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The Impact of Vipassana Meditation Practices on Psychological Wellbeing of Employees

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Abstract: This empirical study was conducted to study the relations between Vipassana meditation (VM) and different facets of Psychological well-being (PWB). For this purpose a standardized scale based on Ryff's PWB scale was used (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The sample of 240 subjects consisted of regular Vipassana meditator employees, practicing VM in Theravada tradition. The effect of VM is studied with respect to three meditation variables namely; number of courses undertaken, daily practice of VM and overall number of years of practice of VM undertaken. For statistical analysis SPSS 20.0 version was used and the relationship between independent and dependent variables is studied by using univariate (Anova) and multivariate (Manova) analysis of variance. The results obtained are encouraging and agree with the existing literature that VM fosters psychological wellbeing in the practitioners. Thus the practitioner enjoys qualities such as openness, trusting relationships, readiness to continue learning and positive attitude towards life, to name a few. Therefore it can be stated that if employees practice VM it will help to generate a conducive atmosphere in the organizations leading to overall growth and harmony.

Key words: Employees, Meditation variables, Psychological Wellbeing, Vipassana meditation.

INTRODUCTION

This is the age of technology. Man has made tremendous technological progress which is apparent from the tech savvy instruments like computers, mobile phones, aviation spacecrafts, luxury cars, superfast bullet trains, the list is never ending. All these inventions have made the overall life of a common man convenient and comfortable. The purpose of this progress was without doubt, the pursuit of happiness. But sadly the pursuit still continues as the progress has become the root cause for more and more wants, greed, jealousy, unhealthy competition and animosity. In spite of having material comforts everyone is stressed and

exasperated. This has made us contemplate on what is happiness? How can we achieve peace of mind? How can one live a harmonious life?

As the external measures are becoming futile, man has started turning the attention inwards. In order to understand himself and understanding the meaning of life he has started exploring age old wisdom in the form of meditation, yoga and other spiritual methods.

Of late there is an awareness developing about spirituality and its effectiveness in addressing as well as dealing with habitual behaviour patterns that are harmful in nature. Spirituality encompasses our thought patterns, behavioral outcomes, our feelings, emotions and dreams, and shapes our perception of meaning in life (Fromm, 1947). Philosophical, spiritual, and psychological traditions emphasize the importance of the quality of consciousness for the maintenance and enhancement of well-being (Wilber, 2000). One attribute of consciousness that has been much-discussed in relation to well-being is mindfulness. (Brown & Ryan 2003).

Scientific studies have shown the positive effects of mindfulness meditation, on stress, blood pressure, anxiety, psychological disorders (Kabat-Zinn, 1982, 1990, 1996), mental alertness, awareness and physical wellbeing as well as restfulness (Udupa et.al., 1975). Moreover, the brain studies conducted on meditators indicate that, attention span, learning ability and memory, as well as, creativity is improved due to increased coherence in brain wave functions (Jha et. al., 2007; Kilpatrick et al. , 2011).

Mindfulness meditation has been used in present times as an alternative to standardized conventional medical interventions as well as treatments and has shown positive results (Kabat-Zinn, 1982). Mindfulness meditation is a part of Vipassana meditation. Amongst different types of meditation practices, the ancient technique of Vipassana meditation (VM) is considered, by modern science, to be able to identify and change deep-rooted behaviour patterns ingrained in a person. It is held as an important meditation method leading to personal transformation (Goenka, 1991). In this study, VM meditation is used as an intervention to study psychological well-being. Keeping in mind the benefits of this non-intrusive and cost effective intervention, a literature review was conducted in order to understand the work already done in the research area.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychological Well-being (PWB)

PWB is defined as “engagement with existential challenges of life” (Keyes et. al., 2002).

PWB is more about what is an individual’s measure or perception regarding how much control one exerts over his/her life; interpersonal relationships and how much of his/her potential is achieved. It is an indication of the meaning in life as perceived by the individual (Franckl, 1963).

According to Ryff (1995), psychological well-being is defined as “the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one’s true potential” (p.100). This definition is similar to the Buddhist perspective where genuine well-being is defined as, “realizing one’s fullest potential in terms of wisdom, compassion and creativity” (Wallace & Shapiro 2006, p.691).

