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The Relationship between Dancing, Self Esteem, Educational Achievement and Stress
among School and University Students in Lebanon

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A Thesis submitted to the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts and Psychology- Emphasis educational Counseling at Haigazian University

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my family and friends

who were continuously supportive throughout this process.

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Completing this project has been the most challenging, and especially rewarding experience I have ever gone through. Through this experience I have learned about not only what my limitations are, but also what I am capable of achieving. Yet, I could not have made it this far without the love and support of my family, friends, and thesis advisor. I, Jinan Khaywa, would like to dedicate the completion of this project to my lovely mom and dad, who stood by me through good times and bad, and to my sisters, brother, and friend Nisrine Ajouz, for being my number one cheerleaders. In addition, I would like to thank my husband for all his love, patience and support throughout this process. Finally, I would like to express gratitude to Dr. Hanine Hout for her great encouragement and positive attitude, and Dr. Marwan Gharzeddine for his time and for always finding ways to make things work.

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Abstract

This study assessed the relationship between dancing, self esteem, educational achievement and stress among School and University students in Lebanon. A total of 471 individuals (N= 471) were administered the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale. The sample for this study consisted of 228 females and 243 males, 177 high school students, 191 university under graduates, and 103 university graduates; 243 participated in dancing, and 228 were non dancers. Their ages ranged from 16 to 28 years, with an average age of 22 years (M= 22). Statistical analyses were run, including correlational analyses, analyses of variance (ANOVA), and Independent samples T-test. There was no correlation between practicing dancing and the self esteem construct among students in Lebanon. However, practicing dancing was negatively correlated with stress levels. Moreover, dancing was positively correlated with better academic achievement. Further analysis of data showed that the "other" and "Rap" dancers received the highest academic average in comparison to the "Ballet", "Dance de Salon" and "oriental" dancers, who all received the lowest averages. Concerning the stress factor, the results of the current study showed significant differences between the type of dance and stress levels among students.

The Relationship between Dancing, Self Esteem, Educational Achievement and Stress
among School and University Students in Lebanon

It is a known fact that regular activity, whether jogging, swimming, mountain climbing or dancing, to mention just a few, are all considered healthy exercises that benefit the human body on different levels, such as, strengthening the muscles, losing unnecessary fat, etc. As we know, doctors advise their patients to engage in such regular activities; also most schools devote certain hours of the curriculum per week to physical education.

But beyond the obvious physical benefits of such activities, it seems that exercising regularly can also benefit the person psychologically. Various research studies have shown the positive effects of physical exercise including dancing on the psychological well being of the people involved in such activities (Scully. D et al, 1998, Stuart J.H et al, 2008). Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationships between dancing, which is a special kind of physical activity, on one hand, and self-esteem, stress as well as educational achievement, on the other. Based on research, it also seems that dancing correlates positively with higher educational achievement. Conducting such a study in a Lebanese context, and especially on young people between the ages of 16-28, seems important since dancing, in particular, is not integrated or, at least, offered as an optional physical activity, in the Lebanese school curriculum.

Background of the Study

Dancing

Dancing is one form of communication that is concerned with the appreciation of beauty and art (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000). Moreover, being involved in a dancing activity, in all its forms, is viewed by many dancers as an emotional experience that is filled with different sensations (Erskine, 2007). In fact, most dancers (both professional and non professional dancers) refer to dancing as their source of youth, energy, discipline and outlet of passion (J. West, C. Otte, K. Geher, J. Johnson, & D. Mohr, 2004).

On the other hand, Heath (1998) concludes in his book that being involved in a dancing exercise provides young people with a healthy psychological development that is focused around a positive self-evaluation and self-perception. In addition, a recent study reported that participating in a dance class will develop gains on the general well-being of the dancer (Connolly et al, 2011) as well as helps a lot in the reductions of levels of stress (Caltabiano, 2006). In another study investigating the educational and psychological benefits of dance among participants between 12 and 25 years old, dancers as well as dance instructors reported that being a part of a dancing program adds great benefits to young people's lives, including healthy peer relationships, building sense of worth and positive self-perception (Erskine, 2007).

Dancing and Self Esteem

One of the positive effects of dancing is the increase in self esteem among dance participants. According to Rosenberg (1965), "self esteem is the favorable or unfavorable attitude towards self (p.15) as well as the person's overall sense of self-worth or personal

value (Woofolk, 2005). Research has shown that high self esteem has many advantages on the well being of individuals. According to Baumeister (2003), the benefits of high self esteem are classified into two parts; first, it gives the person a boost of positive feelings causing him to cope better in stressful situations such as failure and second, it provides an initiative for success.

Furthermore, a research conducted by Feltes (2008), has shown that dancing builds self esteem. According to Basich (2006), female students who participate in dance classes for exercise, show higher levels of self esteem compared to those who don't. According to Jonas (2002), many studies show a positive correlation between dancing and self esteem in girls. Likewise, Mc Auley (1994), revealed a positive correlation between dancing and self esteem upon comparing dancers to non dancers, regardless of the type of dance. Moreover, a research conducted on junior dancers showed that they have higher self esteem compared to those who don't dance (Kalliopuska, 1989). It seems that dance education direct students' attention to be more aware of themselves, of others, and of their environment, in general (Erskine, 2007).

Dancing and Stress

The relationship between dancing and stress has also been studied to support that being involved in dancing practices leads to stress reduction, another positive effect on the dancer's psychological well being. As defined by Nordqvist (2009), stress is the inner response to circumstances which challenge us to adapt to change; circumstances may be positive or negative but they still indicate the need to change. Some studies aimed at seeing whether dancing, as a physical activity, reliefs stress. A study conducted by West et al. (2004), compared the stress levels of participants before and after a 90-minute dance class.

It showed that dancing reduced perceived stress and negative affect. In addition, Scully (1998) revealed that individuals, who participate in dance classes, show a reduced stress response, which, in the long run, act as prevention to stress rather than solution or treatment. In other words, individuals who practice dancing can cope, later, more effectively with stressful situations in comparison to those who are not involved in any dancing exercises. Another study conducted by King A.C et al (2002), showed that people, who are members of dancing classes that consist of regular moderate-intensity exercises, can benefit from stress reduction leading to improved health and better quality of life. Furthermore, Hutchinson (2008) stressed the fact that being involved in a leisure activity can increase a person's ability to cope with stress. Moreover, this study supported the fact that being engaged in dancing exercises allow people to become refreshed for work and provides a state of physical and psychological relaxation (Walden, 2007).

