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Unveiling Inner Engineering: Impact on Stress Perception Across Engagement Levels

Prakrati Shenoy[1], Ramana V. Vishnubhotla[#], Colleen Schmidt[#] and Charlotte A. Haney[#]

[1]Carnegie Vanguard High School, USA
[#]Advisor

ABSTRACT

Inner Engineering (IE) is a comprehensive yoga program that has been taught globally. The practice taught in IE, Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya (SMK), is a 21-minute daily practice. It has shown to reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing. This study adds to existing literature by investigating the impact of the IE program on perceived stress levels among participants from diverse backgrounds. Study participants were recruited into two groups: 1) those who have taken the IE program and 2) those who have not taken the program. Perceived stress levels were assessed using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), a validated self-report measure. Participants filled out an anonymous questionnaire which included the PSS and other demographic characteristics including age, sex, country, and education level. Perceived stress levels were compared between the IE and non-IE groups using a t-test with a two-tailed p-value < 0.05 being considered significant. There were 222 participants in the study including 118 who took Inner Engineering and 104 who did not take the program. Primary results indicate significantly lower self-reported stress levels in the IE group (12.3 vs. 18.05; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, those who practice SMK daily or frequently indicated lower stress. Overall, the results of this study suggest that IE and daily practice of SMK can be effective approaches in reducing stress. The findings suggest that IE holds promise as an effective intervention for stress management, with implications for targeted interventions and global health initiatives aimed at enhancing overall well-being.

Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, stress and mental health challenges are relevant concerns that impact the well-being of individuals across the globe. To address these modern challenges, Inner Engineering, an Isha Foundation program, incorporated the ancient practice of Yoga, rooted in the traditions of India, as a transformative remedy. This paper conducts a cross cultural study which delves into the impact of Inner Engineering and how different engagement levels affect perceived stress.

Inner Engineering (IE) is a program offered by the Isha Foundation, a non-profit organization led by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, that focuses on promoting holistic well-being, spirituality, and environmental conservation. By integrating yoga postures, breathing techniques, and meditation practices, the IE program equips people with tools to harmonize their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. Its practical approach provides participants with effective strategies for managing stress and enhancing overall mental clarity and emotional stability.

Research done in the early 21st century (2000-2023) has addressed the advantages of yoga and mindfulness practices on mental health. Stress is a significant issue globally, and India, along with other countries, is facing severe stress-related problems. Although conventional stress management methods, like physical exercise or anger management training, have been widely researched there is a gap in the literature regarding Inner Engineering and how levels of engagement with the program affect perceived stress. By conducting a

cross-cultural study using participants from India and the United States of America (USA), this research aims to determine how different engagement levels with Inner Engineering affect perceived stress and to see its potential as a global stress management tool.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the specific impacts of Inner Engineering on stress reduction by exploring the experiences of people who have undergone Inner Engineering versus people who have not done Inner Engineering. This research can benefit humanity by determining whether Inner Engineering has the potential to provide stress management benefits across different countries, acting as a possible equalizer. Apart from contributing to academic knowledge, this research holds practical significance. It can serve as a foundation for implementing effective mental health practices worldwide. By examining the stress management benefits of Inner Engineering, this research contributes to the broader discourse on mental well-being and positions this holistic approach as a potential solution with global implications.

Literature Review

Mental Health and Stress

Definitions of Mental Health and Stress

To understand what mental health and stress are, it is important to align the understanding with comprehensive definitions provided by reliable sources. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of well-being in which individuals realize their capabilities, effectively cope with life's stresses, engage in productive work, and make meaningful contributions to their communities (Galderisi, Heinz, Kastrup, Beezhold, & Sartorius, 2015). Stress can be defined using the definition given by WHO as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation (World Health Organization, 2023). Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives (World Health Organization, 2023). The comprehension of mental health and stress, as articulated by the World Health Organization establishes a foundational platform for delving into the exploration of stress impacts, particularly within the context of the Inner Engineering program.

COVID-19 Stress

The outbreak of COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) in November 2019 led to a surge in mental health challenges, becoming a global concern. The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in extensive consequences, initiating a global public health crisis and leading to significant political, sociocultural, and economic impacts (Bos, Gaiswinkler, Fuchshuber, Schwerdtfeger, & Unterrainer, 2023). The measures taken to contain the pandemic, including lockdowns and restrictions in occupational, social, recreational, and cultural life, have been associated with increased chronic stress, sleep disturbances, loneliness, depression, and anxiety (Bos et al., 2023). This heightened stress is particularly relevant in the context of Inner Engineering, which aims to provide tools for managing such stressors. According to a CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) report as of June 2020, 31% of United States adults self-reported anxiety or depression, 13% reported increased substance use, 26% reported stress-related symptoms, and 11% reported having serious thoughts of suicide in the past 30 days (Czeisler et al., 2020).

