

SOCIAL DANCE AS NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING

A SCOPING STUDY FROM HUNGARY*

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Abstract

This study explores social dance as a form of adult learning in Hungary, framed within adult education, non-formal learning, and community education perspectives. Using a mixed-methods scoping approach, it maps the SD ecosystem through content analysis of online platforms, focusing on international partner dance genres to capture contemporary urban trends. Programs with the largest social media followings were analyzed to identify popular dance types and the prevalence of for-profit versus non-profit institutions. The study also assesses the capacity of community-oriented, non-profit institutions to host programs for adults facing geographic or economic barriers. A convenience survey of 45 non-professional adult learners captured self-reported experiences of dance learning, providing insight into benefits. Findings show salsa, bachata, Argentine tango, and kizomba are the most popular, concentrated in for-profit Budapest institutions, reflecting urban demand. Mapping outside Budapest reveals latent non-profit capacity, suggesting opportunities for accessible programs. Survey results indicate participation enhances social connectedness, communal engagement, and personal well-being. These patterns highlight limitations of a profit-driven landscape and the potential of community-based SD programs to broaden access, foster inclusivity, and support adult learning in Hungary.

Keywords: social dance, dance education, non-formal adult learning, community education

1 INTRODUCTION

Numerous studies have documented the positive effects of dance education on individual and community well-being, including its role in fostering social connection, cultural expression, and emotional regulation in multicultural contexts (Mathews et al., 2017). Dance has also been widely examined within neurological, psychological, and therapeutic frameworks (Foster et al., 2023; Lakes et al., 2016; Novikova, 2019). However, within dance education and community education scholarship, dance is still most often approached either as a performative art form or as a therapeutic intervention

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(Vionnet, 2022). Moreover, while dance communities have been explored internationally from linguistic and sociocultural perspectives (Clifford, 1988; Hrytseniuk, 2020), their educational significance as sites of non-formal adult learning, particularly within the context of SD, remains under-researched. Meanwhile, SD is primarily practiced for social interaction, enjoyment, and communal participation. It emphasizes partnering, group engagement, and shared movement experiences and typically takes place in community-based settings such as dance studios, clubs, or festivals.

1.1 Research gap and survey focus: Salsa, Bachata, Argentine tango, and Kizomba

Despite the growing popularity of international SDs, scholarship in Hungary has rarely examined these genres as sites of non-formal adult learning. This study therefore focuses on international SDs including salsa, bachata, Argentine tango, and kizomba as they are practiced in urban Hungary, where they form active adult learning communities. While traditional Hungarian folk dances such as the *Csárdás* remain culturally significant, and other SD forms such as ballroom and Latin-style dances (e.g., cha-cha, rumba, waltz) exist, these are outside the primary scope of this research. By concentrating on the internationally influenced genres mentioned above, the study addresses a gap in understanding how adult learners experience social interaction, participation, and communal engagement in contemporary urban dance settings.

In Hungary, most SD programs operate as profit-oriented private initiatives. Instructors and school owners sustain their activities through participant fees, branding, and market competition (Bachata Club Hungary, n.d.; Dolce Dance Franchise Tánciskola, n.d.; Goldance Tánciskola, n.d.; Kizomba Club Hungary, n.d.; Szege Dance Tánciskola, n.d.; Tango Libre Budapest, n.d.).

While this model supports pedagogical flexibility and vibrant community engagement, it may not be equally accessible to all adults due to financial or geographic constraints. Consequently, SD as a form of non-formal adult learning remains largely unsupported by public and civic educational institutions. With strategic support from non-profit organizations, universities, and community institutions, SD programs could become more broadly accessible, enabling accessible and inclusive participation to benefit from the social and educational dimensions of dance.

Hence, the aim of this exploratory scoping study is to examine the capacity for non-formal education, the Hungarian SD landscape, and adult learners' perceived experiences within SD programs. In particular, it investigates the institutional structure of SD activities, which are predominantly organized through private initiatives, and considers the potential role of non-profit and community-based institutions in expanding access to SD programs across Hungary.

