



A STUDY ON THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOGA PERCEPTION AND PRACTICE MOTIVATION IN MUMBAI'S WESTERN SUBURBS

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Abstract

Originating over 5,000 years ago, Yoga remains a vital part of India's cultural heritage and has gained global recognition for promoting inner peace and health. Social media is said to have played a key role in promoting yoga globally. The current study offers insights into how social media shaped perceptions of Yoga and motivated social media users to practice yoga. The study adopts a descriptive research design. Data were collected from 100 social media users from the Western Suburbs of Mumbai using a random sampling technique. Hypotheses were tested using the Chi-Square test. The result of the present study revealed that social media users' perceptions of yoga are influenced by the frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media, yoga influencers followed and the type of content shared by yoga influencers. Also, the duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day and the frequency of engagement with yoga influencers motivate social media users to practice yoga.

Keywords: Yoga, Social Media, Social Media Users, Perception, Motivation

1. Introduction

Yoga, originating from ancient Indian philosophy, has become popular in Western society¹. Yoga is a state of great steadiness at an emotional level; balance between concentration and detachment at the mental level and homeostasis at the body level. It enhances the personality by carrying out body-mind coordination in a well-balanced manner. Thus, yoga is a spiritual discipline based on an extremely subtle science². It is an art and science for healthy living³. Its core objective lies in enriching physical, mental, social and spiritual welfare⁴. 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'yuj' and 'yuj (g)' meaning to 'connect' and 'unite'⁵. According to Yogic scriptures, Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness⁶.



2. Research Problem

Social media is so prevalent in our lives that it is impossible to overstate how much of an impact it has on different facets of our lives, including fitness and health activities like yoga. Many people attain their workout programs from so-called fitness gurus on social media and online⁷. Social media has subconsciously changed the way people think⁸. Social media platforms shape individuals' perceptions and motivate them to act in desired ways. Sometimes, social media users are unaware that their perceptions have changed due to exposure to these platforms or by following influencers. Social media users need to determine whether their perceptions of yoga have been altered or if they are being influenced by social media influencers. Thus, the focus of this study lies in examining the degree to which social media shapes users' perceptions of yoga and whether they are swayed by the messages conveyed by online influencers.

3. Objective of the Study

1. To assess the relationship between the frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media and users' perceptions of yoga.
2. To evaluate the relationship between the duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day and users' motivation to practice yoga.
3. To investigate the influence of following yoga influencers and the type of content shared by influencers on shaping users' perceptions of yoga.
4. To examine the impact of the frequency of engagement with yoga influencers on users' motivation to practice yoga.

4. Significance of the Study

The study assesses how social media platforms shape the users' perceptions of yoga. It also explores whether increased exposure to yoga-related content on social media platforms correlates with higher motivation to practice yoga. Further, the study examines the influence of influencers on social media in shaping the perception of yoga and its practice.

5. Review of literature

Gothe NP., et. al. (2019)⁷ found a positive effect of yoga practice on the structure and function of the hippocampus, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex and brain networks including the default mode network (DMN).

Woodyard C. (2011)⁸ found that practicing yoga enriches muscular strength and body flexibility, improves respiratory and cardiovascular function, promotes recovery from and treatment of



addiction, reduces stress, anxiety, depression, and chronic pain, improves sleep patterns, and enhances overall well-being and quality of life.

Sabharwal, D. et. al. (2023)⁹ found that yoga practitioners, organisations, and studios have efficiently leveraged digital platforms to promote yoga and its numerous benefits through live streaming, targeted advertising, user-generated content, influencer marketing, and virtual experiences.

6. Research Gap

The existing literature mostly emphasizes the impact of social media on overall health and wellness without analysing yoga as a separate practice. Few studies evaluated the influence of social media on yoga perception and practice in specific regions across the world or urban areas of India. But, no study has been conducted in the Western Suburbs of Mumbai. Also, social media influencer's role in motivating yoga practice is untapped. The current study fills these gaps by concentrating on distinct social media users' interaction with social media trends related to yoga in the western suburbs of Mumbai.

7. Hypotheses of the study

1. **H0:** There is no significant impact of frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media on perceptions of yoga among social media users.
2. **H0:** There is no significant association between the duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day and motivation for yoga practice among social media users.
3. **H0:** There is no significant impact of following yoga influencers on perceptions of yoga among social media users.
4. **H0:** There is no significant association between the frequency of engagement with yoga influencers and motivation for yoga practice among social media users.
5. **H0:** There is no significant association between the type of content shared by yoga influencers and resulting perceptions of yoga among social media users.

