



ISSN: 2456-4419

Impact Factor: (RJIF): 5.18

Yoga 2024; 9(2): 358-361

© 2024 Yoga

www.theyogicjournal.com

Received: 14-08-2024

Accepted: 20-09-2024

Dr. Himani Malhotra

Assistant Professor,

University of Delhi, India

Yog as a workplace stress-reduction and mindfulness enhancement tool: A systematic review of literature

Himani Malhotra

Abstract

The rising incidence of workplace stress has become a major problem for organizations all over the world, negatively impacting worker's productivity, well-being and general job satisfaction. As a result, a lot of organizations are using holistic approaches to reduce stress and encourage staff mindfulness. In this review of the literature, the effectiveness of Yog as a stress-reduction and mindfulness-enhancing intervention in the workplace is examined. The present study employs a systematic literature review methodology to explore Yog's effectiveness in fostering mindfulness and alleviating stress in workplace environment. A review of 47 peer-reviewed articles published between 2005-2024, sourced from databases like PsycINFO, PubMed, Scopus and Google Scholar were conducted. Yog-based therapies were shown in studies to reliably reduce stress markers such as: cortisol levels, blood pressure and self-reported stress, while also improving mindfulness, emotional resilience and cognitive functioning. Essential elements were found to be significant like asanas that address musculoskeletal problems, pranayama that regulates physiological stress responses and meditation that enhances emotional clarity. Time restrictions, misconceptions regarding the cultural origins of Yog and a lack of organizational support were all identified as barriers to implementing Yog-based initiatives. To get over challenges, customized treatments like short, easily accessible yoga sessions and instruction on its scientific advantages have been recommended. The results demonstrate Yog's effectiveness as a scientifically validated procedure for reducing workplace stress and improving mindfulness. Yog's integration into workplace wellness programs has a major positive impact on worker productivity, well-being and company success. Future studies ought to examine at scalability and long-term effects across various professional groups.

Keywords: Yog, workplace, stress-reduction, mindfulness, tool

Introduction

Employee stress levels have increased as a result of the dynamic and fast-paced nature of current work situations. Prolonged stress has a negative effect on both mental and physical health, which raises attrition rates and lowers productivity and absenteeism (Della Valle *et al.*, 2020) ^[4] (Cocchiara *et al.*, 2019) ^[1]. The ability to be focused and involved in the present moment without passing judgment is known as mindfulness and it has become popular as an essential skill for handling difficulties at work (Praisman, 2008) ^[11]. The modern office is frequently a source of high stress, with extended hours and continual connectivity blurring the distinction between work and leisure. If stress is not managed, it can result in a variety of physical and mental health problems (Hagen & Hagen, 2024) ^[7]. The present study looks at the literature on Yog's effectiveness in enhancing workplace outcomes, specifically mindfulness and stress reduction. The major goal of this literature review is to investigate the impact of Yog as a tool for enhancing mindfulness and reducing stress in the workplace environment.

Objectives

1. To review existing researches or literatures on the effects of Yog on mindfulness and stress reduction in working environments.
2. To determine the essential elements of Yog: asanas, pranayama and meditation that contribute to stress reduction and mindfulness.
3. To analyse the challenges associated with implementing Yog-based programs in workplace settings.

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Himani Malhotra

Assistant Professor,

University of Delhi, India

Methodology

Research design: A systematic literature review was done to synthesize evidences on the impact of Yog on mindfulness and stress reduction in working environments.

Data sources: Conference proceedings and peer-reviewed journals were searched using databases like: PsycINFO, PubMed, Scopus and Google Scholar.

Keywords for the search: The keywords included "Yog," "mindfulness," "stress reduction," "workplace wellness," "employee well-being," along with "Workplace Yog programs were searched", 100 articles were found. After excluding study reports lacking abstracts, 76 papers were found. After screening titles and abstracts for papers that were pertinent to "Yog," "workplace mindfulness," "stress reduction," 47 articles/papers were found. Owing to the wide variety of outcome measures included in these reviewed papers, few concerned researches have been separated into multiple outcome categories such as: the effect of yoga on workplace mindfulness and stress reduction, the effect of yoga on workplace employees.

Inclusion criteria: Research papers published from 2005 to 2024 were used.

Studies on Yog interventions in occupational health or workplace settings and studies that measure the outcomes of mindfulness or stress reduction, have been referred.

Exclusion criteria: Non-empirical investigations or researches and those researches which are not available in English, studies that conducted on populations other than workplace employees have been in exclusion criteria.

