

## Evaluating the Role of Corporate Yoga in Shaping Organizational Culture: A Pilot Study in the Pune Region

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### ABSTRACT:

This pilot study examines the influence of corporate yoga programs on organizational culture among medium-to-large enterprises in the Pune region of India. Leveraging a mixed-methods approach, the research integrates qualitative feedback and quantitative data from 120 corporate professionals across IT, manufacturing, and services sectors. The study investigates yoga's impact on cultural dimensions including employee well-being, communication, stress levels, and leadership dynamics. Findings suggest a statistically significant correlation between regular yoga engagement and enhanced organizational values, team cohesion, and workplace morale. The research advances the discourse on workplace wellness by proposing a framework linking yogic practices with Schein's model of organizational culture. This study offers practical insights for HR professionals, wellness consultants, and leadership coaches aiming to integrate holistic health programs in the corporate space.

**KEYWORDS:** Corporate Yoga, HR practices, Organizational Culture, Wellness, Workplace stress.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In the current business landscape, the success of an organization is no longer measured solely by financial performance, but also by its internal culture and the well-being of its workforce. Organizational culture—the set of shared beliefs, values,

rituals, and norms—plays a vital role in shaping employee behaviors, influencing decision-making, and sustaining strategic alignment.<sup>[1]</sup> (Schein, 2016). As enterprises face mounting pressure from globalization, digitalization, and post-pandemic recovery efforts, cultivating a resilient and value-

driven culture has become a strategic imperative.<sup>[2]</sup>

Employee well-being has emerged as a critical component of organizational culture, influencing productivity, retention, and overall morale<sup>[3]</sup>. Within this discourse, workplace wellness programs have gained global traction as tools to foster employee engagement and health. In India, the integration of ancient wellness practices—especially yoga—into corporate routines has gained momentum. Yoga, defined as a holistic system involving physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation (dhyana), is increasingly being adopted in corporate settings to alleviate stress, improve focus, and enhance interpersonal relationships<sup>[4]</sup>.

The relevance of yoga in modern work environments is supported by empirical evidence. Studies have demonstrated that regular yoga practice reduces cortisol levels (stress hormone), enhances mood, and improves cognitive flexibility<sup>[5]</sup>. In a randomized controlled trial by Büssing et al. (2012), yoga practitioners reported significantly better mental clarity, reduced anxiety, and improved emotional balance. These psychological benefits have organizational implications—leading to better team dynamics, increased tolerance, and enhanced innovation<sup>[6]</sup>.

Globally, organizations such as Google, Apple, and General Motors have integrated yoga into their employee wellness portfolios<sup>[7]</sup>. Indian conglomerates like Infosys, Tata Group, and Mahindra have institutionalized yoga as part of corporate rituals, off-site retreats, and even leadership development programs.<sup>[7]</sup> Yet, academic studies that

connect corporate yoga to measurable changes in organizational culture, especially in the Indian context, remain limited.

The rationale for this research is twofold. First, while there is growing awareness about the health benefits of yoga, its strategic potential in shaping organizational values, promoting collaboration, and fostering leadership effectiveness is underexplored. Second, in a diverse and culturally rooted corporate environment like India's, yoga offers a culturally congruent alternative to Western wellness interventions such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and cognitive behavioral coaching.<sup>[10]</sup>

Pune—known as the “Oxford of the East” and a prominent industrial, IT, and academic hub—is a compelling region for such a pilot study. With a large population of corporate professionals, the city's firms represent both legacy and new-age industries. The present study focuses on evaluating the implementation and impact of corporate yoga initiatives on organizational culture in selected medium-to-large firms in the Pune region. Schein (2016) emphasized that organizational culture operates at three levels: artifacts (visible symbols and practices), espoused values (strategies, goals, philosophies), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs). Yoga can potentially influence all three levels. For instance, the visible integration of yoga sessions (artifacts), leadership endorsement of wellness (espoused values), and a shift in collective stress-coping mechanisms (underlying assumptions) indicate a multidimensional cultural transformation.

