

【外国語要約】

Self-Awareness of Career Practice in Professional Ballet Dancers:
A Qualitative Analysis from the interview

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The aim of this research is to identify the process of career practice in professional ballet dancers through literature review and qualitative analysis based on interviews.

Previously, characteristics in classical ballet culture, physical features and skills prominent in professional ballet dancers, and the formation of identity as a professional ballet dancer, have been topics of research. On the other hand, it has been pointed out that the practice of professional ballet dancers in relation to their career development has been limited to topics covered in interview articles and episodes in biographies.

In this paper, we focus on daily activities of professional ballet dancers and their knowledge on ballet practice and explore the details of the practice and its changes that take place over time. Through this we aim to depict the process of development of professional ballet dancers especially for the elite dancers such as the principal or the soloist.

This paper is structured in 4 chapters, consisted of literature review, a qualitative analysis of interviews, and a discussion. The first two chapters survey the literature on ballet dancers and expertise in the field of arts respectively.

Chapter 1 examines occupational characteristics of a professional ballet dancer based on literature review, interview articles, and autobiographies of dancers. Analyzing the literature based on anthropology, sociology, talent identification, and dance education, we found that professional ballet dancers have distinct physical features desired in ballet and have acquired high-level technical skills through intensive training. It was also suggested that the dancers tend to work in a perfectionistic manner to achieve their ideal. Another characteristic that emerged from the review was that their career development was influenced by the tradition and customs of the ballet world as well as the repertoires of the company. In addition to this, due to the ranking system in ballet companies, it was speculated that specific characteristics could be found in high ranked dancers, such as soloists and principals.

Chapter 2 reviews literature on expertise in the field of arts with a special focus on the expertise that occurred after acquiring basic skills and knowledge. At an advanced or professional level, artists acquire problem-solving skills incorporating various viewpoints, such as examining and modifying their interpretation by speculating an audience's and referencing coach's points of view. They are also able to work seamlessly not only by themselves but also in relation to others, such as dance partners or coaches, and sometimes in the group of an entire

company. Furthermore, it was suggested that advanced and professional artists form meanings and purpose in their artistic activities and place themselves in the context of the field they belong to. Based on the findings in chapters 1 and 2, the following characteristics of professional ballet dancers were deduced:

1. Professional ballet dancers have the ability to examine themselves from an objective point of view and make self-adjustments.
2. Professional ballet dancers have acquired knowledge and elements required to achieve high-level performance on stage.
3. There is a distinct development seen only among high-ranked dancers.
4. Professional ballet dancers practice their art not only in terms of individual success.
5. There is a process of finding one's originality based on tradition and values of ballet.

Chapter 3 analyzes the interviews with Japanese professional ballet dancers. SCAT method was used to extract characteristics of practice of professional ballet dancers from dancers' words, and the changes in practice that occurred during their career. Specific characteristics associated with each activity such as class work, rehearsal, and performance were found. Other characteristics were related to the entire process of preparing and performing on stage and shift in stages of career. It was speculated that the skills and knowledge acquired after becoming a professional were developed through accumulating stage experiences. It was also deduced that high-ranked dancers developed understanding and skills particular to soloists and principal dancers.

Chapter 4 explores the findings from chapters 1 through 3 and discusses the details and the details of practice in career of the of a professional ballet dancer. The characteristics deduced from the literature were evident from the interview analysis. From the interview, it was found that the dancers undergo trial and error to improve and reach the level they are expected to attain. We expected that dancers experience more demanding requests as they progress through the ranks. It was considered that this process leads to the development of a professional ballet dancer. Also, through their experience in soloist and principal roles, high-ranked dancers form their own expression as well as a philosophy on expression and obtain a practical understanding on leading the company. In addition, it was found that a dancer develops a sense of self within the company as well as society as they accumulate the experience as a professional dancer.

We concluded that the practice in career of a professional ballet dancer is a process of acquiring skills and knowledge necessary as a professional ballet dancer, as well as developing an understanding on the practice in career through accumulating professional experience. The characteristics seen especially in the high-ranked dancers is that they develop wholly as a professional, through forming self-awareness based on different practices in different ranks.