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Original article

BENEFITS OF THE DANCESPORT COURSE ON THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF STUDENTS IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS

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Abstract

Objectives. The increasing development of dance sport at the national level and the growing interest of the population of any age in practicing this discipline either to a recreational, educative-formative, fitness or a performance-related purpose determine a reevaluation of the way of training specialists in physical education and sports field. The profile faculties assume the task of preparing the human resource that will ensure the teaching of this discipline in different educational compartments.

The study aimed to emphasize the opinions of students in physical education and sports about the benefits brought by the participation in the course "Theory and practice of expression sports". We are interested in seeing to what extent the students have become aware of the importance of the acquired knowledge for their professional training. Through the analysis of students' necessities, we want to meet their desires, by improving the content of the study programme.

Methods of research. The exploratory research used the opinion survey questionnaire. The subjects were 154 first year students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports within the Bucharest National University of Physical Education and Sports. The responses to items used the 5-level interval scale. The questionnaires were filled in and introduced in the SPSS statistical analysis software, version 15.

Results. Analyzing the responses, there were identified the motivational factors that had determined the participation in dancesport courses and the nomination of benefits brought by the accumulated knowledge for the personal and professional training.

Conclusions. The analysis of responses entitles us to estimate as positive the impact of this course on the subjects. Most of the respondents have considered it a suitable course, which provides them benefits especially for the development of coordination components. The knowledge gained is thought to be valuable and useful for their professional carrier.

Keywords: dancesport, professional training, physical education.

Introduction

Pre-university education has the attribution, among others, to ensure the premises for building and developing the artistic aptitudes through intervention of the esthetic education objectives (Cristea, 1994). However, the place occupied by the artistic-esthetic formation in school is estimated restrictively in comparison with the appreciation granted to other disciplines and is even marked by a depreciation in the authority of the staff who teaches disciplines such as music, drawing, dance, physical education (Cucoş, 2014).

Concerning the issue related to the implementation of dance in school activity, we notice the interest of

pupils and some of the physical education teachers in developing this discipline within the extracurricular activities. In a previous research, we showed the role of dance, under its different approaches, in achieving the reference objectives of the school curricula and we underlined the educative-formative valences of this motor activity (Macovei, Zahiu, Şulea, 2014).

From the cultural point of view, dance represents not only an art cherished by any person, of any generation, but also an activity that can be at the same time an art, a sport, a recreational activity, a socialization means, a prophylaxis or a therapy, a formative and educative motor activity (Năstase,

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2004).

Specialty literature provides articles that bring to debate the complex role of education through dance in the motor, cognitive and esthetic formation of practitioners, emphasizing the addressability of this activity through unique multisensory interventions at the level of the entire human body (Arnold, 2005, Eddy, 2009, Hanna, 2008).

Discussions also foster the implications of dance in developing the intelligence forms promoted by Gardner. One of its specific valences is the formation of body control, which intervenes in the development of kinesthetic intelligence through direct contributions to the education of nonverbal communication capacity, with an essential role in human activity (Hanna, 2008).

Due to the multitude of benefits, dance is thought to have a crucial role in the complete education of pupils, regardless of their competences and biological development level (<http://www.eps-canada.ca/programmes/dans>).

Related to the situation of approaching education through dance in the school setting, there are also authors who criticize the way in which it is represented in the school curricula. Among the arts, this one is considered to be the least approached for the esthetic education, therefore to be marginalized. In school, dance depends on the option of the physical education teacher. But its impact on the pupil is large, due to the multiple influences it exerts on building the child's personality (Bresler, 1992, Cucos, 2014). Education through dance may aim to promote the artistic or physical components. If physical activity is the primarily intended purpose, then dance is the responsibility of physical education (http://www.ndeo.org/content.aspx?page_id=22&club_id=893257&module_id=94031).

The aim of the research. Starting from these arguments, we notice that the preparation of specialists in physical education must also include the formation of competences for approaching a form of dance as a motor activity beneficial to pupils. In this sense, dance is present in the curricula of profile faculties in most universities of the country, either as such or introduced in the context of an expression discipline that aims to educate the body expression and the motor communication capacity. Promoting these disciplines is not accidental, but is motivated by the very recognition of the role of the specialist in physical education and sports to build in pupils a series of artistic-motor competences, so necessary for the complex development of their personality.

