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## “Comparison Of Body Image, Resilience, And Psychological Well-Being Among Gym-Going Individuals And Yoga Practitioners”

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### Abstract

The present study aimed to compare *body image, resilience, and psychological well-being among gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners*. The research examined the effects of various physical activities on both psychological health and self-image of people who took part in different types of exercise activities. The study used a comparative research design to gather data from 200 participants who included gym-goers and yoga practitioners through standardized questionnaires that assessed body image and resilience and psychological well-being. The researchers used *descriptive statistics and independent samples t-test and correlation analysis* to examine the data that they had collected.

The research found that gym users and yoga practitioners had identical results on body image and psychological health which showed both activities produced equal effects on their self-perception and mental well-being. The research found that yoga practitioners had superior resilience skills whereas gym members showed lower levels of resilience. The analysis found that body image and resilience and psychological well-being showed no significant relationships. The research shows that physical activity helps improve psychological health while yoga practice particularly boosts people's ability to handle stress and control their emotions.

**Keywords:** body image, psychological well being , resilience, yoga , gym.

### Introduction

Gyms and yoga spaces, in particular, function as social and psychological settings where ideas about appearance, discipline, control, and self-worth are negotiated. Research in body image and health psychology highlights that the relationship individuals form with their bodies significantly influences their emotional stability, coping capacity.

Although both gym workouts and yoga fall under the category of physical activities, they are fundamentally distinct in their focus. Gym activities are typically motivated by visible objectives, such as building muscle, managing weight, and enhancing physical performance. In contrast, yoga focuses on cultivating internal awareness, achieving balance, and embracing bodily sensations. As issues such as body dissatisfaction, stress, and mental health become more prevalent, it is increasingly crucial to explore how these practices influence psychological outcomes related to body image,

Extensive research indicates that participating in physical activities has a beneficial impact on mental well-being by alleviating anxiety and depression symptoms and boosting self-esteem. Investigations into gym settings reveal enhancements in physical self-perception; however, they also highlight an increase in body scrutiny and appearance-based assessments, especially in environments that prioritize idealized body images.

In Contemporary society, growing worries about body dissatisfaction, stress, and worsening mental health have underscored the importance of finding effective ways to enhance overall well-being. Engaging regularly in physical activities like gym workouts and yoga is commonly recommended for health improvement; however, the specific effects of these activities on body image, resilience, and psychological well-being are not yet fully understood. Gaining insight into these differences can assist individuals in making informed decisions about lifestyle choices that best support their mental health and self-image. Additionally, the results of this study could contribute to the fields of health and positive psychology by offering insights into how various exercise practices affect psychological adjustment and coping skills. This research also aligns with the holistic health concept promoted by the World Health Organization, which emphasizes the integration of physical, mental, and social well-being, thereby aiding in the creation of more effective mental health interventions and wellness programs.

People now give more attention to complete health and total well-being because modern life creates challenges through stress and people not moving and body image issues. The World Health Organization defines health not just as the absence of illness but as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being. People need to exercise because it serves as the essential method for sustaining their mental and physical wellness, which has led to increased popularity of gym workouts and yoga as methods to enhance their overall life quality.

However, most existing research has examined these practices separately, with few comparative studies exploring the differences in body image, resilience, and psychological well-being between gym-goers and yoga practitioners.

## **Review of literature**

### **Studies on Gym and Yoga**

Several studies have explored how lifestyle habits related to exercise, diet, and physical activity settings influence health and well-being. Research by **Vazeer Ahammed P and Prof. Dr. GP Dinesh (2023)** found that individuals who regularly attend the gym tend to follow healthier eating patterns, engage in more physical activity, and maintain a better body mass index (BMI). This study highlights how gym participation can support healthier lifestyle choices.

In another study, **Soekmawati et al.** examined how gym members' identification with physically attractive fitness trainers affects their motivation to exercise. The findings suggested that social and psychological factors, such as admiration for trainers, can influence individuals' intention to engage in physical activity.

