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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Effect of Pragya Yoga as a Holistic Practice in Promoting Psychological Well-being in Young Adults

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Abstract. Adolescents and young adults are now facing mounting emotional distress and mood instability, thus reviving academic interest in integrative meditation. The current study focused on the impact of 30 days Pragya Yoga intervention on the psychological well-being of young adults aged between 18 and 25 years. Simple random sampling was used to distribute 83 respondents (37 male, 46 females) into experimental and control groups. The experimental group were subject to systematic Pragya Yoga program involving asanas, pranayama, meditation, relaxation, and self-reflection, but the control group got nothing. The grading of psychological well-being was done through the PGI General Well-Being Measure that was pre-intervention and post-intervention. The findings showed statistically significant improvements in the well-being of the yoga group. There was an increase of 25.6 to 28.6 with a large effect size (d=1.398) in the male participants. There was an improvement of female participants (25.4 to 27.2 with a moderate-large effect size (d=0.768). The standard deviations were declining across the genders, resulting more emotionally stable after the intervention. The control cohort was exhibited insignificant improvement and thus supporting specificity of the practice. Overall, the results indicate that Pragya Yoga produces significant improvements of emotional regulation, self-image, and well-being providing a viable and culture-specific mental-health source to young adults.

Keywords. Pragya Yoga, Psychological Well-Being, Asanas, Pranayama, Meditation, Self-reflection

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Introduction

The young adult today has to deal with an environment full of fast moving technology, academic anxiety and a changing social fabric- situations that would tend to raise the psychological pressures and reduce emotional stability [1]. Meditation practices, which have deep roots in the traditions of contemplation, have been becoming increasingly relevant as effective and available and non-pharmacological intervention mechanisms to build psychological resilience [2]. Yoga, especially, is a holistic practice that balances the bodily, mind, and spirit states of human being operations [3].

One such special kind of integrative yogic practice is Pragya Yoga, a tradition developed within the philosophical tradition of Pandit Shree Ram Sharma Acharya. It is a combination of physical poses, breathing, and self-reflective mindfulness meditation, which intended to sharpen the senses and lead to a harmonious life. The practice is based on discipline, emotional control, moral orientation, and awakening of higher consciousness, which is oriented not towards personal well-being alone but towards social harmony [4]. The basis goals include the production of energetic, disciplined, and spiritually conscious individuals that are able to work at building a balanced society (Figure 1).

Although there is strong evidence that shows the usefulness of several yoga-based interventions, there are only a few empirical studies on an analysis of the particular effects of Pragya Yoga [5]. The current study fills this gap by assessing the findings of psychological well-being. Psychological wellness was measured in the PGI General Well-being Measure, which is a validated scale of 20 items that represents emotional stability, optimism, self-satisfaction, and general mental balance. The first assumption of the research is that the systematic conduct of Pragya Yoga increases psychological well-being by synergetic influence of physical activity through the posture, mindful control of breathing, attention, and introspection. The study aims to bring in evidence-based understanding into the placement of Pragya Yoga as a modern resource of mental health among youth, through quantitative analysis of change scores, correlations, and effect size.

Methodology

Research Design

The Pre-test and Post-test with Control Group was used in the study to evaluate the influence of Pragya Yoga on the psychological well-being. The design allowed making a direct comparison between participants in the experiment who have experienced the yoga intervention (experimental group), and those who did not experience any intervention (control group).

Figure 1: The step-by-step progression of the Pragya Yoga intervention: beginning with Prayer and Chanting (Invocation), Yogic Practices, Relaxation, Chanting (Gayatri Mantra Jaap) and Meditation and Well-Wishing Practices, End (Shanti path).

Participants

We have selected total 163 young adults aged between 18-25 years from an academic institution, and these individuals were picked using a simple random sampling method. Inclusion criteria allowed representatives of both genders, religions, and socioeconomic levels of society. The objectives and procedures of the study were explained to the participants

and only those who gave informed consent were recruited. Outside age range of individuals and those who were chronically ill were excluded.

