

# INSIGHTS FROM AN ONLINE YOGA CLASS.

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## ABSTRACT

Traditionally, Yoga has always been taught one to one, in fact the physical presence of the teacher has been an absolute necessity in Yoga and for all forms of physical, mental and spiritual development. Yoga classes have seen people lining up to learn from an experienced Yogi or yogini. Despite the challenges of distance and time, people have always been walking into a class to learn. The benefits of yoga have always pushed people towards it and people have taken great pains to attend Yoga Classes.

Lock down and Social distancing have been the biggest challenges the pandemic has brought down unto us. In times like this, a yoga class would be essential since it helps reduce stress and brings about a positive attitude. With the whole world opting to work online, study online, the idea of an online yoga class took seed. Sunita Wadhawan explored this area by conducting a month-long, live, online yoga class. Different yogic exercises both physical and mental were carried out by students under the watchful guidance of the teacher through technology.

This paper discusses the challenges and advantages of an online yoga class specifically its need in testing times. "A yogi is not only flexible in his/her body but also finds creative ways to solve a problem" Says Sunita Wadhawan. It is this adaptability and openness that led to these online classes. The outcome of these classes was recorded through a questionnaire and on evaluation of the responses, it was found that all the traditional thought about importance of physical proximity of the teacher and student could be after all a myth. Yoga classes could very well be conducted online and its effectiveness not compromised at all. In fact the classes ensured a diverse and geographically spread out group could come together as a class. The teacher was also quite satisfied with the progress of the group. Online Yoga classes could well be the future of Yoga and its dissemination throughout the world.

## INTRODUCTION TO A YOGA CLASS

Yoga is the art of interconnection between mind and body. It is a practice that has a 5000-year-old history in ancient Indian philosophy. The connection between the body and mind in yoga practices is obtained using a combination of physical postures such as asanas, breathing techniques, and meditation. Initially starting as a practice in India, it has now spread throughout the world and has become popular as a form of exercise that promotes improved control over the mind and body. Improved control paves the way for mind strengthening and overall well-being.

Yoga is equally associated with physical exercise as it is with mind strengthening, but the start of traditional yogic practices was never focused on postures and poses. Physical fitness was not the goal. The practice dealt more with spiritual energy, breathing techniques and control over the mind. Today physical fitness, along with flexibility and strengthening of muscles has become an integral part of yoga.

The famous sage – Patanjali has written treatise on yogic philosophy. This is known as the "Yoga Sutra" and it is a guide to master control over the mind and emotions. This treatise further states that control over the mind and emotions allows an individual to grow spiritually. The Yoga Sutra is also famous for the fact that this is the oldest written record on the practice of yoga, and as such has become a blueprint for all of modern yoga. (1)

Yoga consist of Chakras – which are the focal points of energy, thoughts, emotions, and the physical body. Yogis teach chakras as a way to determine the perception of reality by an individual. "When energy becomes blocked in a chakra, it is said to trigger physical, mental, or emotional imbalances that manifest in symptoms, such as anxiety, lethargy, or poor digestion."

Creativity of the mind can only have optimal functioning when the mind is strong and balanced. This can be achieved using Yoga. Practicing yoga allows an individual to align their chakras in a balanced state thus experiencing control over the mind and enhancing our creativity. Asanas are another integral part of yoga. They are the actual physical poses that yoga practitioners use to stimulate flow of energy and balance the chakras. (1)

A yoga class can focus on various things, one of them is the cyclic meditation process. This process is an 8-step yoga practice that aims to create a cycle of stimulation and relaxation of the mind to achieve balance and mental strength. The key points of this practice involve – single thought process for focused thinking, slowness, awareness of the surroundings, wakefulness, effortlessness to allow relaxation, and expansiveness of the mind. This process of cyclic meditation can relax the body in 35 minutes and gives nine hours of rest that one achieves in sleep. It decreases the heart rate and blood pressure to a state of relaxation.

