

Experiences of Older People with Dancing as a Form of Physical Activity

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Abstract

In terms of active aging, physical activity, which is considered a major factor in preserving good physical and mental health, is particularly emphasized. In this paper, the focus is on dancing as an activity that includes motor skills, cognitive and sensorimotor capacities, emotional and social tendencies and sensory abilities. The aim of the study was to gain an insight into some aspects of participation in dance activities from the perspective of older persons who participate in dance activities. The results of the research demonstrate that older persons cite new life circumstances as a reason for engaging in dance activities, as well as good organization of dance activities for older persons. They also highlight the characteristics and relationships among members of a dance group, as well as the importance of the leader's role, responses of their social environment, enrichment of daily life by dance and the discovery of dancing as a talent that contributes to the sense of community at a higher level. Certain difficulties related to participation in dance activities are highlighted as well (e.g. differences in participants' abilities to master dance steps). Older persons regard participation in dance activities as yielding multiple benefits: as a determinant of physical and mental health, preserving cognitive functions, expanding the network of friends and acquaintances, and a feeling of having free time that is rich in activities. It can be concluded that dancing plays an important role in the lives of persons who participate in these activities, as well as that it represents a positive contribution to various aspects of their lives.

Key words: active aging; andragogy; physical activity; dancing; older persons.

Introduction

Due to the increase of free time in old age, focusing on interests and activities for which there was no time before retirement becomes an option. This allows older persons to lead an active lifestyle after retirement, which includes engaging in certain forms of physical activity. Any form of activity that results in energy consumption greater than when at rest is considered a physical activity (Maček et al., 2016). This entails a variety of activities, such as recreation, sports, performing appropriate chores and the like.

Participation in activities that involve some form of physical activity contributes to preserving physical health and longevity, especially with regard to physical activity practiced through middle age and old age (Hamer et al., 2014). Physical inactivity contributes to tumor development, obesity, cerebrovascular disorders, coronary heart disease, sarcopenia, circulatory disorders, and the like (Hwang & Braun, 2015). On the other hand, physical activity reduces the risk of type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, degenerative rheumatic diseases and tumors (McPhee et al., 2016). With regard to the development of dementia, the results of studies are not uniform. However, certain studies demonstrate that regular physical activity contributes to reducing the risk of the onset of dementia (Tan et al., 2016; Mabire et al., 2018). It also makes it possible to maintain muscle strength and, although developing muscle mass by exercising for people over the age of 75 is difficult, it is important to maintain muscle mass. In the prevention and treatment of sarcopenia, an important role is played by physical activity, that is, resistance exercise (Cruz-Jentoft et al., 2010).

Physically active older persons have a more positive attitude towards work and cope better with stress and tension (Lobo et al., 2008). Physical activity also contributes to, inter alia, the preservation of cognitive functionality (Fallahpour et al., 2016), it is of help in terms of better organizing one's day and it raises the level of self-confidence (Tokarski, 2004). It can also represent a step towards social inclusion. This involvement in recreational and social activities is a protective factor in relation to cognitive functionality (Fallahpour et al., 2016). All of the aforementioned benefits of physical activity are a qualitative contribution to the lives of older persons, i.e. the conclusion that participation in a physical activity enhances the quality of older persons' lives is self-evident.

Dancing as a form of physical activity in old age

Dancing is defined as a multimodal activity that involves motor skills, cognitive and sensorimotor capacities, emotional and social aptitudes, and sensory abilities (Mabire et al., 2018). Given the need for greater involvement of older persons in forms of physical activity, certain authors posit that dancing can make physical activity more interesting and encourage engaging in it (Eyigor et al. 2009). Accordingly, Krampe et al. (2010) highlight dancing as an activity that many older people truly enjoy.

Dancing in old age has many positive effects on quality of life and health. With regard to health, dance contributes to improving muscular strength and endurance,

preserving motor skills and mental abilities, as well as to balance and reducing the risk of chronic diseases (Tomek-Roksandić & Budak, 2009). Furthermore, dancing is considered a form of physical activity that is helpful in preserving dexterity, muscle tone and coordination (Sofianidis et al., 2009). It also increases the speed of gait in older persons (Keogh, et al., 2009). Dancing contributes to the reduction of systolic blood pressure and diabetes parameters (Sivvas et al., 2015) and stimulates mental and motor functions, since it may require remembering certain movements (Garcia Gouvea et al., 2017). It also reduces the risk of falls, which is a common cause of morbidity and mortality in old age (Sofianidis et al., 2009). In persons with Parkinson's disease, it contributes positively to functional mobility and raises the quality of life (Sivvas et al., 2015). It also reduces the risk of depression and dementia (Tomek-Roksandić & Budak, 2009). In general, dancing keeps older persons in good shape. It is estimated that it helps burn 250 - 400 calories per hour, depending on form and intensity (Lima & Vieira, 2007).

In addition to physical well-being, dancing also enhances social and behavioural aspects of life (Hwang & Braun, 2015). Dancing in old age contributes to personal well-being and social connections among older persons, and therefore their confidence. It helps them become more creative and authentic, as well as to experience a sense of belonging to a particular group, while also improving their mood level (Lima & Vieira, 2007). Lima and Vieira (2007) state that participants in their research described dancing as something that makes them happy, facilitates self-love, and results in a sense of attractiveness and good socialization. It is also pleasurable for them, it reduces depression (Sivvas et al., 2015) and stress levels, improves sleep quality (Tomek-Roksandić & Budak, 2009), and reduces feelings of fear and isolation (Garcia Gouvea et al., 2017).

An important function of dancing is also evident in the work of the caring professions. Dance therapy is defined as a creative form of therapy in which movement is used for the purpose of improving an individual's emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration (American Dance Therapy Association, 2013, acc. to Hwang & Braun, 2015). Thus, in the field of psychiatry, dancing is used to encourage positive change in the treatment of persons with apathy and depression, with the aim of reestablishing social relationships (Motte-Haber, 1999).

Many older persons (as well as numerous experts working with them), including andragogues, are not aware of the usefulness of dancing, and it is important to inform them. Žiljak (2011) states that changes in andragogic methods have been observed, where the approach in which the enrollee should be in the centre of focus is predominant. Furthermore, Buiskol et al. (2009, acc. to Žiljak, 2011, p. 32) point out that „programmes should be adapted to the greatest extent to the specific needs and expectations of enrollees belonging to certain social groups – to that effect, the capability of an andragogic worker to identify prior experiences, knowledge and skills of their enrollees becomes important“. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to highlight the diversity of capabilities and motivations in old age. Older persons

who are involved in certain activities are themselves the best source of information on the aforementioned, with the aim of reducing prejudice and highlighting old age as a period of life in which there is creativity, activity and enjoyment of life. This paper presents the experiences of older persons who are engaged in dancing and the numerous aspects of their lives positively affected by this activity.

Research aim and questions

The aim of the research is to gain insight into aspects of participation in dance activities, the experiences thereof, and the contribution of participation in dance activities to the lives of older persons, from the perspective of older persons participating in dance activities. In accordance with the set aim, we endeavoured to answer two research questions:

- 1 What are the experiences of older persons with regard to participating in dance activities?
- 2 What is the role of dance activities in the lives of older persons?

Methodology

Measurement instruments

The semi-structured interview was used as a method of data collection within the framework of the qualitative research approach (Willig, 2013). All participants were asked all of the questions that were listed in the prepared protocol of the semi-structured interview. The protocol consisted of 15 open-ended questions, with the possibility of asking each participant sub-questions, as required. General data about each participant were also collected: gender, age, marital status, education degree, number of household members, number of children, and previous experience in dancing. The questions in the protocol related to: the incentive to engage in dance activities; previous life experience in dancing; feelings about dancing; the contribution of dancing to health, mood and social life; potential difficulties related to participation in dance activities, and reactions of the social environment thereto; the most important gain of participating in dance activities to their lives; and the relationships between dance group members and its leader.

Participants in the research

Twelve persons, members of a senior dance group in the city of Zagreb, who are not beneficiaries of the nursing home where the activity takes place, participated in the research. The age of the participants ranged from 65 to 74 years. The average age of the participants is 67.5 years. Seven participants are women (58.3 %) and 5 participants are men (41.7 %). Regarding the degree of education, 4 participants (33.3 %) have a secondary education diploma, 7 have a higher education degree (58.3 %), and 1 participant (8.3 %) has a doctorate. Six participants (50 %) are married, 5 are divorced (41.7 %), and 1 participant is not married (8.3 %). Eight participants have 2 children

(66.7 %), and 4 participants have one child (33.3 %). Four participants live in a single-person household (33.3 %), 7 participants live in a two-person household (58.3 %), and 1 participant (8.3 %) lives in a three-person household. Prior to conducting the research, each participant was asked for verbal consent regarding participation, as well as for consent to record the interview. An explanation of the aim of the research and the reasons for recording the interview was provided. Interviews were conducted in April and May 2018. The interviews lasted between 14 and 35 minutes, with an average interview time of 20 minutes.

