

# Effects of yoga on life satisfaction and stress



## Literature Review and Results Chapters

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### Literature Review

Carlson, Goodey, Patel and Speca (2003) studied the effects of mindful-based stress reduction on quality of life, mood and stress in those with breast and prostate cancer. The MBSR programme was found to be associated with enhanced quality of life and decreased stress with low cortisol levels (Carlson, Goodey, Patel and Speca, 2003).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased life satisfaction and reduced stress.

Culpepper, Davis, Eisenberg, Phillips and Saper (2004) conducted the first U. S. national yoga survey on 15 million Americans who had practiced yoga at least once in their lifetime, in order to identify the relationship between yoga practice and life satisfaction. 3. 8% of this population were in the age range of 18 to 55 years and had practiced yoga for over one year. These individuals were found to score higher on life satisfaction than those who had tried yoga only once (Culpepper, Davis, Eisenberg, Phillips and Saper, 2004).

From the above study it was inferred that individuals who had practiced yoga for over a period of one year were significantly more satisfied with life than those who had practiced yoga only once.

Lee (2004) studied the relationship between Hatha Yoga practice and subjective well-being between beginners who practiced yoga from one to ten months and advanced Hatha yoga practitioners who practiced yoga for at least two years. 107 adult Hatha yoga practitioners participated in the study that practiced yoga consistently, at least twice a week for an hour. Advanced Hatha yoga practitioners were found to have higher levels of subjective well-being on the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) and the Spiritual Well-Being Scale than the beginners (Lee, 2004).

From the above study it was inferred that regular practice of yoga led to higher life satisfaction, positive affect and spiritual well-being.

Bijlani (2005) studied the effect of a yoga intervention on 98 subjects with chronic illnesses and high risk for cardiovascular diseases who practiced yoga for 3 to 4 hours for 8 days and were later tested on subjective well-being and anxiety scales. It was found that subjective well-being increased and anxiety decreased significantly after the practice of yoga (Bijlani, 2005 cited in Carson, King and Koenig, 2012).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga practice increased life satisfaction and reduced anxiety.

Daubenmier, Hirschman and Impett (2006) conducted a study to examine the potential of yoga to promote embodiment and well-being (life satisfaction) on 89 participants pursuing a 2 years yoga course. After the course and on completing a short survey assessing life satisfaction in many domains, it was found that women objectified their bodies less after participating in the programme. Also, men and women had increased body awareness, positive affect and higher satisfaction with life as well as decrease negative affect with more frequent yoga practice (Daubenmier, Hirschman & Impett, 2006).

From the above study it was inferred that the practice of yoga increased satisfaction with life along with an increase in positive affect and increased body awareness.

Dehen, Flegal, Haas, Kishiyam, Okena and Zajdel (2006) in U. S. A. studied the effects of six months of Hatha Yoga intervention on cognition and quality of life of 135 healthy older people, aged 65 to 85 years who were randomly assigned to the yoga intervention group and the wait-listed control group. Results indicated that the yoga group had significant improvements on cognitive and quality of life measures than the wait-listed control group (Dehen, Flegal, Haas, Kishiyam, Okena and Zajdel, 2006).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga practice increased quality of life as well as cognition functioning.

Geher, Otte and West (2006) researched the effects of Hatha Yoga on stress and life satisfaction on a U. S. population of 168 individuals in the age range of 20 to 40 years. 94 yoga practitioners who had practiced yoga for more  
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than a year were significantly more satisfied with life and had lower cortisol (stress hormone) levels than the 74 individuals had completed only three sessions of Hatha Yoga (Geher, Otte and West, 2006).

From the above study it was inferred that long-term yoga practitioners were more satisfied with life on and had lower stress levels than beginners of yoga.

Kirstein (2006) studied the effects of 10 weeks yoga intervention on postural control, spasticity, mobility and quality of life of 12 patients with Multiple Sclerosis aged 30–76 years who practiced yoga twice a week for 70 minutes. Significant differences between the pre and post intervention scores suggested that yoga was a valuable alternative to other exercises for Multiple Sclerosis patients because of the improved scores on all scales (Kirstein, 2006).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga intervention increased postural control, mobility, quality of life and decreased spasticity.

