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Enhancing Body Awareness through Yogic Practices in Physical Education in a Selected University in Fuzhou, China

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the impact of integrating Yogic practices into physical education classes on body awareness among university students in Fuzhou, China. The research focuses on the assessment of yogic practices in various positions and the level of body awareness among students. A questionnaire was administered to yoga teachers at a selected university to assess yogic practices and measure body awareness among students. The study found a weak linear relationship between the frequency or depth of yogic practices and body awareness, with a correlation coefficient of 0.062. The significance value was 0.332, higher than the 0.05 threshold. The null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted, indicating that the frequency or depth of yogic practices in a student's physical education does not directly correlate with their body awareness. Extensive engagement in yogic practices does not necessarily lead to increased or decreased body awareness, and high body awareness does not necessarily require more involvement in yogic practices.

KEYWORDS: Yogic practices, Physical education classes, Body awareness. University students Fuzhou, China

1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga effectively helps in holistic development of very person. It encompasses the reduction of stress levels and the amelioration of challenges encountered within the classroom setting. The utilization of this particular method has demonstrated its efficacy in augmenting cognitive capabilities and fostering pedagogical innovation among educators, thereby prompting a paradigm shift in instructional approaches. (Poonam, 2017)

The practice of yoga has witnessed a significant surge in popularity as a preferred fitness option among individuals in China. This growth is evident in the impressive enrollment of over 20,000 students at the largest chain of yoga studios in the country. Advocates for the incorporation of yoga in physical education, emphasize its positive impact on physical health, mental health, and academic performance. Furthermore, this study examines the benefits of integrating yoga practices into sports and physical education, specifically highlighting its function in preventing, treating, and improving athletic performance. (Li, 2022; Yoga Ed., 2019; Gangulay (2022)

Despite its popularity, the current market landscape poses notable challenges for maintaining authenticity and instructional quality in yoga education. There are considerable disparities in teaching standards across various educational centers offering yoga programs. Some centers adhere to a traditional methodology, while others have adopted a more contemporary approach to cater to the preferences of the younger generation (Simpson, 2023).

In contrast, traditional Chinese disciplines such as tai chi follow a more conservative and lineage-based teaching approach, maintaining a relationship of master to disciple. This traditional teaching style may not exert the same level of commercial influence as the rapidly growing yoga industry. However, tai chi continues to hold its place in Chinese culture, with millions of practitioners, especially among older generations, participating in its graceful movements and energy-balancing techniques (Simpson, 2023).

In the most recent years, there is an ongoing debate on integration into physical education (Singleton, 2010). In the case of the selected university in It also indicates that cultural adaptation does not pose a substantial obstacle in China, as the fundamental principles of yoga are congruent with Chinese cultural values, which emphasize harmony and equilibrium among people.

Body awareness is crucial for self-awareness, adaptability, and health. It involves identifying internal sensations, anatomical structures, and perception of movement. Effective teaching requires meaningful challenges and clear practice aims. Integrating body awareness in physical education improves students' understanding and contributes to overall well-being. Conventional conceptualizations focus on somatosensory amplification, which can lead to anxiety and maladaptive outcomes. (Bergentoft, 2019; Mehling et al., 2011)

As yogic instruction enters China's educational system, it must be emphasized that this can contribute to the well-being of university students in China. Therefore, this study aims to explore the impact of Yogic practices on body awareness among university students. The researcher, therefore, seeks to provide valuable insights for educational stakeholders to make better decisions on the aspects of incorporating yogic practices as part of its curricular offerings.

Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to determine how integrating Yogic practices into physical education classes can enhance body awareness among university students in Fuzhou, China. Specific research objectives include:

1. What is the assessment of yogic practices of the students in Physical Education concerning the following positions:
   1.1. sitting;
   1.2. kneeling;
   1.3. standing;
   1.4. prone; and
   1.5. supine positions?
2. What is the level of body awareness among students in terms of:
   2.1. internal bodily sensations;
   2.2. anatomical structures; and
   2.3. body position and movement?
3. Is there a correlation between the extent of implementation of yogic practices in Physical education and the level of body awareness among students?

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study aimed to investigate the impact of integrating Yogic practices into physical education classes on body awareness among university students in Fuzhou, China. The research used a quantitative comparative correlational research design and survey data from 249 yoga students at a selected university. The study assessed the effectiveness of yogic practices in different positions and examined the level of body awareness among students.

A researcher-made questionnaire was administered to yoga teachers at a selected university to assess yogic practices in various positions and measure body awareness among students. The instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts, who made necessary adjustments based on feedback. A pilot test evaluated the questionnaire's clarity and feasibility.

Data collection was distributed to eligible yoga teachers with clear instructions and submission deadlines. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential analysis to address research objectives and questions. The findings provided valuable insights into the assessment of yogic practices in Physical Education and the level of body awareness among university students.

