

## STUDENT INTEREST-IN-THE-ARTS QUESTIONNAIRE (SIAQ): VALIDITY EVIDENCE OF THE GREEK VERSION

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### Abstract

*The aim of this study was to confirm the "Student Interest-in-the-Arts Questionnaire" (SIAQ) in a Greek elementary educational context. The internal consistency of the SIAQ was also examined. The sample of the study consisted of 304 male and 348 female elementary school students. The Greek version of "SIAQ" was used. The questionnaire's validity and reliability were checked by performing a confirmatory factor analysis, and an internal consistency analysis. Descriptive statistics were calculated to broadly examine pupils' interest in traditional Greek dance. The results showed that SIAQ is a credible and useful tool to measure the indicative interest of Primary School students aged 9-12 in Greek traditional dance. It appears that students show a moderate interest in participating in Greek dance classes. Nevertheless, further investigation is needed concerning the contribution of interest in the process of learning and its relation to other motivation variables. It is important to define the conditions that lead students of all ages to develop and maintain their interest in Greek traditional dance while growing up and it should be the subject of more investigation in an educational environment.*

**Key words:** *traditional dance, learning theories, learning style, teaching method, motivation.*

### Introduction

Traditional dance is considered a cultural element which is broadly accepted by the Greek society and an important educational and cognitive tool for the Greek educational system which is why it is one of the subjects of the Analytical Educational Program (A.E.P.) of Physical Education both in Primary School and in Junior High School. The latest version of the A.E.P. for Physical Education mentions that the aim of P.E. is to primarily contribute to the physical development of students and simultaneously help their psychological and spiritual cultivation, as well as their harmonic embodiment in society (A.E.P., 2003). Being one of the subjects of P.E., dance is capable of contributing positively to the general realization of the aims of P.E. and offering students multiple benefits because according to British teachers (Department for Education and Skills, 2005a, b) taking up dancing offers young people a broad variety of benefits and social skills which concern not only preventing obesity but also increasing self-respect and self-confidence. The A.E.P. also mentions that dance is a source of life and an unforgettable experience that every student should have. While dancing, students not only feel the essence of life itself, but they also express their own attitude and interpretation of life. Dance is a social phenomenon which is never stagnant and it offers space for artistic creation (A.E.P., 2003). From a modern anthropological point of view, dance is a means of communication which transfers information. According to Lomax (1968) dance is the most repeated and typically organized system of physical communication appearing in human civilization. In a research carried out in Scotland by Muldoon and Inchley (2008), entitled "Dance in School Initiative" the authors mention that "dance

in education, as well as the rest of the subjects of the school curriculum, should be a challenge that offers students the measures and points to move ahead". Recent researches in Scotland indicate that taking up dance activities either as an observer or an active participant is attractive to a wide range of people whose number is constantly increasing (Scottish Arts Council, 2004). In addition, bibliography shows that dancing is a very popular form of entertainment for young people of both genders (Hendry, Shucksmith, Love et al, 1993). It has been proved that Greek traditional dance can be used as a means to improve the physical condition of those who practice it since it is a form of aerobic exercise with its intensity being among the pre-defined margins of aerobic exercises. Furthermore, scientific researches underline the positive influence of traditional dance on a spiritual and psychological level improving mood, rhythm, internal liberation and spontaneity (Goulimaris, 2016), as well as on a psycho-kinetic level ameliorating performance, focusing, effort and satisfaction (Goulimaris, Filippou, Koupani, 2016). It is supported that traditional dance is an attractive activity for students and participating in it transfers them cultural elements through movement and other senses (Royce, 2005, p. 186). In this way there is a creative connection of P.E. with the historic, cultural and artistic frame of other school subjects. Daily practice of P.E. as well as various scientific reports support that students are not that eager to participate in traditional dance activities (Laskaridi, Moysiadou, Kouli, 2009), probably because they do not enjoy themselves in P.E. due to a teacher-centered way of teaching which does not allow spontaneous or creative actions (Min - Hau & Allen, 2002).

