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Attention Regulation Of Meditators And Non-meditators Of Class IX

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ABSTRACT

Attention regulation is a pre-requisite condition for all educational endeavors. Related literature on attention regulation reports that it can be improved by meditation practice. It has gained wide acceptance as a contemporary technique for the physical, mental wellbeing of the individuals. The present study investigates the effect of meditation on attention regulation of class IX students by experimental method of research. Non-randomized control group pre test- post test experimental design was used. One month meditation practice was given to the experimental group and the attention regulation of the control and experimental groups was measured by Star Counting Test. The results showed significant improvement in the attention regulation of the participants.

Keywords : Attention regulation, meditation

Introduction

Attention regulation is the regulation of attention. According to Dandapani, S (2000), attention can be described as the selective activity of the human organism whereby one's conscious is focused upon a specific, narrow field to the exclusion of everything else in the environment. According to William James, attention is the taking possession of the mind in clear and vivid form of what seem several simultaneous objects or trains of thought (James, 1890, p. 404).

Attention is the necessary pre condition for all educational endeavors. Therefore it is very important to regulate attention in the students. Many research studies report that attention is effected by meditation (Chan & Woollacott, 2007; Kratter & Hogan, 1983; Rani, N.J.& Rao, P.V., 1996; Sarang & Telles, 2007; Valentine & Sweet, 1999), yoga (Peck, Kehle, Bray, & Theodore, 2005), physical activity (Budde et.al., 2008), amount and quality of sleep (Taras & Potts-Datema, 2005; Noland, Price, Drake, & Telljohann, 2009), level of stress (Braunstein-Bercovitz, 2003; Bartholow, Pearson, Sher, Wieman, Fabiani, & Gratton, et al., 2003); alcohol consumption (Bartholow et al. 2003; Parsons and Nixon, 1998),

The present study aims at studying the effect of meditation on attention regulation. Since ancient times, meditation practice has been explored as a psycho physiological exercise to solve the problems to address the inner problems of existence by attuning to states of higher consciousness. Meditation is an exercise to prevent thoughts in a natural way by deeply relaxing the physical body and then trying to keep the mind concentrate on a particular type of thought.

On surveying the studies on attention regulation in the context of meditation, it was found that results are not conclusive. Several studies show positive impact on attention regulation (Kratter, 1983; Rani, N.J. & Rao, P.V., 1996; Rani, N.J. & Rao, P.V., 2000; Valentine & Sweet P.L.G., 1999). Some show no impact (Sabel 1980 ; Dave Foris 2005) on attention regulation. Therefore the present study was conducted in order to reach conclusive evidence.

Objectives of the study

The objective of the research is:

To study and compare the effect of meditation on attention regulation among class IX students.

Hypothesis

There will be a significant improvement in the attention regulation of experimental group (meditators) students after practicing meditation.

Variables of the study

Independent Variable: Meditation

Dependent Variable: Attention regulation

Controlled Variables: Intelligence, age (13-15 years), Grade (class IX), and SES (only students of middle socio economic status)

Method of research

Experimental method of research was adopted for the present study.

Design of Research

Non-randomized Pre test - Post test Control Group Quasi experimental design was used for the study.

Sample

Four secondary schools of Agra were selected by incidental sampling method depending on the availability and co-operation. Sample of the study consisted of 268 students from four secondary schools. The study was conducted separately in each school. Out of these 268 students, 134 students belong to experimental group (meditator group) and 134 students belong to control group (non-meditator group).

Tools used

- Parallel forms of Star Counting Test were employed to measure the attention regulation of the students.
- Verbal Intelligence Test developed by R.K. Ojha and K. Ray Chowdhury was used to match the students in control and experimental groups.

Procedure

Procedure of the study was conducted in three phases.

Phase I: Pre test

Pre test of Star Counting Test was administered on the students of control and experimental group separately. Verbal intelligence test developed by R.K. Ojha and K. Ray Chowdhury was administered on two sections of class IX. Students in the two groups were matched by pairs on the basis of their intelligence scores. Among the two groups, one group was assigned as control group and the other as an experimental group, by using simple random sampling method (lottery method).

Phase II: Practice of meditation

Experimental group was given experimental treatment for 30 minutes per day, for 30 days. The yogic meditation practice was given by a professional yoga trainer from Patanjali Yoga Centre, Agra, under the supervision of the researcher accompanied by the corresponding class teacher. The object of meditation in this study was a symbol of 'OM'. The five important limbs of ashtanga yoga viz. asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana and dhyana were practiced in this experimental treatment.

The subjects were allowed to concentrate on that symbol for some time to streamline their thoughts, so that they can focus on that symbol. Thereafter, they are further instructed to close their eyes and repeat 'OM' without using lips.

Phase III: Post test

After the experimental treatment, post- test of Star Counting Test was conducted on the students of the both groups.

Analysis of the data

First of all, as regard to the intelligence test, only those pairs in the two groups were included in the sample that can be matched on their intelligence scores, while others were eliminated. Since the students of the two groups were strictly matched, t- test was used to analyze the data.

Findings

To determine the significance of difference between the

means pre and post tests of control and experimental groups, mean, S.D. and t-values are calculated and the results obtained were presented in the table below.

Table 1: Mean, S.D., SE_D and t-values on the Star Counting Test of control and experimental groups

Group	N	Test	Mean	S.D.	t
Control group	134	Pre test	13.48	3.14	1.53(N.S.)
		Post test	13.89	2.87	
Experimental group	134	Pre test	13.43	3.24	10.79*
		Post test	16.56	3.40	

N.S. - Not significant, *Significant at 0.01 level

The above table shows that the significance of difference between pre and post test means of control group is 1.53 with degrees of freedom equal to 133. This value is insignificant at 0.05 level.

The significance of difference between the two means of experimental group is 10.79 with degrees of freedom equal to 133. This value is highly significant at 0.01 level.

This implies that the students of experimental group improved their attention regulation significantly after meditation practice.

Therefore, the hypothesis, 'there will be a significant improvement in the attention regulation of experimental group students after meditation practice' is accepted.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the effect of meditation on attention regulation among students of class IX. Experimental method of research was used with non-randomized pre test post test control group quasi experimental design. The results showed significant improvement in the attention regulation of the students after meditation practice. The findings of the study indicate that the students who participated in meditation practice performed better than their counterparts. Findings of this study are in confirmation with the findings of Kratter (1983), N.J. Rani and P.V. Rao (1996), Valentine, E.R. and

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