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Mindfulness and Happiness among Yoga and Non Yoga practitioner

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A B S T R A C T

Yoga pursuits lead to the manifestation of mindfulness and happiness in people actively practicing it. In Indian philosophy, yoga is means to self-realization. Yoga aims at union of empirical self with transcendental self. Yoga, according to Patanjali, means cessation of the modification of mind. In other words, yoga aims at cessation of psychic activities. Mindfulness is keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality without any judgment. It is becoming consciously aware about present experiences and surroundings. Where happiness is a emotional state that reflects high level of mental and emotional well-being. Happiness is a term encompassing both mood and cognition in accord to well-being of an individual. The aim of this study is to compare the mindfulness and happiness among yoga and non-yoga practitioners. Purposive sampling method was planned for the study, the sample were taken from college going students in the age range of 19-25 yr. of Uttarakhand, India. 100 students were approached for this study; with include 50 practitioners and 50 non-practitioners. Students who were practicing yogasan, pranayam or meditation from at least 6months were considered as yoga practitioners The participants were administered by Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (by Baer, Smith, and Tony, 2006) and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (by Michael Aegyle and Peter Hills). The data analysis was done with use of t-test and the data analysis was done through SPSS. The results disclosed that mindfulness and happiness was more in yoga practitioners as compared to non-yoga practitioners .The key contribution of this study is that, it helps to know the importance of yoga practice in life because mindfulness

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and happiness are integral part of human composition of well-being to positive and effective functioning of human life and yoga plays a positive role in influencing these domains of human life..

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Introduction

Mindfulness is psychological construct which is being researched extensively.

Mindfulness is perceived as a form of awareness that arises from attending to the present moment in a non judgmental and accepting manner (Bishop et al.,2004).This invites the practitioners to attend to full range of internal and external experiences in a non judgmental attitude (Hart, Ivtzan ,& Hart, 2013). The concept of mindfulness

originates in traditional Buddhist contemplative practices, where the development of psychological wellbeing is regarded as a main goal (Shapiro,2009) . In fact, mindfulness is called the heart of Buddhist meditation (Kabat-Zinn , 2003; Thera, 1962). Mindfulness is practiced usually in the form of meditation but it is different than meditation. It is “inherently a state of consciousness” which involves consciously attending to one’s moment-to-moment experience (Brown & Ryan, 2003). On the other hand meditation practice is simply “scaffolding” used to develop the state, or skill, of mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2005). Within applied psychology mindfulness emerged as a powerful concept in last 20 to 25 years (Brown & Engler, 1980; Deatherage,1975; Kabat-Zinn,1984; Kabat- Zinn , Lipworth,7 Burney,1985) largely due to Jon Kabat Zinn,1984 and colleagues , who developed and promoted Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR) .

Besides the mindfulness based intervention approaches, authors have also provided a comprehensive theoretical aspect to mindfulness. A consensus panel provided us with operational definition of mindfulness, which has two components. (Bishop et al., 2004) . The first component stresses on self regulation of attention, a process that maintains the focus of attention on immediate experience. The second components are concerned with the orientation towards one’s attention that should be characterized by acceptance and curiosity rather than valance and desirability of that situation. (Bishop et al., 2004; Malinowski, 2008)

In an attempt to break mindfulness down into a simple, comprehensible construct, they came out with three axioms i.e. *Intention, attention and attitude* (Shapario, Carlson and Astin , 2006). Axioms are fundamental building blocks out of which other things emerge. From an understanding of IAA, we can deduce how mindfulness might work. Intention, attention, and attitude are not separate processes or stages—they are interwoven aspects of a single *Cyclic process* and occur simultaneously. They propose a model of the potential mechanisms of mindfulness, which suggests that intentionally (I) attending (A) with openness and non-judgmentalness (A) leads to a significant shift in perspective, which we have termed *reperceiving*. We believe reperceiving is a meta-mechanism of Action, which overarches additional direct mechanisms that lead to change and positive Outcome. ((Shapario, Carlson & Astin, 2006)

Happiness is the degree to which an individual judges the overall quality of his/her own life-as-a-whole favorably. In other words: how much one likes the life one leads. (Veenhoven ,1984).

