

# Implications of New Zealand's Outdoor Adventure Education for the Development of University Physical Education Programs in Guangxi Colleges and Universities in China

Lin Chengnan<sup>1</sup>, Lu Xiangliu<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, Department of Physical Education, Guangxi University of Foreign Languages, Nanning, China.

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Physical Education, Guangxi University of Foreign Languages, Nanning, China.

Email: 1 nano98182383@163.com, 2 119871021@qq.com

Orchid Id number: 1 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-9510-0297>, 2 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-7991-0135>

Corresponding Author\*: Associate Professor, Lu Xiangliu2.

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## ABSTRACT

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This study aims to explore the inspiration of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education to Guangxi universities' physical education curriculum. Through a systematic literature review and case study, the study analyzes in depth the successful experience of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education in terms of curriculum design, teaching methodology and assessment system, and puts forward feasible application strategies in the light of the current situation and challenges of physical education curriculum in Guangxi universities. This study found that the success of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education lies in its focus on experiential learning, progressive challenges, and the concept of whole-person education, and these features provide important references for the reform of physical education curriculum in Guangxi's colleges and universities. However, cultural differences and differences in educational philosophies may pose challenges to the direct application of these experiences. Therefore, this paper proposes the necessity of cultural adaptation and localized transformation, aiming to provide specific reform suggestions for Guangxi universities to enhance the quality of physical education courses and students' learning experience.

**Keywords:** outdoor adventure education in New Zealand; Guangxi universities; physical education programs; experiential learning; cultural adaptation; educational reforms

## 1) INTRODUCTION

Outdoor adventure education (OAE) is an emerging educational model that has attracted widespread attention worldwide in recent years, and it is not only an important means of cultivating the overall quality of students, but also significantly promotes the mental health and personal development of participants. As this educational model is promoted in different cultural contexts, its theoretical basis, implementation methods and effectiveness evaluation are facing new challenges and opportunities. This study aims to explore the implications of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand for the development of physical education programs in Guangxi universities in China. Through specific This study aims to explore the potential inspiration of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education to the development of physical education curriculum in Guangxi universities in China, drawing on the successful experience of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education, paying special attention to its innovations in curriculum design, teaching methodology, and assessment system, and exploring the applicability and localization strategies in the context of the actual situation of Guangxi universities.

## 2) LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical foundation of outdoor adventure education mainly includes experiential learning theory, constructivist learning theory and humanistic education theory. Experiential learning theory emphasizes the promotion of learning through direct experience and reflection, constructivist learning theory suggests that knowledge is actively constructed through interaction with the environment and others, and humanistic education

theory emphasizes the self-actualization and holistic development of individuals. These theories provide important support for outdoor adventure education, but they also face many problems in practical application. For example, North et al. pointed out that over-reliance on “novelty” may lead to diminishing educational effects, and that it is necessary to maintain a balance between educational innovativeness and in-depth learning [1]. On a practical level, New Zealand's outdoor adventure education is widely regarded as a success story, and Haggerty et al.'s study of policy shifts in New Zealand's early childhood education curriculum reveals the importance of outdoor education in promoting holistic child development, as well as the challenge of balancing standardized educational outcomes with a bicultural philosophy of education [2]. The positive impact of experiences in natural environments on participants' mental health has been further confirmed in some studies [3][4]. However, these studies are mainly based on Western contexts, and the applicability of their findings to other cultural contexts remains to be explored.

In contrast, the development of outdoor adventure education in China faces unique challenges. Liu noted that the test-based education model and family planning policies limit the promotion of outdoor education in China [5]. Xing et al. further emphasized constraints such as lack of cognition, economic conditions, and safety awareness [6]. Nonetheless, Chinese scholars have made progress in theoretical research and case studies. Poon's [7] and Chang's [8] studies provide a theoretical foundation for the application of outdoor adventure education in China, while Wang and Yang's [9] and Zhang's [10] case studies demonstrate its potential to promote regional economic development and cultural heritage. potential.

The above studies reveal the complexity of cross-cultural applications of outdoor adventure education. New Zealand's experience provides valuable references for outdoor adventure education in China, but does not seem to be suitable for direct replication. For example, the collectivist culture in China and the individualistic orientation in New Zealand may lead to different student responses to outdoor adventure activities. In addition, Espiner et al.'s study of outdoor activities during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the adaptability and resilience of outdoor education, while also raising questions about how to maintain the quality of education in exceptional circumstances [11].

