

Innovations

To Study the Differences between Individuals Who Practice Hatayoga and Those Who Practice Gym in Terms of Subjective Well-Being and Satisfaction in Life

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Abstract

The present study has been conducted to examine whether variables of subjective well-being are significantly related to the satisfaction in life for those individuals who practice hatayoga and those who practice gym and also to examine whether these two groups significantly differ in respect to such relationships. Selected 100 participants were both Bengali and Non-Bengali people of Kolkata having a minimum qualification of 12th standard with their age ranging from 18 to 50 years and belonged to the middle-income family group. Participants were administered with the Subjective Well-being Inventory and Satisfaction with Life Scale and after data collection results were analyzed using SPSS-23. Results showed that there was a positive and significant relationship for most of the variables of subjective well-being with satisfaction in life for those people who practice hatayoga whereas, for those who practice gym, a significant positive relationship was obtained only for the variables Expectation-achievement congruence and inadequate mental mastery. With respect to the differences between the two groups (hatayoga vs gym) which only significantly differed for the variables Family group support, General well-being- negative affect and Total. This present study concludes that in comparison to gym; hatayoga practices work more effectively on the whole system resulting in better overall functioning leading to add more effective contribution to the development of health, happiness and wellbeing.

Keywords: Hatayoga, Gym, Subjective well-being, Satisfaction with life, Self-transformation

1. Introduction

Yoga is a Sanskrit term that means 'Union' which signifies bringing things into a close relationship and nurturing this relationship in a way that may ultimately lead to peak experiences (Rao & Paranjpe, 2016). From the time of the Patanjali yoga sutra, yoga has been represented as a method that is believed to be able to unite the ever-changing, untrue and egoistic individual self with the unchanging, true and genuine transcendental self of the Universe which is also the purpose of yoga as well (Rao & Paranjpe, 2016).

Therefore, in this journey, there should be repeated investigating efforts to increase human potential and true knowledge base as well as also to develop happiness which is beyond sensual pleasure and ego satisfaction of the individuals. Even in the present day society, there is ample scientific evidence that both healthy and sick individuals are getting benefitted from yoga as it is being used as a very effective non-invasive and low cost treatment method that has been emerged in Indian culture but gradually becoming preferred in western culture (Kelley & Kelley, 2020; Worby, 2014) and as reported in United States (2017) that in every passing year, the number of Yoga practitioners are gradually increasing and among them, the most preferred style is hatayoga (NCCIH, 2022). Hatayoga, is one of the most fundamental types of yoga that involves asana and pranayama which are various types of physical exercises and also sitting by maintaining some specific postures and simultaneously regulating breathing through voluntary control. Hatayoga prepares the stage to grow with other subsequent types of yoga and is finally able to reach the inner transformed meditative stage known as Samadhi. Therefore, such hatayoga practices lead individuals to be energetic, calm and attentive and also develop individuals to grow with understanding, self-awareness and self-acceptance (Govindaraj et al., 2016). Therefore, Hatayoga practices are very effective for stress management and also to enhance quality of life (Seki Öz, 2021).

Considering the demands in modern society it is essential for individuals to keep pace with positive psychological practices where health is of utmost importance with well-being, life satisfaction and finally with an overall aim to enhance the quality of life and then choosing between gym and yoga may be a very crucial decision in respect to the health behaviors. Sadhguru, in an article in 2020 stated that strengthening muscles is equally important to the flexibility of muscles, therefore, practicing or getting engaged in gym with lots of weights can make big but not flexible muscles. He further stated that building muscle strength with flexibility is very important by using limbs other than by using machines in respect to the proper functioning of the system that is directly associated with different aspects of well-being such as health, energy, mind and spiritual dimension. In this article, Sadhguru, interestingly mentioned that Gym can work within physicality but yoga can work beyond physicality by setting to the other dimension alive that opens up an individual's existence. In a similar line, Taspinar et al. (2014) conducted a study to compare the hatayoga and resistance exercise in mental health and well-being in sedentary adults. Results obtained which favored both dimensions as Hatayoga results in reducing fatigue and self-esteem but at the same time enhancing the quality of life whereas resistance exercise training resulted in improving body image but interestingly both resulted in reducing depressive symptoms at the same level. Another recent study was conducted by Camper (2015) to assess and compare the effect of yoga and aerobic exercise in promoting mental well-being among college students. Interestingly results obtained in the different line as the yoga and aerobic exercise group did not differ significantly with respect to mental well-being and heart rate variability.

