



Yoga Culture in the Context of Modernity and Ontological Security: A Qualitative Research on Yoga Instructors and Practitioners

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Abstract

Yoga, originated in India, is an ancient teaching with a long history. This ancient teaching is now recognized and embraced by different countries with the opportunities (communication and transportation) provided by the global world. Yoga, popular in Türkiye as in different countries of the world, has become a field of study, practice, and philosophy of life. A determining factor in that fact is the anxiety that the 21st century creates in human life, requiring constant performance and change. In the chaos caused by urban life, people are searching for an occupation that will give meaning to their lives, as well as the search to cope with the (physical and psychological) problems of introversion during the Covid-19. However, yoga preference differs at the level of society and individuals. This study was conducted with semi-structured interviews with 9 people who were instructors or practitioners at 4 different yoga centers in two districts of Istanbul: Bakırköy and Beylikdüzü. The findings obtained from the study show that, in addition to adult women and men, students and a small number of elderly people, as well as children with the guidance of their families do yoga, and they all embrace it. The main reasons for this are the level of awareness and consciousness that eliminates negative prejudices (equating yoga directly with religion and gender). Financial concerns, physical and mental health, and the decrease in leisure time activities during the pandemic are the determining factors for participants to start and continue yoga.

Keywords

Yoga, Modernity, Ontological Security, Urban Life, Yoga Instructors

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