

A PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' APPLICATION OF PE-YOGA PRACTICES TO DAILY "ME TIME": AN EXPLORATION OF MIND-BODY INTEGRATION IN THE LIFEWORLD

Meng-Ling Chung⁽¹⁾; Wan-chun Hsiung⁽²⁾; Cen-yi Lin⁽³⁾

Summary

Purpose: This study utilizes a phenomenological framework, specifically Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology and lifeworld theory, to investigate the application of yoga practices learned in physical education by university students during their "ME TIME" and its impact on their lived experiences. **Methods:** Employing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the study scrutinized in-depth interviews alongside reflective diaries contributed by 15 university students. **Results:** Noteworthy insights encompass: (1) Heightened consciousness of one's physical existence; (2) Merging breath and motion into everyday practices; (3) Establishing personal limits during introspection; (4) Utilization of awareness strategies; (5) Enhanced comprehension of tension and coping methods; (6) Increased self-embrace and healthier exchanges with companions. The findings indicate that the integration of yoga into "ME TIME" fosters a more holistic life experience for students. **Conclusion:** This investigation reveals how pupils blend mind-body exercises into their daily activities, contributing significant understanding for integrated development efforts in higher education. Restrictions are linked to how well the sample can encapsulate the wider community and any biases that might occur in self-description. Future research should broaden sample diversity, employ mixed methodologies, undertake longitudinal studies, and investigate individual differences in the effects of yoga practices.

Keywords: Yoga, Phenomenological analysis, Mind-body integration, Mindfulness.

INTRODUCTION

This study explores how university students apply yoga learned in physical education courses to their "ME TIME" and its impact on their lived experiences, addressing the high prevalence of mental health issues among students (Auerbach et al., 2018; Eisenberg et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2019). Yang (2023) indicated that effective use of "ME TIME" correlates with higher life satisfaction and lower stress levels. The investigation is grounded in Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology and lifeworld theory. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the body as a fundamental aspect of existence, with his concept of "body schema" suggesting that bodily perception is an innate, non-reflective capability. Lifeworld theory posits that our primary relationship with the world is rooted in pre-scientific and non-reflective experiences. These frameworks provide a lens to examine how students' bodily practices through yoga intersect with their everyday experiences, mental well-being, and self-perception. With a focus on Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA),

this examination seeks to unveil the relationships between bodily engagement, regular experiences, and emotional health. It offers theoretical and practical foundations for implementing mind-body integration strategies in higher education, exploring how students incorporate yoga into their personal time and its effects on their lived experiences. Based on the research objectives, here are six focus group interview questions designed to address the key points:

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore university students' yoga experiences during "ME TIME". IPA was chosen for its ability to capture nuanced personal experiences and meanings, interpretable through Merleau-Ponty's body phenomenology. Fifteen participants (8 females, 7 males, aged 19-23) were purposively sampled, having attended university yoga courses and consciously integrated yoga into daily life. Data collection involved: (1) 60-90-minute in-depth semi-structured interviews; (2) four-week

⁽¹⁾Assoc. Prof. PhD, Department of Sports, National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan

⁽²⁾Assoc. Prof. PhD, Department of Tourism and Leisure Management, Ling Tung University, Taiwan

⁽³⁾Assoc. Prof. PhD, Department of Adapted Physical Education, National Taiwan Sport University, Taiwan

Table 1. Focus group questions

1. Can you describe your experiences with mind-body integration practices in your yoga courses? How do you understand the connection between physical postures and mental states in yoga?
2. How have you incorporated yoga practices into your daily "ME TIME"? Please share specific examples of how you've adapted yoga techniques for use outside of class.
3. What challenges have you faced when trying to integrate yoga into your daily routine? Conversely, what opportunities or benefits have you discovered through this process?
4. In what ways has practicing yoga during your "ME TIME" changed how you perceive yourself? Have you noticed any differences in how you view your body, emotions, or thoughts?
5. Has your yoga practice influenced how you interact with others or perceive your environment? If so, can you provide examples of these changes?
6. How has integrating yoga into your daily life affected your approach to managing stress and daily challenges? Can you share a specific instance where you applied yoga techniques to cope with a stressful situation?

reflective journals. Data analysis followed IPA's six steps, including repeated case reading, initial noting, theme development, identifying inter-theme connections, and cross-case analysis. Researchers continuously reflected on biases and assumptions, engaging peer researchers for independent analysis to enhance credibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Bodily Experiences of Physical Education Yoga Practices

1.1. Augmented Bodily Awareness

P3 (female, 21) said: "Now, even while seated, I'm aware of my body's condition." This awareness helped address physical needs and recognize emotions. P7 (male, 20) added: "Focusing on physical sensations helps perceive emotional changes." Findings show yoga as both physical practice and life philosophy, embodying Merleau-Ponty's body-consciousness unity. Participants use somatic practices to influence mental states and apply yoga principles daily, aligning with Merleau-Ponty's view of the body as primary means of engaging reality.

