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UNI's dance craze: A psychological analysis and creative documentary on 'The Interlude Dance' and 'The Dance Party'

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UNI'S DANCE CRAZE:
A PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS AND CREATIVE DOCUMENTARY ON
'THE INTERLUDE DANCE' AND 'THE DANCE PARTY'

A Thesis Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Designation
of University Honors

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This Study by: Ian Goldsmith

Entitled: UNI's Dance Craze: A Psychological Analysis and Creative Documentary on 'The Interlude Dance' and 'The Dance Party'

has been approved as meeting the thesis or project requirement for the Designation

University Honors

Date

Dr. Carolyn Hildebrant, Honors Thesis Advisor

Date

Dr. Jessica Moon, Director, University Honors Program

The UNI campus has been part of an epidemic: a dance epidemic. “The Interlude Dance” and “The Dance Party” are two recent dance phenomena that have played a major role in my undergraduate experience. I sought to study these phenomena through an analytical approach. I sought to determine the psychosocial factors that lead to the initial and continuing success of “The Interlude Dance” and “The Dance Party”, and to build conceptual connections between both phenomena. This creative-research hybrid project culminated in a documentary short-film.

Background

To fully explain my analysis, I will first provide a very brief history of the two phenomena that I am studying. Then I will provide an overview of my initial research. I will detail my research questions and hypothesis. I will then detail my method of surveys I conducted to help answer these questions. Finally, I will detail results and provide a conclusive overview.

“We’re here to teach *you* The Interlude Dance.” This is the opening line of the original instructional video for The Interlude Dance. This dance was created by me and two friends, Scott Connerley and Tyler Wright. Its inception started with Tyler, whose goofy arm-swinging dance move coordinated with a relatively then-unknown song named “Interlude” by Attack Attack!. Once Tyler introduced this song and dance to Scott and me, we developed six musically synced steps during the summer of 2010 while teaching English at a summer camp in Dongguan City, China.

After importing The Interlude Dance to America, the dance ignited the excitement of friends April Czarnetzki, Samm Rich, and the Campbell Hall RA staff. The dance began to spread through friend circles across campus, which ultimately sparked my idea for an instructional “music video.” We recorded a video that was released on November 3, 2010.

The success of my video on YouTube increased the popularity and momentum of the dance, leading many to call for its appearance at UNI basketball games. With the help of some connections, the UNI Athletic Department skeptically agreed to play the song at a women's basketball game, under the condition that we recruited at least 100 students to attend the game. The dance was an immediate hit with the Athletic Department, and has been performed at every Panther athletic event since, as well as many other non-athletic UNI events.

Since its Internet debut, this video has garnered nearly 500,000 views on YouTube, and has inspired approximately 1,000 other video recordings of the dance across the world. The dance has expanded beyond its UNI roots, including, but not limited to, high school athletic events, weddings, proms, conferences/conventions, summer camps, professional athletic events, elementary school classrooms, parking lots, school cafeterias, shopping malls, church services, African tribes, and many more. The dance continues to spread to this day.

The Dance Party, similar to The Interlude Dance, has humble yet unique origins. In the fall of 2008, my friend Tim Getting and his three roommates decided to throw a party. Decorating their 4-bedroom apartment with blacklights and neon-coated bottles, they hosted a party for 50 close friends. A tradition was born.

Throwing this once-per-semester event, "The Dance Party" has consistently grown in numbers and grandiosity. In spring of 2009 they hosted "Dance Party: Remix," this time to the tune of 100 people. The fall of 2009 brought "DP3" while the spring of 2010 brought "Dance Party: Cuatro," each bringing in an estimated 150 and 250 people, respectively.

Whilst attending DP3, my first Dance Party of the series, I was flabbergasted at the size and spectacle of the event. Never did I think some college students could throw a 200+ person party in their apartment, especially one that enforced a strict no-alcohol policy. As I danced the night away, I knew I had discovered something special.

The fall of 2010 brought changes to “The Dance Party.” With the party’s reputation growing larger, the party had to be moved to a new venue. The magnitude of the event, in combination with the upcoming graduation of the original party hosts, called for a new addition: interns. Tim invited me and my best friends Michael and Logan to be the first ever “Dance Party interns.” This completed the group was now self-recognized as “The Dance Party Commission.”

My first year on The Dance Party Commission brought further success to the party with “DP:V” (fall 2010) and “Dance Party: Back to the BaSIX” (spring 2011), each reaching attendance levels of an estimated 400-550 people.

Fall of 2011 was the first year with Michael, Logan, and me at the helm. With the help of new interns, we successfully hosted “Dance Party: 7 Up Get Down” (fall 2011) and “Dance Party: Invigor8.” Dance Parties 7 and 8 each reached between 600-700 people. Fall of 2012 was my last party on the commission, hosting “Dance Party: A9ocalypse.” A new set of interns have hosted Dance Party: X in the spring of 2013 and will be hosting Dance Party: Nightfa11 in the fall of 2013.

