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Impact of Yoga and Meditation on Stress Management and Well Being: An Empirical Analysis

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Abstract: This study explores the impact of yoga on job stress and well-being among bank employees in Kerala, focusing on the public, private, and cooperative sectors. Using a multi-phase random sampling method, a sample of 180 respondents was selected from three districts (Kerala, India) -- Palakkad (North), Kochi (Central), and Trivandrum (South). The study examines the influence of five key yoga-related factors: mindfulness, meditation, breathing techniques, physical flexibility, and emotional resilience, on job satisfaction and stress levels. A survey instrument, developed through a pre-test phase, included questions on demographic data, yoga practices, job satisfaction factors (work environment, work-life balance, recognition), and job stress factors (emotional exhaustion (EM), depersonalization (DE), and Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA)). Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 23, with descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and SEM applied to evaluate the relationship between yoga practices and workplace outcomes. The results show that all five yoga-related factors have a statistically significant positive impact on job satisfaction, with meditation having the highest coefficient value (0.61%), followed by emotional resilience (0.53%), mindfulness (0.42%), breathing techniques (0.32%), and physical flexibility (0.24%). Additionally, yoga practices also significantly reduce job stress, with breathing techniques showing the highest negative impact on stress (0.56%), followed by meditation (0.42%), mindfulness (0.38%), emotional resilience (0.21%), and physical flexibility (0.18%). These findings suggest that incorporating yoga into workplace wellness programs can improve job satisfaction and help manage job stress effectively, contributing to a more productive and healthy workforce.

Keywords: Yoga, Meditation, Stress Management, Well Being, Job Satisfaction

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Introduction

Stress levels, Sadness and anxiety are higher in modern living. Researchers are searching for non-

pharmacological and non-invasive treatments for anxiety and depression due to the unfavourable

adverse effects of pharmaceuticals and their ineffectiveness in some situations. Yoga practice improved psychological well-being, self-description, and general quality of life. As an intellectual and cerebral activity, yoga has improved people's sense of wellbeing. Additionally, yoga can improve psychological conditions for stress and adverse emotion monitoring and regulation, positive emotion enhancement, and mental balance. Stress is a natural, universal human experience practiced for many years. Stress is "the nonspecific response of the body to any demand". Eustress, or good stress, benefits our health (for example, physical activity, receiving first place in tests, and promotions at work). Distress, also known as bad stress, is harmful to one's health and is frequently caused by an imbalance between one's requirements and the resources available to meet those needs. Stress, depression, and anxiety are linked to modern lifestyles. Because of the side effects of medications in the treatment of anxiety and depression, as well as their ineffectiveness in few circumstances, researchers are looking for non-pharmacological and non-invasive treatments. Workplace stress is a significant issue worldwide. The workplace stress reduced employee engagement, creativity, and innovation, leading to employee turnover and burnout. Workplace stress is thought to have a detrimental influence on cooperation, teamwork, productivity, and job quality. Employees said that working stress might contribute to mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression, with up to 97% believing so (Riley and Park, 2015).

There are various popular techniques for managing or reducing stress. These include (a) enhancing cognitive awareness of stressors and coping; (b) relaxation techniques such as biofeedback, progressive muscle relaxation, autogenic training, yoga, meditation, visual imagery, and self-hypnosis; (c) improving interpersonal communication by techniques such as assertiveness and understanding behavioural style; (d) learning anger management by techniques such as active listening and transactional analysis; (e)

combining good food and exercise; and (f) time management. There have been few studies to determine the relative efficacy of various approaches, much less the efficacy of each individually.

Yoga, which originated in India 5000 years ago, has undergone several stages, focusing on various ideas like discovering ultimate reality, improving one's and society's psychological well-being, and learning to separate the past, present, and future. A significant area of focus in positive psychology is the growing popularity of yoga in the West, which fosters a focus on positive psychology elements of psychological wellness in general. Asanas (postures or poses), Pranayama (mindfulness of breathing), Pratyahara (detachment from senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation or positive, mindful focus on the present), Savasana (state of rest), Samadhi (ecstasy), and Yama (moral code) are just a few of the tenets of modern yoga that generally enable one to accept change in life. It is anticipated that yoga and dispositional gratitude will be related since yoga is more than just a set of exercises; it is a philosophical and spiritual practice that has been demonstrated to have substantial correlations with mindfulness and intrinsic spiritual beliefs. As evidenced by the language, which expresses an appreciation of the joy of birth and existence, yoga is founded on a philosophy that includes gratitude (Selye, 1975).