Mindfulness is considered to enhance psychological well-being by:

- 1) Bringing deeper insight into behavioral, emotional and cognitive patterns enabling an individual to regulate his or her behaviour and respond to situations and stimuli in an adaptive and healthy way rather than responding with an automated preset reactive manner (Brown et al., 2007).
- 2) Bringing an individual into a state of mind closely associated with mental peace and calmness resulting in fostering a sense of joy, insight and clarity of thought and a feeling of vitality which directly enhances psychological well-being (Brown & Ryan 2003; Brown et al., 2007)

Individual's goals for betterment and directions in life are, in themselves, central criteria of psychological well-being. Moreover, as Waterman (1984) has stressed, realizing one's goals or purpose in life is not always easy, it requires effort and discipline, which may at times be at odds with short-term happiness.

It is hypothesised in research on mindfulness that increase in mindfulness should lead to improvement in psychological well-being. Consistent with this hypothesis, several studies have reported that mindfulness-based treatment programs have been associated with reductions in a variety of psychopathological indicators (Grossman et al., 2004; Reibel et al. 2001), stress (Tang et al., 2007), and also with enhancements in well-being (Carmody & Baer, 2007). According to a Buddhist view, the fundamental function of mindfulness is its ability to calm and balance the mind, even in difficult situations of fear and pain (Goldstein & Kornfield, 2001).

Carmody and Baer (2007) documented that participants in an MBSR program increased their PWB as well as their self-reported mindfulness. The increase in mindfulness scores and meditation practice time, both significantly predicted PWB. Mindfulness and experience in meditation is related to a higher level of psychological well-being and further, that mindfulness mediates the relation between experience in meditation and psychological well-being.

Similar associations between mindfulness and enhancements in psychological well-being have been reported with another measure of mindfulness; the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan 2003).

According to Shapiro et al. (1998), meditators practicing mindfulness show reduction in anxiety, depression, as well as hostility and increase in subjective well-being. Meditative disciplines claim to be able to enhance multiple psychological capacities some even beyond levels currently recognized by Western psychology (Walsh, 2006).

Several studies have established that Buddhist meditation practice improves psychological and physiological well-being, leading to improved attentional and cognitive abilities (Cahn & Polich, 2009; Chambers et al., 2008; Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Mindfulness appears to enhance perception as measured by perceptual sensitivity, processing speed, empathy, and synaesthesia (Murphy et al., 1997; Shapiro et al., 1998; Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). There is a modification in personality variables as well. Empirical studies have documented relationship between PWB and meaning in life (Zika & Chamberlain, 1992). In their study on college students, Zika and Chamberlain documented that there is a relationship between 'meaning in life' and PWB amongst the students. Also, work enjoyment is related to meaning in life (Bonebright et al., 2000) and coping with adverse circumstances has a positive relationship with meaning in life (King et al., 2006).

Well-being is a complex phenomenon that is related to a variety of factors, including cultural differences, socio-economic status, health, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and specific psychological processes

(Diener et. al., 1999; Ryff, 2014). Auty et al., 2015, have reported that participants who completed yoga or meditation program in prison experienced an increase in their psychological well-being.

Vipassana Meditation

Gautama Buddha rediscovered the technique of Vipassana meditation 2500 years ago. He taught Vipassana meditation to his disciples and asked them to spread this knowledge for the benefit of one and all. The word 'Vipassana' in the ancient Indian language, Pali, means insight, "to see things as they really are" in a special way repeatedly in an iterative fashion. Vipassana meditation has a preamble and a post-amble. The preamble is called 'Anapanasati' and it enables a person to get into a calm mental state and helps to focus the mind and prepares it for insight meditation. Anapanasati is observing ones' natural incoming and outgoing breath as a spectator without attempting to change it in any way. The post-amble is called 'Metta Bhavana' and is about wishing well-being to all worldly beings with a spirit of compassion.

Vipassana or insight meditation (VM) is to observe what is happening inside your body by observing sensations objectively in an iterative manner; which is a mind-body phenomenon. This makes the mind more aware and conscious of what is happening in the present moment and experience it in totality (Gethin, 1998). It paves the way to transformational change in the behaviour and personality of the individual (Chandiramani et. al., 1994). According to, Fleischman (1999), "Vipassana increases self-awareness, promotes integration of subjective experience, and facilitates acceptance and tolerance to sufficiently reduce physical and psychological distress". He further stated that mindfulness awakens in the individual, a sense of well-being that motivates a person to further improve his personal and real self.

