

Influence of *Suryanamaskar* on Levels of Self-Esteem of College Students

V. Suseela¹ & V. Suresh²

Abstract

The study was conducted to find out if *suryanamaskar* influences the self-esteem. Participants comprised of college students between the ages of 18 and 21 years. Subjects were initially assessed for self-esteem using Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale. Those with low self-esteem were chosen for the study and divided into experimental group and control group. The scores on self-esteem of the two groups obtained in the pre test did not differ significantly. The experimental group practiced *suryanamaskar* weekly five days for a period of eight weeks. Results of the post test reveal that the self-esteem of the experimental group has significantly improved.

Keywords: self-esteem, *suryanamaskar*, college students

*1 Assistant Professor in Yoga, Annamalai University

*2 Former Professor and Head, Department of Psychology & Former Director, Centre for Yoga Studies, Annamalai University.

The human “self” consists of a core made of fairly consistent characteristics that fit together into a meaningful pattern and rather a fluid fringe that can undergo constant change. A person’s behavior is an outcome of self-perception. One is born out of the skills and talents that (s)he cultivated in life. One feels confident when in situations where (s)he uses those talents but this type of confidence is limited to the situations one is already good at. Self-esteem refers to the overall opinion we have of ourselves, how we judge or evaluate ourselves, and the value we attach to ourselves as people (Fennel, 1999). This is the rich sense of inner fulfilment that enables us to feel good about ourselves in just about any situation life can offer. Self-esteem is the cornerstone of one’s personality which is reflected in every behavior of the person. According to Yau (1991) the person with high self-esteem is eager and excited by new challenges. The person seeks joyful fulfillments and meaningful relationships. On the other hand, the person with low self-esteem is often overwhelmed by anxiety and fear. Self-renunciation and self rejection become common behaviours.

Negative beliefs about the self, express themselves in many ways including health. They may struggle when they feel ill and may put off going to the physician. Sometimes problems grow out of low self-esteem. Unless the condition of low self-esteem is directly tackled, the person is likely to remain vulnerable to future difficulties. Yoga can help us overcome such a state.

Yoga is a way of life that promotes an integrated development in a person. The goal of Yoga is described in spiritual terms as the union of the individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. On a more practical level, yoga is a means of balancing and harmonizing the body, mind, and emotions. This is done through the practice of *asana*,

pranayama, mudra, bandha, shatkarma, and meditation, and must be achieved before union can take place with the higher reality. The science of yoga begins to work on the outermost aspect of the personality, the physical body, which for most people is a practical and familiar starting point. When the imbalance is experienced at this level, the organs, muscles, and nerves no longer function in harmony; rather they act in opposition to each other. As a result, the well-being of the person is disturbed. Yoga aims at bringing the different bodily functions into perfect coordination so that they work for the good of the whole body. From the physical body, yoga moves on to the mental and emotional levels. Many people suffer from anxiety and phobia as a result of the stresses and interactions of everyday living.

An important spiritual practice is *Suryanamaskar*. It is the mother of yogic exercises. It involves a sequence of postures performed with a focus on inhalation and exhalation. *Suryanamaskar* is a complete *sadhana*, or spiritual practice, in itself for it includes *asana, pranayama, mantra*, and meditation techniques. It is a very effective group of asanas with which to start morning practice. *Suryanamaskar* has a direct vitalizing effect on the solar energy of the body which flows through *pingala nadi*. Regular practice of *suryanamaskar* regulates *pingala nadi*. Regulation of *pingla nadi* promotes a balanced energy system at both mental and physical levels. *Suryanamaskar* generates *prana*, the subtle energy which activates the psychic body. Its performance in a steady rhythmic sequence reflects the rhythms of the universe, the twenty-four hours of the day, the twelve zodiac phases of the year, and the biorhythms of the body. The application of this form and rhythm to the body/mind complex generates the transforming force which produces a fuller and more dynamic life. However, it is an effective way of loosening up, stretching, massaging, and toning all the joints, muscles, and internal organs of the body. Its

versatility and application make it one of the most useful methods of inducing a healthy, vigorous, and active life, while at the same time preparing for spiritual awakening and the resulting expansion of awareness. It enhances the solar energy in a person, giving vitality, resourcefulness, and enthusiasm in all that one thinks and does. In short, *suryanamaskar* stretches the entire body and channels the flow of various energies (Om Swami,2016). The present study was taken up with the objective that the practice of *suryanamaskar* can promote one's self-esteem.

