



Contribution of Ashtang Yoga in Enhancing the Psychological Variable and Quality Of Life of Young Adults

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Received Oct 20, 2017; Accepted Oct 29, 2017; Published Oct 30, 2017

Abstract

The purpose of the research was to evaluate the Psychological variable effects of four months of daily practice (except Sunday and gazzeted holidays) ashtang yoga training .The hypothesis was that four months of ashtang yoga practice would have positive effects on Psychological variable -Attention capacity as supported by previous research. The participants included 80 adults (male and female) both from Govt. P.G College, Bilaspur Rampur (U.P). The subjects were ranging from 18-21 years of age. The subjects were divided into two equal groups consisting of forty subjects each belonging to one experimental and one control group. Participant in the group engaged in 1 hour of ashtang yoga, daily practice (except Sunday and gazzeted holidays) over a four month of period, while the Control group not exposed to any kind of activity.

(Statistical analysis revealed significant effect of ashtang yoga practice)

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) found a statistically significant improvement between pre and post tests core on all the variables. This study concludes that four month ashtang yoga practice provide a sufficient stimulus to improve the Psychological variable in untrained college adults.

Key Words: Ashtang Yoga, Psychological, Young Adults, Quality of Life

1. Introduction:

All the orthodox systems of Indian Philosophy have one goal in view, the liberation of the soul through perfection. The method is by Yoga. Yoga is an ancient discipline designed to bring balance and health to the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of the individual. It is long popular practice in India that has become increasingly more common in Western society.

योगश्चित्त वृत्ति निरोधः। yogascitta vritti nirodhah"Yoga is the restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff" - Sage Patanjali (sutra 1.2); translation by Swami Vivekananda Even though yoga has been mentioned in various ancient texts, including the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita etc, the credit for putting together a formal, cohesive philosophy of yoga goes to Sage Patanjali. In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali has provided the very essence of the philosophy and teachings of yoga in a highly scientific and systematic exposition. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (YSP) form the basis for one of the six Hindu schools of philosophy (or 'shad-darshana,' literally six philosophies) and are a very important milestone in the history of Yoga. The book is a set of 195 aphorisms (sutras), which are short, terse phrases designed to be easy to memorize. Though brief, the Yoga Sutras are an enormously influential work that is just as relevant for yoga philosophy and practice today as it was when it was written.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are also sometimes referred to as "Raja Yoga" or the "Royal Yoga".

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice of breathing, focus and postures that brings tranquility, health, energy and ultimately a greater connection with oneself. The word yoga in Sanskrit translates as "yoke" or "union" and the origins of yoga can be traced as far as 4500 BC.Everyone can do yoga; young children, grandparents, professional athletes and "weekend warriors". The evidence used to validate the health and wellbeing benefits of yoga is often anecdotal.

Yoga as described in the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* refers to Ashtanga Yoga. The *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* is considered as a central text of the Yoga school of Hindu philosophy, It is often called "Rāja yoga", "yoga of the kings," a term which originally referred to the ultimate, royal goal of yoga, which is usually *Samadhi*, but was popularized by

Vivekananda as the common name for Ashtanga Yoga. Ashtanga Yoga incorporates epistemology, metaphysics, ethical practices, systematic exercises and self-development techniques for body, mind and spirit.

