Effective Leadership Through Yogic Practices

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Abstract

Leadership is an art of influencing people at workplaces. The successive drive of modern organizations relies on the leader's ability at workplaces. The leaders in the present day scenario need multi-facet skills like communication, motivation, strategic and political management to acquire and update skills and abilities. A leader needs to enhance his concentration and focus. This is feasible through yoga practices. Yoga derives from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" which means to unite or integrate. It is a Physical, Mental and Spiritual discipline which has originated from ancient India. This study aims to explore the aspects related to yoga practices and its influence on leadership effectiveness and behaviour. For this study, the data is collected from 480 Yoga practitioners from various Yoga centers of Madurai Zone. Convenience sampling technique is used to select sample. From the study it is found that there is direct effect of compassion, concentration, awareness on leadership effectiveness which subsequently influence leadership outcome

Keywords – *Leadership effectiveness, leadership performance, Yoga practices*

Introduction

The Greatest gift of India to the world is Yoga. Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit word "Yuj" which means "to unite or integrate" It is a physical, mental and spiritual discipline originated in ancient India. Yoga in essence is the integration of the body-mind-intellect with the self, individual witvvh the family, the family with the society, the society with the nation and the nation with the whole creation. Yoga is a way of life based on the vision of oneness. Yoga focuses on the Individual's

1. **Physical level:** Makes the body work more efficiently by directing the energies in the most controlled fashion.
2. **Mental level:** Enhances the power of imagination, creativity and the will power of the mind.
3. **Intellectual level:** Enhances the power of sharpness and comprehensive development of the intellect with powerful concentration.
4. **Emotional level:** Enables to systematically sharpen and sensitize their emotions.
5. **Spiritual level:** Helps to move towards the casual state of mind by introspection wherein the subtle layers of mind unfold themselves and the inner dimensions of personality opens out.

Yogic practices

All yogic practices are psychological and physiological. The commonly used three stages of yogic practices are:

1. Asanas (Posture)

A steady and pleasant posture produces mental equilibrium and stable mind. Asanas are postures. The yogi conquers the body by the practice of Asanas and makes it a fit vehicle for the spirit.

2. Pranayama (Science of Breathing)

Pranayama is control of Breath. One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind.

3. Meditation (Dhyana)

According to Patanjali Yoga sutra (Ashtanga Yoga) "Meditation (Dhyan) means Full concentration of the mind focused on one of those experiences" Meditation is the deep concentration, calmness and tranquillity of the mind. It is the study of attaining complete control over one's mind.

Leadership

Leadership is a "Process of social influence in which a person can enlist the aid and support of others in the

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accomplishment of a common task". Leadership has been defined in terms of group processes, personality, compliance, particular behaviours, persuasion, power, goal achievement, interaction, role differentiation, initiation of structure and combinations of two (or) more of these. Effectiveness is defined as the perceived quantity and quality of the performance with satisfaction and commitment. Leadership effectiveness comes from the human – oriented activities – communication and human resource management.

Leader's style is the key to the formulation and implementation of strategy and plays an important role in work group member's creativity and team citizenship. Various theories from classical theories like trait, group, contingency, path-goal and the modern theories includes the charismatic, transformational, social learning and substitutes theory explained about leadership characteristics and styles. Whetten and Cameron provide a more empirical derivation of effective leadership skills, the ten skills identified by them are:

1. Verbal communication (including listening)
2. Managing time and stress
3. Managing individual decisions
4. Recognizing defining and solving problems
5. Motivating and influencing others
6. Delegating
7. Setting goals and articulating a vision
8. Self – Awareness
9. Team – building
10. Managing conflict

Review of Literature

In the present information age, managers need to motivate workers and the Bhagavad Geeta is a rich resource available to the managers to motivate their workforce. In particular, Geeta mentions that all work done without faith is nothing. Sincerity is vital for all interconnectivities between deeds and needs. A business needs to maintain a culture of integrity in order to sustain trust, inside and outside (Chow Hoi Hee and Gurd, 2010). In the application of the Geeta to leadership, results are usually intangible and invisible; work becomes worship, thus increasing in crises and adopting a positive perspective to the same situation (Ratick, 2007). Transformational leadership characteristics, which emanate exclusively from personal qualities of the leader, have a very strong positive relationship with Karma Yoga. Managers practicing Karma Yoga can very easily practice transformational leadership and vice-versa. Thus the concepts of Karma Yoga and transformational leadership are highly correlated and have great promise for organizational development. A manager can become a transformational leader by adopting the principles of Karma Yoga in his working (Satpathy, 2008).

