



Prediction of Participation of Undergraduate University Students in a Music and Dance Master's Degree Program

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The aim of the study was the investigation of students' attitudes and intention towards their possible participation in a graduate Music and Dance Distance Learning Master's Degree Program. The sample consisted of 229 undergraduate University students, between the ages of 20 to 63 yrs. of age ($M=34.24$, $SD=10.70$). More specifically, 134 were students of the Hellenic Open University and 95 were students of the School of Physical Education and Sport Science, of the Democritus University of Thrace. The sample completed the version the "Planned Behavior Theory" questionnaire. Results revealed differences among students of both Universities, between experienced and less experienced ones, and also among age groups. On the contrary, no sex differences in any of the questionnaire's factors were indicated. In conclusion, the findings of this research allow a better understanding of the distance education process, which explains the attitudes and intention(s) of students' participation, and the factors that might influence their particular participation.

Key Words: distance learning, attitudes, intention, role identity, attitude strength

INTRODUCTION

The "Theory of Planned Behavior" is a theory of reasoned decision-making, which describes the type and the process of information during the decision-making process (Ajzen, 2011; Chatzisarantis, et al., 2009). It originated as an expansion of the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980), by its inability to interpret behavior in which people do not have full control over the particular behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Madden, 1986).

Major role in the theory of planned behavior plays the "intention" of the individual to perform a specific behavior. Intentions capture the motivational factors that influence behavior and reflect the relative strength of the individual's motivation to engage in this behavior (Hagger, et al., 2002). These intentions are mainly the indicators of how hard people are willing to try to perform this specific behavior. As a rule of thumb it can be concluded that the stronger the intention of an individual to engage in a behavior, the more likely to implement that behavior (Ajzen, 1991). It should be noted, however, that the

intention may be expressed in a behavior only when the event behavior is under the control of the individual, which does not occur all the time.

According to the theory, there are three independent determinants of intention that must be under consideration. The first is the "attitude" toward the behavior, and refers to the degree to which a person evaluates positively or negatively a behavior and general emotional and cognitive orientation toward that behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Chatzisarantis, et al., 2008; Chatzisarantis, et al., 2009). The second is "subjective norms", which refer to the degree of perceived social pressure-influence from significant others to perform or not perform this specific behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Chatzisarantis, et al., 2009; Harris & Hagger, 2007). And the third is "perceived behavioral control", which refers to the perceived ease or difficulty of execution of that behavior and is assumed to reflect previous experience where situational obstacles may play a crucial role (Ajzen, 1991; Chatzisarantis, et al., 2008, Chatzisarantis, et al., 2009). As Ajzen (1991) stated, the more positively disposed attitudes and subjective norms towards the behavior and the greater the perceived control are, the stronger the intention to perform this behavior.

Research indicated that two variables have been added to the main model of planned behavior theory to predict behavior (Theodorakis, 1994). These variables are "role identity" that represents a particular social object that represents a dimension of the self, and "attitude strength", a variable that expresses how positive, strong, and important are the attitudes towards a given behavior. Role identity serves as a link between the individual self and society (Callero, 1985). The concept is based on Burke's identity theory (1980) in which an individual's self-concept is organized into a hierarchy of role identities that correspond to one's position in the social structure. These might include being a parent, a spouse, a teacher or an employee (Charng, Piliavin, & Callero, 1988).

Additionally, in the case of attitudes toward a behavior which is any belief that a person has, links his/her behavior to a specific outcome or attributes such as the cost of performing this behavior. Since the characteristics or outcomes associated with the behavior already evaluated positively or negatively, people automatically form an attitude toward the behavior (Ajzen, 1991). As a result of that, people prefer and have positive attitudes towards behaviors that they believe that will have the desired results, and negative attitudes on behaviors that they believe that will have undesirable results. Attitudes are formed through the relationship between behavior of the certain outcome (behavioral beliefs) and on the subjective value of that outcome itself (Ajzen, 1991; Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2005).

To perform a specific behavior depends to a great or lesser extent on factors that deal with the intention and motivation of the individual. These factors can be derived from the individual himself or from the external environment. Examples of internal factors that influence behavior are skills, abilities, knowledge and adequate planning, while examples of external factors are time, money, opportunities and dependency behavior from cooperation with other people (Ajzen, 1991; Ajzen & Madden, 1986).