Vipassana is also called as "insight" meditation, because it brings insight into the functioning of the human psyche. It helps to bring the attention to the physical and mental phenomenon as they are happening. This leads to a systematic observation of sensory inputs of all the occurring phenomena and realization of their transitory and impermanent nature. This insight form of the practice helps us to understand the futile attachment to 'I' and liberates us from suffering by facilitating sustainable intra-psychic change (Nanamoli, 1976).

It is the practice of a "clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us, at the successive moments of perception" (Nyanaponika, 1973, p.30). This choice less observation paves the way to observe and attend to all stimuli equally without any preference for any one of them. It helps the practitioner to develop non-judgment, and come out of interpretations, preferences and censorship of selection. Due to this, one's mental patterns or processes no longer have control over his/her personality and behavior. This helps the individual, slowly but surely, come out of one's uncontrolled and unaware psychic phenomenon, as the change happens at the experiential level (Nyanaponika, 1973).

Mindfulness appears to be linked to well-being as it facilitates reduction in distractive and ruminative thinking (Jain et al., 2007), symptoms of anxiety and mood disorders (Goldin and Gross, 2010; Hofmann et al., 2010), and improved emotion regulation (Arch & Craske, 2006). Modinos et al. (2010), have reported that non-meditators and meditator individuals' ability to regulate emotional responses is related to differences in mindfulness. These findings suggest the possibility that mindfulness meditation influences well-being via changes in emotion regulation. Neural and physiological benefits were found to be associated with meditation. Brain studies undertaken by many researchers, suggest that meditation has remarkable long-

term structural effects on the brain affect, better immune system and positive affect (Davidson et al., 2003; Hölzel et al., 2008; Luders et al., 2009), decreased amygdala response to emotional stimuli (Desbordes et al., 2012) and increased brain connectivity (Luders et al., 2011).

Banerjee (2012) documented that Vipassana meditator employees are more focused and composed. According to Avey et al. (2008) they are aware of their adverse thoughts, and this helps them to be more optimistic and positive especially when organizational change is taking place. Bhatnagar (2014) reported that VM facilitates productivity as anxiety in employees is reduced. According to Shiera and Graham (2011) VM positively impacts Subjective Well-Being (SWB). Marques and Satinder (2009) believe that VM can transform wellbeing at the work place and thereby productivity. A well established notion in Buddhist literature is that meditation practice improves the ability to be mindful in daily life which in turn promotes psychological wellbeing.

Agrawal and Bedi (2002) documented that VM improved interpersonal relationships of the Delhi Police Trainees. Khurana and Dhar (2002) reported increase in SWB and reduction in criminal propensity of inmates of Tihar Jail. Also, a number of studies have demonstrated positive effects of Vipassana on psychological symptoms and well-being (Bowen et al., 2006; Chambers et al., 2008; Easterlin & Cardena 1998). Therefore Vipassana which is an intense standardised training is ideally suited to examining the effects of mindfulness meditation on well-being and related physiological changes.

Mindfulness

Nyanaponika Thera (1973) called mindfulness “the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception” (p. 5). Hanh (1976) similarly defined mindfulness as “keeping one’s consciousness alive to the present reality” (p. 11)

“We see mindfulness as a process of regulating attention in order to bring a quality of non-elaborative awareness to current experience and a quality of relating to one’s experience within an orientation of curiosity, experiential openness, and acceptance. We further see mindfulness as a process of gaining insight into the nature of one’s mind and the adoption of a de-centered perspective on thoughts and feelings so that they can be experienced in terms of their subjectivity (versus their necessary validity) and transient nature (versus their permanence).” (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234).

By being mindful, one is attending to one’s breath, bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings, as well as sights and sounds in a holistic manner rather than focusing on a specific stimulus (Brown et al. 2007; Goldstein & Kornfield 2001; Kabat-Zinn 2004; Thera 1996). Mindfulness reduces the chances of being overwhelmed and getting carried away by one’s thoughts and emotions. Even though mindfulness is a trait it can also be acquired and developed as a skill (Kabat-Zinn, 1996). The many fold benefits of mindfulness practice can be seen in areas like health and wellbeing (Kabat-Zinn, 1982), care giving (Shiera et al., 2011), organizational environment (Avey et al., 2008) and personnel growth (Ruedy & Schweitzer, 2011). Kabat-Zinn, (1982, 1990) a pioneer in showing innumerable benefits of mindfulness meditation in diversified areas like stress reduction, interpersonal relationships, physical and mental health in non-clinical as well as clinical populations and in psychiatric patients, firmly believes that by practicing mindfulness one is better equipped to face stressful situations by communicating with others with more confidence and understanding, without reacting (Kabat-Zinn, 1996). A similar view is voiced by Atkins and Parker, 2012, in case of employees. They documented that employees practicing mindfulness exhibited ‘compassionate organizational behaviour’

