

Yoga integration in curriculum design

Llanabelle O. Lañohan

Cebu Technological University
MJ Cuenco & R Palma Street, San Roque Ciudad, Cebu City, Philippines
lanohanllanabelle@gmail.com

Regina P. Galigao

Cebu Technological University
MJ Cuenco & R Palma Street, San Roque Ciudad, Cebu City, Philippines
reginpgaligao@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigates the global integration of yoga into educational curricula, emphasizing its transformative impact on student well-being, academic performance, and holistic development. Utilizing a data mining approach across various international contexts, the research identifies commonalities and regional distinctions in the implementation of yoga programs in schools. Findings reveal that yoga enhances emotional regulation, reduces academic stress, and fosters improved focus and cognitive function—contributing significantly to academic success. The study categorizes global practices into distinct regional frameworks: Asia emphasizes mental stability and academic readiness; Europe prioritizes emotional resilience; Africa focuses on trauma-informed approaches; North America highlights cognitive and socio-emotional benefits; South America underscores holistic and soft skill development; and Australia showcases cross-curricular application. The results underscore yoga’s adaptability and the critical role of context-specific frameworks in maximizing its educational benefits. This comparative analysis offers evidence-based recommendations for integrating yoga into diverse educational systems, positioning it as a powerful, flexible tool for nurturing well-rounded, resilient learners.

Keywords: yoga integration, curriculum design, academic performance, emotional well-being, global education frameworks

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INTRODUCTION

Yoga has been integrated with the curriculum for the reason that it supports nurturing not just the academic development of students but also their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. According to Chauhan et al (2024), the incorporation of yoga and mindfulness in curricula contributes positively to students' mental health, emotional regulation, and stress reduction. Including yoga in classrooms can enhance focus, lower stress levels, increase self-awareness, and boost academic performance in general (Naragatti, 2023). Influence of Integral Yoga Psychology, encouraging a favorable atmosphere for learning (Sharma et al, 2024). Further, according to Atul (2021), numerous studies indicate that yoga in the classroom can support the growth of positive personality traits, emotional regulation, cognitive function, and physical well-being. Also, yoga in the school setting is a viable and potentially efficacious strategy for improving child and adolescent health and therefore worthy of continued research (Khalsa et al., 2016).

Children and adolescents face numerous pressures in life from home and school settings. They have been identified as risk factors for mood and other psychiatric disorders (Khalsa et al., 2016). The WHO report claims that children are more prone to mental health conditions as they age (Khunti et al, 2023). Moreover, children must develop abilities to regulate their emotions and learn how to manage social conflict to succeed in school and life (Jones and Bouffard, 2012; Farrington et al., 2019b).

Offering yoga in the curriculum could be a practical and efficient means of assistance, but there is little evidence regarding yoga interventions in schools, especially when it comes to measurable indicators of stress (Butzer, 2015). School-based yoga and mindfulness programs have become widespread over the last decade and are a promising approach to improving child and adolescent health and well-being. Relatively short mindfulness curricula have been demonstrated to improve teacher ratings of student classroom behavior, and a systematic review and meta-analysis of school-based mindfulness across different settings recently identified strong results in improving cognitive performance and resilience to stress among participating children (Bazzano, 2018). Yoga and mindfulness techniques may hold promise for improving the well-being of such populations. Further, work is warranted to enhance the feasibility of such programs and to evaluate their benefits in school settings (Ancona et al., 2014).

Problem Statement

Beyond disciplinary boundaries, yoga is being incorporated into curriculum design. Borders, combining aspects of education, psychology, wellness, and health, this research is applicable to a broad audience due to its interdisciplinary nature, which promotes cooperation and exchanged information between experts in different domains.

1. Identify the advantages of yoga integration in curriculum design.
2. Examine the effects of frameworks in the implementation of yoga integration.
3. Determine the impact of yoga integration on students' academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study uses a data mining methodology to examine large datasets from educational institutions in several nations. Through clustering countries based on similarities in their yoga integration models and finding patterns that show how yoga influences various aspects of school. The research is designed to identify the countries where yoga has been successfully integrated into school curricula and examine the methods and frameworks used to implement yoga in schools.

Locale of Study

The study covers various nations, including educational institutions that offer yoga and mindfulness interventions.

Respondents of the study

This international scope allows the study to present a comparative analysis that reveals the advantages of yoga integration in curriculum design, the effects of frameworks in the implementation of yoga integration, and the impact of yoga integration on students' academic performance across different educational systems worldwide.