From an HR perspective, this study aligns with the emerging paradigm of “Human-Centric Work Design,” which emphasizes employee flourishing, autonomy, and psychological safety<sup>[12]</sup>. Yoga contributes to these outcomes by fostering mindfulness, emotional self-regulation, and social connectedness—all of which are known to influence work motivation and collaborative behavior<sup>[13]</sup>. A pilot study by Kulkarni and Deshpande (2021) on IT employees in Pune revealed that 72% of participants who attended bi-weekly yoga sessions for over three months reported improved focus and fewer interpersonal conflicts. However, their research lacked a conceptual framework linking yoga practices to broader organizational culture constructs. This gap presents an opportunity for this paper to contribute meaningfully by synthesizing both qualitative and quantitative data using a validated cultural assessment framework<sup>[14]</sup>.

The conceptual model underpinning this study draws from the Competing Values Framework (CVF) by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983), which categorizes organizational cultures into four types—clan (collaborative), adhocracy (creative), market (competitive), and hierarchy (control-oriented). Yoga is hypothesized to foster clan-oriented attributes such as collaboration, shared vision, and emotional support while also enhancing the adaptability of leadership—a trait associated with adhocracy. Furthermore, the recent emphasis on employee mental health in post-COVID workplace reintegration strategies has elevated yoga from a “good-to-have” wellness feature to a strategic business imperative (WHO, 2021). According to the Confederation of Indian

Industry (CII, 2022), over 60% of mid-sized firms in urban India expressed intent to increase investment in mental wellness initiatives, with yoga being the most preferred option due to its cost-effectiveness and cultural acceptance<sup>[15]</sup>.

In light of these observations, the primary objective of this research is to empirically evaluate the role of corporate yoga in shaping organizational culture across dimensions such as leadership openness, communication quality, team cohesion, and employee well-being<sup>[17]</sup>. A mixed-method approach—comprising surveys, in-depth interviews, and correlation analysis—is adopted to gain a holistic understanding. The research intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are the perceived impacts of corporate yoga on organizational culture among employees?
2. How do HR managers and wellness officers view the strategic role of yoga in shaping institutional values?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation between yoga frequency and positive shifts in cultural indicators?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to contribute both theoretical insights and practical recommendations for managers, HR professionals, and wellness consultants seeking to institutionalize yoga within organizational development frameworks.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Organizational Culture: Definitions and Dimensions: Organizational culture is

a foundational concept in management studies, encompassing the shared assumptions, values, and norms that shape the behavior of individuals within a workplace (Schein, 2016). It reflects how members of an organization perceive, think, and feel about their environment and roles (Hofstede, 2001). Culture has been directly linked to organizational effectiveness, innovation, employee engagement, and overall job satisfaction (Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Denison, 1990). Schein's three-level model—artifacts, espoused values, and underlying assumptions—remains the most influential framework for understanding cultural transformation (Schein, 2016). Cameron and Quinn's Competing Values Framework (CVF) categorizes cultures into four quadrants: clan (collaborative), adhocracy (innovative), hierarchy (structured), and market (competitive). Both models provide lenses through which shifts in employee behavior and organizational dynamics can be interpreted. Importantly, scholars have emphasized the role of leadership, rituals, and organizational narratives in shaping and transmitting culture (Martin, 2002; Trice & Beyer, 1993). Wellness programs, including yoga, are increasingly considered artifacts that embody and communicate deeper values of care, balance, and sustainability (Lok & Crawford, 2004).

**B. Corporate Wellness and Organizational Performance:** The literature on workplace wellness has grown significantly over the past two decades. Wellness programs, when implemented strategically, can lead to reductions in absenteeism, presenteeism, healthcare costs, and employee turnover<sup>[17]</sup>. Studies also show

positive associations between wellness initiatives and employee productivity, morale, and engagement<sup>[14]</sup>. Incorporating physical, emotional, and psychological dimensions, comprehensive wellness frameworks now encompass yoga, meditation, ergonomic design, mental health support, and work-life balance interventions<sup>[19]</sup>. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2016) reported that 89% of employees in organizations with robust wellness programs felt more motivated and loyal to their employers. Furthermore, organizational support for wellness is positively associated with perceptions of a supportive culture and with the alignment between employee and employer values. In particular, integrative wellness approaches—those that connect health programs to organizational strategy and leadership—yield stronger cultural impacts.