by which they were less reactive and more conscious of what was happening around them which helped them to be more compassionate. This indicates better psychological well-being as it is a demonstration of an individual's awareness and alertness in day-to-day life situations.

Mindfulness awakens another mechanism that positively impacts psychological well-being (Williams et al., 2000; Hargus et al., 2010). It changes the way memory functions and reduces the ability to sharply recall past events, thereby resulting in reduced severity of depression and reduced tendency to evaluate suicide as a possible recourse (Kuyken & Brewin, 1995). Mindfulness has also shown a considerable decrease in anxiety disorder (Sharma et al., 2012, Miller et al., 2012).

Even brief mindfulness intervention increased emotional health and a more positive outlook on life in participants (McCraty, 2003). Williams (2006) showed that mindfulness practice facilitated positive attitudinal change and betterment in resulting behaviors, as well as decrease in the negative impact of daily hassles. These positive effects were more visible after a 3-month period.

Research has indicated that mindfulness practice has helped in exhibiting self control in behavior as well as self-expression. Lakey et al. (2007) found that mindfulness altered individual disposition resulting in higher self control and the individual was able to rise above or curb inner responses. This resulted in refraining from and interrupting impulses to act on tendencies related to improper behavior (Tangney et al., 2004). Lakey et al. also reported on the importance of mindfulness in breaking impulsive behavior like gambling, which indicates a pathology that can create interpersonal as well as intra-psychic issues (Potenza et al., 2002).

Higher level of psychological well-being is associated with mindfulness and experience in meditation. Spiritual practice of mindfulness meditation has been a useful intervention on well-being in empirical research (Baer, 2003; Kabat-Zinn, 2003; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002; Wallace & Shapiro, 2006). Kabat-Zinn (1996, 2005), has documented reduction in self-regulated stress, chronic pain, anxiety, and various illnesses in people practicing meditation. An effective therapy by combining mindfulness meditation with cognitive therapy is developed by Teasdale et al. (2000). This is based on the fact that depressed patients tend to avoid relapse when they are able to see their emotions and thought processes from a larger perspective. Even in non clinical patients reported increase in mood and affect after practicing mindfulness; Better mood and happiness in employees in stressful jobs (Davidson et. al., 2003) and in health care professionals (Galantino et. al., 2005); enhanced subjective wellbeing (Orzech et al, 2009).

The literature review of the research conducted on psychological wellbeing indicates positive results when meditation techniques are used as an intervention.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To study the impact of Vipassana Meditation practices on the Psychological Well-being scores attained by meditators.

Study Context & Sample

For this study, the research design used was After-Only with Control Design (Kothari & Garg, 2014). In order to measure the Psychological Well-being (PWB) of the respondents, a standardized self-report scale

was employed. This scale was originally developed by Ryff in 1989 and is called the Psychological Well-being Scale model of Psychological well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff, 1989). The original 39 item questionnaire was modified and revised to suit Indian cultural context with 20 items by Mehrotra et al. (2013).

The questionnaire uses a 6 point Likert scale with: 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 6 = “Strongly Agree”. One of the items out of 20 items is “*I feel that I get a lot out of my friendships*”.

Higher scores indicate higher levels of Psychological Well-being (Pradhan and Ajithkumar, 2017).

