

The Social-Psychological Outcomes of Dance Practice: A Review

Alexandros MALKOGEORGOS* • Eleni ZAGGELIDOU*
Evangelos MANOLOPOULOS* • George ZAGGELIDIS*

Dance involvement among the youth has been described in many terms. Studies regarding the effects of dance practice on youth show different images. Most refer that dance enhanced personal and social opportunities, increased levels of socialization and characteristic behavior among its participants. Socialization in dance differs according to dance forms, and a person might become socialized into them not only in childhood and adolescence but also well into adulthood and mature age. The aim of the present review is to provide an overview of the major findings of studies concerning the social-psychological outcomes of dance practice. This review revealed that a considerable amount of researches has been conducted over the years, revealed positive social- psychological outcomes of dance practice, in a general population, as well as specifically for adults or for adolescents. According to dance form the typical personality profile of dancers, dancers being introverted, relatively high on emotionality, strongly achievement motivated and exhibiting less favorable self attitudes. It is proposed that a better understanding of the true nature of the social-psychological outcomes of dance practice can be provided if specific influential factors are taken into account in future research (i.e., participants' characteristics, type of guidance, social context and structural qualities of the dance).

Keywords: dance, youth, personality traits, socialization

Introduction

Dance can be performed at home or at a park, without any equipment, alone or in a group, is a choreographed routine of movements usually performed to music. Dance involvement in general can be described in diverse terms (ballet,

* Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece

modern dance, jazz, musical, ethnic etc.). There is a variety of music, which dictates the type of dance to be performed. Dance to the music of jazz, salsa, hip-hop, ballet, tango, square dance, line dance, belly dancing to name a few. Commonly held perceptions on the value of involvement in dance are mixed. As indicated by some, these common beliefs with regard to dance are often largely based on perceptions obtained through the media and entertainment industry. It has been pointed out that popular media have created a pleasant image of dance for (commercial) entertainment purposes. These popularized notions of dance serve a culture obsessed with glamour (Hagood, 2000).

The duality in the perception regarding the effects of dance is perhaps even more apparent when it involves youth. On the one side, dance involvement is believed to provide positive learning opportunities for youth in general, as well as with regard to specific target groups. In addition, working with the understanding that is developed through movement can assist not only the artistic development but also the cognitive and emotional development of the child (Briskin, 1981). In the majority of countries, dances are introduced during physical education classes in secondary schools, because it is believed that dance involvement can provide positive educational opportunities to pupils. In dance education the analysis of children's movement has become recognized as one means through which children can be understood and helped educationally and, if necessary, therapeutically (North, 1989).

Behavioral problems are a major difficulty that classroom teachers face, and the possibilities of support in this area from the art form means that dance moves from being a "frill" in the curriculum to being a necessity. Also, specific initiatives have been set up in several countries in which educators make use of dance in their work with socially deprived youth. Allison's (1997) study provided an example of what meant by using the body to process ideas and create meaning. In her case study of an inner-city classroom that used dance to construct intertextual literacy knowledge, she found students liked to use their kinesthetic abilities as a learning resource for their academic pursuits. Dance helped students explore the reciprocity between thoughts and actions. It also enabled students to draw connections between semiotic and linguistic texts such as books. They learned to see dance as a mental tool for constructing knowledge.

Studies have demonstrated that dance has physiological and psychological benefits (Hopkins, Murrah, Hoeger, & Rhodes 1990). Adiputra, Alex, Sutjana, Tirtayasa, and Manuaba (1996), found that dancing lowered the resting heart rate and blood pressure and increased the maximum aerobic capacity in young male ballet dancers. Many dance forms provide a total body workout, which tones the body and provides aerobic benefits, unlike working just the lower body when

on the stationary bike or walking on the treadmill (Alpert, 2011). In addition to physiological benefits, benefits of fun, creative expression, and socialization, dancing was also shown to elevate mood, increase sense of self-esteem and well-being, and increase social contact in healthy adolescent females (Blackman, Hunter, Hilyer, & Harrison, 1988; Estivill, 1995). The above findings have been substantiated by numerous investigators (Kirkendall & Calabrese, 1983; Karlsson, Johnell, & Obrant, 1993; Palo-Bengtsson & Ekman, 1997), although the subjects were mainly younger adults (age range 19-44 years) or professional dancers.

