

The Concept of Mind-Body Connection: A Systematic Review

Jade K. Halilio

^a jkhalilio@addu.edu.ph

^a Ateneo de Davao University, E. Jacinto Street Davao City, 8016, Philippines

Abstract

This study explores the intricacies of the mind-body connection, focusing on its perception and integration within physical education in the Philippines. The research highlights the importance of a holistic approach to health, bridging traditional medical practices with mind-body practices such as yoga and mindfulness. Findings underscore the need for culturally sensitive and contextually relevant approaches, emphasizing the role of interdisciplinary collaboration and patient involvement in healthcare. The study's implications extend to mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers, offering strategies to enhance holistic well-being. Future directions include incorporating mind-body practices in physical education to improve student outcomes and address mental health challenges.

Keywords: Mind-body connection, holistic approach/well-being, culturally sensitive approaches, interdisciplinary collaboration mental health, educators and policymakers and student outcomes

1. Introduction

The intricacies of the mind-body connection have been extensively studied across various fields. The research focuses on understanding how this concept is perceived in the context of physical education and the implications it holds for teaching practices. According to Karen Lambert et al. (2022), the complexity and variability of the concept of embodiment in PE limit its potential to inform teaching practices. Literature suggests the mind-body connection is crucial for holistic well-being, impacting physical and mental health. Alexios Batrakoulis (2022) notes the acceptance of mind-body fitness modalities like Pilates and yoga but highlights a lack of robust evidence for their efficacy among obese adults.

Internationally, the concept of the mind-body connection is increasingly recognized, yet challenges persist in understanding and applying it effectively. A key issue is the lack of standardized methods for exploring and teaching

this concept, resulting in varied approaches in research and practice. Cultural diversity further influences how the mind-body connection is understood and incorporated into healthcare and education, leading to disparities in access to relevant therapies and treatments. Woods-Giscombé (2014) emphasizes the need for culturally sensitive approaches to studying this connection, while Park et al. (2020) underscore the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in enhancing our understanding on a global scale.

In the Philippines, the concept of the mind-body connection is gaining recognition, but there are challenges in fully integrating it into mainstream healthcare and education. One issue is the limited awareness and understanding of the mind-body connection among the general population and healthcare providers. Additionally, there is a lack of standardized approaches and training programs for incorporating mind-body practices into healthcare and educational settings. A study by Santander et al., (2024) It suggests that interventions such as Yoga and Benedictine mindfulness can serve as alternative physio-spiritual interventions, potentially contributing to the restoration of good health and well-being. Another study by Ineke Vergeer et al., (2021) the inclusion of practices like Yoga and Tai Chi as holistic movement practices (HMPs) in the field of physical activity, which go beyond typical fitness goals to include mental, emotional, social, and/or spiritual aspects of well-being.

In my study lies in its focus on the perception and integration of the mind-body connection specifically within the context of physical education in the Philippines. While there is existing literature on the mind-body connection in general and its applications in healthcare and well-being, there is a lack of research that specifically addresses its implications for teaching and learning in physical education, especially in the Philippine setting. Furthermore, my study aims to provide a more culturally sensitive and contextually relevant approach to understanding the mind-body connection, which is lacking in current research. By examining the concept of embodiment and its theoretical/philosophical deployment in physical education, my study seeks to fill this gap by providing practical guidance for teachers based on clusters of familiar characteristics found in the literature. Finally, by focusing on the physical education context, my study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on the mind-body connection by providing a unique perspective on its role in education and holistic well-being.

2. Theory Base

This study was anchored on the Functionalism Model by Turner et.al in 1979. It emerged as the science of the body social for if insight into the part of the human body could be achieved by determining how they affected bodily

states, the same would be possible for society. Further, by asking the functions of a social structure for the social whole, greater insight into the operation of societies was believed possible.

Turner's Functionalism Model which posits that understanding the roles of various human body parts can provide insights into societal functions. By examining the functions of social structures within the broader social context, the model aims to enhance our understanding of societal operations.

