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Aspects of the practice of folk dance in Bihor Region - Tradition and perspectives

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Abstract: Romanian folk dances are a wealth of generations that we owe to preserve, protect and leave our inheritance to our descendants as a proof of our identity and history. By practicing dance, the customs and traditions of the people are learned; young people develop harmoniously due to the various movements in which the dances are composed. Romania has a wide range of games, dances and costumes inherited from tradition, perpetuated through repertoire and ethnography, which convinced us to address and highlight the important role of the traditions, folk dances in Bihor County, the beneficial effect that they have in the personal development of the dancers. The proposed research methodology for the study addresses methods such as the survey method by applying a questionnaire and the statistical-mathematical method. The results highlight the importance of folk dances first present in the family and the fact that passion is the main motivation of dancers that drives them to practice folk dance. It is necessary to give children the opportunity to make direct contact with the sources of popular creation such as dance, music, customs and folk costume, to create optimal conditions for learning our folk dances, the priceless treasure of our people.

Keywords: folk dance, tradition, Bihor region

Introduction

The Romanian Folklore, through its popular dances, is a real source of artistic tastes, it strengthens respect and confidence in the creative power of the Romanian

people, and the feeling of national pride and dignity in children is educated and deepened. The feeling of national unity is enhanced by the knowledge of folk creations throughout the country, even those of the cohabiting nationalities, the sense of collaboration and twinning of peoples is enriched and strengthened (Caciora et al., 2021a and b; Ilieș et al., 2021; Herman et al., 2020). On the other hand, dance is considered an activity that involves coordinating movements with music, as well as brain activation because it is constantly necessary to learn and remember new steps. Dance as a musical-kinetics skill, requires the coordination of body movements with rhythmic stimuli, developing the adaptability of the movement (Douka et al., 2019; Cipu, 2004; Zderciuc et al., 1964).

Many studies investigate the impact of various forms of traditional dance on health profile, mobility, and postural balance in elderly subjects (Hofgaard et al., 2019; Noopud et al., 2019; Jung et al., 2018; Erdely et al., 2020).

Since ancient times, dance has been used in the individual or collective as treatment of some diseases, including epilepsy and movement disorders (dyskinesia, chorea etc). Dionysia in Ancient Greece, St. Vitus dance in the Middle Age, tarantism and other traditional dances of southern Italy and of non-Western countries might be credited as curative rituals of these neurological and psychiatric conditions. (Sironi and Riva, 2015) or had improved blood vessel functionality and cerebral hemodynamic at high altitudes. (Li et al., 2020), or improves cardiorespiratory endurance in menopausal women (Janyacharoen et al., 2015).

Bihor folklore has been a research object for a very long time starting with Dimitrie Meci, Miron Pompiliu, G. Alexici (in the 19th century), Bela Bartok, Constantin Brailoiu, Ilarion Cocîșiu and continued with Ioan Bradu. Ioan Chira, Stelian Vasilescu, Rosu Titus and many others. The monumental paper *Musical Folklore in Bihor*, which appeared in 1974, by university professor Traian Mîrza, was recently honored by the R.S.R. Academy. Notable are the many studies of the Bihor customs made by Maria Bocse. Constantin Costea is the author of two volumes that treat the choreographic folklore in Bihor. In recent years, a series of works of great interest for the knowledge of the popular culture in the Criș Rivers Country, and especially Biharea, a book of studies and materials of ethnology and art, from which two volumes have so far emerged (Stoica and Doagă, 1977).

The promotion of popular culture must include two important aspects. On the one hand, the study and revitalization of what is called the passive fund of popular art and folklore (musical, literary, choreographic, etc.), that is, of those traditions that live only in the crates of the food, in the induced or collective memory (Godea, 1997).

Many aspects of popular art are present in contemporary times. In Bihor, many potters, chests-makers, coats-makers, braiders in weeds are still working. Women in many villages continue to weave respecting their traditional character. In every day's life a number of customs are practiced, a number of customs are observed, some of which are brought to stage, in shows, contests, festivals (Pop, 1969). All together constitute what is called the active fund of the Bihor folk culture. Lioara or Feleaga, a spring habit that remained old in the villages in the upper Black Crisul basin, was at some point on the brink of extinction (Marcu and Brata, 1978).

We have approached this topic because folk dances have been present in earthly life since the time; by practicing it we learn the tradition and customs of our own people and help harmonious physical development through the various movements and elements that make up a dance.

