



RESEARCH ON REDUCING THE STRESSFULNESS OF FEMALE IN CHINESE
SOCIETY THROUGH ART CASE STUDY: CHINESE FEMALE IN KUNMING



A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for Doctor of Philosophy Culture - Based Design Arts

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RESEARCH ON REDUCING THE STRESSFULNESS OF FEMALE
IN CHINESE SOCIETY THROUGH ART CASE STUDY: CHINESE
FEMALE IN KUNMING



By
Mrs. Guo YEXIN

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This study explores the use of art therapy as an effective method to support women in autonomously managing psychological stress and regulating emotions. Integrating gender-sensitive perspectives with artistic expression, it emphasizes how art creation can help individuals recognize and respond to emotional states, especially those shaped by social and cultural pressures. Drawing on Sperry's hemispheric theory and principles of psychological projection, the study highlights the regulatory role of the right brain in emotional healing through visual and symbolic processes.

Focusing on women aged 30–45 who face high levels of stress related to work, family, and societal expectations, this research adopts a mixed-methods approach involving questionnaires and interviews to assess emotional burdens and their underlying causes. Participants were selected based on their elevated stress levels and participated in art therapy activities using a customized coloring book specifically designed to support emotional expression and self-reflection. Emotional changes were tracked through pre- and post-intervention evaluations.

The study hypothesizes that gender-perspective art therapy facilitates emotional self-regulation and contributes to stress relief in daily life. The findings demonstrate its practical effectiveness for ordinary women and address a research gap in self-guided psychological support. This offers a new theoretical basis and applied framework for developing art therapy interventions tailored to women's psychological well-being in contemporary China.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	D
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	E
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	F
LIST OF TABLES.....	P
LIST OF FIGURES.....	R
Chapter 1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Statement of the Problems.....	1
1.2 Research Objectives.....	2
1.2.1 Objective 1.....	2
1.2.2 Objective 2.....	2
1.2.3 Objective 3.....	2
1.3 Hypothesis.....	3
1.4 Research Methodology.....	3
1.4.1 Target population of the study.....	3
1.4.1.1 Qualitative Research Population.....	3
1.4.1.2 Quantitative Research Population.....	3
1.4.2 Data collection methods:.....	3
1.4.2.1 Qualitative Data Collection.....	3
1.4.2.2 Quantitative Data Collection.....	3
1.4.3 Data analysis methods:.....	4
1.4.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis.....	4
1.4.3.2 Quantitative Data Analysis.....	4
1.4.4 Ethical considerations.....	4
1.4.5 Results and discussion.....	4
1.5 Research scope and limitations.....	5

1.5.1 Scope of Study.....	5
1.5.2 Stakeholders	6
1.5.3 Geographical Scope of the Study	6
1.5.4 Limitation of this Research	7
1.6 Definitions of Terms.....	8
1.6.1 Female Stress.....	8
1.6.2 Art Therapy	8
1.6.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy	8
1.6.4 Emotion Regulation.....	8
Chapter 2 Literature Review.....	9
2.1 Female stress.....	10
2.1.1 Female Stress in Chinese History.....	10
2.1.2 Contemporary Female Stress in China.....	12
Summary	14
2.2 Gender Perspectives in Feminist.....	16
2.2.1 Western Feminist.....	16
2.2.2 Chinese Feminist.....	18
Summary	19
1. Exchange Theory.....	19
2. Network Theory	19
3. Role Theory.....	20
4. Symbolic Interactionism.....	20
5. Status Expectation Theory.....	20
1. Gender Perspective.....	21
2. Intersectionality Perspective.....	21
3. Historical Perspective.....	21
4. Critical Perspective.....	21
5. Power Dynamics Perspective	22
6. Social Construction Perspective.....	22

2.3 Art Therapy.....	23
2.3.1 Art Therapy in China.....	27
2.4 Painting Art Therapy	29
2.4.1 Theoretical Foundations of Drawing Therapy	29
2.4.1.1 Projection Theory.....	29
2.4.2 Painting Art Therapy in China	31
2.4.3 Mandala Painting Art Therapy	32
2.4.3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Mandala Painting.	34
2.4.3.1.1 Mandala Imagery Theory.	34
2.4.3.1.2 Mandala Color Theory.....	34
2.4.3.1.3 Mandala Function Theory.....	34
2.4.3.1.4 Mandala Stage Theory.....	35
Summary	36
2.5 Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy	38
2.5.1 Western Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy.....	38
2.5.2 Chinese Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy	41
Summary	42
2.6 Female and Flowers.....	43
2.6.1 The Relationship Between Females and Flowers.....	44
2.6.2 Gender-perspective and Flowers	47
2.6.3 Semiotics and Flowers.....	57
Summary	61
2.7 Case study.....	64
2.7.1 Susan Hogan.....	64
2.7.1.1 Emphasis on the Impact of Social and Cultural Context on females' Lives.	65
2.7.1.2 Questioning the Universal Application of Traditional Psychological Theories.....	65
2.7.1.3 Adopting an Empowerment Perspective.	65

2.7.1.4 Focusing on Female-Specific Experiences such as Pregnancy and Childbirth.....	66
2.7.1.5 Introducing the Social Construction of Gender Differences.	66
2.7.2 Zhang Yanzi	67
2.7.2.1. Use of Medical Materials and Symbols.	68
2.7.2.2. Integration with Traditional Medical Culture.	69
2.7.2.3. Reflection on Modern Medical Technology.....	69
2.7.2.4. Integration of Visual and Psychological Therapy.	70
2.7.2.5. Artistic Expression and Emotional Release.	70
2.7.2.6. Theme Selection and Social Reflection.....	70
2.7.2.7. Combining Narrative and Symbolism.....	70
Summary	72
2.8 Focus Group.....	73
2.8.1 Interviews and Discussions	74
2.8.2 Opinions and Suggestions	77
2.8.1.1 Art Design Suggestions.....	77
2.8.1.2 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Activity Guidance.....	78
2.8.1.3 Thematic and Symbolic Enhancement in Art Design.	78
2.8.1.4 Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism.....	78
Summary	79
2.9 Conclusion	80
2.9.1 Color Therapy.....	81
2.9.2 Mechanism of Females Self-Emotional Control	83
Chapter 3 Research Methodology.....	84
3.1 Qualitative research	85
3.1.1 Research Participants (Stakeholders)	86
3.1.1.1 Relevant Literature.	86
3.1.1.2 Case Studies.	86
3.1.1.3 Professional Psychologists.	86

3.1.1.4 High-Stress Females (Aged 30-45).....	86
3.1.1.5 High-Stress Females Seeking Stress Relief.....	87
3.1.2 Research Tools	88
3.1.2.1 Literature Review.....	88
3.1.2.2 In-depth Interviews.....	88
3.1.2.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Activities.....	88
3.1.2.4 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Coloring Book.....	88
3.1.3 Analytical Methods	89
3.1.3.1 Content Analysis.....	89
3.1.3.2 Comparative Analysis.....	89
3.1.3.3 Theoretical Integration.....	89
3.1.3.4 Verbatim Transcription.....	89
3.1.3.5 Inductive Coding.....	90
3.2 Quantitative research	90
3.2.1 Research Participants	91
3.2.1.1 Professional Psychologists.....	91
3.2.1.2 Experimental Participants.....	91
3.2.1.3 Scholars and Professionals from the Art Field.....	91
3.2.1.4 Local Community Members.....	91
3.2.1.5 Buyers and Potential Buyers of Artworks.....	91
3.2.1.6 Educators and Trainers.....	92
3.2.2 Research tools.....	92
3.2.2.1 Survey on Stress Among Chinese Females.....	92
3.2.2.2 Screening Questionnaire for Experimental Participants.....	93
3.2.2.3 SCL-90 Questionnaire.....	94
3.2.2.3.1 Total Score-Related Indicators.....	95
3.2.2.3.2 Factor Scores and Corresponding Content.....	95
3.2.2.3.3 Scoring Standards and Interpretation.....	96
3.2.3 Analytical Methods	97

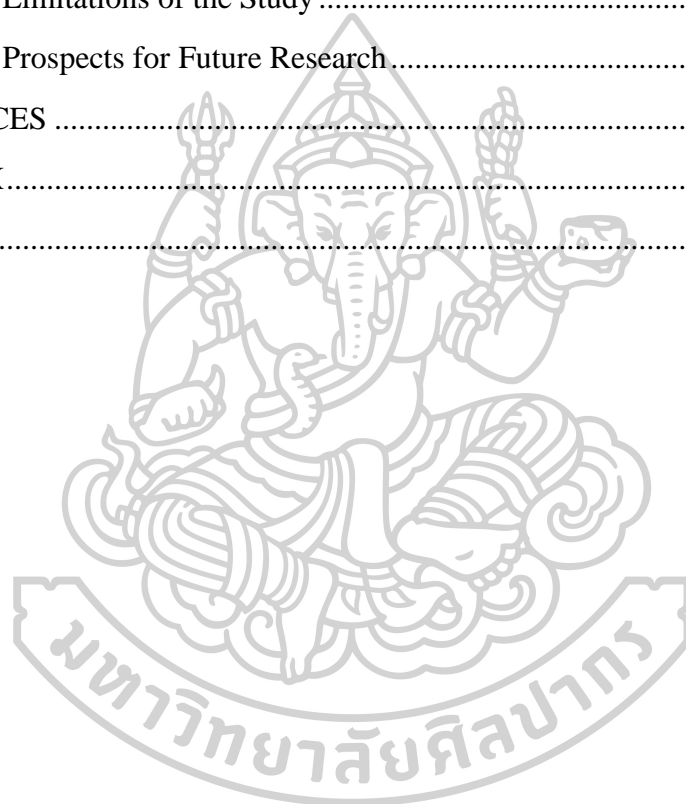
3.2.3.1 Excel.....	97
3.2.3.2 SPSS.....	97
3.2.3.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis.....	97
3.2.3.4 Interpretation of Results.....	98
3.2.3.5 Integration with Theoretical Framework.....	98
3.2.3.6 Integration of Qualitative Findings.....	98
3.3 Design Method.....	98
3.3.1 F. Feminist Consciousness Construction: The Ideological Basis of Cognitive Restructuring.....	99
3.3.2 A. Artistic Toolbox Intervention: An Embodied Tool for Stress Transformation.....	99
3.3.3 C. Community Color Interaction: Healing Empowerment through Social Support Networks.....	100
3.3.4 T. Therapeutic System.....	100
3.4 Conclusion.....	102
Chapter 4 Design Practice.....	107
4.1 Female Stress Survey.....	107
4.2 Design Objectives.....	112
4.3 Design Principles.....	113
4.3.1 Coloring Book Design Principles.....	113
4.3.1.1 Gender-Specific Design.....	113
4.3.1.2 Universal Architecture.....	113
4.3.1.3 Safe Expression Space Creation.....	113
4.3.1.4 Cultural Locality Adaptation.....	114
4.3.1.5 High Emotional Resonance Trigger.....	114
4.3.1.6 Color Psychology System Integration.....	114
4.3.1.7 Progressive Growth Path.....	114
4.3.2 Coloring Book Content Design Theory.....	114
4.3.3 Coloring Book Content Design Principles.....	117
4.3.3.1 Main Content Module Structure.....	117

4.3.3.1.1	Cover and Back Cover.....	117
4.3.3.1.2	Theoretical Introduction Section.	117
4.3.3.1.3	Tool Guide Section.....	117
4.3.3.1.4	Core Practice Section.....	117
4.3.3.1.5	Summary and Elevation Section.....	118
4.3.3.2	Visual Design Principles.	118
4.3.3.2.1	Soft and Beautiful Visual Tone.	118
4.3.3.2.2	Clear and Layered Line Language.....	118
4.3.3.2.3	Saturated Coloring Pages.....	118
4.3.3.2.4	Narrative Layout Rhythm.....	118
4.3.4	The Meaning Behind the Element Selection in the Coloring Book.....	119
4.3.5	Semiotic Element Analysis.....	122
4.4	Coloring Book Design.....	123
4.4.1	Content and Structure Design.....	123
4.4.1.1	Cover and Back Cover Design.	123
4.4.1.2	Introduction Page Design.	125
4.4.1.3	Introduction of F.A.C. T Strategy and Color Therapy.	126
4.4.1.4	Feminist Introduction Page Design.	128
4.4.1.5	Feminist Perspective Page Design.	131
4.4.1.5.1.	Gender Perspective: Crimson Awakening.....	134
4.4.1.5.2.	Intersectional Perspective: Radiant Coexistence.....	135
4.4.1.5.3.	Historical Perspective: Re-Tilling Memory.....	136
4.4.1.5.4.	Critical Perspective: Deconstructive Blue.....	137
4.4.1.5.5.	Power Dynamics Perspective: Spectrum of Struggle.	138
4.4.1.5.6.	Social Constructivist Perspective: Dance of Reconstruction.....	139
4.4.1.6	Interleaf Content Design.....	140
4.4.1.7	Color Message Page Design.	146
4.4.2	Design process.....	147

4.5 Design Experiment	152
4.5.1 Participant Selection.....	152
4.5.2 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Offline Activity 1.0	154
4.5.2.1 Process of the Offline Activity 1.0.	154
4.5.2.1 SCL-90 Initial Data Analysis.	159
4.5.2.2 Quantitative Correlation Between Symptom Improvement and Design Elements.	162
4.5.2.3 Participants' Initial Artwork Analysis.	163
Summary	167
4.5.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Offline Activity 2.0	169
4.5.3.1 Process of the Offline Activity 2.0.	169
4.5.3.2 Participant Operation Logs.....	172
4.5.3.3 Conclusion on the Quantitative Correlation between Symptom Improvement and Design Elements.....	178
4.5.3.4 Overall SCL-90 Data Analysis.....	185
4.5.3.5 Analysis of participants'first and last drawings.....	202
Summary	208
4.5.4 Online Gender-perspective Art Activity	214
4.5.4.1 Online Gender-perspective Activity Content.....	214
Summary	217
4.6 Conclusion	219
Chapter 5 Conclusion.....	221
5.1 Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy	221
5.1.2 Comparative Discussion with Gender-perspective	221
5.1.2.1 Gender-perspective Foundations and Conceptual Shifts.....	221
5.1.2.2 From Gender-perspective Discourse to Embodied Practice.....	222
5.1.2.3 Intersectional Awareness and Cultural Localization.....	222
5.1.2.4 Comparative Insights and Innovations.	223
5.1.2.5 Theoretical Contribution.	223

5.1.2.5.1 Extends the feminist conceptual field into visual and emotional domains;	224
5.1.2.5.2 Makes gender critique experiential, not just intellectual;	224
5.1.2.5.3 Translates theoretical intersectionality into culturally grounded practice;	224
5.1.2.5.4 Bridges the gap between global feminist discourse and Chinese emotional realities.	224
5.1.3 Comparative Discussion with Art Therapy	224
5.1.3.1 Core Ideas and Practice Features of Traditional Art Therapy....	224
5.1.3.2 Innovations in the Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy.	225
5.1.3.2.1 Structured and Symbolic Visual Language	225
5.1.3.2.2 From Emotional Catharsis to Autonomous Regulation	225
5.1.3.2.3 Cultural Adaptation and Localized Design	226
5.1.3.3 Comparative Summary Table.....	226
5.1.3.4 Summary.	227
5.1.4 Comparative Discussion with Gender-perspective Art Therapy.....	227
5.1.4.1 A Shift from Individual Pathology to Cultural Interpretation.	227
5.1.4.2 From Catharsis to Empowerment.	228
5.1.4.3 Visual Culture and Gendered Imagination.	228
5.1.4.4 Group Identity, Intersectionality, and Social Support.	229
5.1.4.5 Cultural Specificity and the Chinese Context.	229
5.1.4.6 Summary.	229
5.1.5 Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy Developed in This Study	230
5.1.5.1 Gender Self-Recognition.....	230
5.1.5.2 Color Self-Healing.	230
5.1.5.3 Self-Release of Tension.....	230
5.1.5.4 Progressive Self-Growth Theory.....	231

5.2 F.A.C. T Strategy	231
5.3 The Achievement of Research Objectives and the Validation of Research Hypotheses	233
5.3.1 The Achievement of Research Objectives	233
5.3.2 Validation of the Research Hypothesis	235
5.4 Social Value and Long-Term Impact of the Study	236
5.5 Limitations and Prospects.....	237
5.5.1 Limitations of the Study	237
5.5.2 Prospects for Future Research.....	238
REFERENCES	240
APPENDIX.....	247
VITA.....	263



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1 Classification of art therapy theories	25
Table 2 Comparison of Symbolic Associations between Flowers and Females in Western and Eastern Cultures	46
Table 3 Western Feminist Artists' Floral Works	54
Table 4 Chinese Feminist Artists' Floral Works	56
Table 5 Introduction of participants.....	74
Table 6 The meaning and therapeutic uses of the 12 color systems.....	82
Table 7 Symbolic Meanings of Elements Used in the Coloring Book.....	119
Table 8 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Cover and Back.....	124
Table 9 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Introduction page	126
Table 10 Semiotics Analysis Table feminist Introduction Page	130
Table 11 Semiotics Analysis Table of feminist Perspective Pages	132
Table 12 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Every page	141
Table 13 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Every page	146
Table 14 Experimental Participants	153
Table 15 Initial Total Scores and Averages.....	160
Table 16 Initial Participant Scores.....	160
Table 17 Proportion of Initial Scores by Factor.....	161
Table 18 Initial Assessment Data (Pre-test) and Corresponding Interventions.....	163
Table 19 Initial Artwork Analysis of Participants	164
Table 20 Participant Log Records.....	173
Table 21 Weekly Design Element Usage Rate by Participants	178
Table 22 Post-test Evaluation Data.....	183
Table 23 Reliability Scores of the Questionnaire Survey	185
Table 24 Initial Total and Average Scores of Participants	186
Table 25 Initial Participant Score Values	186

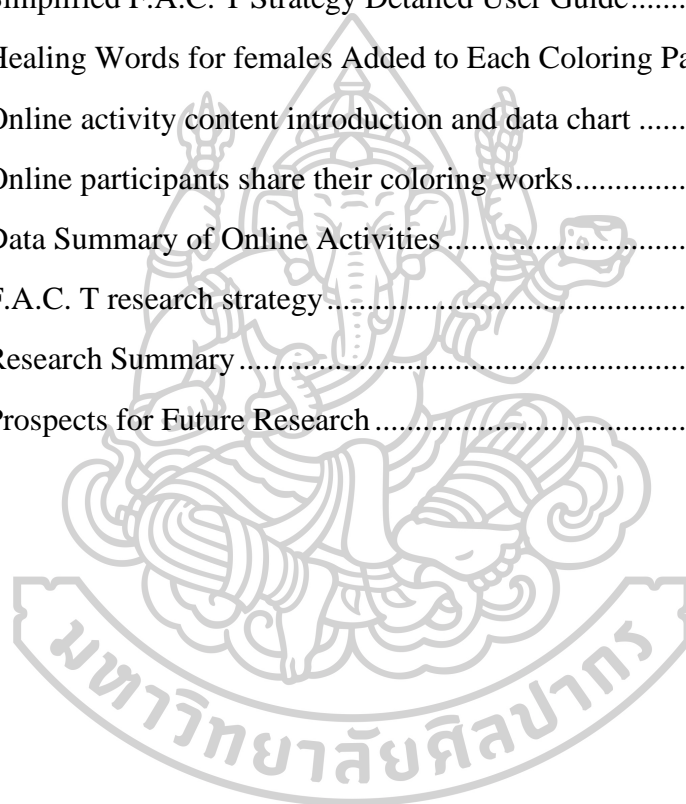
Table 26 for the detailed distribution of each factor among participants	187
Table 27 Week 1 Participant Total Scores and Averages.....	189
Table 28 First Week Participant Scores.....	189
Table 29 Proportion of Each Factor in Week 1 Participants	190
Table 30 Second Week Participants' Total Scores and Averages.....	191
Table 31 Participant Scores in the Second Week	191
Table 32 Proportion of factors for participants in the second week	192
Table 33 Total and Average SCL Scores of Participants in Week 3	194
Table 34 Participant Score Values in Week Three	194
Table 35 Proportions of Participants by SCL Factor Score in Week 3	195
Table 36 Total Scores and Average Scores of Participants in Week Four	196
Table 37 Scores of Participants in the Fourth Week.....	197
Table 38 Proportional Distribution of Participants Across SCL Factors in Week Four	198
Table 39 Paired-Sample t-Test Results for the Five Time Points.....	199
Table 40 Comparison of Initial and Final Scores	200
Table 41 Comparative analysis of colors between participants' first and last drawings	202
Table 42 Comparative Insights and Innovations	223
Table 43 Comparative Art Therapy Table	226

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1 Research methodology and framework	5
Figure 2 Research geographical Scope	7
Figure 3 Chart of the status of females in Chinese history	11
Figure 4 Proportion of health status of Chinese females in the past three years	13
Figure 5 Gender inequality in China.....	14
Figure 6 Factors that cause females to face difficulties	15
Figure 7 Six perspectives of Chinese feminist.....	23
Figure 8 The mechanism of art therapy	30
Figure 9 Mandala painting art therapy.....	33
Figure 10 Three-inch lotus feet shoes and the feet of females	45
Figure 11 Cai Jin's "Canna Lily 174"	50
Figure 12 O'Keeffe's "Black Iris"	51
Figure 13 Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party"	52
Figure 14 Tang Bohu, "Painting of a Chicken", Ming Dynasty	60
Figure 15 Barthes' third-order decoding method of semiotics.....	62
Figure 16 Susan Hogan.....	64
Figure 17 Susan Hogan's therapeutic work.....	66
Figure 18 Zhang Yanzi	68
Figure 19 One of the series of "Pain Relief Patch"	69
Figure 20 One piece from the "Hyperplasia" series	72
Figure 21 Discussion with therapist Li Yanhong	76
Figure 22 Discussion with therapists Du Jingdi and Li Yun	77
Figure 23 Research methodology framework.....	85
Figure 24 Survey on Stress Among Chinese Females	93
Figure 25 Screening Questionnaire for Experimental Participants.....	94
Figure 26 F.A.C. T strategy	101

Figure 27 Research Objectives Achievement Methods	104
Figure 28 Research Methods and tools	105
Figure 29 Ratio of stress status among females	109
Figure 30 The proportion of stress-relieving methods among females	110
Figure 31 The ratio of females' stress relief needs.....	111
Figure 32 Mandala pattern	116
Figure 33 Analysis of the Four Major Categories of Elements in semiotic Coloring Books	123
Figure 34 Cover and back design process: 21cm*29.7cm.....	125
Figure 35 Introduction page design process: 21cm*29.7cm	126
Figure 36 The design of the F.A.C. T strategy section design.....	127
Figure 37 Color Guide Design.....	128
Figure 38 feminist Introduction Page Design	130
Figure 39 Gender perspective page design	134
Figure 40 Intersectional Perspective page design	135
Figure 41 Historical Perspective page design	136
Figure 42 Critical Perspective page design.....	137
Figure 43 Power Dynamics Perspective page design	138
Figure 44 Social Constructivist Perspective page design	139
Figure 45 Interleaf Content Design.....	145
Figure 46 Message page Design	147
Figure 47 Picture book design process	149
Figure 48 Printing effect of hard cover of coloring book	150
Figure 49 Printing effect of insert	150
Figure 50 The printing effect of the colored inner pages of the coloring book	151
Figure 51 Picture books and drawing tools.....	151
Figure 52 The experimental content is being explained to the participants	156
Figure 53 The participants are coloring	156
Figure 54 The participants presented the coloring results	157

Figure 55 Participant Score Collection Table	159
Figure 56 Explain to the participants the changes in their scores	170
Figure 57 Participants checked their scores and signed the Data Integrity document	171
Figure 58 Participants took photos as souvenirs	172
Figure 59 Trends in SSCL scores for 12 participants in 5 tests	201
Figure 60 Newly Modified Color Guide (Front and Back)	210
Figure 61 Simplified F.A.C. T Strategy Detailed User Guide	211
Figure 62 Healing Words for females Added to Each Coloring Page	212
Figure 63 Online activity content introduction and data chart	216
Figure 64 Online participants share their coloring works	217
Figure 65 Data Summary of Online Activities	219
Figure 66 F.A.C. T research strategy	233
Figure 67 Research Summary	235
Figure 68 Prospects for Future Research	239



Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter begins by outlining the core research problem: the growing psychological stress experienced by females in contemporary Chinese society due to intersecting pressures from work, family, and gendered social expectations. In particular, it focuses on the insufficient availability of accessible and autonomous emotional regulation methods for ordinary women, highlighting a gap between professional mental health services and the everyday needs of stressed female populations. This foundational problem lays the groundwork for the subsequent exploration of gender-perspective art therapy as a potential self-directed intervention for emotional relief and stress reduction.

1.1 Statement of the Problems

The psychological stress experienced by Chinese females today is not a sudden phenomenon, but the result of a long-standing patriarchal culture deeply rooted in history. From the "Three Obediences and Four Virtues" of the Spring and Autumn period to the foot-binding practices during the Song dynasty, women's bodies and minds have been disciplined and confined under rigid gender norms for over a millennium. While these customs have faded in form, their ideological residue persists in modern family expectations, gender roles, and self-perception. In essence, the legacy of obedience and compliance has become an implicit psychological imprint inherited across generations.

In contemporary China, women are caught between seemingly achieved "legal equality" and the reality of "substantive inequality." Although women have made progress in education and employment, they continue to face compounded pressures from multiple fronts. Social expectations regarding appearance, marriage, and motherhood, coupled with gendered divisions of domestic labor and workplace discrimination, have created a heavy psychological burden. According to recent surveys, over 60% of women report experiencing significant stress due to their family responsibilities and societal expectations, with few avenues for relief. This

accumulation of invisible stress contributes to anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and a sense of self-erasure.

Recent data further reinforce the severity of this issue. The 2023 National Depression Blue Book reveals that the depression detection rate in women is 68%, nearly twice that of men. The lifetime prevalence of depression and anxiety disorders among women has increased sharply, while physical symptoms such as insomnia and endocrine imbalance have surged. This psychological burden is not only a personal or gendered health issue but a broader socio-economic concern. Female's rising stress contributes to national challenges such as declining fertility rates, delayed marriages, and workplace attrition, causing an estimated annual economic loss of 2.3 trillion yuan. Therefore, addressing the stressfulness of Chinese women is no longer a private matter, but an urgent public challenge requiring cross-disciplinary attention and culturally informed interventions.

1.2 Research Objectives

The research objectives of this study are threefold:

1.2.1 Objective 1

To study the stress experienced by contemporary Chinese females and explore the theoretical foundations and practical implementation of gender-perspective art therapy.

1.2.2 Objective 2

To analyze the underlying causes of stress among contemporary Chinese females and examine the theory and mechanisms of gender-perspective art therapy, with the aim of identifying new approaches and strategies for problem-solving.

1.2.3 Objective 3

To design and implement experimental projects using gender-perspective art therapy, in order to verify whether the proposed strategies can effectively alleviate stress among Chinese females.

1.3 Hypothesis

If combining gender-perspective with the theory and practice of art therapy can lead to the design of stress-reduction tools, that integration will enable females to relieve stress and achieve self-emotion regulation.

1.4 Research Methodology

The researchers will use a mixed research method that combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis to address the issue of females' stress.

The chosen research method is inductive reasoning, which is based on gathering information from specific cases, data, or examples and then gradually building general concepts, principles, or theories. This method emphasizes observation, analysis, and comparison of situations, from which general patterns can be derived. The following is the theoretical foundation that closely integrates inductive reasoning with my thesis research. It involves analyzing and summarizing key concepts, paradigms, and findings from existing studies to provide a theoretical framework and foundation for the research.

1.4.1 Target population of the study

1.4.1.1 Qualitative Research Population. Relevant literature, case studies, females experiencing high levels of stress (aged 30-45), and females seeking stress relief.

1.4.1.2 Quantitative Research Population. Occupational psychologists, experimental participants, females experiencing high levels of stress, scholars and professionals in the art field, local community members, art buyers and potential buyers, educators, and trainers.

1.4.2 Data collection methods:

1.4.2.1 Qualitative Data Collection. Utilize literature analysis, participant observation, and in-depth interviews to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' viewpoints, experiences, and opinions. Participants will be guided to elaborate on relevant issues through interview guides and discussion outlines.

1.4.2.2 Quantitative Data Collection. Use surveys to quantify participants' opinions, attitudes, and experiences regarding specific topics and variables. The survey

design will incorporate existing measurement tools while developing questions tailored to the research subjects and objectives.

1.4.3 Data analysis methods:

1.4.3.1 Qualitative Data Analysis. Employ qualitative content analysis methods to inductively categorize and code the verbatim transcripts of interviews and discussions. Important themes and patterns will be identified and extracted through theme coding and pattern recognition.

1.4.3.2 Quantitative Data Analysis. Use statistical software for data cleaning and analysis. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods, such as frequency distribution, correlation analysis, and regression analysis, will be applied to reveal relationships and effects between variables.

1.4.4 Ethical considerations

During the research process, ethical principles will be followed to protect participants' rights. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants, ensuring their privacy and confidentiality are maintained.

1.4.5 Results and discussion

Qualitative and quantitative research findings will be synthesized for a comprehensive interpretation of the significance of feminist-based art therapy in alleviating females' stress. The discussion section will explore the relationship between the research findings and the theoretical framework, elucidate the contribution and significance of the study, and propose directions for further research and recommendations

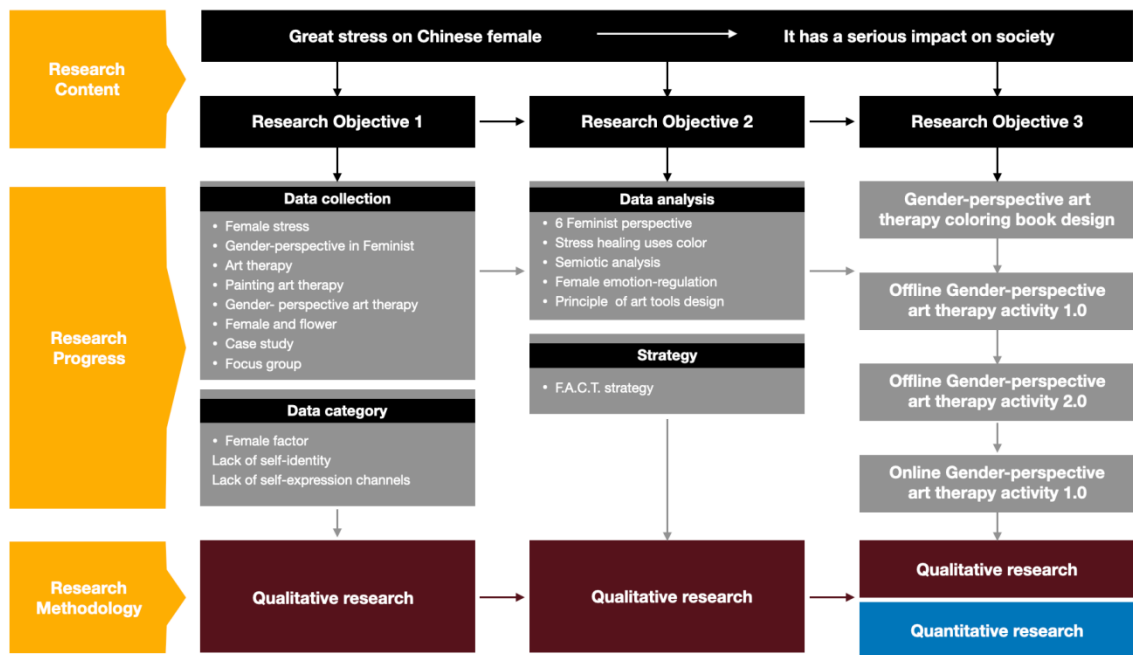


Figure 1 Research methodology and framework
Source: Researcher (Guo, 2024)

1.5 Research scope and limitations

1.5.1 Scope of Study

To establish a solid theoretical foundation for this study, a comprehensive review of interdisciplinary literature was conducted, covering six key research areas. First, in the domain of female stress, existing studies on the sources and relief demands of psychological stress among Chinese females were reviewed, providing empirical support for the construction of a demand-based intervention model. Second, from the perspective of feminism, the study localizes Western feminist theories in the Chinese context, seeking innovative pathways for gender empowerment through culturally embedded narratives. Third, literature on art therapy, especially mandala therapy, was examined to clarify its treatment mechanisms and structured intervention processes. Fourth, the study explores the integration of painting and color psychology, focusing on the expressive characteristics of visual media and the development of a symbolic system suitable for emotional healing. Fifth, comparative studies on gender-perspective art therapy between China and the West were reviewed to analyze cultural differences

and derive adaptation strategies for therapeutic symbols. Lastly, research on female and flower semiotics was introduced to interpret the metaphorical and emotional encoding functions of floral elements in coloring books. These six areas of literature jointly construct a multidimensional research framework, ensuring theoretical rigor and practical relevance for the subsequent design and implementation of gender-perspective art therapy interventions.

1.5.2 Stakeholders

Female participants aged 30-45 with high levels of stress.

Occupational psychologists.

Scholars and professionals in the art world.

Local community members.

Art buyers and potential buyers.

Educators and trainers.

1.5.3 Geographical Scope of the Study

The study is primarily focused on the location of Kunming, which includes publishing online recruitment information, distributing surveys, and implementing the art experiment, all within this location.

"I come from Kunming": Local advantages (cultural insights, resource networks) ensure the authenticity of data and execution efficiency.

"Kunming is China": The gender pressure profile of a mid-sized city (the conflict between professionalization and traditional roles) condenses the core contradictions of a transitional period, with conclusions applicable to emerging first-tier cities.

"Starting from the Spring City": Local symbols (such as the rose = resistance) achieve "Kunming design → nationwide healing" through emotional universality for cross-domain promotion.



Figure 2 Research geographical Scope
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

1.5.4 Limitation of this Research

1.5.4.1 Limited Sample Scope.

Due to time and resource constraints, my study focuses only on a small portion of females who have psychological issues and wish to seek healing, covering only part of the relevant population.

1.5.4.2 Subjectivity and Self-Report Bias.

My research primarily relies on female interviews and survey reports, which may introduce subjective bias. Respondents may express preferences based on social expectations, memory biases, or personal subjective perceptions.

1.5.4.3 Time Constraints.

My research and design practice experiments were conducted within a specific time frame and research duration, which may limit the ability to observe how psychological issues in females change and develop over time.

1.6 Definitions of Terms

1.6.1 Female Stress

In this study, female stress refers to the emotional strain experienced by females whose healthy emotions are influenced by modern societal opinions and biased values in contemporary Chinese society, resulting in excessive inner pressure.

1.6.2 Art Therapy

Art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that utilizes non-verbal methods, enriching the lives of individuals, families, and communities through active art creation, the creative process, and the application of psychological theories within the therapeutic relationship to human experiences.

1.6.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy

Gender-perspective art therapy primarily reveals the impact of social, political, and economic oppression on females from a gender-perspective. It combines art therapy methods, offering stronger support and treatment by helping female clients understand the effects of such oppression.

1.6.4 Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation refers to the ability to respond to persistent emotional demands in a socially acceptable, sufficiently flexible manner that allows spontaneous reactions and, when necessary, delays those spontaneous reactions. It can also be defined as the external and internal processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional responses. Emotional self-regulation is part of the broader emotion regulation process, which includes regulating both one's own emotions and those of others.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

To achieve the objectives of this research and verify the research hypotheses, Chapter 2 provides a structured review and analysis of the literature related to women's autonomous emotional regulation and stress management. First, it examines the rising psychological stress experienced by contemporary Chinese women, highlighting how social, economic, and familial responsibilities—along with tensions between traditional values and modern expectations—contribute to complex emotional challenges.

Next, this chapter explores gender-related perspectives that help illuminate the social and cultural frameworks shaping women's experiences. Rather than relying on abstract ideological critiques, the review focuses on how contextualized gender awareness contributes to understanding emotional stress and internalized role conflicts, providing insight into patterns of identity development and psychological adjustment.

Subsequently, the chapter surveys theoretical research in the field of art therapy, with particular emphasis on the emotional and visual mechanisms of painting-based interventions. It investigates how art-making processes engage the right brain and activate symbolic expression, thus offering a nonverbal channel for self-regulation and emotional relief.

The chapter then focuses on specific art therapy methods, particularly mandala painting and color psychology. These approaches are examined as practical tools for supporting women's emotional self-care in everyday life, enabling low-threshold access to stress relief and promoting a sustained sense of well-being.

In the final section, the study explores how symbolic imagery—especially the recurring theme of flowers—functions in visual expression. The literature review discusses how flower motifs, once associated with passive cultural scripts, are increasingly reinterpreted in art as metaphors of growth, healing, and agency. This section highlights how women artists across disciplines use natural forms as a means of self-exploration and identity reconstruction.

Through this five-part literature review, Chapter 2 lays a theoretical and conceptual foundation for understanding how gender-conscious art therapy can serve as a practical and accessible tool for stress reduction and emotional self-regulation

among women in contemporary China.

2.1 Female stress

2.1.1 Female Stress in Chinese History

The status of females in Chinese history has undergone a process of transition, from a relatively higher social role to gradual marginalization. Lin and Li (2010) analyzed the historical changes in the status of Chinese females, arguing that the influence of traditional gender culture, economic dependence, and patriarchy has led to the continued subordination of females. Yin (2012) pointed out that females held a higher status in matrilineal societies, but with the establishment of patrilineal societies, their status gradually declined. Ding (2008) analyzed the character of Lü Zhi in the Records of the Grand Historian, illustrating how females in a male-dominated society used intelligence and political maneuvering, yet faced gender limitations. Sun (2006), from a feminist critical perspective, interpreted Lü Zhi's tragic fate, emphasizing that her resolute nature and intelligence led her to an irreversible end in a patriarchal society.

Regarding female political figures, Xiang (2009) explored how Lü Zhi controlled the government as the acting regent, surpassing traditional female roles and becoming a power center in a male-dominated society. Ji and Nie (2021) analyzed Wu Zetian's political methods, pointing out that she reshaped females' political status by challenging gender culture. Liu (2024) discussed the multiple factors that contributed to Wu Zetian becoming the only female emperor, noting that while her power expansion was limited by patriarchy, her contributions to women's rights should not be overlooked. Li (2024) analyzed Wu Zetian's limitations from a feminist perspective, highlighting that although she promoted the advancement of females' social status, she remained constrained by patriarchy. Zheng (2023), through a comparison of the political fates of Wu Zetian and Liu E, pointed out that the attitude of the bureaucratic class toward female rulers affected their political status.

Empress Dowager Cixi also experienced power struggles closely tied to gender culture. Liu (2020) explored how Cixi solidified her power through palace politics, though some key decisions exposed her limitations. Wang (2016) compared Cixi's political tactics with those of Queen Victoria, noting that their differing political cultural backgrounds and the status of females had a profound impact on their rule. Hou and

Sun (2017) analyzed how Cixi consolidated her power through interactions with court males and the imperial family, showcasing how she skillfully navigated traditional gender culture. Jiang (2024), through an analysis of Cixi's portrayal in external cartoons, revealed how cultural differences shaped the public's perception of her, emphasizing the importance of combining art with historical education.

The aforementioned literature reveals that throughout Chinese history, females have long been subjected to gender oppression and constraints. Whether through the establishment of patrilineal society or the limitations imposed by traditional gender culture, females have always occupied subordinate positions in society, economy, and family. Historical female political figures such as Lü Zhi, Wu Zetian, and Empress Dowager Cixi, although demonstrating extraordinary political talents, were limited in their power and achievements by their gender identity, unable to escape the oppression of the patriarchal society. This historical gender oppression has not only shaped females' social roles but also profoundly influenced the psychological and emotional states of modern females. Despite social progress bringing changes toward gender equality, the cultural legacies of history still affect females' self-awareness and emotion regulation in many ways. Therefore, using gender-perspective art therapy to help modern females relieve stress and reconstruct their self-awareness becomes especially important.

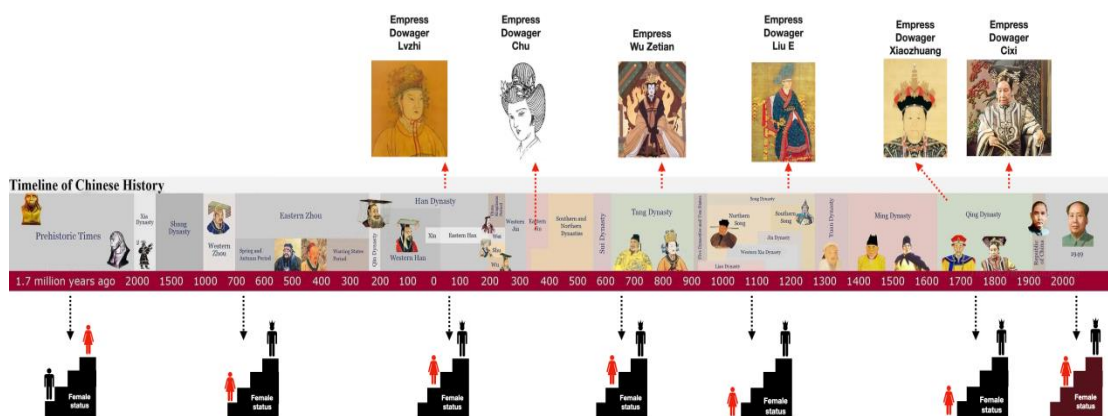


Figure 3 Chart of the status of females in Chinese history
 Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2.1.2 Contemporary Female Stress in China

Cheng (2008) explored the challenges faced by modern Chinese females, pointing out that despite increased educational and professional opportunities, these changes are primarily limited to upper-class females in urban areas, with the majority of females still confined to traditional gender roles and concepts. Genuine social and cultural reform still requires long-term effort. Qu and Zhou (2012) analyzed the historical evolution of Chinese females' ethical culture, noting that this cultural system is rooted in patriarchy and, while transformed under the influence of Western feminist in modern times, faces the challenge of integrating Western culture while maintaining traditional values. Zhang and Liang (2008) discussed the historical changes in Chinese females' social roles, analyzing how females have navigated the intersection of socialist ethics and traditional concepts, emphasizing the importance of resisting ideological constraints on individuality and gender differences to reconstruct gender discourse.

Li (2013), in *An Analysis of the Current Situation and Issues of Contemporary Chinese females' Development*, analyzed the multiple challenges faced by females in the knowledge and market economies. Despite advancements in education and employment, females remain limited in senior management roles and political participation. Yang (2006) discussed how, during the process of socialist modernization, although females legally enjoy equal rights, gender inequality and social prejudice still hinder their comprehensive development, emphasizing that changing traditional notions is key to promoting females' advancement. *The 2022 National Depression Blue Book* pointed out that the incidence of depression in females is significantly higher than in men, with young females being especially affected (2022 National Depression Blue Book, 2022). The research highlights the multiple pressures faced by Chinese females, particularly in the workforce, where females' participation in the labor market is very high, reaching 70%, comparable to men. However, females face greater family responsibilities alongside their pursuit of career success, and the societal pressure on older unmarried females creates additional challenges (Xiaotong Talks about the Workplace, 2020).

The ratio of male to female mental illness In the last 3 years

Source: National Depression Blue Book (published in 2022-2023)

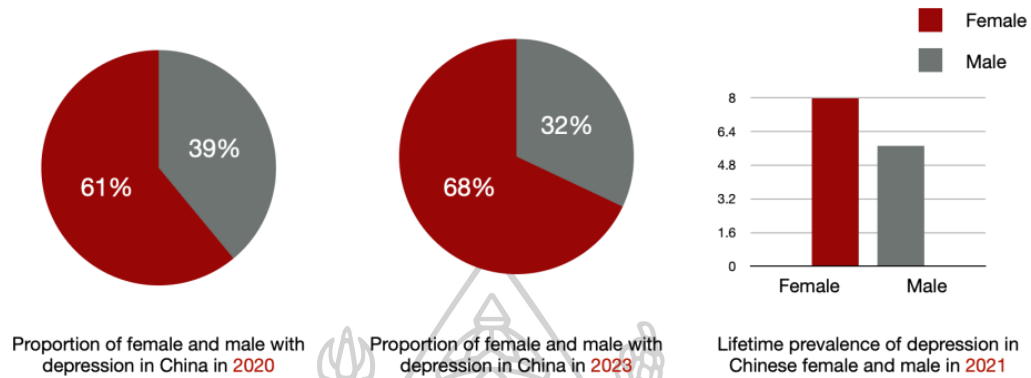


Figure 4 Proportion of health status of Chinese females in the past three years
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Ye (2010) analyzed the psychological health issues of females, pointing out the negative impact of gender culture and work-family pressure on females' mental health, recommending comprehensive measures at the socio-cultural and institutional levels. Xue (2013) conducted a survey of 2,396 females, revealing mental health issues in modern females, especially among those aged 35-45, whose psychological health was the worst, with unmarried females exhibiting lower mental health indices than married females. Hu and Shen (2022), in *A Study on the Professional Psychological Health Issues of Chinese Female Social Workers*, explored the professional mental health issues of female social workers, finding that factors like work support and job satisfaction had a significant impact on depression, and recommended mitigative measures from the perspectives of work regulation and perception.

The above literature reveals the multiple forms of oppression and challenges faced by Chinese females in terms of society, economy, culture, and mental health. From the historical constraints of tradition to gender inequality in modern society, females continuously face dual challenges from social, cultural, and economic spheres. These studies provide important context for understanding the sources of pressure on Chinese females in contemporary society and offer theoretical support for designing effective intervention strategies, such as gender-perspective art therapy, helping females achieve breakthroughs in emotion regulation and self-awareness.

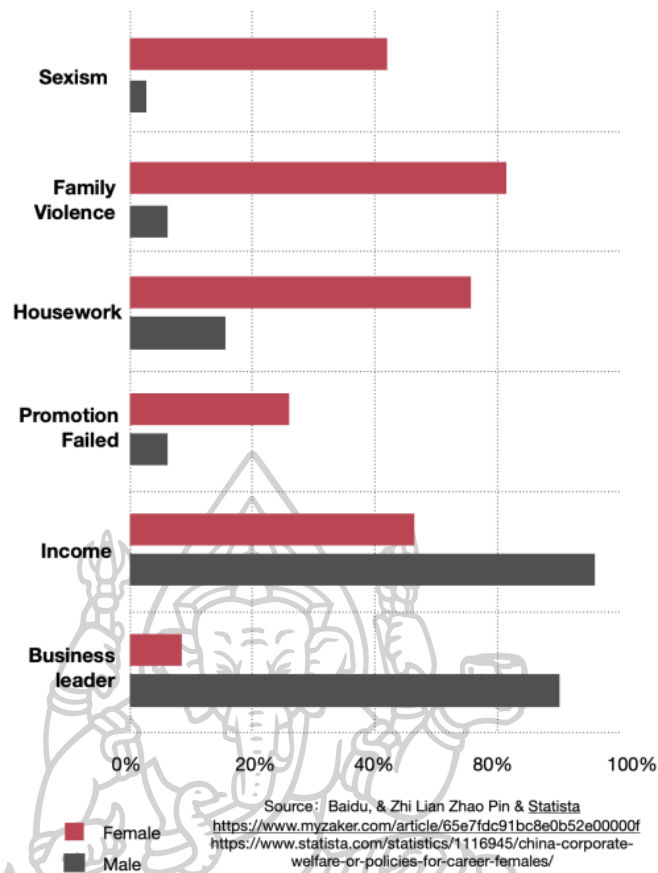


Figure 5 Gender inequality in China
 Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Summary

Through the analysis of the historical and contemporary pressures faced by Chinese females, three main sources of pressure for contemporary Chinese females can be summarized: delayed social consciousness development, unstable self-awareness system, and unchanged male cognition.

Firstly, the delayed development of social consciousness stems from traditional gender notions, which are deeply rooted in Chinese society and affect females' social status and opportunities for development. Despite progress in areas such as education and employment, these advancements are often limited to upper-class females in urban areas, and the majority of females remain trapped in traditional gender roles, unable to truly benefit from the rights and opportunities brought about by societal changes. The unchanged male cognition further exacerbates this issue, as men continue to hold traditional gender beliefs. This not only perpetuates prejudice against females but also

deepens the structural barriers of gender inequality, thereby increasing females' self-dilemmas.

Against this background, the main dilemmas faced by females can be summarized into two aspects: one is the lack of self-awareness, and the other is the lack of emotional expression channels. The issue of self-awareness in females originates from a long process of gender socialization, where their identities are often defined by traditional gender roles, making it difficult to truly recognize and accept themselves. In this situation, females find it hard to develop healthy self-awareness when confronted with inequality, thus failing to effectively resist social oppression and cultural prejudice. Secondly, females lack effective channels for emotional expression. Due to societal restrictions on emotional expression, many females struggle to find appropriate ways to release their inner emotions, and the emotional buildup leads to increased psychological pressure, which exacerbates emotional problems such as anxiety and depression. These dilemmas are interwoven, forming unique sources of pressure for females in modern society.