Research Questions

Will *suryanamaskar* enhance the self-esteem of a person?

Objective

The purpose of the study was to investigate whether *suryanamaskar* enhances the self-esteem of a person.

Hypothesis

The intervention of *suryanamaskar* will enhance the level of self-esteem of a person.

Method

Study design

The study included the pretest-posttest control group design.

Sample

The sample constituted twenty male college students (N-20) between the age of 18-21 years with a mean age of 19.7 years and SD of 2. The subjects were selected using a convenient sampling method from a tutorial college in Salem, Tamilnadu.

Tools

Self-esteem Scale: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), a widely used self-report instrument consisting of 10 statements was used in the study. All items are answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The scale ranges from 0-30. Scores between 15 and 25 are within the normal range; scores below 15 suggest low self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale is 0.86

Procedure: Initially, the level of self-esteem of the participants was assessed and participants with low self-esteem were chosen for the study in order to provide intervention. Based on their low levels of self-esteem score, an equal number of participants (ten in each group) were randomly divided into an experimental group and a control group. The control group was not given any training or intervention of *suryanamaskar*. Only the experimental group underwent training by a trained yoga therapist in *suryanamaskar*. The experimental group practiced *suryanamaskar* weekly for five days for a period of eight weeks. The data were collected with the help of a trained yoga therapist. The requirements of the experimental procedures, testing as well as exercise schedules were explained to them so as to avoid any ambiguity of the effort required on their part and prior to the administration of the study, the investigator obtained individual consent from each subject.

A pre-test before the administration of intervention and a post-test after the training were conducted. The schedule of intervention is explained in Table1.

Table 1. Schedule of Intervention

Total number of weeks	8 weeks
Number of days	5 days
Number of sessions	1 (morning)
Session duration	45 minutes

Time Split

Prayer	2 min
Loosening	10 min
12 rounds of <i>suryanamaskar</i>	20 min
<i>Savasana</i> with Deep Relaxation Technique	10 min
Closing prayer	3 min
Total	45 min

Results

To pursue the objectives of the study, ANCOVA was conducted to assess the effect of the intervention on levels of self-esteem. The data collected in the pre-test and post-test were analysed using ANCOVA is presented in Table 2. Data were analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 version.

Table 2*Analysis of Self-esteem of Experimental and Control Groups*

Test	Control Group	<i>Suryanamaskar</i> Group	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	'F' Ratio
Pre-Test							
Mean	13.6	13.8	B	0.2	1	0.2	0.11
			W	32	18	1.7	
Post-Test							
Mean	13.8	20.6	B	231.2	1	231.2	40.80*
			W	102	18	5.6	
Adjusted Post-Test							
Mean	13.8	20.5	B	218.3	1	218.3	47.26*
			W	78.5	17	4.6	

Note: * Significant at .05 level

Table 2 shows that the pre-test mean values for the self-esteem of the experimental group and control group are 13.8 and 13.6 respectively. The obtained 'F' ratio of 0.11 for pre-test scores is less than the table value of 2.7 for df 1 and 18 required for significance at a .05 level of confidence in self-esteem. This implies that the experimental group and control group do not differ significantly in their self-esteem. The post-test mean values for the self-esteem of the experimental group and control group are 20.6 and 13.8 respectively. The obtained 'F' ratio of 40.80 for post-test scores is more than the table value of 2.7 for df 1 and 18 required for significance at .05 level of confidence in self-esteem. The adjusted post-test means of the experimental group and control group are 20.5 and 13.8 respectively on self-esteem. The obtained 'F' ratio of 47.26 for adjusted post-test means is more than the table value of 2.72 for df 1 and 17 required for significance at .05 level of confidence on self-esteem. This shows that *suryanamaskar* has influenced the self-esteem of the experimental group.

