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**A Qualitative Investigation of Commitment to Dance: Findings from the UK
Centres for Advanced Training**

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Commitment to an activity forms an essential part of the talent development process, yet little is known about the reasons why young people commit to dance training.

The aim of this study was to investigate the factors that affect young dancers' commitment to a selective dance talent scheme. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 committed dancers and transcripts were content analysed.

Enjoyment was the most important factor relating to commitment, and stemmed from several sources such as self-expression, movement sensations and feelings associated with performing. Relationships with dance peers and teachers, parental support and the opportunities available on the scheme also enhanced commitment. While some potential barriers to participation were identified, such as concerns about injury, these seemed insufficient to affect the participants' commitment. The results of the study may help educators to develop young dancers' talents optimally by enhancing their commitment to training.

Keywords: commitment, adherence, dancing, talent

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1 **Introduction**

2 It has traditionally been assumed that talented artists are born rather than made (e.g.
3 Austin 1982; Evans, Bickel and Pendarvis 2000), yet there have been some research
4 advances in the area of dance talent in recent years. Specifically, talent in dance is
5 now understood to be multi-faceted, comprised of physical, technical, artistic and
6 psychological aspects (Baum, Owen and Oreck 1996; Walker, Nordin-Bates and
7 Redding 2010). In the UK, researchers recently completed a longitudinal
8 interdisciplinary investigation of dance talent among young people enrolled in a
9 selective pre-vocational dance training scheme (Redding, Nordin-Bates and Walker
10 2011). The young dancers reported healthy psychological profiles and found their
11 learning environment to be challenging and supportive, which in turn predicted higher
12 self-reported creativity and passion for dance. The results also revealed that many of
13 the physical characteristics associated with dance talent, such as strength and
14 flexibility, changed over time, indicating that at least some components of dance
15 talent are trainable rather than innate.

16 Naturally, in order to improve and progress over time, dancers must remain
17 committed to training. The current study was part of Redding et al.'s (2011) talent
18 research project in recognition of the fact that commitment forms an essential part of
19 the talent development process; without it, a young person is unlikely to develop his
20 or her talents optimally. Indeed, researchers have noted that the attributes required for
21 successful performance are similar to those necessary for lifelong participation in
22 physical activity (Abbott, Collins, Martindale and Sowerby 2002). Of particular
23 relevance to the current study, studies in sport (e.g. Gould, Diffenbach and Moffett
24 2002; Gould and Maynard 2009) and music (MacNamara, Button and Collins 2010;
25 Talbot-Honeck and Orlick 1998) indicate that elite performers are characterised by

1 high levels of commitment not only to their domain, but also to *excelling* in their
2 domain. As such, commitment is clearly a relevant concept to investigate within
3 studies of talent, yet little research of this nature exists in dance.

4 The pursuit of a career in dance often takes much dedicated practice; for
5 young dancers, commitment to training must be made alongside school work and
6 social activities. This is particularly important given that recent research indicates that
7 the main reason for dropping out of dance training is having conflicting demands
8 (Walker, Nordin-Bates and Redding 2012). Empirical studies indicate that
9 participation motives in dance include enjoyment, self-expression, movement
10 sensations, social interactions, an escape from daily life, emotional release, creativity
11 and the feelings associated with performing (Alter 1997; Nieminen 1998; Pickard
12 2006; Pickard and Bailey 2009; Stinson 1997). For example, Nieminen (1998) found
13 that recreational dancers were motivated by self-expression, social contacts,
14 achievement and performing, fitness, breaking away from daily routines, and
15 preparing for a career; self-expression was rated the most important of these factors.

16 While these studies provide useful information, participation motives do not
17 represent an in-depth exploration of the reasons behind long-term activity engagement
18 made alongside other life demands, nor do they address how such a commitment is
19 made when training is arduous and there is no guarantee of a successful career. In a
20 study of young ballet dancers as they progressed through training, Pickard (2012)
21 suggested that young dancers are committed to their training predominantly because
22 of their desire to be a professional, yet this is in contrast to the above participation
23 motives which focus mainly on the elements inherent in dance rather than long-term
24 outcomes (Alter 1997; Nieminen 1998; Pickard 2006; Stinson 1997). Because of these
25 discrepancies, further research is required to better understand dance commitment.

1 Furthermore, existing research into participation motives and commitment in dance
2 has focused either on recreational dancers (Nieminen 1998; Stinson 1997), university
3 dance students (Alter 1997) or young talented ballet dancers (Pickard 2006, 2012). No
4 studies to date have investigated young talented contemporary dancers, despite the
5 popularity of this dance style in the UK (e.g. Dance UK 2009). Therefore the aim of
6 this study was to investigate factors that facilitate young dancers' commitment to a
7 selective contemporary dance talent scheme.

8 Sport research in the area of commitment and adherence is far more advanced
9 than that in dance. Being a physical discipline, often requiring dedication to rigorous
10 training, research in this area is relevant to consider in relation to dance
11 investigations. A range of studies in youth sport have consistently found social
12 relationships, perceived competence and, in particular, enjoyment, to be associated
13 with adherence (e.g. Gould, Feltz and Weiss 1985; Klint and Weiss 1986; Ryska,
14 Hohensee, Cooley and Jones 2002; Salguero, González-Boto, Tuero and Márquez
15 2003). Given the importance of enjoyment to adherence, researchers aimed to better
16 understand *why* physical activities are enjoyable. Across a range of sports, ages and
17 ethnic backgrounds, common sources of enjoyment include the excitement of the
18 game, challenge, positive social interactions, perceived competence, effort, mastery,
19 goal attainment and movement sensations (Scanlan, Carpenter, Lobel and Simons
20 1993a; Scanlan and Lewthwaite 1986; Scanlan, Stein and Ravizza 1989; Stein and
21 Scanlan 1992; Wankel and Kreisel 1985; Wankel and Sefton 1989). As with the dance
22 participation motives, intrinsic motives for participating in physical activity tend to be
23 afforded more importance by participants than extrinsic motives (Ryska et al. 2002),
24 which suggests that young people are 'pulled' toward participation rather than
25 'pushed' into activities.

1 Following on from descriptive studies, sport researchers began to adopt or
2 develop theories in order to understand the psychological mechanisms underlying
3 commitment to physical activity. Commitment is conceptualised as a psychological
4 construct reflecting “the desire or resolve to continue sport participation” even in the
5 face of adversity (Scanlan, Carpenter, Schmidt, Simons and Keeler 1993b, p.1). This
6 definition is relevant to dance, which can often involve arduous training combined
7 with physical and emotional hardship (Pickard 2012). The Sport Commitment Model
8 (SCM; Scanlan et al. 1993b) is one of the most prominent models used to investigate
9 commitment in sport contexts. According to this model, sport commitment is
10 predicted by greater enjoyment, involvement opportunities, personal investments and
11 social constraints, and fewer attractive alternatives. Research with youth engaged in a
12 range of sports has found enjoyment and involvement opportunities in particular to
13 predict commitment (Carpenter, Scanlan, Simons and Lobel 1993; Carpenter and
14 Coleman 1998; Scanlan et al. 1993b; Weiss and Weiss 2006). Recently, social support
15 has received sufficient empirical support to warrant inclusion in the model (Scanlan,
16 Russell, Beals and Scanlan 2003; Scanlan, Russell, Magyar and Scanlan 2009; Weiss
17 and Weiss 2007).