Yoga activities enhanced self-description, psychological state, and overall quality of life. According to research, yoga, as an intellectual and mental activity, boosts one's sense of well-being. Furthermore, yoga can enhance psychological circumstances for monitoring and regulating stress and negative emotions, increasing good emotions, and promoting mental equilibrium. Yoga is a sort of mind-body fitness that combines physical movement with internally attentive training. The National Institutes of Health classifies it as Complementary and Alternative Medicine. The link between physical and mental health is extensively documented in the literature

and is a topic being researched among workers. It has already been proven that Yoga is beneficial for stress management and improves overall quality of life (QoL). Previous research has demonstrated the usefulness of Yoga in modifying several physiological characteristics related to stress, such as cortisol levels, systolic blood pressure, and heart rate. These findings are most likely attributable to psycho-neuro-endocrine-immune systems that promote parasympathetic activity, optimise sympathetic hormone production, and reduce metabolic rate. Yoga helps to address stress-related mental illnesses such as sadness and anxiety. Regular yoga causes physiological changes such as lower blood glucose, blood pressure, and cortisol levels while improving overall well-being. Depression is a psychophysiological illness characterised by changes in monoamine (noradrenaline, serotonin, and dopamine) metabolism. Gamma-aminobutyric acid (GABA), a central neurotransmitter, plays a key role in depression. There are several processes by which yoga aids in the treatment of depression. Yoga is a mind-body treatment that has been shown to benefit a variety of psychosomatic diseases. Yoga helps with emotional growth and offers resolving internal issues through physical postures, breathing exercises, meditation, and moral precepts (yama and niyama). As a result, there is a notable gap in understanding how yoga, as a comprehensive wellness intervention, can simultaneously address both the psychological and physical dimensions of job stress while enhancing overall job satisfaction. This study aims to bridge these gaps by examining how yoga influences job stress and satisfaction, considering various workplace variables and offering a more integrated understanding of its impact (Singh *et al.*, 2015).

This study's objective is to explore yoga's impact on job satisfaction and job stress management. In today's fast-paced work environment, employees face increasing levels of stress, which can negatively affect their job satisfaction, well-being, and overall productivity. This study aims to understand how yoga

practices-- such as mindfulness, meditation, breathing techniques, physical flexibility, and emotional resilience-- can effectively reduce job-related stress and enhance job satisfaction. By examining key variables such as work environment, workload, and interpersonal relationships, this research will assess how incorporating yoga into the workplace can positively influence employee outcomes. Ultimately, the study seeks to provide insights into the potential benefits of yoga in fostering a healthier and more fulfilling work experience (Williams *et al.*, 2003).

Materials and Methods

Design of the Population and Sample

The study focused on Kerala (India) and used correlational, cross-sectional, qualitative, and non-experimental analyses. The sample consisted of workers from public, private, and cooperative banks. A multi-phase random sampling procedure was used, dividing Kerala into three regions: north, central, and south. One district from each zone-- Palakkad, Kochi, and Trivandrum-- was selected due to its higher concentration of educational facilities. Data was collected from 180 respondents, with 60 participants chosen from each district.

Research instrument

Job satisfaction and job stress was planned to investigate in the present study. Before the survey was sent out, thirty respondents completed a pre-test of the questionnaire. Pre-testing results, feedback, and suggestions were utilised to refine and modify the questionnaire to reduce the possibility of measurement errors and ensure that the question was understood by the participants and researchers alike. The completed survey is separated into:

(a) The questionnaire's first part focused on the respondents' socioeconomic data. Five variables connected to yoga, such as "Mindfulness", "Meditation", "Breathing Techniques", "Physical Flexibility", and "Emotional Resilience".

Table 1: Demographic influences on the effect of yoga on bank employees (Source: Survey data)

Demographics	Chi-square	p- Value
Age	73.258	0.0741
Education	56.278	0.292
Gender	49.821	0.038
Experience	64.128	0.042

(b) Job satisfaction factors such as "Work Environment", "Work-Life Balance", "Recognition and Rewards"; and job stress factors such as "Emotional exhaustion (EM)", "Depersonalization (DE)", "Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA)" are included in the second section.

After being imported into Microsoft Excel, the quantitative data was cleaned, arranged, coded, and examined using SPSS 23. The chi-square test was employed to evaluate the impact of demographic factors on workers' overall satisfaction. SEM was also developed to examine the impact of yoga-related variables on job satisfaction and stress.

