselves and decided to take steps to not putting so much pressure on themselves.

#### **5.2.3.5 Emotional/stress management**

‘Emotional or stress management’ was identified as a theme where participants felt that they would like to be able to deal or cope better with emotional or stress-related issues in their future. Participants felt that they could be more emotionally strong in their future. It can be assumed that the changes and experiences participants had in the dance programme gave them insights into their emotions and stress management and through this they felt that they would like to be able to better cope with these issues in future as well.

#### **5.2.3.6 Feelings of confidence**

Another theme of ideal self where participants felt they could improve was ‘confidence’ in all areas of their lives. They want to be able to just be themselves and be bold enough to take on any challenge they would face in their lives in future. Under the qualitative section of self-esteem, participants indicated that their confidence increased during and after the dance programme. In experiencing this boost in confidence through dance, they thus felt they would like to be more confident in all areas of their lives in future and this is something they are willing to work towards.

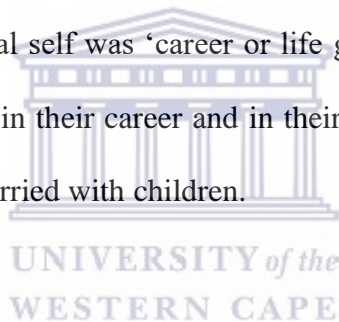


### **5.2.3.7 Happy/Content with self**

To be 'happier or content with themselves' was quite a common theme from participants arising from the ideal self question. Some participants believed that in continuing to dance, they could get closer to their ideal self and be more consistently happier in their future. Dance here became the tool that participants would like to continue using to be happy, as they indicated in the interviews, they felt happier after attending every session from the dance programme. Here participants believe that dance can allow them the space to becoming more content with self. This does not mean that one will not strive for a better self in future, it just indicates that one can do so with clarity and order (Eusanio et al., 2014; Owens & Samblanet, 2013).

### **5.2.3.8 Career/Life goals**

The final theme identified in ideal self was 'career or life goals'. Participants expressed that they would like to be successful in their career and in their personal life too, such as having their own car, house, or being married with children.



In some participants having to describe their ideal self, they realised that the dance programme either made them realise parts of their ideal self; allowed them to see their ideal self clearer; or they felt closer to this future version of themselves. Additionally, the number of dance sessions attended did not make a difference in participants feeling closer to their ideal self. A prominent finding in the ideal self data was that when ideal self has been attained as the current self, a new ideal self needs to be imagined. As participants came to realise their ideal self, they seemed to look forward to re-imagining a new ideal self, as they now realise that it is possible to achieve some characteristics of this future self sooner than they initially anticipated. They came to better understand this evolving concept of the ideal self.

#### 5.2.4 Overall self-concept

As with the element of ideal self, the overall self-concept is an ever-changing and dynamic concept (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). In addition to this, the self-concept is organised and learned (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). The fifth and final research question was: what are the subjective perceptions of peer mentors of their overall self-concept after participating in a structured dance programme? This seemed to be generally the most challenging question for participants to answer during the interviews. In describing their self-concept, participants would describe themselves according to an area of their lives, for example, academics or church. As participants shared their subjective perceptions of their beliefs of themselves, there were as many themes as there were participants. However, the themes that did emerge from the participants' responses in describing their self-concept were focused around:

- becoming less conservative and more confident;
- paying more attention to feelings and expressing them through dance;
- the increase in self-belief which led to an increase in belief in dance ability (self-efficacy);
- a learning to love themselves and no longer put up a front for other people;
- a belief in God;
- how the dance programme took them out of their shell and led to becoming content with self;
- and understanding that challenges made them who they are.

As participants entered the dance programme, they all possessed certain beliefs about themselves. Within the dance environment they were entering, there were many variables and dynamics to consider, i.e. group dynamics – subjective awareness of others; venue; stage – awareness of other people watching you dance; instructor; music and so forth. Through all of these dynamics, participants came to view their self-concept differently. Mostly, participants

developed an in-depth and clearer understanding of their overall self-concept, this led to them possessing a more positive overall self-concept.

One has to note that the dance programme was designed in a particular way to allow for different parts of the self-concept to be researched with a particular group of students, after spending time with the students.

