

# Research on the development path of physical education dance teaching in colleges and universities based on self-determination theory

Dongxiao Yu \*

School of Physical Education, Hunan University of Technology, Zhuzhou, Hunan, 412007, China  
767355899@qq.com

\*Corresponding author

**Abstract:** Using literature, theoretical analysis and other research methods, based on the self-determination theory, the study analyses the value implication and influencing factors of the development of physical education dance teaching in colleges and universities, and puts forward the corresponding practice path. It is found that the teaching of sports dance in colleges and universities follows the value orientation of promoting students' physical and mental health, cultivating students' comprehensive quality, and promoting students' personality development. Combined with self-determination theory, the study further analyses the influence of students' internal motivation, external motivation and school teaching atmosphere on the development of physical education dance teaching in colleges and universities. The study concludes that the development of sport dance teaching in colleges and universities should encourage students to play the decision-making consciousness, stimulate the motivation and interest in learning, create a self-supportive learning environment, cultivate positive habits and thinking ability, and adopt a diversified dance teaching method to meet the learning needs and individual differences.

**Keywords:** Physical education in higher education; physical dance; physical education; self-determination theory; exercise motivation

## 1. Introduction

As the modernisation of Chinese education continues, the importance of physical education in colleges and universities in promoting the all-round development of students is becoming more and more prominent. In recent years, the promulgation and implementation of policy documents such as the National Physical Fitness Standard for Students, the Opinions on Deepening the Integration of Physical Education and Teaching to Promote the Healthy Development of Young People, as well as the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving School Physical Education in the New Era and the Opinions on Comprehensively Strengthening and Improving Aesthetic Education in Schools in the New Era have made it clear that the integration of physical education in colleges and universities in the new era will take the cultivation of excellence in physical education, culture, and artistic. The new era of "Healthy China" is a new era of "Healthy China", which is a new era of "Healthy China". Under the guidance of the concepts of "Healthy China" and "Aesthetic Education" in the new era, how to promote the realisation of the two goals of national fitness and artistic and aesthetic education at the same time requires a sport that combines the attributes of sport and art as a medium[1]. Dance for Sport, also known as International Standard Dance, is a multi-functional sport that combines group, recreational, artistic, fun and competitive features, and embodies "strength" and "beauty", including Latin dance, standard dance and other ten dance art forms[2]. The health value of "healthy heart" and "fitness" of this project has been recognised by the education sector[3] and occupies an important position in the synergistic education system of sports and arts in colleges and universities. Carrying out sports dance teaching courses in colleges and universities not only helps students to master sports techniques and enhance physical fitness, but also cultivates students' artistic appreciation of the beauty of the body, the beauty of the mind and the beauty of the behaviour in sports, and changes the status quo of "growing in wisdom, neglecting morality, weakening in physical beauty and lacking in labour". Therefore, to explore how to stimulate students' internal and external motivation through scientific and effective teaching strategies, to create a good teaching atmosphere, and to improve the quality of teaching has become a key issue in the reform of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), as one of the most supported theories in contemporary motivation theories by empirical research[4], pays attention to the existential experience of individual autonomy and subjectivity, puts the psychological needs of the individual in the first place, pays attention to the development of internal ability and internal motivation in the process of individual action, and emphasises the interaction between the individual and the environment in which he is living (field). which provides a new perspective and new ideas for the innovative development of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities. In view of this, this study is based on the self-determination theory, from the perspective of students' needs, to clarify the value implication of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities, analyse its influencing factors, and put forward practical innovation paths, aiming at providing a new direction and a new way of thinking for the innovation and reform of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities, as well as providing theoretical basis and practical guidance for the promotion of the modernization of education and the cultivation of high-quality talents.

