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The reasons for adult involvement in Greek traditional dances

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was the examination of the reasons for adult involvement in Greek Traditional Dances (GTD). A hundred and twenty-one adult members of Cultural Clubs in Thessaloniki and Serres prefectures in Greece, aged 50.85 ± 8.23 years, were randomly chosen as the sample of the present study. All the subjects took part in GTD programs for many years. For the evaluation of the reasons for engaging in GTD was used the Measure of Involvement with Hiking, was translated into Greek and adapted to GTD. It consists of 11 sentences/questions expressing three factors/dimensions: attraction, centrality, and self-expression. A 5-point Likert scale was used. The individuals who took part were encouraged to reply in an anonymous and honest way to the questionnaire according to the reasons for their involvement in GTDs. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been demonstrated. Statistical analysis was implemented using the statistical package SPSS/PC version 25.0 for windows. Descriptive analysis was applied. Data analysis showed high values in all three individual factors/dimensions namely: self-expression 12.132 ± 1.98 degrees, attraction 23.70 ± 2.03 degrees, and centrality 10.78 ± 2.73 degrees. The results showed that the first and most important reason for adult involvement in GTDs is the attraction they feel to GTDs, then self-expression through GTD, and finally the centrality of GTDs. The factors' high values indicate that the expressed reasons/motivations for adult involvement in GTDs have a dynamic that reflects their long-term or even lifelong adherence and participation in GTD programs.

Keywords: Dance, recreation, motivation, adherence, participation

Introduction

Dance is a creative activity with beneficial effects on adults' quality of life (Barnet-Lopez *et al.*, 2016) [6]. Dance improves stability, balance, and physical fitness, reduces stress, and strengthens social relationships (MacMillan, 2016) [18], since through dance an emotional connection is formed among individuals in the dancing group (McNeill, 1995) [27]. Furthermore, dance restores inner calmness and composition to people (Mazczuk, 1987) [25], releases the tension of everyday life, and, also, seems that can reduce the loneliness people feel and improve the morale of the participating individuals (Medicomm Incorporation, 2004) [28]. All these elements are also mentioned in Greek traditional dances (GTD).

Greek traditional dance (GTD) has played and, still, plays a substantial role in Greek society, concerning arts, customs, beliefs, and all other products of thought by Greek people. Additionally, GTD provides unique indications of Greek people's features and identity as for nature, history, as well as the arts, and other manifestations of their physical and intellectual achievement expressed collectively. GTD, music, and songs are not just expressed feelings, actions, and representations of the Greeks' social lives, but also organic basics and substantial components of everyday life and its special and unique occasions (Argiriadou *et al.*, 2013; Filias, 1999) [2, 9].

However, dancing is an alternative form of physical activity. Dancing, indeed, constitutes an exercise form at a moderate intensity, expressed at 3-5 METs, that leads to benefits concerning dancers' physical fitness (Balady, & Weiner, 1987; Klissouras, 2004) [5, 16]. Additionally, people who dance for an hour at a low intensity can burn 300-360 Kcal, while when dancing

for an hour at a higher intensity they can burn from 420 up to 480 Kcal (Argiriadou *et al.*, 2013; Byrne, 1991; Klissouras, 2004; Papanikolaou, 1993) [2, 7, 16, 33]. Therefore, it is shown that participating in GTDs may affect positively psychological, social, and physiological features. Moreover, positive effects may be observed on dancers' health and well-being (Argiriadou, 2018; Genti, 2009; Mavrovouniotis *et al.*, 2018) [1, 12, 24]. Thus, it can be concluded that GTD is a leisure physical activity with many positive effects.

The immoderate use of technology observed nowadays led people to engage excessively in sedentary jobs and, also, in sedentary activities in their free time. However, given the fact that sedentary life is associated with many major causes of mortality, morbidity, and, also, of psychological diseases, for example, depression, heart disease, diabetes, cancer, etc. (Armstrong *et al.*, 2000; RoyChowdhury, 2012) [4, 36], people must be encouraged to engage in non-sedentary activities in their free time.

The involvement in leisure activities has been determined as a motivation, arousal, or interest unobservable state, concerning a recreational activity. It is triggered by a specific stimulus or situation and has leadership characteristics. Involving in activities during free time results in a) much bigger sensitivity concerning the subtleties of activity attributes, such as equipment knowledge or the selection of locality, b) much bigger perceptions of the importance of the activity, for example, the perception that it is a significant part of a recreationist's life, and c) much bigger engagement or obligation to certain service providers or geographical sites (Havitz, & Dimanche, 1997; 1999; Kyle *et al.*, 2003) [15, 17].