### **5.3 Significance**

In the inception of this research, I was interested in how the self-concept is influenced after participants partake in dance. This research project was able to provide in-depth findings on the influence of a structured dance programme on the self-concept of peer mentors. These findings also allowed for greater insights into peer mentors perceptions of a dance programme and how dance managed to influence their overall self-concept. This is the first research of its kind conducted in the South African context, where dance was used as an intervention to explore parts of the self that are, at times, salient to the awareness through a non-pathological approach. This research was also able to explore and research the self-concept in a non-classroom setting, through a mixed-method approach, with the primary method being qualitative, i.e., from the perspective of the participants. By including participants self-reflections, the data that emerged was rich and valuable, this gave great substance to the qualitative component and overall research findings. The subjective experiences required participants to see themselves as the subject and object of reflection; and incorporated both cognitive and emotional responses. Through this method, this research findings hold great significance to the development of the field of psychology, as well as dance psychology.

With regards to the field of psychology, this research further embeds the self-concept into theory, demonstrating that it can be an effective theoretical framework for research. Furthermore, I found that the self-concept as a theory befitted the intervention of dance, as the

findings reveal, the participants came to realise a range of insights that emerged through them dancing. As found in previous literature, self-esteem is widely researched as a concept in understanding the self. This is understandable as self-esteem is the underlying element of self-concept, but by including self-image and ideal self, this provides for a more comprehensive view of one's self-concept. This research found self-image to be an important contributor to the way one feels about themselves. Especially as it links to the ideal self image one has of oneself. In participants reflecting on their self-image, they became more content with their physical self-image; they made relevant changes to their behaviour; adopted positive changes to their personality; and became reflective of themselves through their external environment. By including ideal self, one is able to understand the motivations of individuals as they attempt to work towards self-actualisation (Kahn & Rachman, 2000; Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Certainly, when applying self-concept as a theoretical framework, the context of the study needs to be considered and meticulously thought through and applied. Furthermore, the focus of previous psychology literature was that the use of dance as an intervention, with a specific focus on the self-concept was not well researched, especially outside of dance training. This research project used dance as an intervention while focusing on individuals who are outside the frame of dance training and not immersed in the dance field. In addition to the significance of this research, participants felt that the dance programme increased their self-esteem, even those who already possessed high self-esteem before participating in the dance programme. The statistical data analysis results complement this, as it found that the self-esteem of participants was increased after participating in the dance programme. This puts dance under a positive spotlight as an intervention for research, as the individual gets to explore themselves through dance, and subsequently taking positive and logical steps to work on areas of their self which they feel need improvement; or also becoming aware of areas of their self that they are

content and satisfied with. This self-development process that occurs needs very little influence from their external world.

In previous literature on dance psychology, I found self-esteem to generally be the main focus, with self-image and ideal self not given much attention. Through this research project, I hope to provide a basis for future research in dance psychology; especially by including and exploring the self-image and ideal self within the overall self-concept. I also found that researching the self-concept holistically through dance allows for a broader conceptualisation of the self.

#### **5.4 Limitations**

One of the limitations faced was the participants' schedules in attending the dance programme, as some participants had tests or classes at the time of the dance sessions, or transport limitations in trying to attending the sessions. As this research had four stages of analysis, there were four different sample sizes. More specifically, the quantitative pre-test data saw a sample size of 34 and the post-test data sample size was 24. This however did not negatively affect the findings of the qualitative or quantitative findings, as a pairwise deletion was employed in the dependent t-test data analysis (Graham, 2009). Another limitation was the limited evidence of validity of the RSES questionnaire within the African context. According to Westaway, Jordaan, & Tsai (2015), some of the questions in the RSES questionnaire could be misinterpreted within the various cultures in Africa and even South Africa. Lastly, some participants did not pitch for the interviews, when contact was made no responses were received. Other than these, no other limitations affected the completion of this research.