The 4 research variables measured by this scale were:

- Self Acceptance
- Mastery & Competence
- Positive Relations
- Engagement & Growth

Sample

The data was collected from two groups of employees from various organizations who enrolled at Bangalore Vipassana Meditation Centre, South India, for a 10-day residential Vipassana course. The groups selected were non meditators (control group) who were enrolling to do their first 10-day VM course and meditators (experimental group) who had already completed a minimum three 10-day VM courses and were regular practitioners of VM. The sampling technique used for collecting the data was judgment sampling. Participation was voluntary and no personal details were captured. Participants had sufficient time to complete the questionnaire. Questionnaire had a section for collecting demographic as well as information regarding meditation practices being followed by the meditators. Completed questionnaires were collected back prior at the start of the course (Pradhan et al., 2016). For final analysis a total of 240 samples each were collected from each group after filtering out incomplete responses. Both the groups were matched on demographic factors and a chi-square test performed confirmed that the two groups were independent of demographic factors as p values were greater than 0.05 for all demographic factors ($p > 0.05$).

In this paper, the focus is on the meditator group, since, this study focuses on the impact of Vipassana meditation practices on PWB scores attained by meditators. The demographics of the meditator group respondents were:

Mean age: 39.31 years, male: 57.1%, females : 42.9% , married : 56.3%, education level (graduates and above) : 91.3%, dominant work sector (services & software) : 61.7%, work position (Middle and Senior level) : 54.9%.

Data Analysis

Even though the PWB scale used was a standardized scale, the data collected for the meditator group was subjected to an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to confirm that the factor structure extracted was in line with the 4 factor structure of PWB with the data sample collected. Further the reliability of the factors was confirmed with:

Cronbach Alpha = 0.894; and KMO= 0.886 indicated sampling adequacy for factor analysis.

An Independent sample t-Test for both the groups (240 respondents) had indicated that meditator group secured higher mean scores on all four variables of the PWB scale with $p < 0.05$ (Pradhan and Ajithkumar, 2017). This result shows that the practice of Vipassana meditation makes a statistically significant difference to the PWB scores obtained by meditators versus non-meditators. Also, a MANOVA analysis was performed which showed that demographics had no effect on PWB scores (Pradhan and Ajithkumar).

PWB scores and Meditation practices

In order to study the effect of meditation practices on PWB scores the following characteristics of meditation practices were captured through the questionnaire and following Meditation variables were formulated for the study:

1. Number of Vipassana courses undertaken: Variable Name; Course Category [CC]
2. Number of hours devoted to Vipassana Meditation every day : Variable Name; Daily meditation practice in hours [DPH]
3. Number of years as a Vipassana Practitioner : Variable name; Number of years of Vipassana practice [YVP]

Anova analysis of PWB scores and Meditation variables

In order to study the interaction between the above meditation variables and the scores obtained by meditator respondents, ANOVA was performed with PWB scores as dependent variables and the above defined meditation variables as independent variables. The results of the ANOVA are presented below.

Effect of Course Category(CC) on PWB variables

ANOVA tests were conducted taking Course Category variable and each of the PWB variables in turn to determine the effect of Course Category.

Self Acceptance Scores

The effect of CC on Self Acceptance was not significant since

$F(2,237)=1.09$, $p=0.338$, partial eta =0.009, power = 0.240.

Mastery & Competence Scores

The effect of CC on Mastery & Competence was not significant since

$F(2,237)=0.613$, $p=0.543$, partial eta =0.005, power = 0.152.

Positive Relations Scores

The effect of CC on Positive Relations was not significant since

$F(2,237)=0.935$, $p=0.394$, partial eta =0.008, power = 0.211.

Engagement & Growth Scores

The effect of CC on Engagement & Growth was not significant since

$F(2,237)=0.914$, $p=0.402$, partial eta =0.008, power = 0.207.

Effect of Daily Practice Hours(DPH) on PWB variables

ANOVA tests were conducted taking Daily Practice Hours variable and each of the PWB variables in turn to determine the effect of Daily Practice Hours.

Self Acceptance Scores

The effect of DPH on Self Acceptance was not significant since
 $F(2,237)=0.858, p=0.425, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.007, \text{power} = 0.197.$

Mastery & Competence Scores

The effect of DPH on Mastery & Competence was not significant since
 $F(2,237)=1.71, p=0.183, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.014, \text{power} = 0.358.$

Positive Relations Scores

The effect of DPH on Positive Relations was significant since
 $F(2,237)=3.52, p=0.031, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.029, \text{power} = 0.653.$

Engagement & Growth Scores

The effect of DPH on Engagement & Growth was significant since
 $F(2,237)=3.50, p=0.032, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.029, \text{power} = 0.649.$

Effect of Years of Vipassana Practice (YVP) on PWB variables

ANOVA tests were conducted taking Years of Vipassana Practice variable and each of the PWB variables in turn to determine the effect of Years of Vipassana Practice.

