ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM: A STUDY OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM AND CERTAIN EFFICIENCY CRITERIA

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Individuals practising Transcendental Meditation were found to be more alert and active, to achieve more with less effort, to become angry less often, to have more self-confidence, to be more extroverted, and to have a greater ability to assign correct priorities to different tasks than non-meditating control subjects.—EDITORS

The following is an abbreviated version of the author’s original master’s thesis presented to the Department of Business Administration of Stockholm University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Civilekonom (Master of Business Administration). With permission of the author, slight rearrangements of tabular material have been made and figures have been added for illustrative purposes.

A study was made of the effects of the Transcendental Meditation program and its possible use to fulfill the goals of organizational development. These goals are generally considered to be increased efficiency and competence of the organization. The present study is restricted to personnel-oriented goals. A 26-item questionnaire was administered to a group of 27 individuals who practiced the TM technique and 56 individuals who were not practicing the TM technique.

The results support the six hypotheses of the experiment. Responses indicated that those who practice the TM technique are significantly more alert and active \((p = .033 \text{ and } p < .001)\), can accomplish more with less effort \((p = .002 \text{ and } p < .001)\), have more self-confidence \((p < .001)\), get angry less often \((p = .007)\), are better able to assign priorities \((p = .035)\), and find it easier to cooperate with others \((p = .034)\) compared with those who do not practice the TM technique. These results indicate that the Transcendental Meditation program is an effective method for use in an organizational development program.

INTRODUCTION

The systematic study of organization development (OD) has emerged as a result of the increased interest of behavioral scientists and management scientists in the way human beings function within organizations. Many experts consider the human component of the organization system to be the most important one, and they continuously look for methods which will enhance the performance of the people in organizations, both as individuals and as a group.

The Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique has been shown to produce many significant achievements such as clearer thinking, increased creativity, increased enthusiasm for work, and greater calmness under pressure (5). This suggests
that the TM program might also be of interest as a method for organization development. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to determine if the Transcendental Meditation program has any effect on the fulfillment of organization development goals, i.e., increased organizational efficiency and competence.

In most of the literature on organization development a connection is drawn between organizational efficiency and individual behavior. However, there is no integrated theory for organizational change (2). At the same time there is no common agreement on how to define organizational efficiency in an operational way. Various OD consultants have solved this problem by simply assuming that certain types of behavior of the individual members of an organization are positively correlated with organizational efficiency. Thus it is claimed that one should strive for increased openness, better relations between organizational members, increased endurance, improved cooperation, etc.

A pilot study on the effects of the Transcendental Meditation technique revealed that the practice of the TM technique seemed to bring about just those effects that OD experts are trying to achieve in organizations. Indeed the efficiency criteria found in the literature on organization development (1, 4, 7, 8) coincide very well with anecdotal reports by individuals practicing the Transcendental Meditation technique. Four representatives of the Swedish business community, who were active meditators, were interviewed about their experiences of TM with regard to their work situation. Their reports, in addition to several other anecdotal reports (3, 6), formed the basis for the hypotheses of the main study:

1. Meditators are more alert and active than nonmeditators.
2. Meditators can perform a larger amount of work, or get less tired from the same amount of work than nonmeditators.
3. Meditators have more self-confidence and are more extroverted than nonmeditators.
4. Meditators are more tolerant of other people and get less irritated than nonmeditators.
5. Meditators are more able to give correct priorities to different tasks than nonmeditators.
6. Meditators cooperate more easily with other people and respect the views of other people more than nonmeditators.

**METHOD**

**DESIGN OF STUDY** — Due to resource limitations a controlled experiment could not be performed. Instead a so-called natural experiment was chosen. This means that the subjects had started the TM technique at some time before the study. In order to match the control group with the experiment group and to eliminate problems connected with self-selection, the controls were selected from a group of persons who had signed up for a TM program course, but who had not yet started the practice at the time of the study.

**METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**—Fifty meditators were selected from the membership file of the Stockholm Age of Enlightenment Center. The selection comprised meditators who held full- or part-time jobs only, and was made at random to ensure a representative sample. All the meditators were informed by letter of the investigation, and later they were contacted by telephone. Six of the respondents were never reached probably because they were on vacation. Four persons claimed to be unable to participate due to lack of time. Further, two of the respondents had died and one other was excluded for health reasons. Due to a coding error in the membership file, two of the meditators turned out to be students, and therefore they were omitted. Finally, one meditator refused to participate.