Research Questions

The study examined how the understanding of the mind-body connection has changed over time, exploring historical and modern perspectives. It aimed to uncover key developments and shifts in thinking regarding the integration of mind and body.

3. Methods

This study will conduct a systematic review to explore how the concept of the mind-body connection has evolved over time. By looking at both historical and modern literature, it will pinpoint significant developments and changes in understanding. The results will offer a detailed summary of how views and uses of the mind-body connection have shifted through different eras. Additionally, the study will highlight a trend towards combining various forms of knowledge to enhance best practices and support learning in adult and higher education (Freiler, 2024).

In the initial phase of the study, the researcher conducted a detailed manual search of published literature, including studies, articles, journals, books, and research papers, to investigate the historical development of physical education in terms of practices, philosophies, policies, and influences. This process yielded 15 relevant studies published between 2001 and 2024.

The inclusion criteria for this systematic review are as follows: a) studies must directly address the evolution of the mind-body connection concept over time, providing insights into historical and modern perspectives; b) studies should pinpoint significant developments and changes in understanding, specifically regarding how views and uses of the mind-body connection have shifted through different eras; c) studies that discuss the trend towards combining various forms of knowledge to enhance best practices and support learning in adult and higher education will be included; d) all types of publications, including studies, articles, journals, books, and research papers, published between 2001 and 2024, are eligible for inclusion; e) there are no restrictions on publication date to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the topic.

Table 1. Significant Statements and Formulated Meanings

Significant Result	Codes	Formulated Meanings
Integrating traditional Chinese philosophy into contemporary physiotherapy practice	R1	Blending Chinese philosophy with physiotherapy
MBIs could have beneficial effects on both mental and physical health	R2	MBIs benefit both mind and body.
Integration could establish a synergistic relationship between dance and science	R3	Merging dance and science for synergy
Incorporating mind-body techniques into medical education to enhance students' well-being	R4	Integrate mind-body techniques in education for well-being
body therapies and its potential benefits for various health conditions.	R5	Body therapies and their health benefits.
protect medical students from functional impairment due to psychological distress	R6	Protect individuals from psychological distress.
support college students' well-being during stressful times	R7	Enhancing coping skills for stress
physical and mental health interventions in the treatment of brain-mind-body interface disorders	R8	Interventions for mind-body disorders.
Integrating QMBE and similar mind-body exercises into PPSP clinical practice	R9	Integrating mind-body exercises into practice.
Reduce the burden on health systems while improving the quality of life for participants	R10	Improve life quality, reduce system burden.
mind-body practices may be helpful in reducing psychological stress related to the pandemic	R11	Mind-body practices reduce pandemic stress.
yoga can be a vehicle for growth and acceptance	R12	Yoga fosters growth and acceptance
integrating MBB into university courses can be beneficial for students' holistic development and well-being.	R13	Connecting MBB into courses is beneficial.
deepen understanding of yoga's role in promoting health and well-being	R14	Understanding yoga's health benefits.
potential benefits of mindful and deliberate approaches to life's challenges	R15	Benefits of mindfulness for life's challenges.

Table 2. Formulated Meanings and Clustered Themes

Formulated Meanings	Clustered Themes
MBIs benefit both mind and body. Integrate mind-body techniques in education for well-being. Integrating mind-body exercises into practice. Mind-body practices reduce pandemic stress. And Connecting MBB into courses is beneficial.	Integrating Mind-Body Practices
Body therapies and their health benefits. Improve life quality, reduce system burden. Protect individuals from psychological distress. Enhancing coping skills for stress. Yoga fosters growth and acceptance. And Benefits of mindfulness for life's challenges.	Health Benefits and Wellness

Blending Chinese philosophy with physiotherapy. Merging dance and science for synergy. Interventions for mind-body disorders. Understanding yoga's health benefits.

