What Does Dancing Have to Do with Blogging?
A study of verbal and nonverbal communication among dance bloggers

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Uppsala University
Katarzyna Kruczynska
Supervised by: Vessela Misheva
Abstract of the research: What does Dancing Have to Do with Blogging? A Study of Verbal and Non-verbal Communication among Dance Bloggers

Dance, in its essence can be seen as a form of social interaction. Unique role of dancing is the recurrent motif in dance-related theories which underline that dance should not be approached only from the perspective of physical exercise but also interpreted within its social context. In other words, dance is a symbol of a changing society.

Dance is can be also seen as a non-verbal expression of emotions. These are projected from the inner subjective world of an individual onto the audience. Non-verbal communication through movement and gestures, as well as spatial arrangement of bodies predominates but the recent trends show the development of a ‘verbal’ dancing occurring online via specialized blogs and social networks.

The growing popularity of dance blogs implies a great diversity within the communicative methods used by dancers. The traditional view of dance as a representative of non-verbal interaction will be challenged in this paper and hypothesis stating that the verbal and non-verbal communication are strictly interrelated will be suggested. Moreover, the paper will concentrate on the impact that online blogging communities have on socialization and identity formation among dancers.

The research question revolves around the idea that dance blogging demonstrates the need to use verbal signs to complete the predominantly non-verbal communication. Furthermore, the reasons motivating bloggers to write about dance will be analyzed. This will be done in order to demonstrate how attitudes to dancing and communicating as well as dancers’ distinctive ways of socialization are reflected by their belongingness to the blogging community. The investigation attempts at identifying the mechanism behind online interactions among dancers and the ways in which the Internet influences socialization and formation of dancer’s identity.

The theories used in study are rooted in both macro- and micro-sociology and their aim is to clarify concepts such as communication, meaning and identification within a group. The data will be collected through interviews conducted with dance bloggers and through the observations of thirty dance blogs. Content analysis of such data will, hopefully, demonstrate how significant blogging is for the online and offline communication processes.

Keywords: blogs, online communities, nonverbal and verbal communication, identification.
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INTRODUCTION
Why do dancers communicate online? Dance, an artistic form in its core, is a representative of contact culture in which body language, spatial arrangement and movements play an important role during interaction between people.

Dance facilitates communication due to its nature. It allows individuals to connect by sharing physical space and by touching; it appears that dance does not require verbalized language to be able to express emotions and attitudes. Dancing is also a performance. It often occurs on stage and, thus communication exists not only between dance partners but also between the dancer and the audience (Davis 1973, 12).

Regardless of the interactive nature of dance, dancers have begun to communicate online. They join social networks and develop their own blogs on which they write about their experiences with dancing: about events, performances and even their own impressions of particular dances.

When combined dancing and blogging can be seen almost as an oxymoron. Is it possible to integrate a purely nonverbal form of artistic and personal expression with the verbalized culture of online communities? Dance bloggers prove that such relation between the contact and noncontact culture, between the verbal and nonverbal communication and between the online and the offline does indeed happen. Whether fusing the two extremes is indeed successful will be a central thought behind the present research.

The contrast between blogging and dancing requires deep analysis with regard not only to the techniques used when writing about dance but also in relation to motivations and driving forces behind the online activity. The issue is particularly interesting due to the nature of Internet-based interaction, which is often associated with the feelings of alienation, loneliness and superficiality in communication (Jankowski 2006, 59). Nevertheless, dance seems to
surpass its classical definitions of artistic profession, aesthetic performance and physical interaction and, instead it enters the realm of the Internet community, succumbing to a complex array of regulations and characteristics governing the online world.

The enigma of dance blogging is the major focus of the present paper. The attempt will be made to search and find an answer to the question regarding the relationship between blogging and dancing. While the growing popularity of online blogs is undeniable, the need that the dancers feel to transfer their nonverbal experiences into the verbalized world of online communication remains puzzling. Thus, the research objective revolves around the basic concepts such as culture, communication, medium and emotions. The paper will also refer to the contrast between the subjective and the objective and between the online and the offline. The theories used in the following chapters will, thus, include not only the scholarly work related to dance theory and social media theory but will also touch upon sociological and social-psychological theories of above all, Niklas Luhmann, Ervin Goffman and Georg Simmel.

The first part of the thesis will concentrate on presenting the background of the research, such as research question and objective as well as theoretical explanation. Chapter 3 and 4 will talk about previous researches as well as research limitations.

Second part of the paper contains empirical data such as information regarding research design and the theoretical discussion of the findings.
CHAPTER 1

Research question and research objective
**Research question**

As mentioned in the Introduction the research attempts at explaining the relationship between blogging and dancing and describe the phenomenon of dance communication via online blogs. The comparison is made between verbal and nonverbal codes and between online and offline realities of dancers. Motivations behind dance blogging are explored in particular in connection with the theory of emotions and theory of communication.

The research question is: **What Does Dancing Have to Do with Blogging? A Study of Verbal and Nonverbal Communication among Dance Bloggers.** The question itself suggests that discovering the connection between dancing and blogging is of utmost importance. The assumption clearly suggests a certain duality of the phenomenon. Nonverbal character of dancing imposes a way of thinking in which dance is a medium which uses space, body and movement to facilitate communication (Arnold 1995, 63). Online communities, blogging communities being an example of such, are, by contrast, representative of verbalized communication which is used to substitute face-to-face interaction and provide a cure for social loneliness and alienation (Subrahmanyam 2008: 121).

**Research objective**

Dance achieved a status of art form a long time ago with the first professional dancers emerging already in ancient times (Giurchescu 2001, 111). Dance has had a social meaning, serving as a tool to create an interactive platform for people to socialize, exchange information and learn more about each other (112). It belongs to a contact culture in which people are given an opportunity to interact with each other through body language.
Dancers have always communicated through movement and physical contact. The recent trend, however, demonstrates that a growing number of blogs have appeared devoted to dance and written by dancers (Giurchescu 2001, 111).

Therefore, the difference between dancing and blogging as an activity is the recurrent motif in this paper. The objective is to capture the essence of those- seemingly - mutually exclusive concepts is the objective of the present thesis.

The question is focused on dance blogs and on bloggers with particular interest devoted to their experiences in both real and virtual world. With the possible restrictions faced by the online world such as the lack of contact culture the artistic value of dance may be lost in the Internet world as well as its significance as a medium in communication. Therefore, the changing role of dancing in relation to expression of emotions and communication will be discussed and the motivations and emotions that govern their decisions as bloggers and dancers will be determined.

The paper attempts at answering the dilemma existing in communication theories which tend to separate the nonverbal and verbal communication rather than finding them complimentary. In case of dancing such division seems particularly applicable as dance, being a physical activity in its essence, appear to use nonverbal codes exclusively (Davis 1973, 16). Such assumption is confirmed by numerous dance theories which claim that nonverbal nature of dance allows for the communication to be complex and, the same time, successful.

At the same time, theories related to media, in particular new media, explore the issue of verbalization which occurs within the society, in which the offline, face-to-face interaction (rooted in the body language and eye-contact) is successfully replaced with an online communication, based on emails and interaction via blogs and other social networks (Jankowski 2006, 56).
The dualism applies also to the roles that the dancers acquire. As dancers, performing in the offline reality they acquire their role as a stage performer (Peick 2005, 2). As bloggers, their role is to communicate via words. Their physical capabilities are not significant online neither is space or body-language. It is their way of communicating and participating in a social world of online reality that constitutes the value for bloggers (2005, 2-3). When blogging dancers can remain more anonymous but at the same they become public figures, who can interact with the audience more actively (Subrahmanyam 2008, 121). Moreover, the type of the audience changes as well. While the viewers are separated from the dancers via the invisible line of stage, blog readers come closer to the dancer and become much more active participants in the dancing process (Goffman 1959). Thus, even when dancing, the public is never excluded although its nature as such transforms dramatically. Capturing and interpreting those changes are included in the research objective as well and the theory of Ervin Goffman will be used to explain the concepts.

The conflict between the nonverbal and the verbal is not, however, insoluble. On the contrary, the hypothesis presented in this paper will suggest that the two types of codes and, in other words, the two types of communication, are inextricably linked with each other. Therefore, the communication requires both verbal and nonverbal signs in order to be mutually understandable and successful in creating a meaning. Dance blogs serve as the best illustration for this point of view for two reasons: one being the almost purely nonverbal nature of dancing and the second being the seemingly verbal nature of blogging.

Communication, motivations, emotions and dancers will be the key concepts in the research around which the research will be designed. Dance will be analyzed in relation to the theory of communication, alienation and performance in order to grasp the core of the relationship between blogging and dancing and determine the driving forces which increase the need for verbalized communication among dancers.
Finally, the research will attempt at finding the motivations behind dance blogging. The research goal is based on the existing theories of alienation which suggest that online activities are related to the feeling of social loneliness, in which individuals find themselves alienated from the offline society. By arguing with this assumption, blogs will be looked upon from the perspective of interaction and communication. Thus, it is necessary to analyze if the two realities: that of an online blogger and an offline dancer are opposite or complementary to each other. Therefore, no particular culture, region or country will be selected for the research process. The main interest is dance and blogging and thus the two aspects will be the mere requirements with regard to the research object.

Among the questions to which the answers will be searched are: is blogging an alternative reality or an extension of the everyday life? How and why is the experience of dancing transported online? Why do dancers communicate online? What is the relation between the subjective and objective form of expression through dance? What is the role of the audience in the process of dancing and blogging?

The research is designed in order to provide the answers for the research question together with all its aspects mentioned above. Before going on to the empirical data, it is necessary, however, to explain the concepts which have been named in this chapter and place them within the existing theories from the fields of dancing, media and communication as well as sociology and social psychology. The concepts which form the theoretical structure are meaning, medium and communication, offline and online realities, verbal vs. nonverbal codes, contact and noncontact culture, emotions and alienation as well as the audience. Difference between media and communication is touched upon in the work of Niklas Luhmann while the concept of audience during performance is thoroughly described by Ervin Goffman. The versatility of the theoretical references is intentional as it matches the multi-
angled perspective of the research question and reflects the complexity of the researched object.
CHAPTER 2

Theory: Dance, Internet and Communication
The previous chapter presented the research question as well as describing in detail the research objective of the thesis. Basic concepts were named, and thus their explanation is required in order to interpret the empirical data collected in the research process. This chapter will deal with selected theories from different fields of social science and attempt at correlating them with each other in order to create a theoretical framework to be used with empirical data.

In order to organize the theoretical data some major concepts are used such as communication, nonverbal codes, the offline and the online world and the subjective and the objective. The theories will, therefore, provide explanations with reference to those notions as well as building the background for the theoretical discussion included in chapter 6.

**Dance as a medium in communication**

*“Dance can have extremely powerful effects on those who watch it.” (Smyth 1984, 21)*

It goes without saying that dance has a status of an art form in which professionals achieve a high level of artistic expression and aestheticism (Smyth 1984). Dance is also a physical activity, quite often connected to sport and general health and well-being.

Traditional dance theory talks, however, of dance as a medium in the process of communication (Arnold 1995, 62). As a social form, dance represents a physical, and to a great extent emotional, interaction between two or more people. As an art form, for example performed on stage, dance can reflect a complex network of feelings and hidden messages; it is rich in its meaning and interpretation (63).

The theory of dance and, consequently the perspectives on dance, have developed in pace with the aforementioned changing forms of dancing. Indeed dance as a theory has created a
basic vocabulary which allowed the researchers to understand the mechanisms behind verbal and nonverbal communication.

Martha Davis in her article “The Potential of Nonverbal Communication Research” claims that the most visible reason behind dancing is to express “emotions or attitudes” (1973, 10). Davis presents the origin of dancing as related closely to the Darwin’s theory of facial expressions as a source of emotions. Similarly, psychology connects the expression of attitudes and emotions with gestures, the examples presented in the writings of Freud and Deutsch (11).

Therefore, dance has developed to express numerous roles in the society. Aside from being a physical exercise, profession and hobby, dance has been used as a form of therapy (both physical and mental) and as a helping tool in communication, in particular nonverbal communication.

For the purpose of the present research the discussion will be focused on the communicative aspect of dancing. Dance as a form of nonverbal medium had its roots in the social development of groups but it cannot be separated from its physical nature. First of all, nonverbal communication is based on gestures, which are, furthermore, related to body movements and bodily expressions. This can be opposed by verbal communication which is grounded in the development of language and thus, no face-to-face contact is required for the communication to be successful.

In the society, or to be precise, within a particular social group, such gestures and expressions can be organized into movements and styles characteristic for the given group (Davis 1973, 13). Naturally, the process leads to the creation of the body language theory which sees people as capable of learning how to control their body in order not only to express their “real” feelings and attitudes but also to manipulate them in order to achieve a certain goal (13-
Many factors can influence the deviations and differences within the developed nonverbal signs, age and social status being a few of them (14). Davis calls dance “an organic composition” in which “each movement and parts are integrated subtly with each other.” (23)

However, the question that remains to be answered is: why do dancers communicate? First of all, it is crucial to understand how the relation between the sender and the receiver is shaped, how the information is transferred and how the experience of both parties shapes the process of communication (Davis 1973, 20). There is no denying the fact that one need to understand also how a body can be stimulated and influenced by “hearing and seeing other people dance” (21). One of the explanations can be the theory of neuro-muscular activity which claims that the observation made by a brain sends information to brain which than causes a kinesthetic reaction. Therefore, a kinesthetic communication takes place and the movement is produced (21).

A more accurate theory refers to the idea that the spectator is able to perceive the movements and understand meaning behind them. It is not, however, the technical aspect such as the knowledge on how to dance but the ability to “access the stored representations of what movements feel like” that determines the kinesthetic communication to be successful (1973, 21). Such process can be called “kinesthetic imaginary” which means that the audience can imagine the movement and respond to such image physically (21).

**Dance as communication**

The abovementioned factors play a particularly important role due to their connection with interaction: “the greater part of facial and body movement patters we see everyday are actually one channel of culturally derived communication system.” (Davis 1973, 15) Different
elements are significant in the interactive processes, the example being body-body relationship, spatial configuration and synchronization within the group.

