

Dancing with Perfectionism and Emotional Inhibition on the Ground of Disordered Eating Behaviors: Investigating Emotion Regulation Difficulties as Mediating Factor

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Abstract : Dancers seem to have much higher risk levels for the development of eating disorders, compared to non-dancing counterparts. In a remarkably competitive nature of dance environment, perfectionism and emotion regulation difficulties become inevitable risk factors. Moreover, early maladaptive schemas are associated with various eating disorders. In the current study, it was aimed to investigate the mediating role of difficulties with emotion regulation on the relationship between perfectionism and disordered eating behaviors, as well as on the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and disordered eating behaviors. A total of 70 volunteer dancers (n = 47 women, n = 23 men) were recruited in the study (M age = 25.91, SD = 8.9, range 19-63) from the university teams or private clubs in Turkey. The sample included various types of dancers (n = 26 ballets or ballerinas, n = 32 Latin, n = 10 tango, n = 2 hiphop). The mean dancing hour per week was 11.09 (SD = 7.09) within a range of 1-30 hours. The participants filled a questionnaire set including demographic information form, Dutch Eating Behavior Questionnaire, Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, three subscales (Emotional Inhibition, Unrelenting Standards-Hypercriticalness, Approval Seeking-Recognition Seeking) from Young Schema Questionnaire-Short Form-3 and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale. The mediation hypotheses were tested using the PROCESS macro in SPSS. The findings revealed that emotion regulation difficulties significantly mediated the relationship between three distinct subtypes of perfectionism and emotional eating. The results of the Sobel test suggested that there were significant indirect effects of self-oriented perfectionism (b = .06, 95% CI = .0084, .1739), other-oriented perfectionism (b = .15, 95% CI = .0136, .4185), and socially prescribed perfectionism (b = .09, 95% CI = .0104, .2344) on emotional eating through difficulties with emotion regulation. Moreover, emotion regulation difficulties significantly mediated the relationship between emotional inhibition and emotional eating ($F(1,68) = 4.67$, $R^2 = .06$, $p < .05$). These results seem to provide some evidence that perfectionism might become a risk factor for disordered eating behaviors when dancers are not able to regulate their emotions. Further, gaining an understanding of how inhibition of emotions leads to inverse effects on eating behavior may be important to develop intervention strategies to manage their disordered eating patterns in risk groups. The present study may also support the importance of using unified protocols for transdiagnostic approaches which focus on identifying, accepting, prompting to express maladaptive emotions and appraisals.

Keywords : dancers, disordered eating, emotion regulation difficulties, perfectionism

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