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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to verify the significance of the Artistic Psychological Painting program for developing middle school students' psychological well-being through an educational program and a multi-factorial experimental design based on feedback from teachers and students.

Methodology: This paper presents the format and content of the Artistic Psychological Painting program to test the program's effectiveness. The subjects were 12-15-year-old middle school students in the first and second grades of Southwest University South China Town Middle School (middle school) in Chongqing, China, and the Artistic Psychological Painting course they took at school.

Findings: The study showed that the Artistic Psychological Painting program positively affected middle school students' emotional intelligence and self-identity. Accordingly, based on the initial definition and exploration of the connotation and extension of the Artistic Psychological Painting curriculum, we have communicated with school leaders, subject experts, in-service teachers, and students to propose the implementation of the "Artistic Psychological Painting".

Recommendation: The program is designed to complement the psychological education curriculum in Chinese public schools and to provide a vision for school-based and community-based curricula.

Keywords: *Artistic psychological painting, art therapy, course, middle school students, mental health level*

INTRODUCTION

The Artistic Psychological Painting course is a group counseling course that takes art therapy techniques as the core and closely integrates the mental health qualities of contemporary youth development. Art therapy is a psychotherapeutic technique using art as a medium to help visitors or group counseling clients solve their psychological problems and improve their psychological quality. The lateralization function of the human brain provides the physiological basis for this. Regarding implementation, art therapy techniques are divided into individual and group counseling. Schools are equipped with space for art therapy group counseling. This technique is embedded in school-based or community-based programs incorporating integrated themes related to adolescent psychological development to help middle school students improve their mental health.

Research Background

It is human nature to express oneself graphically. People can express themselves freely in the activity of drawing. At the same time, art creation is accompanied by advanced information processing in humans. In 1915, Margaret, the founding father of art therapy in the United States, demonstrated through her research that the process of painting itself can help individuals vent destructive emotions and that individuals do not resist this safe way (Lu, 2013). In 1966, the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) was founded. The association states that art therapy as a means of psychotherapy allows clients to explore their problems and developmental potential using a combination of non-verbal and verbal expression and an artistic experiential process. According to the British Art Therapy Association, art therapy involves an interactive and communicative process between the creator, the work, and the therapist, who spends sufficient time with the visitor, treats him or her based on positive concerns, and clearly defines the therapeutic relationship to serve the visitor (Meng, 2009). Art therapy counseling allows visitors to project the inner world through drawing and subconscious expression through intention and metaphor. Art therapy has distinct advantages over verbal therapy in dealing with psychological problems such as emotional distress. It has the following characteristics: creating artwork can be seen as a process of psychological construction. The process itself has the function of self-healing; art therapy techniques are rich in entryways. In art therapy counseling, through the symbolic artworks of the creator, a bridge can be found to the inner world that is otherwise difficult to verbalize. The visitor's defenses can be eliminated so that specific existing deviant psychological problems can be perceived, and the visitor can be guided to make adjustments (Tong, 2019). The beginning of the Artistic Psychological Painting sessions are sessions conducted with art therapy group counseling techniques.

The art therapy curriculum is not a simple combination of art therapy techniques and curriculum but an educational, continuous, and organic integration that can effectively explore and solve problems through action research. Based on this, the researchers built the art therapy curriculum into Southwest University South China Town High School's school-based curriculum, fully analyzed the learning situation, and designed the objectives, naming the curriculum Artistic Psychological Painting. As curriculum developers, we need to pay more attention to the process and details of implementing the curriculum to enhance the mental health of middle school students in a specific context in a way that will lead to their epiphany. The process of curriculum development and action is also a process of research. In the course practice of "Artistic

Psychological Painting," the author summarized the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course concept of "to reach the mind, to paint the scene and to convey the feelings" as the requirements for the teachers in the course. The concept of "understanding the heart" refers to the need for the art psychology teacher to have good empathy, "expressing the meaning" refers to identifying the metaphorical meaning of the painting, and "painting the scene" refers to guiding the creator to depict his or her mental picture through color and line. "Painting the scene" means guiding the creator to paint his or her mental picture through color and line, and "conveying emotion" means guiding the creator to express his or her emotions through art. This process is similar to art therapy projection analysis (observing the picture as a whole and following up on the details, mainly analyzing the size of the area, the intensity of the lines, the neatness and chaos of the picture, the color matching and layout, and the overall atmosphere, etc.), making bold assumptions, carefully seeking proof, and checking with the person concerned. Do positive orientation, point to point) is closely related.

Teachers of art psychology courses need to learn more methods of judging images and accumulating relevant experience in practice. The core elements of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course include counseling music: adopting music that resonates with the visitor; guiding words: setting reasonable and scientific guiding words according to the theme; creative expression: free creative expression through lines and colors, abstract and figurative elements can be applied; projective analysis: the counselor makes judgments based on the images; interview techniques: transform the Projective interview analysis: the counselor makes judgments based on the images; Talking techniques: transforming the talking techniques and guiding the visitor to the epiphany. Individual counseling strategies are provided for students who need help in group counseling. To solve the problems at the level of curriculum implementation, teachers of art psychology courses should pay more attention to visitors' living environment and experiences and thoroughly explore the creative materials in their lives to carry out activities (Zhang & Liu, 2015).

Concerning the school's hardware and material requirements, any creative tool that can establish a spiritual connection with the visitor and convey metaphorical meaning through the expression of intention can be used as a coaching tool for the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course, and all resources available in the school can be fully exploited to serve the course. In addition, teachers of art psychology courses need to sort out, summarize, and transform the subject matter knowledge before the class and combine it with the current knowledge system of the Chinese psychology education curriculum to achieve an artistic transformation. In this context, this study focuses on presenting curriculum intervention methods and data analysis. This study presents the intervention method and data analysis in this context. Can the "Artistic Psychological Painting" program, which uses "art therapy" as the technical support, improves middle school students' emotional intelligence, communicative skills, and sense of self-identity?

