



Examining university students' social desirability and culture of being healthy

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Abstract

Sport is an important tool in terms of the health, social, and well-being of the person. Especially the types of sports that are increasing in popularity, such as yoga and fitness, are considered important. This study aims to examine the health culture and social desirability levels of university students who do yoga and fitness. The quantitative method was used in the study. In the first part, as demographic information; There are questions about gender, age, the type of sport he does, and how many days a week he is involved in sports. In the second part, the culture of being healthy scale developed by Alfrey et al. (2019) and adapted into Turkish by Uğraş et al. (2021) was used. In the third part, the social desirability scale developed by Erzen et al. (2021) was used. After the data were collected in the study, first of all, the skewness-kurtosis homogeneity test and the Cronbach alpha reliability test were performed. In the homogeneous data, an independent t-test for paired groups and anova test for groups of three or more were performed with the SPSS program. According to the results of the study; in the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions; It is seen that being male, being between the ages of 18-23, and doing yoga have a significantly higher mean value than the others.

Keywords: Health, Sports Psychology, Sports Sociology, Students.

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1. Introduction

Being physically and mentally healthy, in addition to being liked in social life, is seen as something that many people desire. It can be argued that it is now more important to be liked socially, especially as a result of the digitalization brought by the age and the use of social media by people (Grossman, 2017). In addition, being healthy and living a

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healthy life has been an issue that human beings have given importance to throughout history. However, the negativities brought by age and the unnatural living conditions have increased the interest and importance of healthy living. In this context, studies on healthy living are considered important (Burgess et al., 2005; Trukhachev, 2013; Burkhanov, 2022; Ahmadova, 2022; Gülu and Ayyildiz, 2022; Gülu et al., 2022). Therefore, this study will contribute to the field of healthy life and social appreciation.

The popularity of yoga included approximately 10.5 million people in the United States in 2004 (Saper et al., 2004), 20 million people in 2015 (Clarke et al., 2015), and 36 million people in 2016 (Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance, 2016). As can be understood from these rates, interest in yoga is increasing day by day (Madanmohan, Thombre and Balakumar, 1992; Roland, Jakobi and Jones, 2011; Woodyard, 2011). 50% of this interested in the exercise said that their reason for participating in yoga and fitness was to improve their general health and socialize (Yoga Journal and Yoga Alliance, 2016). At the same time, Yoga offers an intersecting lens to examine and change intersecting inequalities, not only in the yoga studio but also in the health and fitness environment (Mintz, 2018). Yoga is an important tool that improves the quality of life of people in terms of health and social life (Huberty et al., 2019).

The Culture of Being Healthy (Healthism), which was first introduced in the 1980s, confronts us with a holistic perspective that combines many awarenesses such as knowing how to be healthy, doing sports, and avoiding harmful activities or substances, rather than individuals being physiologically healthy. (Greenhalgh and Wesley, 2004; Dan, 2022). In addition, studies suggest that this concept has become a social status beyond being healthy, a necessity of popular culture, and a consumption tool in society (Baudrillard, 2010). Although such critical or controversial studies have increased, healthy living culture is inevitably an important issue, especially when looking at developed societies.

Another important concept that appears in the literature is social desirability. Social desirability can be evaluated under two main headings: the person himself and his environment (Nederhof, 1985). There are many definitions of social desirability. However, to make a general definition, social desirability can be defined as a person's need or state of being accepted, approved, appreciated, and favored by himself or his environment (DeMaio, 1984; Holden and Passey, 2009). Although social appreciation has become more important with the effect of digitalization and social media, it is among the important issues of society and scientific studies from the past to the present (Johnson and Van de Vijver, 2003). Considering that people are social beings, it is natural to think that the concept of social desirability is important and remarkable.

