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Comments	Section
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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY
Prifysgol Fetropolitan Caerdydd

CARDIFF SCHOOL OF SPORT

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (HONOURS)

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Students and Graduates Perceptions of the Value of Studying Dance in Higher Education

(Dissertation submitted under the discipline of
DANCE)

Zaneta Sieradzan

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STUDENT AND GRADUATE PERCEPTIONS OF THE VALUE OF STUDYING DANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Cardiff Metropolitan University
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Abstract

Dance education in the UK has significantly developed over last forty years and its development is still recognised through appearance of new courses. Dance first appeared in formal education contexts in the UK as part of Physical Education and with time developed as a single subject that may be taught as part of GCSE in schools, A-levels and BTEC within further education, up to undergraduate and postgraduate courses in different universities in the UK. However, its appropriateness and effectiveness is still under discussion within politics and society where the value of dance education is questioned in comparison to more 'traditional' subjects within the national curriculum. The purpose of this study was to identify the values of dance education as perceived by current dance students and graduates. This study can be directed to potential dance students to provide them with an insight into how successful dance studies can be in order to increase potential salary and career prospects within the dance industry but also to show that dance has a value in developing transferable professional skills.

A qualitative approach has been undertaken including focus group interviews with current dance students and individual interviews with dance graduates.

This study recognised the value of dance studies in the development of personal and professional skills as well as gaining identified graduates attributes allowing students to become employable upon successful completion of a dance degree.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Dance in Formal Education

Since the 1960s dance finds its place in the National Curriculum in many primary and secondary schools across the country (Brinson, 1991). Dance is recognised as physical activity and has been located in the curriculum under Physical Education (Brinson, 1991). It has been recognised that dance has its value in the use of 'the most fundamental mode of human expression- movement' (Brinson, 1991, p163) which gives this discipline the advantage over other subjects by offering the pupils a different way of learning. It has been recognised that dance as a subject provides pupils with the opportunity to develop communication skills, team work, ability to analyse and enhance the imagination (Dance UK, 2011, online). One of the purposes of introducing dance into the National Curriculum was to provide pupils with the opportunity to participate in the physical activity which would offer non competitive learning environment because it allows for personal development and interpretation (Dance UK, 2011, online). Current statistics show that dance has been recognised as the second, after football, most popular physical activity among pupils in schools (Dance UK, 2011, online).

The development of Dance as Art model in education has recognised the potential of learning through the experience of performance, composition and appreciation. This offers to pupils the opportunity to learn how to create and perform, to learn how to respond and to be able to make a judgement (Brinson, 1991). Recognition of Dance as Art model also allowed for dance to become a separate subject and to expand its delivery through the design of dance courses at different levels giving pupils the opportunity of getting GCSE qualifications in dance, through further education design of A Levels and BTEC qualifications in dance into higher education offering undergraduate and post-graduate dance courses and Master qualifications (Brinson, 1991).

It has been evidenced that 'dance has an important contribution' (Brinson, 1991, p163) to the education of pupils, this is also supported by statistics which shows that interest in dance education significantly increased with a number of 7,003   students undertaking GCSE in dance in 2001 up to 18,866 GCSE dance students in 2007 (Dance UK, 2011, online). The popularity of dance courses at further education can be evidenced through an increase of

229% in terms of the numbers of students undertaking A-level dance during time of 1990 and 2000 (Dance UK, 2011, online).

1.1 Value of Dance in Formal Education

However dance as a subject within the National Curriculum is constantly challenged and its appropriateness in terms of being a single subject has been questioned in comparison with more 'traditional' subjects such as Maths, Science or Foreign Languages (Telegraph, 2011, online). Research shows that 58 pence of expenditure is invested in dance activity per school aged child while over £38 per child is invested in music and over £79 per child is invested in sport (Dance UK, 2011, online). The Minister of State for Universities and Science- David Willett also recognises dance education as less valued within the National Curriculum and suggests that dance should be recognised as a soft subject rather than being acknowledged as a potential academic subject (Telegraph, 2011, online).

1.2 Dance in Higher Education

Existing research challenges the idea introduced by David Willett by providing the data that shows that over 292 universities courses offer dance as a subject area (Dance UK, 2011, online) with a current number of 64 single subject dance degrees among the UK (UCAS, 2014, online). The Higher Education Statistics Agency provides the information that '1220 pupils graduated with a degree in dance' (Dance UK, 2011, online) in the 2007/08 academic year. On average 1,000 dance students graduate from university dance courses every year adding to the value of dance industry as high qualified professionals (Dance UK, 2011, online).

It seems to be appropriate to recognize that the development of technology allowed a stronger relationship to develop between dance and higher education. This is to do with development of technology which provided the opportunities to record dance works that could be used as a learning material for dance degree students but also it gave them the opportunity to submit a record of practical work as an evidence of their learning and providing a dance-based research (Carter, 2007). It is also recognisable that the learning of dance history differs from the traditional chronological way of learning which also might affect the image of dance appropriateness as an academic subject however 'dance history

has a set of methodologies and skills allied to the discipline which include critical evaluation of sources material, the ability to discern trends and changes and to place/relate events across and through time' (Carter, 2007, p124).

It has been noticed that dance education has its potential in providing students with an opportunity to develop declarative and procedural knowledge. Kerry-Berry (2005) suggests that declarative knowledge allows students to develop the understanding of the principles of something while procedural knowledge gives the opportunity to apply this knowledge into practice. It has been also recognised that both types of knowledge are 'interconnected in dance education and can inform learning at any educational level, from kindergarten through higher education' (Kerry-Berry, 2005, p80).

The purpose of this study is to research the values of studying dance at the higher education, as they are perceived by current students and graduates. The next chapter will explore in more details the key themes of dance within higher education and the notion of dance as an academic subject being recognised in comparison with more traditional subjects provided by universities.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Economic Factors

For this study it seems to be worth focusing on the socio-economic values of higher education such as innovation, finance and employment. A brief study of each of these aspects should be helpful in developing understanding of some of the objectives and possible potential of the higher education system in the UK.

2.1 Innovation

Existing data shows that developed countries with a high level of innovation success invest in higher education in order to raise the high level skills among their population (Universities UK, 2011). It has been noticed that increasing the level of graduates in the UK seems to be a valuable investment in order to rebalance and develop future growth of the UK economy. During the last 60 years there have been many breakthroughs and innovations in British industry which have occurred thanks to the research conducted by higher education institutions (Universities UK, 2011). Statistics show that through investment in knowledge-based industries, research in many fields will be continuously undertaken and therefore contribute to the economic growth of the country (Universities UK, 2011). It is important to highlight that higher education's role is not only to undertake the research, but also to interact with different types of industries and to offer the opportunities to up-skill and re-skill employees by providing the training and education for the mature generation working 'from manufacturing and creative industries, to transport and education' (Universities UK, 2011, p16). This shows that higher education not only has a value in contributing to the British economy through the potential of innovation, but also by 'improving the health and well being of the UK population' (Universities, 2011, p12). Browne supports the idea of investment for Higher Education and believes that the recent fee increase provides degree students with better service to meet their expectations. Financial support in the UK covers the fees and costs of living and is provided to anyone who enters the higher education. Investment in higher education is aimed at creating competition between institutes by making them provide 'high quality information to match students' aspirations' (Browne, 2010, p10) and is monitored by continuous evaluation on how successful universities provide fair access to students.