The 8- step process involved in cyclic meditation is –

### **Cyclic meditation**

Step 1: Opening prayer

Step 2: Instant relaxation technique

Step 3: Centering

Step 4: Standing asana

Step 5: Quick relaxation technique

Step 6: Sitting asana

Step 7: Deep relaxation technique

Step 8: Closing prayer

The aim of yoga is to have an all-round development of the mind and body. Mental strength to combat psychological illnesses and to increase creativity can be achieved through yoga. The development of a strong flexible body that is pain free and has a balanced functioning of all the organ systems is also achieved through yoga. The stretching routines that one practices in the art of yoga has shown through many experiments to reduce the effect of anxiety and depression on one's mind. The muscles and joints also attain a greater range of motion which releases lactic acid accumulated in the muscles and prevents cramps and problems in muscle contraction.(2) (3) (4)

The vast range of benefits of yoga is evident. It is truly a holistic practice. Yoga is practiced with a yogi that knows the art of yoga and can teach it to you. This is usually done in the form of classes either with the yogi coming to your home or you going to a center to the yogi. Unfortunately, today in the crisis of the pandemic, where physical contact is completely restricted, the only option left for yogis is to move to online teaching modes. Creative means must be applied to carry out the practice of yoga and to try and achieve maximum productivity, and the yogis have done exactly that.

We have heard of many online classes being held for college and school students to take classes, and just as such yogi's have started taking online classes. Their classes involve videos of a yogi practicing yoga, along with giving clear instructions in a soothing voice to ensure the correct posture for each pose and prevent any injuries.

### **YOGA ON ONLINE PLATFORMS**

Yoga practitioners are known as yogis/yoginis. They have been known to be teaching and practicing yoga long before any written account of yoga was discovered. They are the ones who passed down the discipline of yoga to their students, who have spread it further around the globe.

In today's world, stressful work environments and unpredictable crises have become recurring incidents that lead to disruption of normal lives. This deviation from routine can lead to various mental health

problems that affect the daily work of a person. Yoga is known to help calm the mind and develop mental strength to focus and overcome any instability in the mind.

“With less access to gyms and fitness centers around the world, the yoga industry along with other exercise venues has quickly adapted by promoting and offering thousands of online classes.” (10)

Yoga as online class is very beneficial during this pandemic time. It allows yogis to take classes from the safety of their home and still provide social help and support to their yoga students. Yoga classes were conducted with great enthusiasm and self-motivation. The benefits of online yoga classes are surely great, but there are also some challenges that one has to face. Good Internet connection is crucial for yoga students to be able to follow their yogi and to keep up with the class with clarity. Poor internet speeds can cause distortion in the video and the student cannot view the postures clearly. Another cause of concern is the amount of screen time gained while doing online classes. The classes conducted lasted for one hour to one and a half hours, and all this time is spent looking at the screen which causes tiredness of the eye and strain in vision. Having a good balance of the positives and negatives can give you huge benefits of doing online yoga class. Another issue is having the correct space to do yoga, if you live in a small cramped apartment it can become difficult to do the postures with limited range of motion.

Conducting online classes surely has its positives. Many people who don't have access to yogis or a yoga center near their homes can avail the benefits of yoga through online classes. There is also freedom and comfort in doing yoga from home. “When working from home people may not have the ideal work environment and for example may be sitting for prolonged periods of time and in awkward positions, which can lead to poor posture. Yoga allows a person to stretch and improve circulation and posture and combat the negative effects of sitting for up to 8 hours per day or more.” (10)

You have the option of doing yoga even on rainy days when it isn't possible for you to commute to the yoga class and you also get to save time by reducing travel. Online yoga classes are also a great way to bring family members together to do a combined yoga session. The classes that were conducted had many families doing yoga together. This allowed them to spend quality time with family and experience yoga together.

### BENEFITS OF YOGA IN A PANDEMIC

2020 has been a difficult time for all of humanity. The pandemic of Covid-19 started right at the beginning on the year and has spread to every nook and corner of this earth.

“Immunity of the host is an essential requisite to facilitate the eradication of infections. Disturbed immune systems seen as lymphopenia and elevated C-reactive protein levels are recognized to be the characteristic features in severely affected cases of COVID-19 infection.” Extensive research has shown that asanas, meditation, pranayamas and mantras can help build a broad spectrum immunity in an individual. (9)

Six months into the pandemic has made people realize that there is a major increase in mental illnesses of the general population. “Rising numbers of COVID-19 cases and deaths possibly raise stress and anxiety, while loneliness and depressive feelings are likely due to mandatory social distancing measures.” (6) Another issue is that because vast majority of the population is stuck at home unable to move about and do any activity, their muscles are not coming into use. This can cause loss of fitness and muscle flexibility. People may also end up risking their health by eating unhealthy food and putting on weight. All these issues can be tackled with the help of Yoga.

