

Strategies for Improving the Employability of Undergraduate Physical Education Students in General Colleges and Universities in the Context of the New Era

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Abstract: With the development of the times and the change of people's consciousness, China's sports industry is also undergoing new changes. In the new era, the employment market of college students is still facing the structural contradiction between the industrial upgrading of "high-precision talent shortage" and the conflict of students' conservative employment concepts, which directly hinders the imbalance of production and demand in the employment market. In the sports industry, the employment of sports undergraduates in general colleges and universities is faced with the challenges of increasingly saturated job market, fierce competition for employment, narrow professional skills, weak market demand, students' lack of work experience and weak practical ability. In order to further enhance the employment ability of undergraduate students in sports, general colleges and universities should take further measures to actively strengthen the guidance on entrepreneurship, help students to carry out entrepreneurship, at the same time, strengthen interdisciplinary teaching, enhance the comprehensive ability of students, and finally also carry out school-enterprise-society linkage, enhance students' practical ability, and ultimately realize the full employment of undergraduate students in sports.

Keywords: Physical Education; Undergraduate; Employability; Promotion strategy

1. Introduction

In the journey of the new era, undergraduate students of sports in general colleges and universities are facing multiple challenges and opportunities in the job market. With the in-depth development of globalization, the transformation and upgrading of economic structure, and the society's increasing emphasis on healthy lifestyles, the sports industry has shown a diversified and specialized development trend, which also puts forward new requirements for the cultivation and use of talents in the sports industry. In this context, a series of strategies to improve the employability of sports undergraduates in general colleges and universities are explored, which are of great significance to the development of sports education in colleges and universities.

2. The basic status quo of college students' employment in general colleges and universities in the new era

With the widespread popularization and in-depth development of higher education, the number of university graduates has shown a trend of continuous growth, which has also led to changes in the relationship between supply and demand in China's job market, and competition among talents has become more and more intense.^[1] There is also a structural contradiction in the current employment market in China: on the one hand, with the rapid development of the economy and the upgrading of industrial structure, the demand for professional talents in certain industry sectors is becoming more and more urgent, and there is an urgent need to replenish the fresh blood with modern knowledge structure and professional skills, so as to push forward the sustained innovation and technological advancement of the industry. At the same time, some regions undergoing economic transformation or developing new industries are also in urgent need of attracting and cultivating professionals with relevant skills to support the growth of the local economy and the overall development of society. On the other hand, when university graduates choose their place of employment and career direction, their decisions are often significantly influenced by their personal professional background and geographical preference, and this

inclination may lead to their lack of sufficient interest in or knowledge of industries and regions that are in dire need of talents, thus missing the opportunity to contribute their talents to these areas. Due to insufficient understanding of the development trends of certain industries and the characteristics of the local economy, they may fail to fully realize the broad career prospects and personal growth potential offered by these industries and regions. This mismatch between supply and demand not only limits graduates' employment choices, but also affects the rational allocation of social resources and the effective utilization of talents. In addition, with the continuous progress and innovation of science and technology, emerging industries such as the Internet, big data and artificial intelligence have ushered in a wave of rapid development. These industries have opened up broad employment prospects and diversified career choices for college students, and at the same time, they have also put forward higher skills and knowledge structure requirements for graduates, who need to master advanced information technology, have the ability to analyze data, understand the basic principles of artificial intelligence, and be able to flexibly use these skills to solve practical problems. Overall, the current employment market for general college graduates is facing outstanding structural contradictions, and college students should actively take action, actively participate in project practice, interdisciplinary learning and international exchanges during their school years, and continuously improve their competitiveness in order to adapt to the development needs of the emerging industries and grasp the opportunities of the era of career development.

3. Realistic Challenges to the Employment of Undergraduate Physical Education Students in General Colleges and Universities in the New Era

3.1. The job market is becoming increasingly saturated and the competition for employment is fierce

With the popularization of higher education and the booming development of sports, some comprehensive universities have opened sports-related majors, and more and more students have entered sports-related majors for further study through the special recruitment examination and general recruitment examination, which directly leads to the number of graduated undergraduates in sports each year showing a significant growth trend. Although graduates of colleges and universities majoring in sports have mastered certain necessary theoretical knowledge and practical skills under the premise of full of passion for sports, however, the increase in the number of graduates also brings certain challenges in the job market, in the face of the fierce competition in the job market, the graduates need to show their professional ability and personal qualities in order to realize employment. At the same time, graduates of physical education often tend to choose careers that are closely related to their own specialties, and they hope to apply their knowledge and skills to practical work, seeking to become physical education teachers, coaches, or sports managers and other professional roles. However, at present, the number of these positions directly related to sports is relatively limited, and the growth rate over a certain period of time may not be significant enough to keep up with the rapid growth in the number of sports graduates each year, and this imbalance between supply and demand has led to sports graduates facing more intense competition in the job market.