Over time, we have developed several elaborate tactics to host and market the party. We create an identity for each party, which includes a logo, business cards, t-shirts, etc. We release the party date with the “Dance Caravan,” where we all pile into a vehicle, driving and dancing around Cedar Falls and handing out the business cards containing the information. We have done fundraisers in the past, since this party is funded entirely by us, the hosts. Our primary marketing tool is creating promotional video trailers, which I would create and edit myself.

Literature Review

I centered my research around the concept of “social epidemics” as outlined in Malcolm Gladwell’s popular 2000 book *The Tipping Point*. Gladwell emphasizes that little changes have big effects, and that these changes can happen very quickly. He explains that “one dramatic moment, when everything can change all at once is the ‘tipping point.’” (Gladwell, 2000, p. 9)

Gladwell (2000) details three major rules that lead to social epidemics and other related phenomena. The first rule is “The Law of the Few.” “Social epidemics [are]... driven by the efforts of a handful of exceptional people... [and] the involvement of people with a rare set of social gifts. [It matters] how sociable they are, or how energetic or knowledgeable or influential they are among their peers.” (p. 21) Essentially, a few people are the most important in the epidemic spreading.

Connectors are people with a special gift for bringing the world together. Connectors have a “connector impulse,” an extraverted ability to develop “weak ties” with many people who become acquaintances (Gladwell, 2000, p. 46), thus allowing them to be connected to many people. In addition to quantity of connections of a Connector, it is also about quality. “They manage of occupy many different world and subcultures and niches.” (p. 48) They do this through “curiosity, self-confidence, sociability, and energy.” (p. 49) By having a foot in so many doors, they can bring people together. Weak ties are important because they occupy different worlds from your own, allowing the connector to be connecting in many ways. As a result, “the closer an idea or product comes to a Connector, the more power and opportunity it has” (p. 55).

I hypothesized that Connectors played a major role in the evolution of The Interlude Dance. I self-identify as a Connector; I have several friends in a wide array of varying social

circles, resulting from my diverse involvements on campus and my gregarious demeanor. This allowed the idea of The Interlude Dance to be spread to many people.

The Dance Party Commission has always been full of Connectors as well. The original four “forefathers,” or hosts, of The Dance Party were involved in a vast array of campus circles, whether it was faith-based communities or student organizations. With their naturally outgoing personalities, it is no surprise that they were able to draw large crowds. The ability to attract many different types of people has grown exponentially with every new Dance Party Commission.

The second rule of social epidemics outlined by Gladwell is “The Stickiness Factor.” Stickiness is summarized as the ability of a message to make an impact. According to Gladwell, stickiness is a critical component in tipping (p. 25). This applies strongly to marketing. Gladwell describes, for example, how the TV programs *Sesame Street* and *Blue’s Clues* were able to structure their show in a way that is irresistible to young children (Gladwell, 2000).

The success of The Interlude and Dance Party relied heavily on their “stickiness.” Regardless of the quantity of people I am able to connect with, The Interlude Dance would not be successful if the dance itself was not considered fun. I suspect that The Interlude’s stickiness results from a few factors. For starters, the song itself is catchy and energetic. Good music is critical for a good dance. Secondly, since it was “marketed” in the instructional video as “six easy steps,” it made people feel more at ease in learning. The choreography is simple, alleviating the need for anyone to be hindered by the pressure of “good dancing.” Finally, I believe that the dance is different in structure from most successful group dances (YMCA, Macarena, etc.). All of the dance moves vary from the others, not including the repeat of ‘the Interlude move’ at the end.

The Dance Party also relies on stickiness. When I was first exposed to The Dance Party, it was unlike anything I had ever witnessed. It was an off-campus party that was packed shoulder-to-shoulder, something I thought only occurred at parties in Hollywood films. But the most impressive aspect of the party for me was that it was alcohol-free. The mission of The Dance Party is to provide an unparalleled night of fun, free from the pressure to drink or feel judged. It epitomizes the desire to let loose and express yourself through dancing. The message of self-respect and inclusiveness that the Dance Party preaches allows anyone and everyone to feel welcomed and bust a move, something you will not find at any other college party.

Wearing ridiculous outfits, dancing in a ridiculous fashion, and creating strange traditions -- things that embody the atmosphere of The Dance Party -- embody the people who started it. With the continuous growth of the Dance Party, it has become evident that this spirit is contagious. Most attendees of The Dance Party show up and “match that level of weirdness” (Getting, 2012).