Data processing

Qualitative analysis based on the coding process (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) was used in data processing. For the purpose of data processing, a coding process consisting of three parts, i.e. procedures, was used: attributing codes to empirical material, organizing codes into categories and defining codes and categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). When analysing the interview transcripts, statements that answer our research questions were extracted. These statements were then divided into codes according to content similarity, and the codes were given a title encompassing all of the aforementioned statements. Then the codes were grouped into categories according to the similarity of their content. The same procedure was applied individually to the first and then the second research question.

Results and discussion

In accordance with the research aim, answers were obtained to the stated research questions about what the experiences of participating in dance activities are and what the role of dance activities in older persons' lives is.

The first research question: What are the experiences of older people with regard to participating in dance activities?

Participants' experiences were reflected in several thematic units: reasons for joining a dance group, good organization of dance activities, characteristics of dance group members, relationships among group members, difficulties related to participating in dance activities, the role of the dance group leader, reactions of the social environment to them participating in dance activities, the contribution of dance activities to daily life, and the discovery of dance as an activity contributing to the sense of community at a higher level.

Reasons for joining a dance group. Retirement (*"The immediate trigger was retirement..."* S05) proved to be an important determinant of (re)involvement in dance activities. According to the disengagement theory, changes caused by aging in all aspects of life of older persons lead to withdrawal from certain groups, but not necessarily all groups to which they belong, thus older persons may nevertheless remain active in certain areas of their lives (Cumming & Henry, 1961, acc. to Schaie & Willis, 2001). This can also be

linked to having enough free time (“...I had enough time...” S04), which is the result of retirement. Previous experience in dancing, which the majority of participants cited as an activity they had been engaged in from a young age or throughout their entire lives, and an accidental encounter with dancing (“...I heard that there were courses, I didn’t even know such a thing existed. I was surprised...” S10) also proved to be an important determinant that motivated older persons to engage in dance activities. Older persons’ participation in dance activities in old age most often has roots in childhood, when they were very active with regard to dance activities, and some of them remained active throughout their lives (Marasović & Blažeka-Kokorić, 2014). All of this can be linked to the realization of one’s own desires related to dancing (“...I always wanted to learn to dance well.” S08), precisely because of the existing motivation for dancing. It is also important to mention the inability to join a dance group earlier because of family life (“While I was raising my family and worked, I missed dancing, but I did not find either the time or the inner strength...” S05). The same results were obtained in the research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014), where family life also emerged as a barrier to engaging in dance activities due to lack of free time. The participants cite a free dance course at a nursing home as an important reason for involvement (“...nothing needs to be paid.” S12). Ovsenik and Vidić (2013) state that money is an important determinant of older persons’ free time, which is why the aforementioned free course plays an important role with regard to members’ involvement.

Organization of dance activities. Older persons have experience in performing with their dance group (“...we are constantly performing somewhere...” S11), as well as the experience of participating in competitions and being successful in doing so (“Since we started competing, we were first, second, fourth, fifth...I have a medal of sorts from it, so that has become a memory...” S02). They also organize events in nursing homes (“Every year for New Year’s Eve and for the masked carnival, we organize a program and do choreography ourselves...” S07). Lindsay et al. (2002, acc. to Fallahpour et al., 2016) state that engaging in physical activity in old age can be a step towards social inclusion. Older persons also state the importance of a good dance partner (“So, when you have a good partner, that’s the most important...” S08).

Characteristics of the dance group. Research participants cite several important factors: a satisfactory group atmosphere (“... a very positive energy and atmosphere...” S01). Krampe et al. (2010) highlight dancing as an activity that many older people are shown to truly enjoy, and satisfactory group atmosphere is an important determinant, as well as other aspects of harmony among members of a dance group. Health condition (“...dancing requires a certain level of health...you must have good legs...” S03), effort as a condition of being able to participate in dance activities (“...you have to love it and want it, really have a will for it...” S07), and commitment to practicing (“...it takes a little effort, practice is needed here...” S04) are important determinants of the characteristics of a dance group as well. The lack of male dancers is also cited (“... primarily, there are few men...” S08).

Relationships among group members. Relationships among members are reflected in mutual help in learning dance steps (*“...we help each other and I am glad that someone corrects me about some wrong movements...”* S08), mutual care (*“We take care of each other....there are colleagues here who know better, and then they deal with you a little more...”* S01), the absence of disagreements (*“...there are no conflict situations...”* S04) and the absence of gossip within the group (*“... there is no gossip in this context...”* S01). Research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014) demonstrated that older persons enjoy conversation and socializing with members of the dance group. In our research, some participants expressed dissatisfaction with the personal characteristics of group members, commenting on people (*“...my wife then starts commenting on how people are dressed, and I start too, then we comment on how they dance...”* S02), and self-praise on behalf of group members (*“There are also those who boast...”* S07). It can be concluded that, as part of the group dynamics, members occasionally comment on one another, and there are differences in personalities and behaviour within the group. However, given other positive experiences, these negative behaviors can be disregarded. Members of the dance group also point out that relations are good in general (*“All in all, I can say that we are satisfied with how we are helping each other.”* S05).

Difficulties related to participation in dance activities. The difficulties are related to the (in)abilities of the group members in mastering dance steps (*“There is always someone in the group who quickly masters the material, and someone who is slower...”* S01), (*“Then you try 2 times, 5 times, 10 times, and after 10 times you realize...you have not mastered it...”* S01); emotions triggered by these difficulties (*“...I feel frustrated...”* S01) and the onset of muscle strain (*“...it is not always muscle strain, although it happens...”* S09), which is in accord with the results of research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014), which also show that older people experience certain health issues that hinder them in engaging in dance activities. Difficulties are caused by changes in physiological characteristics that result from aging, and which can greatly condition the selection of forms of physical activity in old age (Radašević et al., 2006). Stage fright is another difficulty that occurs, as well as in the research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014), but participants in this research are successfully overcoming it (*“...I manage to push stage fright and everything else into the background and do everything right...”* S05). Furthermore, contrary to all of the aforementioned, some participants state that there are no difficulties related to dance activities (*“I have no difficulties.”* S09).

The role of the dance group leader. The leader of dance activities, which older persons engage in, certainly plays an important role. This is reflected in the following statements provided by the participants: *“...he gives us so much... both in terms of dancing and in human terms...”* S05. Participants also highlight socializing with him in his free time (*“He (trainer) went with us for coffee the other day...”* S01), understanding their mood swings (*“...he understands that one day we are joyful, another day we are sad,*

one day, I don't know, sick, the next day chatty... he (trainer/teacher) understands who he is working with..." S07), and adapting the activities to their capabilities. All of the aforementioned results in respect for the dance group leader ("... we respect him as a true professor... we feel respectful..." S08).

Reactions of the social environment to participation in dance activities, at a general level, can be regarded as both positive and negative. As positive reactions, the participants highlight: involvement of other family members in dance activities ("*Even my younger daughter attended a certain dance workshop...*" S08), the family coming to performances ("*... she (granddaughter) came to watch me dance...*" S11), support and assistance offered by the husband ("*...my husband absolutely understands it...*" S07; "*... the husband will grab that iron and help me...he will take me there...*" S07), acceptance ("*...there is no one at all against it, on the contrary...*" S07), the perception of the usefulness of dancing ("*... they (family and acquaintances) have also heard that it is good ...And others who do not take the course, they know it is good too...*" S02). In addition to family and persons close to them, participants also notice compliments and invitations to perform from their social environment ("*... it happened to us several times that we were invited to come when there is some celebration...*" S11) and the involvement of new members in dance activities ("*...then a lot of them come to us and get involved, so we get new members...*" S11). The research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014) demonstrated that older persons are supported in their dance activities by people close to them. Such support can be vital in maintaining satisfaction and motivation for pursuing dance activities (Schaie & Willis, 2001). Contrary to the aforementioned, there are also results showing that older persons experience disinterest from the husband ("*...he did not show interest (husband)...*" S01), disapproval ("*He (husband) can complain on occasion, but this is not serious...*" S07), and the husband's mockery ("*Like, as if he (husband) is mocking me...*" S08), as well as prejudice on the part of social environment ("*That's all well and good, but at that age, is that what you really need now?! ...at this age, you should only be a grandmother...*" S05). Older persons cope well with these negative comments. Specifically, satisfaction coming from participation in dance activities far exceeds the possible detrimental influence of the aforementioned comments.