Effectiveness of its executives is very important for the success of an organization's business (Bao, 2009). The role behaviours and personal traits of managers are the major criteria for their effectiveness (Tsui and Oholott, 1988). To be effective, the development managerial skills should cater to the current and projected needs of the organization. It is the critical responsibility of senior management to identify the core competencies of the enterprise and to ensure that the competencies required by managers, specialists and the workforce in general are adequate and appropriate. Competent people are the key to future success and offer organizations their only sustainable competitive advantage (Pickett 1998).

Leadership qualities and commitment to effectiveness of an individual are one of the most important aspects of managerial effectiveness. Although the terms manager and management are different from leader and leadership and seldom take advantage of each other's contributions (House and Aditya, 1997); these terms can be used interchangeably (Kotter, 1998, Hickman, 1990, Yukl, 1998, Barker, 2000, Alimo-Metcalge and Lawler, 2001, Bolden, 2004; Raelin, 2004). Leadership is an imperative managerial trait desirable at all levels within and across organizational hierarchies including senior, middle and first-line levels of management. This is referred to as managerial leadership; and is to an extent different from organizational leadership and the organizational leader role of directors, senior executives and top managers (Russ-Eft, et. al., 1996). The current and future success of an organization is a reflection of the effectiveness of the senior management team, their vision and leadership, and the combined acknowledge and skills of the organization's work force. Much attention has been given to the effectiveness of senior managers and their performance by theorists, management researchers, developers and practitioners, in developing countries and developing economies (Copeman, 1971; Kotter, 1982; McCall and Lombardo, 1983; Margerison and Kakabadse, 1984).

Asanas (postures), Pranayama (breathing practices intended to influence vital forces), Kriyas (cleaning process), and Mudras (certain muscular locks) are taught as physical practices, while various meditational techniques work at the mental level. All these practices are intended to develop a certain type of awareness within oneself. This in turn is expected to bring about a change in the emotional and visceral functions and through them a change in the intellectual and somatic functions of the individual. Bhole (1977).

In companies that introduced the yoga / meditation programmes, managers and employees, who regularly practiced yoga / meditation, improved significantly in overall physical health, mental well-being and vitality, when compared to controlled subjects with similar jobs in the same companies. Psychosomatic Medicine (1984).

According to Indian Psychological Perspectives, regular practice of meditation will lead to reduction in Rajasic qualities (restless, struggling, more desirous, lack of clear discrimination, distorted understanding, egoistic), Tamasic qualities (depressed, lethargic, distended to work, negligent, undisciplined, arrogant, ignorant, uncertain and dull) and increase of Satvic qualities (discriminative intellect, self-controlled, serene, virtuous, generous, gentle, detached, seeking self and aware of the unity underlying all diversities. Kuppuswamy (1985).

Yukl (2011) focuses at how leaders enhance the meaning of spirituality in their day to day to work involving the followers. Spiritual leadership is a blending of natural and spiritual qualities utilized for influencing God's people to accomplish God's purposes. Spiritual leadership doesn't focus on leader-centric approaches but more on "engaging all group members to meet spiritual needs to enhance organizational commitment and performance" (Fry. et,al., 2011 & Samad.et al 2015) Because the principal of yoga practice seeks to improve the mind and the body(Patanjali & Feuerstein, 1989), this study aimed to find an effective way to strengthen and develop the mental and physical health of individual members, So that they can improve their job satisfaction and quality of work, and potentially building bonds among members of an organization.

Objectives of the Study

1. To Study and understand effectiveness of leadership through Yogic practices
2. To identify factors that brings out effectiveness of a leader
3. To study and understand about yoga and various practices of yoga
4. To study and understand the benefits of Yoga

Scope of the Study

The study aims to find the effectiveness of leaders who are practicing Yoga in various Yoga centers in Madurai Zone. It also aims to identify the factor that brings out effectiveness of leaders and benefits of Yoga to them.

Research Methodology

This present study employed exploratory-cum descriptive research design, since the aim of study is to probe the aspects of yoga practices, leadership effectiveness and subsequent behavior outcome and also understand the causal relationship between those identified aspects.

