

Research on Enhancing the Employment Ability of Sports Major Undergraduates in Guangxi

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Abstract

With the rapid economic development of China, the competitive situation in various fields of society has become increasingly fierce, thereby intensifying the employment pressure on the public. In recent years, the number of college students has continued to rise, making the employment competition pressure for college students increasingly greater, and among this group, the employment challenges faced by sports students are particularly prominent. In view of this, this paper, based on the USEM employment ability model, conducts in-depth surveys of Guangxi sports undergraduates and relevant employers to understand the specific performance of Guangxi sports undergraduates in the four aspects of subject understanding, skills, self-efficacy, and meta-cognition, thereby comprehensively evaluating their employment ability level. According to the survey results, this paper analyzes the reasons hindering the improvement of Guangxi sports students' employment ability and puts forward improvement suggestions based on these reasons, making positive exploration for the improvement of Guangxi sports undergraduates' employment ability.

Keywords

Sports undergraduates, Employment ability, USEM model, Strategies, Colleges and universities.

1. Background of the Study

In recent years, the number of college graduates in Guangxi has been increasing year by year. According to the data released by the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region Education Department, in 2022, there were 383,000 university graduates in Guangxi, and in 2023, there were 396,400. In 2024, the number of college graduates in Guangxi is expected to reach 430,000. The large number of graduates has injected new vitality into the economic development of Guangxi and is an important driving force for the fast development of Guangxi's economy. The large number of college graduates has made positive contributions to the economic development of Guangxi, but it cannot be denied that the problem of college graduate employment has also increased. Among them, the employment problem of Guangxi's sports undergraduates is particularly prominent. In 2022, the number of graduates from Guangxi's sports undergraduate program was 2,080, and in 2023, it was 2,231. In 2024, the number of graduates from Guangxi's sports undergraduate program was 2,569. According to the prediction of the Guangxi Education Department, the sports undergraduate program in Guangxi will continue to grow in the coming years. With the increasing competitiveness of employment and the growing number of graduates, Guangxi's sports undergraduates are facing greater challenges. The uniqueness of the sports industry makes the market's demand for talent particularly strict. It not only emphasizes that students should have a solid foundation of sports-related knowledge, but also has higher requirements for the mastery of sports skills. However,

some students tend to focus on the improvement of sports skills during their studies, while neglecting the accumulation of cross-disciplinary knowledge, which to some extent weakens their overall abilities and puts them at a disadvantage in the severe employment market. This paper will analyze the employment ability of Guangxi's sports undergraduates in detail, both highlighting their strengths and facing the existing problems, in order to explore effective strategies to enhance the employment ability of Guangxi's sports undergraduates.

2. The Specific Implications of the USEM Model

Peter Knight and Menz York proposed the USEM Employability Framework in 2004, which emphasizes that employability is composed of four core elements: subject matter understanding, skills, self-efficacy, and metacognition.

Taking into account the characteristics of sports majors in Guangxi, this paper condenses the core elements of employability into more specific content: subject matter understanding refers to the students' mastery of sports-related subject matter knowledge; skills refer to the students' mastery of sports-related skills; self-efficacy refers to the students' confidence in achieving their expected goals; metacognition refers to the students' correct judgment and positive attitude towards the world, which can be understood as positive values and worldview.

Table 1. Specific Implications of the USEM Employability Model

	The Four Elements	The specific meaning
USEM Employment Competency Model	Subject Understanding	Master the subject knowledge of sports discipline.
	Skills	Master sports-related skills.
	Self-efficacy	Confidence in achieving the expected goals.
	Meta-cognition	Positive values and worldview.

3. Research Design

This study conducted a survey on 250 senior students of Guangxi sports majors from 10 Guangxi universities, including Nanning College, Wuzhou College, North Bay University, Guangxi University for Nationalities, Guangxi Normal University, Guangxi Normal University for Nationalities, Nanning Normal University, Baise College, Hechi University, and Hezhou University, as well as 70 employers who hire Guangxi sports graduates.

In the current survey on the employability of college students, a questionnaire survey method was adopted. The questionnaire survey used a rating scale measurement tool to allow respondents to choose appropriate answers. The specific connotation of the USEM employability model was used to set the questions in the survey questionnaire, and a rating option was set behind each question, such as "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", and "strongly disagree", which corresponded to scores of 4 points, 3 points, 2 points, and 1 point respectively. By calculating the average score of each question based on the actual situation of giving scores to the respondents, the attitude of the respondents towards the relevant issues can be judged. This paper analyzes the current situation of the employability of sports undergraduates in Guangxi through the questionnaire survey method, thereby identifying the shortcomings of the employability of Guangxi sports undergraduates, finding the reasons, and finding ways to improve the employability of Guangxi sports undergraduates.

4. Data Analysis

We distributed 250 questionnaires and received 238 responses. After excluding 14 invalid questionnaires, we were left with 224 valid questionnaires, so we analyzed the results of the questionnaires completed by 224 students.

