

# Contribution of Dance Studies from the Point of View of Religious Dance Teachers in Formal Education

Talia Perlshtein

Dance Department, 'Orot Israel' – Academic-Religious College of Education, Israel

\*Corresponding Author: [taliak200@gmail.com](mailto:taliak200@gmail.com)

Copyright©2016 by authors, all rights reserved. Authors agree that this article remains permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License

**Abstract** This article examines perceptions of observant dance teachers on aspects related to their professional world. The study included 119 teachers, graduates of the dance department at an academic-religious college of education in Israel. The data was collected through a structure questionnaire developed specifically for the study and through interviews with teachers. The data shows that the predictor for the perception of the contribution of dance lessons to pupils is the interrelations between dance and the inner world. The significance of these interrelations arises, among other things, in the finding that the teachers' choice of instruction of the art of dance allows them to realize themselves and mold a new path in the instruction of dance within a religious worldview, as part of an education system compatible with their own worldview.

**Keywords** Motivations for Choosing the Teaching Profession, Arts in Education, Religious Education, Contribution of Dance Studies to Pupils

---

## 1. Theoretical Background

### 1.1. The Choice of the Teaching Profession

Professional identity constitutes a part of the self-identity of a person and is defined as a sense of belonging to the profession and identification with it [1]. The profession a person chooses allows them to express the gamut of abilities, characteristics and preferences that make up the self [2].

Studies have found three main categories of motivations for choosing the teaching profession [3; 4; 5].

**A. Intrinsic motivations** – studies show that the intrinsic motivations – connected with the essence of the profession – are the most prominent in choosing it. These considerations are related to the satisfaction issuing from the work of teaching itself, and from its inherent characteristics, perceived by a person as matching their

skills and personality [3; 5].

In studies dealing with the motivations for choosing teaching it was found that people who choose the profession are mostly people with a self-perception of having an ability to teach well, and who define themselves as people who love children, seeking an occupation entailing interpersonal communication. Active teachers had stressed utilitarian aspects, such as satisfaction and joy from the act of teaching itself and from the opportunity to promote children; interest in the subject matter they teach; potential for self-realization; a high level of autonomy; using professional knowledge, as well as an option to realize personal capacities at work [6; 7; 8].

**B. Altruistic motivations** – the perception of the teaching profession as a socially worthy profession, as it imparts a sense of vocation and of giving to the other, allows for an influence on the lives of children, a shaping of the future generation and an action towards a better society [9]. The altruistic perception is anchored in Jewish tradition as well as in the Christian, both of which view teaching as a social service of high moral value (6).

**C. Extrinsic motivations** – the instrumental aspects of the teaching profession, which are not part of its professional characteristics. These considerations relate to aspects such as social status and work conditions – long vacations, the level of pay, required profession and tenure. Another significant aspect is the fact that the teaching profession is suited to family life and parenting. [3; 6; 8].

### 1.2. Arts in Education

Theoreticians of education to the arts emphasize the value of teaching the arts to a person's process of forming their identity. In their view, arts studies are important to all pupils, and not only those specially gifted in the field, since the arts enhance development in the cognitive sphere and hone critical thinking, which refers to the aesthetic investigation in art and in life. In their view, the instruction of the arts calls for experiences that encourage pupils' development of imagination, sensitivity and awareness to their external and internal world. [10; 11; 12; 13].

In spite of the above, art studies in education system in Western countries, and in Israel as well, are still marginal in relation to the core of the formal curriculum, which includes language and literature studies, mathematics and sciences, and physical education. This division is based on the positivistic philosophical position that upholds an empirical testing of knowledge that may be proven or disproved through experimenting and scientific observations, and a reliance on substantial facts in order to understand the world. According to this approach, the cognitive activity of thinking can only be mediated in a verbal manner. An adoption of this conception leads to the promotion of a hierarchy of knowledge that crowns scientific knowledge and distances the arts from their proper place in the development of human cognition [10; 14].

### 1.3. Education to the Arts in the Religious-General Education (R.G.E.)

The Religious-General Education system exists in Israel due to the lack of separation of religion from the state. This system enables the religious public to choose to educate their children in a framework that integrates a religious way of life with modern western civilization. In this system, only observant teachers are employed, and they are required to set a personal example to their pupils and to enhance their identification with religious values as the proper way of life [15].

In the circular of the administration of RGE [16] serving as a routine framework for ideological instructions Rabbi Adler, head of the administration, spelled out his religious-educational vision, pointing to the importance of integrating arts into education. Among other things, he writes there that [16, p. 10]:

The artistic creation is one of the tools meant to express our spirit, our great aspirations. Through it our Land shall be cleansed and sanctified, since art can not only be reflective and reactive to reality, but it can also influence reality, and to a certain degree even mold it [...] hence those wishing to build the land are called upon today, perhaps more than ever before, to devote their powers to the refinement of all spiritual, artistic, and creative talents.

This vision is based on the teachings of HaRaAYaH Kook (1865-1935), one of the leaders of religious Zionism, who viewed art as the realization of all that is hidden in Man's soul. Rabbi Kook saw the arts as a means for achieving a higher spiritual goal, whereas the modern secular concept viewed cultural creation as an entity in and of its own. It should be mentioned that the Rabbi encouraged the study of, and engagement in, the arts, which cause a person enjoyment and mental and spiritual elation, so long as they are carried out within the boundaries of Jewish law.

