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Influence of Self-esteem on Academic Achievement Among College Dance Students in Changsha, China

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the impact of self-esteem on academic success based on psychological perspectives such as constructivism theory, self-affirmation theory, and social comparison theory with college students majoring in dance in Changsha. Through literature analysis, this study found that: high self-esteem levels can enhance students' motivation and ability to cope with stress, thus promoting academic success; dance majors' self-esteem levels are largely influenced by teachers' feedback, peer relationships, and socio-cultural factors as they face the dual demands of academics and arts. The emphasis on academic success in the Chinese cultural context provides students with both motivation and increased psychological pressure. Research suggests that supportive learning environments and diverse success experiences are critical for promoting students' self-esteem and academic achievement. This study provides a theoretical basis for understanding the psychological development of dance students and offers targeted recommendations for optimizing educational practices.

KEYWORDS:

Self-esteem, academic achievement, dance students, selfaffirmation theory, constructivism theory

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, with the rapid development of higher education in China, the psychological health and academic development of college students have gradually become the focus of social and academic research. For dance majors, their academic performance is not only related to the cultivation of their professional ability but also has an important impact on their future career development. Academic achievement is an important indicator of students' mastery of knowledge. (Liang et al,2020) However, dance majors often face high physical training stress, academic competition, and career uncertainty, which may have a significant impact on their psychological state and academic performance. This study focuses on the effects of self-esteem on the academic achievement among college students majoring in dance.

Firstly, academic achievement mainly refers to the sum of students' academic achievements, learning behaviors and learning attitudes in a certain period, which mainly consists of behavioral performance and objective achievements. (Wang et al,2011) Society is in a period of transition, which puts forward higher requirements on the quality of talents.

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*Cite this Article: Pi Qing, Puteri Roslina Binti Abdul Wahid (2025). Influence of Self-esteem on Academic Achievement Among College Dance Students in Changsha, China. International Journal of Social Science and Education Research Studies, 5(1), 116-122 As the main source of social talents, college students' academic achievement during their school years is the most direct and critical measure for us to assess the comprehensive quality of college students. The expansion of colleges and universities in recent years has led to a gradual increase in the number of college students, but the improvement of the quality of college students has not been effectively implemented, resulting in the phenomenon of delayed graduation and difficult employment.

Secondly, according to Bandura's social cognitive theory, individuals acquire and maintain patterns of behavior based on the triadic reciprocal determinism of behavior, personal factors, and the environment, i.e., individuals do not simply reflect the external environment, and individual behavior is largely influenced by cognitive, personality, and other personal factors. Self-esteem, as one of the psychological components of the self-regulatory structure of personality, is the emotional experience of positive evaluation of the individual self, i.e., the emotional experience of the need for self-esteem, self-love, self-respect, and the need for respect of others, as well as the collective and social . (Lin et al,2003) Research shows that self-esteem has a significant positive effect on students' academic achievement. (Huang et al,2024)

Self-esteem, as an important factor in an individual's mental health, has a profound impact on academic performance and overall growth. In the context of higher education, a student's

level of self-esteem directly affects his or her motivation, resilience, and academic success. For college students majoring in dance, they not only face the pressure of academic tasks, but also need to find a balance between artistic performance and public evaluation, which makes the issue of self-esteem even more complex and important. As an important center of Chinese culture and art education, dance students in Changsha grow up in an environment where traditional cultural values and modern educational concepts are intertwined. The dual demands of academic success and artistic achievement provide special challenges and opportunities for building students' self-esteem. It has been shown that social support has a significant impact on students' self-esteem and academic performance. (Zhang, 2022) However, relatively few systematic studies have been conducted on this group of dance students.

This study examines the impact of self-esteem on the academic performance of college students majoring in dance in Changsha by summarizing and analyzing the existing literature. The study aims to reveal the core factors affecting this relationship and clarify the roles of cultural values, peer relationships, and educational environments in it, to provide theoretical support for educators and help optimize teaching strategies and psychological support mechanisms.

Research Objectives

• To explore the literature review on the impact of self-esteem on academic achievement of college students majoring in dance in Changsha City.

