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Impact of Yoga and Stress on Academic Achievement of Students

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Abstract: *Academic achievement is an important indicator of students' educational development and overall progress. However, students' academic performance is influenced by several psychological, emotional, social and environmental factors. Among these, academic stress has become a significant concern in contemporary educational settings. Examination pressure, academic competition, heavy workloads, parental expectations and career-related uncertainties frequently contribute to increased stress among students. Excessive stress may adversely affect concentration, memory, motivation, emotional stability and learning efficiency, ultimately influencing academic achievement. In this context, yoga has gained considerable importance as a holistic approach to promoting physical health, psychological well-being and stress management. The present study investigates the relationship between yoga practice, stress and academic achievement among graduate and postgraduate students. It also examines differences across gender, academic stream, residential background and educational level. A descriptive survey framework was adopted for the illustrative investigation, involving a simulated sample of 600 students selected to represent different demographic categories. Data were generated for yoga practice, stress and academic achievement and analysed using mean, standard deviation, independent-samples t-test, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis. The simulated findings revealed a significant positive relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement ($r = .567$) and a significant negative relationship between stress and academic achievement ($r = -.599$). Yoga practice was also negatively associated with stress ($r = -.303$). The regression analysis indicated that yoga practice and stress jointly explained 52.2% of the variance in academic achievement. Some differences were also observed across residential background and educational level. The study highlights the potential educational significance of yoga and stress-management practices and recommends their integration into institutional wellness programmes to promote students' holistic development.*

Keywords: *Yoga, Academic Stress, Academic Achievement, Stress Management, Mental Health, Students.*

Introduction: Education is widely recognized as a powerful instrument for individual development and social transformation. It contributes to the intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of individuals and prepares them to participate effectively in society. Academic achievement is one of the major indicators of educational success, as it reflects the extent to which students acquire knowledge, develop competencies and achieve predetermined learning objectives (Bandura, 1997; Bloom, 1976). Nevertheless, academic achievement is not determined solely by intellectual ability or classroom instruction.

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It is influenced by several psychological, emotional, social and environmental factors, including motivation, self-concept, learning environment, emotional adjustment and stress (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Wentzel, 1998).

Among these factors, stress has become an increasingly important concern in modern educational institutions. Students frequently experience academic stress because of examination pressure, competitive educational environments, heavy workloads, parental expectations, financial difficulties and uncertainty regarding future careers. These circumstances may create psychological tension and emotional disturbances that interfere with students' learning processes. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) explained stress in terms of the relationship between individuals and their environment, particularly when environmental demands are perceived to exceed available coping resources.

Excessive academic stress can negatively influence students' concentration, memory, motivation, emotional stability and problem-solving abilities. It may also contribute to irregular study habits, reduced classroom participation, examination anxiety and poor academic performance (Lupien et al., 2009; Owens et al., 2012). Therefore, appropriate stress-management strategies are essential for maintaining students' psychological well-being and supporting their academic development.

Yoga, an ancient Indian system of physical, mental and spiritual practices, has gained considerable recognition as a holistic approach to promoting health and well-being. It includes physical postures (Asanas), breathing exercises (Pranayama), meditation, relaxation and techniques of mental discipline. Yoga encourages harmony between the body and mind and helps individuals develop self-awareness, emotional regulation and psychological balance (Gard et al., 2014; Woodyard, 2011).

Several studies have indicated that regular yoga practice may contribute to improved attention, cognitive functioning, emotional regulation and stress reduction (Gothe et al., 2013; Pascoe & Bauer, 2015). These benefits are particularly relevant to students who regularly encounter academic challenges and psychological pressure.

Therefore, understanding the relationship between yoga, stress and academic achievement is important for promoting holistic student development. The present study attempts to investigate these relationships among graduate and postgraduate students, with particular reference to gender, academic stream, residential background and educational level.

Rationale of the Study: The present educational environment is characterized by increasing academic competition, examination pressure and expectations regarding students' educational and professional achievements. Students are expected to perform well academically while simultaneously managing personal, social and family responsibilities. These demands frequently create psychological pressure, which may adversely affect their academic engagement and overall educational development.

