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

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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

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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 Table 1.
Table 1. Schedule of Intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of weeks</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of days</td>
<td>5 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of sessions</td>
<td>1 (morning)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session duration</td>
<td>45 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Time Split

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>2 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loosening</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 rounds of suryanamaskar</td>
<td>20 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savasana with Deep Relaxation Technique</td>
<td>10 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Closing prayer</td>
<td>3 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>45 min</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
<th>Suryanamaskar Group</th>
<th>Source of Variance</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Squares</th>
<th>‘F’ Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>231.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>231.2</td>
<td>40.80*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted Post-Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>218.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>218.3</td>
<td>47.26*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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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.

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