## 5.5 Recommendations for future research

Future studies in using dance as an intervention should bear in mind the uniqueness and intricacies of the dance programme before implementing a similar one. Where universities or other institutions would like to implement this dance programme, it is suggested that the dance instructor (one conducting the dance programme) have experience in dance and that there be an introduction of the instructor to the group or a consultation-type meeting. This would allow the population an opportunity to become familiar with the instructor and for the instructor to understand the population. Following this, the instructor would need to immerse themselves within the population for a period of time before designing and commencing the dance programme. Thus, an ethnographic approach is suggested, as used in this research project. The design of the dance programme would need to be devised with the population and purpose in mind. The instructor would need to be open to altering the dance programme to the participants and to be flexible in its design, to adapt elements of it when necessary. Future research on the self-concept should also explore active and inventive ways of researching the self-concept holistically. Using the self-concept as a theoretical frame needs to be implemented in any research that is interested in understanding the self. Dance, as in this research, allows for an explorative and non-threatening approach for individuals to explore themselves. Thus, a suggestion of using dance in more research is recommended as it allows for an individual to explore, understand and adapt self-concept changes for themselves.

In my literature review, I briefly mentioned the concept of the African self vs the Western idea of self. As mentioned, this is an opportunity for future research to further investigate this difference or similarity. The African perspective of self argues for a more involved relationship between the person and their community; whereas the Western perspective argues for a person who possesses more agency over their choices and directions in their life (Nwoye, 2006). My concern with including the African self was the blanket of assumption being put over the

participants in this research. Merely for the sake of having participants from South Africa, and therefore the African continent does not necessarily mean that they identify with the idea of the African self. In literature, there has been an argument over a unified African identity (Cloete, 2019; Mamdani, 1996). The conversation going forward, I think, should be more of a combination of the two perspectives than an either/or approach as they both possess aspects of valid truth. Additionally, as mentioned in the limitations of the study section, there was limited evidence of validity of the RSES questionnaire within the African context. According to Westaway, Jordaan, & Tsai (2015), because some of the questions in the RSES questionnaire could be misinterpreted within the various cultures in Africa and even South Africa, one would need to bear this in mind when administrating this measure within the African context. A suggestion would be to develop an alternative measure for assessing the self-esteem with the African context of the Self in mind.



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## Appendix A: Observational field notes

### Group:

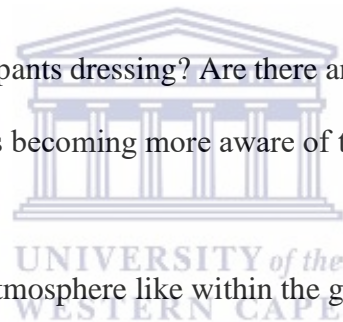
- Overall response of the group to the session? (Describe as: quiet, rowdy, happy, tired, etc.)
- Was there a specific participant or group that stood out in the session? If so, who and why?

### Instructor:

- What was the experience as the dance instructor? (Describe in as much detail as possible)

### Areas to be considered:

- 'Audience' - Awareness of participants to others possibly watching them.
- 'Dress' - How are participants dressing? Are there any changes from the last session?  
- Are participants becoming more aware of their and others' dress style?
- 'Group Dynamics' - What was the atmosphere like within the group? Tense, relaxed, etc.  
- How does it compare to the previous session?
- 'Instructor' - What is the response of the group to the instructor? Elaborate.
- 'Mirror' - The instructor becomes the mirror-image to copy when there is no mirror.  
- How do the participants react when there is a mirror compared to the instructor as the mirror-image?
- 'Music' - Did the music play a role in the session?



- How did they respond to the music chosen?

‘Stage’

- When dancing in front of the group, does behaviour differ?

- Are there participants who prefer being the centre of attention?

- Are there participants who attempt to avoid being the centre of attention or shy away from the front row?

‘Programme structure’

- What is different in this session compared to the previous week’s session?

- How did the group respond to this session? Mention details of the session, i.e. when switching lines.



## Appendix B: Preliminary interview schedule

*I am going to ask you a few questions to find about your personal experience of the dance programme. If you have any questions during the interview or would like me to clarify anything, please ask. This will just be a conversation between us. However, should you feel uncomfortable with any question, please let me know.*

### Dance programme:

- Which session did you enjoy the most and why?
- Which session did you enjoy the least and why?

*Regarding the technical aspect of the dancing:*

- Which part of the programme did you find the easiest?
- Which part of the programme did you find the most challenging?

