

## **MEDITATION AND HABIT FORMATION IN ADOLESCENCE: INSIGHTS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO HEARTFULNESS.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Adolescence is a major stage during which habits are established. Adolescence is not simply a biological stage, beginning with puberty and ending with the sexual and physical maturity of the person; it is the process of establishing one's identity, shaping one's character, determining whether one will be successful in the long term, and eventually, designing one's destiny.

Mediation is an effective technique today in enhancing self-control, emotional balance, and coping with stress, which are useful in the acquisition of good habits. The article explains how various meditation programs, including Mindfulness, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Heartfulness, have influenced the habits of adolescents in the context of Heartfulness Experience Life's Potential (HELP) program. The study uses the secondary data analysis approach, where the published literature, program review, and meta-analyses were reviewed on studies about meditation-based interventions on adolescents between the years 2003 and 2025. The studies have shown that well-organised programs such as HELP enhance the overall well-being of teens, and they have an approach of 360 degrees- mentally, physically, emotionally and socially. The paper also honours the implications of the learning systems through incorporating the meditative interventions as a way of developing healthy practices among the teenagers.

### **Keywords:**

Adolescence, habit forming, meditation, heartfulness, emotional regulation, self-regulation, mindfulness, yoga, transcendental meditation, HELP program.

### **1. INTRODUCTION:**

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence is not a habit, but an act, although, in a certain way, it is habitual (Aristotle, n.d.).

The teenage years are the most important stage in human life, and they shape their future life by adopting habits, behaviour and their overall health during their life. Adolescence is a period when a person is between the ages of 10-19, a period of transition between childhood and adulthood (WHO, 2023). Among the points of view is that adolescence is not a biological stage of puberty and maturing, yet a transformation, which is marked by the search for self, feeling experiments, and value acquisition. It has been a sacred period of human life in the Indian, philosophical and cultural tradition, in which has been inscribed in an instrument of the schooled routine, of the moral education, the nature and the fate of man.

As a neuroplastic and socio-emotional stage, one will encounter an extremely high risk of neuroplasticity on the one hand, and, on the other, a period of habit formation (Steinberg, 2014). The habits formed at this age normally cannot be eliminated, and he/she will carry them throughout his/her life and affect the health, learning, and well-being of the individual (Wood and Rung, 2016). The habit loop model explains how one develops a habit through the process of cue-routine-reward and how very difficult it becomes to get rid of once established (Wood and Neal, 2007). This illuminates the significance of interventions to teenagers in the construction of good, lifelong behaviours (Gardner et al., 2023).

The above, coupled with other factors, the development of behaviour patterns amongst adolescents is highly motivated by motivational and socio-educational factors. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) gives intrinsic motivation, particularly autonomy, competence and relatedness, much-preferred consideration as a condition to maintaining behaviour (Deci and Ryan, 2000). The available literature justifies the hard work of SDT to steer the huge number of teenagers to the healthy ones of self-rule and health (Ryan and Deci, 2025). On the same note, the contemporary studies of the habit theory note that the initial interventions with the help of cues and internal rewards are likely to reinforce the beneficial lifestyle practices to a significant degree (Gardner et al., 2023).

There is a gradual increase in the momentum of the interventions that are grounded on mediation as a platform upon which the manifestation of healthy Habits in the teenage years can be achieved. Based on neuroscientific evidence, meditation enhances the brain to have command over attention, enhances emotional regulation and pro-social behaviour, which are the main features of positive habit development (Tang, Holzel, and Posner, 2015). Many more schools are now adopting contemplative practices as a tool of not only academic performance but also as a tool of self-understanding, empathy, and character building among other tools (Roeser and Peck, 2009).

Several meditation programs have been implemented in the school and adolescent environment to improve self-restraint, mental stability, emotional stability and habituation. The outcomes of mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), present-moment awareness and non-judgmental attention, in turn, have an impact on improving coping skills, resistance to stress and resilience (McKeering and Hwang, 2019; Ashok, 2025; Monsillon et al., 2023). The meditation focused on yoga is a mixture of three components, i.e., thought, depending on the practices of postures, breathing, and concentrated awareness, which, consequently, leads to the improvement of physical balance, emotional resilience and the ability to control impulses (Bilagi, 2025; Kerekes et al., 2021; Janjhua et al., 2020; Ranjani et al., 2023). Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a form of meditation that involves the repetition of a mantra that leads to sleepiness with alertness, less stress, and ease of concentrating and engaging in studies during the day (Barnes et al., 2003; Travis and Shear, 2010; Rosaen, 2006).

Heartfulness meditation, on the contrary, provides a heart-oriented methodology, but pays attention to the inner calm, emotional, and value growth. The HELP program of the school has a single package that includes relaxation and heart-oriented meditation, cleaning of impressions, journaling and life skills training. In this way, self-regulation, prosocial behaviour and sustainable habit formation are also being promoted among teenagers through the program (Amarnath et al., 2023; Iyer et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). Heartfulness is not only not contradictory to Self-Determination Theory as it presents autonomy, competency, and relatedness, but heartfulness, which in which the manual to developing a personality and sustainable social personalities is the major issue (Deci and Ryan, 2000).

## Research Gap

Irrespective of the fact that the subject of meditation has gained greater focus, the research that investigates the importance of various kinds of meditation in the development of habits during adolescence is limited.

The major part of the literature uses personal approaches that often lead to the discoveries of stress relief, attention control, or an emotional reaction, but there is still little information concerning how meditation would impact character development, values synthesis, and their spiritual or intuitive development in a child (Gardner et al., 2023; Ryan and Deci, 2025). To be more specific, no research evidence can be used to propose the effectiveness of Heartfulness meditation and structured programs, such as HELP, in terms of reliable habits, self-regulation, and prosocial behaviour development in adolescents (Heartfulness Institute, 2021; HELP Studies, 2018-19; 2021-22). The identification of the said gaps could lead to the definition of the needs of the respective students, the development of the educational interventions, school-based programs, which would promote the holistic development in children and would enable the establishment of the positive habit development in the lifetime outlook of the students in question.

