

JUDGING OBJECTIVITY ANALYSIS WITH JUDGING COMPONENT “PARTNERING SKILLS” IN LATIN AMERICAN SPORT DANCE “RUMBA”

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(Original scientific paper)

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Abstract

Depending on the level and the stage of the appropriate competition, detailed elaborate criteria are used that represent the basic requirements and parameters for assessing the technical and artistic indicators of the dance performance. The application of the Absolute Judging System (AJS) 3.0 to assess the performance of DanceSport Couples (DSC) should contribute to improvement of the following characteristics: greater objectivity; transparency; better understanding for the audience and the media; providing guidance for athletes and coaches; improving the performance of the dancers. Judges have a key influence on the final result, both objectively and subjectively. The subjective factor is often a blow to the professional field. Three components are the main ones that make it work: dance judges have become both coaches and judges, opening up the possibility of favouring your own couples; realistically insufficient assessment time; lack of answers and analysis to DSCs as feedback. This research on the quality of judging using the AJS 3.0, “Partnering Skills” judging component for the Latin American Sport Dance “Rumba”, as well as the consistency of judges in knowing and applying this criterion and its indicators, should lead to suppression of bias, inconsistency and subjectivism as factors of poor quality of judging in DanceSport.

Key Words: *DanceSport, Absolute Judging, Judging Objectivity, Judging Component, Partnering Skills*

Introduction

In the late 1950s, Latin American Dances entered dance school programs where young people began to visit and study en masse. In the beginning, only four dances were performed: Samba, Cha Cha Cha, Rumba and Paso Doble. In 1968, the Jive took its place as the fifth dance in the Latino group. The technique of Latin American dances was mostly practiced by the English, who also laid the foundations of today's valid techniques. Walter Laird deserved the most credit. His book *The Technique of Latin American Dancing* is a technical foundation for Latin American dances.

According to the WDSF (World DanceSport Federation) competition rulebook, there are five dances in the Latin American Sports Dance (LASD) Group: Samba (S), Cha Cha Cha (CCC), Rumba (R), Passo Doble (PD) and Jive (J). The supporting pillar is the Latin character of each of these dances which must be played in combination with the correct Latin technique. Without the Latino character, dancing is dead, and without appropriate and precise technique, the speed, strength and dynamics of the movement are not emphasized. The emphasis on the foot lines with a pronounced action of the rhythmic movements of the hips is an indispensable technical feature of the choreographies that are extremely important for the overall dance performance of the DSCs. In addition to the characteristic Latino moves, they abound in athletic and ballet maneuvers within close, semi-open and open figures and give it a multidimensional dance structure. The basic relation of guidance and monitoring is based on contact with hands through which body energy and action continuously flow in both directions on the principle of "request" and "execution" which creates a feeling of complete non-verbal communication intertwined with character emotion inherent in the specific Latino dance.

LASDs are a very challenging, a complex and a difficult sport because of their technique and movement. Two bodies produce multi-dimensional spatial-temporal actions on all parts of the body, including internal emotional dimensions. High classes of DSCs have a high level of psychophysical readiness, strength, ability to change quickly and accurately at a given moment, concentration, harmony and aesthetic perfection.

Material

The main aim of this research is to analyze the objectivity of the Rumba adjudication in the LASD group, according to the Absolute Judging System (AJS) 3.0.

Rumba is often called the “dance of love”, distinguished by its romantic feel. It is a nonprogressive dance with continuous flowing Cuban motion which gives Rumba its sensual look. The rumba frame is a typical Rhythm frame. The distinctive hip movement, called Cuban Motion, is a very important element of the Rumba. These hip movements and characteristic sways of the Rumba are generated by the bending and straightening of the knees. The intensity of the Rumba is increased by sharp eye contact that is maintained between the man and the woman. The stillness of the upper body, while adding dramatic intensity, also emphasizes the strong, sensuous leg and foot movements. Hip movements are exaggerated, but are not generated by the hips. They are simply a result of good foot, ankle, knee and leg action. When these weight transfers are well-controlled, the hips take care of themselves.

It is danced as a third dance of the Sport Dance Competitions (SDC) in LASD. Here are some of the basic features of Rumba:

- Beat: 4/4;
- Tempo: 25 – 27 beats / minute;
- Accent: On the fourth beat;
- Rise and Fall: None;
- Dynamics: Hard, rhythmic movements, strong and direct steps..

