TRADITIONAL DANCE AS RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY: TEENAGERS’ MOTIVES
PARTICIPATION

Stella Rokka¹, George Mavridis¹, Zoe Mavridou¹, Antonios Kelepouris² and Dafni-Anastasia Filippou³

¹School of P.E. & Sport Science, Democritus University of Thrace, Komotini, Greece
²Physical Education Teacher, Veria, Greece
³Faculté de Droit, Strasburg, France

Abstract
The aim of this paper was to investigate participation motives of high school students in teaching programs of Greek traditional dance and if factors such as sex, class attendance and participation experience, differentiate their participation motives. The Greek version the Recreation Experience Preference Questionnaire was used for the data collection. The sample of the study comprised 250 high school students. The following statistical analyses were performed: a) factor analysis, b) Cronbach’s alpha, c) T-test for independent samples, and d) One-way analysis of variance. Results showed that: a) all twelve factors accounted for the 85.4% of total variance, b) Cronbach’s alpha was satisfactory, it ranged from .85-.96, c) Of the twelve factors of the questionnaire, “Escape” presented the highest Mean (5.89) and “Expertise” the lowest (2.33). “Socialization” and “Improving physical fitness” were the factors that differentiated “Class Attendance”. In conclusion we could say that students’ participation in dancing activities is a leisure activity since it is a way to escape from school program, to eliminate their anxiety and to improve their physical fitness. Traditional dance constitutes an activity which has the potential to turn extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, thus resulting in the long term participation of people in this activity.

Key words: dance, leisure, motivation, educational system

Introduction
The Greek educational system is one of the most demanding educational systems across Europe and the Greek students, especially those of high school, are among the most hard-working people (Katsikas & Kavvadias, 1998). The considerably increased demands of highschool and in particular those for preparing to enter University, keep teenagers away from any kind of physical activity in order to devote themselves entirely to their lessons.

The entire above are confirmed by Stavridis’ and Filippou’s (2004) research, who observed that there is a decrease of teenage participation in Greek traditional dance clubs, mainly because of their increased academic obligations. Following research (Filippou et al., 2010) came up with the same conclusions. However, students’ withdrawal from physical activities creates many and big risks for both bodily and mental development, since participation in such activities, which include dance as well, aims to keep them in good shape and improve their physical fitness. Joined physical activities have a positive impact on both sexes and on all ages, thereby improving their living standard (Bebetsos & Antoniou, 2009; Dimitrakaki, Porpodis, Bebetsos, Zarogoulidis, Papaiwannou, Tsiouda, Tsioulis, & Zarogoulidis, 2013). Researchers (Caspersen, Powell, & Christenson 1985) have defined physical activity as any physical act produced by skeletal muscles, resulting in using energy distinguishes between two categories of physical activity. The WHO distinguishes between two categories of physical activity.

The first, the common physical activity, includes the total of movements performed for daily life and work, while in the second, recreational activities, all movements performed within the framework of sports and recreation are included. Afthinos (1998) defines recreation as any activity that relaxes and revives somebody, while, according to Kouthouris (2009), recreation is any activity that takes place when there is free time, it is not imposed upon, but freely chosen by the individual, because it is agreeable and appealing and the sole motive during its performance is recreation as such. He goes on to list swimming, dance, cycling and exercising programs organized by gyms and exercising and recreational centers as recreational activities. As far as dance is concerned, Genti, Serbezis, Douda, and Kouli (2008), share Kouthouris’ (2009) views. The first one supports that dance undoubtedly constitutes a recreational activity, since the participants are entertained and uplift their mood and well-being as well. It contributes to the improvement of all physical abilities related to health (Filippou, 2015b; Mavridis, Filippou, Rokka, Bousiou, & Mavridis, 2004) and a mean of personal expression (Filippou 2014; Pitsi & Filippou 2014). Although the benefits from participating in physical activities, like dancing, are widely known and exalted by many researchers and organizations, the public does not seem to be convinced and their participation decreases instead of increasing (Bebetsos & Goulimaris, 2014; Bebetsos, 2015). To reverse this situation and convince people to participate in physical activities, it is necessary to
explore and understand the forces that drive people to take part in such activities (Bebetsos, Chroni, & Theodorakis 2002). Consequently, the concept of motives occupies a prominent place in the study of behavior as far as recreational activities are concerned, as studying them can not only answer “why” people participate in recreational activities but it can also help us better understand the way in which the decision to participate in recreational activities is taken. According to Frederick and Ryan (1993) the factors which determine, to a considerable extent, individuals’ participation in physical activities, are their demographic characteristics. Gender, age, educational level, marital, professional and economic status, constitutes the determinant factors for people’s participation in physical activities (Bebetsos, Zetou, & Antoniou, 2014). Competition is the most important motive for men and teenagers. In contrast, women and elderly people believe that social motives are more important than everything else. Moreover, for women the social factors associated with the body are strong motives of participation, as opposed to men, who consider competition and skills to be major motives (Kouli, Bebetsos, Kamperis, & Papaioannou, 2010). The French adults’ participation motives in dance activities are stress elimination from daily life problems as well as recreation, while 46% expect to spend some pleasant moments with family and friends. Finally, 17% believes that through their participation in collective dancing procedures they develop critical thought and ability (Donnât 1996).

