

The nature and enactment of African dance that produces neurogenic tremors



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Mvelinqangi, Phezukonke, Ndikhoyo - Uzizinto zonke kum Wena.

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Abstract

Distinctly African health-promoting human occupations are under-researched in occupational therapy. Many occupational therapy interventions used in South Africa have been developed elsewhere and may be inaccessible to many. African dance that produces neurogenic tremors (ADNT) is an occupation that may already be accessible to many, and a potential resource for health and could be used in occupational therapy. **Research Question:** What is the nature and enactment of ADNT? **Aim:** The study aimed to explore, describe and explain the nature and enactment of ADNT among professional dancers in Cape Town, South Africa. **Research objectives:** To explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT. To describe and explain the enactment of ADNT in terms of format, pace, and the sequence of steps involved in performing African dance repertoires that are known to produce neurogenic tremors. To describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods. **Methodology:** Case study methodology was used. Semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participant observation were the data collection methods used. Thematic analysis was employed to analyse the data. **Findings:** Four themes emerged from the study (1) Triggers: Improvisation, Energy and pushing beyond limits. (2) Essence of self: Embodying Africa through dance. (3) Leaving and returning to the body and (4) Creatures of the soil: Connected to the ground and beyond...for health. **Discussion:** ADNT is healing, relational, transcendent, and contextually situated. It facilitates self-acceptance (*ubuwena*) through embodying Africa (*KwaNtu*) and holds potential to promote social cohesion (*ubuntu*). It is mainly enacted through improvisation (on and off-stage), through which socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational resources (*isintu*) embedded within, are tapped into. ADNT offers opportunities for connectedness with the self, other people, as well as with transcendent beings. **Conclusion:** This study has illuminated the nature of ADNT as an extraordinary human occupation that offers participants instances of personal and collective meaning-making, healing, and transcendence. Transcendence is proposed as a source of personal and shared meaning.

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Acronyms

ADNT – African dance that produces neurogenic tremors

TRE – Trauma release exercise

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Definitions of terms

Activation conditions: these refer to a diagnostic way of categorizing tremors and explaining their aetiology (Bhatia *et al.*, 2018; Crawford & Zimmerman, 2018). In this study, activation conditions refer to perceived conditions that are conducive for neurogenic tremors. These may be perceived to be originating from within the body or from an external agent.

African dance that produces neurogenic tremors (ADNT): a group of dances that fall into the larger genre of African dances. These subgenres evoke rapid shaking or vibration of the torso, lower-back or lower limb. The tremors may be observed during or after a performance.

Dance improvisation: refers to the spontaneous process of expressing moment-by-moment creativity through rhythmic movement in dance. It is a critical display of embodied knowledge enacted through an existing movement vocabulary that has been retained and re-inscribed, leading to novel invention in dance (Wray, 2017).

Neurogenic tremors: these are mild, rhythmic, involuntary muscle oscillations that are activated as a neurological response to a stressful situation (Berceli, 2009). However, they can also be induced through specific muscle exercises aimed at fatiguing the body and thus evoke tremoring (Berceli, 2009; Berceli, Salmon, Bonifas & Ndefo, 2014). In the current study, neurogenic tremors are induced through ADNT.

Human occupation: simultaneously refers to a relationship between ‘doing’ and ‘that which is done’ (Nelson, 1988), and “to that which occupies contextually embedded and embodied resources available to humans” (Kronenberg, 2018, p. 44) with implications for personal and collective health and well-

being (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). Human occupation can be both ordinary and extraordinary (Hocking, 2005), it can be solitary and collective (Pierce, 2003; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). It can also be novel or intergenerational (Ramugondo, 2009) in the sense that people inherit ways of doing, shaped by perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions (Pierce, 2003).

Stress: refers to a response(s) to “a threat – real or implied, [against] the psychological or physiological integrity of an individual” (McEwen, 1999, p. 1). There are multiple threats (also known as stressors) at any given time – viz. in relationships (*e.g.* caregiver stress, intimate partner violence), work stress, harsh living conditions, poverty, chronic and/or terminal illness and disability. Stressors and consequences of stress can act upon each other, deteriorating the individual’s capacity to cope, *e.g.* work stress can exacerbate chronic illnesses, and vice versa.

Chapter 1

1.1. Introduction to the study

This study is interested in exploring African dance that produces neurogenic tremors (ADNT), an undocumented phenomenon occurring in the contexts of Southern Africa. This is a group of African dance repertoires or subgenres that cause rapid involuntary shaking or tremors of the torso and usually performed in the context of cultural ceremonies. Chapter one of this case study presents the case about ADNT. This chapter situates the research and presents the *raison d'être* for this research, i.e., chronic stress. It further states the purpose and significance of the study while presenting the research aim and objectives as well as the research question. Chapter two of this study focuses on what is known about African dance, its purposes and the contexts in which it occurs. This chapter also takes a close look at terms unique to occupational therapy and applies them to the phenomenon under inquiry. Chapter three describes the research paradigm that informed the research inquiry and the whole research process. This research adopted case study methodology, as presented by Stake (1995) since it was only concerned with the reported phenomenon. In this chapter, the researcher justifies the choice of research strategy, explains the sampling strategy and describes the study's trustworthiness using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) four criteria (credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability).

In chapter four, the findings of this study are presented. Four themes emerged from the data and were used to show how they respond to the research objectives of this study. Chapter five discusses these findings against available literature in occupational therapy and occupational science as well as in other disciplines such as theoretical physics. Where there is no available literature to make sense of the findings, then the findings themselves are used to theorise and bring forth new insights about human occupation and its related constructs. The last chapter, six, presents recommendations for practice and education to occupational therapy practitioners, educators and students, as well as recommendations for further research to occupational science scholars and researchers. This chapter also lists and explains the limitations of the study.

1.2. Situating the researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher becomes the primary instrument of the research (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003); this is due to the nature of subjective knowledge. I am a 30-year-old black South African male occupational therapist. I am a Xhosa man who grew up in various contexts in the former Transkei, Eastern Cape, South Africa. I come from a family that loves history, and as a result, documented our family history from the earliest times. My family values education and knowledge, regardless of whether it is Western or African. Thus some of my family members are experts in African knowledge,

and some are experts in Western knowledge. Therefore I have been socialised in African customs and rituals but have also been exposed to Western education both at home and through private schools.

I am fluent in isiXhosa, English and some Afrikaans. In 2017, I unexpectedly lost my best friend and girlfriend of 10 years to syringomyelia, a neurodegenerative condition. Ever since she departed from this living realm, I have been searching for occupations that could salve the pain and relieve me from chronic stress. I have been exposed to numerous intervention strategies, including psychotherapy but unfortunately, their effectiveness was short-lived. I am not the only one in my family who has struggled with chronic stress – I saw it in my mother, who single-handedly raised me and, in my brother, as well as my extended family. Unfortunately, they have had to deal with chronic stress by themselves because of where we lived and other factors. Having been partly raised by my grandmother, an expert in African knowledge and African dance, I became interested in African indigenous ways of being and doing. Moreover, my masters' thesis supervisor, Professor Elelwani Ramugondo, who taught me in my undergraduate studies, further fuelled the fire in me to dig deeper into African knowledges to find meaningful solutions to the pressing needs of our society. Her timely interventions led to the current research study.

1.3. Situating the context of the research

This research was inspired by Professor Ramugondo in 2017, who had just been exposed to Trauma Release Exercise (TRE). In this time, we had been exploring various ways of handling our personal stresses. Impressed by the promising effectiveness of neurogenic tremors produced by TRE but concerned by its very limited availability, through ongoing discussion, we came to the realisation that there are African dances that produce neurogenic tremors. However, these were nowhere in literature, hence this study. After conceptualising the research proposal and its subsequent Ethics approval, I was introduced to a dance school in Cape Town, South Africa that reported the phenomenon of neurogenic tremors in their practice. Data collection commenced in early 2019, shortly after the death of our beloved Dean of Health Sciences and leading cardiologist, Professor Bongani Mayosi, who also dealt with chronic stress, leading to his demise through depression and suicide. His unfortunate death fuelled the need for this research – a study looking into African ways of dealing with chronic stress and mental health, since Western approaches seem to have failed him.

1.4. Problem Statement

Many people experience stress, which can cause co-morbidities and exacerbate existing ill-health (Griffin, 2010). Stress can be managed effectively through stress-reduction interventions *viz.* mindfulness-based stress reduction (Wong *et al.*, 2011), cognitive behavioural therapy (Bernard *et al.*, 2011), psychotherapy (Voutilainen, Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori, 2011) and trauma release exercise (Berceli,

2009, 2010). However, access to these interventions remains limited in underserved communities due to multiple challenges such as poor infrastructure, lack of funding, inadequate human resources and budget allocations (Matsea, Ryke & Weyers, 2018). There is a gap in occupational therapy literature regarding African interventions with the potential for stress reduction. This necessitates exploring contextually relevant ways of addressing stress, which may be already embedded in the everyday lives of many people in African contexts. ADNT therefore could be a potentially useful and contextually relevant African indigenous occupation, necessitating an inquiry into its nature and enactment.

1.5. Research purpose

The purpose of this case study is to research a human occupation indigenous to Africa that could serve as a stress reduction and mental health intervention in the delivery of occupational therapy services in the context of South Africa. This is because occupational therapy interventions that are contextually situated and indigenous to Africa are missing from the profession's scholarship and research. Therefore, this case study hopes to contribute to emerging research and theorising about human occupation as a key concept in occupational therapy and occupational science in contexts of the Global South (Ramugondo, Galvaan & Duncan, 2015). Findings will contribute to the advocacy for indigenous stress reduction interventions that are affordable, acceptable and appropriate for the majority of South Africans, particularly those who belong to culture(s) wherein African dance is an important part of life. It could also contribute to emerging knowledge about human occupation and its situatedness (Cutchin & Dickie, 2011). It is hoped that this will spark critical engagement, triggering further research and scholarly attention.

1.6. Research question

What is the nature and enactment of ADNT?

1.7. Research aim and objectives

The study aims to describe and explain the nature and enactment of African dance that produces neurogenic tremors among professional dancers in Cape Town.

The objectives of the study are to:

- 1.7.1. Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT.
- 1.7.2. Describe and explain the enactment of ADNT in terms of format, pace, and the sequence of steps involved in performing African dance repertoires that are known to produce neurogenic tremors.
- 1.7.3. Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods.

1.8. Significance of study

The recent review of the South African National Development Plan identified mental health as “a new silent emerging global health crisis” (National Planning Commission [NPC], 2020a, p. 15). The World Health Organisation [WHO] (2013, p. 8) defines mental health as “a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”. Structural and systemic factors such as poverty and unemployment, poor working and living conditions, institutional racism and marginalisation can impede mental health. Moreover, these structural and systemic factors, referred to in literature as social determinants of health, can erode the ability to cope with ‘normal stresses of life’. Stress itself is protective, since it builds individuals’ flexibility to thrive despite changing environments (Greenberg, Carr & Summers, 2002).

However, prolonged periods of stress, where the cost of coping harms the individual’s functions necessary for well-being, may cause subclinical symptoms of a disease, leading to serious ill-health including mental illness (Greenberg et al., 2002; Griffin, 2010; Moberg, 2000). Chronic stress may impair cognition, volition, decision-making and affect (Greenberg et al., 2002; McEwen, 2017), and may hamper individuals’ social and occupational well-being. Impaired social and occupational well-being is cause for concern especially in terms of mental health. Many recognised mental health interventions such as cognitive behavioural therapy, psychotherapy, pharmacotherapy, trauma release exercises are highly specialised and expensive. This is a serious concern because the availability of these interventions is limited to urban middle- to upper-class populations to the exclusion of the South African majority, who live in underserved areas. Mitigating against this concern will need policymakers, health administrators, local government officials, clinicians, researchers and all stakeholders involved in the promotion of mental health, to find solutions that are affordable, acceptable and appropriate; and that promote health and prevent disease (Department of Health, 1997).

Unluckily, the Covid-19 pandemic has also played a significant role in adding to the mental health crisis (NPC, 2020b) since it has disrupted and/or impaired many people’s social and occupational well-being. It is one of the reasons why the reviewers of the National Development Plan, recommend that mental health services be made more widely available (NPC, 2020a). This directive is in line with target four (promoting mental health) of goal three of the Sustainable Development Goals, which is “to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (United Nation [UN], 2015). An indicator for target 4 is increasing coverage for mental health treatment (UN, 2015). This research study is a step towards that direction – by exploring a widely available human occupation that has the potential to promote mental health, reduce stress and increase coverage for mental health services.

Higher Education institutions and academia are necessary for the advancement of knowledge and pursuing research that promotes health. The University of Cape Town released the Curriculum Change Framework in 2018. This framework serves as a perpetual invitation for scholarly pursuits in supporting decolonial academic projects. One recommendation from the framework particularly resonates with this study, encouraging transdisciplinarity towards addressing societal challenges and engaging with “what it means to be African and to remember what it means to be human” (Curriculum Change Working Group, 2018, p. 59). Research on human occupations indigenous to Africa, such as African dance that produces neurogenic tremors, may trigger further research and teaching collaborations focussed on the growing phenomenon of stress-induced mental health challenges, across multiple stakeholders such as service users, professions in health and beyond, and disciplines such as public health and psychology.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. African dance that produces neurogenic tremors (ADNT)

African dance is a ubiquitous human occupation across the African continent and can also be found in diasporic locations. It occurs in multiple contexts throughout the day and may be enfolded in other occupations, *e.g.*, corn-threshing, healing rituals and worshipping (Maluwaya, 2015; Mensah, 1970). It is used as a marker of significant life events and occasions (Glocke & Jackson, 2011; Nettleford, 1998). Dance accompanies many events in Africa: the birth of a child, rites of passage, weddings and harvests (Chebanne, 2007; Maluwaya, 2015). There are dances for healing and curing sickness (Glocke & Jackson, 2011), for funerals, for connecting and channelling ancestral spirits (Amegago, 2007; Mji, 2019; Sandlana, 2014).

This means that African dance is varied, containing numerous sub-genres to account for Africa's numerous cultures and people. Among these sub-genres are African dance repertoires that cause neurogenic tremoring of the body, the object of this study. This sub-genre of tremor-producing African dance is common in Southern Africa, especially in Nguni societies. This dance, however, has received no attention in research, despite its association with neurogenic tremors. A search through popular databases, using the key terms: "African dance" and "neurogenic tremor" yielded results either related to just African dance (mainly from West Africa) or just neurogenic tremors. This means that there is a gap in literature regarding African dance repertoires that produce neurogenic tremors, and a paucity of research on neurogenic tremors outside of TRE. This warrants an in-depth study of this human occupation, in order to understand its nature and its enactment and what it could potentially offer to human health.

2.2. African dance as a human occupation

Understanding human occupation as a concept is challenging, even for some occupational therapists. Nelson (1988, 1996) recognised that human occupation can be understood as 'active doing' (occupational performance) and as 'that which is done' (occupational form). Nelson's (1988, 1996) definitions of occupational performance and occupational form help distinguish the difference and relationship between the nature of ADNT and its enactment. According to Nelson (1988), human occupation is the relationship between occupational form and occupational performance. The former refers to the "pre-existing structure that elicits, guides and structures human performance" (Nelson, 1988, p. 633). Nelson's (1988) definition of occupational form is congenerous with the dictionary definition of nature – which is 'the fundamental qualities of a thing' (Collins English Dictionary, n.d., definition 1). Occupational form is multidimensional, encompassing objective and sociocultural realities (Nelson, 1996). Objective reality includes physical stimuli in the immediate environment of the person

while sociocultural reality refers to values, norms, sanctions, symbols, roles, and practical guidelines for interpreting the physical aspects of occupational forms.

Enactment is commutable with occupational performance, which refers to the actual doing, action, active behaviour or active response exhibited in the context of an occupational form (Nelson, 1988, 1996). Occupational performance by the doer is observable to others (Nelson, 1988). ADNT as an actual performance, are sequences of related patterns of rhythmic body movements. Borrowing from Nelson's (1998, 1996) definition of occupational form, ADNT refers to a pre-existing format or structure that guides when and where those rhythmic body movements are performed. The performer's developmental structure (*i.e.*, the body and its various components) interacts with the occupational form to produce performance (Nelson, 1988). Therefore, human occupation can be viewed as a 'dance' between the human performer and the occupational form, producing occupational performance. To this end, African dance may be viewed as the interaction between the dancer, the dance and the dancing, all within context.

2.3. African dance as collective human occupation

African dance corresponds with Ramugondo and Kronenberg's (2015) definition of collective occupation. These authors define collective occupation as collective engagements "by individuals, groups, communities and/or societies in everyday contexts; these may reflect an intention towards social cohesion or dysfunction, and/or advancement of or aversion to a common good." (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015, p. 10). African dance is performed by individuals, groups, communities or whole societies. The purposes of African dance may reflect an intention for social cohesion and advancement of a common good (Hazzard-Gordon, 1998). For example, the *!Kung* people of Namibia use *!Kia*, a healing trance dance led by the spiritual guide of the community to deal with ill-health at a communal level (Katz, 1982). The intention behind this trance dance is the healing of the community, with healing accepted as the common good (Katz, 1982).

In another instance, African dance is a form of protest and political resistance (Hazzard-Gordon, 1998; van Schalkwyk, 1994). Mineworkers in South Africa formed a distinct dance genre, gumboot dance (*isicathulo*) in response to harsh and oppressive working conditions underground where they were not allowed to even speak to each other (www.kilby.sac.on.ca, accessed September 16, 2017). Using the sound made by tapping and stomping their Wellington boots, the mineworkers would communicate with each other over short distances in the tunnels deep underground (Goodale, 2000). In this historic occurrence, human occupation (active doing, *i.e.*, tapping and stomping) replaced human speech and conversation entirely. The intention behind this collective occupation, *isicathulo* was communication (amongst other reasons) – to check up on each other, to check on whether their fellow mineworkers

were still alive. Despite spaces where oppression is commonplace, African people still find reason and the time to dance (Hazzard-Gordon, 1998). When communicating grievances against oppressive conditions, dance is used to deliver the message and establish solidarity among the oppressed. Furthermore, in South Africa, it is common practice during protests for people to engage in a military dance known as “toyi-toyi”; the rhythmic stomping of the feet, which land with force on the ground, communicating collective anger against those who perpetuate socioeconomic and political inequalities.

African dance’s versatility across varying contexts mean that it can also be used for other ends beyond healing or protest. For instance, African dance can facilitate learning, especially in the school context (Mbusi, 2012). In the Eastern Cape, South Africa, mathematical concepts embedded within the occupational form and performance of African dance are routinely taught by African dance teachers (Mbusi, 2012). The common good here is the preservation of indigenous knowledge and practices and advancing mathematics education in learning contexts that remain marginalised as a legacy of Apartheid. During Apartheid, education was segregated according to race (sahistory.org.za, 2011, accessed April 03, 2021). The Apartheid government ensured that black¹ learners and teachers were deprived facilities necessary for their educational and professional development (sahistory.org.za, 2011, accessed April 03, 2021). Unbeknownst to the Apartheid regime, black South Africans through the vehicle of cultural clubs, continued teaching their children and youth using indigenous collective occupations such as African dance (sahistory.org.za, 2011, accessed April 03, 2021).

2.4. Stress, mental health and occupational therapy

Stress is one of the leading causes of poor health globally and a risk factor for serious health conditions (Griffin, 2010; McEwen, 1999; 2017). Stress’s multifactorial and complicated nature makes it difficult to report on its prevalence. The South African Stress and Health Study paints a grim picture of mental health, reporting the lifetime prevalence of mental disorders at 30.3% (Herman *et al.*, 2009). Thus, the lifetime prevalence of mental disorders as an indicator of stress means in real terms, approximately 18 million South Africans are at serious health risk. Occupational therapists are equipped with skills to assist people to cope with stress, however access is very limited with only 8718 practitioners nationally (HPCSA, 2021). Moreover, not all 8718 occupational therapists in South Africa work for the state, which provides affordable primary health care services. Thus, the vast majority of South Africans have limited access to occupational therapy.

¹ Black African is a racialized identity in South Africa as a legacy of Apartheid - where people were grouped according to race. Black people, sometimes called Africans, were the most systematically oppressed and marginalized race i.e., economically, politically, socially, cultural, religiously (SAhistory.org.za, accessed April 03, 2021).

Occupational therapists use a wide array of interventions to assist people in coping with stress, such as cognitive behavioural therapy, animal-assisted therapy, mindfulness-based stress reduction interventions, relaxation techniques, psychotherapy; Trauma Release Exercise (TRE) and more recently web-based/smartphone-based applications (Ly, Asplund & Andersson, 2014). Although many of these interventions have been clinically proven to be effective in stress management such as mindfulness-based stress reduction interventions (Wong *et al.*, 2011); cognitive behavioural therapy (Bernard *et al.*, 2011), relaxation techniques and physical exercise (van Rhenen *et al.*, 2007); their appropriateness and alignment with the ways of life of people in rural and informal-urban areas in South Africa have not been evaluated. Moreover, some of the interventions used for dealing with stress are exogenous, with implications for their appropriateness. African dance, however, is well-established particularly within rural traditions in South Africa.

2.5. Healing within African dance

Dance can be a source of comfort during difficult times. In African contexts, it is central in expressing physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual desires of individuals and collectives (Snipe, 1998), contributing to a sense of wholeness (Mji, 2019; Sandlana, 2014). In some African societies, dancing is used to help people deal with complex health issues such as spiritual contamination (DeLoach & Petersen, 2010); *ukuthwasa* (the process of becoming a Nguni traditional healer) (Sandlana, 2014; Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1981), communal illnesses (Katz, 1982) and stress reduction (Vinesett, Price & Wilson, 2015; Chebanne, 2007). The health issues that African dance healing practices address are complex since they involve the spirit(s). Western medical science has not been able to address health issues of a spiritual nature adequately. This is because the predominant biomedical view of health adopted by the WHO neglects spirituality, an important aspect of health (Ramugondo, 2017).

The WHO's definition of health has been under scrutiny for years for its failure to be comprehensive, its medicalisation of health and the inadvertent commodification of healthcare (Huber *et al.*, 2011). The WHO's perspective lacks explanations of ill-health outside of biomedicine and fails to fully appreciate solutions for health challenges that indigenous healing practices may resolve. Dancing is believed to exorcise malevolent spirits in certain parts of Africa. Such dance ceremonies include the *N'deup* dance of the Wolof and Serer people in Senegal; the *Zar* ceremony of Ethiopia and surrounding countries (Green, 1998; Monteiro & Wall, 2011); and the *Stambali*, a prophylactic and healing dance in Tunisia (Somer & Saadon, 2000). Collectively, these dance ceremonies are referred to as healing dances, ritual healing dance, trance-dance or trance healing dances (Vinesett *et al.*, 2015; Somer & Saadon, 2000; Burhmann & Gqomfa, 1981). The enactment of these healing dances is of particular interest in this study.

2.6. Tremors, TRE and ADNT

Tremors are often associated with neurological disorders and may accompany other clinical signs and symptoms (Bhatia *et al.*, 2018; Elble & Deuschl, 2011). However, it appears that tremoring in ADNT may not be pathological; instead, tremoring seems to be neurogenic. To understand neurogenic tremors, it is necessary to first review the functions of the nervous system. The nervous system is a very interesting, but complicated and complex body system, which could be likened to a very sophisticated combination of electricity (powering activity), WiFi connectivity (integrating all body systems together) and the internet (processing information). It consists of two major divisions: the central nervous system (the brain and the spinal cord) and the peripheral nervous system (connecting the central nervous system with the rest of the body) (Berceli, 2009). The peripheral nervous system is further divided into the somatic and autonomic nervous systems (ANS). It is the two further subdivisions of the ANS that facilitate neurogenic tremoring (Berceli, 2009; Scaer, 2005; Levine, 1997). The ANS is responsible for controlling all involuntary action such as breathing, heart movements, heart rate, blood pressure, glandular functions, and enervation of internal organs and abdominopelvic muscles (Berceli, 2009; McCann, 2011).