Therefore, the definition of people's motivation concerning their involvement in a leisure activity, such as GTD, may help motivate people to engage in dance-based programs and decrease inactivity. Moreover, while reviewing the literature some reports on the reasons/motives for GTD engagement (Filippou *et al.*, 2010a; Goulimaris, & Filippou, 2016; Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2003; Papaioannidou *et al.*, 2005; Patsiaouras *et al.*, 2012) [10, 13, 30, 31, 34] have been found. However, as far as we can be aware, there is no research examining the reasons for adult engagement in GTD using a measuring instrument of involvement in a leisure activity. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to examine the reasons for adult involvement in GTD, using a valid and reliable questionnaire concerning involvement in a leisure activity.

Materials and methods

Participants

A hundred and twenty-one adult members of Cultural Clubs in Thessaloniki and Serres prefectures in Greece, 45 men (37.2%) and 76 women (62.8%), were randomly chosen as the sample of the present study. All the subjects took part in GTD programs for many years.

Procedure

A brief communication with the participants aiming to inform them about the research was made. All the subjects provided written consent in order to take part in the research. Then all the participants answered study questionnaires. Procedures were consistent with the ethical standards of the Declaration of Helsinki of the World Medical Association (2000).

Measuring Instruments

Initially, all the subjects filled in a questionnaire about their demographic features regarding age, height, weight, as well as participation in GTD programs.

For the evaluation of the reasons for adult involvement in GTDs was used the Measure of Involvement with hiking by McIntyre, & Pigram (1992) [26], which was translated into Greek, and its items were adapted to GTDs. The questionnaire consists of 11 items expressing three factors/dimensions: Attraction (five items), Centrality (three items), and Self-expression (three items). The validity and reliability of the questionnaire have been demonstrated in several studies (Dimanche *et al.*, 1991; Havitz, & Dimanche, 1997; Kyle *et al.*, 2003; McIntyre, & Pigram, 1992; Wiley *et al.*, 2000) [8, 14, 17, 26, 38]. All individuals were encouraged to reply in an anonymous and honest way to the questionnaire according to the reasons for their involvement in GTDs. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale, where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree/neither disagree, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

Statistical analysis

Statistical analysis was implemented using the statistical package SPSS/PC version 25.0 for Windows. Descriptive analysis was applied.

Results

In Table 1, participants' demographic characteristics are presented. As can be seen, the participants, aged 50.85 ± 8.23 years, had many years of participation in GTD programs (mean 11.74 ± 10.43 years), reaching even 50 years. The frequency of participation in GTD programs was 2.45 ± 1.21 times a week with an average participation of 75.62 ± 28.09 minutes each time (Table 1).

Table 1: Participants' demographic characteristics

	Mean	SD
Age (years)	50.85	8.23
Height (cm)	170.89	8.92
Weight (kg)	77.31	16.17
Participation in GTD programs (years)	11.74	10.43
Times a week	2.45	1.21
Minutes at a time (min)	75.62	28.09

In Table 2 are presented the scores of separate dimensions, as well as the total score of all dimensions of the questionnaire, concerning the reasons for adult involvement in GTD programs.

Table 2: Scores of Questionnaire Dimensions

Dimensions	Mean	SD
Self-expression (degrees)	12.132	1.98
Attraction (degrees)	23.70	2.03
Centrality (degrees)	10.78	2.73
Total Score (degrees)	46.61	6.74

In Figures 1-3 are shown the scores of separate dimensions, as well as the minimum and maximum value that each dimension of the questionnaire can potentially accumulate.

