

Correlation of the Yoga Techniques Practice with Locus of Control and Anger Management Style

Bosiljka Janjušević *

*International Society for Scientific Interdisciplinary Yoga Research
Belgrade, Serbia*

Abstract: *This paper refers to the examination of the style of anger in people who practice yoga techniques. We examine the role of locus of control in the control of anger. We consider the assumption that people who practice yoga techniques are emotionally stable, cooperative, moderate, they tend to slowly develop and hold back the anger.*

In this research we used the instrument NEO PI R (Costa and McCrae, 1985) based on the Big Five model of personality and the scale of externality (Bezinović, 1988). The survey was conducted on June 2011 on the sample of 111 yoga practitioners, including 43 certified instructors of the Yoga Federation of Serbia, 38 students of the International Yoga Academy and 30 students of yoga classes, both sexes, aged from 16 to 64 years. There was found correlation between the duration of yoga practice and variables that describe the ability to develop and express anger.

Key words: *yoga, anger, locus of control, relaxation, NEO PI R*

Introduction

By practicing yoga techniques the individual turns to the inner experience, learn to recognize their emotions and gain the ability to manage them, rather than those manage him/her and his/her life. Emotions are the experiences of our subjective evaluation and relations to things, events, and our own actions (Nikić, 2010).

Anger is a normal and healthy human emotion, but when a person has no control over it and when it becomes destructive, problems arise at work, in relationships with people and the quality of life. Lack of control over anger creates an abandonment to the mercy of unpredictable and strong emotion which results in behavior that an individual makes itself ineffective in solving problems, harming other participants of the event. Anger is an emotional state whose intensity varies from mild irritation to intense fury (Spielberger, 2005). In this state there is a psychological and physiological changes, changes in heart rate, blood pressure and hormone levels of adrenaline and noradrenaline. State of intense anger may be caused by internal and external factors. Anger arises in human relationships and occurs when the plans, desires and needs of the individual are not met and when a person perceives the situation as unfair and threatening to his/her ego (Arslan, 2010). Anger is a natural, adaptive response to the threat, it prepares a person to defend when attacked. However, there are legal and social norms and common sense boundaries that define the scope of expression of anger.

It was found that people who perceive themselves as competent in solving problems, behave more open, less hostile and adverse to human relations (Şahin, Şahin, & Heppner, 1993). In addition, a constructive approach to solving problems is associated with lower hostility in conflict situations, while the lack of confidence and unwillingness to take responsibility in solving the problems associated with conflict behavior.

Acceptable and healthy expression of anger is assertive expression. The person should understand his/her needs and how to meet them, not to hurt others, referring with respect for self and others. Anger can be suppressed,

* Corresponding author: bosiljka.janjusevic@gmail.com

reshaped and redirected. The goal is not to suppress anger and transform it into acceptable behavior. The consequences of such a relationship to the emotion of anger are psychosomatic health problems, pathological expressions of anger such as passive-aggressive behavior, ever-present cynicism and hostility. Control of internal reactions to external situations is a third way of expressing anger, which includes the calming of the heart and breathing techniques and prohibiting that feeling intensified. It was found that the feeling of anger that a person is experiencing and expressing anger experience associated with high levels of stress and therefore, to understand the concept of anger, it is necessary to analyze and ability to handle stress.

Although the goal of practicing yoga techniques (*asanas*, *pranayama*, meditation, relaxation) self-realization, one can not ignore the results of the practice of yoga has on health, adaptability to stress, good mood, increase success in solving cognitive, psychomotor and physical tasks. These are the side effects that recognize practitioners of yoga.

Practicing the techniques of yoga, including yoga exercises (*asanas*), breathing exercises (*pranayama*), meditation and relaxation, contribute significantly to gaining greater insight into their perceptions, reactions and behavior in life situations, you get more emotional balance, absence of experience of deprivation and destruction and understanding own ways of reacting (Janjušević, 2010).