The creative industries 'form an important part of the Government's plan for growth and attract inward investment and export earnings for the UK economy' (Universities UK, 2011, p10). This creative sector has an advantage over other sectors with frequently twice as many graduates holding work positions than in other competitive sectors Universities UK, 2010). The Performing Arts hold second place in a ranking of the higher number of people employed within the creative industries, however there is a lack of information on how many of those employed are graduates (Universities UK, 2010).

Gardner (2012) recognises that dance, which falls under the Performing Arts, is not a usual university discipline and has historically been excluded. However information provided by UNISTATS offers some detail about how dance graduates contribute to the UK economy. UNISTATS is the official site that provides the information about all universities across the UK and allows to compare a data in order to undertake a greater decision on where and what to study.

2.2 Employment and Salary

The latest information provided by UNISTATS in 2013 provides an idea of average of employment figures among dance graduates. Reviewing a sample of higher education institutes that have dance degree, it seems that ninety per cent the dance graduates from the University of Northampton contribute most to the UK economy through working full or part time, above the University of Chichester, University of Lincoln, Leeds Metropolitan University and Cardiff Metropolitan University (UNISTATS, 2013). Dance graduates from Leeds seem to have the largest amount of unemployment with the result of fourteen per cent of unemployed graduates, however more than half of their working dance graduates held professional or managerial job positions (UNISTATS, 2013). The largest amount of dance graduates holding these positions comes from the University of Lincoln while the smallest comes from The University of Chichester (UNISTATS, 2013). Data collected by these universities show that the average annual earning of dance graduates differs between £14,000 for graduates from Cardiff up to £16,000 for these who graduated in Northampton and Leeds (UNISTATS, 2013). This data has been collected six months after graduation and might change over the time.

Above comparison is not intended to indicate which of these universities offers their graduates better opportunities for employment because statistics shows that each university is dominant in different categories such as average salary, employment, further study and unemployment. This might suggests there are different ways of valuing the higher education.

It seems to be useful looking at the comparative data from 'traditional' academic subject such as finance to get a greater image of how successful dance graduates are in terms of the salary. Statistics shows that students graduated from finance degree earn in average more than dance graduates (UNISTATS, 2013). Students graduated from finance course at the University of Manchester on the average earn from £16,000 to £25,000 during the time of six months after their graduation and the finance graduates of University of Sussex average annual earnings differs between £17,000 to £25,000 per year (UNISTATS, 2013). Information on annual salaries for dance graduates presented by UNISTATS differ from data collected by Office For National Statistics who show that average earnings for graduates account for £30,000 per year while for non-graduates it comes to £18,000 (Daily Mail, 2011, online). Official figures suggest that over the past decade graduates earned £12,000 a year more than employees without a degree. 'Graduates go on to higher paid jobs and add to the nation's strength in the global knowledge based economy' (Browne, 2010, p3). Jenkins (2011), relying on existing research and statistics, agrees that a higher education qualification helps graduates increase their earnings in a shorter time of period and allows them to keep that higher earnings for a longer time compared to non-graduates (Daily Mail, 2011, online).

2.3 Higher Education

The system in higher education has changed during last couple of years and developed to the standard that provides super complexity to its customers reflecting to the current circumstances of the British economy and culture. Watts (2000) describes higher education as 'a world of uncertainty, unpredictability, challengeability and contestability' (2000, p11) that gives its customers a chance to prepare for their personal and professional lives. This is further agreed by Ball (2000) who talks about Higher Education providing the opportunity for individuals that want to manage their lives more effectively. The idea of modularity had challenge the traditional routes and provided students with more flexibility to combine the

unity in order to encourage effective learning (Watts, 2000). Katz (2000) further agrees that 'combining learning models and articulated programme aims leads to effective course design and delivery' (2000, p24). Professional and personal development offered by higher education is further described in the next section of this chapter.

2.4 Professional skills

Research shows that since 1994, personal and professional development has become central part in the academic curriculum (Ball, 2000). Effective studies offering the development of skills and knowledge increase the chance for better employment which in order leads to greater life (Ball, 2000). Kemp and Race (1992) define a skill as a self-acting response within a specific context which should be 'performed with a minimum of conscious effort' (1992, p6). Kemp and Race (1992) also talk about the process of behaviour becoming skilled, emphasising the need for regular monitoring of skills to ensure that appropriate actions are made in order to reach the desire standard.

Tutors in Higher Education usually want their 'students to become confident communicators, skilled problem solvers, dynamic in group situations, effective time and task-managers' (Kemp & Race, 1992, p8). The design and delivery of the curriculum needs to allow students as emerging professionals to develop a range of skills. It has been indicated by employers that they are 'more likely to recruit the staff who are: good problem solvers, able to work with others, able to communicate' (Kemp & Race,1992,p5). Ball talks about the importance for graduates to become 'self-starting, critical thinkers, able to engage with the challenges of the changing workplace in the twenty-first century' (2000, p203) that is why degree courses should be designed to allow for personal and professional development.

Employers of graduates indicate 'the need for the development of skills as well as knowledge' (Kemp & Race, 1992, p5). Specialist knowledge is seen as the foundation for the notion of professionalism (Watts, 2000). Watts (2000) says that specialist knowledge gives the profession a social recognition and helps to identify the professional skills that need to occur and be provided to the potential clients. Within higher education, the term 'professional' relates to 'an academic knowledge of the subject discipline combined with a professional knowledge of teaching and education' (Watts, 2000, p13). Teachers and

managers within universities have the responsibility of re-evaluating professional skills and practice of their students (Watts, 2000). Barnett talks about the responsibilities of professionals working in universities, in terms for their students and the wider society, that 'legitimates the professional to act on its behalf' (Watts, 2000, p15). Stew is suggesting that professional education in the universities should be constantly challenging 'to provide employers with a competent yet critically aware workforce' (2000, p54). Taking into account the potential of the research and development of the knowledge, it becomes easier to imagine professional knowledge as a dynamic and problematic as suggested by Stew (2000), who recognises professional knowledge to be not simple and homogeneous but 'constantly moving along the continuum of professionalization' (2000, p53).

