

EXPLORING INTERACTIVE ANIMATION TEACHING FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS' MENTAL HEALTH AND EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

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ABSTRACT

This study advocates for the integration of interactive teaching methods involving comics and animation within art therapy programs at centers focusing on emotional management for adolescents. Such an approach serves not only as a crucial tool for alleviating stress and enhancing self-confidence in children and adolescents but also facilitates the cultivation of a positive mindset. Moreover, it imparts effective self-relaxation techniques to typically developing children. The research employs a blend of clinical practices, comparative analyses, and qualitative methods. Participants in both groups (children aged 9-11 years and adolescents aged 11-15 years) practically applied the GIPR (Guiding-Inspiring-Presenting-Releasing) interactive teaching method, utilizing the created anime as case studies. From an artistic perspective, interactive animation teaching integrates content from film and animation disciplines, enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration. This method leverages the playful and exaggerated language of comics and animation to aid in art therapy for adolescents. The study aims to investigate the positive impact of interactive teaching on emotion regulation among children and adolescents, laying a solid foundation for adolescent mental health counseling and adjunctive therapy.

Keywords: interactive teaching, children and adolescents, comics and animation, emotional wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

Background

Under the guidance of a doctoral supervisor in the field of medicine, members of the research team have actively participated as therapists in the Art Therapy Research at the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Center. Throughout this process, they have encountered a considerable number of children and adolescents suffering from mental health disorders, with an average age ranging between 10 and 15 years. These children exhibit various issues, including social difficulties, emotional dysregulation, and peculiar behaviors, largely attributed to the influence of their primary family environment and the lack of timely intervention during their formative years. Presently, research indicates that as many as one-fifth of children face mental health challenges in the 21st century, with factors affecting mental health stemming primarily from social and cultural dimensions (William Bor, 2014). Among these challenges, mental health problems in girls have shown a relative increase compared to boys, although the overall trend remains somewhat stable (William Bor, 2014). Indeed, the experimental data obtained by the research group aligns closely with current research reports, revealing a higher prevalence of mental health issues in girls compared to boys, with a ratio approximately around 2.4:1. With the advancements in technology and societal progress, children and adolescents inevitably encounter numerous obstacles and, at times, face more severe challenges than previous generations. So that, minors experience stress and emotional disorders to varying degrees (Migliorino-Reyes, 2020). The contemporary era of the internet has gradually transformed the lifestyles and social behaviors of modern individuals, particularly impacting children and adolescents. They often feel uneasy in social activities, such as deception, arguments, or isolation, leading them to prefer interactions with machines over people, such as playing online games. This serves as a means to seclude themselves, release stress, and evade reality. Consequently, the prominence of emotional disorders among children and adolescents has intensified, as they proactively withdraw from social circles, making interpersonal interaction a significant challenge (Migliorino-Reyes, 2020). Building upon this understanding, researchers have derived intervention, assessment, and treatment plans from developmental theories in child psychology and clinical medical practices, focusing on the stages of childhood and adolescence. This approach has yielded positive outcomes (George C Tremblay, 1999).

Rationale for the Study

This project primarily approaches emotional management assistance for children and adolescents from an artistic perspective. The method employed is based on sensory integration training (Stephanie Mucha Skipper, 2012), a technique that enhances children's

sensory abilities through various games. In other words, by stimulating a sufficient amount of sensory experiences, this training promotes the formation of new neural connections in the brain, thereby improving sensory integration capabilities (Overwalle et al., 2020). Consequently, this study leverages the engaging, imaginative, and aesthetic qualities of animated art for interactive teaching experiments with children and adolescents. The aim is to stimulate their perceptual, creative, and expressive abilities, allowing them to release stress, enhance aesthetic literacy, and attain additional emotional value in the process (Rebecca M. Todd, 2020).

The research involves a comparative study of two groups: one comprising psychologically healthy children and adolescents and the other with individuals experiencing certain emotional challenges, each consisting of approximately 3-5 participants. Practical applications of the GIPR interactive teaching method are employed for both groups. The analysis focuses on the comic artworks they produce as case studies, aiming to explore whether interactive teaching has an impact on emotional regulation in children and adolescents. The ultimate goal is to determine whether interactive teaching serves as a positive intervention for emotional control.

