



## Impact of Vipassana meditation on Corporate's Occupational Stress

Pranav Pandya<sup>1</sup>, Vivek Vijay<sup>2\*</sup>, Vivek Vijay<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Mathematics, Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya, Shantikunj, Uttarakhand, India

<sup>2</sup>Department of Mathematics, Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India

\*Corresponding author: Vijay V, Department of Mathematics, Indian Institute of Technology, Jodhpur, Rajasthan, India E-Mail: I: VivekVijay@yahoo.co.uk

Received date: 16 August, 2022, Manuscript No. JYPTY-22-65112;

Editor assigned date: 18 August, 2022, PreQC No. JYPTY-22-65112 (PQ);

Reviewed date: 03 September, 2022, QC No JYPTY-22-65112;

Revised date: 08 September, 2022, Manuscript No. JYPTY-22-65112 (R);

Published date: 15 September, 2022, DOI: 10.4172/2325-9841.1000131

### Abstract

Vipassana meditation is an ancient technique, believed to be rediscovered by Gautam the Buddha, 2500 years before. Numerous benefits of this classical technique are described in the literature. In this study, we measure the Vipassana meditation effectiveness on Occupational Stress in the natural environment of an employee. The objective is to observe impact of Vipassana technique on Occupational Stress (OS) among corporate employees. An experimental group was set up with 40 respondents each. To measure OS, a questionnaire with 12 indicators is used [55]. We observe that the technique is not only useful in reduction of OS but also increases the level (eustress) for a few indicators if it is very low. That is, the technique is useful in balancing the mental condition. We use coefficient of variation as a measure of imbalance state. Statistical tests are used to show that the difference among the pre-and-post data is significant.

**Keywords :** Vipassana; Occupational Stress; Stress reduction; Meditation

### Introduction

Occupational stress is a major problem in western societies. Its relationship with various diseases is becoming increasingly obvious [1-3]. The number of effect studies on occupational stress management programmes is increasing and studies including interventions on organizational level have also been identified [4]. Yoga has been in practice in the ancient Indian society since vedic periods [5] possibly 2000+ BCE. The development of basic philosophy and science of Yoga has advanced with the advancement in science and technology. The practice of Yoga has widespread from its origin to the globe. Yoga practice is used in order to maintain physical fitness, psychological well-being and as a therapeutic intervention [6]. As stated in Srimad Bhagavad Geeta (SBG): "Yogah Karmashu Kauṣhalam" [SBG 2/50] excellence in action is Yoga. In other words, the practice of Yoga increases work efficiency. The eight limbs or eight parts [7] of Yoga constituting meditation is of important value. The more insight and awareness is attained with the practice of meditation. Srimad Bhagavad Geeta defines Yoga as balance in every

situation (Samaṭvam Yoga Uchytéy) [SBG 2/48]. With that, one can assume Yoga not only reduces stress but also helps to increase eustress (positive stress) in various quanta. These verses constitute the philosophy of Yoga in practice and assumptions of managing distress becomes more evident with increase in awareness. Patanjali Yoga Sutras (PYS) opines: "Abhyāsa Vairāgyābhyām tannirōdhah" [PYS 1/12], that is, with the conscious practice of detachment, one can sublimate the afflictions of mind and gain insight. As the modern psychology also believes that conditions are not stressful but, the way one perceives it [8]. The brain's active role in the process of perception plays an important and a critical part in determining one's ordinary state of mind. [9], same connotations are exhibited in Buddhist scriptures "ariya aṭṭhaṅgika magga" [10] as "Samyak Dṛṣṭi", the right view. Patanjali further states that with the practice of positive detachment (sa tū dhīrghkālānārantaryasatkārsévitō dhṛidhboomī) one can help attain its mind in such a way that, stressors are perceived rightfully [PYS 1/13]. The same has been contemplated in Srimad Bhagvad Geeta as: "Tam vidyāt Dukḥ samyog viyogam yoga sangyitam" [SBG 6/23]; suggesting Yoga balances the emotions while making one's mind free from desire and suffering. Dr. Pandya opines that the intellect is a virtue by which one can attain the state of non-attachment [11]. Vipassana, a yogic-meditative technique, is used to see its impact on emotions, like occupational stress. Vipassana means intense, deep or powerful seeing; International Home Page [12]. Goenka, 1980, states that the direct experience of a mental-physical phenomenon within one's own self, this technique of self-observation, is called Vipassana meditation (VM). Vipassana is to observe things as they really are, not just as they seem to be. Vipassana is a technique of selfexamination, a scientific method of self-observation that results in total purification of the mind and the highest happiness of full liberation [13]. Vipassana thus leads people from narcissism to mature, social love to a life of altruism. All these imply the highest stage of personality development or the optimal personality functioning and positive mental health [14]. Vipassana meditation is a rational method for purifying the mind of the mental factors which causes distress and pain [15]. Vipassana insight meditation gradually purifies the mind, eliminating all forms of attachment [15].

