

A Comparative Study of Chinese and Foreign Sports Practice: Exploration of Physical Education Models in China and Abroad

He Zhixin, Hamdan Bin Mohd Ali, Liu Dezheng, Li Jianting, Liu Jingyu, Wang Boqian and Xu Mingchen

Abstract -- Under the background of AI intelligent education, the significance of physical education on the comprehensive development of students and the impact of national health are increasingly evident. This article mainly uses documentary method, case analysis method, comparative research method and other research methods to analyze and compare the relevant physical education models in China and abroad, and sort out the differences. Analyze the current situation and existing problems of physical education in terms of development logic, curriculum setting, teaching mode, teacher training, evaluation mechanism, etc., in order to provide certain theoretical and practical references for China's physical education reform and international exchanges. After research, it has been concluded that Chinese physical education has the advantages of linking theory and practice. It has advantages in terms of the popularity of campus sports activities and the degree of student participation. However, there are certain shortcomings in the construction of the curriculum system, the renewal of the concept of education and the improvement of the evaluation and assessment system. The United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and other developed countries have a strong development foundation in physical education practice teaching, diversified evaluation system and physical education teacher training. These rich experiences and practices provide certain reference significance for China's physical education reform. China's physical education reform should be improved in these four aspects: establishing a scientific curriculum system; adopting diversified teaching organization forms; improving the professional ability of physical education teachers; and improving the evaluation and assessment mechanism of physical education.

Keywords -- Physical Education; Comparative Analysis; Chinese and Foreign Practice; Teaching Model

I. INTRODUCTION

Physical education is an important part of the national education system. It undertakes the fundamental task of implementing the concept of "health first", and at the same time bears the responsibility of educating people "with sports" (Ji & Yin, 2025; Mao, 2025). Against the background of the high-quality development of education, physical education teaching is not only about the teaching of sports skills, but also emphasizes the improvement of students' comprehensive physical quality. The purpose of education is based on competitive results, gradually paying attention to students' physical and mental development and improving students' ability to participate in sports. At the national level in China, under the continuous promotion of new policy formulation and new institutional construction, physical education has formed a pattern of wide coverage, high popularity and good basic conditions (Ministry of Education, 2025). At the same time, in developed countries represented by the United States, Britain, Japan, Australia, etc.,

physical education depends more on the development of their respective national cultures and social environments, thus forming a physical education model that attaches importance to personal experience, encourages independent participation, and focuses on cultivating lifelong exercise habits. There is no difference between the two models. Under the influence of different institutional environments and educational concepts, they form their own relatively stable teaching models (Chen & Tian, 2025; Zhou & Zhang, 2025).

Based on historical context and practical practice, this article will make a comparative analysis from the five aspects of development logic, curriculum system, teaching mode, teacher status and evaluation mechanism, so as to promote China's physical education to high-quality development and modernization to provide a scientific theoretical basis and operational practical plan.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

At present, global physical education has clearly moved towards the direction of cultivating sports literacy and implementing comprehensive education. Although China's physical education system has its own advantages, there are also many real problems. The curriculum is centred on sports skills, the teaching is dominated by teachers, the evaluation focuses on results and the process, and the training method of teachers is single. It is in stark contrast to the physical education teaching model that has always attached importance to the main position of students, emphasized social cooperation and implemented comprehensive evaluation. This article mainly studies the core issues, that is, systematically comparing Chinese and foreign physical education models, scientifically drawing on foreign advanced experience, exploring the development path of physical education teaching in line with China's national conditions, and promoting China's physical education system to achieve high-quality and modern development.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays physical education is continuing to transform to modernization. The academic community's attention to Chinese and foreign physical education is increasing year by year. It mainly focuses on the different characteristics, local characteristics and reform paths of Chinese and foreign physical education. The research results are very remarkable. According to the existing results, the main contents of scholars' attention are divided into five aspects, namely development logic, curriculum structure, teaching method, teacher training, and evaluation mechanism. Next, this article will sort out and comment on the latest research results, and compare and analyze the current research status and problems of physical education.

