BODY APPRECIATION, PERCEIVED STRESS, AND YOGA SELF-EFFICACY AMONG FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ACCORDING TO WEEKLY YOGA PRACTICE FREQUENCY AND INSTRUCTION TYPE

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ABSTRACT

BODY APPRECIATION, PERCEIVED STRESS, AND YOGA SELF-EFFICACY AMONG FEMALE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ACCORDING TO WEEKLY YOGA PRACTICE FREQUENCY AND INSTRUCTION TYPE

M.S., The Department of Physical Education and Sports
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The purpose of this study was to investigate the levels of body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university students according to their weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type. Participants included 140 female university students aged eighteen or older who practiced yoga regularly. Data were collected via an online survey utilizing the Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, and Body Appreciation Scale. The results indicated that there were no statistically significant differences among groups with respect to instruction type (self-instructed, instructor-led, or a combination). However, statistically significant differences were observed among groups in relation to weekly practice frequency ($p < .05$). Specifically, students practicing three or more times a week showed significantly higher yoga self-efficacy than those who practiced less frequently. Perceived stress and body appreciation did not differ significantly among groups. These findings suggest that frequent engagement may be a key to building self-efficacy, and it offers evidence to guide flexible and accessible wellness programs in university settings.

Keywords: Wellness, physical fitness, young adults, physical activity participation, exercise frequency

ÖZ

KADIN ÜNİVERSİTE ÖĞRENCİLERİNDE YOGA UYGULAMA SIKLIĞI VE UYGULAMA TÜRÜNE GÖRE BEDEN MEMNUNİYETİ, ALGILANAN STRES VE YOGA ÖZ-YETERLİĞİ

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Beden Eğitimi ve Spor Bölümü
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Bu çalışmanın amacı, kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin haftalık yoga uygulama sıklığı ve uygulama türüne göre beden memnuniyeti, algılanan stres ve yoga öz yeterlilik düzeylerini araştırmaktır. Katılımcılar en az 18 yaşında ve düzenli yoga yapan 140 kadın üniversite öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Veriler, içerisinde Yoga Öz Yeterlilik Ölçeği, Algılanan Stres Ölçeği ve Beden Memnuniyeti Ölçeği bulunan çevrimiçi bir anket yoluyla toplanmıştır. Yoga uygulama türüne (bireysel, eğitmen eşliğinde veya ikisinin birleşimi) dair sonuçlara bakıldığında gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmamıştır. Ancak, haftalık yoga uygulama sıklığına bakıldığında gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar gözlenmiştir ($p < .05$). Özellikle haftada üç veya daha fazla kez yoga yapan öğrencilerin, daha az sıklıkta uygulama yapanlara kıyasla yoga öz-yeterlik düzeylerinin anlamlı derecede daha yüksek skorlara sahip olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Algılanan stres ve beden memnuniyeti sonuçlarında gruplar arasında anlamlı farklılıklar bulunmamıştır. Bu bulgular, haftalık yoga yapma sıklığı artışının, öz-yeterlilik seviyesini artırma açısından önemli bir unsur olabileceğini göstermekle birlikte, üniversite ortamlarında yoga ve benzeri sağlıklı yaşam programlarının geliştirilmesinin öğrencilere faydalı olacağına yönelik kanıt sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İyi oluş, fiziksel uygunluk, genç yetişkinler, fiziksel aktiviteye katılım, egzersiz sıklığı

To everyone, everything, everywhere…

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

YSES: Yoga Self- Efficacy Scale

PSS: Perceived Stress Scale

BAS: Body Appreciation Scale

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The university years play a critical role in developing individuals' characteristics, and represent an important development period for every young adult, owing to the evolving academical requirements, expanding new social networks, and increased level of individual responsibilities required in that area. This timeline mostly comes with starting of adulthood, the period of life linked with a new and unique way of self-discovery (Arnett, 2000). Furthermore, it is the period that can be marked as the beginning of building a life path; which would inevitably shape a person's future, and eventually life. Although this period seems to offer countless opportunities and a new perspective of looking at life, there are some challenges the youth tend to go through in the university years. Though the academical work and social opportunities help to build a responsiveness that help the students to improve an individualistic perspective of life, these concepts also create a tendency for some psychological vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities are formed by the mixture of academical demands, environmental expectations, and internal norms related to physical look and condition; and with their combination the college students often describe increased degree of stress, and bodily concerns, all of which could affect the physical and psychological well-being of the students.

As well as creating chances for personal development and independency, the university years also lead students to stress indicators which might interrupt the development of emotional balance and coping strategies needed for the adaptation to university life. Work overload, academical competition, and economical demands can increase the level of stress and lead to anxiety, depression, and the feeling of unfulfillment. Furthermore, most young women face increased social and online tension regarding to physicality, which can lessen the body appreciation and influence

self-perception in a negative way (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Consequently, the combination of increased stress levels, decreased level of body appreciation and deteriorated psychological wellness have been shown as a significant field of concern in this environment.

These issues represent the need for feasible and efficient approaches which could strengthen the physical and psychological health of female university students. Mind body practices such as yoga have shown to be growing techniques for their use to evolve physical and emotional stability, and lead to healthier behaviors for the well-being of body. It is crucial to comprehend these relationships in order to guide scientifically supported strategies that respond to the particular requirements of young women at this crucial period of life and to guide preventive psychological health activities on university campuses.

The interest in the psychophysiological benefits of yoga has been growing rapidly and there has been lots of scientific investigations regarding its influence, especially in the stress reduction and improving the body-based attitudes and behaviors. Yoga practices are linked with lower levels of stress perception, increased mood and emotional stabilization in lots of different environments and populations. These effects are mostly linked with its versatile and integrative nature, including conscious breathing, postural movement, and mindful focus which offer the activation of parasympathetic system and reduction of hyperarousal. For example (Villemure, 2015) has represented in the research that active yoga practice is associated with anxiety reduction, defense/coping mechanism improvement, and better life quality in university students.

As well as examining the stress-related results, there has also been an interest in investigating the effects of yoga on body image and self-perception. One of the studies has found that yoga improved adaptive behaviors related to body such as fostering the feeling of acceptance, functionality, and internal value and awareness rather than body-related assessment (Alleva, 2020). This shift actually combines with concepts like positive body image and appreciation, which has also been found to be improved owing to regular yoga practice (Cox, 2019). In addition, a research has demonstrated that yoga practitioners have less degree of objectification of self and dissatisfaction of

body in contrast to non-yoga practitioners, claiming the fact that yoga promotes healthier and more affectionate connection with the body (Daubenmier, 2005). These results are specifically more popular among women, who are more vulnerable to traditionally and culturally exposed ideal beauty types and physical appearance challenges (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

Although there have been several studies supporting the psychological effects of yoga, there are a few gaps remaining in the existing literature. First of all, lots of studies mostly have put an importance on higher age levels such as adults or clinical experiment samples, with substantially less studies investigating the particular experiences of university students, a group suggested to be more vulnerable to stress and body related pressures. For example (Pascoe, 2015) has analyzed 25 randomized trials about the effects of yoga on stress, yet only a few of them were university students and it was clinical-based experiment. In addition, though many researches have assessed the regular yoga practice and its benefits, fewer amount has actually combined it with the concept of yoga self-efficacy, which has a strong influence in determining involvement, perceived capability, and the internalization of practice outcomes. It is crucial to comprehend the interaction of self-efficacy with stress and body image as it could highlight significant processes behind yoga's benefits.

Moreover, past researches tend to focus on intervention based or long period workout programs, though cross-sectional studies marking the continuous natural experience of yoga in the university levels stays limited. Also, a handful of studies have simultaneously investigated perceived stress, body appreciation and yoga self-efficacy utilizing reliable and validated measures in same theoretical structure. In conclusion, the need for researches that combine these concepts to offer a deeper understanding on how psychological beliefs, body-mind related practices and general wellness results interact.

All combined, what can be said is the fact that the existing literature highlights the possibility of yoga as an integrative approach to improve psychological wellbeing, mood and emotional stabilization. Yet, more research is required to clarify its particular benefits among female university students and to describe the importance of

self-efficacy in these relationships due to the absence of studies related to these areas. Focusing on these gaps; however, will promote a more comprehensive understanding of psycho-physiological effects of yoga in the university level students who are women in particular.

1.1. Purposes of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the levels of body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university according to their weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type.

1.2. Research Questions

To achieve the purposes outlined above, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How does the frequency of yoga effect the body appreciation, perceived stress and yoga self- efficacy level of the female university students?

2. How does the instruction type of yoga effect the body appreciation, perceived stress and yoga self- efficacy level of the female university students?

1.3. Hypotheses

1. Female university students with a higher weekly frequency of yoga were expected to show greater body appreciation and yoga self-efficacy, and lower perceived stress.
2. Female university students practicing both self-instructed and instructor-led yoga were expected to demonstrate higher body appreciation and yoga self-efficacy, and lower perceived stress, compared to those in only self-directed or instructor-led programs.

1.4. Assumptions

The followings are the assumptions related to the study:

- **Honesty of Participants:** All participants are expected candidly comply with the study's goals and give honest and precise answer regarding their experiences with Body Appreciation, Perceived Stress and Yoga Self-Efficacy.
- **Validity of Instruments:** Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, and Body Appreciation Scale, the scales used in this study, are valid and reliable scales for determining the current psychological behaviors of the study's population.
- **Sample Representativeness:** The female university students are representatives in this study and expected to create a better understanding of psychological processes of larger populations.
- **Understanding of Terminology:** It is assumed that participants have the ability to understand basic yoga terminology in the data analysis form.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Female university students are a group that is specifically subject to higher levels of stress, body image concerns and fluctuations which affects the well- being of their psychological health. The combination of academical challenges, social differences, and increased interaction with thoughts related to physical appearance has a strong role in shaping their emotional and mental stability and well-being. In spite of the fact that yoga is considered as a body-mind practice that is able to improve managing these issues, the systems through which yoga affects the psychophysiological wellbeing lack adequate amount of research and are still open to debate for this particular population including young female university students. Accurate comprehension of these mechanisms is significant for maintaining efficient, valid and reliable practices in university environment which would offer a better quality of life.

Despite the fact that existing literature has shown that yoga can decrease the levels of perceived stress and improve the view of positive image, there are not many researches that have investigated these results completely in the particular context which consists of female university students. The idea of self-efficacy is used to understand the level and frequency of yoga practice students have, the perception of how yoga positively affects them, and the integration of these outcomes to daily life. The involvement of yoga self-efficacy in the present research creates a possibility to achieve a deeper grasp

of how intellectual assumptions and mind-body practices collaborate to affect the psychological health.

Moreover, the access to yoga in university settings is improved due to student communities, physical activity and wellness programs, and gym/sports centers. This currently creates the need to represent scientific evidence that can guide institutional support services, which play a role in shaping students' mental health. As yoga is a feasible, an available and appropriate method to shape fitness capacity, it is considered as a promising source for offering student wellness. However, in order to precisely support its effects in wellness programs, contextual data is to be used that specifically shows its efficiency in university setting.