Significance of Incorporating Comics and Animation in Mental Health Education

The selection of interactive teaching through comics and animation for the auxiliary art therapy of emotional management in children and adolescents is particularly crucial and necessary (R. Pinter, 2012). This is especially relevant for Asian communities, where Japanese manga has played a role in shaping Asian youth culture and altering perceptions of Japan. Asian youth, in particular, exhibit a fascination with elements originating from Japan (Wai-ming, 2002). The influence of Japanese manga and animation in Asia is prominently evident in the fields of animation production, popular culture, and the entertainment industry. These cultural aspects, passed down through generations and characterized by a modern aesthetic visual art, have inspired vibrant young individuals to emulate anime artists, aspiring to engage in various aspects of drawing, format, atmosphere, perspective, storylines, and production systems (Wai-ming, 2002). Concurrently, the storylines of Japanese manga often possess a humanistic and romantic mythological style infused with heroism, aligning to some extent with the modern youth's aesthetic preferences for illusion, unreality, and self-worship. Therefore, employing anime as a means to guide children and adolescents in the process of emotional management for auxiliary therapy holds significance, provided that the method of interactive teaching is deemed feasible.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Relationship of Emotional Health and Interaction with Cognition

Well-being is an active, ongoing endeavor that encompasses self-awareness and the pursuit of healthy choices to achieve a fulfilling life. It necessitates a balance across physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual domains (2009, cited in Jayaram Thimmapuram, 2017). The Vanderbilt University Wellness Center articulates emotional wellness (EW) as the awareness and constructive expression of emotions, marked by consistent moods, a robust sense of self, a positive view of others, and adept stress management skills (2014, cited in Rehana Rehman, 2015). Emotions significantly sway an individual's mood, thoughts, attitudes, motivation, and interests, day and night, playing a pivotal role in life-long decision-making processes (2011, cited in Rehana Rehman, 2015). Consequently, emotional well-being is the capacity to manage and positively navigate emotional experiences amidst stress and adversity, preserving mental equilibrium.

It is clear that emotions are integral to cognitive processes, influencing perception, thought, and action. This underscores the interplay between emotional health and cognition across various cognitive facets, including perception, attention, memory, language, problem-solving, learning, reasoning, and consciousness (Rebecca M. Todd, 2020). The research posits that emotion is not an isolated component but is intrinsically woven into the fabric of cognition. Echoing patterns observed in other mammals, our perception, attention, learning, and memory are significantly molded by emotional consequences, shaping our consciousness and directing our behaviors (Rebecca M. Todd, 2020). Furthermore, current theories propose that the cerebellum plays a vital role in learning and understanding social action sequences, thereby enhancing social cognition. This enhancement allows for the accurate anticipation of future social interactions and cooperation, offering insights into the mechanisms underlying social behavior and emotional intelligence (Overwalle et al., 2020).

Existing Approaches to Adolescent Mental Health Education

Currently, in adolescent mental health education, psychologists primarily conduct emotional interventions through interviews, while clinical diagnoses involve expert-provided pharmaceutical treatments. Supplementary therapies often focus on sensory and physical training. Sensory-based therapies encompass activities aimed at organizing the sensory system through vestibular, proprioceptive, auditory, and tactile inputs (Jaryd Hiser, 2018). Specifically designed therapeutic or recreational equipment such as brushes, swings, and balls are employed for this purpose (Raheleh Mollajani, 2019). Sensory integration, initially articulated by occupational therapist A. Jean Ayres, PhD, in the 1970s, pertains to the body's processing of sensory inputs from the environment. Ayres proposed that the sensory system undergoes developmental stages, similar to other facets of growth like language and motor skills, and deficits may arise during the establishment of a well-organized sensory system (Stephanie Mucha Skipper, 2012). Simultaneously, some researchers advocate for physical activity interventions, but the efficacy of physical activity components in producing meaningful changes in anxiety, depression, and stress outcomes among adolescents remains unclear. Meta-analyses have indicated no overall effect, prompting the need for more conclusive studies in the future.