The participants were equally categorized as two groups: 1) Experimental group (n=83): Pragya Yoga intervention received; 2) Control group (n=83): Was not involved into any intervention.

S. No.	Protocol Activity	Time	Details
1	Prayer – Gayatri Mantra	30 seconds	Om Bhur Bhuvah Swah, Tat Savitur Varenyam, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi, Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat.
2	a. Joint Movements (Each practice 2–3 times)	05 minutes	Toe bending, ankle bending, ankle rotation, knee bending, knee rotation, finger bending, wrist bending, wrist rotation, elbow bending, shoulder rotation, neck movements, facial movements, eye movements, and ear movements
	b. Pragya Yoga – Exercise-Based Practices with Gayatri Mantra	12 minutes	Tadasana (Om Bhuh), Padahastasana (Om Bhuvah), Vajrasana (Om Swah), Ushtrasana (Om Tat), Yog Mudrasana (Om Savituh), Ardha Tadasana (Om Varenyam), Shashankasana (Om Bhargo), Bhujangasana (Om Devasya), Left Twisting Cobra (Om Dheemahi), Right Twisting Cobra (Om Dhiyo), again Shashankasana (Om Yo Nah), Ardha Tadasana (Om Prachodayat), Utkatasana (Om Bhuh), Padahastasana (Om Bhuvah), Tadasana (Om Swah), and finally Shakti Sanvardhanasana with prolonged chanting of Om
3	Relaxation (Shavasana)	02 minutes	
4	Pragya Yoga – Upasana Practices		
	a. Self-Purification (Atma Shodhan)	02 minutes	(a)Pavitrikaran, (b)Achamanam (c)ShikhaBandhan, (d)Pranayama (e) Nyasa
	b. Divine Worship (Dev-Poojan)	03 minutes	(a)DeepWorship, (b)Guru Invocation (c) Gayatri Invocation
	c. Chanting and Meditation (Japa	Dhyana)	15 minutes
5	Well-Wishing (Shubh Kamna)	30 seconds	
6	Peace Recitation (Shanti Path)	30 seconds	

Table 1: Pragya Yoga Protocol

Intervention

The Pragya Yoga program was based on a systematic guide that was ascribed to Swami Shree Ram Sharma Acharya and was based on the past empirical investigations. The intervention lasted 30 days in a row and included 45 minutes sessions an average of which entailed:

Measurement Instrument and Data Analysis

The measure of psychological well-being was done through PGI General Well wellbeing. S. K. Verma and Anita Verma (1989) constructed PGI General Well-being test. The scale consists of 20 items. A test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the 'PGI General Well-being test' (r = 0.88). 20 questions measure emotional stability and self-satisfaction as well as general wellness of the mind. Scores were collected at Pre-test (baseline) and post-test (30-day intervention) [6]. Intervention effects were assessed by using descriptive statistics, paired sample t -tests and correlations.

Result

Demographic distribution of the participants

The current research study recruited 166 respondents (18 to 25 years old). These participants were randomly assigned to either experimental or control group in equal proportions. There were 37 males and 46 females in every group, thus providing a balance between the genders. Inclusion criteria were vaguely outlined to cover all gender identities, religious identification, and socio-economic groups, whereas inclusion exclusion criteria removed the participants who were below the age of 18 years, more than 25 years, or with chronic medical conditions. Informed consent was secured and ethical approval was obtained with all the participants.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive statistics was done on the measures of psychological well-being scores (control and experimental group) on the basis of gender and time point of assays (pre-test, mid-test and post-test). There was a mean increase in the well-being score by males (experimental cohort) at pre-test (25.6 (SD=6.69)) and at post-test (28.6 (SD=3.98)) increase in well-being score was observed. At the post-test, Female subjects of the same cohort had improved to 27.2 (SD=5.52) as compared to 25.4 (SD=7.04) (Table 1). Conversely, the scores of the control groups showed an insignificant change during the same intervals. A decrease in the standard deviations in the post-test conditions of the experimental group shows a decrease in variability, which means that the effects of influencing the psychological well-being of the participants are more consistent. The descriptive statistics highlighted significant improvements in psychological well-being of Pragya Yoga participants. This improvement in the mean score and decreased variability after intervention indicated the successful stabilization and increasing mental health variables, including the emotional equilibrium and self-satisfaction.

