

PHILOSOPHY

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Yoga Philosophy and Martial Arts for Leaders to Resolve Workplace Stress

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Abstract

Background. Workplace stress has crossed an alarming rate. That affects leaders' effectiveness as a result hampers organizational productivity. Leaders are the frontrunners of organizations, leading the organizational objectives such as profit maximization, continuous improvement, employee management, stakeholder satisfaction, etc. In order to manage the organizational objective in a smooth manner the leader must have a sound mind and a stress-free workplace.

Problem and aim. Stress management has become a center of debate for practitioners, researchers, and activists. Stress negatively affects leaders' health, social life, work performance, and the environment where they work. To achieve physical and mental well-being, stress management is indeed needed. For that, this paper proposes Yoga and Martial Arts as a way to maintain the balance between mind and body and make leaders able to manage workplace stress.

Methods. This paper adopts the qualitative methodology based on content analysis.

Results. Yoga and Martial Arts aid to maintain mental and physical balance, enhancing self-confidence, self-control, and self-resilience, making practitioners able to face jeopardized situations. As a result, reduces workplace stress.

Conclusion. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Yoga Philosophy (YP) and Martial Arts (MA) should be adopted in organizational strategy, as these are indispensable for workplace stress management. Organizations should invest in Yoga and Martial Arts to enhance their employee's focus and mindfulness, as a result, it enhances organizational productivity.

Introduction

In this age of cut-throat competition, yoga and martial arts are two activities that are quite popular, because of their soft form of physical exercise that improves physical fitness, strengthens the mind, controls the overflow of emotions and reactions, and aids in decision-making.

Both of these activities are based on discipline and accuracy that offer strategies and techniques to their practitioner, that help them to reach their potential and give them a sense of accomplishment. Yoga as a method suggests their practitioners be disciplined, discipline is the foundational jewel of yoga philosophy. All forms of yoga including *Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama,*

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Pratyahara, *Dhyana*, *Dharana*, and *Samadhi* are based on proper discipline [Miller 1996; Sharma 2000]. Similarly, for martial arts, precision is a foundational jewel, all martial arts' traditions, including *tae kwon do*, *tai chi*, and *aikido*, are based on accuracy. One can find more congruence between their (YP and MA) techniques, goals, and philosophy. Studies have shown that "In particular, Indian martial arts like *Kalaripayattu*, are close to *Hathayoga* system, as growing out of the same culture (Hindu) trunk" [Cynarski 2019: 345]. Similarities can be identified "in the colloquial meaning of *yoga*, it is similar to *taijiquan* and *qigong*" [Cynarski 2019: 345]. Along with the similarities, both of them have some differences, on the one hand *yoga* focuses on breathing techniques, meditation, cleanliness, and physical posture to achieve a peaceful healthy life. On the other hand, *martial arts* are focused on physical activity and dedicatedly ensure "the maintenance, improvement, and restoration of the practitioner's health from both a philosophical/discursive standpoint, and a practical/experiential level of consideration" [Di Placido 2020: 1-2]. Even though they are quite different, they have generally accepted the same ethical principles [Cynarski 2019], and blending them as a method is more effective. Two of these (YP and MA) concomitantly, enhance inner tranquility, concentration, and well-being while cultivating self-awareness, ethical actions, and spirituality [Vaughan 2002; Ware 2007; Woodyard 2011; Maurya 2021], and assist individuals to reduce stress.

Stress management is one of the important issues in the 21st century, wherein every individual, irrespective of their caste, gender, religion, class, etc., is going through stress. It becomes the center of debate for organizations, practitioners, and researchers when it affects organizational productivity. Studies have shown that "leaders at all levels of organizations are under ever-increasing pressure because of the competitiveness and complexity of the global economy" [Roche *et al.* 2014: 467]. The time has come to highlight the significance of stress management instead of focusing on tasks. Stress at work has crossed an alarming rate [Imran *et al.* 2021; Acharya 2020]. A survey conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health depicts that 80 percent of workers experience job stress [Deshpande 2012]. Neglecting employee stress at the workplace will cost organizations in terms of productivity, efficiency, medical costs, compensation, etc. They are the front-runners of the organization and lead organizational objectives [Kanungo, Mendonca 1996; Razak, Muhamad 2022], such as profit maximization, continual improvement, stakeholder satisfaction, quality, reputation, etc. In order "to succeed in today's world, organizations should invest in developing their leaders' skills, capacities, and knowledge" [Naderi 2019: Viii] and make them able to manage workplace stress. Sison & Fontrodona arguably say that business organizations become good "one that is

