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EDITOR'S NOTE

Paññāsāstra Institute of Academic Research and Development (PIARD) is a research department of Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia (PUC). PIARD Journal is a bi-annual publication in the English language with an Editorial Board and reviewers. The Journal is published by the Paññāsāstra University Press (PUC Press) on a wide range of areas, fields, and topics. The Journal contributors are local and international professional and academic researchers and scholars. The purpose of the Journal is to assist researchers to publish their professional, academic, and research-works, and disseminate them to the local and international academic community and the general public to promote scholarship and new knowledge, new thinking, new idea, and new theory under the philosophy of change, innovation, and transformation.

Morality and education are inherently intertwined, shaping the character and intellectual growth of individuals and societies. Education is not merely about the transmission of knowledge but also about instilling values, ethics, and a sense of responsibility toward others. In the modern world, where diverse cultural and moral frameworks coexist, education systems bear the significant challenge of fostering a universal moral compass while respecting cultural plurality.

The role of educators extends beyond teaching; educators are architects of moral consciousness. By integrating discussions on empathy, fairness, justice, and integrity into their curricula, educators help cultivate individuals who are not only intellectually equipped but also morally grounded. In doing so, education becomes a powerful tool for social cohesion, reducing prejudice and promoting inclusivity.

Science and technology have revolutionized the educational landscape, breaking down barriers of time and space, and democratizing access to knowledge. Online learning platforms, virtual classrooms, and interactive tools have made education accessible to millions worldwide, transcending geographic and economic constraints. These advancements have fostered personalized learning, enabling students to learn at their own pace and according to their unique needs.

Beyond education, the influence of science and technology on our lives is profound. From healthcare innovations that save lives to digital platforms that connect people across continents, technology has redefined how we live, work, and interact. However, these

advancements also pose challenges, including ethical dilemmas, digital addiction, and the erosion of privacy. As we integrate more technology into our lives, it is crucial to balance its benefits with mindfulness and ethical considerations.

Education plays a pivotal role in peacebuilding by fostering dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation in conflict-ridden societies. By promoting critical thinking, tolerance, and respect for diversity, education can address the root-causes of conflict and prevent violence. Schools and universities serve as platforms where students from diverse backgrounds can engage in meaningful conversations, breaking down stereotypes, and building bridges of understanding.

Moreover, peace education, which focuses on teaching conflict resolution, human rights, and global citizenship, equips individuals with the skills to resolve disputes non-violently and to advocate for justice and equality. It empowers communities to challenge systems of oppression and to strive for a more just and harmonious world.

The synergy between morality, science, and peacebuilding in education is vital for nurturing responsible, informed, and compassionate global citizens. As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, education must evolve to address both the challenges and opportunities of our time, paving the way for a more equitable and peaceful future. I still have a firm belief that good education should teach the body to move, the mind to think, and the heart to feel human.

This third issue of PIARD Journal includes seven scholarly articles, covering areas of morality and education, the impact of science and technology on education and our lives, and peacebuilding. PIARD Journal is available in printed and electronic forms. PIARD Journal welcomes your articles for publication consideration. I hope you enjoy reading the copy you now have in your hands. Thank you.

Phnom Penh, January 8, 2025
Sam-Ang Sam, Ph.D.
Editor-in-Chief

Rethinking justice: What is the right thing to do

Justin Dara Op

Abstract

The purpose of the paper is to examine two justice aspects of Michael Sandel: Doing the Right Thing and What Matters is the Motive of Immanuel Kant. Doing the Right Thing challenges the readers on the morality relating to the action to be chosen. What the right actions a person should choose when there is a situation that requires a moral decision. The second aspect is on Immanuel Kant's moral principle, who was considered a libertarian, in comparison to the moral principles of utilitarians like David Hume, Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill. The last three persons were the most influential in moral reasoning and utilitarianism. He also challenged the empiricist theory of knowledge associated with John Locke.

Keywords: Moral philosophy, utilitarianism, Kantian Ethics, autonomy vs. heteronomy, Categorical Imperative, moral worth

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Introduction

Michael Sandel presents cases in *Doing the Right Thing* that make readers think of the right ideas or decisions to take without compromising the moral aspect. He also introduces the three contrasts or dualisms of Kant, which connect to the principle of morality. It illustrates Kant's theory of morality in comparison to that of utilitarianism. Immanuel Kant's view on happiness is different from that of utilitarianists such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. In utilitarianism, the law is just when it is made to suit the majority. Such belief is not considered morally right, in Kant's view. Morality is not based only on observation or experience but on the virtue that a person poses or acts. In utilitarianism, "Happiness" is when it is for the majority of people, which is in the sense of maximizing utility. John Broome, a professor of Economics and Philosophy at the University of Bristol, defined "Utility" as *usefulness* (Broome, 1991). He further said of Jeremy Bentham, who said the principle of utility is the principle of actions judged by their usefulness with the tendency to produce good or happiness. The people who believe in the principle are known as utilitarians. Utilitarianism is in line with consequentialism. It states that the consequences of any action are the basis of right and wrong, but there are some differences that consequentialism includes egoism and altruism of which utilitarianism does not. Utilitarianism looks at the interests of all human beings equally. Let's examine some examples and cases involving the use of the concept of libertarianism of Kant and the utilitarianism of a person like Jeremy Bentham, who was known as the modern father of utilitarianism. Bentham believes that what is considered the right action is "if, and only if, it leads to the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people it affects" (Law, 2016).

