



AWARENESS OF THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF YOGA AND THE DETERMINANTS INFLUENCING ITS PRACTICE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN DANANG, VIETNAM

Phan Ngoc Thiet Ke,ⁱ

Tran Thi Vi Van

MA.,

Faculty of Physical Education,

University of Danang,

Da Nang City, Vietnam

Abstract:

This study aims to assess students' awareness of the health-related roles of yoga, as well as the factors that either facilitate or hinder its practice among students at the University of Danang. A questionnaire survey was administered to 240 students currently enrolled in elective yoga courses. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of students demonstrate a positive perception of yoga's benefits, particularly in relation to physical health (62.1%), mental well-being (66.7%), and social relationships (51.3%). However, only 34.2% of participants provided an accurate definition of yoga. More specific knowledge items yielded relatively low correct response rates: practice methods (6.7%), timing (6.3%), duration (3.8%), and appropriate space for practice (11.7%). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified four groups of barriers to yoga participation: (1) personal beliefs and values, (2) prior negative experiences, (3) access difficulties, and (4) constraints related to time and health. These factors exhibited Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients of 0.83, 0.75, 0.66, and 0.61, respectively. Conversely, three key motivators for practicing yoga were identified: (1) support for developing social and community relationships ($\alpha = 0.88$), (2) influence from others and perceived value of action ($\alpha = 0.76$), and (3) fulfillment of personal needs ($\alpha = 0.64$). Based on these findings, the study recommends the implementation of communication campaigns, pilot yoga training programs, and broader institutional support for yoga practice. Additionally, investment in facilities and equipment is essential to foster the development of yoga at the University of Danang and other higher education institutions across Vietnam.

Keywords: Yoga; awareness; health; influencing factors; university students; University of Danang; Vietnam

ⁱ Correspondence: email pnthietke@gmail.com

1. Introduction

Originating from a 5,000-year-old Eastern cultural tradition, yoga—like other meditative practices such as Qigong and Tai Chi—has long been recognized as a method for achieving both physical health and inner balance. In modern times, yoga has been increasingly adopted as a therapeutic intervention and widely practiced for health promotion within communities.

Numerous clinical studies on the effects of yoga on health have yielded promising results, indicating both physical and mental benefits, while also promoting a healthy lifestyle. Reported health benefits of yoga include reductions in chronic back pain [2], fatigue, and sleep disorders [3], as well as contributions to weight loss and lower blood cholesterol levels [4][5]. Yoga practice has also been associated with improved respiratory function, cessation of smoking and alcohol use, and healthier eating habits [6][7].

Today, yoga is widely considered a complementary and alternative therapy in many countries, aiming to enhance health and quality of life. In recent years, interest and participation in yoga have grown substantially not only in Eastern nations but also across the Western world, including countries such as India, the United States, Australia, Canada, and Vietnam. According to Yoga Journal, the number of American yoga practitioners rose to over 36 million in 2016, representing a 76% increase from 20.4 million in 2012 [4]. In Australia, national surveys on physical activity participation reported an increase in yoga practice from 1.7% to 2.9% of the adult population between 2005 and 2006 [1]. In Vietnam, although national statistics on yoga participation are not yet available, a 2012 survey conducted by Vinaresearch on physical activity preferences in major cities indicated that yoga ranked among the top four most popular forms of exercise, practiced by 26.2% of respondents at fitness centers and studios [5].

University students are increasingly facing health-related challenges due to academic pressure, often accompanied by stress, anxiety, depression, burnout, and even suicidal ideation [6][7]. This raises the question of what interventions can effectively enhance students' quality of life and mental well-being. Yoga practice has been shown to significantly aid in relaxation, reduce stress levels, improve emotional regulation, and foster greater self-confidence and balance among students [8].

However, at the University of Danang, no prior studies have explored students' awareness of yoga and its health benefits, nor the factors that either encourage or hinder their engagement in yoga as part of health care practices.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Participants

The study surveyed 240 undergraduate students aged 19 to 20 who were enrolled in elective yoga classes at the University of Danang.

2.2 Study Design

This is a quantitative, cross-sectional descriptive study.

2.3 Instrument Development

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of the following sections: Personal information; Awareness of yoga (general knowledge, practice methods, timing, and environment); Perception of yoga's health benefits (physical health, mental health, and social relationship improvement); Stages in exploring and practicing yoga; Barriers and facilitators influencing yoga practice.

