

## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON HIP-HOP DANCERS AND THEIR CLASSES

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### Abstract

The popularity of social media is undeniable and the number of its users have been rapidly growing from the beginnings. Online presence has influenced the field of the arts including the world of hip-hop dance as well. The platforms allowed hip-hop dancers to reach entire crowds throughout the online surfaces. Choreographers and dancers became famous by their shared videos, which soon lead to the appearance of a growing number of edited, performance-like, therefore, manipulated class footages. These posts show a distorted image and unrealistic expectations regarding the purpose of taking classes. The influence of these videos has been unknown so far but it is a heated topic amongst hip-hop dancers. Besides, there are several other factors caused by social media that could impact the dancers of the community. The relation of social media and hip-hop dance was studied through a qualitative research with participants from Budapest, London and Los Angeles (n=6). The results of the research show that social media sometimes individually and other times regionally can be an advantage or a disadvantage both for hip-hop dancers and the classes that they take. The platforms also influence hip-hop teachers and their students mentally and physically, it effects their motivation, sponsorship and job opportunities as well.

**Keywords:** social media, hip-hop, motivation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an undeniable part of our lives. Its various platforms provide the availability of instant, real-time information sharing (Hudson, 2020). The first social media site was a platform called SixDegrees.com from 1997 (Boyd and Ellyson, 2007). The most popular social media application, Facebook, was created by Mark Zuckerberg in 2004 and was soon followed by the appearance of YouTube, Twitter and Instagram (Ahmad, 2018). Facebook is used by nearly 1.734 billion people worldwide on a daily basis, according to the company's first quarter report from 2020<sup>1</sup>. YouTube is the second and Instagram is the sixth most popular application (Clement, 2020).

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<sup>1</sup><https://edge.media-server.com/mmc/p/fx4dahch>

Hip-hop videos on social media have been important tools for self-definition and community building for minority or subcultural groups, first in the United States and then worldwide. Young people created a participatory and creative community with their own hip-hop videos and used hip-hop to articulate opinions on social media platforms (Porfilio, Gardner, & Roychoudhury, 2013; Delgado, 2018).

Hip-hop is a reflective genre. The distinctive battle motif is also a type of dialogic, reactive and collaborative competing amongst dancers (Hill and Petchauer, 2012), which is ideal to share on social platforms as they allow self-expression and the sharing of opinions on dance videos. This can be observed through dance challenges as well, that have been popular since 2018. The most famous video in this genre was Drake's In My Feelings challenge. After the artist's album was released, social media comedian Shiggy posted a video on his Instagram page in which he danced to Drake's In My Feelings song. He used the DoTheShiggy hashtag below his post to encourage followers for imitating the video (Amiftos, 2018).

The battle motif also appears in a characteristic subgroup of hip-hop videos, known as select group videos. On these recordings, students selected by their teachers dance in small groups or solos in the dance studios while the other students watch them. These videos are primarily for the promotion of dance schools, teachers and dancers so its creators aim for perfection both in terms of dance and film techniques. The 2009 Kennis Class video is a camcorder video from the end of a lesson. The industry's turning point was; however, when the American Will Adams (known as WillDaBeast) shared his choreography for Beyoncé's Upgrade U soundtrack. This video was watched by more than 114 million people on YouTube. That is currently 14 million more than the views on the singer's official music video. Will's content was completely different from the previous hip-hop videos. The American dancer and choreographer Brian Friedman said, that the success of this video was in its details. Will has only filmed his selected dancers; the ones who were the best in class and then he edited the footages to make one video. The studio was bright so everything was clear and visible. His recording was also much better quality than most previously seen videos of its kind (Burke, 2017). In the 2013 Adams video the use of basic cinematography; cuts, alternation of black and white or colour images and the use of plans can be seen. The structure of the 2018 FEFE Dance - Delaney Glazer video is similar with the additional element that it begins with an introduction: the studio is first visible from the outside and then we enter the crowded class through the corridors. After the professionally edited introduction the viewer can watch the select group videos. With the assistance of cinematography, the select group videos have become a new source of entertainment. Comments under the 2013 and 2018 videos show that a large number of viewers want to learn the choreographies and / or follow its dancers. The videos' choreographers and dancers can become well-known celebrities so it is no surprise that the uploaded materials have also become increasingly edited and performance-like (Hawgood, 2016).

