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The Environment and Identity Processes: The Dancer Identity as a Case Study

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Sociology

by

Melanie Ann Kushida

March 2017

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Dr. Bruce G. Link

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The Thesis of Melanie Ann Kushida is approved.

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I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Jan E. Stets, Dr. Sharon S. Oselin, and Dr. Bruce G. Link for their guidance and support in helping me through this process. I dedicate this thesis to my family.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

The Environment and Identity Processes: The Dancer Identity as a Case Study

by

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Master of Arts, Graduate Program in Sociology
University of California, Riverside, March 2017
Dr. Jan E. Stets, Chairsperson

This qualitative study uses identity theory to examine how the environment impacts the tightness of the identity control system, and how socialization impacts attitudes among dance students at a large university. I collected data through field observations and semi-structured interviews (N=30) of an intermediate ballet class and an intermediate hip-hop class. Findings suggest that the structure of the environment influences situational meanings and attitudes through socialization. In turn, the situational meanings and attitudes impact the tightness of the identity control system. Based on previous research on identities and stress, the tightness of the identity control system impacts the likelihood of experiencing identity non- verification and distress. This research contributes to identity theory by developing a better understanding of voluntary role identities, tightly- controlled identity systems, and the importance of the social environment and socialization in the identity process.

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Introduction

Identity theory has been an essential tool in social psychology by expanding upon research on the self, emotions, human behavior, morality, and social structures. Previous research in identity theory has examined various identities such as the gender identity (Burke and Cast 1997; Burke, Stets, and Cerven 2007; Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good 1988; Stets and Burke 1996), student identity (Burke and Reitzes 1981) and moral identity (Stets and Carter 2011, 2012). What we know from previous research on identity theory is that individuals claim an identity based on the various roles they occupy in society (i.e., teacher, daughter, athlete, etc.). There is a set of meanings for each identity an individual claims. With each identity, the individual seeks to have his or her identity verified by others (Burke and Stets 2009). While identity theory has provided us with a thorough understanding of how identities are managed and negotiated in the environment, there needs to be more discussion as to how the social environment influences the identities people claim.

Based on symbolic interactionism, the self is situated. However, little research has integrated the social environment into theoretical models to understand the self and identities (Burke 1991a). This research contributes to identity theory by examining a voluntary role identity (i.e., the dancer identity) and how the social environment may influence the identities people take on. More specifically, this research focuses on the social interactions and structural characteristics of the environment as they influence one's identity.

Theory

Rooted in symbolic interactionism, identity theory examines how the meanings associated with various identities are negotiated and managed through interactions, and how these identities relate to behavior, affect, health, the self-concept, and social structure (Stets and Serpe 2013). An identity is a set of meanings people apply to themselves as a group member, role player, or unique person. Thus, individuals have group, role, and person identities (Burke and Stets 2009). People are motivated to verify the meanings of their identities in social situations, which involves receiving feedback from others that others see individuals in the same way that individuals see themselves. When an identity is not verified, this may cause distress and low self-esteem (Burke 1991b; Marcussen 2006). When experiencing distress due to identity non-verification, people try to adjust their behaviors or perceptions as to who they are or how others see them to reduce these negative emotions (Cast and Burke 2002).

In identity theory, the identity process operates as a control system with four components: an identity standard (the set of meanings attached to an identity), input (perceptions as to who one is in the social situation), a comparator (which compares one's self-perceptions in the situation with the meanings in one's identity standard), and output (the behaviors performed on the basis of one's identity standard meanings) (Burke 1991b; Burke and Stets 2009). These four components in the control system act as a continuous feedback loop. As new inputs are processed as to how individuals think others see them, they are compared to their identity standard, which results in the meaningful behaviors at the output that aim to maintain congruence between the input and their

identity standard. In other words, individuals are continuously monitoring and adjusting their behavior to maintain a congruence between the perceptions as to how they think others see them in situations and how they see themselves based on their behavior (Burke 1991b).

When there is an interruption in the feedback loop or input meanings do not match identity standard meanings, a person will experience distress (Burke 1991b). A more tightly- controlled identity system may be more likely to be interrupted compared to a loosely- controlled system. Individuals with a more tightly- controlled identity system or a more tightly- controlled identity attempt to match the reflected appraisals or how they think others see them in the situation with their identity standard almost exactly. Since a perfect match is more likely to be needed for tightly-controlled identities, identity non-verification is more likely to occur, and distress is more likely to be experienced. A more tightly- controlled identity is analogous to a Type A personality. Type A personalities emphasize success and aim to attain high self-standards (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, and Dynin 1994). In contrast, a more loosely-controlled identity allows for some variation between the reflected appraisals and identity standard before experiencing distress. This can be thought of as individuals with a Type B personality. The type B personality is less likely to focus on perfection and achieving high self-standards. As a result, they are more relaxed and less competitive.

Research in identity theory has examined identities in academia (i.e., student identity), the workplace (i.e., worker identity), in the family (Burke and Cast 1997), and other social structures (Burke et al. 2009). I selected two dance environments (ballet and

hip-hop classes) as additional contexts to investigate the tightness of the identity control system among dancers. For dance can further this line of inquiry because there are aspects of it that represent larger social processes. For instance, in the dance environment, there are in-group and out-group attitudes, a hierarchical status structure, competition for resources, social interactions among status equals and status unequals, the negotiation of identities, and so forth. While these social processes are also present in environments like academia and the workplace, dance is comprised of many different dance styles that have varying dance environments. The ballet dance environment may be very different from the hip-hop dance environment because of the differing expectations of the dancers. This makes the dance environment a good candidate for examining types of identities.

In addition, the dancer identity is not an obligatory identity like most identities that have been studied in prior research. Compared to the student identity or the worker identity that an individual is expected to assume during his or her life (Stets and Serpe 2013), the dancer identity is a voluntary role identity. Obligatory role identities are defined as having long-term affectively intense connections to others that involve mutual rights and responsibilities (Thoits 2003). Given this commitment, it is harder for individuals to abandon these identities. Voluntary role identities have less intense connections to others and fewer rights and responsibilities, which makes it easier for individuals to abandon these identities. Oftentimes, these identities are more short-term and less demanding compared to obligatory identities (Thoits 2003).

Voluntary role identities provide some personal benefit to the individual (Stets et al. 2013). Previous research on voluntary role identities finds that those with voluntary

identities have higher self-esteem, mastery, and lower distress than those with more obligatory identities because they do not experience as many ongoing strains from their role identities compared to those with obligatory identities (Thoits 2003). Because of the personal benefit received from assuming a voluntary role identity and the need for individuals to feel self-competent, an examination of voluntary role identities such as the dancer identity can provide a better understanding of voluntary role identities.

Given that dance is a physical activity, one's embodiment and physicality are closely related to identity, compared to other types of identities. Previous research on embodiment describes how one internalizes ideal physical traits associated with an identity in order to successfully obtain it. For example, research on models and embodiment suggest the modeling industry produces and reinforces traditional patriarchal ideas of the female body (i.e., being thin and tall). As a result, models internalize and pursue these ideas of the body as an attempt to embody the identity (Mears 2008). Thus, in dance environments where physicality is an important part of the identity, one's physical appearance and the internalized ideals of the body might impact the tightness of the identity control system and ability to achieve identity verification.