Understanding these mental health challenges is crucial in assessing the potential impact of Inner Engineering as a holistic approach to stress management. This research seeks to explore how practices introduced in Inner Engineering may contribute to mitigating the mental health challenges induced by stress, particularly in the backdrop of events like the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yoga, Yoga Origins, Kriya

The term 'yoga' is used to describe various styles and purposes that can dilute its true meaning. The word ‘yoga’ is derived from the Sanskrit root ‘yuj’, meaning ‘to join’ or ‘to yoke’ or ‘to unite’ (Basavaraddi, n.d.). The origins of yoga date back between 2,500 and 5,000 years ago (Pandurangi, Keshavan, Ganapathy, & Gangadhar, 2017). Patanjali first described yoga philosophy and practice in the classic text, Yoga Sutras, which is widely acknowledged as the authoritative text on yoga (Woodyard, 2011). Yoga is an internal science which presents diverse methods for individuals to realize union and achieve mastery over their destiny (Basavaraddi, n.d.). However, what is commonly recognized as yoga globally often diverges from the principles outlined in the Yoga Sutras (Hindu American Foundation, n.d.).

Amid technological advancements, the foundational principles of yoga started growing more popular around the world as many yogaacharyas (yoga teachers) spread the message of yoga during the late 19th century and 20th century. However, after the 1900s, yoga has evolved into a mere exercise focused on physical postures with no focus on the mind and intellect. Various modifications of yoga, such as spinning+yoga, naked yoga, doga (yoga for dogs), hot yoga, and yoga on a surfboard. Despite these modern interpretations, true yoga is a holistic mind-body fitness approach involving muscular activity and a mindful focus on self-awareness, breath, and energy (Woodyard, 2011). The main objectives of yoga practice are to live with freedom in all walks of life, health, and harmony (Basavaraddi, n.d.). This may be accomplished through one or more yoga approaches, such as Bhakti (devotion), Jnana (knowledge), Karma (duty and action), and Kriya (Pandurangi et al., 2017).

A vital component of the Inner Engineering Program is Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya. The Sanskrit root of “kriya” is kri, which means to do, act, and react (Yogananda, 1998). Kriya Yoga is the Yoga (union) with the Infinite through a certain kriya (action or rite) (Yogananda, 1998). Kriya Yoga cannot be disclosed to the general public and has to be taught by an authorized Kriyaban (Kriya Yogi).

Introduction to Inner Engineering

What is Inner Engineering?

Inner Engineering (IE) is a transformative program offered by the Isha Foundation, focusing on holistic well-being, spirituality, and environmental conservation. While IE is less familiar to educators and researchers, it has gained recognition for its unique approach to personal development (Chang, Pundir, Rayapuraju, & Purandare, 2022). Designed by Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, Inner Engineering is a transformative program that includes simple Yoga practices, sessions, and meditative processes guided by Sadhguru, and the transmission of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya (SMK), a powerful 21-minute yogic process transmitted during the program (Isha Foundation, 2023). This program helps people build a foundation of health and joy and establish a chemistry of blissfulness (Isha Foundation, 2023).

Inner Engineering incorporates numerous elements from traditional yoga. The Inner Engineering approach focuses on four major elements that one can experience and work with—the physiological, cognitive, emotional, and energetic experiences (Chang et al., 2022). It consists of methods and processes that are designed to optimize the functioning of the physiological, cognitive, emotional, and energetic systems and unify these systems so that they work as a harmonious whole within a person.

Effects of Inner Engineering

Research indicates that completing the Inner Engineering contributed to increased mindfulness. In a 2022 study focused on Information Technology (IT) professionals, the researchers implemented a mindfulness-based program (MBI), using the Inner Engineering Program to assess its impact on reducing stress, burnout, anxiety, and promoting mindfulness and joy (P. Upadhyay et al., 2022). Employing the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MASS), a commonly utilized measure in occupational settings, the study found that participants exhibited

lower scores in mindfulness and joy before participating in the Inner Engineering program. However, post-program, there were notable improvements in both mindfulness and joy levels.

Another study assessed the influence of the Inner Engineering Completion Online (IECO) program, an online meditation workshop, on various dimensions of well-being, such as stress and mindfulness. The study uncovered a notable decrease in perceived stress, evident through significant reductions in Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) scores from baseline to post-IECO and from baseline to the 6-week follow-up (Preeti Upadhyay et al., 2022). Additionally, participants demonstrated an increase in mindfulness, reflected in increased scores on the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) across all assessment points. The study underscored the effectiveness of the online delivery of the intervention, revealing positive outcomes associated with the Inner Engineering program. However, it acknowledged certain limitations and emphasized the need for further research, particularly on mechanisms and physiological markers.

Inner Engineering for Stress Management

The literature review significantly contributes to the understanding of the relationship between yoga, stress, and mental health. It establishes a foundation by exploring the origins of yoga and introducing the lesser-known Inner Engineering program offered by Isha Foundation. This comprehensive exploration forms a holistic backdrop for understanding the potential impacts of yoga on stress management, particularly in the context of modern challenges.