Self Acceptance Scores

The effect of YVP on Self Acceptance was found to be significant since
 $F(2,237)=3.97, p=0.020, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.032, \text{power} = 0.708.$

Mastery & Competence Scores

The effect of YVP on Mastery & Competence was not significant since
 $F(2,237)=0.782, p=0.459, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.007, \text{power} = 0.182.$

Positive Relations Scores

The effect of YVP on Positive Relations was not significant since
 $F(2,237)=0.372, p=0.690, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.003, \text{power} = 0.109.$

Engagement & Growth Scores

The effect of YVP on Engagement & Growth was not significant since
 $F(2,237)=1.87, p=0.157, \text{partial } \eta^2=0.016, \text{power} = 0.387.$

In summary the ANOVA results showed that

- Number of Courses attended did not have an interaction with PWB scores attained
- Number of Hours of Daily Meditation Practice did have a significant interaction with PWB factor – Positive Relations
- Number of Hours of Daily Meditation Practice did have a significant interaction with PWB factor – Engagement & Growth
- Years of Vipassana of Practice did have a significant interaction with PWB factor – Self Acceptance

Manova analysis of PWB scores and Meditation variables

Multivariate Manova Analysis was conducted by taking the four dependent PWB variables and 3 meditation variables simultaneously. The interactions between independent and dependent variables are as shown in the table below

MANOVA Multivariate Analysis : PWB and Meditation Variables

Meditation Variable	Wilky's Lambda Value	Result of Manova Analysis	Result
CC	0.977	F(8,420) = 0.627, p=0.755, eta squared= 0.012, power=0.292	As P>0.05, Insignificant interaction
DPH	.968	F(8,420)=0.854, p=0.556, eta squared =0.016, power=0.400	p>0.05, Insignificant interaction
YVP	.040	F(8,420) = 2.05, p=0.040 , eta squared= 0.038, power=0.832	As P<0.05, Significant interaction
CC*DPH	.949	F(16,642)=0.694, p=0.802, eta squared=0.-013, power=0.365	p>0.05, Insignificant interaction
CC*YVP	.910	F(16,642)=1.265, p=0.241, eta squared=0.023, power=0.666	p>0.05, Insignificant interaction
DPH*YVP	.938	F(16,642)=0.852, p=0.626, eta squared=0.016, power=0.455	p>0.05, Insignificant interaction
CC*DPH*YVP	.899	F(32,776)=0.708, p=0.885, eta squared=0.026, power=0.674	p>0.05, Insignificant interaction

The above table of results of the Manova analysis shows that the YVP variable has a significant interaction with PWB scores. A further study of the 'test between the subjects' results showed that the YVP interacted significantly with Self-Acceptance scores with the following result.

$$F(2,213)=3.072, \mathbf{p=0.048}, \text{ eta squared}=0.028, \text{ power}=0.588$$

This is in line with the results obtained with Anova analysis as well as shown above.

The Post Hoc Tests allowed for a further drill down in terms of analysis and showed that:

- Those who practiced meditation for 1 hour showed higher **Positive Relations** scores than those practicing for less than 1 hour (p=0.029, Tukey test).
- Those who practiced meditation for 1 hour showed higher **Engagement & Growth** scores than those practicing for less than 1 hour (p=0.026, Tukey test).
- Those practicing meditation for more than 5 years showed higher **Self-Acceptance** scores than those meditators practicing for 1 year (p=0.024, Tukey test).

DISCUSSION

The result on PWB was in consonance with the research objective and validated the use of VM as an intervention. As validated in this research and in available literature, experience in meditation strengthens and enhances psychological well being (Lykins and Baer 2009).

ANOVA results showed that the daily practice of VM (DPH) indicated positive effect on Positive Relations ($p = 0.031$), and Engagement and Growth ($p = 0.032$), factors of PWB. This was further substantiated by Post-Hoc analysis as the employees who practiced VM daily for one hour showed higher scores than those who practiced for less than one hour on Positive Relations ($p=0.029$) and Engagement and Growth ($p=0.024$). This indicated that the meditator employees were able to form trusting and good relationships with others and felt more positive and hopeful about themselves and life. They considered life as a process of learning and growth (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

These higher PWB scores would benefit many core areas of organizational science and practice because these areas are inherently relational, including leadership, teamwork, inter-firm partnerships and coordination, trust, psychological safety, communication, conflict, and social networks (Good et al., 2016). The higher scores also lead to improved communication quality, including open listening with increased awareness and less evaluative judgment of others (Beckman et al., 2012), as well as better client-rated relationship quality (Beach et al., 2013). In addition, relationships with supervisors and managers are among the most important relationships we have at work (Dienesch & Liden, 1986), and work in groups often depends on effective cooperation and coordination between members (Mathieu, et al., 2000).

