

Stress and Anxiety Control as a Result of DHSP Bali's Traditional Meditation and Yoga Practice

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ABSTRACT

Stress and anxiety are increasing mental health problems that can negatively impact an individual's physical and psychological well-being. Traditional yoga and meditation, including Yoga DHSP Bali, are known as holistic approaches with potential to help control stress and anxiety. This study aimed to analyze the effect of DHSP Bali Traditional Yoga and Meditation practice on participants' stress and anxiety levels. This study used a pretest-posttest design involving 31 respondents. The intervention, in the form of DHSP Bali yoga practice, was carried out for 4 weeks at a frequency of at least 3 times per week. Measurements of depression, anxiety, and stress levels were conducted using the DASS-42 questionnaire. The results showed an increase in the number of respondents in the normal category and a decrease in the mild-to-severe category across all dimensions of the DASS-42 (depression, anxiety, and stress) after the intervention. A comparison of pretest and posttest scores indicated a decrease in the severity of participants' psychological symptoms. traditional yoga and meditation practice are effective in lowering stress and anxiety levels and has potential as a safe and beneficial non-pharmacological complementary therapy for mental health management.

Keywords: Traditional yoga; meditation; stress; anxiety; DASS-42; DHSP Bali

INTRODUCTION

Stress and anxiety are mental health issues that are on the rise in various walks of life. Both of these conditions can negatively impact an individual's well-being, both physically and psychologically. According to research, prolonged stress can lead to health problems such as increased blood pressure, sleep disturbances, and a decrease in the immune system. Meanwhile, poorly managed anxiety can develop into generalized anxiety disorder, depression, or other psychosomatic disorders (Nabilla & Dwiyanti, 2022). Therefore, an effective approach to managing stress and anxiety is needed to improve an individual's quality of life (Buonocore et al., 2017; Cao et al., 2023; Kidd et al., 2017; Stefanaki et al., 2015).

Yoga has been known as one of the alternative therapy methods that has proven to be effective in reducing stress and anxiety (Bridges & Sharma, 2017; Riley & Park, 2015). Yoga is a combination of physical exercise, breathing techniques, and meditation that helps improve the balance of body and mind (Nabilla & Dwiyanti, 2022). Many studies have been conducted and the results show that yoga and meditation therapy can significantly lower anxiety levels in individuals who have experienced trauma, such as victims of natural disasters (Macy et al., 2018; Mathew, 2021; Nanduri et al., 2023; Taylor et al., 2020). The results of this study found that out of 20 participants, as many as 17 people experienced anxiety before the intervention,

but after being given yoga and meditation therapy, the number decreased to only 4 people who still experienced anxiety (Hasanah et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of yoga in lowering stress and anxiety has also been supported by various other evidence-based studies (de Manincor et al., 2015; O'Shea et al., 2022; Simon et al., 2021; Zoogman et al., 2019). Meta-analyses that have been conducted show that yoga significantly lowers anxiety during pregnancy and reduces the risk of postpartum depression (Nabilla & Dwiyanti, 2022). The study reviewed nine primary studies showing that yoga practice helps reduce anxiety in pregnant women as well as improve their emotional balance. In addition, research conducted by The Impact of Yoga on Mental Health (2023) also shows that yoga can help lower levels of stress hormones such as cortisol, improve emotional regulation, and improve sleep patterns in individuals who experience stress and anxiety (Kamraju, 2023).

Aside from a scientific point of view, yoga also has traditional roots that have long been used as a stress management and mental balance technique. In the book *Yoga Meditation* by Agung Setiabudi (2024), it is explained that the practice of yoga and meditation has become part of the spiritual cultural heritage in Indonesia, especially in Bali (Setiabudi, 2024). Concepts such as Dharma Hidup Singin Prana Bali (DHSP Bali) combine elements of meditation and breathing exercises to achieve inner calm and physical balance (Setiabudi, 2024). These traditional techniques have been used by Balinese people as a holistic approach in maintaining mental and physical health, which is in line with scientific findings regarding the benefits of yoga in reducing stress and anxiety.

Although the benefits of yoga have been widely documented, there is still a need to further explore its mechanisms of action as well as its effectiveness in a wide range of specific populations and conditions. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of yoga on stress and anxiety levels with a more systematic approach. The results of this study are expected to provide stronger scientific evidence on the benefits of yoga as a complementary therapy in addressing mental health problems and may be a recommendation for individuals experiencing stress and anxiety to use yoga as an effective management strategy (Maity et al., 2024).

METHOD

This study was carried out within 4 weeks, with the elaboration of the implementation of therapy at least 3 times in 1 week. Participants can do it at home and must do 1x joint therapy at the DHSP Bali yoga training site. The researcher will review the implementation of therapy at least 1x a week. Before the implementation of therapy, participants were given education about the practice of Yoga DHSP Bali and the benefits of meditation that will be carried out. After that, education on filling out the questionnaire was carried out before the pretest test began. Stress and anxiety levels were measured using the DASS-42 questionnaire and participants were also given motivation and compassion of yoga and meditation to support physical and spiritual health.

Furthermore, participants undergo a full cycle of DHSP Bali Yoga therapy involving physical exercise as well as meditation. After the yoga and meditation sessions were completed, the researchers re-instructed the researchers to conduct research and practice routines for at least 3 times a week in 1 month before the questionnaire was given again at week 4 to the participants to evaluate the changes in their mental state after therapy. Data collection from the

results of the measurements and questionnaires was used to analyze the impact of DHSP Bali Yoga therapy on participants' stress and anxiety levels.

