

1           **Running Head: PARENTING IN IRISH DANCE**

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7                           **Understanding Parental Involvement in Irish Dance**

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## Abstract

The overall aim of the present study was to understand how dancers' perception and parents' own perceptions of parents' responsiveness and competence support were associated with dancers' self-perceptions and thriving. In total, 64 dancers and 91 parents for a total of 52 matching dyads participated in the study. Dancers were aged 7 to 24 years, trained on average 4.17 times/weeks and were involved in Irish dancing for an average of 9.71 years. Participants completed self-reported questionnaires assessing their perceived responsiveness, competence support, self-perceptions, and thriving. Main analyses consisted of mediations performed with structural equation modelling. Results demonstrate that dancers' perceptions of their parents' responsiveness and competence support are associated with their self-perceptions and thriving. Responsiveness and competence support of their second parent was more strongly associated with thriving than responsiveness and competence support of the main parent. Parents' own perceptions of competence support were positively associated with dancers' thriving.

**Keywords:** Competence support, Responsiveness, Performance self-concept, Self-esteem, Thriving

39

## Introduction

40 Dancing is a popular leisure activity associated with a myriad of physical and  
41 psychosocial health benefits for children and adolescents (Burkhardt & Brennan, 2012). It is  
42 ubiquitous, often reflecting the cultural, societal, and historical evolution of various  
43 populations and communities (Fink et al., 2021). Irish dancing is one such genre, which has  
44 experienced a marked increase in global popularity and practice over the last number of  
45 decades (Bhriain & Cahalan, 2020). The emergence of noted Irish dance shows such as  
46 “Riverdance” ensured the expansion of the genre beyond the Irish diaspora to the  
47 international community (Foster, 2020). In contrast to other established genres such as ballet  
48 and contemporary dance, Irish dancing is largely a competitive pursuit involving local and  
49 regional events and culminating in the annual World Irish Dancing Championships for the  
50 most elite performers. Another key difference is the lack of educational institutions where  
51 Irish dancing is part of a broader curriculum, as may be the case for talented dancers from  
52 other dance genres. This means that Irish dancing is pursued outside of school hours, with the  
53 associated demands this places on the child and family.

54 It has been recognised within other performance domains, such as youth sport, that  
55 parents have the most enduring influence on children’s experience and their development  
56 (Harwood et al., 2019). Irish dance is very similar to youth sport, elite dancers are aesthetic  
57 athletes, balancing artistic expression with extreme physical demands in a highly competitive  
58 environment. It is typically an extra-curricular activity, with elite dancers frequently engaging  
59 in five or more training sessions per week and regular competitions, and as such are similarly  
60 reliant on parents as young athletes. Specifically, dancers require a great deal of logistical,  
61 financial, and emotional support from their parents and thus they are similarly influential  
62 within the lives of young dancers as in those of young athletes (Knight et al., 2020).  
63 Unfortunately, to-date, little research has focused on understanding how the specific parent-

64 child relationship influences child's dance experience and subsequently children's enjoyment  
65 and development (Knight et al., 2020). As such, one of the aims of the current study was to  
66 examine the influence parents' have on adolescent Irish dancers' psychosocial experiences.

67 Specifically, within youth sport contexts it has been recognised that parental  
68 responsiveness may be particularly influential when considering children's psychosocial  
69 experiences (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021a). Responsiveness describes how  
70 people in a relationship attend to and support each other's needs and goals, and includes  
71 perceptions of being understood, validated, and cared for (Reis & Gable, 2015). The extent to  
72 which parental behaviors are perceived to be responsive to their child's needs will influence  
73 whether they lead to positive or negative outcomes (Clarke et al., 2016; Knight & Holt,  
74 2014).

75 For instance, Rouquette and colleagues (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, Barrell, et al.,  
76 2021; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021a, 2021b) conducted a series of three studies  
77 exploring the relationship between responsiveness and a variety of athlete outcomes. The first  
78 study sought to understand how the responsiveness of specific parent-athlete interactions  
79 could influence immediate outcomes (i.e., self-efficacy) for young climbers based in Belgium  
80 (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021a). The second study examined how adolescent  
81 British rugby player's general perceptions of their parent's responsiveness could influence  
82 their thriving while mediated by athletes' self-esteem (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, Barrell, et  
83 al., 2021). The third study further examined the pathways through which athletes' perceptions  
84 of their parent's responsiveness could influence long-term psychosocial outcomes. This final  
85 study was conducted with adolescent athletes from several sports based in France (Rouquette,  
86 Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021b). Taken together, these studies showed that, across different  
87 sports and countries, the provision and/or perception of parental responsiveness is positively  
88 associated with athletes' self-perceptions (self-efficacy, self-esteem), leading to longer-term

89 positive psychosocial outcomes (namely reduced anxiety, and thriving) for adolescent  
90 athletes – although the influence and pathway to influence did vary between mothers and  
91 fathers (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, Barrell, et al., 2021; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé,  
92 2021a, 2021b). Given the similarities between youth sport and Irish dance, one may  
93 anticipate a similar outcome being identified among adolescent dancers and this study sought  
94 to explore this.

95 In addition to the broader influence of parental responsiveness on athletes' general self-  
96 esteem and thriving, research also suggests that competence support from significant others is  
97 related to athletes' performance self-concept (Muynck et al., 2020; Rocchi et al., 2017).  
98 Competence support is described as the ability by significant others to encourage learning  
99 and skill development, acknowledging improvements, providing positive feedback, and  
100 believing that others are capable of achieving their goals (Rocchi et al., 2017).

