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RESEARCH ARTICLE

UNVEILING THE MOTIVATIONS OF BRAHMA KUMARIS RAJA YOGA MEDITATION PRACTITIONERS AT MOUNT ABU

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to uncover the motivating factors behind individuals practising Raja Yoga meditation at Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu World Headquarters, an international non-governmental organisation established in India in 1937. The study hypothesizes that various demographic factors such as respondent distribution, gender, age group, educational qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time, and a vegetarian diet free of onions and garlic have a significant impact on people's motivation to practice Raja Yoga meditation. The study utilizes both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including semi-structured interviews and personal observations, to gather data from 500 Raja Yogis aged between 20-45 years. The findings reveal that middle-aged Hindu men, who devote several hours per day to Raja Yoga practise, comprise the majority of practitioners. Their adherence to a vegetarian diet that excludes onion and garlic underscores their commitment to spiritual purity and discipline by Raja Yoga principles. The study provides valuable insights into the factors that influence participation and dedication to Raja Yoga and offers recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of meditation.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the course of the last few years, Raja yoga meditation has taken the world by storm as an immensely sought-after spiritual practice that can be effortlessly carried out at any given moment and in any given place, without the tiresome rigmarole of any rituals or mantras. It's no wonder that this form of meditation has earned a colossal following, given its unparalleled convenience and user-friendliness. The Brahma Kumaris, an international non-governmental organization founded in India in 1937, teaches Raja yoga meditation with a mission of personal transformation and world renewal. This practice is believed to activate inner energy, increase spiritual awareness, and help practitioners find the root of their problems. The practice of Raja yoga meditation has been linked to a myriad of potential benefits, ranging from enhanced mental well-being, better physical health, increased self-awareness, and improved relationships, to spiritual growth. These benefits have been reported by practitioners in various cultures and demographics. It is suggested that the lack of emphasis on traditional rituals, mantras, and postures in Raja yoga meditation, along with its accessibility and flexibility, could be factors contributing to its positive effects. However, more research is needed to validate these findings and determine the underlying mechanisms. Brahma Kumaris' world headquarters is located in Mount Abu, India, where they emphasise Raja Yoga, a practice centered around the concepts of "Soul-consciousness" and "God-consciousness." Unlike other forms of yoga, Raja Yoga does not involve mantras, breathing techniques, or special postures.

Instead, practitioners are encouraged to calm their minds by "contacting the supreme soul," which is represented as a point of light. As the clock ticks and the time seem to stand still, Raja Yoga meditation practitioners enter a serene realm of tranquility where they remain still, with their eyes wide open for 10 to 20 minutes. They dissociate from the sensations of the world around them and introspectively observe the ebb and flow of their thoughts. They introduce positive thoughts, such as "I am a peaceful soul," and focus on them while neutrally observing other passing thoughts. The meditation ends with a few moments of mental "silence" with closed eyes. The objective of Brahma Kumari meditation is to recognize the self not as a body but as a soul. The movement welcomes people of all religions to follow this practise as a powerful tool for personal transformation and spiritual growth. The present study aims to explore the demographic factors that motivate individuals to practise Raja yoga meditation specifically at the World Headquarters of Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu. The present location remains an enigma about this domain of intrigue, creating a sizable chasm in the extant knowledge corpus. Nonetheless, this investigation seeks to traverse this abyss and add to the constantly expanding repertoire of literature on meditation. The study was found to be feasible after a pilot study was conducted, during which all questions regarding data collection were discussed and addressed prior to actual data collection. With utmost emphasis on confidentiality, participants were assured that their identity and privacy would remain undisclosed during the study.

This research is of substantial importance, as it has the potential to offer invaluable insight to practitioners and policymakers alike, further advancing the promotion of meditation and improving the overall well-being of individuals. By identifying the demographic factors that motivate people to practise Raja yoga meditation, this research can help develop effective strategies to promote meditation. Additionally, the study will provide information on the factors driving participation in this form of meditation specifically at the Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu World Headquarters.