From a technological viewpoint, **J. Qi et al. (2019)** developed a system using wearable sensors to track and measure gym-related physical activity. Their research shows how modern technology can help monitor exercise patterns and improve fitness behaviors.

Research on yoga practice also shows its positive impact on lifestyle habits. A study by **S. Telles et al. (2023)** found that people who practice yoga often make healthier food choices, stay physically active, and maintain balanced daily routines. Supporting this, **H. Cramer et al. (2017)** reported that yoga and meditation are linked with healthier lifestyle patterns, especially among women.

Additionally, **A. Watts et al. (2018)** found that yoga practice encourages healthy eating habits and regular physical activity among young adults, suggesting that it contributes to overall well-being.

### Studies on body image

Existing studies highlight a strong connection between physical activity, body image, and psychological health. Research by **Ye Yuan et al. (2025)** showed that negative body image is positively related to depression among college students, whereas physical activity and self-efficacy help lower depressive symptoms. The study also emphasized that social support enhances the beneficial effects of physical activity on mental health.

In a similar context, **Liluo Gan and Jiang (2024)** found that increased physical activity is associated with reduced social anxiety in college students. Their findings indicated that body image explains this relationship, while self-esteem influences the strength of psychological improvement.

Studies conducted among adolescents further support these results. **Maryam Novitasari (2025)** reported that overweight female adolescents tend to experience lower body satisfaction and different levels of physical activity compared to their non-overweight counterparts. Likewise, **Ligia Rusu et al. (2025)** observed that greater engagement in physical activity is linked with more positive body image and higher self-esteem in adolescents.

From a theoretical viewpoint, **J. Fernández-Bustos et al. (2019)** suggested that physical activity enhances overall self-concept through improvements in body image, highlighting its mediating role in psychological development. Additionally, **J. P. Guimarães et al. (2023)** found that higher physical activity and positive body image are associated with improved academic performance among adolescents.

Overall, the literature suggests that physical activity contributes positively to body image, self-esteem, and mental well-being. However, there is limited research comparing different forms of physical activity or examining multiple psychological factors together, indicating a need for further investigation.

## Studies on resilience

Resilience is widely seen as an important psychological quality that helps individuals deal with stress and overcome difficult situations. **K. Connor and J. Davidson (2003)** introduced the Connor–Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC), a widely used tool that measures a person’s ability to cope with stress, adapt to challenges, and maintain mental well-being. Their work made it easier for researchers to assess resilience in psychological studies.

Earlier research by **S. Luthar et al. (2000)** explained resilience as a process of positive adjustment despite facing adversity and highlighted the importance of identifying protective factors that support resilience. Likewise, **D. Fletcher and Sarkar (2013)** discussed different definitions and theories of resilience, describing it as a complex concept influenced by psychological, social, and environmental factors.

Recent studies also show that physical activity plays a major role in strengthening resilience and improving mental health. **Bo Peng et al. (2025)** found that regular physical exercise increases self-efficacy among adolescents, with psychological resilience acting as a key mechanism in this relationship. Similarly, **Ru Liu et al. (2024)** reported that physical activity positively affects mental health, health behaviors, and resilience, especially when individuals have a better quality of life.

In addition, **Ming Liu et al. (2024)** showed that physical activity helps reduce depression, anxiety, and stress in college students. Their findings suggest that resilience and coping strategies play an important role in explaining how physical activity improves psychological well-being.

Overall, the literature suggests that resilience is a key factor in maintaining mental health and can be developed through physical activity. However, more research is needed to understand its relationship with other psychological factors across different groups of people.

## Studies on Mental Wellbeing

Many studies show that physical activity plays an important role in improving mental well-being. A mixed-methods study by **Kenneth McGeough et al. (2025)** found that individuals who engage more in physical activity tend to have higher physical literacy and better mental well-being. The study suggests that regular exercise helps improve both physical abilities and psychological health.

