Best Content Standards in Sports Career Education for Adolescents: A Delphi Survey of Korean Professional Views

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Abstract: Sports careers are an interesting field for adolescents who enjoy participating in sports. Sports career education provides special support to learners by educating them about occupational sustainability and even discontinuation possibilities. Most sports career education programs implemented in schools and other institutions are unsystematic and ineffective. That is, the lack of systematic guidance by educators or counselors at schools make promising adolescents with talents and/or interests in sports look for different career paths. This study developed the best content standards in sports career education for adolescents using a Delphi survey from Korean professional views. The Delphi survey included three rounds and was conducted with 20 professionals from the field. Five content domains and 30 sub-content elements were identified as the best content standards in sports. Based on the consensus, the five content domains identified were as follows: (a) understanding sports careers, (b) self-understanding in sports, (c) understanding sports-related occupations, (d) exploring sports careers, and (e) designing sports careers. The best content standards identified in this study provided important data regarding the educational resources that educators or counselors could use to assist adolescents who enjoy playing sports or who consider sports as their future career path. These standards could guide the decision-making of educators or counselors regarding the best educational content and activities for sports careers. Furthermore, these standards could play a significant role in discovering and nurturing the needs and aptitudes of a diverse group of adolescents in sports.

Keywords: sports career; career education; content standards; adolescents; student athletes

1. Introduction

Preparing for a career in sports can be interesting for adolescents who enjoy participating in sports [1,2]. Adolescents are likely to search for future career areas and make plans based on their interests, aptitudes, and values [1,3–6]. They are at a critical life stage and, during this period, are most susceptible to exploring career options and setting goals [4,7–9]. Career educators in secondary schools assist adolescents in preparing their career design through various career education programs [1]. However, sufficient educational sources are not available for this purpose [5]. According to studies [6,9], most countries undergoing rapid changes to transform into a global society have focused on improving the career education system by introducing varied content and instructions. Yuen et al. [6] stated that career education services should involve more than merely giving job information, as, traditionally, the services have been focused primarily on disseminating career-related information.

It has been observed that the career development and decisions of student athletes are highly influenced by their parents [10–13]. This implies that either sports career education in schools does not exist or is ineffective. In fact, it has been observed that attention is not focused on career education in sports, even though educational content should be...
provided for adolescents intending to pursue such a career. Most studies predominantly focus on dual careers in sports and academics [14–17] rather than on career education for both non-student and student athletes. There is a lack of systematic career education in sports for non-student and student athletes in Korea. Student athletes do not have the information required to explore or design their careers, and they may feel insecure about their future after they retire as athletes. Overall, the employment rate of student athletes after their athletic life in Korea is significantly lower than that of non-student athletes [2,18]. Similarly, appropriate guidance or consultation is not available for non-student athletes who may have a strong interest or display promising potential in sports careers [2,19].

Various career options exist in sports, including professional players and coaches. Despite the wide options available, there is a lack of information and systematic career guidance [2]. Torregrosa et al. [17] stated that the career paths of elite athletes depend on psychosocial situations that are characterized as the following: linear (focusing exclusively on sports), convergent (combining sports and education/work while prioritizing sports), and parallel (constructing a stable dual career pathway). However, they must know about the systematic programs available for career education in sports.

Systematic programs in sports career education can be developed or planned based on the content standards identified. Despite sufficient evidence about career development and education for adolescents, few studies have considered the content standards and elaborated on what adolescents should know and be able to do within the contents of sports career education. Content standards help educators and/or counselors in planning the content structure, including the scope and sequence of contents and in ensuring consistency and manageable of complete career education [19–21].

This study developed the best content standards for sports career education using the Delphi survey of Korean professional views. This study was intended to identify practical rather than scientific values. Therefore, an inductive approach based on the Delphi survey has been utilized to collate the opinions of Korean working groups in sports career fields and to reach a consensus.

