

UNVEILING PREFERENCES: ANALYSING KEY FACTORS IN CHOOSING YOGA CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the factors influencing the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class among individuals in the Vile Parle area of Mumbai who are not currently practicing yoga but are willing to start. To identify the critical factors influencing the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class among non-practicing individuals willing to start yoga in Vile Parle, Mumbai. Data was collected from 197 respondents using a structured questionnaire. A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure a representative sample of the target population. The questionnaire included questions on various factors such as the quality of the yoga teacher, class environment, convenience, style, cost, and additional amenities. The results of the Friedman test indicated a significant difference in the ranks assigned to the factors when choosing a yoga class, $\chi^2(5) = 124, p < .001$. This suggests that the factors such as Yoga Teacher, Class Environment, Style, Cost, Additional Amenities, and Convenience are not equally important to the respondents. The findings reveal that the quality of the yoga teacher and the class environment are the most critical factors, significantly more important than convenience, style, cost, and additional amenities. Convenience also plays a notable role, highlighting the importance of location, schedule, and class duration. Prioritizing well trained instructors and maintaining a welcoming studio environment, along with offering flexible class times and accessible locations, can better meet the needs of new yoga practitioners in Vile Parle, Mumbai.

Keywords: Yoga class selection, decision-making factors, new practitioners.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yoga has become a globally embraced practice, celebrated for its holistic benefits to physical, mental, and emotional well-being. As the popularity of yoga classes continues to rise, it is essential to understand the factors that influence individuals' decisions when selecting a class. This study, titled "Unveiling Preferences: Analyzing Key Factors in Choosing Yoga Classes," aims to identify the critical elements influencing the decision-making process among non-practicing individuals willing to start yoga in Vile Parle, Mumbai. The key factors examined include the quality of the yoga teacher, class environment, yoga style, cost, additional amenities, and convenience of schedule and location. Tailoring yoga classes to meet these preferences can attract and keep students.

A study by Conboy, Wilson, and Braun (2010) found that yoga can boost psychosocial health and overall well-being. This suggests that yoga has the potential to help people live happier and healthier lives. Even though there's a growing body of research on what makes up well-being, there hasn't been much study on how yoga can improve mental and physical health. Most medical and psychological research has focused on treating diseases, not on how traditional practices like yoga can promote human flourishing. Researchers Park, Riley,

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Bedesin, and Stewart (2016) studied the reasons why people start and keep doing yoga with 360 yoga students and 156 yoga teachers. Most people first started doing yoga for exercise and to reduce stress. However, for many people, spirituality became the main reason they kept doing yoga. This study shows that while most people start yoga for its physical and mental benefits, many people later start doing it for spiritual reasons. Jain (2016) analysed the historical development of modern yoga from the 19th century to its current status as a popular fitness phenomenon, highlighting its mass acceptance due to entrepreneurship and global values. Frank et al. (2017) assessed the Transformative Life Skills (TLS) yoga-based intervention on adolescents, finding reduced unexcused absences, detentions, and improved emotional control, though no significant changes in academic grades. Stapp and Wolff (2019) explored young children's experiences with yoga in early childhood settings, finding that all 34 preschool children expressed a desire to continue the yoga activity. Mohanty, Yasobant, and Epari (2019) studied the Patanjali Yogpeeth model for integrating yoga into India's National Physical Activity Plan, suggesting it could address NCDs and enhance public health programs if adopted by government agencies. Cartwright et al. (2020) surveyed 2,434 UK yoga practitioners, finding initial motivations were wellness- and fitness-oriented, shifting to stress management and spirituality, with small but significant health outcomes from practice frequency. Kotecha (2022) highlighted Ministry of Ayush initiatives promoting Ayurveda and Yoga globally, including AYUSH Academic Chairs and Information Cells to provide authentic information worldwide. A study by Mandlik et al. (2023) examined differences in yoga practices among 968 teachers from 64 countries. Traditional and therapy yoga styles focused on non-physical aspects like breathing, meditation, and mantras. In contrast, exercise-based styles emphasized physical exercises. Despite these variations, all yoga teachers incorporated various yoga elements, emphasizing its comprehensive approach to well-being. Narain and Kumar (2023) discussed the evolving concept of spiritual tourism in India, emphasizing its economic benefits and cultural spread, and the need for infrastructure development to attract international visitors and improve local employment. Martin et al. (2024) reviewed the impact of yoga on children, finding it helps them understand and monitor their bodies, enhancing psychological well-being, self-regulation, cognitive functioning, creativity, and persistence in school.