18 While social support has been highlighted as pertinent in more recent
19 investigations using the SCM, several other descriptive and theoretical studies have
20 revealed greater detail as to the role of social relationships play in activity
21 commitment. Within the learning environment, teacher behaviour can influence
22 student participation: perceptions of a task-involving motivational climate (a
23 psychological atmosphere which emphasises task mastery and self-referenced
24 learning; Ames 1992) have been associated with adherence to sport (Boiché and
25 Sarrazin 2009; Le Bars, Gernigon and Ninot 2009). In addition, positive relationships

1 with likeminded peers have been associated with commitment in qualitative studies of
2 young talented athletes and artists (Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin 2008; Fredricks
3 et al. 2002; Patrick et al. 1999). However, social relationships outside of the learning
4 environment can either support or undermine commitment. Patrick et al. (1999) found
5 that engagement in a talent activity could be deemed as either socially acceptable or
6 unacceptable by young people's school peers. The extent to which the young person
7 valued the activity versus social status at school subsequently influenced their
8 commitment to the activity. Furthermore, some studies have reported that romantic
9 relationships can lessen commitment to activities (Coakley and White 1992; Scanlan
10 et al. 2009). On the other hand, family support is crucial in long-term activity
11 involvement, for example by providing advice, encouragement and logistical support
12 (e.g. Côté 1999; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde and Whalen 1993; Pickard 2006). As
13 such, social relationships can have divergent effects on commitment and are of
14 interest to explore further in dance.

15 Finally, a developmental approach to understanding talent development has
16 indicated that the opportunity to sample a range of activities during early
17 development, followed by commitment to one specialised activity during the mid-
18 teens, is associated with both continued sport participation and the attainment of elite
19 status (Carlson 1988; Côté 1999; Côté, Lidor and Hackfort 2009; Fraser-Thomas et al.
20 2008). Overall therefore, a broad range of factors appear related to physical activity
21 commitment that go beyond those explored in previous dance investigations.

22 However, while the research advances made in sport are relevant to consider in
23 relation to dance, the distinctions between dance and sport mean that dance-specific
24 research is essential.

1 Dance training often involves learning a variety of dance styles, each with
2 their own steps and terminology, while choreography and performance entail creating
3 and learning extended sequences where technical and artistic goals must be combined.
4 While dance is a physical discipline that employs dancers' motor skills and
5 athleticism, dancers must also convey the artistic intent of a work during performance
6 whether it be based on narrative or abstract concepts. Expressive ability and creativity
7 are considered key dance talent characteristics, and comprise improvisation,
8 musicality and dynamic range amongst other elements (Walker, Nordin-Bates &
9 Redding, 2010); thus a dancer requires a different set of skills and training methods to
10 an athlete. Also, dance students typically have multiple teachers, which adds to the
11 complexity of the training environment. Therefore, the aim of this study was to
12 support and extend existing research by investigating the factors that affect young
13 dancers' commitment to a selective dance talent scheme.

14 Given the diverse factors related to commitment in sport previous studies, and
15 the paucity of available dance research in the area, an exploratory, qualitative
16 approach was adopted. In this way, a broad understanding of various factors that
17 might affect participants' commitment to dance could emerge inductively. Qualitative
18 designs allow researchers to explore and understand a phenomenon from participants'
19 perspectives rather than from an a priori conceptualisation (Krauss 2005). Wide-
20 ranging factors derived from the literature reviewed above (individual, social,
21 developmental) that potentially influence dance commitment were considered in order
22 to obtain a comprehensive view. Briefly, this included reasons for dancing, enjoyment
23 sources, the role of social relationships, and other activities which may conflict with
24 dance involvement. Rich description yielded from such a qualitative approach (Patton

1 2002) may then be used to structure interventions designed to enhance commitment
2 and subsequently optimal talent development.

3

4 **Method**

5 *Participants*

6 Participants were recruited from the Centres for Advanced Training (CATs), UK
7 government-funded talent schemes that offer high-quality part-time dance training to
8 young people between the ages of 10-18 years. Students typically attend two auditions
9 in order to secure a place at one of the CATs, indicating that the study participants are
10 indeed talented. Dance classes run at weekends and after school to enable students to
11 continue attending their mainstream schools and, if they choose, other extracurricular
12 activities.

13 Nineteen young dancers volunteered to participate in the study following a
14 presentation delivered to students by the first author. In this presentation the aims and
15 objectives of the research, the procedures, potential harm and benefits of taking part,
16 and outcomes of the research were outlined. These were later reinforced in printed
17 information sheets. The participants were recruited from three CATs whose managers
18 expressed an interest in the study. These CATs focus on contemporary dance (centres
19 are referred to as either A, B, or C in the Results), although students also took classes
20 in other styles including ballet, creative dance and professional workshops. Of the
21 participants, 12 were female and seven were male, ranging in age from 11-17 years
22 ($M = 15.21 \pm 2.02$). They trained at their CAT for an average of 6.80 hours (± 1.10)
23 per week, with an additional 6.96 hours (± 5.17) per week training at other dance
24 schools. Students who had been attending their CAT for at least three months were
25 selected for the study because they would be in training for significant hours each

1 week at their CAT and thus were likely to give a rich account of their experiences in,
2 and commitment to, dance (Patton 2002).

3 ***Procedure***

4 The study was granted approval by a Higher Education institutional research ethics
5 committee and informed consent was given by all participants. For participants under
6 16 years of age, parental consent was also obtained. As noted above, participants were
7 given information sheets prior to the interviews to enable them to familiarise
8 themselves with the procedure and aims of the study (Thomas and Nelson 2001).

9 Given the age of the participants it is possible that the presence of a researcher was
10 intimidating. Therefore, it was particularly important to assure participants that there
11 were no right or wrong answers, that their responses would be treated confidentially,
12 that they could be honest about their experiences, that they could ask questions
13 throughout the interview if they were uncertain about a particular question or topic,
14 and that they could choose not to answer certain questions if they felt uncomfortable
15 (Morrow 2008).

16 It has been highlighted that “children are not used to being asked their
17 opinions and relate their experiences to unknown adults, and probably need to have
18 some familiarity with the researcher” (Morrow and Richards 1996, p.101). Positively,
19 the majority of the participants had some familiarity with the authors from previous
20 data collections as part of the larger talent development research project, which
21 appeared to engender trust as the students were open and responsive during the
22 interviews. Indeed, participants would have been unlikely to volunteer for the study if
23 they had had an unsatisfactory experience with the researchers at a previous time.
24 Furthermore, participants were assured that the research would not impact on their
25 studies, did not form part of an assessment, and that their individual responses would

1 not be shared with their teachers, indicating that regardless of whether the young
2 dancers chose to participate in the study or not, their training would not be affected.
3 Participants were also informed that they could request the presence of an impartial
4 observer during the interviews, although all declined to do so.