Doing the Right Thing

The Moral Side of Murder

Case 1: The trolley car

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A person is driving a trolley car, and it is hurtling down the track at a good speed. At the end of the track, there are five workers working on the track. The trolley car's driver tries to stop, but the brakes don't work. The driver knows that if the trolley car keeps going, it can kill the five workers. He feels hopeless. Then, he realizes that there is a sidetrack that he turns. His steering wheel still works. However, there is a person working at the end of the sidetrack. The driver can turn the trolley car on the sidetrack if he chooses to and kills the one worker at the end of the track. The question arises as to what the right thing is to take— whether the driver should continue on the same track and kill five workers or make a turn and kill just one. Some say it would be better to kill one person rather than to kill five people. Some people similarize the reason to the reason for the 9/11 event, that the pilots who decided to fly the plane into the Pennsylvania field to kill everyone, including himself, rather than flying into a building to kill many more. Some choose not to turn the trolley car onto the sidetrack and to let the trolley car continue on the same track, which eventually kills five workers. Michael Sandel throws in a slightly different scenario that now there is an onlooker and a person standing next to the track where the trolley car is coming toward the five workers at full speed. To save the five workers, the onlooker can push the person standing by the track onto the track to derail the trolley car to save the five workers, but the person, who was pushed, will die. Let's look into the matter. The 9/11 event scenario is not quite the same as the trolley car case. The pilot, whether or not he chooses to fly into the Pennsylvania field, all the people in the plane, including himself, still die, so he did the honorable and right thing just to avoid killing more people than the ones on the plane. When the trolley car driver chooses to turn onto the sidetrack, even with a good intention just to kill one person instead of five, he has an intention to kill, which most likely is wrong from a Buddhist point of view. In the second scenario of pushing a person onto the track, it clearly indicates a wrongdoing. It's murder. If the onlooker wants to save the five, why can he jump onto the track himself?

Case 2: The emergency room

Sandel presents a scenario that there are six injured patients involved in a trolley car wreck. In the emergency room, there is only one doctor. As a doctor, he could spend

the whole time to save one severely injured patient and potentially let the other five die, or he could choose to treat the other five, spending moderate time on each one of the patients to save them, but at the same time, the one severely injured will die. As normal practice, the doctor probably will choose his or her time trying to save the severely injured patient to a point that he can jump out to work on the other five, one by one. If the doctor sees, however, that the severely injured person is too critical to save, he might choose to spend his time saving the other five instead.

Case 3: The organ transplant

Sandel brings up another scenario that there are five patients in desperate need of organ transplants of different kinds, and there are no organ donors. There happens to be a healthy patient coming for a checkup staying in the next room. As an organ surgeon, he can take the needed organs of the healthy person without his consent, and the person would die to save the other five. This time is totally wrong to kill one person even with his consent to save the five.

With the three cases presented above, Sandel brings out three moral principles. The first moral principle is the consequentialist moral reasoning that the right thing and the moral thing to do depend on the consequences that will result from the person's action that chooses to save five lives with the one life that must die. The second principle is the categorical moral reasoning that is not to look just at the result but the character of the act that matters. The categorical moral reasoning is to put morality in certain categorical duties and rights with nothing to do with the consequences. To kill one person in order to save five other lives is morally wrong. A consequentialist moral theory is based on the philosophy of utilitarianism, which was founded by Jeremy Bentham. Bentham, who was an 18th-century English philosopher, said, "It is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong" (Jeremy Bentham, 2023). So, the idea to sacrifice one to save five may be acceptable. The other thing of Bentham's idea is that the just thing to do is to maximize utility, which is to balance pleasure over pain and happiness over suffering, and that human beings are governed by pain and pleasure. Because human

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beings like pleasure over pain, to maximize utility, Bentham thought that morality should be based on maximizing happiness. Sandel agrees with Bentham on the part that we are human beings, and as human beings, we tend to respond to our senses and feelings, but not to use such an idea as the only reason to maximize happiness.

Case 4: Lifeboat case: Is murder allowed by necessity?

To examine the principle of utility, Sandel brought up a real-life 19th-century law case of *Queen versus Dudley and Stephens* (Kulkarni, 2004). It was about a yacht, *Mignonette*, with four crew members: Thomas Dudley was an experienced captain, Edward Stephens was the first mate, Edmund Brooks was a sailor, and the 17-year-old Richard Parker was a cabin boy. Parker was an inexperienced seaman and had no family. For the other three, they all had family with wives and children. Purchased by an Australian lawyer, Jack Want, the *Mignonette*, which was an inshore boat, was to be sailed from Southampton, England, to Sydney, Australia. Due to not being built for a long distance, the ship finally met its fate. The four crew members had to abandon the yacht and jump onto a lifeboat. After four days of traveling, they ran out of food. For another eight days, they had nothing to eat and drink. Out of thirst and hunger, the cabin boy could not help but drink seawater against the advice of others. Richard was so sick. On the 19th day, some started to have an idea to draw lots to see who would die to save the rest. Out of the three members, not counting Parker, who appeared to be dying, Brooks refused the idea. At the end, the three decided to kill Parker. With Stephens' help, Dudley killed the boy with a penknife. All three consumed the flesh and meat of Parker. Four days later, all three, except the cabin boy who had been eaten, were rescued by a German ship. Dudley, Stephens, and Brooks were put on trial by the High Court of Justice of England and Wales. Dudley and Stephens were found guilty, and Brooks was acquitted since he never consented to the killing. With utilitarianism, it may be alright to kill one person in order to save three—with or without the consent of the person who was killed. Moreover, it should be noted that the other three individuals had families, while the boy, who was alone, was already dying. Libertarians will not agree with such an idea, citing that it violates the boy's right since he had never agreed to his murder. From the Buddhist's point of view, it will never be right to take the

life of a living being, including one's own self. However, killing oneself is considered virtuous if the act of suicide is for a good cause, that is, to save other beings. Such action of killing one's own self to save others is the action of Dāna Paramita (perfection of giving). Dāna Paramita is the first of the ten paramitas that lead to enlightenment (Nivana). In the story of the First Paramita of Jātaka manuscript (Chung Tai Zen Center of Summyvale, 2007), a Brahman was willing to sacrifice his life to a weak female tiger so she could have milk and strength to feed her cubs. In the other story of Jātaka, the Second Paramita—Sīla (Moral Conduct) (Chung Tai Zen Center of Summyvale, 2004), a boy of a butcher, who refused to kill a sheep as his father forced him to, killed himself, saying that if he killed the sheep, he would become a butcher. Both stories were the stories of the Bodhisattva, who later became the Samana Gotama Buddha.