For the achievement of perfection in terms of form (= film language) and content (= dance technique) only the best students can participate in select group dances. On the one hand, this can lead to the widespread and rapid development of hip-hop techniques but it can also cause frustration in the communities that teach and learn hip-hop. According to Fuhrer (2017) and Laos (2019) these videos are promoting

contents that present a misleading picture regarding the learning process of dance. Laos asked commercial dancers, choreographers, dance teachers, and an agency (n=5) about how social media including Instagram had changed their careers. Interviews revealed that the use of social media is a self-representation and self-management tool for dancers, thus it has become necessary and expected for career building in the US since the second half of 2010. Social media profiles also serve as an online portfolio for dancers (Laos, 2019).

While Laos's (2019) research focused on social media's role in dance careers and online marketing, this present research investigated the changes caused by social media's popular hip-hop contents in the teaching and the community of hip-hop dance in the UK, the US and Hungary.

## 2. RESEARCH SAMPLE AND METHODS

The effects of social media use on the hip-hop dance community and hip-hop education were mapped out in the form of a qualitative study during the winter of 2018 and the spring of 2019. The in-depth interviews were completed by acknowledged hip-hop teachers (n=6) who teach large number of students and have been teaching before the appearance of social media.

Barbara Börczi is the founder, director and choreographer of a dance school in Budapest who has been teaching in the Hungarian capital for thirteen years. Her teams won first place in several local competitions, winning dozens of cups and gold medals. Her students have performed in a number of prestigious competitions not only in Hungary but abroad as well. In 2018 her formation participated in the World of Dance competition in Warsaw. Barbara has also choreographed a concert, music video and in 2015 she was the co-choreographer of the Hungarian X-Factor. The downtown nightclub, Ötkert, has based a full series of events on her school.

Attila Bóhm is a dancer and teacher at the world famous R3D ONE dance studio in Budapest. In the US he received a Movement Lifestyle scholarship and travelled to Los Angeles to study at a prominent North Hollywood dance studio (themovementlifestyle.com). He runs courses all over the world, trains competition teams and choreographs at dance schools.

Dániel Hefler is a hip-hop teacher and a dancer. In 2016, he took first place at the Hip Hop Unite World Championships with his team called Side Effect. After the 2018 WOD in Warsaw he appeared on the TV show of World of Dance Polska and choreographed for their team together with Barbara Börczi. He also performed as a dancer in productions of the Wonderland Show Company and Freelusion.

The members of the HomeBros dancing duo are Unkle TC (George) and Kurty-swift (Kurtis). They are Ghanaian dancers, choreographers and teachers who were born in London and still live in the English capital. They started dancing professionally 14 years ago at the BoyBlue Entertainment hip-hop dance company. At the age of 16 they were given the opportunity to teach within the company, so they have been giving classes in London for nearly 10 years. HomeBros are the English pioneers of the afrobeats dance movement. They have worked with a number of international artists, BBC and Adidas as well. They performed at the opening ceremony of the 2012 Olympic Games, the 2015 British X-Factor Finale, the Breakin 'Convention, the

Alan Carr television show and a number of other performances. Their BoyBlue Entertainment performance, *Pied Paper*, won a Laurence Olivier Award.

The Slovenian dancer, choreographer and influencer Nika Kljun is a teacher at the Millennium Dance Complex in Los Angeles. She has danced alongside Beyoncé, Jennifer Lopez, Justin Bieber, Ne-Yo and has performed at the world-famous MTV Video Music Awards and Billboard Music Awards shows. She appeared on *America's Got Talent*, *Dancing with the Stars* and the *American X-Factor* TV shows as well. She choreographed a Britney Spears concert and was also hired for working on the choreography of the closing ceremony of the 2018 FIFA World Championships.

The interviews consisted of 24 English and Hungarian questions that focused on the following areas within the research questions:

- Which applications are used in the hip-hop dance community in each country?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of using social media for educators and students?
- How do videos effect the purpose and content of lessons?
- How does social media effect dancers' job opportunities and sponsorships?