Anger and rage have been shown as a significant social problem that needs to be systematically investigated. Bearing in mind that the way of expressing anger is associated with the locus of control, that this is a stressful situation that occurs as a result of interpersonal problems (Arslan, 2010) and that the practice of yoga techniques is associated with success in managing thoughts, emotions and behavior, we believe that it is necessary to examine the existence and degree of correlation between the practice of yoga techniques with the locus of control and anger management style.

"Practicing yoga we touch on our deepest meanings, deepest values, purpose and deepest motives, finding a way to incorporate all of these into our lives and our work. Practicing yoga increases awareness of internal resources but also commitment to higher interests in the name of humanity and the future. Mindfulness helps the yoga practitioner to recognize what he/she believes in, identify available resources, which he/she seeks and what he/she takes responsibility for." (Nikić, 2010)

Subject, aim and methods of research

This paper examines the correlation of the practice of yoga with the locus of control and anger management style.

The aims were:

1. To identify the relationship between the length of the practice of yoga techniques, locus of control and anger management style
2. To examine (if any) degree of coherence and polarity of determined correlation
3. To determine differences between groups of practitioners of yoga on variables from the questionnaire Neo Pi R and externalities estimate on the scale.

To achieve the goals we have set the following hypotheses:

1. For those who practiced yoga techniques for years the internal locus of control is more pronounced; in other words there's a statistically significant difference in locus of control with yoga instructors and beginners practitioners.
2. People who practiced yoga techniques for years are more prone to tolerant behavior, are also open and agreeableness
3. Long-time yoga practitioners showed lower scores on the impulsivity scale and have greater tolerance to frustration
4. Long-time yoga practitioners can easily adapt to the new situations and stress, they are emotionally more stable and rational.

In the paper it is applied non-experimental method of studying connectivity of certain psychological and socio-demographic characteristics and duration of exercise of yoga.

The survey was conducted on a group of 111 practitioners of yoga, which consisted of 30 participants in the yoga classes, 38 students and a student of the International Yoga Academy and 43 certified yoga instructors (200 hours of training). The statistical analysis included the 98 questionnaires of respondents, including 26 members of the yoga centers, 35 students from the Academy for training of yoga instructors and 37 certified yoga instructors.

The sample consists of yoga practitioners from different parts of Serbia, from 16 to 64 years old.

All three groups were tested by *NEO PI R* test of personality (Costa and McCrae, 1985) based on the Five-factor model of personality, which examines five dimensions (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and the scale of assessments of externality - the locus of control (Bezinović, 1988).

The analysis was done using Spearman correlation coefficient (for the variable "yoga"), and Pearson's correlation coefficient and multivariate analysis of covariance, where the analysis of the effects between subjects and differences between couples was observed. Interpretation of results from research aimed at discovering correlation between the duration of practicing yoga and psychological and sociodemographic characteristics of yoga practitioners, as well as to the interpretation of the established links between these two groups of phenomena.

The survey was conducted in June 2011.

Results

Results were obtained after application of the *NEO PI R* personality test and the scale of externality – locus of control.

Correlations

We used the Spearman correlation coefficient for the variable yoga (because it is ordinal by nature), while for all other methods used Pearson method.

1. Duration of the yoga practice

Table 1. Correlation between variable “duration of the yoga practice” and aspects of the personality domain

Psychological and sociodemographic variables with which there are correlations	Pearson's correlation coefficient
Assertiveness	-0,28**
Fairness / Straightforwardness	0,20*
Competitiveness	-0,26**

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level

The result shows that the higher level of assertiveness of the yoga practitioners is correlated with a longer period of practicing yoga. A higher level of fairness is associated with the longer period of practicing yoga. Assertiveness and competitiveness express in negative correlation.

2. Duration of the yoga instructor practice

Table 2. Correlation between variable “duration of the yoga instructor practice” and aspects of the personality domain

Psychological and sociodemographic variables with which there are correlations	Pearson's correlation coefficient
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Assertiveness	-0,20*
Extraversion	-0,22*
Competitiveness	-0,24*

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level

Similar results were shown on the variable "duration of the yoga instructor practice." With increased duration of the yoga instructor practice, assertiveness, extroversion and competitiveness are reduced, and conformity grows.

