A Content Analysis of Negative Comments on Ballet Dancers' Instagram Posts

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INTRODUCTION

-Ballet is an artistic dance where carefully organized movements tell a story or express an idea which use this type of dancing.
-Ballet dancers that are seriously considering going into the field typically have an Instagram account with videos of them dancing.
-6 in 10 adolescents use Instagram (Vogels, 2022) which is important in this study because the ballet dancers analyzed were adolescents.
-Body-image issues are a rising problem among adolescents, especially in aesthetic sports such as ballet (Doria, 2022).
-Past studies show that social media usage is associated with body image concerns among adolescents (Fardouly, 2016).
Gap:
-There are very few, if any, studies that specifically examine negative comments of ballet dancers' posts on Instagram.
-Adolescents are infrequently represented in this field of research.
Study Purpose:
This study aims to examine negative comments on young ballet dancers' Instagram posts, and to explore how these posts could affect individuals' body image.

METHODS

Content analysis was used. This format facilitates a large sample set of data that can be filtered via hashtags and keywords.
Subjects:
-The subjects were people commenting on videos of adolescent ballet dancers on Instagram.
Data collection:
-Subjects were determined through searching the hashtag: #balletdancer on Instagram and choosing every 3rd video that pops up.
-If the video seemed to look like a person older than an adolescent, the video was skipped and the 3rd video from there was selected instead.
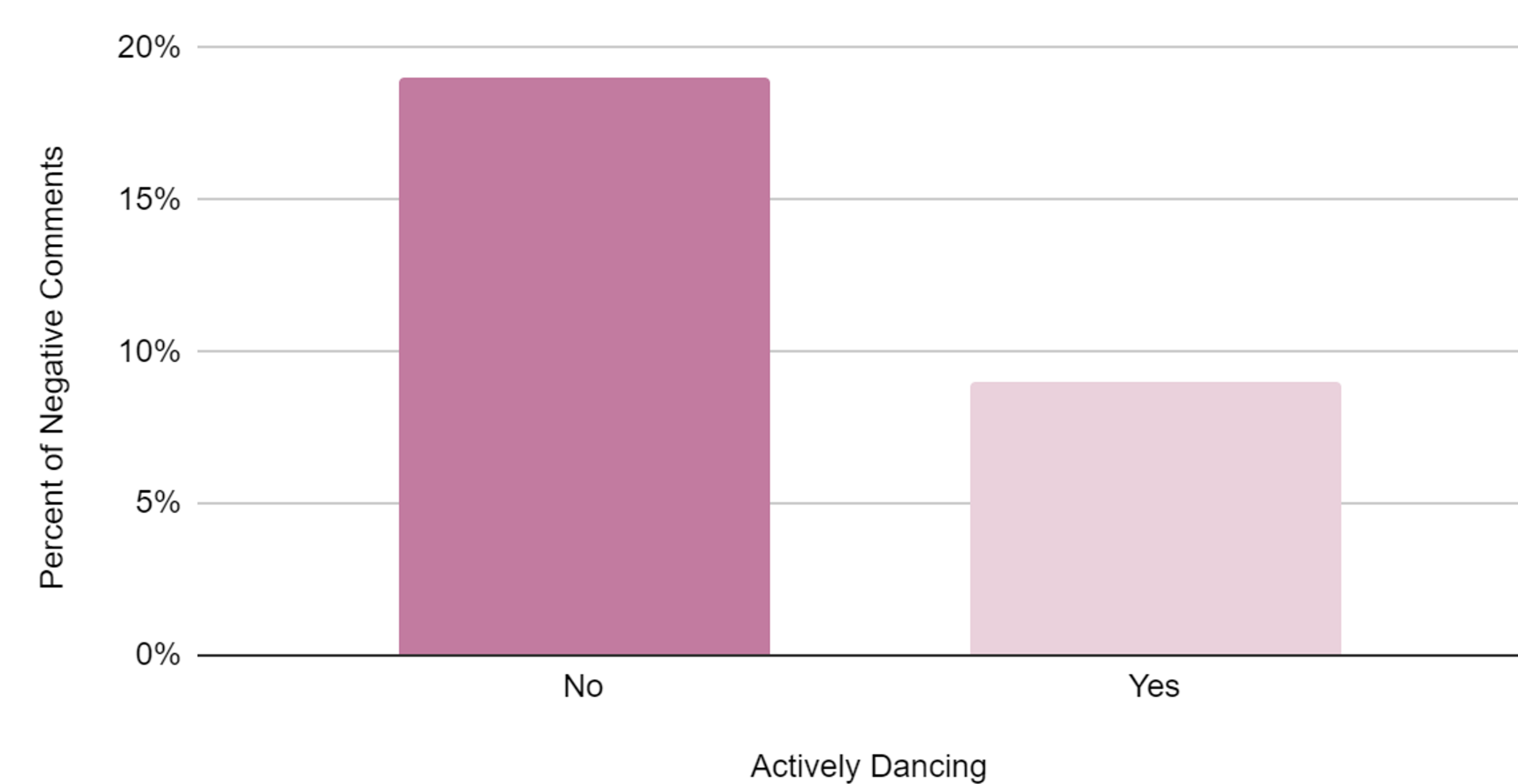-Then, the comments section was analyzed. 30 reels were used to collect data.
-All comments were coded as negative or non-negative. Then, up to 5 negative comments were chosen from each post for further analysis.