Neurogenic tremors are described as mild and rhythmic muscle vibrations that occur without conscious effort and involuntarily in response to stress and stressful situations (Berceli, 2009, 2010; Levine, 1997; Scaer, 2005). Since tremoring (in the absence of neuropathology) is an involuntary action, neurologists, Levine (1997) and Scaer (2005) hypothesized that neurogenic tremors are induced by the sympathetic branch of the ANS. They are seen as a natural mechanism to discharge energy generated and stored in the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) during a flight-freeze-or-fight episode (Berceli, 2009; Scaer, 2005; Levine, 1997). Through the tremoring response, the Hypothalamus-Pituitary-Adrenal (HPA) axis located in the midbrain, is intercepted (Berceli, 2009). The HPA axis which includes the hypothalamus, amygdala and pituitary gland, is responsible for connecting the limbic system with adrenal glands (Berceli, 2009, Brown *et al.*, 1979). It is this system that produces and regulates hormones such as adrenaline, cortisol and aldosterone, necessary to address physiological and psychological stress (Sheppard, 2021, Berceli, 2009, McLean-Tooke *et al.*, 2003; McEwen, 1999; Brown *et al.*, 1979). Without the intervention of neurogenic tremors, the body is forced to continue in a perpetual state of 'flight-freeze-or-fight response even in the absence of a stressor (Berceli, 2009). Unresolved stress responses may contribute to chronic stress.

There is growing interest in neurogenic tremors (McCann, 2011). Scholars in evolutionary biology, neuroscience and traumatology contend that neurogenic tremors are necessary for healing (Levine, 1997; Berceli, 2009, 2010; McCann, 2011). However neurogenic tremors are currently unclassified

since they occur in the absence of neurological abnormalities (Berceli, 2009; Bhatia *et al.*, 2018). The International Parkinson's and Movement Disorders Society produced a new consensus statement in 2017 on the classification of tremors. They did not specifically classify neurogenic tremors, however they indicated that these tremors have 8 -12 Hz oscillations (Bhatia *et al.*, 2018). In South Africa, occupational therapists have begun using TRE in their practice – a stress reduction intervention that produces neurogenic tremors for post-traumatic stress disorder and chronic stress (traumaprevention.com, McCann, 2011). TRE exhibits similar tremors to those found in ADNT. TRE is a body-based intervention for facilitating recovery from tension, stress and trauma (Berceli, 2010). TRE evokes neurogenic tremors by releasing deep muscular patterns of stress, tension and trauma (Berceli, 2009). TRE induces these tremors for healing and has been proven to be effective against stress, tension and trauma (Berceli, 2009; McCann, 2011). Although occupational therapists utilize TRE (treforafrica.com, accessed August 22, 2018), it is expensive (R860 ~ R1550/hr (treforlife.com, accessed April 03, 2021)) and thus limited to middle to upper-class urban populations, leaving the majority of South Africans, particularly in underserved areas, without access. Given the high costs of TRE and the scarcity of occupational therapists in underserved communities, it is possible that stress reduction therapies are inaccessible to these communities, where a substantial section of the South African population resides.

Thus, affordable interventions that produce neurogenic tremors outside of therapy may be of interest to occupational therapy. African dance is one such intervention as it also produces neurogenic tremors. African dance is reportedly used for health promotion by many African societies (Green, 1998; Welsh-Asante, 2010). However, literature on the use of African dance as a health promotion strategy by occupational therapists in South Africa is lacking, despite the ubiquity of African dance in the everyday lives of most Africans. There are studies on neurogenic tremors (Berceli, 2009; Berceli *et al.*, 2014; McCann, 2011) as well as African dance (Green, 1998, Nettleford, 1998; Welsh-Asante, 1998, 2010; Wray, 2017), but there is a gap in literature on 1). ADNT; 2). Neurogenic tremors found outside TRE; 3). and African dance as an occupation that influences health and well-being. Furthermore, research within occupational therapy on neurogenic tremors does not yet exist. By exploring ADNT as a contextually situated and potentially health-promoting human occupation, this study may help advance occupation-based and people-centred occupational therapy.

2.7. Framing the unfamiliar as pathological: The colonial gaze

Neurogenic tremors have been pathologized because they are usually experienced as 'uncontrollable behaviour', thus ignoring their psychotherapeutic benefit (Levine, 1997). The framing of unfamiliar behaviour as pathological has been associated with the colonial encounter (Said, 1979). Western

disciplines and professions established themselves in Africa as dominant producers of knowledge (Okazaki, David & Abelman, 2008) and simultaneously discredited indigenous ways of knowing (Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013). According to Hamayon (1993), the first Christian missionaries observed [Nguni] traditional healers as religious figures, but in servitude to the devil rather than God. This false view of traditional healing has endured but has now been shifted from a religious debate to health and healthcare. When Western-trained psychiatrists and anthropologists encountered *ukuthwasa*, they pejoratively labelled it as a culture-bound syndrome within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders– IV (Shezi & Uys, 1997).

Ukuthwasa (which means emerging of a new moon) is a transformational, healing process of initiation into becoming a Nguni traditional healer. It is often preceded by spiritual afflictions and psychic crises and experiences (Mlisa, 2009). Shezi and Uys (1997) label *ukuthwasa* as a culture-bound syndrome, thus effectively pathologizing what is viewed by the amaXhosa people as a spiritual gift from the ancestors. Nguni traditional healers also use healing trance dance repertoires for their rituals, to evoke therapeutic tremoring (Mlisa, 2009). In Western literature, healing trance dances are associated with ‘dissociative states’; ‘demonic or spirit possession’, ‘hallucination’, ‘amnesia’, ‘sensory overstimulation’, ‘mystical event’ or ‘ecstasy’ (Bourguignon, 2003; Budden, 2003; Garfinkel, 2018; Hamayon, 1993, Hultkrantz, 1992, Rouget, 1985). It is important to note that both occupational therapy and occupational science began in countries with imperialist and hegemonic legacies, where the unfamiliar has been pathologized, fetishized or even demonized. Thus, the Western world runs the risk of perpetuating a pathologizing dominance unless Africans make efforts to understand and theorise about their own occupations urgently, especially if these have never been researched before.

2.8. ADNT as a contextually situated occupation

Studying human occupations such as dance in contexts such as Africa is needed if the occupational therapy profession is serious about its usefulness to the people of this continent and beyond. Occupational science scholars have been increasingly drawn to the Deweyan notion that human occupation can mediate between the individual/collectives and the situations or contexts they find themselves in (Cutchin *et al.*, 2008). This growing appreciation points to the situatedness of occupation (Cutchin & Dickie, 2011). Situatedness refers to intricate relationships between people’s lived experiences in their personal contexts, the subjects they engage with, objects they interact with, and the occupations they participate in within those contexts (Galvaan, 2017). This is to say that situatedness is a useful approach for understanding how Nelson’s (1988, 1996) occupational form influences occupational performance and vice versa. Nelson (1996) defines occupational form as “the

composition of objective physical and sociocultural circumstances external to the person that influences their occupational performance”.

To this end, situatedness in this study refers to how the nature of ADNT influences its enactment and how the enactment of ADNT influences its nature. Therefore, the research objectives of the present study seek to explore, describe and explain the situatedness of ADNT. Pursuing a research study on the situatedness of human occupations indigenous to Africa is essential. This is because a substantive amount of disciplinary and professional knowledge has been generated in Western or Westernized contexts (Hammell, 2011) to the exclusion of the Global South and in particular, Africa. Thus, by describing and explaining the occupational form and situatedness of ADNT, this study will begin to illuminate the sociocultural realities of distinctly African human occupations. Such knowledge, rich in contextual detail, will be vital for the practice of occupational therapy and theorisation in occupational science in Africa and the Global South (Guajardo, Kronenberg & Ramugondo, 2015). In addition, framing ADNT as a contextually situated occupation will be useful for the development of nuanced views of reality (Flyvbjerg, 2006; 2012).

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1. Research paradigm

This is a qualitative research study based on social constructivism, arguing that reality is multiple, subjective and 'constructed' through social interactions (Searle, 1995). In social constructivism, knowledge is relative, implying a multiplicity of views about any phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Multiple 'knowledges' are co-constructed by members of a group through their lived experiences and interactions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Moreover, qualitative research scholars argue that meaningful knowledge on any phenomenon is context-dependent (Flyvbjerg, 2012). In this research, social constructivism necessitates the research site to be in contexts where ADNT occurs, with participants in ADNT deemed to be information-rich. Within social constructivism, as in all qualitative research, the researcher is not regarded as completely separate from the research process, but also plays a part through interpretation of data, to construct a shared reality with participants. In situating the researcher as part of the introduction in Chapter 1, an attempt is made to disclose the standpoint from which the researcher is able to interpret data emanating from this study.

3.2. Study Approach: Case study

This study is an exploration of an undocumented, ongoing phenomenon within its context. The method of inquiry must respond to the whims of a contemporary phenomenon (Stake, 1995). Thus, case study as a research method is ideal for this research as it allows for studying ADNT in its contemporary setting (DePoy & Gitlin, 2015). Harling (2002) defines a case study as "a holistic inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its natural setting." (p. 1). This study aims to explore, describe and explain three distinct elements: the nature of ADNT; how ADNT is enacted; and the experience of those who participate in it.

The holistic nature of case study comes through in the current study in how each of the objectives could individually be studied using other research inquiries such as qualitative description, phenomenology or even narrative inquiry. The intention is to understand ADNT wholly as a case on its own, rather than how it may differ from other dance forms. Case study reveals particularity and complexity of a case without concerning itself with generalizability (Stake, 1995). Understanding of the particular may result in far-reaching and deep insights of the general (Flyvbjerg, 2006). A deep understanding of ADNT within a particular context may strengthen the possibility of resonance beyond that context. ADNT within a particular setting thus becomes an instrumental case study, with possible insights that may be drawn that could apply in other contexts where ADNT occurs.

3.2.1. Bounding the case

Determining the boundaries of the case helps in determining the particularity and complexity of the phenomenon. The boundaries for this case have been determined using time and activity (Stake, 1995). ADNT as a form of African dance is a social and collective occupation, therefore the boundaries follow a social-cultural-temporal axis. The boundaries are informed by the situatedness of ADNT; thus, the first boundary is the social context in which it occurs (*e.g.* dance schools, villages, cultural ceremonies). The second boundary is ADNT as a collective occupation by a group of dancers in an African or diasporic context; values, ideas and customs about ADNT are more useful when emanating from those who belong to the culture in which the phenomenon is found. The third boundary is related to dance frequency: *i.e.* at the minimum, a weekly occurrence. The fourth boundary refers to the activity: the dance must evoke neurogenic-tremoring. The cause of the tremors must be related to the dancing instead of pathological tremors resulting from medical conditions. Therefore, the unit of analysis or the case is African dance repertoires that produce neurogenic tremors among professional dancers in Cape Town.

3.3. Sampling

The purposive sampling approach employed in this study refers to the deliberate setting of criteria to inform representation of key attributes (Charmaz, 2011; Creswell, 2009), allowing the researcher flexibility and discretion to determine best suited participants and sites of study.

3.3.1. Participants

The researcher approached dance schools in Cape Town offering African dance classes because these were the most likely sites to find people who engage in ADNT. Participants needed to be people who know and regularly perform ADNT. There were nine participants in this study. One was the choreographer and spoke isiZulu, and the rest were dance students in the dance academy. Seven of the dance students spoke isiXhosa, while one spoke Afrikaans and English. The selection criteria of the study were as follows:

3.3.2. Selection Criteria

- Active and professional dancers of African dance.
- Participants must perform African dance at least once weekly.
- Participants must have experienced neurogenic tremors during a dance performance.

3.3.3. Exclusion Criteria

- People who have neurological or movement disorders.

3.3.4. Sample size and data saturation

The sample size in this study was nine participants. They were interviewed both individually and in a focus group. A focus group of this size, using multimedia tools such as video material, can yield overwhelming data. However, the number of participants in this study was crucial in providing in-depth knowledge of the phenomenon of ADNT.

3.4. Recruitment process

- i. The researcher initiated contact with dance schools that offer African dance classes via email and telephonic correspondence. In the same conversation, the researcher asked the dance school to identify other dance schools that offer African dance.
- ii. Through word of mouth, the researcher was informed by a volunteer about a dance school that seemed to match the case. The volunteer reported having witnessed dancers at the dance school tremoring. This information was sufficient to initiate contact with the dance school to verify whether the dance school matched the case. The researcher initiated contact through a telephonic conversation with the Creative Director of the dance school.
- iii. Once contact was initiated with one of the dance schools, the researcher asked for permission to attend a class to assess the viability of the dance school as a research site.
- iv. After attending two classes, the researcher determined that the dance school was appropriate and had potential candidates for inclusion into the study.
- v. The researcher met with the dance school's management team (creative director and operations manager) to explain the study's purpose, aim and objectives. In the same meeting, the researcher was granted permission by the school's management to place recruitment advertisements for participants.
- vi. When the maximum number of participants was reached, the researcher arranged a meeting with potential participants to confirm their participation. The initial meeting with potential participants was to give them more information about the study. These individuals were given two weeks to think about possible participation in the study.
- vii. Once participants confirmed their willingness, the researcher negotiated issues such as contact time, duration of the study and data collection methods with both the participants and the creative director.
- viii. The researcher explained the research process and read the information sheets ([appendix B](#)) and informed consent ([appendix C](#)) to participants before signing.

3.5. Gaining access

- i. Ethical clearance was received from the UCT Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee [HREC 044/2019] ([appendix A](#)).

- ii. Verbal permission to conduct the research study on the dance school's grounds was granted by the Dance school's creative director.
- iii. After these permissions, dancers were approached for possible participation through the recommendations of the creative director of the school.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

The Helsinki declaration was used as a guiding framework in thinking and making decisions about the safeguarding of participants in this study (World Medical Association, 2013). Important considerations such as informed consent and autonomy, privacy and confidentiality, beneficence and non-maleficence were guiding principles in this study. This research posed no more than minimal risk. Participants were informed that they would be asked about their experiences, which could cause distress. In the event of this occurring, participants were informed that they would be referred to access counselling services through the dance school's wellness services. At the end of every session, debriefing was done when necessary.

3.6.1. Informed consent and autonomy

This is a decision-making process between the researcher(s) and the participant(s) (Judkins-Cohn *et al.*, 2014). It is always accompanied by three non-derogable principles: respect for autonomy, beneficence and justice (Judkins-Cohn *et al.*, 2014; Richter, Groft & Prinsloo, 2007). Autonomy is the participants' right to freedom of choice to continue or refuse further participation at any stage. All possible implications of participating in the study were made explicit to the participants.

Thus, informed consent acted as a safeguarding mechanism for participants and their right to autonomy (Jefford & Moore, 2008; Judkins-Cohn *et al.*, 2014). Informed consent forms were in English and isiXhosa ([appendix C](#)). The researcher explained the purpose, aim and objectives of the study in both English and IsiXhosa (the researcher is fluent in both) ([appendix B](#)). Any possible confusion and misunderstandings were eliminated by engaging in both languages.

3.6.2. Privacy and confidentiality

Safeguarding of human dignity is sacrosanct. Dignity was upheld through the principles of privacy and confidentiality (Simkiss, Edmond, Bose, Troy & Bassat, 2013). All reasonable and necessary measures were taken to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants. However, during data collection, participants instead of choosing their pseudonyms, insisted on using their real names. This part of the study was an area of discomfort for the researcher for fear of breaching ethical principles. The participants were well-informed about the study's aim and objectives, and that participation posed no more than minimal risk. Upon discussion with supervisors, the researcher had to weigh up confidentiality against agency and to honour the participants' wishes. All information emanating from

this study is stored in a 2-factor authentication password-protected online repository, with access limited to the researcher only.

3.6.3. Beneficence and Non-maleficence

Beneficence means increasing the probability of benefits for participation (Gostin, 1991). Whereas non-maleficence refers to preventing potential harm through acts of commission or omission (Dahlöf, 2013; Gostin, 1991). By participating, participants had an opportunity for collective self-understanding by learning from each other (Romm, 2015). There are and were no foreseen harmful risks in participating in this study.

3.7. Data Collection

Four data collection methods were used, and each strengthened the trustworthiness of this study. They are focus groups, semi-structured interviews, participant observation and video analysis.

- 3.7.1. This study comprised only one focus group session ([appendix E.2](#)). This was audio-recorded and later transcribed. Focus groups are conversations between four to eight participants conducted in the context of a group (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011; Romm, 2015; Silverman, 2014). These are useful when little is known about a topic (Stewart *et al.*, 2007). Benefits include collective conversation, promoting deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2011). Collective conversation, however, can silence and alienate shy members. The researcher may also miss some nuances in the focus group. These known challenges were mitigated through individual interviews. However, the focus group helped establish a sense of trust between the group members and the researcher.
- 3.7.2. Participant observation ([appendix E.3](#)) involves the researcher partaking in the phenomenon under inquiry to understand what may be taken for granted by participants (Creswell, 2009). It requires long-term contact to build trust. The researcher participated in weekly dance classes from May 2019 up until February 2020 (excluding December 2019 when the dance school closed for holidays). Observations were recorded as researcher fieldnotes as soon as possible after classes.
- 3.7.3. Semi-structured interviews are accounts given by participants about a phenomenon (Voutilainen *et al.*, 2011), in this case ADNT ([appendix E.1](#)). These sessions offered opportunities for the participants to make sense of their values and attitudes (Creswell, 2009) regarding ADNT, in the absence of peer pressure. The disadvantage to semi-structured interviews is participants' hesitancy or suspicion to converse with the researcher, however this was mitigated through socialising with participants during participant observation (before the commencement of interviews). Interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed.

3.7.4. A pre-existing video from the public online video repository, YouTube, was used to trigger and generate discussion in the focus group (Davison, McLean & Warren, 2012; Paulus, Lester & Dempster, 2014). The video is about African dancers in the 1950s performing ADNT. The researcher also took footage of the dance rehearsals and live performances of the participants. Some of the footage was used in the data analysis.

3.8. Data management

Qualitative data comes in many forms such as verbal, written or visual or audio-visual information (Bawdekar, 2016). Case study research is ideally suited in using multiple forms of data sources. The current study's aim and objectives necessitated collecting different forms of data such as pictures, videos of the rehearsals and live performances, audio recordings of the interviews and focus groups, as well as field notes.

3.8.1. Types of data

Audio recordings were mostly in IsiXhosa and English. These were transcribed and where necessary, these were translated to English. Both languages informed data analysis. The researcher is IsiXhosa speaking, and care was taken not to lose meaning during translation. Video footage from the dance school was also used during data analysis for triangulation. The video footage was analysed through watching and re-watching clips to make sense of the researcher's fieldnotes. Some of the video footage was used to formulate codes, while some was transcribed into text to allow for coding. However not all the video footage was transcribed owing to the sheer volume captured and time constraints.

3.8.2. Organizing the data

Immediately after each data gathering event, the researcher created detailed memos of the encounter. These were useful in the data analysis as they helped, along with all transcribed data, to form codes, categories and themes. For effective data analysis, all the data was organized and indexed manually for ease of reference.

3.8.3. Data safety

All data was stored in a password-protected online repository with two-factor authentication to gain access. Once the system verifies the password, a six-digit code is generated and sent to the researcher's mobile phone. This must be then entered to allow access. Once the study is concluded, all data will be permanently deleted.

3.9. Data analysis

Multiple data collection methods result in complex, varied and extensive raw data. This necessitates a general inductive approach, useful for transforming such data into a meaningful summary (Thomas, 2003). Using this approach, the researcher was guided by the research objectives in formulating a systematic procedure in analysing qualitative data (Thomas, 2003). In addition, the inductive approach did not impose any structured methodologies often used in other qualitative research designs in analysing data (Thomas, 2003), which was significant for an explorative case study such as this one. The researcher transcribed all the individual interviews and focus group. Care was taken to reproduce all data verbatim including silences, pauses, sighs, laughter as well as body language. The researcher also watched and re-watched video footage all the while, making detailed notes, which were also used for triangulation. Thus all the data was transformed into transcripts to allow for qualitative coding.

The transcripts were segmented into meaningful units that corresponded to each research objective, and then inductively coded (Bawdekar, 2016). The transcripts and codes were read several times in both languages to explore multiple meanings. Using both languages to analyse the data was very useful since words and phrases are situated and embedded in context. This process culminated in sixteen categories (later collapsed to eleven) and conceptualised into four themes to illustrate findings (Thomas, 2003). To maintain trustworthiness, both the supervisors of this study independently read the transcripts and the subsequent codes and categories to see if these were conversant with each other as well as to check for alignment between the research objectives and the data.

3.9.1. Thematic data analysis

This study utilized thematic analysis because of its focus on the meaning of data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis encourages the researcher's own interpretations in the analysis (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012), consistent with case study's explanatory purpose (Stake, 1995). The researcher in this study actively took part in the phenomenon through participant observation. Therefore, the field notes and experiences of the researcher have been included in the data analysis. Thematic analysis assists the researcher not to only identify and describe explicit words or phrases, but also the implicit (Guest *et al.*, 2012). This was especially useful as the most participants used isiXhosa in interviews and their day-to-day activities. IsiXhosa and English have very different syntactic and grammatical rules, which can affect the meaning of words (Steele and Edwards, 2008). Translations/interpretations were always checked with the participants to ensure that they convey the original and intended meanings. Fortuitously, case study and thematic analysis are iterative (Flyvbjerg, 2006; see also Braun & Clarke, 2012), requiring ongoing interaction with participants, ensuring minimal misinterpretation of data.

3.10. Ensuring rigour and trustworthiness

Rigour refers to the process of employing various strategies to address the research question, aims and objectives of the study (Krefting, 1991). It also means maintaining the integrity of the entire research process, ensuring that findings reflect what was gathered from the participants. Rigor was ensured by observing four criteria for trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). A key strategy that allowed the researcher to better understand the participants' day-to-day actions, behaviours, and habits was prolonged engagement. Prolonged engagement is about spending an extended time with participants in their everyday social constructions of reality (Given, 2008). This strategy is consistent with participant observation and ensures deep immersion in the study setting.

3.10.1. Credibility

Member-checking has been used to ensure the credibility of research findings. Member-checking allows the researcher to present findings to the participants for confirmation, clarification and further enlightenment. Participants, through member-checking, often provide critical observations and interpretations, even suggestions to the findings (Stake, 1995). Prolonged engagement allowed for ongoing member-checking throughout data collection. Since the interviews and focus groups were mainly in isiXhosa, the findings present verbatim quotes in isiXhosa alongside English translations to show that the original intended meanings were kept intact. After data analysis, a formal member-checking was done to ensure that analysis and interpretation of the findings were consistent with the actual meaning assigned by participants. Credibility can also be ensured through triangulation – this means using multiple data sources to arrive at the same conclusions regarding the interpretation and confirmation of data (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Stake, 1995). Triangulation was achieved through using various data collection methods: a focus group, semi-structured interviews, and participant observation.