101 This is important because performance self-concept is embedded in the hierarchy of  
102 individual's self-perceptions, having bidirectional influences on both higher-level (self-  
103 esteem) and lower-level self-perceptions (self-efficacy; Marsh et al., 2018; Shavelson et al.,  
104 1976). In the present study, we were particularly interested in the association between  
105 competence support from parents and dancers' body self-concept and performance self-  
106 concept. This is because body self-concept is one component of athletes' general  
107 performance self-concept (Marsh et al., 1997), with sport participation generally associated  
108 with higher levels of both body self-concept and general performance self-concept (Marsh et  
109 al., 2007, 2018). Nonetheless, research tends to demonstrate that competitive dance may lead  
110 to negative perception of body image and body self-concept (Eusanio et al., 2014; Langdon &  
111 Petracca, 2010; Oliver, 2008), but this has not been explored in Irish dancing. Therefore, the  
112 present study sought to better understand how competence support from parents could be  
113 associated with Irish dancers' body self-concept and general performance self-concept.

114 In considering this question, it is also important to consider that parent-athletes/dancers  
115 relationships are dyadic and interdependent relationships (Dorsch et al., 2009; Rouquette,  
116 2020; Snyder & Purdy, 1982). In such dyadic relationship, both the influence of the  
117 athlete/dancer beliefs (e.g., actor effect) and the influence of the parent beliefs (partner effect)  
118 could be accounted for when modeling either the actor (e.g., dancer) or partner (e.g., parent)  
119 outcomes (Cook & Kenny, 2005; Kenny & Cook, 1999; Kenny & Kashy, 2013; Rouquette,  
120 2020). For instance, a study among 146 competitive young athletes and one of their parents  
121 ( $n = 73$ ) in the USA showed that parents' own achievement goals were related to athletes'  
122 anxiety (Kaye et al., 2015). Another study among student-athletes in the USA also showed  
123 that both parent and athletes' perception of parents' responsiveness was associated with  
124 higher levels of athletes' needs satisfaction (Kaye et al., 2019). Therefore, we expect that  
125 dancer's perceptions of parents' responsiveness and competence support will be positively  
126 related to their self-perceptions (self-esteem, performance self-concept, and body self-  
127 concept) and thriving. We also expect that parents' own perception of responsiveness and  
128 competence support will be related to athletes' self-perceptions and thriving. To this end, the  
129 overall aim of the present study was to understand how dancers' perception and parents' own  
130 perception of their parents' responsiveness and competence support will be associated with  
131 dancers' self-perceptions (i.e., self-esteem, performance self-concept, body self-concept) and  
132 thriving.

## 133 Method

### 134 Participants

135 In total, 64 dancers (62 females and 2 males) and 91 parents (89 female, 2 male) for a  
136 total of 52 matching dyads of dancer-parent participated in the study. Dancers' age ranged  
137 from 7 to 24 years ( $M_{\text{age}} = 15.16$ ,  $SD = 2.76$ ). Dancers trained on average 4.17 times/weeks  
138 ( $SD = 1.25$ ) and were involved in Irish dancing for an average of 9.71 years ( $SD = 3.67$ ).

## 139 **Procedure**

140           Following receipt of ethical approval, a survey comprising a series of measures was  
141 emailed to Irish dancing contacts of investigator RC who is a qualified Irish dancing teacher  
142 and adjudicator. Snowball recruitment was also encouraged with the aforementioned contacts  
143 encouraged to share the study information with their networks. Details of the project were  
144 also shared on targeted social media sites used by the Irish dancing community globally.  
145 Interested potential participants were then supplied with information and consent sheets.  
146 Upon receipt of consent from both parent and child, a link to an online survey comprising a  
147 series of measures was emailed to participants. Separate links to bespoke surveys were sent to  
148 parents and children.

## 149 **Measures**

150           *Perceived parental responsiveness.* Dancers' perceptions of parental responsiveness  
151 for their most involved parent, and second parent as well as parent's own perception of their  
152 responsiveness were assessed with a four-item version of the Perceived Partner  
153 Responsiveness Scale (PPRS; Jiang et al., 2017; Reis et al., 2011). The PPRS was used to  
154 assess the extent to which participants perceived that a particular relationship was responsive  
155 to their needs. The four items are: 1) *On the whole, in the recent interactions, I get the feeling*  
156 *that my parent really listens to me;* 2) *On the whole, in recent interactions, I get the feeling*  
157 *that my parent values my abilities and opinions;* 3) *On the whole, in recent interactions, I get*  
158 *the feeling that my parent, and;* 4) *On the whole, in recent interactions, I get the feeling that*  
159 *my parent is responsive to my needs.* Responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale  
160 ranging from 1 (*completely not true*) to 5 (*completely true*). An additional NA option was  
161 provided for participants who reported having no contact with one of their parents. Dancers'  
162 perception of responsiveness of their most involved parent ( $\omega_t = 0.94$ ) and dancers'  
163 perception of responsiveness of their second most involved parent ( $\omega_t = 0.88$ ) as well as

164 parents' own perception of responsiveness ( $\omega_t = 0.73$ ) showed a good internal consistency.  
165 The four items accounting for dancers' perceptions of their parents and parent's own  
166 perception of responsiveness were averaged respectively into single scores of perceived  
167 parent responsiveness, perceived second parent responsiveness and parent perceived  
168 responsiveness with higher scores representing higher perceptions of responsiveness.

