



# Experience of Disgusted Feelings Before and After the Practice of Yoga: A Comparative Study

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## Abstract

**Objective:** To analyse if any changes are there in the feelings of disgust after starting yoga practice, when compared to before its practice

**Methodology:** The research was undertaken among a sample of 100 people practicing yoga in Kozhikode District of Kerala State in India using a questionnaire containing the measure of feeling disgusted and the characteristics of the respondents such as sex, age, marital status and whether they experienced physical and psychological health problems during the past 3 months. The respondents were asked to mention the frequency of experience of the items in the scale both before and after practicing yoga. The data was analyzed as score, proportion and through statistical tests.

**Results:** The study has clearly shown the influence of yoga in reducing the disgusted feelings, when compared to before starting yoga practice. The statistical significance of the difference in the mean total disgusted feelings scores have shown that females have faced disgusted feelings more than males after practicing yoga, existence of physical health problems has made the yoga practitioners feel more disgusted even after practicing yoga than those who did not face such problems, and people who faced psychological problems have experienced more disgusted feelings even after practicing yoga than those who did not have psychological problems.

**Conclusions:** It is necessary to undertake scientific research on wellbeing promoting techniques such as yoga, meditation, art of living etc. not only by Govt academic /research institutions, but also by yoga centers in India, which train so many people on these techniques, and hence, studies on large samples of yoga practitioners are possible to be undertaken by them with the assistance of experts. The empirical results of the studies will be useful to motivate more people to practice such techniques, as well as those who are now practicing them to continue their practice, provided sufficient measures are taken up to propagate them among people. This is very relevant for a country like India, where the number of people practicing yoga, meditation, art of living etc. is not much at present, and many of them discontinue their practice after some time.

**Keywords:** Disgusted; Feelings; Yoga Practice; Reduction

## Introduction

Disgust is one of the seven universal emotions, and arises as a feeling of aversion towards something offensive. A person can feel disgusted by something perceived with physical senses such as sight, smell, touch, sound and taste, by the actions or appearances of people, and even by ideas. Research has documented that the main objective of yoga is to control the process of thoughts and emotions, enabling the individual to encounter pleasurable and painful situations with calmness. The ability of yoga practice to

impact mood, self-awareness, self-acceptance, mental health and cognition have been reported [1,2]. Yoga practice has been found to improve positive emotions and reduce negative emotions for the practitioners, which would contribute to better mental health [3]. The results of a study have indicated the influence of yoga practice in reducing restlessness significantly [4]. The effect of yoga in maintaining good mental state among the practitioners was observed in a study [5]. The results of a study showed that yoga contributes to up to about two times less mental stress for the

**Received date:** 06 December 2024; **Accepted date:** 12 December 2024; **Published date:** 21 December 2024

**Citation:** Madhava Chandran K, Unniraman P, Unnikrishnan KK (2024). Experience of Disgusted Feelings before and After the Practice of Yoga: A Comparative Study. SunText Rev Neurosci Psychol 5(2): 179.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.51737/2766-4503.2024.079>

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respondents, when compared to before yoga practice [6]. Another study indicated the usefulness of yoga practice to reduce anxiety of people [7], which could also be an outcome of feeling disgusted in life. It has been reported that the practice of yoga will help people to maintain better mental health through the development of positive feelings, which will also help them to overcome psychosomatic diseases/problems in their life [8]. The research findings mentioned above indicate the positive effect of yoga in improving the psychological health of the practitioners, which can also be considered to be helpful for the yoga practitioners in reducing disgusted feelings.

## Methodology

The study was carried out among a sample of 100 people practicing yoga in Kozhikode District of Kerala State in India using a questionnaire containing the measure of feeling disgusted [9] and the characteristics of the respondents such as sex, age, marital status and whether they experienced physical and psychological health problems during the past 3 months. The respondents were asked to mention the frequency of experience of the items in the scale both before and after practicing yoga. The data was analyzed as score, proportion and through statistical tests.

## Results

A comparatively higher total disgusted feelings score indicates less of disgusted feelings faced by the respondents.

