



Frustration Discomfort Tolerance of Yoga Practitioners and Non - Practitioners: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

Frustration intolerance denotes the refusal to accept the difference between desire and reality. It has an important role in behavioural and cognitive model of emotional problems. Studies have reported the influence of yoga in frustration tolerance. This study was carried out among 50 yoga practitioners and 50 people not practicing yoga to analyse their frustration discomfort tolerance using a questionnaire containing the measure of Frustration Discomfort. The respondents were asked to rate the strength with which they hold certain beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort, with responses, namely, "Absent", "Mild", "Moderate", "Strong" and "Very strong" belief scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The strength with which they hold the belief is an indication of the level of frustration discomfort tolerance of the respondents. More the strength less is the tolerance level. The data was analysed as scores, percentages and through statistical test. The results reveal that yoga practitioners are able to tolerate the beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort better than those who have not practiced yoga. Improvement in the mental state/psychological condition through yoga practice may be attributed as a probable reason for this. Statistically significant difference exists between the mean score of yoga practitioners and non-practitioners for majority of the beliefs considered under the study.

Keywords: Frustration Discomfort; Yoga; Tolerance

Abbreviations: REBT: Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy; DMN: Default Mode Network.

Introduction

The Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) theory mentions four irrational beliefs, namely, demandingness, awfulizing, frustration intolerance and global rating of self-worth. They determine psychological distress [1]. In this theory, demandingness is considered to be the main component in determining psychological distress, while other processes are only secondary. The assumption that

demands are the main belief has also been questioned. Some studies indicate that the content of self-worth and frustration intolerance beliefs is more important than demandingness in determining psychological disturbance [2]. Frustration intolerance has been defined as a refusal to accept the difference between desire and reality. It has an important role in behavioural and cognitive model of emotional problems [3]. A study has reported that the main effect of yoga is significant on frustration tolerance of the practitioners [4]. Frustration can cause feeling of distress in life. Individuals with low distress or affective tolerance experience negative emotions as particularly threatening. Participants in the yoga

condition reported greater increases in distress tolerance over the course of the hatha yoga intervention, when compared to those in the control group [5].

Methodology

This study was carried out among 50 yoga practitioners and 50 people not practicing yoga (control group) in Kozhikode District, Kerala State, India in order to analyse their frustration discomfort tolerance using a questionnaire containing the measure of Frustration Discomfort [6]. The respondents were asked to rate the strength with which they hold certain beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort, with responses, namely, "Absent", "Mild", "Moderate",

"Strong" and "Very strong" belief scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The strength with which they hold the belief is an indication of the level of frustration discomfort tolerance of the respondents. More the strength, less is the tolerance level. The data was analysed as scores, percentages and through statistical test.

Results

Table 1 shows data on the strength with which yoga practitioners and those who are not practicing yoga hold various beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort.

Belief	Respondents (%) reporting the strength with which they hold the belief						
	People practicing yoga			People not practicing yoga (control group)			
	Mild belief	Strong belief	No such belief	Mild belief	Strong belief	Very strong belief	No such belief
I need the easiest way around a problem	60	-	40	50	40	-	10
I can't stand having to wait for things I would like now	80	-	20	40	50	-	10
I must be absolutely free of disturbing feelings as quickly as possible. I can't bear if they continue	50	10	40	20	50	10	20
I can't stand being prevented from achieving my full potential	70	10	20	50	20	10	20
I can't stand doing tasks that seem too difficult	30	10	60	20	20	20	40
I can't stand it if people act against my wishes	50	10	40	20	40	10	30
I can't bear to feel that I am losing my mind	30	20	50	50	20	20	10
I can't bear the frustration of not achieving my goal	40	10	50	50	20	20	10
I can't stand doing tasks when I am not in the mood	50	10	40	40	30	-	30
I can't bear it if other people stand in the way of what I want	40	20	40	20	50	10	20
I can't bear to have certain thoughts	40	10	50	40	40	10	10
I can't tolerate lowering my standards even when it would be useful to do so	50	40	10	20	60	10	10
I can't stand having to push myself at tasks	60	10	30	40	50	-	10
I can't tolerate being taken for granted	70	-	30	40	40	10	10
I can't stand situations where I might feel upset	40	-	60	50	-	-	50
I can't bear to move on from work I'm not fully satisfied with	40	20	40	10	70	10	10

Table 1: Response of yoga practitioners and non-practitioners to beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort.

Table 2 shows the statistical significance of the difference in scores for beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort

between people practicing and not practicing yoga.

