

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

Shivani Kamal¹, Dr. Khawairakpam Sharmila^{2*}, Nisha Raj³

ABSTRACT

This study assessed the mental health status of young adults in relation to yoga practice. Using purposive random sampling, 150 young adults (20–30 years) from Lucknow city were selected and categorized based on their yoga practice as regular and irregular yoga practitioners. Data were collected through a self-structured sociodemographic questionnaire, yoga practice questionnaire, and the Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF). The results indicated that regular yoga practitioners had significantly higher mental health scores (total $M = 4.1$, $SD = 0.9$) compared to irregular yoga practitioners ($M = 3.2$, $SD = 1.0$; $t(148) = 5.21$, $p < 0.001$) across emotional, psychological, and social well-being domains. Socio-demographic variables such as family type, residence, and parental education were also associated with yoga practice and mental health status. A positive correlation ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.01$) was found between yoga practice and mental health status, indicating that regular yoga practice improves mental well-being among young adults. The study concludes that yoga practice plays an important role in maintaining and enhancing mental health among young adults, and regular practice leads to better mental health outcomes compared to irregular practice.

Keywords: *Mental Health, Yoga Practice, Young Adults, Emotional Well-being, Psychological Well-being, Social Well-being, MHC-SF*

Mental health is an essential component of overall health and well-being and includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It influences how individuals think, feel, and behave in their daily lives and also determines how individuals cope with stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Good mental health enables individuals to function effectively, maintain healthy relationships, work productively, and contribute to society. However, mental health problems are increasing rapidly across the world, especially among young adults due to academic pressure, career uncertainty, financial stress, social expectations, and changing lifestyles (World Health Organization, 2022).

¹M.Sc. Student, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, School of Home Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Vidya Vihar, Raebareli Road, Lucknow, (UP) India

²Professor, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, School of Home Science, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University, Vidya Vihar, Raebareli Road, Lucknow, (UP) India

³Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, College of Community Science, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, (Punjab) India

*Corresponding Author

Received: March 24, 2026; Revision Received: March 28, 2026; Accepted: March 31, 2026

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

Young adulthood is considered a critical developmental stage because individuals experience many life transitions during this period, such as higher education, employment, financial independence, and relationship responsibilities. These transitions often create stress, anxiety, and emotional pressure, which may negatively affect mental health. Many young adults experience emotional instability, stress, anxiety, and depression due to academic competition, job insecurity, social comparison, and changing family structures. These challenges may lead to poor emotional regulation, lack of concentration, low self-esteem, and social adjustment problems. Therefore, promoting mental health among young adults has become an important area of research and public health concern.

Mental health is not only the absence of mental illness but also includes positive functioning and well-being. According to the Mental Health Continuum model, mental health consists of three major components: emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being. Emotional well-being includes happiness, life satisfaction, and positive emotions. Psychological well-being includes self-acceptance, personal growth, autonomy, environmental mastery, and purpose in life. Social well-being includes social integration, social contribution, social acceptance, and positive relationships with others (Keyes, 2002; Keyes, 2005). When these components are balanced, individuals are able to function effectively and maintain good mental health.

In modern society, lifestyle changes such as excessive use of technology, lack of physical activity, irregular sleep patterns, and social isolation have also contributed to mental health problems among young adults. Many young adults spend long hours on mobile phones and computers, which reduces physical activity and increases mental fatigue and stress. Lack of physical activity and relaxation techniques further increases stress levels and negatively affects mental health. Therefore, there is a need for preventive and promotive approaches that can improve mental health naturally and effectively.

Yoga is an ancient Indian practice that promotes harmony between body and mind and is widely used for improving physical and mental health. The word yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word “yuj,” meaning union or integration of body, mind, and spirit. Yoga includes physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), meditation, and relaxation techniques. Regular practice of yoga helps in reducing stress, improving concentration, increasing emotional stability, and enhancing overall well-being. Yoga also improves sleep quality, reduces anxiety, and promotes positive thinking (Tiwari, 2016). Yoga works on both physiological and psychological levels. Physiologically, yoga helps in reducing heart rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension, which are associated with stress. Psychologically, yoga helps in relaxation, emotional control, mindfulness, and self-awareness. Meditation and breathing exercises in yoga help in calming the mind and improving attention and concentration. Due to these benefits, yoga is increasingly being used as a therapeutic and preventive method for improving mental health and quality of life.