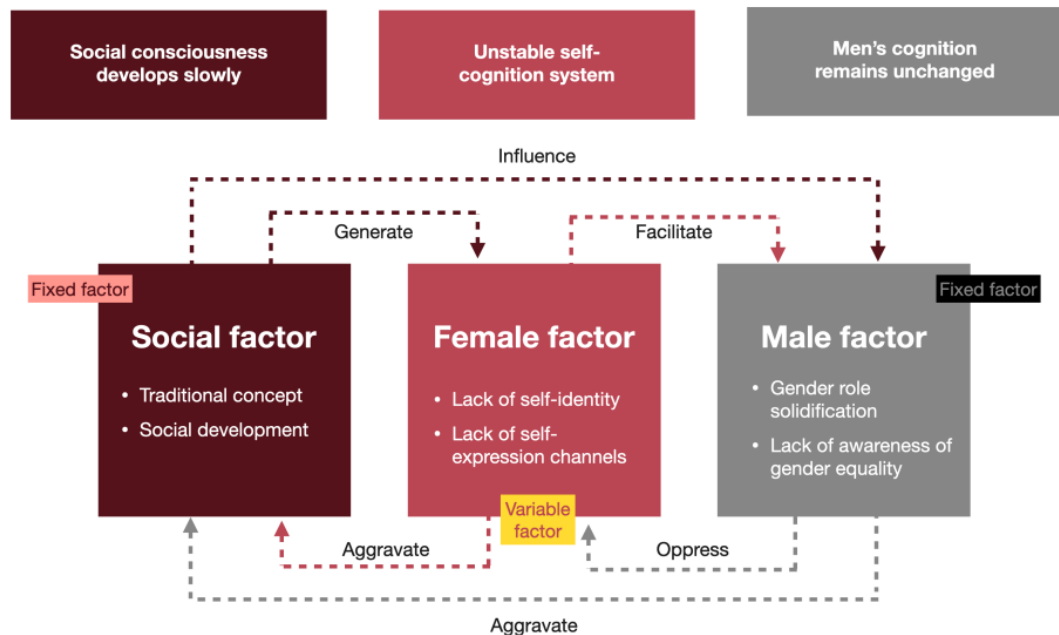


Figure 6 Factors that cause females to face difficulties
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2.2 Gender Perspectives in Feminist

Feminist theory argues that the hierarchical gender structure is socially constructed rather than biologically determined, which causes women to remain in unequal positions in both public and private spheres.

Feminist theories are mainly divided into the following:

Exchange theory is used by feminist theorists to reveal how men control greater political, economic, and intellectual resources than women. These inequalities in resource distribution shape gendered experiences and influence women's self-worth and emotional well-being.

Network theory explains that gendered differences in social connections, beginning in childhood, lead to unequal access to opportunities in adulthood. Women's limited networks in male-dominated fields contribute to feelings of exclusion and reduced career confidence.

Role theory focuses on the internal conflict women experience between professional and family roles. The prioritization of family over career often results in emotional exhaustion and self-doubt, impacting women's career progression and self-perception.

Status expectation theory suggests that social groups tend to expect more from men than women in mixed-gender settings. This undermines women's confidence, decreases their influence, and reinforces internalized inferiority in group dynamics.

Symbolic interaction theory emphasizes that societal labels such as "obedient" or "emotional" shape women's identities through symbolic communication. These internalized roles often cause self-blame, a desire for approval, and emotional suppression.

2.2.1 *Western Feminist*

Western feminism developed in three waves: the first focused on basic rights (e.g., suffrage), the second on autonomy and workplace equality, and the third on cultural diversity and identity. These evolving perspectives laid the groundwork for multiple analytical approaches, such as intersectionality and critical reflection on gender norms, which are useful for understanding women's self-identity.

Hughes (2002) emphasized that feminist theory involves multiple and sometimes

conflicting interpretations of key concepts such as equality, difference, and choice, which is important when analyzing women's self-awareness.

Ferguson (2017) highlighted feminist theory's role in challenging binary oppositions and promoting social transformation through interdisciplinary analysis.

Scholars such as Yang (2011) and Zhao (2023) note that Western feminism emphasizes independent resistance against patriarchy, while Chinese feminism historically aligns with national liberation and political movements. These differences in cultural and political contexts influence how women in different societies perceive gender roles and self-identity.

Lian Furong, in *An Analysis of Gender Views in Western feminist*, reviews the gender views and historical development of Western feminist, analyzing the evolution from suffrage to gender identity, and explores the significance of these theories for females' independence and equality (Lian & Song, 2012).

Liu Dongling also explores the origins, development, and differences between Chinese and Western feminist literature, analyzing their distinctions in themes, narrative styles, female character portrayals, and cultural contexts. She emphasizes the rebellious spirit of Western literature and the pursuit of gender harmony in Chinese literature (Liu, 2016).

Through the above literature review, it is evident that there are differences between Chinese and Western feminists in terms of historical context, development paths, and theoretical foundations. Western feminist theory originated from the modern societal demand for gender equality and individual freedom, experienced multiple waves, and gradually developed into a theoretical system that deeply influences global society and philosophy. In contrast, Chinese feminist has been shaped by traditional culture and political environments. While it has been inspired to some extent by Western feminist, it is more closely integrated with the context of national liberation and political struggle. These studies offer deep perspectives for understanding the diverse faces and influences of feminism globally, and they also provide a theoretical framework for my research on the dilemmas of Chinese females' self-perception and emotional expression.

2.2.2 Chinese Feminist

Chinese feminism developed alongside national political movements, starting from the May Fourth Movement's call for gender equality to the integration of women's roles in socialist construction. In recent decades, global feminist discourse has influenced China's gender perspectives, prompting reexaminations of traditional female identities.

Ma Wenjuan (2014) analyzes how Western feminist ideas entered China through translation and academic exchange, noting their influence on domestic gender discourse and the development of gender equality policies within a Chinese sociopolitical context.

Wang Xuepan (2012) traces the historical trajectory of Chinese feminism since the May Fourth Movement, emphasizing its divergence from Western feminism and the cultural misunderstandings it sometimes encounters in contemporary Chinese society. Zhao Xin (2013) contrasts Western feminism's focus on gender-based critique with Chinese feminism's emphasis on integration with national development, highlighting distinct ideological foundations shaped by different cultural histories. Bai Shan (2024) explores how feminist art reinterprets the image of motherhood in contemporary Chinese contexts, suggesting that artistic practice can challenge and transform internalized gender norms.

Yang Jun and Yang Zhuoran (2023) examine the rapid growth of feminist thought in academic and digital spheres in China since the 1980s, noting its increasing visibility as well as the social tensions accompanying its rise. (A. Yang & B. Yang, 2023).

Chang and Yang (2020) emphasize how the introduction of Western feminist discourses has broadened scholarly perspectives in China and facilitated more diverse understandings of gender roles and identities. Shu Jia (2010) discusses the integration of gender as an analytical concept in Chinese academia, framing it as a tool for examining social roles and cultural expectations. Dai Luhong (2022) examines the challenges facing contemporary Chinese gender literature, advocating for strategies that move beyond oppositional gender narratives toward more balanced and inclusive cultural expressions. Zhao Xifang (2001) discusses the influence of Western feminist theories on Chinese academic discourse and the cultural complexities involved in adapting these frameworks within a localized context. Liu Ya (2015) compares Western and Chinese approaches to gender issues, noting that while Western theories often focus

on individual autonomy and resistance to patriarchy, Chinese perspectives tend to emphasize collective development and alignment with broader national goals.

Compared to Western feminism's emphasis on individual freedom and critique of patriarchy, Chinese feminism is more shaped by traditional culture and political collectivism. This has important implications for understanding how Chinese women internalize gender roles and emotional expectations in distinct ways.

Summary

The divergence between Western and Chinese gender-related thought is especially evident across several theoretical frameworks that explore gender roles, expectations, and identity construction.

The differences between Western and Chinese feminist under 5 theoretical frameworks are as follows:

1. Exchange Theory

Western: Gender analysis under exchange theory highlights the unequal distribution of resources—such as political influence, economic opportunity, and cultural capital—between men and women, with particular attention to the undervaluation of unpaid labor like domestic work.

China: In China, traditional family structures influence the distribution of responsibilities and opportunities. Women often assume greater caregiving roles, and despite formal protections, their contributions in domestic and professional exchanges may receive less institutional recognition.

2. Network Theory

Western: Western scholars use network theory to examine how differentiated socialization shapes gendered access to resources. Men's broader networks often translate into advantages in professional or political spaces.

China: In China, a strong relational culture ("guanxi") reinforces these patterns. Male-dominated networks tend to dominate high-opportunity domains such as business and politics, while women's social circles often remain family-centered, limiting occupational mobility.

3. Role Theory

Western: Role theory highlights the tension between professional and familial responsibilities. While Western societies have introduced supportive policies such as paid parental leave, women's career progression remains influenced by caregiving expectations.

China: In China, the dual-role conflict is intensified by cultural expectations prioritizing familial responsibilities. This often leads to reduced time and energy for professional development, thereby influencing long-term career advancement.

4. Symbolic Interactionism

Western: From the lens of symbolic interactionism, social discourse and imagery play crucial roles in shaping gender norms. Western studies examine how societal labels can influence self-perception and explore how symbolic representations might reinforce role expectations.

China: In China, traditional values like "Three Obediences and Four Virtues" continue to shape women's self-understanding. These social scripts often promote relational harmony but may also constrain expressions of individuality and self-worth.

5. Status Expectation Theory

Western: This theory suggests that women may face lowered performance expectations in mixed-gender settings, which can undermine confidence and recognition. Policy interventions often aim to enhance gender awareness and encourage inclusivity in leadership roles.

China: In Chinese contexts, occupational fields such as science and politics often carry implicit gender expectations. Women may be perceived as less competitive or capable, limiting advancement despite demonstrated competence.

Building on these comparative theoretical insights, this study proposes six analytical perspectives tailored to the socio-cultural realities of Chinese women. Rather than adhering strictly to Western feminist paradigms, these perspectives aim to contextualize emotional challenges and self-identity formation within localized structures and lived experiences.

1. Gender Perspective

Through a gender perspective, we can analyze the impact of social, political, and economic structures on females from the angle of gender. Many seemingly neutral systems and policies may, in fact, discriminate against or overlook females' contributions. Traditional gender roles, in particular, confine females to domestic and caregiving roles and ignore their potential in the workplace and public sphere. The gender perspective prompts us to identify these injustices, promote social reform, and achieve gender equality.

2. Intersectionality Perspective

Intersectionality theory emphasizes the intersecting influences of gender, race, class, sexual orientation, age, and other identities. This perspective helps us understand that the oppression females face is not solely due to gender, but may also be compounded by factors such as race and socioeconomic status. For example, minority females may face both racial and gender discrimination. The intersectionality perspective allows us to more fully uncover the complex oppression and inequality faced by different groups of females.

3. Historical Perspective

Through a historical perspective, we review and analyze historical events and movements to reveal the oppression and struggles females have faced in their fight for rights. Understanding history helps us realize that achievements in gender equality were not easily obtained but were made possible through prolonged struggle and effort. This perspective not only inspires us to continue the fight for equal rights but also reminds us to avoid repeating past mistakes, providing valuable experience for future reform.

4. Critical Perspective

The critical perspective encourages us to question and expose gender inequalities that are naturalized and normalized in society. Many seemingly "normal" social norms and values may actually serve as tools to maintain gender oppression. For example, traditional gender division of labor and family structures are taken for granted, but they

often limit our development and freedom. The critical perspective challenges these norms, advocates for change, and promotes gender equality and personal freedom.

5. Power Dynamics Perspective

The power dynamics perspective emphasizes the power relations in social, political, and economic life. It reveals how power is distributed, exercised, and maintained, helping us understand our position within power structures and the oppression we experience. By analyzing the distribution of power in the family, workplace, and politics, we can more clearly see the roots of gender inequality and seek change to promote structural transformation.

6. Social Construction Perspective

The social construction perspective believes that gender roles and gender differences are the result of social construction rather than biological determination. Through this perspective, we can understand how gender norms and expectations are formed and reinforced through education, culture, and socialization processes. This perspective encourages us to challenge traditional gender stereotypes, redefine gender roles, and promote societal acceptance of diverse gender expressions.

These six perspectives provide a comprehensive framework for research and future implementation of interventions. They help females identify and understand the multiple forms of oppression they face and offer practical tools to fight for equality and liberation. By combining these perspectives, we can more effectively promote social change and strive for a more equal and just social environment.

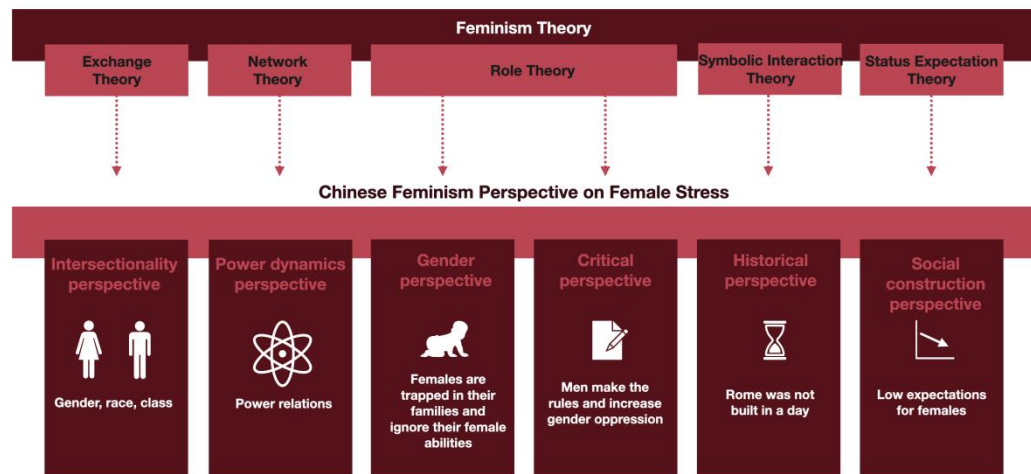


Figure 7 Six perspectives of Chinese feminist
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2.3 Art Therapy

Art therapy, also known as art psychotherapy, is a discipline that uses expressive art forms (such as visual arts, music, dance, drama, poetry, etc., with visual arts including painting, sculpture, film, calligraphy, etc.) for psychological diagnosis and treatment. In a broad sense, art therapy encompasses various forms of expressive art, while in a narrower sense, it specifically refers to painting therapy. (Shi, Shu, Hua, 2017)

According to the definition by the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) in 1980, art therapy uses non-verbal expression and communication through art to achieve balance and harmony between the individual and their internal and external environments. It pursues two main objectives: first, the act of creating art itself serves as a therapeutic process, which can alleviate emotional conflicts and contribute to self-awareness and personality development. Second, through the expression of art works, it helps achieve integration and unity between the individual and their environment. Art therapy provides a creative way for individuals to express their inner emotions and experiences, promoting the development of physical and mental health and the process of self-realization.

Wadson (1980) pointed out in his research that prehistoric cave paintings expressed the early human observation of the world and exploration of life. These cave paintings, through artistic forms, demonstrated ancient humans' perception and

understanding of their surrounding environment.

According to ancient Egyptian legends, it is said that Imhotep used artistic activities to treat patients with mental illnesses. This indicates that in ancient Egyptian culture, art was regarded as a form of treatment for mental disorders.

In the Chinese classical text *Zhuangzi* (Zhuang Zhou, Warring States period), it is recorded that artistic meditation was used to help people transcend the self. This shows that in ancient Chinese culture, art was considered a means to guide individuals to transcend the boundaries of the individual self.

In 1880, Lombroso from Italy began to use art therapy for treating patients with mental illnesses in hospitals. At the same time, Jung encouraged patients to use painting to record their inner activities and dreams. In 1920, German psychiatrist Rinzhom discovered that the paintings of patients with mental disorders could reflect their inner world, thus becoming one of the methods for observing the evolution of their condition. Naumburg (1974) mentioned that in 1925, No-lam and Lewis had already begun using free painting as a therapeutic tool, while Levick et al. (1976) reported that Stern analyzed patients' free paintings through psychoanalysis. These studies further demonstrate the application of art in the treatment of mental illnesses.

The founding figure of art therapy is American psychiatrist Margaret Naumburg. As a follower of Freud and Jung, she founded the Walden School in 1915, integrating art with psychotherapy and providing a pathway to understanding the unconscious.

The paper *The Effectiveness of Art Therapy for Anxiety in Adults: A Systematic Review of Randomised and Non-Randomised Controlled Trials* by Annemarie Abbing et al. (Abbing et al., 2018) aims to evaluate the effectiveness of art therapy in reducing anxiety symptoms in adults and explore the characteristics of interventions, beneficiary populations, and mechanisms of action. The paper analyzes relevant randomized and non-randomized controlled trials conducted between 1997 and 2017. The research found that although art therapy is widely used in clinical practice to alleviate anxiety symptoms, high-quality clinical trial evidence regarding its effectiveness remains limited. This highlights the necessity for higher-quality trials in future research. Additionally, the study explores possible mechanisms of action of art therapy, including promoting relaxation, aiding emotion regulation, and improving cognitive function.

In the 1930s, Naumburg explicitly introduced the concept of "art therapy" and

promoted the gradual development of art therapy in the United States, which quickly spread to other developed countries. Naumburg emphasized "analysis" and "dynamics," with the specific method being to have patients engage in free painting and then interpret these paintings using free association. This marked the formal beginning of "art therapy." In the 1950s, Elinor Ulman (1910-1991) in the United States developed characteristics related to art therapy while conducting painting education with disabled children. Contemporaneous Edith Kramer also proposed that art therapy is a supplementary form of psychotherapy, which allows for the reasonable release of unconscious content without interfering with the patient's defense mechanisms. In 1966, the United States established the American Art Therapy Association (AATA), thus securing widespread recognition of art therapy as a psychological therapy.

Today, art therapy includes the following theories:

According to Lu Ya-qing's *Art Therapy* (Lu, 2002), there are nine theories:

Table 1 Classification of art therapy theories

Main theories	Main ideas	Characteristics
Naturalistic Theory (Naive Realism)	The objective and the impressions perceived by individuals are consistent.	The difference in muscle control abilities between children and adults can result in different artistic expressions.
Summary Theory (Recapitulation)	Art activities are simply objective representations.	Using archetypes to imagine and explain symbolic representations.
Personality Theory (Personality Theory)	Children's drawings demonstrate stage-specific development.	Artworks reflect an individual's inner world and life experiences.
Development Theory (Development Theory)	Kellogg (1969) is representative of this view.	They symbolize complex life experiences. The cognitive development

Main theories	Main ideas	Characteristics
		characteristics are explored from multiple perspectives.
Intellectualist Theory (Intellectualist Theory)	Art reflects the state of the unconscious.	It is believed that the formation of concepts and visual analysis are greatly influenced by learning, experience, and culture. Psychological age and actual age are thought to differ significantly.
Haptic-Visual Polarization Theory (Haptic-Visual Theory)	Based on psychodynamic theory.	An individual's physiological factors (touch, vision) can lead to different perceptions.
Perceptual Development Theory (Perceptual Development Theory)	It is derived from Piaget's cognitive development theory (1980), used to discern the features of a drawing and the actual age of a child to understand the level of their cognitive development.	Intelligence can be increased through the development of perception.
Perceptual Delineation Model (Perceptual Delineation Model)	Based on the Goodenough Draw-a-Man Test (1963), the basic concept is similar to development theory.	Culture can influence an individual's perceptual training.
Synthesis Theory	It developed from	Art serves as a symbolic

Main theories	Main ideas	Characteristics
(Troeger's Synthesis)	Lewenfeld and Brittain's (1987) theory of children's drawing.	system that, through art history, art criticism, and art appreciation, allows people to understand art.

2.3.1 Art Therapy in China

Chinese culture is profound and extensive, and traces of art therapy can be found in ancient times. It is said that Emperor Yang of the Sui Dynasty, due to his excessive indulgence in alcohol and lust, became physically weak. The imperial physician created two paintings for him: one was titled "Plum Ripening in the Spring Courtyard" and the other "The Capital Covered in Snow." Emperor Yang would gaze at these paintings daily, which caused an increase in saliva production, and after about half a month, his symptoms such as dry throat, dry tongue, and irritability began to gradually subside.

Although in this example, the patient merely used visual art to promote recovery from physical illness without engaging in the creation of the artwork, which seems to not align directly with the definition of art therapy, we believe the interaction between the mind and body should not be overlooked. The physical illness of Emperor Yang likely triggered his emotional distress, and the paintings diverted his attention, alleviating his anxiety. Once his psychological troubles were resolved, the scenes depicted in the paintings helped stimulate the secretion of bodily fluids, allowing the body to heal naturally. In a sense, this can also be considered a form of art therapy. Some historical instances of painting art therapy validate its effectiveness in treatment.

The development history of painting art therapy in China is relatively short. Through searching the Chinese Journal Full-text Database and the Wanfang Database using keywords such as "painting therapy," "art therapy," and "painting psychological therapy," it can be found that the earliest theoretical introduction appeared in 1994. The article "Art Psychological Therapy" by Gong (1994) was the only theoretical research article on painting art therapy in the 1990s. The article introduced the psychodynamic, humanistic, and behavioral psychological schools of Western art therapy and explored the relationship between Chinese traditional painting and art therapy. Gong pointed out

that painting can help people return to a state of unity with time and space, eliminating all thoughts of self and time, which helps individuals relax and calm the mind.

Wei Yuan, in "A Review of the Applicability of Foreign Painting Psychological Therapy" analyzed the mechanism of painting therapy and proposed that art, as a neutral symbolic system, can help individuals express suppressed emotions and traumatic experiences through visual means. This non-verbal form of expression breaks through the constraints of social morals and culture, and helps transform destructive emotions into constructive energy (Wei, 2004). Tian Min emphasized the mechanism of art therapy, pointing out that it is based on theories of brain lateralization and psychological projection. Through artistic creation, individuals can express emotions and conflicts from the subconscious. The article also discusses three main approaches to art therapy: psychoanalytic, humanistic, and psycho-educational, analyzing their effects and suggesting that art therapy in China should be developed in conjunction with local culture (Tian, 2009).

Ni Ting and Hu Bingshuang explored the application of art therapy in various fields in China, emphasizing significant progress in education, medical care, and mental health, and stated that future research should focus on the standardization of art therapy and its integration with technology (Ni & Hu, 2011). Li Xiaohong and Wu Mingxia discussed the effectiveness of art therapy for ADHD and individuals with difficulties in emotional expression, highlighting that art therapy helps patients visually record and express emotions, but also pointed out the necessity for cultural localization (Li & Wu, 2011).

Cui Jianhua discussed creative methods in art therapy, emphasizing that art can stimulate patients' creativity, promote self-awareness, and facilitate personal growth. The article proposed that art therapy can help individuals release emotional conflicts, purify their thoughts, and promote personality integration, especially in psychoanalytic-oriented treatment models, where art creation helps release repressed emotions and impulses (Cui, 2011). Zhao Luowei reviewed the historical development of art and believed that art therapy helps individuals express their inner world, release emotions, and integrate conflicts from the subconscious through imitation and spontaneous creation, emphasizing that the role of art therapy is to help individuals face and integrate emotions through creation (Zhao, 2018).

Li Sixiao thoroughly explored the definition and application of art therapy, noting that art therapy helps recipients express emotions, alleviate emotional conflicts, and reduce inner suffering through forms such as visual arts, music, and dance. She emphasized its preventive role in psychological health education and expanded the scope of its audience (Li, 2018). Zhou Qinshan explored the localization process of art therapy in China, pointing out the challenges of cultural adaptation and theoretical conflicts. He stressed the importance of maintaining critical and reflective perspectives to promote the effective development of art therapy (Zhou, 2022).

2.4 Painting Art Therapy

2.4.1 Theoretical Foundations of Drawing Therapy

2.4.1.1 Projection Theory.

Drawing therapy is primarily grounded in the theory of psychological projection in analytical psychology. Projection is a psychological defense mechanism that functions to alleviate anxiety and protect the self, thereby maintaining the internal structure of the personality. In this context, projection refers to the act of attributing one's own faults or socially unacceptable desires to others, also known as denial projection.

Projection is considered an unconscious act of self-expression, resembling the manifestation of free will within consciousness. The products of projection are not limited to art; dreams, hallucinations, and delusions can also be understood as manifestations of psychological projection. Art psychology holds that drawing is inherently a means of self-expression, capable of symbolically conveying unconscious content through nonverbal means. Therefore, drawing can serve as a technique for psychological projection. Similarly, other projection-based techniques such as the Rorschach Inkblot Test and the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) have been proven effective as psychological assessments and therapeutic tools, suggesting that drawing should possess comparable therapeutic functions.

2.4.1.2 Brain Lateralization Theory

The two hemispheres of the brain are functionally specialized. The left hemisphere is associated with abstract thinking, symbolic relationships, and logical

analysis of details, while the right hemisphere is more image-oriented and is responsible for perception and spatial orientation, as well as psychological functions such as music, drawing, and emotion.

Furthermore, research on lateralization impairments in schizophrenia has found that patients with schizophrenia exhibit hyperactivity in the right hemisphere, which manifests as abnormal emotional activity, primarily involving negative emotional experiences. This suggests that impairment in right hemisphere functions can affect a patient's emotional functioning.

Consequently, drawing therapy posits that verbal-based therapies are effective in treating psychological disorders caused by irrational cognition or beliefs, but prove inadequate in addressing psychological issues characterized primarily by emotional disturbances. In contrast, drawing and other art activities—governed by the right hemisphere—can influence and help treat emotional dysfunctions. (Shenzhen Keke Psychology, 2022).

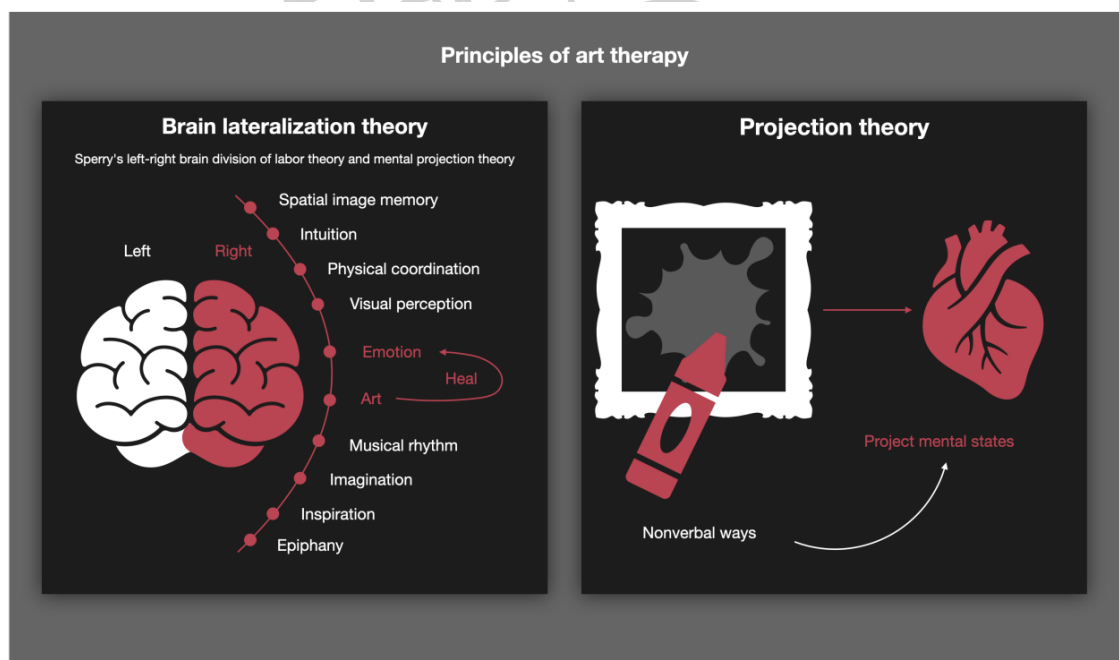


Figure 8 The mechanism of art therapy
Source : Research (Guo, 2024)

2.4.2 Painting Art Therapy in China

Yan Jun and Cui Yuhua, in their study on group painting therapy, pointed out that through the creation of the artwork "Me in the Rain," patients are able to express their inner emotions. The subsequent group discussions facilitate emotional release and self-reflection, enabling individuals to better understand and cope with psychological issues (Yan & Cui, 2005). He Jing and Jiang Mingquan summarized the development of art therapy in China. They noted that since the 1990s, with the initiation of theoretical research, the application of painting-based art therapy has gradually expanded, particularly in psychiatry, education, and among the elderly population (He & Jiang, 2009). In her review, Wang Sisi emphasized that painting, as a tool for emotional expression, can concretize unconscious content. It assists patients who are unable to communicate verbally in releasing emotions, resolving emotional conflicts, and improving self-image and social skills (Wang, 2011). Wang Yanping et al. found that when combined with conventional antidepressant treatment, painting therapy can significantly improve the social functioning, quality of life, and mental health of patients with depression, demonstrating its effectiveness as an adjunctive therapy (Wang et al., 2011). Yu Yang and Hu Yi indicated that visual communication, through images and graphics, aids patients in expressing emotions. It is especially suitable for individuals with limited language abilities, such as those with autism spectrum disorder and Alzheimer's disease, and can effectively alleviate anxiety and depressive symptoms (Yu & Hu, 2017). Zhang Song et al., through a study involving patients with anxiety disorders, found that painting therapy significantly reduced anxiety scores and improved sleep quality, proving its clinical efficacy (Zhang et al., 2019). Duan Shanshan et al. reviewed the application of painting therapy in the treatment of psychological trauma. They found that painting helps individuals integrate traumatic memories, enhance self-insight, and promote emotional expression and recovery (Duan et al., 2021). Zhou Ziqin and Guo Wenhui studied the role of visual painting-based art therapy in relieving psychological stress. They emphasized that integrating art with three-dimensional expressive forms can effectively regulate mental states, with particularly positive effects observed among university students (Zhou & Guo, 2022). Gu Danli, in her study on narrative painting therapy, pointed out that expressing subconscious emotions and conflicts through painting enables students to externalize

sources of stress, enhance psychological resilience, and build self-confidence (Gu, 2022). Xu Zhe, drawing from personal experience with expressive painting therapy, emphasized that painting, as a medium for emotional expression, helps individuals release anxiety, clarify inner desires, foster emotional connections, and achieve psychological transcendence (Xu, 2022). Chen Mengke, in her study on the expressive imagery of color, noted that clothing colors have both visual and emotional impacts. Through psychological suggestion, they can assist in alleviating mental health disorders. She stressed that the application of color must take into account individual characteristics (Chen, 2023). Yue Lin and Sun Yu explored the application of healing-style painting in psychological therapy. They argued that such paintings, characterized by gentle colors and relatable themes, can effectively ease emotional conflict, enhance self-identity, and promote emotional restoration, with broad potential for application in the post-pandemic era (Yue & Sun, 2023). Han Yuting and Wang Jing analyzed the design of narrative illustration, pointing out that characters, time, and spatial elements in illustrations evoke emotional resonance through nonlinear storytelling. The modulation of color enhances emotional expression, thereby promoting emotional transformation and self-healing (Han & Wang, 2023).

These studies collectively demonstrate that painting-based art therapy has significant effects in enhancing emotional expression, psychological healing, emotion regulation, and self-awareness. Whether through group painting, mandala drawing, or narrative illustration, art therapy enables patients to express deep-seated emotions and resolve internal conflicts via non-verbal means, thereby facilitating emotional release and psychological recovery. These findings highlight the increasingly widespread application of art therapy in China and underscore its therapeutic value in addressing a range of mental health issues, particularly in alleviating anxiety, depression, and trauma-related symptoms.

2.4.3 Mandala Painting Art Therapy

Mandala drawing art therapy is a treatment method that combines psychology and art, originating from Carl Jung's analytical psychology. The term "mandala" comes from Sanskrit, meaning "circle" or "wheel," symbolizing the universe, wholeness, and harmony. Mandala drawing uses circular structures, symmetrical layouts, and symbolic

patterns to help individuals seek psychological balance and integration. Jung believed that mandalas could reflect an individual's inner state and that through the process of artistic creation, emotions, conflicts, and repressions from the unconscious could be projected into the artwork, thereby promoting emotional release and psychological healing. Mandala drawing therapy is commonly applied in the treatment of anxiety, depression, and emotional disorders. It helps individuals reconstruct inner order and restore psychological balance through visual artistic expression. Its advantage lies in the fact that it does not require complex drawing skills—anyone can explore and regulate their emotional state freely through the expression of colors and shapes. The application of mandala drawing in art therapy has demonstrated effectiveness, particularly in stress relief and emotional regulation, making it an important tool in modern art therapy.

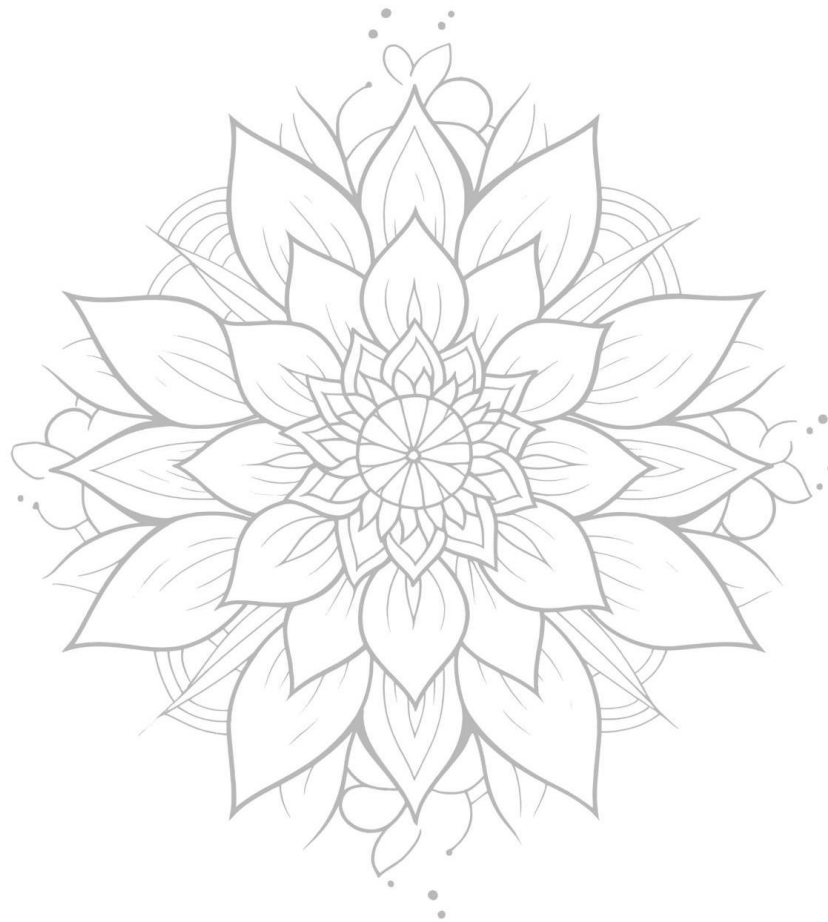


Figure 9 Mandala painting art therapy
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2.4.3.1 Theoretical Foundations of Mandala Painting.

2.4.3.1.1 Mandala Imagery Theory.

Mandala imagery refers to the visual symbols presented in the artwork. In his 1950 paper, Jung summarized the main forms of mandalas, including circles, flowers, wheels, suns, stars, and crosses, often incorporating religious symbolism. The structure of mandalas is mainly based on circles, squares, and multiples, reflecting their profound religious and psychological meanings. Studies have shown that mandala imagery can be categorized into ten types: flowers, gems, life, psychology, religion, etc. Notably, the lotus flower in Eastern mandalas represents the protective and integrative function of the Self archetype.

2.4.3.1.2 Mandala Color Theory.

Mandala colors are classified into primary, secondary, and complementary colors. Red represents drive and passion; yellow symbolizes warmth and wisdom; blue signifies calmness and relaxation. Among secondary colors, orange symbolizes determination and confidence, green represents growth, and purple stands for imagination and creativity. Complementary colors—such as red and green, yellow and purple, blue and orange—reflect internal emotional conflicts, such as the tension between creativity and external demands, independence and dependence, or intimacy and achievement motivation.

2.4.3.1.3 Mandala Function Theory.

Mandala drawing serves not only as a tool for assessing psychological states but also offers multiple therapeutic functions. According to Perry, mandalas possess protective, orienting, cohesive, and integrative functions. The protective function arises from the safety conveyed by the circular form; the orienting function helps individuals gain psychological positioning through radiating patterns from the center; the cohesive function draws focus and activates the Self archetype; and the integrative function aids individuals in confronting internal conflicts and achieving self-integration and protection. The symbolic structure of the mandala facilitates the development and

equilibrium of the self.

2.4.3.1.4 Mandala Stage Theory.

Based on Jung's theory of the relationship between ego and self, Kellogg proposed the "Great Round of Mandala" theory and developed the MARI (Mandala Assessment Research Instrument). She believed that the process of creating mandalas reflects the path of individuation and can be divided into twelve stages. Although each person's experience with mandalas is unique, they generally follow these developmental stages, helping individuals integrate the self during the drawing process and promoting psychological growth and development (Chen et al., 2013).

The following literature demonstrates that mandala drawing, as an art therapy method, has significant effects on emotion regulation. Babouchkina and Robbins, through a randomized controlled trial, found that the circular structure of mandalas significantly improved negative emotions, confirming the emotional enhancement effects of mandala creation (Babouchkina & Robbins, 2015). Støre and Jakobsson, through a meta-analysis, found that while the effect of mandala coloring on anxiety relief is comparable to free drawing, biases and low sample quality suggest that more high-quality research is needed to confirm its efficacy (Støre & Jakobsson, 2022). Van der Vennet and Serice conducted a replication study that supported the effectiveness of mandala coloring in reducing anxiety, especially when anxiety was induced, with the mandala coloring group showing the most significant emotional improvement (van der Vennet & Serice, 2012). Campenni and Hartman found that both structured and unstructured mandala creation effectively improved mood and reduced anxiety, with unstructured creation stimulating more emotional expression and self-insight (Campenni & Hartman, 2019).

Özsavran and Ayyıldız found that mandala art therapy significantly improved the comfort and adaptability of mothers with special-needs children, enhancing their psychological well-being (Özsavran & Ayyıldız, 2023). Sun Jiakang and Li Xian explored the origin and effects of mandala drawing, pointing out that mandalas provide a safe psychological space for creators, aiding in emotional regulation and self-adjustment, and promoting deep cognitive changes (Sun & Li, 2024). Tong Xin, based

on Jung's individuation theory, analyzed the role of mandala drawing and argued that by integrating internal opposites, mandala drawing promotes psychological balance and stress relief (Tong, 2023). Chen Canrui et al. examined the theoretical foundations of mandala drawing therapy, asserting that mandalas not only assess self-function but also promote psychological healing, showing broad application prospects (Chen & Gao, 2013). Mandala drawing can effectively enhance self-harmony, improve inconsistencies between the self and experience, and promote self-flexibility.

Chen Canrui, Zhou Dangwei, and Gao Yanhong found that mandala drawing significantly enhanced participants' positive emotions, particularly showing greater emotion regulation effects in structured mandalas. The integrative function of this process underlies the improvement in emotional states (Chen et al., 2013). Cen Kaimi, Wang Yuzheng, and Luo Fei pointed out that mandala drawing therapy significantly reduces negative emotions and promotes cognitive changes through self-expression and the enhancement of a sense of meaning, thereby effectively regulating emotions (Cen et al., 2022). Xu Yan et al. showed that mandala drawing therapy can significantly improve the emotional states of patients with depression, increase social functioning, and enhance emotion regulation self-efficacy (Xu et al., 2022). Hu Yan et al. discussed the integration of virtual reality with mandala drawing, suggesting that VR technology can enhance the immersive and therapeutic effects of mandala drawing, helping patients release emotions and integrate internal conflicts (Hu et al., 2020).

These studies indicate that mandala drawing, as an effective form of art therapy, significantly improves psychological well-being, particularly in alleviating anxiety, depression, and promoting emotion regulation. Research consistently shows that mandala drawing, through non-verbal means, helps individuals release emotions, integrate internal conflicts, and enhance self-awareness. It has shown positive therapeutic effects especially in stress management, trauma healing, and psychological adaptation. Future research should further explore its localized application in different cultural contexts and validate its long-term efficacy through systematic studies.

Summary

Art therapy through drawing integrates psychology and artistic expression. By engaging in the drawing process, individuals can express inner emotions, release stress,

and explore the self. It has gradually become an important tool in the field of psychotherapy. Although modern art therapy originated in the West, it has progressively integrated local cultural characteristics and humanistic spirit after being introduced to China, continuously enriching and innovating its theories and practices. In China, the application of drawing art therapy is not limited to psychotherapy; it has also extended to education, community services, and rehabilitation, showing broad prospects for development.

Research has shown that drawing therapy has significant therapeutic effects on female patients with anxiety and depression, especially in addressing psychological trauma, emotion regulation, and improving quality of life. Through drawing therapy, anxiety levels in patients with anxiety disorders are significantly reduced, sleep quality is improved, and patients with depression experience notable improvements in recovery status and social functioning, along with enhanced quality of life. This indicates that drawing therapy has remarkable effects in alleviating anxiety and depressive emotions and improving life quality. It is an efficient therapeutic approach that is worth widespread application in clinical and daily life settings.

In addition, drawing therapy emphasizes the value of visual communication. Visual communication conveys information and emotions through images and graphic symbols and is particularly suitable for female patients who lack language ability or are unwilling to communicate verbally, such as females who have experienced trauma or those with psychological disorders. Studies have shown that viewing and creating artworks can effectively alleviate their pain, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve recovery outcomes. Drawing therapy, by guiding patients to establish accurate cognitive and emotional associations through visual symbols, facilitates the overcoming of psychological and emotional disorders and demonstrates its advantages in both psychotherapy and rehabilitative medicine.

Research on drawing art therapy has revealed its significant potential in stress relief for females, particularly in the aspects of emotion regulation and mental health. Based on a summary of the literature, the following core principles of drawing art therapy will guide the design and implementation of my experimental activities:

1. Self-expression and emotional release: Drawing therapy provides participants with a non-verbal channel for emotional expression, helping them release internal

emotional conflicts and stress, thereby promoting emotional regulation and psychological healing.

2. The influence of color psychology: Color has a strong psychological effect on drawing. Proper color combinations can regulate emotions and relieve negative feelings such as anxiety and depression, thus enhancing the therapeutic outcome.

3. Enhancing self-efficacy: Through artistic creation, participants can see their emotions and thoughts transformed into tangible works. This sense of achievement helps to boost their confidence and self-efficacy, promoting mental health.

4. Mindfulness and improved attention: The focused and creative process in drawing therapy can help participants enter a state of mindfulness, improving their attention and concentration, thereby reducing anxiety and stress.

5. The soothing effect of simple, repetitive activities: Simple and repetitive art activities can help participants relax, reducing stress and emotional fluctuations, and providing a calming psychological therapeutic experience.

These core principles will serve as the theoretical foundation for the design and implementation of my drawing art therapy experimental activities, ensuring that the therapy can effectively help females relieve stress, improve emotional well-being, and promote self-identity and psychological growth.

2.5 Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy

2.5.1 Western Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy

Research on art therapy from a feminist perspective is extremely scarce. I can only find feminist-related content in the studies and books published by Susan Hogan. Her research and practice mainly focus on gender-sensitive art therapy, addressing gender-related stress and identity issues in therapeutic contexts. Her published works are of great significance as they continuously challenge the reductive use of psychology and apply anthropological and sociological thinking to the subject of art therapy. There is a general lack of theorization in the entire field of arts in health, but during the 1990s, art therapy practices in the UK became increasingly dominated by the dogmatic application of psychoanalytic theory and the reductive application of object relations theory—both of which were critiqued in her important work *Feminist Approaches to*

Art Therapy (Hogan, 1997). The dominant conceptual frameworks tended to firmly situate the origins of illness within individual psychopathology, though psychoanalytic and Jungian theories understand this differently. In psychoanalytic theory, pathology is the result of the repression of instinctual material, particularly starting in childhood. Symbolic psychoanalytic theory is especially significant in how images are interpreted in art therapy. Symbolic psychoanalytic theory became the dominant theoretical framework during that period, surpassing the previously important Jungian model, which, as Hogan explored in her historical monograph *Healing Arts: The History of Art Therapy* (Hogan, 2001), had been highly influential in post-war Britain. In *Gender Issues in Art Therapy* (Hogan, 2003), a paradigmatic shift was achieved by offering cultural rather than purely psychological explanations for states of being, especially concerning women's experiences of mental illness. It drew upon art theory, cultural theory, and feminist critiques of science. Due to Hogan's early work, literature employing cultural approaches later developed within the fields of art and health.

One of Hogan's projects involved working with women who had recently given birth, exploring the relationship between art and health, offering support through art therapy groups, and providing opportunities to explore the changes in self-identity and sexuality brought about by pregnancy and motherhood. The controversies and conceptualizations surrounding motherhood are complex and can destabilize women's mental health, and thus Hogan continued to focus on this topic in a series of papers, book chapters, and edited volumes.

Hogan also wrote about women who committed infanticide (examining how women's mental states are used in legal defenses) and about elderly women, particularly regarding representations of aging. Her recent photographic work consolidates her various interests in visual culture, examining photographic subjects from a health and therapeutic application perspective. The imagery related to gender determines what can be conceptualized, as part of what Foucault termed the apparatus—that is, how we are constituted through institutions, institutional practices, and discourses. Therefore, offering the researched or the person in therapy an opportunity to reflect on their relationship to the social processes they represent is important and enriching for art therapy practice.

For over two decades, Hogan has argued against simplistic views of women

experiencing psychological distress, as such perspectives exacerbate suffering and help reinforce fundamentally toxic and pathological social processes.

In her work (Hogan, 1997), she argued that art therapy has been slow to adopt interdisciplinary critiques, particularly those from social and cultural perspectives, which are essential to understanding women's mental health challenges. However, there is increasing recognition that language and imagery play a role in creating and maintaining gender inequality and pressures that may contribute to women's mental illness—placing art therapists in a favorable position.

Leading international practitioners in the field have explored ways to address gender issues in art therapy and suggest that by maintaining sensitivity to the sociocultural dimensions of women's lives, therapists may be better able to accommodate the needs of their female clients. Within their specific areas of expertise, contributors challenge the overreliance on universally applied psychological theories. Case studies illustrate how issues of class, race, and gender introduce social elements into what is sometimes described as a purely individual cathartic process. Other chapters discuss empowerment, sexuality, pregnancy, and childbirth, providing a comprehensive investigation into women's issues in art therapy, prompting a re-evaluation of current training and practice in the field.

Her research explores how art therapy can assist individuals in exploring and developing gender identity, coping with gender-related stress, and addressing gender inequality through creative expression and exploration.

Nora Swan-Foster found in her research that drawing tasks in art therapy allowed pregnant women to effectively express emotional conflicts, reduce anxiety, and strengthen emotional bonds with their unborn children, thereby enhancing self-awareness and self-esteem (Swan-Foster, 1989). Amy K. Ponteri's study found that group art therapy improved the self-esteem and mother-child relationships of depressed mothers, although only a portion of the mothers translated these improvements into actual mother-child interactions (Ponteri, 2001). Karin Egberg Thyme and colleagues found that short-term art therapy and verbal therapy were equally effective in reducing depressive symptoms, and that art therapy helped patients establish new cognitive patterns through nonverbal means (Thyme et al., 2007). Catherine Moon emphasized that art therapy is not only a therapeutic method but also an ideological system,

highlighting its diversity and flexibility as unique advantages in promoting mental health (Moon, 2011).

Ann Futterman Collier's research showed that textile creation significantly improved women's mood and psychological well-being, helping them enhance their sense of well-being through emotional regulation and self-expression (Collier, 2011). Corrina Eastwood emphasized that art therapy provides a safe space for women with borderline personality disorder to express themselves, allowing them to explore and challenge repressed emotions through art-making, thus helping them manage interpersonal issues (Eastwood, 2012). Helene Burt argued that although art therapy is predominantly female-led, the lack of research on gender issues suggests that feminist qualitative research is better suited to reveal gender biases within art therapy (Burt, 2013). T. Wright and K. Wright discussed how feminist art therapy can intersect with social change by enhancing critical awareness and amplifying the voices of marginalized social groups (Wright & Wright, 2013).

