

Contemplation per Theravada Buddhist-Based Mindfulness
for Schoolteachers in Sri Lanka

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Buddhist Chaplaincy at
University of the West

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Buddhist Ministry

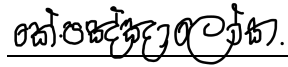
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Spring 2024

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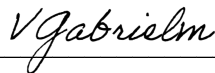
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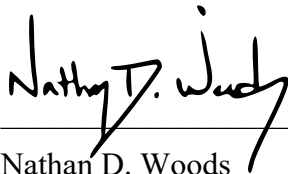
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Acknowledgements

First, I am much indebted to my Dharma Teacher, Ven. Pallegama Samita, former senior lecturer of the Department of Pāli and Buddhist Studies at Kelaniya University in Sri Lanka for his inspirational influence in continuing my doctoral studies at the University of the West. He has been a mentor, precious soul, and a *Kalyānamitta* throughout my life, from educational and research endeavors to completing this research.

I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to my dedicated committee members, Dr. Jitsujo Gauthier, Dr. Nathan D. Woods, and Dr. Victor Gabriel. Professor Nathan D. Woods kindly read this dissertation and provided meticulous feedback on organizing the structure of this research. This dissertation would not have been possible without the committee members' insight, constructive feedback, and guidance. I would also like to thank IRB committee members, Dr. Daphna McKnight and Dr. Elizabeth Burke, for their insight, suggestions, and corrections. I would like to extend my thanks to Dr. Keith Brown for assisting me with the IRB application. I would like to thank Dr. Homero E. del Pino and Dr. Guadalupe G. Montano for reviewing and editing this dissertation and improving the quality of the work. I am grateful to Russel C. Leong, former adjunct professor of English and Asian American Studies at UCLA, for editing some scripts of this dissertation's appendices.

My special thanks go to some loving and inspiring people who supported me in many ways to make this research successful. Wathsala Gangani Abeysinghe is special as she encouraged me throughout the entire research with her never-ending motherly affection and gentle care toward me to complete this dissertation. She initially influenced me to implement Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness for burnout schoolteachers in

Sri Lanka. I owe a debt of gratitude to Chinthaka Warnakula, who loves me like a brother, a gracious and true friend, for his sincere support in this research. I thank Duminda Rajakaruna and Mayuri Madurapperuma, who supported me during the intervention period in many ways. I would also like to thank Dr. Udeshika Pathirana, who helped me find the literature on meditation research interventions implemented by some physicians in Sri Lanka; Chanda Sara Sraman for giving me some suggestions about the SPSS software when analyzing data in this dissertation.

I am grateful to Ven. Havanpola Shanti, the abbot of the International Buddhist Meditation Center in Los Angeles. I am deeply thankful to Dakshini R. Senanayake, Attorney at Law, for her big heart and professional guidance in my VISA status in the U.S. I would like to thank Ven. Aththidiye Puññaratana, who always encouraged me to complete this research. My sincere gratitude extends to the following: Subodhani Rathnayake, Anil Manage, Tonisha Lekamge, H.H. Indrani, Viloshini Dasanayaka, Inoka Amunupura, Thushini Perera, D. Anushka Wijesundara, R. M. Indika Rathnayaka, N. M. A. D. Nayakarathna, Chamila Rathnayaka, Himali Uduwela, Dinusha Premarathna, Amali Warusapperuma, Vidanage Nisansala Sanjivani, G. R. Priyangani, Asitha Ranasingha, N. L. Sadattala Sathruwani, Himali Adhikari and Indika Prashanthi, who helped me in many ways unwittingly during the study program. I would also like to extend the merits of this dissertation to my beloved mother, sister, family members, and well-wishers who have always had faith in my efforts and education, though they are not certain of what the end result of this research would be.

With much respect, I wish to dedicate the merits of this dissertation to the late Master Hsing Yun for founding a unique Buddhist education environment at the

University of the West. This dissertation would not have been successful if I had not received the IBEF scholarship. My sincere thank you goes to the IBEF scholarship committee for its financial support in paying my tuition fee. I admire all the assistance received from the University of the West's librarian, Judy Hsu in the completion of this dissertation.

Last but not least, I greatly appreciate all the assistance received from everyone in this research in testing the effectiveness of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness for increasing well-being in school instructors' everyday lives.

Dedication

With sincere gratitude to my *Dharma* Teacher

Ven. Pallegama Samita

Abstract

Contemplation per Theravada Buddhist-Based Mindfulness for Schoolteachers in Sri Lanka

By

Kongala Paññāloka

The purpose of this study was to see how contemplation in the context of Theravada Buddhist teachings benefit schoolteachers to reduce burnout and improve well-being in their daily lives. Research on schoolteachers' burnout in Sri Lanka has been carried out for different purposes. No research has attempted to investigate Theravada contemplation to address burnout and stress in Sri Lankan school instructors' daily lives. This study explored the utility of contemplation per Theravada teachings to see whether it can help schoolteachers to reduce their burnout. It examined how often school instructors were able to use mindfulness in their daily activities.

This research was conducted online through meditation sessions, conversations, questionnaires, and participant observation. This research recruited twenty-four schoolteachers from two districts in Sri Lanka. Participants practiced contemplative listening, walking, body scan, and sitting during the eight-week online meditation sessions. In every session, a 15-minute guided meditation was offered with instructions on how to stay mindful on the object of meditation. This was followed by a 15-minute silent meditation and 10-minute Grounding Exercise. Participants' anxiety, stress, mindfulness levels, and well-being were assessed using validated psychological scales before and after the test period. The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, and the Beck Anxiety Inventory were used in the research. Meanings

associated with “contemplation” and “mindfulness” in Theravada Buddhist meditation were explained in reference to the Theravada canonical texts.

Results showed a notable decrease in stress and an increase in mindfulness among the participants after the eight-week meditation. Schoolteachers learned how to improve positive qualities to regulate their daily behavior. Participants benefited from using this as a form of relaxation to help them stay calmer and alert in everyday situations. This study helped schoolteachers to increase their awareness in daily actions. This research might benefit school children and parents even if they did not participate in the study. This research was helpful in filling the gaps by incorporating contemplation as a form of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness to address stress and burnout among Sri Lankan school instructors.

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List of Abbreviations

BAI	Beck Anxiety Inventory
MAAS	Mindful Attention Awareness Scale
MBCT	Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy
MBI	Mindfulness Based Interventions
MBSR	Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
PTS	Pāli Text Society
WSPT	Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers

Chapter One: Introduction

Stress adversely affects schoolteachers and remains largely undervalued and unnoticed in Sri Lankan schools. Research in Sri Lanka has less valued and neglected this critical issue in applying practical strategies to address stress. Few studies have confined their findings only to understanding burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers, but not to addressing it. However, those studies need more empirical research on utilizing a form of mindfulness program to address burnout in schoolteachers. In particular, how to incorporate Buddhist-based mindfulness for Sri Lankan schoolteachers who struggle with burnout still need to be explored. The literature showed that those studies lack introducing a strategy to see how this issue should be addressed either during school hours or after school time. This gap was clearly seen in many research studies implemented among schoolteachers in Sri Lanka.

To address teacher stress and burnout, this research examined on how to incorporate Theravada contemplation among Sri Lankan schoolteachers in their everyday lives. This study was designed on the basis that contemplation, as per Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness, if practiced at least once a day, might benefit Sri Lankan schoolteachers to cope better with burnout and enhance well-being in their daily lives. Therefore, whether Theravada contemplation is potential for reducing Sri Lankan schoolteachers' burnout was worth exploring.

Scholars point out two meanings to contemplation in secular and religious contexts.¹ According to scientific explorations of contemplative practices in a secular setting, this means sustained attention. In the context of religious or spiritual experience, contemplation means deep reflective thought.² This study explored the latter meaning by referring to contemplation of Buddhist-based mindfulness as presented in Theravada teachings. Theravada canonical discourses expound that Buddhist-based mindfulness, cultivated through constant contemplation, helps one cope with everyday situations by maintaining balance in every action and remaining in the present moment. The literature review for this research pertains to how mindfulness benefits daily activities, citing the Theravada canonical explanations.

Purpose of the Study

This study explored the utility of practicing contemplation with some Sri Lankan schoolteachers for their everyday well-being. As presented in Theravada teaching, contemplation is a constant reflective thought that should manifest in every action of a devoted meditator's daily life.³ This study was conducted through a range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities in the context of Theravada Buddhist teachings. Accordingly, this study investigated whether Sri Lankan schoolteachers can benefit from contemplation on body scanning, walking, listening, and sitting.

¹ Laura Schmalzl, Mardi A. Crane-Godreau, and Peter Payne, "Movement-Based Embodied Contemplative Practices: Definitions and Paradigms," *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 8 (2014): 3, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2014.00205>.

² Frederic B. Underwood, "Meditation," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 9, 2nd ed., edited by Lindsay Jones (Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5821; Albert Sydney Hornby, "Contemplation," in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, ed. by Jonathan Crowther (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 249.

³ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*, 4th ed. (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 146–47. Cf. notes 146, 147.

Full awareness in daily routine is not new, as it has been successfully used for thousands of years in Theravada meditation. The *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and other Theravada *suttas* include meditation practices of various categories. Kate Crosby points out that a wide range of Pāli canonical texts consists of a wealth of information about various meditation techniques advocated in many ways.⁴ Some of those Pāli texts offer descriptive instructions regarding certain meditation techniques. All the human actions and stances associated with contemplation meditation are challenging to implement in one study. Therefore, this study examined the feasibility of practicing this contemplation only through a few daily actions like listening, sitting, standing, and walking during the meditation sessions. This study's research methodology was designed to explore the utility of those mindfulness activities after reviewing some studies on teacher stress in Sri Lanka and consulting Theravada teaching on contemplation. Participants preferred to practice Theravada contemplation through a few daily actions. Participants were interested in deepening their practice and extending those activities into other daily actions. Though a range of mindfulness activities were implemented during the meditation sessions, the results of these activities were not reported individually. Instead of reporting the results separately on each meditation practice, this study aimed to find the results of the Theravada contemplation meditation as one practice. This study was limited to reporting findings on mindfulness activities overall, for the intervention procedure would require much in terms of resources, time, and energy. Various research

⁴ Kate Crosby, *Theravada Buddhism: Continuity, Diversity, and Identity* (Chichester, West Sussex; Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 144.

methodologies should be designed when reporting the results of each meditation individually. Therefore, this study did not measure mindful activities separately.

Above-mentioned mindfulness activities were explored among the participants to see how they benefit from those activities in their everyday life. This research focused on contemplation as described in various instances in the Theravada canon. Though the explanations presented in other Buddhist schools about contemplation were also worthy of focus in this research study, the exploration was confined for its preciseness to the Theravada canonical texts.

Literature Search Review

A search of literature related to this research was conducted through several stages. ProQuest Religion, ProQuest Psychology, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and Academia were the primary research databases that were used to inquire about the extant studies, dialogues, and writings regarding burnout among schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. The researcher searched the literature using the key terms associated with this proposed study. Those keywords and terms were “Contemplation AND Burnout,” “Mindfulness Meditation AND Burnout Schoolteachers,” “Buddhist-based mindfulness AND Sri Lankan schoolteachers,” “Theravada Meditation AND Teacher Training in Sri Lanka,” “Stress AND Burnout among schoolteachers,” and “Contemplation AND Schoolteachers in Sri Lanka.” The researcher searched peer-reviewed journal articles, reports, and books related to this research topic using above-mentioned keywords and terms. The idea was to find as many as useful writings, research materials, and scholarly views on this proposed study. When surfing the literature, few research studies about burnout of schoolteachers in Sri Lanka were found.

Further search was conducted on schoolteacher burnout and mindfulness in Sri Lanka. This resulted in journal articles and books with headings like education, meditation, mindfulness, stress, and burnout schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. Research on Buddhist-based mindfulness in a population like schoolteachers in Sri Lanka was scant. Though there is no trend in other institutes for researching how to integrate meditation into their programs, medical institutes in Sri Lanka have implemented several studies using mostly their medical staff or medical students as the research population.⁵ Sometimes physicians were contacted by the researcher over the phone and emails in Sri Lanka to obtain information regarding studies in hospital settings. The researcher contacted some Sri Lankan national universities' religious and psychology departments for further information.

A search through world research engines like Google Scholar, Academia, Pro-Quest Psychology, ResearchGate, and Pro-Quest Religion did not yield any findings on Theravada contemplation for schoolteachers' burnout in Sri Lanka. If studies were available, researchers might not have published their research or uploaded such studies into global research engines. When reviewing the literature, there was a notable lack of published research regarding mindfulness for schoolteacher burnout in Sri Lanka. Notably, there has yet to explore teachers' burnout in Sri Lankan schools and colleges associating Theravada contemplation. Therefore, this dissertation investigated how to create a healthy classroom climate and enhance schoolteachers' well-being by incorporating Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness into daily actions. Literature

⁵ Wasantha Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study on the Mental Wellbeing among Regularly Meditating and Non-Meditating Health Care Personnel in Sri Lanka," *Journal of the College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka* 25, no. 3 (2019): 112–20, <https://doi.org/10.4038/jccpsl.v25i3.8206>.

showed how schoolteachers' burnout remains unexplored in Sri Lankan school environments. It was fruitful to consult the opinions of extant literature in other countries.⁶ Those extant scholarly works shed much light on this research project to figure out a better research protocol for implementing Theravada contemplation among Sri Lankan schoolteachers.

Some researchers point out that schoolteacher burnout still needs more attention in research studies in Sri Lanka.⁷ Sri Lankan schoolteachers experience burnout due to many challenges and demands they face in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.⁸ Research shows that the consequences of teacher burnout affect not only the teachers' personal well-being or good performance but, overall, the whole school administration.⁹

⁶ Shadi Beshai et al., "A Non-Randomised Feasibility Trial Assessing the Efficacy of a Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Teachers to Reduce Stress and Improve Well-Being," *Mindfulness* 7, no. 1 (February 2016): 198–208, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0436-1>; Cynthia Taylor et al., "Examining Ways That a Mindfulness-Based Intervention Reduces Stress in Public School Teachers: A Mixed-Methods Study," *Mindfulness* 7, no. 1 (February 2016): 115–29, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-015-0425-4>; Keith Brown, "A Phenomenological Study of Loving Kindness Practice in Education Settings" (master's thesis, University of Toronto, 2016), <http://search.proquest.com/religion/docview/1776157936/abstract/461174C9D23748A5PQ/2>; Eluned Gold et al., "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) for Primary School Teachers," *Journal of Child and Family Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010): 184–189, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10826-009-9344-0>; Jan M. Wall, "Integrating Contemplative Practice into the Undergraduate Pursuit of Finding and Following an Intuitive Call," (PhD diss., Lesley University, 2010), <http://uwest.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/integrating-contemplative-practice-into/docview/863478134/se-2>.

⁷ P. V. De Silva, C. G. Hewage, and P. Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout: Validation of the Sinhala Translation of Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey among Female Primary School Teachers in Sri Lanka," *Galle Medical Journal* 18, no. 1 (2013): 9.

⁸ S. Yogarane, "A Psychological Study on Burnout among Tamil Medium Secondary School Teachers" (conference paper presented at the Annual Research Symposium, University of Colombo, 2012), 1–3, <http://archive.cmb.ac.lk:8080/research/handle/70130/2995>.

⁹ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1.

Research on Teacher Burnout

This study gathered pivotal information from the scant research on schoolteacher stress in Sri Lanka. This study identified seven studies on this topic.¹⁰ Their research findings are based on the reasons for teacher stress. Research on burnout among Tamil medium secondary schoolteachers in Sri Lanka found that introducing education reforms, such as curricular changes, student assessments, term-test assessments, and overload work pressure, were some of the reasons for increased stress and burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers.¹¹ It was noticeable that some Sri Lankan studies used survey questionnaires such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educators Survey (MBI-ES) to measure burnout among female schoolteachers.¹² De Silva Hewage points out the lack of studies investigating burnout among schoolteachers in Sri Lanka¹³

The same researchers conducted studies of the MBI-ES questionnaire in the western and southern provinces of Sri Lanka using a sample of female primary school teachers. The intention of doing this research was to find out only the prevalence and risk

¹⁰ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1-3; De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 8-11; PV Silva, CG Hewage, and P. Fonseka, "Prevalence of Burnout and Its Correlates among Female Primary School Teachers in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka," *European Journal of Preventive Medicine* 3, no. 2-1 (2015): 9-14, <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ejpm.s.2015030201.13>; Sarathadevi Anandasayanan and V.A. Subramaniam, "Effect of Stress on Teachers' Performance with Special Reference to Jaffna District Schools," (conference paper presented at the University of Sairam, December 2013): 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2386067>; Darshana Samaraweera et al., "Mentees' Burnout and Mentors' Self Efficacy: A Study with the Pre Service Esl Teachers in Sri Lanka," *International Journal of Current Innovations in Advanced Research* 1, no.4 (2018): 75–81, <https://ijciar.com/index.php/journal/article/view/36>; Kanchana R Menikdiwela, "Student Misbehavior: An Exploratory Study Based on Sri Lankan Secondary School Teachers' Perceptions," *Journal of Education and Practice* 11, no.17 (June 2020): 103-113, <https://iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JEP/article/view/53198>; Navaneethakrishnan Kengatharan, "The Effects of Teacher Autonomy, Student Behavior and Student Engagement on Teacher Job Satisfaction," *Kuram ve Uygulamada Egitim Bilimleri* 20, no. 4 (October 2020): 1–15, <http://dx.doi.org.uwest.idm.oclc.org/10.12738/jestp.2020.4.001>.

¹¹ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1.

¹² De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 8.

¹³ De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, 9.

factors of burnout among the selected population. Results showed that burnout among these primary schoolteachers was due to reasons such as working a prolonged time in primary classes for more than 20 years, traveling a long distance (10 kilometers/6 miles) every day, engaging in school activities at home during the weekends, less sleeping hours, and less leisure time per day. The study sought due attention from the relevant authorities and recommended that they need to implement educational and counseling programs to benefit teachers in Sri Lankan schools.¹⁴

Anandasayanan and Subramaniam have explored the effects of stress on schoolteachers' performance in the Jaffna district in Sri Lanka.¹⁵ They identified a list of various sources of stress. Sources included unskillful time management, lack of discipline of the students, work-related stressors, professional distress, and impacts of the 30-year war.¹⁶ Again, the main objective of the research was to find only the levels and various sources of stress in the study population. The study found that stress could adversely impact the job performance of schoolteachers.

Samaraweera et al. attempted to find whether schoolteacher training leads to burnout among pre-service English Language (ESL) schoolteachers in Sri Lanka.¹⁷ They explored whether mentoring leads to burnout among those receiving training as preservice English Language teachers. They found that teacher training itself sometimes increases the likelihood of burnout among novice teachers. If the supervisors fail to train novice teachers, such a training can cause burnout and stress. Teacher training is a period

¹⁴ Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Prevalence of Burnout," 14.

¹⁵ Anandasayanan and Subramaniam, "Effect of Stress," 1-10.

¹⁶ Anandasayanan and Subramaniam, 1-2.

¹⁷ Samaraweera et al., "Mentees' Burnout and Mentors," 7.

in which trainees receive further learning for professional teaching in schools. The study suggests that schoolteacher training needs a high-quality intervention to train the preservice English Language schoolteachers.¹⁸

Menikdiwela explored reasons for the misconduct of students in Sri Lankan schools. Those objectives were to identify how schoolteachers perceive students' misconduct, make a list of those students' bad behavior from the point of schoolteachers who instruct them, compare their conduct with previous students who studied 10-15 years ago in the school, explore and analyze the causes for the change of students' behavior.¹⁹ The author categorized the bad conduct of students under headings like disrespecting schoolteachers, being noisy in the classes, aggressive verbal communication, disturbing classmates purposefully, aggressive physical movements, idling, lack of interest for studies, engaging in personal dialogues, not giving attention to the lessons and so forth. Research objectives focused only on explaining the students' misconduct.

Some extant literature in Sri Lankan studies has examined the relationship between schoolteacher job dissatisfaction and student behavior. Navaneethkrishnan Kengatharan at Jaffna University in Sri Lanka examined the relationship between teacher job dissatisfaction and student behavior.²⁰ Kengatharan explored the relationship between teacher autonomy, student behavior, student engagement, and teacher job satisfaction in Sri Lankan state schools. Findings suggest that policymakers and school administrations should enact a code of ethics to stop the bad behavior of some students to improve student behavior and enhance schoolteacher job satisfaction. Because the study aimed to

¹⁸ Samaraweera et al., 80.

¹⁹ Menikdiwela, "Student Misbehavior," 105.

²⁰ Kengatharan, "Effects of Teacher," 1-15.

explore students' cognitive engagement based on the perception of schoolteachers, it expected future research to investigate national educational policies, cultural differences, psychological reasons behind students' bad behavior, and schoolteacher job dissatisfaction.

When designing this research study between 2019 and 2021, the researcher did not find similar studies that utilized a range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities with a research population like schoolteachers in Sri Lanka to reduce their burnout and stress. However, the literature search for this study found there were three study interventions in Sri Lanka that explored some aspects of Theravada Buddhist meditation with different research populations.²¹ Ethkandawaka Saddhajeewa offered three Buddhist meditation techniques as loving kindness meditation, mindful walking and breathing on a population of substance abuse.²² Gunathunga et al. tested a form of Buddhist-based mindfulness with healthcare workers in Sri Lanka. He used a modified meditation like "*Vipassanā* informed mindfulness meditation" and compared the mental well-being and depression of regularly meditating and non-meditating healthcare personnel.²³ Results demonstrated that regular meditators reported a higher level of mental well-being than non-meditators. That study selected its research participants from a healthcare setting in a Buddhist population. The primary investigator mentions that no research had explored the effects

²¹ Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 112-20; Telege Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers' Mindfulness and Professional Skills towards Classroom Climate on Student Outcomes While Learning English as a Second Language in Sri Lanka," *European Journal of Education Studies* 9, no. 9 (September 2022): 254-278, <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v9i9.4467>; Ethkandawaka Saddhajeewa, "Mindfulness for Substance Abuse Recovery" (PhD Diss., University of the West, 2019), <http://uwest.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/mindfulness-substance-abuse-recovery/docview/2285737075/se-2>.

²² Saddhajeewa, "Mindfulness for Substance Abuse," 88.

²³ Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 112-120.

of mindfulness practices on a working population in a Buddhist community. The authors suggested that empirical research on integrating mindfulness practices in a working environment might help reduce stress and improve well-being. The researchers also suggested that the *Vipassanā* meditation they used is worth testing its applicability in other working environments and with other professionals.²⁴ Gunathunga recommends testing new variables for implementing Buddhist meditation with different populations.

However, Peiris et al. explored how to apply Buddhist mindfulness for better performance at schools with Sri Lankan schoolteachers and students. The study recruited both schoolteachers and students as the participants of the study. That study's research objectives were to see how Buddhist mindfulness meditation impacts schoolteachers' professional skills, students' outcomes, and classroom climate. The researcher says practicing mindfulness meditation in government schools will benefit schoolteachers and students. Research findings showed that mindfulness meditation helped schoolteachers and school children to reduce their stress, and achieve their professional goals and educational outcomes, respectively.²⁵

There is a dearth of research testing wellness programs, counseling programs, secular mindful meditation, or traditional Buddhist meditation on schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. However, there are some remarkable studies carried out overseas for utilizing some contemplative practices in a research population like schoolteachers. The researcher has discussed these studies at length in Chapter Two, "Literature Review." Chapter two provides a good description of how the findings of those mindfulness-based interventions

²⁴ Gunathunga et al. 118.

²⁵ Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers," 269.

have benefited diverse populations and schoolteachers in many ways. When researching studies in other countries related to contemplative practices among schoolteachers, research implemented in the U.S. stood out. The research points out that using contemplation and emotive training is fruitful in reducing negative emotions, increasing well-being, and creating social cohesion among schoolteachers.²⁶ The research tested the efficacy on a newly developed 8-week training program by offering secular mindful meditation to the participants. Miller and Nozawa found that some participants use different meditation practices depending on their cultural contexts to enhance well-being in their daily lives. The investigators found that those meditation practices are common in any culture, especially among spiritual practitioners. They predict that educational institutes would benefit from meditation programs if those practices were introduced in a non-dogmatic way.²⁷ The results of this study are corroborated by Ditrich, Royce Wiles, and Bill Lovegrove who focused on the integration of contemplation in schoolteacher education and professional learning in New Zealand and Australia.²⁸ Participants of that study reported using different contemplative practices based on their cultural influence.

Deficiencies in the Studies

Studies found how teacher training programs lead to burnout among ESL schoolteachers.²⁹ Sometimes unruly students make the teaching career stressful.³⁰

²⁶ Margaret E. Kemeny et al., "Contemplative/Emotion Training Reduces Negative Emotional Behavior and Promotes Prosocial Responses," *Emotion* 12, no. 2 (2012): 338–50, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026118>.

²⁷ Jack Miller and Ayako Nozawa, "Contemplative Practices in Teacher Education," *Encounter* 18, no. 1 (March 2005): 42-48, <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/handle/1807/32455>.

²⁸ Tamara Ditrich, Royce Wiles, and Bill Lovegrove, *Mindfulness and Education: Research and Practice* (UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), 1-358.

²⁹ Samaraweera et al., "Mentees' Burnout," 75-81.

³⁰ Menikdiwela, "Student Misbehavior," 103-113.

Schoolteachers experience burnout due to lack of transport facilities, increased workload, participating in school activities during weekends, less sleep, and less leisure time.³¹ As explorers view, there could be many reasons for burnout and stress among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Afore-cited seven Sri Lankan research has been conducted to reveal the reasons for burnout among the selected research population. Research needs strategies to address occupational and daily stress in Sri Lankan school instructors. Wellness or mindfulness programs could be effective in addressing teacher stress. As a result, much remains to be explored in future research to find a solution for burnout and stress in Sri Lankan schoolteachers.

Intervention Implementation and Data Collection

This research was conducted using questionnaires, conversations, participant observations, and online meditation sessions. There will be further a complete description of the research methods and tools in the methodology chapter.

Recruitment

The participants were recruited for this proposed study program only from two districts in Sri Lanka. This study proposed a small sample size of a minimum of 20 participants to be recruited for the program. Initially 12 participants from each district in Sri Lanka were planned to be selected. The Total number of participants recruited in this research program were twenty-four schoolteachers.

Procedures

³¹ Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Prevalence of Burnout," 9-14.

Participants filled out two questionnaires to enroll in the research. They received the two questionnaires of this survey prior to the beginning of online meditation sessions. Participants who completed the survey demographic questionnaire and the Beck Anxiety Inventory test were eligible to get enrolled in the program. This selection procedure for the online meditation program is described in length in the chapter on the methodology of this dissertation. Participants received a confirmation email from the investigator informing them that they were eligible to participate in the research program. A Zoom meeting was created to offer the meditation online. Eight weeks were spent out of this 10-week online meeting to offer the meditation to the recruited participants. The data collection of this study program was completed in less than three months. Accordingly, the online meditation program continued for two months and two weeks.

Data Collection Instruments

The self-reports of the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) were used to assess the anxiety, stress, mindfulness levels, and well-being of the participants before and after the test periods. The Demographic questionnaire was used to determine the eligibility of participants in the proposed study program.

Meditation Practice

To demonstrate how to practice the proposed range of contemplative activities, first, a 15-minute guided meditation was offered. Another 15-minute silent meditation followed this. Some grounding techniques were used, as Lisa M. Najavits recommends in

her research, to ensure that the participants feel grounded after each meditation session.³² The primary purpose of practicing these grounding techniques was to mitigate the risks and confused or negative feelings the participants might experience during or after the meditation sessions. This exercise took 10 minutes to practice grounding techniques with the participants towards the end of meditation sessions each day. Participants completed the two self-reports, the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale and the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, before and after the meditation session. Thus, the data collection of this online meditation program finished within ten weeks, as proposed in the study.

Significance of the Study

Sri Lankan education policies overlook the need to integrate Buddhist-based mindfulness meditation in its educational institutes. The education policies are solely task-oriented and based on fulfilling the year planners. Those who design and introduce educational policies into the schools' curricula in Sri Lanka expect schoolteachers to fulfill their curricula and year planners by the end of each semester every year. This situation demands Sri Lankan school instructors complete their tasks through hectic schedules. Relevant authorities have shown less interest in spiritual practices and how to integrate those practices to reduce burnout among schoolteachers. This trend can negatively affect the well-being of schoolteachers both personally and professionally. It was fruitful to address this issue of burnout among schoolteachers since less attention was paid to their everyday well-being. Therefore, this study attempted to incorporate an aspect of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness so that Sri Lankan schoolteachers can

³² Lisa M Najavits, *Seeking Safety: A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse* (New York: Guilford Press, 2002), 125.

practice it in everyday life. This research benefited schoolteachers as their well-being has been less prioritized in Sri Lankan education policies.

The research findings present contributing factors for burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers as unruly students, impersonal administration, disorganized timetables, disorganized working conditions, multiple role-playing, and increased workloads,³³ the pressure and pace of curriculum changes, fewer sleeping hours, less leisure time at weekends and excessive work at school time, negative public attitudes, job dissatisfaction, low salary, lack of professional opportunities, poor accommodation, lack of teaching materials, lack of transportation, students with low motivation for education, time management, lack of team spirit for a common goal, depersonalization, working through ego concepts, de-evaluation by others, and administrative pressure. New research will be more fruitful for schoolteachers if designed after considering those factors for burnout and stress. The productivity of such an exploration will be immense in many aspects. There is still much space for new exploration to fill this lacuna in Sri Lankan studies. Rather than confining studies to find the reasons for burnout, studies that focus on solutions to address this issue will benefit the affected Sri Lankan school instructors. Theravada contemplation meditation has the potential to address burnout among Sri Lankan school instructors. To find a better solution for this issue, this project explored a range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities to test with the Sri Lankan schoolteachers struggling with burnout and stress in their daily lives.

³³ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1-3.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter One introduces the research design of this study. This chapter discusses the purpose of the study, the research problem, the initial databases, and tools utilized for the literature search, research on teacher burnout, deficiencies in Sri Lankan studies to address schoolteacher stress, intervention implementation, data collection, and the significance of the study. Chapter Two concentrates on the extant literature on schoolteacher stress in Sri Lanka, burnout and stress definitions, contemplative interventions implemented among schoolteachers in other countries, the transformation of mindfulness, contemplation expounded in Theravada canon, reflection on current mindful discussions, MBSR definitions of mindfulness, and competing scholarly views of transformation of Buddhist-based mindfulness to secular mindful purposes. Chapter Three explains this study's research design and methodology. It discusses the research questions, instrument development, implementation, and study design procedure of the study's protocol, as well as suggestions to minimize risks and limitations. Chapter Three further outlines scales, self-reports and questionnaires, 8-week meditation, recruitment process, data collection, eligibility criteria, confidentiality, and grounding exercises.

Chapter Four presents and elaborates on the results of the scales and questionnaires used in this research intervention. This chapter demonstrates how the data analysis showed increased mindfulness and decreased stress among school instructors after participating in the 8-week meditation sessions. Chapter Five discusses the research needs, mindfulness and teacher stress, recruiting challenges, dissimilarities of this study and the research on Buddhist meditation in Sri Lanka, admirations of the offered meditation by participants, delimitations, and limitations of this study. This study's

limitations give a good description of what was hindering and challenging when this research was conducted. That explanation will enable readers to understand unavoidable circumstances that challenged this research study during the data collection period. This research was conducted amid many challenges like restrictions in gatherings, Coronavirus spreading, uncertainties of the pandemic, and socio-economic crises in Sri Lanka.

Chapter Six describes how this research protocol was developed as a ministerial intervention. It shows how the study design protocol was influenced by the engagement of Theravada meditation and Theravada canonical teachings on contemplation to integrate it among Sri Lankan schoolteachers to reduce burnout and increase well-being. It specifies the importance of prior meditation experience for guiding others in meditation. Finally, Chapter Six addresses the future research recommendations and the conclusion.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

This chapter discusses the literature on integrating contemplation as a Buddhist-based mindfulness for teacher stress in Sri Lanka. The scant research that investigated teacher stress and burnout for various research objectives in Sri Lanka has been discussed in this chapter. This discussion shows that research needs to explore burnout and Buddhist-based mindfulness among Sri Lankan school instructors. The discussion concentrates on Theravada canonical explanations of contemplation that were useful for offering this meditation for school instructors' everyday well-being. This discussion has focused on how Theravada discourses and canonical occurrences influenced this study to test contemplation to reduce burnout and increase well-being in Sri Lankan school instructors' daily activities. It is further stated in this chapter how Theravada Teaching esteems contemplation in every action in its scriptures. This discussion reviews scholarly opinions of how Theravada Buddhist mindfulness was transformed into secular mindfulness. Since the research was deficient in incorporating full awareness of the daily activities of Sri Lankan school instructors, the researcher utilized the contemplation reported in the Theravada canon to gain pragmatic results.

Contemplative practices refer to both traditional and contemporary mindfulness practices.³⁴ Researchers have investigated the utility of contemplative practices in

³⁴ Brendan Ozawa-de Silva, "Contemplative Science and Secular Ethics," *Religions* 7, no. 8 (2016): 98, <http://dx.doi.org/uwest.idm.oclc.org/10.3390/rel7080098>.

educational settings with diverse populations such as children³⁵ and adults³⁶ in preschool and school contexts.³⁷ They have used different contemplative practices such as meditation, mindfulness programs, and yoga meditation.³⁸ Research with these populations has shown results like increase in self-regulation, improved emotional well-being, improved attention, academic achievements, and reduced stress.³⁹ Studies with premedical and medical students demonstrated that contemplative practices can decrease levels of anxiety and depression.⁴⁰ Those interventions were held primarily during students' stressful exam periods when excessive stress is possible among the students. Apart from populations of school children and adult students, some scholars have suggested that future research should also consider integrating contemplative exercises among schoolteachers and parents.⁴¹ Shauna L. Shapiro, Kristen E. Lyon, Richard C.

³⁵ Nilson Vieira Pinto et al., "School-Based Meditation in Adolescents: An Integrative Literature Review," *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health* 35, no. 2 (2023): 159–65, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh-2022-0059>; Haley McKeen et al., "Mindfulness as a Mediator and Moderator in the Relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Depression," *Current Psychology: Research and Reviews* 42, no. 8 (March 2023): 6576–86, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-02003-z>; Joanne L. Bagshaw, "Contemplative Pedagogy and Student Success: A Mixed Methods Research Study," (PhD diss., Capella University, 2014), 1-105, <https://www.proquest.com/psychology/dissertations-theses/contemplative-pedagogy-student-success-mixed/docview/1500561597/sem-2?accountid=25358>.