The strength of this literature lies in its multidimensional approach. By intertwining historical origins with contemporary applications, it offers a nuanced perspective on the relevance of yogic practices. The incorporation of diverse sources, including scholarly articles and program descriptions, enhances the comprehensiveness of the review.

Despite its strengths, the literature review has some limitations. The scarcity of empirical studies specifically examining the effects of Inner Engineering on stress in different countries represents a notable gap. Additionally, while the historical and philosophical aspects are well-explored, more empirical evidence and scientific studies could bolster the credibility and applicability of the findings.

The identified gap in the literature is the lack of research on the impact of varying levels of engagement with Inner Engineering—long-term participation, minimal participation, and lack of awareness—on individuals' perceived stress levels in different countries. Existing studies provide broad insights into the benefits of yoga and Inner Engineering in the workplace, but do not specifically address the elements of Inner Engineering in diverse populations. Justifying this gap is important as it underscores the need for targeted investigations into the program's efficacy across varying demographics, acknowledging potential nuances in its impact.

In light of the recognized gap, the research question emerges: What is the impact of varying levels of engagement with Inner Engineering—long-term participation, minimal participation, and lack of awareness—on individuals' perceived stress levels? The hypothesis proposes that Inner Engineering, with its distinctive methodology, will exhibit specific stress-relief benefits tailored to diverse demographics. This hypothesis positions Inner Engineering as a potentially valuable and inclusive addition to contemporary stress management practices.

Methods

Study Design

The primary objective of this study is to delve into the effects of perceived stress across various demographic groups and evaluate the effectiveness of Inner Engineering as an intervention program for stress reduction. The

implications of perceived stress on individuals' physical and mental health, as well as their overall well-being, are significant. Therefore, a thorough examination of how perceived stress varies among demographics such as age, gender, and ethnicity is crucial to identify vulnerable populations and tailor interventions accordingly. Additionally, this research aims to assess the effectiveness of Inner Engineering in mitigating stress to provide valuable insights into alternative approaches for stress management. Ultimately, this will contribute to the development of more targeted, evidence-based interventions to promote mental health on a global scale.

Data Collection and Location Method

To facilitate data collection, the researcher will design and administer a structured survey instrument through an online platform known as Microsoft Forms. Survey research stands as a reliable and accepted method for investigating variables and constructs of interest (Ponto, 2015). It allows for efficient and standardized data collection across a large sample of participants. Surveys offer the advantage of anonymity and convenience, enabling participants to provide honest responses without feeling self-conscious or pressured (Gaur, Zimba, Agarwal, & Gupta, 2020).

The study will primarily gather data from participants in India and the USA, representing a diverse group of individuals. To ensure a diverse and representative sample, the study will employ snowball sampling as its primary recruitment method. Snowball sampling is a recruitment technique in which research participants are asked to assist researchers in identifying other potential subjects (Boise State University, n.d.). The process will begin with the researcher's initial contacts and expand through referrals from participants already involved in the study. Utilizing online platforms like Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook will help broaden the study's reach and awareness, collaborating with community organizations and participating in local events will further facilitate engagement, and leveraging the extensive network of the Isha Foundation will enable connections with individuals familiar with or interested in the Inner Engineering program. Data collection will be conducted through both online and offline methods to cater to participants' preferences and ensure accessibility. This comprehensive approach aims to capture a diverse range of perspectives and experiences, enhancing the richness and depth of the study's findings.

Data Collection

To achieve the research objectives, the study will employ the following methods for data collection. It is important to note that surveys are anonymous and no identifiable participant information is collected.

Perceived Stress Levels

Quantitative data on individuals' perceived stress levels will be collected using standardized stress assessment tools, such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) (Cohen, 1988). The PSS-10 is a reliable and valid self-report measure of perceived stress (Roberti, Harrington, & Storch, 2006). This method will provide numerical measures of participants' subjective stress experiences, allowing for a quantitative analysis of stress levels.

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) comprises 10 items designed to assess the degree to which individuals perceive their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded during the past month (Cohen, 1988). Participants respond to each item on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (never) to 4 (very often). In Questions 4, 5, 7, and 8 of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), values are inverted. Specifically, a response of 0 is scored as 4, a response of 1 as 3, and so on. After inversion, the scores from these questions are summed up. The total scores on the PSS-10 can range from 0 to 40, with higher scores indicating elevated levels of perceived stress. Scores ranging from 0 to 13 indicate low stress; scores ranging from 14 to 26 and 27 to 40 and indicate moderate stress and high stress, respectively. The detailed questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

Group level analysis is performed using a two-sample t-test assuming unequal variances in Microsoft Excel. A two-tail p-value < 0.05 is considered significant. Using the PSS-10 in this study ensures consistency and reliability in measuring participants' perceived stress levels. By using a well-established instrument like the PSS-10, the study can accurately quantify participants' subjective experiences of stress, facilitating a strong quantitative analysis of stress levels across different demographic groups.

