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Level of performance, extent of support, and lifestyle factors among MMSU artists in contemporary dance

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Abstract

This study investigates the performance, institutional support, and lifestyle factors influencing Contemporary Dance artists at Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU). While contemporary dance has evolved as a dynamic art form blending tradition, innovation, and cultural expression, it remains underrecognized in academic settings. Using a descriptive quantitative design, the study surveyed 40 purposively selected MMSU dance artists through Likert-scale questionnaires and behavioral checklists. Findings reveal that MMSU has consistently maintained high performance, securing top placements in the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) regional competitions over five years. However, support systems—particularly in financial assistance, training resources, and mentorship—were found to be moderate, with notable gaps. Lifestyle factors such as physical conditioning, time management, injury prevention, and artistic development significantly influence performance outcomes. Results also underscore the urgent need for enhanced institutional support to address mental health, injury risk, and academic balancing among student-artists. The study recommends expanded access to scholarships, improved facilities, structured mentorship, and holistic wellness programs. By investigating these areas, the university can empower its artists, enrich cultural identity, and align with national goals in education, health, and the arts.

Keywords: Contemporary dance, institutional support, lifestyle factors, performance, MMSU

Introduction

The evolution of Contemporary Dance as an art form provided a chronological reference—Formally developed from the history of traditional-restricted ballet, later recognizing the emergent influence of modernization and applied by technology, and brought a vast array of exploring more freer and natural approaches to movement.

Political, social, cultural theories and ideologies inspired the emergence of new performative dance styles throughout the 20th century and the first period of the 21st century (Volbea, 2018)^[12]. As a result, a number of systems occurred, bolstered by novel theories in the field of drama, new performance approaches, and the numerous fusions of dance elements and techniques (Bates, 2024)^[2].

Conversely, in today's society, dance has been disregarded as mere talent by the majority and confined to the true-life contribution to the academe. In the curriculum of tertiary education, academics are commonly weighted and prevalent over extracurricular activities. It is a subject matter that is misguidedly presented as per less aptitude, thus far beneficial amongst the three domains—cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. Accordingly, Contemporary Dance Artists is a group often underrecognized (Mintz, 2024)^[7], and its history, intricacy, and artistic nature of discipline are often overlooked.

In the statement of Horrigan, K. (2020) is one among the various dance forms, and during training, knees, ankles, and shins are the main problems, and chiefly stressed by the environmental factors that are found within the poor facilities and equipment, more so the financial constraints (Van Winden *et al.*, 2020)^[11]. For these reasons, universities should provide an avenue or support to the young artists, such as scholarship, accessibility to quality training facilities and equipment that optimize their capacities, and sustain the safety and security that stimulates their knowledge, skills, and behaviors to excel in the field.

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Deprived of the provisions to the needs of these contemporary dancers is in jeopardize and vulnerable to mental health issues, which schools should give particular attention to the stress, anxiety, and persistent exhaustion (Van Winden, D., van Rijn, R., Savelsbergh, G., Oudejans, R., & Stubbe, J., 2020) [1]. Consequently, compared to other common sports, even expert dancers endure heavy training loads, which principals to an extremely high rate of injury and illness (Driban & Jeffrey, 2020) [3]. These holes also burden the artists, which affects the execution of this performing art. Moreover, the overall well-being as an indicator should be a focus for the institution.

The part that student-artists have played is a big role within the institution, as they also balance their academics, extracurricular activities, and personal life. Though, employing time management enables individuals to accomplish greater results in less time, which provides more time and freedom enhances concentration, and encourages one to increase productivity, reduce stress, and allows you to spend more time with the people that matter the most (Fhrizz, De Jesus, & Garcia, 2023) [4], unruly management of time is a struggling factor of these student artists which declines their active participation and thwart to ameliorates their potentials.

