



Social

CONSTRAINTS AND LOYALTY OF THE PARTICIPANTS IN RECREATIONAL DANCING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

The aim of this work was to examine the factorial validity of the «leisure constraints scale» by Alexandris and Carroll (1997a) and the investigation of the relationship between the constraining factors of attendance and the participants' loyalty to leisure dancing activities. The sample of the study was 318 adults who participated in traditional dancing classes organized by cultural associations. The «leisure constraint scale» (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a) and a conversion of the «loyalty» subscale was used for the investigation of the constraining factors and loyalty as suggested by Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996). The data supported the factor structure and the internal consistency of the leisure constraints scale. It was also found that there is a reverse relation of loyalty with five factors of the leisure constraints scale. Generally, it appears that the participants experience the constraining factors of attendance to dancing activities with low intensity.

Keywords: Dancing Activities; Constraints; Loyalty.

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1. Introduction

One of the recreational activities, which meet with significant success in Greece, is traditional dancing. Attendance to dancing activities pertains to the individual's need for entertainment, social association, physical fitness, artistic work, and also to his cultural substratum. The interested parties attend the specific activity through hundreds of cultural associations, municipal organizations, "Centres for Open Protection of the Elderly" and private dancing academies. The number of adults who participate in dancing activities has been constantly increasing in recent years. Thus, adults with different dancing experience, educational level and age environ the dancing activities (Filippou, Goulimaris, Baxevanos & Genti, 2010) and improve their quality of life (Zisi, Gianni, Bougiesi, Pollatou & Mihalopoulou, 2014). Moreover, many foreign subjects

from the mid 70s' until today attend dance-learning seminars in Greece, which they combine with their holidays (Filippou, Goulimaris, Mihaltsi & Genti, 2010).

The large participation of individuals increases significantly the work market for those directly involved with dancing and also constitutes a significant «fountain» of customers which shall have to be invested with extra care and attention by the boards of the organizations developing relevant activities.

Despite the increasing number of attendance, the academic studies regarding the reasons of attendance or inhibition in dancing activities are small. The investigation of the reasons that discourage adults from participating in dancing activities is necessary so as to maximize and attract a larger number of adults. The studies that have been conducted and the academic framework that has been developed concerning the factors that suspend attendance to recreational activities constitute useful tools for studying the reasons that prevent adults to participate in dancing activities. In recent years a large number of studies have been conducted with the aim of investigating the reasons that suspend or limit the individuals' participation in recreational activities or physical activities (Alexandris, Kouthouris, Funk & Chatzianni, 2008; Andronikidis, Vassiliadis, Priporas & Kamenidou, 2007; Crawford & Godbey, 1987; Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991; Godbey, 1985; Hawkins, Peng, Hsieh & Eklund, 1999; Hinch & Jackson, 2000; Palen et al., 2010; Parker, 2007; Pinto, Marcus & Clark, 1996; Shinew, Floyd & Parry, 2004; Shogan, 2002; Stodolska & Shinew, 2010; White, 2008).

A particular field of studies on recreation concerns the constraints of attendance (Jackson, 1991; Samdahl & Jekubovich, 1997). Several researchers have defined the concept of constraining factors of attendance to recreation. Their common perception is that they constitute the factors that individuals perceive as those which suspend, limit or prevent their attendance to recreational activities (Alexandris & Carroll, 1999; Alexandris et al. 2008; Hudson, Hinch, Walker & Simpson, 2010; Jackson, 1988; 1991; 1991a; 1993; 2000; Jackson & Herderson, 1995; Kouthouris, Kontogianni & Alexandris, 2008; Theodorakis, Alexandris, Panopoulou & Vlachopoulos, 2008). The constant and increasing interest in recreational constraints led to the creation of models that construe the way that they influence attendance in recreational activities. A classic classification model of recreational constraints, widely accepted by the researchers, was proposed by Crawford and Godbey (1987) and pertains to the preferences and the individuals' attendance. The model distinguishes among three categories of constraints. The intrapersonal constraints «include psychological states and attributes of the individual which interact with the preferences of recreation. For instance stress, religiosity, low self-esteem, depression, perceived self-skill, prior socialization into leisure activities and the suitability of recreational activities as perceived by the individual». The interpersonal factors «are a result of interpersonal interactions or of the relation between the personal characteristics». The difficulties in finding fellow practitioners or company so as to attend the recreational activities are examples of this. The structural constraining factors "are factors that intervene between leisure preference and participation", for instance, the financial resources, the opportunities for participation in activities, the climate, the lack of facilities, etc.