Our hypothesis is that social media has an impact on hip-hop teachers and students, lesson planning, motivation, sponsorship, and job opportunities. According to our theory the positive and negative effects are likely to be the most significant in Los Angeles, moderate in London and the least significant in Budapest. We also assume that the American and English data would be less distinct from one another as they are both Western countries with the same native language and a partly shared dance population. In comparison for the Hungarian hip-hop community it is a much slower and more difficult process to perceive new changes due to the country's economy, location and non-English mother tongue.

### 3. RESULTS

#### 3.1. The characteristics of social media use in the three countries' hip-hop dance communities

In the world of hip-hop dance, the use of social media first appeared in America but the phenomenon quickly became international. Kljun said that the video-sharing platform YouTube, founded in 2005, only appeared among American dancers in 2007. According to Hungarian instructors, the use of social media by the local hip-hop dance community appeared in the country only a few years after the United States. Like in America, all dancers in Hungary initially uploaded their videos to YouTube. After a while; however, claiming copyright infringement YouTube banned the music from these videos. According to Böhm, this was like *"taking a racket out of a tennis player's hand"*. Without music dance videos were useless so a new platform was needed. YouTube was temporarily replaced by Facebook but mostly only friends could see the uploaded videos as well as the problems with the use of music began once again. According to Böhm, the Budapest R3D ONE dance school's official page was deleted with about five hundred thousand followers from the site by Facebook claiming music copyright infringement. This was a huge loss for the school as the gathering of followers and the management of the site took years of work.

According to the interviewees, currently Instagram is the most popular platform among hip-hop dancers in all three countries. According to Kljun and HomeBros, it was in 2014 that dance videos began to spread more significantly on Instagram in both America and England. Two years later this tendency also appeared in the case of Hungarian dancers. In addition to the copyright problem of music, there were other reasons for the changing of platforms. The most determining group of hip-hop dancers, between the ages fourteen to thirty, began to spend an increasing amount of time on Instagram (Pew Research Center). In addition, Instagram has proven to be a more user-friendly platform (Smith, 2018). According to HomeBros, “(...)it’s the go to app for becoming famous or becoming viral in a day”. On Instagram, users follow the people they look up to and are curious about unlike on other apps where they add friends.

In addition to Instagram, Facebook is still an essential tool for hip-hop classes in Hungary. The profiles allow to share information such as posters, events as well as change cover images that reach every friend of the user. Besides the possibility of advertising Facebook is also the medium for group communication. YouTube and Instagram do not allow to create groups with the feature of content sharing and forum conversation. According to Börczi, before the appearance of Facebook, “if you got sick, you had to send text messages... it costed a lot of money and the information didn’t spread as quickly”.

Teachers need to keep up with platforms by sharing images and videos that reach out to current and potential online followers. According to Bóhm, online popularity determines the attendance in classes, so to a certain extent everyone who wants to teach dancers in larger groups also wants popularity. Hefler says that he would share less content if visibility was not as important for his work.

Both the HomeBros in London and Kljun in Los Angeles have only felt the positive impact of social media in their careers. In the two interviews, all three teachers referred to social media as an assisting tool rather than a source of pressure.

## **3.2. The advantages and disadvantages of using social media in hip-hop education**

### *3.2.1. Teachers*

One of the benefits of social media is the ability to network with like-minded people. According to HomeBros the owners of online dance profiles can get to know and get closer to each other’s works from anywhere around the world through social media. Nika Kljun often connects with teachers and dancers of similar backgrounds from around the world using these platforms. Attila Bóhm also experienced this in Hungary. He has been able to teach in several countries, despite the fact that his home is one of the less important places in the world of hip-hop. Dancers can also connect with artists, other performers and even brands online. All interviewees believed that this sense of online visibility and connection increased the opportunities for teachers around the world.