169 ***Perceived parental competence support (PPCS).*** Dancers' perceptions of parental  
170 competence support for their most involved parent, and second parent as such as parent's  
171 own perception of perception support were assessed with the four items from the  
172 Interpersonal Behaviour Questionnaire (Rocchi et al., 2017). The PPCS was used to assess  
173 the extent to which participants perceived that a particular relationship was supporting their  
174 competence in Irish dancing. The four items are: *“On the whole, in the recent interactions, I*  
175 *get the feeling that this person encourages me to improve my skills / Provides valuable*  
176 *feedbacks / Acknowledges my ability to achieve my goals / Tells me that I can accomplish*  
177 *things.”* Responses were provided on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely not*  
178 *true*) to 5 (*completely true*). An additional NA option was provided for participants who  
179 reported having no contact with one of their parents. Dancers' perception of competence  
180 support of their most involved parent ( $\omega_t = 0.85$ ), dancers' perception of competence support  
181 of their second most involved parent ( $\omega_t = 0.89$ ) and parents' own perception of competence  
182 support ( $\omega_t = 0.73$ ) showed a good internal consistency. The four items accounting for  
183 dancers' perceptions of their parents were averaged respectively into single scores of  
184 perceived parent competence support, perceived second parent competence support and  
185 parent perceived competence support with higher scores representing stronger perceptions of  
186 parents' competence support.

187 ***Self-esteem.*** Dancers' self-esteem were assessed with the five items from the short  
188 version of the Physical Self-Description Questionnaire (Marsh et al., 2010). Participants



189 indicated the extent to which, during the last month in their everyday life, (a) *they had a lot to*  
190 *be proud of*, (b) *they did well*, or (c) *things turned out well*; and (d) *if they were no good* or (e)  
191 *if nothing they did ever seemed to turn out right* (reverse items). Participants responded on a  
192 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale showed a  
193 good internal consistency both for dancers and parents ( $\omega_t = 0.77$ ,  $\omega_t = 0.86$  respectively).  
194 The five items were averaged into a global score of self-esteem with higher scores indicating  
195 increased levels of self-esteem.

196 ***Performance self-concept.*** Dancers' perceived performance self-concept was  
197 assessed with six items from the performance self-concept scale (Perry & Marsh, 2003).  
198 Participants indicated how they felt about their performance during the last week with: (a) *I*  
199 *consistently performed to the level of my ability*, (b) *My performance this week overall is*  
200 *particularly good*, (c) *My performance this week consistently meets my goals or expectations*,  
201 *(d) I am consistently able to give my best overall performance this week*, (e) *I excel this week*  
202 *because I am able to give a peak performance when necessary*, and (f) *I am consistently able*  
203 *to "put it all together" (the skills, body, aerobic, anaerobic, and the mental side of things)*  
204 *when performing this week*. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly*  
205 *disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale showed a good internal consistency ( $\omega_t = 0.87$ ).  
206 The six items were averaged into a global score of performance self-concept with higher  
207 scores indicating increased levels of performance self-concept.

208 ***Body self-concept.*** Dancers' perceived body self-concept was assessed with four  
209 items from the body self-concept (Perry & Marsh, 2003). Participants indicated how they felt  
210 about their performance during the last week with: (a) *I excel because of the suitability of my*  
211 *body composition for Irish dancing*, (b) *I excel because of the suitability of my body shape for*  
212 *Irish dancing*, (c) *I excel because of the suitability of my body structure for Irish dancing*, (d)  
213 *Having the right body helps me perform well in Irish dancing*. Participants responded on a 5-

214 point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The scale showed a good  
215 internal consistency ( $\omega_t = 0.85$ ). The four items were averaged into a global score of body  
216 self-concept with higher scores indicating increased levels of body self-concept.

217 **Thriving.** Thriving can be defined as an optimal state of general wellbeing (Feeney &  
218 Collins, 2015; Longo et al., 2016), and assessed with usual indicators such as positive affect,  
219 vitality, and life satisfaction (Gallagher et al., 2009; Longo et al., 2016). In the current study,  
220 dancers' positive affect was assessed with the five positive affect items from the 10-item  
221 PANAS-C (Ebesutani et al., 2012). The items demonstrated good internal reliability ( $\omega_t =$   
222 0.87) and were averaged into a global score of positive affect. Dancers' subjective vitality  
223 was assessed with the 5-item subjective vitality scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). Participants  
224 responded on a 5-point Likert scale anchored at 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*),  
225 the extent to which, during the last month in their everyday life, (a) *they felt full of*  
226 *excitement*, (b) *they had high spirit*, (c) *they looked forward to each day*, (d) *they felt alert*  
227 *and awake*, and (e) *if they had a lot of energy* (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). The five items  
228 demonstrated a good internal reliability (i.e.,  $\omega_t = 0.89$ ) and were averaged into a global score  
229 of vitality. Dancers' life satisfaction was assessed with the single item of Cantril's Ladder of  
230 self-rated life satisfaction (Cantril, 1965). This ladder ranged from 0 (*I have the worst*  
231 *possible life for me at the moment*) to 10 (*I have the best possible life for me at the moment*).

232 All three measures have been used previously with children and as an indicator of  
233 thriving in previous studies (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021a, 2021b). The  
234 components of thriving (affect, vitality, life satisfaction) were averaged into a new variable,  
235 *thriving* ( $M = 3.92$ ,  $SD = 0.62$ ) for each dancer participant, with good internal reliability (i.e.,  
236  $\omega_t = 0.90$ ) and with higher scores representing higher levels of thriving.

237 **Data analysis**

238 Main analyses consisted of mediations accounting for the full paths of direct and  
239 indirect effects (Yzerbyt et al., 2018). The mediation analyses were performed with structural  
240 equation modelling accounting for non-independence between the actor and partner effect  
241 (Brown, 2015; Kenny & Kashy, 2013). The models also controlled for dancer's age.

