

## **PERCEPTION OF WORKING PROFESSIONALS TOWARDS ATTRACTIVENESS IN RELATION TO YOGA**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Interpersonal Attractiveness, whether physical, social or task, has a positive relationship to major life outcomes such as mate selection, employee recruitment etc. Of the various practises that people engage in to work on their attractiveness, Yoga constitutes to be an important one. Building upon the previous studies and taking further the discourse on Yoga and Interpersonal Attractiveness, the current study tries to understand the perception of Working Class Professionals towards Interpersonal Attractiveness of Yoga and Non-Yoga Practitioners. 60 Working Professionals (30 male and 30 female) were shown photographs of Yoga and Non-Yoga Practitioners. Participants had to rate these Yoga and Non-Yoga Practitioners with regards to their Physical, Social and Task Attractiveness. These ratings were taken using the Interpersonal Attraction Scale (McCroskey & McCain, 1974). Results revealed a significant difference between the Physical and Social Attractiveness of Yoga and Non-Yoga practitioners. Discussions and implications for the same along with future suggestions have been provided.

**Keywords:** Interpersonal Attractiveness, Yoga, Working Class Professionals, Physical Attractiveness, Social Attractiveness, Task Attractiveness

### **INTRODUCTION**

Attractiveness has received important consideration in contemporary world. Research within social psychology suggests that, Physical Attractiveness matters for important life outcomes. Attractive adults receive more attention, positive social interaction, and help from others than do unattractive adults. In addition, they achieve greater occupational success, have more dating experience, are more popular, and—perhaps as a result of positive treatment—enjoy better physical and mental health (Langlois, Kalakanis, Rubenstein, Larson, Hallam & Smoot, 2000, p. 422). There is a reason to believe that the emphasis on Attractiveness is a panhuman

characteristic. Although some aspects of it may vary across time and place, research by Cunningham, Roberts, Barbee, Druen, and Wu (1995) and Zebrowitz, Montepare, and Lee (1993) suggests that standards of beauty are somewhat universal and people tend to agree about who is and is not attractive, both within and across cultural and ethnic groups.

Furthermore, Buss et al. (1990) suggest that Attractiveness is an important consideration in mate preference across several diverse societies. Perceiving and processing beauty appear to require little information as well as attention. These facts may make beauty difficult to ignore, possibly leading to its importance in social evaluations (Olson & Marshuetz, 2005, p. 498). According to Ritz and Waldner (2011), for a successful development of human resource selection and marketing measures, public administration also takes into consideration an attractive employer and how employer Attractiveness can benefit the organization. The positive association between Attractiveness and life outcomes may be less readily apparent in worlds where people experience relationship as an environmentally afforded fact, and personal choice, personal preference (as a determinant of choice), and attraction (as a basis of preference) may be somewhat irrelevant for the creation and maintenance of satisfying relationships. However, people today, rate an individual in terms of his/her dimension of Attractiveness; whether physical (related to appearance); social (related to behaviour in a group setting) or task (related to ability to complete a task effectively) and this rating is purely based on personal choice of whether they find an individual attractive or not.

It is no wonder then that people in contemporary settings devote higher time and attention to their Attractiveness. Various qualities play an important role in demonstrating Attractiveness. For instance, Duran and Kelly (1988) worked on communicative competence and found that it influences perceived task, social, and physical Attractiveness, optimists are perceived as socially more attractive than pessimists (Bohm, Schutz, Rentzsch, Korner, & Funke, 2010, p. 431), higher duty-orientation is associated with task Attractiveness, etc. When an individual gains mastery over most of the important dimensions of life, people tend to perceive themselves as more attractive. One such practice that people engage in to increase their appearance and outlook towards life is 'Yoga'.