According to satchidananda (1990), yoga is the total transformation of a seemingly limited physical, mental and emotional person into a fully illumined, thoroughly harmonized and perfected being –from an individual with likes and dislikes, pains and pleasure, successes and failure, to a sage of permanent peace, joy and selfless dedication to the entire creation (p.xiii). Thus, yoga is much more than asana. Yoga helps a person to gain “understanding and complete mastery over the mind” (Satchidananda, 1990, p.xi). It provides a system to achieve Moksha, or “liberation of the cycle of rebirth (chaline, 2001, p.44). The four yogic path includes (1) “Jnana yoga, the yoga of wisdom ; (2) Raja or Ashtanga yoga ,the yoga of meditation ;(3)Hatha yoga, the yoga of physical posture;(4)Karma yoga, the yoga of actions; and bhakti yoga, the yoga of religious devotion (p.44). However, these paths simplify the rather complex goal of self-realization through yoga. Ashtanga is based upon the principles of The yoga sutras of Patanjali (Satchidananda, 1990 p.48). This practice was developed by Pattabhi jois, of Mysore India, and teaches the sun salutation (surya namaskar) followed by sequence of postures. However, despite the different names, these styles all defines the same concept :focusing the attention inward, guided by the breath in attempts to be absolutely present in the moment (Cohen et al,2003). This thesis focusing on the style of Ashtang yoga. The yoga sutras of patanjali, one of the definitive texts in yoga, serves as a document for analysis and as a method to triangular sour (Satchidananda,1990). Sutra means ‘thread ‘and each Sutra, originally written in Sanskrit reads like a proverb and serve as a guide to living the yogic lifestyle. According to its translator, Sri Swami satchidananda, the yoga sutras is a practical handbook to living (Satchidananda 1990, p.v). The Yoga sutras of patanjali is divided into four sections, or books. Each book describes some aspect of the yoga practice: why one practice yoga (Samadhi Pada, the portion on contemplation), how one practices yoga (Sadhna Pada, the portion on practice), the benefits and accomplishments of a yoga practice (Vibhuti Pada, the portion on Accomplishments), and the philosophy of yoga (Kaivalya pada, the portion on absoluteness). No documented date exists as to when the sutras were written, but it is theorized to be somewhere between 5,000 B.C to 300 A.D (Satchidananda, 1990). It is even possible the supposed author, Patanjali was not one man, but actually a succession of men putting the practice of yoga into writing.

Psychology literally means "the study of the psyche." In Western culture, most people would likely consider themselves to be of sound, healthy mind. The branches of Western medicine of psychiatry and psychology are seen as existing for those who have become mentally sick -- otherwise 'normal' people who have for some reason or another become unable to function as smoothly as the average person on a day-to-day. The scope of the psychology of yoga is not limited, then, to the sensory, materialistic, emotional experiences of mankind. Because its premise is based upon the foundation of Universal, underlying Truths, it sees mankind not merely in its transient, earthly form, but in its cosmic, Universal nature. It understands man in the context of his place within the infinite cosmos, and hence provides the necessary tool by which to harmonize one's material, earthly Self (microcosm), with one's eternal, Universal Nature (macrocosm). Only the establishment of yoga (harmony, Oneness) within the human psyche -- a balanced and conscious mental equilibrium -- will reveal health, happiness, peace and prosperity. This is the goal of yoga, and this is the profoundness and power of the yoga psychology.

Yoga is mind and body discipline developed in India some 2000 years ago. Almost two decades ago, the fitness industry rediscovered this ancient form of physical activity and a new category called mind-body exercise was created. In a more recent article, Larkey, Jahnke, Etnier, and Gonzalez (2009) proposed the term “meditative movement” to classify exercise activities which focus on physical movements, conscious breathing, a calm state of mind, and deep states of relaxation. Ultimately, the goal of yoga is purely psychological. As defined in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, one of the authoritative texts in yoga, yoga is the control of the mental fluctuations and energies. In Ashtanga, yoga the purpose of working the body out is to burn the six poisons of the heart – desire, anger, delusion, greed, envy, and sloth (The Practice, 2009). Simply put, the goal is to live a peaceful life free from hatred and negativities. As I pointed out earlier, yoga techniques include not only physical exercises but also breath work, attention focus, and attitude training. Breathwork is essential to developing inner awareness which is prerequisite to relaxation and imagery. One school of yoga actually teaches a technique called yoga nidra (yogic sleep) with preparatory exercises very similar to imagery training. Attention focus in yoga includes sense withdrawal, concentration, and meditation, which are in essence centering in sport psychology language. Yoga also teaches positive thinking. Generally, attitude training in yoga involves the practice of