5 Semi-structured interviews were conducted using an interview guide (see
6 Appendix) that was created with considerations of existing research and gaps in the
7 literature. The guide was structured into four sections: (1) introductory questions and
8 dance training history (e.g. Can you describe when you first started dancing?); (2)
9 feelings about dance, reasons for dancing and future ambitions (e.g. Could you
10 describe what your main reasons for dancing are?); (3) potential changes in feelings
11 about dance, participation and training over time (e.g. Would you say that you are still
12 dancing for the same reason as when you first started?); and (4) the role of significant
13 others (e.g. Can you describe what sort of role your parents play in your dance
14 involvement?). The guide was concise in order to minimise disruption to the students'
15 busy timetables. Participants were encouraged to ask questions where necessary, and
16 probe questions were used when further clarification and elaboration were required in
17 order to reach data saturation (Patton 2002).

18 Pilot interviews were conducted with four dancers (three trained dancers; the
19 fourth a CAT graduate now undertaking vocational dance training) in order to assess
20 the utility of the questions. As a result, some of the questions were re-worded.
21 Interviews were conducted at a mutually convenient time and space at the relevant
22 CAT during the dancers' training day, in a quiet room with no interruptions. All of the
23 interviews were conducted by the first author and lasted approximately 30 minutes.

24 ***Analysis***

1 The interviews were transcribed verbatim and uploaded into NVivo qualitative
2 analysis software. All text was read thoroughly and relevant meaning units extracted
3 and labelled. Meaning units were organised into continuously created and merged
4 categories (themes). From these, a hierarchy emerged that represented relationships
5 between lower- and higher-order themes, and the research question (Patton 2002).

6 Several steps were taken to enhance trustworthiness. Participants were assured
7 of anonymity and data confidentiality, encouraging them to speak freely. The first
8 author has a dance background, enabling her to empathise with participants and use
9 appropriate probes for each interview. Although this could potentially result in the
10 first author interpreting the data in relation to her own experiences, steps taken during
11 analysis (see below) would have safeguarded against this possibility. Furthermore, the
12 advantages of a shared understanding of certain dance terminology and experiences
13 were felt to outweigh the disadvantages, such as creating trust and subsequently
14 greater depth and honesty of responses. After each interview, the first author wrote a
15 summary of the important themes that had emerged. During analysis, the second
16 author separately coded 10% of the transcripts to ensure agreement on coding density
17 (i.e., percentage of transcript coded). The second author then independently
18 categorised all meaning units. The two versions of the hierarchy were continuously
19 compared and debated until agreement was reached (Patton 2002). Finally, quotations
20 are included in the Results to allow readers to form their own interpretations (Sparkes
21 1998). Interviews followed the same schedule and generally lasted for similar
22 durations; thus the number of times a theme was mentioned by participants is
23 included in the Results to indicate its importance to the entire sample. However, it is
24 important to note that a theme may be important even if it is only mentioned by a

1 small number of participants (Krane, Andersen and Streaun 1997); therefore, all
2 themes relevant to the research question are reported below.

3

4 **Results**

5 Three higher-order themes emerged which created the overall hierarchy of
6 commitment: Developmental factors; Factors that Facilitate Commitment; and
7 Potential Barriers to Commitment. Figure 1 shows these themes together with the
8 lower-order themes from which they were created. Each theme will now be presented
9 in detail.

10 *Developmental factors*

11 This theme explored the dancers' backgrounds, current activities and future plans in
12 order to address developmental factors. In terms of backgrounds, nine students began
13 dancing at an early age (four or five years old), four began dancing around the age of
14 10 years, while the remainder came to dance later during their mid-teens, often
15 through school projects. Sixteen participants reported that they now train for a greater
16 number of hours per week than when they first started dancing and the majority (18)
17 felt that their dance training had become more difficult over time. Alongside these
18 changes in training volume and content, fifteen students noted that their own personal
19 reasons for dancing had also altered over time, with dance changing from being a
20 hobby to becoming something that they loved and were considering as a career: "I
21 think back when I first started I didn't realise, like, what was going to happen, and
22 now I just kind of realised that this is exactly what I want to do" (B1). However, four
23 participants felt that there was no change in their reasons for dancing over time, for
24 example: "I started because I was intrigued by it and I want to, I don't know, explore
25 it more" (C2).

1 As well as their CAT participation, 14 participants were training at other
2 dance schools, often partaking in several additional weekly classes. Thirteen students
3 participated in at least one other extracurricular activity, relating to music, the
4 dramatic arts, sport or visual art. As such, the young people were pursuing dance
5 training alongside other activities which may have benefited their talent development
6 in dance in terms of strength development and improved musicality for example. In
7 terms of their future plans, 15 participants aimed to pursue a dance career. Four
8 participants were considering dance as part of their career alongside other options.

9 ***Factors that Facilitate Commitment***

10 This theme was created from lower-order themes relating to positive experiences in
11 the talent scheme, and social relationships inside and outside the scheme that
12 facilitated commitment to dance. Specifically, factors that facilitated commitment
13 were enjoyment, social relationships, course content and being labelled talented.

14 *Enjoyment.*

15 The students' enjoyment of dance was expressed throughout the interviews
16 and was evident not only in their words but also in the enthusiasm with which they
17 described their feelings and experiences. Students reported numerous sources of
18 dance enjoyment and appeared to recognise that enjoyment was important in order to
19 continue training. For example, one participant explained: "...there's a lot more
20 commitment [at CAT], so I really have to feel like I enjoy it to come, and I do" (A3).
21 Several of these enjoyment sources generalised across various dance settings (e.g.,
22 technique class; creative workshops), while some were specific to performance
23 contexts.

24 *General dance enjoyment.* In terms of general sources of dance enjoyment,
25 self-expression was an important reason for dancing cited by nine of the participants,

1 for example: “I just think dancing is such a beautiful way of expressing yourself and
2 feelings” (B2). Moreover, five students explained that dance could be a form of
3 emotional release or escape from problems such as disagreements with friends or
4 pressure about school work. For example:

5 ... if I’ve had a really bad day at school or something then I can go dancing
6 and just forget about it all, and it feels like me, it feels really natural, like what I
7 should do. It’s kind of, like, my escape from everything else (B3).

8 Therefore, the expressive element of dance was important in providing an outlet for a
9 range of emotions, or as a means to forget negative emotions. Additionally, the
10 physical experience of dancing was in itself highly enjoyable; movement sensations
11 were described by seven participants, apparent in the following quote: “I just love the
12 whole, like, rush of it all...trying to fly across the room” (B1). These examples of
13 emotional and physical connection with dance suggest that the young people were
14 able to lose themselves in this highly enjoyable activity.