The application of the Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, and Body Appreciation Scale, plays a significant role in creating a systematic framework in the investigation of these relationships. By measuring these contexts simultaneously, this paper is considered to find out significant gaps in the previous studies and offer a comprehensive understanding of psycho-physiological effects of yoga among female university students.

Overall, the rationale for this study is to expand the existing literature and create a broader understanding of yoga's role in influencing psychological wellness, clarifying the effectiveness of self-efficacy as a mediating factor and developing evidence that could address targeted methods and psychological health programs within university settings. With this examination, this paper aims to promote a comprehensive understanding of how yoga practice can improve stress management, offer positive body image, and highlight spiritual well-being in this specific population.

1.6. Definition of Terms

Body image: It is a term that describes the way an individual perceives their physical appearance, and how they act according to their conceptions about it (Avalos et al., 2005). In this study, body appreciation refers to the adaptive behaviors and attitudes related to the body, such as fostering feelings of acceptance, functionality, and internal value rather than focusing solely on body-related assessment or appearance.

Perceived stress: Stress is known as a complex concept which includes both physical and psychological processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In this study, perceived stress refers to the degree to which situations in a student's life are appraised as stressful since it encompasses the psychological vulnerabilities formed by academic demands, environmental expectations, and internal norms related to physical appearance.

Yoga self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is a term which describes a person's idea of their own capability to carry out necessary actions in order to get to the specific point or goal one is trying to achieve (Bandura, 1977). In this study, Yoga self-efficacy describes an individual's belief in their capability to successfully engage in yoga practice. It is considered to be a determining factor to have a deeper understanding of involvement, perceived capability, and the internalization of practice outcomes.

Awareness: The existence of the knowledge that something exits, and the ability to be able to grasp concepts completely. In this study, awareness is primarily conceptualized as interoceptive awareness, which refers to the general capacity of individuals to be in tune and harmonious with their internal states, as well as physical sensations (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

Self-Perception: The way an individual sees and evaluates oneself.

Psycho-Physiological: The scientific study of effects regarding both mental and physical aspects.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the existing theoretical and empirical literature relevant to the psychological well-being of female university students, and the potential role yoga practice could have regarding that. The review begins by the investigation of the concepts like body image and body appreciation (Section 2.1), and highlights the specific vulnerabilities young women could face regarding self-perception of their bodily features. Section 2.2 explores the physiological and psychological systems and mechanisms of stress, giving broader information regarding its prevalence in the university environment and its impact on student health. Following this, Section 2.3 investigates the concept of yoga as a psycho-physiological intervention, briefly discussing its efficiency and benefits in regulating the nervous system and fostering body awareness. After that, the concept of self-efficacy is mentioned and then contextualized within yoga practice (Section 2.4) to have a better understanding of how beliefs about one's capability could influence engagement and outcomes. Finally, Section 2.5 reviews the current and evolving landscape of yoga instruction, which ranges from studio-based to digital formats, and the significance of practice frequency in achieving mental health benefits.

2.1. Body Image, Self-Perception, and Well-Being in University Women

Body image is a term that describes the way an individual perceives their physical appearance, and how they act according to their conceptions about it (Avalos et al., 2005). Body image is a crucial aspect in psychological behaviors, especially among young women entering the early stages of adulthood. Student often face and tend to get more sensitive to increased social norms, such as expected, idealized and mostly altering beauty type, which eventually affect their perception of self and body. These issues could lead to discontent with their bodies, as well as negatively affecting the emotional wellness and self-confidence.

The research in this area has shown that there has been an increased focus towards the comparison of negative body image perceptions and positive body image stereotypes, which includes the concept of body appreciation. Body appreciation is a term that represents the capacity to accept, respect and embrace the physical appearance of an individual, irrespective of social and aesthetical expectations (Avalos et al., 2005). It includes the gratefulness for the body's capability, confidence with the physical look, and disapproval of expected and idealized norms created by social aspects. Higher levels of body appreciation have been connected to the increased adaptation to positive mental factors, such as higher self-acceptance, elevated mental mood and general psychological health. For women, having a strong and positive perspective towards body image has been a significant focus area due to the fact that it plays a crucial role as a defense mechanism towards stress, unhealthy eating habits and internalized appearance challenges (Halliwell, 2013).

Female university students have specially shown to be susceptible to altering nature of ideal body image owing to the combination of intellectual, cultural and social aspects. Physical dissatisfaction and self-criticism can be increased with the enhanced access to new social environments and people, idealized online and social media beauty norms, and the expanded academical requirements and work overload. Therefore, the methods that motivate self-awareness, physical practice and conscious activities could lead to healthier physical/mental activities which promotes healthier lifestyle. For this context, The Body Appreciation Scale (Avalos et al., 2005) is used to have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of individuals' perspective towards their physical appearance and the way their perspective affects the psychological and emotional wellness.

2.2. Stress and Psychophysiological Responses

Stress is known as a complex concept which includes both physical and psychological processes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It appears when an individual starts to see and think as if the personal, social or environmental issues become more challenging than they already are, and the coping/defense mechanism functions in a way that one doesn't feel totally relaxed anymore and starts to feel anxious, which may even lead

to depression if this feeling reaches to higher levels. For university students, stress is mostly experienced because of the overload of academical demands, revolving social aspects, environmental challenges, economic problems and uncertain future and career plans. Owing to this kind of challenges, students may no longer be able to stabilize their emotions, and feel as if they no longer be able to fulfill their objectives in life, which may unfortunately lead to unhealthy habits to overcome this kind of feeling of stress. For many young women, this feeling can come with extra challenges; including not feeling belonged to a particular setting as well as not feeling fulfilled enough for their physical appearances.

From a psychophysiological perspective, stress creates a series of mental activations and if the feeling is neutral, it helps as a tool to increase alertness, energy and helps them to function the body in a healthy way (Chrousos, 2009). However, unnecessary amount of activation of this system could lead to dysregulation, feeling of tiredness, lack of concentration, emotional stability and furthermore bigger psychological issues. Moreover, increased perceived stress levels are also in connection with health problems, such as insomnia, immune system suppression, and feeling incompetent in dealing with anxiety and depression (Chrousos, 2009).

Owing to the subjective nature of stress, its effects are mostly in connection with the personal appraisal processes and defense/coping mechanisms. To understand and evaluate how stressed a person is feeling, the Perceived Stress Scale is used in which subjective nature of stress is assessed by measuring to what extent a person is feeling as if his/her life is unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded (Cohen et al., 1983). Owing to its significant psychometric qualities and feasibility, the PSS has also become a quite popular tool to measure stress in university environments as it gives accurate and important insights into university students' experience of stress, as well as paving the way of researchers to investigate how factors like physical activity, lifestyle habits, or psychomotor activities could lead to improvement in coping systems and reduced mental pressure.

Comprehending the psychophysiological aspects of stress is crucial for finding appropriate therapies that increase awareness, and physical/mental stability,

particularly for young female university students. Due to rising popularity and increased interest in spiritual practices; such as mindfulness practices and physical movement/breathing techniques towards the management of stress, investigating stress in connection to mind-body interventions like yoga may offer significant contributions to the researches related to the area of student wellness.

2.3. Yoga as a Psycho-Physiological Practice

Risen from the traditional Indian lifestyle, Yoga is a common and popular mind-body practice combining physical movements, breathing techniques and meditativeness (Woodyard, 2011). Nowadays, yoga is seen both as a form of a physical exercises and also as a system of holistic relaxation technique promoting psychological wellness, emotional stability, and physiological health. Its versatile system, including physical postural movements, breathing patterns, and energy-based awareness, establishes yoga as a significant and integrative concept positively affecting both physical and psychological aspects.

A growing body of researches, studies and articles have all highlight the fact that yoga is beneficial in increasement of stress management and reduction, emotional wellness/stability and the general quality of life. In terms of physical aspects, yoga practices have demonstrated to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, which inhibits the sympathetic system and creates beneficial relaxation responses; and this alteration is linked to decrease in cortisol, blood pressure and heart rate levels, all of which assists to improved autonomic regulation and function (Streeter et al., 2012). In terms of psychological aspects, yoga fosters increased interoceptive awareness, promoting individuals to be in tune with internal states and physical sensations (Cook-Cottone, 2015). This helps creating the state of acceptance rather than rejection, judgement or disapproval, which is; to be able to accept life as it is, and understand that some things can be out of the control of an individual and the response given is more important than what happens. It is claimed that yoga as a mind body practice is significant for contributing physical, psychological, emotional and energy-based wellness.

For women in university settings, yoga is especially beneficial due to its versatile nature as it actually addresses several aspects of health and wellness. The combination of physical and psychological aspects of yoga can help to lessen the overwhelming feeling of academic stress, improve focus and concentration, and offer a feeling of meditativeness and present-moment awareness; skills that are mainly crucial for maintaining an efficient academic life and emotional control. Moreover, yoga's influence on body awareness and acceptance is associated with positive body image results, such as appreciating the body more, decreasing the feeling of self-objectification, and helping to have a solid self-esteem and confidence (Daubenmier, 2005; Mahlo & Tiggemann, 2016). These factors can be considered helpful for young women who might be facing physical appearance related challenges and fluctuating self-perception during the university years.

The accessible and feasible nature of yoga establishes it as an efficient practice in university settings and populations. Campus yoga communities, gyms and many individuals by themselves offer yoga classes and this paved the way for yoga to become more popular in female university students, who actually addresses not only the physical benefits of yoga but also its contributions for stress relief and emotional wellbeing. Owing to its psychophysiological effects, yoga has become a significant intervention for the research areas related to health, psychology and educational/academic research.

2.4. Yoga Self-Efficacy and Engagement in Practice

Self-efficacy is a term which describes a person's idea of their own capability to carry out necessary actions in order to get to the specific point or goal one is trying to achieve (Bandura, 1977). For physical and psychological areas, particularly mind-body methods like yoga, self-efficacy has a significant role in developing motivation, maintaining engagement, and comprehending the efficiency of the practice. Yoga self-efficacy particularly shows an individual's belief and motivation in their capacity to carry out yoga poses, sustain a regular breathing pattern, maintain focus and combine all these benefits yoga offers to daily life. The increase in the levels of yoga self-

efficacy is linked with higher persistence, increased practice time/ frequency, and improved mental health benefits.

For young women, yoga self-efficacy could be related not only to their motivation to perform yoga poses but also their capacity to experience the reduction of stress and enhancement of positive body image in their mind to accept their bodily features the way they are. Female university student who has the confidence and belief that they are accurately able to perform yoga tend to practice it more regularly and frequently, discover new techniques, and sustain these overcomes, all of which actually have crucial role in developing the psycho-physiological benefits of yoga (Fuchs & Smyth, 2016; Weitz et al., 2023). On the other hand, low self-efficacy; mostly created by perceptions of lack of physical capability, can become a barrier, reducing the participation to physical activities, particularly yoga in this case, and decreasing the possibility of obtaining efficient psychophysiological outcomes.