3.10.2. Transferability

Transferability refers to how applicable the study findings are, if applied to another context similar to the one in which the original case has been studied (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011). Here the concern is not how the findings from this study can be generalized, instead they could offer profound insights about ADNT beyond the particular setting studied. Prolonged engagement was useful for revealing those deep insights about ADNT, which would have been otherwise hidden. Prolonged engagement also assisted with thick description

3.10.3. Dependability

Dependability is an indicator of whether the process of inquiry was logical and well-documented (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). It is a detailed account of how each decision throughout the research process was taken, mapping out for the readers a clear path that the researcher followed (Denscombe, 2010). Strategies to ensure dependability for this study included an audit trail. From the conception of the study up to the writing of the final report, the researcher has kept detailed notes, including email correspondence from research supervisors that detail how the research methodology was formulated, how the research site and participants were selected, and how the process of data collection and data analysis was conducted.

3.10.4. Confirmability

Confirmability is concerned with the relationship between the findings and the researcher's process of interpretation. The researcher once more relied on an audit trail to ensure confirmability. The audit trail for this study included the researcher's journal, fieldnotes and memos detailing the process of data collection. Concerning data analysis, the audit trail included memos detailing the formulation of initial codes, categories and interpretation of the data. [Appendix G](#) contains all the codes that emerged from the transcripts of the present study and they are grouped according to categories and themes; providing the reader with insight into the process of data analysis and interpretation. Reflexivity (facilitated by research supervisors) was used to strengthen confirmability, allowing the researcher to ponder and think deeply about his own influence on the interpretation of the data.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter begins with a brief account of ADNT to orientate the reader to the sequence, format and structure of the dance and the physical attributes of the context in which it occurs. The findings that follow offer interpretation and explanation of the data on ADNT by the researcher as is allowed in case study methodology to fulfil its explanatory purpose (Stake, 1995). Most of the interviews and the focus group session were in isiXhosa. For transparency and to strengthen credibility, the quotes are presented in isiXhosa alongside their English translations. Thus, the findings section appears to be lengthy, however, case studies according to Flyvbjerg (2011) are typically rich and detailed.

The data yielded 504 codes ([appendix G](#)), forming sixteen categories. These were later collapsed into eleven categories. Four themes emerged (see Table 4), which all show the nature and the enactment of ADNT to varying degrees. Also, in tables 4.1, 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 the reader is reminded of the categories for each theme, respectively, and the research objectives they address. The terms ‘nature’ and ‘enactment’ (see chapter 2, section 2.2.), are used to demonstrate how each of the four themes responds to the research objectives and ultimately the research question.

4.1. ADNT on a typical weekday

Four days a week, the participants engage in rehearsals, except for Wednesdays when the dance school arranges wellness, yoga and art lessons for members of the public for a fee. This routine remains the same throughout the year unless the academy has been commissioned to dance at an event, coinciding with their timetable. The academy follows the South African schools’ calendar. The following is an hourly account of activities that constitute ADNT between Monday and Friday:

08:00 – 08:30 – Dancers arrive at the academy. They set up the dance hall for the day’s activities. Furniture is moved to the sides, audio-speakers are connected, and the wooden floor is swept clean.

08:30 – 09:30 - Dancers change into activewear. They begin by stretching upper limbs by themselves and then move onto lower limbs, usually done with the help of others. *E.g.*, two dancers sit face-to-face with their feet touching, then they will hold hands and alternately pull each other to effect hip abduction.

09:30 – 10:00 – A senior dance student in charge of all the rehearsal music, puts the music on for improvisation. Improvisation is a freestyle dance movement – the performer threads different dance styles to form a unique, one-time dance repertoire. Improvisation also happens during live performances, where it is a deviation from that which is rehearsed. This is why improvisation is not limited only to this half-hour, though it is the focus at this point; it is present throughout the day,

whether in rehearsals or on stage. Most of the music is cinematic scores that have drumming; each week, there is a new playlist.

10:00 – 13:00 - Choreographer runs dance rehearsals for all dancers. These dance rehearsals double as fitness exercises, also known as ‘training’. The dance rehearsals are repetitive and typically include floor work, (for abdominal and lower limb strength) and dance lifts (for upper body strength). The choreographer also uses training to teach about other aspects of dance, such as how to use space, force, time as well as African dance history and philosophy.

13:00 – 14:00 - Lunch Break

14:00 – 16:00 – Dance rehearsal for commissioned events and shows. This entails producing the required choreography rather than general lessons about dance.

16:00 – 16:30 - Dancers use this time to cool down and to stretch again. Afterwards, audio-speakers are packed away, and the hall furniture re-arranged again.

4.2. The nature and enactment of ADNT: Themes and categories

Themes	Categories	Research objectives addressed
I. Triggers: improvisations, Energy and pushing beyond limits	1.1. Shaking only when doing African dance improvisations: 1.1.1. Improvisation 1.1.2. Fitness exercises 1.1.3. Stretching with others 1.2. The Energy: <i>ayipheli (it doesn't run out)</i> , can't control it... don't want to stop 1.3. After I'm done... I begin to shake	• Describe and explain the enactment of ADNT in terms of format, pace, and the sequence of steps involved in performing African dance repertoires that are known to produce neurogenic tremors • Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT
II. Essence of self: embodying Africa through dance	2.1. Connecting with the essence of self 2.2. Embodying African dance	• Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT
III. Leaving and returning to the Body	3.1. The body takes over: <i>umzimba uyathetha (the body speaks)</i> 3.2. Transcendence: leaving and returning to the body	• Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods. • Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT
IV. Creatures of the soil: connected to the ground and beyond... for health	4.1. Africans as creatures of the soil: connected to the ground 4.2. Connecting with other powers and sources 4.3. Sharing my burden with others 4.4. Healing myself and the audience	• Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT • Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods.

Figure 4. The four themes of ADNT with their corresponding categories and the research objectives they address

The nature and enactment of ADNT are inseparable because occupational performance is always done in the context of an occupational form (Nelson, 1988), however, each of the four themes emphasize the nature or the enactment to a lesser or greater degree. Theme I, 'Triggers: improvisations, energy and pushing beyond limits' corresponds more with enactment. This is because these activation conditions (dance improvisation, stretching, and fitness exercises) when enacted, trigger tremors. Theme II, 'Essence of Self: embodying Africa through dance' is about the education of the self about African values, heritage, culture, histories and therefore speaks to the nature of ADNT.

Theme III, 'Leaving and returning to the body' illuminates the enactment of ADNT concerning performance and transcendence. Here participants explain what the tremors mean to them in the context of African dance. Theme IV, 'Creatures of the soil: connected to the ground and beyond...for health' further unearths the nature of ADNT while also describing the meaning derived, as well as the ultimate purpose for ADNT.

Theme I - Triggers: Improvisations, Energy² and pushing beyond limits

Themes	Categories	Research objectives addressed
I. Triggers: improvisations, Energy and pushing beyond limits	1.1. Shaking only when doing African dance improvisations: 1.1.1. Improvisation 1.1.2. Fitness exercises 1.1.3. Stretching with others 1.2. The Energy: <i>ayipheli</i> (it doesn't run out), can't control it... don't want to stop 1.3. After I'm done... I begin to shake	- Describe and explain the enactment of ADNT in terms of format, pace, and the sequence of steps involved in performing African dance repertoires that are known to produce neurogenic tremors - Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT

Figure 4.1. Theme I - Triggers: improvisations, Energy and pushing beyond limits

By exploring and describing perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions in which ADNT is enacted, participants identify triggers of neurogenic tremors as:

- i. Improvisations,
- ii. Energy and
- iii. Pushing beyond limits.

Participants refer to tremors or tremoring as shaking. Through annotating the times at which the tremors occur, this theme highlights temporal conditions: (i) the tremors begin in rehearsal, (ii) continue on stage, (iii) with some participants reporting tremors immediately after the performance. Marking the times when tremors appear also brought to the surface spatial conditions that facilitate tremors: firstly, rehearsal spaces for improvising; secondly on stage where performances take place and where the Energy visits; and thirdly, a grounding space; off-stage to relax, after what they describe as an intense performance.

² Energy is capitalized to indicate that the dancers view it as both a transcendent entity and as a natural phenomenon that allows powers activity or work. During member-checking participants confirmed to the researcher that what they mean by 'Energy' refers to the Holy Spirit.

Category 1.1. Shaking only when doing African dance improvisations

Participants report that African dance improvisations trigger tremoring. Improvisation in the context of ADNT is a panoply of extemporaneous dance moves taken from multiple African dance genres to produce something unique each time. It includes stretching and fitness exercises. This category has three subcategories: improvisation, stretching with others and training exercises. Binding these three subcategories together is their contiguousness and their purpose for warming the body up. In all three subcategories, participants have to push themselves beyond their individual and mental limits. It is only after they have gone beyond these limits that they begin to tremor.

Subcategory 1.1.1. Improvisation

Improvisation is a mode of performance that can be executed alone and/or with others. African dance improvisation requires one to be in tune with their body:

"...when I am starting to dance, I control my body...I try to adjust my body...to protect my body but as the time goes by...my body does its own thing, and it just flows. I feel my body shaking but not in a shaking way that it's tense or tired but in a way that it wants me to move more" (Nosiphiwo).

Tremors occur when the 'body does its own thing and flows'. To get to this point, to know what the body wants, the dancer needs to 'clear the world':

"I usually get it [the shaking] when I'm doing improvisation...I just clear the world that I know...that I walk on...then I go to another spiritual realm..." (Sbonakaliso).

'Clearing the world' so that the 'body does its own thing and flows', is like a trance or deep meditation (described in Theme III):

"I know because I have had the shivering on my bodies (sic) many many many many times. And again, with my choreography as well...people have gotten that...shiver happening when people go to another level of life...when I go to trance...into a deep meditation while you're still awake and present" (Sbonakaliso).

To achieve deep meditation is not easy however, just like stretching and the training exercises, one must push themselves beyond personal limits and overcome fatigue. Tremors occur when one has pushed themselves beyond personal physical and mental limits. Lusindiso refers to this as 'working extraordinarily'. He says that when he has worked extraordinarily, he gets to the extent that he is dancing beyond:

"iyafika bhuti I think...actually elihlobo sendiy' explaine ngalo...if like xandisebenze more than...extraordinary...yah." [it occurs, my brother I think...actually in the way that I have already explained it...when I have worked more than...extraordinary...yah.]

"I am dancing African dance neh? Then I get to that extent where I am dancing beyond, then I get shakes sometimes, I do shake at times."

Nosiphiwo explains how tremors feel for her during improvisation, reporting that her tendons feel like they are being pulled up or in anatomical terms, they are contracting, explaining the tension felt moments later:

"The shaking you know it's like the veins are...you know when you pulling up a vein or umsipha [tendon] or something. Then you just being pulled up and then it feels a little bit tense and then the body is shaking, you want to touch it and stop it but you can't. You do this (rapidly taps on left thigh), you beat up your thigh or something. But it doesn't stop, it's happening, you won't feel any pain or any intensity or anything, but it's just happening" (Nosiphiwo).

She explains that when she has tremors, she wants to stop them, but is unable to. Interestingly, unlike other participants, Nosiphiwo's tremors are not palpable.

Subcategory 1.1.2. Stretching with others

Stretching is done with others because some stretches (e.g., hip abduction, hip and abdominal flexion) can only be done effectively with others. Dancers need to be in tune with each other while stretching to avoid injury. Thus, stretching is necessarily a communal activity. Stretching time strengthens relationships between dancers through storytelling, light-hearted humour and personal conversations:

...they catch up and check-in with each other. The conversations are rich and meaningful. There's lots of gossip and laughter during stretching. Stretching can be painful, but it seems the conversations alleviate the pain or at least shift the focus away from it. They share stories of what happened the day before after they left class. They give each other advice about their families, and what they are going through, all the while stretching (fieldnotes 1).

The dance hall echoes with laughter during stretching time, even though stretching can cause mild discomfort. Each stretch lasts for approximately 3 minutes. Breathing deeply alleviates the discomfort.

Litha says tremors are activated when the pain becomes numb:

"When you get to that point and then you start trying to get that pain, into numbness and then you trying to suppress that pain and you get to that point you like "yeahhhh" the body starts like...because it's in a point is never been before. Yeah, it starts shaking..."

The 'suppression of the pain' is both mental and physical, culminating in tremors. Tremors from stretching are not always guaranteed though, these are spontaneous, as Sesethu confirms:

"Iyazenzekela, but uya stretcher and stretch xausiva kubuhlungu unga give up-i unyuse, unyuse izaw'de izenzekele".

[It just happens by itself but you stretch and stretch – when you feel that is painful, don't give up, keep lifting and it will eventually happen by itself]” (Sesethu).

Subcategory 1.1.3. African dance fitness exercises

Tremors can also occur during the twice-weekly, 3-hour long fitness exercises:

“I only feel...the...the shakings...and...and...stuff when we mostly doing the exercises of fitness in terms of African dance and African contemporary” (Nosiphiwo).

The purpose of these fitness exercises is not only about cardiovascular fitness but also to train dancers about the elements of dance such as using space, moving to the beat, rhythm in tandem with others, fluency in floorwork, and lifts. Sbonakaliso, the choreographer, uses training to hold discussions about motor control, African dance history and philosophy, as well as life lessons and spirituality. The lessons help dancers to know how to manipulate the body and push it beyond its limits while avoiding injury. Despite the need to push the body beyond its physical limits, Sbonakaliso insists that dance must be pain-free:

“ma uturna kamnandi, udansa kabuhlungu awusiyo dancer.

[even if you are twirling smoothly; if you are dancing painfully, you are not a dancer])
(Sbonakaliso).

There is a lot of crouching, stomping, kicking and leg-lifting movements and much of the power behind them is from a strong and stable trunk. Maintaining these movements can be very exhausting, but this also triggers the tremors. Conversations during stretching all come to an end as exercises become increasingly demanding. However, laughter never ceases, even when everyone is exhausted:

She made a joke about the shakes saying “ehe, ngiyanibulala zingane zami!” (aha! I am really killing you kids!), providing some much-needed comic relief from the strenuous core exercises, as everyone laughed (fieldnotes 3).

Conversations pick up again in the last hour as it is dedicated to stretching. At this point, not only is the shaking visible, it is palpable by others:

“In the last hour, we had to partner up to stretch to the maximum. When I was stretching, my partner felt the tremors, so he suggested that I should relax my leg to lessen the intensity...”
(fieldnotes 3).

This category offers four insights into the enactment of ADNT in the context of rehearsals. Firstly, we learn that improvisation is not just freestyling; instead, participants use it for deep meditation. Secondly stretching is about strengthening not only the body but relationships between the dancers. Thirdly, fitness exercise classes are not just for learning fluency in African dance movement; they are for

learning meaningful and varied topics. Fourthly, it is evident that the body is a site for learning about relationships, life lessons, history, spirituality and creativity. Category 1.2 is about tremors that occur in the context of a live performance.

Category 1.2. The Energy: *ayipheli* (it does not run out), can't control it...don't want to stop

Here participants explain tremors that happen during live performances. Live performances are hosted for various events such as dancing festivals, conferences openings or art exhibitions across Cape Town. ADNT is physically demanding and energy-intensive; as the performance depletes the dancers' energy, an external force, which Lusindiso describes as an 'extra energy' replenishes their strength:

"And then you just keep on going uya understander [do you understand]...you don't even feel if you tired anymore uya understander...[do you understand]....yah. It's kinda like an extra energy kinda like..."

This 'extra energy' although concentrated in the dancer, is not perceived as coming from the dancer. Sbonakaliso identifies the source of the energy as a 'huge presence of a Spirit' that causes the body to tremor:

"Usually there's a huge presence of a Spirit that enters you and even your eyes...they start twitching your mouth, everything, they're all...the rest of your body it just goes like...kind of a spasm and then it just starts shaking like non-stop non-stop non-stop."

Mthetheleli personifies this metaphysical entity. Hence Energy with a capital "E" is used to differentiate it from the dancers' own energies:

*"Like ifeeling yakhona yayidifferent, ingathi akudance mna, kudancer omnye umntu.
[Like that feeling was different, it's as if I am not the one dancing, someone else is dancing]"
(Mthetheleli).*

Nosiphiwo explains that dancers must allow the Energy into their bodies; inspiring her to dance even harder:

"So it falls upon you and when you allowing it to...to...to come into you, to be in your body, your body allows it to happen as well...you know that energy...it...it bring...it gives you...I can say it puts you in a good mood, it gives you...uhm strength, it gives encouragement that I am here, we are here to do this, so it gives...it encourages you to...to put more effort..." (Nosiphiwo).

The Energy gives participants encouragement. Once the Energy takes hold of the dancer, it grows and rises within the dancer to the point that the dancer overcomes fatigue:

"ayipheli [it doesn't run out]...it's consistent you don't wanna even stop, you just wanna dance, you are just wanna dance the whole time..." (Lusindiso).

In category 1.1 tremors occur in the rehearsal space away from the audience. In this category, tremors happen during live performances. It is in the context of a live performance when metaphysical entities revitalize and replenish the dancers' worn-out selves. The transition from their own energy to a boundless Energy is the trigger. Category 1.3 is about tremors that occur after the live performance.

Category 1.3. After I'm done... I begin to shake.

In this category, participants explain that intense performances trigger tremors afterwards. They use different terms to explain what they mean by intense performance. After such a performance (rehearsal or live performance), they look for a place to calm themselves down as the tremors tend to energize the body. Lusindiso, both in his interview and focus group reports that tremors occur when one has pushed their own body beyond its physical limits:

"...As umile yaboo...iyazenzekela bhuti iyazenzekela, uvele nje umzimba wakho uwuwe ubana uyangangcazela uya shaker njee...as if like ngohlobo ndiyibona ngalo mna as if like you have done a lot of what the body is capable of."

[...As you stand...it just happens by itself my brother, it just happens by itself. You just feel your body vibrating, you just shake as if...the way I see it, it's as if you have done a lot of what the body is capable of.]

Elaborating further, Lusindiso states that tremors that occur after a performance are because of an extraordinary performance:

"iyafika bhuti I think...actually elihlobo sendiy' explaine ngalo if like xandisebenze more than...extraordinary...yah" [it occurs, my brother...actually in the way that I have already explained it – if like I perform more than...extraordinary...yah.]

Participants offer different understandings of an 'extraordinary' or 'powerful' or 'intense' performance, however, there is consensus that it cannot be just ordinary. In the focus group, Sesethu reports:

"I think xa ugqib' okuxhentsa...like xa uxhentse with ipower yakho yonke, uziva ubaxhentsile afterwards uyeshak(e)..."

[I think it's immediately after dancing...like dancing with all your power (strength/might) you feel that you have danced...afterwards, you then shake.]

Sesethu qualifies the performance with a descriptor; tremoring appears immediately after a powerful performance. Litha confirmed this as an intense performance, establishing consensus in the focus group:

"Xa ugqibe nje [immediately after] when you've just had an intense performance yabon'? [you see?] Then kengoku [now] I...I think what my peers are saying is that you gonna experience the shaking."

An intense performance can trigger tremoring; therefore, participants prefer going home to calm themselves down (grounding as described in [category 4.1](#)):

“It’s like something is bothering my fingertips or my body and stuff, so I just...when something...things happen to me...like what I did that time, I would just go and sit down, and I calm myself and put on my clothes and go home” (Wanie).

The need to calm themselves down is because tremoring is an energized state, an ‘excitement of the body’:

“I think it’s the excitement of the body because you know it happens ne, but not really shaking that people can see but after choreograph or maybe the end of the choreograph I would feel my body shaking a bit, shaking a bit and then I would want to sit down and just relax a bit and take a deep breath, you know?” (Nosiphiwo).

In the first two categories of this theme, tremors are happening as the body is in action. But in this category, tremors occur immediately after dancing. Participants report that an intense or powerful performance triggers tremors. A powerful performance is judged by the dancer because only the dancer knows how far they have pushed themselves. In this category, dancers mention that there is a need to calm themselves down (including from tremors).

Theme I deals with the enactment of ADNT. Participants identify perceived temporal and spatial conditions that trigger tremors. Firstly, tremors happen during African dance improvisations in the rehearsal space. Secondly, tremors are triggered during a live performance on stage when a metaphysical Energy visits them. Thirdly, participants report that they experience tremors immediately after an intense or powerful performance, where they have pushed themselves beyond physical and mental limits. Theme II concerns the nature of ADNT and explains perceived sociocultural and spatial conditions for ADNT.

Theme II - Essence of self: Embodying Africa through dance

Themes	Categories	Research objectives addressed
II. Essence of self: embodying Africa through dance	2.1. Connecting with the essence of self 2.2. Embodying African dance	• Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT

Table 4.2. Theme II - Essence of self: embodying Africa through dance

ADNT allows dancers to both connect with their essence of self and to embody Africa. By embodying Africa’s cultures, heritages and values, dancers learn about themselves as Africans and ultimately about Africa’s knowledges. Theme II describes and explains the nature of ADNT and to a lesser extent,

describes its enactment. In Category 2.1, connecting with the essence of self, participants explain that ADNT has *ubuwena*; the quality of being you, within it. Participants are given the opportunity by performing ADNT to be and to become their real selves. ADNT appreciates both the individual and the collective, with neither competing against the other. Category 2.2 describes and explains embodiment, revealing an African ontic of being a human who does (human occupation); *isintu* (what human beings do, ought to do and have been doing). *Isintu* illuminates the sociocultural resources embedded within ADNT.

Category 2.1. Connecting with the essence of self

In this category, participants all concur that pouring their souls into ADNT connects them with who they really are and their heritage, contributing to self-acceptance. In their view, it is easy to connect African dance with who they are as they are African after all. Participants agreed that ADNT affirms the dancer's individuality and identity, though it is communal in nature. Vuyolwethu identifies individuality and identity as '*ubuwena*' – the quality of being you:

"African dance ine African Phakathi. So inesintu, inobuwena ngaphakathi that's why kusithwa yiAfrican dance...then xauyenzayo funeka nawe ufake isoul yakho, ube kuyo lento uyenzayo."

[African dance has an African within it, so it has isintu it has 'ubuwena' in it, that's why it's called African dance...then when you're dancing, you have to insert your soul, it demands you to be present in what you are doing.]

Vuyolwethu also suggests that *isintu* is embedded within African dance. *Isintu* refers to an ancient way of doing things; wisdom or heritage ([category 2.2](#)). Lusindiso explains that *who he is*, is linked with *where he is*, in Africa. Furthermore, he relates to African dance easily because it is a culture he identifies with; it is *his* culture:

"African dance, first of all, I am an African, so it's kinda like it's easy for me to connect dance with who I am uya understander [do you understand?] because that's who I am in Africa yabon' [you see?], so I just feel like nice and then I could feel like I can communicate with someone else uya understander[do you understand?], it's not like I am doing something that I've borrowed from other...from other people. It's my culture, it's who I am" (Lusindiso).

Ubuwena and *isintu* are deeply embedded within African dance and come naturally to the dancers when enacting ADNT, as these values form part of their culture. This might be why Thandiwe chose African dance as a vocation because it is something that defines who she is:

"it's the route that I actually wanted to follow, that is something that defines me because it's more like...it...it's me...like...I'm doing something that I'm comfortable with, that I actually love yeah yeah" (Thandiwe).

Thandiwe substantiates her affirmation that ADNT has a positive influence on her confidence and sense of self by challenging negative assumptions about her abilities and capacities:

“the best thing is...it reminded me of who I am and who I was because I was actually not that confident. It brought confidence back to me and it’s something that most people...those people think that when you’re having a child you’re no longer going to dance, you won’t be able to move in a certain way and I also challenged myself and showed myself that I am able to do it...”

ADNT is an essential source of continuous feedback for how well she deals with life’s challenges. Participating in ADNT has made Litha aware that the sustenance of African identities and culture depends on everyday doing and practice. He explains that dancing ADNT every day helps to keep his culture alive:

“you kinda like connect with who you are basically, okay I just started to realise that, do you get what I am saying? I won’t lie we live in a modern...we forget our cultures whatsoever; culture is something you practice every day.”

