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In Search of Excellence:
Leadership, Peak Performance and Transcendental Meditation
New Research

London, 24 July 2009:

Peak performers have significantly higher degrees of brain and psychological development than the average population, according to a new study of brain functioning and measures of psychological development. Moreover, this higher level of brain functioning is strikingly similar to that found in people who practise Transcendental Meditation, which suggests that the qualities of peak performance might be systematically developed in anyone, through Transcendental Meditation.

Subjects in the study included world champion athletes, top-level managers, and leaders in a variety of fields, who were compared with average-performing control groups.

The study, entitled, *Higher Development, Brain Integration, and Excellence in Leadership*, is published in the most recent issue (2009, Volume: 47, Issue: 6) of [*Management Decision*](#), a leading management journal in Britain.

The study was a collaboration between Oslo University College, the Norwegian School for Sport Sciences, and Norwegian Olympic Preparatory Centre, and Maharishi University of Management (MUM) in the USA.

Harald Harung, PhD, associate professor at Oslo University College, was the lead author of the article. "There is a growing agreement among researchers that leadership development is, in essence, self-development. The primary dimension in developing leadership is to develop the personality, the consciousness of the potential leader," said Dr Harung.

Dr Harung said that previous research by co-author of this study, Fred Travis PhD, had found that people who had been practising Transcendental Meditation™ up to seven years had a level of brain integration similar to peak performers, and those who had been practising Transcendental Meditation for at least 20 years had significantly higher levels. "The qualities that we find in world-class performers are those that develop with Transcendental Meditation, both individually and collectively," said Dr Harung. This technique has also been associated with the development of self-actualisation as described by psychologist Abraham Maslow. For more information see www.t-m.org.uk.

"The experience of restful alertness during Transcendental Meditation," explains Dr Travis, Director of MUM's Center for Brain, Consciousness and Cognition, "activates and so strengthens frontal executive circuits, the basis for successful learning."

Other co-authors of the study include: Dennis Heaton, PhD, co-Director of the MUM doctoral program in management; and Warren Blank, PhD, a top US management and organisational development consultant.

Abstract with more details of the study

Higher development, brain integration, and excellence in leadership

Author(s): Harald Harung, Fred Travis, Warren Blank, Dennis Heaton

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Purpose of the study – Today, there is a global need for more effective leaders. The purpose of this paper is to present a model of human development which covers the psychological, physiological, and sociological dimensions of leadership.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors review three research studies in which they have investigated the relationships between consciousness, psycho-physiological integration, and leadership performance using physiological measures, psychological tests, and self-reports.

Findings – These studies support the model that leadership ability is closely related to psycho-physiological refinement – the authors found that higher integration of the electrical brain activity, more mature moral reasoning, and more frequent peak experiences are found in top performers compared to average performers.

Research limitations/implications – The high frequency of peak experiences among top performers reveals the importance of such gratifying inner experiences for the business community.

Practical implications – The research suggests that practical methods for psycho-physiological refinement – such as the widely researched Transcendental Meditation technique – can be useful in developing more effective leadership. The brain integration scale presented here may be a reliable objective instrument for assessing an individual's leadership and performance capacity.

Originality/value – A unique contribution of the authors' research is to recognize that integrity – an essential requisite for leadership – has a physiological counterpart in the integration in the functioning of the brain seen through electroencephalography.

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- Transcendental Meditation is an effortless technique practised for 20 minutes twice a day sitting comfortably with the eyes closed.
- Transcendental Meditation is not a religion or philosophy and does not involve any belief or change in lifestyle.
- Over 350 peer-reviewed research studies on Transcendental Meditation confirm a range of benefits for mind, body, and behaviour. For a printable research review, see <http://www.t-m.org.uk/research.shtml>.
- Several studies have compared the effects of different meditation practices and found that Transcendental Meditation provides deeper relaxation and is more effective at reducing anxiety, depression, and hypertension than other forms of meditation and relaxation. In addition, no other meditation practice shows the widespread coherence throughout all areas the brain that is seen with Transcendental Meditation.
- More information on Transcendental Meditation can be obtained by calling 01695 51213 or visiting www.t-m.org.uk.

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