Benefits of Art Therapy in Emotional Management

In F. Nielsen's research report, a specific emphasis is placed on the evaluation system for the use of art therapy in service units for hospitalized children and adolescents. The conclusions drawn indicate that responsive art therapy serves as a valuable strategy in facilitating the safe expression of distress, being perceived as a positive experience by adolescents receiving inpatient mental health care (Nielsen, 2022). Similarly, in an article titled "Effect of Interesting Games on Relief of Preoperative Anxiety in Preschool

Children” by (Xing-Lian Gao, 2014), the study aims to assess the impact of engaging games on reducing preoperative anxiety and enhancing children’s compliance with anesthesia. The conclusion asserts that involvement in an interesting game can effectively decrease preoperative anxiety in preschool-aged children and improve their compliance during anesthesia induction. These instances collectively underscore the beneficial role of art therapy and interactive games in aiding children and adolescents to alleviate emotional stress, demonstrating positive and constructive outcomes (C. Daniel Salzman, 2010; Rebecca M. Todd, 2020).

Role of Comics and Animation in Education and Mental Health

Over the last twenty-five years, the popularity of anime has surged in America, becoming a consistent and enduring pop culture phenomenon worldwide (Mahaseth, 2018). Concurrently, Japanese manga has been instrumental in transforming youth culture and altering perceptions of Japan throughout Asia. The younger generation in Asia exhibits a keen enthusiasm for Japanese cultural elements, fostering a positive perception of Japan that contrasts with the views held by their grandparents and parents (Wai-ming, 2002). Nevertheless, since numerous anime characters and shows often incorporate themes of rebellion against societal norms and overarching hierarchical authority, teenage girls find a sense of connection with these sentiments. Consequently, they engage in drawing anime as a deliberate form of rebellion against HAP (Zygmunt, 2019, p. 63).

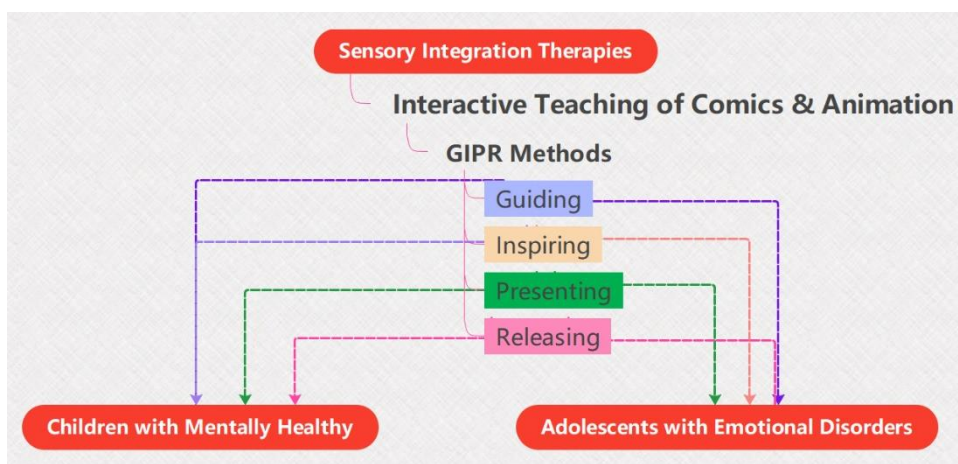
Therefore, as an artistic form within interactive teaching methods, manga and anime, particularly for girls, serve as a secure means of self-expression that is often not easily understood (Zygmunt, 2019). To transform negative energy into positive guidance, continuous efforts are required to stimulate the enthusiasm and creativity of children and adolescents. However, in Zygmunt (2019)’s practice, it was observed that after the activity, contrary to the initial hypothesis, the girls did not respond positively to the anime-themed activity. Instead, they exhibited clear signs of rejection and negativity towards both the activity and the researcher (Zygmunt, 2019, p. 22). This highlights the varying impact of different forms of anime creation on intervening in the emotions of children and adolescents. Researchers should not adopt a bystander perspective and dictate guidance; rather, they should utilize engaging activities to lead participants in overcoming obstacles and challenging themselves. Only when their courage is sparked and the presented anime artworks show positive effects can participants gain confidence, gradually adjusting their negative emotions, and effectively improving mental health development. This aligns with the literature’s statement, “Grit in education is how one can achieve long-term goals by overcoming obstacles and challenges” (Aaron J. Hochanadel, 2015). The literature also mentions, “Participants were unanimously supportive of using anime in the classroom to promote grit and resilience” (Migliorino-Reyes, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The study explores an art-based behavioral intervention within clinical psychological practices, emphasizing the beneficial effects of comics and animation interactive teaching on the well-being of children and adolescents. Lopez (2024) outlines a methodology that employs perspective reframing through expressive arts, mindfulness-compassion theory, and imaginative techniques to facilitate reflection, understanding, and modification of meaning systems. This approach comprises three primary steps: reflection, reimagination, and reintegration. The experimental framework, integrated into clinical diagnosis and extended follow-up interviews, targeted two groups differentiated by age: children aged 9-11 years (Group A) and adolescents aged 11-15 years (Group B). Group A included predominantly psychologically healthy children, whereas Group B involved adolescents experiencing emotional disorders. Utilizing the GIPR teaching method—an interactive pedagogical approach grounded in the principles of Guiding, Inspiring, Presenting, and Releasing—the study aimed to examine the differential responses and coping mechanisms of the two groups to the teaching interventions. The primary objective was to assess the efficacy of comics and animation interactive teaching in mitigating emotional distress and promoting positive values among the participants. (See fig.1)