### 3) METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

This study will focus on the following three areas: one, to comprehensively analyze the theoretical foundation, development history and implementation strategies of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand, including its focus on experiential learning, progressive challenges and whole-person education. Second, to examine the current situation and challenges of the physical education programs in Guangxi universities and assess the feasibility and potential benefits of introducing outdoor adventure education. Third, we explore how to combine the successful experience of New Zealand with the cultural and educational traditions of Guangxi, and make recommendations for the implementation of outdoor adventure education suitable for Guangxi universities. We pay special attention to the issue of cultural adaptability, exploring how to adapt to the cultural background and educational environment of China, especially Guangxi region, while maintaining educational innovativeness. Through comparative research and critical analysis, we aim to provide concrete suggestions for the reform of physical education programs in Guangxi universities in order to enhance the quality of the programs and the learning experience of the students, hoping to provide new perspectives and methods for the practice of physical education in Guangxi universities, promote educational innovation, and cultivate the ability of students to develop their all-round development.

### 4) ANALYSIS OF THE SUCCESS FACTORS IN NEW ZEALAND'S OUTDOOR ADVENTURE EDUCATION

#### (a) Curriculum Design and Educational Philosophy

New Zealand's outdoor adventure education programs are designed with the natural environment at the core, taking full advantage of the country's rich and diverse natural resources. This design philosophy reflects the close connection between New Zealand society and the natural environment. Through direct contact and interaction with the natural environment, the program aims to develop survival skills, teamwork and a sense of environmental responsibility.

New Zealand's Outdoor Adventure Education (OAE) program is designed to incorporate a number of innovative educational concepts into a systematic framework for teaching and learning. At the heart of this framework is the concept of 'experiential learning', which combines theoretical knowledge with practical skills through hands-on involvement in outdoor activities such as hiking, rock climbing, boating and camping. This approach emphasizes a reflective component, encouraging students to think deeply about their individual and team performance after the

activity to deepen their understanding of their own behavior and decision-making. This not only enhances students' practical skills, but also develops their critical thinking and self-awareness. Complementing experiential learning is the concept of "progressive challenge". The curriculum is skillfully designed to link activities of increasing difficulty in a way that ensures a progressive learning process and continues to stimulate students' potential. The advantage of this approach is that it can be adapted to suit students of different ability levels while developing their resilience to challenges and problem-solving skills. The combination of progressive challenge and experiential learning creates a dynamic and engaging learning environment where students can achieve a sustained sense of growth and fulfillment as they overcome obstacles.

Together, these two concepts support the 'whole person' goal of Outdoor Adventure Education in New Zealand. The diverse program of activities in the natural environment focuses not only on the development of students' physical abilities and skills, but also their emotional intelligence, social skills and environmental awareness. Students learn to understand and respect others through teamwork, and develop a sense of responsibility and leadership in the face of natural challenges. This holistic approach to education reflects the vision of New Zealand educators who recognize that success in contemporary society requires not only knowledge and skills, but also good mental and social skills.

By integrating the three core concepts, New Zealand Outdoor Adventure Education develops a holistic approach that enables students to adapt to complex social environments. The success of this educational model provides useful lessons for global education reform and inspires us to think about how similar models can be applied in multicultural contexts.

### **(b) Teaching Methods and Evaluation Systems**

The success of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand is due in large part to its innovative teaching methods and assessment systems, which together form a framework for student-centered education. Within this framework, two pedagogical approaches, Guided Learning and Cooperative Learning, play a central role. In guided learning, the role of the teacher is transformed into that of a guide and facilitator, who promotes students' self-directed exploration in outdoor activities by asking open-ended questions and providing timely feedback. This kind of independent exploration not only helps students master the necessary practical skills, but more importantly, it fosters independent thinking and creative problem-solving. Meanwhile, cooperative learning provides students with rich social learning opportunities through group tasks, enabling them to learn key social skills such as communication, division of labor, and leadership in teamwork. The combination of these two pedagogical approaches not only enhances learning efficiency, but also promotes the overall development of students' individual abilities and team spirit.

In order to effectively support these teaching methods, the assessment system in New Zealand focuses on process assessment, which pays attention to students' engagement, attitude and progress throughout the learning process, rather than only looking at the final outcome. Through continuous feedback and assessment, teachers help students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and make adjustments and improvements in their learning activities accordingly. This comprehensive assessment system combined with the teaching methodology creates a positive interaction that reduces students' learning pressure while enhancing their motivation. In the process of obtaining continuous feedback, students are more able to actively participate in guided learning and actively contribute their ideas in a cooperative learning environment.

