

A Systematic Literature Review On Mantra And Meditation.

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines research on mantra and meditation published between 2001 and 2024, utilizing data traced from the Web of Science. A total of 1,408 studies were initially identified, with 95 studies ultimately included based on relevance and inclusion criteria. The findings highlight significant trends in the field, with notable concentrations in psychology (29 publications), integrative complementary medicine (23), and neurosciences/neurology (13). Other key areas include religion, psychiatry, and general internal medicine. The geographical dispersal of research is dominated by the USA (46 publications), followed by Germany (16) and India (7). The data also reveal an increasing trend in publications, particularly post-2010, peaking in 2021-2023. Articles constitute the largest portion of document types (76), followed by review articles (15), demonstrating the preference for peer-reviewed, original research and comprehensive literature reviews. The findings reflect the growing interest in mantra and meditation across diverse academic disciplines, with a position on health-related research and interdisciplinary approaches. This increase in publications, particularly in the last decade, highlights a shift toward greater academic productivity and international collaboration

KEYWORDS: Mantra, Meditation, Mindfulness Practices, Meditative Techniques, Mental Well-Being, Stress Reduction, Cognitive and Emotional Regulation, Neurophysiological Effects of Meditation, Psychological Health Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Mantras and meditation have been practiced for centuries as effective tools for mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. In ancient Indian, Buddhist, and Tantric traditions, mantra recitation and meditation were considered fundamental for purifying consciousness and achieving mental stability. In the modern era, due to increasing stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health problems, there has been a rapid global increase in interest in the scientific evaluation of these ancient practices. Mantras are typically sounds, syllables, words, or phrases that are repeated to induce a meditative state. Meditation, on the other hand, is a broader concept encompassing various methods of concentration, mindfulness, self-reflection, and mental tranquillity. Mantra-based meditation and other meditation techniques are no longer limited to religious or spiritual practices but are now being studied in the context of psychology, neuroscience, and medical science

Recent experimental studies, randomized controlled trials, and meta-analyses have indicated that mantras and meditation can play a positive role in improving mental health, reducing stress, enhancing emotional regulation, improving cognitive function, and overall quality of life. Neuroimaging and psychophysiological studies have also revealed that meditation practices can influence brain structure and function, the autonomic nervous system, and hormonal balance.

METHODOLOGY

This systematic literature review utilized the Web of Science as the primary database, focusing on studies published between 2001 and 2024 in English. The search covered a variety of document types, including articles, review articles, early access papers, meeting abstracts, proceedings papers, and book reviews. A total of 1,408 studies were initially identified using relevant keywords "mantra and meditation, after applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, 95 studies were ultimately included in the review.

FINDINGS

The main objective of the present study is to conduct a systematic literature review on Mantra and Meditation. For the achievement of this, a systematic literature review analysis was carried out, emphasizing keywords that appeared together frequently, especially keywords related to Mantra and Meditation research.

Figure No. 1 Yearly Publication Graph of Mantra and Meditation

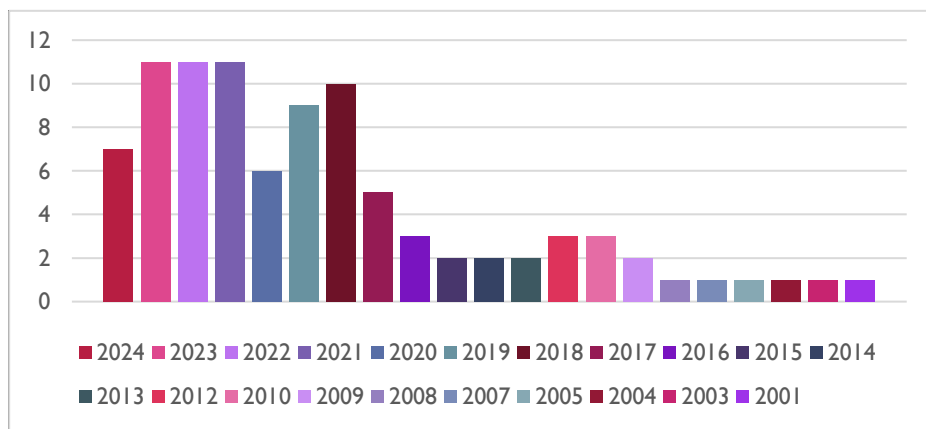


Figure No. 1 shows the number of publications across various years, showing the count of publications for each year from 2001 to 2024. It reveals fluctuations in publication activity over time. For instance, the number of publications is relatively low in the earlier years, with only one publication in 2001, 2003, 2005, and others. Starting in 2010, there was a gradual increase in the number of publications, with some years, such as 2017 and 2018, seeing around 9 to 10 publications. The most notable years for publication activity are 2021 to 2023, each of which saw 11 publications, the highest recorded in the table. In 2024, there were 7 publications, suggesting that recent years have witnessed a significant rise in output compared to earlier periods. Overall, the table indicates an increasing trend in publication activity, particularly in the past decade, with a marked peak in recent years.

