

Research on Practical Paths for Cultivating Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competence of Postgraduates Majoring in Ballroom Dance in the New Era

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Abstract: Driven by the policy initiative of “Mass Entrepreneurship and Mass Innovation” and the connotative development of postgraduate education in the new era, cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship competence of postgraduates majoring in ballroom dance has become a key reform issue in higher physical education. Based on the teaching reform practices of postgraduate education at Wuhan Sports University, this paper systematically sorts out domestic and foreign research literature on innovation and entrepreneurship education for ballroom dance majors. It reviews research progress from multiple dimensions, including the connotation of innovation and entrepreneurship competence, talent demand characteristics of the ballroom dance industry, practical dilemmas facing current education, and corresponding cultivation paths. The study reveals that a systematic training model integrating curriculum reform, social practice, and industry-university-research collaboration should be constructed to cultivate qualified ballroom dance postgraduates with innovation and entrepreneurship competence. On this basis, this paper proposes a four-in-one practical training path of “Curriculum Empowerment — Practical Tempering — Industry-Education Integration — Platform Support”, which provides theoretical references for deepening the reform of innovation and entrepreneurship education for ballroom dance postgraduates in the new era.

Keywords: Ballroom dance; Postgraduate education; Innovation and entrepreneurship competence; Training model; Practical path

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1. Introduction

Currently, academic circles hold diverse viewpoints regarding the cultivation of innovation and entrepreneurship competence for ballroom dance postgraduates. Extensive discussions have been carried out covering talent training models, the construction of innovation and entrepreneurship education systems,

and the exploration of practical paths, yielding abundant important theoretical achievements. At present, research on innovation and entrepreneurship competence cultivation for ballroom dance students has become a research hotspot in higher physical education. Foreign research on relevant topics mainly focuses on the correlation mechanism between innovation and entrepreneurship education and social and economic development. In contrast, domestic research mostly adopts localized research paths guided by policy, with curriculum reform as the starting point and social practice as the carrier.

Since Premier Li Keqiang put forward the slogan of “Mass Entrepreneurship and Mass Innovation”, a growing number of universities have stepped up efforts in innovation and entrepreneurship education in response to the initiative. Against the backdrop of the new era and rising employment pressure, strengthening the cultivation of postgraduates’ innovation and entrepreneurship competence bears great significance. In October 2021, the General Office of the State Council issued the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship among College Students*, putting forward three clear requirements: integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education into the whole process of talent training, improving teachers’ teaching competence in this field, and strengthening special training for college students ^[1]. As an integral part of contemporary literary and artistic undertakings, ballroom dance plays a vital role in enriching people’s spiritual and cultural life. The President of the CPC attaches great importance to the sound development of literary and artistic work, ushering China into a prosperous period of cultural renaissance.

China’s economic development has entered a new normal, accompanied by growing uncertainties in employment, shrinking overall market demand, and more prominent structural employment contradictions. Graduates majoring in ballroom dance also face a grim job market. Postgraduate education sits at the top of the national education system and serves as a critical channel for cultivating high-level talents. While postgraduate enrollment has expanded continuously in the new era, new standards have been raised for training quality. The *Regulations of the People’s Republic of China on Academic Degrees* clearly stipulate that master’s degree holders shall possess “the ability to conduct scientific research or independently undertake specialized technical work.” Nevertheless, research on innovation and entrepreneurship competence cultivation at the postgraduate level remains in the exploratory stage, making it particularly urgent to explore effective training paths for ballroom dance postgraduates under the new-era context.

2 Connotation of innovation and entrepreneurship competence and era requirements for postgraduate training

2.1. Theoretical definition of innovation and entrepreneurship competence

Innovation and entrepreneurship constitute a multi-dimensional composite concept. According to the *Modern Chinese Dictionary*, “innovation” means abandoning the old and creating the new, incorporating both renovation and creation. Economist Joseph A. Schumpeter proposed in *The Theory of Economic Development* (1912) that innovation refers to introducing a new combination of production factors into the production system. Entrepreneurship is a process of discovering and seizing opportunities, through which entrepreneurs create new products and realize their potential value. The widely recognized definition of entrepreneurship in academia was put forward by Stevenson: “Entrepreneurship is the process of pursuing and capturing opportunities regardless of the resources currently under one’s control, whether as an individual or within an organization.”