### 1.4. Balance between Body and Soul

Another innovative concept that arises from the writings of Rabbi Kook is the challenge of finding the balance between body and soul in the path of the Torah. In general, Judaism does not view the occupation with the body and the use of it as a negative concept, since the body serves as a central instrument for the worship of God – it is the abode of the soul and the executor of Man's thoughts, wishes and aspirations. However, since ancient times and following the encounter with Greek culture, where the body was an object of admiration, Jewish spiritual leadership has warned against the dangers imminent in turning the body into an object of deification and of realization of desires, which constitutes idolatry. Through the ages this fear led to a focus on the spiritual aspect of the human being, and an abandonment of the body as a focus within the various Jewish congregations throughout the diaspora [17].

However, contrary to the orthodox perception prevalent in the time of Rabbi Kook, which held holy only scholastic learning, the Rabbi himself emphasized the importance of cultivating the body. The Rabbi warned that "sometimes, through an effort to become overtaken by higher spirituality, all the forces of spiritual life are carried up into the world of upper thought, and the body is neglected by the soul, thus being left to the control of vices" [18, p. 14,B). In order to avoid this depravation, and as a means of reaching a higher level of spirituality, the Rabbi explains that the challenge facing the public is to return to the body, both on the personal level and on the national level, and through it to reach the divine. On the personal level, the importance of physical strength derives from its contribution to spiritual activity, since "where the recuperation of the body is in order it raises the spiritual light and reinforces it" [19, p. C 80:54).

Carmi [20] claims that the correction that Rabbi Kook demanded was part of his revolutionary worldview, which believed that the path to a new religious, Zionist, Hebrew culture passes through a rehabilitation of the material aspect of life, through the rebuilding of the body and an introduction of general content to religious educational institutes, as part of the molding of the student's spiritual world as a whole person and Jew. However, Rabbi Adler writes, "Rabbi Kook had set a high spiritual challenge, but did not explicate how to deal with it. The proper decryption of human creation and the identification of its Godly components await a redeemer. That is the deep role of arts teachers in religious education" [16, p. 8]. These educators are required, first and foremost, to help their students cope with the tension between the Western concept of artistic creation as a personal expression, free of all authority, and the approach of Halacha, which views art as a means for connecting with the divine.

In conclusion, the subject of dance is unique in the educational challenge with which it presents the R.G.E., due to the neglect of the sanctity of the body, as it was termed by HaRaAYaH Kook, by the religious public. The observant teachers are demanded to repeatedly clarify the borders of artistic creation in the spirit of Halacha, in light of the fear that emphasizing the external aspect of that creation might

"diminish Man to the forgetfulness of the Lord" [21]. These teachers have to deal with dilemmas that arise from the field, such as the expression through dance of the inner world, versus the desire to retain the virtue of chastity and modesty, or through encounters with Western cultural heritage of the art of dance, which does not coincide with their religious perception.

### 1.5. The art of Dance Subject in the Formal Curriculum of the School

The art of dance is defined as a human language made up of body movements in time and space with the investment of effort, which are not aimed at performing daily work [12].

The instruction of the art of dance in the formal school framework is called educational dance. The term 'educational dance' describes the art of dance that is taught as part of the overall school curriculum, subject to the State's regulatory requirements and granted to all pupils during the school day. The professional challenge of dance teachers is to develop the artistic skill of the pupils through dance lessons, while perfecting their cognitive, emotional and physical development. McCutchen [13] emphasizes that unlike the model of education for excelling dance students, the basic dance curriculum is not meant to transform all pupils at the school into professional dancers, but rather to expand their educational horizons through dance studies.

Brinson [22] presents six main aspects of teaching the art of dance as part of the school curriculum, contributing to the pupil's development: artistic and aesthetic aspect; cultural aspect; personal and social aspect; physical development aspect; the aspect of developing theoretical studies; and pre-professional training aspect. These aspects also arise in the studies of other major researchers in the field of dance education [12; 23].

**A. Contribution to artistic and aesthetic education** - education in the art of dance includes two aspects: theoretical knowledge such as concepts, genres, and historical processes; and practical knowledge. The latter includes a movement 'vocabulary', rules for constructing a dance, acquaintance with the body, developing awareness and sensitivity to the components of dance – movement, dynamics, time and space – that allow the pupil to conceptualize and express ideas and feelings through nonverbal communication. In addition, the theoretical and practical knowledge perfect the pupil in skills such as observation, understanding, analysis, awareness and reflection [13; 23].

**B. Contribution to cultural education** - the process of creation in dance allows the pupil to investigate and express values, beliefs and norms common to the community to which they belong. This dance expression, in advanced stages of learning, can encourage the development of an aesthetic-artistic language that enables an embodiment of the unique inner spirit of the community members, and for others to become acquainted with their culture [23].

**C. Contribution to personal and social education** – While working individually and in a group as part of dance

lessons, or in preparation for a dance performance, students develop personal skills, such as persistence, discipline and self-awareness. The group activities encourage social interaction provide an opportunity to cooperate, to give and receive constructive judgmental criticism. In these frameworks, the pupil develops interpersonal skills such as sensitivity and acceptance of the other, cooperation, tolerance, respect and trust [22; 24; 25].