There is no escaping the fact that the need for expression and the existence of codes which facilitate communication serve as a clear illustration that dance not only is a medium but also attempts at becoming communication at the same time. Mara M. Smyth in her paper “Kinesthetic Communication in Dance” argues strongly that one can communicate because dance “prompts responses within us” (1984, 19). The most prominent feature of dance is its ability to go beyond its mere artistic visual aspect. Dance first and foremost is a kinesthetic medium, rooted in the physical movement of the body (as the name suggests). The information provided by the body parts such as muscles and joints is received by the body, a so-called “sense of one’s own movement.” (19). Moreover, the kinesthetic communication refers also to the feelings which are awakening in the audience watching such movements.

Therefore, dancing can be seen as expression of emotions and as a medium in the process of communication but it becomes doubtful if dance can be seen as communication on its own. For the communication to occur both the sender and the recipient (in this case, the dancer and the audience or two dance partners) have to aware of the message which is being conveyed. Although Davis argues, that nonverbal communication that occurs via dancing is not limited to only facial expressions but it is mediated and channeled through gestures and movements (1973, 20), it is often impossible to control the reaction and understanding of the audience (especially in relation to them having the particular cultural and social background) so they interpret and define a gesture as particular emotion. Similar role can also be assigned to the style in which dancers perform. Although the dancing style can reveal information about the social status, the relationship between the partners and even the gender differences (Smyth 1984, 21), the process of mutual understanding and message sending may be limited.
Dance is, thus, seen as a tool in nonverbal communication whose structure and composition as well style and developed system of gestures and physical movements allow the audience (or the partner) to read, interpret and respond to the emotions expressed through the act of dancing but not as communication itself, due to the lack of control over the interpretation and message created through dancing.

**Dance as a part of contact culture**

Expression of emotions is not, however, the only role played by dance in the process of communication. Anca Giurchescu in her article “The Power of Dance and Its Social and Political Uses” sees dance as “a particular form of social interaction” (2001, 109). Social role of dancing is the recurrent motif in Giurchescu’s theoretical thinking. First and foremost, the author underlines in the article that dancing, even if seen only through a perspective of a physical exercise, cannot be separated from the social context. As a consequence, dancing can be regarded both as a part of the existing social structure, namely as a “living phenomenon” and as a part of a cultural, ideological or political heritage with values dominant in a given community (109).

According to Giurchescu dance is an active medium in its ability to create meaning through its “kinesthetic, affective and mental representation.” (2001, 110) Therefore, dance can be seen as a symbol of changing world and a medium for expression of emotions and ideas.

Interpreting dancing through the cultural perspective implies the dynamic aspect of dancing which is related to the changing world of culture. Elements of dancing that are used to communicate the message comprise not only the actual choreography but also gestures, proximity between the partners, costumes and music. All those aspects serve as a tool to
enhance the expressionism of the dance, in particular its emotional and ideological layer.

(111)

In order to understand dance as a source of nonverbal coding the idea of **contact culture** has to be explained as well. It was Edward T. Hall, an American anthropologist who first introduced the concept by describing different national cultures and analyzing their behaviour. In his book *Understanding Cultural Differences: Germans, French and America* Hall suggests that cultures can comprise people who interact with each other with a limited physical and social distance (kiss on the cheek, hug) while other cultures such as Northern American culture is based on the appraisal of social independence, privacy and personal space (Hall 1990, 23). Therefore, the level of interaction between individuals in the non-contact culture is lower than that of the contact culture (Hall 1990, xiv). Cultures that are traditionally more contact culture are also the ones in which dance played an important social role due to its focus on contact and movement in relation to each other.

In accordance with the arguments mentioned above there is no denying the fact that dancers can be seen as experts at nonverbal communication. Dance is a complex form and requires a deep interpretation to understand its “intra- and inter-textual relationships” (Giurchescu 2001, 112). This complexity comprises different levels related to the knowledge of technique, emotions transferred in dance, of the mythical or social meaning of the dance and of its artistic value.

In conjunction with other dance-related theories presented in this paper, Giurchescu argues that dancing is a representative of nonverbal coding used to facilitate communication which allows people to connect as individuals and as groups and increase the sense of contact culture. Dancer uses behavioral patterns, space and rules to reinforce such connection
between people and convey elements such as social organization within a group, its structure and regulation (113).

**Internet world in figures and facts**

The recent data shows that the Internet’s popularity is growing significantly in every country with the number of users exceeding 2 billion worldwide and the growth rate amounting to more than 500% (source: http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm). The abovementioned figures are significant in the process of demonstrating how the Internet has become a part of society’s everyday life and can provide a certain background into explaining some of the social phenomena which can be observed nowadays.

The 2009 report *Internet 15 år* published by the Swedish Internet Statistics, SE, concludes that the Internet has become a tool to meet people’s visions of their own future (39). The flexibility and adjustability of the Internet-based communication, the wide accessibility of information and the immediacy of contact are mentioned as the most visible signs of changing social needs to which the Internet tries to adjust constantly. The report lists the most visible phenomena of the digital-dependant society such as the transformation of the work culture, of the way media functions and the political activity. In accordance with the statements made in the report, the Internet influences the way work is distributed allowing for internationalization of workforce and conducting distance-based work projects. As regards the media, the transformation is even more conspicuous, both quality and quantity-wise (17). One of the noticeable effects of the growing Internet access and Internet usage is the need for immediacy. The news has to be delivered as soon as possible, quite often without the necessary proof-reading and editing. Mistakes and factual errors are quite common but, at the same time, there exist a continuous possibility to correct, update and add new information. With regard to media user, the expectations are changing as well. The text has to be accessible, the message
clear and brief and the images are of utmost importance (42). Moreover, new online media are
much more interactive compared to their traditional equivalents. The readers are provided
with the opportunity to comment, express their opinion and even contribute actively with their
own content. This is, undeniably, a clear illustration of the way society changes.

The Internet is also seen as a bridge connecting social gaps. Access to information database
and internationalized communication system, which used to be a privilege of the chosen
group of people, has been facilitated via the Internet. Although, at the moment, less than 1/3
of the world’s population has the access to the Internet, the number is significantly growing
and, nowadays, many public places such as schools, libraries or youth centres offer free
Internet access for those who wish or need to use it. This development is particularly crucial
for young people who are the fastest growing active users1, in particular, in relation to social
media (25).

The offline and the online communication

The offline and the online worlds have blurred into one social reality and their mutual inter-
dependence is undeniable. Communication and interaction occur face-to-face and via the
Internet and both forms are equally successful. Moreover, online communication and,
consequently, the virtual societies whose growing number is directly related to the Internet
domination, reflect visibly – in their structure and ways of functioning – the ‘real’ offline
interaction between members of society (Derks 2007, 189).

The society communicates online more than ever before which gives a rise to a numerous
important social problems and social phenomena related to the issue of loneliness and
togetherness, privacy, safety, integration and successful socialization. A particularly visible

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1 The term active in this context refers to the content-building activities.
trend is the formation of the Internet-based communities whose role is to share experience, common interests and mutual support (Derks 2007, 182).

When referring to the recent developments in the information technology the term social media is used. Social media can be described as any form of online communication platform which is aimed at connecting people and spreading information (Jankowski 2006, 63) Social media has also become a place via which individuals, often situated all over the world, can express their opinions and find people with similar views and/or hobbies. Social media is also an active tool for building or extending one’s status within society, of identity formation and public self-expression (Subrahmanyam 2008, 136).

There are different types of social media and the versatility of their form and regulations governing their functioning are representative of the different trends and needs which arise in society. The tradition of online interaction dates back to the times when first chat-rooms, forums and online journals were created but social media has gone through a significant change since the early 90s (Jankowski 2008, 57). The most modernized and user-friendly forms of social media contain applications and tools which allow constant information exchange, communication and content-formation, such as building photo-albums, writing longer texts and making and posting videos.

The examples and types of social media are numerous and all of them seem to serve the purpose of connecting people who share similar views and interests. Facebook, a social networking website, is one of the most prominent examples of social media (Subrahmanyam 2008, 140). Its structure and purpose is to create an interactive online platform which allows people to communicate in the matter of seconds.

However, one of the traditional forms of social interaction online, which has undergone the most visible change, is blogging which have become a significant tool for self-expression. In
its structure and premises blogs are online journals, devoted to an individual’s life, his and her interests and can be private or public, depending on the settings, access scope and the actual theme and goal of the blog. With the recent transformation within the blogging world, online journals have become also a way to market a product, improve one’s career chances and, last but not least, connect people with similar interests and experiences (Subrahmanyam 2008, 121).

Social media, as mentioned above, can be seen as a sign of changing society (Derks 2007, 842). In the report “Young and the Media”, published in 2010, the authors underline how communication between people have changed via the introduction of new media: “Social sites like Facebook or other more specialized communities currently offer opportunities for both offline-/one-way communication (email, blog posts) that online-/multi-way communication (chat), so it can be assumed that some of the earlier downright chatting has moved over to these sites” (48, translation by me). The natural consequence of such trend is the emergence of new challenges for the successful social interaction such as the growth of expectations and pressure for the social actor who is obliged to maintain contact with more than hundred people and keep abreast of all the latest developments and news.

The rise of the social media is undeniable. Only in 2011 Facebook has registered an astonishing increase in the number of new members which now amounts to 845 million monthly active users (http://newsroom.fb.com/content/default.aspx?NewsAreaId=22). YouTube follows closely with a number of active unique users exceeding 800 million (http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics) By comparison, Twitter boasts over 300 million as its number of users, a figure registered in May 2011 (http://articles.cnn.com/2011-06-27/tech/limits.social.networking.taylor_1_twitter-users-facebook-friends-connections?_s=PM:TECH). The three websites are closely connected with each other with the statistical data claiming that “500 years of YouTube video are watched every day on
Facebook, and over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter each minute” (http://www.youtube.com/t/press_statistics).

Blogs constitute a separate genre in the social media activities, with their distinctive one-way communication aspect. Being online journals rather than chatting places or interactive social platforms, blogs are more about building one’s identity and presenting it in a particular way to the society. The figures as regards blogging also demonstrate a visible increase in the recent years, with the number of bloggers amounting to 181 million which, according to NM Incite, a Nielsen/McKinsey company, is a significant increase from the 36 million users which were registered in 2006. Blogs have changed over years in relation to their form and purpose. One can choose, as a reader, between formal, official blogs of various institutions, companies and organizations, private blogs revolving around everyday life of an individual whose purpose is, in most cases, entertainment and finally, thematic blogs, devoted to one’s interests, work, specializations and attracting people sharing similar views. Despite being one of the oldest among social media forms, blogs are a relatively new phenomenon, who has grown in popularity over the last few years. Being an integral part of the online communication and socialization blogs, together with other social media, constitute an important component of an individuals’ identity be it online or offline. At the same time, the blogs continue to change their form and content with more and more e-journals focused on brand-marketing and including multi-media applications such as music, photos and videos.

Medium and communication

First and foremost, in his article “Are There Still Indispensable Norms in Our Society?” Niklas Luhmann writes about the existence of ‘doubling of reality’, which he relates directly to the issue of cultural invention (2008, 21). He compares the doubling of reality to a difference between a game and life or, “according to the evolution of language, between a
language’s signs and what they signify.” (2008, 21) Such can be applied also to other cultural aspects and to distinction between two realities the fictional/virtual and real reality. The very same issue is mentioned in Luhmann’s famous work *The Reality of the Mass Media* in which Luhmann explores how mass media system differentiates itself from other systems of communication: “the mass media generate a transcendental illusion” (4) The real reality is what happens ‘in facto and the ‘second/double of reality’ is the communicated observations performed by the mass media: “What we have, therefore, is a system which is capable of distinguishing between self-reference and other-reference” There can be, however, no certainty that the relation between two realities is based on a trustworthy account of one in relation to the other. (5)

The theory assumes also that all realities are socially constructed as their based on the difference between self-reference and other-reference (5).

Understanding Luhmann’s theory is, therefore, crucial for comprehending the complexity of modern society. Based on the concept of a doubling of reality blogging can be seen as an expansion of offline activities. Their content may be interpreted as reflection and continuation of offline reality, of the face-to-face communication (3)

The essence of Luhmann’s scholarly work can be also associated with the theory of communication and the theory of social systems. Both theories are interrelated and provide a rich and explanatory framework for understanding modern society. Social systems are defined as indispensable part of everyday life, as they “use communication as their particular (...) mode of reproduction” (1991, 3). It is, however, the concept of communication, which is particularly important in Luhmann's theory that becomes relevant and significant for the present research. Communication, in Luhmann’s theory, replaces action in its active role of system formation (1995, 168): “There are two primary reasons for relating the self-description
of the social systems to actions. One we have already mentioned – actions are easier to recognize and deal with than communications.” Based on Parsons’ theory of action, Luhmann uses similar terminology; for him, however, action cannot always be seen as social (Misheva, 2011, 185). It is only communication that Luhmann sees as internally social and fundamentally related to society (2011, 185).

Rejecting the idea of other forms of social action as a powerful means of change is closely related to the idea of how Luhmann’s sees human beings. Luhmann’s man is incapable of changing society and its structure. Such theory can be, therefore, seen as pessimistic in the way that it presents people as week and powerless with their roles imposed on them via the structure that they have no influence on (Bechmann 2002, 70). Luhmann’s conceptualization is abstract as it rejects the idea of an active individual as such and human beings are in practice fully removed from his theory: “it is systems that communicate, not social actors” (Delanty 2005, 283-284)

Communication is, therefore, of utmost importance for Luhmann’s theoretical thinking. The inability to perform a social action, to influence and to change on the part of human beings is a recurrent motif in Luhmann’s writing. Differences, unequal redistribution and other social imbalance found in the society produce another system and no system is ever subordinated to another system (Luhmann 1999, 154-155). Thus, functioning of the society, according to Luhmann, can be seen as the process of continuous communication between the systems and the subsequent differentiation. Systems are able to define their identity through self-reproduction; such occurs via communication which is used to decide which information is meaningful. The lack of such identity entail that the systems stop their existence and returns to its original form within the chaos of the environment (Misheva 2011, 190).
Therefore, the communication serves as a tool to manage the complexity of the modern society. Production of new social systems and the subsequent social change is directly related to ongoing communication (Misheva 2011, 186). Communication in Luhmann’s theory is the basis in the structure of society (Luhmann, accessed March 12, 2012); it allows selecting important information from the chaotic noise that comes from the environment that is the outside world. Therefore, it can be said that it is through communication that the development of the system occurs and changes are made possible: “The purpose of communication is to create differences” (Bechmann 2002, 71).