Dancing and Educational Achievement

In this section, the third advantage of dancing, improved educational achievement will be discussed. In general, academic achievement refers to the level of schooling the student has successfully completed and the ability to attain success in his studies (Webster's Encyclopedia). Receiving good grades is an example of academic achievement. Another example of academic achievement is attending college and graduate school (Webster's Encyclopedia). In other words, Academic achievement is the educational goal that is achieved by a student over a certain period, and this is usually measured either by summative examinations or by an educational degree attained by the student.

Although research on the impact of dancing on learning across the curriculum is limited, Ewing (2010) asserted that students who participated in dance programs with poor

grades and discipline problems develop, later, into model students. In other words, instead of dropping out of school, dancers, in comparison to non dancers, were able to score higher academically, develop higher self-esteem and more effective interpersonal skills that helped them overcome confrontational situations with their peers and adults, including teachers.

There are no studies in Lebanon that are concerned with the effect of dance on psychological health. Even though the official government has taken steps to improve the curriculum and educational value, but still there are much to be done (Hamdan, 2012). Therefore, it seems important to replicate studies about the effect of dance on psychological health conducted in other parts of the world for the purpose of providing evidence for the official Lebanese educators indicating the importance of adding dance as an essential physical activity in the government curriculum. Local data, when available, are more appealing and convincing to those interested and, therefore, taken more seriously.

Problem Statement

In short, based on the above review, this study aimed at assessing the relationships between dancing, self esteem, stress and educational achievement among young students in Lebanon. The hypotheses are stated below.

Research Hypotheses

1. Those who dance will have higher self esteem compared to those who don't dance.
2. Those who dance will lower stress levels compared to those who don't dance.

3. Those who dance will have higher educational achievement compared to those who don't dance.

Implications of the Research

Dancing exists in different forms such as ballet, disco, rock 'n roll, aerobic dance and many others. However, in Arabic cultures, the word "dancing" signifies oriental dancing which is directly associated with women and seduction. Adding to that, many people don't know that dance exist in different forms. Unfortunately, many people are unaware of the various benefits of dancing. Previous studies with respect to dancing and self esteem, as stated above, revealed a positive relationship between the two constructs. Other studies showed a relationship between dancing and reduced stress levels. These studies have been conducted in European countries who are stressing the fact that dance, as one form of art, has a positive impact on the development of human beings. Dancing has been researched widely in the Western societies for its benefits; however, it was somehow difficult to find any research on the issue conducted in Arab countries. Given this information, I decided to test these hypotheses in our region to see what results might reveal. There have been no studies in the Lebanese society that focused on the importance of dancing neither in improving self esteem nor in reducing stress levels. Though this study replicates previous studies in its purpose, yet these participants, unlike the western studies which focused on people of different age groups, are a combination of high school students, undergraduate and graduate college students living in Lebanon; some of the participants will be enrolled in dancing classes whereas the others will not be enrolled in any dancing classes. Therefore, this study examined the advantages of dancing on high school and university students. Furthermore, this study focused on testing the constructs of self esteem, stress

and educational achievement, and compared it among students who were involved in dancing activities to those who were not.

On the other hand, if school and university administrators become aware of the positive effect of dancing and its relationship to self esteem and stress reduction, they can implement dancing classes aside with physical education classes in order to improve their students' self-esteem levels which in return will yield positive results on students' educational performance whether at school or university.

Finally, clinicians and counselors can also stress the importance of dance to those young people who are in need of boosting their self-esteem, reducing their stress levels as well as improving their academic achievement.

Overview of Methodology

The present study employed the quantitative method of statistical analysis to measure the relationships between the proposed variables, namely, dance, self-esteem, educational achievement and stress. A set of correlations as well as tests of comparison of means were calculated. It depended on self report measures in which participants were asked to provide demographic information (age, gender, GPA score or average, and dance related information, types of dance, and hours of dancing per week), and filled two questionnaires: the Rosenberg self esteem scale and the Perceived Stress Scale. The survey included a total of 25 questions, including the demographic information. The age of participants ranged between 16 and 28 and the sample included both males and females chosen from different high schools and universities in Lebanon. The selection of participants was based on convenience sampling of those who agreed to fill the

questionnaire. The number of participants was around 500 in which 471 questionnaires were fully answered.

Delimitations

A limitation of this study is that a convenience sample was used, and therefore, no generalization to the whole student population, whether school students or university students in Lebanon, could be concluded.

Definition of Key Terms

Self esteem: liking one's nature; a sensation of importance to others and knowing their capabilities and limitations (Glasser, 1969)

Self image: it is the identification of self among a group (Leach, 2008)

Motivation: Motivation refers to "the reasons underlying behavior" (Guay et al., 2010, p. 712). That is, it refers to reasons that underlie behavior that is characterized by willingness. Motivation can be Intrinsic which is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure and extrinsic which is governed by reinforcement incidents (Lai. R, 2011)

Stress: it is the real or perceived imbalance between environmental demands required for survival and an individual's capacity to adapt to these requirements (Weiner, 1992)

Educational achievement: academic achievement refers to the level of schooling the student has successfully completed and the ability to attain success in his studies (Webster's Encyclopedia)

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

This chapter begins with a brief discussion of the importance of physical activity but mainly focuses on dancing including the history and types of dancing. After that, a review of literature on the relationship between dance and the major constructs of the study, namely, self-esteem, stress and educational achievement, is presented. The purpose of this current study was to investigate the relationship that exists between dancing, self esteem, educational achievement, and stress levels among school and university students and to see whether these relationships are similar to those found in research in countries other than Lebanon.

Physical Activity

As defined by Bouchard and Shephard (1994), "physical activity is any body movement caused by the skeletal muscles that leads to increase in spending body energy" (p.77). According to Malina (2001), embracing a lifestyle that involves continuous physical activity throughout different life stages (childhood, adolescence, and adulthood) is very beneficial for the health and well being of people. Lack of physical activity is one of the main risk factors for our current lifestyle. According to a study conducted by Lemstra, Nielson, Rogers, Thompson, and Moraros (2012), only 7% of youth performed a physical activity that required more than half an hour per day. With the revolution of information technology and the Internet, monitoring activities outweigh the physical activities. According to Vairo (2003), nowadays we are spending most of our leisure time in passive activities such as surfing the internet and listening to music.

According to Allender, Cowburn, and Foster (2006), absence of physical activity is a serious public health problem in the developed world. Students, nowadays, spend most of their time sitting in front of their computer or tablet screens, in transportation, or before a television. However, 50% of our body weight is muscles and these muscles need exercise (Ainsworth et al. 2000).

