



### Practice and Continuation of Yoga: A Study from India

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#### ABSTRACT

**Aim:** The study was carried out to analyse the extent of practice as well as continuation of yoga, and the characteristics of the respondents, which influence continuation / discontinuation.

**Materials and Methods:** Data was collected on-line from a random sample of 500 respondents from different States of India through WhatsApp and Email. The questionnaire contained the characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, education and marital status, whether practicing yoga, continuing yoga, and the reasons for discontinuation. Scoring using the Likert equal interval method was adopted for practicing / not practicing, and continuation / discontinuation of yoga practice. The results were analysed as proportions and through t test.

**Results:** 73 % of respondents under the study report that they practiced yoga. However, only 53.4 % of them are continuing it. About 60 % of discontinuers attribute this to lack of time. Statistically significant difference exists between the yoga continuation / discontinuation score of respondents with different educational backgrounds, with Ph.D. holders getting a comparatively lower mean score than PG, Degree and Diploma holders. While 80 % of respondents with Ph.D. report yoga discontinuation, the figure for Degree holders is 67 %, and only about 40 % for PG and Diploma holders. Statistically significant difference exists between the age of respondents continuing (mean age 54.9) and discontinuing yoga (46.1), indicating that yoga continuers are mainly of a higher age than discontinuers. Statistically significant difference exists in the mean yoga continuation / discontinuation score of married and un-married people. There are more married respondents, who are continuing yoga practice than un-married people. Statistically significant difference was not observed between male and female respondents in the yoga continuation / discontinuation score.

**Keywords:** India, Yoga, Practice, Continuation, Discontinuation, Characteristics, Influence

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#### INTRODUCTION

Yoga practice has many benefits such as improving flexibility of the body, balance, immunity, cardiovascular functioning, mental health, brain functioning sleep, self-esteem, quality of life, strength, reducing stress / anxiety, inflammation etc. Meta-analyses of reported studies indicate beneficial effects of yoga interventions [1]. There are over 300 million yoga practitioners in the world. Almost 50 percent of all yoga practitioners are from India, though the younger generations seem to be showing less enthusiasm for the discipline [2].

A study was undertaken by Satyananda Yoga Research Centre (SYRC), Kozhikode, Kerala, India, in association with WEDO, NGO, Kozhikode on the practice and continuation of yoga by people in India.

#### Materials and Methods

Data was collected using an on-line Google Forms questionnaire from a random sample of 500 respondents from different States of India through WhatsApp and Email. The questionnaire contained details of the characteristics of respondents such as sex, age, education and marital status, whether practicing yoga, continuing yoga, and the reasons for discontinuation. Respondents practicing yoga were assigned a score of 2 and 1 for those not practicing. The same scoring pattern was adopted for yoga continuers and discontinuers also. The results were analysed as proportions and using t test.

## Results

Table 1 shows the proportion of respondents reporting that they practiced yoga, and among them, who are continuing it. Even though a very high proportion of people have practiced yoga, only about half of them are continuing it.

**Table-1.** Respondents who practiced and continue yoga

Practiced yoga	Respondents* (%)	Respondents (%) continuing yoga practice
Yes	73	53.4
No	27	

\*out of 500 respondents in the study

Table 2 shows the reasons mentioned by those who are not continuing yoga practice, which include aspects such as lack of time, laziness, work pressure and medical problems.

**Table-2.** Reasons for not continuing yoga

Reason for not continuing yoga	Respondents* (%)
Lack of time	59.7
Laziness	13.9
Work pressure	13.9
Medical problems	12.5
Total	100

Table 3 shows the result of *t* test of education wise difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score. There exists significant difference between the score of Ph.D. holders and PG / Degree / Diploma holders.

**Table-3.** Statistical significance of education wise difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score

Education category	Mean yoga continuation / discontinuation	Variance	<i>t</i>	Statistical significance
Ph.D.	1.20	0.17	-2.5	$p < 0.01$
PG	1.60	0.25		
Ph.D.	1.20	0.17	-2.8	$p < 0.01$
Degree	1.48	0.24		
Ph.D.	1.20	0.17	-1.73	$p < 0.10$
Diploma	1.60	0.30		

Table 4 gives details of respondents with different education levels continuing / discontinued yoga practice.

**Table-4.** Respondents with different education levels continuing / discontinuing yoga practice

Education	Respondents (%)		Total (%)
	Continuing yoga	Discontinued yoga	
Ph.D.	20.0	80.0	100
P.G.	57.0	43.0	100
Degree	33.0	67.0	100
Diploma	60.0	40.0	100

Table 5 shows the statistically significant result of the difference in age of the respondents continuing and discontinuing yoga practice.