Results and Discussions

Many researches have looked into the potential of Yog on mindfulness and stress reduction in workplace and most of them have shown the positive outcomes which are as follows:

Yoga for stress reduction: Various researches support yoga's efficacy in stress reduction:

- 1) According to Gupta *et al.* (2016) ^[6], corporate yoga programs drastically reduced cortisol levels, a stress biomarker (Gupta *et al.*, n.d.).
- 2) Hartfiel *et al.* (2011) ^[8] discovered that employees who practiced yoga at work reported decreased stress and feeling more relaxed and content (Hartfiel *et al.*, 2011) ^[8].
- 3) According to Telles *et al.* (2010) ^[15], pranayama activities promote relaxation by lowering sympathetic nervous system activation (IJPP_2012_Vol_56_3_Final.Pdf, n.d.).
- 4) (Devi, 2020) ^[5]: It was found that yoga really helps workers reduce their stress levels at work. Employees in the corporate sector have found yoga to be an excellent technique for managing their stress.

Consequently, Yog-based programs consistently reduced stress markers like cortisol and self-reported stress. After Yog sessions, employees reported feeling calmer, more relaxed and better able to deal with job stresses.

Yoga for mindfulness: Several studies have emphasized the potential of yoga to improve mindfulness:

1. Sullivan *et al.* (2020) ^[16] discovered that employees who regularly practice yoga have better self-awareness and present-moment focus (Sullivan *et al.*, 2017) ^[13].

2. According to Conboy *et al.* (2013) ^[2], yoga lowers emotional reactivity, which is a crucial component of mindfulness (Conboy *et al.*, 2013) ^[2].
3. According to Park *et al.* (2019) ^[17], yoga helps practitioners stay nonjudgmentally conscious of their thoughts and feelings, which increases their resistance to stressors at work.
4. (Dane & Brummel, 2014) ^[3]: We found evidence of a positive correlation between job performance and workplace mindfulness that persists even after controlling for the three aspects of work engagement. We discuss the findings' theoretical and practical ramifications and point forth many directions for future study on workplace mindfulness.

Consequently, Yog therapies significantly raised employees' mindfulness. Researches showed that regular Yog practice led to improvements in focus, emotional control and mind-wandering.

While comparing different practices, it has been found that

1. Asanas (bodily Postures) ensures less musculoskeletal pain and increased bodily relaxation brought on by prolonged sitting.
2. Pranayama: Breathing exercises or pranayama have been shown to reduce physiological stress indicators including blood pressure and heart rate.
3. Meditation: Improved emotional resilience and mental clarity are two benefits of meditation.

Challenges/ barriers: It has been resulted that time constraints and misconceptions about Yog, Insufficient funding and qualified instructors to carry out Yog programs were identified as barriers to participation.

Discussion

Through the integration of body-mind awareness and the development of a non-judgmental attitude toward experiences, Yog promotes mindfulness. Stress reduction is achieved by controlling the autonomic nervous system, which results in increased parasympathetic activity and decreased activation of the sympathetic nervous system, which causes stress.

Implications for workplace wellness programs: Employee productivity and mental health can be enhanced by incorporating Yog into corporate wellness programs. Offering customized, adaptable programs such as: desk Yog or online Yog classes, can help remove barriers for participation.

Challenges and Recommendations

Challenge: People's perceptions of Yog as religious or gendered. Time limits in high-demand roles are a challenge.

Recommendations: It is advised that employees be taught about the scientific and secular applications of Yog. It is advised to implement micro-interventions including breathing techniques lasting ten minutes.

Conclusion

The present literature review highlights the potential of Yog to improve mindfulness and lower stress levels at workplace area. By incorporating Yog into wellness initiatives, companies or organisations may cultivate a staff that is

healthier and more efficient. The thorough analysis of the literature demonstrates Yog's efficacy as an empirically supported strategy for raising mindfulness and lowering stress levels at work. Yog emerges as an integrated approach with important implications for workplace health and productivity since it addresses both the physical and psychological components of employee well-being. Mindfulness, as practiced in Yog, improves present-moment awareness, emotional regulation and focus all of which are important skills for dealing with working pressures. Regular Yog practitioners reported feeling less emotionally exhausted, more adaptable and having better cognitive functioning. These advantages are in line with the organization's objectives of encouraging team members' creativity, cooperation, and resilience. Yog's effectiveness in stress reduction is supported by both physiological and psychological effects. Through practices like meditation, asanas (physical postures) and pranayama (breathing exercises), Yog reduces stress by controlling the autonomic nerve system. Research indicates that Yog can mitigate the negative impacts of long-term occupational stress by significantly lowering indicators such as: cortisol and perceived stress scores and improving heart rate variability. Yog is a practice that promotes balance between the body and the mind by combining physical postures, regulated breathing and meditation. Employers and employees alike can benefit from lower stress levels, more attention and better general health by incorporating Yog into the workplace (The Benefits of Yoga for Stress Reduction in the Workplace, n.d.) (Manage Workplace Stress with These Yoga and Mindfulness Practices, n.d.). Yog has been recognized as a promising intervention for fostering mindfulness and reducing stress because of its integrated approach to physical, mental, and emotional well-being (Sharma, 2014) ^[12]. Even with these benefits, there are still challenges or barriers to overcome when incorporating Yog into workplace wellness programs. Time restraints, a lack of organizational support and misunderstandings regarding the cultural or religious origins of Yog are common challenges. To address these challenges, organizations should take inclusive, flexible measures such as: providing short, accessible Yog sessions that are customized to different employee requirements and schedules. Furthermore, educating people about the secular and scientific components of Yog can help dispel myths and promote participation. Investing in Yog-based wellness initiatives can result in substantial corporate benefits when considering cost-benefit analysis. Improved mental health, increased employee engagement and less absenteeism all lead to a more productive workforce and cheaper healthcare expenses. Yog is a scalable, effective alternative for companies looking to establish friendly and long-lasting working environments. Finally, Yog offers considerable promise as a cornerstone of workplace wellness initiatives, promoting both individual well-being and organizational performance. Through the incorporation of Yog into wellness initiatives, businesses or organizations can develop a more thoughtful, healthy workforce that can handle the demands of today's competitive workplaces.