Demographic Information

Data on demographic variables including age, gender, ethnicity, education level, employment status, and marital status will be collected to analyze how perceived stress varies across different demographic groups. The questions asked in this portion of the survey will be found in Appendix A.

The collection of demographic information is essential for understanding how various factors may influence individuals' perceived stress levels and their response to the Inner Engineering program. Age, for example, may play a role in shaping stress experiences, with younger individuals potentially facing different stressors than older adults. Gender and ethnicity can also impact stress perceptions, as societal norms and cultural factors may influence individuals' coping mechanisms and stressors.

Education level and employment status may further contribute to variations in stress levels, as individuals with higher levels of education or stable employment may experience different stressors compared to those with lower education levels or unstable job situations.

Marital status is included as a demographic variable in this study based on the understanding that it may influence individuals' stress perceptions. While specific research evidence supporting this assertion is not cited, it is widely recognized that marital satisfaction and support networks can affect individuals' ability to cope with stress. Therefore, marital status will be considered as a potential factor in the analysis of perceived stress levels among participants. By collecting comprehensive demographic information, the study aims to identify potential disparities in stress experiences across different demographic groups and explore how these factors interact with participation in the Inner Engineering program.

Engagement with Inner Engineering and Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Inner Engineering (IE) program in reducing perceived stress levels, the study will gather information on participants' engagement with IE. This will include data on the length of their participation in the program as well as the frequency of their practice of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya.

Understanding participants' engagement with Inner Engineering is crucial for evaluating its effectiveness in mitigating stress. The duration of participation provides insights into the program's long-term effects on stress management, as longer engagement may lead to more significant reductions in perceived stress levels. Similarly, the frequency of practicing Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya indicates the extent to which participants incorporate the technique into their daily lives, which may influence their ability to cope with stressors over time.

By examining participants' level of engagement with Inner Engineering and Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya, this study aims to gain a deeper understanding of how the program influences perceived stress levels and stress management strategies. This information will contribute to evaluating the effectiveness of the program in promoting overall well-being among participants.

Qualitative Insights

Qualitative data will be collected through open-ended questions to gain deeper insights into participants' experiences with stress and Inner Engineering. Qualitative data collection will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by capturing participants' subjective experiences and perspectives.

Results

The primary objective of this research paper was to explore the impact of varying levels of engagement with Inner Engineering—ranging from long-term participation to minimal participation and lack of awareness—on individuals' perceived stress levels. The survey created by the researcher was distributed via Microsoft Forms to the researcher's initial contacts and extended through snowball sampling, resulting in a total of 222 responses.

Demographic Data

The study primarily focused on samples from the United States and India. However, with snowball sampling, the sample became international, encompassing responses from participants in Europe, Australia, and the Middle East. The distribution of responses by country is detailed in Table 1. Gender distribution among these participants can be found in Figure 1. Data regarding employment status can be found in Table 2.

Table 1. Distribution of study participants by country.

Country	Number of Participants
United States of America	144
India	65
Canada	4
United Kingdom	2
Australia	1
Germany	1
Hungary	1
Italy	1
Netherlands	1
Romania	1
United Arab Emirates	1

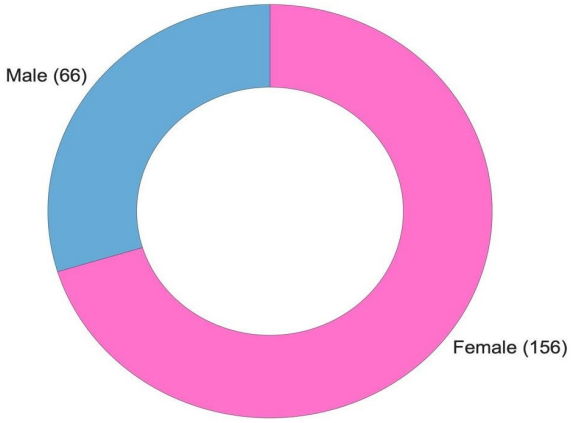

Figure 1. Gender distribution of participants.

Table 2. Distribution of employment status.

Employment Status	Number of Participants
Employed full-time	115
Employed part-time	11
Self-employed/entrepreneur	32
Unemployed (actively seeking work)	11
Not in the labor force (e.g. retired, student, homemaker)	53

The age distribution of participants ranged from 15 to 65 years, as depicted in Figure 2. Ethnicity data revealed a majority identifying as South Asian, with further breakdowns presented in Table 3. Marital status statistics indicated that 75% of participants were married, 18% were single, 4% were divorced, 2% were widowed, and 1% preferred not to disclose this information; these findings are noted in Table 4. In terms of educational attainment, 50% held a degree higher than a bachelor's, 36% possessed a bachelor's degree, and 14% had less than a bachelor's degree, as shown in Figure 3.