As of April 30, 2022, a total of 1039 articles on the topic of "art therapy" were searched in the Chinese mainstream and authoritative database CNKI(China National Knowledge Infrastructure), and from 1983 to 2022, the number of articles published showed an increasing trend almost year by year, especially after 2004 (Figure 1). At the same time, the number of discussions on "art therapy" that I have heard in Chinese academic conferences has also gradually increased. Art therapy shows that since the 21st century, Chinese scholars have increased their understanding and awareness of art therapy and conducted several studies. However, the distribution of the main topics on the CNKI (Figure 2) shows that there is a significant increase in the number of studies

on "mental health education," "art education," "mental health education for college students," "art therapy," "art education," "special education,". This directly combine art therapy with curriculum education, total 72 articles, less than one-tenth of the total number of articles in the field of "art therapy". This shows that the application of art therapy in education and curriculum by Chinese scholars is still lacking in quantity compared to other directions. The authors combed the relevant degree and journal papers and found that the number of empirical studies related to "art therapy" and "curriculum" in Chinese academic papers is relatively small, mainly from two perspectives. The first is to measure the changes in the values of the art therapy-related curriculum after the intervention in the form of scales (most of the domestic articles use SAS/SDS scales, but some also use the Self-Awareness Scale for Children, the Mental Health Scale for Chinese Secondary School Students, the Interpersonal Behavior Scale, and the Self-Evaluation of Satisfaction Scale for Group Counseling) as a reference basis for the changes in mental health levels; the second is to track the psychological changes of the clients (visitors) in the form of drawings (many use room-tree-person) and interviews, to verify the impact and value of the art psychology program. More research is still needed to enrich the empirical research regarding its methodological and instrumental innovations.
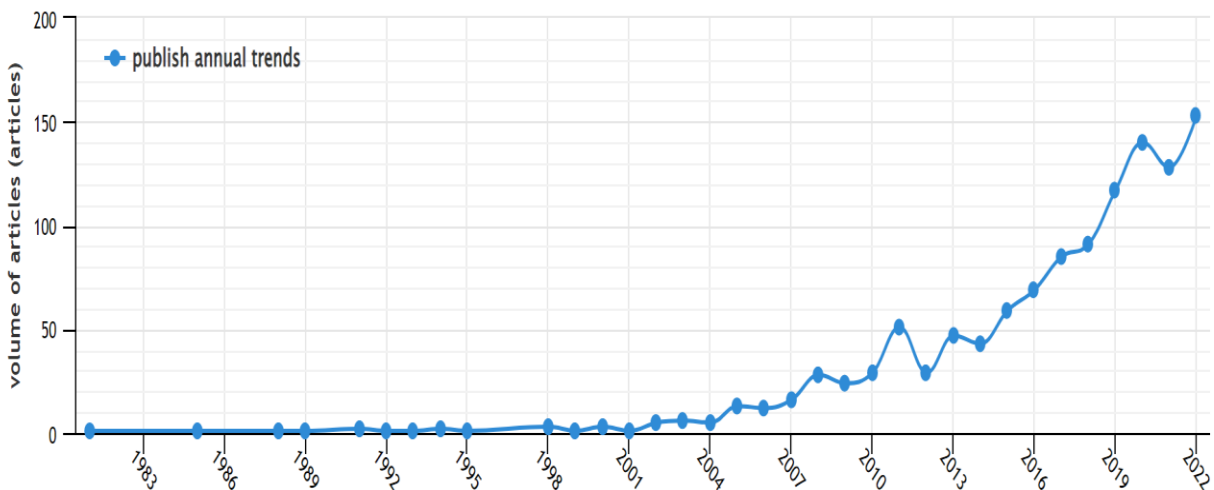

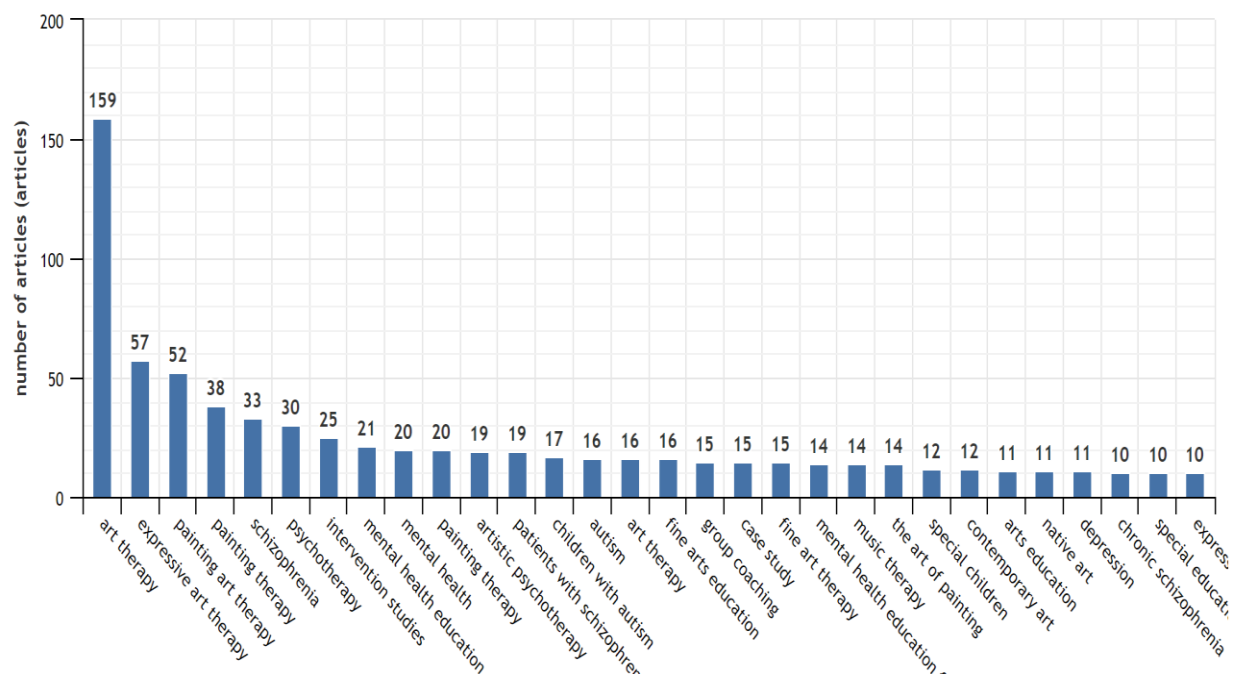**Figure 1: Number of articles on "art therapy" in CNKI (1983-2022).**

Figure 2: Number of articles on "art therapy" in CNKI (1983-2022).