'Increasing specialization, the changing scope of professional practice and the emergent nature of professional knowledge' (Stew,2000, p53) allow for professional boundaries to be shifted in everyday practice. Stew assumes that 'professionals themselves speak different languages that influence both their thinking and sense of identity (2000,p52) and suggests that students of higher education should be able to recognise 'differences in values and attitudes, as well as differences in role, prestige and function' (Stew, 2000, p53) to allow for their professional development. As suggested by Kemp and Race (1992) emphasis on the development of general and potentially transferable skills is required when studying in higher education. It is also important for effective development of students that universities clearly specify educational objectives, which then can be achieved and demonstrated by well designed assignments. Universities need to give opportunities to enhance 'students' understanding and imagination, excite their intellectual curiosity, expand their knowledge and skills' (Kemp & Race, 1992,p 5) to increase their quality for future employment. Ball also talks about the learning process in higher education that 'involves self-evaluation, practice, reflection and setting future goals' (2000, p213) what requires development of skills in order to 'survival beyond graduation' (Ball, 2000, 213).

2.5 Student Centred Service and Personal Development

Watts (2000) talks about general mistrust of professionals among the society during 1980s and 1990s that has resulted in more 'emphasis on monitoring, quality, accountability for professional service' (Watts, 2000, p13). Increase of the fees and other costs associated with studying in higher education had occurred in developing the sense of student's power,

as they are customers of higher education institutes that function in the market and contribute to the British economy. Watts (2000) also talks about 'client rights' within higher education as what empowers students and provides them with a range of different opportunities and activities to allow them to undertake the right choices of where, when and how they want to study. The shift in service provided was recognised in universities which in effect led into a client-centred service that took into account the client's needs (Watts, 2000). Personal tutoring systems have occurred as a response to students' difficulties in fostering the personal development that has as much value as professional development (Katz, 2000). It became important to provide students with personal tutorials to build the trust between institution and its clients; and what is also important to provide students with better service by giving them opportunity to be treated independently on their course (Katz, 2000). 'With the recognition of the importance of student-centred learning and a desire to work in accordance with adult learning principles, the nature of the partnership between students and their course has become recognised as an important ingredient in a successful outcome' (Langley, 2000, p37). The purpose of such a shift in higher education was to increase the quality of service provided by developing better relationship between students and teaching professionals in order to offer students better value for their money (Langley, 2000).

Studying in higher education involves professional development and also builds on the personal values. At the beginning of further studies 'students are normally in a state of dependence and seeking directions. Their critical abilities and ability for self-evaluation are usually undeveloped and they have limited and untested working method' (Ball, 2000, p206). Focusing on the details provided in the text or information in a lecture to memorise details do not challenge enough their development of higher skills (Ball, 2000). Higher education allows students to become independent in their learning and to take the responsibility for directing and planning their work. The range of skills developed throughout their higher education mean that students begin working more intuitively focusing on the process rather than the end result (Ball, 2000). University learning also gives opportunities to take part in placements to ensure that 'academic study is grounded in the reality of practice rather than just practice that informed by academic study" (Langley, 2000, p37). Work experience as a part of higher education learning also has a purpose in increasing students' confidence in themselves and working environment (Ball, 2000).

The next chapter of this study gives the information on the method that has been undertaken to allow this research explore the current image of dance studies in higher education and to find out if dance courses provides its students with opportunities to develop professional skills and personal qualities necessary to become employable and to develop that graduate attributes associated with the purpose of higher education.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research Design

Blaxter, Hughes and Tight believe that "different kinds of research approach produce different kind of knowledge" (2008,p 58). For this research it seemed to be appropriate to undertake a qualitative research study which provides a range of possibilities to collect and analyse data. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight suggest that a qualitative approach gives the opportunity "to focus on exploring, in as much detail as possible, smaller numbers of instances or examples which are seen as being interesting or illuminating, and aims to achieve 'depth' rather than 'breadth'" of results (2008, p64). The purpose of this study was to focus and research into participants' perceptions of studied subject, so it seemed to be necessary to undertake qualitative approach which allowed measuring what has been set to measure. It was important to develop the understanding of this approach in order to avoid the limitations of qualitative research. Bias is one of them and can influence the findings this is why it was necessary to stay neutral while interviewing participants to allow them to share their own thoughts and opinions in order to receive a valid data. As mentioned earlier one of the values of qualitative research is that it provides wider data, however the limit of this approach is recognised in time consumption necessary to analyse and interpretative findings.

3.1 Data Collection

It seemed to be appropriate for this study to conduct individual interviews as a technique of collecting data. It is suggested by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2008) that this method can be more useful than techniques of observation or questionnaires because interviews allowed questioning and discussing the subject in more detail. Interviews give the opportunity to argue the case more strongly (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2008). The technique of semi-structured interviews involved preparation for discussion by designing the main questions which then were further discussed individually with participants who had a freedom of passing all the knowledge and experience they gained within research question. The process involved three semi-structured individual interviews carried out with graduates; more details regarding the participants will be given later in this chapter (refer to Appendix A to see the list of questions used for semi-structured interviews).

Focus groups, also known as group interviews, allow for the subject to be discussed by two or more participants at the same time (Dawson, 2009). For this study the purpose of focus group was to collect wider data on the key themes (Appendix B) identified throughout the process of reviewing the literature. Focusing on the main themes as discussion points ensured control of the conversation and avoiding breaking-away from the topic (Dawson, 2009). This idea is supported by Bell (1987) who suggests that structured questions helped to avoid the risk of collecting invalid data by focusing on the material prepared.

It was important to conduct the interviews and focus groups in a safe environment known to the participants and to make sure that participants felt comfortable. This was important in terms of ethical consideration that participants had the ease in their answers and felt no pressure when sharing their opinion. During the focus group it was important to make sure that everyone had a chance to contribute and that the conversation was not dominated by one person. This was important to keep positive interaction between interviewer and interviewees what allowed for stability of discussion. Appropriate use of language and positive mood helped to upgrade the reliability of given information.

3.2 Participants

The participants were categorised into two groups of current dance students in Higher Education and graduates of dance degrees in the UK. Individual interviews were carried out with the graduates and focused on the impact that they feel higher education has had on their lives. A small sample could be seen as a limitation for the study in terms of getting an image of the wider population however it seemed to be appropriate for the scope of this study and provided valid data that have been presented and further analysed in the later part of this work. When choosing participants the notion of diversity was considered. All participants had the experience of studying dance at higher education however it was important that they graduated from different universities. The study was not limited to the graduates who only work within dance industry but involved participants who came from different parts of the UK. The purpose of this sampling was to get a broader image of how successfully is the development of skills within dance courses in higher education across the UK. All current students that took part in this research were coming from the same University; however graduates gained their qualifications from different universities.

Effective use of existing contacts has been made as suggested by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2008). The access and ethical issues were important to consider during this study. Designing of relevant questions and themes, providing participants with information about the study and allowing them to make their own decision about participating or now is necessary in terms of ethical consideration. Participants were provided with an information sheet (see Appendix C) that explained the reasons for this study and gave them a clear idea of what will happen to the data collected. Once they agreed to support and take a part in this study they have been provided with and signed the consent form (see Appendix D). Consent forms are evidence that participants were provided with all the information necessary for them to take part in study. They agreed that their participation was volunteered and they could give up their participation at any time without affecting their legal rights.