By examining the two different dance environments and the dancers within these environments, this research draws attention to how the social interactions and structural characteristics of this setting contribute to developing more tightly- controlled or loosely-controlled identity systems, and how socialization in these environments impacts those who assume voluntary role identities. It is important to note that when discussing the tightness of the identity control system, I am referring to one identity. The dancer identity

is one identity, but with two different subcategories: ballet or hip-hop. Within these subcategories, the dancer can have a more tightly-controlled identity system (i.e., tightly-controlled identity) or a less tightly-controlled identity system (i.e., loosely-controlled identity).

Background

Ballet

With a rigid curriculum often found in the ballet dance environment, ballet dance is considered one of the most structured dance styles. In Europe during the late 16th and 17th century, ballet became a popular classical art form after dance transitioned from the court to the theater where they were performed in front of the royal court. The specific technique of ballet that derived from court dance is restrictive, but the sophisticated technique was still taught as ballet transitioned from court entertainment to a profession. With the development of the Académie Royale de Dance in 1661, Louis XIV was appointed as the administrator for the académie and ensured that the traditional aesthetics of ballet would not be lost by inexperienced dancers. Today, the Académie Royale de Dance is the Paris Opéra Ballet, one of the oldest and most prestigious ballet academies (Kassing 2007).

Many of the norms and values found in the ballet environment in the 16th and 17th century is still prominent in the dance form today. In ballet, classes hold a similar structure of barre, center, and across-the-floor (Twitchett, Koutedakis, and Wyon 2009). Common movements in ballet such as pliés, tendus, and degages are incorporated in each exercise, and all movements have specific qualities to appropriately be executed.

Instructors, as the authority figure in the environment, reinforce the regimented structure and values through maintaining a common class structure and reinforcing the traditional aesthetics of ballet movement. The regimented structure of the environment provides dancers with specific instructions to movement. This is because if new training were developed, it is feared that the ballet aesthetic and technique might be lost (Koutedakis and Jamurtas 2004).

Due to the regimented environment of ballet, the environment exposes dancers to high amounts of physical and psychological stress. For example, previous research has found that young children who spend at least 15 hours a week in classical or modern dance technique classes have less favorable attitudes and self-esteem compared to non-dancers their age (Bakker 1988). As previously discussed, the regimented environment of ballet provides dancers with specific instructions to movement, but it also provides dancers with other guidelines and meanings to what it means to be a ballet dancer. For example, part of the regimented environment of ballet is the meanings behind the ballet dancer body. The ballet dance environment encourages dancers to stay slender (Ravaldi, Vannacci, Bolognesi, Stafania, Faravelli & Ricca 2006). First introduced by George Balanchine, the Balanchine ballerina became the ideal image of a ballerina for many ballet environments. Rooted in Balanchine's patriarchal beliefs of what women should look like and the roles they play in society, it is argued that these images of what a ballerina should be is not realistic. Balanchine once reasoned that ballerinas should be thin and ethereal to make it easier for the male ballet dancer to manipulate the ballerina (Daly 1987).

Part of the culture of the ballet environment is the idea that the body is moldable. In other words, part of the socialization of a dancer is to learn that they have to fit the ideal body type (Aalten 2007). As previously mentioned, previous research on embodiment has discussed the internalization and pursuit of these ideas such as the ideal dancer body, and the implications it has on successfully assuming the identity. Under the pressure to meet the demands of their environment, ballet dancers are more likely to resort to unhealthy weight loss strategies. The mismatch between ballet dancers perceived body image and their ideal body image set by the ballet dance environment is an example of identity non-verification. As a result, this may lead to distress and low self-esteem (Burke 1991b). Research has suggested that the pressures to maintain a particular body image in the ballet environment contribute to the development of body image problems with ballet dancers (Langdon and Petracca 2010). Based on previous literature suggesting the ballet dance environment is more regimented, I anticipate that the ballet dance environment is more likely to facilitate a more tightly- controlled identity system. In addition, socialization in this environment might develop attitudes relative to having a more tightly- controlled identity system.

Hip-hop

Hip-hop dance, as compared to ballet, focuses on improvisation and artistic expression outside the formal setting of a dance studio or company class (Swami and Tovee 2009). Along with including improvisation, the hip-hop community is a social environment where dancers are encouraged to interact with others (Stevens 2006). The less regimented structure of hip-hop compared to ballet encourages diversity and

community building. Because hip-hop is also considered a “street” dance style, it can be practiced outside the formal dance setting that provides hip-hop dancers with a less regimented dance environment. This is compared to ballet where the dance style is almost always practiced in a formal dance setting such as a dance studio or company class. This suggests that hip-hop is one of the less structured dance styles.

Hip-hop culture involves four elements that contribute to the artistic creativity and expression: graffiti, Disk Jockey (DJ), rap music, and breakdancing. Many of these activities derive from less regimented dance settings where artists use the hip-hop culture to build community and express their lifestyle (Kitwana 2002; Pough 2004). Research has found that the welcoming and social hip-hop environment may provide an opportunity for the dancers to maintain a positive self-image by giving dancers the ability to form a sense of community and acceptance with others (Bowker, Gadbois, and Cornock 2003). Because the hip-hop environment emphasizes expression and diversity, the hip-hop environment, as compared to ballet does not provide the dancers with specific instructions to movement, physical appearance (body type), etc. Instead, dancers within this environment are encouraged to freely express themselves and feel accepted by others in the community. I expect that the less regimented hip-hop dance environment is more likely to facilitate a more loosely- controlled identity system. Furthermore, socialization in this environment might develop attitudes relative to having a more loosely- controlled identity system.

Methods

This qualitative cross-sectional study consists of primary data in the form of field observations and participant interviews. I conducted five field observations in an intermediate ballet class and an intermediate hip-hop class at a large university, respectively. Each visit consisted of an hour and forty minutes of observation. I recruited thirty participants through an announcement made by the instructor at the beginning of the class during the field observation process. I recruited fifteen participants from the intermediate ballet class and intermediate hip-hop class, respectively. I used the field observations to provide information on the structural characteristics and social interactions within each environment. The interviews were essential in assessing the experiences and attitudes of dancers, as well as provide meaning and insight into behaviors that occurred in the dance environment. This information was used to examine the impact of socialization on the attitudes of the participants.

Participant Interviews

I relied on semi-structured interviews with ballet dancers and hip-hop dancers to understand dancers' experiences, challenges, attitudes, and behaviors in these settings. I asked participants open-ended questions such as: "What characteristics do you believe define a ballet dancer/hip-hop dancer?" This gave the interviewees an opportunity to give their own characterizations of ballet dancers/hip-hop dancers. They were also asked: "How would you describe the ballet/hip-hop environment?" "What have your experiences been like in the environment?"

After providing participants with the ability to self-characterize the dancer and the environment, the interviews explored two specific attitudes: obedience and discipline, and openness and acceptability (i.e., being open-minded, accepting of change, and flexible in the environment). Given the different backgrounds of ballet and hip-hop and the varying approaches to training dancers, I assess the level of perceived discipline and obedience of dancers in the environment. Discipline and obedience were examined to measure how important the dancer role is to the individual, and how committed they may be to achieving their goals in the environment. In this sense, commitment is defined as the sum total of the pressure to keep perceptions of themselves in a situation in line with the self-meanings held in the identity standard (Burke and Stets 2009; Cantwell 2011).

Based on previous research suggesting that the ballet environment is a more regimented environment and the hip-hop environment is a less regimented environment, I also examine whether dancers varied in being open-minded and accepting of change. This helps develop a sense as to how tolerant dancers are given the tightness of the identity control system. Given the more regimented ballet environment, I anticipate that individuals in this environment may be less open-minded and accepting of environmental change. On the other hand, I speculate that the less regimented hip-hop environment may result in these individuals being more open-minded and accepting of environmental change.