In recent decades, many international scholars have explored the application of art therapy in education and curriculum. They have empirically tested the effects of related programs at various age levels, but fewer Chinese scholars have focused on empirical research in this area. From a social psychological perspective, psychological research is influenced by the ideology and cultural background of the participating subjects, emphasizing the specificity of the sample and the need to establish a normative model of the corresponding group, and it is still innovative to conduct empirical research on the applicability of art psychology programs in China. This study focuses on developing an art psychology curriculum with local middle school students in China and conducts a logical construction and action research of an art therapy curriculum suitable for the middle school level.

Research Significance

Theoretical value

The study aims to experimentally examine the nurturing effect of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course and analyze whether the course's theoretical framework and design elements are reasonable. The framework includes the theoretical foundation, curriculum framework, pedagogical design, and assessment strategies of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" curriculum. This study focuses on enriching the methodology of the empirical study of art therapy-related curriculum for Chinese middle school students, using different research tools to test the effectiveness of the curriculum, providing a new theoretical perspective for the empirical study of Chinese students' art psychology curriculum, enriching the theoretical content and form of art therapy curriculum education in China, and improving the curriculum theory system of Chinese middle school mental health education curriculum.

Application value

The course takes Southwest University South China City Middle School as a pilot, conducts action research on art psychology courses, constructs a systematic "art psychology painting" course practice system, and tests the effect of the course on human development, thus forming research reports and theoretical results, providing action paths and application references for art therapy course teachers, and providing preparation for related practice materials. The research report and theoretical results will provide an action path and application reference for art therapy course teachers and guidance for preparing related practice materials. This empirical study serves as the theoretical basis for the training textbook for teachers of art psychology courses, Introduction to Art Psychology Courses in Chinese Schools. This textbook is a guide to enhance the richness and interest of the current Chinese school psychological education curriculum and course content. It ultimately constructs community and psychological education programs at all levels and types of schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept Definition

"Art therapy" refers to interactive psychotherapeutic activities based on psychology and using art as a medium, including visual art, music, dance, drama, poetry, etc. "Artistic psychological painting" is a group counseling course that takes art therapy techniques as its core and closely integrates the mental health qualities of contemporary youth development; "Psychology" is the subjective reflection of objective facts by the human brain and is a function of the brain. "Psychological phenomena" include psychological processes and personality psychology. Mental processes include cognitive, emotional, affective, and volitional processes such as sensation, perception, memory, thinking, imagination, and creation. Personality psychology includes personality tendencies such as needs, motivation, ideals, beliefs, values, and psychological personality characteristics such as ability, character, and temperament (Zhang & Xie, 2019); "Psychological health level" refers to the level where all aspects and activities of the human psyche are in a good or normal state, and the inner world and the objective environment are in an It plays an important role in the quality of a person's life. This study mainly includes the level of emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-identity; "emotional intelligence" refers to a person's ability to regulate emotions and to pay attention to and recognize the emotions of others; "Interpersonal skills" refers to the ability and level of communication, interaction, and group cooperation with others and is an important indicator of adolescent development in this study. The term "self-identity" is also referred to as "self-identity"; it refers to whether people, as the subject, have a good understanding of personal value, can know themselves, and have a good understanding of their state and status.

Research Status

Since the term "Artistic Psychological Painting" in this paper is the name of a course defined by the author in a certain context, the search for this term does not have the credibility of a literature search at this time. Based on the definition of "Artistic Psychological Painting" above, the search terms were "art therapy" and "curriculum." As of October 10, 2021, 119 Chinese and 115 English literature were searched in academic databases such as Web of Science, Google scholar, and CNKI. It was found that the international academic research mainly focused on the construction

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of the discipline and knowledge system of art therapy itself, the intervention of art therapy courses on adolescent and child psychological illnesses and problems, the impact of art therapy programs on adults' mental health, the relationship between art therapy and art education teaching, the application of art therapy in college students' mental health education, the application of art therapy in nursing education programs, the application of art therapy in special education schools for adolescents and children, and the application of art therapy in psychological education in kindergartens of public primary and secondary schools. The research areas related to the implantation of art therapy techniques into the education and teaching of public primary and secondary schools include the relationship between art therapy and art education and teaching and related research and the application of art therapy in the psychological education of kindergartens in primary and secondary schools. The following section presents the field's current status clearly and comprehensively through reviews and narratives. It contains some representative research projects organized as follows.

1. The relationship between art therapy and art education teaching and related research

On the whole, some scholars have devoted themselves to researching the forms and methods of art therapy itself, and accordingly, exploring the relationship between art education and art therapy, and proposing ways to integrate art therapy into art education in primary and secondary schools, applying case and survey studies to point out the positive effects of art therapy on art education, and the positive effects of art therapy-oriented art education on the physical and mental health of schoolchildren (Anderson, Eisner, & McRoriel, 1998; Bergmann, 1995; Barron,2019; Dong, 2018; Fransila, 1981; Heise, 2014; Huang, 2018; Hao, 2004; Henderson, 2018). Harlow,2019; Kim, 2020; Kang, 2017; Liu, 2007, 2011; Leng, 2018; Moon, 2003; Mai&Hao, 2003; McNiff, 1998; Niu, 2016; Pu, 2018; Robertson, 2000; Sun, 2019; Shi, 2015a, 2015b; 2015c; Waller, 1984; Weelden & Whipple, 2007; Walters, 2007; Wang, R., 2011; Weng&Liu, 2012; Wang, 2014; Xiao, 2009; Yao, 2014; Xiao&Chang, 2017; Xue,2018; Zhao, 2014; Zhou,2005; Zhang, 2019). These scholars have discussed the relationship between art therapy and art education and affirmed the positive impact of art therapy on students' development in art education.

