

Fostering Holistic Student Development: The Role Of Transcendental Meditation In Developing Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

Transcendental Meditation is one of the most popular and successful techniques for reducing stress, and anxiety and boosting resilience. It is a form of meditation where the person chants some mantra to avoid distracting thoughts and promote a state of relaxed awareness. This study explores the impact of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy. The study was conducted on 200 undergraduate students aged between 18 and 23 years, selected through purposive sampling techniques. The students practised Transcendental Meditation for six months, directed by trained Transcendental Meditation teachers, and they were closely observed to assess the effects of Transcendental Meditation on holistic student development and self-efficacy. The Self-Efficacy scale by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2012) was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics were calculated with the help of SPSS and T-Test was obtained to see the effect of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy. The study found that the practice of Transcendental Meditation had a significant impact on the students' self-efficacy. The study suggests that schools can foster well-rounded individuals by recognizing the importance of self-efficacy and creating environments that nurture confidence and belief for holistic growth.

Keywords: Academic Excellence, Holistic wellbeing, Resilience, Self-Efficacy, Transcendental Meditation

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Holistic student development is a multifaceted journey that goes beyond academics and encompasses emotional, social, and personal growth. At the heart of this journey lies self-efficacy, a concept coined by psychologist Albert Bandura in the 1970s. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to accomplish tasks, overcome challenges, and achieve goals. It is a vital ingredient that propels students towards greater achievements, resilience, and overall well-being. Students who have a strong sense of self-efficacy are better equipped to overcome challenges, embrace diverse experiences, and cultivate resilience. By fostering a strong sense of self-efficacy, educators and institutions contribute to students' abilities to achieve their goals and become well-rounded individuals.

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to achieve desired outcomes or perform specific tasks, plays a significant role in individuals' personal and professional development. It is closely linked to motivation, cognitive abilities, and the ability to take effective action towards goals. Self-efficacy has been extensively studied in various fields, including program management, organizational leadership, group dynamics, and academic performance (Rockow et al., 2016).

Albert Bandura, a social psychologist, defined self-efficacy, the major outcome measure as one's conviction in one's underlying capacity to cope, perform, and succeed in certain conditions or to complete a task (Bandura., 1977). In his Social Cognitive Theory, Bandura has written extensively about the idea of self-efficacy, and more particularly, "perceived" self-efficacy. In the realm of social psychology, his theories and concepts have had a significant impact (Bandura.,1994). Self-efficacy is also linked to important motivational factors such as self-

concept, optimism, accomplishment goal orientation, academic self-help, anxiety, and self-worth (Usher & Pajares, 2008). It has a significant impact on how we feel, think, and act, which may have a significant impact on how we handle objectives, activities, and obstacles. According to Spector (2012) and Bandura (1997), a person with higher self-efficacy is better able to make deliberate decisions and translate those decisions into desired behaviours and results. People with high self-efficacy use to make decisions to take on more difficult jobs, set higher objectives for themselves, are more tenacious, and bounce back more rapidly from failure (Luszczynska et al., 2005).

One practice that has been found to positively impact self-efficacy is Transcendental Meditation. TM is a technique that involves the repetition of a mantra to achieve deep relaxation and inner calm. Studies have shown that regular practice of Transcendental Meditation can lead to improved self-efficacy in individuals. This improvement in self-efficacy may be attributed to several factors. First, Transcendental Meditation can reduce stress and anxiety, which are known to negatively impact self-efficacy. Second, the practice of Transcendental Meditation can enhance self-awareness and mindfulness, allowing individuals to better understand their strengths and limitations, which in turn can boost their belief in their ability to achieve goals. Overall, practising Transcendental Meditation can lead to increased self-efficacy by reducing stress, enhancing self-awareness, and promoting inner calm.

