



Effect of Om Meditation on anxiety of college students

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Abstract

Anxiety is prevalent among college students, impacting their academic performance and overall well-being. This study explores the effectiveness of Om meditation in alleviating anxiety among college students. Om chanting is known for its calming effects on the mind, potentially reducing stress and anxiety levels. The study involved 30 college students from various colleges in the Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh, selected through convenient sampling. The Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT) developed by A.K. P. Sinha and L.N.K. Sinha was administered to assess anxiety levels before and after intervention of 6 days training programme of Om meditation. Pre- and post-intervention SCAT assessments were conducted to measure any changes in anxiety levels. Results indicate a significant reduction in anxiety scores post-meditation, demonstrating the effectiveness of Om meditation in alleviating anxiety among college students ($p < 0.01$). Om meditation offers various benefits including stress reduction, mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, relaxation, improved concentration, emotional well-being, and self-awareness. Incorporating Om meditation into daily practice can be beneficial for students dealing with severe anxiety.

Keywords: Om meditation, anxiety, college students, stress reduction, mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, relaxation, emotional well-being, self-awareness

Introduction

Student life builds foundation of life. But in present time due to modern lifestyle a numbers of students are suffering from various mental disorders in which Anxiety is most common disorders among them. In everyday contexts, anxiety is a term used to describe uncomfortable and unpleasant feelings that an individual experiences when in stressful or fearful situations.

Anxiety is a major hurdle. It is believed that this problem is on increases to the cultural complexity. Due to anxiety students are unable to give their better performance. To achieve the target, students are bound to take extra educational load compare to their age. As a result, they feel anxious in academic field in the form of panic, helpless, and mental disorganization. Anxiety in college students stems mainly from their life experiences, and expectations/assumptions they make as a result (Ajmal and Ahmad, 2019) ^[1].

Om chanting is one such technique that can really root out anxiety from the entire world. The daily practices of Om mantra can be the helpful for reducing stress, anxiety and other types of mental health complexes (Dev, 2013) ^[2]. Chanting Om on regular basis, for just five minutes, can significantly reduce anxiety levels. This is because the sound of Om is believed to have a calming effect on the mind, which can help to reduce feelings of anxiety and promote feelings of anxiety and promote a sense of calmness. The practice of merely listening to the Om chanting attentively can calm down the mind and keep the listener's levels of anxiety and anger under check (Singh *et al.*, 2019) ^[5].

Jain and Sharma (2017) ^[3] conducted a research study on 120 participants (60 male and 60 Female) and analyzing the result it is found that Om meditation effects positively on Anxiety and depression in experimental group.

Kakodkar *et al.* (2016) ^[4] have done a study in which the Anxiety score of experimental group was significantly lower but in control group no significant difference was found. The study result indicated that practice of Om meditation (10-minute) could decrease the anxiety levels and increase the comfort levels among students.

Singh, *et al.* (2014) studied on measures of mindfulness and anxiety in OM mediators and non-mediators in which the Om mediators group showed significantly lower state and total anxiety as compared to the non-mediators group. Results indicate that the Om meditation practice reduced the levels of psychological anxiety and improved the levels of mindfulness.

Considering the importance of Om meditation in reducing anxiety the present research is undertaken with following objective.

Objective

To study the effect of Om meditation on Anxiety of College Students.

Sample

The sample consist of 30 college students from colleges of Amroha district of Uttar Pradesh selected through convenient sampling.

Tool Description

Sinha's Comprehensive Anxiety Test (SCAT) developed by A.K. P. Sinha and L.N.K. Sinha is used. It consist of 90 items. A score of 1 is given to Yes response and a score of 0 is given to no response. The reliability coefficient through test-retest method and odd-even method was found to 0.85 and 0.92. The coefficient of validity was determined by determining coefficient of correlation between scores on Comprehensive Anxiety Test and on Taylor's Manifest Anxiety scale and was found 0.62.

Procedure of Data Collection

The students were contacted at their respective place of study and the purpose of the research is communicated to them after their agreement in participation in 6 days training programme for anxiety reduction through Om meditation. They were given the SCAT before and after the two weeks of intervention. The proper rapport was established before the training and data collection. The 6 days training program aims to reduce anxiety among participants through Om Meditation. Each week, sessions lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour are conducted, supplemented by daily personal meditation practice of 10-20 minutes.

The training program covers the following key points

Day 1: Introduction to Om Meditation

- Overview and goals of the program.
- Explanation of Om meditation and its anxiety reduction benefits.
- Brief guided meditation focusing on deep breathing and relaxation.
- Om chanting session.

Day 2: Understanding Om

- Significance of Om in spiritual traditions.
- Scientific basis of meditation and anxiety reduction.
- Practice session: Introduction to chanting Om for calming effects.
- Om chanting session.

Day 3: Posture and Breath

- Proper meditation posture.
- Breath's role in calming mind and body.
- Guided meditation on posture and breathe awareness.
- Om chanting session.

Day 4: Mindfulness and Awareness

- Introduction to mindfulness for anxiety management.
- Practice mindful awareness of thoughts, emotions, and sensations.
- Discussion on integrating mindfulness into daily life.
- Om chanting session.

Day 5: Anxiety Awareness

- Identifying personal stressors and triggers which produces anxiety.
- Understanding anxiety effects.
- Guided meditation for stress reduction.
- Om chanting session.

Day 6: Personal Practice

- Encourage daily 10-20 min meditation.
- Provide resources for guided sessions.
- Om chanting session.