Yoga originated in India more than 4,000 years ago and, in its original form, consists of a complex system of spiritual, moral, and physical practices aimed at attaining self-awareness (Impett, Daubenmier, & Hirschman, 2006, p 40). Besides weight loss, yoga benefits people in all the aspects of life. Chandwani et al. (2010) found that it is associated with statistically and clinically significant improvements in the Quality of Life. There is also growing evidence by Dorota, Górna and Szopa (2004) that yoga practice supports physical and mental abilities and allows turning personal potential talents into a good account. Singh and Soamya (2010)

empirically established the negative association of mindfulness training and breathing exercises in Yoga to stress and a positive correlation of them with physio-cognitive aspects of well-being. Further, Mulla and Krishnan (2010) found that it is associated with greater responsibility taking, higher charisma and interpersonal motivation. Integrated yoga is an efficacious means of improving the quality of life even in pregnant women and enhancing their interpersonal relationships (Rakhshani, Maharana, Raghuram, Nagendra & Venkatram, 2010, p. 1447). Finally, Bhavanani (2012) suggested that by improving all the dimensions of life, Yoga indirectly contributes to an individual's attractive appearance not only in the physical dimension, but also in social and task Attractiveness.

The above information guides the researchers to focus their attention to study Attractiveness in relation to Yoga. In view of this, some of the specific dimensions of Attractiveness such as Physical Attractiveness, Social Attractiveness and Task Attractiveness need to be studied scientifically. This fact promoted the investigator to take up this challenge and throw light on the perceptions that people tend to have of Yoga Practitioners as well as Non-Yoga Practitioners on their Interpersonal Attractiveness. Hence, the present study is taken up with the following objectives and hypotheses:

### **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

To compare the perception of male and female Working class Professionals towards Interpersonal Attractiveness of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners.

### **HYPOTHESES**

The following hypothesis is formulated to seek answers for the above raised research objective. Thus, it is hypothesized that;

**H<sub>a1</sub>**: Working class Professionals will perceive Yoga Practitioners to be high on Interpersonal Attractiveness (Dimension wise: Social Attractiveness, Physical Attractiveness and Task Attractiveness) compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners.

Further, in addition to the above main hypothesis, the differences between the groups are also verified with the help of following specific hypotheses:

**H<sub>a1.1</sub>**: Female Working Professionals will perceive Yoga Practitioners to be high on Interpersonal Attractiveness (Dimension wise: Social Attractiveness, Physical Attractiveness and Task Attractiveness) compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners.

**H<sub>a1.2</sub>:** Male Working Professionals will perceive Yoga Practitioners to be high on Interpersonal Attractiveness (Dimension wise: Social Attractiveness, Physical Attractiveness and Task Attractiveness) compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners.

### **SAMPLE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted on working professionals in and around Margao Area. These professionals were selected from Manipal Institute of Computer Education, Goa, and were in the age group from 24-59. The total sample of 60 individuals was selected for the study amongst which 30 were males and 30 females.

### **INSTRUMENTS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION**

#### **– Personal Data Questionnaire**

Personal data sheet was used to collect demographic information of the subjects such as age, gender, educational qualification, early background, religion, social class, number of siblings, order of birth, Practice of physical exercise, and satisfaction in life prepared for the purpose of the study.

#### **- Interpersonal Attraction Scale (IAS) (McCroskey & McCain, 1974)**

Interpersonal Attraction Scale developed by McCroskey and McCain (1974) was used to measure perception of Interpersonal Attractiveness of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners by the sample. The scale consists of three dimensions namely Social Attraction, Task Attraction, and Physical Attraction. The authors suggested that these sub scales are related but are independent of one other. The Interpersonal Attraction Scale consists of 5 alternative response pattern ranging from '1=Strongly Disagree', '2= Disagree', '3= Neutral', '4= Agree', '5= Strongly Agree'. There are 18 statements, and 6 items in each dimension. McCroskey and McCain (1974) reported internal reliabilities for Social Attraction, .84; Task Attraction, .81; and Physical Attraction, .86. Further, Split-half reliability was reported as .90 for Social; .87 for Task; and .92 for Physical Attraction (McCroskey, Richmond, Daly, & Cox, 1975). The IAS has been used rather extensively across the communication discipline and to a lesser extent in related fields. Attraction has been positively associated with a host of communication behaviors and perceptions, providing ample evidence for construct validity.

### **METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

In the present study primary data has been collected from 60 working professionals. The investigator personally visited the institutions after obtaining the permission for appointment and

met the working professionals through different means of communication. The purpose and the nature of the visit were made known to them. Permission to administer the measures was sought. 4 photographs (two of Yoga Practitioners and two of Non- Yoga Practitioners, each having one male and one female) were shown to all the working professionals and they had to rate them on physical, social and task Attractiveness.