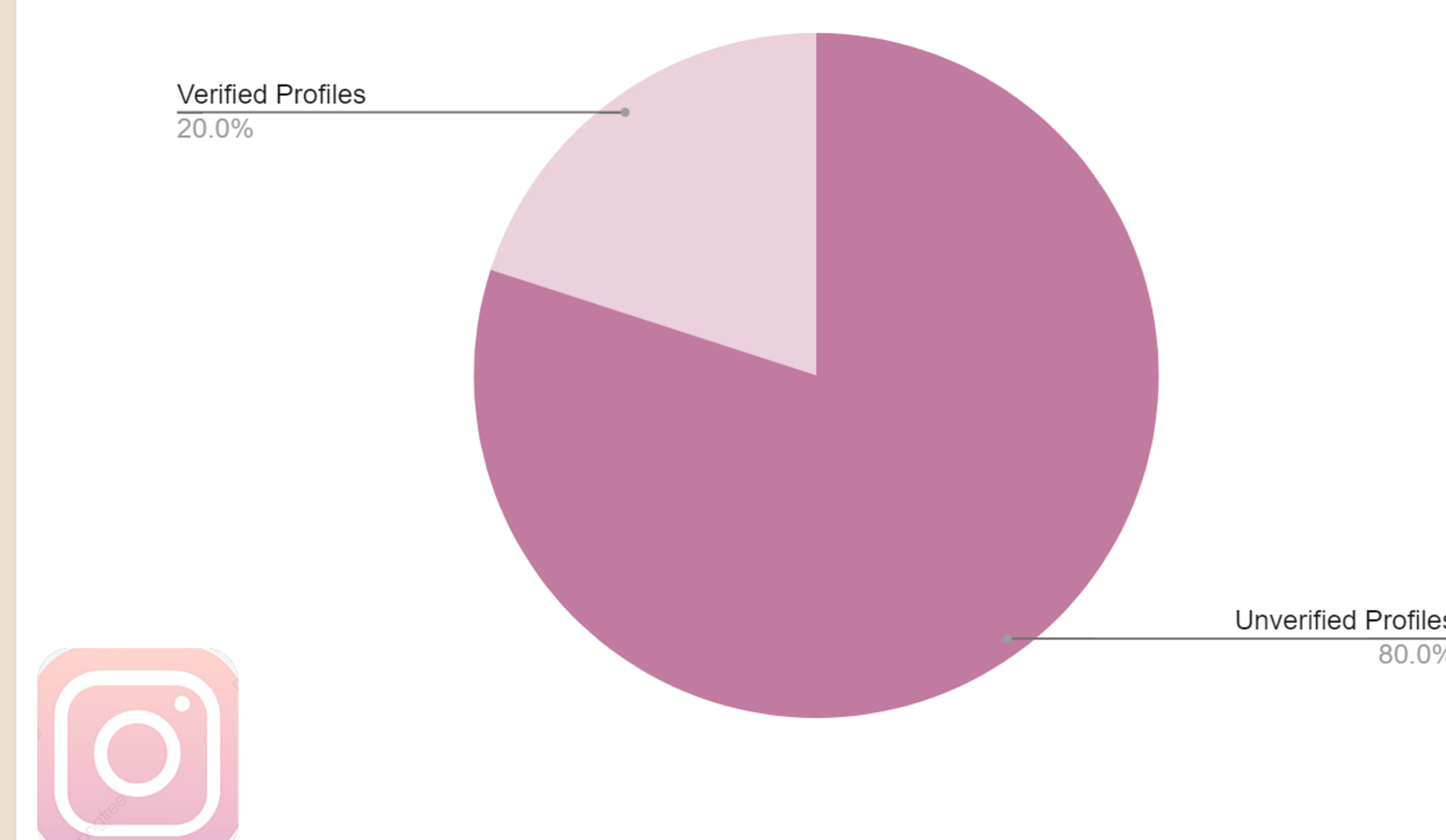| Variable/Category	Coding Criteria Examples of Key Words/Phrases	Don't Include:
Negative comments about Body Parts	Checking comments for references to the commenters own body parts that are negative.	Unrelated comments about body parts that aren't relevant to ballet dancing. (eg. ears)
Jealousy about body	Checking comments for key words like "I wish I had...	Unrelated comments that don't relate to the body itself (eg. surroundings, clothing).
Questions about body	Checking comments for phrases like "How did you get your...to be..." and questions that signify some amount of social comparison or trying to emulate the body of the dancer in the post.	Unrelated questions that don't relate to the body itself (eg. surroundings, clothing).
Emojis	Checking comments for negative emojis.	Emojis portrayed in a funny way such as the crying emoji which can be misinterpreted.
Likes on reel	How many likes a reel has received.	
Comments	Number of comments a reel has received, any and all comments.	
Verified accounts	Whether the post is from a verified account or not.	
Likes on comment	Number of likes on a specific negative comment related to body image issues.	Not on a positive comment.
Negative Comments	How many negative comments are present in the comment section.	
Actively Dancing	Is the person actively dancing in the video?	Background movement doesn't count.