**Table-5.** Statistical significance of the difference in age of the respondents continuing and discontinuing yoga practice

Details	Mean age (years)	<i>t</i>	Statistical significance
Respondents continuing yoga practice	54.9	-2.62	$p < 0.01$
Respondents discontinuing yoga practice	46.1		

Table 6 gives the proportion of respondents under various age groups, who are continuing and who have discontinued yoga practice.

**Table-6.** Respondents under various age groups continuing / discontinuing yoga practice

Age group (years)	Respondents (%)		Total (%)
	Continuing yoga	Discontinued yoga	
20-30	12.0	88.0	100
30-40	37.0	63.0	100
40-50	51.4	48.6	100
50-60	51.4	48.6	100
60-70	64.4	35.6	100
More than 70	75.0	25.0	100

The statistical significance of marital status wise difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score is shown in Table 7.

**Table-7.** Statistical significance of marital status wise difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score

Marital status	Mean yoga continuation / Discontinuation score	Variance	<i>t</i>	Statistical significance
Married	1.6	0.25	-1.61	$p < 0.10$
Un-married	1.3	0.21		

The marital status of respondents who continue / discontinue yoga practice is shown in Table 8.

**Table-8.** Marital status of respondents continuing / discontinuing yoga practice

Marital status	Respondents (%)		Total (%)
	Continuing yoga	Discontinued yoga	
Married	56.0	44.0	100
Un-married	25.0	75.0	100

## DISCUSSION

It is noteworthy that 73 % of respondents under the study have practiced yoga. However, only 53.4 % of them are continuing it (Table 1). About 60 % of yoga discontinuers attribute this to lack of time. The other reasons for discontinuation such as laziness, work pressure and medical problems are reported by less than 15 % of people who have discontinued yoga (Table 2).

Statistically significant difference exists between the yoga continuation / discontinuation score of respondents with different educational backgrounds (Table 3). Ph.D. holders get a comparatively lower mean score than PG, Degree and Diploma holders, indicating that more Ph.D. holders are discontinuing yoga practice, when compared to respondents with lower levels of education. It can be made out from Table 4 that while 80 % of respondents with Ph.D. report yoga discontinuation, the figure for Degree holders is 67 %, and only about 40 % for PG and Diploma holders.

Statistically significant difference exists between the age of respondents continuing and discontinuing yoga (Table 5). The mean age of respondents continuing yoga is more (54.9 years) than that of discontinuers (46.1 years), indicating that people continuing yoga are mostly of a higher age than yoga discontinuers. This is also substantiated by the data presented in Table 6, which shows that while only 25 % to 48.6 % of respondents aged more than 50 years report yoga discontinuation, the corresponding range for those who are aged less than 50 years is 48.6 % to 88 %. This trend could be probably due to the effect of yoga in overcoming more medical problems usually faced by aged people than youngsters, making them more interested in continuing yoga practice.

Marital status wise, there exists statistically significant difference in the mean score of yoga continuation / discontinuation (Table 7). The mean score of married people is more (1.6) than that of un-married people (1.3). This implies that there are more married respondents, who are continuing yoga practice than un-married people. The data in Table 8 also substantiates the result shown in Table 7, since 75 % of un-married people report yoga discontinuation, when compared to only 44 % of married people. Un-married people usually have less problems in life, when compared to those who are married. Hence, they may not have enough motivation to continue yoga practice to overcome them. In addition, other than their job, un-married young people are

nowadays involved much in many activities facilitated by the social media. This could also be making them difficult to find the time and interest to continue yoga practice.

Statistically significant difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score was not observed between male and female respondents, since there was no perceptible difference in the proportion of respondents between the two sexes.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study, which was conducted in India among 500 respondents has shown that even though a good proportion of people have practiced yoga, only about half of them are continuing it, which is mainly attributed by them to lack of time. Statistically significant difference exists between the yoga continuation / discontinuation score of respondents with different educational backgrounds, with Ph.D. holders getting a comparatively lower mean score, since more of them have discontinued yoga practice than PG, Degree and Diploma holders. Statistically significant difference observed between the age of respondents continuing and discontinuing yoga implies that yoga continuers are mainly of a higher age than discontinuers. Statistically significant difference exists in the mean score of yoga continuation / discontinuation between married and unmarried people, with more married respondents continuing yoga than those who are not married. Sex wise statistically significant difference in yoga continuation / discontinuation score was not observed in this study.

## **REFERENCES**

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