Figure No.2 Document types Graph

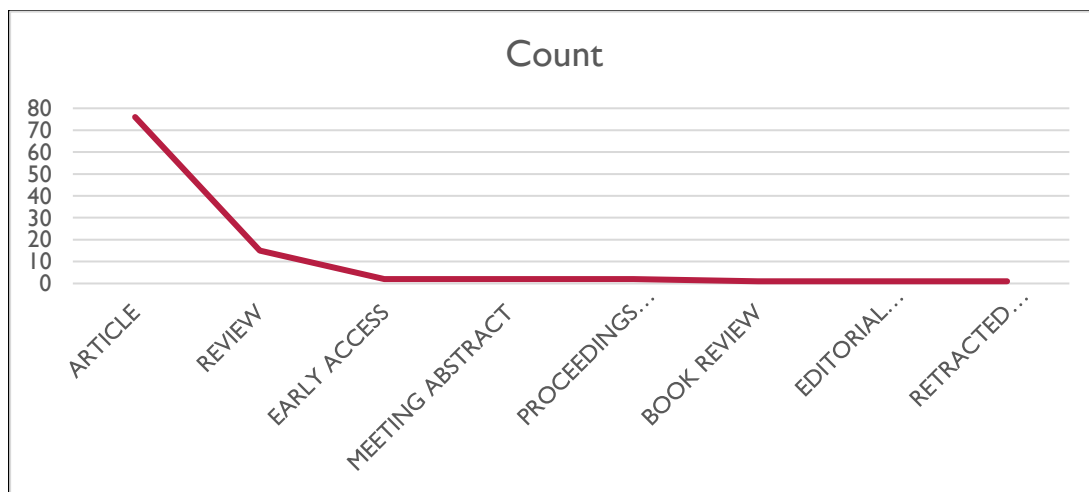


Figure No.2 Shows a breakdown of different document types and their respective counts in a publication database or journal. It shows that the most common document type is the article, with 76 entries, which characteristically includes full-length, peer-reviewed research articles presenting original findings. Review articles come next, with 15 entries, summarizing and evaluating existing literature on a specific topic. There are 2 early access articles, which are published online before the formal peer review process is completed to share research findings more promptly. The list also includes 2 meeting abstracts, which remain summaries of research presented at conferences. Similarly, there are 2 reports and papers, which are part of the formal record of research presented at a scientific meeting or conference. A single book review (1) is included, offering evaluations of recently published books in the field. There is also 1 entry for editorial material, which typically consists of commentary or opinion pieces, and finally, 1 retracted publication, indicating a paper that was inhibited due to issues such as errors or ethical concerns.

