

Original Paper

The Evolution of Scholarship and Paradigm Shifts in China's Long-March Research (2011-2025): A Bibliometric Analysis Using VOSviewer and CiteSpace

Mijia Chen, Wenjun Lu & Linda Zhang

Hangzhou Dianzi University Information Engineering College, Hangzhou, Zhejiang, China
+86 13777361582, comic0622@163.com

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Abstract

Drawing on bibliometric records of Long March-related scholarly articles indexed in the CNKI database from 2011 to 2025, this paper identifies a three-stage developmental trajectory, demarcated by the pivotal years 2016 and 2021. Employing VOSviewer and CiteSpace for co-occurrence and co-citation analyses, we construct a comprehensive visual mapping of the knowledge structure and thematic contours characterizing this body of research. Empirical analyses generate three salient observations on Long-March-related scholarship. First, it features a distinct two-tiered intellectual structure: foundational canonical historical themes (e.g., Mao, the Zunyi Conference) dominated research in 2011-2015, while contemporary agendas such as the Long March National Cultural Park and rural revitalization prevailed during 2021-2025. Second, the field has undergone a paradigmatic shift from historical textual criticism and archival compilation toward policy exegesis and applied inquiry, moving from discipline-driven historical scholarship to applied and cultural-communication-oriented research. Third, journals display functional stratification: core outlets prioritize theoretical elaboration and historical contextual reconstruction, whereas non-core journals mainly publish practice-centered and pedagogy-focused studies on Long March culture. This study clarifies the evolutionary logic and disciplinary layout of Long March research, provides theoretical reference and practical implications for the innovative inheritance and international cross-cultural communication of Chinese Red Culture.

Keywords

Long March, Long March Spirit, Red Culture Communication, Bibliometric Analysis, VOSviewer, CiteSpace

1. Introduction

The Chinese Healthy Physical Education Curriculum Model was proposed by Professor Ji Liu of East China Normal University after long-term theoretical research and practical exploration. This model explicitly outlines the characteristics that physical education classroom teaching should possess based on the “Compulsory Education Physical Education and Health Curriculum Standards (2011 Edition)” and the “General High School Physical Education and Health Curriculum Standards (2017 Edition)”, abbreviated as “Curriculum Standards”. It also describes the objectives to be achieved and the development of students to be realized, serving as a vessel for the national “Curriculum Standards” to be implemented in physical education classroom practices. For decades, physical education has been the cornerstone for the holistic development of children, offering benefits not only physically but also socially, cognitively, and emotionally. As a rapidly developing nation, China has recognized the importance of nurturing a healthy and comprehensively developed next generation. The Chinese Healthy Physical Education Curriculum Model is a testament to this commitment, aiming to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of physical health, nutrition, and overall well-being. This model bridges traditional physical education teaching with modern health principles, promoting a balanced lifestyle. Although China’s HPE curriculum model is progressive, challenges persist in ensuring its effective implementation across diverse educational settings. Differences in resources, teacher training, and even student receptivity to the curriculum exist. How can educators ensure the intentions of the HPE curriculum are realized in the classroom? This study seeks to delve into this issue by proposing a robust implementation strategy.

This study aims to devise effective implementation strategies for China’s HPE curriculum within classroom settings. It analyzes the history and current state of physical education in China; understands the fundamental principles and objectives of the HPE curriculum; proposes teaching strategies suitable for HPE classes; and provides insights into the role and training of educators in ensuring the success of the curriculum. The research stands at the crossroads of education and health, seeking to make a tangible impact on students’ perceptions and engagement in physical health. For educators, this study serves as a guide, offering tested strategies for classroom instruction. Policymakers can benefit from insights into the current state of HPE implementation, making informed decisions in resource allocation and teacher training. Furthermore, this research lays the groundwork for subsequent studies, fostering ongoing dialogue on the evolution and enhancement of HPE in China.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Historical Development of Physical Education in China