Luhmann’s idea of change within society that is not related to any conscious and powerful action on the part of an individual but rather through a so-called ‘irritation’ in the process of communication: (Luhmann 1999, 152). The answer of the system to such irritation and thus to existing social problem is the creation of another system (152-153). The system is capable of protecting itself against irritations, “but they would not be irritations if they did not change.” Luhmann characterizes the systems as having reduced complexity which is facilitated via communication whose role is to select and limit information available outside. This process is also called "reduction of complexity."(Luhmann 1995, 27)

The concept of communication and system is also directly related to the notion of medium. Following this line of thought, the systems can comprise economy, religion or education and each such system contains medium, such as money, belief and language (Luhmann 1995:160, 250, 463). In order to gain access to such it is necessary to obtain the necessary medium (Luhmann 1999, 150-151). Thus while some individuals are able to enter particular systems, the access remains closed to others (4-5). Language becomes the most prominent medium as
it “increases the understandability of communication beyond the sphere of perception” (Luhmann 1995:160).

The dynamics and evolution of the systems is dependable on its media. Media are used to facilitate communication between the systems. This is due to their functional role in the system with money, power and religion clearly illustrating the point of view (Misheva. 192). Money is used to facilitate the economical system and power to ease the functioning of the political system. Art can also be a medium while being a system at the same time (Misheva, 192)

Finally Luhmann uses and re-interprets the theory of autopoiesis, which defines society as the most important social system and a closed system of communication and whose ability to constantly self-develop is its most crucial characteristic (the so-called ‘self-production’) (Luhmann 1991: 1). The term ‘closed systems’ implies that no change is possible within that system; the change can only be observed (1991: 5). Thus, Luhmann describes the society as “a functionally differentiated system.” (1995:19)

Subjective and objective world

By contrast, Peter J. Arnold argues in his paper “Objectivity, Expression and Communication in Dance as a Performing Art” that dance as a medium for communication can be interpreted in the same way a work of art is. In general, the concept of art expressionism is, in Arnold’s opinion, closely related to communication, in particular communication of feelings (Arnold 1995, 61). Another issue often associated with art is its dualism, namely the opposing forces of objectivity and subjectivity. Subjectivity is understood as specific to individual’s experience in which the values are rooted in the feeling and attitudes (61). However, objectivity is regarded as values which have “identifiable features and qualities that are in them and that, when perceived, make them desirable or interesting in some way.” (62) Art,
with dance being it specific example, serves to express emotions and, often, to give those emotions a certain structure and understanding, a process which can be seen in terms of a subjective theory as opposed to the actual product, the piece of art (or dance) which can regarded as objective (63).

Expression is related not only to the inner states of the artist and the performer but serves also the purpose of evoking particular feelings in the audience. Such reaction of the audience cannot be, however, fully controlled. Therefore, as opposed to the actual product, evocation of emotions is not objective either as there is no certainty that one person shall have the same response as the other.

Arnold mentions also a third aspect of artistic expression which he calls “inherent property view.” (1995, 64). According to this statement, a work of art, regardless of the emotional input and output, has a set of inner and inherent properties which can be “picked out and (...) shared and provide a common basis for communication.” (64) Those properties, in Arnold’s opinion, are of an objective nature. All of those three aspects of expression describe the complexity of relationship between the artist, audience and the work of art.

In case of dance, the relationship proves even more complex. The work of art, specifically dance, before the product can be interpreted by the audience, undergoes the process of transformation from the choreographed set of movements into the actual dance. Therefore, it is the performer that adds the finishing touch to the expression and decides on how the specific dance will be presented (1995, 65). Such difference can be associated with the process of creativity and is extremely subjective.

An individual’s personal and subjective experiences can become objective. Georg Simmel’s theory regarding culture can provide an interesting insight into the issue. Simmel believed that the unity is achieved via interaction, in particular the unity within the society: “Society exists
where a number of individuals enter into interaction. The interaction always arises on the basis of certain drives or for the sake of certain purposes. (Simmel 1997, 23) He was particularly interested in the issue of culture and the relation between cultural productivity and society as such.

According to Simmel, nature and culture were interrelated and referred to the same phenomena, in particular “the development of a subject” (Simmel, 1971, 228). As a result culture could be connected to the concept of human action, for example with the ability of a human subject to develop and perfect him or herself. The term used by Simmel is ‘cultivation’ which he defines as process of transformation of the subject into a more perfected state, a process which is inherent in the subject’s own potential and is triggered and realized via culture (228). Simmel claims that “culture is a perfection of a man.” (1971, 230) However, he does not see culture in merely subjective terms. On the contrary, Simmel underlines the need to see culture as an extension of the objective world. In other words, cultivation is only made possible if a subject, in this case human being, relates continuously to the objects which are “external to him” (230). Therefore, the aforementioned process of perfecting and developing is rooted in the constant interaction between the subjective and the objective, between the subject’s internal world and the external world of the objects.

Simmel calls this a “necessary duality of the elements of culture.” (1971, 231) In accordance with his theory, artistic values are also prone to dualism. Evaluating a piece of art is both conducted from the perspective of its importance as an individual object in terms of how much enjoyment and aesthetic pleasure it gives and in terms of its objective cultural value.

Based on such assumptions, Simmel presents two definitions of culture: subjective and objective. The former is characterized by the “measure” of human development, the latter
refers to the objects which undergo the process of perfecting as well and which trigger the subject to self-development (233).

Simmel also describes culture as “the accomplishment of mental and practical labour” (Simmel 1997, 36), which is intensified and perfected through the process of development. For him, the product of such labour, the cultural product, becomes interpreted and confronted by its audience. In this sense, while the objective features of such product remain unchanged, regardless of the level of understanding among such audience, the “the concentrated mental labour of a cultural community is related to the degree to which it comes alive in individuals (…)” (Simmel 1997, 40). When developing his theory of sociology of culture, Simmel underlines also the importance of interaction within culture, which enhances the development and productivity. The importance of senses is one of the major assumptions in his theory (111), followed closely by the concept of sociability which elaborates on the human need to form societies and interact with each other.

Birgitta Nedelmann in her critical article “Individualization, Exaggeration and Paralysation: Simmel’s Three Problems of Culture” attempts at clarifying the scholar’s models of culture, in particular ‘model of cultural dualism’ which has been mentioned above. In this model individuals stand for subjective culture, in which individuals absorb and receive culture which is socially constructed and objectified. (Nedelmann 1994, 367). She also elaborates on Simmel’s differentiation between style and art which she calls the “the dualistic world of aesthetics. Following this theory, style represents the objective knowledge and the generalized features of the object. Art, on the other hand, is associated with the individuality of both the creator and the receiver. The most characteristic feature of such individual relation within the aesthetic experience is the unique relationship that becomes apparent between the art object and the person perceiving it. Such duality of cultural experience creates challenges for an individual and society however. Two of the fallacies mentioned by Nedelmann are:
exaggerated objectivism and exaggerated subjectivism (1994, 377). In both examples the essence of the problem lies within the human tendency to create imbalance. In other words, people often regard objects of everyday use as art without seeing their objective, user-value. On the other hand, works of art are undergo the opposite process, in which their aesthetically artistic value is forgotten and their function becomes objectified and “‘mis’-used for purposes of sociation” (377).

With regard to cultural dualism Nedelmann sees cultivation as the mutually co-dependent process in which consumers of culture are both and influenced and themselves influence culture. The aforementioned objective culture functions as a tool, “intermediary” between the subject which has not developed yet and the subject which has undergone such development. (Nedelmann 1994, 378) Culture in this sense, plays an important role in the transformation process, as it works as a trigger for cultural productivity as well. An individual develops and perfects himself through such externalized objective culture and in turn produced subjective culture which is cultivated and perfected and gains new cultural value. Simmel is therefore interested in the double-sided process. While the external objective culture becomes internalized by the subject (“subjectification of objective culture”), the subjective culture, created in the process, becomes externalized back and institutionalized (“objectification of subjective culture”) (382). The constant need of internalizing and externalizing creates additional challenges for society and for the institution of culture as such (382).

In another critical article by Donald Levine, “On Individuality and Modern Culture”, Simmels’ cultural dilemmas are further dwelled upon. Simmel sees society as consisting of individuals with diverse and fragmented personal experiences and such multitude of social interpretations creates the situation in which perceiving culture in objective terms becomes almost impossible Levine 1994, 355). Such lack of norms and generalizations creates contradictions within culture and, to a similar extent, within society (358), a problem which
Simmel intended to treat with a growing individualism and integrity of an autonomous human being (359).

**Institutionalized dance**

The most prominent contrast can be related to the difference between the interaction and communication is reflected in the idea of institutionalization (see: Luhmann). To institutionalize social forms means to make a phenomenon acquire a certain structure, to allow it to develop into a paradigm, a system, a compilation of languages (Berger and Luckmann 1991). Institutionalization of any social phenomenon requires also developing one’s own language,

In case of dance bloggers artistic expression is not only limited to an offline activity but also to an online one. In other words, the dancers express themselves through both body and mind. Such transference of the social activity may be interpreted in the form of the institutionalization of dance as an artistic form, an institutionalization of an online activity. The dancers express themselves and create a new social structure: creating, in accordance with Luhmann theory, a system of communication, recognizable by its members (Luhmann, 1995). As a consequence, art becomes a system, which moves online and undergoes a process of institutionalization. Hence, dancers, as the artists, contribute to the institutionalization via their labour.

Such claim, however, requires a further development due to the ambiguity of the art as a form of expression. One can question if art can be restricted to such boundaries (Arnold 1995, 67). Art proves resistant to institutionalization as dancing is a personal contribution and a creative activity. As a result, creating a system may be extremely challenging (68). Therefore, one of the most significant focuses and interests of the present research is to discover the mechanism
of institutionalization, namely how the bodily interaction gets translated into media communication and how art, through this process, becomes systematized and institutionalized. Dance bloggers who, through their work, create social structures play an important role in the process of transferring the world of physical dancing into the online reality. Their blogging activity has a specific aim, which can be directly connected to the theory internationalization and externalization. Artistic expression whose perception is extremely internalized becomes, through such experience externalized. In order to understand the issue of internalization and externalization one needs to refer to the theoretical work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, whose *Social Construction of Reality* presents the conceptual explanation with regard to the process of externalizing human experience. Berger and Luckmann are interested in the process of both socialization and interaction as well as in the way knowledge is constructed in society (1991, 69). One of the most interesting aspects of their theory, found particularly applicable with regard to this present research is the issue of institutionalization.

For them human activities are prone to patterns, a process which they call “habitualization.” One of the most characteristic features of a habitualized activity is its repetitiveness or, in other words, that fact that it can be reproduced. (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 70-71) In spite of the fact that an action is, in its very core, specific to a person who performs it, the general pattern becomes established and the action constitutes a part of a routine. The repetitive aspect of the action perform implies the restriction in the number of possibilities and choices that an individual has when taking on an activity (71).

A term which is closely related to the issue of habitualization is institutionalization which occurs “whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors.” (72) Categorizing the action via types of actors creates institutions which are available to all members of a particular type, or, in other words, of a particular social group. The prominent
characteristics of institutions include historicity, meaning that they require time before they can be created and control, as the patterns imposed by the institution apply to all its members. (72).

Such control can be understood in the language of society as social control which sets regulations and routines on human activities, laws being a clear illustration of this point of view. According to Berger and Luckmann institutionalization is inevitably related to interaction as collectiveness is one of the main presuppositions behind successful institutions (1991, 73). The larger the group that interacts the bigger the chances of an institution being created, but, as Berger and Luckmann claim, even a two-person interaction suffices for the process to occur. (73)

The transition between habitualization and institutionalization depends on the level of relevance with regard to a particular aspect of interaction, with communication between individuals forming the basis for habitualization and, later typification (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 75). On the scale of society an extensive and continuous social situation and, thus, communication leads naturally to institutionalization and to social control being created. What is required, however, is the common ground for the members, be it a family of two or the whole society. With the group growing larger and larger over time and with the patterns perfecting themselves habitualized actions acquire types and become institutions (76).

Berger and Luckmann underline the dualism of objective and subjective institution. In the family scale, the boundaries of the institution and the regulations themselves are less strict and more flexible, their perception is often subjective. However, with new members joining the community (in case of the aforementioned family that would be children) who are required to absorb the rules and patterns which institutionalizes them and objectifies. (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 76-77). The process itself is socially constructed as, regardless of how large
the given social group is and how extensive the institution appears to be, the objectification occurs through the action of a human being. (77) This approach, similarly to Simmel’s theory, shows the double-sided interaction between the producer and the product, between an individual and the objective social order he or she created. The objective institution created becomes later on internalized by an individual and contributes into building his or her identity (85).

One of the prerequisites for successful institutionalization is language which becomes conventionalized during the process of habitualization and typification. The vocabulary and the meaning behind words become common and are shared among all the members and allows for the legitimation of the institution. For the legitimation of the institution to occur one must be capable of explaining and understanding the institutionalized world and, language constitutes, thus, a useful tool to achieve such goal (Berger and Luckmann 1991, 79-82).

One of the methods used to achieve such transference and externalization is to create a language which other users are required to understand in order to communicate successfully. Although dancing is an interactive action it becomes a virtual communicative action for which a language used.

**Theory of emotions**

Many sciences defined emotions with both natural and social sciences attempting at determining the origin, functioning and role of emotions. In the field of sociology of emotions, emotions are seen as primary and secondary and have a significant influence on the social interactions (Kemper 1997, 263). Theodore D. Kemper in the article “How Many Emotions Are There? Wedding the Social and the Autonomic Components” describes the process of social interaction which occurs by human ability to communicate emotions (264).
The ability to express emotions can be also closely related to the differences between the noncontact and contact cultures. At the same time, some emotions such as anger, fear and satisfaction are universal and cross-cultural and, hence, can be translated by every individual during communication process (Kemper 1997, 271).

In the world of dancing, dance is seen as expression of emotions in its core (Davis 1973, 14). The expression can only be successful if the meaning of the emotions is understood. Such understanding is required both from the audience and the performer in order for the expression of emotions to be successful (Arnold 1995, 66). Successful emotional message entails also that other elements, such as costumes and lightening contribute greatly as well as the performer’s style and personal interpretation as well as that of the audience.

The theory of emotions is also applicable to the world of social networking. Nicholas W. Jankowski in his article “Creating Community with Media: History, Theories and Scientific Investigations” attempts the analysis of the notion of social interaction online and demonstrates how the traditional view on the Internet tends to associate online interaction with the lack of emotional expression (Jankowski 2006, 58). One of the assumptions is that emotional reaction in the face-to-face reality cannot be transferred into the world of online communication and, in fact, resorting to the Internet communication implies loneliness of an individual and his or her inability to communicate in the offline world (2006, 59).