Others researchers (Zanou, Hassandra, & Goudas, 2001) investigated adult participation motives for people who take part in classes of traditional Greek dance. The results showed that the factors of company (bonding, pleasant atmosphere and good mood), having fun, dance teacher and teaching, were the most important motives for their participation. In another research (Patsiaouras, Xatzigianis, & Anagnostou, 2012) it was found that the major motives for which adults attend courses of Greek traditional dance are the relief from everyday stress and the relaxation they felt both during and at the end of the course, because they believe that these lessons are a form of exercise and a way to improve their physical fitness.

The next research (Doulias, Kosmidou, Pavlogiannnis, & Patsiaouras, 2005) was the only one that included samples between the ages of 14 to 20 years old. According to their results, the most important reasons were entertainment, the need to feel as members of a group, and finally, making friends. On the other hand, success and gaining status through their participation were not included in the motives for their attendance. Escape and relaxation, socialization, originality, learning new dances and improving dance skills, enjoyment and enthusiasm have been the six motivating factors which encourage individuals in the U.S. to participate in dance activities (McCleary, Weaver, & Meng, 2006). Escape from boredom, social relations, and skill improvement were the foreigners’ most important motives in participating in traditional Greek dance teaching courses organized in Greece (Filippou, Goulimaris, Michaltsi, & Genti, 2010). Similar were the French people’s motives who participated in such courses organized in France. So, dance skills improvement, escaping boredom, relaxation from daily life problems and gaining new experiences were the major motives for French adults’ participation in traditional Greek dance courses (Filippou, Bebetsos, Vernadakis, Zetou, & Derri, 2014). The results of Filippou’s, Goulimarisi’s, Baxevanos’ and Gentis’ (2010) study indicated that the most important motives for attending Greek traditional dances are the improvement of the participants’ health via exercise as well as the improvement of their dancing dexterities. Finally, Lilou, Douka, Balaska and Alexandris (2010) indicated that stress reduction, escape and fitness improvement are the adults’ major motives for taking part in dancing activities.

The aim of this study was to investigate participation motives of male and female high school students in teaching programs of Greek traditional dance as well as the sex, the classes of attendance and the participation experience as factors determining participation motives.

**Methodology**

**Sample**

The sample of the study consisted of 250 high school students. The participants were attending Greek traditional dance courses in dancing clubs in the Municipalities of Macedonia, Greece. They were randomly chosen.

Table 1. Distribution of sample per class and gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Class</th>
<th>10th</th>
<th>11th</th>
<th>12th</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sample percentages per sex and some other demographic characteristics as educational level and the sample’s participation experience in courses of Greek traditional dances are presented in tables 1 and 2.

Table 2. Sample’s participation experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection

The Greek version (Douka, Mpalkassa, Pollatidou, and Tsiftelidou, 2011) of the original "Recreation Experience Preference Questionnaire" (Manfredo, Driver, & Tarrant 1996) was used for the data collection. This version consists of thirty-seven questions divided into twelve factors. These twelve factors are: a) “Stress Reduction” e.g. “to relax physically”, b) “Improvement of Knowledge” e.g. “to learn more about dance”, c) “Socialisation (new..."
acquaintances)" e.g. "to meet new people", d) "Socialisation (family)" e.g. "to do something the family can do together", e) "Social Recognition" e.g. "to gain social recognition", f) "Expertise" e.g. "to explore the history of dance", g) "Socialisation (fellow practitioners)" e.g. "to be with people with whom I've shared values", h) "Socialisation (friends)" e.g. "to be with friends", i) Enhancement of Skills" e.g. "to become better at dancing", j) "achievement" e.g. "to boost my self-esteem", k) "Improving Physical Fitness" e.g. "to improve my physical health", l) "Escape" e.g. "to have a change from everyday life". The answers were given in a seven-point Likert type scale ranging from 1="absolutely disagree" and 7="absolutely agree".