Table 2. Employment Ability Survey of Sports Major Undergraduates in Guangxi (Student Version)

USEM Employability	SA	A	SA	SD	Mean	Attitude
Subject Understanding Ability: Master subject knowledge of sports discipline	64	40	84	36	2.59	Disagree
Skills: Master sports-related skills	78	92	31	23	3.00	agree
Self-efficacy: Confidence in achieving the expected goals	79	99	25	21	3.05	agree
Meta-cognition: Positive values and worldview	46	44	82	52	2.38	Disagree

Strongly Agree(SA)= 3.26 - 4.00 *Agree (A)= 2.51 - 3.25*
Disagree (DA) = 1.76 - 2.50 *Strongly Disagree(SD) = 1.00 - 1.75*

This table shows the self-assessment results of the four core elements of the USEM employability model, namely Subject Understanding , skills, self-efficacy, and metacognition, among undergraduate sports students in Guangxi. In the survey, the average score for the understanding of sports-related Subject Understanding was 2.59, with an attitude of "disagree". This indicates that most undergraduate sports students in Guangxi feel that they still have room for improvement in terms of mastering sports-related subject knowledge. The average score for the understanding of sports-related professional skills was 3.00, with an attitude of "agree". This shows that Guangxi undergraduate sports students are relatively confident in their mastery of sports-related professional skills and believe that they perform well in this area. The average score for confidence in achieving expected goals was 3.05, with an attitude of "agree". This indicates that many undergraduate sports students in Guangxi have sufficient confidence and expectations for their future employment and career development. The average score for positive values and worldview was 2.38, with an attitude of "disagree". This means that Guangxi undergraduate sports students need to strengthen their cultivation of positive values and worldview, and some students may lack a deep understanding and recognition of these aspects. From the data in the table, it can be seen that Guangxi sports undergraduates are relatively confident in their skills and self-efficacy, but they have shortcomings in subject understanding and metacognition. This suggests that in enhancing the employment ability of Guangxi sports undergraduates, special attention should be paid to the in-depth transmission of subject knowledge and the cultivation of positive values and worldview.

From the data in the table 3, it can be seen that employers evaluated the four core elements of the USEM employability model for Guangxi sports undergraduates, namely subject knowledge, skills, self-efficacy, and metacognition. Regarding the mastery of subject knowledge in sports, the average score given by employers was 2.89, with an attitude of "disagree". This indicates that most employers believe that Guangxi sports undergraduates still have room for improvement in terms of mastering subject knowledge in sports, and need to further enhance it. Regarding the mastery of sports-related skills, the average score given by employers was 3.02, with an attitude of "agree". This shows that employers are generally satisfied with the sports-related skills of Guangxi sports undergraduates and believe that they perform well in this area. Regarding confidence in achieving expected goals, the average score given by

employers was 2.58, with an attitude of "disagree". This indicates that employers believe that Guangxi sports undergraduates lack sufficient confidence and expectations for their future employment and career development, and need to strengthen this aspect. Regarding positive values and worldview, the average score given by employers was 2.48, with an attitude of "disagree". This means that employers believe that Guangxi sports undergraduates need to strengthen the cultivation of positive values and worldview, and some students may lack a deep understanding and recognition of these aspects. Employers are generally satisfied with the skills of Guangxi sports undergraduates, but there are shortcomings in their subject knowledge understanding, self-efficacy, and metacognition. This suggests that in enhancing the employability of Guangxi sports undergraduates, special attention should be paid to in-depth knowledge transmission, enhancing students' confidence in future employment and career development, and the cultivation of positive values and worldview.

Table 3. Employment Ability Survey of Sports Major Undergraduates in Guangxi (Employer Version)

USEM Employability	SA	A	SA	SD	Mean	Attitude
Subject Understanding Ability: Master subject knowledge of sports discipline	27	16	12	11	2.89	Disagree
Skills: Master sports-related skills	27	21	10	8	3.02	agree
Self-efficacy: Confidence in achieving the expected goals	20	15	14	17	2.58	Disagree
Meta-cognition: Positive values and worldview	13	19	21	13	2.48	Disagree

Strongly Agree(SA)= 3.26 - 4.00

Agree (A)= 2.51 - 3.25

Disagree (DA) = 1.76 - 2.50

Strongly Disagree(SD) = 1.00 - 1.75

In summary, from the results, it can be seen that both students and employers consider the students' skills to be good, which may be due to the fact that sports students pay a lot of attention to training their sports-related skills during their time at school. At the same time, both students and employers believe that there is a lack of subject understanding and metacognition, which needs to be strengthened. It is worth noting that there is a disagreement between the self-evaluation of the students and the evaluation of the employers in terms of self-efficacy. The students believe that they have confidence in achieving their expected goals, but the employers believe that the students' information is insufficient, especially when faced with difficulties, and therefore gave lower evaluations. The employers believe that the students' self-efficacy needs to be further improved.