## Aim of the Study

The specified paper is preoccupied with the same issue of how the so-called meditation practices, i.e. mindfulness, yoga, TM, and Heartfulness, contribute to shaping adolescent habits and adds this aspect of the perspective to the comprehensive HELP program.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This segment has been substantiated by theories introduced in the introductory part and has elucidated on the methodological underpinning under which the role played by meditation practices and meditation practice specifically, Heartfulness, in the formation of habitual processes during the adolescent stage is to be addressed. It determines the research design, data and method of analysis that will be used in the incorporation of the already conducted studies.

### 2.1 Research Design

The study assumes a secondary data analysis format to ensure that the depth of the notion and the validity are ensured. Under such a design, the person will obtain the holistic picture of the reviewed literature, and the biggest factor will be the impact of different meditation practices on adolescent development.

The analytical paper adopts the secondary data methodology, where a thorough study and synthesis of the literature created by the available peer-reviewed articles is performed to explore the relationship between mediation practices and habit formation among youth. The principal one is Heartfulness meditation and the HELP program, and it is compared to other forms of meditation, including MBIs, Yoga, and TM (McKeering and Hwang, 2019; Tang, Holzel, and Posner, 2015; Patel and Pollock, 2018; Heartfulness Institute, 2021). This research topic is to bring together and synthesise the existing evidence of different mediation practices. It enables an in-depth understanding, in detail, of their results and the literature gaps.

## 2.2 Data Sources

Data were drawn from:

- Journal articles published in peer-reviewed journals and published in 2003 to 2025.
- Adolescent meditation practice systematic reviews.
- School-based interventions with a focus on Heartfulness meditation should be evaluated in terms of their impact on the program.

## 2.3 Inclusion Criteria

To preserve methodological strictness and relevance, concrete criteria for inclusion were set up. The next section of the paper also gives an exhaustive account of the criteria that prompted the choice of the studies, which involved meditation and habit formation among adolescents. The selection of studies was mainly caused by the following criteria:

- The research studies were required to take adolescents aged between 10 and 18 years.
- The studies were forced to examine the various meditation exercises that were enacted to enable the development of the habit.
- Measures, whether quantitative or qualitative and somehow related to stress reduction, emotional regulation or habit development had to be in place.

## 2.4 Analytical Approach

The data sources and inclusion parameters are established first, and then the analytical procedure is included. It thematically processes the findings. This method will ensure that the studies included reflect the same attributes that are compatible with all the mentioned meditation types, therefore providing the researchers with information regarding the control of emotions, regularity and the modulation of behaviour among the youth.

With the methodological framework out there, the following sections will present a discourse on how various meditation modalities, Mindfulness, Coherent Breath, Transcendental Meditation and Heartfulness may play a role in forming a habit and the development of emotions in adolescents.

## 3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Acknowledging the above-stated methodology, the following section will be the synthesis of the available theoretical and empirical perspectives on meditation and habit formation. It will birth the conceptual basis and will have the adolescent psychology, motivation and application of the contemplative practices coupled with the behaviour development process.

### 3.1.1 Habit Theory

This part, which works on the classical suggestion of habit, explains how habitual behaviour and environmental stability promote the creation of automatic behaviour, which is typical of how good and bad habits are built among teenagers. Wood and Neal (2007) explain that according to the habit theory, behaviours that are repeated in similar situations and are rewarded slowly become automatic and they need minimal thought. This process is highly applicable to the teens who are in the process of constantly making their brains growingly sensitive to the environment and social reinforcement (Steinberg, 2014). An example of this is a teenager who goes to school daily at the same time and place will eventually associate that environment with an intensive learning experience, hence making it automatic. The three key areas of habit formation are the environmental triggers, habitual actions and rewards and

a combination of these three factors decides whether the habit will be maintained. The initiation of the very first behaviours is driven by goals, and the habits that have already been formed are also able to maintain them with near no effort and therefore allow the teenagers to maintain their good habits, such as exercising or meditation, even when the motivation is non-existent. Conversely, the unhelpful habits would have to be broken with conscious changes in the setting and the creation of new habits that would go hand-in-hand with the good objectives (Wood and Rungar, 2016).

Viewing it neurodevelopmentally, it is found that the brain of an adolescent contains an imbalance in time: the limbic system, which handles emotions and reward sensitivity, matures first, followed by the prefrontal cortex, which handles decision making and self-control and matures last (Steinberg, 2014). The asymmetry can result in the surge of emotional response, yet a platform of organised interventions, using repetition and learning of emotions to settle the good habits, is opened.

In conclusion, the theory of habits demonstrates that teens do have an opportunity to develop the traits of constancy, strength, and self-control, provided that they continue exercising good habits and punishing themselves internally. The core concepts of this theory form the foundation of meditation that should be induced to achieve self-discipline and better emotional control.

### 3.1.2 Neuroscience of Addiction Development in Adolescence.

On the one hand, there is the habit theory that determines behaviour, and other is, neuroscience points to the biological processes that underlie the latter. This section of the discussion relates the theory to brain science and how the neuroplasticity of teenagers can facilitate or hinder the development of lifetime habits. Adolescence among the youth is associated with a high level of neuroplasticity and uneven development.

**Table 1: Stages of Brain Development (Steinberg, 2014)**

Brain Region	Developmental stage of life	Implications of the habit formation.
Limbic System	Early Maturing	Process rewards, emotions. Adolescents are so sensitive to rewards and society.
Prefrontal Cortex	Matures Later	Impulse and decision control, inadequate self-regulation can be an issue in supporting habitual action.

#### Key Insights:

- Emotional responses are more powerful among teenagers, and they are yet to learn how to manage impulse control.
- Regular treatments in the process can be used to take advantage of the plasticity of the brain to form good habits.
- Emotional and environmental support of the uniformity of behaviour cannot be dispensed with.