**Scrutinizing:**

The responses given by each participant are carefully scrutinized for wrong markings, omissions and commissions. Answer sheets, which were complete in all respects, were retained and the rest were rejected.

**Data Analysis/Statistics:**

The obtained data were analyzed using (SPSS 17th version). Both the hypotheses, Ha<sub>1.1</sub> and Ha<sub>1.2</sub> are verified with the application of ‘t’ test.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**Table 1: Table showing Mean, SDs and ‘t’-values for the Perceptions of Female Working Professionals towards Interpersonal Attractiveness (Dimension wise: Social Attractiveness, Physical Attractiveness, Task Attractiveness) of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners**

Variables	Groups				t-value
	Yoga Practitioners		Non-Yoga Practitioners		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Social Attractiveness</b>	59.65	05.47	42.41	6.61	10.99***
<b>Physical Attractiveness</b>	57.67	03.98	44.66	3.24	13.87***
<b>Task Attractiveness</b>	71.62	31.41	59.68	38.56	01.31

\*\*\*p<0.001; Very Highly Significant

An inspection of Table 1 reveals that the perceptions of Female Working Professionals towards Yoga Practitioners is above average in Social Attractiveness (59.65), Physical Attractiveness (57.67) as well as in Task Attractiveness (71.62), compared to mean scores of Non-Yoga Practitioners which are below average in Social Attractiveness (42.41), Physical Attractiveness

(44.66) and Task Attractiveness (59.68) respectively. Further, perception of Female Working Professionals towards Yoga Practitioners and Non- Yoga Practitioners differs significantly from each other in two dimensions of Interpersonal Attractiveness. In other words, perception of Female Working Professionals towards Yoga Practitioners is found to be significantly very high in Social Attractiveness ( $t=10.99, p<0.001$ ) and Physical Attractiveness ( $t=10.99, p<0.001$ ) compared to their perception towards Non- Yoga Practitioners. However, there is no significant difference in the perception of Female Working Professionals towards Task Attractiveness of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners ( $t=01.31, p>0.05$ ).

**Table 2: Table showing Mean, SDs and ‘t’-values for the Perceptions of Male Working Professionals towards Interpersonal Attractiveness (Dimension wise: Social Attractiveness, Physical Attractiveness, Task Attractiveness) of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners**

Variables	Groups				t-value
	Yoga Practitioners		Non-Yoga Practitioners		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
<b>Social Attractiveness</b>	58.75	04.88	42.17	04.27	13.97***
<b>Physical Attractiveness</b>	56.45	03.86	44.40	03.34	12.91***
<b>Task Attractiveness</b>	63.96	33.266	54.50	36.99	01.04

\*\*\* $p<0.001$ ; Very Highly Significant

A perusal of Table 2 reveals that the perceptions of Male Working Professionals towards yoga practitioners is above average in Social Attractiveness (58.75), Physical Attractiveness (56.45) and Task Attractiveness (63.96) compared to mean scores of Non-Yoga Practitioners which are below average in Social Attractiveness (42.17), Physical Attractiveness (44.40) and Task Attractiveness (54.50) respectively. Further, perception of Male Working Professionals towards Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners differs significantly from each other in two dimensions of their Interpersonal Attractiveness. In other words, perception of Male Working Professionals towards Yoga Practitioners is found to be significantly very high in Social Attractiveness ( $t=13.97, p<0.001$ ) and Physical Attractiveness ( $t=12.91, p<0.001$ ), compared to their perception towards Non-Yoga Practitioners. However, there is no significant difference in the perception of Male Working Professionals towards Task Attractiveness of Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners ( $t=01.04, p>0.05$ ).