This article has five parts. The first is a theoretical framework that offers a systematic review of literature on career development for adolescents and sports career education. The second introduces the methodology, including the reasons for using the Delphi survey, the selection of working groups in sports career fields, the questionnaire, and the Delphi procedures and analysis. The third is the results section, which presents the analysis of the three rounds of Delphi surveys. The fourth discusses the results analyzed, including the interpretation and synthesis of the results. The last section elaborates on the conclusions and suggestions, including the theoretical and practical contributions of this study.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Career Development for Adolescents

Career development is defined as “a life-long process of managing learning, work, and transitions to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future” [22], p. 362. This implies that career development is a lifelong journey that includes various activities, such as career exploration, choice, preparation, and progression [23].

Career development is crucial for adolescents to effectively transition from school to work [1,4,23]. Adolescence is the first stage in which children encounter and participate in essential career development tasks, such as (a) crystallization of career choices, (b) specification of career choice, and (c) implementation of a career choice [23]. Super et al. [24] suggested four growth stages based on Super’s [25] developmental theory, which are as follows: (a) concern for one’s future as a worker, (b) exerting control over one’s life trajectory, (c) conviction in one’s ability to realize career aspirations, and (d) competence, including necessary skills and attributes. Del Corso and Rehfuss [26] also suggested the following developmental tasks: curiosity, concern, confidence, and control. Hartung et al. [27] further explained, “curiosity fuels the exploration of possible selves and occupations, career concern prompts the establishment of possible futures, confidence empowers individuals to
construct a preferred future and overcome obstacles, and career control affords individuals ownership of their chosen future” (p. 72).

Adolescents are at the ideal stage in life to explore their future careers without any limitations and can commit to potential careers using all possible methods. According to Lapan [28], setting career goals is the most important activity at this stage, and this enables adolescents to actively pursue the desired career and acquire the essential skills for the same career. Lapan [28] identified the following career development skills: (a) developing positive career-related self-efficacy; (b) forming a vocational identity; (c) learning effective social, prosocial, and work-readiness skills; (d) gaining a better understanding of themselves and the work environment; (e) crystallizing personally valued vocational interests; and (f) empowering students to achieve academically and become self-regulated learners [1], p. 173. Conkel-Ziebell et al. [4], p. 221 identified an interrelated set of skills that include the following: (a) career exploration and planning; (b) person–environment fit goal setting; (c) social, prosocial, or work readiness; (d) self-regulated learning; and (e) garnering emotional and instrumental support from peers, parents, teachers, and other school-based and community personnel. Ronkainen and Ryba [8] found that sports is an early career specialization domain and argued that student athletes tend to have lower career exploration opportunities than non-student athletes. Salmela [29] addressed a descriptive model of career development in talented sports that includes the following phases: (a) initiation, (b) development, and (c) mastery. To transition from one phase to another, young athletes have to meet challenging demands that may be stressful and require commitment. This implies that wide and open approaches toward career development for student athletes are required to systematically prepare and design their future careers [20].

2.2. Sports Career Education

Career education as an instructional activity is considered a key mechanism to prepare students and equip them with the skills and abilities necessary to develop and manage their careers [30,31]. Career education cannot be a panacea that prepares adolescents for future careers, but it plays a significant role in the effective design of their school life [32]. Career education could promote “the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes through planned programs of learning experiences in education to assist informed work and study decision-making” [20], p. 55. Patton [21] suggested that career education should include the following three major elements: self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and decision and transition learning. Self-awareness is associated with knowing the values, strengths, potential, and aspirations of adolescents. Opportunity awareness implies understanding the job world and the range of employment opportunities available. Decision and transition learning are related to the capacity for career transfer and career-building skills for further learning and employment.

Career education in sports assists adolescents in focusing on acquiring skills and preparing for the career that interests them. In fact, the sooner adolescents are exposed to substantial career education, the broader are their career expectations, and they are less likely to be dependent on significant others (e.g., parents, teachers, coaches, etc.) [31,33]. According to Moote and Archer [31], most schools do not have sufficient educational resources for career education. Sports career education in schools is impartially supported by a narrow and fragmented curriculum [2,7,34,35].