Development logic: policy-led coverage of the whole area and people-oriented social coordination

The development path of physical education in China has obvious characteristics, that is, it has a strong national dominance, and its fundamental purpose is to achieve educational equity through institutional coordination. Under the guidance of national policies, students' physical health status has been steadily improved and physical education classes have been effectively guaranteed, so that China's physical education has outstanding advantages in terms of popularization, standardized management and operation efficiency (Ministry of Education, 2025; Liu, 2024). However, we also realize that there are shortcomings in the unified management-based operation mode, which cannot well meet the diversified needs and personalized development of students. Coupled with the low participation of social forces, the vitality and innovation of physical education are not high. In the practice of physical education, the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and other countries pay more attention to the main position of students, the participation of diversified subjects and the cultivation of lifelong sports habits. At the national level, it has established an education system in which schools, families and communities cooperate with each other, so that "learning, practicing, competition and using" can truly be combined in a wider world. Through comparative research, it can be seen that these two models are not only different in the way of action, but also in value orientation. One approach is to start from the collective and value overall fairness and order; the other is to start from personal development and value selectivity and diversity. Although the goal of both is to make students grow up healthily and develop in an all-round way, their value orientation and resource allocation are very different.

Teaching model: Teacher-led and student-cantered

The traditional Chinese physical education teaching model is suitable for large class teaching with a large number of people. In the teaching process, students can be better organized to learn, but in the learning process, students lack the awareness of active participation and the spirit of inquiry. As far as the foreign physical education teaching model is concerned, it is changing from teacher-led to student-led. The teaching method has also changed from explanatory to diversified teaching methods such as exploratory, cooperative and gamified. In the teaching process, teachers should not only be the microphones of knowledge, but also be the organizers and guides of teaching. It is necessary to create a learning environment with a sense of real situation to help students achieve comprehensive development in skills, cognition, emotion and other aspects (Wibowo et al., 2023). It can be seen that the main difference between the two teaching modes is that the former teaches with the goal of mastering skills and standardization, while the latter teaches with the purpose of improving comprehensive literacy and promoting development.

Teaching Paradigm: Teacher-led Control and Student-cantered Growth

Currently, most traditional physical education classes in China are centred around the teacher. In the classroom, it is mostly the teacher who gives explanations and demonstrations, organizes collective practice for the entire class, and the main evaluation criterion is whether the students have reached a certain

standard. This teaching model has good organization and operability in large-class settings, but it also has situations where students lack an active participation mindset, a spirit of exploration, and an experience of physical exercise. In terms of foreign sports teaching concepts, there is a gradual shift towards a student-centred ideology, with an increasing emphasis on the use of diverse teaching forms such as inquiry-based, cooperative, and gamified approaches. In this process, the teacher is not merely a transmitter of knowledge but more of an organizer and guide, using an immersive learning environment to promote the all-round development of students' various skills, cognition, and emotions (Wibowo et al., 2023). Thus, the main difference between the two teaching orientations is that the former is oriented towards skill acquisition and standards, while the latter is oriented towards comprehensive literacy and aims at development. When promoting the reform of physical education teaching, China can, while ensuring classroom order and teaching quality, provide certain support for students' autonomous learning and exploration, thereby increasing their classroom participation and learning effectiveness.

Teacher Training: Specialized Skills-based Talents and Comprehensive Education Talents

The training of Chinese sports teachers is mainly conducted in normal universities, focusing on the training of sports skills and basic teaching methods. The system is complete and the training scale is large, which can well meet the needs of the popularization of basic education. However, there are also some shortcomings, such as narrow knowledge structure, lack of interdisciplinary ability, short education internship time, single on-the-job training content, and imbalance in urban-rural development (Li & He, 2025). The training of foreign teachers places greater emphasis on comprehensive educational abilities and interdisciplinary learning, and generally adopts dual major training, long-term internships, and dual-mentor guidance to improve the overall educational level of teachers (Jia, 2024; Wang, 2023). From the comparison, it can be seen that the education of Chinese physical education teachers should follow the development path of "integration of general and specialized education", emphasizing the practical teaching, and continuously enhancing the comprehensive professional capabilities of physical education teachers.