Therefore, this study contributes to scholarship on SD as a form of non-formal adult learning in three ways. First, it reframes SD communities, often understood primarily as leisure-based or commercial activities, as non-formal adult learning environments. Second, it advances a pedagogical perspective on SD that emphasizes learning, participation, and social discovery beyond therapeutic or clinical interpretations of dance. Third, it addresses an empirical gap in Hungarian research on adult dance learners' perspectives, where such practices remain under-documented, particularly in the context of internationally influenced urban SD genres.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study conceptualizes SD through the lenses of adult education (Knowles, 1980), non-formal learning (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974), and community education (Lindeman, 1926). These perspectives collectively address who participates in dance learning, how learning is socially organized, and where learning occurs, situating SD as a participatory environment in which adults engage in experiential, socially situated learning outside formal educational institutions. By framing SD through these lenses, the study emphasizes how partnered and group-based dance activities provide not only physical practice but also opportunities for reflection, collaboration, and social engagement, highlighting the pedagogical, communal, and intercultural dimensions of adult dance learning.

SD integrates these theoretical perspectives by emphasizing the embodied, relational, and social dimensions of learning. Movement is experienced as a whole, dynamic phenomenon in which learners can participate without full verbal comprehension (Poláková, n.d.). Moreover, dance is a social practice in which communication emerges through embodied interaction, fostering skills such as empathy, coordination, attentiveness, and active listening (Houston, 2024; Narikbayeva et al., 2025; Partridge, 2024). Exposure to diverse dance traditions further invites adult learners to engage with movement as culturally embedded narration rather than purely physical execution, facilitating intercultural understanding even in the presence of language differences (Aksoy & Ling, 2024; Hanna, 2001; Samovar & Porter, 1994). Through these interactions, SD participation supports identity-related experiences, allowing learners to maintain, renegotiate, or reclaim aspects of self (Green, 2019; Radin, 2025; Smyth, 2023).

According to Knowles (1980), adult learning is grounded in prior experiences, motivations, and self-directed strategies. In addition, learning is most effective when it is experience-based, purposeful, and collaborative (Dewey, 1934; Jarvis, 1987; Kolb, 1984; Rogers, 1969). In SD, adult learners bring diverse life histories and social contexts that shape their perception of movement, relational cues, and aesthetics. Dance pedagogy leverages this diversity through real-time problem-solving, collaborative improvisation, and reflective practices that foster self-confidence, agency, and resilience. In this view, reflection allows learners to revisit and reinterpret experience, integrating embodied, cognitive, and social learning into their practice.

Non-formal learning perspectives highlight that such environments are often community-based, accessible, and adaptable, allowing adults to integrate learning with everyday life and social networks. Consequently, SD represents a flexible, voluntary, and practice-oriented environment in which learning emerges through participation, observation, imitation, and social feedback rather than formal curricula or certification (Benkova & Mareva, 2019; Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; Rogers, 2019). These settings emphasize practical engagement, peer interaction, and learner-driven motivation, creating opportunities for adults to develop skills, relational awareness, and confidence in culturally meaningful contexts.

From a community education perspective, Lindeman's (1926, pp. 55-57) situational approach further emphasizes that experience, combined with participatory and reflective action, can support cohesion within the community, allowing learners

to discover themselves and others without imposed conformity; in other words, communities function as “sites of social learning” (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogers 2019). Within SD classes, embodied coordination, rhythmic attunement, and cooperative problem-solving create opportunities for social, emotional, and intercultural growth where adults negotiate identities, develop social belonging, and participate in shared cultural practices through embodied activity.

Together, these three perspectives illuminate how SD serves as a non-formal adult learning environment, where experience, participation, and social interaction converge to create meaningful educational, social, and communal outcomes. This conceptual framework informs the present study’s focus on mapping the Hungarian SD landscape, examining institutional structures, community practices, and adult learners’ perceived experiences.

3 METHODS

This exploratory scoping study employed a mixed-methods design combining manual digital mapping of SD online platforms and institutional websites with a survey of adult learners to examine the Hungarian SD ecosystem. The study is descriptive and exploratory, aiming to map institutional structures, community practices, and adult learners’ perceived experiences. This multi-level approach provides a comprehensive overview of SD as a non-formal adult learning environment in Hungary.