The interviews lasted approximately a half hour to an hour. All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, and coded using Dedoose, an online program used to analyze

qualitative research. All identifying characteristics (e.g., names, dance studios, dance teams, etc.) were given pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participant.

Of the fifteen participants that were recruited in the ballet class, eighty percent identified as female, and twenty percent as male. The age range was between nineteen and thirty-six. The average age was twenty-eight. The racial/ethnic distribution of the ballet sample consisted of white/Caucasian (40%), bi-racial or mixed race (30%), Asian and/or Pacific Islander (20%), and Hispanic/Latino(a) (10%).

The other fifteen participants that were recruited from the hip-hop class consisted of seventy percent self-identified females, and thirty percent males. The age range was between eighteen and fifty-five. The average age was twenty-four. The racial/ethnic distribution of the hip-hop sample consisted of bi-racial or mixed race (30%), Asian and/or Pacific Islander (30%), white/Caucasian (20%), Hispanic/Latino(a) (10%), and African-American/black (10%).

Field Observations

The five field observations were conducted at the intermediate level of the ballet class and hip-hop class at the university. Most dance classes are distinguished by level: beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels. The intermediate classes were chosen for two reasons: the university did not offer an advanced ballet class or hip-hop class, and I expected that intermediate dance students will have stronger dancer identities due to having more dance experience at the intermediate level than at the beginner level. These classes were open to all undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the university.

I observed one intermediate ballet class and one intermediate hip-hop class five times each during the academic year. While the dancers in the ballet class were not enrolled in the hip-hop class, each class was comprised of the same students at each observation. Each class was approximately an hour and twenty minutes. At the beginning of the first class visit, the instructor introduced me as a graduate student researcher who would observe the class.

During the field observation process, I took field notes specifically examining dancer-dancer interaction and instructor-dancer interaction. Specifically, I was interested in positive and negative verbal feedback given by the instructor or other dancers and the responses following the feedback. The field observations also examined characteristics of the dance class. Particularly, what is the culture of the environment? How do the dancers behave in class? How often do they interact with others around them? In what context do they interact with others? What kind of environment does the instructor set for the class? Is the class more welcoming and relaxed, or is it more serious and disciplined? This helps to provide a deeper understanding of the structural characteristics of the dance environments (i.e., regimented or unregimented) and the types of interactions that occur in these environments to distinguish factors that may facilitate a more tightly-controlled identity system.

While I recognize that the hip-hop dance class environment may be different from the hip-hop dance culture that generally involves dance teams or dancers that often practice outside of dance studios such as in parking garages or on the street, observations of the hip-hop dance class still provided useful information to compare structural

characteristics and social interactions in both settings. By examining both dance styles in a classroom setting, this provides a controlled environment where specified interactions can be compared between both classes. If hip-hop dance were to be examined on the streets, control over the environment would be reduced, thus impacting any causal claims I could make.

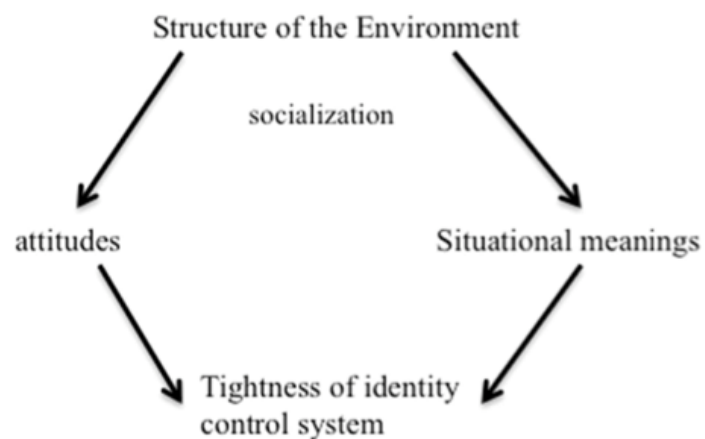
Analysis

Field notes and interview audio recordings were transcribed using Microsoft Word, and coded using Dedoose, an online qualitative data analysis software. An inductive approach was used to organize and code themes found in the field notes and interviews. To thoroughly investigate attitudes of dancers in each environment, common patterns and themes relating to attitudes and dance experiences were used to develop thematic codes. Such themes included, but were not limited to, those that emphasize discipline, obedience, respect for authority, and being open-minded and accepting of change. Specifically, I found patterns in the field notes and interviews that contribute to dancer-dancer interaction, instructor-dancer interaction, structural characteristics of the environment, and specific dancer attitudes. These patterns were also used to develop thematic codes.

In assessing the field observation and participant interview data, a model was developed to illustrate the effect of different elements of the environment (i.e., structural characteristics and social interactions) on the tightness of the identity control system, and how socialization can impact participant attitudes and the identity process (see Figure 1). Based on the model, the structure of the environment (i.e., scripted vs. unscripted,

instructive vs. not instructive, etc.) influences situational meanings and attitudes through the process of socialization. In turn, these attitudes and situational meanings influence the tightness of the identity control system. In presenting my data, I will provide data for each component of the model to illustrate the effects.

Figure 1:



Structure of the Environment

Based on the field observations, I aim to examine structural characteristics and social interactions within each environment that might facilitate a more tightly-controlled identity system. In examining the structural characteristics of the ballet environment, I find that in all of my observations, there is a central theme that the environment is scripted and regimented. This translated to the repetitive and controlled structure and specific instructions provided by the instructor in the environment. In comparing the ballet dance environment to the hip-hop dance environment, I find that in all of my observations of the hip-hop environment, there is a focus on the environment being less

scripted and less regimented. In regards to the theme of less scripted and less regimented, I am referring to the free and relaxed structure and lack of specific instructions in the environment with a focus on individuality, creativity, and self-expression. The more or less scripted and regimented structure and the level of instruction result in differences in the tightness of the identity control system in the ballet and hip-hop environment.

More Scripted and Regimented Structure

For each observation in the ballet class, the class followed the same structure and set of activities. More specifically, each class consisted of barre (a series of exercises using a ballet barre), center (a series of exercises in the center of the floor), and across the floor (exercises that traveled across the room), which usually consists of jumps and traveling steps; this is discussed by many participants in the interview process. This structure was organized and repeated across all class observations.

The structure of the environment follows a regimented classical ballet-training environment that transitions the dancers from low intensity to high intensity exercises (Twitchett et al. 2009). Within the barre exercises, the instructor would begin with demonstrating, verbally and physically, the set exercise (i.e., pliés, tendus, etc.). Generally, every barre exercise followed the same series of exercises, often beginning with pliés (bending of the legs) and finishing with grand battements (a brushing of the leg off the ground to reach a maximum height). As the instructor demonstrated each exercise, the dancers would watch, mimic the movements with their hands, or practice the exercise at the barre. A few others would stretch on their own while listening to the instructor, however, all dancers remained attentive and quiet during this process.

After demonstrating the exercise a few times, the instructor would cue the pianist and an adagio (slow tempo) music would play. The class would progress relatively quickly, with exercises lasting about 2-3 minutes. All of the dancers would stand with their left hand on the barre and their right arm curved and placed gracefully to their side as they wait to begin the exercise. They stood with their chest held high and their shoulders pulled back as they looked towards their right shoulder. As the dancers performed the exercise, the instructor would walk throughout the class evaluating the dancers and provide verbal critique. As the class receives critique from the instructor, there is little interaction between the dancers. In all instances, the dancers remained quiet and focused as the instructor provided critiques. In observing the social interactions in the environment, I find two types of interactions: instructor-dancer and dancer-dancer. The instructor-dancer interaction comprised most of the interactions that transpired throughout the duration of these classes.