Academic stress is not merely an emotional experience; it may also interfere with several cognitive processes necessary for effective learning. Students experiencing excessive stress may encounter difficulties in maintaining concentration, retaining information, organizing their studies and performing effectively in examinations.

Yoga has emerged as a potentially useful approach to addressing these challenges. Its different components, including Asanas, Pranayama, meditation and relaxation, may help students improve physical fitness, emotional stability, attention and psychological resilience. Regular yoga practice may also encourage self-discipline, positive thinking and better adjustment to academic demands.

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The educational significance of yoga becomes particularly important when its relationship with academic stress and academic achievement is considered together. Students who regularly practise yoga may develop better coping mechanisms and emotional regulation, which can help them manage academic pressure more effectively.

Furthermore, students belonging to different gender groups, academic streams, residential backgrounds and educational levels may experience different academic environments and stress-related challenges. Their opportunities for participating in yoga activities and their approaches to stress management may also differ.

Therefore, the present study has been undertaken to examine the relationship between yoga, stress and academic achievement among graduate and postgraduate students. It also seeks to identify demographic differences and investigate the extent to which yoga practice and stress collectively predict academic achievement.

Review of Related Literature: Sharma and Haider (2015) investigated the influence of yoga practice on examination anxiety among students. Their study highlighted the potential contribution of regular yoga practice to reducing examination-related psychological pressure and improving students' concentration.

Kauts and Sharma (2009) examined the effects of yoga on academic performance among secondary school students. Their findings indicated that students participating in yoga programmes demonstrated improvements in academic achievement compared with students who did not participate in such programmes.

Telles et al. (2013) explored the effects of yoga-based practices on cognitive functioning among young individuals. Their findings suggested that yoga may contribute to improvements in attention, memory and selected cognitive processes, which are important for effective learning.

Singh and Devi (2018) examined the relationship between academic stress and academic achievement. Their findings indicated an inverse relationship between stress and academic performance.

Verma and Kumar (2017) investigated gender differences in academic stress among students. Their findings suggested that male and female students may experience different levels of academic pressure and employ different strategies to cope with stress.

Reddy et al. (2018) examined the influence of academic stress on students' academic outcomes and psychological well-being. Their investigation emphasized the importance of managing academic pressure to maintain effective learning and emotional adjustment.

Gupta and Singh (2019) studied the relationship between regular yoga practice, academic engagement and stress among students. Their findings indicated that participation in yoga activities may be associated with reduced stress and improved academic involvement.

Pascoe and Bauer (2015) reviewed the effects of mindfulness-based interventions and related practices on psychological health. Their findings highlighted the potential of mindfulness and yoga-based approaches in improving stress management and emotional regulation.

Bhardwaj and Agrawal (2015) examined differences in stress experiences among students from rural and urban backgrounds. Their findings suggested that residential and environmental circumstances may influence students' stress experiences and educational adjustment.

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Saraswati and Chaudhary (2020) investigated stress-management practices among undergraduate and postgraduate students. Their findings indicated that educational level and academic experience may influence students' approaches to managing psychological pressure.

Research Gap: The reviewed literature indicates that yoga may contribute to improved psychological well-being, cognitive functioning and stress management. Similarly, academic stress has been identified as an important factor associated with students' academic engagement and achievement.

However, the combined relationship among yoga practice, academic stress and academic achievement requires further investigation within a common research framework. Comparative investigations involving gender, academic stream, residential background and educational level are also important for understanding variations in students' experiences.

The present study attempts to address these issues by investigating yoga, stress and academic achievement among graduate and postgraduate students.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement among students?
2. What is the relationship between stress and academic achievement?
3. Is there any significant relationship between yoga practice and stress?
4. Are there significant differences between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement?
5. Are there significant differences between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement?
6. Are there significant differences between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement?
7. Are there significant differences between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement?
8. To what extent do yoga practice and stress collectively predict students' academic achievement?

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement among students.
2. To investigate the relationship between stress and academic achievement among students.
3. To examine the relationship between yoga practice and stress among students.
4. To find out the differences between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.
5. To find out the differences between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.
6. To find out the differences between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

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7. To find out the differences between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

Hypotheses of the Study

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement among students.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between stress and academic achievement among students.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between yoga practice and stress among students.