### 3.1.3 Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Self-determination Theory (SDT) is a motivation theory that states that people will be motivated when there are activities that give them control over the end results of the activities. Together with the neurological and behavioural perspectives, Self-Determination Theory encourages a motivational perspective. It shows why teenagers cling to certain habits, and it does that simply by indicating the needinesses inherent in teens, such as autonomy, competence and relatedness. Although the habit theory explains the phenomenon of behaviour done unconsciously, the Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 2000) provides an explanation of why people engage in these behaviours over an extended period. SDT discusses three main psychological needs namely autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are the key driving forces of intrinsic motivation. When the needs are met, the youths have high chances of displaying the behaviours where they are not only involved but also do it very willingly and often, bringing about the personal growth and the overall health (Ryan and Deci, 2025) that is not only maintained but becomes better as a result of the process.

- The acceptance of autonomy enables adolescents to perceive themselves as being in control of their decisions, which leads to the feeling of owning and responsibility.
- Competence is that feeling of dominance and competence acquired by skill development.
- Relatedness comprises being emotionally attached to peers, teachers, and the community, which supports the urge to behave in social ways that are of significance.

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) motivates the viewpoint of habit formation. It is Barbara killing chickens with water only to be proven that the theory of habit fails to make it meaningful and self-affirmed. An example is that of an adolescent who practices mindfulness daily, not out of a duty to do it but because mindfulness provides this person with calmness and meaning in his or her life; this person is autonomously motivated, intrinsically motivated habit formation.

### 3.1.4 The implications of interventions include

In this section, theoretical frameworks of habit, neuroscience, and SDT are applied to illustrate how the theory can be applied in practice. It shows that the interventions of education and meditation have an opportunity to exploit these mechanisms of self-regulation and consistent behaviour in adolescents.

Key Insights:

- A more favourable outcome is that habits become preserved when there are constant cues, intrinsic drive, and a plan of action as their backup resources.
- Adolescent interventions must be aimed at emotional regulation, attention, and values-related interaction.
- The concepts of meditation can result in better self-regulation, focus, and emotional control, which align with the concepts of both habit theory and SDT.

### 3.1.5 Summative Table 2: Habit Formation Framework during Adolescence.

Components	Description	Implications in of practice interventions	Key Researchers.
Habit	Actions that are practised	Develop a regular	Wood & Neal, 2007

Principles	in a consistent environment will become automatic	study, sleeping, or exercise practice.	
Habit-Goal Interaction	Goal guide habits; habit informs goals; self-control is required in case there is conflict.	After goal setting comes routines.	Wood & Neal, 2007
Development of Brain	Early development of limbic system (reward and emotion); later development of prefrontal cortex (impulse control, planning)	Use reward motivation and training on self-control.	Steinberg, 2014.
Motivation (SDT)	Autonomy, competence, relatedness	Self-directed design interventions, skill-building, and socially engaging	Deci and Ryan, 2000 Deci and Ryan, 2025
Combination of Habit and Motivation	Automatisation, habit, and intrinsic motivation can improve long-term behaviour change.	Learning should be accompanied by the use of habits.	Cano, 2025

### 3.1.6 Making the connection to Meditation Interventions.

After developing the theoretical framework, it is now time to move to practical use. Here, the art of habit forming is related to meditation, hence laying the reflection exercises as a measure to reinforce emotional stability and consistency of the behaviour.

- Meditation may also assist in developing good mental and emotional states that will be used as a reminder of good habits.
- The development of emotional control based on the meditative procedures is harmonised with the demands of the nervous system in its evolution.
- Moral practices - like Heartfulness - that are of value, create the motivating factors within, so the habit can be maintained.

### 3.2 Meditation and Habit Formation: Well-Being, Emotional Control and Self-Regulation.

Based on the already established theoretical framework, this section explores the mechanisms of meditation concerning self-regulation and motivation and provides the related behavioural consequences. It associates emotional control and good sunlight habits development. The self-regulatory skills needed in the formation of healthy habits among adolescents are built in meditation practices, including mindfulness, Heartfulness, Transcendental Meditation (TM), and Yoga-based Meditation. Meditation assists youngsters to practice their attention, emotional consciousness, as well as mental regulation in such a manner that they will be capable of recognising the urge that can cause them to be inclined to commit maladaptive behaviours, e.g., procrastination, unhealthy snacking, or excessive screen time (Gopwani and Patel, 2024).

Scientific research has confirmed the regular practice of meditation to be effective in eliminating stress, anxiety, and emotional non-control, among others, which are very critical to the success of habits. Gopwani and Patel (2024) state that Heartfulness meditation enables a person to gain more control over their emotions, so it is possible to make teenagers react to problematic situations wisely, not emotionally. As an example, a meditating teenager can perhaps take time to think before acting impulsively, therefore giving himself or herself time to pick good things, such as studying and communicating mindfully.

### **Moderation and Habit formation**

Among other things, meditation is important since it teaches adolescents to manage their mental and emotional conditions, thereby controlling their thoughts and behaviours. This psychic regulation is the primary cause that leads to the formation of long-term habits since it reduces spontaneous responses and enhances the performance of conscious behaviour (Ryan and Deci, 2025). Therefore, it is possible to moderate the scheme of moderation in the form of quantitative results, i.e. the number of impulsive actions decreased (reduced instances of discipline or emotional outbursts), the adherence of persons to the daily routine (studying or sleeping at the same time), and the level of their concentration and attention in both academics and inter-personal interactions (Gopwani et al., 2024; Gardner et al., 2025). All these measurable characteristics are signs of how the individual can regulate himself, and this is the connection between emotional control and habit formation.

### **Relate to Values-Based Practices**

Inner balance, compassion, and values-oriented living are some of the values that are highly focused on in heartfulness meditation. The above-mentioned features not only have a positive impact on the increase in emotional intelligence and positive social relationships, but also simplify the process of adhering to lifestyle habits, such as regular sleep hygiene, studying, or religious practices (Gopwani and Patel, 2024; Yadav et al., 2021). All these measures of self-regulation are quantifiable dimensions that signify the middle ground between emotional regulation and the development of the habit. Self-regulation, emotional regulation and the attainment of meaning by engaging in meditation give the teenagers a platform in which they can develop not only good habits but also less of bad habits.