Belief	Mean score for the belief		Statistical significance of the difference in scores
	People practicing yoga	People not practicing yoga (control group)	
I need the easiest way around a problem	1.6	2.3	t = -2.6 p < 0.01
I can't stand having to wait for things I would like now	1.8	2.5	t = -2.3 p < 0.05
I must be absolutely free of disturbing feelings as quickly as possible. I can't bear if they continue	1.7	2.5	t = -2.3 p < 0.05
I can't stand doing tasks that seem too difficult	1.5	2.2	t = -1.7 p < 0.10
I can't bear to feel that I am losing my mind	1.7	2.5	t = -2.2 p < 0.05
I can't bear the frustration of not achieving my goal	1.6	2.5	t = -2.2 p < 0.05
I can't bear it if other people stand in the way of what I want	1.8	2.5	t = -1.8 p < 0.10
I can't bear to have certain thoughts	1.6	2.5	t = -2.6 p < 0.05
I can't stand having to push myself at tasks	1.8	2.3	t = -1.8 p < 0.10
I can't tolerate being taken for granted	1.7	2.5	t = -2.3 p < 0.05
I can't stand situations where I might feel upset	1.5	2.2	t = -2.2 p < 0.001
I can't bear to move on from work I am not fully satisfied with	1.9	2.8	t = -2.5 p < 0.05

Table 2: Statistical significance of the difference in scores for beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort between people practicing and not practicing yoga.

Discussion

Interpretation of the results (Table 1) on various beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort are given below

I Need the Easiest Way around a Problem

40 % of yoga practitioners do not have such a belief, while 60 % have a mild belief. However, only 10 % and 50 % respectively of those who are not practicing yoga (control group) are giving these two responses. While 40 % of those in the control group mention that they have a strong belief, none of the yoga practitioners have a strong belief on this

(Table 1). This shows that the belief about the need for an easiest way to overcome a problem is comparatively less in the case of yoga practitioners. Hence, frustration discomfort tolerance for this belief may be considered to be more for them than those who are not doing yoga. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups confirms this trend (Table 2). The feeling of the need for easy ways to come out of problems could be mostly there for people who feel restless in life, which may be caused due to various psychological inhibitions. Yoga practice endows various mind related benefits such as more positive and less negative thoughts, more balanced, contented life etc.

These factors may be expected to reduce restlessness in life also, making people more open in life, instead of adhering to rigorous conceived notions such as requirement of easy ways to solve problems without thinking of other feasible alternatives.

I Can't Stand having to Wait for Things I Would like Now

20% of yoga practitioners do not have such a belief, while 80% have a mild belief. However, only 10% and 40% respectively of those who are not practicing yoga are giving these two responses. While 50% of those who are not practicing yoga strongly believe in this, none of the yoga practitioners do so (Table 1). Accordingly, frustration discomfort tolerance for the belief about not ready to wait for things which are wanted now may be considered to be more for them than those who are not doing yoga. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups confirms this trend (Table 2). This result also implies that yoga practitioners are more patient in life. Patient people tend to experience less negative emotions, perhaps because they can cope better with upsetting or stressful situations. They are also more mindful (https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/profile/Robert_Emmons). The psychological benefits of yoga include less negative emotions, stress and more of mindfulness in life.

I must be absolutely Free of Disturbing Feelings as Quickly as Possible. I Can't Bear if they Continue

40% of yoga practitioners do not have such a belief, while 50% have a mild belief. However, only 20% and 20% respectively of those who are not practicing yoga are giving these two responses. While 50% of those who are not practicing yoga strongly believe in this, only 10% of yoga practitioners have a strong belief on this (Table 1). So, in the case of the belief about getting relieved from disturbing feelings as quickly as possible, frustration discomfort tolerance may be considered to be more for yoga practitioners than those who are not doing yoga. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups confirms this trend (Table 2). The fact that yoga practice gives psychological and physical health benefits helpful in maintaining a more composed life could be the probable reason for not getting worried about disturbing feelings, which could also be mostly less only for them.

I Can't Stand being Prevented from Achieving my Full Potential

70% of yoga practitioners have only mild belief about this, while only 50% in the control group hold a mild belief. While only 10% of yoga practitioners believe in this strongly, higher proportion (20%) of those in the control group strongly

believe in this, while 10% of them have very strong belief also (Table 1). Hence, frustration discomfort tolerance for the belief that he or she does not like to be prevented from achieving full potential may be considered to be more for yoga practitioners than those who are not practicing yoga. The openness and mindfulness in life of yoga practitioners mentioned earlier could also probably help them in not getting much disturbed even when they are unable to achieve their full potential in various aspects of life.