Taken together, these pedagogical approaches and assessment systems, outdoor adventure education in New Zealand creates a holistic and dynamic learning environment in which students not only acquire outdoor skills, but also develop key competencies such as critical thinking, teamwork and self-reflection. The success of this model of education provides valuable lessons for other countries and stimulates deeper thinking about how these approaches can be applied flexibly in different educational contexts.

### **(c) Impact of Social and Cultural Contexts**

The success of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand stems from two closely related key factors: its unique natural environment and its deep social and cultural background. New Zealand's unique natural conditions provide an ideal environment for outdoor education, and as the 'Green Country' it has a rich diversity of natural resources and magnificent landscapes from beaches to mountains, forests to rivers. This vast natural arena not only provides venues for a variety of outdoor activities, but also stimulates people's desire to get in touch with nature, which in turn fosters a love of the environment and a sense of conservation.

At the same time, the social and cultural background of New Zealand has injected deep connotation and strong support for outdoor adventure education. The profound influence of multiculturalism, especially Maori culture, adds a unique cultural dimension to outdoor education. Incorporating traditional Māori rituals and knowledge into outdoor activities not only enriches the content of education, but also fosters cultural sensitivity and inclusiveness among students. New Zealand society honors nature and encourages its citizens to be in close contact with nature, and this social value lays a solid foundation for the development of outdoor education, which makes this mode of education widely accepted and supported. The government's emphasis on outdoor education is reflected in policy development and funding, ensuring the smooth implementation and sustainable development of outdoor adventure education programs. The extensive participation of schools and communities further consolidates the social foundation of outdoor education, making it an educational model for all.

These two factors - the natural environment and the socio-cultural context - interact with each other to form a virtuous cycle. A privileged natural environment inspires a love of the outdoors in society, while deep cultural traditions and social support drive the educational use of these natural resources. This unique combination not only contributes to the success of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand, but also provides students with a comprehensive and distinctive learning experience. New Zealand has successfully turned its natural strengths into educational strengths, creating a model of education that is both respectful of tradition and innovative. This model not only develops students' outdoor skills, but also deepens their understanding of nature, culture and society, providing a solid foundation for their holistic development.

## 5) IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS FOR GUANGXI UNIVERSITIES

### (a) Implications for Curriculum Design

The success of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education is largely due to its unique curriculum design concepts, which are of great value to Guangxi universities. The most noteworthy are the three core concepts of “experiential learning”, “progressive challenge” and “whole-person education”. Experiential Learning” allows students to practice physical fitness, learn survival skills, and improve teamwork and problem-solving skills in a real natural environment. Combined with “progressive challenges” to help them gradually improve their physical fitness and mental toughness, the concept of “whole-person education” further broadens the cause of education, focusing not only on the inculcation of knowledge, but also on the cultivation of emotions, social skills and mental health.

For Guangxi universities, borrowing these concepts means breaking the traditional teaching framework and creating more opportunities for students to have close contact with nature. Specifically, one can start with simple outdoor hiking activities to allow students to adapt to the outdoor environment, and then gradually introduce more challenging programs such as rock climbing or hiking. After each activity, teachers should guide students to reflect and summarize, and adjust the difficulty and content of the next activity accordingly. This design can not only stimulate students' interest, but also help them gradually improve their physical fitness and mental toughness. Integrate teamwork-based outdoor activities, such as group hiking or cooperative adventure programs, into the curriculum design. These activities can help students learn to understand and respect others, and enhance their self-confidence and sense of social responsibility in their interactions with nature and peers.

By comprehensively applying these concepts, the physical education programs in Guangxi's colleges and universities will not only become a platform for physical training, but also an important way to promote students' all-round development. This comprehensive curriculum design will provide students with richer and more meaningful learning experiences and lay a solid foundation for their future development.

### (b) Implications for Teaching Methods

The effectiveness of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand stems from the role of teachers as guides and supporters, who stimulate students' independent learning through Facilitated Learning. This approach is also applicable to the physical education programs in Guangxi universities. For example, in outdoor activities, teachers can ask open-ended questions, such as “How should we respond effectively to this situation?” or “How should we respond effectively to this situation in teamwork?” or “What challenges have we encountered in teamwork and how can we overcome them?” Such questions not only enhance students' initiative, but also cultivate their independent thinking and innovation ability.