Innovation and entrepreneurship competence is a multi-layered, complex concept. Up to now, academia has not reached a unified consensus on its connotation; scholars define the concept from different perspectives according to research needs. Innovation and entrepreneurship bear a dialectical relationship analogous to that between theory and practice. Innovation lays the foundation for entrepreneurship, and the effects of innovation can only be tested through entrepreneurial practice. Entrepreneurship acts as the medium and manifestation of innovation, with innovative development serving as the fundamental pillar of entrepreneurial activities. The two promote and restrict each other, forming an inseparable dialectical unity.

2.2. Uniqueness and era requirements of ballroom dance postgraduate training

Compared with undergraduates, postgraduate education signifies not only an upgrade of academic credentials but also the cultivation of high-level talents capable of independently undertaking specialized technical work. As interdisciplinary high-level talents spanning sports and arts, ballroom dance postgraduates require solid professional dance skills as well as systematic teaching ability and innovative entrepreneurial literacy ^[2].

Integrating fitness, entertainment, and social interaction, ballroom dance has gained widespread popularity in recent years. Incomplete statistics show that over 30 million people in China participate in ballroom dance activities, with dance training institutions mushrooming across the country. This industrial trend raises higher standards for postgraduates' innovation and entrepreneurship competence: they are expected to be not only dance instructors in the future but also founders, operators and managers of training institutions.

Job demands in the ballroom dance industry are diversified, including dance teachers, institutional founders/operators/managers, project planners, professional agents, marketing specialists, copywriters, music producers, sound engineers, product sales staff, media producers and promoters, makeup artists, costume designers, photographers, stage lighting designers, and program hosts. Such diverse career prospects provide broad space for postgraduates' innovation and entrepreneurship while imposing higher requirements on their comprehensive abilities.

3. Current dilemmas in cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship competence for ballroom dance postgraduates

3.1. Imperfect curriculum system for innovation and entrepreneurship

Insufficient offering of relevant courses stands as the primary factor restricting competence cultivation. Relevant research shows that students majoring in ballroom dance at Hubei University of Arts and Science generally lag in innovation and entrepreneurship competence, partly due to inadequate curriculum provision. Although the Ministry of Education required universities to set up dedicated innovation and entrepreneurship courses starting in 2016, the implementation effect for ballroom dance majors remains unsatisfactory.

Current innovation and entrepreneurship education for ballroom dance majors tends to prioritize theory over practice. Most universities have not fully broken away from traditional teaching frameworks, resulting in talent output that fails to keep pace with industrial restructuring and market demand changes ^[3]. At the postgraduate level, targeted curriculum design for entrepreneurship training is lacking, failing to balance academic and vocational attributes of postgraduate education. Students receive theoretical lectures on campus yet lack systematic practical training, making it hard to translate theoretical knowledge into real entrepreneurial capacity.

3.2. Shortage of social practice platforms and opportunities

Extracurricular social practice serves as a vital channel for fostering students' innovation and entrepreneurship competence, yet multiple problems exist for ballroom dance majors: first, insufficient student awareness of off-campus practice; second, limited innovation in the content and forms of dance-related practice activities; third, scarce competition practice opportunities; fourth, weak foundational expertise and insufficient professional skills.

In most postgraduate training schemes, social practice is limited to teaching internships, lacking comprehensive entrepreneurial activities such as startup simulation and project operation. Students cannot experience a complete entrepreneurial cycle during practice, leading to fragmented entrepreneurial cognition. While some universities have explored student assistant systems, their role in boosting entrepreneurship competence remains underdeveloped. Training should combine on-campus and off-campus approaches: on campus, reforms in curriculum and training modes should be carried out; off-campus training should be guided by market demand, with targeted cultivation based on industry job characteristics.