**C. Yoga as a Strategic Workplace Intervention:** Yoga, an ancient Indian discipline involving physical postures, breathwork, and meditation, is increasingly being integrated into corporate wellness programs worldwide. Numerous studies have documented its physiological benefits, such as improved cardiovascular health, reduced cortisol levels, and enhanced musculoskeletal flexibility.<sup>[22]</sup> Psychologically, yoga has been linked to reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and burnout. In a meta-analysis by Pascoe and Bauer (2015), yoga was found to significantly reduce stress biomarkers and subjective anxiety levels across diverse participant profiles. This makes it a particularly effective tool in high-pressure, performance-driven environments like corporate organizations. From an

organizational standpoint, yoga has been shown to influence affective states, decision-making clarity, and emotional intelligence—all of which are critical to leadership and teamwork <sup>[24]</sup>In randomized workplace trials, employees practicing yoga have reported better sleep quality, emotional balance, and improved interpersonal interactions <sup>[26]</sup> In India, the adoption of yoga in corporate environments is both culturally authentic and strategically appropriate. Companies such as Infosys, TCS, and HDFC have institutionalized yoga into their corporate calendars, and some include yoga modules in leadership development and team-building programs <sup>[28]</sup>

**D. Linking Yoga to Organizational Culture:** The intersection of yoga and organizational culture is a relatively under-researched domain. However, emerging studies suggest that yoga can foster cultural values such as openness, compassion, mindfulness, and collective well-being. These values align closely with clan and adhocracy cultures as per the CVF framework <sup>[33]</sup>. For instance, yoga's focus on breath control and awareness contributes to emotional self-regulation, a key component of psychological safety and healthy conflict resolution in teams <sup>[29]</sup>. Organizational cultures that support reflective practice, inclusivity, and employee autonomy are more likely to embrace wellness practices such as yoga <sup>[30]</sup>. <sup>[30]</sup> found that employees with access to wellness interventions, including yoga, reported higher levels of psychological empowerment—a proxy for positive organizational culture. Similarly, a study by Bond et al. (2013) <sup>[20]</sup> showed that mindfulness and yoga training led to

improvements in ethical decision-making and workplace civility, both of which are cultural indicators. A longitudinal study by Hartfiel et al. (2011) <sup>[31]</sup> involving 48 employees found that after six weeks of yoga training, there were significant improvements in perceived workplace well-being, stress resilience, and organizational connectedness. These findings point to yoga's potential as a lever for cultural transformation rather than merely a personal health tool.

**E. Indian Context: Regional Evidence and Cultural Fit:** India's cultural legacy, legal frameworks, and demographic profile offer a unique landscape for studying the role of yoga in organizations. With government-led initiatives such as the International Day of Yoga and support from the Ministry of AYUSH, there is a growing institutional push for integrating yoga into everyday life, including workplaces (GOI, 2018). Academic studies in the Indian context have echoed global findings. Kulkarni and Deshpande (2021) <sup>[34]</sup> found that IT employees in Pune who participated in company-sponsored yoga sessions experienced better team cohesion and emotional stability. Similarly reported that yoga interventions in manufacturing companies in Gujarat led to reduced absenteeism and improved worker satisfaction. Moreover, India's collectivist cultural orientation and spiritual heritage provide a natural congruence for yoga-based programs in fostering shared identity and institutional loyalty (Budhwar & Varma, 2011) <sup>[21]</sup>. As Chakraborty and Chakraborty (2006) <sup>[24]</sup> argue, Indian organizations that integrate spiritual practices like yoga tend to exhibit higher levels of ethical conduct and

cultural harmony. Despite the promise, regional studies remain sparse and are often limited by methodological rigor. There is a need for empirically grounded research that uses validated frameworks of organizational culture to examine yoga's influence across industry sectors and hierarchical levels.

**F. Identified Gaps and Theoretical Contribution:** This literature review reveals significant gaps in current scholarship. First, while there is abundant evidence on the health benefits of yoga, its organizational impact—particularly cultural—is insufficiently documented. Second, most studies do not integrate yoga interventions into established organizational culture frameworks such as Schein's or the CVP. Third, there is limited focus on regional variations within India, especially cities like Pune, which host a diverse range of industries and workforce profiles. Fourth, few studies adopt mixed-method approaches combining qualitative insight and quantitative measurement to capture both depth and breadth of cultural change.<sup>[40]</sup>

This research addresses these gaps by:

1. Framing yoga as a strategic, not peripheral, component of organizational transformation.
2. Operationalizing organizational culture using validated constructs.
3. Contextualizing the study within an Indian urban-industrial hub with cultural relevance.
4. Combining survey data, correlation analysis, and qualitative interviews for triangulated insights.