The data of the researches conducted claims self-efficacy attributes to emotional stability, coping/defense systems, and mental wellness by increasing a person's feeling of control and regulation for inner processes both physically and psychologically (Bandura, 1977). During the yoga practice, self-efficacy may expand these outcomes by offering a feeling of agency, self-trust and mostly awareness towards mind and body. Since improving self confidence in bodily features can develop better self-perception and decrease the inclination towards negative assessment, this is specifically crucial for young female university student as they could be facing body appearance issues or self-criticism.

The Yoga Self-Efficacy scale (Billen, 2011) offers a scientifically based measurement for evaluating individuals' belief in their capability to carry out many components of yoga practice. Its existence in current researches is significant for investigating the relationship between perceived ability, engagement in yoga, and mental benefits such as the reduction of stress and appreciation of body. By evaluating yoga self-efficacy combined with perceived stress and body appreciation, this paper plans to achieve a stronger comprehension of how cognitive beliefs, mind-body interventions and

psychological wellness is in relation within the experiences of young women university students.

2.5. Yoga Instruction Type and Practice Frequency

In recent years, the way yoga is practiced has evolved beyond the traditional studio-based instruction types. This created a chance for new instruction and practice types which are suitable for different preferences, lifestyles, and needs. Nowadays yoga practice can be performed in-person classes shown by certified yoga instructors and online yoga classes. In addition, pre-recorded videos are also used as well as completely self-directed practices without any external factor or help. These alterations have also been expanded by technological advancements and alterations towards remote well-being practices, specifically among university areas in which flexible and feasible options for psycho-physiological well-being is sought.

Various forms of yoga instruction could have different effects on the practitioners, especially regarding to the engagement and mental experiences. In person practice and instruction typically creates the chance for instant feedback which helps the students to immediately correct wrong postures with personalized guidance, which could be helpful for skill acquisition, body awareness and perceived competence (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Moreover, the social setting of group practices may offer a sense of social support and belonging, possibly enforcing motivation and practice commitment which might help to build the regularity of the practice. On the other hand, the online or self-led types could offer a greater feeling of independence and confidence, influencing individuals to perform the practice at their own speed and needs (Wadhawan, 2020). Yet, the lack of direct instructor feedback and peer contact could affect the levels of accountability, self confidence in practicing the poses correctly, and general yoga-self efficacy (Mullane, 2017).

As well as the instruction type, the frequency of the yoga practice is also a crucial aspect in determining the psycho-physiological effects of yoga. Regular yoga practice is thought to be necessary to acquire prolonged outcomes of yoga, such as stress reduction, emotional stability, and positive body image. However, the scientific

research has barely investigated how the differences in practice frequency actually interact with instruction type to influence perceived stress, body appreciation and self-efficacy, specifically among female university students. Comprehending the combined and independent roles of yoga instruction type and practice frequency could therefore offer valuable aspects into how yoga practices can be optimally structured to support psychological well-being in this population.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Research Design

The present study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to investigate the levels of body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university students based on their weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type. A cross-sectional survey approach was considered appropriate. This was because the aim of the study was to assess psychological variables and behaviors related to yoga at a single point in time in a defined population. This design allowed to examine associations between variables and compare groups based on their natural characteristics such as participation frequency and instructional format. Since the study did not involve experimental manipulation, the participants maintained their natural existing yoga habits in their lifestyles. This approach helped to ensure that the findings reflect real-world yoga participation patterns among female university students.

The independent variables of the study were weekly yoga practice frequency (this variable was divided into three classifications as minimal frequency: one session per week, average frequency: two sessions per week, and high frequency: three or more sessions per week) and yoga instruction type (this variable was categorized into three distinct groups as self-instructed: independent practice without external guidance, instructor-led: participation in yoga classes, studios, or via online sources, and a combination of both. The dependent variables of the study were body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy.

3.1. Participants

A total of 140 female university students with a mean age of 25.42 ± 6.42 years participated in the study. The requirements of eligibility were (a) being a female university students aged at least eighteen years old practicing yoga regularly at the time of the study, (b) having practiced yoga for a minimum of thirty days, and (c) practicing yoga minimum once in a week. Individuals who failed to fulfill these requirements or provided replies that were not comprehensive were not included in the final dataset. The study conducted a convenience sampling (technique to enroll participants since it made it possible to collect responses from a readily available population in a university context). Resources such as student clubs, yoga/ wellness-related online communities, gym and yoga studio members were used for enrollment.

Three classifications were established for the frequency of weekly yoga routine: minimal frequency (one session), average frequency (two sessions), and high frequency (3 or greater sessions). The instruction type was categorized into 3; self-instructed (independent practice), instructor-led (yoga classes, studios or online sources), and both. These categories have enabled to analyze the amount and the kind of yoga practice in connection to the psycho-physiological factors of the study.

The study received an ethical approval given by the Human Subjects Ethics Committee of Middle East Technical University (0510-ODTUİAEK-2025) before the collection of data started. Every method complied with the university's academic rules and ethical requirements. The investigation was completely voluntary, and in order to maintain privacy and security of the participants, no personal data was gathered. The results were safely kept in electronic forms that only those conducting the study could access. Volunteers were explained that their answers could only be utilized for educational research.

3.2. Data Collection Instruments

There were four different parts in the online survey utilized for this study: (1) demographic data, (2) yoga self-efficacy scale, (3) perceived stress scale, (4) body appreciation scale. All scales were standardized instruments with proven validity and reliability in similar groups and researches.

3.2.1. Demographic Data

Participant demographics included age, year of education, level of yoga background, average weekly practice frequency, and favored yoga type. This data served as environmental background and was utilized to explain the sample's characteristics and features.

3.2.2. Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale

The Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale was used to evaluate yoga self-efficacy. The twelve-question test assessed one's self-confidence in practicing yoga poses, addressing mental and physical issues, and retaining a regular yoga routine. Example questions from the test were ‘I can move my body with ease’ for the body section, ‘I can stay at ease with my breathing’ for the breathing section, ‘I can refocus my mind easily if distracted’ for the mind section. Multiple choice questions were used which included choices from 1 = “strongly disagree” to 5 = “strongly agree” in order to assess every item. Yoga Self- Efficacy level is greater when the scores are high in the final distribution of the answers. The scale has been developed by (Birdee et al., 2016) and it has shown to be valid and reliable in many articles and researches regarding the area of Yoga. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Küçükelci (2018).

3.2.3. Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale was used to measure the level of stress and the effects of yoga to the stress levels the participants were experiencing during the time of the study. The test measures how much people feel as if their lives are unexpected, out of control, and overburdened. Example questions are "How often did you feel anxious and stressed in the past month?" and "How often did you feel as if conditions have gone in favor of you in the past month?". Responses are evaluated using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from “Never (0)” to “Very often (4). Higher total scores indicate higher stress levels. The scale has been developed by (Cohen et al., 1983) and has proven to be highly valid and reliable across a wide range of demographics. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Eskin et al. (2013).

3.2.4. Body Appreciation Scale

Body appreciation was measured using the Body Appreciation Scale in order to analyze how much yoga would affect the confidence of the participants. The scale consists of 9 multiple choice questions ranging from 1= " never" to 5= "always". The averaged was used to obtain an overall body appreciation score. Higher range of choice show increased body appreciation. The Body Appreciation Scale has been developed by Avalos et al., 2005 and has proven to valid and reliable in many studies. The scale was adapted to Turkish by Bakalım and Taşdelen Karçkay (2016).

3.3. Data Collection Procedures

An online questionnaire was used to gather data for this study, and it was given to subjects who fulfilled the conditions for inclusion. The survey was made to be feasible to and accurate so that the volunteers would be able to access and complete it without any necessity. The online method to gather data was used because it effectively reached a broad range of individuals in both the yoga and university settings. Numerous platforms were used for the recruiting process, such as social media sites usually visited by university students, online yoga forums, student organizations focused on yoga and health, and campus communities. Data on the research was also collected through nearby fitness centers and yoga studios. A brief description of the study's objectives and the participation criteria were all provided to the people who were interested to participate to the study.

The first page of the survey was the introduction part. Participants were given an informed consent form that introduces the department and the researcher. Then, it outlines the objectives of the research, explains the privacy and security rights clearly. After that, it demonstrates the voluntary nature of involvement and the freedom to discontinue engagement at any moment without experiencing any negative outcome. The following parts of the survey were only accessible to individuals who gave their approval.

The four primary components of the online questionnaire that was used to collect the data were; Demographic data, the Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale, the Perceived Stress Scale, and the Body Appreciation Scale. To guarantee the accuracy of the data and to be able to continue, volunteers had to answer every question; however, they were free

to stop participating at any time before completion. It took about ten to fifteen minutes on average to finish the questionnaire.

Data was collected during a span of four weeks. Responses were obtained from the website after the survey ended and verified for accuracy and validity. Subjects were removed from the final dataset when they failed to satisfy the inclusion criteria, including having performed yoga for a shorter period of time than thirty days. Also, those providing inaccurate answer, or not being a university student were also excluded. The approved dataset was subsequently put together for statistical analysis.

3.4. Statistical Analysis

All values were reported as means and standard deviations. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to analyze the normality of the data. Since the assumption of normality was violated, the Kruskal-Wallis test was used to analyze differences in body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university students according to weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type. The follow-up pairwise comparisons were conducted using the Mann–Whitney U test. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. Each statistical analysis procedure in this study was performed using the IBM SPSS Statistic for Windows, Version 26.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago IL).

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter presents the statistical results of the data collected for this study. In the first section, the demographic characteristics of the participants were shown and explained. After that, descriptive statistics for the main study variables were provided following the main demographic data. Finally, statistical analyses were presented for yoga self-efficacy, perceived stress, and body appreciation scores according to weekly yoga practice frequency and yoga instruction type.

4.1. Demographics of Participants

The descriptive statistics of the demographic information are presented in Table 1. There were 140 female university students who participated in this study. The majority of the participants were undergraduate students (69.29%, n = 97). The following participants were Master's students (18.57%, n = 26) and PhD students (12.14%, n = 17). The data of yoga instruction type has shown self-directed yoga practitioners were 40.71% (n = 57) of the study, followed by instructor-led yoga practitioners 38.57% (n = 54). Lastly, 20.71% (n = 29) of the participants utilized a combination of both self-directed and instructor led sessions. In terms of weekly practice frequency, 36.43% (n = 51) practiced once a week, 33.57% (n = 47) practiced twice a week, and 30.00% (n = 42) practiced three or more times a week.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

Variables	n	%
Education Level		
Undergraduate students	97	69.29
Master’s students	26	18.57

PhD students	17	12.14
Instruction Type		
Self-directed	57	40.71
Instructor-led	54	38.57
Both	29	20.71
Frequency		
1 time/week	51	36.43
2 times/week	47	33.57
≥ 3 times/week	42	30.00

4.2. Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

The overall descriptive statistics for study variables showed that for the Yoga Self-Efficacy scale the mean score was 3.65 (SD = 0.80) with an internal consistency of α = 0.94. For the Perceived Stress Scale, on the other hand, the average score was 2.04 (SD = 0.63) with an internal consistency of α = 0.88. Lastly, for the Body Appreciation Scale, the mean score was 3.84 (SD = 0.84) with an internal consistency of α = 0.94.