However on the other side, the relationship between (some) dance and adolescents has been regarded by others as problematic due to an assumed relationship with negative socialization processes. Consider the ballet dance as an example. Some researchers have also provided evidence for the negative effects of dance involvement among adolescents. On sexual orientation and homophobia in dance education has begun to emerge as important areas for further research. Recent scholarship in dance education and homosexuality is varied and diverse, encompassing research on gay males (Bailey & Oberschneider, 1997; Risner, 2002; Mozingo & Risner, 2002) and male participation, (Crawford, 1994; Risner, 2002) as well as lesbianism (Risner, 2002; Sparling, 2001) and shifting sexualities (Briginshaw, 1999; Desmond, 2001).

The information presented above indicates that doubts exist regarding social-psychological outcomes of dance practice on young participants. It is therefore worthwhile to review findings of the major studies dealing with this topic.

Popularity of dance. Dance (e.g., ballet, contemporary dance etc.) participation has universal appeal. It is obvious that strengthened multiculturalism and cultural globalization are also reflected in dance (Shapiro, 2008), and different dance cultures migrate from one country and continent to another, influencing each other (Rowell, 2000). In Europe, in USA and general, dance is one of the most practiced activities among children and adolescents.

Dancers are among the 30 to 50 million unpaid performers in the U.S. who entertain us with their grace, beauty, and talent every year (Szuhaj, 2001). Recent statistics suggest that approximately 16 thousand young people in the UK study dance, approximately 3000 young dancers are currently engaged in fulltime dance training (Dance UK, 2008) and close to 100 universities offer dance as a single subject area (UCAS, 2007). As an industry, dance employs in region of 30 thousand individuals in the UK alone, as dancers, teachers, managers and choreographers (Dance UK, 2008). Dance has also been ranked among the most practiced activities in a club context.

Frömel and Bartoszewicz (1998); Frömel, Formánková, and Sallis (2002), have provided evidence that dance, aerobic dance, creative and aesthetic activities are highly popular among adolescent girls and furthermore girls 'attitudes towards dance show little change between the ages of 11 to 16 (Sanderson, 2001). Dancing is among the top five activities of girls in their leisure time (Harrell et al., 2003).

The popularity of dance has helped contribute to a growing interest in dance research over the years, (Siljamäki, Anttila, & Sääkslahti, 2010), which can be illustrated through a number of ways. Firstly, there are indications that in recent years much more papers on dance are presented at sports scientific congresses. Secondly, in recent years an increased number of world scientific meetings with regard to dance have been organized. Next to conferences on dance in general e.g., a) IADMS (International Association for Dance Medicine & Science) 21st Annual Meeting Washington, DC, USA. b) CID (Conseil International de la Danse) World Congresses on Dance Research. This World Congress on Dance Research has established itself since 1987 as the biggest gathering in the world for all forms of dance. c) The Annual Congress on Research in Dance and the Society for Ethnomusicology, USA.

Thirdly it is interesting to note the large number of scientific publications regarding dance. There are currently a large number of specific international journals and magazines reporting on dance search and dance activities.

International journals reporting on dancer search

American journal of Dance Therapy

Dance Research Journal (DRJ)

Dance Chronicle

The Journal of Dance Education (JODE)

Research in Dance Education

The ICHPER.SD Journal of research in health, physical education, recreation, sport & dance

Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance (JOPERD)

Ballet Review

Discourses in Dance

Journal of Dance Medicine & Science

Movement Research performance journal

An increased attention among scientists for dance studies, a number of literature reviews have been published regarding this research. Usually dance

reviews covered a wide range of scientific disciplines (e.g., biomechanics, psychology, history, physiology, sociology, pedagogy, epidemiology of injuries). A review of reasons for participation in dance gathered during the surveys suggests that many of the different rationales participants have for dancing have yet to be fully recognized and quantified. Participants in the surveys conducted to date identified their reasons for participation in dance as being related to; socializing, performance, entertainment, recreation, spirituality, education, physical fitness, therapy, religion, culture, creativity, health and wellbeing, competition, aesthetics, research and self-expression (Graham, 2002). They also indicated that a range of people were involved in these dance activities, men and women, children and adults, the aged, infirm, slim and large.

