IMPACT OF MEDITATION ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
-AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

“A healthy mind is a healthy body”. People to keep themselves healthier they undertake breathing exercise, physical exercise, yoga, meditation and so forth. Here the study attempts to analyze one among the popular practice, meditation, which keeps mind and the body healthier, and its impact on emotional intelligence. Data was collected through questionnaire from the sample of 60 meditators in Vellakovil, Tirupur District of Tamilnadu. The result of the study revealed that there is significant relationship between the span of time in meditation and stress tolerance level.

KEYWORDS: Healthy mind, body, meditation, emotional intelligence

INTRODUCTION

Health is predominant for happy and successful life. To ensure success in life the efforts put forth by the human are incalculable. But the ultimate outcomes are less comparable to the efforts. The personal reason for the less resultant outcome could be ones inability to handle physical or psychological problem efficiently. Hence an attempt has been made to study the major psychological
problem which is emotions and its ability to handle them. It becomes vital for every soul to be aware of the concept of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions of oneself, of others and of groups. To become aware of oneself, of others and of groups meditation remains as a platform. Meditation is a practice in which an individual trains the mind or induces a mode of consciousness, either to realize some benefit or as an end in itself.

**MEDITATION**

“Meditation brings wisdom lack of meditation leaves ignorance. Know well what leads you forward and what holds you back, and choose the path that leads to wisdom.”-Buddha.

The word meditation originates from the Sanskrit language ‘medha’ means wisdom. It has been in history from ancient times for more than 15000 years. Meditation establishes awareness in ones inner self. It helps to expand the relaxation state and a tranquil mind. Whatever one does with awareness is termed as meditation. Watching the breath is also a meditation. It accords a sense of calm, peace of mind on regular practice which benefits both emotional well-being and overall health. It should not be solely treated as a technique but it has to be chosen as a way of life to relish in an eloquent mean.

**Types of Meditation**

Meditation is termed differently in various cultures. But the core of it remains the same throughout and they are classified as:

1. Concentration Meditation: It is the ability to concentrate on an object in the mind. It could be sound or image. Practices like japa, parayana, chanting of Gayathri Mantra helps to train the mind.

2. Mindfulness Meditation: It opens our attention and awareness to the perpetual passing of sensations, feelings, thoughts, images, sounds and smells without judgement.

3. Zen Meditation: It is Buddhism culture. It is focused on enlightenment. A practitioner will be focusing on the environment i.e. noise, smell through the uses of senses without embracing them. Here there is interconnectivity between body, self and the environment.

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE**

The term “emotional intelligence” was first coined by Wayne Payne’s in his doctoral thesis, A Study of Emotion: Developing Emotional Intelligence from 1985. ‘EQ’( Emotional Quotient) was published by Keith Beasley in 1987 in an article in the British Mensa Magazine. Stanley Greenspan put forward an EI model in 1989, followed by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1989). However, the term became widely-known with the publication of Daniel Goleman’s best seller Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters more than IQ in 1995.

‘Emotional Intelligence’ refers to the capacity for recognizing one’s own feeling and those of others, for motivating one selves and for managing emotions well in one and in ones relations.
According to Salovey & Mayer (1990), Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate between them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action’. Daniel Goleman (2000) identifies five components of Emotional Intelligence- Self-awareness, Self- regulation, motivation, empathy and social skill.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Richard Davidson and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2005) study showed that eight weeks of mindfulness-based meditation produced significant increases in left-sided anterior brain activity, which is associated with positive emotional states.

Richard Chambers, Barbara Chuen Yee Lo, Nicholas B. Allen (2007) the study on the “Impact of an Intensive Period of Mindfulness Meditation Training on Cognitive and Affective Function”, concluded that those completing the mindfulness training demonstrated significant improvements in self-reported mindfulness, depressive symptoms, rumination, and performance measures of working memory and sustained attention, relative to a comparison group who did not undergo any meditation training.

Li-Chuan Chu (2009), in his research on “The Benefits of Meditation vis-à-vis Emotional Intelligence, Perceived stress and Mental health” found that out of 351 full time working adults with different amounts of experience of meditation exhibited higher EI, and less perceived stress and negative mental health than those who had less or none and the study randomly divided 20 graduate students with mindfulness group (n=10) and a control group (n=10) and tested the meditation training improves people’s state and found that those who completed the mindfulness training demonstrated significant improvement compared to the control group.

Lykins, Emily L.B, Baer, Ruth A (2009) concluded that practicing meditation is associated with increased mindfulness in daily life, which is related to decreased rumination, decreased fear of emotion, and increased behavioral self –regulation.

Terese Mudgway (2009), in his study on “The Physical , Mental and Emotional Impact of Transcendental Meditation” found that regular practice of Transcendental Meditation creates peace of mind osmotic ally permeates into a peace of mind, peace of soul and peaceful society.

Farb et al. and Williams (2010), it was found that the participants who experienced mindfulness meditation had significantly less anxiety, depression and somatic distress compared with the control group. In addition, the MRI data indicated that the mindfulness group had less neural reactivity when they were exposed to the films than the control group, and they displayed distinctly different neural responses while watching the films than they did before their mindfulness training.
Tanmika Tamwatin (2012), found from his study that, meditation significantly enhanced some dimensions of emotional intelligence and the greatest effect of meditation was in increasing interpersonal management and stress management.