Materials and Methods

The aim is to present a picture of the popular dances in Bihor County and to maintain the traditions in order to transmit the folk culture to the next generations.

Research objectives: presentation of the Romanian folk dance and play presented by the folk ensembles, presentation of the Romanian folk costumes present in the present ensembles, highlighting current assemblies and number of participants today, analyzing the degree of family influence or personal decision on the decision to practice folk dance, motivation and importance of popular dance for instructors.

Through this paper we aim to highlight the importance of the traditions and the role of folk dance in Bihor County, as well as the benefits they have on the personal development of the dancers.

The present paper is based on the hypothesis that the participation of children, young people and adults in free-time activities - folk dance, can contribute to the preservation of customs and the transmission of traditions in the Bihor area to future generations.

In order to carry out the study, a number of 19 popular folk-dance instructors from Bihor County were included: 10 instructors conducting assemblies from Oradea, one from Marghita, one from Ștei, one from Aleșd, one from Salonta, one from Budureasa village, one from Hidișelul de Sus village, one from Vadu Crișului commune, one from Borod village, one from Cuzap village.

The research methods used in the paper were as follows: the method of studying the bibliographic materials, the survey method by applying a questionnaire and statistic-mathematical method.

Results

The analysis of the recorded data highlighted the relevant aspect of the popular dances in Bihor. After evaluating the answers given by popular dance dictionaries, the statistics show the following:

The most famous ensemble of popular dances in Oradea is the Crișana Professionals ensemble. Statistics show that 58% of those interviewed know that this ensemble is the most famous, well-known.

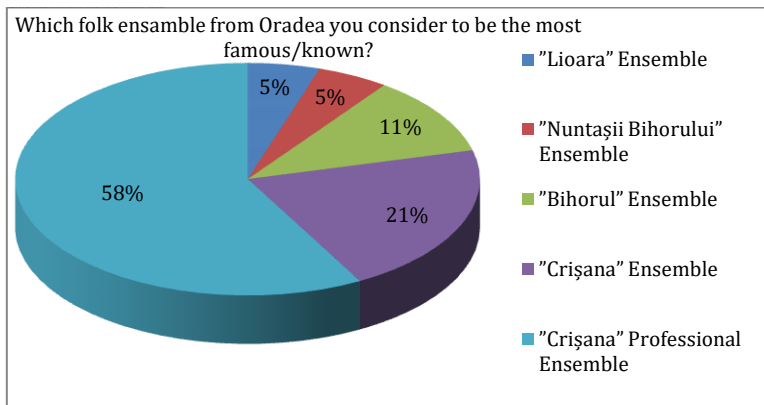


Figure 1. Ensembles in Oradea

Within the ensemble, 58% of folk-dance instructors have the quality of instructor, and 42% have the quality of both instructor and dancer.

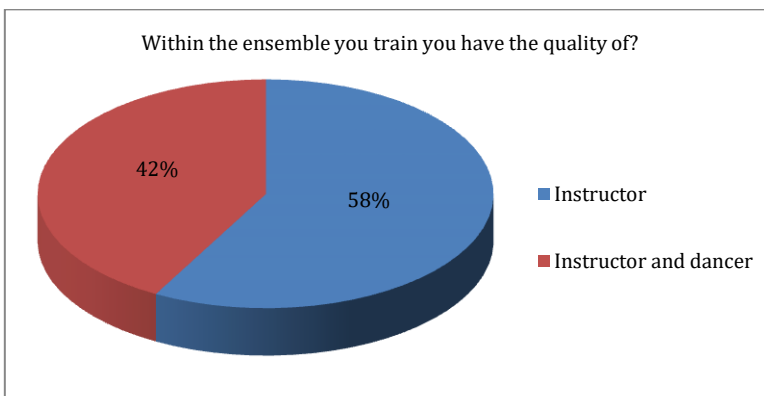


Figure 2. The quality of the trainer within the ensemble

Most of the current instructors have come to practice popular dances on their own initiative, 58% confirm this, 37% have been counseled by parents and 5% are friends.