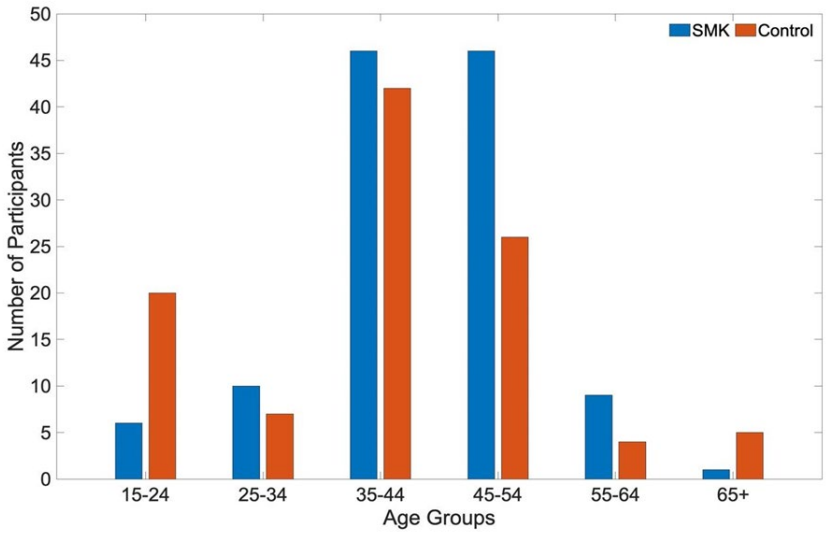

Figure 2. Age distribution of participants.

Table 3. Distribution of race/ethnicity demographics.

Race/Ethnicity	Number of Participants
Black or African American	2
Central Asian	1
East Asian	5
Hispanic	1
Middle Eastern	3
South Asian	185
White or Caucasian	22
Multiple	3

Table 4. Distribution of marital status.

Marital Status	Number of Participants
Married	166
Single	41
Divorced	9
Widowed	4
Prefer not to say	2

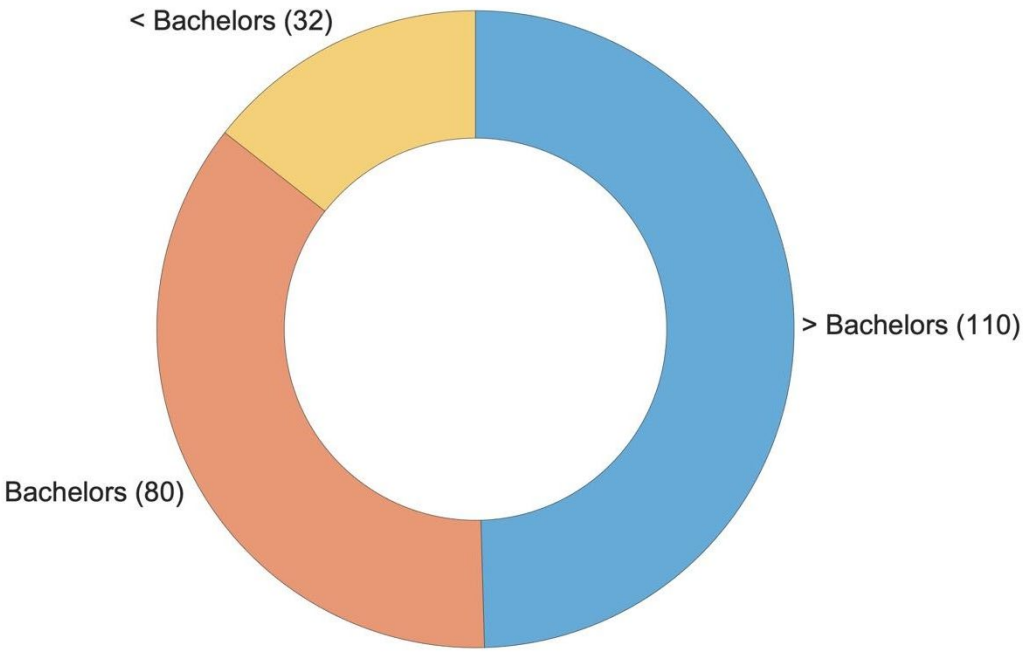

Figure 3. Education distribution of participants.

When participants were asked, "Have you done Inner Engineering by Sadhguru?", 118 indicated “Yes” and 104 indicated “No”. Data is shown in Figure 4.

