

Examination of the relation between the planned behavior theory and the attitudinal loyalty to recreational dance activities

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Abstract:

The aim of the study was to examine the contribution of Planned Behavior Theory in predicting loyalty in recreational dance activities. More specifically, it examines the contribution of knowledge and information in predicting loyalty and the role of dance experience and weekly participation in similar activities. The participants were 254 adult dancers who were involved in recreational dance activities. Loyalty estimation was based on one's intention to participate in dance activities in a society. All participants filled in an anonymous open ended questionnaire based on Planned Behavior Theory, following the procedure recommended by other studies (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Theodorakis, 1994). The results from the regression analyses indicated that the variables knowledge and information play an important role in predicting one's loyalty to dance activities, thus increasing the prediction percentage. The Anova analyses show that the larger the experience and weekly participation of people in recreational dance activities, the larger the knowledge and information they acquire. In conclusion, it appears that participants' loyalty is influenced by the information and knowledge on these activities.

Key-words: loyalty, knowledge, information, dance.

Introduction

Recreational dance activities constitute a physical activity which attracts the interest of many people. The increased participation to such activities is related to psychological and social factors and, consequently, it has become the subject of numerous researches (Bebetso & Goulimaris, 2014; Filippou, 2015a; Papaioannidou, Derri & Filippou, 2015; Voutsina & Goulimaris, 2016; Yfantidou, Costa & Michalopoulou, 2008). The various benefits deriving from participating in such physical activities effect both one's psychological situation and his/her physical condition (Genti, Goulimaris & Yfantidou, 2009; Goulimaris, Mavridis, Genti & Rokka, 2014). Lately, recreational dance activities have been approached from various aspects (Goulimaris, 2015; Goulimaris, Koutsouba & Giosos, 2008; Filippou, 2014; Filippou, 2015b; Papakostas Goulimaris & Douma, in press; Vernadakis et al. 2012; Vernadakis et al. 2015). The increased number of participants has created a significant job market for the professionals of the field and an important number of active or latent customers. Thus, recreational dance activities include a specific amount of services, which are offered to the participants in order to satisfy and increase their interest in them.

Theoretical Framework

Customers' loyalty is particular importance for the recreational institutions because it is connected to the achievement of strategic targets, the creation of a positive reputation, the increase of profits, the promotion of life quality, the development of marketing relations and the preservation of customers (Alexandris et al., 2008; Rundle-Thiele & Mackay, 2001; Nassis et al 2007; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2006; Tsitskari, Antoniadis, & Costa, 2014; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004). In the field of offered services, loyal customers is a powerful competitive advantage (Alexandris, Dimitriadis & Kasiara, 2001). In the field of recreation, preserving customers is less expensive than attracting new ones (Tsitskari, Antoniadis, & Costa, 2014; Zeithaml & Bitner, 2006).

Loyalty is an important concept for marketing and constitutes one of the dimensions of positive behavioral intentions. In literature, the concept of loyalty appears to have two components. Attitudinal loyalty expresses the individual attitude towards a service, the thoughts and sentiments, the positive comments, the knowledge involved and its importance. Attitudinal loyalty also indicates a customer's intention to continue practicing a certain activity. Behavioral loyalty is connected to customers' behavior such as their frequency of participating, the duration and the money spent (Alexandris et al., 2008; Iwasaki & Havitz, 2004; Kim & Scott, 1997; Nassis, et al 2007; Funk & Pastore, 2000; Avourdiadou & Theodorakis, 2014; Dick & Basu, 1994).

Frequently, the concept of psychological commitment is used to describe the attitudinal component of loyalty (Alexandris, et al. 2004; Park & Kim, 2000; Tsitskari, Antoniadis, & Costa, 2014). Customers' loyalty is a multi-dimensional term, which is affected by the behavioral and psychological sides of a customer.

There is an important amount of researches on loyalty in the field of services. In the sector of recreation and sports, the concept of loyalty has been the subject of numerous researchers (Alexandris et al., 2008; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Alexandris et al, 2009; Avourdiadou, & Theodorakis, 2014; Gladden & Funk, 2001; Kolbe & James, 2002; Mahony, Madrigal & Howard, 2000; Nassis, et al 2007; Filo, Funk & Alexandris, 2008; Funk & James, 2006; Papadopoulos, Theodorakis & Alexandris, 2004; Tsitskari, Antoniadis, & Costa, 2014; Yuksel & Yuksel, 2007).

