Original Article

How does the motivational climate differ among adult dancers within an educational context?

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Abstract:

The aim of this study was to investigate the motivation climate among adults who participate in Greek dance lessons, as well as the influence of gender, age and educational level in these. The “Personal Orientation” questionnaire (Duda & Whitehead, 1998) as modified for the Greek population (Diggelidis & Papaioannou, 2002), was used for the evaluation of goal orientation. Study’s sample consisted of 542 adults, members of dancing clubs. The following statistical analyses were performed: a) Factor analysis, b) Cronbach’s alpha, c) T-test for independent samples and d) One – Way Analysis. Results showed that: a) Cronbach’s alpha was satisfactory (Task=.79, Ego=.90) b) “Task orientation” presented the highest mean (3,70) and “Ego orientation” the lowest (1,81) c) Gender, Age and Participants’ educational level do not constitute factors which differentiate the goal orientation of the participants. In conclusion, we can say that participants are intrinsically motivated for participation and consequently they are willing to make greater efforts. They have a learning orientation and they pursue more challenging dexterities. Dance is an activity for all. For both men and women, youth and elderly people, people university and primary education.

Key words: task, ego, goal orientation, dance, gender, age, education level

Introduction

The 50’s constitute a crucial decade for the Greek society as it is during this period that its transformation ends. This process of transformation began in 1832 with the constitution of the Modern Greek sovereign state (Tsaousis, 1991; Dimas, 1999) and ended with the end of the civil war, which led Greek society to the industrial era. The immigration within and outside the country, which resulted in the urbanization of the rural population and the industrialization of the production means, are the main factors that contributed to the formerly mentioned transformation.

The consequences of this transformation are the departure from the traditional way of life (Meraklis, 1986), the change in people’s behavior and culture and the adoption of a new way of life. From the 1960’s we observe changes in the dance practice of the Greeks caused by the gradual expansion of dance teaching in schools and dance clubs. The creation of the departments of physical education and sport was an important change for the study of physical education (Antoniou, Apostolakis, Anastasiades & Karipidis, 2009; Bebetos & Goulmaris, 2015; Delidou, Matsouka & Nikolaidis, 2015; Matsouka, Harahousou, Kabitsis & Trigonis, 2003; Matsouka, Kabitsis, Harahousou & Trigonis, 2003) and dance. The departments provide students with the possibility of specialization in Greek dances. Thus it became possible to study and research dance from many different scientific approaches (Alygizakis, 2005; Bebetos & Goulmaris, 2014; Goulmaris, 2015; Goulmaris, Koutsouba & Giosos, 2008; Goulmaris, Mavridis, Genti & Rokka, 2014; Lykesas, 2002; Serbezis, 1995; Tyrovola, 1994; Yfantidou, Costa & Michalopoulos, 2008; Filippou et al., 2014; Zografou, 1989).

Teaching Greek dance at schools and dance clubs resulted in a different kind of dancing, taught in the halls of dance clubs, a folk-like kind of dance according to Zografou (2003), which gradually replaced Greek dance not only in the everyday practice of modern Greeks but in their conscience as well. We have entered the era of “the culture of folk clubs” (Serbezis, 1999).

In the past few years we have observed a massive turnout of middle aged and older people in the halls of dance clubs with the ultimate aim of participating in Greek dance lessons (Filippou, Kipourou, Goulmaris & Genti, 2009; Filippou, 2002). What are, however, the reasons for attending dance club lessons? What are the goals of adults and their increasingly growing participation in Greek dance lessons?

Theoretical Framework

One of the factors contributing to the creation of the atmosphere that will enhance interaction in teaching is motivation (Salvaras, 2000). When, during class, intrinsic motivation prevails, then the lesson becomes cooperative and its aim is learning. Students feel autonomous, their level of participation in class is

high and they are happy to acquire new skills. It is the process of learning as such that motivates students to participate in the class (Trilianos, 2009). In contrast, when external motivation prevails, the class becomes competitive and the primary goal is to perform well. The participants, in this case, aim at a high mark, reward and praise. Their motivation does not stem from the activity per se but from the underlying influence of some social reinforcement (Koliadis, 1997).