### Literature

D. Kumar et al. argue that the anxiety and depression appear to have increased in working professionals [16]. Mike opines that co-meditation (meditation with breathing awareness), or cross breathing is not a cure but a way to relieve mental emotion sufferings [17]. The whole practice and instructions of Vipassana is focused on controlling the thought process and observing the flow of respiration, bodily and mental sensation. VM is a technique for observing reality from every angle instead of a carefully edited self-image [15]. A very few research studies have been conducted in the field of Vipassana meditation on the population targeted into corporate. On the contrary the self-reported evidences of the practitioners of Vipassana meditation show a great positive change in their physical, psychological and emotional quanta. Michael Huber and Nagendra HR made a significant contribution and gave a scientific approval to the meditation techniques as a key for stress management. Their researches show a significant impact on the stress and other psychological problems [18]. Moore (2009) researched that attentional performance and cognitive flexibility are positively related to meditation practice and levels of mindfulness [19]. The clinical utility

of Vipassana is believed to provide a positive mental state rather than responding only to a particular problem [20], which makes it a perfect anti-stress remedy and an excellent human potential development method. The report says that Vipassana meditator show overall better adjustment and personality organization than non-meditator [21]. It is documented that an EEG study of the meditators revealed novel neuro-physiological processes of synchronization appearing from the midline structures of the brain more pronounced in the experienced meditators than novice [22]. A detailed investigation on 120 subjects showed the significant effect of Vipassana on inmates by department of Psychiatry, AIIMS in 1994 [23]. It was followed by a group study in the same year 1994 on 150 subjects. The two groups, 85 and 65 participants each, were selected for the 10 days of Vipassana course. The results showed the participant feeling less hostile towards their environment and felt less helplessness. The follow-up evaluations at three and six months of intervals revealed further improvements on many of these dimensions [23]. Vipassana is found to be effective to reduce the severity of depressive symptoms [24]. Deepak et al. (1994) have reported that continuous meditation can substantially improve the clinic-electro-encephalographic (cEEG) measures in drug resistance epileptics [25]. Another research shows that VM is effective in reducing tension headache [26], which is one cause of Occupational Stress among working class which leads to various MSDs [27, 28]. Chaudhary (1999) investigated the effectiveness of VM, as a technique of stress management and reformation among adolescent prisoners; eventually she reported that both of state anxiety and trait anxiety reduced significantly among population who had completed the Vipassana course and there was a decrease in aggression among under-trial prisoners who had undergone Vipassana course with increase in the feelings of positive emotions such as, hopefulness, self-control, conformity, and compassion, as compared to non practitioner of Vipassana [29]. Khurana and Dhar reported that VM seems to have the positive effect on the level of QoL, SWB, and CP. There were significant increase in QoL & SWB and decrease in CP as compared to control. In the same study, they also showed that VM seems to have similar effect on SWB and CP of participants irrespective of their gender [30]. The clinical study by Chiesa, 2010 suggested that VM could enhance more mature defenses and coping styles [31] and in managing anxiety, stress-related symptoms and other emotional problems [32]. An empirical study shows that respondents who underwent Vipassana meditation courses had achieved mental peace, developed personal, interpersonal and professional effectiveness irrespective of gender, age, education and position [33]. The three-month prospective study evaluated and showed a significant effects of Transcendental meditation (TM) technique on stress reduction, health and employee development in two settings in the automotive industry [34]. Jhansi and Rao (1996) investigated the role of practicing TM in improving the attention regulation capacity of its practitioners. Their study revealed greater attention regulation capacity among TM practitioners compared to their counterparts, due to the regular cognitive exercises involved in meditation practice [35]. Jadhav and Havalappanavar (2009) showed that there was a significant decrease in both state trait and considerably positive change in subjective well-being of the students [36]. Mindfulness based stress reduction program is more recently developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn; a therapeutic mindful