Vito (2007) evaluated the effects of Hatha Yoga in relieving the psychological and physical symptoms of 25 female breast cancer patients aged 25–60 years, who were alternatively assigned to a twice weekly, 8 week yoga group and a wait-list control group. Questionnaires were administered before and after the yoga intervention. The yoga participants showed significant improvements in all outcome measures with a decrease in fatigue and negative mood as compared to the wait-listed control group (Vito, 2007).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga increased quality of life simultaneously decreasing symptoms of cancer.

Bijlani, Gupta and Sharma (2008) studied the effect of an 8-day intensive yoga intervention on 77 subjects' subjective well-being who were randomly assigned to the yoga group and the control group. Using the Subjective Well-Being Inventory (SUBI), the yoga group reported significant improvements in the areas of general well-being, expectation and achievement, confidence in coping, and mental mastery along with less worry and better abilities to cope with stress, and thus scored higher on subjective well-being than the control group (Bijlani, Gupta and Sharma, 2008).

From the above study it was inferred that a yogic lifestyle increased subjective well-being.

Duncan, Leis and Taylor-Brown (2008) evaluated the impact and outcomes of Iyengar Yoga in a Cancer Centre on 24 participants aged 38 to 57 years on measures of quality of life, spiritual well-being and mood disturbance. They were taught yoga and practiced it for 90 minutes per day for ten weeks. On comparing the World Health Organization Quality of Life scale (WHOQOL) before and after intervention scores, quality of life and spiritual well-being significantly improved with a reduction in mood disturbance (Duncan, Leis and Taylor-Brown, 2008).

From the above study it was inferred that the practice of yoga increased quality of life and spiritual well-being, and regulated mood.

Thomas (2008) examined the relationship between adopting a yogic lifestyle and subjective well-being on 152 Australian yoga students aged 30 to 50 years. Those who undertook an intensive Satyanand Yogic training (incorporation of Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga and Hatha Yoga) for two years scored higher on the Satisfaction With Life Scale and the Personal Wellbeing Index than those who only attended a weekly programme (Thomas, 2008).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased satisfaction with life.

Havalappanavar and Jadhav (2009) studied the effect of yoga on subjective well-being and anxiety on 50 first year students from Naturopathy and Yogic Sciences Course aged 20 years and above. The Spielberger's State Trait Anxiety Inventory and the Subjective Well-being Inventory were administered before and after one academic year with the practice of yoga. A significant decrease was found in both state and trait anxiety levels and positive changes in subjective well-being with an impressive ascend in life satisfaction scores after the yoga intervention (Havalappanavar and Jadhav, 2009).

From the above study it was inferred that the yoga intervention reduced anxiety levels with an increase in life satisfaction.

Maharana, Nagendra, Raghuram, Rakhshani and Venkatram (2010) studied the yoga effects on quality of life and interpersonal relationships on 102 pregnant women who were randomly assigned to two groups; 51 each to the integrated yoga group and the antenatal exercises (relief from back pain) (control) group, both for one hour, thrice a week. Results indicated that there

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were significant improvements in quality of life and interpersonal relationships in the integrated yoga group compared to the antenatal exercise group (Maharana, Nagendra, Raghuram, Rakhshani and Venkatram, 2010).

From the above study it was inferred that integrated yoga effectively improved quality of life and interpersonal relationships.

Moliver (2010) studied yogic effects on subjective wellness as well as physical and psychological wellness in 393 women, including 211 yoginis (female yoga practitioners) who had more yogic experience than the rest aged 45 to 80 years. It was found those with more yoga experience scored higher on physical wellness, subjective vitality and life satisfaction scales than those with lesser yoga experience (Moliver, 2010).

From the above study it was inferred that life satisfaction, physical well-being and subjective vitality increased with greater yoga experience.

Ulger (2010) studied the effects of 8 hourly sessions of yoga on the quality of life in 22 breast cancer patients aged 30 to 50 years. The State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-I and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory-II to measure anxiety and its permanence respectively, and Visual Analog Scale to measure life satisfaction were administered before and after yoga training. Patients' quality of life after yoga was found to be higher with decrease in stress than before training (Ulger, 2010).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga training can diminish stress and increase quality of life.



Choudhary and Rathore (2011) studied the impact of 6 months of yoga on emotional intelligence and life satisfaction on 60 individuals who were given the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS) and the Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) before and after the completion of the yoga training. Results revealed that yoga increased life satisfaction and emotional intelligence before and after yoga intervention. Also, females had higher scores on both tests than males after practice of yoga (Choudhary and Rathore, 2011).