### **3.3 Mindfulness-Based Programs in the Schools**

Shifting from the general principles of meditation to the specific methods, this section examines the studies on mindfulness programs in schools. It also illustrates how mindfulness grew to be a central source of concentration, strength, and emotional stability- very significant factors in the pleasant establishment of habits.

Adolescence is a developmental stage that is highly emotionally reactive, has fluctuating self-regulatory abilities and forms long-term behavioural patterns (Steinberg, 2014). In this respect, the mindfulness-based meditation has proven to be a useful and advantageous approach to the facilitation of self-control, attention management, and long-term and positive routines (Wood and Neal, 2007; Deci and Ryan, 2000). Techniques such as non-judgmental awareness of current experiences are easier approaches to meditation, which enables adolescents to stop, observe, and react directly and not out of impulse; a vital mechanism that helps in the transition to challenging regulation of automatic and habitual behaviours.

Literature on meditation as an approach to habit formation in adolescents has grown and expanded substantially, providing empirical and theoretical evidence on the subject. The systematic review of school-based mindfulness interventions conducted by McKeering and Hwang (2019) on the sample of early adolescents (10-14 years) showed that attention,

emotional regulation, and classroom behaviour, which are key processes involved in adaptive habits, were positively changed very uniformly. Such studies have given way to upcoming empirical research in the field of adolescent mindfulness and habit formation. Miles, Webb, and Sheeran (2023) presented a theoretical model, which mindfulness is placed in health behaviour change. They have highlighted the processes of repetition, intrinsic motivation and contextual reinforcement as the processes by which meditation will become a habit.

Empirical research has also shown direct effects of meditation on self-control and behavioural stability of adolescents. Ashok (2025) discovered that mindfulness-based programs increased the capacities of adolescents to self-regulate and emotional stability, associated with their intrinsic motivation, hence enabling the establishment of stable habits. Salmoirago-Blotcher et al. (2019) conducted a pilot randomised controlled trial on high school students (14-15 years) and identified that students who decreased impulsiveness and increased focus and behavioural consistency, which are signs of the development of a habit, were among the positive and negative outcomes, respectively.

Furthermore, longitudinal evidence similarly points out the enduring effect of mindfulness on the potential of youths who are habit-related. Warren et al. (2021) have put in place that trait mindfulness does not change over the teenage years and at the same time, predicts the self-regulation of consistent and deliberate patterns of behaviour over the years. Lastly, a meta-analysis of school-based mindfulness interventions with adolescents (10-18 years) by Monsillon, Williams, and Blakemore (2023) reported a mean positive well-being and sharing behaviours impact; hence, it is relevant to discuss the potential of meditation as a tool for forming regular and sustainable habits. All the studies indicate that meditation is a habit-developing tool in adolescents since it improves self-control, decreases impulsiveness, and promotes the adoption of deliberate and value-oriented behaviours. Yoga and meditation may be integrated into the school schedule or community outreach programs that are properly designed to engage the children all the time and therefore help them to be accustomed to good practice even when they are adults.

**Table 3: The most important publications concerning mindfulness meditation and habit formation concerning Adolescence.**

Research/Study	Years Published	Authors	Age Group	Design	Relevance to Habit Formation.
Self-regulation and well-being through the use of mindfulness methods in adolescents. Journal of Adolescent Mental Health, 12 (2), 101115.	2025	Ashok, L.	Adolescents (12-17 yrs.)	Empirical research	Enhanced self-regulating, emotionally stable and motivation-sustaining routine.

A systematic review of mindfulness-based interventions in schools in early adolescents. Educational Psychology Review, 31(2), 259-284.	2019	McKeering, P., and Hwang, Y.-S.	Early adolescents (10-14 yrs)	Systematic review	Systematic review of the processes of habit formation in core processes of improved attention, emotional regulation and behavioural control.
Turning mindfulness meditation into a wellness practice: A behavioural change theoretical model. Mindfulness, 14(1), 1-15.	2023	Miles, E., Webb, T. L., & Sheeran, P.	Mixed adolescent and adult attention	Theoretical paper	Theoretical mindfulness was theorised as a health behaviour, being obsessed with repetition and intrinsic motivation
Mindfulness-based impulsivity intervention in adolescents: School-based randomised controlled trial. Mindfulness, 10(6), 1160-1171.	2019	Salmoirago Blotcher, E., et al.	High school students (14-15 yrs.)	High-quality Pilot RCT	Less impulsivity; better focus and behavioural stability.
Trait mindfulness of early adolescence development is a naturalistic journal of child and Family Studies, 30(7) 17451758.	2021	T., Sampaio, F., Dahl, C. J., & Ciarrochi, J.	Young adolescents	Longitudinal research study	The properties of mindfulness stabilise during adolescence, and significant predictive stability of self-regulation.
School-going children Mindfulness-based interventions: a	2023	Monsillo n, J, Williams , A and Blakemo	young (10-18 yrs.)	metabolic analysis	There were moderate positive well-being results and prosocial practices, which

meta-analysis. Journal of Youth and		re, S J.			validated the routine practice of mindfulness on a routine basis.
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### 3.4 Yoga-Based Meditation and Practice in Adolescents

The review replaces yoga-based meditation, which is a full-spectrum process that includes the physical postures, the breathing exercises, as well as the meditative awareness. The following paragraph discusses the combined effects of these practices in controlling emotions and behavioural consistency in teenagers. Yoga meditation that embraces physical postures (asanas), the breathing exercises (pranayama), and the meditative activities and practices has come to be of a huge interest not only in the studies of education and psychological studies but also as a possible contributor to the emotional regulation of the teens, their self-awareness, and their formation of habits. This is a critical stage of development, which can be described as being more emotionally reactive, more impulsive, and more prone to stress, and therefore the interventions based on self-regulation and mindfulness are especially significant in this case (Bilagi, 2025; Kerekes et al., 2021).