Analysis of SEM

A powerful multivariate method that is frequently employed in scientific research to evaluate and analyse causal relationships is structural equation modelling or SEM. Confirmatory component analysis and route analysis are two statistical techniques combined in SEM. The "Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)" and "Barlett's Test of Sphericity (BTS)" were used to assess if the sample size was enough. Findings of the test of normality show a normality of 0.463 ($p = 0.239$, statistically insignificant). The Shapiro-Wilk test result is 0.995. It represents a set of data that is usually distributed. A reliability study was conducted on the responses about the variables linked to yoga, work happiness, and job stress using 35 statements recorded on a five-point scale. An effort was made to assess dependability using the traditional Cronbach Alpha (CA) model.

Results and Discussion

Effect of Demographics of bank workers on the effects of yoga

The results of chi-square tests are shown in Table 1, which shows no significant correlation between age, bank employees' education, and the effect of yoga since the p-value is more than 0.05. However, gender and experience significantly influence the effect of yoga on the bank employees.

Effect of yoga-related factors on job satisfaction and job stress

Calculating model, reliability and validity

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) has been undertaken before SEM. The CFA technique, which examines measurement models that are constructed a priori, explicitly defines the number of components and their relationship to the indicators. CFA (Table 2) assesses the model's fit to the data. Table 2 shows that utilizing a higher number of samples (sample size = 180) resulted in a computed value of 0.1000, which is less than 0.05 for overall satisfaction. Conversely, the CMIN/DF ratio of 4.125 indicates the model's well-fitting, which resolves the previously mentioned problem. In this case, the CFI value is 0.911. Additionally, the findings indicate that the root mean square residuals (RMR) and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) are 0.0456 and 0.0369, respectively, below the generally accepted 0.08 proposed by Hair *et al.* (2006). Also the impact of factors such as "Work Environment", "Work-Life Balance", "Recognition and Rewards" on job satisfaction and factors such as "Emotional Exhaustion (EM)", "Depersonalization (DE)", "Reduced personal accomplishment (RPA)" on job stress are shown in Table 3 and Figs. 1 and 2.

SEM analysis

The impact of variables of yoga on job stress and

Table 2: CFA Results for overall satisfaction (OS)

Indices	Model fit Result	Suggested value
CMIN/DF	4.125	< 5.00
P value	0.002	> 0.05
GFI	0.948	> 0.90
AGFI	0.945	> 0.90
NFI	0.996	> 0.90
CFI	0.919	> 0.90
TLI	0.945	> 0.90
RMR	0.0456	< 0.08
RMSEA	0.0369	< 0.08
PNFI	0.825	> 0.50
PCFI	0.584	> 0.50

Table 3: Structural Equation Model (SEM) based on Standardized Coefficient

			Estimate	S.E.	t-value	P -Value
JS	<---	WE	0.56	0.032	2.365	< 0.001**
JS	<---	WB	0.41	0.412	1.258	< 0.001**
JS	<---	RR	0.68	0.069	6.481	< 0.001**
JT	<---	EM	0.21	0.014	5.147	< 0.001**
JT	<---	DE	0.34	0.093	6.312	< 0.001**
JT	<---	RPA	0.15	0.058	7.125	< 0.001**

** denotes significant at 1% level

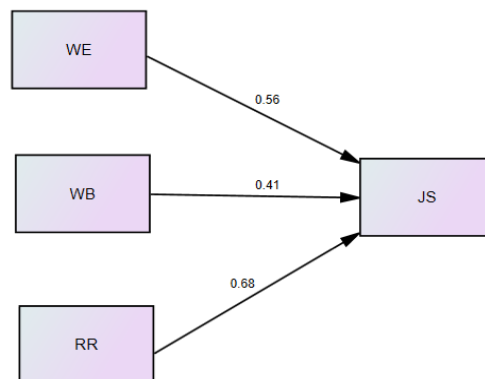


Fig. 1: SEM Analysis- Job satisfaction.