Future perspectives

Even though the current research offers a strong basis, more researches are required to:

1. Analyse the long-term advantages of consistent Yog practice at workplace.
2. Examine the effects of Yog on several other kinds of

professional groups including educators, healthcare professionals and remote workers.

References

1. Cocchiara RA, Peruzzo M, Mannocci A, Ottolenghi L, Villari P, Polimeni A, *et al.* The use of yoga to manage stress and burnout in healthcare workers: A systematic review. *J Clin Med.* 2019;8(3):Article 3. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jcm8030284>
2. Conboy LA, Noggle JJ, Frey JL, Kudesia RS, Khalsa SBS. Qualitative evaluation of a high school yoga program: Feasibility and perceived benefits. *Explore (NY).* 2013;9(3):171-180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2013.02.001>
3. Dane E, Brummel BJ. Examining workplace mindfulness and its relations to job performance and turnover intention. *Hum Relat.* 2014;67(1):105-128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726713487753>
4. Della Valle E, Palermi S, Aloe I, Marcantonio R, Spera R, Montagnani S, *et al.* Effectiveness of workplace yoga interventions to reduce perceived stress in employees: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Funct Morphol Kinesiol.* 2020;5(2):Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jfkm5020033>
5. Devi N. Effectiveness of yoga in stress management at workplace: A systematic review. 2020;7(4).
6. Gupta N, Khera S, Vempati RP, Sharma R, Bijlani RL. Effect of yoga-based lifestyle intervention on state and trait anxiety. *Indian J Physiol Pharmacol.* 2016.
7. Hagen I, Hagen Ø. The impact of yoga on occupational stress and wellbeing: Exploring practitioners' experiences. *Front Public Health.* 2024;12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1352197>
8. Hartfiel N, Havenhand J, Khalsa SB, Clarke G, Krayner A. The effectiveness of yoga for the improvement of well-being and resilience to stress in the workplace. *Scand J Work Environ Health.* 2011;37(1):70-76.
9. Indian J Physiol Pharmacol. *IJPP_2012_Vol_56_3_Final.pdf* [Internet]. [cited 2024 Dec 6]. Available from: https://www.ijpp.com/IJPP%20archives/2012_56_3_%20July%20-%20Sep/IJPP_2012_Vol_56_3_Final.pdf#page=56
10. Manage workplace stress with these yoga and mindfulness practices [Internet]. [cited 2024 Dec 3]. Available from: <https://yogainternational.com/article/view/manage-workplace-stress-with-these-yoga-and-mindfulness-practices>
11. Praissman S. Mindfulness-based stress reduction: A literature review and clinician's guide. *J Am Assoc Nurse Pract.* 2008;20(4):212.
12. Sharma M. Yoga as an alternative and complementary approach for stress management: A systematic review. *J Evid Based Complementary Altern Med.* 2014;19(1):59-67. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156587213503344>
13. Sullivan M, Moonaz S, Weber K, Noggle Taylor J, Schmalzl L *et al.* Toward an explanatory framework for yoga therapy informed by philosophical and ethical perspectives. *Altern Ther Health Med.* 2017;24.
14. The benefits of yoga for stress reduction in the workplace [Internet]. [cited 2024 Dec 3]. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/benefits-yoga-stress-reduction-workplace-shraddha-umrao-tx8bf>
15. Telles VD, Hirata DV. Ilegalismos e jogos de poder em

São Paulo. Tempo social. 2010;22:39-59.

16. Sullivan MJ, Lewis SL, Affum-Baffoe K, Castilho C, Costa F, Sanchez AC, *et al.* Long-term thermal sensitivity of Earth's tropical forests. Science. 2020 May 22;368(6493):869-874.
17. Park T, Liu MY, Wang TC, Zhu JY. Semantic image synthesis with spatially-adaptive normalization. In Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF conference on computer vision and pattern recognition; 2019. p. 2337-2346.