The third rule outlined by Gladwell is the Power of Context. Human beings are sensitive to their environment. Epidemics are strongly influenced by their situation (Gaylor, 2000). “We’re exquisitely sensitive... to changes in context” (p. 140). The role of this epidemic rule is the most difficult to apply to the viral spreading of Dance Party and The Interlude Dance. Through my surveys I was curious to discover clues as to how the context surrounding the formation of the phenomena played a role in their growth.

The Dance Party contains similar qualities to the act of “clubbing.” As a result, I dissected the book *Clubbing: Dancing, Ecstasy, and Vitality* by Ben Malbon (1999). Malbon documented and interviewed many people who participate in the clubbing experience. Among a multitude of observations, he found that clubbers seek a feeling of ecstasy, or an “oceanic experience.”

A clubber's oceanic experience is characterized by an altered state of consciousness. This altered state can be characterized by feelings of loss, such as loss of time or self, or feelings of gain, such as unity, oneness, and release. An experience like this can either be euphoric and intense, or reflective and withdrawn. (Malbon, 1999).

A crowd plays an important role in cultivating oceanic experiences. The clubber can experience a contrasting feeling between introversion and engagement with a crowd. While intensely social in nature, clubbing does not require any actual socializing, such as conversing. An oceanic feeling can also be experienced whether you are distinct from the crowd (individualized) or submerged with a crowd (anonymised) (Malbon, 1999).

Crowds enable the feeling of belonging, which provokes the loss of self. "This kind of togetherness is mostly about unloading the burden of individuality" (Malbon, 1999, p. 73). When people are dancing in a club crowd, they may even morph into more of a "single being" and experience-shared emotion (Malbon, 1999).

I suspect that togetherness and unity of crowds each played a role in the success of both The Dance Party and The Interlude Dance. Many people are hesitant to dance in everyday situations. But when you are part of a 3,000+ student section where everyone is doing the same moves, suddenly dancing is no problem. If you are in a dark, black-lit room with flashing lights and 600 students, expressing yourself through dance is easy. Each phenomenon promotes a "loss of self-consciousness." When I teach The Interlude Dance, I emphasize to the new dancers that if they commit themselves to the dance and do not over-analyze it, they will have a lot of fun. A common theme repeatedly reiterated through The Dance Party is to release yourself from the stresses of the world and simply dance. When everybody is acting strange, the weirdness cancels itself out, and a unique community is formed (Getting 2012).

Music can “intensify shared experience through magnifying an emotion” (Malbon, 1999, p. 78). This point further demonstrates why The Interlude is seemingly successful. The song, “Interlude,” by Attack Attack! is catchy and exhilarating. As indicated earlier, the upbeat music injects energy into the simple dance moves. It goes without saying that Dance Party attendees require proper music to get them excited and engaged at the night.

Finally, a clubber’s oceanic experience can depend on how “competent and confident they are while dancing” (Malbon, 1999, p. 112). Both The Dance Party and The Interlude Dance were founded through a spirit of inclusion with the message that “anyone can do it.” As mentioned previously, I marketed the dance as being only “six simple steps.” If people think that the moves are not complex, this builds their confidence and provokes their willingness to dance.

Research Questions

I had several questions regarding The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party. My primary interests in researching these epidemics can be summarized by three research questions:

- 1) What factors contributed to the initial success of The Dance Party and The Interlude Dance?
- 2.) Has perception of the two phenomena changed over time?
- 3.) What factors contribute to the continued success (or lack of success) of The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party?

I created two separate surveys to help in answering my research questions, one for The Interlude Dance and one for The Dance Party. I explain the survey content and

distribution below. I hoped to have these surveys provide clearer understanding and insight on the psychological and social factors that impact(ed) the appeal of these activities.

Hypotheses

My primary hypotheses were as follows:

- 1) In general, students at UNI will rate both The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party favorably.**
- 2) The longer students have been exposed to The Interlude Dance, the lower they will rate their current perception of it.**

For example, student who first learned The Interlude Dance two years ago will not rate it as currently appealing as those who have learned it recently. However, I think that people who have *never* danced The Interlude Dance will not rate their current perception of the dance very high.

- 3) People who have a strong preference for group dancing (doing the same moves as everyone else in a large crowd) will rate their perception of The Interlude Dance higher than those who have a strong preference for individualistic dancing (doing your own moves, distinct from those around you.)**

For example, someone who prefers dancing the YMCA will like The Interlude Dance more than someone who prefers break dancing.

- 4) People will rate their current perception of the Interlude Dance lower than their initial perception.**
- 5) Students who have had a moderate amount of exposure to The Dance Party will rate their current perception the highest.**

An example is that students who have attended four or five Dance Parties will not rate it as currently appealing as those who have attended just one.

However, I predicted that students who were first exposed to The Dance Party in 2008 or 2009 will not rate their current perception as highly as students who have been exposed more recently. In contrast, I predicted students who have *never* attended The Dance Party will not rate their current perception very high.

