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EFFECT OF YOGA BREAK ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF OFFICE WORKERS OF UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

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ABSTRACT

Mental health problems impact working professionals regardless of whether they are employed in the commercial sector or the public sector. Emotional troubles might arise from a discrepancy between our expectations and reality. Factors such as office politics, excessive workload, personal health issues, superiors' attitudes, management policies, insecurity, discrimination, and relationship problems can significantly impact our emotional well-being and ultimately our psycho-somatic health. Someone who is emotionally stable and intelligent may effectively handle various emotional challenges, leading to improved health and productivity regardless of their status or position at workplace. The present study was carried up on 48 healthy male university and college employees aged between 24 to 34, working as junior assistants, assistants, and senior assistants, or comparable roles, with a minimum of 2 years of experience. Employed at a 9 am to 5.30 pm work schedule, Monday through Friday. An intervention using a 5-week "Yoga Break (Y-break)" protocol, established by MDNIY, New Delhi, consisting of asanas and pranayama for 5 minutes was being implemented at the workplace in the morning. Emotional intelligence before and after the session was assessed using IBM SPSS version 25. Since the data did not meet the assumption of normal distribution, the Wilcoxon signed-ranks test, a non-parametric alternative to the paired samples t-test, was employed for data analysis. The findings indicated a notable enhancement in the emotional intelligence score of the office workers after the intervention. W = 3.00; z = -5.569, p = .000, with a strong effect size (r = .803).

Keywords: Yoga Break, SPSS, Emotional Intelligence

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1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence refers to a collection of attributes and talents that enable individuals to identify and control their own emotions, as well as effectively handle relationships with themselves and others. Goleman (1998) defines

emotional intelligence as an individual's capacity to recognize and manage the emotions of themselves and others in social interactions. Salovey and Mayer (1996) used the term "insight" to refer to the ability to understand and manage both one's own and others' emotions. He also mentioned that emotional data may be utilized to manipulate the general populace to elicit the intended reaction. Many academics have explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and employee performance, but few have investigated the actual effects of yoga on administrative employees in the autonomous organizations like colleges and universities. These middle management employees play pivotal role in the smooth functioning of any institution or college. Semadar, Robins, and Ferris (2006) showed that Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the most effective method for assessing employee performance by understanding and managing their emotions appropriately. Individuals who are passionate and smart may efficiently attain their goals, making enthusiastic knowledge a must for most employment nowadays. Definitions of Emotional Intelligence (EI) vary, but it is generally described as an individual's ability to assess their own and others' emotions, accurately express and regulate their emotions, and use this information to guide thoughts and actions. Emotional intelligence is a complex construct that integrates several types of skills. Emotions have a role in determining the varying degrees of job performance. College and university workers are relocated to different locations, face new difficulties and environments. Engaging in multitasking and keeping up with technological advancements can be beneficial but may also strain emotional well-being in a work setting, particularly for professionals with young children in a nuclear household. The stress might intensify if there are health issues and when the financial year end is coming rapidly. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in motivating professionals to perform at their best and engage fully in their work while being level headed during the times of crisis. Emotional intelligence impacts employee performance through several mechanisms. This study was conducted in the autonomous organizations for the first time. John Mayer and Peter Salovey (1993) define emotional intelligence as the capacity to accurately discern and comprehend one's own emotional responses and those of others. Furthermore, it includes the capacity to use one's strategy for making wise judgements and taking actual action. Reuven Bar-On (2000) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to accept oneself and others, establish strong connections with people, and effectively navigate and adapt to the surrounding environment to better meet ecological needs. Managers and workers that possess strong skills in managing their emotions are very effective in the workplace.

The Yoga Break at Workplace (Y-Break) protocol comprising of postures and breathing exercises is a latest project created by the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) in New Delhi. The institution performed a study experiment in six metropolitan locations to determine its effectiveness. A monograph was developed based on study findings. The procedure has been acknowledged on social media sites. An ongoing clinical trial with the registration number CTRI/2022/05/042567 is investigating the impact of the Yoga Break Protocol on stress-related psycho-biological parameters in working professionals. The project is led by the former Director of MDNIY and has been active since 2022.

This study will benefit employees of autonomous organizations and policy-making bodies by reducing the likelihood of academic and scheme failures, increasing the potential for improved employee performance leading to success in development and research initiatives, daily operations, handling student-related matters, and fostering a collaborative work environment where employees engage and share knowledge. Due to a lack of skilled workers and the growing number and impact of initiatives such as Fit India, Khelo-India, NAAC rating, and ranking institutions based on performance and productivity, there is now global competition to secure additional grants and CSR funds for self-sustainability and continued progress. Project management is crucial for efficiently addressing several issues within a limited timeframe. Organizations are increasingly adopting project-based time-bound programmes over traditional techniques

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Objective: This study was carried out with the objective to find out if there will be a significant difference between pre and post yoga break (Y-break) intervention emotional intelligence of office workers. To discuss if the Y-break is a feasible method for working professionals able to unwind, revitalize, and refocus on the work after a five-minute yoga break.