Investigators have already used the “Theory of Planned Behavior” in order to predict numerous behaviors: intention to participate in sports and physical activities (Godin & Shephard, 1986), intention of pregnant women to exercise after giving birth (Godin et al., 1989), participation in sports and physical activities (Theodorakis et al., 1995; Theodorakis, 1994). Also, for healthy and unhealthy behaviours (Povey et al., 2000; Armitage & Conne, 2001; Sheeran et al., 2001), alcohol use (Rise & Wilhelmson, 1998), safer sex (Sheeran & Orbell, 2000; Bebetsos et al., 2002; Bebetsos et al., 2003; Bebetsos et al., 2014), moral judgment (Bebetsos & Konstantoulas, 2006), special education (Bebetsos et al., 2013), and distant education (Goulimaris et al., 2008).

A form of behavior that can be studied with the use of the “Theory of Planned Behavior” is the participation of students in a music and dance distance education master program. The distinction between art and science, the connection of dancing with well-being, and the satisfaction of psychological needs (Goulimaris et al., 2014; Goulimaris, 2015) as well as the perception that dance is a pleasant, light activity, deprived it from a more scientific approach and study.

In Greece, in the University level-education there is no dance department, school or an educational program exclusively dealing with dance. The needs concerning this specific subject field are partially covered by the program offered by the Hellenic National School of Dance and by numerous private dance schools/clubs.

A significant advancement for the study of dance on a University level has been the creation of Schools of Physical Education and Sport Science which gives students the opportunity to specialize in Hellenic dances (Serbezis, 1995). It must be mentioned that undergraduate students who attend this line of studies are taught with the use of the “traditional method”, which takes place within the contents of a classroom. Even, the overall curriculum is oriented towards the acquisition of motor skills in combination with practice-courses (Goulimaris, 1998; Kardaris, 2002; Koutsoumbas, 1997; Lantzios, 2003; Lykesas, 2002; Serbezis, 1995; Tyrovolas, 1994; Zografou, 1989).

The only course in education concerning Hellenic dance and music, which is taught with the “distance education method”, is carried out by the Hellenic Open University and it is an option for the fourth year (senior) students attending “Hellenic Civilization” (Bebetsos & Goulimaris, 2014). The study of dance acquires new potentials with the adoption of innovative methods of education, like distance education and the use of new technologies (Papastergiou, Antoniou, & Apostolou, 2011). Nonetheless, the nature of dance i.e. the increasing demands for the acquisition of new kinetic dexterities and the need for a personal guidance of the trainee creates certain difficulties in relation to the distance education method (Goulimaris et al., 2008). As a result, the studies’ program is only based on the theoretical background of music and dance excluding any motor skill acquisition.

Research Aim

Therefore, the study was conducted in an attempt:

(i) To investigate whether the application of the Theory of Planned Behavior can predict future intention specifically on attendance of a Master's Program on Dance and Music.

(ii) To identify the variables that might differentiate the sample.

METHOD

Study Samples

The sample consisted of 229 undergraduate University students, between the ages of 20 to 63 yrs. of age ($M=34.24$, $SD=10.70$). More specifically, 134 were students of the Hellenic Open University who participated in the course of "Arts II: Overview of Music and Dance" and 95 were students of the School of Physical Education and Sport Science, of the Democritus University of Thrace, with Major in Dance Studies (Table 1).

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the sample.

<i>Sex</i>					
Male			Female		
68 (29.7%)			161 (70.3%)		
<i>Number of students per University</i>					
Open University			School of Phy. Education & Sport Science		
134 (58.5%)			95 (41.5%)		
<i>Age Groups</i>					
20-29		30-38		39->	
95 (32.8%)		65 (28.4%)		69 (38.9%)	
Open Un.	Phy. Ed.	OpenUn.	Phy. Ed.	OpenUn.	Phy. Ed.
N=0	N=95	N=65	N=0	N=69	N=0
<i>Previous Dance Experience</i>					
Yes			No		
119 (52%)			110 (48%)		
<i>Yrs. of Previous Dance Experience</i>					
1-2		3-5		6->	
30 (25.2%)		40 (33.6%)		49 (41.2%)	
<i>How did you gain your Previous Dance Experience</i>					
Dance Association		School		Dancing School	
72 (31.4%)		27 (11.8%)		20 (7.8%)	