Subsequently, this study seeks to answer the following objectives: a) determine the level of performance of MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance; b) assess the extent of support given by the university to the student-artists in terms of financial assistance, facilities and resources, academic and training programs, faculty and mentorship, and performance opportunities; c) identify the lifestyle factors that contribute to the performance of MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance; and d) to formulate recommendations to increase their performance based on the findings of the study.

The evolving shift suggests dance can be an important resource in raising awareness about sustainability to others, and an opportune time to explore broader authentic and cultural experiences (Cronshaw & Tullin, 2012, p. 27) that offer benefits for the sector across the many definitions of sustainability. Embedding sustainable practices into businesses that are valued, reinforced, and respect personal values while seeking to improve systematic productivity (Bertels *et al.*, 2010, p. 10), can leverage support for using dance as a powerful resource to impact social change.

Dance is not only considered as an art form, as it is also recognised for its broad range of social and health benefits. The evolving shift suggests dance can be an important resource in raising awareness about sustainability to others, and an opportune time to explore broader authentic and cultural experiences (Cronshaw & Tullin, 2012, p. 27) that offer benefits for the sector across the many definitions of sustainability. Embedding sustainable practices into businesses that are valued, reinforced, and respect personal values while seeking to improve systematic productivity (Bertels *et al.*, 2010, p. 10), can leverage support for using dance as a powerful resource to impact social change (Waldman, 2013, p. 6).

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As the 1987 Philippine Constitution, Article XIV, section 19, promotes the value of physical education, and encourages dance as its branch, not only considered as an art form, it is also adequately documented for its broad range of social and health benefits (Kirkham, 2019) [5]. Correspondingly, one of the objectives of general education is to enhance the quality of life, as stated in Article II, section 3 of Ched Memorandum

Order No. 39, series of 2021 (Lorca, 2021) [6].

By giving significant focus to this performing art in dance, the student-artists will have the avenue to fortify their knowledge, behaviors, and skills, through the support of the university in numerous ways, and greatly impact the culture, artistry, safety, and general well-being of the young individuals within and beyond the institution.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of performance of MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance?
2. What is the extent of support given by the University to the artists?

In terms of:

- financial assistance
- facilities and resources
- 2.3. academic and training programs
- 2.4. faculty and mentorship
- 2.5. performance and exposure opportunities
- What lifestyle factors contribute to the MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance?
- What recommendations can be made to further improve the performance of MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance?

Methodology

Research Design

In this study, it used a descriptive quantitative methodology to collect and analyze the data, conducting unbiased measurement, strengthening objectivity, and statistical treatment to the level of performance, extent of support, and lifestyle factors among the Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) Artists in Contemporary Dance.

Population and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling as used in the study, which is a form of non-random sampling that allows researchers to select participants based on study-specific criteria. Moreover, the study is composed of forty (40) participants. They are categorized from first-year to fourth-year level as contemporary dancers in the university.

Research Instrument

The central part of the study described two instruments that offer an objective and methodical assessment of the level of performance, extent of support, and lifestyle factors among artists in contemporary dance

The four-point Likert scale was used to determine and collect additional data including personal information, attitude and perception using the ordinal data from strongly agree to strongly disagree which examines on the extent of support given by the university to the artists such as financial assistance, facilities and resources, academic and training programs, faculty and mentorship, and performance and exposure opportunities.

Meanwhile, the checklist is a nominal data label without any inherent order, which simply identifies the activities, behaviors, and habits of an artist in contemporary dance using the Yes or No option. This focuses on the lifestyle factors, including physical conditioning and training, artistic and creative development, time management and discipline, injury prevention and rehabilitation, and overall well-being.

Data Gathering Procedure and Tool

When conducting the study, the researcher got consent from the school or institution by submitting a letter of permission requesting to collect data. Following approval, participants were given informed consent letters to ensure that they understood the purpose of the study, participants involvement, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and risks and benefits of the data being gathered. The participants used a selective sampling technique to guarantee that they met the necessary classification and qualification requirements for Artists in Contemporary Dance.