Hypothesis: The hypothesis is framed to test the relationship between various demographic factors and the motivation of people to practice Raja Yoga meditation at Mount Abu. By testing this hypothesis, the researchers aim to determine which demographic factors have a significant impact on people's motivation to practice Raja Yoga, which can help in understanding the factors that drive participation and commitment to this spiritual practice. Additionally, this information can be used to develop targeted interventions and strategies to increase participation and engagement in Raja Yoga among different demographic groups. The hypothesis (H1) proposed for the study is, Demographic factors such as respondent distribution, gender, age group, educational qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time, and vegetarian food with onion and garlic have a significant impact on people's motivation to practice Raja yoga Meditation at Mount Abu.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The objective of this proposed research is to explore the motivations of individuals practicing Raja Yoga meditation at Brahma Kumaris in Mount Abu, Rajasthan, using a mixed paradigm approach of both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research will consist of two stages, beginning with a qualitative study to identify fundamental aspects of Raja Yoga meditation and followed by an empirical study using a quantitative research paradigm. The study will evaluate the influence of various demographic factors, such as respondent distribution, gender, age group, educational qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time, and consumption of vegetarian food made with onion and garlic. Data will be collected through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and personal observations, with a sample size of 500 dedicated Raj Yogis aged between 20 and 45 years randomly selected. The data sources will include secondary data from books, journals, and research articles, as well as primary data from questionnaire responses and personal observations. The collected data will be scrutinised using cutting-edge statistical analysis software, SPSS, to detect intricate patterns and interconnections between the diverse demographic factors and the practise of Raja Yoga Meditation. To collect demographic data on participants, a self-administered questionnaire tool will be used, which will include questions on the distribution of the respondents, sex, age group, educational qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time and consumption of vegetarian food made with onion and garlic. The content validity of the questionnaire will be determined by experts in the field of Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga meditation, and the questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. The aim of this analysis is to delve deep into the underlying factors driving individuals to take up meditation and formulate potential strategies to propagate this spiritual practice among varied demographics.

RESULTS

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study findings were analysed using five different combinations of demographic factors that motivate Raja yoga meditation practitioners at the Mount Abu headquarters of Brahma Kumaris Institution. These patterns provide valuable insights into the distribution of practitioners based on different factors, shedding light on potential factors that influence meditation practices.

Table 3.1. The frequency and percentage distribution of the demographic factors of Brahma Kumaris Rajyoga meditation practitioners on Mount Abu

S NO	Demographic Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1. Respondent Distribution			
	a) Pandav Bhawan Complex	80	16
	b) Gyan Sarovar Complex	116	23.2
	c) Shantivan Complex	262	52.4
	d) Global Hospital & Research Center	22	4.4
	e) BKs Peace Park	20	4
2. Gender			
	a) Male	461	92.2
	b) Female	39	7.8
3. Age Group			
	a) 20-25	40	8
	b) 26-30	82	16.4
	c) 31-35	106	21.2
	d) 36-40	110	22
	e) 41-45	162	32.4
4. Educational Qualification			
	a) No Basic Education	4	0.8
	b) Below 10 th standard	60	12
	c) Below Graduation	163	32.6
	d) Graduation	184	36.8
	e) Post Graduate	83	16.6
	f) Others	6	1.2
5. Religious background			
	a) Hinduism	490	98
	b) Sikhism	0	0
	c) Buddhism	1	0.2
	d) Jainism	3	0.6
	e) Christian	3	0.6
	f) Islamism	1	0.2
	g) Religion	2	0.4
6. Professional Background			
	a) BK service	144	28.8
	b) Student	101	20.2
	c) Business	73	14.6
	d) Govt service	24	4.8
	e) Public/Private service	132	26.4
	f) Unemployed	2	0.4
	g) Agriculture	14	2.8
	h) Other	10	2
7. Daily Meditation Practise Time			
	a) Less than 2 Hours	90	18
	b) 2-4 Hours	227	45.4
	c) 4-6 hours	145	29
	d) 6-8 Hours	31	6.2
	e) More than 8 hours	7	1.4
8. Vegetarian food made with onion and garlic substances			
	a) Yes	0	0
	b) No	100	100