3. Yoga Practitioners

Table 3. Correlation between variable "practicing yoga" and aspects of the personality domain

Psychological and sociodemographic variables with which there are correlations	Spearman's correlation coefficient
Depression	-0,19*
Impulsiveness	-0,20*
Neuroticism	-0,19*
Excitement seeking	-0,23*
Values	0,26**
Fairness / Straightforwardness	0,22*
Politeness / Compliance	0,21*
Externality - Locus of control	-0,21*

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level

** Correlation significant at the 0.01 level

In people who practice yoga there appeared a significant negative correlation between the variables of depression, impulsivity, neuroticism and extraversion or search for excitement, as well as at the variable externality, and statistically significant positive correlation on variables values (which is one of the aspects of openness in the domain of the *NEO PIR* personality test), fairness / straightforwardness and politeness / compliance.

Multivariate analysis of covariance

In order to show the relationship of categorical variables and duration of the yoga practice, there were used ANOVA and MANCOVA. There were performed three levels of the variance analysis.

1. multivariate
2. between subjects
3. comparison of the groups

1. The first level of analysis - the multivariate effect which exists for variable "yoga", but without statistical significance, as well as for covariates (age, education and gender). Significance probably is missing because of the small sample, but there is also expressed very high effect. In table 4 there is presented Wilks' lambda - Value, F ratio, and Partial Eta Sig.

2. The second level of analysis - between subjects, which shows that a factor has an impact on the individual variables. The second level of analysis tells us on which personality trait factor has an impact, but it still does not reveal where there are differences and what is their direction.

3. Comparisons (the third level of analysis)

Comparison of the two groups shows on which variables there are statistically significant differences.

1. Multivariate level of MANCOVA

Table 4. Wilks' lambda

	Value	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	0.012	32.591(a)	0	0.988
Age	0.205	1.505(a)	0.124	0.795
Education	0.195	1.603(a)	0.091	0.805
Gender	0.254	1.141(a)	0.364	0.746
Yoga	0.077	1.012(a)	0.493	0.723

Multivariate effect for the variable "yoga" exists, but without statistical significance, as well as covariate (age, education and gender). Significance probably is missing because of the small sample, but there is expressed a very high effect. The table shows the Wilks' lambda -Value, F ratio, and Partial Eta Sig.

2. Analysis of the effects between the subjects

Analysis of the effects between the subjects shows on which variable factor has the influence. Existence of the influence of factor "practicing yoga" (practitioners, students of the Academy and yoga instructors) is expressed through the F quotient, i.e. mean squares.

Table 5. The influence of "yoga practice" factor

Dependent Variable	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social discomfort	64.959	3.565	0.032
Neuroticism	1733.522	3.446	0.036
Values	42.556	3.584	0.032
Fairness/straightforwardness	76.683	4.568	0.013
Politeness/compliance	50.195	3.265	0.043
Externality (LK)	1.035	1.795	0.172

Significance of the F quotient appeared in the following variables: social discomfort, neuroticism, values, straightforwardness and compliance that show us that yoga practice makes an effect on these personality traits and attitudes. In other authors' studies (Nikić, 2010) it appeared that factor "practicing yoga" effects locus of control, humanitarianism and openness (value orientation), and the life styles – religious, power and sentimental/family (Table 6).

Table 6. The influence of "yoga practice" factor (Nikić, 2011)

Dependent Variable	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Locus of control	0.653	4.834	0.01
Humanitarianism	1.621	5.455	0.006
Openness	1.381	4.497	0.014
Religious	6.893	6.099	0.003
Power	3.811	3.491	0.035
Sentimental	4.29	4.479	0.014

3. Differences between pairs

The comparison between groups show statistically significant differences between certified yoga instructor and respondents who attend their yoga classes on the following variables: impulsiveness, neuroticism, excitement seeking, values, politeness / compliance, agreeableness.