³⁶ Adrienne Garro et al., "Mindfulness Initiatives for Students, Teachers, and Parents: A Review of Literature and Implications for Practice during Covid-19 and Beyond," *Contemporary School Psychology* 27, no. 1 (March 2023): 152–69, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40688-022-00446-0>; Lea Waters et al., "Contemplative Education: A Systematic, Evidence-Based Review of the Effect of Meditation Interventions in Schools," *Educational Psychology Review* 27, no. 1 (March 2015): 103–34, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-014-9258-2>.

³⁷ Judith Simmer-Brown and Fran Grace, *Meditation and the Classroom: Contemplative Pedagogy for Religious Studies* (SUNY Press, 2011), 85–94, 237–49.

³⁸ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, *Mindfulness and Education*, 130.

³⁹ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, 130; Shauna L. Shapiro, Kristen E. Lyon, and Richard C. Miller, "Contemplation in the Classroom: A New Direction for Improving Childhood Education," *Educational Psychology Review* 27, no. 1 (Mar 2015): 1-30, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10648-014-9265-3>.

⁴⁰ Shauna L. Shapiro, Gary E. Schwartz, and Ginny Bonner, "Effects of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction on Medical and Premedical Students," *Journal of Behavioral Medicine* 21, no. 6 (December 1998): 581–99, <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1018700829825>; Shapiro, Lyon, and Miller, "Contemplation in the Classroom," 23.

⁴¹ Shapiro, Lyon, and Miller, 26.

Miller, Britta Butler, Cassandra Vieten, and Philip David Zelazo mention that contemplative exercises can yield excellent results among schoolteachers to improve their well-being and classroom climate. They further claim that when teachers benefit from contemplative practices, they also benefit children, even if the children do not directly participate in those programs.⁴²

With the growing interest in the West, secular mindfulness interventions were developed so that anyone could practice even though they did not belong to those religious traditions. These contemplative practices have been used for reducing stress, anxiety, depression, psychological disorders, personality disorders, and addressing suicidal thoughts. Mindfulness meditation, MBSR, and MBCT are some of the popular secular contemplative practices that are being used in clinical and non-clinical environments.⁴³

Burnout

In 1981, Maslach defined burnout as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that can occur among individuals who do “people work of some kind.” Professionals like nurses⁴⁴, social workers, and healthcare workers experience burnout in their daily lives.⁴⁵ Maslach adds that burnout is also “an erosion of engagement with the job. What started out as important, meaningful, and challenging

⁴² Shapiro, Lyon, and Miller, 26.

⁴³ Kemeny et al., "Contemplative/Emotion Training," 338-50.

⁴⁴ Tina S Gauthier, "An on-the-Job Mindfulness-Based Intervention for Pediatric ICU Nurses" (PhD diss., University of the West, 2013), 1-287, <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/on-job-mindfulness-based-intervention-pediatric/docview/1416422564/se-2>.

⁴⁵ De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 8-9.

work becomes unpleasant, unfulfilling, and meaningless.”⁴⁶ Other researchers define burnout as a prolonged response to emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.⁴⁷ Burnout related to work is defined as feelings of exhaustion, emotional fatigue, cynicism, negative attitudes towards work, and reduced professional efficacy.⁴⁸ Researchers define burnout as a prolonged response to emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job.⁴⁹

Human service jobs are mainly vulnerable to burnout. People in helping professionals and caregivers in human service institutes experience this extreme exhaustion after working many hours and shifts. Maslach points out that burnout can occur, especially in working contexts.⁵⁰ Research implemented using human service subjects reveals that psychological and emotional exhaustion, extreme fatigue, and loss of interest in one’s job cause burnout.⁵¹ People who experience burnout feel that life is not worth living anymore and is meaningless. They feel that they cannot relate to their family, friends, relatives, and co-workers. They feel detached from human relations, work, and social interactions. What was pleasing earlier to such a person would no longer be pleasing to him or her. Sometimes, these conditions might result in deep depression.⁵² Kabat-Zinn says that it will lead to a loss of ability to function effectively. Under such circumstances, he says joy and enthusiasm disappear. A person's thought process and

⁴⁶ Christina Maslach, Wilmar B. Schaufeli, and Michael P. Leiter, "Job Burnout," *Annual Review of Psychology* 52, no. 1 (2001): 416, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397>.

⁴⁷ Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, "Job Burnout," 397.

⁴⁸ Giacomo Angelini, "Big Five Model Personality Traits and Job Burnout: A Systematic Literature Review," *BMC Psychology* 11 (2023): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-023-01056-y>.

⁴⁹ Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, "Job Burnout," 397.

⁵⁰ Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter. 407.

⁵¹ Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness," 28–30.

⁵² Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: How to Cope with Stress, Pain and Illness Using Mindfulness Meditation* (London: Piatkus, 2013), 334.

emotional life become dysfunctional at such moments.⁵³ Kabat-Zinn says that if we are unaware of it, burnout is possible in any work or job, irrespective of the power, control, ability, and decision-making in a job.⁵⁴ Human service and caring professions like nursing is exposed to emotional exhaustion and burnout.⁵⁵ Moreover, Daniel Goleman and Richard J. Davidson say that anyone can feel burned out when they do not meet work deadlines in the hectic pace of a business start-up.⁵⁶

Various intervention strategies have been developed to address with burnout at work. Intervention strategies now exist, such as relaxation, time management, assertive training, rational emotive therapy, stress reduction programs to enhance interpersonal and social skills. Research interventions report that meditation is also one of the best methods to cope with burnout.⁵⁷

Stress

In the 1950s, stress was defined by Hans Selye as “the non-specific response of the organism to any pressure or demand.”⁵⁸ Stress is a natural part of life, and it is unavoidable.⁵⁹ Those interpretations have mainly contributed to various analyses of stress.⁶⁰ Stress is defined elsewhere as the demand made on an organism to adapt, cope, or adjust. Some researchers state that people sometimes need healthy stress to stay alert

⁵³ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 334; *Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain, and Illness* (New York: Dell Pub, 1991), 263.

⁵⁴ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 504.

⁵⁵ Daniel Goleman and Richard J Davidson, *Altered Traits: Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body* (New York: Avery, 2017), 92.

⁵⁶ Goleman and Davidson, *Altered Traits*, 92.

⁵⁷ Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter, "Job Burnout," 419.

⁵⁸ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 288.

⁵⁹ Kabat-Zinn, 289, 291.

⁶⁰ George Fink, *Stress Science: Neuroendocrinology* (USA: Academic Press, 2010), 5-6.

and occupied. Hans Selye identifies such healthy stress as “eustress.”⁶¹ “But intense or prolonged stress can overtax our adjustive capacity, affect our moods, impair our ability to experience pleasure, and harm the body.”⁶²

Stress can make excessive demands on a person’s strength and ability to function well. Stress accumulates until the person can no longer cope. Under such circumstances, the person notably fails when interacting with daily conditions, daily hassles, and challenging events. Stress threatens a person's well-being. Stress is “a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being.”⁶³ People encounter stress because of unavoidable working conditions, punishing workloads, interpersonal and organizational conflicts, scarcity of resources, lack of autonomy, decision latitude, and physical stressors such as noise and crowding.⁶⁴ As Kabat-Zinn says, stressors do not determine how much we are stressed. How we perceive and cope with difficult situations, life situations, and how we relate to them determine levels of distress. Regular exercise, meditation, enough sleeping hours, and loving and supportive relationships with family members and friends improve one’s capacity to be resilient in the face of stress.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Spencer A. Rathus, *Psychology: Concepts and Connections: Brief Version*, 7th ed (California: Wadsworth, 2004), 379.

⁶² Rathus, *Psychology*, 379.

⁶³ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 292.

⁶⁴ R. Sergio Guglielmi and Kristin Tatrow, "Occupational Stress, Burnout, and Health in Teachers: A Methodological and Theoretical Analysis," *Review of Educational Research* 68, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 63, <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/occupational-stress-burnout-health-teachers/docview/214115420/se-2>.

⁶⁵ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 294-96.

Haberman claims that teaching is a high-stress profession and that when teachers struggle with burnout, it can cause more damage to students than those who leave the school.⁶⁶ Joseph J. Blase says burnout is inevitable if teachers work in a stressful environment for a considerable period.⁶⁷ Teachers may develop symptoms such as depleted energy (emotional exhaustion), cynical attitude and feelings towards students and colleagues (depersonalization), and negative self-evaluation about his/her job performance (diminished personal accomplishment).⁶⁸ If not addressed in time, teachers' burnout can harm their health and well-being. Studies have shown that contemplative practices such as MBSR can significantly reduce schoolteacher burnout. Mindfulness-based approaches promote well-being among schoolteachers. Mindfulness-based practices can train teachers to be more mindful and benefit students.⁶⁹

Research on Schoolteacher Burnout and Stress

A few studies were limited to studying the reasons for Sri Lankan teacher burnout and stress. This discussion concentrates on seven such research interventions implemented in Sri Lanka to investigate various reasons for schoolteacher burnout and stress. The findings of those studies have explained various causes of teacher stress. Yogaraneer researched teachers' burnout in Sri Lanka.⁷⁰ Her study revealed that the reasons for teacher burnout are the challenges and demands of fulfilling duties and

⁶⁶ Martin Haberman, "Teacher Burnout in Black and White," *The New Educator* 1, no. 3 (July 2007): 153–75, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/15476880590966303>.

⁶⁷ Joseph J. Blase, "A Qualitative Analysis of Sources of Teacher Stress: Consequences for Performance," *American Educational Research Journal* 23, no. 1 (1986): 13–40, <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312023001013>.

⁶⁸ Yogaraneer, "Psychological Study," 1.

⁶⁹ Gold et al., "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction," 185.

⁷⁰ Yogaraneer, "Psychological Study," 1-3.

responsibilities. The cited study revealed that people get frustrated when they cannot continue their work in the face of unexpected and unbearable stressful events at their jobs. The study indicates that among many other stress-related professions, teaching is also an occupation exposed to stressful events. P. V. De Silva, C. G. Hewage, and P. Fonseka say that similar studies of teacher burnout in Sri Lanka were hard to find.⁷¹

Research with female primary teachers in the southern province of Sri Lanka revealed that primary school teachers experience burnout due to the lack of leisure time during weekends and excessive work at school time.⁷² The study found that some teachers leave their jobs because of excessive burnout in their profession. P. V. De Silva, C. G. Hewage, and P. Fonseka suggest that implementing educational and counseling programs in Sri Lankan school environments to address this issue is worthwhile.

Contributing factors for burnout include unruly students, impersonal administration, poorly organized timetables, poor working conditions, multiple role-playing, increased workloads, the pressure and pace of curriculum changes, negative public attitudes, job dissatisfaction, low salary, lack of professional opportunities, poor accommodation, lack of teaching materials, and lack of transportation. Researchers point out that teachers' burnout needs more attention in research studies in Sri Lanka.⁷³

Research on burnout among Tamil medium secondary school teachers in Sri Lanka found that teachers experience burnout due to the challenges and demands of fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.⁷⁴ The study showed that the consequences of

⁷¹ De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 9.

⁷² Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Prevalence of Burnout," 12-14.

⁷³ De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 9.

⁷⁴ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1-3.

teacher burnout affect not only the teacher's well-being or good performance but also the whole school administration. The cited study points out that conducting a qualitative research study is fruitful in understanding what factors lead to the emotional exhaustion of less experienced teachers and the diminished personal accomplishment of more experienced teachers. Yogarane suggests that studying the prevalence of burnout among secondary school teachers will be helpful since only a few studies relevant to teachers' burnout are found in Sri Lanka.

Sarathadevi Anandasayanan and V.A. Subramaniam attempted to identify various sources of stress among schoolteachers and how stress impacts teachers' job performance and how it correlates with demographic variables.⁷⁵ It concluded that stress among schoolteachers could adversely impact their job performance.⁷⁶ The exploration found that schoolteacher stress is related to unskillful time management, work-related stressors, professional distress, and lack of discipline among students. Causes of stress among teachers include instructing students with low motivation for education, unruly student behavior, time management, excessive workload, poor working as a team for a common goal, depersonalization, working through ego concepts, de-evaluation by others, administrative pressure, unsatisfactory working environment. The cited research shows that teachers who struggle with stress cannot perform well. Stress decreases their motivation. It can also create job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and sometimes violence at work.

⁷⁵ Anandasayanan and Subramaniam, "Effect of Stress," 1-10.

⁷⁶ Anandasayanan and Subramaniam, 13.

Darshana Samaraweera et al. aimed to see whether mentoring leads to burnout for those receiving training as pre-service English language teachers in Sri Lankan schools.⁷⁷ The researchers selected 180 pre-service ESL teachers receiving a training program in their third-year internship and 86 supervisors who trained those newly recruited teachers from three national colleges in Sri Lanka. The findings indicate that teacher burnout can create negative feelings among schoolteachers associated with leaving the teaching profession, absenteeism, turnover, unsatisfactory performance, violence, and many more.⁷⁸ Kanchana R. Menikdiwela examined Sri Lankan secondary school teachers' perceptions of student misbehavior.⁷⁹ The study points out that the lack of student discipline is the primary stressor that leads to teachers' burnout in Sri Lankan schools.⁸⁰

Navaneethakrishnan Kengatharan explored the relationship between teacher autonomy, student behavior, student engagement, and teacher job satisfaction.⁸¹ The study collected data from 703 participants chosen at random from 123 schools in Sri Lanka. When collecting the data, 88% of participants responded to the questionnaires in the study. The cited research reveals that student good behavior can increase teachers' job satisfaction.

Literature search found some studies that explored teacher burnout in other countries. A research study by Mei-Lin Chang explores how teachers react to emotions

⁷⁷ Samaraweera et al., "Mentees' Burnout," 75-81.

⁷⁸ Samaraweera et al., 77.

⁷⁹ Menikdiwela, "Student Misbehavior," 103-13.

⁸⁰ Menikdiwela. 103.

⁸¹ Kengatharan, "Effects of Teacher," 1-15.

when they face challenging classroom incidents.⁸² His study found that disruptive classroom situations where students misbehave can cause burnout among teachers. As per the findings of this study, unpleasant emotions like anger, frustration, and irritation will lead to teachers' burnout at schools. Mei Lin Chang says student misbehavior is the top reason for teachers' stress and burnout.

Instead of external influences for teachers' burnout like demanding workload, administrative school issues, lack of resources, and demographic factors in a school environment, Mei Lin Chang's study investigated the internal and cognitive process of how teachers assessed their emotions and cope with stress when they face challenging classroom incidents. This study found that identifying emotional processes will help understand what stress management programs should be utilized to reduce teachers' burnout levels at schools. The research concludes that teachers should regulate their emotions in classrooms and reduce burnout rather than judging challenging incidents and the complexity of classroom dynamics.⁸³

Studies implemented using secular mindfulness revealed that contemplative practices help reduce stress among school instructors. Kemeny et al., looked at how contemplation and emotive training can be utilized to reduce negative emotions and increase well-being and social cohesion among participants.⁸⁴ The study enrolled 82 female schoolteachers. They incorporated secular mindfulness meditation and developed a novel 8-week training program with information and techniques associated with the

⁸² Mei-Lin Chang, "Toward a Theoretical Model to Understand Teacher Emotions and Teacher Burnout in the Context of Student Misbehavior: Appraisal, Regulation and Coping," *Motivation and Emotion* 37, no. 4 (December 2013): 799–817, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11031-012-9335-0>.

⁸³ Chang, "Toward a Theoretical, 815.

⁸⁴ Kemeny et al., "Contemplative/Emotion Training," 338-50.

scientific study of emotions. Participants were asked to complete self-report measures at home online before, immediately after, and five months following the end of the program. Researchers collected reports weekly to see how many minutes per day they practiced meditation each day. Assessment tools like self-reporting and experimental tasks were used to identify changes in emotional behavior. The study showed that participants changed their cognitive and emotional states and improved their well-being and social interactions.

John P. Miller and Ayako Nozawa researched how the participants use different meditation practices in their daily work and report the results they gained. The researchers mention that meditation involves different practices like breathing meditation, lovingkindness meditation, repeating a mantra, walking meditation, visualization, and contemplation on poetry and sacred texts.⁸⁵ This research project was conducted in Toronto with 21 participants. Of these 21 participants, 11 were from the elementary and secondary level, four from the post-secondary level, another four teachers were administrators, and two consultants. One participant had quit the program at the time the study was continuing. Sixty-two percent of the participants reported that meditation helps them stay more relaxed and calmer in their daily lives. They reported that they could remain peaceful and less reactive during troublesome classroom situations. The profiles of three participants from three different cultures and spiritual environments were prominent in this study. Through their findings, the researchers pointed out that different contemplations are common among spiritual practitioners in any culture. These

⁸⁵ Miller and Nozawa, "Contemplative Practices," 42-48.

researchers concluded that contemplation would be helpful to strengthen the educational experience in public institutions if it can be introduced in a non-dogmatic way.⁸⁶

Gaylene Denford-Wood explored how teachers can integrate contemplative practices in mainstream teacher education and professional learning.⁸⁷ Twenty-two teachers were recruited for this program in New Zealand and Australia. This research was based on four aspects of what initially drew participants to meditate: the types and lengths of their meditation, influences that supported meditators to experience the contemplative discipline, and the effects of meditation on teachers' lives, work, and well-being. The methodology that this study used was a case study approach and narrative inquiry to explore how teachers perceive contemplative practices in their personal-professional well-being. Participants used different types and traditions of contemplative practices since different traditions have influenced them. Participants stated that contemplative practices can be transformative not just for their better lives but also for students. That study shows those contemplative practices as Christian-centering prayer and meditation, Anthroposophical meditation, Rosicrucian, Buddhist *Vipassanā* Insight meditation, Transcendental Meditation, Yoga Meditation, *Ashaya*, or Ascension Meditation. The results and benefits participants gained from meditation were multi-dimensional. The cited study shows that research is scarce on academic teacher education on how to incorporate contemplative practices in their professional work.⁸⁸ Albrecht and

⁸⁶ Miller and Nozawa, 48.

⁸⁷ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, *Mindfulness and Education*, 125-48.

⁸⁸ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, 127.

Cohen say mindfulness interventions in education has paid less attention to teachers' long-term practices.⁸⁹

This discussion should address research implemented using Buddhist meditation in Sri Lanka. This study found three interventions that utilized Theravada meditation in Sri Lankan research.⁹⁰ Gunathunga et al. explored a worthwhile study that importantly focuses on the mental well-being of healthcare personnel in Sri Lanka.⁹¹ That study aimed to find the difference between a regularly meditating group and a non-meditating group. To measure the level of depression and the well-being of meditators, researchers used a modified version of *Vipassanā* meditation from the Theravada Buddhist tradition. That research found that those who meditated regularly could enhance their mental well-being and reduce depression. Researchers quoting some scholarly writings mention that implementing mindfulness interventions at workplaces is fruitful in reducing stress, enhancing mental well-being, and improving health. Researchers see that by the time they were conducting that research, no other research interventions of Buddhist-based mindfulness meditation had been executed in working environments in Sri Lanka.

Gunathunga's research shows, workplaces need interventions to help employees reduce their burnout and stress. Throughout the research program, they used guided meditation and group discussion to share the participants' experiences. Researchers, having cited some scholarly writings, say that several studies have evaluated the

⁸⁹ Nicole Albrecht, Patricia Albrecht, and Marc Cohen, "Mindfully Teaching in the Classroom: A Literature Review," *Australian Journal of Teacher Education* 37, no 12 (December 2012): 1-14, <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol37/iss12/1>.

⁹⁰ Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 112-120; Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers," 254-78; Saddhajeewa, "Mindfulness for Substance Abuse," 1-199.

⁹¹ Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 112.

effectiveness of mindfulness meditation in reducing occupational stress among teachers. The co-authors of the above-cited research suggest that the meditation intervention they used in this program should be tested with other professional groups. Researchers utilized a modified version of *Vipassanā* meditation from Theravada Buddhism to investigate the effectiveness of meditation in working places.⁹²

Telege Peiris et al. investigated Theravada mindfulness among Sri Lankan schoolteachers and children. The study's co-researchers used a range of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness activities. They attempted to investigate the impact and effectiveness of teachers' mindfulness and professional skills in creating a healthy classroom environment and better student performance.⁹³ That study randomly sampled nine schoolteachers and 230 students from government schools in the Western province of Sri Lanka. It consisted of an experimental group and a control group. The data collection was carried out for eight weeks. They used a pretest and posttest experimental method to see how Buddhist mindfulness benefited schoolteachers and students. Another objective of that study was to see how schoolteachers can improve their professional skills to create a healthy classroom setting. The researcher met the experimental group once a week for a two-hour session. Participants in the experimental group were asked to practice five-minute mindfulness activities at home every day. Those mindfulness activities utilized in the experimental group were mindful walking, eating, sitting, listening, drawing, body-scanning, and some mindful games like clapping. The leading researcher used a knowledgeable Buddhist monk to offer the meditation for the

⁹² Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 114.

⁹³ Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers," 256.

experimental group. The researcher herself also instructed the experimental group with mindful activities. She seems to have mainly referred to the meditation instructions by Thich Nhat Hanh in *The Art of Mindful Living: How to Bring Love, Compassion and Inner Peace into Your Daily Life*. Ethkandawaka Saddhajeewa explored mindfulness using three Buddhist meditation techniques: loving-kindness meditation, mindful walking, and breathing.⁹⁴ His intervention targeted a substance abuse population to benefit from Buddhist mindfulness.

Transformation of Mindfulness

As a preliminary remark, it can be pointed out that Buddhist-based mindfulness is a practice that was introduced 26 centuries back in India by the Buddha. After attaining perfect Buddha knowledge by Gotama Buddha in the 5th century BCE in India, Buddhist mindfulness came into being. Looking at both a philological and practical angle, Bhikkhu Bodhi observes that since then, this has been interpreted, expanded, and utilized through diverse ways of practice by many schools in different lands throughout Asia with various lines of meditation traditions that belonged to Buddhism for almost 26 centuries in the history. Asian teachers from Buddhism, yoga, and other spiritual disciplines started migrating to the U.S. around the 1960s-70s with the advent of modern aviation facilities. These teachers seem to have attracted young Westerners with their knowledge, and those whom Asian *Gurus* thus influenced went to different territories of Asia and, having studied Buddhist meditation under the guidance of Asian masters, came back to their land and began spreading this new practice.⁹⁵ As a result of this new trend, they could

⁹⁴ Saddhajeewa, "Mindfulness for Substance Abuse," 89–93.

⁹⁵ Goleman and Davidson, *Altered Traits*, 41-58.

influence professionals in medicine, neuroscience, and psychotherapy.⁹⁶ Later on, this was highly popularized into a secular mindfulness practice in the West based on clinical and non-clinical settings, even extending it to psychotherapy today. Rupert Gethin mentions that Buddhist mindfulness directly influenced the secular mindfulness approach, such as MBSR, introduced by John Kabat-Zinn. What Rupert says is evidenced by Kabat-Zinn own writings.⁹⁷ Initially, Kabat-Zinn introduced an eight-week course known as the Stress Reduction and Relaxation Program (SR&RP) in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. At the inception of his 'Full Catastrophe Living,' Kabat-Zinn mentions that "the SR&RP is based on rigorous and systematic training in mindfulness, a form of meditation originally developed in the Buddhist traditions of Asia."⁹⁸ When the current dialogues of mindfulness-based interventions are taken into account, it seems that modern researchers have presented their mechanism of secured mindfulness on positive qualities to regulate the human behavior.

Contemplation in Theravada Canonical Texts

Theravada Buddhist meditation has many approaches for developing mindfulness. An early Theravada textual description of the constant practice of contemplation in every moment associated with daily actions is found in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. Theravada contemplation is vividly presented in this *Sutta* as how we should bring it into everyday activities. This clarity should prevail in the mind whenever going forward and returning, looking ahead and looking away, folding and extending our limbs,

⁹⁶ Bhikkhu Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness Really Mean? A Canonical Perspective," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (June 2011): 20, 35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14639947.2011.564813>.

⁹⁷ Rupert Gethin, "On Some Definitions of Mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (June 2011): 268, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14639947.2011.564843>.

⁹⁸ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using*, 2.

wearing suits, whenever eating, drinking, consuming food, tasting food, even when defecating and urinating, whenever walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent.⁹⁹ Even though the above explanation is presented in accordance with a monastic way of life, its essence is relevant to every human being's day-to-day life events. Again, in the same context in the preceding paragraph of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, developing this constant awareness is explained through the four stances of human behavior.¹⁰⁰ Meditation practices mentioned in early Buddhist teachings are closely interrelated with various activities of daily life. Bhikkhu Anālayo points out that there is a formal meditation practice in early Buddhist teachings that a person can practice in daily life.¹⁰¹

It is necessary to look into why Buddhist-based mindfulness is a practice that should manifest not just during seated meditation but in every other activity of our daily lives. At the very outset of our discussion, we mentioned that Buddhist-based mindfulness extends beyond seated meditation. Practicing mindfulness while seated at a specific place with crossed legs or a lotus position is technically a conventional meditation that we can see in the history of Buddhist meditation. Some assume when they see the image of the Buddha with the lotus posture that meditation needs to be practiced in a seated position. Seated meditation can be introduced as one method of other ways of practicing Buddhist mindfulness. This has been clearly defined in many places in the original teachings of the Buddha. For instance, we can show the second Sutta in the

⁹⁹ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 147; Bhikkhu Anālayo, *A Meditator's Life of the Buddha - Based on the Early Discourses* (UK: Windhorse Publications, 2017), 5.

¹⁰⁰ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 146. Cf. the description to four postures.

¹⁰¹ Anālayo, *Meditator's Life*, 198.

Majjhima Nikāya, *Sabbāsava-sutta* the discourse on “All the Taints.” This *sutta* illustrates that a person whose sole purpose is to eliminate all the defilements from the mind can follow seven steps. As it points out, defilements are eliminated by following those seven ways. Those seven techniques are seeing, restraining, using, enduring, avoiding, removing, and developing.¹⁰² Noticeably, the last method, ‘developing’ among those seven methods, suggests that meditation can be practiced while sitting.

Another aspect of Buddhist-based mindfulness in daily life is presented in one of the discourses like *Metta-sutta* in *Sutta Nipāta*, the discourse on Loving Kindness, which belongs to the earliest stratum of Buddha’s teachings. This *sutta* explicitly defines mindfulness of loving kindness, which should be extended in every action of our daily life. The person who spreads compassion towards beings in the universe is expected to practice this awareness of loving kindness in his four main stances of standing, walking, sitting, and lying down.¹⁰³ *Meghiya-sutta* in the *Āṅguttara Nikāya* has explained some requirements that need to be fulfilled by a meditator when practicing Buddhist mindfulness. Buddha recommends five significant components in this *Sutta* that a practitioner needs to be aware of before practicing meditation.¹⁰⁴ The account in *Khemaka-sutta* in *Samyutta Nikāya* illustrates how contemplative discussions at certain

¹⁰² Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 91.

¹⁰³ Kenneth R. Norman, *The Group of Discourses: Sutta-Nipāta*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Pali Text Soc, 2006), 17. Cf. verse 151. “standing, or going, or seated, or lying down, as long as one is free from drowsiness, one should practice this mindfulness. This, they say, is the holy state here.”

¹⁰⁴ Edmund Hardy, ed., *The Āṅguttara-Nikāya*, Vol. 4 (London: Pāli Text Society, 1979), 354-58.

times lead to the acquisition of perfect knowledge, i.e., Arahantship in Theravada Buddhism.¹⁰⁵

This research is based on the Theravada contemplation meditation explained in canonical texts. A description of the constant practice of contemplation in every action is found in some canonical texts. How Theravada contemplation can be practiced in every action of daily life is noticeable in a popular discourse like the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*.¹⁰⁶ This same Sutta can also be found with a slightly more extended version in the *Dhīga Nikāya*.

Rupert Gethin and Bhikkhu Bodhi state T. W. Rhys Davids was the first person to translate the Pāli word *sati* used in Theravada texts as mindfulness in 1881.¹⁰⁷ After his initial effort to translate it through various readings and inferences from ancient Theravada Pāli texts, the word “mindfulness” became the most common and established translation of *sati*.¹⁰⁸ This translation has influenced scholars and researchers in their writings. Later, in successive periods, other scholars also gave this term various meanings. However, when the definitions of Buddhist-based mindfulness mentioned in the *Nikāya* contexts are considered, it becomes clear that the common term used to denote mindfulness over different strata in Theravada discourses is the *sati*. Therefore, *sati* is the widely used connotation associated with the meaning of mindfulness in discourses of Theravada Buddhism.¹⁰⁹ This can be specifically introduced as an umbrella

¹⁰⁵ Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, ed., *Kindred Sayings*, Vol. 3, trans. F. L. Woodward (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2001), 107-11; M. Leon Feer, ed., *Samyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. 3 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2001) 126-32.

¹⁰⁶ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 147; Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 5.

¹⁰⁷ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 23; Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 263.

¹⁰⁸ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 265.

¹⁰⁹ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 44-66.

term that suggests many aspects of its mental qualities and functioning like memory, cognition, path factor/awakening factor, and concentration. Apart from these functions, a particular entity of mind based on focused attention has also been presented in early discourses closer to careful and balanced supervision, continued full attention, calm and detached observation, aloofness, and uninvolved functioning.¹¹⁰ This is all about experiencing the present moment that Buddhism identified 2500 years ago as a state of mind and particular entity like constant mindful observation, being conscious, or being aware of now, and how to stay connected with the present moment. Bhikkhu Bodhi's definition of lucid awareness of the present happening is also worth exploring. After doing thorough studies for decades about Theravada and other traditions of Buddhism, pioneering researchers like Bhikkhu Bodhi accept two primary canonical meanings for the term *sati*. Accordingly, those two aspects of canonical occurrences are "memory" and the "lucid awareness" of present happenings.¹¹¹ Bhikkhu Bodhi further mentions that though the word *sati* denotes its basic functioning as memory, which prevailed before Buddha's teaching, Buddha had to use the word *sati* for meditation with a new meaning.

Bhikkhu Bodhi and Rupert Gethin, referring to dictionaries, point out the basic meaning of *sati* as memory.¹¹² *Sati* is derived from the Sanskrit equivalent, *smṛiti*, which initially means memory. Sanskrit dictionaries give many close meanings to the word *Smṛiti* as memory.¹¹³ Monier Williams has given many similar meanings to that original

¹¹⁰ Anālayo, 58.

¹¹¹ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 25.

¹¹² Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 263; Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 22.

¹¹³ Lakshman Ramchandra Vaidya, "Smṛiti," in *The Standard Sanskrit-English dictionary: Containing Appendices on Sanskrit Prosody and Names of Noted Mythological Persons Etc* (New Delhi: Asian Pub. Services, 1980), 817. Cf. *recollection, remembrance, memory*; Suryakanta, "Smṛiti," in *A Practical Vedic Dictionary* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981), 729. Cf. *remembrance, recollection*.

Sanskrit word in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary, like remembrance, reminiscence, recollection, thinking of or upon (any person or thing), calling to mind, and memory.¹¹⁴ Vaman Sivram Apte translates the word *smṛiti* as remembrance, recollection, memory, thinking of, calling to mind.¹¹⁵ Robert Caesar Childers has translated the word *sati* in his dictionary as recollection, active state of mind, fixing the mind strongly upon any subject, attention, attentiveness, thought, reflection, and consciousness.¹¹⁶ Rupert Gethin says that Robert Childers' renderings refer to the just memory and salient features of the Theravada mindful meditation.¹¹⁷ A compound term that is common in canonical texts is *satipaṭṭhānaṃ*. This compound noun is formed through *sati* and *upaṭṭhānaṃ*. Robert Childers defines *satipaṭṭhānaṃ* as "fixing the attention, earnest meditation."¹¹⁸ T.W. Rhys Davids, referring to Theravada *Nikāya* texts, gives the basic meaning of *sati* as memory, recognition, and consciousness. He also gives meanings inherent to *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation as intentness of mind, wakefulness of mind, mindfulness, alertness, lucidity of mind, self-possession, conscience, self-consciousness.¹¹⁹ He translates the common phrase in *suttas*, i.e., *parimukhaṃ satim upaṭṭhapetum* as "to surround oneself with the watchfulness of mind." This meaning seems coherent with the constant awareness of the present moment a meditator attempts to develop in daily life.

¹¹⁴ Monier Sir Monier-Williams, "Smṛiti," in *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages*, ed. by Ernst Leumann, and Carl Cappeller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 1272.

¹¹⁵ Vaman Shivaram Apte, "Smṛiti," in *The practical Sanskrit-English Dictionary. Containing Appendices on Sanskrit Prosody and Important Literary and Geographical Names in the Ancient History of India* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1965), 1014.

¹¹⁶ Robert Caesar Childers, "Sati," in *A Dictionary of the Pali Language* (New Delhi: Asian Educational Services, 2003), 466.

¹¹⁷ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 263.

¹¹⁸ Childers, "Satipaṭṭhānaṃ," 466.

¹¹⁹ Thomas W. Rhys Davids and William Stede, eds., "Sati," in *The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1998), 672.

Rupert Gethin sums up four canonical meanings for the word *sati* associated with Buddhist mindfulness from early *Nikāya* texts. Those are “remembering what is before the mind (memory), the natural presence of mind, remembers things in relationship to things and thus tends to know their value and widen the view, closely related to wisdom tending to see things as they are.”¹²⁰

Apart from popular terms like *sati*, Pāli synonyms and phrases can be seen in the Theravada canonical suttas for mindfulness. Those expressions indicate the meaning of watchfulness or lucid awareness of the present moment in the mind. Some other Pāli terms and phrases associated with mindfulness can be cited as *anupassī*, *sampajañña*, *sampajāna*, *sampajānakāri*, *sato va*. Pāli word *sato* seen at the beginning of *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, is nearly synonymous with *sati*. *Sato* means “recollecting”, “mindful”, “attentive”, “thoughtful”, and “conscious.”¹²¹ This word *sato* is derived from the Pāli verb *sarati*. *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* specifies that ever mindful he breathes in (*so sato va assasati*) mindful he breathes out (*so sato va passasati*).¹²² In this *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* text, *sato va* means “being mindful.” The meditator needs to practice breathing in and out, knowing that the person is breathing in and out. When practicing the first step of breathing meditation as per the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, the person should be conscious of inhaling and exhaling. The translators of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi, further clarify the meaning of this phrase in the notes to the *sutta* as “but

¹²⁰ Rupert Gethin, *The Buddhist Path to Awakening* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 44.