Each day ends with an Om chanting session to reinforce relaxation and focus.

The scores obtained at the time of pre and post-testing are compared through paired 't' test. The results are presented below:

Results and Discussion

Table 1: Comparison of Anxiety Scores before and after Om Meditation Session

	Pre	Post
Mean	32.267	24.467
S.D.	5.420	5.380
N	30	30
SEm	0.990	0.982
Mean Difference	7.800	
t'	56.131	
p value	0.000	

The above table shows that mean scores on Anxiety Scale at the time of pre-testing is 32.267 and at the time of post testing it was 24.467. The mean difference was found 7.800 and the 't' score was 56.131 which is significant at 0.01 level. It infers that there is significant difference between anxiety scores at the time of pre and post testing of Om Meditation Session. Furthermore, the mean scores shows that there is significant reduction in anxiety. It clearly indicates that there is significant effect of Om Meditation in reduction of anxiety of college students.

The mean score is divided by total possible anxiety scores and then after multiplication by 100 the mean score is converted into personal stress score which is presented in Table2

Table 2: Comparison of anxiety (in percentage)

	Pre-test	Post-test
Anxiety in Percent	35.85	27.19

The anxiety of college students is 35.85 percent before Om Meditation Session while it is reduced to 27.19 percent after Om Meditation Session. It clearly indicates that there is effect of Om Meditation on reducing anxiety of college students.

The anxiety of student are decreased may be due to these reasons, Firstly, it induces the relaxation response in the body. By practicing Om meditation, individuals activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which counteracts the "fight or flight" response associated with stress and anxiety. This leads to a reduction in the production of stress hormones like cortisol, promoting feelings of calmness and relaxation. Secondly, Om meditation cultivates mindfulness and present-moment awareness. By focusing on the chanting of "Om" and observing the breath, individuals learn to acknowledge and accept their thoughts and emotions without judgment. This mindfulness practice helps to break the cycle of anxious rumination and allows individuals to respond to stressful situations more effectively. Thirdly, Om meditation promotes cognitive restructuring. Through regular practice, individuals become more adept at recognizing and challenging negative thought patterns associated with anxiety. By reframing irrational beliefs and adopting more balanced perspectives, individuals can reduce the intensity of their anxiety symptoms. Moreover, the rhythmic chanting of "Om" during meditation has a soothing effect on the nervous system. This repetitive sound induces a sense of relaxation and tranquility, helping individuals to release tension and stress stored in the body. Additionally, Om meditation enhances concentration and focus. By directing attention to the mantra and the breath, individuals develop greater cognitive control and resilience against distractions. This

improved concentration not only deepens the meditative experience but also strengthens the mind's ability to manage anxiety-inducing stimuli.

Furthermore, practicing Om meditation fosters emotional well-being. Studies have shown that regular meditation can increase levels of neurotransmitters associated with positive emotions, such as serotonin and dopamine, while decreasing levels of stress hormones. This shift in neurochemistry contributes to an overall improvement in mood and a reduction in anxiety levels. Overall, Om meditation offers a comprehensive approach to decreasing anxiety by addressing the physiological, psychological, and emotional aspects of the condition. Through regular practice, individuals can cultivate a greater sense of inner peace, resilience, and well-being in their lives.

Conclusion

Meditation, including practices like Om meditation, has been studied extensively for its potential effects on anxiety, stress, and overall mental well-being. Om meditation is a type of mantra meditation where practitioners focus on the repetition of the sound "Om" (pronounced as "Aum"). While individual experiences can vary, there is evidence to suggest that regular meditation, including Om meditation, can have positive effects on anxiety among students and individuals in general. Om meditation can potentially have a significant impact on anxiety levels among students in several ways. One of the primary benefits of Om meditation, similar to other forms of meditation, is its ability to induce the relaxation response in the body. By engaging in this practice, students can reduce the production of stress hormones such as cortisol, leading to an overall decrease in stress and anxiety levels. Om meditation emphasizes mindfulness and present-moment awareness. Through regular practice, students can become more attuned to their thoughts and emotions, allowing them to observe anxious thoughts without immediately reacting to them. Over time, this heightened awareness can lead to better emotional regulation and a reduction in anxiety symptoms. Another potential benefit of Om meditation is cognitive restructuring. By engaging in regular meditation, students may develop the ability to recognize and challenge negative thought patterns, particularly those related to academic pressures or social interactions. This cognitive restructuring can be instrumental in alleviating anxiety and promoting a more positive mindset. Furthermore, the rhythmic chanting of "Om" during meditation can induce a calming effect on the nervous system. This can help students relax both physically and mentally, potentially reducing symptoms of anxiety and promoting a sense of tranquility. In addition, practicing Om meditation requires focused attention on the mantra. This type of concentration can enhance students' ability to concentrate on their studies and tasks, thereby reducing anxiety related to academic performance. Moreover, meditation practices, including Om meditation, have been linked to an increase in positive emotions and a decrease in negative emotions. This shift in emotional well-being can contribute significantly to reducing anxiety levels among students. Finally, Om meditation can foster a greater sense of self-awareness and self-acceptance. Through this practice, students may develop a deeper understanding of themselves, including identifying triggers for their anxiety and developing healthier coping strategies. Overall, Om meditation offers a holistic approach to managing anxiety

among students, addressing both the physical and psychological aspects of this condition. With regular practice, students can cultivate a greater sense of calm, resilience, and well-being in their lives. In a nutshell it can be said that students dealing with severe anxiety should practice Om meditation.

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