Specifically, some representative studies have analyzed the relationship between art therapy and art education in more detail and selected specific art forms. Activity approaches to intervene with students, drawing specific conclusions from a more focused research perspective and using data analysis, interview follow-up, and other research tools to demonstrate the various positive effects of art therapy or psychologically effective art education activities on students. Summarizing the main elements of Roenfeld's art therapy theory, the feasibility study of integrating art therapy with middle school art education was specifically explained (Ma, 2014). Carl Jung did not focus as directly on children's art as many psychologists, but his basic theory laid the foundation for empirical research on art education and art therapy (McWhinnie, 1985). Helping 13-18-year-old students use visual arts education activities based on Olivia Goode's postmodern principles to reduce students' anxiety and stress, and transform negative emotions into creativity (Ferry, 2016). At the junior high school level, empirical research on improving the quality of art instruction using analysis of students' psychological stage characteristics or psychoanalysis of drawing (Liang, 2014; Wang, 2020). At the junior high school level, using art assignment design and its evaluation as a vehicle to reveal the educational role and practical effectiveness of art assignments and evaluation in improving junior high school students' sense of self (Lu, 2013).

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Combining social and emotional learning (SEL) with a photography curriculum, research showed that students' classroom behaviors significantly improved, their ability to manage stress and regulate depression increased, and their attitudes toward their school enhanced, effectively enhancing the mental health of secondary school students (Scicluna, 2020). Analyzing the relationship between art, educators, and students in art therapy education, exploring what educators should do as students process their art learning experiences, and illuminating the importance of expanding learning interactions (Crane & Byrne, 2020). Other scholars point out that art therapy based on traditional Chinese forms provides support to help adolescents grow positively (Ying, 2013). Use the middle school winding art curriculum as an entry point to discuss the significance of this curriculum format for middle school students' growth (Bai, 2017). Promote emotional intelligence through art therapy in the form of a craft curriculum (Wu, 2018); apply light painting animation in art therapy curriculum in the teaching practice, we explore the teaching practice of art therapy course in terms of artistic characteristics, theme setting, and program design of light-painted animation, and explore the theoretical basis and technical support conditions for introducing light-painted animation in art therapy course teaching (Zhu, Hu & Jiang, 2020).

2. Application of art therapy in the psychological education of kindergarten, primary and secondary schools

Art therapy can enhance mental health education's fun, application, and effectiveness in primary and secondary schools (Carsley & Heath, 2018; McManus, 1993; Wu, 2016; Zhu, 2019). Several practical studies in the international academic community have applied art therapy to mental health education in primary and secondary kindergartens. They cover a richer range of content, with unprecedented levels of programs, groups involved, and intervention methods: helping children narrate and express stories about various aspects of their life experiences through the form of drawing to help address emotional and affective problems in childhood stages (Brown & Sax, 2013; Henley, 1986; Leitch, 2009). Drawing and writing techniques are gaining popularity in child health education research as a form of art therapy, and one study critically evaluated the application of the method, examining the origins and use of children's drawing in several disciplines and practice settings. A range of methodological, analytical, and ethical issues was raised (Milburn & McKie, 1999). Art therapy studies incorporating cognitive-behavioral therapy for 9-12-year-old showed significant increases in resilience, social and emotional functioning in the total sample through the intervention (Sitzer & Stockwell, 2015). Art therapy group counseling has a positive effect in improving general aggression, hostility, anger, and verbal aggression in high school students and can improve their interpersonal relationships (Jiao, 2016). Applying art-based group counseling intervention practices and introducing core elements such as related practice methods, technical materials, and process stages.

Research has shown that the arts have a positive role in promoting mental health elements such as emotional development and social inclusion in adolescent children (Atkinson & Robson, 2012; Coholic et al., 2012; Gibbons, 2010; Karkou & Glasman, 2004; Moon, 1999, 2012; Olson, 2021). A study evaluating the effectiveness of art therapy group counseling in improving social-emotional problems in adolescent boys in poverty showed that art therapy was effective in improving emotional problems in middle school boys at different grade levels (Ramirez, Haen, & Cruz, 2020). Art therapy can be effective in supporting children with personality disorders, autism, or children with personality disorders, autism, or severe learning difficulties (Rees, 2003). Incorporating art therapy components can improve the reality of low student engagement in

traditional "self-awareness" education (Hao, 2018). A study in Korean kindergartens showed that art therapy programs are adequate for the development of creativity, multiple intelligences, and emotional intelligence in young children (Tian & Li, 2010). Studies applying of art therapy into elementary school curricula showed significant increases in mental toughness, social and emotional functioning in the total sample (Sitzer & Stockwell, 2015). The integration of art therapy into alternative education programs in which the art therapist is both the teacher and the founder of the curriculum. This approach achieves the pursuit of both therapeutic and educational goals (Henley, 1997). The integration of art therapy approaches into secondary school subject curricula, where research has found effective reductions in dropout rates, reductions in academic failure, and improvements in students' attitudes toward school, family, and self (Rosal et al., 1997).