¹²¹ Childers, "Sato," 467.

¹²² Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 145-46.

a sustained effort to fix awareness on the breath as it moves in and out in its natural rhythm.”¹²³

Theravada contemplation is associated with a constant awareness of daily actions. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi point out that awareness of bodily postures in daily life mentioned in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* is not mere understanding of body movements. That awareness is more than the ordinary knowledge in daily actions. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi describe this as a “close, constant, and careful awareness of the body in every position through a close analytical inspection of body movements, not taking them as permanent or a self as the agent.”¹²⁴ Full awareness of body movements helps a person to practice this contemplation, as mentioned in this *sutta*. *Sampajañña* is the Pāli noun for “full awareness.” This noun is derived from the Pāli verb *pajānāti* (*pa+jānāti*). It means “to know”, “find out”, “come to know”, “understand”, and “distinguish.”¹²⁵ Though the expression *pajānāti* (he or she knows) refers to the basic meaning of knowing in some places of the *Nikāya* texts, it denotes a more specific meaning in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* as “clearly understanding.”¹²⁶ Bhikkhu Anālayo explores that these *satipaṭṭhāna* expressions need to be understood with broader, deeper, and more sophisticated meanings.¹²⁷ The noun *sampajañña* is also derived from this verb above. It means clearly knowing. Bhikkhu Anālayo points out that the *Satipaṭṭhāna* sub-commentary presents the meaning of *sampajañña* as “knowing in every way and detail.” He further cites a range of secondary source meanings such as “analytical appreciative

¹²³ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1190. Cf. 140 note to the *sutta*.

¹²⁴ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 1191. Cf. 146 note to the *sutta*.

¹²⁵ Davids and Stede, "Pajānāti," 387.

¹²⁶ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 40.

¹²⁷ Anālayo, 39-41.

understanding, investigative intelligence, and deliberate, discriminative knowledge” for the word *sampajāna*.¹²⁸ Therefore *sampajañña* and *sampajāna* are two synonyms. Rhys Davids has translated this as “attention, consideration, discrimination, comprehension, and circumspection.” Pāli-English Dictionary shows that the noun *sampajañña* is often combined with *sati*.¹²⁹ According to *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, one who practices this full awareness is identified as *sampajānakāri*. The notes to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* translated by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi further mention that commentaries written for Theravada canonical texts have analyzed *sampajañña* into four categories. Those four types are “full awareness of the purpose of one’s actions; full awareness of the suitability of one’s means; full awareness of the domain, that is, not abandoning the subject of meditation during one’s daily routine, and full awareness of reality, the knowledge that behind one’s activities there is no abiding self.”¹³⁰ Again, in the same context in the preceding paragraph of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, developing this constant awareness is explained through the four main stances of human behavior.¹³¹ “Again, bhikkhus, when walking, a bhikkhu understands: ‘I am walking’; when standing, he understands: ‘I am standing’; when sitting, he understands: ‘I am sitting’; when lying down, he understands: ‘I am lying down’; or he understands accordingly however his body is disposed.”¹³²

Here, the Pāli word intended for this awareness is *pajānāti*.¹³³ Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli and Bhikkhu Bodhi have translated this Pāli verb as understanding the movements of four

¹²⁸ Anālayo, 39.

¹²⁹ Davids and Stede, "Sampajañña," 690.

¹³⁰ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 1191. Cf. 147 note to the sutta.

¹³¹ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 146. Cf. the description of ‘four postures.’

¹³² Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, 146; Cf. Vilhelm Trenckner, ed., *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2002), 56-57.

¹³³ Trenckner, *Majjhima-Nikāya* 1, 56-57.

postures, i.e., walking, standing, sitting, and lying down. Whenever a person's body moves, this awareness is directed accordingly. Towards the latter part of the description of the four main human stances mentioned in the paragraph of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, the statement related to extending awareness to any physical bodily movements is worth explaining. *Sutta* categorizes it as *yathā yathā vā panassa kāyo paṇihito hoti tathā tathā naṃ pajānāti*. The translation is “he understands accordingly, however, his body is disposed.”¹³⁴ There are several other different translations of this statement by some translators.¹³⁵ This means that the full awareness is not limited to the four main human stances but can undoubtedly be extended to any physical movements of the body. As per *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, full awareness can be experienced in every action: going forward and returning, looking ahead, and looking away, moving limbs, eating, drinking, tasting, defecating, urinating, walking, standing, sitting, falling asleep, waking up, talking and keeping silent.¹³⁶ Bhikkhu Anālayo views this full awareness in every action as “clear comprehension.” As he recommends, clear comprehension can be practiced in various activities of a person's daily life. He says we can experience this clear comprehension in various daily activities, from walking, sitting, and eating to sleeping.¹³⁷ He further

¹³⁴ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 146.

¹³⁵ Nyanasatta Thera, trans., "Satipatthana Sutta: The Foundations of Mindfulness," Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.nysa.html>. Cf. "just as his body is disposed, so he knows it"; Soma Thera, trans., "Satipatthana Sutta: The Discourse on the Arousing of Mindfulness," Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.soma.html>. Cf. "just as his body is disposed, so he understands it"; Thanissaro Bhikkhu, trans., "MN 10 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta: The Establishing of Mindfulness Discourse," Barre Center for Buddhist Studies, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN10.html>. Cf. "however his body is disposed, that is how he discerns it."

¹³⁶ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 146-47.

¹³⁷ Anālayo, *Meditator's Life*, 206.

mentions that we can use any daily activity as food to improve mindfulness. Again, this description of the full awareness of any movements in the body is seen in many places in the Theravada canonical texts. This Pāli passage is seen in four *suttas* in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* (*Sāmaññaphala-sutta*, *Subha-sutta*,¹³⁸ *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*).¹³⁹ The same passage occurs eleven *suttas* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (*Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, *Cūlahatthipadopama-sutta*, *Mahātaṇhāsankhaya-sutta*, *Mahāassapura-sutta*, *Kandaraka-sutta*,¹⁴⁰ *Gaṇakamoggallāna-sutta*, *Chabbisodhan-sutta*, *Kāyagatāsati-sutta*, *Dantabhūmi-sutta*,¹⁴¹ *Ghoṭamukha-sutta*, *Devadaha-sutta*).¹⁴² The same passage is found in three *suttas* in the *Samyutta Nikāya* (*Paṭhamagelañña-sutta*, *Dutiyaḡelañña-sutta*,¹⁴³ *Sati-sutta*).¹⁴⁴ It is found two *suttas* in the *Anguttara Nikāya* (*Attantapa-sutta*,¹⁴⁵ *Upāli-sutta*).¹⁴⁶ This passage is found in two places in two *Khuddaka Nikāya* texts (*Sāriputtasuttaniddesa* of the *Mahāniddesa*,¹⁴⁷ *Milindapañha*).¹⁴⁸ This passage is reported in two places in two *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* texts. One is in the

¹³⁸ Thomas W. Rhys Davids and Joseph Estlin Carpenter, eds., *The Dīgha-Nikāya*, Vol. 1 (London: Pāli Text Society, 1975), 70-71, 204-210.

¹³⁹ T.W. Rhys Davids and J. Estlin Carpenter, eds., *The Dīgha-Nikāya*, Vol. 2 (London: Pāli Text Society, 1966), 95, 292.

¹⁴⁰ Trenckner, *Majjhima-Nikāya* 1, 57, 181, 269, 274, 346.

¹⁴¹ Robert Chalmers, ed., *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. 3 (London: Pāli Text Society, 1977), 3, 35, 90, 135.

¹⁴² Robert Chalmers, ed., *The Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. 2, (London: Pāli Text Society, 1977), 157-168, 214-228.

¹⁴³ M. Leon Feer, ed., *Samyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2001), 211, 214.

¹⁴⁴ M. Leon Feer, ed., *Samyutta-Nikāya*, Vol. 5 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1994), 142.

¹⁴⁵ Richard Morris, ed., *The Anguttara-Nikāya*, Vol. 2 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1995), 210.

¹⁴⁶ Edmund Hardy, ed., *The Anguttara-Nikāya*, Vol. 5 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1999), 206.

¹⁴⁷ Louis de La Vallée Poussin and E. J. Thomas, eds., *Mahāniddesa*, Vol 1 and 2 (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2001), 491.

¹⁴⁸ Vilhelm Trenckner, eds., *The Milindapañho: Being Dialogues between King Milinda and the Buddhist Sage Nāgasena* (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1997), 378.

Vibhanga.¹⁴⁹ And the other one is in the *Puggalapaññatti*.¹⁵⁰ When delivering the discourse on *satipaṭṭhānas*, Buddha addressed the monks as *Bhikkhave*. Generally, Buddha preferred to address monks in that way. This is very often seen in many Theravada *suttas*. However, it does not mean that only the monks should practice this awareness in every action. This awareness is not limited only to monastics. Lay people also may practice this contemplation to experience this awareness whenever they engage in daily actions. This awareness will benefit them by enhancing their everyday well-being. This Pāli passage influences any meditator to practice this awareness in daily activities. As these canonical occurrences show, Theravada contemplation may not be practiced in a particular order. It depends on the meditator's preference for practicing it in daily actions. This means full awareness of one's daily routine.

Bhikkhu Anālayo notes that contemplation in Theravada meditation has been practiced in various forms. *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* presents contemplation in a specific way of looking at an object. As mentioned in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta*, contemplation is often associated with establishing the four foundations of mindfulness. That is closely observing body, feelings, mind, and mind-objects. The *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* uses the word *anupassī*, which means close observation. This is derived from the verb *passati*. It means "to see." R. C. Childers gives meanings for this verb as "look, look at, behold, observe, to see with the mind, learn, know, and understand."¹⁵¹ When the prefix *anu* is added to the verb *passati* as *anupassati*, it gives a specific meaning. It strengthens the meaning. It

¹⁴⁹ Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, ed., *The Vibhāṅga: Being the Second Book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka* (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 2003), 244. Cf. Chapter XII, Jhanavibhanga.

¹⁵⁰ Richard Morris, Georg Landsberg and Caroline A. F. Rhys Davids, eds., *Puggala-paññatti and Puggala-paññatti Aṭṭhakathā* (Oxford: Pāli Text Society, 1997), 242.

¹⁵¹ Childers, "Passati," 354.

modifies the meaning of the verb *passati*. Rhys Davids gives meanings for *anupassati* as “to look at, contemplate, and observe.”¹⁵² The noun *anupassanā* means “looking at, viewing, contemplating, consideration, and realization.”¹⁵³ Bhikkhu Anālayo has defined the verb *anupassati* as “to repeatedly look at, to observe closely, and to contemplate.”¹⁵⁴ The noun *anupassī* that is very often used in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* in reference to the four dimensions of establishing mindfulness in meditation is based on the verb *passati*. *Anupassī* means “looking at, contemplating, or observing.”¹⁵⁵ One who is closely observing an object in *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation can be identified as *anupassī*. Bhikkhu Anālayo further notes that suttas in the Theravada canon identify contemplation as a “particular way of meditation, an examination of the object from a particular viewpoint.”¹⁵⁶ He further points out that various forms of contemplations are mentioned in Pāli *suttas*.¹⁵⁷ Bhikkhu Anālayo views this particular way of observation associated with contemplation further interacting with various functions such as impermanence (*aniccānupassī*), decaying (*vayānupassī*), unattractiveness (*asubhānupassī*), selfless nature (*anattānupassī*), and let go of (*paṭinissaggānupassī*).¹⁵⁸ In terms of the first *satipaṭṭhāna*, i.e. *kāyānupassanā*, contemplation is practiced by looking closely at one’s breath, body postures, body movements, the anatomical constitution of the body, four elementary qualities of the body, and the process of decaying a dead body. This contemplation further extends to feelings, mind, and mind-objects, as mentioned in the

¹⁵² Davids and Stede, "Anupassati," 38.

¹⁵³ Davids and Stede, "Anupassanā," 39.

¹⁵⁴ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 32.

¹⁵⁵ Childers, "Anupassī," 43.

¹⁵⁶ Anālayo, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, 32.

¹⁵⁷ Anālayo, 32-33.

¹⁵⁸ Anālayo, 32.

Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta.¹⁵⁹ All this evidence supports that contemplative meditation as a form of Buddhist-based mindfulness is, be it during formal meditation or when interacting with a daily routine of our lives, a deep reflective thought associated with full awareness in the mind.

Reflection on Present Mindful Discussions

This afore description shows that the contemplation in the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and other canonical texts stands for specific meaning in Theravada tradition. There, the purpose of contemplation is to closely observe an object analytically. This particular way of looking at *satipaṭṭhānas* represents directing one's awareness to gain the ultimate goal of the Buddha's teaching. Though it involves directing the meditator's goal to achieve final liberation in Buddha's teaching, contemplation is utilized in modern research interventions for pragmatic results. The purpose of this research was to see the application of full awareness in participants' daily lives so that they can use it to reduce stress and enhance everyday well-being. Therefore, this research intervention was implemented similarly to the pragmatic goals of modern mindfulness interventions. Indeed, scholars agree that the intention of mindfulness presented in Theravada Buddhist meditation plays a central role in occupying qualities in the mind like full awareness, concentration, and equanimity, which was to realize the perfect knowledge, which is the cessation of suffering in Buddhism. Some researchers in the present mindfulness-based dialogues may assume this last quality as "a non-judgmental state in mind." When the MBSR literature's content is considered, they present this state of mind as non-

¹⁵⁹ Anālayo, 33.

judgmental. From an early Buddhist point of view, when a person lives his life not resorting to the conflicts of both attachments and afflictions whenever confronted with daily experiences, such a state of mind can be identified as a kind of equanimity in the mind. If a person spends time fixed on things, either fit or unfit, his or her mind will inevitably be perturbed at any moment due to this sort of response. Among many other early discourses, the tenth *sutta* of the *Majjhima Nikāya*, the discourse on the Foundation of Mindfulness, categorically points out how a practitioner should continue his mindfulness without being disturbed by covetousness and resentment of different types of daily human experience.¹⁶⁰ The canonical expression that indicates this above notion is *vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*. As Bhikkhu Bodhi renders, it means “having put away covetousness and grief for the world.” Therefore, this awareness is associated with how a person can remain stable and unshaken in the present moment.

Scholars define various aspects of Buddhist meditation, like clear comprehension, close watchfulness, and contemplation. However, applying these aspects of Buddhist meditation in daily life is a good attempt for further explorations in research studies. Bhikkhu Bodhi says this mindfulness has spread from its homeland in northeast India to many territories in southeast Asia and the West. Further, he says that secular mindfulness has taken away the core components of Buddhist meditation from its original teaching and transplanted it in various institutes as a secularized mindful meditation. Rupert Gethin also confirms that some essential and salient aspects adopted in Theravada mindfulness are not apparent in present mindfulness interpretations of MBSR and

¹⁶⁰ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourse*, 145. Cf. “*Bhikkhus, a bhikkhu, abides contemplating the body as a body, feelings, mind and mind-objects ardent, fully aware and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.*”

MBCT.¹⁶¹ The basic idea of those secular mindfulness programs is not to gain any ultimate goals of *Nibbāna* or to be free from birth and death, but the pragmatic benefits such as everyday well-being and release from daily financial, psychological, and stressful pressures. Today, secular mindfulness is practiced in hospitals, universities, colleges, schools, and other work sites. They aim to help people reduce burnout, stress, strain, and pressure and gain health and everyday well-being.¹⁶² There are mixed views, responses, criticisms, uncertainties, doubts, skepticism, and disagreements regarding removing Buddhist mindfulness's core components from its original setting. However, some scholars agree with the modern application of mindfulness in urban meditation centers to hospitals, prisons, and schools so that people can benefit from it to release their everyday tension, worry, and restlessness. Bhikkhu Bodhi agrees to apply Buddhist-based mindfulness in a new setting as secularized mindfulness if it applies to people's daily lives. On the other hand, people from different cultures with various social norms would not welcome Buddhist meditation if introduced as Buddhist-based mindfulness. As scholars see, it is formidable to have a balance between caution and appreciation to test Eastern contemplative practices in modern mindfulness interventions. Bhikkhu Bodhi's opinion is, "However, I do not think we need be alarmed about the adaptation of Buddhist practices for secular ends."¹⁶³ Appreciation of secular mindfulness interventions in his own words is as follows:

I feel that if psychotherapists can draw upon Buddhist mindfulness practice to help people overcome anxiety and distress, their work is most commendable. If clinicians find that mindfulness helps patients accept pain and illness, that is wonderful, and having a chronic pain condition myself, I give extra kudos to their

¹⁶¹ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 263.

¹⁶² Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 35.

¹⁶³ Bodhi, 35-36.

work. If peace activists find the meditation on loving-kindness helps them be more peaceful in their advocacy of peace, again, that is splendid. And if a businessman finds his Zen practice makes him more considerate of his clients, again this should merit our approval.¹⁶⁴

As Bhikkhu Bodhi further views, mindfulness practiced in Buddhism for more than twenty-six centuries will inevitably test some aspects of it in new applications. He says how modern man perceives the world and lifestyles obviously varies from a meditator who aspires to have an ultimate goal in Buddhism. Moreover, people who are born and live in the West will not accept the exact framework of Buddhist teachings since their perceptions are different from Southern and Eastern Asian thinking. From a non-Buddhist perspective, to test the applicability of Buddhist mindfulness in the day-to-day lives of the present world, some impractical aspects of Buddhist meditation must be removed.¹⁶⁵ Again, from Bhikkhu Bodhi's own words, he does not hesitate to mention that irrespective of some differences in the application of Buddhist-based mindfulness in many new sites and investigations, if it helps people to alleviate their daily pains and pressure, it should be praiseworthy and respected.¹⁶⁶ However, he would appreciate it if secular mindful interventions could be carried out while respecting Buddhist mindfulness's original sources and aspects. Bhikkhu Bodhi's final concern in his research article suggests that, however, the responsibility of scholars in Buddhism is to remind the secular mindful researchers and experimenters to show their gratitude to the ancient wisdom that nourished people many centuries ago.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ Bodhi, 36.

¹⁶⁵ Gethin, "On Some Definitions." 268.

¹⁶⁶ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 36.

¹⁶⁷ Bodhi, 36.

MBSR Definitions of Mindfulness

MBSR presents their intervention of mindfulness as ‘non-judgmental.’ John Kabat Zinn, who initiated the inquiry into mindfulness in the 1970s, defined this state of the mind as staying in the present moment non-judgmentally. This proves that one aspect of his definition of mindfulness was adopting a nonjudgmental attitude to the present moment. If this is further clarified through his own words, it is the nonjudging – neutral observation of the present, moment by moment.¹⁶⁸ Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) defines mindfulness as “learning how to pay attention on purpose, in each moment and nonjudgmentally.”¹⁶⁹ Rupert Gethin suggests that this notion of a ‘non-judgmental’ kind of observation in their application of mindfulness further needs to be scrutinized from a traditional Buddhist perspective.¹⁷⁰ Ñāṇaponika understands mindfulness as bare attention.¹⁷¹ After consideration of other essential early teachings of Buddhism, Ñāṇaponika might have coined the term bare attention for specific aspects of mindfulness. According to him, bare-attention is a way of counteracting our preconceived sense of ourselves, our personality, and our egos.¹⁷² This is a subjective judgment. Ñāṇaponika’s definition of mindfulness as bare attention, Rupert Gethin says, might have influenced those successive mindfulness-based discussions in the West.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Rona Hart, Ivtzan Itai, and Hart Dan. "Mind the gap in mindfulness research: A comparative account of the leading schools of thought," *Review of General Psychology* 17, no. 4 (2013): 453-466, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035212>.

¹⁶⁹ Zindel V. Segal, J. Mark G. Williams, and John D. Teasdale, *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*, 2nd ed (New York: Guilford Press, 2013), 84.

¹⁷⁰ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 273-74.

¹⁷¹ Nyanaponika Thera, *The Heart of Buddhist Meditation: Satipaṭṭhāna: A Handbook of Mental Training Based on the Buddha’s Way of Mindfulness, with an Anthology of Relevant Texts Translated from the Pali and Sanskrit* (Kandy, Sri Lanka: Buddhist Publication Society, 2012), 25-40.

¹⁷² Nyanaponika, *Heart of Buddhist Meditation*, 32-34.

¹⁷³ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 267.

Kabat-Zinn defines “mindfulness” in a secular setting. His definition is “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”¹⁷⁴ “Mindfulness is moment-to-moment awareness. It is cultivated by purposefully paying attention to things we ordinarily never give a moment’s thought to.”¹⁷⁵ Kabat-Zinn says we can practice this moment-to-moment awareness in everyday tasks, experiences, and daily actions like cooking, eating, washing, cleaning, playing, working, traveling, etc.¹⁷⁶ Scholars and researchers have described “mindfulness as a nonelaborative, nonjudgmental, present-centered awareness in which each thought, feeling, or sensation that arises in the attentional field is acknowledged and accepted as it is.”¹⁷⁷ Some writers consider this mindfulness “remarkable in its directness and simplicity.”¹⁷⁸ Rupert Gethin mentions that for this above definition of mindfulness, writings by Ñāṇaponika and Kornfield in a Buddhist context have influenced. Rupert Gethin further points out that it is not easy to find a similar definition of mindfulness, which is brief in its meaning in the early Theravada Buddhist texts.¹⁷⁹

Competing Positions

Bhikkhu Bodhi, a contemporary critic of modern mindfulness-based experiments in the West, whose contribution is also remarkable in translations to the oldest Theravada texts, seems concerned about the usage of “bare attention” in defining Buddhist

¹⁷⁴ Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* (New York: Hyperion, 1994), 4.; Segal, Williams, and Teasdale, *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive*, 38-39.

¹⁷⁵ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living: Using*, 2.

¹⁷⁶ Kabat-Zinn, *Full Catastrophe Living*, 149-150.

¹⁷⁷ Scott R. Bishop et al., "Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition," *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 11, no. 3 (October 2004): 232, <https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bph077>.

¹⁷⁸ Segal, Williams, and Teasdale, *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive*, 39.

¹⁷⁹ Gethin, "On Some Definitions," 269.

mindfulness. At the same time, he views that the original aspects of Buddhist mindfulness meditation have been taken away from its traditional setting and are transplanted in secular mindfulness interventions based on achieving pragmatic results. Bhikkhu Bodhi says modern scientific mindfulness interventions have apparently reduced these Eastern contemplative practices to an area of materialism to gain success in varying life expectations. However, he sees no harm in modern mindfulness clinical-based interventions. According to him, those interventions lack some essential components of Buddhist-based mindfulness, such as morality, concentration, and wisdom. However, if the results of these programs are to help people overcome anxiety and stress, they can use that knowledge to face pain and illness. He mentions that modern mindfulness interventions strengthen people to be more peaceful and calmer. He specifically points out that secular purposes of mindfulness will be more productive if the experimenters of modern mindfulness investigations can respect the roots of ancient Eastern contemplative sources developed through long centuries based on genuine spirituality.¹⁸⁰

Rupert Gethin is another critic who emphatically shows in his writing that salient components of mindfulness offered in early Theravada textual explanations have not been apparent in current MBSR (Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction) or MBCT (Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy) clarifications.¹⁸¹ As he observes, the ethical institution of ancient Theravada mindfulness motivated on the grounds of ‘conscience’ has not been given sufficient consideration in recent cognitive therapies in which mindfulness is defined as a non-judgmental observation.¹⁸²

¹⁸⁰ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 35-36.

¹⁸¹ Gethin, "On Some Definitions of Mindfulness," 263.

¹⁸² Gethin, 265.

At the same time, experiences related to sitting meditation were not always pleasant. In some contexts, unpleasant experiences have been reported. A study by Marco Schlosser, Terje Sparby, Sebastjan Voros, Rebecca Jones, and Natalie L. Marchant on a large international sample of regular meditators has reported unpleasant meditation-related experiences. The study shows that one thousand two hundred thirty-two people participated in the research.¹⁸³ Monima Chada, revealing a Buddhist epistemological framework for mindfulness meditation, suggests that mindfulness meditation should embody a range of practices. This writer suggests a range of practice styles that represent different Buddhist texts and practitioners in different times and places.¹⁸⁴ Monima says that all mindfulness meditations are embedded in one coherent entity of the mind and consciousness.

Georges Dreyfus is also critical of the modern description of mindfulness as non-judging. His stance is that modern mindfulness investigations were not seriously respectful towards the original sources in Buddhist traditions through which their interventions have been influenced. Georges Dreyfus says current mindfulness-based interventions do not include salient points and components of original Buddhist mindfulness. Sometimes, he is brave enough to criticize what modern therapeutic interventions have ignored, like the salient features of Buddhist mindfulness from their

¹⁸³ Marco Schlosser et al., "Unpleasant Meditation-Related Experiences in Regular Meditators: Prevalence, Predictors, and Conceptual Considerations," *PLOS One* 14, no. 5 (May 2019), 1-18 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0216643>.

¹⁸⁴ Monima Chadha, "A Buddhist Epistemological Framework for Mindfulness Meditation," *Asian Philosophy* 25, no. 1 (January 2015): 65–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09552367.2015.1012802>.

clinical sessions.¹⁸⁵ There have also been discussions to prompt explorations regarding the challenges both traditional and current mindfulness practitioners faced. Lynette M. Monteiro, R.F. Musten, and Jane Compson give some thoughtful suggestions for future research on mindfulness practices, pursuing the notion that both traditional and current Mindfulness-based Interventions (MBI) have the responsibility to produce fruits rather than continuing temptations in between each other so that every person can be benefited.¹⁸⁶ Terry Hyland, in his publication about the degeneration of contemporary mindfulness, argues that Mindfulness-based Interventions in recent years have totally divorced mindfulness on the condition of their marketization and commodification from ethical origins in Buddhist traditions. If current mindfulness underestimates the moral values connected with engaged Buddhist mindfulness, in that case, he states that current mindfulness-based interventions will become another fashionable self-help gimmick or popular psychological technique that is unlikely to benefit the practitioners ahead.¹⁸⁷

Literature Review Summary

There is much recent research carried out in various contexts like hospitals, pain clinics, mindfulness centers, schools, prisons, universities, colleges, worksites, sports, and treatment centers to see the application of mindfulness for gaining diverse pragmatic

¹⁸⁵ Georges Dreyfus, "Is Mindfulness Present-Centred and Non-Judgmental? A Discussion of the Cognitive Dimensions of Mindfulness," *Contemporary Buddhism* 12, no. 1 (May 2011): 41–54, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14639947.2011.564815>.

¹⁸⁶ Lynette M. Monteiro, R. F. Musten, and Jane Compson, "Traditional and Contemporary Mindfulness: Finding the Middle Path in the Tangle of Concerns," *Mindfulness* 6, no. 1 (February 2015): 1–13, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-014-0301-7>.

¹⁸⁷ Terry Hyland, "The Degeneration of Contemporary Mindfulness: Re-Asserting the Ethical and Educational Foundations of Practice in Mindfulness-Based Interventions," *Meditation: Practices, Techniques and Health Benefits*, 2018, accessed December 5, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/35671160/The_Degeneration_of_Contemporary_Mindfulness.doc?email_work_card=thumbnail.

results.¹⁸⁸ Information in the cited research work explains the evolutionary growth of mindfulness through centuries up to now as a result of adapting to different cultures, social norms, world views, and lifestyles. Those scholarly and scientific research findings show that Buddhist-based mindfulness has been specific and influential since its inception. It influenced many ancient mindfulness practices in different lands in Asia and led to the emergence of secular mindfulness interventions in the West and the U.S.

Scholars point out that mindfulness meditation, whether it is Buddhist-based mindfulness or secular, clinical, or non-clinical mindfulness, needs to be expanded into new frontiers rather than making it confined to dogmatic views.¹⁸⁹ What the competing scholarly revelations have discussed about secular mindfulness interventions is interesting. They say modern clinical interventions have reduced the centuries-long practice of Buddhist mindfulness to secular mindfulness to gain some pragmatic results. It was revealed in the literature review that when incorporating Eastern contemplative

¹⁸⁸ Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness," 287; Stefan Schmidt, "Mindfulness in East and West – Is It the Same?" in *Neuroscience, Consciousness and Spirituality*, ed. Harald Walach, Stefan Schmidt, and Wayne B. Jonas (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2011), 23–38, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-007-2079-4_2; Brian L. Thompson and Jennifer Waltz, "Everyday Mindfulness and Mindfulness Meditation: Overlapping Constructs or Not?" *Personality and Individual Differences* 43, no 7 (November 2007): 1875-85, <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0191886907001973>; Malgorzata Powietrzynska, "Promoting Wellness through Mindfulness-Based Activities" (PhD diss., City University of New York, 2014), 234, <http://search.proquest.com/psychology/docview/1550892824/abstract/61A3596AF0F44609PQ/18>; Jacob Andrew Williams, "What Is Mindfulness? Buddhist and Contemporary Scientific Perspectives" (master's thesis, Saybrook University, 2010), 122, <https://search.proquest.com/religion/docview/761538046/abstract/83650FC2470D403APQ/5>; Cortland J. Dahl, "Contemplative and Scientific Perspectives on Human Flourishing: Psychological Dynamics in Different Families of Meditation and a Curriculum for the Cultivation of Well-Being" (PhD diss., The University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2016), 425, <https://search.proquest.com/religion/docview/1993486088/abstract/EA29D46C6DA3408CPQ/6>; Derek Rubinstein, "Experience of Mindfulness Meditation Teachings and Practices among Adolescents at a Buddhist Community Meditation Center" (PsyD diss., California Institute of Integral Studies, 2015), 201, <http://search.proquest.com/psychology/docview/1757513020/abstract/EDF77B80173E4289PQ/6>; Katherine Jane Leinberger, "Measuring Mindfulness in Meditators and Examining How Aspects of Meditation Practice Affect Mindfulness" (PhD diss., Texas A&M University, 2012), 193, <http://search.proquest.com/psychology/docview/1319305501/abstract/EDF77B80173E4289PQ/13>.

¹⁸⁹ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 35-36.

practices into a secular form of mindfulness, some essential components of Theravada Buddhist mindfulness need to be addressed or given due consideration.

This literature review showed that stress and burnout are critical issues schoolteachers encounter in teaching. Research findings verified that stress and burnout can adversely affect schoolteachers' well-being, everyday life, and academic performance. This situation can lead to unhealthy relationships among schoolteachers and children, schoolteachers and school administration, and schoolteachers and parents. Schoolteachers, children, parents, and school administration get exhausted when struggling with stress and burnout. It was revealed in the lit review that studies of integrating Buddhist mindfulness in worksites and among various populations like schoolteachers and schoolchildren in Sri Lanka still need to be explored. For this purpose, the literature review of this dissertation explored the extant Sri Lankan research. This chapter discussed that only some research interventions have attempted to explore schoolteacher burnout and stress in Sri Lanka. However, those studies have also been confined to exploring only the reasons and causes that lead to stress and burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Research explorations have displayed that some mindfulness practices, meditation, contemplative practices, education programs, or counseling interventions can be utilized as effective tools to address this issue. At least one aspect of Theravada Buddhist meditation can be utilized to see whether it can help Sri Lankan schoolteachers enhance their well-being and academic performance. This literature review consulted similar studies of mindfulness interventions among research populations like schoolteachers and schoolchildren in other countries. This literature review examined how various scholars, researchers, and scientists have defined stress and

burnout in their research interventions. This chapter explored how contemplation is defined in Theravada Buddhist meditation in various contexts in the canon. It further discussed scholarly dialogues and competing positions of world research related to secular mindfulness and Theravada Buddhist mindfulness. This literature exploration attempted to address the research gap on applying Theravada contemplation in a population like Sri Lankan schoolteachers to reduce stress and burnout and enhance their everyday well-being.

Chapter Three: Research Methods

This research inquired why Theravada contemplation should be tested among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. This research also investigated how Theravada contemplation meditation could be implemented among this population. This research investigated whether Theravada contemplation is potential for reducing burnout and stress. Accordingly, contemplation, per Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness, was explored to examine whether it benefited the participants by reducing burnout and stress and enhancing their everyday well-being. Some research questions were designed to investigate the study protocol. The feasibility of this research was determined based on the participants' willingness, support, responses, comments, and full participation throughout the study. Answers to the demographic questionnaire and the BAI determined whether the participants were willing to enroll in the research. Inclusion and Exclusion questions in the demographic questionnaire determined whether the participants were eligible to enroll in the research. Twenty-three schoolteachers from the Gampaha and Kandy districts participated in the research, fulfilling the minimum requirement of twenty human subjects to continue the program. This study recruited twenty-four participants in less than five months.

Research Questions

1. How can Theravada contemplation benefit Sri Lankan schoolteachers for their everyday well-being?
2. Can Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness reduce burnout and increase schoolteachers' well-being?

3. why Theravada contemplation is important for reducing stress and burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers?
4. What type of contemplative practices is most suitable to be utilized on a daily basis among schoolteachers?

Some specific and general questions were designed to investigate the research intervention. The general question was how Theravada contemplation can benefit Sri Lankan schoolteachers for their everyday well-being. Various research instruments, tools, and research methods were utilized to answer this question. Similar research interventions implemented in other countries using human subjects as schoolteachers were also consulted. Three additional specific research questions were addressed in this study. The first question inquired whether Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness can reduce burnout and increase schoolteachers' well-being.

The question was answered by observing how the participants used a range of mindfulness activities daily to help them reduce burnout and stress and enhance well-being. In reaching this target, this study tested applying a range of mindfulness activities every Saturday for two months and two weeks with a fifteen-minute guided meditation followed by another fifteen-minute silent meditation. Self-reports and questionnaires were used as research tools to assess participants' well-being before and after the online meditation program.

Question two inquired why Theravada contemplation is important for reducing stress and burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Stress is a crucial problem in the teaching profession in Sri Lanka that has considerably impacted the well-being of schoolteachers' daily lives. Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness was potential to

address the issue of schoolteacher burnout in Sri Lanka. This study investigated the feasibility of exploring a range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities as per Theravada contemplation among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. There was a dearth of scholarly research implemented in Sri Lanka to see the utility of integrating contemplation meditation among schoolteachers to reduce stress in their daily lives. After consulting similar mindfulness-based interventions in other populations, this research tested the range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities among Sri Lankan schoolteachers.