Once consent is obtained, participants will be asked to complete the structured questionnaire, which consists of three major parts: a) personal information, 2) attitude and perception on support systems, and 3) lifestyle behaviors and practices.

In this study, the researcher employed a structured data interpretation framework to analyze responses from the Likert scale and behavioral checklist used in the questionnaire.

For the attitude and perception section of the questionnaire, the researcher used a 4-point Likert scale to quantify the participants' perceptions regarding the extent of support they receive in contemporary dance. This method provides a structured and measurable way to assess subjective opinions and translate them into numerical values for analysis. Rating ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) for each item. The Likert scale items are evaluated using the following Mean Score Ranges and accompanied by a Descriptive Interpretation and Indicator.

A mean score of 3.5 to 4.0 indicates Strong Support, meaning that respondents generally agree or strongly agree that they are well-supported in the area. A mean score of 2.5 to 3.4 reflects Moderate Support, suggesting there is support with room for improvement. Scores between 1.5 and 2.4 show Low Support, indicating dissatisfaction among respondents. Lastly, scores between 1.0 and 1.4 represent Very Low Support, highlighting serious gaps or a lack of resources in that domain. These categories allow the researcher to determine which areas, such as financial assistance, facilities, academic training, or mentorship, need reinforcement or enhancement. Meanwhile, in the behavior and practice section, a checklist is used to evaluate the participants' engagement in lifestyle-related behaviors and practices. Each statement is answered with a "Yes" or "No", where "Yes" indicates regular practice or behavior, and "No" indicates absence or inconsistency in the behavior.

To analyze the responses, the Completion Rate Formula is applied the Number of "Yes" responses divided by the total number of items multiplied by 100. This formula yields a percentage that reflects how actively each participant engages in the ideal practices and behaviors expected of a contemporary dancer.

The resulting Completion Rate Percentage is interpreted as follows: completion rate of 90% to 100% is considered Excellent, reflecting very high engagement in beneficial practices such as physical conditioning, injury prevention, artistic development, and overall well-being. A rate of 75% to 89% is interpreted as Good, indicating strong participation. A completion rate between 50% and 74% is labeled Moderate, showing that there are noticeable gaps in engagement. Finally, a rate below 50% is classified as Low, which suggests poor participation and the need for significant improvement in lifestyle practices.

These interpretations guide the analysis by revealing patterns in the dancers' habits and the level of institutional and personal support they receive, ultimately contributing to the development of more effective training and support systems. The questionnaire is distributed in both digital via google forms, and printed formats, depending on the participants' preference and accessibility. The estimated time for completing the questionnaire is 10-15 minutes.

All collected data were encoded and processed using appropriate statistical methods. Responses are treated with the utmost confidentiality, and only aggregated data will be reported to protect the identity of the participants.

This systematic and ethical gathering procedure guarantee the accuracy, validity, and consistency of the data acquired for the successful completion of the study.

Research and Discussion

This section covers the study's findings, with an emphasis on the level of performance, extent of support, and lifestyle factors of the MMSU Artists in Contemporary Dance. Drawing from institutional records, survey responses, and performance metrics, the results provide a comprehensive view of how these three interconnected domains contribute to the success and development of student artists.

The discussion highlights the university's competitive standing in regional competitions, the nature and effectiveness of support mechanisms provided to dance artists, and the personal habits and routines that define their artistic and physical discipline. These findings collectively reflect the strengths and gaps in MMSU's dance program, offering insights for further development and strategic support.

Table 1: Level of Performance of the MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists in 5 years during the Regional Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC)

Year	2017	2018	2022	2024	2025
MMSU	Champion	1 st runner up	1 st runner up	Champion	Champion

Based on the record of the Mariano Marcos State University-Center for Human Movement Studies, the performance of the MMSU has maintained a top-tier status in contemporary dance for over five years in the Regional Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC) competitions. The university has consistently demonstrated high-caliber performance, maintaining a top-two standing throughout all the record years—2017, 2018, 2022, 2024, and 2025.