From a feminist perspective, Susan Hogan proposed that art therapy helps women address gender discrimination and violence, offering pathways for healing trauma through artistic expression and thus enhancing self-identity and mental health (Hogan, 2013). These studies suggest that art therapy, as a treatment modality, can effectively promote mental health through emotional expression and emotion regulation. Especially among women, artistic creation, as a nonverbal method of self-exploration, offers opportunities for emotional release and self-repair. Whether through drawing, textile creation, or symbolic expression in art therapy, individuals can process emotional distress, enhance self-awareness, and boost self-esteem and social adaptability. At the same time, a feminist perspective injects more critical and social reflection into art therapy, making it increasingly important in addressing gender issues, cultural biases, and social inequality.

2.5.2 Chinese Gender-Perspectives in Art Therapy

In China, the development of feminist art therapy is still at a very preliminary stage, with extremely limited research and practice. Although painting-based art therapy has received increasing attention and promotion in recent years, research and application specifically targeting women remain noticeably insufficient. There are very

few studies in the existing literature that specifically address art therapy in relation to women, highlighting the need for more theoretical and practical attention in this field. Further development and research are of great significance in meeting the mental health needs of women and exploring art therapy methods tailored to them.

Painting therapy has shown significant effects in alleviating the emotional trauma of romantic breakups among women. By guiding individuals to express emotions and process feelings, it helps adjust psychological states. Research has shown that this therapy can effectively reduce emotional distress caused by breakups and enhance mental health (Zhang, 2016). In the treatment of anxiety disorders, animation as a medium of art therapy plays a significant role through the differential functions of the left and right brain. It has proven effective in emotional regulation and psychological suggestion, helping women discharge negative emotions and improve self-identity (Zhou et al., 2022). Healing-style illustrations, through elements such as color, composition, and visual texture, can effectively alleviate stress among working women. Studies have shown that color tones such as green, blue, and yellow, along with themes related to familial affection, help reduce psychological burden for women (Wei, 2020). Healing picture book design from a feminist perspective integrates the challenges faced by women with principles of emotional healing, offering emotional resonance and support, which aids in stress relief and promotes social awareness and understanding of women's issues (Han & Wang, 2023).

These studies demonstrate that various forms of art therapy—such as painting, animation, and illustration—are significantly effective in enhancing women's mental health, particularly in alleviating stress, anxiety, and emotional trauma. Through emotional expression and psychological regulation, art therapy not only improves women's emotional states but also promotes self-identity and enhances societal understanding of women's psychological issues. Different art forms provide effective emotional outlets for women and contribute valuable perspectives for increasing attention to women's mental health in society.

Summary

Although feminist art therapy in the West has developed relatively slowly, its therapeutic effectiveness and application potential are becoming increasingly evident.

Susan Hogan's research reveals that art therapy helps females explore the self and cope with gender-related stress. It goes beyond psychotherapy by incorporating anthropological and sociological perspectives, thereby advancing both the theory and practice of the field. In comparison, feminist art therapy in China is still in its early stages, with scarce related research and practice. While painting therapy is gradually gaining attention, studies specifically targeting female populations remain limited. Zhang Xinmu's case study demonstrates the notable therapeutic effect of painting therapy in alleviating females' breakup trauma; Zhou Xiaoyu and colleagues show the effectiveness of animation in reducing anxiety, aiding emotion regulation, and enhancing self-identity; and Wei Yuxi explores how healing illustration design helps relieve stress among professional females.

Overall, both international and domestic studies suggest that art therapy practices designed with attention to women's emotional needs and lived experiences have demonstrated considerable potential in promoting mental health, fostering emotional regulation, and enhancing self-identity.

2.6 Female and Flowers

Existing studies have focused on the clinical effectiveness of art therapy, but have ignored the cultural coding carried by its media symbols. This study introduces Barthes's three-level decoding model of semiotics, especially flowers, which are carriers of both biological attributes and cultural metaphors, to reveal how plant images become a hidden channel for patriarchal discipline of females.

Throughout history, flowers have been closely associated with females. In both Eastern and Western cultures, flowers have been constructed as metaphors for gender discipline. In Chinese literature, the "Book of Songs" links the value of marriage to females with the metaphor of "peach and plum" trees, while the tradition of foot-binding during the Qing dynasty, with the notion of "three-inch lotus feet," beautifies physical pain as "step by step, blooming lotus." In Western still life painting, the rose in a vase is a symbol of the fleeting nature of female youth, while the Victorian language of flowers encodes females' emotions into secretive symbols. These traditions naturalize the dependent nature of females, linking the life cycle of plants (germination, blooming, wilting) to gender roles, thus embedding flowers as cultural carriers of power and

discipline.

feminist, through artistic practices, subverts the disciplinary logic of flowers: Judy Chicago deconstructs the male gaze with floral totems, Georgia O'Keeffe uses giant flower petals to declare female desire, and Chinese artist Yu Hong reinterprets the beauty of imperfection with her "scorched peony," while Pan Yuliang breaks free from the constraints of fine brushwork. Such works transform flowers into media for self-empowerment—mandalas with concentric circles facilitate psychological integration, thorny roses stimulate resistance consciousness, and local flowers (like camellias) activate cultural memories. This "destruction-healing" duality provides a theoretical foundation for art therapy: by deconstructing the symbolic load, it reconstructs flowers as a visual language for stress relief and awakening female consciousness.

2.6.1 The Relationship Between Females and Flowers

Liu Yi's *Their Bodies Remember the History—Reviewing the Evolution of Foot-binding: The Rise and Fall of the Golden Lotus Worship* (Liu, 2011) reveals foot-binding as the ultimate symbol of patriarchal body discipline, with its rise and fall reflecting females' oppression and potential for resistance within traditional ethics. Zhong Gaoxiang's *A Study of Female Imagery of Flowers and Female Consciousness in Song Dynasty Ci Poems* (Zhong, 2010) highlights how females in the Song dynasty reconstructed gender discourse through flower imagery like plum, chrysanthemum, and begonia. Through strategies such as "self-pity" and "mourning spring," these flower images transformed into metaphors for females' independence and longing for freedom. Guo Huiying's *On the Female Consciousness in Li Qingzhao's Flower Poems* (Guo, 2007) uses Li Qingzhao as an example to analyze her self-declaration in her plum blossom poem "This flower is not comparable to others," and the emotional writing in *Drunken Flower Shade* with "I am thinner than the yellow flower," arguing that Song dynasty females used flowers to break free from objectifying gazes and, through aesthetic expression and self-reflection, established their subjectivity. These three works collectively reveal that, from bodily violence to literary empowerment, females in ancient China awakened from oppression through different paths, using symbolic imagery to deconstruct patriarchal order, thus providing a multi-dimensional paradigm for the study of female consciousness, from historical trauma to literary resistance.



Figure 10 Three-inch lotus feet shoes and the feet of females

Source :

https://mbd.baidu.com/newspage/data/dtlandingsuper?nid=dt_4390588477190559288

<https://www.douyin.com/note/7206322886213193016>

Xia Aijun "A Preliminary Evaluation of 'Guishu Master—The Culture of Talented females in the Jiangnan Region during the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties'" (Xia, 2005) reveals that Gao Yanyi, through "social gender analysis," reconstructs the culture of talented females in the Late Ming and Early Qing dynasties. Gao points out that the female teachers in Jiangnan Guishu, through literary associations and publishing practices, transformed "feminine virtue" into cultural capital and carved out a space for female subjectivity within the gaps of Confucian ethics, overturning the passive narrative of the "feudal oppression" paradigm.

Gao Wendan "The Beautiful Poppy Flower—On the Expression of Female Consciousness in Zhang Kangkang's Essay Collection 'Softness and Toughness'" (Gao, 2005) analyzes how Zhang Kangkang reconstructs female consciousness through "toughness." She deconstructs the male-dominated discipline of "softness" (such as the juxtaposition of Zong Pu's graceful "wild orchid" with Xu Fengxiang's ecological persistence), and uses the "poppy flower" as a metaphor for the tension between historical trauma and self-awareness, advocating for a "root system" approach to reconstructing inclusive gender discourse.

Hou Sai "Color Pens Bring Flowers—A Study of Contemporary Female Oil Painting on Floral Themes" (Hou, 2013) focuses on the art field, pointing out that

contemporary female oil painters, by deconstructing traditional floral symbols (such as Cai Jin's decaying Canna and Chen Lingyang's juxtaposition of menstruation), transform natural imagery into emotional reflections that challenge the male gaze. They achieve a visual revolution using techniques such as color variation and texture reorganization, transitioning from being "objects of observation" to "subjects of life."

These three works collectively reveal that Chinese females, through different media, have broken through the patriarchal cultural framework—from historical writing to literary creation to visual arts—reconstructing the gender symbolism of flowers. They either serve as vehicles for ethical breakthroughs, as root systems for consciousness awakening, or as translations of bodily experiences, highlighting the multidimensional paths through which females move in cultural negotiation—from "survival in the gaps" to "subjective construction."

Table 2 Comparison of Symbolic Associations between Flowers and Females in Western and Eastern Cultures

Association Dimensions	Chinese System	Western System	Common Drivers
Biological Metaphor	Short Blooming Period → The fleeting youth of females ("Dream of the Red Chamber" "Once spring ends, beauty fades")	Flower Structure → Female reproductive worship (O'Keeffe's floral paintings as organ symbolism)	Embodied perception of the life cycle: Using the plant reproduction cycle to map females' reproductive value
Power Discipline	Bound Feet referred to as "Golden Lotus" → Deformed aesthetics of the lotus flower	Rose Thorns Pruned → Victorian-era flower domestication and females' behavior	The ruling class constructs gender order through controlling natural forms

Association Dimensions	Chinese System	Western System	Common Drivers
	symbol ("Cai Fei Lu" documents Qing and Ming Lotus Culture)	norms ("Language of Flowers Dictionary" 1860)	
Spatial Politics	Inner Chambers and Vase Offerings → Disciplined female spaces ("Chang Wu Zhi" records Ming Dynasty flower arrangement techniques and females' virtue education)	Home Gardens → Middle-class females' radius of activity ("Flora's Empire" discussing the gendered space of colonial gardens)	Binding females to specific naturalized domains
Religious Symbolism	Jade Pool and Peaches → Immortality symbol of the Queen Mother of the West ("Records of the Inner Court of Emperor Wu of Han")	Lily → Symbol of the Virgin Mary's purity (Medieval manuscript "Hortus Deliciarum")	Sanctification of females requires the use of plant symbols

2.6.2 Gender-perspective and Flowers

Wu Lai'an's *females and the World of Flowers* (Wu, 2005) reveals the duality of flowers as gender symbols: they carry both the male gaze's objectification of females' "beauty and sex" (such as the "red poppy" symbolizing sexual characteristics) and

become mediums for female artists to reconstruct subjectivity. For example, Cai Xiaoli's "Blue Iris" uses Eastern subtlety to resist the gaze, while Georgia O'Keeffe's "Canna Lily" challenges tradition with Western boldness, reflecting the cultural struggle between "chains and keys." Liu Jian's "The Gender Symbolism of females: Interpreting the Symbolic Significance of Flowers in Female Painting Art" (Liu, 2009) further points out that Judy Chicago's "The Back of the Fruit Peel" elevates the flower shape into a declaration of female reproduction, using radial petals to symbolize the awakening of subjectivity. This both subverts male visual hegemony and falls into the paradox of "being viewed," highlighting flowers as dual carriers of power and liberation. Shi Xiaoxia's "From a Feminist Perspective on 'Jasmine Blossoms'" (Shi, 2009) traces the fate of three generations of females, from the starry dreams of Mo in the 1930s (subject vacuum), to Li's ethical encirclement in the 1950s (nascent awakening), to the independent transformation of Hua in the 1980s (self-consistent subject), mapping the triple progression of female consciousness from dependence to self-determination. This echoes the symbolic transformation of "flowers" in the studies of Wu and Liu. These three studies collectively indicate that, whether in artistic flower metaphors (Wu, Liu) or narrative generational breakthroughs (Shi), females achieve gender awakening through deconstructing traditional flower imagery—either by using its delicate beauty to subvert rigid male dominance, or by using its life cycle to metaphorically reflect on self-examination—realizing a shift from "being disciplined" to "self-construction" in cultural symbols and social realities, highlighting the trajectory of female empowerment written jointly by artistic practice and historical processes.

Sun Xin's "Analysis of the Flower Images of Feminist Artists" (Sun, 2007) focuses on the dual metaphors of flowers in contemporary art: Chen Lingyang's "December Flowers" juxtaposes the menstrual cycle with the blooming and fading of flowers, provocatively deconstructing physiological taboos; Cai Jin's "Canna Lily" translates historical trauma through decaying textures, while Sun Guojuan's "Combined Flowers" conveys the pain of life through broken flowers and leaves. All three use symbolism and juxtaposition to break through the traditional material logic of still life painting, reconfiguring plant forms as visual declarations of females' bodily experiences. Chen Jie's "females, Flowers, and feminist: The Iconographic Meaning of Flowers in Feminist Art" (Chen, 2005) further reveals the differential strategies of

Eastern and Western art: Western artists, like Judy Chicago in "The Dinner Party", use ceramic flowers to symbolize female genitalia, and Georgia O'Keeffe's "Black Iris" subverts the male gaze with enlarged close-ups; Chinese artists like Cai Jin's "Canna Lily" and Chen Lingyang's "December Flowers" begin with intimate emotions, transforming flowers into "self-narrating" symbols against patriarchal discourse. Zhao Wenxiu's "A Brief Analysis of Feminist Art in O'Keeffe and Judy Chicago's Paintings" (Zhao, 2018) compares Eastern and Western paths: O'Keeffe uses soft lines to reconstruct natural imagery (such as reproductive allusions in "Black Iris"), Chicago uses embroidered floral motifs in "The Dinner Party" to overturn patriarchal aesthetics, while Chinese artists like Cai Jin's blood-colored "Canna Lily" and Shen Ling's direct expression of sexual themes in the 1990s highlight a native "introspective" characteristic. Together, these three works demonstrate that flowers, as a cross-cultural symbol, are both deconstructed in feminist art as the "chains" of traditional discipline (such as the objectification of "beautifying oneself for others") and reconstructed as the "key" to bodily empowerment. Through the publicization of intimate experiences (menstruation, trauma) and the subjectification of natural imagery (reproductive metaphors, texture variations), flowers establish the artistic discourse power of "self-definition," rewriting the gender power order in a visual revolution.





Figure 11 Cai Jin's "Canna Lily 174"

Source: <https://toutiao.sctx.com/toutiao/details-13292.html>

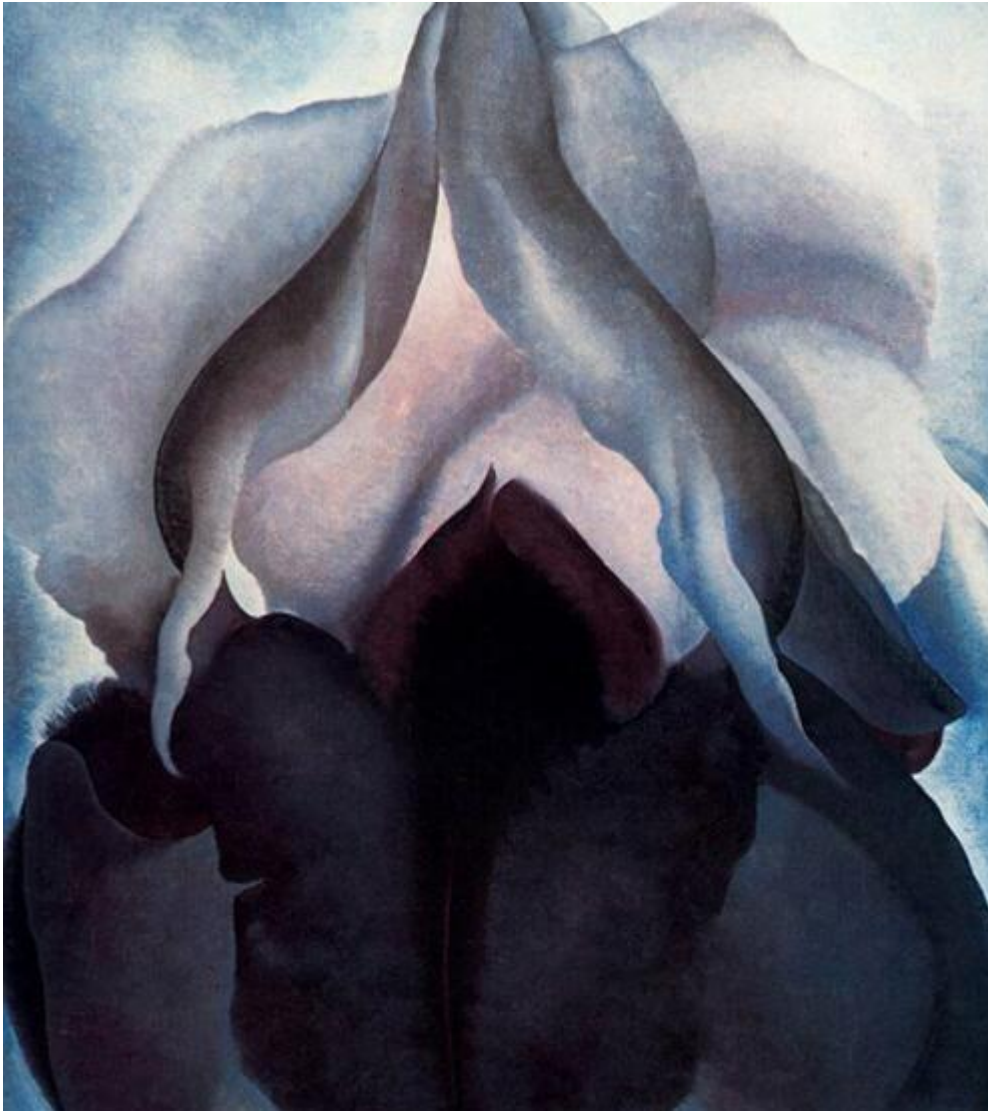


Figure 12 O'Keeffe's "Black Iris"

Source: <https://news.arttron.net/20160307/n820299.html>



Figure 13 Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party"

Source: https://mbd.baidu.com/newspage/data/dtlandingsuper?nid=dt_4587234366918068259&sourceFrom=search_a

Du Mengchu, in "A Study of Flower Symbols in Chinese Female Painting" (Du, 2020), systematically examines the transformation trajectory and cultural metaphors of flower symbols in the history of Chinese female art. The study reveals that in traditional contexts, flowers are often reduced to symbols of femininity characterized by fragility and transience, reflecting females' dependency on male aesthetics. However, with the awakening of feminist thought, contemporary artists have transformed flowers into symbols of subjectivity with life force through exaggerated deformation and texture reconstruction. These artworks not only reflect the bodily metaphors of females' private experiences but also contain a rebellion against traditional gender orders. The study cites Susan Langer's theory of "forms of life," analyzing the organic unity, rhythmic movement, and growth characteristics of flower art symbols. It argues that flowers, as emotional carriers, achieve a transformation from mere representation of objects to declarations of consciousness, reflecting the profound awareness change in Chinese

females from being identity dependents to becoming self-conscious subjects.

Andrea Frownfelter's "Flower Symbolism as Female Sexual Metaphor" (Andrea, 2010) and Kelly McLeod's "From Feminized Flora to Floral feminist: Gender Representation and Botany" (Kelly, 2015) both reveal the dual narrative trajectory of flowers as gender political symbols. Frownfelter, through a cross-cultural analysis of art history, points out the womb metaphor of the Egyptian lotus, the Padmi archetype in the Indian "Kama Sutra", and the feminized representation of Flora in Botticelli's "Spring", constructing flowers as a system of codes that discipline the female body. Her watercolor series uses the metaphor of sewn roses to symbolize sexual violence and trauma, alongside Judy Chicago's ceramic reproductive totems in "The Dinner Party" and Frida Kahlo's "The Flower of Life", showing how feminist art transforms the silent sexual organs into visual strategies of resistance. McLeod focuses on the systematic oppression of botany, noting that Linnaeus's classification system during the Enlightenment erased local knowledge through Latin naming, sexualized the structure of male and female reproductive parts, and excluded females from scientific authority. Meanwhile, Rousseau and Hegel reinforced passive metaphors through their philosophy of "planting" females. Mary Wollstonecraft criticized the objectifying logic of "females as flowers," launching the works of Mary Delany's botanical collages and contemporary artists Fiona Strickland's decaying flowers and Rosie Saunders' oversized petals. Through marginal media, these artists reconstruct plant subjectivity and decolonize aesthetics, dismantling the dual exploitation of nature and females by capitalism. Both studies jointly argue that flowers are not only carriers of patriarchal encoding and discipline but also cross-disciplinary battlefields where females regain subjectivity through narratives of trauma (Frownfelter) and depersonalized individual expression (McLeod).

Table 3 Western Feminist Artists' Floral Works

Artists	Representative Works	Content and Form	feminist Implications
Georgia O'Keeffe	Black Iris (1926)	Large-scale floral paintings with petal textures resembling female genitalia	Challenging the male gaze by elevating flowers from object to subject, establishing a visual grammar of female bodily autonomy
Judy Chicago	The Dinner Party (1974–1979)	Thirty-nine ceramic plates shaped like flowers symbolizing historically marginalized females	Deconstructing the traditional role of flowers as mere decoration and reconstructing them as monuments to females' history
Frida Kahlo	The Two Fridas (1939)	Self-portrait with vines growing from the heart, connecting dual visual selves	Using plant root systems to metaphorically express the vitality born of female trauma, breaking through the pathologization of bodily incompleteness
Yayoi Kusama	Pumpkin Flower (2017)	Infinity mirror room with	Employing the self-erasure of floral forms

Artists	Representative Works	Content and Form	feminist Implications
		proliferating polka-dotted floral installations	to resist societal expectations that fixate on females' identities
Tracey Emin	Rose Thorn (2018)	Neon rose entwined with barbed wire, accompanied by handwritten love letters	Deconstructing romanticized floral imagery to reveal the dynamics of power and harm within intimate relationships

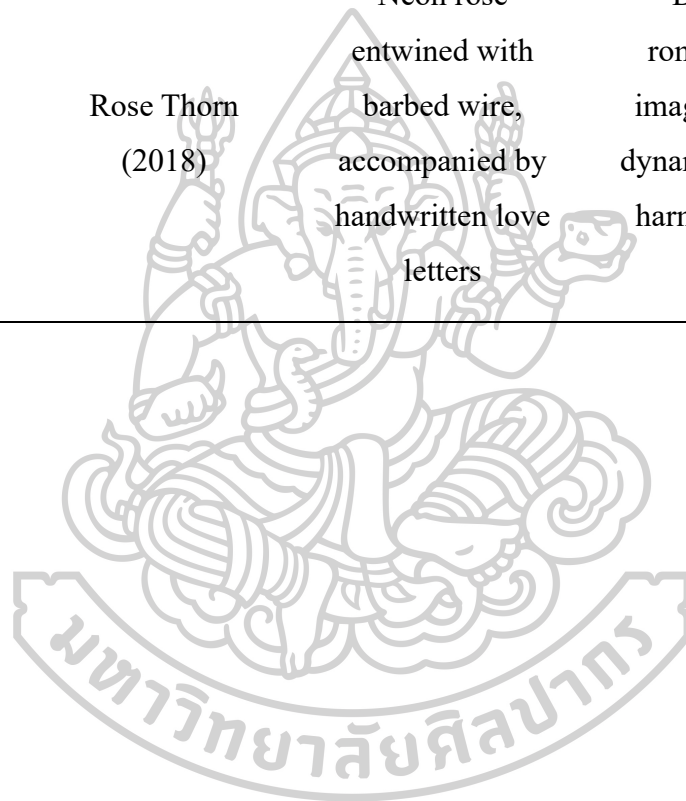


Table 4 Chinese Feminist Artists' Floral Works

Artists	Representative Works	Content and Form	feminist Implications
Cai Jin	Banana Lily series (1991–present)	The decaying and deformed banana lily, painted with blood-red oil paint and layered techniques.	Drawing a parallel between the decay process of plants and females' menstruation, challenging the aesthetic discipline of traditional floral art.
Pan Yuliang	Wild Chrysanthemum (1932)	Rough brushstrokes depict wild chrysanthemums, breaking away from traditional meticulous flower painting styles.	Using wild plants to resist the refined aesthetics of the scholar's brush, establishing the artist's female perspective.
Lin Tianmiao	Braid (2000)	Gigantic flower stems wrapped in silk, entwined with a woman's braided hair.	Revealing the dual nature of the female body—both disciplined and self-liberated—through the growth process of plants.
Cao Yu	Venus (2020)	Temporary tattoos created on the surface of the female body with rose thorns.	Reconstructing the "flower-like delicate" body politics through the experience of pain.
Wen Qiu (Ming Dynasty)	Floral Album (1630)	Meticulous flower paintings by female artists, incorporating numerous medicinal plants.	Opening up a space for the writing of female plant knowledge within the male-dominated tradition of scholar-painting.

Contemporary feminist attempts to break through by deconstructing the arbitrariness of signs and reconstructing their interpretants. Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity is rendered tangible in artistic practices—for instance, Chen Lingyang's "Twelve Flower Months" juxtaposes the menstrual cycle with the blooming and withering of flowers, employing symbolic repetition and difference to dismantle biological determinism; Cai Jin's "Canna" series uses decaying textures as "qualisigns" in Peircean terms, creating sensory impact that transforms trauma into a resistant signifier. Umberto Eco's open semiotics is exemplified in these practices: female creators activate infinite semiosis through cross-media sign matrices (literary self-reference / visual juxtaposition / corporeal narrative), allowing floral symbols to rupture from monolithic signifiers (e.g., "delicacy") into polysemic symbolic clusters—serving both as vessels of personal memory repair and as political texts that challenge symbolic violence. Such symbolic reconfiguration affirms the transformative potential of art as a form of "social symbolic action."

2.6.3 Semiotics and Flowers

Roland Barthes's semiotic theory system (Barthes, 1999) is centered on revealing the ideological operating mechanism behind cultural symbols. Its most paradigmatic contribution lies in the construction of the "extension-connotation" two-level symbol system model: the first-level extension refers to the explicit correspondence between the signifier (form) and the signified (concept), and the second-level connotation is to transform the first-level symbol as a whole into a new signifier, pointing to the hidden value system given by social culture. This double signification process reveals how everyday symbols construct "myths" through naturalization strategies - that is, cultural concepts disguised as eternal truths in a specific historical context.

Barthes particularly emphasizes the "arbitrary" nature of symbols, believing that the connection between signifiers and signifieds does not exist naturally, but is the product of social conventions. He extended Saussure's linguistic semiotics to the field of cultural analysis, proposed the concept of "zero degree of writing", and advocated peeling off the ideological sedimentary layer attached to cultural symbols by deconstructing the combination relationship (horizontal combination axis) and aggregation relationship (vertical aggregation axis) of symbols. This analytical method

provides a key tool for decoding gender metaphors in visual culture, especially in the study of symbolic systems such as flowers that have both natural attributes and cultural codes, and can effectively separate the dual signifying networks of biological characteristics and social symbols.

Xin Yanjun, in "A Study on the Symbolism of "Flower" Imagery in Tang and Song Ci Poetry" (Xin, 2006), analyzes the emotional and formal unity of flower imagery in Tang and Song ci poetry through semiotic theory, revealing the deep cultural significance of flowers as symbols. The author points out that poets of the Tang and Song dynasties used the color, fragrance, and form of flowers such as apricot blossoms, peach blossoms, pear blossoms, and chrysanthemums to imbue them with specific emotional signifieds: for instance, apricot blossoms symbolize delicate beauties (as in Liu Yong's "Man Chao Huan"), pear blossoms with raindrops evoke feminine sorrow (appropriated by Bai Juyi), chrysanthemums convey autumnal melancholy (Li Qingzhao's "Sheng Sheng Man"), and plum blossoms symbolize noble character. Reference Barthes's "Signifier-Signified" theory and Susanne Langer's theory of artistic symbolism, emphasizing that flower imagery is an "emotion-saturated symbol," simultaneously bearing the poet's personal sentiments (e.g., Li Yu's lament over life's impermanence in "flowing water and falling flowers") and traditional cultural metaphors (e.g., the "Book of Songs" uses peach blossoms to symbolize marriage). Thus, flowers transcend natural objects and become core symbols in Tang and Song ci for constructing emotional space, reflecting female fate and scholar-officials' existential experiences, and illustrating an aesthetic realm of "empathic interconnection between human and nature."

Zhang Ruirui, in "An Analysis of the Symbolic Characteristics of Female Imagery in Contemporary Art" (Zhang, 2013), employs semiotic theory to systematically deconstruct the semantic reconstruction and power dynamics of female imagery in contemporary art. The study notes a shift from the classical paradigm of "ideal beauty" (such as Winckelmann's praise for "noble simplicity") to a multiply coded symbolic system in the contemporary era: Judy Chicago's "The Dinner Party" uses ceramic floral forms to metaphorize female genitalia and challenge patriarchal aesthetic hegemony; Jeff Koons' "Made in Heaven" series with Ilona Staller commodifies sexual imagery, exposing consumerism's objectification of the female

body; Murakami Takashi's "superflat" style anime girls (e.g., "Hiropon") deploy moe (cuteness) symbols to reveal the interplay of *mono no aware* and desire in East Asian gender culture. Zhang reveals that contemporary female symbols possess both resistance and compromise—claiming discursive power through body politics (e.g., Renee Cox's "The Last Supper", where a naked Black Christ figure confronts religious and racial norms), yet becoming mired in "symbol inflation" through commercial appropriation (e.g., Andy Warhol's repetitive Campbell's Soup Cans). The study ultimately points to a symbolic dilemma in contemporary art: the media-driven proliferation of symbols contradicts the essential uniqueness demanded by art, with female imagery caught in the core of this paradoxical tension.

Wu Xinlin, in "A Semiotic Interpretation of Flower-and-Bird Painting in the Tang Dynasty" (Wu, 2014), analyzes the dual attributes of Tang dynasty flower-and-bird painting from a semiotic perspective: as "textual symbols," flower-and-bird motifs refer to thematic combinations (such as flora and fauna in decorative screens); as "pictorial symbols," their carriers are diverse, encompassing both two-dimensional forms (screens, murals) and three-dimensional media (textiles, objects), reflecting the Tang conception of painting as serving didactic and social functions—"to promote morality and assist in human relations." Drawing on archaeological and literary sources, Wu notes that Tang flower-and-bird paintings used metaphorical techniques to imbue symbolic meanings: personification of objects (e.g., Li Bai and Du Fu's use of cranes to symbolize reclusive scholars), and conveying emotions through objects, thus transcending naturalistic depiction and embedding humanistic values. The study reveals that although "flower and bird" painting had not yet become an independent genre in the Tang period, its symbolic expressions laid the foundation for the later codified meanings in Song dynasty flower-and-bird painting (e.g., themes of wealth and leisure in "Xuanhe Huapu"), highlighting the symbiotic relationship between artistic media and metaphorical function.



Figure 14 Tang Bohu, "Painting of a Chicken", Ming Dynasty
Source:

<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1764879328762570467&wfr=spider&for=pc>

Summary

In the symbolic construction of flowers as metaphors for gendered power, Barthes's dyadic model of the "signifier" and the "signified" and "denotation" and "connotation" reveals its operative logic: natural flowers (the "signifier") are encoded into cultural signifieds such as "peach" and "golden lotus" (e.g., the peach blossom in "The Book of Songs" as a metaphor for marriage), and through Roland Barthes' mechanism of "mythologization", patriarchal norms are naturalized into collective unconsciousness. Charles Sanders Peirce's triadic model of signs further highlights the dynamic nature of symbols: as "symbols", flowers have interpretants that are constantly shaped by dominant discourses. For example, the "ephemerality" of vase flowers in Western still-life painting functions as a disciplinary strategy of the male gaze. This regulatory function of symbols forcibly aligns the plant life cycle with female bodily experience, thereby constructing a fixed chain of gendered signifiers.

Through Barthes's three-stage model, this study established a critical path from "deconstructing naturalized cognition" to "reconstructing symbolic subjectivity". The extension layer strips away the sensory violence of symbols, the connotation layer reveals the coding mechanism of culture, the symbol layer disenchants ideological myths, and finally realizes the open regeneration of symbolic meaning at the reconstruction layer. This framework not only deepens the gender critical dimension of semiotics, but also elevates artistic intervention from individual healing to the practical level of cultural resistance, providing a trinity of methodological tools for feminist research: "decoding - resistance - reconstruction".

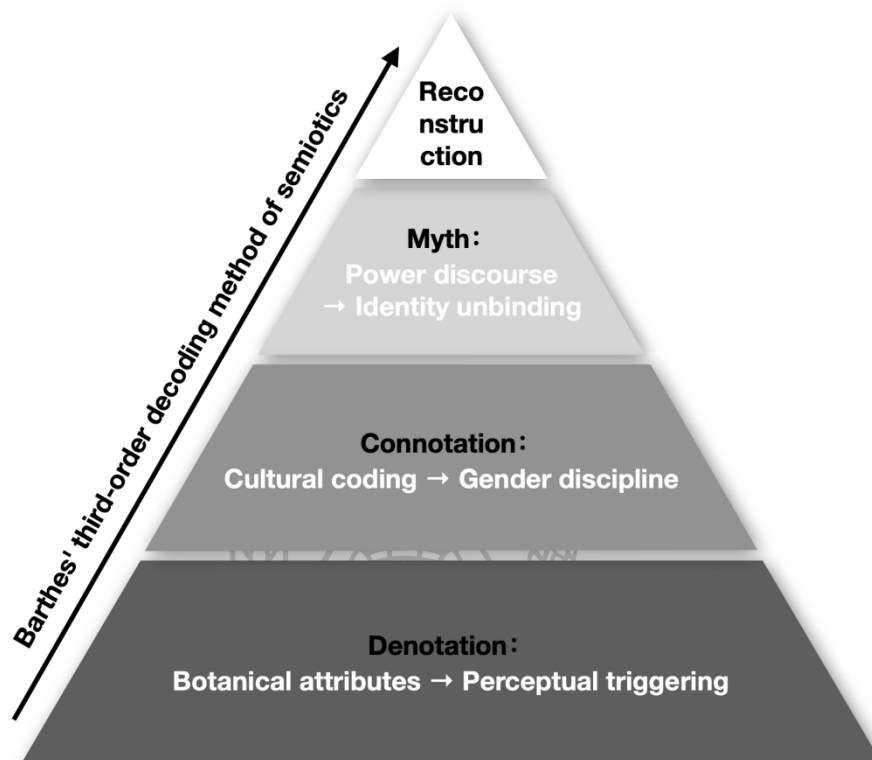


Figure 15 Barthes' third-order decoding method of semiotics
Source: Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Denotation: Sensory deconstruction of natural attributes

The denotational meaning of flowers as visual symbols is rooted in the objective expression of their botanical attributes - the shape of petals, the saturation of colors, and the growth trajectory of branches. These physical characteristics are simplified into sensory labels of "softness" and "fragility" in traditional cognition, becoming a natural tool for disciplining femininity. This study, by stripping away the biological appearance of flower symbols, reveals how they disintegrate the sensory inertia of "femininity = smoothness and roundness" through the complexity of lines (such as sharp thorns, broken stems and veins) and the contradiction of colors (the juxtaposition of cold base and warm mutations), and transform natural attributes into a carrier of confrontational perception.

Connotation: Power criticism of cultural metaphors

The connotation of flowers carries a heavy history of gender coding. From the "Book of Songs" using "peach and plum" to metaphorize marriage ethics, to

consumerism symbolizing roses as medals of sacrifice for motherhood, the metaphorical system of flowers has always served the institutionalized definition of female identity by patriarchy. This study exposes the violence of cultural coding by deconstructing the symbolic isomorphism chain of the "flower-woman" metaphor: for example, the "blooming" of flowers is replaced by the countdown of females' marriage and childbearing value, while "withering" becomes a rhetoric of moral panic. This criticism does not deny the aesthetic value of flowers, but strips off the imposed disciplinary narrative, so that the symbol returns from "cultural shackles" to "neutral carriers".

Symbolic layer (Myth): Disenchantment of ideological myths

The symbolic system of "females are like flowers" sublimates physiological characteristics into moral obligations, and through discourses such as "natural beauty" and "inner fragrance", it imprisons females in the status of objects to be viewed and evaluated. The "myth" referred to by Barthes is manifested here as a dehistoricized ideological manipulation - the life cycle of flowers is simplified into a single narrative of "blooming is the peak", covering up more complex life forces such as root spreading and seed regeneration. This study dismantles the capitalist-patriarchal conspiracy myth of "eternal youth" by reconstructing the spatiotemporal dimensions of flower symbols (such as emphasizing the propagation of seeds and the networking of roots), revealing how it narrows the value of females to consumer goods of appearance and fertility.

Reconstruction layer: Regeneration of symbolic autonomy

Based on the third-order critique, this study ultimately points to the regenerative reconstruction of symbolic meaning. Flowers are no longer static symbols of discipline, but are transformed into a projection interface of female subject consciousness - the cracks in the petals become a mark of resistance to discipline, the overlapping of colors metaphorically represents the coexistence of multiple identities, and the growth direction of the branches symbolizes the self-empowerment of the individual life trajectory. This reconstruction does not establish a new symbolic hegemony, but opens up the right to interpret symbols, transforming flowers from "defined objects" to "medium of self-writing", while breaking the ideological closed loop, providing females with a symbolic practice space that transcends traditional gender narratives.

2.7 Case study

In my case study, I have selected two of the most representative feminist art therapists in contemporary practice: Susan and Zhang Yanzi. Susan is a pioneer in the field of feminist art therapy, helping females understand and address issues related to gender identity and social roles, particularly focusing on marginalized groups such as pregnant females and criminals. She emphasizes group therapy to eliminate isolation. Her research methods and practices have provided significant theoretical guidance for my own work. Zhang Yanzi, on the other hand, uses her artwork to express inner struggles, evoking resonance from the viewers and facilitating spiritual healing. While she is not a professional therapist, her work has provided rich creative inspiration for my research, showcasing the diversity of art therapy in different cultural contexts. I chose these two artists for my case study because their work aligns closely with my research, offering valuable theoretical and practical insights.

2.7.1 Susan Hogan

In her numerous publications, Susan Hogan applies various feminist methods in art therapy and discusses in detail how these methods help females understand and challenge gender inequality. The specific methods and content are as follows:



Figure 16 Susan Hogan

Source: <https://www.routledge.com/authors/i14029-susan-hogan>

2.7.1.1 Emphasis on the Impact of Social and Cultural Context on females' Lives.

Susan Hogan emphasizes that traditional art therapy methods often overlook the profound impact of social and cultural contexts on females' lives. She points out that females' mental health is inextricably linked to their social environment. Hogan believes that, in the therapeutic process, it is essential to consider females' status and roles in society, as well as the various challenges and pressures they face in their daily lives.

2.7.1.2 Questioning the Universal Application of Traditional Psychological Theories.

Hogan challenges the widespread application of traditional psychological theories in art therapy. She argues that these theories typically neglect the impact of social factors such as gender, race, and class on individuals. Traditional methods often attribute problems to the individual, without considering how social structures and cultural contexts influence an individual's psychological state. Hogan calls for the introduction of social and cultural factors in art therapy, urging a reevaluation of the applicability of these traditional theories.

2.7.1.3 Adopting an Empowerment Perspective.

Hogan adopts an empowerment perspective in art therapy, encouraging females to express their experiences and emotions through artistic creation. She believes that art therapy is not only a process of emotional release but also a process of empowering females. Through art, females can re-recognize themselves, discover their potential, and enhance their self-confidence and sense of self-worth.



Figure 17 Susan Hogan's therapeutic work
Source: Gender issue in art therapy, chapter 3-4

2.7.1.4 Focusing on Female-Specific Experiences such as Pregnancy and Childbirth.

In her research, Hogan specifically focuses on the psychological state of females during pregnancy and childbirth. She notes that these experiences have a profound impact on females' mental health, yet are often overlooked by traditional therapeutic methods. Through art therapy, females can better understand and accept these experiences, alleviating the anxiety and stress associated with them.

2.7.1.5 Introducing the Social Construction of Gender Differences.

Hogan argues that gender differences are a result of social construction rather than biological necessity. Society, through culture, education, and the media, shapes gender roles and influences females' self-perception and behavior. She emphasizes that art therapy helps females reflect on these social constructions and use art to seek self-identity and independence. In specific cases, Hogan organizes empowerment workshops that provide a safe space for females to express emotions and experiences through painting and sculpture. She also uses art to help pregnant females and new mothers address the anxiety associated with pregnancy and childbirth, strengthening their maternal identity. Additionally, she guides females in using art to showcase the impact of social structures on their lives and psychological states, such as gender roles

in family, work, and society.

By introducing a feminist perspective, Hogan elevates art therapy to a new level, emphasizing the impact of social and cultural contexts on females' mental health. She applies an empowerment perspective in therapy, focusing on females' unique experiences. Her empowerment workshops, artistic expression related to pregnancy and childbirth, and reflections on social structures help females enhance their sense of self-identity and self-worth. Her work not only enriches the theory of art therapy but also provides valuable guidance for practice.

2.7.2 Zhang Yanzi

Artist Zhang Yanzi, an internationally renowned Chinese artist, has had a career spanning over thirty years, starting in the field of traditional ink art and increasingly exploring experimental forms of artistic expression in recent years. In China, which boasts thousands of years of cultural tradition and history, ink painting is the most traditional and core artistic language. It has been the mainstream method for ancient Chinese scholars and artists to depict the world and express their inner selves. For many years, Zhang Yanzi has been dedicated to exploring the contemporary transformation of this traditional artistic language and has established a research direction in the intersection of "medicine and art," integrating topics from traditional Chinese philosophy, Chinese medicine, Western medicine, psychology, and other fields. Her works have gained widespread recognition in society and among the public. Her unique approach in creation lies in using a highly recognizable ink language to expand the expressive boundaries of ink art, exploring the integration and use of various new materials, and incorporating the sensitivity and talent unique to females in the conceptual expression of her work. Her works are collected by famous art institutions and museums around the world. She is one of China's most representative ink artists and a leading female artist. Her creative work has always centered around the theme of "healing," constantly exploring unique modes of personal expression between art and therapy, particularly in relation to the questioning of life and existence.

Zhang Yanzi has, over the years, explored the state of individual and collective existence from the perspective of psychiatry, achieving a coherent and unified awakening at visual, theoretical, psychological, and bodily levels. Each of her exhibitions provides a profound experiential and cognitive journey related to "trauma and facing trauma."



Figure 18 Zhang Yanzi

Source: http://art.china.cn/zixun/2019-03/25/content_40697657.htm

Zhang Yanzi combines art and therapy through various methods. Below are the main methods she employs in her creative process:

2.7.2.1. Use of Medical Materials and Symbols.

"Pain Relief Plaster" Series:

Method: Uses actual pain relief plasters as the primary material for art creation.

Point of Connection: The pain relief plaster, a medical item directly related to bodily pain, is applied in the artwork to make the viewer associate with both physical pain and psychological trauma. This direct choice of material imbues the work with strong symbolic meaning, emphasizing both the physical and psychological healing process.



Figure 19 One of the series of "Pain Relief Patch"
 Source: <http://www.hiart.cn/news/detail/9d0ktvm.html>

2.7.2.2. Integration with Traditional Medical Culture.

"Ancient Prescription" Series:

Method: Uses traditional Chinese medicinal materials (such as herbs, pills, etc.) as the medium for artistic creation.

Point of Connection: Traditional Chinese medicinal materials symbolize ancient healing wisdom. By showcasing these materials in her art, Zhang Yanzi not only gives them a new visual aesthetic but also conveys respect for traditional medical practices while reflecting on modern medical technology. This integration prompts viewers to reconsider the value of traditional medical culture and its role in modern society.

2.7.2.3. Reflection on Modern Medical Technology.

"Hollow Pills" Series:

Method: Uses empty pharmaceutical blister packaging as the medium for creation.

Point of Connection: These materials symbolize the emptiness and hollowness of modern medical technology. Through these works, Zhang Yanzi leads viewers to reflect on the relationship between the advances in modern medical technology and human emotions. This method turns the artwork into a medium for reflection and critique of modern medical technology, further emphasizing the importance of psychological and emotional healing.

2.7.2.4. Integration of Visual and Psychological Therapy.

Method: In the creative process, Zhang Yanzi focuses on the psychological impact of visual effects on viewers. By employing elements such as color, composition, and texture, she achieves a therapeutic visual experience.

Point of Connection: For example, in the "Pain Relief Plaster" series, gentle tones and organic shapes are used to convey a soothing and healing effect. This visual design is aimed at providing the viewer with psychological comfort and healing while experiencing the aesthetic quality of the work.

2.7.2.5. Artistic Expression and Emotional Release.

Method: By guiding viewers to participate in the creative process, Zhang Yanzi encourages them to express and release their inner emotions and stress through art.

Point of Connection: Zhang Yanzi's works are not merely objects for viewing; they are interactive experiences. In her exhibitions, she often includes interactive elements, encouraging viewers to express their emotions through creation, thereby achieving therapeutic effects.

2.7.2.6. Theme Selection and Social Reflection.

Method: She selects themes related to life, suffering, and redemption for her creative works.

Point of Connection: These themes inherently possess strong emotional and psychological resonance. Through the presentation of her artworks, viewers can emotionally connect with the pieces, which then stimulate reflection on their own experiences and psychological states, contributing to a therapeutic process.

2.7.2.7. Combining Narrative and Symbolism.

Method: Integrates narrative elements and symbolic imagery into her works, prompting viewers to reflect on themselves during the process of interpreting the pieces.

Point of Connection: In Zhang Yanzi's work, recurring symbols—such as pain relief plasters, traditional medicinal materials, and empty pharmaceutical blisters—carry not only surface-level meanings but also deeper psychological and emotional

metaphors. This symbolic mode of expression invites viewers to engage in self-reflection and psychological healing as they interpret the artwork.

Zhang Yanzi effectively integrates art and therapy by selecting medically related materials, bridging traditional and contemporary medical cultures, emphasizing the fusion of visual and psychological experiences, encouraging audience participation, choosing themes with profound social and emotional resonance, and employing narrative and symbolic techniques. Her works are not merely visual presentations but also processes of spiritual healing, enabling viewers to achieve psychological restoration and emotional release through aesthetic experience.

Although Zhang Yanzi has never explicitly identified herself as a healing artist, her works are frequently interpreted as possessing therapeutic qualities—perhaps a reflection of the public's expectations of her art. From the artist's perspective, trauma may be treated or forgotten, but it never truly disappears. As metaphorically illustrated in her series "Hyperplasia", the healed wound is often merely concealed or reconfigured, and its residue continues to ripple through our existence.

Zhang Yanzi's works, rather than offering literal "healing," provide what might be better described as "spiritual consolation." This form of comfort operates on a cognitive level—distinct from objective, truth-seeking knowledge. It cloaks the metaphysical core in a tangible exterior, re-examining the place of pain caused by trauma within broader structures such as nature, community, and language. In doing so, it offers a pathway of solace to those who have yet to find relief.



Figure 20 One piece from the “Hyperplasia” series

Source:

https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s?biz=MjM5MzU2MzExNQ==&mid=2652569412&idx=1&sn=4817c5dd264409270f156909a0877bcf&chksm=bd7b77c08a0cfed62e5305da29ece644316dce85a301b61c3b48d9e236fae7c5c5f89f8a5680&scene=27&poc_token=HD-9UmejhYc2EitJXSIMFT_akVxfBHsnWKKZHdva

Summary

In my case study, I selected two representative feminist art therapists: "Susan Hogan" and "Zhang Yanzi". Susan Hogan is a pioneer in feminist art therapy, emphasizing the impact of social, political, and economic oppression on females, with particular attention to marginalized groups such as pregnant females and incarcerated individuals. She utilizes group therapy to alleviate females' sense of isolation and encourages them to express emotions and experiences through art-making. Hogan's empowerment-oriented approach challenges traditional psychological theories and underscores the importance of sociocultural contexts in females' lives, offering critical theoretical guidance—especially in addressing uniquely female experiences such as pregnancy and childbirth.

Zhang Yanzi, by contrast, achieves spiritual healing through her distinctive artistic practice, which reveals inner struggles and invites empathetic engagement. Her work integrates medical materials and elements of traditional Chinese medicine—as seen in the Pain Relief Patch and Ancient Prescription series—emphasizing the therapeutic interplay between visual art and psychological healing. Though not a professional therapist, her creations demonstrate the cultural diversity and potential of art therapy across contexts, providing rich creative inspiration for my research.

The contributions of both artists have not only deepened my understanding of feminist art therapy but also provided theoretical support and practical insight for designing therapeutic approaches to alleviate stress among females.