Questionnaire

The sample completed the revised version the "Planned Behavior Theory" questionnaire (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Theodorakis, 1994; Bebetos & Konstantoulas, 2006). The questionnaire included:

a) Five questions on “Attitudes” with responses rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale, on five bipolar adjectives “For me to participate regularly next academic year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program, is...” 7=good to 1=bad, 1=foolish to 7=smart, 7=useful to 1=unuseful, 7=pleasant to 1=unpleasant, and 1=unhealthy to 7=healthy.

b) Three questions on “Intention” were responses to the first question rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1=very unlikely to 7=very likely “I intend to participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program”, while a 7-point Likert-type scale with endpoints labeled 1=definitely no to 7=definitely yes, was used for the other two questions “I will try to participate regularly next year in a Greek Music and Dance Master’s Program”.

c) Four questions on “Role Identity” with responses rated on 7-point Likert-type scales from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree “Generally I’m the type of a person who participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program” (Theodorakis, 1994), and,

d) Four questions on “Attitude Strength” were responses to the first question rated on a 7-point Likert-type scale from 1=not at all to 7=very much so “How interesting is it for you participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program?”, while a 7-point Likert-type scale with endpoints labeled 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree was used for the second question “With the academic knowledge that I have, I believe that I must participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program”, next was a 7-point Likert-type scale with endpoints labeled 1=not at all to 7=very much so that was used for the third question “For me to participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program is very important”, and finally a 7-point Likert-type scale with endpoints labeled 1=not at all to 7=very much so, was used for the fourth question “Do you find it interesting to participate regularly next year in a Music and Dance distant education Master’s Program?”.

The questionnaire also included questions related to sex, age, school, previous dance related experience, years of previous experience, and where it was acquired.

The method chosen to conduct the research was that of self-completed questionnaire. Researcher informed all subjects that their participation was completely voluntary and the individual responses would be held in strict confidence. The questionnaire was handed out during a class meeting with the presence of teacher/instructor.

FINDINGS

Reliability Analysis

The analysis showed that α Cronbach coefficient was .87 for “Attitudes”, .82 for “Intention”, .86 for “Role Identity”, and .95 for “Attitude Strength”. The results indicated that the questions in all four factors had a very satisfying internal cohesion.

One-way Anova analysis was conducted in order to investigate any possible differences between the two “Universities’ students”. The analysis revealed statistical significant differences in the following factors (Table 2):

1) For the factor of “Intention” $F_{(1,214)}=3.77, p<.05$. The 1st group (*students of Hellenic Open University*) had the highest score ($M=3.67, SD=1.78$), followed by the 2nd group (*students of School of Physical Education and Sport Science*) with the lowest score ($M=3.00, SD=1.71$).

2) For the factor of “Role Identity” $F_{(1,216)}=4.80, p<.01$. The 1st group (*students of Hellenic Open University*) had the highest score ($M=4.46, SD=1.80$), followed by the 2nd group (*students of School of Physical Education and Sport Science*) with the lowest score ($M=3.69, SD=1.67$).

3) For the factor of “Attitude Strength” $F_{(1,206)}=3.72, p<.05$. The 1st group (*students of Hellenic Open University*) had the highest score ($M=4.30, SD=1.60$), followed by the 2nd group (*students of School of Physical Education and Sport Science*) with the lowest score ($M=3.62, SD=1.72$).

Table 2. Students’ differences

	<i>Intention</i>		<i>Role Identity</i>		<i>Attitude Strength</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Open University	3.67	1.78	4.46	1.80	4.30	1.60
School of Phy. Ed.	3.00	1.71	3.69	1.67	3.62	1.72

One-way Anova analysis was conducted in order to investigate any possible differences between “age groups”. The analysis revealed statistical significant differences in the following factors (Table 3):

1) For the factor of “Intention” $F_{(1,214)}=6.53, p<.05$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Bonferonni test indicated the differences between the 1st group with the lowest score ($M=4.7, SD=1.87$), with both the 2nd ($M=5.04, SD=.97$), and the 3rd with the highest score ($M=5.54, SD=.71$).

2) For the factor of “Attitude Strength” $F_{(1,214)}=6.32, p<.05$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Bonferonni test indicated the differences between the 1st group with the lowest score ($M=3.7, SD=1.08$), with both the 2nd ($M=4.1, SD=.73$), and the 3rd with the highest score ($M=4.4, SD=.60$).