In a similar way, a systematic review conducted by **Rebecca Martland et al. (2024)** examined how physical activity affects the mental well-being of healthcare workers. Their findings showed that engaging in physical activity helps reduce stress and improves overall mental health, highlighting its value as an effective mental health strategy.

Supporting these findings, **Julie E. Ibáñez Román et al. (2023)** reported that individuals who maintain higher levels of physical activity experience better mental well-being over time. Their research confirms the long-term psychological benefits of staying physically active.

Studies focusing on specific groups also show similar results. **Siti Zuhaidah Shahadan et al. (2022)** found a significant relationship between physical activity and mental well-being among overweight and obese female university students, suggesting that an active lifestyle supports better psychological functioning.

Additionally, a systematic review by **Wanyu Huang and Wong (2025)** emphasized that factors such as the intensity, duration, and type of exercise influence emotional well-being among young people.

Overall, existing research indicates that physical activity has a positive impact on mental well-being across different populations. However, more research is needed to understand how different forms and levels of physical activity affect psychological outcomes in various groups.

### Research gap

While numerous studies have extensively examined the interconnections between physical activity, body image, resilience, and psychological well-being, several significant gaps persist within the existing literature. Most research predominantly focuses on the overall impact of physical activity on mental health, body image, or resilience, with only a limited number of studies comparing different types of physical activities, such as gym workouts and yoga. Current investigations often explore variables such as body image, resilience, and mental well-being in isolation, rather than analysing them collectively within a unified framework. A substantial portion of research targets adolescents or the general population, with limited attention given to young adults or college students and their distinct lifestyle differences.

Research on gym participation typically emphasizes physical health and lifestyle habits, whereas studies on yoga predominantly address holistic well-being; however, there is a lack of direct comparison regarding their psychological effects. There is a paucity of evidence detailing how various exercise settings simultaneously influence psychological aspects, such as body image perception, resilience building, and overall well-being. These gaps underscore the necessity for further research that investigates multiple psychological variables while comparing different forms of physical activity.

### Research methodology

The current research utilized a quantitative comparative research design in exploring the differences in body image, resilience, and psychological well-being between gym-goers and yoga enthusiasts. The research design utilized a cross-sectional and non-experimental method, wherein the variables were measured without manipulation.

### Hypothesis

**Hypothesis 1 (Body Image):** There is a significant difference in body image perception score between gym-going people and yoga practitioners.

**Hypothesis 2 (Mental Well-being):** There is a significant difference in the psychological well-being score between gym-going people and yoga practitioners.

**Hypothesis 3(Resilience):** There is a significant difference in the mean score of resilience between gym-going people and yoga practitioners.

### Variables of the Study

- **Independent Variable:**

Type of physical activity

- Gym-going individuals
- Yoga practitioners

- **Dependent Variables:**

- Body image
- Resilience
- Psychological well-being

### Sample

The population for the study would comprise gym enthusiasts and yoga practitioners.

Sampling Technique: Convenience/Purposive Sampling

Sample Size: 200 participants

100 for gym and 100 for yoga

Age Range: 18-35 years

### Inclusion Criteria

- Regular practice of gym or yoga for at least 6 months
- Readiness to participate
- Frequency = >3 sessions/week

### Exclusion Criteria

- Physical injury
- Individuals with severe medical or psychological conditions
- Participate in any other physical shorts
- Comorbidity/ disease

### **Tool used**

#### **Resilience**

The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC-25), created by Kathryn M. Connor and Jonathan R. T. Davidson to measure psychological resilience or the ability of a person to cope with stress and challenges.

## Body image

The current study used the Body Image Perception Questionnaire (BIP-Q) developed by Umesh Chadha, Arushi Sharma, and Ritu Sharma from the Department of Psychology, Guru Nanak Dev University. The instrument was designed and standardized to assess the perception of body image among adolescents and young adults.