Physical Activity and Dancing

Physical activity exists in various forms such as: walking, jogging, hiking, biking, and dancing, in addition to many others. Dancing is the type of physical activity which will be discussed further. Dancing is defined as moving our body according to the music rhythm and following a sequence of steps (Webster's encyclopedia). Therefore, in addition to exercising the whole body, dancing is performed on a music rhythm.

How beneficial is dancing according to research? Heath (1998) concludes in his book that dancing provides young people with a healthy psychological development that is focused around a positive self-evaluation and self-perception. In addition, a recent study reported that participating in a dance class, as a physical activity, will develop gains on the general well-being of the dancer (Conolly. M et al, 2009). A study conducted by Hui, Chui, and Woo (2008), supported the fact that dancing has physical and psychological benefits.

In other words, it can make your mind and body act like soul mates. According to Saito 2006, Japanese dance, is very effective in releasing emotions and keeping a healthy physical body. According to Luserbrink (2004),” dancing stimulates the brain's tactile-haptic, visual sensory and perceptual channels; processing then occurs through cognitive and verbal channels” (p.125).

The process of dancing can counter stress and provide positive distractions from associated life stressors and irritations (Luserbrink, 2004). The mind would move your body based on the rhythm heard and felt. Thus, during the dancing period the mind would be totally distracted from life irritations while focusing on music and the collaborative practice with the body. This clear distraction would be beneficial for the mind and the body at the same time (Luserbrink, 2004). For this, dancing adds to physical activity the music factor which assists in distracting the mind from most life difficulties.

History of dancing

Each dance has a different spirit and a different function. Some foster discovery and expression of sensuality, while others reflect more passionate eroticism; some are just playful whereas others are collective in nature and hence create the feeling of being one with others. Each type of dance evokes a different world and makes us explore certain aspects of ourselves. They, therefore, represent a great tool of self-knowledge and it would be difficult to say that some dances are better than others (Scully 1998).

At all times, and in many countries, man danced. Originally, he danced in honor of the gods. For example, among the Egyptians, they danced to signify the events in the story of a God; King David danced before the ark, which symbolized the alliance of the Hebrew people and their God; and the Greeks devoted to each one of their gods a particular dance (Eddy, 2009). Dancing was also staging the affairs of man - war, love - or expressing joys and sorrows. According to legend, when Theseus faced the Labyrinth, he improvised with his companions a dance that helped them rescue the Athenians from the Labyrinth and that was the first barrage (Denby, 1998). The Romans had their own sacred dances, but they especially enjoyed dancing as entertaining shows (Heidelberg, 2007). As for the Gauls,

among the many traditions they have left us with, are the fires of St. John: celebrating the sun by dancing and jumping (Denby, 1965).

In the Middle Ages, because of wars, disease and famine, death was ever present. So in order to enjoy life, they danced more than ever in the churches to illustrate the sacred texts, in the castles at banquets and parties, and among the peasants, to forget the hard times (Newman, 1961). In addition, Painting and sculpture of death itself was shown in dancing! This is what is referred to as the “Dance of Death” (Eddy, 2009).

Types of Dance

Dancing is one form of communication that is concerned with the appreciation of beauty and art (Bannon and Sanderson, 2000). It exists in different forms and types. The following are examples of few of such dances. One form of dancing is the ballroom dancing which includes different categories such as Tango, Cha-cha, Salsa and others. The Social Ballroom Dancing (SBD) is described as a cultural phenomenon of moving in synchrony with music, as a hobby, with friends, family, and strangers (Schaham, 2013). The ballroom dancing started in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in which they are defined as social dances that require specific set of moves (Webster’s encyclopedia). Another type of dancing is the Ballet dancing which started in the early 1400’s. Ballet dance is a very formal and strict type of performance dance that is typically performed to classical music (Durr, 1985). As for Zumba, it is a mix of Latin dance and fitness that started in the 90’s. The idea of Zumba is to make sports fun, or to dance to lose calories (Polevoy, 2011). Oriental dance also referred to as Belly dance or Middle Eastern dance, is another form of dancing which originated in the Middle East. It is an ancient and expressive form of movement, associated with feminine and community-based celebration

and ritual (Moe, 2012). As for the Rap dance, it has African American origins that dated since 70's (Goffman, 2010). Therefore, there are different types of dances that originated in different eras, but what is common is that they allow the dancers to express their feelings, thoughts, and anger; in addition, it allows us to have a better sense of self and others (Brown, 2011).

Dancing and Gender

Dancing is a series of body movements performed in rhythm, in a certain order, and usually accompanied by music (Chujoy, 1949). In Eastern and Western societies, we cannot ignore the prevailed ideas about gender and masculinity which play an essential role in shaping males' attitudes regarding dancing; these ideas also play an effective role in the male students' participation and their attitudes toward dance study (James, 2010). According to a study conducted by Rinser in 2009, comparing male to female enrollment in dance classes, he concluded that dancing classes are characterized by a female environment with few male peers; he added that this environment according to males is a social environment of teasing, and verbal harassment. However, once enrolled in dance classes, males, just like females, enjoy the feelings of self expression, creativity and the physical activity itself (Rinser, 2009). In a research conducted by Ransford and Pallisi (1996), they examined the relationship between effects of dancing on health and psychological well being in males and females; this study supported the fact that dancing has the same positive effect on health and psychological well being in both males and females. Therefore, if we ignore the effect of social pressure in conforming to certain norms on males, dancing can be beneficial for both genders equally (Risner, 2009).

Dancing and Self Esteem

Having highlighted some of the history and types of dancing, the proceeding paragraphs will be devoted to discussing three positive effects of dancing, namely, increase in self-esteem, reduced levels of stress and high educational achievement.

The first positive effect of dancing is the increase in self esteem among dancers. However, before discussing this, is it vital that we define self-esteem as well as highlight the importance of having high self esteem, according to research. First, self-esteem is defined as the value and the degree of skill that we attribute to ourselves; in other words, it expresses the approval and disapproval and indicate the extent to which the individual believes himself to be able, capable, significant, successful and worthy” (Battle, 1972, p. 5). That is, people with low esteem might perceive themselves as incompetent, inadequate or unsuitable and vice versa. Second, researches have been conducted to show that high self esteem has many positive effects on the well being of individuals. Tangney et al (2008), upon measuring individual differences in self-control, showed that high self esteem predicts good adjustment, less pathology, better grades, and interpersonal success. According to Branden (1994), self esteem has a very powerful effect on our well being; that is, people with low self esteem might suffer from anxiety, depression, fear of intimacy, and many other psychological problems. In a qualitative study conducted by Baumeister (2003), the author concluded that people with high self esteem can persist in the face of failure, and have better self regulation strategies compared to those who have low self esteem. In addition, Zur (2002) conducted a research on 168 young and old community residents who completed the coping strategy questionnaire and self esteem inventories. He noticed that those who showed high self-esteem have positive affect, while those who have low self-esteem have negative affect (Zur, 2002).