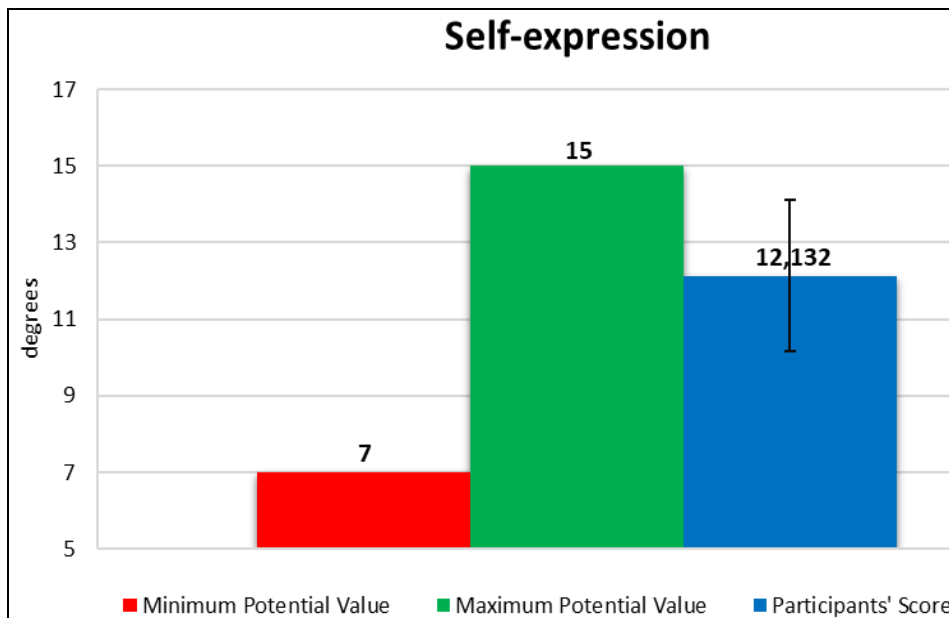


Fig 1: Self-expression Dimension

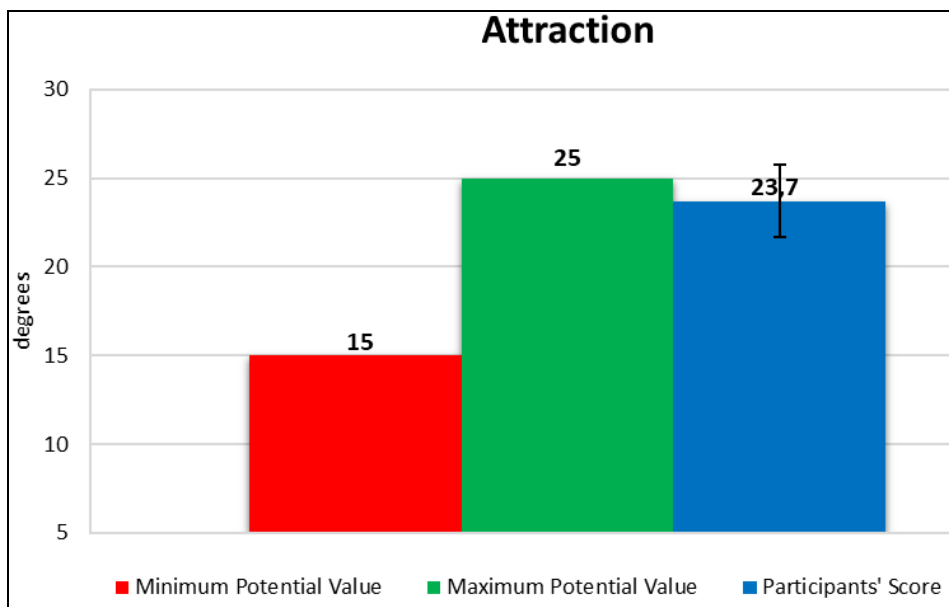


Fig 2: Attraction Dimension

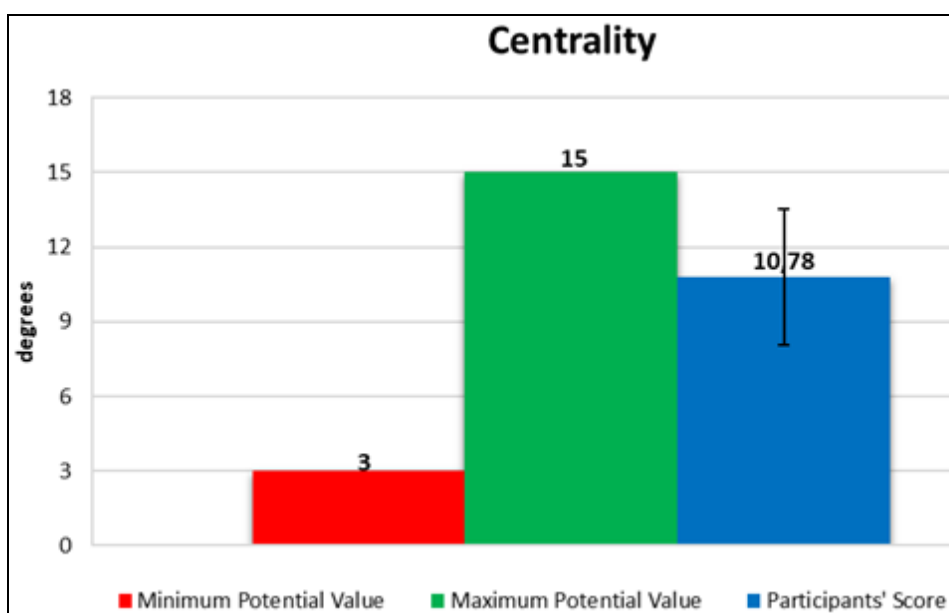


Fig 3: Centrality Dimension

As it can be seen, the participants in the present study have a very high score on all factors regarding the reasons for engaging in GTDs, compared to the minimum and maximum scores that each factor can potentially receive (Table 2, Figure 1-3). Furthermore, the participants in the present research are involved in GTDs mainly because of attraction (Figure 1), while self-expression is the second reason for adult involvement in GTDs (Figure 2). Finally, the third reason for adult involvement in GTDs is centrality (Figure 3).

Discussion

The results showed that the first and most important reason for adult involvement in GTDs is the attraction they feel for GTDs, then the self-expression through GTDs, and finally the centrality. This ranking concerning people's reasons for involvement in GTDs is very important, as well as essential.

In more detail, attraction is meant as a combination of importance and pleasure, which are very essential features for individuals (McIntyre, & Pigram, 1992) [26]. The attraction factor includes statements that express that GTD is important to people, that they are interested in it, that it is one of the most enjoyable activities they do, that it is a pleasure for them, and that they enjoy it very much.

Self-expression, which is the second reason in ranking for adult engagement in GTDs, refers to individual self-presentation or the image and depiction they desire to communicate to other people by dancing GTDs. The self-expression factor includes statements that express that when a person dances, they are truly themselves and/or others see them the way they would like to be seen and that a person can learn a lot about another individual by watching them dance. Finally, the third reason in ranking for adult involvement in GTDs is centrality, which refers to the centrality of GTD to an individual's overall lifestyle and whether other parts of people's lives are around GTDs (Watkins, 1986) [37].

The present findings agree with studies that examined the reasons for adult engagement in dance programs in general (Maraz *et al.*, 2015; Nieminen, 1998) [20, 29], and more specifically in GTD programs (Papageorgiou *et al.*, 2003; Zanu *et al.*, 2001) [30, 39]. In addition, the most important motives for participation in GTDs are anxiety reduction, reduction and relief from daily stress, fun, rejection of boredom, coexistence in a group and with friends, social relations, popularity, gaining new experiences, mood improvement and physical fitness benefits, and health (Filippou *et al.*, 2010a; 2010b; Mavrovouniotis *et al.*, 2010; Papaioannidou *et al.*, 2005; Patsiaouras *et al.*, 2012) [10, 11, 22, 31, 34].