A factor significantly affecting motivation, intrinsic motivation that is, of individuals is the sense of merit of the individuals themselves. This term refers to the assessment the individuals make of the level of their ability, i.e. how capable they feel they are (Koliadis, 1997). This is even more true when the ability is of increased difficulty and simultaneously challenging enough to lead students to the sought for development (Vygotsky, 1988).

The extent and the intensity of the effort somebody is going to make, as well as their performance immediately depend on their assessment and evaluation of their achievement and, additionally, on how they look upon the consequences of their participation (expectancy of achievement). For most people the more they accept themselves (self-acceptance notion) the more they try. This effort is independent of performance/achievement. Undoubtedly, motivation increases when enhanced positive perception of one's abilities and good results coexist. Individuals who judge themselves positively feel satisfied and always endeavor to achieve the goals they set or overcome obstacles and difficulties they come up against. The opposite is true for people who judge their abilities and performance negatively; they are overcome, as it is, by feelings of worthlessness (Bebetsos & Antoniou, 2012; Bebetos et al., 2013).

The level of one's merit which, along with motivation, significantly affects orientation, attitude, motives and performance is reached with the help of one's positive experiences, by observing other people's successful actions and finally by using oral persuasion techniques (Bruner, 1985; Bigge, 1998).

Competition is a factor that contributes to motivating people to participate in various activities. This, however, happens only for a short period, since in the long run, competition undermines the motivation of people resulting not only in those people's loss of motivation but also in their dislike for such activities. Additionally it has been observed that people with external motives neglect or even give up an activity once those motives cease to exist (Pangrazi, 1999).

A lot of researchers have supported the view that a person from the age of 10 onwards sets achievement goals, by deciding what is and what is not important for him/her. Those goals, subject to change, lead to more or less orientation (Piaget, 1972). This orientation can take totally opposite directions: the first direction is oriented to learning/improvement and the second to performance/achievement.

The individuals who are mostly oriented towards learning are interested in how they will consistently improve their skills. This is so because they consider the effort as a path to success (Duda, 1992). High levels of motivation are observed in those individuals who look for challenge. They participate in various activities irrespective of how well they perform and attribute failure to not trying hard enough. They are not terrified when making mistakes. On the contrary, they look upon them as an opportunity and means to cover their insufficiencies which are caused by a bad activistic and imagistic representation of knowledge (Bruner, 1985). They are cooperative and unhesitantly look for help when needed. During the learning procedure they participate in decision-making and aim at attaining merit and skill (Bandura, 1991).

The individuals who aim at achievement are interested in how skilfully they perform. They compare their performance to that of the others and their main concern is to surpass others. Nevertheless, they do not try hard enough and in case of failure they are disappointed and give up. They do not cooperate and do not ask for help since they regard this as evidence of failure and incapacity. Their interest focuses on achieving prestige; they do not participate in decision-making during learning. Finally, achieving a merited outcome constitutes their main concern. (Nicholls, 1992; Duda, 1992).

A by-product of the two previously mentioned goals of achievement is the assessments of skills. Thus, there are 2 ways in which people assess their skills. The first way moves in the direction of improving performance by taking into account the limitations of previous performances. In other words, the attention of those individuals is focused on new things they learn. They do not compare themselves to others and their mistakes or low performance are not factors that will keep them off the activity (Nicholls, 1992). The second way of assessment is directed towards achievement. The individuals who are so oriented are interested in and compare their performance to that of the others and rank themselves accordingly. They care about the activity and the class only if they allow them to stand out. This is so because they constantly seek recognition. If this does not happen they feel inferior, barely try and easily give up with the first failure. We can say that their motivation depends to a great extent on the recognition they achieve because of their performance (Duda, 1989).