Among the practice forms, dancesport becomes an activity increasingly accessed by pupils and students who want to know to dance different styles, more or less integrated into the patterns of the two sections specific to competitive dancesport, respectively Standard and/or Latin sections. (Năstase, 2011).

In our previous research, we were interested in seeing the opinions and preferences of students in physical education regarding the dance styles, so that we could meet their desires through didactic interventions meant to build their motivation for using the accumulated competences in the future practical-methodical activity (Zahiu, Stănescu, Macovei, 2014).

In this study, we started from the premise that, for the professional training of specialists in physical education and sports, we should also investigate the students' awareness of the role and importance of each curricular discipline in the formation of their own competences. We permanently had in view the recommendations and principles promoted by a student-centered education, our desire being to motivate and encourage their engagement in the learning process and also their awareness of the importance of the performed work (<http://www.anosr.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/2012-Toolkit-ICS-cadre-didactice1.pdf>).

In this sense, we have been interested in seeing to what extent the students in physical education and sports are aware, motivated and appreciate the benefits brought by the participation in a course destined to their professional training in the field of artistic education, with special references to dancesport.

Hypothesis. To ensure a student-centered education, it is necessary to know their opinion about the benefits of the course attendance for their professional training.

Methods of research

The study used the survey method, achieved by applying an opinion questionnaire to 154 first year students at the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports within the Bucharest National University of Physical Education and Sports, participants, during the 1st semester of the university year 2013-2014, in the course "Theory and practice of expression sports". The course syllabus provides a number of 14 practical works. At the end of the course, in parallel with the practical-methodical checking, the students filled in a questionnaire including 11 items, for the responses being used:

- The 5-level interval scale, for the quantitative prioritization with equal distances between ranks, where 1 means “to a very small extent”, 2 “to a small extent”, 3 “to the same extent”, 4 “to a large extent”, 5 “to a very large extent”;
- The proportional scale, also for the quantitative variables, but related to the age of the respondents.

Out of the 11 items, there were analyzed the responses to 6 questions referring to the topic of the paper. They will be presented at the results, in a direct connection with the responses received.

Responses to the questionnaire were statistically analyzed using the SPSS software, version 15. For the data analysis, there were used the indicators of central tendency (arithmetic mean and median), dispersion (diffusion/ variation - standard deviation) and distribution form (Skewness Index - for the obliqueness and Kurtosis Index - for the arching). As types of analyses, it was used the Qi-Square Test and also the Independent T-Test.

Results

Distribution of the respondents by gender reveals that 68.8% are males and 31.2% are females. The mean age is 20 years - 53.2% of respondents are 19 years or less, 27.3% are 20 and 19.5% are at least 21.

1. Responses to the item “*What was your attendance rate for the course ‘Theory and practice of expression sports’?*” showed that the course attendance was 100% for 42.9% of the interviewed students and 80% for 40.3% of them, which indicates a good participation.

2. For the item “*After having attended the course ‘Theory and practice of expression sports’, appraise, on a scale from 1 to 5, the pleasure to dance*”, 82.5% of students gave responses corresponding to levels 4 and 5. The pleasure to dance is significantly higher among those who have attended the course in a proportion of 80% (an average score of 4.40 on the scale from 1 to 5) or even 100% (an average score of 4.42) than among those who have attended the course in a proportion of only 50% (an average score of 3.87). At the same time, there are found higher scores among women (4.65, the average score), as compared to men, according to figure 1.