Table 1 shows the statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents before and after yoga practice.

Table 2 shows the frequency of experience of the items related to disgusted feelings before and after yoga practice by the respondents under the study.

Table 3 shows the statistical significance of sex wise difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice.

Table 4 shows the statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on physical health problems faced during the past 3 months.

Table 5 shows the statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on psychological health problems faced during the past 3 months.

*t* test of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents based on their marital status was found to be non-significant. ANOVA of mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents based on their age was also found to be non-significant.

## Discussion

## Disgusted Feelings Score

Statistically significant difference observed between the comparatively lower mean total disgusted feelings score before yoga practice and the higher score obtained after yoga practice establishes the influence of the practice of yoga in reducing disgusted feelings for the respondents.

## Respondents Experiencing Disgust Before and After the Practice of Yoga

The result based on the data presented in Table 1 is further substantiated by the data on proportion of respondents reporting disgusted feelings before and after the practice of yoga (Table 2), which is discussed below:

I avoid disgusting things

While 70 % respondents did this most of the time before they started yoga practice, after yoga practice, 90 % respondents report doing this most of the time (Table 2).

When I feel disgusted, I worry that I might pass out

20 % of respondents doing this very rarely has increased to 40% doing so after the practice of yoga (Table 2).

It scares me when I feel nauseous

While 10 % respondents have reported that they have never felt scared when feeling nauseous, the figure after yoga practice is 30 % (Table 2).

I feel repulsed

While 60 % respondents have reported that they have felt this only sometimes before yoga practice, after they started yoga, all of them have reported in this manner (Table 2).

Disgusting things make my stomach turn

50 % respondents experienced this very rarely before yoga practice. However, 80 % report experiencing this very rarely after they started yoga practice (Table 2).

I screw my face in disgust

While 10 % respondents have reported that they have felt this very rarely before yoga practice, 30 % respondents have experienced in this manner after they started yoga practice (Table 2).

When I notice that I feel nauseous, I worry about vomiting

While 10 % respondents have reported that they have never experienced this disgust feeling, 30 % respondents report that they have never experienced this after yoga practice (Table 2).

I experience disgust

20 % respondents have reported experiencing this very rarely before yoga practice, which has increased to 40 % reporting in this manner after yoga practice. Further, while 30 % respondents report experiencing disgust most of the time before yoga practice, none of them have experienced disgust most of the time after they started practicing yoga (Table 2).

It scares me when I feel faint

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30 % respondents have reported experiencing this very rarely before yoga practice, which has increased to 60 % reporting in this manner after yoga practice. While 30 % respondents report experiencing this most of the time before yoga practice, none of them have experienced disgust most of the time after they started practicing yoga (Table 2).

I find something disgusting

Before yoga practice, 70 % respondents have experienced this sometimes only. However, after yoga practice, all of them report experiencing this sometimes only. Further, while 30 % respondents report experiencing this most of the time before yoga practice, none of them have experienced it most of the time after they started practicing yoga (Table 2).

It embarrasses me when I feel disgusted

While 40 % respondents report experiencing this very rarely before yoga practice, 90 % report so after yoga practice. 10 % of

respondents have reported experiencing this most of the time before they started yoga practice. However, after they started practicing yoga, none of them have experienced this most of the time (Table 2).

I think feeling disgusted is bad for me

Only 10 % of respondents have felt this very rarely before yoga practice, when compared to 50 % respondents reporting feeling this very rarely only after they started the practice of yoga. Further, while 10 % respondents have felt in this manner most of the time before yoga practice, none of them report experiencing this most of the time after they started yoga practice (Table 2).

The results discussed above show the effect of yoga in reducing feelings of disgust for the practitioners under the study, when compared to before starting yoga practice.

**Table 1:** Statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents before and after yoga practice.

Details	Before yoga practice	After yoga practice	t stat and significance
Mean total disgusted feelings score	37.9	43.1	5.04; $p < 0.001$

**Table 2:** Responses on the frequency of experience of items related to disgusted feelings before and after yoga practice.