The descriptive statistics for the Yoga Self-Efficacy Scores are given in Table 2. The results showed that the highest mean scores were observed for the statements "I am able to remain as comfortable as possible while doing movements" (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.91) and "I am able to keep my mind focused on movements of my body" (Mean = 3.89, SD = 0.91). Conversely, the lowest mean score was recorded for the item "I am confident that I can maintain my attention" (Mean = 3.34, SD = 1.14).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Yoga Self-Efficacy Scores

Items	Mean	SD
I am able to remain as comfortable as possible while doing movements	3.89	0.91
I am able to keep my mind focused on movements of my body	3.89	0.91

I can coordinate the movements of my body with my breath	3.70	1.04
I am able to move my body smoothly	3.69	1.05
I am able to maintain a feeling of stability in my body.	3.72	1.01
I am able to keep my breath smooth and continuous	3.54	1.06
I am able to remain comfortable while regulating my breath	3.61	0.98
I am able to focus my mind on my breath	3.62	1.04
I am able to make my breath longer and deeper without feeling anxious	3.63	1.21
If distracted, I can re-focus my mind.	3.66	0.99
I am confident that I can maintain my attention.	3.34	1.14
I am able to remain focused on a meditative object or point	3.54	1.08

The descriptive statistics for the Perceived Stress Scale scores are represented in Table 3. The results indicated that the highest source of perceived stress was related to 'the frequency of finding themselves thinking about things they have to accomplish' (Mean = 3.01, SD = 1.05). The items with the lowest reported frequencies were 'feeling that things were going their way' (Mean = 2.09, SD = 0.94) and 'being able to control the way they spend their time' (Mean = 2.11, SD = 1.00).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Perceived Stress Scale Scores

Items	Mean	SD
In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?	2.26	1.02
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?	2.48	1.06
In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?	2.59	0.97
In the last month, how often have you dealt successfully with day-to-day problems and annoyances?	2.71	0.90
5. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were effectively coping with important changes that were occurring in your life?	2.52	0.93

In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?	2.46	0.98
In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?	2.09	0.94
In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?	2.16	0.97
In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?	2.19	0.98
In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?	2.23	0.95
In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside your control?	2.26	1.11
In the last month, how often have you found yourself thinking about things that you have to accomplish?	3.01	1.05
In the last month, how often have you been able to control the way you spend your time?	2.11	1.00
In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?	2.13	1.19

The descriptive statistics for the Body Appreciation Scale scores are presented in Table 4. The results indicated that the highest agreement was found for the statement "I feel that my body has at least some good qualities" (Mean = 4.41, SD = 0.80), followed by "Despite its imperfections, I still like my body" (Mean = 4.17, SD = 0.97). The lowest scoring item was "I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight" (Mean = 3.17, SD = 1.25).

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics for Body Appreciation Scores

Items	Mean	SD
I feel good about my body	3.74	0.83
On the whole, I am satisfied with my body	3.79	0.91
Despite its flaws, I accept my body for what it is	3.87	1.07
I feel that my body has at least some good qualities	4.41	0.80
I take a positive attitude toward my body	3.93	1.00
My self-worth is independent of my body shape or weight	3.50	1.26

I do not focus a lot of energy being concerned with my body shape or weight	3.17	1.25
My feelings toward my body are positive, for the most part	3.94	1.07
Despite its imperfections, I still like my body	4.17	0.97

4.3. Results According to Weekly Yoga Practice Frequency

Table 5 presents the differences in yoga self-efficacy, perceived stress, and body appreciation according to weekly yoga practice frequency. The Kruskal–Wallis test indicated no statistically significant differences in perceived stress ($\chi2(2) = 1.576$, $p = 0.455$) and body appreciation ($\chi2(2) = 1.804$, $p = 0.406$) among the groups. On the other hand, there were significant differences in yoga self-efficacy scores ($\chi2(2) = 14.319$, $p < 0.001$). The Mann-Whitney U test results showed that university students who participated yoga practice three times a week had significantly higher scores than the university students who participated yoga practice once a week ($U = 603$, $p < 0.001$) and twice a week ($U = 733$, $p < 0.036$). The results also revealed that university students who participated yoga practice twice a week had significantly higher scores than the university students who participated yoga practice once a week ($U = 917$, $p = 0.045$).

Table 5. Results According to Weekly Yoga Practice Frequency

Frequency	Once / week (n = 51)	Twice / week (n = 47)	Three or more / week (n = 42)
YSES	3.40 (± 0.89)	3.66 (± 0.74)	3.95 (± 0.61)
PSS	2.26 (± 0.37)	2.41 (± 0.41)	2.35 (± 0.38)
BAS	3.75 (± 0.94)	3.76 (± 0.84)	4.02 (± 0.67)

YSES: Yoga Self-Efficacy Score
PSS: Perceived Stress Score
BAS: Body Appreciation Score

4.4. Results According to Yoga Instruction Type

Table 6 represents the differences in yoga self-efficacy, perceived stress, and body

appreciation according to weekly yoga instruction type. The Kruskal–Wallis test demonstrated no statistically significant differences in yoga self-efficacy ($\chi2(2) = 0.927$, $p = 0.629$), perceived stress ($\chi2(2) = 5.370$, $p = 0.068$), and body appreciation ($\chi2(2) = 0.300$, $p = 0.861$) scores among the groups.

Table 6. Results According to Weekly Yoga Instruction Type

Frequency	Self-Instructed (n = 57)	Instructor-Led (n = 54)	Both (n = 29)
YSES	3.61 (± 0.82)	3.67 (± 0.83)	3.69 (± 0.71)
PSS	2.46 (± 0.37)	2.29 (± 0.41)	2.34 (± 0.34)
BAS	3.78 (± 0.90)	3.85 (± 0.83)	3.92 (± 0.74)

YSES: Yoga Self-Efficacy Score
PSS: Perceived Stress Score
BAS: Body Appreciation Score

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the levels of body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university students according to their weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type. The university period is known as a critical developmental stage. It is characterized by increased academic demands and shifting social expectations, which are considered to be the reasons of heightened vulnerability to stress and body image concerns. While mind-body practices such as yoga are widely recognized in the literature because of their benefits such as improving physical and emotional stability, this study aimed to address the possible existing research gaps. Therefore, how the frequency and format of yoga practice influence these psychophysiological outcomes in young women were specifically evaluated.

The findings of the current study yielded mixed results when they are compared to the initial hypotheses. Contrary to expectations, the results actually indicated no statistically significant differences in perceived stress and body appreciation based on weekly yoga practice frequency. Similarly, whether self-directed, instructor-led, or a combination of both, the instruction type did not significantly impact the participants' levels of yoga self-efficacy, perceived stress, or body appreciation.

However, a significant dose-response relationship was actually observed according to the results of the yoga self-efficacy scale. Female university students who engaged in yoga practice three or more times a week demonstrated higher yoga self-efficacy scores than those who practiced once or twice a week. These findings suggest that participating in yoga may not immediately alter the perceived stress or body appreciation. However, the practice frequency could be responsible for playing a crucial role in building a practitioner's confidence, as well as their perceived capability in their yoga practice.

5.1. The Impact of Yoga Practice Frequency

The result of the data found that higher weekly yoga practice frequency enhances the feeling of yoga self-efficacy. This finding actually aligns with the self-efficacy theory stated by Bandura (1977). According to Bandura's theory, mastery experiences are the primary drivers and the motivations of the self-efficacy, which are achieved through consistent physical and mental engagement. In the context of this study, female university students practicing three or more times a week accumulate more successful experiences compared to those practicing yoga less. These experiences include factors such as coordinating their breath, moving smoothly, and maintaining mental focus during the practice. This consistent engagement reinforces their belief in terms of their capacity to perform yoga poses and internalize yoga to their daily lives. This is parallel to Fuchs and Smyth's (2016) aspect, supporting that increased practice time and frequency are linked to higher levels of yoga self-efficacy.

On the contrary, the lack of significant relationship between yoga practice frequency and perceived stress could be explained by analyzing the literature regarding to yoga's cumulative effects in terms of stress reduction. Yet, stress has a complex nature, especially in university years. Therefore, the reason why there was not a significant result could be explained due to this; since stress can exist due to combination of several aspects such as academic demands, changing social environment and undetermined career plans, especially for female university students. The Perceived Stress Scale measures the subjective stress a person experiences over the past month by capturing the systemic and structural stress habits. Therefore, higher weekly yoga practice could not be enough to decrease these experiences on its own. Hence, though yoga provides acute parasympathetic activation and relaxation responses, the dose-response benefits of frequent yoga practice could not completely mitigate the university's possible overwhelming nature of stress combined by academic and social aspects in a cross-sectional observation. This also aligns and reflects the issues Weitz et al. (2023) observed. as he noted that the relationship between yoga dosage and perceived stress can be heavily influenced by the practitioner's external environment.

Similarly, body appreciation scores did not significantly differ based on practice

frequency. Body appreciation is a deeply rooted cognitive and emotional construct. It is heavily influenced by prolonged exposure to idealized social norms created by social environment and media. It is also connected to cultural conditioning, and appearance pressures. Although the literature suggests yoga fosters interoceptive awareness and positive body image, it could be difficult to change general body appreciation just by frequent yoga practice. The lack of significant difference suggests that this kind of shifting deeply internalized body image ideas might be more than just the weekly frequency of yoga practice and it could depend more heavily on the duration of a practitioner's overall yoga journey such as the total years of practice. This matches with Mahlo and Tiggemann's (2016) Embodiment Model. It is demonstrated in the model that fostering positive body image actually requires a sustained shift in how individuals experience their physical selves, and it is an important process that likely happens over a longer timeline rather than through short-term weekly frequency. Another factor could be their underlying intentions for practicing, such as approaching the practice and its benefits for more spiritual, physical or mental aspects. Thus, how many days a week they step onto the mat could not be completely enough to increase the level of body appreciation.

5.2. The Role of Yoga Instruction Type

This study also investigated whether the format of yoga instruction has a significant effect on the psychophysiological variables. There were three categories; self-directed, instructor-led, or a combination of both. The results demonstrated no significant differences in yoga self-efficacy, perceived stress, or body appreciation among the three instructional groups.

The absence of significant differences in yoga self-efficacy in terms of these three instruction types actually highlights a compelling and controversial insight into modern yoga practice among university students. In-person, instructor-led classes theoretically provide immediate feedback and personalized guidance to correct postures. On the other hand, self-directed practice requires and fosters an internal motivation, independence, and personal accountability. It is highly probable that students who engage in self-directed yoga already possess a baseline level of

competence and confidence. Therefore, this could balance out the external validation that is provided by an instructor. Consequently, both instruction types could appear equally effective in terms of successfully maintaining an individual's belief in their capability to perform yoga. These results are also parallel with the findings of Mullane et al. (2017). He demonstrated the comparative effectiveness between video-based and instructor-led yoga interventions in the study, as he suggested that the delivery format does not diminish the practice's underlying value.