3.2. Specialized skills are too narrow and lack market demand

In today's rapidly developing and highly competitive society, the market demand for talents has become more diversified and comprehensive. With the continuous saturation of the job market and the increasing number of graduates, enterprises pay more attention to the technical application ability of students in practical work. The curriculum system of physical education majors tends to focus on cultivating students' professional skills and theoretical knowledge in specific sports fields, which ensures the depth of students' specialization in the field to a certain extent. However, this concentration may lead to overly narrow curriculum content and lack of interdisciplinary curriculum design, thus limiting the breadth of students' knowledge structure. Against the backdrop of the current job market's diverse demand for talent, this limitation may affect students' employability and career development potential. Students may excel in sports professional knowledge, but are relatively weak in interdisciplinary skills such as innovative thinking, technology application, data analysis, etc. This also leads to the inability of sports graduates to meet the needs of employers, thus weakening their competitiveness. Meanwhile, in the current physical education system, some colleges and universities may not yet fully recognize the importance of career development and employment guidance services in such specialized fields as physical education, thus there are problems such as insufficient resource allocation and lack of professional guidance personnel in the implementation of career counseling for students, which leads to

a lack of effective support and guidance for students in their career planning and preparation for employment. Students may not have a good understanding of the latest trends and needs of the job market, and lack a clear understanding of their own career interests, strengths and development directions.^[2] This situation may lead to students feeling confused and at a loss when seeking employment, and making it difficult for them to formulate reasonable career development paths and employment strategies, thus failing to compete and match with the needs of the job market.

3.3. Students' lack of work experience and weak practical ability

In the education system of sports majors, a common phenomenon is that the curriculum tends to favor theoretical teaching, emphasizing the mastery of theoretical knowledge such as sports science and principles of sports training. While this theoretically-oriented education model can provide students with a solid foundation in the discipline, it may also overlook the importance of practical skills. Due to the lack of sufficient practice opportunities, students may find themselves inexperienced in the application of technology, on-site adaptability, teamwork and other practical aspects when facing a real work environment. This disconnect between theory and practice not only affects students' ability to effectively transform what they have learned into practical work, but may also limit their competitiveness in the job market. Meanwhile, in the course of higher education, some students may focus mainly on the pursuit of academic achievements and in-depth theoretical learning, which certainly helps them to build up a solid professional knowledge system. However, this bias sometimes leads them to neglect the accumulation of practical experience, the importance of which cannot be ignored in the workplace. When seeking employment, employers tend to place more emphasis on the practical ability and past performance of candidates, which includes internship experience, project participation and vocational skills. If students fail to actively accumulate relevant experience through internships, part-time jobs or voluntary services during their school years, they may find themselves overwhelmed in demonstrating their practical abilities and find it difficult to prove their abilities and potentials to employers. This not only affects their competitiveness in employment, but may also limit their ability to understand and adapt to the professional world.

4. Strategies for Improving the Employability of Undergraduate Physical Education Students in General Colleges and Universities in the New Era

4.1. Strengthening guidance on entrepreneurship and helping students to start their own businesses

In the wave of development of the times, physical exercise and healthy lifestyles have gradually become the focus of public attention. With the upgrading of consumption and people's pursuit of healthy life, sports and related industries have ushered in unprecedented development opportunities. In the face of such market demand, sports majors in colleges and universities have the responsibility to expand their horizons to a broader entrepreneurial market. In order to adapt to the development of the times and the public's pursuit of healthy lifestyles, sports majors in colleges and universities must take active measures to strengthen entrepreneurial education and guidance for students. First of all, colleges and universities should design and offer a series of entrepreneurship courses related to physical exercise, and train some students with clear entrepreneurial ideas and solid skill levels in courses such as basic entrepreneurial theories, business plan writing skills, market analysis methods, etc., so as to help the students accumulate solid theoretical knowledge of entrepreneurship and practical practical skills, and to ensure that they are able to gain a foothold in their entrepreneurial journeys. At the same time, colleges and universities should anchor the job market on a regular basis and actively organize sports industry seminars and workshops, so that students can communicate directly with industry experts and learn about the latest development and future trends of the industry, thus enhancing their specific knowledge of the industry's development and stimulating their innovative thinking and practical problem-solving abilities. In addition, colleges and universities should organize activities to carry out simulated entrepreneurial projects, case studies and actual entrepreneurial projects, and rely on on-campus and off-campus entrepreneurial practice platforms such as entrepreneurship laboratories and incubators to provide students with opportunities for actual operation and practice, so that students can try and make mistakes in a safe on-campus learning environment, and to help them transform their theoretical knowledge into actual entrepreneurial capabilities. Through these specific measures, colleges and universities are able to stimulate students' entrepreneurial enthusiasm, cultivate their innovative spirit and practical ability, jointly promote students' entrepreneurial activities in the sports industry, and cultivate more entrepreneurs in the sports industry with innovative ability and practical spirit for the society.