RESULTS

Percent of Negative Comments Given by Actively Dancing or Not

People use language indicating negative body image, jealousy, negative comparisons, and negative emojis in their negative comments on these reels. A few examples:

I'm so jealous of narrow footed dancers, they look so cute and elegant, my feet look like bricks 😂   787

I'm so jelly but also amazed drop tips?? 😭😅

i wish i had long legs 😭

Give me a few degrees please   11

Percent of Verified Profiles

Verified Profiles 20.0%

Unverified Profiles 80.0%

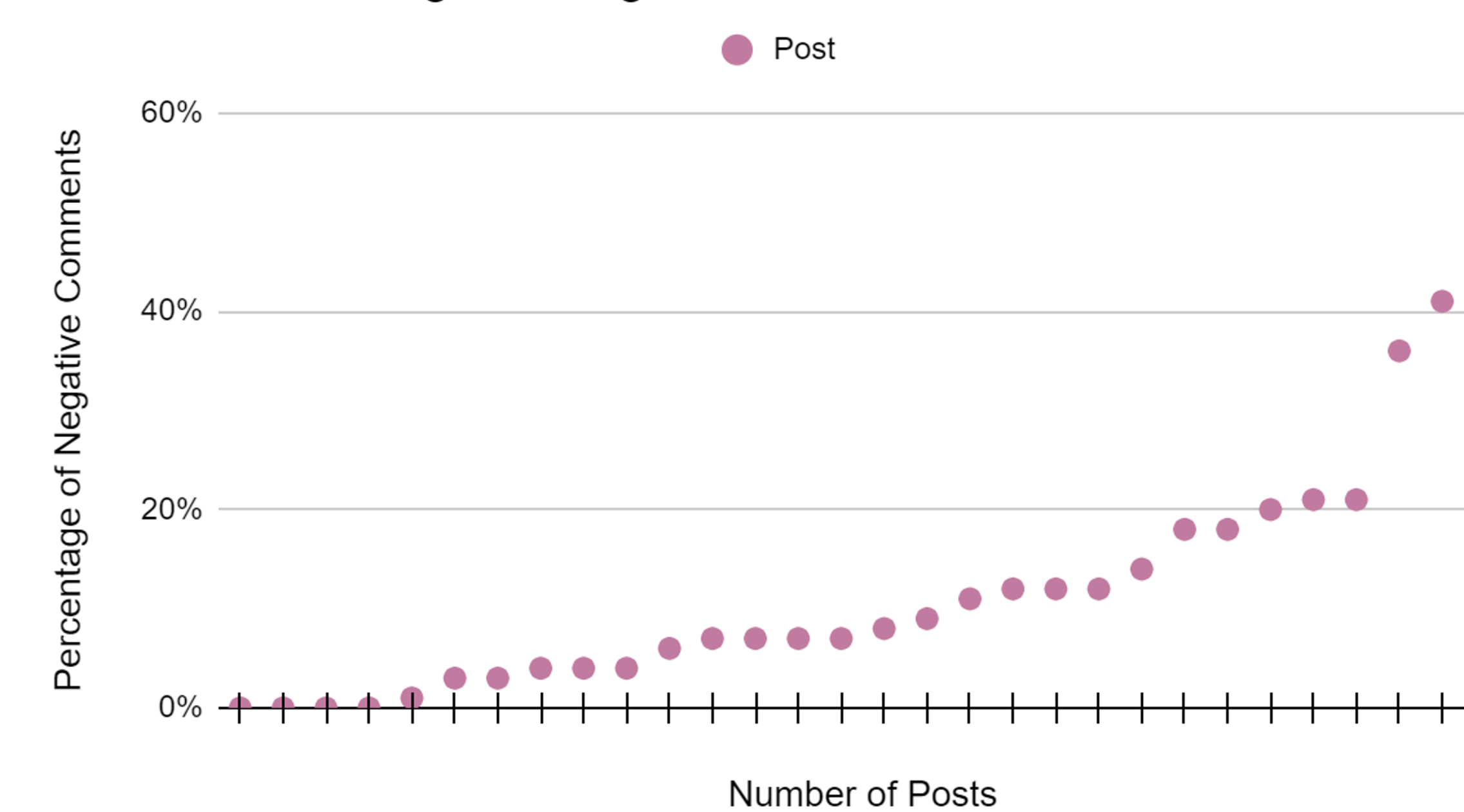### Types of Negative Comment Trends:

Body Image: Lots of the negative comments related to body image tended to receive likes when they were "relatable." The commenters used body-shaming language against themselves in comparison to the poster of the reel. They typically focused on a specific body-part related to ballet dancing.

Jealousy Language: Many of the negative comments indicating jealousy used the keywords, "I wish…"

Questions: The questions that were asked were mostly criticizing the poster and asking why they looked like this, or why they were dancing like this.

Emojis: A commonly used emoji was the sobbing emoji: 😭. Most of the time, this indicated jealousy or comparison.

Percentage of Negative Comments on Each Post

Post Likes:
Average - 17,390 Likes
Range - 255 to 87,900 Likes

Negative Comment Likes:
Average - 34 Likes
Range - 0 to 787 Likes

The verified profiles' posts received little to no negative comments, compared to the unverified profiles' posts.

CONCLUSIONS

-With the results of this study, we conclude that people commenting on ballet dancers' Instagram posts expressed their negative feelings through the variables analyzed, however, for the majority of the posts, negative comments represented only a small percentage of the total comments.
-The majority of negative comments were body image related comments and there was a higher rate of them when the dancer was not actively dancing and there was a lower rate of them when the account was verified. The percentage of negative comments depends on these factors.
-A post/comment got more likes when the content was "relatable" or included humor.
-Negative comments on ballet dancers' posts may stem from the dance industry, where comparison and body image issues are common (Swami, 2012).
-A limitation in this study is that only up to 5 negative comments were coded per post and if there were other negative comments in a
-Future research would possibly help examine the motivation and the root cause for these comments. The dance community would benefit from further research as reducing negativity is vital for a successful dance experience, or even a career in dance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CITATIONS

-I would like to thank Jacqueline Nesi for the great feedback and guidance throughout the project.
-I would like to thank the program coordinators, staff, and scholars for making this program unique and a great learning experience.

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