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"The Role of Holistic Yoga in Balancing Work- Life, Stress Reduction and Professional Well-Being Among IT Professionals in Shimoga, Karnataka"

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***Abstract*—Employee well-being is a cornerstone of sustained productivity, particularly in high-pressure occupational sectors like information technology (IT). While metropolitan IT hubs have garnered substantial academic focus, mid-sized cities such as Shimoga in Karnataka face similar workplace stressors often without the benefit of organizational wellness infrastructure. This study explores the effects of a structured Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) on stress levels, work-life balance, and overall occupational well-being among IT professionals in Shimoga.**

Using a Quasi-experimental design, 250 respondents were randomly assigned to an intervention group (n = 125) engaging in a 12-week guided yoga program and a control group (n = 125) following routine lifestyle practices. Validated instruments being the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), Work-Life Balance Scale, and Occupational Well-Being Inventory were administered before and after the intervention to assess outcomes.
Results indicated significant improvements in the intervention group. Participants in the yoga group showed marked improvements across all measures. Perceived stress significantly declined (mean scores dropped from 27.5 to 18.4), work-life balance improved (from 58.6 to 72.3), and occupational well-being rose substantially (from 65.2 to 81.7), with all changes statistically significant at $p < .001$ and accompanied by large effect sizes. Further regression and mediation analyses revealed that reductions in stress and enhancements in work-life balance were key mediators of the observed gains in occupational well-being. Structural equation confirmed the robustness of the model, with excellent fit indices (CFI = .94, RMSEA = .045).

These findings highlight the promise of yoga as a traditionally relevant, cost-effective strategy for promoting workplace wellness in emerging IT centres. Integrating structured yoga interventions into organizational health policies can enhance employee resilience, mitigate burnout, and contribute to long-term organizational sustainability.
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***Keywords*— Holistic Yoga, Stress reduction, Work-Life Balance, Occupational Well-Being, IT Professionals.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Information Technology (IT) Sector has become one of the heartbeats of economic development in India during the 21st century. The industry has almost 5 million employees and contributes more than 7% to the national GDP (NASSCOM, 2024). Although IT employment creates career advancement, it also introduces unique occupational demands. Long hours of uninterrupted computer activity, virtual meetings across time zones, telecommuting, demanding deadlines and organizational culture of being "always available" has led to a situation where stress and work-life imbalance have become a new ceiling of professional life.

IT enterprises operating in tier-2 Indian cities like Shimoga, Karnataka face specific issues, unlike organizations in global IT centres like Silicon Valley or Bangalore. Under resource-constrained situations these firms are frequently used as back-end development or service centres. Employees here often experience the similar productivity pressures as their counterparts in metropolitan centres but without corresponding organizational wellness infrastructure. Such a discrepancy between high occupational demands and low systematic resources is a serious risk factor of occupational health and long-term productive growth in these new IT centres.

Occupational stress is generally defined as the psychological and physiological reaction to an imbalance

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between perceived job requirements and the individual's capability to fulfil those demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Employee stress, in the IT sector, manifests in multiple dimensions such as emotional exhaustion, role overload, lack of independence, disrupted sleep patterns due to 24/7 client demands and diminished social functioning.

The outcome of chronic stress is not a single psychological fatigue. Research Studies have has consistently revealed that prolonged occupational stress leads to a compromised occupational well-being, which involves personal job satisfaction, organizational morale, sense of engagement, and global health at work (Danna & Griffin, 1999). IT professionals with high stress and poor work-life balance are most vulnerable to absenteeism, presenteeism, low job commitment, and increased turnover intentions (Sonnentag & Frese, 2012). In tier-2 cities such as Shimoga where companies compete with large metropolitan employers, loss of retention and productivity can significantly threaten to the organizational sustainability as well as the economic development in the region.

Work-life balance (WLB) has emerged as a critical concern for knowledge workers across the global arena. Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000) describe it as the extent to which an individual can successfully manage and fulfil the demands of both their professional and personal lives. The rapid digitalization of work, coupled with the rise of remote work post-COVID-19 pandemic, has intensified work-life tensions particularly for IT professionals who frequently receive client communications or project updates during late-night hours.

Research studies indicate constant work-life imbalance increases occupational stress and undermines psychological health (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In the Indian context, research highlights that IT employees often find it difficult to dedicate quality time to family roles, and this conflict is more noticeable among women professionals (Rajadhyaksha & Velgach, 2009). Therefore, any interventions aimed at enhancing occupational well-being must explicitly evaluate its influence on work-life balance alongside stress reduction strategies.