In the researches of other authors (Nikić, 2011) there appeared statistically significant difference between these two groups of the yoga practitioners on the locus of control variable.

Table 7. Comparison of the group of yoga practitioners according to the aspects of the *NEO PI R* domain

Dependent Variable	(I) yoga	(J) yoga	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.(a)
DEPRESSION	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	0.647	0.644
		I am yoga instructor	2.871(*)	0.036
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-0.647	0.644
		I am yoga instructor	2.225	0.08
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-2.871(*)	0.036
		I am a student of the Academy	-2.225	0.08
SOCIAL DISCOMFORT	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	0.991	0.398
		I am yoga instructor	2.872(*)	0.012
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-0.991	0.398
		I am yoga instructor	1.881	0.076
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-2.872(*)	0.012
		I am a student of the Academy	-1.881	0.076
IMPULSIVENESS	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	0.902	0.437
		I am yoga instructor	2.355(*)	0.037
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-0.902	0.437
		I am yoga instructor	1.453	0.166
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-2.355(*)	0.037
		I am a student of the Academy	-1.453	0.166
NEUROTICISM	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	2.465	0.688
		I am yoga instructor	13.858(*)	0.021
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-2.465	0.688
		I am yoga instructor	11.393(*)	0.042

	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-13.858(*)	0.021
		I am a student of the Academy	-11.393(*)	0.042
EXCITEMENT SEEKING	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	2.09	0.117
		I am yoga instructor	2.854(*)	0.028
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-2.09	0.117
		I am yoga instructor	0.765	0.522
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-2.854(*)	0.028
		I am a student of the Academy	-0.765	0.522
VALUES	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	-1.781	0.062
		I am yoga instructor	-2.396(*)	0.01
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	1.781	0.062
		I am yoga instructor	-0.615	0.47
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	2.396(*)	0.01
		I am a student of the Academy	0.615	0.47
FAIRNESS/ STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	-0.658	0.558
		I am yoga instructor	-2.973(*)	0.007
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	0.658	0.558
		I am yoga instructor	-2.315(*)	0.024
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	2.973(*)	0.007
		I am a student of the Academy	2.315(*)	0.024
POLITENESS / COMPLIANCE	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	-0.142	0.895
		I am yoga instructor	-2.225(*)	0.034
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	0.142	0.895
		I am yoga instructor	-2.084(*)	0.033
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	2.225(*)	0.034
		I am a student of the Academy	2.084(*)	0.033
AGREEABLENESS	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	-2.159	0.636
		I am yoga instructor	-9.118(*)	0.04
	I am a student of	I go to yoga	2.159	0.636

	the Academy	classes		
		I am yoga instructor	-6.959	0.093
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	9.118(*)	0.04
		I am a student of the Academy	6.959	0.093
EXTERNALITY	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	0.348	0.207
		I am yoga instructor	0.339	0.2
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-0.348	0.207
		I am yoga instructor	-0.009	0.187
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	-0.339	0.2
		I am a student of the Academy	0.009	0.187

* Significance at the level 0,05

Table 8. Comparison of the group of yoga practitioners in the locus of control variables (Nikić, 2011)

Dependent Variable	(I) yoga	(J) yoga	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.(a)
LOCUS OF CONTROL	I go to yoga classes	I am a student of the Academy	0.026	0.795
		I am yoga instructor	-.230(*)	0.02
	I am a student of the Academy	I go to yoga classes	-0.026	0.795
		I am yoga instructor	-.256(*)	0.006
	I am yoga instructor	I go to yoga classes	.230(*)	0.192
		I am a student of the Academy	.256(*)	0.038

Analysis of variance gave statistically significant differences between groups on variables values, straightforwardness, achievement striving, persistence and externality.