The data collection method employed for the study is through scheduled questionnaire, administered to the respondents who are engaged in yogic practices. The area of study is the yoga centers of urban area of Madurai Zone. The responses were collected on their personal, career backgrounds, details of yoga practices, opinion of leadership traits, view on yoga practices and its outcome on their work place execution and finally their trait variation before and after practicing yoga. The respondents have been approached only by considering the yoga practicing institutions only. Convenient sampling technique is used to collect the data from the respondents in order to attain the desired objective of the researcher and the samples size selected for the study is 480 Yoga practitioners of various Yoga centers in Madurai Zone.

Limitations of the Study:

The study is confined to the Madurai Zone in Tamilnadu. The sample only includes some major urban areas of Madurai. This research does not differentiate among Yogic practices in any specific area but is exploring effectiveness of Yogic practices among leaders in an organization

Results and discussion

The table given below shows the demographic description of the sample. The table shows the respondent's personal and professional background. With regard to age background of respondents it is observed from the table 49 percent are above 50 and 26 percent are between 40-50 years of age. It is found that

69.2 percent are male respondents. It is observed that 78 percent are married and 22 percent are unmarried. Regarding their cadre of work 49 percent are in functional level managerial cadre and 32 percent are operational level. It is also observed from the table that 68 percent are vegetarian and 23 percent are Non-vegetarian.

Table No.1: Showing Demographic Background

Sl.No	Attribute	Category	No. of Respondents	Percent to Total
1	Age	Less than 40	119	24.8
2		40 to 50	124	25.8
3		More than 50	237	49.4
1	Gender	Male	332	69.2
2		Female	148	30.8
1	Food habit	Vegetarian	320	66.7
2		Non-Vegetarian	111	23.1
3		Eggterian	49	10.2
1	Level of management	Operational	153	31.9
2		Functional	235	49
3		Top	92	12
1	Marital Status	Married	372	77.5
2		Unmarried	108	22.5

Source: Primary data

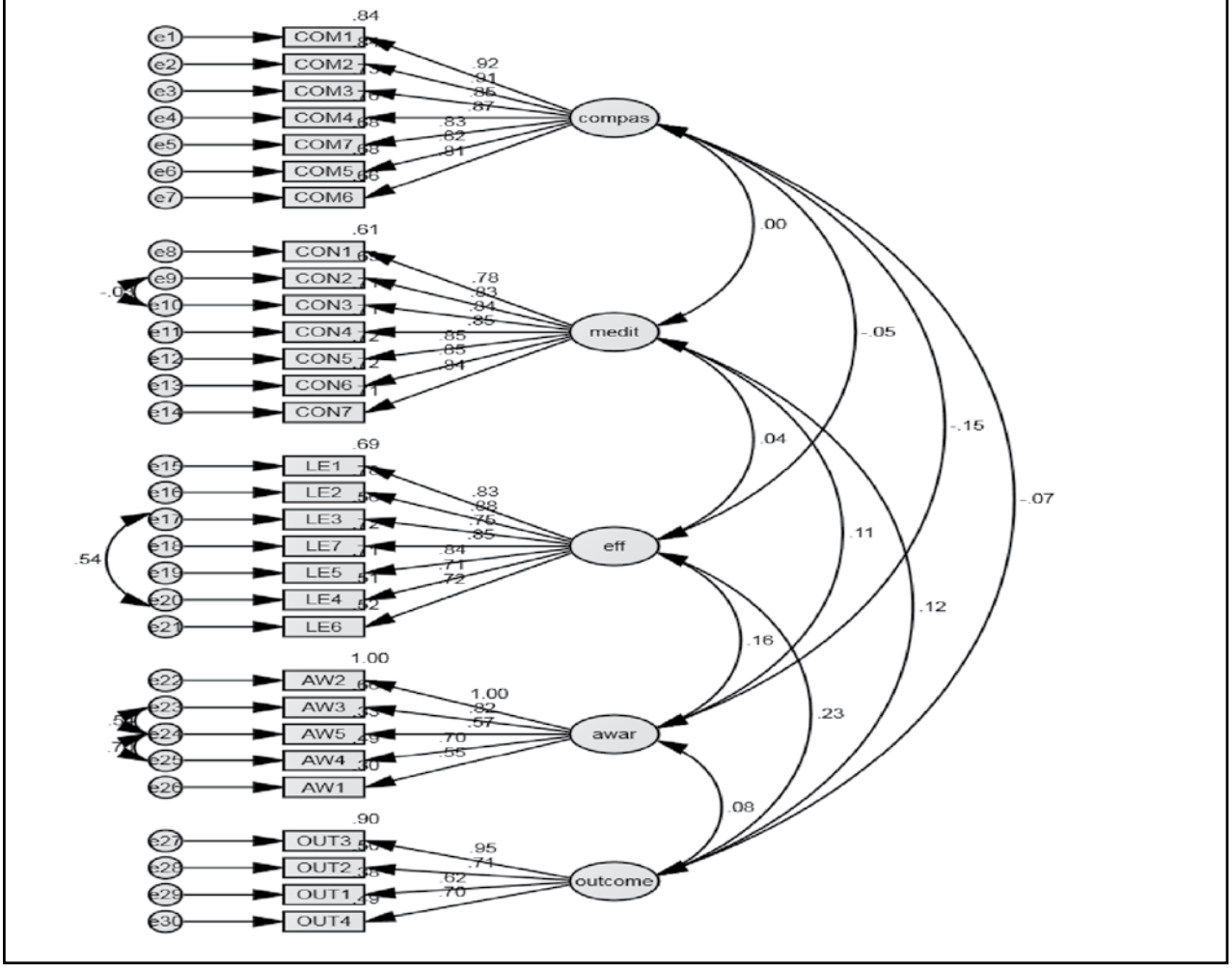
Table No.2: Yoga practices pattern among the respondent