Social media also made it easier to have access to the work of foreign dancers. According to Hefler, Hungarian hip-hop dancers have the opportunity to constantly monitor the life and works of international dancers. Bóhm believes that the online

content also serves as a guide for Hungarians. Dancers can follow the style’s developments and current competitions from abroad. Bóhm watches interviews with dancers and choreographers, which was not possible 5-10 years ago. Hefler thinks in addition to personal information online contents can also be used for inspiration by following dancers around the world. According to him such inspiration influences movements, outfit choices and even a way of living for dancers. For Bóhm, being a dancer was for a long time limited to studio classes. When one of his role models Keone Madrid was featured on a television show, the American dancer took TRX and CrossFit classes for half a year to prepare his body for the challenges ahead. Attila Bóhm was only then aware of how complex the training of a professional hip-hop dancer was and he also started training more. The proximity of foreign dancers also provides an opportunity to learn from the bests in the profession. According to Börzci one can learn from these videos and rapidly develop by doing so. There are explicit tutorial videos that anyone can watch and try for free from anywhere in the world. In addition to inspiration and development, the proximity of foreign dancers also gives Dániel Hefler a reassuring feeling.

Social media’s advantages include personal motivation, which according to the Hungarian teachers, is partially provided by the online platforms. Bóhm believes that besides other dancers’ videos a teacher’s own post can become a motivating tool as well. As a result of the large number of views the video can reach a big audience who may support the content. Barbara Börzci feels that face-to-face positive feedback is rare and people praise on social media platforms.

The most outstanding advantage of social media, which was mentioned by all three Hungarian teachers was the possibility of advertising hence having visibility on the platforms. In Hefler’s classes students often take videos, which then they share on various platforms. These contents can reach an extensive audience thus advertise both the dance school and its teacher. Börzci believes that the shared videos also help students to be widely known.

In addition to its many benefits, social media also hinders the work of hip-hop teachers (*Table 1*).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Networking	Disproportionate expectations
Easier access of foreign dancers	Must-follow trends
Motivation	Chasing of popularity
Advertising	Distorted values
	Accelerated work schedule
	Emotional pressure

*Table 1:* The positive and negative effects of social media on teachers

Since the advent of online platforms dancers can see classes from abroad thereby arriving to their own classes with expectations based on the viewed contents. Students

are paying for the classes so they pick and choose as customers from the available options. If the studio does not meet the wishes of dancers then they continue their trainings elsewhere. Following trends in such ways pressures teachers and schools likewise (Howard, 2018). According to Börzci, dance teachers have to adapt to the expectations otherwise the given teacher may seem old-fashioned in the trend-driven world of hip-hop. According to HomeBros, many teachers in England have completely changed their teaching style to meet the new needs of their classes in both studios and at workshops.

Social media also has the disadvantage of setting trends, which puts the emphasis on appearances rather than the knowledge of hip-hop teachers. The Hungarian hip-hop community admires trends followed by foreign dancers seen through their outfits, use of language or the typical photos they take. The looks of teachers have such great importance today that it is common for it to be more important than the knowledge they have. According to Börzci, as a woman, *“(...) if you are not a sex bomb then you have an extra difficult job to make it in the industry”* Besides the looks, movements also have a trend that partly defines choreographies. Movements such as the dab have become famous through social media. In many cases these moves do not come from professional dancers but from street children. There are also changing trends in the execution of movements or the initial steps of choreographies. According to Börzci, word choices or stylistic features used on social media are also spreading rapidly within the community. In fact, even choreographed songs are influenced by these trends. According to HomeBros, there are typical top-list songs that everyone choreographs then makes the same videos for.

A further disadvantage of social media is that hip-hop teachers are chasing popularity on the platforms, thereby setting themselves up for false goals. HomeBros think that teachers want more attention, followers and the creation of their own brands in America, England and even across Europe. According to Bóhm, the main purpose of uploading dance class videos is not to show off students or present the process but to hope that the uploaded footage will be watched by many people. As a result, Hefler says many teachers only share the dancing of their best learners on social media.

The distorted values of social media not only encourage the chasing of popularity but also effect the process of choreographing. Bóhm believes choreographies for popular songs have a higher number of views; therefore, making teachers insecure and influencing them to create only a certain type of choreography. Although it is difficult to ignore the numbers, Bóhm says, every teacher should know that *“(...) just because something was not watched by a million people it is still valuable”*.

Hefler said; the social platforms have accelerated work schedule in the industry. Bóhm thought the same, stating that teachers must choreograph the day after the release of a new track then teach and film it in the next days because after a week or two, hundreds of other choreographies will appear.