Results

In order to control the validity of the questionnaire a factor analysis was conducted since the questionnaire was first used in a sample with these characteristics. The analysis was made by the method of principal components analysis and afterwards a varimax rotation of axes. The factors' number was defined by the criterion that the Eigen values should be greater than 1. The minor charge that was used in order for the questions to be distributed to the factors was .30. The total variance explained is 85.4%. Twelve factors came up from the factor analysis. The factors are: "stress reduction", "knowledge improvement", "socialisation (family)", "socialisation (new acquaintances)", "social recognition", "expertise", "socialisation (friends)", "socialisation (fellow practitioners)", "enhancement of skills", "achievement", "improving physical fitness" and "escape" (Table 4). Similar results were found on the previous research (Douka, Mpalaska, Pollatidou, & Tsiftelidou, 2011).

To examine the coherence of the questions which compose the twelve factors and furthermore to examine the reliability of the factors, a reliability analysis was conducted. The reliability test was founded on the calculation of a Cronbach. It needs to be noticed that the variables in the present study, showed similar loadings to those mentioned by the original research (Douka, Mpalaska, Pollatidou, & Tsiftelidou, 2011). Table 3 presents the reliability analysis, Mean and Standard Deviation of the twelve factors. check whether there were statistically important differences on sex, T-tests for independent samples, were performed. The results indicated that "Enhancement of Skills", "Socialization (friends)" and "Improving Physical Fitness" differentiated the sample (Table 5).

More specifically, results indicated that: a) Boys presented a statistically higher score (M=5.34, SD=.68) regarding the factor "Enhancement of Skills" in relation to girls (M=4.91, SD=.99), b)
female students of the 12th class had a higher score ($M=4.65$, $SD=1.31$) than male and female students of the 10th class ($M=4.20$, $SD=1.31$) and the 11th class ($M=4.59$, $SD=1.22$). b. “Enhancement of skills” ($F_{(2,247)} = 37.22$ $p < .05$): male and female students of the 12th class had a higher score ($M=4.97$, $SD=1.31$) than male and female students of the 11th class ($M=4.20$, $SD=1.10$) and the 12th class ($M=3.95$, $SD=1.31$). c. “Improving physical fitness” ($F_{(2,247)} = 7.02$ $p < .05$): male and female students of the 10th class had higher score ($M=5.37$, $SD=0.80$) than male and female students of the 11th class ($M=4.99$, $SD=0.86$) and the 12th class ($M=4.97$, $SD=0.83$).

Table 5. Gender differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhancement of skills</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization (friends)</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving physical fitness</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One-way analysis of variance was conducted to indicate any difference in the participation experience on the twelve variables of the questionnaire. The results revealed significant statistical differences on the subscales of: a. “Social recognition”, ($F_{(2,247)} = 23.21$ $p < .05$): male and female students with participation experience ≤ 5 years had a higher score ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.28$) than male and female students of the 11th class ($M=4.04$, $SD=1.10$) and the 12th class ($M=3.55$, $SD=1.31$). d. “Improving physical fitness” ($F_{(2,247)} = 7.02$ $p < .05$): male and female students of the 10th class had higher score ($M=5.37$, $SD=0.80$) than male and female students of the 11th class ($M=4.99$, $SD=0.86$) and the 12th class ($M=4.97$, $SD=0.83$).