This category offers three insights into the nature of ADNT. Firstly, participants explain that connecting with African dance connects them with who they are and that it defines them. ADNT affirms *ubuwena*; their sense of self, bringing to the surface a symbiotic relationship between the individual and the collective. Secondly, there is a transactional relationship between ADNT and dancers. ADNT imbues dancers with *isintu*, wisdom about human doing that is passed on from one generation to the next. Thirdly, we learn that ADNT helps dancers to connect with their cultural heritage and facilitates self-acceptance. Category 2.2. expands further on *isintu* and explains what embodying African dance means.

Category 2.2. Embodying African dance

Participants spoke about embodying Africa through the love they have for African dance. In their view, embodying Africa is achieved through physically expressing personal and cultural values such as *isintu* and re-enacting African history. Vuyolwethu asserts that African dance has *isintu* within it, that is, a cache for socio-historical-cultural information about Africans and Africa:

“iAfrican dance bhuti wam ine rhythm kum, inesintu ngaphakathi yabona?”

[African dance, my brother, has rhythm for me. Within it, there is isintu (what humans do, tradition, ancient wisdom, heritage) you see?

This assertion is affirmed during the focus group when Sesethu laments not knowing enough about Xhosa culture and music. Drawing from *isintu*, Sesethu validates the new information she learns about Xhosa music during the focus group:

“(Chuckles) And then into endiyi-find(e) interesting is that yint’ba andiyazi idance yamaXhosa kodwa ndingumXhosa – bendiqal’ uyiva mna le ipart of idance yabon’, nalomusic for isiXhosa.”

[And then what I found interesting is that I don't know Xhosa dance even though I am Xhosa – It was my first time hearing about this part of dance, you see, even the music for isiXhosa] (Sesethu).

African dance, therefore, is an ongoing and embodied education. This education however is not limited to rehearsals or the dancers. African dance provides the audience with opportunities to learn. Participants agree that embodying African dance is about conversations that are held between the dancers and the audience, and with the Great Spirit (or Energy) mediating ([see category 4.2](#)). Sesethu insists that embodying African dance means the audience *feels* and does not only just see the performance:

“umntu xake dancer masithi nge soul neh angenzeli abantu like balentoze...yabona xa udancer awujonganga audience but uyi feeler kuwe iaudience ziyayibona uba uyayifeela lento uyenzayo mmh.”

[when a person dances, let's say with their soul; they are not just doing it for show...but you feel the audience within you, and they can see that you're feeling [embodying] what you're doing mm] (Sesethu).

It might be for this reason that Sbonakaliso insists that it is not done just for aesthetics, but for connecting with the spirit realm ([see category 4.2](#)):

“African dance is one way of talking, of inviting that Spirit...it's a feeling more than anything...African dance is a dance for reason, for celebration or for some reason, you know when you've got a reason of doing it. You don't do it for the sake of doing it...and then when you're connecting with whatever ancestors you connect...Mina [for me], African dance speaks about being an African and you connecting with ancestors. So it's not something that you can take lightly.”

From participant observation, it became evident that embodying African dance is about African knowledges, histories, heritages; and being African, perceived beyond words. This might explain why participants refer to embodying African dance as shared sublime feelings between the dancers and the audience. In the snippet below, taken from field notes, Mthetheleli portrayed the story of the *Mfecane* wars in the time of Shaka. Oral history says that *impi* (Zulu warriors) crossed crocodile-infested rivers. Accordingly, Mthetheleli re-enacted the actions of clearing the path and wading, demonstrating how *impi* carefully avoided danger:

...arm movements mimicked cutting through reeds by the river while also wading through the water. Elements of this quick Zulu dance movement also contained indlamu [kicking of legs skyward] (Mthetheleli improvising: field notes).

African dance movements such as *indlamu*, *ukungqisha* (rapid stomping of the ground), and *ukuteya* (tremoring of the torso and lower limbs, while stomping) help dancers to re-enact stories of wars, celebrations or legends. Mthetheleli's improvisation was characterized by a sense of adventure; a fitting theme for the *Mfecane* war. Thus, African dance allows those who perform it to re-enact history while allowing those watching it to remember and reflect on what happened. Therefore, African dance must be understood as a heritage passed down through generations, through ancestors and the Great Spirit.

In this category, we learn that embodying African dance is about portraying African values, heritage, culture and history. We learn that because African dance has *isintu* embedded within, this means that embodying African dance allows dancers to retrieve and portray socio-historical-cultural information. Furthermore, we learn that African dance is embodied education that can be passed down. Lastly, we learn that both the dancers and the audience share sublime feelings, *i.e.*, they are moved by African dance when it is embodied.

Theme II foregrounds the nature of ADNT by describing and explaining the process of connecting to the essence of self and embodying Africa through dance. In category 2.1, *ubuwena* – the quality of being you, is highlighted, showing how African dance affirms individuality despite its communal nature. Furthermore, we learn that African dance imbues dancers with *isintu*, an African value and occupational repository for African knowledge ([see category 2.2.](#)) In this current category, we learn that *isintu* is embedded within ADNT, making it possible for participants of African dance to re-enact and recall stories of war, celebrations and legends. The next theme is concerned with the enactment of ADNT by describing and explaining the transcendent experiences of the participants. Theme III explores the perceived temporal and spatial conditions associated with their transcendent moments.

Theme III - Leaving and returning to the body

Themes	Categories	Research objectives addressed
III. Leaving and returning to the Body	3.1. The body takes over: <i>umzimba uyathetha (the body speaks)</i> 3.2. Transcendence: leaving and returning to the body	• Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods. • Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT

Table 4.3. Theme III - Leaving and returning to the Body

Perceived temporal and spatial dimensions also come to the fore in this theme. By exploring the temporal and embodied experience of those who participate in ADNT, this theme illuminates the

experience of the participants when they enact ADNT. Category 3.1. describes moments during the enactment of ADNT in which the mind lets go and the body takes over performance. Category 3.2. describes transcendent moments during enactment in which the self leaves and returns to the body. 'Letting go and taking over' (category 3.1) and 'leaving and returning' (category 3.2) happen when the body tremors. These experiences are both neuro-physical (*i.e.*, tremors) and transcendental (the 'self' leaving and returning).

Category 3.1. The body takes over: *umzimba uyathetha* (the body speaks)

Participants affirm the existence of embodied experience and embodied cognition. They report that the body can take over the direction of the performance from the mind. In their view, it is the mind that initiates action in ADNT and the body follows its direction:

"...your mind controls you because your mind tells you that "oh this is very difficult I am not going to be able to". And then once the mind says that the body will react on it (laughs), the body will react on it" (Nosiphiwo).

However, this state of affairs does not go on forever, as soon as the body becomes more and more confident, the mind relinquishes control over it:

"...as soon as the body gets...gets...used to the movement, the body feels comfortable and then it's no longer controlled by the mind, the body controls itself, it's comfortable with the movement is being done so it takes over" (Nosiphiwo).

Nosiphiwo's experience validates embodied cognition, where the body makes sense of its actions. Hidden, yet embedded in Nosiphiwo's words is that the mind too has to feel comfortable enough to relinquish control over the body. It is this sweet spot, the moment of take-over when the body is most energized, that neurogenic tremoring occurs:

"I think...it [tremoring] happens during that taking over. I think it's the excitement of the body."

The dancer must achieve fluency of movement for the body to take over. Once the body takes over, *umzimba uyathetha* (the body speaks). However, what the body 'says' may not be readily accessible to the dancers; hence Vuyolwethu feeling "dis-abled":

"...umzimba uthetha into endingayaziyo endingayiqelanga. That's why ndisithi ndifeela ingathi ndi dis-able." [...my body says something that I neither recognize nor know. That's why I say it feels as if I'm dis-abled.]

The dis-abling feeling perhaps comes from being unable to stop the tremors once the body takes over ([see category 1.2](#)). Mthetheleli experiences the take-over as if someone else is dancing on his behalf with his body:

"Like ifeeling yakhona yayidifferent, ingathi akudance mna, kudancer omnye umntu, 'ike ingathi ngomny' umntu odanceyo, whereas indim odanceyo."

[Like the feeling is different, it's as if it's no longer I dancing, but a different person, it's like another person is dancing, whereas it's me that is dancing].

Wanie explains this phenomenon differently by stating that when he is dancing, he does what his body wants, not what he himself wants. By 'going after' what his body wants, both his sense of self and his body are in harmony.

"...I am going after what my body wants not what I want because my body is my instrument, and my body is doing most of the work and all that. So it, yah...obviously, I will use my mind and my heart to do what I love or like but the most of the things is like my body is doing, and all the work all...they work and that's how I put my soul in what I do."

Wanie's comments foreground embodied experience within human occupation as active doing, involving body and mind. The experience of 'work' in the context of ADNT is processed primarily by the body but this does not mean that the mind and heart are not active in this process.

In this category, we learn that there is a sweet spot where both mind and body are confident enough in each other that the body takes over while the mind relinquishes control. Secondly, we learn that the moment of taking over and letting go is characterized by the appearance of neurogenic tremors. These two lessons have much to teach us about embodied cognition and embodied experience. Category 3.2 is about the leaving and returning of the self to the body, offering insights into the participants' transcendent experiences.

Category 3.2. Transcendence

In this category, participants did not differentiate between the spirit, soul and self – instead, they used them interchangeably. Participants report an out-of-body experience that happens as the mind lets go and as the body takes over. This helps them to perceive the world with their spirit and outside of the body. This phenomenon happens during the enactment of ADNT. Mthetheleli explains:

"yes xandisithi su, like bakhona abantu. But ingathi...ingathi...like ndiphumile...imoments ezinjeya, I mean like yho, ndiyazithanda. Like ndifuna ukuphuma kum and then like ndi...like...yeah...I think zimoment ezinjalo."

[Yes when I looked around like people were there. But it was like...like...like I had gone outside...like...moments like that, I mean like wow I love them. Like I want to come out of my body and then like I...like... yeah...I think it's moments like that].

In this moment, Mthetheleli becomes a spectator to his own performance as his body continues to dance. He reports that his soul connects to the dance ([see theme II](#)) such that it feels like someone else has taken over his performance:

“if there’s a kind of a piece endiyithandileyo, ndabon’ uba iyaconnecta nesoul yam...is’kathi esininzi like andiyifeeli ndiperforma mna. It’s like kuperforma omnye umntu...like ndibukele lomntu wayo...Like ndives’ke ndibelost nje... Uba wow okay...”

[if there’s a kind of [dance] piece that I like, and I see that it connects with my soul...Most of the time like, I don’t feel I am performing it...it’s like somebody else is performing...like I am watching this ‘person’ perform. Like I just get lost...like ‘wow, okay...]

Though the self is outside the body, it is still connected to the dance. The self literally becomes the life and soul of the dance, i.e. ADNT is embodied ([see theme II](#)). Embodying ADNT allows dancers to retrieve socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational information embedded within the occupational form ([see category 2.2](#)). Sbonakaliso explains that while she is tremoring, she ‘goes away with her spirit’, leaving her body suspended in motion. She explained to the researcher that the dance choreographies they perform are taken from her dreams. She goes away with her spirit. She reports that in her dreams, she watches angels, sometimes people [ancestors] performing. She learns ethereal choreographies by dancing alongside these celestial beings, that is to say she retrieves information from the spirit realm and translates it to the material world.

When Thandiwe ‘goes away with her spirit’, she reports what Sbonakaliso explained to the researcher, and speaks also of seeing her ancestors dancing. It seems therefore that participation in African dance is not confined to the living:

“It takes me back because it’s one of the things that our great grandmothers used to...dance and do it and the way that xa kukho umgidi [when there’s a celebration] - so that’s whereby you see them like doing...so I feel connected to...to...your family and ancestors” (Thandiwe).

Vuyolwethu also reports going to a different spatial-temporal reality when he is performing, and explicitly mentions going to a time period when he did not yet exist. This can be interpreted as ADNT being a medium for time-travel.

“ngoba i-African dance kum I feel like ndisekhaya...ndisekhaya...like kwaXhosa back in the days xandiyenzayo...back in the days even if zange ndibekho...xandibukele like abantu besenza African...like wow indibuyisela back, so that’s why ndiye nda chooser African dance ngoba ndifuna ufunda ngayo more and more and more.”

[African dance to me...I feel like I’m home...I’m home...like the ancient home of amaXhosa (translation) when I perform African dance...back in the days, even though I did not exist in ancient times...when I am watching like people performing African [dance] like wow, it takes me back so that’s why I have chosen African dance because I want to learn more and more and more about it].

African dance sounds like Vuyolwethu's ancestral home from his description. It transports him back to antiquity, a temporal location and to his primordial home, a spatial location. African dance is experienced as a living archive of memory shared between the living and the non-living. Sbonakaliso explained that her choreographical work is inspired by *isintu*. *Isintu* means 'the way that humanity does and ought to do things'. This encompasses beliefs, values and rituals, informs how rituals and practices are observed and is a living archive of collective memory that is shared by the living and those that have passed on. When the retrieval of socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational information is complete, that is when Vuyolwethu 'comes back' from antiquity or Sbonakaliso returns from the spirit realm; the 'self' returns to the body. The return is staggered, through the spirit, then the senses and the body:

"Only then I came back I said in my...in my spirit, in my senses and then my body at the time was like this (tenses neck muscles and shakes head) I was really really really really shaking" (Sbonakaliso).

Lusindiso views the neurogenic tremors as a welcoming of the 'self' back into the body. The 'self' returns:

"It's not that I am tired already...or I'm in a trance, no, it's just the body, like it's kinda like, it's kinda like welcoming me back uya-understander?"

It is interesting that Lusindiso cannot 'welcome' the sensation of returning back to the body.

"It feels weird bhuti (brother) (giggles) for mna andikwazi uyi-welcomer uyabon'? [I don't know how to welcome it, you see?] I am trying like all my best, uba [I say myself] "Sira can you relax now", whereas I am relaxed but shaking is still going on, uya-understander, still going on yabon' [you see?]..."

Lusindiso finds the return a strange feeling, reporting that he cannot get used to the sensation of tremor. Perhaps this highlights the spontaneity of neurogenic tremors as they do not occur every time the participants dance.

Category 3.2 is about the participants' experience of leaving and returning to the body while performing and enacting ADNT. We learn that participants use their spirits to perceive the world outside of the body. In this moment, they can perceive celestial beings, including their ancestors, whom they learn choreographies from, either through watching or performing with them. Therefore, participation in African dance extends to the non-living. The phenomenon explains the concept of *isintu* as a cache for storing and retrieving socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational information. The tremors are an indication of the spirit or self returning back to the body from its ethereal journeys.

Theme III explains the phenomena that take place during the enactment of ADNT. In the first category, the performance of ADNT is understood as a subtle dance between the mind and the body, highlighting

the mind-body connection. In this context, the body taking over from the mind is an example of embodied experience and cognition. Category 2.2. moves a level higher, where the key finding is the participants' experience of what could be understood as transcendent. We learn that the essence of their self is granted opportunities during the enactment of ADNT, to leave and return to the body. Theme IV explores the participants' need to connect with the ground, to connect with other [transcendent] sources and powers, and to share their burden with other dancers. Theme IV also describes and explains ADNT as an occupation for healing both the dancers and the audience.

Theme IV - Creatures of the soil: Connected to the ground and beyond...for health

Themes	Categories	Research objectives addressed
IV. Creatures of the soil: connected to the ground and beyond... for health	4.1. Africans as creatures of the soil: connected to the ground 4.2. Connecting with other powers and sources 4.3. Sharing my burden with others 4.4. Healing myself and the audience	• Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT • Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods.

Table 4.4. Theme IV - Creatures of the soil: connected to the ground and beyond... for health

This theme has four categories that emphasize relationships participants have with the environment and others. It addresses two research objectives, as listed in table 4.4. Category 4.1 expounds the need for connecting with the ground because “*even the earth tremors*”, according to Sbonakaliso. The need for connecting with other powers and sources in category 4.2 uncovers the temporal conditions conducive to ADNT not only in terms of Westernized notions of time (e.g., 30 minutes before), but also through ancestral connections, ‘*abaphantsi*’ (those in the ground or ancestors), and in ways that are not linear. The last two categories focus on the benefits of connecting with the self and others. Thus, the nature of ADNT becomes clearer by exploring and describing perceived spatial, temporal and sociocultural conditions.

Category 4.1. Africans as creatures of the soil: Connected to the ground

Participants describe ADNT as an occupation inherently connected with the ground. Describing floorwork, a component of African dance where the knees and hands touch the ground, Sesethu observes that, “*uhlala phantsi, awukhe ume ubephezulu*”, which means “you sit down, and you never stand high up”. This statement was confirmed during member-checking by Sesethu and Lusindiso to mean that one is always close to the ground, humble and never haughty. Most African dance repertoires such as *Indlamu* (Zulu war dance) or *Isicathulo* (gumboot dance) demand rapid hip flexion-

extension oscillations because of stomping, making it impossible to stand upright during a performance. Stomping, a distinctive African dance move, reinforces the connection with the ground because African dance is traditionally performed on untreated soil or earth.

“African dance kaloku...cause...xau...xau...xauseenza African dance most of the time funeka ube phantsi uyabo? So kengoku usebenzisa... (she performs indlamu (rapid stomping) to demonstrate). but usebenzisa like uhlala phantsi awukhe ume ubephezulu, funeka ube phantsi so most of the time usebenzisa thighs, and then kengoku zihambe zibe fit, and then zingcangcazele kengoku.”

[Naturally, African dance...cause...when...when...when you’re performing African dance most of the time, you need to be [on the floor/low/down-to-earth/grounded], you see? So, you use...but you use like, you’re always on the floor, you never have a chance to stand tall and be high, you need to be on the floor so most of the time you use thighs. And then over time, they become fit, and then they vibrate] (Sesethu).

The floor on which participants perform indoors at the dance school is wooden. This makes for soft landing and amplifying the sound of stomping as part of African dance. However, when the opportunity arises, they prefer the ground (soil surfaces). The sound the ground makes when it is percussed by the dancers’ feet adds to the ambience of the performance or power of the space ([see category 4.2](#)). The ground can also be thought of as the soil or earth, sharing the same complexion as most Africans, reinforcing the connection with the ground further:

“Africans are the creatures of the soil. We [are] connected so much into the ground. We [are] grounded people and if you think about anything that shakes, [it] comes from the soil, [it] comes from the ground - to the earthquakes and you know the sources underneath we’ve got something connected” (Sbonakaliso).

Litha explains that African dance gives a feeling of being in touch and being grounded, concurring with Sesethu’s remarks regarding African dance’s demand for humility in its dancers. Wanie and Nosiphiwo reported that when tremors begin, they immediately look for a space to sit down and relax. A calming space after a spirited performance is important for grounding themselves. It is also during this time and space that Sbonakaliso experiences ethereal choreographies ([see category 3.2](#)):

In this category, the dancers insist on a humble and down-to-earth disposition for those who participate in ADNT. In their view, Africans are creatures of the soil, connected to the ground. Those performing African dance must be necessarily grounded because the dance itself has numerous crouching stances and floorwork. A grounding space after a performance is necessary in African dance to calm oneself

down. Category 4.2. explains yet another connection necessary in African dance, connecting with the beyond.

Category 4.2. Connecting with other powers and sources

ADNT in this category is described as a medium for connecting with transcendent others. These entities are invited to dance rehearsals and live performances through stomping the ground and dancing. Nosiphiwo identifies one as a 'power' that falls upon her and her co-performers and the audience. This 'power' permeates the context including the physical features of the environment like lights, music, the audience, and other dancers. These contextual features and more, contribute to the 'power of dance'. Nosiphiwo likens it to a 'vibe in the church':

"When you in the church you feel the vibe of the church. So, the whole power that is in there...the power of dance that is in that environment because it's an environment of dance. So, it falls upon you and when you allowing it to...to...to come into you, to be in your body, your body allows it to happen as well..." (Nosiphiwo).

Though the power permeates all in the space, dancers must permit it to enter their bodies. It then encourages more effort in the performance. 'Extraordinary' performance is fuelled by this power (described in Energy ayipheli):

"you know that energy it...it brings...it gives you...I can say it puts you in a good mood...it gives you uhm strength, it gives encouragement that I am here, we are here to do this, so it gives, it encourages you...to...to...put more effort..." (Nosiphiwo).

The power that Nosiphiwo refers to, is not only flowing from those who are living, but also the non-living. Each dancers' ancestors are present, suggesting the audience is not limited to the living, but *abaphantsi* are present, hence the importance of connecting to the ground ([see Category 4.1](#)):

"when you do it obviously your ancestors are all around you at that time" (Sbonakaliso).

Sbonakaliso identifies the power as the Great Spirit and that the Great Spirit is also a member of the audience. Sbonakaliso asserts that ADNT is one way of communing with the Great Spirit:

"African dance is one way of talking...of inviting that Spirit..."

In fact, every morning before the rehearsals begin, all the dancers invoke and petition the Great Spirit through prayer and song to visit them and to speak with them. This is the song:

Phind' ukhulume Moya Oyingcwele, (Speak again Holy Spirit)

Phind' ukhulume Nkosi yam (Speak again, my Lord)

Ngoba zonk' izono (Because all the sins)

Ebengizenza, namhla (that I have committed, today)

Zisobala ebusweni bakho (are before your face)

Phind' ukhulume Moya Oyingcwele

Phind' ukhulume Nkosi yam (field notes 3).

The song is easy enough and accessible that even the two and half-year-old toddler, who is also already an impressive dancer, partakes in this. The toddler's mother is one of the dancers. On days for a live performance, the dancers, usually in the dressing room, petition their ancestors through traditional Xhosa songs and stomping the ground, to join them for the performance. Mthetheleli says that African dance makes it possible to communicate with ancestors:

"African dance is whereby you're able like to...let's say you able to communicate with...maybe if you believe like...to your ancestors...be able to...like communicate through dancing."

Sbonakaliso insists that African dance should be treated with reverence since it is a means of connecting with ancestors and the Great Spirit. It cannot be just for aesthetics or leisure, there must be a deeper reason beyond just dancing:

"what I know...is African dance as umZulu ne [as a Zulu person]? I think I think it's like being connected - you need to connect...with the other powers, other sources. Uyabona [You see] iAfrican dance is a dance for reason: for celebration or for some reason, you know when you've got a reason of doing it. You don't do it for the sake of doing it. There must be a reason behind doing African dance and then when you're connecting with whatever ancestors you connect..."

She continues saying that connecting with these entities is about the healing that takes place in 'the other world'. Connecting through dance for healing is accepted as a legitimate reason to continue:

"...for me, African dance speaks about being an African and you connecting with ancestors. So, it's not something that you can take lightly. So, when you do it, obviously your ancestors are all around you at that time you first call them. And then they come to you and then because you connecting with them in an outside world, so obviously, your world is gonna be...the world will disappear a bit, you know, the other world will take over and then that would cause the body to leap to another, a spiritual level and it starts shivering and then it starts healing at the same time" (Sbonakaliso).

Tremors occur when she is connected with the other world. Tremors can be seen to be a sign of connection with ancestors and with the Great Spirit.

In this category, we learn that ADNT is a medium for communicating with supernatural forces. We learn that the presence of powers and sources beyond contributes to the 'power of dance'. We also learn that African dance is not merely a hobby or leisurely activity but that it is must be revered since it is for communicating, connecting and healing. Category 4.3. is about connecting with other dancers to share their burdens.

Category 4.3. Sharing my burden with others

ADNT has intimate moments of vulnerability when dancers are performing on stage, during rehearsals or during stretching time. Litha likens such moments with being naked. However, according to participants this nakedness and vulnerability, is nothing to be ashamed of, but rather, it frees them from the burdens they carry. Thandiwe notes that being part of the dance school has given her another family, people that she can confide in:

“you also find a family; people that you actually can open up to, people that you can actually connect to, work, so those are the other things, that I have another family. I have another family.”

