

Occupational Stress in Central Government Employees Practicing Yoga and Employees Who do not Practice Yoga

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ABSTRACT

The objective of the study was to find out the difference between occupational stress in the employees who are practicing Yoga and those who are not practicing Yoga. The research was conducted in Bangalore. The subjects were employees who worked for Central Government Organization. These are the people who are working either in technical or administrative jobs. A total of 60 samples were collected and evaluated. Out of them 30 were the employees who practiced Yoga for more than a year and 30 employees who had never done yoga. The collecting of data was done by convenience sampling. The sample collected were residents of the Bangalore city. The tool that was administered on the subjects was The Occupational Stress Index (OSI). The results from the study show that practicing Yoga has been helped in reducing their stress levels. The employees who have been practicing Yoga has been having lower occupational stress whereas the employees who have been never involved in practicing Yoga has been seen to have moderate levels of occupational stress. Thus, the results imply that by practicing Yoga, the levels of stress can be reduced be it in highly stressful place or in jobs that has minimal stress.

Keywords: *Occupational Stress, Central Government, Employees, Practicing Yoga*

According to the Labor Force Survey, Britain (LFS) it is seen that, the total number of cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2013/14 was 487 000 (39%) out of a total of 1,241,000 cases for all work-related illnesses in Britain. The total number of working days lost due to stress, depression or anxiety was 11.3 million in the year 2013/14. An estimated 442,000 individuals in Britain, who worked in 2007/08, believed that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level that was making them ill. (*Health and Safety executive* 2014) An average of 23 days per case of stress, depression or anxiety. 44% of Americans feel more stressed then they did 5 years ago. 1 among every 5 Americans experience extreme stress which includes shaking, heart palpitations depression etc. it is seen that work stress causes 10% of strokes in America 60% of 26000 workers in United States were so unhappy with their current jobs that they would prefer to choose a new career. 87% of workers worldwide are emotionally disconnected from their workplaces and less likely to be productive. 48% reported lying awake at night due to stress.

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In India a research by Regus shows that the workers are getting more stressed recently. The survey reveals that work (51%) and personal finances (50%) are the contributing factors for the increased stress levels of the Indian work-force. The Regus survey, canvassing the opinions of over 16,000 professionals across the globe, found that over half (51%) of Indian respondents say their stress levels have risen over the past year. 45% of workers report that job insecurity has a significant impact on stress levels. 61% of workers list heavy workloads as a significant impact on stress levels. 25% of workers have taken a mental health day to cope with stress. 54% of workers are concerned about health problems due to stress. (Chhappia, H 2012)

Causes of work stress include: Being unhappy in your job, having a heavy workload or too much responsibility, working long hours, Having poor management, unclear expectations of your work, or no say in the decision-making process, working under dangerous conditions, being insecure about your chance for advancement or risk of termination, having to give speeches in front of colleagues, facing discrimination or harassment at work, especially if your company isn't supportive. (Goldberg, 2014). Measures taken to alleviate stress among employees are Meditate, Breathe Deeply, Be Present, and Reach Out, tune In to Your Body, decompress, Crank up the Tunes and to be Grateful. Individuals under stress at work have been known to experience fatigue and/or low motivation which can directly influence an organization's morale and decrease overall productivity. Health-care costs, absenteeism, and workplace safety are the issues most adversely affected by workplace stress. (Moninger, J., 2004)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter consists of the empirical background on the present research topic of Occupational stress and the impact of yoga on Central Government employees. This chapter throws light into various research gaps related to effectiveness of Yoga in reducing the occupational stress in organization. Based on the gaps found in the previous literature findings, the objective of this study focuses on bridging those gaps through further understanding of the relationship between the two above mentioned variables. There has been past research conducted in the fields of workplace Yoga and Occupational stress, respectively but very few have focused on studying it in the Central Government sector.