Now what about the relationship between dancing and self-esteem? A study conducted by Murcia at (2010) on 475 non professional dancers, confirmed through the analysis of the PANAS, that dancing contributes positively to the emotional well-being of the dancers leading to increase in positive affect and decrease in negative affect. Furthermore, in a study conducted to examine the relationship between self-esteem and duration of ballroom dancing among dancers, the authors found out that as the duration of dancing increases, better interpersonal functioning among individuals and couples occurs leading to higher self esteem (Schaham, 2013). In addition, dance lessons can be challenging, so learning new steps can bring to each dancer a sense of mastery, which boosts self-esteem (Spilner, 1991). According to Smith (1995), the ballroom dance floor is a place where one can practice not only dance steps, but also interpersonal communication, functioning, and relationship-building. In a study conducted on 475 non professional dancers including males and females, the researchers aimed at studying the benefits of dancing on well-being; they found out that in addition to emotional and physical benefits, participants reported dancing to have positive influences on self-esteem (Murcia et al, 2010). Many researchers agree that one of the indicators of well being is self esteem. Adding to that and according to Fox (2000), dancing can cause positive changes in self esteem.

Dancing and stress

The second positive effect of dancing that will be discussed next is reduced stress. The relationship between dancing and stress has also been studied to support that dancing leads to stress reduction, another positive effect on the dancer's psychological well being. As defined by World Health Organization (WHO),” stress is a significant problem of our

times and affects both physical as well as the mental health of people” (as cited in Varvogli et al, 2010). By definition, stress is when the organism perceives a situation as threatening (Varvogli et al, 2010) and it is any situation, positive or negative, that requests the need to change (Nordqvist, 2009).

Many cultures consider dance as one way to reduce and resist stress (Brauninger, 2012). Some studies aimed at seeing whether dancing reliefs stress. A study aimed at identifying the benefits of dancing on well being in a population of non professional dancers. They found out that in addition to physical and emotional benefits, dancing can provide an effective coping strategy for daily stress (Murcia et al, 2010). Another study conducted by Rainbow (2005), aimed at finding out if Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) can reduce stress among patients. DMT is a form of therapy that involves dancing, verbal intervention and movement to improve the social and emotional status of the individual (ADTA, 2011). The study showed that DMT reduces distress and improve stress management in patients ($p < 0.02$); moreover, it supported the fact that dancing has long term effects on stress treatment (Brauninger, 2012).

In addition, a study was conducted on graduate students in order to find out their opinion in pointing out sources of stress experienced during their life stages, and possible interventions to reduce them .; they found out that one of the top five stress reduction interventions was dancing (Manoukian, Olmo, 2011). Another study conducted by Young et al (2005), supported the fact that dancing can be effective in improving psychological distress in adolescents having depression upon assessing the changes in neuro hormones (Serotonin and dopamine). Many researches were conducted about dancing and stress, and most of them supported the fact that being engaged in dancing classes allows people to

become refreshed for work and provides a state of physical and psychological relaxation (Walden 2007).

Dancing and Educational Achievement

After discussing the two benefits of dancing on well being which are high self esteem and reduced stress, it is time to discuss the third advantage of dancing which is improved educational achievement. Educational achievement by definition is the level of schooling the student has successfully completed and the ability to attain success in his studies (Webster's Encyclopedia). According to Kao (1999), after comparing native born to immigrants' educational achievement in the USA, they realized that educational achievement is highly effected by the psychological well being of students; for example students having stress, have lower educational achievement compared to those with less stress. As a result, a special program was developed referred to as OMA (Opening Minds through the arts), aimed at increasing student achievement through arts integration (dance, music, and others). A research was conducted on schools applying the OMA program compared to regular schools; the findings of the study were summarized as follows: in schools applying OMA, there were less discipline problems, higher school attendance, increased parental involvement and higher test scores (OMA program model, 2008).

Adding to that, a qualitative research conducted by Shalala (2010) concluded that, physical activity, such as dancing, has many known advantages on health such as building healthy bones and muscles, improving muscular strength and endurance, reducing the risk for developing chronic disease risk factors, improving self-esteem, and reducing stress as well as benefiting the academic performance. According to Ross and Butterfield (1989) and after conducting a research on 54 girls and 66 boys participating in the dance

movement program in association with the regular physical education program, remarkable improvements in motor skills were developed in most of the participants. In addition, Rizutto (1993) supported the fact that better academic achievement can be attained upon improving motor skills. In other words, according to researchers, improving motor ability by physical activities such as dancing can improve academic achievement. Another research conducted by Ewing (2010) showed that, getting involved in dance programs can improve grades and reduce discipline problems. In other words, instead of dropping out of school, students were able to score higher academically, developed higher self-esteem and more effective interpersonal skills. The aforementioned benefits helped them overcome confrontational situations with their peers and adults, including teachers, in comparison to those that were not involved in any dancing programs.

In conclusion, and based on the above discussed review of literature, the current study predicted the following hypotheses:

1. Those who dance will have higher self esteem compared to those who don't dance.
2. Those who dance will lower stress levels compared to those who don't dance.
3. Those who dance will have higher educational achievement compared to those who don't dance.

CHAPTER 3

Method

Participants

The sample for this study consisted of 471 participants (N= 471), 228 females and 243 males, 177 high school students, 191 university under graduates, and 103 university graduates; 243 participated in dancing, and 228 were non dancers. Their ages ranged from 16 to 28 years, with an average age of 22 years (M= 22). High school or secondary students (16-17 years old), university and graduate students (18-28 years old) participated in the present study. Participants who danced were restricted to those enrolled in dancing classes during the time of the study.

Materials

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The first is the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) (Rosenberg, 1965). The Rosenberg's scale is a widely used self report to assess self esteem (Martin et al, 2006). This questionnaire is composed of ten items scored on a seven-point scale ranging from very strongly disagree to very strongly agree (Rosenberg, 1965). Five of the items are positive and the other five are negative items; the items with reverse scoring are items 2-5-6-8-9. Adding to that, the scale is short, easy to administer and its items are face valid (Martin et al, 2006). Higher scores on the RSES indicate high esteem (Rosenberg 1965). The scale ranges from 10-70. The scale generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are typically in the range of .82 to .88, and Cronbach's alpha for various samples is 0.84 (Robinson et al, 1991).