What Matters Is the Motive

Freedom: Autonomy vs. heteronomy

Sandel views freedom as the absence of obstacles to doing things that a person wants. Since human beings like pleasure and dislike pain, we tend to do things to follow the desires and passions. Thus, we are not acting freely. We let our urge to dictate the outcome of what we want. To act freely, Kant uses the term “autonomy.” A person acting autonomously is to act according to the law that the person gives to himself or herself, not to any sources of nature and social pressure. On the other hand, when acting in accordance with the determination given outside of oneself, it is to act in what Kant uses the term, “heteronomy.” Hetero means others. Sandel gives an example of a billiard ball that is falling to the ground. The billiard ball is not acting freely as it falls to the ground since it falls under the effect of gravitational force—the law of nature. If the billiard ball hits a person, it will not be morally responsible. The billiard ball is considered to act heteronomously and not autonomously. There is a link between freedom and autonomy, which also links to Kant’s idea of morality. Acting autonomously is to act morally responsibly. The capacity to act autonomously gives the person the value of dignity, which shows the person as an end in himself or herself. It also means the person’s value depends

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solely not on anything else but on their own action according to the law he or she gives to himself or herself. Let's look at the case of pushing a man onto the track of the trolley car to avoid killing the other five people on the track. The action would disrespect the man as an end in himself as the autonomy principle put forth. The utilitarians may see it as acceptable since it is to kill one to save many, but Mill, as a rational utilitarian, will disagree. He does not see it as Kant does, but to see that the action may give an effect to people to stop standing near the sidetrack. It devalues the utility in the long run. To Kant, freedom is the opposite of necessity.

Moral Worthiness: Look for the Motive

With the autonomous principle, by looking at the moral side, what is considered moral worth depends on the motive of which the act is done. Acting autonomously is to act freely, and to act morally worth is to act in an intention of doing the right thing because it's right and whether or not the action is successful. Acting with a motive of self-interest or in all attempts to satisfy one's own wants is considered an action with a lack of moral worth. Kant calls it the "motive of inclination" and not the "motive of duty." And only the actions with the motive of duty have moral worth. Sandel states, "For any action to be morally good, it is not enough that it should conform to the moral law—it must also be done for the sake of the moral law" (Sandel, 2009). Kant gave an example of a prudent shopkeeper who sells a loaf of bread to a young and innocent boy. The shopkeeper can jack up the price of the loaf of bread, and the boy will not know it, but he chooses not to for the reason that it may ruin his reputation, should such dishonesty be later revealed. The shopkeeper did the right thing but not for the right reason. His action lacks moral good since he chooses not to do it for the sake of his self-interest. He, however, chooses not to do it because he sees that it is not morally right. The latter will be considered moral worth.

Morality: Duty vs. Inclination (Motive of Duty)

Kant brings up another aspect of moral worth. It is the motive of duty. "Doing something because it's right, not because it's useful or convenient" (Sandel, 2009). Let's

look at an example of suicide. A hopeless and miserable person who no longer has a desire to go on living. He, however, chooses to continue on living not from inclination but from duty. Such action is considered moral worth. Now, let's look a little deeper into a case of two kinds of persons. One person is an altruist who takes pleasure in helping other people. The other is a misanthrope who lacks sympathy and compassion. Unlike the altruistic person who has pleasure in helping others, the misanthropic person has to tear his heart out to help others, not from his compassion but for the sake of duty. The misanthropic person's action has a moral duty, whereas the altruistic person does not. Kant explains that having pleasure in doing the right thing does not mean it lacks moral worth. It is considered moral worth when a good deed is done because it is the right thing to do, whether or not it gives the person pleasure. To illustrate moral worth character, let's look at another example. The New York Times had posted an article, "Misspeller is a Spelling Bee Hero," in its June 9, 1983, edition (UPI, 2009). It called a thirteen-year-old boy a spelling bee hero for his honesty in telling judges he was misspelling the word. When it was his turn to spell a word, "echolalia." The boy mistakenly misspelled the first vowel "a" with an "e." The judges misheard the vowel and let the boy win. The boy later realized his mistake and told the judge about it. The judges then withdrew his name. He was honored with a name, "Spelling Bee Hero." When later asked why he came forward to tell the judges of his misspelling word, he said, "I didn't want to feel like a slime." From the quote, Sandel comments that "Not wanting to feel like a slime is an inclination..." The boy's truth-telling may lack moral worth since it seems like his courage to tell the truth is to avoid the feeling of guilt or to avoid bad publicity should his mistake be revealed. However, if he tells the truth because it is the right thing to do as his primary choice, his action will carry some moral worth.

Reason: Categorical vs. Hypothetical Imperatives

Now let's look at the moral worth conditions from two aspects, the categorical imperative and the hypothetical imperative. The Oxford dictionary defines imperative as crucial or vital. Kant states, "If the action would be good solely as a means to something else, the imperative is hypothetical. If the action is represented as good in itself, and therefore as necessary for a will that, of itself, accords with reason, then the imperative is

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categorical” (Sandel, 2009) He further says that the hypothetical imperative is conditional and the categorical one is unconditional. The conditional hypothetical imperative is when a person does one thing in order to get something else. In business, a shopkeeper always practices honesty so he can earn trust and respect from his customers in order to have a successful business. Look at the Golden Rule that said, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” Such a statement, that tells you to treat others well if you want to have them give you the same treatment, clearly shows it fits the hypothetical imperative point of view. On the other hand, the action of treating people as they are rational beings regardless of what they want to be treated will be classified as a categorical imperative.