Sports career education is required for both student and non-student athletes. The former group relates to adolescents who have extended periods of playing experiences in a particular sport with deliberate practice and training, whereas the latter includes those who have rarely or temporarily experienced playing sports and have done so based on enjoyment or interest. In schools, these two groups include potential individuals who may seek a career in sports. Unfortunately, it has been reported that student athletes are mostly dependent on parents or senior elite athletes during the critical period when they have to make decisions regarding their future careers [12]. Consequently, their career exploration opportunities are lower than those of non-student athletes [8,36].
Research regarding career education and how adolescents are systematically guided to transition from students with sports literacy to employers in sports-related workplaces is limited [2,37]. Discourses on curriculum and instruction in sports career education shared by physical education teachers and sports coaches at schools are considered indifferent and passive. Furthermore, while these teachers and coaches understand the necessity of sports career education at schools, most of them are unprepared or unwilling to undertake the same due to a lack of educational resources or content standards. To address this, it is imperative to develop systematic content standards pertaining to the field. This would lead to creating a wider range of educational content, which would have higher relevance and significance. Without the availability of systematic content standards, the possibility that adolescents may make inappropriate career choices would be higher due to the inconsistent scope and sequence of career education [2,38].

3. Methods
3.1. The Delphi Technique

The Delphi method has been used for this study to collate the varied practical opinions of experts working in sports career education. In this method, the same group of experts responded to three or four questionnaires. Additionally, the questionnaires included opinions or information derived from responses of the individual experts, analysis results, etc. [39,40]. With this methodology, homogeneity is obtained from the disparate opinions or judgments of experts at the early stages, finally resulting in reaching a consensus [39–41].

Three questionnaires were used for this study to develop the best content standards in sports career education for adolescents. As has been established, limited attention has been given to sports career education for adolescents in Korea. Therefore, there is a lack of consensus among educators and/or counselors about what to teach and how to teach. For this purpose, the Delphi technique can be effectively used to decide on the content standards in sports career education, based on recommendations from experts.

3.2. Delphi Participants in the Expert Panel

There is no universally agreed sample size for Delphi polls [42]; however, an attempt has been made to balance the size of the panel with a high response rate between the three rounds. A panel of approximately 20 individuals, who agreed to share their expertise, was selected, and the participants committed to giving their time to respond to each round. The expert panel included four groups of stakeholders, including five university professors with physical education teacher education, five physical education teachers, five sports coaches, and five career counselors. The five university professors hold a Ph.D. in physical education and taught their major subject in the Department of Physical Education. The experts were selected according to the following criteria: (a) more than five years of work experience, (b) duties in sports career education, and (c) experience in teaching, counseling, or research in sports careers.

3.3. Delphi Procedure

A three-round Delphi survey of expert panels was used to identify the content standards for sports career education. The first survey was open-ended and aimed to gather expert opinions. To improve the understanding of the contents of sports career education, the content elements of middle school “career and occupation” in Korean schools were used as examples. The survey was modified with peer and expert consultation reviews. Two peers (university faculty members in physical education) and three experts (one physical education teacher, one sports coach, and one career counselor) reviewed the draft of the survey and provided their opinion to the authors. The survey was finally developed with the mutual exchange of opinions. To obtain various answers from experts, the questions were summarized with as many neutral words as possible. The elements of the content standards obtained by the first survey were classified in the second Delphi survey, and the adequacy of the standards was checked on a 5-point Likert scale. Based on the results
of the second Delphi survey, the third Delphi survey was created and analyzed using a 5-point Likert scale.

3.4. The Questionnaire

The first Delphi survey provided an example of the content system and standards of the middle school “career and occupation” in Korean schools. Experts were then asked to elaborate on how content elements should be organized for sports career education. The second Delphi survey identified sub-factors based on the content elements obtained from the first survey, which were classified as follows: (a) understanding of sports career, (b) self-understanding in sports, (c) occupational understanding of sports, (d) exploration of sports careers, and (e) designing sports careers. The expert panel responded to the suitability of each item on a 5-point Likert scale. Additionally, the second Delphi survey asked for specific reasons for the responses and additional comments. It also included general information, such as the occupation and working period of the experts. In the third Delphi survey, the results of the second Delphi survey were first informed, and the final suitability of each sub-factor was identified on a 5-point Likert scale based on the five sub-factors.