African dance relieves participants from difficult emotions and stress. This category also describes the sense of relief and cleansing dancers feel after exposing their vulnerabilities to others. Mthetheleli maintains that *“dancing and dancing and dancing and then again and again”* relieves him from stress. This repeated dancing and dancing can be interpreted as centring or grounding, especially considering the repetitive nature of African dance moves, such as stomping the ground:

“Then sadansa sadansa sadansa [danced, danced and danced], I was like “wow ok, masiye siphinde siphinde siphinde [let’s do it again, again and again]”. Ndiphinde ndohlala, so like ndishiftwe away from like yidance, yiAfrican dance kulento ebendikuyo, kwesistress. [Then I took a break, so like I was shifted away by the dance, African dance from the stress I was in]” (Mthetheleli).

In Litha and Lusindiso’s views, ADNT is a medium through which unwanted emotions are danced out.

“I just feel light...yah...I just feel light...it’s like I’ve shared that with someone else, uya-understander I just feel so light and happy uya understander, it kinda like heals me yah it heals me” (Lusindiso).

Lusindiso’s tears ‘drop down’ when he is dancing out his difficult emotions or stress. His nakedness finds expression in his tears:

“Uhm...maybe that morning I didn’t feel well uya-understander [do you understand?], I was angry maybe something happened at home, uya-understander so once I got to that trance I just wanna dance yabon’ [you see?] till my tears drops down I just dance uya-understander [do you understand?]”

Unwanted emotions can weigh heavily on a person, which is why Litha says that once they are out there, he feels a sense of relief, *“like a burden has been taken off”* of him.

In this category, participants inform us how they use ADNT for stress reduction. They also use ADNT to share their burdens with other dancers, as a family. This sharing of the load makes it lighter and easier

to bear. The next and final category is about healing themselves and extending the healing to the audience.

Category 4.4. Healing myself and the audience

In this category, we learn that dancing is healing, for dancers and the audience. In fact, Sbonakaliso welcomed the researcher to the academy this way:

"Welcome back home baba. We don't really dance here, we get healed" (field notes 1).

Sbonakaliso explains that African dance has bestowed upon her healing powers.

"...but the healing powers and then I don't know my brother, I don't know. What I know is I heal. I have never said it to anybody ne (right)? I heal people through dance. I heal the audience, members, through them watching my work."

When the researcher asked Sbonakaliso whether she has healed herself through dance, she responded without hesitation with *"many times"*. The healing that participants refer to is holistic. Once, during fieldwork, the researcher arrived during a healing session. Sbonakaliso stood behind Thandiwe with her hands on the back of Thandiwe's neck. Both their eyes were closed, with tears streaming down their faces. This was happening during a dance rehearsal. Thandiwe had complained about a sharp pain in her neck. The researcher could not capture this on video as it felt like this would be an intrusion. This observation draws attention to the healing nature of ADNT, also evident in Sbonakaliso's own story. She asserts that ADNT is what healed her from her knee injuries:

"...first six months of my first knee operation, the second operation took eight months. I said I cannot have another one I want to go back to dancing. I wanna go back to what I do best and then I started dancing and then the pain went...till today. I only feel it when I get bumped like that (hits knee)."

Connecting with the essence of self ([category 2.1](#)) is necessary for healing; this is why Lusindiso explains that he must 'add' his 'original' self to distribute healing:

"...Uhm I think I heal the audience and myself, uya-understander [do you understand?]. ...If I add who I am...like the original me...that's when like I can distribute [healing] uya understander [do you understand?] to get into people's heart, to peoples mind to get them thinking."

Two kinds of healing in ADNT become evident: one for the self, which may happen in the absence of the audience; and healing of the self and others, which happens in the presence of the audience. Although participants admit that they heal people through dance, none claim to be a healer, wherein the responsibility of healing lies solely with them. Instead, the indication is that people can heal themselves, especially when they let go of colonial ways of doing:

“I'm sure that if people could practice African dance and allow it to...to do what it wants to do in people and not to put the word “civilization” in your head then we gonna heal ourselves. With all the sicknesses that we have...civilization that stops us from healing ourselves” (Sbonakaliso).

Participants declare that there is a certain type of exchange between themselves as dancers and their audience, transactional healing so to speak. They all agree that ADNT is for both the dancers and the audience since the audience also contributes to its enactment (through clapping, ululating and cheering). Sesethu asserts that because of the jovial and jubilant nature of African dance in general, it is inherently de-stressing. It is acceptable social etiquette for the audience to participate in the dance through cheering, clapping and ululating. She insists that it is difficult to cheer other people when one is stressed:

“African dance iya distressa because in a way that kwi African dance awukwazi uthula funeka uCheerish abantu like (ululates) because awukwazi u cherish umntu une stress” [African dance destresses because, in a way that...in African dance, you cannot keep silent, you must cheer people up like (ululates), because you can't cheer others if you are stressed] (Sesethu).

In this category, participants explain the healing nature of ADNT. We learn that the healing is transactional, it flows from the dance to the dancers and the audience. The nature of African dance is such that the audience must cheer, clap and even ululate, these acts and behaviours are inherently de-stressing. Secondly, the participants contend that for the healing to take place, the dancer must dance with their soul.

This theme described the nature of ADNT and shows the necessary relationships that dancers must establish and maintain. The theme lists the different types of connection that are inherent within African dance: connecting with the ground, with other powers and sources, sharing burdens with others, and healing of the self and the audience.

4.3. Summary of themes

The findings show that the nature and enactment of ADNT are always entangled. Theme I identifies triggers of neurogenic tremors, revealing temporal and spatial conditions, as well as the format and sequence of steps in ADNT. Theme II explains perceived sociocultural and spatial conditions for ADNT and thereby describing its nature. By embodying Africa's cultures, heritages and values; dancers portray these ontological and axiological values in their practice of African dance. They learn about themselves as Africans and ultimately about Africa's knowledges. By describing the temporal and embodied experience of those who participate in ADNT, theme III illuminates the enactment of ADNT. When tremors occur during live performances, the mind lets go and the body takes over. During the same

performance, at a transcendental level, the self is freed to perceive itself and the world outside of the body but is still connected to ADNT.

The self is then able to 'travel' across time and space to retrieve socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational information (or resources) embedded in ADNT. ADNT having been influenced by generations of dancers, is a living archive and a direct channel to the ancestors. Once retrieved, the information is then embodied during the performance. Tremors after such a performance signal a return to the body. Theme IV emphasizes the need for connecting. Perceived sociocultural and spatial conditions come to the fore, thus describing the interconnected nature of ADNT. Firstly, dancers as creatures of the soil need to be connected to the ground. Stomping, grounding or centring maintains this connection. Secondly, dancers connect with other powers and sources. These refer to transcendental others such as ancestors, spirits and God, highlighting the transcendental nature of ADNT. Thirdly, dancers are able to maintain strong ties with other dancers. This way, each dancer's burden is lightened, accentuating the interpersonal nature of ADNT. Fourthly, ADNT allows for the healing of the dancers and the audience, foregrounding the collective healing nature of ADNT.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter discusses the findings of the study. In approaching the discussion, each theme is first discussed in relation to available literature. However, there are intersections across the themes that lead to further and greater synthesis of the findings, and what becomes a culmination of this study's main theoretical contributions to occupational therapy and occupational science. ADNT, as a human occupation in an African context, demands a full appreciation of its nature and enactment through African worldviews. However, ADNT is also a contemporary human occupation that has evolved with the times to reflect the current globalised context. Much of Africa's context has been affected by colonialism and coloniality (Biko, 1978; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014; Ramugondo, 2015), globalization (Netshitenzhe, 2020) and technology (Xing & Marwala, 2015) such that ADNT as quintessentially African as it is, could not escape Western influences. For instance, most of the music used at the dance school came from epic Hollywood movie scores such as Hans Zimmer's 'now we are free' from the movie, *Gladiator*. This reflects Western influence on African ways of life. Explaining and interpreting findings on ADNT as a contemporary human occupation in an African context, therefore, necessitates some convergences between African and Western worldviews.

5.1. Triggers: Improvisation, Energy and pushing beyond the limits

Theme I wholly concerns triggers of neurogenic tremors in African dance repertoires. Anything that triggers a tremor is ordinarily referred to as an activation condition, especially in the field of neurophysiology (Bhatia et al., 2018). Clinicians and researchers in neurophysiology use the term 'activation condition' in the context of diagnosing neuropathologies (Crawford & Zimmerman, 2018). For this study, the researcher wishes to borrow the same term but to apply it differently. Thus, for this study, activation conditions are perceived conditions that elicit neurogenic tremors in African dance repertoires ([research objective 1.7.1](#)). Furthermore, these may originate from within the body or sources external to the body. This study has identified three activation conditions for neurogenic tremors in African dance, also referred to as triggers in the present study. These are improvisation, a supernatural energy that visits during live performance, and stretching beyond personal limits. These triggers are characteristics of ADNT and are thus part of its nature. Since these triggers occur in the context of performing ADNT, they also assist in understanding its enactment.

5.1.1. Improvisation in ADNT

The three triggers of neurogenic tremors in ADNT were found to be predominantly in the context of improvisation. Though theme I identifies three triggers of neurogenic tremors, only improvisation is discussed in this section. The second trigger: a metaphysical Energy is discussed in a later section titled 'transcendence and meaning-making'. The third trigger: pushing beyond limits is also discussed in a later section titled 'ADNT as an extraordinary occupation'.

A useful way to understand improvisation in African dance is by unpacking its four characteristics as described by Wray (2017), a dance scholar and choreographer of Caribbean descent. She describes four characteristics of improvisation in African dance: 1). improvisation as a communicative performance; 2). as an expression of creativity; 3). as the transmission of ideas; and 4). as a discovery of self-knowledge that is channelled by and through the body (Wray, 2017). All four characteristics are present in the current study and resonate with its findings. Firstly, it is evident that improvisation was used by participants to tell their personal stories or to share their innermost feelings ([see Section 5.2.1 on Ubuwena](#)). All the dancers in this study indicated that improvising allowed them to re-enact African stories, ideas and values ([see Theme II](#)). This highlights improvisation as a communicative performance.

Secondly, new choreographies are developed through improvisation at the dance school. The ability to 'create' or produce work that is new, novel or original, high in quality and appropriate, has been defined as creativity (Sternberg, Lubart, Kaufman, & Pretz, 2005). As reported in the findings, some participants even dream their choreographies ([see Theme II](#)) and often test them out during rehearsals. This highlights improvisation as an expression of creativity. Thirdly, this shows improvisation as a transmission of ideas in the sense that developing new choreographies is a group effort, requiring dancers to communicate and share their ideas through dialogue and demonstration. This resonates with the third characteristic: improvisation as the transmission of ideas and as a critical display of embodied knowledge (Wray, 2017).

Fourthly, in the current study, improvisation in ADNT was reported to be a channel into deeper worlds and the spiritual realm, confirming improvisation as a discovery of self-knowledge ([see Theme II](#)). Self-knowledge has been proposed by psychologists as a source of meaning in life (Schlegel, Hicks, King & Arndt, 2010). These authors posit that people are more satisfied when they pursue life goals that are consistent with their true self (Schlegel *et al.*, 2010). However, it is important to note that Schlegel *et al.* (2010) conceptualise the self through a Western lens where the self is understood exclusively as the individual. When viewed through an African lens, specifically, *ubuntu*, the self cannot be fully understood in the absence of others, including ethereal others such as ancestors. All four characteristics of improvisation in African dance according to Wray (2017), in this study take on a collective aspect. Thus, improvisation in ADNT is not an individualistic pursuit; rather, it is a mode of performance that summons others including ancestors to join. It is for this reason that improvisation in ADNT is transcendent.

5.2. Essence of self: Embodying Africa through dance

Theme II explains the meaning derived from participating in ADNT. The findings show that what the participants do in ADNT gives meaning to their lives. Meaning refers to the ability to derive something

valuable and significant in the process of experiencing and interpreting individual or collective experiences, actions, behaviours and events (Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists [CAOT], 1997; Urbanowski, 2005; Ramugondo, 2017). The interpretive process may happen before, during or after the occupation has taken place. Meaning has existential and phenomenological dimensions (Ramugondo, 2017). The existential dimension of meaning concerns how individual choices, actions and consequences may relate to what it means to be alive, or what life itself is about, while the phenomenological dimension concerns the experience and interpretation of personal actions and life events (Ramugondo, 2017).

The findings in this study have shown that participants experience meaning through ADNT in both the existential and phenomenological sense. At an existential level, ADNT allows participants to link who they are as Africans (*Ubuwena*), to where they are in the world (Africa), providing them ontological density (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2014). Importantly, ADNT was found to mitigate against the corrosive effects of coloniality on African identities and cultures (see '[ADNT as an instance of occupational consciousness](#)'). ADNT formed a key part of *isintu*, keeping participants rooted in who they are as Africans. At a phenomenological level, ADNT provided participants with an avenue to connect with their essence of self (*Ubuwena*) and to share positive experiences. *Ubuwena* gives participants the confidence to challenge negative assumptions about their abilities and capacities, for example, that becoming a mother does not change what one is capable of as a dancer.

It is worth noting that there is a difference between experiencing meaningful human occupation and psychologically rewarding experiences (Ikiugu *et al.*, 2015). Pushing beyond personal limits ([theme I](#)) for instance, is not necessarily psychologically rewarding at moments when the body experiences pain, but completion of dance routines brings contentment afterwards.

On one hand, Nelson (1988) identifies meaning or meaningfulness as the interpretation of the occupational form but limits it to the individual. Ramugondo (2017), on the other hand, has hinted at collective sense-making, noting its scarcity in occupational therapy and occupational science literature. The findings highlighted that ADNT allows for both individual and collective sense-making among the participants. It is for this reason that 'Essence of self' is juxtaposed with 'Embodying Africa through dance' in theme II to show that meaningfulness is derived in relation to and in context with other people, not just through individual interpretive processes. *Ubuwena*, *ubuntu*, *isintu* and Africa, related to both personal meaningfulness and collective sense-making, emanated from the respective categories of this theme. *Isintu*, which will be explored later in this discussion, refers to African ways of doing things.

5.2.1. *Ubuwena* – essence of self

Ubuwena may refer to an awareness of oneself or the essence of self. ‘*Ubu-*’ means being and becoming; whilst ‘*-wena*’ simply means you or yourself. Thus, *ubuwena* means ‘being and becoming yourself’. Participants explained that ADNT has *ubuwena* and that it connects them to it. In their view, ADNT serves as both an expression of the dancers’ essence of self through occupation, as well as an occupation through which they find themselves. This is supported by an argument advanced by Guajardo *et al.* (2015) that human occupation is not separate from people; instead, we are occupation. These two processes, expressing and finding themselves through ADNT, co-occur and are in constant conversation with each other. The more they perform ADNT, the more participants express themselves and find themselves. This points to a continuous revealing of themselves, a process of becoming through performing ADNT. Expressing oneself, finding oneself, and revealing oneself through doing are concepts that have been explored extensively in occupational therapy. They are perhaps most understood through Wilcock’s (1998) reflections on doing (expressing of self through that which is done), being (finding of self) and becoming (revealing of self), where she proposes occupation as the synthesis of these three concepts.

The essence of self has been linked with spirituality and spiritual well-being in occupational therapy literature (CAOT, 1997; McColl, 2002; Unruh, Versnel & Kerr, 2002; Ramugondo, 2005, 2017). The position statement on spirituality by the Occupational Therapy Association of South Africa (OTASA) refers to spirituality as, “the dynamic and intrinsic aspect of humanity through which persons seek ultimate meaning, purpose, transcendence, and to experience relationship with the self, family, community, nature and the significant or sacred” (Soomar, Mthembu & Ramugondo, 2018, p. 64). OTASA’s definition identifies spirituality as a dynamic and intrinsic aspect of [our] humanity (Soomar *et al.*, 2018). It is worth noting that *ubuntu*, which will be discussed in the next section, is often translated into the English language as ‘humanity’ – where humanity means being human (Tutu, 1999; Masango, 2006; Dladla, 2017). It is unsurprising therefore that spiritual well-being involves “deeply personal ways of relating to one-self as a human being” (Ramugondo, 2017, p. 34). McColl (2002) nuances the argument further by avowing spirituality as being aware of the presence of spirit. To stretch the argument even further, Ramugondo (2017) notes that the human spirit has the ability to create, including creating self-awareness. McColl (2002) and Ramugondo (2017)’s consonance points to a very intricate and inseparable relationship between the essence of self and spirituality. To put this succinctly, Egan and DeLaat (1994), as well as the CAOT (1997), assert that spirituality is an expression of our most authentic self. The authentic self is “the sum of a person’s natural, uncontrived tendencies and inclinations, as reflected in one’s motives, values, feelings, self-perceptions, world view and other traits” (Leary, 2003, p.53). This means that spirituality can be found in almost every second of our daily

functioning, even in the mundane and ordinary details of our lives. However, this does not mean that individuals always behave authentically.

A useful definition of spirituality that appears to resonate strongly with the inseparability between the essence of self and spirituality, comes from outside occupational therapy literature. Cook (2010, p. 120) defines spirituality thus:

spirituality is a distinctive, potentially creative and universal dimension of human experience arising both within the inner subjective awareness of individuals and within communities, social groups and traditions. It may be experienced as relationship with that which is intimately “inner”, immanent and personal, within the self and others, and/or a relationship with that which is wholly “other”, transcendent and beyond the self. It is experienced as being fundamental or ultimately important and is thus concerned with matters of meaning and purpose in life, truth and values.

Scholars often cast spirituality as an individual experience, a personal quest for meaning and purpose in life (Unruh *et al.*, 2002; McColl, 2002; Prezioso, 1987). However, Cook (2010) and Soomar *et al.* (2018) assert that spirituality can also be experienced relationally with others. Following this logic, spirituality as a meaning-making process can also be a collective experience. Moreover, since participants in the current study report that they commune with transcendent others, it is not inconceivable to accept transcendence as a source of meaning for both individuals and collectives.

Wilcock’s (1998) reflection on occupation as a synthesis of doing, being and becoming, while useful, remains individualistic, neglecting that human occupation is relational and always in context (Galvaan, 2017; Guajardo *et al.*, 2015). Participants in this study express themselves, find themselves, and become themselves, all with others through a collective occupation, highlighting the relational nature of ADNT. In other words, ADNT is fully immersed in the philosophy of *ubuntu* – the understanding that how we express, find and become ourselves is shaped by others and influenced by an appreciation of other human beings (Guajardo *et al.*, 2015; Ramose, 2015; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015).

5.2.2. *Isintu* – the way of the people

Ubuntu is an African philosophy that has found broad resonance because of its versatility in facilitating understanding of multiple disciplinary fields such as philosophy, law, social sciences, management and religious studies, amongst others (Cornel & Van Marle, 2005; Dladla, 2017; Masango, 2006; Ramose, 2015; Tutu, 1999). Notwithstanding the numerous definitions of *ubuntu*, all are in agreement that *ubuntu* essentially is about the profound veneration of the humanness in others (Tutu, 1999). Cornel and Van Marle (2005, p. 206) refer to *ubuntu* as an “interactive ethic or an ontic orientation in which who and how we can be as human beings is always being shaped in our interaction with each other”.

To understand *ubuntu* even more profoundly, Ramose (2002) breaks down the term into its constituent meanings. In Nguni languages, ‘*Ubu-*’ simultaneously denotes being and becoming, and ‘*-ntu*’ refers to humanness (Ramose, 2002). Thus Ramose (2002) defines *ubuntu* as a way of being with others in the world and a becoming orientated toward humanness. It is best encapsulated in the maxim, ‘*umntu ngummntu ngabantu*’ – which is to say that ‘a human only becomes a human being through affirming other human beings’ humanness’, and also being affirmed.

Humanness is therefore, not a given; instead, one must work towards it (Ramose, 2015, Kronenberg, 2020). This implies that *ubuntu* or humanness is achieved through doing since ‘working towards it’ is a form of action. Doing that is informed by *ubuntu*, is referred to as *isintu*. Borrowing from Ramose (2002)’s semantic analysis approach, ‘*Isi-*’ denotes language or custom, ‘*-ntu*’ means humanity. Therefore, *isintu* can be understood as a ‘language of and for human doing’. This is a situated ‘lexicon of culture’ (Clark *et al.*, 1991). This is why *isintu* at times refers to an ancient way of doing things or the ancient wisdom of doing things. Moyo (2021), Bongela (2016) and Xeketwane (2018)’s definitions of *isintu* as the “way of the people”, drive this point home. This is because the Oxford English dictionary (n.d., definition 1) defines ‘way’ as “a method, style, or manner of doing something; an optional or alternative form of action”. Henceforth *isintu* refers to ‘a manner of doing’ underpinned by the philosophy of *ubuntu* (Moyo, 2021).

Isintu, the lesser-known twin of *ubuntu*, does not enjoy the same level of attention in literature in general, and none in occupational therapy and occupational science literature, despite it being more focused on doing. Though in general, scholars do mention *isintu* in their writings, this is done in passing and only to validate the aspects of *isintu* that either refer to culture or linguistics (Dladla, 2017). Nonetheless, ‘*isintu*’ and its explicit reference to ‘doing’ would fit very well within occupational therapy and occupational science theorising around human occupation. *Isintu* is intertwined with *ubuntu*, where both emphasise relational doing.

The findings in the current study illuminated *isintu* in the nature and enactment of ADNT. Guided by *isintu* in their performances, participants access both personal and collective sense-making; this allows them to embody Africa through dance. Africa is understood here using isiXhosa, the language of the participants and the researcher. ‘Africa’ in isiXhosa is *KwaNtu* (Marwanqa, 1995). Again, following Ramose (2002)’s tradition of semantic analysis, ‘*kwa-*’ is a Nguni preposition that shows direction, time and/or place; ‘*-ntu*’ refers to humanity. Thus, *KwaNtu*, when directly translated, is “where humanity comes from and where humanity is”. *KwaNtu* contains temporal, socio-historical-cultural and ontological dimensions, which are missing in the name ‘Africa’. Connecting with the essence of self may

be understood as ‘travelling’ (Theme III) to “where people come from” so that people can relive and retell their ancestors’ stories. Embodying Africa through dance, therefore, is about re-enacting (hi)stories of “where people come from”.

5.2.3. ADNT as an expression of occupational consciousness

Enacting ADNT every day was found to heighten participants’ awareness of the impact of their daily actions and choices in sustaining their own culture(s) and heritage (see [Theme II](#)) while resisting hegemonic social forces. This sense of awareness and commitment to keep their culture(s) alive strongly resonates with Ramugondo’s (2009) notion of occupational consciousness. Occupational consciousness refers to an awareness about how everyday doing sustains and perpetuates, or challenges and liberates people from hegemonic social structures, with implications for personal and collective health and well-being (Ramugondo, 2012; 2015). By taking a closer look into the activities that comprise ADNT, expressions of occupational consciousness become evident.

For example, during performance rehearsals, participants had robust and engaging discussions and reflections with the choreographer and with each other about the meaning of the choreography, how each dance movement or stance or act within the performance calls into existence African ideas and values (see [subcategory 1.1.3](#)). The rehearsal space offers opportunities for critical engagement in historical and contemporary social issues that influence ways of being and doing in Africa. One of their choreographies is called ‘*Ingxoxo yabafazi*’ – which translates to “a conversation among women”. Through this work, the dancers challenge patriarchal perceptions that portray women as weak; rather the dance performance portrays women as they are – strong and enduring, the backbone of families and society at large. Participants view ADNT as a conscientizing human occupation, teaching them the value of African dance and how to challenge and resist oppressive social structures. Enacting ADNT has given participants opportunities to contribute to multiple discourses of social phenomena and social structures such as patriarchy, racism and coloniality, African spirituality and African philosophy, to name a few.