15 However, dance enjoyment was not only derived from expression and physical
16 sensations, but was also found in mastering steps and movement tasks. Task mastery
17 was cited by six participants, who understood that hard work enabled them to reach
18 their technical goals and subsequently increase their self-confidence: “It seems like
19 you keep working at it, and it does work, you do get a lot better” (B6). Furthermore,
20 one participant described the satisfaction from the physical signs of having worked
21 hard: “If I ache the next day I know I’ve done good. It might be hurting me but
22 [laughs] I don’t know, it makes me feel good ’cause I’ve worked really, really hard”
23 (C3). Perhaps because dance has no objective markers with which to monitor
24 progress, such physical signs and symptoms provided reliable evidence of task
25 mastery and progression. Finally, three students reported that creativity – such as
26 creating phrases individually or working collaboratively – was an enjoyable part of

1 their dance experience: “I like creating stuff. Here, when we’re performing a piece
2 together, when we’re part of the creative process, I like that” (C4). This quote also
3 introduces the role of social relationships in commitment which are further explored
4 below.

5 *Dance performance.* Although many of the enjoyment sources could relate to
6 both classes and performances, most (17) students found performing in and of itself to
7 be particularly enjoyable, as one described: “I think the adrenalin rush, it’s everything
8 that’s put towards that performance, it’s all, there’s so much pressure on you but it’s
9 your time to shine. It’s really good!” (C3). This quote illustrates how performing
10 facilitated an enjoyable adrenalin rush or ‘buzz’, which was identified by a further
11 nine participants. Indeed, one participant explained that during performance he could
12 let himself go in a way that was not possible in technique class. Performing also
13 provided dancers with opportunities for task mastery, as six students explained how
14 performance was a means of justifying the hard work that had gone into training and
15 rehearsing: “...the realisation that all that training has come to something” (C4).
16 Although task mastery was mentioned in the general dance enjoyment section, the
17 specific achievement associated with performing was distinct from studio-based
18 examples in that it represented a cumulative moment in the dancers’ training year.
19 The combination of heightened pressure to perform well and the accompanying
20 adrenalin rush meant that satisfaction after a performance was greater for most
21 students than after class, which implies that performance opportunities represented an
22 important reason for dancing. Given that performing was such an important source of
23 enjoyment, it is positive to note that seven participants stated that they performed
24 more at the CATs than at their other dance schools, which may have enhanced their
25 commitment to the talent development scheme.

1 An additional aspect of performing was dancing in front of an audience. The
2 majority of the group enjoyed performing on stage and receiving cheers, feedback and
3 appreciation from those watching. In this sense, tacit audience feedback elicited
4 positive feelings among the participants, but performing was also viewed by four
5 participants as an opportunity to give others pleasure. One participant took this notion
6 further by explaining: "...if you have that kind of passion and you show it, and then
7 the audience receives it, I think you can really, like, change someone's life" (A6). The
8 enjoyable opportunity, unique to performing, of connecting to those watching
9 illustrates an important social dimension of commitment. The role of social
10 relationships in relation to commitment is further explored below.

11 *Social relationships.*

12 Social relationships emerged strongly as an important facilitator of
13 commitment and includes social relationships within and outside of the CAT in terms
14 of CAT peers, CAT teachers, family and friends, and inspiring relationships.

15 *CAT peers.* According to 14 participants, CAT peers were important in terms
16 of friendship, support and, "...being around people who all had the same interests"
17 (A5). Spending time with likeminded peers resulted in close relationships and enabled
18 the participants to cultivate a peer group that served to enhance their identity as
19 dancers. In class the strength of these relationships resulted in encouragement and
20 motivation, as four participants described; for example: "in the class we all spur each
21 other on and give credit if we've done something well" (C2). This quote illustrates
22 how friendship and support was manifested in the studio; indeed, seven participants
23 stated that their peers worked together, were able to learn from each other, and that
24 they enjoyed this collaborative atmosphere. While the connection between dancer and
25 audience was an important social dimension to performing, an additional element

1 specific to performing was being on stage as a group. As one participant described:
2 “...no-one’s gonna let you down, ’cause everyone’s working not just to make
3 themselves look good but to make everyone look good in a way, to really prove
4 yourself as a group” (A1). These findings indicate that social relationships served to
5 enhance commitment in terms of representing a likeminded peer group as well as a
6 group of young artists with whom to cooperate.

7 *CAT teachers.* CAT teachers appeared to represent an important aspect of the
8 social environment in two related ways: through their relationship with the students
9 and positive approach, and in their teaching style. First, students appeared to have
10 good relationships with their teachers, with six describing their teachers as
11 approachable and helpful in giving valuable advice about dance careers. For example,
12 one participant explained: “I really trust them...not just with the steps they give us”
13 (A6). The professional credentials and experience of the CAT staff served to enhance
14 the extent to which students admired, trusted and sought advice from their teachers:
15 “...they’ve had so much experience and, like, we just learn loads from them” (C1).
16 This positive relationship was facilitated through teachers’ motivation and
17 encouragement to work hard, identified by seven participants, and evidenced in the
18 following quote: “[Teacher] in a way believes in me and spurs me on in what I can
19 do” (C2). Such encouragement was also reflected in the way that teachers used
20 positive and constructive feedback, as one participant explained: “I also like it when
21 the teachers praise you for, like, doing well on what they’ve corrected you on, ’cause
22 the teachers like knowing that you’re improving in what you’re doing” (B4). Given
23 that task mastery emerged as an enjoyment source, feedback of this nature provided
24 evidence that students’ mastery attempts were indeed successful, which in turn
25 enhanced their commitment to training.

1 In addition to their positive approach, staff appeared to teach in a way that
2 emphasised autonomy and equality. Specifically, two students explained that CAT
3 teachers were less controlling than their teachers at other dance schools, while two
4 participants explicitly stated that their teachers did not have favourites. Three
5 participants described how the teachers treated them like adults, which served to
6 enhance their autonomy and confidence: "...we're treated more as young dancers here,
7 whereas there [other dance school] we're still children who are learning to
8 dance...and that helps you to believe in yourself a bit more" (B3). Autonomy was
9 also nurtured as students were encouraged to take responsibility for their learning, and
10 indeed there was evidence of this occurring, for example: "I'm kind of really focusing
11 on getting this move right so that next week I'll be able to show the teacher that I have
12 practiced and that I have concentrated" (B2). Collectively, then, teachers served as
13 both supportive role models and facilitators of autonomy. This emphasis on
14 independent learning with support appeared important in relation to commitment to
15 the scheme.

16 *Family and friends.* Supportive relationships outside of the CATs were
17 predominantly with parents and friends. The majority of participants (16) felt that
18 their parents were supportive of their dance involvement. Eight dancers described
19 how parents offered advice, help and emotional support when needed. Parents
20 appeared to take a predominantly supportive and facilitative, rather than motivational,
21 role, although some participants did talk of encouragement to continue training, as the
22 following quote demonstrates: "[Mum's] always said to me, 'follow your dreams, do
23 what you want', saying 'you go to your class and you put in your effort and you'll get
24 out of it what you put in' ...she's really been helpful" (C3). Alongside this emotional
25 support, parents also provided tangible assistance in terms of transportation to and

1 from training, rehearsals and performances so that their child could continue to
2 develop their talents. One student noted: "...without them I wouldn't be able to do it
3 really" (A3). Four of the older participants (14 years and above) were aware of the
4 time and effort dedicated by their parents and expressed gratitude for this: "I think my
5 mum, well, my parents, know how much I love it so they do it for me, I'm really
6 lucky about that" (DE3). As such, families were typically perceived as being essential
7 in the facilitating the students' commitment to training.