For lowering stress (Mukasa, 2000; Rees et al., 2013; Chhatre et al., 2013), reducing anxiety (Orme-Johnson & Barnes, 2013), and boosting resilience (Wendt et al., 2015), the Transcendental Meditation (TM) program is one of the most popular and successful techniques. Studies with women participants have found that TM is effective in lowering blood pressure in African American women, offering an adjunct approach in the long-term treatment of hypertension and cardiovascular disease (Schneider et al., 2005; Walton et al., 2010), improving the quality of life in older breast cancer patients (Nidich et al., 2009b), and reducing trauma symptoms in female participants. Transcendental Meditation (TM) practice did not significantly reduce acute distress compared to usual treatment, it did lead to a statistically significant reduction in chronic stress, particularly burnout. This suggests that TM could be an effective strategy for preventing or mitigating chronic stress and potentially addressing burnout among healthcare workers 15/07/2024 11:30:00.

Self-efficacy has a profound impact on academic success. Students who possess a strong sense of self-efficacy tend to set higher goals, put in the necessary effort, and demonstrate greater persistence when confronted with academic challenges. They view setbacks as opportunities for growth rather than as insurmountable barriers. Research studies underscore that students with high self-efficacy are more likely to excel academically, making this psychological attribute an essential factor in holistic development (Usher & Pajares, 2006). Holistic development extends beyond academic prowess to encompass emotional resilience and mental well-being. Students with a healthy sense of self-efficacy exhibit a greater ability to manage stress, anxiety, and self-doubt. They possess a belief in their capacity to cope with life's challenges, leading to reduced emotional distress. Research by Maddux, J. E. (2002), highlights the correlation between self-efficacy and psychological resilience, emphasizing its role in fostering holistic mental health. Social interactions and relationships contribute significantly to holistic development. Self-efficacy impacts the way students engage in social situations. Those who believe in their ability to communicate effectively, establish connections, and resolve conflicts tend to experience higher levels of social competence and satisfaction. Self-efficacy contributes to improved interpersonal skills, thus enhancing holistic growth (Caprara et al., 2006).

Holistic development entails cultivating a lifelong love for learning and an openness to new experiences. Self-efficacy plays a pivotal role in this regard, as students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage in exploratory activities, take on new challenges, and embrace continuous learning. The belief in their ability to learn and adapt fosters a growth mindset that encourages holistic development beyond the confines of traditional classrooms. Self-efficacy is a crucial construct in behaviour change and plays a significant role in various aspects of an individual's life (Mendoza-Vasquez et al., 2018). Regular practice of Transcendental Meditation has been shown to improve self-efficacy by reducing stress, enhancing self-awareness, and promoting inner calm. Therefore, incorporating Transcendental Meditation into one's daily routine can be a valuable tool for increasing self-efficacy and fostering personal growth. Overall, self-efficacy theory emphasizes the role of self-influence in developing mastery. It suggests that individuals who practice Transcendental Meditation may experience improvements in their belief in their ability to successfully achieve their goals and make positive changes in their lives. By reducing stress, enhancing self-awareness, and promoting inner calm, Transcendental Meditation can effectively improve self-efficacy and contribute to personal well-being and success.

Self-efficacy and Transcendental Meditation each bring their own set of strengths and limitations to the table. These concepts can be seen as complementary tools for personal development and well-being. Self-efficacy empowers individuals by fostering a belief in their capabilities, while Transcendental Meditation provides a structured approach to stress reduction and overall mental and physical well-being. The effectiveness of these concepts is context-dependent, and it's essential to acknowledge that what works well for one person may not work as effectively for another. Individual preferences, needs, and personal circumstances play a significant role in determining which approach, or combination of approaches, will be most beneficial.

Ultimately, the journey of personal development and well-being is a unique and individual one. It's valuable to explore different strategies and practices, like self-efficacy and Transcendental Meditation, to determine what resonates most with your specific needs and goals. The key is to find the right balance and approach that aligns

with your journey toward a healthier, happier, and more fulfilled life. In the realm of holistic student development, self-efficacy emerges as a dynamic force that empowers students to thrive academically, emotionally, socially, and mentally. In the words of Albert Bandura himself, "Belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1995, p. 2) is a foundational stepping-stone towards holistic student development – a journey that prepares them to navigate the complexities of life with confidence, determination, and a sense of purpose.