3.5. Data Analysis

The Delphi technique includes both quantitative and qualitative analysis methods [43,44]. Qualitative open-ended questions were used in the first round, and, for the second and third rounds, a numeric consensus-seeking survey was conducted [45]. A qualitative content analysis approach was used to analyze the written comments and answers [46].

Based on peer consultation and a review of the first Delphi survey, the sections were added, removed, and comprehensively reflected in the second and third Delphi surveys. The second and third Delphi surveys eliminated the less valid items through the mean, standard deviation, consensus, convergence, and content validity ratio (CVR) outputs. Only items with CVR values of 0.42 or higher were considered content-reasonable because, with a panel of 20 experts, only such items are considered to have content validity [47], p. 568. Consensus and convergence verification were calculated using quartile deviations and median values to determine the extent to which the panel reached a consensus. It was also determined that the closer the agreement was to 1, the higher the agreement was. In general, if the consensus is greater than 0.75, and the convergence is less than 0.5, the panel’s opinion is considered to be agreed upon and reasonable [47,48].

3.6. Ethics

This study did not require formal ethical clearance from the university committee, as it did not involve any procedures for which written consent is required. No other formal authorization is required, according to Korean law. The study participants were verbally informed about the research objectives and through email, and they were free to decline at any time. All participants provided a verbal agreement or provided their consent to participate through an email. All collected information and data were analyzed anonymously and confidentially.

4. Results

4.1. First Round

In the first Delphi survey, opinions on constructing content standards for sports career education were collated through an open survey method. Elements with the same or overlapping meanings were consolidated or eliminated. Subsequently, the derived content standards were categorized, and the domains were selected and classified. The categorization process was verified by three sports career education experts. These domains were as follows: (a) understanding sports careers, (b) self-understanding in sports, (c) understanding sports-related occupations, (d) exploring sports careers, and (e) designing sports careers. The first domain, understanding sports careers, was divided into five
content elements, and the second domain, self-understanding in sports, was divided into seven. The third domain, understanding sports-related occupation, was divided into six elements; the fourth domain, exploring sports careers, was divided into seven; and the last domain, designing sports careers, was divided into eight. The five domains and 33 content elements derived are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Domain and elements in the first Delphi survey.

| Domains                          | Content Elements                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Understanding sports careers | 1.1 Understanding the meaning of a sports career  
                                   | 1.2 Understanding sports history  
                                   | 1.3 Knowing the values in sports areas  
                                   | 1.4 Discovering the value of a sports career  
                                   | 1.5 Understanding sports and convergence  |
| 2. Self-understanding in sports | 2.1 Exploring one’s own strengths in sports  
                                   | 2.2 Searching for one’s own interest in sports  
                                   | 2.3 Searching for one’s own talent and aptitude for sports  
                                   | 2.4 Exploring one’s own connection with the sports career  
                                   | 2.5 Developing sports-related competencies  
                                   | 2.6 Understanding the home environment  
                                   | 2.7 Connecting sports careers with one’s personality  |
| 3. Understanding sports-related occupations | 3.1 Exploring prospective sports jobs  
                                   | 3.2 Understanding contemporary sports-related jobs  
                                   | 3.3 Understanding the changing job world in sports  
                                   | 3.4 Understanding sports-related ventures  
                                   | 3.5 Understanding necessary competencies required for sports jobs  
                                   | 3.6 Understanding the ethics of sports-related occupations  |
| 4. Exploring sports careers     | 4.1 Exploring occupational information related to sports  
                                   | 4.2 Exploring types of occupations related to sports  
                                   | 4.3 Experiencing sports occupations through on-site practice  
                                   | 4.4 Exploring sports-related majors  
                                   | 4.5 Searching for customized sports career programs  
                                   | 4.6 Exploring workplaces related to sports  
                                   | 4.7 Exploring sports-related certificates  |
| 5. Designing sports careers     | 5.1 Exploring and eliminating factors that act as barriers for sports careers  
                                   | 5.2 Setting goals for sports careers  
                                   | 5.3 Promoting competencies required for sports careers  
                                   | 5.4 Planning and preparing for sports careers  
                                   | 5.5 Planning and preparing for the selection of sports-related majors  
                                   | 5.6 Designing careers based on the occupational types related to sports  
                                   | 5.7 Making career decisions  
                                   | 5.8 Counseling for sports careers  |

These findings support the development of self-understanding and social competence, the understanding of occupations, career exploration, and design, which are major areas of career and occupation education in middle and high schools. The content elements of understanding and designing sports careers were particularly emphasized in the responses received in the first Delphi survey.

