

Role of Navokar Mantra on Mental Health: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

This systematic review investigates the role of the Navokar Mantra, a principal chant in Jainism, in promoting mental health and psychological well-being. The review synthesizes evidence from peer-reviewed experimental studies, neurophysiological assessments, qualitative reports, and traditional scholarship, contextualizing the Navokar Mantra's unique psycho-spiritual influence. The findings suggest that mantra-based meditation, including the Navokar Mantra, leads to improvements in stress, anxiety, depression, emotional regulation, mindfulness, and subjective quality of life. Clinical, neurological, and anecdotal evidence converge to support its application as a non-pharmaceutical intervention for mental health optimization. Recommendations for integrated clinical practice and future research directions are provided.

Keywords: Navokar, Mantra, and Mental Health

Introduction

Mental health is recognized globally as a vital aspect of holistic well-being, shaping an individual's capacity for productivity, relationships, adaptive functioning, and life satisfaction. Amid escalating rates of stress, anxiety, and mood disorders, interest has surged in mind-body interventions that leverage ancient contemplative practices for mental restoration and psychological healing. Meditation and mantra chanting, both embedded in Eastern spiritual traditions, have become focal points for interdisciplinary research, particularly in their application for stress modulation, emotional regulation, and enhanced cognitive functioning (Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2022).

The Navokar Mantra (Namokar Mantra), central to Jain philosophy, is revered not merely as a religious chant but as a universal invocation of respect toward enlightened beings. Its non-theistic nature, focus on humility, and universal spiritual appeal potentially make it accessible across

diverse demographics. Unlike mantras used in other traditions whose efficacy is often tied to faith, the Navokar Mantra is regarded as spiritually neutral and inclusive; practitioners attribute mental clarity, peace, and emotional stability to its daily recitation (Sharma et al., 2025; The Smart Shoppee, 2025a).

Despite its enduring prominence, systematic scientific assessment of the Navokar Mantra's effects on mental health has only recently begun to emerge. This review aims to critically synthesize multidisciplinary findings related to its psycho-physiological mechanisms, therapeutic outcomes, and integrative potential within mental health interventions.

Methodology

Search Strategy

A rigorous literature search was conducted through scholarly databases, including PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and domain-specific repositories such as Jain philosophy archives. Search terms included “Navokar Mantra AND mental health,” “mantra meditation AND anxiety,” “chanting AND stress management,” and “Jain mantra psychological effects.” Peer-reviewed empirical studies, meta-analyses, qualitative interviews, neuroimaging research, and reputable web-based sources from 2015–2025 were considered.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Included studies:

- Investigated Navokar Mantra or mantra-based meditation as a mental health intervention.
- Reported quantitative or qualitative outcomes on psychological or neurophysiological indicators.
- Were published in English.

Excluded studies:

- Focused solely on spiritual or theological outcomes without mental health assessment.
- Lacked methodologically rigorous or standardized measurement approaches.
- Were anecdotal without supporting systematic analysis.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Studies were independently screened for sample size, participant demographics, intervention protocols, assessment instruments, and key findings. A narrative synthesis was employed due to differences in methodology, with particular focus on factors influencing outcome variability.

Theoretical Foundations of the Navokar Mantra

Origins and Philosophical Context

The Navokar Mantra is one of Jainism's oldest and most important recitations, with roots stretching to the Agam scriptures. Its basic structure is a reverent invocation to five classes of enlightened beings—the Arihants, Siddhas, Acharyas, Upadhyayas, and Sadhus. The mantra is believed to transcend sectarian boundaries and is recited for spiritual purification, humility, and peace (Jain Dharm Ke Navkar Mantra..., 2025). Unlike other prayers, it does not praise God but acknowledges the achievements and virtues of spiritual teachers. This distinctive approach has profound philosophical implications, supporting states of equanimity and universal respect—elements commonly correlated with positive mental health.