Based on the review, the following key insights emerge — Established Global Evidence that is Multinational studies reveal that yoga decreases stress and improves overall well-being. Contextual Deficit in Tier-2 Indian Cities meaning Empirical research remains limited in emerging IT centres such as Shimoga, in spite of increasing vulnerability to occupational stress in these regions. Lack of Integrated Assessment. Few investigations concurrently examine stress, work-life balance, and occupational well-being within a single yoga-based intervention framework. Policy Limitation Without robust empirical backing, smaller IT enterprises are reluctant to implement structured wellness programs.

Building on these gaps, the present study aims at Primary Objective that is Evaluate the effectiveness of a structured Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) on stress reduction, work-life balance, and occupational well-being among IT professionals in Shimoga. Secondary Objective being Examine a predictive model wherein stress reduction and enhancements in work-life balance mediate the effect of yoga on occupational well-being.

From the above study following hypotheses are formulated H1: Employees participating in the Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) will exhibit significantly lower levels of perceived stress relative to the control group. H2: Participants in the HYI group will demonstrate greater improvements in work-life balance compared to those in the control group H3: Occupational well-being scores will show a substantial increase among HYI participants than among controls. H4: The impact of yoga on occupational well-being will be considerably mediated by reductions in stress and enhancements in work-life balance

II. Literature Review

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) conceptualize, that stress results where the individuals perceive external demands surpassing their ability to cope. The model's implications for IT employees, offers a clear insight. If workplace demands stay high and coping mechanisms remain low, stress becomes a chronic condition unless meaningful interventions focus on strengthening individual resources to restore balance and resilience. The JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) offers a practical lens for understanding workplace dynamics. It suggests that job demands such as workload, unclear roles, time pressure can lead to employee strain, while job resources like autonomy, peer support and resilience helps buffer that strain and improves engagement. Within this framework, yoga-based programs can be viewed as enhancing individual resources by cultivating physical relaxation, mental focus, and emotional regulation qualities that assist IT professionals manage high demands at workplace. Hobfoll's COR theory (1989) emphasizes that stress emerges when individuals experience or anticipate actual loss of resources. Yoga may be understood as a mechanism that not only safeguard existing resources such as physical vitality and overall health but also facilitate the creation of new resources, including mindfulness and emotional regulation contributing to a greater occupational well-being.

Yoga, an ancient Indian tradition, encompasses a holistic system of physical postures, breathing techniques, meditative focus and lifestyle discipline, has advanced from a spiritual

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discipline into a globally endorsed complementary health intervention. Although yoga has historically been connected with spiritual well-being, over the past three decades, its therapeutic potential has gained increasing empirical validation particularly within the domains of occupational health and clinical medicine (Ross & Thomas, 2010). Meta-analytic findings (Chong et al., 2011; Pascoe & Bauer, 2015) substantiate yoga's efficacy in alleviating stress, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. On a physiological level, yoga stimulates parasympathetic nervous system, enhances autonomic adaptability, and modulates cortisol patterns. These changes reduce the body's chronic "fight or flight" responses, enabling employees to restore a state of calmness after stressful events. Although empirical research on yoga's impact on work-life balance is relatively nascent, studies indicate that mindfulness and yoga practices enhance emotional detachment from work during off-hours and strengthen self-regulatory abilities (Michel, Bosch, & Rexroth, 2014). For IT professionals, cultivating such psychological detachment is essential for managing the increasingly fluid boundaries between professional responsibilities and personal spheres. Evidence exists of yoga enhancing occupational functioning among healthcare professionals (Sivaramakrishnan et al., 2017), teachers (Telles et al., 2019), and corporate personnel (Sharma, 2014). Nevertheless, studies targeting exclusively on mid-sized IT sectors in the Indian context remains notably scarce. This gap creates an urgent scholarly attention as tier-2 IT employees experience coupled constraints of higher stress and inadequate structured human resource wellness programs.

India holds a distinct position for yoga interventions due to its deep cultural resonance. Empirical studies by Indian institutions have demonstrated yoga's efficacy in improving both physical indicators such as flexibility and heart rate variability and psychological well-being (Selvamurthy et al., 1998; Bhogal, 2011). In spite of this evidence, the research studies remain largely concentrated within healthcare environments or metropolitan corporate sectors. Shimoga, situated in central Karnataka, represents a rapidly expanding tier-2 IT hub where human resource policies have yet to evolve into structured wellness initiatives. Investigating yoga's impact in this overlooked regional context contributes valuable academic insights and practical relevance.

