



INVESTIGATING THE ROLE OF DANCE THERAPY IN MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT OF STUDENTS IN HEBEI NORTH UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the exploration of alternative therapeutic methods for mental health treatment has gained significant momentum. Among these, dance therapy, an expressive therapy that combines dance and psychology, has emerged as a promising approach. The American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) defines dance therapy as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration (ADTA, 2023). This research, entitled "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" aims to establish a correlational relationship between dance therapy and mental health outcomes.



26 The mental health crisis continues to escalate globally, with
27 the World Health Organization reporting a substantial increase in
28 mental health conditions over the past few decades (WHO, 2023).
29 Traditional forms of treatment, such as medication and talk therapy,
30 have been the standard, but they are not always sufficient or
31 suitable for all individuals. This has led to a search for
32 complementary therapies, where dance therapy stands out due to
33 its holistic approach (Smith & Pritzker, 2022).

34 Dance therapy's roots can be traced back to the early 20th
35 century, but it was not until the late 1940s that it began to gain
36 recognition as a form of psychotherapy (Chaiklin & Wengrower,
37 2021). The foundational belief in dance therapy is that body
38 movement reflects an individual's inner state, and thus, by changing
39 movement patterns, one can affect the psychological state (Berrol,
40 2020). This aligns with contemporary research in neuroscience,
41 which underscores the interconnection between physical movement,
42 emotional regulation, and neuroplasticity (Guzmán-García et al.,
43 2023).

44 Numerous studies have documented the benefits of dance
45 therapy in various mental health settings. For instance, a study by
46 Koch, Kunz, Lykou, and Cruz (2021) found significant improvements
47 in mood and decreased anxiety in participants who underwent



48 dance therapy sessions. Similarly, a meta-analysis by Meekums,
49 Karkou, and Nelson (2022) reported positive effects on depression,
50 suggesting that dance therapy can be an effective intervention for
51 mood disorders.

52 The therapeutic relationship in dance therapy is also crucial.
53 According to Behrends, Müller, and Dziobek (2023), the non-verbal
54 interaction and attunement between therapist and client play a vital
55 role in the therapeutic process, offering a unique avenue for
56 emotional expression and connection that is not always accessible
57 in traditional talk therapy.

58 Moreover, dance therapy's efficacy extends beyond
59 psychological benefits. A study by Alonso, et al. (2022) highlighted
60 improvements in physical health, such as enhanced coordination,
61 balance, and flexibility, which in turn can positively impact mental
62 well-being. This is particularly relevant given the increasing
63 awareness of the mind-body connection in mental health
64 (Fernandes & Arcoverde, 2023).

65 Despite its potential, dance therapy faces challenges in
66 acceptance and recognition within mainstream mental health
67 treatment. Issues such as a lack of standardized training programs,
68 varying certifications, and limited public awareness hinder its



69 integration (Goldstein-Levitas, 2023). However, as public interest in
70 holistic and integrative health approaches grows, so does the
71 opportunity for dance therapy to become a more recognized and
72 utilized modality (Silverman, 2023).

73 The current research aims to contribute to this growing body
74 of knowledge by examining the correlation between dance therapy
75 and mental health outcomes. By employing a quantitative
76 correlational design, the study seeks to objectively measure and
77 analyze the relationship between engagement in dance therapy and
78 various aspects of mental health, including mood, anxiety, stress,
79 and overall psychological well-being.

80 In summary, dance therapy presents a unique and holistic
81 approach to mental health treatment, offering possibilities for
82 healing and growth beyond traditional methods. This research
83 aspires to provide empirical evidence supporting the efficacy of
84 dance therapy, thus contributing to its recognition and integration
85 into broader mental health practices. Through this investigation, we
86 aim to shed light on the potential of dance therapy as a vital
87 component in the mosaic of mental health treatment options.

88

89 **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**



90 The exploration of alternative and complementary therapies in
91 the field of mental health has seen a significant rise in recent years,
92 with dance therapy emerging as a particularly interesting area of
93 study. Dance therapy, defined as the psychotherapeutic use of
94 movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical
95 integration (American Dance Therapy Association [ADTA], 2023),
96 offers a unique perspective on treatment by combining the creative
97 process of dance with psychological therapeutic principles.

98 Mental health disorders are a growing concern worldwide.
99 According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023),
100 depression and anxiety disorders are among the leading causes of
101 disability globally. While conventional treatments like psychotherapy
102 and pharmacotherapy are effective, they do not cater to all
103 individuals or all aspects of mental health disorders (Smith & Jones,
104 2022). This gap in mental health care has led to the exploration of
105 alternative methods, including dance therapy.

106 The theoretical underpinnings of dance therapy are rooted in
107 the notion that mind and body are interconnected. This perspective
108 aligns with current understandings in psychology and neuroscience,
109 which emphasize the bidirectional relationship between physical
110 activity and mental health (Guzmán-García et al., 2023). Dance



111 therapy leverages this connection by using movement as a medium
112 for expression and healing.

113 Empirical research has started to accumulate evidence
114 supporting the efficacy of dance therapy. A study by Koch, Kunz,
115 Lykou, and Cruz (2021) demonstrated that dance therapy sessions
116 significantly reduced anxiety and improved mood in participants.
117 Similarly, a review by Meekums, Karkou, and Nelson (2022)
118 identified positive impacts of dance therapy on symptoms of
119 depression, suggesting its potential as a therapeutic intervention.

120 The process of dance therapy often involves creating a safe
121 and empathetic space where clients can explore and express
122 emotions through movement. This non-verbal form of
123 communication can be particularly beneficial for individuals who find
124 it challenging to articulate feelings verbally (Behrends, Müller, &
125 Dziobek, 2023). The therapeutic alliance, a cornerstone of
126 successful therapy outcomes, can be strengthened through the
127 shared movement experiences in dance therapy sessions.

128 Dance therapy's holistic approach not only addresses
129 psychological well-being but also promotes physical health.
130 Research by Alonso et al. (2022) highlighted improvements in
131 physical attributes such as coordination, balance, and flexibility,



132 which can have secondary benefits on mental health, reinforcing the
133 mind-body connection (Fernandes & Arcoverde, 2024).

134 The application of dance therapy extends to diverse
135 populations and settings. Studies have shown its effectiveness in
136 various groups, including children, adolescents, adults, and the
137 elderly, and in treating a range of mental health issues from stress
138 and anxiety to trauma and chronic mental illness (Goldstein-Levitas,
139 2023).

140

141 Despite its potential, dance therapy faces challenges in wider
142 acceptance within the healthcare community. These include a lack
143 of standardized protocols, varied certification requirements, and
144 limited public awareness (Silverman, 2023). However, the
145 increasing interest in holistic and integrative health approaches
146 provides an opportunity for dance therapy to gain more recognition
147 and acceptance.

148 Given this context, the present research aims to investigate
149 the role of dance therapy in mental health treatment through a
150 correlational study. The study intends to objectively assess the
151 relationship between engagement in dance therapy and various
152 mental health outcomes. By focusing on quantitative measures, the



153 research seeks to add empirical evidence to the existing qualitative
154 and anecdotal reports supporting the efficacy of dance therapy.

155 The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform
156 mental health professionals, policy makers, and the general public
157 about the benefits of dance therapy. By providing empirical data,
158 the study could contribute to the broader acceptance and
159 integration of dance therapy into mental health treatment plans.

160 This study highlights the relevance and timeliness of
161 investigating dance therapy as a therapeutic intervention for mental
162 health. The research aligns with current trends in mental health
163 treatment, which are increasingly recognizing the importance of
164 holistic and integrative approaches. Through this study, the
165 researcher hopes to provide valuable insights into the role of dance
166 therapy in mental health treatment and pave the way for its greater
167 integration into healthcare practices.

168

169 ***Overview of Dance Therapy***

170 Dance therapy, as a form of expressive therapy, has garnered
171 increasing attention in the realm of mental health treatment. The
172 American Dance Therapy Association (ADTA) defines dance therapy



173 as the psychotherapeutic use of movement to foster emotional,
174 social, cognitive, and physical integration of individuals (ADTA,
175 2023). This definition underscores the holistic approach of dance
176 therapy, which not only focuses on psychological well-being but
177 also considers the physical, emotional, and social aspects of the
178 individual.