In a research Zaxariadis and Biddle (2000) investigated the existing relationship between the participation motives and personal orientation in a sample of 412 students of English schools. From the results we infer, on the one hand, a connection between intrinsic motivation and orientation to the task (team spirit, skill improvement) and, on the other a connection, between external motivation and orientation to the ego (status, recognition).

The aim of this study was to investigate the motivation climate of adults who participate in Greek dance lessons as well as the influence of gender, age and educational level in motives.

Methodology

Sample

The participants were 542 individuals of over 25 years of age, who participate in Greek dance lessons in dance clubs, in “Centres of Open Protection for the Elderly” and in municipal cultural clubs. The selection of the participants was random.

More specifically, 164 are men and the 378 women. The sample was separated in three group age: 247 of them are at the age of 25 to 45 years old, 240 of them are at the age of 46 to 65 years old and 55 are at the age of 66 and over. The majority of the sample consists of high school graduates and graduates (table 1).

Table1. Demographic characteristics of the sample

Gender	%	Age	%	Education	%
Men	30,2	25-45	45,6	Primary	12,3
Women	69,8	46-65	44,3	Secondary lower	20,7
		66+	10,1	Secondary upper	34,0
				Tertiary	33,0

Data Collection

The “Personal Orientation” questionnaire (TEOSQ: Task & Ego Orientation in Sport Questionnaire) (Duda & Whitehead, 1998) as modified for the Greek population (Diggelidis & Papaioannou, 2002), was used for the evaluation of motivation. The questionnaire consists of two parts. The first investigates the demographic characteristics of the participants with three variables. The second consists of 13 questions divided in two factors. The first factor is called “task orientation” and consists of seven variables e.g. “While I’m trying hard, I learn a new dance” while the second one is named “ego orientation” and consists of six variables e.g. “The others do not manage as well as I do”. The answers were given in a five-point Likert type scale where 1=“absolutely disagree” and 5=“absolutely agree”.

Measurement Process

The completion of questionnaire was anonymous and with the consent of participants. Was carried out in dance halls before or after the dance lessons. The completion time was around 15 minutes.

Results

Factor Analysis

An exploratory factor analysis was carried out for in order to confirm the model of “goal orientations” (Duda, 1989; Nicholls, 1992) in the field of dances. Two factors were came up, the “task” and the “ego” (table 2). The total variance that explained is 62,7%.

Table 2. Exploratory factor analysis

Item	Task	Ego
I feel more successful in a dance lesson....:		
Something new that I learn, makes me want to practice more hard	.72	
While I’m trying hard, I learn a new dance	.70	
I learn a new dance and this makes me want to practice more	.68	
I practice really hard	.67	
A new dance I learn makes me feel good	.65	
I do my best	.68	
I learn something which is entertaining	.59	
The others do not manage as well as I do		.95
The others “blow it” whereas I do not		.91
I am the only one who manages to perform the dance		.88
I manage better than my friends		.90
I am the best		.89
I achieve most of my goals		.78
Eigen values	3.3	4.5
Variance	25.6	37.1
Total variance:	62.7	
KMO	.85	

Reliability Analysis

The reliability control of the questionnaire was carried out by calculating the values of the a Cronbach, for each factor separately. As appears in table 3, the values of the factors were satisfactory ($\alpha > .70$).

Table 3. Reliability analysis of the factors

Factors	Cronbach's alpha
Task	.79
Ego	.90

Mean and Standard Deviation

The "task orientation" factor is experienced by the sample to a greater degree in comparison with the "ego orientation" factor (table 4).

Table 4. Means and standard deviation of the two factors

Factors	M	S. D.
Task	3,70	0,67
Ego	1,81	0,89

Differences in motives according to gender.