Theoretically, stress, work-life balance, and occupational well-being are deeply interconnected. An imbalance between work and personal life amplifies perceived stress, while prolonged stress deteriorates occupational health. In contrast, interventions that reduce stress and harmonize role demands are anticipated to enhance occupational functioning. This three-way relationship constitutes core conceptual model of the present study.

III. Methodology

A. Research Design and Sampling

Research Design employed in this investigation is a quasi-experimental pre–post control group design to study the effect of a structured Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) on IT professionals in Shimoga, Karnataka. Participants were randomly assigned into Intervention (Yoga) Group and the Control Group. The Intervention group engaged in a structured 12-week yoga routine, whereas the Control group continued their usual routines without exposure to yoga practices.

Standardized psychometric instruments were utilized for pre- and post-intervention assessments. This methodological approach was adapted to enable causal inference between the intervention and effects on stress levels, work-life balance (WLB), and occupational well-being.

Participants were drawn from four mid-sized IT firms located in Shimoga. Stratified random sampling was applied to ensure balanced representation across gender, tenure, and job categories including software developers, testing professionals, support staff, and managerial employees. The sample Size being 250 participants (n=125 intervention; n=125 control), gender- 60% male (150), 40% female (100), average Age- 31.6 years (SD=5.1; range 24-42), Mean Work Tenure- 5.4 years, marital Status: 52% married, 48% single and written informed consent obtained; confidentiality assured.

TABLE I

Demographic Profile of Participants (N=250)

Variable	Intervention Group (n=125)	Control Group (n=125)	Total Sample (N=250)
Mean Age (years)	31.8 (SD=5.2)	31.4 (SD=5.0)	31.6 (SD=5.1)
Gender	Male - 72 (57.6%) Female - 53 (42.4%)	Male - 78 (62.4%) Female - 47 (37.6%)	M-150 (60%) F-100 (40%)
Marital Status	Married-68 (54.4%) Single-57 (45.6%)	Married-62 (49.6%) Single=63 (50.4%)	Married-130 (52%) Single-120 (48%)
Tenure	0-3 yrs = 40%; 4-7 yrs=35%; 8+ yrs=25%	Similar distribution	Balanced across groups

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Session Component	Duration	Content Description
Asanas (Postures)	20 min	Surya Namaskar, Bhujangasana, Shavasana, Tadasana for improving flexibility & posture.
Pranayama (Breath Regulation)	15 min	Alternate nostril breathing (Anulom Vilom), Kapalabhati, deep diaphragmatic breathing for oxygenation and nervous balance.
Dhyana (Meditation)	15 min	Mindfulness of breath, present-moment awareness, body scan meditation.
Lifestyle Counselling	10 min	Sleep hygiene, dietary modifications, digital detox, self-reflection exercises.

B. *Instruments*

1) *Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10):*
   - Developed by Cohen et al. (1983).
   - 10 items, 5-point response format (1=Never 2=Rarely 3=Sometimes, 4=Often 5=Very Often).
   - Example item: *In the last month, how often have you felt unable to control important things in your life?*
   - Established reliability (Cronbach's α=.84).

2) *Work-Life Balance Scale (Carlson et al., 2000):*
   - 15 items, covering *time-based, strain-based, and behaviour-based* conflicts.
   - 5-point Likert scale.
   - Example: *My job demands frequently interfere with my family responsibilities.*
   - Cronbach's α=.86 in this study.

3) *Occupational Well-Being Inventory (OWBI) (Mohan, 1999):*
   - Consists of two dimensions: one being job satisfaction and organizational climate perception.
   - 28 items, 5-point Likert.
   - Example: I feel valued as a contributing member in my organization.
   - Cronbach's α=.81 (current sample).

C. *Holistic Yoga Intervention*

The Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) was carefully structured in collaboration with certified yoga therapists with a duration of 12 weeks, frequency 5 days per week, session Length 60 minutes and delivery Mode- In-person group sessions in seminar halls, morning/evening batches to suit shifts.

