

Effect of Yoga Practice on Feeling Inspired in Life: A Study from Kerala State, India

Dr Madhava Chandran K^{1*}, Dr Sivasankaran Nair PC², Unniraman P³, Ram Subramanian⁴

¹Independent Social Researcher, Kozhikode, Kerala State, India

²Former Post Graduate Teacher (English), Kendriya Vidyalaya, India

³Director, Patanjali Yoga Research Centre, Kozhikode

⁴CEO, Patanjali Yoga Research Centre, Kozhikode

*Corresponding Author: Dr Madhava Chandran K
Independent Social Researcher, Kozhikode, Kerala State, India

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Abstract: To psychologists, inspiration is a very strong and rapid surge of creativity which pushes a person into original ideas or insights. The study reported in this article was undertaken by Patanjali Yoga Research Centre, Kozhikode, Kerala State, India among a randomly selected sample of 100 yoga practitioners from Kerala State using a questionnaire containing the measure of feeling of inspiration in life, how far yoga practice has contributed to feeling inspired in life, and the characteristics of the yoga practitioners, namely, sex, age, marital status, period of yoga practice (in months), and the effects obtained through yoga practice. Equal interval Likert scale scoring was adopted for the responses to feeling irritated and all the characteristics of the respondents except age, for which the numerical value of the age was considered for analysis. The total inspiration score and the total score for contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life were worked out as the sum of the item scores. The data was analysed as proportion reporting, as scores and through statistical tests. The results show that 60 % of the respondents have total inspiration score in the range of 71.4 to 100 % of the maximum possible score. This is supported by the responses of the yoga practitioners on the level and frequency of experience of various items related to inspiration considered in the study. Statistical significance exists in the difference in total inspiration score based on period of yoga practice. The lowest score is obtained by people who have done yoga for a period of up to 1 year, followed by a comparatively higher score in the case of people having 3 to 4 months of yoga practice and the highest score for those who have practiced yoga for more than 12 months. Statistical significance is observed in the difference in total inspiration score based on the age of the yoga practitioners. Comparatively younger respondents get a higher score than those in the higher age groups. Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status of the yoga practitioners is also evident. Unmarried respondents get a comparatively higher score than those who are married. The results of regression analysis of the characteristics of the respondents on total inspiration score shows that marital status, period of yoga practice, sex, and the effects obtained through yoga practice by the respondents contribute to 62 % of the variation observed in their total inspiration score. Among them, the regression coefficient is significant in the case of the characteristic, namely, the effects obtained through yoga practice. 85 % of the yoga practitioners report 62.5 to 100 % contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life. Feeling inspired in life would help to boost motivation, promote positive coping strategies and foster a sense of purpose, thus improving the psychological wellbeing of the yoga practitioners. This could prove useful in reducing their psychological and psychiatric problems also.

Keywords: Inspired, Feeling, Yoga, Practice.

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INTRODUCTION

Human life is inspired in various ways by numerous factors. Inspiring situations derive from the influence of changing environments in nature or through

cultural impact. Inspirational factors help to improve quality of life through character behaviour and rightful actions, thus mitigating challenges and prompting social commitments in life. Inspiration is a personal psychological experience.

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Inspiration is something which is evoked in an individual and not invoked or initiated through a voluntary process, something that takes hold of us completely, through which we experience a compulsion to act (The Science of Inspiration. <https://thefusioner.com/blog/the-science-of-inspiration/>). The psychology of feeling inspired involves a complex interplay of mental states, including heightened motivation, creativity, and a sense of purpose, often stemming from a positive outlook and a belief in possibilities. Cognitively, it involves the sudden emergence of insights or innovative thoughts that encourage problem-solving or personal growth. Emotionally, inspiration can evoke feelings of elation, awe, or a sense of urgency to act, often leading to a period of heightened productivity or creative output.

To psychologists, inspiration is a very strong and rapid surge of creativity which pushes a person into original ideas or insights. It arises spontaneously, and is mostly caused by various individual and environmental factors. Feeling inspired is a pleasurable and rewarding human experience. Abraham Maslow has referred to them as “peak experiences”. The results of a study suggest that being inspired in both positive and negative emotions is positively related to approach coping strategies in adverse situations such as COVID-19 (Jia Hao *et al.*, 2023). This study highlights the importance of inspiration experience as a motivational state that can help individuals bring newly acquired ideas into fruition, especially during times of difficulty. By understanding the role of inspiration in the context of adversity, public

health systems can better assist individuals in different societies to cope with the challenges they face.