Methods

Sample of competition and respondents:

The research was conducted on a sample of 24 DSCs in the LASD–R discipline. The parameters of the DSCs and SDC sample are given in the following table:

- Class of SDC: WDSF World Open Latin;
- Age group: Adult;
- Age range: 19 – 35 years of age;
- Number of DSCs: 57 from 38 countries;
- Number of DSCs (sample): 24 from 17 countries (1/4 final);
- Class of DSCs (sample): High (7.00 – 10.00);
- Number of Adjudicators (sample): 12 from 12 countries.

Sample variable

The criterion variable in this research for estimating the success of LASD–R performance is Partnering Skills (PS). Possible technical errors in LASD–R performance that refer to the PS criterion, are manifested through deviations in terms of sub-criteria that in detail describe the complete action that DSC should implement at a given moment. The PS criterion has the following sub-criteria:

- *Physical communication*: Use of body action to indicate intentions through physical contact;
- *Overbalance/Counterbalance/Holds/Drops*: The use and coordination of connection in movements, figures and lines where one or both partners are not on their own balance;
- *Use of Space*: The management of the space between partners to allow efficiency in execution of movement;
- *Synchronization*: The timing and synchronization of steps that are mirrored, danced side by side, or timed together;
- *Consistency*: The ability of the dancer to maintain partnering skills throughout the performance.

Program and procedure for evaluating success rate of LASD–R performance

For the DSCs sample, the success rate of the LASD–R performance according to the PS criterion was determined by 6 out of 12 WDSF licensed judges from 6 countries: Slovenia, San Marino, Estonia, Portugal, Russia and Latvia. Chairperson was from Macedonia who does not judge but took care of the complete implementation of the WDSF competition rules. According to WDSF rules, licensed adjudicators must meet the following requirements:

- To have acquired a judging license according to AJS 3.0;
- To be included in the referee list of the specific competition by WDSF;
- To have an active license for AJS 3.0 at the time of the competition.

The evaluation was performed according to subjective and objective assessment of judges for the specific criterion for evaluating the dance performance of the specific DSC. The evaluation scale is from 1–10 with the possibility of grading with a range of 0.25:

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Poor; | 6. Above Average; |
| 2. Poor; | 7. Good; |
| 3. Weak; | 8. Very Good; |
| 4. Fair; | 9. Superior; |
| 5. Average; | 10. Outstanding. |

Performance Assessment Standards (PAS) define the actions that describe the expected ways and skills needed to perform them. What judges perceive when evaluating according to AJS 3.0 using a specific criterion are Indicative Qualities (IQs). They are a detailed description of the indicative indicators that result from the successful execution of technically correct dance actions and expressions. PAS and their IQ for grades 6, 8 and 10 are defined and described by the Dance Sports Academy (DSA), as an authorized WDSF professional body. The following table shows the definitions of the PAS for Above Average (6 points), Very Good (8 points) and Outstanding (10 points) performance of DSCs, for all 5 sub-criteria of the criterion PS:

SUB CRITERIA	PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT STANDARDS		
	Above Average – 6 points	Very Good – 8 points	Outstanding – 10 points
PHYSICAL COMMUNICATION	1. Use the body activities and the shared centre to initiate the lead for the partner to respond 2. Produce the right body action in response to the lead initiated by the leader within the boundary of the hold and the shared centre.	Make leading and following becomes partnering and it is no longer separated from the total body movement itself.	Create constant flow of communication towards/between each other, where in the leading there is a sense of following and in following there is a sense of leading.
OVERBALANCE COUNTERBALANCE HOLDS DROPS	Create Holds/Drops using principles of overbalance and/or counterbalance.	Create and control Holds/Drops using principles of overbalance and/or counterbalance while maintaining posture, stability and a degree of coordination.	Create and control Holds/Drops using principles of overbalance and/or counterbalance maintaining posture, stability and a high degree of coordination, integrating this ability with the rest of the programme.
USE OF SPACE	Use of space is mostly applied to allow the figures and amalgamations to be performed without error in Couple Position.	Use the space appropriately to enhance the performance.	Use the space between each other to characterize the performance and allow a continuous sense of connection throughout the dance.
SYNCHRONIZATION	The ability to synchronize when performing the same actions in time with or without contact.	A specific moment to be in sync attuned not necessarily performing the same movement at the same time movement.	A constant awareness and felt sense of being in sync.
CONSISTENCY	The demonstration of consistency in partnering skills when in physical contact.	The consistency of partnering throughout the dance with and without physical contact.	The consistency of demonstrating the merging of all the partnering skills with the other components.