well-governed and that makes its members good" [2013]. Employees' well-being is one of the keys to organizational productivity [Rahim 1981; Grawitch *et al.* 2006; Van De Voorde *et al.* 2012; Malinen *et al.* 20019]. Organizations should adopt practices that prevent, minimize, and help employees and leaders to overcome workplace stress. For that, in this paper, we propose yoga philosophy and martial as a method for leaders to resolve workplace stress.

Methods

A qualitative methodology based on content analysis of literature was used in this study to understand practitioners' experiences, beliefs, and attitudes to investigate features of yoga practices and martial arts, for leaders to resolve workplace stress. This study has adopted a qualitative methodology based on content analysis because it is useful for giving rich descriptions of complex phenomena. Since leadership is a subjective component, that may be challenging to adopt other methodologies because the phenomenon is complicated, and empirical study in this field is in its early stages. Yet, the background of the study is created by looking through the literature on stress and leadership effectiveness. It is grounded on secondary sources such as articles, books, videos, and other websites. For that, we gathered data from two types of key components yoga philosophy and martial arts for physical and mental fitness, with the following research questions: how do yoga philosophy and martial arts help one to achieve mental and physical fitness?

Results

We used qualitative methodology based on content analysis to interpret the YP and MA for leadership to resolve workplace stress. Both (YP and MA) focus on physical and internal exercise and broadly speak about oriental discipline [Cynarski 2019]. That helps leaders in order to achieve physical and mental well-being. W. J. Cynarski arguably defines them (YP and MA) as "psycho-physical systems of self-realization" [Cynarski 2019: 345]. YP is a method of self-discovery that combines physical postures with breathing exercises and meditation. It helps to build resilience, boost emotional intelligence, improve creative capacity, and thinking ability and make practitioners focus. These qualities help leaders to build strong relationships with their followers and customers, while stress narrows one's perspective and cuts off one's relationship with others. To achieve psychological capital, practicing meditation is essential. It is a therapeutic practice, one might establish a mental state by concentrating one's consciousness on the present moment while calmly noticing and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. On the other hand, MA enhances

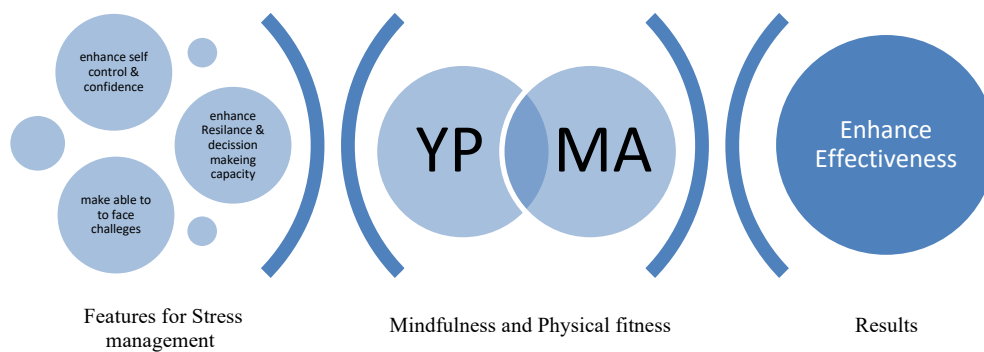


Figure 1. Stress management model through YP and MA [authors' interpretation]