Further, Guangxi universities can adopt the “cooperative learning” model, where students learn to share responsibilities/exploit their strengths in cooperation by organizing group adventure tasks, such as searching for specific resources in the forest or planning safe hiking routes. Teachers only need to clarify the objectives of the tasks and let students explore the solutions on their own. Such a process not only exercises students' social skills, but also strengthens their team spirit and sense of collective honor, which will have a positive impact on their future social life and career development. At the same time, teachers should focus on personalized teaching and provide different choices of activities according to the differences in students' physical abilities and interests. For example, offering different programs such as nature observation and rock climbing at the same time allows students to make choices based on their interests and abilities, ensuring that each student can grow in areas that suit them. Through the comprehensive use of these teaching strategies, the physical education programs in Guangxi's universities can better stimulate students' interest in learning, cultivate their comprehensive abilities, and lay a solid foundation for their overall development.

### **(c) Implications for Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms**

The assessment system of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education is based on process assessment (Formative Assessment), emphasizing the continuous attention to students' participation process and learning attitude. Guangxi universities can learn from this assessment method and establish a more comprehensive assessment and feedback mechanism. The traditional assessment of physical education programs often focuses only on students' physical fitness test scores or competition results, while ignoring the progress and efforts in the learning process. Guangxi universities can focus on students' performance during their participation in activities, such as teamwork, perseverance and problem-solving ability, by introducing process assessment. Several specific measures can be taken to achieve this goal. First, at the end of each activity, teachers should review the process with students, give specific feedback, and discuss how to improve on the next activity. Second, reflection and discussion sessions can be arranged so that students can express their feelings and learning experiences by keeping a reflective journal or participating in group discussions. Teachers should guide students to relate these reflections to their daily lives and learning to enhance the relevance of the activities.

The assessment system can also combine self-assessment and peer assessment methods to encourage students to enhance their learning through self-reflection and mutual feedback. For example, at the end of an activity, students can fill out a self-assessment form to reflect on their own performance; at the same time, teachers can organize peer-to-peer assessment so that students can understand their own performance from the perspective of others. Through the introduction of these assessment and feedback mechanisms, the physical education programs in Guangxi's universities will pay more attention to the overall development of students, and help them not only gain physical fitness, but also cultivate multifaceted qualities and abilities in the process of participating in physical education activities.

Through these specific operational suggestions, Guangxi universities can effectively apply the successful experience of New Zealand's outdoor adventure education to their physical education programs, improve the quality of the programs, meet the multifaceted needs of students, and promote the innovation and development of physical education. This comprehensive assessment system can not only reflect students' learning outcomes more accurately, but also stimulate their learning motivation, promote the cultivation of independent learning ability, and lay a solid foundation for their future development.

## **6) CULTURAL ADAPTABILITY AND FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS**

### **(a) Challenges of Cultural Differences**

Cultural differences are undoubtedly an important challenge in the process of applying New Zealand's experience of outdoor adventure education to Guangxi's university physical education program. There are significant differences between New Zealand and China in terms of social culture, educational concepts and student behavioral norms, and these differences may affect the applicability and effectiveness of New Zealand's successful experience in Guangxi.

Cultural differences and safety perceptions are two key challenges in applying New Zealand's experience of outdoor adventure education to Guangxi's university physical education programs. Outdoor education in New Zealand is heavily influenced by its traditional culture of honoring nature and encouraging the spirit of personal adventure. In New Zealand, close contact with nature is regarded as a cultural tradition, and children are trained from an early age

to have a high level of environmental awareness and wilderness survival skills. In China, however, cultural values and perceptions of safety may limit students' deeper interaction with nature. The emphasis on collectivism and normative behavior in traditional Chinese culture, as well as the high concern for safety, may lead students and parents to be cautious about outdoor adventurous activities. In this cultural context, students may lack opportunities to explore and challenge themselves in the natural environment, thus affecting their development of environmental awareness and wilderness survival skills. The philosophy of physical education in Chinese universities may focus more on physical training and athletic performance than on whole-person education and the overall development of individual abilities as emphasized in New Zealand. This difference requires us to consider how to integrate with local educational goals and values when introducing outdoor adventure education in New Zealand.