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

**A. Research Design:** This study employed a mixed-methods exploratory pilot design to evaluate the role of corporate yoga in shaping organizational culture within firms located in the Pune region. A mixed-method approach was selected to provide a comprehensive understanding of both subjective experiences and measurable organizational indicators. This dual approach integrates quantitative survey data, offering statistically analyzable trends, with qualitative insights from in-depth interviews, enabling a deeper interpretation of workplace dynamics, sentiments, and leadership practices.

The design was structured into three sequential methodological phases:

1. **Quantitative Phase** – A structured questionnaire was distributed to 120 employees across 10 organizations.
2. **Qualitative Phase** – In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 25 HR managers and wellness coordinators.
3. **Integrative Phase** – Quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated to assess how yoga practices influence dimensions of organizational culture such as openness, cohesion, stress management, and respect.

This multi-level analysis supports both **descriptive exploration** and **statistical validation**, ensuring contextual relevance and empirical credibility.

## B. Sample and Context

**1. Sample Size and Structure:** *The sample consisted of 120 employees selected from 10 firms based in the Pune metropolitan region. The firms represented diverse sectors including:*

- **Information Technology (IT)** – 4 firms
- **Automotive Manufacturing** – 2 firms
- **Education/EdTech** – 2 firms
- **Business Consulting and Services** – 2 firms

A **purposive sampling** technique was employed to include only those organizations that met the following **inclusion criteria:**

- The company must have implemented a **corporate yoga program** (in-person or hybrid) for at least 3 months.
- Yoga sessions must be conducted **minimum twice a week.**
- Employees across different levels (executives, team leads, and middle management) should be accessible for participation.

Table 1 outlines the demographic profile of participants.

**C. Data Collection Instruments:** To comprehensively capture the influence of yoga on organizational culture, two data collection instruments were deployed:

**1. Structured Survey Questionnaire:** A self-administered survey consisting of **28 items** was designed using **5-point Likert scale questions**, ranging from “Strongly Disagree (1)” to “Strongly Agree (5).” The questionnaire was structured into four thematic domains:

- **Leadership Openness and Transparency** (7 items)
- **Respect and Collaboration** (7 items)
- **Stress Management and Emotional Balance** (7 items)
- **Workplace Satisfaction and Morale** (7 items)

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a small cohort of 10 professionals for reliability (Cronbach’s alpha > 0.78 for all sections) before full deployment.

**2. Semi-Structured Interviews:** To complement quantitative findings, **25 in-depth interviews** were conducted with HR heads, corporate wellness facilitators, and mid-level managers. The interviews explored:

- The perceived impact of yoga programs on team dynamics.
- Leadership support and adoption of yoga.
- Changes in interpersonal conflict and communication quality.
- Behavioural indicators of cultural shifts (e.g., empathy, discipline, initiative).

Interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and were recorded and transcribed with participant consent.

**D. Analysis Methods:** The collected data was analysed through a multi-tier approach involving both statistical software (SPSS v25) and qualitative coding tools (NVivo 12 Plus).

**1. Quantitative Analysis Using SPSS:** The following procedures were conducted:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Means, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were computed for each variable.
- **Reliability Analysis:** Cronbach's alpha was computed for all subscales.
- **Pearson Correlation:** Assessed relationships between frequency of yoga practice and organizational culture indicators.

*Note:  $p < 0.01$  (2-tailed) Interpretation: Higher frequency of yoga sessions was strongly and positively correlated with all four cultural indicators, particularly stress management and leadership openness.*

**2. Thematic Analysis Using NVivo:** Transcripts from the interviews were uploaded to NVivo 12 for thematic coding. The analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase method: familiarization, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining themes, and writing results. Emergent themes included:

- **Emotional Regulation:** "Teams respond better under pressure."
- **Mindful Leadership:** "Our managers became more reflective."
- **Interpersonal Empathy:** "Less judgment, more cooperation."

- **Consistency in Culture:** "Yoga made wellness a core value."

**E. Ethical Considerations:** All participants were briefed on the purpose and confidentiality of the study. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before surveys and interviews. Data were anonymized during analysis and stored securely. The research adhered to the ethical guidelines of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the University Ethics Review Board, ensuring protection of human subjects and privacy rights.