The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What capacities exist within non-profit, civic, and community-based institutions to support adult SD programs?
2. What is the current landscape of SD in Hungary, including the most popular dance genres, institutional types, and geographic distribution?
3. How do adult learners perceive the educational, social, and intercultural benefits of participating in SD programs?

A manual digital search of community websites and social media pages was conducted to identify partner-based SD programs with the largest online presence. Inclusion criteria were as follows:

- Program active within the last 12 months
- Partner-based SD programs
- Publicly accessible information on classes, events, and institutional profiles
- Non-profit, civic, or for-profit initiatives included.

Public engagement indicators, including page followers, group members, and event interest, were recorded to approximate participation levels. Official websites of non-profit organizations were reviewed to assess institutional capacity, organizational profile, and sectoral orientation. This approach provided a descriptive overview of both for-profit and community-oriented SD initiatives and their accessibility across Hungary.

3.1 Survey of Adult Learners

Data were collected via an online convenience-sample survey of 45 non-professional adult learners (≥ 18 years old) between March and May 2025. The survey link was posted in Hungarian social dance community Facebook groups, and participation was voluntary; no individuals were approached directly. The questionnaire did not collect detailed demographic variables such as gender or age, as the focus of the study was on participants' dance engagement and experiences. Instead, the survey captured the length of participants' involvement in social dance, which ranged from one month to five years, along with self-reported experiences of learning, social connection, and well-being within Hungarian SD communities. While the sample was not intended to be representative, it provides an initial descriptive account of learner experiences. Notably, the researcher is an active participant and teacher in these communities; reflexive attention was applied to survey design and interpretation to mitigate potential bias and ensure findings reflect broader learner perspectives rather than personal experience.

The survey consisted of 13 items organized into three conceptual clusters:

- Dance Learning and Instruction
- Social Competence and Collaboration
- Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness

Items addressing skill development, confidence in dance terminology, and class responsiveness were grounded in adult and experiential learning principles (Dewey, 1934; Knowles, 1980; Kolb, 1984). Items on collaboration and partnering captured the social and peer-mediated aspects of non-formal learning (Rogers, 2019). Items on intercultural engagement and sense of belonging drew on community education perspectives, emphasizing SD as a site of social discovery, cultural learning, and identity formation (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lindeman, 1926).

3.2 Data Analysis

Survey responses were analyzed descriptively, reporting the percentages of participants selecting each response category on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Given the exploratory design and small convenience-based sample, no inferential statistics or causal claims were made. Together with the mapping data, the survey provides insight into both the institutional landscape and learners' perceived educational, social, and intercultural experiences within SD communities in Hungary.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent. Data were anonymized to protect participant identities. The study focused on educational, social, and communal experiences, avoiding therapeutic framing, and adhered to ethical guidelines for research with human subjects.

4 RESULTS

In Hungary, most dance activities for adult learners are organized outside formal educational frameworks and are predominantly offered through profit-oriented SD schools. Despite their widespread presence, these initiatives rarely articulate explicit pedagogical aims. This section draws on the conceptual framework above to describe the Institutional Structure (community infrastructure such as NGOs, civic houses, and cultural centers), Community Practices (profit-oriented landscape of SD activities), and Learner Experiences (survey with SD learners) in Hungary as a basis for examining the conditions and capacities for arts-based and participatory SD education development. Table 1 summarizes the criteria used to map the Hungarian SD ecosystem, indicating the aspects examined, data sources, and their alignment with research questions and thematic clusters. The following sections describe each aspect in detail.

Table 1 Hungarian Social Dance ecosystem map

Criterion	What Was Examined	Data Source / Method	Metric / Indicator	Link to RQs / Clusters
Institutional Structure	Non-profit, civic, community-based institutions; universities	Official websites, national statistics, institutional networks	Number of institutions, geographic spread, organizational profile, capacity for SD programs	RQ1: capacity within non-profit/civic institutions
Community Practices	Profit-oriented SD schools; Facebook groups; national/regional festivals	Manual digital search of websites and social media pages; event websites; Facebook pages	Page followers, group members, online event interest; estimated participation, online engagement	RQ2: popular genres, visibility; landscape & social connectivity
Learner Experiences	Adult SD learners	Online survey (13 items, 5-point Likert scale)	% responses per item in clusters: Dance Learning & Instruction, Social Competence & Collaboration, Personal Growth & Cultural Awareness	RQ3: perceived educational, social, intercultural benefits