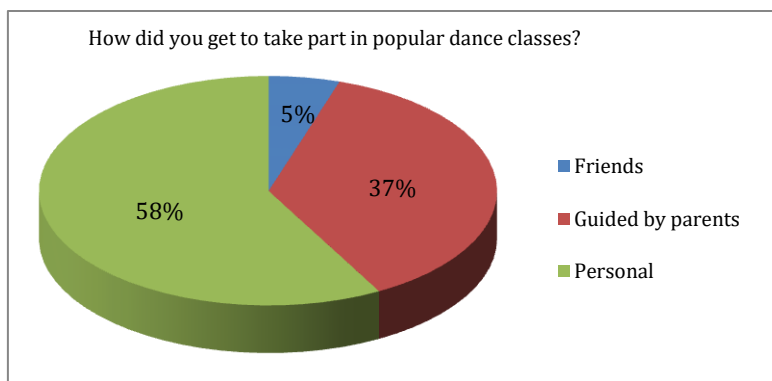


Figure 3. The way the instructors got involved in popular dance classes

Statistics show that most of the interviewed instructors met the popular dance in the family, the percentage being of 74%, which proves that the Romanian folk dance is present in the life of the people from the times.

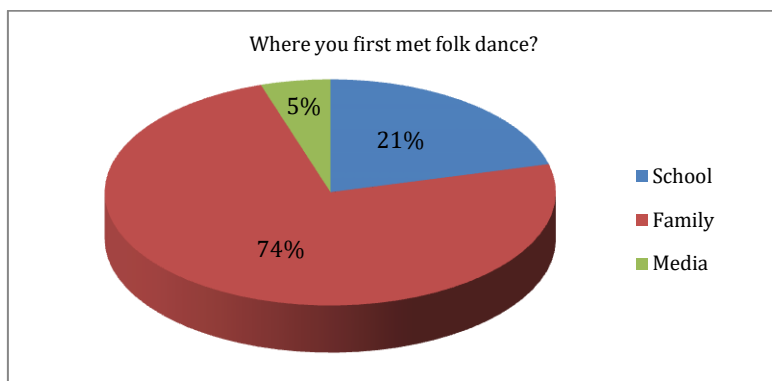


Figure 4. First contact with popular dance

The motivation of instructors to practice folk dances is to lead the tradition further 53% say this and 47% practice this dance of passion. At the same time for 58% of the instructors, the popular dance represents the greatest passion.

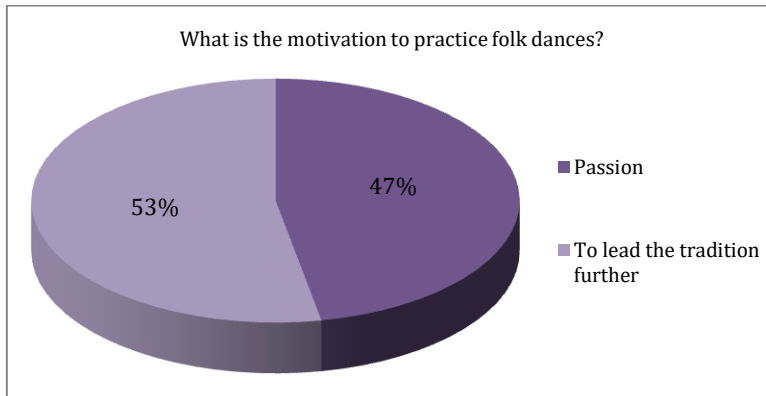


Figure 5. Motivation of folk dance

Considering 58% answers for instructors, folk dance is the greatest passion, for 21% it is a way of relaxation, for 16% it is a way of life and for 5% it is an art.

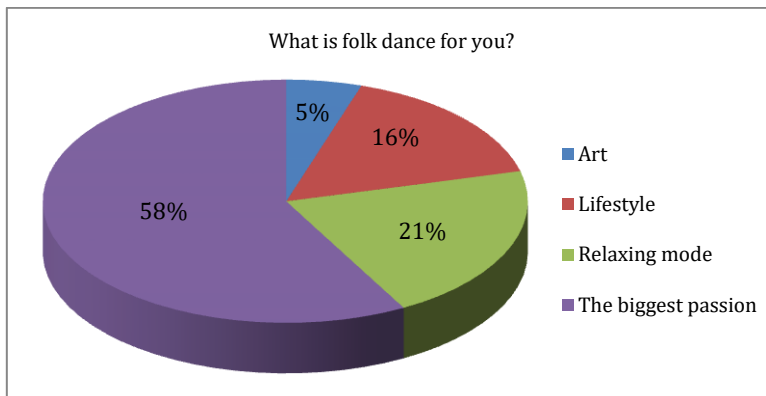


Figure 6. Popular dance for the instructor

The percentages for the duration of the practice of the folk-dance instructors' training of our subjects are:

- 53% of the instructors are currently 5-year-old folk dance instructors, which shows us that some of the younger generation is continuing their tradition;
- 31% between 5-10 years;
- 16% are over 10 years old.