2.4 Data Processing and Analysis

Data were entered using Epidata 3.1 software. Data cleaning and analysis were performed using Stata 14.

Descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentage calculations, were used to describe general characteristics, awareness of yoga's health benefits, and yoga practice behavior among the participants.

Analytical statistics were employed to examine correlations between various factors and the current status of yoga awareness, practice, and interest in extracurricular yoga activities among University of Danang students.

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to identify underlying factor groups (causes) that facilitate or hinder students' yoga practice.

3. Research Findings

3.1 Students' Awareness of the Health Role of Yoga at the University of Danang

To assess students' knowledge and perceptions of yoga, a Likert-scale instrument was used, consisting of five response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Investigators provided guidance to ensure that respondents clearly understood the questions and answered as objectively as possible. Below are the findings related to the University of Danang students' awareness of yoga.

More than half of the respondents (51.3%) agreed with the definition that "Yoga is a simple physical exercise discipline aimed at improving physical health." A majority of students either felt neutral (38.3%) or agreed (39.6%) with the statement "Yoga is an ancient spiritual art originating from India, emphasizing a mystical connection between humans and the universe." The definition "Yoga is a set of ancient physical and mental training methods from India that require harmony between the mind and body at the same moment" was agreed upon by the majority of students (53.8%).

Table 1: Students' Awareness of the Definition
of Yoga at the University of Danang (n = 240)

Students' Understanding of the Definition of Yoga	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Yoga is a simple physical exercise discipline aimed at improving physical health.	1.3	16.7	17.1	51.3	13.8
Yoga is an ancient spiritual art originating from India, emphasizing a mystical connection between humans and the universe.	2.9	9.6	38.3	39.6	9.6
Yoga is a set of ancient physical and mental training methods from India that require harmony between the mind and body at the same moment.	0.4	3.8	19.2	53.8	22.9

Table 2: Students' Awareness of Yoga Practice
Methods at the University of Danang (n = 240)

Yoga Practice Methods	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Dance	18.1	41.6	23.5	14.3	2.5
Meditation and Breathing	0.4	2.9	14.7	63	18.9
Qigong	6.7	15.1	31.8	41.4	5
Martial Arts Practice	13.8	40.6	30.1	12.1	3.4
Practicing Asanas (animal-inspired postures)	7.9	14.6	25.4	42.5	9.6

When asked about their understanding of yoga practice methods, the majority of students identified “*meditation and breathing*” (63%) and “*practicing asanas (animal-inspired postures)*” (42.5%) as core components of yoga. Additionally, “*qigong*” was acknowledged as a relevant method by 41.4% of respondents. In contrast, methods such as “*dance*” and “*martial arts*” were largely rejected as part of yoga practice, with 41.6% and 40.6% of students, respectively, disagreeing with these associations.

Table 3: Students' Awareness of Appropriate Times
for Practicing Yoga at the University of Danang (n = 240)

Appropriate Time to Practice Yoga	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Early morning, after waking up.	1.3	2.1	8.3	66.7	21.7
Noon during rest time.	7.5	35	35	18.3	4.2
Afternoon.	4.2	15.4	30	43.3	7.1
Evening before bedtime.	3.8	9.2	24.6	52.9	9.6
Practice whenever free time is available.	9.6	28	36	19.3	7.1

According to Table 3, the respondents indicated that the most appropriate times for practicing yoga during the day are “*early morning after waking up*”, “*evening before bedtime*”,

and “*afternoon*”, with agreement rates of 66.7%, 52.9%, and 43.3%, respectively. In contrast, the time slots “*noon during rest time*” and “*practice whenever free time is available*” were mostly met with responses of Disagree or Neutral.

Table 4: Students’ Awareness of the Most Effective Duration
for Each Yoga Session at the University of Danang (n = 240)

Most Effective Duration for Each Practice Session	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Less than 30 minutes	5.4	26.3	37.9	25	5.4
30 minutes – 1 hour	2.9	7.5	24.6	51.3	13.8
More than 1 hour – 2 hours	5	27.5	42.9	20.4	4.2
More than 2 hours	11.7	46.3	31.3	10.4	0.4
The longer, the better	26.1	47.1	21	3.8	2.1

The majority of students perceived that the most effective duration for a yoga session is between 30 minutes and 1 hour, with 51.3% agreeing with this option. Other time duration choices showed relatively small differences between agreement and disagreement rates. However, a notable proportion of students disagreed with the notion that “*the longer, the better*” when it comes to yoga practice, with 26.1% expressing disagreement.

