

Study on Professional Identity Recognition of Students Majoring in Social Sports Guidance and Management

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Abstract: This study takes undergraduate students majoring in social sports instruction and management in the School of Physical Education and Sports of Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics as the target, and collects and analyzes the current situation of professional identity of the students in this major and its influencing factors by preparing a professional identity questionnaire and an interview outline, and by applying the questionnaire survey and interview method. The main conclusions are as follows: 1) the mean value of students' overall professional identity is 3.34, which is slightly higher than the critical value of 3, and the level of identity is not high; 2) the analysis of differences shows that: female students' identity is higher than that of male students, students from remote mountainous areas have higher identity than that of students from cities/townships/rural areas, and students with better or worse performance have higher identity than that of students with average performance; 3) the level of identity is mainly affected by the factors of individual, school, and social and family levels. Accordingly, this paper puts forward the following recommendations: at the individual level, to improve self-knowledge and strengthen self-belief; at the school level, to improve the quality of education and teaching, and to promote the overall development of students; at the social family level, to strengthen the social family's correct cognition and awareness of sports.

Keywords: Professional Identity Recognition, Social Sports Guidance and Management Major, College Students.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research Background and Significance

With the economic development and the improvement of living standard, the public demand for sports has become more and more prominent, which is mainly manifested in the rising enthusiasm for participation and the demand for scientific, diversified and interesting sports. In this context, students majoring in social sports instruction and management (hereinafter referred to as "social sports major") have become a key force to promote the development of related industries. However, the development of this program is still facing constraints: at the macro level, it is affected by national policies, economic situation, industry supply and demand; at the micro level, it is related to factors such as school education atmosphere, teachers' level, and students' professional identity, among which there may be a close relationship between professional identity and other factors.

Currently, identity research focuses on culture, identity, occupation and other fields, and there is a relative lack of research on the professional identity of students majoring in social sports. This study takes students of social sports majors in Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics as the object, and comprehensively utilizes the questionnaire survey method and interview method, aiming at exploring the status quo, characteristics and influencing factors of their professional identity. By focusing the research object on social sports majors, this study subdivided the research scope of professional identity in the field of sports, provided the basis for subsequent similar studies in other sports majors, and enriched the research theme of social sports majors.

In the aspect of social development, improving the professional identity of social sports majors can help improve the employment rate of professional counterparts, send more qualified social sports instructors to the society, and promote

the structural development of social sports undertakings from the level of talent allocation.

1.2. Concept definition

To study the current state of professional identity, we must first understand what "identity" is and what "professional identity" is. Jenkins R (1996) believes that the process of identity formation is the process of seeking similarity or distinction from others. [4] Manuel Castells (2006) believes that identity is the source of people's meaning and experience in life. It is an individual's consistent experience of self-identity, status, interests, and belonging. [7]

Compared to identity, professional identity is a more precise concept. Browne, et al. (2018) describe professional identity as an individual's recognition of their own experiences and professional collective identity, the formation of which is an ongoing process shaped by the media, educational experiences, and role modeling. [1] Richter, et al. (2021) define professional identity as one's perception of oneself as a professional in a professional field, based on attributes, beliefs, values, motivations, and experiences, to establish a personal framework that guides one's task perception, stress interpretation, and practical actions in the workplace. [5] Wang Dingming & Liu Yongcun (2007) defined the concept of professional identity as follows: it refers to learners' acceptance and recognition of their chosen field of study, and their willingness to approach learning and exploration with a positive attitude and proactive behavior. This is manifested in learners integrating their own interests, hobbies, and strengths to identify with a particular field of study as an extension of their self, while viewing other fields as external to themselves. They may even aspire to become individuals of distinction within that field. [8]

Based on the above research on professional identity, this study defines "professional identity in social sports guidance and management" as: college students majoring in social

sports guidance and management who, after learning relevant professional knowledge, recognize and love their major, are satisfied with their major, and are willing to learn and explore with a positive attitude and proactive behavior.

1.3. Research Status

1.3.1. Factors influencing professional identity

In research on professional identity, the factors influencing professional identity have always been a focus of scholars.