Evaluation System: Quantitative Summative Evaluation and Developmental Multi-dimensional Evaluation

China's sports evaluation is mainly based on standardized physical tests and skill assessment. The indicators are clear and easy to quantify. However, at the same time, it is easy to cause test-based sports and ignore the development of non-intellectual factors such as the learning process and the degree of individual progress. The evaluation subject is single and the evaluation lacks process, which plays a negative role in the overall evaluation (Mao, 2025).

Foreign sports evaluation no longer focuses on competitive results, but focuses on improving students' sports literacy and lifelong sports habits. The specific implementation method will generally use multi-dimensional indicators, multiple evaluation subjects and qualitative records to meet the needs of every student's sports development (Bailey et al., 2024).

Existing studies generally believe that the reform of the evaluation system should achieve three transformations: first, we should not only look at the final results, and pay attention to the process and results; second, we should not use unified standards to measure everyone, but pay attention to the progress of individuals; third, we should not rely on teachers alone to make the final say, and we should involve many parties.

IV. RESEARCH MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Materials

Research data originates from three categories of authoritative literature: First, policy documents, including physical education policies, curriculum standards and official schemes issued by the Ministry of Education of China and educational authorities of the United States, the United Kingdom, Japan and Australia. Second, academic publications, covering core journal articles, monographs and research reports from 2023 to 2026 concerning physical education development, curriculum construction, teaching modes, faculty development and evaluation mechanisms. Third, international frontier research achievements on sports literacy, school-based curriculum development and student-centred teaching models.

Research Methods

Literature Analysis Method

This study collects, organizes and interprets official policies and academic literature to clarify developmental logics, structural characteristics and practical dilemmas of Chinese and foreign physical education systems, and summarizes mainstream viewpoints and developmental trends.

Comparative Research Method

Horizontal comparisons are conducted between China and developed countries including the US, UK, Japan and Australia from developmental logic, curriculum design, teaching modes, teacher training and evaluation mechanism. This paper analyzes divergent characteristics and institutional causes, and extracts beneficial international experience.

Logical Induction and Theoretical Analysis Method

On the basis of literature sorting and comparative analysis, this study summarizes strengths and weaknesses of various physical education models via logical induction, explores underlying causes of structural differences, and provides theoretical support for the modernization of China's physical education.

V. RESULTS

Development Logic

China's physical education follows a top-down policy-driven approach. At the national level, there is unified planning and coordinated implementation of physical education, focusing on popular and guaranteed sports programs. Its advantage is that it allows for coordinated development of physical education across

regions, ensuring that every student receives basic physical education and meets basic physical fitness requirements. However, it lacks flexibility in teaching, does not fully integrate social resources, and cannot truly meet the diverse needs of each student.

International physical education development often begins with a bottom-up approach, primarily based on school self-management, emphasizing student self-development, highlighting home-school collaboration and multi-party participation, mobilizing all forces to create better conditions for students' individual development. However, this model is heavily reliant on regional resources, and its implementation effectiveness varies across regions. Economically underdeveloped areas with low population quality cannot achieve balanced development of physical education due to resource mismatches.

Curriculum Structure

China's physical education curriculum implements a unified curriculum structure, and the core is mainly sports skills, knowledge teach and physical training. The curriculum objectives are clear, the curriculum structure is clear, and the implementation process is clear, which is convenient for schools to organize teaching in a unified manner. However, the course content lacks diversity, the curriculum of each section is not closely connected, and there is a lack of interdisciplinary integration, which cannot cultivate students' comprehensive physical literacy well.

The international sports curriculum takes the improvement of sports quality as the fundamental task, and attaches importance to the development of school-based courses. Students independently design teaching content, highlight the main position of students, and promote students' personalized development. However, in the absence of unified quality evaluation standards, it is easy to have uneven teaching quality in the process of teaching implementation.