Table 5: Students’ Awareness of Appropriate Spaces for
Practicing Yoga at the University of Danang (n = 240)

Appropriate Space for Practicing Yoga	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Enclosed room with adequate lighting, using air conditioning or fan.	10	34.2	34.2	18.8	2.9
Open area in harmony with nature, without the use of fans or air conditioning	0.8	1.7	10.8	58.3	28.3
Anywhere is suitable for yoga practice, as long as it feels comfortable.	5	13.3	35.4	39.2	7.1

Table 6: Students' Perceptions of Physical Health
Benefits of Yoga at the University of Danang (n=240)

Benefits of Yoga for Physical Health	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Cardiovascular system	0.4	0.4	6.3	70.4	22.5
Respiratory system	0	0.4	5	71.7	22.9
Musculoskeletal system	0.4	2.5	8.3	65.8	22.9
Digestive system	0.8	4.6	20.8	55.4	18.3
Endocrine system	0.8	5	21.7	54.6	17.9
Immune system	1.7	3.8	20.4	55.8	18.3

According to Table 5, the majority of students at the University of Danang agreed that the most appropriate space for practicing yoga is an "open area in harmony with nature, without the use of fans or air conditioning," with 58.3% expressing agreement. Additionally, 39.2% of respondents agreed that "anywhere is suitable for yoga practice, as long as it feels comfortable."

According to Table 6, The majority of respondents recognized the physical health benefits of yoga, with high rates of agreement and strong agreement: 92.9% for the cardiovascular system, 94.6% for the respiratory system, 88.% for the musculoskeletal system, 73.7% for the digestive system, 72.5% for the endocrine system, and 74.1% for the immune system.

Table 7: Students' Perceptions of Mental Health
Benefits of Yoga at the University of Danang (n=240)

Benefits of Yoga for Mental Health	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Reduces stress, anxiety, and tension.	0	0.8	3.3	64.2	31.7
Supports the treatment and management of mental health disorders such as schizophrenia and depression.	1.3	6.3	22.3	53.4	16.8
Regulates emotional disturbances and negative behaviors.	0.8	2.9	10.4	65	20.8

According to Table 7, the proportion of students who recognized the mental health benefits of yoga was generally high. Specifically, 95.9% agreed or strongly agreed that yoga helps "reduce stress, anxiety, and tension." Meanwhile, 53.4% agreed that yoga "supports the treatment and management of mental health disorders such as schizophrenia and depression," and 65% agreed that it "regulates emotional disturbances and negative behaviors."

Table 8: Students' Perceptions of the Social Relationship
Benefits of Yoga at the University of Danang (n=240)

Benefits of Yoga for Social Relationships	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Enhancing communication skills and sociability with the surrounding environment	0.8	8	37.7	42.3	11.3
Improving patience and the ability to resolve conflicts and difficulties in life	0.4	1.7	8.3	68.3	21.3
Developing perseverance and a gentle character	0	1.3	5.9	64	28.9

When asked about the benefits of Yoga on social relationships, the majority of participants either agreed or strongly agreed with the statements "Improving patience and the ability to resolve conflicts and difficulties in life" (a total of 89.6%) and "Developing perseverance and a gentle character" (a total of 92.9%). However, there was still a notable proportion of respondents (37.7%) who were uncertain about the benefit of "Enhancing communication skills and sociability with the surrounding environment," while 42.3% agreed with this statement.

Table 9: Perceptions of Yoga Among 240 Students at the University of Danang

Content		n	%
Correct knowledge of the definition of Yoga.		82	34.2
Correct knowledge of Yoga practice methods.		16	6.7
Correct knowledge of the appropriate time to practice Yoga.		15	6.3
Correct knowledge of the duration for each Yoga session.		9	3.8
Correct knowledge of the appropriate space for Yoga practice.		28	11.7
Correct knowledge of the benefits of Yoga...	For physical health	149	62.1
	For mental health	160	66.7
	For social relationships	123	51.3

The proportion of students at the University of Danang with a positive perception of Yoga was high in areas related to its health benefits, including physical health (62.1%), mental health (66.7%), and social relationships (51.3%). The percentage of students who provided a correct definition of Yoga was 34.2%. More specific knowledge about Yoga showed lower rates of correct responses: practice methods (6.7%), appropriate timing for practice (6.3%), optimal duration of practice (3.8%), and suitable practice environments (11.7%).