• To discuss the significance of self-esteem on academic achievement of college students majoring in dance in Changsha City.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

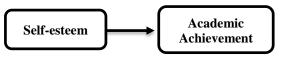


Fig1: Conceptual Framework

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement is an important indicator for judging the quality of education, and different scholars have defined its concept differently. According to Barry (1990), academic achievement refers to students' acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills through stages of learning. Astin (1993) stated that students' academic achievement consists of cognitive gains and affective gains. Pike (2012) and others suggested that academic achievement includes realistic, research, artistic, social, entrepreneurial and traditional. There are also scholars who use academic achievement only as a criterion for judging students' academic achievement, such as Roksa et al. (2018) who measured students' academic achievement by measuring their GPA scores.

Academic achievement is defined in a narrow sense as the achievement of specific results in assignments, exams, disciplines, or degrees by students and expressed in the form of numerical grades or GPAs, and in a broader sense as the performance of school tasks aimed at the acquisition of knowledge and skills, specifically referring to the knowledge gained or competencies developed by students in the course of their study of specialized knowledge and academic subjects. developed competencies. A search of the Oxford Dictionary for the term "academic achievement" leads to the interpretation that academic achievement is a performance outcome that is primarily a function of the extent to which an individual accomplishes specific goals that are the focus of activity in the instructional environment, especially in schools, colleges, and universities. Bloom from a theoretical point of view, divided the goals of education into three separate areas: cognitive, affective and conscious activities, which corresponds to the conclusion that academic achievement is the knowledge (cognitive), values and attitudes (affective), and skills or behaviors (conscious activities) that students are expected to acquire after a period of learning.

Factors affecting academic achievement

In terms of internal factors, Li (2023) and Gong (2023) concluded that self-efficacy has a significant relationship with academic achievement. Yousefy Alireza et al. (2012), through a survey of medical students, found that students' academic achievement requires the coordination and interaction of different aspects of motivation. Ruffing Stephanie et al. (2015) explored and found that overall cognitive ability, learning strategy effort, attention, and learning environment were positively correlated with academic achievement, which provided a basis for further understanding the specific role of learning strategies on academic achievement.

In terms of external factors, Smart & Toutkoushian (2001) found that school characteristics were significantly associated with students' academic achievement, and that students at higher level universities generally had higher academic achievement compared to average universities. In addition, some studies have proved that family also affects students' academic achievement, for example, Liu et al (2024) found that students' academic achievement was significantly affected by family income, parental occupation, parental education, and family size .Hou et al (2018) adolescents were the subjects of the study, and they found that peer learning strategies were able to positively affect students' achievement.

Theories Related to Academic Achievement



Fig2. Related theories of academic achievement

Self-determination Theory

In the 1980s, American psychologists Deci & Ryan proposed the Self-Determination Theory of Motivation (SDT). According to Deci et al: "Self-determination is not only an individual's ability; it is also an individual's need. People possess a basic intrinsic predisposition to self-determination that directs them to engage in behaviors that are of interest and beneficial to the development of their abilities, as well as to form flexible adaptations to the social environment." (Zhang, 1999) Because of this inherent developmental predisposition in individuals, the internalization of internal and external motivation is a natural process (Liu & Zhang, 2010). However, this predisposition does not necessarily develop smoothly, but requires the support of the social environment, i.e., the fulfillment of the three basic psychological needs of human beings. According to SDT, there are three basic psychological needs: first, autonomy, which refers to individuals' pursuit of autonomy in their own actions and decision-making; second, competence, which refers to individuals' desire to perceive themselves as competent in activities; and third, relationship, which refers to individuals' desire to connect with others and to feel understood, supported, and cared for. Under the SDT perspective, satisfying the three basic psychological needs is the key to VET role models' pursuit of professional growth and achieving professional excellence.

In this study, SDT provides a theoretical framework for exploring the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement. SDT emphasizes the satisfaction of the three basic psychological needs of an individual, namely, autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which are the keys to promoting intrinsic motivation and academic achievement. For Changsha dance majors, the application of selfdetermination theory is reflected in the following aspects: first, students need to experience autonomy in their studies and performances, such as having a certain degree of freedom in choosing their academic direction or dance style, which enhances their sense of commitment to their academics. Second, dance students' sense of competence is primarily expressed through academic performance and success on stage, and self-esteem and academic performance reinforce each other when they gain a sense of fulfillment in their artistic creations or academic tasks. Finally, relationality is particularly important in this group; by building supportive interpersonal relationships with faculty, classmates, and audience members, students can feel a sense of belonging and social support, which leads to a more positive approach to academic and artistic challenges.