This study aims to uncover the factors that influence individuals who are new to yoga in their decision-making process for selecting a yoga class. By examining elements such as the expertise of the yoga instructor, the ambiance of the class environment, the type of yoga offered, the cost of classes, additional amenities, and the convenience of the class schedule and location, the research seeks to provide valuable insights. These insights will assist yoga studios and instructors in Mumbai, particularly in the Vile Parle area, in tailoring their offerings to better meet the needs and preferences of new yoga practitioners.

This study focuses on understanding the factors influencing the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class among individuals who are not currently practicing yoga but are interested in starting. The research is geographically concentrated in Mumbai, specifically in the Vile Parle area. Data is collected from respondents who have expressed a willingness to begin practicing yoga, providing insights into their preferences and considerations when choosing a yoga class. This study employs a quantitative research methodology to explore the factors influencing the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class among individuals who are not currently practicing yoga but are willing to start. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondents' preferences and considerations. The sample size consists of 197 respondents, chosen using a simple random sampling technique to ensure a representative and unbiased sample. By focusing on the Vile Parle area of Mumbai, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can help yoga studios and instructors tailor their offerings to better meet the needs of new practitioners in this specific locality.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 Settings and Design

The research design for "Unveiling Preferences: Key Factors Influencing Yoga Class Selection" is descriptive research design. This research design is used to identify and analyze the factors influencing individuals' preferences for yoga classes without manipulating any variables. It aims to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon, providing insights into what factors are most influential in the decision-making process.

2.2 Variables of the Study

Yoga Teacher, Class Environment, Style of Yoga, Cost of learning Yoga, Additional Amenities and Convenience Aspect of Yoga.

2.3 Methods

This study employs a quantitative research methodology to explore the factors influencing the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class among individuals who are not currently practicing yoga but are willing to start. Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire designed to capture respondents' preferences and considerations. The sample size consists of 197 respondents, chosen using a simple random sampling technique to ensure a representative and unbiased sample. To make better understanding of the research study, an attempt has been made to refer to some of the books, e-journals, and internet sites. By focusing on the Vile Parle area of Mumbai, the study aims to provide valuable insights that can help yoga studios and instructors tailor their offerings to better meet the needs of new practitioners in this specific locality.

2.4 Statistical Analysis

Friedman test is used to identify a significant difference in the ranks assigned to the factors when choosing a yoga class. Durbin-Conover test is used for Pairwise comparisons.

2.5 Data Analysis

To gain a deeper understanding of the factors influencing the selection of yoga classes among new practitioners, a detailed data analysis was conducted. This section presents the detailed analysis from the collected data, highlighting the key considerations and preferences of the respondents.

3. RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of ranks assigned to factors determining the choice of yoga class

Rank	Yoga Teacher	Environment	Style	Cost	Additional Amenities	Convenience
1	91	45	24	26	32	40
2	40	77	36	31	28	30
3	25	40	36	25	21	72
4	15	11	32	65	23	19
5	16	13	52	20	43	13
6	10	11	17	30	50	23
Total	197	197	197	197	197	197

Researcher's compilation from primary data

The table illustrates the ranks assigned to various factors considered when selecting a yoga class, highlighting the importance of each factor. The quality of the yoga teacher emerges as the most critical factor, with the highest number of respondents (91) ranking it first. The class environment follows closely, with 77 respondents placing it second and 45 ranking it first, indicating its significant role. The style of yoga, while important, is ranked third overall, with a notable number of respondents assigning it the fifth rank. Cost is also a key consideration,

particularly ranked fourth by 65 respondents, reflecting its influence on decision-making. Additional amenities, though less critical, still impact choices, especially for those valuing convenience and comfort. Lastly, convenience is highly important for some, with 72 respondents ranking it third and 40 ranking it first, underscoring the importance of location, schedule, and class duration. Overall, the data suggests that the quality of the yoga teacher and the class environment are the top priorities, followed by the style of yoga, cost, additional amenities, and convenience.

