



Influence of yoga in achieving peace of mind

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of the practice of yoga in achieving peace of mind, in comparison with people who do not do yoga. The sample consisted of 50 yoga practitioners and 50 people who do not practice yoga, who were interviewed using a questionnaire. Peace of mind was quantified as the sum of scores of parameters in the Peace of Mind Scale (Yi-Chen Lee *et al*, 2013). Data was statistically analysed through ANOVA. The results reveal that when compared to people who do not practice yoga, higher proportion of yoga practitioners experience peace of mind all the time and most of the time. There exists statistically significant difference between the peace of mind score of people practicing yoga and those who do not practice it. More period of yoga practice is found to contribute to higher peace of mind.

Keywords: yoga, influence, peace of mind

1. Introduction

One of the problems faced by people, who are exposed to various personal / social / professional stresses, is the absence of peace of mind. Peace of mind or inner peace refers to a deliberate state of psychological or spiritual calm, despite the potential presence of stressors (www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inner_peace)^[2].

Patanjali's yoga sutra mentions yoga chitta vritti nirodhah, which implies that yoga is intended for the cessation of mind movement. Yoga was known as a spiritual discipline for the advancement of the ultimate state of psycho-physiological health with higher mind-body consciousness (Khalsa, 2013)^[3]. It is also recognized as a form of integrated mind-body medicine that improves wellbeing, mostly the stress related illnesses (Atkinson *et al*, 2009)^[1]. In view of the documented benefits of yoga in promotion of mental and physical health, numerous psychiatrists now recognize its positive role in alleviating psychiatric disorders and adapt yoga in their own practice (Rao *et al*, 2013)^[4]. Asanas increase the physical flexibility, strength and coordination, while Pranayama and Meditation practices calm and focus the mind to enhance higher self-awareness and lessen anxiety, resulting in better quality of life.

A study was undertaken to analyze the influence of yoga in achieving peace of mind, in comparison with people who do not practice yoga.

2. Methodology

The study was carried out using a questionnaire among a sample of 50 yoga practitioners. A control group of 50 people, who do not practice yoga was also interviewed using this questionnaire. The questionnaire contained parameters and frequencies of experiencing the parameters in the Peace of Mind Scale reported by Yi-Chen Lee *et al* (2013)^[6] and the number of years of yoga practice. Likert's scoring method was adopted for quantifying the responses to the items in the Peace of Mind Scale. The peace of mind score of the respondents was worked out as

the sum of scores of all the parameters in the scale. Higher the peace of mind score of an individual more is the peace of mind. The data was statistically analysed through ANOVA.

3. Results

3.1. Peace of mind for yoga practitioners

Taking into consideration the entire sample of yoga respondents, their mean peace of mind score is found to be 3.90, equivalent to 78 % of the maximum possible score under this study. Table 1 shows that the mean peace of mind score of people who have practiced yoga for a period of up to 5 years (3.47) is less than the mean score of people who have done yoga for more than 5 years (4.33). The F value obtained through ANOVA of the mean peace of mind score of these two categories is significant (Table 1).

Table 1: ANOVA of mean peace of mind score of two categories of yoga practice

Years of yoga practice	Mean peace of mind score	F value	Statistical significance
Up to 5	3.47	3.75	Significant at 0.10 probability
> 5	4.33		

3.2. Comparison of peace of mind of yoga practitioners and non practitioners

Taking into consideration two frequencies of experiencing peace of mind parameters, namely, all the time and most of the time, it can be made out from Table 2 that the mean percentage of yoga practitioners experiencing the four positive peace of mind parameters all the time and most of the time works out to 18.8 and 54.7 % respectively, totalling to 73.5 % respondents. However the mean percentage of people not practicing yoga experiencing the four positive peace of mind parameters all the time and most of the time works out to only 13.2 % and 37.8 % respectively, which totals to 51 % respondents only (Table 3).