Data Gathering Instruments

The primary research instruments employed are data mining tools, which enable the extraction of meaningful insights from large educational datasets. These tools allow the study to evaluate variables such as the advantages of yoga integration in curriculum design, the effects of frameworks in the implementation of yoga integration, and the impact of yoga integration on students' academic performance in schools in various nations.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis procedure in this study begins with the identification of key educational variables, such as advantages of yoga integration in curriculum design, the effects of frameworks in the implementation of yoga integration, and the impact of yoga integration on students' academic performance in various nations. Through data mining, patterns and correlations between these variables are identified, revealing insights into the frameworks for incorporating yoga in educational institutions. The study then conducts a comparative analysis across different countries, assessing how different countries integrate yoga in their educational system. The findings are interpreted within the broader framework of educational institutions, emphasizing policies and guidelines that support yoga education. This multi-step data analysis approach provides evidence-based recommendations aiming to implement yoga integration in school curricula.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Advantages of Yoga Integration in Curriculum Design

The integration of yoga into educational curricula has emerged as a globally embraced approach to enhancing student well-being, emotional resilience, and academic performance. Across Asia, yoga is deeply rooted in cultural and educational systems, where its integration significantly reduces academic stress and improves self-regulation, confidence, and classroom behavior. In India, studies among children show marked reductions in fear of failure and interpersonal difficulties, while "Superbrain Yoga" in the Philippines has improved reading comprehension and emotional control among struggling students. Thailand and Bali highlight yoga's role in fostering emotional intelligence and mental well-being, reinforcing its value in preparing students for academic success.

In Europe, yoga serves as a tool for cultivating emotional stability and self-management. Studies in the UK, Norway, and France reveal that yoga reduces anxiety, improves emotional regulation, and enhances concentration—critical factors for maintaining academic focus and psychological resilience. These outcomes reflect Europe's broader commitment to mental health as a foundation for learning.

Africa showcases yoga's power in supporting trauma-affected learners and improving classroom environments. In Kenya, Uganda, and South Africa, yoga promotes emotional regulation, reduces disruptive behavior, and fosters a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. Programs like MindUp in Uganda have even demonstrated measurable academic gains among participants.

In North America, yoga is viewed as a performance-enhancing intervention. Canadian and U.S. studies confirm that yoga reduces stress, increases engagement, and improves cognitive functions such as attention and memory. Even in regions with fewer formal studies, such as Mexico, the benefits of yoga are recognized in addressing student stress and enhancing focus.

South America emphasizes yoga's role in holistic development. Brazil reports improvements in attention, memory, and focus, while Argentina and Colombia underscore yoga's value in building soft skills such as empathy, communication, and self-worth. These qualities, while not traditionally quantified, are increasingly seen as essential to academic and life success.

Australia offers a highly integrated model, using yoga not only for emotional wellness but also to enrich learning across core subjects like math, English, and the arts. This cross-disciplinary application highlights yoga's versatility as both a behavioral and cognitive support tool in education.

Frameworks in the Implementation of Yoga Integration

Globally, the implementation of yoga in education is shaped by diverse policy frameworks that reflect cultural values, developmental priorities, and societal needs. These frameworks not only facilitate yoga's inclusion in school systems but also determine its form, depth, and impact on students.

In Asia, frameworks emphasize holistic development and cultural relevance. India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 formally incorporates yoga into the school system, positioning it as central to achieving spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical growth. Policies promote structured programs, workshops, and integration into physical education. In Thailand, yoga is aligned with ethical education and emotional intelligence, supporting classroom harmony and self-regulation. Bali's approach is deeply cultural, embedding yoga within traditional healing practices and community rituals, reinforcing its relevance through cultural immersion. Meanwhile, the Philippines' MATATAG curriculum offers schools autonomy to adopt yoga as a tool for improving mental focus and emotional wellness, showcasing a flexible, needs-based model.

In Europe, the emphasis lies in promoting mental health and well-being. Countries like the UK and Norway embed yoga within broader student wellness and health promotion policies, supporting its use as a preventative mental health measure. The Hippocampus project in Norway shows successful outcomes from school-based yoga interventions, especially among marginalized youth. France highlights the role of a nurturing school climate and caring relationships in promoting psychological wellness through yoga, though large-scale policy adoption remains limited. The region underscores yoga's therapeutic potential in school environments.