#### 242 **Data transparency and openness**

243 The present study design and hypothesis were not preregistered. The present study  
244 was approved by Swansea University (CK\_25-08-21). The ethical approval did not allow to  
245 share the raw data due to concerns pertaining to disclosing participants identity. We followed  
246 American Psychological Association 7<sup>th</sup> Edition standards for reporting quantitative research  
247 (Appelbaum et al., 2018). The data analysis was conducted in R (*R: A Language and*  
248 *Environment for Statistical Computing*, 2019) version 4.3.1 throughout R-Studio (version  
249 2023.12.1). All data were collected online with Microsoft Forms. The full script of analyses,  
250 questionnaires used, and comprehensive results are available on an OSF repository [here](#).  
251 Results from previous studies showed that we could expect medium ( $\beta = 0.3$  to  $\beta = 0.5$ ) to  
252 large ( $\beta \geq 0.5$ ) effect sizes for the association between perceived responsiveness and  
253 thriving while mediated by dancer's self-perceptions (Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, Barrell, et  
254 al., 2021; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021b, 2021a). We did not perform a-priori  
255 power analysis but the final sample size of 64 dancers and 91 parents for a total of 52  
256 matching dyads was sufficient based on empirical estimates of sample size needed for 0.8  
257 power with medium to large effect sizes (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). Only the data from the  
258 matched dyads ( $n = 52$ ) was used for the models, the other data was discarded.

#### 259 **Results**

260 The correlations (Table 1) indicated that dancers' perception of their parent  
261 responsiveness (Main PPR) is related to their perception of their second parent  
262 responsiveness (Second PPR) but not with parent's own perception of their responsiveness

263 (Parent PPR). Similarly, dancers' perception of their parents' competence support (Main  
264 PCS) is positively associated with their perceptions of their second parent's competence  
265 support (Second PCS) but not with their parent's own perception of their competence support  
266 (Parent PCS). Dancers' self-esteem is positively associated with dancers' perception of their  
267 second PPR only. Dancer's performance self-concept is positively associated with both their  
268 perception of second parents PPR and PCS and with parents' own PPR and PCS, while  
269 dancers' body self-concept is associated with their perception of second parents PPR and  
270 PCS. As expected, dancers' level of thriving is positively related to their self-esteem,  
271 performance self-concept, and body self-concept.

272 **Table 1**

273 *Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Main PPR	4.44	0.86									
2. Second PPR	4.19	0.91	.52**								
			[.31, .68]								
3. Parent PPR	4.67	0.38	.19	.23							
			[-.09, .45]	[-.05, .48]							
4. Main PCS	4.46	0.78	.78**	.52**	.07						
			[.66, .86]	[.31, .68]	[-.21, .34]						
5. Second PCS	4.15	0.97	.49**	.80**	.13	.67**					
			[.27, .66]	[.69, .88]	[-.15, .40]	[.51, .79]					
6. Parent PCS	4.70	0.39	.09	.11	.43**	.06	.06				
			[-.19, .36]	[-.18, .37]	[.17, .63]	[-.22, .33]	[-.22, .34]				
7. Self-esteem	4.15	0.53	.23	.39**	.13	.22	.30*	.09			
			[-.02, .45]	[.16, .58]	[-.15, .40]	[-.03, .45]	[.05, .51]	[-.19, .36]			
8. Performance self-concept	3.75	0.76	.19	.38**	.36*	.22	.48**	.31*	.23		
			[-.07, .42]	[.14, .58]	[.09, .58]	[-.03, .45]	[.26, .66]	[.04, .54]	[-.02, .46]		
9. Body self-concept	3.62	0.65	.13	.44**	.18	.20	.48**	.10	.26*	.53**	
			[-.13, .37]	[.20, .62]	[-.11, .43]	[-.06, .43]	[.25, .65]	[-.18, .37]	[.01, .48]	[.32, .69]	
10. Thriving	3.71	0.63	-.01	.16	.06	-.03	.02	.13	.46**	.39**	.27*
			[-.26, .24]	[-.10, .39]	[-.22, .33]	[-.27, .22]	[-.23, .27]	[-.15, .39]	[.24, .63]	[.15, .58]	[.02, .49]

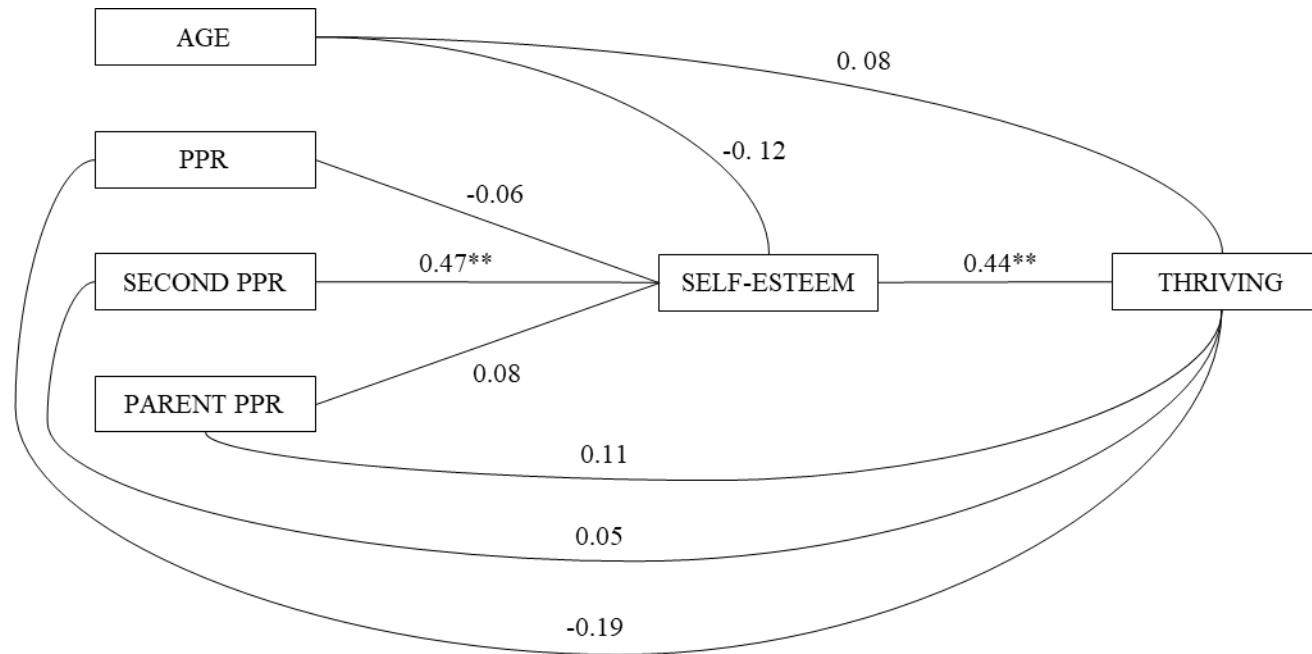
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275 *Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval

276 for each correlation. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

277

278           The first model (Table 2) tested the relationship between athletes' perception of their  
279 most involved parent's responsiveness (Main PPR), athletes' perception of their second  
280 parent responsiveness (Second PPR), and their parent's own perceived responsiveness  
281 (Parent PPR) on their thriving while mediated by their self-esteem. This model showed a  
282 significant relationship between the second parent responsiveness and thriving while  
283 mediated by athletes' self-esteem. The model explains 21.2% ( $f^2 \approx 0.269$ ) of the variance  
284 for athletes' self-esteem and 27.8% ( $f^2 \approx 0.385$ ) of the variance for their thriving.



285

286 *Figure 1 - Mediation model assessing the association between dancers' perception of their parent responsiveness (PPR), second parent*  
 287 *responsiveness (second PPR), and parent own perception of their responsiveness (Parent PPR) on dancers' thriving while mediated by dancers'*  
 288 *s self-esteem. \* = p < 0.05, \*\* = p < 0.001*

289 **Table 2.**

290 Model 1.

Independent variable (IV)	Mediator variable (MV)	Dependent variable (DV)	a path coefficient (IV – MV)	b path coefficient (MV – DV)	Indirect effect	90% CI indirect effect
Main PPR			-0.065		-0.029	-0.146: 0.088
<b>Second PPR</b>	Self-esteem	Thriving	<b>0.469**</b>	<b>0.445***</b>	<b>0.209*</b>	0.056: 0.363
Parent PPR			0.076		0.037	-0.056: 0.124

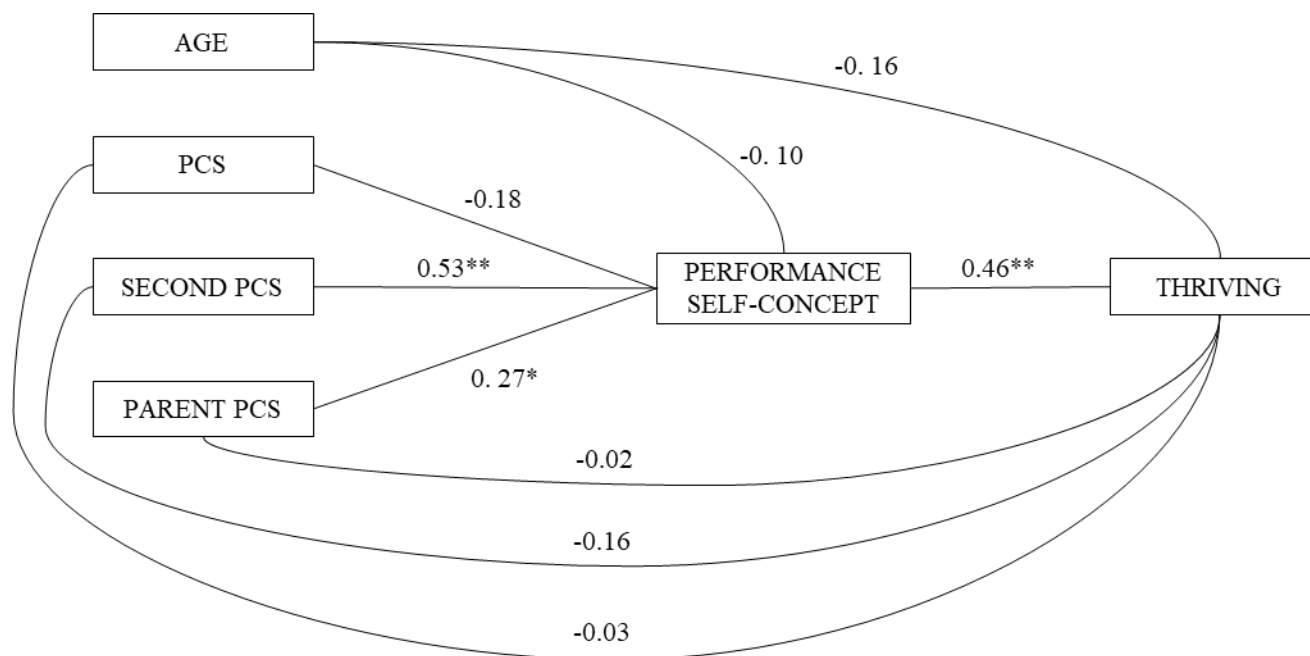
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292           The second model (Table 3) tested the relationship between athletes' perception of  
293 their most involved parent's competence support (Main PCS), athletes' perception of their  
294 second parent competence support (Second PCS), and their parent's own perceived  
295 competence support (Parent PCS) on their thriving while mediated by their athletes'  
296 performance self-concept. This model showed a significant relationship between the  
297 second parent responsiveness and thriving while mediated by athletes' performance self-  
298 concept. The model also showed a significant relationship between parent's own  
299 competence support and athletes' thriving while mediated by athletes' performance self-  
300 concept. The model explains 28.2% of the variance for athletes' performance self-concept  
301 ( $f^2 \approx 0.392$ ) and 21.7% of the variance for their thriving ( $f^2 \approx 0.277$ ).