Figure 1: The Flow Chart of GIPR of Interactive Teaching



Integration of Comic and Animation in Art Therapy

This study supplements the treatment of adolescent emotional behavior using art therapy, employing unconventional art interventions. Existing literature suggests exploring animation pedagogy, typically facilitated through software, yet this approach predominantly relies on human-machine interactions, noticeably lacking in human-to-human engagement. Sensory integration training, while utilized in clinical psychology to augment mood improvement, is primarily effective for younger children and does not significantly impact adolescents. Research has positively highlighted the role of manga and anime within art therapy for enhancing mental health, particularly among college students. These findings indicate a growing interest in campus-wide initiatives leveraging anime to raise awareness and strengthen the relationships among counselors, educators, and students (Migliorino-Reyes, 2020). During their formative years, children and teenagers experience a pronounced awakening of self-awareness, showing a keen interest in animated films that highlight themes of heroism and fantasy, with a particular admiration for the visual artistry of Japanese anime (Wai-ming, 2002). Observes that anime, as a prominent aspect of Japanese popular culture, has exerted a significant influence on the youth in Asia. This influence permeates not only cultural and entertainment sectors but also extends to various facets of artistic expression, including drawing techniques, formatting, ambiance, perspective, storytelling, plot development, and production methodologies. The anime cultural wave has notably impacted most Asian comic and animation creators.

Animated narratives often celebrate heroic figures, whose attributes and styles leave a lasting impression on audiences. For example, the storyline and artistic approach of Mochizuki Mikiya's "Wild Seven" – a celebrated manga featuring seven heroes combating malevolent forces- have inspired many (Wai-ming, 2002). This phenomenon reflects the desire of young individuals in their developmental stages to endow characters with distinctive traits and a sense of humanity, mirroring those depicted in such narratives. Accordingly, this research incorporates relevant animation curriculum content, including scriptwriting, storyboard creation, performance animation, and interactive games, into its methodology. It employs a reciprocal interaction model, wherein educators guide and inspire, while students engage in creating, presenting, and releasing their works. This approach is designed to bolster the self-esteem of children and adolescents, ignite their imagination, and foster their creative aspirations.

Experimental Research and Qualitative Analysis

The study utilized an experimental research design combined with qualitative analysis to explore the effects of guided training in comics and animation creation for both Group A and Group B. The facilitator began the process by introducing a narrative, symbolized by a drop of ink splashing onto a canvas – this represented a starting point free of boundaries and constraints. As the activity progressed from chaos to structure, participants engaged their senses fully, sparking creativity and initiative. This approach led to a rich diversity of outcomes, as individual approaches to the creative process resulted in unique visual scenes (See fig.2). The methodology included interviews and analysis of the artworks, allowing participants to narrate the stories behind their drawings. This process strengthened memory association and fostered a positive creative expression, ultimately leading to optimal visual outcomes and emotional stability. Each participant, in essence, became an artist, imbuing their artwork with narrative depth that transcended simple interpretation (Zygmont, 2019).