The planned behavior theory claims that our actions are motivated by specific intentions, which constitute our “behavioral intention”. The intensity of our intentions is usually analogical to our determination to act (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). These intentions are defined by a) our predisposition towards a specific behavior (negative or positive) and b) certain subjective norms (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972). Such subjective norms concern 1) behavioral beliefs (concerning our disposition towards a behavior) and 2) normative principles (concerning social factors). Behavioral beliefs are related to the fact that certain people may approve or disapprove of a specific behavior (Tesser & Shaffer, 1990). This “reasoned action model” can be quite successful when investigating controlled behaviors (Ajzen, 1987).

Planned behavior theory has been enriched with the attachment of two more variables which can predict a exercise behavior (Theodorakis, 1994). One of them is “role identity” which refers to the social extension of the self and the second is “attitude strength” which is related to how positive, strong and significant are the attitudes towards a certain behavior. “Role identity” is usually a connection between an individual and society (Callero, 1985). The idea is attributed to Burke’s “identity theory” (1980) according to which our self-perception is expressed through a number of “role identities” corresponding to our position in a social structure, such as our being husbands or wives, parents or employees (Charng, Piliavin & Callero, 1988). According to Ajzen (1985), “perceived behavioral control” is one’s conviction that a certain behavior will be rather easy or difficult to perform. This control is affected by both internal and external factors including opportunity, time and the interference of others.

The present research examines loyalty in the field of recreational dance activities. The study aims at examining the contribution of the variables of Planned Behavior Theory in predicting loyalty in recreational dance activities. More specifically, it examines the contribution of Knowledge and Information in predicting loyalty and the role of dance experience and weekly participation in similar activities.

Method

Participants

The participants were 254 adult dancers who were involved in recreational dance activities and more specifically in Greek dances. The activities took part in cultural societies of non-profitable nature in Greece. The selection of the participants was random. The only condition was that they had to participate in the activities regularly, on a weekly basis. The total of the participants were 77 men and 177 women aged from 18 to 71, with a mean 39.2 years (SD=16.3) (table 1).

Table 1. Participants’ descriptive characteristics

Sex	%	Age	%	Previous dance experience	%	Weekly participation	%
Women	69,7	18-30	33,9	Less than 5	51,2	1	79,2
Men	30,3	31-40	13,8	6-10	24,8	2	15
		41-50	17,7	11+	24	3+	5,8
		51-60	22,4				
		61+	12,2				

Note: % = percentage

Instruments

Loyalty estimation was based on the one’s intention to participate in dance activities in a society and was measured with three items: “how much determined you are to continue dancing in the society”, “how much committed you are to continue dancing in the society” and “how much difficult would be for you to stop dancing in the society”. Five-point Likert-type scales were used, ranging from “not at all” to “very much”. The questions were used in other similar researches both in Greece and abroad (Alexandris et al, 2002; Alexandris et al., 2004; Alexandris, Kouthouris & Meligdis, 2006; Alexandris, et al, 2008; Alexandris, et al, 2009; Alexandris & Stodolska, 2004; Armitage & Conner, 1999; Carpenter, et al, 1993; Smith & Biddle, 1999; Tsitskari, Antoniadis & Kosta, 2014).

All participants filled in an anonymous open ended questionnaire based on Planned Behavior Theory, following the procedure recommended by other studies (Ajzen & Madden, 1986; Theodorakis, 1994; Theodorakis, et al., 1995).

Intention was estimated by the mean-score of the responses to three different questions: “I intend/I will try/ I am determined to participate in the dance activities regularly next month.” Responses to the first question (I intend...) were rated on a 7-point scale from 1=very unlikely to 7=very likely. A 7-point scale with endpoints labeled 1=definitely no to 7=definitely yes, was used for the other two questions.

Attitudes were estimated by the mean score of responses to the question “For me to participate in the dance activities regularly next month is...”. Responses were rated on 7-point scale, on five bipolar adjectives (7=good – 1=bad, 1=foolish – 7=smart, 7=healthy – 1=unhealthy, 7=useful – 1=non useful, 7=pleasant – 1=unpleasant).