**D. Contribution to physical development** – the discipline of dance includes a connection between body and soul, which generates an artistic expression. Perfecting physical skills – such as coordination, flexibility, and strength – is a means for honing the artistic expression [12; 22].

**E. Contribution to general subject-matters in school** – an integration of the arts with the core subjects enhances learning and improves pupils' understanding and achievements, due to the use of a variety of learning skills and teaching styles, which characterize the study of the arts. Dance contributes to the study of general subject-matters since in this art all senses, and not cognition alone, partake experientially in the processing of contents [26].

**F. Contribution to pre-professional education** – Dance lessons as part of the school curriculum allow the pupils with the physical and mental traits required for a professional career in dance to stand out. The acquaintance that excelling dance pupils make with their unique skills opens for them the possibility to choose pre-professional dance studies in designated dance schools, which train their students to the stage art [13].

**Objectives of the research** - to identify the perceptions of observant dance teachers towards the following: the motivations for choosing dance instruction; the interrelations between faith and the art of dance; the contribution of the art of dance subject to pupils in the Religious-General Education system.

## 2. Method

The research is a mixed methods study in which the qualitative paradigm supports and deepens the findings of the quantitative paradigm [27]. The quantitative part is based on a questionnaire developed specifically for this study. The qualitative part is based on interviews with 11 teachers.

### 2.1. The Research Population

The research population consisted of 119 dance teachers, graduates of the dance department at an academic-religious college of education, from the first cohort up to the eleventh cohort, who make up 73% of all graduates in these cohorts. The average age is 29.47, standard deviation 3.44, age range 25 to 41 years. 83.9% of the respondents are married. 33.3% defined themselves as very religious, 56.1% religious, 4.4% lightly-religious, and 6.1% not religious. 66.7% teach dance in schools, 68.1% out of these work only

in the general-religious educational framework.

**2.2. The Research Tool**

A questionnaire was constructed for the purposes of this study. The subjects of the questionnaire were presented with statements on a 6-point Likert scale, from 1 – "Didn't influence at all" to 6 – "Influenced very much". Since generally speaking of all subjects of the questionnaire, a statistical factor analysis could not be conducted for the purpose of division into categories due to the participants / statements ratio, division into categories was based on the content analysis among two judges who are experts on education and on methodology, along with Cronbach's alpha reliability test. The findings are shown in table 1.

The table shows that three super-categories were found: motivations for choosing dance instruction; interrelations – faith and the art of dance; the contribution of dance lessons to pupils. Each of the super categories contains several subcategories.

Indices were constructed based on averages of the rankings of the statements making up the subcategories, a high value in the index pointing to a high level in the perception of the content described by it. In order to test the

discriminate validity of the various subcategories in the different sections of the questionnaire, Pearson's coefficients were calculated between the subcategories making up the super-categories, and these were found to have correlations at a medium-high level between .256 and .648. These findings indicate correlation between the dimensions, but not an overlapping, and increase the discriminate validity of the different categories.

**2.3. Procedure and Ethics**

The anonymous questionnaire was sent by e-mail and separated upon reception, by e-mail or regular mail, by the research assistant, from any identifying detail of the senders.

The interviews that were recorded and transcribed were held with interviewees who had voiced their consent to be interviewed without notice of identifying details, and in the presentation of the data, the names and characteristics were changes in such a manner that the interviewees could not be identified. All quotes in the article were passed on to the interviewees in order to obtain their consent for publication, and a full consent was received for anonymous publication, as is used in qualitative publications [28].

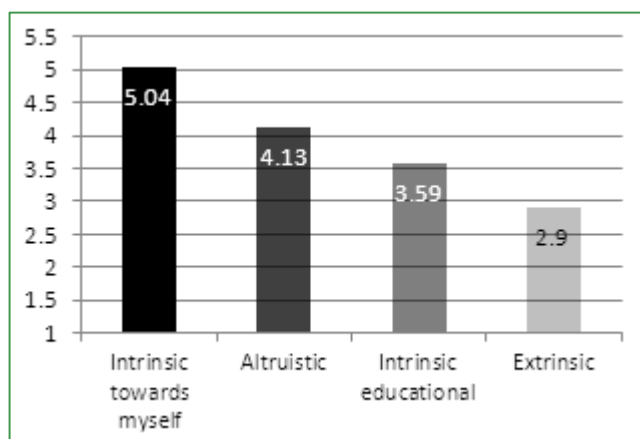
**Table 1.** the categories of the research variables, an example of a statement and Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients

Super category	Subcategories	Example of a statement	Reliability
Motivation for choosing dance instruction	Intrinsic-towards-myself	"To work in what I love"	-
	Intrinsic-educational (promoting the integration of dance in RGE schools)	"Providing pupils of the general-religious education another way to interact with the divine"	<b>.709</b>
	Altruistic (having an influence on pupils)	"The potential of developing the pupil on all their dimensions: body, cognition and soul"	<b>.662</b>
	Extrinsic (work Conditions in teaching)	"Allows for convenient working conditions for a family life and for raising children"	<b>.740</b>
Interrelations – faith and the art of dance	Relations between dance and the religious worldview	"I don't define myself as less observant due to my occupation with dance"	<b>.610</b>
	Relations between dance and the inner world	"The artistic world is to me an instrument of expression of my religious world"	<b>.728</b>
Contribution of dance lessons to students	Contribution to artistic-aesthetic education	"Developing the students' ability to express themselves through movement"	<b>.697</b>
	Contribution to physical development	"Developing students' physical mastery"	-
	Contribution to personal-social education	"Developing the sensitivity of students to respecting the other" "I feel that dance contributes to students in scholastic aspects as well"	<b>.819</b>
	Contribution to general subject-matters in school	"Deepening the awareness of students to the connection between body and soul within the boundaries of the Halacha"	<b>.848</b>
	Contribution to artistic-religious education		<b>.863</b>

### 3. Findings

The first research question examined the motivations for choosing dance instruction. As mentioned in the section on the method, four categories of motivations were found: Intrinsic-towards myself motivation, altruistic motivation, intrinsic-educational motivation, and extrinsic motivation.