In 1991 Crawford, Jackson and Godbey developed the above model suggesting that the individual experiences hierarchically the constraints during the decision procedure as far as attendance to recreational activities is concerned. The intrapersonal constraints constitute the most powerful

obstructions to the participation in activities. The interpersonal factors follow while the structural constraints possess the least power of influence. Subsequent studies have confirmed the rank of significance of the constraints (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a; 1997b; Raymore, Godbey, Crawford & Von Eye, 1993). Jackson, Crawford and Godbey (1993), developing further the model, elaborated on an alternative approach of the constraints which holds that attendance to recreational activities depends on the negotiation of the constraints and not their lack. Negotiation may achieve a modified attendance of the individual to activities and not lead him to their rejection.

The researchers' interest has turned to the culture's influence on leisure constraints examining the validity of the constraints model in populations with different culture (Dong & Chick, 2012). Some researchers presume that culture constitutes a factor that influences the theories and the study of the human behavior (Hudson et al. 2010; Matsumoto & Yoo, 2006). Some studies support that culture influences the recreational constraints (Chick, Hsu, Yeh, 2015, Hudson et al. 2010; Walker, Jackson & Deng, 2007; 2008) while Chick and Dong (2003) state that new constraints categories should be added to the hierarchical model considering that culture is a category of constraints which amplifies the model's reliability when applied to different societies.

There is a lack of studies in Greece as far as the constraints of attendance to culture and dancing activities is concerned. From the few relevant studies Theodorakis, Alexandris, Panopoulou and Vlahopoulos (2008) found that constraints play a significant part to the prediction of the involvement level to dancing activities. The studies that exist focus mainly on the investigation of the constraints in the field of physical activity and sports (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a; Alexandris & Carroll, 1999; Alexandris, Grouios, Tsorbatsoudis & Bliatsou, 2001; Damianidis, Kouthouris & Alexandris 2007; Kouthouris, Alexandris & Goltsios, 2005; Kouthouris et al., 2008; Kouthouris, Tzouvista & Alexandris, 2006; Masmanidis, Gargalianos & Kosta, 2009).

Some researchers examined the constraints in relation to the individuals' demographic characteristics (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997b; Avourdiadou, Alexandris & Kouthouris, 2007; Kouthouris et al., 2005) while some others in relation to their motivation (Alexandris, Kouthouris & Girgolas, 2007; Alexandris, Tsorbatsoudis & Grouios, 2002; Carroll & Alexandris, 1997). Furthermore, in recent years studies are conducted about the negotiation of the constraints (Alexandris et al. 2007; Kouthouris, Alexandris & Boudolou, 2005).

For the managers and the managerial staff the knowledge of the behavioral intentions of the clients is important because it is the closest correlating factor with choice behaviour (Warshaw, 1980). According to Zethaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996), the behavioral intentions are «indicators that signal whether customers will remain with or defect from company». The researchers themselves in order to better measure the notion divided it in favorable and unfavorable behavioral intentions. The favorable behavioral intention means that the clients have close ties with the company or the service.

In the multidimensional model of Zeithaml et al. (1996) loyalty is one of the dimensions of the favorable behavioral intentions. Ostrowski, O' Brien and Gordon (1993), specify it as the product or the service that the customer chooses among other products or services. When we refer to the services, customer loyalty is defined as the observed behavior (Bloemer, Ruyter & Wetzels, 1999; Liljander & Strandvik, 1995).

In the field of recreation the creation of customer loyalty is a significant aim that brings many benefits to the organizations. Besides, the preservation of the existing customers costs less than attracting new ones (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2006). Loyalty is expressed in several ways like when the customer keeps «buying» by the organization, increases his attendance in the future or shows his preference to it (Zeithaml et al, 1996).