Table 3. Age Groups’ differences

	<i>Intention</i>		<i>Attitude Strength</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1 st age group	4.7	1.87	3.7	1.08
2 nd age group	5.04	.97	4.1	.73
3 rd age group	5.54	.71	4.4	.60

Univariate analyses were conducted in order to find any type of gender and/or previous dance experience related differences. The analyses revealed statistically significant differences only in the variable of previous dance experience (Table 4):

1) For the factor “Intention” ($F_{1,215}= 5.19$; $p < 0.05$). More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Bonferonni test indicated the differences between the experienced group ($M=3.51$, $SD=.19$), with the notexperienced one ($M=2.95$, $SD=.18$).

2) For the factor “Self -Identity” ($F_{1,217}= 13.52$; $p < 0.001$). More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Bonferonni test indicated the differences between the experienced group ($M=4.42$, $SD=.18$), with the not experienced one ($M=3.52$, $SD=.17$).

3) For the factor “Attitude Strength” ($F_{1,207}= 7.66$; $p < 0.01$). More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Bonferonni test indicated the differences between the experienced group ($M=4.20$, $SD=.18$), with the not experienced one ($M=3.51$, $SD=.17$).

Table 4. Previous Dance Experience differences

	<i>Intention</i>		<i>Self-Identity</i>		<i>Attitude Strength</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Experienced	3.51	.19	4.42	.18	4.20	.18
Not experienced	2.95	.18	3.52	.17	3.51	.17

No sex differences were indicted in any factor of the questionnaire.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was the investigation of intention of undergraduate University students in order to attend a Master’s Degree Music and Dance Program. To the investigator’s knowledge, few similar studies have been conducted on the specific topic either in physical education or other courses. Therefore, discussion and conclusions from the present study reflect a first attempt to interpret the relation of attitudes, intentions and behaviors of undergraduate students towards the participation in a Masters’ Degree Music and Dance Program.

To begin with, the results support the validity of planned behavior model in the education domain. That is, attitudes, self-identity and attitude contributed to intentions regarding the participation in a post graduate Music and Dance Program. More specifically, students who attended Open University have greater scores than the students of School of Physical Education, in all 3 factors. These scores underline the greater experience that Open University students had were the University curriculum indicates that the 4th year (senior) courses are all conducted with the use of distance education method. As past research illustrated students who are more familiar with this specific education procedure, express more positive attitudes towards their inclusion in a distance learning Master’s Program (Antoniou et al., 2009).

Results also revealed age differences. Open University students (groups 2 & 3), who were generally older in age (Table 1), illustrated greater scores in the factors of “intention” and “attitude strength” than their colleagues of the School of Physical Education (group 1). Older studies in the broader academic field of the tertiary education support that one of the basic factors which increase the general behavior of students in such institutes are the chances which are offered to them for personal, academic and professional development (Aldemir&Gulcan, 2004; Navarro et al., 2005).

Accordingly, the students with previous dance experience scored higher on the factors of “intention”, “self-identity” and “attitude strength” (Table 4). They consider their

participation in a distance education master program on music and dance as a part of their identity and they feel more secure about participating. This point of view agrees with previous results (Goulimaris et al., 2008) and confirms the notion that knowledge of the subject and increased dance ability due to previous experience, contribute to the students' capability and certainty about participating in corresponding educational programs. Similar results were found in other research concerning athletic behavior (Bebetsos et al., 2004), special education (Batsiou et al., 2006) and computer use (Bebetsos et al., 2007).

Finally, no difference due to sex existed among the examined factors. Regarding the relationship between dance and sexes, it is well known a general perception that dance is more of a "woman's thing", meaning that it suits the female idiosyncrasy and character more than the male. However, this idea is not supported by the present research, which is not a totally unexpected finding as a part of the research sample was composed of students of Physical Education specializing in dance. Previous research indicated similar results (Goulimaris et al., 2008; Filippou et al., 2014).

Implication of the study

The impact of the study proved the necessity of improving teaching methods within the University level education on teaching specifically music and dance. Very limited studies were conducted in Greece towards that direction, so educating researchers on students' attitudes and intentions might improve the overall education process.

Limitation and Recommended Future Studies

For future studies it is recommended the use of this specific theory and similar ones in order to investigate possible intentions of students' participation in any new Graduate Programs (Master and Ph.D.) of different Universities, even on combining these programs.