In pedagogical researches the teachers' conception of teaching dance is that they emphasize in the learning should go "through the dancers' body and mind" and the responsibility for learning is shared by both the teacher and the students. Even though the teachers use a lot of teacher-oriented methods, at the same time they stress the importance of the students' own thinking when learning (Tynjälä, 2006; Anttila, 2008). This teaching conception takes into account the learners' different skills and experiences. Creating a motivating atmosphere is also at the heart of the conception. The feeling of competence and individually appropriate motor challenges increase motivation, which simultaneously improves learning. Gaining intrinsic motivation demands an experience of competence and a feeling of togetherness in the social environment, as in this case in a dance class (Deci & Ryan, 1985; 2000). Three qualitatively different ways of understanding the nature and pedagogy of dances were identified: Dance is art. Dance is culture open to all people and simultaneously art and physical education. Dance is a part of well-being.

Dance has been largely neglected as a focus of psychological research. As these reviews, it is interesting to learn about more recent dance research. Among other things, it would be worthwhile to specifically focus on young dancers, as several studies have reported an increased percentage of adolescents involved in dance.

Methods

Considering regarding the effects of dance practice on young people, it is relevant to gain more insight in the social-psychological outcomes of dance involvement among youth by reviewing the existing research on this topic. Apart from a number of secondary sources (e.g., research reviews), literature data were primarily collected through computer and manual searches of primary sources (e.g., journal articles, theses and dissertations) in the areas of sport sociology, psychology, pedagogy and philosophy. For the computer search, online databases (e.g., Sport Discus, Google scholar, PubMed...) were combed pairing primary key-

words, such as dance, ballet, children, youth, adolescents, outcomes, effects, motivation, teaching style, teaching approach, participation, motives and socialization.

To be included in the review conducted as part of the present study, a study had to meet six criteria. Firstly, only those studies measuring social-psychological outcomes of practicing a kind of dance are included. For example, this means that studies looking at the therapeutic values of dance are not discussed in this review. Secondly, studies in which dance was incorporated as part of a larger intervention program, were excluded from this review as limited evidence could be provided that measured outcomes were specifically attributed to dance practice. Thirdly, studies evaluating specially dances programs (belly dance and other forms of oriental dance e.g.) were also excluded. Fourthly, studies focused on specific target groups, such as persons with disabilities, none of this research was included in this review as no meaningful comparison would be possible. Fifthly, the focus is on studies conducted from the mid '90s onwards, as the older ones were mostly included in the previous reviews. However, to enable a comparison with more recent research, major findings of these older studies were included as well. Sixthly (and finally), the review covers only research that has been published in English. Studies written in another language were not discussed in the review.

The results of this literature study will be described in the present review, and the possible effects of dance practice on participants will be discussed. Finally, a conclusion is presented and recommendations are provided for further investigation.

Social-psychological outcomes of dance practice. Firstly, a number of trends can be noticed with regard to themes, groups of participants and methodologies in dance research. Research into the relationship between personality and membership in sporting and other cultural groups has a long tradition and is principally directed towards answering two categories of questions (Bakker, Whiting, & Van der Brug, 1990). In the first category, questions relate to the influence of participation in sport, dance or music on personality: is there a change in a person's personality traits as a consequence of his or her participation in those activities? Questions in the second category have to do with attempts to identify-personality profiles of athletes, musicians, dancers etc. Do these persons possess personality traits which predispose them to be more successful in sport, dance or music than those who do not have these traits?