8. Research Methodology

As of January 2024, the social media penetration rate in India is 32.2%¹⁰ and the average time Indians spent on social media is about 141.6 minutes daily¹¹. Mumbai Suburbs has a population of 93.56 Lakhs¹². The study comprises social media users in the Western Suburbs of Mumbai. A sample survey was carried out. Using the Random Sampling technique 100 samples were selected. The questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Secondary data were collected from



websites and journals. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Text, tables and graphs are used to present data. The Chi square test was used to test the hypothesis.

9. Data Analysis and Inferences

Table 1: Result of Chi-Square test

| Null Hypothesis | Chi-square Statistic | p-value | Result | Appendix |
|--|----------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1. H0: There is no significant impact of frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media on perceptions of yoga among social media users. | 30.6979 | 0.00219 | Significant at $p < .05$ | 1 |
| 2. H0: There is no significant association between the duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day and motivation for yoga practice among social media users. | 10.5236 | 0.032473 | Significant at $p < .05$ | 2 |
| 3. H0: There is no significant impact of following yoga influencers on perceptions of yoga among social media users. | 38.2797 | 0.00001 | Significant at $p < .05$ | 3 |
| 4. H0: There is no significant association between frequency of engagement with yoga influencers and motivation for yoga practice among social media users. | 16.8549 | 0.031656 | Significant at $p < .05$ | 4 |
| 5. H0: There is no significant association between the type of content shared by yoga influencers and resulting perceptions of yoga among social media users. | 15.9168 | 0.043587 | Significant at $p < .05$ | 5 |

For all hypotheses (1, 2, 3, 4, 5), the result is significant at $p < .05$. Hence, there is a failure to accept null hypotheses and consequently alternative hypotheses are accepted. Thus, it can be inferred that social media users' perceptions of yoga are influenced by the frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media, yoga influencers followed and the type of content shared by yoga influencers. Also, the duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day and the frequency of engagement with yoga influencers motivate social media users to practice yoga.

10. Limitations of the study

The study was conducted in Western Suburbs of Mumbai which uses social media only. The findings of the study may not apply to other cities and areas.



11. Scope for further research

The sample size is very small and may not be representative of the population in general. Hence, there is a wide scope for repeating this research with a broader-based sample which could lead to a different set of results.

12. Conclusion

Social media plays a significant role in shaping the perception of yoga among social media users and motivating them to practice yoga. Hence, Social media users, yoga instructors and content creators on social media should raise a balanced and informed engagement with yoga-related content, promoting a more holistic understanding and practice of yoga.

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14. Appendices

Appendix 1

| Frequency of exposure to yoga content on social media | Perception of Yoga | | | | | Grand Total |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Extremely beneficial | Very beneficial | Moderately beneficial | Slightly beneficial | Not at all beneficial | |
| Very frequently | 10 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 27 |
| Frequently | 16 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 38 |
| Occasionally | 3 | 3 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 19 |
| Rarely | 2 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 16 |
| Grand Total | 31 | 25 | 22 | 15 | 7 | 100 |

Appendix 2

| Duration of exposure to yoga content on social media per day | Motivation for yoga practice | | | Grand Total |
|--|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | High | Moderate | Low | |
| Less than 1 hour | 31 | 28 | 5 | 64 |
| 1 – 2 hours | 16 | 5 | 7 | 28 |
| More than 2 hours | 6 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Grand Total | 53 | 34 | 13 | 100 |



Appendix 3

| Following Yoga influencers | Perception of Yoga | | | | | Grand Total |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Extremely beneficial | Very beneficial | Moderately beneficial | Slightly beneficial | Not at all beneficial | |
| Yes | 29 | 22 | 17 | 4 | 1 | 73 |
| No | 2 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 6 | 27 |
| Grand Total | 31 | 25 | 22 | 15 | 7 | 100 |

Appendix 4

| Frequency of engagement with Yoga Influencers | Motivation for yoga practice | | | Grand Total |
|---|------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | High | Moderate | Low | |
| Always | 25 | 9 | 1 | 35 |
| Often | 9 | 11 | 1 | 21 |
| Sometimes | 3 | 5 | 3 | 11 |
| Rarely | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Never | 11 | 7 | 6 | 24 |
| Grand Total | 53 | 34 | 13 | 100 |

Appendix 5

| Type of content shared by yoga influencers | Perception of Yoga | | | | | Grand Total |
|--|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| | Extremely beneficial | Very beneficial | Moderately beneficial | Slightly beneficial | Not at all beneficial | |
| Informational | 17 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 33 |
| Inspirational | 8 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 32 |
| Instructional | 6 | 8 | 11 | 5 | 5 | 35 |
| Grand Total | 31 | 25 | 22 | 15 | 7 | 100 |