Figure NO. 3 Publication of countries on Mantra and Meditation

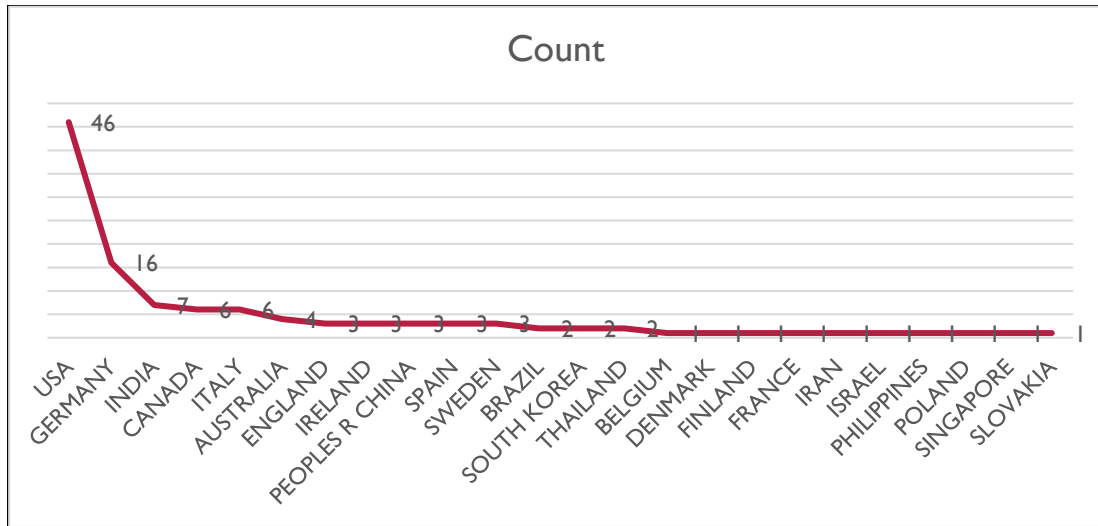


Figure NO. 3 indicates the countries and regions associated with the research publications, with the USA leading by a significant margin, contributing 46 publications. Germany follows with 16, while countries like India, Canada, and Italy each contribute 6. Other countries, including Australia, England, Ireland, the People's Republic of China, Spain, and Sweden, separately have 3 publications. Several countries, such as Brazil, South Korea, and Thailand, have 2, while numerous others, including Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, and others, contribute 1 publication each. This distribution reflects a broad international representation in the research output.

Figure No. 4 Research areas of Mantra and Meditation

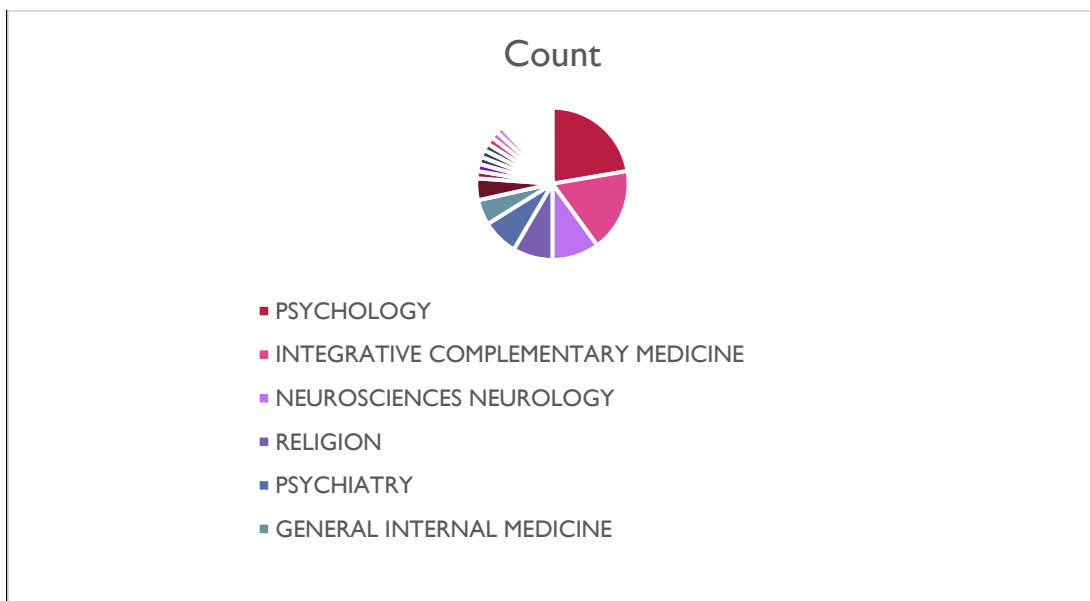


Figure No. 4 highlights various research areas and the number of publications associated with each. The most represented field is psychology, with 29 publications, followed by integrative complementary medicine (23), and neurosciences/neurology (13). Other significant areas include religion (11), psychiatry (10), and general internal medicine (7). Research in public environmental occupational health contributes to 6 publications. Several other fields have 2 publications each, such as Asian studies, behavioral sciences, engineering, environmental sciences/ecology, nursing, philosophy, rehabilitation, and social work. A variation of specialized fields, such as anesthesiology, biochemistry, chemistry, criminology, and education, each contribute 1 publication, showcasing a broad range of academic disciplines counted in the dataset.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The data collected from the various figures provides valuable insights into the trends, distribution, and diversity of academic research in recent years. The findings suggest that psychology is the most prominent research area, with 29 publications, followed by integrative complementary medicine (23) and neurosciences/neurology (13). This reflects the increasing attention in the direction of the mind-body connection, holistic health approaches, and neurological disorders in the present years. Research in psychology has consistently been a major focus, as evidenced by previous studies, such as the growing body of work exploring mental health and psychological treatments (Seligman, 2018). Similarly, integrative complementary medicine and neurology have seen noteworthy growth, as interest in alternative therapies and understanding of brain functions continues to expand (Smith et al., 2019).