Kaveri Subrahmanyam and Patricia Greenfield relate to this theory in their research titled “Online Communication and Adolescent Relationships” by claiming that, in fact, the emotional expression that is used in the offline world in the communication process is successfully transported to the online reality (2008, 119). They investigate the relationship between young people, who are also active users of social networks and blogs. They authors discovered that rather than being a reaction to loneliness and the lack of social interaction,
increased participation of young people in online communication is a reflection of the emotional relationships existing in the offline world:

Adolescents are using these different communication forms for many different purposes and to interact with friends, acquaintances, and strangers alike. Teens use instant messaging mainly to communicate with offline friends. Likewise they use social networking sites to keep in contact with their peers from their offline lives, both to make plans with friends whom they see often and to keep in touch with friends whom they see rarely. They use blogs to share details of everyday happenings in their life.” (Subrahmanyam 2008, 122)

Therefore, it becomes visible that the theory of emotions is significant for understanding the issue of communication both in terms of dancing and blogging activity.

**Alienation from the product**

The attempt at objectifying and institutionalizing an object or activity can be related to the theory of alienation. The concept has been particularly associated with the writing of Karl Marx who described the difficult situation of people caught in the system of capitalism: “the misery of the worker is in inverse proportion to the power and size of production.” (McLellan 2000, 85) Marx claims that capitalism causes the differences between the workers producing the labour and the capitalists owning the produced labour to grow (85-86). Alienation is explained by Marx in terms of labour to which the worker producing it has now right (85).

With the worker being alienated from the product of his work, the natural balance in the world is distorted: “The worker can create nothing without nature, the sensuous exterior world. (...) the worker becomes a slave to his object.”(87) The destruction of such natural balance and the externalization of an individual from the product of his own work create tensions and leads eventually to social alienation (91). The more the worker produces the smaller the value of his
own work. It is the capitalist that has a control over the product and the value of it, is therefore, lost to the worker (90).

**Labour vs. work**

The theory of Karl Marx was also an inspiration for a number of theories, the writings of Hanna Arendt’s clearly illustrating this point of view. Drawing on Marx definition of capitalism, production and labour, Arendt presents labour as being different from work. Both concepts are a form of activity. Nevertheless, they differ significantly. Labor is one of the three forms of human condition with work and action being the other two (Suchting 1962, 48).

The main difference between labour and work lies in the durability of the product produced via those human activities (1962, 48). Labour can be associated with basic needs, thus the activity itself is repetitive and the product resulting from labour is alienated from the person producing it and is transitory. Labour activities are, thus, related to the sustaining biological requirements such as food and accommodation: “Life becomes futile, meaningless. Consuming man is a greedy creature who can use pleasure only to consume more.” (48)

Labour is directly consumed after its production and nothing durable is left behind for an individual to use it further.

Work, by contrast, is characterized by control over the product and its durability. In the physical world, objects such as house build or chair constructed are a product of work (49). In the abstract terms, work can refer to products which are not alienated from an individual with a work of art being a clear illustration for this point of view (1962, 49-50).

**Locus of control**
A concept, which can be related directly to the issue of alienation, is so-called locus of control. The concept has its origins in the psychological theory of an American psychologist Julian Rotter. His theory refers to the degree of control which an individual believes he or she has over their own life (internal locus of control) and the control that external forces exert on them without their control (Engler 2009, 251). Rotter places the two extremes on the continuum and underlines that various behaviours and related to them emotions like confidence, mastership, loneliness or alienation can be situated within the borders of that continuum (2009, 251). Therefore, in the situation in which people consider themselves in control of their own behaviour the feeling of confidence increases. By contrast the sensation of alienation and loneliness is affected by people believing their behaviour is controlled by external forces and thus they feel externalized from the product of their own lives (251).

During his research, Rotter came to believe that with age people’s feeling of control becomes more and more internalized. Internal control allows, thus, for “good physical and emotional health”, protects people from being influenced by the authority and are less likely to feel anxious (252).

The audience

In his book, The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Ervin Goffman presents his concept of theatrical life. Using the metaphor of performance as a reflection of life, Goffman uses props, stage, audience and actors as the conceptual reference points in his theory. As regards the present research the notion of audience is of particular importance. In Goffman’s theory, an actor performing on a stage attempts at communicating with the audience. The audience is watching the performance and judging it, which creates pressure on the actor: “the degree that the individual maintains a show before others that he himself does not believe, he can come to experience a special kind of alienation from self and a special kind of wariness of others.” (Goffman, 1959, 259)
Improved relationship between the audience and the performer implies better performance, which, in turn, improves the process of communication as such.

**Conclusions**

To conclude, the aforementioned concepts regarding dance and online communication as well as the theory of emotions and alienation will be used to build a framework for theoretical discussion of the findings. The role of the discussion will be to find the answer to the question of how dancers communicate online and determine the motivations behind the decision to blog. Being equipped with the background knowledge regarding the development of the blogging communities, dance theories as well as scholarly work of major sociological theorists, the data collected can be analyzed and interpreted. The following chapters will focus on presenting the methodology of the research, on demonstrating the results as well as drawing final conclusions and interpretations.
CHAPTER 3

Previous research
Two of the concepts investigated in this research are: dance as a medium in communication and online loneliness. Although the two notions have not been studied together yet, many studies have been conducted with regard to the way in which dance and Internet influence communication and their findings constitute an important contribution into the present research.

The idea of a complex nonverbal communication is investigated in the research introduced Melissa Peick titled “Dance as Communication: Messages Sent and Received through Dance.” The article revolves around the idea of nonverbal messages which can be sent and received during the act of dancing. Dance is treated as a social activity and as a “communicative phenomenon” (2005, 1). As a form of non-verbal communication can be described using codes such as proxemics, haptics and kinesics.

The meaning associated with the sent and received messages is associated with touch and physical contact (haptics), with spatial arrangement (proxemics) as well eye-contact (kinesics). All of those factors can be said to be crucial during social interaction (3). As touch can be associated with expression of inner emotions such as affection, the messages sent via touching can be both of positive and negative nature (2005, 2). Peick says that “movement as a creative expression plays an important part in life, building self-image, self-awareness and self-direction (Peick 2005, 2).” It allows for the message to be passed on in a clear and involved way.

Space is also used in dance communication, especially when considered in terms cultural references (noncontact vs. contact culture) as well as gender structure. Kinesics, by contrast, offers the channel for message sending via eye contact and facial expression (Peick 2005, 2) which enables the dancer to communicate “psychological and/or physical closeness.
As mentioned in other dance-related theories the success of nonverbal communication is deeply rooted in its context, or to be specific, in the situational factors which have an impact on how the message is understood and interpreted (2). Nonverbal communication is used for expression of feelings and intentions and in dance, the physicality, bodily contact and other types of nonverbal behaviour play a particularly important role.

The article describes research analyzing dancers’ behaviour to see the patterns in which they express different feelings and intentions via the three codes. The examples of the emotions expressed are “having fun”, “confidence”, “flirtation” and “confidence” as well as “not interested”. (Peick 2005, 6-8). Confidence seems to be particularly important as confident dancers often dance on their own and do not need the comfort of a partner. (9)

The conclusions of the research highlights that the dance is not only limited to the actual exercise but also that many messages are sent and received in the process. “All the dancers are making sense of their nonverbal messages” meaning that the nonverbal communication used is understood commonly by the participants (Peick 2005, 8). Gender plays also a significant role in such communication as nonverbal codes between men and women (especially spatial organization) show visible patterns (8). The study demonstrates, thus, how dance serves as a medium in communication, becoming a channel through which complex meaning can be transferred.

The concept of communicative medium has also been investigated within the media and communication field. The contrast between the way communication is mediated online and offline is of major interests within the theories of new media. Jean-Francois Coget, Michael Suman and Yutaka Yamauchi conducted a research which revolved around the subject of communication online and the inevitable class between the offline and the online realities. They summarized their findings in the article, “The Internet, Social Networks and
Loneliness,” in which they suggested both the benefits and the negative implications of social networks as a medium in communication. (Coget et al., 2002, 180)

The key words used in the research were loneliness, belongingness and alienation as well as communication and interaction. The research objective aims at discovering the relation between online and offline interaction and between the online communities and individuals (Coget et al., 2000, 180)

At the same time, the researchers set themselves a goal to test the theory claiming that loneliness and alienation are related to the decrease of social interaction offline and the increase in the online activities. One of the assumptions is that the “reduction” and “limitation” in the number of interactions with family and friends can be directly connected to the virtual communities. (2002, 181). The foundation for their study is the analysis of computer-mediated communication (CMC) with the hypothesis suggesting that the relationship between individual’s feeling of loneliness and the increase in participation online may not be as direct as traditional media theories suggest (181).

Secondary research of theories is the method, which is used by Coget et al in their study. Thus, the authors of “Internet, Social Networks and Loneliness” focus on the analysis of existing empirical data (both quantitative and qualitative), previous research and theoretical works in order to find a correlation between them.

Their particular interest is on the study conducted in 2000 which comprised a survey of a group of American Internet users and nonusers (Coget et al., 2002, 182). The authors approach the survey from a critical point of view in an attempt to determine if the Internet and the increased social loneliness are related. The authors notice the two extreme views on the matter, one suggesting a strong and negative correlation between the two aspects of social life and the other claiming that the online and the offline do not have to be exclusive. Thus, their
paper is an interesting example of research which aims at producing a solution to that
dilemma (2002, 182). Their final findings demonstrate that, regardless of the negative-relation
theories in media and communication, there is no direct prove that increased social loneliness
is a result or a cause of an intensified use of the Internet: “Overall the impact of the Internet
on loneliness is unclear and complex (Coget et al, 2002, 193).

Understanding how communication works is crucial for capturing the essence of modern
society and the two researches show how important it is to place the concept of
communicative action within social activities and test it against known theories. Both papers
succeed in doing so as they suggest that the relationship between individuals in the
communication process is far from straightforward.
CHAPTER 4

Research limitations
While the discussion of dance in the context of online blogging is relatively recent the issue of Internet communication has been the topic of heated debates among many scholars. The examples of the previous researches concerning the concept of dance communication as well as offline and online are included in chapter 3. This chapter will focus on presenting alternative perspectives on the concept of communication and dance. References to other sociological theories will also be included in order to demonstrate that the understanding of the same phenomenon may vary and, therefore, it is of utmost importance to acknowledge the different theoretical outlooks. This paper, however, will not deal directly with theories neither will the concepts be included in the theoretical discussion as they are not considered relevant for the research question in hand.

While the issue of alienation and loneliness in Internet communities is significant in relation to the data collected for this research, online communication can also be looked upon from the perspective of gaming and avatar building. There exist a number of studies and theoretical papers which engage in the discussion about the role of online avatars, namely online personalities which people can acquire, control and change and which do not have to be related to their offline personality. In the article “Second Language Use, Socialization, and Learning in Internet Interest Communities and Online Gaming” the authors: Steven L. Thorne, Rebecca W. Black and Julie M. Sykes describe how individuals participate in the participation in virtual communities such as Second Life and Games in order to control the way their persona is presented and perceived (2009, 802) They says that “This discussion has argued that what occurs online, and often outside of instructed educational settings, involves extended periods of language socialization, adaptation, and creative semiotic work that illustrate vibrant communicative practices (816). Therefore their suggestion is that
gaming and avatar building allows for a different kind of interaction in which the online world is an alternative reality to the offline world.

The modern research related to media and communication as well as education uses the concept of ‘second life’ as a basis for understanding the functioning of online societies. Second Life as an online game was created in 2003 by Linden Lab. Its origins are related to the novel *Snow Crash*, published in 1992, which described “a virtual world where users could ‘digitize everything’ and collaborate in a 3D environment that would be built by the users themselves.” (Jennings 1992, 180) In the article “Virtual or Virtually U: Educational Institutions” Nancy Jennings and Chris Collins define ‘second life’ as a virtual world in which users create fake personalities (so-called ‘avatars’) in order to lead lives different (perfected and controlled) from the offline reality (1992, 180). The popularity of this belief is strongly connected to the growing popularity of technological developments as such and the increasing importance of “‘Net’ generation – those born around the time the first PC was introduced and who have grown up with technology” (184).

The concepts of ‘second life’, avatar and gaming will not be used during the theoretical discussion as they do not constitute appropriate tools when explaining the complexity of blogging world. While analyzing the structure and functioning of the Internet and in, particular online blogs, the conclusion seems inescapable that such second-life approach which would see bloggers as attaining their avatars and creating completely new identities, is limiting with its inability to provide multi-angled interpretation and capture the essence of offline/online relation.

The concept that has been mentioned in the previous chapter was virtual communities. Although, for the purpose of this research, blogging will be analyzed from the perspective of
an online communication rather than virtual community of bloggers, it is important to bear in mind the recent theoretical developments regarding virtual communities. Seeing Internet as a form of community is a popular view and prevails among many modern theorists coming from the scientific field of media and communication. Virtual communities, such as social networks, blogs and other communicative platforms, can serve as an illustration of how culture, technology and social communication can co-exist on commonly shared large online space. Despite being a relatively recent concept, the definition of virtual communities has already transformed over the years (Jankowski 2006, 55). At the beginning of 2000, the new phenomenon of virtual interaction and the subsequent appearance of Facebook caused many scholars to question the validity, and applicability of the concept of virtual communities (Bakardjieva, 2003, 292-293).

Virtual communities are defined as computer-based social networks whose role is to “link people as well as machines” (Wellman et.al., 1996:214). They reflect the processes of online socialization during which ideas, knowledge and experiences are exchanged (Bakardjieva, 2003, 291).

However, rather than treating blogs as virtual communities one can see them as illustrating online communication and relation between an individual and his or her audience. In other words, writing about dancing becomes a form of communication which has a specific role and specific way of functioning. While the sense of community is important for dance blogger it is the communication and objectification of dance that are of utmost importance for understanding the motivations behind blog writing.

Internet, in particular blogs and social networks like Facebook, can be seen as public arena of social interaction. A German sociologist, Jurgen Habermas, talks, in his theoretical work, about modern society in terms of public sphere. Habermas focuses on the degree to which the
public sphere is commercialized with the concepts of culture and society appearing predominantly as core notions (Habermas 1991, 236). He describes the issue of public and private sphere and attempts at discovering the forces behind the two spheres (1991, 172). Mass media and mass culture serve as tools to connect the two spheres. This phenomenon once more sums up the disintegration of the public sphere in the world of letters. (…) the public is split apart into minorities of specialists who put their reason to use nonpublicly and the great mass of consumers whose receptiveness is public but uncritical (175). According to Habermas, the mass culture is integrated with regard to information, critical assessments and discussions and journalism. It advises, entertains and advertises (175). In this sense, the public sphere serves as a political and economical tool (175).