Overall, the three core needs of self-determination theory complemented each other in this study and worked together to influence students' levels of self-esteem and academic achievement. This theoretical framework provides an important theoretical basis for understanding and improving the psychological well-being and academic performance of dance students.

Self-efficacy Theory

Based on the theoretical framework of social learning theory, social cognitive theory puts more emphasis on the role played by personal beliefs on one's own behaviors and thoughts and highlights the importance of the five basic competencies in the human self-system. On the view of human nature, social cognitive theory believes that human beings are dynamic and have great potential, and that human beings are masters of their own destinies, but at the same time, they are also constrained by environmental conditions. Social cognitive theory consists of four theories, which are ternary interaction determinism, observational learning theory and self-efficacy theory and self-regulation theory (Liang, 2022). Among them, ternary interaction determinism is the core and foundation of the whole theory. In this framework, an individual's selfefficacy is regarded as a key variable that affects academic achievement.

Self-efficacy is an important component of social cognitive theory and refers to the confidence or beliefs that people hold about their ability to achieve goals in specific domains (Bandura, 1986). The social cognitive theory proposed by Bandura emphasizes the critical role of self-efficacy in academic achievement. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's confidence in his or her ability to accomplish a task. Selfesteem is closely related to self-efficacy in this framework because high self-esteem enhances students' beliefs about their academic abilities. Dance students' self-efficacy directly affects their performance on academic and artistic tasks. When students believe they can succeed in academic tasks or excel on stage, their level of self-esteem increases, which further motivates motivation and effort.

People's behavioral choices are all often influenced by selfefficacy. People with a high sense of self-efficacy recognize their own abilities, dare to take on and perform challenging tasks, are willing to have higher goals and put in more effort, choose to respond positively to difficulties, and are more able to persevere in difficult situations, which can stimulate their potentials, and they tend to have a positive mindset and are more optimistic. On the other hand, people with low selfefficacy do not recognize their own abilities, are afraid to choose challenging tasks, prefer to set the most secure goals for themselves, choose to escape when encountering difficulties, and easily give up. Difficulties will increase their psychological pressure, and avoid failure and unfavorable results, and their thinking pattern tends to be negative and anaerobic, with a pessimistic mood, and they tend to be more anxious or depressed.

The author mainly focuses on the use of self-efficacy in dance professional learning, and the individual's belief in his or her own ability to learn is usually called learning self-efficacy (or

"academic self-efficacy").Schunk believes that if students already have certain learning abilities or skills, their beliefs about whether they can use them to achieve their learning goals are their learning self-efficacy. According to Schunk, if students already possess certain learning abilities or skills, their beliefs about their ability to use these abilities to achieve their learning goals are their learning self-efficacy. Xiao (2002) interpreted learning self-efficacy as students' ability to judge the extent to which they have accomplished a learning task and Wei (2004) regarded learning self-efficacy as students' self-perceptions and beliefs in a learning situation. Self-perception and beliefs.

In general, self-efficacy in this study is defined as the perception or belief of individuals in their subjective judgment of their learning ability and their ability to control their own learning behaviors, and it reflects their self-efficacy in the field of learning. In addition to having a high level of self-efficacy in the art of dance, they must also have a good level of knowledge and proficiency to have an outstanding performance.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is a specific way in which people evaluate or feel about themselves and is one of the important components of self-concept (Li et al., 2019) Self-esteem (Self-esteem) refers to an individual's overall evaluation and experience of his or her self-competence and value. (LIJ, 2018) Self-esteem has always been a research hotspot in psychology, and the concepts about self-esteem have blossomed in a hundred different ways. Functionalist psychologist James was the first to propose the concept of self-esteem, he believed that selfesteem is the ratio of success and ambition levels, that is, selfesteem is related to an individual's actual accomplishments versus ideal desired accomplishments. (Rosenberg, 1965) argued that self-esteem is an attitude towards the self that is based on one's own judgment of the standards of behavior and values implemented by society. (Baumeister et al., 1996) and others believe that self-esteem is a holistic estimate and evaluation of one's own values and abilities, which plays an important role in human development. (Mruk, 1999), based on a review of previous self-esteem research, suggests that self-esteem is a state of the individual that demonstrates the individual's ability and worth in coping with life's challenges. self-esteem refers to an individual's confidence and positive self-regard (Arslan, 2019). self-regard (Arslan, 2019; Leary, 1999).