4.2. Second and Third Round

The content standards derived from the results of the first Delphi survey were modified and supplemented for the second Delphi survey through peer review and multidimensional verification. The third Delphi survey was modified and supplemented with the content standards derived from the second Delphi survey. Specifically, the content validity ratio (CVR), the consensus, and the convergence were comprehensively determined according to the selection criteria given in Method (Sections 3.4 and 3.5), and three content elements were deleted after the second Delphi analysis.
In the second Delphi survey analysis, in the first domain, “1.2. Understanding sports history”, had a low validity of convergence of 1 (≤0.5), a consensus of 0.75 or less, and a CVR value of 0.42 or less. In the second domain, “2.7. Connecting sports careers with one’s personality” had a low validity of convergence of 1 (≤0.5), a consensus of 0.75 or less, and a CVR value of 0.42 or less. In the third domain, “3.6. Understanding the ethics of sports-related occupations” had a low validity of convergence of 1 (≤0.5), a consensus of 0.75 or less, and a CVR value of 0.42 or less. In the fourth and the fifth domain, all criteria of content elements indicated a high validity with a convergence of 0.5 or less, a consensus of 0.75 or higher, and a CVR value of 0.42 or higher. Accordingly, three content elements (1.2. understanding sports history; 2.7. connecting sports careers with one’s personality; and 3.6. understanding the ethics of sports-related occupations) were deleted in the second Delphi survey.

The analysis of the third Delphi survey indicated that the validity of the remaining elements was high. The CVR values of all content elements were high (0.8 to 1). The CVR values for all elements, except “3.5. Understanding necessary competencies in sports jobs” and “5.5. Planning and preparing the selection of sports-related majors”, were 1. The consensus and the convergence also showed high validity, with values above 0.78 and below 0.5, respectively. The results of the second and third rounds of the Delphi survey are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. The CVR of the content standards of sports career education (suitability) in the second and third Delphi survey.

| Domains | Content Elements | Round 2 | Round 3 |
|---------|-----------------|---------|---------|
|         |                 | Mean    | SD      | Conv. | Cons. | CVR | Mean | SD  | Conv. | Cons. | CVR |
| 1.1     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 1.2     | 3.3             | 1.03    | 1       | 0.43  | 0     |     |      |     |       |       |
| 1.3     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.9 | 0.31 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 1.4     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 1.5     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.7 | 0.47 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 1     |
| 2.1     | 4.7             | 0.47    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.85| 0.37 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 2.2     | 5               | 0       | 0       | 1     | 1     | 5   | 0    | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 2.3     | 4.9             | 0.31    | 0       | 1     | 1     | 4.95| 0.22 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 2.4     | 4.7             | 0.47    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.9 | 0.31 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 2.5     | 4.5             | 0.51    | 0.5     | 0.78  | 1     | 4.55| 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 1     |
| 2.6     | 4.1             | 0.72    | 0.5     | 0.75  | 0.6   | 4.7 | 0.47 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.9   |
| 2.7     | 4.4             | 0.94    | 1       | 0.6   | 0.4  |     |      |     |       |       |
| 3.1     | 4.5             | 0.51    | 0.5     | 0.78  | 1     | 4.5 | 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.78  | 1     |
| 3.2     | 4.6             | 0.68    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 3.3     | 4.8             | 0.41    | 0       | 1     | 1     | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 3.4     | 4.3             | 0.66    | 0.5     | 0.75  | 0.8   | 4.55| 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 1     |
| 3.5     | 4.5             | 0.69    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.55| 0.6  | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.9   |
| 3.6     | 3.9             | 1.07    | 1       | 0.5   | 0.2  |     |      |     |       |       |
| 4.1     | 4.8             | 0.41    | 0       | 1     | 1     | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 4.2     | 4.7             | 0.47    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 4.3     | 4.6             | 0.68    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.8 | 0.44 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 4.4     | 4.8             | 0.47    | 0.5     | 0.78  | 0.6   | 4.8 | 0.47 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 4.5     | 4.4             | 0.68    | 0.5     | 0.78  | 0.8   | 4.55| 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.9   |
| 4.6     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.65| 0.49 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.9   |
| 4.7     | 4.6             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.8   | 1     | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 5.1     | 4.4             | 0.68    | 0.5     | 0.78  | 0.8   | 4.55| 0.51 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 1     |
| 5.2     | 4.8             | 0.62    | 0       | 1     | 0.8  | 4.9 | 0.31 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 5.3     | 4.6             | 0.68    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.8  | 4.7 | 0.47 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.9   |
| 5.4     | 4.7             | 0.66    | 0       | 1     | 0.8  | 4.8 | 0.41 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 5.5     | 4.4             | 0.82    | 0.5     | 0.8   | 0.6  | 4.5 | 0.69 | 0.5 | 0.8   | 0.8   |
| 5.6     | 4.9             | 0.31    | 0       | 1     | 1     | 4.9 | 0.31 | 0   | 1     | 1     |
| 5.7     | 4.4             | 0.5     | 0.5     | 0.75  | 1     | 4.6 | 0.5  | 0.5 | 0.8   | 1     |
| 5.8     | 4.9             | 0.31    | 0       | 1     | 1     | 4.9 | 0.31 | 0   | 1     | 1     |

