

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDITATION, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING THROUGH STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

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Abstract - Meditation is purely an internal effort for self regulation of mind and it provides rest to the mind. When the mind is free from agitation meditation emerges. It is a key practice for mental hygiene. Emotional intelligence is an ability to perceive one's emotion and other people emotion and to use those emotional information to guide ones thinking and behavior. Subjective well-being is a multi dimensional which includes both positive and negative emotions, satisfaction with different aspects of one's life and global satisfaction. This study assess the relationship between meditation, emotional intelligence (EQ) and subjective well-being (SWB) through structural equation modelling.

Key Words: Meditation, Emotional Intelligence, Subjective Well-Being and Structural Equation Modelling.

1. INTRODUCTION

Meditation is a journey of inner self. It creates awareness to one's mind and body. It induces a mode of consciousness to realize benefits for mankind. It enables one to focus attention on a specific point like on breath, on body or on mantra. It is considered as the most valuable tool for the stress relief, improved mental clarity and pain reduction. The concept of emotional intelligence was first evolved in 1985 by Wayne Leon Payne, in his doctoral dissertation title. In 1990 American University Professors, John Mayer and Peter Salovey published a journal article entitled 'Emotional Intelligence' (EI) and defined it as a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own emotions and respect other people's emotions and use this information to guide one's thinking and action. In 1995 New York writer and consultant Daniel Goleman came out with the book "Emotional Intelligence - Why it can matter more than IQ". There are three Emotional Intelligence models developed by the famous psychologists and models are named after them which include Mayor- Salovey Model, Daniel Goleman's Model and Bar-On Model of Emotional- Social Intelligence. For the purpose of research, the researcher considered third model Bar-On's Model of Emotional - Social Intelligence measured by Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) for assessing individual meditators emotional and social competencies.

Subjective well-being (SWB) refers to how people experience their quality of lives in relation to emotional reaction and cognitive judgment. According to an American

Psychologist, Ed Diener, Subjective well-being is a multidimensional which includes both positive and negative emotions, global satisfaction, and satisfaction with different aspects of one's life. Among the various scales developed by the psychologists the scales developed by Ed Diener et al. was considered for the presentation research which include Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS), Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE) and Flourishing Scale. Therefore it is clear that both emotion intelligence and subjective well being are mind and body related. To become emotionally intelligent and to ensure well-being, meditation remains as a back bone. Thus the researcher has taken an initiative to study the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence and subjective well-being among the meditators.

1.1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Today's era of tech-savvy, the human beings are with high desire to live their life with ultra modern facilities and high level of sophistication. In order to fulfill their needs and their desire they put themselves in physical and mental pressure. To rejuvenate the mental ill- health and to balance emotions people practice meditation. The present study attempts to ascertain whether there significant relationship between mediation, emotional intelligence and subjective well-being.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To analyze the significant relationship between meditation, emotional intelligence and subjective well-being through Structural Equation Modelling.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research has been considered the most appropriate for the study. The researcher used both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected from the meditators who had undergone meditation for the period of minimum eight weeks in Erode District. The secondary data was collected from all associated sources such as books, magazines, journals and internet web sources. Simple random sampling techniques were used as sampling techniques. . The sampling units were selected by covering the meditators in all six taluks of Erode District. The sample size was 727 respondents.

2.1. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study has the following limitations.

- This study is encompassed to the meditators of Erode District only. Hence, the findings are not generalized.
- Respondents' bias in understanding the questionnaire is also considered.

Thus the generalization of the findings of the study is subject to above limitations.

3. IMPACT OF MEDITATION ON EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL - BEING : STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELLING

Structural Equation Model is used to test and eliminate causal relationship using a combination of statistical data and qualitative caused assumptions. There is no difficulty in hypothesis testing in SEM because it takes the confirmatory approach rather than the exploratory approach. Many sub-criteria are considered under each criterion. This is the reason why the relative weightage arrived from SEM is considered more valid than through any other approach. This model also takes measurement error into account when analyzing the data statistically. SEM is capable of estimating or assessing measurement error. It can incorporate both observed and latent variables.

When interpreting structural equation model the values attached to one way arrows (or directional effect) are regression coefficient, whereas two way arrows (non directional relationship) are correlation coefficient; Regression coefficient correlation comprise the 'parameters' of the model. The regression coefficient and correlations measure the strength of the relationship between the variable. The regression coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates a very strong relationship, 0.50-0.69 indicates a substantial relationship, 0.30-0.49 indicates a moderate relationship, 0.10-0.29 indicates a low relationship, 0.01-0.09 indicates a negligible relationship and the value of 0 indicates no relationship.

Impact of Meditation Model

In order to ascertain the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence and Subjective Well-Being among the selected meditators in Erode District, the structural equation model was applied. For, age, educational qualification, period of practicing meditation and duration of meditation in a day are considered as exogenous or independent variables. The impact of meditation on emotional intelligence, level of increasing emotional intelligence, five dimensions of the Subjective Well-Being variables viz., Achievers, Charismatics, Diplomatic, Progressive and Optimistic Thinkers and Delighters which have found from factor analysis technique are considered as endogenous or dependent.