3.2. Facilitating and Hindering Factors Influencing the Practice of Yoga Among Students at the University of Danang

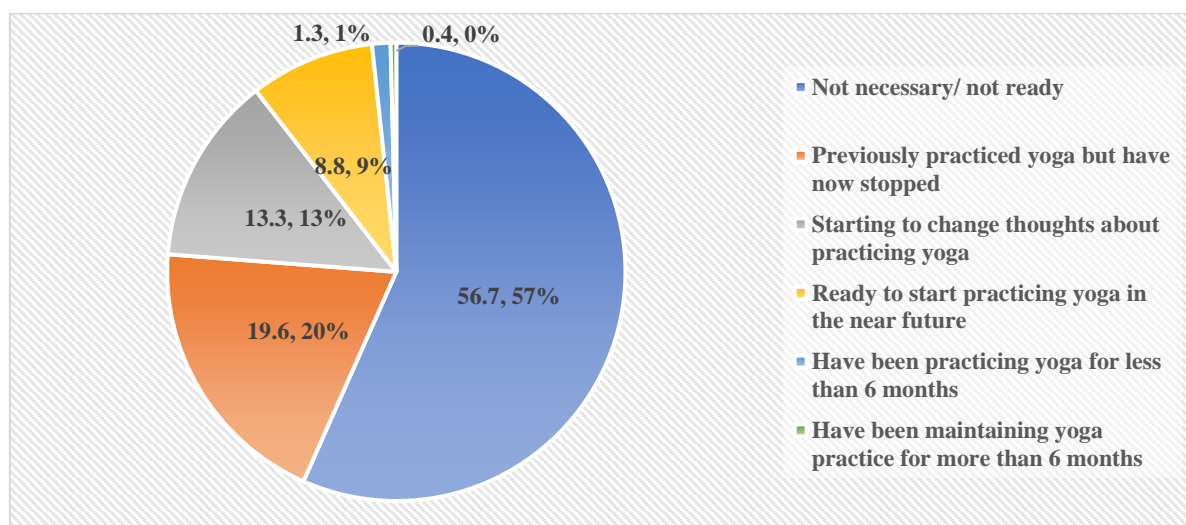


Chart 1: Current Status of Yoga Practice among Students at the University of Danang

More than half of the research sample indicated that they felt practicing yoga was unnecessary or that they were not yet ready to begin (accounting for 56.7%), making this the largest proportion. The second highest group consisted of those who were beginning to reconsider their views on yoga practice (19.6%). The two smallest groups included those who had practiced yoga within the past six months (1.3%) and those who had maintained regular practice for more than six months (0.4%).

Following the question regarding students' current engagement with yoga, participants were guided to answer subsequent questions on the reasons for not practicing, ceasing practice, or not yet beginning. These questions were directed at students in the "not yet necessary/not ready" group or those who had previously practiced but had since stopped. Students in the remaining groups were asked about their motivations for continuing or beginning yoga practice. Responses were collected using a Likert scale with five levels: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

According to the study results, 168 students were either in the stage of feeling yoga was unnecessary/not ready or had previously practiced but were no longer engaged. Meanwhile, 72 students were in the stage of having changed their perspective, were ready to practice, or were currently practicing yoga.

Table 10: Categories of Reasons for Not Practicing or Discontinuing Yoga
Among 168 Non-Practicing or Formerly Practicing Students at University of Danang

Questions	n	%	Cronbach's alpha
Barriers related to time and health			0.61
My schedule is too busy.	151	89.9	0.63
The practice times are not suitable for me.	129	76.8	0.77
My body is not flexible enough to practice.	98	58.3	0.57
I do not have enough physical strength to practice.	70	41.7	0.55
Personal beliefs and values			0.83
I dislike the language used in yoga.	69	41.1	0.48
Yoga seems to be a religion or spiritual belief.	69	41.3	0.63
Yoga appears to be only for women.	51	30.4	0.7
Yoga appears to be only for slim people.	36	21.4	0.82
Yoga appears to be only for young people.	32	19.1	0.8
Yoga appears to be only for the upper class.	34	20.2	0.74
Negative experiences			0.75
I am currently experiencing health issues.	37	22	0.54
I do not feel that I am suited for this practice.	102	60.7	0.49
I have had a bad experience with yoga.	24	14.4	0.65
I dislike the way I have to dress when practicing yoga.	45	26.8	0.69
Yoga seems overly sexually stimulating to me.	26	15.5	0.67
I lack transportation.	58	34.7	0.54
Accessibility difficulties			0.66
I cannot afford the cost of practice.	108	64.3	0.53
I do not know how to begin practicing yoga.	121	72.5	0.82
I do not know how to choose a good yoga teacher or class.	126	75	0.74

After conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on the variables related to the reasons for not practicing, discontinuing, or having never practiced yoga among the study sample based on the research instrument, four groups of factors were identified. These include: personal perceptions and values; previous negative experiences; barriers to access; and constraints related to time and health. The Cronbach's alpha values – indicating the reliability of each factor – were 0.83, 0.75, 0.66, and 0.61, respectively.

Table 11: Reasons for Not Practicing or Discontinuing
Yoga among 168 Students at the University of Danang

Content	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Barriers related to time and health					
My schedule is too busy.	0.6	9.5	19.6	56.6	13.7
The practice times are not suitable for me.	3.6	19.6	28	42.9	6
My body is not flexible enough for practice.	8.3	33.3	23.2	30.4	4.8
I do not have enough physical strength for practice.	8.9	49.4	28.6	12.5	0.6
Personal beliefs and values					
I dislike the language used in yoga.	16.1	42.9	26.2	10.7	4.2
Yoga seems to be a religion or spiritual belief.	14.4	44.3	25.8	15	0.6
Yoga appears to be only for women.	17.9	51.8	17.3	10.7	2.4
Yoga appears to be only for slim people.	20.2	58.3	12.5	7.7	1.2
Yoga appears to be only for young people.	22	58.9	11.3	6.6	1.2
Yoga appears to be only for the upper class.	23.8	56	11.3	8.3	0.6
Previous negative experiences with yoga					
I am currently experiencing health problems.	16.1	61.9	11.3	8.3	2.4
I do not feel suited to this practice.	11.3	28	25	29.8	6
I have had a bad experience with yoga.	22.2	63.5	7.8	6	0.6
I dislike the attire required for yoga practice.	19.1	54.2	16.7	7.7	2.4
Yoga seems overly sexually stimulating to me.	25.6	58.9	7.7	7.1	0.6
Lack of transportation.	17.4	47.9	18.6	14.4	1.8
Difficulties in access					
I cannot afford the cost of practice.	12.5	23.2	20.2	36.9	7.1
I do not know how to begin practicing yoga.	6.6	21	22.8	42.5	7.2
I do not know how to choose a good yoga instructor or class.	6	19.1	20.8	45.8	8.3

Within the factor group "Personal beliefs and values," the reason "Yoga appears to be a religion or belief system" received the highest level of agreement, with 15% of respondents endorsing this view. The proportion of students who expressed uncertainty was also considerable for the reasons "dislike of the language used in Yoga" and "Yoga appears to be a religion or belief system," with rates of 26.2% and 25.8%, respectively. The proportion of students who disagreed was predominant for the reasons "Yoga is only for slim people," "Yoga is only for young people," and "Yoga is only for the upper class," with rates of 58.3%, 58.9%, and 56%, respectively.

In the factor group "Previous Negative Experiences with Yoga," 29.8% of respondents agreed with the statement "I do not feel suited to this practice," and 14.4% agreed with "I lack transportation."

For the factor group "Barriers to Access," all three reasons exhibited high levels of agreement: "insufficient financial resources for training" (36.9%), "not knowing how to start practicing Yoga" (42.5%), and "not knowing how to select a good teacher or Yoga class" (45.8%).

Similarly, in the factor group "Constraints Related to Time and Health," there was a high level of agreement among participants: "having a busy schedule" was endorsed by 56.6% of respondents, and "training times not being suitable" was agreed upon by 42.9%. Regarding health-related reasons, 30.4% agreed that they were "not flexible enough to practice," and 12.5% agreed that they "lacked sufficient physical strength to practice."