However, despite the significance and ubiquity of the experience of inspiration, it has not received much attention in psychological research, unlike related topics like motivation and creativity.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was undertaken by Patanjali Yoga Research Centre, Kozhikode, Kerala State, India among a randomly selected sample of 100 yoga practitioners from Kerala State using a questionnaire containing the measure of feeling of inspiration in life (Todd and Andrew, 2003), how far yoga practice has contributed to feeling inspired in life, and the characteristics of the yoga practitioners, namely, sex, age, marital status, period of yoga practice (in months), and the effects obtained through yoga practice. Equal interval Likert scale scoring was adopted for the responses to feeling irritated and all the characteristics of the respondents except age, for which the numerical value of the age was considered for analysis. The total inspiration score and the total score for contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life were worked out as the sum of the item scores. The data was analysed as proportion reporting, as scores and through statistical tests.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the range of total inspiration score of the yoga practitioners expressed as % of the maximum possible score under the study.

Table 1: Total inspiration score of the yoga practitioners

Range of total inspiration score*	Respondents (%)
41.1- 48.2	10.0
57.1- 58.9	15.0
62.5- 67.9	15.0
71.4- 75	20.0
80.4- 89.3	30.0
92.9-100	10.0
Total	100

*as % of the maximum possible score under the study

Table 2 gives the responses of the yoga practitioners towards the level of experience of various inspiration related items.

Table 2: Responses of the yoga practitioners towards the level of experience of various inspiration related items

Inspiration related item	Responses (%) on the level of experience of the item							Total (%)
	Very strongly	Strongly	Moderately strongly	Slightly strongly	Less strongly	Very less strongly	Not at all	
In the past one month, experienced inspiration in life	10	25	25	10	30	-	-	100
In the past one month, something which was encountered or experienced created a feeling of inspiration	15	20	30	10	20	5	-	100

Inspiration related item	Responses (%) on the level of experience of the item							Total (%)
	Very strongly	Strongly	Moderately strongly	Slightly strongly	Less strongly	Very less strongly	Not at all	
In the past one month, felt inspired to do something in life	10	30	35	5	15	5	-	100
In the past one month, felt inspired in life	15	25	45	5	5	5	-	100

Table 3 shows the responses of the yoga practitioners towards the frequency of experience of various inspiration related items.

Table 3: Responses of the yoga practitioners towards the frequency of experience of various inspiration related items

Inspiration related item	Responses (%) on the frequency of experience of the item							Total (%)
	Very often	Often	Many times	Sometimes	Less often	Very less often	Never	
In the past one month, experienced inspiration in life	25	30	10	30	5	-	-	100
In the past one month, something which was encountered or experienced created a feeling of inspiration	35	5	25	25	5	5	-	100
In the past one month, felt inspired to do something in life	20	30	15	25	5	-	5	100
In the past one month, felt inspired in life	25	25	10	30	10	-	-	100

Table 4 shows the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of total inspiration score of the respondents based on period of yoga practice.

Table 4: ANOVA of total inspiration score of the respondents based on period of yoga practice

Period of yoga practice (months)	Mean total inspiration score of the respondents
Up to 1	32.13
3 to 4	45.78
> 12	49.67
F = 20.72; p < 0.001	

The results of ANOVA of total inspiration score of the respondents based on age of the respondents are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: ANOVA of total inspiration score of the respondents based on age of the respondents

Age group (years)	Mean total inspiration score of the respondents
19-22	50.00
34-35	52.33
42-47	37.75
51-57	37.33
70	35.00
F = 3.75; p < 0.05	

Table 6 gives the results on the statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status.

Table 6: Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status

Marital status	Mean total inspiration score of the respondents
Married	39.89
Unmarried	50.00
t = 4.88; p < 0.001	

The results of regression analysis of scores of the characteristics of respondents on total inspiration score are given in Table 7.

Table 7: Regression analysis of scores of the characteristics of respondents on total inspiration score

Characteristics of the respondents	Regression coefficient (r)
Marital status	-4.73; NS
Period of yoga practice	0.60; NS
Sex	5.21; NS
Effects of yoga practice	7.06; $p < 0.01$
$R^2 = 0.62$; $F = 6.03$; $p < 0.01$	

Table 8 shows the responses of the yoga practitioners regarding the effects obtained through yoga practice.