## **2. The Value Implications of the Development of Physical Education Dance Teaching in Colleges and Universities from the Perspective of Self-Determination Theory**

### ***2.1 The core essence of the development of physical education and dance teaching in colleges and universities: to promote students' physical and mental health***

The teaching of physical education dance in colleges and universities is based on the concept of health first, and its primary task is to promote the physical and mental health of students. In the teaching process, students learn and master various postures and movements of physical dance, use dynamic physical activities to significantly improve the body's athletic ability, coordination and flexibility, and then promote the healthy development of bones and muscles, thus enhancing the overall physical fitness. Secondly, the study of sport dance is an effective means of psychological adjustment. By expressing their emotions in dance, students can effectively release learning pressure, improve their emotion management ability and enhance their mental health. Relevant studies have shown that students who regularly participate in sports dance have significantly better indicators of mental sub-health emotional problems and social adaptation problems than those in the sedentary and less active group[5], further proving the unique role of sports dance in promoting students' mental health. Therefore, the promotion of physical dance teaching in colleges and universities not only helps to improve students' physical health, but also plays an important role in the psychological level, which is of great practical significance for students' physical and mental health development.

### ***2.2 Important concepts in the development of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities: fostering students' comprehensive qualities***

Sports dance is not only a physical activity programme, but also one of the important carriers of art education. Sports dance teaching in colleges and universities aims to cultivate students' comprehensive quality, and promote students' all-round development through the combination of dance movement learning and artistic expression. First and foremost, sports dance serves as a unique blend of art and athletics within the educational framework. In the teaching process, students not only develop their dance movement skills and physical abilities but also learn to express emotions and tell stories through dance. This artistic cultivation fosters a deeper cultural literacy and enhances students' appreciation of artistic aesthetics. Secondly, the study of sports dance can effectively cultivate the teamwork spirit of individuals. In the practice of duo or group dance, the mutual cooperation between men and women, along with their adherence to the rhythmic beat and implicit collaboration, fosters a strong sense of teamwork and cooperation among the dance partners. Furthermore, the study of sports dance also emphasises individual expression, providing a platform for students to show themselves and their personalities, and this spirit of expression is not only reflected on the stage and on the field, but also affects students' daily learning and life, which can prompt them to be more confident, active and proactive in participating in a variety of activities. Therefore, the teaching of sports dance in colleges and universities takes the cultivation of artistic cultivation, co-operation ability and the spirit of expression as a way to comprehensively improve the comprehensive quality of students, which reflects the important value of the educational concept of "five education" in practice.

### ***2.3 Key elements of the development of physical education and dance teaching in higher education: promoting students' personality development***

Personalised education is a key concept in the modern education system. Individual differences among students exist objectively, and giving each student a suitable education is a manifestation of fairness and justice in education, which is reflected in the whole process of education practice[6]. In the process of teaching sports dance in colleges and universities, through the organic combination of dance elements, physical art and musical accompaniment, teachers use physical activity as a means to not only encourage students to master sports skills and improve their physical functions, but also to improve their artistic appreciation and aesthetic ability, and thus promote personalised development[7]. In the process of teaching, the teachers make personalised teaching objectives and strategies, tailor the teaching to the students' needs, encourage the students to show themselves, and promote the enhancement of self-cognition. This development is not only limited to the study of physical education dance itself, but also extends to other disciplines, helping students to have stronger independent decision-making and problem-solving abilities in their future learning and life. Therefore, physical dance teaching not only plays a role in physical skills, but also promotes the personalised development of students through the combination of art and sports, which is more in line with the modern education's demand for personalised and diversified development.

## **3. Influential factors on the development of physical education dance teaching in colleges and universities under the view of self-determinism**

### ***3.1 Internal motivation***

Internal motivation refers to the motivation of an individual to engage in an activity spontaneously because of his or her own interest, pleasure, or satisfaction[8]. Internal motivation is the core driving force for students to learn DanceSport techniques and to enhance their interest and initiative. When students experience fun, achievement or personal growth in DanceSport, their internal motivation will be significantly stimulated, which in turn will lead to students showing higher commitment and continuity in learning, greater perseverance and resilience in the face of challenges, and even willingness to dedicate more time to independent practice after class. The students were even willing to devote more time to independent practice after class. For example, in the process of dance learning, when students spontaneously practice a certain dance style because they like it, they not only can master the technique faster, but also experience the satisfaction and fun brought by dance in the process of constantly challenging themselves and exploring new movements. Research shows that students with strong internal motivation tend to show higher learning efficiency and more lasting learning motivation in the learning process[9]. At this point, dance learning is no longer a mere task, but an effective way for students' self-expression and self-realisation. After mastering a complex dance movement or choreographed routine, students further enhance their confidence in dance learning and experience a sense of achievement, which motivates them to be more autonomous in their next learning. This virtuous cycle not only helps to improve students' dance skill development, but also promotes them to show more motivation and initiative in other areas of their studies and life.