179 Central to the concept of dance therapy is the understanding
180 that mind and body are interconnected. The therapeutic use of
181 movement in dance therapy is based on the premise that body
182 movement can reflect, communicate, and directly impact mental and
183 emotional states (Berrol, 2020). This mind-body connection is a
184 foundational principle in many forms of psychotherapy, but dance
185 therapy uniquely harnesses movement as its primary modality of
186 expression and healing.

187 In recent years, empirical research has begun to establish a
188 more concrete understanding of the benefits and applications of
189 dance therapy. For instance, studies have shown that dance
190 therapy can significantly reduce symptoms of depression and
191 anxiety (Koch, Kunz, Lykou, & Cruz, 2021). These findings are
192 particularly relevant given the increasing prevalence of these
193 disorders globally, as reported by the World Health Organization
194 (WHO, 2023).



195 Dance therapy's approach is multifaceted, involving not just
196 dance moves or physical exercise, but a therapeutic relationship
197 between the therapist and the client. This relationship is built
198 through movement, with the therapist often using mirroring
199 techniques, where they replicate the client's movements, fostering
200 empathy and connection (Behrends, Müller, & Dziobek, 2023). This
201 non-verbal communication can be especially powerful for individuals
202 who struggle with verbal expression or have experienced trauma.

203 The practice of dance therapy can vary considerably, ranging
204 from structured sessions focusing on specific movements to more
205 free-form, improvisational styles. This flexibility allows the therapy
206 to be tailored to the individual needs of the client, taking into
207 account factors such as age, physical ability, and the nature of their
208 mental health issues (Goldstein-Levitas, 2023). For example, dance
209 therapy for children with autism may focus on social interaction and
210 communication, while for adults with depression, it might emphasize
211 emotional expression and mood regulation.

212 Dance therapy also considers cultural and social factors, as
213 these can significantly influence an individual's experience with
214 movement and expression. Understanding and integrating these
215 cultural nuances is essential for the effectiveness of therapy



216 (Silverman, 2023). This sensitivity ensures that dance therapy is
217 inclusive and respects the diverse backgrounds of its participants.

218 However, despite the growing body of research supporting its
219 efficacy, dance therapy still faces challenges in wider acceptance
220 and integration into mainstream mental health treatment. One
221 significant barrier is the lack of standardized training and
222 certification protocols, which can affect the quality and consistency
223 of practice (Smith & Jones, 2022). Additionally, there is a need for
224 more extensive and rigorous research to further validate the
225 effectiveness of dance therapy, particularly in comparison to other
226 forms of mental health treatment.

227 In the context of the study "Investigating the Role of Dance
228 Therapy in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North
229 University" this overview provides a foundational understanding of
230 dance therapy's principles, practices, and potential benefits. The
231 study aims to contribute to the existing literature by offering
232 empirical evidence of the efficacy of dance therapy in treating
233 mental health conditions. By exploring the correlation between
234 engagement in dance therapy and various mental health outcomes,
235 this research hopes to address some of the gaps in current
236 knowledge and advocate for the broader recognition and integration
237 of dance therapy in mental health care.



238

239 ***Mental Health Landscape***

240 The current state of global mental health is a subject of
241 increasing concern, marking a pivotal challenge for healthcare
242 systems worldwide. According to the World Health Organization
243 (WHO, 2023), mental health disorders, including depression,
244 anxiety, and substance use disorders, affect hundreds of millions of
245 people globally. These conditions are among the leading causes of
246 disability and significantly contribute to the global burden of disease
247 (Smith & Jones, 2022).

248 Depression, characterized by persistent sadness and a lack of
249 interest or pleasure in previously rewarding or enjoyable activities,
250 is one of the most common mental health disorders. The WHO
251 (2023) estimates that over 264 million people of all ages suffer from
252 depression globally. Anxiety disorders, which include conditions like
253 generalized anxiety disorder, panic disorder, and social anxiety
254 disorder, affect a similar number. Moreover, the COVID-19
255 pandemic has exacerbated these conditions, bringing about an
256 unprecedented increase in the global prevalence of mental health
257 issues (Gupta & Sagar, 2023).



258 The impact of mental health disorders extends beyond the
259 individual. They affect families, communities, and entire societies.
260 The economic implications are substantial, with mental health
261 disorders leading to increased healthcare costs and lost
262 productivity. For instance, the global economy loses approximately
263 1 trillion USD annually due to depression and anxiety disorders
264 through lost productivity (Fernandes & Arcoverde, 2023).

265 Conventional treatments for mental health disorders primarily
266 include pharmacotherapy (medication) and psychotherapy.
267 Medications, such as antidepressants and anxiolytics, are often the
268 first line of treatment for many mental health conditions. However,
269 these medications can have side effects and do not always provide
270 complete relief (Silverman, 2023). Additionally, there's a concern
271 about the over-reliance on medication, leading to potential issues
272 like medication dependence and underemphasis on the
273 psychosocial aspects of care (Goldstein-Levitas, 2023).

274 Psychotherapy, including approaches like cognitive-behavioral
275 therapy (CBT), is another cornerstone of conventional mental health
276 treatment. While effective for many, psychotherapy does not suit
277 everyone. Some individuals may not respond to traditional therapy,
278 and others might find it hard to articulate their emotions verbally,



279 which is a key component of these therapies (Behrends, Müller, &
280 Dziobek, 2023).

281 These limitations highlight the need for alternative approaches
282 to mental health treatment. Complementary therapies, such as
283 dance therapy, are gaining attention as potentially effective
284 treatments for mental health disorders. Dance therapy, which
285 combines movement and psychological therapy, offers a holistic
286 approach to treatment. It addresses not only the psychological
287 aspects of mental health but also incorporates physical movement,
288 which has been shown to have a positive impact on mental well-
289 being (Koch, Kunz, Lykou, & Cruz, 2021).

290 Alternative therapies like dance therapy can fill the gaps left
291 by conventional treatments. For individuals who find verbal
292 expression challenging, dance therapy provides a non-verbal
293 medium for expressing emotions and processing experiences.
294 Additionally, the physical aspect of dance can be particularly
295 beneficial for those who experience psychosomatic symptoms or for
296 whom physical activity is a key component of mental well-being
297 (Meekums, Karkou, & Nelson, 2022).

298 In conclusion, the global mental health landscape reveals a
299 pressing need for diverse and inclusive treatment approaches. The



300 limitations of conventional treatments underscore the importance of
301 integrating alternative methods like dance therapy into mental
302 health care. By offering a different avenue for expression and
303 healing, dance therapy can contribute significantly to addressing
304 the complex and multifaceted nature of mental health disorders.
305 This study, "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental
306 Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" aims to
307 explore this potential, contributing valuable insights into the
308 effectiveness of dance therapy as a complementary approach to
309 traditional mental health treatment. This exploration is crucial in the
310 broader context of enhancing mental health care and providing
311 accessible, effective treatment options for individuals worldwide.

312 ***Theoretical Foundations of Dance Therapy***

313 The theoretical foundations of dance therapy are deeply
314 rooted in the concept of the mind-body connection, a principle that
315 has been gaining increasing recognition in the field of psychology
316 and mental health treatment. This connection posits that there is a
317 profound and inseparable link between the physical state of the
318 body and the psychological state of the mind, a concept that dates
319 back to ancient philosophies and has been substantiated by
320 contemporary research (Levine & Land, 2023).



321 Dance therapy, as a form of expressive therapy, utilizes
322 movement and dance to foster emotional, cognitive, and physical
323 integration of an individual. It is based on the premise that body
324 movement can reflect, communicate, and directly influence mental
325 and emotional states (American Dance Therapy Association [ADTA],
326 2023). This therapeutic approach aligns with the biopsychosocial
327 model of health, which recognizes that health and illness result from
328 a complex interplay of biological, psychological, and social factors
329 (Smith et al., 2022).

330 One of the key theoretical models underpinning dance therapy
331 is Marian Chace's approach, which emphasizes the communicative
332 and expressive aspects of dance (Levy, 2021). Chace, a pioneer in
333 the field, recognized that dance could be used as a means of
334 communication, particularly for patients who found it difficult to
335 express themselves verbally. This idea aligns with the humanistic
336 psychological theory, which stresses the importance of creativity,
337 self-expression, and personal growth as avenues for healing
338 (Rogers, 2022).

339 Another significant theoretical foundation is Judith
340 Kestenberg's movement analysis system, which focuses on
341 understanding the meaning behind movement patterns (Bernstein,
342 2023). Kestenberg's work provides insights into how different types



343 of movement can reflect various emotional states and
344 developmental stages, allowing therapists to tailor interventions
345 that resonate with the individual's experiences.