This study's third question inquired about the type of contemplative activities that were discernible for engaging in the participants' daily lives. There are many manifestations of contemplative practices used in various traditions. The term "contemplation" has numerous resonances of historical, cultural, philosophical, and traditional meanings. In Western philosophical and religious traditions like Christian contemplative traditions, contemplation has different meanings.¹⁹⁰

However, "contemplation" has been used as a synonym for "meditation."¹⁹¹ Buddhist traditions follow various contemplative activities to experience active attention, mindfulness, and awareness. Some that are popular among Buddhist communities are sitting meditation, loving-kindness meditation, walking meditation, *tai chi*, *yoga*, *aikido*, *dharma* arts, *mudra* space awareness practice, mindfulness of sound and other sensations, the contemplative inquiry of *Madhyamika* logic, contemplative dance, movements, and many others.¹⁹² Research suggests that schoolteachers can develop mindfulness by

¹⁹⁰ Mirabai Bush, ed., *Contemplation Nation: How Ancient Practices Are Changing the Way We Live: Papers from the State of Contemplative Practice in America* (Kalamazoo, MI: Fetzer Institute, 2011), 112.

¹⁹¹ Bush, *Contemplation Nation*, 112-13. Cf. various meanings of 'contemplation'.

¹⁹² Bush, 241.

paying attention to daily activities like eating, walking, and listening. They can practice mindfulness while working in a classroom.¹⁹³ Buddhist-based mindfulness activities tested in this online meditation session were contemplative listening, walking, body scan, and sitting. This study did not attempt to investigate a broader scope of mindfulness activities related to every action of participants' daily lives. However, participants were free to extend that full awareness practiced during the online meditation sessions to everyday situations and events as their preference. Research interventions have explored mindful activities among school instructors, like mindful body scans, walking, sitting, eating, listening, breathing, mindful forgiveness, and loving-kindness practice.¹⁹⁴ In this study, the researcher consulted the research design of such interventions when exploring mindfulness activities to address stress among Sri Lankan schoolteachers.

Research Methodology

Instrument Development

This study used a mixed-method research design to investigate the feasibility of integrating a range of contemplative activities among schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. Self-reports and survey questionnaires are the principal methods that were used for data collection in this study. Researchers use self-reports for various purposes like measuring burnout and stress, identifying beliefs, attitudes, and responses of a particular practice, and reporting the results of a survey.¹⁹⁵ Three basic psychological measures were used in this study: the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI),¹⁹⁶ the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale,¹⁹⁷ and

¹⁹³ Albrecht, Albrecht, and Cohen, "Mindfully Teaching in the Classroom," 2.

¹⁹⁴ Taylor et al., "Examining Ways," 118,122.

¹⁹⁵ Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness," 97-109.

¹⁹⁶ See Appendix C.

¹⁹⁷ See Appendix F.

the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS).¹⁹⁸ A Demographic Questionnaire was also used.¹⁹⁹ The Beck Anxiety Inventory checked whether the participants were experiencing severe anxiety. Eligibility of participation was determined as a requirement to get enrolled in this research based on the severity of anxiety reported on this questionnaire. The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale was used to measure the stress of schoolteachers before and after the 8-week online contemplative meditation. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale was used before and after the 8-week meditation to measure the participants' mindfulness. The researcher used those psychological measures as a pre-test and post-test to report the participants' anxiety, stress, well-being, and mindfulness. The study was conducted in the Sinhalese language. However, because many Sri Lankan schoolteachers could understand English, participants received the scales, the survey questionnaires, the consent form, and self-reports in both languages according to their preferences.

The Beck Anxiety Inventory

The Beck Anxiety Inventory is a valid and reliable instrument used to detect a patient's anxiety severity.²⁰⁰ This self-report consists of 21 items and response options consist of four-point Likert Scale ranging from 0 to 3. Response options include '0- Not at all, 1- Mildly, but it did not bother me much, 2- Moderately, it was not pleasant at times, and 3- Severely, it bothered me a lot.' This questionnaire interprets common somatic and cognitive symptoms of anxiety. Fourteen items present somatic symptoms,

¹⁹⁸ See Appendix G.

¹⁹⁹ See Appendix B.

²⁰⁰ Thomas Fydrich, Deborah Dowdall, and Dianne Chambless, "Reliability and Validity of the Beck Anxiety Inventory," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 6, no. 1 (December 1992): 55–61, [https://doi.org/10.1016/0887-6185\(92\)90026-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0887-6185(92)90026-4).

and seven inquire about anxiety-related cognitive symptoms. Questions show how a person has been feeling over the past week. This was developed for the first time in 1988 by Aaron T Beck, MD. (Epstein, Brown, and Steer). Score of minimal anxiety is 0 to 7, mild anxiety 8 to 15, moderate anxiety 16 to 25, and severe anxiety 26 to 63. This instrument differentiates people with and without anxiety. This measure has been validated among research interventions like community and residential samples of older adults and clinical interventions.²⁰¹ Symptoms of anxiety include numbness or tingling, feeling hot, wobbliness in legs, inability to relax, fear of the worst happening, dizziness or lightheadedness, heart pounding or racing, unsteadiness, feeling of terrified, feeling of nervousness, feeling of choking, trembling hands, feeling shaky and unsteady, fear of losing control, difficulty in breathing, fear of dying, feeling scared, indigestion or abdominal discomfort, faintness and lightheadedness, face flushing, and sweating. Subjects can select each item with a multiple choice ranging from no symptom to severe symptom. Schoolteachers were asked to rate the severity of each of these items on the four-point Likert scale. The aim was to rate their feelings how they were feeling over the past week before they were enrolled in this research. Researchers state that this psychological variable can be tested with the same person in subsequent sessions to track the progression or improvement of anxiety.²⁰²

The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale

Dr. C. F. Wilson developed and used in 1979 the Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers to measure the stress among elementary, middle school, and special education

²⁰¹ B.V. Elsevier, "Beck Anxiety Inventory," ScienceDirect, accessed August 3, 2023, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/medicine-and-dentistry/beck-anxiety-inventory>.

²⁰² Elsevier, "Beck Anxiety Inventory."

teachers.²⁰³ This is a 36-item self-report questionnaire. Nine categories of this questionnaire score the symptoms of stress. Sample questions include: “I have difficulty controlling my class,” “I become impatient/angry when my students do not do what I ask them to do,” “My administrator makes demands of me that I cannot meet,” “I feel my fellow teachers think I am not doing a good job,” “I feel my students’ parents think I am not doing a satisfactory job of teaching their children,” “I have too much to do and not enough time to do it,” “I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet scheduled deadlines,” “I find my job tires me out,” “I find myself complaining to others.” Schoolteachers completed this stress profile before and after the 8-week online meditation. Response options are on a five-point scale: 1-Never, 2-Rarely, 3-Sometimes, 4-Often, 5-Very Often. The total score is calculated by adding the scores from the following subscales: Student Behavior, Employee/Administrator Relations, Teacher/Teacher Relations, Parent/Teacher Relations, Time Management, Intrapersonal Conflicts, Physical Symptoms of Stress, Psychological/Emotional Symptoms of Stress, and Stress Management Techniques. Item scores should be summed to yield the total scale score and range from 36 to 180. 36 to 72 is Low Stress; 73 to 108 is Moderate Stress; 109 to 180 is High Stress.

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

The MAAS is a 15-item scale designed to assess a target research audience’s core characteristics of mindfulness and mindlessness. What is occurring in the present by

²⁰³ Geoffrey Sutton and Thomas Huberty, "An Evaluation of Teacher Stress and Job Satisfaction," *Education* 105, no. 2 (January 1984): 189–92, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232558472_An_evaluation_of_teacher_stress_and_job_satisfaction.

simply observing what is taking place in the mind is measured on this instrument. K. W. Brown and R. M. Ryan developed the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) in 2003.²⁰⁴ Brown and Ryan validated this instrument in a clinical intervention study with cancer patients to show that increasing mindfulness over time has the power to decrease mood disturbances and stress.²⁰⁵ This has been tested as a valid instrument to measure mindfulness among many research populations.²⁰⁶ The result of this scale has been validated on college, community, and cancer patient samples. There are 15 items to describe participants' everyday experiences and a 6-point response scale (1-almost always to 6-almost never) to measure how frequently participants report certain experiences. Fifteen items reflect mindfulness and mindlessness related to everyday experiences, variation in awareness of actions, interpersonal communication, thoughts, emotions, and physical states. Some statements in the questionnaire are; "I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later," "I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else," "I forget a person's name almost as soon as I have been told for the first time," "I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I am doing," "I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past." To score the Mindful Attention Awareness

²⁰⁴ Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan, "The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and Its Role in Psychological Well-Being," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 84, no. 4 (April 2003): 822–48, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>; James Mackillop and Emily J. Anderson, "Further Psychometric Validation of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)," *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment* 29, no. 4 (May 2007): 289–93, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10862-007-9045-1>; Kelly Miller, "The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)," *PositivePsychology.com* (blog) August 28, 2019, <https://positivepsychology.com/mindful-attention-awareness-scale-maas/>.

²⁰⁵ Brown and Ryan, "Benefits of Being Present," 822.

²⁰⁶ Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness" 101-102.

Scale, researchers need to sum the answers and divide them by the total number of fifteen questions. Higher scores reflect a higher level of dispositional mindfulness.

The Demographic Questionnaire

The demographic questionnaire was used to obtain information on participants, like gender, age, ethnicity, district, marital status, religion, name, email address, contact number, health matters, employment experiences, and previous meditation experiences. This survey questionnaire helped find basic information about schoolteachers willing to participate in the research. Demographic information was fruitful for the researcher in learning about the target population in the following way. Some responses were obtained through close-ended questions on answers like 'yes' or 'no', whereas some were based only on one best answer from multiple choice answers. Experience of meditation inquired about how often the participants previously practiced meditation. The response options were never, 1-5 times, more than six times.

Participants were asked about their knowledge of Theravada Buddhism and Buddhist meditation. Multiple choice answers for this question were no knowledge, minimal knowledge, and part of the family's spiritual tradition. Participants' openness to share their experiences during the meditation sessions was examined on the responses of very likely, somewhat likely, or more likely. Whether the participants will take prescribed or unprescribed mind-altering drugs was assessed on the responses of 'yes' and 'no' answers. The next question examined if participants expected to consume alcohol during the meditation sessions. The answer options were 'yes' or 'no.' The next item probed whether the participants were under a doctor's or therapist's care for trauma, anxiety, and stress. The answers were received as 'yes' or 'no.' The next item asked if the

participants were experiencing stress from a health condition like a mental or physical disorder. The response was 'yes' or 'no.' The next question checked whether the participants were experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 or already contracting Covid. Answer options were 'yes' or 'no.' The next item interrogated whether the participants worked full-time as schoolteachers. 'Yes' or 'No' were the answers provided for the question. The above questions were related to the eligibility for enrolling in this research. This research's inclusion/exclusion criterion explains in detail the enrollment eligibility into the online meditation program. Toward the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked to fill out this demographic information and submit it to the researcher online with the signed date.

Implementation and Design Procedure

Schoolteachers were recruited using convenience sampling from two districts in Sri Lanka, Gampaha and Kandy. The researcher facilitated the recruited schoolteachers to test the Theravada contemplation with a short-guided meditation during the meditation sessions. It was a 15-minute guided meditation followed by another 15-minute silent meditation with instructions on how to stay mindful of their thoughts. The researcher instructed participants with this guided meditation in each session for up to 8 weeks. The researcher contacted the schoolteachers over the phone, WhatsApp, and through emails to get their participation in weekly sessions.

The explorer asked the participants to listen to how different sounds emerged and faded away until they could no longer hear them. Through the guided meditation, participants were instructed on how to stay attentive to the different sounds in the environment. Participants were asked to sit with closed eyes, heedful to the movements in

and around their sitting environment. Participants may focus on weather changes as warm or cold. Participants may observe their subjective experiences, like sensory perceptions. Schoolteachers may extend this experience to check whether they can practice mindful eating, mindful walking, mindful sitting, and talking. They can also monitor their cognitive experience as emotions and thoughts more mindfully. For example, when thirsty, they can mindfully drink water and observe its taste, color, and temperature.

The researcher instructed schoolteachers through fifteen-minute guided meditation to practice contemplation by paying attention to internal experiences and external stimuli. As per some studies, internal experiences could be thoughts, sensations, and breath. External perceptions might be paying attention to the sound of a bell or an image and being heedful to the environment.²⁰⁷ In this study, schoolteachers were asked to observe their attention by listening to an object. The researcher used a bell and asked school instructors to be heedful on how it echoes and fades away until they no longer hear it.

Further, schoolteachers were instructed to be mindful of a specific sensory experience during guided meditation sessions. Schoolteachers can extend this experience and practice mindful eating, purposeful and heedful to different aspects of eating a raisin. Schoolteachers can observe their somatosensory perceptions related to the color, texture, temperature, and taste of any food like this they eat every time. Paying attention to external stimuli with mindful awareness is another way that schoolteachers can practice contemplation. For instance, schoolteachers were asked to enjoy the different stimuli of

²⁰⁷ Shapiro, Lyon, and Miller, "Contemplation in the Classroom," 3.

nature. The researcher facilitated schoolteachers to spend their time in silence in nature and observe it with full awareness. Participants were supposed to be aware of their thoughts, feelings, and movements during the meditation.

Grounding Exercise

The researcher offered a grounding exercise towards the end of the 15-minute silent meditation if a participant encounters a physical or psychological difficulty during the meditation sessions. The grounding exercise helped him/her to reduce negative feelings and trauma. There are three types of grounding: mental, physical, and soothing. When traumatized participants can practice grounding exercises. They understood the purpose of it and knew how to use them if they become distressed or even mildly anxious. The investigator asked the volunteers to rate their negative feelings after the exercise on a 0-10 scale, with ten being the worst. The investigator asked the participants to rerate negative feelings after the exercise. Then the investigator checked whether participants' ratings have changed from their initial ratings. A low range of negative feelings is 6. A participant might have overwhelming feelings over six on a 0-10 scale. In that case, the researcher anticipated do a re-grounding activity for another 5 minutes with grounding techniques as his/her preference on three types of Grounding.

During the sessions, participants can tell the researcher if their anxiety has significantly increased, and grounding techniques are not supportive enough. Najavits has explained how grounding techniques should be practiced after a mindful meditation session.²⁰⁸ Though grounding works, a patient's rating might occasionally not improve.

²⁰⁸ Najavits, *Seeking Safety*, 125-135.

However, if the grounding does not work, the investigator can discuss how participants can use grounding as their preference. Participants can notice which method among the three types of grounding works best for them. If the participants prefer another round of exercise, then the investigator can do another quick grounding exercise for 5 minutes. The investigator can also ask, “What did you like and dislike about the grounding?” “What type of grounding works best for you?” “Were any parts of the exercise a problem for you?” “What do you think might help make it more effective next time for you?” “Are there any grounding techniques that you would like to add to the list?” The investigator can give further suggestions to the participants to improve their exercise for better results. For example, the investigator can ask the participants to practice the exercise as often as possible, practice faster, and practice grounding for a long time, like 30-40 minutes. Participants may also have others to assist them in grounding. For example, participants may ask their friends, family members, or partners to help guide them in grounding exercises. They may also create a cassette tape of grounding of their preference and listen to it when they need to practice grounding exercises.

Eight Meditation Sessions

This study was conducted in less than three months. There were 10 weekly online meetings. The first online meeting was scheduled for 60 minutes. It addressed the introduction to the program, obtaining the signature for the informed consent form, and answering two self-report questionnaires of MAAS and WSPT Teacher Stress Scale. From the second to the ninth week, participants engaged in a 15-minute guided

meditation, a 15-minute silent meditation followed by a grounding exercise²⁰⁹ for 10-15 minutes, for a total of 45 minutes every session. The 9th-week session was scheduled for 80 minutes because participants needed to complete the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). Schoolteachers were free to take 30 minutes in the exit meeting to share their experiences, thoughts, and insight about the meditation program with their peers.

Recruitment Procedure

In Sri Lanka, districts are the second-level administrative divisions included in a province. There are twenty-five districts organized into nine provinces in Sri Lanka. Participants were recruited from two districts in Sri Lanka, Kandy and Gampaha. These two districts were chosen for the convenience of collecting the data and the availability of resources, such as the researcher's familiarity and living experiences. Also, the urban areas of these two districts have a diverse population of schoolteachers with various beliefs and cultures. Schoolteachers who participated in this study were free to join the study from any religious, spiritual, social, philosophical, atheistic, agnostic, or secular traditions. If participants from all 25 districts in Sri Lanka were recruited, it would take longer to collect the data, requiring much energy and many resources to complete the study. This study aimed to recruit a minimum of twenty participants. However, twenty-four participants enrolled and completed the data in this study in less than three months. Twelve participants were selected from each district in case a participant or two dropped

²⁰⁹ Najavits, 125-135.

out of the intervention; the study program would still have the proposed minimum sample size.

Recruiting participants for the study program was initiated during 2022 summer. Based on the study protocol, the researcher ensured that the participants received accurate information about the study program. Before recruiting participants for the study program, a government-sworn translator was hired to translate the relevant documents. All materials were translated into Sinhalese language. It took nearly two months to complete the translation. During the translation, the researcher had to help the translator to find suitable words in the Sinhalese language. Whenever the translator was unfamiliar with some technical words and expressions in the study program, the researcher supported her in finding the best translation in the documents. The documents translated into the Sinhalese language were certified by that government's sworn translator. Soon after the translation, the researcher started recruiting the participants for the study program. Participants who qualified for the study referred potential study candidates. To give a complete picture of the study program for schoolteachers, an Enrollment Written Transcript²¹⁰ was sent to them through WhatsApp and emails. This enrollment transcript enabled them to understand the research scheduled to be conducted online for two months and two weeks every weekend. This enrollment process continued for several months until the total number of participants got recruited into the research.

All the participants were notified about the study through email announcements, WhatsApp messages, phone calls, phone messages, and word of mouth. PDF documents

²¹⁰ See Appendix A.

and Google forms were designed to send the participants the Self-reports, questionnaires, enrollment transcript, and consent form. At the beginning of the recruitment, schoolteachers received the Enrollment Transcript and the Consent Form²¹¹ as PDF documents. The demographic Questionnaire, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the Consent Form, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale were designed as Google forms to send online after they completed the consent form.

First, the Enrollment Written Transcript about the research program was sent to schoolteachers. This enrollment transcript facilitated interested participants some understanding of whether they could participate in the study program. After that, participants received the Demographic Questionnaire and the Beck Anxiety Inventory. The demographic questionnaire inquired about demographic information, participants' previous experience, and knowledge about Theravada meditation. The BAI was used to know participants' stress levels before research enrollment. The researcher used the information in the demographic questionnaire and the BAI to check the participants' eligibility.

The investigator analyzed the data from the anxiety test BAI and the survey of demographic questions. The anxiety test and the survey questionnaire determined whether participants were eligible to join the 8-week online meditation sessions. After analyzing the anxiety test and survey of demographic questions and determining that the participants might have some low-stress or moderate-level stress, they were recruited for an 8-week meditation session. The recruitment procedure was impartial, as the

²¹¹ See Appendix D.

participants were enrolled on a first-come basis. The Sinhalese language was mainly used to give instructions during meditation sessions.

Eligibility: Inclusion-Exclusion Criteria

Schoolteachers were eligible to participate in this study if they were (1) at least 24 and below 55 years of age, (2) worked in Sri Lankan schools, (3) score ≤ 35 on BAI, (4) have completed a demographic questionnaire, (5) report minimal or no experience with meditation, and (6) willing to participate in a group setting. Schoolteachers were excluded if (1) they did not meet the criteria listed above, (2) exposed to health conditions or severe disorders, (3) contracted COVID-19, or (4) were receiving treatment for trauma from a physician or therapist. If their anxiety level was high or exceeded 36, participants were excluded from the study because high anxiety indicated that they needed to consult a counselor or physician for treatments. The recruitment process was finalized based on this impartial selection procedure.

Data Collection

As the recruitment process took nearly five months, the researcher often kept in touch with the schoolteachers, sending them messages about the exact date and time of launching the online meditation sessions. Participants received a confirmation email from the investigator informing them they were eligible to participate in the research program. A Zoom meeting was created to offer the meditation online. The investigator sent the participants the Zoom link and password before the first online meeting. A WhatsApp group was formed with the participants to ensure that every participant was on the same page when receiving messages. This WhatsApp group was named “Mindful Meditation

Meetup.” Since WhatsApp was the preference among participants, it was used to send messages to the participants to educate them about online meetings.

Duration of Participation

Online meditation sessions lasted 45-50 minutes during weekends. Initially, a 15-minute guided meditation was offered for the participants. After this 15-minute guided meditation, another 15 minutes was scheduled to be spent in silent meditation through meditation of the day. After this silent meditation, the investigator designed to do a quick Grounding Exercise²¹² and ask the participants to rate their level of discomfort and stress on a level of 0-10. This initial grounding activity was scheduled to take only 10 minutes. When a participant rates his/her negative feelings, 10 means the worst on a 0-10 scale. A low range of negative feelings is 6. If a participant reported overwhelming feelings over six, then the Grounding Activity was offered again, with three grounding techniques for the participant to choose from. This brief grounding activity lasted 5 minutes. If the participants were comfortable with the meditation offered during the day and with the grounding techniques²¹², that was the end of the session.

Introduction to the study program was scheduled on the first day of the online meetings, as well as completion and submission of the self-report questionnaires and the consent form. Participants completed two pre-tests before the next day’s online meeting. Those pre-tests were the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. Participants were reminded to complete those questionnaires and submit them to the researcher before the next online meeting started. Most of the

²¹² See Appendix I.

participants responded to those questionnaires. Contemplative listening²¹³ was the first meditation offered in the program's second week. First, a guided meditation was offered for contemplative listening, followed by silent meditation and grounding techniques.

A bell was used at the beginning of each meditation session to announce the start time. This was repeated at the end of each meditation session to mark the end of the meditation. The soothing effect of the echo sound of the bell was beneficial for the participants to continue the awareness of external perception. Participants practiced the meditation of contemplative listening on that day, and as scheduled, it continued to the following week. Participants received reminders through WhatsApp on the day before every meditation session started. Participants who could not attend the meditation for some reason received the audio recording of the meditation at the end of the day. This helped participants stay connected with each meditation session without missing information about the day's meditation. The online meditation was launched at 5.30 a.m. from Pacific Time. It was 7 p.m. on Saturday in Sri Lanka. As scheduled, the participants practiced the Contemplative Walking meditation on the fourth and fifth weeks. Then it was time to practice the Contemplative Body-Scan meditation for two Saturdays (weeks six and seven)

Next, Contemplative Sitting meditation was offered. It continued on two Saturdays (weeks eight and nine). The researcher asked the participants to fill out the two post-tests for the last time. Those two post-tests were the same two self-report questionnaires. They were the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindful Attention

²¹³ See Appendix H.

Awareness Scale. Every participant submitted the two post-test questionnaires before the last online meeting. The last online meeting intended to thank Sri Lankan school teachers who participated in this study program. Participants shared their thoughts, comments, and wisdom in the last meeting.

Offered Meditation Procedure

The researcher and participants discussed setting a time and date for launching the eight-week online meditation sessions over the phone. The researcher used the WhatsApp group to inquire about their availability for the program. Everyone agreed to participate on weekends. Participants received a WhatsApp message in both languages on December 14, 2022. The WhatsApp message was as follows: “I will start the Online Mindful Meditation on December 17, 2022. I will host the Zoom meeting at 7 p.m. from Sri Lankan time every Saturday. It will continue for thirty to forty-five minutes every Saturday for ten weeks. Make it a time to enjoy the bliss of this meditation program for a new experience in your life.” The WhatsApp message included the Zoom link, Zoom ID, and the Zoom passcode for the online session.

The researcher updated the online meditation’s time and date every previous day. Participants also received another last WhatsApp message one hour before the online meditation, informing them that the meditation would start sharply at 7 p.m. The researcher sent updates to participants like this because they were busy with schoolwork, classwork, family matters, and other important matters. It was fruitful to remind them about the online meeting, the date and time, and the completion of the questionnaires. At the end of each meditation program, the researcher appreciated the schoolteachers’ participation and cooperation in the meditation session. As scheduled, participants were

reminded to fill out and submit the consent form and the pre-test and the post-test questionnaires of the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in Google Forms. The researcher further informed participants to contact him at any moment until the following week if they had any questions or problems.

Participants asked the researcher to send them a recording of online meditation sessions if they could not attend the meditation. This study gained permission from the IRB committee to record every meeting. Initially, only the first and the last meetings were scheduled to be recorded. After receiving permission from the IRB committee, the researcher sent the audio recordings of the online meditation sessions every week in case a participant missed the session for the due date. Some schoolteachers could not participate in the online meeting due to unavoidable, uncontrolled situations and reasons. It was amid many chaotic situations in Sri Lanka that schoolteachers joined this online meditation. This chapter will mention this again when discussing the research's challenges and limitations.

To feel grounded with the online meditation session scheduled for the day, the researcher meditated for thirty minutes the night before the online session. The researcher double-checked the announcements from the previous day and the WhatsApp messages to ensure that the participants received information about the date and starting time for the online meditation. The researcher also practiced the meditation scheduled for the day for fifteen minutes before the online session. It helped the researcher immensely to calm his thoughts, pacify himself, and center himself before launching the online meditation program. The researcher woke up early every Saturday, finished his work, and fixed the Zoom setting. The researcher continued reminding the participants about the meditation

through the WhatsApp group one hour before launching it online. This last announcement reminded schoolteachers to get ready for the meditation program if, for some reason, they still needed to remember the program.

Participants were asked to join the Zoom before ten minutes early. This allowed the researcher to quickly fix technical issues if participants were struggling to log in. Many participants logged in to Zoom five minutes before the meditation. While the participants logged in, the researcher used some beautiful soothing background sounds from YouTube in Zoom. At first, the researcher welcomed the participants to the meditation program. Then, the participants were asked to mute their microphones when the meditation was in progress. Participants consented to do so as it could disrupt the meditation. They remained silent with muted microphones on Zoom from their end. They were free to join the session either with disabled or working videos from their end as preferred. Many participants remained with disabled videos during the whole program. They unmuted the microphone when they wanted to ask the researcher something.

After participants were welcomed to the program, the researcher briefly explained, in one or two minutes, what meditation they were to practice for the day. Then, the participants followed the guided meditation. During the first fifteen minutes, participants followed instructions through the guided meditation to practice the scheduled meditation for the day. This was all about the fifteen-minute guided meditation. After that, the researcher rang the bell to announce the time to stop the guided meditation. With that, they practiced the silent meditation for another fifteen minutes. The researcher asked the participants to notice their thoughts and movements during the silent meditation. After that, the researcher used the bell to stop the silent meditation. Then, the researcher

instructed them to practice the grounding exercise for five to ten minutes. These grounding techniques helped participants return to regular actions after the meditation. Lastly, the bell announced the end of the meditation program for the day.

After finishing the meditation for the day, the researcher thanked them for participating in the meditation session. The researcher sent them WhatsApp messages of gratitude after the program. The researcher appreciated encouraging the participants to continue their interest in the meditation program. At the end of every online session, participants were encouraged to practice meditation several times during the week before the next meeting.

After finishing the day's session, the audio recording of the meditation was sent to the WhatsApp group. Any participant who missed the scheduled meditation for the intended day could follow the audio recording and practice the meditation at a convenient time during the week. Participants used the audio recording to catch up on the meditation session they had missed during the previous week. This audio recording captured the whole meditation program from the beginning to the end as was scheduled for the day. The researcher followed this procedure every Saturday from the beginning to the end of the meditation program.

The last online meeting was scheduled to finish in thirty minutes. However, it continued for two hours as participants eagerly shared their thoughts, experiences, and insights with their peers. As scheduled, the meditation sessions and the online meetings officially finished on February 18, 2023.

Confidentiality

Participants were asked to write their names on the Consent Form, the Enrollment Written Transcript, the Demographic Questionnaire, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. A code system with the initials of participants' first and last names to distinguish each person was used when analyzing the data. Participants were free to answer the questions to their comfort level. All information gathered from participants is strictly confidential. There is no risk of breach of confidentiality. The identity of the participants will not be disclosed in the text of the dissertation, its publication, or presentations. If a volunteer decided not to participate in this study, there was no penalty or compensation for quitting the study. Participants were free to decline to discuss any issues or answer any questions. Participants were free to stop participating in this research program at any time. If a participant preferred to log into online sessions with the disabled video, he or she turned off the video and continued the program.

Only the exit online meeting was to be audio recorded as participants' comments and thoughts were helpful in future research. This decision changed in the course of conducting the online meditation sessions. Every online meditation session had to be audio and video recorded for some reasons and challenges. Sri Lanka was confronted with many challenges during the data collection period. Power cuts, inability to access the Internet, and online login failures interrupted the online meditation program during the data collection period. Reasons that posed challenges for conducting this research online are mentioned in the limitations. After receiving permission from the IRB and the requests from the participants, every online meditation session was recorded. Participants who could not attend the online meditation later received only the audio recordings of

online meetings of the day. Audio recordings were sent to the participants through the WhatsApp group. Though online recordings captured participants' names and identities, those recordings were stored in a safety folder on the researcher's laptop. The researcher will keep the data saved for five years. In any case, if the research committee wants to review this research work later, saved data might make that task easier. After five years of approving the research, the data saved thus will be deleted permanently.

Data Storage

Participants' responses and answers to questionnaires, self-reports, and the consent form were stored in the researcher's Google account. That Google account is password-protected. The researcher used Excel and SPSS statistic software to analyze the data. The researcher created a code system using the initials of the participants' first and last names when recording data in Microsoft Word documents, Excel, and SPSS statistics. The researcher analyzed data received from self-reports and questionnaires using Excel and SPSS statistics. Separate folders were created on the researcher's laptop for each questionnaire to record the data. After cleaning and analyzing the data, the researcher stored everything on his laptop.

A WhatsApp group was created to send the participants updates and information about the research. The researcher's laptop and handphone are password-protected. No one can access the laptop and the handphone without the researcher's permission. This online meditation program was recorded from the third week to the last one. Those audio and video records were also stored in separate folders on the laptop. There was no risk of breach of confidentiality. Participants' identities were not disclosed when cleaning and

analyzing the data, in the text of the whole dissertation, its publication, and in its presentation.

Benefits and Risks

Contemplative activities helped schoolteachers to stay refreshed and energetic, exhibit greater confidence, increase concentration, and develop higher self-esteem in life situations. Schoolteachers could use this as a form of relaxation to help them stay calmer and be alert in everyday situations of their lives during this study. This study helped schoolteachers experience contemplation during everyday actions to reduce stress. This study facilitated schoolteachers how to improve positive qualities to regulate their daily behavior during this study. This study program was useful for the participants to reduce stress for at least a couple of minutes or hours per day if he/she practiced contemplation meditation for 10-15 minutes on other days except planned weekends. The four contemplative meditation practices in this study helped a participant to experience some level of well-being in his/her daily actions depending on how he/she practiced it during a week during the ten weeks of this program.

Except high risks, this study expected that some minimum or moderate risks might occur. Sometimes, a participant might develop a physical, emotional, or psychological difficulty or uneasiness during the study program. The designed 8-week meditation sessions might trigger trauma, stress, anxiety, or panic attacks among the volunteers. A participant might develop some physical difficulties, such as headaches, back pains, nausea, and muscle pains due to meditation postures. A participant might self-evaluate specific physical and mental difficulties that recall unpleasant memories. A participant might feel exhausted because of the meditation session of the day during the

study program. A participant might need clarification of certain specific words related to meditation or practice. A participant might not feel secure sharing experiences about the meditation sessions in the program with peers or with the investigator because of social, cultural, religious, and educational settings. While attending a Zoom meeting, a participant might not feel brave to speak up and raise his/her voice over discomfort feelings during the interview sessions. A Participant might get confused when attempting to practice contemplation in other actions of everyday life except the suggested contemplative meditations in the study program.

Suggestions to Minimize Risks

As mentioned clearly in the informed Consent Form, participants were informed that they could withdraw from the program at any time without any penalty. Because every study involves some risk, and meditation can trigger trauma or panic attacks, the following actions were proposed to minimize the participants' minimal and moderate risks. The informed Consent Form stated clearly that no one, including the investigator, was responsible for costs incurred via research-related adverse events or injury. Volunteers needed to agree to this condition to continue participating in the study program and sign the Consent Form. This allowed the volunteers to quit the study program at any time.

However, immediate actions were to be taken by the investigator to deal with any adverse events if they happened due to a participant's involvement in the research. Though this study did not expect high risks of participating in this program, there might occur some minimum or moderate levels of risks. Meditation can trigger trauma or panic attacks. The following actions were suggested to be further taken at any adverse events:

1) If a participant seems to be having physical, emotional, or psychological difficulty or uneasiness during the meditation sessions, they will be asked to stop attending the meditation session or to take a break during the meditation sessions if they feel exhausted. They can resume the session when they feel comfortable after a break.

2) If a participant becomes too traumatized in the sessions to act on his/her behalf, they will be encouraged to ask a family member to come to the Zoom meeting. If the family member needs to contact a professional person or institute for health care, they will be encouraged to contact emergency hotlines immediately.

3) Volunteer acknowledgment of a change in stress level and grounding activities will help to determine whether the participants should stop attending the meditation sessions to reduce their risk of an anxiety attack or re-traumatization.

4) Participants will be encouraged to speak up or send chat messages to the investigator during the sessions if they feel any discomfort.

5) During the first online session, participants will be shown how to contact the emergency hotline if they feel that they are having any physical, emotional, or psychological discomfort. If they want to contact a professional person or institute for health care, emergency hotlines will be provided for them in the consent form.

6) On the consent form, participants must agree to tell the investigator if they begin medical treatment, medications, or therapy that might increase their anxiety or affect their psychological clarity.

7) The investigator will be available at any time to reach out to the participants for emotional or spiritual support during the intervention and up to one month after the completion of the study.

Research Regulations and Ethics

This study was conducted following research ethics, laws, and regulations that strengthen the research involving human subjects. Research is required to follow an approved research protocol in Sri Lanka. Any research involving human subjects should avoid creating complicated issues that breach ethical, legal, and social standards. This ensures that research complies with scientific evidence. It needs to be valuable and professional. Such research brings new knowledge. The Education Training and Research Unit of the Health Ministry in Sri Lanka has designed a Code of Conduct for Health Research.²¹⁴ This Code of Conduct of Health Research is based on principles like honesty and integrity, accountability. Research needs to respect human participants in research. Sri Lankan research regulations and laws encourage ethical issues when conducting research. It encourages researchers with relevant expertise and qualifications to design research proposals. It further accepts that proposals must be evaluated by peer review through a scientific review process or committee and an ethics review committee. As the Code of Conduct for Health Research in Sri Lanka expects, researchers are obliged to adhere to the published guidelines, procedures, and policies of the relevant institution of the study when implementing research.