H_{04}: There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{05}: There is no significant difference between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{06}: There is no significant difference between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{07}: There is no significant difference between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

Research Methodology

Research Method: The study employs the Descriptive Survey Method as its proposed research framework. The illustrative statistical analysis presented in this article is based on simulated observations rather than actual survey responses.

Population: The target population consists of graduate and postgraduate students studying in colleges and universities, belonging to science and arts streams and rural and urban residential backgrounds.

Sample and Sampling Technique: An illustrative sample of 600 students has been generated, with equal representation across the four demographic classifications.

Table 1: Distribution of the Sample (N = 600)

Demographic Variables	Categories	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	300	50.00
	Female	300	50.00
Academic Stream	Arts	300	50.00
	Science	300	50.00
Residential Background	Rural	300	50.00
	Urban	300	50.00
Educational Level	Graduate	300	50.00
	Postgraduate	300	50.00
Total participants		**600**	**100.00**

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Variables of the Study: The present study considers yoga practice and stress as the two independent variables, while academic achievement is treated as the dependent variable. Yoga practice refers to students' participation in activities such as Asanas, Pranayama, meditation and relaxation, whereas stress refers to the psychological and emotional pressure experienced by students in their academic and personal lives. Academic achievement represents the educational performance of students and is measured through their examination marks or CGPA. In addition, gender, academic stream, residential background and educational level are considered demographic variables for examining differences among various categories of students.

Tools for Data Collection: The present study employs three major tools for collecting the required information. The Yoga Practice Scale assesses the frequency and extent of students' participation in yoga activities. The Student Stress Scale measures the level of psychological and academic stress experienced by students. Students' Academic Achievement Records, represented by percentage marks or CGPA obtained in their most recently completed examinations, serve as the basis for assessing their academic performance. The standardized instruments, along with their respective reliability and validity information, are specified to ensure the appropriateness and accuracy of data collection.

Statistical Techniques: Appropriate statistical techniques are employed to analyse and interpret the collected data. Mean and Standard Deviation determine the average scores and variability of students' performance in the selected variables. The Independent-Samples t-test examines differences between male and female, science and arts, rural and urban, and graduate and postgraduate students. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient investigates the relationships among yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. All statistical tests are evaluated at the 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data: The simulated data of 600 students were analysed to examine the relationship among yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed to examine the objectives and test the formulated null hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of the Major Variables (N = 600)

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Yoga Practice	600	29.04	88.91	61.00	10.47
Stress	600	26.74	83.63	56.45	10.41
Academic Achievement	600	38.87	94.20	66.00	9.63

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics of yoga practice, stress and academic achievement among 600 students. The mean score of yoga practice was found to be 61.00, with a standard deviation of 10.47. This indicates a moderate average level of yoga practice among the students included in the simulated dataset. The mean stress score was 56.45, with a standard deviation of 10.41, indicating variation in the perceived stress levels of the participants. Similarly, the mean academic achievement score was 66.00, with a standard deviation of 9.63. These results provide an overall description of the three major variables and establish the basis for further statistical analysis.

Objective 4: To find out the differences between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

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H_{04}: There is no significant difference between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences between male and female students.

Table 3: Gender-wise Comparison of Yoga Practice, Stress and Academic Achievement

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Yoga Practice	Male	300	61.12	10.20	0.288	.773
	Female	300	60.88	10.74		
Stress	Male	300	55.81	9.99	-1.500	.134
	Female	300	57.08	10.79		
Academic Achievement	Male	300	65.65	9.46	-0.873	.383
	Female	300	66.34	9.79		

Note: t-tests are independent-samples tests; df = 598 for each comparison. The p-values are two-tailed.

Table 3 presents the comparison between male and female students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The mean yoga practice score of male students was 61.12, whereas that of female students was 60.88. The calculated t-value was 0.288, which was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = .773). Therefore, no significant gender difference was observed in yoga practice.

Regarding stress, male students obtained a mean score of 55.81, while female students obtained a mean score of 57.08. The calculated t-value was -1.500, with a p-value of .134. Since the p-value exceeded the .05 significance level, the difference was not statistically significant.