I Can't Stand Doing Tasks that Seem too Difficult

While 60% of yoga practitioners do not hold such a belief, the figure for the control group is only 40%. 10% of yoga practitioners have a strong belief on this, while in the control group, 20% have strong belief and 20% have very strong belief about this (Table 1). Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups confirms this trend (Table 2). Accordingly, those who are not practicing yoga may be considered to be more vulnerable than yoga practitioners in tolerating the problem in undertaking difficult tasks, which can probably cause more discomfort for them. The psychological as well as physical health benefits of yoga practice could have probably made the practitioners more confident to undertake even difficult tasks in life.

I Can't Stand it if People Act Against my Wishes

While only 10% of yoga practitioners report strong belief on this, 40% in the control group strongly believe and 10% believe in this very strongly (Table 1). This indicates that yoga practitioners are more capable than those who have not done yoga to withstand even if people act against their wishes. Accordingly, they may be considered to be having more tolerance towards such a belief, which will contribute to less discomfort for them on account of such a frustration causing belief. Positive improvement in the mindset of yoga practitioners should normally help them to not feel bad even when extremities happen.

I Can't Bear to Feel that I am Losing my Mind

Table 1 shows that 20% of respondents in the control group have a strong belief and another 20% have a very strong belief on this. However, 20% of yoga respondents reported a strong belief only (Table 1). This indicates that the tolerance level for the belief related to bearing the condition of being mentally upset or losing one's mind due to various conditions in life is comparatively more for yoga practitioners than the control group. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups confirms this trend (Table 2). This could be probably because yoga practitioners mostly experience good mental benefits making them in a better position to bear such feelings, if at all they arise, which also need not be significant for them.

I Can't Bear the Frustration of not Achieving my Goal

While 50 % yoga practitioners do not hold such a belief, the figure for the control group is only 10 % respondents. When 10 % of yoga practitioners have a strong belief on this, 20 % respondents in the control group have strong and 20 % very strong belief about this (Table 1). Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups is observed (Table 2). From this, it may be inferred that the degree of tolerance of the discomfort which can happen due to frustration experienced from not achieving goals in life is comparatively more for yoga practitioners than non-practitioners. This can also be considered as an outcome of the improved mind set attained through yoga practice. This could also probably help the practitioners to pragmatically decide on achievable goals, for which they may be able to devise means/methods which are not so difficult to adopt. Better mind set usually contributes to more favourable thought processes in life.

I Can't Stand Doing Tasks when I am not in the Mood

While 10 % of yoga practitioners believe in this strongly, 30 % of those who are not practicing yoga (control group) have strong belief on this (Table 1), implying that the degree of tolerance of the frustration in undertaking tasks/activities when one is not in a good mood is less for the control group than the yoga practitioners. Two things may be interpreted from this trend regarding yoga practitioners. First of all, yoga practice may help improve the mood of people. A recent study has reported improvement in various moods of yoga practitioners [7]. Hence, chances of losing one's mood can be expected to be less for people practicing yoga. The second aspect is that even if slight degree of mood loss is experienced by the yoga practitioners due to circumstances beyond their control, due to the better mental state attained through yoga practice, they may not probably feel much demotivated to undertake relevant tasks in life.

I Can't Bear it if Other People Stand in the Way of what I Want

While 40 % of yoga practitioners report that they don't have such a belief, only 20 % of respondents in the control group report so. Further, while 20 % of yoga practitioners believe in this strongly, the figure in the case of the control group is 50 % respondents, in addition to 10 % having very strong belief on this aspect (Table 1). Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups further establishes the fact that yoga practitioners are having comparatively less belief than those who have not done yoga that they won't be able to tolerate others standing against what they want in life (Table 2).

I Can't Bear to have Certain Thoughts

While 50 % of yoga practitioners do not have such a belief, only 10 % in the control group report so. Further, 10 % of yoga practitioners have such a strong belief, in the control group, 40 % have strong belief and 10 % have very strong belief that they won't be able to bear certain thoughts (Table 1). Usually, such thoughts will be negative in nature, which are often triggered by stress or anxiety. Since yoga has been usually found to reduce stress and anxiety and promote calmness / relaxation, the chances of having bad thoughts for yoga practitioners will be less only. This may be the probable reason for the above trend. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups is also observed (Table 2).