Poor mental health has known to be linked with decrease in normal functioning of the body and increasing the risk of acute respiratory infections (7). With the unavailability of many facilities such as regular therapy sessions and certain hospital facilities, many people are suffering even more. There have been methods for online therapy, but they don't seem to be available at an affordable price for everyone. The best way to cope with these hard times is to develop mental strength by yourself. This can be done by

taking online yoga classes. Many yogi's have realised the importance of yoga even more so than before in this year, and they have adapted with creativity and flexibility of the mind to online classes. Availing online classes of yoga can help mediate many health risk factors such as anxiety and depression. Meditation has also been found to reduce inflammation markers and enhance stimulation of virus specific immune response (8).

Practising yoga can ensure that flexibility of the body muscles are not lost and health of the individual is maintained. Strengthening the mind through yoga can also lead to creative use of time in quarantine and improvement of oneself.

Availing online yoga classes from the comfort of one's home is the perfect tool to battle boredom and loneliness. You can attain many benefits and this will ensure that you come out of this quarantine happy and healthy.

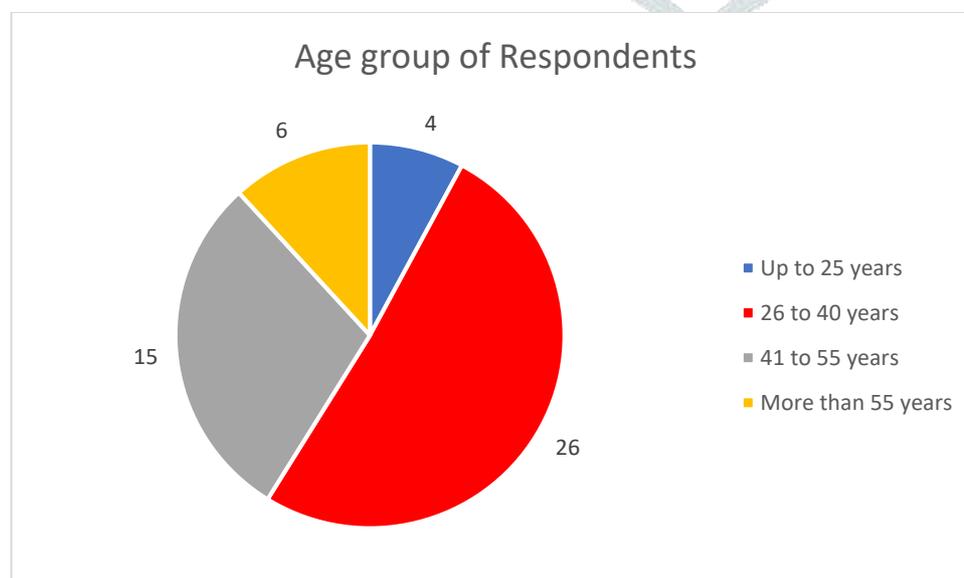
## DATA ANALYSIS

Information on primary data of Yoga Practitioners - collected through a structured Questionnaire. For the study of Emotional Quotient, information gathered from primary data was first classified and then Hypotheses were tested. Table of classification for the collected responses are as follows.

### Demographics:

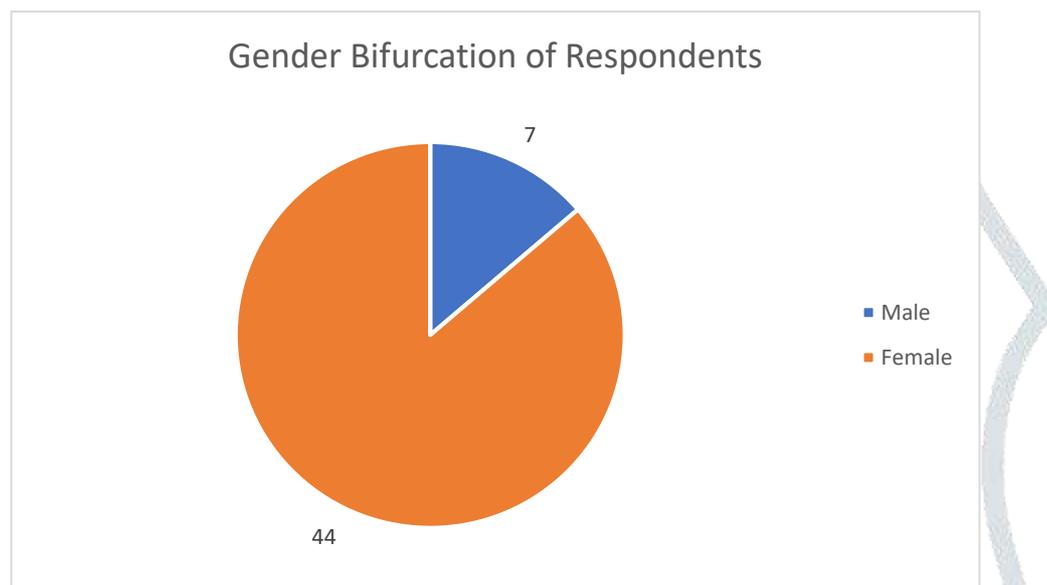
Age Group		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Up to 25 years	4	7.8	7.8	7.8
	26 to 40 years	26	51.0	51.0	58.8
	41 to 55 years	15	29.4	29.4	88.2
	More than 55 years	6	11.8	11.8	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates that out of 51 respondents, 4 respondents are aged up to 25 years, 26 are aged between 26 to 40 years, 15 are aged between 41 to 55 years and 6 respondents are aged more than 55 years. This information can be graphically represented in a Pie Chart as follows:



Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	7	13.7	13.7	13.7
	Female	44	86.3	86.3	100.0
	Total	51	100.0	100.0	

The above table indicates that out of 51 respondents, 44 respondents are Female, and 7 respondents are Male respondents. This information can be graphically represented in a Pie Chart as follows:



### Positive Emotional Quotient

The Positive Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioner respondents were assessed through statement/questions 1,3,6,7,10,13,14,16 and 19 of the Questionnaire. The responses for the same were recorded as below:

Statement	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I feel pleasant.	1	21	21	8
I feel satisfied with myself	2	23	18	8
I feel rested.	7	31	10	3
I am "calm, cool and collected"	6	24	15	6
[I am happy.	1	19	19	12
I feel secure	2	19	18	12
I make decisions easily	8	15	21	7
I am content	4	23	14	10
[I am a steady person	3	20	20	8

Above responses are rated as follows:

Almost Never	=	1
Sometimes	=	2
Often	=	3
Almost Always	=	4

Using the above scores for question 1,3,6,7,10,13,14,16 and 19 the mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is calculated using the formula given below:

$$\text{Mean Positive EQ} = \frac{\text{Totalscore of rating of respondent (for 9 questions)} \times 100}{\text{Maximum rating (36)}}$$

The mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is calculated for each respondent and subsequently for all 51 respondents and represented in the table below:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Positive EQ	51	36.11	100.00	64.7059	15.88242
Valid N (listwise)	51				

The above table indicates that the mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is 64.70 percent. Corresponding standard deviation is 15.88. The standard deviation indicates high variation in the responses.

### Negative Emotional Quotient

The Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioner respondents were assessed through statement/questions 2,4,5,8,9,11,12,15,17,18 and 20 of the Questionnaire. The responses for the same were recorded as below:

Statement	Almost Never	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
I feel nervous and restless.	8	33	9	1
I wish I could be as happy as others seem to be.	12	17	12	10
I feel like a failure	25	21	5	0
I feel that difficulties are piling up so that I cannot overcome them	17	21	7	6
I worry too much over something that really doesn't matter	11	23	10	7
I have disturbing thoughts	11	27	9	4
I lack self-confidence	16	22	6	7
I feel inadequate	21	19	10	1

Some unimportant thought runs through my mind and bothers me	7	24	15	5
I take disappointments so keenly that I can't put them out of my mind	11	24	12	4
I get in a state of tension or turmoil as I think over my recent concerns and interests	10	27	11	3

Above responses are rated as follows:

Almost Never	=	1
Sometimes	=	2
Often	=	3
Almost Always	=	4

Using the above scores for question 2,4,5,8,9,11,12,15,17,18 and 20 the mean score for Negative Emotional Quotient is calculated using the formula given below:

$$\text{Mean Negative EQ} = \frac{\text{Totalscoreof rating of respondent(for 11 questions)} \times 100}{\text{Maximum rating}(44)}$$

The mean score for Negative Emotional Quotient is calculated for each respondent and subsequently for all 51 respondents and represented in the table below:

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Nevetive EQ	51	25.00	93.18	52.3619	15.48767
Valid N (listwise)	51				

The above table indicates that the mean score for Negative Emotional Quotient is 52.36 percent. Corresponding standard deviation is 15.48. The standard deviation indicates high variation in the responses.