Conclusion

In Buddhism, there are eight worldly conditions that human beings are living under (Ubeysekara, 2021). They are:

- 1- Gain (*labho*) and loss (*alabho*)
- 2- Fame (*yaso*) and disgrace (*ayaso*)
- 3- Praise (*pasansa*) and blame (*ninda*)
- 4- Pleasure (*sukha*) and pain (*dukkha*)

With regard to the pain and pleasure, as a utilitarian thinker, Bentham put forth that we are human beings. Pain and pleasure are “our sovereign master” (Sandel, 2009). Kant partially agrees with Bentham’s view on the part that human beings have the capacity for pleasure and pain, and we seek pleasure and avoid pain. Human beings are more than animals who just do things to please their appetites. Human beings are rational beings who have an ability to rationalize. And as autonomous beings, we surely can choose to act freely. For Kant, freedom is not just simply doing things in the absence of obstacles or in accordance with the natural necessity. To act freely is to act autonomously, and to act autonomously is to act accordingly to a law I give myself (Triethoc 42, 2020). The opposite of autonomy, Kant invents a word called “heteronomy.” A heteronomous act is an action that a person does in accordance with an inclination, not because he chooses to do it for himself. It is the action that put human beings as instruments to purposes given outside us.

Let's look at the free-falling billiard ball, for instance. We might think the billiard ball is acting freely as it falls to the ground, but actually, it falls under the natural law of gravity. Unlike the billiard ball, which is not acting according to a law it gives to itself, a human being, as Kant puts it, can choose to act not on the inclination of the law of nature or the laws of cause and effect. Let's look further at the connection between the idea of freedom as autonomy and the idea of morality. To link to morality, freedom to act needs to be well connected to human dignity. It means to regard "persons not just as means but also as ends in themselves" (Triethoc 42, 2020). Kant says it is wrong to use people for others' happiness or well-being. Kant gives an example of throwing Christians to the lions for the sake of other people's pleasure or happiness. It is an immoral act that the action does not respect human dignity. The utilitarian, like Mill, would think of the same thing for not throwing Christians to the lions but most likely for a wrong reason. It's the reason for a widespread fear for a long run leading to the decline in utility. To Kant, the utilitarians would support justice and rights for the persons only for the instrumental reason meaning that the utilitarian's motive is to use people as means rather than respecting them as ends in themselves. Kant's view is that the person acting autonomously is to act freely but to act with moral worth depends on the motive for which it is done. It's the motive of duty, which is to do the right thing for the right reason. The moral worth of action should be done for the sake of moral law and not to conform to the moral law. He says, "Goodwill isn't good because of what it effects or accomplishes. It's good in itself. Even if by utmost effort the good will accomplishes nothing, it would still shine like a jewel for its own sake as something that has its full value in itself" (Triethoc 42, 2020). Kant also brings up a dualism of reasons, the categorical imperative and the hypothetical imperative. The categorical imperative is when the action is good in itself for a reason, not for the sake of something else. The action, which falls into the category of hypothetical imperative, is done with a motive for something else. It's like the shopkeeper who practices honesty not for the sake of ends in themselves but for a favorable reputation to bring in more customers. Kant connects the dualism of reasons to the dualism of freedom. Action in the sense of autonomous requires the act out of categorical imperative.

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To end the conclusion, Kant's theory of justice denies utilitarianism not only as a foundation for morality but also for law. Unlike utilitarians who seek to do things to maximize utility, Kant sees human beings as rational beings. We, as human beings, need to respect other human beings' dignity. Morality is determined by the motive of actions that are carried out. Moral worth actions are from the motive of duty and not from inclination. The second link of Morality is Freedom, which connects to two contrasts or dualisms, autonomy and heteronomy. Heteronomy refers to the action attained according to a law that is given or imposed on us, whereas autonomy implies the actions of freedom that are in accordance with the law the person gives to himself or herself. A question is raised about where the law comes from. It is from Reason, which now lets us link it to the first two dualisms, Morality and Freedom. With reason, Kant introduces the third dualism or contrast, the categorical imperative and the hypothetical imperative. Hypothetical imperative is conditional. It uses instrumental reason, which signifies the action done solely to be good as a means for something else. The categorical imperative, on the other hand, represents goodness in itself.

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*A Framework of academic management, character education, moral
development, and ethical leadership in secondary school in Cambodia:
Insights from a mixed method study*

Kolpheng Vaddhana

Abstract

This article explores how academic management impacts an individual's life and society. The objective of the study is to establish a framework for academic management that promotes character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary schools in Cambodia with an emphasis on Buddhist concepts and principles.

The development of academic management consists of curriculum management, instructional management, and assessment management. The integration of character education and moral development into the core curriculum ensures that culturally relevant content is woven into various subjects and extracurricular activities, contributing to the development of ethical leaders.

The mixed-methods concurrent triangulation design was applied. The population of this study includes four high schools (two public high schools and two private high schools). The sample size included 390 high school students for the survey; 16 moral civic teachers for the focus group discussions; and four experienced school principals for the interviews.

This study suggests that the curriculum of high schools should integrate project-based learning activities and stakeholder engagement into many subjects, especially at the community level, to be more effective. The instructors should include internal and external instructional resources that promote character education, moral development, and ethical leadership at the general school level. Assessment should focus not only on academic achievement but also on character development.

In conclusion, character education and moral development are the key ingredients for building human capital with moral value, which is the road to peace and prosperity for humanity. Therefore, to thrive in strengthening character education and ethical leadership for Cambodia's youth, public-private collaborations should increase and be structured towards building knowledge and human capital to the benefit of all.