The remaining 34 meditators were interviewed by telephone. Of these, seven had given up meditation, at least temporarily (less than five meditations per month during the last six months). A structured interview containing 26 questions was used which included several questions relevant to each hypothesis. The respondents were asked to express their agreement or disagreement with various statements along a seven-point scale. In addition, they were asked to evaluate the benefits they had experienced from TM in their jobs, and how valuable they thought it would be for the company if most of their colleagues would learn the TM technique. Finally, they were asked how much change along the variables expressed in the six hypotheses they experienced after beginning the TM program.

Over a short period of time, all persons signing up to learn the TM technique at the Stockholm Age of Enlightenment Center were asked to complete essentially the same questionnaire. In total, 83 persons belonged to this group. Out of these, 56 held a
A Mann-Whitney U-test was used to test whether those practicing the TM technique differed significantly from those who did not on any of the questions. With samples as large as those in this study, U is approximately normally distributed. However, z values are slightly underestimated when tied scores occur. In analyzing the present data a connection for ties was used when z fell close to the critical value of 1.96.

RESULTS

The results are shown in tables 1–6 for each question in the questionnaire. The questions are grouped under the relevant hypothesis. (Questions 1–5 concerned background variables.)

For each question the mean rating of the TM program group and the control group are presented along with the value of z derived from the Mann-Whitney U-test and the associated probability. On each scale a low score means agreement, and a high score means disagreement with the statement in the question. On every question the difference between the means of the two groups was in the predicted direction. On 14 out of 18 questions this difference was statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The first hypothesis, that meditators are more alert and active, was supported by questions 6 and 20. Those practicing the TM technique listened to others more carefully (p = .033) and felt less dull (p < .001) than did those in the control group. Further, 20 (74%) out of 27 meditators definitely felt more alert than before they began the TM program.

That meditators can do more with less effort, was supported by the relevant questions, 7 and 12. Those practicing the TM technique reported that they felt less tired (p = .002) and that they achieved more with less effort (p < .001) than did those in the control group. When asked if they felt less tired than before they learned the TM technique, 22 (81%) out of 27 meditators replied definitely yes, whereas none replied no.

The third hypothesis, that meditators have more self-confidence, received support from the results of questions 8, 15, 17, 21, and 22. Responses to these questions indicated that compared with the control group, those practicing the TM technique stood up more for their opinions (p = .038), worried less about what other people thought of them (p < .001), made decisions more easily (p = .019), were less introverted (p = .001), and made contact with others more easily (p = .003). Out of the 27 meditators, 16 (59%) definitely felt that they had become more self-confident after learning the TM technique, and another 7 (26%) felt that they had improved somewhat.

The fourth hypothesis, that meditators are more tolerant of others, was supported by questions 9 and 23. The meditators get less irritated when people are late (p = .042) and get angry less often (p = .007) than nonmeditators. Moreover, 18 (67%) of the 27 meditators felt that they had definitely become more tolerant and got irritated less after learning the TM technique. Another 7 (26%) felt that they had changed somewhat in this direction.

The fifth hypothesis was supported by question 14, the only question relevant to this hypothesis. Responses to this item indicated that those practicing the TM technique found it easier to postpone less important tasks if necessary than did the nonmeditators (p = .035). A total of 20 (74%) of those practicing the TM technique found it at least somewhat easier to assign priorities correctly since they had begun the TM program.

The sixth hypothesis, that meditators cooperate more easily with others and respect their views more, was also supported by its relevant questions. Responses to questions 10 and 19 indicated that those practicing the TM technique found it easier to cooperate with others (p = .034) and felt more that there was some value in what others say (p = .042) than those who did not practice the TM technique. Moreover, 85% of the meditators found it at least somewhat easier to cooperate with others after beginning the TM program.

It is interesting to note that all those who practice the TM technique regularly thought that it was useful in their work. Also 58% of those who had stopped practicing the technique thought that the TM program was useful in their work. Moreover, 93% of those practicing the TM program thought that it would benefit their company if most of their
TABLE 1

**HYPOTHESIS 1: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM ARE MORE ALERT AND ACTIVE THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th></th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. Often I don’t listen carefully when someone speaks to me</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I am rather active</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>NS†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. I quickly understand what people say</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. I often feel rather dull and without initiative</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 26 a. Do you feel more alert?  Yes: 20*  Somewhat: 7*  No: 0*

* Number of subjects.  † NS = not significant.