The first questions seem to be answered in the negative. The available evidence does not, in general, indicate changes in personality traits as a result of participation in, e.g. sport, music or dance (Eysenck, Nias, & Cox, 1982). The comparison of athletes and non-athletes, dancers and non-dancers, groups of athletes who practice sport at different levels or practitioners of different

types of sport is still the focus of many research articles (Bakker, 1988; Daino, 1985; Miller & Miller, 1985; Poole, Henschen, Schultz, Gordin, & Hill, 1986). The results of these comparisons gave rise to some well-established differences. Athletes, for example, appear to be consistently more extraverted than non-athletes and lower in emotionality. Dancers, in contrast, have been found to be more introverted and higher in emotionality than non-dancers (Bakker, 1988).

These earlier studies focused on personal characteristics of dance artists, how these characteristics determined preferences for specific types of dance and the extent in which they changed as a result of dance involvement. Since then, more researchers have become interested in the outcomes of dance practice. While earlier studies focused on dance involvement in general, in more recent years attention shifted to outcomes of dance practice among children and adolescents.

Secondly, a shift can be noticed regarding the type of dance under study. Previously, the majority of studies focused on ballet, while in more recent years a growing interest for other types of dance can be noted. And thirdly, throughout the years, the type of social-psychological outcomes under study changed. While most of the earlier studies primarily looked at the influence of dance practice on a variety of personality traits of practitioners, in recent years the emphasis is more on the relationship between dance and socialization.

In the following section an overview is presented of empirical studies with regard to social-psychological outcomes of dance practice, in which, among other things, results and used methodology will be examined more closely. Studies examining different personality traits, such as self-confidence, self-assurance, anxiety level, and self-regulation are discussed first. Afterwards, research regarding the relation between dance practice and social behavior is looked at because of its increased attention by researchers in recent years.

Personality traits. Most research looking at personality profiles of dancers used a cross-sectional design into the relationship between personality and membership in sporting and other cultural groups. A number of these studies have compared personality traits according to the performance level of artists (Bakker, 1990). As a result of participation in, e.g. sport, music or dance (Eysenck et al., 1982) indicate changes in personality traits. It should be admitted that the paucity of longitudinal research hampers reaching definite conclusions with respect to the question of whether or not dancing has any effect on personality traits. The comparison of dancers and non-dancers, who practice dance at different levels or practitioners of different types of dance, is still the focus of many research articles.

Bakker (1988) studied the personality traits of ballet students aged between 11 and 16 years (all female), comparing them with non-dancing controls on a variety of standardized questionnaires. Dancers showed lower self-esteem than non-dancers and a less favorable physical self-concept. They were more introverted than controls and higher in achievement motivation, anxiety and emotionality. These results were interpreted in terms of an interaction between self-selection on traits such as sensitivity and ambitiousness that would promote success in dancing and the stresses placed on young dancers by the exacting discipline of ballet.

Since part of the dancer's job is giving expression to feelings, it was supposed that high emotionality would not necessarily be detrimental to performance. The introversion of dancers could be connected with the fact that ballet is a solitary activity requiring a great deal of disciplined training than, other sociable types. The results of these comparisons gave rise to some well-established differences. Athletes, for example, appear to be consistently more extraverted than non-athletes and lower in emotionality. Dancers, in contrast, have been found to be more introverted and higher in emotionality than non-dancers (Bakker, 1988). Dance provides an outlet for releasing emotional expression, allows for creativity, and the socialization aspect lowers stress, depression, and loneliness. Stress reduction also seems to occur by the dancer being in the moment. Dance also provides the same type of response of mood elevation. It is evident that dance is not only a sustainable form of exercise but it also has a body–mind effect on anyone who dares engage in this form of physical activity (Alpert, 2011).

Studies indicated clear similarities in their conclusions. On the positive side, dance is an art form where the body is the medium, and dancers create art by focusing on their bodies, how their bodies look, how they move, and how they fit in with other dancers' bodies. Findings presented in literature have shown that dance and aerobic dance can enhance girls' perception of physical activity. It applies especially to aerobic dance since it is not considered a competitive physical activity and supports girls' perceptions of their own femininity, body image and physical self efficacy. On the negative side dancers – especially ballet dancers – are usually reported to have views of their bodies that are unrealistically strict, and which lead to psychological and physical problems such as anorexia nervosa (Abraham, 2006).

