



## **Participation Motives of Greek Expatriates in the Middle East in Greek Dancing Lessons**

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The aim of this research was to study the motives for participation of Greeks of the Diaspora in the Middle East in Greek dancing lessons in their countries of residence. In addition, it was examined whether demographic characteristics such as gender, age, country of birth (Greece or other) and educational level of the participants are factors that differentiate their motives. The sample of the research constituted of 91 Greeks (men and women) of the Diaspora in the Middle East who participate in organized Greek dancing classes. The Greek version (Konsoulas et al., 2017) of the Exercise Motivation Inventory-2 (EMI-2) questionnaire by Markland and Ingledew (1997), adapted to the needs of the research, was applied to collect the research data. The following statistical analysis were performed: a. Descriptive statistics b. t-test for independent sample c. Reliability analysis (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ), d. Variance analysis (One-Way ANOVA) and e. Post Hoc LSD Test. The findings and the evaluation of the study suggest that the participants are mainly intrinsically motivated by the 'Affiliation' and 'Relation to the Homeland' factors therefore institutions offering Greek dancing lessons abroad can adapt their approach to satisfy the participants' motives and subsequently attract and retain their participation.

Keywords: dance lessons, motivation, diaspora, Middle East, Greek dance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization, a key feature of the modern way of living, results in the increase in mobility of the human capital worldwide. There has been a wide discussion lately

**Citation:** Vasilaki, A., Goulimaris, D., Tsitskari, E., & Kosta, G. (2022). Participation motives of Greek expatriates in the middle east in Greek dancing lessons. *International Journal of Instruction*, 15(4), 763-776. <https://doi.org/10.29333/iji.2022.15441a>

regarding the phenomenon called brain drain (Docquier & Hillel, 2012) as knowledge becomes a key element of the global economy. Greece is no exception to this modern reality. After all, migration is not an unknown process for the Greeks. From the ancient colonies (apikies) to the 15<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> century communities (parikies), Greeks have been relocating outside their homeland and developing new communities in the Diaspora (Attanasi, 2012; Hasiotis et al., 2006).

Regarding the current situation, according to the data released by ELESTAT (Hellenic Statistical Authority) in 2020, from the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008 until the end of 2019, it is estimated that a total of 1,107,049 permanent residents in the Greek territory have ceased residing in Greece for a period of at least 12 months. The majority of these people are over 31 years old, highly educated and experienced professionals who chose to immigrate mainly for work reasons, as recorded by the ICAP in 2018. In particular, apart from the European countries, the constantly developing GCC countries (United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain) have been poles of attraction for the Greeks.

The Greek immigrants in the Middle East are connected by the “nostos” (longing) for their homeland. The need to connect and preserve their national identity leads to the formation of institutions such as Greek communities, expatriate associations as well as cultural institutions such as Greek language schools and Greek dancing groups where lessons of Greek dancing are held (Theodoropoulou, 2019). Occasional differences and restrictions occur, depending on the country, which has resulted in some groups being better organized than others. Nevertheless, Greek dancing groups exist, have existed in the past or are about to form in the near future in the Middle East. Understanding people’s motives for participation in these groups is crucial to attracting and retaining participants so that they can continue to exist. The recording and evaluation of the participants’ motives plays a significant role in gaining a greater depth of understanding.

### **Literature Review**

Motivation is defined as the force that initiates, directs and maintains human behaviour (Iso-Ahola, 1999). Various theories have been developed in international literature aiming to study motivation. In most cases motivation is classified as intrinsic and extrinsic. The basis of this classification lies on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Deci and Ryan (1985), according to which human motives are divided into internal (intrinsic), external (extrinsic) and absence of motivation (amotivation).

Intrinsic motivation stems from the positive experiences that people gain from participating in a leisure activity, such as enjoyment, knowledge, aesthetic pleasure, excitement and gratification. The main characteristic and significant difference between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is the absence of external rewards regarding intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In international literature, intrinsic motivation has been studied in various leisure activities and was proven to play an important role in the development of involvement, devotion and attachment of the participants in the activities. (Alexandris et al., 2007; Caldwell et al., 2010; Watts & Caldwell, 2008; Pelletier et al., 2007; Vallerand & Losier, 1994, 1999).