At this point, individuals have turned to sports and gyms in order to be socially appreciated, be healthy, and socialize (Nystrom et al., 2012; Korkmaz and Tuna, 2020). There are many branches preferred by individuals in gyms. In these branches, fitness, and yoga, which are associated with a healthy life and being beautiful, draw attention

(Skurikhina et al., 2016). Although yoga and fitness have only recently become widespread in developing countries, it has a history dating back to the 1970s in the United States (Ryan, 1971). However, when looking at its history, yoga has a history dating back centuries. Yoga, which has come from the past and has become widespread, is now among the important practices that see the marrow in gyms (Worthington, 1982). In addition, the fitness branch, which is indispensable for gyms, offers a fit body to the individual, and requires good nutrition and rest, has also become an important lifestyle (Getchell, 1979; van Hilvoorde, 2008). In addition, fitness is seen as a means of gaining identity and authority beyond being healthy (Hutson, 2013).

Individuals who practice yoga have significant health benefits (Kim et al., 2018; Tran et al., 2001). However, it remains unclear which one is more beneficial in terms of psychological effects in studies on yoga and fitness. In addition, there are very few studies comparing yoga and fitness from a psychological perspective (Kim and Kim, 2007; Tong et al., 2021). There is evidence that individuals who practice yoga help self-love and have positive psychological contributions (Bhattacharyya, Andel, and Small, 2021; Chobe et al., 2020; Ross and Thomas, 2010). However, some studies show that women who do yoga have a similar mood, while men who do yoga feel better psychologically (Berger and Owen, 1992).

In light of the information above, considering the importance of the concepts of being healthy and being social and their interrelationships, this research aims to examine the health culture and social desirability levels of university students who do yoga and fitness.

2. Method

2.1. Research Model

The quantitative method was used in the research. In line with the purpose, it was made with the descriptive scanning model, which is one of the general scanning designs. The convenience sampling method was used in the data collection process.

2.2. Identify subsections

The data collection tool consists of three parts. The first part is the personal information form. This section consists of questions about gender, age, the type of sport he is interested in, and how many days a week he does sports. In the second part, the culture of being healthy scale developed by Alfrey et al. (2019) and adapted into Turkish by Uğraş et al. (2021) was used. This scale consists of two sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are the Criticism of individual actions sub-dimension and judgment sub-dimension. In the third part of the study, the social desirability scale developed by Erzen et al. (2021) was used. This scale consists of two sub-dimensions. These sub-dimensions are the judgment sub-dimension and acceptance sub-dimension.

2.3. Participant (subject) characteristics

University students were asked to fill in a questionnaire by hand. Data were collected at yoga training and fitness centers. Participants are college students pursuing either yoga or fitness.

2.4. Sampling procedure

The study was collected by convenience sampling method. There were a total of 109 (34.1%) yoga participants and 211 (65.9%) fitness participants. Data were collected voluntarily at the university's yoga club and fitness center. The ethical report of the study was obtained from Pamukkale University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee.

2.5. Analysis of Data

A descriptive survey model was used in this study. The kurtosis skewness values of the data were calculated. After the homogeneity test, an independent t-test for paired groups and anova test for groups of three or more were performed with the SPSS program. In addition, if there was a significant difference in the anova test, the post-hoc (Bonferroni) test was applied.

3. Results

In order to control the homogeneity of the sample group in the research findings, the results of kurtosis and skewness were examined. These results show that all sub-dimensions are in the range of $-2+2$. According to Sharma and Ojha (2020), the fact that the skewness kurtosis values are in the range of $-2+2$ indicates that the data is homogeneously distributed.

Table 1 - Cronbach Alpha reliability analysis

Scale	Cronbach Alpha
Criticism of Individual Actions Sub-Dimension	,77
Judgment Sub-Dimension	,79
Acceptance Sub-Dimension	,83
Attention Sub-Size	,84

The Cronbach Alpha Reliability test was used to find out the reliability level of the scale (Table 1). When the sub-dimensions of the scale were examined, it was determined that

all sub-dimensions were above .70. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011) a Cronbach alpha value over .70 is considered reliable.