Champion titles were earned in 2017, 2014, and 2015, indicating peaks in performance excellence. In 2018 and 2022, MMSU placed as the first runner-up, a slight dip, but still within elite rankings. Notably, there is a gap between 2018 and 2022, with no records from 2019 to 2021. This corresponds with the onset and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020 and significantly disrupted academic, athletic, and cultural events nationwide, including regional and national competitions.

Despite the challenges and disruptions caused by the pandemic, MMSU's return to the competitive scene in 2022 with a first runner-up finish and its reclaimed championship status in 2024 and 2025 reflect a resilient recovery and continued commitment to excellence in contemporary dance. The trend suggests strong institutional support, effective training, and the sustained dedication of its artists and coaches.

Table 2. Extent of Support by the university to the contemporary dance artists

Indicator	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
Financial Assistance		
Scholarships or grants	2.28	Low Support
Financial support for production	3.03	Moderate Support
Funding for competition fees	3.00	Moderate Support
Financial support for training	2.85	Moderate Support
Composite Mean	2.79	Moderate Support
Facilities & Resources		
Access to well-equipped studios	2.90	Moderate Support
Use of performance venues	3.35	Moderate Support
Provisions of costume/props	3.45	Moderate Support
Access to needed resources	3.05	Moderate Support
Composite Mean	3.19	Moderate Support
Academic & Training Programs		
Enrollment in dance programs	2.60	Moderate Support
Access to workshops	2.55	Moderate Support
Collaboration with professionals	3.15	Moderate Support
Academic/training needs supported	3.05	Moderate Support
Composite Mean	2.84	Moderate Support
Faculty and Mentorship		
Trained by experienced faculty	3.50	Strong Support
One-on-on mentorship	2.68	Moderate Support
Encouraged in research	3.00	Moderate Support
Support for artistic growth	3.40	Moderate Support
Composite Mean	3.15	Moderate Support
Performance & Exposure Opportunities		
Dance concerts/showcases	3.45	Moderate Support
Intercollegiate competitions	3.38	Moderate Support
Outreach performances	3.13	Moderate Support
Sufficient exposure opportunities	3.45	Moderate Support
Composite Mean	3.35	Moderate Support

Legend:

Numerical Representation	Range of Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
4	3.5 - 4.0	Strong Support
3	2.5 - 3.4	Moderate Support
2	1.5 - 2.4	Low Support
1	1.0 - 1.4	Very Low Support

In Table 2, it describes the extent of support provided by the university to contemporary dance artists, categorized into five key areas: financial assistance, facilities and resources, academic and training programs, faculty and mentorship, and performance and exposure opportunities. Each category includes specific indicators evaluated using a Likert scale, and the results are interpreted using descriptive ranges.

The overall results indicated that most areas related to the extent of support for contemporary dance students at the university received moderate support, with a few exceptions. The lowest rated item was on receiving scholarships or grants specifically for contemporary dancers, which was received a weighted mean of 2.28 and was classified under Low Support. This suggests that a significant number of students feel undeserved in financial assistance, which indicates the composite mean of 2.79 resulted in moderate support specific to their art form, which may impact their ability to continue training or performing.

Support facilities and resources were also rated moderately. While student-artists generally agreed they had access to studios and venues, this shows some variability in

experiences. While its composite mean concluded to 3.19, which is interpreted as moderate support. This suggests that while access exists, the quality or consistency of those facilities may differ.

In terms of academic and training programs, the composite mean was 2.84, also interpreted as moderate support. Besides, access to dance workshops brought the lowest mean to 2.55 and fell under moderate support, with students indicating a potential need for more structured academic opportunities and accessible professional development initiatives.