Discussion

The results of the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in self-esteem. It is also found that there is a significant improvement in self-esteem in the experimental group due to yoga practice. The result is in line with the findings of Bhaskar (2021) who found that middle-aged women's participation in the 12 weeks of *suryanamaskar* improved self-esteem. The mere expectation of an increase in fitness, or the person's belief they are doing something positive for themselves can improve self-esteem. A sense of achievement rather than actual achievement is the important element. Probably the ability to perform the twelve rounds of *suryanamaskar* itself provided the subjects a sense of achievement. The flow of energy also could have made them feel more resourceful and enthusiastic. Thus, we can state that *suryanamaskar* not only enhances fitness but also mental strength. Hence *suryanamaskar* is profoundly effective in promoting self-esteem among youngsters. *Suryanamaskara* help in maintaining psychological, social, and spiritual well-being (Venkatesh & Vandhana, 2021). Adopting them in the day-to-day exercise regimen not only enhances physical health but improves psychological well-being in turn enhancing self-esteem.

References

- Beer, J., Lombardo, M., & Bhanji, J. (2010). Roles of medial prefrontal cortex and orbitofrontal cortex in self-evaluation. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 22(9): 2108–2119.
<https://doi.org/10.1162/jocn.2009.21359>.
- Bryan S. Pinto Zipp G. Parasher R. St. Peter's University, Jersey City, NJ, USA. The 'effects of yoga on psychosocial variables and exercise' adherence: a randomized, controlled pilot study, Physical inactivity is a serious issue for the American Public.

- Dhameja, K., Singh, S., Mustafa, M. D., Singh, K. P., Banerjee, B. D., Agarwal, M., & Ahmed, R. S. (?). Therapeutic effect of yoga in patients with hypertension with reference to GST Gene Polymorphism. Department of Physiology, University College of Medical Sciences (University of Delhi) and GTB. Delhi, India.
- Dhananjai, S., Sadashiv, T. S., Dutt, K., & Kumar, R. (?) Reducing psychological distress and obesity through yoga practice. Source Department of Physiology, CSM Medical University, Lucknow, India.
- Fennell, M. (1999). *Overcoming low self-esteem*. Robinson.
- Gordon, L., McGrowder, D. A., Pena, Y. T., Cabrera, E., & Lawrence-Wright, M. B. Effect of yoga exercise therapy on stress indicators with low self-esteem on students.
- Hagins, M., Haden, S. C., Daly, L. A. (?). A randomized controlled trial on the effects of yoga on stress reactivity in 6th grade students. Source Department of Physical Therapy, Long Island University, Brooklyn Campus, One University Plaze, Brookly, NY 11201,
- McGee, R., & Williams, S. (2000). Does low self-esteem predict health compromising behaviours among adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 23: 569–582.
<https://doi.org/10.1006/jado.2000.0344>.
- Moliver, N., Mika, E., Chartrand, M., Hausmann, R., & Khalsa, S. (?) Yoga experience as a predictor of psychological wellness in school students over 15 years. Source School of Behavioral and Health Sciences, North central University, Arizona, USA.
- Myers, J., Willise, J., & Villalba, J. (2011). Promoting self-esteem in adolescents: The influence of wellness factors. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 89: 28–30. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6678.2011.tb00058.x>.

Om, S. (2016). *When all is not well*. Harpercollins. India

Rosenberg, M. (1965). *Society and the adolescent self-image*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Shim, C. S., Lee, Y. S., (?). Effects of a yoga-focused prenatal program on stress, anxiety, self confidence and labor pain in pregnant women with in vitro fertilization treatment.

Sobana, R., Parthasarathy, S., Duraisamy., Jaiganesh, K. & Vadivel, S. (?) The effect of yoga therapy on selected psychological variables among male patients with insomnia. Source Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, Mahatma Gandhi Medical College and Research Institute Puducherry, Southern India.

Timko, A., England, E., Herbert, J., & Foreman, E. (2010). The implicit relational assessment procedure as a measure of self-esteem. *The Psychological Record*, 60(4): 679.

Venkatesh, L. P., & Vandhana, S. (2021). Insights on Surya namaskar from its origin to application towards health. *Journal of Ayurveda and Integrative Medicine*, 100530.

Vinu, B. (2021). *Journal of Sports Science and Nutrition*, 2(1): 12-14.

Yau,C. (1991). An essential relationship: Healthy self-esteem and productive creativity. *The Journal of Creative Behavior*, 25(2):154-161.