The Perceived Stress Scale. The second measure that was used in this study is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) (Cohen et al, 1983), a widely used psychological instrument to measure the extent in which situations are appraised as stressful. It consists of 10 items on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (1=never, 2=almost never, 3=sometimes, 4= fairly often, 5= very often). The scores on the PSS are obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 1=5, 2=4, 3=3, 4=2, and 5=1) for the items 4, 5, 7 and 8 (positively stated items) and summing across the rest of the items. The higher scores from the scale indicate higher levels of stress, and increased susceptibility to induced stress illnesses; the lower scores indicate a better coping with life stresses. This scale has a Chronbach's alpha of 0.83 implying adequate reliability (Reis et al, 2010).

Procedure

Dr. Hout, the thesis advisor, looked over the surveys that had been chosen and agreed on the topic. She requested a pilot study to determine whether the scales will be reliable to use in the Lebanese society. A pilot study was performed and the data of 40 participants were analyzed for the scale reliabilities. The scales were all found to have high reliabilities. The alpha coefficient for the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale was $\alpha = 0.899$, and for the perceived stress scale $\alpha = 0.911$.

The two scales were combined into one questionnaire packet including demographic variables pertaining to gender, age, GPA or average, duration of enrollment in dance classes, number of hours spent on dancing per week, and the type of dance being practiced (Appendix B). The questionnaires used were the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (Appendix C), and the Perceived Stress scale (Appendix D) and were arranged in the above mentioned order following the demographic information. Convenience sampling

was used to collect data. Questionnaires were handed out by the researcher in schools, universities, physical fitness centers, and dance clubs in different areas of Beirut, Lebanon in an attempt to get a diverse sample of participants with different ages and backgrounds. The researcher approached individuals and explained that this study aims at assessing the benefits of dancing on general well being of individuals, asking the individuals if they were willing to fill out the questionnaire. Moreover, before filling the questionnaires, participants were asked to read a consent form (Appendix A).

Data collection began in January 2014 and was completed in February 2014. Following this, data were entered into SPSS and statistical analyses were run, including analyses of variance (ANOVA), and Independent samples T-test.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Reliability Testing

Cronbach's alpha was computed to determine the reliabilities of each scale and subscale used in the study. The current reliability scores were within acceptable range. There were no significant differences shown between the reliabilities tested in the previous studies and the present study. The previous and current reliability coefficients are reported in the table below (See Table 1).

Table 1

Cronbach's alpha for the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale and the Perceived Stress Scale.

Cronbach's alpha	Previous Cronbach's alpha	Current
Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale	0.84	0.981
Perceived Stress Scale	0.83	0.961

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: Students who dance will have higher self esteem compared to those who don't dance.

An independent sample T-test was used to assess this relationship. Dancers (M= 40.3, SD=17.1) and non dancers (M= 37.7, SD= 37.7) did not differ significantly, $t(469) = 1.597, p > 0.05$.

The hypothesis was not confirmed. Hence, dancing did not show any increase in the self esteem of dancing students compared to non-dancing students (See Table 2).

Table 2

Independent Samples T test for Dancing with Self Esteem

	Are you enrolled in any dancing classes?	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Self Esteem	Yes	243	40.3004			
	No	228	37.7719			
Equal variances assumed				1.597	469	0.111

Hypothesis 2: Students who dance will have lower stress levels compared to those who don't dance.

An independent sample T-test was used to assess this relationship. Dancers (M= 16.6, SD= 1.49) and non dancers (M= 41.5, SD= 2.84) differed significantly, $t(469) = -120.1$, ($p < 0.01$).

The hypothesis was confirmed. Hence, dancing decreased the stress levels of student dancers compared to non-dancers (See Table 3).

Table 3*Independent Samples T test for Dancing with Stress*

	Are you enrolled in any dancing classes?	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Stress	Yes	243	16.6173			
	No	228	41.5219			
Equal variances assumed				-120.150	469	0.000

Hypothesis 3: Students who dance will have better educational achievement compared to those who don't dance.

An independent sample T-test was performed to check the effect of dancing on the academic achievement of student-dancers. Dancers (M= 84.3, SD= 3.69) and non dancers (M= 71.13, SD= 3.99) differed significantly, $t(469) = 37.4$, $p < 0.05$. Hence, dancing helps students in improving their academic achievement (See Table 4).

Table 4*Independent Samples T test for Dancing with Participant's Average*

	Are you enrolled in any dancing classes?	N	Mean	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
The participant's Average	Yes	243	84.39			
	No	228	71.13			
Equal variances assumed				37.401	469	0.000

Additional Analysis:

Several ANOVAs were conducted to look at differences between stress levels, academic achievement, and dance types across participants.

First, stress levels were assessed across different dance types. Dancing types included Rap, Dance de salon, Zumba, Ballet, Oriental, Rock n Roll and other. Upon comparing different dance types, Rap dancing had the highest mean in comparison to all dance types (M=19.0000). Therefore, Rap dancing correlated the most with the highest level of stress. In addition, the “other” (i.e. as other type of dance) option received the lowest mean (M=15.0000). Thus, moving the body to any type of music, free dance, correlated the most with the least level of stress. As for comparing Zumba dance type to Dance de Salon, Zumba received a less mean (M=16.52). Adding to that, upon reading the table results, we notice that Zumba received a less mean (M=16.52) in comparison to the oriental dance type (M= 16.8333) (See table 5 & graph 1).