Despite the registered positive effects of dancing on both physical and psycho-spiritual health of people, boys are unwilling to take up dance activities either in school or in dance associations. Dance possibilities are rather restricted for boys since traditionally dance is suitable only for young children and girls (Sanderson, 2001). According to Filippou (2015a), the above opinions may be valid for classical or contemporary dancing, but they do not apply for Greek traditional dance, since it is known that in Greek traditional society, dance activities were a means to exhibit masculinity and male posture. Greek Traditional Dance as part of teaching P.E. both in Primary School and in Junior High School is, according to Stivaktaki, Mountakis, Bournelli (2010), a cultural product of broad acceptance by the Greek society and an important educational instrument in organized education.

In recent years, Greek researchers have become interested in improving the content of teaching Greek Traditional Dance, since the current teaching methodology does not seem sufficient to attract the interest of the majority of the students or even P.E. teachers, which leads to the almost non existence of the subject (Filippou, 2015b). This situation could be indicative of the ignorance and indifference of either the students or the P.E. teachers to deal with Greek Traditional Dance. It might also indicate that P.E. is not challenging enough for the students to participate in any physical activities, including traditional dance.

So, all P.E. teachers should find a way to provoke the interest of students. Interest is a basic factor for students to participate in a P.E. lesson. Yet, what does interest mean? Is it an instant stabilization, an attraction, a charm? Could it be love for learning of passion? Is it perhaps a preference or an attitude? Is it an emotion or a characteristic, like curiosity, or even a kind of motivation? According to Hidi (2006), all these concepts can be found in bibliography together or separately (Hidi, Renninger & Krapp, 2004). People who have developed an interest in a subject are filled with more positive emotions and knowledge about this specific subject than other subjects, they work on its content, seek for feedback and persist despite any difficulties or disappointments (Renninger, 2000).

The level of interest maintained by students in an activity or subject has repeatedly been acknowledged as an important condition in relation to knowledge, attention, goal setting (high-low), level of learning and it influences their academic performance (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). A wide range of researchers have proved that the role of interest in the learning process has a strong influence in the cognitive and emotional experience. The positive effect of interest in academic learning has been confirmed by its application on people, cognitive fields and cognitive subjects (Hidi & Berndorff, 1998). In addition, every phase of interest is connected to different levels of effort, self-sufficiency, goal regulation, and ability to self-

control one's behavior. All these variables are altered depending on the increase or decrease of interest (Renninger & Hidi, 2002). All the above arguments consolidate the positive influence of traditional dance on the psycho-physical and spiritual development of students (Goulimaris, Mavridis, Genti et al, 2014) and also the prevention of obesity and the increase of self-esteem and self-confidence as well as the motivation of interest in the learning process (Bebetsos, & Goulimaris, 2014). According to Schraw and Lehman (2001, p.23) "interest plays an important part in the learning process, affecting what we choose to learn, how well we learn, and how much we learn—indeed, resulting in learning more than one would otherwise learn". Nevertheless, there are no researches focusing on the interest shown by Primary School students (aged 9-12) to participate in Greek traditional dance classes and consequently, teachers depend on their own observations as well as those of their colleagues. The principal aim of this study was to confirm the "Student Interest-in-the-Arts Questionnaire" (Brandon & Lawton, 2013) in a Greek elementary educational context. The internal consistency of the SIAQ was also examined.

## Materials and methods

### Participants

The sample of the study consisted of 652 students of elementary school; 304 (46.6%) males and 348 (53.4%) females, of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades. Students were randomly chosen (table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of sample per gender and class attendance

Gender		Students per Grade	
boys	304 (46.6%)	4 <sup>th</sup>	198 (30.4%)
girls	348 (53.4%)	5 <sup>th</sup>	255 (39.1%)
		6 <sup>th</sup>	199 (30.5%)

### Instruments

The Greek version of "Student Interest-in-the-Arts Questionnaire" (Brandon & Lawton, 2013) was used. The questionnaire consists of seven questions researching the students' interest in Greek traditional dance. The answers were given in a five-point Likert type scale ranging from 1=totally disagree to 5=totally agree, since according to the constructors when only part of the scale is used there should be a five-point scale and not a four-scale one, which is used only when the whole scale is in use. According to Brandon and Lawton (2013) there were four elements used for the development of the scale, which examined the following demonstrations of interest: a. Learning about the art form (two items), b. Participating in the art form (three items), c. Being happy participating in the art form (one item) and d. Talking about the art form (one item).