Note: SD: standard deviation; Conv.: convergence; Cons.: consensus; CVR: content validity ratio.
4.3. The Final Content Standards of Sports Career Education

Based on the results of the third Delphi survey, the elements with a CVR value of 0.42 or less were removed, and the derived domain and content elements are shown below (see Figure 1).

![Figure 1. Content standards of sports career education.](image-url)

The first domain, “understanding sports careers”, emphasizes learning social and personal values so that students can understand the meaning and value of their career. Additionally, it provides students with various opportunities to better understand sports careers by studying sports from the convergent viewpoints of other disciplines. In the first domain, students develop a wider and deeper understanding of sports career paths. In the second domain, “self-understanding in sports”, students understand and explore their physical characteristics (interest, aptitude, environment, physical conditions, etc.) that are related to sports. Students can identify their association with sports-related jobs and lay the foundation for their careers. They can identify their capabilities and have an active approach regarding the related decisions. In the third domain, “understanding sports-related occupations”, students explore various jobs related to sports, understand the job market according to social changes, and learn about sports-related jobs that will be available in future societies. Additionally, students are encouraged to create their own sports-related careers through ventures or startups and to broaden their awareness of these careers. By understanding the relationship between sports-related jobs and their necessary competencies, students can prepare their career design for the future. In the fourth domain, “exploring sports careers”, students can learn about the various ways to explore information and the types of occupations related to sports. Through this exploration, sports careers can be designed and developed in practice. In addition to simple jobs or related department information, the contents are organized to allow students to explore the relevant workplaces and certificates and find customized sports career programs suitable for them. This allows students to develop their ability to explore sports careers and occupational information through hands-on activities in various ways. Finally, “designing sports
“careers” is organized into courses and procedures so that students can set goals related to sports careers, develop career decision-making skills, and collect the necessary information. Additionally, it is necessary to identify and explore ways to overcome obstacles associated with their career decisions. Students can design, prepare, and challenge their careers based on the obtained information and exploration skills.

5. Discussion

As stated, the expert panels agreed with the educational content system, defined educational boundaries, and established systematic procedures for sports career education. Based on the content standards in sports career education identified through the Delphi survey, physical educators, sports coaches, or counselors can decide the scope and sequence and can plan and implement sports career education [19,49]. The five content domains deduced from the results—(a) understanding sports careers, (b) self-understanding in sports, (c) understanding sports-related occupations, (d) exploring sports careers, and (e) designing sports careers—are considered the educational boundaries that should be included in sports career education. Additionally, the five content domains indicate the sequential order for designing learning programs for adolescents. This study offers a new perspective on designing and developing systematic educational programs for adolescents interested in sports careers.

