EMPLOYEE AGE AND MEDITATION & ITS IMPACT ON COMPANY PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Yoga – meditation has been integral part of Indians since ages. Even gods are not an exception in practicing yoga. Because of yoga they were able to concentrate and take very calculative decisions. Unfortunately yoga/meditation has taken a back seat during the past two / three decades, thanks to the hectic schedules in the Global MNC’s, especially software employees are becoming pray for such hectic schedule . if they are asked to practice meditation to get relieved from the stress , only response we get is where is the time???. These kinds of stress are leading to health hazards, frustration, hyper tension and many more such issues. This in turn is affecting upon the overall performance of employees and also the organization. People of all the age groups are not having time to relax and spend time for them. Western countries have identified the solution as Meditation to curb such stress related problems, which can be practiced anytime anywhere... Indians are also realizing the importance of Meditation gradually. Meditation cannot be imparted to all the age group people on the similar parlance. The requirement varies as the age progresses. The objective of this paper is to identify the effect of meditation on the select IT professionals hailing from different levels and across different age groups and its impact on their performance at professional level. The age group of the selected sample varies from 22 years to 55 years from junior level to management level. They have been practicing meditation with a diverse group from beginners to seasoned ones ranging from 3 months old to 25 years . Some of the problems in day to day were addressed for them viz sleep deprivation, reduction of anxiety, becoming fearlessness, controlled emotions (emotional maturity), improved focus, enthusiasm at work etc. The leaders at work suggest their teams to practice meditation as the long term benefits are enormous in improving the quality of the work. The study believes that meditation and yoga are the continuous methods for attainting pinnacle of self-satisfaction in every individual’s life, whether it is in personal life or work life. Especially in work life it provides immense benefits both to the employer and employee in achieving the organizational goals in set standards. Ripples of yoga and meditation across age groups of employees significantly vary in the process of practice. This study explores the relationship between employee age and meditation across various yoga and meditation practicing managers and its effect on company performance. To explore these dimensions the study will administer a structured questionnaire with standard scales used in research. The study intended to use multivariate statistical tools like Factor analysis and discriminate analysis, in addition to univariate statistical tools.

Keywords: Yoga, Meditation, Performance, IT Professional , Multivariate Statistical Techniques