### Measurement process

The first step was the translation of the questionnaire into Greek using the two-directional method, as suggested by Banville, Desrochers and

Genet-Volet (2000). Firstly, the questionnaire was translated into Greek by two English teachers specializing in translation. There was complete identification between the two translators on the interpretation of the 5 out of the 7 variables. For the remaining 2 variables the differentiation involved the sentence syntax and not the interpretation of the words. After conferring with the researcher, the translators agreed on the final interpretation of the questions of the questionnaire. Next, the questionnaire was again presented to two official translators to be interpreted into English. The produced text was contrasted to that of Brandon and Lawton (2013), in the presence of all four translators as well as the researcher and after deliberating, they all came to an agreement regarding the formulation of the questions. For the construction of the questionnaire in Greek, the authors asked the contribution of teachers who teach Greek Language in the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> grades of Primary School. For the validity control of the content of the questionnaire there was a pilot study with the participation of 90 students of the above Primary School grades. Students were given parental consent before participating in the study. The questionnaires were anonymous and were completed in school, without any reported difficulty either in their meaning or their structure.

**Statistical analysis**

The questionnaire’s validity and reliability were checked by performing a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). A reliability analysis was also conducted to examine the reliability of the factors (Cronbach’s alpha). Descriptive statistics were calculated to broadly examine pupils’ interest in Greek traditional dance.

**Results**

A confirmatory factor analysis was performed through LISREL 8.80 on the subscale of the SIAQ. The hypothesized model is presented in figure 1 where ellipses represent latent variable and rectangles represent measured variables. Figure 1 shows the path diagram for the latent and observed variables. The hypothesized model consists of one latent variable, namely Interesting for traditional Greek dance. The observed item on the SIAQ and their corresponding questions and subscale (factor) has been presented in Table 2.

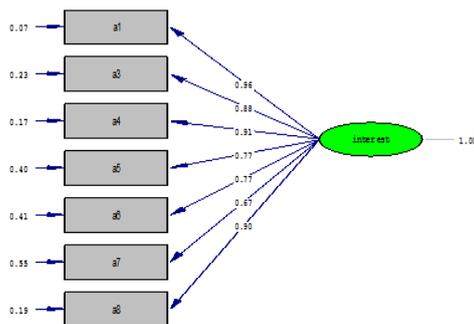


Figure 1. Path diagram for the latent and observed variables in the CFA

The fit indices which were considered are: namely minimum discrepancy (CMIN or  $\chi^2$ ), degrees of freedom (d.f.), minimum discrepancy divided by the degrees of freedom ( $\chi^2/d.f.$ ), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), and incremental indices Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Normed Fit Index (NFI) (McDonald and Marsh, 1990; Zetou, Filippou, Filippou et al; 2016). All are presented in Table 3.

Table 2. Standardized Direct Effects of the Latent Variables on the Observed Variables

Questions	L1
1	.96
2	.88
3	.91
4	.77
5	.76
6	.67
7	.90

The acceptable values of fit indices are when  $\chi^2/d.f.$  is <5, the incremental indices (CFI, NFI) >.90 (Hu and Bentler, 1995), the error index RMSEA is <.08 (Browne and Coudeck, 1993) and the error index SRMR is <.05 (Hu and Bentler, 1999). The results of this study obtained in the confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that the hypothesized model produced a significant chi-square,  $\chi^2$  (652, 20) = 134.82, p < .05. The NFI and CFI were found to be 0.98 and 0.99 respectively. The RMSEA was also considered to assess the degree of fit of the model. The RMSEA value for the hypothesized model was found to be .08 and SRMR = .028 (Table 3).

Table 3. Model Fit Indices

	N	CMIN	D	NFI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model <sub>H</sub>	652	134.8	20	.98	.99	.08	.028

**Reliability estimation**

The internal consistency analysis was performed using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. The results showed a satisfactory alpha coefficient of .94 for “interesting for traditional Greek dance” factor. The total variance explaining is 74.5% and initial Eigen values are 5.22. The results suggest highly acceptable levels of reliability.