Both male and female Working Professionals have perceived Yoga Practitioners to be significantly very high on the dimensions of Social and Physical Attractiveness compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners. Working Professionals perceiving Yoga Practitioners to be significantly high on the dimension of Social Attractiveness could be due to the fact that Yoga practitioners tend to have a very good capacity to maintain their relationships. They tend to have a pleasing mood and an always approachable outlook due to which it becomes easier for people to develop relations with them. According to Woolery, Myers, Sternlieb and Zeltzer (2004), Yoga has an uplifting effect on peoples' moods, alleviating all symptoms of negativity. The present study is in line with a study conducted on Yoga and Interpersonal relationships by Bhavanani (2012). According to him, all aspects of our human personality are cultured through the process of Yoga helping us evolve towards perfection. By destroying all the psychological afflictions (biases, sufferings, misconceptions etc.) that warp our vision, Yoga tends to help people relate to others and see the story from their perspectives. Also, when it comes to workplace, people tend to be in search of a companion with qualities such as an empathetic outlook, ability to listen patiently, a helping nature etc. which are possessed by Yoga Practitioners.

Working Professionals have also rated Yoga Practitioners significantly higher on the dimension of Physical Attractiveness. This could be due to the physical benefits that Yoga offers its practitioners. Yoga, also involving Asanas and other physical exercises is one way of getting the body in shape and giving it a more attractive outlook. Recent studies by Impett, Daubenmie, and Hirschman (2006) have shown that in an effort to maximize favorable treatment from others, girls and women may monitor and shape their appearance to increase their physical Attractiveness. And practices such as Hatha yoga, the system on which much of Western yoga is based, involves physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation (Riley, 2004, p. 20) that tones the body giving it a correct and balanced outlook. Yoga and meditation have also been linked to reduced or delayed Aging, a factor that all the women in their adulthood are concerned with (Dhar, 1997, p. 159). Further, most of the males answering the questionnaire belonged to the age group of forties and fifties which is also a span of health issues. There is a huge body of evidence suggesting that Yoga can restore the physical health and body by curbing all the health problems and promoting positive Physical changes (Cowen & Adams, 2005, p. 211).

In case of Task Attractiveness, the perceptions of Male and Female Working Professionals do not differ significantly for Yoga Practitioner and Non-Yoga Practitioner. This could be due to the fact that Work and Task are most important factors for all the people. Nowadays, standards of work and professions have risen benefiting both men as well women (Waddar & Keni, 2015, p. 306). And factors like necessity to work, continuous need to prove oneself in the competing world, overcoming all the work deadlines etc. make everyone work in the same pace, whether practicing Yoga or not. With the rising work demands and the standards, people from various

dimensions whether poor or rich, educated or uneducated, literate or illiterate, friendly or hostile, attractive or not; all are recruited for some or the other work in the organizations. The same applies for Yoga as well. Though a person practicing Yoga might get higher rating than the one not practicing it; both are offered some job and people feel both can be counted upon to get the job done. However, this study contradicts with a study conducted by Mulla and Krishnan (2010) where the findings suggest that Yoga practitioners are significantly higher in areas of transformational leadership and work related issues compared to those not practicing Yoga at all.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The obtained results and discussed facts have led to the following conclusions:

1. Male Working Professionals have perceived Yoga Practitioners to be high on Interpersonal Attractiveness in terms of Social Attractiveness and Physical Attractiveness compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners.
2. Female Working Professionals have perceived Yoga Practitioners to be high on Interpersonal Attractiveness in terms of Social Attractiveness and Physical Attractiveness compared to Non-Yoga Practitioners.
3. There is no significant difference found between Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners by Male Students in their perception towards Task Attractiveness.
4. There is no significant difference found between Yoga Practitioners and Non-Yoga Practitioners by Female Working Professionals and Male Working Professionals in their perception towards Task Attractiveness.

## **ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The nature and purpose of the study was explained to the Working Professionals before administering the questionnaire after which only the willing Working Professionals were taken for the study. Confidentiality was assured to the participants.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE SUGGESTIONS**

The findings of the study reflect fairly well the prevailing state of Yoga in connection to Interpersonal Attractiveness. This call for special attention to understand the benefits of Yoga to help Working Professionals balance their lives and to plan for Yoga Training to reduce the negative feelings and develop positive attitude in different paths of life. Present study will further help Working Professionals to be effective in their personal and professional lives. Future studies can be extended to wider geographical area and cultural diversities so that the study may highlight the similarities or differences, if any. Moreover, since in the present study most of the

Working Professionals were into teaching profession, the future study may be conducted on different professionals who are working for different organizations to know the differential impact on Interpersonal Attractiveness.

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