Table 8: Effects of yoga practice reported by the respondents

Effects of yoga practice	Respondents (%)
Physical and mental health benefits	65.0
Physical health benefit	15.0
Mental health benefit	10.0
No benefit	10.0
Total	100

Table 9 shows the contribution of yoga practice (in percentage) to feeling inspired in life as reported by the yoga practitioners. This was worked out based on the total score obtained for the contribution of yoga practice,

expressed as % of the maximum possible score in the study. 100 % contribution indicates that yoga practice has contributed to the maximum extent in feeling inspired in life.

Table 9. Perceptions of the yoga practitioners on the contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life

Contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life (in %)	Respondents (%)
54.2-58.3	15
62.5-66.7	35
83.3-87.5	20
95.8-100	30
Total	100

DISCUSSION

Inspiration score

Most of the yoga practitioners (30%) have a total inspiration score in the range of 80.4 to 89.3 % of the maximum possible score in the study (Table 1). It can be made out from Table 1 that a total of 60 % respondents have total inspiration score in the range of 71.4 to 100 % of the maximum possible score. This indicates that a high proportion of yoga practitioners are feeling very much inspired in life. This is further supported by the responses of the yoga practitioners on the level and frequency of experience of various items related to inspiration considered in the study, which is discussed below.

Responses on the level of experience of items related to inspiration

Experienced inspiration in life in the past one month

It can be made out from Table 2 that total of 60 % of the yoga practitioners have given the responses, namely, very strongly, strongly and moderately strongly for this item.

Something which was encountered or experienced created a feeling of inspiration in the past one month

Total of 65 % of the yoga practitioners have given the responses, namely, very strongly, strongly and moderately strongly for this item (Table 2).

Felt inspired to do something in life in the past one month

Table 2 shows that total of 75 % of the yoga practitioners have given the responses, namely, very strongly, strongly and moderately strongly for this item.

Felt inspired in life in the past one month

Total of 85 % of the yoga practitioners have given the responses, namely, very strongly, strongly and moderately strongly for this item (Table 2).

The responses on all the inspiration items indicate that the yoga practitioners have felt strongly inspired in their lives during the past one month.

Responses on the frequency of experience of items related to inspiration

Experienced inspiration in life in the past one month

It can be made out from Table 3 that total of 65 % of the yoga practitioners report experiencing

inspiration in life very often, often and many times during the past one month.

Something which was encountered or experienced created a feeling of inspiration in the past one month

Table 3 shows that total of 65 % of the yoga practitioners report experiencing inspiration very often, often and many times in the past one month on account of something which was encountered or experienced.

Felt inspired to do something in life in the past one month

It can be made out from Table 3 that total of 65 % of the yoga practitioners report feeling inspired to do something in life very often, often and many times in the past one month.

Felt inspired in life in the past one month

Total of 60 % of the yoga practitioners report feeling inspired in life very often, often and many times in the past one month.

Hence, in addition to experiencing the feelings of inspiration strongly, the yoga practitioners have been able to experience them frequently also. This substantiates the result observed from the data presented in Table 1 regarding a high proportion of yoga practitioners feeling very much inspired in life.

When yoga is practiced, physical and emotional space is created. Open areas of the body where tension is held - shoulders, hips, and the heart are stretched. These openings are more than physical and allow creative energy to move freely, breaking through the blockages that keep people feeling stuck. As the body opens up, so too does the mind, and with it, the creativity of people. The simple act of flowing through poses, breathing intentionally, and focusing on the present moment can unlock ideas, solutions, and new perspectives. (Yoga for Inspiration & Creativity: Unlocking Your Inner Spark. <https://www.yogadownload.com/Blog/TabId/424/PostId/2727/yoga-for-inspiration-creativity-unlocking-your-inner-spark.aspx>). Hence, creativity achieved through yoga practice can be considered conducive for making people inspired in life also.