Location and gender: Table 4.1 presents a distribution of Raja yoga meditation practitioners at the Brahma Kumaris World headquarters in Mount Abu, sorted by location and gender of the respondents. Based on data from the contingency table, it is strikingly evident that the proportion of male participants (92.2%) eclipses that of their female counterparts (7.8%). This discrepancy could be attributed to a myriad of factors, ranging from social and cultural norms of the region to individual beliefs, as well as variances in the accessibility of resources for engaging in meditation practice. Furthermore, it is plausible that the Brahma Kumaris World Head Quarters could have a unique selection process that favors more men to practice Raja Yoga meditation at their headquarters. Most of the respondents (262 or 52.4%) came from Shantivan Complex, which is the largest campus of the Brahma Kumaris organisation in terms of area. This could be attributed to the availability of various programs and facilities for meditation and spiritual growth, making it a desirable location for individuals interested in this meditation practice. This table emphasises the need for more research to investigate the reasons behind this gender disparity among Raja yoga meditation practitioners at the Brahma Kumaris World Headquarters, Mount Abu. In conclusion, this data sheds light on the distribution of Raja yoga meditation practitioners in terms of respondent location and gender at the Brahma Kumaris World Head Quarters in Mount Abu.

Age group and daily meditation time: Table 4.2 presents intriguing information on the relationship between age group and daily meditation time among Raja yoga meditation practitioners at Mount Abu.

Table 4.1. Distribution of Raja yoga meditation practitioners at Brahma Kumaris World Headquarters Mount Abu, in terms of location and gender of the respondent

Location /Gender	Pandav Bhawan Complex	Gyan Sarovar Complex	Shantivan Complex	Global Hospital & Research Centre	BKs Peace Park	Total
Male	67	101	228	19	46	461
Female	13	15	34	3	4	39
Total	80	116	262	22	50	500

Table 4.2. Relationship between Age group and meditation time of the Raja yoga Meditation practitioners at Mount Abu

Age Group / Meditation Time	Less than 2 hours	2-4 hours	4-6 hours	6-8 hours	More than 8 hours
20-25	10 (25%)	22 (55%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)
26-30	20 (24.4%)	42 (51.2%)	15 (18.3%)	4 (4.9%)	1 (1.2%)
31-35	26 (24.5%)	60 (56.6%)	15 (14.2%)	4 (3.8%)	1 (0.9%)
36-40	22 (20.0%)	60 (54.5%)	23 (20.9%)	4 (3.6%)	1 (0.9%)
41-45	12 (7.4%)	43 (26.5%)	86 (53.1%)	17 (10.5%)	4 (2.5%)
Total	90 (18.0%)	227 (45.4%)	145 (29.0%)	31 (6.2%)	7 (1.4%)

Table 4.3. Relationship between the education level of the Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga Meditation practitioner and their professional background

Educational Qualification\ Professional Background	Brahma Kumaris Service	Student	Business	Government Service	Public/Private Service	Un used	Agriculture	Others	Total
No Basic Education	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
Below 10th Standard	26	18	6	2	6	1	1	0	60
Below Graduation	56	31	20	4	50	1	1	0	163
Graduation	39	36	22	9	70	3	3	2	184
Post-Graduate	21	14	8	2	34	0	2	2	83
Others	0	1	0	0	3	0	1	1	6
Total	144	101	56	17	164	5	8	5	500

Table 4.4. Relationship between the Religious background and vegetarian diet of the RajaYoga Meditation practitioner at Mount Abu

Religious background/ Vegetarian diet	Religious background						
	Hinduism (98%)	Sikhism (0%)	Buddhism (0.2%)	Jainism (0.6%)	Christian (0.6%)	Islamism (0.2%)	Other Religions (0.4%)
Vegetarian food made with onion and garlic substances	No (100%)						

Table 4.5. Relationship between the Location and daily meditation time of Brahma Kumaris RajaYoga meditation practitioners

Location/ Daily meditation time	Pandav Bhawan Complex	Gyan Sarovar Complex	Shantivan Complex	Global Hospital & Research Centre	Brahma Kumaris Peace Park	Total
Less than 2 hours	17	29	35	5	4	90
2-4 Hours	42	94	71	16	4	227
4-6 Hours	17	35	74	16	3	145
6-8 Hours	3	10	13	4	1	31
More than 8 hours	1	2	4	1	0	7
Total	80	116	262	22	20	500