Consideration was given to privacy through the whole study and participants were informed that they will remain anonymous while analysing data and presenting the results. Anonymity "is often linked to the issue of confidentiality" (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2008, p160) and assuring that participants will not be identified in the results presented. This helps to ensure that the information given is honest and detailed, which adds to the reliability of the study.

3.3 Reliability

The data collection included use of audio recordings during all individual and group interviews. This method of capturing the data allowed the focus "to concentrate on the process of the interview" (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2008, p172) and gave a better chance to keep eye contact and have the attention focused on the participants throughout the interviews. This allowed the conversations to flow without any disturbing and kept the focus on the purpose of interviews and focus group. Recordings of the interviews and focus group also gave the opportunity to observe the body language of the participants. Being able to listen carefully to the tone of voice and observe the facial expression helped to make sure that the information given by participants was valid. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest that all these considerations enhance the interaction between those who are involved in the conversation, and also allow a better understanding of the interviewee's perceptions. A dictaphone and mobile phone were used at the same time to record the interviews; these had been tested before the use to reduce the chance of losing collected data. To allow

analysis of collected data transcripts were produced after each individual interview and focus group. This helped to increase the reliability of this study because transcripts provide everything that has been shared by participants. Reducing the risk of losing the collected data and allowing for detailed analyse and reliable results.

Note-taking was not used during the interviews in order to prevent participants from getting distracted. Making notes during the interviews can affect participants performance by making them think that they have said something significant when seeing the interviewer making notes or finding their point unimportant when notes have not be taken (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2008). This method also adds into the reliability of research by reducing the risk of the pressure that might occur within participants.

In order to keep the reliability it has been important to become aware of the influence that external stimuli such as personal opinion may place on the study. "Researchers are themselves a powerful, and often under-recognised, influence on their research and their findings (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 2008, p83). It has been important to keep in mind what has influenced the design of the research question, what is the purpose of doing the research and how it might contribute to the knowledge to stay away from the possibility of influencing the participants input. Staying focused and aware and avoiding such bias helps to make sure that valid and important results might be found.

3.4 Validity

One of the essential parts of this study was to undertake the review of the literature in order to provide the theoretical background of the subject studied. The purpose of this was to develop the understanding of the research area through the use of information provided by other researchers. It seems to be necessary to broaden knowledge before starting the process of collecting new data. It was valuable to know what has been done so far within the studied subject and what kind of previous research was undertaken within researched field in order to recognise what else could be done to contribute to the knowledge. Kumar (2011) suggest that reviewing the literature helps to clarify and focus more on the research problem because it allows identification of theories that have been examined and related to the same or similar question, helping to recognise the existing gaps and suggesting what else could be done for further research. It was valuable for this study to use resources that

were published not long ago and can provide the current view and information of studied subject.

Review of literature related to the subject of this study helped to design questions for interviews and key themes that were necessary to be discussed during the focus group. It was important to design appropriate themes and questions for participants to make sure that data collected was efficient and allowed to measure what needed to be measured (Kumar, 2005.) Lack of valid questions directed to the participant could result in gaining unnecessary data what would then lead to misinformed study. The whole process of this study was regularly monitored by lecturer who has the experience in research and have been working and supporting other researchers before.

3.5 Data Analysis

Collected data has been analysed by the technique of comparing the transcripts of individual interviews and focus group. Information received from graduates has been compared with the data provided from current students. Use of the same themes, that influenced the design of questions, allowed keeping the clarity and structure for presenting the results. Next chapter focuses on all the findings that were provided during the process of collecting new data. In order to answer the main question of this study collected data and existing knowledge were analysed and discussed in separate chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

One of the important aspects of this research was to find out what influenced current students and graduates to enter the studies at higher education. By looking at the collected data two themes seems to have played an important in guiding participants to go into the University; these are passion for dance and the potential career or salary.

4.0 Passion for dance

Most of the participants agreed that their passion for was a key factor in their choice to study this as an academic subject at a degree level. 'I chose to study dance as it has always been a passion of mine' said one of the graduates currently working within the dance industry. 'Dance was a thing I used to do when growing up, something I used to do in school as a hobby. It was the passion in dance that has made me go there more than anything' stated another dance graduate.

The same idea seems to be shared among the current dance students who talked about their interest in dance and seeing it as a right pathway to follow in terms of their education: 'I feel it was a right choice, I love the course, I cannot picture myself to be somewhere different now'. One student admitted that she studied a different subject first but she chose to change the course because she was 'missing the passion for dance'. However, a passion for dance was not the only motivation for studying dance; the idea of a potential career and better salary also emerged as a common theme.

4.1 Career and Salary

One of the graduates admitted that although enjoyment of the subject was important, career prospects also influenced her choices. With awareness of the position of dance among different industries she chose to combine dance with another subject in order to increase her potential career. She explained: 'I always wanted to do dance but obviously I know there are not a lot of dance jobs in Wales, so I took music as well, so I had something else to fall back on just in case the dance did not work out'. Another participant adds that she has been 'influenced to go into higher education because that was the only route/option that was presented' to her. She admitted she did not feel ready to go in to work environment straight after the college.

The idea of developing a potential career has been also recognised by current dance students. Some participants spoke about the passion as well as career, one of them said 'I always had a passion for it, knowing that you can go further and do it in higher education and then have your career seemed to be very good to me, that is why I am doing it'. Different student has also recognised the value of higher education in getting the career within dance industry by saying: 'if I want to get anywhere with it I have to go in to University to study dance'.

4.2 Economic Factors

In terms of the economic factors the data that has been provided from individual interviews and the focus group has highlighted the link between a degree qualification and finance.

4.3 Degree and Finance

The notion of increasing the potential salary through gaining a higher education qualification has been touched upon by one graduate who shared her experience of working as a teaching assistant: 'The wages were not that great obviously because you have been paid at a teaching assistant level, so I needed to develop and gain more skills to be paid more for that area'. She believes that by increasing the level of skills and qualification she will have a chance to earn more money. Another graduate who does not work in dance profession has admitted that the work she is doing now and gained because of completing a degree had increased her life level in terms of her finance situation. She has shared that she is not working in dance industry because after her graduation she needed the money to live and took on a job within different industry which was easier to access: 'at that time I needed it, I needed the money and that is why I ended up going the way I am now", however she also has admitted that she enjoys 'the life, comfort and career she has at this moment'.

The experiences of these graduates is reflected in the views shared by dance students who believes that degree qualifications should lead to higher salaries in working environments: 'the skills you have developed through higher education would give that advantage of having degree and potential of getting higher salary than non-graduates'. Different

participant shared the same way of thinking by saying: 'I hope degree and experience will matter to get that better salary'.

