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Social Media-Based Professional Development of Physical Education Teachers in China

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Abstract

In recent years, social media has played an important role in the professional development (PD) of physical education (PE) teachers (Jeffrey P. Carpenter & Stephen Harvey, 2020). There is a wealth of research on the professional development of PE teachers, but few relevant studies examined social media-based PDs. The purpose of this study was to specifically explore the research interests and changes in the PD of PE teachers in social media, and to explore the potential research space in this field. In this literature review, we followed three steps to conduct literature search. We used the following keywords: “social media”, OR “Wechat/Weibo”, AND “physical educators” or “PE teachers”, AND/OR “professional development” or “PD” for the literature search via the libraries resources of a large university in Shanghai, China. The search was limited to scholarly peer-reviewed journals. Then we cross-checked the bibliographies of the articles identified through direct library search to locate any missed articles. We next conducted direct searches in PubMed, Scilit, and ResearchGate with the same keywords. Inclusion criteria included: (a) the study must be from the perspective of social media; (b) the main results must involve teachers’ PD or related variables. A total of 56 highly relevant articles were retrieved and then saved to a data processing computer. The research team summarized and reported below several thematic findings. The main aspects of researches for social-media related PD of PE teachers were summarized including relevant concepts, connotation characteristics, theoretical basis, current development status, relevant factors, existing problems and corresponding strategies. The efficient communication and interaction as an important function of social media has attracted extensive attention and induced discussion in academic circles, where the topics mainly focus on the construction of identity, knowledge sharing, etc. Many related studies have continued examining the PD of individual teachers but are not specific to the reality of PE teacher groups, so the combination with the specific implementation of relevant theories on PE teacher groups needs more attention in related work. Social media can fill some of the gaps in PE teachers’ traditional PD community. It is necessary to conduct more comprehensive theoretical and empirical studies on social media-based PDs for PE teachers. The findings from this literature review shed light on the integration of resources needed to promote and thrive social media-based PD opportunities for PE teachers.