Similarly, the mean academic achievement score of male students was 65.65, compared with 66.34 for female students. The calculated t-value was -0.873, with a p-value of .383, indicating no statistically significant difference.

Thus, the simulated findings indicate that male and female students did not differ significantly in yoga practice, stress or academic achievement. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was retained for all three comparisons.

Objective 5: To find out the differences between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{05}: There is no significant difference between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

An independent-samples t-test was employed to compare science and arts students.

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Table 4: Stream-wise Comparison of Yoga Practice, Stress and Academic Achievement

Variables	Stream	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Yoga Practice	Arts	300	60.41	10.99	-1.384	.167
	Science	300	61.59	9.90		
Stress	Arts	300	56.73	10.38	0.674	.500
	Science	300	56.16	10.44		
Academic Achievement	Arts	300	65.45	10.18	-1.384	.167
	Science	300	66.54	9.03		

Table 4 shows the comparison between science and arts students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The mean yoga practice score of arts students was 60.41, whereas science students obtained a mean score of 61.59. The calculated t-value was -1.384, with a p-value of .167. This difference was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

In the case of stress, arts students obtained a mean score of 56.73, while science students obtained a mean score of 56.16. The calculated t-value was 0.674, with a p-value of .500. Thus, no significant difference was observed between the two groups.

Regarding academic achievement, arts students obtained a mean score of 65.45, whereas science students obtained a mean score of 66.54. The calculated t-value was -1.384, with a p-value of .167. This difference was also statistically insignificant.

Therefore, the simulated findings indicate that academic stream did not produce statistically significant differences in yoga practice, stress or academic achievement. Hence, the null hypothesis was retained for all three comparisons.

Objective 6: To find out the differences between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{06}: There is no significant difference between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare rural and urban students.

Table 5: Residential Background-wise Comparison of Yoga Practice, Stress and Academic Achievement

Variables	Residence	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Yoga Practice	Rural	300	60.04	10.30	-2.267	.024*
	Urban	300	61.97	10.56		
Stress	Rural	300	55.99	10.55	-1.087	.278

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	Urban	300	56.91	10.26		
Academic Achievement	Rural	300	65.74	9.67	-0.639	.523
	Urban	300	66.25	9.59		

Table 5 presents the comparison between rural and urban students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The mean yoga practice score of rural students was 60.04, whereas urban students obtained a mean score of 61.97. The calculated t-value was -2.267, which was statistically significant at the 0.05 level (p = .024). This indicates that urban students demonstrated significantly higher yoga practice scores than rural students in the simulated dataset.

Regarding stress, rural students obtained a mean score of 55.99, while urban students obtained a mean score of 56.91. The calculated t-value was -1.087, with a p-value of .278. Therefore, the difference was not statistically significant.

Similarly, the mean academic achievement score of rural students was 65.74, compared with 66.25 for urban students. The calculated t-value was -0.639, with a p-value of .523. This difference was also statistically insignificant.

Thus, the simulated findings indicate a significant residential difference only in yoga practice, whereas no significant differences were observed in stress and academic achievement. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected for yoga practice but retained for stress and academic achievement.

Objective 7: To find out the differences between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

H_{07}: There is no significant difference between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to examine the differences between graduate and postgraduate students.

Table 6: Educational Level-wise Comparison of Yoga Practice, Stress and Academic Achievement

Variables	Educational Level	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Yoga Practice	Graduate	300	60.32	10.52	-1.597	.111
	Postgraduate	300	61.68	10.39		
Stress	Graduate	300	57.33	9.88	2.094	.037*
	Postgraduate	300	55.56	10.86		
Academic Achievement	Graduate	300	65.28	9.24	-1.838	.067
	Postgraduate	300	66.72	9.96		

Table 6 presents the comparison between graduate and postgraduate students regarding yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The mean yoga practice score of graduate students was 60.32, whereas

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postgraduate students obtained a mean score of 61.68. The calculated t-value was -1.597, with a p-value of .111. Therefore, no statistically significant difference was observed between the two groups.

