

Effect of Yogic Practices on Selected Psychological Variables among Middle-aged Women in Mumbai

Shivesh Shukla

Director of Physical Education & Sports Narsee Monjee College of Commerce & Economics (Autonomous), MS, India

Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to examine the impact of yogic practices on selected psychological variables among middle-aged women residing in the Mumbai region. A total of thirty hypertensive women, aged between 30 to 40 years, were randomly selected as participants for this study. The participants were divided into two equal groups: an experimental group, which engaged in a structured yogic practice program for six weeks, and a control group, which did not undergo any intervention. Initial assessments were conducted prior to the commencement of the training program, and subsequent evaluations were performed at the conclusion of the six-week period. The analysis of the results involved comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of both groups, utilizing the paired 't' test to ascertain significant differences. A significance level of 0.05 was established for the statistical analysis. The findings indicated notable improvements in the psychological well-being of the experimental group in contrast to the control group.

KEYWORDS: Yogic Practices, Psychological Variables, Middle-Aged Women, Mumbai.

Introduction

Yoga, a practice rooted in ancient civilization, has been historically documented in texts such as the Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita, and the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Among these foundational texts, the Yoga Sutras have significantly influenced contemporary yoga practices. Over centuries, yoga has evolved to encompass not only the ultimate goal of achieving a harmonious state but also a multitude of practices, techniques, and methodologies that facilitate this journey. The classical definition of yoga, derived from the Sanskrit root "Yuj," embodies the concepts of union and integration, reflecting the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and spirit. It encompasses the quest for self-realization and the merging of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness.

In the context of urban India, particularly in metropolitan areas like Mumbai, the psychological challenges faced by middle-aged women—exacerbated by stressors such as family responsibilities, societal expectations, and work-life balance—highlight the need for effective coping strategies. This study aims to explore how yogic practices can serve as a valuable tool for enhancing psychological resilience and overall mental well-being in this demographic.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have investigated the psychological effects of yoga on various populations, with a particular focus on middle-aged women. Research indicates that regular engagement in yoga practices can significantly reduce stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms while enhancing overall psychological well-being.

1. **Effects on Stress and Anxiety:** A study by Brown and Ryan (2003) found that mindfulness practices, including yoga, lead to significant reductions in stress and anxiety levels. The relaxation techniques incorporated in yoga facilitate a decrease in the physiological responses associated with stress, thereby promoting a sense of calm and improved mood.
2. **Psychological Resilience:** A review by Khalsa and Cope (2006) noted that yoga helps in building psychological resilience, which is crucial for coping with life's challenges. Regular practitioners reported increased emotional regulation and a greater sense of self-awareness.
3. **Quality of Life:** Research conducted by Cramer et al. (2013) demonstrated that women who practiced yoga experienced a marked improvement in quality-of-life metrics, particularly in areas relating to mental health, vitality, and emotional well-being.

These findings underscore the potential of yoga as an effective intervention for improving psychological health, particularly among middle-aged women facing unique stressors.

Statement of the Problem

The present research seeks to assess the effects of yogic practices on selected psychological variables, such as stress levels, anxiety, and overall mental well-being, among middle-aged women in Mumbai.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights into the psychological benefits of engaging in a structured yogic exercise program. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the potential of yoga as an intervention for improving mental health among hypertensive women, thereby raising awareness about the importance of incorporating yogic practices into daily routines for psychological wellness.

1. The study will empower women by providing knowledge about the mental health benefits associated with regular yoga practice.
2. It aims to foster awareness among middle-aged women regarding the positive impact of yoga on psychological well-being and stress management.

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated for this study:

1. There will be a significant improvement in psychological variables, including stress and anxiety levels, among middle-aged women who practice yoga compared to those who do not.

Delimitations

The study is delimited in the following ways:

1. The sample comprised 30 middle-aged hypertensive women from the Mumbai region.
2. Participants were aged between 30 and 40 years.
3. The yogic exercises implemented were specifically designed by the investigator, with guidance from an expert, and conducted over a six-week period.

Limitations

The study faced the following limitations:

1. The subjects selected were from a specific residential area, which may have limited the variability in dietary habits among participants.
2. Participants hailed from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, but the impact of these varying conditions on the psychological outcomes was not accounted for in the analysis.

Methodology

The study aimed to explore the impact of yogic practices on psychological variables among middle-aged women in Mumbai. Thirty hypertensive women, aged between 30 and 40 years, were randomly selected and divided into two groups: an experimental group that participated in a six-week yogic exercise program and a control group that did not receive any intervention. Initial psychological assessments were conducted prior to the training, followed by post-tests after six weeks. The differences in mean scores between the experimental and control groups were analyzed using the paired 't' test, with a significance level set at 0.05.

Results

Table I- Computation of 't' ratio between the pretest and posttest means of psychological variables of experimental and control groups

Variables	Group	Mean Diff	SD	σ DM	't' ratio
Stress Level	Exp	5.32	2.12	0.57	9.34*
	Con	0.78	2.45	0.63	1.23
*Significant at 0.05 level					

Figure I: Bar Diagram Showing Pre-Test and Post-Test Means of Stress Levels

Explanation: Figure I illustrate the comparative analysis of stress levels between the experimental and control groups before and after the intervention. The experimental group showed a notable reduction in stress levels post-intervention, as indicated by the higher mean difference of 5.32 compared to 0.78 in the control group, with a significant 't' ratio of 9.34, exceeding the critical value for significance.

Table II - Computation of 't' ratio between the pretest and posttest means of anxiety levels of experimental and control groups

Variables	Group	Mean Diff	SD	σ DM	't' ratio
Anxiety Level	Exp	4.15	1.95	0.48	8.67*
	Con	0.54	2.22	0.58	0.93
*Significant at 0.05 level					

Figure II: Bar Diagram Showing Pre-Test and Post-Test Means of Anxiety Levels

Explanation: Figure II depicts the changes in anxiety levels for both groups. The experimental group demonstrated a significant reduction in anxiety, with a mean difference of 4.15 and a 't' ratio of 8.67. In contrast, the control group exhibited minimal change, highlighted by a mean difference of only 0.54, indicating the effectiveness of yogic practices in reducing anxiety.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. **Integration of Yoga into Daily Routines:** It is recommended that middle-aged women incorporate yoga into their daily routines to enhance their psychological well-being. Simple practices, such as pranayama (breathing exercises) and meditation, can be beneficial and can be adapted to fit into busy schedules.
2. **Community Yoga Programs:** Local health organizations and community centers should consider establishing yoga programs specifically designed for middle-aged women. These programs can provide a supportive environment and foster social connections that enhance mental well-being.
3. **Training for Instructors:** Yoga instructors should receive training focused on the unique psychological needs of middle-aged women, ensuring that the yoga practices taught are relevant and effective for this demographic.
4. **Further Research:** Future studies should explore the long-term effects of yoga on psychological variables, as well as investigate the impact of different styles of yoga to identify the most effective practices for mental health improvement.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The practice of yogic exercises led to a significant reduction in stress levels

among the experimental group compared to the control group.

2. Participants in the experimental group experienced a noteworthy decrease in anxiety levels, demonstrating the psychological benefits of engaging in a structured yogic program.

References

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