Figure 2: The Precess of Experimental Research



Notably, the visuals created by Group B exhibited greater dynamism and uniqueness, despite this group having minimal or no prior drawing training (See fig.3). The participants, driven by their passion for anime, unconsciously incorporated anime characters and game scenes into their drawings. Despite lacking formal training, they described stories based on the images and expressed satisfaction with the outcomes. This parallels the findings of Zygmont (2019) in the experimental process of visual analysis of anime drawings, where treated adolescents assigned creative value to their works based on personal reflections. The seemingly creative process served as an emotional outlet, shaping a character within the entire artwork while infusing it with an anime style.

In the final stage, the presentation, children and adolescents take the lead, showcasing their unlimited creativity freely. The mentor transitions into an observer role. Ultimately, when the artwork is completed, the expression of emotions is naturally released.

Figure 3: The Artworks of Adolescents with Emotional Disorders



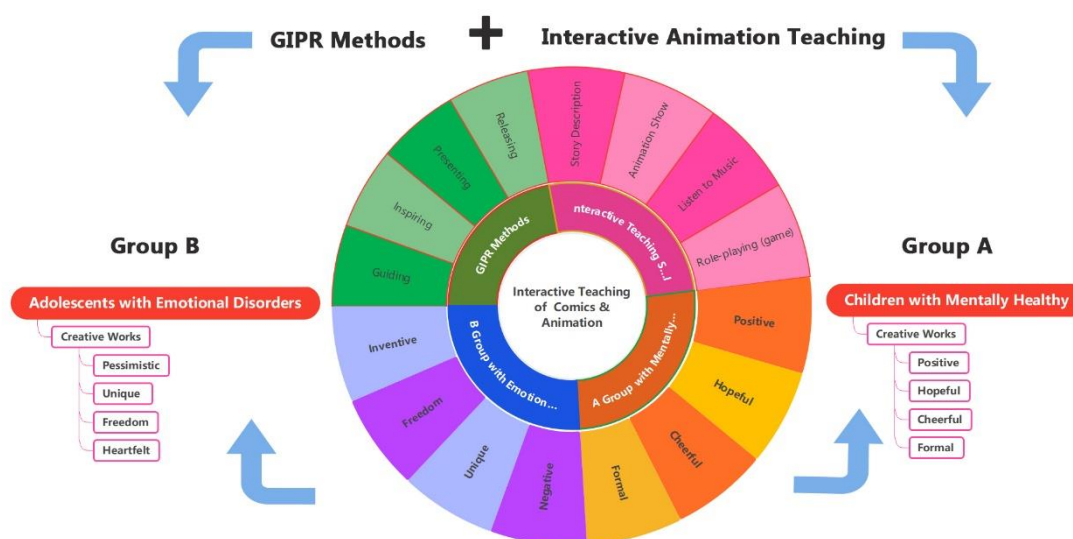
INTERACTIVE TEACHING STRATEGIES

The Guiding-Inspiring-Presenting-Releasing Method

The GIPR teaching method integrates “Guiding, Inspiring, Presenting, Releasing” principles and is anchored in the context of sensory integration training (Nielsen, 2022; Stephanie Mucha Skipper, 2012; Xing-Lian Gao, 2014; Zygmunt, 2019). This approach emphasizes interactive teaching with a focus on drawing activities. It enables participants of any skill level to engage in the artistic process naturally and effortlessly, allowing them to complete their works without the pressure of prior drawing experience (Nielsen, 2022). Distinct from courses aimed at teaching manga drawing techniques through structured lessons, the GIPR method leverages the facilitator’s expertise and experiential knowledge. In this environment, participants are not burdened by the need for external references or deterred by excessive critique. Instead, the facilitator actively identifies and harnesses positive, genuine experiences from the participants’ viewpoints. Following this, the facilitator introduces manga-themed drawing topics for improvisation, encouraging spontaneous creative expression (C. Daniel Salzman, 2010). This process does not merely focus on the technical aspects of drawing but rather fosters a holistic developmental experience, nurturing participants’ creativity, confidence, and emotional well-being through the act of creation.