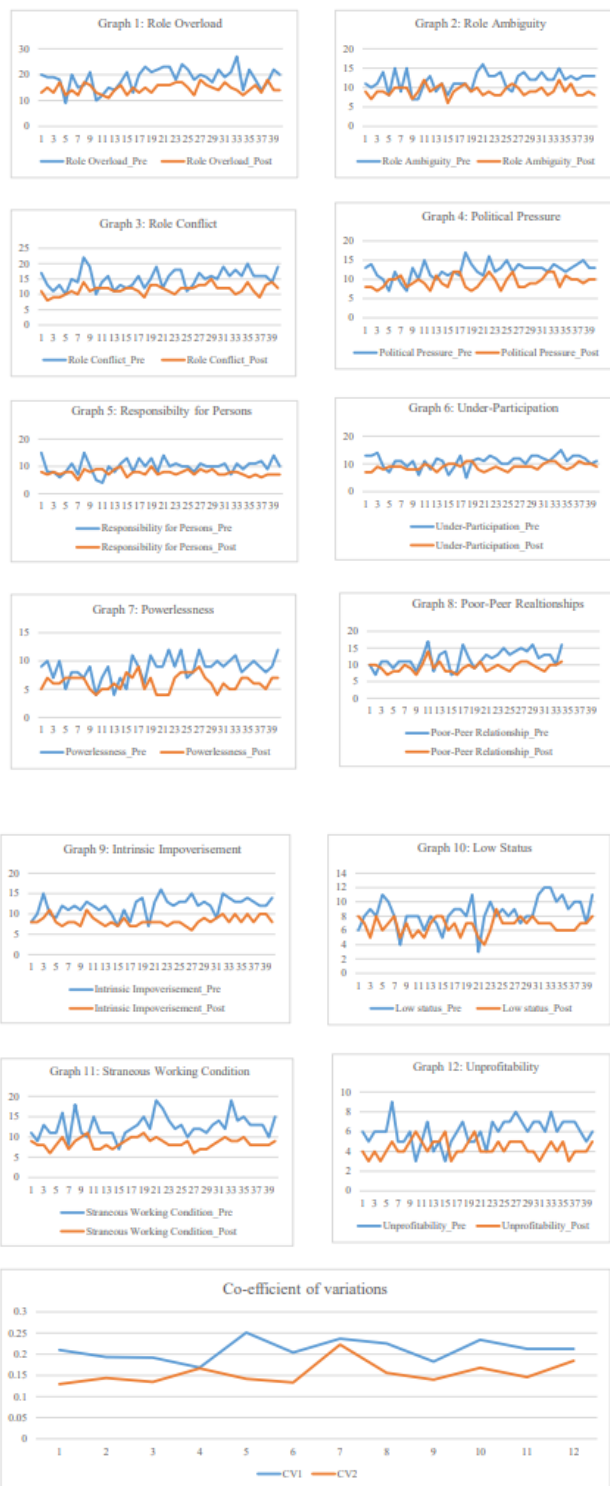
meditation practice, incorporating elements of Yoga and Vipassana, has seen positive results clinically and in research studies [37]. The principles of Vipassana have been incorporated into Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSRP), which has offered an alternative approach to theoretical stress management at workplace. Emerging evidences are revealing the effectiveness of the technique at par [38]. A randomized 8-week pilot program related to work stress revealed that MBSRP intervention was found highly effective for reducing work stress and increasing quality of life [39] and self-compassion in health care professionals [40]. The three month mindfulness based work site program where employee learned and practiced mindfulness; participants reported decrease in emotional exhaustion, depression and fatigue [41]. A study further confirms that MBSRP helps to reduce work site stress [42]. Other early evidence shows that mindfulness can improve how people regulate their attention and ability to concentrate [43]. Jin (1992) has observed the efficacy of Tai-chi, a moving meditation, in reducing mood disturbances caused by mental/ emotional stressors [44]. Yoga is claimed to endow perfect physical, mental and social well-being of an individual.

A series of research investigations have revealed that there are many beneficial effects of Yoga, which would help in the stress management [45]. Venkantesh et al. (1994) have also observed that Yoga practitioners show more positive attitude than control grouped in both gender [46]. Organizations temporarily introduce relaxation techniques, Electro-Mayo-Gram (EMG), biofeedback, standardized meditation program [47], Mindfulness based stress reduction [48] and Yoga [49] as a program for stress inoculation. Yoga is attributed to have holistic effective contribution which has been adopting widespread. Practicing Yoga at the work place teaches employee to use relaxation techniques to reduce stress and risks of injury on the job [50]. Granath et al. showed through experiment that both cognitive behavior therapy and Yoga are promising stress management techniques at workplace [51]. 'Study of Effect of Vipassana on Anxiety and Depression' states that the practice of Anapana for greater control over the mind is helpful in handling harmful impulses and wishes thus controlling the emotions at par [52].

The Vipassana is a technique of not only meditation but, a guide where the mental examinations are seen at close proximity. The intervention of meditation reduces the perceived stress, state anxiety, trait anxiety, burn-out [53] and job stress [54]. Criteria: As per the questionnaire guidelines, individuals between the age of 18 years and 50 years are included in the experimental group to see the impact of VM (Vipassana Meditation) on OSI (Occupational Stress Index). The prerequisite criteria are followed in demographic data collection. The sample population was either from working corporate settings or office bearers from high pressure work.