focus, self-confidence, and self-control, and guides practitioners to follow ethical ways during challenging situations. In order to maintain workplace stress leaders should follow YP and MA in their life. Overall fitness is the main concern of YP and MP, which help leaders to manage an organization effectively. Yet, both of them simultaneously improve the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual levels, which helps leaders to manage stress and, as a result, enhances effectiveness. It has beneficial effects on cognition, attention to emotional intensity, and stress reduction [Sudhanshu 2017]. To make leaders stress-free and effective organizations should adopt YP and MA in their curriculum. Employee well-being is one of the keys to organizational productivity. Yet, it is a fact that numerous business executives move towards these practices, still limited. Studies have shown that eminent business persons move towards yoga and martial arts so as to enhance self-confidence, self-resilience namely Dan Schulman (PayPal CEO) *Krav Maga*, Adena Friedman (Nasdaq CEO) *Taekwondo*, Elon Musk, and Fredrik Eklund are a few of them. Fredrik Eklund, one of the famous figures in the U.S. business world once said that “he often performs a karate high-kick before he walks into the room. When he was asked why he pointed out that it was a great way to release stress and mentally prepare himself for a big business meeting” [2015]. The time has come to highlight the significance of YP and MA; for that, business CEOs should speak out about the benefits of meditation and martial Arts [Gelles 2015]. That influences others to adopt it in their daily activities and organizational strategies.

Discussion

Workplace stress and leaders

Over the last two decades, stress become a central concern for practitioners, researchers, and psychologists. Increasing publications in the field of stress management have become evident that stress is a considerable problem [Koolhaas *et al.* 2011]. Several studies highlight, “stress management

is the most important subject of the contemporary competitive world wherein every individual, irrespective of gender, race, religion, caste, class, etc. is undergoing stress” [Kushwaha 2014: 469]. Yet, stress in the workplace is not a new topic, practitioners go through stress on a daily basis to hit the target. Business is an ever-changing and ever-challenging platform, where stress is a common factor. For that organizational practitioner focuses on tasks instead of stress management. It takes every one's attention when it affects organizational productivity. A survey conducted by the American Institute of Stress concludes, American business organizations annually lose \$300 billion due to employee disengagement, productivity losses, and healthcare expenses as a result of stress [Le Blanc, Schaufeli 2008]. Stress as a silent killer affects an individual's physical, psychological, and behavioral well-being, “the stress response is a complex emotion that produces physiological changes to prepare us for fight or flight” [Deshpande 2012: 2143]. Stress has a two-way impact, one is positive and the other one is negative. Short-term, low-level, healthy doses of stress have positive effects on the brain, strengthen immunity, enhance resilience, and improve motivation [Aschbacher *et al.* 2013; Kirby *et al.* 2013; Puneet *et al.* 2021]. On the other hand, a high level of stress harms mental, social, and professional life [Novak 2019], “stress negatively impacts employees, leaders, and organizations” [Naderi 2019: 1]. In order to manage stress, one should be aware of such conditions that are most likely to cause excessive work pressure and cause stress. Studies have shown that “83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress, with 25% saying their job is the number one stressor in their lives” [2016]. However, there are other situations such as unreasonable demands, marginalizing actions, crucial meetings, harassment, poor communication, upcoming presentations, losing or winning a client, lack of feedback, shouting, personal issues and lack of support are just a few reasons that can lead to stress. Still, several professional and personal reasons are there that may cause stress. It will not be possible for business organizations to eradicate all these causes of stress. To manage stress collaboration is indeed needed, collabo-