8 In terms of friends, 14 participants described their non-dancing peers as being
9 supportive, understanding the time commitments involved in dance training, and
10 coming to watch performances. Although positive, this appeared less important than
11 parental support in helping the young dancers stay dedicated to training.

12 *Inspiring relationships.* Another social aspect that was important in motivating
13 students and encouraging their commitment came in the form of inspirational figures
14 and experiences. Participants mentioned several ways in which they had been inspired
15 to commit to dance. Seven students felt that watching professional dancers was
16 inspiring, as one explained: "...when I first ever went to see a contemporary
17 performance, I think that's when it really clicked, 'this is what I want to do'" (C3).
18 Teachers were also inspiring, as illustrated in the following quote: "I just go 'wow, I
19 want to be like you, I want to get to where you've got to'" (A7). Two participants
20 explained how watching their peers performing technical exercises in class could be
21 inspiring. Finally, one student described a school work experience opportunity with
22 children with disabilities, which helped him to appreciate and optimise his dancing.
23 Taken together, a variety of experiences could inspire students to push themselves
24 further to reach their goals.

25 *Course content.*

1 Course content was related to student commitment in that it was perceived as
2 challenging and offering several opportunities and experiences that were not available
3 at the participants' other dance schools. There was a general agreement that training
4 was focused and well-planned, involving plenty of challenge and hard work. In terms
5 of opportunities, five participants explained the variety of opportunities they had
6 experienced at the CATs including workshops with professional choreographers,
7 collaborations with young musicians and performances at various venues which were
8 felt to be professional and personally meaningful. As one explained: "I enjoy
9 everything we do, especially performances and getting to work with different
10 choreographers and stuff, it's really, really good" (B3). In addition, each CAT is
11 associated with a professional school, company or theatre, usually sharing access to
12 purpose-built dance spaces such as studios and theatres. The combination of the
13 experiences and facilities on offer appeared to have given students a taste of the
14 professional world, providing further inspiration and encouragement to commit to
15 training.

16 *Being labelled talented.*

17 All but one student could recall a time when they had been told they were talented in
18 dance, typically by parents, friends and/or teachers. One participant described how
19 this made him feel: "Good I guess. If anyone tells you you're succeeding at
20 something, you actually think, 'oh I'm gonna really go for it, push myself, try and
21 achieve something'" (A6). Being labelled talented provided evidence of a certain
22 level of competence, consequently boosting students' confidence and motivation to
23 continue training and aim for goals that may previously have appeared out of reach.

24

25 *Potential Barriers to Commitment*

1 Participants described a number of potential barriers to commitment including worries
2 and concerns, the need to juggle commitments and a lack of support. These factors
3 represented *potential* barriers and generally did not actually undermine commitment,
4 yet are still important to discuss in the context of participation behaviour.

5 *Worries and concerns.*

6 Participants listed several worries and concerns relating to their dance practice. First,
7 injury was a concern for six participants, for example: “The only worry would be that
8 I got injured and I couldn’t [dance] anymore, ’cause that can happen so easily” (B3).
9 This quote suggests that only a physical barrier such as injury would prevent the
10 dancer from continuing her training. Secondly, six participants cited worries regarding
11 perceived competence. For example, one dancer expressed her concerns about the
12 competitive dance profession: “And there’s so many good dancers as well, like, how
13 do you know if you’re good enough?” (C1). Four participants described having ‘bad
14 days’ which challenged their perceived competence, but these were infrequent. As
15 one participant described: “Obviously there’s been the bad days when I’ve come
16 home going ‘oh my God I’m crap, I’m a terrible dancer, they’re all so much better
17 than me’, and that kind of thing, but they’ve been very, very rare” (A1). The fact that
18 these ‘bad days’ were infrequent indicates that they were insufficient to affect
19 commitment; moreover, worries about competence were typically counteracted by
20 self-initiated coping strategies, such as: “... at the end of every class or whenever I’ve
21 done something good I always cheer or something like that” (C2). In doing so, it
22 appeared that low perceived competence was prevented from affecting commitment;
23 however, this quote does reinforce the importance of positive and instructive feedback
24 from teachers in providing evidence of task mastery and subsequently increasing
25 competence perceptions.

1 Two participants listed concerns related to aesthetics, such as: “I’m quite
2 muscle-y...I don’t think I’m very elegant” (B5). Demonstrating awareness of the
3 physical ‘ideals’ that exist in some dance forms, some participants were concerned
4 that they would not ‘fit’ such restrictive criteria. Almost in contrast to this, one
5 participant explained concerns relating to body image: “I hope dance doesn’t, like,
6 make me become overly concerned about what I look like or my body” (B3). Notably,
7 only two students highlighted these aesthetic issues, indicating that they were not a
8 major concern for most of the dancers.

9 Practical issues such as money and travel were discussed by two of the older
10 students, as the dance profession has limited financial rewards and involves travelling
11 when touring. However, participants had realistic and positive outlooks:

12 ...it’s such a hard industry to get into, it’s not always a guaranteed job is it? So

13 I suppose it might be hard with money and things. But I suppose – it’s more a
14 job that you love than a well-paid job isn’t it, so you just have to do it! (C1).

15 Awareness of the limited financial gains available from dance careers were
16 insufficient to prevent the participants from trying to achieve their goals; the love of
17 dance apparent in the above quote appeared to override any worries about financial
18 security due to the rewards inherent in dancing itself.

19 *Lack of support.*

20 Despite the majority of participants describing supportive relationships outside of the
21 CATs, three participants stated that their parents were not supportive of their dancing,
22 as the following quote illustrates: “They don’t care. Well, they think it’s just a hobby”
23 (A2). Five participants felt that their siblings were not supportive, usually because the
24 sibling was too young to offer support, or was older and had left home. However, this
25 perceived lack of support did not appear to undermine the participants’ commitment;

1 a love of dance combined with supportive relationships within the CATs may have
2 helped the participants to continue training regardless.

3 In terms of peers outside of dance, one participant felt that her non-dancing
4 friends were indifferent to her dancing, explaining: "...I don't really talk about dance
5 much because they're not into it" (B4). Four participants mentioned unfriendly
6 teasing from non-dancing peers; for example, one male reported that he had
7 occasionally endured negative comments regarding his sexuality. However, these
8 students did not appear to be affected by negative comments, for example: "...I lost a
9 lot of friends when I originally started, which was good in a way 'cause then it
10 showed who were my true friends" (A8). In the face of such experiences, the positive
11 relationships with CAT peers may have taken on even more importance within the
12 young dancers' lives in general. Finally, one participant discussed how her boyfriend
13 seemed to understand the time commitment required for demanding training, yet was
14 not entirely supportive:

15 ...he understands that I dance and he accepts it, but...I don't see him as much and he
16 got a bit like, 'oh you dance too much'...and it's like, 'oh I wanna do this, just let me
17 do it, I'll still see you, isn't twice a week good enough?' (A5).

18 More so than negative comments from non-dancing peers, which appeared relatively
19 easy to ignore, this romantic relationship undermined the participant's commitment to
20 dance, as is further outlined in the below section.