Interdisciplinary Approaches

Table 3. Clustered Themes and Emergent Themes

Clustered Themes	Emergent Themes
Integrating Mind-Body Practices	Holistic Well-being
Interdisciplinary Approaches and Health Benefits and Wellness	Collaborative Health Approaches

Table 4. The Concept of mind-body connection

Essential Themes	Core Ideas
Holistic Well-being	Recognizing the interconnectedness of mental and physical well-being. Cultivating a deeper understanding of one's body and mind relationship. Leveraging integrated techniques to improve overall functioning and productivity. Utilizing mind-body practices as complementary approaches in medical and therapeutic settings. Incorporating mindfulness and physical activities into daily routines for sustained benefits.
Collaborative Health Approaches	Harnessing the expertise of multiple disciplines to address complex health challenges. Integrating knowledge from diverse fields to provide holistic wellness solutions. Incorporating scientific findings from multiple disciplines to inform health and wellness strategies.

4. Results and Discussions

The purpose of the study is to explore the evolution of the mind-body connection concept over time, analyzing historical and modern literature to understand how perceptions and applications have changed. It also aims to highlight the trend of integrating various forms of knowledge to enhance best practices in adult and higher education.

Table 4 discusses the vital link between mental and physical health, known as the mind-body connection, which is crucial for holistic well-being. This concept suggests that our thoughts, emotions, and attitudes can influence our physical health and vice versa. It emphasizes the need for a balanced integration of mental, emotional, and physical elements for optimal health. Collaborative health approaches have gained recognition for enhancing this connection, emphasizing a unified, interdisciplinary healthcare approach involving healthcare providers, patients, and communities. This approach acknowledges that health encompasses complete physical, mental, and social well-being, going beyond mere absence of illness. Holistic well-being, a core principle of the mind-body connection, emphasizes treating the whole person, including physical, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, recognizing their interconnectedness in shaping overall health.

Holistic well-being is a comprehensive approach to health that considers an individual's physical, mental, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects, recognizing their interconnectedness. This approach emphasizes the importance of addressing these elements together for overall health and wellness, acknowledging that physical health can impact mental and emotional well-being, and vice versa. The study's findings align with previous research indicating that programs promoting holistic well-being can significantly enhance mental health, supporting the goal of promoting mental health and well-being (Cerdá et al., 2023). Furthermore, the interconnected nature of the mind and body, as well as emotions, cognition, and values, highlights the importance of viewing oneself as a holistic entity (Xinyue, 2022).

Holistic well-being emphasizes the importance of mental and emotional health, acknowledging the influence of thoughts, emotions, and attitudes on overall well-being. Practices like mindfulness, meditation, and therapy are often recommended to enhance mental and emotional wellness. Social well-being is also integral, emphasizing the value of healthy relationships and social connections in fostering overall health. Meaningful relationships and engaging in social activities can contribute to a sense of belonging and support. The study by Abdullah Mohammed lesloum et al (2023) supports this holistic view, suggesting that optimal well-being requires consideration of the entire human experience, including emotional and psychological states, physical health, and a sense of connection to something greater than oneself.

Collaborative health approaches are a cornerstone of modern healthcare, highlighting the importance of integrating various healthcare professionals, patients, and communities to provide comprehensive care. This approach acknowledges the complexity of health issues, emphasizing the need for a holistic understanding that encompasses more than just medical interventions. By uniting professionals from diverse fields like medicine, nursing, therapy, and social work, collaborative health approaches ensure that patients receive holistic and individualized care tailored to their specific needs. The study's findings echo Zeleke et al.'s (2020) view, which emphasizes the importance of supporting a healthy mind and body connection, including advocating for personalized mind-body approaches and collaborative efforts between schools and homes.

A key strength of collaborative health approaches is their emphasis on patient involvement, encouraging active participation in healthcare decisions. This involvement promotes a sense of empowerment and ownership over one's well-being. Recognizing patients as experts in their own health, this collaborative model values their input in developing effective care plans. By including patients in decision-making, healthcare providers can ensure that care

is personalized, leading to improved health outcomes. This study's findings resonate with Esch et al.'s (2024) focus on identifying and developing interventions that address psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects to prevent harmful responses to stress.