Barbarà-i-Molinero, et al. (2017) conducted research on professional identity development (PID) and the factors that influence PID. The research findings are as follows: The resulting integrative conceptual framework considers the following categories of influencing factors on PID: social experience, educational context, perceived congruence with the profession, demographic characteristics, professional image, professional experience, personal development and self-engagement.^[2]

JIANG Ming-xia, et al. (2019) conducted a study and found that the school's lack of cognitive education for students majoring in rehabilitation therapy is the main reason for the low professional identity of students majoring in this field.^[6]

1.3.2. Measurement of professional identity

Currently, most scholars in the field of "professional identity" research primarily employ two methods: questionnaire surveys and interviews.

Xu Shimei (2018) developed an initial scale through open-ended questionnaires and individual in-depth interviews, integrating five demographic variables: gender, grade, subject category, whether the student had changed majors, and whether the student had work experience. She created the "Initial Scale for Professional Identity of Master's Degree Students" and identified five factors, which she named professional evaluation, professional emotion, learning motivation, achievement motivation, and self-evaluation.^[9]

Qin Panbo (2009) explored the structure of college students' professional identity through questionnaire surveys and statistical analysis in the article "Characteristics of College Students' Professional Identity and Related Research." Based on this research, he developed and continuously revised a questionnaire on college students' professional identity. The questionnaire consists of four dimensions, adding behavioral and appropriateness dimensions to the existing cognitive and emotional dimensions.^[10]

Izadinia (2013) review of 29 empirical studies to identify the main foci of research on student teachers' identity, the methodologies used and their major findings. Reflective practices and interviews were found to be mainly used by researchers as data collection tools.^[3]

2. Research Methods

2.1. Questionnaire Method

This study takes undergraduate students majoring in social sports at Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics as the research object, and 205 questionnaires were distributed (183 were effectively recovered, with an effective rate of 89%). In this paper, on the basis of relevant literature, according to the social sports major's own characteristics of the development of the "social sports guidance and management students (undergraduate) professional identity questionnaire", randomly selected 20 students for pre-survey, combined with the pre-survey questionnaire revision, the questionnaire design includes basic information and professional identity

scale two parts, the scale using a 5-level Likert scoring (20 question items), reliability and validity of the standard (Cronbach coefficient = 0.973, KMO = 0.951).

Options were positively scored and consisted of five choices: completely disagree (1 point), relatively disagree (2 points), unsure (3 points), relatively agree (4 points), and completely agree (5 points). The mean score of professional identity (M) was calculated from the specific data of each option in the questionnaire, and the higher the mean score of professional identity (M), the higher the level of professional identity. The evaluation table of professional identity level is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Professional Identity Level Evaluation

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
$M < 2$	$2 \leq M < 3$	$3 \leq M < 4$	$4 \leq M < 5$

The mean (M) of professional identity was calculated by SPSS 27.0 and variance analysis was conducted based on variables such as gender, grade, upbringing, study, and reason for enrollment.

2.2. Interview Method

Using a semi-structured interview format, purposive sampling was used to select 10 representative students (6 male and 4 female; covering the first to fourth year of college) for in-depth interviews through recommendations from teachers and classmates.

The interviews focused on personal factors (interest, cognition, ability), college factors (curriculum, teaching resources, teachers) and social and family factors (social demand, family attitude), and the influencing factors were summarized through qualitative analysis. The basic information of the interviewees is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Basic information about the interviewee

Numble	Gender	Grade
01	Female	Junior
02	Male	Junior
03	Female	Junior
04	Male	Freshman
05	Male	Sophomore
06	Female	Sophomore
07	Female	Freshman
08	Male	Senior
09	Male	Senior
10	Male	Senior

3. Results and Analysis

This chapter mainly organizes and analyzes the data and results obtained through the questionnaire method and the interview method, and is divided into two parts. The first part quantitatively analyzes the data on professional identity of college students majoring in social sports, analyzes the overall degree of professional identity of college students majoring in social sports as well as the differences in the degree of professional identity of different categories of survey respondents; the second part combines the data obtained from the questionnaire survey with the material obtained through interviews to analyze, summarize and conclude, and arrive at the corresponding influencing factors

of professional identity and its discussion.

3.1. Current Status of Professional Identity of Students Majoring in Social Sports Instruction and Management

According to the data in Table 3, the mean score of professional identity of social sports majors in Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics is 3.34 (critical value 3), which is at the lower limit of the level of “comparative identity”, and the overall identity is not high. In the scale items, students have a higher degree of recognition of “future sports industry” (M=3.44) and “society needs social and sports talents” (M=3.48), but they have a higher degree of recognition of “professional interest” (M=3.48), but they have a higher degree of recognition of “professional interest” (M=3.49) and “social and sports talents” (M=3.49). “(M=3.16) and ”Satisfaction with teaching resources” (M=3.20).

