

THE STUDY PROGRAMME OF DANCE PEDAGOGY AND ITS RENEWAL CONTEXTS

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Abstract. The article discusses the study programme of dance pedagogy and its renewal contexts. Additionally, the study analyzes dance programmes of Scandinavian countries, which are well evaluated and appreciated. The dance programmes are analyzed based on comparison with the situation in Lithuania, i.e. study programme of dance pedagogy at Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences), which has a purpose to educate and prepare a pedagogue who is capable to attain education results provided in general education programs, to provide scholars with an opportunity to develop and educate the basis of moral, social, cultural, and civic qualities, acquire general and specific competencies and get the chance to try these competencies in various professional activities, so as to decide the prospects of future career. With the aim to evaluate the quality of the study programme of dance pedagogy in Scandinavia and Lithuania, its efficiency, effectiveness, and compliance with European standards, the documents that regulate teacher training, and course descriptions are analyzed. In addition, it is attempted to examine whether graduates of these countries are satisfied with study programmes and wherewith the programme is special. While analyzing the content of study programmes, the opinion and evaluation of graduates are of particular importance seeking continuous improvement while applying new and relevant disciplines.

Keywords: *dance pedagogue, Lithuania, Scandinavia, studies, comparative analysis, study programme*

Introduction

Lithuania had to adapt to various ideological principles, changes, and challenges during the previous century while generating its independence. Accordingly, over time, the education system of the country changed and developed. The Lithuanian education system, which conception was formed in 1992, still does not have a precise model and effective strategy. Regarding Lithuania's Seimas Resolution "On the state education strategies for years 2013-2022 approval" it is stated that institutions of higher education are still learning to work autonomously and are not acquitted to use its potential opportunities. Based on the European Commission strategy on higher education it is accentuated that to improve the quality of higher education, international communication must be promoted and stimulated (Jucevičienė et al., 2007). By the 1960s, numerous universities had established simple relationships with universities in foreign countries so that students might gain cross-cultural experience (AI-Youbi et al., 2020).

One of the most important features of the modern world is dynamism and continuous attempts to improve (Jucevičienė, 2017). Is an increasing need for cultural understanding and constructive dialogue (Lähdesmäki et al., 2020; Wahlen, 2007). Consequently, the process of maintaining international relationships and experience

sharing is an irrefutably prominent and significant step forward to such a small and relatively young country as Lithuania.

Well-developed and highly evaluated Education systems of Scandinavian countries are one of the most appropriate examples for Lithuania's education system to follow. It is the main reason, why seeking to create and improve the conception of Lithuania's Education system, Lithuanian scientists tend to analyze Education systems of Lithuania, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark, in this manner attempting to find appropriate and practical examples to follow. The current Lithuanian Education system actively integrates into European space, therefore it is of particular importance to assure not only the national quality of the studies but systematically renew the study programmes as well. This process in Lithuanian higher education schools was intensified by introducing a European credit transfer and accumulation system and conducting the activities under the 2007-2013 year's Human Resources Development Operational Program (Žibėnienė, 2014). To attain ET 2020 defined objectives, Lithuania pays attention to currently relevant spheres, such as professionalism of the teachers and professors, education, which is based on analysis of the data and self-evaluation, development of non-formal education, and lifelong learning. These goals are defined in the new Lithuanian National Education strategy of 2013-2022 years.

Since the standards for Education system, institution, and study programme are getting higher continually, it is supreme to analyze an appreciable worldwide programme of dance pedagogy of Scandinavian countries and compare it with the current situation in Lithuania. Analysis and self-assessment are essential points while attaining constant improvement, applying new, efficient disciplines, and refusing outdated subjects. The object of the research is a study programme of dance pedagogy; the research aims to disclose a particularity of the dance pedagogy programme of Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences) following the content of dance pedagogy programmes offered by the institutions of higher education in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. The objectives of the research are: (1) to analyze the study programmes of dance pedagogy and course descriptions of Lithuania and Scandinavian countries; (2) to compare the conceptions of Bachelor Thesis of study programmes of dance pedagogy; (3) to compare the opinion and evaluation of graduates of dance pedagogy; and (4) to introduce the renewed strategy of the study programme of dance pedagogy of Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences).