		N	Missing	Mean	Std. error	Median	SD	Mini	Max
Male	Control	37	0	25.6	1.1	25	6.69	6	37
	Pre	37	0	25.6	0.925	27	5.63	13	37
	Post	37	0	28.6	0.655	28	3.98	20	38
Fe-male	Control	46	0	25.2	0.773	25	5.24	12	37
	Pre	46	0	25.4	1.04	25.5	7.04	11	37
	Post	46	0	27.2	0.814	27.5	5.52	13	39

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of psychological well-being of Pragya Yoga

	Variables	Statistic	df	p	Effect Size (Cohen's d)
male	Control	2.34	36	0.025	0.384
	Pre	2.83	36	0.008	0.466
	Post	8.5	36	$< .001$	1.398
Female	Control	2.79	45	0.008	0.411
	Pre	2.33	45	0.025	0.343
	Post	5.21	45	$< .001$	0.768

Table 3: Qualitative analysis of impact of pragya yoga on male and female. Note: Significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

Quantitative Analysis

The within group post-intervention pre-intervention significant changes were tested using inferential statistical tests, mainly 1-sample t-test, to determine their significance. In male participants of Pragya Yoga, t (36) =8.5, p=0.001 was obtained in the t -test with the yoga program significantly affecting them positively. Significant improvements among female participants also attained statistical significance, (t (45) =5.21, $p > 0.001$) (Table 2). The control group were not statistically significant and this supported benefits that were observed were due to the intervention. The quantitative studies confirmed the effectiveness of the intervention in both genders,

with strong impacts of the intervention being observed in males. The mentioned substantial results emphasize the role of Pragya Yoga in developing psychological health by improving optimism, emotional regulation, and self-concept. Cohen d values were called to determine the degree of observed effects. A very large effect was observed in male population (d = 1.398) and a moderate-large effect was observed in female population (d = 0.768). These sizes of effects confirm the hypothesis that Pragya Yoga had a significant and quantifiable difference especially in the group of male participants. The results suggest that the combined application of asanas, pranayama, and meditation produces significant effects of emotional regulation and self-awareness.

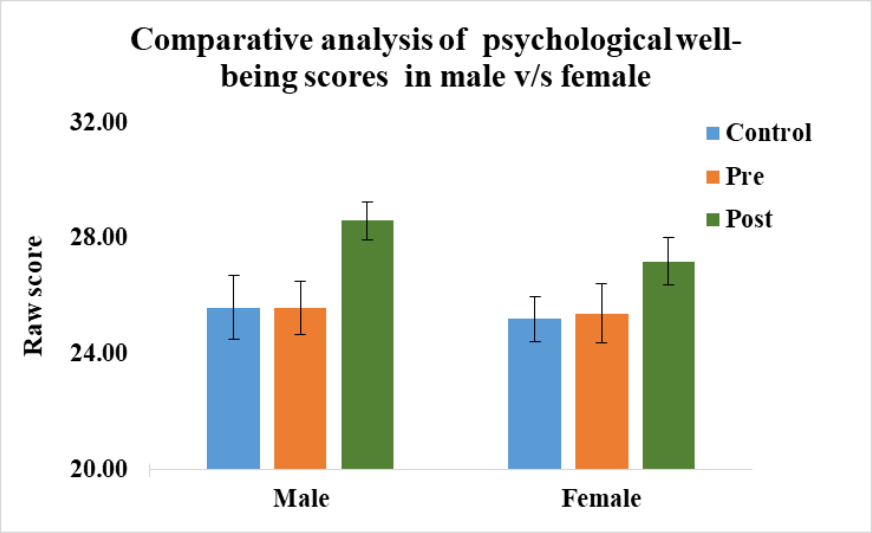

Figure 2: Graphical representation of psychological well-being scores in male v/s female