Similarly, the lack of significant difference in perceived stress and body appreciation based on instruction type suggests that the intrinsic mechanisms of yoga are robust and adaptable. The core therapeutic elements of yoga could be explained by several factors; such as the stimulation of the parasympathetic nervous system, and the improvement of conscious breathing, and mindfulness. However, the instruction type does not seem to affect or alter how these factors function independently as the fundamental benefits of yoga remain consistent. Due to this fact, whether a female university student is guided by a certified instructor in a studio/ online class/ video, or simply practicing independently in her own personal area could just be a personal option which is the most suitable at that time. This finding is particularly relevant and important for university settings, as it highlights the fact that; accessible, self-led, or digital yoga practices can be just as valuable for psychological well-being as traditional studio classes.

5.3. Implications for University Wellness Programs

The combined findings of this study offer valuable, evidence-based insights for the development of psychological health and wellness programs on university campuses. Since the data indicates that frequent practice (three or more times a week) significantly enhances yoga self-efficacy, university administrations and campus fitness centers should prioritize accessibility and consistency over specific instructional formats

Because instruction type did not significantly alter perceived stress or body appreciation outcomes, universities can invest in a hybrid model of wellness offerings.

For example, a few free, or subsidized access to a mix of in-person classes can be provided for the students. In addition, pre-recorded digital libraries, and designated quiet spaces for self-directed practice can be quite useful as they can accommodate varying schedules, financial constraints, and personal preferences. By removing barriers to entry and encouraging frequent, consistent engagement, universities can empower female students to build the self-efficacy needed to sustain a lifelong, health-promoting practice, equipping them with better tools to navigate the versatile nature and pressures of academic life.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

This study provides several important insights describing the relationship between yoga practice and psychological well-being. However, there are a few limitations needs to be acknowledged. First of all, the study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional as the research design. Therefore, the collected data of psychological variables and yoga-related behaviors were assessed at a single point in time rather than a longer period. Thus, it is not possible to establish definitive causal relationships between yoga practice frequency, instruction type, and the resulting psychophysiological outcomes. Another limitation could be the fact that the data were collected with self-reported questionnaires. Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale, Perceived Stress Scale, and Body Appreciation Scale are validated and reliable instruments that have been used in many studies. However, self-reporting could inherently be susceptible to social desirability bias. In addition, it is the subjective interpretation of the participants' internal states. Therefore, the responses could be exaggerated or perhaps falsely completed.

Furthermore, the sample consisted of 140 female university students. The participants were recruited through convenience sampling from student clubs, online communities, and local gyms. This specific focus successfully managed to target a demographic that can be considered vulnerable to stress and body image concerns. However, it limits the possibility to generalize the findings to male university students. Also, the results cannot be conceptualized to non-university populations, or different age demographics. Finally, the inclusion criteria required participants to have practiced yoga for a minimum of only thirty days prior to the study.

Consequently, the current data may not be able to fully capture the nuanced psychological shifts that might have happened over years of dedicated practice. Also, it does not account for the potential effects of other physical activities the participants might engage in alongside yoga.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Research

Regarding the analysis of the findings and limitations of the current study, it can be suggested for future research to focus on prioritizing experimental and intervention designs, for a longer amount of time. The future research could track students over an entire academic year and benefit from the usage of randomized controlled trials. Benefitting from the systematic review from Pascoe and Bauer (2015), as the importance of the vigorous trials are specifically explained in that study, would help to allow researchers to observe causality. Moreover, it could be more efficient to measure how acute fluctuations in academic stress align with yoga practice habits over time.

The diversification of the sample population could be another recommendation for future studies. For example, male students could be included to expand the demographic scope. This would be helpful to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gender differences could play a role in influencing body appreciation and yoga self-efficacy. Additionally, it could be efficient to investigate these variables across cross-cultural context. For instance, the observation of international or exchange students' adaptation to new university environment could reveal how culturally diverse backgrounds influence the perception and utility of Yoga. This could be a perfect example to have detailed look at the emerging adulthood theory of Arnett (2000), as he explains how drastic changes in social environment can be a good reflection to study psychological behaviors and stress.

Finally, as the instruction type did not significantly alter the outcomes in this study, qualitative research that incorporates in-depth interviews could be highly beneficial. This would be helpful to uncover the specific and subjective reasons of the students' choice of self-directed or instructor-led practices. In addition, it could be beneficial to

understand how those personal preferences shape their mental health outcomes. Furthermore, since physical education encompasses a broad spectrum of disciplines, future research could focus on exploring how yoga interacts with other rigorous physical training. The investigation of the psychophysiological outcomes of students who combine yoga with high-intensity regimens, such as weightlifting or competitive sports, could offer deeper insights into holistic stress management and functional body appreciation.

5.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the nuanced role of yoga in terms of the psychophysiological well-being of female university students. The frequency and instructional format of yoga practice did not yield statistically significant changes in perceived stress or body appreciation within this specific sample. However, the findings actually illuminate a critical pathway for building self-efficacy. The participation in Yoga three or more times a week may serve a powerful aspect for enhancing a young woman's belief in her physical and mental capabilities on and off the mat. Furthermore, the lack of significant differences across instruction types highlights the versatile and accessible nature of yoga. That is; whether a student is guided by an instructor in a studio or self-directed by her own in a private space, the practice remains a viable and adaptable tool for student wellness. Ultimately, the integration of frequent and accessible yoga opportunities into university environments could be a valuable approach. It could play a significant role in terms of cultivating the self-efficacy necessary to navigate the academic and social pressures of early adulthood of female university students.

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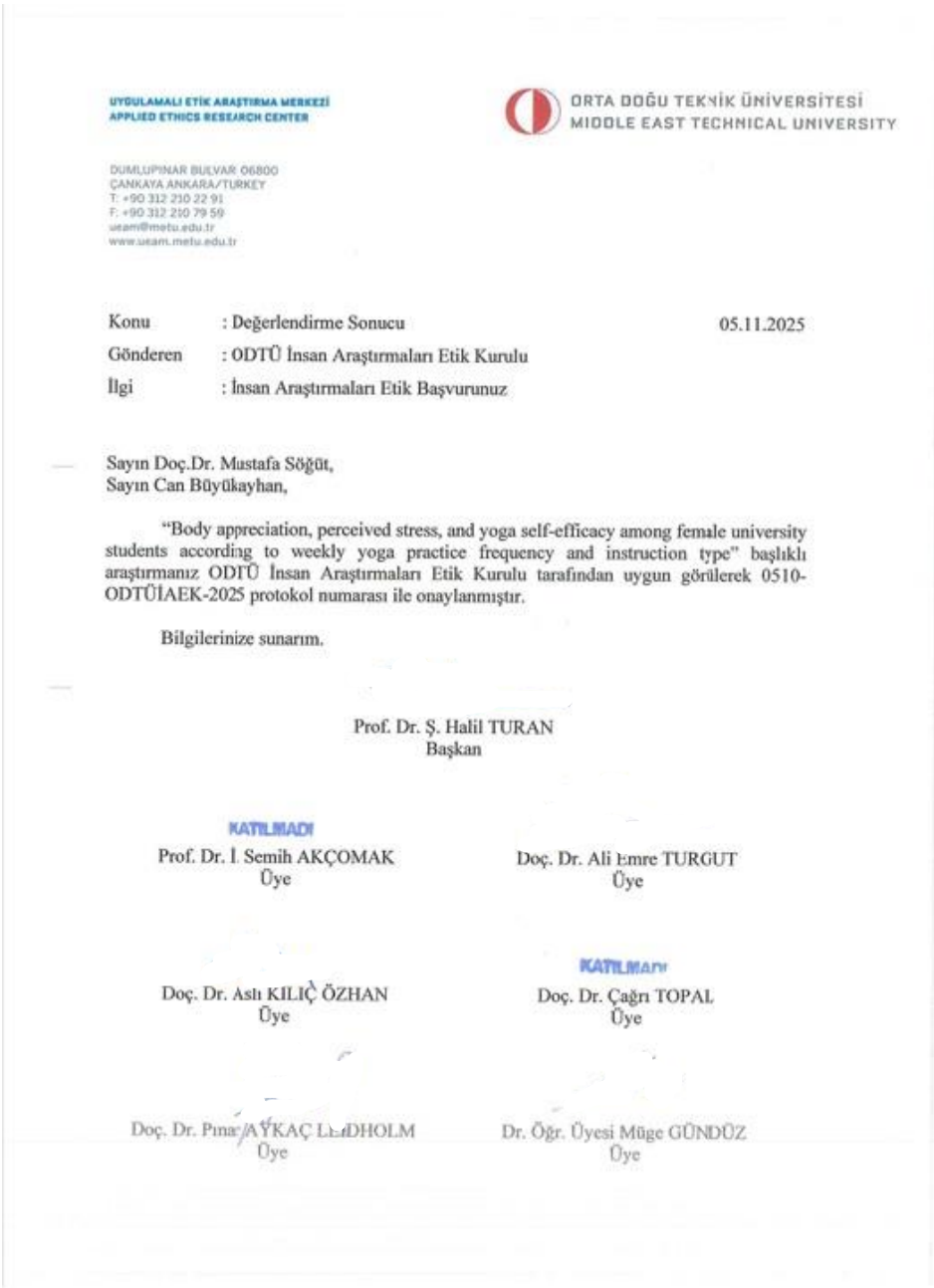
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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE



UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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Konu : Değerlendirme Sonucu 05.11.2025
Gönderen : ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu
İlgi : İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Başvurunuz

Sayın Doç.Dr. Mustafa Söğüt,
Sayın Can Büyükayhan,

"Body appreciation, perceived stress, and yoga self-efficacy among female university students according to weekly yoga practice frequency and instruction type" başlıklı araştırmanız ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek 0510-ODTÜİAEK-2025 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

KATILMADI
Prof. Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre TURGUT
Üye

Doç. Dr. Aslı KILIÇ ÖZHAN
Üye

KATILMADI
Doç. Dr. Çağrı TOPAL
Üye

Doç. Dr. Pınar AYKAÇ LUNDHOLM
Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

CAN BÜYÜKAYHAN

MSc Student – Physical Education and Sports
Middle East Technical University (METU), Türkiye

PROFILE

Master's student in Physical Education and Sports with an interdisciplinary background in sport science, psychology, and wellbeing. My research focuses on the psycho-physiological effects of yoga practice frequency and type on female university students, particularly in relation to perceived stress, body image, and self-efficacy.
Alongside my academic training, I am a certified yoga instructor with over 10 years of experience in fitness and strength training. I am seeking to pursue my career in an international academic or applied research environment combining physical activity, health, and wellbeing.