Table 2: Experience of positive peace of mind parameters by yoga practitioners

Parameters	Respondents (%) experiencing	
	All the time	Most of the time
My mind is free and at ease	18.8	43.6
I feel content and comfortable with myself	31.3	43.8
I have feelings of peace and stability in my mind	12.5	62.5
I have peace and harmony in my mind	12.5	68.8
Mean (%) reporting	18.8	54.7

Table 3: Experience of positive peace of mind parameters by people who do not practice yoga

Parameters	Respondents (%) experiencing	
	All the time	Most of the time
My mind is free and at ease	15.0	33.5
I feel content and comfortable with myself	22.8	31.5
I have feelings of peace and stability in my mind	8.5	42.5
I have peace and harmony in my mind	8.5	43.8
Mean (%) reporting	13.2	37.8

There exists statistically significant difference between the mean peace of mind score of people practicing yoga and those who do not practice yoga (Table 4).

Table 4: ANOVA of mean peace of mind score of yoga practitioners and non-practitioners

Group	Mean peace of mind score	F value	Statistical significance
Yoga practitioners	3.90	6.09	Significant at 0.01 probability
People who do not practice yoga	3.20		

Table 5 and Table 6 show the range of peace of mind score of yoga practitioners and non practitioners respectively, expressed as percentage of the maximum possible score. The total proportion of yoga practitioners having score in the range of 80 to 100 % of the maximum possible score works out to 70.1 % (Table 5), whereas the total proportion of non practitioners having score in this range comes to 55.8 % only (Table 6). Further, it can be made out from Table 5 that the proportion of yoga practitioners having a low peace of mind score in the range of 20 to 40 % of the maximum score works out to 13% only. However, the proportion of non practitioners having a low peace of mind score in the range of 20 to 40 % of the maximum score works out to 24.3 % (Table 6)

Table 5: Range of peace of mind score of yoga practitioners

Range of peace of mind score (as % of maximum possible score)	Respondents (%)
100	21.7
80	48.4
60	16.9
40	12.2
20	0.8
Total	100

Table 6: Range of peace of mind score of people not practicing yoga

Range of peace of mind score (as % of maximum possible score)	Respondents (%)
100	13.8
80	42.0
60	19.9
40	17.4
20	6.9
Total	100

4. Discussion

The statistical significance of the higher peace of mind score obtained by people practicing yoga for more than 5 years, compared to people with less than 5 years of yoga practice confirms the effect of higher period of yoga practice in achieving better peace of mind (Table 1).

Higher proportion (73.5 %) of yoga practitioners experiencing four positive peace of mind items all the time plus most of the time (Table 2), when compared to only 51 % of people who do not practice yoga (Table 3) shows the comparative advantage of yoga practitioners with regard to achievement of better peace of mind. With regard to yoga practitioners, the total proportion of people having peace of mind score in the range of 80 to 100 % of the maximum possible score is 70.1 %, while the proportion having low peace of mind score in the range of 20 to 40 % of the maximum score is 13% only (Table 5). However, with respect to people who do not practice yoga, only 55.8 % have a high score in the range of 80 to 100 % of the maximum possible score, but 24.3 % of people have low peace of mind score in the range of 20 to 40 % of the maximum score (Table 6). This shows the influence of yoga practice in achieving more peace of mind. This is also substantiated by the statistically significant difference existing between the mean peace of mind score of people practicing yoga and those who do not practice it (Table 4).

One of the reported benefits of yoga is achieving peace of mind (www.yogajournal.com) ^[7]. During yoga practice, even beginning students notice a shift toward silence. Their minds are relieved by a sense of quieting down (www.yogainternational.com) ^[5]

5. Conclusions

When compared to people who do not practice yoga, higher proportion of yoga practitioners experience peace of mind all the time and most of the time. Also, there exists statistically significant difference between the peace of mind score of people practicing yoga and those who do not practice it. More period of yoga practice is found to contribute to higher peace of mind. The results of such studies should be disseminated among people to motivate them to practice mind-body relaxation techniques like yoga

6. References

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