Happiness When evaluating the favorableness of life, we tend to use two more or less distinct sources of information: our affects and their thoughts (Veenhoven 2009). One can decide that one feels fine most of the time and one can also judge that life seems to meet ones (conscious) demands. These appraisals do not necessarily coincide. We may feel fine generally, but nevertheless be aware that we failed to realize our aspirations. Or one may have surpassed ones aspirations, but nevertheless feel miserable. Using the word 'happiness' in both these cases would result in three different kinds of happiness, the overall judgment as described above and these two specific appraisals. Therefore the components are referred to as 'hedonic level of affect' and 'contentment'. To mark the difference with the encompassing judgment I will refer to happiness (the core concept) as overall happiness. A synonym for overall happiness is 'life-satisfaction'. According to Seligman, (2002), conditions of happiness are (i) focusing on positive emotions (contentment, happiness, hope), (ii) character traits (love, courage, compassion, curiosity, integrity, moderation, to mention a few) and (iii) institutions (justice, responsibility, parenting).

Yoga is union of mind, body and soul. Maharishi Patanjali compiled the 8 stages of yoga in a disciplined manner, when the knowledge was scattered. The eight stages consist of Yama, Niyam, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharna, Dhyana, Samadhi. The

ultimate aim of yoga is to attain samadhi which is eternity and union of the soul with the universe. For our study we've took people who practices the third, fourth and sixth stage which are Asana, pranayama and dharna (concentration). Asana, Pranayama, and dharna helps in concentration and focusing, which contributes to mindfulness. Studies have shown improved emotional stability among individuals (Gehlawat. S; IJASSH, 2018).

Hypothesis

The yoga practitioners will be more mindful and happy as compared non yoga practitioners

Objective

The aim of this study is to compare happiness and mindfulness among yoga and non-yoga practitioners.

Variable

In this study, independent variables are Yoga and Non Yoga Practitioners and dependent variables are mindfulness and happiness.

Method

Participant

A sample of 100 college going students in the age range of 19-25 years was taken through purposive sampling, from DSVV, Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

Procedure

In this study , the sample was Collected from students of graduation and post-graduation , from DSVV, Haridwar.100 students were approached for this study; with include 50 yoga practitioners and 50 non-yoga practitioners. students who were practicing yogasan, pranayam or meditation from at least 6months were considered as yoga practitioners. Then the two groups were administered by Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (by Baer, Smith, and Tony, 2006) and Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (by Michael Aegyle and Peter Hills). Each participant was thanked for voluntary participation and cooperating in administration of the test 100 questionnaires were completed for the study.

Measures

Mindfulness was assessed using the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ; Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006), a 39-item instrument derived from a factor analysis of instruments measuring a dispositional tendency to be mindful in daily life. The FFMQ provides subscale scores for five elements of mindfulness: observing, describing, acting with awareness, no judging of inner experience, and no reactivity to inner experience. Items are rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (never or very rarely true) to 5 (very often or always true). In our study, the total score of mindfulness was only used for assessment. Five factor Mindfulness questionnaire in study by Françoise et al., 2015; on a total of 251 healthy, French-

speaking female volunteers were administered the FFMQ-S, the original FFMQ, and the Female Sexual Distress Scale (FSDS-R). Confirmatory factor analyses indicated that the FFMQ-S exhibits a five-factor model, as implied by the original FFMQ. Good scale reliability was observed (Adam et al, 2015). The FFMQ-S showed significant correlations with the FSDS-R and the usual FFMQ. Scores on the FFMQ-S correlated significantly more negatively with the total FSDS-R score than with the total score of the original version of the FFMQ. These findings clearly support the relevance of developing a version of the FFMQ tailored to sexual functioning. (Adam et al, 2015).

