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journal or publication title	The bulletin of Faculty of Health and Sport Sciences
volume	42
page range	57-61
year	2019-03
URL	<a href="http://hdl.handle.net/2241/00154998">http://hdl.handle.net/2241/00154998</a>

## A comprehensive and comparative survey study reveals the current status of physical education in liberal arts higher education courses at colleges and universities in Japan, Korea and Taiwan

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### 1. Introduction

Previous studies revealed that the rate of colleges and universities (hereafter, CUs) compulsory physical education (hereafter, PE) in liberal arts higher education (hereafter, PEHE) courses in Japan was 100% in 1991, 70.7% in 1997<sup>6)</sup> and 63.5% in 2000<sup>7)</sup>. However, no comprehensive survey of PEHE courses in CUs has been done since 2000, and the current status is unknown. In order to grasp the current status of PEHE courses for all CUs in Japan a detailed study is essential for a meaningful outcome towards the aim of the research. Also, given the current social issues in Japan and the resulting decrease in the 18-year-olds population, the number of CUs is expected to decline.

On the other hand, previous studies from around the world have shown the status of practical PEHE at CUs in other countries<sup>6), 7), 11)</sup>. For example, there are 78% and 63% PEHE courses at most CUs in North America and Europe, respectively. In addition, it is reported that in Asian CUs, 41% of the PEHE courses are compulsory<sup>12)</sup>. Previous studies have also shown that the rate of CUs compulsory PEHE courses in America was 97% in 1930, 65% in 1988, 63% in 1998<sup>2)</sup>, and 39.6% in 2010<sup>1)</sup>; and had a further decrease in 2017<sup>5)</sup>. Although around 1990s, the rate of compulsory PEHE courses in all CUs in Japan (1991), Korea (1989) and Taiwan (1994) were reported to be 100%, a comprehensive survey of the PEHE courses in CUs has not been performed since then. Currently Korea and Taiwan have also confirmed having PEHE courses, but only few details are available. Thus, the current PEHE status (of CUs) remains unknown, particularly in Japan.

Therefore, this report presents the results of an investigation into the current status of PEHE courses for

all CUs in Japan with the aim to understand the current status (Study 1). The current status of educational system of PEHE courses in CUs<sup>3)</sup> in Japan, Korea and Taiwan was studied to present useful information (educational system; curriculum, faculty profile, etc.) contributing to better PEHE courses in CUs in East Asia neighboring countries, and categorizing the similarities and differences in PEHE courses in CUs (Study 2).

### 2. Method

Study 1: 1) Survey subjects: 742 CUs (national-81, public-86, private-575) excluding graduate universities and PE colleges. 2) Survey contents: (1) offered of PEHE course, (2) compulsory or optional, (3) number of credits necessary for graduation, (4) course type, (5) subject name. 3) Survey method: Web search survey by CUs regulations and syllabus on the website of each CUs. The investigation period was from August 2016 to March 2017. The above survey has been published (in Japanese with English abstract) in 2016<sup>4)</sup>.

Study 2: 1) Survey subjects: 742 Japanese CUs in 2016 (national-81, public-86, private-575), 190 Korean CUs (national-44, public-1, private-145) excluding 10 CUs that were difficult to investigate from 200 CUs in 2017, and 143 Taiwanese CUs in 2017 (national-48, public-1, private-94). Each country excluded graduate school universities and PE colleges. 2) Survey contents: The current status of PEHE courses of all CUs in each country and PEHE courses of educational system such as curriculum and faculty profile of CUs extracted for survey subjects. 3) Survey methods: Mainly a web search survey for all CUs regulations and syllabus in Japan and Korea, research data of the Sports Administration, Ministry

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of Education in Taiwan<sup>10</sup>), and questionnaire survey for each CUs in each country, including interviews and observations of PEHE courses in Korea and Taiwan. The investigation period was from November 2017 to October 2018.

### 3. Result

Study 1: Out of the 742 CUs surveyed subjects, 97.7% (725 CUs) offered PEHE, except for 17 CUs (2.3%) that did not offer PEHE. The 725 CUs offering PEHE were categorized into courses of mainly practical skills 98.2% (712 CUs), lecture 63.4% (460 CUs) and compulsory from all departments 28.0% (203 CUs), and compulsory from some departments 40.8% (296 CUs) including practical skills 94.6% (280 CUs), lecture 31.1% (92 CUs), practical skills and lecture 25.7% (76 CUs) in the undergraduate departments. The number of PEHE credits to be offered as compulsory subjects was  $2.15 \pm 0.84$  (mean  $\pm$  standard deviation) and 0.5 to 5.0 (minimum - maximum) credits. When studying the terms included in the integrated titles of PEHE courses group for 725 CUs offering PEHE, “Sports” 42.8% (310 CUs), “Physical education” 39.9% (289 CUs), “Health” 37.8% (274 CUs), “Health education” 18.6% (135 CUs), “Health and physical education” 17.8% (129 CUs), and “Science” 14.8% (107 CUs).