The information provided by the study indicates the existence of a direct correlation between the frequency and the frequency of yoga-related practices and the enhancement of the mental health of the individual, the ability to restrain impulses and the development of adaptive behavioural traits. As an example, Bilagi (2025) guaranteed and conducted a one-month-long integrated yoga course and documented that depression, anxiety, and stress levels among the adolescent participants had reduced significantly, and mindfulness and general mental wellness increased. In line with this, Kerekes et al. (2021) have mentioned that adolescents who practised yoga developed an increase in impulse control and a decrease in aggression, thereby highlighting the significance of yoga in a positive.

Ranjani et al. (2023) also suggested that yoga practitioners were found to experience a lower level of stress, improved cognitive problems such as attention and concentration, and an opportunity to achieve improved academic performance; therefore, developing consistent, positive practices in adolescents. More studies support these claims. As an example, Khunti (2022) demonstrated that the mental health of school-age children was enhanced due to yoga programs, and they were able to overcome their pre-examination anxiety, depression, and academic stress. Likewise, Uebelacker et al. (2021) indicated the positive impact of even a single yoga session on the mood and reduction of youth distress, even in the case of the already psychologically vulnerable individuals. Overall, the research shows that yoga-based meditation as a whole is a holistic and balanced method of developing emotional resilience, self-regulatory ability, and long-term positive behaviours in teenagers. At this point, it can be said that yoga practices can be effective in intervening in school or community-based programs to enhance mental health in adolescence, facilitate habit formation, and improve academic and social outcomes.

**Table 4: Seminal Research on the relationship between Yoga-based Meditation and the formation of habits in adolescents.**

Research/Study	Year Published	Authors	Age group	Design	Relevance to Habit Formation
The impact of integrated yoga on mental health and mindfulness amongst adolescents. Journal of Yoga and Mindfulness, 10(1), 45-58.	2025	Bilagi, S	Adolescents	Quasi-Experimental Study with pre-test and post-test design	Less depression, anxiety, and stress; better mindfulness and mental health.
The Effects of yoga on violence and impulsiveness in teenagers. Journal of Child and Adolescent Behaviour, 9(4), 201-212.	2021	Kerekes, N., Kovacs, M., & Szabo, Z.	Adolescents	Experimental study using an intervention and control group.	Increased impulse control, reduced aggression and facilitated positive behavioural habits.
Yoga practice and its effect on emotional regulation, self-esteem and well-being in adolescents. International Journal of Adolescent Health, 7(3), 112-123.	2020	Janjhua, S., Sharma, R., and Gupta, P.	13-18 yrs	Correlational and comparative study	Gains in emotional regulation, self-esteem, and the health and well-being of yoga practitioners.
Stress and cognitive intervention using yoga in school-going adolescents	2023	Ranjani, R., Pillai, S., & Menon, A.	Adolescents	Experimental study	Less stress, better attention, concentration and grades, promoted habit formation.
Psychological yoga advantages among school-going children: Stress, anxiety	2022	Khunti, V.	School-aged children	Cross-sectional study	Better psychological parameters, pre-exam anxiety and

and depression control. Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 27(1), 34-46.					stress are managed.
The attitude of adolescents toward yoga as a method for stress and mood disorders. Journal of Adolescent Health, 68(5), 877-885.	2021	Uebelacker, L. A., Tremont, G., Epstein-Lubow, G., and Gillette, T.	Adolescents	Survey-based descriptive study	Positive effect on mood and distress despite single yoga classes.

### 3.5 Transcendental Meditation and Habit Formation in Adolescents.

A comparative study has been conducted on Transcendental Meditation (TM), a mantra-based technique, known and practised by adolescents. Transcendental Meditation (TM) is a meditative technique involving a mantra that is extensively researched and which describes the cognitive functioning, behaviour control and reduction of stress among the youth. TM consists of silently repeating a mantra; this causes an amorphous mind, creating a state of restful alertness and sufficient mental clarity, emotional tranquillity and attentional focus (Barnes et al., 2003; Travis & Shear, 2010; Conti, 2022). Adolescence is also characterised by emotional responsiveness and the formation of permanent habits (Steinberg, 2014); therefore, TM results in self-regulation and organisation of practices. Research shows that TM applies greatly in the acquisition of positive habits among teenagers. Barnes et al. (2003) carried out a controlled trial among high-school students that revealed that TM training resulted in a decrease in absenteeism, a drop in the number of school-rule infractions and a performance improvement. What the TM group saw was an average of 6.4 missed classes per student, whereas in the control group, there was an increase in absenteeism; therefore, the intervention may be considered as improving the school attendance and routine amongst students consistently. Further, the number of suspensions or disciplinary cases decreased in the TM practising students, and it was a definite sign of better behaviour control and routine following.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) has been proven to alleviate stress, and thus, it also leads to the development of habits, as it is stress and distress that tend to disrupt the regular pattern of behaviour. In such a school-based program as 'Quiet Time', students of the 9th grade who sampled TM for four weeks reported a decrease in anxiety levels and an increase in resilience, thereby suggesting that TM can be used as well to develop focus, self-control, and study skills (Travis and Shear, 2010; Conti, 2022).

The other researchers have reported the effects of TM on emotional flexibilities, attention, creativity and self-esteem that are favourable to the acquisition and maintenance of good behavioural practices (Rosaen, 2006; Kaplan, 2015; TMWomen.org, 2011). In general, the information shows that the TM is a meditation technique that enhances the self-regulatory, emotional, and disciplined behaviour of adolescents. Being a reliable source of relaxation and mental clarity, TM enables the establishment of sustainable practices that are aimed at achieving goals, such as periodical studying, mindful learning, and socially beneficial

behaviour. TM intervention in schools and communities is a possible approach to developing habits and long-term well-being among teens.