When evaluating decimals (e.g. 7.25; 7.50; 7.75), judges use the technique listed in the following table:

Rating Achieved PAS and IQs + percentage coefficient

- 6.5 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 6 and up to 25% of PAS and IQs required for 8
- 7.0 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 6 and up to 50% of PAS and IQs required for 8
- 7.5 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 6 and up to 75% of PAS and IQs required for 8
- 8,5 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 8 and up to 25% of PAS and IQs required for 10
- 9.0 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 8 and up to 50% of PAS and IQs required for 10
- 9.5 Achieved PAS and IQs required for 8 and up to 75% of PAS and IQs required for 10

Data processing methods

In order to obtain relevant scientific information, the obtained data are processed with an appropriate and compatible statistical programming system. The factor method was used to analyze the judging assessment objectivity and to determine the metric characteristics for estimating LASD-R dance performance for each DSC.

Results

From the analysis of the basic central and dispersion parameters of judges' evaluations (Table 1) it can be seen that the values of the arithmetic means are approximately identical and tend towards the average evaluations. Also, the standard deviations of all judges in assessing the criteria for evaluating dance performance have been equated.

Table 1: Descriptive statistical parameters

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Variance	Std.Dev.	Coef.Var.	Standard	Skewness	Kurtosis
SUD 1 PS	8,4479	7,2500	9,5000	2,2500	0,2499	0,4999	5,9173	0,1020	-0,3637	0,9093
SUD 2 PS	8,2083	7,0000	9,2500	2,2500	0,3514	0,5928	7,2223	0,1210	-0,4881	-0,2976
SUD 3 PS	8,3333	7,2500	9,2500	2,0000	0,1884	0,4341	5,2087	0,0886	-0,0201	0,7682
SUD 4 PS	8,4479	7,7500	9,2500	1,5000	0,1847	0,4297	5,0868	0,0877	0,0158	-0,4556
SUD 5 PS	8,4063	7,2500	9,5000	2,2500	0,2327	0,4824	5,7382	0,0985	-0,1678	0,7294
SUD 6 PS	8,1667	7,2500	9,0000	1,7500	0,2047	0,4524	5,5402	0,0924	-0,1262	-0,6221
SUD AVE PS	8,3351	7,7500	9,2917	1,5417	0,1394	0,3734	4,4797	0,0762	0,5840	0,2872

Table 2. Kolmogorov – Smyrna test (Table 2) indicates that all judges' assessments of the selected Partnering Skills (PS) variable are normally distributed.

	N	max D	K-S
SUD 1 PS	24	0,208	p > ,20
SUD 2 PS	24	0,189	p > ,20
SUD 3 PS	24	0,180	p > ,20
SUD 4 PS	24	0,173	p > ,20
SUD 5 PS	24	0,123	p > ,20
SUD 6 PS	24	0,144	p > ,20
SUD AVE PS	24	0,125	p > ,20

Pearson correlation (Table 3) between judges generally ranges from very low to quite high. A very low correlation between the mean scores of the Partnering Skills (PS) variables was found between the 1st and 5th judge (r = 0,385; p <0,01), the 2nd and 5th judge (r = 0,385; p <0,01), and the 3rd and 6th judge (r = 0,004; p <0,01).

Table 3: Inter-correlation

	SUD 1 PS	SUD 2 PS	SUD 3 PS	SUD 4 PS	SUD 5 PS	SUD 6 PS
SUD 1 PS	1,000	,598	,497	,746	,385	,425
SUD 2 PS	,598	1,000	,479	,567	,385	,523
SUD 3 PS	,497	,479	1,000	,607	,519	,369
SUD 4 PS	,746	,567	,607	1,000	,618	,634
SUD 5 PS	,385	,385	,519	,618	1,000	,486
SUD 6 PS	,425	,523	,369	,634	,486	1,000

The first main components are isolated by the analysis of the inter-correlation matrices (Table 4). From the projection of the average marks of the judges of the first main component it can be seen that all six judges have relatively high projections with the first main component of the variable. The highest projection of the first major component of the variable is shown by the fourth judge. The lowest projection of the first major component of the variable is shown by the fifth judge. The total variability of the judging of all six judges in this variable explains the first main component with 60,548%. The remaining percentage can probably be explained by the specific way of assessing and the mistakes that are made during the judging, as well as the impact of the environment, that is the atmosphere that prevails during the judging process. Despite all the results, the reliability indexes are relatively high.