In his other book, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Habermas describes the issue of identity formation via the power of words and language. He describes the ‘I’ as being dependent upon various cognitive assumptions and underlines that the identity is related to language and action-related skills as well as the ability to fulfill the requirement of consistency (Habermas 1991, 228).

Lofland, the author of the book *The Public Real: Exploring the City’s Quintessential Social Territory* offers another interesting perspective on the idea of society as a public sphere. The idea of interaction between individuals who are strangers to each other is new to sociology and is strongly connected to the definition of public realm. In this sense, human being act in a way that reveals shared interests, expectations and experiences which leads to a successful interaction. Through such interaction, despite no “personal relationships” being established among individuals, societies within the public sphere become interactive (Lofland 1998, 26). Values are being shared as well and norms are being created within public realm and the individuals agree to follow a pattern and which Lofland refers to as the “the principles of
stranger interaction.” (1998, 27). She makes also an extensive reference to Goffman by saying that, in public realm, it is the audience that plays a prominent role in the interaction. The audience in this sense is often described in Goffmanian terms as being ‘inattentive’, that is observing without being necessarily interested personally. In accordance with Lofland’s statement: “inhabitants of the public realm act primarily as audience to the activities that surround them (1998, 31).

These theories, although tempting and seemingly applicable, when attempting at comprehending the phenomenon of blogging and most recently, social networking, do not explain how the offline and online correlate and influence each other. Rather than seeing bloggers as consumers of public culture Luhmann’s theory allows for more open interpretation. In conjunction with his theory and opposing Habermas’ public sphere theory, one can see online activity as a continuation of the offline life, a sort of step-ahead. Luhmann’s concept of doubling of reality suggests that, by using the mass media one can observe the reality, communicate it and, to some extent, ensure its continuation.

Finally, as regard dance theory, Davis mentions that dance, being an organized and a highly interactive medium, can influence other forms of social life and thus, the structure, regularity and organization of a dance can be applied when analyzing the nonverbal communication occurring during regular conversations (Davis 1973, 24).

Michelle Garcia Winner writes in the online article “The Social Communication Dance: The Four Steps of Communication” that the issue of mind and body coordination is used in communication in order to teach how to communicate while interpreting the behaviour and attitudes of the others (accessed on April 16, 2012).

In case of children with learning difficulties such ability has to be taught from the beginning. A way to do it is to use the “dance” technique, which compares the process of communication
learning to learning steps in the dance. As if in dancing “mind, body, eyes and language” play an important role in the process of successful communication. As a social activity, communication, similarly to dance requires the ability to interpret the same aspects in another person, that is being to understand people’s emotions, opinions, adjust the body language and eye-contact as well as use the language in relation to others. Winner ends her article with the statement: “communication is more than words.”

In a similar manner, Gina Lawrie describes in her short paper “Dance Your Way to Emphatic Dialogue: Nonviolent Communication” how the term “Nonviolent Communication” (NVC) refers to the ability to establish a dialogue with other people that is filled with mutual understanding and respect (accessed on April 16, 2012). Dance vocabulary is used in the learning processes, such as NVC dance floors made up of cards and card layouts which Lawrie calls dances. Dances themselves, are therefore, different forms of dialogues with another person. Such dance, as Lawrie says, “guides a person through a deep inner process, in relation to something that is painful, or something that is joyful.”

Finally, Cathy Harris elaborates on the same idea in the text “The Dance of Communication.” The article compares dancing to effective conversation, implying that in both cases authenticity, understood as “the honest search for understanding”. In other words, to successfully communicate one is required to acquire the ability to listen with understanding and empathy as well as learn from experience (accessed on April 16, 2012). Therefore, a successful communication can be seen as learning the steps in dancing.

Rhythm and timing are also crucial - as it is in dancing - and one of the requirements when conversing with another person is to understand the meaning and feelings behind the words, to recognize their own rhythm. In addition the idea of timing can be applied to the art of communication when we learn when to start the communication and what response to expect.
from other person. As it is with dancing, practice is required to master the skill of communication. The metaphor of dance as a symbol of communication is therefore very effective.

The aforementioned theories, showing how the metaphor of dance can be used to enhance communication as such, clearly illustrate the extensive role that dance plays in the process of nonverbal communication. Nevertheless, the present research deals with dance blogging as an activity rather than metaphorical dancing and, therefore, dance’s more direct role a medium in nonverbal communication forms the theoretical perspective. Using dance as a metaphor, however, demonstrates the versatility of dance’s role and the importance of the emotions felt and expressed during the dance.

To conclude, the large amount of theories investigating the concepts of communication and dance and communication and Internet prove that the issue is complex and requires further research. Due to specific and focused nature of the research questions some of the aforementioned perspectives were found to be inapplicable. Nonetheless, they provide a wide and multi-angled view with regard to interpretation of modern social phenomena and may prove valid if the research was to be developed further.
CHAPTER 5

Research design
The present chapter will be devoted to the issue of methodology. The research object will be further described in detail while the method of data collection and data analysis will be presented and explained.

**Research object:**

The times have changed together with the rapid changes in technology. Social networking has taken over the world of communication and nowadays even dancing has left the confinements of school buildings, stages and training rooms. Dance has moved online. Dance-devoted websites are numerous and dance blogs have become more and more prominent. One of the popular websites related to dancing is DanceBloggers (http://www.dancebloggers.com), whose creators describe their project as “a central hub for people who blog about dance in English. The site aims at helping dance bloggers connect by sharing, following and interacting with the dance blogosphere; to “allow people interested in dance and blogging to learn more about the field” (http://www.dancebloggers.com/about/). The data presented on the website demonstrates interesting insight into the versatility and activity of dance communities. While connecting blogs from all over the world (the only specification being that they have to be written in English), DanceBloggers enables dancers and dance admirers to connect with each other, find a common forum and share their interests. The website is also connected to Facebook which, due to its multi-way interactive applications allows the bloggers and other members to communicate even more effectively.

DanceBloggers estimates an approximate number of 351 contributors (dance bloggers) listed on the website and around 1000 members registered via Facebook with the visit rate on the website exceeding twelve thousand. Those figures only refer to the official records of the website. The actual number of blogs is much larger and much harder to estimate.
Swedish dance blogs, although not included on the DanceBloggers website, constitute also a significant part of the blogging tradition in Sweden. The structure and the organization of the dance community as such is managed by the Swedish Dancesport Federation which, aside from managing Swedish professional dancing scene, is also an administrative body for a large number of dance clubs. The organization, via its website, gives an opportunity to connect dance hobbyists and dance professionals, offers trainings, organizes events and provides a platform for communication. An interesting example is also set by the Swedish online magazine 5678 which is devoted to dancing and which gathers a number of dance bloggers who contribute to the page’s content on everyday basis:  http://www.5678.se/dans-blogg/.

Another example of such organization is The Voice of Street Dance which comprises a dance school and a dance-devoted organization and boasts to be the first dance blogging website in Sweden (http://www.thevoicestreetdance.se/sv/voice/blogg)

There is also a significant amount of dancers in Sweden who are not a part of a large dance school or other organization online but who wish to express their emotions and passion for dance in a form of a blog. Although the exact figures are difficult to obtain, there is a visible trend among people interested in dancing to connect via social media, in particular via dance blogs. Similarly to the blogs registered within DanceBloggers website, Swedish blogs are either written by professional dancers and official schools or individuals whose hobby is dancing.

Therefore, the research object comprises dance blogs and the communication occurring between dance bloggers and their audience (as compared to the nonverbal communication between dancers in the offline world.) Theoretical material and the background data included in the previous chapters serve as a tool to place the discussed issue into the contextual environment of dance research and sociological thinking. The core of the paper is, however, a research among dancers who actively participate in the online community via their blogs.
Therefore, the in-depth interviews with the bloggers are the focus of the data collection process.

The analysis of the dance related theories suggests that the relationship between the offline communication through dance and the verbal communication trough dance blogs is strong and interdependent. Thus, it is possible to formulate the hypothesis and use it when forming the interview questions as well as approach the collected data.

The data from the dance blogs website provides a certain background necessary for defining the trends within the online dance communities, in particular with regard to how dance blogs influence the communication among professional and amateur dancers and what type of content is the most prominent.

The assumption that verbal signs are complimentary to transitory nonverbal communication codes constitutes the basis for the research process. While there is no denying the predominance of kinesthetic interaction during dancing, the content analysis of the available blogs (with the focus not only on the actual text but also pictures and style of writing) attempted at extending the knowledge about the motivations behind blog writing. Moreover, the interviews with the selected group of dance bloggers serve as a source of knowledge with regard to motivations and any other visible behavioral patterns. Thus, the conclusions drawn in the process of data analysis can either confirm or challenge the hypothesis claiming that the increasing significance of dance blogs is a reflection of the growing need of individual dancers to objectify the experience and enhance the communication.

The object of the research are dance bloggers and their activity offline and online. Therefore, in order to test the hypothesis and answer the research question, the sampling process was initiated (Bryman 2004: 335). Creating a sample among dance bloggers implied that the characteristics of the group had to be specified. The investigated group comprised, thus,
dancers who, at the same time, were authors of their own blogs. Age, nationality and
profession of a dance blogger were not the object of the research with the stress being put on
blogging experience. Moreover, due to the international nature of Internet and online
communication, country of living was not taken into consideration either. Instead the focus
was on discovering who people writing the blogs are, how often they write and what is their
focus of interest as well as their relationship with the readers of their blogs.

**Research design**

In the initial stage, four methods were selected: questionnaires, e-mail interviews, face-to-face
interviews and online phone interviews (through Skype). The pilot study was conducted on
the sample of 100 blogs in order to test the methods and the result demonstrated that Skype
and e-mail interviewing would prove the most applicable, valid and successful method.
During the sampling process, it became obvious that twelve dance bloggers showed a high
level of involvement into the research process and committed themselves to participation in
the data collection.

Thus, following the pilot study and based on the response received after it had been conducted
a **qualitative method** of data collection was chosen.

Thus, the chosen method comprised **twelve** in-depth interviews with dance bloggers who
responded positively to the pilot test and expressed their wish to participate in the research.
Qualitative method of data collection, in particular interviews, provides the researcher with
appropriate tools to formulate and conduct a seemingly unstructured and ‘natural’
conversation in order to “grasp people’s point of view.” (Legard 2003:, 138). Through such
method, the researcher is able to access the data regarding the researched social phenomenon
by focusing on personal stories, attitudes and emotions of interviewed individuals (138). The
interviewer works in the conditions which allow him to analyze the situation from different
angles while the respondents are able discuss issues which they consider to be “relevant and important.” (Bryman 2004, 319-320)

In-depth interviewing, as a form of qualitative data collection method, can also prove significant and useful when emotions and attitudes are to be investigated, which is an aspect applicable when focusing on the emotional expressiveness of dance communication. As Bryman says interviewing serves as a tool to both probe and prompt the issues that one finds interesting (2004:321). Such approach to the researched material secures room for unexpected results, further explanations and unique responses on the part of the interviewee which may be found crucial for the study’s final conclusions.

Designing the present research requires, above all, taking control over a number of factors. Those factors proved important both during the sampling process and data collection process. First of all, verbal, online communication related to dance is a topic relatively unexplored both in dance and communication theory. This, of course, imposes natural restrictions. Thus, theoretical background had to be complex and derived from different sources as no single theory proved sufficient when explaining the results. Secondly, the selection process, when applied to the variety of issues related to communication theory, constituted a challenge, a research problem mentioned by Seidman in his book Interviewing as Qualitative Research (1998, 22-27).

Moreover, the three issues, significant for the research’ success, namely reliability, validity, reliability and applicability (in other words ability to generalize from the provided results) research were constantly present both during the preparation of questions and during the interview process (Seidman 1998, 17). That meant that the research design had to be specific enough to provide answers to the intended and planned questions and flexible enough to allow for unexpected results. The task which proved to be of greatest importance was to create a
logical link between the objective of the research, the hypothesis (regardless of whether such was proven or not) and the actual results. Reliability was secured by controlling if the method for analysis was consistent with the method for data collection, namely if the method used served the purpose which was intended by the interviewer.

With regard to the aforementioned requirements a number of challenges had to faced, such as choosing the number of interviews, the type and amount of questions asked, the time-limitations with regard to the number of blogs observed and analyzed for their content and other possible limitations which could affect the study.

Data collection process: preparation and conduction

As mentioned above, data was to be collected via content analysis of a number of dance blogs and via interviews with dance bloggers. Thirty most active blogs were chosen and their content underwent thorough analysis. The criteria for the selection included the frequency of the blogger’s writing, the activity on the part of blog’s followers and the length and versatility of the actual posts. Thus, the thirty selected blogs were versatile enough to provide a multi-angled material for analysis.

After selecting the method, all potential respondents were emailed beforehand to ensure time efficiency and arrange interviews. E-mailing respondents in advance can contribute greatly to the level of response rate in accordance with Bryman’s method described in his book Social Research Methods (2004, 333-335). E-mails were sent to fourteen bloggers registered with the website Dance Blogger and Sveriges Danstadning 5678. The email included an introduction of the researcher as well as short summary of the research goal. The research design assumed between 10-14 interviews. Based on the number of responses received and on the willingness of the blogger to participate in the research, it became possible to conduct twelve in-depth interviews. Only bloggers who received the initial email did not respond. Of
this group, all twelve were able to confirm their attendance and arrange an interview at the convenient time both for the blogger and for the researcher. Over a period of time given for a research twelve interviews proved a manageable and sufficient number. As mentioned before, factors such as age of the respondent, sex and nationality were not taken into consideration when choosing the samples, although the ability to speak English or Swedish was required. The selected sample included both men and women (in relation 4 to 8) and of three different nationalities: Swedish, American and Australian. While it was required that all of the respondents were dance bloggers it was not considered significant if they were professionals or amateurs and if their website was of more business or private nature. As a result of such flexibility with regard to sampling requirement, it was possible to find a large number of cases fitting the required group description.