rating between management and employees to determine which components of the workplace are creating difficulties, and thus, they can act together for betterment. In order to run organizations successfully, stress-free sound leadership is essential. Leaders from every field should be aware of the consequences of stress and develop a healthy environment for stress management, to survive in the cut-throat competitive world [Kushwaha 2014]. Studies have shown that stress increases burnout, dissatisfaction, and disengagement as a result hampers organizational productivity [Calitz *et al.* 2014; Rothmann 2008]. So as to perform effectively, good mental and physical health is indeed needed. Studies have shown that well-being indirectly enhances work performance [Guest 2017; Malinen *et al.* 2019]. They must have mindfulness and well-being, “psychologically healthy, thriving leaders not only benefit themselves but, also critical to employee well-being as well” [Roche *et al.* 2014: 467]. In order to achieve mindfulness and well-being, leaders should incorporate yoga and martial arts into their daily activities [Bernstein *et al.* 2014; Roy 2022]. Both of them simultaneously improve self-awareness, self-confidence, and concentration, in addition, they make practitioners focus [McGarrigle, Walsh 2011; Sandlund, Norlander 2000] and as a result they enhance self-improvement, self-discovery, and well-being. Leadership begins with self-confidence and self-understanding can tackle workplace stress.

Blending Yoga Philosophy with Martial Arts: An Overview

Yoga is a mind-body intervention that arose in India thousands of years ago, during the 2nd century BC [Sharma 2000]. Traditionally it has five forms such as *Gyana yoga, Karma yoga, Bhakti yoga, Raja yoga, and Hota yoga* [Devananda 1999; Sivananda 1963]. The word ‘Yoga’ means uniting: uniting the individual soul with the divine one [Smart 1965; Newcombe 2017]. In the word of Patanjali “the founder of the yoga system” [Sharma 2000: 169], yoga means “spiritual effort to attain perfection through the control of the body, senses, and mind, and through right discrimination between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*” [Sharma 2000: 169]. Several scholars define yoga in different ways, but, in the modern context yoga is defined as “a systematic practice and implementation of mind and body in the living process of human beings to keep harmony within the self, within society, and with nature” [Maharishi 1992: 39]. Its objectives are to create balance, peace, harmony, and awareness. The first written record of this system is the *Yoga Sutra*, by Patanjali. The *Yoga Sutra* consists of 169 aphorisms, outlining the eight limbs of yoga (Ashtanga Yoga), for individuals to maintain a balanced life. The word Ashtanga is a Sanskrit word, which consists of eight limbs, namely moral practices (*Yama*); self-discipline (*Niyama*); physical postures and exercises (*Asana*); breath regulation (*Pranayama*); sensory withdrawal (*Pratyahara*); concentration (*Dharana*);

meditation (*Dhyana*) and self-transcendence (*Samadhi*) [Chatterjee, Datta 2016; Corner 2009; Agarwal 2013; Maurya *et al.* 2021]. This eight-fold path gives a systematic approach to expanding consciousness [Chatterjee, Datta 2016], and it leads toward the goal. However, the eight-limb path has no chronological order; rather, all limbs are to be practiced as part of daily life. It is not necessary to complete the previous limb before practicing the subsequent ones; they will occur concurrently. This paper focuses on three limbs out of eight limbs, these three limbs such as postures (*Asana*), a breathing technique (*Pranayama*), and meditation (*Dhyana*). These three focus on internal aid (*antaraga sadhana*) and guide practitioners to achieve peace, calmness, resilience, mindfulness, etc. Yoga philosophy is all about “a system of ascetic for the spiritual growth of man, and at the same time grew out of the Hindu philosophical system, therapeutic and educational” [Cynarski 2019]. Along with internal aid (*bahiranga sadhana*), external aid is also needed for a balanced life. For that, in this paper, we blend yoga philosophy with martial arts. *Martial Arts (MA)* are of Japanese origin [Cynarski, Skowron 2014]. “The term martial art has become heavily associated with the fighting arts of eastern Asia but was originally used regarding the combat systems of Europe as early as the 1550s” [Cynarski, Skowron 2014: 52]. Studies have shown that during the 1960s to 1970, the word *martial arts* were popularized by Hong Kong martial arts film [Yu 2012; Yip 2017; Bowman 2021]. Martial arts are the precise and coordinated techniques used for fighting purposes, “martial arts are extensive systems of codified practices and traditions of combat that are practiced for a variety of reasons, including self-defense, competition, physical health, and fitness, as well as mental, physical and spiritual development” [Cynarski and Skowron 2014: 53]. They have numerous forms such as *mixed martial arts, kung fu, jujutsu, karate, taekwondo, and judo*. Studies have shown that each of them is included logically and based on knowledge, value system, and custom [Green 2001]. Furthermore, martial art is “a practice that also strives for an aesthetic representation during combat, without focus on its destructive potential” [Naves-Bittencourt *et al.* 2015: 36]. The philosophy of combat sports focuses on self-defense abilities, which is a utilitarian characteristic that differentiate it from other sports groups [Piepiora, Witkowski 2020]. Yet, many individuals interpret martial arts in a wrong way, they consider martial arts as if they were all about physical fitness and physical health, and limited numbers of individuals are aware of the psychological aspects of martial arts. Yes, it is a fact that martial arts are popularly known for their physical benefits, yet they have some psychological benefits that help individuals achieve mindfulness and self-control. They guide individuals toward ethical activities and suggest incorporating moral and intellectual principles during the time of self-defense. As a result, individuals develop