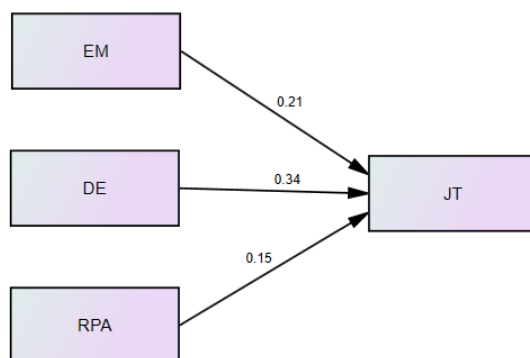


Fig. 2: SEM Analysis- Job stress.

satisfaction of bank employees was assessed by a SEM utilizing AMOS. Table 4 demonstrates that the calculated p value is 0.021, which was less than 0.05, due to a larger sample size of $n = 180$. Nevertheless, the issue appears to have been resolved based on the CMIN/DF ratio 4.478, which denotes a perfect match. The construct measurements yielded a chi-square value of 28.456 ($df = 18$), indicating a statistically significant fit for the model. The current dataset shows a perfect match with values greater than 0.90 for the "Trucker-Lewis Index (TLI)" at 0.941, the "Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index (AGFI)" at 0.989, and the "Goodness of Fit Index (GFI)" at 0.942. Furthermore, perfect fit is indicated by the computed values of the "Normal Fit Index (NFI)" (0.919) and "Comparative Fit Index (CFI)" (0.974). Moreover, Hair *et al.* (2006) argue that a perfect fit is indicated by values of the "Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)" and "RMR" by 0.0569 and 0.032, respectively, both of which are below the criterion of 0.08.

The five factors of yoga and their effects on job satisfaction and stress are highlighted in Table 5, and Figures 3 and 4. These factors-- mindfulness, meditation, breathing techniques, physical flexibility, and emotional resilience are statistically significant and positively impact job satisfaction. Among them, meditation (ME) has the highest coefficient value of 0.61, meaning a 1 per cent increase in meditation practice results in a 0.61 per cent increase in job satisfaction. Meditation fosters relaxation, clarity, and focus,

helping employees manage stress and improve mental well-being. It promotes inner peace, enabling employees to approach work challenges calmly and with focus. This leads to better emotional regulation, reduced anxiety, and enhanced decision-making, contributing to higher job satisfaction. The other factors, though slightly less impactful, also play important roles. Emotional resilience (ER) is closely followed by a coefficient of 0.53, indicating its significant role in managing stress and improving job satisfaction. Mindfulness (MF) has a coefficient value of 0.42, highlighting its importance in maintaining focus and reducing rumination on stressors. Breathing Techniques (BT) and Physical Flexibility (PF) also contribute, with coefficients of 0.32 and 0.24, respectively. Together, these factors emphasize how yoga practices can enhance job satisfaction by improving employees' mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

Emotional resilience (ER), with a coefficient of 0.53, is crucial in reducing job stress. It refers to recovering from adversity and coping with stress effectively. Employees with higher emotional resilience are better equipped to handle work pressures, setbacks, and challenges. This increased resilience helps reduce feelings of helplessness and burnout, leading to greater job satisfaction. Emotionally resilient employees maintain a positive attitude even in difficult situations, experiencing less stress and more fulfillment in their roles. Managing emotions and staying adaptable is key to navigating modern

Table 4: Model fit summary of Structural Equation Model

Indices	Value	Suggested value
Chi-square value	28.456	-
DF	18	-
P value	0.021	> 0.05
Chi-square value/DF	4.526	< 5.00
GFI	0.942	> 0.90
AGFI	0.989	> 0.90
NFI	0.919	> 0.90
CFI	0.956	> 0.90
RMR	0.032	< 0.08
RMSEA	0.0569	< 0.08
TLI	0.941	> 0.90
PNFI	0.754	> 0.50
PCFI	0.68	> 0.50

Table 5: Structural Equation Model (SEM) based on Standardized Coefficient

			Estimate	S.E.	t-value	P -Value
JS	<---	MI	0.42	0.0352	2.365	< 0.001*
JS	<---	ME	0.61	0.174	1.258	< 0.001*
JS	<---	BT	0.32	0.685	6.481	< 0.001*
JS	<---	PF	0.24	0.482	5.147	< 0.001*
JS	<---	ER	0.53	0.962	6.312	< 0.001*
JT	<---	MI	-0.38	0.025	7.125	< 0.001*
JT	<---	ME	-0.42	0.174	8.149	< 0.001*
JT	<---	BT	-0.56	0.634	6.298	< 0.001*
JT	<---	PF	-0.18	0.961	4.269	< 0.001*
JT	<---	ER	-0.21	0.152	3.684	< 0.001*

* denotes significant at 1% level

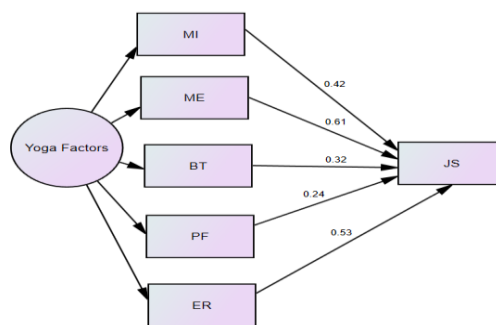


Fig. 3: SEM Analysis of the yoga factors effect on job satisfaction.