**F. Triangulation and Validity Measures:** Triangulation was achieved by cross-referencing insights from:

- Survey patterns and correlations
- Thematic interview narratives
- Organizational yoga implementation records

Additionally, **member checking** was conducted by sharing key findings with a subset of interviewees for validation. Inter-coder reliability for NVivo-based analysis was 0.87, indicating strong consistency in thematic interpretations.

**G. Limitations of the Methodology:** While the mixed-methods design strengthens the research robustness, some limitations persist:

- **Non-probabilistic sampling** may limit generalizability to all corporate regions.
- Short-term yoga exposure (3–6 months) may not capture deep-rooted cultural changes.

- **Self-report bias** in surveys could influence positivity of responses.
- **Regional concentration** in Pune restricts extrapolation to other metro and rural workspaces.

#### IV. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

**A. Descriptive Statistics:** To evaluate the influence of corporate yoga on organizational culture, a quantitative survey was administered to 120 corporate professionals across mid- to large-sized enterprises in the Pune region. The survey focused on four primary cultural dimensions—stress management, team cohesion, leadership openness, and employee morale—each measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The response analysis revealed that:

- 68% of the respondents reported a “positive shift” in workplace relationships.
- 72% indicated improved stress management abilities.
- 70% observed increased leadership transparency and empathy.
- 65% noticed higher morale and emotional stability across teams.

The descriptive statistics, presented in **Table 2**, summarize the central tendencies and standard deviations for each cultural dimension.

These results indicate a generally favorable perception of yoga interventions. The highest mean value was recorded for Stress Management ( $M = 4.12$ ), which aligns with existing literature that links yoga to reduced physiological stress responses (Pascoe & Bauer, 2015). Leadership Openness also

scored highly ( $M = 4.01$ ), suggesting that yoga may have indirectly contributed to a more open, empathetic, and transparent leadership style. The moderately high score for Employee Morale ( $M = 3.89$ ) and Team Cohesion ( $M = 3.98$ ) further supports the assumption that shared wellness practices, such as corporate yoga, foster collective well-being and psychological safety, crucial elements of positive organizational culture (Denison & Mishra, 1995).

**B. Correlation Analysis:** To test the strength of the association between yoga participation and cultural variables, a Pearson correlation analysis was performed. The frequency of yoga participation (measured on a scale of 1 = Never to 5 = Daily) was treated as the independent variable, and each cultural dimension was treated as a dependent variable.

The results revealed significant positive correlations at the 0.01 level:

- **Leadership Openness:**  $r = 0.62, p < 0.01$
- **Team Collaboration:**  $r = 0.58, p < 0.01$
- **Emotional Regulation:**  $r = 0.65, p < 0.01$

These results suggest that regular yoga participation is strongly associated with key cultural attributes. The highest correlation was observed between yoga participation and emotional regulation ( $r = 0.65$ ), consistent with studies that link mindfulness and breath control with self-regulation and conflict de-escalation in organizational settings (Keng et al., 2011).

Leadership openness, with a correlation of 0.62, implies that managers who either practiced or endorsed yoga were perceived as more approachable and emotionally intelligent. This aligns with research on the role of embodied leadership in shaping organizational values. Team collaboration, too, was moderately correlated ( $r = 0.58$ ) with yoga participation, supporting the notion that collective wellness rituals can act as team-bonding mechanisms and trust-building platforms.

### C. Thematic Analysis (NVivo Results):

In addition to the quantitative survey, 25 semi-structured interviews were conducted with HR heads, mid-level managers, and wellness program coordinators. Using NVivo 14 software, the transcripts were coded into thematic clusters based on emergent concepts. Three dominant themes emerged:

1. **Mental Calmness and Conflict Diffusion:** Many participants noted a noticeable reduction in workplace tensions following the introduction of yoga. One HR manager remarked:

*“Yoga creates shared mental calmness that diffuses tension. There’s less shouting in meetings now.”*

This supports the hypothesis that wellness activities like yoga foster a climate of emotional safety and controlled responses—both of which are foundational to constructive dialogue and collaborative work environments.

2. **Improved Emotional Regulation:** Emotional self-control emerged as a major theme, especially in high-stress settings such as IT service delivery and client management. A project lead observed:

“A lot more emotional control during difficult team meetings. People breathe before they react.”