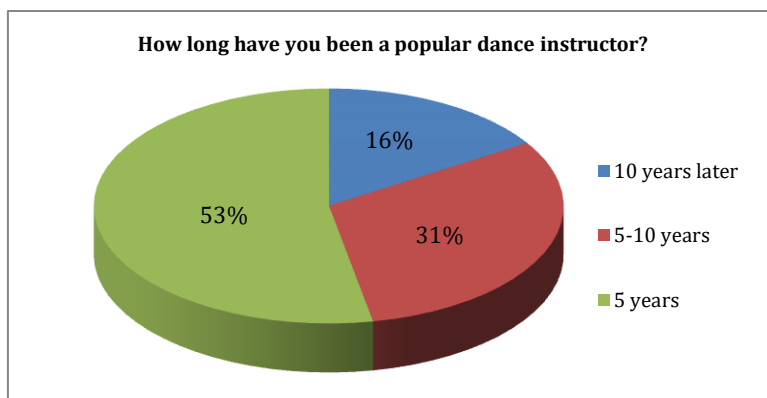


Figure 7. Duration of the trainer's job

The physical aspect in practicing popular dance for most of them:

- 74% say it is important;
- 16% consider it to be of little importance;
- 10% think it is not important at all.

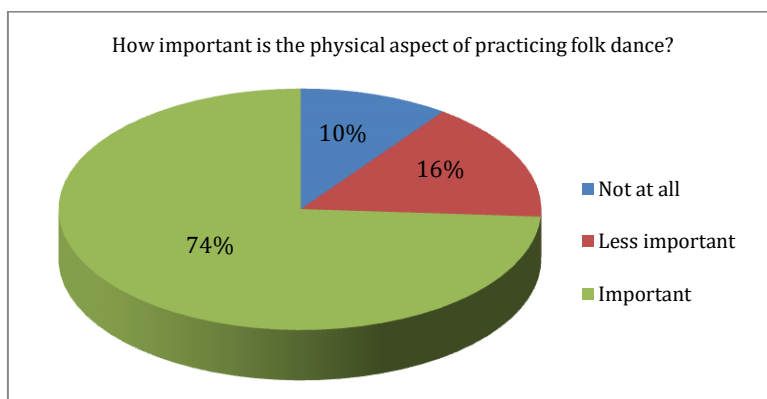


Figure 1. The importance of physical appearance in the practice of folk dance

Depending on the number of beginners, advanced and professional dancers, the information provided by the interviewed instructors demonstrates that, according to the arithmetic mean above 38% of the current dancers in each of the instructors interviewed are at with beginners being the highest, 32% at advanced and 30% at professional level.

Table 1. Arithmetic average

Name of groups	Total number of dancers	Number of groups	Arithmetic average
Beginners	308	11	28
Advanced	330	14	23,6
Professionals	45	2	22,5

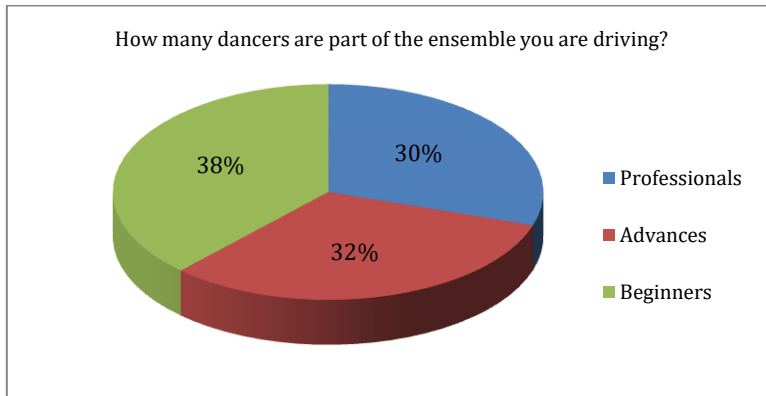


Figure 9. Arithmetic average

In the Romanian folk dance there is a wide range of dances specific to each area, and most of the dance instructors from Bihor County interviewed present in their performances:

- dancing "on foot", 21% of them have this dance;
- Polca de Alesd 18%;
- Polca de Beiuș 15%.