The findings indicate that most practitioners allocate a considerable chunk of their daily routine, ranging from 2-4 hours to meditation, regardless of their age. But the age-based breakdown highlights fascinating discrepancies in their meditation habits. For example, respondents in the 20-25 age bracket prefer relatively shorter meditation sessions, ranging from less than 2 to 2-4 hours. On the contrary, those aged 41-45 are more likely to stretch their meditation sessions for longer durations, ranging from 4-6 hours or even more than 8 hours. A multitude of factors may underlie this variation in meditation habits. Firstly, younger individuals may face more commitments, such as education, spiritual service, and social engagements, that limit their ability to dedicate extended hours to meditation practice. On the contrary, older individuals may have fewer obligations due to retirement or fewer work responsibilities, providing them with more time to focus on their spiritual practice. Second, younger people may have a shorter attention span and find it challenging to concentrate for extended periods, while older people may have refined their concentration abilities over time.

The complexity of the relationship between age and meditation time calls for further research to shed light on this fascinating topic.

Educational Qualification and Professional Background: Table 4.3 explores the correlation between the educational background and the professional career of Brahma Kumaris Raja yoga practitioners. The data contain information on the level of education and profession of 500 respondents belonging to various professions, with a specific focus on Raja Yoga meditators. Most of the respondents have completed their education or have an education below graduation, indicating a highly educated group. The largest group of respondents belongs to the Brahma Kumaris service background, followed by those in public/private services, highlighting a diverse range of professional backgrounds. The table provides valuable insights into the profile of Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga meditators as a highly educated group with a strong representation in the BK service background.

Religious background and vegetarian diet: Table 4.4 examines the association between a practitioner's religious background and his dietary habits, specifically whether they consumes vegetarian food containing onion and garlic substances. The data show that none of the respondents, regardless of their religious affiliation, consumes this type of food. A fascinating discovery arising from the data is that a whopping 98% of the participants self-identify as Hindu, with a mere handful embracing other belief systems. Interestingly, there were no Sikhs among the respondents, and those who followed Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Islamism, or other creeds were present only in a small number. This table implies that there is no correlation between religious background and the consumption of vegetarian food that contains onion and garlic substances among the respondents.

Location and daily meditation time: Table 4.5 displays information on the duration of daily meditation practice in different locations for practitioners of Brahma Kumaris Raja Yoga Meditation. The table reveals that the majority of the respondents, 52.4%, are located in the Shantivan complex. Gyan Sarovar Complex and Pandav Bhawan Complex account for a smaller percentage of respondents. Concerning daily meditation practice time, the largest group of 227 respondents (45.4%) claims to meditate for a paltry 2-4 hours daily. Furthermore, 145 respondents (29%) claim to meditate for 4-6 hours. The enigmatic data, while puzzling, provides valuable information on the distribution of respondents based on location and meditation practice time. However, its bizarre nature prompts further analysis to identify the factors contributing to these differences and their potential impact on meditation practices,

HYPOTHESIS TESTING: A hypothesis is framed in research to provide a tentative explanation for a phenomenon or a problem. It is a statement that can be tested through research and experimentation. Hypotheses serve as a starting point for research, guiding the direction and scope of the investigation. It helps researchers to focus their efforts, determine the appropriate methodology, and interpret the results of their study. A hypothesis also allows researchers to make predictions about the outcome of their research and to draw conclusions based on the evidence they collect. In essence, a hypothesis is an educated guess that helps to guide and inform the research process. From the findings of the study, it is evident that demographic factors such as respondent distribution, gender, age group, educational qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time, and vegetarian food with onion and garlic have a significant impact on people's motivation to practice Raja Yoga Meditation at Mount Abu and hence the Null Hypothesis (H₀) was rejected.