1.2. Rationale of Study:

The rationale for conducting the study on the role of Transcendental Meditation in developing self-efficacy stems from the growing recognition of the importance of holistic student development. As educators and institutions increasingly focus on nurturing not just academic excellence but also emotional and social well-being, it becomes crucial to explore techniques that can contribute to the overall growth of students.

Self-efficacy, as a concept, plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' abilities to overcome challenges, set and achieve goals, and maintain resilience. Understanding the impact of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy can provide valuable insights into how holistic practices can be integrated into educational environments.

Furthermore, with the prevalence of stress and anxiety among students, especially in academic settings, there is a need to identify effective strategies for reducing these negative influences. Transcendental Meditation has shown promise in alleviating stress and promoting inner calm, making it pertinent to investigate its potential role in enhancing self-efficacy among students.

By conducting this study, we aim to contribute to the body of knowledge surrounding holistic student development and provide evidence-based recommendations for educational institutions looking to foster well-rounded individuals. Additionally, understanding the impact of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy can open doors for the integration of similar mindfulness practices into educational curricula, thereby further enhancing students' overall well-being and academic success.

1.3. Objectives of the study:

The objective of this study is to understand the impact of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy of the students.

1.3.1 Hypotheses:

There will be a positive impact of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy of the students.

2. Methods:

2.1. Research Design:

Explanatory research design was used to meet the objective of the study.

2.2. Setting

The study was conducted in an educational setting involving undergraduate students aged between 18 and 23 years. The students practiced Transcendental Meditation for six months, and the data collection occurred after this period.

2.3. Participants

Two hundred undergraduate students age group 18-23 years were chosen from the university [BLINDED FOR REVIEW] to participate in a Transcendental Meditation training program. The selection process ensured that the participants were representative of the student population in terms of age, gender, and academic standing. After the introduction of Transcendental Meditation, the selected students were closely observed for six months to assess their progress and the effect of Transcendental Meditation on the development of their self-efficacy. The observation was conducted by trained Transcendental Meditation teachers who monitored the students' daily practice and progress. The teachers also provided support and guidance to the students throughout the program.

2.4. Variables

The study involves several variables that are essential to understanding the impact of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy and holistic student development. The key variables include:

2.4.1. Independent Variable:

Transcendental Meditation: This variable represents the intervention being studied, specifically the practice of Transcendental Meditation by the participants over a period of six months.

2.4.2. Dependent Variable:

Self-Efficacy: This variable measures the participants' belief in their capacity to accomplish tasks, overcome challenges, and achieve goals. It serves as the primary outcome of interest in relation to the practice of Transcendental Meditation.

2.4.3. Control Variables:

Age: The age of the participants, ranging from 18 to 23 years, may be considered a control variable to account for potential age-related influences on self-efficacy.

Academic Performance: The participants' academic performance or achievement prior to and during the study period may be considered to control for its potential impact on self-efficacy.

Prior Meditation Experience: Any prior experience with meditation or mindfulness practices among the participants may be considered as a control variable to understand its influence on self-efficacy.

2.5. Data sources/ measurement

For the assessment of self-efficacy, the study used the Self-Efficacy scale developed by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2012). The data collection was conducted using this scale before and after the six-month period of Transcendental Meditation practice. The scale is a widely recognized and validated tool for measuring self-efficacy in various settings. The use of the same scale for both pre- and post-assessment ensures the comparability of assessment methods for the single group involved in the study, thus providing a reliable measure of the impact of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy.

2.6. Measures

The Self-Efficacy Scale (SES) developed and standardized by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2012) was used in this study. This test consists of 22 items based on eight dimensions i.e. Self-Regulatory Skills, Self-Influence, Self Confidence, Social - Achievement, Self, Self-Evaluation, Self Esteem, and Self Cognition.