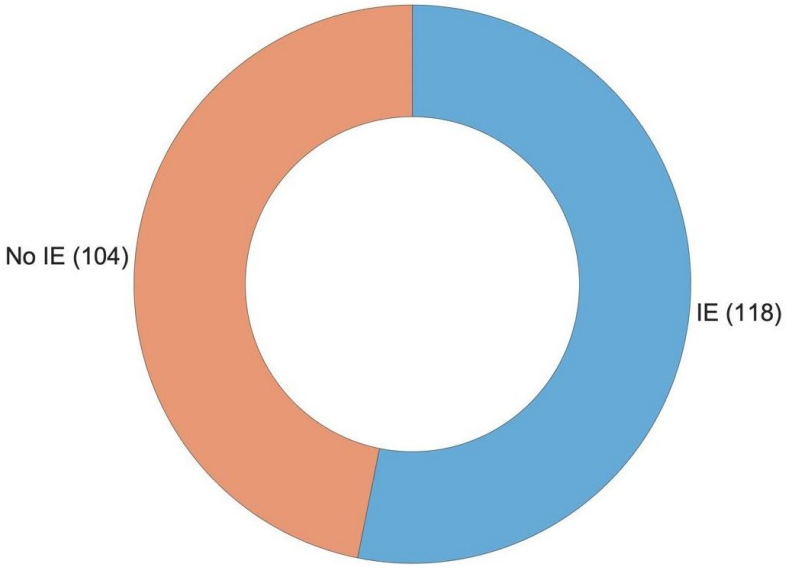

Figure 4. Distribution of study participants on if they have taken Inner Engineering.

Perceived Stress Levels

The researcher employed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) to gauge participants' self-reported stress levels. The PSS is 10 questions designed to assess the degree to which individuals perceive their lives as unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded during the past month (Cohen, 1988). Upon analyzing the data using the Perceived Stress Scale, the study found that 101 participants reported low levels of perceived stress. In contrast, 108 participants indicated moderate levels of perceived stress, and 13 participants reported high levels of perceived stress. These findings are visually represented in Figure 5.

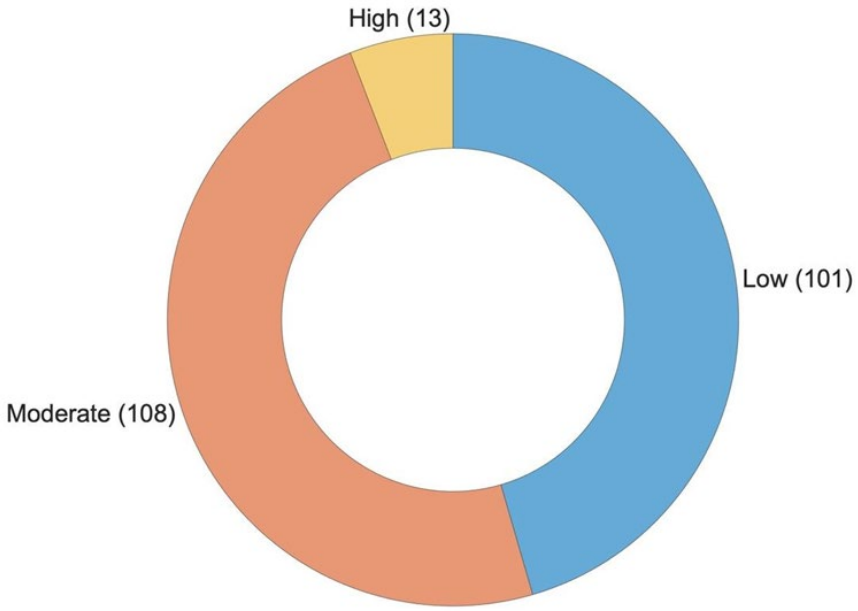

Figure 5. Perceived stress levels of participants.

The Perceived Stress Scale data, as depicted in Figure 6, shows a comparison between participants who engaged with Inner Engineering and those who did not participate in the program.