Study 2: Current status of PEHE courses offered rate was 99.3% (142 CUs) in Taiwan, 97.7% (725 CUs) in Japan, and 90.0% (171 CUs) in Korea; compulsory

from some departments the rate was 100% (142 CUs) in Taiwan, 40.8% (296 CUs) in Japan and 8.8% (15 CUs) in Korea and compulsory from all departments the rate was 100% (142 CUs) in Taiwan, 28.0% (203 CUs) in Japan and 7.0% (12 CUs) in Korea. Offered rate of practical PEHE courses was 100% (142 CUs) in Taiwan, 98.2% (712 CUs) in Japan, and 90.4% (150 CUs) in Korea; and, the offered rate of PEHE courses in lectures were 63.9% (106 CUs) in Korea, 63.4% (460 CUs) in Japan and 0% (0 CUs) in Taiwan. Educational contents emphasized most in PEHE courses was “Understanding the importance of cooperative play and improvement in communication skills” in Japan, “Improvements in physical strength and physical activities” in Korea, and “Establishment of regular lifestyles” in Taiwan. Additionally, among the three aspects of the grading evaluation method, the most important contents were “Attitude/Motivation” in Japan, and “Motor skill” in Korea and Taiwan.



Photo 1 Weight training class in Seoul National University

Table 1 Offered rates of physical education in liberal arts higher education courses at colleges and universities in Japan, Korea and Taiwan

Offered rate of PEHE course	Overall (%)			National and public (%)			Private (%)		
	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Korea	Taiwan
The overall offered PEHE course	97.7	90.0	99.3	98.8	100.0	97.9	97.4	86.9	100.0
Practical PEHE course	98.2	90.4	100.0	98.8	82.2	100.0	98.0	93.4	100.0
Lecture of PEHE course	63.4	63.9	0.0	60.5	48.9	0.0	64.1	69.4	0.0
Practical and lecture of PEHE course	61.7	53.0	0.0	59.3	44.4	0.0	62.1	56.2	0.0

† Japan: n=742 CUs (national-81, public-86, private-575), Korea: n=190 CUs (national-44, public-1, private-145), Taiwan: n=143 CUs (national-48, public-1, private-94)

Table 2 Compulsory rates of physical education in liberal arts higher education courses at colleges and universities in Japan, Korea and Taiwan

Compulsory rate of PEHE course	Overall (%)			National and public (%)			Private (%)		
	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Korea	Taiwan	Japan	Korea	Taiwan
All undergraduate departments	28.0	7.0	100.0	58.2	15.6	100.0	19.1	4.0	100.0
Some undergraduate departments	40.8	8.8	100.0	70.3	22.2	100.0	32.1	4.0	100.0
Practical PEHE course	38.6	8.8	100.0	67.9	22.2	100.0	30.0	3.3	100.0
Lecture of PEHE course	12.7	0.6	0.0	20.6	0.0	0.0	10.4	0.8	0.0
Practical and lecture of PEHE course	10.5	0.6	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0	8.2	0.8	0.0

† Japan: n=725 CUs (national-81, public-84, private-560), Korea: n=171 CUs (national-44, public-1, private-126), Taiwan: n=142 CUs (national-47, public-1, private-94)



Photo 2 Taekwondo class in Seoul National University



Photo 3 Badminton class in National Taiwan University



Photo 4 Volleyball class in National Taiwan Normal University

#### 4. Summary and future prospects

Through this combined research, the current status of PEHE courses for all CUs in Japan was revealed. Moreover, this study revealed the commonality and differences in the curriculum, faculty profile and the current status of PEHE courses at CUs in Japan, Korea and Taiwan. The next step is to investigate and analyze the curriculum (educational goals, educational contents, and grade evaluation) based on detailed information in Japan through interview surveys. Further, the plan is to develop the research into an international comparative research study with other countries over the East Asia neighboring countries implementing PEHE courses at CUs.

#### Acknowledgments

I am deeply grateful to many faculty members for their support while conducting the surveys in Japan, Korea and



Photo 5 Question and answer of academic presentations in National Taiwan Sport University



Photo 6 Academic presentations with researchers and collaborators in National Taiwan Sport University

Taiwan. For conducting the survey of PEHE in Korea, I appreciate the support of Assistant Professor Sungchan Hong from the University of Tsukuba (UT). For the cooperation in the PEHE interview survey in Korea, I especially thank Professor Euichang Choi from Seoul Normal University, Professor Kicheon Lee from Korea University, Associate Professor Hyukki Chang from Seoul Women's University and Assistant Professor Yunsoo Lee from Dankook University. For the cooperation in the PEHE interview survey in Taiwan, I especially thank Professor Ching-Ping Lin and Professor Mei-Chun Lin from National Taiwan Normal University, Professor and Chair from National Taiwan University, Professor Ching-Chung Wang from National Chengchi University, Associate Professor Ya-Cheng Yeh from Huaan University, Associate Professor Li-O Chen from China University of Technology and Associate Professor Jiceh-Der Dong Fang from Soochow University. In addition to that, I am thankful to Mr. Yasuhiko Ishihara (adad, Tsukuba, Japan) in supporting with system development for the PEHE

survey in Japan. I also acknowledge Professor Rakwal Randeep (TIAS, UT) for editing the manuscript. Finally, I also acknowledge the financial support from University of Tsukuba Overseas presentation support program for the 2018 academic year; thank you very much.



Photo 7 “The 2019 International PEHE Research Forum for the 1st in Japan, Korea and Taiwan” with researchers and participants in University of Tsukuba



Photo 8 “The 2019 International PEHE Research Forum for the 1st in Japan, Korea and Taiwan” with researchers and participants at the social gathering

#### Note

This research is a summary of the paper presented at “The 2018 International Conference for the 7th East Asian Alliance of Sport Pedagogy and Adventure Physical Education” held at the National Taiwan Sport University. And it is also a part of the contents of the report at “The 2019 International PEHE Research Forum for the 1st in Japan, Korea and Taiwan” held at the University of Tsukuba.

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