A challenge in this study lies in determining whether the facilitator’s professional competence and improvisational skills can capture the attention of children and adolescents with emotional disorders. The effectiveness of the subsequent presentation and release phases depends on whether the participants are inspired and find joy in the interactive experience. The core of this process, akin to the sensory integration training model, involves establishing connections between the entire body, limbs, senses, and the brain (Stephanie Mucha Skipper, 2012). Combining manga creation or anime performance, individuals infuse vitality into their states and visually present them in an artistic manner. (See fig.4) In essence, the GIPR anime teaching method aims to mobilize the body’s sensory organs to obtain diverse information from the environment. This information is then integrated and analyzed by the brain, prompting adaptive responses (Rebecca M. Todd, 2020). The outcome is manifested in the form of drawing creations. The ultimate satisfaction of the participants can be gauged through visual images, allowing for conclusive judgments.

Figure 4: Comparison of Group A and Group B in GIPR Interactive Teaching Methodology



Explanattion of the Multi-Dimensional and Innovative Teaching Approach

In accordance with the GIPR teaching method, the research team attempted to enhance interactive relationships with children and adolescents by incorporating artistic games from anime, such as story description, anime performances, music listening, and role-playing (Lopez, 2024; Nielsen, 2022). They designed a case study for an innovative experiential course in psychological health through aesthetics. This case study targeted the age group of 9-15, applicable to both experimental groups A and B.

The teaching objectives were: A. to enhance aesthetic awareness and foster a drive for creativity, assisting in the robust psychological growth of children and adolescents through aesthetic education. B. to instill an understanding of artistic beauty, cultivating correct aesthetic attitudes and behaviors, enabling the transmission of aesthetic feelings, and fostering a comprehensive comprehension of beauty. C. to alleviate study-related stress and nurture a better appreciation for life through aesthetic education. The teaching emphasis focused on guiding students to develop their own understanding and cognition of beauty under the correct guidance of the teacher.

As an example, let's consider the self-portrait through manga. In the guiding phase, the teaching instructor asked participants to close their eyes and gently touch their facial features, becoming familiar with their facial characteristics. The game phase involved a drawing relay, where, positioned about 2 meters away from the drawing board, participants decided what to draw, then closed their eyes, turned around three times, and confidently made a stroke on the board. Regardless of the outcome, the next participant followed suit but faced the challenge of continuing or improving upon the drawing made by the previous person. The goal was to gradually reveal the semblance of a person in the collective artwork. Throughout the experiment, participants displayed high levels of enthusiasm and initiative. The uncertain nature of the drawings generated curiosity and joy, making the guiding phase remarkably smooth (Lopez, 2024, p. 29). The interactive nature of the guiding phase, coupled with the imaginative space sparked by touching facial features, stimulated their creative desires. Following the teacher's demonstration, where students were encouraged to reference but not entirely depend on, they quickly created their own portrait drawings. It is noteworthy that they had never used drawing tools before, let alone received training in drawing techniques. At this point, colored tools proved more effective than colorless pencils, and the use of vibrant colors and novel drawing tools became crucial for the success of the artwork.

The finding from these experiments underscore that despite existing literature highlighting the benefits of traditional anime teaching for adolescent emotional and psychological health, it is not the specific form or content of anime that catalyzes emotional shifts in participants. Instead, it is the instructional approach used in conjunction with anime that ignites creativity and prompts participants to engage actively. Instructors play a pivotal role in teaching participants to self-regulate their emotions and bolster their intrinsic motivations. Essentially, it is the Aesthetics of Behavioural Motivation – the capacity to appreciate and be moved by the underlying beauty of motivated actions – that facilitates significant impacts. This concept is particularly critical in teacher-led educational strategies, proving to be a decisive factor in fostering adolescent creativity and self-expression.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Through a comparison of the works produced by Groups A and B, distinct characteristics emerge among children and adolescents of different ages and varying levels of psychological well-being. The artworks of children in Group A (See fig.5) exude optimism and positivity, radiating joy much like the lively demeanor of children their age. It is as if they are portraying themselves in a world filled with laughter and delight. On the other hand, the creations of Group B (See fig.6) convey a dialogue with oneself, expressing inner thoughts like a mirror reflection, yet hesitating to fully articulate them. Consequently, the artworks from Group B possess a bittersweet beauty, encapsulating both longing and hope. During the follow-up interviews with Group B, the research team

observed that 80% of adolescents were willing to participate in the guiding process. Throughout the drawing sessions, they exhibited a sense of relaxation, expressing a desire to engage in enjoyable and interactive games that complemented their preferred artistic expressions. However, the willingness of adolescents to participate was closely linked to the facilitator's approach and the themes guiding the manga creation. If the guiding approach proved mundane, lacking in appeal and enthusiasm for the adolescents, they were inclined to abandon or reflect participation.