2.8 Focus Group

To further validate and refine my research design, and to ensure that the art therapy activities effectively help females alleviate stress, I decided to invite a focus group composed of three nationally certified psychological counselors based in Kunming. By engaging in discussions with these experienced professionals, I aim to obtain expert feedback and suggestions—particularly regarding the implementation strategies of art therapy, selection of tools, activity design, and the application of a feminist perspective. The focus group discussions will not only help me understand the experts' evaluations of my research plan, but also provide valuable theoretical foundations and practical guidance for the continuation of my studies. This process is essential to ensure that the research truly addresses the psychological needs of females and achieves meaningful, tangible outcomes.

2.8.1 Interviews and Discussions

Table 5 Introduction of participants

Names	Titles	Areas of Expertise
Li Yanhong	National Level-3 Psychological Counselor Applied Psychology Major, Southwest University Psychotherapist Social Worker Years of Experience in Special School-Based Programs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emotional regulation for adults, stress relief, interpersonal relationships, marital issues, career planning, and personality restoration 2. Solution-focused brief therapy, psychodynamic therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavior therapy (DBT), motivational interviewing techniques, narrative therapy
Li Yun	Internationally Certified Level-3 Marriage and Family Counselor Intermediate-Level Marriage and Family Therapist Psychological Counselor of Yunnan Province OH Card Subconscious Exploration Therapist	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Counseling for depression and anxiety disorders, panic attacks 2. Family relationships, romantic and marital issues, dream interpretation 3. Inferiority complex, enhancement of self-worth 4. Interpersonal difficulties in adolescents, lack of academic motivation

Names	Titles	Areas of Expertise
Du Jingdi	Master's Degree in Applied Psychology, Yunnan Normal University Member of Yunnan Psychological Counselors Association Social Worker Academic Advisor Senior High School Mental Health Education Teacher	1. Depression, anxiety, insomnia, and irritability in adults 2. Interpersonal relationships, parent-child relationships, intimate relationships, postpartum depression 3. Acute and chronic psychological trauma 4. Personal growth, workplace stress, etc.

A focus group was conducted with three nationally certified psychological counselors from Kunming—Li Yanhong, Du Jingdi, and Li Yun—who offered professional feedback on the research design and implementation. The discussion focused on multiple key themes, particularly the role of art therapy in supporting emotional self-regulation among women facing high social and emotional stress.

First, regarding the central role of art therapy in females' self-regulation of stress and emotional control, the experts unanimously agreed that art therapy offers a non-verbal space for emotional expression, which is particularly suitable for females. Artistic creation helps females identify, express, and regulate their inner emotions and conflicts. This is especially therapeutic when dealing with gender-related stress and emotional struggles. The experts emphasized that mandala drawing, with its balanced and repetitive visual structure, can offer individuals a sense of order, which is beneficial for managing anxiety and internal stress. This method supports emotional anchoring through structured artistic processes. Regarding my coloring book art therapy experiment, the experts suggested simplifying the design while ensuring the images retain both complexity and clarity to enhance engagement and improve therapeutic outcomes.

To further improve participation and the effectiveness of the experiment, the experts recommended incorporating more forms of art, such as sculpture and handicrafts, to allow participants to experience emotional release on multiple levels during the creative process. They also highlighted the importance of group therapy in females' art therapy, as sharing the experience of creation can reduce feelings of isolation and increase the sense of social support. While affirming the utility of the SCL-90 scale in evaluating psychological states, the experts recommended the addition of more nuanced tools in future studies, such as structured interviews and targeted emotional regulation scales, to more comprehensively capture participants' psychological changes.

Experts suggested that incorporating culturally resonant symbols—such as floral imagery and maternal metaphors—within art creation could help enhance participants' emotional resonance and sense of personal identity. These symbolic elements were seen as supportive in reinforcing inner strength and psychological healing during the creative process.



Figure 21 Discussion with therapist Li Yanhong
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 22 Discussion with therapists Du Jingdi and Li Yun
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2.8.2 Opinions and Suggestions

In the experts' recommendations, the following guidance was provided regarding the design of the art therapy activities:

2.8.1.1 Art Design Suggestions.

Selection of Content Elements: The experts suggested that the design of art therapy should be more aligned with the needs and aesthetics of females. The selected images and themes should have emotional resonance, triggering identification and emotional release from participants. The content should emphasize the unique experiences and life situations of females, avoiding overly abstract or generic design elements.

Complexity and Simplicity of Images: The design of images needs to strike a balance between complexity and simplicity. Overly complex images may overwhelm participants, hindering emotional expression, while simpler designs can help participants better focus their attention and guide the release of emotions.

Application of Color Psychology: The experts recommended that the psychological effects of colors should be fully considered in the design process. For

example, soft, warm tones (such as green and blue) should be used to help alleviate anxiety and stress, while avoiding overly intense or glaring colors, as these would enhance the therapeutic effects.

2.8.1.2 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Activity Guidance.

Diverse Art Forms: The experts suggested that art therapy should encompass a variety of art forms, not limited to painting. Sculpting, handicrafts, and other forms of creation could be included. Diverse artistic activities provide more ways to express emotions, catering to the different needs of participants.

Group Therapy and Support Networks: Group therapy was considered especially important for females. The experts emphasized that group interaction can reduce feelings of isolation, increase the social support network, and help females better cope with and address emotional issues. The interactions and support within the group could also enhance the effectiveness of the therapy.

2.8.1.3 Thematic and Symbolic Enhancement in Art Design.

Incorporating feminist Symbols: The experts believed that adding feminist symbols (such as roses, maternal symbols, etc.) In art therapy could help enhance participants' self-identity and healing effects. These symbols can help females establish a sense of self-identity during the creative process and encourage them to reflect on and challenge gender roles, thereby achieving self-healing.

2.8.1.4 Evaluation and Feedback Mechanism.

Continuous Monitoring and Feedback: The experts suggested that continuous monitoring of emotional and psychological changes should be conducted throughout the research process, with timely collection of participant feedback. This can be achieved through regular emotional assessments, observational records, and interviews, ensuring the effectiveness of the therapy process.

Personalized Guidance and Adjustments: The experts emphasized the need for personalized guidance and adjustments based on the specific needs of participants during the therapy process. For example, for participants with specific emotional issues or needs, the therapeutic approach should be adjusted as needed to ensure each

participant receives maximum psychological support and emotional release.

These suggestions provide important guidance for the subsequent design and implementation of my research. They not only help optimize the art therapy activity plan but also provide practical references for the effectiveness and operability of feminist art therapy.

Summary

Through the focus group discussion with the three national-level psychological counseling experts from Kunming—Li Yanhong, Du Jindi, and Li Yun—I received valuable feedback on my research design. The expert group provided practical and constructive recommendations on enhancing art therapy interventions. They emphasized the importance of aesthetic appeal and emotional resonance in design, encouraging the use of gentle colors and culturally meaningful symbols to improve emotional engagement. In addition to visual design, experts advocated for incorporating multi-modal art forms and facilitating group interaction to foster social connection and shared expression. Continuous evaluation, participant feedback, and individualized adjustments were also recommended to ensure the therapeutic relevance and psychological effectiveness of the activities.

The experts suggested that art therapy activities should be diversified, covering various art forms such as painting and sculpture to enhance participant engagement. They also recommended utilizing group therapy to provide a support network, helping females reduce feelings of isolation. The incorporation of a feminist perspective—especially challenging gender roles and empowering females through artistic creation—is an essential aspect of the therapeutic process.

Regarding evaluation and feedback mechanisms, the experts recommended continuous monitoring of emotional and psychological changes and making personalized adjustments based on participants' feedback to ensure the reliability and effectiveness of the therapy. These suggestions provide crucial guidance for the subsequent design and implementation of my research, ensuring that the study can meet participants' needs and produce tangible therapeutic outcomes.

2.9 Conclusion

In recent decades, increasing attention has been paid to stress management and mental well-being among women, particularly in response to the cumulative social and emotional burdens they often carry. Factors such as family responsibilities, professional pressures, and cultural expectations tend to place women at a higher risk of psychological distress, including anxiety and depression. These stressors not only affect emotional balance but also impact long-term mental resilience. As a response, various therapeutic approaches have been explored, and among them, art therapy has gained growing recognition for its non-verbal, expressive, and psychologically restorative effects.

Art therapy offers a creative and emotionally safe space where individuals can explore internal states, process emotional tensions, and gradually rebuild psychological stability through visual expression. For women in particular, such creative processes are often effective in fostering emotional awareness and inner regulation, as they allow for the articulation of complex feelings that may be difficult to express verbally. This form of therapy supports emotional self-regulation and contributes to improving self-perception, confidence, and adaptability in the face of daily challenges.

Rather than positioning art therapy solely within a specific ideological framework, this research emphasizes its value as a gender-informed psychological intervention. It acknowledges the unique psychological stressors that many women face, without anchoring the discussion in theoretical debates. Instead, the study highlights how meaningful symbols, personal narratives, and aesthetic choices in art can support women in identifying emotional triggers, processing internal conflicts, and reinforcing their sense of identity and agency.

Throughout the literature and expert consultations reviewed in this chapter, the significance of culturally relevant design elements, gender-sensitive content, and emotional symbolism in therapeutic art practices has been repeatedly emphasized. These insights form the theoretical basis for the subsequent intervention experiments, which aim to evaluate the effectiveness of art therapy tools—such as the customized coloring book—in supporting women's emotional adjustment.

In summary, this chapter has provided an integrated overview of gender-related













emotional stress, creative therapeutic strategies, and the underlying mechanisms of visual expression in psychological intervention. These foundations inform the next stage of research, where practical implementation and empirical evaluation will be conducted to test the hypotheses and refine the methodology.

2.9.1 Color Therapy

In my research, I have summarized the 12 major color schemes in mandala painting art therapy, their corresponding emotional meanings, therapeutic uses, and their connection to feminism. These colors not only carry unique psychological symbolic meanings, but also play an important role in art therapy, helping females regulate emotions, reduce stress, and promote self-identity. The emotional meanings and therapeutic effects associated with each color can provide valuable support in various therapeutic contexts. For example, soft tones like light blue and pink help relieve anxiety and promote relaxation, while more vibrant colors like red and orange can stimulate emotional release and boost motivation. The choice of color can be adjusted according to the woman's emotional state and therapeutic needs to optimize the therapeutic outcome. By combining these colors with artistic creation, females can better understand and express their inner feelings, promoting emotional healing and enhancing mental health.



Table 6 The meaning and therapeutic uses of the 12 color systems

Color	Color Name	Emotional meaning	Therapeutic Uses
	black	Mysterious, solemn, sad	Self-reflection, release of repression, emotional expression
	grey	Moderate, Lost, Calm	Balance emotions, relieve anxiety, protect emotions
	White	Pure, fresh, empty	Clear your mind, find peace, and start anew
	Light Blue	Calm, Relaxed, Trusting	Reduce stress, relax your mood, soothe your mind
	brown	Stable, reliable, simple	Build a sense of security, emotional stability, and rootedness,
	red	Passion, energy, tension	Motivation, anger, emotional release
	pink	Gentle, romantic, stress-free	Soothe emotions, enhance self-love, and soften anxiety
	Orange	Energetic, cheerful, mature	Stimulates creativity, enhances vitality, and boosts mood.
	yellow	Happiness, hope, energy	Lifts mood, brings hope, inspires optimism
	green	Peace, Growth, Healing	Heal trauma, promote peace and inner stability
	Dark Blue	Calm, rational, profound	Deep meditation, self-discovery, inner peace
	Purple	Mysterious, noble, imaginative	Stimulate imagination, enhance creativity, and purify the mind

2.9.2 Mechanism of Females Self-Emotional Control

The mechanism by which women achieve emotional self-regulation through art therapy can be summarized as a gradual, internally driven process enabled by visual and symbolic expression. This process consists of several interrelated components:

First, through the symbolic structure of mandala imagery and the expressive use of color, participants are guided to identify and externalize complex emotional states. This facilitates internal reflection and enables the safe release of emotional tension associated with personal identity, role expectations, and daily stressors.

Second, the meditative and repetitive nature of painting helps foster a sense of inner calm and psychological security. In this setting, artistic engagement serves as a buffer against external pressures, allowing participants to construct personal boundaries and develop emotional resilience.

Third, the increasing complexity of visual forms in the painting exercises introduces a progressive challenge that encourages cognitive engagement and emotional processing. As participants navigate these visual tasks, they simultaneously experience a sense of control, which supports psychological growth and gradual resolution of internal conflicts.

Finally, through repeated engagement in creative activities, participants learn to independently manage emotional fluctuations. This leads to improved stress regulation in daily life and strengthens their emotional balance and psychological adaptability over time.

In conclusion, many women in contemporary society face limited outlets for effective emotional expression and regulation. Art therapy—characterized by its inclusiveness, non-verbal nature, and capacity for personal resonance—offers a structured and adaptable means for self-healing. The case of the female woodcarver in Jianchuan further demonstrates how the integration of traditional craft practices with therapeutic intent can support psychological restoration, enabling individuals to find inner peace and strength amid life's challenges. These theoretical insights and practice-based observations provide a valuable reference for future research and the design of art-based interventions tailored to gendered experiences of stress and emotion.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research to comprehensively analyze the effects and impacts of feminist art therapy on alleviating females' stress. The qualitative research focuses on exploring the participants' experiences and emotional responses, revealing the internal transformations females undergo during the therapy. I utilize literature review, in-depth interviews, the implementation of art therapy activities, and the design of coloring books to capture subtle changes in participants throughout the therapy process. Methods such as content analysis and thematic analysis are employed to systematically interpret the data and explore underlying complex meanings.

The quantitative research primarily uses surveys, targeting psychologists, experimental participants, high-stress females, and community members. Descriptive statistics and experimental data analysis are employed to obtain quantitative feedback on the effectiveness of art therapy. Using tools like Excel and SPSS, I conduct in-depth analysis of the collected data and integrate the findings of the quantitative research with the qualitative results, forming a comprehensive understanding.

By integrating both qualitative and quantitative research findings, this study provides dual support for the theory and practice of feminist art therapy. This methodology not only lays the foundation for subsequent art experiments and design practices but also provides strong support for exploring the practical applications of feminist art therapy in reducing females' stress. It also guides further research in related fields.

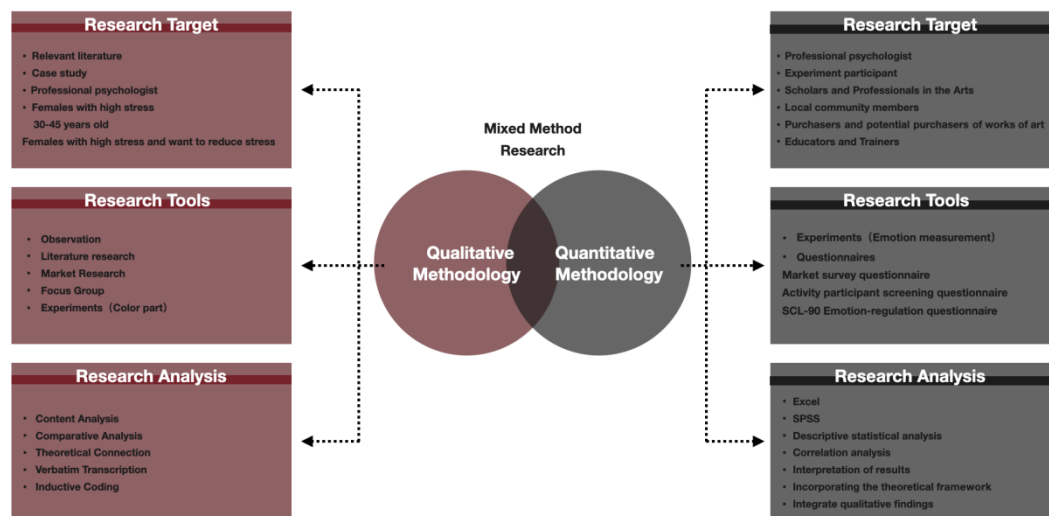


Figure 23 Research methodology framework
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research offers flexible and in-depth tools for the study of feminist art therapy, capable of revealing the complex emotional and psychological changes participants undergo during the therapy. Through qualitative research, researchers can capture females' unique responses to societal gender pressures and understand their emotional expressions and internal liberation during art therapy. Compared to quantitative research, qualitative research focuses more on individual differences and deep psychological needs, providing a solid foundation for the innovation of theory and therapeutic strategies. For example, through in-depth interviews, observations, and self-narratives, researchers can uncover participants' inner worlds and complex emotions, offering valuable insights into art therapy practices.

Furthermore, qualitative research emphasizes understanding individual experiences, especially the diversity and complexity of females' experiences during art therapy. By conducting case studies, researchers can delve deeper into each participant's background, experiences, and changes, revealing their unique responses to art therapy. Qualitative research not only records the process of change in art therapy but also generates new theories and insights, advancing the development of art therapy theory. Through this approach, researchers can gain profound insights into females' emotional expression and psychological transformation, helping to better understand the process

of emotional liberation and inner strength that females achieve through art therapy.

3.1.1 Research Participants (Stakeholders)

In my qualitative research, the primary participants represent several key groups, each with different psychological needs and backgrounds. These groups provide valuable data and case support for my study of feminist art therapy methods. Through in-depth analysis of the psychological states and emotional responses of these groups, I aim to explore how art therapy can alleviate females' stress, promote emotional regulation, and enhance self-awareness. The main research participants in my study are:

3.1.1.1 Relevant Literature.

The literature provides the theoretical framework and methodological foundation for my research, clarifying existing research findings, theoretical developments, and the impact of art therapy, while helping to identify research gaps.

3.1.1.2 Case Studies.

By analyzing the practical cases of Susan Hogan and Zhang Yanzi, I gain a deeper understanding of the operational effects and potential of feminist art therapy in both Western and Chinese contexts, providing theoretical support and practical references for the research.

3.1.1.3 Professional Psychologists.

Three national-level psychology experts provided professional guidance for the research design through focus group discussions, enriching the theory and practical experience of art therapy.

3.1.1.4 High-Stress Females (Aged 30-45).

According to the data of the Outline of China's females' Development (2021-2030) and the National Gender Health Survey Report, more than 67% of adult females self-assessed that they had moderate or above psychological stress, among which females aged 30-45 accounted for a high proportion. Females at this stage usually play multiple social roles such as the main force in the workplace, childcare responsibilities

and family care, and face structural oppression of "having old people above and young people below". Data from the National Bureau of Statistics show that as of 2020, the total population of females aged 30-45 in China is close to 180 million, accounting for nearly 24% of the total female population in the country. Therefore, in the issue of females' mental health, the stress problem of females in this age group is highly representative and realistic and urgent, providing a research basis with universal significance for this study.

Against the background of national psychological stress trends, combined with regional social culture and life structure, Kunming has become an important observation point for this study. According to the data of the seventh national census, the total population of females aged 30-45 in Kunming is about 880,000, with sufficient sample capacity. At the same time, as the provincial capital of the southwest region, Kunming has a certain degree of economic and cultural modernity, but also retains a relatively strong traditional gender concept and family structure, which leads to a typical tension between social modernization and traditional responsibilities for females in the region. The imbalance between urban development and the change of females' roles has made young and middle-aged females in Kunming a typical "middle layer of social pressure", and their psychological load state is representative, complex and easy to observe. Therefore, this study selected females aged 30-45 in Kunming as the experimental sample group, which not only ensured the representativeness of the study, but also provided a realistic basis for promoting a replicable intervention mechanism.

3.1.1.5 High-Stress Females Seeking Stress Relief.

Participants actively seeking emotional regulation contribute key data to the research, helping assess the practical effectiveness of art therapy in emotional release and stress management.

Through in-depth analysis of these research participants and case studies, my qualitative research will reveal the potential of feminist art therapy in alleviating stress, promoting emotional regulation, and enhancing self-awareness. It will explore how females from different backgrounds and with different needs process emotional struggles through art creation, ultimately improving their psychological health and

quality of life.

3.1.2 Research Tools

3.1.2.1 Literature Review.

The literature review provides a solid theoretical foundation for the study, encompassing diverse perspectives such as feminist, art therapy, and stress management. It supports the innovation of this research based on existing academic achievements. By identifying research gaps and deficiencies, the literature review offers theoretical support and practical direction for the design of the coloring book and art therapy activities.

3.1.2.2 In-depth Interviews.

Through in-depth interviews with psychological counseling experts, the study gains a comprehensive understanding of females' emotional responses and psychological changes under high levels of stress. These interviews reveal participants' needs and expectations regarding art therapy. The professional opinions of the experts contribute to refining the theoretical framework and evaluating the effectiveness and potential of feminist art therapy in practical application.

3.1.2.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Activities.

Feminist art therapy activities provide participants with a safe environment to express emotions and explore female experiences. These activities demonstrate the role of artistic creation in stress reduction and the enhancement of self-identity. Feedback obtained from these sessions offers empirical evidence for theoretical validation and inspires the design and refinement of the coloring book.

3.1.2.4 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Coloring Book.

The coloring book, as a crucial research tool, is designed with guided themes to help participants express emotions, relieve stress, and explore the recognition of female identity within society. The process of engaging with the book offers participants a platform for emotional expression and promotes self-reflection and internal growth.

3.1.3 Analytical Methods

In this qualitative study, analytical methods constitute a core component, ensuring the effective extraction, processing, and interpretation of research data. The following are the detailed analytical approaches adopted:

3.1.3.1 Content Analysis.

Content analysis synthesizes and integrates key information and themes from literature to extract the theoretical framework and therapeutic methods required for the research. It identifies shortcomings in existing theories and practices, providing systematic theoretical support for the specific application of art therapy from a feminist perspective.

3.1.3.2 Comparative Analysis.

Comparative analysis focuses on the differences in gender awareness and self-identity between Western and Chinese feminists, aiming to develop feminist perspectives suitable for the Chinese cultural context. By examining the similarities and differences in theories and therapeutic approaches, this method offers tailored art therapy strategies for Chinese females.

3.1.3.3 Theoretical Integration.

Theoretical integration combines core ideas from feminist and mandala-based art therapy to develop the "Female Autonomous Emotion Regulation Theory." This framework guides the design of activities and experiments, explaining how females achieve emotional release and psychological growth through art therapy.

3.1.3.4 Verbatim Transcription.

Verbatim transcription records all contents from focus group discussions and interviews, ensuring data authenticity and integrity. By preserving detailed expert opinions and participant feedback, this method provides reliable primary data for analysis.

3.1.3.5 Inductive Coding.

Inductive coding categorizes participants' emotional responses and psychological changes into concrete themes and patterns. This method helps identify trends and commonalities in the therapeutic process, offering critical insights for theory development and practical implementation.

Through these analytical approaches, the qualitative study delves deeply into females' emotional transformations during art therapy, providing both data support and theoretical foundation for the further development and refinement of feminist art therapy methods.

3.2 Quantitative research

Quantitative research methods, through the use of questionnaires, data collection, and statistical analysis, enable the acquisition of generalized quantitative data from a broader participant group. These methods offer objective measurements of changes in stress levels, contributing to the validation of the effectiveness of feminist art therapy activities. They also support the refinement of activity design and tools, providing a foundation for subsequent improvements. Furthermore, quantitative research allows for comparisons across females from different backgrounds, ages, and professions, revealing group-specific differences. This understanding aids in identifying which populations benefit most from the therapy, thus supplying data to optimize therapeutic activities and coloring book design.

Through the analysis of quantitative data, statistically significant results—such as reductions in stress levels and participant satisfaction—can be obtained, offering solid evidential support for research conclusions and enhancing scientific rigor and credibility. Moreover, quantitative findings can verify trends and themes identified in qualitative studies, rendering conclusions more comprehensive. The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches provides a holistic analytical framework that captures both macro-level data and in-depth individual experiences. Additionally, quantitative results can help predict the applicability of art therapy among various groups, offering data-driven guidance and references for broader community implementation of therapeutic approaches in the future.

3.2.1 Research Participants

3.2.1.1 Professional Psychologists.

Professional psychologists offer expert psychological evaluations and consultations, ensuring the scientific integrity and effectiveness of the therapeutic activities. They assist in assessing participants' mental states, emotional changes, and behavioral responses, and provide recommendations for optimizing therapy plans, thereby ensuring the design and implementation of activities meet participants' psychological needs.

3.2.1.2 Experimental Participants.

Experimental participants form the core group of the study. Through their emotional feedback and personal experiences, the effectiveness of the art therapy methods can be validated. The self-perceived data they provide help assess therapeutic outcomes, highlight intergroup differences, and supply data essential for refining and optimizing the therapy activities.

3.2.1.3 Scholars and Professionals from the Art Field.

Art scholars and professionals provide theoretical support and practical guidance for the study. They assist in designing the forms, colors, and media used in art therapy activities. Their feedback facilitates the interpretation of emotional and psychological changes expressed in participants' artworks, contributing to the academic advancement of art therapy.

3.2.1.4 Local Community Members.

Community members, through their participation and feedback, offer insights into the social and cultural contexts of the research. Their involvement supports the localization and cultural adaptation of the art therapy activities, thereby enhancing their acceptability and integration within community settings.

3.2.1.5 Buyers and Potential Buyers of Artworks.

Buyers and potential buyers provide market feedback, aiding in the assessment

of the social impact and commercial potential of the art therapy initiatives. Their preferences and demands help shape more market-attractive art therapy products and foster the broader application of therapeutic activities.

3.2.1.6 Educators and Trainers.

Educators play a key role in promoting knowledge and skills related to art therapy. Through courses and workshops, they enhance public awareness and understanding of feminist art therapy. Their evaluations of the educational and training applications of therapy activities provide valuable feedback for future enhancements.

3.2.2 Research tools

The following are the primary research tools used in the quantitative study:

3.2.2.1 Survey on Stress Among Chinese Females.

The objective of this questionnaire was to assess the sources of stress experienced by Chinese females and their needs for stress relief. A total of 1,033 females aged 18 to 60 participated, with 657 of them between the ages of 26 and 45. The results revealed that work, marital status, and pregnancy were the primary sources of stress. Other contributing factors included academic pressure, social interactions, financial issues, and family responsibilities. Participants commonly selected listening to music, painting, blogging, going out, and gaming as the most effective stress-relief methods. Although music was the most frequently chosen, painting—while not ranked first—was recognized as an expressive method that best aligned with the majority's needs for active stress relief. Most females indicated that effective stress-relief methods should be simple, easy to use, independently executable, economical, and shareable. The survey also indicated that females experience a high daily demand for stress relief, further underscoring the importance of stress-relief activities in their everyday lives.

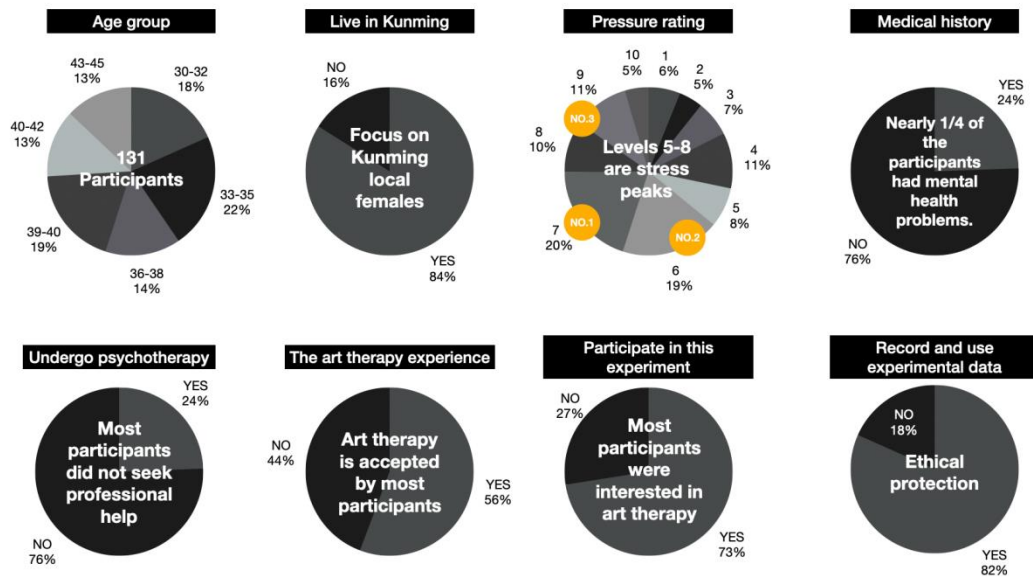


Figure 24 Survey on Stress Among Chinese Females
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

3.2.2.2 Screening Questionnaire for Experimental Participants.

This questionnaire was designed to select participants who met the criteria for the research study. A total of 106 females aged 35 to 45 participated, all reporting stress levels between 5 and 8. Participants were required to meet the following criteria: they must have resided in Kunming for at least two months, be willing to explore painting-based art therapy, and consent to the use of their data as well as to a one-month data collection period. Furthermore, participants had to agree to engage in art therapy sessions. This questionnaire facilitated the identification of participants who were both interested in painting as a form of art therapy and experiencing relatively high stress levels, thus ensuring a suitable sample for the subsequent experiment.

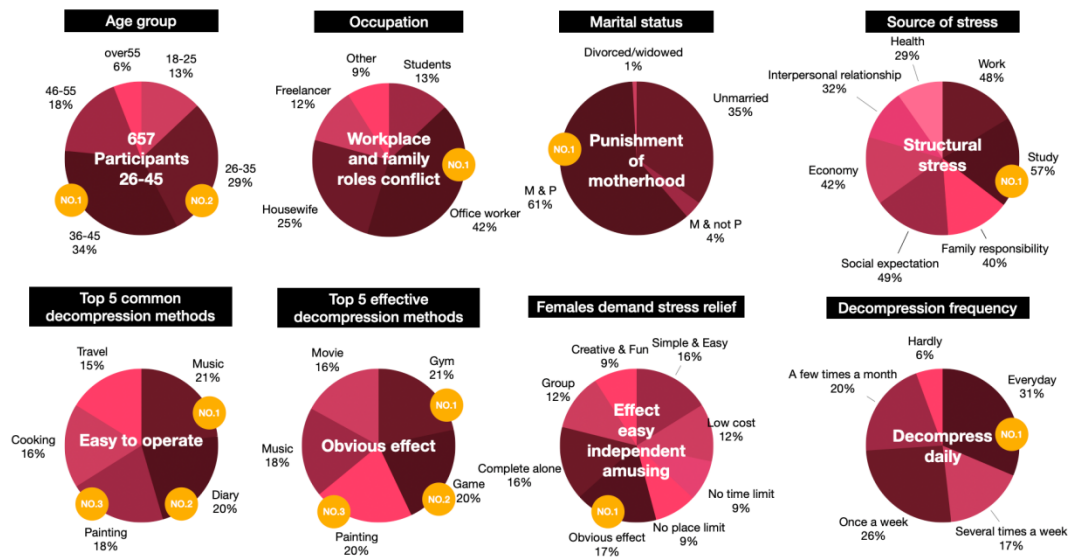


Figure 25 Screening Questionnaire for Experimental Participants
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

3.2.2.3 SCL-90 Questionnaire.

The SCL-90 (Symptom Checklist-90) was used to collect data on participants' emotional changes. Twelve females aged 35 to 45 participated, with data collected weekly over a one-month period, for a total of five sessions. The analysis focused on emotional changes throughout the course of art therapy, strictly based on the scale's data indicators. This questionnaire allowed researchers to track and quantify emotional fluctuations during therapy, providing critical support for further data analysis and validation of results.

SCL-90 Scoring Index Explanation

The SCL-90 is a widely used psychological assessment tool for evaluating the distribution and severity of psychological symptoms in individuals. It consists of 90 items covering a broad range of psychological states and symptoms. The scoring system includes total scores, factor scores, and positive symptom metrics across several dimensions:

3.2.2.3.1 Total Score-Related Indicators.

1. Total Score

The sum of all 90 items, reflecting the overall psychological symptom level. Higher scores indicate more severe psychological problems.

2. General Symptom Index (GSI)

Calculated by dividing the total score by 90, this average score per item reflects the general prevalence of symptoms and provides an overview of mental health.

3. Number of Positive Items

The number of items rated between 2 and 5, representing the breadth of reported psychological symptoms.

4. Positive Symptom Distress Index (PSDI)

Calculated by dividing the total score by the number of positive items, this index indicates the severity of reported symptoms. A higher value signifies greater symptom intensity.

3.2.2.3.2 Factor Scores and Corresponding Content.

The SCL-90 includes 10 primary factors, each addressing different psychological symptom domains. This helps identify specific areas of mental health concern:

1. Somatization

12 items: e.g., items 1, 4, 12, 27... Reflects the extent to which psychological stress manifests as physical symptoms—such as palpitations, nausea, or muscle pain.

2. Obsessive-Compulsive

10 items: e.g., items 3, 9, 10, 28... Measures compulsive thoughts and behaviors like excessive checking or repetitive thoughts.

3. Interpersonal Sensitivity

9 items: e.g., items 6, 21, 34... Assesses discomfort in social interactions, including fear of rejection or hypersensitivity to criticism.

4. Depression

13 items: e.g., items 5, 14, 15... Evaluates depressive symptoms including sadness, lack of interest, fatigue, and suicidal thoughts.

5. Anxiety

10 items: e.g., items 2, 17, 23... Measures both psychological and physiological anxiety symptoms such as restlessness and chest tightness.

6. Hostility

6 items: e.g., items 11, 24, 63... Assesses feelings of anger and aggressive behavior, such as irritability or loss of control.

7. Phobic Anxiet

7 items: e.g., items 13, 25, 47... Evaluates irrational fears and avoidance behaviors related to specific situations or objects.

8. Paranoid Ideation

6 items: e.g., items 8, 18, 43... Measures paranoia, including mistrust, suspiciousness, and delusional thinking.

9. Psychoticism

10 items: e.g., items 7, 16, 35... Assesses symptoms similar to psychosis, such as social withdrawal or distorted thought patterns.

10. Additional Items

7 supplementary items (e.g., items 19, 44, 59...) that are not assigned to any specific factor but serve to further describe psychological characteristics.

3.2.2.3.3 Scoring Standards and Interpretation.

According to SCL-90 scoring guidelines, the total score is categorized into four levels, each representing a different psychological condition:

1. Score \leq 160

Normal emotional state: Indicates stable mental health and no significant psychological distress.

2. Score 161 - 225

Mild disturbance: Suggests minor psychological concerns, possibly requiring lifestyle adjustments or basic emotion management.

3. Score 226 - 315

Moderate disturbance: Indicates evident emotional distress affecting daily life, potentially requiring counseling or professional support.

4. Score $>$ 315

Severe disturbance: Reflects significant psychological symptoms disrupting daily functioning; professional psychological intervention is likely needed.

5. Number of Positive Items

More than 43 items rated ≥ 2 suggests the potential presence of psychological issues.

6. Factor Score Ranges

Factor score ≥ 2.0 : Mild disturbance

Factor score 2.9 - 3.8: Moderate disturbance

Factor score ≥ 3.9 : Severe disturbance

These evaluation standards provide a comprehensive, scientific foundation for assessing individual mental health and support further psychological diagnosis and intervention.

3.2.3 Analytical Methods

3.2.3.1 Excel.

Data Organization and Preliminary Analysis: Excel served as the basic tool for organizing quantitative data. It helped researchers manage questionnaire responses and participant information, and visualize data distribution and trends through tables, charts, and pivot tables.

3.2.3.2 SPSS.

Advanced Statistical Analysis: SPSS was employed for complex statistical analysis, including multivariate, correlation, and regression analyses. It was used to explore the effectiveness of feminist art therapy under various conditions.

3.2.3.3 Descriptive Statistical Analysis.

Overview and Trend Analysis: This analysis summarized participants' demographics, stress levels, and emotional changes, identifying general trends to inform further causal analysis.

3.2.3.4 Interpretation of Results.

Understanding and Interpreting Results: Researchers interpreted the data by combining descriptive and advanced analysis to reveal how feminist art therapy influenced stress reduction across participant groups.

3.2.3.5 Integration with Theoretical Framework.

Linking Theory and Data: Quantitative results were integrated with feminist art therapy theory to validate or refine theoretical assumptions and deepen understanding of its therapeutic mechanisms.

3.2.3.6 Integration of Qualitative Findings.

Cross-Method Results Synthesis: Combining qualitative insights with quantitative data enabled a holistic view of therapeutic effects and offered deeper understanding for future research directions.

3.3 Design Method

The stress relief strategy developed in this study is an interdisciplinary feminist art therapy intervention. It establishes a stress transformation mechanism centered on bodily autonomy by deconstructing the gender discipline embedded in traditional floral symbolism. This strategy deeply integrates feminist, art therapy, and semiotics, and creatively employs floral imagery as a medium of resistance.

From a feminist perspective, it systematically dismantles the oppressive gender logics that extend from biological metaphors to spatial politics. At the tool level, it features the design of a coloring book that incorporates color psychology and art therapy theory to enable an embodied perception of stress relief. At the evaluation level, it utilizes documented growth archives and the SCL-90 scale to quantitatively assess the effectiveness of ideological deconstruction in reducing anxiety indices.

This strategy transcends the limitations of traditional stress relief tools by offering not only immediate emotional support but also fostering profound gender consciousness awakening. Its innovative value lies in being the world's first cross-media therapeutic system that combines feminist semiotics with the principles of art

therapy, thus opening new directions for the theoretical development of art-based interventions.

3.3.1 F. Feminist Consciousness Construction: The Ideological Basis of Cognitive Restructuring

The essence of females' stress lies in the internalization of structural gender oppression, and its resolution requires systematic cognitive restructuring as a prerequisite. This study popularizes feminist theory through an illustrated workbook, transforming abstract concepts into localized, everyday narratives within the Chinese context. This helps participants identify the societal causes embedded within stress, thus breaking the cognitive fallacy of attributing personal difficulties to individual failure. Six specially designed localized feminist perspectives provide concrete analytical frameworks addressing the dual burden of career and family commonly faced by Chinese females. These frameworks allow participants to situate their personal experiences within a broader structural context. Additionally, the design linking twelve colors with gender topics utilizes visual metaphors to activate emotional memory in the right brain, forming neural connections between color perception and self-empowerment. This step lays the cognitive foundation for subsequent interventions—only when females realize that the root cause of their stress does not lie in personal flaws, but is embedded in sociocultural structures, can the true process of stress transformation begin.

3.3.2 A. Artistic Toolbox Intervention: An Embodied Tool for Stress Transformation

Traditional stress management tools often neglect gender dimensions, leading to interventions that disconnect from females' lived experiences. The coloring book developed in this study uses floral imagery as a medium, embedding feminist meanings into operable artistic practices. Through the synergy of visual and cognitive engagement during coloring, participants achieve embodied emotional release. The accompanying SCL-90 scale accurately captures the specific psychological harms caused by patriarchy to females, while the "Color Guide" translates theoretical understanding into actionable self-regulation strategies, grounded in the neuroscience of emotion regulation (e.g., blue tones reducing amygdala activity). Together, these three elements form a stress

transformation toolkit that fills the gender sensitivity gap in existing art therapy practices. This integration is essential: only by combining feminist consciousness-raising with physiological stress relief techniques can systematic change be achieved, from cognition to behavior.

3.3.3 C. Community Color Interaction: Healing Empowerment through Social Support Networks

Females' stress is often exacerbated by social isolation, necessitating group interaction to rebuild support systems. Offline workshops involving twelve participants create safe spaces for females to share stigmatized experiences (e.g., anxiety around childbirth). The healing effect derives from the mirror neuron mechanism—witnessing others overcome gender-related struggles stimulates personal motivation for change. Online communities (e.g., Xiaohongshu) break geographical barriers, allowing females from different social strata to form cross-regional alliances through the use of "color codes" (e.g., purple to symbolize resistance against age discrimination). This online-offline synergy is crucial: individual cognitive restructuring must be embedded in collective action networks to resist the reabsorption by patriarchal culture. The activity design involves three progressive phases (observation - imitation - creation), grounded in Bandura's social learning theory, ensuring participants shift from passive acceptance to active construction of new gender identities.

3.3.4 T. Therapeutic System

The effectiveness of stress intervention strategies must be verified through a rigorous evidence-based framework. This study employs a modified SCL-90 scale for longitudinal tracking. The statistical significance not only confirms short-term emotional improvement but also, through the "gender role stress perception" metric, verifies the sustained effects of ideological deconstruction. In qualitative analysis, growth narratives are extracted and analyzed using grounded theory coding, revealing the deeper mechanisms of stress transformation—such as how color choice behavior reconstructs body image cognition. This evaluation system is essential on two levels: quantitative data ensures scientific rigor of the interventions, while qualitative evidence captures subtle cognitive shifts that traditional scales fail to measure. More importantly,

in-depth case tracking of twelve participants provides valuable anthropological samples for understanding the cultural specificity of Chinese females' stress issues.

The F.A.C.T. The strategy system developed in this study essentially creates a gender-based stress transformation loop of "cognitive disembedding - tool reconstruction - collective resonance - evidence iteration." ,the coloring book Its innovation lies in translating critical theory into tangible artistic tools (e.g., the coloring book), upgrading individual healing into collective action (e.g. , the coloring book). , the coloring book)., community interaction), and refining qualitative experience into replicable scientific solutions (e.g., the evaluation framework). Each module targets the core contradiction in Chinese females' stress—the tension between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations. females need both ideological tools to break internal oppression and embodied tools to enact behavioral transformation. Only through such multi-dimensional interventions can the ultimate goal of stress management be realized: not for females to better adapt to oppressive systems, but to empower them with the capacity to reconstruct their existential frameworks.

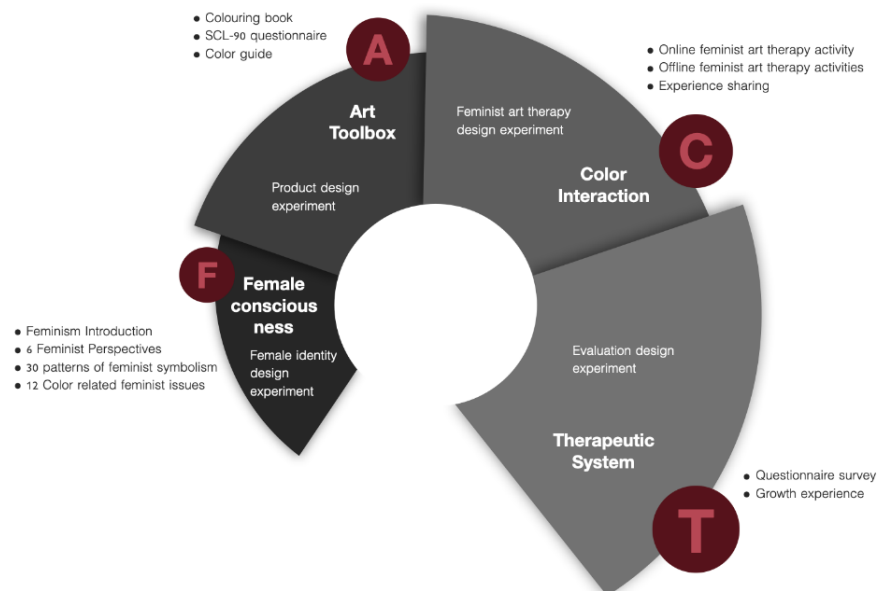


Figure 26 F.A.C. T strategy
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

3.4 Conclusion

In Chapter 3, this study employs a mixed-methods research approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively explore the causes of stress among contemporary Chinese females and the theoretical mechanisms of feminist art therapy. The core aim is to examine how data collection, categorization, analysis, and design practice can effectively help females reduce stress and achieve emotional self-regulation.

During data collection, questionnaires and focus group interviews gathered information on stress sources, emotion regulation methods, and adaptability to feminist art therapy among diverse female groups. This data provided a foundation for subsequent analysis, especially in identifying common challenges females face under stress, such as lack of self-identification and limited emotional expression channels.

Through categorizing and analyzing the data, the study explored females' emotional needs in stress management and, through a feminist lens, investigated the structural social factors contributing to stress. It also assessed the effectiveness of art therapy, with special emphasis on the role of color in influencing emotional regulation and enhancing emotional cognition and self-regulatory capacities.

In terms of design strategy, the study proposed a F.A.C.T. stress-relief system based on feminist art therapy theory, consisting of four stages:

F Stage: Using localized feminist illustrated books to deconstruct stress origins (e.g., workplace discrimination, maternal anxiety), applying six life-based perspectives and twelve color metaphors to help females recognize their individual dilemmas as structural oppression rather than personal failure, thus laying the foundation for cognitive awakening.

A Stage: Providing a toolkit including the coloring book and a modified SCL-90 scale, translating abstract theory into operable therapeutic routines using neurofeedback from color (e.g., anxiety-soothing blues) and gender-sensitive stress indicators.

C Stage: Constructing a social support network through community healing in offline workshops (12 participants in the experimental group) and cross-class alliances in online communities (e.g., Xiaohongshu), leveraging collective engagement to alleviate patriarchal stress.

T Stage: Validating emotional improvements through quantitative data and

analyzing growth logic through qualitative narratives, forming a closed-loop intervention of "cognitive awakening – behavioral reconstruction – systemic resistance," shifting stress management from individual adaptation to structural empowerment.

Under this methodological framework, the study's analysis and solutions are tightly aligned with both theoretical and practical dimensions of feminist art therapy in addressing contemporary Chinese females' stress. For the first research objective, multiple data collection methods were employed—including literature review, surveys, interviews, and focus groups. These efforts yielded substantial data on females' stress sources, emotional regulation strategies, and their needs regarding art therapy, offering theoretical support and revealing correlations between stress and gender roles or identity.

For the second objective, data were categorized to identify key stress factors such as dual role expectations and gender identity conflicts. Particularly, issues like lack of self-identity and emotional expression channels were highlighted as major stress amplifiers. The study also examined the role of visual art in emotion regulation from a feminist perspective, emphasizing how artistic expression and color psychology help females reconnect with themselves, release emotions, and reduce stress.

Finally, in addressing the third research objective—designing and implementing art therapy experiments—the study integrated qualitative and quantitative approaches to develop four key therapeutic components: a feminist art therapy coloring book as a flexible, self-directed stress-relief tool; two stages of offline feminist art therapy workshops fostering emotional release and self-identification through group and individual creative practices; and an online version of the therapy ensuring accessibility for females unable to attend in person. These designs and implementations offer a complete, operable set of strategies for emotional management and stress reduction, helping females independently regulate their emotions in daily life.

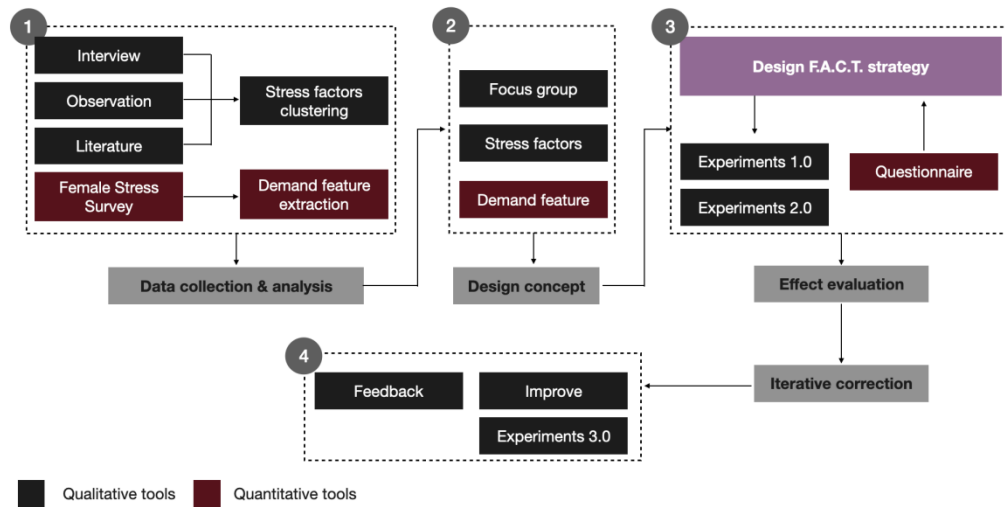


Figure 27 Research Objectives Achievement Methods

Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

This mixed-methods approach ensures both breadth and depth, revealing the general impact of feminist art therapy at a macro level and providing detailed insights into individual experiences at a micro level. The methodological rigor reinforces the reliability of findings and the originality of the theoretical framework. Ultimately, this study not only validates the effectiveness of feminist art therapy but also provides a practical reference framework and guidance for future research in the field.