## **Data**

Demographic information and OSI were collected on index developed by A. K. Srivastava and A. P. Singh [55]. After Exclusion criterion, the VM is introduced. An open-ended question (feed-back form) was included randomly after the collection of post-data to assess the perceived changes individually.



### Statistical Analysis

Based on the objectives given in previous section, we tested two hypotheses, corresponding to stress reduction and balance.

We use t-test (with unequal variances) to test the null hypothesis.

$$H_0: \mu_i(\text{pre}) = \mu_i(\text{post})$$

$$H_1: \mu_i(\text{pre}) > \mu_i(\text{post}), 1 \leq i \leq 12$$

Where,  $\mu_i$  is mean of  $i$  th stress index.

Note that, high score of indicator normally implies high level of stress. The p-values given in table-1 clearly shows that all the null hypotheses (no reduction of stress) are rejected. That is, there is significant reduction score for each of the 12-indicators. This is also reflected in the plots given above. The second objective is to test the state of balance. The assumption here is that, after Vipassana the overall variability will be reduced. This mean that the meditation technique is not just to reduce the score of indicators but to increase the score of an index if it is very low. As a result, the overall variability at post data should be reduced. We test this by using coefficient of variation given by:

$$CV = \left( \frac{\sigma_i}{\mu_i} \right) * 100 (1 \leq i \leq 12)$$

Where,  $\sigma_i$  and  $\mu_i$  are standard deviation and mean of  $i$  th indicator respectively. We use t-test to test the null hypothesis

$$H_0: \sigma_i(\text{pre}) = \sigma_i(\text{post}) (1 \leq i \leq 12)$$

Against the alternate hypothesis

$$H_1: \sigma_i(\text{pre}) > \sigma_i(\text{post})$$

The p-value given in table 2 clearly shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. The same is evident from the plot.

### Conclusion

The Vipassana meditation impacts the occupational stress among the corporate employees significantly and substantially after the exposure of meditation for a period of a month. Yoga is a convenient and practical outlet that improves work performances by relieving tension and job stress. It is handy and easy to start with, and the continuity would prove more benefits for the long run in managing stress and various psychological disorders. Occupational stress prevention and management at the organizational level involves the creation of the 'healthy organization'. Research shall go into the concept of healthy organization through Yoga philosophies and techniques. It deserves further research and study because it could potentially enrich occupational science theory and occupational therapy practiced at large. Co-meditation training programs or meditation based interventions may thus be beneficial to workers with stress related illness, in introducing them to positive coping strategies and stimulating reflection and understanding of their attitude in different situations leading to manage the stress holistically. Employers should consider offering Yoga sessions to their employee. Yoga based relaxation can be incorporated into occupational stress management intervention setup imbibing its outstanding contribution.

### References

1. Lehrer PM, Isenberg, S, Hochron S (1993). Asthma and emotion: A review. J Asthma. 30:5-21.
2. Siegrist J, Peter R, Junge A (1990). A low status control, high effort at work and ischemic heart disease: prospective evidence from blue-collar men. Soc Sci Med. 31:1127- 1134.
3. Niaura R, Goldstein MG (1992). Psychological factors affecting physical condition: Cardiovascular disease literature review: II. Coronary artery disease and sudden death and hypertension. Psychosomatics. 33:146-155.

4. Van Der Hek H, Plomp HN (1997). Occupational stress management programmes: a practical overview of published effect studies. *Occupational Medicine*. 47:133- 141.
5. William, Heart. (1987). *The Art of living: Vipassana Meditation as taught by S. N. Goenka*. Mumbai Embassy Book Distributors. 6-9.
6. Liu Z, Ding Y, Zeng YS. (2011) A new combined therapeutic strategy of governor vessel electro-acupuncture and adult stem cell transplantation promotes the recovery of injured spinal cord. *Current medicinal chemistry*. 18:5165-5171.
7. Gabel BC, Curtis EI, Marsala M, Ciacci JD. (2017) A Review of Stem Cell Therapy for Spinal Cord Injury: Large Animal Models and the Frontier in Humans. *World Neurosurgery*. 98:438-443.
8. Mackay-Sim A, St John JA. (2011) Olfactory ensheathing cells from the nose: clinical application in human spinal cord injuries. *Experimental neurology*. 229:174-180.
9. Saberi H, Firouzi M, Habibi Z, Moshayedi P, Aghayan HR, et al. (2011) Safety of intramedullary Schwann cell transplantation for postrehabilitation spinal cord injuries: 2-year follow-up of 33 cases: clinical article. *Journal of Neurosurgery: Spine*. 15:515-525.
10. Bunge MB, Wood PM. (2012) Realizing the maximum potential of schwann cell to promote recovery from spinal cord injury. *Hand b clinic neurol*. 109:523-540.