Other significant areas identified include religion (11), psychiatry (10), and general internal medicine (7). The focus on religion may indicate the rising interest in the intersection of mental health and spiritual well-being, as sound as the role of faith-based healing methods. This is supported by research that highlights the growing recognition of spirituality in psychiatric care (Koenig, 2012). General internal medicine, with 7 publications, aligns with the increasing emphasis on comprehensive healthcare and preventative medicine, which has gained momentum globally due to aging populations and the growing burden of chronic diseases (Lloyd-Jones et al., 2020). Public environmental occupational health, with 6 publications, points to an increasing awareness of the impact of environmental factors on health. Environmental health is an area that has gained significant attention in light of rising concerns over climate change and pollution (Briggs et al., 2019). The two publications each in Asian studies, behavioral sciences, engineering, environmental sciences/ecology, nursing, philosophy, rehabilitation, and social work reflect an interdisciplinary approach, demonstrating how research spans diverse fields to address complex societal issues. Specialized fields like anesthesiology, biochemistry, chemistry, criminology, and education contributing a single publication each demonstrate the breadth of academic research across more niche topics. These areas, although smaller in terms of publication count, remain critical for the advancement of specialized knowledge and innovation (Bergman et al., 2018). Regarding the geographical distribution, the USA leads with 46 publications, significantly outpacing other countries such as Germany (16), India (7), and Canada (6). This finding is consistent with global trends where the United States remains a leading contributor to scientific research output (Narin, 2019). The distribution of research across various countries highlights the increasing globalization of research efforts, with countries like China, Brazil, South Korea, and Thailand showing notable contributions. This global participation suggests a broad and diverse academic engagement in the fields under study (Gaule et al., 2020). The findings from Figure No. 2, which show the document types and their distribution, reveal that articles dominate the dataset with 76 publications, highlighting the preference for full-length, peer-reviewed research papers. The significant number of review articles (15) aligns with the trend of synthesizing existing research to provide insights and guide future studies (Higgins & Green, 2011). The attachment of early access articles, meeting abstracts, and proceedings papers reflects the increasing trend toward rapid dissemination of research findings, especially in fast-evolving fields such as health and technology (Smith et al., 2020). Finally, Figure No. 1 shows a clear upward trend in publication activity, especially from 2010 onward, peaking in 2021-2023. This increase is consistent with the rising emphasis on academic productivity and the availability of research funding in recent years (Bok, 2013). The notable rise in publications after 2017 is also aligned with the global expansion of research networks and collaborative efforts, especially in response to global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Fraser et al., 2021).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of this dataset highlights the expanding scope and diversity of contemporary academic research, underscoring both disciplinary growth and increasing global participation. A pronounced concentration of publications within health-related fields—particularly psychology, integrative medicine, and neurology—

reflects a broader international emphasis on human health, well-being, and evidence-based clinical practice. This trend suggests not only rising societal demand for health research but also sustained investment in medical and behavioural sciences. Geographically, the distribution of research output reveals a strong global presence, with the United States and Germany emerging as major contributors alongside a range of other countries. This pattern illustrates the increasingly international nature of academic scholarship, where knowledge production is no longer confined to a small number of regions. Instead, collaborative networks across borders are becoming central to research advancement, enabling the exchange of ideas, methodologies, and technological resources.

The noticeable increase in publication volume, particularly after 2010, signals a shift toward heightened academic productivity. This growth may be attributed to factors such as improved access to digital research tools, the expansion of online publishing platforms, and stronger incentives for interdisciplinary collaboration. Moreover, the integration of technology into scientific communication has accelerated knowledge dissemination and fostered more inclusive participation in research communities worldwide. Overall, the observed trends align with broader global transformations in academia, characterized by interdisciplinary approaches, technological integration, and international collaboration. These developments point toward a more connected, dynamic, and responsive research landscape, capable of addressing complex global challenges through collective scholarly effort

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