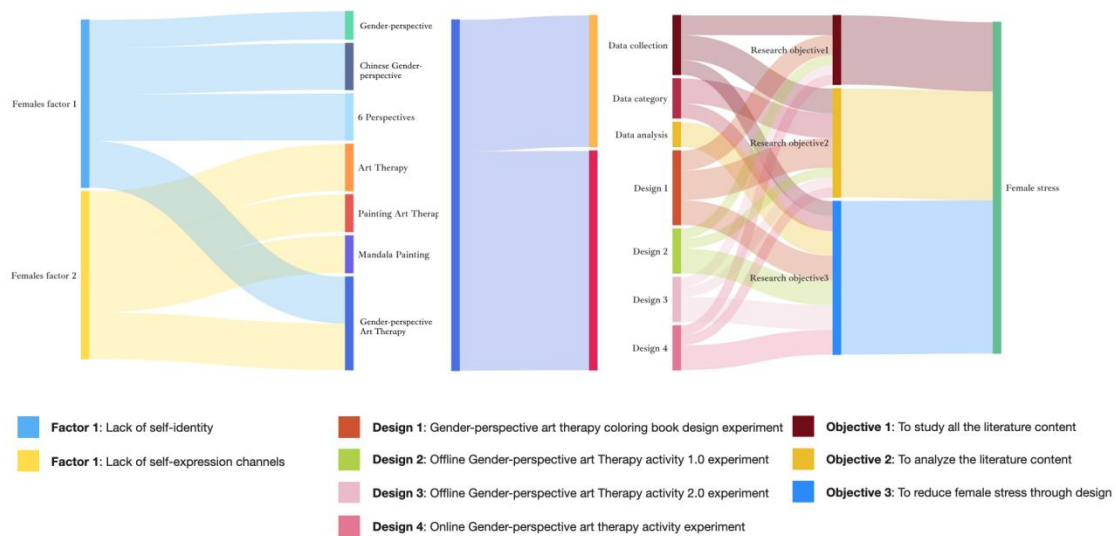


Figure 28 Research Methods and tools
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

This study takes systematic data-driven as the core methodology, and in the initial stage, the research foundation is constructed through multi-dimensional information collection. On the one hand, it integrates sociological field observation records, academic literature on the theme of female stress, and research reports on decompression products in the consumer market to form a macro picture of the causes of stress; on the other hand, it organizes interdisciplinary focus groups and invites experts in clinical psychology, gender studies, and art therapy to conduct structured discussions on high-incidence stress situations (such as workplace gender discrimination, maternal anxiety, and appearance discipline), anchoring the particularity of Chinese females' stress mechanism-including the compound effect of traditional cultural conventions and modern capital logic. In this process, the generation of design strategies is not a linear deduction, but through the cross-mapping of the stress source matrix (such as time poverty, loss of physical autonomy) and the spectrum of decompression demands (such as emotional catharsis, cognitive reconstruction, and community connection), a trinity intervention framework of "symbolic deconstruction-embodied interaction-collective empowerment" is gradually condensed.

The research process strictly follows the principles of evidence-based design and adopts a step-by-step experimental verification path. In the first stage, experiments were

conducted to test the effectiveness of art media in relieving individual stress, and in-depth interviews with participants were combined to refine the design optimization direction; in the second stage, the iterative plan was transformed into a standardized toolkit, and with the help of large-sample experiments and questionnaires, core indicators such as emotional improvement and cognitive transformation rate were quantitatively evaluated to discover the effectiveness of symbolic intervention, which not only verified the effectiveness of individual treatment, but also completed a closed-loop verification from theoretical models to social practice.



Chapter 4

Design Practice

This chapter explores the application of feminist art therapy in alleviating females' psychological stress and improving emotion regulation through a series of design-based practices. Drawing from data on Chinese females' stress, theoretical foundations, and tool development, the study systematically created a localized set of art therapy tools, particularly emphasizing a feminist perspective coloring book. This tool guides females to express emotions autonomously through creative engagement, strengthens their awareness of social roles and stress origins, and utilizes visual elements like color and pattern to assist in emotional regulation.

The next section—Design Experiment Procedures—details the practical implementation of the experiment. It covers the design of the coloring book (both visually and structurally), participant selection criteria, the setup of the initial and final offline feminist art therapy sessions, and the weekly data collection protocol. These activities demonstrate how feminist concepts are applied in real-life artistic practices to help participants experience tangible stress relief. The in-person sessions also offer a space for emotional exchange and social bonding, reinforcing psychological support networks among females.

Finally, in the Data Analysis and Evaluation section, the study will assess changes in participants' psychological states using quantitative tools (such as a modified SCL-90 scale) and qualitative interviews. By comparing pre- and post-intervention data and subjective feedback, the research identifies the effectiveness and mechanism of feminist art therapy. It also evaluates the sustainability and applicability of the approach, offering insights into its potential for broader implementation in the future.

4.1 Female Stress Survey

Before conducting design practices, market research is an essential step, as it provides in-depth insight into the primary sources of stress that females face in their daily lives and the current methods commonly used for stress relief. Through market research, specific data can be gathered from females of different age groups and

professional backgrounds, helping identify their core stress factors and clarify their preferences and needs when choosing stress-relief methods. This is particularly important as this study focuses on using feminist art therapy to alleviate female stress, so understanding females' expectations regarding activity formats, scheduling, tool convenience, and cost becomes a crucial basis for design practices.

A total of 1,033 females participated in this market survey. The data shows that modern females' stress is primarily concentrated in the married and mothered group, especially within the 36-45 age range, which accounts for 34.27%. Females in this group often need to maintain competitiveness in the workplace while also taking on the main responsibilities at home. In terms of occupation and identity, 41.63% of the respondents were office employees, while 24.59% were full-time housewives, indicating that most females face both work-related pressure and family demands. Regarding marital status, 60.5% of the respondents were married with children, suggesting that for many females, the multiple pressures of life primarily stem from the intersection of career, family, and social expectations.

Furthermore, the primary sources of females' stress are distributed across society (48.5%) and economics (42.4%). Overall, these data confirm the pressure females in Chinese society experience under the dual expectations of professional and domestic roles, particularly the psychological burden of balancing both.

Stress components for females aged 26-45

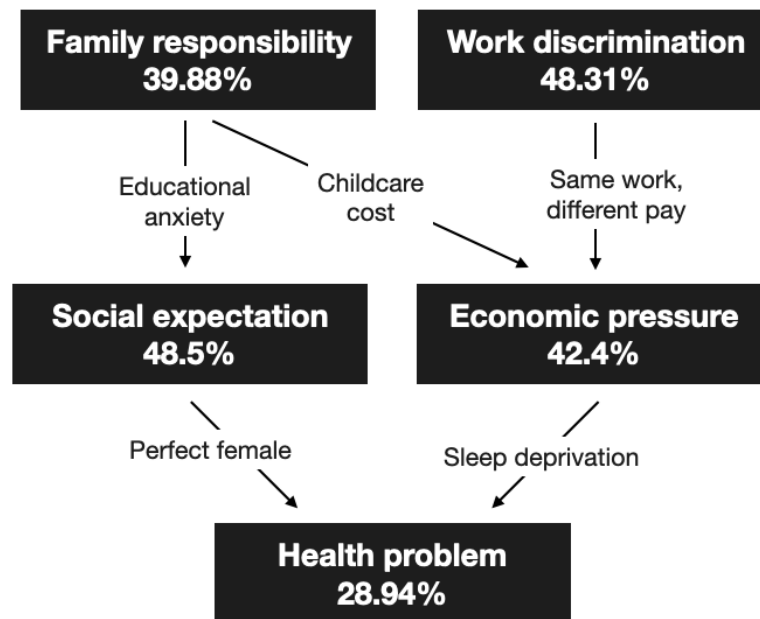


Figure 29 Ratio of stress status among females
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

When it comes to choosing methods for stress relief, many females prefer activities that combine emotional input and output, such as listening to music (20.72%), writing diaries or blogs (20.04%), drawing or coloring (18.49%), and communicating with friends and family (14.42%). Notably, drawing and coloring, as forms of artistic expression, have gained considerable popularity among females due to their ability to provide a private and autonomous space while also expressing emotions. In addition, over 53.05% of the respondents placed particular importance on the effectiveness of stress-relief methods, while 49.08% of females preferred simple and easy-to-execute methods, demonstrating a demand for convenient, independent stress-relief tools. Relatively speaking, stress-relief methods with these characteristics are more likely to help females quickly alleviate stress in their busy lives while also providing an effective means of self-regulation.

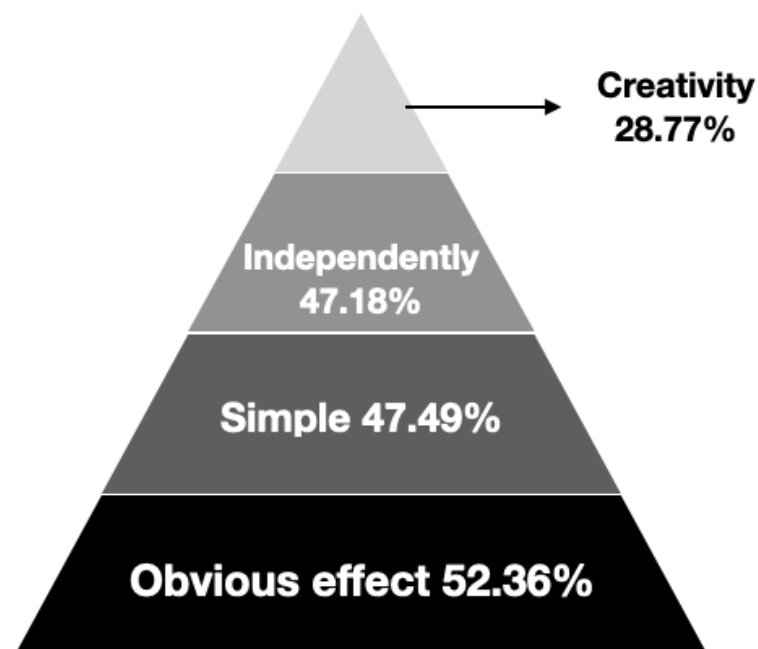


Figure 30 The proportion of stress-relieving methods among females
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

The data also shows that when choosing stress-relief methods, females particularly value flexibility in usage. 49.08% of the respondents preferred methods that could be done "anytime and anywhere." Additionally, 47.24% of females hoped that stress-relief methods could be carried out independently, while 36.98% preferred low-cost options, and 36.59% leaned toward activities that could be shared with others. Furthermore, 31.36% of the respondents engaged in stress-relief activities almost daily, while 25.75% did so once a week, indicating that the need for emotion regulation in their daily lives is highly sustained. These needs are difficult to fully meet in traditional art therapy, which highlights the need for flexible, convenient, and low-cost art therapy tools. These tools would allow females to easily perform emotion regulation in their daily lives, thus addressing their stress-relief needs across various scenarios.

Activity	Practice rate	Effectiveness
Drawing or coloring	18.49%	20.14%
Keep a diary/blog	20.04%	10.36%
Sports and Fitness	7.36%	20.72%
Handicrafts	9.87%	9.2%
Listen to music	20.72%	18.1%
Watch movies and TV series	12.97%	16.26%
Shopping	8.62%	14.23%
Online Games	13.94%	20.33%

Figure 31 The ratio of females' stress relief needs
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Traditional art therapy reveals significant limitations in this study, including time, location, and tool constraints, as well as insufficient personalization and low treatment frequency. Traditional therapy often relies on specific settings and tools, lacking flexibility and failing to meet the needs of working females or those with heavy family responsibilities. While group therapy can foster social interaction, it lacks specificity for the diverse sources of stress females face and fails to provide personalized guidance, while the intermittent nature of therapy sessions further limits emotional management continuity.

The market survey shows that females have a strong demand for the flexibility, convenience, and affordability of stress-relief methods, especially preferring those that can both express emotions (output) and bring comfort (input). As a simple and portable form of artistic creation, a coloring book can meet this demand. It has a low barrier to entry, is easy to use, and requires no professional skills. Users can express emotions and release stress by coloring at any time and place, all while providing an effective, low-cost means of emotional management.

Survey data indicates that drawing and coloring have become one of the common stress-relief methods used by females. The flexibility and personalization of a coloring book allow it to adapt to the needs of different females, regardless of time and location, making it particularly suitable for working females or those with busy family duties.

With its ease of use, cost-effectiveness, and high adaptability, a coloring book provides females with an independent and efficient emotional management tool, making it a practical and feasible form of art therapy.

4.2 Design Objectives

The main objective of this study is to develop a flexible and effective art therapy tool through the perspective of feminist art therapy to help females achieve self-regulation and alleviate psychological burdens when facing the pressures of multiple social roles. Based on the theoretical research in the previous chapters, the study reveals the structural pressures faced by contemporary Chinese females within the context of family, career, and societal expectations, particularly the psychological conflicts in gender role identity and social norms. These sources of stress not only include the continuation of traditional gender views in modern society, but also involve role conflicts between career and family dual identities. Therefore, this study, centered on feminist art therapy, designs a tool for stress relief that meets the daily needs of females, helping them find ways to express themselves in artistic creation and achieve exploration and reconstruction of their gender identity and social roles.

The core goal of the research is to combine the self-created F.A.C.T. strategy, which involves a series of artistic activities that allow females to express emotions and recognize sources of stress in a safe and private environment. By integrating color psychology and self-regulation methods, the study aims to enhance emotion regulation abilities. The F.A.C.T. strategy combines feminist cognition, coloring, color psychology, and advanced self-regulation emotional management methods to provide participants with a tool that can be used anytime in their daily lives for emotional management. This study adopts a systematic research methodology, including surveys, quantitative scale analysis, painting content analysis, and other methods, to verify the actual effectiveness of this tool in emotion regulation. The ultimate goal is to develop a coloring book and other flexible art therapy forms through the perspective of feminist art therapy, providing females with an effective means of self-emotion management, helping them achieve psychological balance in high-pressure lives, improving their social psychological adaptability, and providing a practical basis for improving female mental health support systems.

4.3 Design Principles

4.3.1 Coloring Book Design Principles

This stress-relief tool is grounded in feminist critique theory, constructing an intervention system that balances cultural critique with practical inclusivity. Through the feminist perspective, art therapy, and behavior-guidance mechanisms, a complete path from stress recognition to cognitive restructuring is formed. The design principles focus on responding to the survival dilemmas females face in patriarchal culture, transforming abstract theories into tangible daily practices, and bridging art expression with social transformation.

4.3.1.1 Gender-Specific Design.

The design focuses on unique stress points in the female life cycle (e.g., motherhood anxiety, the career ceiling) by constructing a gendered cognitive interface through a visual symbol system. Abstract feminist theory is transformed into concrete resistance patterns (e.g., a "broken cocoon rose" deconstructing traditional marriage symbols), facilitating an awareness shift from individual experience recognition to structural oppression critique during the coloring process.

4.3.1.2 Universal Architecture.

A modular strategy is adopted to accommodate diverse usage scenarios, offering solutions ranging from fragmented micro-interventions to deep systemic healing. Open visual structure design ensures barrier-free participation from females of different ages, professions, and cultural backgrounds.

4.3.1.3 Safe Expression Space Creation.

A decentralized usage ecosystem is constructed through self-guided instruction books and preset color guides, enabling home-based autonomous operations with zero professional barriers. Each pattern is embedded with metaphorical decoding cues, making independent creation a private ritual for self-dialogue.

4.3.1.4 Cultural Locality Adaptation.

Deep integration of local cultural genes and gender critique perspectives: through the localized re-creation of symbols, feminist enlightenment generates cognitive resonance with the collective memory of Chinese females.

4.3.1.5 High Emotional Resonance Trigger.

A metaphorical dialogue interface between color and emotion is constructed, using the psychological suggestive function of hue to activate subconscious expression. The immersive design of visual language promotes the embodiment and outward expression of stress experiences.

4.3.1.6 Color Psychology System Integration.

A dynamic color decision-making model is developed, creating interactive feedback between emotional states and color choices. By guiding emotional transformation through color gradation, the tool itself becomes a visual psychological regulation navigator.

4.3.1.7 Progressive Growth Path.

A tiered intervention program is designed to progress from cognitive enlightenment to active reconstruction in phases. Through gradual behavioral guidance, a natural transition from stress management to gender awareness awakening is achieved.

4.3.2 Coloring Book Content Design Theory

The content design theory of the coloring book in this study is derived from the combination of the feminist perspective, art therapy theory, and semiotics, as summarized and analyzed in Chapter 2's literature review, as well as from an in-depth study of four key theories of females' self-emotional control. These theories form the theoretical foundation for the design of the coloring book. Following these theories, the principles aim to provide females with an effective stress-relief tool and help them explore themselves, express emotions, and manage stress through artistic creation. Below are the main theoretical principles for the coloring book content design:

First, feminist symbols and social role identity are important starting points for this design. Flowers and plants are often seen as symbols of females, representing life, grace, and growth. In the coloring book, using these natural elements not only stimulates females' recognition of their unique strengths but also encourages them to reflect on their self-identity and social roles. According to feminist theory, females often face pressure and challenges in their multiple social roles. Through drawing and coloring, participants are able to reassess these roles, enhancing their self-identity and inner strength. The design of floral and plant patterns visually provides females with a space to reconnect with themselves and rebuild self-confidence, thereby evoking their inner power and emotional expression, effectively reducing stress.

Second, the application of plant therapy and nature therapy highlights the important role of natural elements in psychological therapy. Plants and flowers not only have natural aesthetic value but also have positive psychological effects. Nature therapy theory posits that nature has healing effects on both the body and mind, with contact with natural environments helping to reduce negative emotions such as anxiety, stress, and depression. Therefore, the design of plant and flower elements in the coloring book aims to guide participants into an emotional connection with nature through a visual "contact with nature." Through relaxation and focus during the coloring process, participants can temporarily escape from the pressures of daily life, entering a tranquil inner space, thereby achieving stress relief and emotion regulation.

Third, the use of mandala art therapy in the coloring book is also based on its rich psychological therapeutic background. A mandala, as a symbol of harmony and wholeness, has a unique psychological healing effect due to its symmetry and structured design. Mandala patterns guide participants into a meditative state, helping them achieve inner balance and emotional stability. Research has shown that mandala patterns can effectively reduce anxiety, providing a sense of order and control, which helps individuals feel more stable and relaxed when facing stress. The mandala designs in the coloring book leverage their geometric symmetry and structure to guide female participants in using coloring as a way to experience psychological balance and harmony, thus achieving significant effects in emotion regulation and stress relief.

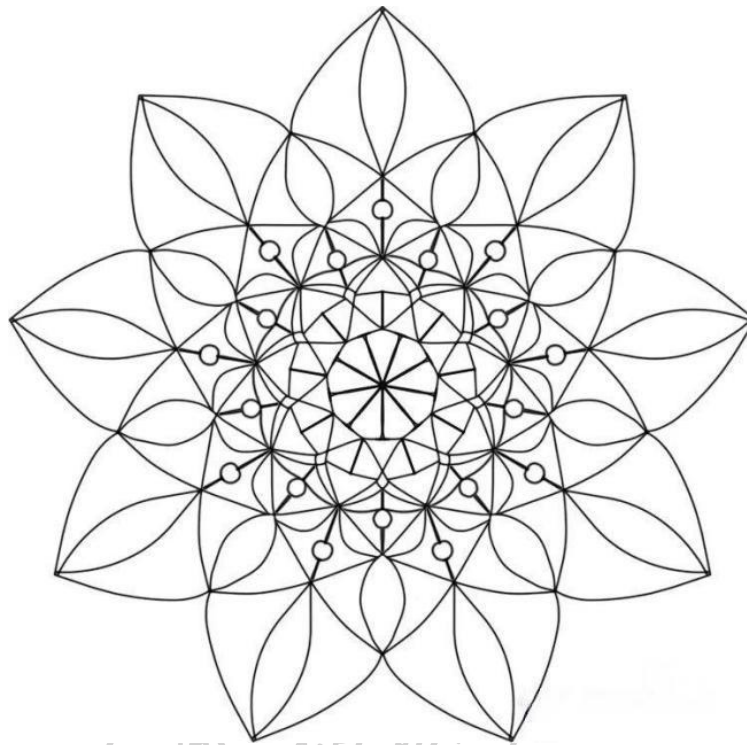


Figure 32 Mandala pattern
Source:

https://mbd.baidu.com/newspage/data/ftlandingsuper?nid=dt_4832387608300341224

Finally, the theories of architecture and environmental psychology are applied in the design of the coloring book to help participants establish a sense of security and belonging. Environmental psychology suggests that architectural and spatial design have a profound impact on emotional and psychological states. By introducing architectural imagery and spatial sensations, the design of the coloring book aims to provide participants with a psychological "safe haven." The design of architectural elements and spaces, through their structure and inclusivity, helps female participants escape the pressures and anxieties of daily life and enter a "psychological space" filled with a sense of security and comfort. This design not only focuses on the aesthetic effects of the visuals but also takes into account the psychological impact of the space, helping females achieve psychological relaxation and emotional release during the coloring process.

Through these design theories, the coloring book not only serves as an art therapy tool to help females achieve emotion regulation and stress relief, but also, with deep

support from psychological and sociological theories, promotes a reexamination of their self-awareness, social roles, and inner balance.

4.3.3 Coloring Book Content Design Principles

This coloring book follows the narrative thread of "feminist cognitive enlightenment" as its core theme. It constructs a complete experience loop, from theoretical penetration to behavioral transformation, through a rigorous content structure and aesthetic visual language. The content modules cover three main dimensions: theoretical guidance, practical operation, and reflection. This forms a layered and progressive content ecosystem. The visual design focuses on balancing "delicacy" and "functionality," transforming abstract ideas into perceptible and operable immersive artistic practices. The design always adheres to a core principle: making every inch of paper a gentle battleground for ideological enlightenment.

4.3.3.1 Main Content Module Structure.

4.3.3.1.1 Cover and Back Cover.

As the first impression carrier of the book, it conveys the core message through symbolic imagery while also serving as the brand recognition function.

4.3.3.1.2 Theoretical Introduction Section.

Includes the introduction page of the coloring book, an overview of feminism, and six feminist perspective analyses, establishing a cognitive framework for the coloring practice.

4.3.3.1.3 Tool Guide Section.

The color guide and the F.A.C.T. strategy guide form an operational support system, transforming abstract methodology into executable steps.

4.3.3.1.4 Core Practice Section.

The coloring pages use progressive pattern designs to guide users from technical

practice to free expression.

4.3.3.1.5 Summary and Elevation Section.

The concluding message and back cover form an emotional closure, reinforcing the significance and continuity of the activity.

4.3.3.2 Visual Design Principles.

4.3.3.2.1 Soft and Beautiful Visual Tone.

Uses watercolor textures and organic curves to avoid aggressive visual elements, creating a safe emotional container.

4.3.3.2.2 Clear and Layered Line Language.

The main outlines are reinforced with 1.5pt thick lines, while detail parts use 0.3pt fine lines, balancing the freedom of coloring with the recognizability of shapes.

4.3.3.2.3 Saturated Coloring Pages.

The design allows participants to freely color or outline without the concern that the pattern's original color will be too dark to cover.

4.3.3.2.4 Narrative Layout Rhythm.

Titles use serif fonts to convey a classic feel, while the body text uses sans-serif fonts to ensure readability. The image-text layout strictly follows the rule of thirds and baseline alignment.

4.3.4 The Meaning Behind the Element Selection in the Coloring Book

Table 7 Symbolic Meanings of Elements Used in the Coloring Book

Element Name	Element Meaning	Meaning in Art Therapy	Traditional Chinese Significance
Rose	Love, beauty, and danger coexist	Addressing emotional trauma (thorns represent defense mechanisms, petals symbolize self-acceptance)	Chinese native rose (Yueji) symbolizes peace across four seasons; Western roses introduced during the Qing Dynasty align with females' liberation movements
Bellflowers	Purity and rebirth	Healing postpartum depression (bell-shaped flowers evoke mother-infant bonding memories)	"Niao Luo" in <i>Book of Songs</i> symbolizes attachment, now reinterpreted as female mutual support
Orchids	Nobility and hidden desire	Guides sexual minorities toward self-identification (orchid reproductive duality)	Symbol of the gentleman (male-centric); in Li Qingzhao's poetry, "withered orchids" symbolize the plight of female intellectuals
Mandalas	Cosmic order and	Used for PTSD treatment (concentric structures promote	Esoteric Buddhist ritual tools; in <i>Flowers in the</i>

Element Name	Element Meaning	Meaning in Art Therapy	Traditional Chinese Significance
	psychological wholeness	prefrontal-limbic system integration)	<i>Mirror</i> , represent a female path to spatial transcendence
Lilies	Purity and resurrection	Help sexual assault survivors reclaim bodily autonomy (bulbs symbolize underground regeneration)	Symbol of matrimonial harmony; in <i>The Golden Lotus</i> , lilies hint at female desire
Sunflower	Loyalty and life force	Used for Seasonal Affective Disorder (heliotropism activates dopamine system)	Introduced in the Ming Dynasty, merged with loyalty culture; now reappropriated by female entrepreneurs as a symbol of independence
Euphorbia	Sacrifice and memory	Addresses war trauma (red color evokes hemoglobin, aids trauma narrative externalization)	Symbol of female tragedy in the tale of Xiang Yu and Yu Ji; now reframed in art exhibitions as a witness to gender-based violence
Flowers for the windowsill	Boundary between private and public spaces	Creates safe exposure scenarios (window frames offer structural security; external	In <i>Treatise on Superfluous Things</i> , window aesthetics dominated by men; now female artists

Element Name	Element Meaning	Meaning in Art Therapy	Traditional Chinese Significance
		views evoke emotional projection)	use window installations to critique spatial power dynamics
Warm Flower Shop	Healing-oriented consumption space	Group therapy venue (floral selection activates orbitofrontal cortex decision-making)	females-led business since Song Dynasty; modern floral studios serve as temporary refuges from family obligations
Chrysanthemum	Death and rebirth	Used in grief counseling (radiating petals guide emotional diffusion)	Secret resistance in Chongyang Festival (widows using white chrysanthemums to oppose remarriage per <i>The Chrysanthemum Chronicles</i>)
Monstera (Swiss Cheese Plant)	Resilience and adaptability	Psychological adjustment in chronic illness (leaf perforations evoke breathing imagery)	Recorded in <i>Lingnan Miscellany</i> for curing miasma; now a "single woman plant" symbol among urban females
Strelitzia reginae	Freedom and exotic imagination	Stimulates creative thinking (beak-shaped bracts activate the brain's	Introduced in the 1980s as a "trendy woman" home decor symbol, challenging traditional aesthetics

Element Name	Element Meaning	Meaning in Art Therapy	Traditional Chinese Significance
		precuneus metaphor zone)	of plum, orchid, bamboo, chrysanthemum
Iris	Bridge between the divine and the secular	Used in faith crisis intervention (three-petal structure symbolizes mind-body-spirit integration)	Known as "butterfly flower" in the Tang Dynasty; used as a tattoo by prostitutes to mark reformation (<i>Beili Zhi</i>)
Bouquet	Ritualized medium for emotional transmission	Tool for social anxiety intervention (bundling behavior as metaphor for relational formation, modular reconstruction)	Initially a male refinement practice in the Song Dynasty; became part of girls' school curriculum in the Republican era to challenge gender division

4.3.5 Semiotic Element Analysis

This study uses Roland Barthes's three-order model of semiotics as a theoretical framework to systematically deconstruct the symbolic violence mechanism of floral elements in coloring books. Through the denotation layer, the sensory discipline of plant morphology is analyzed; the connotation layer criticizes the gender coding logic of cultural metaphors; the symbol layer reveals the mythical operation of the "females are like flowers" ideology; and finally, the transformation of symbolic meaning is achieved at the reconstruction layer - turning traditional flowers from disciplinary tools into an expression interface of female subjectivity. This analytical path not only reveals the symbolic generation mechanism of gender pressure in Chinese society, but also provides an operational critical path for breaking through the implicit control of the

symbolic system through artistic intervention practice.

















Category	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
Flower 	Biological characteristics such as petal shape/color saturation/stem thorn density trigger sensory experience 	Gender discipline of "females are like flowers" (softness needs to be cared for/blooming is the peak of value) 	Your roots weave a network of resistance underground; your thorns and petals are both your scepters 
Green plant 	Structural features such as leaf hardness/vein orientation/hole distribution form spatial perception 	The implicit coding of "green plants = masculinity" (toughness/silence/functional existence) 	Leaf veins are the trajectory of destiny, and you have the power to redraw the growth coordinate system. 
Mandala 	Geometric elements such as concentric circles/radial lines/symmetry axes create visual compulsion 	The illusion of the "perfect self" in Jung's archetype theory (must be complete/must be harmonious) 	Perfect symmetry is not sacred, every fragment is a seal of self-determination. 
Flower shop 	Customers' preferences for "interactivity of the flower stand" (e.g. flowers facing others/white space) 	Social consumption discipline, capitalism sells romance to females for profit 	Every seed you caress quietly grows a kingdom of sisters on the shelf. 

Figure 33 Analysis of the Four Major Categories of Elements in semiotic Coloring Books
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4 Coloring Book Design

4.4.1 Content and Structure Design

4.4.1.1 Cover and Back Cover Design.

The cover features a cluster of blue-violet irises, visually constructing a dual expression of healing and critique. The iris has long been intertwined with females' destinies across Eastern and Western cultures: in Western art history, Van Gogh's "Irises" depicted vitality amid struggle; in traditional Chinese culture, the iris, also known as the "butterfly flower," was often embroidered on the lapels of females' garments in the Ming dynasty, conforming to the decorum of "feminine appearance" while discreetly conveying imaginative freedom. This design employs contemporary digital illustration to transform this historical tension into a participatory medium for art therapy.

The choice of blue-violet holds cultural translatability. The hue recalls rare dyes historically restricted for female use (e.g., "snowy blue" silks in Qing court attire) while also aligning with the symbolic color of modern gender equality movements (e.g., purple as the theme of International women's Day). The clear floral vein lines in the illustration guide colorers to focus on the present moment; their rhythmic patterns provide meditative calm, while the subtle distortions along petal edges imply a gentle defiance against perfectionist discipline.

The densely layered irises at the center of the cover form a visual "safe haven" through repetition in composition. Each flower's orientation introduces movement within order, metaphorically representing females' negotiation between tradition and modernity. This design approach continues the tradition of "inclusive critique" in art therapy—just as Mexican artist Frida Kahlo painted floral plaster corsets from her sickbed to transform pain into blooming, the cover seeks to open a fissure for self-healing within cultural constraints.

Table 8 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Cover and Back

Content	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
Iris cluster	The blue-purple gradient is like ink-wash mist, and the cold tones surround the form	Blue and purple symbolize mystery/religious rights/ folk use of grass to ward off evil spirits during the Dragon Boat Festival / "female's appearance" standard	Cold colors are the noblest counterattack - turning the melancholy in others' eyes into "calmness" to equip females with wisdom

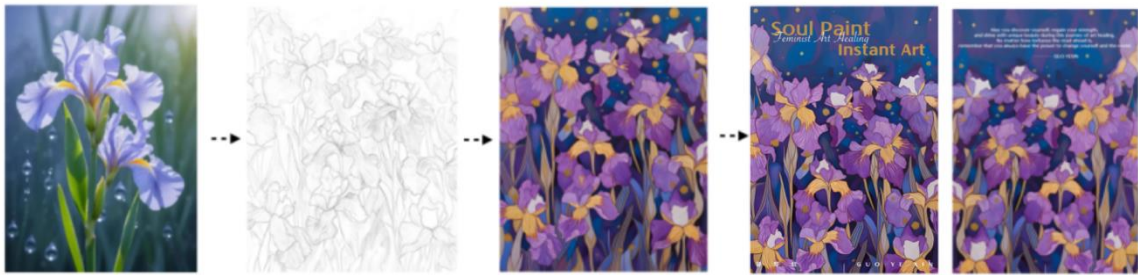


Figure 34 Cover and back design process: 21cm*29.7cm
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.2 Introduction Page Design.

The introduction page serves as a crucial guide and emotional prelude in the coloring book. It first helps readers understand the purpose and value of the coloring book, clarifying its role as a tool for females' art therapy—not merely a coloring activity, but a medium for females to release emotions, explore the self, and regulate inner states. The introduction explains that contemporary females endure multiple pressures, particularly arising from role conflicts in the workplace, family, and social life, often neglecting their own needs. Against this backdrop, the coloring book aims to help females reconnect with their inner emotions through artistic creation and regain a sense of balance and empowerment. It also introduces the F.A.C. T strategy and color therapy techniques, which will follow the introduction, to guide readers in effective emotion regulation and stress relief.

The introduction is centered on the poppy flower as a symbolic image, constructing an art therapy space that resonates with the lived experiences of females. The cultural memory of the poppy bears dual associations: on the one hand, it evokes the tragic narrative of Lady Yu's suicide during the Chu-Han contention; on the other, it represents resilient vitality in contemporary wildfields. This transition from a "symbol of sacrifice" to one of "self-regeneration" makes the plant an ideal medium for exploring the transformation of female stress.

Table 9 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Introduction page

Content	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
Orange Poppy	Warm-toned thin petals	Memorial/Symbol of fragile life /War memorial/Short-lived joy	Orange-red is not the fleeting sunset glow, but the flame meme that burns anxiety into glass and casts it into an everlasting flower



Figure 35 Introduction page design process: 21cm*29.7cm
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.3 Introduction of F.A.C. T Strategy and Color Therapy.

Following the introduction, the inclusion of the F.A.C. T strategy and color therapy methodology provides a systematic guide for the coloring book, enhancing its function beyond artistic creation into an effective tool for females' emotion regulation. The F.A.C. T strategy—comprising cognitive decentering, tool reframing, interactive resonance, and functional iteration—builds a step-by-step framework for managing emotions. Each module directly targets the core contradictions of stress in Chinese females—caught between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations, females require both ideological tools to dismantle internalized oppression and embodied instruments to enact behavioral transformation. Only through such multidimensional intervention can the ultimate goal of stress management be achieved: not for females to better adapt to oppressive structures, but to gain the capacity to reconstruct their living

systems.

The color therapy section further supports users in identifying and adjusting emotions through color. Each color corresponds to specific emotional symbols and therapeutic effects, enabling users to select hues according to their mood, achieving self-expression and psychological balance. A color therapy chart empowers users to consciously apply color for emotion management, providing a flexible emotion regulation tool for daily life. The integration of F.A.C. T strategy with color therapy transforms the coloring book into an effective self-healing support system, assisting females in gaining psychological relief and support through artistic creation.

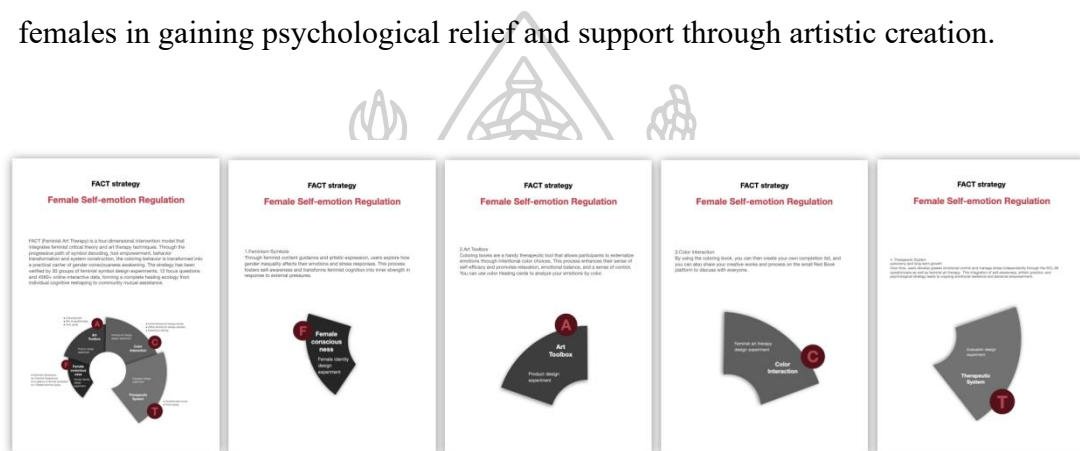


Figure 36 The design of the F.A.C. T strategy section design

Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Color guide

Color	Color psychology	Healing uses of color	Related feminist issues
Black	mysterious, solemn, sad	Self-reflection/repression release	The collective aphasia of historical discourse power
Dark Grey	moderate, lost, calm	Emotional balance/anxiety relief	The system solidification of implicit gender discrimination
White	pure, fresh, empty	Clear your mind/Start again	A visual statement of bodily autonomy
Blue	calm, relaxed, trusting	Decompress and relax/mentally soothe	The restorative narrative of the objectified female image
Brown	stable, reliable, simple	Security building/emotional stability	The obscured maternal lineage
Red	passionate, energetic, nervous	Motivation/anger release	Body politics in the institution of marriage
Pink	gentle, romantic, stress-free	Emotional comfort/self-care	The social construction of femininity
Orange	energetic, happy, mature	Creatively stimulating/emotionally active	Visual rectification of menopausal stigma
Yellow	happy, hopeful, energy	Foster a sense of hope/increase optimism	The folk female narrative that has been annihilated
Green	peaceful, growing, healing	Trauma repair/Inner peace	The tension between motherhood and self-actualization
Light Blue	calm, rational, profound	Creativity enhancement/spiritual cleansing	The legitimacy of the existence of non-binary gender
Purple	mysterious, noble, imaginative	Deep meditation/self-exploration	Modern reflection on the education of traditional talented girls

Figure 37 Color Guide Design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.4 Feminist Introduction Page Design.

This page design uses the bust of a cheongsam woman as the core narrative carrier, and conveys the metaphor of gender consciousness awakening through the reconstruction of visual symbols. In the picture, a woman wearing a traditional cheongsam bows her head and smiles, and the clusters of flowers blooming on the lapel break free from the fabric boundary and spread outward - the flowers break through the stand-up collar and stretch on the side of the neck. The orange main tone is laid out with a gradual smudge technique, transitioning from the sunset molten gold at the neckline

to the sunset embers at the skirt. It not only metaphorically represents the turning point of the era of patriarchy, but also dissolves the sharpness of the struggle with a warm spectrum, and establishes a balance between cultural inheritance and critical tension.

This design uses a dialectical dialogue between feminism and tradition. The slim silhouette of the cheongsam is originally a historical imprint of the body politics of modern Chinese females, and the wanton growth of branches shifts the focus of gaze from the aesthetic of curves to the self-empowerment of vitality. The woman's drooping face avoids the objectification perspective, and the smile is condensed at the corner of the lips instead of blooming on the whole face, suggesting the subjectivity that refuses to be incorporated by the symbol of "sweet obedience". The path of the petals breaking through

The constraints of form corresponds to the growth trajectory of individuals from the private domain to the public domain, and also symbolizes the breakthrough of collective consciousness against gender role stereotypes, ultimately forming a dynamic game of "confinement" and "blooming" on the picture, providing participants with a visual thinking space for deconstructing gender.

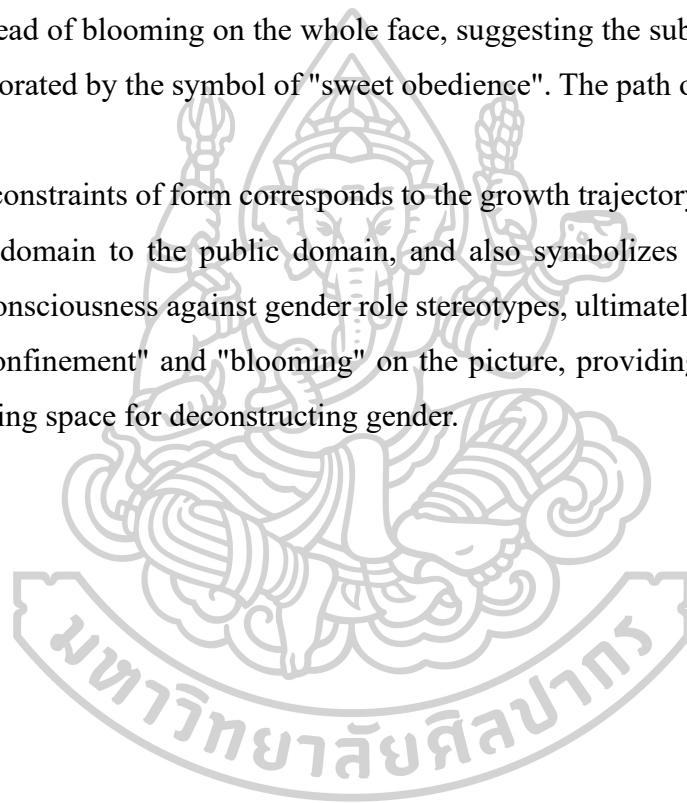


Table 10 Semiotics Analysis Table feminist Introduction Page

Page Type	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
Introduction page (Cheongsam females·Spreading flowers)	The outline of the cheongsam is blurred in ink, and the branches break through the frame and grow out of the paper.	The rebellion of the "branch-breaking method" in Song Dynasty flower and bird paintings: the complete beauty that refuses to be framed	Symbiosis between body and plants: The stitches of cheongsam are a modern way to express the "collection of mulberry leaves" in the Book of Songs
	The woman lowered her head and smiled, her fingertips lightly touching the petals.	Deconstructing the "lowered eyebrows" tradition in literati painting: from being submissive to whispering with all things	A new interpretation of "studying things to gain knowledge" is at the touch of your fingertips: exploring beauty is to reconstruct the world order

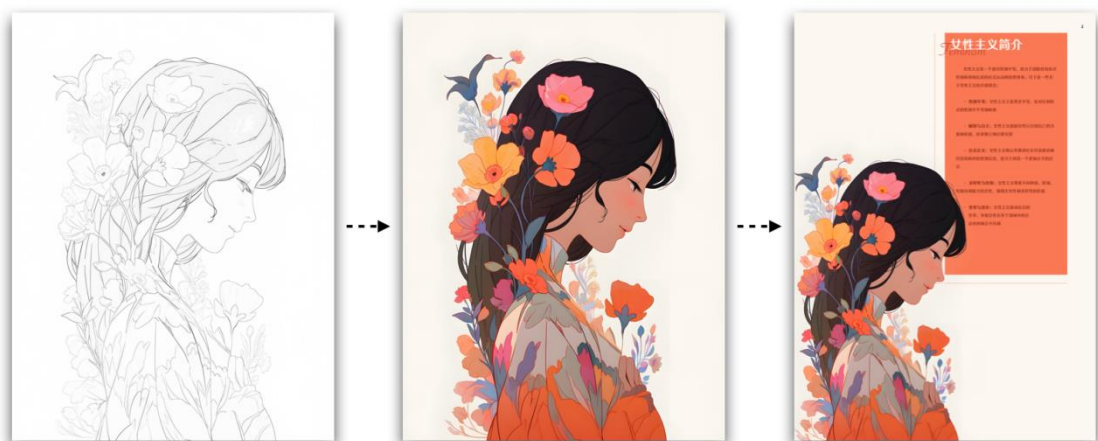


Figure 38 feminist Introduction Page Design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5 Feminist Perspective Page Design.

Through preliminary literature research analyzing the challenges faced by females in contemporary society, I identified two key factors significantly affecting females' psychological and emotional states. The first is a lack of self-awareness—females often find it difficult to clearly understand their identities, roles, and emotional needs. To assist females in gaining better self-understanding and achieving cognitive integration of emotional and social roles, I included six feminist perspectives drawn from theoretical summaries of Chinese females' challenges as interleaved pages in the coloring book. These six perspectives aim to encourage deep reflection on social roles and cultural influences through a feminist lens, thereby promoting enhanced self-awareness.

These interleaf pages are not only visually artistic—combining female figures with floral elements to appeal to feminine aesthetics and stimulate interest—but also serve as vital tools guiding participants to recognize structural issues and the root causes of their stress. In the current societal context, females frequently struggle between multiple roles—career professionals, household managers, mothers, or partners—each shaped by traditional culture and modern norms. These feminist perspectives are designed to offer opportunities for females to reassess the self and critically reflect on social expectations.

Table 11 Semiotics Analysis Table of feminist Perspective Pages

Viewing angle	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
1. Gender perspective (woman in red skirt, poppy)	The red dress is like a traditional wedding dress, and the petals are like drops of blood	Red is regulated as the "exclusive color for brides", which is actually a metaphor for female sacrifice	Take back the sovereignty of the body, the petals are the sparks that burn the chastity arch
2. Intersectionality (Green-haired girl, Rainbow Flower)	Close your eyes to avoid the gaze of the world, the petals are like multiple identity labels	The orange background implies the oppression of "minorities must cater to the mainstream"	Closing your eyes is a form of self-protection, but it is also a meditation posture to accumulate energy for counterattack.
3. Historical Perspective (Brown-haired Woman, Wild Chrysanthemum)	The blue and purple wild chrysanthemums are like mold spots on ancient books, and the dark green ones are like feudal shackles.	Cold colors are defined as "not suitable for females", which is actually a sign of intellectual repression	Adding to the glorious resumes of unsung females in history
4. Critical Perspective (Blue-haired Girl, Pink Orange Flower)	The pink and orange is like a sweet filter, and the cold purple background is a	The lie that "girls should be gentle" is a gender prison hidden under the pink sugar coating	Mosaic the discipline manual, the petals are torn labels

Viewing angle	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
	disciplinary cage.		
5. Power Dynamics Perspective (Black-Haired Girl, Colorful Poppy)	Orange is like sunlight piercing through dark clouds, with uneven distribution of petals	Areas with dense flower clusters = male-dominated areas, blank areas = female-silent areas	Using color violence to break the invisible enchantment of the power map
6. Social construction perspective (pink-dressed woman, red poppy)	Pink clothes are wrapped in red flowers, like standard answers that trap individuality	The lie that "females should wear pink" is actually a trap for domesticating aesthetics	The model room that bombards social discipline with rebellious colors



4.4.1.5.1. Gender Perspective: Crimson Awakening.

A woman in red entangled with blood-colored poppies visually deconstructs traditional gender discipline. The poppy's bold stem lines—drawing from Dunhuang flying-figure painting techniques—break through the fragile metaphor of the flower. The red color evokes historical female sacrifices (e.g., the legend of Lady Meng Jiang) while referencing menstrual equity movements' aesthetics of resistance. The negative space within the layered petals conceals fragments of "Biographies of Exemplary females", symbolically overwritten during the coloring process.



Figure 39 Gender perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5.2. *Intersectional Perspective: Radiant Coexistence.*

Clusters of multicolored flowers in an orange-red palette are segmented in Mondrian-style color blocks, expressing the complexity of interwoven identities. A green-haired girl with closed eyes pays homage to Frida Kahlo's "Roots", while flower stems embed Morse code (decoding to Audre Lorde's quote: "There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle"), symbolizing oppression across race, class, and other axes. Petal textures merge decorative patterns and Pride elements, forming a cross-cultural dialogue.



Figure 40 Intersectional Perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5.3. *Historical Perspective: Re-Tilling Memory.*

Blue-violet wild chrysanthemums emerging from dark green foliage reconstruct the visual grammar of women's historiography. Flower outlines reference the Han dynasty image-brick motif of Nüwa creating humans, while the cool palette echoes the elegiac mood of late Qing revolutionary Qiu Jin's poem, "Autumn wind and rain grieve the soul." The flower core hides a miniature timeline—from women's suffrage in the 1920s to the 2023 abortion rights march—recording both oppression and resistance.



Figure 41 Historical Perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5.4. *Critical Perspective: Deconstructive Blue.*

Pink-orange blossoms on a pale purple background use contradictory color schemes to challenge visual comfort zones. Floral forms symbolize the shackles of biological determinism, with blue hair rendered in cyborg texture to question the natural/artificial binary. Cubist fragmentation of petals forces multi-angle visual reassembly, metaphorizing the deconstruction of gender norms.



Figure 42 Critical Perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5.5. *Power Dynamics Perspective: Spectrum of Struggle.*

A black-haired girl wrapped in orange-yellow poppies visualizes power networks through plant root systems. The main stem symbolizes the heartbeat rhythm of institutional oppression; the varying thickness of vines reflects Foucault's notion of "micro-power" infiltration. The girl's firm grip on the flower implies its function as a tool of resistance.



Figure 43 Power Dynamics Perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.5.6. *Social Constructivist Perspective: Dance of Reconstruction.*

A woman in red symbiotically merged with red poppies employs "color immersion" to deconstruct essentialism. Petals adopt traditional Chinese stylistics, hinting at the assemblage nature of gender norms and re-defining femininity through the interplay of strength and softness.



Figure 44 Social Constructivist Perspective page design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.6 Interleaf Content Design.

The inner pages of this coloring book are designed with minimalist light gray lines that outline plant imagery, creating a healing interface that is both guiding and open. All 30 illustrations feature a white background and 0.3mm gray-scale contour lines (Pantone Cool Gray 2 C). This visual syntax originates from the Song Dynasty's white drawing theory, "emptiness accommodates all realms"-the irises, mandala geometry, and the interplay of light and shadow on windowsills provide participants with tangible creative anchor points, while the use of negative space allows for the freedom of reconstruction. The line designs subtly integrate semiotic nuances: the broken brushstrokes along the holes of the bamboo leaves symbolize the penetrability of institutional oppression; the spiral lines of the bird-of-paradise flower's calyx hint at Deleuzian "escape routes"; and the intentionally fractured stems of the irises invite participants to use color to heal the gaps between historical trauma and modern anxiety.