On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to participating in an activity in search of external rewards, such as social recognition, improvement of appearance, positive feedback from the social environment etc. (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Research has shown that external motives are present in many cases and especially when starting to participate in a leisure activity. However, they do not contribute significantly to the development of long-term involvement (Ryan & Deci, 2007). Gottfried (1985), also argued that intrinsic motivation is superior to extrinsic in terms of achieving goals, while a study conducted by Goudas, Biddle and Underwood (1995) similarly concluded that people who are internally motivated usually show greater progress and are more likely to achieve their goals.

Finally, according to the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), a person may lack both internal and external motivation, i.e. be in a state of lack of motivation (amotivation). An individual may reach this condition due to a lack of positive emotions from his/her participation, negative experiences and even low self-esteem regarding his/her abilities (Ryan & Deci, 2007). If no stimulus conditions are created, it is normal that the people who are in the state of amotivation will soon decide to terminate their participation in the activity (Douka et al., 2011).

According to Markland and Ingledew (1997), Self-Determination Theory does indeed govern human actions, however it is often not easy to achieve a clear distinction between internal and external motives. This conclusion emerged from the detailed description of the stages of extrinsic motivation and how close some of them are to intrinsic. In addition, it has been proven that Greek dancing is an activity in which the concept of internal and external motivation coexists (Filippou et al., 2010).

Relevant literature review indicated that different theoretical approaches have been used for the conceptualisation of motivation and therefore, a variety of measurement models have been proposed. The Self-Determination Theory has been prominent in the attempt to conceptualize all types of motivation for physical activity (Tsitskari et al., 2017).

Various instruments have been developed to measure participation motives in physical activities. Ryan, Frederick, Lepes, Rubio and Sheldon (1997) – extending Frederick and Ryan's (1993) suggestion - proposed that participants in physical activities are motivated by: enjoyment, competence, appearance, fitness, and social motives. Duda and Tappe (1989) categorized physical activity motives to: mastery, competition, affiliation, social recognition, health benefits, and physical fitness. Adding two more dimensions, enjoyment and recreation, Markland and Hardy (1993) formed the Exercise Motivations Inventory (EMI). Markland and Ingledew (1997) further refined the EMI examining the following 14 motivational factors: stress management, revitalization, enjoyment, challenge (labelled as psychological motives); social recognition, affiliation, competition (interpersonal motives); health pressures, ill health avoidance, positive health (health motives); weight management, appearance (body-related motives); strength, endurance and nimbleness (fitness motives). This 14 motivational-factor instrument (EMI-2), has been widely used to measure motives of participation in physical activities, (Ingledew & Sullivan, 2002; Ingledew & Markland, 2008; Ingledew et al., 2009; Tsitskari et al., 2017; Konsoulas et al., 2017).

One of the most popular physical activities is dancing. Be it professional or for leisure, dancing of all kinds attracts a large scale of participants. Dancers show different levels of receptiveness to coaching (de las Heras-Fernández et al., 2020). Greek dance courses and seminars are organized in various parts of Greece and abroad attracting both Greek and foreign participants. The results of these dancing lessons are beneficiary in many aspects (Masadis et al., 2019). The motives of participation in Greek dancing lessons and the function of the institutions that operate within this context have been extensively studied. Summarizing the results of various researchers makes it evident that the main motives for participation in Greek dancing lessons are affiliation, stress elimination, escape from everyday routine, dancing skills improvement, physical condition maintenance or even improvement, acquaintance with culture and preservation of the tradition (Filippou et al., 2010; McCleary et al., 2006; Filippou et al., 2009; Zanou et al., 2001; Papaioannidou et al., 2005; Lilou et al., 2010; Rokka et al., 2015; Filippou et al., 2016; Goulimaris et al., 2016; Filippou et al., 2020).