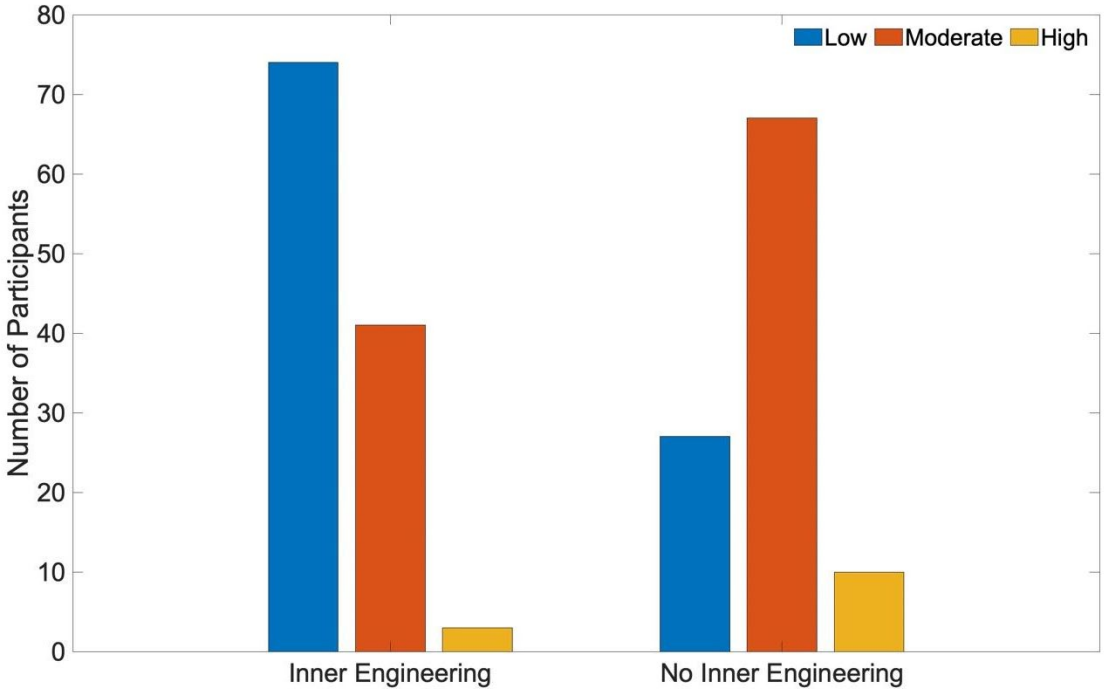

Figure 6. Comparison of perceived stress levels based on program status.

1. Low Perceived Stress: A majority of participants who reported low perceived stress had engaged with Inner Engineering. Specifically, 74 participants had experienced Inner Engineering, whereas 27 had not.
2. Moderate Perceived Stress: Among those reporting moderate perceived stress, 41 participants had engaged with Inner Engineering, compared to 67 who had not.
3. High Perceived Stress: A small number of participants who engaged with Inner Engineering reported high perceived stress, contrasted with those who had not participated in the program. Specifically, 3 participants engaged with Inner Engineering, while 10 had not.

Table 5. Statistical comparison between those who took Inner Engineering (IE) and those who did not (control).

Statistical Measure	IE	Control
Mean	12.30	18.05
Variance	42.31	47.56
Observations	118	104
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	213	
t Stat	-6.37	
P(T<=t) one-tail	5.82E-10	

t Critical one-tail	1.65	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1.16E-09	
t Critical two-tail	1.97	

To measure significance, we used the two-tail p-value, which is 1.16×10^{-9}. This is considerably lower than 0.05, which is the threshold for significance. Average values include 12.3 for IE practitioners and 18.05 for non-practitioners. These average scores correspond to the average IE practitioners having low stress and the average non-practitioner having moderate stress.

Frequency of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya Practice

Participants were asked about the frequency of their practice of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya (a 21-minute Yogic process transmitted during the program). Overall data is represented in Table 6 and breakdown of by stress levels is represented in Figure 7.

Table 6. Frequency of Shambhavi Maahamudra Kriya practice.

Frequency of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya	Number of Participants
Daily (All 7 days)	58
Frequently (3-5 times a week)	31
Occasionally (4-8 times a month)	14
Rarely (once a month)	6
Have not practiced for the last 2-3 months	12