Hypothesis: H_0: No significant difference between pre and post yoga break protocol on emotional intelligence of the office workers.

H_a: Significant difference between pre and post yoga break protocol on emotional intelligence of the office workers.

Settings of the study: The participants were screened and enrolled with the help of yoga instructors from two yoga centers across Delhi-NCR districts/towns, based on the availability and willingness of the partner organization in that cluster: the two institutes were: Navyoga Suryodaya Sewa Samiti, Mayur Vihar, Delhi, and Adhyatma Sadhana Kendra, Dwarka, New Delhi. Five minutes Y-Break protocol was practiced at the workplaces under the supervision of certified Yoga instructors.

Study design and assessment: This study was conducted as an experimental, randomized control trial having 48 office workers who were enrolled for the trial of five weeks (5 days a week). The participants were junior assistants, assistants and senior assistants working at educational autonomous institutions (universities) and their affiliated colleges across the Delhi NCR region. The 48 male participants were in the age group of 24 to 34 years with at least 2 years of experience, currently working healthy professionals, working at least 8 hours or more hours per day, those who were having work related emotional issues, volunteered to attend the yoga sessions to maintain their health and well-being.

Exclusion criteria: Negative attitude towards yoga, any major illness or restrictive disability that did not permit the practice.

The tool used for this study was the Emotional intelligence scale (EIS-SANS) developed by Dr. Arun Kumar Singh and Dr. Shruti Narain to assess emotional intelligence of office workers. The questionnaire was filled by the participants on 1st day and on 25th day. Y-Break protocol was practiced once a day for 25 days. Participants' experience through feedback was collected using six semi-structured questions and three questions pertaining to the procedure adopted, duration and quality of instructions given. Mean, standard deviation, and Wilcoxon signed-rank test were the statistical techniques used to analyze the data, computed by using IBM SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) 25.0 version.

Intervention- Y break protocol: The Yoga Break at Work: The protocol consists of various sets of yoga techniques such as Asana (postures), Pranayama (breathing techniques), and Dhyana (meditation). All the techniques followed a specific rhythmic breathing pattern. This protocol was taught by certified professional yoga instructors. In the five-minute schedule, each posture had a rhythmic flow of techniques (each posture practiced for one minute) with intermittent rest as follows:

1) Urdhvahastottanasana and Tadasana
2) Skandhachalana and Uttanamandukasana
3) Ardhachakrasana and Padottanasana
4) Nadi Shodhana Pranayama
5) Bhramari Pranayama and Dhyana.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table one shows the demographic variables of the office workers. Mean age was 27.83 ± 2.63 years, mean height - 1.71 ± 0.47 meters, mean body weight 72.04 ± 3.71 kg, and body mass index was 19.60 ± 1.32, which was well within the desired range prescribed by World Helath Organization.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics showing demographic variables of office workers (N=48)

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Age_in_years	24.00	34.00	27.83	2.63
Height_in_meters	1.60	1.78	1.71	.047
Body_Mass_in_kg	64.00	80.00	72.04	3.71
Body_Mass_Index	17.04	22.66	19.60	1.32

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation values of before and after yoga break intervention. There was improvement in the emotional intelligence variable after the five weeks yoga break protocol.

Table 2: Pre and post yoga break protocol descriptive statistics of emotional intelligence of office workers (N=48)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	Percentiles		
					25th	50th (Median)	75th
Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score	22.5	1.99	18.00	28.00	21.00	22.00	24.00
Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score	24.33	1.84	20.88	29.27	23.15	23.94	25.78

Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used in the study to test whether or not there is a significant difference between two population means (before and after yoga break) because the distribution of differences between the two samples could not be assumed to be normal.

Table 3: Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test showing confirmation of rank scores across conditions

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score - Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score	Negative Ranks	3[a]	15.00	45.00
	Positive Ranks	45[b]	25.13	1131.00
	Ties	0[c]		
	Total	48		
a. Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score < Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score				
b. Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score > Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score				
c. Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score = Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score				

Table-3 shows the summary of negative and positive ranks in both the groups, whereas Table 3 shows z statistic and p value. To interpret the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, z statistic needs to be examined for testing two-tailed hypothesis.

Table 4: Test Statistics[a]

	Pre yoga break Emotional Intelligence score - Post yoga break Emotional Intelligence score
Z	-5.569[b]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	
b. Based on negative ranks.	