The use of art therapy to help students with culturally diverse backgrounds overcome school barriers to academic success (Cochran, 1996). Providing tools to assess cognitive skills based on art, including skills to assess what may lead to school violence and depression in children and adolescents (Silver, 2002). Applying a curriculum format that incorporates art therapy to students' life education, using art as a creative way to mourn or grieve (Ertmann, 2003). Applying a case study of combining art therapy and museum instruction in a middle school to help art therapists understand how visitors can use art museums. Art museum education is proposed as a new venue for art therapy (Treadon, Rosal & Wylder, 2006). Thus, many international scholars have developed the idea of integrating art therapy into mental health education and have conducted corresponding empirical studies. The results of the studies show that the value of art therapy programs must be balanced. However, research on mental health education-oriented art therapy programs has rarely been conducted with Chinese students as the research sample, and relevant empirical studies in Chinese are few and not deep enough. Further work is needed in the academic community to conduct empirical studies on art therapy programs that are appropriate for Chinese students.
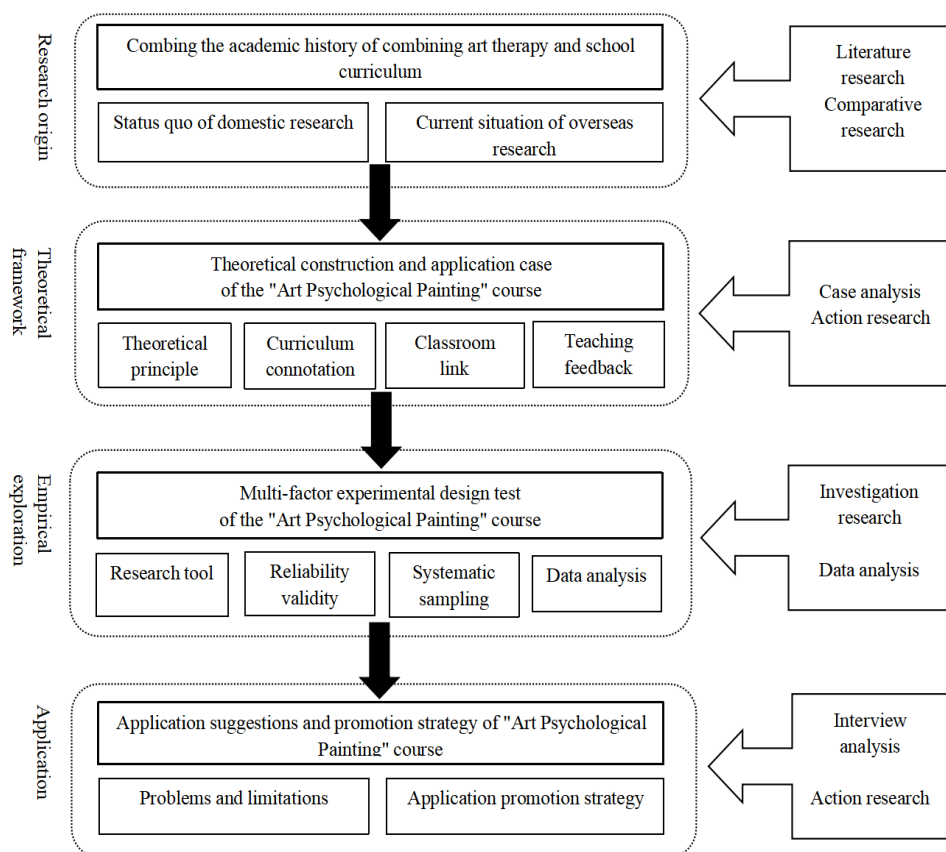
Study Design

Figure 3: Technology roadmap

 Source: Sarvari (2018)

Study Sample

The study sample was students in the first and second grades of Southwest University South China City Middle School in Banan District, Chongqing, China. Questionnaires from 911 were distributed, and 884 questionnaires were finally returned, with a questionnaire return rate of 97.04%. After eliminating invalid questionnaires, 778 valid questionnaires were left, and the effective recovery rate of questionnaires was 88.01%. This study adopted a multi-factor experimental design method with an equal group experiment as the primary method. The experimental group was 22 students who chose the "Art Psychological Drawing" course in the second half of 2021(see table 1). Through pre-testing, multiple control groups were established with 22 students (less than 22 students in some dimensions because every invalid data was directly deleted to ensure the authenticity of the data, and the data of the experimental group and the control group were one-to-one correspondence), categorized by measurement content (the valid data of each control group corresponded to different students, and the descriptive demographic statistics

of each control group are not presented separately below)(see table 2). Attempts were also made to ensure that the grade, class, gender, and age structure of the control group were the same as those of the experimental group and to avoid the influence of extraneous variables (classroom educational environment, etc.) as much as possible on the experimental results. The experimental group received six sessions of the "Art Psychological Drawing" group counseling program, while the control group did not receive any experimental treatment in its natural state. Finally, the experimental and control groups' data were compared, and an ANOVA was conducted to test whether the program improved several aspects of the student's mental health. The experimental independent variable was 6 sessions of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" group counseling program; the experimental dependent variable: is the subjects' emotional, interpersonal, and self-identity ability levels.

Table 1.

Descriptive statistics results of the experimental group (N=22)

Properties		Number of people	Percentage
Classes	7.1	5	22.7
	7.2	5	22.7
	8.1	6	27.3
	8.2	6	27.3
Age	12	1	4.5
	13	13	59.1
	14	7	31.8
	15	1	4.5
Gender	Male	5	22.7
	Female	17	77.3

Table 2.

Results of descriptive statistics for the control set (N=133).

Properties		Number of people	Percentage
Classes	7.1	33	24.8
	7.2	39	29.3
	8.1	31	23.3
	8.2	30	22.6
Age	12	13	9.8
	13	67	50.4
	14	51	38.3
	15	2	1.5
Gender	Male	70	52.6
	Female	63	47.4

Interventions

The intervention was six sessions of "Artistic Psychological Painting." The process of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" sessions was as follows: an icebreaker activity related to the theme was conducted before the session, then the teacher explained the basic knowledge related to the theme, and the teacher first applied a systematic deep breathing method to help students relax, led the group through a guided meditation on the theme, and after the meditation session, provided instructions and guidance for the creation, and guided the children to create a story on the paper with metaphorical symbols. After the meditation session, the children were guided to create a theme on paper and write a story for the metaphorical symbols in the picture.