A possible limitation of the study might be that the sample consisted mainly by female students. Addressing the same study on students from different cultures might derive interesting results.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study and its results are considered as positive and encouraging towards the development of a distance learning Master's Degree Program, in Greece. A further investigation as well as the research for other aspects that might influence this attempt such as economic status, quality of studies, institute's quality, and instructor's quality, is considered to be necessary.

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Turkish Abstract**Lisans Öğrencilerinin Müzik ve Dans Yüksek Lisans Programına Katılma Durumları**

Bu çalışmanın amacı öğrencilerin Müzik ve Dans Yüksek Lisans Programına muhtemel katılmalarındaki tutum ve niyetlerini incelemektir. Örneklem 20-63 yaş arası 299 lisans öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. 134 öğrenci Hellenic Open University öğrencisiyken, 95 öğrenci ise School of Physical Education and Sport Science, of the Democritus University of Thrace öğrencisidir. Örneklem "Planlanmış Davranış Teorisi" anketini doldurmuşlardır. Sonuçlar deneyimli olmanın ve yaşın farklılıklara sebep olduğunu gösterirken, cinsiyetin bir etkisinin olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Sonuç olarak çalışmanın bulguları uzaktan eğitimin işleyişini anlamada ve katılımı belirleyen faktörleri ortaya çıkarmada ipuçları ortaya çıkarmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: uzaktan öğretim, tutum, niyet, rol kimliği, tutum gücü

French Abstract**Prédiction de Participation d'Étudiants Universitaires En licence dans une Musique et un Programme de Master de Danse**

Le but de l'étude était l'enquête des attitudes des étudiants et l'intention vers leur participation possible dans une Musique diplômée et un Programme de Master d'Enseignement à distance de Danse. L'échantillon a consisté en 229 étudiants Universitaires en licence, entre les âges de 20 à 63 ans. D'âge ($M=34.24$, $SD=10.70$). Plus spécifiquement, 134 étaient les étudiants de l'Université Ouverte hellénique et 95 étaient les étudiants de l'École de Culture physique et la Science Sportive, de l'Université Democritus de la Thrace. L'échantillon a complété (achevé) la version "la Théorie de Comportement Planifiée" le questionnaire. Les résultats ont révélé des différences parmi les étudiants des deux Universités, entre des expérimentés et moins expérimentés et aussi parmi des tranches d'âge. Au contraire, aucune différence sexuelle de n'importe lequel des facteurs du questionnaire n'a été indiquée. Pour conclure, les découvertes de cette recherche permettent une meilleure compréhension du processus de formation à distance, qui explique les attitudes et l'intention(s) de la participation des étudiants et les facteurs qui pourraient influencer la participation theirparticular.

Mots-clés: enseignement à distance, attitudes, intention, identité de rôle, force d'attitude

Arabic Abstract**التنبؤ بمشاركة الجامعية طلاب الجامعة في الموسيقى والرقص برنامج درجة الماجستير**

وكان الهدف من هذه الدراسة التحقيقي في مواقف الطلاب ونية تجاه إمكانية مشاركتهم في الموسيقى الدراسات العليا وبرنامج درجة الرقص التعلّم عن بعد الماجستير. تكونت عينة الدراسة من 229 طلاب الجامعيين، الذين تتراوح أعمارهم بين 20-63 عاما. من العمر ($M=34.24$, $SD=10.70$). وبشكل أكثر تحديدا، كان 134 طلاب وطالبات جامعة الهيلينية المفتوحة و 95 كانوا طلابا من كلية التربية البدنية وعلوم الرياضة من جامعة ديموقريطس في تراقيا. أكملت عينة من رواية "نظرية السلوك المخطط" الاستبيان. وكشفت النتائج وجود فروق بين طلاب الجامعات على حد سواء، وبين أصحاب الخبرة وأقل خبرة، وأيضا بين الفئات العمرية. على العكس من ذلك، تم الإشارة إلى أي فروق بين الجنسين في أي من العوامل الاستبيان. في الختام، فإن نتائج هذا البحث نتيج فهم أفضل لعملية التعليم عن بعد، وهو ما يفسر المواقف ونية (ق) من مشاركة الطلاب، والعوامل التي قد تؤثر على مشاركتهم معينة.

كلمات البحث: التعلّم عن بعد، والمواقف، والنية، هوية دور وقوة الموقف