Item related to disgusted feelings	Respondents (%) reporting the frequency of experience of the item									
	Never		Very rarely		Sometimes		Most of the time		Always	
	BY	AY	BY	AY	BY	AY	B Y	A Y	BY	A Y
I avoid disgusting things	-	-	30	10	-	-	70	90	-	-
When I feel disgusted, I worry that I might pass out	10	10	20	40	60	50	10	-	-	-
It scares me when I feel nauseous	10	30	50	40	40	30	-	-	-	-
I feel repulsed	-	-	-	-	60	100	40	-	-	-
Disgusting things make my stomach turn	-	-	50	80	50	20	-	-	-	-
I screw my face in disgust	-	-	10	30	80	70	10	-	-	-
When I notice that I feel nauseous, I worry about vomiting	10	30	60	70	30	-	-	-	-	-
I experience disgust	-	-	20	40	50	60	30	-	-	-

It scares me when I feel faint	-	-	30	60	40	40	30	-	-	-
I find something disgusting	-	-	-	-	70	100	30	-	-	-
It embarrasses me when I feel disgusted	-	-	40	90	50	10	10	-	-	-
I think feeling disgusted is bad for me	-	-	10	50	80	50	10	-	-	-
BY- Before starting yoga practice										
AY- After starting yoga practice										

**Table 3:** Statistical significance of sex wise difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice.

Details	Males	Females	t stat and significance
Mean total disgusted feelings score after yoga practice	44.3	41.3	2.10; $p < 0.10$

**Table 4:** Statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on physical health problems faced.

Details	Faced physical health problems	Did not face physical health problems	t stat and significance
Mean total disgusted feelings score after yoga practice	41.3	44.3	-2.69; $p < 0.05$

**Table 5:** Statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on psychological health problems faced.

Details	Faced psychological health problems	Did not face psychological health problems	t stat and significance
Mean total disgusted feelings score after yoga practice	41.4	44.8	-3.40; $p < 0.001$

**Statistical significance of sex wise difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice**

The comparatively lower mean total disgusted feelings score of females after yoga practice than males, and the statistical significance of the difference in these scores (Table 3) indicates that females have faced disgusted feelings more than males even after practicing yoga.

**Statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on physical health problems faced**

The statistical significance of the difference in the mean total disgusted feelings scores after yoga practice, with comparatively higher score obtained by respondents who did not report any physical health problems than those who reported such problems (Table 4) indicate that the existence of health problems has made the yoga practitioners more disgusted even after practicing yoga.

**Statistical significance of the difference in mean total disgusted feelings score of the respondents after yoga practice based on psychological health problems faced**

The comparatively lower mean total disgusted feelings score after yoga practice of respondents having psychological problems than



those who did not report psychological problems and the statistical significance of the difference in the scores (Table 5) indicate that people who faced psychological problems have experienced more disgusted feelings even after practicing yoga than those who did not have psychological problems.

## Conclusions

The study has clearly shown the influence of yoga in helping to reduce the disgusted feelings, when compared to before starting yoga practice. The statistical significance of the difference in the mean total disgusted feelings scores have shown that females have faced disgusted feelings more than males after practicing yoga, existence of health problems has made the yoga practitioners feel more disgusted even after practicing yoga than those who did not have such problems, and people who faced psychological problems have experienced more disgusted feelings even after practicing yoga than those who did not have psychological problems. It is necessary to undertake scientific research on wellbeing promoting techniques such as yoga, meditation, art of living etc. not only by Govt academic /research institutions, but also by yoga centers in India, which train so many people on these techniques, and hence, studies on large samples of yoga practitioners are possible to be undertaken by them with the assistance of experts. The empirical results of the studies will be useful to motivate more people to practice such techniques, as well as those who are now practicing them to continue their practice, provided sufficient measures are taken up to propagate them among people. This is very relevant for a country like India, where the number of people practicing yoga, meditation, art of living etc. is not much at present, and many of them discontinue their practice after some time.

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