**Table 5: Significant Research that has connected Transcendental Meditation and the development of habits in adolescents.**

Research/Study	Year Published	Authors	Age group	Design	Relevance to Habit Formation
Transcendental Meditation and blood pressure, anxiety, and stress in adolescents. Journal of Adolescence, 26(3), 293-303.	2003	Barnes, V. A., Schneider, M. and Greenberg, M. T.	Adolescents	Randomised controlled trial (RCT)	Reduced absenteeism, less school violations, and enhanced academic performance of TM practitioners.
Focused attention, open monitoring, automatic self-transcending: Categories to arrange the meditations of Vedic, Buddhist and Chinese systems. Consciousness and Cognition, 19(4), 1110-1118.	2010	Travis, F., and Shear, J.	Adolescents	Comparative Experimental Study	Less anxiety and resilience after four weeks of TM practice.
Transcendental Meditation and its implications on teen academic achievement and well-being. Journal of Educational Research, 115 (5), 345352.	2022	Conti, A.	Adolescents	Quasi-experimental school-based study	TM intervention resulted in enhanced student behaviour and school academic achievement.
The experience of Transcendental Meditation by students of	2006	Rosaen, C.	Middle school students	Qualitative phenomenological study	Enhanced self-control, emotional flexibility, and academic

middle school: A qualitative study. Journal of Developmental and Behavioural Paediatrics, 27(2), 110-116.					performance using TM practice
Adolescents and young females: Transcendental Meditation.	2011	TM-Women.org Authors	Adolescents	Program evaluation report	Major decreases in absenteeism, violation of school rules, and suspension of TM practitioners.
Transcendental Meditation and its effects on adolescents' substance use, focus, and stress: Review. TMWomen.org.	2015	Kaplan, G.	Adolescents	Systematic review of Empirical studies	Improved attention, reduced anxiety, and reduced substance use following TM practices.

### 3.6 Heartfulness Meditation: Meditation Practices and New Studies.

The first step was conceptualisation of Heartfulness; this is the part where the organised skeleton of the education is provided as part of the Heartfulness Experience Life, Potential of the Heartfulness (HELP) program. It examines operations and activities to be self-regulated, emotionally intelligent, and sustainably form habits to meditate. Heartfulness, the modern meditation practice that is perceived as the best among all. It is giving a very advanced level of emotional and spiritual growth to the user; synthesis of the ancient yogic values and spiritual growth is the primary one. It is an ancient Raja Yoga method but introduces an element of Yogic Transmission or Pranahuti into it; therefore, the student can refer to it as Godly energy that cleanses or is the force that produces the needed change inside (Heartfulness Institute, 2021). Therefore, the transmission points of Heartfulness come into the frame of importance through the heart, not using cognitive attention alone, as one of the major practitioners makes the distinction between meditation and another.

The technique includes a collection of procedures: body and mind conditioning with the help of guided relaxation; heart meditation to achieve inner calmness; night cleaning to clear the day of the emotional impression on the heart; writing or silent praying before sleep. Combined methods are goal-oriented and evoke calmness, empathy, courage, and clarity, emotional regulation and moral development of adolescents, which are characteristics of the qualities related to the mentioned above.

Some studies that are being developed show that Heartfulness meditation brings about benefits in emotional and psychological well-being that are measurable. Gopwani and Patel (2024) found that their self-awareness, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships

were more successful in terms of youths who participated in programs according to the principles of Heartfulness. Similarly, Yadav et al. (2021) examined the effects of combined practice of Heartfulness meditation and brainwave entrainment on the well-being of adolescents and conducted the following observations: mood improvement, the reduction in anxiety, and improvement in emotional regulation, which are the key aspects of spiritual intelligence.

A massive analysis conducted at Kanha Shantivanam, Hyderabad, involved 725 individuals and demonstrated that all the aspects of physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental well-being were improved after group meditations. The report provided by Indica Today (2021) proves the topicality of the Heartfulness practices in the development of various features of the young generation, in particular, the spiritual and intuition-based, which accompany the cognitive and emotional ones. In particular, the Heartfulness approach provides adolescents with an opportunity to experience such values as love, gratitude and patience, thus it would be easy to develop good habits. Even though empirical studies are still a developing process, the available few of them consistently lead to the opportunity of Heartfulness opening a pathway in which individuals could experience the equilibrium between social and emotional mindfulness and moral consciousness in terms of heart-based meditation and value-based living.

### **3.7 Heartfulness Meditation: Practices and the HELP Program.**

Heartfulness Meditation is a heart-based meditation that links the ancient Raja Yoga with the idea of yogic transmission presented by Pranahuti that facilitates reaching a higher level of meditation and accelerates a spiritual change (Heartfulness Institute, 2021). The method entails directed relaxation, heart-focused meditation, and an evening cleaning method to forget about everyday stress, journaling, and nighttime affirmations/prayer. These traditions are meant to build inner-satisfaction, serenity, benevolence, bravery, and simplicity, thereby resulting in whole-person development.

### **Values, Intuitive and Spiritual Development.**

The values-based living is emphasised in Heartfulness, and, therefore, not only are adolescents expected but also provided with the support in their attempts to be positive, empathic, and meaningful persons themselves, in addition to their meditation practice. Recent studies are alluding to the fact that Heartfulness is entirely a new route to the development of the socio-emotional trait and spiritual intelligence. IQ and the Spiritual Quotient (SQ) are the concepts describing the power to relate to inner guidance and ethical awareness, respectively. Even though these constructs remain at the stage of theoretical emergence, some of the researchers operationalise them in terms of self-report measures that describe decision-making clarity, empathy, ethical reasoning, and self-awareness (Yadav et al., 2021).

### **Quantitative Evidence:**

- Yadav and colleagues (2021) examined how Heartfulness meditation can positively affect the well-being of adolescents along with the contribution of brainwave entrainment to this effect; the positive effects on the mood ( $p < 0.01$ ), reduced anxiety, along improved emotional control are among the ones that were reported.
- The Heartfulness-based 725-person study held in the Kanha Shantivanam ashram (Hyderabad) uncovered that all the categories of well-being, namely physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual, had been measured by significant improvements in meditation sessions conducted in groups (Indica Today, 2021).