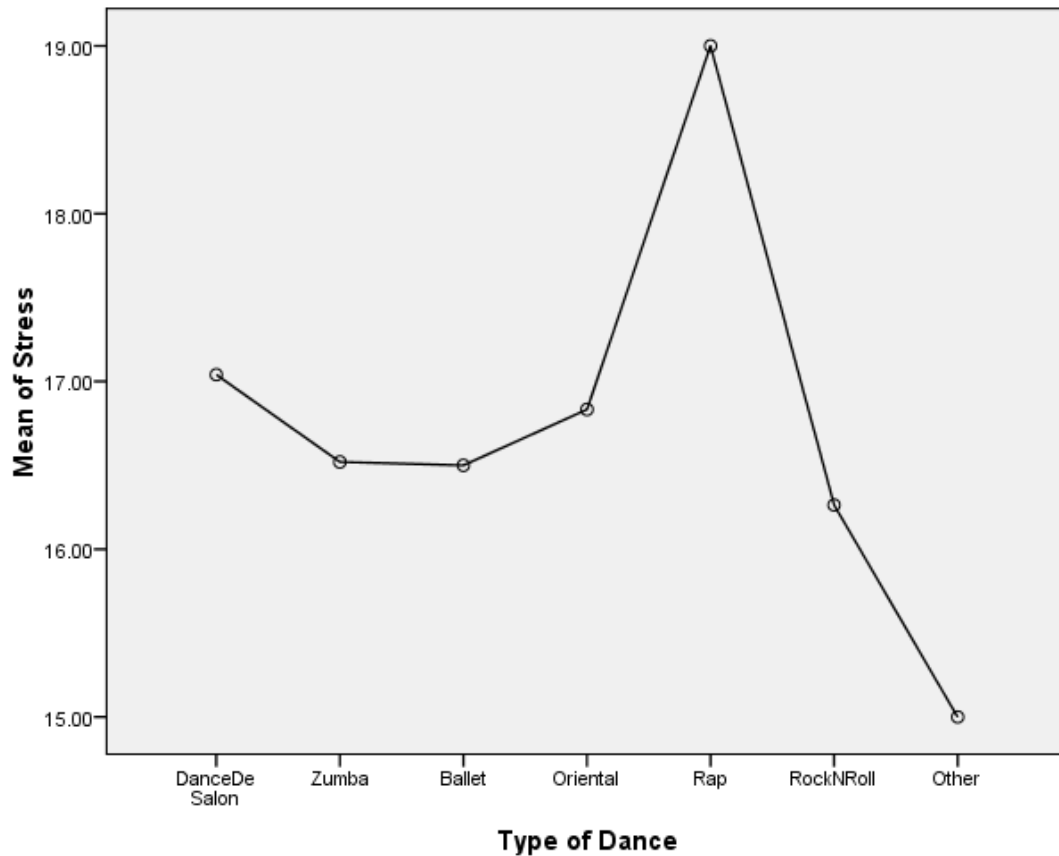
Table 5

Participants' Stress level averages across Different Dance types

Types of Dance	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dance de Salon	25	17.0400	1.01980
Zumba	25	16.5200	.50990
Ballet	26	16.5000	.50990
Oriental	90	16.8333	1.45533
Rap	13	19.0000	.00000
Rock'n Roll	38	16.2632	1.88428
Other	26	15.0000	1.01980
Total	243	16.6173	1.49297

Graph 1

Participants' Stress level averages in Different Dance types



Second, another test was conducted to assess the relationship between academic achievement and dancing types. Dancers ($M= 122.6$) and non-dancers' ($M= 10.9$) academic achievement differed significantly. Upon comparing the means of student dancers and their academic achievement or average, dancers of the “other” dance type received the highest mean ($M=87.50$), in comparison to Dance de salon dancers who received the lowest mean ($M=82.92$) (See Table 6 & graph 2). Moreover, upon comparing Zumba to Rock’n Roll dancers, Rock’n Roll dancers received the highest mean ($M=86.26$). In addition, upon comparing oriental dancing to Ballet dancing, Oriental dancers received

the highest mean ($M=83.26$). Therefore, “other”, Rock’n Roll, and Rap dancers received the highest averages in comparison to other dance types (See table 6 & graph 2).

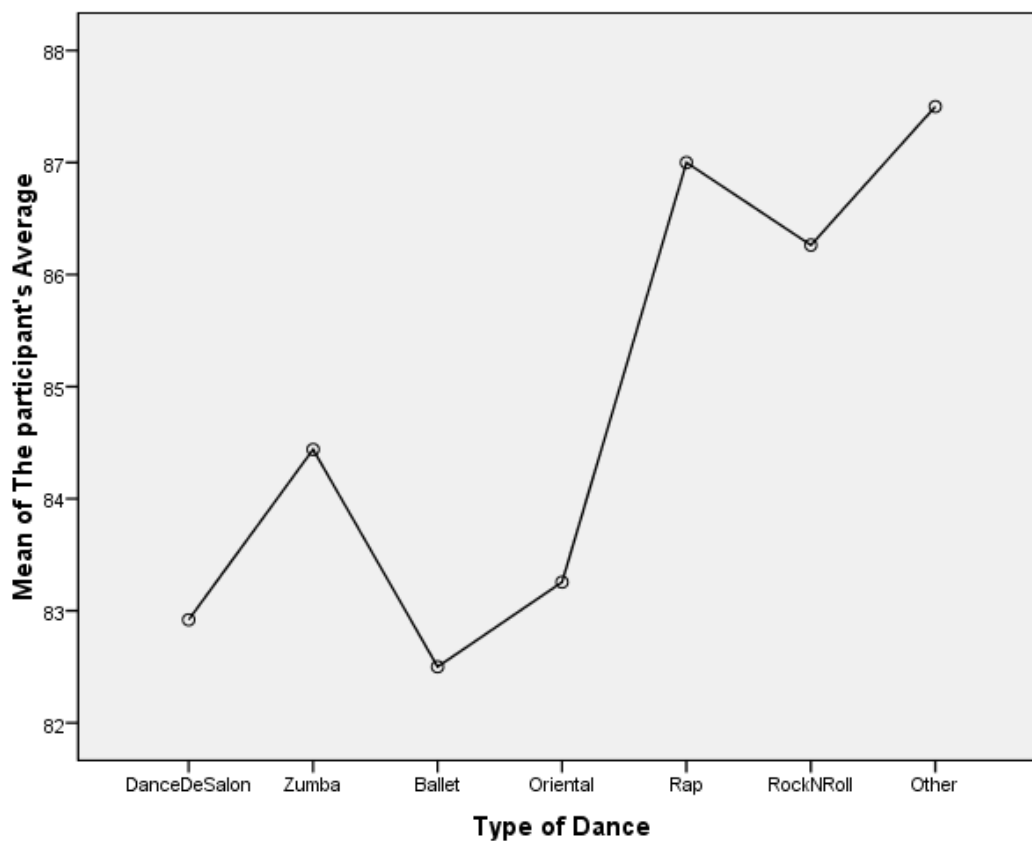
Table 6

The Participants’ Academic Averages across Different Dance Types

Types of Dance	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Dance de Salon	25	82.92	2.040
Zumba	25	84.44	1.530
Ballet	26	82.50	3.569
Oriental	90	83.26	3.307
Rap	13	87.00	.000
Rock’n Roll	38	86.26	5.371
Other	26	87.50	1.530
Total	243	84.39	3.698

Graph 2

The Participants' Academic Averages across Different Dance Types



A T-test was performed to check whether stress levels and self esteem differed across gender. With respect to self esteem, males ($M=39.0$, $SD=17.2$) and females ($M=39.1$, $SD=39.1$) didn't differ significantly with respect dancing, $t(469) = -0.046$, $p = n.s.$ (See table 7).