The rest of the dances present in the chart below are the dances that each instructor chooses to present and practice with their team.

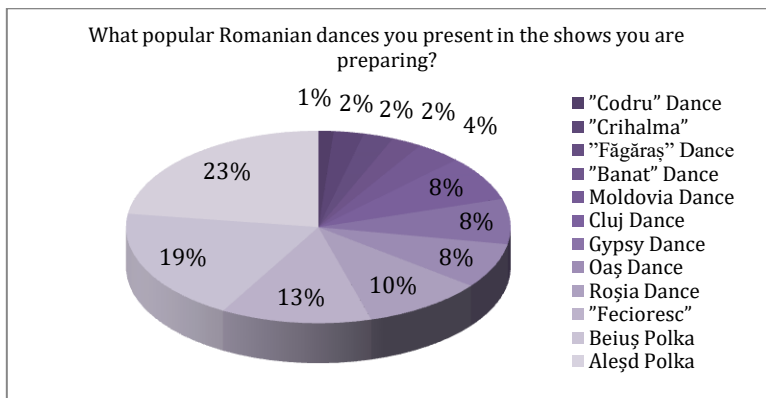


Figure 10. Most Danced in Ensembles

As well as traditional Romanian dances, there is also a wide range of traditional Romanian costumes that are specific to each area and each ensemble has some of the costumes that the dance instructor, depending on the dances presented in performances and festivals, acquires their costumes:

- 41% of the ensembles have a total of Alesd costumes;
- 18% Gypsy costume;
- 15% Red suit.

The rest of the costumes shown in the chart are costumes chosen by the instructor according to dances practiced and presented in shows and festivals.

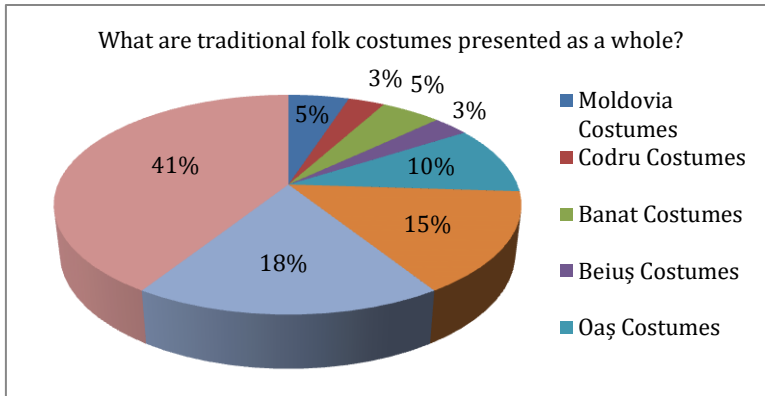


Figure 11. The most common costumes in ensembles

The percentage of the teachers' response to the presence of the spectators supported by the whole group is 95% confirms that the performances supported by the ensemble attract a large number of spectators, which demonstrates people's interest in folk dances.

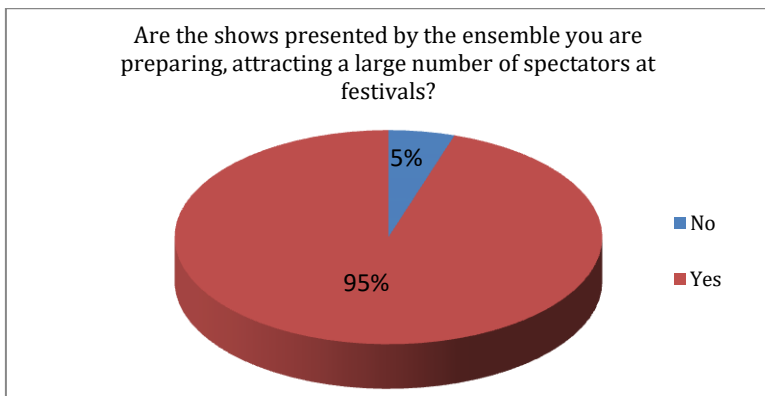


Figure 12. The presence of the spectators in the festivals, performances supported by the ensembles

Folk dance instructors believe that folk dances are not as successful as other dance styles and that modern dance (disco rock) is most preferred by young people today.