The "Art Psychological Drawing" course is designed to meet the following requirements: In the ice-breaking session, the material is identified before the class based on the theme, including preparing the activity sheets for the ice-breaking session. The basic knowledge of the course is set concerning the relevant domestic and international primary and secondary school mental health textbooks for the same age group. In the meditation introduction session, the design of the introductory phrase is flexibly adapted to the psychological states and confusion expressed by the children before the meditation activity. In the art creation session, students are guided to complete their creation and expression according to the imagery in their minds during the meditation. The themes, core contents, guide words, and meditation music of several interventions are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Intervention themes and core elements of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course

Research Hypothesis

Topics	Core Content	Introductory remarks	Meditation Music
Family Relations	Sharing of common parent-child conflicts; transpersonal analysis; self-awareness; positive communication	Okay, now we have traveled back in time and space to our home. We see a child who is with his mom and dad. What are they doing? What is the little kid in the picture doing? Can you recall this scene and how you usually get along? What about the scene that comes to your mind? Now push this scene slowly into the middle of your brain. Now let us look at this little man in the picture. Is he happy? What are the things he feels happy about? Furthermore, what are the unhappy moments? If you are unhappy, please tell that child, hug him, and tell him it is okay.	Music for Zen Meditation

Getting Along with Classmates	Empathy; communication skills; interpersonal effects; getting along with the opposite sex; helping each other	Okay, now we have entered the world of self and are surrounded by everything we do in our daily campus life. Just around you, there are classmates and friends you like and classmates or friends you disapprove of. How do you usually get along with him or her? What kind of picture is it? Who are the friends you interact with? What interests do you all share or do not share? If you feel good about the situation now, tell that child to stick with it; if you feel bad, ask that child why you would like to say anything to that person. How do we become better?	For Forever
Self-awareness	Self and other self; self-portrait; acceptance of self; self-advantage; growth planning	We have entered the world of self and have a mirror to illuminate our bodies. What kind of self do you see in the mirror? Is it tall or short, or fat or thin? Is the mood happy, calm, or sad? If you already have the answer, follow the teacher again and take a deep breath, slowly pushing the scene before our eyes back to reality.	Amazing Grace
Emotion Management	Positive emotions; negative emotions; awareness of emotions; regulation skills	Okay, now each of our students slowly relaxes physically. We traveled back in time and saw a child walking on a wooded path, the child was sad and sighing. What was causing him to be depressed and stressed? Let us think about it. Have we encountered something similar? Can you recall the picture of what happened? How about the scene that comes to your mind?	Heal the body
Learning Method	Time management; goal management; learning to learn; memory methods	Okay, now that we have returned to elementary school, can you recall the study routine? What was that scene like? How did you listen to the lectures and complete your	Song for the Morning Star

| | | homework at that time? So slowly, we went to middle school; now, how do you listen to the lectures? Furthermore, how did you finish your homework? Now let us slowly push the scene that just appeared from the back of your head to the middle of your brain. Take three deep breaths. Come on, again. What do you think has been the strength of your study method? What are the problems that need improvement? | |
| Aesthetic Awareness | Law of Creativity; Visual Perception; Basic Aesthetics; Graphic Expression | Students, now we are entering together the scene of spring when everything is reviving, listening to the music and feeling all the sights. Slowly we come back to summer and feel the warmth of summer. Slowly we move on to autumn; what are the autumn colors like? Gradually, winter comes. Now we slowly push the scene that just appeared before our eyes. Using color and line on a sheet of paper in four compartments to bring out these shapes. | Ice;Summer; Autumn Whispers; Huit |

The "Artistic Psychological Painting" program significantly affects middle school students' mental health by improving their emotional intelligence, interpersonal skills, and self-identity.

Research tools

1. The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) for middle school students

This scale was developed by Scott et al. based on the theory of MAYER and SALOVEY (1990), and it has high reliability and validity (Schutte, 1998; Ciarrochi, 2000). The scale's validity was verified by Wang Caikang of South China Normal University (a=0.83). The 33-question scale can assess people's ability to perceive, understand, express, control, and manage their emotions and those of others. It has four dimensions and is scored on a five-point scale, where 5, 28, and 33 are reverse scores, with higher scores indicating higher levels of emotional intelligence.

2. Interpersonal Adaptability Scale (IAS)

In this study, the General Interpersonal Relations Test for Middle School Students (36 questions, reverse scoring, higher scores represent more severe interpersonal problems) and Zheng Richang's Comprehensive Interpersonal Relations Diagnostic Scale (28 questions, higher scores represent more vital interpersonal skills) developed by Wu Qingxiang, a professor of psychology at East China University of Political Science and Law, were used as measurement instruments for pre-test

screening of subjects and post-test examination of the effect of group support. It was used for pre-test screening and post-test to examine the effectiveness of group support. This set of scales has high reliability and validity (Zheng, 2018; Zhang&Xu, 2011).

3. Self-identity scale

The Self-Identity Scale (SIS) was developed by Ochse and Plug (1986) based on Erikson's theory. The scale consists of 19 items and is scored on a scale of 1 (not at all applicable) to 4 (very applicable). The higher the score is, the better the subject's self-identity is developed; the lower the score is, the subject's self-identity is still in the development and formation stage. Li and Lou 2009) from the College of Education Science, Liaocheng University, Shandong Province, examined the reliability of the self-identity scale in a group of Chinese adolescent students. The study showed that the self-identity scale has good reliability indicators and can be used to measure adolescents' self-identity.

Research limitations

This experiment is a quasi-experiment in educational science, and the influence of irrelevant variables cannot be excluded entirely in every aspect of the study. For example, although a control group with comparable test scores to the experimental group was identified through the pre-test experiment, the development of the control group during the experimental period cannot be accurately measured and controlled by the current level of research technology. The influence of family and social factors on students could not be fully measured or translated into operational definitions. The mood, physical, and attitude of filling out the scale may also affect the measurement results, so the study has some limitations. However, the study has considerable scientific and reference value with sufficient data.

STUDY RESULTS

The impact of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention on the emotional intelligence of middle school students

The emotional intelligence scale data of 22 students in the experimental group were used as the dependent variable. The data were divided into four dimensions: the ability to feel emotions, the ability to understand and reason about others' emotions, the ability to understand and reason about one's own emotions, and the ability to express emotions. The "Artistic Psychological Painting" group counseling session intervention was the independent variable. It was found that the mean value of each dimension of emotional intelligence of middle school students was improved after the intervention of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course ($p>0.05$, statistically insignificant, probably because some of the students who took this course had good psychological quality. The value was improved after the intervention, but the improvement was not significant, so it needs to be further tested qualitatively), especially for the students whose pre-test data were below the mean value. (The improvement of the ability to feel emotions was significant ($P < 0.05$), the improvement of the ability to understand and reason about the emotions of others was highly significant ($P < 0.01$), and the improvement of the ability to understand and reason about their own emotions was significant ($P < 0.05$), and the improvement of the ability to express emotions was not significant for the time being ($P > 0.05$, and the subsequent curriculum of art psychology should focus on this indicator). At the same time, since secondary school students also improve their psychological quality in their natural state, in order to prove the effectiveness of the

curriculum intervention, the changes in the mean of the scale scores between the experimental group and the control group after the curriculum intervention were compared in the case that the pre-test scores of the experimental control group samples were precisely equal, and the experimental group was more significant than the control group in all four dimensions. As shown in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.