Many researchers have studied the body esteem and self-esteem of populations of dancer. Studies have often compared ballet dancers to non-dancers, usually reporting that ballet dancers are preoccupied with their bodies and their weight, resulting in unhealthy eating and dieting. Bettel, Bettel, Neumärker, and Neumärker (2001), found that adolescent ballet dancers view themselves as less desirable, less attractive, less confident, less lovable, and more sensitive than age-matched non-dancers. Tiggemann and Slater (2001) found that former ballet

dancers reported higher self-surveillance and disordered eating than the same age group of non-dancers. Pierce and Daleng (1998) discovered high levels of distorted body images among professional female dancers, using measures to compare current body image to ideal body image. These differences between dancers and non-dancers are concerning.

Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) posits that being female in a culture that sexually objectifies the female body causes females to internalize societal assessments of their physical selves. Acceptance of these societal body attitudes can increase body monitoring, which can increase shame, guilt, and anxiety, which can subsequently lead to negative feelings about the body and yield poor motivation and performance. Objectification may be especially strong in the field of dance where females are constantly monitoring and critiquing their physical bodies and movements. Tiggemann and Slater (2001) tested former classic ballet dancers and non-dancers on questionnaire measures of self-objectification. Former dancers scored higher on self-objectification, self-surveillance, and disordered eating. Slater and Tiggemann (2002) also used questionnaires to evaluate self-objectification in ballet dancers and non-dancers, but did not find support for their predicted difference between these groups. Dancers did not report significantly greater self-objectification, anxiety over their appearance, or disordered eating compared to non-dancers in this sample. Although these and many other studies (Fredrickson & Harrison, 2005; Harrison & Fredrickson, 2003) support objectification theory, the difference between dancers and non-dancers is not as consistent.

Modern dancers have reported stronger beliefs in being able to control their lives and their health (internal locus of control), as compared to ballet dancers. Ballet dancers have lower body esteem than modern dancers. However, in a recent, direct comparison, modern dancers and ballet dancers were shown to have equally negative body esteem on a standard Psychological scale, and modern dancers' self-esteem was only slightly higher than ballet dancers (Niemi, 1998). Aerobic dance might enhance girls' physical self perception and therefore could be an activity through which positive psychological results could be attained (Daley & Buchanan, 1999). Another study by Bartholomew and Miller (2002) supports the affective benefits of submaximal, continuous exercise in aerobic dance classes which extend to self selected aerobic dance classes.

From the point of view of educational and other values, dance is acknowledged for other reasons than aerobic dance is. They are the aesthetic, cultural, social, emotional and artistic benefits of dance (Hanna, 1999; Purcell, 1994; Sanderson, 1996; Smith-Autard, 2002). Since these contribute to progress in the learning process (Chen, 2001; Graves & Townsend, 2000; Koff, 2000; Richard-

son & Oslin, 2003), they belong among the main points of advocacy for dance in the school curriculum. In dance and especially creative dance, composing dances is emphasized (Morin, 2001), because every dance movement is the result of a range of useful decisions on how the dance movement uses space, time, energy and partnership of pupils. Dance gives pupils an opportunity to express their ideas, feelings and views (Purcell, 1994).

Savran, Coknaz, Guler, and Atalay (2004) were found their research that the typical personality characteristics of sport were aggression, dominance, achievement, masculinity and exhibition according to subject's perceptions. In their study Tavacioglu, Kora, Atilgan, and Savran (2010), used a descriptive method in order to assess the personality characteristics of athletes in dancing sports. Preponderance over others, decisiveness, high self-esteem, masculine behavior was found significantly higher in younger athletes compared to older ones. On the other hand, acceptance of psychological consultation was found to be significantly higher among older athletes. The dominant personality characteristics of the sampling group were aggression, counseling readiness, autonomy, success-dependence exhibition and ideal self.