Moreover, instances of occupational consciousness with regard to ADNT can also occur for those not actively performing but watching. One of the participants, Vuyolwethu, highlighted that watching other dancers perform ADNT helps him to “learn more and more and more about it” (see [Category 3.2](#)). The conscious choice to learn through watching other dancers perform is meaningful. This is because African dance is a “source of communication and a history re-enacted through movement” (Nettleford, 1998). That is to say, both the dancers and the audience find it meaningful, whether for re-enacting history or learning that history re-enacted in movement. Thus, ADNT is a meaningful human occupation that allows occupational consciousness to find expression.

5.3. Leaving and returning to the body

The relationship between the mind and the body as mediated by ADNT takes centre stage in this theme. The findings suggest that neurogenic tremors serve as a cue for the mind to let go and for the body to take over and lead action. In ADNT, the body takes over the performance during improvisation. This is because improvisation is a critical display of embodied knowledge. This is to say the body knows what to do, the body knows how to enact ADNT. Thus, embodiment as improvisation, therefore, refers to the corporeal body's know-how (Bailliard, *et al.*, 2018), where the performance of movement is skilfully executed, spontaneously created, and enacted through existing movement vocabulary (Wray, 2017; Blom & Chaplin, 1988). In both occupational science and dance literature, both improvisation (Blom & Chaplin, 1988) and embodiment (Bailliard *et al.*, 2018) are predominantly understood as occurring without the support of the mind. Wray (2017) in her thesis on African dance improvisation, dispels this notion, arguing that improvisation as embodied knowledge is made possible through the coalescence of the mind and the body.

This nuanced view on improvisation challenges Cartesian philosophy, which not only separates the mind from the body (Merleau-Ponty in Bailliard *et al.*, 2018; Wray 2017) but promulgates a superiority-inferiority dichotomy, thus privileging intellectual knowing over embodied knowing. Since the findings point to the inseparable interdependence of the mind and the body, this means that knowing and knowledge in ADNT are not fragmented. Instead, as the findings confirm, this kind of interdependence points to the transcendental nature of ADNT.

5.3.1. Transcendence and time-travel

Transcendence is the experience of rising above and beyond material existence (Unruh *et al.*, 2002) in pursuit of collective well-being (Karakas, Sarigollu & Kavas., 2015). Transcendence or a sense of connectedness involves perceptions and experiences with people, living or non-living, across time and space (Unruh *et al.*, 2002). Transcendent experiences that occur as a consequence of performing ADNT involve the perception of crossing the borders of time and space, that is, to time-travel. In the findings, participants reported transcending to different spatial-temporal locations, even to Xhosa antiquity. In these 'travels', that is, when the mind lets go and the body takes over, participants reported engaging with their ancestors through dance, or in some experiences, watching their ancestors perform.

ADNT is not just a signifier of time and life events, useful for commemorations and time-telling (Maluwaya, 2015; Glocke & Jackson, 2011; Amegago, 2007; Chebanne, 2007; Nettleford, 1998; Green, 1998; Primus, 1994), but it is also for travelling through time(s). Conventional scholarship on time reflects the taken-for-granted assumption that time progresses linearly. The linearity of time is

informed by Newtonian physics (Raju, 2013), which itself derives from the hegemonic Judeo-Christian cosmology prevalent in occupational therapy and occupational science literature (Hammell, 2011). Colonial cosmology tends to present localized truths as universal and irrefutable, thereby undermining other equally important worldviews. This hegemonic worldview understands time as apocalyptic, only advancing forward (Raju, 2013), and if occupation only unfolds over time, then it means it is also understood as only moving forward.

The interaction between ancestors and their living offspring(s) as reported by participants in relation to transcendence in ADNT, could be interpreted as either the ancestors travelling forward in time to interact directly with their living offspring(s) or the living offspring(s) travelling backwards in time to do the same. This may also include perceptions of meetings between the living offspring(s) and their ancestors in a different spatial-temporal reality altogether. The findings suggest all of this to be possible. However, dominant assumptions about the unidirectionality of time make this proposition sound illogical or even outrageous. Nevertheless, the real possibility of time-travel is intensively explored by scholars in theoretical physics (Nahin, 2016; Raju, 2006; Hawking, 1992). Raju (2006, p. 1100) insists that there is a kind of time travel that “contemplates only transfer of information without involving physical transport of the traveler’s body”. This kind of time-travel allows for intergenerational interaction beyond the living and transfer of knowledge that is commensurate with ADNT. This might explain why Nettleford (1998) refers to African dance as a living archive. Thus, communication between the living and the non-living may be understood as transcendental and, accordingly, a potential source of meaning.

5.4. Creatures of the soil: Connected to the ground and beyond...for health

Pursuing meaning beyond simple gratification is associated with eudaimonic occupation (Ramugondo, 2017). Theme IV depicts ADNT as a eudaimonic occupation. *Eudaimonia* is a Greek term meaning human flourishing (Robinson, 1989). Thus, eudaimonic occupations may be understood as those occupations that inherently promote human flourishing. Thibeault (2014, in personal communication with Ramugondo, 2017) suggests that eudaimonic occupations are those engagements that allow for the centring of self, contemplation, connectedness, creation or creativity, and contribution. Many of these characteristics of eudaimonic occupation are evident in ADNT. Findings show that dancers of ADNT need to connect to the ground (centring of self), with ethereal powers (contemplation and connectedness), and with other dancers to share their burdens (connectedness). They also dance to heal themselves and the audience (creativity and contribution). In this section, only creativity is not explored, as it has been mentioned through improvisation earlier.

5.4.1. Centring of self

Participants describe ADNT as a human occupation that connects them with the ground and therefore keeps them grounded. “Grounded” in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d., definition 1) refers to the quality of being mentally and emotionally stable, secure and sincere. Groundedness in ADNT may be achieved through grounding movements such as foot-stomping, which is perhaps the most important feature in Southern African dances (Welsh-Asante, 2000). Stomping within ADNT is a repetitive action that allows for centring of self. Ramugondo (2017) refers to centring occupations as those engagements that free persons of nervous energy and foster presence. Connecting with the ground through stomping channels energy into the earth (Welsh-Asante, 2000), while the percussion from the ground sends energy as soundwaves back into the dancers through the auditory canal. Thus, stomping not only connects dancers with the earth through tactile receptors but also through sound.

5.4.2. Contemplation

ADNT is a human occupation that promotes multiple opportunities for contemplation for dancers and the audience. The dancers report that improvising in ADNT ‘clears the mind’ and helps the dancers to enter the spiritual realm. In other words, ADNT simultaneously allows for the centring of the self through contemplation as well as transcending into the immaterial world(s). This is not surprising since activities associated with contemplation involve prayer, meditation and reflection. These activities themselves (i.e., prayer, meditation and reflection) are associated with spirituality and transcendence.

ADNT allows the participants to pray, meditate and reflect. In fact, in the findings section, the researcher reported a prayerful moment in which Sbonakaliso is standing behind Thandiwe, with tears streaming down both their eyes. Sbonakaliso has her hands on Thandiwe’s neck while praying.

Some performances in ADNT are intense, often requiring dancers to push themselves beyond the mental and physical limits ([theme I](#)). Thus, a quiet space after a trigger (or activation condition) such as a contemplative improvisation/ provides time for participants for reflection. Therefore, even after the performance in ADNT has come to an end, opportunities for contemplation still abound. ADNT as a meditative occupation is discussed in a later section.

5.4.3. Connectedness

One of the words for ‘ancestors’ in isiXhosa is *abaphantsi*, which means ‘those who lay in the ground’. Thus, connecting with the ground is also viewed as a means to connect with ancestors. Channelling ancestors or a higher being signifies connectedness. The findings depict ADNT as a collective human occupation that allows for connectedness between the living and the non-living. This proposition necessitates revisiting Ramugondo and Kronenberg’s (2015) working definition of collective occupation

as, “occupations that are engaged in by individuals, groups, communities and/or societies in everyday contexts; these may reflect an intention towards social cohesion or dysfunction, and/or advancement of or aversion to a common good” (p. 10). Ramugondo and Kronenberg’s (2015) working definition presupposes that occupational engagement occurs between the living, with no explicit mention of connections between the living and the dead. The findings, however, point to the fact that collective occupation may also include the participation of ancestors and other metaphysical entities. Except where they invoke ubuntu, Ramugondo and Kronenberg (2015) explain human occupation by employing mostly Western philosophy. Except for canonical texts, Western philosophy celebrates its dead heroes through symbolism and art (Viriri & Mungwini, 2010) but downplays the reality of tangibly interacting with ancestors in everyday life, relegating this to superstition. Within African cosmology, ancestors are accepted as being able to influence human affairs, just as humans can influence their affairs (du Toit, 1960). Mji (2019) asserts that ancestral veneration is not a religious belief system, ancestors simply exist and are treated with respect, whilst worship is exclusively for God. The findings affirm that ancestors and the Great Spirit take part in ADNT; their role is of primary importance, which is healing and energizing.

5.4.4. Contribution

Using the working definition of collective occupation, the intention behind “doing” ADNT is the healing of the self and the audience. One participant confirmed this to the researcher with the words, *“Welcome back home, baba. We don’t really dance here; we get healed”*; reflecting an advancement of a common good. Occupations that allow people to give back and be valued members of their community (Ramugondo, 2017) may also be viewed as an advancement toward a common good. Beyond live performance, ADNT as a eudaimonic occupation fosters connectedness with others. There is a sense of community in the dance academy. The camaraderie is more pronounced during rehearsals, where dancers give each other psychosocial and emotional support. Beyond themselves, the dancers also give or contribute to the healing of the audience, making them valued members of society.

5.5. ADNT as an Extraordinary Human Occupation

Participants regard ADNT as both an ordinary and extraordinary human occupation. Ordinary occupations refer to things that people routinely do and usually taken-for-granted until doing such tasks and activities becomes a challenge (Polatajko *et al.*, 2007). At the dance academy, mundane and daily activities included stretching and fitness exercises.

Extraordinary occupation has not been adequately described in occupational therapy literature. Though numerous articles use the term ‘extraordinary’ in relation to human occupation; a definition is

often missing (Jacques & Hasselkuss, 2004; Morgan, 2012; Polatajko *et al.*, 2007; Segal and Frank, 1998) even from those who popularized the term in occupation therapy scholarship (Hocking, 2005; Ramugondo, 2017). Where there is an attempt towards a definition, the author seems to suggest that extraordinary occupations are those in which individuals experience creativity or express passion (Blanche, 2004), neglecting the fact that creativity may also flow into everyday ordinary activities. Just what do occupational therapists mean when they talk about extraordinary occupations?

The word 'extraordinary' has multiple meanings and cannot be just defined through understanding the 'ordinary'. For example, an injury can transform an ordinary thing such as dance into the extraordinary. Sbonakaliso reported in her interview that she sustained a knee injury requiring multiple surgeries. For some time, she was unable to dance. In that sense, the ordinary (something mundane and easy to achieve) had become extraordinary, i.e., extremely difficult. Interestingly, Sbonakaliso reports that it was African dance that healed the same injury. In this light, African dance became extraordinary since it facilitated healing (Primus, 1994) because extraordinary can also mean miraculous. Participants also advanced the idea that ADNT is extraordinary because it allowed them to experience transcendence. In this case, extraordinary is understood to mean transcendent. It is evident then that 'extraordinary' cannot be just an antonym to the 'ordinary'. This suggests that the ordinariness and extraordinariness of human occupation are not dichotomous but instead are on a continuum since a single occupation can be both of these qualities at different times.

Determining the ordinariness and extraordinariness of any human occupation largely depends on the subjective interpretation of the person(s) engaged in it and the culture and situation in which the occupation is unfolding. Though an outside observer may, to a lesser extent, also judge an occupation as ordinary or extraordinary, such a determination may not be necessarily exact. Due to the contextually situated nature of occupation (Cutchin & Dickie, 2011), it is difficult to arrive at a uniform understanding of extraordinary occupation (or ordinary for that matter). This study suggests that perhaps establishing a set of qualities to determine the extraordinariness of an occupation might open up possibilities for understanding extraordinary human occupation better. Possible qualities could be meaningfulness for individuals and collectives, impact on self and others, and transcendency.

5.6. ADNT, meditation and healing

The findings show that ADNT allows *inter alia* for meditation. This is evident in improvisation when dancers 'clear the world' to enter 'into another spiritual realm' ([see Theme II](#)). Meditation is a mindfulness-based stress-reduction intervention (Wong *et al.*, 2011) concerned with deliberately paying attention to one's consciousness unfolding through time (Kabat-Zinn, 2003). It enjoys moderate and growing acceptance in the mainstream world (Pascoe *et al.*, 2017) and even in the health sciences.

However, literature on African dance improvisation as meditation is non-existent. Instead, much attention is on healing trances associated with African dance (Vinesett *et al.*, 2015; Edwards, 2010; Katz, 1982), usually in the context of an exorcism (Somer & Saadon, 2000) or *ukuthwasa*; the process of becoming a sangoma (Bührmann & Gqomfa, 1981). This focus has overshadowed other health-giving qualities inherent in African dance.

In their systematic review, Black and Slavich (2016) found that meditation is associated with the regulation of biological markers of health such as cortisol and endorphins. A boost in cortisol is often associated with increased stress (Jindal, Gupta & Das, 2013), whereas an increase in endorphins is associated with positive feelings and experience (Pascoe, Thompson & Ski, 2017). Meditation is reported to lower cortisol (Pascoe *et al.*, 2017) and cause a rise in endorphins and brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF). BDNF is a brain-nourishing molecule that plays a central role in neurogenesis, which refers to the birth of neurons and progenitor cells (Binder, 2003). These cells are vital for structural remodelling and growth of neural synapses after learning (Fleming, 2019). This means that BDNF encourages resilience to bodily challenges such as ageing, and damage caused by trauma or infection (Fleming, 2019). ADNT improvisation is both a meditative and aerobic exercise that contributes to the production of BDNF, which in turn reduces stress (Binder, 2003). This calls for more research about ADNT as a stress-reduction intervention for both its meditative and physiological benefits.

ADNT is reported by the participants as a human occupation that not only heals those who perform it but also heals the audience who receive the performance. Watching a performance is an occupation enfolded within ADNT and has its own peculiar set of activities unique to the audience, such as clapping, ululating, whistling and cheering. These activities allow the audience to actively take part in ADNT. Handclapping, ululation, whistling and cheering are ways of showing gratitude and appreciation to the performers. Thus, watching a performance potentially brings its own meaning. Drawing from the foundations of occupational therapy, that meaningful occupation promotes health and well-being (Law, Steinwender & Leclair, 1998; Hocking, 2000), one can extrapolate that watching an ADNT performance might indeed promote health and well-being. However, there is no research in occupational therapy on watching performances such as ADNT that carry associated activities (handclapping, ululation, whistling or cheering) and directly impacting health.

5.7. Transcendence and meaning-making

The focus of this section nuances the understanding of the relationship between meaning and transcendence. Current occupational therapy understanding of sources of meaning suggests four such

sources, namely value-orientation, perceiving possibilities, coherence and enjoyment (Ramugondo, 2017). Value orientation refers to personal considerations individuals take at any given time with regards to decision-making processes in everyday life (Ramugondo, 2017). This study proposes transcendence as another legitimate source of meaning. Transcendence is strongly associated with spirituality; in fact, in their review of spirituality literature within occupational therapy scholarship, Unruh *et al.* (2002) identified it as one of the seven themes of spirituality. Spirituality is generally accepted as deeply personal, rather than institutional and structural, such as is the case with culture and religion. Through this distinction, spirituality is understood as a value orientation rather than a value sphere. Value spheres pertain to collective frameworks such as culture or religion, which individuals may affiliate with or not (Ramugondo, 2017). The framing of sources of meaning such that spirituality is embedded within value-orientation, with the former only potentially implying transcendence, is that transcendence can never be regarded as a legitimate source of meaning in its own right.

In this study, it is evident that ADNT is a human occupation associated with transcendence. Participants reported in themes I and III that they derive meaning from transcendent experiences in ADNT. In theme I, participants reported that it is through improvisation that they 'enter into another spiritual realm'. The experiences of entering into a different realm can be considered transcendent. Moreover, in the same theme, participants identified the visitation by a metaphysical Energy as one of the triggers of neurogenic tremors. It is fair to conclude that being visited by a metaphysical Energy is a transcendent experience. These experiences confirm that transcendence ought to be considered a source of meaning in its own right.

5.8. Summary of discussion

This chapter has discussed the four themes arising out of this study but has also expanded theorising around ADNT beyond these themes. The concept of meaning is central in this chapter since it glues together various ideas presented herein to highlight African perspectives on human occupation. Meaning as a construct has been written about extensively in occupational therapy and occupational science (Nelson, 1988; CAOT, 1997; Urbanowski, 2005; Ikiugu *et al.*, 2015; Ramugondo, 2017); however, there is scant scholarship on meaning drawing from African worldviews. This chapter highlights meaningfulness drawing from four African philosophical constructs: *ubuwena*, *ubuntu*, *isintu* and *KwaNtu*.

ADNT allows its performers to connect with *ubuwena*. The African construct of *ubuwena* was shown to be linked to the philosophical concept of the essence of self, which occupational therapy scholars have

written about (CAOT, 1997; McColl, 2002; Unruh *et al.*, 2002). Breaking up this Xhosa word into its constituent parts, i.e., ‘*ubu-*’ and ‘*-wena*’, revealed the ontological dimension of the essence of self. Furthermore, a strong link was made between the essence of self and spirituality, illuminating the spiritual dimension of *ubuwena* as experienced in ADNT.

In recent years, *ubuntu*, an African worldview (Ramose, 2002), has entered the discourse of occupational therapy and occupational science scholarship (Kronenberg, 2018; Mahoney and Kiraly-Alvarez, 2019; Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015). However, theorising about *ubuntu*-informed action, i.e., *isintu*, is largely missing in literature. This is despite *isintu* having more direct links with human occupation. This study advances the idea that *isintu* is a language of and for human doing in Southern Africa. In the discussion, ADNT has been framed as a meaningful human occupation inspired by *ubuntu* – and any action informed by *ubuntu* is most likely collective. By exploring *ubuntu* within ADNT, this study has responded to Ramugondo’s (2017) call for research into collective sense-making and subsequently presented a case for collective meaning-making.

This study further advances the idea that *isintu* is wisdom and knowledge about and for human doing that is passed on from one generation to the next. In other words, *isintu* is an occupational repository for socio-historical-cultural-intergenerational resources embedded in human occupations indigenous to Africa (*KwaNtu*) such as ADNT. By tapping into the resource that is *isintu*, participants are ‘transported’ to *KwaNtu* - ‘where humanity comes from and where humanity is’. *KwaNtu* is the isiXhosa name for the continent, but its meaning extends beyond geographical understandings of land. Travelling to *KwaNtu* was discussed as transcendence - a means to cross the borders of space and time. This was discussed through theoretical physics since this discipline concerns itself, among other things, with cosmological phenomena and their relationships with time and space. Therefore, the transcendental nature of ADNT challenges dominant assumptions about the conceptions of time, particularly its supposed linearity.

ADNT has been framed as a human occupation that advances eudaimonic well-being, which results from pursuing meaning beyond simple gratification (Ramugondo, 2017). This finding was discussed in relation to Thibeault’s conceptions of eudaimonic occupations (Ramugondo, 2017). Framing ADNT as a collective occupation, however, revealed this occupational science construct as defined by Ramugondo and Kronenberg (2015) as needing to be expanded to highlight connectedness between the living and their ancestors and how this connectedness influences human occupation and health. ADNT was also framed as both an ordinary and extraordinary occupation, with possible qualities for its

extraordinariness identified as individual and collective meaningfulness, impact on self and others, and transcendent experience.

The final section of the discussion focuses on transcendence and meaning-making. ADNT is a human occupation that allows its performers to connect with the ground and with other sources and powers. The discussion demonstrated how this sort of connectedness is transcendent and meaningful. Spirituality, which is sometimes taken to mean, amongst other things, transcendence (Unruh *et al.*, 2002), is understood as a value-orientation. Value-orientation, perceiving possibilities, coherence and enjoyment are the four main sources of meaning currently accepted in occupational therapy literature (Ramugondo, 2017). However, this study proposes transcendence as yet another source of meaning, in addition to the current four.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This final chapter of the study begins with recommendations for occupational therapy practice. In the first section, the reader is reminded of the burden that chronic stress has on many South Africans' lives and how ADNT as an indigenous human occupation could be incorporated into occupational therapy practice. In the following section, the researcher presents recommendations for occupational therapy and occupational science scholarship. Here, final remarks about the insights on collective occupation and African constructs that emanated from this study are presented. In section 6.3, recommendations for occupational therapy education are presented. Here suggestions for educators and students to explore stress reduction interventions indigenous to Africa are offered. No research inquiry is without limitations, especially when researching a contemporary and a previously undocumented phenomenon. Thus section 6.4 explains the limitations of this study. Lastly, in section 6.5, the case about African dance that produces neurogenic tremors is concluded.

6.1. Recommendations for occupational therapy practice

The purpose of this case study was to contribute to the thinking and development of acceptable, affordable, accessible and appropriate human occupations that promote health and well-being to inform occupational therapy practice in the context of South Africa. Chronic stress is ubiquitous in South Africans' everyday lives due to a range of factors such as social and income inequality, intergenerational poverty, chronic unemployment, and unsuitable living and working conditions (Matsea *et al.*, 2018). Chronic stress is a risk factor for disease and disability and contributes to premature death. Thus, stress reduction interventions are urgently needed.

Occupational therapists can respond to this national health crisis through promoting meaningful human occupation. Interventions promoted by South African occupational therapists are often exogenous and not easy to incorporate into the daily lives of most South Africans. In addition, most occupational therapy interventions are hospital-based and removed from the everyday lives of many South Africans. ADNT is an example of a meaningful human occupation that can be extended to whole communities. It can be incorporated in occupational therapy practice, for instance, during community outreach, especially for sections of the society that cannot afford expensive stress reduction interventions such as TRE or regular psychotherapy sessions. African indigenous occupations like ADNT are maybe more culturally relevant and appropriate for most South Africans.

6.2. Recommendations for occupational science and occupational therapy scholarship

From the findings and discussion of this study, it has become clear that some Africans value connectedness with others, including non-living beings. This connectedness is cultivated through human occupation, specifically, a human occupation that is collective. However, the current working definition of collective occupation by Ramugondo and Kronenberg (2015) does not account for engagements that include the participation of ethereal beings. Thus, this study recommends that the construct of collective occupation as defined by Ramugondo and Kronenberg (2015) be expanded upon to reflect the lived realities of some Africans even more than it currently does.

Ubuntu is an African philosophy that encompasses most, if not all, aspects of daily living for some Africans. It has captured the attention of many disciplines and professions that concern themselves with human relations. *Ubuntu* has entered the conscious thought of occupational therapy and occupational science (Ramugondo & Kronenberg, 2015; Kronenberg, 2018; Mahoney & Kiraly-Alvarez, 2019). However, it remains a philosophy, its potential locked away from occupational therapists and the people they serve. This study recommends scholarly engagements on *ubuntu*-inspired human action – identified in this research as *isintu*. This proposed construct could unlock *ubuntu*'s potential since it has more explicit links with human occupation.

This study adopted Ramose's (2002) semantic analysis approach to excavate deeper meanings of the constructs of *ubuwena*, *ubuntu*, *isintu* and *KwaNtu*. The same approach could be adopted for other African languages to a further understanding of key concepts in occupational therapy and occupational science. Accepted understandings and definitions of these concepts are based mostly on hegemonic cosmologies such as the Judeo-Christian worldview.