In order to examine the differences in the perception of the various motivations for choosing dance instruction, an analysis of variance was conducted with repeated measures, and a significant main effect was found ( $F(3,103) = 39.82$ ;  $p < .001$ ). In order to test for the source of the differences a Bonferroni correction analysis was conducted ( $p < .05$ ), and the following hierarchy was found: Intrinsic-towards myself motivation > altruistic motivation > intrinsic-educational motivation > extrinsic motivation. Means appear in the following diagram:



**Figure 1.** Means of Perception of the various motivations for choosing dance instruction

The qualitative analysis of the interviews allows for an expansion and enhancement of the quantitative information regarding the perception of the various motivations for choosing the teaching profession.

The interviewees related to these aspects in the interviews. For instance:

**Intrinsic-towards-myself motivation:** "It was always clear to me that I will work with children, and it just combined everything together for me – working with children and dance" (H).

**Altruistic motivation:** "Dance helped me build up body image and self-confidence, and I decided that was what I want to do. I want, especially within the religious society, to help building. That is why I went to become a dance teacher" (A).

**Intrinsic-educational motivation:** "When you are part of the system you can make a significant change and create meaning, [...] I feel that movement and dance are not only spiritual, but religious. It is as though I am repenting when I teach, I'm helping the children reach their soul" (E)

**Extrinsic motivation:** "As a teacher it is very convenient working in the morning [...] it's a God given that I have

tenure at school just like a teacher – holidays, sick days, these are very important things when you're a mother, it's very important" (D).

**The second research question** examined the perceptions towards the interrelations of faith and the art of dance. As described in the method chapter, two subcategories of interrelations were found: a. Relations between dance and the inner world was found to be at a medium-high level ( $M = 4.84$ ;  $SD = 1.03$ ) on a 6-point scale; b. Relations between dance and the religious worldview was found to be at a high level ( $M = 5.04$ ;  $SD = 1.23$ ) on a 6-point scale.

**Perception of the interrelations** – in order to examine the differences in the perception of the two subcategories describing the relations a t-test (paired) was conducted, and no significant difference was found.

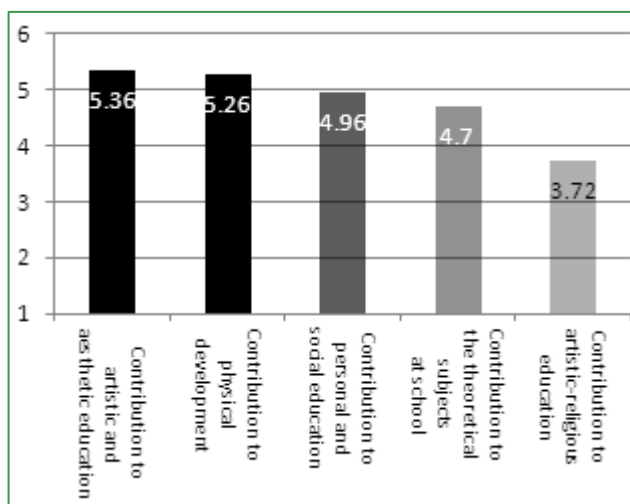
The interviews reinforce the similar approach of the research participants to the interrelations in both areas.

**Interrelations between dance and the inner world** – "Emotionally I am much more moved by the language of movement. I am sometimes amazed at how much movement comes from deep places in the soul, and how much it can make me more clear and precise. It has a richness that is different than the verbal language. I feel that creating makes me grow, it expands my borders, allows me to get to know more of who I am, and from here it has turned into a true existential need." (A)

**Interrelations between dance and religious worldview** - "I believe that if my creation comes from within me, from my deepest, most inner place, then it's clear that my religious world is there, and it will find expression in the language" (B.)

**The third research question** examined the perceptions of the research participants towards the contribution of studying the art of dance as a school subject to pupils in the R.G.E. system. As described in the method chapter, the contribution of the dance lessons found expression in five subcategories: contribution to artistic and aesthetic education; contribution to physical development; contribution to personal and social education; contribution to the theoretical subjects as school; contribution to artistic-religious education.

**Contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils** – in order to examine the differences in the perception of the contribution of the various five subcategories, an analysis of variance with repetitive measurements was conducted and a significant effect was found ( $F(4,88) = 30.48$ ;  $p < .001$ ). In order to test for the source of the differences a Bonferroni correction analysis was conducted ( $p < .05$ ), and the following hierarchy was found: contribution of dance lessons to artistic and aesthetic education and the contribution of dance lessons to physical development at a higher level than the contribution of dance lessons to the theoretical subjects at school and the contribution of dance lessons to artistic-religious education. Means appear in the following diagram:



**Figure 2.** Means of the perception of the contribution of dance lessons to the students

The qualitative analysis of the interviews makes it possible to hear the voice of the dance teachers who are partners in paving the way for the art of dance as a school subject in religious general education.