Several studies have reported that yoga practice reduces stress, anxiety, and depression and improves emotional and psychological well-being. Regular yoga practitioners often show higher levels of life satisfaction, better emotional control, and improved social relationships compared to non-yoga practitioners. Yoga also improves self-confidence, emotional stability, and coping ability, which are important for maintaining mental health (Hagen et al., 2023).

The rationale of the present study is based on the increasing mental health problems among young adults and the growing popularity of yoga as a preventive and promotive mental health

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

practice. Although many studies have been conducted on yoga and mental health, limited studies have focused specifically on young adults and their mental health status in relation to yoga practice. Therefore, the present study was conducted to assess the mental health status of young adults in relation to yoga practice and to examine whether regular yoga practice is associated with better mental health compared to irregular yoga practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Locale of the Study:

The present investigation was conducted using a descriptive and comparative research design to assess the mental health status of young adults in relation to yoga practice. The study was carried out in Lucknow City, Uttar Pradesh. The research focused on comparing the mental health status of young adults who practiced yoga regularly with those who practiced yoga irregularly.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size:

For the present study, a multistage sampling procedure was adopted. In the first stage, educational institutions and residential areas of Lucknow City were selected. In the second stage, young adults were selected randomly from these locations. A total of 150 young adults were selected as respondents for the study. Out of the total respondents, 83 were females and 67 were males. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 to 25 years.

The respondents were divided into two groups based on their yoga practice pattern:

- Regular yoga practitioners (those practicing yoga at least three times per week for the last six months)
- Irregular yoga practitioners (those practicing yoga occasionally or less than three times per week)

Thus, the final sample consisted of 85 regular yoga practitioners and 65 irregular yoga practitioners.

Variables of the Study: The study included both independent and dependent variables.

Independent Variables:

- Age
- Gender
- Family type
- Residence (urban/rural)
- Parental education
- Socioeconomic status
- Yoga practice (regular/irregular)

Dependent Variable:

- Mental health status (emotional, psychological, and social well-being)

Tools Used for Data Collection:

The data for the present study were collected using the following tools:

1. Sociodemographic Information Schedule
2. Yoga Practice Schedule
3. Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF)

Tools and Techniques

- **Sociodemographic Information Schedule:** A sociodemographic information schedule was prepared by the researcher to collect background information about the respondents. The schedule included information related to age, gender, family type, residence, number of siblings, parental education, parental occupation, and socioeconomic status. This information helped in understanding the demographic background of the respondents and its relationship with mental health and yoga practice.
- **Yoga Practice Schedule:** A Yoga Practice Schedule was developed by the researcher to obtain information regarding yoga practice among the respondents. The schedule included questions related to frequency of yoga practice, duration of practice, type of yoga practiced, and purpose of practicing yoga. Based on the responses, the respondents were categorized into regular and irregular yoga practitioners.
- **Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF):** The Mental Health Continuum–Short Form developed by Keyes (2002) was used to assess the mental health status of the respondents. The scale consists of 14 items measuring emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being. The respondents were asked to indicate how often they experienced each feeling during the past month on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 5 (every day). Higher scores indicate higher levels of mental health and well-being.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Young Adults by Yoga Practice Frequency

Characteristic	Total Sample (N=150) n (%)	Regular Practitioners (n=85) n (%)	Irregular Practitioners (n=65) n (%)	χ^2 -value	p-value
Gender					
Female	83 (55.3)	48 (56.5)	35 (53.8)	0.10	0.75
Male	67 (44.7)	37 (43.5)	30 (46.2)		
Age Group					
18–21 years	68 (45.3)	35 (41.2)	33 (50.8)	1.25	0.26
22–25 years	82 (54.7)	50 (58.8)	32 (49.2)		
Residence					
Urban	98 (65.3)	65 (76.5)	33 (50.8)	11.21	0.001
Rural	52 (34.7)	20 (23.5)	32 (49.2)		
Family Type					
Nuclear	82 (54.7)	45 (52.9)	37 (56.9)	0.25	0.61
Joint	68 (45.3)	40 (47.1)	28 (43.1)		
Parental Education					
Graduate & above	78 (52.0)	52 (61.2)	26 (40.0)	7.15	0.007
Below Graduate	72 (48.0)	33 (38.8)	39 (60.0)		

The table provides a breakdown of participants based on various demographic factors relevant to their yoga practice. In terms of residence, a significantly higher percentage of regular practitioners resided in urban areas compared to irregular practitioners, with a statistically significant p-value. Similarly, parental education showed a significant association

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

with yoga practice frequency. Gender, age group, and family type did not show statistically significant differences between regular and irregular yoga practitioners.