Materials and Methods

Methodology of the research is using the analysis of scientific literature, content analysis of the documents that regulate teacher training, programmes, and its subjects' descriptions, comparative analysis, as well as conducting an interview. The basis of the research are Higher education institutions of Lithuania and Scandinavian countries. The scope of the study involves with 28 graduates of dance pedagogy from Lithuania and 24 graduates of dance pedagogy from Scandinavia.

Results and Discussion

Analysis of dance pedagogy study programmes of Lithuania and Scandinavina countryes

The preparation of professional and qualified teachers is a significant and responsible work of the state, which is directly related to the future of the country and nation. Regarding the authors of the book “Analysis of the teacher training study programme: it is stated that the progress and quality of education is a crucial key factor, which leads to an appropriate preparation of pedagogues. It is the main reason why the external and self-evaluations, as well as study programmes’ accreditations of higher education institutions, are initiated and organized. Consequently, competence becomes the aim of educational programs. However, levels of activities and competence are the issues, since any professional environment is continuously changing” (Jucevičienė, 2017). A purposefully formed system of education provides qualitative studies and the formation/preparation of competent specialists (Fägerlind and Strömqvist, 2004). Lithuania has an opportunity to learn from Scandinavian countries, which follow the principles based on “realization of individuality”, avoidance of competitiveness, and “autonomy of higher education institutions”.

Until 2021, it was possible to study dance in Lithuania at four educational institutions: the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences, Vilnius, Samogitia and Marijampolė colleges. In 2021, dance pedagogy can be studied at Vilnius College and Vytautas Magnus University. Four institutions of Education in Lithuania such as the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and Colleges of Vilnius, Samogitia, and Marijampolė provide the possibility to acquire a specialty of dance pedagogue. To gain appropriate competencies it is obligatory to prepare professional specialists. It requires well-formed study programmes and purposeful disciplines. According to the Republic's of Lithuania Minister's of Education and Science edict's on regulation of teacher training approval amendment, pedagogical studies of any level must ensure that graduates have accumulated enough subject knowledge and skills [...], understand the taught subject's methodology (The Minister of Education and Science, 2010). Under these circumstances, the programme of dance pedagogy has to adapt to a harmonized system between the art of dance and the subjects of its teaching.

While analyzing the documents that regulate teacher training, dance pedagogy programmes of Lithuania and Scandinavian countries, attention was drawn to two aspects: the content of dance pedagogues' curriculum and the logical link between its taught subjects. The basis of the analysis is a study programme of dance pedagogy at Vilnius college (University of Applied Sciences) since the authors of this article are specialists of this field, who graduated and work in this sphere. Study programmes of Scandinavian countries are chosen purposefully, to renew the conception of dance pedagogue preparation and formation at Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences). The study programme of Dance Pedagogy at Vilnius College is designed to prepare a dance teacher who is ready for education and training activities, who can act creatively, and adapt to the constantly changing environment in various sectors of the education system. The graduate of the programme, who defends the final work, is awarded a professional bachelor's degree in art pedagogy and the professional qualification of a teacher.

The study programme of dance pedagogy at Vilnius college (University of Applied Sciences) is designed to prepare a competent pedagogue who can analyze, prearrange, manage, and evaluate educational activities of dancing at schools and non-formal institutions of education. The programme's graduate that has defended the thesis is granted the Bachelor's degree in art pedagogy and professional dance, and the teacher's professional qualification. The logical ground of the programme formation is clear and

reasonable, the subjects of the programme is well arranged. The process of the studies is organized concerning the outcome of the intended results. It is ensured by pedagogical and dance (such as folklore, Lithuanian scenic, classical, ballroom dancing, and genres of contemporary dances) subjects, which are designed in the study programme. Pedagogical studies consist of: (1) theoretical part, which is designed to ensure specialized knowledge of pedagogy, psychology, and methodology; and (2) pedagogical practice, which is organized based on the principle of theoretical and practical teaching/studying.