Analysis Descriptive statistical tests were performed to describe the basic characteristics of the patient and the frequency distribution of various variables. The analysis of DASS-42 was carried out by summing the scores on each subscale, then classifying the scores into categories of severity according to the DASS guidelines.

Table 1. Category DASS 42

| NO | CATEGORY | DEPRESSION | ANXIETY | STRESS |
|----|-------------|------------|---------|--------|
| 1 | NORMAL | 0-9 | 0-7 | 0-14 |
| 2 | LIGHTWEIGHT | 10-13 | 8-9 | 15-18 |
| 3 | MEDIUM | 14-20 | 10-14 | 19-25 |
| 4 | WEIGHT | 21-27 | 15-19 | 26-33 |
| 5 | VERY HEAVY | 28-42 | 20-42 | 34-42 |

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the data analyzed, the number of valid respondents was 31 people. Based on gender, the research respondents were dominated by women, namely 18 people (58.1%), while male respondents amounted to 13 people (41.9%). Age characteristics showed the average age of the youngest participants at 20 years old and the oldest at 69 years.

Table 2. Pretest-Posttest

| Variable | Category | Pretest (n) | Posttest (n) | Remarks |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| Depression | Normal | 21 | 26 | Increase |
| | Lightweight | 4 | 3 | Downward |
| | Medium | 4 | 2 | Downward |
| | Weight | 2 | 0 | Downward |
| | Very Heavy | 0 | 0 | Fixed |
| Anxiety | Normal | 12 | 20 | Increase |
| | Lightweight | 5 | 6 | Increase |
| | Medium | 7 | 3 | Downward |
| | Weight | 2 | 2 | Fixed |
| | Very Heavy | 5 | 0 | Downward |
| Stress | Normal | 20 | 24 | Increase |
| | Lightweight | 3 | 5 | Increase |
| | Medium | 7 | 2 | Downward |
| | Weight | 1 | 0 | Downward |
| | Very Heavy | 0 | 0 | Fixed |

The results of the pretest measurement using DASS-42 showed that some respondents experienced depression, anxiety, and stress with mild to severe severity, especially in the dimensions of anxiety and stress, although some respondents were still in the normal category. In the posttest, there was an improvement in the psychological condition of the respondents, which was characterized by an increase in the number of respondents in the normal category and a decrease in the mild, moderate, and severe categories in all dimensions of DASS-42 (depression, anxiety, and stress). Overall, a comparison of pretest and posttest showed a decrease in the severity of psychological symptoms after the intervention.

Anxiety is an emotional condition characterized by excessive feelings of fear or worry about a certain situation, even though the actual threat does not necessarily exist. Anxiety can affect a person's physical and mental well-being, as well as interfere with daily activities (Maity et al., 2024). Some common symptoms of anxiety include increased heart rate, sleep disturbances, difficulty concentrating, muscle tension, and persistent disturbing feelings of anxiety (Hasanah et al., 2022). The effectiveness of yoga in reducing anxiety can be explained through several physiological and psychological mechanisms. Physiologically, yoga lowers levels of stress hormones such as cortisol, increases the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system, and improves the body's autonomic balance (Chauhan et al., 2024). A study conducted by Maity et al. (2024) found that participants who followed a yoga program experienced a decrease in systolic and diastolic blood pressure, as well as a more stable heart rate, indicating a calming effect of this exercise.

The effectiveness of meditation in improving mental health can be explained through several key mechanisms. First, meditation can reduce the production of stress hormones such as cortisol, which is often associated with increased anxiety and depression. Second, meditation increases activity in the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that plays a role in decision-making and emotion regulation (Parajuli et al., 2022). In addition, meditation also increases the production of neurotransmitters such as serotonin and dopamine, which play a role in improving mood and reducing anxiety (Parajuli et al., 2022). Some neuroimaging studies show that individuals who regularly meditate have structural changes in the brain related to improved coping skills and improved emotional well-being (Parajuli et al., 2022).

From a psychological perspective, yoga helps improve self-awareness and emotional regulation. Breathing techniques in yoga, such as pranayama, can increase oxygen levels in the body and stimulate the autonomic nervous system, which contributes to feelings of calm and relaxation (Setiabudi, 2024). Meditation in yoga also helps individuals to focus more on the present (mindfulness), thereby reducing anxiety due to excessive worry about the future (Ariyanti et al., 2024).

The mechanism of action of yoga in improving mental health can be explained through several main factors. First, yoga helps regulate the autonomic nervous system by increasing the activity of the parasympathetic nervous system and lowering sympathetic responses, which play a role in reducing stress and anxiety (Setiabudi, 2024). Second, yoga practice lowers cortisol levels and increases the production of the hormones serotonin and dopamine, which contribute to feelings of happiness and relaxation (Kamraju, 2023). Third, brain imaging studies show that yoga can increase the thickness of the prefrontal cortex, that is, the part of the brain responsible for emotion regulation, decision-making, and concentration (Gothe et al., 2019). Fourth, meditation techniques in yoga increase self-awareness and help individuals manage their thoughts and reduce negative thinking tendencies (Kamraju, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that DHSP Bali's Traditional Yoga and Meditation practice has a positive impact on controlling stress and anxiety levels, as well as improving the psychological condition of participants in general. DHSP Bali Traditional Yoga and Meditation Practice was shown to be effective in lowering participants' levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, which was demonstrated by the increase in the normal category

as well as a decrease in the severity of symptoms based on the DASS-42 score on the posttest. This intervention has the potential to be a safe and beneficial nonpharmacological complementary therapy in the management of mental health. Further studies are recommended using a design with control groups, larger sample counts, and longer intervention durations to strengthen the scientific evidence and generalize the results of the study.

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