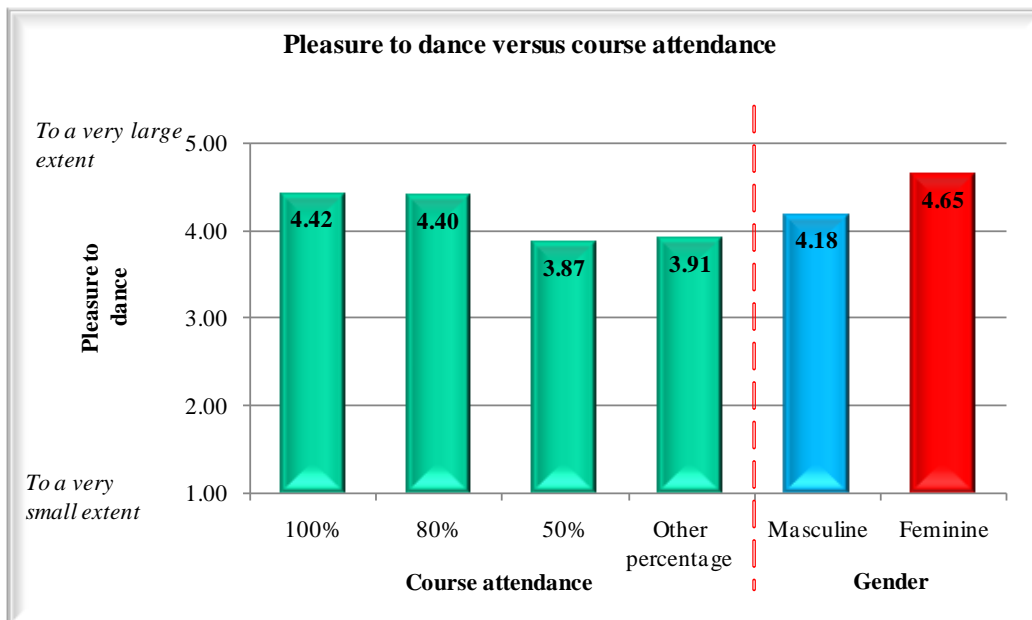


Figure 1. A comparative synthesis between the pleasure to dance and the course attendance

3. For the item “*To what extent do you think that participation in the course ‘Theory and practice of expression sports’ has been beneficial to you?*”, more than half of the respondents, respectively

55.2%, consider that their participation in the course has been beneficial to a very large extent.

The scores calculated by gender are significantly higher among women (an average score

of 4.54 on the scale from 1 to 5), as compared to men (4.25). At the same time, they are significantly higher among those who have attended the course in a

proportion of 100% (4.42) or 80% (4.47) than among those who have attended the course in a proportion of only 50% (3.53), according to figure 2.

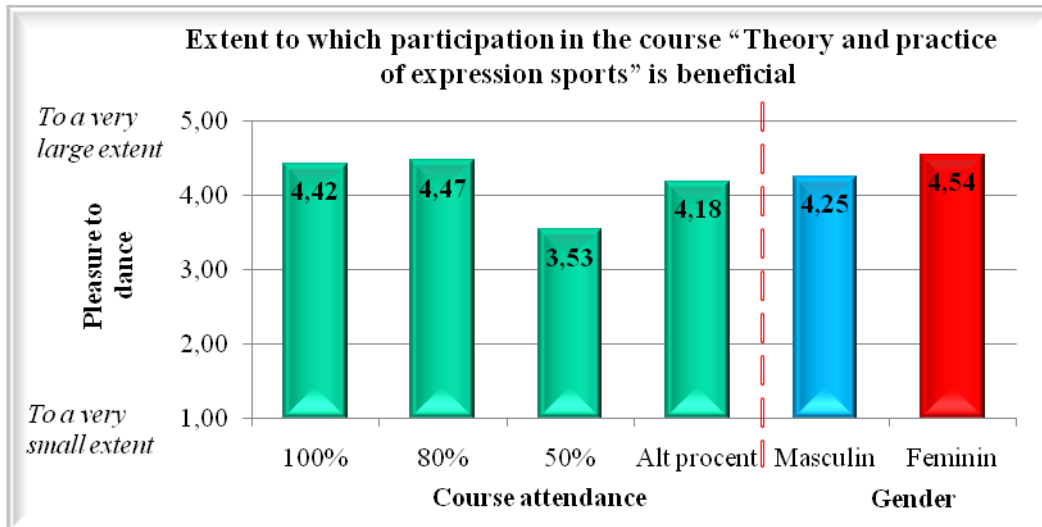


Figure 2. A comparative synthesis of the appraisal related to participation in the course "Theory and practice of expression sports"

4. The item "Appraise, according to your opinions, on the scale from 1 to 5, the motivational factors that would determine you to participate regularly and systematically in the

dancesportcourses" nominated a series of reasons presented in figure 3, together with the calculated statistical indicators.