4.1 Institutional Structure

In 2024, approximately 61,000–62,000 nongovernmental and non-profit organizations were registered in Hungary across all sectors (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2025a). Among these, organizations active in culture (16.1%), sport (16.7%), and

recreation/hobby activities (16.3%) constituted the largest share, followed by education (12.6%), highlighting the prominence of different community-oriented activity areas (Hungarian Central Statistical Office, 2025b). These figures indicate a sizeable civil society infrastructure with the potential capacity to host activities intersecting SD and non-formal adult learning.

Nearly 6,000 local community centers (*művelődési házak*) operate across Hungary, with numbers remaining relatively stable in recent years (Compendium of Cultural Policies & Trends, n.d.). These centers host lectures, exhibitions, workshops, folk and arts events, and community programs, demonstrating their potential suitability as venues for inclusive adult learning initiatives. Many centers belong to associations or networks, such as the Kulturális Központok Országos Szövetsége (KKOSZ), which represents approximately 96 member institutions nationwide (European Network of Cultural Centres [ENCC], n.d.) and typically provides municipal or community-oriented cultural services.

Pécs was selected as a feasible site for exploring local cultural infrastructure due to the accessibility of community institutions and active civil networks. For example, the *House of Educators Association (Nevelők Háza Egyesület)* operates the House of Civic Communities (*Civil Közösségek Háza*), a hub hosting more than 90 civil organizations active in cultural, educational, and community domains (Nevelők Háza Egyesület, n.d.). Pécs, Hungary's fifth-largest city, has a population of roughly 145,000, about 65–70% of whom are adults, making it a significant regional center with diverse cultural life and potential for community engagement, although it should not be considered representative of the national context.

While these institutions do not currently host SD programs, they represent latent capacity to support adult dance initiatives, particularly for learners facing geographical or financial barriers. Universities and municipal institutions could also play a key role in initiating and sustaining non-profit SD programs, embedding them within educational or civic frameworks that enable clearly articulated learning objectives, ethical guidelines, and reflective teaching practices aligned with adult learning principles (UNESCO & UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2016). Structured yet flexible curricula could emphasize communication, collaboration, and social participation without framing dance primarily as a therapeutic intervention. Mechanisms such as instructor training, peer observation, and systematic evaluation are identified in the literature as strategies to safeguard participant agency and uphold program integrity (Mabingo et al., 2024; Shen & Rowe, 2025).

An illustrative example of university-based SD provision is the *Dancing University* program at the University of Pécs, which offers classes and SD events for students and university staff, as well as specialized programs for people with Parkinson's disease. Although participation is currently limited, this initiative demonstrates the potential of higher education institutions to host structured SD programs and serve as a bridge between recreational and educational opportunities (University of Pécs, n.d.). Other Hungarian universities also offer dance-related activities, although these tend to be formal or continuous. The Hungarian Dance University in Budapest operates the dance studio *Noverre Táncstúdió*, providing technique training and workshops accessible beyond degree-seeking students (Magyar Táncművészeti Egyetem, n.d.). At the University of Debrecen, sports and cultural programs include dance

events such as the Move Debrecen Senior Dance Group and short-term festivals, reflecting participatory movement culture (University of Debrecen, n.d.). Similarly, the University of Szeged hosts a summer school combining traditional music and dance workshops with cultural study, providing short-term experiential learning opportunities (University of Szeged, 2024). These examples indicate that higher education institutions across Hungary have the capacity to engage with dance, albeit with varying degrees of structure and accessibility.

Taken together, these institutions illustrate the considerable infrastructural and pedagogical potential within Hungary to support SD as a form of non-formal adult learning, complementing existing commercial offerings. By situating SD programs within recognized adult education quality frameworks, universities and municipalities can contribute to inclusive, participatory, and sustainable SD education, promoting community engagement, intercultural learning, and lifelong participation.