Karina Minda (2013), her research on “The Practice of Meditation: A Path to Maximize the Quality of Life” result showed there is significant difference between two groups (meditates and non-meditates) in stimulating emotional intelligence, ameliorates the fear of death, enhances self-satisfaction and emotional intelligence correlates positively with self-satisfaction. Meditation is the path to understanding and personal growth.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Emotional Intelligence has emerged as an important subject of research in the last decade. Most of the studies are concerned with the development of models and measures that can be used in improving managerial performance. It is found from literature review that only few studies are available on the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence in Indian context. Hence the researcher attempts to research the same in Indian context which might benefit both individual in specific and society in general. On need the study is undertaken, empirically analyzed and meaningful conclusions are drawn.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design chosen is descriptive in nature. The universe of the study comprises of meditators in Vellakovil, Tirupur District of Tamilnadu. A sample of 60 respondents was selected on the basis of judgmental or purposive sampling. In this study, the primary data was collected through questionnaire which consists of both open-ended and close-ended questions. The secondary data was collected journals and web sites. Before beginning the main survey a pilot study was performed with 10 respondents to check the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the conceptual framework of meditation in improving emotional intelligence.
2. To assess the meditation practices underwent by the respondents to enhance their emotional intelligence.
3. To study the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence of the respondents.

Conceptual Framework of Meditation in Improving Emotional Intelligence

Meditation helps to enhance emotional intelligence, especially self-awareness, which is essentially a base for emotional intelligence. Peter Salovey and John Mayer, leading researchers on EI, defined it as “the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”(1990). They developed a model that identified the components of EI: the ability to perceive emotion, the ability to reason using emotion, the ability to understand the impact of emotion and the
ability to manage one’s emotions. In perceiving emotion, meditation helps to calm and observe without being involved. When reasoning using emotions, meditation let one to observe thoughts and emotions as part of their internal mind chatter and decide whether or not to respond emotionally. Meditation helps with the understanding of emotion through self-awareness. And finally management of emotions, during any situation, the clarity of mind, the lack of stress and the increased compassion of others allows one to choose how to respond to the situation. There are many ways meditation can increase EQ, to mention few: it helps one to become aware of and detach from negative thoughts, helps to read the emotions of other people and the same time it eases off anxiety, depression and dysfunctional thought patterns.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

TABLE NO.1

ANALYSIS OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Demographic Factors</th>
<th>1. Age (in years)</th>
<th>2. Gender</th>
<th>3. Marital Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of respondents</td>
<td>Less than 15</td>
<td>15-30</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>45-60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table no:1 summarizes the responses of the demographic factors such as age, gender and marital status of 60 respondents of the study.

It has been inferred that 38% of the respondents belong to the age group of 30-45 years, 32% belong to 45-60 years, 20% belong to 15-30 years, 8% belong to above 60 years and 2% belong to less than 15 years. It also indicates that 63% of them were male and 37% were female. 82% of them were married and 18% were unmarried.

TABLE NO.2 (a &b)

ASSESSMENT OF MEDITATION PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>a) Meditation Practices</th>
<th>1. Span of Time (in years)</th>
<th>2. Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of respondents</td>
<td>Less than 1</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table no:2 (a&b) summarizes the responses of meditation practices underwent by 60 respondents of the study. In the table 2 (a) it has been inferred that 40% of the respondents have been practicing meditation for the period of 1-5 years, 28% for less than 1 years, 15% for 5-10 years, 10% for 10-15 years and 7% for more than 15 years and it also inferred that 77% of the respondents practiced meditation regularly i.e. every day and 23% practiced on irregular basis i.e. when wished.

In the table no:2(b) it was observed that 48% of the respondents were practicing meditation in the meditation centre, 23% in temple, 22% in home, 7% in work place and it was also observed that majority of 45% of the respondents practice mindfulness meditation, 22% practice concentration meditation, 18% practice zen meditation and 15% practice body awareness and breath awareness meditation.

Benefits of Meditation:

Meditation generally offers 100’s of benefits in the form physical, psychological and spiritual. Three benefits from each category were picked up and the respondents are asked to rank them in the order of realization. The following table is analyzed using weighted average.

**TABLE: 3**

**Rank the Benefits of Meditation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Benefits of Meditation</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>It increases blood flow and slows the heart rate</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Leads to a deeper level of physical relaxation</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>IV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Greater orderliness of brain functioning</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increased emotional stability</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Helps control own thoughts</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Grows a stable, more balanced personality</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Deeper understanding of yourself and others</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Brings body, mind, spirit in harmony</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>VIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Attain enlightenment</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>IX</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the above table no:3 it has been observed that the majority of the respondents felt that meditation increased emotional stability their within them and hence ranked FIRST.
SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPAN OF TIME AND STRESS TOLERANCE LEVEL

The following table deals with the relationship between span of time and stress tolerance level using chi-square analysis.

Null Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between the span of time and stress tolerance level.

Alternate Hypothesis

There is significant relationship between the span of time and stress tolerance level.

TABLE: 3 Associations between the span of time and stress tolerance level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress tolerance level</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Sometime</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Span of time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 15 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: 4(a) Calculated Chi-Square value and Table Value

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Calculated X² value</th>
<th>Table value</th>
<th>Degree of freedom</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Span of time and Stress tolerance level</td>
<td>32.453</td>
<td>26.296</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table no: 4 &4(a) shows that calculated value (32.453) is more than the table value (26.296) at 5% level of significance. So the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence there is a significant relationship between the span of time and stress tolerance level.
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The findings are presented on the basis of different tools of analysis such as simple percentage analysis, weighted average and chi-square analysis.

It was observed from the study that the majority of the respondents were married male and they were belonging to the age group of 30-45 years, practice mindfulness meditation in the meditation centre every day for the span of about 1-5 years.

The majority of the respondents opined that through meditation they have increased their emotional stability and it also reveals that there is significant relationship between span of time and stress tolerance level.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis it can be concluded that meditation has the positive impact on emotional intelligence.

REFERENCES

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