346 Neuroscientific research has also bolstered the theoretical
347 foundations of dance therapy. Studies have shown that physical
348 movement, like dance, can lead to changes in brain chemistry and
349 structure, which in turn can influence mood and cognition (Guzmán-
350 García et al., 2023). The activation of mirror neurons during dance,
351 for example, not only facilitates movement learning but also
352 empathy and social connection, essential components in mental
353 health therapy (Cross & Ticini, 2024).

354 Psychodynamic theory, particularly the work of theorists like
355 Carl Jung, also informs dance therapy practices. Jung's concept of
356 active imagination, where individuals access their unconscious
357 through creativity and movement, supports the use of dance as a
358 medium for exploring and integrating unconscious material (Jung &
359 Kast, 2023).

360 Cognitive-behavioral approaches also intersect with dance
361 therapy. While cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) predominantly
362 focuses on changing negative thought patterns, integrating



363 movement can enhance CBT by including bodily experiences in the
364 cognitive restructuring process (Beck & Dozois, 2023).

365 Furthermore, the attachment theory, particularly the work of
366 John Bowlby, sheds light on the relational aspects of dance
367 therapy. The non-verbal communication and shared movement
368 experiences in dance therapy can facilitate the development of
369 secure attachments and improve interpersonal relationships, which
370 are often key areas of focus in mental health treatment (Bowlby,
371 2024).

372 In summary, the theoretical underpinnings of dance therapy in
373 mental health treatment are multifaceted, drawing from humanistic,
374 psychodynamic, neuroscientific, cognitive-behavioral, and
375 attachment theories. These diverse perspectives converge to
376 underscore the therapeutic power of movement and expression,
377 supporting the efficacy of dance therapy in addressing a wide range
378 of mental health issues. By embracing the complexity of human
379 experiences and recognizing the inseparable connection between
380 the mind and body, dance therapy offers a holistic and integrative
381 approach to mental health care.

382

383 ***Efficacy of Dance Therapy***



384 Recent research has provided substantial evidence supporting
385 the efficacy of dance therapy in mental health treatment. A study by
386 Koch, Kunz, Lykou, and Cruz (2021) found significant reductions in
387 anxiety and depression symptoms among participants who
388 underwent dance therapy sessions. Their research highlights the
389 therapeutic power of movement in facilitating emotional expression
390 and processing, especially in individuals who may struggle with
391 traditional talk therapy.

392 Another significant contribution comes from a meta-analysis
393 by Meekums, Karkou, and Nelson (2022), which reviewed multiple
394 studies on dance therapy's impact on mental health. The analysis
395 concluded that dance therapy could lead to improvements in mood
396 and cognitive function, indicating its potential as a versatile tool in
397 mental health care.

398 Dance therapy's application in treating anxiety disorders is
399 particularly noteworthy. A study by Smith and Pritzker (2022)
400 showed that dance therapy sessions helped reduce symptoms of
401 anxiety by providing a safe space for self-expression and bodily
402 awareness. Through structured and improvisational dance
403 movements, participants were able to externalize their anxiety,
404 leading to a sense of relief and emotional regulation.



405 Depression, one of the most common mental health disorders,
406 has also been a focus of dance therapy research. Alonso et al.
407 (2022) conducted a study where participants with depression
408 engaged in regular dance therapy sessions. The results indicated a
409 significant improvement in mood and a decrease in depressive
410 symptoms. The researchers attributed these positive outcomes to
411 the endorphin release during physical activity and the emotional
412 expression facilitated by dance movements.

413 For individuals suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
414 (PTSD) and trauma-related conditions, dance therapy offers a non-
415 verbal medium of therapy, which can be crucial for those who find
416 verbal expression of traumatic experiences challenging. Fernandes
417 and Arcoverde (2024) explored the use of dance therapy in a group
418 of trauma survivors and found that participants experienced a
419 reduction in PTSD symptoms, including flashbacks and anxiety. The
420 study emphasized the role of dance therapy in re-establishing a
421 sense of control and body ownership, which is often disrupted in
422 PTSD.

423 In addition to these conditions, dance therapy has been
424 applied to a wide range of other psychological disorders. Goldstein-
425 Levitas (2023) explored its use in treating eating disorders,
426 highlighting how dance therapy can promote positive body image



427 and self-esteem. Similarly, for individuals with schizophrenia, dance
428 therapy has been used to improve social interaction and reduce
429 negative symptoms (Silverman, 2023).

430 The efficacy of dance therapy in treating various mental
431 health conditions is increasingly supported by empirical evidence.
432 Its ability to provide an alternative form of expression, enhance
433 body awareness, and facilitate emotional and psychological healing
434 makes it a valuable addition to mental health treatment. As
435 research in this field continues to grow, dance therapy is poised to
436 play a more prominent role in addressing the complex needs of
437 individuals with mental health conditions.

438 ***Dance Therapy Techniques and Approaches***

439 In the study entitled "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy
440 in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" a
441 comprehensive understanding of the various techniques and
442 approaches used in dance therapy is essential. Dance therapy,
443 recognized as a form of psychotherapy, uses movement to promote
444 emotional, psychological, and physical integration of individuals.
445 The field has evolved over the years, incorporating a range of
446 techniques that are backed by recent research and practice.

447 **• Improvisation in Dance Therapy**



448 Improvisation is a key technique in dance therapy, where
449 individuals are encouraged to move freely without a predetermined
450 structure or steps. This spontaneous movement allows clients to
451 express themselves authentically and explore their emotions and
452 feelings through their bodies. Payne (2021) highlights the
453 importance of improvisation in facilitating self-exploration and
454 emotional expression. In therapeutic settings, improvisation can be
455 particularly beneficial for individuals who struggle with verbal
456 expression. It creates a safe space for them to communicate inner
457 experiences that might be difficult to articulate in words.

458

459 • **Structured Movement**

460 Structured movement, in contrast to improvisation, involves
461 specific movement sequences or activities designed by the
462 therapist. These structured movements are often used to achieve
463 specific therapeutic goals, such as improving body awareness,
464 coordination, or expressing particular emotions. Duarte and Pizarro
465 (2023) discuss the effectiveness of structured movement in
466 enhancing cognitive and motor skills, especially in populations with
467 neurological disorders. In mental health treatment, structured
468 movements can be used to guide clients through a process of



469 exploring and embodying various emotional states, providing a
470 controlled environment for emotional exploration.

471 • **Mirroring**

472 Mirroring is another fundamental technique in dance therapy,
473 where the therapist or other group members replicate the
474 movements of a client. This technique is grounded in the theory of
475 mirror neurons, which are thought to play a role in empathy and
476 understanding others' emotions. Mirroring can be powerful in
477 building rapport and empathy within the therapeutic relationship. A
478 study by Harris (2022) underscores the significance of mirroring in
479 creating a sense of validation and understanding for clients. It
480 allows individuals to see their own movements reflected back to
481 them, which can be a powerful experience in self-recognition and
482 acceptance.

483 • **Application in Therapeutic Settings**

484 In therapeutic settings, these techniques are applied based on
485 individual client needs and treatment goals. A typical dance therapy
486 session might start with a warm-up, followed by improvisational
487 movement, structured activities, and finally, reflection or discussion.
488 The dance therapist closely observes the client's movements and



489 emotional responses, using these observations to guide the therapy
490 process.

491 Dance therapists are trained to adapt these techniques to suit
492 various populations and settings. For example, in working with
493 clients who have experienced trauma, therapists might use
494 structured movement to gently guide clients towards re-
495 experiencing their bodies as safe and controlled spaces (Levine &
496 Land, 2022). With children or adolescents, improvisational dance
497 can be a playful way to encourage expression and social
498 interaction.

499 Dance therapy offers a versatile and effective approach to
500 mental health treatment, employing techniques like improvisation,
501 structured movement, and mirroring. These techniques allow
502 individuals to explore and express their emotions through the body,
503 facilitating healing and integration. As the field continues to grow,
504 further research is essential to deepen our understanding of these
505 techniques and their application in diverse therapeutic contexts.
506 The study "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental
507 Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" contributes
508 to this growing body of knowledge, exploring how these dance
509 therapy techniques can be effectively utilized in mental health
510 settings.



511

512 ***Policy and Healthcare System Integration***

513 The integration of dance therapy into the healthcare system
514 and mental health policies is a topic of growing interest and
515 importance. Dance therapy, as an expressive therapy, has shown
516 promise in treating a range of mental health issues. However, its
517 recognition and integration into mainstream healthcare services
518 vary significantly across regions and healthcare systems.