It was of utmost importance to ensure that the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent was sufficiently distant. This was done to make sure that personal influence personal influence or any other form of bias on the part of the interviewer was limited to the minimum degree as required by the type of the research (Legard 2003:143). Such proved no obstacle however, as all of the bloggers were living in a considerable distance from the respondent and none of them was even slightly familiar to the researcher. The geographical distance proved problematic however, as arranging face-to-face interviews turned out to be impossible (which was already tested during the pilot study). As an alternative Skype was suggested, namely a computer programme which allows for, technologically advanced, phone-based conversation between two computers which include visualization via video. The programme allows also for recording of the conversation which facilitated transcribing the interviews. Concluding, the respondents were chosen based on their suitability (in relation to the group requirements), access to computer (to use Skype and e-mails) as well as their ability to schedule an appointment for an interview. It was important to make sure that all the
respondents were able to arrange an interview (Legard 2003, 143).

However, in case of four respondents both time limitations and technical difficulties posed a challenge and an interview via email was suggested instead. There are obvious disadvantages of such method, such as a lack of interaction between the respondent and the researcher and the lack of immediacy in the responses. To counteract to the degree possible all the negative implications of the method, two criteria had to be fulfilled. First of all, the time given to answer the questions was short to provide the impression of immediacy. Moreover, it was ensured that the follow-up questions were allowed. Therefore, when required, the researcher was able to ask additional questions relevant to the answers given during the first interview.

Firstly, six interviews were conducted, followed by an initial analysis. Such analysis allowed the researcher to determine a number of recurring motifs and concepts such as: “unique emotions”, “willingness to share” and “readers vs. viewers”. With the help of this initial coding, six more interviews were arranged and it became of importance to control if those concepts would repeat themselves and form more general categories. Various angles and aspects of the subject were taken into consideration when designing the research and constructing the interviews in order to explore different experiences and situations with regard to dancing and blogging (for example, if the blog was a part of a professional career, if other media such as videos and pictures were included, etc).

Finally, twelve interviews were completed and another analyzing process was performed to see which patterns and concepts were conspicuous. Patterns were then categorized into larger conceptual groups. For example conceptual patterns such as “feeling happy”, “social life through dancing” and “close to other people” were grouped into categories such as: “codes used in dancing”, “codes used when blogging”, “relation to the audience”, “emotions”, “motivations” That process enabled to see that a certain theoretical saturation was achieved
within interviewed group, namely it was decided that research, as based on the data collected and analyzed was relevant, valid and reliable (Bryman 2004, 334).

All of the respondents were chose to answer in English and all of them spoke the language fluently. Six of them were native speakers of English. As mentioned before the age and gender did not play a role when sampling the cases but all of the interviewees’ age varied from twenty to fifty eight and both men are women were interviewed which secured that the sample was varied. When forming the interview guidelines it was of utmost importance to ensure that the questions related to researcher’s own experience at blogging and dancing, as a way of stimulating the respondents interest in the topic: “Researchers need to establish their credibility with participants by asking relevant questions which are seen as meaningful by the participant and which are based on an understanding of the research subject” (Legard 2003, 143).

**Interviewing: advantages and disadvantages**

During the Skype interviews an attempt was made to remain objective by avoiding, at all costs, leading questions or openly disagreeing with the answers given (Legard 2003, 159). In the interviewing process it is of utmost important to formulate an interview guideline that is structured and focused with consideration taken to the ethical issues (Legard 2003, 60). An attempt was made to choose questions which were clearly formulated, objective and relevant to the research question. Yes/No questions were avoided at all cost (Legard 2003,155). All of the Skype interviews were audio-recorded using Skype recording system. After recording of all Skype interviews the transcripts were made, (a process taking around two weeks and). In case of email interviews, all the answers were gathered and put into one file.

To ensure the aforementioned model of unstructured interviewing (an aspect which had to be re-considered during email interviews) the interview did not contain a definite number of
questions. Nevertheless, to make sure that major theoretical concepts were covered by the interview an interview guideline was prepared including a set of question-like prompts (Bryman 2004, 320-321). The concepts which were of interest in the interview guide were: verbal and nonverbal communication, dancing experience and blogging activity, offline and online communication, audience, emotions and motivations. Such semi-structured interview guide gave the researcher an opportunity to probe and elaborate on interesting issues in order to gain an insight in the experience and understanding of an individual blogger (Bryman 2004, 324-325). Two types of questions were used during the interviews, in accordance with Legard’s typology. First of all, the so-called “content mapping questions” were asked in order to raise new issues that have not been mentioned. A second type of questions, namely “content mining questions,” was aimed at exploring the issues in more detail. (Legard 2003,148). All of the questions had an open form to ensure longer answers, in particular in relation to communication and online communication. Some of the questions used in the interview, however, were aimed at introducing or establishing the background of the dancer, his or her working, dancing and blogging experience, etc. (Bryman 2004, 327). This was done not only to see if certain patterns in their personal and professional lives do occur among dancers who choose to write their blogs but also to establish a closer contact with them. It was impossible to fully control the order laid out in the interview guides as the respondents would often mention numerous issues at the same time. This required concentration on the part of the researcher to avoid repetitions and to encourage the respondents to add more depth to their answers if such was required (Bryman 2004, 332). The guideline underwent constant transformations (such as changing the order of the issues mentioned or adding additional questions), as a result of the interviews, to improve the access to the data and adjust the questions to the particular bloggers.

**Method of data analysis**
Qualitative method of data collection brought about the need to select a suitable method of analysis (Gilbert 2008, 350). Content analysis method was, therefore, chosen. With a support of the observation notes, each and every interview was transcribed and analyzed in order to capture, highlight and select the most prominent patterns. Aspects such as the ability to speak English fluently, use of formal vs. informal register and inclusion of nonverbal sings (hesitations, repetitions and nervous ticks) were not considered relevant for the research and were, therefore, not taken into account, with the focus being on the content of the actual responses.

Next step involved gathering all the data, ordering it and breaking it into groups in order to find and determine most evident concepts mentioned during the interviews (Bryman 2004, 403). A number of concepts have already been mentioned. Some of them, such as ‘offline communication’ and ‘online communication’ were contrasted with each other; others such as ‘physical contact with dance partner’ and ‘enhancing human contact’ were grouped together under one label: ‘nonverbal interaction’. Similar process was performed as regards concepts including ‘performance’ ‘work’, ‘artistic expression’ and ‘control’ which were included in the category ‘motivations’. Concepts such as ‘readers’, ‘viewers’, ‘commentators’ formed a group called ‘the audience’. This process allows the research to narrow down the findings into most prominent, ‘core’ concepts (Bryman 2004, 403) and form arguments which can be used to answer the research question and connect the findings with the theory as well as the stated hypothesis. (Bryman 2004, 402-405).

In order to ensure validity and reliability of the, it is of utmost importance to relate the findings to the theories mentioned in the previous chapter (Legard 2003, 272-275). Such theoretical discussion is conducted in the following chapter.

**Ethical aspects**
The research took into consideration the ethical aspect of data collection and, therefore, the anonymity of the respondents was ensured. This was done in accordance with the regulations stipulated by the Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet): “Ethical aspects are especially important in research, since research has a major impact on society in the long term.” (http://www.vr.se/inenglish/ethics.4.69f66a93108e85f68d48000116.html). Other laws regarding research on humans are included in The Act concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (2003:460) and the Statute (2003:615) concerning the Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans;

First of all, it was considered significant to form a relationship of confidence, security and understanding with the respondents. Such could be done by ensuring that the interviews were scheduled at times which were suitable for the interviewed bloggers and that the questions were not intrusive or leading (Seidman 1998, 13-14). Prior to conducting the interviews, all bloggers received information regarding the estimated length of the interview. This was beneficial for both the researcher and the respondents as it allowed for a better control of interview and, at the same time, ensured that the interviewees had knowledge of how long they were to be interviewed for. All respondents were aware of the topic of the dissertation and the aim of the research, thus, preventing any intentional misguidance or misuse of data on the part on the part of the research.

Other ethical issues significant in the data collection process included anonymity and confidentiality. Therefore, it proved extremely important to assure the respondents that their names will not be mentioned to anyone other than the researcher. As the nature of the research did not require revealing detailed information about the bloggers’ lives, it was possible for them to remain anonymous and neither of the respondents was “harmed or damaged in any way by the research” (Grey, 2005, 235).
In cases when the subject of nonverbal codes (questions regarding body language and physical contact) touched upon the matters reserved for personal life (see: Levin I and J. Trost, 1992, 348) it became crucial to ensure that high level of confidentiality was secured and no pressure was imposed on the respondent. Regardless of interviews’ role in providing provide in-depth information in relation to the researched issue it is extremely crucial to bear consider personal feelings of the respondents and control their reactions (Grey, 2005, 228). For this reason, when the interviewee found the question difficult to answer, the question was simply rephrased.
CHAPTER 6

Theoretical discussion
This chapter summarizes the results collected via observations and interviews and attempts at categorizing them, structuring them and providing some final conclusions. The material is organized in two ways. The first step provides a data from the observation notes and interview notes as split into two separate groups of results. Next step comprises the results as organized according to the most visible categories. The choice of each category is explained and supported by direct quotes from the interviews and observations of the blogs. Finally, a summary is made, which gathers all the results and initial conclusions and in order to answer the research questions, namely who dancers communicate.

**Observing the blogs**

In the previous chapter the process of collecting data via observations of blog contents was explained in detail. As mentioned before, the selected sample comprised thirty profiles, all of which demonstrated high activity (both on the part of the author and the readers, so-called “followers”). Ensuring that the requirement for frequency of blog posts - as regards how often the texts were posted, how long they were, how many comments they acquired – was fulfilled provided the researcher with the research material versatile and rich enough to draw applicable conclusions.

After six weeks of observations it became obvious that certain characteristics and patterns became apparent. First of all, the majority of the dance blogs extended their content beyond the subject of dance in order to include elements such as private life, opinions about society, aesthetic impressions and references to art and nature. Based only on that initial observation, it was possible to establish that online communication included a complex array of codes and references and that the communicative goal went beyond the kinesthetic interaction and expression of emotions.
Story-telling technique has been a predominant in the way blogs are constructed. Their aim seems to be to describe the experience of dancing in the most encouraging and understandable way. Therefore, the audience is constantly present in the way posts are constructed. There are numerous references to the readers, in the form of direct phrases and formulations such as “you remember”, “to show you”, “if you experienced”.

Specific characteristics of the audience were determined. First and foremost, the posts are directed at the general audience which is not specified and which usually comprises both the followers and other users of the Internet. Such audience is not easily definable as the readers of blogs do not inform, in most cases, about their profession, education or social status nor do they reveal in their comments any specification in relation to their interests and hobbies.

By contrast, the most visible and common characteristic of the readers is their focused interest on the dancing culture. A high level of communication with the blog followers can be noticed on the dance blogs. In case of dance blogs, the similarity of interests seems to play an important role and there is a constant interaction within the blogging community.

Another significant observation made relates to the use of other media on the blogs. Photos are common as well as videos and pictures. In many cases, other media prevail upon the written text. Almost every post is supported with photos and pictures and often the decorative style of font and the way in which the text is organized visually on the website plays an important role as well. Artistic expression appears, therefore, to be extremely significant in the process of writing regardless of the topic touched upon in the post (ref).

In addition, visual signs such as so-called ‘emoticons’ which are commonly used in online interaction to substitute nonverbal facial or body movement are also present in dance blogs (Derks 2007, 842). The examples are hearts (indicating love/affection towards something or someone), happy or sad ‘face’, winking ‘face’ and even visual sing indicating dancing.
Similarly to other forms Internet communication, those signs serve the purpose of communicating emotions and attitudes which are usually limited to nonverbal interaction.

Finally, the actual content of the posts constitutes an interesting research material. The topics range from writing about types of dancing, describing the dance-related events and stories about dance history as well as anecdotes from the blogger’s personal life. The lack of specific profiling as regard the theme of the posts demonstrates the versatility of the communication occurring on the blogs.

Dancing is the most prominent subject of interest and describing the experience seems to be the main challenge among the bloggers. Whether it is the personal experience and individual feelings when dancing or emotions felt when observing an act of dancing, the attempt is made at verbal presentation of such impression. One of the bloggers describes the dance she observed as “clenched fists open into flexed palms (…) Their arms reach into all directions and intertwine until their torso’s thrust into convulsions.” In another article the blogger describes dancers as they “tumble to the floor and bound again to their tip toes, their breathing is labored but the execution is fierce” (http://readingthedance.wordpress.com/).

The name of the aforementioned blog is Reading the Dance which seems an appropriate phrase to summarize the way dance bloggers attempt at grasping the essence of dancing into words. Another interesting example is presented in the blog The Real Life of a Dancer (http://reallifeofadancer.blogspot.se/) in which the author, in one of the blogs, compares the experience of dancing to rain. Comparisons with weather and nature allow for the visualization and evoke imagination in the minds of the readers.

To conclude the observations, there is no escaping the fact that both the textual and visual media used in dance blogging appears to serve a specific purpose of creating images. Despite the seemingly limiting abilities of the language at describing the physical activities, the
dancers seem to succeed in doing so. Therefore, one of the methods they use is writing in the way as if they were dancing, by describing the movements, the body language and even the spatial relation between the dancers.

Using landscape and other elements of aesthetic imaginary is another interesting way to transfer the physical into the world of online blogging as the reader is able to relate and visualize the image which he or she would normally be able to observe in the offline world. It seems that the language allows for the experience to become richer and more complex.

At the same time, it becomes clear that verbal codes do not suffice when writing about dance. Despite the ability of the language to convey the movement, to describe the kinesthetic, proxemics and even haptics images, those codes cannot be completely replaced (Peick 2005, 2). Hence, the attempt is made by the bloggers to include the visualizations into their blog writing. Pictures and videos help with presenting the dance, while artistic tools such as font style or decorative elements of the website serve as an illustration for the dancer’s inner personality and emotions. Thus, the expression, which is the essence of dancing, is transferred into the world of dancing.

The findings from the observations played an important role when preparing the guidelines for interviewing. Some of the most conspicuous categories became apparent and, thus the researcher felt it necessary to include them in the interview guide

**Between dancing and blogging**

Following the observations the interviews were conducted with twelve dance bloggers. The data collected via interviews brought about many interesting issues, some of them confirming the theoretical assumptions and some of them bringing a new light to the matter.
The collected data was divided into two groups. The first group comprised answers related to the respondent’s experience as a dancer. The second category included the information regarding the individual’s blogging activity. This was done in order to compare the information from the two groups and find the similarities and differences between the two types of communication. It was assumed that the first category was characterized by high level of immediacy as regards the emotions and attitudes to dancing and the audience and as the responses were based on personal experiences of being a dance blogger. The latter, due to the nature of respondent’s position in relation to the blogging community and the lack of immediacy in relation to the written communication contained a more general and distant approach to the researched matter. Therefore, the major reason behind such grouping of the findings was to capture if the difference in circumstances and relation to communication is influenced by the offline and online interaction.