INTRODUCTION

Employees are the critical asset for any business. It is important for the individuals to be very conscious at work place day-in and day-out for providing best performance. This will lead to the team performance and in turn sums up to the company performance. The different factors and conscious effort to improve the individual performance is researched and described below. Business’s sustainability depends on how capable and competent the employees are. “Whenever you’re present to the world, you have sensory contents—thoughts, mental objects—and that are what makes up consciousness,”(Cleeramans [1]) David [2] mentioned in his article that Malden Mills CEO Aaron Feuersteinsays after a fire accident at work place, “The fundamental difference is that I consider our workers an asset, not an expense”. This is very much true for IT service companies because the employees are the assets for the organizations in serving their customers. Looking at the current demand of services for customers, every employee in the organization has to provide best in their roles. So, as the cost goes high for the individuals, the shorter teams have to perform for organization’s success, else results in downsizing. The employees have to look at different factors of how this can optimize the teams and some of them are being researched here. There are many ways to record the improvement in these factors, but Meditation has taken the front seat to address and has already proven scientifically. Lot of research has been going on how Meditation helps the individuals in every aspect of life, including workplaces. Many of the organizations have started Meditation in their well-being curriculum as it effects productivity and organizational growth. The global workspace theory suggests that a memory bank from which the brain draws information to form the experience of conscious awareness (Kendra Cherry [3]).There are many different types of Meditation techniques and below analysis was done using Hathafulness meditation. A lot of research has been happening on Meditation across the globe and many of benefits of Physiological, Psychological, and Emotional aspects have been published. A graphical report was submitted during Meditation Summit [4] by different publications between 1980 and 2015. A tremendous increase in publications of about 35 in 1980 and has gone up to about 400 by 2018. This shows
the significant importance given to meditation research with respect to several benefits gained. As it gains the attention of any segment of human population, the researchers are bringing more of scientific approach to this make Meditation as part of curriculum. The field of meditation research has grown exponentially in the past two decades. A total of about 500 peer-reviewed scientific articles on the science of meditation existed in 1990. Today, there are over 4,000 (US National Library of Medicine, pubmed.com). About 25 papers were published per year in the 1990’s, whereas over 400 were published in 2016. (Cassandra [5]) Unlike the traditional approaches in recruiting the employees on their technical abilities alone, now recruiters are considering that employees with high Emotional Quotient also a critical factor. Emotional Quotient is taking equal percentage of technical skills in most of the recruitments as the changing corporate world require more emotionally matured leaders to be successful in their roles. Employees’ thoughts, feelings, emotions, and decisions are qualitative experience that anybody has while working at a company for the best output (Mizne [6]). Meditation practice in the US has grown from 4.1% to 14.2% in the US per National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health stats (NIH, 2018 [7]). In today’s Corporate World, Meditation has taken paramount importance as it makes the day to day activities so joyful and anxiety-free even under heavy pressurized times. Steve Jobs has mastered in the meditation and introduced Zen meditation to their workplace. He was called Mind Technology specialist. He offered his employees a 30-minute meditation daily and made a special arrangement for mediators at workplace. In the same lines of his thought-process, Google has started Search inside you in 2007. There are so many Corporate Giants who followed this technique in different fashions and made the workplaces meditation based. This created an environment to handle stress in a subtle way. Similar way, Yahoo offered all their employees the meditation sessions to reduce stress at workplace and make the workplace so joyful and lively. (Tamara [8]) From the detailed reviews of different articles published in journals, Meditation enhances creativity, improves the focus by decreasing the internal dialogue, and improves the inner calmness. Since these characteristics will make the person to respond to the situations better, which in turn improves the team building skills? This will also help reducing burn outs at work place. Emma has done extensive research on finding out and analyzing the benefits of meditation in CEO world. She wrote that Meditation enhances creativity. It shows that our internal or inner system works more effective when we are in a meditative state or complete relax of the mind. Our intuitiveness will get enhanced in this state of mind. These are some moments called “eureka”. (Emma [9]). It also shows that the focus will improve as the internal dialogue will reduce through the practice of meditation. In general, mind wanders for more than half of the time. Meditation can help moving away from the distractions that the digital gadgets create today, like phone calls, text messages, emails etc. Meditation helps to curb these tendencies to improve our focus at work. Out of several different factors which improve individual performance, eight were considered for this research. A highly Motivated employee has the Ability to Learn new skills, manage his Emotional Quotient, Time, Empathize with others, is an Initiator, develop a good Team and ultimately provide Quality work performance. The current research is done on different age groups and roles in an IT company which can show how these factors are improved in a given period of Meditation. A sleep-deprived person is likely to fall asleep when forced to sit still in a quiet or monotonous situation, such as during a meeting or class. This degree of severe sleepiness can be a safety hazard, causing drowsy driving and workplace injuries. (American Sleep Academy of Sleep Medicine, [10]). Over a practice of meditation for some time, sleep pattern gets controlled and sleep will be peaceful. As the practice of Meditation gives multiple health benefits both at physical and mental level, Raja [11] has published an article that He artfulness meditation produces relaxation response on nervous system and brings moderation in overall body’s physiology and psychology”. Meditation shows a significant change on the time management where prioritization of tasks becomes vital. As the inner state calms down through the practice, it makes us to live in reality which improves the acceptance. Stanford University research study shows that the below shows how concentration improved using Transcendental meditation technique with the value of 0.2 to 0.8 in adjusted mean value effect size (standard deviation) The meditation practice was done on some of IT employees working in Hyderabad India to learn about the behavioral change in the parameters before and after meditation. They were given to try Hatefulness meditation. The results were recorded and analyzed. Meditation helps improve the sleep problems through a practice of at least 30 mins each in the morning and evening as insufficient sleep time employees’ mood can be irritable. A recent article by Sara Lazar [12] in Harvard Business Review shows that the Mindfulness program followers enjoyed a 28% reduction in stress, 20% better sleep, and 19% less pain. Stress impacts performance more than physical health issues. Overall, employees claimed mental health issues (stress and/or anxiety) were more impactful to presenters and absenteeism than physical health issues. There are many reasons employees might feel anxious: lack of sleep, lack of exercise, heavy workload, overall feeling of a lack of control. Over 18 million people in the US use Meditation according to National Health Statistic Report (Clarke [13]). A physically and mentally healthy employee can perform to the best. A regulated mind can think better and make better decisions at work even in a pressurized environment. As employees are the key to any company’s success. When managers and team members communicate regularly and he artfully, every employee will be clear on management’s goals and expectations. The below conceptual framework shows different factors of individual performance at work and meditation enhances these after a good amount of practice.