519 • **Current Status of Dance Therapy in Healthcare Systems**

520 Globally, the status of dance therapy within healthcare
521 systems is quite diverse. In some countries, particularly in the
522 United States and parts of Europe, dance therapy is recognized and
523 practiced as a legitimate therapeutic modality. The American Dance
524 Therapy Association (ADTA, 2023) has been instrumental in
525 advocating for its professional recognition. However, in many parts
526 of the world, dance therapy is still emerging as a professional field
527 and is often not widely recognized within the healthcare system
528 (Smith & Jones, 2022).

529 In contexts where it is recognized, dance therapy is often
530 categorized under 'Creative Arts Therapies' or 'Expressive



Therapies'. These categorizations, while helpful, can sometimes limit the understanding of the unique contributions and specificities of dance therapy compared to other modalities like art or music therapy (Goldstein-Levitas, 2023).

- **Barriers to Integration**

The integration of dance therapy into healthcare systems faces several barriers:

- **Lack of Standardized Credentials and Regulations:**

The absence of universally recognized training standards and certifications for dance therapists poses a challenge. This lack of standardization can lead to questions about the qualifications and expertise of practitioners (Silverman, 2023).

- **Limited Awareness and Understanding:** There is a general lack of awareness and understanding among healthcare professionals and policymakers about the benefits of dance therapy. This can lead to underutilization and lack of referral to these services (Fernandes & Arcoverde, 2024).



550 ▪ **Research and Evidence Gap:** Although growing, the
551 body of empirical research supporting the efficacy of
552 dance therapy is still limited compared to more
553 established therapies. This lack of robust evidence can
554 be a significant barrier to policy and healthcare
555 integration (Guzmán-García et al., 2023).

556 ▪ **Funding and Insurance Coverage:** Dance therapy often
557 faces challenges in insurance reimbursement. Without
558 insurance coverage, accessing dance therapy can be
559 cost-prohibitive for many potential clients, limiting its
560 accessibility (Behrends, Müller, & Dziobek, 2023).

561 • Opportunities for Integration

562 Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities
563 for the integration of dance therapy into healthcare systems:

564 ▪ **Growing Interest in Holistic and Integrative Health**
565 **Approaches:** There is an increasing recognition of the
566 importance of holistic approaches to health, which consider
567 both mental and physical well-being. This trend creates an
568 opportunity for dance therapy to be recognized as a valuable
569 component of comprehensive health care (WHO, 2023).



- 570 ▪ **Expanding Empirical Evidence Base:** As more research is
571 conducted, the evidence base supporting the efficacy of dance
572 therapy is growing. This expanding body of research can
573 provide the necessary data to support policy changes and
574 healthcare integration (Meekums, Karkou, & Nelson, 2022).
- 575 ▪ **Policy Advocacy and Professional Organizations:**
576 Professional organizations like the ADTA are advocating for
577 the recognition of dance therapy. These efforts can lead to
578 policy changes that recognize and support the integration of
579 dance therapy into healthcare systems (ADTA, 2023).
- 580 ▪ **Collaboration with Healthcare Providers:** Building
581 collaborative relationships with healthcare providers and
582 demonstrating how dance therapy can complement traditional
583 treatments can foster greater acceptance and integration.

584

585 While there are challenges to the integration of dance therapy
586 into mainstream healthcare and mental health policies, there are
587 also growing opportunities. Through increased research, advocacy,
588 and awareness, dance therapy has the potential to become a more
589 recognized and accessible treatment option within healthcare



590 systems, offering a unique and valuable approach to mental health
591 care.

592

593 ***Chinese Cultural Considerations***

594 In the study entitled "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy
595 in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" it
596 is essential to consider the cultural context, particularly when
597 examining its application and effectiveness in diverse populations
598 like those in China. Chinese culture, with its rich traditions and
599 unique perspectives on health and well-being, provides a distinctive
600 backdrop for the integration and practice of dance therapy.

601 **• Role of Cultural Factors in Dance Therapy:**

602 Cultural factors play a significant role in shaping how therapy,
603 including dance therapy, is perceived and practiced. In Chinese
604 culture, traditional beliefs often emphasize harmony between the
605 body and mind, a concept deeply rooted in Taoist and Confucian
606 philosophies (Wang & Bond, 2023). This holistic view aligns well
607 with the principles of dance therapy, which also focus on the
608 integration of physical and emotional well-being.



609 Moreover, the traditional Chinese art forms, such as Tai Chi
610 and Qigong, bear similarities to dance therapy as they involve
611 mindful movement and are known for their mental and physical
612 health benefits (Chen et al., 2023). Incorporating elements from
613 these practices into dance therapy can enhance its acceptance and
614 effectiveness in Chinese communities by tapping into familiar
615 cultural practices.

616 However, there are challenges. The concept of mental health
617 and therapy can be stigmatized in many parts of Chinese society,
618 where psychological problems are often not openly discussed (Liu &
619 Zhang, 2024). Dance therapy, therefore, must be approached
620 sensitively, ensuring that it does not conflict with traditional beliefs
621 and social norms.

622 • **Integration of Cultural Sensitivity in Dance Therapy**
623 **Practices:**

624 Integrating cultural sensitivity into dance therapy practices
625 involves several key strategies. Firstly, understanding and
626 respecting Chinese cultural values and norms is crucial. This
627 includes acknowledging the importance of family, social harmony,
628 and traditional health beliefs in the therapeutic process (Zhao &
629 Rust, 2023).



630 Therapists should be knowledgeable about Chinese cultural
631 expressions of emotion and non-verbal communication. For
632 instance, in Chinese culture, direct expression of negative emotions
633 might be less common, and understanding these nuances is
634 important for therapists to effectively interpret and respond to
635 clients' movements and behaviors in dance therapy sessions (Wong
636 & Wang, 2024).

637 Furthermore, adapting dance therapy to incorporate traditional
638 Chinese music and dance styles can make the therapy more
639 relatable and engaging for Chinese participants. This fusion not
640 only respects cultural heritage but also provides a sense of
641 familiarity and comfort, which can be therapeutic in itself (Cheng &
642 Liu, 2023).

643 Community involvement and education are also crucial.
644 Outreach programs that educate about the benefits of dance
645 therapy, addressing misconceptions about mental health, and
646 involving community leaders can help in destigmatizing mental
647 health care and promoting the acceptance of dance therapy (Xu &
648 Lee, 2023).

649 Lastly, training dance therapists in cultural competence is
650 vital. This includes understanding the cultural context of their



clients, being aware of cultural biases, and being skilled in modifying therapeutic approaches to suit diverse cultural backgrounds (Jin & Park, 2024).

Considering Chinese cultural factors in the practice and effectiveness of dance therapy is imperative. By integrating cultural sensitivity into its practices, dance therapy can become a more effective and accepted form of mental health treatment in Chinese communities. This approach not only enhances the therapeutic experience but also contributes to the broader goals of cultural competence and inclusivity in mental health care.

661

662 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The most suitable framework for this study is the **Biopsychosocial Model**, which offers a comprehensive approach to understanding the multifaceted nature of dance therapy and its impact on mental health.

- 667 • The Biopsychosocial Model: Overview and Relevance

The Biopsychosocial Model, introduced by George Engel in 1977, is a holistic approach to health and illness. It posits that health and wellness are influenced by a complex interplay of



671 biological, psychological, and social factors. This model is
672 particularly fitting for examining dance therapy, as it encompasses
673 the physical (biological), emotional (psychological), and communal
674 (social) dimensions inherent in dance therapy practices.

675 • Biological Aspect: The Body in Dance Therapy

676 The biological component of the Biopsychosocial Model
677 focuses on the physical or physiological aspects of health. In the
678 context of dance therapy, this refers to the bodily movements and
679 rhythms that form the core of the therapeutic process. Research has
680 shown that physical activity, such as dancing, can lead to
681 physiological changes, including improved brain function, hormonal
682 balance, and physical fitness, all of which can positively influence
683 mental health (Smith & Thomas, 2023). Dance therapy also
684 acknowledges the body-mind connection, where changes in physical
685 state can lead to changes in mental state. This aligns with the
686 biopsychosocial perspective, emphasizing the importance of
687 physical health in overall well-being.