There are a large number of studies about the relation of loyalty, interference and quality of the services in many products and services. In the field of recreation and sports the notion of loyalty constituted a subject of research for many researchers (Alexandris et al., 2008; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Filo, Funk & Alexandris, 2008; Funk & James, 2006; Gladden & Funk, 2001; Kolbe & James, 2002; Mahony, Madrigal & Howard, 2000; Papadopoulos, Theodorakis & Alexandris, 2004; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007). Within the skiing framework, Alexandris et al. (2008), examine the relation among the leisure constraints, skiing involvement and skiing loyalty. They found that skiing loyalty is influenced by the two dimensions of interference (centrality & attractions) and by the constraints. More specifically the intrapersonal constraints influence loyalty negatively.

Kontogianni, Kouthouris, Barlas, and Voutselas (2011), examining the relationship between the involvement and loyalty of recreational swimmers in Greece with a sample of 349 people, showed that only the two dimensions of involvement, attraction and centrality predicted loyalty as attitude of the participant.

The aim of the study was twofold. Firstly, to examine the factorial validity of the «leisure constraints scale» by Alexandris and Carroll (1997a), in the field of traditional dancing, and secondly, the investigation of the relationship between the constraining factors of attendance and the participants' loyalty to corresponding traditional leisure dancing activities.

Two inquiring hypothesis were examined. a) The confirmative factorial analysis supports the model of the seven constraints and the internal consistency of all subscales is satisfactory. b) There is a statistically negative significant relation among the seven dimensions of the constraints of attendance to recreational activities (Alexandris & Carrol, 1997a) and to loyalty.

2. Methods

Participants

In the study answered 318 adults who participated in traditional dancing classes organized by the cultural associations. The associations were non-profit organizations. The choice of the sample was made using the method of random sampling. From the sample 120 (37, 7%) were men and 198 (62, 3%) women. The average age was 37, 6 years (S.D. = 12, 2) and their age ranged between 18- 69 years.

Measurement Instruments

The «leisure constraints scale» by Alexandris and Carroll (1997a) was used for the evaluation of the constraints of attendance. The instrument reliability and validity has been tested successfully in a variety of leisure studies in Greece and internationally (Alexandris et al., 2007; Alexandris & Stodolska, 2004; Damianidis, Kouthouris & Alexandris, 2007).

Permission was given to use the scale. The questionnaire included a total of seven factors having three questions each. The factor «Lack of Time» e.g. ‘‘I do not have any time due to work obligations’’. The factor «Individual / Psychological» e.g. ‘‘Dancing tires me’’. The factor «Lack of Knowledge» e.g. ‘‘I do not have anybody to teach me the activities of the traditional dancing that I want’’. The factor «Facilities» e.g. ‘‘the facilities where we dance are poor’’. The factor «Access / Financial» e.g. ‘‘I do not own a means of transport’’. The factor «Lack of Partners» e.g. ‘‘My friends are not interested in dancing’’. Finally, the factor «Lack of Interest» e.g. ‘‘Traditional dancing is not one of my priorities’’. The answers were given in a seven degree Likert scale ranging from «not significant» (1) to «very significant» (7). A questionnaire by Zeithaml et al. (1996), was used to evaluate the notion of customer loyalty. The instrument reliability and validity has been tested successfully in a variety of leisure studies in Greece (Papadopoulos, Theodorakis & Alexandris, 2004). This instrument was used after conversion and differentiation e.g. « Is there any possibility to make positive comments to other individuals for their attendance to traditional dancing classes». The answers were given in a seven degree Likert scale from «exceptionally impossible» (1) to «exceptionally possible» (7).

Procedure

The participation in the study was voluntary and the filling in of the questionnaire was anonymous. Firstly, the participants were informed about the aim of the study and the way of filling in the questionnaire, that there are not right or wrong answers and that their answers would be used exclusively for the study’s needs. They answered in the questionnaire at the place of the associations at the beginning of the dancing activity.