In order to obtain a cleaner and clearer relationship between the level of involvement in yoga and the examined variables, there have been controlled gender, age and education of respondents. This was done in a way that they were set as covariates in multivariate analysis of covariance.

Multivariate analysis of covariance demonstrated a statistically significant difference between groups (practitioners in the yoga centers, students of the International Yoga Academy and certified yoga instructors) on the following variables: depression, social discomfort, impulsiveness, neuroticism, excitement seeking, values, straightforwardness, compliance and agreeableness.

Discussion

This paper examines correlation between the practice of yoga and the locus of control and anger management style. That is why three groups of respondents were tested, a longtime yoga instructors, students of the International Yoga Academy and people who practice yoga recreationally in classes of instructor. We hypothesized that respondents who practiced yoga technique for years have stronger internal locus of control, that people who practiced yoga techniques for years tend to tolerant behavior, are also open and agreeable, that the longtime yoga practitioners showed lower scores on the impulsiveness scale and have greater tolerance to frustration and that longtime practitioners of yoga easily adapt to the new situations, and stress, their emotions are stable and they are more rational. Respondents were given test *NEO PI R* and externality scale.

In previous studies it was found that long-time yoga practitioners showed reduced aggression and high vital need for understanding and learning about their environment because of the expectation that greater knowledge allows for better functioning. These people use life experience to help them cope with external events. These are adequate and well-balanced persons with a solid self-control, perform the action in the long run, are prepared to invest long effort to get to the goal (Janjušević, 2010).

Manage our emotions also includes the belief that we are responsible for what happens to us and that our peace cannot be disturb until we do not agree with it. The study has observed a significant effect of locus of control on expression of emotions. Internal locus of control has a significant impact on the lower level of expression of aggression.

The results of this study show that there is a correlation between the duration of the yoga techniques practice with aspects of the domain that contribute to experiencing and expressing anger.

For variable "duration of the yoga practice", the result shows that the lower level of assertiveness of yoga practitioners is associated with a longer period of practicing yoga. A higher level of fairness is associated with longer practicing of yoga. Assertiveness and competitiveness are in negative correlation.

Similar results were shown by the variables "duration of yoga instructor practice.

According to results of respondents who practice yoga recreationally in classes of instructor (variable "practicicing yoga"), it appears that the practice of yoga is associated with a low tendency to experience negative affects, the greater ability of frustration tolerance and a better adaptation to the new situations and stress. Practitioners of yoga require less external stimulation and excitement to experience the joy and fulfillment, they are tolerant to difference and more willing to question their beliefs and tend to express authentic feelings.

In multivariation analysis of covariance, comparison between groups showed statistically significant differences between certified yoga instructors and respondents who attend their yoga classes on the following variables: depression, social discomfort, impulsiveness, neuroticism, excitement seeking, values, fairness/straightforwardness, politeness/compliance, agreeableness.

Between the group of yoga instructors and students of the International Yoga Academy, in multivariate analysis of covariance it is showed a significant difference in the following variables: neuroticism, fairness/straightforwardness and politeness/compliance. In the students of the International Yoga Academy there is no statistically significant differences in other variables in relation to the other two groups.

In the group of yoga instructors, compared to the group that practices yoga, depression, social discomfort, impulsiveness, neuroticism, and excitement seeking are less expressed.

Instructors, compared to the practitioners, are less likely to experience shame, sadness, helplessness and loneliness; they are self-confident and have rarely experience dysphoric states (variable "depression").

Practitioners in relation to the instructors showed less expressed willingness to review their beliefs and tolerancy toward different (variable "values") and more showed the need for external stimulation and sensation (variable "excitement seekng").

On variable "impulsiviness", participants show less ability to control impulses and needs than the instructors of yoga, while the instructors are to a greater extent self-controlled and able to resist the temptation.

Participants in the yoga classes feel uncomfortable in the company, sensitivity to ridicule and feelings of inferiority, to a greater extent than instructors (variable "social discomfort"). These emotions are the core of neuroticism.

