

Perceptions of Viennese people towards sustainable behaviors promoted by Yogic philosophy

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Submitted to David Leonard, PhD

Parampara Patil Hashmi

62005094

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ABSTRACT

The ancient philosophy of Yoga provides a framework for moral conduct, guiding societal and environmental interactions, and aimed at the union of the mind, body, and spirit (Galatino & Musser, 2007), or self-actualization. The lifestyle promoted by Yogic philosophy has wide-ranging implications for the social, economic, and environmental behaviours of practitioners, including what to consume, how to treat others, and how to prioritize. This framework is accessible due to its low-cost and aligns closely with the key principles of sustainable development (Zaferoudi, Pipinia, Yfantidou, & Georgomanos, 2021). UN Secretary, Ban Ki Moon advocated for Yoga to foster awareness of individual responsibility towards the planet's resources, promote neighborly respect, and cultivate peace (UN News Centre, 2016), yet the scope of its potential contributions to sustainability objectives remain largely untapped. As such, this study investigates the perceptions of the people living in Vienna towards yogic philosophy through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB: Ajzen, 1991).

Based on a thorough literature review, a quantitative online survey assessed the attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, and intentions of 162 Viennese participants related to 17 sustainable behaviours aligned with the yogic philosophy.

The structural equation models (SEM) for predicting each individual behaviour found a perfect fit for the TPB model, according to Comparative Fit Index (CFI) and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) statistics. The various models ranged in their explanatory power from R^2 values of 0.193 to 0.715. Attitude proved a significant predictor for all 17 behaviours, with the expected positive effect, and was the dominant predictor of 13 behaviours. Perceived behavioural control (PBC) proved a positive and significant predictor of 11 behaviours and was dominant for 4 behaviours. Subjective norms (SN) were insignificant in predicting 16 of the 17 behaviours, yet commonly displayed an unexpected negative effect on behavioural intentions, which may partly explain the observed attitude-behaviour gap.

To consider Yogic philosophy holistically, the various items relating to diverse lifestyle aspects were combined and showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.91 for attitude, suggesting that the Yogic philosophy is a coherent concept (SN=0.91, PBC=0.94). Despite this, the aggregated SEM model showed TPB to be a poor fit for the data. Based on the outcomes of the analysis, this research uncovers opportunities to further promote and utilize the low-tech Yogic framework for adopting sustainable behaviors across societal, environmental, and economic dimensions.