On the other hand, items like being trained by experienced faculty weighted mean of 3.50, received a Strong Support interpretation, indicating that students acknowledge and appreciate the expertise of their dance instructors. This highlights that while guidance is available, more individualized mentorship could enhance the experience.

Lastly, the category of performance and exposure opportunities had the highest composite mean at 3.35, reflecting a relatively strong level of moderate support. Opportunities such as dance concerts and showcases, and sufficient exposure, received the highest ratings. These results suggest that the university prioritizes performance for student growth and recognition.

Overall, the data reflect a moderately supportive environment for contemporary dance artists, with specific strengths in faculty quality and performance opportunities. However, enhancing scholarships, increasing access to workshops, and expanding mentorship opportunities could further strengthen the support for student-artists.

Table 3: Lifestyle Factors among MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists

Lifestyle Factor	Yes (f)	No (f)	Completion Rate (%)
Physical Conditioning and Training			
Daily strength and flexibility exercises	33	7	82.50
Cardiovascular endurance through cross-training	37	3	92.50
Injury prevention (core stability, joint mobility)	38	2	95.00
Warm-up and cool-down routines	39	1	97.50
Artistic and Creative Development			
Explore different dance styles	37	3	92.50
Attend workshops and masterclasses	24	16	60.00
Participate in improvisation exercises	32	8	80.00
Stay updated with dance trends	33	7	82.00
Time Management and Discipline			
Plan and schedule effectively	32	8	80.00
Set dance goals	35	5	87.00
Punctual and committed to rehearsals	36	4	90.00
Balance dance with other responsibilities	40	0	100.00
Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation			
Rest when needed	39	1	97.50
Seek professional help and follow rehab	34	6	85.00
Use proper technique	39	1	97.50
Use appropriate footwear and attire	38	2	95.00
Overall Well-being			
Build positive relationships	40	0	100.00
Balanced diet	30	10	75.00
Get 7-9 hours of sleep	23	17	57.50
Practice stress management	36	4	90.00

Legend:

Completion Rate%	Descriptive Interpretation
3.5 - 4.0	Excellent
2.5 - 3.4	Good
1.5 - 2.4	Moderate
1.0 - 1.4	Low

The completion rate results reflect on how well the respondents are integrating essential lifestyle practices in support of their dance performance. The findings indicate that a majority of the respondents exhibit healthy and productive habits, especially in areas related to physical conditioning, discipline, and injury prevention.

In the Physical Conditioning and Training category, completion rates are notably high, ranging from 82.5 percent to 97.5 percent, indicating that most dancers regularly perform strength exercises, cardiovascular training, and injury prevention routines. The high rate of 97.5 percent for warming up and cooling down suggests strong adherence to essential safety practices and maintaining readiness, which is crucial for performance and injury prevention.

Under Artistic and Creative Development, responses were slightly more varied. While exploring various dance styles resulted in 92.5 percent and staying updated with trends with 82.5 percent were highly rated, only 60 percent of the respondents attended workshops or masterclasses. This may reflect possible limitations in time, access, or resources to attend external skill-enhancing opportunities, which suggests a need for increased participation to enhance their skills and exposure.

The Time Management and Discipline category showed strong performance as well, with most responses above 80 percent. In particular, note is that 100 percent of respondents reported successfully balancing dance with academic or personal life, reflecting strong prioritization and planning among the dancers.

Injury Prevention and Rehabilitation is a well-practiced area.

Most dancers rest when needed and use proper technique, resulted the same into 97.5 percent, indicating that most dancers are aware of and practice injury prevention strategies. While 85 percent of the participants still seek professional help and follow rehabilitation protocols when injured. These practices indicate a strong culture of injury management and prevention, which is vital for sustaining long-term participation in dance.

