

## **A Study of correlation between Yoga Practice and happiness**

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### **Abstract**

*Happiness is a concept in the field of Psychology but is used in all the disciplines and desired by across the age groups in all walks of life. It is considered to be a state of emotional wellbeing which a person experiences in specific moments or through an overall evaluation of his life. A number of researches has been done in this field with an aim to identify and search those factors which are related to happiness. This study is also an endeavour in one of this direction to find the effect of Yoga on happiness. A sample of 22 subjects were taken to see the effect of one month Yoga practices on happiness. By using the statistical analysis of Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation, it is concluded that there exists a significant but low positive correlation between the Yoga practices and happiness. Similarly a significant difference between the means of level of happiness for before and after performing Yoga Practise has also been found.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Happiness is a state of emotional well-being and contentment that a person experiences when good things happen in a specific moment, or a general positive evaluation of one's life and accomplishments. Happiness is something which is desired by all the human beings. Everyone seeks happiness in all spheres of life.

Happiness is a concept which is similar to people around the world and as such it can be recognized in others. As a result, the specific emotion of happiness is often included as one of a small number of basic emotions that cannot be further broken down into more fundamental emotions and that may combine to form other, more complex emotions. Thus, happiness is an important concept for researchers who study emotions.

A legion of researchers started working around the more inclusive and broader concept of subjective well-being, which is characterized by a broad collection of happiness-related phenomena rather than a specific momentary emotion. In subjective well-being positive emotion is quite a strong theme in comparison to negative emotions. It also include a cognitive component along with emotional. People with subjective well-being when look back and evaluate their lives, they report it positive and satisfactory.

To a lay person happiness is the most important aspect of life in comparison to other materialistic things. Similarly in order to be happy how a person reacts to the outside world also provide information about his basic nature which can further be assessed by the psychologists. Hedonistic theory postulates that everyone desires to do that which extends pleasure and avoids pain. Psychologists consider it as a form of adaptive technique used by organisms to gain access to the resources and avoid dangers.

Psychologists have contended that there are varied means to achieve happiness, but happiness is end in itself. Since time immemorial researchers of different fields have tried to find those means which provides happiness to humans. Wealth, Health, social relationships, marriage, religion, education, Job prestige etc. are considered by researches as few important determinants of happiness. In his study Carr A.(2004) explored and found that certain factors like family, close relationships, good health and freedom are positively related to happiness. Chan(2009) in his study demonstrated that out of three orientations i.e. life of meaning, life of engagement and life of pleasure, meaningful life and engaged life strongly predicts subjective well-being in terms of life satisfaction and emotion.

Internal factors in comparison to external factors consistently shown to play a relatively strong part in subjective well-being. Researches have also shown that attitude play a big role in happiness as it is reported to be relatively stable over the lifespan by the individuals, if some sudden dramatic event does not happen. Mohanty,M.S.(2009), in her study "Effects of positive attitude on happiness" contended that happiness is directly related to the attitude of the employees.

Psychologists have also found that personality trait like extraversion is moderately correlated with positive emotion. Extrovert people report more intense and frequent emotions. Similarly optimism and self-esteem play a significant role in the overall happiness of an individual.

Most of the researches focussed on the role of factors in achieving happiness as an outcome but Barbara Fredrickson in 1998 theorise that happiness has also some function and the most important of that is to broaden the horizon of one's thought process and to build resources. It develops the ability in people to create new things and to approach the world in unique ways. As a result people develop new interests and further develop on their social relationships.

Argyle and Lu (1990) studied and found various components of happiness. They noted that positive relation with others, personal growth, life purpose, positive mood, positive recognition and mood are significant to lead a happy life. They further stated that positive outlook leads to success while negative attitude breeds more negativity and problems in life.

Psychologists have described happiness as an amalgamation of different aspects of positivity such as positive emotions, positive institutions and positive traits. Seligman forwarded two models of happiness, PERMA and Authentic happiness. PERMA model has outlined happiness or psychological wellbeing as consisting of five main domains which are Pleasure, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and Accomplishment. Seligman (2002) stated that three distinct elements form the foundation of happiness. These are the meaningful life, the good life and the pleasant life. The pleasant life is related to enjoyment of our daily affairs. The good life contributes in the recognition of our unique abilities and working on them creatively to enrich our life. The third element meaningful life helps a person in living a fulfilling life by helping others. A happy person has all these three major elements in his life. Hence happiness is highly correlated with positive emotions. Seligman further contended that happiness consists of positive emotions like contentment, empathy, hope, appreciation and love etc.

Yoga means oneness of mind, body and soul. It is an Indian system practised since ancient times. It involves chiefly three techniques namely, meditation, breathing exercises and physical exercises. In order to create a sense of consciousness and a balanced way of life, it provides a harmony with self, society and nature. Kapoor, B. et al. (2015) has taken Yoga as a road to positive empowerment which provides a person a sense of subjective well-being. Patanjali has described that Yoga constitutes eight parts, Ashtanga Yoga, which channelizes the energies of both action and perception of an individual in the right direction. It follows a continuous and progressive approach, where only after achieving the lower stages a person can reach to the next higher stage. Iyengar a well known proponent of yoga posits that stretching of the body enhances mental capacity and awareness which further makes our mind calm, flexible and detached from different kinds of disturbances.