## HYPOTHESIS TESTING

**Null Hypothesis H<sub>01A</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the Age group of the Respondents.

**Alternate Hypothesis H<sub>11A</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the Age group of the Respondents.

To test the above Null Hypothesis ANOVA is obtained and F-test is applied. Results are shown in the table below:

ANOVA					
Positive EQ					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	1413.143	3	471.048	1.977	.130
Within Groups	11199.420	47	238.286		
Total	12612.564	50			

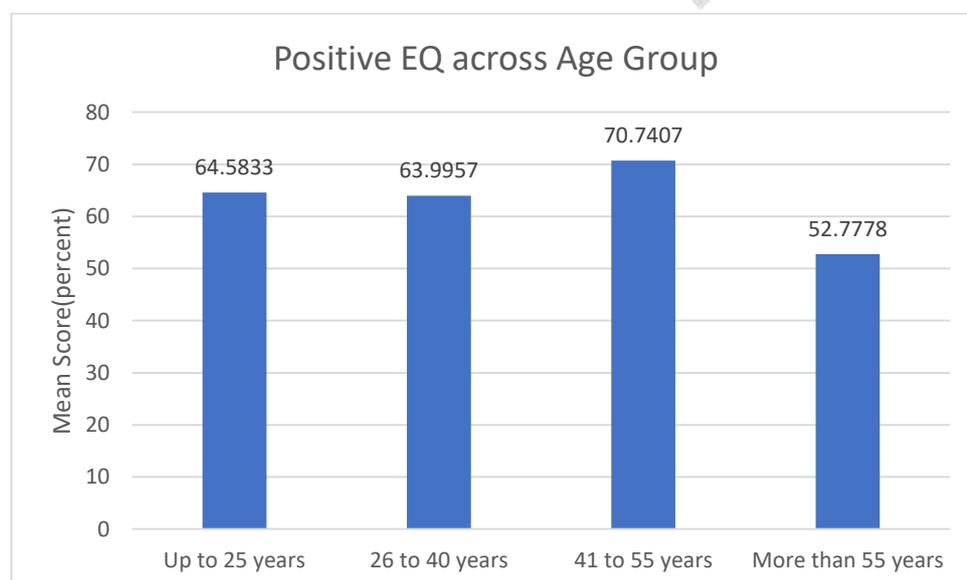
**Interpretation:** The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.130. It is greater than 0.05. Therefore F-test is accepted. Hence Alternate hypothesis is rejected and Null hypothesis is accepted.

**Conclusion:** There is no significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the Age group of the Respondents.

**Finding** is that the Mean Score Positive Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners highly insignificant across the Age group of the respondents. The Positive Emotional Quotient is similar across the Age group of the respondents. This can be observed in the following table:

Report			
Positive EQ			
Age Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Up to 25 years	64.5833	4	22.60947
26 to 40 years	63.9957	26	15.50549
41 to 55 years	70.7407	15	14.19763
More than 55 years	52.7778	6	12.90994
Total	64.7059	51	15.88242

The above table indicates that the mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is highest at 70.74 percent for respondents aged between 41 to 45 years, while it is the lowest at 52.77 percent for respondents of age more than 55 years. This difference is not significant according to the F-test results. Thus, it verifies our findings. This can also graphically be represented in a Bar chart as follows:



**Null Hypothesis H<sub>01B</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the Gender of the Respondents.

**Alternate Hypothesis H<sub>11B</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the Gender of the Respondents.

To test the above Null Hypothesis ANOVA is obtained and F-test is applied. Results are shown in the table below:

ANOVA					
Positive EQ					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	80.572	1	80.572	.315	.577
Within Groups	12531.992	49	255.755		
Total	12612.564	50			