Interesting results obtained in terms of the neuropsychological impact when yoga was compared with physical exercises. A comparative study was conducted by Rocha et al. (2012) in which they compared salivary cortisol levels between two groups of military populations. One group was trained with 6 months of yoga and another group with 6 months of physical exercise. Results indicated that in comparison to the exercise group, significantly lower cortisol levels was showed by the yoga group. Authors further showed an improvement in short term and long term memory and self reported reduced depression, anxiety and stress. In the similar line Telles et al. (1995) indicated that yoga enhances one's ability to detect subtle changes in visual stimuli and Narayana (2009) showed an increased alertness and visuo-spatial attention for those who practice yoga. Another interesting study conducted by Gothe et al. (2013) who compared a single session of yoga with a single session of general aerobic exercise. Results indicated an excellent improvement in working memory after a single session of yoga in comparison to a single session of general aerobic exercise.

The present study

The present study has been conducted as people live in a new world of demands, competitions, and expectations in which to be able to maintain and cope with the continuous flow of life with emerging needs and demands of society is really becoming challenging in everyday life. It is already observed that a gradual increase in success in life does not equally bring satisfaction in life. Therefore, channeling life energy in the different pathways by utilizing individuals' inner world has resulted in strengthening mind-body relationship that leads to the development of health, well-being and happiness in the individuals.

2. Research objective

To examine whether individuals who practice hatayoga differ with those who practice gym in terms of subjective well-being and satisfaction in life.

3. Hypotheses

The different hypotheses for this study are-

Hypothesis 1: There exists no significant relationship of Satisfaction with life with the variables of subjective well-being for those individuals who practice hatayoga in terms of 1a) General well-being- positive affect, 1b) Expectation-achievement congruence, 1c) Confidence in coping, 1d) Transcendence, 1e) Family group support, 1f) Social support, 1g) Primary group concern, 1h) Inadequate mental mastery, 1i) Perceived ill-health, 1j) Deficiency in social contacts, and 1k) General well-being- negative affect, and 1l) total.

Hypothesis 2: There exists no significant relationship of Satisfaction with life with the variables of subjective well-being for those individuals who practice gym in terms of 2a) General well-being- positive affect, 2b) Expectation-achievement congruence, 2c) Confidence in coping, 2d) Transcendence, 2e) Family group support, 2f) Social support, 2g) Primary group concern, 2h) Inadequate mental mastery, 2i) Perceived ill-health, 2j) Deficiency in social contacts, and 2k) General well-being- negative affect, and 2l) total.

Hypothesis-3: There exists no significant difference between individuals who practice hatayoga and those who practice gym in terms of the relationship of Satisfaction with life with the variables of subjective well-being in terms of 3a) General well-being- positive affect, 3b) Expectation-achievement congruence, 3c) Confidence in coping, 3d) Transcendence, 3e) Family group support, 3f) Social support, 3g) Primary group concern, 3h) Inadequate mental mastery, 3i) Perceived ill-health, 3j) Deficiency in social contacts, and 3k) General well-being- negative affect, and 3l) total.

4. Participants

The study participants belonged to both Bengali and non-Bengali communities of Kolkata city with having higher secondary or 12th standard as minimum educational qualification and the age range of the participants was 18-50 years with monthly family income of rupees 20000-100000 per month. From the pull of 150 individuals, finally, 100 participants were included (50 individuals who practice only hatayoga but not any other form of exercise and 50 individuals who practice only gym but not any other form of exercise) following the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

5. Tools

At the beginning of the study an information schedule was prepared to collect data on the various demographic and non-demographic variables and thereafter, the participants were administered with the standardized tools which are as follows-

The Subjective Well-being Inventory (Sell & Nagpal, 1992) with its 40 items in 11 subscales was administered to evaluate the level of well-being of the individuals who practice hatayoga and also those who practice gym. This inventory has good psychometric properties as it contents with sound reliability and validity. This is a self-administered inventory which is administered in approximately within 10 to 15 minutes.

Satisfaction with life scale (Diener et al., 1991) with 5 items was administered to assess level of satisfaction of the participants as a whole in terms of their life. The five items are assessed in 7point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (7). This scale too has sound psychometric properties and can be administered within few minutes.

6. Procedure and Analysis

Data were collected in online and offline mode both individually and in group after permission was granted from the authorities of the selected yoga and gym centre and also consent was taken from each participant. For the individual and group data collection, after appointment the participants were initially interviewed and then they were administered with the different tools used for the present study. After that all data were tabulated as well as scored and for statistical analysis, SPSS 23 was used. Data were analyzed using Descriptive, correlational and inferential statistics (t-test).

7. Results

To conceptualize the relationship of the different variables of subjective wellbeing with satisfaction with life in both the group of individuals who practice only hatayoga and those who practice only gym, hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested. Again hypothesis 3 was tested to understand the differences between the individuals who practice hatayoga and those who practice gym in terms of the relationship of variables of social wellbeing with life satisfaction.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) and Fisher's Z test were conducted and results were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r) and Fisher's Z test for correlation of variables of subjective well-being with life satisfaction.