There is a dearth of information regarding the implications of task- and ego-involving features of the motivational climate in the domain of dance. One notable study was conducted by Carr and Wyon (2003). They found perceptions of an ego involving dance climate to positively predict dance students' degree of ego orientation, trait anxiety, and the perfectionism characteristics of high personal standards, concern over mistakes, and doubts about actions. Past research has suggested that being high in all three of these attributes is reflective of neurotic perfectionism, a personality syndrome that is linked to a number of maladaptive behaviors and indices of mental health (Hamachek, 1978). Thus, Carr and Wyon (2003) concluded that an ego-involving motivational climate may contribute to potentially detrimental self-evaluation tendencies and the compromised welfare of dancers. While the Carr and Wyon (2003) study provided some cross-sectional evidence regarding the potential impact of motivational climate in dance, it did not target the underlying psychological mechanisms through which the social environment can influence the quality of engagement in dance and dancers' well-being.

Socialization. The process of socialization has been seen as the most important factor influencing the type and amount of involvement in a variety of activities (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981; Lewko & Ewing, 1981). According to Snyder and Spreitzer (1978) the process of socialization into sport is similar to that of socialization into music, the arts, academic subjects or other fields of expertise. Although fundamentally different in their nature, all of them require extensive training, practice, discipline and performance. In addition, certain institutions

such as sports clubs or groups working with music or dance can serve as socializing agents.

The family is the most likely factor determining early sport involvement among both girls and boys (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981; Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978; Gregson & Colley, 1986). The family provides social support for the sport role in many ways, such as creating a positive value climate for participation, giving encouragement, acting as active role models, and giving opportunities to their children (Estrada, Gelfand, & Hartmann, 1988). The mother's strong influence on girls' starting to dance was seen in the study by Stinson, Blumenfield-Jones and Van Dyke (1990). In Alter's (1997) study forty-one percent of the dancers reported that their mother, father, grandmother or friend put them into dance classes.

Researchers of sport socialization agree with the general findings that sport involvement is greater among males than females (Greendorfer & Lewko, 1978; Laakso & Telama, 1981; Yang, Telama, & Laakso, 1996), although girls receive less encouragement than boys to engage in sport, which is seen as a highly male-centered activity, in dance the situation may be just the opposite. Dance, especially art dance, is closely related to aesthetics which in turn are related to femininity and youth. For this reason it can be assumed that a boy socialized into art dance might be under pressure due to the feminine, homosexual image of the male dancer. Dance forms vary considerably in this perspective, as in social dance and folk dance the participation of men is more common and acceptable. It may also be assumed that socialization into dance differs according to dance forms. Some forms of dance, such as classical ballet, are typically taken up by young girls and are not very relevant in terms of long-term participation at a non-professional level. In contrast, it is possible to participate in social dance, folk dance and competitive ballroom dance well into a mature age, and a person might become socialized into them in adulthood (Nieminen, 1998).

Dance is generally perceived as a single cultural form. However, the various forms of dance are different at their cores, having varying purposes and functions. Dance subcultures might, then, be expected to reflect these differences. The majority of ballet and modern dancers were women, but almost half of folk and ballroom dancers were men. Men are still afraid of the label of femininity in dance, and western societies do not encourage dancing as part of the male role (Alter, 1997). Applying what Estrada et al. (1988) wrote about sport to dance, the gender bias in dance is due to cultural prescriptions regarding activities which are deemed appropriate for males and females. Therefore boys and men have been encouraged to take part in sport rather than dance (Crawford, 1994).

The variation in the respondents' age of taking up their main dance form indicated that socialization into dance is possible not only in childhood and adolescence but also in adulthood. Nieminen (1998) found that the age of starting dance is strongly domain-specific, related to dance form, and that ballet dancers in particular socialize into dance already in childhood. The mean ages of dancers indicated that folk dancers and competitive ballroom dancers were involved in their activity well into adulthood while only a few non-professional dancers continued to participate in modern dance and even fewer in ballet as adults. For ballet and folk dancers their current dance form was most often the one they had first chosen, while modern and ballroom dancers had often initially taken up some other form of dance. The change from one dance form to another should be seen as a natural process in dance socialization since each dance form fulfills different needs among those engaged in them.