Africa's frameworks often respond to complex social and emotional needs, especially in trauma-affected populations. Kenya's trauma-informed yoga models address stress and resilience for vulnerable students, prioritizing mental health first aid. Uganda's integration of yoga-based mindfulness in the MindUp SEL program shows measurable academic gains, emphasizing self-regulation and cognitive support. South Africa supports trauma-informed yoga teacher training, recognizing yoga as a restorative tool for learners with adverse life experiences. These frameworks highlight yoga's critical role in healing, regulation, and resilience-building.

In North America, yoga is embedded in holistic development frameworks that focus on cognitive growth, social-emotional learning (SEL), and academic achievement. In Canada, policies recognize yoga's contribution to mental clarity, memory, and emotional intelligence. The United States integrates yoga into district-level SEL programs, supported by institutions like CASEL, reinforcing yoga's value in school culture, academic performance, and emotional well-being. Mexico aligns yoga with early childhood development and neuroscience research, using it to enhance classroom atmosphere and student wellness.

South American countries adopt frameworks that support personal growth and emotional intelligence. Brazil's educational vision promotes holistic development beyond academics,

enabling yoga to serve as a tool for self-awareness and stress reduction. Argentina employs a pedagogical framework adapted for young learners, using stories and activities to introduce yoga in a multisensory way. Colombia's government-driven SEL initiatives create a policy environment highly conducive to yoga, reinforcing its alignment with key competencies like self-management and interpersonal skills.

In Australia, education departments promote yoga as a cross-disciplinary strategy for both physical and emotional development. In South Australia, yoga is embedded into curricula across subjects like math, English, and the arts, and is linked to benefits such as stress management, confidence-building, and mindfulness. Western Australia highlights yoga's success in improving emotional control and reducing behavioral issues, particularly in remote communities. These comprehensive frameworks position yoga as an integral element of inclusive and responsive education.

Impact of Yoga Integration to Academic Performance

The global integration of yoga into educational systems has shown consistent and positive effects on academic performance, though the mechanisms and emphases differ across regions. Across continents, yoga emerges as a transformative practice that supports not just physical wellness but also cognitive functioning, emotional balance, and behavioral improvement—all of which are foundational to effective learning.

In Asia, the impact is most directly tied to academic performance. India demonstrates strong evidence linking yoga to reduced scholastic stress, improved emotional regulation, and enhanced cognitive abilities such as memory, focus, and motivation. These changes lead to measurable improvements in both general and subject-specific academic outcomes. In the Philippines, “Superbrain Yoga” programs have directly improved reading comprehension and classroom behavior. Thailand and Bali support yoga's indirect academic benefits through improved mental well-being, flexibility, and physical readiness, all considered essential for sustained learning. In Europe, yoga's contribution is framed within the context of mental health and socioemotional development. Countries like the UK and France show that reductions in anxiety, stress, and depression improve students' capacity to concentrate, self-regulate, and engage meaningfully with academic material. Norwegian programs further suggest that even culturally adapted yoga interventions can enhance focus and resilience, thereby indirectly supporting academic success through emotional well-being.

In Africa, yoga supports learning by fostering emotional stability, behavioral control, and resilience—particularly in trauma-affected or disadvantaged contexts. In Uganda, students in the MindUp program saw measurable academic improvement, while in Kenya and South Africa, yoga practices have promoted emotional regulation and reduced classroom disruptions. These outcomes create more focused and supportive learning environments, which enhance academic persistence and success.

In North America, the impact of yoga is seen through both cognitive enhancement and academic engagement. In Canada and the U.S., studies link yoga to improved executive functioning, attention, and self-discipline—skills essential for academic success. U.S. research further shows that regular yoga participation increases student engagement and achievement, especially in special education settings. Mexico complements this with findings that yoga's stress-reducing and focus-enhancing benefits significantly contribute to classroom productivity and academic readiness.

In South America, yoga's academic benefits stem largely from its emphasis on emotional development and holistic learning. Brazilian and Argentinian studies show that yoga reduces anxiety, boosts emotional resilience, and enhances cognitive functions like attention and self-awareness. In Colombia, yoga aligns with national SEL priorities, with research highlighting its value in cultivating emotional stability—a prerequisite for effective learning.

In Australia, the academic benefits of yoga are framed around behavior management and mental clarity. Programs in South and Western Australia report that yoga improves concentration, emotional regulation, and classroom behavior. Although not always measured in grades, these changes are critical enablers of learning, particularly among children in remote or diverse educational contexts.

CONCLUSION

The pervasive global integration of yoga into educational curricula, supported by diverse regional frameworks, unequivocally demonstrates its consistent and profound positive impact on both student well-being and academic performance worldwide, by enhancing cognitive functions, mental health, and resilience, irrespective of varying regional priorities.

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