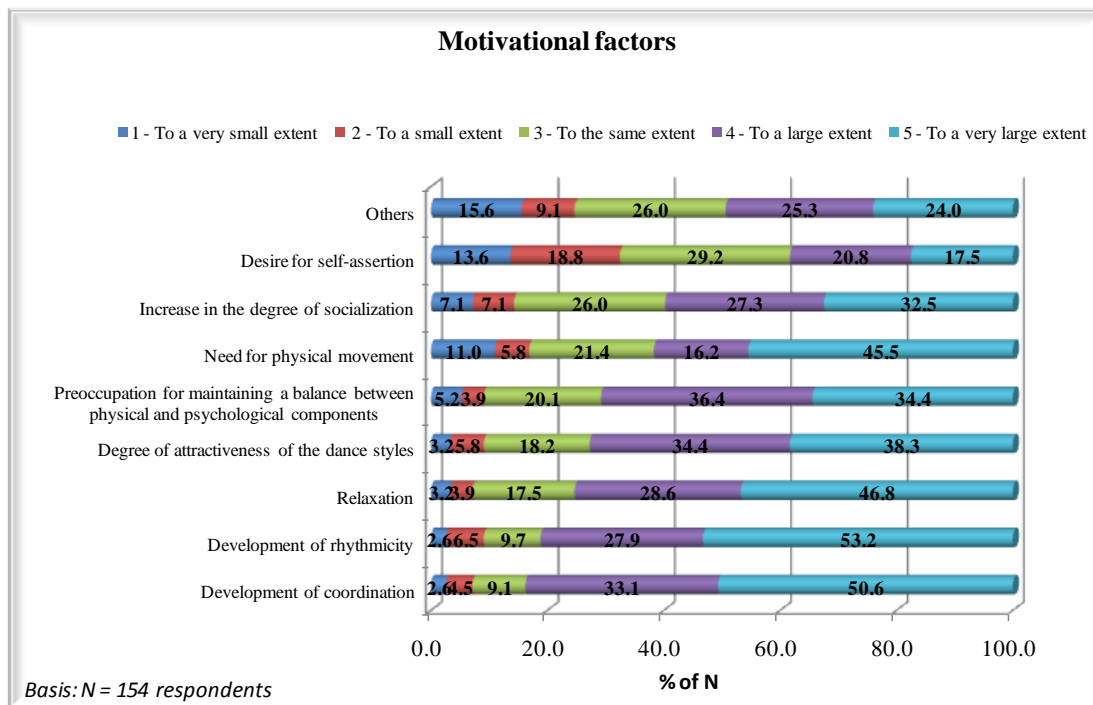


Figure 3. Appraisal of the motivational factors

It is found that the first places are occupied, in order of the options, by the development of coordination, development of rhythmicity and relaxation, followed by the degree of attractiveness of the dance styles.

The analysis by gender, highlighted in figure 4, shows significant differences only for the factor - Degree of attractiveness of the dance styles, which, in the case of women, is significantly stronger (4.38, the average score) than among men (3.81).