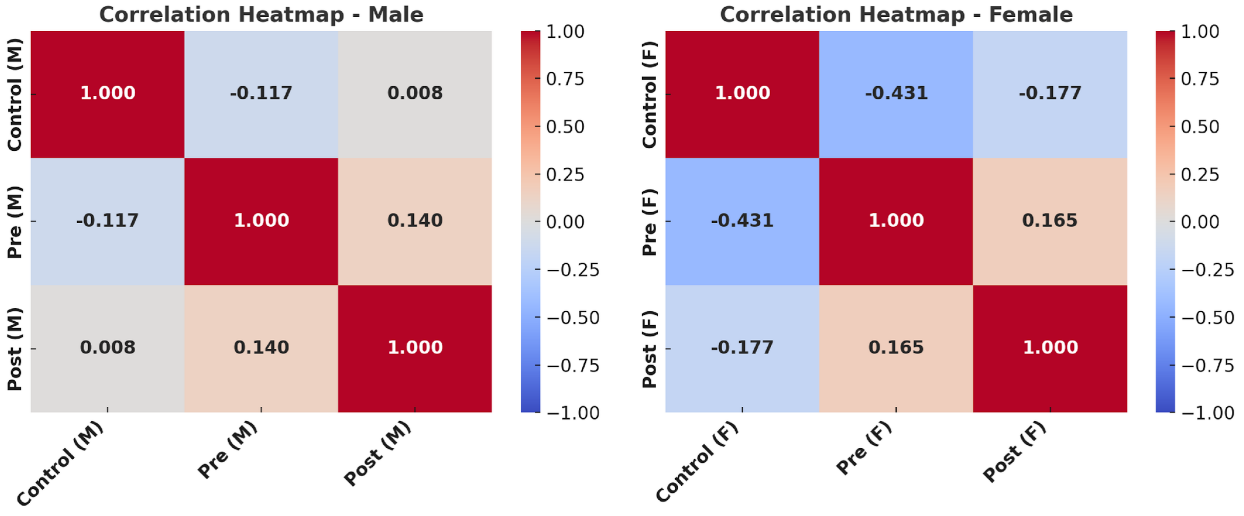

Figure 3: Heat map of correlation matrix among control, pre and post-test in male and female

Gender-based Comparison

Comparative analysis of men and women respondents shows that there are some similarities as well as minor differences in reaction to the intervention. The improvement was higher in the males (+3.0 from 25.6 to 28.6) than in females (+1.8 from 25.6 to 27.8), and the effect size of the males (d = 1.398) was greater than that of females (d = 0.768) (Figure 2; Table 2). However, the other two groups had lower post-test standard deviations, indicating an improvement in emotional regulation. The increased benefits in males might be related to the increased level of stress at the baseline or decreased previous experience with meditative procedures. However, each gender also gained a lot, and this fact proves that Pragya Yoga provides a psychological well-being regardless of the demographic boundaries.

Pearson's correlations analysis performed to determine the correlation between pre- and post-test scores of well-being. Experimental males (Pre vs post $r = 0.14$, $p < 0.001$), showed moderately in a positive manner and that individual changes are consistent. Similarly, Experimental female group (pre vs post; $r = 0.17$, $p < 0.001$), also showed moderate correlation (Figure 3). However both male and female control group implied nonsignificant change. The results suggest that apparent variations of the experimental group of the population can be attributed to actual intervention effects and no longer to relate to control group variation. Correlation within groups showed no significant relationships in the control group supporting the stability of the scores without intervention. In contrast, the experimental cohort had high levels of improvements which gave strong evidence of an intervention effect that was greater than those caused by chance or time.