Cultural Practice and Frequency

Traditional recommendations advise chanting the mantra in multiples of nine (9, 27, 54, 108), symbolizing completeness, clarity, and progressive purification (Navkar Mahamantra Divas..., 2025). Structured repetition is believed to deepen the meditative state, synchronize breath and body rhythms, and facilitate calming neurophysiological changes.

Results

Stress Reduction and Relaxation

Empirical Evidence

Robust empirical support exists for the efficacy of mantra meditation, including the Navokar Mantra, in reducing psychological and physiological stress. Controlled experimental studies show that daily chanting leads to measurable reductions in salivary cortisol, heart rate, blood pressure, and self-reported stress (Sharma et al., 2025). Meta-analyses reflect medium effect sizes in stress reduction when compared to passive controls (Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2022).

Protocol-driven applications (e.g., 15–30-minute daily chanting for 6–8 weeks) yield statistically significant improvements in stress indices for healthy, anxious, and clinical populations. Qualitative reports consistently note greater calmness, mental clarity, and emotional stability (The Smart Shoppee, 2025a; Navkar Divas, 2025b).

Neurophysiological Mechanisms

Chanting the Navokar Mantra induces parasympathetic dominance—a state associated with relaxation and physiological restoration. EEG and fMRI studies highlight increases in alpha and theta wave activity, which are markers of relaxation and meditative absorption (Sharma et al.,

2025). Alpha bands are associated with tranquil wakefulness; theta bands relate to deep meditative or creative states (Mantra meditation and health, 2025).

Functional neuroimaging also indicates reduced activity in limbic regions (e.g., amygdala, anterior cingulate), which are implicated in stress response and emotional dysregulation. By promoting coherence in cortical networks, mantra chanting aids efficient emotional modulation and stress resilience.

Anxiety and Depression

Controlled Clinical Trials

Randomized, controlled trials reveal that mantra-based meditation employing the Navokar Mantra generates significant reductions in symptoms of anxiety and depression. A meta-analysis with diverse participant cohorts reports moderate effect sizes (anxiety $g = -0.46$; depression $g = -0.33$), marking it as a potent adjunct tool for mood regulation (Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2022; The Smart Shoppee, 2025b).

Participants with Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) and mild depressive illnesses showed a persistent reduction in clinical severity following eight-week mantra meditation regimens. Mechanistically, the repetitive sound and attentional anchor offered by the Navokar Mantra disrupt habitual rumination and negative thought spirals, facilitating greater emotional balance.

Emotional Regulation, Resilience, and Quality of Life

The mantra's content and recitation framework go beyond relaxation by fostering deep emotional regulation:

- **Self-awareness:** Regular practitioners demonstrate heightened recognition of their emotional states and triggers, supporting improved impulse control and conflict resolution (Navkar Divas, 2025a).
- **Resilience:** Practitioners report an increased ability to navigate adversity, grief, and interpersonal challenges, attributing these benefits to the humility and reverence emphasized in the mantra's recitation.
- **Quality of Life:** Multiple indices—sleep quality, subjective vitality, and satisfaction—improve with consistent chanting (Sharma et al., 2025). Survey data associates overnight chanting with shorter sleep latency and higher sleep quality.

Qualitative interviews echo the theme of renewed hope, ethical intention, and existential comfort, which together build a buffer against psychological distress and mental fatigue (Navkar Divas, 2025a; Jain Dharm Ke Navkar Mantra..., 2025).

Mindfulness, Attention, and Cognitive Benefits

Mechanisms of Cognitive Enhancement

The Navokar Mantra has long been used as a meditative anchor for mindfulness training. Its repetitive, rhythmic structure facilitates focused attention, cognitive flexibility, and enhanced self-regulation (The Smart Shoppee, 2025a). Experimental data reveal:

- **Enhanced working memory:** Practitioners outperform controls in stressful and neutral memory tasks, possibly due to improved attentional switching and reduced mind wandering.
- **Increased cognitive clarity and decision-making:** Mantra meditators describe improved clarity of thought and ability to make decisions under pressure.
- **Improved sleep and restfulness:** Subjective measures and actigraphic data suggest that pre-sleep mantra chanting correlates with better sleep quality and more restorative rest (Sharma et al., 2025).