The results then imply that the Heartfulness methods are not only stress relievers but also have a positive effect in truth in measuring self-regulation, emotional intelligence, and value-based habits.

### **The HELP Program:**

The HELP program is an official educational program, the meaning of which is Heartfulness Experiences Life Potential (simplified to HELP), a 16-week program that combines meditation in Heartfulness style, life skills training, and counselling to enhance the emotional, social, and academic welfare of adolescents (Heartfulness Education Trust, 2019). The most important results of the program evaluation are as follows:

- Stress Reduction: The subjects refer to impressive decreases in the levels of stress and anxiety (Amarnath et al., 2023; Iyer and Iyer, 2019).
- Emotional Resilience and Social Well-Being The teenagers are more resilient and have reported a higher degree of satisfaction with life and social connectedness in comparison to what they reported before (Iyer et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023).
- Habit Formation: Even the well-designed sessions of meditation, as well as the daily practices, generate and then strengthen the monotonous practices that ultimately lead to forming stereotypic positive behaviour in the long term.

Accessibility: The program was also converted to the online platform during the COVID-19 pandemic period, resulting in continuous meditation practice, formation of habits, and skill development among the students of various backgrounds (Heartfulness Education Trust, 2021).

### **Implications:**

Motivational scaffolding to facilitate the formation of the habit is offered by Heartfulness meditation, including internal cues that allow perceiving calmness, concentration, emotional awareness, values, purpose, and Ethical awareness as motivational indicators. Even though constructs such as intuitive and spiritual quotient are still in development, all the existing quantitative data indicate that the former can be measured and transitioned to the latter using the Heartfulness practice. The fact that Heartfulness meditation can be integrated with various practices is emphasised, and the biggest cause of conflict between the two genres of developed concepts- adolescent habit forming and character building is raised because of the precursor to researching the topic empirically.

### **3.8 Synthesis and Research Gap**

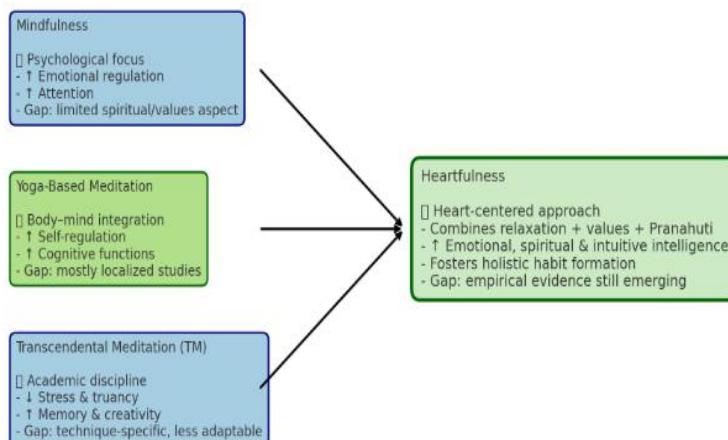
The review of the studies conducted on meditation, Mindfulness-Based Interventions, Yoga-Based Meditation, Transcendental Meditation, and Heartfulness practices has shown a consistent potential of the practices in enhancing psychological well-being in adolescents and inducing desirable behaviour change. Generally shared in the responses from the various disciplines is that the negative characteristics of emotional disordering, including stress, anxiety, and negative affect, are attenuated, and the positive characteristics of emotional regulation, attention, and self-control are enhanced.

These findings are theoretically justified because self-regulatory and coping skills are the innate psychological factors for developing habits in the adolescent stage. Nonetheless, the differences are significant. Despite the high levels of evidence for MBIs, no values and spirituality are taken into account; instead, they focus the practitioners only on being mindful in the present moment. Yoga-based meditation, on the other hand, is very holistic in its connection to the mind and the body, but is typically investigated in small and narrow terms,

thus posing the question of whether the findings are transferable to other areas. Transcendental meditation has achieved great results in the fields of educational attainment and good behaviour; however, the implementation of the technique suffers from the fact that it is structured, very specific and method-driven. Heartfulness approach, instead, uses intuition, spiritual intelligence, and values in the process so that the development of psychological and spiritual youth can be dealt with in an integrated way.

However, the reported research on Heartfulness is still very little, particularly about its role in this process of habit formation by the intuitive as well as spiritual quotients. Thus, one is hinting at the need to carry out the research more specifically directed towards Heartfulness. However, since Heartfulness is a holistic practice that not only helps to relieve stress but also helps in character formation and imbibing positive habits by young people for a lifetime, Heartfulness should be the prime candidate for such a study.

#### Meditation Approaches for Adolescents: Positioning Heartfulness as the Integrative Model



"It is not individual methods that mould the destiny of the society, but the awakening of collective consciousness that constructs a prosperous and sustainable nation." These meditation practice forms do not compete to get recognised or adjudicate the top position; instead, they are the two side-by-side pathways, which converge to build a strong foundation for humanity (Patel, 2021, cited from Indica Today, n.d.).

## 4. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### 4.1 Aim of the study

The objective of this paper is to discuss the contribution of meditation practices and specifically valuable approaches like Mindfulness, Yoga, Transcendental Meditation (TM), Heartfulness towards habit formation of adolescents with special reference to the holistic approach of the HELP programme. The study involves the examination of the effects of meditation in maintaining positive behavioural habits, emotional control, self-discipline, and intrinsic motivation amongst adolescents.

### 4.2 Meditation and Providing Emotional Regulation

Meditation improves adolescent emotional self-control, which is a core prerequisite for habit building. Meditation (Yoga, Mindfulness, Heartfulness, Transcendental Meditation - TM) can boost emotional memory, reduce stress and anxiety, and develop a more calm emotional personality (McKeering & Hwang, 2019; Gopwani & Patel, 2024; Bilagi, 2025; Barnes et al.,

2003; Travis & Shear, 2010). "Scientists found that young individuals who experience daily meditation can think rationally in the face of difficulties, encouraging the maintenance of daily positive practices such as school, proper sleep, as well as pro-social interaction."