21 *Juggling commitments.*

22 This theme relates to the many different activities and commitments with which the
23 young people were engaged, and the impact of this on relationships with their family
24 and friends.

25 Fifteen students reported that they were juggling many commitments in their
26 lives, and 12 participants believed that balancing these commitments had become

1 more difficult over time: "...it has got more difficult...now we've started our GCSEs
2 so there's a lot more homework given, and you're trying to do stuff and seeing friends
3 has become less" (B4). Participants had to prioritise certain activities in their lives; 11
4 of the young dancers reported that CAT took priority over other dance training and
5 extracurricular activities, as one explained: "...when they said how often it was...I
6 thought I'd better put everything into coming here" (C4). This was the case even for
7 seven participants who travelled long distances to attend training; indeed, the long
8 journey provided an opportunity to catch up on school work. For example one dancer
9 explained: "We need to get up about quarter to six 'cause our train's at seven, yeah,
10 bit early. It's worth it though. I wouldn't do it if I didn't want to" (A3). Some of the
11 participants noted that juggling their various commitments had resulted in improved
12 time-management skills which helped them to manage their busy schedules.

13 In contrast, one dancer had been prioritising spending time with her boyfriend,
14 who, as noted above, was not particularly supportive of her dance involvement.
15 Despite this, the dancer was determined to stay committed to her training, explaining:
16 "I think the main thing's having a boyfriend, it's been harder, 'cause it's like another
17 thing I enjoy as much as dancing [laughs], but I still wanna [dance], it's just that I
18 need to put more into it..." (A5). Although this young dancer struggled to prioritise
19 her training, she was aware that her ambitions had not changed and that she needed to
20 continue to work hard in order to reach her goals.

21 While most of the dancers felt that juggling their commitments was
22 manageable and worthwhile, many questions had been raised for one participant. He
23 explained: "Well this has made me wonder if I'd rather go to school, options, spend
24 time with my mates and do sports at school...and it is really thinking 'am I enjoying
25 myself enough?...is this more important than that?'" (B6). As students grew older

1 they faced increasing commitments and seemed aware of conflicting interests. For this
2 particular student, participation in other activities such as school work, socialising and
3 other hobbies raised questions as to the relative importance of each activity. For the
4 time being, however, he had decided that dance remained a priority and stayed in
5 training.

6 *Effects on family and friendships.* Many of the young dancers were aware of
7 the impact their dance training had on the family. Two participants reported that the
8 family spent less time together because of their dance commitments; for example, one
9 student whose parents were divorced explained, “Well I don’t see my dad a
10 lot...’cause I dance on Saturday, and I used to go see him on weekends, but it’s kind
11 of gone out the window now” (C2). One participant described some tension between
12 herself and her father as they disagreed on her priorities: “Sometimes it makes things
13 very tense with dad ’cause he disagrees with a lot of stuff about the amount of time I
14 spend dancing” (A7). As a result, she felt that her father was unsupportive of her
15 dance involvement due to his concerns that dance training reduced the amount of time
16 available for school work. However, she remained dedicated to training as for her,
17 dance remained a priority.

18 Five participants described how their parents’ own time was affected by
19 transporting them to training, and three students acknowledged the financial impact of
20 their dance involvement on the whole family. Although the CATs widen access
21 through means testing, not all participants benefited from financial assistance, and the
22 financial impact on middle income families with several children was significant. As
23 noted above, some participants expressed gratitude for the sacrifices their parents
24 made in order to support their commitment to dance training. In contrast, nine
25 participants did not perceive any effects on their families; this could be accurate or

1 could reflect a lack of maturity or understanding of the impact of their activities on
2 the whole family.

3 Regarding effects on friendships, although 14 participants felt that their non-
4 dancing friends were supportive of their dancing, eight of them also noted that they
5 saw these friends less often due to their training. This was generally perceived as
6 being negative, for example: “I can’t see them, can’t go to parties at all... I’m missing
7 everything” (A2). Again, students had to assess the relative importance of their
8 interests and activities; the fact that the young dancers reported such close friendships
9 in the CATs may have lessened the impact of seeing other friends less often.

10 Interestingly however, three dancers did not appear to be affected by seeing their
11 friends less frequently, as one explained: “My friends at school, they’re always like,
12 ‘you’re dancing all the time, we never get to see you, we haven’t had a proper chat in
13 ages’, but I don’t mind [laughs], I’d rather be dancing!” (C3). Moreover, three
14 participants perceived positive effects, such as a greater appreciation of the time that
15 they were able to spend with these peers, indicating that on the whole commitment to
16 dance was not lessened as a result.

17

18 **Discussion**

19 The aim of this study was to investigate factors that affect young dancers’
20 commitment to a selective dance talent scheme. In doing so this study has made a
21 novel contribution to research, because without commitment to training, a young
22 dancer cannot develop his or her talents optimally. Throughout the interviews it
23 became clear that the participants were passionate about dance in that they liked it,
24 spent much time engaged in it and valued it highly (Vallerand et al. 2003); they were
25 also dedicated to their training even in the face of technical challenges and busy

1 schedules. Overall, enjoyment and social relationships were the most frequently cited
2 factors that influenced dance commitment; course content, developmental factors and
3 additional themes such as juggling activities are also worthy of discussion.

4 Enjoyment emerged overwhelmingly as the most important factor associated
5 with dance commitment, which supports much previous research (e.g. Gould et al.
6 1985; Klint and Weiss 1986; Ryska et al. 2002; Salguero et al. 2003). Enjoyment
7 sources cited by the participants bear similarities to participation motives reported in
8 previous dance research, including self-expression, creativity and performing (Alter
9 1997; Nieminen 1998; Pickard 2006; Stinson 1997). Self-expression in particular was
10 the most frequently cited enjoyment source, suggesting that a personal or emotional
11 connection to the talent activity can have an impact upon an individual's desire to
12 continue pursuing his or her art. These more artistic factors could be considered
13 dance-specific as other enjoyment sources, such as movement sensations, task
14 mastery and emotional release, have also been cited in sport studies, and could be
15 considered more general as participation motives for physical activities (e.g. Scanlan
16 et al. 1993a; Wankel and Kreisel 1985). Participants were predominantly intrinsically
17 motivated to dance, which supports previous research with talented youth
18 (Csikszentmihalyi et al. 1993; Ryska et al. 2002) and indicates that the elements
19 inherent to dance such as self-expression and task mastery are what drive participation
20 and commitment more than external motives such as praise or pressure from
21 significant others.

22 While it could be assumed that young people enrolled in selective training
23 programmes are engaged in the single-minded pursuit of excellence, social
24 relationships were essential to the participants' commitment. The young dancers
25 described their CAT peers as being important in terms of friendship, motivation and

1 sharing common interests. The importance of peer relationships to activity
2 participation has been reported in previous studies of talented young people (Fraser-
3 Thomas et al. 2008; Fredricks et al. 2002; Patrick et al. 1999). Furthermore,
4 socialising with likeminded peers may have had a positive impact upon the dancers'
5 identity development and subsequent desire to continue training (Fredricks et al.
6 2002). Notably, in the current study the importance of peer relationships operated
7 across several dimensions, including not only typical friendship behaviours such as
8 support and encouragement, but also in relation to technical and artistic progress in
9 terms of practicing with one another, collaborating to create work, and performing
10 together.