From the above study it was inferred that consistent practice of yoga increased life satisfaction.

Reis (2011) studied the effect of a 6-week prenatal yoga intervention in late pregnancy and its changes in optimism, power and well-being on 21 women. Tests were administered in the first week and after the yoga intervention. Optimism, power and well-being had significantly increased from the first to the sixth week of the yoga practice (Reis, 2011).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga promoted optimism and well-being.

Woodyard (2011) explored the therapeutic effects of yoga to increase quality of life on 404 individuals aged 20 to 40 years who had newly enrolled for six months of yoga. Results showed that yoga enhanced individuals' muscular strength and body flexibility, promoted and improved respiratory and cardiovascular function, promoted recovery from and treatment of addiction, reduced stress, anxiety, depression, and chronic pain, improved sleep patterns, and enhanced overall well-being and satisfaction with life than they previously experienced (Woodyard, 2011).

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From the above study it was inferred that satisfaction with life along with overall well-being increased with the practice of yoga.

Seldin (2012) studied the effects of yoga on female body experience on factors such as self-objectification and self-acceptance on 7 American women aged 25-49 years who had consistently practiced yoga 4 times a week for 2-12 years. The self-objectification theory stated that expectations of physical and sexual body appeal resulted in poor body image. In 2004, Myers and Sinclair's study established a link between poor body image and lower life satisfaction in adulthood among women. Using a semi-structured interview format, most women acknowledged decrease in body dissatisfaction and self-objectification after several years of yoga practice which was also directly related to higher marital, familial, occupational and other life satisfaction variables (Seldin, 2012).

From the above study it was inferred that the practice of yoga increased self-acceptance and satisfaction with life with a reduced dissatisfaction with body image.

Chartrand, Haussmann, Khalsa, MikaandMoliver(2013) studied the effect of yoga practice as a predictor of psychological well-being on 211 female yoga practitioners between 35 and 60 years of age. Some who had practiced yoga for 10 years had higher life satisfaction and positive health outcomes compared to those who had practiced for only 2 months. Increased yoga experience predicted increased psychological well-being for those who intended to practice yoga throughout their lifetime (Chartrand, Haussmann, Khalsa, MikaandMoliver, 2013). Subjective well-being reduces in midlife

years and rise in old age. However, the practice of yoga has shown to increase emotional well-being and life satisfaction in both midlife years as well as old age despite material and social losses (George, 2010).

From the above studies it was inferred that yoga increased life satisfaction with age due to prolonged practice.

Lucia (2013) studied the effects of yoga on psychological and physical wellness, and subjective well-being on 372 individuals aged 18-85 years. The participants were divided into yoga practitioners group and the control group who engaged in non-yoga exercises. Results indicated that yoga participants had higher psychological wellness and subjective well-being than the control group with no significant differences in physical wellness (Lucia, 2013).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga participants experienced higher levels of psychological wellness and subjective well-being than non-yoga participants.

Margaret (2013) studied yogic effects on the quality of life and functional performance of older adults. 135 individuals aged 60 years and above participated with 71 subjects in the intervention group and 64 in the control group. After 12 weeks of intervention, significant improvements were found in the quality of life and functional performance of the yoga participants. According to observations made in the study, the high attendance rate implied that yoga was preferred to medications (Margaret, 2013).

From the above study it was inferred that aging individuals preferred yoga to medication, not only to increase functional performance and physical ability, but also to increase quality of life.

Rai, Ramesham, Sathian and Sinu (2013) conducted a study on 280 married individuals, aged 30 to 55 years of which 164 individuals were Raja Yoga practitioners and 116 were non-yoga practitioners, to assess the effects of yoga on life satisfaction and happiness. It was found that yoga practitioners were happier and more satisfied with life than non-yoga practitioners. Also Rajayoga Meditation significantly increased life satisfaction and happiness in life further enhancing positive thinking (Rai, Ramesham, Sathian and Sinu, 2013).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased life satisfaction and enhanced positive thinking.

Ivtzan and Papantoniou (2014) studied the effect of yoga on three dimensions of psychological wellbeing: gratitude, life satisfaction and meaning in life on 124 participants, aged 18 to 40 years, with equal number of individuals with and without yoga experience. The research findings stated yoga practitioners scored higher on all scales (Ivtzan and Papantoniou, 2014).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased meaningfulness of life, satisfaction with life and gratitude towards life.