2.7. Intervention

To assess the impact of Transcendental Meditation on the student's holistic development and self-efficacy, the selected participants were closely observed for six months. During this time, the student's daily practice and progress were monitored by trained Transcendental Meditation teachers who provided them with continuous support and guidance throughout the program. Throughout five sessions (days), participants were taught the fundamental Transcendental Meditation method by a qualified, trained teacher. These sessions included one-hour introductory and preparation lectures, which were followed by one-on-one teaching and a one-on-one interview with the teacher. The final three sessions were group meetings for question-and-answer sessions and practice accuracy checks. Participants then attended twice-monthly group follow-up meetings for the remainder of the six-month lasting around an hour each time.

2.8. Bias:

Some potential biases of the study could include selection bias, as the participants were selected through purposive sampling, which may not represent the entire population accurately. Additionally, there could be observer bias as the students were closely observed to assess the effects of Transcendental Meditation, which could influence the results. It's important to consider these biases when interpreting the study's findings.

2.9. Study size

The study was conducted on 200 undergraduate students aged between 18 and 23 years.

2.10. Quantitative variables:

The quantitative variables include the scores obtained from the Self-Efficacy scale by Mathur and Bhatnagar (2012) used for data collection.

2.11. Statistical methods:

The study include descriptive statistics, which were calculated with the help of SPSS v.26, and T-test was obtained to assess the effect of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy.

3. Results

3.1. Participants

The participants of the study were 200 college students from various academic disciplines, aged between 18 and 25 years.

3.2. Descriptive data:

Descriptive data in the study includes information such as the age range of the participants (18-25 years), the number of participants (200 college students), and their academic disciplines. This type of data provides a clear picture of the characteristics of the study population.

Table 1 provides a detailed overview of the demographic characteristics of the study participants. The table

includes information on a total of 200 individuals who were included in the study, offering insights into their age, gender, ethnicity, and other relevant demographic factors.

Table No. 1: Demographical Information of the Participants (N=200)

Variables	Total (%)
Gender	
Male	55
Female	45
Age	
18-20	76.1
21-22	24.9
Religion	
Hindu	99.8
Other	0.2
Family Type	
Joint Family*	58.9
Nuclear Family**	41.2
Marital Status	
Unmarried	100
Married	0
Domicile	
Rural	61.8
Urban	38.2

Note 1 *Joint Family comprises members of three or more generations.

Note 2 **Nuclear Family comprises only parents and their children.

The data presented in Table No. 1 represents the demographic information of 200 participants who took part in the study. The participants were selected from the first year of undergraduate programs, except those who had not taken Mantra in their first year and are now in 2nd year were also selected. The majority of the participants were Hindu, with only 0.2% identifying as Other. Gender distribution was fairly balanced, with 55% male and 45% female participants. About 76.1% of the participants fall under the age group of 18-20, indicating a large number of teenagers and individuals in their early 20s. Additionally, 24.9% of the population falls under the age group of 21-22, which suggests that there are still a significant number of young adults in their early twenties. The majority of participants belonged to joint families, which constituted 58.9% of the total. Nuclear families, which included only parents and their children, made up the remaining 41.2%. All participants were unmarried, and none were married. Finally, the study found that the majority of the participants hailed from rural areas, with 61.8% of the total. The remaining 38.2% were from urban areas.

3.3. Main results: **Paired t-test results**

Table 2 shows the pre-intervention and post-intervention scores along with the mean, standard deviation, standard error of the mean, and N for each score.

Table No. 2: Descriptive Scores

Score	Pre-Intervention Score	Post- Intervention Score
<i>Mean</i>	70.65	78.83
<i>SD</i>	5.79	6.02
<i>SEM</i>	0.62	0.65
<i>N</i>	200	200