11 In addition to peer relationships on the talent development scheme,
12 participants valued their teachers as inspiring role models who encouraged and
13 supported them. Students felt that they were treated like adults by their teachers and
14 were encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, which appeared to
15 enhance their confidence, motivation and commitment. Such emphasis on personal
16 progression and autonomy relate conceptually to definitions of a task-involving
17 motivational climate (Ames 1992), which have been associated with adherence in
18 sport (Boiché and Sarrazin 2009; Le Bars et al. 2009). Indeed, research with the larger
19 cohort of CAT students indicated that task-involving climate perceptions were
20 associated with adherence (Redding et al. 2011); taken together, teacher behaviour in
21 the studio appears to play a significant role in nurturing dance commitment.

22 Outside of the talent scheme environment, parental support was an important
23 factor in facilitating the young dancers' commitment to their training. Participants
24 described receiving emotional, financial and logistical support from their parents,
25 which supports other studies of talented youth (Côté 1999; Csikszentmihalyi et al.

1 1993). Previous research has indicated that peers outside of the talent activity can
2 have either an encouraging or lessening impact on commitment (Fraser-Thomas et al.
3 2008; Patrick et al. 1999). In the current study, peers outside of the studio were more
4 likely to support than undermine their friends' commitment to dance, although this
5 was not universally the case. On the whole, the role of social relationships both within
6 and outside of the dance environment should not be underestimated during a young
7 dancer's training.

8 Course content emerged as another factor influencing the young dancers'
9 commitment. First, lesson content was perceived to be well-structured and
10 challenging, which is positive because balancing challenge and skill level in talent
11 settings is important for building motivation and creating enjoyable experiences
12 (Csikszentmihalyi et al. 1993; Fredricks et al. 2002). Secondly, students were inspired
13 and motivated by numerous opportunities to get a taste of the professional dance
14 world via performances, theatre visits and workshops. This highlights the value of
15 enrichment opportunities in talent schemes that relate to participants' future
16 aspirations. The finding also supports the role of involvement opportunities as
17 highlighted in the Sport Commitment Model (SCM; Carpenter et al., 1993; Scanlan et
18 al., 1993b; Scanlan et al., 2003). Indeed, the current study concurs with the enjoyment
19 and social support antecedents of the SCM (Carpenter et al. 1993; Carpenter and
20 Coleman 1998; Scanlan et al. 1993b; Weiss and Weiss 2006). However, although the
21 current study did not attempt to test the SCM, it appears that this model may not
22 encompass all of the factors that influence dance commitment. Furthermore, some
23 antecedents in the SCM (involvement alternatives, personal investments and social
24 constraints) did not emerge from the data. Future studies could usefully assess the
25 extent to which sport theories can be applied to dance.

1 Regarding developmental factors, some researchers suggest that optimal
2 developmental trajectories for commitment and elite performance exist (e.g., Côté,
3 Lidor and Hackfort 2009) but the current study was unable to support or contend this
4 notion in dance. Participants reported varying backgrounds as well as diverse current
5 levels of dance and extracurricular activity involvement. However, the majority of the
6 young dancers reported participating in increasing hours of dance training over time,
7 the content of which had become increasingly difficult, in accordance with most talent
8 models (e.g., Côté 1999). Furthermore, most participants explained that their reasons
9 for dancing had changed over time, with dance changing from a recreational activity
10 to something that many of the young dancers loved and considered as a future career.
11 This suggests that passion and drive develop over time and demonstrates the influence
12 that both emotional attachment to an activity and future goals can exert over
13 participation decisions. Although the importance of love or passion to commitment is
14 intuitive, this study was the first to highlight it, and further such research is
15 recommended.

16 Three additional findings emerged from the current study which are relevant
17 to the understanding of dance commitment. First, all but one of the participants had
18 been labelled talented at some point in their dance histories. Although being labelled
19 talented can lead young people to feel that their abilities are outside of their control,
20 resulting in poor persistence when confidence is low (Dweck 1986), in the current
21 study being labelled talented boosted the dancers' confidence and motivation to
22 pursue dance. It is possible that the participants already had high levels of confidence
23 in their abilities and were thus positively affected by such labels (Dweck 1986).
24 Secondly, some students were inspired by dance performances, teachers and peers to
25 continue working hard or aim to become a professional dancer. Pickard and Bailey

1 (2009) similarly noted the importance of such ‘crystallising’ experiences in increasing
2 young dancers’ drive to pursue their art.

3 Finally, although some participants identified worries and concerns (e.g.
4 injury), for intrinsically motivated dancers, such potential barriers did not appear to
5 lessen commitment. Furthermore, juggling increasing commitments to dance, school
6 and friends was generally deemed manageable and did not appear to affect
7 commitment to dance among the majority of participants. This is in contrast to recent
8 research with dropout students from the same cohort, who indicated that conflicting
9 demands was the most important reason for withdrawing from the CATs (Walker et
10 al. 2012). These dropout students decided to prioritise schoolwork, spending time
11 with family or, most commonly, spending time with friends instead of dance training.
12 However, while many of the participants in the current study acknowledged that their
13 dance commitments limited the amount of time they could spend with family and
14 friends, for the most part this did not have a lessening effect on commitment. The
15 exception to this was one participant’s romantic relationship. Similar findings have
16 been reported in youth sport (Coakley and White 1992) and elite netball (Scanlan et
17 al. 2009) and indicates that more than relationships with family and friends, romantic
18 relationships may have an impact upon adolescents’ commitment to talent activities
19 and are worthy of further research.

20 Overall, enjoyment underpinned commitment to dance, facilitated by social
21 relationships and the opportunities available on the talent scheme. Future research
22 should continue to explore dance commitment, perhaps by further investigating the
23 emergent themes in this study such as the influence of romantic relationships. The
24 results of this study suggest that educators could facilitate young talented dancers’
25 commitment to training by emphasising the enjoyable aspects of dance such as self-

1 expression, movement sensations and creativity. Encouraging dancers to work toward
2 collaborative goals, changing peer leaders regularly and allowing shared group
3 decision making can enhance peer relationships (Redding et al. 2011). Teaching styles
4 that emphasise autonomy and provide a balance between challenge and support also
5 appear important. Furthermore, it has been shown in sport that adopting behaviours
6 including informational and corrective instruction, reinforcement, praise and
7 encouragement after mistakes can enhance enjoyment and intention to continue
8 playing (Smoll and Smith 2002). Finally, dance institutions should aim to provide
9 students with inspiring opportunities such as workshops and theatre visits, while
10 encouraging family support by inviting parents to events.