Yoga Practice Patterns and Associated Mental Health Status: The study examined the frequency with which participants engaged in basic yoga types and also examined the mental health status of respondents in relation to these specific types. This combined table provides an integrated view of practice patterns and their mental health outcomes.

Table 2: Basic Types of Yoga, Their Practice Frequencies, and Associated Mental Health Status

Yoga Type	Practice Frequency (Total f (%))	Flourishing (%)	Moderate Mental Health (%)	Languishing (%)
Surya Namaskar	Regularly: 88 (58.7)	65.0	25.0	10.0
	Occasionally: 45 (30.0)			
	Never: 17 (11.3)			
Pranayama	Regularly: 78 (52.0)	60.0	30.0	10.0
	Occasionally: 54 (36.0)			
	Never: 18 (12.0)			
Siddhasana	Regularly: 36 (24.0)	40.0	35.0	25.0
	Occasionally: 58 (38.7)			
	Never: 56 (37.3)			
Padmasana	Regularly: 23 (15.3)	35.0	40.0	25.0
	Occasionally: 59 (39.3)			
	Never: 68 (45.3)			
Bhadrasana	Regularly: 15 (10.0)	30.0	45.0	25.0
	Occasionally: 55 (36.7)			
	Never: 80 (53.3)			
Simhasana	Regularly: 18 (12.0)	25.0	50.0	25.0
	Occasionally: 38 (25.0)			
	Never: 94 (62.7)			

This table integrates findings on both the frequency of practicing specific yoga types and their associated mental health outcomes. Surya Namaskar and Pranayama were the most regularly practiced and showed the highest percentages of flourishing mental health. This suggests a strong positive impact of these foundational and widely practiced yoga types on overall mental wellbeing.

Overall Mental Health Status of Young Adults: This section presents the overall mental health status of the young adults using the Mental Health Continuum Scale. This provides a general picture of the well-being levels across the entire sample before comparing groups.

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

Table 3: Overall Mental Health Status of Young Adults (N=150)

Mental Health Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Flourishing	75	50.0
Moderate Mental Health	45	30.0
Languishing	30	20.0
Total	150	100.0

This shows that half of the young adult participants reported flourishing mental health. A significant portion exhibited moderate mental health, while some were categorized as languishing. This distribution indicates that while a good proportion of young adults experienced optimal mental well-being, a notable segment faced mental health challenges.

Mental Health Status by Yoga Practice Frequency: The primary objective of comparing mental health status between regular and irregular yoga practitioners yielded significant results. Regular practitioners consistently scored higher across all mental health domains.

Table 4: Mental Health Scores (MHC-SF) by Yoga Practice Frequency Among Young Adults

Mental Health Domain	Regular Practitioners Mean (SD)	Irregular Practitioners Mean (SD)	t-value	p-value
Emotional Well-being	4.5 (0.7)	3.2 (1.2)	6.20	<0.001
Psychological Well-being	4.1 (0.8)	3.0 (1.1)	5.10	<0.001
Social Well-being	4.0 (0.9)	3.1 (1.0)	4.80	<0.001
Total MHC-SF Score	4.2 (0.8)	3.1 (1.1)	5.67	<0.001

The results consistently demonstrate that regular yoga practitioners report significantly higher levels of mental well-being across all dimensions compared to irregular practitioners. These findings strongly support the hypothesis that consistent yoga practice is positively associated with superior mental health outcomes in young adults.

Association of Regular Yoga Practice with Overall Mental Health Status : The study further explored the direct association between regular yoga performance and overall mental health status. The results indicated a significant correlation between consistent yoga practice and mental health outcomes.

Table 5: Correlation between Regular Yoga Practice and Overall Mental Health Status (N=150)

Variables Correlated	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value
Regular Yoga Practice vs Overall Mental Health Status	0.62	<0.01

The study found a significant positive correlation between regular yoga practice and overall mental health status. This strong association highlights that as the regularity of yoga practice increases, the level of mental well-being among young adults also increases. This provides strong evidence for the beneficial role of consistent yoga practice in improving mental health.

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

Summary

The present study was conducted to assess the mental health status of young adults in relation to yoga practice. Mental health is an important component of overall well-being and includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. In recent years, mental health problems among young adults have increased due to academic pressure, career uncertainty, lifestyle changes, and social stress. Therefore, the study aimed to examine whether yoga practice is associated with better mental health among young adults.