When asked to describe the ballet dance environment, Alia describes the structure of the class and series of exercises often performed in class:

There's a general order of combinations. So you start off with pliés, just to warm up your joints, your knees, and ankles... And then, from there, you go to tendus and dégagés, rond de jambes, frappés, temps lié, everything involves pliés and tendus and dégagés, and you just kind of build up on that. You do petit battement, which is when you have your foot and you have it in low coupe, and you go back and forth really fast from front to back from front to back. You usually end barre with grand battements. From there, you usually stretch again and get some water, and then go to the center. In center, you usually start with adagio, maybe turns, or something across the floor, and then you usually end class with petit allegro, which is really fast jumps, you have to focus on every little thing. You have to make sure it's perfect, and pristine, and sharp. Then you end class with a reverence, which is kind of like a bow to your fake audience in the mirror, and

maybe the musician if you have that, or your teacher. I was taught that after every single class, you go up and you courtesy to the ballet teacher and you say thank you for class.

The participant reinforces what was found in the field observations that suggest that the environment is scripted and regimented and the environment provides specific instructions. She describes how each movement has specific techniques that must be followed and dancers are driven to perform movements in a “perfect, and pristine, and sharp” manner. This detailed description of the structure of the ballet environment as scripted and regimented acts as the first component of the model. While Alia emphasizes the scripted organization of the class, she also references the instructions provided in the setting that contribute to the regimented environment.

Based on my observations, the dancers do each exercise on the left side and then turn around to place their right hand on the barre to do the other side. This occurs during the center and across the floor exercises as well. For the across the floor exercises, the dancers would gather at one corner of the room and travel across the floor with the set exercise in various groups.

All of the dancers gather to the left back corner of the room. The professor demonstrates an across-the-floor combination that includes turns. She says, “pique, arabesque, sauté, tombé pas de bourée, fourth, double pirouette, fourth, double pirouette.” The dancers follow and mimic the movement behind her. After her demonstration, the dancers line up along the sides of the room and she says, “four at a time!” (Field observation 2/8/2016).

Most classes would end with a reverence, or a bow to the instructor, pianist, and class.

This reinforces values such as respect for authority, since the dancers are taught to bow or courtesy to the ballet instructor at the end of every class. As stated by Alia and other

participants, these behaviors stem from norms and etiquette in ballet that reinforce respect to the instructor, as well as gratitude to the pianist and audience.

As previously mentioned, during a set exercise, the instructor would often evaluate dancers and provide critique with an emphasis on technique. During one observation the instructor called out, “Plié! Release the torso down; drop the body” and on another day, the instructor corrected dancers. “Hear me when I say that! I’m not saying lift the leg, I’m saying pull the leg.” Her verbal critique emphasized technique and was aimed to challenge the dancers. After some exercises, the instructor would take the time to evaluate the dancers execution of the exercise and provide feedback. In one observation, the instructor discusses the specific aesthetic of ballet:

“You know in ballet, we are obsessed with the line-the line of the body.” Following this, she went over the positions of the body, which are set positions in ballet to guide a dancer on his or her movements commonly used in ballet. The dancers quietly followed the movements behind her (Field observation 2/24/2016).

In addition to the critiques emphasizing technique and challenging the dancers, the critiques also provided instructions to movement. For example, the instructor said, “You have to fall forward. This is a controlled falling” (Field observation 2/10/2016). The instructor described the specific ways of doing various movements in ballet. The verbal critique and evaluation given by the instructor in the environment provided dancers with specific instructions that emphasize technique, which contributed to the scripted and regimented nature of the ballet environment.

Less Scripted and Regimented Structure

While the ballet environment follows a specific class structure that is organized and repetitive, the hip-hop environment has a loose structure to the organization of the class, which suggests a less scripted and regimented environment. For each observation, there was generally some type of warm-up for the dancers. In some instances, the instructor would lead a high-energy warm-up that would consist of some variation of cardio movement (i.e., jumping jacks, running in place, etc.) sit-ups, and stretches. Other times, the instructor would let the dancers stretch and warm-up on their own. This generally would lead to many dancers gently stretching on the dance floor while socializing with other dancers nearby.

The rest of the class time was spent going over choreography and running the dance combination. The combinations generally lasted about 1-2 minutes. The instructor would put the music on repeat, and the dancers would run the combination as a class over and over at their own pace. Unlike the ballet environment, the hip-hop environment did not follow any strict structure. The instructor would not direct the dancers to perform the combination. In three of the five observations, the instructor would leave the classroom as the dancers were practicing the combination and return a few moments later.

In all of the observations, there was an emphasis on the environment being social. While instructor-dancer interaction was common, dancer-dancer interaction was also common. In general, dancers engaged in side conversations throughout the class more than ballet dancers. I found that the environment was also more likely to set up more group activities than the ballet environment. For example, the end of class might require

dancers to work in groups to choreograph the beginning of the combination, which they would perform together in front of the class. Furthermore, dancer-dancer interaction also occurred in the form of social support and teamwork. Dancers would often help other dancers in class who appeared to be struggling with choreography, or be willing to teach other dancers different types of movements they were experimenting with on their own.

Marcus catches my eye as he does handstands and big jumps in the corner of the room. I notice Tucker get on the floor a little while later. They strike up a conversation and head towards the long ballet barre to the right of the room. Marcus grabs onto the barre while facing away from it and begins to swing his legs in the air demonstrating a movement. Tucker observes and begins to try it for himself. As they both attempt the movement, the professor calls out from the other side of the room, "you're supposed to end facing the barre." Marcus responds, "oh, that makes more sense." They continue to work together. I watch as Tucker attempts the movement to find himself catching his balance on his landing. Nevertheless, he continues to attempt the movement with Marcus until they exhaust themselves (Field observation 4/4/2016).

Instructor-dancer interaction in the class came in the forms of verbal critique/evaluation, which is similar to what was observed in the ballet environment. However, all observations of the hip-hop environment also suggest a more comfortable relationship with the instructor. This relationship is one where the instructor and dancers were able to share jokes and engage in side conversations. When the instructor did provide feedback on certain parts of the choreography, he would often joke with the dancers, and provide a more relaxing atmosphere.

He continues, "don't do this," as he awkwardly pops his back up instead of his butt. The dancers all laugh. "This is just a bad Saturday night," he jokes. As he makes his way towards the speaker system, he makes suggestions to the dancers about the arms on their walk. He tells them to choose arms; if they feel weird, change it. If it doesn't feel weird, change it. The dancers laugh again (Field observation 4/14/2016).

This illustrates the instructor reinforcing the relaxed and social environment embedded in the dance class. Dancers felt comfortable enough with the instructor to engage in side conversations, and respond to jokes in class. The more comfortable relationship with the instructor facilitated a more relaxed and positive environment for the dancers.

In addition to promoting a relaxed and social environment, the instructor also encouraged individuality and self-expression in the class. Aside from being less scripted and regimented, this is one of the biggest differences between the ballet environment and the hip-hop environment. In a few instances, the instructor would tell the dancers that the environment was a judgment-free environment where they were free to be themselves and experiment with their own ways of moving.

“This is a judgment-free room and we are all family.” He asks them to step outside the box. “I mean I want you to get buck wild... there is a famous technique in hip-hop- ‘call and response;’ we [the dancers] give them [the audience] energy and they give it right back. He walks off the dance floor and plays the music for the first group (Field observation 4/28/2016).