**Enhancement of these factors through Meditation**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Self-Motivation</th>
<th>Ability to Learn</th>
<th>Emotional Maturity</th>
<th>Time Management</th>
<th>Empathy</th>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Teamwork</th>
<th>Quality</th>
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A highly Motivated associate has the Ability to Learn new skills, manage his Emotional Quotient, Time, Empathize with others, is an Initiator, develop a good Team and ultimately provide Quality in terms of outcome.
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As required for the study, the below literature has been thoroughly reviewed to understand the dynamics of the factors for individual performance. To perform to the fullest of his/her potential, there are certain issues (both physically and mentally) that have to be addressed through meditation. Loss of productivity in an organization is one of the critical things to be addressed although it is not in the mainstream of product development, but an underlying factor. Inadequate resources and workplace stress are some of the causes for low productivity. The impacts of these are enormous in low production and low morale. Wafi [14] states that Employee welfare can be achieved through the working relationships with the employees. As stated, Herbert Benson was the first researcher to conclusively uncover links between the benefits of Meditation with western medicine (Losyk [15]). Along with this, another study also revealed that the costs of absenteeism and its effect on company performance. Stress at workplace falls into either positive or negative. Positive stress may improve the productivity of the employee whereas negative may impact his/her physical or emotional health. Accepting the current moment will make a big change in our inner state which can resolve stress issues through a rigor practice of meditation. This has already been proven through EEG test to read the brain activity and various changes before and after meditation (Cahn [16]). Many of the workplace issues are connected with (Emily [17]) emotional functioning and ego depletion. At workplace, it is very critical to gain control on their emotions to have a smooth execution at work. These emotions will cause stress depending on the situations. For example, a critical deadline work has to be completed by a team, due to which they have to work long hours and on holidays. This would cause stress and in turn impact the work performance. From Muwafaq’s [18] findings on a research study about stress and work performance, it was observed that working conditions and family problems cause the stress. Multitasking and completing the tasks on time is another important thing in the competitive edge. It is stressful to work on multiple tasks during the peak hours. Meditation helps employees in multitasking without much pressure. The meditation practitioners made fewer task switches and as well as reporting less negative (David [19]) at a certain practice. Because of the brain activity during meditation, the meditators also show improved memory for the details of the tasks they do. There are many renowned meditation practices using many different techniques. He artfulness is one of the meditation practices which is made very simple and subtle for all the seekers. It connects the individuals inside deeper (Kamalesh [20]) and founded in 1945. Many published journals have been referred from He artfulness. This practice has been offered in more than 130 countries with a follower pool of about three millions. This organization has been associated with UN Department of Global Communications to work on meditation initiatives. It has proven several aspects scientifically in improving immunity, making sleep patterns better, controlling BP as controls emotional conditions, and heart-rate. In his article Jay ram [21] mentions that the effect of He artfulness is significant on burnout and emotional wellness as it has done an extensive study on a sample of patients. He artfulness meditation has been implemented as part of curriculum in several colleges and requested by several government and corporate organizations as part of their well-being programs. Transcendental Meditation practice has published many scientific research journals predominantly on medical benefits. About 50 articles were reviewed (TM [22]) and the gist has summarized the overall benefits of meditation to the individuals. Mindfulness meditation has published several articles in international journals on healthcare benefits including cancer. As it is a type of mental training, it works at the neuroplasticity level (Susan [23]). This technique also has proven that all the well-being benefits are achieved.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE – MEDITATION PRACTITIONERS