Sl.No	Attribute	Category	No. of Respondents	Percent to Total
1	Frequency of practicing	Daily	210	43.8
2	yoga	Twice in a week	173	36
3		Weekly once	65	13.5
4		Occasional	32	6.7
1	Hours of Practice	Less than half-an hour	161	33.5
2		1/2hours-1hours	270	56.2
3		More than one hour	49	10.2
1	Preferred time for Practice	Early morning	303	63.1
2		Morning	97	20.2
3		Evening	80	16.7
1	Reasons to Practice Yoga	To reduce stress	84	17.5
2		For Physical Fitness	108	22.5
3		For mental Fitness	81	16.9
4		For Physical &Mental Fitness	80	16.7
5		Social harmony	84	17.5
6		Spritual advancement	43	9

Source: Primary data

Table 2 shows the yoga practices pattern among the respondents, it is found that 56.3 percent practice yoga from half to one hour and 33.5 percent practice yoga for less than half an hour. In terms of respondent's preference for time to practice yoga, it is found that 63.1 percent prefer to practice yoga during early morning and 16.7 percent during evening. It is learnt that 22.5 percent practice yoga for physical fitness, 17.5 percent to reduce stress, 16.9 for mental fitness and 16.7 percent for physical and mental fitness.

Figure 01: Showing the Measurement Model with Modification Indices



**- compass – Compassion, medit – Mediation eff- Leadership Effectiveness awar- Awareness outcome – Leadership Outcome

Table 3 Showing the Model Validity scores

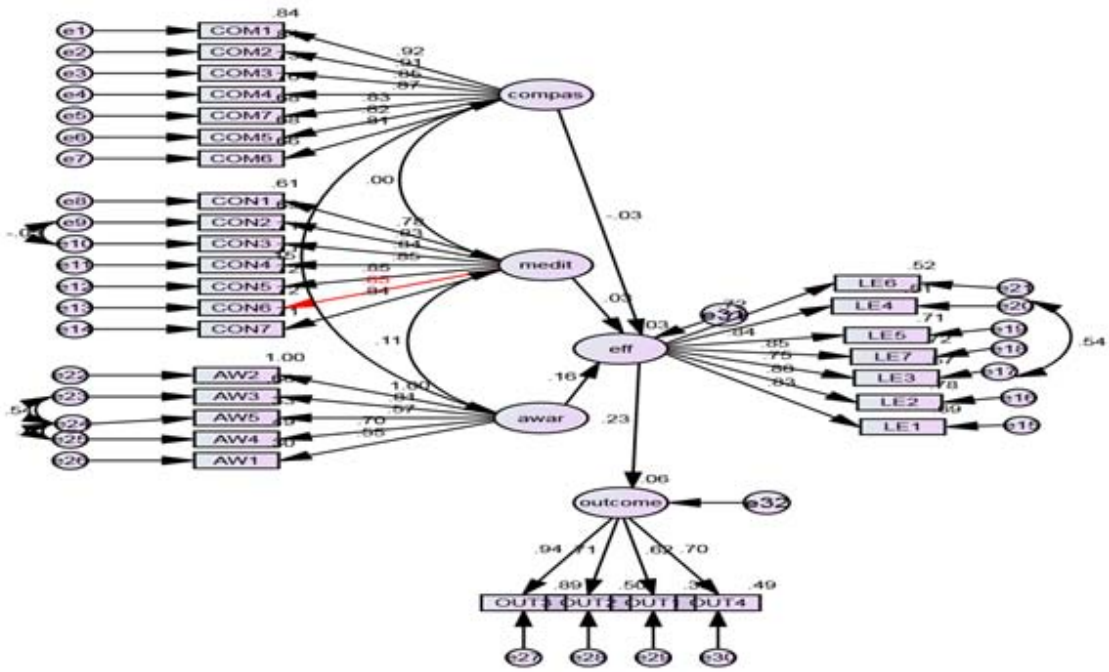
	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	Compassion	Mediation	Leadership Effectiveness	Awareness	Leadership Outcome
Compassion	0.952	0.740	0.024	0.957	**0.860**				
Mediation	0.941	0.696	0.014	0.942	-0.001	**0.834**			
Leadership Effectiveness	0.925	0.639	0.055	0.933	-0.049	0.043	**0.799**		
Awareness	0.857	0.557	0.026	0.997	-0.155**	0.114*	0.161***	**0.746**	
Leadership Outcome	0.836	0.567	0.055	0.918	-0.074	0.118*	0.234***	0.085†	**0.753**

The above table shows the model validity obtained for all constructs framed through exploratory factor analysis and modelled for confirmatory factor analysis. The convergent validity of all items under each construct satisfied the required convergence of more than 0.7, the average variance for five constructs are more than 0.05, the composite reliability also more than 0.7 for the five constructs. It is also understood the required discriminant validity also obtained for each constructs and which is more than 0.7.

Structural Equation Modeling

After confirming the model fit it is necessary to test the structural equation model. SEM finds the relationship between the construct (Latent Variable) and its direct or indirect effect changes in the other constructs in the model (Byrne, 2001).The theoretical SEM model is shown in figure.

Figure 2: Showing Structural Equation Model