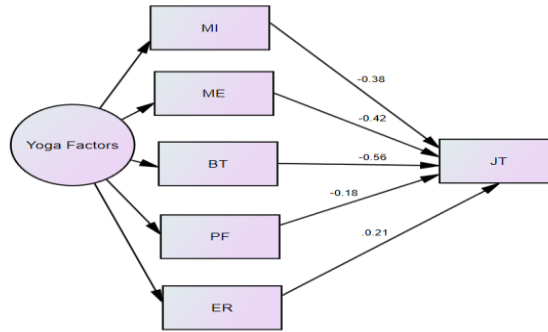


Fig. 4: SEM Analysis of the yoga factors effect on job stress.

workplaces' dynamic and often stressful nature. Mindfulness (MF), with a coefficient of 0.42, also significantly impacts job satisfaction. A 1 per cent increase in mindfulness leads to a 0.42 per cent increase in job satisfaction. Mindfulness involves being fully present and aware without judgment, which helps employees focus on tasks, improve interactions, and reduce rumination on stressors. It also enhances awareness of thoughts, emotions, and bodily sensations, enabling employees to manage stress proactively. By promoting balance and well-being, mindfulness is key in enhancing job satisfaction and reducing stress. Breathing techniques (BT), with a coefficient value of 0.32, also positively impact job satisfaction. Breathing techniques such as deep breathing, pranayama, or controlled breathing help reduce the physical symptoms of stress, such as elevated heart rate and muscle tension. These techniques activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation and reducing the body's stress response. As a result, employees who regularly practice breathing techniques experience less physical tension and mental fatigue, leading to improved overall well-being and greater satisfaction at work. Finally, physical flexibility (PF), with a coefficient value of 0.24, shows a positive, though comparatively more minor, impact on job satisfaction. Physical flexibility, which improves through yoga postures and stretches, can reduce physical discomfort and musculoskeletal pain, often associated with long hours at a desk or physically demanding jobs.

Enhancing flexibility allows employees to experience fewer physical limitations, allowing them to move more quickly and comfortably. This, in turn, can improve energy levels, reduce fatigue, and enhance focus, contributing to greater job satisfaction.

In conclusion, the results indicate that while all five factors of yoga positively influence job satisfaction, meditation has the most substantial impact. Meditation promotes mental clarity, reduces stress, and enhances emotional well-being, directly translating into higher job satisfaction. Emotional resilience, mindfulness, breathing techniques, and physical flexibility contribute positively, but to a lesser extent. The results from Table 5 and Figure 4 provide valuable insights into how various factors of yoga also affect job stress. The five main factors are statistically significant and negative, which means an increase in yoga-related factors and job stress. Though the factor has a negative value, it positively reduces the job stress. Among the factors, "breathing technique (BT)" has the highest negative impact with a value of 0.56, which implies that an increase of one percent in "breathing technique (BT)" decreases the job stress by 0.56. That meditation (ME) has the highest coefficient value of 0.42 per cent, "Mindfulness (MF)" with a value of 0.38, "Emotional Resilience (ER)" with 0.21, and lastly "Physical Flexibility (PF)" with 0.18.

Breathing Techniques (BT) have the highest

negative impact on job stress, with a coefficient value of 0.56, indicating that a 1 per cent increase in breathing practice leads to a 0.56 per cent decrease in stress. These techniques activate the parasympathetic nervous system, promoting relaxation by lowering heart rate, reducing muscle tension, and calming the mind. This is particularly effective in high-stress environments with tight deadlines and challenging tasks. The ability to control breath through yoga provides immediate stress relief, explaining the significant reduction in job stress observed in this study. Meditation (ME) also shows a strong impact, with a coefficient value of 0.42, suggesting a 0.42 per cent reduction in job stress for every 1 per cent increase in meditation practice. Meditation enhances mental clarity, focus, and emotional stability, allowing employees to detach from work-related stressors. It helps reduce anxiety, foster emotional regulation, and promote relaxation, making it an essential tool for managing job stress's mental and emotional aspects. Mindfulness (MF), with a coefficient value of 0.38, significantly reduces job stress by encouraging individuals to stay present and non-judgmental, helping them disengage from negative thoughts and focus on the moment. This practice enhances awareness, reduces rumination, and allows employees to respond to stressors with composure and resilience. Mindfulness fosters a balanced, focused approach to workplace challenges when integrated into daily routines. Emotional resilience (ER), with a coefficient of 0.21, is also critical in managing job stress. It refers to the ability to recover from setbacks, adapt to change, and cope with pressure. Yoga practices that build emotional resilience help employees remain calm and adaptable, promoting problem-solving and a positive attitude. Resilient employees are better equipped to handle long-term job stress, reducing the likelihood of burnout (Ross and Thomas, 2010).