In the interviews, the interviewees related to these subcategories, for instance:

**Contribution to aesthetic-artistic education:** "The pupils' movement is an expression of their entire personality. Engagement in dance is a platform enabling self-acquaintance – an entrance inwards, to themselves. Through movement they are exposed to the personal tools they possess, through them they can get to know the world and themselves." (R)

"There are very quiet children, for whom it isn't simple to speak in front of the group, but suddenly, in dance, they open up, they are no longer mute, their body speaks, breaks their own barriers [...], expresses them and their thinking." (H)

**Contribution to physical education:** "Dance allows for learning that continually perfects the machine. It promotes, in my opinion, the human body in its entirety. It is learning from both the executional and creative-emotional places" (T)

**Contribution to personal and social education:** "Dance encourages students to think! To make an effort! To invest themselves! [...] and it's also a thing with self-discipline and seeing that when you invest yourself, things happen... and what happened is yours. I have no doubt that it goes with them." (L.)

"In the ceremonies they have an opportunity, through dance, to pass something on to other children. To give something to others through this ability they have in movement." (A)

**Contribution to the theoretical subjects as school:** "Dance deals with learning 'hard core'. The way we learn things, the way we understand things [...] How to use the body to learn to read, to learn how to subtract and to add fractures" (L.)

**Contribution to artistic-religious education:** "Art is there to lift and to cleanse, to create in holiness. On the one

hand there is freedom of expression, but on the other hand you also have to know how to filter things, know our boundaries from a place of connection to the believing and spiritual place." (T)

**In addition, the study also tested for the relations between the participants' level of religiosity, and:** a. Motivations for choosing dance instruction; b. The perception of the interrelations between faith and the art of dance; c. The perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils.

In order to test this question the participants were divided into two groups, in accordance with their self-definition regarding their level of religiosity: A. Very religious (N=38); B. Religious (N=64). Participants who defined their level of religiosity as 'lightly-religious' or 'not-religious' were not included in the analysis. These two groups made up only 10.5% of all respondents. In order to validate the self-definition of the level of religiosity, the correlation between this self-definition and between an objective index of religious education of the spouse (has / doesn't have). In a  $\chi^2$  test a significant correlation was found between the two variables ( $\chi^2 (1) = 5.97, p < .01$ ). The relation is ascribed to the fact that the percentage of teachers with spouses having religious education is much higher among the teachers who defined themselves as very religious (47%) than among the teachers who defined themselves as being religious (19%), which grants validity to this division.

**A. The link between the participants' level of religiosity to motivations for choosing dance instruction**

Analysis of variance was conducted, with the independent variable being the level of religiosity (very religious / religious), and the dependent variable motivations for choosing dance instruction (intrinsic-towards-myself; altruistic; intrinsic-educational; extrinsic). This analysis included repeated measures on the dependent variable, and the following was found: A significant main effect of the repeated measures, as was reported above in the first research question; No significant main effect of the level of religiosity was found; No main effect of the interaction was found. This means that the participants' level of religiosity is not linked to the motivations for choosing dance instruction.

**B. The link between the participants' level of religiosity and the perception of the interrelations between faith and the art of dance**

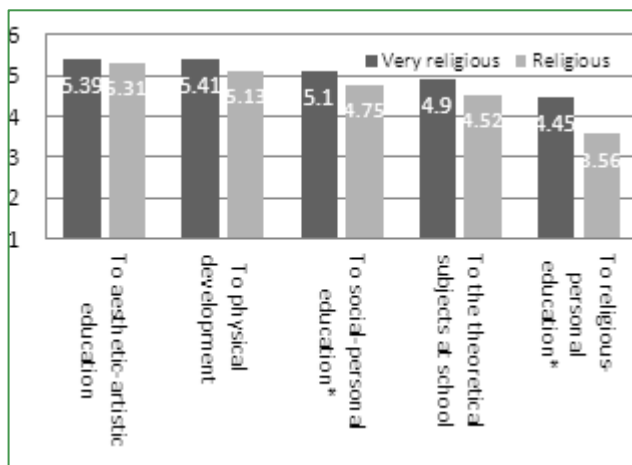
Analysis of variance was conducted, with the independent variable being the level of religiosity (very religious / religious), and the dependent variable the perception of the interrelations between faith and the art of dance (between dance and the inner world; between dance and the religious perception). This analysis included repeated measures on the dependent variable, and the following was found: No significant difference was found of the repeated measures, as was reported above in the second research question; Main effect of the level of religiosity was found ( $F (1,88) = 9.03$ ;



$p < .01$ ). This finding indicates that the very religious participants perceive the overall contribution of the interrelations ( $M = 5.05$ ;  $SD = 0.78$ ), at a higher level than the religious participants ( $M = 4.59$ ;  $SD = 0.83$ ); No main effect of the interaction was found.

