

Correlation between Yoga Techniques Practice, Value Orientations and Life Styles

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Abstract: *There were assessed value orientations and life styles in persons who practice integral yoga (Patanjali). Starting hypothesis was that in persons that practice yoga for a longer period of time, openness and democratic orientation are more pronounced and religious life style is less frequent. The research has been conducted on June, 2011 with the sample of 111 respondents, 43 yoga teachers, 38 students of the International Yoga Academy and 30 yoga practitioners, both sexes, 16 to 64 years of age. In addition to the standardized demographic questionnaire, there were use Kuzmanovic (1995) and Pantic (1981) instrument (for assessment of the value orientations) and preferences of the life styles were assessed with Popadic's (1990, 1995) instrument. Results of the research confirmed expectations: there is a correlation between the period of yoga practice and value orientations. Results of the research show that there is high correlation between respondents who practice yoga for a longer period of time and openness as value orientation ($r = 0,22^*$). Period of the yoga practice also correlates with democratic life style ($r = 0,23^*$).*

Key words: *yoga, value orientations, life styles, awareness*

Introduction

Yoga techniques practice may become a method for conscious life shaping. We will perceive values as criteria that people use when they make choice and to justify their activities both when they estimate people (including themselves) and events (Schwartz, 1992; Rokeach, 1973; Williams, 1970). Yoga practitioners change their life philosophy by accepting new life values, they change their behaviour, attitudes, they tend to be humane and to achieve higher goals in their lives (Nikic, 2011). Regardless whether yoga instructor (Master) draws his power from the formal status or personal charisma, he give the hallmark to the events and relations during the course of learning yoga, by his decisions and behaviour. Cross-cultural validation of Schwartz's theoretical model of values (Schwartz, 1992, according to Fontaine, 2000) have shown that, in different cultures, value system of an individual is in correlation with her consistent acceptance of traditional values and norms of the culture and rejection of hedonistic values orientations.

Yoga Techniques practice (including physical postures - *asanas*, breathing exercises - *pranayama*, meditation and relaxation), significantly contributes to gaining the greater insight in their perception, reactions and behaviour in the life situations (Janjusevic, 2011) and enables the choice of value orientations and life styles where there is recognized openness for other and for new options.

Subject and goals of the research

In this paper there was examined correlation between value orientations and life styles and the time period of the yoga techniques practice.

Goals of the research were aimed to identify whether there is correlation, and if it exists, to examine the level of correlation between the time period of the yoga techniques practice, value orientations and life styles and to examine polarity of the found correlations.

There was established the following hypothesis: in respondents who practice yoga for a longer period of time, openness and democratic orientations are more pronounced, as well as humanistic life style, and religious value orientations and life style are less pronounced.

Methodology

In this paper, correlation between certain psychological and socio-demographic characteristics and the time period of the yoga techniques practice has been assessed with application of demographic questionnaire which consisted of 22 questions, instrument of Dragan Popadic (1990, 1995) which was used to life styles and instrument of Kuzmanovic (1995) and Pantic (1981) which was used to examine value orientations of the respondents.

The sample was made of 111 yoga practitioners from different parts of Serbia, different ages. Their average years of age were 42. among respondents, there were 30 yoga practitioners who attend yoga classes, 38 students of the International Yoga Academy in Belgrade and 43 certified yoga instructors (200 hours of training).

In the data analysis, there were used Spearman's correlation coefficient (for variable "yoga") and Pearson's correlation coefficient for all other variables. Interpretation of the results obtained by research is aimed towards discovering correlation between the time period of the yoga practice with value orientations and life styles of the yoga practitioners, as well as explanation of the found correlations between the mentioned groups of phenomena.

Results of the research

Correlations

Spearman's correlation coefficient was used for variable "yoga" (because it is ordinal variable), while Pearson's correlation coefficient was used for all other variables.

1. Time period of the yoga practice

Table 1. Correlation between variable "time period of the yoga practice", value orientation and life style

Correlated variables	Pearson's correlation coefficient
Religiosity	-0,21*
Openness	0,22*
Democratic orientation	0,23*

* correlation significant at the level 0,05 ** correlation significant at the level 0,01

Result shows that openness in yoga practitioners is in correlation with longer period of time of the yoga techniques practice ($r = 0,22^*$), while religious life style is in negative correlation with the time period of the yoga techniques practice ($r = -0,21^*$).

Results of the research confirmed the hypothesis by showing that there is a correlation between the time period of the yoga practice, life style and value orientations. Results indicate that the longer yoga practice reduces presence of religiosity and increases openness and democratic orientation. On the variable "time period of the yoga instructor work" appeared increased religious value orientation ($r = -0,29^{**}$) and religious life style ($r = -0,23^*$). The first variable is in negative correlation with sentimental life style, as well ($r = -0,23^*$).

According to the results of the respondents who practice yoga recreationally (variable "practices yoga"), negative correlation between yoga techniques practice and religious values ($r = -0,19^*$) is lower than in yoga instructors ($r = -0,29^*$).

Discussion

Results show that openness and democratic orientation are the most prevalent value orientations among yoga instructors. Besides them, humanistic life style has also been extracted, and it appears that the least importance respondents gave to the religious-traditional values. For Rokeach (1973), values have the

central place in the personality structure and they represent belief that the specific manner of behaviour or living is socially or personally more desirable comparing to some other. Schwartz (1992) thinks that behaviours directed towards a certain type of values have psychological, social and practical consequences that may be compatible or in conflict with other types of values.

In yoga instructors and yoga practitioners, awareness about body, emotions and mind processes (memory, concentration of attention...) enable more responsible relation towards health, higher level of self-initiative and higher level of self-respect. Emotional awareness enables higher level of empathy with practitioners, therefore they feel possibility to give to the other the climate that they wish and expect for themselves, and they achieve that through openness and democratic life style. Yoga techniques practice strengthens self-reliance therefore it is understandable that, in yoga instructors and yoga practitioners, religious life style is in negative correlation with yoga practice. With increased duration of the yoga techniques practice, negative correlation between yoga practice and religious-traditional life style increases which explains lower correlation between religious values and religious life style with yoga practice in yoga instructors comparing to the practitioners who practice in their yoga classes.

Conclusion

Results of the research confirmed that yoga practice, including physical postures, techniques of breathing, concentration, meditation and relaxation, are directly connected with humanistic life style and higher level of openness and democratic orientation of the practitioners. Yoga practice is in negative correlation with orientation towards religious value orientation and life style. Results indicate the need for further researches of the yoga practice effects.

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