Thus, GTD participants seek many benefits. They mainly expect to improve their social relationships by creating new friendships and strengthening old ones and maintain their health at a good level or even improve it compared to their peers, through their participation in an activity such as GTD (Argiriadou, 2018; Argiriadou *et al.*, 2017; Goulmaris, & Filippou, 2016; Pikoula *et al.*, 2007) [1, 3, 13, 35].

The results of the present study indicate that the reasons for involving in GTDs, as stated by adult participants in the research, express internal motives. It is worth mentioning that people who take part in physical activity due to innate motivations, more specifically individuals who are driven by components concerning the activity for example pleasure or skill development and accomplishment, are prone to take part in activities over a longer period of time, as opposed to people with external motivations, who are involved in physical activity because of components unrelated to the activity itself,

for instance, recognition, health improvement, or having a good appearance (Filippou *et al.*, 2010a) [10].

Therefore, it is no coincidence that the participants in the present study were members of Cultural Clubs and systematically participated in GTD programs for an average of 11.74 years, reaching even 50 years, a fact that highlights the dynamic of their internal motivations. Consequently, the expressed reasons/motivations for the involvement of the adult participants in the present research in GTDs have a dynamic that reflects their long-term or even lifelong adherence and participation in GTD programs.

Conclusion

Participation in GTDs may cause many positive psychosocial and physical benefits (Argiriadou, 2018; Genti, 2009; Malkogeorgos *et al.*, 2020; Mavrovouniotis *et al.*, 2013; Mavrovouniotis *et al.*, 2016; Papaioannou *et al.*, 2009) [1, 12, 19, 21, 23, 32]. In addition, the reasons for participating in GTDs, which were examined, are such that can encourage people to involve in GTDs, therefore enhancing adherence. Therefore, programs based on GTDs must be designed and implemented. Consequently, aiming at fighting inactivity through lifelong participation and adherence to physical activity, traditional dance may be the solution!

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors state that they have no conflict of interest. The final version of the manuscript was read and approved by all authors. No financial support was received for this study.

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