### C. The perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils

Analysis of variance was conducted, with the independent variable being the level of religiosity (very religious / religious), and the dependent variable the perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils (to aesthetic-artistic education; to physical development; to personal and social education; to the theoretical subjects at school; to religious-artistic education). This analysis included repeated measures on the dependent variable, and the following was found: A significant main effect of the repeated measures was found, as was reported above in the third research question; Main effect of the level of religiosity was found ( $F(1,81) = 8.41$ ;  $p < .01$ ). This finding indicates that the very religious participants perceive the overall contribution of the dance lessons ( $M = 5.06$ ;  $SD = 0.64$ ), at a higher level than the religious participants ( $M = 4.70$ ;  $SD = 0.62$ ); The interaction comes close to significance ( $F(5,77) = 2.21$ ,  $p = .062$ ). Since the interaction comes close to significance,  $t$ -tests were conducted to test for the differences. Differences were found regarding: contribution to personal and social education ( $t(93) = 2.17$ ;  $p < .05$ ); contribution to religious-artistic education ( $t(91) = 2.84$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Averages appear in the following diagram:



\* Significant difference

**Figure 3.** Perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils linked to the level of religiosity

The diagram shows that the perception of the contribution of the dance lessons on the aspects: contribution to personal and social education; contribution to religious-artistic education, is significantly higher among the very religious teachers than among the religious teachers.

### Predicting the perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils

In order to test for the factors predicting the overall perception of the contribution, step-wise regression analyses were conducted. The predicted factor was the perception of the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils. The predictors were those aspects that were found to have significant correlations with the predicted factor: interrelations between dance and the inner world, and between dance and the religious perception, as well as motivations for choosing teaching: intrinsic-towards-myself, intrinsic-educational, altruistic, and the level of religiosity.

In predicting the contribution of the dance lessons to the pupils one predictor was found: the interrelations between dance and the inner world ( $t = 4.243$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $R = .345$ ;  $\beta = .345$ ).

## 4. Discussion

The current study examined the perceptions of observant dance teachers towards three aspects: their motivations for choosing dance instruction, the interrelations between faith and the art of dance, and the contribution of studying the art of dance as part of the formal curriculum in the R.G.E. system to the pupils. The study also examined the link between the teachers' level of religiosity and these three aspects.

As for the motivations for choosing dance instruction, the following hierarchy was found: the intrinsic-towards-myself motivation is greater than the altruistic motivation, greater than the intrinsic-educational motivation and greater from the extrinsic motivation. This finding shows that the participants' motivation to teach stems from internal personal characteristics, such as a love for children and for teaching, and less by convenient working conditions. This finding, then, indicates that the participants are part of the general public of teachers, unrelated to their uniqueness as to their culture and their teaching discipline. This means that the perceptions presented depict universal aspects unique to the teaching profession [4; 5]. A finding that is unique to this study is that the universal motivation for choosing teaching, the intrinsic motivation, is comprised, in this population, of two complementary aspects: the first, referring to the self - intrinsic-towards-myself, which is related to satisfaction from working in the discipline. The second, referring to the environment - intrinsic-educational, which is related to the teachers' desire to expand the integration of dance into the RGE and to realize their skills within an education system concordant with their religious worldview. It might be possible to assume that this is a result of the teachers' perception that the integration of dance into the RGE not only allows them to realize themselves through work in their discipline, but also enhances and increases the recognition of dance as a legitimate school subject in religious society.

As to perceptions towards the interrelations between faith and the art of dance, two subcategories – interrelations between dance and the inner world, and interrelations

between dance and religious perception - were found to have the same level. It may be assumed that the religious identity, with its multi-faceted significances, is a predisposition of the dance teachers, and that their religious outlook is expressed in the various aspects of their lives. This assumption can be examined in further research.

As to the perceptions regarding the contribution of studying the art of dance to pupils, the following hierarchy was found: the contribution of dance lessons to aesthetic-artistic education is greater than the contribution of dance lessons to physical development, greater than the contribution of dance lessons to personal and social education, greater than the contribution of dance lessons to the theoretical subjects at the school, greater than the contribution of dance lessons to religious-artistic education. The hierarchical structure indicates that in the two first subcategories at the top of the hierarchy, the participants assign great importance to the contribution of the discipline to the expansion of the pupil's means of personal expression. The qualitative analysis allows us to hear the voices of the teachers, who stated that the space for various means of using the body parts in dance allows pupils to conceptualize and express ideas and feelings in a way that is different than their entire being at the school, through nonverbal communication. This perception is concordant with other studies indicating that tasks in a dance lesson encourage pupils to develop a dialogue with themselves and with their environment, and to understand that there are many different ways for organizing their means of expression [23].

In the second subcategory in the hierarchy - the contribution of dance lessons to physical development, the interviewees stressed that physical development in the art of dance is for the purpose of personal expression, and not only for the perfection of the body, thus contributing to a reinforcement of the perception of self as an inseparable part of body and soul. This perception is expressed in Brinson's study [22], who claimed that in physical education the connection between body and soul has a competitive goal. In contrast, in the subject of the art of dance the connection between body and soul effects an artistic expression, which allows for an organization and expression of individual worldviews.