Table 2 - Distribution of the participants in the sample group according to their answers to the questions in the personal information form

Variable	Grup	f	%	Total
Gender	Male	207 (64.7)		320
	Female	113 (35.3)		
Age	18-20 years	77 (24.1)		320
	21-23 years	165 (51.6)		
	24 years and older	78 (24.4)		
What sport do you do?	Yoga	109 (34.1)		320
	Fitness	211 (65.9)		
How many days a week do you do the sport you are interested in?	1-2 days	56 (17.5)		320
	3-4 days	153 (47.8)		
	5-7 days	11 (34.7)		

The distribution of the sample group according to the answers they gave to the questions in the personal information form is as in Table 2. Variables in the personal information form; gender, age, which sports branch you do, and how many sports branches you are interested in per week. consists of following the welfare and sports news. 207 (64.7%) of the participants were male and 113 (35.3) of them were female.

Table 3 – Independent t-test analysis by gender of the participants

Scale	Variable	N	\bar{x}	SS	P
Criticism of Individual Actions Sub-Dimension	Men	207	4.17	.46	.000
	Women	113	3.94	.38	
Judgment Sub-Dimension	Men	207	4.01	.56	.000
	Women	113	3.65	.62	
Acceptance Sub-Dimension	Men	207	2.22	.93	.003
	Women	113	1.95	.67	
Attention Sub-Size	Men	207	2.55	.95	.485
	Women	113	2.62	.92	

p<0,05

The t-test analysis performed according to the gender variable question of the participants is shown in Table 3. According to the results in the table, it was determined that there was a significant difference in favor of men in the criticism of individual actions sub-dimension, judgment sub-dimension, and acceptance sub-dimension, while there was no significant difference in the attention sub-dimension (p<0.05).

Table 4 – Anova analysis by age of the participants

Scale	Variable	N	\bar{x}	p	Benferoni
Criticism of Individual Actions Sub-Dimension	18-20 years (1)	77	4.12	.000	1>2>3
	21-23 years (2)	165	4.13		
	24 years and older (3)	78	3.92		
Judgment Sub-Dimension	18-20 years (1)	77	3.72	.137	-
	21-23 years (2)	165	3.69		
	24 years and older (3)	78	3.84		
Acceptance Dimension	18-20 years (1)	77	2.22	.079	-
	21-23 years (2)	165	2.01		
	24 years and older (3)	78	1.98		
Attention Sub-Size	18-20 years (1)	77	2.51	.000	2>3-1
	21-23 years (2)	165	3.12		
	24 years and older (3)	78	2.38		

p<0,05

When Table 4 is examined; It has been determined that there is a significant difference in the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions and the sub-dimension of attention. When the Bonferroni results are examined, it has been determined that individuals between the ages of 18-23 are significantly higher in the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions compared to individuals aged 24 and over. In the attention sub-dimension, university students aged 21-23 were found to be significantly higher than university students aged 18-20 and 24 years and older (p<0.05).

Table 5 – Independent t-test analysis according to the sport type that the participants are interested in

Scale	Variable	N	\bar{x}	SS	P
Criticism of Individual Actions Sub-Dimension	Fitness	211	3.92	.38	.000
	Yoga	109	4.21	.45	
Judgment Sub-Dimension	Fitness	211	3.74	.57	.150
	Yoga	109	3.85	.71	
Acceptance Sub-Dimension	Fitness	211	2.00	.81	.112
	Yoga	109	2.15	.72	
Attention Sub-Size	Fitness	211	2.59	.95	.900
	Yoga	109	2.60	.91	

p<0.05

When Table 5 is examined, it has been determined that the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions is significantly higher among university students who do yoga than those who do fitness. It was determined that there was no significant difference in judgment sub-dimension, acceptance sub-dimension, and attention sub-dimension ($p<.05$).