6) The feeling of “togetherness” will be a prominent factor in any continued success of both phenomena.

I hoped the results of the study could potentially help UNI better utilize The Interlude Dance, as well as help The Dance Party Commission plan future Dance Parties more effectively.

Method

Participants:

I had 773 valid responses to my Interlude Dance survey. Out of these valid responses, I had 251 males (33%) and 520 females (67%). 2 people identified as “Other,” meaning non-specific to a male or female gender identity. I also had nearly every academic major represented in my participants. The participants were almost unanimously Caucasian. Ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 84, according to the data. The average age among participants was 23.86.

For the Dance Party survey, I had 46 valid responses. Out of these 46 responses, 22 identified as male (48%) and 24 identified as female (52%). Most of the respondents were Caucasian. The average age for participants was 21.03, with a range of 18-24.

Materials:

My primary materials were two surveys: one to analyze The Interlude Dance, one to analyze The Dance Party. Although the questions were specific for each of the phenomena, they were composed with similar layouts. They each asked questions about demographics, and to rate how much they generally enjoy dancing, their initial and current perceptions of the phenomena, and how specific factors influenced their perceptions of the phenomena. The survey questions varied in format, between rating on a Likert scale (rate 1-7), multiple choice, and short answer. The full surveys can be viewed in Appendices A and B.

Procedure:

I obtained IRB approval to distribute my two surveys I created my surveys through the online survey software, Qualtrics. All of my surveys were completed online. I distributed the Interlude Dance survey publically through my personal social media, Facebook and Twitter. I also received some help from UNI's Athletic Department, which distributed the surveys through their database and/or listserv. In exchange, I offered to summarize my findings for them to help them better understand current student perception of the Interlude Dance, and in order to better utilize the dance for athletic events. My adviser, Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt, also distributed the survey to her Psychology of Music class, offering extra credit to those who completed the survey.

The Dance Party survey was more narrowly distributed than The Interlude Dance survey. I distributed the Dance Party survey through Facebook messaging. I messaged people who had previously attended the party as indicated on past Dance Party Facebook event pages.

Results

Interlude Dance Survey:

I asked each participant “How much do you generally enjoy dancing?” using a Likert scale of 1 to 7, one being “I do not enjoy dancing at all” and seven being “I find dancing extremely enjoyable.” Out of 727 valid responses, the average rating was 5.76 with a standard deviation of 1.66.

I asked each participant to rate their initial reaction to The Interlude Dance after FIRST being introduced to it, using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “I didn’t like it at all” and 7 being “I loved it.” Out of 729 valid responses, the average rating was 5.19, with a standard deviation of 1.66.

I found that those who rated higher their enjoyment of dancing also rated higher their initial reaction of the Interlude Dance. We found a small positive correlation between the two questions, ($r = .231$), which was significant at $p < .001$.

When I asked “When did you first learn about The Interlude Dance?” these were the results:

Fall 2010	206
Spring 2011	312
Summer 2011	56
Fall 2011	103
Spring 2012	40
Summer 2012	15
Fall of 2012	28

I found a very small negative correlation ($r = -.132$) between people’s initial reaction to the dance and when they were introduced to it. This is significant at $p < .001$. The earlier someone was introduced to the dance (i.e. the fall of 2010), the higher their response to it.

I ran a one-way ANOVA test between “How did you first find out about the Interlude Dance” as the independent variable and “Rate your initial reaction” as the dependent variable. There were no significant differences between the different ways of finding out about the interlude dance and how they reacted to it ($F = .823, p = .552$).

I asked people to rate their preference for synchronized dancing, or doing the same moves as a crowd, on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “I don’t like it at all” and 7 being “I love it.” I found that there is a moderate correlation ($r = .306$) between how they rated their preference for synchronized dancing and how they rated their initial perception of the dance, which is significant at $p < .001$.

Additionally, I asked people to rate their preference for individualistic dancing, or doing moves that are distinct from others, on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “I don’t like it at all” and 7 being “I love it.” I found that there is a very small correlation ($r = .121$) between how they rated their preference for individualistic dancing and how they rated their initial perception, which is significant at $p < .001$.

I asked people to rate how much the “following factors influenced their INITIAL perception of the dance,” on a Likert scale from 1 to 7, one being “I do not like it at all,” to seven being “I love it.” The four factors I measured were “Feeling of School Pride,” “The Song,” “Feeling of Unity, Group Cohesion, and Togetherness,” and “Simplicity of Dance Moves.” I also saved a box for “other” answers.