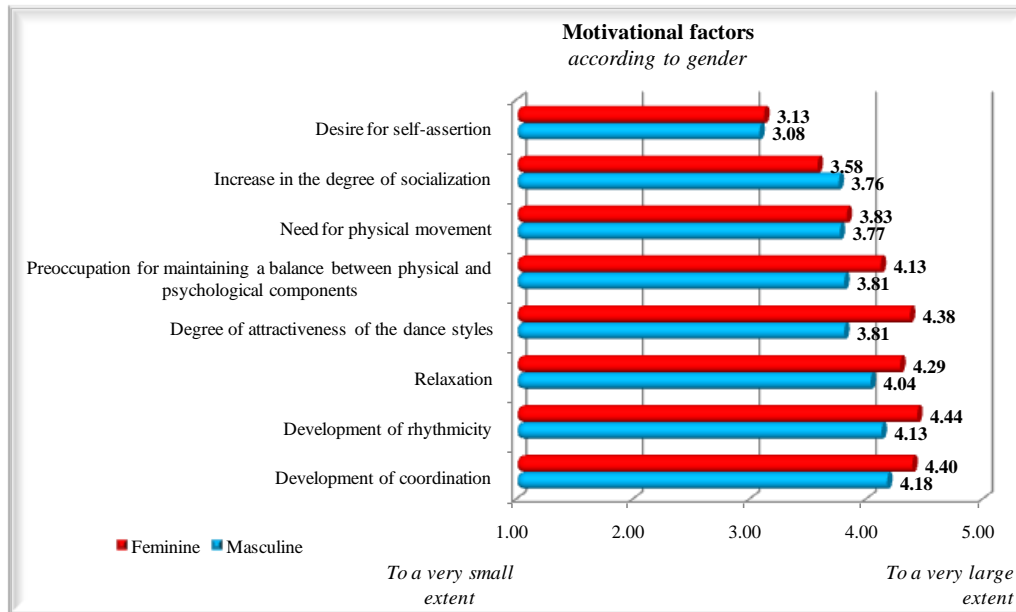


Figure 4. A comparative analysis by gender of the motivational factors

5. The item “Which of the following benefits of dancesport do you think that are important to you?” emphasizes three main aspects: psychic relaxation and de-stressing, maintaining some correct

attitudes of the body posture, desire for self-improvement and self-surpassing. The full presentation of results for each factor nominated by students is illustrated in figure 5.

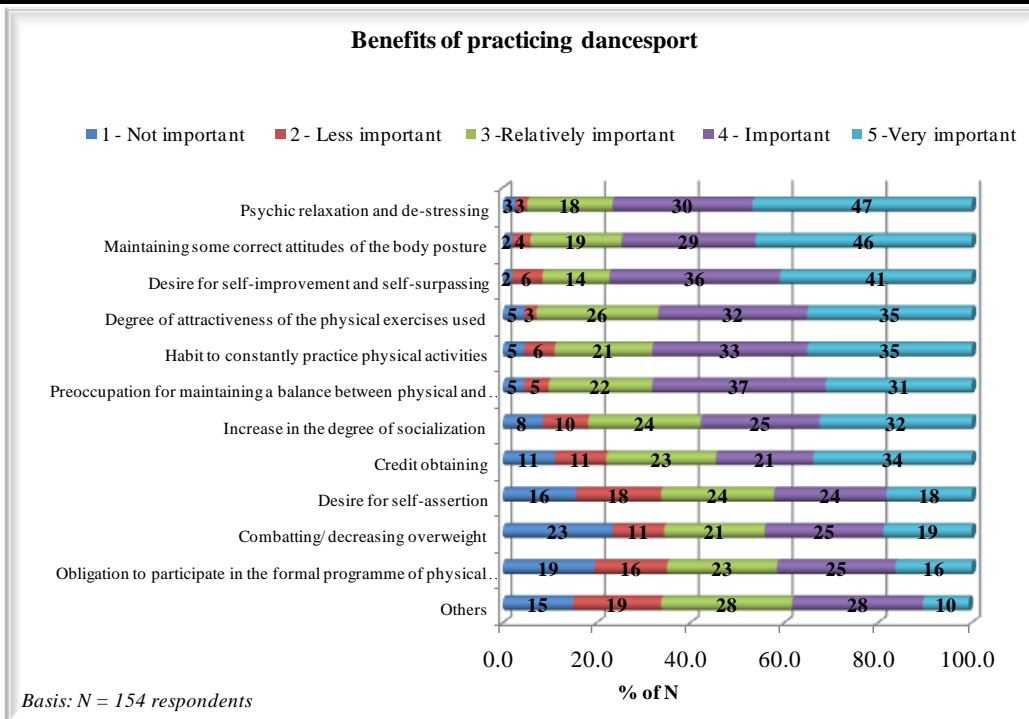


Figure 5. Benefits of practicing dancesport

The analysis by gender keeps the same ranking in both men's and women's opinions, but the maintenance of some correct body postures, as well as the desire for self-improvement and self-surpassing, are significantly more important to women. For the nominations related to credit

obtaining and the obligation to participate in the formal programme of physical education, the scores are significantly more important to male students (figure 6).

