Literature Essay

How do people in different communities interact through dance in the CNMI?

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A general browser search with Google on October 11, 2018 on the topic of “Dance in the CNMI” - resulted in 156,000 hits with the majority of local news reports providing positive opinions regarding the events happening in the CNMI where the residents socialize through dancing. This is interesting because our community in the Northern Marianas Islands gets involved with various styles in dancing, which includes contemporary, break dancing, hip hop, and cultural. In recent local news the people of the dance communities has been expanding and have been getting involved with many community events hosted in the CNMI. This led the student researcher to look into the interactions of the residents of the CNMI through dancing. Most of the literature found about dancing were non-academic because of all articles that came up the most in the search was local news articles. With all the news about the different dance groups getting involved in the community led the student researcher question how do people from different communities interact through dance. The review of literature will discuss the various perspectives presented on the topic by how dance is perceived and the different ways dance can be a form of interaction by local newspapers from Marianas Variety and academic sources from online school websites, and the benefits of socializing through dance in the CNMI.  
 Local Newspapers provided by Marianas Variety write about the many events the CNMI hosts that involves the many different dance groups. These community events and dance groups welcome all ages and dance abilities. (B. Raquel, 2014, pp1), “children and teenagers in colorful trendy clothes and with high energy who have won the admiration of locals and tourists alike.” The article talks about a specific dance group, called Saipan Music and Dance Studio, where it explains who their choreographers are and the studio’s purpose in the CNMI. Another studio known as Saipan Studio 29:11 were created in 2015 by former SMADS choreographer, Ray S. Lizama. These dance groups are affordable for the people who are willing to learn and experience in a safe environment. (Sablan, 2014, pp.8) “We’ve built our entire studio around them. We welcome any student to explore all forms of dance in an affordable non-competitive environment,”. These dance groups also introduced workshops for outsiders to come and join to learn, experience, and socialize with other local dancers.  
 An article from Oxford University research explains how dance comes in many different forms and that it is important to many social events. The article provides an example that in Africa, dance can be performed as an act of a ritual at births, funerals, and healing intent creating various emotions; joy and grief. The research article also explains how dance is a form of communication and has important implications for various social factors through shared groups. Communication between the audience and the performers is the energy and the emotion, every group has a different type of energy such as their social identities and ethnic identity. That from one group’s energy, influences the experience of the other group. (P. Rachyl and G. Howard, 2017, pp. 54) “Audience response to a performance can show solidarity and shared values with the performance or disagreement and bothering.”  
 One of the original forms of community development is dancing. This is beneficial to the CNMI because dancing plays a role in most cultures. Through dance, people would be able to express their creativity in the CNMI without too many restrictions. With dancing, residents or people in the CNMI who participate in these community dances can rediscover their community’s history, gain social activity, and get health benefits. The CNMI hosts events where the community can get involved with each other. Dancers are allowed to express their creativity in a nonverbal style. Dancers often experience a strong sense of accomplishment as they learn complex choreographed steps and work together as a unit. Creativity and teamwork are often used to solve local issues and to make a positive difference in the community.  
 The literature will help the student researcher expand the needed knowledge and information about the topic and will apply the literature to the methodology such as the interviews conducted with the different dance members in the CNMI. The literature will also be helpful towards finding experts and what type of questions to ask about the topic. Lastly, the literature will help the research project to be more profound and accurate.

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