A study to see the baseline occupational stress levels and physiological responses after intervention of 2-day Stress management program was conducted in 2014 in India. The objective of the research was to see the benefits of work stress management programs for symptomatic employees. The study evaluated the physiological changes of a yoga-based stress management program for 26 male middle-managers in India. The stress and autonomic parameters are measured. The results were shown as decrease in the breath rate after the two-day program. The two-day stress management course, which had the yoga in it, helped the middle level managers to reduce their breathing rate and hence help in reduction in the stress level. It is also shown that the participants with median levels of occupational stress Index were shown significant changes in their reduction of their stress level. Those participants with low-levels of stress did not show any changes in their stress levels. This shows that the stress management program that went for 2 days with yoga helped the participants who had stress issues from the beginning. The Yoga will help in toning the muscles that has the impact on the reduction in secretions of Cortisols and thus reduction in the stress. (Vempati, & Telles, 2014)

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A study was conducted to see the benefits of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Yoga on the Stress-Management of employees in a Swedish Company. The research wanted to see the impact of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Kundalini Yoga on the Stress-Management. The study sample consisted of 26 women and 7 men from a Swedish company were divided randomly into 2 groups with different types of interventions. So that was totally 4 groups at the end. Each group had a team/group leader. Each group had 10 sessions over a period of 4 months. There were psychological and physiological measurements taken both before and after the sessions. This was done to study the effects of yoga and CBT (Cognitive Behavioral therapy) on the employees. The psychological issues that were measured in the study were self-related, stress behavior, anger, exhaustion, and quality of life. The physiological issues are blood pressures, heart rate and salivary cortisol. After the CBT (Cognitive Behavior Therapy) treatment there was a significant improvement in the stress-levels of the employees. Even the performance of yoga had helped in the decrease of the stress levels. This clearly shows that both CBT (Cognitive Behavior Therapy) and Yoga can be very efficient stress management techniques. The results showed that yoga when practiced could have a positive impact on the lives of people who are working. The reasons behind reduction of stress in the study told that the Yoga exercises helped to control and regulate breathing that helps in reducing the anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

Objective

To find out the difference between occupational stress in the employees who are practicing Yoga and those who are not practicing Yoga.

Hypothesis

H0. 1. There is no significant difference in occupational stress between employees practicing and not practicing yoga.

Sample

A sample in this particular research study is drawn from a population of all central government employees. The sampling technique used here is Convenience sampling. The sample size is 60 in which 30 are Central Government employees who practiced Yoga and 30 Central Government employees who did not practice.

Inclusion

- The employees working above Group C level in all central Government employees.
- The employees are in age between 30 to 60 years.
- The employees taken for research under practicing yoga have been practiced yoga for more than a year.

Exclusion

- The employees in Group C level are excluded from the study.
- The employees who have been practicing yoga for less than one year are not included for research.
- The employees who have been doing other physical fitness apart from Yoga are not included in this study.

Variables: The variables used for this study are,

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- **Occupational Stress:** is stress involving work. It occurs when people have responsibilities and demands at work with which they cannot cope, for a variety of reasons. It can also occur when there is a mismatch between job expectations and reality (Hart, 1999). The occupational stress scale gives 11 subscales. E.g. My higher authorities do not give due significance to my post and work.
- **Yoga:** Yoga is a physical, mental, and spiritual practice or discipline which originated in India. The origins of Yoga have been contemplated to date back to pre-Vedic Indian background, but most liable improved around the sixth and fifth centuries BC, in early India's Spartan circles, which are also accredited with the near the beginning of sramana movements. The written record of initial texts unfolding yoga-practices is uncertain, changing credited to Hindu Upanishads. The *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* date from the first half of the 1st millennium CE, but only profited importance in the 20th century. (M Singleton, 2010)

Tools:

The tool used in the study is:

Occupational stress Index: Srivastava and Singh developed occupational stress Index in the year 1984 in Banaras Hindu University at Varanasi. This has been published in Varanasi. The scale has 46 items, each to be rated on the five-point scale. Out of these 46 items 28 are 'True-Keyed' and the other 18 are 'False-keyed'. Therefore, two different patterns of scoring have adopted for two different types of items.