Table 2: Friedman Test Statistics

χ^2	df	p
124	5	<.001

Researcher's compilation from primary data

The results of the Friedman test indicated a significant difference in the ranks assigned to the factors when choosing a yoga class, $\chi^2(5) = 124$, $p < .001$. This suggests that the factors such as Yoga Teacher, Class Environment, Style, Cost, Additional Amenities, and Convenience are not equally important to the respondents. Some factors are considered significantly more important than others in the decision-making process for selecting a yoga class.

Table 3: Pairwise comparison

		Statistic	p
Yoga Teacher	Class Environment	0.164	0.87
Yoga Teacher	Convenience	2.057	0.04
Yoga Teacher	Yoga Style	5.565	<.001
Yoga Teacher	Cost	7.433	<.001
Yoga Teacher	Additional Amenities	8.404	<.001
Class Environment	Convenience	1.893	0.059
Class Environment	Yoga Style	5.401	<.001
Class Environment	Cost	7.269	<.001
Class Environment	Additional Amenities	8.24	<.001
Convenience	Yoga Style	3.508	<.001
Convenience	Cost	5.376	<.001
Convenience	Additional Amenities	6.347	<.001
Yoga Style	Cost	1.868	0.062
Yoga Style	Additional Amenities	2.839	0.005
Cost	Additional Amenities	0.972	0.331

Source: Researcher's compilation from primary data

Pairwise comparisons using the Durbin-Conover test showed that the quality of the yoga teacher and the class environment are the most critical factors, significantly more important than convenience, style, cost, and additional amenities. Specifically, the yoga teacher was significantly more important than convenience ($p = 0.040$), yoga style ($p < .001$), cost ($p < .001$), and additional amenities ($p < .001$). Similarly, the class environment was significantly more important than yoga style ($p < .001$), cost ($p < .001$), and additional amenities ($p < .001$), but not significantly different from convenience ($p = 0.059$). Convenience was also found to be significantly more important than yoga style ($p < .001$), cost ($p < .001$), and additional amenities ($p < .001$). The comparison between yoga style and cost was marginally non-significant ($p = 0.062$), indicating a slight preference for yoga style over cost, while yoga style was significantly more important than additional amenities ($p = 0.005$). There was no significant difference between cost and additional amenities ($p = 0.331$).

4. DISCUSSION

The findings from this study highlight the critical factors that influence individuals' decisions when selecting a yoga class, particularly among those who are new to yoga. The results indicate that the quality of the yoga teacher and the class environment are paramount, significantly outweighing other considerations such as convenience, style, cost, and additional amenities. This underscores the importance of having well-trained and experienced instructors, as well as maintaining a welcoming and clean studio environment, to attract new participants. Convenience also emerged as a notable factor, suggesting that the location, schedule, and duration of classes play a significant role in the decision-making process. While factors like the style of yoga, cost, and additional amenities are important, they are secondary to the expertise of the teacher and the ambiance of the class environment. These insights can help yoga studios and instructors in Mumbai, particularly in the Vile Parle area, to better tailor their offerings to meet the needs and preferences of potential new practitioners, ultimately fostering higher participation rates and a more engaged yoga community.

5. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the quality of the yoga teacher and the class environment are the most influential factors for individuals who are new to yoga when selecting a class. These factors significantly outweigh other considerations such as convenience, style, cost, and additional amenities. The findings underscore the importance of having well-trained and experienced instructors, as well as maintaining a welcoming and clean studio environment, to attract and retain new participants. Convenience also plays a notable role, indicating that the location, schedule, and duration of classes are important in the decision-making process. While factors like the style of yoga, cost, and additional amenities are relevant, they are secondary to the expertise of the teacher and the ambiance of the class environment.

By understanding what factors affect people's choices in yoga classes, yoga studios can adjust their offerings to better match the needs and expectations of their students. This can make people happier with their yoga classes and more likely to keep practicing yoga.

Based on the findings, yoga studios and instructors in Mumbai, particularly in the Vile Parle area, should prioritize hiring well-trained and experienced yoga teachers to enhance the quality of instruction. Maintaining a clean, welcoming, and aesthetically pleasing studio environment is also crucial. To accommodate the convenience factor, studios should offer a variety of class times and ensure that the location is easily accessible. Additionally, while cost and amenities are less critical, offering flexible pricing options and providing basic amenities such as showers and lockers can further enhance the overall experience for new practitioners. By focusing on these key areas, yoga studios can better meet the needs and preferences of potential new participants, fostering higher engagement and satisfaction.

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