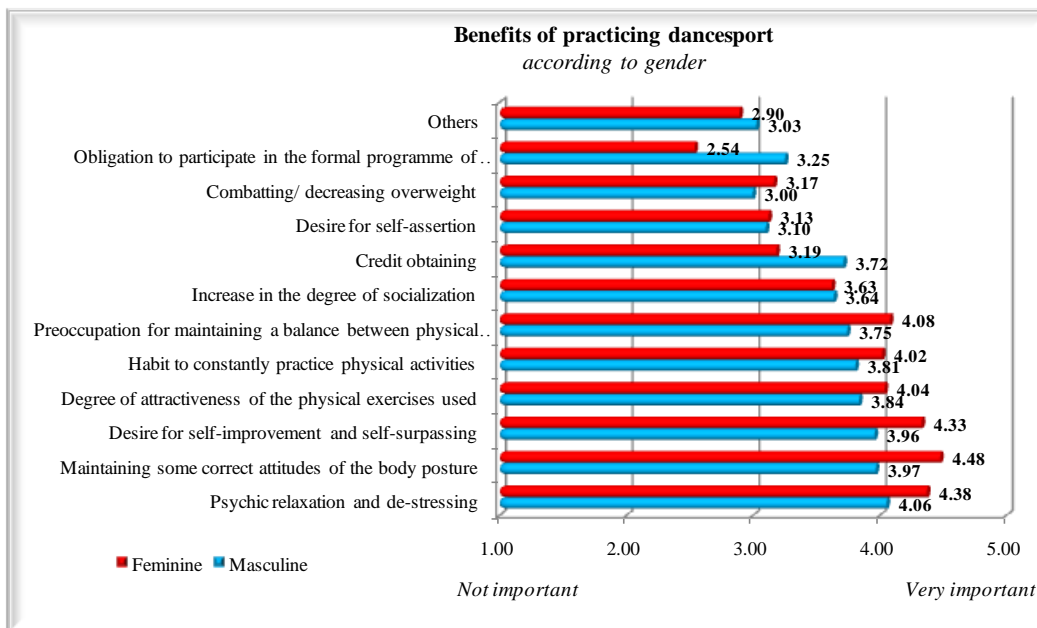


Figure 6. A comparative synthesis by gender regarding the benefits of practicing dancesport

6. As to the last item, “Do you consider that what you have learnt at the course ‘Theory and practice of expression sports’ may be useful in your professional career?”, the respondents, in a proportion of 24.4%, consider that what they have learnt at the course will be useful in their professional career to a very large extent, but, as it can be seen in

figure 7, there are 34.4% appraisals falling within level 4 and 35.1%, within level 3, which shows the generally positive appraisal of the subjects in relation to the accumulated knowledge. There are no statistically significant differences between the men’s and women’s perception about this aspect.