Collaborative health approaches go beyond traditional healthcare settings to involve communities. By addressing social determinants of health and collaborating with local resources and organizations, healthcare providers can tackle underlying causes of health issues and promote well-being at a community level. This community-centered approach not only leads to better health outcomes but also nurtures a sense of shared responsibility for health, creating a more resilient and supportive healthcare system. The findings of this study align with Richard's (2023) research, highlighting the impact of motivation, self-efficacy, and social support on health-related behaviors and lifestyle choices. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach to treatment that considers the mind, body, and behavior, benefiting patient care and health outcomes.

5. Implication and Future Direction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the researchers, focusing on the implications and future directions of the mind-body connection. The study underscores the importance of integrating holistic approaches with traditional medical practices to enhance patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs. These findings have significant implications for mental health professionals, educators, and policymakers, providing them with strategies to promote holistic well-being. Future research and application of mind-body practices in physical education can lead to more comprehensive student development and improved mental health.

5.1 Implication

The following implications were drawn:

Studying the mind-body connection is crucial as it bridges traditional medical practices with holistic approaches. This study's impact is particularly significant in healthcare, where recognizing the link between mind and body allows for more comprehensive treatment plans that address both mental and physical health issues. This holistic approach has the potential to enhance patient outcomes and reduce healthcare costs by preventing chronic diseases often associated with stress and psychological factors.

The study's findings also benefit mental health professionals, enabling them to incorporate various techniques into their practice to help clients achieve emotional and physical well-being. Techniques like mindfulness meditation

and yoga, known to reduce stress and improve health, can be integrated into therapy sessions, enhancing overall effectiveness.

Furthermore, educators and policymakers can leverage this study to develop curriculum and public health initiatives that promote holistic well-being. By teaching students how to incorporate mind-body practices into their lives, educators can empower individuals to manage stress and maintain good health. Policymakers can use this information to create programs that support mind-body wellness, potentially reducing the societal burden of chronic disease.

5.2 Future Direction

The study of the mind-body connection holds significant potential for shaping the future direction of teaching physical education, leading to a more holistic approach to student development. Understanding the deep interconnection between the mind and body allows educators to refine their teaching methods, promoting a more comprehensive student experience. Incorporating mind-body practices, such as mindfulness and relaxation techniques, into physical education can result in improved focus, emotional regulation, and overall well-being for students.

Additionally, understanding the mind-body connection can help teachers tailor physical activities to suit individual student needs. By recognizing that mental states can impact physical performance, educators can create a supportive environment that encourages students to explore and understand their bodies better. This approach not only enhances physical skills but also promotes a deeper appreciation for the mind-body connection, empowering students to take ownership of their health and fitness.

Furthermore, incorporating mind-body practices into physical education can help address the mental health challenges faced by many students today. The study's findings suggest that by promoting activities that enhance the mind-body connection, such as yoga or tai chi, teachers can help students develop coping mechanisms for stress and anxiety. This holistic approach to physical education not only benefits students' mental health but also contributes to a more positive and inclusive learning environment.

Finally, the study on the mind-body connection offers valuable insights that can revolutionize the field of teaching physical education. By integrating mind-body practices into curriculum and instruction, educators can nurture students' physical, mental, and emotional well-being, fostering a lifelong appreciation for health and fitness.

