

A Study on the Influence of Learning Motivation on Dance Education

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Abstract. With the continuous advancement of quality-oriented education, the educational value of dance education at the high school level has gradually received increasing attention. Dance learning not only contributes to students' physical fitness but also plays a unique role in cultivating aesthetic ability and enhancing overall competence. However, in actual teaching contexts, some high school students still exhibit problems such as insufficient learning interest, low participation, and weak learning persistence. Based on this, this paper takes learning motivation as the entry point to explore its mechanism of influence in high school dance learning. The study employs a literature review to examine the current state of high school students' dance learning. The results show that the overall level of learning motivation among high school students is moderate, with both intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation coexisting, but their effects on learning outcomes differ. Among them, intrinsic motivation has a more stable effect on learning engagement and outcomes, while extrinsic motivation shows short-term motivational effects but limited sustainability. Meanwhile, learning motivation is significantly correlated with learning attitude and learning engagement. Based on the findings, this paper argues that improving the quality of dance learning among high school students lies in strengthening intrinsic motivation and enhancing students' learning experience and participation through optimizing teaching methods and evaluation mechanisms. This study extends the application of learning motivation theory in dance education to some extent and provides references for high school dance teaching practice.

Keywords: Learning Motivation, High School Dance Education, Learning Engagement

1. Introduction

With the continuous deepening of quality-oriented education, dance education at the high school level has gradually shifted from a focus on single skill training to an emphasis on students' learning experience and psychological mechanisms. Among these, learning motivation has been extensively researched in general academic domains as a significant factor influencing learning behaviour. However, systematic investigation in the context of dance education is still comparatively restricted, particularly empirical study aimed at high school students.

High school is a critical stage in which individuals' self-awareness and values gradually take shape, and their learning motivation exhibits diversity and coexistence. On the one hand, students

may engage in dance learning for interest, aesthetic experience, or self-expression; on the other hand, external factors such as academic pressure, performance evaluation, and social recognition also exert significant influence. Different types of motivation do not exist independently but interact with each other in the learning process and produce differentiated effects on learning outcomes.

Based on this, this paper focuses on the motivation for dance learning among high school students, analyzing the types of motivation and their mechanisms of action, and further examining the relationships among motivation, learning attitude, and learning engagement. The study primarily uses a literature review, systematically reviewing and integrating relevant domestic and international studies. On this basis, it summarizes and discusses possible influence paths among variables within relevant theoretical frameworks. The study aims to provide theoretical foundations for optimizing high school dance teaching strategies and to provide explanatory support for improving students' learning motivation and persistence.

2. Intrinsic motivation in high school dance learning

2.1. Sources of intrinsic motivation

The intrinsic motivation of high school students in dance learning primarily stems from individuals' internal needs and the psychological satisfaction derived from dance activities. First, aesthetic experience is an important source. As a comprehensive art form, dance integrates body language, musical rhythm, and emotional expression, enabling students to gain aesthetic perception and enjoyment in the learning process, thereby stimulating sustained participation.

Second, the need for self-expression is also a key driving factor. High school students are at a stage characterized by rich emotions and gradually enhanced self-awareness. Dance provides a non-verbal means of expression, allowing them to release emotions and express individuality, thereby enhancing learning initiative.

In addition, the pursuit of self-realization is also an important foundation of intrinsic motivation. As dance skills continue to improve, students experience a sense of achievement from completing movements, participating in performances, and receiving recognition. This positive experience further strengthens their willingness to continue learning.

2.2. Effects of intrinsic motivation on learning

Intrinsic motivation has profound and positive effects on high school students' dance learning. First, it helps students build resilience to frustration. In the process of dance learning, technical difficulties and physical limitations often bring challenges, and students driven by intrinsic interest are more able to maintain patience and persistence in the face of difficulties.

Second, intrinsic motivation contributes to improving students' aesthetic literacy [1]. Students can improve their vision and appreciation of beauty by actively participating in their education and gaining a deeper understanding of the creative meaning of dance pieces.