3.3. Lagging construction of teaching staff

Improving teachers' innovation and entrepreneurship teaching competence is explicitly required by the *Guiding Opinions on Promoting Innovation and Entrepreneurship among College Students*. Nevertheless, most ballroom dance programs face a shortage of qualified instructors in this field. Many teachers lack firsthand entrepreneurial experience and cannot deliver targeted entrepreneurial guidance. Meanwhile, the teacher training system for innovation and entrepreneurship education is incomplete, leaving educators' teaching capacity to be improved.

Drawing on the successful experience of entrepreneurship education at Stanford University, U.S., universities should establish systematic optimization mechanisms, including improved teacher training systems, recruitment of industrial entrepreneurial mentors, and strengthened industry-university-research cooperation ^[4]. Building a workforce of dual-qualified teachers with both theoretical literacy and practical experience is the key to upgrading postgraduate entrepreneurship education quality.

3.4. Disconnection between curriculum content and market demand

With the rapid expansion of the ballroom dance training industry, a large proportion of ballroom dance graduates choose to work as institutional teachers or launch their own training startups after graduation. However, university curricula lag behind market changes, making it difficult for graduates to fully apply professional knowledge in real teaching scenarios ^[5]. The mismatch between courses and market needs extends graduates' adaptation period after graduation and lowers their entrepreneurial success rate and employment quality.

Current postgraduate curricula still focus on traditional dance skill training, lacking systematic design of entrepreneurship-related modules. Expanding postgraduate enrollment has raised higher standards for training quality, making it an urgent task to optimize training models and raise entrepreneurial success rates ^[6].

4. Practical paths for cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship competence of ballroom dance postgraduates

4.1. Curriculum empowerment: Build an integrated curriculum system of major and entrepreneurship

Reforming talent training programs oriented toward innovation and entrepreneurship has become a core research topic. The ballroom dance postgraduate curriculum system should consist of three modules: general innovation and entrepreneurship courses, interdisciplinary integrated courses, and entrepreneurial simulation training courses. General courses cultivate innovative thinking and entrepreneurial awareness; interdisciplinary modules break disciplinary barriers; simulation courses deliver hands-on entrepreneurial experience.

Innovation and entrepreneurship education should run through all stages of postgraduate training schemes. By embedding entrepreneurial cases and thinking training into professional courses, students can develop entrepreneurial awareness while mastering dance expertise. Interdisciplinary entrepreneurship curricula should be constructed to upgrade classroom teaching and consolidate teaching infrastructure and reform initiatives ^[7]. This research focuses on four dimensions of “cultivation”: first, establish diversified competence training systems; second, perfect screening and training mechanisms for outstanding students; third, create a favorable entrepreneurial training environment; fourth, summarize and integrate proven entrepreneurial practices ^[8].

4.2. Practical tempering: Build diversified social practice platforms

To address insufficient innovation in practice content and forms, a hierarchical, progressive practice system should be designed, covering curriculum observation, teaching internships, entrepreneurial incubation, competition organization, and simulated startup operations, with practice depth gradually increased. Postgraduates can deepen industrial cognition and accumulate entrepreneurial experience by participating in institutional operation and management.

Ballroom dance postgraduates face diversified career options including teachers, institutional founders, operators, project planners, and marketing specialists. Universities should design differentiated practice programs tailored to various job profiles to boost targeted entrepreneurship competence. Training should integrate on-campus and off-campus resources: internal reforms in curricula and training modes lay the groundwork, while external practice should be market-driven with targeted training based on industry job characteristics ^[9].

4.3. Industry-education integration: Deepen collaborative talent training mechanisms

Industry-education integration serves as a critical solution to the disconnection between university training and market demands. Universities should establish long-term cooperative ties with ballroom dance training institutions and cultural enterprises, integrating real industrial demands into talent training. Off-campus innovation and entrepreneurship practice bases can be built to provide authentic entrepreneurial experience for postgraduates ^[10]. Through industry-university cooperation, enterprises can supply cutting-edge industrial information, entrepreneurial resources, and employment opportunities for students.