Parents' active sport participation has been found to be a positive factor in the intensity of children's sport participation (Yang et al., 1996). This finding also held true in Nieminen's (1998) study, especially for folk dancers of whom 80 percent had at least one other family member who was involved in dance. Ballroom dancers and art dancers perceived Social Contacts as less important than folk dancers. The ballroom dancing seemed to be situated between the highly social folk dance and the less social ballet and modern dance. However, it is notable that ballroom dancers were closer to art dancers than to folk dancers in this dimension, even though ballroom dance originated as a participant-centered social dance form.

Dance, as another cultural system of symbols and meanings, may also be used by children as a mechanism for attaining behavioral self-control, which in turn would lead to improved behavior and social skills (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1992). Lobo and Winsler 2006, using creative dance/movement on preschool children were found significantly greater positive gains over time in the children's social competence and both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems and it appears to be an excellent mechanism for enhancing social competence and improving behavior. The increased awareness of, and respect for others that comes from dancing in groups, is thought to help children learn about personal space and social space and distance, both of which are important dimensions of effective social interaction. And increased self-esteem might enable children to feel confident enough to make new friends or confront difficult social situations. (Lobo & Winsler, 2006).

Discussion

Studies have demonstrated that dance has physiological and psychological benefits. (Hopkins et al., 1990). Many dance forms provide a total body workout,

which tones the body and provides aerobic benefits, unlike working just the lower body when on the stationary bike or walking on the treadmill. (Alpert, 2011). In addition to physiological benefits, benefits of fun, creative expression, and socialization, dancing was also shown to elevate mood, increase sense of self-esteem and well-being, and increase social contact in healthy adolescent females (Blackman et al., 1988; Estivill, 1995). Consider the ballet dance as an example, some researchers have also provided evidence for the negative effects of dance involvement among adolescents. Sexual orientation and homophobia in dance education have begun to emerge as important areas for further research.

Dance (e.g., ballet, contemporary dance etc.) participation has universal appeal. It is obvious that strengthened multiculturalism and cultural globalization are also reflected in dance (Shapiro, 2008), and different dance cultures migrate from one country and continent to another, influencing each other (Rowell, 2000). In Europe, in USA and general, dance is one of the most practiced activities among children and adolescents. The popularity of dance has helped contribute to a growing interest in dance research over the years, (Siljamäki, Anttila, & Sääkslahti, 2010). Participants in the surveys conducted to date identified their reasons for participation in dance as being related to; socializing, performance, entertainment, recreation, spirituality, education, physical fitness, therapy, religion, culture, creativity, health and wellbeing, competition, aesthetics, research and self-expression, (Graham, 2002). They also indicated that a range of people were involved in these dance activities, men and women, children and adults, the aged, infirm, slim and large.

Three qualitatively different ways of understanding the nature and pedagogy of dances were identified: Dance is art. Dance is culture open to all people and simultaneously art and physical education. Dance is a part of well-being. The comparisons in personality traits according to the participation in sports, dances, indicate changes in personality traits. Athletes, for example, appear to be consistently more extraverted than non-athletes and lower in emotionality. Dancers, in contrast, have been found to be more introverted and higher in emotionality than non-dancers (Bakker, 1988). Dance provides an outlet for releasing emotional expression, allows for creativity, and the socialization aspect lowers stress, depression, and loneliness. It is evident that dance is not only a sustainable form of exercise but it also has a body–mind effect on anyone who dares engage in this form of physical activity (Alpert, 2011).

A number of more recent studies have focused on the influence of dance on personality profiles among adolescents. Findings presented in literature have shown that dance and aerobic dance can enhance girls' perception of physical activity. It applies especially to aerobic dance since it is not considered a com-

petitive physical activity and supports girls' perceptions of their own femininity, body image and physical self efficacy. Aerobic dance might enhance girls' physical self perception and therefore could be an activity through which positive psychological results could be attained (Daley & Buchanan, 1999).

On the negative side dancers – especially ballet dancers – are usually reported to have views of their bodies that are unrealistically strict, and which lead to psychological and physical problems such as anorexia nervosa (Abraham, 2006). Many researchers have studied the body esteem and self-esteem of populations of dancer. Bettle et al. (2001) found that adolescent ballet dancers view themselves as less desirable, less attractive, less confident, less lovable, and more sensitive than age-matched non-dancers. Tiggemann and Slater (2001) found that former ballet dancers reported higher self-surveillance and disordered eating than the same age group of non-dancers.