The average ratings of the four scores were as follows:

School pride	5.58
The song	5.33
Feeling of togetherness	5.86
Simplicity of dance	5.67

To see if there was a correlation between people’s rating of their initial perception to the dance and each of the influencing factors, I did a standard multiple regression, entering

the ratings of factors as independent variables, with initial perception as the dependent variable. The factors "Feeling of unity and togetherness" and "The song itself" were found to be statistically significant influencers ($p < .05$), while "School pride" and "Simplicity of the dance" were not found to be statistically significant factors. The model as a whole explained approximately 67% (r-squared equal to .668) of the variance.

When I asked people to rate how much The Interlude Dance CURRENTLY appeals to them on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, one being "I do not like it at all" and 7 being "I love it," I found that the average out of 711 valid responses was 5.31, with a standard deviation of 1.755.

When asked how the factors influenced current perception, almost the same results were found as when asking how the factors influencing initial perception. I did a standard multiple regression, entering the ratings of factors as independent variables, with initial perception as the dependent variable. The factors "Feeling of unity and togetherness" and "The song itself" were again found to be statistically significant influencers ($p < .05$), while "School pride" and "Simplicity of the dance" were not found to be statistically significant factors. The model as a whole was significant at $p < .001$, and explained approximately 67% (r equal to .668) of the variance.

I asked people how often they attend UNI Athletic events, with choices of "twice or more per week," "once a week," "once or twice a month," "once a semester," or "never." I found that there was a very small correlation ($r = -.131$) between how often they attend athletic events, and how they rated their current perception of the dance, which is significant at $p < .001$.

Dance Party Survey

I asked each participant “How much do you generally enjoy dancing?” using a Likert scale of 1 to 7, one being “I do not enjoy dancing at all” and seven being “I find dancing extremely enjoyable.” The average rating was 6.30 with a standard deviation of 1.227. Twenty-nine out of the 46 valid responses (63%) were “I found dancing extremely enjoyable (7).”

I asked each participant to rate their initial reaction to The Dance Party after FIRST being introduced to it, using a Likert Scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “I didn’t like it at all” and 7 being “I loved it.” Out of 729 valid responses, the average rating was 6.52, with a standard deviation of .836. Twenty-nine out of the 46 valid responses (63%) were “I loved it! (7).”

I asked people to “rate how much the following factors played into your INITIAL perception of The Dance Party” on a Likert scale of 1 to 7, 1 being “Not at all” and 7 being “Very much.” The factors I measured were “The number of people attending the party,” “The lights, music, and decorations,” “Feeling of unity, group cohesion, or togetherness,” “No alcohol,” “Off-campus,” “Marketing (i.e. promo videos, logo, business cards, party theme),” “Welcoming environment,” and “Feeling of safety.” With my sample size, I found the “Feeling of Unity and Togetherness” to be the only factor statistically significant in predicting people’s initial perception of The Dance Party. We also found that the Marketing factor was trending towards significance. [significant at $p = .05$ model r -squared = .343]

I ran a simple bi-variant correlation between “When did you first learn about The Dance Party?” and “Please Rate your current reaction to The Dance Party?” I found a moderate correlation ($r = .248$, $p = .097$), but it was not found to be significant at $p > .05$.

Discussion

In regard to demographics of the participants for The Interlude Dance survey, I was surprised to have nearly twice the number of females take the survey as males. While there is a higher ratio of females compared to males on campus, it is certainly not 2:1. I was disappointed to have such low numbers in racially diverse demographics. I was interested to see if perception of the dance varied at all between different racial groups. As far as ages go, there may have been a flaw with the distribution of The Interlude Dance survey, since the ages ranged from 18-84. I designed the surveys to be taken by UNI students or recent UNI graduates. However, the Athletic Department may have sent them out to community members through a listserv.

I found it notable that 68% of participants (518 out of 761 valid responses) said they learned about The Interlude Dance in either Fall of 2010 or Spring of 2011, which would have been right around the dance's "tipping point."

I was not surprised that those who learned about the dance earlier and/or closer to its "tipping point" rated their initial perception of it higher. I think that these people learned it when it was still considered a very exciting craze by the masses, as opposed to now when it has settled a bit more.

The results also supported my hypothesis that those who prefer synchronized group dancing would rate their initial perception of the dance higher than those who prefer individual dancing. That makes a lot of sense, since the dance is a synchronized group dance.

The data supported my hypothesis that people's perception of the dance would correlate more strongly with those who have a higher preference for synchronized dancing ($r = .306$) than those who have a strong preference for individualistic dancing ($r = .121$).

The results supported my hypothesis that the *current* perception of the dance was rated, on average, lower than the average *initial* perception. This may be a result of overexposure to the dance, culture shift, or any number of other factors.

I was very limited in my analysis of the Dance Party survey. I would be interested in the results with a higher sample size. I was a little disappointed that only 46 people took the survey, because that hinders what may have been found to be significant. I also think that it was a biased group. I know that for people to take this survey, they were likely big fans of The Dance Party, as indicated by the people's average rating of their initial reaction to The Dance Party at 6.52, as well as 32 of the 46 rating it the full 7.