Content standards, including five content domains and thirty sub-content elements in sports career education, were identified in this study. The first domain, “understanding sports careers”, focuses on the beginning of sports career education and establishes that adolescents should know the meaning of sports and its value in their future lives [50]. Of the four sub-content elements, three (i.e., understanding the meaning of sports careers, knowing the values in sports areas, and discovering the value of sports careers) demonstrated optimal content validity (convergence 0/consensus 1). This reflects that adolescents do not possess a basic education regarding sports careers. This domain also implies the necessity and importance of careful career decisions at the adolescent stage [19,51]. In terms of career development, “understanding sports careers” is the first stage and is considered imperative and essential for adolescents who intend to pursue a long-term career in sports. Sweet et al. [52] stated that this helps prevent rash or impulsive decisions by developing a detailed understanding of sports careers before students decide to pursue a career in this field. Furthermore, this is associated with an important career development skill [28], “crystallizing personally valued vocational interests.”

The second domain, “self-understanding in sports”, focuses on the inquiry process to identify talents and aptitude based on self-understanding in sports. Additionally, it includes the exploration of several interesting sports jobs in various ways. Four content elements (i.e., exploring one’s strengths in sports, searching for one’s interests in sports, searching for talent aptitudes for sports, and searching for one’s connection with a sports career) have demonstrated optimal content validity (convergence 0/consensus 1). This includes educational experiences to know oneself and to identify with a career in the sports field based on the experiences. The second domain supports Super’s [24] developmental theory, that is, “conviction”, as the third among the four growth stages (concern, control, conviction, and competence). Conviction is a person’s ability to be aware of career aspirations and is an ongoing process of aligning oneself with occupational personalities or roles [12]. “Self-understanding in sports” is considered a private experience acquired by adolescents and is rarely perceived as a sports career [2]. However, student athletes do not have sufficient opportunities to gain these experiences. Instead, they are influenced by the opinion of their parents and coaches, who function as significant contributors toward the decision-making associated with their career-related education [8,11,13], which is based on their aptitude and potential in sports. The second domain, stated in this study, is meaningful for student athletes to become independent decision-makers and is supported by Patton [21]. This would involve self-awareness, opportunity awareness, and decision and transition learning as a part of career education. Thus, it is necessary to educate adolescents...
about the importance of career decision-making so that they can identify their unique characteristics and make decisions regarding their future careers [20]. Sports career education within and outside schools is required to be intentionally planned and implemented to encourage self-understanding in sports.

The third domain, “understanding sports-related occupations”, guides adolescents to comprehend the relationship between social changes and sports. According to the third Delphi survey, the optimal content validity (convergence 0/consensus 1) was shown in two content elements, that is, “understanding contemporary sports-related jobs” and “understanding changing job worlds in sports.” This implies the necessity of various experiences through which adolescents can actively explore the worlds of sports that currently exist and understand social changes that will influence future trends [2,53]. Adolescents should be willing to explore various options in the field so that they have varied career opportunities. The content validity of “understanding sports-related ventures” is appropriate and can be included in the final content elements, but the mean (4.55), the convergence (0.5), and the consensus (0.8) were relatively lower than for other content elements. However, this is an important aspect of sports career education as it encourages adolescents to create new jobs and opportunities in the sports labor market and enables the understanding of available sports jobs and those that might be available in the future [54]. For adolescents, it is important to be aware of how the labor market might change with time as they grow older. Some occupations may become irrelevant and newer ones may become available in the labor market [55]. Thus, curiosity, as identified by Hartung et al. [27], p. 43, is important for adolescents to enable career adaptability or transition based on changes in the social environment.