The main activities and/or competencies of dance pedagogue are established in “In the standard of dance teacher training”, which asserts that students must be able to manage the process of dancing, organize the educational activity of dance, participate in socio-cultural life, and constantly improve professional competencies. Disciplines of pedagogy, psychology, and methods of dance enable students to develop the main competencies, such as the ability to manage, plan, create, and evaluate educational activities of dance, as well as provide an environment that would be favorable and appropriate for learning. Based on the research, although the biggest attention is paid to the disciplines of dance art, students are eager to learn such dance genres as street dance and lindy-hop. Additionally, regarding the research, the pedagogical/professional practice provides an opportunity to put in practice the theoretical knowledge gained during the lectures. Therefore, based on the results of students' professional practice, it is possible to determine not only the quality of the study programme but its logical ground as well.

Students of programme are taught by professors, artists, and pedagogues. The students create choreography, perform artistic programs, are able critically to evaluate, and analyze information, which is closely related to their professional activity and thus perform research. Lithuanian students have an opportunity to study pedagogy of dance in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden-Stockholm (School of Dance and Circus Stockholm), Finland-Helsinki (University of Arts Helsinki), Norway (Norges Dansehøyskole), Stavanger (University of Stavanger), and Denmark-Copenhagen (The Danish National School of Performing Arts). These institutions provide Bachelor's degree studies and postgraduate studies. The master's degree is designed for students who aspire to become dance teachers. Scandinavian countries: Norway, Denmark, and Finland (Sweden is not a member of ENQA) (European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education) are engaged to assure the high quality of higher education, whose one of the main aspects is to ensure a relevant formation of study programmes.

After having examined the study programmes of dance pedagogy at higher education schools in Scandinavian countries, it became apparent that study programmes are designed to pay more attention to practical lectures rather than theoretical. It is interesting to notice that in Finland, psychology as a study subject is not taught, while bigger attention is paid to various disciplines of pedagogy. Furthermore, in Sweden and Norway students are acquainted with the basis of modern, contemporary, jazz, classical dances, and their training specific. Additionally, in Norway, students have such study discipline as performance work. Considering professional practice, students have the opportunity to perform their professional practice in any Scandinavian country they prefer. Professional practice is oriented to prepare a professional dance pedagogue, who would be able to work in public and private institutions. In addition, it is guaranteed that students before the beginning of their professional practice “will have a possibility to

raise the goals, which should be attained during their internship period and to choose their teaching style and methods". Institutions of higher education of Copenhagen and Stavanger develop a different attitude towards a dance pedagogy. It is stated that first and foremost, a dance pedagogue must have the skills of a professional dancer to get a diploma of dance pedagogue. The main objective of this system is to prepare dance pedagogues, who are already specialists of various dance genres, well-educated, and creative choreographers. This is the principal reason why higher education institutions of Copenhagen and Stavanger prepare the study programmes dedicated to such study programme subjects as pedagogy, professional practice, and methodology rather than lectures designed to improve the skills of dance techniques.

The main features of dance pedagogy in Scandinavia is regulated in education documents freedom of education and creation, a high level of preparation of future pedagogue, and good physical form. The second aspect to mention is the experience of a dancer, which has received different opinions and estimations during the research and is not regarded as obligatory but widely appreciated in Scandinavian countries. It is observed as one of the guarantees proving the professionalism of a dance pedagogue. In Scandinavian countries, dance pedagogues are obliged to apply innovative measures and adapt to liberal ideas during the learning process. It became evident that the set goals of Scandinavian institutions of higher education are in line with measures taken: attention is paid to a dance technique and improvement of performance. Thus, in Scandinavian countries, the role of a performer-pedagogue is more emphasized. Additionally, in Finland, the majority of lectures consist of art education and art pedagogy, since it is a method, which permits to deepen knowledge to the science of education and format a wider approach towards the specialty of a pedagogue.

During the professional practice, students are provided with a big potential of freedom, therefore the institutions of higher education put efforts with the aim to educate a pedagogue, who would be open to worldwide innovations and ideas, to work with multicultural dance groups and classes, and at the same time, creatively perform the entrusted tasks. i.e., to formulate an individual philosophy of education. Lithuania and Scandinavian countries have a completely different historical context of educational systems and their formation; however, the differences of these countries are not evaluated as positive or negative features (*Table 1*).

Table 1. Differences and similarities of preparation of dance pedagogues in Lithuania and Scandinavia..