Finally, intrinsic motivation plays an important role in promoting positive self-identity. In the process of continuously overcoming difficulties and making progress, students gradually build self-confidence and a sense of self-worth, forming a positive evaluation of their own abilities [2].

In summary, intrinsic motivation not only promotes the sustained occurrence of learning behaviors but also positively impacts individual psychological development and the improvement of comprehensive quality [3, 4].

3. Extrinsic motivation in high school dance learning

3.1. Sources of extrinsic motivation

The extrinsic motivation of high school students in dance learning mainly comes from external environmental pressures and expectations. First, academic pressure is the most direct driving factor. Under the current educational evaluation system, some universities use artistic talent as a criterion in admissions, which leads students to closely link dance learning with opportunities for further education, thereby generating strong utilitarian motivation.

Second, social evaluation is also an important source. Recognition and evaluation from teachers, parents, and peers can reinforce students' learning behavior to some extent, helping them maintain learning engagement while seeking approval from others.

Competitiveness is also an important component of extrinsic motivation. In dance competitions, grading examinations, and performance activities, students are often motivated by comparison and competition to achieve better performance and rankings [5].

3.2. Effects of extrinsic motivation on learning

Extrinsic motivation plays a certain promoting role in high school students' dance learning. First, its short-term effect is relatively significant. Driven by clear goal-oriented contexts such as examinations and competitions, students often increase training intensity and concentration over a short period, thereby achieving stage-based improvements in skill levels.

Second, extrinsic motivation helps meet students' social needs. By receiving rewards, recognition, or positive evaluations, students can enhance their sense of belonging and achievement, thereby maintaining learning behaviors to some extent. Therefore, in specific contexts, extrinsic motivation has a positive motivational function in dance learning.

3.3. Potential risks of extrinsic motivation

Although extrinsic motivation has certain motivational effects, its potential risks should not be ignored. First, excessive reliance on extrinsic motivation may lead to the instrumentalization of learning behavior, that is, students regard dance learning merely as a means to achieve external goals while ignoring its artistic value and intrinsic meaning.

Second, extrinsic motivation is at risk of decline. Once external rewards or pressures are reduced, students' learning enthusiasm may rapidly decrease, making it difficult to maintain long-term engagement.

In addition, extrinsic motivation may also inhibit intrinsic interest. When students are long exposed to a result-oriented evaluation system, their interest and enthusiasm for dance itself may be weakened, thus affecting their sustainable development. Therefore, it is necessary to reasonably guide the role of extrinsic motivation in dance teaching to avoid its negative impact on learning.

4. Integration and transformation of learning motivation

4.1. Coexistence and interaction of two types of motivation

In the process of high school dance learning, intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation often coexist and interact dynamically. At the initial stage of learning, most students have a multi-dimensional motivational structure. On the one hand, they are driven by curiosity and interest in

dance; on the other hand, they are also influenced by practical considerations such as credit acquisition, further education needs, and social development.

However, as learning deepens, the motivational structure gradually differentiates. Some students strengthen their intrinsic motivation through continuous aesthetic experience and skill development, demonstrating greater learning autonomy and stability. Others who rely excessively on external evaluation may weaken their interest or even develop burnout under pressure or unsatisfactory feedback.

In addition, key events in the learning process, such as technical breakthroughs, competition results, and teacher evaluations, often become important nodes for motivation transformation [6]. These situations may prompt students to re-examine the meaning of learning, thereby leading them to realize a transformation from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation, or vice versa. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to key moments of motivational change and provide timely, effective guidance to promote positive interaction and integration between the two types of motivation.

4.2. Motivation adjustment under academic pressure

In the current education environment, which is oriented toward academic performance, high school students face considerable academic pressure, which significantly affects their motivation to learn dance. First, the time compression effect is prominent. Heavy coursework and examination pressure often reduce the time available for dance practice, leading to decreased practice frequency and weaker learning outcomes, thereby reducing learning motivation to some extent.