11

12 **Conclusion**

13 In order for young people to develop their talents, dedication to training and
14 progression over a sustained period of time is necessary. The current study
15 investigated factors that affect commitment to dance training among young talented
16 dancers. The experiences intrinsic to dance, such as self-expression and movement
17 sensations, underpin the enjoyment that drives dance commitment, facilitated by
18 social relationships and the opportunities that the talent scheme provide. From their
19 enthusiasm for the activity and their positive outlooks, it appeared that many of the
20 young dancers had a genuine passion for dance and drive to succeed, which helped
21 them to overcome potential barriers and maintain their commitment. Importantly, the
22 young people were not driven solely by a single-minded dedication to the pursuit of a
23 professional career, but by intrinsic motivation for dance and the enjoyment derived
24 from engaging with like-minded peers. The role of opportunities such as
25 performances and collaborations enriched the curriculum by broadening the students'

1 understanding of the nature of the dance sector and further inspiring them to achieve
2 their dreams. Crucial within this was teacher behaviour in facilitating these
3 opportunities as well as providing challenging training and first-hand knowledge of
4 the profession. This study has begun to address the gap in the literature around dance
5 commitment, providing valuable findings and implications for practice. Overall,
6 application of the findings may help educators to enhance their programme retention
7 rates by creating learning environments that optimise enjoyment, enhance peer
8 relationships, balance challenge with support and provide exciting opportunities. By
9 optimising commitment to talent development processes, educators may help to
10 enable young dancers to reach their goals and become successful artists in the future.

11

12

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15

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28 Medicine and Science.

29

30

1 **Appendix: Interview Guide**

2
3 **1. Introductory questions**

- 4 ○ Could you describe for me when you first started dancing?
5 i. Types of dance, how often and where
6 ii. Who initiated dance training
7 ○ Can you describe any other extra-curricular activities you take part in?
8 i. Did you used to?
9

10 **2. Feelings about dance**

- 11 ○ Can you remember if you have ever been told that you are talented in
12 dance?
13 i. Who by?
14 ii. How did it make you feel?
15 ○ Could you tell me a bit about whether you plan to do anything with dance
16 in your future?
17 ○ Can you describe any worries or concerns you might have about dancing?
18 i. Now?
19 ii. About the future?
20 ○ Do you dance in other schools?
21 i. Can you describe any differences between these two (or more)
22 types of training you are doing?
23 ○ Can you tell me a bit about what is your CAT training like? Have you had
24 any particularly good or bad times?
25

26 **3. Changes over time**

- 27 ○ Can you describe what your main reasons for dancing now are?
28 i. Could you describe what it is about dancing that you most like or
29 enjoy? When do you enjoy it the most?
30 ii. Do you think you are still dancing for the same reason as when you
31 started?
32 ○ Can you tell me how your dance involvement has changed over time?
33 i. Are you doing more hours, styles, performances?
34 ○ Do you think dance has got easier or harder over time?
35 i. Dancing itself
36 ii. Training
37 iii. Getting to dance training
38 iv. Fitting dance training in with other commitments such as school
39 exams, chores, friends, etc.
40

41 **4. Significant others**

- 42 ○ Can you describe what sort of role your parents and/or siblings play in
43 your dance involvement?
44 i. Did they encourage you?
45 ○ Can you tell me what role you think your teachers play?
46 ○ Can you describe the role of your friends in your dance involvement?
47 i. Friends in dance
48 ii. Friends outside of dance

- 1 ○ Could you describe how your dance involvement affects those around you
2 such as your family and friends? (It might not)

3

4 **5. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

5

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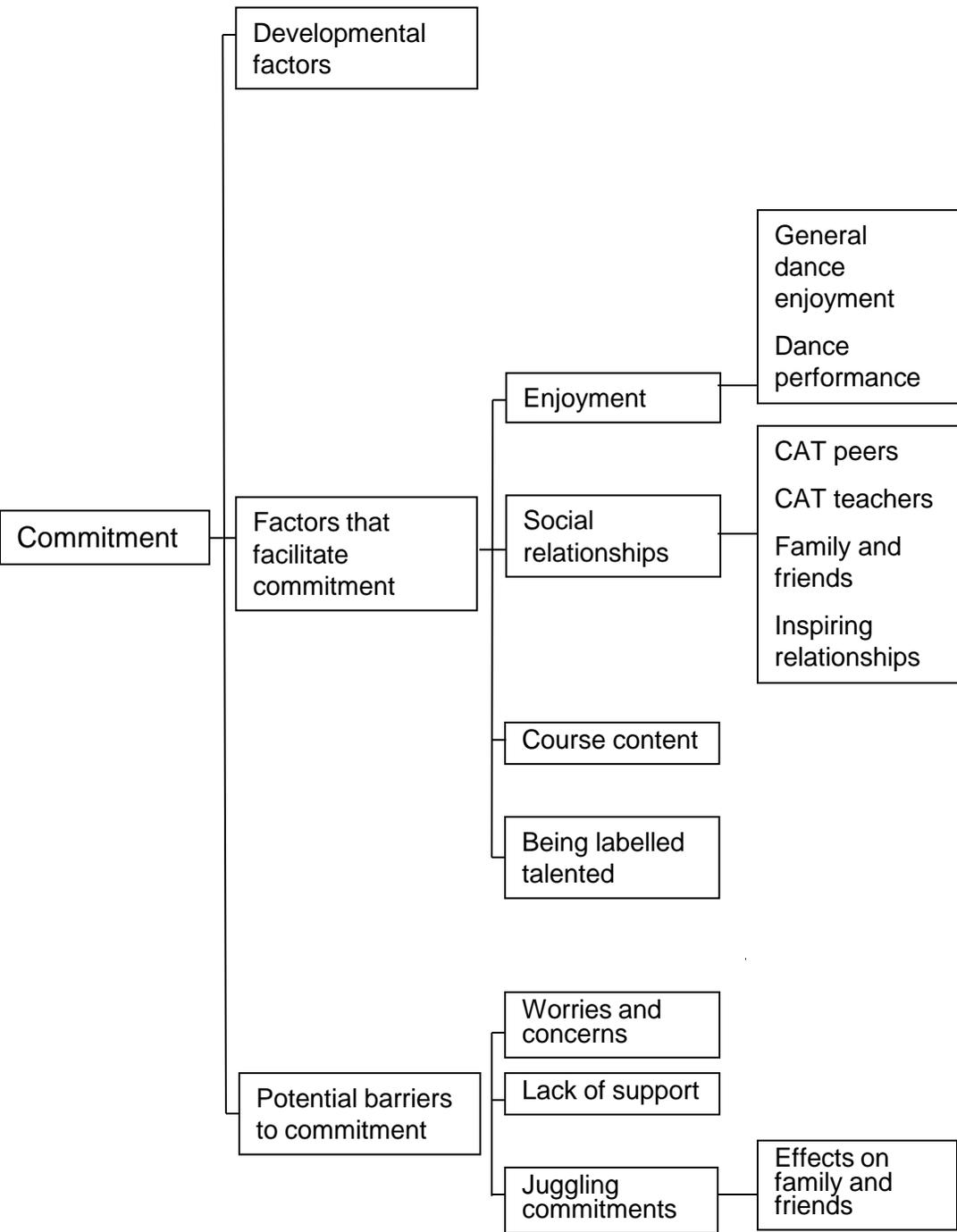


Figure 1. Hierarchical representation of results.