Possible differentiation in the motives for participation in Greek dancing activities, depending on the demographic characteristics of the participants, has also been a previous research subject. The results of relevant studies have shown partial differentiation in the participants' motives depending on their gender, age, years of participation in the activity, educational level, previous dance experience and place of residence (Filippou et al., 2010; Doulias et al., 2005; Filippou et al., 2010; Filippou et al., 2009; Goulimaris & Filippou, 2016).

In conclusion, the evaluation of motives for participation in exercise and leisure activities has been systematically studied in international literature, as they play a particularly important role in understanding and retaining participants. The motivating factors that mainly urge people to participate, seem to differ depending on the activity, the study environment and the sample of the population.

The aim of this research was to study the motives for participation of Greeks of the Diaspora in the Middle East in Greek dancing lessons in their countries of residence. In addition, it was examined whether demographic characteristics such as gender, age, country of birth (Greece or other) and educational level of the participants are factors that differentiate their motives.

## **METHOD**

### **Sample**

The sample of the research consisted of 91 Greeks of the Diaspora in the Middle East (n=91, 29 male and 62 female), aged 17 and above, who participate in organized Greek dancing classes at least once a week for two hours. More specifically, they are permanent residents in countries of the Arabian Peninsula (Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Jordan and Saudi Arabia); countries in West Africa (Egypt and Tunisia) as well as countries of the Eastern Mediterranean (Israel and Palestinian territories). Their educational level varies from secondary education graduates (12.1%) and college graduates (38.5%) to postgraduates with MSc degree (38.5%) and doctorate (11.0%). The majority of the participants are born in Greece (80.2%).

### **Instrument**

Data collection was made using the Exercise Motivation Inventory-2 (EMI-2) questionnaire by Markland and Ingledew (1997). The questionnaire has been checked and adapted to the Greek population (Konsoulas et al., 2017). The Greek version of the instrument consists of nine factors, each comprised of three to six items. The following six factors have been selected:

- *Health*, with 6 items that refer to health related results of the physical activity (e.g. to avoid getting ill),
- *Social Recognition*, with 5 items referring to the participants' need for recognition for their accomplishments in the physical activity (e.g. to compare my abilities with other people),
- *Weight Management/Appearance*, with 5 items that refer to appearance motives (e.g. to lose weight),
- *Stress Management/Enjoyment*, with 5 items that describe the need to exercise for psychological reasons (e.g. to help me manage my stress),
- *Affiliation*, with 4 items that refer to socialization motives (e.g. to spend time with friends) and
- *Challenge*, with 3 items dealing with motives in terms of pursuing someone's personal goals (e.g. to give me goals to work towards).

The researchers considered it important to include one more factor, that they named "*Relation to the Homeland*". This factor was formed after a discussion with 20 Greeks of the Diaspora that participate in Greek dancing lessons. Taking into consideration the views of experts in the field of recreation and dance, a pilot study was conducted that resulted to the formation of the "Relation to the Homeland" factor, which consists of the following four items: "because I want to stay in touch with my country's traditions (music, dance, history, cultural heritage)", "to continue my participation in Greek dancing lessons abroad", "to learn how to dance Greek dances like other members of my family/friends" and "to participate in events promoting Greece abroad".

All responses were given using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "not at all true for me" (=1) to "very true for me" (=5). The questionnaire also includes questions that examine the demographic characteristics of the participants, more specifically their gender, age, country of birth (Greece or other) and educational level.

### **Data Collection**

Preliminary contacts were made electronically with Greek institutions (embassies, Greek schools, Greek communities, cultural centres, groups of Greek expatriates on social media platforms as well as the education coordination office of the Greek state in the Middle East) in all the countries of the Middle East in order to confirm the existence of groups offering Greek dancing lessons in the area and thus ascertain the occurrence of participants in the region who would potentially participate in the research. The

institutions that confirmed the occurrence of such groups in their area provided the contact details of the persons in charge of the groups. After contacting them, it was found that there is a sufficient number of people who participate in Greek dance learning activities and who could participate in the research.