psychosocial, physiological, and psychological nature in their character [Demarzo *et al.* 2014; Naves-Bittencourt *et al.* 2015]. That helps them in stress management and makes them able to face jeopardized situations. Along with the above differences, one can find some similarities in exercises. Studies have shown that many of the stretching techniques found in Hathayoga are also frequently found in karate and other combat arts [Iyengar 1988; Cynarski 2019]. Therefore, in this paper, we blend yoga philosophy with martial arts and present it as a method for leaders to achieve well-being and as a result, make them able to resolve workplace stress.

Yoga Philosophy and Martial Arts for Stress Management

Health is wealth is a common mantra for healthy lives, and it applies to every individual irrespective of caste, gender, profession, and position. It implies both physical and mental well-being, which is the basic requirement for a healthy life. Two of these (mental and physical health) are interrelated into each other, and one affects the other, "if the mind is relaxed, the muscles in the body will also be relaxed" [Prashad 2004]. In order to manage workplace stress leaders should focus on both physical and mental health. Prashad arguably says that "stress produces a state of physical and mental tension" [2004]. In order to maintain, a healthy balance between body and mind leaders must practice MA and YP in their life. On the one hand yoga aid from the internal side (*antaranga sadhana*) on the other hand MA aid from the external side, to achieve mental well-being. Leaders should incorporate three limbs (*Asana, Pranayam, and Dhyana*) in their day-to-day life. The first one is *Asana*, which is the third limb of ashtanga yoga. It means "steady and comfortable posture" [Sharma 2000: 172], it is a physical help to achieve concentration [Radhakrishnan 1927]. It was originally and still is a general term for "steady and comfortable postures" [Sharna 2000: 172], but it was later extended in hatha yoga and modern yoga as an exercise to include any type of position, including reclining, standing, inverted, twisting and balancing poses. It is the discipline of the body [Sharma 2000]. By doing *Asanas*, the yogi conquers the body and transforms it into a proper vehicle for the spirit. If business leaders inculcate some of the *asanas* in their habits, then they will have mental relaxation. Mental equilibrium and a stable mind are produced by a steady and pleasant posture [Saraswati, Hiti 1996; Madhukar *et al.* 2018; Wiese *et al.* 2019]. It is the foundational limb towards mindfulness. The next path is *Pranayam*, which is the science of breathing, it deals with the "regulation of inhalations, retention, and exhalations of breath" [Sharma 2000]. "It controls the sense and consists of withdrawing the senses from their objects. Our senses have a natural tendency to go to outward objects, they must be checked and directed toward the internal goal. It is the process of intervention." [Sharma 2000: 172]. This controls our life