Table 7*Independent Samples T test for Self Esteem versus Gender*

	The Participant's Gender	N	M	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Self Esteem	Male	243	39.0412			
	Female	228	39.1140			
Equal variances assumed				-0.462	469	0.963

As for stress levels, males (M=27.3, SD=12.8) and females (M= 30.1, SD = 12.3) differed significantly with respect to dancing, $t(469) = -2.4$, (See table 8).

Table 8*Independent Samples T test for Stress versus Gender*

	The Participant's Gender	N	M	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Stress	Male	243	27.3169			
	Female	228	31.1184			
Equal variances assumed				-2.412	469	0.016

CHAPTER 5

Discussion

Summary and Discussion of Findings

The present study aimed at examining the relationships between dancing, stress, self esteem, and academic achievement. The results of the study demonstrated that the constructs under study are of relevance in Lebanon.

Although previous research states that dancing improves self esteem of students across different age groups, this study showed that there were no significant differences among students in Lebanon. Hence, student- dancers and non-dancers, of different age groups, did not differ with respect to their self esteem. However, many previous studies looked at relationships between dancing and well-being of adults and concluded that a positive relationship between dancing and self esteem of participants does exist (Murcia et al, 2010, Feltes (2008), Basich (2006). The absence of a positive relationship between dancing and self esteem in the current study, however, might be attributed to several factors. First, Murcia (2012) and Feltes (2008) did not look exclusively at students. This might have influenced the results because young students might have other problems that are causing their low self esteem levels. Another explanation might be attributed to cultural differences. It could be that men and women from other western cultures feel freer to express themselves in comparison to our culture. Their values and opinions about dancing differ from our Lebanese Eastern values and opinions. In certain societies, such as the Lebanese one, male dancers are sometimes associated with being gay (Shay, 2006), whereas women dancers are immediately associated with exciting men (Jeffreys, 2008). However, in western societies, dancing is considered a form of a physical activity that

people enjoy (Lewis et al, 2014). This difference in perspectives about dancing in western and eastern societies might have lead to the absence of relationship between dancing and self esteem among the participants in the current study.

Moreover, many studies examined dancing and its effect on stress (Hernandez, 1999; Ewing, 2010; Manoukian & Olmo, 2011; Brauninger, 2012) and most of them confirmed that dancing reduces levels of stress. Likewise, this study concluded that dancing and reduced stress levels correlated positively. However, in previous research, the effect of the type of dance was not examined. Concerning the stress factor, the results of the current study showed significant differences between the type of dance and stress levels among students. For example, the “other” dancers had the least stress levels in comparison to other stated dance types; moreover, the "Rap" dancers had higher levels of stress in comparison to the "Zumba" and the "Dance de Salon" dancers whereas both the "Rock n Roll" and "Zumba" dancers had the least levels of stress after the “other” among the participants. One of the possible reasons for such a result is that in "Zumba" there is no right or wrong way to do it; participants are encouraged to move to the beat of the music, not to mention that the choreography is less formal than in many other group exercise classes (Luetgen et al, 2012). In addition, according to Novack (1990), dancing is all about moving the body without thinking and following steps or regulations. Therefore, as the rules and regulations of the dance decrease, the stress levels decrease as well. As for having the “other” dance type yielding the least stress level, further studies should attempt to analyze these "other" dances.

As far as "Rock n Roll" is concerned, represented by Elvis Presley, the King of Rock' n Roll, it is considered a type of music that speaks directly to the heart of teenagers

by helping them let loose, go crazy, and express themselves as they shake their hips, thrust their pelvis, and dance passionately on stage (Wallace, 2012).

As for the "dance de salon", it seems that it has a number of advantages: 1) helps improve mental acuity, 2) involves kinesthetic emotional processes, 3) develops flexibility and endurance, and 4) reduces stress levels; therefore this type of dance helps the dancer enjoy a positive sense of well-being (Matta, 2010).

As for the positive relationship between dancing in general and better educational achievement, the current study confirmed that, which coincides with previous research, such as, Hernandez, 1999; Ewing 2010; Manoukian & Olmo, 2011; Brauninger, 2012. On a more specific level, one of the findings showed that "Rap" dancers received the highest academic average in comparison to the "Ballet", "Dance de Salon" and "oriental" dancers, who all received the lowest averages. The fact that Rap dancing yielded the highest academic achievement in comparison to other dance types, might be due to the fact that students who enjoy Rap music are those individuals who usually enjoy memorizing long lyrics rich with clever meaning and original rhymes. According to Weinstein (2006), the Hip-hop music as well as the Rap music, both hold promising implications for enhancing language, learning, and interest in curriculum. They can be infused into existing language-arts curricula to teach important subjects (Morrell & Duncan-Andrade, 2002). The genre of hip-hop music and, in particular, rap music with its heavy emphasis on the art of storytelling by using rich vocabulary and clever, thought-provoking rhymes, may be an effective vehicle for providing culturally-relevant language arts instruction; in particular, in the area of vocabulary (O'Reilly, 2011). Moreover, the participants, who danced the "other" dance type, received the highest academic averages of all. This is an interesting result that needs further studying in the future. Although it is a well-documented fact that dancing, in

general, as a physical exercise, builds healthy bones, reduces the risk for chronic illnesses, reduces stress levels, and improves self esteem, which all eventually could reflect positively on academic achievement (CDC, 2010), yet future studying needs to further explore the meaning of the "other" type of dances and why it correlates more positively with the reduction of stress.

In addition, further analysis of the overall results of the current study showed that stress levels vary across gender. That is, females have higher stress levels in comparison to males. These results apply with a study conducted by Matud (2004), who found out that women score significantly higher on somatic symptoms and psychological distress when compared to men. Another study conducted by Foster et, al (2003), demonstrated that females report as being more stressed than males because they have the urge to prove themselves in the male dominating environment. The current study is conducted on school students, undergraduate and graduate university students. Many stress sources exist during this life stage that are considered more stressful for females than males, such as, examinations and test pressures (Shukla, 2003), entering a new environment (Elinor, 2005), leaving old friends and making new ones (Denise 2001). Therefore, based on the above, one might conclude that, although both genders should be encouraged to participate in dancing activities to help in reducing their stress levels, females, in particular, should be targeted even more.

