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The Benefits of Yoga: Reducing Anxiety Among Chapman University Students

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The Benefits of Yoga: Reducing Anxiety Among Chapman University Students

Abstract

High expectations of Chapman University students and the uncertainty of their future contribute to increased levels of anxiety. Researchers at the University of Rhode Island College of Pharmacy have shown that there is a negative correlation between yoga and anxiety. We propose that a 15-minute vinyasa yoga flow held on Zoom will reduce anxiety levels among the university participants. Vinyasa yoga flow consists of mindful breathing exercises and breath-to-movement coordination, stimulating the vagus nerve and promoting the parasympathetic “rest and digest” nervous system response. This leads to a state of relaxation. Participants will complete a survey measuring their anxiety levels immediately before and after the yoga session to measure the change. Reports of decreased anxiety levels would suggest that the mindful practice is effective in reducing anxiety among college students, despite the remote environment. This is useful for campuses to potentially implement vinyasa yoga for anxiety regulation in their student population while life is online. Furthermore, positive results from this study will suggest that online platforms such as Zoom or Skype have the ability to help those suffering from anxiety.

Keywords

anxiety, yoga, online

Disciplines

Health Communication | Other Communication

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COM 498, Senior Seminar

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Introduction

College students are notoriously known for elevated anxiety levels. A 2018 study conducted by the Harvard medical school found that **1 in 5 students had suicidal thoughts** throughout their time as a college student.



Yoga is an ancient physical and mental practice that has been shown to have measurable effects on anxiety. A 2014 study showed evidence for the positive effects of Vinyasa yoga on **acute stress** in young-adult college students.



Our Purpose

The purpose of our study is to offer insight into the benefits of virtual vinyasa yoga on state anxiety.

Hypothesis: Chapman University students will report lower acute anxiety levels after a remote mindful yoga practice.

- **Independent variable:** Virtual Vinyasa Yoga
- **Dependent variable:** Acute Stress report on STAI survey



Methods

We tested our hypothesis with an **experimental approach**. We evaluated the participants' state anxiety levels with the standardized **State Trait Anxiety Inventory survey** before and after a 15 minute yoga session.

Procedure:

1. Pre-test (to evaluate acute anxiety prior to yoga)
2. Yoga Flow (to alleviate acute anxiety)
3. Post-test (to evaluate acute anxiety after yoga)

State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults

Self-Evaluation Questionnaire

STAI Form Y-1 and Form Y-2

Read each statement and choose the appropriate answer to indicate how you feel right now, that is, at this moment. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement but give the answer that describes your present feelings best.

I feel calm



☐ Not at all

☐ Somewhat

☐ Moderately so

☐ Very much so



Thank you for your responses. You may now return to Zoom. Please create a comfortable space for a 15-minute yoga flow which will begin shortly. A passcode will be shared at the end of the session for you to continue the survey.



Yoga Flow

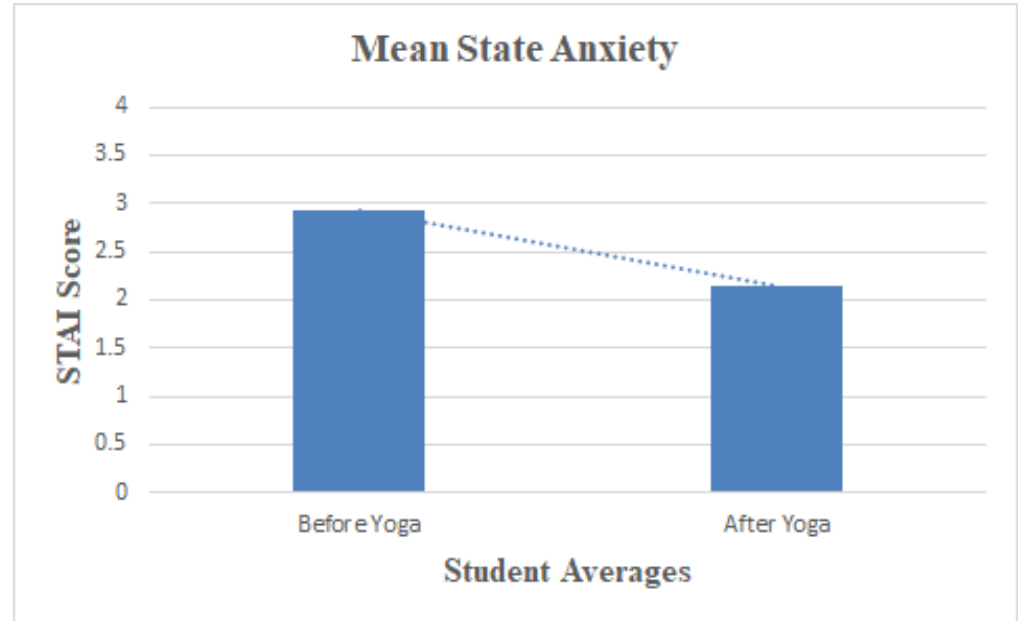
Participants were asked to create a comfortable space. They were guided through 15 minutes of **mindful Ujjayi breathing and vinyasa yoga poses**, coordinating their **breath-to-movement**. The flow included side stretches, spinal twists, and words of affirmation. Afterwards, they were directed to continue their survey with an access code.

Results

Pre-test average STAI score: **2.92**

Post-test average STAI score: **2.13**

P = 0.000034



Discussion

College students face many challenges and difficult decisions that contribute to their elevated anxiety levels.

Our results indicate that the decrease in state anxiety after practicing yoga is **statistically significant**. Participants reported **lower acute anxiety** after the flow, supporting our hypothesis.

Yoga, conducted remotely, is an **effective practice to reduce state anxiety** among college students.

Questions



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