Once the data was ordered the next step was to analyze it. Each case involved building certain concepts in order to see if a certain pattern repeats itself. Both the similarities and differences in the way dancers responded to questions became visible.

**Theoretical discussion**

First and foremost, it became apparent that the respondents, when talking about their experiences as dancers followed a certain pattern despite differences in age, experience and current situation. The goal of that research was researching the relationship between dancing and blogging and one of the recurrent motifs which became visible was seeing dance as a major aspect of one’s life.

As regards all the interviewed dancers, their responses demonstrated that dance plays a significant role, culturally, socially and even economically. Secondly, all the respondents, after starting their blogs (for some the starting point was earlier than for others) experienced
an immediate and noticeable change in their way of thinking about dance and thinking about
the audience. Moreover, all respondents mentioned that blogging caused them to feel more
open and communicative. Finally, dance bloggers, during their interviews, expressed their
opinion about the advantages and disadvantages of blogging.

Therefore there was no escaping the fact that the findings could be summarized into the
following categories: *blogging as expression of emotions, the motivations behind blogging,
the role of dance as communication and the connection with the audience.* Such
categorization was necessary for two reasons. First of all, it helped to generalize from the
findings and confirm the validity of the research. Secondly, it enabled to analyze the material
from the ‘conceptual’ point of view, and therefore, establish a connection between the data
and the theoretical context, explained in chapter 2.

*Blogs as expression of emotions*

The difference between the online and offline realities, in particular as regards the expression
of emotions has been focused upon during the interviews. The online/offline can be applied to
communication, to expression of emotions and attitudes towards other members of the group.

Despite its physical nature dance can be analyzed as an activity which is of social
significance, enhancing interaction between individuals. When analyzing dancing from the
social perspective, namely seeing dancing as a socializing tool, the idea of bodily interaction
becomes significant. Dance is about individuals exchanging a social experience that is
charged with emotions (Arnold 1995, 62). In this way their physical interaction becomes also
a communicative tool, used to express certain states of mind, feelings and also attitude
towards each other.
The situation changes to some extent when the interaction is moved to the level of online blogging. Traditional perspective on online interaction sees the increased use of Internet-based social networks like Facebook and blogs as a sign of emotional deprivation and social loneliness (Jankowski 2006, 58). Therefore, in accordance with this line of thinking, blogging could be seen as an attempt at “making up for” the lack of social interaction and increased emotional alienation.

However, bloggers, through their writing and in the way they talked about blogging during the interviews demonstrate confidence in their social interaction skills and passion about what they do. Such emotional approach to the theme of dancing is of particular interest, as it is the words, rather than physical movements, that are used as a form of expression.

Talking about dancing enables the bloggers to express themselves and their interest and send it as a message it to other people. In this sense, blogging acquires a strong communicative value and enhances the process of socialization.

Theory of emotions is, therefore, of utmost importance, both with regard to blogging as an online form and dancing as a hobby (Derks 2007, 843). Those emotions become universal as they are verbalized and visualized through the use of pictures and videos posted together with the text. The audience can relate to those emotions and communicate them back.

Despite their knowledge-extending value, dance blogs are not strictly devoted to teaching and learning process. The aforementioned passion for dancing can be more understood as a way of extending the process of emotion expression – bloggers write about their hobby with the same level of engagement as one would imagine them to dance. There is high level of communication not only between the users – in this context other dancers, other bloggers and just readers but also communication between the offline and the offline experience.
In other words dancing which is a physical and social interaction becomes a communication:
The latter statement becomes particularly applicable when looking at the content of the blogs.
As mentioned above, the bloggers write as if they were dancing – they write about their experience and their emotions.

Similarly, with reference to dance bloggers, self-expression which is reflected in the bodily competence and confidence is translated in the competence of the mind and externalized. They use words to explain their bodily competence and expression to institutionalize the artistic sphere. Written texts are used to describe the experience serves as a means to institutionalize the dance and objectify and legitimize the functioning of dance as an art form, a form of reality.

**The motivations behind blogging:**

The first pattern visible when analyzing the responses referring to the way dancers approached the question concerning the role of dancing in their lives. First of all, they all claimed that dancing seemed to go beyond mere professional work, physical training or even hobby. Such an attitude to dancing can be related to the theory which Hannah Arendt presented in her book: *The Human Condition*, in particular the distinction between the labour and work (Pitkin 1998). As mentioned in the theoretical chapter, Arendt sees labour as a part of the active life. Labour, is thus, seen as a repetitive action which is required in order to provide and maintain the basic elements of living such as food and accommodation. It is often associated with core, biological needs (Pitkin 1998). Such focus on necessity of life activities is contrasted with which work which is characterized by the focus on product rather than on the sustainable activity.

If applied to the present research, dance could be seen as work, not labour, as all of the respondents did not see their activity as necessity but rather as something whose aim is to
produce beauty and emotional response in the audience. The aim of dancing is, thus, to produce. This goal which agrees with Arendt’s definition of work as an activity with a visible, permanent whose results remain with the person. None of the respondents named dance as an obligation and instead “passion”, “life work” and “something I always knew I wanted to do” were used to describe the experience. Therefore, a strong connection with dance, seen as a product of work, rather than labour, indicates how meaningful the activity is for the dancers and how important it is to demonstrate that meaning to others, an objective which can be achieved via blogging.

At the same time, the responses suggested that Arendt’s distinction between labour and work can be also applied to the issue of offline and online dancing. In other words, the responses suggested that the main advantage of blogging is the ability to prolong the experience. Underlying the enduring quality of a written production can imply also that dancing in a physical sense, although producing a visual image is not permanent. Its fragility and transitory nature suggests that the relationship between the dancer and his or her product, namely the dance, is not, in fact strong. In this sense also, blogging can be seen as an attempt to prolong the feeling of dancing and to capture and objectify the dance. Applying Arendt’s theory, the dance in the offline reality is seen as labour because the dancer does not have an access to the product. The durability of the experience is secured trough writing and thus, labour becomes work.

Hence, during the interviews, it became apparent that blogging was used as a way to prolong the experience of dancing. In case of one respondent the reason affecting the willingness to write about dancing was to encourage more people to start dancing salsa and one of the respondents openly used blogging to meet other dancers and share views with them. In case of all respondents the will to capture the essence of dancing shaped their activity on blogs.
The ability to objectify the predominately subjective experience can also serve as a demonstration of the motivations behind blogging. Dancing, as mentioned in chapter 1 is an expression of emotions, a highly individualistic performance and a subjective experience (Davis 1973, 22). Therefore, its nature is, by all means, transitory. Although dance can be observed, watched and even recorded, the actual experience lasts only during the time it is performed. This can create a feeling in which dancers feel separated from their own dance, their own performance and attempt at capturing the experience through other means.

Similar statement can be made in relation to the theory of social psychologist, Georg Simmel, who, in his work sees the pursue for objectification as an essence of one’s existence. In the process of cultural production, subjective perception of reality and values requires an objectification in order to provide its duration (Simmel 1971, 231). Dancing as an expression of emotion is a highly subjective activity, a presupposition confirmed through the responses of the interviewed dancers.

While dance is an aesthetic experience for both the dancer and the audience, the ability to read the dance and communicate the essence of dancing becomes dependant on the subjective interpretations of individual people: “Dancing is beautiful; it’s like an image you paint with the movements you make.”

Aesthetic pleasure is, according to one of the respondents, a prominent feature of the viewing process. In order to make dance into a medium in communication process, dancers resort to writing, that is to using verbal codes of language in order to tell the story of dancing. Dance becomes an object of affection through the power of language and, as a result, it becomes relatable and objective in terms of values and emotional layering. Dance blogging enables the response to be more controllable as objectivism entails that the emotions expressed through dancing and the dance itself becomes more accessible and more “tangible”. This means that a
written text which tells the story of a dance becomes a part of an objective cultural world, an object that can be admired for its aesthetic, social and cultural values in the same or similar way by everybody regardless of the individual’s social or economical background, on the individual’s knowledge about dancing or level of aesthetic sensitivity.

Simmel’s theory of cultural dualism provides an extensive set of tools, necessary for understanding the various aspects of the objective and subjective world. The difference between the subjective perceptions of the objective reality can be applied to the process in which dance bloggers externalize their objective experience of dance and subjectify it through their blogs. This in turns creates a perfected and cultivated subjective reality which is passed on to other members of the group, to the audience.

It can be also related to the issue of concentrated labour and human action. Dancers, through their concentrated effort and through their use the online measures as well as their active approach to the dancing as a form of art enables self-development of the subject, enhances the communication and increases the productivity. Moreover, such subjectified reality of dance culture becomes cultivated and objectified again via the communication with the audience.

Similarly, when applying Marx’ conceptualization to the theory of dancing and blogging the correlation seems undeniable (McLellan 2000, 85). Dancer may feel alienated from the product of his or her labour due to the temporary nature of the performance. Although nonverbal communication is extremely powerful, in its core it is elusive. Verbal codes of a written language allow the dancers to grasp the emotions and store the value of experience. Thus, blogging can be seen as an activity aimed at capturing the essence of dancing. The communication occurring face-to-face with the exclusive use of only nonverbal codes becomes insufficient and the written text and the language serve as a complimentary tool in
the communicative process. To prevent the feeling of alienation, the bloggers write about their feelings and reactions during the dancing process and are, thus, able to prolong the experience and make it more permanent.

While it has already been established that creating the meaning and connecting with the audience seemed to be a predominant factor behind a decision to start blogging, the findings showed that all of the interviewed dancers found blogging to be an important part of their lives. The online reality of blogging has become, therefore, as important as the offline: “I come back from work and I just sit in front of the computer and write. It is like addiction. If I saw something amazing during the day I write about it. If I have an idea about a movement I want to include in my dance routine I write about. If something inspires me I want to share it. That is what my blog is for. So I can talk about things that are important to me.

The aforementioned quote demonstrates that blogging does not replace the private life of a dancer, nor is it a form of alternative reality. On the contrary, blogging ensures a sort of prolongation of the offline reality as it extends and captures the experience and, through wider contact with the audience, provides constant exchange of ideas and the ability to communicate.

It goes without saying, thus, that blogging is a reflection of the dancer’s need to grasp the essence of their hobby, profession, their offline life. Their way of writing about dance as if telling the story and describing it by using poetic and descriptive language are all clear illustration of the way in which dancers use blogs to transfer the strictly subjective experience into the objective world, in this case the world of online blogging.

The goal is, therefore, to create the meaning, draw a mental picture and evoke an image. Indeed, it is imagination that plays an important role in the communication process that occurs online. One of the methods used to achieve such objective is using language to tell the story
of the events, emotions and experiences. Mental pictures are created with the use of words and comparisons are made relating to the aesthetic, cultural and artistic knowledge and sensitivity of an individual. Thus, blogging about dancing and, through that, the online communication is based on creating images and meanings and sharing them with the audience.

As mentioned in the conclusions made in the observation notes verbal codes, although important in the process, are not exclusive. All of the respondents mentioned using other methods such as pictures, videos and other visual signs to add into the content of their posts: “It is sometimes difficult to write about dance. After all, it is such an emotional state and it’s so physical and beautiful then you just need to add picture to express it better. Therefore, ironically, the previously mentioned restrictions of nonverbal signs become a helping tool in the blogging process. At the same time, it becomes visible, that the bloggers, being aware of the limitations of both the nonverbal codes and verbal codes, choose to use both in order for the communication to succeed. The dance becomes no longer a mere medium facilitating communication but a communication in itself. It creates and controls the meaning and becomes an object of worship, discussion and artistic understanding for both the blogger and the readers.

Dancing as communication

As mentioned in the introduction the main interest of the present research is to understand how and why dancers communicate, or - to be specific how such communication occurs among dance bloggers. The popular dance theories revolve around the issue of dance as a performance, as a physical act which, through its expressiveness of body language, spatial arrangement and movement as such can be understood in terms of more abstract
communication. Nevertheless kinesthetic, proxemics and haptics codes belong to the family of nonverbal tools and are enhanced or facilitated by other sensory channels such as hearing and vision.

The growing trend of blogging can be attributed to the development of the Internet and new media as such. Dance blogging, however, as mentioned in the Introduction, carries a certain oxymoron. There is an almost ironic discrepancy between the physical, nonverbal essence of dancing and the verbalized nature of blogging.

For instance, Davis and Smyth describe nonverbal codes as the most successful tools for communication (1973:11 and 1984:21 respectively). Blogs, on the other hand, reflect the social trend, which seems to limit the face-to-face interaction and replace it with words written online.

When applying Luhmann’s theory to the findings, dance can interpreted as a medium in the process of communication while dance blogs can be seen as communications (Luhmann 1995). Offline dance contains necessary codes which are required for communication to be understood. As regards communication, dance blogging implies that the meaning is created through verbalized dance and the communication is coherent and structured.

The hypothesis stated in the introductory chapter claims that successful communication cannot exist without both the nonverbal and the verbal communication. Dance remains a powerful art form due to its powerful array of nonverbal codes. In accordance with the dance theorists, dance can express the emotions and evoke reactions, an ability which language can fall short of (Arnold 1995, 62). Media theorists, see verbal tools as necessary in the society in which ambiguity and multi-interpretative nature of nonverbal signs can be too misleading (Davis 1973, 27).
That pattern seems to reveal itself also with regard to communication and interaction. With regard to the difference between nonverbal and verbal communication two of the respondents specifically answered that verbal codes are “almost never present when dancing” and that “the only thing we have are our bodies, and how we present them.” Therefore, it becomes obvious, as based on the collected data that significance of the differences between the nonverbal and verbal communication is known to the dancers and the limitations of the former and the latter become visible during the process.

When asked about the advantages of physical expression of feelings through dance, the interviewed bloggers mentioned that dance: “(has) a strong body language”, “it’s very powerful” and “let’s you be close with other people.” Thus, there is no escaping the fact that dancing as a method of expressing emotions and creating meaning through movement is considered to have a strong impact on the way people interact. The ability to connect with the dancing partner and use body to convey numerous feelings and attitudes gives the dancers also the confidence in the communication process (the concept of communication as dancing is touched upon in chapter 2 and allows them to understand the kinesthetic codes of other people.