The objective of the research is to address the gap identified above in full potential of individual’s job performance. The purpose can be generic and specific. The primary objective of this study is to learn the improvements in the job performance between pre and post-meditation in a group of IT employees in Hyderabad. The objectives are further divided/classified, so that it can be better explained how meditation helps improving different factors namely, self-motivation, ability to learn, emotional maturity, time management, empathy, initiative, teamwork and quality of the work they produce.

- To study different factors of individual job performance in some of the IT employees in Hyderabad, India
- To study He artfulness meditation effect on individual performance
- To study how different factors will have an impact on job performance of the respondent’s pre and post meditation

As keeping good mental health is becoming predominant in the corporate industry, especially in IT industry in India, meditation gets paramount importance. Implementation of Meditation in the organizations is becoming a crucial activity in the well-being programs. This study will target some of the employees of IT companies in Hyderabad, India at different levels and measure their performance. The study will be done on how they perform their job without meditation practice and with practice.

RESULT: DATA ANALYSIS

A questionnaire was prepared on different parameters of job performance. The response from 100 employees for the questionnaire was recorded before and after meditation. The results show a significant change in all parameters except Self-Motivation. The values for all parameters moved from rarely/sometimes to always in their behavioral patterns. It indicates that due to meditation, respondents were able to develop their ability to learn on a continuous basis, developed emotional maturity, able to manage their time effectively both at professional and personal levels, become more empathic towards others, confident in taking initiatives, were able to be a team player and finally able to give a quality performance. Data has been analyzed by using multivariate analysis. While analyzing multiple variables at one time an attempt has been made to bring out meaningful conclusion to the study.
As the descriptive statistics shows what the data is and what it shows, the calculations of Mean, Standard Deviation, Minimum, Maximum, Sum, and Count of all the questions for pre and post meditation have been done. The detailed analysis was done along for the inferential statistics by calculating t value and p values. It has been found out that there is a difference between the Pre and Post meditation results of a given response. The below data is a snapshot of the high-level captured by the survey. It shows the changes observed in different parameters of the questionnaires. It has been observed from the above that meditation was not much impactful in increasing self-motivation levels of the respondents. Since there is no significant difference in the mean values of pre and post-meditation, it can be inferred that all most all the respondents remained indifferent to as far as self-motivation is concerned. But at the same time, in rest of the parameters respondents experience a great impact of meditation. The analysis was done mainly using different age groups, number of years of meditation practice, number of years of work experience, and employee role in the organization in all the parameters of the individual performance at work. From the data collected, it has been observed that the number of years of meditation practice and a significant improvement in the ability to learn. Another interesting aspect from respondents is a change in Emotional Maturity of a long duration of meditation practice; the respondents mentioned that it helped them a lot with a balanced mind set. When this was studied on different profiles of the respondents, it was consistent with everybody except senior managers of the organization. The same was observed in Time Management aspect also with the above profiles. Being Empathetic in the job roles also has been observed high except the age group of 51 to 60 years. Meditation has proven a significant change in their Empathetic behavior. As taking initiatives is the key aspect of the day-to-day professional life, another significant change was observed with the meditation practitioners.

## CONCLUSION

The study concluded that Meditation had a significant effect on the behavioral parameters of the respondents, in transformation of their attitude towards work related attributes. This has eventually stimulated them to improve their performance at organizational level. The same research findings can be applied to other sectors of corporate business as applied. It has been found that among all the parameters, only self-motivation was not enhanced due to Meditation; there could be some other reason as to why meditation could not help respondents to enhance their self-motivation levels. This research leaves a scope to other researchers to find out parameters apart from the ones which have been already used in the above research.

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