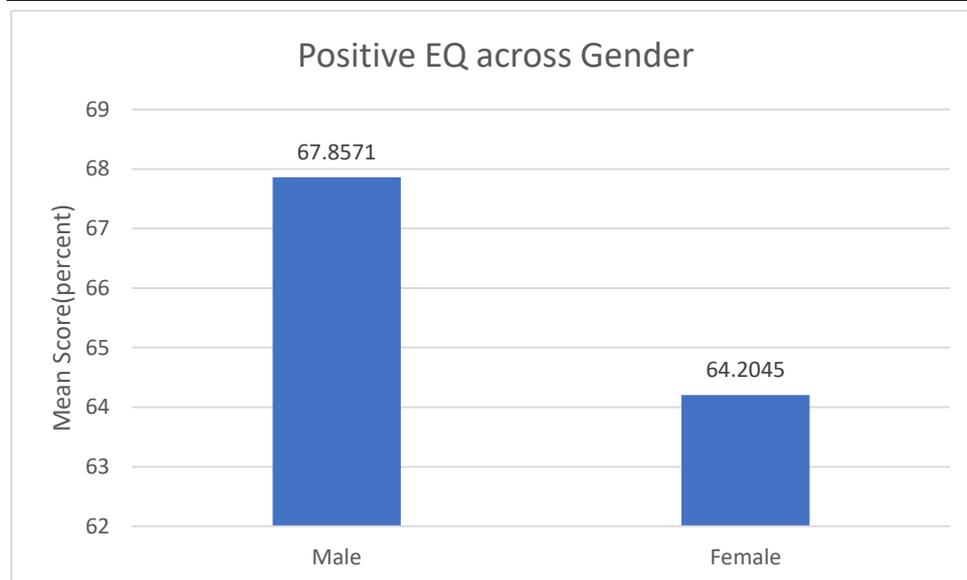
**Interpretation:** The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.577. It is greater than 0.05. Therefore F-test is accepted. Hence Alternate hypothesis is rejected and Null hypothesis is accepted.

**Conclusion:** There is no significant difference in the Positive Emotional Quotient across the gender of the Respondents.

**Finding** is that the Mean Score Positive Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners highly insignificant across the Gender of the respondents. The Positive Emotional Quotient is similar across the Gender of the respondents. This can be observed in the following table:

Report			
Positive EQ			
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	67.8571	7	19.76307
Female	64.2045	44	15.39293
Total	64.7059	51	15.88242

The above table indicates that the mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is highest at 67.85 percent for Male respondents, while it is the lowest at 64.20 percent for Female respondents. This difference is not significant according to the F-test results. Thus, it verifies our findings. This can also graphically be represented in a Bar chart as follows:



**Null Hypothesis H<sub>02A</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Age group of the Respondents.

**Alternate Hypothesis H<sub>12A</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Age group of the Respondents.

To test the above Null Hypothesis ANOVA is obtained and F-test is applied. Results are shown in the table below:

ANOVA					
Negative EQ					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	608.516	3	202.839	.837	.480
Within Groups	11384.880	47	242.231		
Total	11993.397	50			

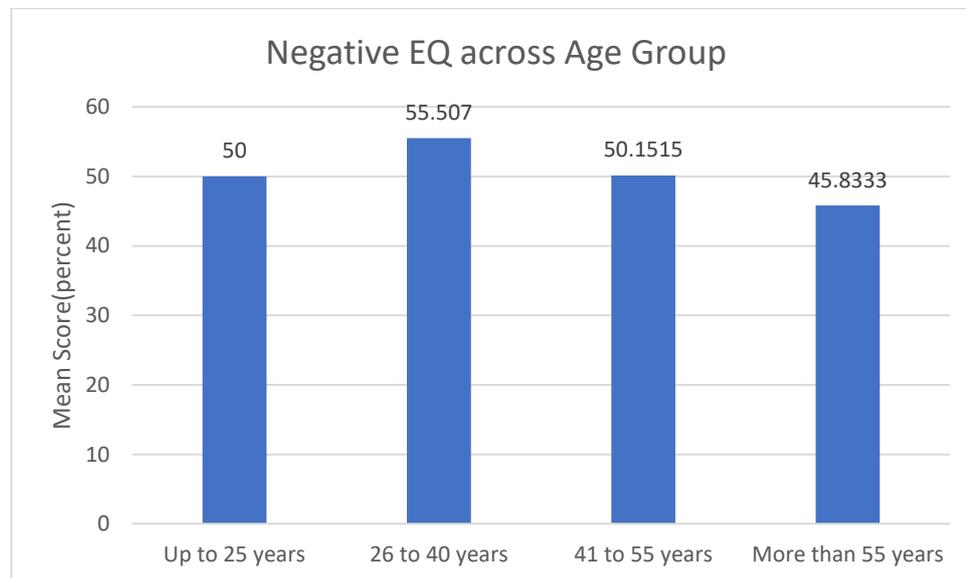
**Interpretation:** The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.480. It is greater than 0.05. Therefore F-test is accepted. Hence Alternate hypothesis is rejected and Null hypothesis is accepted.