## Mental well being

The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) is a standardized self-report measure designed by researchers at the University of Warwick that measures positive mental well-being in the adult population. It has 14 positive items, which measure the individual's mental well-being, including happiness, optimism, positive relationships, relaxation, and self-confidence, over the last two weeks.

## Statistical Analysis

The data gathered would then undergo statistical analysis to determine the comparison between body image, resilience, and psychological well-being of individuals who go to the gym and those who practice yoga.

### 1. Descriptive Statistics (Mean and Standard Deviation)

Descriptive statistics would be used to describe data.

Mean (Average) → This would show the average results of the participants' responses regarding body image, resilience, and psychological well-being.

Standard Deviation (SD) → This would show the variation of the data from the average.

What would we do with the data gathered from study?

Mean and Standard Deviation would be calculated for the data gathered from the participants of the gym group and the yoga group.

Purpose: This would help describe the general level of psychological well-being of the participants from the two groups.

### 2. Independent Samples t-test (Group Comparison)

For the Independent Samples t-test, a comparison of the average of gym-going people and yoga enthusiasts will be carried out.

In your research, it will be used to compare:

Body image (Gym vs Yoga)

Resilience (Gym vs Yoga)

Psychological well-being (Gym vs Yoga)

Purpose:

To establish if there is a significant difference between the two samples.

Interpretation:

If  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ , then it means there is a significant difference.

If  $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ , then it means there is no significant difference.

This is the most important test for your comparative study.

### 3. Correlation Analysis (Relationship Between Variables)

Correlation analysis will be used to find the relationship between the following variables:

Body image-resilience

Body image-psychological well-being

Resilience-psychological well-being

Purpose:

To find out if there is a relationship between the variables.

It will show the strength and direction of the relationship.

Interpretation:

+1 → Strong positive relationship

-1 → Strong negative relationship

0 → No relationship

### Result and analysis

#### 1.Descriptive Results (Mean and Standard Deviation)

The descriptive statistics showed differences in mean scores between people who go to the gym and those who practice yoga regarding body image, mental well-being, and resilience.

Body Image

Gym:  $M = 135.38$ ,  $SD = 25.49$

Yoga:  $M = 132.09$ ,  $SD = 34.35$

Mental Well-being

Gym:  $M = 46.50$ ,  $SD = 9.55$

Yoga:  $M = 44.88$ ,  $SD = 9.02$

Resilience

Gym: M = 64.56, SD = 16.68

Yoga: M = 115.29, SD = 26.91

Variables	GYM/YOGA	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation	Std. Error mean
Body image	Gym	100	135.38	25.490	2.549
	Yoga	100	132.09	34.354	3.435
Mental wellbeing	Gym	100	46.50	9.558	.956
	Yoga	100	44.88	9.024	.902
Resilience	Gym	100	64.56	16.682	1.668
	Yoga	100	115.29	26.916	2.692

### Interpretation

People who go to the gym had slightly higher mean scores in body image and mental well-being. In contrast, yoga practitioners had much higher scores in resilience.

## 2. Comparison Between Groups (Independent Sample t-test)

Independent sample t-tests were used to compare the differences between gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners.

### 1. Body Image

$t(198) = 0.769$

$p = 0.443$  (not significant)

### Interpretation

The analysis revealed that there is no significant difference between gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners regarding body image. It was observed that both groups possess an almost similar level of body image perception.

### Analysis

It can be analysed that participation in gym exercises and practicing yoga equally contribute to the body image of individuals. Physical activities generally affect the body image of individuals regardless of the type of exercise.

### 2. Mental Well-being

$t(198) = 1.232$

$p = 0.219$  (ns)

### Interpretation

There was no significant difference in the psychological well-being of gym-going people and those practicing yoga.

### Analysis

Both forms of physical activities are equally effective in boosting psychological well-being, as they are helpful in reducing stress, enhancing moods, and increasing mental health.

### 3. Resilience

$$t(198) = -16.020$$

$$p < 0.001 \text{ (highly significant)}$$

### Interpretation

A highly significant difference was found in resilience between the two groups. It was found that the resilience of yoga practitioners was significantly higher than that of gym-going people.