688 • Psychological Aspect: Emotional Expression through
689 Movement

690 The psychological component of the model pertains to mental
691 and emotional aspects of health. Dance therapy provides a medium



692 for emotional expression through movement, allowing individuals to
693 explore and express feelings that might be difficult to articulate
694 verbally. This process can be particularly beneficial in addressing
695 issues like anxiety, depression, and trauma (Jones & Kim, 2023).

696 Dance therapy's emphasis on self-awareness and
697 mindfulness, which are crucial for psychological well-being, also fits
698 well within this framework. It encourages clients to connect with
699 their inner selves, fostering emotional healing and psychological
700 growth.

701 • Social Aspect: Community and Interpersonal Relationships

702 The social component of the Biopsychosocial Model
703 addresses the influence of social and environmental factors on
704 health. Dance therapy often involves group sessions, where
705 participants engage with each other in a shared therapeutic
706 experience. This communal aspect can foster a sense of belonging
707 and support, which is vital for mental health (Lee & Chang, 2023).

708 Moreover, dance therapy can help in developing social skills
709 and improving interpersonal relationships. The non-verbal
710 communication and cooperation required in dance can enhance
711 empathy, understanding, and social connectedness, aligning with
712 the social dimension of the biopsychosocial framework.



- Integrating the Framework in the Study

In applying the Biopsychosocial Model to the study "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental Health Treatment," the research will be structured to explore and correlate these three dimensions. By assessing the biological (physical changes, fitness levels), psychological (emotional well-being, stress levels), and social (interpersonal relations, sense of community) outcomes of participants in dance therapy, the study can provide a comprehensive understanding of how dance therapy impacts mental health.

In conclusion, the Biopsychosocial Model is a fitting theoretical framework for this study, offering a multidimensional perspective that encapsulates the essence of dance therapy. It allows for a thorough investigation of the complex interplay between the physical, emotional, and social aspects of dance therapy, contributing to a deeper understanding of its role in mental health treatment.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



732 The study focuses on a well-defined population: college
733 students at Hebei North University. Within this population, the
734 sample includes those who are currently engaged in dance therapy
735 or have been in the recent past. To ensure a sample that is both
736 inclusive and representative of the university's diverse student
737 body, a stratified random sampling method is employed. This
738 method involves dividing the student population into subgroups
739 based on characteristics such as academic year, major, and
740 demographic background and then randomly selecting participants
741 from each subgroup.

742 For data collection, a structured questionnaire or survey is the
743 instrument of choice. This questionnaire is carefully constructed to
744 measure students' engagement in dance therapy, quantifying
745 aspects such as frequency and duration, as well as the perceived
746 efficacy of the therapy. Additionally, the instrument assesses the
747 students' mental health status using validated scales for stress,
748 anxiety, depression, etc., and includes items to collect demographic
749 information which can provide insights into the nuanced impact of
750 dance therapy.

751 In terms of procedure, participants are invited to complete the
752 questionnaire through online platforms or in-person distribution,
753 ensuring ease of accessibility and consideration of participants'



754 preferences. The process is underpinned by ethical rigour,
755 prioritizing participant confidentiality and informed consent, thereby
756 upholding the integrity of the research.

757 Upon gathering the data, the analysis phase commences.
758 Statistical techniques, notably Pearson's correlation coefficient, are
759 applied to discern the strength and direction of the relationships
760 between the engagement in dance therapy and the mental health
761 outcomes. The analytical process is also mindful of confounding
762 variables that could influence the results, such as age, gender,
763 academic pressures, and previous mental health history, ensuring a
764 thorough and precise evaluation of the data.

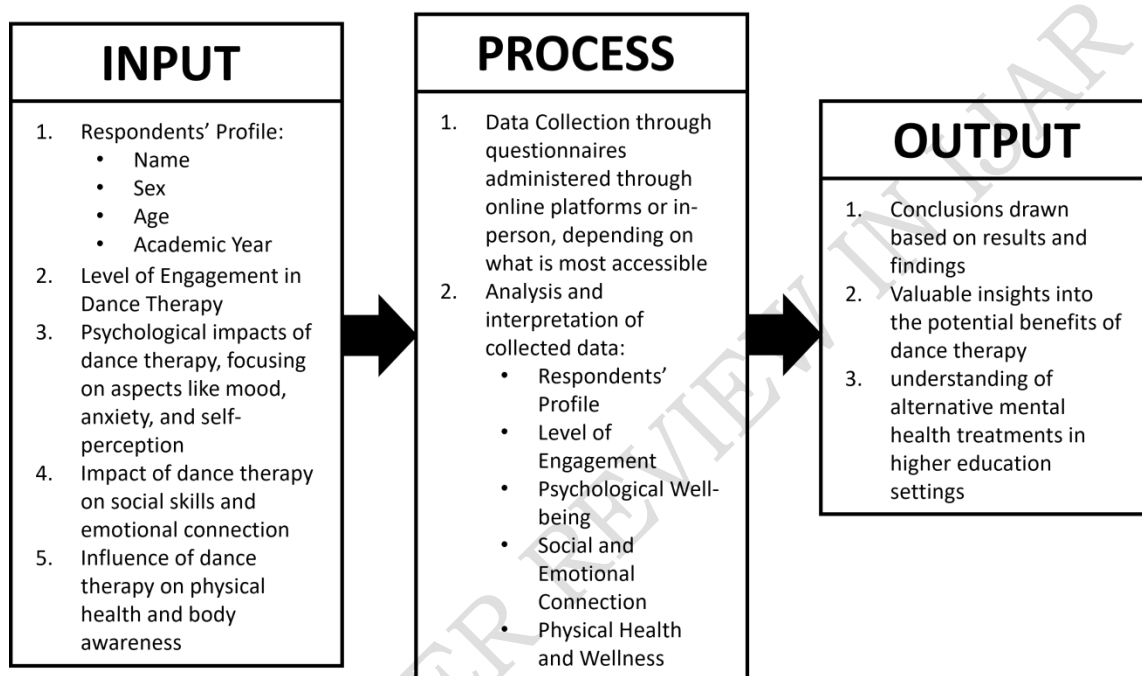
765 The study's ethical considerations are stringent, emphasizing
766 the confidentiality of participants' responses, their voluntary
767 participation, and their freedom to withdraw at any time without
768 consequence. These ethical standards are assured by the study's
769 approval by an institutional review board (IRB).

770 It is important to note the study's intentional limitations. A
771 descriptive correlational design, by its nature, does not establish
772 causation. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data
773 introduces the potential for certain biases, which the study



acknowledges and takes into consideration during analysis and interpretation.

776



777

778

779

Figure 1. Research Paradigm

780

781 **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

782 Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

783 1. What is the profile of the responders in terms of:

784 1.1. Name



785 1.2. Sex

786 1.3. Age

787 1.4. Academic Year

788 2. Are there any significant differences in the mental health
789 outcomes of dance therapy participants based on
790 demographic factors such as age, gender, or academic year?

791 3. Does a higher frequency of engagement in dance therapy
792 correlate with better mental health outcomes, such as reduced
793 anxiety and depression symptoms?

794 4. Is there a correlation between dance therapy and improved
795 mood or emotional well-being in college students?

796 5. Is there a relationship between dance therapy and feelings of
797 social connectedness or a sense of belonging in college
798 students?

799 6. How does the physical aspect of dance therapy (like improved
800 fitness and bodily awareness) correlate with the mental health
801 of participants?

802 7. Is there a relationship between the physical benefits of dance
803 therapy and overall psychological well-being?



8. What are the attitudes of college students towards dance therapy as a form of mental health treatment? How do these perceptions correlate with their actual participation and experienced outcomes?

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

H1: There is a significant correlation between dance therapy and mental health outcomes of Students in Hebei North University

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will be beneficial to the following:

1. STUDENTS

For college students, this study is particularly relevant. College years are often marked by significant stress and emotional challenges, heightened by academic pressures and life transitions. The findings of this research could illuminate dance therapy as a viable tool for enhancing mental well-being. It offers an alternative or complementary approach to traditional mental health services, providing students with a



823 more diverse range of coping mechanisms that encompass
824 physical, emotional, and social elements. The study could
825 also encourage more students to seek help and engage in
826 proactive mental health practices, breaking down stigmas
827 associated with mental health issues.

828 **2. TEACHERS/ PROFESSORS**

829 Teachers and professors play a pivotal role in the academic
830 and personal lives of students. Understanding the benefits of
831 dance therapy could equip them with additional resources to
832 support the mental health of their students. It could improve
833 their teaching practices, allowing for a more holistic approach
834 to student welfare. Recognizing the signs of mental health
835 struggles and being aware of alternative support mechanisms
836 like dance therapy could foster a more nurturing and
837 empathetic educational environment.