Physical education is a unique cultural phenomenon in human society, “a socio-cultural form created by humans based on their own needs. It exists in the cultural patterns of every specific era or ethnicity, adjusting its content and structure with the changing demands in human society and transforming its own functions.” Traditional Chinese sports activities, such as martial arts, have long been rooted in the

country's cultural structure. Historically, these activities served not only as physical exercises but also as mediums for moral education, discipline, and spiritual growth. Confucian emphasis on a balanced life paved the way for the integration of sports activities into daily life. With the modernization and globalization of the 20th and 21st centuries, China's education system underwent significant changes. Physical education transitioned from primarily traditional forms to more standardized and globalized sports, reflecting both Western influences and the evolving needs of a changing society.

2.2 Principles and Framework of the Healthy Physical Education Curriculum Model

The Chinese Healthy Physical Education Curriculum Model distinctly points out the three key aspects of physical education: "exercise load, physical fitness training, and sports skills". China's HPE curriculum is grounded in holistic development, focusing not only on physical attributes but also on understanding health, nutrition, and well-being. Introduced in the 21st century, the HPE curriculum aims to address modern challenges, such as sedentary lifestyles, dietary issues, and the importance of mental health. Various researchers and educators have outlined the core components of HPE, typically including sports skills, basic health knowledge, awareness of mental health, and understanding one's body.

2.3 Previous Implementation Strategies

Different provinces and schools in China have adopted various strategies to promote the HPE curriculum. Some schools have integrated technology, utilizing apps and online platforms for health tracking and guidance. Others have emphasized a teacher-centric model, focusing on reinforcing educational training. A critical analysis of past strategies has revealed a series of successes and challenges. Some models have shown promising results in urban settings but struggled in rural environments, highlighting the need for adaptive and localized strategies.

2.4 Theoretical Foundation of Physical Education

Educational theories consistently influence the method of teaching disciplines, and physical education is no exception. For instance, sports pedagogy emphasizes a "student-centered" curriculum model, suggesting: 1) Providing students with authentic opportunities to learn sports; 2) Increasing the chances for students to learn sports in a concise, compact manner; 3) Making students' experiences more relevant and important. Constructivist theory advocates an active learning process where students construct knowledge through experience, aligning with the hands-on nature of sports lessons. Other theories, like kinesthetic learning, emphasize the significance of movement in learning, suggesting activities involving physical movement can enhance cognitive processes. These theories underscore the intrinsic value of physical education beyond just health benefits.

3. Implementation Strategies for China's HPE

3.1 Situational Analysis

China's physical education currently presents a landscape of both opportunities and challenges. Rapid urbanization, technological advancements, and a growing health consciousness create a conducive environment for the modern HPE's implementation. Conversely, resource disparities, especially between

urban and rural areas, and traditional beliefs can sometimes hinder the consistent application of HPE concepts.

3.2 Strategy Formulation

Technological Integration: Tools like fitness apps, virtual reality sports simulations, and online health modules can make HPE more appealing and measurable. City schools with advanced technological infrastructure can explore such integrations.

Teacher Training Programs: Regular workshops and training sessions should be conducted focusing on innovative teaching methods, understanding health and wellness concepts, and effective classroom management in real-life scenarios.

Localized Curriculum Adjustments: While the core of HPE remains consistent, regional adjustments reflecting local sports, health practices, and cultural differences should be considered.

Peer Learning: Encourage older students or those proficient in particular sports or health concepts to guide their peers, fostering a culture of collaborative learning.

Community Involvement: Engage local health experts, sports personalities, and community leaders in seminars, discussions, and interactive sessions. This not only adds a layer of authenticity but also strengthens community ties.

3.3 Roles of Teachers and Administrators

Teachers: They are pivotal for the successful implementation of HPE, transitioning from traditional teaching roles to facilitators and guides. Their training should emphasize a balance of athletic skills and understanding holistic health concepts.