1.2. Convergence of Breath and Motion

Participants integrated breath-movement beyond yoga into daily life, using conscious breathing for relaxation. P5 (female, 22) said: "Yoga taught me to regulate my state through breathing. Before stressful situations, I adjust my breath to calm quickly." P10 (male, 19) added: "I

observe my breath while walking or climbing stairs, maintaining calm in busy campus life."

2. Yoga Application in "ME TIME"

2.1. Creating Personal Space and Time

Participants successfully created personal space and time by integrating yoga into "ME TIME". One participant (P2, female, 20) described: "My 15-minute morning yoga practice has become the most valuable 'ME TIME' of my day. During this time, I feel completely isolated from the outside world, able to truly dialogue with myself." Another participant (P12, male, 21) shared how he created personal space in a crowded dormitory: "Even in a four-person dorm, I've learned to use the small space beside my bed for simple yoga poses and meditation. This helps me find inner peace in a noisy environment."

2.2. Mindfulness Practice in Daily Life

Participants applied yoga mindfulness to daily life. P8 (female, 23) said: "I practice mindfulness while eating, savoring each bite. This enhances enjoyment and promotes healthier habits." "ME TIME" proved crucial for integrating yoga into daily life, providing space for self-reflection and mind-body regulation. Phenomenologically, it represents a unique lived experience of focused existence, free from external distractions.

3. Transformation of the Lived World through Mind-Body Integration

3.1. Changes in Stress Perception and Coping

Participants reported significant changes in their perception and coping with stress. One participant (P6, female, 21) shared: "Before, I always felt anxious and helpless when facing stress. Now, I've learned to regulate my emotions with yoga breathing. This not only helps me face stress more calmly but also allows me to learn and grow from it."

3.2. Reshaping Relationships with Self and Others

Participants reported increased self-acceptance and empathy. P4 (female, 19) said: "Yoga helped me accept imperfections. I no longer demand perfection, but appreciate progress and growth. This self-acceptance makes it easier to understand and accept others." Through yoga integration, participants experienced significant transformation in their lived world. From feeling disconnected and stressed, they achieved a more integrated lifestyle through consistent practice, especially during "ME TIME". This shift aligns with Merleau-Ponty's lifeworld theory, as participants reconstructed their world through bodily practice, enhancing self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal relationships.

4. Challenges and Adaptations

4.1. Continuity and Consistency of Practice

Maintaining consistent practice was a significant challenge. One participant (P13, male, 20) admitted: "Maintaining daily practice is the biggest challenge. Sometimes I skip yoga time due to assignments or social activities. I'm trying to view yoga as an indispensable part of life, not an optional extra activity."

4.2. Overcoming Initial Resistance and Discomfort

P1 (female, 22) shared: "Initially, morning yoga made me feel stiff and unfocused. I wanted to quit but persisted. Gradually, discomfort turned to comfort and pleasure." Merleau-Ponty's theory reveals students reconstructing their lifeworld through yoga. Consistency challenges show "habit body" formation; yoga's importance indicates efforts to reshape world relationships. The comfort transition reflects body schema reconstruction, demonstrating bodily subjectivity.

This highlights yoga's potential in reshaping students' existence and world understanding.

CONCLUSION

This study used a phenomenological approach to examine how university students apply yoga learned in physical education to their daily "ME TIME" and its impact on their lived experiences. Findings show that integrating yoga into daily life enhanced bodily awareness, breath-movement integration, personal space creation, mindfulness cultivation, stress perception changes, and relationship reshaping. This reveals yoga's potential in reconstructing students' lifeworlds, leading to a more integrated lifestyle. Challenges like maintaining consistency and overcoming initial discomfort were noted. The investigation highlights ways in which higher education can better weave yoga into the daily lives of students and indicates potential subjects for future exploration regarding yoga's enduring influence on student wellness.

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