Similarities	Differences
Attention is concentrated on students' professional practice.	The number of higher education institutions preparing the dance pedagogues concerning the population in Lithuania and Scandinavian countries.
The efficiency of disciplines such as theory and methodology is accentuated.	Philosophical approach to a dance pedagogue, as a teacher and dancer, their basic competencies.
Choreographical education of future pedagogue: Creation of dance compositions, sophistication of various dance genres.	An approach to link of attrts: In Scandinavian countries it is highly accentuated, whereas in Lithuania this accept is not emphasized.
An active international communication.	A discipline as folk dance is not included in the study programme in Scandinavia, whereas in Lithuania, it is one of the core components.

The competencies of bachelor thesis of dance pedagogy study programme

The purpose of the Bachelor thesis is regulated by the Republic of Lithuania Minister of Education and Science edict. The institutions of higher education are obliged to provide the conditions for students to prove the acquired professional competencies and achieved the aims and objectives of their study programme. Dance pedagogy studies provide various conceptions of Bachelor thesis since the specialty itself is double – including not only the fields of art but social sciences and educational sciences. Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences) seeks to renew the study programme and creates a new model of Bachelor thesis following the example of Norway. Up to now, the Bachelor thesis consisted of theoretical and empirical parts. Students of the University of Arts in Helsinki have two options: the first one is when the future pedagogues have to present an artistic-pedagogical work, the second option is to present an art-pedagogical work. In Norway, students are required to conduct dance lessons and training for dance groups of chosen age. The duration of these lessons is twelve weeks. Additionally, the students are required to conduct at least one dance lesson/training per week. Subsequently, students have to present the reflection paper of this professional practice. Lastly, the Bachelor thesis in Copenhagen and Denmark consists of the analysis of theoretical and empirical parts, i.e. a student, who has chosen a theme concerning the stages of dance creation has to conduct a theoretical analysis/research and thereafter, present and disclose their theme practically.

After having examined the themes of the Bachelor thesis, it became apparent that Lithuanian students are more considered to analyze the problems of education, whereas Scandinavians prefer to examine the problems, which are related to a philosophy of art and dance, i.e., to inspect the objects closely connected with a sphere of dances (*Table 2*).

Table 2. The examples of Bachelor's thesis themes.

Themes of Lithuania's students	Themes of foreign students
Curriculum changes in dance lesson.	A research of dance creation process.
Talented students (self) education opportunities during dance.	About you: A history about continuity.
Reason why adults choose non-formal education.	What happens when dances and acting confront?

An opinion of dance pedagogy graduates while assessing study programmes of dance pedagogy

During the research, the graduates were asked, whether they are satisfied with the conception of the Bachelor thesis. The analysis has disclosed that half of Lithuanians are not contented, however, the students affirmed that the institution of higher education has already started to change the structure of the Bachelor thesis. The same question was given to graduates of Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark. The respondents were happy having the opportunity to choose, whether to perform the practical or theoretical analysis of their Bachelor thesis or carry out the research, which consists of both previously mentioned parts. In addition, foreign students were satisfied with the conception of the Bachelor thesis, since it is not only interesting but motivating as well. From the given responses it is evident that Scandinavian students for the biggest part appreciate such advantages of Bachelor thesis as given freedom to creativity and

performance of work, possibility to choose the theme, and practical part of the thesis. However, foreign students identified the possible disadvantage as well, i.e. a theoretical part of the thesis, which is not seen as a utility to develop creativity. Additionally, students pinpointed formal and specific writing styles as a drawback of final thesis writing. A “formal text writing” was one of the aspects, negatively evaluated by Lithuanian students as well.

Moreover, the students were asked if the current study programme of dance pedagogy provides a well-balanced number of practical and theoretical lectures (“Is the number of practical and theoretical lectures balanced in program of dance pedagogy?”). The biggest part of Lithuanian graduates responded negatively. Graduates argued that there is a lack of practical lectures and contact hours, meanwhile, foreign students were satisfied with the balance of provided lectures. Another significant question of the research was related to the practice of the dance pedagogue as a dancer and dance performer/artist, the question was “Do you consider that a dance pedagogue has to be experienced as a performing artist before or during the studies of dance pedagogy?” The responses given by graduates can be divided into two categories: one part of the respondents affirmed that the practice (as a dancer, dance performer/artist) is obligatory, another group of respondents argued that it is only an additional tool while gaining a pedagogical education. The research has disclosed that the first category of respondents represents the majority of Lithuanian students and few foreign graduates, meanwhile the biggest part of the second category is Scandinavian students and includes only one respondent from Lithuania.

