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A comparative study of personality characteristics between yoga practitioner and non-yoga practitioner working women

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Abstract

The main objective of the present study is to compare the personality characteristics of yoga practitioner and non-yoga practitioner working women employed in white collared jobs. To conduct the study, 37 yoga practitioner working women between 30 to 40 years of age were selected as sample. The selection of yoga practitioner working women was done from yoga centres from Nagpur city. The sample also consists of 43 non-yoga practitioner working women between 30 to 40 years of age. The sample for the present study was chosen from working women with average to high socio-economic status. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of subjects. Only those working women in a white collared career in Nagpur were selected. To assess personality characteristics of selected working women, a Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon *et al.* (1978) was used. It was found that yoga practitioner working women were significantly less psychotic and neurotic as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women. Another personality dimension extraversion did not differ significantly between yoga practitioner and non-yoga practitioner working women. Hence it can summarily be concluded that yoga practitioner working women have better personality characteristics as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women.

Keywords: Personality, yoga, working women

Introduction

A woman who is gainfully employed is termed as working women. Dual earner families are standard norms in the 21st century. In modern Indian society, women are performing multiple roles. It is a dual-duty in terms of career and performing household duties for working women. Working women need to possess certain personality characteristics that allow them to face challenges in their career as well as emotional strength to maintain a balance between family needs and career. To manage the problems in the work front and family responsibility, working women need a certain level of assertiveness, interpersonal calmness and emotional stability. All these factors are also embedded in Eysenck's personality theory. Psychoticism is one of the dimensions in Eysenck's personality theory (1985). This dimension is suggestive of impulsivity, lack of assertiveness, lack of feeling and suspicious behaviour. The extraversion dimension of personality reflects a person's assertiveness, optimism, sociability etc. The neuroticism dimension of Eysenck's theory reflects emotional stability. A person on a higher side of neuroticism scale tends to be restless, anxious and moody.

It has been opined that yoga is a great remedy for women to relieve tension. The advocates of yoga for working women believe that it helps to rejuvenate them by boosting their mood states. It was also documented that yoga is beneficial to control anxiety in working women. Yoga has also been known to increase energy levels of working women which is good for their mental keenness while elevating their health status. Proponents of yoga believe that positive emotions and emotional stability come from various asanas and meditations. The principles of Yama and Niyama helps in our social and personal life by negating negative emotions. In this connection, quite a few researchers have studied yoga and its effect on various factors in working women. Guskowska (2006) [5] in a study concluded that regular exercises reduce the anxiety levels in women. A beneficial effect of hath yoga was observed on reduced stress level among working women in a study conducted by Ulger *et al.* (2007) [8].

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Cohen (2007) [2] reported significant psychological benefits of yoga in an adult population. Khemka *et al.* (2011) [6] reported positive outcomes of yoga on psychological health parameters. Chong *et al.* (2011) [1] found that regular practice of yoga is beneficial for stress management in healthy individuals. Gawli and Dhule (2013) [4] reported that regular yogic practices help working women to control their anxiety. Despite extensive research, none of the studies has examined the psychological characteristics of yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioner working women employed in white collared jobs. Hence the present study was planned.

Aims and Objective

The main objective of the present study is to compare the personality characteristics of yoga practitioner and non-yoga practitioner working women employed in white collared jobs.

Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that the yoga practitioner working women will be significantly less psychotic, emotionally more stable and extrovert as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women.

Methodology

The following methodological steps were taken to conduct the present study.

Sample

To conduct the study, 37 yoga practitioners working women between 30 to 40 years of age were selected as sample. The selection of yoga practitioner working women was done from yoga centres from Nagpur city. The sample also consists of 43 non-yoga practitioner working women between 30 to 40 years of age. The sample for the present study was chosen from

working women with average to high socio-economic status. Purposive sampling was used for the selection of subjects. Only those working women in a white collared career in Nagpur were selected.

Tools

To assess personality characteristics of selected working women, the Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon *et al.* (1978) [7] was used. This Hindi PEN Inventory comprises of in all 78 items of which 20 items are for tapping P, 20 items for measuring E, 20 items for tapping N and 18 items are for measuring tendency to tell a lie (L). So as the reliability and validity of this Hindi PEN inventory are concerned it can be said that the inventory is highly reliable and valid. The test-retest reliability coefficients have been found as 0.630, 0.888, 0.687 and 0.337 for P, E, N and L scales respectively. The authors of this Hindi PEN also attempted to estimate its correlation with the English PEN and found resultant coefficients fairly high. Since L dimension is social desirability, it was excluded from the study.

Procedure

37 yoga practitioner working women and 43 non-yoga practitioner working women were selected purposively. Hindi version of Eysenck's PEN inventory prepared by Menon *et al.* (1978) [7] was administered to selected working women. Scoring for P, E and N dimension of personality was completed according to manual. Independent sample 't' test was used to analyse the difference in the personality of subjects placed in two study groups. The result is shown in table 1.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Comparison of personality characteristics of yoga practitioner and non-yoga practitioner working women

Personality dimensions	Study groups - Working women				Mean difference	't'
	Yoga practitioner (N=37)		Non-yoga practitioner (N=43)			
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.		
Psychoticism	7.37	1.62	8.44	2.54	1.06	2.18*
Extraversion	10.62	1.93	11.13	2.50	0.51	1.04
Neuroticism	8.54	2.59	10.51	1.99	1.97	3.75**

**Significant at .01 level; * Significant at .05 level

Statistical figures given in table 1 for psychoticism dimensions of personality reveals that non-yoga practitioner working women were more psychotic (M=8.44) as compared to yoga practitioner working women (M=7.37). The calculated $t=2.18$ also support this finding at .05 level of statistical significance.

Statistical figures given in table 1 for the extraversion dimension of personality reveals no significant difference between two groups i.e. yoga practitioner working women (M=10.62) and non-yoga practitioner working women (M=11.13). The calculated $t=1.04$, $p>.05$ gives statistical support to this finding.

Statistical figures given in table 1 for neuroticism dimensions of personality reveals that non-yoga practitioner working women were more neurotic (M=10.51) as compared to yoga practitioner working women (M=8.54). The calculated $t=3.75$ also support this finding at .01 level of statistical significance. In a study conducted by Telles *et al.* (2012) yoga was established as an intervention program to reduce neuroticism in subjects between 36 to 51 years. A study conducted by Arumugam (2013) reported that regular practice of yogic

asanas along with pranayam improves resilience and assertiveness in women students. Hence the results of the present study are consistent with previous findings. The non-significant difference in the extraversion dimension of personality between yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners is expected because subjects of both the groups were in similar kind of jobs.

Conclusion

1. Yoga practitioner working women were less psychotic as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women.
2. No significant difference was observed in the extraversion dimension of personality between yoga practitioners and non-yoga practitioners working women.
3. Emotional stability in yoga practitioner working women was found to be significantly higher as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women.

Hence it can summarily be concluded that yoga practitioner working women have better personality characteristics as compared to non-yoga practitioner working women.

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