The rights of the participants were ensured throughout the whole research. This study complied with the good research practice and research guidelines. Results were accurately reported. Since the study focused on the well-being of the participants, it adhered to the research regulations and laws of Sri Lanka. Results of this study were

²¹⁴ ResearchGate, "Code of Conduct of Research in Sri Lanka," accessed June 10, 2024, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346059829_The-Code-of-Conduct-of-Research-in-Srilanka.

reported on a higher standard of objectivity, transparency, and accuracy. This study does not represent fabrication, falsification, exaggeration, misrepresentation, or misinterpretation of data. There was no need to get prior authorization or permission from schools for this study as it was designed to be conducted online during weekends. This study adhered to the national and institutional policies, laws, regulations, guidelines, and procedures of research work in Sri Lanka.

Limitations

The sample of this study was limited to two regions of Sri Lanka. Schoolteachers in other regions may have different experiences. It was also a small sample size and so the efficacy of the intervention could not be proven. This project was conducted entirely online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Social gatherings were limited at that time. The country had travel restrictions since the pandemic was spreading across territories. There were many uncertainties about the pandemic spreading. In-person participation may yield different results. Participation was inconsistent despite the intervention being online because sometimes schoolteachers could not log in to online meditation sessions due to internet interruptions. Prevailing situations like economic collapse and political unrest in Sri Lanka were unfavorable for this research. The nation was facing an economic crisis and political chaos during that time. The country was experiencing a power cut in many areas for hours a day. This power-cut issue bothered the internet connection when the participants tried logging in to the online sessions through Zoom. School instructors found it a challenge to show up with their full participation in every meditation session.

Self-reporting was also a limitation. Participants might have given imprecise responses regarding their meditation experience when completing the self-reports because they might wish to refrain from sharing their true experiences with the researcher who is a Buddhist monk. Generally, Sri Lankan lay Buddhists do not like to give an undervalued impression about themselves to a Buddhist monk. Moreover, participants were allowed to join Zoom meetings with disabled videos, so the researcher could not ascertain whether the participants followed the instructions and practiced contemplative meditation during the online meditation sessions or did something else.

Chapter Four: Results

Introduction

Four self-reports were used as pre- and post-study surveys to collect data. These were the Demographic Questionnaire, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. The participants received the Demographic Questionnaire and the Beck Anxiety Inventory before the online meditation program. Participants were selected based on their responses to the survey Demographic Questionnaire and the Beck Anxiety Inventory test. The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale were administered as pre-test and post-test measures. Those two self-reports tested participants' stress and mindfulness. Those Anxiety/Stress Scales and self-reports measured participants' stress and anxiety levels, demographic information, mindfulness levels, and how they felt when they engaged in contemplative activities.

The Demographic Questionnaire

The Demographic Questionnaire provided basic information about the target population. Demographic information consisted of age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, beliefs, marital status, and language. The Demographic Questionnaire's inclusion/exclusion questions determined the schoolteachers' eligibility to take part in the study. Among the twenty-four schoolteachers who consented to participate in the research, twenty (83%) were female, and four (17%) were male. One participation requirement was to be older than twenty-four and younger than fifty-five. Accordingly, seven (29%) participants were between twenty-five and thirty-four, nine (38%) were between thirty-five and forty-four, and eight (33%) were older than forty-five.

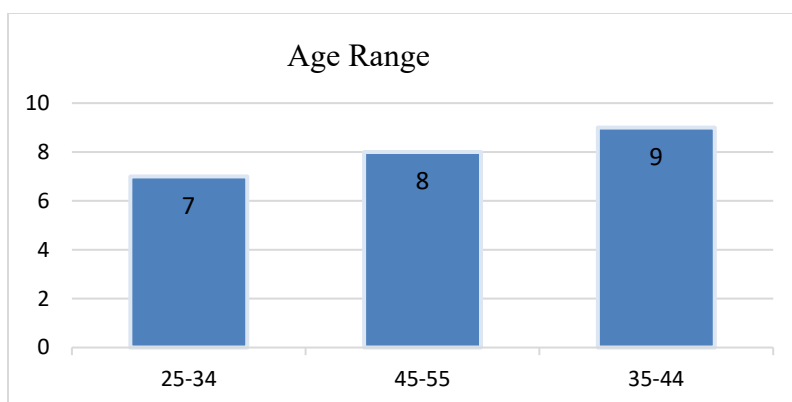


Figure 1: Participants' Age Range

Though the study was open to all ethnic groups, all twenty-four (100%) participants were Sinhalese. Regarding marital status, nineteen (79%) were married, and five (21%) were unmarried. For religion, twenty-three (96%) participants represented Buddhism, and one (4%) represented Christianity. The participants' teaching experience showed three ranges. Eleven (46%) had ten years of teaching experience, eleven (46%) had between eleven and twenty years, and only two (8%) had more than twenty years of experience. There were three levels of schools where participants taught. Ten (42%) worked in high schools, ten (42%) worked in middle schools, and four (16%) worked in elementary schools.

This demographic questionnaire consists of inclusion and exclusion questions. Question one inquired about how much meditation they had practiced in the past. Participants were free to select one answer for this question out of three variable answers like "1-5 times," "more than six times," and "never." Eleven (45%) participants had never meditated, ten (42%) had meditated between one and five times, and only three (13%) had practiced meditation more than six times.

Table 1: Previous Meditation Experience

How much meditation have you practiced in the past?	No of respondents (<i>N</i> = 24)	%
Never	11	45%
1-5 times	10	42%
More than six times in your life	3	13%

The next two questions covered prior experience with meditation and the likelihood of sharing their experiences. Question two inquired how they described their knowledge of Theravada Buddhism and Buddhist meditation. Volunteers were free to select only one answer out of three choices. The three choices were “minimal knowledge,” “it is a part of my family’s spiritual tradition,” and “very knowledgeable based on books, academics, and other training.” Eighteen (75%) schoolteachers reported minimal knowledge, and five (21%) reported that they inherited that knowledge from their family. One person (4%) reported very knowledgeable. Question three asked how likely they were to share their meditation experiences during the sessions. They were free to select only one answer out of the three answers. Three responses were “very likely,” “more likely,” and “somewhat likely.” Twelve (50%) schoolteachers responded very likely, six (25%) responded more likely, and six (25%) responded somewhat likely.

The next four questions inquired about medical and mental health. Question four inquired whether they expected to use mind-altering drugs (prescribed or not prescribed) during the meditation. All twenty-four (100%) schoolteachers responded “no.” Question five inquired whether they anticipated taking alcohol during meditation sessions. Everyone answered no. Question six inquired whether they were under a doctor’s or therapist’s care for trauma, anxiety, or stress. Table 2 shows that 23(96%) volunteers

responded no. Only one person (4%) responded “yes.” Question seven inquired whether they were experiencing stress due to a health condition, a mental or physical disorder.

Figure 2 indicates that twenty-one (87%) people responded “no,” and three (12%) responded yes.

Table 2: Current Medical Care

Question Six	Yes		No	
	Number of respondents	%	Number of respondents	%
Are you currently under a doctor’s or therapist’s care for trauma, anxiety, or stress?	1	4%	23	96%

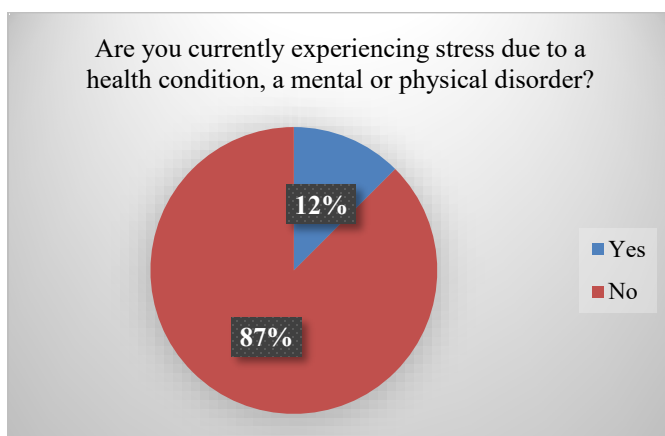


Figure 2: Present Health Condition

Question eight inquired whether volunteer schoolteachers were having COVID-19 symptoms or experiencing COVID-19 while enrolling in the study program. All twenty-four (100%) volunteers reported as no.

Question eight inquired whether they were working as schoolteachers on a full-time basis. Twenty-three (96%) volunteers responded “yes,” and one (4%) responded “no.” Responses received through this questionnaire indicated participants’ demographic information and some inclusion and exclusion characteristics.

The Beck Anxiety Inventory

The Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) is a list of common symptoms of anxiety.²¹⁵ Each item indicates how much that symptom bothered the respondent during the past month, including the day they filled out the inventory. A score of 0 to 21 indicates very low anxiety. A score between 22 and 35 indicates moderate anxiety, and a sum exceeding 36 shows more severe symptoms. Table 3 shows the schoolteachers’ anxiety levels.

Table 3: Total Sum of Beck Anxiety Inventory

	Grand Sum	Participants
Valid	0	3
	1	1
	2	3
	3	2
	4	1
	5	2
	6	1
	9	2
	10	1
	11	2
	15	1
	17	2
	18	1
	29	1
	32	1
Total	24	

²¹⁵ Fydrich, Dowdall, and Chambless, "Reliability and Validity," 55-61 .

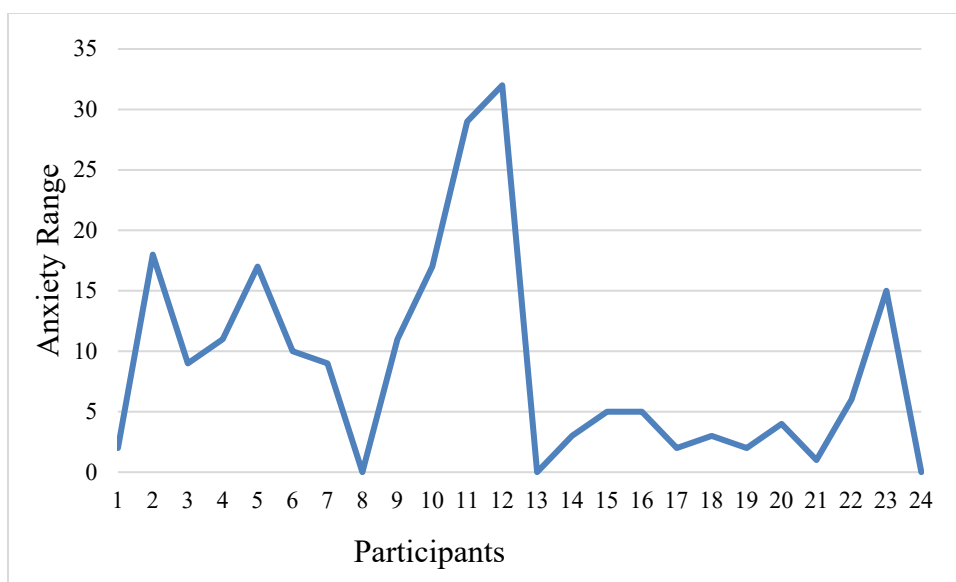


Figure 3: Participants' Anxiety Range

The first three items of this BAI inquired about physical symptoms. The first asked whether schoolteachers were experiencing numbness or tingling. Eight people (33%) reported that they experienced it mildly. Sixteen (66%) reported “not at all.” The second item was about feeling hot. One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Seven (29%) reported the response as “mildly,” and sixteen (66%) reported “not at all.” The third item inquired about wobbliness in the legs. Two people (8%) had skipped this item without answering. Five (20%) reported it as “mildly.” Two (8%) persons reported it as “moderately.” Fifteen people (62%) reported it as not at all.

The fourth item inquired whether the schoolteachers were unable to relax. Two people (8%) remained without answering this. Eight (33%) experienced it as “mildly.” Two (8%) reported their answer as “moderately.” Ten (41%) reported it as “not at all,” and two (8%) reported it as “severely.” The fifth item inquired whether the schoolteachers had a fear of the worst happening. One person (4%) did not respond.

Seven (29%) reported their response as “mildly.” Four people (16%) reported their response as “moderately,” and twelve (50%) reported their response as “not at all.” The sixth item is about dizziness or lightheadedness. Two (8%) people remained without answering this item. Seven people (29%) reported their response as “mildly.” One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Fourteen (58%) reported their response as “not at all.”

The seventh item was about heart pounding or racing. One person (4%) remained without answering this item. Four persons (16%) reported their experience as “mildly.” One (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Seventeen (70%) reported their experience as “not at all.” One (4%) reported the experience as “severe.” The eighth item is about whether the schoolteachers were feeling unsteady. One person (4%) did not answer this item. Eleven people (45%) reported their experience as “mildly.” Two (8%) reported their experience as “moderately.” Ten (41%) reported their experience as “not at all.” The ninth item inquired whether schoolteachers were feeling terrified or afraid. One person (4%) remained without answering this item. Five people (20%) reported their experience as “mildly.” Three (12%) reported their experience as “moderately.” Fifteen (62%) reported their experience as “not at all.”

The tenth item inquired whether schoolteachers were nervous. Two persons (8%) remained without responding to this item. Seven (29%) reported their experience as “mildly.” Three (12%) reported their experience as “moderately.” Ten (41%) persons reported their response as “not at all,” and two (8%) reported “severely.” The remaining items covered other physical as well as psychological symptoms. For instance, the eleventh item inquired whether schoolteachers were having the feeling of choking. One

person (4%) did not respond to this item. Four persons (16%) reported a response of “mildly.” One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Eighteen people (75%) reported their response as “not at all.” The twelfth item inquired whether they were having trembling hands. One person (4%) did not answer this item. Four (16%) reported their response as “mildly.” Eighteen people (75%) reported their response as “not at all.” One person (4%) reported the response as “severely.”

The thirteenth item inquired whether schoolteachers were feeling shaky and unsteady. One (4%) did not respond to this item. Eight persons (33%) reported their response as “mildly.” One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Fourteen (58%) people reported their response as “not at all.” The fourteenth item inquired whether they had the feeling of fear of losing control. One person (4%) did not answer this item. Six (25%) people reported their response as “mildly.” One (4%) reported the response as “moderately.” Fifteen (62%) reported their response as “not at all,” and one (4%) reported the response as “severely.”

The fifteenth item inquired whether schoolteachers had difficulty in breathing. One person (4%) did not respond to this item. Three persons (12%) reported their response as “mildly.” Two (8%) reported their response as “moderately.” Eighteen people (75%) reported their response as “not at all.” The sixteenth item inquired whether schoolteachers were having the feeling of fear of dying. One person (4%) did not respond to this item. Four people (16%) reported their response as “mildly.” One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately,” and eighteen (75%) reported their response as “not at all.” The seventeenth item inquired whether schoolteachers felt scared. One person (4%) did not respond to this item. Four persons (16%) reported their response as

“mildly.” One person (4 %) reported the response as “moderately.” Seventeen people (70%) reported their response as “not at all.” One person (4%) reported the response as “severely.” The eighteenth item inquired whether schoolteachers had indigestion. One (4%) did not respond to this question. Five persons (20%) reported their response as “mildly.” Eighteen people (75%) reported their response as “not at all.”

The nineteenth item inquired whether schoolteachers were experiencing faintness and lightheadedness. One (4%) did not respond to this item. Seven persons (29%) reported their response as “mildly.” Sixteen people (66%) reported their response as “not at all.” The twentieth item inquired whether schoolteachers were experiencing flushed faces. One person (4%) did not respond to this item. Six (25%) persons reported their response as “mildly.” One (4%) reported the response as “moderately,” and sixteen (66%) reported their response as “not at all.” The twenty-first item inquired whether schoolteachers were feeling hot and experiencing cold sweats. Eleven people (45%) reported their response as “mildly.” One person (4%) reported the response as “moderately,” and twelve (50%) responded “not at all.”

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)²¹⁶ is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of mindfulness: a receptive state of mind in which attention, informed by a sensitive awareness of what is occurring in the present, observes what is occurring. The mean equals the sum of the answers divided by the total number of fifteen questions. Participants answered 15 items on a 6-point scale (1 = almost always

²¹⁶ Brown and Ryan, "The Benefits of Being Present," 822–48; Mackillop and Anderson, "Further Psychometric Validation," 289–93; Miller, "Mindful Attention Awareness Scale."

to 6 = almost never), choosing an option from 1 to 6 as most relevant to them. To score results, at the end of each questionnaire, the researcher added each participant's score separately and divided each participant's total score by fifteen. Lower scores indicated less sensitive awareness, whereas higher scores reflected high sensitive awareness. The average value of higher scores showed that those schoolteachers lived more frequently in a state of higher mindfulness. This psychological measurement tested participants' mindfulness before and after the eight-week online meditation. Table 4 presents the results of the MAAS pre-test.

Table 4: MAAS Pre-Test Score

Score	Mean	Participants
32	2.13	1
35	2.33	1
41	2.73	1
43	2.86	1
45	3	1
53	3.53	1
56	3.73	1
57	3.8	1
59	3.93	1
60	4	1
62	4.13	2
64	4.26	1
66	4.4	2
68	4.53	2
71	4.73	1
72	4.8	1
74	4.93	1
78	5.2	1
79	5.26	1
81	5.4	1
Total Participants		23

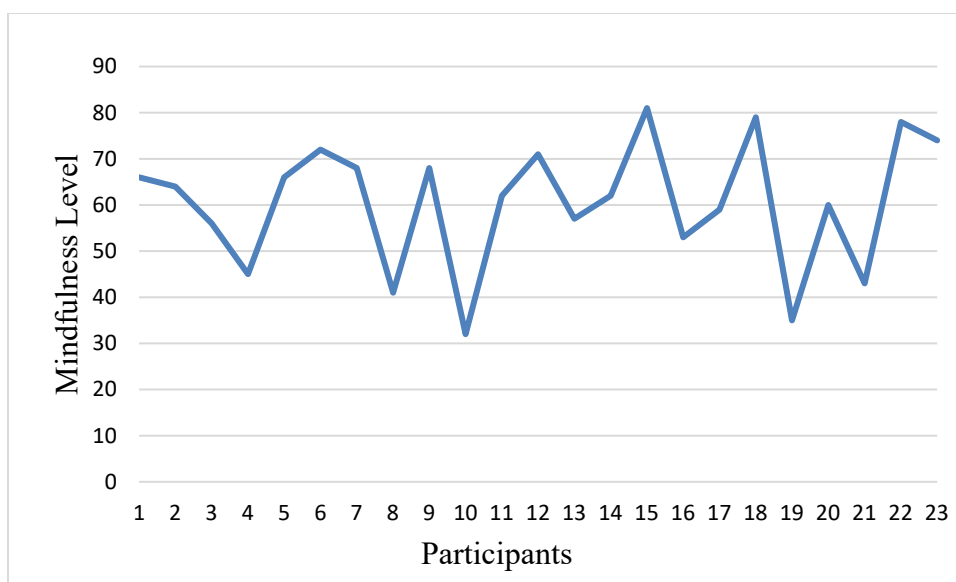


Figure 4: Mindfulness Range of MAAS Pre-Test

For example, the first item of this questionnaire is “I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.” Participants selected an option from the 6-point scale. Two participants (8%) reported “almost never,” eight (34%) reported “very infrequently,” three (13%) reported “somewhat infrequently,” and eight (34%) reported “somewhat frequently.” Two participants (8%) reported “very frequently,” Question two asked, “I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention or thinking of something else.” Three participants (13%) reported “almost never.” Eight (34%) reported “very infrequently,” and three (13%) reported “somewhat infrequently.” Six (26%) reported “somewhat frequently.” Only three participants (13%) reported “very frequently.”

As Table 4 and Figure 4 indicate, the lowest level of mindfulness in this MAAS pre-test was reported with a 32 score (mean 2.13). The highest level of mindfulness was reported, with an 81 score (mean 5.4). Ten participants showed their mindfulness scores

from 32 to 60 (mean 2.13 to 4). Thirteen participants' mindfulness scores ranged from 61 to 81 (mean 4.13 to 5.4). Twenty-three participants completed this MAAS pre-test self-report.

This MAAS measured participants' mindfulness after the eight-week online meditation. Compared to the MAAS pre-test, only twenty-two participants completed this MAAS post-test. Table 5 and Figure 5, related to MAAS post-test results, show the range of participants' mindfulness.

Table 5: MAAS Post-Test Score

Score	Mean	Participants
37	2.46	1
45	3	2
47	3.13	1
49	3.26	1
52	3.46	1
53	3.53	1
54	3.6	1
58	3.86	1
59	3.93	1
64	4.26	1
68	4.53	2
72	4.8	2
76	5.06	2
78	5.2	2
81	5.4	1
85	5.66	2
Total Participants		22

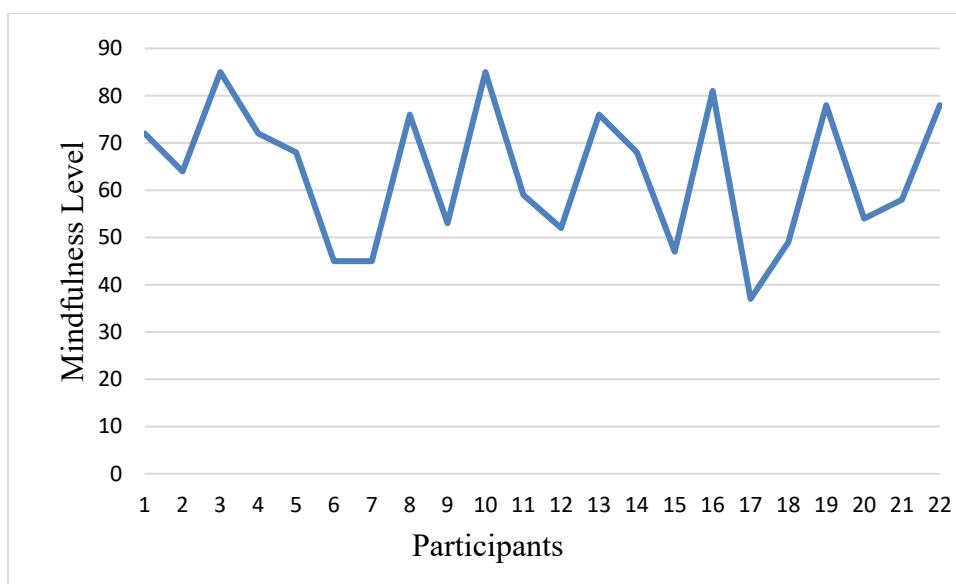


Figure 5: Mindfulness Range of MAAS Post-Test

The lowest level of mindfulness a participant reported in this post-test was a 37 score (mean 2.46). Two participants reported the highest score, 85 (mean 5.66). The range of mindfulness for ten participants was between 37 (mean 2.46) and 59 (mean 3.93). The mindfulness range of twelve participants was between 64 (mean 4.26) and 85 (mean 5.66).

The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale

WSPT Teacher Stress Scale²¹⁷ is a 36-item self-report to measure schoolteachers' stress at the elementary and secondary levels. Participants answered 36 items on a 5-point scale (1-never to 5-very often). Item scores were added to yield a total scale score of 36 to 180. The 36 to 72 range is low stress, 73 to 108 is moderate, and above 109 is high. Participants took less than 15 minutes to complete this questionnaire. This self-report

²¹⁷ Tyler Christine Rosenberg, "Teacher Stress: An Assessment of Teachers' Need for and Receptiveness towards a Stress Reduction Program within One Rural School System" (EdS Thesis, James Madison University, 2010), 53, <https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/edspec201019/98>.

tested schoolteachers' stress before and after the online meditation program. The following bar chart shows the results of this WSPT pre-test.

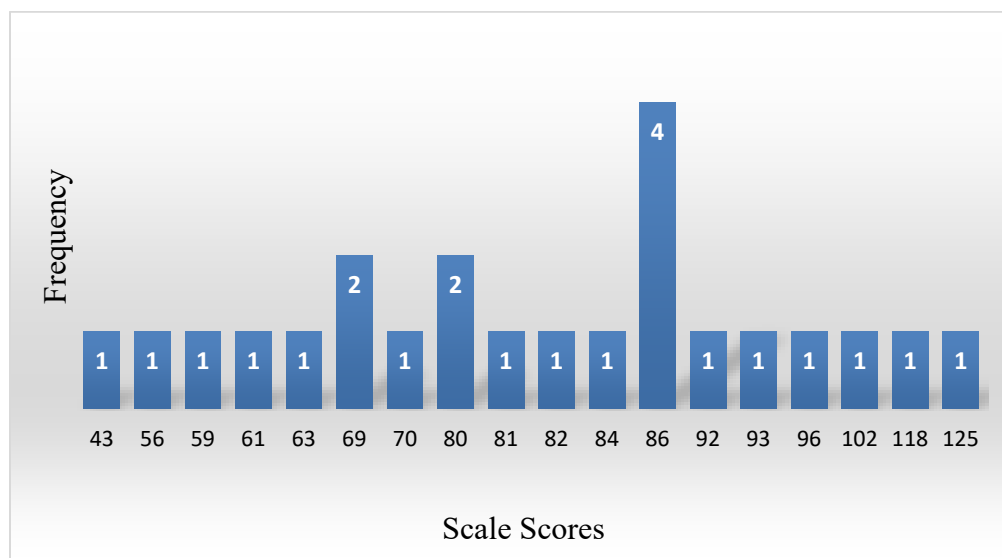


Figure 6: Pre-test of WSPT Teacher Stress Scale

As Figure 6 displays, 23 schoolteachers completed this WSPT pre-test questionnaire. Thirty-six items measured schoolteachers' stress through nine categories. Those nine categories are student behavior, employee/administrator relations, teacher relations, parent/teacher relations, time management, intrapersonal conflicts, physical symptoms of stress, psychological/emotional symptoms of stress, and stress management techniques. Eight participants reported low stress below 73. Thirteen reported moderate stress below 108. Only two participants reported high stress above 108.

For example, the first item of this self-report is "I have difficulty controlling my class." Six participants (26%) reported their response as "rarely." Seven participants (30%) reported their answer as "never." Ten (43%) reported their answers as

“sometimes.” The second item of this stress report was, “I become impatient and angry when my students do not do what I ask them to do.” Two participants (8%) responded “never.” Five (21%) responded “rarely.” Thirteen (56%) responded “sometimes.” Three (13%) responded “often.” Like this, participants responded to thirty-six items of this WSPT pre-test as their preference. This WSPT Teacher Stress Scale also measured participants’ stress after the eight-week online meditation. The researcher used this stress profile for teachers as a post-test measurement. Only twenty-two participants completed this WSPT post-test at the end of the eight-week meditation program. The following Figure 7 shows every participant’s total score of stress.

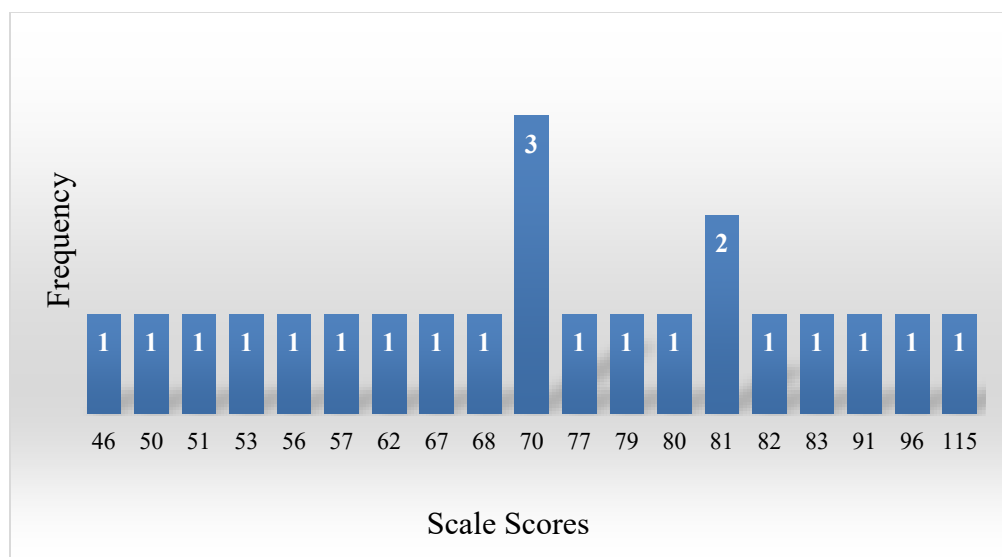


Figure 7: Post-Test of WSPT Teacher Stress Scale

Twelve participants’ scores showed low stress, less than 72. Nine participants’ scores showed moderate stress, between 73 and 108. Only one participant reported the highest stress score of 115.

Intervention Results

Four questionnaires helped to examine quantitative and qualitative data. Those four questionnaires are the Demographic Questionnaire, the BAI, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale. Those questionnaires, scales, and self-reports provided information on recruited schoolteachers' participation, willingness, stress, anxiety, and mindfulness levels during the intervention. Participants completed the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale as pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

One requirement that the schoolteachers met during the recruitment period was eligibility for the meditation program. To determine participants' eligibility, they completed two pre-survey self-reports. Those two questionnaires were the Demographic Questionnaire and the BAI. These determined whether the interested schoolteachers were eligible to participate in the eight-week meditation sessions. Apart from eligibility, the demographic questionnaire and the BAI helped identify individuals' willingness to enroll in the study. Twenty-four schoolteachers from the Gampaha and Kandy districts completed the two questionnaires.

However, only twenty-two participated from beginning to end. Data illustrate that twelve participants were from the Gampaha district and eleven from the Kandy district. One person from the Kandy district quit the meditation program at the very beginning due to her health condition. Another participant from the Kandy district dropped out of the study in the middle of the eight-week meditation without giving a reason. That participant showed up only in a few meditation sessions. The researcher attempted to reach that participant through emails and WhatsApp, but she never replied. There were

only ten participants from the Kandy district during the online meditation. All twelve schoolteachers from the Gampaha district continued their participation from beginning to end. Only the data received from twenty-two schoolteachers were analyzed in the research. The researcher did not analyze the data received from the two schoolteachers who quit the program since their data was incomplete.

The attendance percentage shows how often the schoolteachers participated in the online meditation sessions. Thirteen schoolteachers participated in the meditation on the very first day. The highest percentage of participation was reported in the sixth week. Eighteen participants attended the meditation on that day. The lowest participation was reported in the seventh week. Only ten people participated that day. Thirteen persons participated in the first week, fifteen in the second, sixteen in the third, fifteen in the fourth, fourteen in the fifth, eighteen in the sixth, ten in the seventh, twelve in the eighth and ninth, and sixteen in the tenth.

The participants' attendance records fluctuated due to various reasons. Schoolteachers who could not participate said that they experienced a power cut and poor internet connections in their areas. Some participants did not attend the meditation on some days for personal matters. However, out of the twenty-four participants, twenty-three completed the self-report questionnaires. Twenty-two schoolteachers who participated fully from the beginning to the end of the study completed every questionnaire before, during, and after the online meetings. This indicates that many participants showed interest in meditation during the study.

Except for some specific information related to the online meditation program, the demographic questionnaire examined general information about schoolteachers, such as

their age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, beliefs, marital status, and language.

Schoolteachers' age was a decisive factor that determined their eligibility to participate in the research. Schoolteachers younger than twenty-five or older than fifty-five were excluded, though they were willing to enroll in the online meditation. One assumption was that many Sri Lankan schoolteachers start their teaching profession when they are older than twenty-five. If they are above fifty-five, they might not work in a school since some retire from teaching earlier.

Inclusion and exclusion questions are a part of the demographic questionnaire. Inclusion and exclusion questions were used to identify specific information about schoolteachers. Question one examined their meditation experience. Participants were supposed to select only one answer out of three for this question. Ten (42%) schoolteachers had practiced meditation fewer than five times. Eleven (45%) had no meditation experience. Only three (13%) volunteers had practiced some sort of meditation more than six times. Those who had meditation experience of more than six times were supposed to be excluded from the study. However, this condition was negotiable. This did not prevent them from enrolling in the study since they did not possess a long history of practicing meditation. They had attended some brief meditation sessions before this eight-week meditation program. Based on these reasons, the researcher decided that these three participants were eligible to participate in the research. However, schoolteachers with much experience in Theravada meditation were excluded from the study. Some schoolteachers who had participated in Theravada meditation for many years consented to enroll in the study, but they were excluded based on the criteria that this online meditation would not benefit them as expected.

Questions four and five examined whether participants would take any prescribed or unprescribed mind-altering drugs or alcohol during the meditation sessions. Mind-altering drugs or alcohol can divert a person's consciousness. Everyone responded "no" to those two questions. Some demographic questionnaire questions were designed to ensure healthy attendance from the participants during the meditation. Question six inquired whether the volunteer schoolteachers were under a doctor's or therapist's care. Twenty-three (96%) answered "no" to this question. Only one (4%) volunteer's response was "yes." Question seven examined whether schoolteachers were experiencing stress or mental and physical disorders. Twenty-one (87%) schoolteachers provided the answer "no." Only three (12%) participants responded "yes." Question eight examined whether they were showing symptoms or having COVID-19 by the time they were recruited to the study program. Everyone responded to this question as "no." Participants who answered the sixth and the seventh questions as "yes" still showed better health conditions to be recruited in the study. However, they were enrolled in the eight-week meditation sessions after signing the consent form.

Survey self-reports were used to measure the anxiety and stress of the schoolteachers before enrolling in the study. One such report was the Beck Anxiety Inventory. It was essential to fill out this anxiety report by the participants as one requirement to be enrolled in the study before the online meditation. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, those who quickly responded to this questionnaire gained priority in enrolling in the eight-week online meditation. Results showed a notable value of lowest anxiety among the participants. If a person exceeds the grand sum of 36, it is an indication that he or she is having severe anxiety symptoms. Table 3 and Figure 3 in this

chapter show that the highest score of anxiety a schoolteacher reported was 32. This sum is below the severe anxiety score of 36. No schoolteacher reported severe anxiety symptoms. All 24 schoolteachers showed an anxiety level between 0 and 32.

A mindful scale was used before and after the online meditation to measure the participants' mindfulness. The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale assessed the participants' mindfulness, attention, and present awareness. Participants reported their mindfulness scores from the lowest 32 (mean 2.13) to the highest 81 (mean 5.4) in the pre-test of MAAS before the meditation. Participants' mindfulness was reported from the lowest to the highest, from 37 (mean 2.46) to 85 (mean 5.66) scores in the post-test of MAAS after the intervention. Figure 8 shows the compared scores of MAAS before and after the meditation. Ten participants' mindfulness scores were reported to be 32 to 60, whereas 13 participants' mindfulness scores ranged from 61 to 81 before the meditation. After the meditation, the range of mindfulness for ten participants was between 37 and 59. The mindfulness range of 10 participants was between 64 and 81. Two participants reported the highest score, from 82 to 85.

