

An Action Research Study on Effect of Integrated Yoga on Personality of Employees with reference to Openness to Experience

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Abstract:

Aim: The purpose of writing the paper is to evaluate the impact of practice of Integrated Yoga on a personality trait of employees namely Openness to experience by using Big Five Personality Inventory.

Literature review: Earlier studies proved the validity of Big Five Personality measures to evaluate the performance of employee

Study Design: An empirical study is made to assess the effect of practicing Integrated Yoga on personality traits, including Openness to experience. 51 employees are given Integrated Yoga Intervention for four months and another 51 are not given any intervention. Using Big Five Personality Inventory, data is collected before the study, in the middle of the study and at the end of the study.

Results and Conclusion: The analysis of data using SPSS showed that Openness to Experience in Integrated Yoga Intervention group improved significantly ($p < .01$)

Keywords: Personality, Performance, Openness to Experience, Integrated Yoga

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present knowledge based society, human resources are the most important resource for the development. Personalities of employees shape the behaviours in the workplace and thus their performance. Development of the personalities to suit the changing requirements of the organization and also society is an important need of the present fast changing society. The present research studies how practice of Integrated Yoga can bring changes in employee's personality with reference to Openness to experience, a Big Five Personality trait.

According to American Psychological Association, Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. Many efforts are made to identify the primary traits that govern behaviour and out of these Big Five Personality Model is most widely used in identifying and classifying traits. The Big Five Personality traits are Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Among these, Openness to experience, it's importance and impact of practice of Integrated Yoga on it are studied in the present research. The facets of openness are Active imagination (fantasy), Aesthetic sensitivity, Attentiveness to inner feelings, Preference for variety, and Intellectual curiosity. According to ancient Indian literature, Yoga is a technique to mind control and personality development. The present study wants to assess the impact of Yoga Intervention on the

personality of employees with special reference to Openness to Experience.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to previous studies, Openness to experience is important in following aspects:

Training proficiency (Jesus F. Salgado (1997), Broad minded and imaginative (Dollinger, Leoung, and Ulicni ,1996), Predicted unique variance in job performance (Mark N. Bing, John W. Lounsbury , 2000), Positive attitudes towards learning experiences in general (McCrae and Costa, 1986), Task performance and Creativity (S Rothmann et al, 2003), in high complexity jobs (Gouri Mohan & Zubin R. Mulla), Skill acquisition (Oakes et al, 2001), Better performance in unfamiliar environments (Bing & Lounsbury, 2000), higher levels of creativity when the ends and means to their task are ill-defined (George & Zhou, 2001), More cued in to environment and will be attentive to multiple influences while taking decisions (McElroy & Dowd, 2007), Divergent thinking (McCrae, 1987)

Personality Development- Integrated Yoga as the facilitator:

Yoga is becoming popular in all parts of the world and recognising the importance of it the United Nations declared June 21st as World Yoga Day. However only a little research

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has been done on Yoga and most of it is related to application of Yoga to improve physical health of people. Very little research has been done on the application of Yoga to personality development of employees. To fill this gap, an effort has been made in the present study.

Patanjali, defines *Yoga as Yogah Cittavritti Nirodhah* –Yoga is a technique used to still the fluctuations of the mind to reach the central reality of the true self. According to Yoga Vashishta(3.9.32) Manah Prasamanopayah Yoga ityabhidhiyate- Yoga is a skillful and subtle process to calm down the mind. According to Swamy Vivekananda, every one can become divine by Psychic control(Raja Yoga), Devotion(Bhakti Yoga), Knowledge of self (Jnana Yoga), Selfless action(Karma Yoga). Yoga practice which aim at the integral development of the personality by a fine combination of the above four methods of yoga viz., Karma Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Jnana Yoga and Raja Yoga is called as Integrated Yoga. Practicing this knowledge may bring out complete transformation of one’s personality on physical, mental, emotional and spiritual levels which, among other things, strengthen his performance levels.

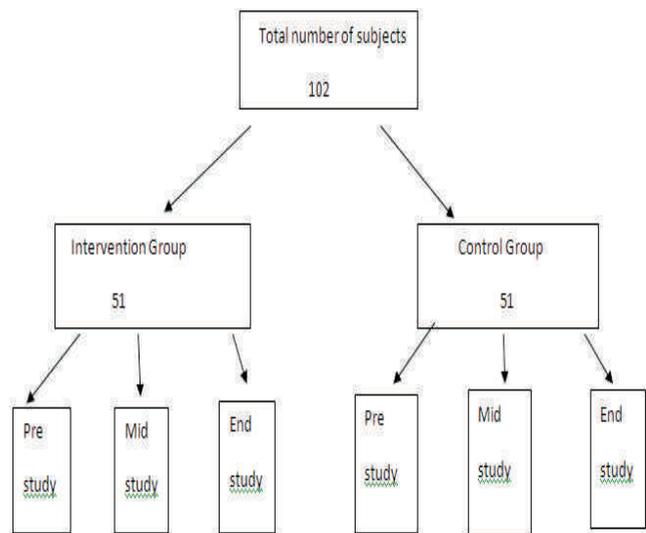
III. DETAILS OF STUDY DESIGN

The salient features of the of this study is summarized as below:

- The aim of the study is to see if Openness to experience is improved by practice of Integrated Yoga
- The subjects for the study were 102 employees (after considering drop outs from the study), 51 of them practicing Integrated Yoga (Intervention Group) and the remaining 51 of them not practicing Integrated Yoga(Control group)
- Employees-men and women, with normal health as declared by the subjects are included in the study. Those who have any previous experience of any Yoga program or presently following any type of Yoga program or taking any medication for psycho somatic problems are excluded from the study
- The average age of subjects in intervention group is 34.7 years with standard deviation of 6.6 where as the average age of subjects in control group is 32.21 with standard deviation of 4.77. The average experience of subjects in intervention group is 10.6 years with standard deviation of 6.17 where as the average experience of subjects in control group is 7.21 years with standard deviation of 4.2 years.
- The participants are working in different industries as follows. In intervention group- 21 in IT and related sectors, 14 in Finance and related sectors, 16 in other sectors. In Control group- 20 in IT and related sectors, 18 in Finance and related sectors and 13 in other sectors. Thus the background of subjects in terms of age and experience and nature of industry in control group and intervention group is similar.
- The subjects for intervention group are employees who practice Integrated Yoga in Andhra Pradesh Yogadhyana Parishad, a state government organization in Hyderabad. Subjects for control group are people who volunteered to participate in the study.

- The subjects in the intervention group practiced Integrated Yoga for 4 months(100 days, after deducting holidays, absents etc) for 1.5 hours a day. The daily program of intervention contains Surya Namaskaras(Sun salutations), Asanas (Body postures),Pranayama(Breath regulation exercises), Self Awareness Meditation and 10 minutes lecture on application of traditional Indian knowledge to modern work and personal lives. Every month a lecture viz., Jnana yoga class for 1 hour on application of traditional Indian knowledge is conducted by the first author on the following topics, either through oral lectures or audio visual presentations.1) Yogah Karmasu Koushalam-Integrated Yoga 2) Six Dimensions of Karma Yoga 3) Axioms of meaningful work 4) Lord Krishna as modern manager. The subjects in the control group were not given any intervention.
- The period of study is four months i.e from 1st October 2014 to 31st January 2015. Data was collected for both the groups before the study i.e, on October 1st 2014(Pre), in the middle of the study i.e on December 1st 2014(Mid), at the end of the study i.e., on 31st January 2015 (End)
- The Big Five Inventory developed by Oliver P.John was used. It contains 44 questions and 10 of them are related to Openness to Experience. It is a five point Likert scale and has a Cronbach Alpha reliability of .82 and validity of .92.

Figure 1: A schematic representation of the study plan



IV. RESULTS

Table- 1: Change in scores of Openness in Intervention and Control group during the study

	Intervention Group			Control Group		
	Pre	Mid	End	Pre	Mid	End
Mean	29.61	31.8	34	29.9	30.4	30.5
SD	5.657	5.4	5.87	5.02	5.03	5.21
Change		7.4	14.8		1.66	2

Table 1 represents the average changes in the openness among the subjects in Intervention group and Control group. Since the total number of items in Openness to Experience are ten and scales are five, the maximum score is 50. The pre study i.e., base line data shows that score of Openness is 29.61 with standard deviation of 5.67 in subjects of Intervention group where as the same for Control group is 29.9 and 5.02 respectively which shows that the subjects have similar traits before the study. The mid study i.e., data in the middle of the study shows that there is 7.4% increase in openness in intervention group ,but only 1.66% increase in openness in control group. Similarly the End study i.e., data at the end of the study compared to beginning of study shows there is 14.8% increase in openness in intervention group where as it is only 2% in control group.

Since the design of the study requires repetitive studies of the same subjects, Repetitive Measures ANOVA i.e RMANOVA test was used to analyse the data which are collected before the study, in the middle of the study and at the end of the study both for intervention group and control group. The results are shown in the table 2

Table – 2: Changes Within group in Openness to Experience

Yoga Group		Control Group	
Time factor	Significance (p value)	Time factor	Significance (p value)
Pre vs Mid	.000**	Pre vs Mid	.842
Pre vs End	.000**	Pre vs End	.922
Mid vs End	.000**	Mid vs End	1.000

Table 2 shows changes in Openness with in Intervention group and control group during the study. It shows a continuous increase in openness from Pre Study to Mid Study(p<.001), Mid Study to End Study(p<.001) and Pre Study to End Study (p<.001) in subjects of Intervention group . There is no significant increase in Openness to Experience from beginning to middle(p>0.05), middle to end(p>.05) and beginning to end (p>.05) in subjects of control group

Notes:

** indicates that the values are significant

Pre, Mid / Mid Study, End/ End Study means the Study before intervention (baseline data), study in the middle of intervention, study at the end of intervention respectively

Y1,Y2,Y3 means Yoga group(Intervention group) at the time of before study, middle of study, after study

C1,C2,C3 means Control group at the time of before study, middle of study, after study

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The control group is not given any intervention, which may affect their interest to give response to the questionnaires and affect it’s accuracy. For further research, it is recommended to give some non yoga intervention to control group.

The participants are working in different industries. The changes in work environment in these different industries may affect their responses. For further study it is recommended to study employees from one organization or industry only.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study

1. Personality traits of employees especially Openness to Experience has an impact on the their performance which is established through literature survey
2. Practice of Integrated Yoga improves employees Openness to Experience
3. The above two conclusions may imply that practice of Integrated Yoga can improve the performance of employee.

VII. STRENGTH AND IMPORTANCE OF STUDY

To the best of authors’ knowledge this is the first study to assess impact of Yoga intervention on Employees Openness to Experience. Since the study proves effectiveness of Yoga intervention, it is recommended that all employees to practice Yoga to improve their performance in work.

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