The questionnaire was then sent electronically to the leaders of the Greek dancing groups in the Middle East, who then distributed it electronically to the participants in the Greek dancing lessons. General instructions for completion were given emphasizing that the personal motives of each participant were requested in order to avoid misinterpretations.

It was also clarified that the answers were given anonymously, without them being right or wrong and that they would be used only for the purpose of the research. While collecting the data, all the anonymity procedures were observed regarding the participants. The researchers did not save the IP addresses of the participants. Finally, the participants were given the opportunity to quit the survey at any time they chose to.

## FINDINGS

After the final configuration of the scale, seven factors emerged. The results in Table 1 show that the participants appeared to be highly motivated regarding the *Affiliation* and *Relation to the Homeland* factors in contrast to the *Social Recognition* and *Weight Management/Appearance* factors, which showed low means.

Table 1  
Scale factor's Means (M) and Standard Deviations (S.D.)

FACTORS	M	S.D.
Health	2.65	.90
Social Recognition	1.57	.83
Weight Management/Appearance	1.87	.98
Stress Management/Enjoyment	3.77	.94
Affiliation	4.16	.65
Challenge	2.79	1.13
Relation to the Homeland	3.88	.87

## Reliability Analysis

Reliability Analysis was performed in order to determine the coherence and reliability of the questions that compose the seven factors of the scale. The reliability analysis was based on the calculation of Cronbach's alpha (Table 2). The results showed that the factors have sufficient cohesion as all Cronbach's alpha values are  $> .60$ . It is, therefore, safe to conclude that all variables contribute positively to the improvement of the reliability of the respective factors.

Table 2  
Scale factor's reliability analysis

Factors	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Health	.85
Social Recognition	.91
Weight Management/Appearance	.93
Stress Management/Enjoyment	.84
Affiliation	.73
Challenge	.78
Relation to the Homeland	.65

#### Participants' Gender as a Motives Differentiating Factor

To examine if there are statistically significant differences in any of the scale's factors related to the participants' gender, T-tests for independent samples were performed for each factor. The results showed that gender is not a differentiating factor for any of the motivational factors (Table 3).

Table 3  
Differences in participants' motives depending on their gender

Factors	t	p
Health	t(87)= 1.58	.12
Social recognition	t(89)= .98	.33
Weight Management/Appearance	t(86)= .22	.82
Stress Management/Enjoyment	t(89)= .93	.35
Affiliation	t(88)= .26	.80
Challenge	t(89)= .85	.40
Relation to the homeland	t(61)= .90	.37

\*:  $p < .05$

#### Participants' Country of Birth as a Motives Differentiating Factor

To examine if there are statistically significant differences in any of the scale's factors related to the participants' country of birth, T - tests for independent samples were performed for each factor. The results show that the participants' country of birth differentiates their motives regarding the *Social recognition* factor (Table 4). Participants born outside Greece showed a higher mean in this factor (Mean= 2.00, SD = 1.3) compared to those born in Greece (Mean= 1.47, SD = .65).

Table 4  
Differences in participants' motives depending on their country of birth

Factors	T	p
Health	t(87)= .85	.40
Social Recognition	t(89)= 2.5	.01*
Weight Management/Appearance	t(86)= .12	.90
Stress Management/Enjoyment	t(89)= .68	.50
Affiliation	t(88)= .82	.41
Challenge	t(89)= 1.03	.30
Relation to the homeland	t(61)= .25	.80

\*:  $p < .05$

### Participants' Age as a Factor of Motivation Differentiation

Variance analysis (One - Way ANOVA) was performed to examine if there are statistically significant differences in any of the scale's factors related to the participants' age. The results of the analysis showed statistically significant differences regarding the factors *Challenge* and *Social Recognition* (Table 5).