Figure 5: the Artworks of Group A



Figure 6: the Artworks of Group B



Through the innovative interactive approach of comics and animation teaching, there was a notable impact on the emotional states of adolescents. Even if transient, the stimulation of the brain and the formation of memories during the drawing process proved instrumental in guiding them toward positive thinking, fostering an appreciation for the significance of art education. Importantly, this interactive teaching method was not contingent on prior drawing skills or aesthetic literacy; rather, it hinged entirely on the prerequisites of effective guidance and inspiration. The subsequent process of creation and release remained intrinsically intertwined with the preceding interactive elements.

Building on the theoretical and practical insights garnered, the researcher devised a novel approach by amalgamating content and engaging, expressive, and interactive teaching methodologies in animation. This approach positions both the researcher and the participant in a dynamic, two-way interactive study setting. The objective was to investigate the extent to which improvisation plays a crucial role in stimulating creativity among young children. Employing the GIPR interactive teaching method allowed for the artistic expressions to emerge in a seemingly uncontrolled yet profoundly impactful manner. This methodology not only showcased the positive effects of such an approach but also ensured that the qualitative interviews and the produced artworks served as authentic and accurate reflections of the research outcomes.

DISCUSSION

A. Interrelationship Between Classroom Learning and Adolescent Emotions

In terms of research questions, researchers have paid more attention to the relationship between the content of animation and the way of teaching, and have discussed whether the driving force that motivates adolescents' psychological behaviours in a positive direction comes from the art form of animation or the difference in the way of teaching methods. Literature suggests that an organism's psychological state includes internal variables such as hunger or fear, along with representations of a series of environmental stimuli present at a given moment, and the temporal context of stimuli and events. Any given mental state prompts the organism to respond in some way; these actions may be cognitive (e.g., making decisions), behavioral (e.g., freezing or fleeing), or physiological (e.g., increased heart rate). Psychological state variables are theoretically useful (C. Daniel Salzman, 2010). Therefore, in the GIPR interactive teaching method, the variables that interact with the emotions of adolescents are not the adolescents themselves but the facilitators (who may be professional counselors or art therapists). It is their conscious effort to guide adolescents' emotions towards positive trends in response to different environmental stimuli that may enhance positive responses in adolescents' emotional health. Therefore, the researcher believes that the innovation of interactive teaching methods contributes to the positive growth of rebellious adolescent children, and that the animation art form is an important part, but not a necessity, to assist in adding colour.

B. Positive Effects of Animation Teaching on Psychological Growth

It is a necessary part of the discussion about the need for external factors to influence the physical and mental health of children and adolescents through the content and teaching tools of comics and animation. They are taught in a variety of forms, such as learning to make up stories, drawing split-screen scripts, and feeling the presence of beauty by acting or singing, etc., through based on the artistic perspective of animation and comics in this study. It resonates with the visual symbols and interactive experiences that adolescents enjoy, which are development during adolescence. Teaching animation incorporates mainstream trends and physical-emotional development to stimulate exploration and curiosity in adolescents of this age. The continuum of self-confidence and healthy choices described in the definition of emotional well-being, which encompasses physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual dimensions in the interactive teaching of animation, has been shown to be beneficial in clinical practice for interventions with emotionally disturbed children.

C. Comparison with Traditional Approaches to Mental Health Education

The innovation of this study lies in overturning traditional methods of mental health education and conventional art therapy. It allows adolescents to be unrestrained and actively release emotions, making the process enjoyable and easily accepted. However, not all art therapists with professional certification can effortlessly master this method. It requires comic art practitioners who are not only knowledgeable about adolescent mental health but also possess strong divergent thinking to innovate ways to broaden the path of mental health education.