Administrators: They play a vital role in resource allocation, ensuring teacher training, and integrating feedback mechanisms. Their leadership is crucial in setting the tone for the significance of HPE in a broader school curriculum.

3.4 Feedback Mechanisms

Regular Assessments: Periodic testing and evaluation of students not only on physical abilities but also on their understanding of health and wellness concepts.

Feedback Loop: Establish platforms for teachers, students, and parents to provide feedback on curriculum efficacy, challenges faced, and areas needing improvement.

External Audits: Engage third-party educational experts to evaluate the effectiveness of the HPE program and suggest improvements.

Reflective Sessions: End-of-term discussions with educators about what strategies were effective, which weren't, and plans for future action.

4. Theoretical Analysis of HPE Classroom Teaching

4.1 Instructional Framework

HPE teaching extends beyond imparting skills or knowledge; it cultivates a mindset. Theoretical foundations like constructivism and kinesthetic learning become crucial. In the constructivist model,

learning becomes an active, contextual process where students build their understanding through experience. In HPE, this might mean understanding a sport's mechanics through participation or grasping nutritional concepts by planning a meal.

4.2 Constructivist Learning in Sports Teaching

Active Learning: In HPE classrooms, students are not passive recipients but actively participate, experiment, and learn from their experiences.

Situational Learning: Lessons are most effective when taught contextually. For instance, long-distance running not only illustrates the importance of endurance but provides a tangible understanding of it.

Reflective Practices: After activities, encourage students to reflect on their experiences, connecting practical skills with theoretical knowledge, understanding their strengths, and areas needing improvement.

4.3 Incorporation of Health and Wellness Concepts

Beyond physical activities, China's HPE classrooms are also emphasizing holistic health. This is based on a holistic education theory focusing on developing an individual's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative, and spiritual potential. **Psychological and Emotional Health:** Topics like stress management, mindfulness, and emotional regulation are becoming as essential as traditional sports or fitness activities. **Nutritional Knowledge:** Understanding nutrition has become crucial as dietary and health consciousness rises. Here, experiential learning theory comes into play, where students might engage in activities like meal planning or understanding food labels.

4.4 Evaluation and Assessment Techniques

Traditional sports evaluations usually focus on skills – how fast a student can run, or their performance in a particular sport. However, contemporary educational theories suggest the need for a more holistic evaluation. **Formative Assessments:** Continuous evaluations like peer reviews during activities, teacher observations, and self-reflection. **Summative Assessments:** End-of-term tests or projects might include physical demonstrations, written tests on health concepts, or even group projects on community health themes. **Portfolio-based Assessments:** Over time, students compile their achievements, reflections, and learnings from HPE into a portfolio. This comprehensive record of their journey can be rooted in authentic assessment theories.

5. Discussion

The evolution of China's HPE curriculum reflects a shift towards holistic health, encompassing not just physical but also mental and emotional health. The integration of modern educational theories into HPE, especially constructivism and experiential learning, has yielded positive outcomes in terms of student engagement and understanding. While technological integration, particularly in urban settings, has reignited student interest, it also brings challenges, including costs and potential over-reliance on gadgets rather than genuine physical activities. Community partnerships, especially in rural settings, offer dual benefits of reinforcing the curriculum and strengthening community ties. However, balancing traditional

local wisdom with a structured curriculum might be challenging. Peer teaching emerges as a promising strategy to enhance student leadership skills but requires rigorous oversight and structure to be effective. Schools considering technological integrations into HPE should proceed with caution, ensuring a harmonious blend of technology-driven and traditional physical activities. Community partnerships should be promoted, but with a structured framework to ensure alignment with broader HPE objectives. Periodic teacher training is paramount, especially when introducing new methods or tools, ensuring educators can effectively guide students. Institutionalized feedback mechanisms, both internal (from students and educators) and external (from experts or community members), should be established to continually refine the curriculum.

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