References:

- Batrakoulis, A. (2023). Role of mind-body fitness in obesity. *Diseases*, 11(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.3390/diseases11010001>
- Bond, A. R., Mason, H. F., Lemaster, C. M., Shaw, S. E., Mullin, C. S., Holick, E. A., & Saper, R. B. (2013). Embodied health: The effects of a mind-body course for medical students. *Medical Education Online*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.3402/meo.v18i0.20699>
- Buric, I., Farias, M., Jong, J., Mee, C., & Brazil, I. A. (2017). What is the molecular signature of mind-body interventions? A systematic review of gene expression changes induced by meditation and related practices. *Frontiers in Immunology*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fimmu.2017.00670>
- Cerdá, A., Boned-Gómez, S., & Baena-Morales, S. (2023). Exploring the mind-body connection: Yoga, mindfulness, and mental well-being in adolescent physical education. *Education Sciences*, 13(11), 1104. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13111104>
- Clark, S. D., Long, M. M., & Schiffman, L. G. (1999). The Mind-Body Connection: The Relationship Among Physical Activity Level, Life Satisfaction, and Cognitive Age Among Mature Females. *Journal of Social Behavior & Personality*, 14(2), 221–240.
- Dean, E. (2001). Neo-Confucianism and physiotherapy: The mind-body-spirit connection. *Hong Kong Physiotherapy Journal*, 19(1), 3-8. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1013-7025\(09\)70017-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1013-7025(09)70017-X).
- Dixon, E. (née Burrows). (2005). The mind/body connection and the practice of classical ballet. *Research in Dance Education*, 6(1-2), 75-96. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14617890500373352>
- Esch, T., Stefano, G. B., & Michaelsen, M. M. (2024). The foundations of mind-body medicine: Love, good relationships, and happiness modulate stress and promote health. *Stress and Health*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3387>
- Freiler, T. J. (2024). Bridging traditional boundaries of knowing: Revaluing mind/body connections through experiences of embodiment. PSU. Retrieved from <https://etda.libraries.psu.edu/catalog/6957>
- Fritzson, A. E., Schrag, B. H., Park, B., Strife, S., Teeters, L. A. P., Lischwe, E. H., ... & Dimidjian, S. (2024). Enhancing body image satisfaction and well-being among early adolescents: Feasibility and preliminary outcomes of the Mind. Body. Voice. program. *Eating Behaviors*, 53, 101875. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.eatbeh.2021.101875>
- Hellem, T., Benavides-Vaello, S., & Taylor-Piliae, R. (2021). National Internet-Based Survey of the Use, Barriers, Reasons and Beliefs of Mind-Body Practices During the Early Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine*, 26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2515690X211006332>
- Kim, S.-K., Shim, J.-L., & Han, G.-S. (2019). The effect of mind-body exercise on sustainable psychological wellbeing focusing on Pilates. *Sustainability*, 11(7), 1977. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11071977>
- Kraemer, K. M., Luberto, C. M., O'Bryan, E. M., Mysinger, E., & Cotton, S. (2016). Mind-body skills training to improve distress tolerance in medical students: A pilot study. *Teaching and Learning in Medicine*, 28(2), 219-228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10401334.2016.1146605>
- La Forge R. (1997). Mind-body fitness: encouraging prospects for primary and secondary prevention. *The Journal of cardiovascular nursing*, 11(3), 53–65. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005082-199704000-00006>
- Lambert, K., Gray, S., O'Connor, J., & Young, L. (2022). How is embodiment in physical education theoretically conceptualised? A concept analysis. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2022.2153819>
- Lesloum, A. M., Mahdi, M., Alyami, M. G. M., Abdullah, R., Saeed, M., & Alyami, S. M. (2023). Evaluating the harmony: A critical review of natural therapy in balancing mind, body, and spirit. *Journal of Survey in Fisheries Sciences*, 10(5), 26–32. <https://doi.org/10.53555/sfs.v10i1.2186>
- Li, T., Hu, X., & Chi, I. (2022). A systematic review of randomized controlled trials on interventions adopting body-mind-spirit (BMS) model on holistic well-being. *Journal of Evidence-Based Integrative Medicine*, 27. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2515690X221103303>
- Lutovac, S., Kaasila, R., Petäjänieniemi, M., et al. (2024). How does Mind-Body Bridging