The fourth domain, “exploring sports careers”, emphasizes hands-on activities and field experiences, such as collecting, analyzing, and experiencing occupational information and types. Five of the seven content elements showed optimal content validity (convergence 0/consensus 1) according to the third Delphi survey. This suggests that adolescents should identify role models in their desired sports fields and thereby focus on specific preparation processes and work activities that are inspired by these role models. This enables adolescents to directly experience the desired job, and they can therefore analyze their strengths and weaknesses based on their experiences [56]. Ronkainen et al. [12] stated that identifying role models in this field has not been prioritized. This could have various benefits, such as motivation, adaptability, and persistence [57]. The fourth domain is consistent with “gaining a better understanding of themselves and the work environment” and is one of the career development skills proposed by Lapan [28]. This concurs with the concept of “person–environment fit goal setting” as one of the interrelated skills in career development identified by Conkel-Ziebell et al. [4]. In fact, the opportunity to explore sports careers allows adolescents to check the congruence between their occupational expectations and the real workplace. Thus, for sports career education, sufficient facilities and rich resources at schools or in communities are required to offer adolescents direct exploration opportunities and experiential activities. This would also prevent possible barriers or inequalities in access to valuable information [55].

The fifth domain, “designing sports careers”, emphasizes comprehensive and systematic experiences, ranging from goal setting to career preparation, planning, and management of sports careers. Four elements, including “setting goals of sports careers”, “planning and preparing sports careers”, “designing careers based on occupational types related to sports”, and “counseling sports careers”, demonstrated optimal content validity (convergence 0/consensus 1). This implies that acquiring the ability to set career goals and following a series of systematic procedures is the most important aspect of career education for adolescents [19,20]. Additionally, this assists adolescents in managing their careers and finding the identities necessary for career design in the desired sports fields [7,37]. Therefore, it is important to ensure that student athletes who have not independently designed their career paths are provided guidance regarding “designing sports careers.” Interestingly, counseling careers showed the best content validity in the third Delphi survey,
even though it has not been universally included in the educational content for sports career education. This indicates that career counseling should be emphasized as an important element in future sports career education [20]. According to Mann et al. [55], adolescents who have participated in career development activities demonstrate positive changes in their academic performance and their working lives. Systematic guidance or counseling can have a significant impact as they design their career path and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to achieve their career goals [1,20,47,51,55].

Comprehensively, the content standards of sports career education identified in this study were designed considering the following systems: scope and sequence. The educational scope of sports career programs guides teachers or counselors to select the range of instructional content, and the educational sequence allows them to make decisions in an instructional order based on the limited and predetermined instructional time [2,19,21]. Content standards are intended and implemented for all adolescents who enjoy sports and would like to pursue a career in this field. Thus, they include the key contents that all adolescents, including student athletes and non-student athletes, should learn and effectively apply throughout their lives. Additionally, they guide the practical process of adolescents creating a learning path regarding their career choice and preparation. Content standards are an attempt to overcome the separation of “studying” and “playing sports” [7,58] to converge the two in all educational systems. It is therefore recommended that all adolescents who enjoy sports choose the same career option while playing sports in school.

6. Conclusions and Suggestions

This study provides useful data that could be used to develop a curriculum framework for sports career education for adolescents. Using a Delphi survey, the best content standards in sports career education for adolescents were identified as follows: (a) understanding sports careers, (b) self-understanding in sports, (c) understanding sports-related occupations, (d) exploring sports careers, and (e) designing sports careers. The content standards proposed can guide the decision-making of educators or counselors regarding the best educational content and activities in sports careers. Sweet et al. [52] stated that three curriculum models can be used to introduce career education for adolescents that could be made a separate subject, embedded within another subject, or infused across the entire curriculum. These models can also be applied to sports career education. For example, sports career education can be included in physical education as a separate subject. Additionally, sports career education could be embedded within social studies or other subjects or could be a part of extracurricular activities. However, in either case, a student-centered approach, rather than an information-centered approach, should be used.

This study had a few limitations. The Delphi survey only included Korean professionals in sports career education; therefore, cultural differences may impact the study. However, systematic career education in sports is a necessity for all countries, and the views of the Korean experts are not disparate from the views of experts in other countries. Developing the best content standards in sports career education is imperative for customizing services based on individual interests, talents, and school contexts. Therefore, the findings of this study are also applicable to other countries in the global society. Further studies should be conducted to identify the most effective teaching and evaluation methods to determine and assess content standards in sports career education.

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