

# Quality of Life among Yoga and Gym Performers

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## ABSTRACT

Quality of life is the subjective experience of an individual which is evaluated taking into account the positive and negative aspects in the dimensions of life including health, social-support, achievements, personality traits, peace at micro and macro system such as family, community, national peace etc. Among the many factors that affect quality of life, the present paper aims to study the effect of performing yoga and regular exercise in gym on quality of life. The main objectives were: (1) to examine difference between the yoga and gym performers on quality of life (2) to examine the difference between the male and female yoga and gym performers on quality of life. The sample consisted of 70 yoga performers (male= 35, female= 35) and 62 (male=31, female=31) gym performers selected randomly from the various gym and yoga institutes of Aligarh. WHOQOL-BRIEF scale (WHO, 1996) was used to assess quality of life of the two groups. Two way analysis of variance was conducted to find out the difference on the basis of gender and on the basis of group. Findings of the study revealed significant difference between yoga performers and gym performers on quality of life. However on the basis of gender no difference was found between the yoga and gym performers on quality of life.

**Keywords:** Quality of Life, Exercise, Yoga, Gym.

## INTRODUCTION

Research on quality of life have gained paramount importance in recent years because everyone is working hard for growth and improving quality of life. But when we work hard and try to move towards excellence many push and pull factors affect our quality of life. The push factors include health, social support, family environment, spiritual practices and spiritual experiences, and communal and national peace. The pull factors include diseases, poor social support, poverty and poor health conditions, adverse effects of technology on mental and national peace, conflicts and violence. The present paper is an attempt to throw light on the effects of yoga and regular exercise on quality of life across the two groups.

Numerous research studies provide evidences regarding the benefits of both yoga and other exercises. They advocate the role of yoga and exercise in appeasing a wide range of problem from stress to blood pressure to cardiovascular diseases. Yoga techniques enhance well-being, mood, attention, mental focus, and stress tolerance. Proper training by a skilled teacher and a 30-minute practice every day will maximize the benefits. Health care providers play a crucial role in encouraging patients to maintain their yoga practices. Yogic breathing (Pranayama) relieves post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. <sup>[1]</sup>

Yoga has been used as a tool for stress management that can assist in

alleviating depression and anxiety disorders.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Quality of life

World Health Organisation (WHO) defines quality of life as “an individual’s perception of his/her position in life in the context of culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns”<sup>[3]</sup>

In recent times, “Quality of Life” has become a vital notion in the medicine where healthcare professionals place two fold weight age on the quality of care, in a technical sense, and individuals’ Quality of life. Combining these two perspectives is a task for which the concept of quality of life is especially well-suited because it encompasses both objective and subjective aspects: the personal, subjective experience of an individual’ own life, as well as the more objective assessment of external factors that impact its quality.<sup>[4]</sup>

**Yoga:** Nowadays yoga is becoming one of the most commonly used complementary and alternative treatment remedies to manage a vast array of ailments. Yogic science believes that psychological problems arise due to the disturbed state of mind. Yoga may be considered as the science to regulate the mind. The disturbances in the mind are the actual cause of the problem. A lot of studies conclude that yoga improves psychological health. One of the study shows that mindfulness meditation improves mental well- being and reduces psychological symptoms of stress related difficulties, illness and anxiety. Lifestyle modifications based on yoga and stress management programs lead to notable reduction in anxiety and depression. Yogic breathing (Pranayama) has also been found to be helpful in treating post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression. Some studies have shown that yoga positively impacts quality of life and subjective well-being, patients who regularly practice yoga experience better quality of life.<sup>[5]</sup> Yoga combines structured physical and breathing techniques and meditation to arouse sense of

well-being. As a clinical intervention, yoga has been related to a range of psychological and physical effects such as enhanced mood and reduced signs of anxiety and depression<sup>[6]</sup> Yoga also refers to an inner science comprising of a variety of methods through which human beings can achieve union between the body and mind to attain self-realisation. The aim of Yoga practice (sādhana) is to overcome all kinds of sufferings that lead to a sense of freedom in every walk of life with holistic health happiness and harmony.<sup>[7]</sup>

**Exercise:** Exercise is a tool for the one who wants to maintain his/her health. There are many mental and physical benefits of the exercise including enhanced body weight control, improved cardiovascular system, and tauter diabetic control. Other benefits of exercise that are lesser known may include better sleep, lower blood pressure, stronger bones, improved mood, cancer prevention, and even a longer lifespan.<sup>[8]</sup> It does not matter which type of physical activity is performed; may it be sports, planned exercise, household or yard work, or occupational tasks, all are beneficial. Improvements in fitness and health will be comparable if the overall energy expenditure remains constant.<sup>[9]</sup> Nowadays normal lifestyle has taken a very vicious form as people normally have jobs that are mostly technology based leaving no space for any physical exercise. This sedentary life style spells negatively for overall health of the population. Medical practitioners are also in view of providing some kind of physical training to the patients along with the medical treatment. And it is proved to be helpful in alleviating physical as well as psychological ailments. In recent years more attention has been paid to the psychological effects of exercise, and much evidence can be found in the literature to support these beneficial effects. Psychologically, exercise has also been shown to elevate mood, increase intellectual functioning, and improve self-concept.<sup>[10]</sup>