Each piece's gray border essentially forms a "safety threshold." Participants are free to either break the boundary (e.g., coloring the iris petals in blood red, extending them into protest slogans in the background) or add personal narratives in the blank spaces (e.g., drawing their own window display in the flower shop scene). This design continues Paulo Freire's concept of "dialogic education," transforming the coloring activity into a collective rewriting of feminist symbols—when warm orange fills the cold contours of the lily of the valley, or golden powder fills the sorrowful folds of chrysanthemums, participants are essentially deconstructing gendered rituals in traditional flower language through bodily practice. The white canvas, like unwritten parchment, awaits individual experiences and collective memories to generate new healing texts in the layering of colors, where each seemingly spontaneous stroke across boundaries becomes a metaphorical ritual of breaking psychological boundaries.

Table 12 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Every page

Serial number	Coloring content	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
1	Single Rose	Thorn density/ petal layers	Love/Pain	Stab → Defense visualization
2	A bunch of lilies of the valley	Drape arc/bell opening ratio	Purity/Fragility	Bell → Sound Diffuser
3	A bunch of orchids	Abnormal structure of lip	Aristocratic temperament/sexual metaphor	Lip → Declaration Amplifier
4	Mandala	Concentric circles	Balance/Perfection	Symmetry can also be a peaceful heart
5	Mandala	Radiation density	Cosmic Order	Rays can be the way to the heart
6	A bouquet of lilies	Stigmamucus texture	Motherhood/fertility	Body autonomy
7	sunflower	Seed tray honeycomb structure	Loyalty/heat conversion	Self-luminous heat
8	poppy	Petal wrinkle	Temptation/short-lived pleasure	Wrinkles → Creases of Time

Seria l num ber	Coloring content	Denotat ion	Connotation	Reconstru ction Myth
9	Single-storey flower shop	Plant stacking layers	Consumerism/Commoditization	Deconstructing the consumption space
10	Mandala	Boundary closure	Self-protection	Open Borders
11	Single-storey flower shop	Depth of space	Class display	Flat perspective
12	Half Mandala	Hatch Curvature	The beauty of imperfection	Compulsory Completion
13	Diagonal Mandala	Cross axis angle	Binary opposition	Completeness does not mean perfection
14	Single-storey flower shop	Uniformity of container shape	Standardized Aesthetics	Irregular Container Implantation
15	chrysanthemum	Density of tongue-shaped petals	Mourning/Longevity	Density smooths out the creases of time
16	Monstera	Hole distribution pattern	Exotic	Accept imperfect life
17	Double Sunflower	Flower stem	Dependencies	Competitive growth

Serial number	Coloring content	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
		intersection		
18	Mandala	Number of color zones	Psychological isolation	Cross-region penetration
19	Double Mandala	Pattern Similarity	Copy/Discipline	Differential Empowerment
20	Bird of Paradise	Bird's beak shaped bracts	Freedom/Adventure	Autonomous right to speak
21	Flowers on windowsill	Internal and external space dividing line	Private domain/public display	Infinite growth to the outside world
22	Cluster of Roses	Flower spacing	Group unconsciousness	Spacing → Social Distance
23	Flowers on windowsill	Light projection direction	The Observer	You are your own audience
24	Mandala	Center point ratio	Perfect/complete	You are the center
25	A pot of orchid	Density	Elegance/Restraint	Flowers can bloom anywhere

Serial number	Coloring content	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
26	iris	Ratio of drooping petals to standard petals	Theocracy/Messenger	Late night healing
27	Small wild flowers	Random distribution pattern	Humble/Wild	Disorder → Freedom
28	iris	Honey guide texture	Temptation Path	Path → Autonomous Trajectory
29	Double-storey flower shop	Interaction between upper and lower layers	Hierarchy	Every floor has its own unique atmosphere
30	Bouquet of flowers	Beautiful bouquet	The recipient	Love yourself and give yourself

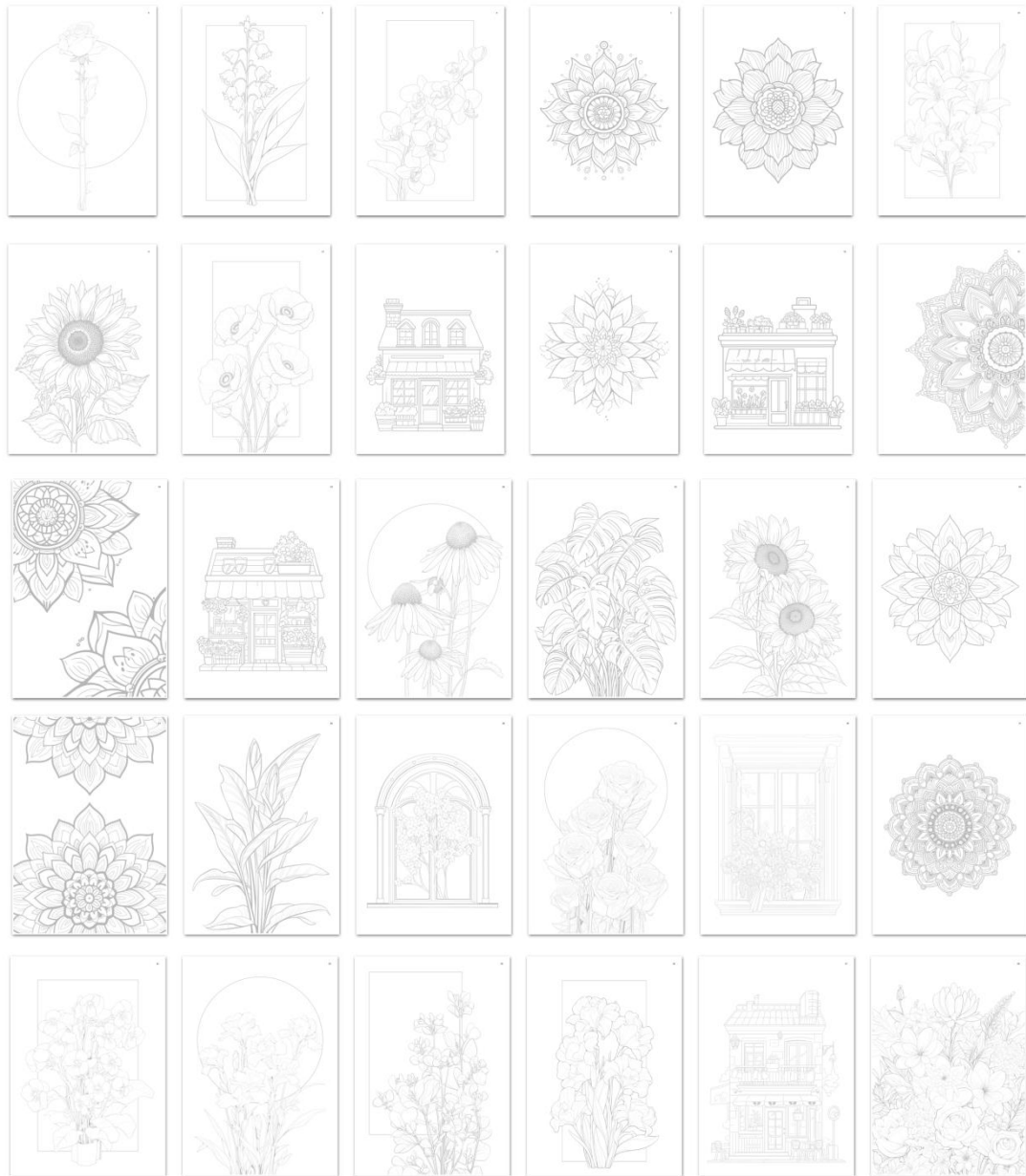


Figure 45 Interleaf Content Design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.1.7 Color Message Page Design.

Message Page Design.

The iris flower blooming in the deep blue night is a visual declaration of inner strength. The deep blue-violet background symbolizes challenges and the unknowns of life, much like the night storing the energy for dawn; the bright yellow light bursting from the heart of the flower symbolizes the untapped potential within every individual, the perfect moment to self-illuminate when darkness envelops the outside world.

The gradient of the iris petals radiating from the center transitions from rich purple to bright yellow—this is not only a color gradient but also a visual narrative of overcoming adversity. The slight blurring at the edges of the petals hints that the light will eventually surpass the defined boundaries, and the deliberately left-open lines invite every colorist to continue the light's trajectory with their brush, completing a personalized definition of "hope" through participation.

This is not just a blessing, but a gentle reminder: true brightness does not lie in pre-designed patterns, but in the courage to paint outside the lines. When yellow breaks through the contours of the petals and the deep blue background is dotted with personal stars, each stroke is rewriting the script of "bloom."

Table 13 Semiotics Analysis Table of Coloring Book Every page

Page Type	Denotation	Connotation	Reconstruction Myth
Message Page (Dark Night Iris-Central Glow)	The blue and purple petals fission ice porcelain pattern, and the halo particles scatter like star trails	Digital reincarnation of Dunhuang mural "Noctilucent Algae Ceiling": Darkness is the container of light	Cracks and light dance together: the hope of the "Wei Ji" hexagram in the Book of Changes emerges from the broken places

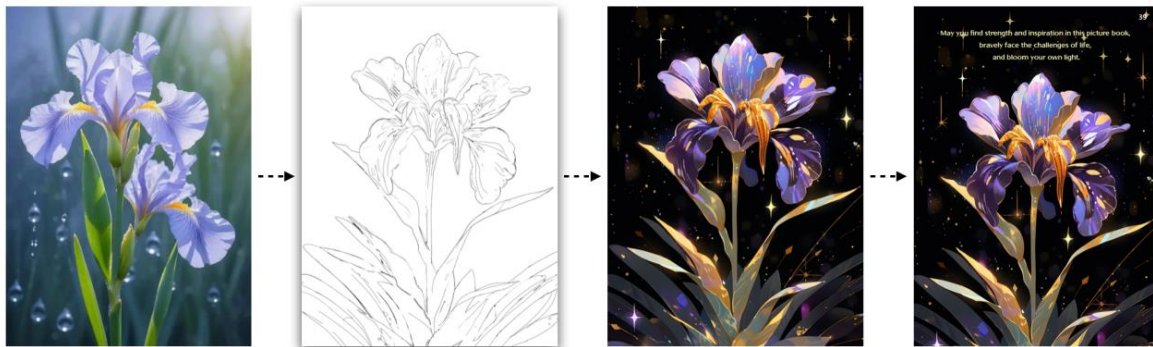


Figure 46 Message page Design
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.4.2 Design process

In the design process of the coloring book, I first began by collecting drawing materials to provide rich inspiration for the overall design. To ensure that the design content is both visually appealing and supportive of females' emotional expression and regulation, I specifically selected photos related to females, flowers, plants, and architecture. These materials symbolize females' vitality, resilience, and need for safety. For example, flowers and plants symbolize growth and healing, while architecture conveys stability and safety. Through the analysis of these materials, I not only captured aesthetic inspirations for the pattern designs but also understood the emotional meanings behind them, laying the foundation for the content of the coloring pages.

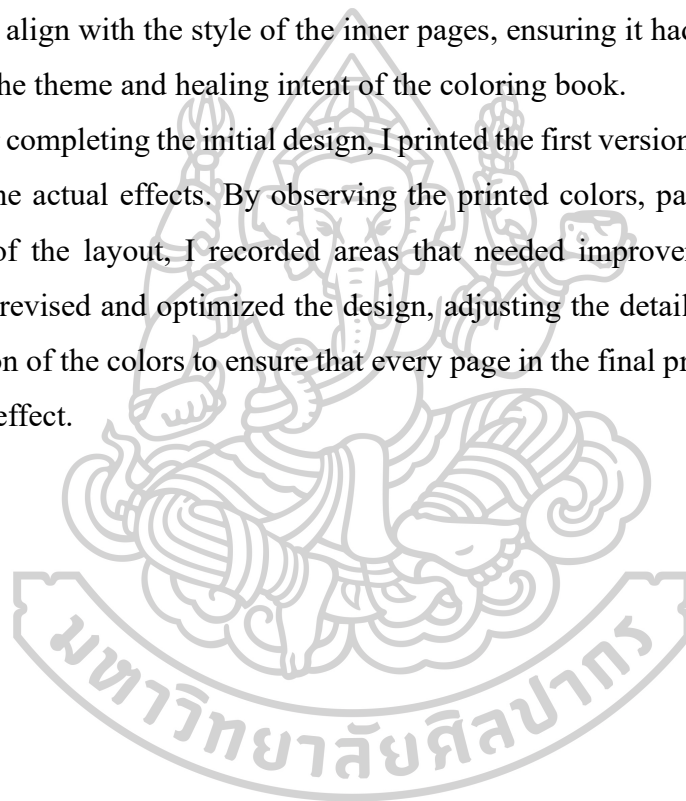
Once the material collection was complete, I moved into the hand-drawing phase, transforming the collected elements into specific patterns in the coloring book. During the hand-drawing process, I focused on detail and structure to ensure that each page's design was both aesthetically pleasing and aligned with the needs of artistic healing. For example, I integrated the symmetry of mandalas, the softness of flowers, and the geometric structure of buildings to create visual balance and harmony. Every detail in the hand-drawing was carefully crafted to provide users with a sense of safety and order, allowing them to gradually release their inner emotions through coloring.

After the hand drawings were completed, I added color, considering the impact of colors on emotions. Every color choice was carefully thought out. Soft tones were

used to express calmness and relaxation, while bright tones were used to inspire strength and vitality. Coloring not only enhanced the layers of the patterns but also provided users with a reference for color selection, allowing them to choose colors that express their emotional state during the coloring process.

Next, I arranged all the hand-drawn patterns in a layout, ensuring that the content on each page was visually cohesive and unified. During the layout process, I paid special attention to spacing, page layout, and overall aesthetic to ensure users would have a pleasant experience when flipping through and using the book. I also designed the cover to align with the style of the inner pages, ensuring it had visual appeal while conveying the theme and healing intent of the coloring book.

After completing the initial design, I printed the first version of the coloring book to inspect the actual effects. By observing the printed colors, pattern details, and the rationality of the layout, I recorded areas that needed improvement. Based on this feedback, I revised and optimized the design, adjusting the details of the patterns and the saturation of the colors to ensure that every page in the final product would achieve the desired effect.



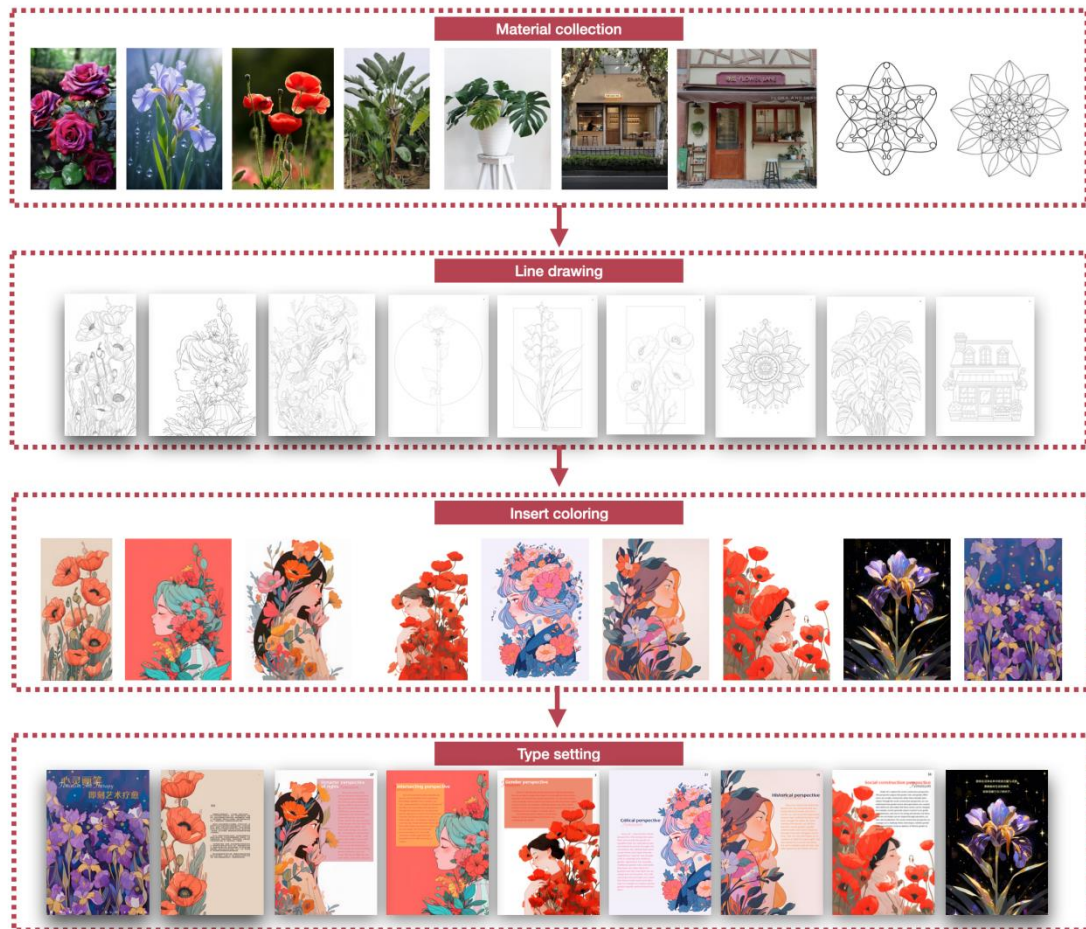


Figure 47 Picture book design process
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

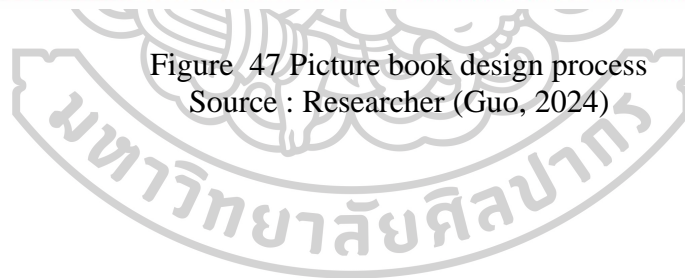




Figure 48 Printing effect of hard cover of coloring book
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 49 Printing effect of insert
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 50 The printing effect of the colored inner pages of the coloring book
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 51 Picture books and drawing tools
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Finally, I compiled all the content and printed the final version, providing users

with a coloring book that combines both artistic creativity and therapeutic effects. This coloring book is not only a medium for artistic creation but also a tool to help females with emotion regulation and stress relief.

4.5 Design Experiment



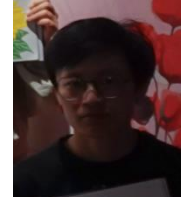
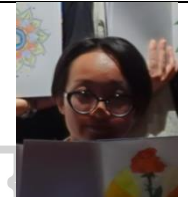
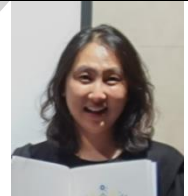
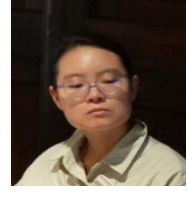
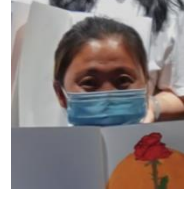
4.5.1 Participant Selection

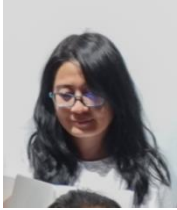


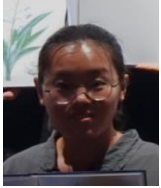

In the first phase of the feminist art therapy experiment, I conducted a rigorous selection process for participants to ensure they met the research requirements and could provide high-quality data support for the experiment. The selection process was based on a questionnaire survey, which was published on an online platform for data collection and analysis. The questionnaire was open for 10 days, during which 106 females aged between 35 and 45 participated in the survey. After the selection and analysis, 12 local females from Kunming who met the criteria and were willing to participate in the study were selected as participants for the experiment.

The main criteria for selection were based on the research objectives and experimental design requirements. Participants had to meet the following conditions: First, they must have lived in Kunming for at least two months to ensure their long-term involvement in the experiment process and completion of multi-phase data collection. Secondly, participants needed to have a basic interest in art therapy and an open attitude, willing to understand the methods of art therapy and its potential effects on emotion regulation. Additionally, they had to agree to the use of their personal data during the research and consent to one month of data collection and analysis, while also participating in the art therapy activities and the use and analysis of the resulting artworks. To ensure the effectiveness of the experiment, the stress levels of the 12 final participants were strictly controlled within the range of 5 to 8, and they all voluntarily participated.

Through this selection process, I ensured that the participants' psychological states were suitable for the experimental intervention, laying the foundation for the credibility and analyzability of the subsequent experimental data. This phase of participant selection was a crucial step, directly affecting the scientific rigor and validity of the experimental design and implementation.

Table 14 Experimental Participants

Name	Sample No.	photo
Yang Zixuan	Sample 1	
Yang Yanhong	Sample 2	
Tan Junwen	Sample 3	
Chen Weiya	Sample 4	
Guo Jia	Sample 5	
Cao Rui	Sample 6	
Xu Yuwen	Sample 7	

Name	Sample No.	photo
Wei Qun	Sample 8	
Wang Heying	Sample 9	
Bayberry	Sample 10	
Li Ling	Sample 11	
Chen Yan	Sample 12	

4.5.2 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Offline Activity 1.0

4.5.2.1 Process of the Offline Activity 1.0.

On the afternoon of July 30, 2024, at 2:00 PM, I organized the first offline feminist art therapy activity. This event invited 12 local females from Kunming, who were selected through a questionnaire screening, and all participants attended punctually and actively participated. The activity took place in a warm and quiet space, designed to provide participants with a safe and comfortable environment where they could focus on exploring and expressing their emotions.

After the event began, I first gave a thematic presentation to the participants through a carefully prepared PowerPoint presentation (PPT). The PPT covered several core parts: firstly, I introduced why I chose feminist art therapy as the research topic, and the six perspectives of feminist, to help the participants better understand their identity status and life difficulties, fostering a deeper self-awareness. I then elaborated on my research objectives — aiming to alleviate the pressure contemporary females face due to their multiple social roles through this method. Following this, I explained the basic principles of art therapy, with a particular emphasis on the important role of painting in emotional expression and regulation. I also combined the core content of the F.A.C. T strategy and gave detailed instructions on how participants could carry out stress-relief coloring activities at home according to the strategy. Additionally, I explained the specific applications of color therapy, helping them understand the relationship between color and emotion, and encouraged them to use a color therapy chart to select colors that suited their emotional states during the coloring process, further helping them alleviate psychological pressure.

Following the presentation, I invited all 12 participants to complete the SCL-90 questionnaire as the initial data collection for the experiment. This questionnaire aimed to assess the current psychological state of the participants and provide baseline data for subsequent comparative analysis. Upon completing the questionnaire, I distributed the designed coloring books to each participant and explained the usage rules and precautions. During the painting session, participants were encouraged to freely choose colors based on their inner emotions and preferences. The atmosphere during the coloring process was relaxed and enjoyable, with participants chatting in limited ways while sharing their emotional stories and initial impressions of the activity. This interaction not only enhanced mutual understanding and support but also allowed them to feel resonance and warmth from others in the creative process.



Figure 52 The experimental content is being explained to the participants
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 53 The participants are coloring
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



Figure 54 The participants presented the coloring results
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

After the coloring session, I conducted a brief on-site analysis of each participant's first artwork. The analysis focused mainly on the choice of colors, the coloring style of the patterns, and the overall emotional expression, helping participants gain an initial understanding of their emotional state and the role of the coloring activity in emotional release. Through this analysis, many participants began to realize the emotional demands and sources of pressure within themselves and became interested in the psychological significance behind their color choices.

At the end of the activity, all 12 participants showed great interest in the content of the activity and provided positive feedback about their experiences. They not only expressed approval of the art therapy method but were also excited about the design of the coloring book and its usage rules. In the following month, I required participants to use the coloring book for emotion regulation whenever they felt stressed, and to take photos of each of their colored works. At the same time, they were asked to complete the SCL-90 questionnaire again each week to collect continuous data and track

emotional changes. The entire experimental period lasted for one month, and after its completion, a second offline feminist art therapy activity would be conducted to further analyze the effects and summarize the research findings.

This activity not only provided the participants with a preliminary understanding of art therapy but also offered them a new way to explore their own emotions. Through painting, communication, and self-reflection, they had the opportunity to release emotions, while also laying a solid foundation for data collection in the research.



4.5.2.1 SCL-90 Initial Data Analysis.

Top 3 items in participants

Name		Yang Zixuan				date		July 30			
Somatization F1		Force F2		Interpersonal sensitivity F3		Depression F4		Anxiety F5		Hostile F6	
Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score
1	0	3	2	6	1	5	3	2	1	11	3
4	1	9	1	21	3	14	2	17	2	24	4
12	0	10	1	34	3	15	3	23	2	63	4
27	0	28	2	36	1	20	3	33	2	67	3
40	0	38	3	37	2	22	3	39	3	74	3
42	0	45	3	41	1	26	3	57	4	81	3
48	0	46	2	61	2	29	3	72	3		
49	1	51	2	69	3	30	3	78	1		
52	0	55	2	73	3	31	4	80	1		
53	1	65	3			32	3	86	2		
56	0					54	2				
58	0					71	4				
		total	21	total	19			total	21		
total	3					total	38			total	20
Terror F7		Paranoid F8		Psychotic F9		Other F10					
Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Project No.	score	Factor Item	Total score	Number of projects	Factor
13	3	8	2	7	1	19	1	F1	3	12	0.25
25	3	18	3	16	1	44	2	F2	21	10	2.10
47	1	43	4	35	2	59	1	F3	19	9	2.11
50	3	68	3	62	1	60	1	F4	38	13	2.92
70	3	76	2	77	1	64	2	F5	21	10	2.10
75	2	83	3	84	1	66	3	F6	20	6	3.33
82	2			85	2	89	2	F7	17	7	2.43
				87	0			F8	17	6	2.83
				88	1			F9	11	10	1.10
				90	1			F10	12	7	1.71
total	17	total	17			total	12				
Total score	179	Equal	1.99	Number of positive items		58	Average score of positive items		2.7		

Figure 55 Participant Score Collection Table
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Each participant's SCL-90 questionnaire was recorded in the following data collection table to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships. In the initial measurement, among the 12 participants, the highest total score was 230, which falls into the moderately abnormal range, while the lowest score was 169, which falls into the mildly abnormal range. The overall mean score was 198, with 5 participants scoring above the average (41.67%) and 7 participants scoring below the average (58.33%), as shown below:

Table 15 Initial Total Scores and Averages

Case Number	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Above Average	Below Average
12	230	169	198	5 (41.67%)	7 (58.33%)

The average score for the SCL items of the 12 respondents ranged from 1.88 to 2.56, with the number of positive items ranging from 58 to 82, and the average score for positive items ranged from 2.32 to 2.83, as detailed below:

Table 16 Initial Participant Scores

Sample No.	Stress Level	Total Item Score	Average Item Score	Number of Positive Items	Average Positive Item Score
Sample 1	Mild	179	1.99	58	2.73
Sample 2	Mild	190	2.11	63	2.84
Sample 3	Mild	176	1.96	61	2.61
Sample 4	Moderate	226	2.51	76	2.80
Sample 5	Mild	169	1.88	62	2.32
Sample 6	Mild	213	2.37	72	2.78
Sample 7	Moderate	230	2.56	77	2.83
Sample 8	Mild	220	2.44	75	2.77
Sample 9	Mild	228	2.53	82	2.68
Sample 10	Mild	173	1.92	59	2.54
Sample 11	Mild	180	2.02	60	2.57
Sample 12	Mild	188	2.09	64	2.63

Initial scores of each SCL factor revealed the following distribution:

Factors with mean scores below 2.0 and where more than half of the participants

scored in this range included Somatization (12 participants), Psychoticism (9 participants), and Other (8 participants).

Factors with mean scores between 2.0 and 2.9 and with a majority of participants scoring in this range included Interpersonal Sensitivity (10 participants), Anxiety (10 participants), Paranoia (9 participants), Depression (9 participants), Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms (8 participants), Hostility (6 participants), and Phobic Anxiety (6 participants).

The only factor with mean scores between 3.0 and 3.8 and more than half of the participants scoring in this range was Hostility (6 participants).

Details are presented as follows:

Table 17 Proportion of Initial Scores by Factor

Stress Factor	Number of Participants with Scores < 2.0	Proportion	Number of Participants with Scores 2.0–2.9	Proportion	Number of Participants with Scores 3.0–3.8	Proportion
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms	2	16.67%	8	66.67%	2	16.67%
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	8.33%	10	83.33%	1	8.33%
Depression	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	0	0.00%	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Phobic Anxiety	2	16.67%	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Paranoid Ideation						

Psychoticism	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Others	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Somatization						
Obsessive-Compulsive Symptoms	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

Among the 12 participants, 9 were assessed to be in a state of mild psychological stress. According to the results of the SCL-90 analysis, these participants exhibited relatively minor emotional issues. They occasionally experienced symptoms such as anxiety, irritability, and depression in daily life, but overall maintained good self-regulation capabilities. Although they felt nervous and uneasy when facing stress, they were generally able to alleviate these emotions through simple self-soothing methods such as coloring, meditation, or physical exercise. Their emotional state did not significantly impact their daily lives or work performance.

The remaining 3 participants were assessed to be in a moderate state of stress. The SCL-90 analysis revealed that they carried a relatively heavier psychological burden, with more frequent episodes of anxiety, depression, and emotional fluctuations. Their stress might not be limited to the psychological level and could have begun to affect their daily routines and work efficiency. Symptoms such as persistent insomnia, difficulty concentrating, and social withdrawal were evident. Participants experiencing moderate stress require more psychological support and guidance to effectively reduce stress levels and restore mental well-being.

4.5.2.2 Quantitative Correlation Between Symptom Improvement and Design Elements.

Among the assessed psychological stress factors, three showed a notably high prevalence: interpersonal sensitivity, depression, and anxiety. Therefore, the researcher specifically designed stress-relief coloring methods targeting these three factors. Participants were instructed to follow these approaches in their subsequent coloring

sessions.

Table 18 Initial Assessment Data (Pre-test) and Corresponding Interventions



Core Symptoms	Item Mean (M±SD)	Symptom Severity Three-inch lotus feet	Corresponding Design Elements	Element Usage Rate	Mechanism of Action
Interpersonal Sensitivity (9 items)	2.42±0.38	Moderate	Progressive Tasks + Neutral Colors (Gray/White)	12.5%	Neutral Colors (Brightness 65-75): Reduce perceived social threat in social scenarios;
Depression (13 items)	2.62±0.51	Moderate	Mandala Structure + Cool Tones (Blue/Green)	30%	Progressive Tasks: Enhance self-efficacy.
Anxiety (10 items)	2.57±0.43	Moderate	Floral Patterns + Warm Tones (Orange/Yellow)	16.1%	









4.5.2.3 Participants' Initial Artwork Analysis.




In the early stages of the feminist art therapy experiment, the researcher conducted a detailed analysis of the participants' first coloring works to uncover their







emotional states and psychological characteristics under high-pressure conditions. These artworks, through the use of color, composition, and content, reflected the participants' complex inner emotions and psychological needs, providing an essential foundation for subsequent analysis of their emotional changes and the therapeutic effects. During the analysis, the researcher integrated color psychology and art therapy theory, exploring the sources of participants' stress and emotional expression through color usage, pattern selection, and overall composition. The aim was to gain a deeper understanding of how art therapy can effectively help females alleviate stress and promote psychological growth. This section provides crucial reference material for the later stages of the research, while also validating the potential value of the coloring book as a therapeutic tool in emotion regulation.

Table 19 Initial Artwork Analysis of Participants

Sample	Painting	Primary Color	Analysis
Sample 1: Yang Zixuan			<p>The artwork layers and intertwines high-saturation tones such as bright yellow, cobalt blue, deep purple, and emerald green, metaphorically depicting the subject's attempt to harmonize with pressure through stark contrasts. The vibrant color spectrum not only reveals a healing vision but also subtly hints at the underlying currents of manic-depressive interplay.</p>

Sample	Painting	Primary Color	Analysis
Sample 2: Yang Yanhong			The coral pink walls and cobalt blue dome construct a spiritual abode, with the high-saturation color order interwoven, symbolizing the obsession with finding tranquility and inner balance amidst the turbulent flow of pressure.
Sample 3: Tan Junwen			The pale purple and light blue lilies weave into a mental island, where under the misty tones, art becomes a channel for stress relief, exploring the silent pivot of inner equilibrium between introspection and protection.
Sample 4: Chen Weiya			The crimson rose burns in the entropic dilemma, with a molten amber background swelling with intense desire, while dark green stems anchor the descending obsession, and the patchy spectrum exposes the topological folds of the soul.
Sample 5: Guo Jia			The mandala's interplay of emerald green, deep purple, and pastel tones creates a symmetrical order, with gradient layering forming a meditative color scale experiment. It calibrates the geometry of the soul between conflict and stability.

Sample	Painting	Primary Color	Analysis
Sample 6: Cao Rui			Black petals represent the burden of repressed emotions, while the bright reds and oranges symbolize a yearning to release inner power. The contrast between the vivid colors and black shows the emotional fluctuations.
Sample 7: Xu Yuwen			The red rose against a bright yellow background conveys passion as well as anxiety, with green leaves symbolizing resilience, collectively depicting the effort to maintain balance under high pressure.
Sample 8: Wei Qun			The deep purple-blue flower against a light yellow background conveys repression through dark tones, while the bright color hides hope, highlighting the desire for emotional release amidst pressure.
Sample 9: Wang Heying			The red rose and orange background collide, blending passion with conflict, while green leaves uphold resilience, illustrating the struggle to stabilize emotions under stress.

Sample	Painting	Primary Color	Analysis
Sample 10: Yang Mei			The deep blue background holds the colorful lilies of the valley, with dark red-purple tones representing repression, while the soft pink-yellow hints at gentleness, presenting an attempt to find inner calm through the external environment.
Sample 11: Li Ling			The red lily of the valley symbolizes emotional tension, with green leaves yearning for peace. The vivid contrast directly points to the intention of releasing pressure through venting under high stress.
Sample 12: Chen Yan			The pale purple-pink lily of the valley reflects fragility and sensitivity, while the deep green leaves seek stability. The soft tones expose the process of self-regulation and the search for security amidst pressure.

Summary

This in-person feminist art therapy session was designed with the core objective of alleviating stress and enhancing emotion regulation skills among females. By integrating feminist theory with art therapy practices, the session offered participants a platform to explore their inner selves and release emotional tension. The program included components such as feminist psychoeducation, an introduction to color psychology, guidance on using coloring books, and hands-on experience with emotion regulation techniques. Through a combination of theoretical knowledge and practical

application, the activity helped participants gain a deeper understanding of their emotional states and develop effective self-regulation strategies. The session provided comprehensive support, effectively reducing participants' stress while strengthening their awareness of social roles and emotional dynamics.

1. Feminist Awareness Feedback

Through the session, participants developed a deeper understanding of feminist theory and recognized its relevance to daily life and emotional stress. This cognitive enhancement enabled them to reevaluate gender roles in society, strengthening self-identity and building confidence in facing everyday pressures.

2. Color Psychology Feedback

Participants learned to use color as a medium for emotional expression and regulation. Soft tones were used to soothe anxiety, while bright colors helped to boost energy. In acquiring knowledge of color psychology, they also gained practical emotional management tools through the act of creative expression.

3. Coloring Book Feedback

Participants responded positively to the design of the coloring book, praising its blend of educational value and artistic creativity. The diversity of themes and progressive structure encouraged emotional exploration and artistic self-expression, demonstrating the flexibility and efficacy of art therapy in practice.

4. Self-Emotion Regulation Feedback

The activity significantly reduced participants' stress levels. The calming experience of coloring enhanced their willingness to engage. By learning the F.A.C.T. Through strategy, participants acquired the skills to regulate their emotions independently at home, laying a foundation for sustained psychological well-being.

Overall, the session not only enriched participants' theoretical understanding of feminist and color psychology but also provided tangible therapeutic outcomes. The coloring book served as a key tool, receiving high praise for its thoughtful design and impactful function, showcasing the powerful potential of art therapy in emotion regulation. Furthermore, participants' engagement with the F.A.C.T. strategy has equipped them with lasting techniques for managing their emotional health. This session achieved notable success in supporting females' stress relief and emotional empowerment, while also offering valuable data and practical insights for future

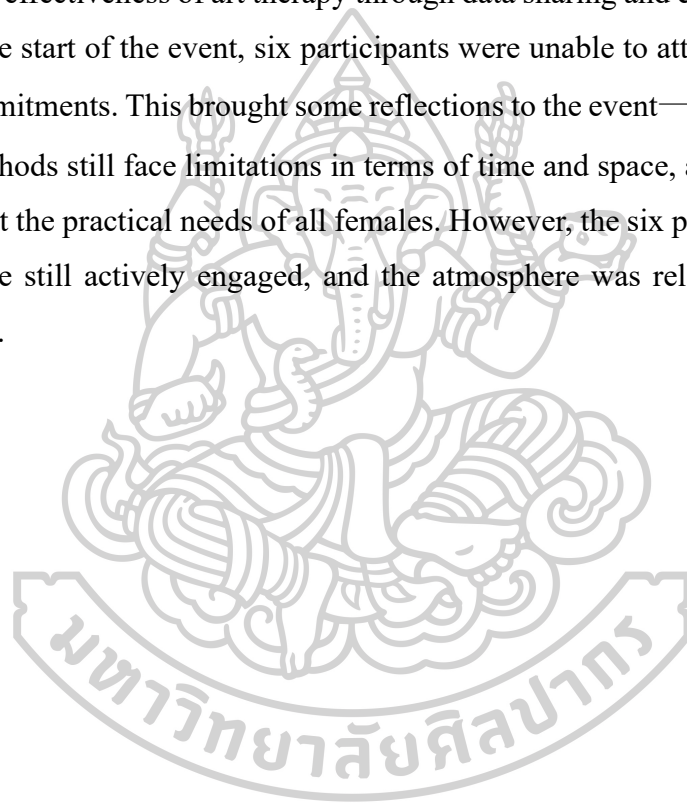
research.

4.5.3 Gender-perspective Art Therapy Offline Activity 2.0

4.5.3.1 Process of the Offline Activity 2.0.

The second feminist Art Therapy offline event took place as scheduled on the afternoon of September 11, 2024, at 2:00 PM. The theme of this event was to summarize the participants' experiences and emotional changes over the past month, and to further enhance the effectiveness of art therapy through data sharing and emotional exchanges.

At the start of the event, six participants were unable to attend due to work and family commitments. This brought some reflections to the event—traditional offline art therapy methods still face limitations in terms of time and space, and they are not able to fully meet the practical needs of all females. However, the six participants who were present were still actively engaged, and the atmosphere was relaxed and filled with anticipation.



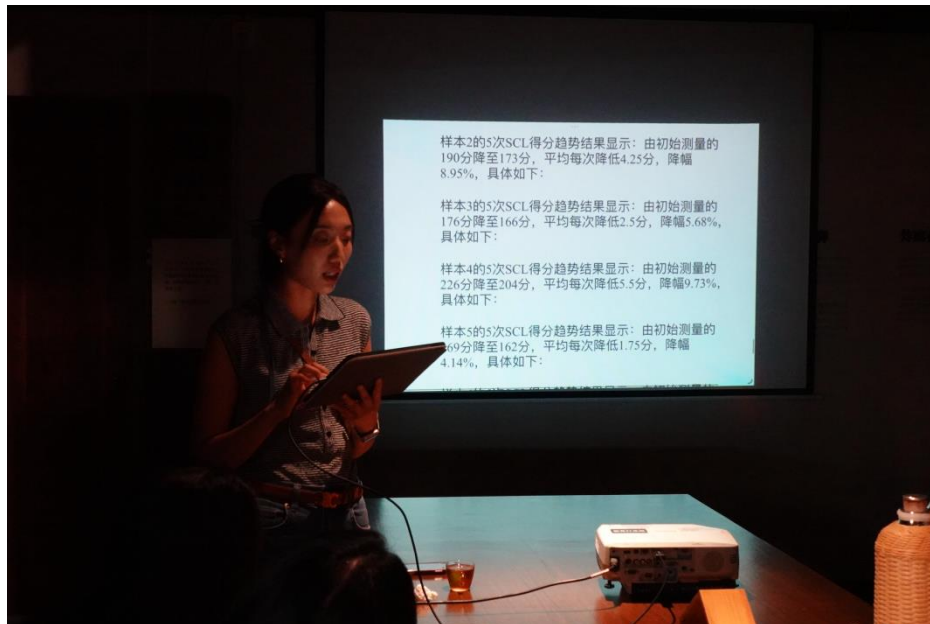


Figure 56 Explain to the participants the changes in their scores
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

The first part of the event was the sharing session by the participants. Each participant took turns reviewing their personal experiences with using the coloring book, the F.A.C. T strategy, and color therapy methods over the past month. They shared how these tools helped them find an emotional outlet during stressful times and gradually mastered the skill of expressing inner emotions through colors. Some participants mentioned that the design of the coloring book made the coloring process not only a stress-relieving activity but also a way to explore their own emotions and release feelings. The color therapy methods and the F.A.C. T strategy were particularly praised for their practicality, helping alleviate anxiety and enhance inner peace in various situations. Their sharing was full of subtle emotions and profound reflections, offering valuable practical experiences to the other participants present.



Figure 57 Participants checked their scores and signed the Data Integrity document
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

The second part of the event was the researcher's data sharing session. I presented the data analysis results from the SCL-90 questionnaires collected over the past month. The results were clearly displayed in charts, showing the emotional value changes for each participant. The data indicated that most participants showed a significant decrease in scores for anxiety, depression, hostility, and other dimensions, especially during stressful times. Through the use of the coloring book and the F.A.C. T strategy, their emotional states were significantly improved. At the same time, I also prepared personalized emotional change reports for each participant present, so they could visually understand their emotional progress. This data-driven feedback not only boosted the participants' confidence in their emotional improvement but also further validated the practical effectiveness of the art therapy tools.

At the end of the event, I reflected with the participants on the limitations of traditional offline art therapy. The absence of the six participants reminded us that work, family responsibilities, and other real-life factors significantly limit females' ability to participate in offline activities. Therefore, there is a need to consider more online and offline integrated art therapy methods in the future, in order to provide more females with flexible and efficient emotion regulation tools and methods.



Figure 58 Participants took photos as souvenirs
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

The event concluded successfully in a warm and profound atmosphere, with the participants' sharing and data analysis providing rich practical support for the future research direction. It also validated the potential of feminist Art Therapy in emotional management and the promotion of mental health.

4.5.3.2 Participant Operation Logs.

Due to the importance of the data in this study, each instance of the coloring elements and colors used by the participants is crucial for the later experimental results. Therefore, the researcher strictly collected and analyzed each participant's data and artwork to facilitate later comparison and feature analysis.

Table 20 Participant Log Records

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
1	6	35±8 (3 times)	65±8 (4 times)	Cool-colored Mandalas (4 pieces) + Neutral Gradients (2 pieces)	Depression ▼6 points (38 → 32)
2	5	38±6 (2 times)	60±10 (3 times)	Neutral Gradients (3 pieces) + Cool-colored Mandalas (1 piece) + Warm-colored Flowers (1 piece)	Interpersonal sensitivity ▼5 points (29 → 24)
3	4	40±5 (2 times)	55±12 (3 times)	Cool-colored Flowers (2 pieces) +	Depression ▼1 point (32 → 31)

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
				Neutral Gradients (2 pieces)	
4	4	33±7 (6 times)	50±12 (2 times)	Neutral Gradients (2 pieces) + Cool-colored Mandalas (2 pieces)	Depression ▼3 points (30 → 27)
5	6	35±6 (3 times)	68±9 (2 times)	Warm-colored Flowers (2 pieces) + Cool-colored Mandalas (2 pieces) + Neutral Gradients (2 pieces)	Stable (No significant improvement)

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
6	5	37±6 (3 times)	62±8 (3 times)	Cool-colored Mandalas (1 piece) + Warm-colored Flowers (3 pieces) + Neutral Gradients (1 piece)	Anxiety ▼4 points (29 → 25)
7	4	35±8 (1 time)	58±7 (3 times)	Cold-colored mandala (2 pieces) + neutral gradient (1 piece) + warm-colored flowers (1 piece)	Depression ▼5 points (28 → 24)
8	4	42±5 (4)	None	Cold-	Interperso

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
		times)		colored mandala (1 piece) + neutral gradient (1 piece) + warm-colored flowers (2 pieces)	nal sensitivity ▼2 points (23 → 21)
9	6	36±7 (3 times)	70±10 (3 times)	Cold-colored mandala (3 pieces) + warm-colored flowers (2 pieces) + neutral gradient (1 piece)	Anxiety ▼2 points (28 → 26)
10	4	None	63±6 (6 times)	Warm-colored	Depression ▼9

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
				flowers (2 pieces) + cold-colored mandala (2 pieces)	points (39 → 30)
11	4	39±4 (4 times)	52±10 (2 times)	Cold-colored mandala (2 pieces) + warm-colored flowers (1 piece) + neutral gradient (1 piece)	Depression ▼ 3 points (39 → 36)
12	4	None	65±12 (4 times)	Neutral gradient (1 piece) + cold-colored mandala (2	Depression ▼ 6 points (33 → 27)

Participant	Total Number of Works	Weekday 19:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Weekend 9:00-22:00 (Minutes) (Times)	Diversified Element Usage Pattern (Main-Secondary Combination)	Symptom Improvement Validation (Maximum Decrease)
				pieces) + warm-colored flowers (1 piece)	

4.5.3.3 Conclusion on the Quantitative Correlation between Symptom Improvement and Design Elements.

During the experiment, all 12 participants followed the design elements corresponding to the three major stressors—interpersonal sensitivity, depression, and anxiety—developed by the researcher, achieving maximum effect.

Table 21 Weekly Design Element Usage Rate by Participants

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
1	0	10%	50%	17%	
	1	12%	52%	18%	
	2	30 %	48%	10 %	
	3	40 %	50%	30%	

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
	4	17%	50%	33%	Depression ▼ 6 points (38 → 32)
2	0	33%	17%	5%	
	1	35%	18%	17%	
	2	38%	15%	25%	
	3	45%	25%	20%	
	4	50%	17%	0%	Interpersonal ▼ 5 points (29→24)
3	0	50%	25%	0%	
	1	48%	27%	15%	
	2	43%	30%	10%	
	3	40%	35%	5%	
	4	17%	83%	0%	Depression ▼ 1 point (32 → 31)
4	0	0%	33%	50%	

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
	1	2%	35%	45%	
	2	16%	38%	40%	
	3	20%	40%	35%	
	4	33%	33%	20%	Depression ▼ 3 points (30→27)
5	0	17%	50%	0%	
	1	15%	52%	15%	
	2	18%	48%	28%	
	3	20%	45%	35%	
	4	33%	33%	0%	Stable (no improvement)
6	0	0%	17%	17%	
	1	5%	15%	20%	
	2	12%	12%	25%	
	3	50%	10%	30%	
	4	0%	33%	50%	Anxiety ▼ 4 points

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
					(29 → 25)
7	0	0%	0%	25%	
	1	15 %	5%	28%	
	2	30 %	28 %	30%	
	3	38 %	30 %	32%	
	4	40%	33%	33%	Depression ▼5 points (28 → 24)
8	0	0%	20%	20%	
	1	12 %	18%	38 %	
	2	20 %	15%	45 %	
	3	40 %	25 %	28%	
	4	0%	17%	33%	Interpersonal ▼2 points (23→21)
9	0	0%	25%	50%	
	1	5 %	40 %	48%	
	2	10 %	32%	45%	

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
	3	20 %	35%	40%	
	4	0%	50%	25%	Anxiety ▼2 points (28→26)
10	0	0%	33%	10%	
	1	12 %	35%	12%	
	2	12 %	38%	15%	
	3	20 %	42%	18%	
	4	0%	25%	75%	Depression ▼9 points (39 → 30)
11	0	0%	50%	0%	
	1	10 %	52%	28 %	
	2	5 %	55%	40 %	
	3	20 %	58%	20 %	
	4	17%	50%	33%	Depression ▼3 points (39 → 36)
12	0	40%	40%	0%	

Participants	Weekly	Interpersonal relationship sensitivity usage rate	Depression Use Rate	Anxiety Usage Rate	Symptom Improvement Focus
	1	38%	42%	2%	
	2	35%	45%	5%	
	3	32%	48%	8%	
	4	33%	50%	17%	Depression ▼ 6 points (33→27)

Table 22 Post-test Evaluation Data

Core Symptom	Mean Score per Item (M±SD)	Reduction Value	Reduction Rate	Element Usage Rate	Usage Rate Increase	Design Validation Anchor
Interpersonal sensitivity	2.23±0.35 ▼	0.19	7.85%	16.7%▲	+33.6%	Completion rate of progressive tasks is negatively correlated with social avoidance behavior

Core Symptom	Mean Score per Item (M±SD)	Reduction Value	Reduction Rate	Element Usage Rate	Usage Rate Increase	Design Validation Anchor
Depression	2.36±0.48 ▼	0.26	9.92%	42.3%▲	+41%	Symmetry of mandala is positively correlated with the reduction of salivary cortisol
Anxiety	2.44±0.39 ▼	0.13	5.06%	26.6%▲	+65.2%	Warm color temperature is significantly correlated with the decrease in skin conductance response

After completing the art-based intervention, participants showed significant improvements across all three core symptoms. Interpersonal sensitivity scores decreased by 7.85% (from 2.42 to 2.23), which was directly linked to a 33.6% increase in the use of progressive coloring tasks. The neutral gray backgrounds and step-by-step line structures acted like a "buffering glove" for social anxiety—helping participants rebuild confidence in interpersonal interactions by regaining control through precise brushwork.