- support professional identity development? *International Journal of Educational and Vocational Guidance*, 24(2), 151–172.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10775-022-09552-0>
- Maggio, J., Adams, C., & Perez, D. L. (2023). Creating a “Brain-Mind-Body Interface Disorders” diagnostic category across specialties. *The Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/appi-neuropsych>
- Mehling, W. E., Wrubel, J., Daubenmier, J. J., et al. (2011). Body awareness: A phenomenological inquiry into the common ground of mind-body therapies. *Philosophy, Ethics, and Humanities in Medicine*, 6(6). <https://doi.org/10.1186/1747-5341-6-6>
- Osypiuk, K., Kilgore, K., Ligibel, J., Vergara-Diaz, G., Bonato, P., & Wayne, P. M. (2020). "Making peace with our bodies": A qualitative analysis of breast cancer survivors' experiences with Qigong mind-body exercise. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, 26(9), 827-834.
<https://doi.org/10.1089/acm.2019.0406>
- Pretty, J., & Barton, J. (2020). Nature-based interventions and mind-body interventions: Saving public health costs whilst increasing life satisfaction and happiness. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(21), 7769. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17217769>
- Price, J., & Brunet, J. (2024). Adults diagnosed with gynecologic cancer and their relationship with their body: A study on the supportive role of yoga using interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Body Image*, 49. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2024.101705>
- Santander, N., Santiago, R., & Matitu, B. (2024). Yoga and Benedictine Mindfulness: An Alternative Physio-Spiritual Intervention Towards Restoration of Good Health and Well-Being in the Academe. *Scientia - The International Journal on the Liberal Arts*, 13(1), 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.57106/scientia.v13i1.179>
- Saunders, P. A., Tractenberg, R. E., Chaterji, R., Amri, H., Harazduk, N., Gordon, J. S., Lumpkin, M., & Haramati, A. (2007). Promoting self-awareness and reflection through an experiential Mind-Body Skills course for first year medical students. *Medical Teacher*, 29(8), 778-784. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01421590701509647>
- Shaw, A., & Kaytaz, E. S. (2021). Yoga bodies, yoga minds: Contextualizing the health discourses and practices of modern postural yoga. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 28(3).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13648470.2021.1949943>
- Sovereign, G., & Walker, B. R. (2021). Mind, body and wellbeing: Reinforcement sensitivity theory and self-cultivation systems as wellbeing influencers. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 22(1), 1–20.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00216-5>
- Strehli, I., Ziegenfuss, D. H., Block, M. E., Burns, R. D., Bai, Y., & Brusseau, T. A. (2022). "I felt grounded and clear-headed": Qualitative exploration of a mind-body physical activity intervention on stress among college students during COVID-19. *INQUIRY: The Journal of Health Care Organization, Provision, and Financing*, 59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00469580221126307>
- Vergeer, I., Johansson, M., & Cagas, J. Y. (2021). Holistic movement practices – An emerging category of physical activity for exercise psychology. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 53, 101870.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2020.101870>
- Vickram, A. S., & Titus, R. (2023). Psychological factors in health and illness: A comprehensive review. *Journal for ReAttach Therapy and Developmental Diversities*, 6(9s), 736–746.
<https://doi.org/10.31721/jrtdd.v6i9s.1512>
- Woods-Giscombé, C. L. (2014). The cultural relevance of mindfulness meditation as a health intervention for African Americans: Implications for reducing stress-related health disparities. *Journal of Holistic Nursing*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0898010113519010>
- Zeke, W. A., Hughes, T. L., & Drozda, N. (2020). Home-school collaboration to promote mind-body health. In C. Maykel & M. A. Bray (Eds.), *Promoting mind-body health in schools: Interventions for mental health professionals* (pp. 11-26). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000157-002>
- Zhang, X., Zong, B., Zhao, W., & Li, L. (2021). Effects of mind-body exercise on brain structure and function: A systematic review on MRI studies. *Brain Sciences*, 11(2), 205.