The results supported that "the Feeling of Unity and Togetherness" was found to significantly correlate with their perception of the phenomena. The Feeling of Togetherness" also had the strongest correlation for each. It shows that the power of human connection is very important. However, I think that a much larger sample size would have garnered some different results, with more factors found to be significantly influential, especially since we had a few with correlations.

I was also interested that there was a positive correlation between "When did you first learn about the Dance Party?" and "Rate your current reaction." This seems to indicate that those who have known about the party longer do not like it as much as those who have learned about the party recently. This supported my hypothesis, that those who have been attending the Dance Parties since DP:Remix or DP:3 no longer enjoy it the way someone who has only attended DP: A9ocalypse might. This may be a result of people getting old, the parties being different than they used to be (more people, different venues, etc.), or any number of other factors.

For future research I would want to reach out to more participants than the few I did for The Dance Party survey. For future research I would also like to spend more time

analyzing the results of the two surveys even more extensively. There were several more variables I could test in these results between the two surveys. Based on current time restrictions, I decided to only test variables that most directly related my initial research questions and hypotheses.

Overall there was nothing in the results that completely surprised me or totally blew me away. However, I found it to be very satisfying to see the testing of hypotheses come to fruition and to support my long-time theories. The entire research process was a very rewarding and beneficial experience. It was exciting to see my personal experiences tie in to existent theories, such as Gladwell's rules on social epidemics.

Documentary

When I set out to do this thesis, I knew I wanted to take a fun spin on it. I decided that, after completing my research, I would also complete a creative documentary. This documentary short-film would serve as an entertaining medium to convey the history behind these two phenomena and display my research.

The initial concept was conceived from the thesis completed by my friend Eva Anderson. Her undergraduate honors thesis, *EVALuation on Tanning*, analytically looked at society's view on skin tanning. She utilized her talents to turn the academic piece into a comedic character-based talk show. I, too, wanted to take a fun, comedic video approach to an academic study.

I drew inspiration from a few other sources in addition to Eva. One source was a Brett Gaylor documentary *RiP! A Remix Manifesto*. Gaylor (2008) follows mashup artist Girl Talk in a pursuit to better dissect the creative parameters of copyright laws in our

modern digital age. Gaylor does a good job of keeping the audience engaged by using unique videography techniques such as freeze frame, animation, and typography.

Another source I drew inspiration from was KWWL Sports Anchor Mark Woodley's package on The Interlude Dance after it was performed and filmed by soldiers in Afghanistan. Mark does an excellent job demonstrating the origin of the dance through visuals and narratives.

A final source I drew some inspiration from is *Bill Nye the Science Guy*. I've always loved Bill's way of explaining academically advanced concepts to his child-based audience through "edutainment."

My documentary was structured similar to a research paper: Introduction, History of The Interlude Dance, History of The Dance Party, Research Method, Results, and Conclusion, with an "Interlude Dance around the world" montage over the credits. I completed nine on-camera interviews with friends who have played major roles in the development of The Interlude Dance or The Dance Party. I edited these interviews to tell the narrative of my documentary. I filled in the gaps of the documentary through my own on-camera and voice-over narrations. I pulled B-roll footage from several pre-existing photographs and videos on the internet.

My completed documentary was about 4-times the length I had initially intended, but I wanted to make sure I appropriately covered the content. Completing the video was an immense amount of time and energy, but was well worth it. The documentary is attached as a DVD (Appendix C).

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APPENDIX A: INTERLUDE DANCE SURVEY

Interlude Dance Survey

Consent UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

REVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: UNI's Dance Craze: A Creative Documentary on the Psychological Interpretation of The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party

Name of Investigator(s): Ian Goldsmith

Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

Nature and Purpose: I seek to determine the psychosocial factors that led to the initial and/or sustained success of The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party. I then plan to present this information creatively through a video documentary. This research is important because it could help us better understand modern trends in dancing and recreational activities that are alcohol-free, positive, inclusive, and community-building experiences for college-age students.

Explanation of Procedures: I will be conducting a survey to measure your perception of The Interlude Dance and/or The Dance Party. This online survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and will be comprised of multiple-choice questions, Likert scales (rate 1-10) and short answers. All answers will be anonymous. I will then utilize the data measured in creating a documentary about The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party. The documentary will be posted on YouTube to be viewed by anyone with Internet access. The video documentary will also be submitted to film festivals.

Discomfort and Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participation.

Benefits and Compensation: No direct benefits will be garnered by participants. No compensation will be given.

