



EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES AND TRAINING RELEVANCE OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT GRADUATES AT DANANG SPORTS UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

Nguyen Ngoc Tuan,

Tran Manh Hungⁱ

Danang Sports University,
Vietnam

Abstract:

This study investigates the employment outcomes of graduates majoring in Sports Management at Danang Sports University from 2015 to 2020. Using a structured survey distributed to 78 alumni, the research examines employment status, job relevance to training, satisfaction levels, and future learning needs. Results indicate that 80.77% of graduates were employed, with 48.71% working in roles directly aligned with their training. While the majority expressed satisfaction with their current employment, gaps were identified in areas such as foreign language proficiency and professional practice. The findings emphasize the need for curricular revisions that better align with labor market demands and support graduates in enhancing their competencies.

Keywords: graduate employability, sports management, curriculum evaluation, labor market alignment, Vietnam

1. Introduction

Graduate employment remains a significant concern for higher education institutions, particularly in fields with emerging labor markets such as sports management. In Vietnam, the rapid expansion of higher education has led to an oversupply of graduates in many disciplines, resulting in heightened competition and underemployment. According to national labor statistics, thousands of university graduates remain unemployed annually, reflecting a misalignment between academic training and labor market needs.

Danang Sports University, a leading institution under the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism, has produced numerous cohorts of Sports Management graduates since its transition from college to university in 2007. However, the institution currently

ⁱ Correspondence: email hungcovua@gmail.com

lacks comprehensive feedback on the real-world employment status and competency alignment of its graduates.

Understanding employment outcomes and alumni perceptions is essential for enhancing curriculum quality and improving graduate employability. This study seeks to assess the employment status, job satisfaction, and training program relevance of Sports Management graduates from 2015 to 2020, while also identifying their continuing education needs. The findings are expected to support the ongoing improvement of academic programs and inform strategic decisions in curriculum design.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 Study Design

This study employed a cross-sectional survey design to evaluate the employment status and post-graduation experiences of Sports Management alumni. The research utilized a structured questionnaire targeting multiple aspects, including employment outcomes, job relevance, satisfaction levels, self-assessed competencies, and future learning intentions.

2.2 Participants

The study population comprised 78 graduates of the Sports Management program at Danang Sports University, who completed their degrees between 2015 and 2020. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, targeting alumni with accessible contact information provided by the university's alumni network.

2.3 Research Instrument

A questionnaire consisting of nine items was designed and divided into three core sections: employment status and workplace type; evaluation of the training program; and self-assessment of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, along with learning needs. The instrument was validated through expert review using the Item Objective Congruence (IOC) method, with five experts evaluating each item. The instrument's internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.85.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected via online surveys and follow-up interviews conducted between January and March 2021. Participants were contacted via email and social media platforms, with reminders issued to improve response rates.

2.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean, were computed using SPSS version 22. The data were used to summarize employment outcomes and participant feedback across the identified categories.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed of the study's purpose and gave voluntary consent before participation. Data were anonymized to ensure confidentiality and were used solely for research purposes. The study protocol was approved by the university's internal research committee under the code 06/2020/HĐ-KHCN.

3. Results

3.1 Employment Status after Graduation

Table 1: Employment Status of Sports Management Graduates 2015–2020 (n = 78)

Course	Total Graduates	Employed		Unemployed		Employment in Related Field		Nearby Field		Unrelated Field	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
6	18	12	66.67	6	33.34	8	44.44	2	11.11	2	11.11
7	36	31	86.11	5	13.89	17	47.22	10	27.77	4	11.11
8	14	11	78.58	3	21.42	7	50.02	3	21.42	1	7.16
9	6	5	83.33	1	16.66	3	50.0	1	16.66	1	16.66
10	4	4	100.0	0	0.0	3	75.0	1	25.0	0	0.0
Total	78	63	80.77	15	19.23	38	48.71	17	21.80	8	10.26

Among the 78 surveyed graduates, 63 (80.77%) were employed, while 15 (19.23%) remained unemployed. The employment rate across cohorts ranged from 66.67% to 100%. However, only 38 graduates (48.71%) reported working in positions directly aligned with their academic training, while 17 (21.80%) worked in related roles, and 8 (10.26%) were employed in unrelated fields.

3.2 Workplace Types and Job Satisfaction

Table 2A: Types of Workplaces of Graduates (n = 78)

Type of Organization	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
State administrative or sports institutions	31	40.43
Sports clubs	8	10.64
State-owned enterprises	0	0.00
Private enterprises	24	30.78
Sports facilities	15	18.15

Table 2B: Job Satisfaction of Graduates (n = 78)

Satisfaction Level	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
Very satisfied	35	44.88
Satisfied	27	34.61
Relatively satisfied	12	15.38
Not satisfied	4	5.13

Among employed alumni, 40.43% worked in state administrative or sports units, 30.78% in private enterprises, and 18.15% in sports service facilities. Notably, none worked in state-owned enterprises. In terms of job satisfaction, 44.88% were very satisfied, 34.61% satisfied, and only 5.13% reported dissatisfaction.

3.3 Self-Assessment of Competency Readiness

Table 3: Alumni Self-Assessment on Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (n = 78)

Category	Criteria	Not Met (%)	Met (%)	Well Met (%)
Knowledge	General science	11.54	70.51	17.95
Knowledge	Specialized knowledge	6.41	78.21	15.38
Skills	Sports instruction	55.13	44.87	0.00
Skills	Foreign language communication	32.05	67.95	0.00
Attitude	Working under pressure	12.82	82.05	5.13

Graduates generally rated themselves as adequately prepared in knowledge and attitude, but expressed concern over specific skills. The lowest ratings were reported in sports instruction (55.13% reported unmet proficiency) and foreign language use (32.05%).