This theme aligns with emotional intelligence theories and reaffirms the physiological-psychological bridge provided by practices like pranayama and meditation.

3. **Leadership Empathy and Openness:** Respondents also indicated a perceptible change in leadership behaviour post-intervention. An assistant general manager shared:

“Leadership has become more empathetic and transparent. It’s not just about ROI- Return on Investment anymore—it’s about RHI: Return on Human Investment.”

This sentiment echoes literature that positions wellness as a strategic, rather than cosmetic, investment in human capital (Berry et al., 2010)<sup>[9]</sup>.

### D. Diagrammatic Model: Yoga's Influence on Organizational Culture:

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative findings led to the development of a conceptual model (See **Figure 1**) based on Schein’s three-level framework of organizational culture.

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- **Artifacts:** Visible signs such as yoga rooms, meditation zones, and daily wellness rituals. stress responses, and inclusive behaviour norms.
- **Espoused Values:** Policy statements on work-life balance, leadership communication, and mental health. This model illustrates the cascading effect of yoga—from visible practices to the unconscious values that define a workplace culture. By engaging all three levels of culture, yoga transcends mere stress relief and becomes a cultural catalyst.
- **Underlying Assumptions:** Shifts in emotional intelligence, collective

**Table-1: Demographic Profile of Survey Respondents (n = 120)**

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	70	58.3%
	Female	50	41.7%
Age	21–30 years	32	26.7%
	31–40 years	48	40.0%
	41–50 years	28	23.3%
	Above 50 years	12	10.0%
Sector	IT	48	40.0%
	Automotive	22	18.3%
	Education	25	20.8%
	Consulting	25	20.8%
Frequency of Yoga Sessions	2–3 times/week	85	70.8%
	>3 times/week	35	29.2%

Source: Based on Data Collected by Author.

**Table- 2: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (n = 120)**

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach’s Alpha
Leadership Openness	4.01	0.87	0.84
Respect & Collaboration	3.92	0.81	0.82
Stress Management & Emotional Balance	4.12	0.88	0.86
Workplace Satisfaction	3.89	0.93	0.80

Source: Based on Data Collected by Author.

**Table-3: Pearson Correlation Coefficients (n = 120)**

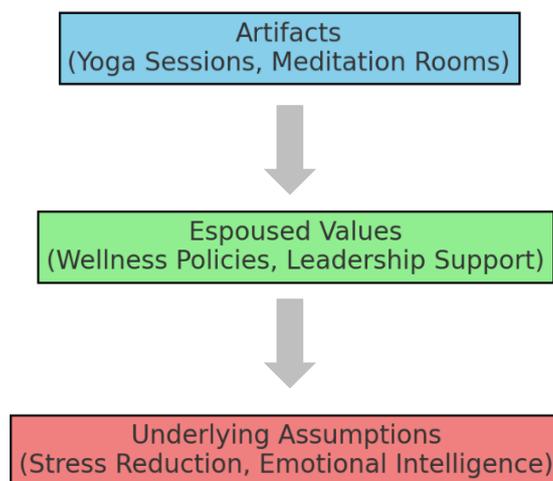
Variables	Leadership	Collaboration	Stress Mgt	Satisfaction
Yoga Frequency	0.62**	0.58**	0.65**	0.61**

Source: Based on Data Collected by Author.