In this example, he encourages the dancers to step outside their comfort zones, and lets them know that the environment is a safe space. He also describes the connection between the dancers and audience that promotes energy in the hip-hop environment.

Based on the observations, the “call and response” technique mentioned by the professor, came in the form of cheering and yelling at the dancers as they performed, with the goal of bringing more energy to the dance and the dancers.

As the dancers perform, the other half of the class cheers them on. The entire class gets really loud... The dancers clap and holler as the group performs. I hear laughing, cheering, and hollering. I see dancers smiling and clapping as they watch the other dancers... The next group performs. “Ay! Ay! Ay!” the professor cheers as he grooves to the music. (Field observation 4/28/2016).

This type of interaction is not found in the ballet environment, but it can act as positive reinforcement or verification of one's identity. The social support in the hip-hop environment provides the dancers with positive reinforcement, support, and positive interactions that may act as beneficial elements when dealing with situations that may lead to identity non-verification (i.e., evaluation, critique, pressure from the environment, etc.).

The hip-hop dance environment also promoted self-expression. When asked to describe the hip-hop dance environment, eight-seven percent of interviewees described the importance of expressing yourself and finding your own style in the environment.

Hallie describes her experience with the hip-hop environment:

I feel like there's a lot more freedom in hip-hop classes... They're so much more laid-back and fun. There's room to express yourself when you're learning dances and a lot of choreographers encourage it. Like they'll put little spots in their pieces, where they'll just be like, alright, do whatever you want, I don't care, but they'll give you guidelines, but it's just so much more expressive, and the people too- like the people that you interact with, they're kind of on that same level of expression as you where they just kind of want to go in and have fun with dance.

While she mentioned that they do provide some instructions to movement, she felt that they still gave you opportunities to be expressive. With respect to the instructions provided in the environment, observations of the hip-hop environment suggest a low level of instructions in the environment. Dancers were encouraged to self-express, use their creativity, and embrace their individuality.

Hannah, a dancer in the hip-hop class, provides an example of how the hip-hop instructor will provide opportunities for dancers to experiment with their own movements

by giving them some instructions, while simultaneously encouraging their creativity and freedom of movement.

So the dance we're doing now with all girls, there's a part where you turn and then you're supposed to do a shoulder move going up, so it's just two shoulder moves going up. It's super simple...it's two moves that you have to do, but within those two moves, you can do whatever you want with your arms- you can be higher or lower with your legs, you can do jagged movement with your shoulders, or you can do like a fluid fun type of thing with your shoulders. I feel like it's something where you have the movement and you have what you're supposed to do, but you can throw in what you want to do or how you want to portray it within the move... Hip-hop is just, it's very structured, but also, it's structured with a personality. I think that's how you can describe it.

While the findings suggest that the hip-hop environment is less scripted and regimented than the ballet environment, there is evidence that supports the hip-hop environment is still structured. Hannah described this as the hip-hop environment being “structured with a personality” because although structure is provided, it is loose enough to provide freedom and self-expression. Compared to the ballet environment that has a specific way of doing a plié or tendu, the hip-hop environment left movement qualities to the individual as a form of self-expression.

In the model, the structure of the environment impacts attitudes and situational meanings through socialization. In assessing the more scripted and regimented ballet environment that follows a set class structure and provides instructions, the hip-hop environment is less scripted and regimented in the sense that the instructor will provide a more free and relaxed atmosphere, where there is a loose structure to the class, and little instruction is provided. This difference in the structure of the environment may contribute to variance in the attitudes and situational meanings amongst members in each environment.

Situational Meanings

In the previous section, I compare the structure of the ballet environment and the hip-hop environment, and examine the various factors that contribute to an environment being more or less scripted and regimented. In the current section, I examine how socialization in these environments impacts the situational meanings from which dancers draw upon.

The hip-hop field observation data suggests a less scripted and regimented environment. Due to the less regimented structure of the class and the little instructions provided in the environment (i.e., no specific guidelines to movement), I argue that the environment facilitates more loosely-controlled meanings in an environment, which are also heavily reinforced by the instructor. Compared to the field observations of the ballet environment, I find that the regimented and scripted structure of the ballet environment provide dancers with instructions to movement and behavior. These specific instructions act as meanings behind what it means to be a ballet dancer. In other words, these specific instructions act as a guideline for being a ballet dancer. Dancers are taught that there is a specific way to move, behave, and even appear as a ballet dancer. This is reinforced by instructor-dancer interaction through the instructor's class structure, evaluation, and verbal critique. This suggests that the regimented and scripted structure of the ballet environment provide dancers with a specific set of situational meanings that may be more tightly-controlled, which are reinforced by the instructor in the environment. I rely on in-depth interviews to gain a further insight into how dancers interpret and implement meaning in the identity process.

Brianna illustrates the impact the scripted and regimented ballet environment had on her perceptions about her ability to embody a particular identity.

... It's very strict and it's very like, "this is how you do ballet," and so I think I did have those feelings of, "I'm never going to be good enough. I'm never going to be in a really cool company because I'm never going to be good enough, or I'll never be thin enough." Like you look at these professional ballet dancers and they're petite- they're tiny. They don't have hips. They have very small breasts... And I just felt feelings of insecurity and feelings of not being good enough and people thinking that I'm not a good enough dancer and so I remember just feeling like, "why even try?" You want to be friends with them, but it's hard to be friends when you're always jealous of them. You're always trying to live up to them and the teacher's expectations. And feeling like they don't like me as much as they like her because I don't move like her or I don't dance like her.

Brianna elaborates on how the ideal type of ballet dancer, specifically the ideal body type, and the expectations in the ballet environment feels unattainable for her, which causes distress. She also mentions how she would compare herself to others and try to be someone else to live up to the teacher's expectations, or to be what she thought a "good" dancer was based on the meanings shaped by the environment.

Based on Brianna's experience in the environment, she developed meanings regarding what and who a ballet dancer is, which acted as her identity standard. Based on what she observed in her environment (i.e., ballet dancers were all petite, they had small breasts, etc.), Brianna has self-appraisals that were compared to those meanings in her identity standard, which also influenced developed reflected appraisals that were compared to her identity standard (i.e., people thinking I'm not a good enough dancer). When the perceptions did not match her identity standard, Brianna experienced distress (i.e., feeling insecure and not good enough).

Clara discusses a similar experience in the ballet environment pertaining to her ability to embody this identity, which eventually led her to stop ballet for a period of time.

There's a pressure to be small, to be flexible, there's a lot of... and it's really depending on who's teaching whether the pressure's there, and the expectation is there or not. So for one of my ballet instructors, she said, "yeah it's okay if you skip a meal or two and just have a granola bar," like that was something that was actually encouraged, and that happens, and you know what are you going to say about that? And this kind of encouragement like, "oh you're looking thinner. That leotard looks really good on you," so there's like stuff like that, so mentally if you're already like in my case, mentally and emotionally focused on that, that definitely illuminated more. Which wasn't the same when I first started ballet dancing, it didn't have that same effect, and it grew to where I was having that effect and that's why I stopped.

Similar to Brianna's experience, Clara felt that the ballet environment held certain expectations and meanings regarding being a ballet dancer (i.e., small and flexible). Clara illustrates that she experienced pressure from the environment to achieve these meanings, which were often reinforced and encouraged by the instructor. In both instances, the ballet environment provided the dancers with specific instructions and meanings regarding the ballet dancer identity. As these meanings became more specific and the pressure to achieve them increased, the situational meanings became more tightly-controlled.

In contrast, Hannah describes the less scripted and regimented hip-hop environment.