Social media also puts emotional pressure on hip-hop teachers. According to Börzci, teachers are more confronted with who loves or looks down on their work. According to her, dance teachers and even their students would need a competitive sports and social media expert psychologist to help them through the traumas they experienced. According to Börzci, choreographies are rated by the non-dancer

community and there are a lot of negative comments as well. However, to be present in the profession one needs to get through the consequences and stay on the platforms.

### 3.2.2. Students

The American and English teachers both mentioned the advantage of social media's role in helping students dance careers. Among the most popular in the profession are students who have reached millions of viewers through class videos. Kljun believes that filming "(...) can be a great tool for a dancer who has a good relationship with the camera and with social media." According to Bóhm, not all talented dancers get the same attention on these platforms because arousing interest often depends on who has the best media personality. HomeBros believe that the videos "attract people around the world who would never usually see your talent including artists, labels, and companies". In the lives of young celebrity dancers, the opportunity for teaching also arrives very quickly. Taylor Hatala, the young girl known from Nicki Minaj's music video has been teaching workshops in Los Angeles and New York since the age of 13 (Hurd, 2016). According to the Hungarian teachers, hip-hop dancers in their country do not have the same opportunities that Kljun and HomeBros have mentioned. However; due to the lower number of dancers studying hip-hop in Hungary, they have a higher chance of making it in the profession at home.

Bóhm and Hefler see that students follow the internationally recognized and most talented hip-hop dancers. Such role models can influence students in both appearance and development. A great advantage of using social media, according to Bóhm, is that students also pay attention to their diet, lifestyle and additional workouts besides dancing. Hefler had a student who dyed her hair the same colour as her role model's but it is also possible to learn choreographies from international videos. According to Hefler, many people "can copy a movement's style just by watching videos" and later they can also adapt to certain styles much easier. When learning new choreographies these students immediately identify with the movements.

Interviewees all agreed that the advantages of social media include motivation that platforms provide to students (Table 2).

Advantages	Disadvantages
Building a dance career	Loss of individuality
Healthy lifestyle	Distorted self-image
Available hip-hop trends and movement styles	False motivation
Motivation	False view of the purpose of classes
	Shorter attention span
	Compulsion to film

Table 2: Positive and negative effects of social media on students

Teachers in Hungary and England both found that following role models unquestionably leads to the loss of individuality either in style and/or in movements. Böhm sees that there is always a popular clothing item or brand that many students wear in classes. According to Börzci, at the moment extra-long fake nails and hoodies tucked in at the back are very popular. Both trends spread through videos and were spotted on dancer Ysabelle Capitulé from Los Angeles who is currently one of the most significant influencers of the community. Hefler thinks it is mostly the dancers who push in class for selections that buy new outfits and pay attention to their looks the most. Hefler says the videos affect everyone but there are some who's bodies copy entirely what they see in the videos. According to Börzci, it is difficult to accept that many students sacrifice their individuality for copying trends. HomeBros also feel that students assume the key for a guaranteed success is to be like the already popular dancers, so "*A lot of videos look the same and a lot of dancers look the same now (...)*." Hefler says, that students who don't really follow influencers, may for this exact reason be more original and novel even if it is not always an advantage on Instagram.

In addition to the loss of individuality another disadvantage of social media is the cause of distorted self-image, which also affects students' self-esteem negatively. Instagram allows to follow, like and comment on contents. According to Böhm, this encourages slanted opinions and comparisons of dance videos. Although the number of views or follows should not be confused with talent yet many mix up the two. Börzci often sees that for this reason students do not recognize their own achievements. They share the learned choreographies then judge who is better or worse based on their likes.

Although widely popular, followed and commented contents are motivating they can also contribute to the development of false motivation in students. HomeBros say back in the days everyone danced because they used to love it more than anything else in the world. Dancers would meet their friends in class and live every moment of the practice without a camera. Back then, dancers wanted to prove themselves not in front of the world but to their peers. HomeBros think the 15 to 20-year-olds today might never experience this. The boys think that this kind of popularity-seeking motivation is also related to the systematic manipulation of dance videos.