Keywords: Academic management, character education, moral development, ethical leadership, Cambodia

A Framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary school in Cambodia: Insights from a mixed method study

Introduction

Background of the Study

Education plays a key role in the socioeconomic development of nations and the world. It impacts an individual's life and society. World leaders, religious leaders, business leaders, and educational leaders view education as an essential factor in improving quality of life and sustaining a nation's development. Mahatma Gandhi advised the world that only education with character can bring true prosperity and harmony for mankind (Patra, 2021). He further stressed that "education without character is a deadly social sin." Holistic education encompasses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, which are essential for nurturing well-rounded citizens. Particularly, it emphasizes the affective domain, which involves nurturing emotional intelligence, empathy, ethical reasoning, and social skills that enable students to fully develop their self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and responsible decision-making. This helps foster a sense of social responsibility and ethical behavior in society. It is necessary for Cambodian educators to better prepare academic programs with character building and moral development for the youth. Significant developments in various pedagogies and the distribution of quality education to citizens are challenging tasks for any government. A prosperous nation invests in education, as it is the key to sustaining development and enhancing the knowledge, leadership, character, and morality of socially responsible citizens. School leaders must teach leadership, morality, and character to prepare students for college and careers (Haynes-Tross, 2015). Beginning in secondary school, the teaching curriculum must implement youth leadership, moral growth, and character development. The true purpose of education is to develop people who wish to better themselves and who overall practice love towards themselves, others, and the country.

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As Alastair Goddard (Ang et al., 2001) noted, "A child is not a vase to be filled, but a fire to be lit." Young people learn through action (Claxton et al., 2010). Educational activities help students acquire good character, and teachers are expected to fill moral deficits in students. To become ethical leaders for Cambodia's future, pupils should graduate from secondary schools with a solid foundation in moral development, character education, and key disciplines.

Statement of the Problem

In Cambodia, the vision of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) is to establish and develop human resources that are ethically sound and of the highest quality in order to develop a knowledge-based society (Team, 2023). To achieve this, MoEYS has the mission of leading, managing, and developing the education, youth, and sport sectors in Cambodia, responding to the socioeconomic and cultural development needs of its people and the reality of regionalization, globalization, and the fourth industrial revolution, or Industry 4.0.

Secondary education will engender a sense of national and civic pride, high moral and ethical standards, and a strong belief in young people's responsibility for Cambodia, its citizens, and its natural environment. Secondary education graduates will meet international standards, be competitive in global job markets, and act as catalysts for Cambodia's socioeconomic development. To achieve these aims, the key objectives of secondary education in Cambodia are to equip Cambodia's young people with subject knowledge, 21st-century skills and competencies (including at least one foreign language), and good citizenship values and moral character to enable them to become productive members as Cambodia transitions to a knowledge-based economy (Team, 2023).

Tan (2008) stated that the tensions and challenges associated with civic and moral education are linked to a fundamental difference between the traditional view of education in Cambodia and the modern view of education promoted by the Cambodian government

and external donor agencies. Policymakers need to promote the effective teaching and learning of civic and moral values with the support of the local community and religious institutions. A moral decline in modern society calls for the necessity of character education. It is observed that a broken family affects their children's academic performance, that poor discipline in school lowers students' morale, and that a weak community weakens youth's courage (McLean & Ellrod, 1992). To lift young people's spirits and well-being, the home, school, and community must work together to do what is best for young people to lift their spirits and well-being.

This study seeks to provide answers to the research question: What is the framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary schools in Cambodia?

Literature Review

Concepts of Academic Management

Quality education produces quality graduates (Pooprasert, 2002). Academic management oversees school operations related to pedagogical techniques, teaching materials, curricula, and teacher development to improve teaching and learning (Smithason, 1997). It reviews performance to accomplish curriculum goals and benefit students (Wahachat, 2007). Policy formation, planning, improvement, development, and teacher assessment are crucial to meeting curricular and educational goals for the benefit of future learners (Wonganutaroj, 2010). Academic management encompasses planning, curriculum, instructional management, supervision, teaching and learning development, and performance assessment (Asawapoom, 2008).

Concepts of Character Education

The word "character" comes from a Greek term that means 'to mark,' like an engraving. It signifies persistent behavioral habits, pointing to something profoundly

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ingrained in personality—an organizing principle that unifies behavior, attitudes, and values. Character is a person's "overall approach to the challenges and duties of social life, a responsiveness to the world that is reinforced by emotional reactions to the misery of others, the acquisition of prosocial abilities, understanding of social conventions, and building of personal values" (Hay, 1995). It requires self-control and empathy (Etzioni, 1993). According to Baumrind (1999), it permits ethical agents "to plan their activities and implement their plans, to study and choose among possibilities, to avoid certain actions in favor of others, and to arrange their lives by adopting agreeable habits, attitudes, and standards of conduct."

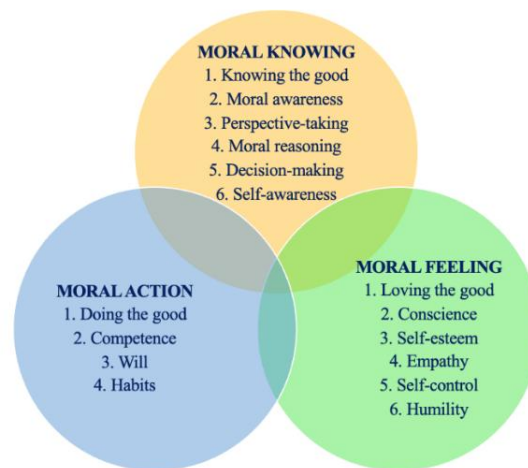
Character education in school helps build students' attitudes and behaviors with fundamental rules, helping them become responsible citizens and future leaders. It uplifts students' ethical values, giving them more confidence and moral courage. Character education goes beyond textbooks and standardized tests, aiming to instill values, ethics, and social skills in students. It emphasizes the development of traits such as integrity, responsibility, empathy, and resilience, laying the foundation for positive interpersonal relationships and ethical decision-making.

Surveys by Michigan State University (MSU) reveal that youth lie, cheat, steal, and drink underage when ethical values are in question. According to the study, character education helps youth in three important areas: (1) Consciousness—knowing the right thing to do; (2) Commitment—committing to do the right thing; and (3) Competency—being capable of doing the right thing (Michigan State University, 2023).

Lickona (1992) stated that character education is crucial for students and for discussions about how our schools can teach respect and responsibility. He describes the components of good character, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Components of Good Character (Adapted from Baumrind et al., 2010; Lickona, 2004)



Moral Knowing

According to Baumrind et al. (2010) and Lickona (2004), moral knowing consists of six components:

Knowing the Good. Respecting others, taking full responsibility, being honest, and helping people without expecting anything in return.