As it was possible to have already concluded from the results obtained so far, participation in dance activities is important to older persons in their daily lives. This stems from their love of music ("*Well, it's passion probably, for music, as soon as it plays... it's the music that motivates me.*" S07) and dancing ("*...I have always loved dancing, even from a young age...*" S05), whereby dancing represents an inner inclination ("*...some inner inclination... some kind of inner calling...*" S05), passion ("*...we have this common passion in life...*" S08) and their primary leisure activity ("*Ever since I began dancing, I had to cut back on other leisure activities...I'm in four dance groups...*" S01). The research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014), as well as the aforementioned results of this research, demonstrated that older persons' love of music and dancing,

dancing as an inner inclination and passion, and therefore the importance of dance in their daily lives, has roots in their early childhood and youth.

Dancing as a talent that contributes to the sense of community at a higher level. Older persons regard their dance group as, and associate it with various important aspects of life: religiosity, family, school, and children. This is evident in the following statements: dancing as an expression of religiosity (“...for me, it is something of an Act of Creation...and as a talent, it is a kind of call of God...” S05), the dance family (“We have become, in a way, one big family, much more than a dance group...” S01), school as a metaphor for participating in dance activities (“... as if you enroll in first grade or in kindergarten with your own generation...The same problems you had in high school...And quarrels ...” S03), and children as a metaphor for dance group members (“...we can be even naughtier, like children...” S07). In line with our findings, the research conducted by Marasović and Blažeka-Kokorić (2014) demonstrated that older persons perceive dancing as a metaphor for life. The research participants compare dancing with many other aspects of their lives (religiosity, school, family, etc.), that is, they perceive it as an important and integral part of their lives and as a path to social contact and a sense of community outside their own families. Such links show that dancing plays an important role in their lives, which will be demonstrated in the following sections of this paper.

The second research question: What is the role of dance activities in the lives of older persons?

The role of dancing in the lives of persons who participated in this research was manifested through the following thematic units: participation in dance activities as a determinant of physical and mental health, preservation of cognitive functions, expansion of the social network and a sense of free time that is rich in activities.

Participation in dance activities as a determinant of physical health is manifested through the experience of dancing as physical activity (“... this is physical activity...” S09), dancing as movement (“... these are all body movements, or rather, of the musculature of the body...” S04) and forms of recreation (“... This is recreation...” S08), which can be linked to the fact that physical activity is considered a major factor in preserving physical health in old age (McPhee et al., 2016). Older persons in this study identify dance with the various forms of physical activity mentioned above and, inter alia, further results show that they believe dancing contributes to their physical health. Therefore, they mention dancing as an aid regarding health issues (“... everything decreased for me, all the parameters in my blood count, cholesterol as well... I have no health issue or difficulty now...” S03), strengthening of the body (“I am much stronger than I was before...” S01), better coordination (“... activity that improves coordination of movements...” S09), it contributes to agility (“...it helps because I am more agile, more flexible...” S02) and proper body posture (“...all of us started to develop a nice posture...” S01). Resistance to illness and functional independence, reduced risk of mortality,

delayed or prevented hypertension, diabetes and coronary heart disease are among the most common contributions of physical activity (Clark, 1996, acc. to Ellingson & Conn, 2000), as well as decreased systolic blood pressure and diabetes parameters (Murrock et al., 2009, acc. to Sivvas et al., 2015). Some authors also cite muscle mass gain, joint flexibility, balance, general endurance and weight loss (Stewart & King, 1991, acc. to Ellingson & Conn, 2000). Furthermore, as falls are a common cause of death in old age, it is important to note that physical activity plays a major role in the prevention of falls (Zheng et al., 2013, acc. to Bianco et al., 2014). Participants in this research also cited maintaining muscle mass (“...I constantly maintain that musculature, for it to be a little firmer...” S11), maintaining physical fitness (“... I feel I’m fit...” S01), and taking care of physical appearance (“...I lost some weight...” S05) that, among other things, encompasses maintaining body weight. Stewart and King (1991, acc. to Ellingson & Conn, 2000) state that physical activity contributes to weight loss, and according to Lima and Vieira (2007), the estimation is that dancing contributes to burning 250 – 400 calories per hour, which some of the participants in our research have noticed as well.

With regard to **participation in dance activities as a determinant of mental health**, older persons mention moments of pleasure, joy, relaxation and laughter, as well as the creation of positive energy (“Dancing, in fact, creates a very beautiful energy. A wonderful, positive energy...” S10), satisfaction (“I am super satisfied after dancing, during the dance as well...” S02) and contributing to the mood (“... raising the mood...” S06). As noted above, dancing is considered a form of physical activity that older persons truly enjoy (Sandel et al., 2005, acc. to Krampe et al., 2010). According to Lima and Vieira (2007), dancing raises the mood level, and participants in their research described how dancing makes them happy. Akandere and Demir (2011, acc. to Sivvas et al., 2015) mentioned an increase in satisfaction and a decrease in the degree of depression as some of the contributions of dancing to mental health. Research participants also cite a contribution to the restoration of psychological balance (“I know it helps me... psychologically too...psychologically, people are doing better...” S02), which may be linked to the aforementioned. Likewise, dancing represents a significant contribution to older persons experiencing their own selves (“... Great, I feel that way... we all feel young!” S03). Along these lines, Lima and Vieira (2007) refer to dancing as an activity that develops self-love and enhances self-esteem. Release from rumination (“... I don’t think about anything” S07) is also one of the contributions that can be linked to the feelings of happiness, contentment and positive mood that arise as a result of participating in dance activities. With regard to contribution to the spiritual aspect of life (“...it satisfies all my endeavors, spiritual ones as well...” S05), it may be linked to dance therapy, in which contrasts and symbolic movements are used in order for a person to become aware of their body and spirit (Sivvas et al., 2015).

Participation in dance activities as a determinant of preservation of cognitive functions is manifested in mental activity (“... some form of exercise for memory too...

and brain function...” S08), prevention of dementia (“... there are some studies that state that dancing is a very good prevention of Alzheimer’s, dementia too...” S09) and retaining memories (“... perhaps what reminds me of my dad, who first taught me dance steps... a person retains those fond memories ...” S10). According to Garcia Gouve et al. (2017), dancing stimulates mental and motor functions, since it may require remembering certain movements. With regard to dementia prevention, some older persons are aware of the fact that dementia risk is reduced by regular physical activity, and Heiberger et al. (2001, acc. to Sivvas et al., 2015) state that, in the context of the onset of Parkinson’s disease, dancing has a positive contribution to functional ability and enhances quality of life. With regard to retaining memories, older persons in this study state that dancing helps retain the memories of loved ones who taught them how to dance, which also stimulates their mental functions.

Another role of participation in dance activities is functioning as a determinant of social life of older persons. Thus, older persons mention socializing in general, joint celebrations (“... any time the season ends, whether there is a birthday, there are parties...” S07), mutual contacts, people with whom a person can talk, exchange of information, meeting new people (“...I met a lot of people while dancing... I would never have met these people if I hadn’t come here.” S11), making new friends (“...you find new friends too...” S11), sharing personal problems with a group, dance parties and trips. Accordingly, Lima and Vieira (2007) state that dancing contributes to social bonds among older persons, and its contribution to the area of socializing is noticeable as well (Akandere & Demir, 2011, acc. to Sivvas et al., 2015). Older persons in this research also mention various aspects of socializing in their lives when discussing celebrations, contacts, conversations, going for coffee, dance parties, and trips as a result of participation in dance activities. Dance activities also yield a sense of belonging to a community in their lives (“... and when you come, you feel like you belong here somehow.” S10). Lima and Vieira (2007) also state that dancing contributes to a sense of belonging to a particular community; Vankova et al. (2014, acc. to Garcia Gouvea, 2017) state that participation in dance activities reduces the feeling of isolation. As members of a particular dance group, older persons feel involved in society and make various contacts with people whom they would not meet otherwise.