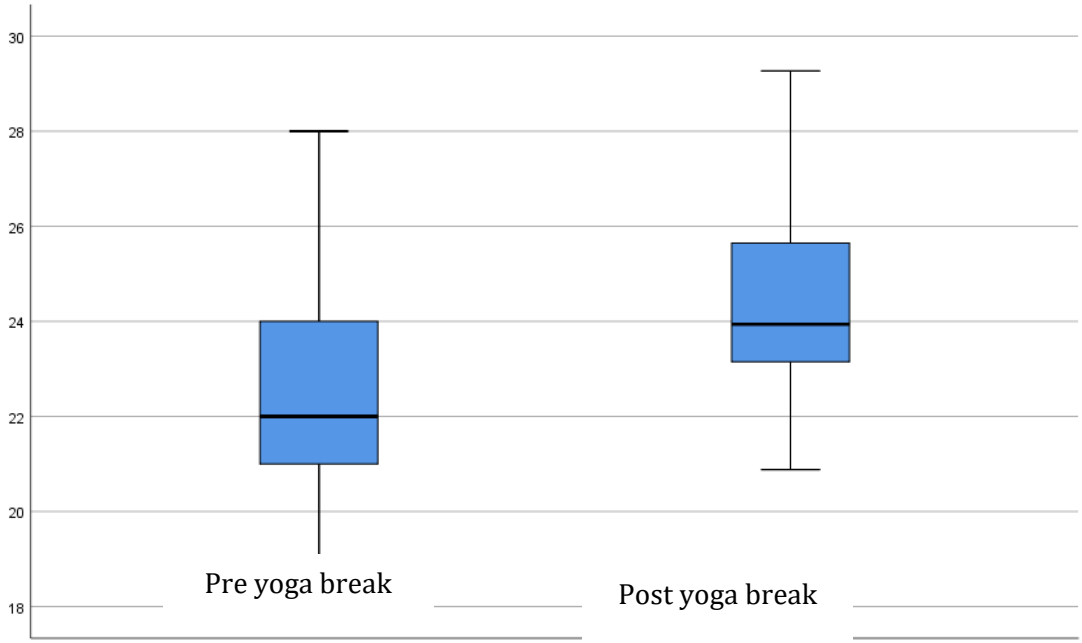
Table-4 confirms that we have a significant outcome, z = -5.569, p = .000.

Effect size = 5.569 / square root of 48 = 0.803, which is a strong effect according to Cohen's classification of effect sizes.

Table 5: Emotional intelligence of workers: pre and post yoga break protocol (N=48)

	Median	95% CI
Pre intervention score on emotional intelligence	22.00	21.95-23.11
Post intervention score on emotional intelligence	23.94	23.79-24.86

A Wilcoxon signed-rank test showed that the workers significantly differed in emotional intelligence after the yoga break protocol. This means that the ability of workers in the recognition, use, understanding, and management of their own and others emotional state required in solving problems and regulating behavior (Ciccarelli $ Meyer, 2006), improved after 5 weeks of yoga break was introduced: W = 3.00; z = -5.569, p = .000, with a strong effect size (r = .803). We, therefore, must reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the 5 minutes of yoga break for 5 weeks (5 days a week) had an effect on the emotional intelligence of the office workers or alternately, we can accept the H_a.



Graph 1: Completed box plot workers emotional intelligence: pre yoga break vs. post five weeks yoga break (N = 48)

The findings of our study are similar to a "single group pre-post design" study (Ganpat TS, Nagendra HR., 2011) on 72 managers, Self-Management of Excessive Tension (SMET) program was associated with improvement in emotional intelligent quotient (EQ) and may have implications for "executive efficiency" after 5 days of SMET program.

A survey study (Senćanski D. et. al., 2023), to compare the emotional intelligence and perceived stress levels of community pharmacists who provided a new service to patients with diabetes with their controls who provided standard pharmaceutical services, suggested that the introduction of emotional intelligence agenda into certification programmes for new community pharmacy services should be considered. The results also suggested that higher emotional intelligence may have protective effects against perceived stress.

A study entitled "Impact of Emotional Intelligence on College Instructors' Work Management" (Martinez, Crizzel et. al., 2023) to explore the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Work Management (WM) among Filipino College Instructors at the University of Cebu – Phillipines suggested that higher emotional intelligence correlates with more effective work management for college instructors.

We obtained satisfactory comments from the office workers after discussing the viability of implementing more frequent yoga breaks during office hours in a double-blinded manner. 30.3% of the participants wanted a dedicated yoga room to practice the yoga break regimen at their leisure. 86% of participants stated that they were able to unwind, revitalize, and refocus on the work after a five-minute yoga break.

4. CONCLUSION

Our study suggests that the yoga break intervention of merely 5 minutes a day during office hours can be beneficial in improving the emotional intelligence of office workers. Such interventions if promoted among higher management workers of the university and college set up can be a useful tool for the prevention and management of burn outs, unexpected stress in situations arising out of demands due to work, family, weather conditions, pollution and it can be a healthy substitute to taking constant tea breaks and lower absenteeism due to body aches and pains that results from prolonged sitting.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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