4.2 Community Practices

Online communities relevant to SD in Hungary were identified through a purposive aggregation of approximately 40 Facebook groups and pages, providing an indicative overview of the relative visibility and activity of different schools and communities within the SD ecosystem. These figures are treated as proxies for relative popularity rather than precise measures of participation. The results suggest that Hungary's SD landscape is largely structured around salsa, bachata, Argentine tango, and kizomba, which emerged as the most commercially organized and publicly visible genres (Table 2).

Table 2 Number of Facebook Groups and Pages per SD Style in Hungary

Dance Style	Number of Groups/Pages	Percentage (%)
Salsa	15	38
Bachata	10	25
Argentine Tango	8	20
Kizomba	7	17
Total	40	100

Large multi-style schools demonstrate the highest online reach. For example, Goldance Tánciskola, a dance school in Budapest, maintains the largest online presence, although follower numbers primarily indicate visibility rather than market dominance (Goldance Tánciskola [Facebook page], n.d.). Its class offerings, locations, and schedules are documented on the official website (Goldance Tánciskola, n.d.). Similarly, Dolce Dance Tánciskola exhibits a substantial online following (Dolce Dance Tánciskola [Facebook page], n.d.), reflecting the broad appeal of multi-style dance instruction (Dolce Dance Tánciskola, n.d.).

Alongside these larger institutions, smaller genre-focused communities contribute to the diversity of the SD ecosystem. Bachata Club Hungary (BCH) represents a well-established bachata-focused network with active online (Bachata Club Hungary [Facebook page], n.d.) and offline communities (Bachata Club Hungary, n.d.). Other partner dance genres, including Argentine tango and kizomba, are organized around more specialized initiatives such as Hello Tango Budapest, Tango Libre Budapest, and Kizomba Club Hungary, which tend to attract more localized engagement (Hello Tango Budapest [Facebook page], n.d.; Kizomba Club Hungary [Facebook page], n.d.; Tango Libre Budapest [Facebook page], n.d.).

Regional centers outside Budapest such as Pécs, Debrecen, and Szeged host notable SD activity, as reflected by the online presence of schools and communities such as Dr. Salsa (n.d.), Dance Universe TáncSport Association (n.d.), and Szegedance Tánciskola (n.d.). In contrast, schools in smaller towns generally report fewer than 1,000 followers, indicating more localized participation, for example, TáncPont Tánciskola in Szombathely (Dr. Salsa Pécs [Facebook page], n.d.; Dance Universe TáncSport Egyesület [Facebook page], n.d.; Szegedance Tánciskola [Facebook page], n.d.; TáncPont Tánciskola [Facebook page], n.d.). Table 3 summarizes illustrative examples of schools and communities, highlighting their estimated online reach and primary focus.

Table 3 Illustrative examples of Hungarian social dance schools and communities

SD School / Community	City	Estimated Reach (FB followers)	Focus
Goldance Tánciskola (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	31,300	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, etc.
Dolce Dance Tánciskola (n.d; [FB])	Budapest / multiple cities	20,700	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba
Dance Universe TáncSport Egyesület (n.d; [FB])	Debrecen	7400	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, etc.
Kizomba Club Hungary (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	6,300	Kizomba
Szegedance Tánciskola (n.d; [FB])	Szeged	4,600	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, etc.
Bachata Club Hungary (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	4,400	Bachata
Tango Libre Budapest (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	4,000	Argentine tango
El Sabor de Hungria (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	3,300	Argentine tango
Dr. Salsa (n.d; [FB])	Pécs	2,700	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba
Hello Tango Budapest (n.d; [FB])	Budapest	2,400	Argentine tango
TáncPont Tánciskola (n.d; [FB])	Szombathely	658	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba, etc.

In addition to schools, large-scale festivals constitute a key component of Hungary's SD ecosystem. Participation in these events reflects the convergence of dancers from multiple schools and regions, providing another indicator of popularity. For instance, the Hungarian Summer Salsa–Sensual Festival (HSSF) attracts over 7,000 participants annually, while PAW: Dance Events and More, an event organizer, reaches approximately 9,900 participants across four events per year (Hungarian Summer Salsa–Sensual Festival [Facebook page], n.d.; PAW: Dance Events and More [Facebook page], n.d.). Table 4 presents selected festivals, their estimated reach, and the type of metrics used to assess visibility. It should be noted that these indicators combine online engagement and estimated attendance and serve only as a proxy for relative popularity rather than precise participation counts.