Subjective Norms were estimated by the mean score of responses to four questions “If I participate in the dance activities regularly next month, individuals who are important to me...”; “Generally, I enjoy doing what some important individuals want me to do”; “Some individuals who are important in my life, believe that I must participate in the dance activities regularly next month”; “Generally, I like doing what some important individuals want me to do”. Responses were rated on 7-point scales. For questions 1, 2 and 4 responses were rated on 1 = will strongly disagree, to 7 = will strongly agree and for question 3 responses were 1 = very impossible, to 7 = very possible.

Self Identity was measured by four questions: “I consider myself to be able to participate in the dance activities next month”; “I consider myself a person that will participate in the dance activities regularly next month”; “Its in my character (temperament) to participate in the dance activities regularly next month”; “Generally, I am the type who is going to participate in the dance activities regularly next month”. Responses were rated on 7-point scales from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

Attitude Strength was measured using eight questions. The items were: “How certain are you that you are going to participate in the dance activities regularly next month?”; “Is it right for you to participate in the dance activities regularly next month?”; “I feel very sure that I will participate in the dance activities regularly next month”; “Is it important for you personally, to participate in the dance activities regularly next month?”; “How interested are you in participating in the dance activities regularly next month?”; “For me to participate in the dance activities regularly next month is...”; “With the knowledge I have, I think I will participate in the dance activities regularly next month”; “Do you find it interesting to participate in the dance activities regularly next month?”. Responses were rated on 7-point scales, for the first item from 1=very uncertain to 7=very certain, for the second and sixth items from 1=not at all to 7=very much so, for the third and seventh items from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree, for the fourth item from 1=not important at all to 7=very important and for the fifth and eighth items from 1=not at all to 7=very much.

Knowledge about the specific subject was measured by the mean score of responses to four questions: “Some of us are very well informed about participating in the dance activities regularly, while other individuals aren't. How well informed about participating in the dance activities regularly do you believe that you are?”; “If someone told you to write anything you know about participating in the dance activities regularly, how much could you write?”; “In comparison to other students, I believe that I am very well informed on the issue of participating in the dance activities regularly”; “How much do you think that you know on the issue of participating in the dance activities regularly?”. The answers were rated on 7-point scales. For the first question from 1=not informed at all to 7=very well informed, for the second question from 1=very little to 7=a lot, for the third from 1=I strongly disagree to 7=I strongly agree and for the last question from 1=no knowledge at all to 7=a lot of knowledge.

Information was measured by four questions: “Some individuals told me that they pay attention to different information about participating in the dance activities regularly. How much attention do you pay to different information about participating in the dance activities regularly?”; “How often do you pay attention to different printed material with information about participating in the dance activities regularly?”; “I am very interested in any information regarding participating in the dance activities regularly”; “How often do you pay attention to information regarding participating in the dance activities regularly?”. Responses were given on 7-point scales, for the first and fourth questions from 1=I never pay attention to 7=I very much pay attention, for the second from 1=never to 7=very often, for the third from 1=I strongly disagree to 7=I strongly agree and for the fourth from 1=I never pay attention to 7=I pay a lot of attention.

Procedure

The data collection was carried out with the method of personally filled in anonymous questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled in by the participants in place, after the end of the class, after being given explanations that: a. the participation in the research was optional, b. they had to give truthful answers, c. there were not right or wrong answers and d. the research data would be exclusively used for the needs of the research.

Statistical analysis

For the statistical treatment of the data, the method used was the reliability analysis and descriptive analysis.

The hierarchical regression analyses was also used in order to to examine the contribution of Planned Behavior Theory variables in predicting loyalty in recreational dance activities and, more specifically, the

contribution of Knowledge and Information. Univariate Anova analyses were conducted in order to find any experience and weekly participation differences. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Results

Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed for all assessed variables and are presented in table 2. The results indicated that all scales showed acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach alpha was higher than .70.

Table 2. Internal reliability and descriptive statistics of all variables.