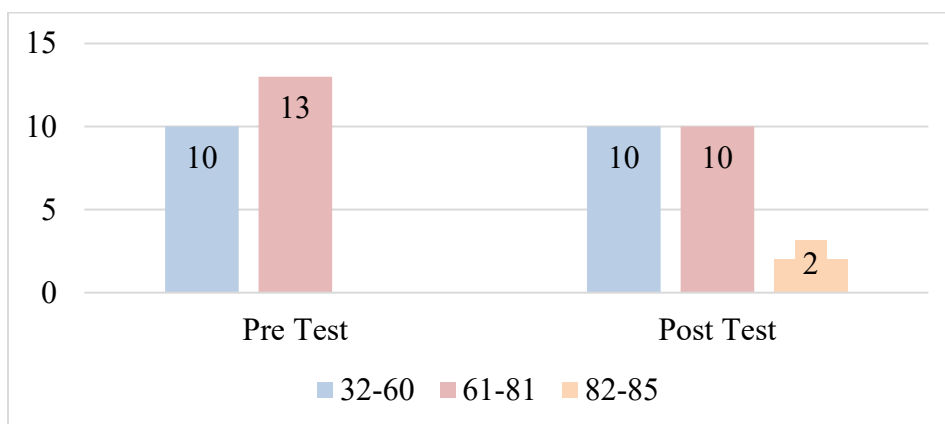


Figure 8: MAAS Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Results of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale showed a notable increase in mindfulness among the schoolteachers after the intervention. It was highly suggestive that contemplation as a form of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness benefited the schoolteachers by increasing their awareness of the present moment during the study. This increase in mindfulness showed that Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness helped them to improve their full awareness of daily actions. In other words, eight-week meditation sessions offered in the study benefited participants by allowing them to notice what is occurring in the present moment mindfully.

Figure 9 shows the compared scores of the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale before and after the meditation. The low stress score on the WSPT is below 72. This teacher stress scale indicated that eight participants reported low stress before the eight-week meditation. At the end of the eight-week meditation, twelve participants reported low stress. Moderate stress score is below 108. Thirteen participants reported moderate stress before the meditation. After the meditation sessions, nine participants reported moderate stress. A score that exceeds 108 indicates high stress. Two participants reported high stress before the meditation sessions. Only one reported high stress after the eight-week meditation with a score of 115. That participant did not show any decrease in stress at the end of the meditation.

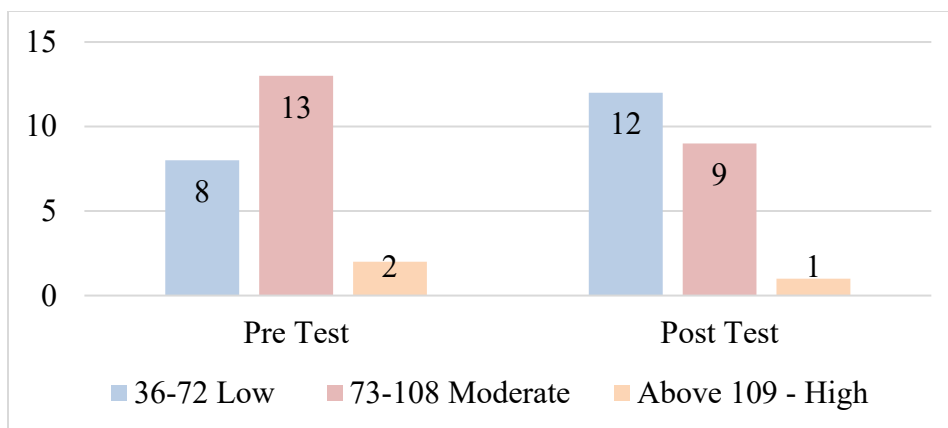


Figure 9: WSPT Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Compared to the pre-test, the post-test results of the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale showed a notable decrease in stress among the schoolteachers after the intervention period. The above results of both the pre-test and the post-test of the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale show that schoolteachers could manage stress after participating in the eight-week meditation sessions.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This chapter concentrates on research needs for teacher stress, mindfulness interventions for teacher stress, challenges confronted in recruiting school instructors, intervention dissimilarities, participants' admiration of the meditation offered, delimitations, and limitations.

Research Needs

Stress and burnout are critical issues that schoolteachers encounter in Sri Lankan schools. Many work, duties, obligations, tiresome work, and responsibilities during and after school affect schoolteachers' overall well-being. This unfortunate situation remains unexplored. This plight has impacted the well-being of schoolteachers, schoolchildren, parents, and school administrators. The literature review of this dissertation witnessed that Sri Lankan research on integrating mindfulness or meditation among schoolteachers to reduce burnout and stress remains uninvestigated and unexplored. Implementing mindfulness programs to create a healthy environment and stress-free setting for schoolteachers and children in Sri Lankan schools is a timely need. Studies show that policymakers, curriculum developers, implementers, teacher-educators, and relevant professionals in Sri Lankan education should use mindfulness programs in Sri Lankan schools.²¹⁸ Some Sri Lankan research show that no research intervention on applying mindfulness and professional skills among schoolteachers and students on school sites can be found in Sri Lanka.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers," 269.

²¹⁹ Peiris et al., 255.

Mindfulness and Teacher Stress

Current research is rich with information that secular mindfulness can benefit various populations and communities if utilized daily. Incorporating mindfulness in education programs and school settings is growing in many countries. Research papers, theses, reports, dissertations, peer-reviews, books, magazines, and websites related to mindfulness studies are being published and designed in the millions per year worldwide. Clinicians, educators, and researchers share their insights and experiences of integrating mindfulness in school settings around the world.²²⁰ Cynthia Taylor et al., says that mindfulness-based interventions can reduce burnout and stress among school instructors.²²¹ Spiritual practices such as meditation have also been effective strategies for coping with teacher stress in some regions of the United States.²²²

Eight-week mindfulness-based interventions have been effective in reducing anxiety, emotional reactivity, depression, and stress among teachers.²²³ Richard C. Brown says the ability to notice when the mind is wandering and bring it back to the present moment is beneficial while teaching.²²⁴ He shows that teachers can improve their mindfulness by paying attention to various activities while teaching. They can notice their sense of touch, walking, standing, sitting, breathing, thoughts, speech, emotions, and feelings. For example, teachers can test their presence of mind while walking to the

²²⁰ C zenner, S herrnleben-kurz, and Harald Walach, "Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Schools- a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Frontiers in Psychology* 5, no. 603 (June 2014): 2, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2014.00603>.

²²¹ Taylor et al., "Examining Ways," 115, 117, 127, 128.

²²² James M. M. Hartwick and Shin Ji Kang, "Spiritual Practices as a Means of Coping with and Ameliorating Stress to Reduce Teacher Attrition," *Journal of Research on Christian Education* 22, no. 2 (August 2013): 166, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10656219.2013.808979>.

²²³ Hartwick and Kang, "Spiritual Practices," 169.

²²⁴ Simmer-Brown and Grace, *Meditation and the Classroom*, 77.

classroom. Doing so will help them be calm before starting the day's lessons.²²⁵ Research recommends that schoolteachers embody mindfulness in their daily actions before guiding their students to experience mindfulness.²²⁶ Mindfulness interventions in a school setting yield various outcomes. Studies show some of those aims as enhancing experiential and contemplative learning, increasing compassion, building healthy relationships between teachers and children, empowering concentration and attention, and reducing stress among children and teachers.²²⁷

Mindfulness, which originated as a form of Buddhist meditation, spread to many territories of the Eastern world.²²⁸ It then gained popularity in the Western world, transitioning from ancient meditation to a new form. Scholarly opinions in the literature review showed that Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness is fruitful and productive in gaining pragmatic benefits. Scholars point out that meditation practices, as explained in early Buddhist teachings, are closely interrelated with various daily activities. As Bhikkhu Anālayo identifies, there is a formal meditation practice in early Buddhist teachings that a person can practice daily. However, in Theravada Buddhism, this formal meditation is not for realizing particular states but for transforming a person. It is about gaining a person's inner change.²²⁹ The core characteristic of Theravada mindfulness meditation is to pay attention to the present moment with full awareness.

²²⁵ Simmer-Brown and Grace, 78-79.

²²⁶ Albrecht, Albrecht, and Cohen, "Mindfully Teaching," 1,10,11.

²²⁷ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, *Mindfulness and Education*, 59.

²²⁸ zenner, herrnleben-kurz, and Walach, "Mindfulness-Based Interventions," 1.

²²⁹ Analayo, *Meditator's Life*, 198.

Various populations have benefited from Buddhist meditation, as research reveals that mindfulness has benefited various communities, from golfers to share traders,²³⁰ and has been beneficial in clinical and non-clinical settings. Studies conducted in schools have found that mindfulness benefits both teachers and students.²³¹ Mindfulness interventions have also benefited nurses,²³² healthcare workers, and patients. In some experiments, researchers have explored the utility of Buddhist meditation and precepts among students.²³³ The results show that students have benefited from contemplative practices such as Buddhist meditation.

Recruiting Challenges

Though schoolteachers shared the information about this study program with their colleague instructors, some showed no interest in participating in this research. They criticized this research even without reading the enrollment transcript. They did not give a favorable response to this online meditation program. Some had a cynical attitude toward the program. Their worldview, uncertainties, misunderstandings, and life experiences might have influenced them to show a different perspective toward this research as it involves an experiment. Some said they could not find free time to make this meditation program. One requirement of this study was to allow schoolteachers to participate in this eight-week online meditation voluntarily. They were not coerced for any reason. Schoolteachers were free to enroll in the study as they wished and quit the

²³⁰ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, *Mindfulness and Education*, 34.

²³¹ Ditrich, Wiles, and Lovegrove, 34–54.

²³² Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness," 1-287.

²³³ Simmer-Brown and Grace, *Meditation and the Classroom*, 179-184.

research at any time. Schoolteachers who had a genuine feeling and a strong desire to enroll were recruited with their consent.

Intervention Dissimilarities

The research by Telege Peiris et al. is specific when discussing the study protocol implemented in this study. This study concentrates this discussion on Telege Peiris' study since the two studies have similarities and dissimilarities. However, the research intervention implemented in this study deviates from many aspects of Telege Peiris' study. The research objectives and the whole structure of the two studies apparently differ except for a few minor similarities. There is a distinctive discrepancy in mindfulness activities offered during the sessions in the two research programs. Instead of using a variety of mindful activities during the meditation sessions, only a few mindful activities were used in this research. They were mindful listening, walking, Body scan, and sitting. Participants were instructed to extend awareness to their daily activities at other times, too. The researcher offered meditation online. Meditation was conducted during weekends online to practice contemplation for thirty minutes. Telege Peiris reports that the participants in her study paid attention to breathing while practicing mindful walking. However, this study didn't ask participants to pay attention to breathing when practicing mindful walking steps during the sessions. The researcher instructed the participants to practice mindful walking very simply, like paying attention to a few moments of their steps. Firstly, participants in this research were asked to be mindful of the steps of walking and extend that awareness to the movements and sensations of the steps when walking. Since it was not easy to synchronize breathing and walking steps while going

forward and backward, school instructors in this research remained mindful only of the movements of their walking steps.

It is fruitful to see how scholars have explained the nature of walking meditation in this context. Referring to the *Madhyama-Agama* discourse and the *Brahmāyu-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*, Bhikkhu Anālayo explains how the Buddha walks in a balanced way.²³⁴ Buddha’s walking is not too fast or too slow. When the Buddha walks, He puts steps neither far nor too close.²³⁵ Anālayo further mentions that walking becomes natural if we can practice it without losing balance and bumping into things around us. What exemplifies Buddha’s walking is His balance in the mind when walking. This illustration in an early Theravada source like *Brahmāyu-sutta* shows that Buddha did not pay attention to breathing while walking.

This study asked participants to practice contemplative listening, similar to how Telege Peiris instructed her participants to be aware of mindful listening. How this study offered instructions for contemplative sitting differs from her study. Moreover, Telege Peiris has used “mindfulness practices” in a general sense to introduce the meditation taught by the Buddha. Telege Peiris has used the term “mindfulness” to represent the Theravada Buddhist meditation. However, the term “mindfulness” is used in secular mindfulness programs for a different purpose that deviates from Theravada Buddhism. The application of mindfulness in clinical interventions like Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) is utilized to

²³⁴ Anālayo, *Meditator's Life*, 200–201.

²³⁵ Chalmers, *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. 2, 137. Cf. “So nātidūre pādaṃ uddharati. nāccāsanne pādaṃ nikkhipati. so nātisīghaṃ gacchati. nātisaṅkaṃ gacchati.”; Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 746.

reduce stress, burnout, and emotional distress and increase everyday well-being of human subjects.²³⁶

Participants' Admirations

It is apt to mention that the participants admired this online meditation program. Their responses toward this meditation program show how Theravada contemplation meditation benefited them in the study. Participants used to provide encouraging responses to the online meditation during the study. No one complained about the online meditation program. No participant experienced a hard time because of this meditation program. No participant reported any unpleasant experience during the research. The researcher provided information in the enrollment transcript and the consent form to contact mental health care institutes in an emergency. Every participant was safe with the meditation offered to them. No one wanted to reach those contacts to seek help from those mental health care institutes in Sri Lanka because of bad experiences received from the meditation program.

Willingness was decided by how often participants appreciated the meditation program. On the first day, some had assumed that the researcher would conduct this meditation program similarly to some meditation programs where instructions and advice are common. The first online meeting might have led them to assume such a notion. The first online meeting was limited to explaining the study aims, meditation schedule, and the questionnaires in the research. Some participants shared their thoughts in such a way at the end of the meditation program. However, the guided meditation offered after the

²³⁶ Bishop et al., "Mindfulness: A Proposed," 230.

first session changed their assumption that it was a practical meditation program based on various contemplative activities. Some participants often gave updates about their meditation experience on the next meditation day. Some avoided family functions, ceremonies, and other life events to make it a time for this online meditation. Some participated in the meditation program using their phones while traveling by bus or train if they happened to go somewhere on that day. Thus, some participants actively participated in the meditation wherever they were. Their interest in this meditation program stimulated them to regard this online meditation as essential on Saturday evenings.

Some participants said they could engage in daily activities more efficiently after this eight-week meditation program. Some said they did not know how to lead a meditation for at least a few minutes for children. Some said they gained that skill from this program. At the end of the research, some participants felt confident conducting a simple meditation for school children. Some said that they prefer to further their meditation experience after this program. Some participants revealed that they were impressed by this program and wanted to continue their meditation experience at meditation centers.

Some schoolteachers had illogical assumptions about Theravada Buddhist meditation before implementing this intervention. Some participants were honest in revealing that they could dispel their ignorance about Theravada Buddhist meditation after attending this research. Some schoolteachers believed that engaging in Theravada Buddhist meditation might discourage their family relationships and marriage. However, their participation in this research cleared all those doubts, uncertainties, questions, and

misunderstandings. Some WhatsApp messages received from participants appreciating the meditation program are as follows.

- Today, I felt most of the time, you read my mind. Amazing.
- This is just like a medicine for our aimless minds.
- We recommend this meditation to apply in our classrooms.
- It gave me peace, calmness, and balance of the mind.
- You smoothly instructed the participants during the meditation program.
- I prefer the walking meditation among all others offered during the sessions. It was more convenient than others.
- Meditation is a good exercise that we can use to enhance our mental health and well-being.
- We can use meditation to better our lives and students.
- It is good to have a recording of today's meditation. We can practice it on weekdays, too.
- The meditation program is excellent. I could not attend the last week's program, but I will follow the recording.

Some schoolteachers continuously encouraged the researcher to conduct this meditation after participating in the program.

What contemplative activities were easy and most challenging for the participants to practice during and after the meditation sessions are worthy to mention. As some participants revealed, contemplative walking and listening made it easy for them to focus their full attention. However, some participants found that contemplative body scan and sitting were the most challenging to be mindful. We can practice walking meditation,

keeping the balance of both our mind and steps. It should be normal walking but with mindfulness.²³⁷ Scholars notice that in present-day meditation traditions, some practice it while walking in a particular formalized manner. They slow down and take only concise steps while practicing walking meditation.²³⁸ However, it must be normal walking, going up and down with balanced steps. Bhikkhu Anālayo says that we should walk centered and balanced. We should walk in meditation without disorderliness and without bumping into things around.²³⁹

Delimitations

Delimitations of this study were that this research was narrowed down to a specific intervention. This study aimed to examine how instructors in Sri Lankan schools can use Theravada contemplation to reduce stress and burnout and enhance their everyday well-being. Though the study proposed applying mindful activities, it explored only a few mindful activities during the meditation sessions. The study was confined to contemplative walking, listening, sitting, and body scanning.

This research was developed as a practice-based meditation intervention. The meditation protocol implemented in this research was designed using explanations about contemplation in the Theravada canon and the researcher's ministerial reflection. Statistical results were obtained through the range of contemplative activities practiced in the meditation sessions. Though this study did not report or gain statistical results in a strong way regarding population level effects, the descriptive statistics derived from the

²³⁷ See Appendix H for Contemplative Walking.

²³⁸ Anālayo, *Meditator's Life*, 201.

²³⁹ Anālayo, 206.

demonstrated meditation show the importance of Theravada contemplation in reducing teacher stress and burnout and enhancing their everyday well-being.

Limitations

This research identified areas for improvement. As witnessed, the data collection period had weaknesses. It was also challenging to run a meditation program online.

Weaknesses are inevitable when conducting mediation programs online. The researcher observed that disabled video feeds were not favorable for online meditation sessions. In an online program, participants must mute microphones to minimize unnecessary noise. However, disabled video feeds do not provide a clear picture of the attendees.

Participants were free to join the meditation sessions with disabled videos, which allowed them to move away from the ongoing meditation. Participants might have engaged in other activities, though the meditation was in progress without the researcher seeing them. The researcher had only limited online facilities to observe whether participants truly practiced meditation during the sessions. The researcher could not see participants' physical movements, facial expressions, or behaviors. The researcher had to trust the participants' honesty during and after the meditation sessions. The researcher had to depend on their responses, WhatsApp messages, and other updates about their meditation experience. Intervention results and participants' responses show that the meditation program was productive for them during the intervention period.

Power cuts, internet failure, or bad weather conditions could sometimes disrupt online meditations. Many participants said they experienced many challenges when accessing Zoom from Sri Lanka. The country confronted a substantial economic setback in 2022 because of a corrupt government. The data was collected when the whole country

was in a big crisis. The nation suffered social, economic, and political setbacks during this time. There was a power cut in every part of the island for many hours, like eight to ten hours day and night. This unstable situation interrupted the online meditation program from time to time. Some participants logged in to Zoom after launching the meditation. Some could not make the meditation program at all because of power cuts and internet failures. That situation in the country compelled many people to regret it most of the time during the day.

Participants attended the meditation sessions from their homes. The home environment can also disturb meditation. Family members continued to engage in their usual daily actions, though a meditation program was being conducted. Schoolteachers at home especially struggled to continue the meditation because of their children's disturbances. Sometimes, other home matters were also not favorable for online meditation. Participants were asked to choose a peaceful space in their homes to practice meditation for thirty to forty minutes on Saturdays. Some homes were favorable for some participants to fully engage in meditation without getting disturbed by the family members. However, the researcher relied on participants' responses that they genuinely participated in the meditation program.

Chapter Six: Ministerial Intervention

This chapter discusses the reasons and ministerial reflections that led to implementing the study as a ministerial intervention to address burnout in Sri Lankan school instructors. Further describing the research framework, this chapter will briefly explain the engaged Buddhist values, prior training in meditation, Theravada contemplation, future recommendations, and the conclusion. What remedies and solutions need to be considered to fill the gap in modern research studies in Sri Lanka is also suggested towards the end of this chapter.

Engaged Buddhist Values

After Buddha's enlightenment, He did not confine Himself to one place. He started His mission of caring for other's spiritual upliftment. The Buddha often reminded Buddhist monks to function for the betterment of others. As a monastic, the researcher has functioned in caring for others' spirituality in various places and times. Theravada teachings influenced the researcher's ministerial insight from theoretical and practical perspectives. Buddhism acknowledges that stopping fluctuations of losses and gains in everyday life is inevitable.²⁴⁰ As previously discussed in the dissertation, stress, burnout, anxiety, and emotional reactivity are inevitable in human life. People emerge as great souls to care for others through the same vicissitudes. The cultivation of mindfulness is a crucial component on the path to perfect knowledge that leads to the cessation of suffering.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ W. S. Karunaratne, *Buddhism: Its Religion and Philosophy* (Singapore: The Buddhist Research Society, 1988), 5.

²⁴¹ Edo Shonin, William Van Gordon, and Nirbhay N. Singh, *Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness* (Cham: Springer, 2015), 181.

Ariyapariyesana-sutta in the *Majjhima Nikāya* shows that, through many years of experiments with meditation teachers and in contemporary meditation practices in India, Buddha discovered the fruition of Buddhist-based mindfulness.²⁴² Buddha introduced His doctrine not as a demanding belief but as a practice to help human beings for their eternal happiness and spiritual well-being. Scholars view that gradual training lies at the heart of Buddhist teachings to guide the person toward insight and overcoming suffering.²⁴³ The ultimate goal of Buddha's teaching is to alleviate suffering and acquire the perfect knowledge (i.e., Arahantship). Buddhist teachings accept that every being in this universe has boundless space for Buddha nature. A true follower of the Buddha should have the determination to support others. Gotama Buddha, before his enlightenment, being the Bodhisattva, wished to attain Buddhahood to help others become liberated from suffering.²⁴⁴ Buddhism's true path to the cessation of suffering is enriched with wisdom and compassion for self and others while nurturing the mind of love (i.e., *Bodhichitta*).²⁴⁵ A human being who lives a Bodhisattva life, an aspirant for becoming a Buddha in the future, helps others while practicing and fulfilling the six perfections.²⁴⁶

The narrative style of the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Dīgha Nikāya* exhibits that Buddha preached the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* to the direct eminent monastic members of the congregation. In these two occurrences, *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* displays that the *satipaṭṭhānas*, or mindfulness instructions, were addressed to the monks. However, it does not indicate that the mindful meditation, or *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation,

²⁴² Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 253–68.

²⁴³ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 20.

²⁴⁴ Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 1218. Cf. 307 note to the sutta.

²⁴⁵ Shonin, Van Gordon, and Singh, *Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness*, 182–83.

²⁴⁶ A. K. Warder, *New Paths in Buddhist Research* (Durham, N.C.: Acorn Press, 1985), 28.

was solely intended for male monastics. Bhikkhu Anālayo highlights that discourses include mindfulness instructions for nuns and lay disciples to experience *satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.²⁴⁷ This meditation has been successfully used for thousands of years in Theravada meditation. The *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* and other Theravada Suttas include meditation practices of various categories.

From a theological perspective, mindful interventions, whether they are secular, religious, educational, or psychological, have the potential to address stress, burnout, and anxiety among various populations. Buddhist teachings hold in high esteem caring for others when people are suffering. W.S. Karunaratne says that Buddhism is not solely a philosophy or religion. As he views it, the person needs a philosophy to understand his existence and the world around him. A human being needs religion to care for him or her spiritually. Buddhism includes both philosophical and religious teachings to address these two needs.²⁴⁸ Caring for others has been the practice of Buddhism since its inception. Whatever the way this notion is defined, whether it is socially engaged Buddhism or Humanistic Buddhism, it encourages togetherness to alleviate some aspects of suffering in our daily lives.²⁴⁹ Theravada contemplation explored among school instructors can be a spiritual way to care for them.

Training for Guidance

Good training in Theravada mindfulness and knowledge of other essential components of Theravada Buddhist meditation can play a pivotal role in well-being when

²⁴⁷ Shonin, Van Gordon, and Singh, *Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness*, 71.

²⁴⁸ Karunaratne, *Buddhism: Its Religion*, 5.

²⁴⁹ Arnold Kotler, *Engaged Buddhist Reader: Ten Years of Engaged Buddhist Publishing* (Berkeley, California: Parallax Press, 1996). Cf. the editor's Introduction.

guiding others in meditation. This has been the practice for many centuries since the beginning of Theravada Buddhist meditation. Theravada Buddhism acknowledges that prior training is essential for guiding another person to practice meditation. Very often guided by a teacher, Theravada Buddhist meditation is a threefold training: morality (*Sīla*), concentration (*Samādhi*), and wisdom (*Paññā*).²⁵⁰ One who instructs another person to practice mindfulness must have good training and sound knowledge in Buddhist meditation. Such a person should have personal experiences before instructing others on meditating.

Current researchers in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) accept that those who wish to teach MBCT for depression must have accredited training in counseling or psychotherapy. Segal, Williams, and Teasdale share guidelines for using mindfulness in cognitive therapy treatments in the following way. Those interested in mindfulness practice should have experience working with a mental health professional in mood disorders. They must have a good understanding of depression to help the vulnerable. They should be further qualified with training in behavioral or cognitive therapy or equivalent training and prior experience in guiding groups. Without extensive personal experience, the instructors should not guide or offer mindfulness to clients. From the cognitive therapy perspective, instructors should have a daily formal mindfulness practice in their own lives for at least one year. An instructor should embody proper training in mindfulness practice from the inside. Previous experience in practicing mindfulness helps progress in treatments in cognitive therapy.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ Gauthier, "On-the-Job Mindfulness," 189.

²⁵¹ Segal, Williams, and Teasdale, *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive*, 78–79.

Ministry Reflection

The researcher's spiritual values co-exist with pure Buddhist teachings. Ministerial experience provides a better understanding of a person's function in spiritual care. It is apt to briefly mention what influenced this research. I am Buddhist by birth. My parents were also Buddhists. Since childhood, I had a desire to become a Buddhist monk. I was ordained in 1991 when I was just 11 years old. Since then, I received a monastic education as a novice monk. I received my primary education in Theravada Buddhism, Theravada Canonical texts, the History of Ceylon, Sinhalese literature, and ancient languages like Pāli and Sanskrit. After that, I continued my university education, further learning subjects like Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist Culture, Pāli, Sinhala, and Sanskrit.

After my university education, I started working as an instructor in monastic education at four institutes in Sri Lanka. I have had the privilege of working in those education institutes as an instructor for nearly ten years. When I quit my teaching career, I had been working as an instructor at one of the private Buddhist universities in Sri Lanka. I have experience working as an instructor and associating with Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Working as a school instructor is sometimes a tiresome job. At times, I struggled with burnout when I worked as an instructor. I also confronted challenges, stressful events, and burnout when I taught in those educational institutes. I have witnessed the problem of burnout among schoolteachers in Sri Lankan education institutes.

I participated in a 7-day meditation retreat in a Sri Lankan meditation center around 2011. It captivated my mind to explore the applied aspects of Theravada

contemplation meditation further. I practiced this whole-day meditation retreat at the Vipassanā Meditation Center at Kanduboda²⁵² in Sri Lanka. Some devotees in my temple asked whether I could conduct guided meditation for their knowledge on Poya days (religious days). I did not have previous experiences practicing meditation when those pious devotees requested me to. I went to Kanduboda Vipassanā Meditation Center to gain some experience in meditation around 2012. When it was time for the next religious day in Sri Lanka, I participated in and practiced a whole-day meditation retreat for one week under the guidance of a senior monk. I used the knowledge, experience, insight, and wisdom I gained at that meditation retreat to modify a meditation program suitable for the lay followers to practice at my residential temple. My residential temple, a monastic education institute to train novice monks, named Vidyakara Pirivena at Bemmulla, is in the district of Gampaha in Sri Lanka.

Every Poya day, devotees observe precepts and engage in various religious and spiritual activities at my residential temple. Those devotees listen to Dhamma talks, Dhamma Discussions, Chanting, and practice throughout the whole day. They gather in a large hall to practice those religious activities. I mostly used those religious days to offer the meditation I learned at the Kanduboda Vipassanā Meditation Center. I instructed those devotees on Theravada meditations like *Mettā Bhāvanā* (Loving Kindness Meditation), *Buddhānussati Bhāvanā* (Contemplation on the Great Qualities of the Buddha), *Ānāpānasati* (Breathing Meditation), Walking meditation, and the Four *satipaṭṭhānas* (the Four Foundations of Mindfulness) each religious day at my temple. I

²⁵² Richard F. Gombrich and Gananath Obeyesekere, *Buddhism Transformed: Religious Change in Sri Lanka* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), 238-39; Crosby, *Theravada Buddhism*, 164.

often instructed those lay devotees for nearly two hours through guided meditation. Thus, I have conducted meditation sessions on every religious day at my temple for many years.

Many of those devotees had never participated in a meditation retreat or tried to practice meditation before I offered this program. They learned how to practice meditation at least once a month. On every religious day, more than one hundred lay devotees engaged in religious activities at the temple. Many of them enjoyed the meditation I offered as the very first program of the day. I did not confine the guided meditation to only one theme to instruct the lay followers. Instead, I used meditation objects like *Mettā* meditation, Breathing Meditation, Walking Meditation, Four Foundations of Mindfulness, and *Buddhānussati Bhāvanā*. I instructed those lay followers to practice those meditations as *Samatha* (concentration) and *Vipassanā* (insight). This experience helped me learn how to conduct guided meditation for large gatherings.

I have spoken with many schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. Some asked me to conduct a meditation program for their benefit. I understood that some were experiencing lethargy and feeling overwhelmed. They worked in stressful school environments. A meditation program could be productive in reducing burnout in their daily lives and help them increase their well-being. I used my meditation experiences and the knowledge I gained by conducting meditation retreats at my residential temple to develop the present research topic. My worldview, ministerial experiences, monastic training, and meditation experiences helped me figure out the research topic and design the research intervention.

Many Sri Lankan school instructors who were known to me shared that they did not know how to start practicing meditation. Given any meditation object, they were unable to figure out from where they should proceed to practice mindfulness. Under such circumstances, guided meditation could help participants to feel awareness in the present moment. It can ease them to a state of simple presence.²⁵³ This research enabled school instructors to experience present moment awareness through daily activities.

Theravada Contemplation

The literature related to this research described contemplation in daily actions that could be found in Theravada discourses. Besides textual explanations, scholars have defined what contemplation means in Theravada discourses. The literature related to this research is based on two findings: textual explanations and scholarly views on Theravada contemplation meditation. Though Theravada contemplation can be reckoned as a contemplative practice, it has a specific meaning in Theravada texts. Theravada contemplation means full awareness in every action of a meditator's daily life. The literature review of this dissertation discussed this topic.

Bhikkhu Bodhi has used the phrase "contemplative practices" in a general sense. He has used "traditional Eastern contemplative practices" in his writings.²⁵⁴ Traditional Eastern contemplative practices could be mindful practices, various meditation practices, and teachings related to the purification of the mind. Bhikkhu Bodhi has also explained elsewhere what contemplation means in Theravada meditation in reference to the *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya*. This study investigated the Theravada

²⁵³ Simmer-Brown and Grace, *Meditation and the Classroom*, 85.

²⁵⁴ Bodhi, "What Does Mindfulness," 35.

contemplation meditation as explained in Theravada discourses and Theravada teachings, but in a way, school instructors can attain pragmatic benefits in their everyday lives. The researcher discussed what contemplation means in the Theravada teachings, having consulted the Theravada texts and scholarly definitions.

Framing Study Protocol

Theravada discourses and other textual occurrences specify what contemplation means in everyday actions. Theravada textual expositions clearly state that contemplation can be practiced in various ways. A meditator who aspires to Nibbana cultivates contemplation based on various themes. This has been discussed in chapter two, the literature review. Early Buddhist thought clarifies that the central aim of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness is realizing the perfect knowledge. This is complete freedom from clinging and craving. Bhikkhu Anālayo points out that early Buddhist teachings acknowledge that Theravada mindfulness is based on the acquisition of perfect knowledge, *Nibbana*, while leading to a person's physical and psychological well-being.²⁵⁵ This indicates that Buddhist-based mindfulness is fruitful since it eases the person and helps them loosen the grip of daily pressure. However, this study explored the utility of contemplation meditation based on the pragmatic benefits that school instructors in Sri Lanka can gain in daily activities.

The lack of research to integrate Theravada contemplation among instructors in Sri Lankan schools influenced this study protocol. Research reveals that no evidence of Buddhist-based mindfulness inventions executed among Sri Lankan school instructors

²⁵⁵ Shonin, Van Gordon, and Singh, *Buddhist Foundations of Mindfulness*, 87.

can be found.²⁵⁶ Theravada contemplation explored through a range of mindful activities has the potential to address the issue of burnout in school instructors since it is based on full awareness of the daily actions of a person's life. Due to the scant research on Buddhist-based mindfulness in the school environment, this study tested the utility of Theravada contemplation meditation for gaining pragmatic results among school instructors based on a limited research population from two Sri Lankan provinces.

A literature search showed that no one had attempted to investigate the utility of Theravada contemplation meditation with school instructors in Sri Lanka for their everyday well-being. The studies the researcher found attempted to identify only the reasons and causes of burnout and stress among schoolteachers. This study found seven such studies on schoolteachers' stress and burnout in Sri Lanka.²⁵⁷ However, three studies that used Buddhist meditation with research participants were noticeable in this study. Wasantha Gunathunga introduced a modified meditation named *Vipassanā* Informed Mindfulness Meditation for his population during the intervention.²⁵⁸ Ethkandawaka Saddhajeewa used loving kindness meditation, mindful walking, and breathing for a population involved in substance abuse.²⁵⁹ Telege Peiris et al. tested a range of Buddhist-based mindfulness activities with both schoolteachers and children to investigate the effectiveness of Buddhist-based mindfulness in improving school

²⁵⁶ Peiris et al., 255–56.

²⁵⁷ Yogarane, "Psychological Study," 1-3; De Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Measurement of Burnout," 8-11; Silva, Hewage, and Fonseka, "Prevalence of Burnout," 9-14; Anandasayanan and Subramaniam, "Effect of Stress," 1-10; Samaraweera et al., "Mentees' Burnout and Mentors," 75-81; Menikdiwela, "Student Misbehavior," 103-113; Kengatharan, "Effects of Teacher Autonomy," 1-15.

²⁵⁸ Gunathunga et al., "Comparative Study," 112-20.

²⁵⁹ Saddhajeewa, "Mindfulness for Substance Abuse," 88-93.

instructors' professional skills and student performance.²⁶⁰ The procedure of the meditation offered by Telege Peiris showed distinctive discrepancies in offering the range of mindful activities in her study and in this intervention.