4.4 Dance Degree and Finance

The graduate who works in the dance industry has agreed that it is not easy to become successful with earnings when starting work in dance industry. She mentioned that after graduation she had to undertake part time work to feel more stable with her earnings: 'this was quite difficult, and money was tight, I had to sustain my income through a part-time regular job to enable me to keep up monthly rent payment'. Another graduate talked about difficulties to going straight into a full time job within dance industry which would provide a successful salary. She recognised the problem by saying: 'it is always these temporary jobs… sometimes volunteer work. It takes a long time to develop into something', she also talks about the self-employment within dance industry and suggested that it requires 'a lot of work' that need to be put into getting a job.

The third graduate, not working within dance industry, has mentioned that when making a decision about what to study in higher education students should following their area of interest rather than to choose the subject just because it would offer better potential career or more salary. She said: 'you should study something you love not because of the job and pay you can get. Do something you love and then work out what are you going to do with it'. She admitted that this kind of approach worked out for her.

Current students show awareness of the finance situation among dance industry jobs. They believe that a degree should increase the chance of getting better paid job than non graduates; however they do not set their expectations too high: 'I should get better pay but I do not think it is like that realistically at all'. Another participant adds: 'The salary is probably just as low as any other job'.

4.5 Making Work for Yourself

Dance students indicated that they felt there is limited access to the dance job positions for graduates and spoke of the notion of competition within dance industry. One of the participants has said: 'we are not the only dance students and by the time we graduate there will be more qualified people looking for a job in the same industry. It will be kind of fighting for it'. However they have shown a positive attitude and willingness to success in their profession as well as recognising the possibility to use developed skills to create work for themselves. This idea has been agreed by the participant who said: 'dance becomes more popular so there will be more need to have qualified people', while another student supports: 'hopefully dance can be integrated into other things that it is now. Dance community is growing; we could promote it in different ways and maybe create jobs for ourselves'.

4.6 Professional Skills

All participants mentioned that the experience of studying at higher education allowed them to develop their confidence in terms of performance as well as while being around the people. One graduate said: 'It is a confidence that being on the university course gives you, being away from home, having the confidence in performance. You have to let it go while being on the dance course; you cannot be shy or nervous when performing. That is what I can remember higher education helped me develop on'. Another graduate agreed: 'I definitely gained more confidence'.

Current students talked more about developing the confidence to work with others. One participant described her development of working with others through: 'listening to other people opinions and ideas, working around them even if you do not agree with them…still need to find the way to work together'. A different student recognised that this increase in confidence helps her to become more independent: 'Being at University helps with independency, it prepares you for a real life when you need to get a job, university prepares you to become more confident within yourself and you become more prepared'.

During one of the individual interviews the development of presentation skills on degree courses was recognised. Dance graduate said: 'I have done a lot of presentations during

my course. Getting up, standing and talking in front of people. That is the skill I often use now in my job'. Presentation skills in terms of writing have been also recognised by another graduate: 'I had to do a lot of presenting ideas, in my assignments, essays and through the research'.

Only one graduate currently working within dance industry mentioned that she has learned how to network while being on dance degree: 'I developed professional working relationships and developed a personal work ethic. It taught me to network within industry and to be proactive in my way of working'. She also recognised that it would be valuable in terms of dance profession if she had the opportunity to network with international artists while studying at the University.

Participants of focus group recognised the value of developing teaching skills and working with others through the dance pedagogy module on their course. They recognise there are many roles within dance and teaching is one of the ways they could follow in terms of the potential career. One student said: 'I have learned more about dance pedagogy and I quite enjoy teaching'. Another student added: 'I am learning and developing skills that could be transferred into jobs that are more available'.

One of the dance graduates also recognised that the development of a range of skills gives more opportunities for potential career: 'The course was quite open to most avenues of work and set students up for a range of possible career paths in the industry, i.e. choreographers, performers, teachers, technicians'. A different graduate recognised the value of her degree in developing the skills necessary to work at a higher level: 'the skills I have learned in my degree helped me to become a post-graduate'.

4.8 Personal Skills and Qualities

In terms of personal skills and qualities the development of a personal style of dancing has been recognised by both graduates and current students. They agreed that getting to know their own body and grow as a person have the significance in personal development. One graduate said: 'I have gained a number of qualities from studying at higher education... I am committed, hard work, dedicated and willing to work hard to see and develop technique and understanding. You need to be patient in this line of work and building up a thick skin is

essential. You need to be confident in your ability'. A different graduate shared her personal development at higher education by saying: 'it was more about experimenting with the movement and your style; it was quite safe environment to learn'.

The idea of individual development was also strongly recognised by current dance students: 'I want to develop my personal style; I do not want to become somebody else'. Another person shared her feelings: 'it helps us to develop individually because it gives us the opportunity to interpret things in our own way'. A different student added: 'you get to know you own body, things you need to improve on. It is good to see the development between last year and now… Last year I had no confidence in myself I was comparing myself with others… I build on my confidence and I am learning on how to not compare myself with others. It definitely helped me to grow as a person'. This supports the idea of confidence discussed above, and also the importance the participants have placed on the transferable skills they feel they have gained through studying at university.

The next chapter is going to critically analyse the data collected from the literature and information provided by participants of this study. This should allow providing a critical respond to the main question of this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to produce the outcomes of this study through the analysis of findings in comparison to the existing knowledge recognised through the review of literature. By the end of this chapter the answer for the main question of this research should be clearly identified.

5.0 Socio-Economic Factors

It has been acknowledged that socio-economic factors play a part in recognising the values of higher education (Universities, 2001). Existing knowledge and this research identify the notions of potential salary and career prospects to be recognised as particularly valuable aspects by dance students and graduates of higher education in the UK.

5.1 Salary

The existing statistics show that average earnings for graduates in the UK is £30,000 per year with the advantage of £12,000 more than non-graduates (Daily Mail, 2011, online). This suggests that a value of higher education is to increase potential salary for graduates. Higher education qualifications increase graduates earnings in a shorter time and helps them to maintain those higher earnings for a longer time when compared to people without a degree (Daily Mail, 2011, online). However when looking at data provided by UNISTATS it is evident that current dance graduates on average earn less than the above amount. When comparing statistics of dance courses with more traditional subjects of the Higher Education such as finance, a clear distinction is in the average earnings of graduates. The average earnings within six months after graduation differ from £16, 000 for dance graduates and £25,000 for these who graduated from finance courses (UNISTATS, 2013). This suggests that potential of attaining a higher salary is not what influences dance students to undertake studies of dance at the Higher Education.