*The next few questions might seem similar, but there are differences, I will explain them as I ask. I will be asking about your self-image – how you see yourself, physically and your behaviour; self-esteem – how you feel about yourself in a moment, your emotions; and how you see your future-self, physically and your behaviour.*

### Dance and self-image (view of self):

*Self-image means how you see yourself, i.e. your physical characteristics and your behaviour.*

- How would you describe your view of yourself (physically and behaviour) before the dance programme?
- What was your view yourself (physically and behaviour) during the dance programme?
- How would you describe your view of yourself (physically and behaviour) after the dance programme?
- If there was a change in the way you view your physical characteristics and your behaviour, what was it and why?

- If there was no change in the way you viewed your physical characteristics or your behaviour, why do you think this was so?

Dance and self-esteem (feelings about self):

*Self-esteem means the way you feel about yourself in a moment, this refers specifically to your emotions, i.e. how did you feel about yourself.*

- How would you describe your feelings about yourself before the dance programme?
- How would you describe your feelings about yourself during the dance programme?
- How would you describe your feelings about yourself after the dance programme?
- If there was a change in the way you felt about yourself, what was it and why?
- If there was no change in the way you felt about yourself, why do you think this was so?

Dance and ideal self (how do you see yourself in the future):

*Ideal self means the desirable image you have of yourself. This has got to do with your motivation to strive to be or do better for yourself or your behaviour in the future. Thus, how you see yourself (physical and behavioural attributes) in the future.*

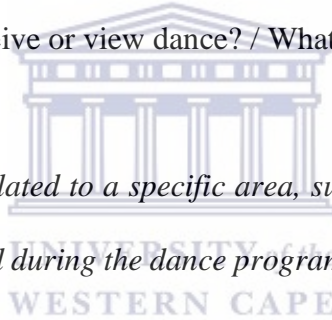
- How would you describe the view you had of your future-self?  
How did you see your future-self before the dance programme?
- Did your view you had of future-self change during the dance programme?
- Did your view you had of future-self change after the dance programme?
- If there was a change in the way you viewed your future-self, what was it and why?
- If there was no change in the way you viewed your future-self, why do you think this was so?

Overall self-concept:

*The next few questions look at your self-concept. Self-concept includes your self-image (view you have of yourself), your self-esteem (how you feel about yourself) and your ideal self (how you view yourself in the future). Your self-concept is the beliefs you have about yourself and the qualities you possess and your personal definition of yourself.*

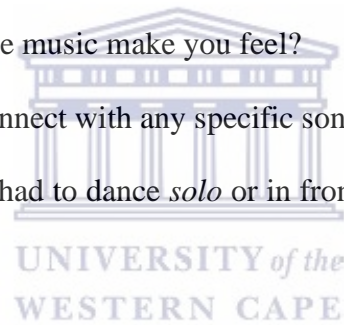
- How would you describe your perception or view of your self-concept (your beliefs about yourself) before participating in the dance programme?
- What was your perception or view of your self-concept (your beliefs about yourself) after participating in the dance programme?
- After participating in this dance programme, how do you think dance has influenced the way you perceive or view your self-concept (your beliefs about yourself)?
- How do you, personally, perceive or view dance? / What does dance mean to you?

*The next few questions will be related to a specific area, such as audience or music, possibly linked to a situation that occurred during the dance programme or in general, I will explain as I ask.*



Other areas to be considered:

- ‘Audience’ - How did you see *it* (*add topic*) and how do you think others saw *it*?
- ‘Dress’ - Did you find yourself dressing differently from the start through to the end of the dance programme?
- ‘Group dynamics’ - Did you find it easy or difficult to connect with the group, or a specific person?  
- How did you connect with or relate to the group?
- ‘Instructor’ - How did you view yourself in relation to the dance instructor?
- ‘Mirror’ - Did you view yourself differently when dancing in front of the mirror compared to no mirror and the instructor as your mirror?
- ‘Music’ - Did you enjoy the music in the sessions?  
- How did the music make you feel?  
- Did you connect with any specific song?
- ‘Stage’ - When you had to dance *solo* or in front of the group (cypher), how did you feel?  
- How did you view yourself?  
- How did you think others viewed you?  
- Throughout the dance programme, where in the class were you mostly (e.g. front row, back row)?
- ‘Programme structure’ - Did any part of the programme make you feel a certain way?  
- Did you view yourself differently during any part of the programme?