Table 4

Experimental group after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention (all samples)

Variables	Number of observations	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Emotional Sensory Ability	22	39.86364	43.13636	117.8182	1.831925	0.18314
Understanding and reasoning about the emotions of others	22	32.22727	35.68182	131.2727	2.582854	0.11552
Understanding and reasoning about one's own emotions	22	22.45455	24.40909	42.02273	1.3867	0.245593
Expression of emotions	22	16.40909	17.18182	6.568182	0.437468	0.511959

Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) on scores of emotional intelligence scale of middle school students

Table 5

Experimental group after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention (samples with below-average pre-test values)

Variables	Number of observations	Sample premeasurement value levels	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Emotional Sensory Ability	12	≦39	34.3333	41.5	308.1667	5.091114*	0.03432
Understanding and reasoning the emotions of others	12	≦35	27.75	35.41667	352.6667	10.64046**	0.00357

Understanding and reasoning about one's own emotions	8	≦22	15.5	21	121	5.394904*	0.03577
Expression of emotions	10	≦16	13.5	14.9	9.8	0.680031	0.42037

*$p<0.05$ **$p<0.01$

Table 6

Analysis of the changes in the mean values of the experimental group and the control group after the intervention of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course

Variables	Number of observations	Experimental and control group mean pre-test	Experimental group mean post-test	Control group mean post-test	Whether the mean improvement of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group
Emotional Sensory Ability	17	39.86364	44.29412	43.76471	Yes
Understanding and reasoning about the emotions of others	15	34.8	36.46667	34.13333	Yes
Understanding and reasoning about one's own emotions	16	24.375	25.75	25.625	Yes
Expression of emotions	21	16.80952	17.47619	16.57143	Yes

Results of analysis of variance (ANOVA) on scores of emotional intelligence scale of middle school students

The impact of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention on the interpersonal skills of middle school students

The data of the 22 students in the experimental group on the Comprehensive Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Scale (21 had valid questionnaire data) and the General Interpersonal Relationship Test scores for middle school students (14 had valid questionnaire data) were used as

the dependent variables. The "Artistic Psychological Painting" course was used as the independent variable. The lack of regularity and statistical significance ($P > 0.05$) may be due to the course instructors' need for attention to this literacy ability. Later, the curriculum development board should focus more on cultivating students' interpersonal skills. As shown in Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9.

Table 7

Experimental group after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention (whole sample)

Variables	Number of observations	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Comprehensive Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Scale	21	10.7619	12.09524	18.66667	0.545164	0.464611
Secondary school students' scores on the General Interpersonal Relations Test	14	25.64286	25.07143	2.285714	0.071588	0.791149

Results of analysis of variance for scores of interpersonal skills-related scales of middle school students

Table 8

Experimental group after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention (samples with below-average pre-test values)

Variables	Number of observations	Sample premeasurement value levels	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Comprehensive Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Scale	12	≦10	14.4166	13.66667	3.375	0.163696	0.689683
Secondary school students' scores on the General Interpersonal Relations Test	11	≦29	24.1818	23.27273	4.545455	0.17094	0.683677

Results of analysis of variance for scores of interpersonal skills-related scales of middle school students

Table 9

Analysis of the change in the mean value of the experimental group and the control group after the intervention of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course

Variables	Number of observations	Experimental and control group mean pre-test	Experimental group mean post-test	Control group mean post-test	Whether the mean improvement of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group
Comprehensive Interpersonal Relationship Diagnostic Scale	21	10.2381	12.09524	9.190476	Yes
Secondary school students' scores on the General Interpersonal Relations Test	10	25.9	25.7	25	Yes

Results of analysis of variance for scores of interpersonal skills-related scales of middle school students

The effect of the "Artistic Psychological Painting"course intervention on middle school student's level of self-identity

The self-identity scale data of 19 students (22 completed, 3 invalid data) in the experimental group were used as the dependent variable. The Artistic Psychological Painting course was used as the independent variable. Through the experiment, it was found that after the intervention of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course, the mean value of the self-identity level scale of middle school students all obtained an increase, indicating that the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course has a positive effect on improving students' self-identity level (P > 0.05, statistical significance is not significant and needs to be further tested in a qualitative study). The increase in self-identity level was more significant for students below the medium level in the pre-test data. The p-value is smaller but still not statistically significant (p > 0.05), probably because the sample size is not large enough, and the effect of the curriculum on students' self-identity level needs to be further tested through interviews and observations. As shown in Table 10, Table 11, and Table 12.

Table 10

The experimental group (whole sample) after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention

Variables	Number of observations	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Self-identity scale score	19	45.68421	47.15789	20.63158	0.369038	0.547342

Results of ANOVA on Self-identity Scale scores

Table 11

Experimental group after the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course intervention (samples with below-average pre-test values)

Variables	Number of observations	Sample premeasurement value levels	Mean pre-test	Mean post-test	MS	F	P-value
Self-identity scale score	15	≦51	43	46.33333	83.333	1.975169	0.170899

Results of ANOVA on Self-identity Scale scores

Table 12

Analysis of the changes in the mean values of the experimental group and the control group after the intervention of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course

Variables	Number of observations	Experimental and control group mean pre-test	Experimental group mean post-test	Control group mean post-test	Whether the mean improvement of the experimental group is higher than that of the control group
Self-identity scale score	14	45	45.21429	44.35714	Yes

Results of ANOVA on Self-identity Scale scores

DISCUSSION

The data analysis revealed that although both dimensions of middle school students' mental health levels improved significantly after the intervention, especially in terms of the effect of the curriculum on improving middle school students' emotional intelligence, the mean scores of the

emotional expression dimension and the interpersonal skills dimension did not improve, which may be because teachers did not pay enough attention to students' expression and communicative skills in the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course and neglected students' psychological development in this area. This reminds the developers of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course to focus not only on the development of emotional perception and understanding but also on helping students improve their emotional expression skills, and through the improvement of their expression skills to help them improve their interpersonal skills, and finally obtain an improvement of sound mental health qualities of middle school students.