I Can't Tolerate Lowering my Standards Even When it would be Useful to Do So

When 40 % of yoga practitioners believe in this strongly, a higher proportion (60%) has a strong belief and 10 % report very strong belief on this (Table 1). This implies that the yoga practitioners mostly do not mind lowering their standards in undertaking tasks/activities if required. It may also be noted that the response of the yoga practitioners is about lowering the standards when it would prove useful to them. This means that they also have a positive attitude towards achieving useful outcomes for their activities. The practice of yoga has been reported to help in maintaining better mental health through the development of positive feelings, which would contribute to overcoming psycho-somatic diseases/problems in the life of the practitioners [8].

I Can't Stand having to Push Myself at Tasks

30 % of yoga practitioners report that they don't believe in this, while only 10 % respondents in the control group report so. Also, while 10 % of people who do yoga report a strong belief on this, the figure in the case of the control group is 50% (Table 1). Many tasks in life may require strenuous efforts to achieve the goals. People having psychological inhibitions or stress, anxiety etc. may probably feel demotivated to take up such difficult tasks. This may be the probable reason why many of the non-practitioners of yoga in this study have a strong notion that they can't push themselves in tasks which require to be carried out in that manner. However, the psychological benefits obtained by yoga practitioners might have made them more prepared to undertake difficult tasks in life. Statistical significance of the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups is also evident (Table 2).

I Can't Tolerate being Taken for Granted

With respect to this belief as one which can cause frustration discomfort, this may be interpreted as a feeling that others

are not properly noticing or appreciating your value. This can even make you push yourself to do anything that warrants appreciation. 40 % of those who do not practice yoga (control group) strongly believe and 10 % very strongly believe in this. However, none of the yoga practitioners have strong or very strong belief on this (Table 1). Statistical significance is observed in the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups (Table 2). Having such a belief may also be due to an inferiority complex, reflecting feelings of insecurity and self-doubt. Low self-esteem or self-worth can cause this. Better mental state achieved by the yoga practitioners might have probably helped them to reduce such a feeling more than the respondents in the control group.

I Can't Stand Situations where I Might Feel Upset

Table 1 shows that while 60 % of yoga practitioners do not believe in this, 50 % in the control group do not believe in this. Even with this less difference in the proportion of respondents, statistical significance exists in the difference in scores for this belief between the two groups (Table 2). Better tolerance of feelings which can upset them by the yoga practitioners is evident from this. This also may be attributed to the psychological benefits achieved through yoga practice, which might have helped them to reduce upsetting feelings as well as improve the capability to tolerate such feelings, even if they arise to some extent.

I Can't Bear to Move on from Work I'm not Fully Satisfied With

While only 20 % of yoga practitioners strongly believe in this, 70 % in the control strongly believe and 10 % believe very strongly (Table 1). Statistically significant difference in the scores is observed between the two groups (Table 2). Yoga as an effective tool to improve work productivity is recognised, for which, stress reduction and energy boosting through yoga plays an important role (<https://ciiblog.in/the-practice-of-yoga-to-enhance-workplace-productivity/>). On the one hand, yoga might have helped the practitioners in the present study to achieve better satisfaction in their work. On the other hand, through a better mental state achieved through yoga practice, they might have developed more tolerance to do work, which may not be much satisfactory. A study found that pranayama and asana in yoga practice help in balancing the nervous system and reducing the level of frustration of employees in the IT sector [9].

Yoga contributes to both cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression items related to emotion regulation in the practitioners [10]. Yoga was found to help in developing resilience among the practitioners, which indicates one's ability to keep functioning physically and psychologically, even when negative emotions are experienced [11]. Yoga has been reported to have appositive effect on "the structure

and/or function of the hippocampus, amygdala, prefrontal cortex, cingulate cortex, and brain networks including the default mode network (DMN)". It can improve the mood and possibly even slow down the kind of mental decline [12]. Better mood, capacity to regulate one's emotions more resilience ability and other psychological benefits, which the yoga practitioners under this study might have been able to achieve would have probably helped them in developing comparatively more tolerance for frustration discomfort related beliefs than people who have not practiced yoga.

Conclusion

The study has revealed that yoga practitioners are able to tolerate the beliefs which can cause frustration discomfort better than those who have not practiced yoga. Other studies on the influence of yoga practice in reducing frustration also support this result. Improvement in the mental state/psychological condition through yoga practice may be attributed as a probable reason for this. Statistically significant difference exists between the mean score of yoga practitioners and non-practitioners for majority of the beliefs considered under the study.

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