



The Influence of Sino Japanese University PE on Students' Overall Competence: A Sports Management Based Comparison

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How to cite this paper: Xu, Q.Y. and Liu, C.Z. (2025) The Influence of Sino Japanese University PE on Students' Overall Competence: A Sports Management Based Comparison. *Open Access Library Journal*, 12: e13286.

<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1113286>

Received: March 17, 2025

Accepted: April 13, 2025

Published: April 16, 2025

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Abstract

This study focuses on the significant disparities in physical fitness between Chinese and Japanese university students, exploring how Japan's successful higher education sports system can be leveraged to improve the physical fitness and sportsmanship of Chinese students. From the perspective of sports management, the study systematically and comprehensively analyzes the main differences in the sports education systems of China and Japan, identifying key factors that impact students' overall development. Chinese students are found to lag behind their Japanese counterparts in various dimensions of physical fitness, including endurance, strength, and flexibility. Japan's sports education system stands out in aspects such as curriculum design, teaching methods, competition organization, and sports facility management. By examining these differences in depth, the study aims to uncover both strengths and weaknesses. The primary objective is to propose a series of feasible improvement strategies, including optimizing sports curricula, innovating teaching methods, and refining sports competition mechanisms, to foster comprehensive and balanced development in Chinese university students' physical fitness, sportsmanship, and overall competency. This research aims to contribute to the cultivation of high-quality talents capable of meeting the demands of the new era.

Subject Areas

Physical Education

Keywords

Chinese and Japanese University Sports Education, Sports Management, Physical Fitness, Sportsmanship, Overall Competency

1. Introduction

Physical fitness plays a crucial role in students' overall development, yet Chinese university students lag behind their Japanese counterparts in endurance, strength, and flexibility. This study compares the sports education systems of China and Japan, analyzing differences in curriculum design, teaching methods, and sports culture. Using Comparative Education Theory and Ecological Systems Theory, the research identifies key areas for improvement in China's sports education. By adopting Japan's successful practices, such as personalized training and stronger extracurricular engagement, Chinese universities can enhance students' physical fitness, sportsmanship, and overall competency, fostering well-rounded talents for the modern era.

2. Theoretical Framework and Research Methods

In this study, Comparative Education Theory and Ecological Systems Theory form the core theoretical framework. Comparative Education Theory enables a systematic analysis of the curriculum, management models, and cultural foundations of sports education in China and Japan. For instance, Japanese universities emphasize diverse sports options, while Chinese institutions are expanding emerging programs. This comparative approach helps identify strengths and areas for improvement in enhancing students' physical fitness.

Ecological Systems Theory provides a macro perspective, examining the interactions among policymakers, institutional environments, educators, and students. Policy decisions shape resource distribution, infrastructure influences participation, and teaching methods impact skill development. Students, as central participants, contribute through their engagement and physical attributes. This framework helps assess how different environments shape sports education outcomes.

Methodologically, this study integrates literature analysis and semi-structured interviews. A review of academic articles and policy documents offers macro-level insights. Additionally, 20 purposefully selected participants—10 sports education experts and 10 university administrators—were interviewed. Experts were chosen based on research contributions, while administrators provided institutional perspectives. Data were analyzed using thematic coding and comparative analysis, ensuring rigor through triangulation. This approach enhances validity and provides practical insights into optimizing university sports education in China.

3. Comparison of the Sports Education Systems in China and Japan

1) Sports Curriculum Design and Management Model

Chinese universities primarily focus on fundamental physical fitness through traditional sports like basketball, badminton, and table tennis. The curriculum is rigid, with theoretical and practical components, and physical education credits are mandatory for graduation [1]. The management of sports education is largely centralized within physical education departments, limiting the scope for extra-

curricular engagement. In contrast, Japanese universities offer a more flexible sports curriculum, combining traditional sports with interdisciplinary subjects such as sports science and health management. The emphasis on practical engagement and student choice in activities promotes greater autonomy, allowing students to pursue sports aligned with their interests [2]. This difference is rooted in cultural values: China's education system tends to prioritize academics, while Japan's philosophy of "lifelong sports" emphasizes sports as integral to personal and professional development.

2) Sports Facilities and Resource Distribution

Chinese universities show significant disparities in sports facilities. While top-tier institutions like Peking University have advanced infrastructure, regional universities often face limitations in resource allocation [3]. This disparity in sports facilities is influenced by the uneven distribution of financial resources. In contrast, Japanese universities generally provide well-maintained and equally distributed sports facilities, with institutions like the University of Tokyo and Waseda University collaborating with local sports organizations to enhance resources [4]. The centralization of policymaking in China creates challenges in addressing this imbalance, yet offers opportunities for public-private partnerships to expand resource availability and improve access to quality facilities across the country.