Combining the results of the introduction and data analysis of the course content and teaching process above (to a certain extent, including the author's intuitive experience during the course action). It is clear that the successful implementation of the scientific and fun "Artistic Psychological Painting" course is based on the following factors: the degree of mastery of art therapy techniques. The level of understanding and application of the level of understanding and application of adolescent developmental psychology. The creation of the context in the group counseling process, including the selection of music and the format of the paintings. The level of participation of the students, the quality and level of meditation; the level of the pictures, although not essential. If necessary, to provide suitable sketch materials or ready-made materials, so that the psychological effectiveness of the art creation at the same time, so that the students can reap the benefits of aesthetic quality improvement.

The design of the guide is also a key element, so the specific content of the guide is presented in the text (it should be noted that there is no universal guide to solve the problems of all families or all classmates, each one is specific and irreplaceable). In the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course, students are guided to draw from their own experiences on how to solve certain types of problems when they encounter them effectively and to identify and find solutions to certain types of psychological confusion they have encountered. Understanding how people approach decision-making and problem-solving has also been emphasized in previous psychology research. For instance, Fredrickson et al. (2001) found that people who are able to control their emotions and maintain a positive outlook are better able to solve problems and make good decisions. Kahneman & Tversky (1979) emphasized the significance of recognizing and correcting cognitive biases in order to make better decisions in other studies that looked into the impact of cognitive biases on decision-making.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study results showed that the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course significantly affected middle school students' emotional intelligence and positively affected their self-identity level. This study is innovative because it incorporates art therapy techniques into the school-based curriculum of public schools in China. It is more innovative, rich, and rigorous than previous empirical studies with Chinese students as a sample.

"It is an interdisciplinary course based on the intersection of art, education, and psychology. In addition to ensuring that students can improve their psychological skills in the course, it also emphasizes the characteristics, i.e., innovation. Art psychological counseling and art education complement and promote each other, making up for the lack of psychological attention to students in art education. Art therapy is implanted in the classroom with attention to the richness of the subject matter, the logic of the guiding language, and the richness of the creative painting. The

intellectual content is generated through the summaries of the students. A constructivist teaching philosophy is adopted to execute the curriculum. He is in line with the objective needs of students' cognitive development and the requirements related to improving the development of interdisciplinary integration in the national core literacy curriculum standards (Yan & Liang, 2018). It is recommended that subsequent researchers base their interventions on the ways and means presented in this paper and focus on the students' psychological states before and after the intervention. Interviews can be conducted and recorded semi-structured to further verify the curriculum's effectiveness. It is recommended that the follow-up study focuses on curriculum and materials development, provide teaching cases and templates for the trainers, organize a professional team to write and train the implementation of the relevant curriculum, and supplement it with a complete evaluation program to follow up the improvement of the curriculum quality. The dissemination of the curriculum will be promoted through an easy-to-operate curriculum and teacher training programs.

The research at the ground level mainly addresses curriculum materials and teacher training. The author notes the issues of teacher training and action research in this direction and conducts related action research on teacher education. From the perspective of curriculum materials, the author is simultaneously organizing a team to develop an Introduction to the Chinese School Art Psychology Curriculum, both a curriculum development team and a team of teachers. The practical manual contains theoretical foundations, practical cases, assignment sharing, and feedback and is reference material for the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course training. From the perspective of teacher training, a teacher who wants to become an "Artistic Psychological Painting" course teacher in China can pursue a degree in psychology or obtain the corresponding psychology teaching certificate, art teaching certificate, and counselor training certificate. They can also participate in further training and professional psychological supervision to follow up teacher training, and supplemented with "art therapy" "curriculum" related academic reading training, combining theory and practice. At the same time, the core knowledge and competencies required of the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course teachers include knowledge of art therapy. The necessary skills for the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course, and general knowledge of curriculum theory. The group discussion and project problem-solving models are the models for moving forward in the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course. Art therapy or "Artistic Psychological Painting" course teachers do not require a particularly technical background in clinical psychology. Art students with strong empathic skills can complete the course with some psychology or art therapy training. Hence, it is feasible to implement the course on a large scale if the educational administration pays attention to it.

While completing this action research, the author introduced this model to the art education curriculum at Southwest University in Chongqing, China. Some art teacher training students (many of whom took a second major in psychology) were willing to actively study and try to master the curriculum after learning about it. Almost all of them are art teachers in excellent schools in various provinces and cities in China after graduation. Suppose they master this course concept and practice method well and carry out the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course action. In that case, they will influence aesthetic art education and mental health education in primary and secondary schools to a certain extent and promote the development of regional psychological education construction. It is suggested that the relevant government and large K12 education groups pay attention to the importance and characteristics of the psychologically effective art and

aesthetic education curriculum and select practical classes to carry out the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course.

It is suggested that the relevant governments and large K12 education groups should pay attention to the importance and characteristics of art and aesthetic education courses with psychological effectiveness. Try to select practical classes to carry out "Artistic Psychological Painting" courses. It is suggested that higher teacher training colleges and universities set "Artistic Psychological Painting" course as compulsory courses in art education majors. This will help improve the psychological health of teacher trainees themselves and the students they will teach in the future and bring into play the psychological effects of aesthetic education courses. In conclusion, it is recommended that more action research and empirical studies on the "Artistic Psychological Painting" course be conducted in China to enrich the form of art psychology courses, optimize and enhance art course design programs, and enhance the nurturing value of the courses.

Acknowledgments

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