For assessment of happiness, Oxford Happiness questionnaire by Argayel et al. (1989) was used. It is a 29 item scale where items are rated on 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 6 (from strong agree to strongly disagree). One of the study conducted total of 1000 students in Seremban and the instruments used were the research questionnaires regarding happiness of the students was Oxford Happiness questionnaire. The Cronbach's alpha value for this inventory was 0.75 (Sharli , Poh & Sing, 2011) The results showed that most of the students had a moderate level of happiness. There were significant differences in happiness quotient mean with ethnic, religion, good friends and hobbies. However, there was no significant difference between happiness quotient mean with gender and academic stream (Sharli , Poh & Sing, 2011)

TABLE.1

The aim of the study is to compare mindfulness and happiness among yoga and non-yoga practitioners. T-test was applied. in order to test our hypothesis. Table .1 shows mean and standard deviation of mindfulness and happiness

RESULTS:

among yoga and non-yoga practitioners. Table no 2 show t value , degree of freedom and mean difference of mindfulness and happiness among yoga and non-yoga practitioners.

	GROUPING	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
HAPPINESS	NON YOGA	50	3.5990	.79931
	YOGA	50	4.7496	.91149
MINDFULNESS	NON YOGA	50	2.7880	.60756
	YOGA	50	3.8766	.63335

TABLE.2

	t	Df	Sig.(2-tail)	Mean difference	95% confidence interval of difference	
					Lower	Upper
Happiness	8.771	98	.000	1.08860	1.33491	.84229
Mindfulness	6.711	98	.000	1.15060	1.49083	.81037

Discussion

The research question was whether there was significant difference in yoga and non-yoga practitioners with regards to mindfulness and happiness. The findings indicate that yoga practitioners scored significantly higher than non-yoga practitioners with regards to mindfulness and happiness. The mean and standard deviation for mindfulness among yoga practitioners is 3.87 and 0.633 respectively and for mindfulness among non-yoga practitioners is 2.87 and 0.607 respectively. The mean and standard deviation for happiness among yoga practitioners is 4.74 and 0.911 and for non-yoga practitioners is 3.59 and 0.79 respectively. The t score derived for mindfulness is 8.77 and t- score derived for happiness 6.77 at significance level of 0.05. The mean difference for mindfulness

among yoga and non yoga sample is 1.08 and mean difference for yoga and non-yoga practitioners is 1.15. Thus, these results indicate that yoga practitioners have high mindfulness and happiness as compared to non-yoga practitioners. Participants who experience yoga in their daily life have high level of happiness and mental balance compare to non yoga practitioners. This could be happen because yoga calms the mind of the participants (Ram Gupta, 2016) .

Yoga enhances relaxation because of increasing vagal stimulation, turning off the Hypothalamic-Pituitary- Adrenal (HPA) axis and the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) and regulating activity of the parasympathetic nervous (PNS) and gamma amino-butyric acid (GABA) systems (McEwen, 2000).Yoga tends to achieve inner peace, self-reflection, or self-relaxation through the quieting of the mind, develop the self to access a deeper level of

consciousness. In other hand it (i) reduces psychological stress and depression (Marlatt & Kriseller, 1999) and negative emotions (Bedow & Murphy, 2004) mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) for reducing psychological distress in working adults. (Mario virgili, 2013) .Yoga and mindfulness gives positive impact on anxiety and depression Which can lead to happiness. (Amanda E. Geldert, B.A, 2017)

The study could be used in counseling setting to identify the happiness and mindfulness of the clients and use yoga as an intervention to improve the lifestyle of the clients and aid the therapy process. It is useful in education setting also to imply yoga on the students to see their progress in academia and other activities as well and can also used for their coping with the stress of the curriculum and examinations.

Educational Implication of Study:

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