4.2. Strengthen interdisciplinary teaching and enhance students' comprehensive ability

Under the background of the new era, the physical education majors in ordinary colleges and universities need to actively change their teaching methods to meet the needs of the job market and industry development in the face of the impact of the job market, in which strengthening interdisciplinary teaching is a key strategy to enhance the comprehensive ability of students. In this process, colleges and universities should combine the active communication between teachers of physical education majors and teachers of other disciplines, and design and implement a series of interdisciplinary courses under the premise of combining the opinions of students and the development trend of the industry, organically combining the core knowledge of physical education disciplines with the contents of related disciplines, such as management, psychology, nutrition, and so on, so as to help the students deepen the understanding of physical education theories, and at the same time, learn how to apply the principles of management to optimize the operation of sports organizations, how to use psychological knowledge to improve athletes' psychological adjustment ability, and how to develop scientific training and diet plans based on nutritional principles. At the same time, universities should also establish a course feedback and evaluation mechanism to collect feedback from students, teachers and industry partners on a regular basis to continuously optimize course content and teaching methods. This comprehensive knowledge system helps students to have a broader vision and more diversified problem-solving abilities in the field of sports.^[3] In addition, by developing project courses in cooperation with enterprises, encouraging students to participate in interdisciplinary research projects and practical activities, and allowing students to participate in the planning and execution of sports events, the operation and management of sports facilities, the health management of athletes and other project practices in real work environments, colleges and universities are able to fully help students to understand the operation of the industry in depth through this project-oriented learning method, and to cultivate their teamwork and project management abilities, thus realizing the students' theoretical and theoretical knowledge, and helping them to realize their potential project management ability, thus realizing the effective combination of theory and practice. Finally, colleges and universities should also create a resource sharing platform to integrate teaching facilities, sports facilities and industry resources inside and outside the university. Through this platform, students will have easier access to advanced sports training equipment, scientific research laboratories, library materials and other educational resources. In addition, the resource-sharing platform will also include resources for projects with enterprises, internship opportunities, industry databases, etc. to provide students with more diversified learning and development opportunities. Through these measures, students will be able to hone their interdisciplinary thinking and application skills in real-world practice, laying a solid foundation for diverse career paths in the sports industry in the future.

4.3. Carry out school-enterprise-society linkage to enhance students' practical ability

In the wave of education reform in the new era, in order to cultivate a group of composite and professional sports talents, physical education majors of general colleges and universities need to combine with sports enterprises, community organizations and government agencies to establish a strong school-enterprise-society cooperation network, so as to create a diversified learning and practice platform for students and enhance their practical working ability. In this process, in order to ensure the close integration of educational content with the needs of the sports industry and to reflect the latest trends and technologies of the industry in a timely manner, sports majors in colleges and universities should firstly invite experts, entrepreneurs and professionals from the sports industry to participate in the development of sports courses and discuss them, so as to ensure the practicability and foresight of the course content with the help of the latest market demands. At the same time, in order to enhance students' practical ability, colleges and universities should also actively screen and invite sports coaches, athletes, sports marketing experts, sports medicine experts and other people with rich industry experience and profound professional knowledge to serve as students' industry mentors. These industry mentors will provide students with one-on-one career guidance and share their industry insights, including the latest industry trends, technological advancements, market dynamics, etc., so that students can keep abreast of the latest developments in the sports field. In order to enhance the students' accurate alignment with the needs of the sports market, each industry mentor will also provide students with personalized advice and guidance on the development of career plans, pathways for skills enhancement, and selection of internships based on their interests, strengths, and career plans, as well as formulate a growth plan that meets the needs of their personal development, and help them to understand their career development paths and clarify their career goals. In addition, in order to comprehensively improve the employment competitiveness and career development potential of physical education majors, colleges and universities need to take

innovative measures to establish a comprehensive career development platform. This platform will organize regular career development seminars, inviting industry leaders and human resource experts to conduct in-depth exchanges on topics such as current job market trends and career planning strategies, providing students with valuable first-hand information and professional guidance. Colleges and universities will also actively participate in locally organized industry forums, allowing students to focus on the hot issues and future development direction of the sports industry with industry professionals in the collision of ideas and knowledge updating. Through these specific measures, colleges and universities will create a comprehensive, open and interactive career development environment for students majoring in sports, helping them to take advantage of the fierce job market and realize the successful planning and development of their own careers.^[4]

5. Conclusion

With the continuous development of society, the employment environment and market demand of the sports industry are also undergoing new changes. In the face of the current difficulties in the employment market of the sports industry, colleges and universities should also take advantage of the situation and actively work out a set of feasible and effective employability enhancement programs. As a multi-dimensional and systematic project, the enhancement of the employability of sports undergraduates also requires the active efforts and joint collaboration of educators, students, industry and society. With the deepening and perfecting of the employability enhancement strategy, undergraduates of physical education in general colleges and universities will be able to show stronger competitiveness and broader development prospects in the job market of the new era, and make positive contributions to the promotion of the cause of physical education and the progress of the society.

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