Table 5  
Differences in participants' motives depending on their age

Factors	F	P
Health	F <sub>(3,88)</sub> =.40	.75
Social Recognition	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =10.40	.00*
Weight Management/Appearance	F <sub>(3,87)</sub> =.86	.47
Stress Management/Enjoyment	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =.25	.86
Affiliation	F <sub>(3,89)</sub> =1.40	.25
Challenge	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =3.25	.03*
Relation to the homeland	F <sub>(3,62)</sub> =2.13	.11

\*:p< .05

Post Hoc LSD Test was performed to determine in which categories of the participants' age statistically significant differences are found regarding the factors *Social Recognition* and *Challenge*. For each of these two factors the following were found:

- "Social recognition": Statistically significant differences were found between the age group 17-30 and all other age groups. The analysis showed that the age group 17-30 presented a higher mean in this factor (M=2.70, S.D=1.37) compared to the other age groups.
- "Challenge": Statistically significant differences were found between the age group 17-30 and all other age groups also in this factor. The analysis showed that the age group 17-30 presented a higher mean in this factor (M=3.70, SD = 1.19) compared to the other groups.

### Participants' educational level as a factor of motivation differentiation

Variance analysis (One - Way ANOVA) was performed to examine if there are statistically significant differences in any of the scale's factors related to the participants' educational level. The results of the analysis showed statistically significant differences regarding the factors *Health* and *Challenge* (Table 6).

Table 6  
Differences in participants' motives depending on their educational level

Factors	F	P
Health	F <sub>(3,88)</sub> =3.23	.03*
Social Recognition	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =2.38	.07
Weight Management/Appearance	F <sub>(3,87)</sub> =1.07	.37
Stress Management/Enjoyment	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =.96	.41
Affiliation	F <sub>(3,89)</sub> =1.17	.33
Challenge	F <sub>(3,90)</sub> =4.78	.00*
Relation to the homeland	F <sub>(3,62)</sub> =.69	.56

\*:p< .05

Post Hoc LSD Test was performed to determine in which categories of the participants' educational level statistically significant differences are found regarding the factors *Health* and *Challenge*. More specifically, for each of these two factors the following emerged:

- "Health": Statistically significant differences were found between the categories "University/Technical Institution" and two of the other categories ("MSc" and "Doctorate"). The analysis showed that the category "University/Technical Institution" presented a higher mean in the factor *Health* than the other two categories (Mean = 2.98, SD = .91).
- "Challenge": Statistically significant differences were found between the category "High School" and all other categories, with this category showing a higher mean (M=3.70, S.D.=.99) compared to the other categories in this factor. Finally, a statistically significant difference was found between the categories "University/Technical Institution" and "Doctorate", with the category "University/Technical Institution" showing a higher mean (M=2.89, S.D.=1.10) compared to the "Doctorate" category, regarding the *Challenge* factor.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the research partially confirm the basic research hypothesis, that the level of participation motives in Greek dancing activities for the Greeks of the Diaspora in the Middle East is high. The fact that the highest means occurred in factors corresponding to intrinsic motives leads to the conclusion that participants in general do not expect external rewards from their involvement in Greek dancing lessons in the Middle East. Previous research has also concluded that participants in Greek dancing lessons are intrinsically motivated and interested in learning (Filippou et al., 2010, 2019). After all, by nature, Greek dancing, even in its most artistic form, remains a physical activity of inner motivation as enjoyment is found to be the dominant motive for participation (Filippou et al., 2016).

Regarding the gender of the participants, the present study did not show that it is a statistically significant factor of differentiation in the participants' motives. This does not correspond with previous relevant research (Filippou et al., 2009; Doulias et al., 2005; Filippou et al., 2010), but is considered a possible result of future research, given that there is greater equality in the role of men and women in modern societies. After all, the Greeks of the Diaspora both in earlier historical periods and today, due to their experiences in different parts of the world, have been a vehicle of modernization for Greek society (Kaloudis, 2006). In addition, the Greeks of the Diaspora who participated in the present study are people of higher education, as shown by their educational level, which is likely to affect their attitudes and perceptions in general. Finally, human views and attitudes regarding the issue of participation gradually change over time (Tsitskari et al., 2017). The lack of differentiation in motives regarding the gender of the participants allows us to conclude that dancing is an activity that is addressed equally by all genders (Goulimaris, et al., 2016).