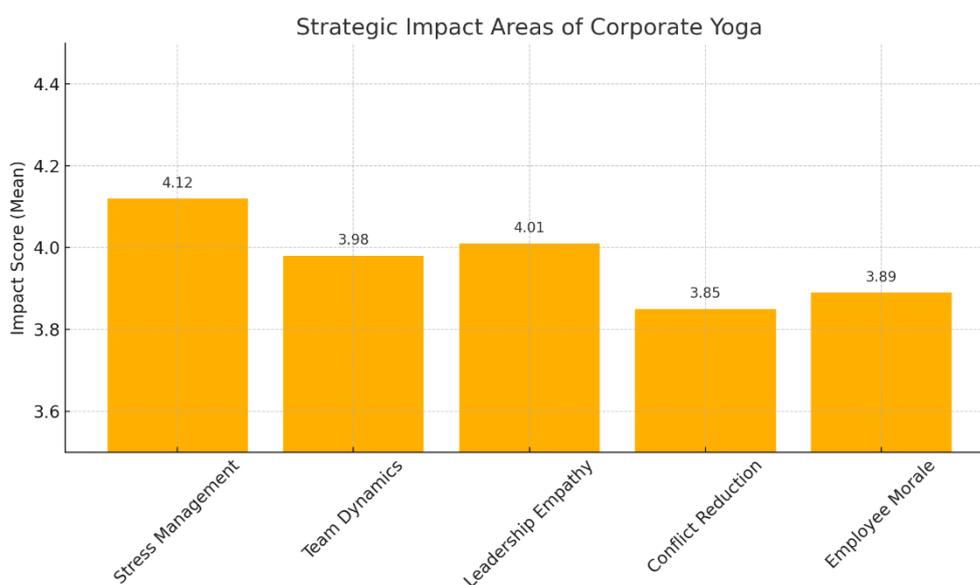
**Table-4: Summary of Survey Responses (n = 120)**

Dimension	Mean	Std. Dev.	Interpretation
Stress Management	4.12	0.88	High
Team Cohesion	3.98	0.91	Moderate-High
Leadership Openness	4.01	0.87	High
Employee Morale	3.89	0.93	Moderate-High

Source: Based on Data Collected by Author.



**Figure-1: Conceptual Model Linking Yoga and Organizations.**



**Figure 2: Strategic impact areas of Corporate Yoga.**

## V. DISCUSSION

**A. Interpretation of Findings:** The findings of this pilot study reinforce the central hypothesis that corporate yoga positively influences not just individual health but also broader organizational culture. The strong mean scores across cultural dimensions—particularly in stress management ( $M = 4.12$ ) and leadership openness ( $M = 4.01$ )—validate yoga's role as a strategic organizational asset. The survey results, coupled with significant Pearson correlations ( $r = 0.62$  to  $0.65$ ), confirm that yoga engagement contributes to reduced interpersonal friction, improved emotional control, and enhanced team collaboration. The correlation between emotional regulation and yoga participation ( $r = 0.65$ ) is particularly noteworthy. Emotional regulation is a critical component of psychological safety and team effectiveness (Kahn, 1990). As participants reported greater self-awareness and controlled reactions, the workplace climate showed visible improvements in respect, empathy, and morale. These findings mirror those of Hartfiel et al. (2011), who observed similar results in a U.K.-based trial. Importantly, the NVivo-coded themes further substantiate the quantitative data. Statements like “Yoga creates shared mental calmness that diffuses tension” demonstrate a collective psychological transformation. These outcomes go beyond individual well-being and resonate with the deeper assumptions in Schein's model of organizational culture (Schein, 2016). The visual presented in **Figure 2** summarizes these findings through mean impact scores across key cultural attributes.

**B. Role of HR and Leadership:** A recurring insight from the interviews was the pivotal role of HR professionals and top management in determining the success of yoga initiatives. Organizations where leaders not only sanctioned but also participated in yoga sessions saw higher participation rates, improved feedback, and sustained adoption. Leadership modelling was identified as a key enabler. Managers who openly discussed the benefits of yoga or scheduled team-based sessions created a climate of trust and psychological safety. These top-down behaviours acted as “cultural signals” (Martin, 2002), thereby increasing legitimacy and encouraging engagement. In contrast, in firms where yoga was outsourced with minimal Human Resource involvement or no leadership endorsement, the programs were seen as peripheral or even disruptive to work routines. This finding echoes the theory of “organizational support” in the wellness literature, where perceived support from leadership directly affects participation and outcomes.<sup>[39]</sup>

**C. Cultural Congruence:** Another important factor contributing to the success of yoga programs in Pune-based companies is the cultural alignment of yoga with Indian social values. India's collectivist orientation, spiritual foundations, and receptiveness to traditional practices make yoga not only acceptable but desirable in workplace contexts. Participants mentioned how yoga sessions often began with Sanskrit chants or breathing exercises rooted in ancient Indian scriptures—elements that were seen as culturally familiar rather than esoteric or intrusive. This congruence supports indigenous HRM practices and enhances psychological contract fulfilment (Budhwar