Also, ANOVA tests indicated that the employees practicing VM for number of years (YVP) indicated better Self Acceptance ($p=0.048$) in terms of being hopeful about oneself and more satisfied with life. Post-Hoc tests reconfirmed that the employees practicing meditation for more than 5 years showed higher Self-Acceptance scores than those practicing for 1 year ($p=0.024$)

Since maintaining a sustained positive work ethic and harmonious atmosphere at work is predicated on the PWB of employees, practicing VM facilitates overall business growth as they also experience reduction in anxiety (Bhatnagar, 2014).

The enhancement in employees' PWB brought about by meditation practice improved their ability to deal with work situations effectively. Enhanced PWB leads to improved attention and cognitive abilities, which contributes significantly in aiding employees to be more productive at work (Moore & Malinowski, 2009). Controlled and stable attention serves as the basis for the effective coordination and enhances effective team work (Metiu & Rothbard, 2012). As Bonebright et al. (2000) stated better PWB fosters the ability of employees to find enjoyment at work and greater meaning in life. The enhanced attention and cognitive abilities of employees equips them to cope with adverse work situations and fosters the belief that life is meaningful (King et al., 2006).

Therefore it can be stated that the positive effect of VM on PWB helped employees to feel that life is meaningful, enjoy work and to be able to cope with adverse circumstances which are a part and parcel of work environment. VM can transform wellbeing at the work place and thereby productivity (Marques & Satinder, 2009). Better psychological well-being is a demonstration of an individual's or employees' awareness and alertness in day-to-day life situations (Walsh & Shapiro, 2006). They are less reactive and more conscious of what was happening around them. This helps them to be more compassionate and exhibit 'compassionate organizational behaviour' (Atkins & Parker, 2012).

However, the number of VM courses attended by the meditator employees did not show any significant impact. It is clear from the results of the analysis that merely attending a number of meditation courses and going through the prescribed methodology in a class room environment does not deliver any impact

on psychological well-being. It is important to internalize the practice of Vipassana meditation and make it a part of one's daily schedule. The practice of Vipassana meditation when done for at least a period of 1 hour every day helped employees develop positive relationships with others. Similarly, the practice of meditating for at least an hour every day, inculcated in meditators a sense of acting with awareness and being mentally engaged in activity they were performing moment to moment, and this resulted in enhancing their psychological well-being because they were always in a mode of 'Engagement and Growth'.

In summary, Vipassana meditator employees are an asset to any organization as they feel more positive and hopeful about themselves and life in general. For them life is a process of learning and growth. They are good relationship builders and are able to maintain warm and trusting relationships.

LIMITATIONS

- 1) PWB is perceptual in nature and therefore it varies from person to person. Two individuals in the same scenario may assess it differently
- 2) VM is a multifaceted, complex and intense experience. A self report questionnaire may not be able to capture its nuances.

FUTURE RESEARCH

- 1) The main goal of VM is to apply it in day to day life situations. Research can be undertaken to study the effects of moment to moment mindfulness i.e. 'Sampajanya' in pali, during daily life experiences. This will help individuals to implement the 'quality awareness' in life experiences.
- 2) Undertake compilation of Individual case studies of regular meditator employees to understand their journey on the path of Vipassana as it is a subjective process.
- 3) Studies involving combination of multifaceted qualitative and quantitative analysis will help to understand the complex changes taking place in human psyche due to VM in a better way.

CONCLUSION

The results show that Vipassana meditation has a positive effect on psychological health of employees in terms of positive relations, engagement and growth and self acceptance. Literature indicates that these qualities are associated with openness, positivity, readiness to learn new things and ability to have good and trusting relationships with others in personal and professional lives. Therefore if organizations encourage employees to practice VM it will not only benefit them but it will create an atmosphere of openness, trust, friendliness and compassion.

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