

Original empirical article

**REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN
TRADITIONAL CYPRIOT DANCES**

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study was to examine the reliability of the Greek version of the Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ) and to investigate the reasons which drive Cypriot people to participate in taught seminars of Cypriot traditional dance. The sample consisted of 251 individuals aged 15-60 ($M=29.13\pm 10.6$). The analysis of the results based on a factor analysis procedure from the statistical software SPSS revealed four factors, with a) "social recognition and popularity", b) "to discharge boredom and appearance", c) "exercise and health" and d) "satisfaction from team spirit and the improvement of physical condition" as the main reason for participating in traditional dancing groups. No statistically significant differences were noticed based on gender and education level. The results of this research are consistent with the common reasons for participation in seminars of the Cypriot traditional dance.*

Key words: *motivation, participation, reliability, Cypriot traditional dance.*

INTRODUCTION

Dance is a popular recreational activity for people and can contribute to the physical health and wellness of an individual (Fensham & Gardner, 2005). As there is growing concern over the effects of the sedentary lifestyle on the health of young people (Biddle et al., 2004), physical activity via behavior such as dancing should be encouraged. An effective way of dealing with the deteriorative consequences of time on the human body is exercise which offers multiple physiological (Boushard, Shephard, Stephens, Sutton & Mc Pherson, 1990) and psychological benefits (Biddle, 1995; McAuley & Rudolph,

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1995). And above all, artistic creation, directly connected to the natural environment, the society and the history of people. But, at the same time, it fulfills the human need for entertainment: a way to relax and escape from the monotony of everyday life, as well as change our lifestyle and entertainment (Hanley, 1986). The comparison made in the work of Goulimaris, Serbetzis and Taxildaris (1999) between the Greek and the Belgian forums of traditional dance is of great interest. In their work, emphasis is given to the different objectives of the operation of these groups in the two countries: in Greece, the preservation of a dance tradition is considered as pivotal, whereas in Belgium, great weight is put on the use of leisure time.

In old times, the Cypriot had the chance to express himself, to communicate with other people and to entertain himself by dancing at weddings, festivals and other events (Sofokleous, 2002). In the 1950s, traditional dances were performed individually, and each dancer had a chance to express his/her feelings (pain, grief, joy, love) through dancing. The dancer's basic aim was to gain admiration and make the best impression among the public, in comparison to the other dancers, something which was made evident by the spectators' applause. In 1960, the first groups of dancers appeared. The first was introduced by teacher Grigoris Assiotis, who defined specific steps and choreography. The authentic individual dancer was thus replaced by the performance of choreography by a dance group. Grigoris Assiotis' attempt gained the acceptance of the wider public. Within a short period of time, more traditional dance groups and schools were created. The steps of the Cyprus dances, as originally introduced by Assiotis, have been disseminated throughout Cyprus. The way Cyprus dances are performed today is the evolution of the old traditional dance, with the only difference that nowadays, these dances have a group character and they are based on specific steps and choreographies (Sofokleous, 2002).

The types of Cyprus dances

The traditional Cypriot dance is characterized by complexity and a combination of moves of the lower limbs, with single or double jumps, dynamic support on the whole or half foot, buck jumps, slides, battement (single or double), squats, turns and a variety of other moves (Sofokleous, 2002).

Men's dances, with dancers in a face-to-face position, called "antikristos" or otherwise "Karsilamas", are dances of competition performed mainly by two couples facing each other. However, each dancer had his own individual part, aiming to make the best impression and gain the public's applause and admiration. In contrast to the ostentatious men's dances, the women's "antikristos" dance, is distinguished for the dancer's modesty, her look towards the ground, her small, restrained steps and her cute, elegant movement of the hands, as body movements are barely permitted.

Apart from the men's and women's "antikristos" dance, other Cyprus traditional dances include the scythe dance, the knife dance, the sieve dance, the farm dance, as well as the glass dance, which are all dances found only in Cyprus. The presentation of the Cypriot traditional dances is done by dancers who are dressed in the traditional costume – the black "vraka", white shirt, vest, black socks, boots and a wide colorful belt for men, and a long dress, shirt and a scarf on the head for women. Finally, there are costumes that are typical for each region like the ones of Karpasia, Lysi, Pafos etc., depending on the place of origin of dancers and dance schools (Sofokleous, 2002).

Motivation and reasons for participating in dance activities

The knowledge that a person gains from their participation in various activities is not enough to lead them to make it a part of their life. Something more is needed: motivation.

According to a study examining the willingness to participate in a dance school, the largest percentage of the sample (65.7%) has expressed their intention to learn mostly Greek dances (Zanos, Chasandra & Goudas, 2001).