The most notable change appeared in depression symptoms, with a nearly 10% reduction in average item scores (2.62 → 2.36). About 42.3% of participants actively chose mandala patterns for intensive coloring. The cool-toned concentric structures functioned like an "emotional stabilizer," guiding the brain from repetitive rumination to more orderly thinking. Anxiety relief, however, revealed an interesting paradox: although the score reduction was the smallest (5.06%), the use of warm floral patterns surged by 65.2%. This suggests that the immediate soothing effect of orange-yellow tones (e.g., increased deep breathing) may have masked deeper underlying anxiety. It indicates that, much like using warm water to ease stomach pain, warm hues can quickly calm physical tension—but addressing the root of anxiety still requires additional intervention strategies.

4.5.3.4 Overall SCL-90 Data Analysis.

The first aspect is the reliability scores of this questionnaire survey:

Table 23 Reliability Scores of the Questionnaire Survey

Sample size	Number of projects	Cronbach.coefficient
60	90	0,974

During the one-month study with five rounds of data collection, analysis began with the initial scores.

In the initial assessment, among the 12 participants, the highest SCL score was 230, indicating a moderate level of psychological abnormality. The lowest score was 169, indicating a mild level of abnormality.

The average total score was 198. Five participants scored above the average (41.67%), and seven scored below the average (58.33%).

Week 1:

Analyze from the initial scores to the first week of measurement. the maximum SCL score of the 12 respondents was 224 points (6 points lower than the initial measurement), which was a mild abnormal level, and the minimum was 167 points (2

points lower than the initial measurement), which was a mild abnormal level. The average total score was 194 points (4 points lower than the initial measurement). There were 5 respondents with scores above the average, accounting for 41.67%, and 7 respondents with scores below the average, accounting for 58.33%, as follows:

Table 24 Initial Total and Average Scores of Participants

Number of Cases	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Above Average	Below Average
12	230	169	198	5 (41.67%)	7 (58.33%)

The initial SCL item average scores of the 12 participants ranged from 1.88 to 2.56. The number of positive items ranged from 58 to 82. The average score of positive items ranged from 2.32 to 2.83.

Table 25 Initial Participant Score Values

Sample number	Stress level	Total Item Score	Average Item Score	Number of Positive Items	Average Score of Positive Items
Sample 1	Mild	179	1.99	58	2.73
Sample 2	Mild	190	2.11	63	2.84
Sample 3	Mild	176	1.96	61	2.61
Sample 4	Moderate	226	2.51	76	2.80
Sample 5	Mild	169	1.88	62	2.32
Sample 6	Mild	213	2.37	72	2.78
Sample 7	Moderate	230	2.56	77	2.83
Sample 8	Mild	220	2.44	75	2.77
Sample 9	Mild	228	2.53	82	2.68

Sample number	Stress level	Total Item Score	Average Item Score	Number of Positive Items	Average Score of Positive Items
Sample 10	Mild	173	1.92	59	2.54
Sample 11	Mild	180	2.02	60	2.57
Sample 12	Mild	188	2.09	64	2.63

Initial SCL factor scores indicated that the following factors had scores below 2.0 with a majority of participants: Somatization (12 participants), Psychoticism (9 participants), and Others (8 participants).

Factors with scores between 2.0 and 2.9 for more than half of the sample included: Interpersonal Sensitivity (10 participants), Anxiety (10 participants), Paranoia (9 participants), Depression (9 participants), Obsessive-Compulsive (8 participants), Hostility (6 participants), and Phobia (6 participants).

The only factor with scores between 3.0 and 3.8 for the majority of participants was Hostility (6 participants).

Table 26 for the detailed distribution of each factor among participants

Stress Factors	Number of Participants with Factor Score < 2		Number of Participants with Factor Score 2–2.9		Number of Participants with Factor Score 3–3.8	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive	2	16.67%	8	66.67%	2	16.67%

Stress Factors	Number of Participants with Factor Score < 2		Number of Participants with Factor Score 2–2.9		Number of Participants with Factor Score 3–3.8	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	8.33%	10	83.33%	1	8.33%
Depression	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	0	0.00%	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Phobia	2	16.67%	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Paranoia	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Psychoticism	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Others	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

Week 1:

Among the 12 respondents, the maximum SCL score was 224 (a reduction of 6 points from the initial measurement), indicating a mild abnormal level.

The minimum score was 167 (a reduction of 2 points from the initial measurement), also indicating a mild abnormal level.

The average total score was 194 (a reduction of 4 points from the initial measurement).

5 participants scored above the average (41.67%), while 7 scored below the average (58.33%).

Table 27 Week 1 Participant Total Scores and Averages

Number of Cases	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Above Average	Below Average
12	224	167	194	5 (41.67%)	7 (58.33%)

The average item scores of the 12 participants in the first week ranged from 1.86 to 2.49, the number of positive items ranged from 56 to 80, and the average score of positive items ranged from 2.31 to 2.88. The details are as follows:

Table 28 First Week Participant Scores

Sample number	Stress Level	Total Item Score	Average Item Score	Number of Positive Items	Average Positive Item Score
Sample 1	Mild	176	1.96	56	2.68
Sample 2	Mild	185	2.06	62	2.79
Sample 3	Mild	174	1.93	59	2.63
Sample 4	Mild	221	2.46	75	2.77
Sample 5	Mild	167	1.86	61	2.31
Sample 6	Mild	207	2.30	70	2.76
Sample 7	Mild	224	2.49	72	2.88
Sample 8	Mild	220	2.44	75	2.77
Sample 9	Mild	221	2.46	80	2.64
Sample 10	Mild	169	1.88	58	2.50
Sample 11	Mild	176	1.98	58	2.55
Sample 12	Mild	183	2.03	63	2.57

The factor scores in the first week show:

Items with a factor score less than 2 and affecting more than half of the sample

are Somatization (12 people).

Items with a factor score between 2 and 2.9, affecting more than half of the sample, are Obsessive-compulsive (7 people), Interpersonal Sensitivity (11 people), Depression (9 people), Anxiety (10 people), Phobic Anxiety (6 people), Paranoid (9 people).

Items with a factor score between 3 and 3.8, affecting more than half of the sample, are Hostility (7 people).

Here's the summary:

Table 29 Proportion of Each Factor in Week 1 Participants

Stress Factors:	Factor score < 2	Factor score between 2 and 2.9	Factor score between 3 and 3.8	Proportion	Proportion	Proportion
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive	4	0.00%	7	58.33%	1	8.33%
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	0.00%	11	91.67%	0	0.00%
Depression	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	0	0.00%	5	41.67%	7	58.33%
Phobic Anxiety	2	16.67%	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Paranoid	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Psychoticism	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Other	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

The data for the second week shows the following results:

In the second week of measurement, among the 12 participants, the maximum SCL score was 219 (a decrease of 5 points from the first week), which is in the mild abnormal range. The minimum score was 165 (a decrease of 2 points from the first week), also in the mild abnormal range. The average total score was 190 (a decrease of 4 points from the first week). There were 5 participants above the average, accounting for 41.67%, and 7 participants below the average, accounting for 58.33%. Specifics are as follows:

Table 30 Second Week Participants' Total Scores and Averages

Case Number	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Above Average	Below Average
12	219	165	190	5 (41.67%)	7 (58.33%)

The SCL item mean scores for 12 participants in the second week ranged from 1.83 to 2.43, the number of positive items ranged from 53 to 75, and the mean score of positive items ranged from 2.46 to 2.90. The details are as follows:

Table 31 Participant Scores in the Second Week

Sample Number	Stress Level	Total Item Score	Item Mean Score	Number of Positive Items	Mean of Positive Items
Sample 1	mildly	173	1.92	53	2.72
Sample 2	Mild	182	2.02	60	2.80
Sample 3	Mild	171	1.90	57	2.65
Sample 4	Mild	216	2.40	74	2.75
Sample 5	Mild	165	1.83	60	2.27
Sample 6	Mild	202	2.24	69	2.71
Sample 7	Mild	219	2.43	69	2.90

Sample 8	Mild	216	2.40	73	2.77
Sample 9	Mild	215	2.39	75	2.63
Sample 10	Mild	166	1.84	56	2.46
Sample 11	Mild	172	1.93	57	2.57
Sample 12	Mild	180	2.00	62	2.55

The scores for the SCL factors in the second week show:

The factor with a score less than 2 and more than half of the sample is Somatization (12 people).

The factors with scores between 2 and 2.9 and more than half of the sample are Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (8 people), Interpersonal Sensitivity (9 people), Depression (9 people), Anxiety (10 people), Phobic Anxiety (6 people), and Paranoid Ideation (9 people).

The factor with scores between 3 and 3.8 and more than half of the sample is Hostility (7 people).

Table 32 Proportion of factors for participants in the second week

Stress Factor	Number of people with factor score less than 2	Proportion	Number of people with factor score between 2 and 2.9	Proportion	Number of people with factor score between 3 and 3.8 Proportion	Proportion
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive	4	0.00%	8	66.67%	0	0.00%

Stress Factor	Number of people with factor score less than 2	Proportion	Number of people with factor score between 2 and 2.9	Proportion	Number of people with factor score between 3 and 3.8 Proportion	Proportion
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	0.00%	9	75.00%	1	8.33%
Depression	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	0	0.00%	5	41.67%	7	58.33%
Terror	2	16.67%	6	50.00%	4	33.33%
Paranoia	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Psychoticism	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Other	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

Week 3:

In the third week of measurement, among the 12 participants, the highest SCL score was 213 (a decrease of 6 points compared to the second week), indicating a mildly abnormal level. The lowest score was 164 (a decrease of 1 point compared to the second week), also within the mildly abnormal range. The average total score was 186 (a decrease of 4 points compared to the second week). Five participants scored above the average, accounting for 41.67%, while seven participants scored below the average, accounting for 58.33%. Details are as follows:

Table 33 Total and Average SCL Scores of Participants in Week 3

Case numbers	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Number of Scores Above Average	Number of Scores Below Average
12	213	164	186	5 (41.67%)	7 (58.33%)

In the third week of measurement, the mean SCL item scores of the 12 participants ranged from 1.82 to 2.37. The number of positive items ranged from 52 to 67, and the mean score of positive items ranged from 2.32 to 2.87. Details are as follows:

Table 34 Participant Score Values in Week Three

Sample Number	Level of Stress	Total Symptom Score	Mean Symptom Score	Number of Positive Items	Mean Score of Positive Items
Sample 1	Mild	171	1.90	52	2.71
Sample 2	Mild	178	1.98	57	2.82
Sample 3	Mild	169	1.88	55	2.67
Sample 4	Mild	211	2.34	70	2.76
Sample 5	Mild	164	1.82	59	2.32
Sample 6	Mild	197	2.19	66	2.64
Sample 7	Mild	213	2.37	67	2.87
Sample 8	Mild	212	2.36	72	2.71
Sample 9	Mild	210	2.33	73	2.61
Sample 10	Normal	158	1.76	53	2.39
Sample 11	Mild	167	1.88	55	2.54
Sample 12	Mild	176	1.96	60	2.48

Week 3 SCL Factor Scores:

The scores of each SCL factor in Week 3 show the following:

The factor with a score lower than 2 and with more than half of the participants falling in this range is Somatization (12 participants).

Factors with scores between 2 and 2.9, and with more than half of the participants falling in this range, include:

Obsessive-Compulsive (6 participants),
 Interpersonal Sensitivity (11 participants),
 Depression (10 participants),
 Anxiety (10 participants),
 Hostility (6 participants),
 Phobic Anxiety (7 participants), and
 Paranoid Ideation (9 participants).

The only factor with scores between 3 and 3.8 and with more than half of the participants falling in this range is Hostility (6 participants).

Table 35 Proportions of Participants by SCL Factor Score in Week 3

Stress Factor	Number of Participants with Factor Score < 2		Number of Participants with Factor Score 2–2.9		Number of Participants with Factor Score 3–3.8	
	Participants with Factor	Percentage	Participants with Factor	Percentage	Participants with Factor	Percentage
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive	6	0.00%	6	50.00%	0	0.00%
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	0.00%	11	91.67%	0	0.00%

Depressio n	2	16.67%	10	83.33%	0	0.00%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	0	0.00%	6	50.00%	6	50.00%
Phobic Anxiety	2	16.67%	7	58.33%	3	25.00%
Paranoid Ideation	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Psychotici sm	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Others	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

Week Four:

In the fourth week of measurement, among the 12 respondents, the highest SCL score was 208 points (5 points lower than the third week's measurement), indicating a mild level of psychological abnormality. The lowest score was 162 points (2 points lower than the third week's measurement), also within the mild abnormality range. The average total score was 181 points (5 points lower than the third week's measurement). Five participants scored above the average, accounting for 41.67%, while seven participants scored below the average, accounting for 58.33%. Details are as follows:

Table 36 Total Scores and Average Scores of Participants in Week Four

Number of Cases	Maximum Total Score	Minimum Total Score	Average Total Score	Above Average	Below Average
12	208	162	181	5 (41.67%)	(58.33%)

In the fourth week, the average item scores of the 12 respondents on the SCL ranged from 1.83 to 2.30. The number of positive items ranged from 50 to 70, and the average score of positive items ranged from 2.31 to 2.88. Details are as follows:

Table 37 Scores of Participants in the Fourth Week

Sample number	Stress level	Total Score of Items	Average Score per Item	Number of Positive Items	Average Score of Positive Items
Sample 1	Mild	169	1.88	51	2.68
Sample 2	Mild	173	1.92	56	2.77
Sample 3	Mild	166	1.84	53	2.68
Sample 4	Mild	204	2.27	64	2.72
Sample 5	Mild	162	1.80	57	2.31
Sample 6	Mild	192	2.13	65	2.66
Sample 7	Mild	208	2.31	64	2.88
Sample 8	Mild	207	2.30	69	2.74
Sample 9	Mild	204	2.27	70	2.66
Sample 10	Normal	154	1.71	51	2.37
Sample 11	Mild	163	1.83	50	2.58
Sample 12	Mild	171	1.90	57	2.50

SCL scores for each factor in the fourth week show the following: the factor with a score lower than 2 and more than half of the participants is Somatization (12 participants). Factors with scores ranging from 2 to 2.9 and more than half of the participants include Interpersonal Sensitivity (11 participants), Depression (10 participants), Anxiety (10 participants), Hostility (6 participants), Phobic Anxiety (6 participants), and Paranoid Ideation (9 participants). For factors with scores between 3 and 3.8, the number of participants in each category is fewer than 6. Details are as follows:

Table 38 Proportional Distribution of Participants Across SCL Factors in Week Four

Stress Factors	Number of Participants with Factor Scores Below 2		Number of participants with factor scores between 2 and 2.9		Number of participants with factor scores between 3 and 3.8	
	Number of Participants with Factor Scores Below 2	Proportion	Number of participants with factor scores between 2 and 2.9	Proportion	Number of participants with factor scores between 3 and 3.8	Proportion
Somatization	12	91.67%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Obsessive-Compulsive	7	0.00%	5	41.67%	0	0.00%
Interpersonal Sensitivity	1	0.00%	11	91.67%	0	0.00%
Depression	2	16.67%	10	83.33%	0	0.00%
Anxiety	0	0.00%	10	83.33%	2	16.67%
Hostility	1	8.33%	6	50.00%	5	41.67%
Phobic Anxiety	3	25.00%	6	50.00%	3	25.00%
Paranoia	1	8.33%	9	75.00%	2	16.67%
Psychoticism	9	75.00%	1	8.33%	2	16.67%
Others	8	66.67%	3	25.00%	1	8.33%

Overall Analysis

A paired-sample t-test was conducted on the scores from the initial measurement,

Week 1, Week 2, Week 3, and Week 4. The results are as follows:

The t-value between the initial measurement and Week 1 was 7.000, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating statistical significance. This suggests that the scores in Week 1 were significantly lower than those in the initial measurement.

The t-value between Week 1 and Week 2 was 11.127, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), also indicating statistical significance. This suggests that the scores in Week 2 were significantly lower than those in Week 1.

The t-value between Week 2 and Week 3 was 7.696, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), showing statistical significance and indicating that the scores in Week 3 were significantly lower than those in Week 2.

The t-value between Week 3 and Week 4 was 10.166, with a significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), which is statistically significant, indicating that the scores in Week 4 were significantly lower than those in Week 3.

In conclusion, the results suggest that the intervention using the xx coloring book effectively reduced the SCL pressure scores of the participants.

Table 39 Paired-Sample t-Test Results for the Five Time Points

		Number of cases	t	Degree of freedom	Significance
Pair 1	Initial Total Score - Week 1 Total Score	12	7.000	11	.000
Pair 2	Week 1 total - Week 2 total	12	11.127	11	.000
Pair 3	Week 2 total - Week 3 total	12	7.696	11	.000
Pair 4	Week 3 total - Week 4 total	12	10.166	11	.000

A detailed report on the initial SCL scores and the fourth-week SCL scores of the 12 surveyed samples shows the following: The average decrease in scores for all 12

respondents was 16.58 points, with 8 participants experiencing a decrease greater than this value. These participants were Sample 2, Sample 4, Sample 6, Sample 7, Sample 9, Sample 10, Sample 11, and Sample 12. Among them, Sample 5 had the smallest decrease, dropping from an initial score of 169 to 162 in the fourth week, a decrease of 7 points. Sample 9 had the largest decrease, dropping from an initial score of 228 to 204 in the fourth week, a decrease of 24 points.

Table 40 Comparison of Initial and Final Scores

NO.	Initial SCL score (degree of abnormality)	Week 4 SCL score (degree of abnormality)	Change in SCL score
Sample 1	179 points (mild abnormality)	169 points (mild abnormality)	Down 10 points
Sample 2	190 points (moderate abnormality)	173 points (mild abnormality)	Down 17 points
Sample 3	176 points (mild abnormality)	166 points (mild abnormality)	Down 10 points
Sample 4	226 points (moderate abnormality)	204 points (mild abnormality)	Down 22 points
Sample 5	169 points (moderate abnormality)	162 points (mild abnormality)	Down 7 points
Sample 6	213 points (mildly abnormal)	192 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 21 points
Sample 7	230 points (moderate abnormality)	208 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 22 points
Sample 8	220 points (mildly abnormal)	207 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 13 points
Sample 9	228 points (moderate abnormality)	204 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 24 points
Sample 10	173 points (mildly abnormal)	154 points (normal)	Down 19 points
Sample 11	180 points (mildly abnormal)	163 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 17 points

NO.	Initial SCL score (degree of abnormality)	Week 4 SCL score (degree of abnormality)	Change in SCL score
11	abnormal)		points
Sample	188 points (mildly abnormal)	171 points (mildly abnormal)	Down 17 points
12	abnormal)		

The score trend of 12 respondents across 5 SCL assessments is shown below:



Figure 59 Trends in SSCL scores for 12 participants in 5 tests
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Based on the summary of the SCL-90 questionnaire data in the figure above, participants' emotional states showed significant improvement during the experiment. The initial scores indicated that all participants were in a mild to moderate abnormal state, with scores ranging from 169 to 230. At the end of the experiment, scores generally decreased in the fourth week, with changes ranging from 7 to 24 points. All participants showed a decrease in scores, and some participants improved from moderate abnormal to mild abnormal states.





Specifically, the most significant decrease during the experiment was seen in Sample 10, whose score dropped from 173 to 154, achieving a notable reduction of 24









points and reaching the normal emotional range. Samples 4 and 7 also showed remarkable score changes, both decreasing by 22 points, greatly improving from moderate abnormal to mild abnormal states. Sample 5 showed the smallest reduction, only 7 points, but still reflected a slight improvement in emotional state.









Overall, this set of data indicates that through the use of coloring books, the F.A.C. T strategy, and color therapy methods, most participants experienced varying degrees of emotional stress relief. This experiment not only validated the effectiveness of these methods but also further supports the potential of art therapy as a tool for emotional management.









4.5.3.5 Analysis of participants' first and last drawings.









Table 41 Comparative analysis of colors between participants' first and last drawings













Samples	Initial Artwork	Color s	Final Artwork	Color s	Analysis
Sample 1: Yang Zixuan					Bright yellow-orange background signifies vitality, while blue roses represent calmness. The overall composition reflects stress relief and emotional balance.

Samples	Initial Artwork	Color	Final Artwork	Color	Analysis
<p>Sample 2: Yang Yanhong</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">s</p> 		<p style="text-align: center;">s</p> 	<p>Soft purple paired with fresh green conveys tranquility with a touch of hope, indicating a more positive mindset after stress release.</p>
<p>Sample 3: Tan Junwen</p>					<p>Dominated by blue and green tones, the peaceful and natural color combination symbolizes harmony. The coloring activity helps stabilize emotions.</p>

Samples	Initial Artwork	Color s	Final Artwork	Color s	Analysis
<p>Sample 4: Chen Weiya</p>					<p>The multicolored flower cluster signifies joy, while the lingering black symbolizes confusion. Overall, it shows peace after the release of negative emotions.</p>
<p>Sample 5: Guo Jia</p>					<p>The purple and green pairing suggests healing, while the deep blue leaves stabilize the mindset, expressing the sense of fulfillment from the creative</p>

Samples	Initial Artwork	Color s	Final Artwork	Color s	Analysis
<p>Sample 6: Cao Rui</p>					<p>process.</p> <p>Green, yellow, and orange represent growth and healing, with the pink center symbolizing self-love. The symmetrical mandala reflects inner balance.</p>
<p>Sample 7: Xu Yuwen</p>					<p>Yellow and blue mandala symbolizes hope, with the red heart indicating release and green-pink expressing self-care. The overall image represents psychological growth.</p>

Samples	Initial Artwork	Color s	Final Artwork	Color s	Analysis
Sample 8: Wei Qun					Purple signifies calmness, and orange represents vitality. The strong contrast in the blooming flowers signals stress release and an improvement in mental state.
Sample 9: Wang Heying					Bright yellow as the main tone, complemented by green leaves, with an upward composition indicating strength, marks the effectiveness of healing.

Samples	Initial Artwork	Color s	Final Artwork	Color s	Analysis
Sample 10: Yang Mei					Bright yellow simple lines represent optimism, and the green stems indicate recovery, highlighting the restoration of confidence.
Sample 11: Li Ling					Pink, green, and yellow flowers convey vitality, while the unfinished sections symbolize ongoing healing and a current exploration of positivity.
Sample 12: Chen Yan					The yellow window with blue sky represents openness, with

Samples	Initial Artwork	Colors	Final Artwork	Colors	Analysis
					multicolored flowers symbolizing stability. The green plants form a boundary, representing vitality and future hope.

Summary

In the one-month gender-perspective art therapy experiment, we provided participants with a platform combining theory and practice for emotion regulation through art creation, coloring experiences, and psychological data analysis during the first and second sessions. These activities were designed based on feminist theory to help participants better understand the impact of gender inequality on emotions. They also explored effective ways to alleviate stress and enhance their self-regulation abilities through coloring books and color therapy strategies. This report summarizes the significant changes observed in participants during the two offline activities in terms of deepening feminist cognition, tool application, stress reduction, and improved emotion regulation abilities.

1. Deepening Gender-perspective Cognition

Through interaction with feminist theory, participants gradually recognized the impact of gender inequality on emotions and stress. They internalized this awareness as an inner strength to face external pressures. This cognitive shift enhanced their sense of self-identity, helping them approach life's challenges with a more positive attitude.

2. Successful Application of the Coloring Book

Participants found the coloring book to be simple, convenient, and always

available, making it an essential tool for daily stress relief. During the coloring process, they expressed emotions through colors and boosted their confidence, making it an effective form of emotion regulation.

3. Effectiveness of Stress Reduction

Data analysis indicated a significant reduction in participants' stress scores, confirming the effectiveness of feminist art therapy in alleviating stress. The combination of art creation and feminist theory provided new methods for emotional release and stress management.

4. Improvement in Self-Emotion Regulation Abilities

The art therapy activities significantly enhanced participants' emotional control abilities. They became more autonomous in identifying and regulating their emotions. By rethinking their self-perception and social roles, participants strengthened their internal psychological resilience and improved their emotional states.

In summary, these two offline activities, through the combination of art creation and theoretical support, not only enhanced participants' cognition and emotion management skills but also provided them with sustainable emotion regulation tools and methods. Despite the limitations regarding participant engagement, the effectiveness of the activities in reducing stress and boosting confidence among females is commendable.

Feedback and Revisions

Based on post-experiment interviews and questionnaires, participants provided the following optimization suggestions for the use of the coloring book, offering clear directions for tool iteration:

1. Color Therapy Cards Need More Convenient Access

Most participants expressed a desire for easier access to the color therapy cards. They suggested that the cards should be made in a way that allows them to be easily taken out and placed next to the book during coloring sessions. Additionally, including elements that address common stress factors would make it more intuitive to use.

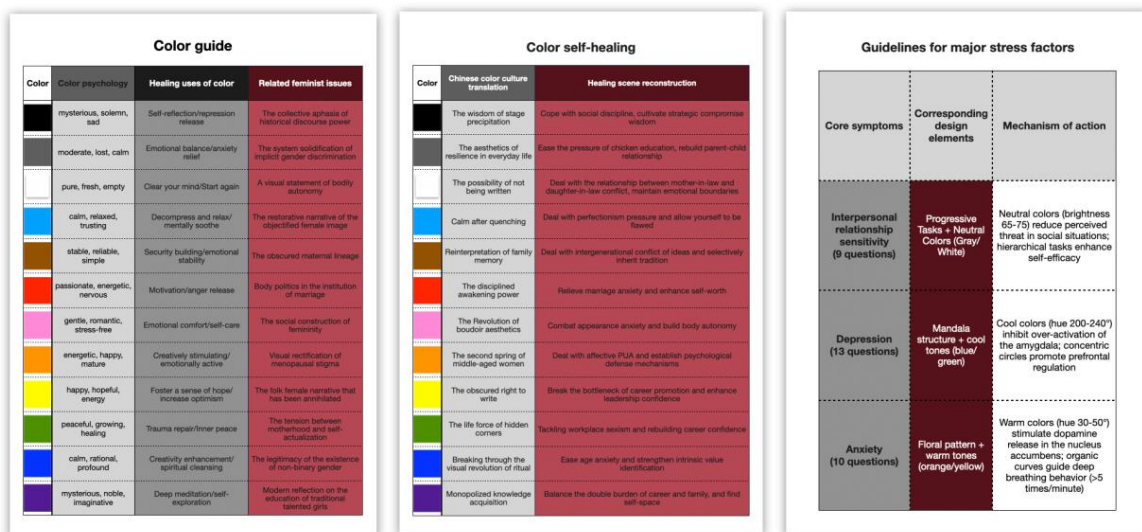


Figure 60 Newly Modified Color Guide (Front and Back)
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

2. The Strategy Manual Should Provide Clearer Steps

The content of the F.A.C. T strategy manual needs to be simplified further. Participants suggested: "The steps are a bit abstract, for example, what does 'progressive deconstruction' actually mean? It would be better to break it down into clear steps, like 'Step 1: Choose a color corresponding to your stress, Step 2: Start coloring from the center of the pattern.' This would be much easier to understand."

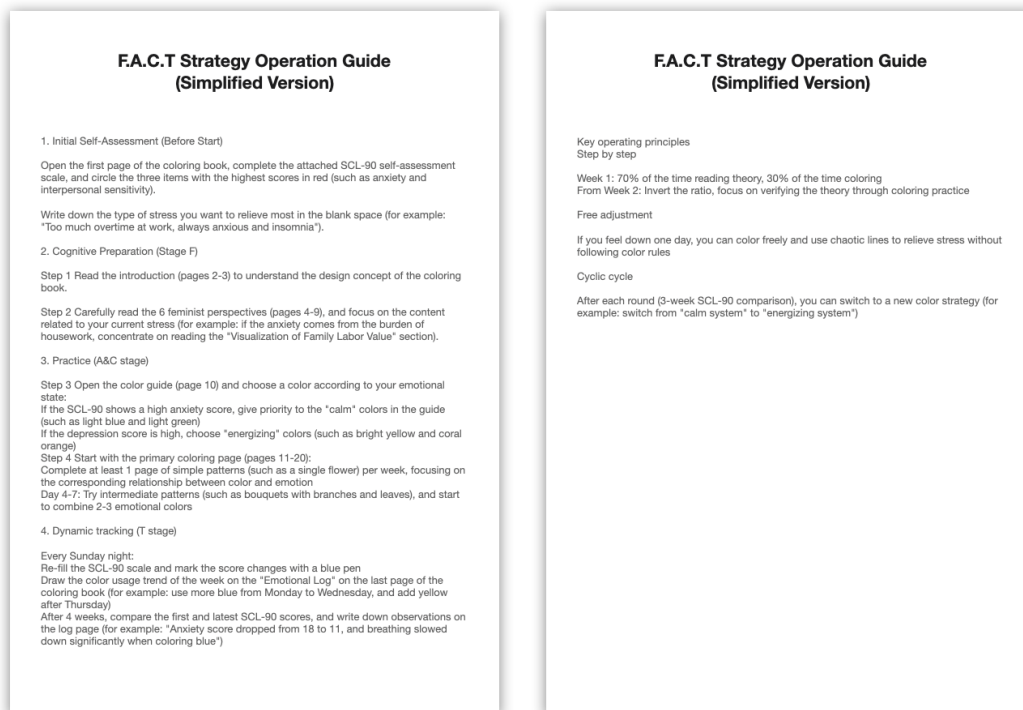


Figure 61 Simplified F.A.C. T Strategy Detailed User Guide
 Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

3. feminist Content Should Be Linked to Real-Life Scenarios

Participants recommended incorporating real-life examples into the color guide. For instance, "Gray helps alleviate the stress from coercive education and rebuilds parent-child relationships." They also suggested adding a brief reminder on each coloring page, such as a note next to each flower that explains its healing significance. This would allow participants to immediately understand the meaning of the plant and be positively influenced.

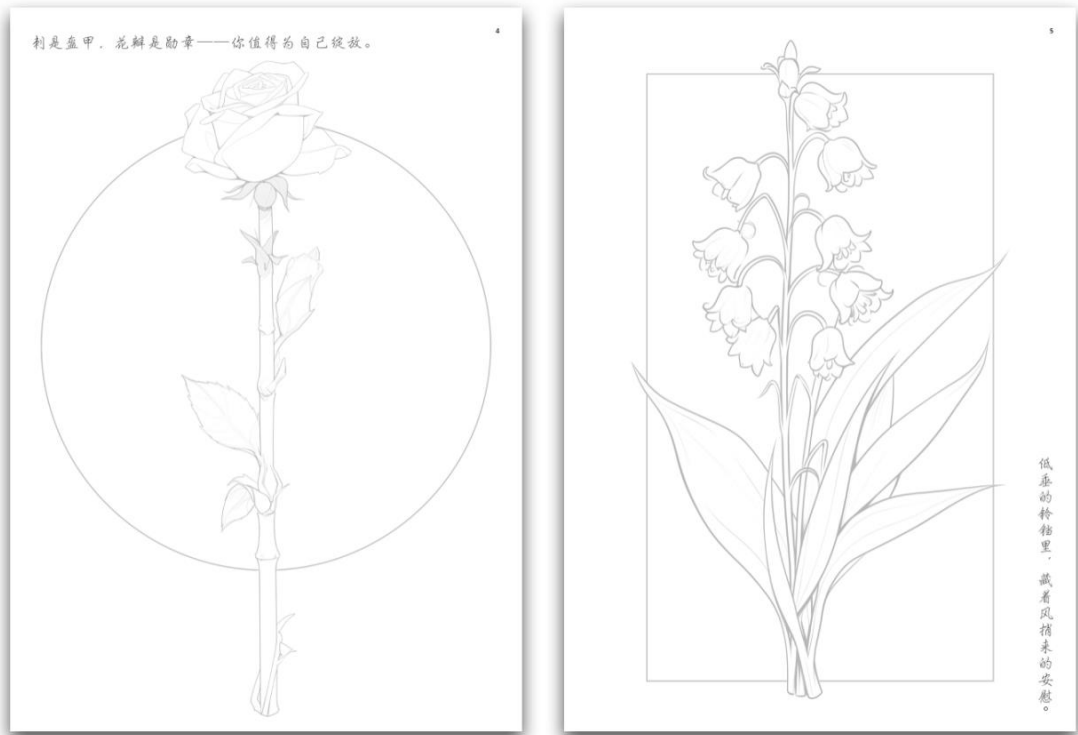


Figure 62 Healing Words for females Added to Each Coloring Page
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Single Rose: "The thorns are armor, the petals are medals - you deserve to bloom for yourself."

Lily of the Valley: "In the drooping bells, comfort brought by the wind is hidden."

Orchid Cluster: "Elegance does not need to be defined; like the orchid's curves, it only follows its own breath."

Mandala (Round Shape): "In the whirlpool of order, your calm coordinate system is hidden."

Mandala (Star Shape): "Every ray is a road to the heart; walk slowly, don't count your steps."

Bouquet of Lilies: "Pure white is not weakness; it is the courage that remains clear after the mud has been washed away."

Sunflower: "Before chasing the light, first become your own sun."

Poppy: "The flower that grows from the wound is more touching than the

perfect specimen."

Single Flower Shop: "Rebuild your healing convenience store with color - open 24 hours."

Mandala (Polygonal Shape): "The sharp edges of rules will be worn smooth, but your light will not fade."

Single Flower Shop (Window Display): "Leave fatigue at the door; this is your exclusive palette."

Half Mandala: "Imperfection is an invitation - please use color to complete the world's tenderness."

Diagonal Mandala: "Imbalance is another kind of balance, like a branch finding its center in the wind."

Single Flower Shop 2: "Flower fragrance has no KPI, and your happiness doesn't need one either."

Chrysanthemum Cluster: "In the folds lies the light's zigzag line; gently smooth it out, don't rush."

Monstera: "The crack is the leaf's poem - understand it, and new veins will grow."

Double Sunflower: "Back-to-back can still coexist, both solitude and companionship are nutrients."

Mandala (Wave Pattern): "Let anxiety drift with the curve, the destination is calm like the horizon."

Double Mandala: "Resonance is not replication, it is a nod between two flowers from a distance."

Bird of Paradise: "The petals stretching to the sky are not only flowers, but also your unspoken desires."

Flower Windowsill: "Scatter the seeds of your heart's troubles here, waiting for a silent sprout."

Rose Cluster: "Blooming in the thorns is life's most honest declaration."

Flower Windowsill (Night Scene): "Moonlight will gently kiss the petals of the late-returning, and you too are loved by the world this way."

Mandala (Spiral Pattern): "Spinning is not losing your way, it is a return

journey to the core."

Orchid Pot: "The silence of rooting down will eventually support the upward curve."

Iris Cluster: "Blue-purple is the bruise of healing, and pain will eventually turn into stars."

Wildflowers: "Being small is not a weakness; it is the love letter that the earth writes to the sky."

Single Iris: "In the curved stem, there is the stubbornness to resist gravity."

Double Flower Shop: "The second floor hides the backup rainbow - get it after finishing this page."

Fresh Flower Bouquet: "Before wilting, every second is worth being celebrated in rich, bold colors."

4. Enhance Autonomy and Build a Sharing Platform

Participants wanted to reduce their reliance on instructors. They suggested: "If the manual is detailed enough, we can follow it and do it on our own, without waiting for someone to teach us." Additionally, they proposed creating an online mutual support community: "For example, by hosting activities on the platform, participants can upload their coloring works and share experiences. Seeing others face similar issues would make us feel less alone."

Thus, I randomly initiated the online feminist art therapy activity.

4.5.4 Online Gender-perspective Art Activity

4.5.4.1 Online Gender-perspective Activity Content.

This online gender-perspective art therapy activity aims to promote the concept of art therapy through the Xiaohongshu platform, combining feminist theory with color psychology to provide females with a convenient way to regulate their emotions. The activity was designed in a relaxed and open format, allowing users to participate autonomously at home and enhancing their emotional control and self-awareness. Through careful planning, the activity content not only included art creation but also integrated in-depth emotional management guidance.

At the beginning of the activity, a theme post was published on Xiaohongshu,

providing a detailed introduction to the background, objectives, and participation methods of feminist art therapy. Participants were encouraged to download a specially designed coloring book, which contained various mandala patterns and floral designs, symbolizing the diversity and vitality of emotions. The activity specifically designed daily coloring tasks, recommending that participants complete their creations in a quiet environment while using the emotion log template provided in the coloring book to record their emotional changes and creative reflections each day. This approach helped participants reflect on the sources of their emotions through art creation, gradually adjusting their mindset.

To enhance the interactivity of the activity, the Xiaohongshu community provided a platform for sharing and communication. Participants could upload their coloring works, along with descriptions of their creative feelings and emotional changes, and engage in discussions under the activity topics, such as #feminist art therapy# and #color therapy#. The like and comment functions not only brought participants closer together but also provided emotional support for their expression. Many participants stated that by observing the works and experiences of others, they gained a deeper understanding of their emotional fluctuations and received emotional encouragement through interaction.

A link to download the coloring book was provided on Baidu Cloud, allowing any interested females to download and use it freely.



Figure 63 Online activity content introduction and data chart
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

At the same time, regular posts featuring videos and images about color selection and emotional expression allowed participants to gain a deeper understanding of the role of color psychology in stress relief and emotion regulation. The researcher also provided feedback through Xiaohongshu comments and private messages, addressing participants' specific questions and helping them apply color therapy strategies more accurately. This real-time interaction enhanced the professionalism and credibility of the activity, further improving participant satisfaction with their experience.

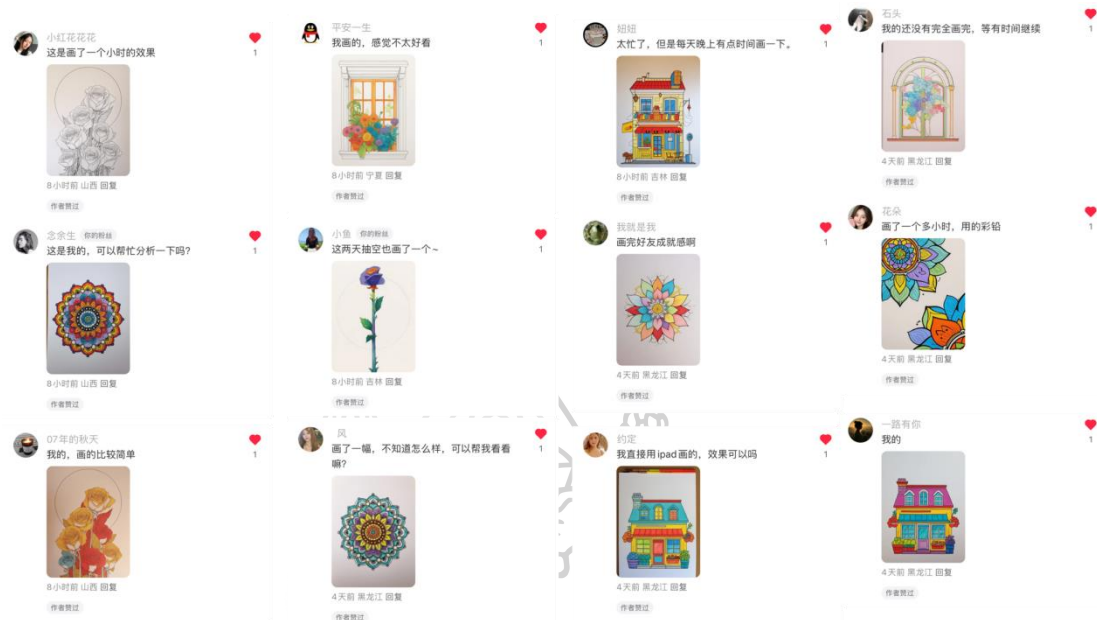


Figure 64 Online participants share their coloring works

Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

Lastly, the activity designed a set of emotional monitoring and follow-up mechanisms, encouraging users to submit their SCL-90 emotional assessment results weekly to observe trends in emotional changes. Based on this data, the activity provided participants with personalized emotion regulation suggestions, such as recommending suitable color therapy solutions and psychological strategies. This model, which combines self-participation and data feedback, not only enhanced females' control over their emotions but also allowed them to experience consistent therapeutic effects through ongoing art creation, ultimately fostering a deep recognition of their self-worth and inner strength.

Summary

The online art therapy activity conducted on the Xiaohongshu platform achieved significant engagement, meeting the emotional regulation needs of women and promoting both individual participation and sustained community interaction. The event was widely accessible and attracted a large audience, with a click-through rate 93% higher than similar initiatives. This performance validates the strong public

interest and growing acceptance of visual art as a tool for emotional support.

A key feature of the event was its interactive nature, as reflected in 109 comments submitted by participants. Many users shared their coloring artworks and personal experiences, fostering an open, emotionally resonant online support environment. Through coloring, participants externalized stress, exchanged feelings, and co-created a supportive digital space that served as an informal yet impactful channel for psychological relief.

Within the first 20 days, the activity surpassed 5,000 views, with likes and saves ranging from 220 to 1,187. These metrics reflect not only the sustained relevance of the content but also the emotional resonance it evoked. Participants were primarily women aged 18 to 40—a demographic frequently affected by occupational and familial stress—who reported that the coloring activity provided a simple and accessible method for emotional self-regulation. Although participants were geographically diverse, a concentration in Kunming was observed, highlighting the regional adaptability of art therapy practices.

The digital art therapy initiative designed in this study successfully established a scalable and responsive emotional support model. Utilizing Xiaohongshu's content-sharing structure, the activity created a low-threshold platform that enabled asynchronous and anonymous emotional expression. Participants from cities such as Kunming, Shanghai, and Chengdu engaged in meaningful exchanges, forming a decentralized community based on shared experiences. Through 109 interactive comments, individuals discussed personal stressors such as workplace pressure and maternal anxiety, thereby transforming the platform into a collective emotional archive.

This model demonstrates that structured visual expression activities—especially those integrated into familiar digital platforms—can effectively circumvent traditional spatial and temporal barriers in psychological interventions. The use of coloring books not only served as a non-verbal outlet for individual distress but also facilitated the formation of social bonds and peer support. The high engagement rate and viewership suggest that such practices hold substantial potential for expanding access to emotional wellness tools.

In conclusion, the activity confirms the viability of online art therapy as a

lightweight, scalable intervention mechanism for stress reduction. The notable engagement statistics, combined with evidence of peer support and emotional exchange, highlight its potential as both an emotional outlet and a means of enhancing public awareness around women's mental health. When combined with culturally relevant content and accessible creative formats, digital art therapy may serve as a powerful tool for psychological self-care in contemporary society.

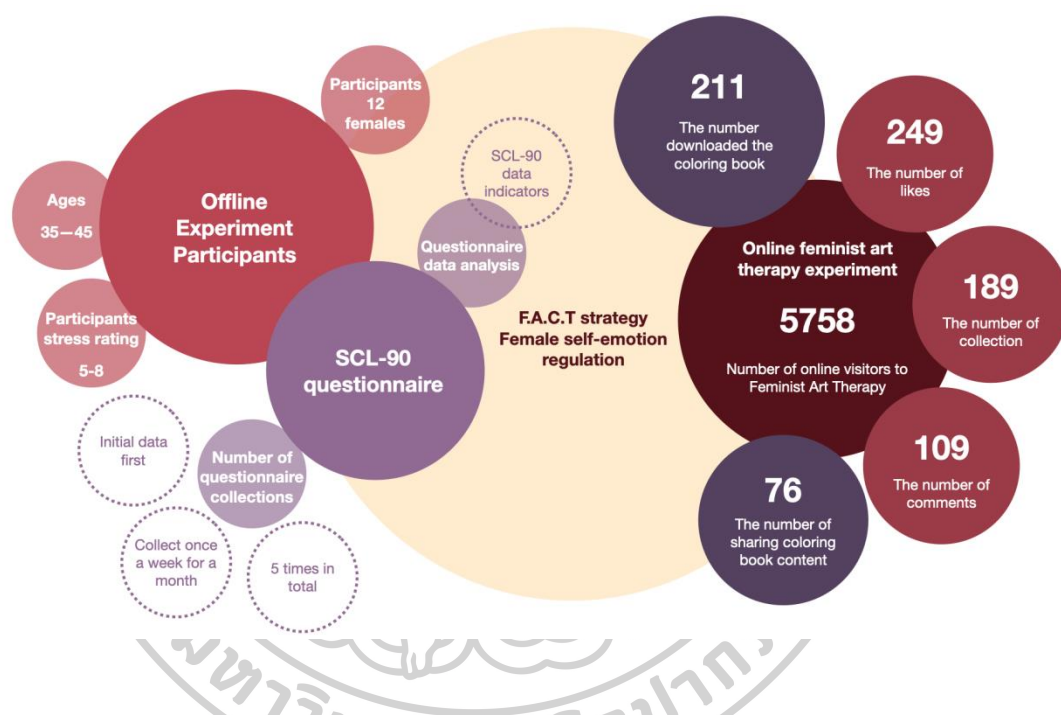


Figure 65 Data Summary of Online Activities
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter's design practice integrates both offline and online approaches to explore how art therapy can support women in managing emotional stress and enhancing psychological resilience. The offline experiment combined structured coloring therapy with the F.A.C. T strategy to provide participants with opportunities for self-expression and emotional release through creative activities. The application of color psychology enabled participants to recognize and reflect on their emotional states during the creative process, gradually achieving stress relief through visual expression. In addition to promoting individual emotional regulation, the activity encouraged

participants to reevaluate their personal identity and life roles, thereby strengthening their sense of self and cultural belonging. This immersive art experience effectively integrated emotional healing with personal and cultural reflection.

Experimental data from both offline and online activities confirmed the positive effects of the intervention on emotional well-being. In the offline setting, SCL-90 assessments revealed a notable decrease in emotional stress levels among most participants, demonstrating a marked improvement in mental state. Concurrently, participants' color preferences evolved from cooler, darker tones to brighter, warmer hues, visually indicating a shift toward more positive emotional states. In the online component, the Xiaohongshu platform served as an effective outreach tool, drawing high click-through rates that exceeded comparable content by 93%. This reflects a strong public demand for accessible emotional regulation resources. Many participants downloaded and used the customized coloring books, and actively shared their artworks and emotional changes, contributing to the formation of a digital art therapy support network centered on shared experience and emotional communication.

Through this integrated design practice, the research confirms the unique value of art therapy in addressing the emotional needs of contemporary women. Offline interventions provided a safe, interactive space for individual healing, while the online platform expanded accessibility, enabling participants from different regions to benefit from psychological support remotely. This hybrid model overcame the spatial and temporal limitations of traditional therapy by creating low-barrier, high-engagement channels for emotional expression. Furthermore, by fostering creative participation and peer-based support, the activity empowered participants to take greater ownership of their emotional well-being. The insights and data gained from this chapter offer valuable reference points for future art therapy activity design, contributing to the wider recognition and application of creative approaches in promoting women's mental health.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1 Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy

Based on the practical exploration conducted in this study, it is necessary to further summarize and consolidate the findings at the theoretical level, in order to deepen the understanding of the internal logic and innovative value of the research. Since this study focuses on the integration of feminist theory with art therapy practices to alleviate stress among females, the conclusion chapter should not only revisit the experimental outcomes but also engage in a systematic discussion regarding the relationship between this study and existing theoretical frameworks. By thoroughly examining feminist theory and mandala art therapy, this research establishes a solid theoretical foundation for the proposed "mechanism of feminist art therapy."