Ultimately, **participation in dance activities appears as a determinant of free time.** Above all, older persons regard dancing as entertainment and a hobby (“... it is a big part of my life...my greatest hobby!” S11) in their lives, as an activity they perform in their free time. With the reduction in obligations in old age, older persons often begin to engage in activities that they were interested in and for which, until old age, they did not have time, and they regard these activities as relaxation and a pastime (Ovsenik & Vidić, 2013) so that, inter alia, they also engage in dance activities, which are entertainment and a hobby in their free time. They also note that participation in dance activities enriches the way they spend their free time (“...found something to do

in my free time... filled a gap in time..." S04), and helps organize it ("*...it structures both days and weeks.*" S08), which is confirmed by Tokarski (2004) in stating that physical activity helps organize older persons' daily lives.

According to the results of this research, it can be concluded that dancing plays a very diverse but important role in the lives of older persons participating in dance activities as members of dance groups. Furthermore, older persons acknowledge the contributions of dancing to their lives and highlight them as something that keeps them engaged in this activity. It is also important to note that all members of the older persons' dance group in this research possess the experience of participating in dance activities and the love of dancing from early childhood and adolescence, which leads to the conclusion that this is one of the important factors conducive to dance activities in old age. All of the aforementioned leads to the conclusion that dancing is a form of physical activity that contributes to the quality of life of older persons (Sivvas et al., 2015).

Conclusion

Physical activity is still not a part of the daily life of many older persons (Franco et al., 2015). However, more and more attention is being paid to the concept of active aging and many older persons are familiar with the contributions of physical activity (Franco et al., 2015).

This study also discusses older persons' physical activity through participation in a dance group. Their experiences encompass several important areas: reasons for joining a dance group (retirement), good organization of dance activities tailored to their age, good relations among dance group members, pointing out difficulties related to participation in dance activities, the importance of the leader's role, reactions of their social environment to their participation in dance activities, the contribution of dance activities in everyday life, and the discovery of dancing as an activity that contributes to a sense of community at a higher level. Older persons regard participation in dance activities as yielding multiple benefits: as a determinant of physical and mental health, preserving cognitive functions, expanding the network of friends and acquaintances, and a feeling of having free time that is rich in activities. According to Radešević et al. (2006), dancing is one of the desirable activities with regard to preserving health in old age, and some older persons cite dancing specifically as an activity that they truly enjoy in multiple ways (Krampe et al., 2010).

A conclusion can be drawn that dancing is a form of physical activity in older persons that is useful in many aspects of their lives, and that, at the same time, it is a form of physical activity that enriches older persons' free time by introducing them to social life in a new, different way that, according to this research, "rejuvenates" and expands the worldview. The results of this research may be of use to older persons themselves with regard to obtaining information about the benefits of dancing, since many older persons harbor the prejudice according to which dancing is an "activity for the youth".

It is also important to inform various professionals involved in organizing free time for older persons about the positive effects of dancing. Furthermore, as examples of good practice, the results can also serve andragogues – in terms of empowering older persons with regard to their involvement in such and similar activities. Finally, the results can help younger generations raise awareness of the importance of adopting healthy life habits, as well as reducing prejudice towards older persons.

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Iskustva starijih osoba s plesom kao oblikom fizičke aktivnosti

Sažetak

Kod aktivnog starenja osobito se ističe fizička aktivnost koja se smatra glavnim faktorom za očuvanje dobrog fizičkog i psihičkog zdravlja. U ovom radu fokus je na plesu kao aktivnosti koja uključuje motoričke vještine, kognitivne i senzomotorne kapacitete, emocionalne i socijalne sklonosti te osjetilne sposobnosti. Cilj istraživanja bio je dobiti uvid u neke aspekte sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima iz perspektive starijih osoba koje sudjeluju u plesnim aktivnostima. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da starije osobe za sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima navode nove životne okolnosti kao razloge bavljenja plesom i dobru organizaciju plesnih aktivnosti za starije. Također ističu karakteristike i odnose među članova plesne skupine kao i važnost uloge voditelja, reakcije okoline, obogaćenost svakodnevnog života plesom te otkrivanje plesa kao talenta koji doprinosi zajedništvu na višoj razini. Istaknute su i neke teškoće vezane uz sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima (npr. različite mogućnosti sudionika u svladavanju plesnih koraka). Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima starije osobe doživljavaju višestruko korisnima: kao odrednicu fizičkog i psihičkog zdravlja, očuvanje kognitivnih funkcija, širenje mreže prijatelja i poznanika te osjećaj dobro ispunjenog slobodnog vremena. Može se zaključiti kako ples ima važnu ulogu u životu starijih osoba koje sudjeluju u navedenim aktivnostima kao i pozitivan doprinos različitim aspektima njihovog života.

Ključne riječi: *aktivno starenje; andragogija; fizička aktivnost; ples; starije osobe*

Uvod

Povećanjem količine slobodnog vremena u starosti, omogućava se usmjeravanje na interese i aktivnosti za koje do odlaska u mirovinu nije bilo vremena. To omogućuje starijim osobama da nakon umirovljenja vode aktivan životni stil što uključuje i bavljenje određenim oblikom fizičke aktivnosti. Fizičkom aktivnosti smatra se bilo koji oblik aktivnosti koji rezultira energetsom potrošnjom većom nego što je ona u stanju mirovanja (Maček i sur., 2016). To podrazumijeva razne aktivnosti, poput rekreacije, sporta, obavljanja prigodnih poslova i sličnog.

Participacija u aktivnostima koje uključuju neki oblik fizičke aktivnosti doprinosi očuvanju fizičkog zdravlja i dugovječnosti, osobito kad se radi o fizičkoj aktivnosti koja se prakticira kroz srednju dob i starost (Hamer, Lavoie, Bacon, 2014). Fizička

neaktivnost doprinosi razvoju tumora, debljini, cerebrovaskularnim poremećajima, koronarnoj bolesti srca, sarkopeniji, poremećajima vezanima uz cirkulaciju i slično (Hwang i Braun, 2015). Fizička aktivnost, s druge strane, smanjuje rizik od dijabetesa tipa 2, osteoporoze, degenerativnih reumatskih bolesti i tumora (McPhee i sur., 2016). Kad se radi o razvoju demencije, rezultati studija nisu izjednačeni, međutim, određeni dio studija pokazuje kako redovita fizička aktivnost doprinosi smanjenju rizika od pojave demencije (Tan i sur., 2016; Mabire, Aquino, & Charras, 2018). Također omogućava i zadržavanje mišićne snage jer iako je u dobi iznad 75 godina stvaranje mišićne mase vježbanjem otežano, važno ju je zadržati. Kod prevencije i tretmana sarkopenije¹ važnu ulogu ima upravo fizička aktivnost, odnosno, vježbe snage s opterećenjem (Cruz – Jentoft i sur., 2010).

Fizički aktivne starije osobe imaju pozitivniji stav prema radu te se bolje nose sa stresom i napetosti (Lobo i sur., 2008). Između ostalog, fizička aktivnost doprinosi i održavanju kognitivne funkcionalnosti (Fallahpour i sur., 2016) te pomaže u boljoj organizaciji dana i podiže razinu samopouzdanja (Tokarski, 2004). Isto tako, ona može biti i korak ka socijalnom uključivanju. Ta uključenost u rekreativne i socijalne aktivnosti je protektivni faktor kognitivne funkcionalnosti (Fallahpour i sur., 2016). Sav navedeni doprinos fizičke aktivnosti životu starijih osoba je doprinos dimenzijama kvalitete njihovih života, što nas vodi ka zaključku da sudjelovanje u fizičkoj aktivnosti svakako podiže kvalitetu života starijih osoba.

Ples kao oblik fizičke aktivnosti u starosti

Ples se definira kao multimodalna aktivnost koja uključuje motoričke vještine, kognitivne i senzomotorne kapacitete, emocionalne i socijalne sklonosti te osjetilne sposobnosti (Mabire, Aquino, & Charras, 2018). S obzirom na potrebu većeg uključivanja starijih osoba u oblike fizičke aktivnosti, neki autori smatraju da ples može učiniti fizičku aktivnost zanimljivijom i potaknuti uključivanje u istu (Eyigor i sur. 2009). Sukladno tome, Krampe i suradnici (2010) ističu ples kao aktivnost u kojoj mnoštvo starijih osoba zaista uživa.