EDUCATION

MSc in Physical Education and Sports
Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Türkiye
September 2022 – May 2026 (expected)

Master's Thesis:
Body Appreciation, Perceived Stress, and Yoga Self-Efficacy Among Female University Students According to Weekly Yoga Practice Frequency and Instruction Type
Relevant coursework:
• Research Methods in Sport Sciences
• Exercise Psychology
• Physical Activity and Health
• Advanced Statistics in Sport Sciences

BSc in English Language Teaching
Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Türkiye
2016 – 2021
Erasmus+ Exchange Student
D'Annunzio University of Chieti–Pescara, Italy
2018 – 2019
Hungarian University of Sports Science- Budapest- Hungary
2023 – 2024

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Master's Researcher – Master's Thesis
METU, Department of Physical Education and Sports
• Designed and conducted a cross- sectional research study on yoga practice and wellbeing
• Used standardized psychological scales (Perceived Stress Scale, Body Appreciation Scale, Yoga Self-Efficacy Scale)
• Responsible for data collection, data cleaning, and statistical analysis
• Conducted literature review in the fields of sport psychology, wellbeing, and mind–body practices

Undergraduate Research Assistant
METU, Department of Foreign Language Education
• Assisted in data collection for a research project on code-switching
• Supported qualitative analysis and academic reporting

TEACHING & PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Yoga & Fitness Instructor (In-person & Online)
Private practice, Türkiye
2020 – Present
• Conducted individual and group yoga sessions (online and face-to-face)
• Designed yoga programs focused on stress management and wellbeing
• Provided strength training and functional fitness coaching
• Worked with clients of different ages and fitness levels

English Language Tutor
Private practice, Türkiye
2019 – Present
• Provided one-to-one English instruction for university, high school students and adults.
• Prepared students for proficiency and university entrance exams
• Developed personalized learning materials

Intern English Teacher
Ankara Atatürk High School, Türkiye
2019 – 2020
• Assisted in classroom teaching and lesson planning
• Observed and applied pedagogical methods in formal education

CERTIFICATIONS

• RYT 200+ Yoga Instructor Certificate – Yoga Alliance
• Erasmus+ Participation Certificates (Italy & Hungary)
• Certificate of Attendance – Train the Brain Conference, Dr. Sam Said
• Certificate of Attendance – METU Radio Society Conferences

LANGUAGE SKILLS

Turkish – Native
English – Fluent (C2)
Italian – Basic (A2)

DIGITAL & RESEARCH SKILLS

• Microsoft Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel)
• Zoom, online teaching platforms
• SPSS / basic statistical analysis
• Online survey tools (Google Forms)
• Academic literature search (Google Scholar, Scopus)

ADDITIONAL INTERESTS

• Yoga & wellness
• Strength training & functional fitness
• Guitar (fingerstyle flamenco), singing
• Healthy lifestyle and mind–body practices
• Travelling, camping, hiking

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

1. GİRİŞ

Üniversite yılları, bireylerin karakterlerini geliştirmesi açısından kritik bir rol oynayan bir dönem olarak düşünülebilir. Artan akademik gereksinimler, genişleyen yeni sosyal ağlar ve bu alanda gereken bireysel sorumlulukların artması nedeniyle, üniversite yılları her genç yetişkin için önemli bir gelişim dönemini temsil eder ve yansıtır. Bu dönem çoğunlukla, bireyin kendini keşfetmesinde yeni ve benzersiz bir yol sunar. Tüm bunlarla bağlantını olan bu dönem, yetişkinliğin başlangıcı ile birlikte gelir (Arnett, 2000). Dahası bu süreç, kaçınılmaz olarak bir kişinin geleceğini ve nihayetinde hayatını şekillendirecek olan bir yaşam yolu olan yetişkinliği inşa etmenin başlangıcı olarak işaretlenebilecek bir dönemdir.

Bu dönem sayısız fırsat ve hayata yeni bir bakış açısı sunuyor gibi görünse de getirdiği yenilikler ve faydalar kadar gençlerin üniversite yıllarında yaşamaya eğilimli oldukları bazı zorluklar da vardır. Artan yaşamsal ve bireysel sorumluluklar, akademik rekabet ve ekonomik talepler stres seviyesini artırabilir ve bu artış ileri seviyeye gelirse kaygıya, depresyona ve tatminsizlik hissine yol açabilir. Tüm bunların yanı sıra özellikle genç kadınlarda fiziksellikle beraber gelen ve sosyal medyanın da buna bağlantısı dolayısıyla, artan sosyal beklentilerle karşı karşıya kalma durumu söz konusu olmaktadır ve bu da onların kendilerine yönelik algıladığı beden memnuniyetini azaltabilmektedir (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Sonuç olarak, stres seviyelerinin artması, beden memnuniyetinin azalması ve psikolojik sağlığın bozulmasının birleşimi, bu dönemin önemli ve üzerine düşülmesi gereken bir zaman dilimi olduğunu göstermiştir.

Bu sorunlar, kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin fiziksel ve psikolojik sağlığını güçlendirebilecek uygulanabilir ve etkili yaklaşımlara duyulan ihtiyacı daha açık bir şekilde ortaya koymaktadır. Yoga gibi zihin-beden pratikleri, fiziksel ve duygusal stabilizasyonu geliştirmek ve beden sağlığı için de daha verimli ve sağlıklı davranışlara yönlendirmek amacıyla giderek daha fazla kullanılan teknikler olarak günümüzde tekrar popülerliğini kazanıp öne çıkmaktadır. Literatürde yoganın

psikofizyolojik faydaları üzerine, özellikle stresin azaltılması ve beden temelli tutumların iyileştirilmesi bağlamında artan bir ilgi bulunmaktadır (Alleva, 2020). Çok sayıda çalışma, yoga uygulamalarının birçok farklı ortamda ve popülasyonda daha düşük stres algısı, daha sağlıklı bir ruh hali ve duygusal stabilizasyon ile bağlantılı olduğunu göstermiştir (Cox, 2019). Bu etkiler çoğunlukla, parasempatik sistemin aktivasyonunu ve aşırı uyarılmanın azalmasını sağlayan bilinçli nefes alma, postüral hareket ve dikkatli odaklanmayı içeren yoganın çok yönlü ve bütünleştirici doğasıyla bağlantılıdır.

Bununla birlikte, birçok araştırma çalışma esnasında müdahale temelli veya uzun süreli egzersiz programlarına odaklanma eğilimindeyken, üniversite düzeyinde yoganın uzun vadede doğal deneyimini gösteren çalışmalar sınırlı kalmaktadır. Ayrıca, güvenilir ve geçerliliği kanıtlanmış ölçümler kullanarak algılanan stresi, beden memnuniyetini ve yoga öz-yeterliğini aynı teorik yapıda eş zamanlı olarak inceleyen az sayıda çalışma bulunmaktadır. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma literatürdeki bu eksikleri biraz da olsa kapatıp, yoganın üniversite yıllarında kadınların fiziksel ve zihinsel sağlığına etkisini daha kapsamlı bir şekilde anlamayı amaçlamaktadır.

2. LİTERATÜR TARAMASI

2.1. Üniversite Öğrencisi Kadınlarında Vücut İmajı, Benlik Algısı ve Sağlıklı Yaşam

Vücut imajı, bir bireyin fiziksel görünümünü algılama biçimini ve bu konudaki algılarına göre nasıl davrandığını tanımlayan bir terimdir (Avalos vd., 2005). Beden imajı, özellikle yetişkinliğin ilk aşamalarına giren genç kadınlar arasında psikolojik davranışlarda çok önemli bir unsurdur. Öğrenciler genellikle beklenen, idealleştirilen ve çoğunlukla değişen güzellik tipleri gibi artan sosyal normlarla yüzleşir ve bu normlara karşı daha duyarlı hale gelme eğilimindedirler; bu da eninde sonunda onların benlik ve beden algılarını etkiler.

Beden memnuniyeti, bireyin fiziksel görünümünü sosyal ve estetik beklentilerden bağımsız olarak kabul etme, saygı duyma ve benimseme kapasitesini temsil eder (Avalos vd., 2005). Bedenin kapasitesi için minnettarlığı, fiziksel görünümle barışık olmayı ve sosyal durumların yarattığı beklenen ve idealleştirilmiş normların reddedilmesini içerir. Kadınlar için güçlü ve pozitif bir beden imajına sahip olmak,

strese, sağlıksız yeme alışkanlıklarına ve içselleştirilmiş görünüm zorluklarına karşı bir savunma mekanizması görevi gördüğü için önemli bir odak alanıdır (Halliwell, 2013). Kadın üniversite öğrencileri, entelektüel, kültürel ve sosyal yönlerin birleşimi nedeniyle ideal beden imajının değişen doğasına karşı özellikle duyarlı olduklarını göstermişlerdir. Bu nedenle, öz farkındalığı, fiziksel pratiği ve bilinçli aktiviteleri motive eden yöntemler, daha sağlıklı bir yaşam tarzını teşvik eden fiziksel/zihinsel aktivitelere yol açabilir. Tüm bunların net ve doğal ortamında açıklanabilmesi için bu çalışma, güvenilir ve onaylanmış bir ölçme şekli olarak Beden memnuniyeti ölçeğinden faydalanmıştır (Avalos vd., 2005).

2.2. Stres ve Psikofizyolojik Yanıtlar

Stres hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik süreçleri içeren karmaşık bir kavram olarak bilinir (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Üniversite öğrencileri için stres çoğunlukla akademik taleplerin aşırı yükü, değişen sosyal durumlar, çevresel zorluklar, ekonomik problemler ve belirsiz gelecek ve kariyer planları nedeniyle yaşanmaktadır. Bu tür zorluklar nedeniyle, öğrenciler artık duygularını dengelemekte zorluklar yaşamaya başlayabilir ve hayattaki hedeflerini gerçekleştiremeyecekmiş gibi hissedebilirler. Bu ve bu tarz hissiyat da ne yazık ki bu stres hissinin üstesinden gelmek için sağlıksız alışkanlıklara yol açabilir. Pek çok genç kadın için bu duygu, belirli bir ortama ait hissetmemenin yanı sıra fiziksel görünümleri için yeterince tatmin olmamak gibi ekstra zorluklarla birlikte gelebilir.

Artan algılanan stres seviyeleri uykusuzluk, bağışıklık sisteminin baskılanması ve kaygı ve depresyonla başa çıkmada yetersiz hissetme gibi sağlık sorunlarıyla da bağlantılıdır (Chrousos, 2009). Özellikle genç kadın üniversite öğrencileri için farkındalığı ve fiziksel/zihinsel dengeyi artıran uygun terapiler bulmak amacıyla stresin psikofizyolojik yönlerini kavramak çok önemlidir. Stres yönetimine yönelik farkındalık uygulamaları ve fiziksel hareket/nefes teknikleri gibi ruhsal uygulamalara artan ilgi nedeniyle, stresi yoga gibi zihin-beden müdahaleleriyle bağlantılı olarak araştırmak, öğrencileri kapsayan sağlıklı yaşam alanındaki araştırmalara önemli katkılar sunabilir. Tüm bunların daha detaylı olması için, bu çalışma güvenilir ve onaylanmış ölçeklerden olan Algılanan Stres Ölçeğini kullanmıştır (Cohen vd., 1983).