The age of the participants was also examined as a possible participation motives' differentiating factor. Statistically significant differences were found in the *Social Recognition* and *Challenge* factors with younger ages showing higher means in both factors compared to older participants. The same conclusion, regarding the age of the participants, emerged from research conducted by Filippou, Goulimaris, Mihaltsi and Genti (2010), who found that the participants in Greek dancing seminars of a younger age, perceive their participation as a challenge and as an opportunity to gain new experiences to a greater extent than older participants. Previous research on students of young age (elementary school) has also shown that Greek dancing lessons is the most effective means to achieve social skills learning (Masadis et al., 2019). Younger dancers were also found to present a higher mean in receptiveness to coaching in the study conducted by de las Heras-Fernández, Coll, & Espada (2020).

Similar results were found in terms of the educational level of the participants, which was examined as a potential participation motives' differentiating factor and was found to partially affect them, specifically regarding the factors: *Health* and *Challenge*. Regarding the *Challenge* factor, participants with lower educational level showed higher means. These results were examined in combination with the corresponding results of the 'age' factor, concluding that people of a younger age and lower educational level are more motivated by external motives such as the validation of their abilities resulting from the comparison with the other participants. Conversely, participants of a higher educational level and of an older age view their participation in Greek dancing lessons less competitively and more as a leisure activity.

Finally, in the present study, the country of birth of the participants was examined and it was found that it was a partially differentiating factor regarding their motives for participation. Specifically, participants who were not born in Greece are more motivated by the *Social Recognition* factor than those who were born in Greece. Participants born outside Greece may partake in Greek dancing classes aiming to compare their abilities with other participants to a greater extent than participants born in Greece, who may not feel the need for this comparison and, consequently, for validation of their abilities.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Knowledge of participation motives is important for practical reasons mainly related to better planning and meeting the needs of the participants (Ingledew & Markland, 2008; Tsitskari et al., 2017). After all, Greek dancing is an activity that has the potential to turn extrinsic motivation to intrinsic (Rokka et al., 2015) and thus establish long-term involvement. The results of this research have practical applications on the planning of Greek dancing lessons. Knowledge of the motivational factors for participation and planning accordingly can lead to meeting the participants' needs. Focusing on the participants' needs will enhance and retain their interest and long-term participation.

More specifically, the conclusions of the research provide valuable information for determining suggestions on how to best design and implement Greek dancing lessons, in which Greeks of the Diaspora in the Middle East participate. Courses and institutions should focus more on knowledge and less on competition. Comparison and competition

can have short-term effects in motivating mainly younger participants of lower educational level. However, this research has shown that the majority of participants are of an older age and have a higher education background. In addition, investing in extrinsic motives degrades the development of intrinsic ones and can lead participants to the stage of lack of motivation (amotivation), according to the Self-Determination Theory. Conversely, orienting the courses to satisfy more internal forms of motivation such as affiliation and maintaining the relation to the homeland, which are the dominant motivating factors of the participants, will lead not only to the consolidation of their participation but possibly to the attraction of more participants, such as friends who might want to join as well. Greek dance is by nature a social activity and gives people the opportunity to create or strengthen their social relations by learning or improving their dancing skills.

Dance teachers, and in general the institutions that organize Greek dancing lessons, should often research and evaluate the internal and external motivations of the participants as it appears that the views and the differentiation of the motivating factors change over time. Stakeholders should understand the motivations of the participants and try to enhance both their extrinsic and intrinsic motives of participation by reinforcing the sense of success and the joy of participation respectively (Tsitskari et al., 2017). In particular, regarding the Middle East, where special conditions prevail in each country and due to these, challenges arise regarding the formation and maintenance of dance groups, it becomes particularly important to strengthen the willingness of individuals to overcome obstacles in order to participate in Greek dancing activities. A major factor in achieving this goal is to understand the motives that inspire individuals to participate and to use this data to provide for participants' needs to be met, so that their long-term involvement will be more likely to be maintained.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The authors would like to thank Carolyn Ketsiou MEd LLB for her diligent proofreading of the manuscript.

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