Related to false motivation another negative impact of social media is that students do not see the real purpose of hip-hop lessons. According to Kljun, dance classes should be about concentration, technical development, training and the desire to dance. However, HomeBros say that nowadays it is all about filming. The students do not attend classes for development but for filming the select group videos. It is not their love for the art but the possible gaining of attention that motivates them. Students hope that the select group videos will make them famous. They spend so much time editing their online profiles that the hours could add up to a part-time job. HomeBros believe that students attend classes as if they were going to perform on stage. They mark throughout the entire learning phase and "*(...) wait 'till the end to bang up because the camera is there*". Their goal is to dance in a duo or solo because these videos can increase the viewership of their profile the most. The same tendency can be observed in the classes of famous teachers. All students hope that if they are in a video of a celebrity teacher then they can become famous too. Kljun feels that

dancers put themselves under a lot of pressure to perform in classes, which takes away the confidence of many and it certainly prevents the purpose of the lesson. Dance classes are no longer a safe zone for development but a stage for the students, which intimidates and hinders many through their learning process. According to HomeBros, this phenomenon is ubiquitous from America through England and across Europe and it has become the norm for most hip-hop classes.

HomeBros think that both memory and concentration can be negatively affected by social media. In today's classes the aim is no longer the long-term development but the quick learning then posting of choreographies. Students are less focused during lessons and require a constant flow of information. Börzci regularly experiences at mega crew rehearsals that students who are not rehearsing immediately go on their phones. She sees that as soon as the camera shows up in class the students' full attention is back on because they want to look good in the videos. HomeBros also mentioned that dancers are preoccupied with the videos from their phones instead of focusing on their progress in class.

According to Bóhm, the profession is not as easy as Instagram makes it look. Students only face the difficulties of acquiring genuine knowledge and technique when taking classes. A dance career demands renouncement as there is no time, energy and opportunity to pursue other activities or hobbies which, according to Börzci can at times be difficult for the dancer.

### 3.2.3. *Lessons*

All teachers identified development as the most important aim of hip-hop lessons. The aim determines the content of the lessons. Börzci thinks it is important to include physical/technical trainings and to simulate and practice different dance situations (eg. casting or performing). Hefler and Kljun consider fun to be essential for the learning environment as it helps students to loosen up and learn quicker. Many students are not aware of their talents at first so HomeBros also consider it their job to mentor students. The boys' classes also aim to pass on cultural heritage.

Development is also important for recreational dancers in Hungary but according to Börzci and Bóhm, relaxation and enjoyment are the most important purposes of such lessons. Börzci believes that these dancers can identify a personal goal once they are having fun and by that are motivated to attend classes.

The question is that how much does the appearance of select group videos change the purpose and content of hip-hop lessons. According to Fuhrer (2017), hip-hop classes were taught with a different goal in pre-social media times; therefore, the education was also different at the time. Fuhrer refers to Ian Eastwood's 2010 hip-hop class video. In there the learned choreography is danced by the students in a small group at the end of the lesson. The dancers are not dressed up nor are they surrounded by the usual semicircle of hyping crowd. There is no editing in the video (such as slow motion or popping up special effects around the dancers' bodies) other than the cut between the footages. The video was not recorded with a professional camera by a cinematographer. According to Eastwood, this video shows the real purpose of hip-hop lessons.

In 2016, American dancer and choreographer Keone Madrid's comment regarding class videos was the following: *"I don't even know anymore if some dance class videos are even classes or if it was just a video shoot"* (Fuhrer, 2017). According to Madrid, the main purpose of class, which is the development of dancers is not encouraged by shooting videos during class time (Fuhrer, 2017). The American dancer and choreographer Brian Puspos also commented; *"(...) the main reason why I don't teach in LA anymore. The class I provide wouldn't be received & appreciated anymore:(" (Fuhrer, 2017). Puspos possibly referred to the teaching process, that has been changed by many due to the new needs of students and social media. According to Börczi, there are students who do not like filming but that is only about 3 out of 60 people. In Hefler's experience many students only take classes to be in class videos.*

In Hungary filming in classes appeared six years ago. Hefler sees it is becoming more common and there is almost no class choreography that is not being recorded. It is a little different for everyone but Börczi spends every fourth class with filming. The first three classes are for teaching the choreography and on the fourth lesson the students have the chance to dance the whole piece in smaller groups. According to Bóhm, filming allows students to get the best out of themselves. It takes a huge courage to dance alone in a solo so Börczi tries to encourage her less confident dancers to try it during video classes.