Scoring:

The questionnaire has both true keyed and false keyed items. The scoring is done with 5 liker scale. The possible responses for the questions given are;

- Never/Strongly disagree
- Seldom/Disagree
- Sometimes/Undecided
- Mostly/Agree
- Always/Strongly Agree

Since the questionnaire consists of both true keyed and false keyed items different patterns of scoring have to be adopted for two types of items.

Categories of Responses	For True keyed	For False keyed
Never/Strongly Disagree	1	5
Seldom/Disagree	2	4
Sometimes/Undecided	3	3
Mostly/Agree	4	2
Always/Strongly Agree	5	1

Reliability: the reliability index ascertained by split-half method and Cronbach's alpha-coefficient for the scale as a whole were found to be .935 and .90 respectively. The reliability indices of the 12 sub scales were also computed using the split half method and they indices were from .549 to .840.

Ethical Considerations:

- There has to be Right to confidentiality.
- There should be Right to withdraw from study if they want.

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- The researcher's duty is to inform about the implications of the study to the participants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to find out the difference between occupational stress in the employees who are practicing Yoga and those who are not practicing Yoga. The research was conducted in Bangalore. The subjects were employees who worked for Central Government Organization. These are the people who are working either in technical or administrative jobs.

Table 1 Result of Mann Whitney U test comparing the Scores of occupational stress between employees who do Yoga and don't do Yoga.

Variables	Groups	Mean Rank	U	Sig.
Role Overload	1.Practicing Yoga	26.08	317.50	0.049
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	34.92		
Role ambiguity	1.Practicing Yoga	33.95	346.50	0.123
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	27.05		
Role conflict	1.Practicing Yoga	29.45	418.50	0.639
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	31.55		
Unreasonable	1.Practicing Yoga	21.43	178.00	0.000
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	39.57		
Responsibility	1.Practicing Yoga	41.08	132.50	0.000
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	19.92		
Under participation	1.Practicing Yoga	25.42	297.50	0.022
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	35.58		
Powerlessness	1.Practicing Yoga	31.77	412.00	0.014
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	29.23		
Peer relations	1.Practicing Yoga	24.12	258.50	0.004
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	36.88		
Low status	1.Practicing Yoga	23.62	243.50	0.002
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	32.78		
Intrinsic	1.Practicing Yoga	28.32	384.50	0.328
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	32.68		
Work Conditions	1.Practicing Yoga	27.47	358.50	0.170
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	33.53		
Unprofitability	1.Practicing Yoga	22.82	219.50	0.002
	2.Not Practicing Yoga	38.18		

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Results

The Table 1 shows the results of Mann Whitney tests comparing the scores of the Central Government Employees who practice Yoga and employees who are not practicing Yoga.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to find out the difference between occupational stress in the employees who are practicing Yoga and those who are not practicing Yoga. The research was conducted in Bangalore. The subjects were employees who worked for Central Government Organization. These are the people who are working either in technical or administrative jobs.

In the dimension Role Overload, the group that has been practicing yoga has a scored lower stress score than the group that has not been practicing yoga. This shows that the employees who have been practicing yoga has less stress related to that of role overload than to those who are not doing yoga. Under the dimension, Unreasonable group pressure, the employees who practiced yoga got a higher score than those who did not practice yoga. So, this means that the employees who did practice had less group issues or lesser group pressure than that of the ones who did practice yoga. In the dimension, Responsibility, those practicing yoga have got higher score than those who did not practice. The employees who practiced yoga showed to have less stress related to responsibility. In the dimension, Powerlessness, those practicing yoga have got higher score than those who did not practice. The employees who practiced yoga showed to have less stress on issues related to powerlessness. In the dimension, Peer relations, those practicing yoga have got higher score than those who did not practice. This shows that the group practicing yoga have better peer relations with lesser stress when compared to those employees who do not practice yoga. In the dimension, Low status, those practicing yoga have got higher score than those who did not practice. This shows that the employees who practiced yoga showed comparatively low stress in the dimension about low status when compared to that off those employees who did not practice yoga at all. In the dimension, Unprofitability, those practicing yoga have got higher score than those who did not practice. This shows that the employees who have been practicing Yoga has lesser stress when it refers to bringing any profit to the organization. But those who are not practicing Yoga have got higher levels of stress.

