

ABSTRACT

Basic element of competitive Dance Sport is the dance couple. For being successful, it's needed to master the combination of specific dance skills, sport skills, stress resilience and skills connected to dance partnership, mainly communication skills and conflict resolution skills. Since the scientific research of conflict resolution among competitive couples is very scarce, aim of our explorative qualitative research is to understand how Latin Dance Sport couples experience conflicts and their subjective meaning of partnership in competitive dance. Experiences of dancers of various dance classes and their trainers were gathered using questionnaire (= 43) and half-structured interviews (= 13). Based on thematic analysis, relevant themes were identified and described, and explanatory model further based on activity theory, game theory and theory of interdependence was proposed. Model suggests that contradiction of two different motives (competitive success vs. partner relationship) in the activity systems of competitive dance predisposes possible complex relationships between (implicit and/or explicit) aims of dancers, their type of partnership, possible expressed conflicts and their preferred styles of conflict resolution (based on the unique context of every dance couple). Relevant identified themes were types of conflicts in dancesport, types of conflict resolutions in dance couples, change in the preferred style of conflict resolution based on the personal and dance experiences, meaning of conflict avoidance and coach mediation in dancesport, dance as the mirror of relationship, contradiction of connection vs. separation of personal and dance life and contradictions of lived vs. expressed gender roles in dancesport. Both benefits and limitations of our research study are further discussed and possibilities of further research are suggested.

KEYWORDS:

Dance sport, competitive ballroom dance, competitive latin dance, conflict resolution, communication training, dyadic interaction, dance partnership, relationship in dance couple, psychology of personal relationships, activity theory, cultural-historical activity theory, interaction of activity systems, Thomas-Kilmann model of conflict resolution, interdependence theory, sport psychology, social psychology, educational psychology, thematic analysis, participatory paradigm in qualitative psychology research