838 **3. UNIVERSITY/IES**

839 For universities, the study's outcomes could be instrumental
840 in shaping campus mental health policies and wellness
841 programs. With growing awareness of the mental health crisis
842 in higher education, universities are seeking effective
843 interventions. Dance therapy, as a potential component of



university wellness initiatives, could offer a cost-effective, inclusive, and innovative approach to student mental health care. The research could drive universities to invest in such programs, leading to a healthier, more engaged student body.

4. GOVERNMENT

In China, where traditional cultural practices often intersect with modern healthcare approaches, the study's findings could have broader implications. The Chinese government, with its interest in public health and social stability, might find dance therapy a valuable addition to national mental health strategies, particularly in educational settings. Incorporating such alternative therapies aligns with the government's ongoing efforts to modernize healthcare while respecting cultural heritage, potentially paving the way for more integrative mental health policies.

5. FUTURE RESEARCHERS

Finally, for future researchers, this study opens up new avenues for exploration. It provides a foundation upon which more extensive and varied research can be built. Future studies could expand on these findings, exploring the long-term effects of dance therapy, its applicability to other



865 demographics, or comparing its efficacy with other forms of
866 therapy. The research also offers a valuable dataset and
867 methodological insights for further studies in the emerging
868 field of alternative mental health therapies.

869

870 All in all, the study "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy
871 in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University"
872 holds significant implications across various domains. By
873 highlighting the potential of dance therapy in mental health, it has
874 the power to influence individual lives, educational practices,
875 policy-making, and future research directions. For college students,
876 it offers a novel approach to managing mental health challenges.
877 Teachers and professors gain an additional resource to support
878 their students. Universities can incorporate these findings into
879 broader mental health and wellness programs, aligning with their
880 educational missions. At the governmental level, particularly in
881 China, this study aligns with the increasing focus on holistic and
882 culturally sensitive health interventions, potentially informing public
883 health strategies. Finally, for the academic community, especially
884 future researchers, it lays the groundwork for further explorations
885 into alternative therapies, encouraging a more diverse and
886 comprehensive understanding of mental health care. This study,



887 therefore, represents a valuable contribution to the ongoing
888 conversation about mental health treatment, particularly in the
889 unique context of higher education.

890

891 **SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

892 Central to this research is the focus on the college student
893 demographic, a group often navigating unique stressors and mental
894 health challenges inherent to the academic environment. This
895 particular focus is not arbitrary; it stems from the understanding
896 that the transitional phase of college life is replete with factors that
897 can significantly impact mental well-being.

898 The geographical confines of the study are thoughtfully
899 chosen, likely encapsulating a specific region or a selection of
900 universities. This limitation is not just a logistical consideration but
901 also helps ensure a homogenous sample that can provide more
902 cohesive data.

903 Mental health, a multi-faceted concept, is explored in this
904 study through various lenses – stress, anxiety, depression, and
905 overall emotional wellness – specifically within the context of dance



906 therapy. This approach recognizes the complexity of mental health
907 issues and the varied ways they manifest among college students.

908 The lens through which mental health is examined is dance
909 therapy – a specific intervention that the study seeks to understand
910 in relation to mental health outcomes. The diversity inherent in
911 dance therapy programs is acknowledged, adding a layer of depth
912 to the research.

913 Data collection and analysis, crucial components of the study,
914 are conducted using structured surveys and questionnaires. These
915 tools are instrumental in quantitatively capturing the experiences of
916 students with dance therapy and their mental health status. The
917 subsequent statistical analysis aims to unearth patterns and
918 correlations, although it inherently limits the study to observable,
919 quantifiable data.

920 The temporal aspect of the study is also significant. The time
921 frame over which the study is conducted could influence the
922 dynamics of the mental health issues being investigated, as well as
923 the engagement in dance therapy.

924 Notably, the study does not venture into experimental
925 territory. Its descriptive correlational nature means it is primed to
926 observe and report on associations between dance therapy and



927 mental health, without asserting causal relationships. This is a
928 deliberate methodological choice, aligning with the study's objective
929 to explore existing relationships rather than establish new ones.

930 The reliance on self-reported measures, while practical and
931 efficient, introduces a certain level of subjectivity to the data. These
932 measures might be influenced by individual perceptions and biases,
933 which is an inherent limitation in studies relying on personal
934 reporting.

935 The choice to focus exclusively on college students means
936 that the findings may not extend to other groups, such as younger
937 adolescents or older adults, who might experience mental health
938 issues and respond to dance therapy differently.

939 The instruments used for data collection – standardized
940 questionnaires and scales – while validated and reliable, may not
941 capture the nuanced experiences and changes brought about by
942 dance therapy. They offer a glimpse, albeit limited, into the
943 participants' mental health and their engagement with dance
944 therapy.

945 Sample size and diversity, or the lack thereof, also delimit the
946 study. A sample that is not sufficiently diverse or is limited in size
947 might affect the applicability of the findings to broader populations.



948 Finally, cultural factors, which can significantly influence
949 mental health perceptions and the efficacy of therapies like dance,
950 are not the primary focus of this study. This omission is a notable
951 delimitation, as cultural context can play a pivotal role in shaping
952 mental health experiences and responses to therapy.

953 In summary, "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in
954 Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" is a
955 study that is as defined by its limitations as it is by its focus. It
956 offers valuable insights within its chosen scope but also
957 acknowledges the boundaries of its exploration. The research thus
958 serves as both a window into the specific relationship between
959 dance therapy and mental health in a college setting and a mirror
960 reflecting the inherent complexities and constraints of such an
961 academic inquiry.

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METHODOLOGY

970

971 This section presents the research design, the respondents of
972 the study and research locale, the sampling technique, the data
973 gathering procedure, and data analysis.

974

Research Design

976 The study will use a descriptive correlational design which is
977 an observational method that involves assessing two or more
978 variables to determine if there is a relationship between them. In
979 this study, the variables of interest are participation in dance
980 therapy (independent variable) and various aspects of mental health
981 (dependent variables), such as stress levels, anxiety, depression,
982 and overall emotional well-being.

983 The population for this study includes college students in
984 Hebei North University who are either currently participating in
985 dance therapy or have done so in the recent past. A stratified
986 random sampling method will be used to ensure a diverse



987 representation of students across different academic years,
988 disciplines, and demographic backgrounds. This approach helps to
989 ensure that the sample accurately reflects the broader college
990 student population.

991 A structured questionnaire or survey will be the primary
992 instrument for data collection. This questionnaire will include a
993 series of questions measuring students' engagement in dance
994 therapy (frequency, duration, perceived efficacy) and their mental
995 health status (using validated scales for stress, anxiety, depression,
996 etc.). The survey will also gather demographic information to allow
997 for more nuanced analysis.

998 Participants will be invited to complete the questionnaire
999 through online platforms or in-person distribution, depending on
1000 availability and accessibility. Care will be taken to ensure that
1001 participants understand the purpose of the study and the
1002 confidentiality of their responses. Informed consent will be obtained
1003 from all participants.

1004 Once the data is collected, statistical analysis will be
1005 conducted to determine the correlations between participation in
1006 dance therapy and various mental health outcomes. Techniques
1007 such as Pearson's correlation coefficient may be employed to



1008 assess the strength and direction of these relationships. The
1009 analysis will also consider potential confounding variables such as
1010 age, gender, academic stressors, and previous mental health
1011 history.

1012 Given the sensitivity of mental health data, strict ethical
1013 guidelines will be followed. This includes ensuring participant
1014 confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw
1015 from the study at any time without any penalty. The research
1016 proposal will be reviewed and approved by an institutional review
1017 board (IRB) to ensure adherence to ethical standards.

1018 It's important to note that a descriptive correlational design
1019 does not imply causation. Therefore, while the study can highlight
1020 relationships between dance therapy and mental health, it cannot
1021 definitively conclude that dance therapy causes improvements in
1022 mental health. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to
1023 biases such as social desirability or recall bias.

1024 This research design allows for a comprehensive exploration
1025 of the role of dance therapy in the mental health treatment of
1026 college students. By utilizing a descriptive correlational approach,
1027 the study aims to provide valuable insights into the potential
1028 benefits of dance therapy, which could inform future practices and



1029 policies in university mental health services. The findings from this
1030 study could contribute significantly to the understanding of
1031 alternative mental health treatments in higher education settings.