According to HomeBros, the authentic knowledge of a style is primary of importance thus the focus of a lesson should not be the teaching of a choreography. Filming is more useful for HomeBros during their freestyle classes. By capturing improvisation, the students can analyse then improve their movements. Kljun also teaches everything the same way as before, except, that the camera is present as an observer in her classes. The help of cinematographers allows the camera to be present as an observer during American and English dance classes. For example, Tricia Miranda already hired a cinematographer in 2014 to film her classes (Hawgood, 2016). For now, Hungarian teachers and students are still filming each other during video classes, which according to Bóhm is not an issue as the tools for movement recording are also getting better.

### **3.3. The impact of social media use on the dance labour market**

#### *3.3.1. Sponsorship*

The interviewees were asked whether less-followed teachers need paid advertising and sponsorship to be recognized by the masses. The answers distinguished three categories and highlighted the differences of the dance teacher profession in America, England and Hungary.

According to Bóhm, less-followed teachers do not need paid advertisement or sponsorship for mass recognition. He thinks that by watching uploaded contents people can decide if one's work holds value for them or not. Bóhm believes that these evaluation preferences can be predicted in advance. If a teacher is less followed and does not choreograph according to current trends then paying for advertisement or having a sponsor would be useless as the distributed content would not be popular anyways.

In contrast, Dániel Hefler and Barbara Börczi believe that the widespread recognition of less-followed teachers can only be achieved through paid advertisement and sponsorship. Hefler says even if a less-followed person shares a large amount of content it remains invisible without publicity. For this reason, Börczi also believes that in a small country like Hungary everyone has to pay on social platforms for their visibility otherwise their content will never reach the masses.

According to Kljun, while paid content can help, there are other ways to gain recognition from the masses. According to her, it is up to the teacher to decide which path to take. There are teachers whose works are recognized by the masses yet their audience does not know them by name. WilldaBeast starred in a Black Eyed Peas music video and also danced for Jason Derulo before his record breaking Upgrade U video. He was already working some of the best jobs of his profession but only after the 2013 YouTube video did the masses recognize him personally as a dancer and a creator (Burke, 2017).

HomeBros say that perhaps new teachers might need paid support as the online presence is an important part of the profession. However, as counter-examples the boys mentioned the OGs, the first pioneers of the genre (Walsh, 2017). There was no social media at the time of the OGs so when the platforms appeared they gained minimal followings compared to the new generation of dancers. Yet HomeBros say it does not matter if the OG's followers are even below ten thousand because their CVs include the most respected works of all times. Non-OG hip-hop teachers, according to HomeBros, do not need the help of paid advertising either due to their networks. Teachers in the UK and the US know agents and artists personally. People may not know these creators by name either, but the shows they direct are admired by masses across the globe.

This is a huge difference compared to the Hungarian tendencies. Hip-hop teachers in Budapest do not necessarily have the networks that provide the best choreographing jobs of the country for them. In the Hungarian hip-hop dance community two groups were formed. One provides job opportunities and choreographs productions while the other consists of the hip-hop teachers who actively teach classes. In the US and the UK there is the possibility of anonymous recognition, for example, when a teacher or dancer becomes part of a world-famous production. This is not an option for Hungarian teachers as the music and other performing industries are not world famous. These productions do not reach the masses worldwide; therefore, only active participation can lead to recognition on Instagram.

### 3.3.2. *Job Opportunities*

Teachers in Hungary feel that social media does not affect job opportunities for hip-hop dancers at all. According to Hefler, there are only a few job alternatives for Hungarians. Castings are rare and this was no different before the age of social media. The number of followers of a dancer is perhaps only important for commercial shoots. Although Börczi says that the most followed Hungarian dancers on Instagram are not followed entirely by Hungarians. For example; of Bóhm's 70,000 followers only eight percent are Hungarian users. Hungarian non-dancers do not know of their popular local hip-hop dancers. However, well-known dancers of Instagram have

been the subject of negative prejudice by their employers. Bóhm recounted that his girlfriend experienced negative discrimination in work situations several times simply because she has a large Instagram follower base. According to Börczi, employers may falsely assume that online popular dancers are full of themselves.