Variable	M	SD	Cronbach's alpha
Attitudes	6.4	.40	.80
Intention	6.1	.72	.79
Attitudes Strength	6.1	.58	.89
Self Identity	6.0	.67	.75
Subjective Norms	5.1	1.0	.72
Information	5.2	.91	.86
Knowledge	5.0	.88	.79
Loyalty	4.6	.60	.94

Hierarchical regression analyses for "Loyalty"

Initial analysis. According to Ajzen and Madden (1986), in the initial analysis Hierarchical analysis, the variables accounted for the 35% of the variance. More specifically, Attitudes were entered at Step 1; Intention was entered at Step 2; Self Identity was entered at Step 3; Attitude Strength was entered at step 4; Subjective Norms were entered at Step 5; and Knowledge and Information were entered at step 6. In Step 1, Attitudes contributed for the prediction (R^2 Change=.09, $F_{1,210}=19.87$, $p<.001$). In Step 2, Intention significantly contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.07, $F_{1,210}=17.56$, $p<.001$), in Step 3 Self Identity also contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.03, $F_{1,210}=7.51$, $p<.01$), in Step 4 Attitude Strength also contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.08, $F_{1,210}=23.62$, $p<.001$), in Step 5 Subjective Norms did not contributed to the prediction ($F_{1,210}=.95$, $p>.001$), and finally in Step 6 both Knowledge and Information contributed to the prediction, (R^2 Change =.08, $F_{2,210}=12,14$, $p<.001$), (table 3).

Table 3. Initial Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

Step	Variables Entered	B	β	R^2 Change	SE B
	Prediction of Loyalty				
1	Attitudes	0.35	.29**	.09	.08
2	Attitudes	0.24	.20		.08
	Intention	0.31	.28**	.07	.07
3	Attitudes	0.19	.16		.08
	Intention	0.20	.19		.08
	Self Identity	0.25	.21*	.03	.09
4	Attitudes	0.13	.10		.08
	Intention	0.01	.01		.08
	Self Identity	0.04	.03		.10
	Attitude Strength	0.43	.44**	.08	.09
5	Attitudes	0.12	.10		.08
	Intention	0.01	.01		.09
	Self Identity	0.05	.05		.10
	Attitude Strength	0.41	.41		.41
	Subjective Norms			n.s.	
6	Attitudes	.13	.11		.08
	Intention	.02	.08		.08
	Self Identity	-.03	-.02		.10
	Attitude Strength	.32	.33		.09
	Subjective Norms	.001	.01		.03
	Knowledge	.10	.20**	.08	.04
	Information	.09	.15**		.04

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$.

Second analysis. The same procedure was followed for the second analysis. The only difference was that the variables of "Knowledge" and "Information" were entered at step 1 (Bebetsos et al. 2004; Bebetos,

2015). All variables accounted for the 40% of the variance. More specifically, Knowledge and Information were entered at Step 1; Attitudes were entered at Step 2; Intention was entered at Step 3; Self Identity was entered at step 4; Attitude Strength was entered at Step 5; and Subjective Norms were entered at step 6. In Step 1, Knowledge and Information contributed for the prediction (R^2 Change =.27, $F_{2,210}=32.4$, $p<.001$). In Step 2, Attitudes significantly contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.05, $F_{1,210}=13$, $p<.001$), in Step 3 Intention also contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.03, $F_{1,210}=8.62$, $p<.01$), in Step 4 Self Identity did not contributed to the prediction ($F_{1,210}=1.57$, $p>.001$), in Step 5 Attitude Strength also contributed to the prediction (R^2 Change =.05, $F_{1,210}=14.11$, $p<.001$), and in Step 6 Subjective Norms did not contributed to the prediction ($F_{1,210}=.02$, $p>.001$), (table 4).

Table 4. Second Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

Step	Variables Entered	B	β	R^2 Change	SE B
1	Prediction of Loyalty				
	Knowledge	0.18	.34**	.27	.04
	Information	0.10	.18**		.05
2	Knowledge	0.15	.30	.05	.10
	Information	0.11	.18		.10
3	Attitude	0.26	.22**	.03	.07
	Knowledge	0.13	.26		.04
	Information	0.10	.18		.04
	Attitude	0.20	.17		.07
4	Intention	0.20	.19*	.03	.07
	Knowledge	0.13	.24		.04
	Information	0.10	.17		.04
	Attitude	0.18	.15		.08
5	Intention	0.16	.15	n.s.	.08
	Self Identity				
	Knowledge	0.10	.20		.04
	Information	0.09	.15		.04
	Attitude	0.13	.11		.07
	Intention	0.02	.02		.08
	Self Identity	-0.03	-.02		.09
6	Attitude Strength	0.33	.33**	.05	.09
	Knowledge	0.10	.20		.04
	Information	0.09	.15		.04
	Attitude	0.13	.11		.08
	Intention	0.02	.02		.08
	Self Identity	-0.02	-.02		.10
	Attitude Strength	0.32	.33		.09
	Subjective Norms			n.s.	