Teaching mode

Physical education in China is mainly based on Large class teaching, focusing on teaching sports skills and techniques. The teaching efficiency of the collective teaching model is high, which can quickly enable students to master the basic sports knowledge and methods. The classroom atmosphere of this teaching method is relatively single, which cannot mobilize students' enthusiasm well, so that students' sense of classroom experience and participation is insufficient.

International physical education is student-centred and pays attention to cultivating students' independent learning ability. It adopts exploratory and experiential teaching, and uses game-based and project-oriented teaching methods to fully mobilize students' learning initiative and participation. However, this teaching model has high requirements for class size and teachers' teaching ability, and cannot be applied to a teaching environment with a large number of people.

Teacher Training System

China's physical education teacher training focuses on professional skills and has formed a large-scale training system that can meet the needs of basic physical education teaching. However, the knowledge structure of the teaching staff is relatively singular, lacking the development of interdisciplinary

teaching and comprehensive education abilities, which cannot meet the requirements of current competency-oriented physical education teaching.

In contrast, foreign countries place greater emphasis on the cultivation of comprehensive abilities when training physical education teachers, namely the integration of interdisciplinary knowledge and the improvement of practical skills, using systematic training and practice to improve the overall teaching level of teachers. However, this training model is costly, and due to the current state of teacher training in my country, its full-scale promotion requires a gradual process.

Assessment and Evaluation Mechanism

China's physical education evaluation prioritizes quantitative assessment represented by fitness tests and skill qualification. Objective and quantifiable results facilitate school management and performance accountability. Nevertheless, single evaluation criteria ignore individual differences, and fail to assess students' sports emotion, participation attitude and social skills comprehensively.

International physical education emphasizes formative and comprehensive evaluation, adopting integrated assessment approaches to promote holistic student development. However, such complex evaluation systems place heavy administrative burdens on schools and require high professional evaluation capacity from teachers.

VI. RESEARCH LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

Research Limitations

This study merely adopts literature review and comparative analysis without large-scale field investigation and empirical data collection, leading to deficiencies in micro-practical analysis. Research conclusions mainly rely on existing theoretical literature with inherent limitations awaiting further verification.

In addition, comparative objects are restricted to developed countries without cross-research between developed and developing nations, failing to elaborate physical education characteristics at different developmental stages. Furthermore, macro-systematic comparison overshadows in-depth analysis of stage-specific and school-specific practical teaching, with insufficient integration between theoretical research and frontline instructional practice.

Future Research Directions

Future research can focus on the following aspects: First, expanding the scope of international comparisons to include countries with different levels of economic development and national conditions to improve the universality of research conclusions; second, increasing empirical research by using methods such as field surveys and statistical analysis to obtain first-hand teaching data, thereby improving the authenticity and effectiveness of the research; third, concentrating efforts on researching specific reform measures, conducting longitudinal tracking, and exploring the effectiveness of various reform measures and the problems encountered; fourth, strengthening research on collaborative education among families, schools, and communities, improving collaborative mechanisms, and

promoting the comprehensive development of physical education.

VII. CONCLUSION

This article makes a systematic comparative analysis of the Chinese and foreign physical education system from five aspects: development logic, curriculum setting, teaching paradigm, teacher training and evaluation mechanism. After comparative research, it is learned that China's physical education system is sound, with large coverage and strong guarantee, which can ensure that every student's sports rights can be exercised. However, there are obvious shortcomings in the comprehensiveness of personalized training, diversified curriculum research and development and evaluation. Foreign physical education places more importance on the main position of students in the classroom and the improvement of comprehensive literacy.

VIII. SUGGESTION

To promote the high-quality development of physical education in China, we should rely on China's national conditions. On the basis of ensuring the advantages of China's physical education teaching system, drawing on international advanced experience and practices, we will optimize the curriculum system, innovate the teaching mode, strengthen the construction of teachers, improve the evaluation mechanism, break the intractable diseases such as "skills, neglecting literacy" and "unity and personality", and transform physical education from "skill orientation". For "literacy orientation". In the future, China's physical education reform should adhere to the educational idea of "health first" and maintain the educational purpose of "lifelong sports" without wavering. Continuously improve the curriculum system, change the teaching method, strengthen the construction of teachers, improve the evaluation system, promote the model of joint education between home, school and society, closely combine physical education with the comprehensive development of students, cultivate students' lifelong exercise habits, improve the national sports literacy, and promote physical education towards modernization, comprehensive.