Table 4

PS	H ₁
SUD 1	0,792
SUD 2	0,761
SUD 3	0,741
SUD 4	0,905
SUD 5	0,721
SUD 6	0,734
λ	3,633
λ %	60,548

The variable of the judging reliability is estimated based on Kronbah alfe- α and ICC coefficient, and the mean correlation between the scores (r) was also shown. The value of Kronbah alfe - α coefficient in the Partnering Skills (PS) variable is 0,868, the value of the ICC coefficient is 0,862, and the average correlation $r = 0,522$.

	r	ICC	α
PS	0,522	0,862	0,868

Discussion

The relatively small differences between the judges' marks when using the Criteria for Partnering Skills of the 1/4 final DSCs when performing LASD-R show that the judges perceived their presentation with a high degree of objective interpretation of the evaluation scale according to pre-defined PAS and IQ.

The inclusion of half of the panel of judges for evaluation of two out of four criteria among which is the criterion that is the subject of this paper which is one of the essential changes in the judging with the previous system 2.0 where the panel of judges was divided into 4 groups of 3 judges shows that it leads to a reduction in the differences between the judges through the expressed average and an algorithm that in its code annuls the extreme values which casts their influence on the final result.

If we take into account the relative number of sub-criteria and indicative qualities that describe the standard used as a variable in this paper, then we can safely explain the relatively high coefficient of judging objectivity because the artistic part where criterion of PS is included with its accuracy and detailed description guarantees that. Certainly starting from the fact of the good educational readiness of the panel of judges, their many years of experience and ability for quick and sharp perception.

In the course of development of DanceSport, the judging system has been changed and improved in order to objectify the places won by dance couples and decide the winners. Since the contest result depends on the scores given by qualified judges in accordance with the established protocol, there are inevitable subjective factors that interfere with this procedure and can significantly affect the final result. In this view, the judging systems evolve towards objectification of the scores given by the panel of judges. The evolution of judging systems starting from the Skating System to the currently used AJS 3.0 System and the approaches used in both systems as well as earlier AJS 1.0/2.0 Systems is with the purpose to increase their objectivity. It was concluded that in the judging system, where competitive performance of dance couples

is assessed by comparing them with each other, subjective scoring and inaccurate assessment are highly possible. Although judges are trained and licensed, they score subjectively, which is why the judging systems with strict rating parameters have an advantage in terms of objectivity.

On the other hand, it can be a double-edged sword if you take into account the relatively short time for estimating the technical part of the dance performance where in about one and a half minute the judge is required to make a final decision.

Regardless of the high professionalism of the judges, it should be borne in mind that the influence from the previous system of comparative method is still present to some extent. However, it takes time for the "pure" mental transformation of judges who have such experience in their careers.

At DSCs, which was taken as a sample in this paper, there was a participation of 13 DSCs from the first 50 places on the world ranking list for LASD. Given the fact that 12 of them are placed in the semi-final, it can be concluded that they have shown continuous top performance in this match or the adjudicators in a subjective approach assess them as a pass in the next round regardless of the fact that some of those DSCs may not deserve it. For this reason, maybe the right solution is to not allow the judges to have any possibility to look at the competition lists of the DSCs before the competition.

Conclusions

It can be concluded that the objectivity of the judging with the PS criterion as one of two artistic criteria of the dance performance using AJS 3.0 has a high coefficient of objectivity in the given circumstances. However, it is still possible to influence judges who may give points that are inappropriate for certain performance components but minimized by introducing the method for determining the median value in the AJS 2.1 System and its later version AJS 3.0.

The dose of subjectivism is not excluded, which, taking into account the rank of the competition, the class of DSCs and the quality of the panel of judges, is minimized.

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