This study's eight-week meditation was offered based on the contemplation explained in the Theravada canon. The *Satipaṭṭhāna-sutta* description of four main human stances and experiencing full awareness wherever a person's body moves was fruitful in developing the contemplation meditation protocol offered in this research.²⁶¹ The meaning associated with contemplation and full awareness in every action in the Theravada canon has been discussed in the literature review of this dissertation. The offered meditation was limited to a 15-minute guided and a 15-minute silent meditation so that school instructors could practice those contemplative activities during the eight-week sessions. Secular mindfulness interventions were helpful when determining the range of mindful activities to be practiced for thirty minutes in every session.²⁶² Secular mindfulness-based interventions show that they were conducted through eight to nine weeks as needed.²⁶³

All the human actions and stances associated with contemplation meditation are challenging to implement in one study. Therefore, this study examined contemplation as a simple meditation only through a few daily actions like listening, sitting, walking, and body-scanning during the sessions. Initially, participants found it easy to practice contemplative thoughts through a few daily actions. Later, this helped them to extend the

²⁶⁰ Peiris et al., "Impact of Teachers," 254-78.

²⁶¹ Trenckner, *Majjhima-Nikāya*, Vol. 1, 56-57; Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi, *Middle Length Discourses*, 146-47.

²⁶² Taylor et al., "Examining Ways," 118.

²⁶³ Kemeny et al., "Contemplative/Emotion Training," 346.

contemplative thoughts into other daily actions and experience them through constant awareness. Though this study used a few meditation practices in the sessions, the researcher did not intend to report the results of these meditation practices individually. Instead of reporting the results separately on each meditation practice, this study aimed to find the results of the contemplation meditation as one practice.

It was noticeable that an organization named Sati Pasala Foundation was conducting mindfulness programs for schoolchildren at several schools in Sri Lanka.²⁶⁴ That mindfulness program of ‘Sati Pasala’ (Mindful Meditation in Schools) is available on YouTube.²⁶⁵ The Sati Pasala Foundation was conducting mindfulness programs for children in some schools through lectures, public talks, and speeches by the time (2021-2022) this study was conducted.²⁶⁶ They have offered their meditation to children following a similar strategy in secular mindfulness meditation. Buddhist monks of the Sati Pasala Foundation play a modeling role in guiding those mindfulness programs.²⁶⁷ According to that program, mindfulness does not need to represent Buddhist meditation. At that time, the Ministry of Education had not approved implementing mindfulness programs in schools in Sri Lanka. However, the Daily Mirror, a national newspaper in Sri Lanka, had reported that the Education Ministry was planning to introduce “mindfulness”

²⁶⁴ Sati Pasala Foundation, “*Mindfulness for Schoolchildren: Sinhala 1*,” Dec 28, 2022, YouTube Video, 10:21, https://youtu.be/2yb4Ninzk_4?si=yPkFEJXfhU5wep10; “*Mindfulness for Schoolchildren: Sinhala 2*,” Dec 28, 2022, YouTube Video, 10: 20, https://youtu.be/5t9o7DsUf30?si=X_i_rapul_jgAGLF.

²⁶⁵ Sati Pasala Foundation, “සතිමත් බව පාසල් දරුවන්ට: වසර (1-5) කොටස - 01,” Oct 17, 2022, YouTube Video, 20:13, https://youtu.be/1D_96PajL90?si=mpPqafTsJcpsy2yS.

²⁶⁶ Sati Pasala Foundation, “පාසල් සිසුන් සඳහා සතිමත් බව: Mindfulness for Schoolchildren: Sinhala: 8,” Dec 29, 2022, YouTube Video, 10:22, <https://youtu.be/pFvMTci9KqY?si=Ls1QHAhUOoqtpefB>; “පාසල් සිසුන් සඳහා සතිමත් බව: Mindfulness for Schoolchildren: Sinhala 7,” Dec 29, 2022, YouTube Video, 10:10, https://youtu.be/-BshCOULYKk?si=y_3bEDda_xr76nku.

²⁶⁷ Sati Pasala Foundation, “පාසල් සිසුන් සඳහා සතිමත් බව: Mindfulness for Schoolchildren: Sinhala 13,” March 02, 2023, YouTube Video, 9:29, <https://youtu.be/DWg1zgOrF2k?si=IK7O42QMqFrDCcDm>.

in all schools in Sri Lanka as a pilot program from the very beginning of 2023.²⁶⁸ Several other websites also reported that the Education Ministry had scheduled to implement that ‘Sati Pasala’ mindfulness program in schools for 10 minutes three days per week.²⁶⁹ As reported, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka expected school children to practice 10-minute mindfulness before they start classes every day. The Ministry of Education needed religious leaders from every religion to guide a ten-minute mindfulness program for children in classrooms before school started. The basic idea of conducting those mindfulness programs among schoolchildren in schools was to support children to experience peace and calmness in their minds. Thereby, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka anticipated schoolchildren to attend their studies peacefully in school environments. The mindfulness program Sati Pasala differs from the Theravada contemplative meditation offered to Sri Lankan schoolteachers during the ten weeks of this study. However, it is not reported whether the Sati Pasala mindfulness program is still in progress in every school.

Even though the Ministry of Education wants to implement a mindfulness program in every school, schoolteachers do not have the confidence to conduct a

²⁶⁸ Chaturanga Pradeep Samarawickrama, "Mindfulness Pilot Programme to Be Launched in Schools from Jan 4: Minister," *Daily Mirror*, December 15, 2022, https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking_news/Mindfulness-pilot-programme-to-be-launched-in-schools-from-Jan-4-Minister/108-250490.

²⁶⁹ Sri Lanka Brief, "Religious Leaders Appointed to Supervise Mindfulness School Programme in Sri Lanka," *Sri Lanka Brief* (blog), December 15, 2022, <https://srilankabrief.org/religious-leaders-appointed-to-supervise-mindfulness-programme-in-sri-lanka/>; Guruwaraya.lk, "Mindfulness Programme for School Students in 2023," *Guruwaraya* (blog), December 13, 2022, <https://www.guruwaraya.lk/2022/12/mindfulness-programme-for-school.html>; Sati Pasala Foundation, "Mindfulness for Teacher Educators," *Sati Pasala* (blog), December 22, 2016, <https://www.satipasala.org/mindful/mindfulness-for-teacher-educators/>; Ministry of Education, "Mindfulness Education 'Satipasala' Program Is a Very Timely Action to Provide a Depression Free Better Mental Health for Children," | MOE, last modified February 9, 2021, <https://moe.gov.lk/week-school-program-is-very-timely-action-to-provide-a-depression-free-better-mental-health-for-children/>.

meditation program for children. Some schoolteachers seem to struggle with not being able to lead a 5–10-minute meditation in the classroom. To the best knowledge, meditation is not a common practice among many Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Only a few schoolteachers have experience practicing meditation. It was fruitful to investigate a doable program, as proposed in this study, to explore the feasibility of implementing a meditation program to benefit schoolteachers in Sri Lanka.

School instructors admired the contemplation meditation implemented in the study since it helped them relieve daily and occupational stress. School instructors applauded this eight-week meditation program not in the sense of putting an end to the cycle of birth and death but in the sense of addressing their occupational stress and burnout in everyday life situations. This research was executed to make the study participants' lives more pleasant. The study data reported participants' well-being through psychological scales and survey questionnaires. The results of this research reported the potential of Theravada contemplation meditation, which was tested through a range of mindful activities, to integrate into participants' daily lives. During the intervention, Theravada contemplation meditation was potential in decreasing participants' burnout and stress and increasing their everyday well-being.

Future Research

When meditation is offered online, the meditation conducted in a specific, allocated, designated, peaceful, and calm place could be more effective and productive in future research. Future explorers can test their research design at a work site by applying mindfulness among different populations. Any form of mindfulness or Buddhist meditation can benefit people if explored in a worksite or working environment in a

simple way. Future studies can explore the applicability of any form of mindful meditation in a classroom or school site. Using many self-reports and questionnaires in written form affects the participants' interest in skipping filling them out. Instead of using many questionnaires, self-reports, and scales in written form, future research can prepare reports to fill out online like Google Forms or such online tools.

Participants usually prefer to read short essays. Future research can limit the description of a study to only a few paragraphs when educating the participants about the study procedure. Regular, consistent contact with the participants when doing future research among any population is helpful. Sometimes, participants forget to respond to questionnaires and messages. They do not do so purposefully. They might unintentionally skip fulfilling specific research tasks since they engage in various daily activities and responsibilities. However, it is the responsibility of the researcher to remind the participants about the ongoing research from time to time.

Instead of exploring a range of mindful activities, future research can test mindfulness limited to one specific activity. For instance, a mindful activity like walking can be investigated with a research population. Future researchers can guide their research participants to practice mindful walking from simple to advanced steps. Mindful walking can be practiced with a normal speed, simply stating in the mind as "walking, walking." In the beginning, participants can pay attention to steps, as left and right, while walking. After an improvement in mindfulness with that first step, they can next pay attention to the movements of walking, such as lifting a foot from the ground and placing it on the floor. Thirdly, they can pay attention to their footsteps, such as lifting, moving, and placing. When it comes to the advanced steps, mindful walking can be practiced with

various movements such as taking a step, lifting, moving, placing the foot, and turning the body. Later, that awareness can be extended to various daily actions. Researchers have demonstrated many such daily actions in mindful walking.²⁷⁰ Participants can experience awareness when walking to the office, home, restroom, staff meetings, and in any direction. Future explorers can instruct their participants to observe each little movement and fully engage in walking with full presence in the mind. If it is challenging to focus on every action in daily life, Bhikkhu Anālayo suggests being mindful of one specific action of our daily experience. He says we can later extend that mindfulness to other daily actions in a simple way.²⁷¹ Future research can test the utility of mindfulness in every action in a specific meditation retreat. Researchers can observe how participants improve mindfulness without disturbances during such a meditation. Researchers can further explore the difference in a follow-up program, like how participants use that meditation insight at other times in daily life. This whole awareness should be explored in an actual environment rather than doing it online. When launching a meditation online, the researcher cannot directly observe the participants. This was explained as a limitation elsewhere in the fifth chapter.

Monastic institutions of Theravada Buddhism in Sri Lanka provide spiritual care for communities by guiding them on the true teachings of the Buddha. Monks use many religious activities like chanting, meditations, giving Dhamma talks, conducting Dhamma discussions, and Dhamma schools for children. Temples fulfill people's religious needs

²⁷⁰ Donald Altman, *The Mindfulness Toolbox: 50 Practical Tips, Tools and Handouts for Anxiety, Depression, Stress and Pain* (Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing and Media, 2014), 36–38; Linda A. Curran, *101 Trauma-Informed Interventions: Activities, Exercises and Assignments to Move the Client and Therapy Forward* (Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing and Media, 2013), 180.

²⁷¹ Anālayo, *Meditator's Life*, 206.

for spiritual care. Meanwhile, some monks and temples approach the poor, the sick, and the needy by providing them with houses, shelters, food, medicine, clothes, and dry ration packs. Some temples assist children in their education. Some temples take care of elderly people and children by running nursing homes and children's homes. Buddhist temples, institutes, and monastics engage in various humanistic and social actions for the well-functioning of communities in the country. However, there is also a timely need to utilize Buddhist-based mindfulness among professionals and in various work sites to benefit them in their daily lives. Research findings of such studies might influence universities, colleges, and other higher educational institutes in Sri Lanka to investigate some aspects of Buddhist meditation and Buddhist teachings in various research populations.

Theravada temples in Sri Lanka can explore the effectiveness of some aspects of Buddhist meditation and Buddhist teachings among various institutes to continue their engaged and humanistic social service to people in a more professional base.

Conclusion

Schoolteachers encounter many challenges and need to fulfill various duties in their daily lives. Utilizing mindfulness in school environments is fruitful in many aspects. It brings academic, social, and emotional outcomes to school education. This research inquired whether contemplation in Theravada meditation can benefit schoolteachers in reducing their stress and burnout. Research in Sri Lanka has yet to explore how mindfulness can be applied among schoolteachers. Extant literature shows insufficient empirical research on integrating mindfulness among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Whether secular or religious, mindfulness has benefited various populations in the West and East. This research investigated how often schoolteachers can use contemplation in a

simple way in daily actions. This study found that the designed protocol, contemplation as a form of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness, was popular with participants. The study's evidence supports a potential reduction in teacher stress and enhancement in reported well-being.

This study revealed that stress is a critical issue in the teaching profession. The introduction and literature review explain various reasons that cause stress and burnout among Sri Lankan schoolteachers. Scholarly views were consulted to design this research for the benefit of Sri Lankan schoolteachers. The extant literature was surfed using many research engines and databases to see similar studies investigating teacher burnout and stress. This study addressed a crucial gap in the literature by examining how to incorporate contemplation as a form of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness into the daily lives of school instructors. Sri Lankan studies were confined to analyzing only the reasons for teacher stress and burnout.

In contrast with the literature, this study explored the feasibility of experiencing full awareness in schoolteachers' daily actions through a range of mindfulness activities. Eight weeks spent on this online meditation were favorable for participants. Participants found it easy to practice the contemplation meditation and report its results during this time. Enrolling a minimum sample of twenty-four research participants enabled the intervention to be conducted efficiently. At the end of each meditation session, the grounding exercise helped participants to feel grounded in regular daily actions. It facilitated bringing participants' awareness back to the moment after the meditation. The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale measured participants' stress and mindfulness. The results of these two self-reports revealed a

notable decrease in stress and an increase in mindfulness among participants after eight weeks of meditation. This research intervention is highly suggestive that awareness in daily actions can bring clarity and stability to schoolteachers' minds, extending it to effective contemplative teaching.

This study attempted to fill the gap in the research for incorporating Buddhist-based mindfulness among school instructors in Sri Lanka. Schoolteachers learned a new experience of how to utilize Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness in their daily lives. Schoolteachers from two districts in Sri Lanka who participated in the study benefited from this meditation. However, this intervention might further benefit school children and parents. Policymakers in the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka can consult this research when introducing reforms in school curricula to apply mindfulness in school environments. Further research can explore Buddhist-based mindfulness in work sites, centers, and other institutes.

Contemplation as a form of Theravada Buddhist-based mindfulness can gain pragmatic results among Sri Lankan schoolteachers that benefit their everyday lives. This research found that full awareness of every action, whether experienced during a formal meditation or everyday actions, has the potential to address daily stress and burnout and increase well-being among school instructors.

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Appendix A

The Enrollment Transcript

Purpose

My name is Ven. Kongala Paññāloka. I am a doctoral student in the Chaplaincy Department of the University of the West at Rosemead in Southern California. I am doing a research study about Theravada Contemplation meditation with the participation of schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. This research project will inquire whether Buddhist-based mindfulness activities engaged daily are effective in enhancing the everyday well-being of schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. I have designed to implement this research study online for two months and two weeks. I expect you to participate in 10-online sessions on weekends. You can find more information about the 10-week online sessions in the chart below. For the convenience of collecting the data within the given timeline of every weekend for two months and two weeks and your comfort level, I will choose only a few contemplation practices from the Theravada contemplation meditation. I expect to use these few contemplation practices with a 15-minute guided meditation, and another 15-minute silent meditation of the day followed by a grounding exercise during the 8- meditation sessions online. The information you share with me may be of great benefit to schoolteachers. It may help reduce stress among schoolteachers if this study becomes a success.

Eligibility

You are eligible to participate in this study, if you are above 24 and below 55 years of age, and if you work as a schoolteacher in Sri Lanka. I will select volunteer participants from the two districts Kandy and Gampaha in Sri Lanka. 12 volunteer schoolteachers will be selected from each district and there is no intention to exceed this number when enrolling the participants. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Volunteer schoolteachers will receive an exclusion questionnaire and an anxiety test through WhatsApp and emails before the first online session. You need to complete the survey of demographic questions, and the anxiety test of the Beck Anxiety Inventory to get enrolled in the study program. You need to indicate the score of 0-21 of

low anxiety or 22-35 of moderate anxiety based on the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) to get enrolled in the study program. If your anxiety level is high, if it exceeds 36, you will be excluded from the study, because high anxiety indicates that you need to consult a counselor or physician for treatments. You further need to complete the survey of demographic questions (in which the inclusion/exclusion questionnaire is also a part) to be enrolled in the study program. Schoolteachers who meet the requirements of the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and the survey questionnaire as explained above will be immediately recruited for the study program. Exclusion criteria further apply to the following schoolteachers: schoolteachers who are exposed to health conditions, severe disorders, and the Covid-19 positive cases, who are receiving treatments for trauma from a physician or therapist, who have meditated more than 5 times or have a lot of experience participating in meditation retreats, or who are with a long history of practicing the Theravada meditation. Retired schoolteachers will also be excluded from the study. You will be notified of your admission into the study program through WhatsApp and emails. The enrollment procedure closes after this. Your gender, ethnicity, religion, language, spirituality, tradition, or worldview is not an issue to participate in this study.

Confidentiality

You can write your names on the consent form, the enrollment written transcript, the survey of demographic questions, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). A code system with the initials of your first and last names to distinguish each person will be used in the meditation sessions when collecting the data. You may answer the questions to your comfort level. All information gathered from you will be kept strictly confidential. Only the advisor and the researcher can access the data. The advisor of this study program can access to data since this research study needs to be reviewed by the university. There is no risk of breach of confidentiality. I will not disclose your name or identity in the text of my dissertation, publication, or presentations. If you decide not to participate in this study, there will be no penalty or compensation for you for quitting the study. You are free to decline to discuss any issues or answer any questions. You can stop participating

in this research program at any time. If you prefer to participate in online sessions with the disabled video, you may turn off the video.

Only the exit online meeting is audio recorded as your comments and thoughts will be useful for future research. The audio recording will not capture your names and identities. This audio recording will be stored in a safety folder on my laptop. No one can access that audio recording file as the laptop is password protected. The researcher will keep the data saved for five years. In any case, if the advisor wants to review this research work later, this data might make that task easier. After five years the data saved will be deleted permanently.

Duration of Participation

I will implement this study through 10-week sessions on weekends. This study will be conducted online through Zoom meetings. Enrolled volunteers will receive the Zoom link and the password through emails and WhatsApp to log in to online sessions before week one for the study program.

Online meditation sessions will take around 45-50 minutes during weekends. Initially, I will offer a 15-minute guided meditation for the participants. After this 15-minute guided meditation, another 15-minute will be spent in silent meditation through meditation of the day. After this silent meditation, I will do a quick grounding exercise and ask the participants to rate their level of discomfort and stress on a level of 0-10. This initial grounding activity will take 10 more minutes. When a participant rates his/her negative feelings, 10 means the worst on 0-10 scale. A low range of negative feelings is 6. If a participant is having overwhelming feelings over 6 on a 0-10 scale, then I will do a re-grounding activity through one of the three grounding techniques as per the participant's preference. This brief grounding activity might take another 5 minutes. If the participants seem to be fine with the meditation offered during the day and with the grounding techniques, that will be the end of the session for the day. Finally, I extend my thanks to everyone for participating in the session for the day.

10-week online meeting with 8-week meditation sessions		
sessions	Theme	Duration
Session 1	Introduction/signature for consent form/WSPT Teacher Stress Scale/Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)	60 minutes
Session 2	Contemplative Listening with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 3	Contemplative of Listening with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 4	Contemplative Walking with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 5	Contemplative walking with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 6	Contemplative Body Scan with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 7	Contemplative Body Scan with the guided and silent	45 minutes

	meditation followed by the grounding exercise	
Session 8	Contemplative Sitting with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 9	Contemplative Sitting with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise. Completing WSPT and MAAS for the last time.	80 minutes
Session 10	Exit Meeting	30 minutes

Benefits and Risks

Contemplative activities might help you to stay refreshed and energetic, exhibit greater confidence, increase concentration, and develop higher self-esteem in life situations. You might further benefit to use this as a form of relaxation to help you stay calmer and be alert in the everyday situations of your life during this study. This study might help researchers and schoolteachers in the future to practice contemplation during everyday actions to reduce stress. This study might help you on how to improve positive qualities to regulate your daily behavior during this study. This study program might help you to reduce your stress at least for some time or a few hours per day if you at least attempt to practice contemplation meditation for 10-15 minutes on other days except planned weekends. The four contemplation practices might help you to experience some level of well-being in your daily actions depending on how you practice it during a week during the 10 weeks of this program.

Though this study does not expect high risks in this program, some minimum or moderate levels of risks might occur. Sometimes, a participant might develop a physical, emotional, psychological difficulty or uneasiness during the study program. The designed

8-meditation sessions might trigger trauma, stress, anxiety, or panic attacks among the volunteers. A participant might develop some physical difficulties. ex: headaches, back pains, nausea, muscle pains due to meditation postures. A participant might do a self-evaluation of certain physical and mental difficulties. A participant might feel exhausted because of the meditation session of the day during the study program.

No one (including the investigator) is responsible for costs incurred via research-related negative events or injury.

Grounding Exercise

Grounding Techniques will be offered if you need to prevent physical or psychological difficulty during the meditation sessions. When practicing grounding techniques, you may understand the purpose of it and know how to use them if you become distressed or even mildly anxious. You must agree on the consent form that you will follow stress mitigation strategies of practicing grounding techniques that the researcher will offer at the end of the silent meditation during 8-week meditation sessions. You must tell the researcher during the sessions if your anxiety has significantly increased, and grounding techniques are not supportive enough. The investigator can ask the volunteers to rate their negative feelings after the exercise on 0-10-scale, with 10 being the worst. The investigator will ask the participants to rerate negative feelings after the exercise. Then the investigator will check whether the participants' ratings have changed from their initial ratings. As the author Lisa M. Najavits mentions in her research *Seeking Safety, A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse 2002*, pages 125-135, though Grounding does work, occasionally a patient's rating might not improve. In any case, if the Grounding does not work, the investigator will discuss how participants can use grounding as their preference. Participants can notice which method among the three types of grounding works best for them. They might prefer one category of physical, mental, or soothing grounding. If the participants prefer another round of the exercise, then the investigator can do another quick grounding exercise for 5 minutes.

If you experience trauma during the sessions, I will pause the exercise and give you a break. You are free to have a break like this during the sessions if you feel exhausted because of the meditation session of the day and resume the session when you feel

comfortable after a break. Immediate actions will be taken by the investigator to deal with any negative events if it happens because you participate in the research.

If you become too traumatized in the sessions to act on your behalf, the researcher encourages you to provide a contact for a family member to come to the zoom meeting. You need to agree upon this in the consent form. This will help the researcher to contact the family member if you are triggered or if you need support. You need to agree on the consent form to tell the investigator that if you begin medical treatment, medications, or therapy that might increase your anxiety or affect your psychological clarity.

You are free to withdraw from the study if you feel not grounded with the meditation sessions without any penalty. If your anxiety or trauma level is higher than expected, a relative or a close friend of yours will be contacted immediately using the number given in the consent form. I will help you, your relative, or a close friend of yours to contact a professional person, a counselor through an emergency hotline service in Sri Lanka.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency hotline service in Sri Lanka:

Suwasariya Ambulance: 1990 (This 24-hour emergency medical service provides an island-wide free high-quality pre-hospital emergency care to any person with an average response time of 15 minutes. Ambulance navigation and routing system is faster reach to the patient's location.)

National Mental Health Helpline: 1926

National Institute of Mental Health: 0112578234-7

Day Treatment Center: 0112578556/0113140844

Dementia Hotline: 0113140844

Contacts

If you have any questions about this research study program or your participation in the study program, please feel free to reach me either at 0714409192 or venpenalu@gmail.com.

If you would like to participate in this study program, please provide me with your contact number or email. I will email you or send through WhatsApp the survey of

demographic questions, and the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI). If you are recruited for the program, you will be notified immediately. I will inform you of the dates for starting the online sessions after you are recruited to the study program.

Thanking you profusely, Much Peace!

Investigator's Signature Date

Appendix B

The Demographic Questionnaire

For each item, please complete/circle the information that best describes you:

- Gender: Male /Female/Transgender/Do not want to specify
- Age:
- Ethnicity: Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, Burgher, Other (please specify) _____
- District: Gampaha/Kandy
- Marital Status: Married/Separated, Divorced/Widowed/Single/Never married
- Religion: Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Catholic, Hindu, Other _____
- Number of years teaching (including this year) _____
- I teach at a/an: Elementary School/Middle School/High School

Inclusion/Exclusion Questions

- How much meditation have you practiced in the past?
 - Never
 - 1-5 times
 - More than 6 times in your life
- How do you describe your knowledge of Theravada Buddhism and Buddhist Meditation?
 - No knowledge
 - Minimal knowledge
 - It's a part of my family's spiritual tradition.
 - Very knowledgeable based on books, academics, other training
- How likely are you to share your experiences during these sessions?
 - Very likely
 - Somewhat likely
 - More likely
- Will you be using mind-altering drugs (prescribed or not prescribed)? Yes No
- Will you be using alcohol during our group sessions? Yes No

- Are you currently under a doctor's or therapist's care for trauma, anxiety, or stress?
Yes No
- Are you currently experiencing stress due to a health condition, a mental or physical disorder? Yes No
- Are you having symptoms or experiencing COVID? Yes No
- Are you currently employed full-time as a teacher? Yes No

Participant's Name:

Email Address:

Telephone Number:

I am giving accurate information to the best of my knowledge.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C

The Beck Anxiety Inventory

Below is a list of common symptoms of anxiety. Please carefully read each item in the list. Indicate how much you have been bothered by that symptom during the past month, including today, by circling the number in the corresponding space in the column next to each symptom.

	Not At All	Mildly but it didn't bother me much.	Moderately - it wasn't pleasant at times	Severely – it bothered me a lot
Numbness or tingling	0	1	2	3
Feeling hot	0	1	2	3
Wobbliness in legs	0	1	2	3
Unable to relax	0	1	2	3
Fear of worst happening	0	1	2	3
Dizzy or lightheaded	0	1	2	3
Heart pounding/racing	0	1	2	3
Unsteady	0	1	2	3
Terrified or afraid	0	1	2	3
Nervous	0	1	2	3
Feeling of choking	0	1	2	3
Hands trembling	0	1	2	3
Shaky / unsteady	0	1	2	3
Fear of losing control	0	1	2	3
Difficulty in breathing	0	1	2	3
Fear of dying	0	1	2	3
Scared	0	1	2	3
Indigestion	0	1	2	3
Faint / lightheaded	0	1	2	3
Face flushed	0	1	2	3
Hot/cold sweats	0	1	2	3
Column Sum				

Scoring - Sum each column. Then sum the column totals to achieve a grand score. Write that score here __.

Interpretation

A grand sum between **0 – 21** indicates very low anxiety. That is usually a good thing. However, it is possible that you might be unrealistic in either your assessment which would be denial or that you have learned to “mask” the symptoms commonly associated with anxiety. Too little “anxiety” could indicate that you are detached from yourself, others, or your environment.

A grand sum between **22 – 35** indicates moderate anxiety. Your body is trying to tell you something. Look for patterns as to when and why you experience the symptoms described above. For example, if it occurs prior to public speaking and your job requires a lot of presentations you may want to find ways to calm yourself before speaking or let others do some of the presentations. You may have some conflict issues that need to be resolved. Clearly, it is not “panic” time, but you want to find ways to manage the stress you feel.

A grand sum that **exceeds 36** is a potential cause for concern. Again, look for patterns or times when you tend to feel the symptoms you have circled. Persistent and high anxiety is not a sign of personal weakness or failure. It is, however, something that needs to be proactively treated or there could be significant impacts to you mentally and physically. You may want to consult a counselor if the feelings persist.

Appendix D

The Consent Form 1

Purpose

My name is Ven. Kongala Paññāloka. I am a doctoral student in the Chaplaincy Department of the University of the West at Rosemead in Southern California. I am doing a research study about Theravada Contemplation meditation with the participation of schoolteachers in Sri Lanka. This research project will inquire whether Buddhist-based mindfulness activities engaged daily are effective in enhancing the everyday well-being of schoolteachers. I have designed to implement this research study online for two months and two weeks. I expect you to participate in 10-online sessions at weekends. You can find more information about the 10-week online sessions in the chart below. For the convenience of collecting the data within the given timeline of every weekend for two months and two weeks and for your comfort level, I will choose only a few contemplation practices from the Theravada contemplation meditation. I expect to use these few contemplation practices with a 15-minute guided meditation, and another 15-minute silent meditation of the day followed by a grounding exercise during the 8-minute meditation sessions online. The information you share with me may be of great benefit to schoolteachers. It may help reduce stress among schoolteachers if this study becomes a success.

Eligibility

You need to understand the exclusion criteria and give your consent for this study to prove your eligibility in the following way. You should have already received and understood the enrollment written transcript before this first online session. You are eligible to participate in this study, if you are above 24 and below 55 years of age, and if you still work as a schoolteacher in Sri Lanka. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You should have completed the survey of demographic questions (in which inclusion/exclusion questions are also a part), and the anxiety test of the Beck Anxiety Inventory by now to continue your participation throughout the 10-week online sessions.

Schoolteachers who meet the requirements of the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) and the exclusion questionnaire are eligible to continue the study program.

You need to indicate the score of 0-21 of low anxiety or 22-35 of moderate anxiety based on the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) to maintain your eligibility in the study program. If your anxiety level is high, if it exceeds 36, you can't get enrolled in the study, because high anxiety indicates that you need to consult a counselor or physician for treatments.

You further need to complete the exclusion questionnaire to be enrolled in the study program. Your gender, ethnicity, religion, language, spirituality, tradition, or worldview is not an issue to participate in this study. Exclusion criteria further apply to the following schoolteachers: schoolteachers who are exposed to health conditions, severe disorders, and the Covid-19 positive cases, who are receiving treatments for trauma from a physician or therapist, who have meditated more than 5 times or have a lot of experience participating in meditation retreats, or who are with a long history of practicing the Theravada meditation. Retired schoolteachers will also be excluded from the study.

Confidentiality

You can write your names on this consent form, the enrollment written transcript, the survey of demographic questions, the Beck Anxiety Inventory, the WSPT Teacher Stress Scale, and the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS). A code system with the initials of your first and last names to distinguish each person will be used in the meditation sessions when collecting the data. Please answer the questions to your comfort level. All information gathered from you will be kept strictly confidential. Only the advisor and the researcher can access the data. The advisor of this study program can access to data since this research study needs to be reviewed by the university. There is no risk of breach of confidentiality. I will not disclose your name or identity in the text of my dissertation, publication, or presentations. If you decide not to participate in this study, there will be no penalty or compensation for you for quitting the study. You are free to decline to discuss any issue or answer any question, as well as to stop participating in this research program at any time. If you prefer to participate in online sessions with

the disabled video, you may turn off the video. The exit session will only be audio recorded as your comments and thoughts are useful for future research. The audio recording will not capture your names and identities. This audio recording will be stored in a safety folder on my laptop. No one can access that audio recording file as the laptop is password protected. The researcher will keep the data saved for five years. In any case, if the advisor wants to review this research work later, this data might make that task easier. After five years the data saved will be deleted permanently.

Duration of Participation

This study will be implemented during 10 weeks on weekends over the Zoom. Enrolled volunteers will receive the Zoom link and the password through emails and WhatsApp to log in to online sessions before week one of the study program. 8- meditation sessions will take around 45-50 minutes during weekends. Initially, the researcher will offer 15-minute guided meditation for the participants. After this 15-minute guided meditation, another 15-minute will be spent in silent meditation through meditation of the day. After this silent meditation, the researcher will do a quick grounding exercise and ask the participants to rate their level of discomfort and stress on a level of 0-10. This initial grounding exercise will take 10 minutes. At the end of the exercise, the researcher will ask the participants to rerate their negative feelings. When a participant rates his/her negative feelings, 10 means the worst on 0-10 scale. A low range of negative feelings is 6. If a participant is having overwhelming feelings over 6 on a 0-10 scale, then the researcher will do a re-grounding activity for another 5-minutes with grounding techniques as his/her preference on three types of grounding. This brief grounding activity will take another 5 minutes. If the participants seem to be fine with the meditation offered during the day and the grounding techniques, that will be the end of the session for the day. Finally, I extend my thanks to everyone for participating in the session for the day.

10-week online meeting with 8-week meditation sessions		
sessions	Theme	Duration
Session 1	Introduction/signature for consent form/WSPT Teacher Stress Scale/Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS)	60 minutes
Session 2	Contemplative Listening with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 3	Contemplative of Listening with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 4	Contemplative Walking with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 5	Contemplative walking with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 6	Contemplative Body Scan with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 7	Contemplative Body Scan with the guided and silent	45 minutes

	meditation followed by the grounding exercise	
Session 8	Contemplative Sitting with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise	45 minutes
Session 9	Contemplative Sitting with the guided and silent meditation followed by the grounding exercise. Completing WSPT and MAAS for the last time.	80 minutes
Session 10	Exit Meeting	30 minutes

Benefits and Risks

Contemplative activities might help schoolteachers to stay refreshed and energetic, exhibit greater confidence, increase concentration, and develop higher self-esteem in life situations during this study. Participants might further benefit to use this as a form of relaxation to help them stay calmer and be alert in the everyday situations of their lives during this study. This study might help researchers and schoolteachers in the future to practice contemplation during everyday actions to reduce stress. This study might help participants learn how to improve positive qualities to regulate their daily behavior during this study. This study program might help participants to reduce stress at least for some time or a few hours per day if they attempt to practice contemplation meditation for 10-15 minutes on other days except the planned weekends.

The four contemplation practices might help participants to experience some level of well-being in their daily actions depending on how they practice it during a week during the 10 weeks of this program.

Though this study does not expect high risks in this program, some minimum or moderate levels of risks might occur. Sometimes a participant might develop a physical,

emotional, psychological difficulty or any uneasiness during the study program. The designed 8-meditation sessions might trigger trauma, stress, anxiety, or panic attacks among the volunteers. A participant might develop some physical difficulties. ex: headaches, back pains, nausea, muscle pains because of meditation postures. A participant might do a self-evaluation of certain physical and mental difficulties. A participant might feel exhausted because of the meditation session of the day during the study program.

No one (including the investigator) is responsible for costs incurred via research-related negative events or injury.