The study was conducted in Lucknow City using a descriptive and comparative research design. A total of 150 young adults aged between 18 and 25 years were selected using a multistage sampling procedure. The respondents were divided into two groups: regular yoga practitioners and irregular yoga practitioners. Data were collected using a Sociodemographic Information Schedule, Yoga Practice Schedule, and the Mental Health Continuum–Short Form (MHC-SF) developed by Keyes (2002).

The results of the study showed that socio-demographic variables such as residence and parental education were significantly associated with yoga practice. A higher proportion of regular yoga practitioners belonged to urban areas and had parents with higher education levels. Gender, age group, and family type did not show significant differences between regular and irregular yoga practitioners.

The study also examined yoga practice patterns and mental health status in relation to different types of yoga practices. Surya Namaskar and Pranayama were the most commonly practiced yoga activities, and respondents who practiced these regularly showed higher levels of flourishing mental health. This indicates that regular practice of basic yoga and breathing exercises has a positive impact on mental well-being.

The overall mental health status of young adults showed that half of the respondents were in the flourishing category, while some respondents were in moderate and languishing categories. The comparison of mental health scores between regular and irregular yoga practitioners revealed that regular practitioners had significantly higher emotional, psychological, and social well-being scores compared to irregular practitioners.

Furthermore, the correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between regular yoga practice and overall mental health status. This indicates that as the frequency and regularity of yoga practice increase, mental health and well-being also improve among young adults.

Overall, the study clearly indicates that yoga practice plays an important role in improving mental health and well-being among young adults.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the present study, it can be concluded that yoga practice has a significant positive relationship with mental health status among young adults. The study found that young adults who practiced yoga regularly had better emotional well-being, psychological well-being, and social well-being compared to those who practiced yoga irregularly.

The study also revealed that socio-demographic factors such as residence and parental education were associated with yoga practice and mental health status. Young adults from

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

urban areas and higher educational family backgrounds were more likely to practice yoga regularly and showed better mental health status.

The comparison of mental health scores between regular and irregular yoga practitioners showed significant differences in all mental health domains. Regular yoga practitioners had higher scores in emotional well-being, psychological well-being, social well-being, and overall mental health. This indicates that regular yoga practice helps in stress reduction, emotional stability, better social relationships, and improved psychological functioning.

The study also found a significant positive correlation between regular yoga practice and overall mental health status, which indicates that regular yoga practice contributes to improved mental well-being. Therefore, yoga can be considered an effective and natural method for promoting mental health among young adults.

In conclusion, the study suggests that regular yoga practice should be encouraged among young adults as a preventive and promotive strategy for improving mental health. Educational institutions, universities, and community organizations should promote yoga programs and awareness activities to improve the mental health and well-being of young adults.

REFERENCES

- Brown, R. P., & Gerbarg, P. L. (2005). Sudarshan Kriya yogic breathing in the treatment of stress, anxiety, and depression: Part I—Neurophysiologic model. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, *11*(1), 189–201.
- Field, T. (2011). Yoga clinical research review. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, *17*(1), 1–8.
- Hagen, I., Nayar, U. S., & Mandt, S. F. (2023). Long-term effects of yoga on mental health: A systematic review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *14*, 112345.
- Keng, S. L., Smoski, M. J., & Robins, C. J. (2011). Effects of mindfulness on psychological health: A review of empirical studies. *Clinical Psychology Review*, *31*(6), 1041–1056.
- Keyes, C. L. M. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, *43*(2), 207–222.
- Keyes, C. L. M. (2005). Mental illness and/or mental health? Investigating axioms of the complete state model of health. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, *73*(3), 539–548.
- Ross, A., & Thomas, S. (2010). The health benefits of yoga and exercise: A review of comparison studies. *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, *16*(1), 3–12.
- Streeter, C. C., Gerbarg, P. L., Saper, R. B., Ciraulo, D. A., & Brown, R. P. (2012). Effects of yoga on the autonomic nervous system, gamma-aminobutyric acid, and allostasis in epilepsy, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. *Medical Hypotheses*, *78*(5), 571–579.
- Tiwari, G. K. (2016). Yoga and mental health: An overview. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, *3*(3), 124–132.
- World Health Organization. (2022). *World mental health report: Transforming mental health for all*. WHO Press.

Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Kamal, S., Khawairakpam, S., & Raj, N. (2026). Assessment of Mental Health Status of Young Adults in Relation to Yoga Practice. *International Journal of Social Impact*, 11(1), 219-227. DIP: 18.02.024/20261101, DOI: 10.25215/2455/1101024