



Research on the Professional Development of Rural Physical Education Teachers

Yibin Zhao*

City University Malaysia, Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia

*1561388202@qq.com

Abstract. Against the background of Rural Revitalization and the integration of sports and education, rural physical education (PE) teachers are the core force of rural sports education. Their professional development is directly related to the physical and mental health of rural youth, educational equity, and rural cultural inheritance. This study analyzes the current situation, challenges, and importance of rural PE teachers' professional development, proposes targeted strategies and policy support paths, and verifies the feasibility through typical cases. Finally, it looks forward to the future development trend, aiming to provide theoretical and practical reference for promoting the high-quality development of rural PE teachers and narrowing the urban-rural sports education gap.

Keywords: rural physical education teachers; professional development; strategy; policy support; practical cases

1 Introduction

With the deepening of the Rural Revitalization Strategy and the full implementation of the sports-education integration policy, rural PE education has become an important part of basic education. Rural PE teachers, as the direct implementers of rural sports education, their professional competence level determines the quality of rural PE teaching and the realization of educational equity. In recent years, supported by national policies such as the Special Post Teacher Plan and rural teacher training programs, certain progress has been made in the professional development of rural PE teachers. However, constrained by factors such as unbalanced resource allocation, backward development concepts, and insufficient support mechanisms, they still face prominent dilemmas such as irrational team structure, weak professional competence, and imperfect support systems [1]. Therefore, exploring the path of rural PE teachers' professional development is of great practical significance for improving rural PE quality, empowering rural revitalization, and building a sports power.

2 Current Situation and Challenges of Rural PE Teachers' Professional Development

2.1 Basic Current Situation

Teacher Team Structure.

The team structure is gradually optimized but still has shortcomings: the age structure tends to be younger due to the special post teacher policy, but remote areas still face aging and brain drain [2]; the educational level is steadily improved, but the proportion of bachelor's degree or above is lower than that of urban teachers, and a large number of rural schools rely on part-time PE teachers without systematic professional training; the gender imbalance is prominent, with male teachers dominating, affecting the diversity of PE content [1].

Professional Competence.

Rural PE teachers have solid basic teaching skills and are good at organizing classroom teaching according to rural venue conditions, and some have innovated characteristic teaching models by integrating local resources. However, there are obvious shortcomings: insufficient reserve of emerging sports knowledge and digital teaching capabilities; weak teaching design, evaluation, and research capabilities (less than 10% of teachers publish papers or participate in research projects annually, far below the rate among urban PE teachers) [3]; Homogenized professional skills, primarily focused on track and field, with insufficient ability to teach ball games, traditional ethnic sports, and similar activities.

Professional Development Support System.

A preliminary support system has been established but is not perfect: training resources are inclined to suburban rural areas, with theoretical and outdated content, and the annual average training sessions for rural PE teachers are far lower than those for urban teachers; sports facilities and equipment are deficient, and the proportion of PE funding in the total education budget is low; the salary and treatment are low, the professional title promotion channel is blocked, and the proportion of senior titles is significantly lower than that of academic subject teachers.

2.2 Core Challenges

Unbalanced professional competence: Gaps in digital literacy, homogenized professional skills, and weak research capabilities restrict the improvement of teaching quality.

Mismatched training supply and demand: Training content is disconnected from rural reality, the format is rigid, and the work-study conflict is prominent.

Insufficient resource support: Shortages of hardware (simple venues, lack of equipment), software (scarce teaching and research resources, low utilization rate of online platforms), and funds (insufficient professional development funds) coexist.

Limited career development space: Low social recognition, unreasonable professional title evaluation standards, and prominent professional burnout lead to insufficient internal motivation for development.

Imperfect policy implementation: The "one-size-fits-all" policy lacks pertinence, the supporting measures are incomplete, and the multi-stakeholder collaborative mechanism is not formed.

Underdeveloped local resources: Weak awareness and ability to develop ethnic traditional sports and local venue resources, failing to form characteristic development paths.

3 Importance of Rural PE Teachers' Professional Development

3.1 Safeguard the Physical and Mental Health of Rural Students

The physical health compliance rate of rural adolescents is lower than that of urban adolescents. Professional PE teachers can design scientific teaching programs according to students' physical characteristics, cultivate their lifelong exercise habits, and alleviate the loneliness of left-behind children through sports activities.

3.2 Promote Urban-Rural Educational Equity

The gap in PE education between urban and rural areas is mainly due to the lagging professional development of rural PE teachers. Improving their professional competence can promote rural PE to transform from "skill teaching" to "literacy education", enrich teaching content, and narrow the quality gap with urban PE.

3.3 Empower Rural Revitalization

Professional PE teachers can integrate local sports culture (such as Miao bamboo pole dance, Yi wrestling) into teaching, preserve traditional culture, and drive the development of rural sports tourism. Organizing national fitness activities can optimize rural social governance and enhance community cohesion.