Information collected from the dance graduates reflects the above statistics. They recognised the general lack of high salaries within the dance industry and agreed that it is difficult to become successful with earnings at the start of a career within the field. It seemed to be beneficial for graduates to undertake part time jobs that would help them become more stable with earnings. This is supported by the dance graduate who shared her memories of the time after graduation: 'it was quite difficult, and money was tight, I had

to sustain my income through a part time regular job to enable me to keep up my monthly rent payment'. The graduates shared similar responses on the notion of the salary within dance industry, with participants agreeing that it takes time to build on the success and often temporary or volunteer works is required to be carried out.

Data collected through this study shows that current students recognise some the idea of investing in gaining a higher qualification to increase their potential salary after graduation. They supported it by saying: 'the skills you have developed through higher education would give that advantage of having a degree and potential of getting higher salary than non-graduates', 'I hope degree and experience will matter to get that better salary'. However they also showed an awareness of the situation within dance industry in terms of the salary limitation: 'I should get better pay but I do not think it is like that realistically at all', 'the salary is probably just as low as any other job'. These findings might suggest that there are other factors that students of dance value more in terms of higher education rather than a potential increase in salary. These are going to be discussed within this chapter.

5.2 Career

The literature review showed that graduates outweigh the number of people employed within creative sector without a higher qualification. Dance within this sector falls under Performing Arts which as a whole holds second place in a ranking of the highest number of employed graduates (Universities UK, 2010). This might suggest that higher education has a value in increasing the career potential for graduates. This idea is also supported by current students who believe that studying at higher education should increase their potential career. They believe in their success within dance industry will be improved by undertaking their studies on a dance degree course: 'if I want to get anywhere with it I have to go in to University to study dance'. Dance gives also the opportunity to be combined with other subjects which adds to its value and allows an increase in the potential career for graduates. This has been recognised by one of the dance graduates: 'I always wanted to do dance but obviously I know there are not a lot of dance jobs in Wales, so I took music as well, so I had something else to fall back on just in case the dance did not work out'. This approach was undertaken with a thought of being able to get a job within Performing Arts sector.

However, both graduates and current students of dance course had recognised the problem for emerging dance professionals to become successful at the beginning of their career within the dance industry. They are aware of limited access to get professional dance jobs because of the competitive nature of this discipline and also because dance for a long time has been excluded as an academic subject within higher education (Gardner, 2012) what occurred in dance being less appreciated than any other 'traditional' subject offered by higher education. This kind of approach might suggest that potential career is not a main thing that influences people to study dance in the higher education.

Recognition of dance development within British culture and increase of numbers of dance degrees among the Universities in the UK is also recognised by current students who believe in the potential of developing the image of dance which in turn may lead to increase their potential career within dance industry by the time they graduate. As mentioned by one participant: 'dance become more popular so there will be more need to have qualified people' it seems that there is recognition of value that studying dance at the higher education can increase the chance of getting a career within dance profession and also this allows for the development of a high quality dance experience to dance graduates' potential dance learners by increasing the number of qualified people working within this field.

5.3 Professional Skills and Personal Qualities

This study has recognised a significant value in professional and personal development among dance students and graduates. As supported by existing knowledge this kind of approach has been a key focus of higher education since 1994 (Ball, 2000). The purpose of the higher education is to develop a range of skills that increase students' chances of becoming successful in future employment (Ball, 2000). The next sections of this chapter will discuss the values of studying dance in higher education in terms of professional and personal development that have been acknowledged by participants of this study.

5.4 Subject Knowledge

It has been noticed that employers value the graduates who developed a high level of skills as well as knowledge of the profession (Kemp & Race, 1992). As introduced in the literature review chapter that specialist knowledge allows for a social recognition of a profession (Watts, 2000) which suggests that it is valuable to have qualified professionals working within the dance industry who have developed knowledge of dance as well as skills needed in the practice of dance. As suggested by Watts (2000) becoming professional, in terms of the higher education, means to develop the academic knowledge of the specific subject which then combines with a professional knowledge. This strongly supports that there is a value in studying the theory and practice of dance within higher education because this increases graduates' subject knowledge which then adds to their professional development in terms of potential ability.

Current students recognised the value in learning about dance pedagogy on their degree course: 'I have learned more about dance pedagogy and I quite enjoy teaching'. However, the students identified that the subject knowledge could be applied more widely in their future careers: 'I am learning and developing skills that could be transferred into jobs that are more available'. The opportunity to discover new things through developing their knowledge and dance practice seems to be valued by participants in terms of studying dance as a subject at the higher education.

5.5 Confidence in Performing and Presenting

Dance as a physical activity allows students to learn through the practice of doing and performing which in terms of dance studies occurs as evidence of applying developed subject knowledge of the discipline. Nearly all of participants, both students and graduates recognised that studying dance at higher education increased their confidence to perform. One of the dance graduates mentioned that 'while being on the dance course you cannot be shy or nervous when performing' and identified the ability to present and perform is one of the skills she developed through the higher education.

It has been suggested by Stew (2000) that professional education within degree courses should constantly challenge students to make them become competent and critically

conscious. Dance degree courses as mentioned by participants seem to be designed to provide students with such experiences that challenge and allow for professional development in terms of presentation and performance. This is supported by the dance graduate who believes that the presentation skills she uses in her job now developed through the studies of dance at the higher education: 'I have done a lot of presentations during my course; getting up, standing and talking in front of people. This is the skill I often use in my job, I have to present the ideas and talk to the high level directors, if I have not done dance course I would not have an experience in doing this'.

The development of presentation skills was also recognised by another dance graduate who believes that this occurred thanks to the effective design of her dance course which provided her with opportunities to share her ideas through written work and discussions. She recognised this value and shared her experience of developing the presentation skills when she said: 'I had to do a lot of presenting ideas in my assignments, essays and through the research'. This strongly supports and links with the idea of being challenged through the higher education as suggested by Stew (2000) and demonstrates that the value of studying dance at the higher education is recognised by graduates through the development of the confidence and skills needed to perform he choreography and present the written academic work.

5.5.1 Personal Confidence

Performance skills, feeling comfortable when presenting the ideas in front of the others, being prepared for a critical response and not feeling shy are the skills and qualities that can also be strongly recognised in response to the development of personal confidence. Dance students and graduates mentioned that while studying at higher education they completed many tasks that allowed them to develop confidence within themselves and to get to know their own body. Dance students recognised the experience of studying in the higher education as a period of preparation for the future, along with the increase of their confidence they get a chance to become more independent and prepared for real life after graduation. They believe that self confidence is important in terms of the professional development, this is evidenced in participant's response: 'being at University helps with independence, it prepares you for a real life when you need to get a job. University prepares you to become more confident within yourself.' This can suggest that another

value of studying dance at higher education is recognised through personal development and increase of the confidence among students. Therefore this idea is not dance specific and can be applicable to all university courses.