Table 3. Questionnaire specific information date

Options		Quantities	Proportions
Gender	Male	145	79.23%
	Female	38	20.77%
Grade	Freshman	41	22.40%
	Sophomore	46	25.14%
	Junior	51	27.87%
	Senior	45	24.59%
Growth environment	Urban	72	39.34%
	Township or rural	105	57.38%
	Mountainous region	6	3.28%
Academic record	Better	71	38.80%
	Medium	97	53.01%
	Worse	15	8.20%
Reasons for applying to the program	Personal interest	60	32.79%
	Family wishes	10	5.46%
	Career prospect	13	7.10%
	Social needs	9	4.92%
	Just to get into college	91	49.73%

In order to further understand the relationship between the

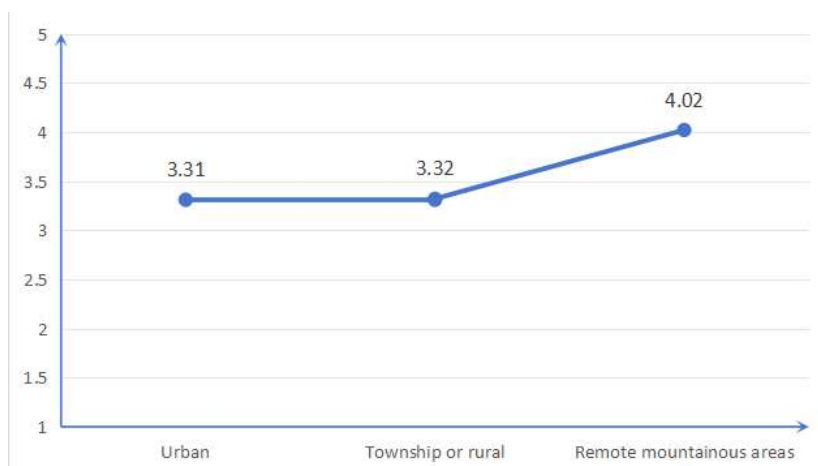


Figure 1. Average score of professional identity by Upbringing

level of professional identity of students majoring in social sports and factors such as gender, grade, growth environment, study situation and reasons for applying for the exams, this paper uses SPSS27.0 and EXCEL to analyze the group differences in the data collected from the professional identity questionnaire.

3.1.1. Differences in the Level of Professional Identity by Gender

Of the 183 questionnaires effectively collected, 145 of them were filled by male students and 38 by female students. The data collected this time were classified and counted to get the current level of professional identity of male students of social sports majors and the level of professional identity of female students respectively, the specific data are shown in Table 4.

According to Table 4, it can be seen that the average score of professional identity of male students of social sports majors is 3.26, which is lower than the overall average score of professional identity of 3.34, whereas the average score of professional identity of female students is 3.65, and the professional identity level is significantly higher than the professional identity level of male students. This shows that gender has a certain influence on the professional identity level of social and physical education students.

Table 4. Average score of professional identity by gender

Gender	Quantities	Average Professional Recognition Score
Male	145	3.26
Female	38	3.65
Total	183	3.34

3.1.2. Differences in Levels of Professional Identity by Grade Level

Based on the data collected, the trend of the mean professional identity scores for social studies majors is folded. The average professional identity score was 3.33 in the freshman year, then peaked at 3.4 in the sophomore year, dropped to 3.29 in the junior year, and finally returned to 3.34 in the senior year. there was not much difference in the level of professional identity among the grades, and there was no significant effect of grade level differences on the level of professional identity.

3.1.3. Differences in Levels of Professional Identity Across Upbringing

The sub-survey questionnaire divided the growing environment into three categories, namely, urban, township or rural, and remote mountainous areas. The mean scores of professional identity of social and physical education majors who grew up in cities, towns or rural areas were 3.31 and 3.32, respectively, with small differences, while the mean score of professional identity of social and physical education majors who grew up in remote mountainous areas was 4.02, and the degree of identity of students in remote mountainous areas (M=4.02) was significantly higher than that of students in cities (M=3.31) and townships/rural areas (M=3.32), and the professional identity of this type of social and physical education major students are at a high level of professional identity for social and physical education majors. The specific data are shown in Figure 1.