Ples u starosti ima mnogobrojne pozitivne učinke na kvalitetu života i zdravlje. Kad se radi o zdravlju, ples doprinosi unapređenju mišićne snage i izdržljivosti, održavanju motoričkih i mentalnih sposobnosti, ravnoteže te smanjenju rizika od kroničnih bolesti (Tomek – Roksandić i Budak, 2009). Također, ples se smatra oblikom fizičke aktivnosti koji pomaže u održavanju spretnosti, mišićnog tonusa i koordinacije (Sofianidis i sur., 2009). Također, povećava brzinu kretanja kod starijih osoba (Keogh, i sur., 2009). Doprinosi i smanjenju sistoličkog krvnog tlaka i parametara dijabetesa (Sivvas i sur., 2015). Ples stimulira mentalne i motorne funkcije, budući da može zahtijevati pamćenje određenih pokreta (Garcia Gouvea i sur., 2017). Također, smanjuje rizik od padova, što je učestali uzrok morbiditeta i mortaliteta u starosti (Sofianidis i sur., 2009). Kod

¹ Sarkopenija je gerijatrijski sindrom koji se očituje u smanjenom opsegu mišićne mase, smanjenoj snazi i umoru. Ključnu ulogu u liječenju sarkopenije ima fizička aktivnost i adekvatna prehrana (Maček i sur., 2016.).

osoba s Parkinsonovom bolešću, pozitivano doprinosi funkcionalnoj mobilnosti i podiže kvalitetu života (Sivvas i sur., 2015). Isto tako, smanjuje i rizik od depresije i demencija (Tomek – Roksandić i Budak, 2009). Općenito, ples održava starije osobe u dobroj formi. Procjenjuje se kako ples pomaže izgaranju 250 – 400 kalorija u satu, ovisno o njegovom obliku i intenzitetu (Lima i Vieira, 2007).

Osim fizičke dobrobiti, ples unapređuje i socijalni i ponašajni aspekt života (Hwang i Braun, 2015). Ples u starosti doprinosi osobnoj dobrobiti i socijalnim vezama među starijima, pa samim time i njihovom samopouzdanju. Pomaže im da postanu kreativniji, autentični i dožive osjećaj pripadnosti određenoj grupi, a podiže i razinu raspoloženja (Lima i Vieira, 2007). Lima i Vieira (2007) navode kako su sudionici njihovog istraživanja opisali ples kao nešto što im donosi sreću, ljubav prema sebi, osjećaj atraktivnosti i dobro druženje. Također, donosi im zadovoljstvo i smanjuje stupanj depresije (Sivvas i sur., 2015), snižava razinu stresa i poboljšava kvalitetu spavanja (Tomek – Roksandić i Budak, 2009), a smanjuje i osjećaj straha i izolacije (Garcia Gouvea i sur., 2017).

Važna funkcija plesa očituje se i u radu pomažućih profesija. Terapija plesom definira se kao kreativni oblik terapije u kojem se koristi pokret u svrhu unapređenja emocionalne, kognitivne, fizičke i socijalne integracije pojedinca (American Dance Therapy Association, 2013, prema Hwang i Braun, 2015). Tako se u području psihijatrije, ples koristi za poticanje pozitivnih promjena kod terapije apatičnih i depresivnih osoba, s ciljem ponovnog uspostavljanja socijalnih odnosa (Motte-Haber, 1999).

Mnoge starije osobe (ali i brojni stručnjaci koji s njima rade), pa i andragozi, nisu upoznati o korisnosti plesa te ih je važno o tome informirati. Žiljak (2011.) navodi da su uočene promjene u andragoškim metodama gdje prevladava pristup u kojem polaznik treba biti u središtu. Također, Buiskol i sur. (2009, prema Žiljak, 2011.:32) ističu da se „programi trebaju maksimalno prilagođavati specifičnim potrebama i očekivanjima polaznika pojedinih društvenih skupina – u tom smislu postaje važna sposobnost andragoških djelatnika da prepoznaju prethodna iskustva, znanja i vještine svojih polaznika.” Stoga je svrha ovog istraživanja ukazati na raznolikost sposobnosti i motivacije u starijoj životnoj dobi. Same starije osobe koje prakticiraju neku aktivnost su najbolji izvor informacija o tome s ciljem smanjenja predrasuda i isticanja starosti kao životnog razdoblja u kojem je prisutna kreativnost, aktivnost i uživanje u životu. U ovom radu prikazana su iskustva starijih osoba koje se bave plesom te mnoga područja njihovog života na koja pozitivno utječe ova aktivnost.

Cilj i istraživačka pitanja

Cilj istraživanja je dobiti uvid u aspekte sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima, iskustva koja se pritom stiču te doprinos sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima njihovom životu, iz perspektive starijih osoba koje sudjeluju u plesnim aktivnostima. Sukladno cilju nastojali smo dobiti odgovor na dva istraživačka pitanja:

1. Koja su iskustva sudjelovanja starijih osoba u plesnim aktivnostima?
2. Koja je uloga plesnih aktivnosti u životu starijih osoba?

Metodologija

Mjerni instrument

Kao metoda prikupljanja podataka u okviru kvalitativnog istraživačkog pristupa korišten je polustrukturirani intervju (Willig, 2013). Svim sudionicima, postavljena su sva pitanja koja su se nalazila u pripremljenom protokolu polustrukturiranog intervjua. Protokol se sastojao od 15 otvorenih pitanja, uz moguće postavljanje podpitanja svakom od sudionika, ovisno o potrebi. Također su se prikupljali i opći podaci o svakom sudioniku: spol, dob, bračni status, stupanj obrazovanja, broj članova kućanstva, broj djece te prethodno iskustvo bavljenja plesom. Pitanja u protokolu odnosila su se na: poticaj za uključivanje u plesne aktivnosti, doživljaj plesa u vlastitom životu, osjećaje vezane uz ples, doprinos plesa zdravlju, raspoloženju, društvenom životu, moguće teškoće vezane uz sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima i reakcije okoline na isto, najvažniji doprinos sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima njihovom životu te odnose između članova plesne skupine i voditelja

Sudionici istraživanja

U istraživanju je sudjelovalo 12 osoba, članova jedne plesne skupine starijih osoba u gradu Zagrebu, koji nisu korisnici doma za starije i nemoćne osobe gdje se aktivnost održava. Raspon dobi sudionika kretao se od 65 do 74 godine. Prosječna dob sudionika je 67,5 godina. Ženskog spola je 7 (58,3 %), a muškog spola je 5 (41,7 %) sudionika. Kad se radi o stupnju obrazovanja, 4 (33,3 %) sudionika ima srednju stručnu spremu, 7 (58,3 %) sudionika ima višu ili visoku stručnu spremu, a 1 sudionik (8,3 %) ima doktorat. U braku je 6 (50 %) sudionika, razvedeno je 5 (41,7 %) sudionika, a 1 (8,3 %) sudionik je nevjenčan. Dvoje djece ima 8 (66,7 %) sudionika, a 1 dijete imaju 4 (33,3 %) sudionika. U samačkom kućanstvu žive 4 (33,3 %) sudionika, u kućanstvu od 2 člana živi 7 (58,3 %) sudionika, a u kućanstvu od 3 člana živi 1 (8,3 %) sudionik. Prije početka provođenja istraživanja, od svakog sudionika zatražen je usmeni pristanak za sudjelovanje te pristanak za snimanje intervjua, uz objašnjenje cilja istraživanja, te objašnjenje razloga snimanja intervjua. Intervjui su provedeni u travnju i svibnju 2018. godine. Trajali su između 14 i 35 minuta, a prosječno vrijeme trajanja intervjua bilo je 20 minuta.

Obrada podataka

Pri obradi podataka, korištena je kvalitativna analiza koja počiva na procesu kodiranja (Hsieh i Shannon, 2005). U svrhu obrade podataka korišten je postupak kodiranja koji se sastoji od tri dijela odnosno postupka: pripisivanja kodova empirijskoj građi, organiziranja kodova u kategorije te definiranja kodova i kategorija (Hsieh i Shannon, 2005). Prilikom analize transkripata intervjua, izdvojene su izjave koje odgovaraju na naša istraživačka pitanja. Te izjave su potom prema sličnosti sadržaja podijeljene u kodove, koji su pritom dobili naziv koji obuhvaća sve navedene izjave. Zatim su kodovi prema sličnosti svog sadržaja povezani u kategorije. Isti postupak primijenjen je pojedinačno za prvo, pa zatim na drugo istraživačko pitanje.

Rezultati i rasprava

Sukladno cilju istraživanja, dobiveni su odgovori na dva istraživačka pitanja: koja su iskustava sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima? te koja je uloga plesnih aktivnosti u životu starijih osoba?

Prvo istraživačko pitanje: Koja su iskustva sudjelovanja starijih osoba u plesnim aktivnostima?