The other dimension Work conditions also was did not show any significant difference among employees practicing yoga and those who did not. The working conditions of the employees have been made as employee friendly as possible. The ministry of labor and welfare work for the betterment of the work conditions and they have been doing their best to make sure the employees work in the most best conditions. So, the stress by the work conditions is relatively low and therefore no difference in employees practicing yoga and those not practicing yoga.

Summary

The Regus survey had revealed that work (51%) and personal finances (50%) are the contributing factors for the increased stress levels of the Indian work-force. The same survey, canvassing the opinions of over 16,000 professionals across the globe, found that over half (51%) of Indian respondents say their stress levels have risen over the past year. 45% of workers report that job insecurity has a significant impact on stress levels (Regus 2009).

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Considering the reports like this it has been seen that job security has been one of the prime reasons for the occupational stress. The research being specifically in Central Government Organizations, it is very evident that the stress related to job insecurity will be different when compared to other organizations as the jobs in Government are usually permanent. Even people have a perception about the workloads in Government jobs to be less when compared to other organizations. The research here showed the importance in studying the levels of stress and then comparing between the employees practicing Yoga and employees not practicing Yoga.

This study is unlike other studies as most of them have done the interventions and then come to conclusions. But in this study, the employees who have already practicing yoga are taken for the sample and the results are to be evaluated.

The objective was to find out the difference between occupational stress in the employees who are practicing Yoga and those who are not practicing Yoga. The hypothesis stated that “There is no significant difference in occupational stress between employees practicing and not practicing yoga”.

A total of 60 samples were collected and evaluated. Out of them 30 were the employees who practiced Yoga for more than a year and 30 employees who had never done yoga. The collecting of data was done by convenience sampling. The sample collected were residents of the Bangalore city. The tool that was administered on the subjects was The Occupational Stress Index (OSI) that had been developed by Dr. K. Srivatsav. The questionnaire had 46 questions with a Likert scale from 1 to 5.

The results from the study show that practicing Yoga has been helped in reducing their stress levels. The employees who have been practicing Yoga have been having lower occupational stress whereas the employees who have been never involved in practicing Yoga have been seen to have moderate levels of occupational stress. Thus, the results imply that by practicing Yoga, the levels of stress can be reduced be it in a highly stressful place or in jobs that have minimal stress.

Findings

- There is a significant difference between the employees who have been practicing Yoga and employees who have not been practicing Yoga in seven dimensions which are Role Overload, Unreasonable groups, Responsibility, Powerlessness, Peer relations, Low status and Unprofitability. And in these above-mentioned dimensions, the employees who have been told that they practiced yoga have got low stress scores and those who reported did not practice yoga have a higher stress score.
- This makes it very evident that Yoga does help in reducing the stress levels of the employees working in any sector of organization.
- By the above results we can conclude that the Hypothesis which stated “There is no significant difference in occupational stress between employees practicing and not practicing yoga” has been disproved. In fact, there is a significant difference in seven dimensions of the occupational stress index.

Implications

The implication of the study could be concluded as Yoga has been and even till date has been proved to help in controlling stress. Though the stress levels of employees in

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Government jobs are said to be low, there are few dimensions that had really benefitted by the practice for Yoga.

Limitations

- The study has been done on employees in one geographical area.
- The sample collected cannot be completely generalized to all the population.
- The employees only from technical and administrative are taken into consideration for the study.
- Age of the respondents widely range from 28-60 years.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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