**Conclusion:** There is no significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Age Group of the Respondents.

**Finding** is that the Mean Score Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners highly insignificant across the Age group of the respondents. The Negative Emotional Quotient is similar across the Age group of the respondents. This can be observed in the following table:

Report			
Negative EQ			
Age Group	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Up to 25 years	50.0000	4	23.25153
26 to 40 years	55.5070	26	16.12417
41 to 55 years	50.1515	15	13.89014
More than 55 years	45.8333	6	10.60335
Total	52.3619	51	15.48767

The above table indicates that the mean score for Negative Emotional Quotient is highest at 55.50 percent for respondents aged between 26 to 40 years, while it is the lowest at 45.83 percent for respondents of age more than 55 years. This difference is not significant according to the F-test results. Thus, it verifies our findings. This can also graphically be represented in a Bar chart as follows:



**Null Hypothesis H<sub>02B</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Gender of the Respondents.

**Alternate Hypothesis H<sub>12B</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Gender of the Respondents.

To test the above Null Hypothesis ANOVA is obtained and F-test is applied. Results are shown in the table below:

ANOVA					
Negative EQ					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Between Groups	51.047	1	51.047	.209	.649
Within Groups	11942.350	49	243.721		
Total	11993.397	50			

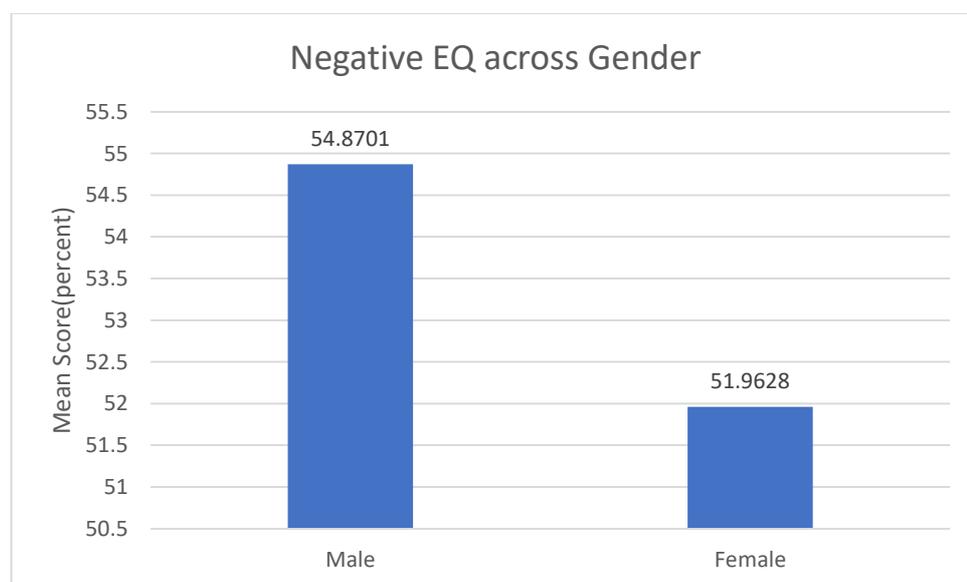
**Interpretation:** The above results indicate that calculated p-value is 0.649. It is greater than 0.05. Therefore F-test is accepted. Hence Alternate hypothesis is rejected and Null hypothesis is accepted.

**Conclusion:** There is no significant difference in the Negative Emotional Quotient across the Gender of the Respondents.

**Finding** is that the Mean Score Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners highly insignificant across the Gender of the respondents. The Negative Emotional Quotient is similar across the Gender of the respondents. This can be observed in the following table:

Report			
Nevetive EQ			
Gender	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	54.8701	7	21.09390
Female	51.9628	44	14.68478
Total	52.3619	51	15.48767

The above table indicates that the mean score for Negative Emotional Quotient is highest at 54.87 percent for Male respondents, while it is the lowest at 51.96 percent for Female respondents. This difference is not significant according to the F-test results. Thus, it verifies our findings. This can also graphically be represented in a Bar chart as follows:



**Null Hypothesis H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the Positive and Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners.

**Alternate Hypothesis H<sub>13</sub>:** There is a significant difference in the Positive and Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners.