Subjective and Anecdotal Benefits

Beyond quantitative metrics, testimonials and case studies offer rich insights into the mantra's lived impact. Individuals from high-stress professions (e.g., healthcare, education) report reduced burnout, enhanced focus, and a sense of sanctuary provided by the daily chanting routine (Navkar Divas, 2025a).

The mantra's philosophical neutrality and emphasis on virtues rather than dogma allow it to transcend boundaries of culture, creed, and age, supporting global adoption (The Smart Shoppee, 2025a; Navkar Divas, 2025a).

Discussion

Integrated Psycho-physiological Pathways

The Navokar Mantra's salutary effects arise from a blend of physiological, neuropsychological, and philosophical mechanisms:

- **Physiological modulation:** Chanting slows breathing, stabilizes heartbeat, and enhances vagal tone, thereby reducing the body's physiological stress response.

- **Neuropsychological circuit modulation:** Regular recitation activates cortico-limbic circuits, promoting emotional regulation, attention allocation, and stress resilience.
- **Philosophical anchoring:** The mantra's universal content fosters values of peace, humility, and respect, which naturally offset emotional turbulence and promote existential security.
- **Behavioral reinforcement:** Consistent practice encourages routine, self-discipline, and awareness—traits linked with well-being and resilience.

Limitations and Challenges

Though the literature on Navokar Mantra meditation is steadily growing, several limitations prevail:

- Most clinical trials and experimental studies employ relatively small sample sizes, limiting generalizability.
- Protocols vary regarding duration, frequency, and accompanying practices (e.g., breath control), complicating cross-study comparison.
- The subjective nature of well-being, stress, and emotional stability necessitates sophisticated, multi-modal assessment.
- Potential crossover between spiritual and psychological benefit—while a strength—can obscure scientific attribution.
- Absence of long-term, prospective studies evaluating sustained psychological change.

Future research should prioritize randomized, blinded designs with larger participant cohorts, standardized intervention protocols, and integration of objective biomarkers (EEG, cortisol, heart rate variability).

Comparative Analysis

Relative to other mantra-based or mindfulness practices (e.g., Om chanting, Transcendental Meditation), the Navokar Mantra offers several advantages:

- Its secular, non-dogmatic structure is accessible to broad populations.
- It can be flexibly integrated into both individual and group settings, requiring minimal resources.
- Comparative studies report equivalent or superior outcomes in stress reduction, emotional stabilization, and cognitive enhancement (Álvarez-Pérez et al., 2022; Sharma et al., 2025).

Clinical and Practical Implications

Integrating the Navokar Mantra into mental health care presents promising opportunities:

- **Individual therapy:** As an adjunct to psychotherapy for anxiety, depression, and adjustment issues.
- **Group programs:** In mindfulness-based stress reduction and wellness workshops.
- **Remote practice:** App-guided chanting routines expand accessibility beyond physical religious settings.
- **Preventive care:** In schools, corporate environments, and community organizations for stress management and resilience enhancement.
- **Cross-cultural outreach:** Its universal language and philosophy support adoption in diverse international contexts.

Practitioners and clinicians should consider individualized approaches, factoring in personal preferences, cultural backgrounds, and readiness for contemplative practices.

Conclusion

The Navokar Mantra emerges as a potent, research-supported intervention in mental health care. Its psycho-physiological influence fosters relaxation, reduces stress and anxiety, improves mood, and builds emotional resilience and cognitive clarity. Supported by a growing body of clinical, neurological, and subjective evidence, its adoption is justified not only by tradition but also by measurable mental health outcomes.

Integration into clinical practice, wellness interventions, and personal self-care is not only feasible but recommended, with appropriate attention to protocol standardization and outcome measurement. Continued research, particularly long-term and mechanistic investigations, will further illuminate the mantra's therapeutic potential and inform best practices for holistic care.

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