### ***3.2 External motivation***

External motivation is the motivation of an individual to engage in an activity driven by factors such as rewards, punishments, evaluation mechanisms or pressure, such as grade ratings, competition results, praise from teachers or recognition from peers[8]. Although external motivation is mainly driven by external factors, through appropriate guidance and incentives, these external factors can also be gradually internalised and transformed into students' internal motivation, thus enhancing their autonomy and adaptability. External motivation can quickly boost students' motivation in the short term, especially in the early stages of learning, and external rewards can often play a powerful motivational role[9]. For example, students may practise harder because they want to get a high mark in a physical education exam or win an award in a dance competition, with external motivation taking a dominant role. This type of motivation can also help students to focus for a short period of time, prompting them to work harder in the moment to learn dance skills or perform at competition level. However, external motivation can also produce a double-edged sword effect. If external rewards or evaluation mechanisms are not set up properly, it may lead to a lack of intrinsic motivation to learn on their own just for the sake of obtaining some kind of reward or incentive, and if the external rewards

are gone, the students' motivation to learn may then decline and they may even be bored with learning. Therefore, when teachers make use of external motivation, they should focus on combining external rewards with students' personal interests and growth goals, and make reasonable use of teachers' incentives, peer recognition, or excellent results in competitions in the classroom. By setting challenging goals and providing continuous feedback, students are prompted to regard external rewards as a part of their personal growth, and are helped to transform external motivation into internal motivation drive. This in turn drives their continued progress in learning Dance for Sport.

### ***3.3 Teaching atmosphere***

Teaching atmosphere factors such as educational environment, teachers' behaviour and attitudes have an important impact on the teaching effect of sport dance in colleges and universities, students' motivation and participation experience[10]. On the one hand, the teaching environment of sport dance courses in colleges and universities can not only directly affect students' motivation and participation, but also shape students' learning attitudes and behaviours through subtle ways, including the physical and psychological environments. The physical environment refers to the classroom hardware facilities, space layout, equipment use, etc., such as spacious and bright dance classrooms, perfect audio equipment, appropriate floor materials, etc., which can provide students with a safe and comfortable learning environment, and can effectively improve their learning experience and efficiency in sport dance; the psychological environment is the emotional atmosphere in the classroom, the interaction between students, and the overall classroom order and discipline, etc. The psychological environment is the emotional atmosphere, the way students interact with each other, and the overall classroom order and discipline. Some studies have shown that the comfort of the learning environment and the emotional support in the classroom have a significant effect on students' motivation, and when students feel the positive feedback from the external environment, their motivation and autonomy will be significantly improved[11]. On the other hand, in the process of teaching organisation and programme implementation of sport dance in colleges and universities, the teacher, as the organiser and leader of the classroom, plays a key role in the creation of the classroom teaching atmosphere and the students' experience through his/her teaching style, emotional expression and feedback mechanism[12]. Research has shown that teachers' supportive behaviours can significantly increase students' intrinsic motivation and classroom engagement[13]. On the contrary, too harsh or critical attitudes may weaken students' enthusiasm for learning and easily lead to burnout and frustration[14]. Therefore, the optimisation of the physical education dance teaching environment and the shaping of physical education teachers' behaviours and attitudes in higher education creates a supportive and motivating dance teaching atmosphere for students and enhances their motivation and effectiveness in learning.

## **4. Self-determination theory perspective The practical path of the development of physical education dance teaching in colleges and universities**

### ***4.1 Encourage students to utilise their decision-making awareness to stimulate motivation and interest in sport and learning***