2.3. Psiko-Fizyolojik Bir Pratik Olarak Yoga

Yoga geleneksel Hint yaşam tarzından doğarak günümüze kadar ulaşan bir egzersiz ve sağlıklı yaşam tekniğidir. Yoga, fiziksel hareketler ile nefes alma tekniklerini ve meditasyonu birleştiren yaygın ve popüler bir zihin-beden uygulamasıdır (Woodyard, 2011). Fiziksel postüral hareketleri nefes alma egzersizleriyle birleştirerek enerji temelli farkındalığı içeren çok yönlü sistemi, yoganın hem fiziksel hem de psikolojik sağlığımızı olumlu etkileyen önemli ve bütünleştirici bir kavram olarak hayatımızda, ve aynı zamanda egzersiz bilimleri dahil olmak üzere birçok farklı disiplini de kapsayarak literatürde kalmasını sağlamıştır. Yoga pratiklerinde fiziksel yönlerden poz uygulamalarının, sempatik sistemi inhibe eden ve faydalı rahatlama tepkileri oluşturan parasempatik sinir sistemini uyardığı gösterilmiştir (Streeter vd., 2012). Psikolojik açıdan ise yoga, artan iç algısal (interoceptive) farkındalığı teşvik ederek bireylerin içsel durumları ve fiziksel duyumlarıyla uyum içinde olmalarını destekler (Cook-Cottone, 2015).

Üniversite ortamlarındaki kadınlar için yoga, çok yönlü doğası nedeniyle özellikle faydalıdır. Yoganın fiziksel ve psikolojik yönlerinin birleşimi, akademik stresin bunaltıcı hissini azaltmaya büyük katkılar sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, odaklanmayı ve konsantrasyonu iyileştirmeye yardımcı olabilir. Ek olarak, yoganın beden farkındalığı üzerindeki etkisi; bedeni daha fazla takdir etmek, kendini nesneleştirme hissini azaltmak ve sağlam bir öz saygı ve güvene sahip olmaya yardımcı olmak gibi pozitif vücut imajı sonuçlarıyla ilişkilidir (Daubenmier, 2005; Mahlo & Tiggemann, 2016). Yoganın erişilebilir ve kolay uygulanabilir doğası, onu üniversite ortamlarında ve popülasyonlarında verimli bir uygulama haline getirmektedir.

2.4. Yoga Öz-Yeterliği ve Pratiğe Katılım

Öz-yeterlik, bir kişinin ulaşmaya çalıştığı belirli bir noktaya veya hedefe ulaşmak için gerekli eylemleri gerçekleştirme yeteneğine ilişkin kendi fikrini tanımlayan bir terimdir (Bandura, 1977). Yoga gibi zihin-beden yöntemleri söz konusu olduğunda öz-yeterlik kelimesi; genel motivasyonu geliştirmede, aktif katılımı sürdürmede ve pratiğin verimliliğini kavramada önemli bir rol oynar. Yoga öz-yeterliği özellikle pratik esnasında bireyin yoga pozlarını uygulama ve düzenli bir nefes alma akışını sürdürme motivasyonunu yansıtır. Ayrıca, odağını koruma ve yoganın sunduğu tüm bu faydaları günlük yaşamla birleştirme kapasitesine olan inancını gösterir. Genç

kadınlar için yoga öz-yeterliği, sadece yoga pozlarını gerçekleştirme motivasyonlarıyla değil, aynı zamanda stresin azaldığını deneyimleme ve bedensel özelliklerini oldukları gibi kabul etmek için zihinlerinde olumlu vücut imajını geliştirme kapasiteleriyle de ilişkili olabilir. Yoga yapma konusunda kendine güvenen ve doğru bir şekilde uygulayabileceğine inanan kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin, yoga pratiğini daha düzenli ve sık yaptığı gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca onlar yeni teknikleri keşfetme ve bu kazanımları sürdürme eğilimindedir; ki bunların hepsi aslında yoganın psiko-fizyolojik faydalarının geliştirilmesinde çok önemli bir rol oynayan faktörlerdir (Fuchs & Smyth, 2016; Weitz vd., 2023).

Bedensel özelliklerde özgüvenin artması daha iyi bir benlik algısı geliştirebileceğinden ve olumsuz değerlendirmeye yönelik eğilimi azaltabileceğinden, fiziksel görünüm sorunları veya öz eleştiriyle karşı karşıya kalabilen genç kadın üniversite öğrencileri için bu durum özellikle hayati önem taşımaktadır. Bu sebeple, bu tarz durumların yoga öz-yeterliliği ile nasıl etkileştiğini daha kapsamlı şekilde anlayabilmek için bu çalışmada güvenilir ve onaylı Yoga öz-yeterlik ölçeği kullanılmıştır (Billen, 2011)

.

2.5. Yoga Uygulama Türü ve Pratik Sıklığı

Son yıllarda yoga pratiği uygulama şekli geleneksel stüdyo temelli eğitim türlerinin ötesine geçmiştir. Bu durum farklı tercihlere, yaşam tarzlarına ve ihtiyaçlara uygun yeni eğitim ve uygulama türleri için bir şans yaratmıştır. Günümüzde yoga pratiği, sertifikalı yoga eğitmenleri tarafından gerçekleştirilen yüz yüze derslerde veya çevrimiçi yoga derslerinde gerçekleştirilebilmektedir. Yüz yüze uygulama ve eğitmen eşliğinde dersler, tipik olarak anında geri bildirim şansı yaratır ve bu da öğrencilerin yanlış duruşları anında düzeltmelerine yardımcı olur (Cook-Cottone, 2015). Öte yandan, çevrimiçi veya bireysel yönetilen türdeki dersler, daha büyük bir bağımsızlık ve güven duygusu sunarak bireyleri uygulamayı kendi hızlarında ve ihtiyaçlarında yapmaları için daha olumlu yönden etki sağlayabilir (Wadhawan, 2020). Ancak, doğrudan eğitmen geri bildirimi ve akran teması eksikliği, sorumluluk duygusunu, pozları doğru uygulama konusundaki özgüveni ve genel yoga öz yeterliliğini etkileyebilir. (Mullane, 2017).

Eğitim türünün yanı sıra, yoga pratiğinin sıklığı da yoganın psiko-fizyolojik etkilerini belirlemede çok önemli bir unsurdur. Yoganın genel stresi azaltma etkisi, duygusal

dengeyi sağlaması ve pozitif beden imajı anlayışını geliştirmesi gibi uzun süreli ve kapsamlı sonuçlarını elde etmek için düzenli yoga pratiğinin gerekli olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ancak, bilimsel araştırmalar, özellikle kadın üniversite öğrencileri arasında, uygulama sıklığındaki farklılıkların eğitim türüyle nasıl etkileşime girerek algılanan stresi, beden beğenisini ve öz yeterliliği etkilediğini neredeyse hiç incelememiştir. Bu nedenle, yoga uygulama türünün ve pratik sıklığının birleşik ve bağımsız rollerini anlamak, yoga uygulamalarının bu popülasyonda psikolojik sağlığı desteklemek için en iyi şekilde nasıl yapılandırılabileceğine dair değerli yönler sunabilir.

3. YÖNTEM

3.1. Araştırma Tasarımı ve Katılımcılar Bu çalışmada, kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin haftalık yoga uygulama sıklığı ve uygulama türüne göre beden memnuniyeti, algılanan stres ve yoga öz-yeterlik düzeylerini araştırmak amacıyla nicel, kesitsel bir araştırma tasarımı kullanılmıştır. Kesitsel anket yaklaşımı, belirlenmiş bir popülasyonda ve zaman diliminde psikolojik değişkenleri ve yogaya ilişkin davranışları değerlendirmek amacıyla uygun görülmüştür. Bu tasarım, deneysel bir manipülasyon içermediğinden, katılımcıların doğal yaşam tarzlarındaki mevcut yoga alışkanlıklarını yansıtarak grupları karşılaştırmaya olanak tanımıştır.

Çalışmaya, yaş ortalaması 25.42 ± 6.42 olan toplam 140 kadın üniversite öğrencisi katılmıştır. Katılımcıların çalışmaya dâhil edilme kriterleri; (a) çalışma sırasında düzenli olarak yoga yapan, en az on sekiz yaşında kadın üniversite öğrencisi olmak, (b) en az otuz günlük yoga geçmişine sahip olmak ve (c) haftada en az bir kez yoga yapıyor olmaktır. Veriler, üniversite ortamından kolayca yanıt toplamak amacıyla öğrenci kulüpleri, sağlıklı yaşam toplulukları, spor salonları ve yoga stüdyoları aracılığıyla kolayda örnekleme (convenience sampling) yöntemi ile elde edilmiştir. Haftalık yoga sıklığı; minimum (haftada 1 seans), ortalama (haftada 2 seans) ve yüksek (haftada 3 veya daha fazla seans) olmak üzere üç kategoriye ayrılmıştır. Yoga uygulama türü ise bireysel (kendi kendine pratik), eğitmen eşliğinde (stüdyo veya çevrimiçi dersler) ve her ikisinin karma kullanımı olarak sınıflandırılmıştır.

3.2. Veri Toplama Araçları ve Süreç Veriler, güvenirliği ve geçerliliği kanıtlanmış dört bölümden oluşan çevrimiçi bir anket aracılığıyla toplanmıştır: (1) Demografik veriler, (2) Yoga Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği, (3) Algılanan Stres Ölçeği, (4) Beden Memnuniyeti Ölçeği.

Demografik veriler katılımcıların yaş, eğitim yılı, yoga geçmişi düzeyi, haftalık pratik sıklığı ve tercih ettikleri yoga türü gibi bilgilerini içermektedir. Yoga Öz-Yeterlik Ölçeği (YÖYÖ), bireylerin yoga pozlarını yapma, zihinsel ve fiziksel sorunları ele alma ve düzenli bir pratik sürdürme konusundaki özgüvenlerini ölçen 12 maddelik bir araçtır. Yoga Öz- Yeterlik ölçeği, (Birdee vd., 2016) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve (Küçükelci, 2018) tarafından Türkçe'ye adapte edilmiştir. Yüksek puanlar, daha yüksek yoga öz-yeterlik düzeyini göstermektedir. Algılanan Stres Ölçeği (ASÖ), katılımcıların hayatlarını ne kadar öngörülemez, kontrol edilemez ve aşırı yoğun hissettiklerini değerlendirmiştir. Algılanan Stres Ölçeği (Cohen vd., 1983) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve (Eskin vd., 2013) tarafından Türkçe'ye adapte edilmiştir. Yüksek puanlar yüksek stres seviyelerine işaret etmektedir. Beden Memnuniyeti Ölçeği (BMÖ) ise katılımcıların bedenleriyle ilgili algılarını değerlendirmek amacıyla kullanılmış olup, yüksek ortalamalar bireylerin bedenlerine yönelik takdirinin arttığını göstermektedir. Beden Memnuniyeti ölçeği (Avalos vd, 2005) tarafından geliştirilmiş ve (Bakalım and Taşdelen Karçkay, 2016) tarafından Türkçe'ye çevrilmiştir.

Çalışma için gerekli etik kurul onayı (0510-ODTUİAEK-2025) Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu'ndan veri toplanmaya başlanmadan önce alınmıştır. İstatistiksel analizlerde, verilerin normallik varsayımını ihlal etmesi nedeniyle değişkenler arasındaki farkları incelemek için Kruskal-Wallis testi kullanılmış ve ikili karşılaştırmalar Mann-Whitney U testi ile yapılmıştır; anlamlılık düzeyi $p < 0,05$ olarak belirlenmiştir.