Grounding Exercise

Grounding Techniques will be offered if participants need to prevent physical or psychological difficulty during the meditation sessions. When practicing grounding techniques participants may understand the purpose of it and know how to use them if they become distressed or even mildly anxious. You must agree that you will follow stress mitigation strategies of practicing grounding techniques that the researcher will offer at the end of the silent meditation during 8-week meditation sessions. You must tell the researcher during the sessions if your anxiety has significantly increased, and grounding techniques are not supportive enough. The investigator can ask the volunteers to rate their negative feelings after the exercise on 0-10-scale, with 10 being the worst. The investigator will ask the participants to rerate negative feelings after the exercise. Then the investigator will check whether participants' ratings have changed from their initial ratings. As the author, Lisa M. Najavits mentions in her research *Seeking Safety, A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse*, (2002, pages 125-135), though Grounding does work occasionally a patient's rating might not improve. In any case, if the Grounding does not work, the investigator will discuss how participants can use grounding as their preference. Participants can notice which method among the three types of grounding works best for them. They might prefer one category of physical, mental, or soothing grounding. If the participants prefer another round of the exercise, then the investigator can do another quick grounding exercise for 5 minutes.

If you experience trauma during the sessions, I will pause the exercise and give you a break. You are free to have a break like this during the sessions if you feel exhausted because of the meditation session of the day and resume the session when you feel comfortable after a break.

Immediate actions will be taken by the investigator to deal with any negative events if it happens for you participated in the research.

If you become too traumatized in the sessions to act on your behalf, the researcher encourages you to provide a contact for a family member to come on the zoom meeting. You need to agree upon this in this consent form. This will help the researcher to contact the family member if you are triggered or if you need support. You need to agree here to tell the investigator that if you begin medical treatment, medications, or therapy that might increase your anxiety or affect your psychological clarity.

You are free to withdraw from the study if you feel not grounded with the meditation sessions without any penalty. If the anxiety or trauma is higher than expected, a relative or a close friend of yours will be contacted immediately over the number given here. The researcher will help you, your family member, or a close friend of yours to contact a professional person through an emergency hotline service in Sri Lanka.

Emergency Contacts

Emergency hotline service in Sri Lanka:

Suwasariya Ambulance: 1990 (This 24-hour emergency medical service provides an island-wide free high-quality pre-hospital emergency care to any person with an average response time of 15 minutes. Ambulance navigation and routing system is faster reach to the patient's location.)

National Mental Health Helpline: 1926

National Institute of Mental Health: 0112578234-7

Day Treatment Center: 0112578556/0113140844

Dementia Hotline: 0113140844

Contacts

If you have any questions regarding this research or your participation in the study program, please feel free to contact me either at 0714409192 or venpenalu@gmail.com. You can also contact my dissertation supervisor, Dr. Jitsujo Gauthier, at 0016199618717 or JitsujoG@uwest.edu. If you have any questions about your rights or transparency of this study, you can reach our university IRB committee at any time at IRB@uwest.edu.

If you would like a copy of this study, please provide me with your address or email, and I will send a copy to you in the future when I complete this study.

I agree to have this interview audiotaped. Yes No [Please circle one]

Family member's/friend's contact number: _____

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Thank you for your participation in this study.

Appendix E

The Consent Form 2

I consent to participate in this research project, and the following has been explained to me: the purpose, eligibility, confidentiality, duration of participation, benefits and risks, and emergency contacts through the enrollment transcript. My participation is entirely voluntary.

Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Email: _____

In an emergency, a family member's/friend's contact number: _____

I agree to have audiotaped the last meeting of this online meditation. Yes NO

Date: _____

Research Investigator: Ven. Kongala Paññāloka.

- Participants submitted this consent form using Google Forms.

Appendix F

The WSPT Teacher Stress Scale

The WSPT is a 36-item self-report stress inventory developed by Dr. C.F. Wilson in 1979 for teachers at the elementary and secondary levels. ... Item scores are summed to yield the total scale score and range from **36 to 180** (36 to 72 = Low Stress; 73 to 108 = Moderate Stress; 109 to 180 = High Stress).

Stress Profile for Teachers

Please circle the number that best represents your response:

Student Behavior

1. I have difficulty controlling my class.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

2. I become impatient/angry when my students do not do what I ask them to do.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

3. Lack of student motivation to learn affects the progress of my students negatively.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

4. My students make my job stressful.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Employee/Administrator Relations

5. I have difficulty in my working relationship with my administrator(s).

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

6. My administrator makes demands of me that I cannot meet.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

7. I feel I cannot be myself when I am interacting with my administrator.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

8. I feel my administrator does not approve of the job I do.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Teacher/Teacher Relations

9. I feel isolated in my job (and its problems).

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

10. I feel my fellow teachers think I am not doing a good job.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

11. Disagreements with my fellow teachers are a problem for me.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

12. I get too little support from the teachers with whom I work.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Parent/Teacher Relations

13. Parents of my students are a source of concern for me.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

14. Parent's disinterest in their child's performance at school concerns me.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

15. I feel my students' parents think I am not doing a satisfactory job of teaching their children.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

16. The home environment of my students concerns me.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Time Management

17. I have too much to do and not enough time to do it.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

18. I have to take work home to complete it.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

19. I am unable to keep up with correcting papers and other schoolwork.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

20. I have difficulty organizing my time in order to complete tasks.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

Intrapersonal Conflicts

21. I put self-imposed demands on myself to meet scheduled deadlines.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

22. I think badly of myself for not meeting the demands of my job.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

23. I am unable to express my stress to those who place demands on me.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

24. Teaching is stressful for me.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

Physical Symptoms of Stress

25. The frequency I experience one or more of these symptoms is: stomachaches, backaches, elevated blood pressure, stiff necks, and shoulders.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

26. I find my job tires me out.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

27. I am tense by the end of the day.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

28. I experience headaches.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

Psychological/Emotional Symptoms of Stress

29. I find myself complaining to others.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

30. I am frustrated and/or feel angry.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

31. I worry about my job.

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often

32. I feel depressed about my job.

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

Stress Management Techniques

33. I am unable to use an effective method to manage my stress (such as exercise relaxation techniques, etc.)

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

34. Stress management techniques would be useful in helping me cope with the demands of my job.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

35. I am now using one or more of the following to relieve my stress: alcohol, drugs, yelling, blaming, withdrawing, eating, smoking.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

36. I feel powerless to solve my difficulties.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very Often

Appendix G

The Mindful Attention Awareness Scale

The trait MAAS is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of mindfulness, namely, a receptive state of mind in which attention, informed by a sensitive awareness of what is occurring in the present, simply observes what is taking place.

Brown, K.W. & Ryan, R.M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 822-848.

Carlson, L.E. & Brown, K.W. (2005). Validation of the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in a cancer population. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 58, 29-33.

Instructions: Below is a collection of statements about your everyday experience. Using the 1-6 scale below, please indicate how frequently or infrequently you currently have each experience. Please answer according to what really reflects your experience rather than what you think your experience should be. Please treat each item separately from every other item.

1 almost always

2 very frequently

3 somewhat frequently

4 somewhat infrequently

5 very infrequently

6 almost never

_____ 1. I could be experiencing some emotion and not be conscious of it until sometime later.

- _____ 2. I break or spill things because of carelessness, not paying attention, or thinking of something else.
- _____ 3. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.
- _____ 4. I tend to walk quickly to get where I'm going without paying attention to what I experience along the way.
- _____ 5. I tend not to notice feelings of physical tension or discomfort until they really grab my attention.
- _____ 6. I forget a person's name almost as soon as I've been told it for the first time.
- _____ 7. It seems I am "running on automatic," without much awareness of what I'm doing.
- _____ 8. I rush through activities without being really attentive to them.
- _____ 9. I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.
- _____ 10. I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.
- _____ 11. I find myself listening to someone with one ear, doing something else at the same time.
- _____ 12. I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.
- _____ 13. I find myself preoccupied with the future or the past.
- _____ 14. I find myself doing things without paying attention.
- _____ 15. I snack without being aware that I'm eating.

Scoring: To score the scale, simply compute a mean (average) of the 15 items.

Appendix H

The Four Meditations of Contemplation

Listening, Walking, Body-scanning, and Sitting

1. Contemplative Listening

Welcome to our, “*contemplative listening meditation*” session. Find a comfortable seated position. Sit anywhere in your room: on your bed, against the wall, on your chair, on the floor on a cushion you find comfortable. Check how you are placing your hands on your lap. Keep both hands on your lap or knees with fingers stretched. Your palms either facing down or facing up with stretched fingers on your knees. Only when you are comfortable, close your eyes. Let your eyes rest. This might help you to experience the inner peace with the meditation we are going to practice today. Take a moment to settle into position wherever you are seated. [pause for a few seconds]

At first, you might experience various movements in your room, at your home, place of residence. As we find a deeper connection with these movements within us, we find that all these movements give us different experiences. Stay connected. [pause for a few seconds]

You may hear sounds, family members talking to each other at home. Though you don't have an intention to hear, a cellphone is ringing. How many various sounds do you hear at this moment? Try to identify each sound. Pets, dogs, or cats that are making sounds inside or outside. The sound of the ceiling fan or cooling fan, or the sound that comes from the kitchen. Maybe someone nearby is watching a TV show. [pause for a few seconds]

Focus on these sounds. Connect our inner energy with that sound however we experience it. Sometimes it might be pleasing, or annoying. Don't judge these experiences of listening.

Now you may be noticing other noises. Listen to these different sounds as they occur. This time, it may be the crying of a bird. Maybe a crow or squirrel is crying in your garden. (The crying of a squirrel is a common experience in Sri Lanka). Listen to the noise of the trees, branches, or twigs and how they are moving. If your house is located near a busy road, you may hear cars and vehicles passing. Meanwhile, airplane in the sky

overhead travels with a loud noise. For everything that you hear, just experience it as a sound without judgments. This means simply listening and knowing that you are listening.

What you are hearing is neither bad nor good. It's just sound. Just focus on the experience and recognize it as a sound, neither good nor bad [pause for a few seconds] Listen to these sounds and noises as they are. Focus on these sounds separately. Notice how these sounds happen, continue, and vanish from your experience. Stay connected to these experiences of hearing as far as you are comfortable. How do you experience these sounds? You may judge those sounds as pleasing, annoying, soft, or mild. Let that thought go away and try to accept the sound as it is. [pause for a few seconds]

Some of the listening experiences might generate soft and mild feelings in you. It is connected to your inner experience, most importantly with your inner self. Allow your thoughts to rest. Take this opportunity to bring your awareness to listening. Just feel how the sounds fill your ears. Do a quick scan of your listening right now. [pause for a few seconds] Try to hear the subtle sounds that you may not experience at other times. Stay focused on that experience. Simply focus on mindful listening.

Now intentionally let go of experiences that no longer serve you. Do not judge your experiences of frustrations, anxieties, stress, and worries. They are neither good nor bad. Just experiences. Let all that go for this moment. Visualize how the negative feelings are leaving out of your experience. Let this beautiful energy empower you and fill your life with comfort and happiness. [pause for a few seconds] (After 15-minute guided meditation, the investigator will lead the meditation session into the silent meditation.)

Now it's time for you to experience the bliss of silent meditation. Stay relaxed and connected to the various sounds you hear for a few more minutes silently. For the next 15 minutes of silent meditation, stay connected and mindfully practice the guided meditation of the day. All you have got to do is stay mindful of the sounds and noises you may hear now. Your mindfulness was disturbed by the guided meditation as I had to instruct you from time to time. Now you will be on your own. Make sure you are comfortable in your posture. Check whether you have tightened the muscles of your forehead, your eyebrows, jaw, and your shoulders. Let all the tightened places in your

body relax. Just focus on contemplative listening. [After 15 minutes, the investigator will finish the silent meditation with his voice as the following way]

To finish the session for the day, breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Take a deep breath and let it go slowly. And now open your eyes slowly if you kept them closed.

(After the 15-minute silent meditation, the investigator will guide the participants through a quick grounding exercise for 10 minutes. If a participant needs re-grounding, the investigator will do a quick grounding exercise again for 5 more minutes.)

2. **Contemplative Walking**

Welcome to our “*contemplative walking meditation*” session. Find a comfortable place in home or in your room. Choose a suitable place in your house or room so that you can practice mindful walking for a few minutes. Feel free to adjust the distance. You can walk back and forth. If you prefer to practice mindful walking in your room, you may walk in a circle. Make sure you walk in a balanced way. Don’t close your eyes. Keep your eyes open and look three to four feet ahead of you. Check how you are keeping your hands. Feel free to keep both hands joined in front of the body. This might help you to experience serenity. Take a second to settle into your position where you are standing. [pause for a few seconds]

Let's get started. Begin walking at a normal pace. Keep going. Don’t look at your feet. Be mindful how you place your feet on the floor. Notice your right foot moving forward. Notice your left foot moving forward. When you walk back and forth be mindful of the distance you need to turn back. If your walking place is inside the room, walk round and round inside the room. When you are placing your right foot on the floor, be mindful of it as the right foot. When you are placing the left foot on the floor, be mindful of it as the left foot. [pause for a few seconds]

You may miss the footsteps unintentionally as left and right. Bring your attention back and keep saying to yourself, “left and right.” If you miss a step, let it go. Start practicing again when you miss a step. It is natural to get confused with the steps. While you are practicing walking meditation, your mind may go from one place to another. You

may lose your attention on the two feet as left and right. Start again with mindful footsteps as left and right. Get back to your awareness. [pause for a few seconds]

Let go of the steps as left and right. Now start focusing on lifting and placing each foot. Notice how your foot is placing on the ground as the other foot lifts from the ground. Focus on it as lifting and placing. [pause for a few seconds] When you feel like your mind wanders away from the feet, simply bring it back and become aware of it. Do not look around at the sights. Instead, keep your gaze a few feet ahead of you. [pause for a few seconds] You are practicing an internal observation just to feel the sensation of walking mindfully. No need to walk too slowly. Walk at a normal pace. Be mindful of the balance of your body. Be mindful of your steps as left and right. Let the missed steps go and bring your awareness back to walking. Return your attention to the feet. Feel the sensations in your feet. You may also feel various sensations on your legs. You may also feel when you are going forward your body is moving forward too. If your concentration becomes stronger, you may become aware of the sensation in your feet, such as cold or warmth. If the floor is cold, you may feel a cold sensation in your feet. If it is warm, you may feel a warm sensation underneath your feet. If the floor is carpeted softly, you may feel a soft sensation in your feet. If the floor is rough, feel that sensation too. If you are wearing shoes, you may feel the softness and the texture of your shoes or slippers. Practice mindful walking at your own pace. Allow yourself to experience each step with awareness. [pause for a few seconds]

You followed the instructions to practice mindful walking for 15 minutes. We will now practice the next 15 minutes silently. Stay mindful about the walking steps without the speaker's voice. Your mindfulness was disturbed by the guided meditation as the instructor had to guide you from time to time. Now you will be on your own. Make sure you are comfortable in your posture. Check whether you have tightened the muscles of your forehead, your eyebrows, jaw, and your shoulders. Let all the tightened places in your body relax. Continue like this for another 10 minutes. No judgments about thoughts. Just focus on mindful walking. Let go of any unwanted thoughts and experience your mindful walking steps. (Now it's time for the participants to experience the bliss of that

silence. They will stay relaxed and connected to the various movements in their walking meditation like this for a few more minutes.)

Stop walking and sit somewhere in your room you find comfortable. To finish the session for the day, Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Take a deep breath and let it go slowly.

(After the 15-minute silent meditation, the investigator will guide the participants to do a quick grounding exercise for 10 minutes. If a participant needs re-grounding, the investigator will do a quick re-grounding exercise for 5 more minutes.)

3. **Contemplative Body-Scan**

Welcome to our “*body-scan*” session. Before we start the meditation session, make sure you find a comfortable seated position. Feel free to sit anywhere in your room as you wish. It may be on your bed, against the wall, on your chair, on the floor on a cushion you find comfortable. Make sure you are sitting in a fine position. Go ahead and check how you are placing your hands on your lap. Feel free to keep both hands on your lap or knees with fingers stretched. You can keep your palms either facing down or facing up with stretched fingers on your knees. Only when you are comfortable, close your eyes. Let your eyes rest. This might help you to experience the inner peace with the meditation we are going to practice today. Take a second to settle into your position where you are seated. [pause for a few seconds]

Let’s begin. Scan your body starting from the head, scanning it way down to the bottom, being mindful of body movements. Feel the sensation that goes through your body. Scan each part of your body making its way down to the tip of your toes. Bring your awareness to the head, forehead muscles, eyes, jaws, tongue, and neck. See whether you are having tightened muscles, whether you are having any pain in those places. Let them become relax. Relax the muscles and let the pain go away. Relax your forehead. Relax your eyebrows, jaws, eyes and tongue. Relax your neck muscles. observe the sensations you are having in those places. You may feel relaxed when you let those tightened muscles go away. [pause for a few seconds] Scan the middle region of your body. Feel the sensations you experience on your shoulders, in your hands, chest, belly, and back. [pause for a few seconds] Relax your body. [pause for a few seconds] Maybe

you are having some feelings of itching in your shoulders, hands, chest, belly, or back. Relax those places. If you feel like scratching those itching places, take your hand to that place and scratch it slowly. Relax your muscles. Bring back your hand on your knees or lap and relax. When you are relaxed, you might feel like you are healing through these pains. If you feel like itching your nose or ears; experience that sensation for a second. If the pain is unbearable, scratch that place and relax. You might feel the heartbeat now. Stay mindful of your heartbeat for a moment. [pause for a few seconds]

When you are inhaling and exhaling, feel the breath, filling the lungs and rising and falling of your belly. [pause for a few seconds] Feel the sensation you are having in your bladder, thighs, knees, calf, legs, and feet. Check whether you are having tightened muscles in those places. Let go off these pains from your lower body parts. If you feel the itching sensation, feel it for a second. If it is so painful and disturbing you, scratch it. [pause for a few seconds] Take a moment and watch how these sensations go away from you. [pause for a few seconds]

Sensations will never leave you. Sometimes you may feel sensations as pleasing. Sometimes as itching and disturbing your peace of mind. You may feel worried after you scratch the place with the thought that you missed your mindful body scanning. That's natural. Sometimes you may feel like your mind is wandering, drifting off. Bring your awareness back to the region of the body that you were focusing on. Feel different sensations there. Stay with your mindfulness. Breath in and breathe out. Continue the body scan through different parts of your body. [pause for a few seconds]

You followed the instructions to practice the contemplative body scan for 15 minutes. We will practice the silent meditation. Stay mindful of the various sensations in your body parts. Your mindfulness was disturbed by the guided meditation. Now you are on your own. See whether you are comfortable with your seated position. Check whether you are having tightened muscles. Let the tightened places relaxed. If you are uncomfortable with closed eyes, open your eyes and practice the mindful body scan. Focus on body scanning mindfully from the top to the bottom of your body as you wish. You may feel very subtle sensations. You may feel different sensations that you do not feel at other times. This might be an indication to notice that your contemplative body

scan has sharpened your awareness. You may feel various sensations you had never felt before. No judgments about thoughts. Just focus on the mindful body scan. Let go of any unwanted thoughts, bothering thoughts and experience your mindful body scan. (Now it's time for the participants to practice the silence meditation).

To finish the session for the day, slowly come back to the breath and feel how you breathe in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes simply focusing on the light. See what is happening around you. (After the 15-minute silent meditation, the investigator will guide the participants to do a quick grounding exercise for 10 minutes. In any case, if a participant needs re-grounding, the investigator will do it for 5 more minutes).

4. Contemplative Sitting

Welcome to our “*mindful sitting meditation*” session. Before we start the meditation session, make sure you find a comfortable seated position. Feel free to sit anywhere in your room as you wish. It may be on your bed, against the wall, on your chair, on the floor on a cushion you find comfortable. Make sure you are sitting in a fine position. Go ahead and check how you are placing your hands on your lap. Feel free to keep both hands on your lap or knees with fingers stretched. You can keep your palms either facing down or facing up with stretched fingers on your knees. Only when you are comfortable, close your eyes. Let your eyes rest. This might help you to experience the inner serenity with the meditation we are going to practice today. Take a second to settle into your position where you are seated. [pause for a few seconds]

First, take a moment to feel what's going on in and around you. You may hear various sounds in your room. Your family members are talking inside the house. [pause for a few seconds] Or, you may hear some voices of people outside. This way, various sounds, and listening experiences take your attention all the way from your sitting place to the neighborhood. [pause for a few seconds] You may feel the comfort of wind blowing through the windows in your room. You may feel the warmth of the day inside your house. Feel the weather conditions you are experiencing in your area. [pause for a few seconds] Maybe it is raining now. Feel the cold weather if it is raining now. You may also hear various other sounds, feel a lot of sensations, and feelings. Take a few minutes

to focus on these experiences as you go through them. [pause for a few seconds] Maybe your mind is wandering. Bring back your attention all the way from sounds, sensations, feelings, thoughts, and memories to your breath.

Take a moment to feel how you are inhaling and exhaling. Just stay connected with the feeling that you are breathing in, and you are breathing out. Just be aware of every breath you are inhaling and exhaling. [pause for a few seconds] Feel the breath when the air fills your nose down the body through the lungs to the stomach. Observe the exhaling when the breath is coming out from the stomach through the lungs and nose, and out of the body completely. Feel it come in. Feel it go out. Stay as much connected to the full awareness on the in-breath, and the out-breath. Let the breath just happen and observe it. [pause for a few seconds] If you find it difficult to focus on inhaling and exhaling at the same time, be mindful only of one function of your breath. Maybe it is breath in. Stay focused on breathing in every time you are inhaling. If you find it comfortable to stay connected to the outgoing breath, be mindful of it. [pause for a few seconds] Maybe, you are now missing the awareness of your breath. Let it go. Bring back your attention again to the breath. Let it happen as it is. Though we try to breathe in intentionally at times, breath flows in and out, naturally. So, no need of taking a breath purposefully. Let it happen as it is. What you all need to do is, be conscious of your breath like whether you are inhaling or exhaling. Simply focus and notice if you begin to feel your breath. Simply observe the breath as it flows in and out. [pause for a few seconds]

Though you try as much as to stay connected to your breath, you may feel that you have lost your attention, and your mind is wandering. A lot of thoughts might be flooding into your mind. It is natural to experience a lot of thoughts in the mind when practicing breath meditation. Let go of these unwanted thoughts. Bring back your awareness to breathing. No judgments here. Simply observe your breath. Breath in and let it go. Just watch the breath come in and go out. [pause for a few seconds] If this way of experiencing your breath is disturbing you, focus on how your belly is rising and falling with each breath. See it as rising and falling. No matter what it carries away, gently bring your attention back to your belly. Gently observe it as rising and falling with each breath in and out. [pause for a few seconds] Physical discomfort may divert your attention away

from the breath or belly. Various thoughts may disrupt your attention. Let these thoughts go. Let the never-ending stream of thoughts go. If you feel like your forehead and eyes are heavy now, relax. If you are experiencing discomfort, change it with mindfulness. If you feel pain with your stance, change that with awareness to your comfort zone. Feel relaxed. Feel the relaxation downward toward your neck, arms, chest, belly, hips, pelvic, thighs, calf, anklets, through the fingers, and the feet. Let that relaxing feeling go from the top to the bottom of the toes. [pause for a few seconds]

Next, we will practice the silent meditation. All you have to do is stay mindful about the breath in or out. Your mindfulness was disturbed by the guided meditation. Now you are on your own. See whether you are in a comfortable stance with your seated position. Continue like this for another 10 minutes. No judgments about thoughts. Let go of any unwanted thoughts, bothering thoughts and experience your mindful sitting. Try to be aware of your breath in. If not, feel how your belly is rising and falling with each breath. Practice awareness and feel whatever comes to your experience. Let them come in and go off. Just watch. (Now it's time for the participants to experience the bliss of that silence meditation. They will stay relaxed and connected to the mindful sitting like this for a few more minutes)

To finish the session for the day, now slowly come back to the breath and feel how you breathe in and breathe out. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes simply focusing on the light you might see in your room through the windows. Just see what's around you now.

(After the 15-minute silent meditation, the investigator will guide the participants to do a quick grounding exercise for 10 minutes. In any case, if a participant needs re-grounding, the investigator will do a quick re-grounding exercise for 5 more minutes).

Appendix I

The Grounding Exercise

Script for a 10-minute In-session Grounding Demonstration

The researcher used some words like ‘meditation practice session’, ‘home’, ‘residential place’ and ‘participants’ in this script to the initial script of the 10-minute grounding exercise by Lisa M. Najavits. The researcher did some changes in suitable places in the script. This script was used for doing the grounding exercise after the silent meditation of the program. First, the researcher asked the volunteer participants to rate their negative feelings on a 0-10 scale. After that, the researcher guided the participants to practice the grounding exercise for 10 minutes. At the end of the exercise, the researcher asked the participants to rerate their negative feelings. When a participant rates his/her negative feelings, 10 means the worst on a 0-10 scale. A low range of negative feelings is 6. If a participant was having overwhelming feelings over 6 on a 0-10 scale, then the researcher planned to do a re-grounding activity for another 5-minutes with grounding techniques as his/her preference on three types of grounding. (Seeking Safety, A Treatment Manual for PTSD and Substance Abuse, pages 131-132.)

Ask patients to rate their level of negative feelings before the exercise.

“Before starting this exercise, notice how you are feeling right now. If you were to rate your negative feelings on a 0–10 scale, with 10 being the worst, how bad do you feel right now? The reason to rate feelings is to see whether grounding helps to reduce the negative feelings; we will rerate the feelings after the exercise.” Ask each patient to state a rating and write these ratings down. Guide patients (participants) to give you a number, rather than to describe their feelings.

Orient patients to grounding. "Many people with PTSD find grounding very helpful. In grounding, the goal is to turn your attention to the outside world, to shift away from the inner world of negative feelings. You can detach and distance yourself from emotional pain. If you notice yourself focusing on negative feelings, try to let them go, like leaves in a fall breeze. Turn away from them, focusing your attention even stronger on the outside world. You may want to think of this as 'changing the channel,' just like a television, where you can change the channel to get a different show. Keep your eyes

open the entire time and look around the room as much as you like. Remember that you are always in control. And try not to judge anything—just notice what 'is.' I will give you grounding instructions for about 10 minutes. We will try three types of grounding: mental grounding, physical grounding, and soothing grounding. You can see which types work best for you. I'll also be asking a number of simple questions." For individual therapy: "Please answer the questions out loud." For group therapy: "Please answer the questions silently to yourself."

Mental grounding. "Start by reminding yourself that you are safe. You are here in therapy (meditation practice session). Today is ... (e.g., Saturday/Sunday), and you are at your home, residential place, etc. Now let's try to imagine putting a buffer between you and all of your negative feelings. Imagine that your negative feelings are bundled up and put in a container. Next, think of something you can put between you and that container of negative feelings. Perhaps it's a wall, a suit of armor, or a big open field in the country—anything that creates a safe distance between you and your negative feelings. Good!

"Now let's focus on the room. Look around the room. Name as many colors as you can. Good. Now name as many objects as you can: How many chairs are there? Are there curtains? How many windows? Look out the window—what is the weather outside? Good. Are there paintings or posters? If so, choose one and describe it, not judging it, but just describing everything you can about it: colors, shapes, content. Excellent! What color is the carpet or floor? How many doors are there? Are the lights fluorescent or yellow? What color is the paint on the walls? Do you see any words printed anywhere in the room (on a poster or book jacket)? If so, read each letter backward (the reason we read it backward is that you just want to notice the letters themselves—as if you're seeing these letters for the first time). Terrific!

"Next, we'll try naming some facts. Tell me the names of cities—as many cities as you can name. Wonderful! Now try naming all the sports teams that you can remember. How about TV shows? Name as many as you can. Now take the number 100; subtract 5 from that and notice the new number; subtract 5 again and notice the new number. Don't worry if you can't get the math—just let it go."

Physical grounding. "Now we're going to try physical grounding methods. Please keep following along with me. Notice your feet on the floor. They are literally grounded, connected to the floor. Wiggle your toes inside your shoes. Dig your heels gently into the floor to ground yourself even more. Good. Now, touch your chair: Tell me anything you can about it—what material is it made of? Now touch the table (or desk): What is it made of? Is it colder or warmer than the chair? Good. Now, find any object that's near you—perhaps a pen, or your keys, or something here on the desk. Pick it up and hold it and say everything you can about it: What it's made of, how heavy it is, whether it's cold or warm, what colors it is. Now clench your fists; notice the tension in your hands as you do that. Now release your fists. Good. Now press your palms together, with elbows to the side; press as tightly as you can. Focus all of your attention on your palms. Now let go. Excellent! Now grab onto your chair as tightly as you can; then after a few moments, now let it go. Finally, roll your head around in a circle a few times. Excellent."

Soothing grounding. "Now let's move on and try soothing grounding. Let's start with favorites. Think of your favorite color: What color is it? Good. Think of your favorite animal: What animal is it? Think of your favorite TV show: What TV show is it? Excellent. Now, think of your favorite season of the year: What season is it? Now think of your favorite time of day. What time of day is it? Think of a favorite person—it may be someone you know, or it could be a famous person. Picture that person. Good! If you want to, think of a favorite, upbeat song, and try to remember the tune and the words." Give patients at least a minute or so to do this.

"Now, try to think of a safe place. Still, keeping your eyes open, think of a place that is very safe, soothing, and calming for you: Maybe the beach, the mountains, a walk in the city, a favorite room, or a park? If you can't think of a safe place, that's okay too—just let yourself notice this room since we're safe here. Good. Now, try to notice everything you can about your safe place. Notice everything you love about it—the colors, the textures, the shapes, and the safety and calm of the place. Good. You have done a terrific job." Keep going until at least 10 minutes have been completed.

(The investigator i.e., I will ask the participants to rerate negative feelings after the exercise. Ex: “Now rerate your negative feelings on a 0–10 scale (10 being the most negative).” Then the investigator will check whether participants’ ratings have changed from their initial ratings).

As Lisa M. Najavits mentions though Grounding does work, occasionally a patient’s rating might not improve. In any case, if the Grounding does not work, the investigator will discuss how participants can use grounding as their preference. Participants can notice which method among the three types of grounding works best for them. It could be physical, mental, or soothing grounding. The investigator can also ask, “what did you like and dislike about the grounding? What type of grounding works best for you? Were any parts of the exercise a problem for you? What do you think might help make it more effective next time for you? Are there any grounding techniques that you would like to add to the list?” The investigator can give further suggestions to the participants to make their exercise improve for better results. For example, the investigator can ask the participants to practice the exercise as often as possible, practice faster, practice grounding for a long time like 30-40 minutes. They may also have others to assist them in grounding. For example, they may ask their friends, family members to help guide them in grounding exercises. They may also create a cassette tape of grounding of their preference and listen to it when they need to practice grounding exercise.

At the end of the 10 to 15-minute grounding exercise, the investigator will thank every participant for his/her participation in the meditation session. The online meditation session for the day will come to an end with greetings for the day.

And I hope you have wonderful rest of the day!

Appendix J

The Recruitment Email

November 02, 2022

Congratulations!

I am very happy to inform you that you have been selected for the Online Weekend Meditation program. Thank you so much for filling the google forms of the Beck Anxiety Inventory and the Demographic Questionnaire.

As scheduled, the meditation program will be held on weekends at a convenient time. Hopefully, I will launch the program in a couple of weeks. I will contact you soon either through emails or WhatsApp to fix a time that suits your weekend schedule.

Thanking you profusely,

Ven. Paññāloka from Los Angeles.

සුඛ පැතුම්!

සති අන්තයේ පැවැත්වීමට නියමිත (online) මාර්ගගත භාවනා වැඩසටහන සඳහා ඔබව බඳවාගත් බව ඉමහත් සතුටින් දැනුම් දෙමි. ගූගල් පත්‍රිකා ලෙස ඔබට ලැබුණු බෙක් විසින් නිර්මිත ක්ලමත පරිමාණය හා ප්‍රජා තොරතුරු සඳහන් ප්‍රශ්න මාලාව පුරවා එවීම ගැන ඔබතුමාට/ඔබතුමියට බෙහෙවින් ස්තූතියි.

සැලසුම් කොට ඇති පරිදි ඔබට පහසු වේලාවක සෑම සති අන්තයකම භාවනා වැඩසටහන පැවැත්වෙනු ඇත. සති දෙකකින් පමණ පසු භාවනා වැඩසටහන ආරම්භ කිරීමට අපේක්ෂා කරමි. සති අන්තයෙහි පහසු වේලාවක් ඒ සඳහා වෙන් කර ගැනීමට ඊමේල් හෝ වටස් ඇප් මගින් ඔබව ඉතා ඉක්මනින් සම්බන්ධ කර ගැනීමට බලාපොරොත්තු වෙමි.

ඔබට බෙහෙවින් ස්තූතියි!

පඤ්ඤාලෝක ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේ ලොස් ඇන්ජලීස් නුවර සිට.

Appendix K

The WhatsApp Text Message

Dear All,

I will start the online mindful meditation on December 17th, 2022. I will host the zoom meeting at 7 p.m. from Sri Lanka time every Saturday. This will continue for 30-40 minutes every Saturday for 10 weeks. Make it a time to enjoy the bliss of this meditation program for a new experience in your life. You can find the information below for the zoom link, zoom ID, and the zoom passcode for the meeting. For any inquiries, please feel free to contact me.

Much Peace and Much Health!

Thanks!

Ven. Paññāloka from Los Angeles.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3867025150?pwd=NVJsZ1dPVkh2MkZCU0dBUM9rZklSdz09>

Meeting ID: 386 702 5150

Passcode: 077365

(This WhatsApp text message was sent to the participants on December 14, 2022, to inform them about the start date and time for the eight-week meditation program)

ගුරු මහත්මාවරුනි, ගුරු මහත්මියනි,

මේ සතියේ සෙනසුරාදා, එනම් දෙසැම්බර් 17, 2022 වැනි දින ලංකාවේ වේලාවෙන් සවස 7 ට මාර්ගගත භාවනා වැඩසටහන මම ආරම්භ කරමි. අනතුරුව සති දහයක කාලසීමාවක සෑම සෙනසුරාදාවකම සවස 7 සිට විනාඩි 30-40 පමණ කාලයක් මෙම භාවනා වැඩසටහනට ගත වෙනු ඇත. භාවනාව හා සබැඳි මෙම නැවුම් අත්දැකීම ඔබගේ ජීවිතයේ අත්විඳ ගැනීමට අවස්ථාවක් කරගනු මැනව. Zoom සබඳතාවය, zoom ID සහ zoom මුරපදය පහතින් ඇත. ඕනෑම විමසීමක් සඳහා මාව සම්බන්ධ කරගනු මැනව.

හැමෝටම නිදසක් නිරෝගී සුව පනමි. ස්තුතියි!

පඤ්ඤාලෝක ස්වාමීන් වහන්සේ ලොස් ඇන්ජලීස් නුවර සිට.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/3867025150?pwd=NVJsZ1dPVkh2MkZCU0dBUM9rZklSdz09>

Meeting ID: 386 702 5150

Passcode: 077365