Well it's very free, it's very loose, it's very ...you can do what you want in it. Parts of it are very self-taught, not taught, self-instructed. So [the instructor] leaves it open for interpretation. He gives us portions of the music to do whatever it is and do whatever you want to do as a dance, so it's really open. It's really comfortable. The reason I stayed with that class is because I'm comfortable in it and all the people are really nice. They're all really supportive.

According to Hannah, the loose, free, and comfortable hip-hop environment is positive for her. While women in the ballet environment felt they must meet certain expectations, fit a particular body image, or dance a certain way, Hannah does not mention any specific expectations or meanings she felt that she had to meet in the hip-hop environment. Instead, she states that the environment leaves dancers with the opportunity to self-teach and experiment with the dance form on their own. Moreover, she asserted the structure of the hip-hop environment gives her self-confidence and a willingness to try new things. “So I think a lot of self-confidence for me came from it. A lot of learning how to be comfortable in other types of things where I have no proficiency in, I’ve learned how to adapt and I think hip-hop taught me that.”

While Clara mentioned that the ballet instructor contributed to the pressure to achieve these specific meanings regarding the ballet dancer identity, Gary, a participant in the hip-hop class, illustrates that the hip-hop instructor provides a more relaxed environment where dancers experience less pressure. He explained:

...If you don't get the step, do what you can. If you can't get it the way I did it, do it in the way you think I did it. There's a lot of time, if you don't have the flexibility or your mind is telling your body to do it this way and it's not working... but that's why [the instructor] put it that way, if you're doing it the best you can, don't worry about it.

In this section, I investigated the role of socialization on situational meanings. My findings suggest that the structure of the environment (i.e., scripted vs. less scripted and regimented vs. less regimented) influenced the tightness of the situational meanings. In comparing participant experiences in these two different environments, the findings suggest that the more scripted and regimented ballet environment provided Brianna and

Clara with tightly-controlled situational meanings (i.e., dance like her, move like her, very small breasts, etc.) that felt unattainable or unhealthy. In contrast, the less scripted and regimented hip-hop environment provided Hannah and Gary with loosely-controlled situational meanings (i.e., leaves it open for interpretation, do whatever you want to do, etc.). This boosted Hannah's self-confidence and her willingness to try new things.

Attitudes

In this section, I turn to how the structure of the environment influences participant attitudes through socialization. Specifically, how are dancers' attitudes impacted by the structure of the environment? I discuss four attitudes that emerged in my findings: discipline and obedience, open-minded and accepting, striving for perfection, and self-expression and acceptance.

Discipline and Obedience

In examining discipline and obedience in the ballet environment, participants were asked, "in terms of being obedient or disciplined, do you think that ballet dancers tend to be more or less obedient or disciplined than other types of dancers?" Of the fifteen participants interviewed in the ballet class, seventy-three percent of participants stated that they believe ballet dancers are more disciplined and obedient than other dancers. When asked why they felt ballet dancer might be more disciplined than other types of dancers, Valerie describes how the instructor influences the amount of discipline and obedience in the environment and how this shapes the attitudes of the ballet dancer.

You know it's because they care about ballet as a discipline. It showed a lot. Just with how instructors were walking out because they felt like we were disrespecting choreography...things like that. And so it was strict and we couldn't have our hands on our hips or cross our arms. Things like that; and that was

probably the first time in a dance environment that I was that disciplined that I had to think about how I was appearing just standing there because you got approached for looking like you don't care.

Samantha, another participant in the ballet class, describes the amount of discipline and obedience in the structure of the ballet environment.

At least in my experience, there tends to be more discipline and obedience in a ballet setting just because of how the classroom is run. You know, ballet is very much "this is what it is," there's not really any room for you to add your flare. It's like "this is the movement, you do the movement," whereas other styles kind of encourage a little more to add your own style to it; ballet is not like that.

Both Valerie and Samantha emphasize that the ballet environment is more disciplined and obedient because of the scripted and regimented structure that provides dancers with specific instructions (i.e., specific ways to doing the movement and behaving in class) that leaves little room for variation (i.e., no room to add your flare). Valerie emphasizes that the level of discipline and obedience in the environment is rooted in how the instructor runs the class.

In another instance, Tracy describes how the instructions in the ballet environment contribute to ballet dancers being more disciplined than other dancers.

I think because as a ballerina, as you're learning technique and how to do the movements, it's very precise and you have to hold your arms certain ways so you can do all the turns you want to do, and hold your back up, and you have to think about all the different things you do at once and tuck you butt in, suck your stomach in, and remember to breathe out sometimes, point your toes, turn out...

Tracy emphasizes the specific instructions given to movement. She also emphasizes how these meanings and guidelines to movement are expected of dancers in that environment. In this way, these instructions provide dancers with more tightly-controlled situational meanings, which, according to participant interviews, may result in dancers being more

disciplined and obedient. This was confirmed in my field observations, where, the ballet dancers remained quiet and focused during all exercises and obedient to instructor feedback and critiques. They also were more inclined to work independently by stretching and refining movements on their own.

Monica does not disregard that other dance requires discipline yet she clearly distinguished the different types:

I think in ballet, there's more of a structure and more of an expectation of quiet and focused and... that kind of discipline. You look at jazz dancers; you look at musical theatre dancers; these people dance just as much as ballet dancers, and they learn just as difficult things, it's just a different kind of discipline.

In this sense, Monica states that all dancers have a sense of discipline. In other words, all dancers have to invest some type of commitment to the dancer identity. However, Monica emphasizes that the ballet dance environment compels a specific kind of discipline that varies across other dance environments.

Responses towards whether hip-hop dancers are different from other dancers in terms of discipline and obedience engender no clear assessment. Many hip-hop participants feel that all dancers have to be disciplined and obedient, and the dance style does not influence the level of discipline or obedience. Given that voluntary role identities have less intense ties to others and are easily escapable compared to obligatory identities, the responses that suggests that all dancers have to be disciplined and obedient despite dance style might be because there needs to be a certain amount of commitment in order for individuals to continue to assume a voluntary role identity.

When asked about the discipline and obedience of hip-hop dancers, sixty percent of respondents felt that all dancers are disciplined and obedient. Tucker describes this, and emphasizes that the discipline comes from having to know the technique of each style.

I think every style requires discipline- yes. They all interconnect, but you definitely have to know your technique for hip-hop; you definitely need to know your technique for ballet. So I don't think they differ. I think the discipline needs to stay the same in everything that you do.

Open-minded and Accepting of Change

When ballet participants were asked whether they believe ballet dancers were more or less open-minded and accepting of change than other dancers, fifty-three percent believed that ballet dancers are less open-minded and have difficulties accepting change. Hayden discusses her sense of why this occurs and attributes it to the structure of the environment.

Because ballet is... it's the same five positions that have been around forever. It's the same order of class. It's the same order of exercises that you do at the barre. You get married to this structure versus pretty much everything else that I've taken- jazz, tap, hip-hop; there's a lot more freedom in what you can do. In ballet, we always start at the barre. We always do center. We always do across the floor. In jazz, sometimes we have a warm-up, sometimes we start across the floor, sometimes we do like random just groove to yourself for a little bit... but because I grew up in the studio, I appreciate the structure. I kind of need the structure sometimes... just to feel... in it, I guess.

For Hayden, the set structure of ballet socialized her to become accustomed to the regimented environment. She states that dancers in this type of environment become “married” to the structure, and accordingly adapt to it. It is now difficult for her to separate this rigidity from ballet.

In another instance, Monica describes how the general culture of ballet might cultivate dancers being less open-minded and accepting of change as well as more controlling.