3.1.4. Differences in Levels of Professional Identity Across Academic Record

Analyzing the level of professional identity of the social body from the perspective of learning situation, the mean score of professional identity of students with better learning performance (top 25% of the professional ranking) is 3.53, the mean score of professional identity of students with medium learning performance (25%-75% of the professional grade ranking) is 3.2, and the mean score of professional identity of students with poorer learning performance (bottom 25% of the professional grade ranking) is 3.34. The mean score of professional identity of the students with different academic profiles in the different ranges was 3.34. Among them, students with better grades (M=3.53) and worse grades (M=3.34) have a higher degree of professional identity than intermediate students (M=3.20), showing a “V” distribution, and the specific data are shown in Figure 2.

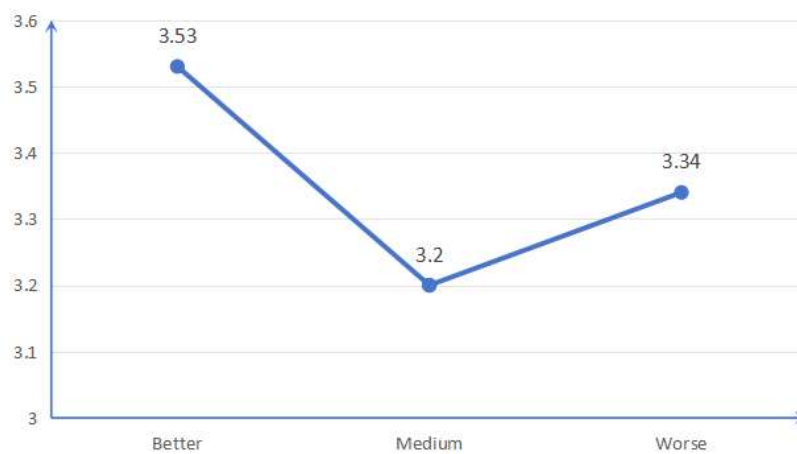


Figure 2. Professional identity average score for different academic record

3.1.5. Differences in the Level of Professional Recognition for Different Reasons for Enrollment

Reason for enrollment is a key factor reflecting students' active and passive choices of social and physical education majors. The questionnaire categorized the reasons for enrollment into five options: A (interest) for active choice, B (family willingness), C (employment prospect), D (social demand), and E (in order to go to college) for passive choice. According to the data in Figure 3, 67.21% of students passively chose the major due to objective factors, with option E (49.73%) accounting for the highest proportion; only 32.79% of students actively chose due to interest.

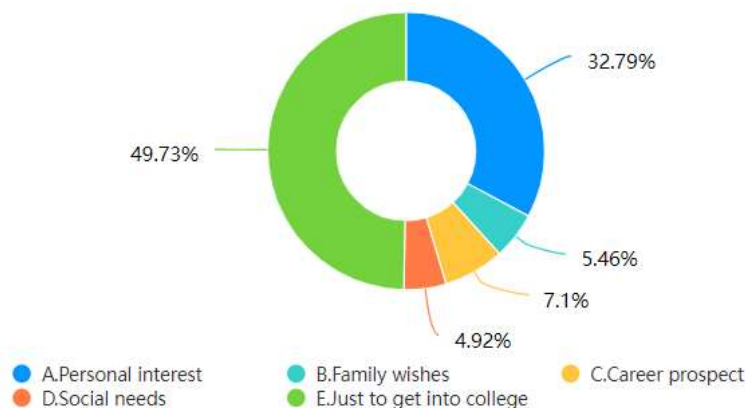


Figure 3. Percentage of students majoring in social studies for different reasons for enrollment

There are differences in the level of students' professional identity among different reasons for enrollment: students who enroll for employment prospects (C) have the highest level of

identity (M=4.03); those who enroll for interest (A) have a level of 3.34; those who enroll for family willingness (B), social needs (D), and to go to college (E) have a lower level

of identity (3.28, 3.19, and 3.26), which indicates that the motivation of enrollment significantly affects the level of

professional identity. level. The specific data are shown in Figure 4.