302

\*\*\*\*\*Insert Figure 2 here \*\*\*\*\*





303

304 *Figure 2 - Mediation model assessing the association between dancers' perception of their parent competence support (PCS), second parent*  
 305 *competence support (second PCS), and parent own perception of their competence support (Parent PCS) on dancers' thriving while mediated by*  
 306 *dancers' s performance self-concept. \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.001$*

307 **Table 3.**

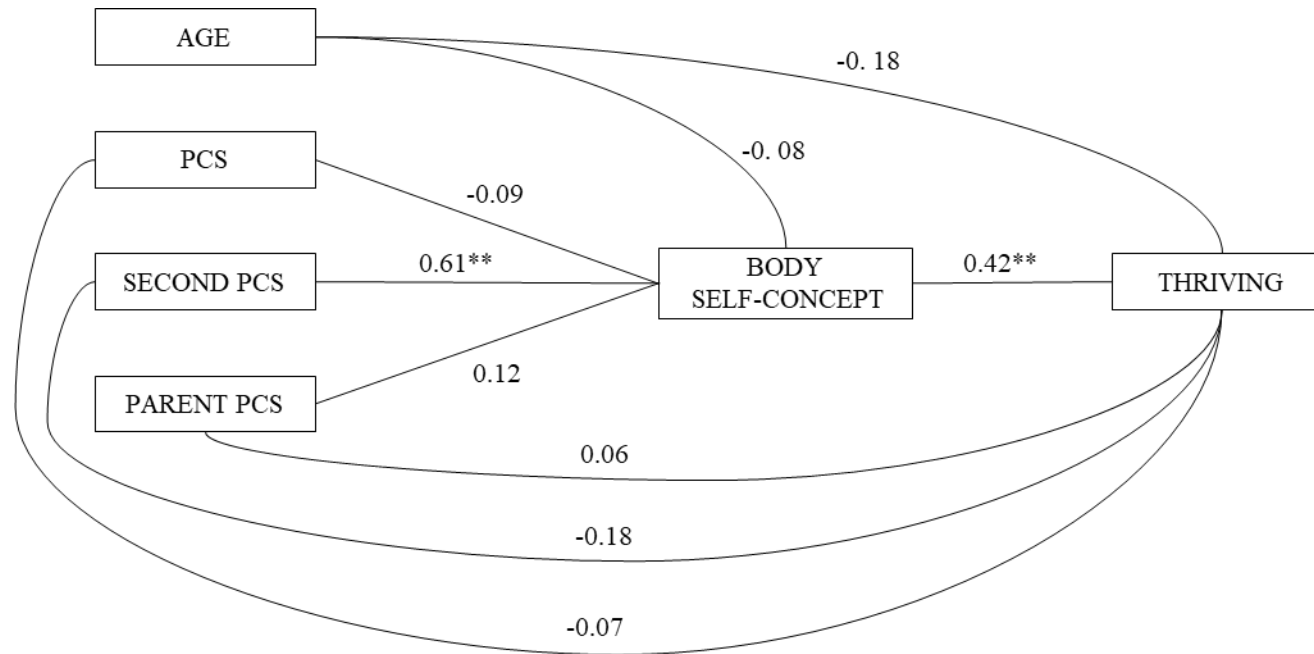
308 Model 2.

309

Independent variable (IV)	Mediator variable (MV)	Dependent variable (DV)	a path coefficient (IV – MV)	b path coefficient (MV – DV)	Indirect effect	90% CI indirect effect
Main PCS	Performance self-concept	Thriving	-0.174	<b>0.465***</b>	-0.081	-0.195: 0.032
Second PCS			<b>0.527**</b>		<b>0.245*</b>	0.055: 0.437
Parent PCS			<b>0.273**</b>		<b>0.127*</b>	0.022: 0.232

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320

321 *Figure 3 - Mediation model assessing the association between dancers' perception of their parent competence support (PCS), second parent*  
 322 *competence support (second PCS), and parent own perception of their competence support (Parent PCS) on dancers' thriving while mediated by*  
 323 *dancers' s body self-concept. \* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.001$*

324 **Table 4.**

325 Model 3.

Independent variable (IV)	Mediator variable (MV)	Dependent variable (DV)	a path coefficient (IV – MV)	b path coefficient (MV – DV)	Indirect effect	90% CI indirect effect
Main PCS			-0.092		-0.039	-0.119: 0.041
Second PCS	Body self-concept	Thriving	<b>0.612***</b>	<b>0.422***</b>	<b>0.259**</b>	0.097: 0.421
Parent PCS			0.118		0.050	-0.025: 0.124

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## Discussion

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The purpose of the present study was to understand how dancers' perceptions of their parents' responsiveness and competence support, as well as parents' own perceptions of their parents' responsiveness and competence support are associated with dancers' self-perceptions (i.e., self-esteem, performance self-concept, body self-concept) and thriving. Overall, the results demonstrate that dancers' perceptions of their parents' responsiveness and competence support are both associated with dancers' self-perceptions and subsequently thriving (mediated through different pathways). Particularly, the responsiveness and competence support of their second parent (i.e., the parent who they perceive to have more secondary influence or involvement) was found to be more strongly associated with thriving than the responsiveness and competence support of the main parent. Parents' own perceptions of competence support were positively associated with dancers' thriving while mediated by their performance self-concept. However, parents' own perceptions of their responsiveness were not associated with either dancers' perceptions of these behaviors or with dancers' self-perceptions and thriving. Taken together, these findings have important implications both from a research and applied perspective, particularly with regards to whom we are engaging within studies pertaining to parental involvement and also seeking to include within parent support or education programs.