## **Appendix C: Information sheet**

**Project Title:** Exploring the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

### **What is this study about?**

This research is being conducted by Simone Momplé at the University of the Western Cape. You are being invited to participate in this research project because you are part of the Peer Mentoring Programme. The purpose of this research project is to explore the self-concept of a group of peer mentors prior to and after participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

### **What will I be asked to do if I agree to participate?**

You will be asked to participate in a seven session structured dance programme. You will be asked to complete a short questionnaire before and after the dance programme, where you would rate yourself on a scale. Interviews will also be conducted after the dance programme. The dance programme sessions and the interviews will be audio and visually recorded with your permission. The seven dance sessions will run twice a week over three weeks, for one hour each. The interviews will last approximately an hour. The interview will focus on your personal views on dance and how it has influenced the way you view and feel about yourself. The dance programme and interviews will take place at the University of the Western Cape, the exact venue and times will be communicated to you with sufficient notice.

### **Would my participation in this study be kept confidential?**

The researcher undertakes to protect your identity and the nature of your contribution. To ensure your anonymity, your name will not be used at all. Instead, pseudonyms will be used and only the researcher will know which pseudonym is linked to your name. To ensure confidentiality, the audio and visual data will be stored in a locked cabinet, and all other data on a password-protected computer files.

If a report or article is written about this research project, your identity will be protected. Extracts from the dance programme sessions and interviews will be read by the supervisor and examiners but no names will be used.

In accordance with legal requirements and/or professional standards, we will disclose to the appropriate individuals and/or authorities information that comes to our attention concerning child abuse or neglect or potential harm to you or others. In this event, we will inform you that we have to break confidentiality to fulfil our legal responsibility to report to the designated authorities.

This study involves you being part of a group in the dance programme therefore the extent to which your identity will remain confidential is dependent on participants' in the group maintaining confidentiality.

### **What are the risks of this research?**

All human interactions and talking about self or others carry some amount of risks. We will nevertheless minimise such risks and act promptly to assist you if you experience any discomfort, psychological or otherwise during the process of your participation in this study. Where necessary, an appropriate referral will be made to a suitable professional for further assistance or intervention.



**What are the benefits of this research?**

This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about the influence of dance on the self-concept. We hope that, in the future, other people might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the influence dance could have on the self-concept.

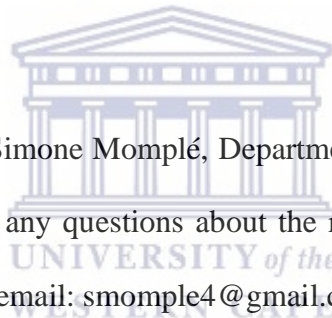
**Do I have to be in this research and may I stop participating at any time?**

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time, you will not be penalised or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

**What if I have questions?**

The research being conducted by Simone Momplé, Department of Psychology, at the University of the Western Cape. If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Simone Momplé at 076 186 7937; email: smomple4@gmail.com.

Should you have any questions regarding this study and your rights as a research participant or if you wish to report any problems you have experienced related to the study, please contact:



**Research supervisor:**

Associate Professor Michelle Andipatin

021 959 2454

mandipatin@uwc.ac.za

**Dean of the Faculty of Community and Health Sciences:**

Professor Anthea Rhoda

University of the Western Cape

Private Bag X17

Bellville 7535

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This research has been approved by the University of the Western Cape's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee.





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## Appendix D: Informed consent form

**Title of Research Project:** Exploring the self-concept of a group of peer mentors participating in a structured dance programme at a South African University.

The study has been described to me in language that I understand. My questions about the study have been answered. I understand what my participation will involve and I agree to participate of my own choice and free will. I understand that my identity will not be disclosed to anyone. I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason and without fear of negative consequences or loss of benefits.

This research project involves you being observed and audio-visually recorded, to accurately capture your accounts. For transcription purposes, the audio and visual recordings will be stored in a locked cabinet and on a password protected computer. It will be destroyed after completion of the study.

\_\_\_ I agree to be observed and audio-visually recorded during my participation in this study.

\_\_\_ I do not agree to be observed and audio-visually recorded during my participation in this study.