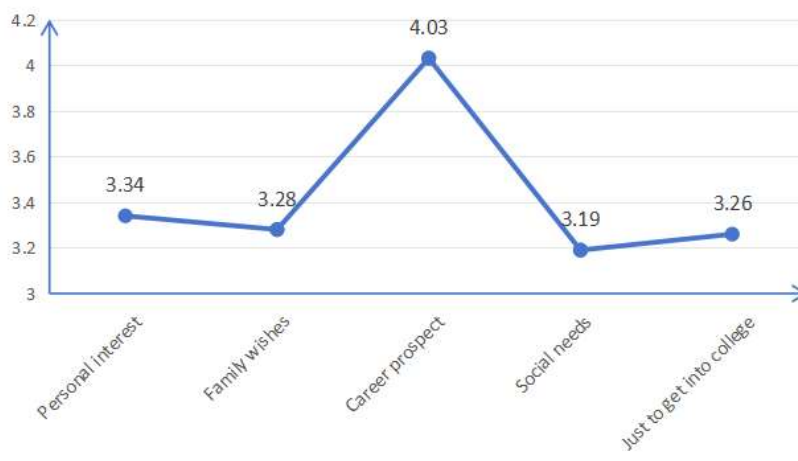


Figure 4. Mean scores of professional identity for different reasons for enrollment

3.2. Factors Influencing Professional Identity of Social Sports Instruction and Management Students

By conducting semi-structured interviews with 10 students majoring in social sports, integrating the contents of the interviews, forming a text version of the interview record, and then combining the data information previously obtained in the questionnaire and relevant literature, organizing and analyzing the interview record, the professional identity influencing factors of social sports guidance and management students were finally broadly classified into three major factors, i.e., personal factors, college factors, and social and family factors.

3.2.1. Personal Factors

Lack of interest: only 32.79% of students actively chose their major because of their interest, and in the interviews respondents 03, 04, and 07 made the same point: “Choosing a social sports major is due to the love of sports.” It can be seen that personal interest in sports has a positive impact on the level of professional identity of students majoring in social sports. On the other hand, students who chose to major in social studies because of non-interest factors had a lower level of identification with the social studies major. For example, Respondent 05 said, “I don't really like sports, it's more like a means to get into college for me, and I don't really like the social studies major, so it's probably just a passing grade on a scale of 1 to 10.”

Some students identified with “the sport” rather than the major itself: Interviews also revealed that some students simply enjoyed one or more of the sports themselves, but were not interested in social studies as a major. Specifically, they identify with the sport or sports they like, but not so much with the major. Interviewee 02 mentioned, “I actually just love sports because I gain happiness and can get a healthier body during sports, but I don't really like this major.”

Cognitive bias: It was found in the interviews that most of the students' goal before the college entrance examination was only to get into the university of their choice, and students did not know enough about the professional training objectives and curriculum system, which led to a weak sense of identity.

Lack of self-confidence in ability: In the interviews, some students' disapproval of social sports majors originated from their own disapproval. They linked sports majors, including social sports majors, to “poor cultural performance” and believed that their own learning ability was worse than that of non-sports majors, and their lack of self-confidence and disapproval of their own ability led to their lack of confidence and disapproval of their own social sports majors. The lack of self-confidence and disapproval of their own abilities leads to their disapproval of the social and physical education majors they are studying.

3.2.2. The College Factors

Unreasonable curriculum: Curriculum refers to the establishment and arrangement of professional courses in colleges and universities, and its reasonableness directly affects the degree of achievement of professional training objectives and students' professional identity. According to the results of the survey, students who are very satisfied with the curriculum (13.6%) have a mean score of 4.28, while those who are very dissatisfied (11.4%) have a mean score of only 1.54, which indicates that curriculum satisfaction is positively correlated with professional identity. In the interviews, the main problems mentioned by the interviewees were the imbalance of the ratio of theoretical courses to practical courses and the single type of technical courses.

Lagging teaching content: In addition to the reasonableness of the curriculum, the practicality and systematicity of the teaching content also have a significant impact on the professional identity of social and physical education majors. Good or bad teaching content will directly affect students' enthusiasm and attitude towards professional learning, which in turn affects the degree of students' professional identity. From the interviews, we can learn that the current curriculum of social sports majors has problems such as slow updating of teaching materials and disconnection between teaching content and social needs, which reduces students' motivation to learn and thus affects the level of professional identity.

Insufficient teaching resources: Teaching resources are the basic conditions for effective teaching, mainly including infrastructure and teacher resources. Among them, the infrastructure of social sports majors is centered on stadiums. The quantity and quality of the stadiums directly affect

students' enthusiasm for learning technical courses, satisfaction with daily training and professional identity. In the interviews, some interviewees mentioned that there were problems such as outdated facilities and insufficient opening hours of the school's venues, which hindered skill training, confirming the key role of rationality of teaching resources on professional identity.