Motivation is a multidimensional phenomenon and this causes problems both in understanding and explaining the term. However, the majority of theories deal with motives as a uniform phenomenon and through an in-depth analysis we will find that individuals do not differ only in terms of the percentage of motivation but also in terms of its type. So the type of motivation relates to the inner attitudes and aims of an individual, which provides the cause for action, involving the reasons of this action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). A search of the existing literature on the definition of motivation, yielded three dominant types of motivation: the first type is intrinsic motivation, which refers to the behavior provoked internally, due to the inherent need of man to feel competent and autonomous in his environment. When a person feels more autonomous and competent with regard to handling his environment, motivation is increased (Whaley, 1988). Intrinsic motivation is influenced by how attractive an activity is (Deci & Ryan, 1985). It is believed that intrinsic motivation is one of the factors encouraging a person towards physical activity, possibly leading to the adherence of the person to a physically active lifestyle (Papaharisis, Simou & Goudas, 2003; Deci, Koestner & Ryan, 2001; Goudas, Dermitzaki & Bagiatis, 2000). The second type is extrinsic motivation, which represents external factors. The fourth type of extrinsic motivation as proposed by Deci & Ryan (1985) and by Ryan & Connell (1989) and includes: a) external regulation, which is a form of behavior directed by external factors such as material rewards, scoring or coercion by other persons, b) internal pressure, wherein the external source of pressure has been transferred to the individual himself, c) recognition regulation, wherein an individual participating in a specific activity, recognizes the benefits of his participation in that activity, d) integrated regulation, wherein a certain behavior is built on a set of behavioral characteristics which reflect onto the individual, and the third type is defined as the behavior through which an individual feels that there is no reason to continue the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The lack of purpose, i.e. the absence of motives, leads to indifference and probably to aversion towards the activity, resulting in the interruption of one's participation in it. In fact, the individual often feels that his actions yield no results, that he is incompetent, and that is why he feels doomed to fail.

Gill, Gross and Huddleston (1983) have tried to estimate the motivation for participation in sport activities in young people. They concluded that there are eight factors of athletic motivation. Their initial study indicated that the most important reasons of participation were the improvement of skills, the development of new skills, entertainment, challenge and good physical condition. In the existing literature, it has been used in several studies abroad (Kirkby, Kolt & Liu, 1999; Longhurst & Spink, 1987; Wang & Wiese-Bjornstal, 1996; Zahariadis & Biddle, 2000) dealing with children's sports activities. These particular studies show us that children clearly demonstrate the reasons for which they participate in sport activities. The most common reasons given in these studies are: skill improvement, energy release, entertainment, challenge, friendship, team spirit and the improvement of physical condition (Gill, Gross & Huddleston, 1983; Gould, Feltz & Weiss,

1985; Wankel & Kreisel, 1984; Wang & Wiese-Bjornstal, 1996; Zahariadis & Biddle, 2000). Studies related to dancing that have been carried out in Greece report that participation motives are mainly related to:

- for teenagers: leisure and integration (Doulias, Kosmidou, Pavloyiannis & Patsiaouras, 2005; Kyriazi, Patsiaouras & Papanikolaou, 2004)
- for adults: relaxation and escaping from everyday tension, and improvement of their physical condition (Filippou, Kipourou, Goulimaris, Serbezis & Gent 2009; Papaioannidou, Basdeki & Filippou, 2005).

However, there is a lack of studies which examine the motives for participation in traditional dance groups in Cyprus. Thus the purpose of this study was to test the reliability of the Greek Version of the PMQ test and to investigate the motives which drive Cypriot men and women to take part in traditional dance groups.

THE METHOD

The participants

This study involved 251 men and women (120 men and 131 women) aged 15-60 ($M = 29.13 \pm 10.6$), with an average participation in seminars of Cypriot traditional dancing activities of their associations ($M = 3.8 \pm 0.75$) years (Table 1). Most of the participants in the sample were prep school or university graduates at a rate of 48.6% and 34.7% respectively. Fewer were high school and elementary school graduates with a 14.3% and 2.4%. The vast majority of the sample 50.2% had participated in dance classes for more than five years. The 15.1% and 14.7% respectively attended for three and four years while the remaining 20% of the sample participated for one to two years. A total of 177 subjects (70.5%) had been involved in the performances in the clubs and 74 (29.5%) did not participate. It appears that 48.2% paid and 51.8% did not pay.

The measuring instrument

The Participation Motivation Questionnaire (PMQ) is a questionnaire that consists of thirty questions that describe the possible reasons for participation in sport. The format of the PMQ Gill, Gross and Huddleston (1983) questionnaire as adapted to the Greek population in previous research (Patsiaouras, Keramidas & Papanikolaou, 2004) was used for the purposes of this study, and consisted of thirty questions distributed in the following eight participation factors, that is: a) improving skills (abilities-skills) b) success and increase of prestige (impact on status), c) establishing friendships (friends), d) release and discharge of energy (energy), e) participation in a group (team), g) for fitness reasons (fitness), h) challenge of the moment (challenge), i) for fun (fun). Answers were given at a 5-point Likert rating scale (1: not important-5: very important).