This study explored an extraordinary occupation – since, amongst other important considerations, ADNT was found to be healing to both the performers and the audience. Extraordinary occupation is not new in the discourse of occupational therapy (Hocking, 2005; Jacques & Hasselkuss, 2004; Morgan, 2012; Polatajko *et al.*, 2007; Ramugondo, 2017; Segal & Frank, 1998); however, it is not clearly defined. This study offers some suggestions for further explorations in occupational therapy or occupational science scholarship towards an understanding of extraordinary human occupation. Furthermore, the enfolded occupation of watching a performance such as ADNT and how this may impact the health of members of the audience emerged as another area for further research.

6.3. Recommendations for occupational therapy education

Stress reduction and mental health interventions taught in occupational therapy programs are largely exogenous to Africa. Training students and practitioners in exogenous mental health interventions for indigenous people and communities seems out of place and defeats the purpose of contextually situated occupational therapy practice and education. Stress reduction and mental health interventions that resonate with and affirm African identities (*ubuwena*), cultures (*isintu*), knowledges (*ubuntu*) and contexts (*kwaNtu*) might more readily respond to the growing burden of mental ill-health in Africa, and possibly to people of African descent in diasporic locations across the world.

This study, therefore, recommends that occupational therapy scholars, educators and students, particularly those in Africa, together with the people and communities they serve, further explore indigenous human occupations that may help with stress reduction and mental health. This study unearthed concepts that are well-known by many African people, i.e., *ubuwena*, *ubuntu*, *isintu* and *kwantu*, which may benefit occupational therapy education beyond mental health. Critical engagement about these concepts, especially African students and educators, would make learning about occupational therapy much more meaningful.

6.4. Limitations

6.4.1. Data collection

One of the limitations of this study is that only one focus group session was possible. The original intention of the study was to have two focus group sessions; however, the participants, as members of a dance company, had very busy schedules. In addition, the dance company had to relocate to multiple sites in the course of data collection, making it difficult to hold a second focus group. However, the individual interviews and prolonged engagement through participant observation compensated for this shortcoming.

6.4.2. Mostly Xhosa participants in urban settings

This study involved many of those who identified as Xhosa; thus, the findings arose from a limited cultural space. AmaXhosa do not have a monopoly in understanding African dance. South Africa comprises many other Nguni cultural groups and other language groups such as BaSotho, BaTswana, VhaVenda, amaSwati and amaNdebele, to name a few. All these ethnic groups have their own peculiar dances, which would add a variety of perspectives to the understanding of African dance.

6.5. Conclusion

This research presented the case about African dance that produces neurogenic tremors, a phenomenon that has not been researched before, especially in South Africa, where occupational

therapy has been around for 76 years (Davy, 2000 cited in Joubert, 2010). African dance is ubiquitous in the everyday life of many black South Africans, who form the majority of the country. This research study set out to explore, describe and explain the nature and enactment of ADNT, hoping that the findings would lead to indigenous, affordable, acceptable and appropriate stress reduction interventions for most South Africans who have very limited access to mental healthcare. Case study methodology was ideal for researching this phenomenon in its contemporary setting. Case study allowed for multiple data collection methods, including semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group, and participant observation. One of the primary purposes of case study methodology is explaining why a phenomenon is the way it is. This allowed the researcher to synthesize and interpret data to explain the nature and enactment of ADNT. The findings are rich, detailed and voluminous since case studies are, by nature, intensive (Flyvbjerg, 2012).

The study has led to deeper insights about key concepts in occupational therapy and occupational science constructs such as collective occupation, meaning and extraordinary occupations. For example, it became evident that the current understanding of collective occupation is limited when applied to African contexts, where the spirit realm intertwines with the material world. In terms of meaning, it became clear that transcendence needs to be understood as a source of meaning rather than an aspect of value orientation as part of spirituality (as is currently proposed). Also, this study provided strong evidence that collective meaning is possible – something that has been missing in occupational therapy literature. Regarding extraordinary occupation, literature is not clear on what exactly constitutes an extraordinary occupation. This study has proposed possible criteria for determining what may be an extraordinary occupation.

Furthermore, African concepts that have the potential to benefit practice and scholarship in occupational therapy and occupational science in Africa, namely *ubuwena*, *ubuntu*, *isintu* and *kwantu*, also emerged. It is in the context of these discoveries that recommendations in this chapter have been made.

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Appendices

A. Ethics Approval Letter



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
Faculty of Health Sciences
Human Research Ethics Committee



Room E53-46 Old Main Building
Groote Schuur Hospital
Observatory 7925
Telephone [021] 406 6626
Email: shuretta.thomas@uct.ac.za

Website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms

10 April 2019

HREC REF: 044/2019

Prof Elelwani Ramugondo
Occupational Therapy
Health & Rehab
F-floor, OMB

Dear Prof Ramugondo

PROJECT TITLE: THE NATURE AND ENACTMENT OF AFRICAN DANCE THAT PRODUCES NEUROGENIC TREMORS (MASTERS CANDIDATE: Mr S TOTO)

Thank you for submitting your study to the Faculty of Health Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee.

It is a pleasure to inform you that the HREC has **formally approved** the above-mentioned study.

Approval is granted for one year until 30 April 2020.

Please submit a progress form, using the standardised Annual Report Form if the study continues beyond the approval period. Please submit a Standard Closure form if the study is completed within the approval period.

(Forms can be found on our website: www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/research/humanethics/forms)

Please quote the HREC REF in all your correspondence.

Please note that the ongoing ethical conduct of the study remains the responsibility of the principal investigator.

Please note that for all studies approved by the HREC, the principal investigator **must** obtain appropriate Institutional approval, where necessary, before the research may occur.

The HREC acknowledge that the student, Sivuyisiwe Toto will also be involved in this study.

Yours sincerely

Signature Removed

PROFESSOR M BLOCKMAN
CHAIRPERSON, FHS HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
Federal Wide Assurance Number: FWA00001637.
Institutional Review Board (IRB) number: IRB00001938
NHREC-registration number: REC-210208-007

HREC 044/2019

B. Information letter



FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Human Research Ethics Committee



Introduction:

My name is Sivuyisiwe Toto. I am a master's student in Occupational Therapy at the University of Cape Town. The title of my research study is "The Nature and Enactment of African dance that produces Neurogenic Tremors".

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this case study is to contribute to thinking and development of acceptable, affordable, accessible and appropriate occupations that promote health & well-being within occupational therapy practice in the context of South Africa. Corollary, to contribute to emerging research and theorising about human occupation in contexts of the Global South.

Selection of Participants

I am looking for people who are dancers and have knowledge of African dance in Cape Town.

Criteria for preferred participants:

- Participants must be active and professional dancers of African dance.
- Participants must perform African dance fairly frequently *i.e.*, at the minimum, a weekly occurrence.
- Participants must have experienced neurogenic tremors (rapid, involuntary shaking) during a dance performance

Participation in the study

Participating in this study will entail agreeing to meet with the researcher five times, for individual semi-structured interviews and focus groups at the participants' dance school.

First meeting (-/+ 1 hour)

This will be for introductions, explanation the research study and outlining the process and timeframes, reading and signing the information sheet, consent form; and setting provisional dates for follow-up meetings. In this meeting, participants will be given an adequate chance to ask any questions that may have before they proceed to sign the informed consent.

Second meeting (-/+ 2 hour)

Focus group with the participants. The focus group will be recorded via audio. In this meeting, I will use video elicitation as part of the group conversation. Video elicitation is the use of videos in a research project to participants to discuss the topic of interest in greater detail than they would during standard interviews. The researcher will be screening videos that illustrate ADNT performances, these have been sourced the online video repository, YouTube.

Third meeting (-/+ 1 hour)

Individual semi-structured interview with the participants. Interviews will be audio-recorded. This meeting will also be used as an opportunity to observe participants performing. This will be arranged prior to the meeting, so that the observation coincides with the participants' routine performance of ADNT. The interview will happen before or after the performance, depending on the participants' availability.

Fourth meeting (-/+ 2 hours)

Focus group with the participants. All audio will be recorded. In this meeting, I also be using video elicitation as part of the group conversation. This meeting will also be used to check/confirm findings. The interview will happen before or after the performance, depending on the participants' availability.

Fifth meeting (-/+ 1 hour)

Second semi-structured interviews with each participant. This will be used for member checking against the two focus groups and the first interview. This meeting will be used again as an opportunity to observe participants performing.

Final meeting

This will be to present findings of the study and to also thank the participants for their contributions and time.

What will be required from the participants?

The participants will be required to meet with researcher for two individual semi-structured interviews not lasting longer than an hour, and to meet with other participants for a focus group, which will not last longer than 2 hours. The participants are required to share their knowledge of African dance that produces neurogenic tremors. Refreshments will be provided for every meeting.

Potential risk

This study poses minimal risks to the participants as the knowledge sought is not personal, sensitive or confidential. However, participants will be asked about their experiences (both positive and negative) of ADNT, which may trigger distress/ secondary stress through retelling. In the event of this occurring, participants will be referred for counselling and to access psychological services in their local communities, and if available, the Dance School's own wellness services. At the end of every session, debriefing will be done by the researcher. The researcher is an Occupational Therapist, registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and is therefore qualified to offer debriefing.

Benefits of participating in the study

African dance that produces neurogenic tremors is under-researched and mostly undocumented, thus the participants would be contributing to building this knowledge. However, there is no direct benefit to participating.

Voluntary participation

There is no obligation to participate in the study, even after the data collection has begun. Participants may withdraw at any stage and have the right to withdraw the information they have provided. There will be no penalties for withdrawing or refusing to participate in this study. Participation will not be remunerated.

Confidentiality

The researcher will take all reasonable and necessary measures to protect the identity, privacy and confidentiality of all participants by concealing any personally identifying information through the use of pseudonyms. All information emanating from this study will be stored in a password-protected online repository - only the researcher, supervisors, transcriber will have access. Participants may wish to preserve their anonymity by refusing participation in the focus group.

For more information, please contact:

Researcher/Student	Research Supervisor	Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee
Siwe Toto 078 949 9607 Siwe.toto@uct.ac.za Division of Public Health Medicine School of Public Health and Family Medicine Faculty of Health Sciences University of Cape Town	Professor Elelwani Ramugondo 021 650 2104 Elelwani.ramugondo@uct.ac.za Division of Occupational Therapy Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Faculty of Health Sciences University of Cape Town	Professor Marc Blockman 021 406 6492 Marc.blockman@uct.ac.za The Human Research Ethics Committee Floor E53, Room 46 Old Main Building Groote Schuur Hospital Observatory, 7925

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES:

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) 24hr helpline: 0800 12 13 14

Lifeline Western Cape: 021 461 1113

Cipla Mental Health Helpline: 0800 456 789

C. Informed consent form



FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Human Research Ethics Committee



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

I _____ have read (or have had read to me by _____) the information sheet. I understand what is required of me and I have had all my questions answered. I do not feel forced to take part in the interviews and focus group interviews. I am doing so of my own free will. I know that I can withdraw and ask the content of the recording to be permanently deleted at any time if I so wish and that it will have no bad consequences for me.

Semi-structured individual interviews

I understand what is required of me in an individual interview and the researcher has explained the advantages and risks associated with individual interviews. I understand that any identifying characteristics with regard to my identify, personal and professional, will be redacted, and that I have a choice of using a pseudonym. I have been made aware of a list of counselling and psychological services in and around Cape Town, should I feel that I need to access these.

Focus Groups

I understand that taking part in the focus groups may involve some loss of privacy; however, I have been given assurance that my records will be as confidential as possible. I know that the other group members in the focus group and myself, must use only first names during the group sessions. I will also not tell anyone outside the group what any particular person said in the group. I understand that the researcher cannot guarantee that everyone will keep the discussions private. I understand that only the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor will have access to study records and the tape-recordings. After the group discussions have been copied from the tapes, the tapes will be destroyed. I know that my individual identity will not be used in any reports or publications that may result from this study.

Video recording

I understand that taking part in this study will involve filming of my dance routines and performance. The researcher has explained to my satisfaction that all filming will exclude my face or any other prominent features on my body that may be used to identify me or others. The researcher has explained to my satisfaction that video recordings of my performances will only be used to analyse specific dance routines and muscles to enable him to complete his research.

Name:	
Signature:	
Date and place	

For more information, please contact:

Researcher/Student	Research Supervisor	*Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee
Siwe Toto 078 949 9607 Siwe.toto@uct.ac.za Division of Public Health Medicine School of Public Health and Family Medicine Faculty of Health Sciences University of Cape Town	Professor Elelwani Ramugondo 021 650 2104 Elelwani.ramugondo@uct.ac.za Division of Occupational Therapy Department of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences Faculty of Health Sciences University of Cape Town	Professor Marc Blockman 021 406 6492 Marc.blockman@uct.ac.za The Human Research Ethics Committee Floor E53, Room 46 Old Main Building Groote Schuur Hospital Observatory, 7925

*If you have concerns about your welfare as a research participant, please contact the Human Research Ethics Committee (details listed above).

COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES:

South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) 24hr helpline: 0800 12 13 14

Lifeline Western Cape: 021 461 1113

Cipla Mental Health Helpline: 0800 456 789

D. Recruitment Advertisement

Hello there!

Do your muscles shake uncontrollably when you are dancing, or after the dancing?

If you answered yes, then you are invited to participate in a study that seeks to contribute to the understanding of African dance that produces neurogenic tremors (ADNT). ADNT refers to a group of shaking dances that cause involuntary shaking or tremors of the body, particularly around the chest, lower back, pelvis, thighs and/or legs.

The study will involve face-to-face interviews with the researcher and as well as being part of a focus group. In these interactions, the researcher will be asking you about your understanding and experience of ADNT.

Upon sign up, you will be asked to complete an informed consent and a confidentiality agreement. Participation is entirely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study anytime.

Who is eligible?

- Participants must be active and professional dancers of African dance
- Participants must perform African dance fairly frequently *i.e.*, at the minimum, weekly
- Participants must have experienced neurogenic tremors (rapid, involuntary shaking) during a dance performance

If you are interested in participating in this study and would like more information, please contact Siwe Toto on siwe.toto@uct.ac.za or 078 949 9607.

E. Interview Schedule

E.1. Interview schedule for semi-structured individual interviews

1. Describe the nature of African dance that produces neurogenic tremors.

- a. Can you tell me about what you know about African dance that causes neurogenic tremors?
- b. Could you tell me about the shaking found in African dance?
- c. Why the shaking? What is important about shaking for African dance?
- d. Going back to the African dance that produces neurogenic tremors, please tell me about what kind of environment does it occur, what materials are needed and who is involved in?
- e. Can you tell me about other African dances that cause shaking?

3. Describe how African dance that produces neurogenic tremors is enacted.

- a. I want you to take me through step-by-step of an African dance that causes you to shake that you are most comfortable to perform?
- b. What do you have to do to induce the shaking?
- c. As much as possible, could you name the body parts and muscles that you have to use to trigger the shaking?
- d. Could you describe what you feel when the shaking starts during the dance?
- e. Have you experienced this kind of shaking outside of this dance?

4. Describe the experience of those who participate in African dance that produces neurogenic tremors

- a. Can you tell me about your dance practice?
- b. When did you start, and why did you choose African dance over other types of dance?
- c. Could you tell me about what happens for you and to you when shaking during the dance?
- d. Can you tell me about your highlights and lowlights with regards to African dance that produces neurogenic tremors/ African dance that causes shaking?
- e. What challenges or opportunities does African dance that produces neurogenic tremors have?
- f. What effect or impact has ADNT had on your experiences of stress?

E.2. Interview schedule for Focus groups: videos

1. Can you describe what you watching?
2. What interests you in the video and why?
3. Please tell me about your impressions, thoughts and feelings about the dance you see in the clip?
4. Please try to identify this dance – in your response please consider its locale, when and where it is seen? Who can and cannot perform it? What may the purpose of this dance be?
5. Consider the audience, what do they add to the performance?
6. Consider the attire that the dancer(s) are wearing: what are your thoughts on this? The materials they have in their possession – what are they and what are they for?
7. What do you think is the role of the raised leg during the dance?

E.3. Structure for field notes

- 1. Description of the experience/session:**
 - 1.1. Describe what happened (what, where, who, why, when, how).
 - 1.2. Describe any salient issues that came up during the session.
- 2. Description of poignant moments during the session:**
 - 2.1. The initial response to video clips.
 - 2.2. List the issues that were raised from the focus group.
- 3. Description of thoughts, feelings and impressions before, during and after the session**
 - 3.1. Thoughts
 - 3.2. Feelings
 - 3.3. impressions

F. Confidentiality Agreements

F.1. For focus group participants

- I acknowledge that by agreeing to be part of the focus groups, I will lose my anonymity to the other members of the focus group.
- I will not share in any form or format any personally identifiable information with anyone outside the focus group.
- I understand that all research participants will not share any personally identifiable information about the other members of the focus group.
- I will keep all the information shared with me in the focus groups confidential by not discussing or sharing the information in any form or format (*e.g.*, tape or audio recordings, transcripts, field notes) outside of the focus group.
- I the undersigned acknowledge and accept these commitments.

Name:	
Signature:	
date and place	

F.2. For the researcher

- I will maintain participants' confidentiality and wherever possible data will be recorded anonymously.
- I will not disclose individually-identifiable information except to researchers who sign this agreement, and members of the Human Research Ethics Committee, which is responsible for monitoring, auditing and reviewing the activities of researchers engaged in human research.
- I will store the information in a secure place (*e.g.*, password-protected online repository - iCloud).
- I will destroy any identifiable information as soon as the purpose of data collection has been achieved.
- I will report and publish research findings in a way that protects participants' identities.
- I, the undersigned, acknowledge and accept these commitments.

Name:	
Signature:	
date and place	

G. Codes and Categories

Theme (4)	Category (11)	Code (504 codes)	Research Objective
I. Triggers: improvisations, Energy and pushing beyond limits	Shakings only when doing AD improvisations	<u>Subcategory: Improvisation</u> 1.1. Being tense and not relaxing the body means no shaking/tremors 1.2. Sometimes I am shaking because my body is tired 1.3. Sometimes I am shaking because my body is tired from the exercises 1.4. my body starts shaking when I've gotten to that point I wanted; there's some joy in getting to where you want to be 1.5. The shaking/tremors begin once the body controls itself 1.6. When it happens, I feel my body shaking a bit, then I want to sit down, relax and take a deep breath 1.7. Shaking occurs when I have worked more than extraordinary 1.8. When my work is extraordinary, shaking occurs 1.9. I get to that extent where I am dancing beyond then I get shakes sometimes 1.10. I am dancing beyond, then I get shakes sometimes 1.11. Warm-up exercises and improvisations are done together 1.12. Warm-up and improvisations are done first thing in the morning 1.13. Improvisation is for the dancer's state of mind to be focused 1.14. Improvisation is also done for the dancer to be 'present' for the day, 1.15. Kawenze imovement ethile – which means 'show us your signature move' 1.16. dancing is like walking, you need to stretch your body <u>Subcategory: fitness exercises</u> 1.17. Mostly feel the shakings and stuff when we're doing the fitness exercises linked to African dance and African contemporary 1.18. Only feel the shakings and stuff when we mostly doing the exercises of fitness linked to African dance and African contemporary dance 1.19. 3 hours of intense upper and lower limb exercises 1.20. 3 hours of intense truncal and pelvic exercises	• Describe and explain the enactment of ADNT in terms of format, pace, and the sequence of steps involved in performing African dance repertoires that are known to produce neurogenic tremors • Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT

		1.21. 3 hours of intense truncal and pelvic exercises 1.22. 3 hours of strength and resistance training 1.23. The exercises consist of repetitive movements including abduction, flexion-extension, dorsiflexion-plantarflexion 1.24. I began tremoring from the intense training exercises 1.25. The tremors lasted for 2 hours and happened during the training exercises 1.26. We began to shake as the exercises became more difficult 1.27. we began to shake as we got more and more tired 1.28. Sbo teased us and said she's killing us, and we all just laughed 1.29. power behind leg movements is from a strong and stable trunk 1.30. our movements must be drawn from the trunk 1.31. we have to use the trunk to redistribute the weight evenly throughout the body 1.32. trunk control influences dynamic balance in dance movements 1.33. Trunk control contributes o graceful movements 1.34. Dance rehearsals lasted 3 hours 1.35. dancing is not only about smooth twists and turns, the dance must be pain-free 1.36. the rehearsals is interspersed by many discussions and demonstrations of how a routine could be or ought to be 1.37. there is stomping, contributing to sound and effect 1.38. Stomping with force, but is controlled and graceful 1.39. Crouching stance (hip flexion, knee flexion, chest is brought forward and down) is ubiquitous in most of the movements 1.40. Even kicking and leg-lifting movements, crouching stance is maintained 1.41. Shoulders are rolled back and forth, up and down to accentuate upper body movements 1.42. I feel the shakings and stuff when we mostly doing fitness exercises linked to African and African contemporary dance 1.43. Lifting up your leg, stretching, splits...those are the things that are challenging to me 1.44. I did not get special treatment, as I would have expected seeing that I am not a dancer 1.45. I was expected to keep up with the rest of the dancers, despite never having danced,	
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		<u>Subcategory: Stretching with others</u> 1.46. Stretches are done with others 1.47. We help each other to stretch It is mostly lower limb stretches 1.48. Some stretches require other people to execute 1.49. Some stretches can only be done with another person 1.50. For a wider range of motion, we need each other to stretch 1.51. Some stretches can only be done when we face each other and connect our feet together 1.52. Two people had to push me beyond my limit to achieve a good stretch 1.53. Some stretches need more than 2 people to be executed 1.54. Focus on breathing while stretching to alleviate the pressure 1.55. Focus on breathing while stretching to alleviate the pain 1.56. Being stretched by another person, requires trust and confidence in one another 1.57. Although stretching can be painful, afterwards it feels good 1.58. Everyone needs everyone to get the stretches done 1.59. Stretching time is filled with laughter, though the stretches are actually painful 1.60. Stretching is an interactive activity 1.61. Tremoring from stretching 1.62. Stretching can result in tremors 1.63. Stretching is important to warm the body up 1.64. shaking comes if you stretch until you get to a point where you were not before 1.65. if you stretch yourself further you will feel the shaking 1.66. when the pain becomes numbness, you shake 1.67. We partnered for stretching 1.68. We helped each other to stretch 1.69. Each stretch lasted for 3 minutes 1.70. I feel tremors mostly before I perform, I think 1.71. there's joy in resistance [shaking] because its where you wanted to be 1.72. there's joy in resistance because it's where you wanted to be 1.73. my body is shuddering because its trying to bring itself into resisting/resistance 1.74. lyazenzekela [it happens by itself] 1.75. Although it happens by itself, you must be stretch and stretch and don't stop when it feels painful [rather discomfort]	
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		1.76. Warm-up exercises are specifically for the muscles of the body to be ready for intense and quick movement 1.77. All rehearsals are preceded by 30 to 45 minutes of warm-up exercises and stretches 1.78. Though it happens by itself, you must stretch and stretch till it happens	
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	The Energy: Ayipheli (it does not run out), Can't control it... don't want to stop 1.79. I don't want to stop 1.80. I couldn't control, I can't control myself really well 1.81. You must shake to the point where you cannot stop yourself 1.82. Tremoring is induced by effort 1.83. When I perform AD, I don't want to be restricted – no one to hold me back or tell me my time is up 1.84. when I am in that trance, I'm shaking 1.85. when I am in that trance, I'm shaking, I don't want to stop 1.86. when I'm shaking, I don't want to stop 1.87. I have to stop [the shaking] but it feels so good 1.88. It feels so good that I feel it could maintain [that mood] for the whole year 1.89. When I'm in that trance, I'm shaking, it feels so good 1.90. When I'm in that trance, I'm shaking, I don't want to stop – the whole year feeling like that 1.91. The body taking over 1.92. I feel my body shaking, and I don't want to stop, I still want to dance hard 1.93. I feel like my body is shaking and I don't want to stop 1.94. The shaking happens after dancing 1.95. You feel a little bit tense and then you start shaking 1.96. You want to touch [the tremors] and stop then, but you can't 1.97. Even though there is no pain, there is some discomfort...(majimbos: disabled) 1.98. It happens by itself and you cannot even stop it 1.99. The one [type of shaking] you cannot even stop it when it starts 1.100. You want to touch it and stop it, but you can't touch it 1.101. You just being pulled up, you want to stop it but you can't 1.102. You want to touch it and stop it, but you can't 1.103. The tremors were quite intense and uncontrollable 1.104. When you standing you feel like your body is just vibrating 1.105. you get tired but you keep on going, you keep on going, you keep on going till you don't feel tired anymore 1.106. It's kinda like an extra energy, you don't feel tired anymore 1.107. It's kinda like an extra energy, you don't feel if you are tired 1.108. The energy doesn't run out, it's consistent 1.109. Ayipheli (the energy doesn't run out)	
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		1.110. Ayipheli (the energy doesn't run out), you don't even wanna stop, you just wanna dance 1.111. Ayipheli (the energy doesn't run out), you just wanna dance the whole time 1.112. The energy ivele ithi gqi (it suddenly appears) and then it keeps on growing 1.113. It keeps on growing and all you wanna do is just dance 1.114. You feel like you don't wanna stop dancing 1.115. I am just feeling like dancing the whole day	
	After I'm done... I begin to shake.	1.116. It happens after the choreograph 1.117. At the end of the choreograph, I feel my body shaking a bit 1.118. it [the shaking] only comes when I am at Indoni. 1.119. Tremors start only after a performance 1.120. I don't shake during a performance, I shake after the performance 1.121. Tremors start only after a performance 1.122. Tremors start only after a performance 1.123. If I have not been dancing, I get cramps, but if I have been attending class, I shake 1.124. The shaking comes only after the dance 1.125. Yet it is the legs that shake 1.126. I don't feel it when I am dancing I only feel it afterwards. 1.127. the shaking appears when you go beyond what the body can take 1.128. The shaking starts when I am done and when I am stepping off stage. 1.129. Shaking happens immediately after an intense performance 1.130. You feel like you've danced then you shake after the performance 1.131. My thighs from up here to the toes 1.132. Once the story has 'left' the body, there's a relief that the story is out there. Then the body shakes 1.133. Shaking can be induced by exhaustion and prolonged activity 1.134. After a spirited performance, a wave of exhaustion and fatigue hits 1.135. After a spirited performance, you sleep for hours to recover 1.136. I feel the shakings and stuff when I have been dancing for a long time 1.137. feel the shakings and stuff when I have been dancing for a long time sometimes I don't feel my body anymore 1.138. The tremors lessen when you relax 1.139. The tremors were around 10 to 12 Hz 1.140. Did not expect the shaking to last that long nor to be that intense	