Table 4 Selected social dance festivals and events

Event	City	Estimated Reach / Participation	Metric Type	Focus
PAW: Dance Events and More (n.d.)	Budapest	≈9,900	Online event interest	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba
Budapest Kizomba Connection Festival (n.d.)	Budapest	≈9,000	Online event interest	Kizomba
HSSF (n.d.)	Balatonfüred	≈7,171	Online event interest	Salsa, Bachata
Noches de Hungría Tango Marathon (n.d.)	Budapest	≈6,900	Online event interest	Argentine Tango
All Stars Festival (n.d.)	Budapest	≈4,400	Online event interest	Salsa, Bachata
Dance Casa Festival (n.d.)	Budapest	≈2,700	Online interest	Salsa, Bachata, Kizomba
5th International Tango Festival of Pécs (n.d.)	Pécs	Social media event listing	Event announcement	Argentine tango

It should be noted that the indicators presented in Table 4 combine different types of metrics, including estimated event attendance and online engagement indicators derived from Facebook pages and event listings.

Pricing data further contextualize accessibility and potential barriers. According to the school and event websites, monthly passes for four class visits typically range from €20–80 based on advertised prices, while festival attendance generally starts at approximately €100 (Goldance Tánciskola, n.d.; Dolce Dance Tánciskola, n.d.; Hungarian Summer Salsa–Sensual Festival [Facebook page], n.d.; Noches de Hungría Tango Marathon, n.d.; All Stars Festival, n.d.). These costs suggest that commercial orientation and urban concentration may limit participation for adults facing financial constraints, highlighting opportunities for more accessible community-based initiatives.

Taken together, these observations provide a snapshot of SD popularity in Hungary, demonstrating that commercial, urban-centered schools and festivals dominate online visibility, while smaller and regional initiatives play a more localized role. The combination of school and festival metrics illustrates the social and inter-institutional nature of the ecosystem, emphasizing where popularity is concentrated and where opportunities exist to expand participation.

4.3 Learner Experiences

The survey included 45 respondents, of whom 39 (87%) reported Hungarian as their native language, six (13%) reported English, and three (7%) reported Russian (Item 1). Respondents reported varied levels of dance experience: 40 (89%) have been attending dance classes for more than one year, two (4%) for 3–6 months, two (4%) for less than three months, and one (2%) for 6 months to 1 year (Item 2). This sample reflects active involvement in SD communities and provides descriptive insight into the sampled learners' perceptions, rather than representing the broader population. The survey consisted of 13 items organized into three conceptual clusters:

- Dance Learning and Instruction,
- Social Competence and Collaboration,
- Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness.

Due to the exploratory design and small convenience sample, results are presented descriptively using percentages across a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree; see Appendix A).

4.3.1 *Dance Learning and Instruction*

This question block examined participants' perceptions of instructional practices, confidence with dance terminology, and their ability to understand and respond effectively in class. Most participants reported that dance instruction supported skill acquisition, particularly regarding dance-specific terminology and embodied comprehension. Specifically, 86.7% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt confident using dance terminology (Item 4), while 71.1% agreed or strongly agreed that learning dance improved their ability to understand and respond in class situations (Item 5). Appreciation for instructors' clarification of dance concepts (Item 3) showed greater variability, with nearly half of participants selecting a neutral response, suggesting differences in perceived instructional clarity or individual

learning preferences. These findings indicate that SD instruction generally fosters learners' understanding, skill development, and active engagement in class activities.

4.3.2 Social Competence and Collaboration

The social and collaborative dimensions of SD were explored through items addressing communication, partnering, and the ability to give and receive instructions. Participants reported positive effects on social confidence and collaboration: 68.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt comfortable communicating and collaborating with classmates (Item 6), and 77.8% indicated that partnering with different classmates improved their social confidence (Item 7). Responses regarding the ability to give and receive instructions (Item 8) were more mixed, with just over half of respondents agreeing and one-third selecting a neutral response. These results suggest that SD provides a supportive environment for developing interpersonal skills and confidence in collaborative contexts, though experiences may vary depending on group dynamics and individual engagement.