Lastly, the overall well-being category showed a completion rate of 100 percent for building positive relationships, which is a critical component of a healthy support system. However, results showed that only 57.5 percent of the respondents reported getting 7-9 hours of sleep per night, which is the lowest completion rate in the entire dataset. This highlights a potential concern regarding rest and recovery, which could affect overall performance and health. Stress management, on the other hand, was practiced by 90 percent of respondents, indicating an awareness of mental health strategies.

In A Nutshell, MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists generally demonstrated excellent to good practices in physical conditioning, discipline, and injury prevention, while also showing strong engagement in artistic development. However, more efforts are needed in attending external workshops, maintaining a healthy diet, and especially in achieving adequate sleep, to ensure holistic well-being and peak performance.

Conclusions

The study has shown that the MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists have consistently performed at an elite level in regional PASUC competitions over five years, maintaining either champion or first runner-up standings. This level of achievement is a testament to the strong artistic foundation, institutional support, and commitment of both the students and faculty members. Despite the interruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the group demonstrated resilience and a swift return to excellence, reclaiming championship titles in the most recent years.

However, while performance remains exceptional, the study also reveals that the extent of university support is generally at a “moderate” level across several domains, including financial assistance, access to resources, academic and training programs, mentorship, and performance opportunities. The findings highlight particular strengths in faculty expertise and opportunities for exposure through performances, but they also point to pressing areas for improvement, such as scholarships, personalized mentorship, and participation in workshops.

Furthermore, the lifestyle practices of MMSU’s contemporary dance artists are commendable, with most respondents exhibiting strong discipline in physical training, injury prevention, and time management. These habits have likely contributed to their sustained competitive success. Nonetheless, the data also uncovers critical wellness issues, particularly in sleep adequacy and balanced nutrition, which could compromise long-term performance and health if not addressed.

Overall, the integration of performance records, institutional support data, and lifestyle practices provides a holistic view of the MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists’ environment. The university has built a strong platform for artistic achievement, but targeted enhancements in support structures and health practices are essential to sustaining and advancing the growth of student-artists. Through strategic investments and focused improvements, MMSU can further solidify its reputation as a nurturing ground for contemporary dance excellence.

Recommendations

To further elevate the performance and well-being of MMSU Contemporary Dance Artists, it is recommended that the university increase the financial assistance tailored specifically to dance artists. The current low rating on scholarships and financial grants suggests a gap in economic support that may hinder the participation and progress of some talented students. Creating targeted scholarship programs and allocating additional budget for training, production, and competition-related expenses would directly alleviate financial burdens and encourage greater involvement and excellence in the art form.

In addition, enhancing access to academic and professional development is crucial. While students benefit from being trained by experienced faculty, the relatively low participation in workshops, inviting guest artists, and facilitating partnerships with other institutions or professionals. These efforts would not only improve technical competencies but also expose students to diverse artistic styles and trends.

Moreover, the mentorship component of the dance program should be strengthened. Although students recognize the quality of their faculty, the moderate rating in one-on-one mentorship programs that monitor individual growth and provide tailored feedback would enhance the learning experience and support both artistic and academic development.

In terms of health and wellness, the university should initiate interventions to promote adequate sleep, balanced nutrition, and stress management among student-artists. The notably low percentage of dancers achieving sufficient rest and proper dietary habits poses a concern for their overall performance and health. Providing access to wellness professionals such as nutritionists and counselors, as well as conducting awareness campaigns on self-care, would support holistic well-being and long-term sustainability in dance.

Finally, the university must ensure the consistent availability

and quality of facilities and resources. Although access to studios and venues exists, variability in experiences suggests the need for regular maintenance, upgrades, and feedback-driven improvements. Establishing a system to monitor and evaluate support services—using data from student feedback and performance metrics—would help identify areas for enhancement and align university strategies with the evolving needs of its contemporary dance artists.

By implementing these suggestions, MMSU can expand on its present advantages and establish a more encouraging, welcoming, and long-lasting atmosphere that will enable student artists to flourish in both their artistic endeavors and personal growth.

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