However, in past research self-esteem reflects individuals' perceptions and evaluations of the self (Greenberg et al., 1992). On the one hand, individuals with high self-esteem tend to recognize more of their own abilities and values (Yao et al., 2016), and hold more positive evaluations of their life status, with higher subjective well-being (Ouevedo & Abella, 2011). On the other hand, positive self-related evaluations are

also important for the emergence of self-esteem (Leary et al., 1995). It can be seen that high academic achievement can effectively enhance the individual's sense of competence, lead to the positive development of autonomy and interpersonal relationships and thus promote the positive self-evaluation of college students (Liu Ran, 2014), and consequently enhance their self-esteem level (Demirtas et al., 2017; Leary & Baumeister, 2000).

Theories Related to Self-esteem



Fig3. Related theories of self-esteem

Self-Affirmation Theory (SAT)

Self-Affirmation Theory (SAT), proposed by Claude Steele, argues that when an individual's self-worth is threatened, an overall sense of self-esteem can be preserved through achievement or recognition in other domains. For example, a dance student's success in stage performance may help compensate for stress in the academic field. Self-affirmation in multiple domains can help balance an individual's selfesteem, especially when faced with failure or stress.

Self-affirmation, which refers to the maintenance of an individual's positive overall self-image through the affirmation of important values unrelated to the threat domain, is categorized into two types: value affirmation and trait affirmation. Value affirmation enhances the clarity of an individual's self-concept by emphasizing one's values, principles, and standards. Trait affirmation, on the other hand, enhances an individual's sense of self-worth by emphasizing one's positive, positive traits (e.g., empathy), but both can enhance an individual's self-integrity (Liu & Huang, 2018). One study found that affirming self-positive traits makes individuals feel good about themselves and feel more capable, while also preventing self-evaluation from being affected by negative feedback (Gao Li, 2014). At the same time, selfaffirmation helps activate an individual's positive resources, improves their sense of identity, enables individuals to view themselves and their school in a broader perspective, and diminishes the negative effects of threats on social identity (Cohen & Sherman, 2014; Easterbrook & Hadden, 2020) When individuals face situations that may damage their selfesteem, by affirming their own value in other important areas, it can alleviate anxiety, enhance resilience, and promote more positive behavioral performance. In the present study, selfaffirmation theory provided an important psychological framework for exploring the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among college students majoring in dance at Long Beach.

Dance undergraduates often face multiple pressures from peer competition, faculty evaluations, and public feedback in

their academic studies and stage performances. These pressures may threaten students' sense of self-worth, which in turn affects their academic performance. According to selfaffirmation theory, students who can find a sense of value in other domains (e.g., artistic achievement or social competence) can effectively maintain self-esteem and increase confidence and motivation in facing academic challenges. Also, by receiving affirmation from teachers, peers, and family in the educational setting, dance students can mitigate the negative effects of failure or underperformance, thus maintaining self-esteem levels. This positive self-affirmation process helps students to stay engaged academically and enhance their academic achievement.

Social Comparison Theory (SCT)

Social Comparison Theory (SCT), developed by Leon Festinger, suggests that individuals assess their abilities, accomplishments, and values by comparing themselves to others. It is believed that people tend to evaluate themselves by comparing themselves to objective information and standards. If objective information is unavailable, vague or ambiguous, then people will compare themselves with others. It has been found that upward comparisons with people who are better than oneself produce an assimilation effect and a contrast effect. The assimilation effect refers to the phenomenon that when individuals face social comparison. their self-evaluation level will be directed toward the target, and individuals will choose to compare themselves with those who are better than themselves (upward social comparison), in order to help themselves obtain the information and methods of improvement, so as to self-motivate and promote the self-improvement of the individual . The contrast effect refers to the fact that individuals will lower their selfevaluation level when facing upward social comparison information.

This theory is important in understanding the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement among dance majors in Changsha, because this group is often in highly competitive and evaluative environments, and their selfesteem and academic performance are significantly affected by social comparison. Dance majors often engage in upward comparisons with peers who are more technically proficient or academically performing. Such comparisons may motivate them to pursue higher academic and artistic goals, but they may also result in negative self-perceptions, leading to decreased self-esteem and increased academic stress.