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The current study builds upon previous research pertaining to parental responsiveness within youth sport contexts (including, rugby, handball, and individual sports such as sport climbing, athletics, tennis, swimming, and gymnastics; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, Barrell, et al., 2021; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021b, 2021a). Specifically, the findings illustrate that, as with youth sport, children's perceptions of their parents' responsiveness in dance are indirectly associated with thriving while mediated through self-esteem. The confirmation of this association in an additional performance context (i.e., Irish dance)

352 alongside the series of studies within youth sport, reiterates the importance of working with  
353 parents to help them to understand what responsiveness is and the importance of displaying  
354 responsiveness to support thriving within performance contexts.

355         Expanding the focus beyond responsiveness, the current study demonstrates that there  
356 may be an additional benefit of encouraging parents to display competence support to their  
357 children. Specifically, the results demonstrate that dancers' perceptions of their parents'  
358 competence support influences thriving, mediated through performance self-concept. This  
359 association is anticipated, given that previous literature has demonstrated that perceived  
360 competence support has a positive association with athletes' motivation (Muynck et al.,  
361 2020). However, to our knowledge, this is the first study to demonstrate the link to thriving  
362 and as such, it may be beneficial to provide parents with information and guidance regarding  
363 how to display competence support to their children. However, some caution must also be  
364 taken when considering competence support, notably that it does not become perceived as  
365 conditional support (i.e., that support is only provided when/if children are succeeding in  
366 sport). If the support is perceived by children as conditional to their involvement and success  
367 in an activity, it may lead to fluctuations in self-esteem, negative feelings, and lower levels of  
368 thriving (Assor & Tal, 2012; Wuyts et al., 2015).

369         Importantly, the current findings suggest there is a need to ensure that we are not only  
370 providing support or guidance regarding the value of responsiveness and competence support  
371 to dancer/athlete's main parent. Rather, we would suggest that targeting support at both  
372 parents (if available) and particularly the parent who is typically perceived to be less involved  
373 (i.e., the second parent) in the child's performance activity would be particularly beneficial.  
374 Such a suggestion is made because, within the current study, dancers' perceptions of their  
375 second parents' perceived responsiveness and competence support had a stronger association  
376 with self-esteem and subsequently thriving than the perceived responsiveness of the main

377 parent. The previous studies that are available for comparison (e.g., Rouquette, Knight,  
378 Lovett, Barrell, et al., 2021; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé, 2021b, 2021a) only  
379 included perceptions of perceived responsiveness of the most involved parent or accounted  
380 for their influence separately and thus it is not possible to conclude whether this difference in  
381 the influence of the main and second parent would have been present in youth sport contexts.  
382 But clearly, given the difference established in this study, as well as the previous literature  
383 that has demonstrated that parents within the same family have differing roles and potential  
384 impact within performance contexts (e.g., Holt et al., 2009; Mårs et al., 2024), future research  
385 within youth sport contexts should include both parents (where possible) and consider their  
386 unique and combined influences on child-outcomes.

387         In considering why there is a difference in the strength of association between  
388 perceived responsiveness and competence support of the main versus the second parent on  
389 dancers' self-perceptions and thriving there are two considerations. First, it is important to  
390 recognize that the scores for perceived responsiveness for both parents (i.e., the main and the  
391 second parent) were high but particularly high for the main parent across all participants.  
392 Thus, it may be that a ceiling effect occurred and the lack of differentiation in perceptions of  
393 responsiveness across the participant group regarding the main parent prevented the  
394 identification of differences in the influence on thriving. Second, in reviewing the data, it is  
395 apparent that across the dancer participant group, mothers were exclusively identified as the  
396 main parent, while the second parent was exclusively fathers. Given that dance is  
397 traditionally perceived as a female-dominated/feminine activity (e.g., Clegg et al., 2019;  
398 Clements & Clegg, 2022) and an activity in which both sons and daughters may perceive less  
399 support from their fathers compared to their mothers (Polasek & Roper, 2011), the  
400 identification of fathers as the second parent is not surprising. However, in this context, it

401 may be that fathers' involvement in an area in which they are traditionally not involved or  
402 perceived to be supportive is particularly desirable and influential.

403         Furthermore, the value placed on fathers' involvement within this study is also  
404 consistent with research conducted within youth sport. Specifically, within the youth sport  
405 context, it has been recognised that fathers' can be particularly important or influential,  
406 although the research is not always consistent (see Dorsch et al., 2021). For instance, it has  
407 been shown that children may place more weight on their father's informational feedback  
408 (Mars et al., 2024). Thus, the current findings appear to suggest that it may be that any sort of  
409 involvement of fathers in a performance context (e.g., sport, dance) is more important or  
410 valued than that of mothers. However, what is particularly interesting is that this similarity in  
411 findings appears even though father's involvement in these two contexts is typically  
412 perceived to be so different. That is, youth sport has traditionally been recognized as a  
413 context in which fathers can be heavily involved and an avenue through which fathers can  
414 seek to develop a connection with their children (Coakley, 2006), while their involvement in  
415 dance is usually limited. Exploring these gendered roles and perceptions across different  
416 research contexts and family structures (e.g., same sex couples) would be useful to fully  
417 explore the why fathers appear to be so influential.