Neuroticism (different from the term "neurosis") is a person's general tendency to experience negative affects, to destabilize and experience difficulty adapting to the new situations and stress (Costa and McCrae, 1985).

Individuals with higher scores on the domain of neuroticism tend to have strong, destabilizing emotions, they are more prone to irrational ideas, have lower impulse control and have difficulty to adapt, while persons of lower scores are emotionally stable, more relaxed, able to cope with stress without anxiety or panic.

Higher scores represent a tendency to experience anger, frustration and rage. There is a greater willingness to experience anger, and the way of expression depends on the agreeableness scale. On this scale, yoga instructors show more gentleness, moderation, and agreeableness in relation to students and students of the Academy, as well as a more empathy and willingness to help and to trust that they will receive help from others. Variables "straightforwardness" and "compliance" are the aspects of the domain of agreeableness.

Yoga instructors demonstrate openness, freedom, honesty and immediacy to a greater extent in relation to students of Academy and practitioners in yoga centers (variable "straightforwardness").

The variable "compliance" is related to the interpersonal conflict. Yoga instructors show greater tolerance, openness, respect, kindness, courtesy and politeness, and less expressed lack of compliance and intolerance in relation to both groups, yoga centers' students and students of the International Yoga Academy.

The results of the scale of evaluation of externality (Bezinović, 1988) have not shown significant results in multivariate analysis of covariance with respect to the examined group of yoga practitioners. In studies by other authors (Nikić, 2011) there was shown a statistically significant difference between these groups of practitioners of yoga on the variable "locus of control", as well. On that occasion there was used instrument *LOK2002* (Kodžopeljić, Franceško, Mihić, 2002).

On the variable "locus of control", there is statistically significant difference between the yoga instructors and practitioners and between instructors and students of the International Yoga Academy. Between practitioners and students of the Academy there are no statistically significant differences. Yoga instructors express a greater level of internal locus of control comparing to both groups - practitioners and students of the Academy. This suggests that yoga instructors in higher levels feel that they manage their own lives rather than believe that the events in their life are the result of external circumstances. This approach shows greater independence and the ability to locate the exact problem. People with internal locus of control have better control of impulses, their ideas are more prone to rational and they have stable emotions, and thus demonstrate the potential for lower ability to experience and express anger.

Conclusion

The results of this study confirmed that the practice of yoga techniques, including physical exercises of yoga, breathing techniques, meditation and relaxation, contribute to the personality test results that show a greater ability to control emotions and the ways of their expression.

By practicing yoga techniques, better understanding of our own ways of reacting can be achieved, better control of impulses and needs, less tendency to experience anger, frustration and rage and moderation and agreeableness are more expressed.

Results of multivariate analysis of covariance showed that long-time yoga instructors have statistically significantly different results from participants who practice yoga and students of the International Yoga Academy in the studied variables, and therefore we conclude that the practice of yoga techniques contributes to the adaptability and emotional stability that are important factors in management of frustration, anger and rage.

It turned out that people who practiced yoga techniques for years are more prone to tolerant behavior, they are also open and cooperative, their emotions are more stable and their thoughts are rational, they show lower scores on the impulsiveness scale and have greater tolerance for frustration.

The results at the scale of externality (Bezinović, 1988) have not shown significance on the variables "duration of the yoga techniques practice", "duration of the yoga instructor practice" and "practicing yoga", whereas studies of other authors (Nikić, 2011) who have studied the same group of practitioners by other instruments (for testing locus of control it was used instrument *LOK2002* (Kodžopeljić, Franceško, Mihić)) showed a statistically significant difference between the yoga instructors and practitioners and between instructors and students of the Yoga Academy where yoga instructors express a greater internal locus of control than both groups - practitioners and students of the Academy. In this study, yoga instructors have shown a greater degree of internal locus of control in relation to the other two groups, indicating that they have better impulse control and more stable emotions, and therefore a lower willingness to experience and express anger. We suggest additional attention to be devoted to this phenomenon in the future studies.

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