Table 12: Groups of Reasons for Practicing Yoga
among 72 Students at the University of Danang

Questions	<i>n</i>	%	Cronbach's alpha
Support for the development of social and community relationships			0.88
Yoga helps raise community awareness.	58	80.6	0.90
Yoga helps connect bodily sensations with the mind.	69	95.8	0.63
Yoga supports personal relationships.	59	81.9	0.85
Yoga supports professional relationships.	58	80.6	0.86
Influence from others and perceived value of the practice			0.76
Pain relief.	49	68.1	0.56
Recommended by friends/colleagues/partner.	45	62.5	0.85
Recommended by a doctor or healthcare provider.	42	58.3	0.84
Fulfilling personal needs			0.64
Desire to improve personal health (including existing medical conditions).	69	95.8	0.73
Recreation.	57	79.2	0.67
Access to extensive information about yoga practice on the Internet.	66	91.7	0.64

After conducting an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) on the variables related to the reasons for practicing yoga using the designed instrument, the results presented in Table 12 indicated three factor groups: "Support for the Development of Social and Community Relationships" with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.88; "Influence from

Others and Perceived Value of the Action" with a reliability coefficient of 0.76; and "Fulfilling Personal Needs" with a reliability coefficient of 0.64.

Table 13: Reasons for Practicing Yoga among 72 Students at the University of Danang

Content	Strongly Disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)
Support for the Development of Social and Community Relationships					
Yoga helps enhance community awareness.	1.4	18.1	43.1	26.4	11.1
Yoga helps connect bodily sensations with the mind.	0	4.2	12.5	69.4	13.9
Yoga supports personal relationships.	0	18.1	36.1	38.9	6.9
Yoga supports professional relationships.	1.4	18.1	43.1	29.2	8.3
Influence from Others and Perceived Value of Action					
Pain relief.	6.9	25	29.2	30.6	8.3
Introduction to yoga by friends/colleagues/partners.	2.8	34.7	26.4	29.2	6.9
Recommendation to practice yoga by doctors/healthcare providers	1.4	40.3	23.6	25	9.7
Fulfilling personal needs					
Improvement of one's own health conditions (existing illnesses).	0	4.2	9.7	61.1	25
Entertainment and leisure.	4.2	16.7	31.9	38.9	8.3
Access to a wide range of yoga-related information on the internet.	0	8.3	19.4	61.1	11.1

Nearly half of the respondents expressed uncertainty when asked whether "Yoga enhances community awareness" (43.1%) and "Yoga supports professional relationships" (43.1%) were reasons for practicing yoga. Other reasons within the factor group "Support for the development of social and community relationships" received relatively high levels of agreement, notably "Yoga helps connect bodily sensations and the mind" (69.4%) and "Yoga supports personal relationships" (38.9%). Within the factor "Influence from others and perceived value of actions," there was little variation among the proportions of respondents who disagreed, were undecided, or agreed; the highest agreement rate was 30.6% of students affirming that practicing yoga helps alleviate pain. Among participants who had started or were currently practicing yoga, more than half agreed that "Yoga improves personal health conditions" (61.1%), and consulting information about yoga online was also reported as a motivating reason for practicing yoga (61.1%).

4. Discussion

4.1. Perceptions of the Health Benefits of Yoga among University of Danang Students

An evaluation of the participants' perceptions reveals that a high proportion of University of Danang students hold positive views on the health benefits of yoga, particularly in three key domains: physical health (62.1%), mental health (66.7%), and social relationships (51.3%). These findings indicate that the health-related benefits of yoga, as recognized in the community, play a central role in shaping students' perceptions. Most respondents showed greater interest in physical and mental health benefits. This is understandable, as students live and study in a highly demanding environment filled with academic pressures, which increases their demand for activities that support both physical and mental well-being. Moreover, they are likely to engage in knowledge acquisition that supports future treatment and counseling for patients. Therefore, this may explain their relatively limited awareness of yoga's benefits in the domain of social relationships. These findings are relatively consistent with those of Hedgen SV et al., published in early 2018, which showed that 70.5% of students recognized yoga's health benefits [9].

However, only 34.2% of respondents provided a correct definition of yoga. The proportions of students who correctly understood specific aspects of yoga were much lower: 6.7% for the practice methods, 6.3% for the appropriate time of day, 3.8% for the session duration, and 11.7% for the appropriate space. These findings are likely attributable to the fact that deeper knowledge of yoga practices and related aspects often requires firsthand experience, such as regular practice or prior exposure.