5. Analysis of the Weak Employment Ability of Sports Major Undergraduates in Guangxi

There is a deficiency in subject understanding among sports undergraduates in Guangxi, mainly manifested in their insufficient grasp of the discipline knowledge of sports. This may be due to the fact that some students have focused too much on the improvement of sports skills during their studies, neglecting the accumulation of interdisciplinary knowledge. In addition, the educational system has not paid enough attention to the mastery of sports-related subject knowledge by students, with fewer courses on sports discipline knowledge and a single teaching method, which has resulted in weak abilities in this area for students.

Students majoring in sports in Guangxi also have deficiencies in metacognition, which manifests in their lack of correct judgment and positive attitude towards many social issues. The deficiencies in metacognition stem from a lack of deep understanding of the sports industry and a lack of clarity about personal career planning and future development. Some students may lack a comprehensive understanding of the sports industry and have not deeply thought about their own positioning and career planning, leading to a lack of clear guidance and positive values in facing employment and career choices.

In terms of self-efficacy evaluation, students have a high level of self-efficacy based on their own performance in skill acquisition and training process, as well as their recognition of their own efforts and progress. Employers give lower evaluations also has certain basis. College students majoring in sports are lacking in workplace practical experience, and their ability to cope with difficulties, teamwork and communication skills still need to be improved, so they need to enhance their resilience and problem-solving ability to further enhance their self-efficacy.

6. Suggestions for Improving the Employment Skills of Sports Undergraduates in Guangxi

Based on the current situation of students' deficiencies in subject understanding, insufficient metacognition, and the need to enhance their self-efficacy, the following are suggestions for improving the employability of sports undergraduates in Guangxi:

Strengthen subject knowledge learning and accumulation, and in response to the problem of students' poor understanding of their subjects, Guangxi's colleges and universities' sports departments should strengthen subject knowledge and theory teaching, improve their teaching and training plans, and ensure that students can systematically master the subject knowledge of sports. Meanwhile, teachers should enrich their classroom teaching methods to stimulate students' learning interest and help them learn subject knowledge better.

Cultivating meta-cognitive ability, to address the problem of insufficient meta-cognition, colleges and universities of physical education in Guangxi should pay attention to cultivating students' meta-cognitive ability. In sports professional education, it should be consciously enhanced students' meta-cognitive ability, guide students to reflect and summarize their learning process, cultivate students' self-monitoring and adjustment ability. Meanwhile, teachers can also help students realize their own shortcomings through classroom interaction, feedback on assignments, etc., help students better understand themselves, find their career boundaries, formulate career plans, and strive for their career goals.

To enhance self-efficacy, most students have some confidence in themselves, but if they encounter significant difficulties or challenges, they often have a certain fear of difficulty. Therefore, it is necessary to further enhance the self-efficacy of Guangxi sports undergraduates. Firstly, the school should strengthen psychological health education for students, helping them establish a correct self-cognition through the opening of psychological health courses and providing psychological counseling. Secondly, teachers should pay attention to the progress and performance of students and give them timely affirmation and encouragement, so that students can feel their progress and achievements. In addition, the school can actively cooperate with enterprises to provide students with more internship and practical opportunities, so that they can exercise their abilities in practice and enhance their confidence and expectations for the future.

7. Conclusion

Firstly, enhancing the employability of undergraduate sports students in Guangxi is a systematic project that requires joint efforts from schools, students, and employers. Schools

should optimize their curriculum design, strengthen the teaching of sports-related disciplinary knowledge and theories, and pay attention to cultivating students' meta-cognitive ability and self-efficacy. Students themselves should also enhance their learning of interdisciplinary knowledge and actively participate in internships and practical activities to improve their self-awareness and career planning ability. Employers should pay attention to the cultivation of students' subject understanding, self-efficacy, and positive values during the recruitment process, in addition to their professional skills.

Secondly, based on the USEM employability model, this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the employability of undergraduate sports students in Guangxi, revealing their deficiencies in subject understanding and metacognition, as well as their differences in self-efficacy. This study is not only helpful for sports departments in Guangxi to make more targeted teaching plans and training programs, but also provides a more comprehensive recruitment reference for employers.

Finally, with the rapid development of the sports industry and the constant changes of the job market, the improvement of the employability of undergraduate sports students in Guangxi will be a continuous process. All parties should pay close attention to industry dynamics and market demand, constantly adjust and optimize training strategies, and jointly promote the employability improvement and career development of undergraduate sports students in Guangxi.

In summary, by strengthening the study and accumulation of subject knowledge, cultivating meta-cognitive abilities, and enhancing self-efficacy, we can effectively enhance the employability of undergraduate sports students in Guangxi and lay a solid foundation for their future development.

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