At the same time, we need to realize that although Chinese universities are gradually focusing on the cultivation of students' comprehensive quality, in practice, how to balance the relationship between the traditional physical education curriculum and the newly introduced outdoor adventure education is still a problem that needs to be solved. This involves not only the updating of educational concepts, but also the re-conceptualization of safety and how to ensure students' safety while encouraging them to explore and challenge themselves. Therefore, in the process of introducing New Zealand's outdoor adventure education, Guangxi universities need to thoughtfully make localized adjustments, respecting and integrating local cultural values and safety concepts, as well as exploring how to stimulate students' enthusiasm for participation, cultivate their environmental awareness and wilderness survival ability, and lay a solid foundation for their all-round development. In this way, the integration of cultural values and safety concepts can more naturally explain the phenomenon that Chinese students are less likely to go deeper into nature, and provide a more comprehensive consideration for the introduction of outdoor adventure education in Guangxi universities.

### **(b) Feasibility in Guangxi Universities**

The successful experience of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand can also find its unique way of application in Guangxi universities. Despite the challenges posed by cultural differences, this educational model is expected to be effectively applied in Guangxi through appropriate cultural adaptation and localization.

Guangxi's rich natural resources provide unique conditions for outdoor adventure education. The natural environments of Guangxi, such as mountains, rivers, and forests, are somewhat similar to those of New Zealand, and are able to provide diverse site options for outdoor activities. By closely integrating outdoor education with Guangxi's community and cultural heritage, we can allow students to experience and pass on the traditional culture of ethnic minorities in sports, thus enhancing their awareness and pride in their local culture. In order to reduce the impact of cultural differences, Guangxi universities can adopt the strategy of gradually introducing and piloting programs. The outdoor adventure program can be piloted in some schools or classes first, starting with some relatively simple experiential activities, such as short-distance hiking or nature observation, and then gradually adjusting the course content and teaching methods according to the feedback, and gradually transitioning to more challenging programs. Such a pilot project not only allows teachers and students to gradually adapt to the new education model, but also collects feedback in practice and continuously optimizes the curriculum design, thus increasing its feasibility for school-wide expansion. In order to cope with cultural differences in safety and responsibility, Guangxi universities need to fully consider safety factors in the design of activities and strengthen risk management education. This includes communication and publicity with parents to help them understand the value of outdoor adventure education and the safety and security measures; and the development of rigorous safety plans, as well as detailed risk assessments and simulation drills prior to activities. These measures will not only enhance the trust of parents and the community in outdoor adventure education, but also provide safeguards for the smooth implementation of the activities.

Policy and financial support an important guarantee to ensure feasibility. Guangxi universities can seek support from the government and local education departments to apply for special funds for the development and implementation of outdoor education programs. In addition, they can obtain sponsorship for equipment and facilities needed for outdoor activities through cooperation with enterprises. Colleges and universities should also encourage teachers to participate in outdoor education training to enhance their professional ability to implement such programs.

Through these measures, the successful experience of outdoor adventure education in New Zealand can be localized, transformed and applied in Guangxi universities. This will not only enhance students' physical and mental fitness,



but also promote their love of nature and culture, and inject new vitality into the development of physical education programs in Guangxi universities.

## 7) CONCLUSION

This study analyzes in depth the New Zealand outdoor adventure education model and explores its potential for application in the physical education curriculum of Guangxi universities. The New Zealand experience provides valuable insights for Guangxi in terms of curriculum design, teaching methods and assessment systems. In particular, experiential learning and progressive challenges, as well as guided and cooperative learning approaches, are crucial to the development of students' physical fitness, mental toughness, creativity and social skills. To address the challenges of cultural differences and educational concepts, the following measures are recommended for Guangxi universities: first, curriculum design should incorporate local natural resources and ethnic cultures to enhance students' cultural identity; second, teaching methods should encourage students' independent exploration and teamwork in natural environments; and, third, the assessment system should emphasize process assessment to promote students' self-reflection and teamwork through self- and peer-assessment; Finally, the implementation process should consider cultural adaptability and safety and security, increase social acceptance through communication and risk management, and seek policy and financial support.

Although this study provides a theoretical foundation, future research should validate the practical effects of these experiences through empirical methods and assess their impact on students' physical fitness, mental toughness, and social competence. Also, the impact of cultural differences should be explored in depth, and ways to maintain core educational concepts while adapting to the Chinese culture and educational environment should be examined. In addition, student development is tracked over time to assess the lasting effects of outdoor adventure education on students' overall quality. Through these measures, the reform of physical education curriculum in Guangxi universities will be more complete and provide richer educational resources for the overall development of students.

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### Data Availability:

No new data were created or analyzed in this study. Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

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