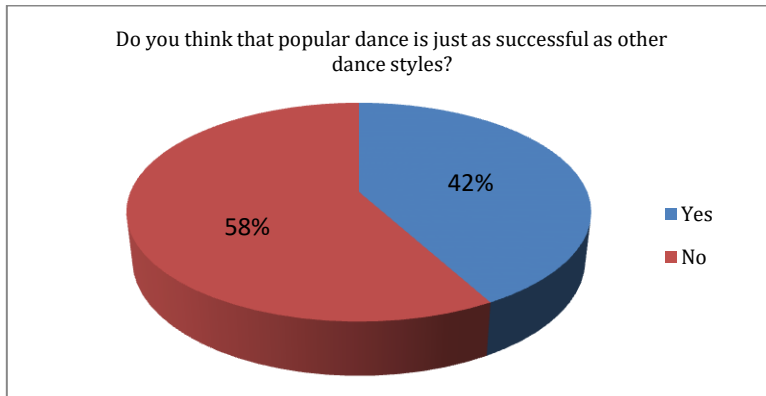


Figure 13. The success of popular dance compared to other dance styles

As for the preface of the dance style of young people the answers show us that 47% of young people prefer modern dance, 37% prefer urban dance (breakdance, hip-hop and streetdance) and 16% prefer sports dance.

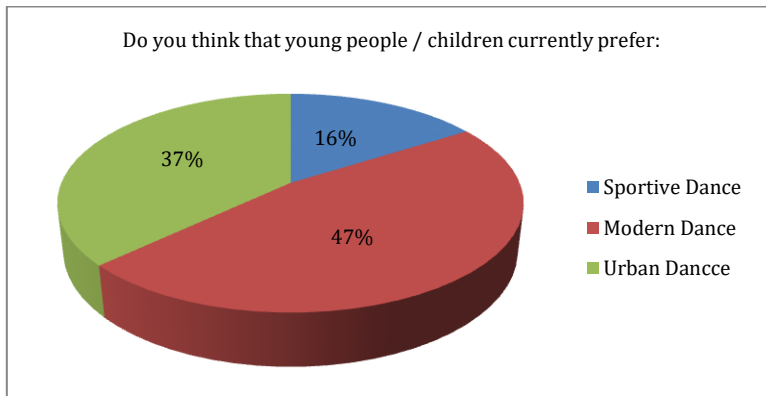


Figure 14. Most preferred dance style by children

Folk dance instructors consider it appropriate to introduce folk dance as a discipline in school curriculum, statistics show that 68% of the instructors agree to this.

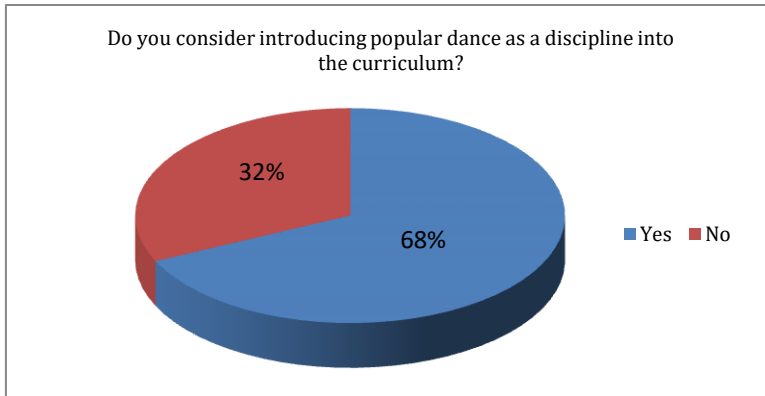


Figure 15. Introduction of popular dance as a discipline in the school curriculum

Participations in various events, competitions, festivals, performances are considered the best way to attract young children to participate in folk dances, by 33% of instructors.