*Yaqlia and Ulger* (2015) conducted a study to examine the effect of yoga on

quality of life on depression in elderly breast cancer patients. The sample consisted of 20 patients (10 patients were placed in yoga programme and 10 patients were placed in exercise programme). The age range of participants was between 65-70 years. Using the pre and post design of research they found that patient's quality of life score after yoga and exercise programme was significantly improved ( $p < 0.05$ ) than scores obtained before the yoga and exercise programme. [11]

Wolff, Sundquist, Lonn, & Midlov (2013) studied the impact of yoga on blood pressure and quality of life in patients with hypertension. The sample consisted of 83 adult patients with the age range of 20-80 years. There were three groups (1) yoga class with yoga instructor, (2) yoga at home, and (3) control group. The participants were matched at their systolic blood pressure. The experimental groups were given 12 weeks of yoga training. Findings of the study revealed significant improvement on blood pressure and self-rated quality of life ( $p < 0.05$ ) among the yoga at home group as compared to control group. [12]

Marwer et al. (2013) studied the effect of SudarshanKriya yoga on quality of life among healthy people living with HIV. The sample consisted of 61 adults. Findings of the study revealed significant improvement on quality of life by SudarshanKriya Yoga. [13]

Rao, Nagendra, Raghuram, Vinay, Chandrashekhar, Gopinath and Srinath (2008) studied the influence of yoga on mood states, distress, quality of life, and immune outcome in early stage breast cancer patients undergoing surgery. They used pre and post design where subjects were assessed prior to surgery and four weeks thereafter. The sample consisted of 69 female participants whose age range was 30-70 years. They formed two group (1) yoga group ( $n=33$ ) and (2) control group ( $n=36$ ). Findings revealed significant positive impact of yoga in improving quality of life. [14]

## Research objectives

Objective of the present study were:

1. To examine the difference between the yoga performers and gym performers on quality of life.
2. To examine the difference between male and female yoga performers and gym performers on quality of life.

## Research Hypotheses

In the present study following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There will be no significant difference between the yoga performers and gym performers on quality of life,
2. There will be no significant difference between male and female yoga performers and gym performers on quality of life.

## METHODOLOGY

### Participants

The sample consisted of 132 adults out of these 70 were yoga performers and 62 were gym performers randomly selected from different gyms, yoga institute of Aligarh city and physical education department of Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. Further the two groups were divided on the basis of gender where 35 male and 35 female yoga performers, and 31 male and 31 female gym performers.

### Measures

#### WHOQOL-BRIEF Scale

To measure quality of life the WHOQL-BRIEF scale was administered to the participants. The WHOQOL-BRIEF scale developed by WHO (1996) consists of 26 items, measuring the broad domains of physical health, psychological health, social relationships, and environment. Chronbach's alpha value for each of the domain scores range from 0.71 to 0.86 which shows good internal consistency.

### Procedure

Different gyms and yoga centres of Aligarh city were approached for the collection of data and the purpose of study was briefly explained to the yoga and gym

centers' administrators. After that rapport was build with the participants and confidentiality issue was ensured that the data collected from them will only be used for research purpose. Then the scale was administered individually on the yoga and gym performers. Once they filled the scale they were thanked for their cooperation and participation in the study. The scoring of each scale was then done manually. The data was categorised on the basis of group (1) yoga performers and (2) gym performers and, on the basis of gender (1) male and (2) female.

**Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed by using SPSS version 16.00. The statistical techniques include descriptive statistics (mean, range, and standard deviation of scores) and Two-way analysis of variance.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1: Showing the descriptive statistics of quality of life among yoga performers and gym performers.**

Group	N	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean	SD
Yoga	70	92	114	101.72	4.11
Exercise	62	87	119	96.69	6.42
Male	66	91	118	100	5.2
Female	66	87	115	98.60	6.37

**Table 2: Showing the result of two way analysis of variance among yoga performers and gym performers**

Source	df	mean	F	p
Group	1	703.66	24.47	.000
Gender	1	50.52	1.75	.187
Group*Gender	1	2.10	.073	.787

From table 1 it can be seen that the means of the two on quality of life groups differ significantly. The mean of the yoga group ( $\bar{x}$  =101.72) is greater than the mean of exercise group ( $\bar{x}$  =96.69). From table 2 it can be seen that the two groups namely (yoga and gym performers) significantly differ on quality of life ( $F=24.473$ ,  $p< 0.01$ ) which shows yoga has significant impact on quality of life among yoga performers as compared to group performers. Therefore the null hypothesis 1 stating that there will be no difference between yoga and gym performers on quality of life is rejected.

Furthermore no difference was found between the male and female yoga and gym performers on quality of life. Therefore the null hypothesis 2 stating that there will be no difference between male and female yoga and gym performers on quality of life is accepted. Also the interaction of group membership (yoga & gym) and gender was not found to be significant.

Thus findings of the above study revealed that yoga has substantial positive effect on quality of life of its performers.

**CONCLUSION**

Yoga has many therapeutic implications for improving health, sleep, minimizing diseases, elevating good mood and restoring positive mental health by stress management. To sum up, we can say that yoga, because of its technique and methods, proved to be highly effective in improving the quality of life of people. Yoga is useful in stress reduction and anxiety management that is ultimately beneficial for many stress prone diseases like hypertension, depression, cardiovascular diseases etc. and thus effecting overall quality of life. Yoga, if done properly and with the help of trainer can benefit the person in prodigious ways. So we can conclude that yoga enhances quality of life better than gym.

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