Confidentiality: Information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept confidential. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. People selected by me to appear in the video documentary will verbally provide separate answers for the camera, maintaining that their answers to the survey remain anonymous and confidential. These separate camera interviews will be conducted under the informed consent of the interviewee that their answers will be used for the video documentary.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and by doing so, you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions: If you have questions about the study or desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study generally, you can contact Ian Goldsmith at 563-920-2736 or (if appropriate) the project investigator's faculty advisor Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt at the Department of Psychology, University of Northern Iowa 319-273-7179. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process."

Agreement: I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in

this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

* BY CLICKING THIS BUTTON I ACKNOWLEDGE ALL OF THE ABOVE AND GIVE MY CONSENT. YOLO! :)

Q1 What is your age?

	Years (1)	Months (2)

Q2 What is your classification in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Senior+
- Graduate Student

Alumnus / Alumna [What year did you graduate?] _____

Q3 What is your major?

Q4 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (specify if desired) _____

Q5 What is your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

- Caucasian
- African American
- Hispanic

- Asian, Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Other (specify if desired) _____

Q6 How much do you generally enjoy dancing?

	I do not enjoy dancing at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I find dancing extremely enjoyable (7)

Q7 When did you first learn ABOUT The Interlude Dance? (For reference, the dance was first performed at a UNI sporting event in January of 2011)

- Fall of 2010
- Spring of 2011
- Summer of 2011
- Fall of 2011
- Spring of 2012
- Summer of 2012
- Fall of 2012
- Spring of 2013
- I do not know about The Interlude Dance

Q9 When did you first DANCE The Interlude Dance?

- Fall of 2010
- Spring of 2011
- Summer of 2011
- Fall of 2011
- Spring of 2012

- Summer of 2012
- Fall of 2012
- Spring of 2013
- I have never danced The Interlude Dance

Q10 How did you FIRST find out about The Interlude Dance?

- The Internet (i.e. YouTube)
- UNI Athletic Event
- Other UNI Event
- UNI promotions or visit (i.e. UNI Up Close)
- At a High School Event / In High School
- Word of Mouth
- Other - _____

Q11 Rate your reaction to The Interlude Dance when you were FIRST introduced to

it.

	I didn't like it at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	I was neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I loved it (7)
When I was first introduced to The Interlude Dance... (1)							

Q12 How much did the following factors influence your INITIAL perception of The

Interlude Dance (whether positive or negative)?

	Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very much (7)
Feeling of school pride							

Feeling of school pride							
The song							
Feeling of unity, group cohesion, or togetherness							
Simplicity of the dance moves (4)							
Other (5)							

Q19 How much does The Interlude Dance CURRENTLY factor into your decision to ATTEND athletic events?

	pushes me away from the events (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	doesn't make a difference (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	draws me to the events (7)
The Interlude Dance...							

Q20 How much does The Interlude Dance CURRENTLY influence your decision to STAY AT athletic events?

	I want to leave before the dance (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	It doesn't make a difference (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I have to stay through the dance (7)

Q21 How often do you currently attend UNI athletic events?

- Twice or more a week
- Once a week
- Once or twice a month
- Once a semester
- Never

Q22 How much do you enjoy individualistic dancing? (i.e. doing your own moves, distinct from others)

	I don't like it at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	I'm neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I love it (7)

Q23 How much do you enjoy synchronized dancing? (i.e. doing the same dance moves as everyone else, such as the YMCA and the Macarena)

	I don't like it at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	I'm neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I love it (7)

Q24 Is there anything else you want to share or add? If so, please use the space below!

APPENDIX B: DANCE PARTY SURVEY

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

REVIEW INFORMED CONSENT

Project Title: UNI's Dance Craze: A Creative Documentary on the Psychological Interpretation of The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party

Name of Investigator(s): Ian Goldsmith Invitation to Participate: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted through the University of Northern Iowa. The University requires that you give your signed agreement to participate in this project. The following information is provided to help you make an informed decision about whether or not to participate.

Nature and Purpose: I seek to determine the psychosocial factors that led to the initial and/or sustained success of The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party. I then plan to present this information creatively through a video documentary. This research is important because it could help us better understand modern trends in dancing and recreational activities that are alcohol-free, positive, inclusive, and community-building experiences for college-age students.

Explanation of Procedures: I will be conducting a survey to measure your perception of The Interlude Dance and/or The Dance Party. This online survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and will be comprised of multiple-choice questions, Likert scales (rate 1-10) and short answers. All answers will be anonymous. I will then utilize the data measured in creating a documentary about The Interlude Dance and The Dance Party. The documentary

will be posted on YouTube to be viewed by anyone with Internet access. The video documentary will also be submitted to film festivals.

Discomfort and Risks: There are no foreseeable risks to participation. **Benefits and Compensation:** No direct benefits will be garnered by participants. No compensation will be given.