At the same time, while traditional art therapy primarily addresses individual psychological adjustment, it often neglects the deep influence of gender structures on emotional distress. Conversely, feminist theory emphasizes social critique but lacks concrete, actionable therapeutic pathways. Therefore, building upon interdisciplinary integration, this study proposes and develops a "mechanism of feminist art therapy" that simultaneously addresses emotional healing and gender identity reconstruction, responding to the dual needs of contemporary females under social pressure. The following sections will first discuss the theoretical foundations and then elaborate on the innovative mechanism proposed in this study.

5.1.2 Comparative Discussion with Gender-perspective

5.1.2.1 Gender-perspective Foundations and Conceptual Shifts

The Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy developed in this study is grounded in the evolving trajectory of Western feminist theory, particularly from the second and third waves. While the first wave focused on formal equality (Wollstonecraft), later waves—especially the third wave—shifted toward exploring identity, intersectionality, and embodied emotional experience (Zhao, 2023; Ferguson, 2017). These shifts in focus form the theoretical soil upon which this study's model has

grown.

As Christina Hughes (2002) notes, key feminist concepts such as "equality," "difference," and "autonomy" are not fixed, but historically and politically redefined across feminist traditions. The proposed mechanism does not merely reflect these evolving definitions—it operationalizes them. By embedding these concepts into visual language and creative activities, the mechanism helps participants experience gender difference not as a deficit, but as a source of emotional insight and aesthetic agency.

5.1.2.2 From Gender-perspective Discourse to Embodied Practice.

Elizabeth Grosz (2010) emphasized the role of feminist theory in redefining the social body through creative conceptual practices. In her view, feminist practice must intervene in both social thought and lived experience. Similarly, this study adopts a form of embodied feminist design, whereby gendered experiences—previously confined to discourse and critique—are externalized, visualized, and restructured through symbolically loaded art forms. The body is not merely theorized; it becomes the canvas of resistance.

While traditional feminist discourse has long relied on textual and linguistic expression, this research echoes Grosz's argument that non-linguistic media (such as image, space, color) can play a critical role in feminist transformation. The use of flowers, hair, body shapes, and color-coded emotion mapping in the therapy activities re-configures the female body from a passive symbol of oppression to an active site of expression and healing.

5.1.2.3 Intersectional Awareness and Cultural Localization.

Kathy Ferguson (2017) has called for feminist theory to move beyond binary thinking and embrace intersectionality, processual identity, and cross-cultural agency. The mechanism in this study resonates with that call. By choosing urban Chinese women aged 30–45 as the focal group—who face compound stressors across gender, economy, age, and cultural expectations—the model reflects not only feminist goals but intersectional sensitivity. In particular, this design integrates the structural stressors emphasized in Chinese feminist literature (Yang Xin, 2011; Wang Xuepan, 2012), which differ from Western feminist concerns about individual patriarchy and identity.

Furthermore, unlike much of Western feminist art therapy which is clinic-based, this study proposes a non-institutional, low-threshold, and self-directed intervention model. This aligns with Luan Qing's (2019) call for feminist strategies that resist the commodification of therapy and remain rooted in grassroots cultural engagement.

5.1.2.4 Comparative Insights and Innovations.

Table 42 Comparative Insights and Innovations

Comparison Area	Western Feminist Theory	This Study's Mechanism
Emphasis	Identity, resistance, critique of binary structures	Emotional healing, self-regulation, identity reconstruction
Expression Medium	Discourse, activism, body politics	Visual art, color, metaphor, participatory co-creation
Target Participants	Academics, activists, patients in clinical therapy	Ordinary women under daily pressure (non-clinical)
Method of Engagement	Political mobilization, narrative transformation	Symbolic coloring, structured visual reflection
Cultural Context	Global North, post-industrial urban societies	Urban Chinese context, post-socialist, Confucian culture

This comparison shows that while drawing on feminist theory's epistemological roots, the mechanism proposed here has localized and materialized feminist values into accessible, symbolic, and emotional practices for everyday use. It not only facilitates emotional relief, but also helps women reclaim narrative agency over their stress and identity.

5.1.2.5 Theoretical Contribution.

In summary, the Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy:

5.1.2.5.1 Extends the feminist conceptual field into visual and emotional domains;

5.1.2.5.2 Makes gender critique experiential, not just intellectual;

5.1.2.5.3 Translates theoretical intersectionality into culturally grounded practice;

5.1.2.5.4 Bridges the gap between global feminist discourse and Chinese emotional realities.

It thereby offers a hybrid framework where feminist consciousness, symbolic creation, and emotional agency converge—making feminist healing visible, participatory, and locally relevant.

5.1.3 Comparative Discussion with Art Therapy

The Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy proposed in this study is developed on the foundation of traditional art therapy theories, while extending and reconstructing them to address gender-specific emotional needs in a culturally relevant context. While preserving the therapeutic core of non-verbal expression and emotional regulation found in traditional approaches, this mechanism introduces structured symbolic design, gender perspective, and local cultural encoding to enhance both accessibility and efficacy.

5.1.3.1 Core Ideas and Practice Features of Traditional Art Therapy.

According to the American Art Therapy Association (AATA, 1980), art therapy is a non-verbal form of psychotherapy that uses visual creation to establish harmony between individuals and their internal/external environments. Margaret Naumburg (1974), one of the pioneers of art therapy, emphasized the use of spontaneous art creation to access the unconscious, often analyzed through free association. Edith Kramer (1958) further highlighted the intrinsic therapeutic power of the creative process itself, particularly its role in safely releasing unconscious material without disrupting a patient's defense mechanisms.

Abbing et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review demonstrating that art therapy is effective in relieving anxiety and promoting emotional well-being, though high-quality clinical trial evidence remains limited. The mechanisms suggested include right-brain activation, improved emotional processing, and relaxation facilitation. Similarly, Tian Min (2009) emphasized art therapy's reliance on projection theory and brain lateralization, particularly its value in addressing emotional issues that cannot be fully articulated through language.

Despite these achievements, most traditional approaches prioritize individual psychological recovery, often overlooking the sociocultural origins of emotional distress, especially those rooted in gender norms or systemic inequality. Moreover, the design of therapeutic materials in traditional art therapy rarely encodes cultural symbolism or gender-specific visual language, limiting its resonance with diverse user groups.

5.1.3.2 Innovations in the Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy.

In comparison, the Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy proposed in this study builds upon traditional foundations but introduces three critical innovations:

5.1.3.2.1 Structured and Symbolic Visual Language

Rather than relying solely on spontaneous drawing, this mechanism utilizes symbolic graphic structures and guided coloring tasks that embed gender metaphors and emotional cues. For example, red poppies represent sacrifice and oppression, while green stems symbolize resistance and vitality. This design preserves the intuitive nature of visual expression while strengthening cultural and emotional readability, especially for participants unfamiliar with therapeutic terminology.

5.1.3.2.2 From Emotional Catharsis to Autonomous Regulation

Whereas traditional art therapy often focuses on short-term emotional release or therapeutic relaxation (as observed by Abbing, 2018), the mechanism in this study emphasizes developing emotional literacy and long-term regulation capacity. Through repeated engagement with visual tasks, participants gradually learn to identify,

externalize, and transform their emotions—moving from passive healing to active self-regulation.

5.1.3.2.3 Cultural Adaptation and Localized Design

While previous scholars like Wei Yuan (2004) and Gong (1994) have explored cultural adaptation in Chinese art therapy, such efforts often remained theoretical. This study actively incorporates Chinese visual motifs and female-specific lived experiences, targeting women aged 30–45 in Kunming who face structural pressure from family, work, and social expectations. This localization significantly increases both the usability and emotional effectiveness of the intervention.

5.1.3.3 Comparative Summary Table.

Table 43 Comparative Art Therapy Table

Dimension	Traditional Art Therapy	Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy
Theoretical Basis	Projection theory, brain lateralization	Same, plus gender metaphor, symbolic encoding, cultural design
Expressive Mode	Free drawing, spontaneous expression	Structured coloring, symbolic graphics, emotional layering
Therapeutic Focus	Emotional release, relaxation, support	Emotional literacy, autonomy, psychological resilience
Context of Use	Clinical settings, therapist-guided	Daily life, self-directed, culturally embedded
Cultural Adaptation	Limited (Western-centric models)	High localization to Chinese female experience and symbolism

5.1.3.4 Summary.

In summary, while the Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy retains the essential values of traditional art therapy—such as non-verbal expression, projection, and emotional healing—it introduces a structurally guided, symbolically encoded, and culturally relevant system that better addresses the lived experiences of Chinese women under contemporary societal pressures. By transforming art therapy from a clinical, therapist-dependent model to a self-directed, visually rich, and gender-sensitive intervention, this study provides a new pathway for the expansion of art-based emotional regulation and offers a scalable model for broader application in mental health and design fields.

5.1.4 Comparative Discussion with Gender-perspective Art Therapy

While traditional art therapy has provided valuable techniques for emotional expression and psychological healing, feminist art therapy introduces critical perspectives that center on gendered experience, cultural narratives, and power dynamics. This research's proposed Mechanism of Feminist Art Therapy is situated within and contributes to this growing body of feminist critique and expansion of art therapy. By analyzing key feminist literature, especially the works of Susan Hogan and other feminist scholars, this study explores how its framework aligns with and extends feminist approaches in art therapy.

5.1.4.1 A Shift from Individual Pathology to Cultural Interpretation.

As Susan Hogan (1997, 2003, 2013) emphasized in *Feminist Approaches to Art Therapy and Gender Issues in Art Therapy*, mainstream art therapy has long relied on psychoanalytic and object relations theories that locate pathology within the individual, often ignoring sociocultural contributors to distress. Hogan advocated for a paradigm shift—toward interpreting mental states and symbolic imagery through a cultural and gendered lens, rather than exclusively psychological frameworks.

The mechanism proposed in this study adopts this perspective by embedding gendered visual codes and symbolic metaphors into the design of art therapy tools. For example, red poppies symbolize sacrifice and blood memory, and symbolic coding of

emotional categories (e.g., grief, rebellion, constraint) reflect not only personal emotions but also collective female experiences of gendered oppression. Like Hogan's critiques, this approach resists the over-medicalization of emotional expression and reclaims art-making as a site of resistance, awareness, and meaning-making rooted in lived gendered realities.

5.1.4.2 From Catharsis to Empowerment.

Many feminist scholars, including Ann Futterman Collier (2011) and Corrina Eastwood (2012), highlight how feminist art therapy fosters emotional agency and self-definition, particularly for women dealing with trauma, identity negotiation, or marginalization. This study's mechanism echoes this empowerment ethos by guiding participants toward self-directed emotional regulation, rather than passive catharsis. It encourages repeated engagement, which gradually builds emotional awareness, reflective capacity, and a sense of control.

Additionally, the visual design promotes autonomous meaning-making—each coloring activity is structured yet open to interpretation, enabling users to inscribe their own emotional narratives while engaging with culturally encoded forms. This mirrors Hogan's assertion that feminist art therapy must center clients' voices and symbolic languages rather than imposing clinical or interpretive authority.

5.1.4.3 Visual Culture and Gendered Imagination.

Hogan's recent work on visual representation and Foucault's "apparatus" suggests that imagery itself is a form of social power: what can be seen determines what can be thought. In line with this, the mechanism developed in this study deliberately leverages visual composition, color fields, and floral symbolism to challenge normative aesthetic paradigms associated with femininity (e.g., softness, passivity), and instead foreground assertiveness, plurality, and emotional depth.

For instance, the structure of the coloring book encourages the confrontation of repressed narratives by inviting users to transform socially imposed roles (e.g., motherhood, obedience) into new forms of visual and emotional articulation. This strategy aligns with Catherine Moon's (2011) view that art therapy is not only a method, but an ideological system—and its flexibility can be used to contest cultural norms

while enabling psychological healing.

5.1.4.4 Group Identity, Intersectionality, and Social Support.

Many feminist art therapists—including Wright & Wright (2013) and Swan-Foster (1989)—emphasize the relational dimension of therapy, in which group settings or shared experiences become a space for recognition and community-building. While the mechanism in this study is primarily individualized in practice, its online dissemination strategy and digital participation features create a hybrid environment where women can collectively share, reflect, and respond to each other's creations.

This resonates with feminist goals of expanding therapy beyond private introspection to include solidarity, validation, and mutual empowerment. By extending the healing space from the personal to the collective, this mechanism supports the broader feminist vision of using art to catalyze both personal and social transformation.

5.1.4.5 Cultural Specificity and the Chinese Context.

Most feminist art therapy literature is rooted in Western contexts, with limited transposition to other cultures. As noted in Chinese studies (e.g., Han & Wang, 2023; Zhang, 2016), feminist healing through painting, animation, and illustration remains underexplored yet promising. The mechanism proposed in this study integrates Chinese visual heritage, symbolic idioms, and localized stressors faced by urban Chinese women aged 30–45—such as filial pressure, motherhood, and career identity.

This cultural embedding differentiates it from earlier feminist models and speaks to what Hogan (2001) advocated in *Healing Arts*: that art therapy must be historically situated and culturally responsive. In doing so, this study contributes to the emergent field of Chinese feminist art therapy and offers a replicable framework for gender-sensitive emotional intervention rooted in local experience.

5.1.4.6 Summary.

The Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy constructed in this research aligns closely with the theoretical imperatives of feminist art therapy: challenging patriarchal narratives, reclaiming emotional authority, and embedding therapeutic practices in sociocultural contexts. Drawing on Susan Hogan's critical legacy and

integrating recent feminist insights, this mechanism represents a generative advancement in the field, especially in the underdeveloped context of feminist art therapy in China. By offering a visually symbolic, self-guided, and culturally embedded tool for emotional healing, it answers the feminist call for therapies that are not only expressive but also transformative.

5.1.5 Mechanism of Gender-perspective Art Therapy Developed in This Study

In my research, by integrating feminist theory with mandala art therapy, and feminist art therapy, I have developed a more suitable "Female Self-Emotional Control Method" for Chinese females. This theory focuses on helping females regulate their emotions, enhance self-awareness, and release emotions through artistic creation, thereby achieving psychological well-being and emotional management. This theory consists of four core components:

5.1.5.1 Gender Self-Recognition.

By creating mandalas and other patterns, females are able to re-examine their gender roles in society, reflecting on the relationship between their personal identity and societal expectations. Art creation becomes a tool through which females can express their inner gender identity and emotional struggles, deconstructing the constraints of societal gender roles and helping females better understand and accept their self-identity.

5.1.5.2 Color Self-Healing.

Colors have a powerful psychological regulatory effect. In mandala painting, through the selection of colors, females can express their emotions, helping to release and regulate stress. Each color has a unique emotional connection, and through the use of colors in the artwork, females can effectively release negative emotions, balance their psychological state, and achieve self-regulation and healing of emotions.

5.1.5.3 Self-Release of Tension.

The process of mandala painting provides females with a safe psychological space, allowing them to gradually release emotional stress through artistic creation.

This process is not only an expression of emotions but also a means of psychological relaxation and recovery. In this non-verbal creation, females can transform long-suppressed emotions into tangible artwork, thereby alleviating anxiety and tension in their hearts.

5.1.5.4 Progressive Self-Growth Theory.

The process of art therapy is gradual, starting with simple pattern creation and progressively increasing in complexity. This incremental process encourages females to achieve self-growth in gender identity, emotional expression, and psychological processing. As the therapy deepens, female emotional regulation abilities gradually improve, and psychological growth becomes more apparent.

Thus, the feminist art therapy mechanism developed in this study represents an innovative integration that simultaneously addresses emotional healing and sociocultural critique, filling the theoretical and practical gap between traditional art therapy and feminist psycho-social intervention.

5.2 F.A.C. T Strategy

In the design of the F.A.C. T stress relief strategy, I fully considered the multiple sources of pressure that contemporary Chinese females face in a rapidly developing societal environment, including career development, family responsibilities, and societal expectations of female roles. These pressures are often closely related to gender inequality and structural social issues, but existing mental health solutions largely overlook the unique emotional needs and social context of females. Therefore, based on the core principles of feminist theory and art therapy, I designed this stress relief strategy suitable for Chinese females, aiming to provide them with a convenient and flexible way to explore gender identity, release emotions, and achieve self-healing in daily life. The design of the F.A.C. T strategy particularly takes into account the limitations faced by many females who cannot regularly participate in offline psychological therapy. By integrating picture book art and scientific assessment tools, it allows for emotion regulation and stress management anytime and anywhere.

The F.A.C. T strategy consists of four interconnected steps, aimed at providing a systematic stress relief framework. The first step is self-awareness, helping females

understand their own stress and explore the impact of gender identity and social roles on emotions from a feminist perspective. Next, through picture book art creation, participants are encouraged to express inner emotions, explore self-identity, and enhance their understanding of social roles and structural issues. Then, color self-healing, using color psychology in combination with coloring and mindfulness meditation, helps participants relax their emotions, improve emotional regulation skills, and increase confidence in coping with stress. Finally, females can cycle through these steps, forming a dynamic stress management mechanism through self-assessment and artistic creation. Each step is tailored to the specific needs and psychological characteristics of females, providing them with efficient and flexible psychological support.

The F.A.C. T strategy addresses several key issues in modern female mental health management. First, through the stress self-assessment and gender awareness steps, it reveals the social and structural sources of stress, allowing females to better understand the connection between their emotions and social environment, thereby breaking free from simple individual attribution. Second, the strategy provides concrete and easy-to-use tools, such as picture book art and color therapy, to help females effectively alleviate stress in their daily lives, especially for those who cannot regularly participate in offline therapy. Lastly, it forms a closed-loop intervention of "cognitive awakening - behavior reshaping - systemic resistance," which not only helps females achieve emotional management and stress relief but also strengthens gender identity recognition and social role exploration, enhancing their self-efficacy and control over life, offering a long-term and sustainable solution for female mental health.

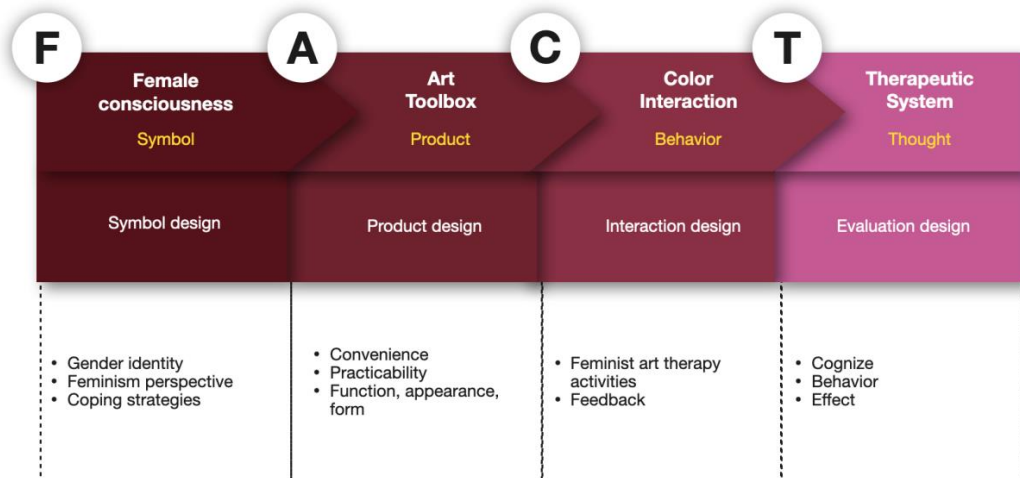


Figure 66 F.A.C.T research strategy
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

5.3 The Achievement of Research Objectives and the Validation of Research Hypotheses

5.3.1 The Achievement of Research Objectives

The objective of this study focuses on exploring the sources of stress among contemporary Chinese females and identifying effective relief strategies, particularly through the theoretical and practical integration of feminist art therapy. This research has successfully achieved multiple goals and made significant theoretical contributions. Firstly, the study systematically integrates feminist theory with practical applications of art therapy, proposing six feminist-perspectives tailored to the Chinese cultural and social context. By deeply analyzing the sources of stress faced by Chinese females, the research reveals multiple contributing factors—including gender roles, family responsibilities, and workplace inequalities—and based on these findings, develops a therapeutic model rooted in a feminist framework. This model not only expands the applicability of feminist theory in the Chinese context but also provides a new theoretical perspective and practical foundation for the field of art therapy.

Secondly, the study offers innovative contributions by combining color psychology with art-based therapy, particularly in the implementation of gender-perspective art therapy activities. It identifies the correlation between color and emotional states, establishing a model of emotional guidance based on 12 emotional correspondences with specific colors. The study demonstrates through empirical data that this color-based approach significantly aids in stress relief and promotes emotional regulation. By providing guided color creation strategies for different emotional states, the research enhances participants' emotional awareness and self-regulation abilities. This contribution not only deepens the theoretical application of color psychology in art therapy but also supplies a practical, replicable tool for future therapeutic design.

Finally, the study extends and constructs a theoretical framework for autonomous emotional regulation among females by integrating feminist theory with the core principles of mandala-based art therapy. Through the development of the F.A.C.T. strategy, the research organically merges feminist perspectives, creative art practices, and mechanisms of color psychology, with mandala drawing as the primary artistic medium. This framework emphasizes female self-exploration and emotional reflection during the creative process, leading to independent emotional regulation. The theoretical model effectively combines the universality of mandala art therapy with the specificity of feminist insight, providing an innovative emotion management approach tailored for females in the Chinese socio-cultural context. Empirical results confirm that the F.A.C.T. strategy helps females better recognize, understand, and manage their emotions, thereby enhancing self-efficacy and emotional balance through artistic expression. These findings open new pathways and perspectives for research in female mental health and the practical application of art therapy.

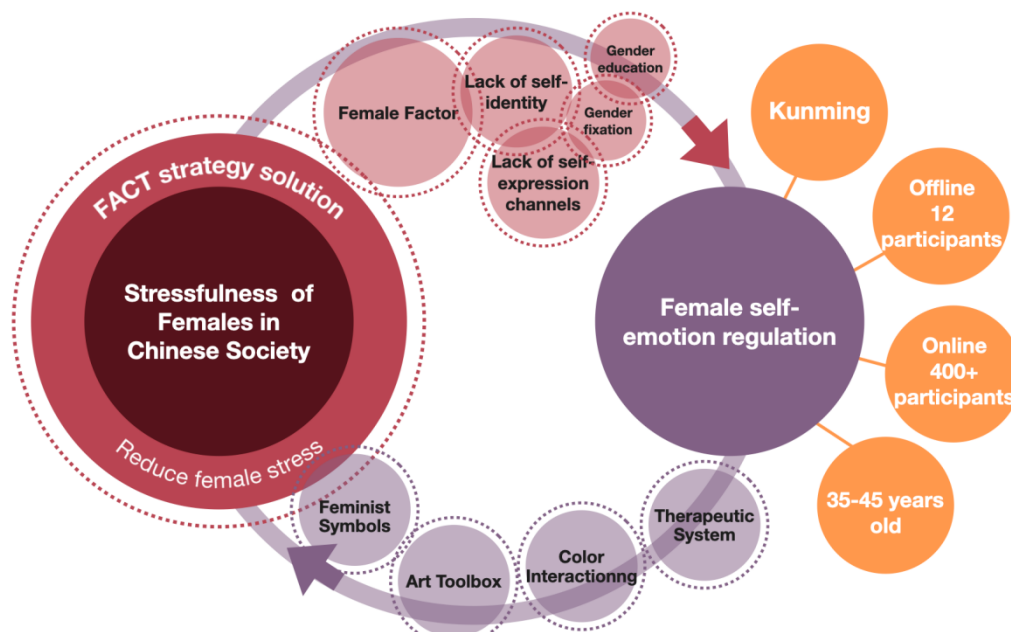


Figure 67 Research Summary
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)

5.3.2 Validation of the Research Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that by integrating gender-perspective with art therapy, it is possible to design accessible and practical stress-relief tools that can effectively help females alleviate stress and achieve self-directed emotion regulation. Based on the achievement of research objectives and the analysis of results, this hypothesis has been thoroughly validated. The study identifies multiple sources of stress experienced by females and successfully constructs an art therapy mechanism tailored to Chinese females by combining mandala drawing with color psychology. The F.A.C.T. The strategy is both operationally convenient and emotionally therapeutic, enabling participants to independently identify, analyze, and relieve stress while enhancing their emotion regulation skills and sense of self-efficacy. This demonstrates the practical feasibility of integrating feminist and art therapy.

Moreover, the implementation model—combining online and offline formats—has expanded the applicability of the stress-relief tools, allowing a broader group of females to easily participate in activities and receive support through artistic healing.

The study not only achieves its goals of reducing stress and improving emotion regulation among females, but also emphasizes the importance of female independence and autonomy. It provides a scientific and innovative solution to the improvement of mental health for contemporary Chinese females. This achievement holds significant practical relevance and offers new perspectives for the interdisciplinary integration of art therapy and feminist, demonstrating both high theoretical value and promising application potential.

5.4 Social Value and Long-Term Impact of the Study

The social value and long-term impact of this study are primarily reflected in promoting female mental health, raising societal awareness of the issue of female stress, and providing new perspectives and models for the practical application of art therapy and feminist theory.

Firstly, this study provides a scientifically grounded and operational solution to female mental health issues by analyzing the sources and manifestations of stress among contemporary Chinese females. The F.A.C.T. strategy developed in this research integrates feminist theory with mandala-based art therapy, creating a stress-relief tool that is both accessible and practical. The results demonstrate that this tool not only significantly reduces stress levels among females but also helps them develop the ability for self-regulated emotional control. This outcome holds practical relevance for addressing the multilayered pressures faced by specific groups in Chinese society—such as professional females and full-time mothers—enhancing their sense of well-being and quality of life, thereby contributing to broader social harmony and sustainable development.

Secondly, the study expands the influence of feminist art therapy by combining online and offline activities and promoting its outcomes on social media platforms. Beyond improving individual mental health, the project facilitates the creation of an online "female emotional support community," which strengthens emotional bonding and mutual support among females. This community-based healing model reinforces a sense of collective female identity and promotes public understanding and acceptance of the feminist perspective and female stress-related issues. It contributes to the gradual transformation of gender inequality at the societal level. Furthermore, this new

therapeutic model has the potential to be replicated and scaled to benefit more populations, offering new approaches for the socialized development of mental health services.

Finally, the study expands the theoretical application of feminist theory and art therapy. The system developed in this research, which integrates color psychology and autonomous emotion regulation theory, holds long-term academic value. This theoretical framework not only enriches the content of feminist but also provides innovative directions for the field of art therapy, particularly in emotional regulation and stress relief. The integration of theory and practice offers reference value for healing practices in different cultural contexts, demonstrating cross-cultural adaptability and long-term applicability. Therefore, the social significance of this research lies not only in its support for contemporary Chinese females but also in its theoretical and practical contributions to global efforts to improve mental health and advance gender equality.

5.5 Limitations and Prospects

5.5.1 Limitations of the Study

This study has certain limitations, primarily related to the sample range, data collection methods, and time constraints. Firstly, due to time and resource limitations, the research only includes a subset of females with psychological stress who wish to improve their situation through art therapy. The sample size is relatively small and lacks sufficient diversity, failing to represent a broader population of females. Secondly, the research primarily relies on interviews and self-reported questionnaires, which may introduce subjective bias. Respondents may adjust their answers based on social expectations, memory bias, or personal perceptions, which could affect the accuracy of the data. Lastly, both the research and experimental design were conducted within a specific time frame, limiting the ability to observe changes in female psychological states over time. This somewhat affects the evaluation of the long-term effectiveness of the research findings. Future studies should aim to overcome these limitations by expanding the sample size, incorporating objective measurement tools, and extending the observation period.

5.5.2 Prospects for Future Research

In future studies, I plan to further expand the scope and depth of the research to enhance its applicability and theoretical value. Firstly, the sample range will be broadened from a specific female group to a more diverse background, including females from different regions, occupations, age groups, and socioeconomic conditions. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the sources of stress for females in different social and cultural environments, as well as their needs for stress-relief strategies. This approach will help improve the representativeness and generalizability of the research findings, allowing the F.A.C.T. strategy to reach a broader target population, especially marginalized female groups that have not been adequately studied and supported.

Secondly, future research will focus on overcoming self-report bias by introducing more objective measurement methods, such as physiological indicators (e.g., heart rate variability, skin conductance response) and observational studies, to complement the subjective data from interviews and surveys. By combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the research will further validate the efficacy of the F.A.C.T. strategy among different female groups and assess its long-term impact. Additionally, by incorporating cross-cultural comparative studies, we will explore the applicability and limitations of the F.A.C.T. strategy in different cultural contexts, providing data support and theoretical references for the global application of feminist-based art therapy.

Finally, future research will also focus on the long-term practice and continuous optimization of the F.A.C.T. strategy. Longitudinal studies will observe the emotional and stress change trajectories of females who implement the strategy, as well as their adaptability to the strategy when facing pressure from different life stages. This not only helps validate the long-term effects of the F.A.C.T. strategy but also provides practical insights for its further refinement. For instance, exploring how to integrate the F.A.C.T. strategy with female daily lives through digital technologies and online platforms, and developing personalized, interactive stress-relief tools, would offer more convenient and flexible emotional management support for modern females. Through these future research directions, I hope the F.A.C.T. strategy can truly become an innovative solution that meets the needs of modern society, effectively helps females alleviate

stress, and enhances their emotion regulation capabilities.

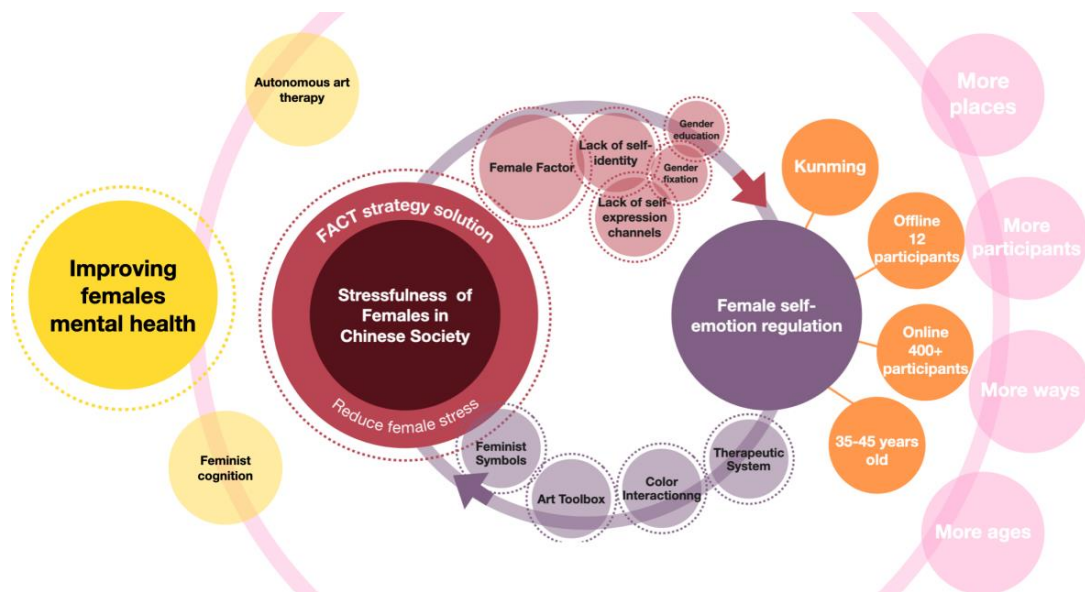
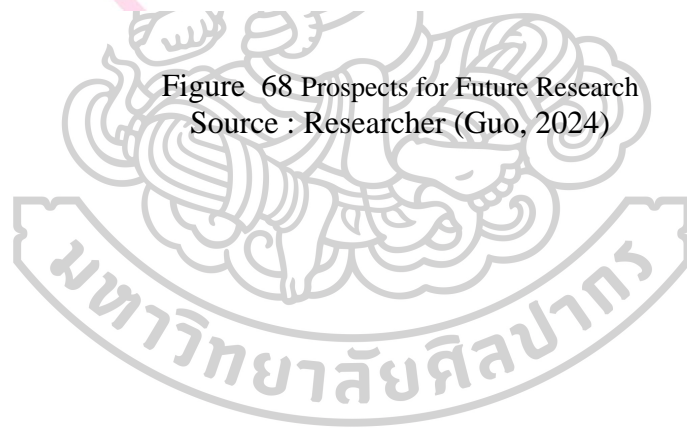


Figure 68 Prospects for Future Research
Source : Researcher (Guo, 2024)



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Stress Reduction Questionnaire

1. What is your age group? [Single-choice question]

- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 55 and above

2. Your occupation is [single choice question]

- Students
- Office workers
- Housewife
- Freelancer
- Others _____

3. Your marital status is [single choice]

- Single
- Married but not pregnant
- Married and pregnant
- Divorced / widowed

4. What are the main sources of stress for you? (Multiple choice) [Multiple choice]

- Work
- Learning
- Family responsibilities (such as childcare, caring for the elderly, etc.)
- Social expectations (such as appearance, marriage, fertility pressure, etc.)
- Economic issues
- Interpersonal Relationships
- Health problems
- Others _____

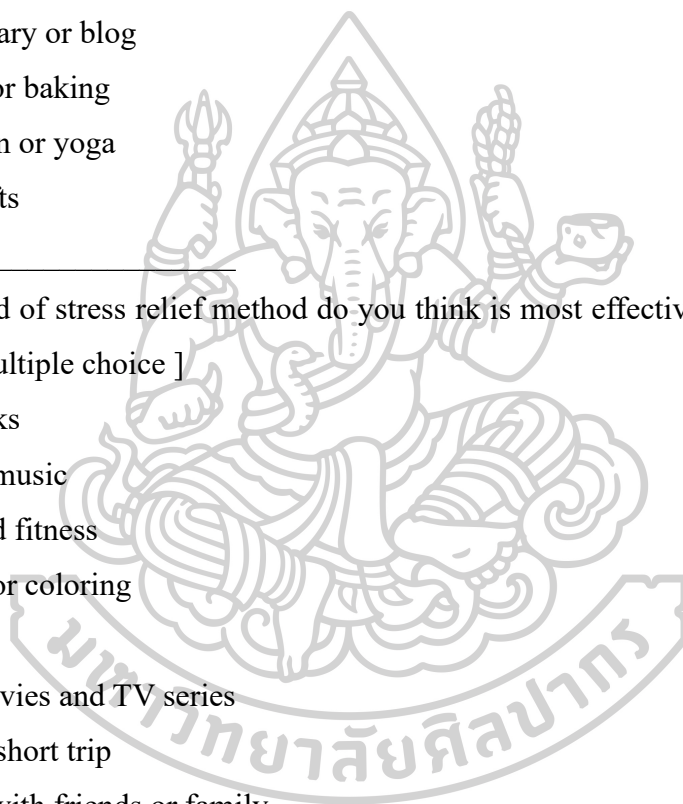
5. When you feel stressed, what methods do you usually use to relieve stress? (Multiple choice) [Multiple choice]

- Read books
- Listen to music

- Sports and fitness
- Drawing or coloring
- Dancing
- Watch movies and TV series
- Travel or short trip
- Chatting with friends or family
- Online games
- Shopping
- Write a diary or blog
- Cooking or baking
- Meditation or yoga
- Handicrafts
- Others _____

6. What kind of stress relief method do you think is most effective for you? (Multiple choice) [Multiple choice]

- Read books
- Listen to music
- Sports and fitness
- Drawing or coloring
- Dancing
- Watch movies and TV series
- Travel or short trip
- Chatting with friends or family
- Online games
- Shopping
- Write a diary or blog
- Cooking or baking
- Meditation or yoga
- Handicrafts
- Others _____



7. What factors do you consider most important when choosing a decompression method? (Multiple choice) [Multiple choice]

- Easy to use
- Low cost
- No time limit
- No location restrictions
- Obvious effect
- Can be completed independently
- Can be shared or done with others
- Creativity and fun



Recruitment of art therapy participants

1. Name [fill in the blank]

2. Gender [single choice]

Female

Male

3. Age [single choice]

30-32

33-35

36-38

39-40

40-42

43-45

4. Do you live in Kunming now? [Single-choice question]

Yes

No

5. Occupation [Fill in the blank]

6. Contact information (mobile phone / WeChat) [Fill in the blank]

7. Please roughly evaluate your current stress level? (Between 1-10, 1 is no stress, 10 is very, very stressful) [Single-choice question]

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

○10

8. Do you have any mental health problems or medical history? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

9. Are you currently receiving any form of psychological treatment or counseling? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

10. Have you ever had experience with art therapy? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

11. Are you interested in participating in art therapy activities? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

12. Would you like to participate in a feminist art therapy activity once a week for 4 weeks (one month)? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

13. Please confirm that you have understood the purpose and methods of this activity, agree to participate in this study voluntarily, and know that you can withdraw at any time without any negative impact? [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

14. Please confirm that you understand that all your answers and personal information will be kept strictly confidential, used only for this study, and will not be disclosed to any third party. [Single-choice question]

Yes

○ No

15. Do you agree that the researcher will use your anonymous data for this study and future related academic research? [Single-choice question]

Yes

No

16. During some art therapy activities, we may record or videotape them for analysis. Please confirm whether you agree to be photographed, recorded or videotaped during the activity. All materials will be used for research purposes and will not be released publicly. [Single-choice question]

Yes

No

17. Are you willing to show or share your stress problems with researchers? [Single-choice question]

Yes

No

18. Are you willing to let the researchers record and analyze your performance in the experiment? [Single-choice question]

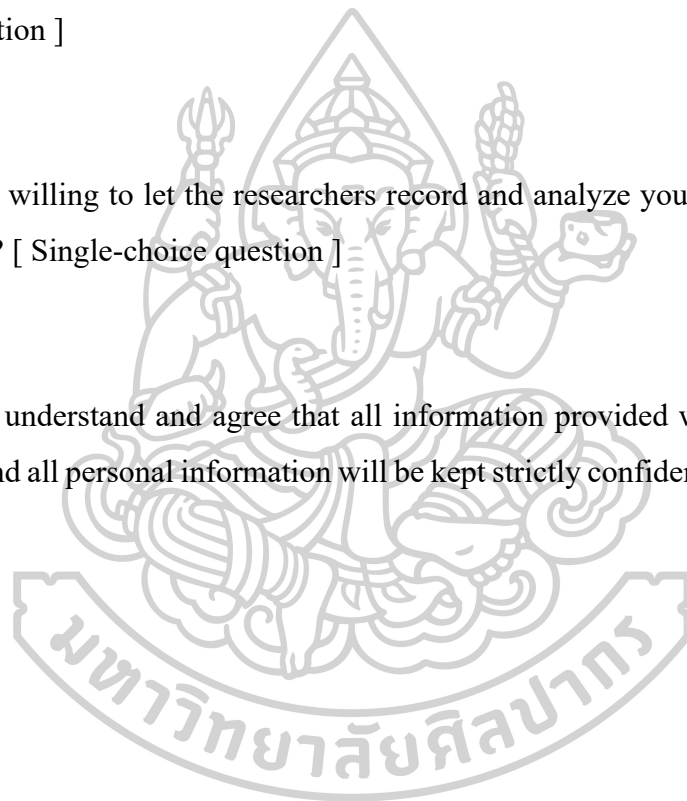
Yes

No

19. Do you understand and agree that all information provided will only be used for this study and all personal information will be kept strictly confidential? [Single-choice question]

Yes

No



SCL-90 (continued)

HOW MUCH WERE YOU BOTHERED BY:		NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE BIT	MODERATELY	QUITE A BIT	EXTREMELY
20.	Crying easily	0	1	2	3	4
21.	Feeling shy or uneasy with the opposite sex	0	1	2	3	4
22.	Feeling of being trapped or caught	0	1	2	3	4
23.	Suddenly scared for no reason	0	1	2	3	4
24.	Temper outbursts that you could not control	0	1	2	3	4
25.	Feeling afraid to go out of your house alone	0	1	2	3	4
26.	Blaming yourself for things	0	1	2	3	4
27.	Pains in lower back	0	1	2	3	4
28.	Feeling blocked in getting things done	0	1	2	3	4
29.	Feeling lonely	0	1	2	3	4
30.	Feeling blue	0	1	2	3	4
31.	Worrying too much about things	0	1	2	3	4
32.	Feeling no interest in things	0	1	2	3	4
33.	Feeling fearful	0	1	2	3	4
34.	Your feelings being easily hurt	0	1	2	3	4
35.	Other people being aware of your private thoughts	0	1	2	3	4
36.	Feeling others do not understand you or are unsympathetic	0	1	2	3	4
37.	Feeling that people are unfriendly or dislike you	0	1	2	3	4
38.	Having to do things very slowly to insure correctness	0	1	2	3	4
39.	Heart pounding or racing	0	1	2	3	4
40.	Nausea or upset stomach	0	1	2	3	4
41.	Feeling inferior to others	0	1	2	3	4
42.	Soreness of your muscles	0	1	2	3	4
43.	Feeling that you are watched or talked about by others	0	1	2	3	4
44.	Trouble falling asleep	0	1	2	3	4
45.	Having to check and double-check what you do	0	1	2	3	4
46.	Difficulty making decisions	0	1	2	3	4
47.	Feeling afraid to travel on buses, subways, trains	0	1	2	3	4
48.	Trouble getting your breath	0	1	2	3	4
49.	Hot or cold spells	0	1	2	3	4
50.	Having to avoid certain things, places, or activities because they frighten you	0	1	2	3	4
51.	Your mind going blank	0	1	2	3	4
52.	Numbness or tingling in parts of your body	0	1	2	3	4
53.	A lump in your throat	0	1	2	3	4
54.	Feeling hopeless about the future	0	1	2	3	4
55.	Trouble concentrating	0	1	2	3	4

SCL-90 (continued)

HOW MUCH WERE YOU BOTHERED BY:		NOT AT ALL	A LITTLE BIT	MODERATELY	QUITE A BIT	EXTREMELY
56.	Feeling weak in parts of your body	0	1	2	3	4
57.	Feeling tense or keyed up	0	1	2	3	4
58.	Heavy feelings in your arms or legs	0	1	2	3	4
59.	Thoughts of death or dying	0	1	2	3	4
60.	Overeating	0	1	2	3	4
61.	Feeling uneasy when people are watching or talking about you	0	1	2	3	4
62.	Having thoughts that are not your own	0	1	2	3	4
63.	Having urges to beat, injure, or harm someone	0	1	2	3	4
64.	Awakening in the early morning	0	1	2	3	4
65.	Having to repeat the same actions such as touching, counting, washing	0	1	2	3	4
66.	Sleep that is restless or disturbed	0	1	2	3	4
67.	Having urges to break or smash things	0	1	2	3	4
68.	Having ideas or beliefs that others do not share	0	1	2	3	4
69.	Feeling very self-conscious with others	0	1	2	3	4
70.	Feeling uneasy in crowds, such as shopping or at a movie	0	1	2	3	4
71.	Feeling everything is an effort	0	1	2	3	4
72.	Spells of terror or panic	0	1	2	3	4
73.	Feeling uncomfortable about eating or drinking in public	0	1	2	3	4
74.	Getting into frequent arguments	0	1	2	3	4
75.	Feeling nervous when you are left alone	0	1	2	3	4
76.	Others not giving you proper credit for your achievements	0	1	2	3	4
77.	Feeling lonely even when you are with people	0	1	2	3	4
78.	Feeling so restless you couldn't sit still	0	1	2	3	4
79.	Feelings of worthlessness	0	1	2	3	4
80.	Feeling that familiar things are strange or unreal	0	1	2	3	4
81.	Shouting or throwing things	0	1	2	3	4
82.	Feeling afraid you will faint in public	0	1	2	3	4
83.	Feeling that people will take advantage of you if you let them	0	1	2	3	4
84.	Having thoughts about sex that bother you a lot	0	1	2	3	4
85.	The idea that you should be punished for your sins	0	1	2	3	4
86.	Feeling pushed to get things done	0	1	2	3	4
87.	The idea that something serious is wrong with your body	0	1	2	3	4
88.	Never feeling close to another person	0	1	2	3	4
89.	Feelings of guilt	0	1	2	3	4
90.	The idea that something is wrong with your mind	0	1	2	3	4

Reference: Derogatis, L.R., Lipman, R.S., & Covi, L. (1973). SCL-90: An outpatient psychiatric rating scale—Preliminary Report. *Psychopharmacol. Bull.* 9, 13–28.

Index of item objective congruence

Through the Index of item objective congruence and the applicability of research tools, the data collection is organized in the following table, and the experts' ratings in the per-person section are as follows:

All variables and questionnaire questions in this research: *Research on Reducing the Stressfulness of Females in Chinese Society through the Design of Feminist Art Therapy* were obtained by consulting literature and previous works. To ensure the consistency of each variable and question in the questionnaire, the questionnaire was evaluated by the thesis advisor and three experts in related fields including:

Expert1: Li Yanhong

Expert2: Li Yun

Expert3: Du Jingdi

The author uses the index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) to examine consistency between questions and objective or objective and content (Turner & Carlson, 2009). It can be calculated from the formula:

$$IOC = \frac{\Sigma R}{N}$$

Where:

IOC = Consistency between questions and objective or objective and content.

ΣR = Total assessment points that are given from all qualified experts.

N = Number of qualified experts.

There are 3 levels of assessment point as follows:

Suitable (+1) means The questionnaire's questions are certainly consistent with the objective.

Not Appropriateness (0) means The questionnaire's questions are unsure to be consistent with the objective.

Not Suitable (-1) means The questionnaire's questions are inconsistent with the objective.

The consistency index value must have the value of 0.5 or above to be accepted.

Index of Item Objective Congruence (IOC) from three experts result are as followed:

Part 1 Research basic questionnaire

No.	Expert1			Expert2			Expert3			Total Scores Σ	IOC ΣR — N	Data Analysis
	-1	0	1	-1	0	1	-1	0	1			
Q1			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q2			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q3			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q4			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable

Part 2 Network screening participant questionnaire

No.	Expert1			Expert2			Expert3			Total Scores Σ	IOC ΣR — N	Data Analysis
	-1	0	1	-1	0	1	-1	0	1			
Q1			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q2			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q3			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q4			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q5			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q6			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q7			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q8			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q9			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q10			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q11			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q12			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q13			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q14			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable

Q15			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q16			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q17			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q18			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable

$$IOC = \frac{\Sigma R}{N}$$

Part 3 Emotion Regulation Questionnaire—Symptom Checklist-90 (SCL 90)

(The questionnaire will be used at the beginning, middle and end of the design experiment to determine whether the participants' stress levels are reduced according to their scores.)

No.	Expert1			Expert2			Expert3			Total Scores Σ	IOC Σ R —— N	Data Analysis
	-1	0	1	-1	0	1	-1	0	1			
SCL-90 (1-90)			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable

Part 4 Expert assessment

Where:

No.	Expert1			Expert2			Expert3			Total Scores Σ	IOC Σ R —— N	Data Analysis
	-1	0	1	-1	0	1	-1	0	1			
Q1			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q2			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q3			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q4			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable
Q5			√			√			√	3	1	Acceptable

IOC = Consistency between questions and objective or objective and content.

ΣR = Total assessment points that are given from all qualified experts.

N = Number of qualified experts.

Therefore

The value index of item objective congruence (IOC) assessment result of this questionnaire is equal to 1.

The value of IOC is 1, its more than 0.5, it is proved the questions in this questionnaire are consistent.

List of experts

$$IOC = \frac{28}{28} = 1$$

Expert1: Li Yanhong

Expert2: Li Yun

Expert3: Du Jingdi

Participant Data Integrity Statement

**数据诚信书
参与者声明**

本人 杨子斌 (姓名), 特此声明, 我自愿参与本研究项目《通过女性主义艺术疗法设计减轻女性压力的研究》的全部过程。本人确认, 所有提供给研究团队的个人数据、问卷反馈、参与经历以及其他相关信息均为本人真实、准确、完整的陈述。

数据提供

我理解并同意以下条款:

数据真实性

本人确认, 所有提供的数据信息, 包括但不限于心理健康状况问卷、艺术治疗活动反馈、绘本涂色作品及其他参与体验, 均为本人真实的自愿表达, 所有信息均基于本人实际情况, 未进行任何形式的夸大、隐瞒或虚假陈述。

数据使用

本人授权研究团队将提供的全部数据用于学术研究和分析, 且研究团队有权在不透露个人身份的前提下, 在学术论文、报告和其他研究成果中使用这些数据。研究团队承诺, 所有个人数据将严格保密, 不会用于本研究项目之外的其他用途。

参与意愿

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签名: 杨子斌
日期: 2024.9.11

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VITA

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PUBLICATION

1. Yexin, G. (2024). Yunnan Feminist Artists' Living Environment and Interpretation of Artistic Language—A Case Study of Sun Guojuan and Fu Liya. *Lawarath Social E-Journal*, 6(3), 149–160.
2. Yexin, G., & Pintong, S. . (2024). A Study of Floral Images in Chinese-Western Feminist Art Creation. *Asian Journal of Arts and Culture*, 24(1), e259708.