Moral Awareness. Affects all ages and behaviors; helps individuals make moral decisions and know the consequences of immoral actions.

Perspective-Taking. Understanding how others see situations and how they react emotionally and cognitively.

Moral Reasoning. Understanding morality and why it is important involves determining between right and wrong.

Decision-Making. Great minds make their decisions using the best of their knowledge and experiences; average minds base their decisions on gut feelings.

Self-Awareness. It is the toughest moral knowledge to acquire, but it builds character. Morality involves self-reflection and fairness.

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Moral Feeling

According to Baumrind et al. (2010) and Lickona (2004), moral feeling has six components:

Loving the Good. This is the feeling of being happy to see others doing good deeds and being inspired by these actions.

Conscience. Conscience is both rational and emotional. Many know what is right, yet do not act appropriately.

Self-Esteem. From a sense of self-value, we care for our bodies and minds. Most importantly, we do not allow people to mistreat us.

Empathy. This is the capacity to understand others. Ears can hear words, but a healthy heart can understand them. Good people act from the heart, where empathy grows.

Self-Control. This is important for morality, as emotion can override logic. "Control your emotions or they will control you" (Smalls, 2023).

Humility. Being humble is a special trait of moral people. Humility enriches one's heart and promotes peace from within. Self-knowledge works through humility.

Moral Action

According to Baumrind et al. (2010) and Lickona (2004), moral action consists of:

Doing the Good. Actions produce results. If one does not do good, knowing and loving the good is worthless.

Competence. The ability to act on moral convictions. Listening, communicating without criticizing, and working together to solve problems and achieve goals are practical abilities needed to properly resolve a conflict.

Will. Goodness often takes willpower. Individuals fail because they lack willpower, not information on morality. Strong-minded people can push through obstacles because they have the will to do it.

Habits. Repeated actions form habits. Habits shape an individual's character.

Stages of Moral Development

In his Theory of Moral Development, Kohlberg classifies six stages of moral development (Kohlberg & Hersh, 1977):

Stage 1: Obedience and Punishment. This early stage applies to young children. For them, it is important to obey the rules to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Individualism and Exchange. Children start to develop their own points of view and focus on satisfying personal needs.

Stage 3: Developing Good Interpersonal Relationships. This stage is referred to as the “Good Boy-Good Girl” stage. Youth start to care about social expectations. Thus, they focus on being kind and considerate towards others because they understand that their choices affect their relationships.

Stage 4: Maintaining Social Order. Youth and adults start to “consider society as a whole” when they make judgments. People follow the rules, fulfill their duties, and respect authority to help maintain social order.

Stage 5: Social Contract and Individual Rights. Individuals hold different beliefs, values, and opinions. However, to avoid consequences, an individual’s beliefs, values, and opinions should not supersede rules of law.

Stage 6: Universal Principles. This final stage is focused on “universal ethical principles and abstract reasoning.” People follow the judiciary system even if they disagree with its laws and rules.

Concepts of Ethical Leadership

Recent literature on leadership and management reveals that character is an important aspect of leadership. Ethical leadership is essential for fostering trust, integrity, and sustainable success within organizations and communities, positively influencing the behavior and choices of individuals, and impacting society at large (Mendonca & Kanungo, 2006). Leadership without ethics and integrity can be harmful both for organizational stakeholders and society (Ahmad et al., 2017). Leaders must avoid ethical and moral failures, according to Bass and Steidlmeier (1999) and Avolio and Gardner (2005). This

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study supports Bass and Steidlmeier's (1999) idea that transformative leadership involves authentic and ethical values. According to Avolio and Gardner (2005), a social learning perspective on ethical leadership proposes that leaders influence followers' ethical conduct through modeling. The term modeling covers a broad range of psychological matching processes, including observational learning, imitation, and identification. George (2003) underlines that great leaders have a profound sense of purpose, possess ethical and solid beliefs, understand their purpose, lead from the heart, develop deep connections, and exhibit self-restraint and discipline.

Ethical leadership is an ambiguous concept that includes diverse elements (Yukl, 2006). Instead of perceiving ethical leadership as preventing people from doing the wrong thing, multiple authors propose that we need to perceive it as enabling people to do the right thing (Freeman & Stewart, 2006). An ethical leader is a person who lives up to principles of conduct that are crucial to him and to more universal standards of moral behavior. Leading ethically is believed to be a process of inquiry (asking questions about what is right and what is wrong) and a code of conduct (setting the example for followers and others about the rightness or wrongness of actions).

Ethical leadership can be viewed in terms of the healing and energizing powers of love, recognizing that leadership is a reciprocal relationship with followers. A leader's mission is to serve and support, and his passion for leading comes from compassion (Kouzes & Posner, 1995).

Five Buddhist Character-Building Precepts for Youth

In Buddhism, there are five golden principles that can guide youth toward a joyful existence and develop their character (Ranke & Wongsurawat, 2015). The Five Precepts include:

- You shall not kill humans or animals. Good youth value life. They understand that no one deserves death.

- You shall not steal money or valuable things. Good kids never steal. Without doing honest labor, they would not profit from others.
- You shall not commit sexual misconduct. Good youth do not have sexual connections with married people or those under family care. They never have sexual relations without love, responsibility, and long-term commitments.
- You shall not lie. Good youth refuse to deceive and harm others. To avoid being haunted by their words, they practice conscious communication. Right speech enhances morality.
- You shall not drink alcohol or use other intoxicants. To stay healthy and mindful, good youth should avoid alcohol and other intoxicants.

Fine youth practice the five precepts for their own good and encourage their friends to do so as well because they recognize that these five precepts promote genuine peace and happiness for individuals.