From the point of view of educational and other values, dance is acknowledged for other reasons than aerobic dance is. They are the aesthetic, cultural, social, emotional and artistic benefits of dance (Hanna, 1999; Purcell, 1994; Sanderson, 1996; Smith-Autard, 2002). The results confirmed the typical personality profile of dancers, dancers being introverted, relatively high on emotionality, strongly achievement motivated and exhibiting less favorable self attitudes.

The family provides social support for the sport role in many ways, such as creating a positive value climate for participation, giving encouragement, and acting as active role models, and giving opportunities to their children (Estrada et al., 1988). Although girls receive less encouragement than boys to engage in sports (Zagelidis, Martinidis, & Zagelidis, 2004), which is seen as a highly male-centered activity, in dance the situation may be just the opposite. The majority of ballet and modern dancers were women, but almost half of folk and ballroom dancers were men. Men are still afraid of the label of femininity in dance, and western societies do not encourage dancing as part of the male role (Alter et al., 1972). Before males are ready to overcome such stereotypical socializing influences, they need positive encouragement from many different sources, including family members, peers, and the mass media. This means that having a male participant in a dance group presents a real challenge to the teacher, and he or she should support and encourage the male's identity especially in the delicate initial stage of dance involvement.

Socialization into dance differs according to dance forms. Ballet dancers in particular socialize into dance already in childhood, in social dance, folk dance and competitive ballroom dance well into a mature age, and a person might become socialized into them in adulthood (Nieminen, 1998). The variation in the

respondents' age of taking up their main dance form indicated that socialization into dance is possible not only in childhood and adolescence but also in adulthood. This is particularly interesting because thus far most socialization studies have concentrated on young people.

For ballet and folk dancers their current dance form was most often the one they had first chosen, while modern and ballroom dancers had often initially taken up some other form of dance. A challenge for a dance teacher would be offering to dancers the opportunity to become acquainted with more than one dance form. In this way it might be possible to prevent at least some dancers from dropping out. Art dancers had more varied dancing activities while social dancers mainly practiced one dance form. It may be that art dancers feel that they need to know and be competent in many different styles and techniques in order to be successful dancers. For them it is also easier and more natural to practice different dance forms because most dance studios offer classes in ballet, jazz, modern dance, etc. while folk dance clubs or ballroom dance clubs provide dance training only in one dance form. Hence, it can be assumed that participants' socio- economical background might also have an influence on the type of dance involvement.

In conclusion, most studies investigating the relationship between dance practice and socialization revealed positive outcomes, in a general population, as well as specifically for adults or for adolescents. In general, future studies that can control for a number of important influencing factors might be able to provide a better understanding of the true nature of the social-psychological outcomes of dance practice for adolescents.

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Alexandros MALKOGEORGOS, MSc, is a member of the Special Teaching Staff of the Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Hellas). She received Masters in Human Performance and Health Sciences, from the Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. He is PhD candidate in faculty in sport science in Pitesti University Romania. She is interested in sports and health and specialized in dance activities and has worked as dance teacher in traditional Greek dances for many years. E-mail address: malko@phed.auth.gr

Eleni ZAGGELIDOU, is graduate from the Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Hellas). She received also diploma in teaching classical and modern dance from professional dance school (Hellenic Ministry of Culture and Tourism). She is interesting in dance and she working as dance teacher and as trainer in rhythmic gymnastics.

Evangelos MANOLOPOULOS, is lecturer at the department of Physical Education and Sport (Serres) Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Hellas). He received PhD in physical education from the Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Hellas). He is interesting in physical performance and team sports, he is specialized in soccer and he is trainer for many years in football teams.

George ZAGGELIDIS, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of the Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (Hellas), is specialized in judo-karate. He received a Ph.D in Pedagogy (Sport), from University of Bucharest (Department of History-philosophy), Romania. His research interests involve Sport Pedagogy, coaching and combat sports. He has published as author or co-author numerous papers. E-mail address: gzangel@phed.auth.gr