Overall, the results supported two of the three investigated hypotheses of this study. It was expected that there would be a negative correlation between dancing and stress levels. The results supported the hypothesis. Moreover, it was hypothesized to have positive correlation between dancing and academic achievement. This hypothesis was

supported by the results too. The results discussed above provide support to the theories surrounding dancing, stress and academic achievement found in previous studies.

Clinical and Social Implications

The findings of the current study have several implications within the clinical context. To begin with, the knowledge of the fact that dancing correlates positively with the well being of individuals, should encourage school and university counselors, therapists, physical education teachers and parents to consider dancing when attempting to solve problems that their students or children are facing. More specifically, in Lebanon, students, in general, but even more so high school students, are exposed to high levels of stress, such as, official exams, cramming of subjects, huge amount of material to cover throughout a school year, and lack of national security due to the political situation the country is facing. Therefore, students need activities that might help them in reducing their stress levels and, at the same time, maintain a good academic average.

On the other hand, school administrators in Lebanon, based on this local study, have evidence now that dancing can benefit their students. Therefore, they can implement a dancing program by including one hour per week for dancing and one hour for sports, instead of having two sports hours. By implementing such a program, they can allow students to benefit from dancing without decreasing the studying hours at school. Moreover, based on the results obtained through further analysis of data, administrators do not need to hire trained dancers for dancing classes since the “other” dancers yielded the lowest stress levels and the highest academic averages. Therefore, the same physical education trainer can lead students to dance to the beat on various types of music (music they choose) and attain the benefits of dancing. As for universities, benefitting from the

current study would be by establishing dance clubs with minimal or no conditions for membership. That is, the only requirement to be a member in the dancing club is to feel free to dance. Moreover, universities can include elective courses of dancing.

Last, but not least, as discussed earlier in this study, dancing has been researched widely in the Western societies for its benefits, whereas minimal research about dancing is conducted in the Arab countries, including Lebanon. Therefore, the fact that this study was conducted on a Lebanese sample, might provide more Lebanese people with local evidence regarding the therapeutic benefits of dancing on both genders. In other words, they might start changing their unjustified views about this physical activity that could be a source of pleasure as well as physical and mental health, instead of a provocative social label created solely by some for the sake of stereotyping dancers.

Limitations and Future Studies

As with all research, there are several limitations to the current study that must be noted. The first limitation was that the questionnaires were not translated to Arabic, thereby including only English-speaking members of the Lebanese population. This means that the results cannot be generalized to the whole of Lebanon. The second limitation is that the current study was not representative of the Lebanese population as it was performed only in Beirut. Accordingly, there are many schools and institutions that I did not visit.

Although this study has shed light on some important findings, there is more room to explore within the Lebanese society. Future research could focus on causal relationships between these factors in order to clarify these relationships further. It would be interesting to know if dancing is a cause to the changes in stress levels and academic averages or if

there are other factors interfering. In addition, further studies should focus on the type of dances and their various benefits, so that people can benefit maximally from dancing depending on the difficulty being faced. Moreover, since the study sampled participants from the Beirut area, it is important that future studies focus on different areas in Lebanon. Last but not least, it would be interesting to further research “the other” dance type in an attempt to find out what dance types does this “other” specifically refer to.

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Appendix A: Consent Form

Haigazian University

P.O. Box 11-1748

Riad El Solh, 1107 2090

Beirut, Lebanon

CONSENT TO SERVE AS A PARTICIPANT IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Project Title: The Relationship between Dancing, Self Esteem, Stress, and Educational Achievement among Lebanese Students

Project Director: Dr. Hanine Hout, PhD. email: hanine.hout@haigazian.edu.lb

Research investigator: Jinan Khaywa, email: jinankhaywa-99@hotmail.com

Nature and Purpose of the project:

The purpose of the project is to determine the relationship between dancing, stress, self esteem and educational achievement measures.

Explanation of Procedures:

As a research participant, you will be administered a questionnaire that you will be asked to fill out. Your names will not appear on the questionnaires and they will remain anonymous. It is expected that your participation in this research will last 20 minutes at maximum.

Potential discomfort and Risk:

There are no risks associated with participating in this research.

Potential Benefits:

The potential benefit is that you would have helped the investigator complete his research which is a thesis dissertation, and contributed to answering the research problem.

Costs/reimbursements:

There are no costs associated with the participation in this research.

Alternative Procedures:

There are no alternative procedures in this study in case you refuse to participate.

Alternatives to Participation:

There are no alternatives to participation in this study in case you refuse to participate.

Termination of participation:

If you decide to give consent to participate in this research, your participation might be terminated by the principal investigator or research director if the results show that they were contradictory or malingered.

Confidentiality:

The results of your participation will be kept confidential to the fullest extent possible. This means that only the principal investigator and research director will know about your specific results. Only information that cannot be traced to you will be used in reports or manuscripts published or presented by the investigator or director. Raw data on data-recording systems will be kept with the investigator following the termination of the study.

Withdrawal from the Project:

Only your oral consent is needed. By consenting you agree to participate in this research project. The purpose, procedures to be used, as well as, the potential risks and benefits of your participation have been explained to you in detail. You can refuse to participate or withdraw your participation in this study at any time without penalty. You will be given a copy of this consent.

Appendix B Demographics Form

This survey is confidential. Please do not include your name anywhere on it. Answer the following questions, without forgetting to answer anything, and then go to answer the survey.

Age: _____

Gender: _____

High School Student Average: _____

Undergraduate Student GPA: _____

Graduate Student GPA: _____

Dance-Related Information

Are you enrolled in any dancing classes? YES NO

if yes, specify the duration for your enrollment in dancing classes: _____

Have your relatives been involved in any dancing classes? YES NO

What is the number of hours spent on dancing per one week? _____

Type of dance

Dance de salon

Zumba

Ballet

Oriental

Rap

Rock n Roll

Others Please, specify: _____

Appendix C: Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale

Directions: Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself.

- 1- If you very strongly disagree, circle **1**.
 2- If you strongly disagree with the statement, circle **2**.
 3- If you disagree, circle **3**.
 4- If you are neutral, circle **4**.
 5- If you agree, circle **5**.
 6- If you strongly agree, circle **6**.
 7- If you very strongly agree, circle **7**.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
←.....→						
Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Very Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.							
2. At times, I think I am no good at all.							
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.							
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.							
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.							
6. I certainly feel useless at times.							
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least equal to others.							
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.							
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.							
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.							

Appendix D: Perceived Stress Scale

Instructions: The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, please indicate with a check how often you felt or thought a certain way.

1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and “stressed”?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often

10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

___1=never ___2=almost never ___3=sometimes ___4=fairly often ___5=very often