3) Sports Culture and Student Participation

China's university sports culture is still developing, with low participation rates primarily driven by academic pressures. While universities like Tsinghua encourage involvement through large-scale sports events, daily engagement remains limited [1]. In contrast, Japan's club-based sports culture fosters active student participation through numerous student-run sports clubs [2]. At universities like Waseda, sports are viewed not as an obligation but as a social and academic activity, promoting extracurricular engagement. The cultural context significantly shapes these behaviors: in China, sports are often seen as secondary to academics, while Japan integrates sports into the student identity, creating a strong social bond through sports [5].

4) Comparative Case Study: Tsinghua University vs. Waseda University

Tsinghua University, representing China, excels in providing high-quality sports facilities and structured events. However, participation largely remains confined to official activities [6]. Waseda University, however, fosters a more inclusive sports culture, where students are encouraged to join a variety of clubs, integrating sports into daily life [2]. This contrast highlights the different educational philosophies: China's approach is centralized and policy-driven, focusing on mandatory participation, while Japan encourages self-motivated, social involvement through extracurricular sports clubs.

5) Challenges and Opportunities in Policy Implementation in China

In China, policy-driven reforms such as the "Healthy China 2030" initiative aim to improve sports infrastructure, but challenges persist, particularly in balancing academic demands with sports participation. While elite universities boast excel-

lent facilities, regional disparities in resources remain a barrier to universal access. The centralization of policymaking also hinders the equitable distribution of resources. However, opportunities exist in public-private partnerships and regional sports funding to improve access. Furthermore, shifting cultural attitudes toward sports can encourage a more holistic approach to student development, where sports become integrated into academic life rather than an extracurricular obligation. This would require both policy adjustments and cultural changes to foster a more inclusive, participatory sports environment across Chinese universities.

4. Impact on Students' Overall Development

1) Physical Fitness Improvement

Physical education plays a critical role in enhancing students' physical fitness. Japanese universities, such as the University of Tokyo and Waseda University, emphasize physical assessments and personalized training plans in their sports curriculum, significantly improving students' physical fitness [7]. In contrast, Chinese universities mostly rely on traditional group exercises and basic sports activities, lacking targeted and personalized training plans. Surveys show that Japanese university students outperform their Chinese counterparts in endurance, flexibility, and cardiovascular function [8]. This difference indicates that while Chinese universities are improving sports facilities and curriculum design, they need more scientific and personalized training plans to boost students' physical fitness. Chinese universities should break away from traditional sports education models and learn from Japan's advanced practices by introducing scientific physical assessments and personalized guidance to enhance overall fitness.

2) Teamwork and Leadership Development

Sports activities also play a key role in developing teamwork and leadership skills. Japanese universities place great emphasis on team sports, such as rugby and baseball, where teamwork training helps students improve their leadership and communication abilities [6]. For example, the rugby team at Waseda University has produced many students with strong teamwork and leadership skills, which are beneficial not only in sports but also in their professional careers. In contrast, although some team sports are offered in Chinese universities, there is still a gap in developing students' teamwork and leadership skills. Research indicates that Japanese students who participate in team sports score 15% higher in teamwork evaluations compared to Chinese students [9]. Chinese universities need to strengthen team sports offerings and promote extracurricular activities and intramural teams to enhance students' teamwork and leadership skills.

3) Mental Health and Social Skills Development

Sports activities not only improve physical fitness but also positively impact students' mental health and social skills. Japanese universities offer counseling and sports psychology courses, helping students cope with academic pressure and improve emotional management [10]. For example, the University of Tokyo provides regular psychological counseling and sports psychology courses to help students

manage stress and anxiety. Data shows that Japanese university students have 20% lower anxiety levels compared to their Chinese counterparts [11]. This gap highlights Japan's efforts to integrate mental health education with physical activities, an area that Chinese universities could benefit from. Chinese universities should focus more on students' mental health and provide social platforms through sports activities to help alleviate academic stress and enhance social skills.

5. Conclusion

There are significant differences between the sports education systems of Chinese and Japanese universities, particularly in curriculum design, personalized training, teamwork and leadership development, and mental health support. Japanese universities use scientific physical assessments and personalized training plans that not only enhance students' physical fitness but also focus on team sports and mental health education, fostering leadership and communication skills while reducing academic pressure. In comparison, Chinese universities still have shortcomings, especially in personalized training, teamwork development, and integrating mental health with sports activities. Thus, learning from Japan's advanced practices, particularly strengthening personalized training, increasing team sports, and combining mental health with physical activities, is crucial for improving the quality of sports education in Chinese universities and enhancing students' overall development.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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