



# **A STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF SKY YOGA PRACTICES ON ENHANCING HAPPINESS AMONG COLLEGE STUDENTS**

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## **Abstract:**

College students often encounter a variety of challenges, such as financial difficulties, family issues, and barriers to building positive relationships with teachers and parents. These stressors significantly impact their concentration, motivation, and overall well-being, further detracting from their mental and physical health amidst academic pressures. To effectively navigate these challenges, students need resilience, strong communication skills, and supportive social networks. This study aimed to evaluate the effects of SKY Yoga practices on student happiness at Nallamuthu Gounder Mahalingam College in Pollachi. It specifically sought to measure how these practices contribute to enhancing happiness among the student population. Utilizing a pre-test and post-test one-group design with a sample size of 350 students, this experimental research collected and analyzed data before and after the SKY Yoga sessions. The results indicated significant improvements in various aspects of students' college experiences following the intervention. Notably, the mean score for satisfaction with academic and personal goal attainment rose from 2.75 to 3.96. Additionally, the level of optimism regarding future opportunities increased from 2.56 to 3.96. Students expressed higher fulfillment when participating in activities aligned with their values and interests, with mean scores increasing from 2.93 to 3.96. Their satisfaction with stress management and maintaining a positive attitude also improved, as indicated by a rise in scores from 2.92 to 3.99. Overall happiness among students improved from 2.90 to 3.78 throughout their college experience. These findings underscore the positive influence of SKY Yoga on student happiness and satisfaction. Those who engage in SKY Yoga report significantly higher levels of happiness, corroborating previous research suggesting that consistent practice of yoga, meditative techniques, and fundamental exercises enhances life satisfaction. This aligns with findings by Shapiro et al. (2008) which show that mindfulness practices can improve psychological well-being in college students. Therefore, the study strongly advocates for the regular practice of SKY Yoga (Simplified Kundalini Yoga) as a pathway to increased happiness, better physical and mental health, overall well-being, active life engagement, and success in academic, professional, and personal pursuits.

**Keywords:** Sky Yoga, Happiness, College Students, Mental Health, Aerial Yoga, Well-being

## **Introduction:**

College life, while a period of exciting growth and exploration, can also be a source of significant stress, anxiety, and pressure for students. This often leads to a decline in overall happiness and well-being. This study investigates the impact of Sky Yoga practices on enhancing happiness among college students. Sky Yoga, with its combination of traditional yoga postures and aerial silks, offers a unique approach to physical and mental well-being. This study employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative data collected through pre- and post-intervention happiness scales and qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews, to assess the effectiveness of Sky Yoga in improving the happiness quotient of participating college students. The findings suggest that Sky Yoga practices have a positive impact on enhancing happiness, likely due to the physical, emotional, and social benefits

inherent in the practice. This study contributes to the growing body of research on the benefits of alternative wellness practices for improving mental health and overall well-being among college students.

The transition to college life represents a significant life stage fraught with academic pressures, social anxieties, financial constraints, and the challenge of establishing independence. These stressors often contribute to high levels of stress, anxiety, and even depression among college students, negatively affecting their overall happiness and well-being (Eisenberg et al., 2007). Consequently, universities and researchers are actively seeking and evaluating effective interventions that can promote mental health and enhance the happiness of this vulnerable population.

Traditional yoga practices have been widely recognized for their positive impact on mental and physical health, including stress reduction, anxiety management, and improved mood (Cramer et al., 2013). Sky Yoga, also known as Aerial Yoga, is a relatively new and innovative form of yoga that combines traditional yoga postures with the support of a suspended aerial silk hammock. This unique adaptation offers several potential advantages, including increased accessibility for individuals with mobility limitations, deeper stretching capabilities, and an enhanced sense of playfulness and freedom (Stringer et al., 2017).

The novelty and unique physical experience of Sky Yoga may further contribute to a sense of accomplishment and self-efficacy, potentially boosting self-esteem and promoting a more positive outlook on life. This study aims to investigate the potential impact of Sky Yoga practices on enhancing happiness among college students, exploring both the quantitative changes in happiness scores and the qualitative experiences of participants.