3.2.3. Social and Family Factors

Diversification of social demand: At present, the society needs more composite talents with "professional characteristics", which also brings challenges to the cultivation of talents specialized in sports in colleges and universities. In the interviews, some interviewees believe that the employment orientation of social sports majors is ambiguous, resulting in students facing the double competitive pressure of professional skills and theoretical knowledge. Colleges and universities should be responsive to the changes of the times, respond to the needs of society and vigorously cultivate composite talents, and at the same time should pay attention to retaining the characteristics of the social sports major itself, as a sports major, sports skills is one of the very important "professional characteristics".

Insufficient family support: the views and attitudes of parents, relatives and other relatives towards social sports majors will have a certain impact on the professional identity of social sports majors. Parents have a great influence on the formation of children's outlook, character, behavior and thought level. In the interviews, we found that students' parents' attitudes and perceptions towards social and physical education majors also affect students' level of identification with social and physical education majors to a certain extent. For example, Interviewee 04 mentioned, "My family still supports me to study this major, and they hope that I will become a physical education teacher later, which is the same as my idea"; Interviewee 07 mentioned, "My family doesn't support me to study this major, and I don't have any personal identification with this major either".

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

First, overall, the mean value of professional identity of students majoring in social sports instruction and management in the School of Physical Education and Sports of Jiangxi University of Finance and Economics is 3.34, which is slightly higher than the critical value of 3, and the overall level of identity is not high; second, the difference analysis of the variables of different genders, grades, upbringing, study, and reasons for enrollment reveals that the genders, upbringing, and reasons for enrollment are the key variables affecting the level of identity; and third, the level of professional identity of social sport instruction and management students' professional identity level is influenced by three major factors: personal factors, college factors, and social and family factors.

4.2. Recommendations

4.2.1. Individual Level

The specialty of social sports guidance and management is comprehensive, practical and innovative. Aiming at the problems of insufficient professional knowledge, low self-efficacy and weak identity caused by the lack of sports experience, this paper puts forward the following suggestions:

- 1) Deepen the cognition of the major: fully understand the

connotation of the major (covering sports management, marketing, psychology and other fields), make it clear that it is not limited to sports skills, and plan the career path based on their own strengths;

- 2) Strengthening self-belief: Facing up to the potential of professional development, giving full play to one's strengths (e.g. communication skills, sports quality) through theoretical study and practice, and enhancing professional confidence with a positive attitude;

- 3) Realize the value of sports: take the initiative to participate in sports activities, feel the dual promotion of physical and mental health and social interaction in practice, and cultivate sports interest to enhance professional identity.

4.2.2. College Level

Colleges need to play a central role in improving the quality of education for social sports majors, and the specific paths are as follows:

- 1) Optimization of curriculum system: Dynamically combining social demand and feedback from teachers and students, build a curriculum structure that highlights the characteristics of the specialty. Increase the proportion of technical courses (e.g. fencing, sparring, etc.) and practical courses to strengthen the theoretical application ability;

- 2) Updating of teaching content: Timely iteration of teaching materials and knowledge structure to ensure cutting-edge. Technical courses need to be systematically designed to promote students to move from "introduction" to "mastery";

- 3) Innovative teaching methods: Teachers should enhance classroom interaction and create a positive learning atmosphere to improve students' mastery of professional skills and interest in learning;

- 4) Upgrading of resources: expanding and maintaining sports venues, optimizing the use of management (e.g. time scheduling, intelligent lighting), and guaranteeing the needs of teaching and training.

4.2.3. Socio-family Level

Social cognition and family attitudes profoundly affect the career choice and professional identity of social sports majors. Under the current background of national fitness, the participation of the public in sports has increased, but the deeper values and concepts of sports have not been fully integrated into the minds of the public. In the current society, there are still a large number of people with insufficient knowledge of sports, resulting in prejudice and disapproval of sports and the sports industry, and these prejudices and disapproval have a great negative impact on the professional identity of social and sports majors, and even have a great negative impact on the overall development of the sports industry.

Therefore, at the social and family level, the government should strengthen the publicity of the sports industry, enhance the correct cognition and awareness of sports in the society and families, and build a positive sports ecology to eliminate the prejudice; parents should enhance the knowledge of sports and give positive guidance to their children's professional choices, so as to form a synergistic support system of the society and the family.

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