The third subcategory in the hierarchy is the contribution of dance lessons to personal and social education. This subcategory received comprehensive treatment in the statements of the interviewees, on various aspects. For personal contribution, such as education to perseverance, self-discipline, and self-realization on the one hand, and for social contribution, such as the development of interpersonal skills in planning and making group decisions, as well as influencing the formation and reinforcement of norms and values through the integration of dances into school ceremonies. In their statements the interviewees emphasized the uniqueness of the subject, to the effect that the experiential experimentation with the body serves as a source for action and for self- and social learning. Their

descriptions coincide with the claims appearing in the professional literature regarding the positive contribution of the art of dance to young people, in the recognition of the forces latent in them and in the reinforcement of their values and their personal and social development [29].

Regarding the fourth subcategory, the contribution of dance lessons to the theoretical subjects at the school, the interviewees referred to the variegation of methods that allow pupils in dance lessons to develop and enhance their cognitive and emotional skills. Their perception is related to the theory of multiple intelligences [30], which implies that pupils should be exposed to a variety of teaching methods in order to realize the potential talent in them, coinciding with findings of other researchers as well [26].

As for the fifth subcategory, the contribution of dance lessons to religious-artistic education, the interviewees emphasized that in its supreme essence dance constitutes an expression of a connection with holiness through the movement of the body. The art of dance as a subject serves as a means for the religious empowerment of pupils, among other things - by nurturing their virtues. This perception is in concordance with the study conducted by Hanna [23], who claims that the subject of the art of dance enables pupils to construct their cultural identity, by embodying the unique inner spirit of the community members.

In addition, in order to test whether there is a link between the level of religiosity and the aspects examined in the study, the research population was divided into two groups - very religious and religious, in accordance with the teachers' self-definition. The findings indicate that the very religious participants perceive the overall contribution of the interrelations between faith and the art of dance and the overall contribution of the dance lessons at a higher level than the religious participants. The same goes for aspects related to the art of dance, and to dance education, as an instrument for the expression and reinforcement of faith. It may be assumed that these findings express the identification of the very religious teachers with the educational ideology in the RGE, according to which teachers are required to develop the pupil not only in the cognitive-academic field, but to also mold the pupil's image in accordance with the Halacha. These findings coincide with previous studies regarding teachers of the RGE in Israel, from which it was found that a person's religious outlook will find expression in various aspects related to their professional-educational world [31]. However, the findings also show that in predicting the perception of the contribution of dance lessons to pupils (in which the categories of the research variables were tested with the level of religiosity), the level of religiosity was not a predictor. The predictor was rather the interrelations between dance and the inner world, which expresses the need for self-realization through dance. It may be possible to assume that the universal finding arising from the prediction - the aspiration for self-realization [1; 2] - is made possible among the research population of observant dance teachers as well, in light of the call made by the head



of the religious education administration, Rabbi Adler [16, pg. 8]. He called educators to face the challenge set by Rabbi Kook, one of the designers of the spiritual worldview of the national-religious sector, to become acquainted with the self and to develop the forces: "... hence one must search within themselves for the special powers imprinted in them, and not toss out all that he finds within their soul as preparation of this, but shall study and learn to use them properly" [32]. The words of the Rabbi are echoed in the statement made by one of the interviewees, C., who attested to her inner need for artistic self-expression, which found full realization in dance, once this art form received legitimacy in the national-religious society: "throughout my life I have found my means of expression through poetry [...] I think I chose writing since in the world where I grew up it was within the boundaries of what is allowed and possible. I flew high on the wings of simple words, calmed and charmed by their presence. Dance was at that time a dream [...] my thoughts were swirled around by movement, but the body stood still [...] years later I was exposed to dance within the boundaries that suited me as a religious girl. A world that was crying out renewed within me. A window was opened, as if a new sun had shone on me".

In conclusion, the study described in this article is a pioneer study examining the perceptions of religious dance teachers on aspects related to their professional world. One of the most prominent findings of the research is that most of the participants' perceptions are concordant with the universal perceptions of teachers on issues related to teaching and to the motivations for choosing it, as arose in other studies. The uniqueness of the research population both socially and in terms of their discipline is reflected in the fact that they are educating to a unique dance culture, which is adapted to the values of the population of which they are part, and in their work make possible the development of a professional art of dance in the spirit of the Jewish Halacha. Moreover, there is congruence between the objectives of the Religious General Education regarding the instruction of the arts, and the perceptions of the dance teachers, which could reinforce the status of the art of dance as a school subject in these educational frameworks.

Further research comparing the perceptions of the religious dance teachers in Israel with those of secular teachers, and/or from other religions and different countries, could shed further light on the unique and universal aspects related to the professional world of these teachers.

## Acknowledgements

I wish to thank my dedicated research assistant, Rona Mashiach, for her excellent assistance in the study.

I also wish to thank Roey Perlstein-Dvir, who translated and proofed the article diligently and to the highest professional standards.