3. Results

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The factorial validity of the Leisure Constraints Scale (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a) was examined with Confirmatory Factor Analysis using the EQS (Bentler, 1995). Skewness values ranged from -.21 to 1.93 and item kurtosis ranged from -1.27 to 2.55 for the Leisure Constraints items and Mardia’s coefficient of multivariate kurtosis was 178.57. The maximum likelihood method of estimation was employed. Results indicated an acceptable fit of the model to the data: $\chi^2 = 381.79$, $df = 168$, $p < .001$, NNFI = .931, CFI = .945, SRMR = .059, RMSEA = .063. CFA item statistics for the seven dimensions of the Leisure Constraints Scale are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Confirmatory factor analysis results for the leisure constraints scale

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis	Factor Loadings	Error Term	Item Variance Explained (%)
Lack of Time 1	-.21	-1.27	.81	.58	.66
Lack of Time 2	-.07	-1.24	.90	.43	.81
Lack of Time 3	.20	-.99	.64	.76	.41
Psychological 1	1.44	.77	.79	.60	.63
Psychological 2	1.93	2.55	.86	.50	.74
Psychological 3	1.32	.81	.80	.59	.64
Lack of Knowledge 1	1.20	-.34	.63	.77	.40
Lack of Knowledge 2	1.06	-.38	.87	.49	.75
Lack of Knowledge 3	1.03	-.32	.90	.43	.81

Facilities 1	.67	-.88	.77	.63	.60
Facilities 2	.81	-.38	.70	.70	.50
Facilities 3	.68	-.70	.84	.53	.71
Access / Financial 1	1.01	-.41	.72	.69	.52
Access / Financial 2	.83	-.81	.79	.60	.63
Access / Financial 3	.68	-.54	.78	.62	.61
Lack of Parnters 1	1.03	-.26	.91	.40	.83
Lack of Partners 2	.90	-.59	.96	.26	.92
Lack of Partners 3	1.07	-.23	.81	.58	.66
Lack of Interest 1	.66	-1.17	.78	.61	.61
Lack of Interest 2	.52	-1.30	.89	.44	.80
Lack of Interest 3	.75	-.97	.80	.58	.65

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability

Cronbach’s alpha values were satisfactory for all seven leisure constraints dimensions: Time .82, Individual / Psychological .85, Lack of Knowledge .83, Facilities .81, Accessibility / Financial .80, Lack of Partners .92, Lack of Interest .86. Internal consistency reliability was also satisfactory for the Loyalty scale .79. Respondents rated Lack of Time as the main constraint for expressing loyalty to the programs (M = 3.91). On the other hand, the Individual / Psychological constraint received the lowest means score (M = 2.14). The loyalty factor presents a very high average (M = 6.07). Finally, bivariate correlations among the seven dimensions of leisure constraints and loyalty indicated that the dimensions of Lack of Time, Lack of Knowledge, Facilities, Lack of Partners and Lack of Interest were statistically negatively correlated with participants’ loyalty to the programs.

The means, standard deviations, alpha values, and Pearson correlation coefficients for the variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for the Loyalty and Leisure Constraints Dimensions

	α	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Loyalty	.79	6.07	.93							
Lack of Time	.82	3.91	1.72	-.20**						
Individual / Psychological	.85	2.14	1.55	-.10	.13**					
Lack of Knowledge	.83	2.50	1.72	-.11*	.18**	.44**				
Facilities	.81	2.92	1.68	-.16**	.28**	.38**	.57**			
Access / Financial	.80	2.66	1.76	-.02	.25**	.43**	.49**	.45**		
Lack of Partners	.92	2.64	1.89	-.15**	.21**	.38**	.40**	.38**	.55**	
Lack of Intererst	.86	3.03	2.01	-.11*	.28**	.31**	.42**	.40**	.51**	.44**

**p<.001, *p<.05

4. Discussions

The present study examined the factorial validity of the «leisure constraints scale» by Alexandris and Carroll (1997a), in the field of traditional dancing via the confirmatory factor analysis. The

specific measurement model has been widely used in bibliography (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a; Alexandris & Carroll, 1997b; Alexandris & Stodolska, 2004; Carroll & Alexandris, 1997; Kouthouris, 2005; Kouthouris, Alexandris, Giovani & Xatzigianni, 2005; McCarville & Smale, 1993; Theodorakis et al. 2008) however more evidence confirming its factorial structure is required.