ethical rules and observances called yamas and niyamas, but in the context of sport psychology, attitude training in yoga means thinking positively or applying positive self-talk. Yoga as a physical activity has many physical as well as psychological benefits. It offers a holistic approach to a physical activity intervention and an alternative strategy to enhance mental skills in sports. Yoga has a wide range of techniques designed to improve health and fitness; to teach inner awareness, breathing and relaxation; and to cultivate a positive mental state. As sport psychology is still in its infancy in some parts of the world, offering yoga as a cross-training program is a good introduction to a comprehensive mental skills training program and may assist in providing a way to gain entry into an athletic team. Traditional psychological skills techniques such as centering, imagery, and relaxation, can be incorporated into a regular yoga session which makes it a great introductory mental training package. Yoga is now a mainstream discipline that even professional NBA teams incorporate it in their training programs (Stack, 2011).

Attention is the mind's filtering process, which allows an individual to focus on a few important aspects of the surrounding environment (Goldstein, 2007). In this study, selective attention, which requires individuals to focus upon target stimuli while ignoring other stimuli, is explored in an effort to understand the relationship between yoga and attention. The psychological benefits of yoga may, in part, result from yoga's meditative component. Several studies have investigated the correlations between various forms of meditation and the constructs of stress and attention. Based on discussions in Shapiro and Walsh (2006) and the descriptions of meditation in yoga literature (Johnston, 1912), meditation is a self-regulating practice that focuses on training attention and awareness over a period of time. It was found that a mindfulness program resulted in an improvement on perceived stress and even though yoga was not practiced as frequently as the other meditation exercises, yoga also had a strong correlation with lower stress scores (Carmody & Baer, 2007). Valentine and Sweet (1999) found that there were statistically significant increases in attention test scores after both a mindfulness meditation and concentrated meditation session. Thus, meditation, an exercise included in yoga practice, has been shown in the literature to have a positive effect on attention. One study, conducted in India, found that practicing yoga improves memory and attention in children (Sahasi, 1984). Another study found that children had improved function on measures of attention after practicing yoga (Peck, Kehle, Bray, & Theodore, 2005). Although these two studies provide statistically significant evidence supporting yoga's positive correlation with attention, not all research supports this conclusion.

Quality of life has been increasingly used as a scientific concept in literature embracing a wide range of target groups and populations as a whole. Conceptualizations vary, but there is much common ground concerning the domain content embraced by the term. Commentators are also clear that account needs to be taken of both objective life conditions and subjective personal appraisals, and the fact that what is important to each person varies. A synthesis of these perspectives provides a model of quality of life which integrates objective and subjective indicators and individual values across a broad range of life domains. Life domain issues may be categorized within six areas: physical, material, social, productive, emotional and civic well-being. Whatever it's precise specification, the model is put forward as a framework for organizing measurement relevant to the quality of life concept rather than as a blueprint for deriving the ultimate single instrument. There is still a need for methodological flexibility. The pre-eminent aim is to relate the fine grain of the experience of individuals with disability to that of the wider world.

2. Methodology:

For the purpose of the study 80 healthy and physically fit young adults (male and female) in the age group of 18-21yrs studying in Govt. P.G. College, Bilaspur Rampur (U.P) was selected randomly as the subjects for the study. Random group design was used for the purpose of the study. First the subjects were divided into two equal groups by drawing a lot. Group A acted as experimental group and Group B acted as control group. Both groups consist of forty subjects each. Prior to the administration of test pre test scores for all the selected variables were collected .After four months of training post test scores were collected on each of the selected variables. Experimental group perform selected ashtang yogic activities daily for 1 hour. No training was imparted to the control group. For this study Attention capacity was chosen as a variable. The selection criterion variable such as Attention capacity was measuring by D2 test by of attention. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) found a statistically significant improvement between pre and post tests score on all the variables.

3. Results and Discussion:

Data was analyzed using the Analysis of Variance at .05 level of significance. The subjects of both groups were compared on selected Psychological Variables. The result of analysis of variance was presented through table 1 to 4.