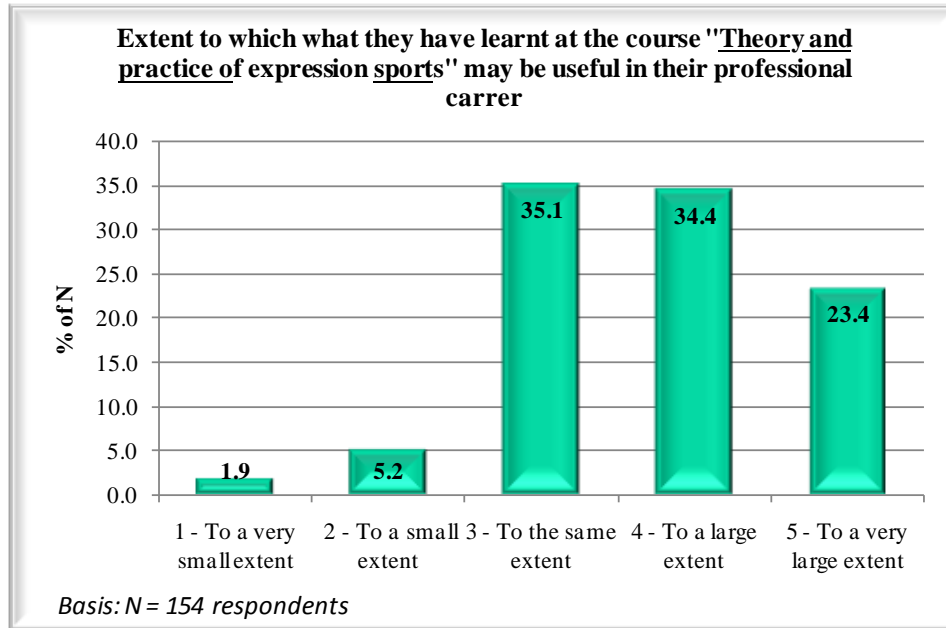


Figure 7. Course appraisal for the professional training

Discussions

We approached the analysis by gender of the group of subjects, so that subsequently we could see the possible differences between the perception of female subjects and that of male subjects.

We wanted to know how the subjects appraised the course attendance, in order to see their interest in the discipline, and the scores obtained were favorable to the didactic process. We consider that, for appraising the professional value of a course, students should attend it at a rate able to ensure the accumulation of the desired knowledge and competences. Only thus the responses to the questionnaire can support the topic addressed in this study.

Participation in the course “Theory and practice of expression sports” has determined a considerable increase of the pleasure to dance, which is visibly significant for the students with a very good

attendance. We think that the higher scores recorded by the female gender are normal and supported by a series of educational traditions, through which the artistic activities are better promoted among the female gender.

Most subjects have appraised as beneficial the participation in the course, and the scores by gender and from the attendance perspective reflect the same trend already emphasized in their previous responses. We notice that the students with a good attendance are finally more aware of the formative value of the course.

From the analysis of factors that motivate the students’ participation in the course, we positively appreciate the fact that the first places come to the coordination and rhythmicity components, being followed by the other nominated motivational situations. We consider as positive the nomination of



the coordination factors, especially since the development of these motor components is essential to building the individual's motor personality. (Epuran 2013, Dafinoiu, 2002) The increased interest of the female students in the aspect related to attractiveness versus that one related to relaxation, mentioned by the male students, confirms again the girls' artistic orientation (<http://genderbudgets.ru/biblio/ghid-privind-prevenirea-stereotipurilor-de-gen-la-.pdf>).

From the list of benefits, the placement of relaxation and de-stressing on the first position supports the course attractiveness and motivates the very good presence of students in the practical works. We also appreciate as positive the fact that they have

Conclusions

Knowing the subjects' opinions has provided us an objective feedback regarding their appraisals of the benefits derived from attending the course "Theory and practice of expression sports", in the context in which this one takes place in the 1st semester of the specialty university studies.

We appreciate as positive the benefits of this course for the development of coordination components, having in view the recommendations of

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understood the role of body posture for the self-image. Differences presented at the analysis by gender fall within the general trend aforementioned.

Responses to the last item confirm the subjects' responsibility towards their professional preparation and also their awareness of the necessity to acquire various competences allowing them to approach different motor activities in their future professional career. To the same extent, the validity of the course is confirmed.

In this sense we are confirming the recommendations from the literature that, for carrying out an efficient teaching design, it is essential to apply the principle of analyzing the students' necessities, as a reflection of the educational process finality (Colibaba, 2010).

the specialty literature about the importance of these components in educating the motor motricity.

The positive impact of the course, proved by the responses to the questionnaire, entitles us to consider that this one is beneficial and provides real, valuable and useful competences, necessary for training the specialist in physical education and sports field.

In the context of the above-mentioned aspects, we consider that the hypothesis of the research has been confirmed.

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