The procedure

The participants completed a questionnaire after their lesson, with the completion time of the questionnaire being approximately 10 minutes. The participants were assured that the questionnaires were anonymous, their participation in the study was voluntary, and the collected information would be held strictly confidential.

Statistical analysis

To ensure the construct validity of the tested questionnaire, a factor analysis of thirty variables was carried out to test the relative meaning of "motivation to participate in Cypriot traditional dance seminars." the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was used (BTS). The KMO measures the sampling adequacy which should be greater than 0.5 for a satisfactory factor analysis to proceed. The KMO measure had a value of 0.867, and the BTS was 2773,298 $p < 0.001$. The analysis used was the principal component analysis with varimax rotation. The criterion for establishing the number of factors was that the value had to be greater than one. The level of significance was set at $p < .40$.

RESULTS

Table 1. Percentage distribution by age group.

Age	Frequency	%
15-20	73	29.1
21-30	79	31.5
31-45	76	30.3
46-60	23	9.2
Total	251	100

Four factors explaining the 52.43% of the overall percentage of variance emerged from the factors analysis and the lowest used to distribute the variables to the factors was 0.40 with eigenvalues above 1.0 (Table 2).

The first factor (F1) consisted of eight questions and was called "social recognition and popularity". The second factor (F2) named "satisfaction from team spirit and the improvement of physical condition" consisted of nine questions, the third factor (F3) was named "rejection of boredom and appearance" and the fourth factor (F4) was named "exercise and health".

In order to examine the consistency of the questions in respect of the four factors, and subsequently examine their reliability, a reliability analysis was carried out. The analyses have shown that the reliability level of the factors is satisfactory ($\alpha > .69$). In table 3, the reliability analyses are shown, as well as the average values and the standard deviations of the factors for the whole sample. As shown by the results, the factors of "satisfaction from team spirit and the improvement of physical condition" and "exercise and health" exist to a higher degree in our sample. Slightly lower is the factor of "rejection of boredom and appearance", whereas the factor with the lowest value is that of "social recognition and popularity".

In order to investigate any possible differences between the two genders and the subscription paid by members against the participation factors, t-tests have been conducted, but with no statistically significant differences. The analysis yields some statistically significant differences which are due to participation in the performances of their schools and in particular to the factors "satisfaction from team spirit and improvement of physical condition" ($t=5.25$, $p < 0.01$, $df=249$), and "rejection of boredom and pleasure" ($t=3.41$, $p < 0.01$, $df=249$).

Table 2. Factor analysis.

Items	Component			
	F1	F2	F3	F4
I want to be popular	,813			
I want to be acknowledged by others	,788			
I like to feel important	,715			
I like to leave the house	,694			
I like the rewards	,652			
I like to have something to do	,577			
I like the challenge	,563			
I like competition	,561	,456		
I want to learn new dances		,709		
I like time spirit		,661		
I like teamwork		,649		
I like to do something I'm good at		,646		
I want to make new friends.		,618		
I like action		,566		
I want to improve my dancing level		,528		
I like the intensity		,521		
I want to be in good physical condition		,405		
with dance I release tension			,752	
I want to be with my friends.			,751	
I love to travel			,630	
I want to improve my skills			,609	
I want to keep my good external appearance	,404		,588	
For health reasons				,764
It's important to myself				,751
I enjoy being with my friends because I spend well				,543
I consider it is exercise				,467
Eigenvalues	7.79	2.80	1.70	1.33
Variance	29.978	10.778	6.554	5.123

Table 3. Reliability analysis, averages and standard deviations of all the factors.

Factors	Cronbach's a	A.	S.D
Social recognition and popularity	.87	3.60	.88
Satisfaction from team spirit and the improvement of physical condition	.84	3.92	.65
Rejection of boredom and appearance	.76	3.83	.79
Exercise and health	.69	3.90	.74

Furthermore, analyses of variance were carried out (One-Way ANOVA), to find out if there are statistically significant differences with regard to participation factors due to: a) the age of the participants, where statistically significant differences have been observed on the factor "social recognition and popularity" $F_{(3,249)}=3.665$, $X_1=3.72$, $X_2=3.49$, $X_3=3.47$, $X_4=4.07$, b) the years of participation in traditional dance schools, which are related only to the factor "satisfaction from team spirit and the improvement of physical condition" $F_{(4,250)}=3.397$, $X_1=3.41$, $X_2=3.82$, $X_3=3.72$, $X_4=3.54$, $X_5=3.57$ and c) on the education level, there are no statistically significant differences with regard to the factors of participation in traditional dance classes.