**Discussion and conclusion**

The aim of this study was to confirm the “Student Interest-in-the-Arts Questionnaire” (Brandon & Lawton, 2013) in a Greek elementary educational context. The internal consistency of the SIAQ was also examined. Regarding the validity of factors and the structure itself, SIAQ has shown a structure of oblique factors, coinciding with the findings of Brandon and Lawton. As far as reliability is concerned, results have shown the required internal consistency and temporal stability of the scale (.94), with results similar to the findings of Brandon and Lawton (.93) (2013). The reduced interest shown by male students towards Greek traditional dance may be due to opinions which support that

traditional dance, as well as other forms of dance, is suitable for girls and totally inappropriate for boys, since it does not bring out their masculinity. This attitude, as mentioned above, is completely mistaken in relation to traditional dance and it probably reflects wrong educational approaches, since research has shown that the satisfaction gained by participating in Greek traditional dance classes of cross-curricular direction has increased a lot, especially among boys (Filippou, 2016; Filippou, Rokka, Mavridis, 2016; Papaioannidou, Derri, Filippou, 2015). Educational conditions or the proper learning environment can enhance the development and enlargement of an already existing interest, offering opportunities such as interaction and challenge and thus leading to a cognitive structure that can enable the development of interest in traditional dance (Renninger & Shumar, 2004; Lipstein & Renninger, 2006). It has also been supported that creative teaching methods influence positively kinetic factors in Primary School classes. It is imperative that there can be an attractive learning process to approach Greek traditional dance, so that Primary School students can realize the importance of traditional dance in life, communicate and entertain themselves during classes. Scientific researches should focus on the ways through which students will enjoy classes and should investigate the factors that will increase interest in Greek traditional dances and the pleasure and satisfaction from participating in them, while enriching the Analytical Educational Program (A.E.P.), the teaching methods, the creation of an attractive learning environment and the positive learning experiences (Tannehill & Zakrajsek, 1993).

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Generally, the results of various studies on interest suggest that teachers should be able to:

- a. Help students to experience interest in a situation so that they can get the proper feedback that will keep their attention intact and will raise their curiosity.
- b. Give students the chance to pose curiosity questions.
- c. To choose or create the means to facilitate the solution of problems and the creation of strategies.

It is also necessary for teachers to understand that interest can be developed and this is something that cannot take place individually. There must also be a further articulation concerning the contribution of interest in the learning process and its relation with other motivation variables, which will have a probably important influence on both school practice and the conceptual and methodological approaches in the study of interest. Defining the conditions which will lead students of all ages to be challenged on what they know or assume, it is important to preserve interest in all phases of their development, which is a crucial step in the research for interest in educational environments. From all the above, we can deduce that:

1. SIAQ is a credible and useful tool for measuring the demonstrated interest towards Greek traditional dance, in relation to Primary School students aged 9-12.
2. Students aged 9-12 show a moderate interest in participating in activities such as learning Greek traditional dances.

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## UPITNIK O UČENIČKOM INTERESU U UMJETNOSTI (SIAQ): DOKAZ VALJANOSTI GRČKE VERZIJE

### Sažetak

Cilj ovog istraživanja bio je potvrditi „Student Interes-in-Arts Questionnaire“ (SIAQ), tj. Upitnik o učeničkom interesu u umjetnosti, u grčkom osnovnoškolskom obrazovnom kontekstu. Unutarnja dosljednost SIAQ-a također je ispitana. Uzorak istraživanja sastojao se od 304 muških i 348 ženskih učenika osnovne škole. Korištena je grčka verzija SIAQ-a. Valjanost i pouzdanost u upitniku bili su provjereni izvođenjem potvrdne faktorske analize i interne analize dosljednosti. Deskriptivna statistika izračunata je na široko ispitanim interesima učenika u tradicionalnom grčkom plesu. Rezultati su pokazali da je SIAQ vjerodostojan i koristan alat za mjerenje indikativnih interesa učenika osnovne škole u dobi 9-12 godina u grčkom tradicionalnom plesu. Čini se da učenici pokazuju umjereni interes za sudjelovanje u grčkim plesovima. Ipak, daljnja istraživanja su potrebna u vezi doprinosa interesa u procesu učenja i njegov odnos prema drugim varijablama motivacije. Važno je definirati uvjete koji će pomoći učenicima svih uzrasta razvijati i održavati svoj interes u grčkom tradicionalnom plesu dok odrastaju i to bi trebao biti predmet više istraga u obrazovnom okruženju.

**Ključne riječi:** tradicionalni ples, učenje teorije, stil učenja, metoda poučavanja, motivacija.

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