The results confirm the first hypothesis of the study. The confirmatory factor analysis supported the factorial structure of the seven constraints model (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a): Lack of Time, Individual / Psychological, Lack of Knowledge, Facilities, Access / Financial, Lack of Partners, Lack of Interest. Moreover, the study showed also that the indicators of internal consistency of all the factors supported the reliability of the scale.

The most significant obstruction that negatively influences attendance to traditional dancing activities was the lack of time. In relative studies on a series of different activities it was found that the lack of time constitutes the most significant constraining factor of attendance (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a; Alexandris & Carroll, 1997b; Kouthouris et al. 2005; Theodorakis et al., 2008). The lack of time, irrespective of the type of recreational activity, is linked to the lifestyle of the modern individual, the work and family duties. Thus, the associations' managements which offer a corresponding type of dancing activities should take into account the specific reason which increases the difficulty in attending to activities. The further investigation of the reasons leading their clients to experiencing time problems may lead them to offering programs with dancing activities which serve better their minimum free time e.g. weekends.

The less significant obstruction which negatively influences their attendance in traditional dancing activities was the individual / psychological factor. It seems that the participants experience mildly the obstructions that are related to the lack of abilities, health problems, self-esteem, physical fitness etc. This factor belongs to the intrapersonal factors category that influences the individuals' preferences and translates to the most powerful attendance obstructions (Crawford, Jackson & Godbey, 1991). This result opposes the Alexandris, Grouios, Tsorbatsoudis and Bliatsou (2001), study results in which the specific factor was found to be the most significant constraining factor of attendance.

The above findings and the fact that all the factors averages are low and below the mean of the seven-degree evaluation scale generally show that the constraining attendance factors are experienced by the participants with low intensity, because dancing is a leisure activity (Goulimaris, Filippou, Kottis & Genti, 2008). This result demonstrates that generally the constraining factors of attendance to Hellenic dancing activities are not powerful, a fact which constitutes an important positive element for the development of those activities. Besides, the obstructions in attendance are often overcome. The constraining factors may finally not prevent the participation in an activity (Kay & Jackson, 1991).

The statistically significant reverse connection of loyalty to the five constraints (Lack of Time, Lack of Knowledge, Facilities, Lack of Partners, Lack of Interest) verifies the second hypothesis of the study to a great degree. This fact and the high average of loyalty proves that the less the obstructions of attendance to dancing activities are, the more the participants' loyalty is. Previous studies showed that the Lack of Time and Individual / Psychological factors negatively influence

loyalty (Alexandris & Carroll, 1997a; Gilbert & Hudson, 2000) and the constraints predict a significant percentage of variance, loyalty and involvement (Alexandris et al., 2008).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The results supported the factorial validity of the «leisure constraints scale» in the field of traditional dancing. Furthermore, supported the reverse relation of loyalty to the five factors of constraints. The study results offer to the associations' administrations propositions and ideas for their practical implementation. The preservation of the participants' number in the association's activities, in a tough economic period, is of great importance for its viability. The boost of the participants' loyalty in dancing activities, which is an important aim for every organization, may be combined with actions that will reduce attendance obstructions. This presupposes the capability on behalf of the associations' members to appreciate the existing and the future needs of the participants and to supply tailored dancing services and programs. Their categorization into groups on the basis of their characteristics is the first step so as to subsequently aim at the group that they wish to focus on. A part of the services that the administrations may put into effect is the constant training of the staff in management matters, in clients' services, in programming, in organizing dancing programs and events, the delineation of communicative strategy, the supply and promotion of specially designed dancing programs which meet with the clients' needs, the creation of information network, the improvement of the facilities and the adoption of motives so as to attract the friends of those who attend.

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