Finally, physical flexibility (PF), with a coefficient of 0.18, demonstrates the least but still significant impact on job stress reduction. Physical flexibility is essential for reducing physical tension, which is often a source of stress in the

workplace, especially for individuals with sedentary jobs or physically demanding tasks. Employees can alleviate discomfort and prevent the physical strain that contributes to stress by improving flexibility through yoga. While its impact is smaller than the other factors, physical flexibility still promotes overall well-being and reduces stress. In summary, the results indicate that yoga-related practices substantially and negatively impact job stress, with breathing techniques and meditation emerging as the most effective factors for stress reduction. The ability to practice mindfulness, build emotional resilience, and improve physical flexibility also contributes to managing stress effectively in the workplace. These findings prove that incorporating yoga into the work environment can significantly enhance employees' coping skills, leading to a more balanced and productive workforce (Prieske *et al.*, 2019).

This study highlights the significant implications of yoga for both employees and organizations. Yoga can enhance job satisfaction and reduce stress, improving employee well-being, performance, and organizational success. In high-stress environments like banking, yoga can be a valuable tool in corporate wellness programs, fostering improved morale, productivity, retention, and reduced absenteeism. Regular yoga practice can also alleviate musculoskeletal issues from prolonged desk work. For employers, investing in yoga initiatives can lower healthcare costs by addressing physical and mental health concerns early, reducing medical claims and promoting a healthier workforce. Additionally, incorporating yoga into leadership development programs can enhance emotional resilience, mindfulness, and stress management skills, helping leaders improve team dynamics and decision-making under pressure, benefiting organizational culture (Pascoe and Bauer, 2015).

Future research could expand the sample to include employees from diverse industries such as healthcare, education, and IT to better understand yoga's impact in various settings. Longitudinal

studies could explore the long-term effects of yoga, while examining its influence on work engagement, creativity, and burnout. Research could also assess different types of yoga practices (e.g., Hatha, Vinyasa) and their specific benefits. Qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, would provide deeper insights into personal experiences with yoga in the workplace.

Conclusion

The present study indicated that all five yoga-related factors have a significant positive impact on job satisfaction and a negative effect on job stress, thus supporting the integration of yoga practices as practical wellness tools within the workplace. The findings from this study underscore the multifaceted benefits of yoga in the workplace. Meditation was found to have the highest positive impact on job satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.61%, indicating that a 1% increase in meditation practice leads to a 0.61% increase in job satisfaction. This suggests that meditation plays a crucial role in promoting mental clarity, emotional regulation, and relaxation, all of which contribute to greater overall satisfaction in the workplace. Emotional resilience and mindfulness also showed significant positive effects on job satisfaction, indicating that yoga enhances employees' ability to handle challenges, regulate emotions, and maintain a positive outlook at work. Breathing techniques, which involve controlled and conscious breathing exercises, help activate the body's relaxation response, reducing anxiety and stress. Meditation and mindfulness were similarly effective in reducing job stress, with both factors showing substantial adverse effects. These practices foster mental focus, decrease stress-inducing rumination, and improve emotional balance, reducing job-related stress. Emotional resilience, which helps individuals better cope with pressure and setbacks, was also found to alleviate job stress. At the same time, physical flexibility had a comparatively lower impact but still contributed to reducing physical tension and discomfort associated with stress. These findings have important implications for

organizations seeking to enhance employee well-being and productivity. Incorporating yoga practices can improve job satisfaction and reduce stress, leading to healthier and more engaged employees. Furthermore, given the significant role of emotional resilience in managing job stress and enhancing satisfaction, fostering a resilient workforce through yoga can be a valuable strategy for long-term organizational success.

Ethical Statement

The authors confirm that all ethical issues have been dealt with the research ethics guidelines provided by the Sree Neelakanta Government Sanskrit College, Pattambi, Palakkad, Kerala, India.

Author Contributions

All the authors have contributed equally to the completion of this review and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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