Table 6 – Anova analysis according to the educational status of the participants

Scale	Variable	N	\bar{X}	p	Benferoni
Criticism of Individual Actions Sub-Dimension	1-2 days a week (1)	56	4.07	.522	-
	3-4 days a week (2)	153	4.02		
	5-7 days a week (3)	111	3.99		
Judgment Sub-Dimension	1-2 days a week (1)	77	3.88	.202	-
	3-4 days a week (2)	165	3.79		
	5-7 days a week (3)	78	3.70		
Acceptance Sub-Dimension	1-2 days a week (1)	77	2.10	.012	3>2
	3-4 days a week (2)	165	1.92		
	5-7 days a week (3)	78	2.20		
Attention Sub-Size	1-2 days a week (1)	77	2.63	.032	3>2
	3-4 days a week (2)	165	2.46		
	5-7 days a week (3)	78	2.76		

$p<0.05$

When Table 6 is examined; It was determined that there was a significant difference in the acceptance sub-dimension and the attention sub-dimension. When the Bonferroni results are examined, it has been determined that those who do sports 5-7 days a week are significantly higher than those who do sports 3-4 days a week. No significant difference was found in the criticism of individual actions and the judgment sub-dimension ($p<0.05$).

4. Discussion

It is emphasized that students who do yoga will be more successful and feel better than those who do not do it academically (Leonard et al., 2021). In addition, when yoga is given for educational purposes in schools, it can provide equal opportunities for men and women. It can make a significant contribution to a person's well-being, especially socially (Butzer et al. 2015; Wang and Hagins 2016). The fact that men get physical results faster among the participants who do yoga plays an important role in making them feel better, social and healthy (Flaherty, 2014). In addition, it is seen that men who are interested in fitness have a positive effect on social desirability and health behaviors (Erikson et al.,

2008). Our study shows parallelism with this result. It is seen that men are higher than women in the sub-dimensions of social desirability and culture of being healthy. However, although there was a difference only in the attention sub-dimension of the social desirability scale, no significant effect was found.

Yoga is used as an important tool to increase the physical activity of students. In addition, age-appropriate yoga training is an important positive factor in terms of health (Gumenyuk et al., 2021). In the study conducted for students between the ages of 19-23, it was concluded that yoga and meditation significantly reduced stress and anxiety, felt better socially, and were mentally healthier (Lemay, Hoolahan and Buchanan, 2019). In our study, it was concluded that the participants between the ages of 18-23 were significantly higher in the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions than those aged 24 and over. In addition, it was concluded that the participants in the 21-23 age range were significantly higher than the participants aged 18-20 and over the age of 24. This situation shows that the criticism and attention attitude of the individual actions of the people in our sample group are the factors that make a difference in the culture of being healthy and the level of social desirability.

Studies comparing the effects of yoga and exercise show that in both healthy and diseased populations, yoga can have positive health outcomes as effective as or better than fitness. (Ross and Thomas, 2010). Yoga intervention is better than fitness exercises in helping undergraduates improve mindfulness and reduce stress (Tong et al., 2021). In addition, healthy individuals feel good in terms of social taste (Hillgrove, 2021). Although the average scores of those who do yoga in the culture of social desirability and being healthy are higher, there is a significant difference in favor of yoga participants only in the sub-dimension of criticism of individual actions.

As participation in yoga increases, there are positive benefits such as getting rid of harmful habits and increasing healthy lifestyle (Rosen ve ark., 2016). In addition, the increase in the level of yoga increases the quality of life (Duyan, 2007). In addition, it is seen that both the quality of life and the healthy lifestyle increase as the number of weekly fitness increases in fitness individuals (Toplu, 2019). While social desirability was partially parallel in our study, no similar results were found in the culture of being healthy. The fact that university students do yoga or fitness for 5-7 days is considered to be an indication that they feel more physically good than other participants and that they are more socialized in the sports environment they are in. An important reason for not finding a significant difference in the sub-dimensions of the culture of being healthy may be due to the fact that university students in sports environments have health awareness.

5. Conclusions

As a result, yoga and fitness can benefit the individual in terms of both health and social desirability. Having a good appearance and being in a social environment can

make a significant contribution both physically and mentally. For this reason, sports branches such as yoga and fitness can make important contributions to the social and physical development of students within the university.

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