4.2. Current Yoga Practice Behaviors among University of Danang Students

With regard to the current state of yoga practice, more than half of the sample reported feeling that practicing yoga was unnecessary or that they were not ready to begin (56.7%), making this the most common response. The second most common group consisted of students who had started to change their mindset about yoga practice (19.6%). The least common groups were those who had practiced yoga in the past six months (1.3%) and those who had maintained regular practice for over six months (0.4%). These results differ from international studies. According to Hedgen SV, nearly three-quarters of respondents had practiced yoga at some point, and a larger-than-expected proportion expressed future intentions to practice. Approximately 95.5% of pre-clinical students had practiced yoga but had since discontinued [9]. In a study by Christiane Brems, 54.8% of student participants reported either practicing or intending to practice yoga [11]. Cultural differences, prevailing beliefs, and the relatively recent popularization of yoga in Vietnam may contribute to this contrast. Additionally, medical students often have limited time and tend to prioritize other interests over relatively "quiet" practices like yoga.

4.3. Facilitators and Barriers to Yoga Practice and Associated Factors among University of Danang Students

An exploration of factors hindering yoga practice was conducted using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on items addressing reasons for not practicing, discontinuing, or never starting yoga. Four thematic groups of reasons were identified: (1) personal values and beliefs; (2) previous negative experiences; (3) access barriers; and (4) time and health-related constraints, with respective Cronbach's alpha values of 0.83, 0.75, 0.66, and 0.61. The survey showed that students widely agreed with all three access-related barriers: "lack of financial resources for training" (36.9%), "not knowing how to start" (42.5%), and "not knowing how to find a good instructor or yoga class" (45.8%). Similarly, barriers related to time and health were also highly endorsed: "being too busy" (56.6%) and "incompatible training schedules" (42.9%). These factors reflect the common limitations faced by students, whose study and work commitments often conflict with optimal times for yoga, and who still depend financially on their families. As a result, financial constraints and transportation issues serve as additional obstacles. These findings are consistent with similar research by Christiane Brems (2015), which reported that major barriers to yoga practice include lack of time, financial cost, busy schedules, inflexible routines, lack of knowledge on how to begin, and difficulty finding appropriate classes or instructors [12].

To identify facilitators for yoga practice, EFA was again employed to analyze variables associated with reasons for taking up yoga. Three thematic groups emerged: (1) support for social and community connection (Cronbach's alpha = 0.88); (2) influence from others and perceived value of action (alpha = 0.76); and (3) personal needs (alpha = 0.64). In the first group, students largely agreed that "Yoga helps connect the body and mind" (69.4%) and "Yoga supports personal relationships" (38.9%). In the second group, 30.6% cited pain relief as a motivation to practice yoga, and 29.2% mentioned referrals from friends, colleagues, or partners. Among those who were beginning or currently practicing yoga, more than half agreed that "Yoga improves current health conditions" (61.1%) and that "online information about yoga" was a motivating factor (61.1%).

These results differ somewhat from the study by Christiane Brems in the U.S., where the most commonly reported motivations included physical exercise, flexibility, balance, relaxation, emotional stability, and general health improvements, all rated by 93.5% to 97.9% of participants. Meanwhile, motivations like feeling connected, pain relief, or treating existing conditions were less frequently cited (50%–60%) [12]. Similarly, Mary T. Quilty's study in the U.S. found the main reasons for starting or resuming yoga were general health care (81%), exercise (80%), and stress management (73%) [11].

5. Conclusion

Approximately two-thirds of students at the University of Danang demonstrated positive perceptions regarding the benefits of yoga for physical health (62.1%), mental well-being (66.7%), and social relationships (51.3%). However, their awareness remained limited

concerning specific aspects such as practice methods (6.7%), optimal practice timing (6.3%), duration of practice sessions (3.8%), and appropriate practice spaces (11.7%).

More than half of the students reported that they did not find it necessary or were not yet ready to engage in yoga practice (56.7%). Additionally, 19.6% of respondents indicated that they were beginning to reconsider their attitudes toward yoga practice. Only 1.3% of the students reported having actively practiced yoga within the past six months. Furthermore, 38.8% of participants agreed with the proposal of incorporating yoga or other meditation-related activities into the university's extracurricular programs. The study identified four primary groups of barriers contributing to students' reluctance or discontinuation of yoga practice: (1) personal perceptions and value systems, (2) prior negative experiences, (3) barriers to accessibility, and (4) constraints related to time and health. Among these, difficulties in accessibility—particularly financial limitations—and time and health constraints were cited most frequently.