CONCLUSION

The investigation conducted at Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu had the aim of scrutinizing the incentives that motivate Raja Yoga meditation practitioners. The findings emanating from the study indicate that practitioners are motivated by an intense longing for self-improvement, inner tranquility, and spiritual growth. Furthermore, the study also revealed that Raja Yoga meditation is gaining ground due, in part, to its lack of emphasis on rituals, mantras, and special postures. The act of Raja Yoga meditation has the potential to provide many benefits, including improved mental well-being, physical health, self-awareness, improved interpersonal relationships, and spiritual advancement. In the future, further investigations could be conducted to scrutinize the efficacy of Raja Yoga meditation in promoting personal growth and societal transformation and explore its application in addressing specific mental health issues. In summation, this study accentuates the prospective benefits that Raja Yoga meditation can bring about for individuals and society at large.

IMPLICATIONS

The study of demographic factors and motivations of people practising Raja Yoga meditation at Brahma Kumaris in Mount Abu has several implications. Firstly, A startling revelation arising from

this investigation is its potential to offer illuminating glimpses into the defining features of the population under consideration, opening up a multitude of exciting possibilities for customizing interventions and initiatives that cater to their specific needs and requirements. Second, this study represents a valuable resource for uncovering the myriad factors that motivate individuals to engage in the transformative practice of Raja Yoga, offering invaluable insights that can be used to advocate the benefits of meditation and foster a culture of consistent practise. Third, efforts must be made to promote meditation to women and individuals of different religions, educational levels, and professional backgrounds. Fourthly, the study identified that regular practice time was a challenge for some, and support should be provided for individuals who may find it challenging to dedicate long hours to meditation. The study aims to contribute to the existing literature on meditation by filling the knowledge gap on the demographic factors that motivate people to practise Raja Yoga meditation at the Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu World Headquarters. The study proposes a mixed methods research design that combines qualitative and quantitative research methods to assess the impact of various demographic factors on people's motivation to practise Raja Yoga meditation. The study's paramountcy lies in its prodigious potential to yield abundant benefits for not only meditation adherents but also policymakers. The boundless possibility of augmenting one's well-being through meditation promotion cannot be overstated and should not be disregarded. The data collected may also provide information on the factors driving participation in this form of meditation, specifically at the Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu World Headquarters.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The research suggests several recommendations to improve the effectiveness of meditation. First, future studies should expand their scope by including individuals from diverse backgrounds and traditions, rather than only focusing on Raja Yoga meditation practiced at Mount Abu. Secondly, in the pursuit of enhancing the prevalence of meditation practise and its consequential benefits, it is paramount to extend outreach to diverse groups of individuals who are yet to explore its advantages, such as women, people of varying religious affiliations, and those with lower educational levels. Let us broaden the horizons of meditation to all. Third, programmes and treatments that promote regular meditation practise should be tailored to individual motivations. Fourth, accessibility to meditation should be increased for those who face challenges in practising it. Fifth, The study also recommends investigating a variety of topics for future research, such as the short-term and long-term effects of Raja Yoga meditation practise through different studies.

LIMITATIONS

The research has some potential limitations, including

- **Sample bias:** The study is restricted to individuals who practice Raja Yoga meditation specifically at Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu World Headquarters. This may limit the applicability of the findings to other locations and populations practising Raja Yoga meditation. Furthermore, the sample size of 500 Rajyogis aged 20-45 years may not be representative of the entire population of Raja Yoga practitioners.
- **Self-reporting bias:** The study is based on self-reported data obtained through semi-structured interviews and personal observations. This may introduce bias since individuals may not accurately report their motivations for practicing Raja Yoga meditation or may provide socially desirable answers.
- **Lack of control group:** The study does not include a control group of non-Raja Yoga practitioners for comparison. Henceforth, it's an arduous task to discern whether the factors recognized are distinctive to Raja Yoga meditation or ubiquitous across all sorts of meditation practices.
- **The limited scope of demographic factors:** The study only examined a limited set of demographic factors, including the distribution of the respondents, sex, age group, educational

qualification, religious background, professional background, daily meditation time, and the consumption of vegetarian food made with onion and garlic. Other imperative demographic factors, such as income level, marital status, and cultural background, are neglected, which can have a significant impact on study findings.

- **Limited generalisability:** The study focuses only on the demographic factors that motivate people to practise Raja Yoga meditation at the World Headquarters of Brahma Kumaris Mount Abu. Consequently, the findings may not be broadly applicable to different regions or communities where Raja Yoga meditation is performed, considering the context-specific influences that could impact the results.

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