force energy as we go through the cycles, seasons, and changes in our daily lives. Through *pranayama*, one may manage the cycles of pranic energy and develop a healthy mind. In order to manage work-related stress leaders should incorporate this into their lifestyle, "physical postures and breathing exercises improve muscle strength, flexibility, blood circulation, and oxygen uptake as well as hormone function" [Dev, Rathore 2017: 22]. Studies have shown that those who practice *pranayam* on a daily basis are calmer than those who do not practice [Jayawardena *et al.* 2020; Sharma, Sharma 2020]. During the time of Covid-19, the World Health Organization suggest that practicing *pranayam* on a daily basis will control stress level [Pal *et al.* 2020; Agarwal *et al.* 2020; Mahendru *et al.* 2021]. The next one is *Meditation [Dhyana]*, which is the full concentration of the mind. In general, "it means meditation and consists in the undistributed flow of thought around the object of meditation. It is the steadfast contemplations without any break" [Sharma 2000:172]. It is one of the most significant elements of stress management. It is the mental state of intense focus, tranquility, and stillness. It is the study of achieving perfect mental control. That is essential for the contemporary business leader to face organizational challenges. Leaders should incorporate these limbs into their daily lives to purify their consciousness and their instruments of perception. These limbs help to maintain mental fitness that in turn develops mindfulness. Mindfulness is a psychological state in which an individual experience a sense of detachment and freedom while being non-biased and non-judgmental while focusing on the current purpose [Martin 1997]. According to Sternberg [2000], mindfulness is a cognitive style that includes openness to novelty, attention to distinction, sensitivity to varied contexts, awareness of multiple perspectives, and orientation in the present. It helps leaders to face ever-changing business challenges and enhances self-awareness and confidence [Ritchie, Bryant, 2012] and it also "helps to stabilize the autonomic nervous system with a tendency towards parasympathetic dominance" [Dev, Rathore 2017: 22]. Hafenbrack arguably says that "mindfulness meditation as an On-The-Spot workplace intervention many employees have turned to mindfulness meditation to reduce and deal with stresses they face at work" [Hafenbrack 2017: 118]. In order to achieve mindfulness leaders must practices meditations on regular basis. Studies have shown that meditation helps to enhance mindfulness [Amar *et al.* 2014; Petchsawang, McLean 2017]. Mindfulness serves as an internal resource that promotes healthy psychological functioning and, as a result, promotes well-being [Brown, Ryan 2003] and "taking charge of your life, a way of doing something for yourself that no one else can do for you; consciously and systematically working with your stress, pain, illness, and the challenges and demands of everyday life" [Romano 2014: 23]. Along with the

above three limbs, leaders should incorporate martial arts in their day-to-day life to maintain the equilibrium between physical and mental health. Maintaining the balance between physical and mental health is indeed needed for workplace stress management, as we already discussed in the above sections. For that, yoga philosophy should blend with martial arts. Martial arts contain some Japanese philosophical lessons that may be applied to all parts of human existence, especially in the corporate world, these lessons help practitioners to live a better life. MA not only focuses on physical fitness but also highlights the significance of mental health. Yes, it's a fact that "in ancient times, martial arts were practiced for self-defense but now they are mainly used for self-improvement" [Bu *et al.* 2010: 205]. For that, "in recent years martial arts has evolved into a part of the fitness industry; almost every town boast martial arts training schools" [Bu *et al.* 2010: 205]. It is practiced for a variety of purposes, such as physical health, sports, self-defense, fighting skills, self-cultivation (meditation), mental discipline, character development, and the treatment of some medical disorders [Sharpe 2007]. It contains some internal soft style including "tai chi chuan (also known as tai chi) and aikido, there is more emphasis on aesthetics, harmony, and a sense of calmness; these arts are often dubbed 'Zen in motion' [Bu *et al.* 2010: 205]. Many people consider martial arts to be a component of the three disciplines of healing, self-discovery, and essential physical conditioning [Bu *et al.* 2010]. Yet this is a complete method that overly focuses on the three basics that are needed for stress management. In order to assess how martial arts, affect health, leaders should incorporate some of the martial art forms into their day-to-day life. It guides leaders to focus and suggests following the ethical path in a challenging period, which favorably affects stress management. Naves-Bittencourt arguably says that "the regular practice of MA could elevate MF levels of practitioners and thus influence positively on stress management and therefore the quality of life and well-being" [Naves-Bittencourt 2015: 34]. Martial arts are characterized as a "meditative movement as it is a performance that simultaneously stimulates both body and mind" [Naves-Bittencourt *et al.* 2015: 43] as a result reduce stress. To manage stress leaders must have 'Shu ha ri' in their life. 'Shu ha ri' is a Japanese martial arts concept, it is used to explain the phases of learning on the way to mastery. It has three stages *shu*, *ha*, and *ri*, the word *shu* signifies studying the fundamentals while adhering to the master's instructions, *ha* means commencing experiments and learning the experts and integrating the knowledge into practice and the last one *ri* means focusing on creativity and applying it to various situations. Similarly, leaders should follow the master of Martial arts and adopt some practical knowledge for overall enhancement and finally applies it to practical field example in decision-making. The practical skills