LIMITATIONS

The study also addressed ethical considerations. Adolescents with emotional disorders participating in the clinical trial did so under confidentiality agreements, voluntarily and with signed consent forms. Data were securely stored in the participants' personal files at the Pindu Health Emotional Management Centre for follow-up and observational purposes. However, a limitation of this research is that the sample was exclusively drawn from this center, without conducting extensive qualitative interviews across a broader demographic, thereby undermining the generalizability of the findings. The Emotional Health Assessment Form, utilized in this study, has been exclusively evaluated among adolescents diagnosed with emotional disorders and has yet to undergo formal validation within a healthy child population. Consequently, the potential presence of emotionally unstable individuals within the ostensibly healthy cohort cannot be discounted. Group A, serving as the control, primarily consists of younger children, whereas Group B includes adolescents undergoing treatment. The age disparity and differing levels of mental maturity between these two groups present significant challenges for direct comparison, potentially skewing the evaluation of both the animated content and the efficacy of interactive teaching methods. Consequently, the results do not establish a firm foundation for assessing the categorization effectiveness within the context of art therapy.

CONCLUSION

This research conducted a comparative analysis on the application of animation as a novel, interactive teaching methodology across two distinct groups, A and B, which consisted of children and adolescents at varying stages of mental health. The findings underscored that the advantageous impacts of engaging in comics and animation creation are predicated on the foundation of an interactive educational approach. The role of the facilitator in this interactive teaching model is crucial and carries a significant responsibility (Nielsen, 2022). Facilitators who are both skilled and experienced are more adept at encouraging creativity among children and adolescents. Crucially, effective facilitators must possess not only expertise in animation but also the capacity to weave psychological principles and aesthetic appreciation into the animation curriculum. This blend is essential for alleviating negative emotions through engaging teaching methodologies and meaningful educational objectives. Furthermore, the ability to communicate with young individuals – acknowledging their unique perspectives, fostering a positive mindset, and guiding appropriate behavioral responses – is vital for realizing genuine research value and achieving therapeutic outcomes through art.

The process of creating animation is multifaceted, incorporating listening, speaking, acting, and other entertainment forms. For Group A, the study's findings do not indicate a marked improvement in mood. This lack of significant change is attributed to Group A already embodying appropriate emotional states, along with a natural curiosity and inclination to emulate engaging subjects and themes. Thus, facilitators must consistently emulate and reconstruct positive and optimistic elements throughout the creative process to foster happiness and self-confidence in the children. The behavior of Group A children mirrors this approach; they thrive on the encouragement provided by the facilitator, continuously motivated to express and create. This motivation is driven by a desire to gain further affirmation from the facilitator and bolster their self-esteem, creating a positive feedback loop. Conversely, Group B, characterized by emotional lows or vulnerability, exhibits significant emotional well-being improvements under the same experimental conditions. This improvement stems from the trust and empathy developed through interactions with the facilitator. The teaching strategy focuses on play and interaction as central facilitation forms. Participants in this process consistently receive attention and encouragement, fostering self-expression and emotional attunement, which, in turn, alleviates their anxiety. This approach nudges their internal emotional state towards positivity and proactivity.

In the artistic endeavors of Group B adolescents, despite occasional hesitations and self-doubts, the facilitator's engaging instruction captivates them, transporting them to a more positive mindset. This shift is facilitated by the facilitator's engaging rhythm, ensuring continuous encouragement and attention throughout the process. As a result, these youths set aside their concerns, immersing themselves in the act of creation and achieving a sense of spiritual fulfilment. This immersion not only alleviates their worries but also propels them towards constructive engagement, culminating in spiritual contentment. When these creations are presented, and the facilitator offers additional encouragement and praise, participants experience a transient surge of happiness, which further encourages positive behaviors. These behaviors are manifested in their artwork, displaying expressions of self-confidence and satisfaction with their creative output. Even with a sense of discontentment towards their creations, Group B participants exhibit positivity and confidence, blending imaginative avatars with elements of their reality to share their work in a manner that reflects self-assurance. Through clinical practice and comparative research, the animation interactive teaching method is revealed as a significant asset. It serves as an effective art-assisted therapeutic approach within clinical settings and stands as an impactful intervention strategy, offering profound benefits in fostering emotional and psychological well-being among participants.

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