Furthermore, when asked, if teachers/professors are following the tendencies of foreign countries to improve the study programme of dance pedagogy and methods of teaching, students responded positively, since the benefit of international collaboration is indisputable. However, the analysis revealed that this process is not maintained quite actively and purposefully, as the majority of respondents from Lithuania and Scandinavia had remarks and affirmed that international collaboration could be supported more actively, especially in Lithuania. Moreover, the graduates were asked to indicate the aspects needed to improve considering the study programme of dance pedagogy “What would you like to change in the studies of dance pedagogy?”. Thus, Lithuanian students indicated the necessity to expand the number of given practical lectures and stimulation of the creativity, whereas foreign students accentuated the lack of individual work and cooperation with other areas of art. Notwithstanding the previously mentioned arguments, the graduates do not regret having chosen their study programmes.

Renewed strategy of dnace pedagogy programme

Regarding study programmes of dance pedagogy in Scandinavian countries, the opinion of graduates, and the documents that regulate education activities, a renewed strategy of dance pedagogy programme at Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences) was prepared. The following changes were accomplished: a goal of study programme was revised and adjusted, i.e. prepare a person who can work creatively and adapt to a constantly changing environment in the various sectors of the Education system. To provide the graduates with the abilities to adapt the acquired specific knowledge and competencies, to understand pedagogical phenomena and educational activities, and apply these competencies during professional activities, the subjects of pedagogy and methods were differentiated based on stages of the age. Additionally, two

supplementary specializations were offered, i.e. pedagogy of dance in preschool education and Children with special self-education needs dance pedagogy. Unfortunately, specializations have been abandoned.

It is planned to change the final work of the Dance Pedagogy study program to the Project, which consists of two parts, i.e. theoretical analysis of educational problems and project of educational dance. It is intended that this will help students to better analyze and structurize information, which is based on theoretical and scientific research, and in addition, practically justify the professional competencies acquired during the studies.

Conclusion

The research has disclosed that Lithuania and Scandinavian countries have a completely different historical context of educational systems and their formation, however, the differences of these countries are not evaluated as a positive or negative feature. In addition, it became evident that in Lithuania, the study programme of dance pedagogy applies an educational model of pedagogue-performer, whereas in Scandinavian countries a model of performer-pedagogue is more emphasized. Furthermore, the research has revealed that the conceptions of Bachelor thesis in Lithuania and Scandinavian countries are similar, consisting of theoretical and empirical parts, however, the themes of Bachelor thesis in previously mentioned countries tend to be different, i.e. in Lithuania students analyze the problems of dance education, whereas in Scandinavian countries universities adapt to a liberal approach concerning formulations of Bachelor themes, i.e. the topics of art and practice of dance performance are emphasized.

After having compared the opinions of Lithuania and Scandinavia's students, it became apparent that students from Scandinavia tend to evaluate their study programmes more positively than Lithuanian students and have more motivation while preparing their Bachelor's Thesis. Furthermore, all of the respondents affirmed the necessity to be more active in the sphere of international communication and emphasized the benefit of the experience of dance pedagogue as a performer/artist. However, according to the research, students had different estimations concerning the balance of theoretical and practical lectures and improvement of the study programme. A renewed strategy of dance pedagogy programme at Vilnius College (University of Applied Sciences) was prepared. The following changes were accomplished: a goal of study programme was revised and adjusted, the subjects of pedagogy and methods were differentiated based on stages of the age. Additionally, two supplementary specializations were offered, i.e. pedagogy of dance in preschool education and Children with special self-education needs dance pedagogy. The Bachelor thesis of the dance pedagogy study programme was changed to the Project, which consists of two parts, i.e., theoretical analysis of educational problems and project of educational dance.

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Conflict of interest

The author confirms that there is no conflict of interest with any parties involved with the study.

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