Civic and Moral Education in Cambodia

Civic and moral education spreads the views, rhetoric, and goals of exemplary leaders. King Norodom Sihanouk promoted Cambodian history, culture, literature, civic education, and morality to eliminate colonial mentality and foster national pride (Clayton, 2005). To equip learners with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to support their daily lives and further studies, the curriculum framework of moral civics aims to improve the quality of education in response to the changing socio-political landscape. The goal is to ensure that all citizens develop their full potential. Good citizens are equipped with 1) responsibility, understanding, love, and commitment; 2) ethics, right-wrong judgment, protection, and expansion of integrity; 3) unity in team responsibility; and 4) kind and compassionate relationships that promote happiness.

The Policy for Curriculum Development 2005–2009 covers civic and moral education (MoEYS, 2004b). The ministry's aims are "national and civic pride, high standards of morality and ethics, and a strong belief in being responsible for their own fate"

A Framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary school in Cambodia: Insights from a mixed methods study (MoEYS, 2004a, 11). MoEYS seeks fair access to basic education, high-quality secondary education, pro-poor financing, effective resource management, and accountability through standard development (MoEYS, 2004b).

Two Contrasting Views of Education

Buddhist monks have taught male students to read and write Khmer, do arithmetic, memorize Buddhist principles, study propriety, and how to build temples, buildings, and other infrastructure since the 7th century (Gyallay-Pap, 1989). Beyond teaching Buddhism, these schools promoted civic and moral values within the confines of the monastery. Monks mentored students' moral, spiritual, and social growth. Religious leaders became intellectuals and gurus under Indianized regal authority (Dy, 2004).

For social solidarity, schools have fostered social cohesion and traditional values, absorbing civic and moral values from their culture (Clayton, 1995; Dy, 2004). Cambodian parents believed that "when their children left the monastery, they would become good citizens and would be valued by the whole community because of their education in the spiritual life, religious counseling, and how to live in harmony in society" (Neau 2003, 254). Girls and other community members were influenced by this moral context and filled with *sammaki* (friendship) and communal spirit, even though only males can attend temple schools.

Moral instruction, community decision-making, political advice, and dispute settlement were supplied by monasteries and temple schools (Morris, 2000). Governance improved with Buddhism as monks legitimized the ruler, who in turn supported them by following Buddhist rules (Morris, 2000). To be a good Buddhist, the monarch had to be honest, courteous, and non-violent. In modernity, Buddhism unites traditional Cambodian society and prevents political leaders from misusing power. "Buddhist institutions controlled every village and infiltrated every facet of the Khmer people's social, political, intellectual, and spiritual existence" (Cormack, 1997, 30).

Character Building for Cambodia's Youth

Chambers et al. (1992) stated that societal, economic, and personal issues plague humanity in the 21st century. Greed manifests through financial instability, climate change, and invasions of privacy. Intolerance manifests through religious fanaticism, racial crises, and political absolutism. Globalization and innovation are transforming business and personal lives. We struggle to find happiness and a job that satisfies us. Automation and offshore businesses are causing societal disruptions as technology grows exponentially. Like during the Industrial Revolution, social misery increases when education falls behind technology.

Relevant Research Studies

Tan (2008) conducted a study to explore traditional and modern views of education. It stated that the tensions and challenges associated with civic and moral education are linked to a fundamental difference between the traditional view of education in Cambodia and the modern view of education promoted by the Cambodian government and external donor agencies. He further argued that policymakers must promote effective teaching and learning of civic and moral values in Cambodia with the support of the local community and religious institutions.

Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) carried out research focused on character education that is both popular and controversial. A psychological approach to understanding its central constructs was proposed. The study reviews philosophical conceptions of virtue and concludes that character education cannot be distinguished from rival approaches based on a distinctive ethical theory.

Sweeney and Fry (2012) conducted a study focused on character development through spiritual leadership. How to develop the character of leaders is a challenging question pursued by managers, psychologists, and consultants. To address this question, Sweeney and Fry introduced a developmental model for character growth. The model

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proposes that the integration of the leader's core values and beliefs into self-identity is at the heart of character development. The supporting character strengths of agency, self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, social awareness, and connection to others assist in the internalization and integration of core values, beliefs, and moral standards into leaders' identities, ensuring consistent moral and ethical behavior.

Enu et al. (2019) explored the role of social studies in promoting ethics and moral values for nation-building and leadership development among youths in a multi-ethnic area of Nigeria. This paper looks at the concepts of ethics, moral values, nation-building, and leadership; the consequences of a lack of ethics and moral values in nation-building among the youth; and the positive influence of ethics and moral values in promoting nation-building and leadership development. The paper suggests that agents of socialization and reorientation, like social studies, should intensify efforts to inculcate ethical and moral values in youth reorientation programs through their curriculum.

Suwalska and Nowosad (2023) studied curricula related to varied dimensions of character and citizenship education in the prism of values in grades 1-2 of primary education in Singapore. The analysis of the curriculum began with a review of the literature on values in education. The next stage was to analyze the curriculum along with core values of respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care, and harmony; its three big ideas (identity, relationship, choices); and its guiding principles in grades 1-2. Education is viewed as an interaction between various sets of teachers' values and the ongoing construction of students' values. The key element of the study was to understand Singaporean character and citizenship education, principally its parts that involve the core values.

Patra (2021) conducted a study at a middle school in Brooklyn, New York, to explore the importance of developing leadership skills in middle school students in grades 6–8 from the perspective of administrators, teachers, and students. Data was gathered through focus groups and individual interviews to determine what, where, why, and how

adolescents develop leadership. Findings focused on how leadership development is taught, the perceived qualities of leadership in adolescence, what barriers exist in the development of leadership, and what can be done to enhance leadership development.

Previous studies found many gaps in research methods, population, implications, and perspectives, especially in concepts. It was found that character education and moral development to promote ethical leadership in secondary schools in Cambodia have received insufficient attention in research. Consequently, this research study explores how to strengthen academic management based on character education and moral development in secondary schools to promote ethical leadership for youth in Cambodia.

Research Methods

Research Design

This research on strengthening academic management based on character education and moral development in secondary schools to promote ethical leadership for youth employed an explanatory mixed-methods research design. The research design is composed of informants, research instruments, and data analysis. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. The results were merged to compare, interrelate, and validate for interpretation.