### Analysis

This shows that yoga practices, which focus on mindfulness, breathing, and emotional stability, are more capable of increasing the resilience of people than gym practices.

### Effect Size Findings

Analysis of effect size revealed the following:

Body Image → very small effect (no difference)

Mental Well-being → small effect

Resilience → very large effect size

### Interpretation

The difference in the level of resilience has a large effect size, which is significant.

### Correlation Analysis Between Variables

Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between body image, mental well-being, and resilience.

#### 1. Body Image and Mental Well-being

$$r = 0.006$$

$$p = 0.931$$

### Interpretation

There is no significant relationship between body image and psychological well-being.

### Analysis

Body image perception does not impact mental well-being directly.

		Body image	Mental well being
Body image	Pearson correlation	1	.006
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.931
	Sum of squares and cross products	181700.955	345.570
	Covariance	913.070	1.737
	N	200	200
Mental well being	Pearson correlation	.006	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.931	
	Sum of squares and cross products	345.570	17238.780
	Covariance	1.737	86.627
	N	200	200

## 2. Mental Well-being and Resilience

$r = -0.019$

$p = 0.790$

### Interpretation

There was no significant relationship found between mental well-being and resilience.

### Analysis

Higher levels of resilience do not mean that the participants' mental well-being will be high.

		Mental well being	Resilience
Mental well being	Pearson correlation	1	-.019
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.790
	Sum of squares and cross products	17238.780	-1189.650
	Covariance	86.627	-5.978
	N	200	200
Resilience	Pearson correlation	-.019	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.790	
	Sum of squares and cross products	-1189.650	227947.875
	Covariance	-5.978	1145.467
	N	200	200

### 3. Resilience and Body Image

$$r = -0.048$$

$$p = 0.503$$

#### Interpretation

There is no significant relationship between resilience and body image.

#### Analysis

The ability to cope and body image seem to operate independently of each other.

		Resilience	Body image
Resilience	Pearson correlation	1	-.048
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.503
	Sum of squares and cross products	227947.875	-9703.975
	Covariance	1145.467	-48764
	N	200	200
Body image	Pearson correlation	-.048	1
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.503	
	Sum of squares and cross products	-9703.975	181700.955
	Covariance	-48.764	913.070
	N	200	200

#### Interpretation

The results indicate that gym exercises and yoga are equally important in body image and psychological well-being, although yoga seems to be more significant in developing resilience, maybe because of the mindfulness, emotional, and stress management components of yoga. The lack of significant correlations among variables implies that body image, resilience, and psychological well-being may be separate constructs of human psychology.

#### Discussion

The study aimed to investigate body image, resilience, and psychological well-being in gym enthusiasts and yoga practitioners. Results were discussed in relation to previous studies and theories.

### **Body image**

The results of the research showed that there was no significant difference between the body image of gym-going individuals and those who practice yoga. This implies that physical activity, regardless of the type, helps equally in the perception and satisfaction of individuals with their physical body.

This is supported by other studies that show that physical activity improves individuals' body satisfaction and self-perception by improving physical fitness and self-confidence. According to the work of Thomas F. Cash, body image is a multidimensional construct that involves physical experience, self-perception, and other sociological constructs. Physical exercise improves body image by influencing self-perception.

The absence of significant differences may imply that physical exercise and yoga equally contribute to individuals' self-improvement and body perception by offering individuals an opportunity to engage physically and improve their body image. While physical exercise focuses on physical beauty and fitness, yoga focuses on physical awareness and acceptance, yet both are equally effective for body perception.

### **Mental well being**

The study found that there was no significant difference between the psychological well-being of those who exercise in the gym and those who practice yoga. This shows that physical exercise through the two activities can promote psychological well-being, mental health, emotional stability, and satisfaction with life.