I think, especially professional ballet dancers, they get combinations that have been the same for hundreds of years, and so seeing a change in that would be super confusing, I think that goes right along with the control aspect that I talked about earlier where ballet dancers have a certain level of control that they like to maintain when they're dancing. There's a continuity with ballet that's not necessarily there in other dance styles, and so that openness to change isn't always there because some of these things have been the same forever, whereas in like jazz dances and lyrical dances, when you're rehearsing numbers, you can just say, "hey, change that. We're going to make this different." ... There's this flexibility, I think with other dance styles, that ballet doesn't necessarily have because it's so put on choreography that has been there forever.

The participant's response reinforces the field observations suggesting that the scripted and regimented ballet environment provide dancers with more tightly-controlled situational meanings that shape ballet dancers attitudes (i.e., being more disciplined and obedient, less open-minded and accepting).

In addition, hip-hop participant responses support this claim. Of the fifteen interviews, sixty-seven percent of respondents describe hip-hop dancers as being open, welcoming, and accepting. Hannah attributes these attitudes to the less scripted and regimented environment. She emphasizes how the hip-hop environment is accepting and welcomes diversity, especially compared this to the ballet environment.

I mean just in terms of looking at my class, there's so many different body types and we all can hip-hop dance. And then again with ... like my mind goes to race, so you see the typical...my teacher is African-American, and I'm a white girl, and he's never once said you can't hip-hop because you're white. So I definitely think there's a lot of open-mindedness. Ballet just got a lead principal dancer- who is an African-American, whereas I feel like hip-hop has been doing that for years, and they don't really care.

Hannah elaborates on how the loose structure of the environment is likely to facilitate open-minded and accepting attitudes among hip-hop dancers.

I feel like hip-hop allows you to look at that obstacle, whatever that may be and just learn how to deal with it. I think it gives you the structure, which is just loose enough where you can be like okay, because I can't learn choreography, it just doesn't work for me, but I have enough flexibility within the hip-hop genre of learning the choreography at my speed and then also in my way.

Clark agrees with Hannah's assessment but he stresses the hip-hop environment helps cultivate a willingness to try new things among dancers.

I would say hip-hop is definitely a little more open like accepting of other things because one of my friends who is in my class was telling me ballet dancers are very like their bodies are everything and is always so tight, and they are very in full control of everything they do, so when they're dancing, it's kind of like their own thing. If you can learn some of the ballet stuff, like as a hip-hop dancer, if you pull stuff from other things, it just makes you a better hip-hop dancer... So I'd say a lot of hip-hop dancers like to take a lot of traits from other dance styles and kind of put it into their hip-hop style to critique it better, and basically refine it.

According to Clark, hip-hop dancers were more open to learning new styles and incorporating new movements. This is unlike the ballet environment, which he argues tends to be tight and always in full control. Similar to the ballet findings, socialization occurs in the environment that teaches individuals to be more or less open-minded and accepting based on the structure of the environment. Based on the less scripted and regimented structure of the hip-hop environment, participants stated that hip-hop dancers were more open to diversity, and more flexible and adaptive to life obstacles.

Striving for Perfection

The interviews with ballet dancers reveal an emphasis on striving for perfection, an attitude not present among hip-hop dancers. James, a dancer in the ballet class, who is

also a professional dancer in a local ballet company, describes how the dance environment promotes dancers' need to achieve perfection.

I guess it's just that drive for perfection that we want; we want that perfect technique; we want the perfect body... there's a level of refinement that you want to go on stage and be the best that you can be... and so we're always striving to get our legs higher and doing more turns... a willingness to not stay complacent, and to always want to refine yourself.

In another instance, Maria states how the dance environment creates a setting where you have to strive to be the best. She discusses the pressure that comes from this environment and her experiences.

Yeah I think the pressure of always being the best was tough... You have to be on time at rehearsal. You have to work on your flexibility more than the others if you want to be on the front line. So always, always, trying to be the best, and if you're not, there are consequences, and consequences were not.... Like I couldn't afford to even experience the consequences, so yeah, that was very challenging; putting pressure on myself and feeling the pressure from the dance community as a whole.

Based on the interviews, striving for perfection is rooted in the values of the dance environment and the need to be acknowledged by the instructor or other person of authority (i.e., company director, judge, etc.). When dancers feel that they have to strive for perfection, more tightly- controlled situational meanings are assumed and there is an inclination for these dancers to reach the perfect standard. This need to achieve perfection contributes to the competitive environment and the tendency to compare you to others and self-critique as mentioned by Brianna, who stated that she felt that she had to live up to teacher's expectations and be good enough in the eyes of others in the environment. Tracy also describes how the need to achieve perfection and be acknowledged by the

instructor might produce a more competitive and self-critical environment, and the impact this has on the self:

Well I think it comes with that some teachers choose favorites, and that can always affect people because you might be jealous of someone else, but then they can be jealous of you if the teacher likes you. And then, I think that everyone just wants to be the best when it comes to dance. You want to be the best person in the room. You want to keep working the hardest, which it's good in a way, because it can make everyone better, but it can also just cause negativity, which is probably the worst downfall when it comes to the dancer world. I think everyone has the point when if a teacher favors someone else or a teacher doesn't approve of you the way you want, or just getting that approval, I guess it's almost like a...it's an adult figure in a way. So that's always hard when it comes to anything, or school. But I think especially for dancers, it's hard. So that's definitely a mental and emotional thing.

Grace describes how the need to be perfect in the environment became deleterious to her health.

... I tried my best, but it was a very competitive environment. I don't know I feel like everyone felt the same way. Did you see how many pirouettes that person did? Four repetitions? Like we would talk about that. It was common. It was like did you see her grand allegro, how perfect or how high her jumps were on grand jeté? Or like that was part of the normal conversation and I mean that's what I got. Like I loved my experience having been able to train at a dance conservatory, but it was kind of unhealthy to me like always thinking like am I the worst person in class? I hope I don't mess up because everyone is going to stare at me. I did this and I feel so stupid. Just criminalizing yourself about everything that you do wrong.

Self-expression and acceptance

In contrast to the ballet environment, participants in the hip-hop environment emphasized self-expression and acceptance during the interviews. In terms of self-expression and acceptance, Tricia discussed the ability to self-express. "...people can find in hip-hop who they are. Like basically for them, it's just like... in dance, you can respect yourself in who you are." According to Tricia, hip-hop dance allows people to

respect and feel comfortable with who they are. Tucker reinforces this idea and elaborates on how an important part of hip-hop dance is being able to express and accept who you are as a unique individual.

It's as simple as this-being you. Do the hip-hop version of you because I can be over there, but I can't be you because there is only one you. Your experiences, your story is so unique to you that nobody else will have that and that's your biggest asset. People try to be like this person and that person and that person, but they're not that person, you're you. So you know interpret hip-hop as you do, and people will appreciate it at that point.

Tucker emphasizes that you can interpret hip-hop and express yourself based on your own interpretation of the dance form. This suggests more loosely-controlled meanings in the hip-hop environment that allows interpretation, self-expression, and acceptance.

In comparison to the ballet environment that emphasizes striving for perfection and having to meet certain expectations, the hip-hop environment emphasizes an open interpretation of the dance form, and a need to self-express and accept who you are. Dancers in the hip-hop environment do not feel like they are pressured to meet certain expectations and achieve perfection; instead, they feel like there is a greater focus placed on being able to self-express and be who you are based on your individual interpretation of hip-hop.