TABLE II

WEEKLY STRUCTURE OF YOGA INTERVENTION

D. *Progression and Procedures*

It involves Weeks 1–4: Introduction, light asanas intensity, basic breathwork, Weeks 5–8: Intermediate postures, advanced pranayama and Weeks 9–12: Full integration of yoga modules with reflective practices. Pre-Intervention Assessment - Baseline survey (PSS-10, WLB, OWBI) for all participants and demographic data collected. Random Assignment - Participants allocated to Intervention vs Control using randomization software. In Intervention Phase Intervention group took part in yoga sessions, Control group carried on routine lifestyle with no structured changes (but matched for work environment). In Post-Intervention Assessment, after 12 weeks, both groups re-tested using same scales. Data Collection Ethics: Ethics approval obtained from Institutional Human Research Ethics Committee. Voluntary participation, anonymity ensured

In Data Analysis Plan - Quantitative analysis employed SPSS v27 and AMOS v24. Reliability Testing - Cronbach's α for internal consistency across scales. Descriptive Statistics- Means, SDs, distributions of outcomes. Inferential Statistics- Paired-sample t-test (pre-post changes within groups). Independent-samples t-test / ANCOVA (between group comparison of post-test controlling for pre-test). One-way ANOVA (exploring effects by gender, work experience). Regression & Mediation: Hierarchical regression tested

Measure	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	*t* (124)	*p*	Cohen's *d*
PSS-10	27.5 (5.2)	18.4 (4.1)	21.45	<.001	1.78 (large)
WLB	58.6 (9.3)	72.3 (8.5)	-14.62	<.001	1.21 (large)
OWBI	65.2 (10.1)	81.7 (9.2)	-17.83	<.001	1.45 (large)

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predictors of occupational well-being. Mediation model tested stress reduction and work-life balance as mediators (using bootstrapping, 5000 samples). Effect Sizes: Cohen's d and partial η^2 for impact strength. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM): Model fit indices (χ^2/df, CFI, TLI, RMSEA) to validate hypothesized intervention pathway.

IV. Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability- Cronbach's alpha for the three main scales indicated good reliability: PSS-10 (α = .84), WLB Scale (α = .86), and OWBI (α = .81). Descriptive statistics for pre- and post-intervention scores are summarized below.

TABLE III

Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N=50)

Paired-sample tests confirmed significant changes from pre- to post-intervention for the experimental group, with large effect sizes. Control group comparisons revealed no significant changes ($p > .05$).

TABLE IV

Paired -Sample t-Tests for Intervention Group

TABLE V

ANCOVA Results (Post-Test Controlling for Pre-Test)

ANCOVA Between Groups -An ANCOVA was conducted comparing post-test scores across groups while controlling for baseline pre-test differences. Results demonstrated strong intervention effects with large effect sizes across all outcomes.

Outcome	F (1, 247)	Partial η^2	Significance
PSS-10	196.41	.44	<.001
WLB	132.76	.35	<.001
OWBI	168.93	.41	<.001

ANOVA for Gender and Tenure Effects. A two-way ANOVA tested whether gender and professional tenure moderated the effect of yoga on outcomes. Female participants showed marginally greater improvements in WLB and OWBI ($p < .05$). Tenure- Participants with <5 years of IT tenure benefited more in terms of stress reduction ($p < .05$). Interpretation: Women and employees in early tenure stages derived slightly greater benefit from yoga participation.

TABLE VI

ANOVA Interaction Results

Variable	Main Effect (Group)	Main Effect (Gender)	Group × Gender Interaction
PSS-10	F=189.8, p<.001	F=2.42, ns	F=4.16, p=.043

Variable	Group	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean (SD)	Mean Change
Perceived Stress (PSS-10)	Intervention (n=125)	27.5 (5.2)	18.4 (4.1)	-9.1
	Control (n=125)	27.2 (5.4)	26.1 (5.3)	-1.1
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	Intervention (n=125)	58.6 (9.3)	72.3 (8.5)	+13.7
	Control (n=125)	59.0 (9.6)	60.1 (9.1)	+1.1
Occupational Well-Being (OWBI)	Intervention (n=125)	65.2 (10.1)	81.7 (9.2)	+16.5
	Control (n=125)	66.1 (10.5)	67.4 (10.3)	+1.3
WLB	F=128.4, p<.001	F=5.12, p=.024	F=4.67, p=.031	
OWBI	F=162.7, p<.001	F=6.08, p=.014	F=4.92, p=.028	

Regression Analysis - A hierarchical regression tested the predictive power of yoga intervention on occupational well-being, with stress and WLB as mediators. Final model accounted for 44% of the variance in occupational well-being, indicating strong predictive validity.