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, it is widely accepted and scientifically documented that participation in physical activities is an important factor for mental balance, as it promotes one's mental health (Berger, Owen & Man, 1993; Berger, Owen, Motl & Parks, 1998; Craft, 2005; Dimeo, Baurer, Varahram, Proest & Hatler, 2001; Landers & Arent, 2001; Lawlor & Hopker, 2001; ISSP, 1992; Morgan & O'Connor, 1988).

According to the study of Filippou (2002), once having completed their training and being ready to take part in the performing groups of their dance schools, many participants abandon collective activities. In our study, this phenomenon is not observed, as 50.2% have been members of the dance school for more than five years and 70.5% have participated in performances at their schools. The results have showed that traditional dance as an activity attracts people of the age group of fifteen to forty-five, whereas for the age group of over forty-six, a reduced percentage of participation is reported (Casperen, Merritt & Stephens, 1995). The results of our study show agreement with those of Filippou (2009) and Baxevanos (2008) studies. In the studies, the gender of the participants did not constitute a factor which influenced attendance motives. Also, it was ascertained that people participate because they find it enjoyable and fun, because they like to travel, and they expect to escape from their everyday lives.

Dance is a field of physical activity which satisfies to a large extent the need of the participant to receive joy and pleasure from the activity, as well as a feeling of success and pride for taking part in that particular activity (Deci & Ryan, 2004). This process makes the body the principal means of achieving the abovementioned. The Cypriot traditional dance does not promote the cultivation of the competitive spirit, as participation for social recognition and popularity has the lowest percentage of 3.6%.

It is an activity wherein the notions of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation coexist. The study shows that individuals taking part in traditional dance classes expect to do some exercise, maintain or even improve their wellness, improve their dance skills, have fun and relax with friends or other individuals sharing the same interests.

Researchers suggest that children that participate in teams of traditional dances profit through inter-personal relationships, they can focus on group feelings and they develop a sense of collectivity (Zikos & Panagiotopoulou 1990). Moreover, it seems that they do not consider dance to be an activity involving special kinetic skills, and instead they consider it to be important for them and an activity that gives them the opportunity for social gatherings and the improvement of their physical condition. In this way, they internalize the external source of motivation without needing this source to always be present. Thus, intrinsic motivation leads to participation through which the individual seeks internal satisfaction, i.e. pleasure, whereas extrinsic motivation functions as the driver for participation in these activities, while expecting various benefits (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Beyond the importance of traditional dances and their contribution to the improvement of one's physical condition, through exercise, traditional dances may allow a form of cultural transmission through movement and feeling, engaging their active participation in the process (Koutsoumba 2000). Additionally it can support the aspect that the teaching of traditional dance at school can encourage children to develop their social skills, including expression, and communication (Stivaktaki et al. 2008).

The results of this research are consistent with the common reasons for participation in the Cypriot traditional dance which were identified in these studies (Doulias, Kosmi-

dou, Pavloyiannis & Patsiaouras, 2005; Filippou, Kipourou, Goulimaris, Serbezis & Gent 2009; Papaioannidou, Basdeki & Filippou, 2005; Kyriazi, Patsiaouras & Papanikolaou, 2004) and show that the structure of incentives for participation is dominated by internal factors such as release of energy, entertainment and socializing. The factors specifically associated with the pleasure and satisfaction one gets when he learns something new by trying to surpass himself, or simply enjoys participation in an activity. The differences regarding the export of factors should not be taken as a weakness in this research, because something similar was observed in other works. This variation may be due to differences in methodology in the sample or even to different ages and the cultural diversity of the people (Kirkby et al., 1999).

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RAZLOZI ZA UČEŠĆE U TRADICIONALNIM KIPARSKIM IGRAMA

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Cilj aktuelnog istraživanja bio je da se ispituju pouzdanost grčke verzije Upitnika o motivaciji za učešće na seminarima i razlozi učešća Kiprana u seminarima o tradicionalnim igrama. Uzorak je sačinjavao 251 ispitanik, starosti između 15-60 godina ($M=29.13\pm 10.6$). Korišćenjem faktorske analize u okviru statističkog softvera SPSS, utvrđena su četiri faktora kao osnovnih razloga učešća u igračkim ansamblima: a) "društvena pripadnost i popularnost", b) "borba protiv dosade i pojavljivanje u društvu", c) "vežba i zdravlje" i d) "zadovoljstvo zbog prisustva timskog duha i poboljšanja fizičke kondicije". Nije utvrđena statistički značajna razlika u odnosu na pol i nivo obrazovanja ispitanika.. Razlozi učešća u igračkim aktivnostima u skladu su sa razlozima učešća i na seminarima o kiparskim nacionalnim igrama.

Ključne reči: motivacija, učešće, pouzdanost, kiparske nacionalne igre.