The study adhered to ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and data protection. Participants were provided with clear information about the study, its objectives, data collection process, and their rights as participants of the study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The assessment of yogic practices among students in physical education classes regarding the sitting position shows that students generally have some experience with and engagement in these practices. The highest mean score is given to the indicator "Teachers effectively adapt and modify sitting position yogic practices to meet my diverse needs and abilities," indicating that students perceive their teachers as adept at adjusting these practices to cater to various skill levels and requirements. The lowest mean score is associated with the indicator "The assessment of my performance in sitting position yogic practices is conducted regularly to track progress and provide feedback," suggesting that there is room for improvement in terms of consistently monitoring and offering feedback on students' progress in these yogic exercises.

In terms of kneeling position yogic practices, the overall mean score is 3.082, falling within the "Practiced" interpretation range. Students actively engage in and practice kneeling position yogic exercises, signifying the effectiveness of integrating these practices into the curriculum. The highest mean score is given to the statement "I learn and practice kneeling position yogic exercises with proper alignment and execution, thanks to the instructions," demonstrating that students perceive valuable guidance and clear instructions from their teachers.

The standing position yogic practices are also acknowledged by students, with the cumulative mean score of 2.998 placing them within the "Practiced" interpretation range. The highest mean score is given to the statement "The inclusion of mindfulness and breath awareness in the standing position yogic practices enhances my overall focus and mental clarity," aligning with the principles of mindfulness-based approaches.

The composite mean score for the prone position yogic practices is 2.987, placing them within the "Practiced" interpretation bracket, highlighting the students' recognition of the effective integration and influence of these practices. The highest mean score is given to the statement "The integration of relaxation and mindfulness techniques in the prone position yogic practices benefits my overall well-being and stress management," demonstrating the holistic advantages of merging physical postures with relaxation and mental awareness.

The study focuses on the effectiveness of prone position yogic practices in physical education, with students having moderate beliefs in their value and effectiveness. The lowest mean score of 2.78 suggests that there is room for improvement in teaching and demonstration of these practices. The overall mean score for supine position yogic practices is 3.126, indicating that students acknowledge their effective teaching and integration. The highest mean score of 3.53 is for the integration of meditation and breathing techniques, which enhances mental clarity and relaxation. This aligns with the concept of mindfulness-based practices, emphasizing the synergy of physical postures and mindfulness techniques. The lowest mean score of 2.87 is for the skillful teaching and demonstration of supine position yogic practices, which falls within the "Practiced" interpretation range. This suggests that while there is room for improvement in teaching and demonstration, students recognize the efforts made to ensure proper execution and alignment. This finding emphasizes the need for refining instructional techniques to enhance students' comprehension and execution of these practices, aligning with effective coaching and facilitation principles.

2. The study reveals that students exhibit high awareness of their internal bodily sensations, which is attributed to the activities, teachings, and exercises provided in physical education classes. This leads to a deeper connection with their bodies, promoting self-awareness and informed decisions regarding health, stress management, and emotional regulation. Positive feedback regarding mindfulness practices and the integration of relaxation techniques also contribute to this awareness.

Anatomical structures are also highly valued by students, with an overall mean of 3.03112, indicating that the integration of anatomy lessons into the curriculum has significantly benefited them. Consistent acknowledgment and feedback about anatomical knowledge can boost students' confidence and engagement in the subject, laying a foundation for future pursuits in health, medicine, or sports science fields.

The study also highlights the importance of regular assessments in tracking progress and fostering a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Students express increased confidence in their body movements after receiving guidance from teachers, with a mean score of 3.54, interpreted as "Very High." This highlights the crucial role of educators in the students' journey of body awareness, as they impart knowledge and bolster students' confidence in their physical endeavors.

Active participation in activities that encourage posture observation and adjustment is also high, suggesting that there is potential for educators to further emphasize posture-oriented exercises to further solidify students' understanding and practice of proper body postures. Overall, the study highlights the importance of incorporating mindfulness practices, anatomy lessons, and body position and movement into the physical education curriculum to enhance students' understanding and performance.

3. This study examines the correlation between the implementation of yogic practices in physical education and students' body awareness. The mean score for yogic practices is 3.091, while the mean score for body awareness is slightly higher at 3.101. The correlation coefficient is 0.062, indicating a weak linear relationship between the two variables. The significance value is 0.332, which is higher than the 0.05 threshold. The null hypothesis (Ho) is accepted, indicating that the frequency or depth of yogic practices in a student's physical education does not directly correlate with their body awareness. Extensive engagement in yogic practices does not necessarily lead to increased or decreased body awareness. High body awareness does not necessarily require more involvement in yogic practices. The two variables are independent of each other.

IV. CONCLUSION

Students show positive engagement with various yogic practices, particularly in sitting, kneeling, standing, and supine positions. Teachers play a crucial role in adapting these practices to cater to students' diverse needs and abilities. The integration of anatomy lessons is highly valued by students, contributing to their overall confidence and engagement. However, the study found a weak and statistically insignificant relationship between yogic practices and body awareness, suggesting that the frequency and depth of yogic practices do not directly impact students' body awareness. This suggests that while yogic practices offer numerous benefits, they may not be the sole determinant of students' body awareness. Future research may explore additional variables influencing body awareness in physical education. Nonetheless, integrating mindfulness practices, anatomy lessons, and posture-oriented exercises into the curriculum is essential for a holistic approach to physical education.

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