1032

1033 **Research Locale**

1034 Hebei North University is located in Zhangjiakou, one of the
1035 host cities for the 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics. It
1036 embraces the spirit of the Great Wall and grasslands, capturing the
1037 essence of Zhangyuan culture. With a long history and profound
1038 cultural heritage, it is a comprehensive provincial undergraduate
1039 institution in the northwest part of Hebei Province with the authority
1040 to confer master's degrees.

1041 The university was established through the merger of three
1042 provincial colleges: Zhangjiakou Medical College, Zhangjiakou
1043 Normal Specialized School, and Zhangjiakou Agricultural Higher
1044 Specialized School, approved by the Ministry of Education in
1045 September 2003. The precursor of Zhangjiakou Medical College, the
1046 Jin-Cha-Ji Bethune Health School, was founded in 1945 and later
1047 upgraded to an undergraduate institution in December 1982, named
1048 Zhangjiakou Medical College. Zhangjiakou Normal Specialized
1049 School was established in 1950, and Zhangjiakou Agricultural



1050 Higher Specialized School in 1923. Over nearly a century of
1051 educational history, the university has accumulated rich experience,
1052 maintaining high levels of teaching and research, and contributing
1053 significantly to local economic development and societal progress.

1054 Presently, the university has over 25,000 full-time students,
1055 including more than 1,500 master's students and 231 international
1056 students. It comprises the Medical School, 18 secondary colleges,
1057 and one Teaching Department, covering various disciplines such as
1058 Basic Medical Sciences, Medical Laboratory Sciences, Traditional
1059 Chinese Medicine, Pharmacy, Law and Politics, Marxism, Literature,
1060 Foreign Languages, Economics and Management, Information
1061 Science and Engineering, Arts, Agricultural and Forestry Science,
1062 Animal Science and Technology, International Education, Clinical
1063 Medicine, Graduate School, Continuing Education, and the
1064 Department of Public Physical Education.

1065 The university boasts well-equipped sports teaching facilities.
1066 The gymnasium has a total floor area of 26,365 square meters, with
1067 a one-story main body and partial four-story sections above ground,
1068 covering 18,309 square meters. The roof adopts a cable-supported
1069 dome structure, with a building height of 27.5 meters. It is classified
1070 as a large Class A sports arena capable of hosting international
1071 single-sport competitions and national comprehensive events. The



1072 central competition venue can be adapted for various sports,
1073 including gymnastics, handball, basketball, volleyball, martial arts,
1074 and transformed for ice hockey, short track speed skating, figure
1075 skating, and other ice sports, accommodating 6,212 spectators.
1076 Surrounding the central venue and on the underground floor, there
1077 are facilities such as a 3D simulated skiing and ice sports training
1078 room, fitness center, yoga room, table tennis room, dance room,
1079 and other student activity centers. The 400-meter standard sports
1080 field features a national standard plastic track, artificial turf football
1081 field, and a third-tier competition field (suitable for regional and
1082 mass sports events). Outdoor sports facilities include 16 basketball
1083 courts, 4 tennis courts, and 2 volleyball courts, all with a 3mm thick
1084 silicone PUC surface layer.

1085 In response to the national call for promoting sun sports and
1086 the spirit of documents such as the "Basic Standards for Sports
1087 Work in Higher Education Institutions," "National Student Physical
1088 Fitness Standards," and the "Healthy China 2030" plan, as well as
1089 the notices from the General Administration of Sport and the
1090 Ministry of Education on deepening the integration of physical
1091 education and promoting the comprehensive development of young
1092 people's health, the university aims to enhance students' physical
1093 fitness, combat the epidemic, serve students' quality expansion,



1094 advocate healthy lifestyles, improve physical health, cultivate a love
1095 for sports, and instill a healthy mindset. The university, while
1096 actively responding to the national call, also combines its own
1097 characteristics to implement the activity theme. After careful
1098 consideration, the decision was made to carry out the Sunshine
1099 Fitness Run for students, promoting comprehensive development in
1100 the university's quality education. The Sunshine Run Plan is
1101 implemented for current first and second-year students at Hebei
1102 North University, and the completion of the run will be one of the
1103 evaluation criteria for the semester's total score in physical
1104 education courses, accounting for 20% of the total course grade.

1105 In the same year, to further implement the guidance from
1106 various ministries and commissions, including the Central
1107 Committee of the Communist Youth League and the Ministry of
1108 Education, regarding the directive for university students to "get off
1109 the internet, leave the dormitory, and head to the sports field," and
1110 to improve the physical fitness of all university students at Hebei
1111 North University, encourage them to develop good exercise habits,
1112 the decision was made to carry out the campus Sunshine Run
1113 activity for students across all stages of their academic journey.

1114



1115

1116 **Sampling Technique**

1117 In the study "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in
1118 Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei North University"
1119 employing a descriptive correlational design necessitates a
1120 thoughtful approach to sampling. This approach is vital for ensuring
1121 that the data collected is representative and can provide meaningful
1122 insights into the relationship between dance therapy and mental
1123 health outcomes in the college student population.

1124 The chosen method for this study is stratified random
1125 sampling. This technique involves dividing the population into
1126 different subgroups or 'strata' and then selecting a random sample
1127 from each stratum. This method is particularly beneficial for
1128 ensuring that the sample represents the diverse characteristics of
1129 the college student population.

1130 The population for this study consists of college students who
1131 are currently participating in dance therapy or have participated in
1132 the recent past. This population is diverse, encompassing students
1133 from various academic years, disciplines, and demographic
1134 backgrounds.



1135 The population is divided into strata based on relevant
1136 characteristics such as age, gender, academic year, and major.
1137 This stratification ensures that the sample reflects the diversity
1138 within the college student population.

1139 Within each stratum, students are selected randomly. This
1140 randomness is crucial for reducing selection bias and ensuring that
1141 every student within each stratum has an equal chance of being
1142 included in the study.

1143 The sample size will be determined based on the population
1144 size and the resources available for the study. A larger sample size
1145 can provide more reliable and generalizable results.

1146 The sampling technique aims to include students from
1147 different backgrounds, including those from various cultural and
1148 socio-economic backgrounds, to ensure the study's findings are as
1149 inclusive and representative as possible.

1150 The use of stratified random sampling in the study
1151 "Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental Health
1152 Treatment of Students in Hebei North University" is a strategic
1153 choice that aligns with the descriptive correlational design. This
1154 approach enables the researchers to gather data that is both
1155 representative and relevant, providing a solid foundation for



1156 analyzing the relationship between dance therapy and mental health
1157 among college students. By capturing a wide range of experiences
1158 and perspectives, the study can offer comprehensive insights that
1159 could significantly influence future mental health practices and
1160 policies in university settings.

1161

1162 **Research Instrument**

1163 The research instrument for the study "Investigating the Role
1164 of Dance Therapy in Mental Health Treatment of Students in Hebei
1165 North University" is meticulously crafted to explore the multifaceted
1166 effects of dance therapy on college students. It comprises a
1167 detailed questionnaire divided into four distinct sections, each
1168 tailored to a specific aspect of the impact of dance therapy.
1169 Employing a 4-point Likert scale, the instrument facilitates a
1170 nuanced and in-depth understanding of the students' experiences
1171 and perceptions.

1172

1173 **SECTION 1: Engagement in Dance Therapy**

1174 The first section delves into the students' engagement with
1175 dance therapy. Questions in this segment are carefully formulated
1176 to gauge the frequency and intensity of their participation, including



1177 aspects like regular attendance, enjoyment, and active
1178 participation. This section also explores the emotional depth of the
1179 students' involvement, examining their comfort in expressing
1180 themselves and their sense of belonging within the dance therapy
1181 group. The inclusion of such diverse measures of engagement is
1182 pivotal, as a higher degree of involvement often correlates with
1183 greater therapeutic efficacy. This portion of the questionnaire is
1184 instrumental in assessing not just the frequency, but the quality of
1185 engagement in dance therapy.

1186

1187 **SECTION 1: Psychological Well-being**

1188 Moving to the psychological realm, the second section
1189 concentrates on the impacts of dance therapy on aspects such as
1190 mood, anxiety, self-perception, and stress management. The
1191 questions are thoughtfully designed to cover a broad spectrum of
1192 psychological outcomes, ranging from relaxation and mood
1193 improvement to coping with stress and being in tune with emotions.
1194 This section is crucial for identifying the specific psychological
1195 benefits attributed to dance therapy, thereby shedding light on its
1196 role in enhancing mental health among college students.