**- compass – Compassion, medit – Mediation eff- Leadership Effectiveness awar- Awareness outcome – Leadership Outcome

Table Showing: Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Leadership Effectiveness	< ---	Compassion	-.019	.035	- .534	.593	Not supported
Leadership Effectiveness	< ---	Mediation	.026	.046	.563	.574	Not supported
Leadership Effectiveness	< ---	Awareness	.206	.064	3.224	.001	Supported
Leadership Outcome	< ---	Leadership Effectiveness	.182	.038	4.796	***	Supported

** Significance at 5% level

The above figure shows the direct effect of one latent variable on the other as proposed in the research model. There is direct effect of compassion, concentration, awareness on leadership effectiveness which subsequently influence on leadership outcome.

In SEM the endogenous variable (Dependent Variable) should have residual error term (disturbance or Latent error). In this model three exogenous variable namely compassion, concentration and awareness and two endogenous variable namely leadership effectiveness and outcome. The path was from compassion to leadership effectiveness, concentration to leadership effectiveness and awareness to leadership effectiveness and leadership effectiveness to leadership outcome.

The outcome of exploratory factor analysis outcome gives the five factors that have emerged namely: Compassion, Awareness, Mediation, Leadership effectiveness and Leadership outcome. From the SEM model outcome that is run on the five confirmed factors this shows the results as: there is positive influence of awareness on leadership effectiveness-(as the

standardized estimated value is 0.206) this indicates that one incremental level of awareness statistically improve 20.6 percent of leadership effectiveness. Compassion and meditation the other three factors identified for yoga practices do not show significant influence on leadership effectiveness and they fail to support the hypotheses.

Conclusion:

For an effective leader constant personal growth is needed. The art of leadership is a never ending process of learning. There are many ways to develop our leadership qualities. Uncovering the essence of our being is important in leadership development. Leader can undergo personal growth training that may involve a combination of physiological and psychological exercises. This approach is aimed at empowering participants to take greater responsibility for their own lives and ultimately their organizations. The concept of self- awareness (or) knowing our self is central to both yoga and leadership. Learning to be an effective leader requires introspection, adherence to ethics and moral standards which is available in Yogic practices.

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