II. Essence of self: embodying Africa through dance	Connecting with the essence of self	2.1. I think I heal the audience and myself 2.2. If I add who I am [in the dance] I can distribute [healing] to get to people's heart and mind 2.3. If I add who I am to the dance, that's when I can get into people's heart and mind 2.4. If I add to the dance the original me, that's when I can get into people's heart and mind to get them thinking 2.5. If I add the original me, that's when I can distribute [healing] to get into people's heart and mind 2.6. I think I heal myself when I add who I am to the dance to get into people's heart and mind 2.7. I think I heal myself when I add the original me to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 2.8. I think I heal myself and the audience when I add the original me to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 2.9. I think I heal myself and the audience when I add who I am to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 2.10. [African dance] connects you with who you are 2.11. When I am shaking, I am just feeling good and I just forget about the outside world 2.12. Dancing is knowing yourself 2.13. AD interpreted as 'source of [my] origin, heritage, cultural values, ideals and morals passed down through generations' 2.14. iAfrican dance ine rhythm 2.15. African dance is the rhythm of humanity 2.16. African dance is about humanity at its core 2.17. African dance has humanity at its core 2.18. African dance is a heritage 2.19. iAfrican dance inesintu ngaphakathi 2.20. African dance ineAfrican phakathi 2.21. African dance has Africans in its core 2.22. African dance is about the way humans do things [human occupation] 2.23. African dance is about personhood 2.24. African dance contains personhood 2.25. When you perform African dance, you have to insert your soul 2.26. When you insert your soul and are fully present, then what needs to come out will come out	Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT
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		2.27. When you insert your soul and are fully present, then what needs to be manifested will be manifested 2.28. When you perform African dance, you have to insert your soul and be fully present 2.29. When you perform African dance, you have to be present 2.30. African Dance has isintu and ubuwena 2.31. in African dance, you have to connect movement with yourself 2.32. Connecting with yourself through doing a certain movement that puts your own being in it 2.33. in African dance, you have to connect with yourself 2.34. Putting your own being in that [certain] movement, you connect with yourself 2.35. Connecting with African dance 2.36. It's easy for me to connect dance with who I am, its my culture 2.37. It's easy for me to connect African dance with who I am because I am an African 2.38. It's easy to connect African dance with who I am 2.39. It's not like I am doing something I've borrowed from other people 2.40. AD is something that defines me 2.41. AD is the route that I actually wanted to follow – its something that defines me 2.42. AD is something that defines me 2.43. AD is the route that I actually wanted to follow – its something that defines me 2.44. AD: It's more like its me like I'm doing something that I'm comfortable that I'd actually love yeah 2.45. AD reminded me of who I am 2.46. AD reminded me of who I was 2.47. how I put my soul in what I do 2.48. it's my heart that's dancing. 2.49. African Dance is something you must feel completely from the bottom of your heart 2.50. inobuwena ngaphakathi - it's got 'ubuwena' (a state of being yourself) in it. 2.51. nawe ufake isoul yakho,ube kuyo lento uyenzayo, (African dance has ubuwena and then when you're dancing, you have to involve your soul, you have to be present) 2.52. it's just the body, like its kinda like, it's kinda like welcoming me back 2.53. You need to let all your emotions out and be genuine 2.54. You have to purge all [your emotions out] and be genuine 2.55. You have to purge all [your emotions out] then you will be genuine 2.56. The best thing about African dance is when it reminded me of who I am	
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		2.57. The best thing about African dance is when it reminded me of who I am and who I was 2.58. I was not that confident, African dance brought confidence back to me 2.59. I was not that confident, I challenged myself and showed myself that I am able 2.60. the outside form (flexibility and muscle tone) must be aligned with your inside form (emotions) 2.61. the outside form (the body) must be aligned with the inside form (the spirit)	
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	Embodying African Dance	2.62. it's my heart that's dancing 2.63. I am learning lots of things here, things that you know only when you're a dancer 2.64. African Dance is something you must feel completely from the bottom of your heart 2.65. iAfrican dance ine rhythm 2.66. African dance is the rhythm of humanity 2.67. African dance is about humanity at its core 2.68. African dance has humanity at its core 2.69. African dance is a heritage 2.70. iAfrican dance inesintu ngaphakathi 2.71. African dance ineAfrican phakathi 2.72. African dance has Africans in its core 2.73. African dance is about the way humans do things [human occupation] 2.74. African dance is about personhood 2.75. African dance contains personhood 2.76. When you perform African dance, you have to insert your soul 2.77. When you insert your soul and are fully present, then what needs to come out will come out 2.78. When you insert your soul and are fully present, then what needs to be manifested will be manifested 2.79. When you perform African dance, you have to insert your soul and be fully present 2.80. When you perform African dance, you have to be present 2.81. African Dance has isintu and ubuwena 2.82. Dancing with your soul – the audience can see that you are feeling it 2.83. AD is a feeling more than anything 2.84. You must feel what you're doing 2.85. You must embody what you're doing 2.86. You must feel that you're embodying what you're doing 2.87. the shaking comes whenever you feel the process 2.88. Audience can when you're feeling what you're doing 2.89. it starts only when you can feel that you are really putting in effort 2.90. it starts only when you can feel that you are really putting in effort 2.91. African contemporary speaks to me 2.92. African contemporary suits me within 2.93. You must embody what you're doing	
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		2.94. You must feel that you're embodying what you're doing 2.95. The dance routines may look difficult but also easier when done 2.96. Once you do the dance routines, they become easier to perform 2.97. The dance is about recounting historical events in Africa 2.98. Isintu – the way that humanity does and ought to do things 2.99. Isintu is a living archive of collective memory shared by the living and the dead 2.100. The movements are swift and dramatic 2.101. The movements are adventurous 2.102. The movements are characterized by exploration and discovery 2.103. Each movement in African dance is inspired by historical and spiritual truths 2.104. Each movement in African dance is inspired by historical and spiritual events 2.105. Lessons in dance can be connected to life's experiences 2.106. themes explored in the performances sometimes are best explained through movement itself 2.107. African dance is drawn from isintu 2.108. In the dance lessons, there are life lessons 2.109. In the dance lessons, there are also African philosophy lessons 2.110. The life lessons are taught over multiple days 2.111. In the dance lessons, there are many lessons on African spirituality 2.112. The life/spirituality lessons are used by the dancers to catch their breath 2.113. Sbo's choreographies blend elements of zulu, xhosa, Ndebele and shona together 2.114. There is a distinctive African rhythm/beat (isingqi) 2.115. Drawing from Zulu heritage to create ADNT choreographies 2.116. Infusing Zulu traditional dances with contemporary dance 2.117. African dance is even performed by very young children (2 ½ year old) 2.118. Ndalo, the 2 ½ year old dancer's mother is also a dancer in the same dance school 2.119. Even the toddler, Ndalo playfully participates in this chanting, humming and dance	
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III. Leaving and returning to the Body	The body takes over: <i>umzimba uya thetha</i> (the body speaks)	3.1 The body takes over [to shake itself] when it gets used to the movement and feels comfortable, the mind no longer controlling it 3.2 The shaking/tremors begin once the body controls itself 3.3 I thought it was the stress/trauma leaving the body, it is interesting to learn another possible experience or reason to the tremors 3.4 An internal tremor: a feeling of a tremor without actual movement 3.5 Temporal consideration: after a choreograph or the end of the choreograph 3.6 Internal tremor begins after the choreograph 3.7 Possible explanation of the tremors 3.8 I thought it was the stress/trauma leaving the body, it is interesting to learn another possible experience or reason to the tremors 3.9 The shaking/tremors begin once the body controls itself 3.10 The body takes over 3.11 When I am shaking, my body is speaking about something unusual, funny and something I don't know. 3.12 When I am shaking, something strange happens 3.13 When I am shaking, I do not understand what my body is saying 3.14 My body is speaking in a language that I neither recognize nor know. 3.15 You're not the same when you're performing 3.16 When you're performing, you are not the same as when you are off stage 3.17 By disabled I mean your body is reacting to this feeling strangely 3.18 When you're doing something unusual, your body also reacts in a different way 3.19 Someone else dances with my body, even though it seems like I am the one dancing 3.20 It was not I who was dancing, but someone else was dancing with my body 3.21 It just happens – the body takes over 3.22 The body takes over, it doesn't give you a note to say okay, now I'm about to leave, I'm about to cross over 3.23 To fill up my body more of what my body wants, not what I want 3.24 I dance to fill up my body 3.25 Shaking happens immediately after an intense performance 3.26 My shaking is caused by my body on its own 3.27 it's my heart that's dancing 3.28 I feel the shakings and stuff when I have been dancing for a long time 3.29 feel the shakings and stuff when I have been dancing for a long time	● Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods. ● Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT
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		3.30 sometimes I don't feel my body anymore 3.31 my body does its own thing 3.32 Even though there is no pain, there is some discomfort... 3.33 It feels uncomfortable 3.34 I didn't know what was going on when I was shaking 3.35 If something like that happens, then I will know that okay 3.36 This only occurs at Indoni 3.37 I don't know how I made it happen 3.38 I was just dancing the whole day and stuff 3.39 Reluctance to share experience with others 3.40 I did not know what was going on when I shaking 3.41 it's very difficult to talk about what I go through 3.42 It scares me somehow 3.43 It scares me somehow because I don't know... 3.44 Its my lower back that shakes 3.45 The shaking feels weird, I don't know how to welcome it 3.46 I am relaxed but the shaking is still going on, it feels weird so I don't know how to welcome it 3.47 When I am shaking, my body is speaking about something unusual, strange and something I don't know. 3.48 When I am shaking, something strange happens 3.49 When I am shaking, I do not understand what my body is saying 3.50 My body is speaking in a language that I neither recognize nor know. 3.51 The body must light and feet quick to move 3.52 There is no time to doubt when dancing 3.53 each dancer interprets the same performance differently 3.54 They dip down with their bodies and quickly spring up	
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	Transcendence	3.55 African [contemporary] dance is universal when it comes to the spirit 3.56 African [contemporary] dance celebrates different tongues and different languages 3.57 African [contemporary] dance reaches different souls and people in the world 3.58 African dance is a universal language for our spirits 3.59 I love moments where I can exit myself 3.60 I am not in a trance, the body is welcoming me back 3.61 The body leaps to another spiritual level 3.62 Its starts shivering and healing at the same time 3.63 A huge presence of a Spirit enters you, and your body begins to [shake] 3.64 Your eyes, your mouth start twitching 3.65 No one can stop the [shaking] 3.66 The Spirit is the One who can stop the shaking 3.67 African dances for me, feels like home 3.68 African dance for me feels like my ancient home 3.69 African dance takes to me to the primordial Xhosa home 3.70 Even though I have never lived in ancient times, African dance makes feel like I was there 3.71 Even when I watch others perform African dance, it transports back in time 3.72 the power of the space 3.73 So it falls upon you and when you allowing it to to to come into you, to be in your body, your body allows it to happen as well... 3.74 An environment of dance 3.75 In a trance, I don't think about what movement comes next 3.76 sense of uneasiness in those who have not gone in a trance while dancing 3.77 there was curiosity tinged with a sense of unease about trance-dancing 3.78 Someone else dances with my body, even though it seems like I am the one dancing 3.79 It just happens – the body takes over 3.80 The body takes over, it doesn't give you a note to say okay, now I'm about to leave, I'm about to cross over 3.81 It was not I who was dancing, but someone else was dancing with my body 3.82 I keep moving, and the more I move, the more I go deeper 3.83 I get to that extent where I am dancing beyond then I get shakes sometimes	
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IV. Creatures of the soil: connected to the ground and beyond for health	Africans as creatures of the soil: Connected to the ground	4.1. When you're performing African dance, most of the time you need to be on the ground 4.2. When you're performing African dance, most of the time you need to be grounded 4.3. When you're performing African dance, most of the time you need to be down-to-earth 4.4. When you're performing African dance, you need to be humble 4.5. When you're performing African dance, most of the time you need to be on the floor 4.6. Africans are the creatures of the soil, we're connected so much to the ground 4.7. You must be grounded, you cannot be haughty 4.8. You sit down, you never stand tall and be high, you need to be down most of the time 4.9. African dance holds you and grounds you in midst of rapid social change 4.10. It's just being able to be in touch 4.11. Somehow when you doing African dance you feel grounded 4.12. Floor work is about interacting with the floor a lot 4.13. Floor work movements move between standing to lying in prone and standing to kick the leg to the ceiling 4.14. They use the entire hall to perform 4.15. Contemporary African Dance It's interesting that in my observation they seem to be flying, yet in the interviews they all emphasize floor work	• Explore the perceived temporal, spatial and sociocultural conditions conducive for ADNT • Describe the experience of those who participate in ADNT by exploring the subjective effect it has had on stress levels or during stressful periods.
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	Connecting with other powers and other sources	4.16. African dances for me, feels like home 4.17. African dance for me feels like my ancient home 4.18. African dance takes to me to the primordial xhosa home 4.19. Even though I have never lived in ancient times, African dance makes feel like I was there 4.20. Performing African dance feels like home 4.21. African Dance is a living history, transports one back to times past, allows participants to interact with history in a tactile and tangible way 4.22. Watching African dance is also capable to transporting people back to times past, 4.23. African dance is like being connected 4.24. African dance as UmZulu is like being connected 4.25. In African Dance, you need to connect with other powers 4.26. In African Dance, you need to connect with other sources 4.27. African dance is a dance for reason 4.28. You don't do African dance for the sake of doing it 4.29. There must be a reason behind doing African dance 4.30. African dance is about being African 4.31. African dance is about connecting with ancestors 4.32. African dance is not something that you take lightly 4.33. Your ancestors are all around you 4.34. The body leaps to another spiritual level 4.35. Its starts shivering and healing at the same time 4.36. African dance is like being connected 4.37. African dance as UmZulu is like being connected 4.38. In African Dance, you need to connect with other powers 4.39. In African Dance, you need to connect with other sources 4.40. African dance is about being African 4.41. African dance is about connecting with ancestors 4.42. AD allows for communication with ancestors 4.43. AD takes me back to our great grandmothers, I feel connected 4.44. I feel connected through AD 4.45. AD takes me back to our great grandmothers, I feel connected 4.46. I feel connected through AD 4.47. I feel connected to [my] family and ancestors	
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		4.48. we begin with prayer, while holding each other's hands 4.49. we begin with a spiritual song 4.50. invocation of the Holy Spirit 4.51. Petition for the Holy Spirit to speak once more 4.52. Being in a trance while performing 4.53. She would go into a trance when she gives all her energy into the performance 4.54. She would go into a trance when she lifts up her spirit 4.55. When people disappear while she is dancing, she is entering the spiritual world 4.56. She is in two worlds when she is dancing 4.57. She is two worlds at the same time when she is dancing 4.58. When she is trance-dancing, she is in two worlds at the same time 4.59. In the spiritual world, she feels the embrace of the Great Spirit and her ancestors 4.60. The experience of being into two worlds at once gives energy and motivation to push the body beyond 4.61. You don't feel like talking or being disturbed when you are in a trance 4.62. Choreographies are dreamt 4.63. Choreographies are inspired by dreams 4.64. Choreographies are taken from dreams 4.65. Dancing to invoke the spirit 4.66. Dancing to lift the spirit 4.67. Spirituality is easily expressed through African dance	
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	Sharing my burden with others	4.68. I feel naked 4.69. I feel a sense of relief 4.70. I feel a sense of relief like a burden has been taken off me 4.71. I feel naked like a burden has been taken off me 4.72. I feel naked and a sense of relief 4.73. I feel like a burden has been taken off me 4.74. I kinda like get a sense of relief in a space where I am myself 4.75. I kinda like get a sense of relief in a space where I am myself with my emotions 4.76. I get a sense of relief when I am not suppressing my emotions 4.77. When I focus on what I am doing, that is dance, I forget about stress 4.78. African dance helps you to de-stress 4.79. Any dance makes me forget about my stresses 4.80. African dance makes me forget about my stress 4.81. Telling one's stories through dance for relief 4.82. Once the story has 'left' the body, there's a relief that the story is out there. Then the body shakes 4.83. a certain fear inside of you and a certain relief inside of you comes out and then that kinda gives me the shaking 4.84. Once I got to that trance, I just wanna dance, yabon' till my tears drop down 4.85. After dancing, I just feel light 4.86. The trance is followed by tears, but all is happening DURING the dance 4.87. my body starts shaking when I've gotten to that point I wanted; there's some joy in getting to where you want to be 4.88. When I perform AD, I feel boundless 4.89. For me it feels good cause I am used to it now 4.90. For me it is good 4.91. I came here and my stress shifted away 4.92. We danced and danced and danced and my stress shifted away 4.93. The dance, African dance, shifted me away from stress 4.94. The dance, African dance took me away from my stress 4.95. The dance, African dance took me out from my stress 4.96. Dancers must feel each other intuitively 4.97. Dancers must communicate with each other without speaking 4.98. You think, Oh God! we are dancers!	
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		4.99. When I am on stage, I am feeling people 4.100. When I am on stage I am communicating with and feeling people 4.101. It's not about focusing and dancing only yeah...you also find a family 4.102. You also find a family: people you that you can open up to 4.103. You also find a family: people that you can connect with, to work 4.104. You also find a family: people that you can work with to connect 4.105. You also find a family: people you that you can connect to work 4.106. Trusting others – those are the things that are challenging to me 4.107. They need each other for the choreography to make sense 4.108. Stretching time is also time to catch up and check in with each other 4.109. Stretching time is also gossip time 4.110. The stretches are actually painful, but it seems the conversations that ensue alleviate the pain or at least shift the focus away. 4.111. Stretching time is also time for storytelling 4.112. They speak about their lives and what they are going through while stretching 4.113. Dancers connect with each other during stretching time 4.114. Stretching is not a solitary, but a communal activity 4.115. people are able to communicate with each other with dance 4.116. dance is communicating 4.117. This dance requires complete trust in one another 4.118. The dancers dance around a circle, humming and singing a spiritual song 4.119. we could see each other's tremors 4.120. My dance partner felt tremors in my leg	
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	Healing myself and the audience	4.121. I have healed myself with dance many times 4.122. I heal audience through them watching my work 4.123. What I know is I heal, I heal people through dance 4.124. I'm sure that if people could practice African dance and allow it to do, to do what it wants to do in people, then we gonna heal ourselves 4.125. I wanna go back to what I do best and then I started dancing and then the pain went away 4.126. positive energy when you see people 4.127. You have to feel the audience inside of you 4.128. You have to feel the audience within 4.129. You have to feel the audience 4.130. positive energy when you see audience happy 4.131. Energy associated with the transcendental 4.132. The shakings are the shakings of a sense of relief 4.133. I think I heal the audience and myself 4.134. If I add who I am [in the dance] I can distribute [healing] to get to people's heart and mind 4.135. I think I heal myself and the audience when I add who I am to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 4.136. You're going to start healing yourself whatever sickness you have 4.137. If I add who I am to the dance, that's when I can get into people's heart and mind 4.138. If I add to the dance the original me, that's when I can get into people's heart and mind to get them thinking 4.139. If I add the original me, that's when I can distribute [healing] to get into people's heart and mind 4.140. I think I heal myself when I add who I am to the dance to get into people's heart and mind 4.141. I think I heal myself when I add the original me to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 4.142. I think I heal myself and the audience when I add the original me to the dance, to get into people's heart and mind 4.143. When I am on stage I am communicating with the audience 4.144. When I am on stage, I am feeling people 4.145. When I am on stage I am communicating with and feeling people	
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		4.146. Dancing with your soul – the audience can see that you are feeling it 4.147. You must feel what you're doing 4.148. Audience can when you're feeling what you're doing 4.149. Watching someone perform traditional African dance beautifully gives me butterflies 4.150. I get butterflies when I am watching African Dance being performed 4.151. Cheering people on through African dance is de-stressing 4.152. You cannot just keep silent when performing African Dance 4.153. You cannot just keep silent when watching an African dance performance 4.154. Cheering on those that are dancing through ululation is de-stressing 4.155. When I am watching people performing African dance – like wow! 4.156. Being on stage is the only opportunity for me to know people that I never thought I would know 4.157. As audience I am amazed at what is unfolding in front of me 4.158. The dance has many moving parts, making it difficult to focus on one only 4.159. In the physical world, she feels the energy of the audience 4.160. there's spirited cheering, chanting and whistling that is in tandem with each movement and seems to propel the dancers to dance with even more rigour 4.161. the cheering, chanting and whistling is both by the audience and the dancers themselves 4.162. the performance is characterized by spirited engagement by both the dancers and the audience 4.163. Shaking only comes when she is busy with healing work	
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