Iskustva sudionika istraživanja očitovala su se kroz nekoliko tematskih cjelina: razlozi uključivanja u plesnu skupinu, dobra organizacija plesnih aktivnosti, karakteristike članova plesne skupine, odnosi članova skupine, teškoće vezane uz sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, uloga voditelja plesne skupine, reakcije okoline na sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, doprinos plesnih aktivnosti u svakodnevnom životu te otkrivanje plesa kao aktivnosti koja doprinosi zajedništvu na višoj razini.

Razlozi uključivanja u plesnu skupinu. Odlazak u mirovinu („*Neposredni okidač je bio odlazak u mirovinu...*” S05) pokazao se važnom odrednicom koja je uvjetovala (ponovno) uključivanje u plesne aktivnosti. Prema teoriji smanjene aktivnosti, promjene izazvane starenjem u svim aspektima života starijih osoba dovode do povlačenja iz određenih skupina, ali ne nužno i svih skupina kojima osobe pripadaju, pa tako starije osobe u određenim područjima svog života ipak mogu ostati aktivne (Cumming i Henry, 1961, prema Schaie i Willis, 2001). Isto možemo povezati i s dovoljno slobodnog vremena („...*imao sam dovoljno vremena...*” S04), koje je rezultat upravo povlačenja iz radne uloge. Prijašnje iskustvo bavljenja plesom, koje je većina sudionika navela kao aktivnost iz mladosti ili tijekom cijelog života i slučajan susret s plesom („...*čula da imaju tečajevi, to čak nisam ni znala da postoji. Iznenadila sam se...*” S10) također su se pokazali važnom odrednicom koja je motivirala starije osobe na uključivanje u plesne aktivnosti. Bavljenje plesom kod starijih osoba u starosti najčešće seže još iz djetinjstva, kada su bili vrlo aktivni u plesnim aktivnostima, a neki od njih to su ostali i kroz cijeli život (Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić, 2014). Sve to moguće je povezati i s ostvarenjem vlastitih želja vezanih uz ples („...*uvijek sam htjela naučit dobro plesat.*” S08), upravo zbog postojeće motivacije za bavljenjem istim. Tu je važno spomenuti i nemogućnost ranijeg uključivanja u plesnu skupinu zbog obiteljskog života („*Dok sam podizala obitelj, posao, falio mi je ples, ali nisam našla ni vremena ni snage nutarnje...*” S05). Iste rezultate možemo pronaći i u istraživanju Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014), gdje se obiteljski život također javio kao prepreka za uključivanje u plesne aktivnosti zbog nedostatka slobodnog vremena. Besplatni tečaj plesa u Domu za starije sudionici navode kao važan razlog uključivanja. Ovsenik i Vidić (2013) ističu kako je važna odrednica slobodnog vremena starijih osoba upravo novac, zbog čega to što je navedeni tečaj besplatan ima važnu ulogu kad se radi o uključivanju članova.

Organizacija plesnih aktivnosti. Starije osobe imaju iskustvo nastupanja sa svojom plesnom skupinom („...*mi stalno nastupamo negdje...*” S11), sudjelovanja na natjecanjima

i pri tom ostvarene uspjehe („Pošto smo se natjecali pa smo onda bili prvi, drugi, četvrti, peti... Pa imam od tog nekakvu medalju, pa to je uspomena...” S02). Isto tako, organiziraju i događaje u domovima za starije i nemoćne osobe („I svake godine za Novu godinu i za maskare mi priredimo program i sami napravimo koreografiju...” S07). Lindsay i suradnici (2002, prema Fallahpour i sur., 2016) navode da uključivanje u fizičku aktivnost u starosti može biti korak ka socijalnom uključivanju. Pri tom starije osobe navode i važnost dobrog plesnog partnera („Tak kad imate dobrog partnera, to je najvažnije...” S08).

Karakteristike plesne skupine. Sudionici istraživanja navode nekoliko važnih čimbenika: zadovoljavajuću grupnu atmosferu, a povezano s time, i međusobnu sličnost članova skupine („...puno novih znanaca koji jednako misle... zajednički interesi... smo se baš onako našli i po talentu, i po nekakvim željama plesnim, i ambicijama, i volji, i snazi...” S05), komunikativnost članova skupine) te prihvaćanje novih članova („...odmah sam bila prihvaćena...” S01). Krampe i suradnici (2010) ističu ples kao aktivnost za koju se pokazuju da mnoštvo starijih osoba zaista u njoj uživa, a važna odrednica je upravo zadovoljavajuća grupna atmosfera i ostali aspekti slaganja među članovima unutar plesne skupine. Zdravstveno stanje („...ples vam zahtijeva određeni nivo zdravlja... morate imat dobre noge...” S03) i trud kao uvjet mogućnosti sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima te posvećenost vježbanju („...tu treba malo i uložiti truda, tu treba i vježbati...” S04) također su važne odrednice karakteristika plesne skupine. Navodi se i nedostatak muških plesača („...muškaraca prvenstveno ima malo...” S08).

Odnosi članova plesne skupine. Odnosi među članovima se pokazuju kroz međusobnu pomoć u učenju plesnih koraka („...jedan drugome pomažemo i meni je drago da meni netko iskorrigira moje nekakve krive pokrete...” S08), međusobnu brigu („Vodimo računa jedni o drugima...zato su tu kolege i kolegice koji znaju bolje, i onda se ono, pozabave malo više s tobom...” S01), nepostojanje nesuglasica („...nema tu konfliktnih situacija...” S04) i nepostojanje tračeva unutar skupine. U istraživanju Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014) pokazalo se kako starije osobe uživaju u razgovoru i druženju s članovima plesne skupine. U našem istraživanju neki sudionici su iskazali i nezadovoljstvo osobnim karakteristikama članova skupine, međusobnu zavist komentiranje („...moja žena onda kak je ko obučen, pa onda i ja, pa kak pleše...” S02) i hvaljenje članova skupine („Ima i onih koji se hvale...” S07). Može se zaključiti kako je unutar članova navedene plesne skupine kao dio grupne dinamike prisutno povremeno komentiranje te različitost u osobnostima i ponašanju. Međutim, uzimajući u obzir ostala pozitivna iskustva, ova negativna ponašanja možemo zanemariti. Također članovi plesne skupine ističu da su općenito odnosi dobri („Kad se sve zbroji, mogu reći da smo zadovoljni kako si pomažemo.” S05).

Teškoće vezane uz sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima. Poteškoće se odnose na (ne)mogućnosti članova skupine u svladavanju plesnih koraka („Uvijek u grupi ima netko tko brzo savladava gradivo, netko tko sporije...” S01), („Pa onda probate 2 puta, 5 puta, 10 puta, i nakon 10 puta shvatiš... da nisi savladao...” S01); osjeća je potaknute

tim teškoćama („...frustrirajuće se osjećam...” S01) te pojavu upale mišića („...nije uvijek upala mišića, mada i to se događa...” S09), što se može povezati s istraživanjem Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014), gdje se također navodi da starije osobe imaju određene zdravstvene teškoće koje ih ometaju u bavljenju plesnim aktivnostima. Teškoće su uzrokovane promjenama fizioloških karakteristika koje su rezultat starenja, a koje mogu uvelike uvjetovati odabir oblika fizičke aktivnosti u starosti (Radašević i sur., 2006). Trema je još jedna od teškoća koja se javlja, kao i u istraživanju Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014), no sudionici istraživanja uspješno ju prevladavaju („...uspijevam i tremu i sve stavim u drugi plan i napravim što treba...” S05). Također, suprotno svemu navedenom, neki navode nepostojanje teškoća vezanih uz plesne aktivnosti („Ja nemam nikakvih teškoća.” S09).

Uloga voditelja plesne skupine. Voditelj plesnih aktivnosti s osobama starije životne dobi svakako ima važnu ulogu. To se očituje u sljedećim izjavama sudionika: („...puno daje... u ovom smislu plesnom, i u ljudskom...” S05). Također sudionici ističu druženje s njim u slobodno vrijeme („Neki dan je baš bio (trener) s nama na kavi...” S01), razumijevanje njihovih promjena raspoloženja („...razumije da smo jedan dan veseli, drugi dan tužni, jedan dan, ne znam, bolesni, sljedeći dan lajavi ili brbljavi...on (trener) razumije s kim radi...” S07) te prilagođavanje aktivnosti njihovim mogućnostima. Kao posljedica navedenog je poštovanje prema voditelju plesne skupine („...respektiramo ga kao pravog profesora... osjećamo jedno poštovanje ...” S08).

