



THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA



OPEN UNIVERSITY RESEARCH SESSIONS 2020

OURS 2020

12th & 13th November 2020



## THE CORRELATION OF DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS WITH THE SKILL LEVEL OF MEDITATORS: A PILOT STUDY

H.M.N.N. Dasanayaka<sup>1\*</sup>, E.A.S.K. Somarathne<sup>1</sup>, N.O. Outschoorn<sup>1</sup>,  
K. K. Vithanage<sup>2</sup>, K.P.C. Dalpatadu<sup>2</sup>, M.W. Gunathunga<sup>3</sup>, H.M.J.C.  
Herath<sup>4</sup>, K.S.A. Jayasinghe<sup>5</sup>, W.D.N. Dissanayake<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Promotion and Facilitation Centre, University of Colombo

<sup>2</sup>Department of Physiology, University of Colombo.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Community Medicine, University of Colombo.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Social Science Education, University of Colombo.

<sup>5</sup>Department of Clinical Medicine, University of Colombo.

Meditation includes a variety of spiritual and psychophysical practices that emphasize different goals, including the increase in focus, self-awareness, relaxation, and tranquility by training attention and awareness of an individual. Skill-level seems to be leading a meditator to achieve physiological, genetic, and psychological benefits. Hence, the aim of this study was to seek the correlation between skill-level of a meditator with eight factors: (1) age, (2) gender, (3) body mass index (BMI), (4) highest educational achievement, (5) sleeping hours per day, (6) diet type (7) duration of meditation experience (years), and (8) frequency of meditation per day (minutes per day). The sample consisted of meditators who were above 18 years of age ( $n=20$ ) and were not pregnant, breastfeeding, smokers or identified themselves as having a psychiatric disorder. They were given an interviewer-administered questionnaire titled "Intake interview" consisting 30 questions that were validated through the following steps: review of literature, pre-condition, test development, confirmation (empirical analyses), administration, scoring scales and interpretation, and documentation. It was used to assess the skill-level of meditators and it explored 6-areas of skill-level that included: duration and details of meditation practice, heightened peripheral awareness, stable attention, alertness and emotional stability. These were individually scored to calculate a single score that reflected the skill-level of each meditator. In addition, clinical and demographic data were collected. The skill-level of a meditator was correlated with age, BMI, sleeping hours, duration of meditation, and the frequency of meditation per day using Pearson Correlation. Gender, diet type, and highest educational achievement were correlated by Point-Biserial Correlation. The findings of the study revealed that the highest educational achievement (significance ( $\text{sig}$ )=0.001; Pearson's correlation ( $r$ )=0.671), duration of the meditation (years) ( $\text{mean}\pm\text{SD}=7.48\pm 3.81$ ;  $\text{sig}=0.002$ ;  $r=0.642$ ), and meditation frequency per day (minutes) ( $\text{mean}\pm\text{SD}=78.8\pm 6.71$ ;  $\text{sig}=0.001$ ;  $r=0.792$ ) were significantly correlated with the skill-level of a meditator. However, significant correlations were not observed between age, gender, BMI, diet type and sleeping hours.



This study has shown that the skill-level of meditators is closely correlated with the highest educational achievement, duration of meditation experience (years), and meditation frequency per day (minutes). This pilot study suggests that exploring the correlation between skill-level of meditators with age, gender, BMI, diet type, sleeping hours per day, highest educational achievement, duration of the meditation experience (years) and frequency of meditation per day (minutes) context to be feasible.

**Keywords:** Clinical data, Demographic factors, Intake interview, Meditation, Pilot study, Skill level

*\*Corresponding author: nirodhidasanayaka@gmail.com*