Studies have reported that the practice of yoga contributes to many positive psychological outcomes such as improvement in the positive mental state (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2023), quality of life (Madhava Chandran and Sasidharan, 2024), contentment in life (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2024), emotional state (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2024), resilience ability (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2024), feeling less disgusted in life (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2024) and more of distress tolerance in life (Madhava Chandran *et al.*, 2024). Such positive effects of yoga practice could probably help people to feel more inspired in life also.

Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score based on period of yoga practice

Table 4 shows that statistical significance exists in the difference in total inspiration score based on period of yoga practice. The lowest score is obtained by people who have done yoga for a period of up to 1 year, followed by a comparatively higher score in the case of people having 3 to 4 months of yoga practice and the highest score for those who have practiced yoga for more than 12 months. This may be probably due to the compounding effects of yoga through more period of its practice.

Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score based on age of the yoga practitioners

It can be made out from Table 5 that statistical significance exists in the difference in total inspiration score based on the age of the yoga practitioners. Comparatively younger respondents get a higher score than those in the higher age groups. The nature of work of youngsters nowadays demands lot of creativity and inspiration, which could have probably added on to the level of inspiration derived by them through yoga practice. It can be observed from Table 5 that the lowest inspiration score is obtained by those who are 70 years old. They may be mostly retired people, with not much of contribution required in life. Those who are above the age of 70 may probably be suffering from physical ailments, and hence, couldn't get much inspired through the practice of yoga. These may be the reasons why they are not feeling very much inspired in their life. Even then, their mean total inspiration score is 35, which works out to as high as 62.5 % of the maximum possible total inspiration score under the study, which could be attributed to their practice of yoga.

Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status

Table 6 shows the statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status of the yoga practitioners. Unmarried respondents get a comparatively higher score than those who are married. Unmarried people who may be mostly younger in age may be feeling more inspired due to their nature of work as already mentioned earlier. Further, unlike married people, less of family related responsibilities and problems for the unmarried yoga practitioners might have probably helped them to have a better positive mind set, which could have contributed to more inspiration in life also.

Regression analysis of the characteristics of respondents on total inspiration score

The results of regression analysis of the characteristics of respondents on total inspiration score shown in Table 7 indicates that marital status, period of yoga practice, sex, and the effects obtained through yoga practice by the respondents contribute to 62 % of the

variation observed in their total inspiration score. Among them, the regression coefficient (r) is significant in the case of the characteristic, namely, the effects obtained through yoga practice. Table 8 shows that 65 % of the respondents report experiencing both physical as well as mental health benefits through the practice of yoga, which may be expected to have helped them to feel more inspired in their life. Relief from physical and psychological problems opens up the vistas of life, leading to a more productive and utility-oriented life style. Practicing yoga under such a condition with a composed mind can be expected to provide a good inspirational vibe.

Perceptions of the yoga practitioners on the contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life

It can be inferred from the data presented in Table 9 that total of 85 % of the yoga practitioners report 62.5 to 100 % contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life. In fact, this shows the conviction of the respondents regarding the effect of yoga practice in making their lives more inspired.

The results of the study have confirmed that systematic practice of yoga can inspire the practitioners in a major way, making them capable of withstanding the mental, physical and emotional turbulences, in addition to lifting them to a higher level of thinking.

CONCLUSION

60 % of respondents have total inspiration score in the range of 71.4 to 100 % of the maximum possible score. This is supported by the responses of the yoga practitioners on the level and frequency of experience of various items related to inspiration considered in the study. Statistical significance exists in the difference in total inspiration score based on period of yoga practice. The lowest score is obtained by people who have done yoga for a period of up to 1 year, followed by a comparatively higher score in the case of people having 3 to 4 months of yoga practice and the highest score for those who have practiced yoga for more than 12 months. Statistical significance is observed in the difference in total inspiration score based on the age of the yoga practitioners. Comparatively younger respondents get a higher score than those in the higher age groups. Statistical significance of the difference in total inspiration score of the respondents based on marital status of the yoga practitioners is also evident. Unmarried respondents get a comparatively higher score than those who are married. The results of regression

analysis of the characteristics of the respondents on total inspiration score shows that marital status, period of yoga practice, sex, and the effects obtained through yoga practice by the respondents contribute to 62 % of the variation observed in their total inspiration score. Among them, the regression coefficient is significant in the case of the characteristic, namely, the effects obtained through yoga practice. 85 % of the yoga practitioners report 62.5 to 100 % contribution of yoga practice to feeling inspired in life.

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