Discussion

Once again, research results show that the majority of those who participate in dancing activities are women (Filippou, Kipourou, Goulimaritis, Serbezis, & Genti, 2009; Filippou, Goulimaritis, Michailti, & Genti, 2010). Thus, in our research, women are the overwhelming majority of the sample. Perhaps, this is owing to an imported, and pertaining to classical dance, opinion that dance concerns only women and not men. However, this is a completely wrong view and it certainly is not true for traditional Greek dance, since it required that men not only participate in dancing activities but also have special dancing skills and show them off (Alexandris, Tsorbatzoudis, & Grouios, 2002). Moreover, the dance ground was the place of manliness demonstration and the good dancer was a sought-after groom (Filippou 2015a, 2014; Pitsi & Filippou, 2014). As far as the classroom of the sample was concerned, 10th class students constitute the vast majority of the sample. They are the 48% of the sample versus the 26.4% of 12th class students and 25.6% of the 11th class. There is a significant decrease of high school last two class students, which is probably caused by the increased demands of the school program. In addition, the majority of the last class declared that “we will stop for the next two years, but we will come back, for sure”. As far as years of participation in dancing activities and, therefore, students dancing experience, are concerned we see that the majority of the interviewees take part in such activities for more than five years. A non negligible percentage is involved for more than 10 years. The survey results are consistent with other survey results which find as well a long term human presence in dancing club activities and they associate that presence with the results yielded by such activities (Douka, Mpalaska, Pollatidou, & Tsiftelidou, 2011). The long participation of dancers in dance procedures greatly contributes to the smooth operation of dance clubs. The dancers who have a long presence in clubs constitute “the clubs’ invaluable property” as they possess the experience necessary for the performance of traditional dance. Although the validity and reliability of the questionnaire is granted as it’s been used in other researches too (Ryan & Deci, 2007; Goudas & Biddle, 1993), it was considered necessary to be confirmed due to this research’s different composition of the sample. The results of factor and reliability analysis confirm the questionnaire’s reliability and are in accordance with previous researches for the composition of this particular sample as well. The factors “escape”, stress reduction”, “improving physical fitness”, “enhancement of skills”, and “socialization (friends)” are the factors with the higher $M$, while the factors “social recognition”, “socialization (family)”, and “expertise” with the lower $M$. The results of this research are in accordance with previous researches (Goudas & Biddle, 1993; Ryan & Deci, 2007). Researchers (Heitmann 1986) have shown that factors such as “escape” stress reduction”, “socialization (friends)”, “socialization (practitioners)” and “socialization (acquaintances)” function as intrinsic motivation to action, while factors such as “improving physical fitness” are associated with external motivation. This is because factors like the above are linked to the pleasure and satisfaction someone gets when s/he learns something new in an effort to overcome oneself or when s/he just enjoys participating in an activity. This realization, in combination with the findings of this research, allows us to claim that traditional dance constitutes an activity in which the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation coexist. More specifically, results indicated that individuals participated in the course clearly for their pleasure, without taking into consideration any teaching benefits. Of course, this doesn’t exclude the participants’ benefits, like gaining new experiences or improving their dancing level, since, through their improvement, they will feel satisfied, happy and they will also have the sense of participating in an activity for the internal pleasure that it offers rather than for the fact that they succeeded in overcoming themselves.
However, for a part of the sample, dance functions like an extrinsic motivation, since their aim is to have specific results from their participation and gain a benefit from them. More specifically, dance seems to work as a recognizable regulation of any behavior (Filippou, Serbezis, Harahousou, Kabilitis, & Koleta, 2006). Part of the sample are convinced that they will acquire personal benefits, such as physical fitness, improvement or social recognition and they consider those as important benefits. In this way, they internalize an external source of motivation without needing its presence from now on. We would say that students look upon their participation in dance clubs as a leisure activity which provides them with the opportunity to escape and relax from all school program demands and also to improve their physical fitness, their dancing skills and finally to make new friends. As for the participants’ gender, this has proven a differentiating factor in comparison to other factors like “enhancement of skills”, “socialization (friends)” and “improving physical fitness”. In particular, male students participate in a higher degree than female students in order to improve their dancing skills. On the other hand, female students usually participate in order to be with friends and also to improve their physical fitness. The results are similar to other surveys results according to which women participate in exercising activities with the view to maintaining their health and to improving their physical fitness and to managing their free time by being with friends. Taking into account the participation in students’ classroom as a differentiating factor of motivation, we find out that this comes up as a differentiating factor for such aspects as “socialization (fellow practitioners)”, “escape”, “socialization (new acquaintances)” and “improving physical fitness”. Final class students participate mostly in order to escape from daily life problems and to get in touch with people who have the same interests with them. On the contrary, 10th grade students participate to meet new people and to improve their physical fitness. We could say the results are expected since it is normal to escape for a short time from this difficult school program and find people having the same interests with them. In traditional Greek society dance constituted the means by which someone could demonstrate his dancing skills and capabilities, but also an indication of male vigorousness. This has led to the present day perception of dance as a way of social recognition and acknowledgement. Dance seems to work similarly for male and female students with dancing experience up to five years due to their minimal dance performances experience. These students participate more than their classmates who have more than six years dancing experience. The survey results correspond with those of Mavridou (2012) according to which dancing clubs managers should take seriously into account the different participation reasons, the participants’ desires and goals so that the last ones be satisfied and be guided in a long term participation.