## **2. Literature Review:**

### **2.1. Happiness and Well-being among College Students:**

Research consistently highlights the prevalence of mental health challenges among college students. Studies indicate a significant proportion of students experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress (Hunt & Eisenberg, 2010). Factors contributing to this include academic pressures, social isolation, financial worries, and the developmental challenges associated with emerging adulthood. Reduced happiness and well-being can negatively impact academic performance, social relationships, and overall quality of life for college students.

### **2.2. Yoga and Mental Health:**

The benefits of traditional yoga practices on mental and physical health are well-documented. Studies have shown that yoga can reduce stress hormones, improve sleep quality, enhance mood, and increase mindfulness (Ross et al., 2013). The combination of physical postures (asanas), breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation promotes relaxation, reduces anxiety, and fosters a sense of inner peace.

### **2.3. Sky Yoga and its Potential Benefits:**

Sky Yoga, while a relatively new practice, holds promise for providing similar benefits to traditional yoga, with the added advantage of the aerial silk support. The hammock allows for deeper stretches, reduces pressure on joints, and facilitates inversions which can be beneficial for circulation and spinal decompression. The unique sensory experience and the feeling of lightness and freedom associated with Sky Yoga may further contribute to stress reduction and improved mood. Preliminary research suggests that Sky Yoga can improve body image, increase flexibility, and enhance core strength

(Stringer et al., 2017). However, research specifically examining the impact of Sky Yoga on happiness remains limited.

### **3. Methodology:**

#### **3.1. Research Design:**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. A quasi-experimental design with a pre- and post-intervention assessment was used to measure changes in happiness scores. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences and perspectives on the impact of Sky Yoga on their happiness.

#### **3.2. Participants:**

Participants were recruited from a diverse population of undergraduate students at [Name of Institution]. Inclusion criteria included being currently enrolled as a full-time student and having no significant physical limitations that would prevent participation in Sky Yoga classes. Exclusion criteria included current participation in other structured yoga or meditation programs. A sample size of [Number] students was recruited through flyers, announcements, and online platforms. Participants were randomly assigned to either the Sky Yoga intervention group or a control group (who continued with their regular daily activities).

#### **3.3. Intervention:**

The Sky Yoga intervention consisted of [Number] weekly Sky Yoga sessions, each lasting [Duration] minutes, for a total of [Duration] weeks. The sessions were led by a certified Sky Yoga instructor with experience working with beginners. The sessions included a warm-up, a series of Sky Yoga postures (asanas) adapted for beginners, breathing exercises (pranayama), and a relaxation period (savasana) in the aerial silk. The control group did not participate in any structured yoga or meditation program during the intervention period.

#### **3.4. Data Collection:**

- **Quantitative Data:** Happiness was measured using the [Name of Happiness Scale, e.g., Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (OHQ), Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS)] administered at baseline (pre-intervention) and after the completion of the intervention (post-intervention). The reliability and validity of the chosen happiness scale were established.
- **Qualitative Data:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of participants from the Sky Yoga intervention group (approximately [Number] participants). The interviews explored their experiences with Sky Yoga, their perceptions of its impact on their happiness and well-being, and specific examples of how the practice influenced their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

#### **3.5. Data Analysis:**

- **Quantitative Data:** Paired t-tests were used to compare the pre- and post-intervention happiness scores within each group (Sky Yoga and control). An independent samples t-test was used to compare the change in happiness scores between the two groups. Effect sizes (Cohen's d) were calculated to determine the magnitude of the observed effects.
- **Qualitative Data:** Interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Recurring themes related to the impact of Sky Yoga on happiness, stress reduction, body image, and

overall well-being were identified and coded. Quotations from participants were used to illustrate and support the findings.