Variables of Social Wellbeing as correlated with life satisfaction	r values in hatayoga group	r values in gym group	Z values
General well-being- positive affect	.49**	.16	1.90
Expectation achievement congruence	.48**	.29*	1.10
Confidence in coping	.42**	.15	1.50
Transcendence	.44**	.11	1.80
Family group support	.47**	.11	2.05*

Social support	.38**	.02	1.90
Primary group concern	.01	-.05	0.20
Inadequate mental mastery	.25	.30*	0.25
Perceived ill-health	.26	.05	1.10
Deficiency in social contacts	.18	.09	0.70
General well-being- negative affect	.42**	.03	2.10*
Total	.64**	.22	2.10*

*Significant beyond a-priori alpha level of .05

Results showed that in hatayoga group, satisfaction with life is significantly correlated with General well-being- positive affect, Expectation-achievement congruence, Confidence in coping, Transcendence, Family group support, Social support, General well-being- negative affect and total whereas in gym group the relationship is significant only for Expectation-achievement congruence and Inadequate mental mastery. The differences between hatayoga and gym group in terms of the relationship of life satisfaction with the variables of subjective well-being was significant only for Family group support, General well-being- negative affect and total. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is accepted for 1g, 1h, 1i and 1j but rejected for 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, 1k and 1l whereas hypothesis 2 is accepted for 2a, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, 2g, 2i, 2j, 2k and 2l but rejected only for 2b and 2h. Considering hypothesis 3 which is accepted for 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3f, 3g, 3h, 3i, and 3j but rejected only for 3e, 3k and 3l.

8. Discussion

Analysis of results reveals that most of the variables of subjective wellbeing are positively and significantly correlated with life satisfaction in hatayoga group, whereas in gym group such positive and significant relationships are obtained only for the variables Expectation-achievement congruence and inadequate mental mastery. Considering the differences between these two groups (hatayoga vs gym), the relationships of the variables of subjective well-being with life satisfaction are significant for the variables Family group support, General well-being- negative affect and Total. In all these cases, the relationship values are much higher and positively significant in hatayoga group. Comparatively better results in hatayoga group have been obtained which may be corroborated by a recent study by Sadhguru (2020), in which he showed that though physical exercises like gym and hatayoga both develop strength of muscles but in hatayoga, more uses with limbs actually results in working with the system which resulted in more flexibility in muscles which are positively associated with health, wellbeing and happiness. In a similar line with the present study findings, another recent study was conducted by Taspinar et al. (2014) who showed that hatayoga resulted in reducing fatigue and enhancing self-esteem whereas resistance exercise only results in increasing body image. An interesting and very significant finding obtained in this study was that both hatayoga and gym resulted in controlling depressive symptoms. In the similar line, in another study by Camper (2015) who showed that yoga and aerobic exercise group did not differ significantly with respect to mental well-being and heart rate variability.

Therefore, discussing the present study findings in the light of some recent studies, it is found that gym and other related physical exercises like hatayoga though results in strengthening body muscles and controlling stress, anxiety and depressive symptoms, hatayoga may work as lifelong preventive measures in terms of health, happiness, wellbeing and overall quality of life. In this regard, a recent study may be discussed in which Nafees and Nazam (2016) showed that in comparison to gym, yoga has a substantial positive impact on the quality of life.

9. Limitations

The present study has the following limitations-

- i) The sample size is supposedly a smaller one. Only a pool of 100 participants is included in the study.
- ii) There might be an influence of gender differences with respect to hatayoga and gym which the present study did not consider.
- iii) The study only measures a specific type of yoga, that is, hatayoga. Thus, it does not identify the effects of other types of yoga which might also have a similar or better impact on subjective well-being and satisfaction with life of the individuals.
- iv) Also, the present study did not consider the other factors apart from subjective well-being and satisfaction with life that might also get influenced due to the practice of hatayoga or gym.

10. Conclusions and implications

The present study concludes that people who practice hatayoga have more subjective well-being and satisfaction in life in comparison to the people who practice gym. Therefore, implications of the study may be drawn in line with creating social messages that adhering to the hatayoga practices which tend to prepare individuals to be aligned with the elements of nature by properly working on the human system will eventually lead to better health and well-being. As mentioned in Rao and Paranjpe (2016) to be able to transform our life and finally develop to be a transcendental self is actually the main purpose of yoga as well as also the main purpose of human life.

11. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors of this present study declare that there were no conflicts of interest regarding authorship and also about publication of this study.

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