4. BULGULAR

Demografik bulgulara göre, katılımcıların büyük bir kısmı lisans öğrencileridir (%69,29, n = 97). Bu grubu yüksek lisans (%18.57, n = 26) ve doktora (%12.14, n = 17) öğrencileri takip etmiştir. Yoga uygulama türü verileri incelendiğinde; öğrencilerin %40,71'inin (n = 57) kendi kendine yoga yaptığı, %38,57'sinin (n = 54) eğitmen eşliğinde derslere katıldığı ve %20,71'inin (n = 29) her iki yöntemi birlikte

kullandığı görülmüştür. Pratik sıklığı bakımından ise katılımcıların %36,43'ü (n = 51) haftada bir kez, %33,57'si (n = 47) haftada iki kez ve %30.00'u (n = 42) haftada üç veya daha fazla kez yoga yapmaktadır.

Tanımlayıcı istatistiklere bakıldığında, YÖYÖ skorlarında en yüksek ortalamaların "Hareketleri yaparken olabildiğince rahat kalabiliyorum" (Ort = 3.89, SS = 0.91) ve "Zihnimi bedenimin hareketlerine odaklı tutabiliyorum" ifadelerinde olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. ASÖ'de algılanan en yüksek stres kaynağı, "kendilerini başarmak zorunda oldukları şeyleri düşünürken bulma sıklığı" (Ort = 3.01, SS = 1.05) olarak öne çıkmıştır. Beden Memnuniyeti Ölçeği sonuçlarında ise en yüksek katılım "Bedenimin en azından bazı iyi nitelikleri olduğunu hissediyorum" (Ort = 4.41, SS = 0.80) maddesinde saptanmıştır.

Haftalık yoga uygulama sıklığına göre yapılan analizler (Kruskal-Wallis testi), algılanan stres ($\chi2(2) = 1.576$, $p = 0.455$) ve beden memnuniyeti ($\chi2(2) = 1.804$, $p = 0.406$) düzeylerinde gruplar arasında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir fark olmadığını ortaya koymuştur. Buna karşın, yoga öz-yeterlik skorlarında istatistiksel olarak anlamlı farklılıklar ($\chi2(2) = 14.319$, $p <0.001$) bulunmuştur. Mann-Whitney U testi sonuçlarına göre, haftada üç kez veya daha fazla pratik yapan öğrencilerin skorları, haftada bir ($U = 603$, $p <0.001$) ve haftada iki ($U = 733$, $p = 0.036$) kez pratik yapan öğrencilere kıyasla anlamlı derecede daha yüksektir. Yoga uygulama türüne (bireysel, eğitmen liderliğinde veya her ikisi) göre yapılan analizlerde ise yoga öz-yeterliği ($p = 0.629$), algılanan stres ($p = 0.068$) ve beden memnuniyeti ($p = 0.861$) açısından hiçbir grupta istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir farklılık görülmemiştir.

5. TARTIŞMA VE SONUÇ

5.1. Yoga Pratiği Sıklığının Etkisi Başlangıç hipotezlerinin aksine, bu çalışmada haftalık yoga sıklığının algılanan stres veya beden memnuniyetinde anlamlı bir değişime neden olmadığı saptanmıştır. Ancak veriler, doz-yanıt ilişkisi bağlamında haftada üç veya daha fazla yoga yapmanın, kişinin kapasitesine ve inancına yönelik güçlü bir etken olan yoga öz-yeterliğini anlamlı bir şekilde artırdığını ortaya koymuştur. Bu bulgu, ustalık deneyimlerinin öz-yeterliğin birincil etkileyen gücü olduğunu savunan Bandura'nın (1977) teorisi ile büyük ölçüde uyumludur. Haftada en az üç kez pratik yapan kadın üniversite öğrencileri, nefes kontrolü ve bedensel

koordinasyon bağlamında daha tutarlı başarılar elde ederek bu pratiği günlük yaşantılarına entegre edebilme yeteneklerine dair inançlarını pekiştirmektedirler. Bu, Fuchs ve Smyth'in (2016) artan uygulama süresi ve sıklığının daha yüksek yoga öz yeterlilik seviyeleriyle bağlantılı olduğunu destekleyen görüşüyle paralellik göstermektedir.

Algılanan stres ile yoga sıklığı arasında anlamlı bir bağlantı bulunamaması, stresin üniversite yıllarında sahip olduğu son derece karmaşık yapısıyla açıklanabilir. Akademik talepler, sosyal çevre değişiklikleri ve kariyer belirsizlikleri, sadece haftalık fiziksel bir pratikle tamamen yatıştırılamayacak yapısal stres alışkanlıkları yaratabilir. Dolayısıyla, yoga akut parasempatik aktivasyon ve gevşeme tepkileri sağlasa da sık yoga uygulamasının doz-yanıt faydaları, kesitsel bir gözlemde üniversitenin akademik ve sosyal yönlerin birleşimiyle oluşan olası bunaltıcı stresini tamamen hafifletememiştir. Bu durum, Weitz ve diğerlerinin (2023) gözlemlediği sorunlarla da örtüşmekte ve bunları yansıtmaktadır; zira kendisi yoga dozu ile algılanan stres arasındaki ilişkinin uygulayıcının dış çevresinden büyük ölçüde etkilenebileceğini belirtmiştir.

Benzer şekilde, beden memnuniyetinin kısa vadeli pratik sıklığından etkilenmemesi, beden algısının medyada idealleştirilmiş güzellik normları ve kültürel koşullamalar tarafından derinden etkilenen bilişsel ve duygusal bir yapı olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Derin içselleştirilmiş bu fikirleri değiştirmek, salt haftalık sıklıktan ziyade, pratiğe adanmış genel yıllar gibi uzun soluklu bir zaman çizelgesini gerektirebilir. Bu, Mahlo ve Tiggemann'ın (2016) Bedenleşme Modeli ile örtüşmektedir. Modelde, olumlu beden imajını geliştirmenin aslında bireylerin fiziksel benliklerini deneyimleme biçimlerinde sürdürülebilir bir değişim gerektirdiği ve bunun kısa vadeli haftalık sıklıkla değil, daha uzun bir zaman diliminde gerçekleşmesi muhtemel önemli bir süreç olduğu gösterilmektedir.

b. **Yoga Uygulama Türünün Rolü** Eğitmen eşliğinde veya kişinin kendi yönlendirmesiyle yoga yapmasının, psikolojik değişkenler (öz-yeterlik, stres, beden memnuniyeti) üzerinde anlamlı bir farklılık yaratmadığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu sonuç, kendi kendine pratik yapan öğrencilerin halihazırda belli bir yetkinlik seviyesine ulaştıkları ve dışsal bir onaya ihtiyaç duymadan da öz-yeterliklerini koruyabildikleri anlamına gelebilir. Yoganın temel

faydalarını sağlayan parasempatik uyarılma, bilinçli nefes alma ve farkındalık gibi mekanizmalar sağlam ve uyarlanabilirdir; bu nedenle alınan talimatın formatı (yüz yüze ders, çevrimiçi video veya bireysel) söz konusu faydaların işleyişini değiştirmemektedir. Bu sonuçlar, Mullane vd. (2017)'nin bulgularıyla da paralellik göstermektedir. Mullane, çalışmasında video tabanlı ve eğitmen liderliğindeki yoga uygulamaları arasındaki karşılaştırmalı etkinliği göstermiş ve uygulama biçiminin uygulamanın temel değerini azaltmadığını öne sürmüştür. Bu durum, dijital ve bireysel pratiklerin de en az geleneksel stüdyo sınıfları kadar psikolojik iyi oluş için değerli olabileceğini göstermektedir.

5.3. Sınırlılıklar ve Öneriler Araştırma sonuçları, üniversite yönetimlerinin ve kampüs sağlık merkezlerinin belirli bir öğretim biçimine değil; erişilebilirliğe, tutarlılığa ve pratik sürekliliğine öncelik vermesi gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Öğrencilere esnek planlanmış hibrit modeller, ücretsiz dersler ve kişisel çalışma alanları sunularak önlerindeki engellerin kaldırılması büyük önem taşımaktadır.

Çalışmanın bazı sınırlılıkları bulunmaktadır; kesitsel araştırma yapısı nedeniyle değişkenler arasında nedensel ilişkiler kurulamamıştır ve veriler sadece kendini raporlama anketleri üzerinden elde edilmiştir. Ayrıca katılımcıların son 30 gün içinde yoga yapmış olmalarının yeterli sayılması, yıllara dayanan adanmışlık gerektiren pratiğin yarattığı derin psikolojik değişimlerin tam anlamıyla gözlemlenmesini engellemiş olabilir. Gelecekteki çalışmaların, öğrencileri tüm akademik yıl boyunca izleyen boylamsal müdahale tasarımlarına yönelmesi tavsiye edilebilir. Pascoe ve Bauer'in (2015) sistematik incelemesinden yararlanmak, özellikle bu çalışmada titiz müdahale deneylerinin önemi açıklandığı için, araştırmacıların nedenselliği gözlemlemelerine yardımcı olacaktır. Ayrıca, örneklemin çeşitlendirilmesine (örneğin erkek öğrencilerin veya uluslararası öğrencilerin sürece dâhil edilmesi) ve öğrencilerin ağırlık kaldırma ya da rekabetçi sporlar gibi diğer fiziksel aktivitelerle yogayı nasıl birleştirdiklerini araştırmaya odaklanması önerilmektedir. Bu, Arnett'in (2000) ortaya çıkan yetişkinlik teorisine ayrıntılı bir bakış atmak için mükemmel bir örnek olabilir; zira Arnett, sosyal çevredeki köklü değişikliklerin psikolojik davranışları ve stresi incelemek için iyi bir yansıma olabileceğini açıklamaktadır.

5.4. Sonuç

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin psikofizyolojik sağlığı açısından yoganın rolünü araştırmıştır. Yoga pratiğinin sıklığı ve uygulama biçimi, bu özel örneklemde algılanan stres veya vücut beğenisinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı değişikliklere yol açmamıştır. Bununla birlikte, bulgular aslında öz yeterlik oluşturmanın kritik bir yolunu aydınlatmaktadır. Haftada üç veya daha fazla kez yogaya katılmak, genç bir kadının mat üzerinde ve dışındaki hayatında fiziksel ve zihinsel yeteneklerine olan inancını artırmak için güçlü bir unsur olarak hizmet etmektedir. Dahası, öğretim türleri arasında anlamlı farklılıkların olmaması, yoganın çok yönlü ve erişilebilir doğasını vurgulamaktadır. Yani; bir öğrenci bir stüdyoda bir eğitmen tarafından yönlendirilse de özel bir alanda kendi kendine yönlendirilse de uygulama öğrenci sağlığı için geçerli ve uyarlanabilir bir araç olmaya devam etmektedir. Sonuç olarak, sık ve erişilebilir yoga fırsatlarının üniversite ortamlarına entegrasyonu değerli bir yaklaşım olup, kadın üniversite öğrencilerinin erken yetişkinlik dönemindeki akademik ve sosyal baskılarla başa çıkmak için gerekli öz yeterliliği geliştirme açısından önemli bir rol oynayabilir.

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