To check whether there were statistically important differences on gender, T-tests for independent samples, were performed. The results reveal that gender does not constitute a differential factor of the participation factors (table 5).

Table 5. Differences in motives according to gender

Factors	Men		Women		t
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	
Task	3.65	.77	3.71	.70	1.54
Ego	1.94	1.03	1.76	.82	.85

= $p < .05$

Differences in motives according to age.

To ascertain the differences among the participants' age groups due to the two factors there were made analyses of variance (One-Way ANOVA). The analysis reveals that the statistically significant differences owing to the age do not exist for any of the factors. More specifically, the "ego" factor showed $F_{(2,541)}=1,78$ and $p > .05$ and the "task" factor showed $F_{(2,541)}=.98$ and $p > .05$.

Differences in motives according to educational level.

To ascertain the differences among the different levels of education of the participants due to the two factors there were made analyses of variance (One-Way ANOVA). The analysis reveals that the statistically significant differences owing to the educational level do not exist for any of the factors. More specifically, the "ego" factor showed $F_{(3,541)}=1,73$ and $p > .05$ and the "task" factor showed $F_{(2,541)}=1,67$ and $p > .05$.

Discussions and conclusions

Greek dance in modern Greece is multiply used and has many aims. It constitutes an indispensable part of the school curriculum of Physical Education and is taught in primary and secondary schools; it is used as a form of exercise (Pitsi, 2002), as a means of mental discipline (Filippou, 2015; Filippou et al., 2014; Filippou, Pitsi & Stavridis, 2000; Filippou, 2002). However, it is mainly taught in hundreds, all over Greece and the world, folk clubs (Serbezis, 1995). We have recently observed significant increase in the participation of adults in the halls of folk clubs with the aim of learning Greek dances.

When the dance teacher is aware of the goals the adults coming to classes have he/she has a valuable tool for his/her work. This awareness will not only allow the teacher to know his/her students' goals but to organize the teaching material and handle orientation of the lesson. The latter can be interactive and aim to learning or it could be competitive and aiming to achievement (Papaioannou, Theodorakis & Goudas, 1999). One cannot help but wonder whether the dance club halls are places where learning is promoted or competitiveness encouraged. Are the adults learning Greek dances interested in improving their dancing skill or are they just interested in proving that they are better than the rest?

The results of the research show that the adults who participate in Greek dance lessons are task oriented ($M=3.70$) and not ego-oriented ($M=1.81$). Gender, age and education background of the sample do not constitute factors of differentiation of goal achievement between members of the sample.

Personal orientation to the task in combination with the kind of motivation, allow us to reach safe conclusions for the expectation an attitude of the members of the sample and, as a result, for the sort of lesson they wish to participate in.

People who participate in Greek dance lessons are intrinsically motivated (Filippou, Goulimaris, Baxevas, Genti, 2010) and are quite interested in learning. Consequently their motive for learning is independent of the others' achievement. Their mistakes and weaknesses do not prevent them from participating in the lesson. On the contrary, they regard them as all the more reason for trying harder to improve their dancing skills even more. In class they take part in decision-making, which is very important, since the feeling of participation in the teaching procedure contributes to the creation of motivation in people. The feeling of participation enhances student autonomy in their choices (Mosston & Ashworth, 2002).

These conclusions allow us to propose that the orientation of Greek dance lessons for adults should be interactive and promote learning and not competitiveness. The latter may have short-term positive results regarding the motivation of the participants. In the long run, though, it has been shown to have negative implications since it undermines motivation, ultimately leading individuals to lose interest or even to dislike dance.

Lack of differentiation regarding gender, age-group and educational background allows us to claim that the above reached conclusions are true for both men and women, for all age groups and all education backgrounds, which reinforces the fact that dance is an activity appealing to both sexes, and people of all ages and education backgrounds.

We can claim that the adults who participate in Greek dance lessons aim at learning and are willing to try to improve their dancing skills, since they look upon their effort as the key-factor to their success.

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