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer.

TABLE 2

**HYPOTHESIS 2: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM CAN PERFORM A LARGER AMOUNT OF WORK OR GET LESS TIRED FROM THE SAME AMOUNT OF WORK, THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th></th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7. I am often tired</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I achieve a lot without working so hard</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>4.44</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 26 b. Are you less tired?  Yes: 22*  Somewhat: 5*  No: 0*

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer.  * Number of subjects.

TABLE 3

**HYPOTHESIS 3: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM HAVE MORE SELF-CONFIDENCE AND ARE MORE EXTROVERTED THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th></th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. I stand up for my opinions</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I worry about other people’s opinions about me</td>
<td>5.42</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>&lt;.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I easily make decisions</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>.019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I am rather introverted</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. I easily make contacts with other people</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 26 c. Are you more extroverted and do you have more self-confidence?  Yes: 16*  Somewhat: 7*  No: 4*

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer.  * Number of subjects.

TABLE 4

**HYPOTHESIS 4: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM ARE MORE TOLERANT OF OTHER PEOPLE AND GET LESS IRRITATED THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th></th>
<th>z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. I get irritated when people are late</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.03†</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. No individual has silly opinions</td>
<td>4.74</td>
<td>4.96</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>NS†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. There is often a fully understandable reason if someone behaves in a rude manner</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.91</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>NS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I am seldom angry for a long time</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.007</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 26 d. Have you become more tolerant and less irritated?  Yes: 18*  Somewhat: 7*  No: 2*

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer.  * Number of subjects.  † NS = not significant.  †† Corrected for ties.
HYPOTHESIS 1:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Are More Alert and Active than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

HYPOTHESIS 2:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Can Perform a Larger Amount of Work, or Get Less Tired from the Same Amount of Work, than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

HYPOTHESIS 3:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Have More Self-Confidence and Are More Extroverted than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

HYPOTHESIS 4:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Are More Tolerant of Other People and Get Less Irritated than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

HYPOTHESIS 5:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Are More Able to Assign Correct Priorities to Different Tasks than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

HYPOTHESIS 6:
Participants in the Transcendental Meditation Program Cooperate More Easily with Other People and Have More Respect for the Views of Others than Those Not Participating in the TM Program

FIG. 1. RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE CONCERNING THE SIX HYPOTHESES.
TABLE 5
HYPOTHESIS 5: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM ARE MORE ABLE TO ASSIGN CORRECT PRIORITIES TO DIFFERENT TASKS THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>TM Program</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. I easily postpone less important things if necessary</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 26 e. Do you find it easier to give priority to the most important tasks?</td>
<td>Yes: 14*</td>
<td>Somewhat: 6*</td>
<td>No: 7*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer. * Number of subjects.

TABLE 6
HYPOTHESIS 6: PARTICIPANTS IN THE TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION PROGRAM COOPERATE MORE EASILY WITH OTHER PEOPLE AND HAVE MORE RESPECT FOR THE VIEWS OF OTHERS THAN THOSE NOT PARTICIPATING IN THE TM PROGRAM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTIONS</th>
<th>TM Program</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10. I find it difficult to cooperate with other people</td>
<td>6.42</td>
<td>5.56</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. There is mostly some truth in what my colleagues say</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 26 f. Do you cooperate more easily with other people?</td>
<td>Yes: 14*</td>
<td>Somewhat: 9*</td>
<td>No: 4*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: Scores range from 1–7. Low scores indicate a positive answer and high scores indicate a negative answer. * Number of subjects. 1 Corrected for ties.

colleagues practiced the TM technique. Seventy-one percent of those who had stopped practicing the technique also felt that their company would benefit if their colleagues practiced the TM program.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to evaluate the effect, if any, of the TM program on the fulfillment of organization development goals. As was discussed in the introduction, these goals were largely compatible with the effects of the TM program as reported by single meditators and by scientific research. The hypotheses which were put forward were based on this observation. All six hypotheses were supported by the results of this study. It may be concluded that the Transcendental Meditation program fulfills the goals of organizational development and therefore should be recommended for use as an intervention method in organization development programs.

REFERENCES