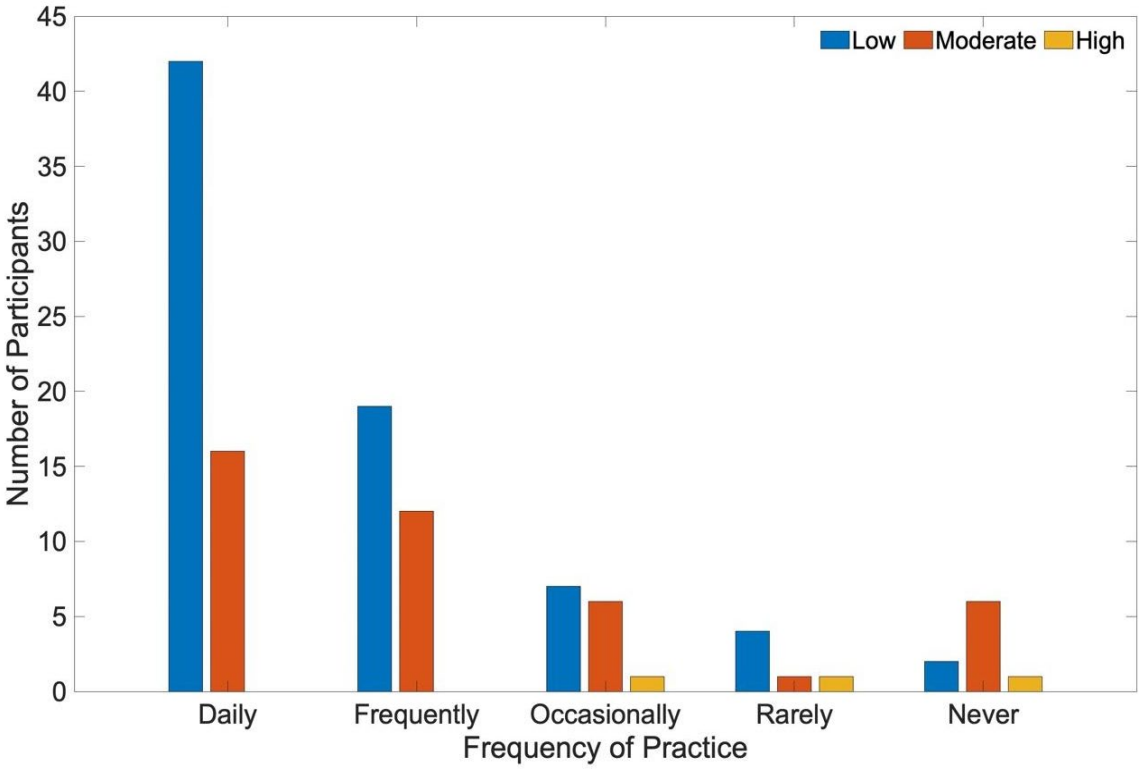

Figure 7. Frequency of Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya practice by participants who completed Inner Engineering.

Those who practiced Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya daily had the highest percentage of low stress. Those who have not practiced in the past two to three months have the lowest percentage of low stress and the highest percentage of moderate stress. All those with high stress levels practiced Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya occasionally or less.

Discussion

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between engagement with Inner Engineering (IE) and perceived stress levels among a diverse group of participants. The findings reveal a distinct pattern indicating that individuals who regularly practice Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya, a key component of Inner Engineering, report lower levels of perceived stress compared to those who do not engage with it as frequently. Notably, while there are instances of low perceived stress levels among individuals who have not engaged with Inner Engineering, these occurrences are less frequent compared to participants who have taken the program.

Perceived Stress Levels

The data indicates a clear association between engagement with Inner Engineering and perceived stress levels among participants. Specifically, a majority of those who engaged with Inner Engineering reported lower levels of perceived stress compared to those who did not participate in the program. The average stress level of those who took Inner Engineering was low while the average stress level of those who did not take Inner Engineering was considered moderate. This is also confirmed statistically with a very low p-value. Additionally, those who

practiced Shambhavi Mahamudra Kriya frequently and especially daily were more likely to have lower stress. This suggests that Inner Engineering may have a beneficial effect on managing stress levels.

Qualitative Insights

The qualitative findings offer deeper insights into the transformative impact of Inner Engineering across various life domains. The reported benefits span stress reduction, emotional regulation, personal growth, improved relationships, physical health, spiritual growth, positive lifestyle changes, enhanced efficiency, increased energy, mindfulness, and personal transformation. These insights underscore the program's potential in fostering resilience, promoting well-being, and offering transformative experiences.

Comparing Results with Other Research

Research conducted by the Isha Foundation Research Team offers insights that align with the findings of the present study. Upadhyay et. al. (Preeti Upadhyay et al., 2022) explored the impact of the Inner Engineering Completion Online (IECO) program on various facets of well-being, including stress and mindfulness. The study reported significant reductions in Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) scores immediately after program completion and at a 6-week follow-up. This finding is consistent with the current study's observation of a higher prevalence of low stress levels among participants engaged with Inner Engineering compared to those who are not.

Furthermore, Upadhyay et. al. found that completion of the Inner Engineering program led to increased mindfulness among participants. Using the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MASS), the study documented improvements in mindfulness and joy levels post-program. This theme was also found in this study's qualitative results, suggesting a broader positive impact on mental well-being beyond stress reduction.

These findings across studies bolster the evidence supporting Inner Engineering's effectiveness in enhancing both stress management and mindfulness. The consistency in results underscores the program's potential as a holistic approach to well-being, offering valuable insights for addressing the multifaceted mental health challenges prevalent in the world now.

Implications

The observed association between engagement with Inner Engineering and reduced perceived stress levels suggests that the program may serve as a valuable tool for stress management and overall well-being. The holistic benefits reported by participants, such as emotional regulation, improved relationships, and increased mindfulness, further emphasize the program's potential as a comprehensive approach to mental health.

Recommendations for Future Research

For future research, longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the long-term effects of Inner Engineering on stress levels and well-being. Randomized controlled trials (RCTs) could provide stronger evidence by comparing Inner Engineering with control groups. Diverse participant samples are essential to generalize findings across populations. Qualitative studies can offer deeper insights into participant experiences. Objective measures and comparisons with other interventions can further enhance understanding of Inner Engineering's potential.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study provides evidence supporting a positive association between engagement with Inner Engineering and reduced perceived stress levels among participants from diverse backgrounds. The reported benefits across various life domains underscore the program's potential in promoting well-being and offering transformative experiences. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of stress management and mental health interventions, highlighting the significance of holistic approaches like Inner Engineering in addressing contemporary mental health challenges.

Limitations

While the findings are insightful, several limitations must be considered. The reliance on self-reported measures, such as the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), introduces potential biases into the data. While surveys offer anonymity and convenience, encouraging participants to provide honest responses, they are susceptible to various biases, including social desirability bias and recall bias. Participants may feel inclined to respond in a socially desirable manner, skewing their reported stress levels either positively or negatively. Additionally, participants may struggle to accurately recall their stress experiences, leading to inaccuracies in the reported data.

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