

Measuring the Effectiveness of Om Chanting on Mindfulness Attention Awareness Level, Psychological Well Being and Altered States of Consciousness in a Comparative Study

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Abstract

The current research investigated the impact of Om chanting on mindfulness, psychological well-being, and states of altered consciousness, namely ego dissolution, in experienced versus novice practitioners. There were 65 participants in total, 35 experienced Om chanters with over one year of consistent practice and 30 novice chanters with under one year of practice. Online surveys and offline chanting sessions were used to collect the data. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS), Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale (18-item version), and the Ego Dissolution Inventory (EDI) were filled out by participants. Group differences were compared using independent-samples t-tests. Analysis yielded that experienced chanters reported significantly greater mindfulness, ego dissolution, and psychological well-being in several areas of functioning, i.e., autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, and purpose in life.

Differences were marginally significant for self-acceptance and nonsignificant for positive relations. Effect sizes varied from medium to large, highlighting significant differences between groups. These results indicate that Om chanting is an independent contemplative practice that maximizes both attentional and eudaimonic well-being components, in addition to enabling states of self-transcendence. Nevertheless, because of the cross-sectional design, causal conclusions cannot be drawn. Subsequent studies must utilize experimental or longitudinal designs to validate directions of these effects and incorporate neurophysiological measures to correlate subjective reports with objective indicators of altered states.

Keywords

Om chanting, mindfulness, psychological well-being, ego dissolution, altered states of consciousness, comparative study.