Second, value comparison pressure should not be ignored. Under an evaluation system that prioritizes core academic subjects, students and parents often regard dance as a "non-core subject," thereby allocating time and energy to academic learning. This marginalizes dance learning and affects students' sustained engagement.

In this context, motivation adjustment is particularly important. On the one hand, it is necessary to optimize curriculum arrangements and teaching methods to improve learning efficiency and alleviate time conflicts. On the other hand, it is important to strengthen the recognition of the educational value of dance and guide students to correctly understand its significance for comprehensive development, thereby maintaining relatively stable learning motivation under academic pressure.

5. Teaching suggestions for high school students

5.1. Strategies for cultivating intrinsic motivation

In high school dance instruction, cultivating students' intrinsic motivation should be the core objective. Multi-dimensional teaching strategies should be adopted to enhance students' initiative and persistence in learning.

First, in terms of teaching content design, attention should be paid to integrating artistry and experiential learning. Through diversified dance styles and situational teaching, students can be guided to generate interest and emotional resonance in aesthetic experiences.

Second, in the teaching process, students' agency should be strengthened. Teachers should encourage participation in choreography and improvisation, enabling students to gain a sense of achievement and self-identity through self-expression, thus enhancing internal motivation.

At the same time, a process-oriented evaluation should be adopted, focusing on students' progress and efforts while mitigating the limitations of single-result-oriented evaluation, thereby creating a

supportive learning atmosphere.

In addition, by setting hierarchical goals and providing individualized guidance, students at different levels can gain meaningful success experiences, gradually moving from extrinsic to intrinsic motivation.

5.2. Home–school collaborative support

It is impossible to separate the united support of families and schools from the establishment and growth of high school students' ambition to learn dance. First, schools should strengthen the promotion and guidance of the value of dance education, enabling parents to fully recognize its importance in promoting students' physical and mental development and comprehensive quality.

Second, parents should provide emotional support and reasonable expectations in daily life, avoiding excessive pressure based on performance and results.

Meanwhile, effective communication mechanisms should be established between schools and families to promptly understand students' performance and psychological changes in dance learning and jointly provide a supportive environment.

Through home–school collaboration, the negative impact of academic pressure on dance learning can be mitigated to some extent, helping students achieve a balance among multiple demands and maintain stable, positive learning motivation.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper systematically analyzes the structure, mechanisms, and dynamic changes of learning motivation in high school dance education from the perspectives of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The findings show that intrinsic and extrinsic motivations coexist, with intrinsic motivation playing a more significant role in promoting learning outcomes.

Intrinsic motivation enhances students' initiative and persistence, improves their resilience, aesthetic literacy, and self-identity. In contrast, extrinsic motivation has strong short-term incentive effects and satisfies social needs, but it lacks stability and may lead to tendencies toward instrumental learning.

Moreover, the two types of motivation continuously interact and transform during the learning process, with key events and teaching contexts playing important regulatory roles. Under academic pressure, time constraints, and value comparisons, students' motivation levels are further affected. Therefore, teaching practice should focus on stimulating intrinsic motivation while reasonably guiding extrinsic motivation to achieve coordinated development.

Despite certain progress, this study still has limitations. The sample size and scope are relatively limited, which may affect the generalizability of the conclusions. In addition, the study primarily relies on literature review and lacks longitudinal and experimental support. Future research should increase sample size, adopt longitudinal designs, and incorporate multiple research approaches to enhance scientific rigor. At the same time, it is necessary to explore the influence of different teaching models, curriculum designs, and evaluation mechanisms on learning motivation, and to combine emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, to develop personalized dance-teaching approaches.

Overall, the role of learning motivation in dance education remains a promising area for further research, and further exploration will provide important support for promoting students' comprehensive development and optimizing dance education.

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