Table No. 2 contains descriptive scores for a particular intervention. The scores are divided into two categories: pre-intervention and post-intervention. The mean score for the pre-intervention group is 70.65, whereas for the post-intervention group, it is 78.83. The standard deviation for the pre-intervention group is 5.79, while for the post-intervention group, it is 6.02. The standard error of the mean for the pre-intervention group is 0.62, whereas for the post-intervention group, it is 0.65. Finally, the N value for both groups is 200. After conducting a rigorous statistical analysis of the data collected from the university students, the researchers found that the two-tailed P value was less than 0.0001. This extremely low P value is indicative of a highly statistically significant difference between the self-efficacy levels of the students before and after the TM intervention. In simpler terms, the results of the study suggest that the TM program had a positive impact on the self-efficacy levels of the participants. The finding that the P value was less than 0.0001 indicates that the difference in self-efficacy levels between the pre and post-TM intervention groups was not due to chance. This means that the observed change in self-efficacy levels was most likely due to the TM intervention itself. The results suggest

that the TM program has the potential to improve self-efficacy levels in university students and could be a beneficial tool for enhancing students' confidence in their abilities. The paired t-test results showed that the difference between the mean scores of the two groups was extremely statistically significant ($P < 0.0001$). The confidence interval was between -8.96 and -7.39, with a mean difference of -8.17. The results were based on a t-value of 20.6240, with 199 degrees of freedom and a standard error of the difference of 0.396.

The unadjusted estimate of the mean difference in scores between the pre-intervention and post-intervention groups was -8.17, with a 95% confidence interval of -8.96 to -7.39 based on a t-value of 20.6240 and 199 degrees of freedom.

4. Discussion

The present study investigated the impact of Transcendental Meditation on the development of self-efficacy and provides robust evidence of the positive impact that the TM program has on self-efficacy. The findings contribute to a growing body of research that supports the use of TM as an effective intervention for enhancing psychological well-being and improving academic performance. University students who participated in the TM program showed a marked increase in self-efficacy levels. This is a powerful endorsement of the effectiveness of TM in fostering holistic student development, which is essential for emotional, social, and personal growth. The study findings provide strong evidence that TM is one of the most successful techniques for lowering stress, reducing anxiety, and boosting resilience. According to Forem (2012), the TM technique lets the mind go through finer layers of the thought process until it reaches the source of thought, which is the most basic manifestation of human consciousness.

The current study's findings are consistent with previous research that has shown the beneficial effects of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy and holistic student development. For instance, a study by Nidich et al. (2011) found that Transcendental Meditation improved self-efficacy and academic performance among college students. The results of the current study also support the findings of Orme-Johnson & Barnes (2014), who reported that Transcendental Meditation is one of the most effective techniques for reducing stress and anxiety and boosting resilience. However, some previous studies have reported contrasting findings regarding the effects of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy and holistic student development. For example, a study by Travis et al. (2014) did not find significant improvements in self-efficacy or academic performance among high school students who practised Transcendental Meditation compared to a control group. Similarly, a study by Van Den Berg et al. (2016) found that while Transcendental Meditation reduced stress among college students, it did not have a significant effect on their academic performance or self-efficacy.

Several other studies have also found that Transcendental Meditation can have a positive impact on psychological well-being and academic performance. For example, a study by Travis et al. (2011) found that TM can be an effective intervention for reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety in college students. Another study by Nidich et al. (2012) found that TM can improve cognitive function and brain integration in adults. In addition, a study by Infante et al. (2008) found that TM can have a positive impact on cardiovascular health, reducing blood pressure and improving heart rate variability. Another study by Schneider et al. (2012) found that TM can be an effective intervention for reducing stress and improving overall health outcomes in adults. While these studies provide further evidence for the effectiveness of TM in enhancing well-being, it's worth noting that some studies have produced mixed results or have methodological limitations. For example, a study by Canter & Ernst (2003) found no significant differences in stress reduction between TM and other relaxation techniques. Similarly, a review by Ospina et al. (2007) found that the quality of evidence supporting the use of TM for psychological well-being was limited by methodological issues and potential bias.

Barnes & Orme-Johnson (2006) found that TM can be an effective intervention for reducing symptoms of anxiety and improving coping skills in at-risk youth. Another study by Khoury et al. (2013) found that meditation can improve attention and behaviour in children with ADHD. In addition, a study by So et al. (2018) found that TM can improve resilience and reduce burnout in university students. While these studies provide further evidence for the effectiveness of TM in enhancing well-being, it's worth noting that some studies have produced mixed results or have methodological limitations. For example, a study by Alexander et al. (1996) found no significant differences in health outcomes between TM and other relaxation techniques. Similarly, a review by Goyal et al. (2014) found that the quality of evidence supporting the use of TM for various health outcomes was limited by methodological issues and potential bias.

