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Analysis of Plateau Phenomenon Characteristics in Chinese Normal University Latin Dancers

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Abstract: This study investigates the plateau phenomenon in university-level Latin dancers in China, crucial in the evolving dancesport education. Despite its growing popularity, challenges such as low enrollment and faculty expertise remain. The research focuses on how this plateau—where dancers' progress and performance stall—affects the advancement of dancesport in universities. It explores the plateau's characteristics, its impact on dancesport programs, and proposes solutions for these academic challenges.

Keywords: Dancesport Education; Plateau Phenomenon; Chinese Universities; Latin Dance; Competitive Training

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

1.1.1 Introduction of Latin dancing in Chinese universities.

Recently, China's higher education has rapidly developed, enhancing dancesport education and training in colleges. Numerous institutions have introduced dancesport majors and established professional dance teams.^[1] Chinese colleges and universities mainly offer International Standard and Latin dancesport, allowing young enthusiasts to pursue and develop into professional competitors at the university level.^[2]

"Dancesport programs in colleges are struggling with low student enrollment and weak faculty. Additionally, many dancers face a 'plateau' in their progress and competitive results, significantly hindering the advancement of college-level dancesport."^[3]

1.1.2 Definition of the "plateau phenomenon" in dancesport(Sport) learning.

Wang Ying and Yu Aimin point out in their article "The Problem of Learning Plateaus and Scientific and Effective Teaching Guidance" that wavelike progression and spiraling are the general law of human cognitive development.^[4]

The plateau phenomenon in sports training is a major obstacle in achieving consistent athletic improvement. It's marked by a phase where gains in muscle strength, endurance, and cardiorespiratory fitness halt, even with continued training.^[5]

The plateau phenomenon, indicating a stagnation after initial progress, aptly describes the current state of athletic sports dance in Guangdong Province's universities. Despite a history of national success and a favorable environment for sports, Zhou and Wenjing note a troubling halt in the sport's institutional development.^[6]

Learning plateaus are characterized by periods of little or no progress in a learning curve. They depend on various factors including the nature of the task, the learner's motivation, approach, and previous experience.^[7]

Dance competitors commonly face a "plateau period" during professional training, impeding their skill enhancement. Understanding the key traits and manifestations of this plateau in dancesport is crucial. This exploration will aid in identifying the causes of the plateau, allowing the development of specific training strategies to help competitors overcome it and advance college dancesport.

1.2 Research Purposes and Significance.

The significance of this study lies in:

1. Summarizing the characteristics of the "plateau period" affecting Chinese dance competitors.
2. Preliminarily exploring the causes of the "plateau period".

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

In this study, a mixed-methods research design is employed to comprehensively understand the plateau phenomenon in Chinese univer-

sity Latin dancers. This approach integrates both qualitative and quantitative research methods, allowing for a more holistic analysis of the phenomenon.

2.1.1 Qualitative Research Component

The study's qualitative part includes interviews and observations. Interviews with university Latin dancers, coaches, and educators will gather detailed data on experiences and perceptions of plateaus. Observations during practices and performances will provide context on how plateaus occur in dancing activities.

2.1.2 Quantitative Research Component

The quantitative aspect will involve the use of surveys and performance metrics analysis. Surveys will be distributed to a larger sample of university Latin dancers to gather data on common patterns, frequencies, and characteristics of plateau experiences. Performance metrics, such as competition results and skill progression records, will be analyzed to objectively measure the impact of plateaus on dancers' progress.

2.2 Participants

This study selected 80 competitors from the Anqing Normal University and Yan'an University Dancesport Teams, based on a survey identifying those experiencing the plateau phenomenon. Selection criteria included:

1. Team Membership: Only members of these specific teams were chosen to maintain consistency in training environment and coaching methods.
2. Age Range: Participants were aged 19-22, a period typically associated with advanced skills development in dance where plateaus are common.
3. Latin Dancesport Experience: All participants had at least two years of experience in Latin dance, ensuring a foundational skill level and knowledge of the dance style.

The demographic profile of the participants was diverse in terms of their specific Latin dance styles, with representation across different dance forms such as Samba, Cha-Cha, Rumba, Paso Doble, and Jive. This diversity provided a comprehensive perspective on the plateau phenomenon across all 5 Latin dances.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection for this study was conducted in two primary modes: in-depth interviews, and symptom and characteristic classification based on the survey responses.