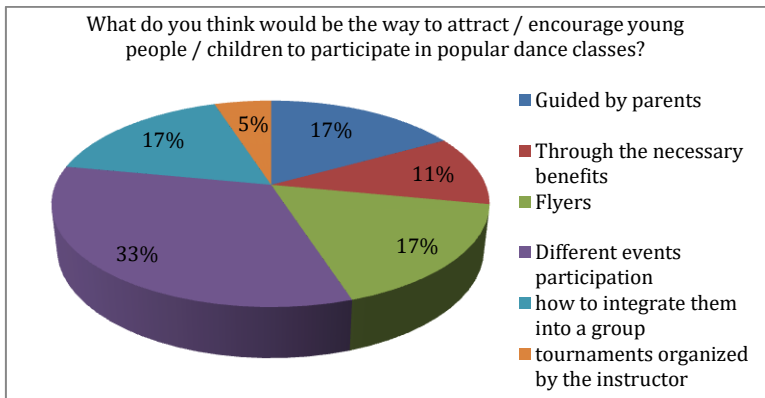


Figure 16. Ways to attract young people and children to participate in popular dance classes

Most of the folk-dance instructors interviewed leads an ensemble in Oradea and more than 8 folk ensembles are currently active in Oradea. The 74% of the urban environment is from the urban area, 26% from the rural area.

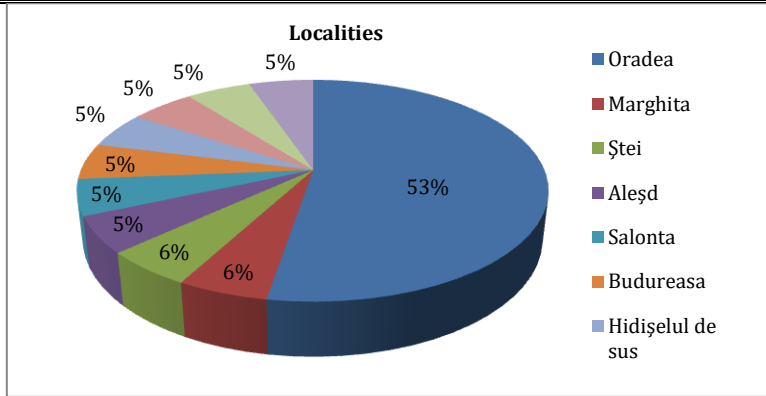


Figure 17. Community, municipality, commune, village of which everybody is part

The percentage of the instructors' background shows that 74% are urban and 26% are rural.

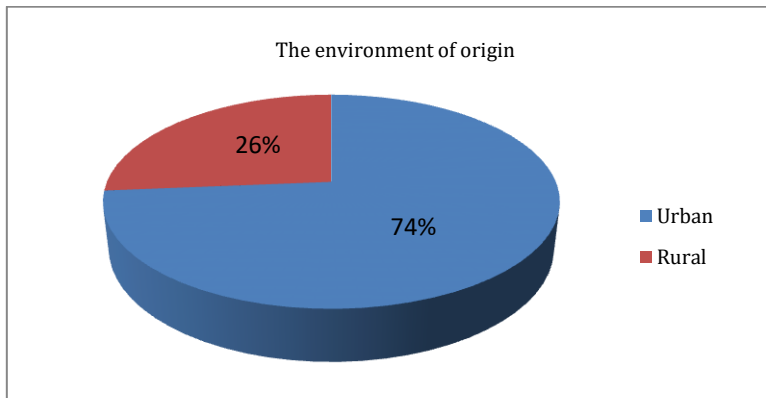


Figure 18. Instructor Origins Environment

Most popular dance instructors are male 74% and 26% female. This statistic demonstrates that the male genre is more interested in this type of dance than the female genre

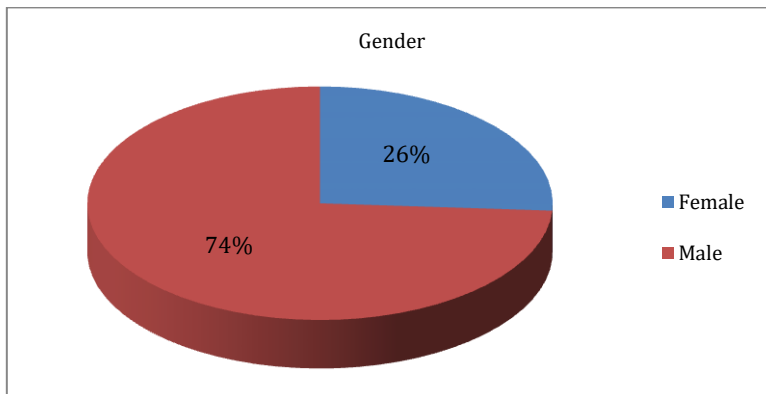


Figure 19. Gender of each instructor interviewed

As a result of the statistics, 58% of the instructor has secondary education; 32% of them have higher education.

