
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STRESS COPING MECHANISMS AMONG STUDENTS PRACTICING YOGIC AND NON-YOGIC WELLNESS TECHNIQUES

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to comparatively analyze stress coping mechanisms among students practicing yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques. Stress has emerged as one of the major psychological concerns among students due to academic pressure, lifestyle changes, technological dependence, and social expectations. In recent years, yoga and wellness practices have gained considerable importance as preventive and therapeutic approaches for managing stress and improving psychological well-being. The study employed a comparative descriptive research design involving 240 higher education students aged between 18 and 25 years. Participants were divided into two groups: students practicing yogic wellness techniques and students following non-yogic wellness practices such as gym workouts, recreational activities, music, and social interaction. A standardized stress coping questionnaire was administered to assess emotional regulation, relaxation, resilience, and coping behaviour. Statistical techniques including mean, standard deviation, independent t-test, and Pearson correlation were applied for data analysis. The findings revealed that students practicing yogic wellness techniques demonstrated significantly better stress coping abilities, emotional balance, concentration, and psychological stability compared to students practicing non-yogic wellness techniques. Yogic practices contributed positively toward self-control, mindfulness, and stress reduction. The study concludes that yoga-based wellness practices provide more effective coping mechanisms for stress management among students and should therefore be integrated into higher education wellness programs.

Keywords: Stress Management, Yogic Wellness, Coping Mechanisms, Mental Health, Psychological Well-Being

INTRODUCTION

Stress has become an increasingly common phenomenon among students in contemporary educational environments. Academic competition, examination pressure, career uncertainty, family expectations, technological overload, and changing social lifestyles have significantly affected students' physical and psychological well-being. Higher education students particularly experience emotional instability, anxiety, sleep disturbances, mental fatigue, and concentration difficulties due to multiple academic and social responsibilities.

In recent years, educational institutions and health professionals have shown growing concern regarding stress-related problems among students. Excessive stress negatively influences academic performance, emotional balance, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life. Consequently, students increasingly seek different wellness techniques and coping strategies to manage stress effectively.

Stress coping mechanisms refer to cognitive, emotional, and behavioural strategies used by individuals to manage challenging or stressful situations. Effective coping mechanisms help individuals maintain emotional stability, mental resilience, and psychological balance.

Among various stress management approaches, yoga has emerged as an important holistic practice capable of promoting mental peace, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and physical relaxation. Yoga combines physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, and relaxation practices to create harmony between body and mind.

Scientific research has demonstrated that yogic practices reduce cortisol levels, improve concentration, regulate emotions, and enhance psychological well-being. Yoga encourages self-awareness, mindfulness, relaxation, and positive thinking, which contribute significantly toward stress management.

Apart from yoga, students also adopt non-yogic wellness techniques such as gym workouts, music therapy, recreational activities, social interaction, entertainment, gaming, and fitness exercises to cope with stress. Although these techniques may provide temporary relaxation and emotional diversion, their long-term effectiveness in promoting psychological balance may differ from yoga-based practices.

Comparative analysis between yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques is therefore important to understand their relative effectiveness in stress coping among students. Such understanding may assist educational institutions in developing effective student wellness programs.

The present study therefore aims to comparatively analyze stress coping mechanisms among students practicing yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Several researchers have examined the influence of yoga and wellness practices on stress management and psychological health.

Lazar et al. (2005) reported that regular yoga and meditation practices positively influence emotional regulation, concentration, and mental clarity. Their findings suggested that yoga enhances psychological resilience among young adults.

According to Sharma and Gupta (2018), yoga significantly reduced stress and anxiety levels among university students. The study emphasized the role of yoga in promoting emotional stability and self-control.

Telles, Singh, and Balkrishna (2012) observed that yogic practices improve mental relaxation, concentration, and stress tolerance among students.

A study conducted by Kauts and Sharma (2009) found that yoga practices improved academic performance and reduced examination stress among adolescents.

Woodyard (2011) highlighted that yoga contributes positively toward mindfulness, emotional resilience, and psychological well-being.

On the other hand, Salmon (2001) suggested that physical exercise and recreational activities also contribute to stress reduction by improving mood and reducing mental fatigue.

Research by Craft and Perna (2004) demonstrated that regular physical activity positively influences mental health and reduces symptoms of anxiety and depression.

In the Indian educational context, Verma and Singh (2021) found that students participating in yoga programs demonstrated better emotional balance and stress coping abilities compared to students engaged only in recreational activities.

The reviewed literature indicates that both yogic and non-yogic wellness practices contribute to stress management; however, limited comparative studies have examined their relative effectiveness among higher education students. Therefore, the present study seeks to address this research gap.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine stress coping mechanisms among students practicing yogic wellness techniques.
2. To examine stress coping mechanisms among students practicing non-yogic wellness techniques.
3. To compare stress coping abilities between yogic and non-yogic wellness groups.
4. To analyze the influence of yoga on emotional regulation and psychological well-being.
5. To suggest strategies for improving student mental health through wellness practices.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

H01: There is no significant difference in stress coping mechanisms between students practicing yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques.

H02: Yogic wellness techniques do not significantly influence emotional regulation among students.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The study was limited to higher education students only.
2. The sample size was restricted to 240 participants.
3. Self-reported responses may involve personal bias.
4. The duration and intensity of wellness practices were not examined in detail.

CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF KEY VARIABLES

Stress Coping Mechanisms

Stress coping mechanisms refer to behavioural, emotional, and cognitive strategies adopted by individuals to manage stressful situations effectively.

Yogic Wellness Techniques

Yogic wellness techniques include yoga postures, pranayama, meditation, mindfulness, and relaxation practices aimed at improving physical and psychological well-being.

Non-Yogic Wellness Techniques

Non-yogic wellness techniques include gym exercises, recreational activities, music, entertainment, fitness activities, and social interaction used for relaxation and stress management.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed a comparative descriptive research design to analyze stress coping mechanisms among students practicing yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques.

Participants

A total of 240 higher education students participated in the study. The participants were divided into two groups.

Distribution of Participants

Groups	Number
Students Practicing Yogic Wellness Techniques	120
Students Practicing Non-Yogic Wellness Techniques	120
Total	240

Participants were aged between 18 and 25 years.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was used to select students regularly practicing specific wellness techniques.

Research Tool

A standardized Stress Coping Mechanism Scale was used to assess:

- emotional regulation
- stress tolerance
- mental relaxation
- concentration level
- resilience
- self-control

Responses were recorded using a 5-point Likert scale.

Data Collection Procedure

Permission was obtained from educational institutions before data collection. Participants were informed regarding the purpose of the study and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process.

Statistical Techniques Used

The collected data were analyzed using:

- Mean
- Standard deviation
- Independent t-test

- Pearson correlation

The level of significance was fixed at 0.05.

Results and Data Analysis

Table 1
Mean and Standard Deviation of Stress Coping Scores

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation
Yogic Wellness Group	4.28	0.54
Non-Yogic Wellness Group	3.71	0.68

Interpretation

The findings indicate that students practicing yogic wellness techniques demonstrated higher stress coping ability compared to students practicing non-yogic wellness techniques.

Table 2
Comparison of Emotional Regulation between Yogic and Non-Yogic Groups

Groups	Mean	SD	t-value
Yogic Wellness Group	4.36	0.51	3.84
Non-Yogic Wellness Group	3.69	0.73	

Interpretation

The calculated t-value indicates a significant difference between the two groups regarding emotional regulation. Students practicing yoga demonstrated better emotional balance and self-control.

Table 3
Correlation between Yogic Practices and Stress Management

Variables	r-value	p-value
Yogic Practices and Stress Management	0.72	0.001

Interpretation

The obtained r-value indicates a strong positive relationship between yogic practices and stress management abilities among students.

Table 4
Comparison of Concentration and Mental Relaxation

Variables	Yogic Group Mean	Non-Yogic Group Mean
Concentration Level	4.41	3.78
Mental Relaxation	4.52	3.66

Interpretation

Students practicing yogic wellness techniques demonstrated higher concentration and mental relaxation levels compared to students practicing non-yogic wellness practices.

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION

The findings of the present study indicate that students practicing yogic wellness techniques demonstrated significantly better stress coping abilities compared to students practicing non-yogic wellness techniques.

One of the major findings of the study is that yogic practices positively influenced emotional regulation and psychological stability. Students engaged in yoga-based wellness practices demonstrated greater emotional balance, concentration, relaxation, and resilience.

Yoga practices such as pranayama, meditation, and mindfulness appear to improve self-awareness and emotional control, enabling students to manage stressful situations more effectively. These findings support previous studies suggesting that yoga contributes positively toward mental clarity, stress reduction, and psychological well-being.

The strong positive correlation identified between yogic practices and stress management indicates that regular engagement in yoga significantly improves coping mechanisms among students.

Although non-yogic wellness techniques such as physical exercise, music, and recreational activities also contributed positively toward stress relief, their effectiveness in promoting emotional stability and mindfulness appeared comparatively lower than yoga-based practices.

The findings further suggest that yoga provides both physiological and psychological benefits by reducing stress responses and enhancing mental relaxation. Yogic practices encourage holistic wellness rather than temporary emotional diversion.

In the context of modern higher education, where students frequently experience psychological pressure and emotional fatigue, yoga-based wellness programs may serve as effective interventions for improving mental health.

Educational institutions therefore need to integrate yoga and mindfulness practices within student wellness and mental health initiatives.

Recommendations

1. Educational institutions should organize regular yoga and meditation sessions for students.
2. Student wellness programs should include mindfulness and stress-management training.
3. Awareness programs regarding the psychological benefits of yoga should be conducted regularly.
4. Counselling centers should incorporate yoga-based interventions for stress management.
5. Further studies may examine long-term effects of yogic practices on academic performance and psychological health.

CONCLUSION

The present study comparatively analyzed stress coping mechanisms among students practicing yogic and non-yogic wellness techniques and revealed significant differences between the two groups.

Students practicing yogic wellness techniques demonstrated better emotional regulation, concentration, stress tolerance, mental relaxation, and psychological stability compared to students practicing non-yogic wellness practices.

The findings indicate that yoga-based practices contribute more effectively toward long-term stress management and emotional well-being among students.

The study therefore emphasizes the importance of integrating yoga, meditation, and mindfulness practices within higher education institutions to promote mental health and holistic student development.

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