4.3.3 Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness

Participants' perceptions of personal growth and intercultural learning were examined through items addressing cultural diversity, intercultural engagement, and social belonging. Results indicate that SD participation contributes to both personal development and social integration. A majority of participants reported that dancing with peers from diverse backgrounds strengthened their sense of belonging (82.2%; Item 11) and encouraged intercultural interactions beyond class (66.6%; Item 10). Additionally, 81.8% agreed or strongly agreed that dance helps them remain open to learning from people with different experiences (Item 12), and 84.1% agreed or strongly agreed that dance facilitates individual and social transformation (Item 13). Responses regarding appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusivity (Item 9) were less uniform, with 42.2% agreement and 44.4% neutral responses, suggesting that explicit recognition of cultural diversity may vary among participants. Collectively, these findings highlight the potential of SD to foster a sense of belonging, openness to diverse experiences, and engagement with intercultural learning.

Across all three question blocks, adult learners reported positive effects of dance participation on skill development, social competence, and personal growth. SD instruction supported movement literacy and class responsiveness, partnering and collaboration enhanced social confidence and communication, and engagement with diverse peers promoted intercultural awareness and a sense of community. These results provide an exploratory, descriptive account of participants' experiences, reflecting perceived benefits rather than measured learning outcomes or causal effects.

The findings underscore the educational, social, and transformative potential of SD in adult learning contexts, complementing mapping data on SD communities and highlighting the value of inclusive, socially interactive, and culturally rich learning environments.

5 DISCUSSION

The survey results indicate that participation in SD supports multiple dimensions of adult learning, aligning with Knowles' (1980) principles of self-directed, experiential, and socially situated learning. Within the Dance Learning and Instruction section, most participants reported confidence using dance terminology (86.7% agreed / strongly agreed) and an improved ability to respond in class situations (71.1%). This suggests that SD instruction fosters cognitive and embodied understanding, consistent with adult learning theory, which emphasizes learning grounded in prior experience and problem-solving (Dewey, 1934; Kolb, 1984). Appreciation for instructors' clarification of concepts showed more variability, with nearly half the participants providing neutral responses, highlighting individual differences in learning preferences and the need for multimodal teaching strategies.

In the Social Competence and Collaboration section of the questionnaire, 68.9% of participants felt comfortable communicating with peers, and 77.8% reported improved confidence through partnering. These findings align with community education and situated learning perspectives (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Lindeman, 1926), emphasizing the role of collaborative participation and embodied interaction in fostering social skills, confidence, and relational competence. The mixed responses in Item 8 (giving and receiving instructions) indicate that collaborative skill development may depend on group dynamics or instructor facilitation, suggesting potential areas for pedagogical refinement.

Finally, in the Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness question group, a majority of participants reported increased openness to intercultural learning (81.8% agreed) and strengthened sense of belonging (82.2%). These outcomes reinforce the notion that adult learning in SD is not only cognitive and kinesthetic but also relational and cultural, supporting identity negotiation and social transformation (Hanna, 2001; Merleau-Ponty, 2002). Lower agreement regarding the appreciation of diversity (Item 9) suggests that explicit reflection or facilitation around cultural inclusivity may enhance learning outcomes.

The survey findings gain additional significance when contextualized within Hungary's institutional SD landscape. Mapping data indicate that most adult SD programs operate within for-profit, urban-centered schools concentrated in Budapest, with high online visibility but limited geographic and financial accessibility. Despite this, participants reported strong benefits across all question groups, suggesting that even within commercially structured programs, adults can experience meaningful learning, social connection, and personal growth.

However, the institutional landscape also points to untapped potential. Non-profit and civic institutions including community centers (*művelődési házak*) and university programs offer latent capacity to host SD initiatives, particularly for learners facing geographic or economic barriers. By situating SD programs within such frameworks, participants' reported benefits could be extended to a broader demographic, supporting more inclusive adult learning and community engagement. Internationally, the Oxford University Dancesport Club (OUDC, UK) provides a concrete example of how universities can leverage institutional infrastructure and

pedagogical resources to foster lifelong, community-based SD that is accessible to both students and the wider community (Oxford University Dancesport Club, n.d.).