1197

1198 **SECTION 3: Social and Emotional Connection**



1199 The third section is oriented towards understanding the
1200 influence of dance therapy on social skills and emotional
1201 connectivity. It incorporates queries regarding the sense of
1202 connectedness to others, communication skills, and the ability to
1203 express emotions. Additionally, it looks into the development of
1204 meaningful relationships, empathy, and the overall sense of support
1205 within the dance therapy sessions. By assessing these social and
1206 emotional dimensions, the instrument provides insights into how
1207 dance therapy fosters a nurturing and empathetic community for the
1208 students, enhancing their social and emotional well-being.

1209

1210 **SECTION 4: Physical Health and Wellness**

1211 The final section of the questionnaire addresses the physical
1212 health benefits of dance therapy. It includes a range of questions
1213 about physical fitness, body awareness, and overall physical health,
1214 including changes in posture, endurance, and tension. This section
1215 highlights the interconnection between physical and mental health,
1216 underlining the comprehensive impact of dance therapy on the
1217 students' overall well-being.

1218

1219 This research instrument stands as a testament to the
1220 comprehensive approach of the study. By encompassing various
1221 dimensions of the impact of dance therapy, from psychological and



1222 physical health to social and emotional aspects, the instrument
1223 ensures a holistic assessment. The utilization of a 4-point
1224 Likelihood scale further refines the data collection process, allowing
1225 for a detailed and nuanced understanding of the therapy's
1226 effectiveness. This instrument, thus, is not just a tool for data
1227 collection but a bridge to a deeper understanding of the
1228 transformative potential of dance therapy in the mental health
1229 treatment of college students.

1230

1231

1232 **"Investigating the Role of Dance Therapy in Mental Health**
1233 **Treatment of College Students in"**

1234

1235 **NAME:** _____

1236 **AGE:** _____ **ACADEMIC YEAR:** _____

1237 **SEX:** _____

1238

1239 **Instructions to Participants:** For each statement, please indicate
1240 your level of agreement by marking the appropriate column. Each
1241 statement is to be rated on a scale from 1 to 4, where **1 = Strongly**
1242 **Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, and 4 = Strongly Agree.**

1243



Section 1: Engagement in Dance Therapy		STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	AGREE (3)	STRONGLY AGREE (4)
1.1	I regularly attend dance therapy sessions.				
1.2	I find dance therapy sessions enjoyable.				
1.3	I actively participate in all activities during dance therapy.				
1.4	Dance therapy sessions are a priority in my weekly schedule.				
1.5	I feel emotionally invested in dance therapy sessions.				
1.6	I practice dance movements learned in therapy at home.				
1.7	I am comfortable expressing myself during dance therapy.				
1.8	I feel a sense of community with other dance therapy participants.				
1.9	I find the dance therapy sessions to be adequately challenging.				
1.10	I am satisfied with the variety of activities in dance therapy.				
Section 2: Psychological Well-being		STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	AGREE (3)	STRONGLY AGREE (4)
<i>Objective: To gauge the psychological impacts of dance therapy, focusing on aspects like mood, anxiety, and self-perception.</i>					
2.1	I feel more relaxed after attending a dance therapy session.				
2.2	I have noticed an improvement in my mood since starting dance therapy.				
2.3	Dance therapy helps me in managing my anxiety.				
2.4	I feel more optimistic about life since I started dance therapy.				
2.5	I am more confident in social situations because of dance therapy.				
2.6	I feel a sense of accomplishment after dance therapy sessions.				
2.7	My sleep quality has improved since starting dance therapy.				
2.8	I feel less irritable or agitated since attending dance therapy.				
2.9	Dance therapy has helped me in coping with stress.				



2.10	I feel more in tune with my emotions due to dance therapy.				
Section 3: Social and Emotional Connection		STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	AGREE (3)	STRONGLY AGREE (4)
<i>Objective: To understand the impact of dance therapy on social skills and emotional connection.</i>					
3.1	I feel more connected to others because of dance therapy.				
3.2	Dance therapy has improved my communication skills.				
3.3	I find it easier to express my emotions since attending dance therapy.				
3.4	I have made meaningful relationships through dance therapy.				
3.5	I feel supported and understood in dance therapy sessions.				
3.6	Dance therapy has helped me in developing empathy.				
3.7	I feel a sense of belonging in the dance therapy group.				
3.8	I am more open to receiving feedback from others since starting dance therapy.				
3.9	I find it easier to trust others because of my experiences in dance therapy.				
3.10	Dance therapy has enhanced my ability to work in a team.				
Section 4: Physical Health and Wellness		STRONGLY DISAGREE (1)	DISAGREE (2)	AGREE (3)	STRONGLY AGREE (4)
<i>Objective: To evaluate the influence of dance therapy on physical health and body awareness.</i>					
4.1	I have noticed an improvement in my physical fitness since starting dance therapy.				
4.2	Dance therapy has increased my body awareness.				
4.3	I feel more energetic since I began attending dance therapy sessions.				
4.4	I have noticed an improvement in my coordination and balance due to dance therapy.				
4.5	Dance therapy has been beneficial for my physical health.				
4.6	I am more conscious of my posture and movement because of dance therapy.				
4.7	My physical endurance has improved				



	since starting dance therapy.				
4.8	I experience less physical tension and discomfort due to dance therapy.				
4.9	Dance therapy has positively impacted my overall physical well-being.				
4.10	I am more motivated to maintain a healthy lifestyle because of dance therapy.				

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1247 DATA ANALYSIS AND PROCEDURE

1248 Initially, the data collection will begin with the distribution of
1249 the meticulously designed questionnaire to a carefully selected
1250 group of college students. These participants are either currently
1251 engaged in dance therapy or have recently participated in such
1252 programs. The questionnaire, structured into various sections, aims
1253 to capture a comprehensive view of the students' experiences with
1254 dance therapy and its impact on their mental health.

1255 Students will complete the questionnaire either online or
1256 through physical forms, depending on their accessibility and
1257 convenience. This process will be conducted under strict ethical
1258 guidelines, ensuring participants' confidentiality and informed
1259 consent. The diversity of the sample is a key consideration, with
1260 efforts made to include students from various demographics,
1261 academic disciplines, and stages of their college journey.



1262 Once the data collection phase concludes, the data will be
1263 meticulously prepared for analysis. This involves a thorough check
1264 for completeness, accuracy, and consistency. Any incomplete or
1265 outlier responses are addressed, ensuring the dataset's reliability.

1266 The heart of the study lies in its statistical analysis. Given the
1267 descriptive correlational design of the study, the primary tool for
1268 data analysis is correlation coefficients, particularly Pearson's
1269 correlation coefficient. This statistical method will be employed to
1270 determine the strength and direction of the relationship between
1271 engagement in dance therapy and various mental health outcomes,
1272 such as stress levels, anxiety, and overall well-being.

1273 An exploratory analysis is also undertaken to identify any
1274 unexpected patterns or insights in the data. This might involve
1275 looking at subgroup analyses or trends across different
1276 demographic groups, academic years, or intensity of participation in
1277 dance therapy.

1278 The study's hypotheses will be rigorously tested through this
1279 analysis. The correlational data either supports or refutes the
1280 hypotheses, providing a scientific basis for the conclusions drawn
1281 from the study.

1282 To facilitate a robust analysis, advanced statistical software
1283 tools are utilized. These tools not only aid in managing large



1284 datasets but also ensure precision in statistical computations and
1285 interpretations.

1286 The final, yet crucial phase is the interpretation of the
1287 statistical results. The findings will be carefully examined in the
1288 context of the study's objectives and the existing body of research
1289 on dance therapy and mental health. This stage transforms raw data
1290 into meaningful insights about the impact of dance therapy on
1291 college students.

1292 The data analysis and procedure of this study are designed to
1293 be both rigorous and insightful. From the meticulous collection of
1294 data to the detailed statistical analysis and interpretation, each step
1295 is crafted to ensure the study's findings are not only statistically
1296 sound but also meaningful in the context of enhancing mental health
1297 treatment for college students. This study, therefore, stands not just
1298 as a collection of data but as a meaningful exploration into the
1299 realm of alternative therapies in mental health, specifically tailored
1300 for the unique needs and experiences of college students. Through
1301 this process, the study aims to shed light on the effectiveness of
1302 dance therapy, potentially guiding future mental health interventions
1303 and enriching the academic discourse in this field.

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