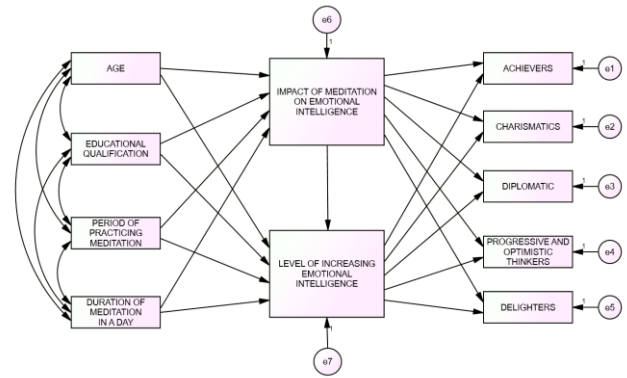


FIG. 1: HYPOTHESES FORMULATED MODEL - IMPACT OF MEDITATION

Testing a measurement model is underlying a full structural model first. If the fit of the measurement model is found acceptable, then one should proceed to test the structural model. The structural equation model was conducted to assess the construct validity by using the maximum likelihood method. The confirmatory test result showed good fit as shown in the following model fit summary table.

TABLE NO. 1: MODEL FIT SUMMARY

No.	Test Factor	Value	Criteria*	Result
1	Chi-Square	103.1	p>0.05	1% level
2	Chi-Square / df (30)	3.436	2.0-5.0	Good Fit
3	GFI (Goodness-of-fit index)	0.978	>0.95	Good Fit
4	AGFI (Adjusted goodness-of-fit index)	0.956	>0.95	Good Fit
5	CFI (Comparative fit index)	0.988	>0.95	Good Fit
6	NFI (Normed fit index)	0.958	>0.95	Good Fit
7	TLI (Tucker-Lewis index)	0.967	>0.95	Good Fit
8	RMSEA (Root mean square error of approximation)	0.042	<0.07	Good Fit

A model is said to fulfil the criteria of goodness of fit, if it satisfies certain values which are given by the above table. Based on these values, estimated value for the model is 3.436 which satisfied the required condition. Similarly, the required value of root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 0.07. Against this value, the estimated model value is 0.042 which highly validates the result. Similarly, model fit indices (GFI-0.978, AGFI-0.956, CFI-0.988, NFI-0.958 and TLI-0.967) for this model indicates that the model fits well.

Research Hypothesis

On the basis of the above presented hypotheses model, the following null hypotheses are proposed.

- H₁-H₄ : There is no significant association between age, educational qualification, period of practicing meditation, duration of meditation in a day and impact of meditation on emotional intelligence.
- H₅-H₈ : There is no significant association between age, educational qualification, period of practicing meditation, duration of meditation in a day and level of increasing emotional intelligence.
- H₉ : There is no significant association between impact of medication on emotional intelligence and level of increasing emotional intelligence.
- H₁₀-H₁₄ : There is no significant association between impact of meditation on emotional intelligence and five dimensions of Subjective Well-Being variables Achievers, Charismatics, Diplomatic, Progressive and Optimistic Thinkers and Delighters.
- H₁₅-H₁₉ : There is no significant association between level of increasing emotional intelligence and five dimensions of Subjective Well-Being variables Achievers, Charismatics, Diplomatic, Progressive and Optimistic Thinkers and Delight

Impact of meditation on emotional intelligence increases their level of increasing emotional intelligence positively increases. When the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence increases, the meditators' Subjective Well-Being characteristics like achievers, charismatics, diplomatic, progressive and optimistic thinkers and delighters also increases. On the other hand, when the level of increasing emotional intelligence increases, the meditators' Subjective Well-Being characteristics like achievers, charismatics, diplomatic, progressive and optimistic thinkers and delighters also increases in Erode District.

SUGGESTIONS

- Increase in educational qualification of the meditators affects the impact of meditation on emotional intelligence decreases. Hence, it is suggested to the meditators, first trust the meditation and they should continuously practice meditation that brought significant improvements in general intelligence and cognitive level which gives the confidence level to do the continuous practice of meditation and result in increasing emotional intelligence level and Subjective Well-Being status.
- Impact of meditation on emotional intelligence and level of increasing emotional intelligence reflects positively on subjective well-being characteristics of the meditators. So, meditators should give importance of practicing meditation continuously.

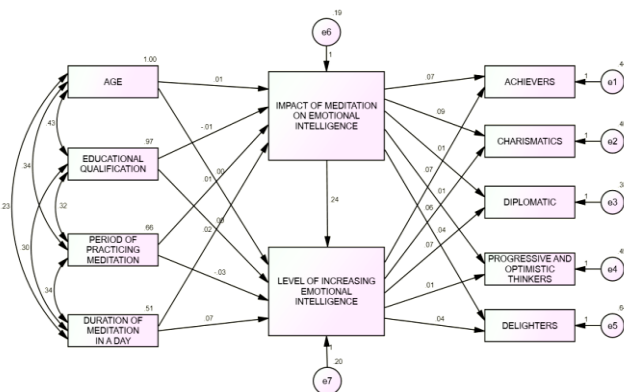


FIG. 2: RESULTED HYPOTHESES MODEL – IMPACT OF MEDITATION

It is found from the structural equation modelling that age, period of practicing meditation, duration of meditation in a day of the selected meditators increases their impact of meditation on emotional intelligence also increases. When the educational qualification of the meditators increases, their impact of meditation on emotional intelligence decreases. Age and duration of meditation in a day of the respondents increases their level of increasing emotional intelligence also increases. Level of increasing emotional intelligence decreases when the educational qualification and period of practicing meditation of the respondents increases.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The empirical study on the relationship between meditation on Emotional Intelligence and Subjective Well-Being through Structural Equation Modelling was a relatively new and interesting field. The study also noticed that emotionally intelligent meditators are good at the task performance, complete their assigned tasks adequately, fulfill their responsibilities and perform tasks that are expected of them. All the facets of emotional intelligence are seen to play a very important role in categorizing the arenas of emotional intelligence amongst the meditators in Erode District. The study contributes to the emerging field of Subjective Well-Being not only from theoretical but also from meditation practitioners' perspective in the study area.

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