3.4 Implement the Sports-Education Integration Strategy

Rural PE teachers are the key to the grassroots implementation of sports-education integration. They can integrate PE with moral, intellectual, aesthetic, and labor education, and discover and cultivate rural sports reserve talents.

3.5 Promote Educational Equity and Consolidate the Foundation for Building a Leading Sporting Nation

The professional development of rural PE teachers can narrow the urban-rural gap in teacher competence, enabling rural youth to enjoy high-quality PE services. It also

elevates the overall standard of rural sports, consolidating the grassroots foundation for building a leading sporting nation [4].

4 Strategies for Rural PE Teachers' Professional Development

4.1 Improve Professional Competence in a Targeted Manner

Strengthen digital literacy training: Cooperate with universities and technology companies to carry out training on AI sports analysis and digital teaching tools, with annual training no less than 16 credit hours. Incorporate digital skills into teacher assessment.

Optimize specialized skill training: Provide training on ball games, traditional ethnic sports, etc., and carry out special training for part-time teachers on classroom organization and safety protection.

Cultivate teaching research capabilities: Establish a pairing assistance mechanism between rural PE teachers and university experts, guiding teachers to transform teaching problems into research topics [3]. Recognize outstanding teaching research achievements annually.

4.2 Optimize the Training System

Precisely match training needs: Increase the proportion of content related to rural reality (local resource development, simple equipment application) to no less than 40%.

Innovate training formats: Build a "online + offline" diversified training system, and establish a paired assistance mechanism between "Master Teacher Studios" and rural schools .

Improve the training effect transformation mechanism: Establish training records and follow-up guidance systems, and link training results to professional title evaluation [4].

4.3 Strengthen Resource Support

Improve hardware configuration: Ensure that PE funding accounts for no less than 8% of the total education budget, and encourage the use of local resources to make simple teaching aids.

Increase financial guarantee: Establish a special fund for professional development, with no less than 2,000 yuan per teacher per year.

Enrich software resources: Upgrade rural school network infrastructure, and increase the utilization rate of online teaching and research resources to no less than 60%.

4.4 Broaden Career Development Channels

Optimize professional title evaluation: Incorporate teaching performance, student physical health improvement, and local resource development into evaluation indicators.

Enhance social recognition: Publicize the exemplary deeds of rural PE teachers through the media.

Strengthen professional development guidance: Formulate personalized development plans for teachers of different ages and titles.

4.5 Build a Collaborative Support Mechanism

Improve policy pertinence: Local governments formulate special implementation plans according to regional differences.

Strengthen multi-stakeholder cooperation: Promote the pairing assistance between universities, urban high-quality schools and rural schools .

Improve teacher mobility mechanisms: Advance the county-managed school-employed system reform.

4.6 Develop Local Characteristic Resources

Enhance resource development awareness: Conduct special training to guide teachers to explore the educational value of local sports resources.

Improve resource development capabilities: Support teachers to transform local resources into school-based curricula.

Strengthen external guidance: Invite university experts and folk sports inheritors to guide the optimization of characteristic teaching content.

5 Policy Support and Practical Cases

5.1 Policy Support Framework

National Macro Policies.

The state has formed a multi-dimensional policy support system through the sports-education integration strategy, Rural Teacher Support Plan, education balanced development strategy, and national fitness strategy. For example, the 2024 "Opinions on Further Strengthening the Construction of Rural Primary and Secondary School PE Teacher Teams" clarifies the training requirements for digital literacy and local resource development capabilities [5]. The revised Rural Teacher Support Plan (2025-2030) proposes to increase the tilt towards rural PE teachers in special allowances and professional title evaluation [6]. The national fitness strategy also provides a broader platform for rural teachers to carry out work [7].

Local Implementation Practices.

Local governments have refined supporting policies: Binzhou, Shandong implemented the "direct evaluation and appointment" of professional titles for rural PE teachers [8]; Minquan, Henan established a special fund for professional development; Zhejiang improved the urban-rural teacher mobility mechanism [6].

Policy Implementation Effects and Optimization Suggestions.

The policy implementation has achieved initial results. The evaluation of high-quality balanced development of compulsory education has promoted the basic guarantee of rural PE [9]. However, there are still problems such as unbalanced regional implementation and insufficient pertinence. It is necessary to strengthen precise policy design, improve supporting measures, establish a normalized supervision mechanism, and unblock feedback channels.

5.2 Typical Practical Cases

Professional Title Reform in Binzhou, Shandong.

Binzhou implemented a direct evaluation policy for rural PE teachers: teachers with more than 10 years of service can apply for intermediate titles, and those with more than 30 years can apply for senior titles, focusing on evaluating teaching performance and local resource development [8]. After three years, a number of teachers were promoted to intermediate and senior titles, and the team turnover rate dropped significantly.