418         Considering this suggestion within the context of other performance domains, such as  
419 sport, studies of parental involvement have frequently highlighted differences in the influence  
420 of mothers and fathers, with further differences being apparent depending upon the sex of the  
421 child ( i.e., there is a difference apparent between father-son and father-daughter relationships  
422 and interactions; Dorsch et al., 2021). Specifically, the involvement of fathers has often been  
423 particularly valued within sport contexts and recognized as a context through which fathers  
424 often feel comfortable parenting (Kay, 2009). Interestingly, however, fathers' influence on  
425 their daughters' involvement in sport has traditionally been more focused on participation

426 than performance (in comparison to the emphasis for sons; Dorsch et al., 2021).  
427 Unfortunately, despite this body of research, recent literature on sport parenting has often not  
428 considered or accounted for parent role (i.e., mother or father), often only collecting data  
429 regarding or from one parents (typically classified as the most involved parent (Felber  
430 Charbonneau & Camiré, 2020; Knight et al., 2016; Rouquette, Knight, Lovett, & Heuzé,  
431 2021a). Given the distinction in the influence of mothers and fathers in the context of sport,  
432 as well as the current findings in the context of Irish dance, we would contend that future  
433 research pertaining to parenting across performance contexts would benefit from considering  
434 mothers' and fathers' unique and combined influence on their children.

435         Linked to the above, the current findings also reiterate the importance on focusing on  
436 children's perceptions of parenting behaviors, separate to and alongside parents' own  
437 perceptions. Overall, within the current study, parents perceived themselves to be highly  
438 responsive and competence supportive and there was very little variance between  
439 participants. This may indicate that participants were responding in a socially desirable  
440 manner and with such little variance in responses it did not appear that parents' perceptions  
441 of either their responsiveness or competence support influenced child outcomes. Further,  
442 within the current study, there was no association between parents' perceptions of either their  
443 responsiveness or competence support and that of the dancers. This finding is not entirely  
444 unexpected, given that previous research has demonstrated that parents and children perceive  
445 parents' behaviors differently (e.g., Felber Charbonneau & Camiré, 2020). However, what is  
446 perhaps unexpected is the fact that there was no association between children and parent  
447 perceptions at all. It is difficult to identify exactly why these was no association between  
448 parents' and dancers' perceptions at all. It may be due to the aforementioned suggestion of  
449 social desirability bias in parents' responses or due to parents' (particularly the lesser  
450 involved parents') limited understanding of the context of dance. Furthermore, it might arise



451 due to the suggested large generational gap between parents and their children (e.g., Twenge,  
452 2023). While it is unknown why parents and children view parents' behaviors so differently,  
453 it seems important that researchers work to understand why these differences in perceptions  
454 exist as well as practitioners working directly with parents to help them to better understand  
455 their own behaviors and how they may be perceived from a child's perspective. Furthermore,  
456 it highlights the importance of including both parents and children in studies when exploring  
457 perceptions of each other.

#### 458 **Limitation and Future Research**

459         Within the current study, data was obtained from children regarding their self-  
460 identified main parent in the context of dance and their second parent. Subsequently,  
461 information was obtained from the main parent. However, data was not collected from the  
462 second parent. Given the distinction in findings regarding the influence of the main and the  
463 second parent on dancers' thriving, the lack of information from the second parent limits  
464 some of the conclusions that can be drawn. Specifically, when considering parents own and  
465 children's perceptions of parental responsiveness and competence support, the available data  
466 suggests there is no association. However, it is not possible to conclude that this is the same  
467 association that would be present if perceptions of parental responsiveness and competence  
468 support had been obtained from the second parent. Thus, future research should seek to  
469 obtain such insights from both the main and the second parent.

470         Secondly, dancers were free to indicate who they perceived was their main parent and  
471 who was their second parent. These terms were chosen to ensure inclusivity, not assuming  
472 that all children had a mother and father. It transpired that, in our context, all dancers selected  
473 their mother as their main parent and father as the second parent. Subsequently, when a  
474 distinction in the influence of the main and the second parent was identified, it is unclear if  
475 the difference in influence is tied to the parenting role (i.e., mother/father) or their level of

476 involvement in their child's dance, or both. Future research may benefit from explicitly  
477 seeking out children and parents, where the father is perceived as the main parent and the  
478 mother is the second, to see if the same findings are replicated. Additionally, research with  
479 parents of the same gender (i.e., two mothers or two fathers) may also be beneficial. Linked  
480 to this, given the potential gendered finding identified in the current study, future research  
481 with boys (both within dance and also in other performance contexts) would be useful to shed  
482 light on the extent to which the findings in this study are due to the mother-daughter/father-  
483 daughter relationship and role expectations.

484         When interpreting the findings of this study, several further limitations must be  
485 considered. The use of self-reported scales may introduce biases such as recall bias or social  
486 desirability bias, where participants might provide responses they perceive as socially  
487 acceptable rather than entirely accurate, potentially affecting data reliability. The snowball  
488 recruitment strategy used in this study could result in a homogenous sample, limiting the  
489 generalisability of the findings to a broader population. Additionally, the reliance on a  
490 convenience sample rather than random sampling may introduce selection bias, which could  
491 impact the representativeness of the sample.

## 492 **Conclusion**

493         In conclusion, the current study is the first to explore the influence of parents on Irish  
494 dancers' self-perceptions and subsequent thriving. The results show that dancers' perceptions  
495 of the responsiveness and competence support provided from both the most involved parent  
496 (in this study the mother) as well as dancers' other parent are indirectly associated with  
497 thriving through self-esteem and perceived body satisfaction respectively. However, the  
498 association is stronger for the second parent than the main parent. There is no association  
499 between parents' perceptions of their own responsiveness or competence support and  
500 children's perceptions of their parents' responsiveness and competence support.

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