& Varma, 2011). This finding is consistent with Chakraborty and Chakraborty's (2006) argument that spiritual practices like yoga can nurture ethical behaviour and emotional stability—attributes deeply embedded in Indian work ethics. Unlike Western wellness techniques, which may face resistance due to cultural dissonance, yoga fits seamlessly into the Indian corporate ethos.<sup>[21]</sup>

#### **D. Integration into Organizational Strategy:**

The most forward-thinking organizations viewed yoga not as a standalone wellness event but as part of a broader cultural transformation agenda. Yoga was integrated into leadership development programs, onboarding sessions, team-building retreats, and even conflict resolution processes. One HR director noted, “We include a 20-minute yoga primer in our conflict management training. It helps de-escalate group tensions and primes the brain for active listening.” Such integration moves yoga from the periphery to the strategic core of organizational development. Moreover, firms began linking yoga practices to performance management by tracking post-intervention indicators such as employee engagement scores, absenteeism, and internal communication metrics. This evidence-based approach enhances the credibility of wellness initiatives and aligns them with KPIs.

## **VI. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**A. Policy Implications:** The most immediate implication for corporate policy is the need to formalize yoga programs as part of the human resources management strategy. Companies should:

- Add wellness and yoga KPIs to HR scorecards.
- Institutionalize yoga programs through internal wellness councils.
- Offer opt-in modules for departments or teams with higher stress indices.

Inclusion of yoga in employee handbooks, official calendars, and wellness policies can help normalize participation and remove stigma or misperceptions.

**B. Training Modules:** Leadership development programs should embed yoga-based mindfulness, emotional regulation, and breathing exercises. As organizations face increasing volatility, cultivating centered and empathetic leadership becomes essential.

Suggested modules include:

- **“Breathing Through Chaos”:** Pranayama for high-stress negotiations.
- **“Mindful Leadership”:** Yoga philosophy in decision-making.
- **“Energize Your Meetings”:** Short asana sessions before long planning marathons.

Such modules can be co-designed with certified yoga therapists and behaviour psychologists to ensure relevance and psychological safety.

#### **C. Wellness Metrics and Dashboards:**

The need for evidence-based wellness outcomes has never been greater. Companies should invest in internal dashboards to monitor and report the

impact of yoga interventions. Suggested metrics include:

- Stress Reduction Index (pre- and post-yoga self-assessments)
- Cultural Cohesion Score (team feedback on trust, openness)
- Leadership Responsiveness Scale (360-degree feedback)

These metrics not only justify ROI but also build a culture of data-driven HR practices. Linking these to HR analytics platforms or employee wellness apps can also ensure real-time monitoring.

**D. Inclusion and Diversity:** Yoga programs must be sensitive to religious, physical, and cultural differences. This can be achieved through:

- Offering both physical and chair yoga options.
- Providing gender-segregated sessions, if requested.
- Avoiding chanting or spiritual invocations in mandatory sessions.

Ensuring voluntary participation and offering customized modules can make the program inclusive while maintaining its transformative potential.

**E. Future Research Recommendations:** Given the pilot nature of this study, future research should consider:

- Longitudinal designs measuring cultural change over time.
- Larger sample sizes across multiple cities and industries.
- Comparative studies between yoga and other wellness interventions

(e.g., mindfulness, cognitive therapy).

- Impact of virtual yoga programs in hybrid and remote work environments.

Such studies would deepen the theoretical understanding of yoga's place in modern organizational psychology and HRM.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This pilot study presents robust evidence that corporate yoga programs serve as a transformative force for organizational culture in the Indian corporate sector. Far from being a recreational or isolated health initiative, yoga has the capacity to reshape employee behaviour, inter-personal dynamics, and institutional values. The survey and interview findings consistently support the proposition that yoga enhances stress management, emotional regulation, and leadership empathy. The statistical correlations, backed by qualitative narratives, reveal a deep integration of yoga into the cultural fabric of high-performing teams. Organizations that approached yoga as a strategic tool—integrating it into leadership training, team bonding, and HR policies—reported the highest cultural gains. Furthermore, the natural cultural congruence of yoga within Indian workplaces provided an added advantage over imported wellness models. As India continues to evolve as a global economic powerhouse, the integration of ancient wellness techniques into modern management presents a unique fusion of heritage and innovation. Corporate yoga, when implemented thoughtfully and inclusively, offers not only a healthier

workforce but a more cohesive, adaptive and human-centric organization.

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