Autonomous decision-making ability is the key ability for adolescents to achieve self-management and personality perfection. In the process of teaching sports dance in colleges and universities, encouraging students to participate in decision-making is not only an important strategy to cultivate students' independent learning ability, but also an effective way to improve the quality of classroom teaching. On the one hand, physical education teachers should adhere to the concept of student-centred education, let students be the masters of the classroom, provide students with opportunities and space for independent decision-making, and fully mobilise students' subjective initiative in physical education dance learning. For example, let students actively participate in the selection of dance projects, the development of practice plans, the design of classroom activities and other aspects and put forward their own opinions, so as to let students feel respected and understood, and stimulate their motivation and interest in learning, so as to enhance their sense of identity, sense of responsibility for the completion of the objectives of the dance learning, and sense of belonging to the classroom interactions; on the other hand, teachers should follow the principle of "cooperation and mutual assistance". On the other hand, teachers should follow the educational paradigm of "co-operation and mutual assistance" and hold regular discussions and exchanges with students to understand their learning needs and expectations, which can be timely incorporated into the teaching design and objectives of physical

education dance, so as to adjust the teaching strategies and means in a targeted manner and improve the effectiveness of the teaching of physical education dance.

#### ***4.2 Creating a self-directed and supportive learning environment that fosters positive habits and thinking skills***

Sports dance teaching in colleges and universities is not only the teaching of dance technique, but also an effective way of students' motor habitus and way of thinking. Therefore, in classroom teaching, it is especially crucial to create an autonomous and active learning environment. First of all, college educators and management should make full use of external high-quality sports resources combined with teaching purposes, invite off-campus dance experts, sports dance educators and other demonstration teaching and course explanations, and organise students to participate in on-campus and off-campus dance performances and competitions, so as to provide students with a better learning experience and a platform for display. Secondly, teachers should focus on the construction of a motivational and supportive classroom atmosphere, using encouraging language and positive feedback to help students build up self-confidence in the learning process and enhance their enthusiasm for dance learning. In addition, students are further guided to make practical learning plans on their own to cultivate their time management and self-management skills. Finally, by creating diversified learning tasks, such as group co-operation projects and creative performances, teachers stimulate students' active participation and active exploration, enhance their commitment to learning and enthusiasm for participation[15], and encourage students to exercise their planning ability and teamwork spirit in the process of completing the tasks. This kind of autonomous and active learning environment not only helps to improve students' dance level, but also cultivates good exercise habits and ways of thinking for them in their future study and life.

#### ***4.3 Adopt diversified dance teaching methods to meet learning needs and individual differences***

In the teaching of sports dance in colleges and universities, students' individual differences and learning needs are different, and teachers need to adopt diversified teaching methods to mobilise students' learning enthusiasm to the greatest extent possible and meet the learning needs of all kinds of students. First of all, physical education teachers should follow the educational logic of "students as the main body, teachers as the leading" in the teaching process, adhere to the educational principle of "teaching students according to their aptitude", and analyse the situation of students according to their educational backgrounds, inherent needs and ability levels, and understand their real needs and willingness to learn. We analyse the situation of students in terms of their educational background, intrinsic needs and ability levels, and understand their real needs and willingness to learn. They should adopt diversified learning methods such as game, challenge and immersion, create exercises of medium difficulty, simulate real dance scenes or set up competition classroom activities to stimulate students' interest in learning and enhance the interactivity and fun of teaching. Secondly, educators need to implement dynamic and differentiated stratified teaching according to the movement level and exercise foundation of different individuals in the class. For example, for students with a weak foundation in dance, teachers can adopt a more detailed decomposition teaching method to build up self-confidence and a sense of interest in sports dance learning, help them gradually master the basic movements, and stimulate their interest in learning and the spirit of challenge. For students with a certain foundation, teachers can increase the difficulty and variability of movements and emphasise the expression of emotions, dance consciousness and other internal thoughts.

### **5. Conclusion**

Under the background of modern education concept and new development stage, the development of sports dance teaching in colleges and universities needs to always adhere to the "student-centred" teaching mode, and devote itself to the optimisation and innovation of sports dance teaching mode. Teachers in colleges and universities should provide students with opportunities to participate in decision-making, enhance students' subjective awareness and learning autonomy, so as to stimulate their intrinsic motivation and interest in learning; colleges and universities should create a positive learning environment that encourages self-exploration and development, and cultivate students' habit of active exercise and independent thinking ability; and teachers should adopt diversified and personalised teaching methods to meet students' different needs, better adapt to the learning characteristics of contemporary students, and promote their all-rounded development. Teachers should adopt diversified

and personalised teaching methods to meet the different needs of students, better adapt to the learning characteristics of contemporary students and promote their comprehensive development.

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