Universities should conduct regular industry surveys to track development trends and talent demands, adjusting teaching content and methods accordingly. Since most ballroom dance graduates intend to launch training institutions independently, targeted courses on institutional operation and management should be

offered. This research adopts a dual training model combining campus and off-campus practice, closely aligned with social needs, to conduct in-depth research on training paths and consolidate theoretical and practical outcomes ^[11].

4.4. Platform support: Improve comprehensive guarantee systems for innovation and entrepreneurship

Sound support systems form solid backing for postgraduate entrepreneurship training. Universities should provide multi-dimensional support covering policy, capital and tutoring: set up special entrepreneurship funds to offer startup seed money; build incubation bases with complete venues and facilities; establish mentor systems to deliver professional entrepreneurial guidance.

In terms of faculty guarantee, efforts should be intensified to build entrepreneurship teaching teams consisting of on-campus instructors and industrial mentors with practical startup experience. In evaluation mechanisms, innovation and entrepreneurship performance should be incorporated into postgraduate training quality assessment systems, with incentives and honors awarded to outstanding individuals and teams.

The research data of this project are collected from Wanfang Data, CNKI, Wuhan Sports University Library, National Library, and social surveys. Each sub-project is assigned a clear completion deadline, with regular group seminars held to resolve research obstacles and ensure high-quality delivery on schedule ^[12].

5. Research prospects and expected practical outcomes

Through systematic theoretical analysis and practical exploration, this project intends to define sub-research topics on postgraduate entrepreneurship training and reveal their internal logical relations, analyzing their practical value. The research is expected to deliver systematic theoretical frameworks and operable practical schemes for cultivating ballroom dance postgraduates' innovation and entrepreneurship competence.

This research carries distinct innovative value. Existing studies on innovation and entrepreneurship mostly target undergraduate and junior college students, while research at the postgraduate level remains scarce. Previous literature focuses mostly on status analysis and superficial countermeasures without forming integrated systematic frameworks or actionable practical outputs. This project comprehensively explores multi-dimensional training paths and reveals interrelations among training elements to upgrade research depth in this field ^[13].

Research methods adopted include a literature review to sort national policy documents and prior studies for theoretical foundation; the Delphi method to identify core training indicators; and the Analytic Hierarchy Process to quantify weights of subtopics and expose internal logical links among all system elements.

Expected research outputs include the *Survey Report on Career Demands of Ballroom Dance Postgraduates in the New Era* and *Practical Research on Cultivating Innovation and Entrepreneurship Competence of Ballroom Dance Postgraduates in the New Era*, offering theoretical and practical references for relevant education reforms ^[14].

6. Conclusion

Cultivating innovation and entrepreneurship competence for ballroom dance postgraduates in the new era constitutes a systematic project requiring coordinated progress across curriculum reform, social practice

expansion, industry-education integration and comprehensive support systems. This paper systematically sorts relevant domestic and foreign literature, reviewing research from the connotation of competence, industrial talent demands, existing dilemmas, and training paths. The study identifies four major bottlenecks: imperfect entrepreneurship curricula, insufficient practical platforms, weak teaching staff, and disconnection between courses and market demands ^[15].

Combined with postgraduate teaching reform practices at Wuhan Sports University, this paper proposes the four-in-one training path of “Curriculum Empowerment — Practical Tempering — Industry-Education Integration — Platform Support.” Centered on embedding entrepreneurship education into full-cycle talent training, the model takes curriculum reform as the foundation, social practice as support, industry-university-research collaboration as guarantee, and comprehensive service systems as backup to build a systematic training framework through multi-dimensional coordination.

From an innovative and entrepreneurial perspective, the ballroom dance industry will witness expanding employment space with abundant opportunities alongside challenges. Innovative competence serves as the prerequisite, while entrepreneurial capacity forms the fundamental goal. Only with solid innovative thinking can graduates gain employment advantages and seize market opportunities to realize personal growth and a promising future. Universities should seize new-era opportunities to deepen entrepreneurship education reform and cultivate high-level ballroom dance talents with innovative spirit, entrepreneurial capacity, and global vision, providing talent support for high-quality development of ballroom dance and prosperity of socialist culture ^[16].

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