Sharma (1986) focused on the application of yoga to modify behaviour for achievement of self-actualization. The scheme of yoga fits the Hierarchy of

Needs Model by Maslow where self-actualization is the final goal after satisfaction of psychological, safety, love and esteem needs. According to Sir Aurobindo, ego is the source of all conflicts, which if continues, leads to mental ill health and disorders (Sharma, 1986). In 1988, Hoffman stated that self-actualization is a continuous process of becoming satisfied with one's life. According to Maslow, the desire for fulfilment in all aspects of life caters to becoming actualized. Diener and Tay tested Maslow's theory in which 60, 865 participants representing all continents of the world were surveyed from 2005 to 2010. They answered questions regarding six needs closely resembling those of Maslow's needs to assess well-being across three measures, namely life evaluation also called life satisfaction, positive feelings and negative feelings. It was found that satisfaction of the six needs rendered life satisfaction and positive feelings being greater than negative feelings (Diener and Tay, 2011). Positive psychologists Martin Seligman, Christopher Peterson and others have ascertained the fulfilment of these six needs to contribute to higher well-being and life satisfaction. They also stated that those who successfully fulfill these needs are capable of self-actualization (Coon and Mitterer, 2010).

The above literature reviews have stated that the practice of yoga had significantly increased satisfaction with life. Greater experience of a yogic lifestyle increased life satisfaction as individuals grew older.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4. 1. INTRODUCTION

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This chapter comprises of the two sections namely, the statistical analysis of the data obtained and the discussion of the results.

#### 4. 2. RESULTS

This section entails the statistical analysis of the obtained data for the two groups, yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners using Descriptive Statistics and Independent Samples T-test.

Table 4. 1. (a) showing Descriptive Statistics for Yoga Practitioners and Non Yoga Practitioners on the Satisfaction With Life Scale.

	Comparative Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Life Satisfaction	Non Yoga Practitioners	100	23. 71	3. 19
Yoga Practitioners	100	27. 75	2. 98	

From Table 4. 1. (a) showing the descriptive statistics for the two comparative groups it was observed that the total sample (N) consisted of 200 individuals, 100 yoga practitioners and 100 non-yoga practitioners. For the group of non-yoga practitioners, the Mean was calculated to be 23. 71 with a Standard Deviation of 3. 19. For the group of yoga practitioners, the Mean was calculated to be 27. 75 with a Standard Deviation of 2. 98.

Table 4. 1. (b) showing Independent Sample T-test for the sample of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners on Life Satisfaction.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-test for Equality of Means		Mean Difference
	F	Sig.	t	df	
Life Satisfaction	0.51	.472	-9.22	198	.000
	Equal Variances Assumed				

Table 4. 1. (b) shows the Independence Sample T-test for the two comparative groups, yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners on life satisfaction. In the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, the F value obtained was 0. 51 which was significant at the 0. 47 level indicating that the homogeneity in the sample was maintained. Thus, equal variances were assumed. In the T-test for Equality of Means, the t value obtained was - 9. 22 with df value (degree of freedom) of 198 which was significant at the 0. 000 level. The mean difference obtained was - 4. 04. The significant difference obtained between the two comparative groups thus indicated that yoga practitioners showed significantly higher life satisfaction compared to non-yoga practitioners.

#### 4. 3. DISCUSSION

The present study is a comparative study of yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners on life satisfaction. From the above section, the t value of - 9.

22 was significant at the 0.000 level. Thus the hypothesis stating that 'the scores on life satisfaction will be significantly higher for yoga practitioners than non-yoga practitioners' was accepted because the statistical analysis of the obtained data showed a significant difference between the two groups.

In congruence to the above findings, previous researches done on the practice of yoga and satisfaction with life are listed below.

Gharote (1982) studied the psychophysiological effects of meditation (Pranayama) and yogasanas on personality and use of yoga in therapy over a period of one year on several individuals who enrolled at the College of Yoga and Cultural Synthesis at Kaivalyadhyama, Lonavala. On various testing grounds, meditation and yogasanas decreased neuroticism, increased extroversion and self-control, self-actualization, happiness and psychological well-being (Gharote, 1982).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased happiness and life satisfaction.