Reakcije okoline na sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, na općenitoj razini bi se mogle sagledati kao pozitivne i negativne. Kao pozitivne reakcije ističu: uključenje u plesne aktivnosti i drugih članova obitelji („Čak mi se i mlađa kćerka uključila u neku plesnu radionicu...” S08), dolazak obitelji na nastupe („...došla je (unuka) gledat kak sam ja plesala...” S11), podršku i pomoć supruga („...moj suprug to apsolutno razumije...” S07; „...suprug će dohvatit tu peglu i pomoći mi...odvest će me na ples...” S07), prihvaćanje percepciju korisnosti plesa („...oni (obitelj i poznanici) su čuli isto tako da je dobro... I drugi koji ne idu na tečaj, i oni znaju da je to dobro...” S02). Uz obitelj i bliske osobe, sudionici zamjećuju i pohvale od strane okoline i pozive za nastupe („...dogodilo nam se nekoliko puta da nas pozovu kad nešto slave da mi dođemo...” S11) te uključivanje novih članova na plesne aktivnosti („...onda se puno njih i uključi isto kod nas, tako da dobijemo i nove članove...” S11). U istraživanju Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014), pokazalo se da starije osobe imaju podršku od strane bliskih osoba u bavljenju plesnim aktivnostima. Takva podrška može biti vrlo važna za održavanje motivacije i zadovoljstva za bavljenjem istima (Schaie i Willis, 2001). Suprotno gore navedenom, javljaju se i rezultati koji pokazuju da starije osobe doživljavaju nezainteresiranost od strane supruga („...nije pokazivao interes (muž)...” S01), negodovanje („On (suprug) zna koji put prigovorit, ali to nije ozbiljno...” S07) i podrugivanje supruga („Onak malo, kao da se (suprug) podruguje...” S08) te predrasude od strane okoline („Ma sve je to lijepo, ali u toj dobi, šta ti treba to sad?!...u ovoj dobi bi trebala biti samo baka...” S05).

S ovim negativnim komentarima se starije osobe dobro nose. Naime, njima je puno veće zadovoljstvo u sudjelovanju u plesnim aktivnostima od navedenih komentara.

Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, kao što se već moglo i zaključiti prema dosadašnjim rezultatima, je važno starijim osobama u svakodnevnom životu. To proizlazi iz njihove ljubavi prema glazbi („*Pa strast vjerojatno, ka muzici, čim zaszvira... muzika je ta koja mene motivira.*” S07) i plesu („...*inače sam od mladosti uvijek voljela ples...*” S05), ples im predstavlja unutarnje nagnuće („...*neko nutarnje nagnuće... nekakav nutarnji zov...*” S05), strast („...*baš imamo neku zajedničku strast u životu...*” S08) te im je primarna slobodna aktivnost (*Otkad se bavim plesom, druge slobodne aktivnosti sam morala smanjiti... u četiri plesne grupe plešem...*” S01). Istraživanje Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014), kao i prethodno navedeni rezultati ovog istraživanja, pokazali su da starije osobe ljubav prema glazbi i plesu, ples kao unutarnje nagnuće i strast, stoga i važnost plesa u svom svakodnevnom životu, imaju još od najranijeg djetinjstva i mladosti.

Ples kao talent koji doprinosi zajedništvu na višoj razini. Starije osobe svoju plesnu skupinu doživljavaju i povezuju s raznim važnim aspektima života: religioznost, obitelj, škola, djeca. To je vidljivo u sljedećim izjavama: ples kao izraz religioznosti („...*to mi je nekakav Stvoriteljski čin... i kao talent je neka vrsta i Božjeg poziva...*” S05), plesna obitelj („*Mi smo postali na neki način jedna velika obitelj, puno više od plesne skupine...*” S01) i škola kao metafora sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima („...*ko da se upišete u prvi razred ili ko da uđete u vrtić sa svojom generacijom...Isti problemi koje imate u srednjoj, gimnaziji... I svađe...*” S03) te djeca kao metafora članova plesne skupine („...*znamo bit zaista još gori, ko deca...*” S07.). Sukladno našim nalazima, istraživanje Marasović i Blažeka – Kokorić (2014) pokazalo je da starije osobe plesu pridaju metaforu života. Sudionici istraživanja ples uspoređuju s mnogim drugim aspektima njihova života (religioznost, škola, obitelj, itd.), odnosno, doživljavaju ga kao važnom sastavnicom svog života i putem ka socijalnim kontaktima i zajedništvu izvan vlastite obitelji. Takve poveznice pokazuju da ples ima važnu ulogu u njihovom životu, što će se iskazati kroz nastavak ovog rada.

Drugo istraživačko pitanje: Koja je uloga plesnih aktivnosti u životu starijih osoba?

Uloga plesa u životu sudionika istraživanja se očitovala kroz sljedeće tematske cjeline: sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima kao odrednica fizičkog i psihičkog zdravlja, očuvanje kognitivnih funkcija, širenje socijalne mreže te osjećaj dobro ispunjenog slobodnog vremena.

Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima kao odrednica fizičkog zdravlja očituje se kroz doživljaj plesa kao fizičke aktivnosti („...*to je fizička aktivnost...*” S09), plesa kao kretanja („...*sve su to pokreti tijela, odnosno, određeno muskulature tijela...*” S04) i oblika rekreacije), što se može povezati s time da se fizička aktivnost smatra glavnim faktorom za očuvanje fizičkog zdravlja u starosti (McPhee i sur., 2016). Starije osobe u ovom

istraživanju ples poistovjećuju s raznim gore navedenim oblicima fizičke aktivnosti, te između ostalog, kroz daljnje rezultate je vidljivo kako vjeruju da ples doprinosi njihovom fizičkom zdravlju. Tako spominju ples kao pomoć kod zdravstvenih tegoba („...meni su se smanjile sve, svi parametri u krvnim nalazima, i kolesterol...ja nemam neki zdravstveni problem, tegobe sad...” S03), jačanja tijela („puno sam jača nego što sam to prije bila...” S01), bolje koordinacije doprinosi pokretljivosti i lijepom držanju tijela. Među najčešćim doprinosima fizičke aktivnosti smatraju se otpornost na bolest i funkcionalna samostalnost, smanjen rizik od smrtnosti, odgođena ili prevenirana hipertenzija, dijabetes i koronarna bolest srca (Clark, 1996, prema Ellingson i Conn, 2000) te smanjenje sistoličkog krvnog tlaka i parametara dijabetesa (Murrock i sur., 2009, prema Sivvas i sur., 2015). Neki autori spominju i ojačanje mišićne mase, fleksibilnost zglobova, ravnotežu i općenito izdržljivost te smanjenje težine (Stewart i King, 1991, prema Ellingson i Conn, 2000). Također, kako su padovi učestali uzrok smrti u starosti, važno je spomenuti kako glavnu ulogu u prevenciji padova ima upravo fizička aktivnost (Zheng i sur., 2013, prema Bianco i sur., 2014). Starije osobe u ovom istraživanju također su spomenule održavanje mišićne mase („...stalno održavam tu miškulaturu da bude malo čvršća...” S11), održavanje tjelesne forme („...imam osjećaj da sam fit...” S01) te brigu o tjelesnom izgledu („...izgubila sam poneke kile...” S05), koja, između ostalog, obuhvaća i održavanje tjelesne težine. Stewart i King (1991, prema Ellingson i Conn, 2000) navode kako fizička aktivnost doprinosi smanjenju tjelesne težine, a prema Lima i Vieira (2007), procjenjuje se da ples pomaže izgaranju 250 – 400 kalorija u satu, što su primijetili i neki sudionici našeg istraživanja.