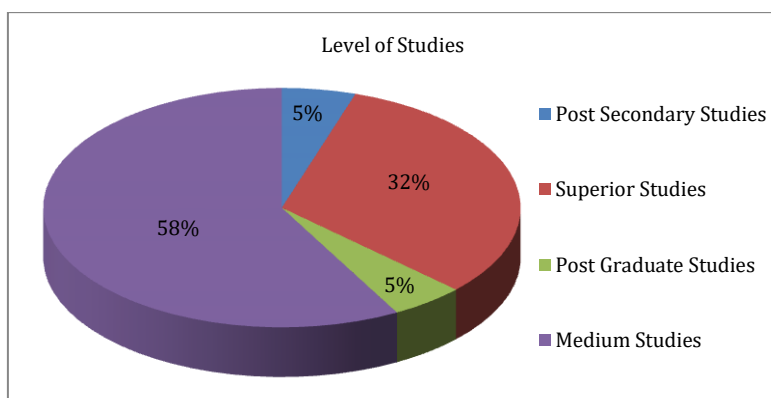


Figure 20. The level of education of each instructor

Instructors who are currently active in this field are aged 18-30 years 47%, which shows that almost half of the instructors are young and are concerned and have the peace to practice and at the same time to carry on the Romanian folk dance.

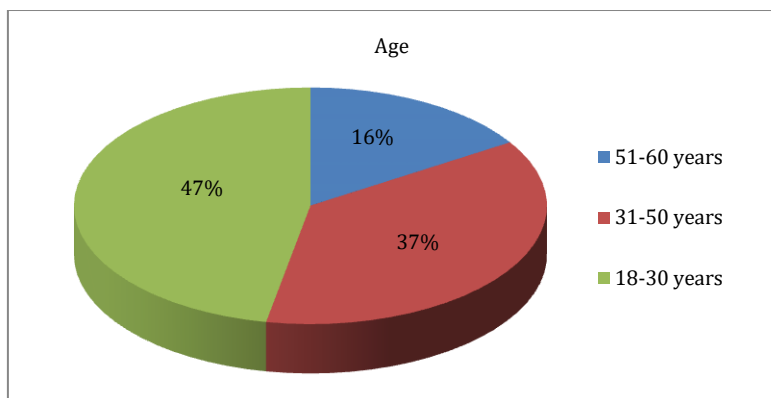


Figure 21. Every instructor's age

Discussions

Based on the respect of the authentic, it is not by chance that the professional and amateur groups in Bihor County have achieved great successes on the scenes of several countries in the world.

The most representative Bihor dances are "on foot", "polca", "fecioresc", "felaga", bătrânescul", "mânânelul" etc. The main musical instrument that accompanies the Bihor dances is the violin (especially the violin with the trumpet), the folk music bands containing the drum and the contrabass. Characteristic of the Bihor people in the dances are the ironic, joyful, or even sad cries (Baciu, 1965).

The authentic popular costume in the ethnographic area of Bihor has developed particularly recently, as a result of the cultural and economic exchanges

of Bihor residents with other citizens of the country, as well as the social-economic development of the area, the influence of the city on the village (Dunare, 1957).

Careful study of the custom and especially of the extremely interesting musical genre that accompanied the custom brought it to the stage in several villages in the area.

Conclusions

The Romanian folk dance is a true source for the formation of healthy artistic tastes, it strengthens confidence and respect for the creative forces of our people, deepens and educates the children the feeling of national dignity and pride.

The knowledge of popular creation in all parts of the country, strengthens the feeling of national unity, enriches the content of the idea of twinning and collaboration between ethnographic areas. Besides the aesthetic and educational effect, the Romanian folk dances are also important from the point of view of the exercise exercises, they exert a favorable influence on the physical development of those who practice them, while contributing to the development of muscle strength and elasticity.

The results highlight the importance of popular dances first in the family. It was highlighted that passion is the main motivation of the dancers that makes them practice folk dance. Instructors believe that popular dance does not have the same impact as the other dance styles on today's young people, being less attractive.

It is considered beneficial and it is proposed to introduce popular dance into the school curriculum, resulting in children's attractiveness to physical education classes.

Finally, we can say that it is necessary to offer children the opportunity to get direct contact with the sources of folk creation such as dance, music, shouting, customs and folk costumes, to create optimal conditions for learning our folk dances, an invaluable treasure of our people.

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