Bhushan (1998) studied the effect of a 14 month yoga course on measures of psychological well-being. The Satisfaction With Life Scale and Spielberger's State Trait Anxiety Inventory were administered before and after the yoga course to 139 employed individuals. When the pre and post intervention scores obtained for the two variables, life satisfaction and anxiety were compared, an interesting finding was seen. There was a significant decrease for those with initial high levels of anxiety, and life satisfaction had increased after the yoga course (Bhushan, 1998 cited in Thomas, 2008)

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From the above study it was inferred that yoga increased life satisfaction and reduced anxiety.

Jhansi (2007) studied the impact of yoga training on self-ideal disparity (incongruence between real self and ideal self) and psychological well-being on an experimental sample of 19 adults who had completed a yoga training course for six months and a control sample of 19 adults who had newly enrolled for the same. The experimental sample was tested after their yoga course and the control sample was tested before it on self-ideal disparity and on a scale of psychological well-being. Results revealed that the experimental group showed higher congruence between real self and ideal self and higher psychological well-being than the control group (Jhansi, 2007).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased life satisfaction and reduced self-ideal disparity.

Bakshi and Kumari (2009) studied the effect of practicing yoga on subjective well-being (SWB) and academic performance on 100 adolescents aged 14 to 16 years. After a year of yoga practice, the students had high scores on subjective well-being and showed a gradual increase in academic performance in school (Bakshi and Kumari, 2009).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga increased subjective well-being and ultimately improved their academic performance.

Monk-Turner and Turner (2010) conducted a study on an adult sample of yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners to assess life satisfaction along

with body, mind, spirit and happiness differences. It was found that yoga practitioners significantly reported more mental wellness, strong morals, healthy values, ability to express their feelings and consider those of others, a positive outlook towards life and high well-being with higher scores on life satisfaction as compared to non-yoga practitioners. Yoga practitioners were also more likely to experience happiness within themselves (Monk-Turner and Turner, 2010).

From the above study it was inferred that satisfaction with life along with mental wellness, positive outlook and happiness increased with the practice of yoga.

Malhotra and Nangia (2012) studied the influence of regular practice of yoga on cognitive skills and well-being on 19 regular yoga practitioners who were tested on outcome measures of attention, remote memory, mental balance, immediate and free recall, verbal and visual retention, and on a measure of well-being. Results indicated that the practitioners obtained high scores on all cognitive measures and well-being (Malhotra and Nangia, 2012).

From the above study it was inferred that practice of yoga not only enhanced well-being but it also sharpened cognitive skills.

Dubey (2012) studied the role of perceived control (a belief that individuals are capable of influencing the events in their lives to deal with stressors and their inner states) in continuing yoga for six months every day, and its effect on health and well-being on regular, irregular and non-yoga practitioners aged 22 to 60 years. Various tests were administered before the course and six months after it. Perceived control was a good predictor of life satisfaction

and health in the regular yoga group and thus they were more satisfied with life and had better health scores than the irregular yoga and the non-yoga practitioners (Dubey, 2012).

From the above study it was inferred that yoga practice increased life satisfaction and promoted better health outcomes.

Bankar, Chaudhari and Chaudhari (2013) studied the impact of long-term yoga on sleep quality and quality of life on 65 adults aged 60 years and above. Scores of yoga practitioners on the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and Quality Of Life Leiden-Padua (LEIPAD) Scale were compared with a non-yoga group of the same age. The yoga group was found to have higher life satisfaction with better sleep quality than the control group (Bankar, Chaudhari and Chaudhari, 2013).

From the above study it was inferred that regular yoga exercises helped to improve sleep quality as well as quality of life.

Basavaraddi, Gangadhar, Hariprasad, Koparde, Sivakumar, Thirthalli, VaramballyandVarghese(2013) studied the effect on yoga on sleep, life satisfaction and quality of life on 220 individuals aged 40 to 55 years. 133 subjects in the yoga group attended a yoga intervention twice a week for six months. 87 individuals formed the non-yoga practitioner group. After the yoga group had completed the course, both groups were administered with tests. The yoga group had scored significantly higher on all the domains of quality of life, had higher satisfaction with life and better sleep quality after the intervention (Basavaraddi, Gangadhar, Hariprasad, Koparde, Sivakumar, Thirthalli, VaramballyandVarghese, 2013).

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From the above study it was inferred that the practice of yoga increased life satisfaction as well as quality of sleep.

Cramer, Dobos, Langhorst, Lauche and Paul (2013) conducted a comparative study on the quality of life, mental health and life satisfaction between yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners on 2486 individuals who were married and employed. Yoga practitio