3.4 Evaluation of the Training Program

Table 4: Graduate Opinions on Training Content Sufficiency (n = 78)

Evaluation	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
Sufficient	8	10.25
Relatively sufficient	64	82.05
Insufficient	6	7.70

Table 5: Detailed Evaluation of the Sports Management Curriculum (n = 78)

Curriculum Feature	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
Clearly defined goals	89.75	10.25
Updated content	91.03	8.97
Balanced knowledge and skills	92.30	7.70
Practical orientation	92.30	7.70
Meets workforce demands	91.03	8.97

A large majority of respondents found the training program relatively sufficient (82.05%) or fully sufficient (10.25%). Specific feedback showed strong agreement regarding practical orientation and updated content.

3.5 Learning Needs for Career Advancement

Table 6A: Desire for Continuing Education (n = 78)

Response	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
Yes	54	69.23
No	24	30.76

Table 6B: Preferred Type of Further Education (n = 54)

Type of Training	Number of Graduates	Percentage (%)
Self-study	6	7.69
Short-term courses	30	38.46
Master's or doctorate	18	23.07

4. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal a relatively high employment rate (80.77%) among Sports Management graduates at Danang Sports University, with nearly half working in positions directly aligned with their academic training. These results are encouraging and reflect the growing demand for sports-related professionals in both the public and private sectors in Vietnam. However, the presence of 19.23% unemployed graduates and 10.26% working in unrelated fields indicates persistent challenges in aligning higher education outcomes with labor market needs.

Skill gaps identified in this study—particularly in foreign language communication and instructional competence—are consistent with global trends in graduate employability. According to the OECD (2021), transferable skills such as communication, adaptability, and digital fluency have become increasingly important in the 21st-century workforce. Nonetheless, these skills are often underrepresented in traditional curricula, particularly in fields with a strong technical or practical focus. Similar challenges have been reported in Australia and the United Kingdom, where sports management graduates expressed concerns about insufficient exposure to hands-on training and real-world applications during their studies (Smith et al., 2020; Jones & Shephard, 2019).

Although the majority of graduates expressed satisfaction with their current employment, their evaluation of the training program pointed to several areas in need of improvement. Notably, 55.13% of respondents felt unprepared in sports instruction, suggesting the need for increased practical engagement through internships, simulations, or project-based learning. Furthermore, the demand for foreign language proficiency—especially English—has grown in the context of globalization and international collaboration in the sports industry. As such, embedding language and communication modules tailored to professional contexts may enhance graduate readiness and competitiveness.

The limited representation of graduates in state-owned enterprises and sports clubs also indicates potential untapped employment opportunities. This underscores the importance of fostering stronger linkages between universities and industry partners. Previous studies emphasize the role of university-employer collaboration in curriculum co-design, student mentoring, and job placement programs, which can significantly improve employment outcomes (Knight & Yorke, 2004; Pham & Nguyen, 2019). Establishing formal partnerships with local sports federations, fitness chains, and regional sports event organizers may create more structured pathways for internships and full-time employment.

In response to these findings, the university may consider adopting a competency-based education (CBE) framework. This approach, increasingly adopted in North America and Europe, emphasizes learning outcomes tied to real-world job performance, and encourages continuous assessment of student progress. Additionally, implementing alumni feedback mechanisms and employer surveys can serve as critical tools for dynamic curriculum adjustment.

Overall, this study reinforces the need for a more holistic and market-responsive approach to curriculum design in sports management education. By integrating practical experience, soft skills development, and industry collaboration, institutions can better prepare their graduates for the evolving demands of the labor market.

5. Conclusions

This study examined the employment outcomes, job relevance, and competency readiness of Sports Management graduates from Danang Sports University between 2015 and 2020. The findings revealed a high overall employment rate (80.77%), with nearly half of the graduates (48.71%) working in jobs directly related to their field of study. Despite this, significant gaps remain in specific skill areas, especially in foreign language use and professional sports instruction.

The study also highlighted a strong desire among graduates for continued education and professional development, reflecting their awareness of evolving labor market demands. The majority of respondents viewed the training program as generally sufficient, yet emphasized the need for improvements in practicality and alignment with employer expectations.

Source of the Article

The article is quoted from the school-level topic "Research to improve the bachelor's training program in Sports Management at Danang Sports University to meet social needs". Code 06/2020/HĐ-KHCN: Chairman Dr. Tran Manh Hung.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

Nguyen Ngoc Tuan (PhD), Lecturer in the Faculty of Sports Management, Danang Sports University, Vietnam.

Tran Manh Hung (PhD), Head of Faculty of Sports Management, Danang Sports University, Vietnam.

References

1. OECD (2021). Skills for Jobs Database. Retrieved from <https://www.oecdskillsfor-jobsdatabase.org/#FR/>
2. Knight, P. T., & Yorke, M. (2004). Learning, Curriculum and Employability in Higher Education. Routledge. Retrieved from https://www.routledge.com/Learning-Curriculum-and-Employability-in-Higher-Education/Knight-Yorke/p/book/9780415303439?srsId=AfmBOopR_nFJf62mcO5mhdeOLf8Hvz-lAr7MwluXQar_LhsTMQFMAYw
3. Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
4. Pham, T. H., & Nguyen, N. T. (2019). Graduate employability in Vietnam: The mismatch between education and labor market. *Vietnam Journal of Education*, 456(2), 45–53.
5. Smith, J., & Shephard, K. (2020). Employability of Sports Management Graduates: A UK Perspective. *Journal of Sport Management*, 34(3), 310–326.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).