The convergence of survey and mapping data highlights opportunities for non-profit SD initiatives to complement the commercial sector. Structured programs within community-oriented institutions could leverage the observed educational, social, and intercultural benefits while enhancing accessibility and sustainability.

Practical implications include:

- Curriculum design: Incorporate multi-modal instruction, structured reflection, and the explicit facilitation of intercultural learning to strengthen personal growth outcomes.
- Social collaboration: Design rotating partnering schemes and collaborative exercises to further develop interpersonal skills and confidence.
- Accessibility: Use existing municipal and university infrastructure to expand participation beyond urban centers, addressing financial and geographic constraints.

These approaches suggest that non-profit and community-based SD can operate not only as recreational activities but as meaningful non-formal adult learning environments, supporting social cohesion, cultural literacy, and lifelong learning.

6 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations. The survey relied on a small convenience sample ($N = 45$), which limits generalizability. Participants were predominantly active learners in urban SD communities, potentially biasing responses toward positive experiences. Moreover, self-reported measures capture perceptions rather than objectively measured learning outcomes. Additionally, the mapping of online visibility as a proxy for participation may not fully reflect actual engagement or inclusivity.

Future research could address these limitations by employing larger, representative samples, longitudinal designs to track learning outcomes, and mixed-methods approaches combining observational, behavioral, and qualitative data. Further exploration of regional and non-profit SD initiatives could clarify how institutional structures influence learning, social engagement, and intercultural outcomes. Investigating explicit pedagogical interventions within SD programs may also reveal strategies to maximize adult learning potential.

7 CONCLUSION

Overall, while adults in Hungary currently engage with SD primarily through profit-oriented schools, there is significant untapped potential for non-profit institutions to expand access. Our findings suggest that many effective learning practices in SD remain largely situated outside non-profit or public adult education frameworks due to several structural factors: limited information on the educational dimensions of SD programs, insufficient institutional support for arts-based initiatives, and a lack of integration between civic infrastructures and pedagogical expertise.

By strategically leveraging civic infrastructures, cultural centers, NGOs, and university expertise, SD could be positioned as an alternative, participatory form of adult learning practice, particularly for learners facing structural, geographic, or economic barriers. Addressing these structural limitations is essential for translating the rich pedagogical and social potential of SD into more widely accessible, non-profit adult education contexts.

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SOCIAL DANCE AS NON-FORMAL ADULT LEARNING

Appendix A. Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items (Percentages, N = 45)*

Cluster	Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Dance Learning and Instruction	3. I appreciate when instructors clarify dance concepts using different communication methods	8.9	6.7	48.9	8.9	13.3
	4. I feel confident using dance terminology when discussing movements and patterns	31.1	55.6	6.7	4.4	0
	5. Learning dance has improved my ability to understand and respond in class situations	24.4	46.7	11.1	6.7	6.7
	6. I feel comfortable communicating and collaborating with classmates	22.2	46.7	17.8	6.7	2.2
	7. Partnering with different classmates has improved my ability to approach social interactions with confidence	51.1	26.7	11.1	2.2	4.4
Social Competence and Collaboration	8. Working with dance partners has helped me receive and give instructions effectively	11.1	42.2	33.3	6.7	2.2
	9. Participating in dance has deepened my appreciation for cultural diversity and inclusivity	11.1	31.1	44.4	6.7	2.2
	10. Participating in dance encourages me to engage in intercultural interactions outside of class	13.3	53.3	22.2	2.2	2.2
Personal Growth and Cultural Awareness	11. Dancing with people from different backgrounds has strengthened my sense of belonging and connection	31.1	51.1	6.7	4.4	0
	12. Dance helps me feel open to learning from people with different experiences or backgrounds	31.8	50.0	13.6	4.5	0
	13. Dance, as an art form, facilitates individual and social transformation through bodily, emotional, and multilingual communication	40.9	43.2	11.4	4.5	0

* The author removed the first two items from the Appendix table due to the characteristics of their demographic data.