In summary, I investigated the role of socialization on attitudes. Based on participant responses in the ballet and hip-hop interviews, I saw noticeable differences in attitudes among ballet dancers and hip-hop dancers. Differences in discipline/obedience, being open-minded and accepting of change, striving for perfection, and self-expression and acceptance are a result of socialization according to one's environment. A primary factor that plays a role in socialization is the structure of the environment (i.e., scripted

vs. less scripted and regimented vs. less regimented). As dancers become more socialized in the environment, more tightly-controlled or more loosely-controlled situational meanings are internalized and related attitudes are more likely to be adopted and expressed. For example, being socialized in a less scripted and regimented environment is more likely to develop more loosely-controlled situational meanings and facilitate attitudes such as being more open-minded and accepting of change.

Tightness of Identity Control System

In examining how attitudes and situational meanings impact the identity process, my findings suggests that more tightly-controlled situational meanings and the corresponding attitudes that derive from this type of environment might facilitate a more tightly-controlled identity system. In examining the two dance environments and interviewing participants in each environment, the findings highlight the impact of the structure of the environment on the identity process, and the role of socialization on attitudes.

In assessing the ballet environment, when socialization occurs in an environment that has more tightly-controlled situational meanings, dancers assume more tightly-controlled attitudes (i.e., being less open-minded and accepting of change, striving for perfection, etc.). Many participants in the ballet environment described the difficulty ballet dancers have in accepting changes in the class structure and the specific instructions to movement, and always feeling as if they have to reach a certain amount of perfection. On the other hand, when dancers are socialized in the hip-hop environment,

which has more loosely-controlled situational meanings, dancers assumed loosely-controlled attitudes (i.e., being more open-minded and accepting, relaxed, etc.). Many participants reported the hip-hop environment makes them more open-minded, accepting, and self-confident. Therefore, this research suggests that assuming more tightly-controlled situational meanings and obtaining more tightly-controlled attitudes is linked to having a more tightly-controlled identity system. While this is suggested through my findings, this needs to be empirically tested in future research.

An interesting component of this research is the role of evaluation in the environment. According to identity theory, evaluation can make individuals feel anxious or nervous. Negative evaluations interrupt the goal of self-verification, which would result in distress (Burke 1991b). When the self is being evaluated, the situation can lead to identity verification or non-verification. Based on the specific instructions and the values and meanings behind what it means to be a ballet dancer, there is a tightly-controlled meaning behind ballet dance and the ballet dancer, which is more likely to produce identity non-verification.

While evaluation was still a part of the hip-hop environment, the relaxed nature and loosely-controlled meanings in the environment made dancers feel more relaxed and accepting. The dancers in the environment felt that despite being given critiques and evaluations, their goals were attainable because they were still able to express themselves and retain a sense of individuality. This reinforces previous research on more loosely-controlled identities that suggest that some variation between the perceptions and identity

standard can occur before experiencing distress. An examination of the role of evaluation on the environment and more tightly-controlled or loosely-controlled identities would be a beneficial topic for future research.

Discussion

By using the dance environment and dancer identity as a case study, this research has demonstrated how the social environment can facilitate more tightly-controlled or loosely- controlled meanings, and how socialization can impact attitudes and the tightness of the identity control system. This can be examined in various environments such as the workplace, academia, etc.

While the research provided information on how the social environment and socialization influences the identity process, there are a few areas left for future research. First, future research may want to empirically examine the effects of tightly-or loosely-controlled identities on one's ability to negotiate identity verification with others. As the findings suggest, the type of environment influences the tightness of the identity control system. Given that evaluation occurs in both environments, it would be interesting to examine how those with more tightly-controlled or loosely-controlled identities negotiate identity verification in these environments. There is also potential in performing a laboratory experiment to assess how tightly- controlled and loosely- controlled identities experience identity non-verification.

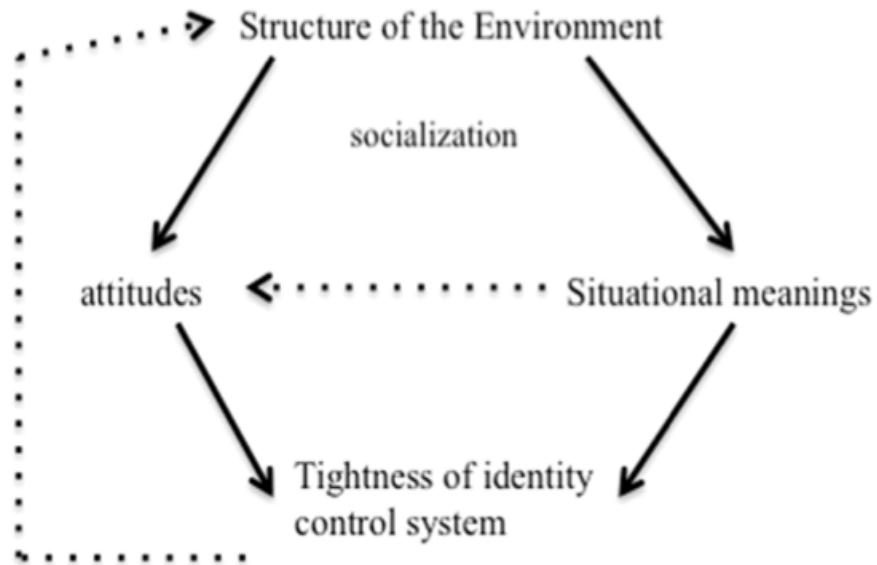
Second, future research would also benefit from empirically examining self-selection in these environments. In other words, does the identity an individual naturally assumes impact their inclination to participate in certain types of environments? Future

research might ask how the tightness of the identity control system prior to engaging in the environment might influence one's likelihood of choosing a particular environment. For example, based on predispositions of those who hold more tightly-controlled identities might make them more likely to become a member of a tightly-controlled environment. This is depicted through figure 2.

In addition, if an individual with a previously assumed tightly-controlled identity enters a less scripted and regimented environment that might hold more loosely-controlled meanings, how might this impact the person's ability to achieve identity verification? One might speculate that someone with a more tightly-controlled identity, who becomes accustomed to the structure of a more scripted and regimented environment might seek structure in a less scripted and regimented environment. On the other hand, someone with a more loosely-controlled identity might find a scripted and regimented environment too restrictive or structured.

In examining self-selection, the relationship between attitudes and situational meanings might want to be investigated. For example, do the situational meanings in the environment produce new attitudes, strengthen previously existing attitudes, or simply reinforce previously existing attitudes? This would take into account attitudes that might already be assumed prior to becoming a member of the environment. In instances where an individual with a more tightly-controlled identity enters a more loosely-controlled environment (i.e., less scripted and regimented) and vice versa, it would be interesting to examine if attitudes among these individuals change as they become integrated in the environment, or if these individuals choose to leave these environments.

Figure 2:



Next, it is also speculated that there may be possible gender differences among the dance population that may want to be further investigated in future research. In other words, given that the ballet dance community is heavily female-oriented, it might be beneficial to examine how men in these environments differ compared to men in the hip-hop environment, which tend to be more diverse.

Lastly, in regards to the tightly- and loosely- controlled dancer attributes, future research would benefit from examining the amount of social ties to an individual's identity to have a better sense of commitment to the role identity. Findings in the hip-hop environment suggest high levels of social interaction between the instructor and other dancers in this environment. On the other hand, findings in the ballet environment suggest that social interaction was limited primarily to instructor-dancer interaction.

Given the varying levels of interaction in the environments, an examination of the amount of social ties to an individual's identity in each environment might provide a better understanding of the level of commitment to the role identity.

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