The research was supported by the Intercollegiate Research Authority at Mofet Institute and 'Orot Israel' –

Academic-Religious College of Education

## REFERENCES

- [1] L. Kosminsky, Professional Identity in Teaching, Paths of Research, Vol.15, 13-18, 2008 (in Hebrew).
- [2] D. H. Pink, Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us, Riverhead Books, New York, 2011 (2009).
- [3] R. Arnon, P. Frenkel, & I. Rubin, 'Me? A Teacher?!' Considerations Concerning the Choice of Teaching as a Profession Dapim, Journal for Studies and Research in Education, Vol.59, 17-44, 2015 (in Hebrew).
- [4] K. Chan, Teacher Professional Development: In-Service Teachers' Motives, Perceptions and Concerns about Teaching, Hong Kong Teachers' Centre Journal. Vol.3, 56-71, 2004.
- [5] O. Katzin & A. Shkedi, Factors Influencing Entry to a Program for Training Excellent Students for Teaching, Dappim: Journal for Studies and Research in Education, Vol.51, 57-83, 2011, (in Hebrew).
- [6] D. C. Lortie, Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study, University of Chicago Press, Illinois, 1990 (1975).
- [7] T. Perlshtein, Choosing the Teaching Profession Among Dance Students, Studia Universitatis Moldaviae, Vol.9, No.79, 213-220, 2014.
- [8] P. Richardson, & H.M.G. Watt, Who Chooses Teaching and Why: Profiling Characteristics and Motivations across Three Australian Universities, Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, Vol.34, No.1, 27-56, 2006.
- [9] Y. Katzir, R. Sagee & Y. Gilat, Choosing the Teaching Profession: Types of Decision Makers and the Connection to their Positions towards Teaching, Dappim: Journal for Studies and Research in Education, Vol.38, 10-29, 2004 (in Hebrew).
- [10] E.W. Eisner, The Kind of Schools We Need: Personal Essays, Heinemann, New Hampshire, 1998.
- [11] M.R. Goldberg, Arts Integrating: Teaching Subject Matter through the Arts in Multicultural Settings, Pearson, Massachusetts, 2012.
- [12] J.L. Hanna, Dancing to Learn: The Brain's Cognition, Emotion and Movement, Rowman & Littlefield, Maryland, 2015.
- [13] B.P. McCutchen, Viewing Educational Dance from an Arts Education Perspective, Teaching Dance as Art in Education, Human Kinetic, Illinois, 2006.
- [14] B.H. Snook & R. Buck, Policy and practice within arts education: rhetoric and reality, Research in Dance Education, Vol.15, No.3, 219-238, 2014.
- [15] M. Dagan, The Development of the General-Religious Education, The Religious Zionist Education in the Test of Time and Age, Ministry of Defense and the Lifshitz College, Israel, 2006 (in Hebrew).
- [16] S. Adler, Creation and Art in the Religious-General School, Circular of the Director of Religious Education: Art and Creation Sheet, No.3-4, 7-11, 2007 (in Hebrew).

- [17] H. Kaufman, The Link between Judaism, Zionism, and the Culture of the Body – a Historical View, *In Movement*, Vol.5, No.2, 226-248, 1999 (in Hebrew).
- [18] A.Y.H. Kook, Orrot haTshuva, Rabbi Kook Institute, Israel, 1985 (in Hebrew).
- [19] A.Y.H. Kook, Orrot HaKodesh [Lights of Sanctity], Vols. A-D, Rabbi Kook Institute, Israel, 1990 [1963] (in Hebrew).
- [20] S. Carmi, Physical and Artistic Education in the Thought of Rabbi Kook, *Thoughts in Education*, Vol.5, No.2, 144-165, 2003 (in Hebrew).
- [21] Y. Sherlo, The Image of the Religious Artist: Introduction and Draft for a Curriculum, *Tlalei Orot*, Vol.10, 336-367, 2002 (in Hebrew).
- [22] P. Brinson, Dance as Education: Towards a National Dance Culture, Ach, Israel, 1993 (in Hebrew).
- [23] J.L. Hanna, A Nonverbal Language for Imagining and Learning: Dance Education in K–12 Curriculum, *Educational Researcher*, Vol.37, No.8, 491-506, 2008.
- [24] T. Anderson, Why and How We Make Art, with Implications for Art Education, *Arts Education Policy Review*, No.105(5), 31-38, 2004
- [25] T. Perlshtein, A Connection of the Upper and the Lower Spheres: Perceptions and Positions of Observant Dance Teachers towards the Teaching of Dance to Pupils in the Israeli General-Religious Education, *Dance Today* (Mahol Akhshav), Vol. 26, 80-91, 2014.
- [26] J.M. Burton, R. Horowitz & H. Abeles, Learning in and Through the Arts: The Question of Transfer, *Studies in Art Education*, Vol.41, No.3, 228-257, 2000.
- [27] J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th Edition, Sage Publication, California, 2013.
- [28] H. Ezer, Women Investigators in Education: "Like a Painting by Picasso: A Woman Looking in the Mirror", Ben-Gurion University Publishing, Israel, 2012 (in Hebrew).
- [29] N.V Wallace, C.R.A Jones, D. Lipa-Ciotta, C.A. Kindzierski, Dancing through the Decades in Middle School, *Middle School Journal*, Vol.45, No.4, 13-22, 2014.
- [30] H. Gardner, *Brain, Mind, and Creativity*, Poalim Library, Israel, 1995 (in Hebrew).
- [31] Y. Rich & S. Illouz, Education and Teaching Objectives in the Eyes of Teaching Students in Religious Teacher Training Institutions, *Studies in our Legacy: Researches in Jewish and Education Sciences*, No.2-3, 343-357, 2004 (in Hebrew).
- [32] A.Y.H. Kook, Mussar Avicha, chapters of instruction in worship, in G-d's work, in virtues, in self-scrutiny, Rabbi Kook Institute, Israel, 1946 (in Hebrew).