* $p<.01$, ** $p<.001$.

Univariate analyses

According to their dancing experience, the participants were divided into 3 groups (table 1).

(a) Univariate Anova analyses were conducted in order to find any experience differences. The analyses revealed the following statistically significant differences:

(1) For the variable “Attitude Strength”: $F_{(2,253)} = 7$, $p<.001$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between both the 1st ($M=6.2$, $SD=.43$) and 3rd groups ($M=6.3$, $SD=.40$) with the 2nd, who had the lowest score ($M=5.9$, $SD=.80$).

(2) For the variable “Knowledge”: $F_{(2,253)} = 15,68$, $p<.001$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 2nd ($M=5.4$, $SD=.91$) and 3rd groups ($M=5.5$, $SD=.94$) with the 1st who had the lowest score ($M=4.8$, $SD=.80$).

(3) For the variable “Information”: $F_{(2,253)} = 5.67$, $p<.01$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 1st group ($M=5.0$, $SD=.95$) and the 3rd ($M=5.5$, $SD=.93$).

The participants were divided into 3 groups according to their weekly practice-time (table 1).

(b) Univariate Anova analyses were conducted in order to find any weekly participation differences. The analyses revealed the following statistically significant differences:

(1) For the variable “Self Identity”: $F_{(2,253)} = 3.91$, $p<.05$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 1st group ($M=5.9$, $SD=.57$) and the 3rd ($M=6.4$, $SD=.20$).

(2) For the variable “Attitude Strength”: $F_{(2,253)} = 5.23$, $p < .01$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 1st group ($M=6.1$, $SD=.58$) and the 3rd ($M=6.6$, $SD=.19$).

(3) For the variable “Information”: $F_{(2,253)} = 5.18$, $p < .01$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 1st group ($M=5.1$, $SD=1.0$) and the 3rd ($M=5.6$, $SD=.96$).

(4) For the variable “Knowledge”: $F_{(2,253)} = 12.11$, $p < .001$. More specifically, the post hoc multiple comparisons Scheffe test indicated the differences between the 2nd ($M=5.6$, $SD=.84$) and 3rd groups ($M=5.7$, $SD=1.0$) with the 1st who had the lowest score ($M=4.9$, $SD=.90$).

Dicussion

The aim of the study was to examine the contribution of Planned Behavior Theory in predicting loyalty in recreational dance activities and, more specifically, the contribution of Knowledge and Information.

The regression analyses support that planned behavior theory variables, apart from Subjective Norms, can explain an important percent (35%) of the loyalty’s variance in recreational dance activities. It seems that the hierarchic chain of variables has changed and that the variables Knowledge and Information are first in the analysis model, playing an important role in predicting one’s loyalty to similar activities, thus increasing the prediction percentage (40%). The increased significance of Knowledge and Information has been ascertained by the results of other similar researches (Bebetsos, et al. 2004; Davidson, et al. 1985; Wilson, Kraft & Dunn, 1989).

The Anova analyses show that the larger the experience and weekly participation of people in recreational dance activities, the larger the knowledge and information on them. It seems that the immediate conduct with an activity is the most powerful source of knowledge and information about it, followed by indirect sources of information such as media and friendly opinions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the results point out the importance of knowledge and information in recreational dance activities. It appears that the participants’ loyalty is influenced by the information and the total amount of knowledge about these activities. Frequent participation and previous dancing experience play an important role. The findings are very useful for the managers of the institutions offering similar activities. In today’s particularly difficult economic environment, the viability of such activity depends on the participation of those interested. Consequently, the “package” of information provided to the participants by the institutions is of vital importance for their continuing to be functional.

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