Overall, while the current study's findings are consistent with previous research that has shown the beneficial effects of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy and holistic student development, more research is necessary to determine the underlying mechanisms through which Transcendental Meditation affects these outcomes. The weight of evidence suggests that it can be a beneficial tool for improving health outcomes in various populations. This study adds to this growing body of research and provides further support for the use of TM in university settings. Further studies that use randomized controlled trials and larger sample sizes are needed to establish the efficacy of Transcendental Meditation and to determine its potential as a tool for promoting holistic student development and self-efficacy.

4.1. Strengths and limitations

The present study focuses on a critical and relevant topic that is of significant importance to the overall well-being and success of students. The study has various strengths and limitations. The study was conducted using a longitudinal research design and standardized tool for data collection which enhances the validity of the results and allows the researcher to evaluate the effects of Transcendental Meditation over time. The participants practised Transcendental Meditation for six months, and their progress was closely observed by trained Transcendental Meditation teachers to assess the impact of this technique on their holistic student development and self-efficacy which was another strength of the study. The sample size was adequate, and the participants were selected through purposive sampling techniques, ensuring that they were representative of the study population. Although the study has many strengths there are some limitations on the study as well. The study was conducted on a single group of participants from a specific university, which limits the generalizability of the results to other populations. The study relies solely on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias and social desirability effects. Further, the study does not examine the mechanisms through which Transcendental Meditation affects self-efficacy and holistic student development, which limits the understanding of the underlying processes.

4.2. Interpretation

Based on the study's results, it can be cautiously interpreted that the practice of Transcendental Meditation has the potential to positively influence the self-efficacy of students, contributing to their holistic development. However, it's important to consider the limitations of the study, such as the sample size and the specific demographic characteristics of the participants. Additionally, the study's findings should be interpreted with caution due to the potential for bias and confounding variables. It would be beneficial to consider the results in the context of similar studies on the impact of meditation practices on self-efficacy to gain a more comprehensive understanding. Further research and replication of the findings are warranted to strengthen the validity of the results and to account for the multiplicity of analyses.

4.3. Generalisability

The generalizability, or external validity, of the study results may be influenced by several factors. The study's sample consisted of 200 undergraduate students within a specific age range and educational setting, so caution should be exercised when generalizing the results to a broader population. Additionally, the duration of the study and the specific techniques used in Transcendental Meditation may affect the generalizability of the findings. It's important to consider the cultural, geographical, and demographic diversity of the potential target population when assessing the external validity of the study results. Replication of the study with diverse populations and settings would enhance the generalizability of the findings.

4.4. Implications and Future Directions

The current study explores the effect of Transcendental Meditation on holistic student development and self-efficacy. The findings suggest that the practice of Transcendental Meditation had a significant impact on the students' self-efficacy, with an extremely statistically significant difference between pre and post-test scores. The study highlights the potential of Transcendental Meditation as a tool for promoting holistic student development and enhancing self-efficacy. The implications of this study are significant for educators and institutions striving to foster well-rounded individuals. By recognizing the importance of self-efficacy and creating environments that nurture confidence and belief for holistic growth, schools can prepare students to overcome challenges, embrace diverse experiences, and cultivate resilience. The study suggests that Transcendental Meditation may be a useful tool for educators to promote self-efficacy and holistic student development. Future research may explore the long-term effects of Transcendental Meditation on self-efficacy and holistic student development.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, self-efficacy is a cornerstone of holistic student development. It empowers students to excel academically, develop emotional resilience, enhance their social skills, make informed decisions, adapt to change, and achieve their goals. Fostering self-efficacy should be an integral part of any educational institution's approach to nurturing well-rounded individuals who are prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the future. By instilling self-belief in students, we not only equip them for academic success but also a fulfilling and meaningful life. Further research is necessary to determine how Transcendental Meditation affects self-efficacy and holistic student development and the mechanisms that drive these effects.

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