Moreover, three key motivational factors encouraging yoga practice among participants were identified: (1) support for the development of social and community relationships, (2) influence from others and perceived value of actions, and (3) the fulfillment of personal needs. Among these, motivations related to social and community relationship development and the influence of others were the most frequently mentioned.

Acknowledgements

This research was funded by the University of Da Nang under project number T2024-DHĐN-12. The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the administrators, lecturers, and students of the University of Da Nang. Special thanks to Dr. Nguyen Quang Son for his valuable comments and feedback on this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Authors

Master **Phan Ngoc Thiet Ke** is currently serving as a lecturer in Physical Education at the Faculty of Physical Education, the University of Danang, Vietnam.

Master **Tran Thi Vi Van** is currently serving as a lecturer in Physical Education at the Faculty of Physical Education, the University of Danang, Vietnam.

References

- [1] Xue, C. C. L., Zhang, A. L., Lin, V., et al. (2007). Complementary and alternative medicine use in Australia: A national population-based survey. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 13(6), 643–650.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2006.6355>

- [2] Tekur, P., Nagarathna, R., Chametcha, S., et al. (2012). A comprehensive yoga program improves pain, anxiety and depression in chronic low back pain patients more than exercise: An RCT. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 20(3), 107–118. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ctim.2011.12.002>
- [3] Reddy, M. S., & Vijay, M. S. (2016). Yoga in psychiatry: An examination of concept, efficacy, and safety. *Indian Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 38(4), 275–278. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0253-7176.185958>
- [4] Yoga Journal, Yoga Alliance, & Ipsos Public Affairs. (2016, January). *The 2016 Yoga in America Study*. Retrieved from <https://www.yogajournal.com/page/yogainamericastudy>
- [5] Vinaresearch. (2012). *Demand for Physical Exercise and Sports among Urban Residents in Major Cities*.
- [6] Nguyễn, H. M. T., & Nguyễn, T. Đ. (2013). Depression and Associated Factors among Medical Students at Can Tho University of Medicine and Pharmacy in 2013, *Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol. 27 (Special Issue 3/2017 PB), p. 75.
- [7] Vũ, K. L., & Phạm, T. H. T. (2013). Current Situation of Stress among Students at Hanoi Medical University in 2013, *Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Issue 8 (144) 2013 (Volume XXIII), p. 112.
- [8] Simard, A. A., & Henry, M. (2009). Impact of a short yoga intervention on medical students' health: A pilot study. *Medical Teacher*, 31(10), 950–952. <https://doi.org/10.3109/01421590902849550>
- [9] Hegde, S. V., Rao, S. K., Menezes, R. G., et al. (2018). Knowledge, attitude, and practice of yoga in medical students: Assessment of anthropometry and lifestyle factors. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy*.
- [10] Nguyễn, V. H., & Lê, T. T. (2012). *Behavioral Science and Health Education Communication*, p. 270. (p. 270).
- [11] Mary T. Quilty, Robert B. Saper, Richard Goldstein và các cộng sự. (2013), "Yoga in the Real World: Perceptions, Motivators, Barriers, and patterns of Use", *Global Advances in Health and Medicine*, 2(1), tr. 44-49.
- [12] Brems, C., Justice, L., Sulenes, K., et al. (2015). Improving access to yoga: Barriers to and motivators for practice among health professions students. *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, 29(3), 6–13.

Creative Commons licensing terms

Authors will retain the copyright of their published articles agreeing that a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0) terms will be applied to their work. Under the terms of this license, no permission is required from the author(s) or publisher for members of the community to copy, distribute, transmit or adapt the article content, providing a proper, prominent and unambiguous attribution to the authors in a manner that makes clear that the materials are being reused under permission of a Creative Commons License. Views, opinions and conclusions expressed in this research article are views, opinions and conclusions of the author(s). Open Access Publishing Group and European Journal of Physical Education and Sport Science shall not be responsible or answerable for any loss, damage or liability caused in relation to/arising out of conflict of interests, copyright violations and inappropriate or inaccurate use of any kind content related or integrated on the research work. All the published works are meeting the Open Access Publishing requirements and can be freely accessed, shared, modified, distributed and used in educational, commercial and non-commercial purposes under a [Creative Commons attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY 4.0\)](#).