learned through martial arts can help leaders to manage stress. Studies have shown that martial arts were able to have a favorable impact on mindfulness, stress management, and health-related factors [Bu *et al.* 2010]. Martial arts encourage leaders to go within, identify areas of stagnation, and aid to overcome mental obstacles. It boosts confidence, and self-control to make good changes and helps leaders to fulfill their goals. It reduces stress, and muscle tension improves the ability to focus, breathing, and self-esteem. Naves-Bittencourt *et al.* [2015] work entitled *Martial arts: Mindful exercise to combat stress* arguably proves that "MA training was able to positively influence both stress management and MF levels as well as to influence health-related parameters. Martial arts training frequently causes the production of feel-good hormones in the brain, which improves mood, lowers stress levels, and offers several physical and mental advantages. Apart from this, MA have been demonstrated to be more effective when compared to other forms of physical activity and leisure" [Naves-Bittencourt *et al.* 2015: 42]. It does not only highlight the mental and physical effectiveness but also makes a difference in various factors namely neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness [Piepiora, Witkowski 2020; Piepiora 2021]. These qualities aid leaders take the right decisions for long-term perspectives, as a result enhance leadership productivity. Leaders' personalities and decisions justify their effectiveness and organizational productivity. They are the role models of their employees, and front runners of the organizations, for that they should focus on these two qualities. Piepiora and Witkowski's [2020] work entitled 'Personality profile of combat sports champions against neo-gladiators' proves that combat sports have a significant impact on personality development. Therefore leaders should adopt the right form of martial arts that helps them in stress reduction. With the intent, we highlight two forms of MA namely *kung fu* and *tai chi*, instead of any other forms of martial arts. Studies have shown that these two are the best forms of stress relief. The first one is *kung fu*, which is fully a physical activity. It has many forms, yet it commonly requires patience, energy, and time to achieve its objective. It improves coordination, balance, agility, and speed while boosting stamina, energy, cardiovascular endurance, and strength. Studies have shown that "through physical activity, people are able to direct their life goals and be ambitious in life" [Piepiora, Witkowski 2020: 72]. That is why leaders should adopt this in their day-to-day activities. Studies have demonstrated that professional athletes exhibit greater levels of extraversion and conscientiousness and lower levels of neuroticism compared to physically fit but untrained individuals [Piepiora, Witkowski 2020]. On the other hand, *tai chi*, is an internal Chinese martial art. It focuses on defense training, health benefits, and meditation. It is a kind of moving meditation that aids