The study’s results reveal that the more years of dancing experience students have, the greater their interest to broaden their knowledge about dance will be. So, male and female students with dancing experience of more than ten years, participate in order to broaden their knowledge, while those with dancing experience of less than five years participate since they want to learn more about traditional dance and about everything relating to it. This may be explained by the fact that these persons from the beginning wished to learn more about what we call “traditional dance” and for this reason remained for so long in dancing clubs, since, according to Douka et al. (2011:5), "individuals who expect to broaden their knowledge about dance, folklore, tradition, etc are possible to develop this element of consistency. Furthermore, knowledge development is expanded by the understanding of participation benefits". In conclusion we could say that students’ participation in dancing activities is a leisure activity since it is a way to escape from school program, to eliminate their anxiety and to improve their physical fitness. Traditional dance constitutes an activity which has the potential to turn extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, thus resulting in the long term participation of people in this activity.

References


Filippou, F. (2014). The role of the kinetic motif in determining the form and time of dance through the dance "Tis Marias". *Journal of Physical Education and Sport*, 1(18), 115-119.


Questionnaire
1. To gain a sense of self-confidence
2. To prove to myself that I can dance
3. To improve my self-esteem
4. To show others that I can dancing
5. To take social recognition
6. To have others think highly of what I am doing
7. To improve my dancing skills and abilities
8. To test my dancing abilities
9. To become better at dancing
10. To do something with my family
11. To bring my family closer together
12. To do something the family can do together
13. To be with members of my club
14. To be with friends
15. To do things with friends
16. To be with people with whom I shared interests
17. To be with people with whom I’ve shared values
18. To be with people who enjoy the same activities as me
19. To meet new people
20. To have new social relations
21. To make new friends
22. To develop my knowledge of dance
23. To learn more about dance
24. To learn more about cultural
25. To record new data for dances
26. To capture data on the areas from which the dances
27. To explore the history of dance
28. To get exercise
29. To keep physically fit
30. To improve my physical health
31. To relax physically
32. To rest physically
33. To calm down physically
34. To reduce my stress
35. To have a change from everyday life
36. To escape from routine
37. To escape from responsibility

TRADICIONALNI PLES KAO REKREACIJSKA AKTIVNOST: SUDJELOVANJE TINEJDERSKIH MOTIVA

Sažetak
Cilj ovog rada bio je ispitati motive sudjelovanja učenika srednjih škola u nastavnim programima grčkog tradicionalnog plesa, te uz čimbenike kao što su spol, pohađanje i iskustvo sudjelovanja, razlikovati njihove motive sudjelovanja. Grčka verzija upitnika “Recreation Experience Preference Questionnaire” je korištena za prikupljanje podataka. Uzorak istraživanja sastoji se od 250 srednjoškolaca. Provedene su slijedeće statističke analize: a) faktorska analiza, b) Cronbach Alpha, c) T-test za nezavisne uzorke, i d) univarijantna analiza varijance. Rezultati su pokazali da: a) svih dvanaest faktora čini 85,4% ukupne varijance, b) vrijednost Cronbach Alpha je zadovoljavajuća, u rasponu od .85-.96, c) Od dvanaest faktora upitnika, onaj koji opisuje "pobjeći" pokazuje najvišu prosječnu vrijednost (5,89) a "stručnost" najnižu (2,33). "Socijalizacija" i "Poboljšanje kondicija" bili su faktori koji razlikuju "Pohađanje nastave". U zaključku možemo reći da je sudjelovanje učenika u plesnim aktivnostima aktivnost u slobodnom vremenu, jer je to način da se pobjegne iz školskog programa, kako bi se uklonile osobne tjeskobe i poboljšale fizičke sposobnosti. Tradicionalni ples predstavlja aktivnost koja ima potencijal da se poveže sa intrinzičnom motivacijom, što rezultira u dugoročnom sudjelovanju ljudi u ovoj djelatnosti.

Ključne riječi: ples, slobodno vrijeme, motivacija, obrazovni sustav

Received: August 10, 2015
Accepted: December 5, 2015
Correspondence to:
Stella Rokka
School of Physical Education and Sport Science
Democritus University of Thrace, Campus Komotini, 69130, Greece
E-mail: srokka@phyed.duth.gr