#### **4.3 Improvement of Self-Care and Self-Continuity**

Meditation also helps to improve attention, concentration, and self-control - crucial in habit formation (Tang, Holzel, & Posner, 2015; Conti, 2022). Rituals are beneficial in that they help adolescents internalise routines so that behaviour gradually becomes more automatic. The Heartfulness HELP intervention explicitly integrates relaxation, heartfulness practice, journaling and reflective practice that provides the adolescent with repeated activity that promotes consistency and helps long-term retention of the habit (Heartfulness Institute, 2021; HELP Studies, 2018-19).

#### **4.4 Motivation, Values and Habit Sustainability**

One of the frontline fruits of the practice of meditation is the highest type of self-motivation, because it increases self-awareness, connects values with actions. Heartfulness meditation embraces the value of living and enables one to develop intuitively to increase the young people's faith in the environment (Patel & Pollock, 2018, 2019). Even if in one case no one is monitoring what is happening inside, the youth will be more inclined to maintain the good habits as long as his or her actions are in support of the goals and the ethical values.

#### **4.5 Academic Involvement and Behavioural Outcome**

Meditation helps in the formation of the habit of study, attention control and completion of the work. The research on TM, Mindfulness, and Heartfulness revealed that the level of concentration and engagement in academics increased, in addition to the decrease in stress-related behaviours (Barnes et al., 2003; McKeering & Hwang, 2019; Amarnath et al., 2023; Iyer et al., 2023). For example, participants of the HELP program indicated that they were more engaged in school and were better at organising their time, which suggests that structured meditation programs can supply the needed "tools" to develop the habits.

#### **4.6 Synthesis of Findings**

Meditation is reported in literature as one of the common factors related to habit formation in three main ways:

- Emotional Regulation: Impulse control and resilience allow one to engage in good actions in the future.
- Touchstone of Change: Meditation practice patterns develop into powerful stimuli, and the effect of habituated behaviour persists.
- Values and Intrinsic Motivation: Finding comforts and habits that are consistent with personal and moral values leads to the guarantee of long-term sustainability and intentionality.

In conclusion, the results outline that meditation, and particularly heartfulness meditation through the HELP program, in a holistic way enables habit formation by developing the emotional, cognitive, and motivational dimensions.

### **5. DISCUSSION**

This data analysis results in meditation being a powerful stimulator of habit-forming among the young. Any type of meditation improves the mind, emotion and action systems, which are of utmost importance in establishing a sustainable routine. The quality of attention, coping

with stress, and self-regulation change with the help of MBIs and Yoga exercises, TM assists in organising behaviour and participating in schools, and Heartfulness has a special position as it integrates spiritual and values-oriented aspects, which can not only make a person more psychologically powerful, but also moral and capable of making decisions based on intuition. This is the age between 10 and 20 years when the level of development is most active, and the brain is highly wired, and there is a great number of emotional changes (Steinberg, 2014). The meditation takes advantage of these changes by giving the individual internal signs (emotional tranquillity, concentration) and the external rewards (values, purpose) to form a habit. The HELP program may be considered as a good example of how systematic interventions that entail a combination of meditation, journaling, and education of life-related skills can not only facilitate, but also inhibit, i.e. lead to the formation of lifelong-maintained habits.

Other than this, the convergence of the spiritual and the intuitive quotient is a new direction in which the character of the newly born being is developed, along with the usual development of the character by custom. Although the main focus of MBIs and TM is on cognitive-behavioural, the entire person is developed in Heartfulness, thus indicating the expanded possibilities of the psychosocial and moral benefits. But not everything is good: few empirical studies about Heartfulness are large-scale studies, and longitudinal outcomes are monitored, and the majority of interventions are focused on short-term outcomes only. It is proposed that the relationship existing between the Heartfulness practices and intuitive and spiritual growth, along with the establishment of long-term habits, should be considered in future research.

## CONCLUSION

The studies arrive at a common conclusion that the interventions based on meditation have significant and beneficial functions during the adolescent phase of the individual, which is essential in shaping emotions, the cognitive and behavioural aspects. Out of the existing methods, the most suitable option is heartfulness meditation, not only because of its essential aspects, such as emotional restraint, intrinsic and values-based growth, but also a holistic offering of the capacity to combine all of them. The empirical studies prove the given benefits: Amarnath et al. (2023) have enrolled the reduction in the stress levels of the students, who participated in the HELP program, Gupta et al. (2023), and Iyer et al. (2023) recorded changes in the level of resilience, social connectedness, and life satisfaction, and Yadav et al. (2021) registered increased emotional regulation and mood stability under the influence of the Heartfulness with brainwave entrainment as the complementary technique.

All these suggestions suggest that Heartfulness does not just make a person a better one with the assistance of meditation, relaxation, and reflective exercises, but also evolves as a habit to be a good one as a by-product of a psychologically healthy individual. Examining and evaluating all the other modalities, i.e. Mindfulness as a form of attention focus, Yoga as a form of self-control and Transcendental Meditation (TM) as a form of reducing stress, Heartfulness is not only the one that comprises a set of psychosomatic spirit formation among the adolescents, but also has a specific characteristic of being ethical, emotionally balanced and development of intuition as the main focus. Integration of the different approaches can be advantageous, especially in learning and development strategies where teenagers can undergo different emotional and cognitive mechanisms.

In general, Heartfulness is an embodiment of what the development of emotional intelligence and values-driven behaviour and the acquisition of sustainability skills entails. The future research will be longitudinal and comparative studies; such research will be able to unravel

the long-term outcome and cultural flexibility of the practices, besides the experiment of the hybrid interventions that will integrate the benefits of different meditation practices to support the overall development of the adolescents. The current research must go far towards school and community programs aimed at the generation that will constitute the main characteristics in the concept of self-regulation, compassion and intuitive awareness as the most important elements that should become habit-forming in the younger generation, which will give the myriad-minded youth the way of shaping habits, which will suit them best.

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