to create harmony between body and mind [Horwood et al. 2008]. To manage workplace stress leaders should blend *asana, pranayama, and Dhyana* with *kung fu* and *tai chi*. Five of them simultaneously focus on such elements that aid leaders minimize stress and being able to face challenges. Thus, through figure 1, we try to depict YP and MA as methods to enhance some basic features, namely resilience, self-control, and self-confidence and make leaders able to take decisions during challenging periods, as a result, intensify effectiveness and reduce stress. For that, leaders must adopt yoga and martial arts as methods, to achieve a healthy mind and body [Taneja 2014; Richert, DeCloedt 2018; Gothe 2019; Deshpande 2012], and to manage work-related stress. Yoga philosophy makes leaders emotionally stronger and martial arts make them physically fit which concurrently aids leaders to perform effectively not in organizations but also in combat sports. Studies have shown that “emotional stability has a significant impact on the bravery of judokas and may translate into combat effectiveness” [Piepiora, Witkowski 2020: 282] Yet, it is a fact that both YP and MA focus on the same body-mind well-being. Still, one can find out some differences between them, YP teaches peace, calmness, and strengthening mental ability, whereas MA talks about systematic activities and ethical paths in the challenging periods which helps leaders to take the right decisions during difficult situations, as a result, enhance leadership effectiveness and reduce workplace stress.

Conclusions

This paper analyses the origin, similarities, and differences between yoga philosophy and martial arts interpreted as methods of stress management. We would like to conclude this paper by suggesting that YP and MA should be added to an organizational strategy for cultivating the appropriate mindset and transforming stress-loaded organizations into stress-free workplaces. Both of them (YP and MA) uncover the essence of being, which is important in leadership development. MA help leaders to enhance and realize the significance of self-confidence and guide them to tackle jeopardized situations. MA are about self-control during a challenging situation. These two approaches help leaders achieve a stress-free lifestyle and along with enhancing effectiveness. Studies have shown that leaders can perform better without stress. Therefore, constant personal growth is indeed needed to be an effective leader. In order to be effective, a leader must have a rational mind. Yoga helps realize oneself and hence can help make relevant rational decisions. This approach aims to empower participants to take greater responsibility for their own lives and ultimately for their organizations. To sum up, if organizations look forward to strategies to build confidence and resilience of

their employees, they should adopt YP and MA in their strategy. However, we do not assert that this strategy applies to everyone; rather, we just illustrate a potential ground-breaking response for workplace stress management. Obviously, additional research and surveys are required to confirm our findings.

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Filozofia jogi i sztuki walki dla liderów jako pomoc w rozwiązywaniu sytuacji stresowych w miejscu pracy

Słowa kluczowe: liderzy, uważność, sztuki walki, zarządzanie stresem, filozofia jogi

Streszczenie

Tło. Stres w miejscu pracy osiągnął alarmujący poziom. Ma negatywny wpływ na skuteczność liderów i utrudnia osiąganie produktywności organizacyjnej. Liderzy są pionierami organizacji, którzy realizują jej cele, takie jak maksymalizacja zysków, ciągłe doskonalenie, zarządzanie pracownikami, zadowolenie akcjonariuszy, itp. Aby skutecznie zarządzać tymi celami, lider musi mieć zdrowy umysł i bezstresowe miejsce pracy.

Problem i cel. Zarządzanie stresem stało się przedmiotem debat wśród zawodników, badaczy i aktywistów. Stres negatywnie wpływa na zdrowie liderów, życie społeczne, wydajność pracy i środowisko, w którym pracują. Aby osiągnąć dobrostan fizyczny i psychiczny, niezbędne jest zarządzanie stresem. W związku z tym w artykule proponuje się jogę i sztuki walki jako sposób utrzymania równowagi między umysłem a ciałem i umożliwienia liderom radzenia sobie ze stresem w miejscu pracy.

Metody. Artykuł przyjmuje metodologię jakościową opartą na analizie treści.

Wyniki. Joga i sztuki walki pomagają utrzymać równowagę psychiczną i fizyczną, wzmacniając pewność siebie, samokontrolę i odporność psychiczną, dzięki czemu praktykujący są w stanie stawić czoła zagrożeniom. W rezultacie zmniejsza się stres w miejscu pracy.

Wnioski. Autorzy zdecydowanie zalecają wprowadzenie filozofii jogi (YP) i sztuk walki (MA) do strategii organizacji, ponieważ są one niezbędne do zarządzania stresem w miejscu pracy. Organizacje powinny inwestować w jogę i sztuki walki, aby zwiększyć skupienie i uważność pracowników, co prowadzi do zwiększenia produktywności organizacji.