In the UK and the US social media clearly influences job opportunities for dancers. Kljun believes that *"(...) in general these days a dancer's Instagram is sometimes viewed as a sort of resume"* and she thinks that dancers with many followers often have more job opportunities as well. HomeBros say, since social media there are more opportunities for foreigners as well. HomeBros believe that *"you can go from just someone who has been taking classes and training at home to a choreographer or a teacher in a space of a few years due to social media's help for pushing you to show your talents online to people who would never normally see you"*.

According to HomeBros, students no longer have to be the best dancers to get casted for a job because their number of views can also provide opportunities for them. WilldaBeast said that there are jobs where the client specifically only wants to employ Instagram famous dancers (Howard, 2018). According to Bóhm, anyone who wants to be a professional dancer has to take time to be visible online because it has become part of the profession.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It can be stated that the use of social media platforms reached the Hungarian hip-hop community slower than it did abroad. Ever since the active use of applications; however, Hungary did not seem to fall behind in any ways compared to the English capital or Los Angeles. Social media is a need for Hungarian and a tool for UK and US hip-hop teachers. For teachers the benefits of social media include networking, easier access of foreign dancers, motivation and advertising. Expectations, must-follow trends, chasing of popularity, distorted values, accelerated work schedule and emotional pressure account for the disadvantages of social media. The disadvantages seemed to affect only the Hungarian teachers.

For students, the benefits of social media include the support of dance careers, encouragement of a healthy lifestyle, availability of hip-hop trends and styles and motivation. The disadvantages of social media are the loss of individuality, distorted self-image, false motivation, misunderstanding the purpose of classes, shorter attention spans and the compulsion to film. The advantages and disadvantages occurred in the Hungarian, English and American areas as well.

Preparation for hip-hop classes since the use of social media have remained the same in London and Los Angeles but it has changed in Budapest. Teachers in London and Los Angeles feel that they have managed to keep the original structure of classes while adapting to newness. In Hungary, there has been a change in the build-up of lessons since the appearance of social media. This can also be explained by the sudden access of information. Hip-hop is not a native genre in Budapest so education has progressed a lot as it is easier for teachers to follow foreign trends since the use of social media.

The impact of social media on dancers' job opportunities varies. In Hungary there is no major change regarding opportunities. In contrast, Instagram and other similar

platforms have multiplied job opportunities for dancers in England and America. Keeping in mind that professional knowledge is not necessarily the priority for employers abroad since the use of social media.

## 5. LIMITATIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Social media has been actively influencing the daily lives of hip-hop dancers for about five to seven years. In the research; however, we also interviewed individuals who have not been teaching for a very long time. Those who taught long before the advent of online platforms may have a greater knowledge and insight concerning the changes of hip-hop teaching. When continuing the research, we will seek to interview teachers in the ages of Nika Kljun and Barbara Börczi to examine the transformation of hip-hop education from a broader perspective.

Throughout the interviews the research may have been limited by the interviewees personal experiences that could have led to bias. While we conducted online English and American in-depth interviews the Hungarian ones took place in person, which may have influenced the explicitness of the responses.

As for the future of social media's influence on hip-hop education, the six teachers expressed differing views. Kljun thinks of social media applications as a helping tool but nonetheless, she says that these platforms cannot have too great of an importance in the everyday lives of dancers. According to Böhm, social media has changed dancers' opportunities but they might disappear from one day to the next. Böhm thinks it is possible that a new trend will take the applications' place. According to HomeBros, social platforms will survive as a paradigm in the dance community and some will follow while others will continue to reject them because of its divisive effects. Hefler and Börczi agreed that the negative effects of social media could scarcely increase further in Hungary.

According to Howard (2018), once something is lost it is difficult to recreate, so the question is whether the community is able to assess real values and thereby control what it loses or preserves. Social media allows hip-hop dancers to exist in a diverse and cosmopolitan network of relationships in the dance world where dancers from different genres can work side by side (Phillips, 2018). Based on the interviews; however, we can conclude that teachers who lead and inspire the dancers of the future have a greater responsibility than ever before. Dance teachers must be aware of the influences of social media on students and in regard of themselves to develop and from the harmful effects consciously protect their students.

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