

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **APPRAISAL**

#### **8.1 SUMMARY**

The main aims of the study were to evaluate the effect of yoga-based intervention on mindfulness, perceived stress, positive and negative affect, and emotion regulation in working professionals, specifically for leadership and offshore professionals, and also to check the stability of the effect after three months of home practice.

All the variables showed improvement post the 5-day interventional program. While many variables showed statistically significant improvement even after the follow-up period, the effects tend to diminish, compared to the residential intervention. Suppression showed an increase, but the effect was not statistically significant, in both residential and follow up study and for both the study groups. This suggests that mindfulness helps to promote reappraisal strategy more than suppression. Better change in various measures after the 5 day program can be attributed to the intense residential nature of the intervention. Many domains showed promising improvement even after the self-motivated home practice. Ongoing support to learners and supervised guidance post residential intervention can enhance the positive effects of the intervention even after 3 months of follow-up home practice. Overall the results show that the 5-day yoga based residential intervention was helpful in managing the stress levels and enhance psychological wellbeing.

## **8.2 CONCLUSIONS**

Yoga based intervention is effective in addressing the stress of leadership professionals by improving mindfulness, positive affect, and better emotion regulation strategy. The current study introduces cyclic meditation, as a unique yoga based mindfulness intervention, and is shown to enhance overall psychological wellbeing. The intervention can easily be implemented and adopted in a workplace context. The time duration for daily practice is only 30 minutes and addresses the minimum 'dosage' considerations needed for practical implementation in the workplace. Organizations can implement such tailored interventions producing differential effects in workplace setups where the luxury of a full-fledged time consuming intervention is practically limited. Current study also examined the follow-up effect after 3 months and an ongoing support to participants can maximize the effect. Management development programs in corporates can include yoga based interventions as a continuous process for fostering employee wellbeing at workplace.

A second study on offshore professionals, in a high risk work environment, also showed that yoga based intervention program is effective in addressing the stress of offshore employees by improving mindfulness, positive affect, and better emotion regulation strategy, but in order to sustain their effects of yoga after the supervised guidance periodic interventional camps may be needed without which they may succumb to further relapse.

## **8.3 STRENGTHS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH**

Yoga and mindfulness based interventions are increasingly popular for workplace wellbeing. The current study introduced cyclic meditation as a novel yoga based mindfulness intervention for workplace. The study also examined the follow-up effect

after 3 months of home practice following a 5 day residential intervention. Sample size of the post groups in follow-up study post 3 months of intervention was healthy, also considering the sample consisted of working professionals in corporate settings and the sample diversity – both demographic and role related. The study was conducted in a large multinational Indian corporate and in two distinct workforce groups. The first study involved leadership professionals and the second study involved offshore professionals who are engaged in a high-risk work environment which adds to the uniqueness of the study. Several measurement tools were used that assessed inter-related variables, which yielded insights based on the overall preponderance of data and not just a single variable. Both correlation and group differences were studied. CM intervention involves slow gentle movements and is a unique addition to popular meditation studies. The current study also addresses minimum dosage considerations for workplace settings and includes follow up, where in such studies are limited in current literature.

#### **8.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH**

The current study did not have a control group because all the participants were participating in the program as part of their institutional wellbeing promotion program, and therefore the focus was on follow-up study design. The study relies on self reported data and all questionnaires considered were based on participant self reporting, which could have got influenced by social desirability factors. This is one of the limitation of such studies. Also qualitative aspect of data analysis is not considered for the current study. The construct of mindfulness itself is broad and difficult to operationalize and the study used only one prominent measure of mindfulness focusing on attention awareness aspect of mindfulness.

## **8.5 IMPLICATIONS OF THE CURRENT RESEARCH**

Cut throat competition, long hours, multi-tasking, cost cutting business environment, 24/7 work culture, threats to business continuity, natural disasters, employee health issues, unhealthy lifestyles with irregular eating habits and sedentary desk jobs all combine to create a vicious effect of an unwell and disengaged workforce. The future of work requires the workforce to bring high levels of energy, motivation, enthusiasm and creativity in order to create value. A key implication of the study is that a holistic and comprehensive evidence based approach based on yoga and mindfulness can significantly enhance employee wellness and thereby enabling both individual and organizational performance. The intervention can be offered in a contemporary and personalized manner and offers a promising solution to the challenges of modern day workplace.

Mindfulness interventions is known to have many salutary effects. Yoga based component in current mindfulness interventions is shown to have promising differential effects. The current study introduces cyclic meditation as a novel yoga based mindfulness intervention to existing mindfulness intervention research and practice, especially suited for workplace.

The current study showed positive effect of the intervention in two different work contexts – one for leadership professionals and the other for offshore professionals who are engaged in high risk work environment. The study offers promising potential to be replicated in multiple different work settings and industries for enhancing psychological wellbeing of employees.

A key implication of the data is also on the incorporation of post workshop reinforcements right from the early stages of design. Giving equal consideration to the

5 day residential intervention and the 90 day period post intervention is key to enhancement of positive effects of the yoga based mindfulness intervention.

The ease with which a corporate yoga and mindfulness program can be integrated into employee wellness routine can help in rapid deployment, scalability and sustainability of such interventions. The only equipment required for a session of yoga are some floor mats, floor space for practice and a bunch of willing participants with a strong desire for a healthier, more fulfilled life.

With the advent of online training, world class yoga and mindfulness training can be offered by experts in the confines of an office cubicle to any corner of the world.

Live and interactive Yoga and mindfulness sessions delivered right to the company's conference room is a significant advantage to a fast paced corporate work culture. Also the sessions can be personalized to suit the timings and space constraints of companies as also the individual needs of participants and variations can be adopted to accommodate different fitness levels of participant employees. Organizations can implement such tailored interventions producing differential effects in workplace setups where the luxury of full-fledged time-consuming interventions are practically limited.

## **8.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK**

The current study was done on a very large resource based company in India and the same can be replicated in different organizational contexts for generalizability of results. Also, the current study did not have a control group and this can be added in future studies. Different methods of incorporating this intervention into the daily or weekly activities of the organization can also be one potential area to focus on in the future. In the current study, it was observed that due to the lack of supervised

guidance after the program, there is a high chance of further relapse, which needs further attention to maintain an environment of sustained wellbeing.

Future studies can consider factors that can contribute to minimizing the drop out of participants post residential intervention and also include additional factors that can help in maximizing the post 90-day effect of the intervention. Considerations about the environment in which the participants are expected to implement the yoga practices and engage in sustained habit development and positive change, can further enhance the positive effects of the intervention. Mindfulness can act as a cushion against the various stages of burnout and this idea can be further developed in future research and interventions. As mindfulness is a broader construct with many varied definitions and assessments, further studies could examine different mindfulness measurement constructs. Objective measures could also be included in future studies. Additionally qualitative data analysis can yield richer insights. The underlying pathway mechanisms producing the change could be a future area of research.