Regarding stress, graduate students obtained a mean score of 57.33, while postgraduate students obtained a mean score of 55.56. The calculated t-value was 2.094, with a p-value of .037. Since the p-value was lower than .05, the difference was statistically significant. The findings indicate that graduate students reported higher stress levels than postgraduate students in the simulated dataset.

In the case of academic achievement, graduate students obtained a mean score of 65.28, compared with 66.72 for postgraduate students. The calculated t-value was -1.838, with a p-value of .067. This difference was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Therefore, the simulated findings indicate a significant difference between graduate and postgraduate students only in stress. The null hypothesis was rejected for stress but retained for yoga practice and academic achievement.

Objective 1: To examine the relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement among students.

Objective 2: To investigate the relationship between stress and academic achievement.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between stress and academic achievement among students.

Objective 3: To examine the relationship between yoga practice and stress.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between yoga practice and stress among students.

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was calculated to examine the relationships among the three major variables.

Table 7: Correlation among Yoga Practice, Stress and Academic Achievement (N = 600)

Variables	Yoga Practice	Stress	Academic Achievement
Yoga Practice	1.000	-.303**	.567**
Stress	-.303**	1.000	-.599**
Academic Achievement	.567**	-.599**	1.000

Table 7 presents the correlation among yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The correlation coefficient between yoga practice and academic achievement was found to be .567, indicating a moderate positive relationship between the two variables. The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This suggests that students reporting higher levels of yoga practice also tended to demonstrate higher academic achievement in the simulated dataset. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{01} was rejected.

The correlation coefficient between stress and academic achievement was found to be -.599, indicating a moderately strong negative relationship. The relationship was statistically significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates that higher stress levels were associated with lower academic achievement. Consequently, the null hypothesis H_{02} was rejected.

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Similarly, the correlation coefficient between yoga practice and stress was -.303, indicating a negative relationship between the two variables. This relationship was also statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The result suggests that students reporting greater participation in yoga activities tended to report lower stress levels. Therefore, the null hypothesis H_{03} was rejected.

Overall, the correlation analysis indicates that yoga practice was positively associated with academic achievement, whereas stress was negatively associated with academic achievement. Yoga practice was also negatively associated with stress.

Discussion: The findings of the present study highlight the important associations among yoga practice, stress and academic achievement. The positive relationship between yoga practice and academic achievement ($r = .567$, $p < .01$) suggests that regular participation in yoga activities may be associated with better concentration, emotional regulation and learning outcomes. This finding is consistent with the view that yoga promotes physical and psychological well-being and supports students' learning processes (Khalsa & Butzer, 2016).

The negative relationship between stress and academic achievement ($r = -.599$, $p < .01$) indicates that higher stress levels are associated with lower academic performance. Excessive academic stress may interfere with concentration, memory and effective learning. This observation corresponds with the findings of Pascoe, Hetrick, and Parker (2020), who report that academic stress is associated with adverse educational and psychological outcomes among students.

Furthermore, yoga practice shows a significant negative relationship with stress ($r = -.303$, $p < .01$), suggesting that yoga may contribute to stress management. The group comparisons reveal no significant gender or academic-stream differences in the three major variables. However, residential background shows a significant difference in yoga practice, while educational level shows a significant difference in stress.

Overall, the findings suggest that yoga practice and stress are important correlates of academic achievement. Integrating appropriate yoga and stress-management activities into educational settings may therefore support students' academic and psychological well-being.

Conclusion: The present study aims to examine the impact of yoga and stress on the academic achievement of students across different demographic categories. Academic achievement is influenced not only by intellectual ability but also by psychological and emotional factors that affect learning and performance (Bandura, 1997; Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Among these factors, yoga and stress have emerged as particularly significant determinants of students' psychological well-being and educational outcomes (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Gard et al., 2014).

Overall, the study contributes to the field of educational psychology by highlighting the interconnected relationship among yoga, stress, and academic achievement. Research on school-based yoga and social-emotional learning suggests that structured interventions can support students' psychological well-being and classroom experiences (Durlak et al., 2011; Serwacki& Cook-Cottone, 2012). The findings may encourage educational institutions to incorporate yoga-based programmes and stress-management initiatives into their regular curriculum, thereby promoting holistic student development, mental health, and academic excellence.

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