



Dances which are Typically Characterized by a Short Burst of Popularity

Shahary M. L.*

Department of Culture and Performance, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

COMMENTARY

As the popular music market got bombed within the late 1950s, dance fads were commercialized and exploited. From the 1950s to the 1970s, new dance fads appeared almost weekly. Many were popularized (or commercialized) versions of recent styles or steps created by African-American dancers who frequented the clubs and discothèques in major U.S. cities like ny, Philadelphia and Detroit. Among these were the Madison, "The Swim", the "Mashed Potato", "The Twist", "The Frug", "The Watusi", "The Shake" and "The Hitch hike". Many 1950s and 1960s dance crazes had animal names, including "The Chicken" (not to be confused with the Chicken Dance), "The Pony" and "The Dog".

There are fad dances which are meant to be danced individually as solo, others are partner dances, and yet others are danced in groups. A number of them were of freestyle type, i.e., there have been no particular step patterns and that they were distinguished by the design of the dance movement (Twist, Shake, Swim, Pony, Hitch hike). Just some have survived to the current day, sometimes only because the name of a step (Suzie Q, Shimmy) or of a method (Mashed Potato) in an exceedingly recognized dance. Fad dances are in fashion at the time of their popularity. They are available to be related to a selected fundamental measure, and may evoke particular styles of nostalgia when revived.

One way of observing the spread of fads is thru the top-down model, which argues that fashion is formed for the elite, and from the elite, fashion spreads to lower classes. Early adopters may not necessarily be those of a status, but they need sufficient resources that allow them to experiment with new innovations. When gazing the top-down model, sociologists wish to highlight the role of selection.

The elite may be those that introduce certain fads, but people must value more highly to adopt those fads. in our

own way of gazing the spread of fads is thru a symbolic interaction view.

People learn their behaviors from the people around them. When it involves collective behavior, the emergence of those shared rules, meanings, and emotions are more hooked in to the cues of things, instead of physiological arousal. This connection to symbolic interactionism, a theory that explains people's actions as being directed by shared meanings and assumptions, explains that fads are spread because people attach meaning and emotion to things, and not because the item has practical use, for example.

A study examined why certain fads die out quicker than others. A marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business, Jonah Berger and his colleague, Gael Le Men's, studied baby names within the U.S. and France to assist explore the termination of fads. In line with their results, the faster the names became popular, the faster they lost their popularity. They also found that the smallest amount successful names overall were those who caught on most quickly. Fads, like baby names, often lose their appeal even as quickly as they gained it.