Table: 1 Analysis of Variance of the Means of the Experimental Group and Control Group for D2 Test of attention (TN)

S. No	Test	Groups		Group Type	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level
		Experimental	Control						
1.	Pre Test	560.63	568.8	A	1	64468.01	64468.01	13.891	0.001
				W	78	361990.98	4640.91		
2.	Post Test	617.4	584.6	A	1	4992.8	4992.8	0.77	0.383
				W	78	505780	6484.36		

* Significant at 0.01 Level

Not Significant

Table: 1 oneway ANOVA further reveals that the obtained F value (13.891) was not found to be significant in case of pre test mean which shows that pre test mean do not differ significantly and the random assignment of the subjects to the two groups was quite successful. However the post test mean of both the groups were significant as the obtained F value (0.77) is more than the tabulated F value (3.96)

Table: 2 Analysis of Variance of the Means of the Experimental Group and Control Group for D2 Test of attention (E1)

S. No	Test	Groups		Group Type	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level
		Experimental	Control						
1.	Pre Test Means	116.9	98.43	A	1	29953.8	29953.8	11.273	0.001
				W	78	207250	2657.05		
2.	Post Test Means	78.2	104.15	A	1	655.51	655.51	0.196	0.659
				W	78	261072.88	3347.09		

* Significant at 0.01 Level

Not Significant

Table: 2 oneway ANOVA further reveals that the obtained F value (11.273) was not found to be significant in case of pre test mean which shows that pre test mean do not differ significantly and the random assignment of the subjects to the two groups was quite successful. However the post test mean of both the groups were significant as the obtained F value (0.196) is more than the tabulated F value (3.96).

Table: 3

Analysis of Variance of the Means of the Experimental Group and Control Group for D2 Test of attention (E2)

S. No	Test	Groups		Group Type	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level
		Experimental	Control						
1.	Pre Test Means	11.1	9.48	A	1	762.61	762.61	11.312	0.001
				W	78	5258.38	67.42		
2.	Post Test Means	4.93	7.6	A	1	70.31	70.31	0.755	0.388
				W	78	7265.58	93.15		

* Significant at 0.01 Level

Not Significant

Table: 3 oneway ANOVA further reveals that the obtained F value (11.312) was not found to be significant in case of pre test mean which shows that pre test mean do not differ significantly and the random assignment of the subjects to the two groups was quite successful. However the post test mean of both the groups were significant as the obtained F value (0.755) is more than the tabulated F value (3.96)

Table: 4
Analysis of Variance of the Means of the Experimental Group and Control Group for D2 Test of attention (CP)

S. No	Test	Groups		Group Type	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F	Sig. Level
		Experimental	Control						
1.	Pre Test Means	153.13	142.08	A	1	43898.45	43898.45	29.514	0.001
				W	78	116017.35	1487.4		
2.	Post Test Means	199.98	160.43	A	1	6734.45	6734.45	2.804	0.098
				W	78	187356.55	2402.01		

* Significant at 0.01 Level

Not Significant

Table: 4 oneway ANOVA further reveals that the obtained F value (29.514) was not found to be significant in case of pre test mean which shows that pre test mean do not differ significantly and the random assignment of the subjects to the two groups was quite successful. However the post test mean of both the groups were significant as the obtained F value (2.804) is more than the tabulated F value (3.96)

3.1. Discussion:

The analysis of variance was used to find out the contribution of Ashtang yoga in enhancing the quality of life of young adults.

It was observed from above findings that four month ashtang yoga practice was shown to have positive effects on the variable. Results of the study lead to the acceptance of the hypothesis that there would be significant effect of ashtang yoga on selected Psychological variable – Attention.

4. Conclusions:

Results of this study provide evidence supporting the effectiveness of ashtang yoga training in Psychological variable.

The result indicates that four month practice except Sunday and gazzeted holidays, ashtang yoga provides a sufficient stimulus to improve the variable in untrained college adults.

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