Meanwhile, downward comparisons, i.e., to less capable peers, may boost their self-confidence and self-esteem levels, leading to improved academic performance in the short term. Dance students derive much of their self-esteem from social evaluations and comparisons. They confirm their value and status by comparing themselves to their peers, teachers, and even the public. In a more supportive environment, positive social comparisons can reinforce their sense of self-efficacy and academic achievement; whereas in a competitive and critical environment, negative social comparisons may lead to impaired self-esteem and affect academic engagement and performance.

III. DISCUSSION

Research has shown that the formation of self-esteem is a dynamic and constructive process, which is affected by multiple influences from the learning environment, social interactions, and individual reflections. Changsha dance students constructed their perceptions of their own value through positive feedback and self-affirmation in the interaction between academics and dance practice. High levels of self-esteem not only enhanced students' academic performance, but also their ability to cope with stress and challenges. Conversely, an overly competitive or critical environment may weaken students' self-esteem and affect their academic performance. This suggests that the supportive design of educational environments is crucial for promoting students' psychological well-being and academic success.

In the Chinese cultural context, academic achievement is regarded as an important reflection of family and social values, and this traditional concept has a significant impact on the self-esteem constructs of dance students. On the one hand, this cultural value motivates students to pursue excellence in academic and artistic fields; on the other hand, excessive social expectations may lead to increased psychological stress, especially when students are unable to achieve the set goals. Therefore, educators should pay attention to students' self-positioning in the multiple value systems and help them find a balance between academic and artistic pursuits, so as to effectively maintain the level of selfesteem and promote all-round development.

This study utilizes multiple perspectives, including constructivist theory, social comparison theory, and selfaffirmation theory, to reveal the complex interactions between students' self-esteem and academic achievement. Educational practices should capitalize on these theoretical guides to create more supportive learning environments. For example, positive feedback from teachers, cooperative peer learning, and personalized learning goals can help students increase their self-efficacy and affirmation of their abilities. In addition, by providing diverse success experiences (e.g., stage performances, artistic creations, etc.), students' sense of achievement and self-esteem can be further enhanced, thus promoting academic success.

The study also found that different students showed significant individual differences in coping with academic stress and constructing self-esteem. For example, some students tend to be motivated to learn through upward

comparisons, while others may have impaired self-esteem due to frequent social comparisons. This suggests that educational strategies need to be tailored to provide targeted support and guidance based on students' characteristics to ensure that each student can grow and succeed at a pace that is appropriate for him or her.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Based on several psychological perspectives, including constructivist theory, self-affirmation theory, and social comparison theory, the study reveals the important role of self-esteem in students' psychological development and academic performance. Students with high levels of selfesteem are more able to cope positively with challenges in academic and artistic learning and demonstrate higher levels of academic motivation and achievement. Conversely, impaired self-esteem may lead to decreased motivation and deteriorated academic performance. Thus, self-esteem is not only an important indicator of students' psychological wellbeing, but also a key factor in academic success.

Dance students are under both academic and artistic pressures, and their level of self-esteem is affected by a variety of factors, including academic feedback, stage performance, peer comparisons, and socio-cultural values. A supportive learning environment and diverse success experiences can help students maintain a high level of self-esteem and further promote their academic performance. The high value placed on academic achievement in Chinese culture provides motivation for students while also increasing their psychological stress. It was found that students who were able to find a balance between academic and artistic goals and gained self-affirmation from multiple values were more likely to develop positively in terms of psychological well-being and academic achievement.

Educators should focus on creating supportive learning environments in their teaching practices, such as helping students build and maintain self-esteem through positive feedback, individualized instruction, and diverse success experiences. In addition, providing support strategies tailored to students' individual differences can help enhance their academic performance and mental toughness. This study explored the relationship between self-esteem and academic success at a theoretical level, providing important theoretical foundations and practical insights for understanding the psychological development and academic success of dance students. However, as the study did not involve empirical data, future research could further validate the findings of this through empirical methods while exploring study applicability in more cultural contexts and educational models. This study provides useful insights for optimizing educational environments and psychological support strategies for dance students, while pointing the way for subsequent related research.

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