Kad se radi o **sudjelovanju u plesnim aktivnostima kao odrednici psihičkog zdravlja**, starije osobe govore o trenucima uživanja, veselja, opuštanja i smijeha te stvaranju pozitivne energije („Ples inače stvara jednu jako lijepu energiju. Jednu krasnu, pozitivnu energiju...” S10), zadovoljstva i doprinosu raspoloženju. Kao što je već navedeno, ples se smatra oblikom fizičke aktivnosti u kojem starije osobe zaista uživaju (Sandel i sur., 2005, prema Krampe i sur., 2010). Prema Lima i Vieira (2007) ples podiže razinu raspoloženja, a sudionici njihova istraživanja opisali su kako im ples donosi sreću. Akandere i Demir (2011, prema Sivvas i sur., 2015) spominju povećanje zadovoljstva i smanjenje stupnja depresije kao jednih od doprinosa plesa psihičkom zdravlju. Sudionici istraživanja navode i doprinos uspostavljanju psihičke ravnoteže („znam da mi pomaže... i psihički... psihološki čovjek je bolje...” S02), što se može povezati s već navedenim. Isto tako, ples im donosi primjetan doprinos doživljaju sebe („...Odlično, tako se osjećam...zato se svi osjećamo mladi!” S03), a Lima i Vieira (2007) spominju ples kao onu aktivnost koja razvija ljubav prema sebi i jača samopouzdanje. Oslobođanje od misli („...na niš ne mislim!” S07) također je jedan od doprinosa, koji se može povezati s osjećajima sreće, zadovoljstva i raspoloženja koji se javljaju kao rezultat sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima. Kad se radi o doprinosu duhovnom aspektu života („...zadovoljava sva moja preguća, i duhovna...” S05), to je moguće povezati s terapijom

plesom, u kojoj se koriste kontrastni i simbolični pokreti kako bi osoba postala svjesna svog tijela i duha (Sivvas i sur., 2015).

Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima kao odrednica očuvanja kognitivnih funkcija očituje se kroz mentalnu aktivnost („...neki način vježbanja i memorije...i rada mozga...” S08), prevenciju demencije („...postoje neke studije koje kažu da je ples jako dobra preventiva protiv Alzheimerera, protiv demencije...” S09) i očuvanje uspomena („...možda što me podsjeća na mog tatu koji me je prvi naučio plesne korake...čovjek si nastavi s tim lijepim uspomenama...” S10). Prema Garcia Gouvea i suradnicima (2017), ples stimulira mentalne i motorne funkcije, s obzirom da može zahtijevati pamćenje određenih pokreta. Kad se radi o prevenciji demencije, neke starije osobe upoznate su s činjenicom smanjenja rizika od obolijevanja od demencije uslijed redovite fizičke aktivnosti, a Heiberger i suradnici (2001, prema Sivvas i sur., 2015) navode kako uslijed obolijevanja od Parkinsonove bolesti, ples ima pozitivan doprinos funkcionalnoj sposobnosti i podiže kvalitetu života. Kad se radi o očuvanju uspomena, starije osobe u ovom istraživanju navode kako im sudjelovanje u plesu čuva uspomene na bliske osobe koje su ih učile plesu, što također stimulira njihove mentalne funkcije.

Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima ima i ulogu odrednice društvenog života kod starijih osoba. Tako starije osobe spominju općenito druženje, zajedničke proslave („...bilo kad završi sezona, bilo da ima netko rođendan, pa se napravi malo fešta...” S07), međusobne kontakte, društvo za razgovor, razmjenu informacija, stvaranje poznanstava („...na plesu sam upoznala jako puno ljudi... te ljude nikad ne bi upoznala da nisam došla tu.” S11), sklapanje novih prijateljstava („...pronadeš isto onda nove prijatelje...” S11), dijeljenje osobnih problema s grupom, odlaske na zajedničke plesnjake i izlete. Sukladno navedenom, Lima i Vieira (2007) navode kako ples doprinosi socijalnim vezama među starijima, a isto tako, doprinosi u području druženja (Akandere i Demir, 2011, prema Sivvas i sur., 2015). Raznovrsne aspekte spominju i starije osobe u ovom istraživanju kada pričaju o proslavama, kontaktima, razgovorima, kavama, plesnjacima i izletima, kao rezultatu sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima. Plesne aktivnosti u njihov život donose i pripadnost zajednici („...i kad dođeš, osjećaš se kao da nekako tu pripadaš.” S10). Lima i Vieira (2007) također spominju kako ples doprinosi osjećaju pripadnosti određenoj zajednici, a Vankova i suradnici (2014, prema Garcia Gouvea, 2017) navode kako sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima smanjuje osjećaj izolacije. Starije osobe se kao članom određene plesne skupine osjećaju uključenima u društvo te ostvaruju razne kontakte s osobama koje inače ne bi upoznale.

Na kraju, **sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima javlja se kao odrednica slobodnog vremena**. Prvenstveno, starije osobe ples vide kao zabavu i hobi („...to je jedan veliki dio u mom životu...najveći moj hobi!” S11) u svom životu, kao aktivnost kojom se bave u slobodno vrijeme. Starije osobe se smanjenjem obaveza u starosti često počinju baviti onim aktivnostima za koje su imali interes, a do starosti nisu imali vremena, a te aktivnosti smatraju opuštanjem i razbibrigom (Ovsenik i Vidić, 2013), pa se,

između ostalog, uključuju i u plesne aktivnosti, koje im predstavljaju zabavu i hobi u njihovom slobodnom vremenu. Isto tako, spominju kako im sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima ispunjava („...ispunio slobodno vrijeme... ispunio je prazninu u vremenu...” S04) i organizira („...konstruira i dan i tjedan.” S08) njihovo vrijeme, što potvrđuje i Tokarski (2004) koji navodi kako fizička aktivnost pomaže organiziranju dana kod starijih osoba.

Može se zaključiti kako, prema rezultatima ovog istraživanja, ples ima vrlo raznolike ali važne uloge u životu starijih osoba koje sudjeluju u plesnim aktivnostima u okviru plesnih skupina. Također, starije osobe prepoznaju doprinose plesa svom životu te ih ističu kao nešto što ih održava upravo u toj aktivnosti. Isto tako, važno je spomenuti kako svi članovi plesne skupine starijih osoba u ovom istraživanju imaju iskustvo sudjelovanja u plesnim aktivnostima i ljubav prema plesu još iz ranog djetinjstva i mladosti, zbog čega se može zaključiti kako je to jedan od važnih faktora o kojima ovisi uključenje u plesne aktivnosti u starosti. Sukladno svemu navedenom, ples je jedan od oblika fizičke aktivnosti koji doprinosi kvaliteti života starijih osoba (Sivvas i sur., 2015).

Zaključak

Fizička aktivnost još uvijek ne predstavlja dio svakodnevnog života većeg broja starijih osoba (Franco i sur., 2015). Međutim, sve se više pažnje posvećuje konceptu aktivnog starenja i mnoge starije osobe su upoznate s doprinosima fizičke aktivnosti (Franco i sur., 2015).

O fizičkoj aktivnosti kroz sudjelovanje u plesnoj skupini starijih osoba govori i ovo istraživanje. Njihova iskustva obuhvaćaju nekoliko važnih područja: razloge uključivanja u plesnu skupinu (odlazak u mirovinu), dobru organizaciju plesnih aktivnosti prilagođenih njihovoj dobi, dobre odnose članova plesne skupine, ukazivanje na teškoće vezane uz sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, važnost uloge voditelja, reakcije okoline na njihovo sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima, doprinos plesnih aktivnosti u svakodnevnom životu te otkrivanje plesa kao aktivnosti koja doprinosi zajedništvu na višoj razini. Sudjelovanje u plesnim aktivnostima starije osobe doživljavaju višestruko korisnima: kao odrednicu fizičkog i psihičkog zdravlja, očuvanje kognitivnih funkcija, širenje mreže prijatelja i poznanika te osjećaj dobro ispunjenog slobodnog vremena. Prema Radašević i suradnicima (2006), ples je jedna od poželjnih aktivnosti u očuvanju zdravlja u starosti, a neke starije osobe ga navode upravo kao aktivnost u kojoj zaista višestruko uživaju (Krampe i sur., 2010).

Možemo zaključiti kako je ples kao oblik fizičke aktivnosti kod starijih osoba koristan u mnogim aspektima njihova života, a istovremeno je i oblik fizičke aktivnosti koji ispunjava vrijeme starijim osobama tako da ih uvodi u društveni život na neki novi, drukčiji način koji, sukladno ovom istraživanju, „pomlađuje” i širi pogled na svijet. Rezultati ovog istraživanja mogu koristiti samim starijim osobama u informiranju o dobrobitima bavljenja plesom, budući da mnoge starije osobe imaju predrasude kako

je to „aktivnost za mlade”. Također je važno informirati i različite profesionalce koji se bave organiziranjem slobodnog vremena za starije osobe o pozitivnim učincima plesa. Također, rezultati, kao primjer dobre prakse mogu poslužiti i andragozima – u smislu osnaživanja starijih osoba u poduzimanju ovakvih i sličnih aktivnosti. Na kraju, mlađim generacijama mogu pomoći u širenju svijesti o važnosti usvajanja zdravih životnih navika kao i smanjenju predrasuda prema starijim osobama.