



Original Article

Effects of Panchakosha Practices in Fostering Holistic Well-being among Children

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Abstract

The Panchakosha model, described in the Taittiriya Upanishad, outlines five interrelated dimensions of human existence: Annamaya (physical body), Pranamaya (vital energy), Manomaya (mind and emotions), Vijnanamaya (intellect), and Anandamaya (spiritual bliss). This study investigates the effectiveness of Panchakosha-based interventions in promoting holistic personality development among middle school children. A mixed-method approach was used, incorporating a 12-week intervention with 60 children divided into experimental (n=30) and control groups (n=30). The intervention included yoga and Surya Namaskar for Annamaya, breathing practices (box breathing, anulom-vilom) for Pranamaya, mindfulness journaling and guided relaxation for Manomaya, storytelling and problem-solving for Vijnanamaya, and meditation and gratitude practices for Anandamaya. Quantitative data were collected through physical fitness checklists, emotional well-being scales, and teacher observation schedules, while qualitative data were gathered via student reflective journals. Results indicated significant improvements in physical fitness, emotional regulation, attention, creativity, empathy, and self-awareness among children in the experimental group. Findings demonstrate that integrating Panchakosha principles into school curricula supports NEP 2020's vision of holistic education, bridging ancient Indian wisdom with modern pedagogical practices. The study highlights practical strategies for child-centered education and recommends wider adoption and further research to validate long-term outcomes.

Keywords: Panchakosha model, Holistic education, Yoga and mindfulness, Child development, Annamaya Kosha; Pranamaya Kosha, Manomaya Kosha, Vijnanamaya Kosha, Anandamaya Kosha, Emotional well-being, Spiritual growth, Physical fitness, Attention and creativity.

Introduction

1. Background of the Study

Holistic education in the 21st century emphasizes not only academic achievement but also physical, emotional, intellectual, ethical, and spiritual development. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates integrating well-being, values, and socio-emotional learning into school curricula. Ancient Indian wisdom, particularly the Panchakosha framework, aligns with this vision by offering a structured model for nurturing complete human development.

2. The Panchakosha Model

The five koshas—Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya, and Anandamaya—represent layers of existence that are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Each kosha corresponds to a domain of child development, making the framework highly relevant for holistic education.

3. Statement of the Problem

Current educational systems often focus primarily on academics, leaving physical, emotional, intellectual, and ethical development underemphasized.

4. Research Gap

Although research exists on yoga, mindfulness, and values education, few studies have applied an integrated Panchakosha approach to school-based interventions.

5. Objectives

To evaluate the effectiveness of Panchakosha-based practices in promoting physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual well-being in children.

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6. Research Questions

How do Panchakosha interventions impact children's physical fitness, emotional regulation, attention, creativity, and self-awareness?

7. Significance of the Study

This study provides culturally grounded, practical interventions for schools, expands educational psychology research, and aligns with NEP 2020's emphasis on holistic, child-centered education.

Review of Literature

1. Panchakosha in Education

The Panchakosha framework has its roots in the Taittiriya Upanishad, emphasizing holistic human development. Contemporary scholars advocate its relevance for modern pedagogy, highlighting its alignment with socio-emotional learning and values education.

2. Yoga and Physical Well-being (Annamaya Kosha)

Research shows yoga enhances strength, flexibility, concentration, and mental health in children (Khalsa et al., 2012; Telles et al., 2012).

3. Pranayama and Vital Energy (Pranamaya Kosha)

Breathing techniques like anulom-vilom and box breathing improve focus, vitality, and stress management (Saoji et al., 2019; Nivethitha et al., 2016).

4. Mindfulness and Emotional Regulation (Manomaya Kosha)

3. Intervention (12 Weeks)

Kosha	Activities
Annamaya	Yogic postures, Surya Namaskar
Pranamaya	Box breathing, Anulom-vilom
Manomaya	Mindfulness journaling, guided relaxation
Vijnanamaya	Storytelling, problem-solving, reflective learning
Anandamaya	Meditation, gratitude circles, silent sitting

4. Data Collection Tools

- Physical fitness checklist
- Emotional well-being scale
- Teacher observation schedule
- Student reflective journals

5. Procedure

Weekly sessions were conducted 3x per week, 40 minutes each, facilitated by trained teachers. Pre- and post-tests were administered.

6. Data Analysis

- Quantitative: Descriptive statistics, t-tests
- Qualitative: Thematic analysis of journals and teacher observations

3. Tables / Figures

Table 4.1 – Pre/Post Comparison of Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	Experimental Pre	Experimental Post	Control Pre	Control Post
Sit-ups	18	28	19	20
Flexibility (cm)	14.2	17.3	14.5	15.0
Emotional Well-being	56.3	72.8	55.7	58.1
Attention (%)	46	83	48	52

Figures for bar/line charts can be inserted here to visualize pre/post differences.

Mindfulness journaling and guided relaxation foster emotional awareness, empathy, and self-regulation (Schonert-Reichl & Lawlor, 2010; Zenner et al., 2014).

5. Storytelling, Values, and Intellect (Vijnanamaya Kosha)

Value-based storytelling and problem-solving enhance ethical reasoning, creativity, and critical thinking (Narvaez, 2006; Kumar & Aruldass, 2021).

6. Meditation, Gratitude, and Spiritual Bliss (Anandamaya Kosha)

Meditation and gratitude practices support inner peace, resilience, and prosocial behavior (Roeser et al., 2013; Tang et al., 2007; Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

7. Research Gap

Few studies investigate the integrated Panchakosha model, highlighting the need for structured interventions in school settings.

Methodology

1. Research Design

A mixed-method design was employed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess outcomes across all five koshas.

2. Sample

Sixty middle school children (ages 9–12) were randomly assigned to experimental (n=30) and control (n=30) groups.

Results

1. Quantitative Findings

- Physical fitness: Experimental group improved in sit-ups (18 → 28) and flexibility (14.2 cm → 17.3 cm).
- Emotional well-being: Scale scores increased (56.3 → 72.8).
- Attention/Engagement: Classroom focus increased from 46% → 83%.

2. Qualitative Findings

Teachers reported better cooperation, empathy, and reduced conflicts.

Students described enhanced self-awareness, gratitude, and creativity.

Discussion

- Each kosha improved: Annamaya (physical), Pranamaya (energy), Manomaya (emotional), Vijnanamaya (intellectual), Anandamaya (spiritual).
- Integrated approach: Synergistic impact across domains.
- Comparison with prior studies: Supports yoga, mindfulness, storytelling, meditation literature; adds value through integration.
- Contribution to NEP 2020: Demonstrates practical alignment with holistic education vision.
- Educational implications: Teacher training, curriculum integration, cultural relevance.
- Limitations: Small sample, short intervention, single school.
- Future research: Longitudinal studies, digital modules, cross-cultural applications.

Conclusion

Panchakosha-based practices significantly enhanced physical fitness, emotional regulation, attention, creativity, empathy, and self-awareness among children. This framework aligns closely with NEP 2020's vision of holistic education and offers practical strategies for child-centered classrooms. By integrating yoga, pranayama, mindfulness, storytelling, and meditation, schools can foster balanced personality development. The study encourages wider adoption, teacher training, and further research to validate long-term impacts and explore cross-cultural applications. Panchakosha thus provides a timeless and practical model for nurturing well-rounded, resilient, and ethical children.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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