Discussion

The Pragya yoga investigation is amalgamation of the physical, mental, and spiritual modalities, which are founded on the classical principle of Indian yoga but adjusted to the practical and daily use[7]. The program includes a very systematic series of asanas (posture practices), pranayama (breath regulation methods), meditation and focus exercises, yogic self-reflection, and devotional chanting. Meditation and self-reflection activities cultivate mindfulness and lead to the emotional regulation process, and hence allows cognitive restructuring and reduction of stress [8]. Spiritual aspects cultivate the feeling of self-reflection, thus leading to resilience and inner peace. These components are designed as a 45 minutes session per day that was maintained throughout four weeks. The study included randomized controlled group and the sample size was sufficiently large, with gender balanced. Internal validity was further enhanced as a standardized intervention was implemented in combination with daily practice supervision. The Pragya yoga program showed significant statistical improvements in the psychological well-being of the target group of young adults (18-25 years old), through significant increases in PGI General Well -Being scores. The benefits were found in both males and females, where the effect sizes were relatively larger among male respondents, which supports the hypothesis that Pragya yoga can be useful in achieving quick improvement in emotional balance, mental acuity, and self-awareness. The recent research on yoga and mindfulness intervention has involved consistent reporting of the study results regarding reductions in levels of stress, emotional balance, and cognitive functioning in young adults[9,10]. Recent research demonstrated that less cortisol and sympathetic arousal following 4-8 weeks of yoga[11]. Similarly, improvement in emotional regulation and attentional stability have been seen after systematic programs of pranayama and meditation [12]. The current results align with data pointing to moderate to great impacts of yoga-based interventions on mental health conditions, such as anxiety, depression, and well-being in general. The significant level of change observed among male participants (d = 1.398) is worth citing, as it is clear that it has a strong effect, which would benefit further study of gender-specific differences in yoga efficacy. Although previous studies are more focused on the physical fitness or overall mindfulness, the detailed protocol of the current study, combined with the use of strictly validated PGI measures, provides empirical strength and culture-specificity to the literature that exists. The fact that substantial change was not observed in the control group also supports the vicinity of intervention gains, and the fear of regression to the mean or other extraneous environmental factors can be eliminated [13]. The physical element of a yoga practice, such as cervical mobilization, standing poses, such as Tadasana and Dhanurasana, and relaxation in a Shavasana pose, has several purposes: it can increase musculoskeletal suppleness, improve cardiovascular efficiency by increasing blood circulation, and strengthen the respiratory system, with the help of specific inspiratory and expiratory poses [14]. Previous studies also showed higher levels of psychological well-being in university students practiced daily mindfulness-based movement [15]. Our findings were consistent with other studies of the psycho-physiological effects of yoga and are unique in the inclusion of a standardized protocol, which

combines asanas, pranayama, meditation, and self-reflection based on Indian spiritual traditions, thus being customized to induce holistic health promotion [16].

These exercises do not only increase physical fitness, but also produce physiological responses of relaxation which quenches activity of the sympathetic nervous system and enhances parasympathetic activity. This observation is in agreement with findings that regulated breathing exercises such as Kapalabhati and AnulomVilom do regulate autonomic control hence alleviating stress and anxiety [17]. Moreover, Gayatri mantra chanting result in spiritual elevation and internal calmness, tasking the affective and cognitive with a transcendental consciousness [18].

Despite the positive results, the research is restricted due to short-term intervention period and the use of self-reported instruments that may lead to bias. To demonstrate underlying mechanisms, objective physiological measures, like salivary cortisol, heart rate variability measures, or neuroimaging, should be included in future studies. It requires longitudinal studies to determine the sustainability of the benefits and delineate dose-response relationships. Pragya Yoga will have an opportunity as a viable practice that is culturally oriented and has the capacity of promoting mental wellbeing during the educational institutions. Implementation is scalable, because of the low-cost structure and low equipment requirements. In addition, its combination of physical, cognitive, and spiritual might provide greater involvement than the exercise-only or mindfulness-only programs.

Conclusion

The research proves that a systematic 30-day Pragya Yoga Protocal provision is a significant addition to psychological well-being among young adults. They noted significant improvements in emotional stability, optimism and general mental balance with strong statistical significance, especially with male subjects. The difference between post-, and pre-test scores is reduced, which means that the intervention has a stabilizing effect. These findings support the idea that Pragya-Yoga, by combining physical poses, breathing, meditation, and contemplation, is an accessible, holistic form of intervention to support the mental health of the youth. Pragya Yoga offers an effective and evidence-based tool of building resilience and inner balance in the face of growing modern psychological pressure.

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