To test the above Null Hypothesis Chi-square test is applied. The p-value is calculated and is shown in the below table :

Paired Samples Test								
			Paired Differences			t	df	p-value
			Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 1	Positive EQ - Nevetive EQ	12.34403	23.70579	3.31948	3.719	50	.001	

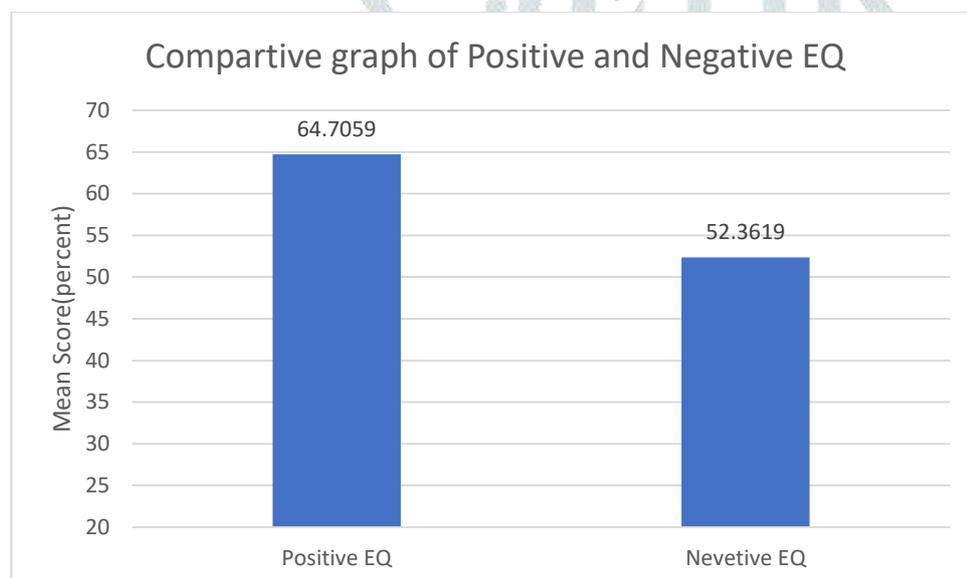
**Interpretation:** The p-value is 0.001. This is less than 0.05. Hence the Chi-square test is accepted. Hence Null Hypothesis is rejected and Alternate Hypothesis is Accepted.

**Conclusion:** There is a significant difference in the Positive and Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners.

**Finding** is that the Positive Emotional Quotient is significantly different that the Negative Emotional Quotient of the Yoga Practitioners. The positive EQ of the yoga practitioners is more than the negative EQ. This can also be seen in the below table:

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Positive EQ	64.7059	51	15.88242	2.22398
	Nevetive EQ	52.3619	51	15.48767	2.16871

The above table indicates that the Mean score for Positive Emotional Quotient is 64.70 percent while Negative Emotional Quotient is 52.36 percent. This indicates that Positive EQ is higher than the Negative EQ for the Yoga Practitioners.



## CRONBACH'S ALPHA TEST

**Test of reliability of scale:** It is used to validate likert scale used in questionnaire.

To validate the scale in this study Cronbach Alpha test is applied. Test is applied for all 51 respondents. For the Cronbach Alpha test all 20 questions/statements are considered.

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	51	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	51	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.828	20

Above results indicate that Cronbach Alpha value is 0.828. It is more than required value 0.700. Hence test is accepted. Conclusion is **scale is reliable and accepted.**

## CONCLUSION –

On analysing the data from the questionnaire, we can see the major benefits of yoga even when practised online. The maximum number of practitioners were in the age group of 26-40 years (51%) followed by 41-55 years (29.4%), 86.3% of the practitioners were females and 13.7% male. From the testing of the hypothesis, various conclusions were drawn –

- There is no significant difference between the Positive Emotional Quotient across the age group.
- There is no significant difference between the Positive Emotional Quotient across genders.
- There is no significant difference between the Negative Emotional Quotient across the age group
- There is no significant difference between the Negative Emotional Quotient across genders.
- There is a SIGNIFICANT difference between the Positive and Negative Emotional quotient, with the Positive Emotional Quotient being higher than the Negative.

From these findings we can conclude that irrespective of age or gender, there is a significant improvement in the Positive Emotional Quotient of the yoga practitioner. Online yoga classes as proved in our analysis, has immense benefits in uplifting the mood of a person and improving the overall positivity.

The stressful time of 2020 has caused many people to become sad and depressed. Yoga, with its availability on online platforms and its immense benefits can truly help people in these times. The purpose of this article is to spread the purpose gained through yoga, and with our conclusive analysis we can say that online yoga classes allows you to improve your mental state of mind and emotional positivity.

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