The previously mentioned dance-related theories present also dance as a medium triggering and facilitating communication via nonverbal coding. Movements, eye-contact, body language and spatial arrangements all play an important role in the dancing process (Arnold 1995, 63-63). When asked about the methods which they use to express emotions or attitudes in dancing all of the respondents mentioned the importance of kinesthetic communication. One of the dancers, who is also a professional choreographer talked about “making the bodies move”, that is, arranging the dancers in the way as if to tell a particular story and make the dance “send the message I want it to be sent”. It can be argued that nonverbal coding has a
specific use in dancing in order to pass on the meaning intended by the choreographer and/or dancer. The message is sent through the movements and received by the audience or the partner.

There are, however, conspicuous limitations of the solely nonverbal communication. First aspect, the lack of control with regard to how the message is received and interpreted has already been discussed in Chapter 2. One of the dancers referred to the issue as “problematic” due to the lack of visible response among the audience: “it is really hard to tell sometimes whether someone liked it or not. I mean, they cheer and clasp but whether they understood it, felt it, that’s another type of question.” The lack of responsiveness, mainly due to the way in which the dance is performed (on stage, often with the audience sitting on the other side of the room) indicates a large gap between the audience and the dancer. Despite the efforts to express the emotions and regardless of the powerful nature of body language and eye contact, the distance between the person performing and the person viewing is significant. Rather than interacting as equals, the dance can be seen in Goffmanian terms as constant strive for acceptance when the audience judges how much the performer succeeded. If the dancer’s objective is seen as strive for self-acceptance then his or her performance is dependent on the degree to which the audience understands the intended message of the dance (Goffman 1959, 246).

This stands in a stark contrast to the way in which communication occurs online. When asked about befits of blogging one of the dancers answered that blogging “gives me a place to talk about dance in a way which I can’t express only when dancing.” Using verbal codes provided by language seems to serve as a helping tool in surpassing the limitations of the kinesthetic, proxemics and haptics codes. The process of verbalization allows for a larger control with regards to how audience reacts. There is a possibility for blog readers to reply and interact via private messages, comments and links. Therefore, constant feedback from the audience is
secured, which, in turn, enables the dancer to succeed in his or her performance online. At the same time, the distance between the audience and the dancers decreases as blog followers have more possibilities to actively participating in the process. Furthermore, the followers, regardless of their previous knowledge of dancing, become equal members of the group and, as the users of the Internet, have the same position and status in the process of communication.

Nonverbal communication brings about restrictions also with regard to meaning creation. While the dancer uses his or her body to pass on the message created by the choreography, the dance, in its physical form, only facilitates the communication and sends the message that already exists rather than creates a new meaning.

The research showed a significant similarity in the way dancers approach the content creation. One of the interviewees says: “Basically I always feel like I want to write something, to put something into perspective and shed a new light on it.” Thus, the will to write about dancing and create new meaning with regard to the experience seems to be shared by many of the respondents when asked why they decided to blog in the first place. One of the dancers mentions even the fact that it was during one of her performances that she decided she wants to start her blog: “I just felt like I wanted to write about what I felt at that moment. I wanted to describe it for other people to understand”

The aforementioned findings and conclusions indicate how powerful online communication has become. The growing number of blogs and online websites connected to dancing as well as social networking groups serve as an illustration that the solely nonverbal nature of dancing is no longer applicable. Dancers need and want to ‘write’ about dancing and require language to do so. Movements and body language, although of prominent importance, is transferred into the world of words. To understand, however, how blogs can provide the appropriate
language for describing the experience of dancing a further research into the development of new media is required.

To apply Luhmann’s theory into the world of the Internet society one can define offline society as a system communicating with another system of online world. In other words, the reality of human life projects itself onto another reality, in this sense onto the online world. When explaining the blogging phenomenon by using the language developed by Luhmann, the relationship between the online and offline may be interpreted as being characterized by strong correlation and interdependence. In other words, the activities and interaction occurring on everyday basis are reflected in the online world; the world of blogging is an expansion and prolonging of offline reality. The characteristics such as the self-referential nature, the existence of environment, language as a medium and the ability to communicate all contribute to the interpretation that blogging and other forms of social networking can be regarded in terms of systems.

**Connecting with the audience**

The audience is an extremely important issue in the world of blogging because writing online always implies writing for other people. Goffman claims that one can only stay true to themselves if their performance is genuine. Blogging seems to allow for such authenticity to occur and, through that the communication become authentic as well.

The aforementioned statement relates also the dance theory which highlights the impossible task of evoking a full-understanding of the movement among the audience due to the lack of relatable knowledge. In other words, it is suggested that in order to understand the choreography, and the meaning behind the dance, the audience is often required to have background knowledge about the physical and emotional experience of dance, they have to
know how it feels to dance and what choreographed movements imply (Peick 2005, 3). The argument repeats itself in the interviews. One of the respondents claims that although interpreting a dance can be as subjective and as individual as possible without distorting its aesthetic qualities, the emotional input of the dancer, the personal attitude and meaning that is intended is often misread. Therefore, for dancers, for whom dancing is passion, blogs are a tool to express and communicate to a wider audience.

The motif of audience proved to be of significance during the interviews. When asked about their viewers and readers, all of the respondents reported on the increased contact with people “outside the group” when blogging. When dancing both during their past time or professional time, they all seemed to spend a considerable amount of time with other people who are also connected to dance. However, when inquired about the topics of the conversations one of the respondents answered: “We do not really talk dance as such. I mean we do when it comes to talking about what we should do next, or how to choreograph the next sequence. We hardly ever get to talk about emotions though, you know, like how we feel when we dance and what dance means to us. This is what I leave for my blog.”

This statement seems significant in the light of dance theory which claims that dance, being kinesthetic in its nature and relying on proximity and eye-contact between people, facilitates strongly emotional interaction (Peick 2005, 4). When faced however, with the reality of everyday life of a dancer, it seems that the respondents found in insufficient to express themselves nonverbally through dance but at the same time unable to use ‘dance’-related language during their interaction with other dancers and viewers.

Eight out of twelve respondents mentioned that their readers vary and although they aim their posts at people interested in dancing, many of their “followers” are not professional dancers.
or do not even dance. They are nevertheless, actively commenting and sending messages to express “how they like reading what I wrote. They just like reading about dance.”

Relating to the audience becomes therefore, a crucial objective for bloggers. Verbalization of feelings related to dance in the form of language serves to bring the audience closer, to access wider spectrum of readers and to communicate in much more complex way.

Control is an important aspect in the process. The dancers, through the use of blogs, are able to capture the experience and exert a level of control. Being able to use the language in order to express the essence of dancing allows the bloggers to control the reactions of the audience. As nonverbal codes, despite their directness, are more difficult to manipulate or direct, writing allows the dancers to present the experience in the way they wish or intend to. Such control entails also a constant flexibility. Being able to discuss dancing when blogging and receiving feedback from the audience “on the spot” enhances the communication and gives the blogger an opportunity to adjust the performance and think through emotions and attitudes. The concept of control can be related to the theory of locus of control. Bloggers, by establishing, connection with their audience and successfully transporting their experience into the verbalized world of blogs, achieve internal locus of control as they are aware of their own ability to influence what they do (Engler, 2009).

Therefore, dance becomes an artistic expression which can be controlled and which is adaptable, a topic of creative discussion, of shared passion and an object of worship not only for the dancer but also for the audience. It is no longer required that the audience is equipped with professional knowledge about dancing. On the contrary, the audience, the generalized others, become an important factor in the process of content creation. They provide feedback and help in the process of objectifying dance, turning it into an artistic form which can be
produced, admired and controlled. This can also be seen as a form of struggle, so-called strive for independence, presenting the offline experience as closely related to the online world.

**Summary of the findings**

To conclude, four major conclusions can be drawn as based on the collected and analyzed material. All of the conclusions are strongly related to each other and form a response to the hypothesis stated in Chapter 1.

As suggested in the introduction the seemingly unrelated concepts of dancing and blogging are in fact strongly dependent on each other. In Luhmann’s terms, dancing, an artistic form, relating almost entirely on nonverbal codes in its role as a medium, facilitates communication through its use of kinesthetic, proxemics and haptics signs. Blogging, by contrast, demonstrates how the online world becomes an extension of the offline reality, allowing the blogger to share the experiences, feelings and attitudes through the use of language. Blogs become, therefore, communication as the meaning is created and the mutual understanding between the audience and the performer occurs.

Based on the interviews and on the notes made from the observations suggest that dancers use blogs in order to capture the experience of dancing, objectify it so it becomes accessible to others - in this case the readers.

Therefore, imagination plays an important role, as the bloggers use both verbal and nonverbal signs in their blogs to convey the essence of dancing to their readers so that their minds and emotional and aesthetic sensitivity become responsive. The active change of the content and the constant exchange of ideas between the readers and the dance bloggers allows for the new meanings to be created and the communication to occur. Being the dancer and the blogger at
the same time, allows them to become masters in communication, skillfully using language as well as visualizations to assist them in their main goal: making a subjective experience and transfer into an object that others can understand and relate to.

Blogging allows dancers to control the way dancing is presented and interpreted. It gives appropriate tools to communicate the ideas behind dancing as both an artistic form and an essence of life. The readers, who form the audience in this context, bridge the distance between the performer and the audience (which once can find in a Goffmanian understanding of the terms) and their ability to comment and interact verbally with the blogger, enhances the communication of ideas and allows for the dance to become an experience that is shared and felt by many rather than a subjective expression of a sole dancer.

Thus, it goes without saying that blogging allows for the dance to become communication in its own right. Verbal and nonverbal codes are used together to achieve a level of mutual understanding and shared experience between the dancer and the blogger. The dance becomes an object of affection and blogging enables the aesthetic beauty of dance experience to be evoked in the minds of many regardless of their knowledge of dance as an art form or trained aesthetic sensitivity. Dance becomes a being on its own, the communication and the symbol of successful collage between the verbal and nonverbal, the objective and the subjective and between the online and the offline. As one of the respondents says: “Dance is everything!”
CONCLUSIONS
The research findings presented in Chapter 6 demonstrate how the Internet has changed the way in which people communicate. Social networks and blogs created virtual communities in which interests, experiences and emotions are shared via the verbal medium of written language. The ability to express emotions online became an issue of heated debates and dance blogs seem to have faced the challenge successfully.

Blogging surpasses the boundaries of stage performance and allows for the subjective experience of dancing to become objective. At the core of dance is artistic expression and individualism. However, it is transforming dance into a ritual and an object of affections that is one of the main motivations behind blog writing. Dancing remains a calling but, at the same time, through online communication, it becomes widely accessible. Durability of dancing is maintained through blogging while the emotions, which are usually expressed through offline dancing, are transferred into the world of blogging.

Blogging is also a reflection of dancers’ struggle for verbalization. In an offline situation dance cannot be alienated from the body and is, therefore, transitional. Using language provides an opportunity to capture the experience of dancing and avoid the limitations imposed by on-stage performance and misinterpretation of nonverbal codes. Verbalization is necessary for the dance to become communication on its own. Nonverbal codes become transferred into verbal codes and the language is aimed at developing the imaginary and bringing the audience closer to the performer.

When understanding human existence as being marked by a certain level of dualism and contrasts one can interpret the blogging activity as an attempt to translate the way individuals switch between the offline and the online, the verbal and nonverbal and between two realities, that of objective or real reality or subjective/observed reality.
The conclusion seems inescapable that the phenomenon of dance blogging is a reflection of the transition between the traditional and modern world. The Internet is, therefore, a helping tool in the process of modernization and in the process of communication between people. Contact culture becomes verbalized and modernized not as a result of loneliness but as an attempt at enriching the offline world. As a result, the virtual world can be seen as a completion of the real world.
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APPENDIX: INTERVIEW GUIDE
Interview guide:

I) Identification of an individual as a dancer

1. What is profession?

2. If a professional dancer, how would you describe your everyday work with dance? How often do you dance?

3. If an amateur dancer, what form of dancing do you take? How often do you dance?

Audience


5. Do you perform publically? If yes, how would you describe the difference between dancing in private and dancing for the audience?

6. Can you tell me more about the audience? Who is the audience?

7. How would you define your attitude to the audience? Who do you dance for?

8. In what way do you try to relate to the audience?

Emotions

9. How would you describe the emotions felt during dancing?

10. How do you express emotions in dancing? What methods do you use to express such emotions?

11. What motivated you to start dancing?

12. What usually inspires you to dance?

Communication

13. How would you define the role of dancing? How do you see your role as a dancer?

14. Do you dance alone or with partner/group of dancers? Why?

15. Based on your experience, how would you define the role of choreography in dancing?
16. Based on your experience, how would you define the role of dancers’ body language?
17. “Dancing is like telling a story”. Do you agree with the statement? If yes, how do you try to tell a story through dance?
18. What are the benefits of dancing?

II) Defining an individual as a blogger

Motivations

1. How would you define your blog and its content?
2. How often do you write? How would you describe the role of blogging in your life?
3. Where do you usually find inspiration for the content of your blog/website?
4. What motivated you to start blogging?
5. What is the most characteristic aspect of your work as a blogger/writer?
6. Based on your experience, how different is writing about dance from dancing?
7. If you would stop being active on your blog/website, what would you miss the most?

Emotions

8. How do you write about dancing? What methods do you use?
9. You described the ways in which you express emotions through dance. How do you express emotions through your blogging?
10. Have you ever encountered problems when writing about the experience of dancing? If yes, provide examples?

Communication

11. Is dance blog the only place where you are active online? If not, what other forms of online activity do you choose? (Facebook, Twitter, etc?)
12. How do you communicate with your readers online? How frequent is that communication?
13. How do you readers communicate with you? What is the content of their comments?
14. Do you read other blogs? If yes, why?
15. How would you describe the blogging community?
16. What are the advantages and disadvantages of online communication when compared to face-to-face interaction?

**The audience**

17. Who do you write for?
18. How would you define your readers/blog followers?
19. In what way do you relate to the readers of your blog? What methods do you use to achieve connection?
20. Have you developed a personal acquaintance/friendship with other dance bloggers/dance writers/readers that go beyond the online communication?
21. If yes, how often and in what form do you communicate with those individuals?
22. How would you describe the advantages and disadvantages of blogging if compared to dancing in real life?