Digital Empowerment in Huaibei, Anhui.

Huaibei built a digital training platform, carried out special training on AI sports analysis and digital teaching tools, and established a "Famous Teacher Studio + Rural School" assistance mechanism. After three years, the digital literacy compliance rate of rural PE teachers and the utilization rate of online teaching and research resources increased significantly.

Local Resource Development in Liangshan, Sichuan.

Liangshan guided rural PE teachers to develop Yi traditional sports resources, compiled multiple sets of school-based curricula, and some were rated as provincial excellent. Teachers' professional competence and cultural inheritance ability were significantly improved. Research on school-based teaching in northern China also confirms the importance of local resource development.

6 Future Outlook

6.1 Digital Integration

AI technology and big data will be deeply integrated into teacher training and teaching practice, realizing personalized training and intelligent teaching research.

6.2 Collaborative Development

Build a "government-school-university-society-teacher" symbiotic ecology, strengthening inter-departmental linkage and social participation. Research reports provide data support for this [10, 11].

6.3 Characteristic Development

Deepen the integration of local and ethnic traditional sports resources with professional development, forming a distinctive development path of "culture inheritance + professional improvement".

6.4 Precise Policy Guarantee

Policies will develop towards differentiation and long-term effectiveness, focusing on the needs of different groups such as young teachers and part-time teachers [12].

6.5 Subjective Motivation Enhancement

Strengthen the cultivation of teachers' professional beliefs and internal motivation, promoting the transformation from "passive development" to "active development".

6.6 Integration of Teaching and Research

Improve teachers' scientific research capabilities, focusing on solving practical teaching problems .

7 Conclusion

The professional development of rural PE teachers is a systematic project involving multiple dimensions such as policy, resources, and individuals. Against the background of Rural Revitalization and sports-education integration, it is necessary to focus on core dilemmas and promote comprehensive improvement through targeted strategies. By learning from typical cases, rural PE teachers' professional development will move towards digitalization, collaboration, and characteristic development, providing solid talent support for rural education quality improvement, rural revitalization, and sports power construction.

References

1. Pan, T. T., & Cen, Y. X. (2020). Current situation and optimization strategies of rural PE teachers' professional development in China. *Journal of Beijing Sport University*, 43(7), 89-96.<https://m.fx361.com/news/2020/1123/12367255.html%5Breference:0%5D%5Breference:1%5D>

2. Wang, G. Y. (2023). Research on the current situation and countermeasures of rural PE teachers' professional development in Guizhou. *Journal of Guizhou Normal University (Natural Sciences Edition)*, 41(3), 98-104. <https://d.wanfangdata.com.cn/thesis/D03086303>[reference:3][reference:4]
3. Shu, Z., & Wang, H. (2018). Research on the teaching research capabilities of rural PE teachers in central China. *Journal of Physical Education*, 25(2), 78-84. https://edu.alljournals.cn/view_abstract.aspx?pcid=B5EDD921F3D863E289B22F36E70174A7007B5F5E43D63598017D41BB67247657&aid=0725B285E6A61AA6E3E75F08A9F9476E[reference:6][reference:7]
4. Guo, M., & Wang, J. (2014). Dilemmas and countermeasures for the professional development of rural PE teachers in underdeveloped areas. *Journal of Capital University of Physical Education and Sports*, 26(3), 256-260. <https://doi.org/10.15942/j.jcsu.2014.04.001%5Breference:10%5D%5Breference:11%5D>
5. General Administration of Sport of China, & Ministry of Education. (2024). Opinions on further strengthening the construction of rural primary and secondary school PE teacher teams [Policy brief]. General Administration of Sport of China, Ministry of Education. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>[reference:18] <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>[reference:18]
6. Ministry of Education. (2025). Rural teacher support plan (2025-2030) [Policy brief]. Ministry of Education. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>
7. General Administration of Sport of China. (2025). National fitness plan (2025-2030) [Policy brief]. General Administration of Sport of China. <https://www.sport.gov.cn/>
8. Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. (2025). Typical cases of rural teacher team construction [Case collection]. Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>
9. Ministry of Education. (2024). Evaluation standards for high-quality balanced development of compulsory education [Policy brief]. Ministry of Education. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>
10. National Sports Talent Development Research Center. (2025). Research report on the development of rural sports talent in China [Research report]. National Sports Talent Development Research Center. <https://www.sport.gov.cn/>
11. Yao Ming Foundation. (2025). Research report on the development of rural physical education in China [Research report]. Yao Ming Foundation. <https://www.yaomingfoundation.org/>
12. Ministry of Education. (2025). Notice on several measures for strengthening the construction of primary and secondary school PE teacher teams in the new era [Policy brief]. Ministry of Education. <http://www.moe.gov.cn/>

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 International License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>), which permits any noncommercial use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.