---

**Participant's full name**

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**Participant's signature**

---

**Date**



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## Appendix E: Indemnity form

By signing, I acknowledge that I am physically and medically fit to participate in the Moving thru Dance (MTD 2018) programme. I acknowledge that the University of the Western Cape (UWC); the Peer Mentoring Programme (PMP) and the instructor will not be held responsible for any injury or loss suffered by me that may occur for the duration of the Moving Thru Dance programme.

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Student Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



In case of emergency, please contact:

**Full Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Relation:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Number:** \_\_\_\_\_



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## Appendix F: Demographic profile

This form is for research purposes only and your identity will remain anonymous.

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Year of study: \_\_\_\_\_

Please answer the following questions:

1. What does dance mean to you?



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2. Where do you dance?

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3. How often do you dance?

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4. Why do you dance?

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5. How would you describe dance to someone who has no idea about it?

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## Appendix G: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Please read each statement and record a number 0, 1, 2, or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past two weeks. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement. This assessment is not intended to be a diagnosis. If you are concerned about your results in any way, please speak with a qualified health professional.

0 = Strongly disagree 1 = Disagree 2 = Agree 3 = Strongly agree

1	I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others	<input type="text"/>
2	I feel that I have a number of good qualities	<input type="text"/>
3	All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure (R)	<input type="text"/>
4	I am able to do things as well as most people	<input type="text"/>
5	I feel I do not have much to be proud of (R)	<input type="text"/>
6	I take a positive attitude toward myself	<input type="text"/>
7	On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	<input type="text"/>
8	I wish I could have more respect for myself (R)	<input type="text"/>
9	I certainly feel useless at times (R)	<input type="text"/>
10	At times I think that I am no good at all (R)	<input type="text"/>

Total score =

i Many themes emerged, but in this section I would like to bring in a theory that could be used as an umbrella for explaining the changes participants' experienced through the dance programme. This is a theory that I have identified as 'inner conflict theory'. 'Inner conflict' is that assessment one has of one's self or the confrontation with self. The basis of the theory of 'inner conflict' is that if there is resistance, it is from within and it is at this point where you get to confront yourself (the external factors are simply an indication of conflict from within). As participants entered the dance programme, they all had certain beliefs about themselves. In the dance programme environment, there were many variables and dynamics to consider, i.e. group dynamics – subjective awareness of others; venue; stage – awareness of other people watching you dance; instructor; music and so on. With all of this transpiring, one experiences 'inner conflict', where one has to either confront what emerges from the 'inner conflict' or leave/move away from what is causing the conflict if one is not ready to deal with it. Therefore, it is not necessarily the variables of the dance sessions environment (external factors) that matter, whether they confront this 'inner conflict' or not is where the real shift in self-beliefs takes place. These variables are mere indicators or triggers. Thus my observational assumption is that participants will come back to the sessions if they are ready to confront this 'inner conflict'. The participants that did not return might have not been ready to confront it. This is based on my observations during the dance sessions and unfortunately, participants who did not return to the dance programme (attended 1 or 2 sessions) did not come for an interview. In Beausoleil & Lebaron (2013), they state that when one experiences a threat of conflict or pressures, one returns to familiar patterns of thought, behaviour and reasoning, and have trouble seeing any alternatives, this is called "trained incapacity" (p. 135). It is possible that through one, in training themselves in this pattern of thinking, that one can no longer see alternatives and could fall into habits of behaviours. "We get locked into perceptions, behaviours and dynamics despite their limitations and the likelihood of impasse", especially because of disagreement (Beausoleil & Lebaron, 2013, p. 136). This is quite interesting in relation to dance. When one dances and 'inner conflict' occurs, one then ends up behaving and thinking in the same way (default thinking) to try and solve it, as we have done before. There are no new levels of thinking that emerge to solve the issues, thus default thinking occurs and one then resorts to default dance moves of the body too. Yet there comes an awareness to this default thinking where one makes a decision to change or to move away from what is allowing the 'inner conflict' to occur. When making the decision to change, one experiences different thinking patterns which then allows them to see themselves differently. Thus many participants felt changes in self-esteem, self-image, ideal self and their overall self-concept; or desires to make changes in these various aspects of themselves.