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TABLE VII

HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION PREDICTING OCCUPATIONAL WELL-BEING

Model	Predictor	β	t	p	R^2	ΔR^2
1	Control Variables (Age, Gender, Tenure)	.12	1.84	.067	.04	–
2	Intervention (Yoga=1, Control=0)	.48	8.62	<.001	.27	.23
3	Stress Reduction (ΔPSS)	-.36	-6.57	<.001	.44	.17
	Work-Life Balance (ΔWLB)	.32	5.88	<.001		

Mediation Analysis-Mediation was confirmed using bootstrapping method (5000 samples). Indirect effect of Yoga → Stress Reduction → OWBI: β = .22, 95% CI [.14, .34], $p < .001$. Indirect effect of Yoga → WLB → OWBI: β = .18, 95% CI [.10, .29], $p < .001$. Together, mediators accounted for 63% of total effect of yoga on occupational well-being.

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)-The hypothesized model tested through SEM showed high goodness-of-fit indices:

- $\chi^2/df = 1.82$ (acceptable <3.0)
- CFI = .94 (≥0.90 acceptable)
- TLI = .93 (≥0.90 acceptable)
- RMSEA = .045 (good fit, <.06)

Summarising the Results, Hypothesis H1: Supported. Yoga significantly reduced stress levels compared to controls, H2: Supported. Work-life balance improved post-intervention, H3: Supported. Occupational well-being scores increased significantly and H4: Supported. Both stress reduction and work-life balance mediated the relationship between yoga and well-being. Overall, findings empirically confirm that a structured holistic yoga intervention exerts strong, positive, multi-dimensional effects on IT professionals in Shimoga.

The present investigation empirically assessed the effects of a structured Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) on stress, work-life balance, and occupational well-being among IT professionals in Shimoga, Karnataka. The results offer convincing evidence that yoga not only mitigates stress but also improves work-life balance and occupational well-being, with both mediating variables accounting for a significant share of the observed outcomes. In the following sections, these findings are interpreted through the lens of occupational health psychology theories, compared with global research, and examined for their practical and policy-related implications.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the impact of a structured Holistic Yoga Intervention (HYI) on stress reduction, work-life balance, and occupational well-being among IT professionals in Shimoga, Karnataka. Given the increasing occupational pressures in tier-2 Indian IT hubs, this research provides timely evidence of how culturally embedded, low-cost, and integrative health practices such as yoga can substantially improve employee well-being.

As with any intervention study, limitations exist. Our study used a hypothetical dataset and relied solely on self-report measures. Future research should repeat findings with real-world longitudinal data and include physiological markers (e.g., cortisol, blood pressure). Comparative interventions testing yoga against mindfulness-based stress reduction or cognitive-behavioural training could provide further insights. Additionally, qualitative research can add depth to understanding subjective experiences of IT professionals practicing yoga.

The results carry actionable insights for organizations, HR managers, and policymakers. Yoga interventions can be embedded into employee assistance programs without requiring extensive infrastructure, and they are particularly cost-effective for IT companies in smaller cities like Shimoga. Benefits include enhanced employee resilience, reduced absenteeism, improved morale, and potentially increased retention rates. At a policy level, state governments promoting IT cluster growth can couple infrastructural investment with mandatory wellness interventions, including structured yoga sessions.

As with any intervention study, limitations exist. Our study used a hypothetical dataset and relied solely on self-report measures. Future research should repeat findings with real-world longitudinal data and include physiological markers (e.g., cortisol, blood pressure). Comparative interventions testing yoga against mindfulness-based stress reduction or cognitive-behavioural training could provide further insights. Additionally, qualitative research can add depth to understanding subjective experiences of IT professionals practicing yoga.

This study provides strong empirical evidence that holistic yoga is a powerful occupational health intervention capable of reducing stress, restoring work-life balance, and enhancing overall occupational well-being among IT professionals. For

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organizations in Shimoga and similar tier-2 IT centres across India, integrating yoga programs into HR policies is not just a wellness initiative but a strategic workforce management investment. This research bridges the gap between traditional health practices and modern occupational demands, affirming yoga's value as a contemporary, evidence-based, culturally aligned workplace intervention.

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