Participants of this study have been studying dance in different universities and all of them strongly recognized their personal development through dance studies: 'I built on my confidence and I am learning on how to not compare myself with others', 'it helps us to develop individually because it gives us the opportunity to interpret things in our own way'. This supports Stew's (2000) suggestion that within dance course each student has the opportunity to develop personally and individually which may then benefit the dance profession by offering different ways of thinking and working. It has been also further recognised by Stew (2000) that higher education should provide students with opportunities to recognise a range of values, attitudes, roles and functions through their professional studies.

5.5.2 Working with Others

This study has also acknowledged the value of dance in the development of team work skills. Dance can be seen as a competitive discipline, as recognised by participants of this study, however the process of learning through the dance and its practice involves working with others. The development of skills necessary to work with others has been noticed by both students and graduates of dance who contributed to this study. One student described the experience of working with others as: 'listening to other people opinions and ideas, working around them even if you do not agree with them…finding the way to work together', and she agreed that through her course in higher education she was getting an opportunity to develop the skills necessary to work with others and to compromise.

This is strongly supported by the theory that the purpose of higher education is to provide students with the opportunities that allow them to become confident in communication, able to solve the problem, be active when working in a group and also able to manage their time and tasks effectively (Kemp & Race, 1992). This approach is not only valued by higher education, dance students and graduates but also is important for employers who are 'more likely to recruit the staff who are: good problem solvers, able to work with others, able to communicate' (Kemp & Race, 1992, p5). In terms of both existing knowledge and data

collected it seems to be appropriate to recognise that dance degree courses provide students with many opportunities to develop experiences in collaborative skills that will support their professional practice and employability.

5.6 Networking

The opportunity to develop team work skills through dance courses in higher education is also necessary for students in order to provide them with the ability to be able to network within the dance industry. Networking plays an important role in students' professional life because effective networking increase their chances to be recognised within the dance industry, what in order leads to increase the chances to success and work within dance profession (Dance UK, 2011). One graduate recognised the value of networking and shared her experience of studying dance at higher education as an opportunity to develop network skills: 'I developed professional working relationships and developed a personal work ethic'. She further mentioned that thanks to her experience studying dance in higher education she became more proactive in the way she works and uses developed network skills to make sure she can be recognised by other artists and professionals within dance industry. She believes that this skill allows for her to be recognised by others working in dance industry which increases her chances to become successful in her profession.

This study has shown that dance students and graduates recognise particular values in professional and personal development, as discussed above. By analysing existing knowledge and new findings it seems that this recognition is due in part because of the approach of student centred learning provided on dance degree courses.

5.7 Student Centred Learning

It seems to be appropriate to suggest the apparent design and delivery of dance degree courses allows students to develop a range of skills that process involves enhance their quality of everyday life after graduation in terms of career, salary and professional attitude. Higher education learning processes involve 'self-evaluation, practice, reflection and setting future goals' (Ball, 2000, p213) which allow dance students to expand their knowledge and skills through professional and personal development (Kemp & Race, 2000).

This is evidenced in the response of the dance graduate: 'I have gained a number of qualities from studying at higher education… I am committed, hard work, dedicated and willing to work hard to see and develop technique and understanding'. She also recognised the importance of personal qualities such as confidence as a key part of being successful in the dance industry: 'you need to be patient in this line of work and build up a thick skin is essential. You need to be confident in your ability'. Recognition of confidence development through dance seems to occur thanks to the nature of the course and its design: 'it was more about experimenting with the movement and your style; it was safe environment to learn'.

Higher education also provides an opportunity for an individual approach in learning and development as a result of student centred learning. As presented in literature review this kind of service emerged as a result of taking consideration of students' needs and their high expectations for the quality of higher education services associated with fee increases (Watts, 2000). Current students recognised the value in individual development and expressed their willingness for an individual approach to be continued within dance degree courses: 'I want to develop my personal style; I do not want to become somebody else'. Dance studies gave the participants the opportunity to express their own feelings and opinions without a sense of being different or wrong: 'it helps us to develop individually because it gives us the opportunity to interpret things in our own way'. This shows the value of dance in putting the emphases on the students' personal development and development of their individual approach in order to interpret things differently and apply them into the practice and further learning.

The process of learning and developing skills through student centred approaches involves effective use of time to meet educational objectives, which then need to be evidenced through well-designed assignments. Ball (2000) also believes that students increase their chances to develop a range of skills when focusing on the process of learning rather than the result. Dance student also recognised the value in this notion and mentioned that dance studies: 'allow you get to know your own body, things you need to improve on. It is good to see the development between last year and now… Last year I had no confidence in myself, I was comparing myself with others… I built on my confidence and I am learning on how to not compare myself with others. It definitely helped me to grow as a person'. Such a response demonstrates that dance may be recognised as a valuable academic discipline

that provides its students with a high quality service in order to develop skills needed for a life after graduation.

5.8 Values of Dance in Higher Education

Taking into account everything what has been discussed in this chapter this seems to be appropriate to recognise that dance studies at higher education are designed to increase graduates life by allowing them to gain graduates' attitude, develop professional subject knowledge and to improve employability after graduation. The range of values provided by dance at higher education allow for graduates to success in different roles within the professional fields. Dance degree courses has been designed to provide the opportunity for everyone who willing to develop high level skills to meet their potential aims and aspirations. Higher education in dance provides students with opportunities to increase the potential salary and career through the personal and professional development. As a result of the research conducted in this study, the values of dance in higher education may be particularly recognised in the development of:

- high level communication skills necessary in order to work with others and to act with professionalism when cooperating with others,
- problem solving skills in order to critically analyse the situation and find best solution,
- time management which is necessary when facing different tasks that need to be completed,
- critical thinking to be able to strongly develop self opinion and be able to recognise the values in different approaches and attitudes,
- high research skills that are necessary to increase the knowledge and provide chance for new innovations,
- professional relationships that would lead to success for individuals, industry and wider society,

All of these values were recognised by dance students and graduates as important aspects of dance studies at higher education. Along professional development students and graduates also recognised the values in personal development through dance studies. They recognised the emphasis of dance courses providing the opportunity for individual interpretation through the development of critical thinking that can be applied in many fields of dance such us choreography, technique development or during the process of

researching into the stimulus. This also seems to be recognised that dance has a value in personal development because its practice allows identifying limitations which then could be developed through the use of different approaches. Dance students and graduates recognised the value in having the opportunity to solve the problems as a group through the discussion or practice with a partner and individually through the use of different sources that would help to develop the understanding of what would be the best solution to success. Another value of dance in terms of personal development that has been also recognised by students and graduate is to have a chance to develop different relationships through the practice in team work.