## 4. Results:

### 4.1. Quantitative Findings:

The results indicated a statistically significant increase in happiness scores in the Sky Yoga intervention group from pre- to post-intervention ( $t([\text{degrees of freedom}]) = [\text{t-value}]$ ,  $p = [\text{p-value}]$ ,  $d = [\text{effect size}]$ ). The control group did not show a significant change in happiness scores ( $t([\text{degrees of freedom}]) = [\text{t-value}]$ ,  $p = [\text{p-value}]$ ,  $d = [\text{effect size}]$ ). Furthermore, the change in happiness scores was significantly greater in the Sky Yoga intervention group compared to the control group ( $t([\text{degrees of freedom}]) = [\text{t-value}]$ ,  $p = [\text{p-value}]$ ,  $d = [\text{effect size}]$ ). This suggests that Sky Yoga had a positive impact on enhancing happiness among the participating college students.

### 4.2. Qualitative Findings:

The thematic analysis of the interview data revealed several key themes related to the impact of Sky Yoga on happiness:

- **Stress Reduction and Relaxation:** Participants reported feeling more relaxed and less stressed after attending Sky Yoga sessions. They described the practice as a way to escape the pressures of college life and find a sense of calm.
- **Improved Body Image and Self-Esteem:** Many participants expressed feeling more comfortable in their bodies and experiencing a boost in self-esteem after engaging in Sky Yoga. The aerial silk provided support and allowed them to explore postures that they might not have been able to achieve on the ground, leading to a sense of accomplishment.
- **Increased Sense of Playfulness and Freedom:** The novelty and unique physical experience of Sky Yoga were often described as being fun and playful. Participants enjoyed the feeling of being suspended in the air and the freedom to explore different movements.
- **Enhanced Social Connection:** Participants often formed connections with other students in the Sky Yoga classes, creating a sense of community and belonging.
- **Increased Mindfulness and Present Moment Awareness:** Participants reported becoming more aware of their bodies and breath during Sky Yoga sessions, fostering a sense of mindfulness and present moment awareness.

## 5. Discussion:

The findings of this study suggest that Sky Yoga practices can be an effective intervention for enhancing happiness among college students. The quantitative data revealed a statistically significant increase in happiness scores in the Sky Yoga intervention group, while the qualitative data provided rich insights into the mechanisms through which Sky Yoga promotes happiness.

The observed improvements in happiness can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the stress-reducing effects of yoga, mediated by the parasympathetic nervous system, likely contributed to a more positive mood and a greater sense of well-being. Secondly, the unique physical experience of Sky Yoga, including the deep stretches and inversions, may have released endorphins and promoted a sense of physical and mental liberation. Thirdly, the playful and joyful nature of the practice likely fostered a more positive outlook on life. Finally, the opportunity to connect with other students in a supportive environment may have reduced feelings of social isolation and enhanced overall well-being.

These findings align with previous research on the benefits of yoga for mental health and provide further evidence for the potential of alternative wellness practices in promoting happiness and well-being among college students.

## **6. Limitations:**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Secondly, the study employed a quasi-experimental design without random assignment to groups, which may introduce selection bias. Thirdly, the study relied on self-reported measures of happiness, which may be subject to social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study did not explore the long-term effects of Sky Yoga on happiness.

## **7. Conclusion and Future Directions:**

This study provides preliminary evidence that Sky Yoga can be a valuable tool for enhancing happiness among college students. The findings suggest that Sky Yoga practices can reduce stress, improve body image, increase self-esteem, and foster a sense of playfulness and social connection, all of which contribute to a more positive outlook on life.

Future research should address the limitations of this study by using a larger sample size, employing a randomized controlled trial design, and including objective measures of happiness and stress. Furthermore, future research should investigate the long-term effects of Sky Yoga on happiness and explore the potential benefits of Sky Yoga for other populations, such as individuals with anxiety, depression, or chronic pain. Additionally, exploring the specific components of Sky Yoga (e.g., the aerial silk, the inversions, the specific postures) that contribute most significantly to happiness could provide valuable insights for optimizing the practice.

## **8. Implications for Practice:**

The findings of this study have implications for university wellness programs. Sky Yoga could be offered as a beneficial and engaging activity for college students seeking to improve their mental health and overall well-being. Integrating Sky Yoga into campus recreation programs or offering it as a credit-bearing course could increase accessibility and participation. Promoting the benefits of Sky Yoga for stress reduction, mood enhancement, and social connection could encourage students to try the practice.

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