Studies all over the world have shown a strong relation of Yoga with mental and physical health. It is also considered as a malady for many diseases. It reduces stress, alleviates pain and manages many life style and other diseases like heart disease, diabetes, asthma etc.. Similarly it also extend relief in mental health related problems such as depression, anxiety, PTSD etc.. Yoga also assists a healthy person in the promotion of his personal development by improving his self-esteem, life satisfaction and overall well-being. It increases a person's positive emotion and reduces negativity thereby making him feel full of energy and vigour which further improves his sense of confidence and level of satisfaction. Studies suggests that functioning of vagus nerve which is related to the ANS plays an important role in providing psychological benefits of Yoga. It's proper functioning is linked with better social competence and emotional regulation and reduces aggression, hostility, depression and anxiety. Yoga helps in toning this nerve which in turn make us feel happy and satisfied.

Turner, E.M. and Turner, C. (2010) in their study demonstrated that both regular Yoga Practitioners and college students who practised Yoga for some time reported positive effects in terms of stability in their life, satisfactory interpersonal relationships, more tolerance, expression of their feelings in healthy and appropriate manners. Similarly it also promotes positive outlook towards life and a sense of happiness within.

Catherine, W. (2011) reviewed articles on the topic therapeutic effects of Yoga and found that practice of Yoga along with physical health benefits also contributes in reducing the effects of various mental disorders like stress, anxiety, depression and chronic pain. It improves the sleep patterns and promotes the general well-being, life quality and happiness.

In their study involving 200 subjects aged 17-27 years to see the effect of Yoga on happiness and mental balance Gupta, R.K. et al. (2015) found that Yoga practitioners in comparison to non-Yoga practitioners showed higher level of happiness and mental balance. They concluded that it might be a result of the effect of Yoga on calmness of mind.

While reviewing the relationship between Yoga practices and different aspects of Spirituality Barbara, C. et al. (2011) found that Yoga is positively related to Spirituality. Various components of Spirituality such as search for insight, meaning, hope, peace and a sense of happiness within are the potential benefits of Yoga if it is practised regularly.

Most of the studies and theoretical models are of the opinion that Yoga indeed leads to happiness but it's benefit are more pronounced when Yoga is practiced regularly for a long period. In order to observe that whether Yoga is also contributing in happiness even when it is practised for a shorter period of one month. The present study is designed to study such phenomenon. Keeping in mind this the problem of the present study is: "*A Study of correlation between Yoga Practice and happiness*"

### **Research Objectives:**

To study the relationship between Yoga practices and Happiness.

To study the difference between high and low level of happiness before and after practicing Yoga.

**Hypothesis:**

There will be a positive relationship between Yoga and happiness.

There will be a significant difference between the level of happiness before and after practicing Yoga.

There will be no significant gender difference.

**II. METHODOLOGY**

The present chapter gives an account of the research methods used to carry out the present study.

The present study was conducted on a sample of 22 subjects aged 20 to 29 years using purposive random sampling from Rewari district of Haryana. Both male and female were selected in equal proportion.

After taking the willingness of the subjects for this study the subjects were made comfortable and provided all the instructions carefully to make them easily understandable. All the 22 subjects were tested before and after one month Yoga practice on The Authentic Happiness Inventory.

**Statistical tools used**

The statistical techniques used for analysis in this study were Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

In order to achieve the research objectives the obtained data was put for statistical analysis and analyzed through Mean, Standard Deviation, t-test and Pearson Correlation. A summary of the Mean ,Standard Deviation has been presented in Table no.1.

**Table -1  
Mean and Standard Deviation**

Pair I	Treatment	Mean	N	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean
	Before	68.27	22	10.48	2.23
	After	87.05	22	17.34	3.71

After looking at the Table-1, it has been observed that there is a significant difference in the happiness scores when taken before and after Yoga practice. The mean score of happiness before Yoga practise was 68.27 while after Yoga practice the mean score becomes 87.05 which is quite higher difference. Hence the second hypothesis that “there will be a significant difference between the level of happiness before and after practicing Yoga” is proved and accepted.

**Table-II  
T-Test analysis**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	Lower	Upper	T	df	Sig ( 2 - tailed)
Before	-18.38	18.35	3.91	-26.91	-10.64	-4.80	21	.00
After								

The T- Test analysis in Table-II shows that the t score is -4.80 which is found to be significant at .05 level. It denotes that there is a significant difference in happiness level before and after using Yoga Practice. Similarly it has been also observed through statistical analysis that there is no significant difference in terms of gender on the effect of Yoga on happiness. Which means Yoga works equally for both male and female with regard to its effect on happiness. Hence the third hypothesis that “ there will be no significant gender difference” is proved.

**Table-III  
Correlational analysis  
Before and After Yoga Practise**

		Before	After
Before	Pearson Correlation	1	.21
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.35
After	Pearson Correlation	.21	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.35	

The correlational analysis depicted in Table-III shows that the correlation between before and after doing the Yoga practice on happiness is found to be .21. It denotes that there exists a significant but low positive

correlation between Yoga and happiness. The correlation between the two shows that as the Yoga practice increase happiness will also increase to an extent. Hence the first hypothesis which stated that “there is a positive relation between Yoga practice and happiness” is proved.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The main findings of the study are:

There exists a significant difference between before and after using Yoga techniques on happiness.

There is a positive but low correlation between Yoga and happiness.

There is no gender difference in terms of effect of Yoga on happiness.

There are some suggestions and directions for study in this area like the sample of the study could be increased and it should include the participants from other possible age groups. This study could also include population from other states of India to give it an overall acceptance throughout the India.

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