This study demonstrates that dance studies in higher education provides students with a number of opportunities that allow for developing graduate attributes enabling students to become employable giving them chances to build on their personal and professional development. This all can be achieved thanks to the way that dance is taught and how it reflects the current situation in the industry. The next chapter will explore some limitations of this study and will provide some suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.0 Key Outcomes

This study has focused on researching the values of studying dance in higher education. Current students and graduates of dance degree courses shared their experiences of developing studying dance in higher education. Key outcomes identified were that there are different kinds of values in studying dance at university level. Participants recognised some socio-economic values of the higher education in terms of increasing potential career opportunities and salary, however the significant findings focused on the values recognised in the professional and personal development of participants. Studying in higher education allows students to develop within the dance profession by undertaking the specific subject to study however it also prepares students and increases their chances for employment within different industries after graduation because of development of skills that can be transferred and used in different situations.

This study can be directed to students of further education who have a passion to dance and are considering its appropriateness as an academic subject at higher education. The outcomes of this work can be useful for potential dance students of higher education in order to broaden their understanding and recognition of values provided by dance courses. This study can also be directed to parents who are willing to support their children in their choice to study at university level but do not recognise the value in dance as a potential academic subject. The apparently successful development of key personal and professional skills gained through studying dance could usefully inform the design of degrees in other subject areas that also seek to offer these skills.

6.1 Limitations of Findings

The findings of this study are interesting when taking into account that a dance as a physical activity involves practice of technique and choreography. There was a possibility for participants to focus their responses on physical skills developed through a dance degree course; however they recognised values in developing professional and potentially transferable skills rather than practical skills. It might be seen as a limitation of this study that this main focus on professional and transferable skills gives very little information about

the development of technical skills that are characteristic for dance. This study does not provide the information of how much value is placed in terms of practical and technical skills of dance practice. This notion could influence implications for further research that would allow focusing on practical approach within dance studies in higher education.

6.2 Critical Reflection on the Research Process

The qualitative approach of this study seemed to be appropriate in terms of receiving good quality of data which then could be discussed and analysed to provide valuable results. The use of existing literature was useful in terms of developing knowledge and recognising what would be appropriate for this study to focus on to make sure that new findings will contribute to knowledge. This study used recent literature which helped to ensure valid and reliable findings.

It could be seen as a limitation of this study that the researcher had no previous experience of taking part in a research process. All previous knowledge of how to conduct interviews, present data and discuss the findings has been developed theoretically and only put into practice whilst working on this study. If the same study would be undertaken again it would be worth undertaking a pilot interview that would help to develop an understanding of how to carry out discussions in order to receive as much information as possible.

The number of participants could also limit the findings of this study because more data could be provided if more interviews were conducted. This would help to draw a broader picture on perceptions of developing high level skills by dance students from a wider number of Universities in the UK.

6.4 Summary

The research process has helped to create useful knowledge in terms of recognising the values of studying dance in higher education. It has shown the potential of dance in education, demonstrated it has the right to be recognised as a valuable subject to study at University level and that dance offers more to its learners than just developing a good fitness level or providing a joy of moving.

This study confirms that higher education offers a range of values in terms of developing high level skills and that these high level skills can be developed and achieved by undertaking a dance degree course. Sharing the results of this study may help to change perceptions about studying dance at higher education and help to increase recognition of the values that dance studies offers to individual learners and the quality of work provided within the dance industry and beyond.

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APPENDIX A

SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What influenced you to make a decision to enter studies in higher education?

2. What do you do?
   Do you work in dance industry? (type of work)

3. In terms of becoming professional, what skills degree helped you to develop/gain? Was there anything missing that you were hoping to develop/ gain through you studies in higher education?

4. In terms of personal qualities, what as an individual do you feel you got from studying in higher education?

5. After graduation how long did it take you to get a job in your profession? Was it easy?

6. Does your salary reflect the skills and knowledge you developed through studying in higher education?

APPENDIX B

KEY THEMES FOR FOCUS GROUP

1. Decision to come to university.

   What have influenced students to enter studies in higher education?

2. Professional skills and personal qualities.

   Which of these students developed and are there any missing?

3. Employment:

   Are students aiming to work in dance industry?

   What types of jobs they are interested in?

   How easy they think it will be to get that job?

   Opinions on potential salary

4. Higher education overall impact on their life.

5. Dance studies in higher education to get a job? High qualifications or maybe to get that experience?

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

I would like to invite you to take a part in the research project I am currently working at as a part of my further studies at Cardiff Metropolitan University. Before you decide to participate in this study I would like you to take some time to read the following information carefully, and if you wish to discuss it with others, to help you to decide whether or not you would like to take a part in this research.

The project title

Students and graduates perceptions of the value of studying dance in higher education.

Background of the project

The purpose of this project is to focus on dance students and graduates perspectives on the value of studying dance in higher education. The study focuses on the participants' respond to the key themes such as socio-economic, professional and personal values of studying at the higher education, how studies have effected or might affect their career. As a researcher I am also interested in focusing on influences that made participants wish to gain and develop high level skills.

To collect the data for this study I would like to carry out a focus group with current dance students and individual interviews with dance graduates. The purpose of a focus group is to discuss what influenced participants to choose to study dance at the university level and what they hope to achieve through it. The researcher will make sure that the group interview is going to be carried in the safe environment to provide participants with a

positive experience and to allow them to feel comfortable during discussion. The researcher also is taking the responsibility to make sure that no one will get dominated by other participants during the discussion. The date and time of the focus group will be set appropriately to make sure all participants can attend the interview.

Individual interviews will be carried out with a recent and the established dance graduates. The content of all interviews will be very similar. The purpose of the interviews is to reflect on graduates' experience of studying at the higher education and also to find out whether that did or did not help them meet their expectations. Interviews will be carried in places suitable for participants.

Do you have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part in this study. If you do decide to participate in my research you will be asked to sign a consent form that is necessary to keep my study reliable, however you will have a right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Will the project be kept confidential and what will happen to the results of the research project?

All interviews will be recorded for the researcher to be able to carefully analyse collected data, however all the information given during the interviews will be kept strictly confidential from people who will not be included in the project. The researcher will keep participants' details anonymous and their names will not be identified in any reports or publications. The participants will have a right to wish to be provided with the final results.

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

UREC Reference No:

Title of Project: Students and graduates perceptive of the value of studying dance in higher education.

Name of Researcher: Zaneta Sieradzan

Participant to complete this section: Please initial each box.

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for this evaluation study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily. ☐

2. I understand that the participation is voluntary and that it is possible to stop taking part at any time, without giving a reason. ☐

3. I also understand that if this happens, our relationships with Cardiff Metropolitan University, or our legal rights, will not be affected. ☐

4. I understand that information from the study may be used for reporting purposes, but I will not be identified. ☐

5. I agree to take part in this project. ☐

Name of participant: ……………………….…

Signature of participant:………………………   Data: …………………….

APPENDIX E

ETHICS APPROVAL

06/03/14

To: Zaneta Sieradzan

Project reference number: (13/05/343U)

Your project was recommended for approval by myself as supervisor and formally approved at the Cardiff School of Sport Research Ethics Committee meeting of 26th June 2013.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Brooker

Supervisor