2.3.1 In-Depth Interviews

Method: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the selected 40 competitors. Each interview lasted approximately 30-45 minutes and was recorded with the consent of the participants.

Content: The interviews focused on understanding the competitors' personal experiences with plateaus, including their symptoms, feelings, and perceived impacts on their performance and training.

Analysis: The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically to identify common patterns and unique insights related to the plateau phenomenon.

2.3.2 Symptom and Characteristic Classification

Method: The preliminary survey responses were analyzed to classify and quantify the symptoms and characteristics of plateaus as experienced by the participants.

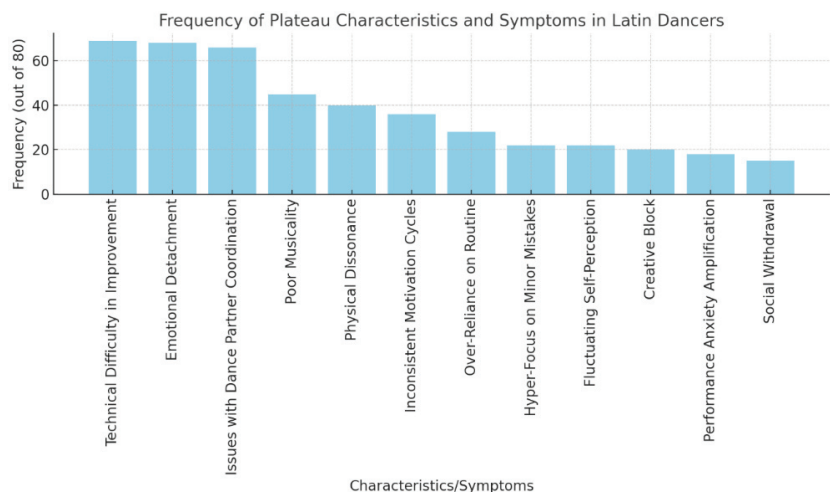
Variables Analyzed: This included aspects such as frequency of experiencing plateaus, duration of plateaus, specific challenges faced (e.g., technical, emotional).

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 Data Presentation (See figure)

3.2 Analysis of Results

In this study, compared to previous literature, the most common plateau symptoms ob-



served were Technical Difficulty in Improvement, Poor Musicality, Issues with Dance Partner Coordination, and Physical Dissonance. Additionally, less frequent characteristics like Emotional Detachment, Hyper-Focus on Minor Mistakes, and Over-Reliance on Routine were noted. Among these, Emotional Detachment, which indicates a loss of passion or connection with dance, was the most prevalent and can greatly impact performance and motivation. This was followed by Over-Reliance on Routine.

These findings suggest that plateaus in Latin dance are multidimensional, involving technical skills, mental focus, emotional states, and creative processes. Addressing these aspects holistically is crucial for overcoming plateaus.

4. Discussion

4.1 Analysis of Common Characteristics

The graph reflects 'Technical Difficulty in Improvement' as a leading common plateau characteristic, indicative of the challenge dancers face in advancing their skills after reaching a certain level. 'Poor Musicality' and 'Issues with Dance Partner Coordination' are also prominent, signifying that musical interpretation and partner synergy are critical hurdles during plateaus.

4.2 Newly Discovered Characteristics

'Physical Dissonance' is a common issue, highlighting a gap between dancers' expectations and their actual movements. 'Emotional Detachment', less common but significant, shows that losing emotional connection to dance hinders progress. Both emphasize the need to focus on physical and emotional aspects in dance education to surpass plateaus.

5. Conclusion

The exploration on the plateau phenomenon in Chinese university Latin dancers revealed a complex array of challenges. The common symptoms align with literature, highlighting issues in skills improvement, musical interpretation, and partner coordination. This confirms the need for developing training programs focusing on these areas.

This foundational knowledge sets the stage for the next phase of research: a detailed analysis of the specific causes of the plateau period. By correlating the identified characteristics of plateaus with underlying factors, future research can uncover the root causes, paving the way for more targeted and effective interventions. This prospective approach promises not only to deepen our understanding of plateau phenomena in dancesport but also to enhance the training methodologies and overall progression strategies for dancers.

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