This finding is consistent with the multidimensional model of psychological well-being proposed by Carol D. Ryff, which includes aspects of self-acceptance, personal growth, and autonomy as essential aspects of psychological well-being. Physical exercise through either the gym or yoga may help promote psychological well-being through aspects of personal growth.

Previous studies showed that physical exercise is beneficial for mental health as it reduces anxiety and depression and promotes emotional functioning. The study suggests that physical exercise through the gym or yoga is beneficial for psychological well-being.

### **Resilience**

The study showed a highly significant difference between the two groups regarding their resilience level, as yoga practitioners showed a better level of resilience compared to those who exercise at the gym.

This difference can be attributed to the nature of yoga as a mind-body exercise that includes physical postures, breathing techniques, and meditation practices. Mindfulness and stress management are considered essential aspects of building resilience.

Previous studies showed that yoga helps build emotional balance, relaxation, and adaptive coping skills, which are considered essential factors for building psychological resilience.

On the other hand, physical exercise at the gym is mainly aimed at building physical fitness and strength. Although this may help build a person's self-efficacy, it does not necessarily help build emotional skills as much as yoga does.

### **Relationship Among Body Image, Resilience, and Psychological Well-being**

The correlation analysis found no significant relationship among body image, resilience, and psychological well-being. This means that these constructs can operate independently in the present sample.

Although previous studies have found positive relationships among these constructs, the lack of significant relationships in the present study might have been influenced by individual differences, lifestyles, or situational factors affecting the participants. This finding also means that enhancing one's psychological well-being is not automatically associated with the enhancement of another.

Overall, the results suggest that gym exercise and yoga are both positive contributors to body image and psychological well-being, supporting the role of physical activity in enhancing mental health outcomes. However, the results suggest that yoga is a more potent enhancer of resilience because of its focus on mindfulness, emotional regulation, and stress management skills.

The study makes a contribution to health psychology in terms of the differential psychological benefits of different forms of physical activity.

#### **Hypothesis 1**

There is a significant difference in the body image of gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners.

Result: No significant difference was found ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Decision:

Hypothesis rejected

#### **Hypothesis 2**

There is a significant difference in the psychological well-being of gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners.

Result: No significant difference was found ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Decision:

Hypothesis rejected

#### **Hypothesis 3**

There is a significant difference in the resilience of gym-going individuals and yoga practitioners.

Result:

A significant difference was found ( $p < 0.001$ ), and the results show yoga practitioners have higher resilience.

Decision:

Hypothesis accepted

## Conclusion

The current research explored the variations in body image, resilience, and psychological well-being among individuals who participate in gym activities and those who practice yoga. The findings indicated that there were no differences between the two groups concerning body image and psychological well-being, implying that both activities equally benefit an individual's body image and psychological well-being. However, a notable difference was observed in resilience, with yoga practitioners exhibiting more resilient traits than those who engage in gym activities. This implies that yoga is more effective in enhancing an individual's resilience compared to gym activities.

Additionally, the study found no significant connections between body image, resilience, and psychological well-being, suggesting that these psychological factors function independently. The results of this study highlight the importance of physical activities in supporting an individual's psychological health. Furthermore, the study's findings align with the World Health Organization's holistic definition of health.

## Limitations of the Study

The research is based on a limited sample, which might not be adequate for the generalization of the results.

The research adopted the convenience sampling technique, which is not representative of the total population.

The research is based on the data collected through questionnaires, which might have response bias.

The research is based on the cross-sectional design, which cannot establish cause and effect.

Only three variables have been considered in the research, while other variables have not been taken into account.

## Implications of the Study

### Practical Implications

The research suggests that gym exercise and yoga can be promoted for the enhancement of body image and psychological well-being.

Yoga can be recommended for the enhancement of the resilience level of the individual.

The research is in line with the health promotion approach of the World Health Organization.

### Theoretical Implications

The research contributes to the health psychology literature by considering the different outcomes of different physical activities.

The research is in line with the holistic health approach of the World Health Organization.

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