REFERENCES

- Bailey, R., & Macdonald, D. (2024). International perspectives on physical education curricula: A systematic review. *Sport, Education and Society*, 29(2), 187–203.
- Bu, Y. F., Qian, J., Wang, X. T., & Li, Y. (2025). Differences in thinking paradigms between Chinese and French football training models and paths to integration. *Journal of Shanghai University of Sport*, 49(10), 66–78.
- Chen, Q., & Tian, S. P. (2025). A comparative study of physical education governance models between China and foreign countries. *Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical Education*, 59(4), 72–79.
- Ji, L. (2025). Deepening directions of physical education and health curriculum reform in the new era in China. *China Sport Science*, 45(1), 3–12.

- Ji, L., & Yin, H. C. (2025). The theoretical connotation and practical path of “cultivating virtue through physical education”. *China Sport Science*, 45(3), 12–20.
- Jia, M. X. (2024). International experience and implications for core curriculum design of PE majors in China. *Journal of Shanghai University of Sport*, 48(2), 45–54.
- Li, Y. L., & Zhang, C. (2025). Institutional logic and educational goals: A comparison of school physical education development models between China and abroad. *Journal of Beijing Sport University*, 48(3), 98–106.
- Li, C. B., & He, K. (2025). Research themes, paradigm shifts and future directions of pre-service PE teachers’ professional competence. *Journal of Beijing Sport University*, 48(12), 112–120.
- Liu, Y. (2024). Operational logic, effects and optimization of policy-dominated physical education models. *Journal of Wuhan Institute of Physical Education*, 58(5), 89–96.
- Ma, J., & Wang, H. Z. (2025). The global trend of physical education transformation and China’s reform orientation. *Journal of Sports Research*, 39(2), 1–8.
- Mao, Z. M. (2025). Theoretical construction and practical paths for the modernization of physical education with Chinese characteristics. *Journal of Beijing Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, (2), 135–144.
- Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China. (2025). *Opinions on implementing the student physical fitness enhancement program*.
- Park, S., & Lee, J. (2024). Lifelong physical activity policies and school physical education in East Asia. *International Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 19(4), 567–582.
- Wang, H. Z. (2023). Operational mechanisms and implications of school-based physical education in the United States. *China Sport Science*, 43(7), 45–54.
- Wang, X. Z. (2025). New reforms of school physical education from a global perspective. *Journal of Sports Research*, 39(6), 1–8.
- Whitehead, M. E., & Durden-Myers, E. J. (2025). *Physical literacy: From philosophy to practice* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Wibowo, J., Krieger, C., Gaum, C., & Kuhn, T. (2023). Bildung: A German student-centred approach to health and physical education. *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, 42(3), 345–354.
- Yi, J., Wu, X. H., Song, Y. J., & Hu, Y. (2025). International comparison of physical literacy in basic education: Policies and assessments. *China Sport Science*, 45(8), 23–32.
- Xiong, X. Z., & Zhang, L. L. (2024). A comparison of value orientations between Chinese and Western physical education from a cultural perspective. *China Sport Science*, 44(4), 23–31.
- Zhang, Y. M., & Wang, Z. Z. (2025). International trends in physical education development and China’s reform pathways. *Chinese School Physical Education*, (1), 8–13.
- Zhou, A. G. (2023). Commonalities and divergences in the global transformation of PE from skill-oriented to literacy-oriented. *Journal of Sports Research*, 37(6), 1–9.
- Zhou, A. G., & Zhang, L. L. (2025). Cultural genes and institutional logic: Deep reasons for the divergence of physical education paths between China and foreign countries. *Journal of Sports Humanities and Sociology*, 31(1), 34–41.