Confidentiality: Information obtained during this study that could identify you will be kept confidential. The summarized findings with no identifying information may be published in an academic journal or presented at a scholarly conference. Your confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used. Specifically, no guarantees can be made regarding the interception of data sent via the Internet by any third parties. People selected by me to appear in the video documentary will verbally provide separate answers for the camera, maintaining that their answers to the survey remain anonymous and confidential. These separate camera interviews will be conducted under the informed consent of the interviewee that their answers will be used for the video documentary.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to withdraw from participation at any time or to choose not to participate at all, and by doing so, you will not be penalized or lose benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

Questions: If you have questions about the study or desire information in the future regarding your participation or the study generally, you can contact Ian Goldsmith at 563-920-2736 or (if appropriate) the project investigator's faculty advisor Dr. Carolyn Hildebrandt at the Department of Psychology, University of Northern Iowa 319-273-7179. You can also contact the office of the IRB Administrator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-6148, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participant review process."

Agreement: I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it. I hereby agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this consent statement. I am 18 years of age or older.

* BY CLICKING THIS BUTTON I ACKNOWLEDGE ALL OF THE ABOVE AND GIVE MY CONSENT. YOLO! :)

Q1: What is your age?

	Years (1)	Months (2)

Q2 What is your classification in school?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- Senior+
- Graduate Student
- Alumnus / Alumna [What year did you graduate?] _____

Q3 What is your major?

Q4 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other (specify if desired) _____

Q5 What is your race/ethnicity? Please check all that apply.

- Caucasian

- African American
- Hispanic
- Asian, Pacific Islander
- Native American
- Other (specify if desired) _____

Q6 How much do you generally enjoy dancing?

	I do not enjoy dancing at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I find dancing extremely enjoyable (7)

Q7 When did you first learn about the Dance Party?

- Fall of 2008
- Spring of 2009
- Summer of 2009
- Fall of 2009
- Spring of 2010
- Summer of 2010
- Fall of 2010
- Spring of 2011
- Summer of 2011
- Fall of 2011
- Spring of 2012
- Summer of 2012
- Fall of 2012
- Spring of 2013

- I have never heard of The Dance Party. (No need to finish the survey. Have a splendid day!)

Q8 Which Dance Parties have you attended? (Please check all that apply)

- Dance Party 08 (Fall of 2008)
- Dance Party: Remix (Spring of 2009)
- DP3: Funk City (Fall of 2009)
- Dance Party: Cuatro (Spring of 2010)
- DP:V (Fall of 2010)
- Dance Party: Back to BaSIX (Spring of 2011)
- Dance Party: 7 Up Get Down (Fall of 2011)
- Dance Party: Invigor8 (Spring of 2012)
- Dance Party: A9ocalypse (Fall of 2012)
- I have never attended The Dance Party

Q9 Rate your reaction to The Dance Party when you were FIRST introduced to it.

	I didn't like it at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I loved it (7)
When I was first introduced to The Dance Party...							

Q10 How much did the following factors influence your INITIAL perception of The Dance Party (whether positive or negative)?

	Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very much (7)
The number of people attending the party							
The lights, music, and decorations							

Feeling of unity, group cohesion, or togetherness							
No alcohol							
Off-campus							
Marketing (i.e. promo videos, logo, business cards, party theme)							
Welcoming environment							
Feeling of safety							
Other							

Q11 Rate how much The Dance Party CURRENTLY appeals to you.

	I don't like it at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	I'm neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	I love it (7)

Q12 How much do the following factors influence your CURRENT perception of

The Dance Party (whether positive or negative)?

	Not at all (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	Neutral (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	Very much (7)
The number of people attending the party							
The lights, music, and decorations							
Feeling of unity, group cohesion, or togetherness							
No alcohol							
Off-campus							
Marketing (i.e. promo videos, logo, business cards, party theme)							
Welcoming environment							
Feeling of safety							
Other							

Q13 Does your experience at The Dance Party differ from your dancing experience at establishments on Main Street, the Hill, or in Iowa City?

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No
- I never dance at establishments.

Q14 Does your experience at The Dance Party differ from on-campus UNI events, such as Dance Marathon or RHAve?

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No
- I never attend on-campus dances

Q15 Do you still try to attend The Dance Parties every semester?

- Yes (skip to question 17)
- No (answer Question 16)

Q16 If you do not currently try to attend The Dance Party, why not? Check all that apply.

- I feel too old
- I no longer live in the area
- It does not appeal to me (specify, if desired) _____
- Other _____

Q17 How has The Dance Party influenced your college experience?

	has made no impact (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	has made a powerful impact (7)
The Dance Party...							

Q18 Is there anything you would want to share or add? If so, please use the space below!

APPENDIX C: *UNI's DANCE CRAZE: A Documentary Short Film*

(Documentary attached as a DVD)