Research Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Phnom Penh, the capital city of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The population sample of this research study included experts in personal growth and character education, school principals, school administrators, teachers, and students. In this research, the purposive sampling technique is used to select a specific group of individuals or units. Two public high schools and two private high schools were chosen to conduct the research. The four selected high schools are 1) Preah Sisowat New Generation School; 2) Prek Leap New Generation School; 3) Paññāsāstra International

A Framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary school in Cambodia: Insights from a mixed methods study School; and 4) True Vision International School. The population of the research study consists of 1) students from grades 10 to 12, both males and females; 2) character education and moral development teachers; 3) school administrators; and 4) school principals in the academic year 2022-2023.

The researcher used the stratified random sampling technique to select 390 students (85%) out of 459 upper secondary education students who are studying in grades 10 to 12 at four selected high schools (see Table 1). 25% of students from each school were selected using non-probability sampling. The researcher used convenience sampling techniques to select informants based on ease of access. The purposive sampling technique was used to select four to five teachers who are teaching social studies subjects such as moral civics, history, and geography to participate in focus group talks (Creswell, 2013) with semi-structured interview questions. The reason for using this sample approach for the focus group talks is because these senior secondary instructors are responsible for teaching their students character education, moral development, and ethical leadership; they supplied excellent data for the study. The same was true for teachers in charge of discipline and teachers in the guidance and counseling section.

Data Collection

There were two phases of data collection in this study. The research instrument used in the first phase was a questionnaire, which was then validated by the experts and informants mentioned earlier, approved by dissertation advisors, and tested with 30 respondents—excluding the sample group of the research—to confirm its reliability.

In the second phase, the researcher participated in the focus group discussions and interviewed key informants, utilizing qualitative listening, note-taking, and recording equipment. The researcher evaluated the study's trustworthiness utilizing Guba and Lincoln's (1989) credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability methods.

Data Analysis

Two types of data analysis were carried out during the research study, including descriptive statistics, inferential statistics, and content analysis. The obtained quantitative data from the sample group were analyzed using descriptive statistics to find frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviations (SD). The obtained qualitative data from the small group interview was analyzed using content analysis (Creswell, 2014).

Findings and Discussion

The Respondents' Demographic Information

Table 1

Demographic Information of the Respondents

Description	Number	Percentage
1. Sex		
Male	203	52.1
Female	187	47.9
Total	390	100
2. Age		
Under 16	132	33.8
16-17	198	50.8
18-19	57	14.6
Over 19	3	0.8
Total	390	100
3. Grade		
Grade 10	142	36.4
Grade 11	136	34.9
Grade 12	112	28.7

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Total	390	100
4. School Name		
1) Paññāsāstra International School	100	25.6
2) True VISION International School of Cambodia	94	24.1
3) Preah Sisowath New Generation School	100	25.6
4) Prek Leap New Generation School	96	24.6
Total	390	100
5. Courses Attended		
1) Character Education	64	16.1
2) Moral Development	18	4.6
3) Moral Civics	168	43.1
4) Community Service	54	13.8
5) Others	86	22.1
Total	390	100

As shown in Table 1, there are 390 respondents from across four schools (two public schools and two private schools). Males (52.1%) and females (47.9%) are nearly equal in number. Most of the respondents are 16-17 years old (N = 198, 50.80%). Most of the students are in grade 10 (N = 142, 36.40%). A majority of the respondents are enrolled in the moral civics course (N = 168, 43.10%); a minority are enrolled in the moral development course (N = 18, 4.6%).

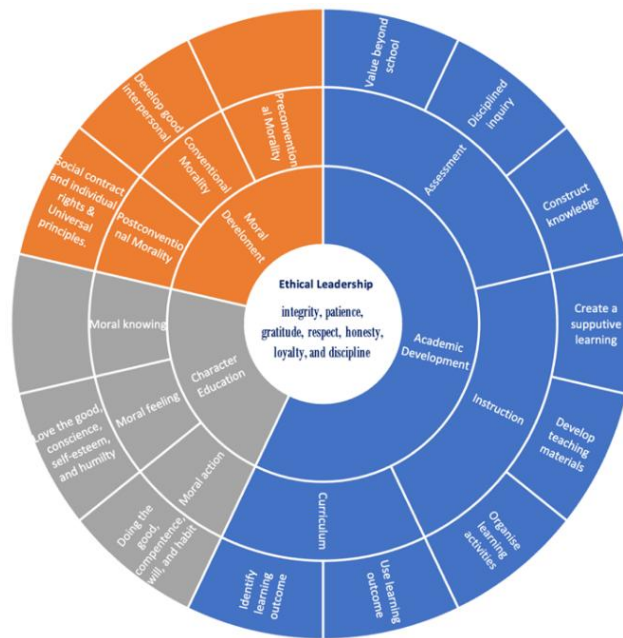
A Framework of Academic Management, Character Education, Moral Development, and Ethical Leadership

To determine the framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in the secondary schools in Cambodia, the researcher implemented the following three steps: 1) reviewed and synthesized theories of human growth and development, academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership from the literature review; 2) performed semi-structured interviews

with three experts in the fields of character education, personal growth, and leadership; and 3) constructed the conceptual framework of the research. The findings are summarized in Figure 2, which is presented below.

Figure 2

Development of Academic Management Based on Moral Development and Character Education to Promote Ethical Leadership for Cambodia's Youth



Academic Management. In this study, academic management is defined in terms of 1) curriculum— a) identify learning outcomes and b) use learning outcomes; 2) instruction— a) organize learning activities, b) develop teaching materials, and c) create a supportive learning environment; 3) assessment of authentic achievement— a) construction of knowledge, b) disciplined inquiry, and c) value beyond school.

Character Education. Character building consists of 1) moral knowing—knowing the good, moral awareness, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-awareness; 2) moral feeling—loving the good, conscience, self-esteem, empathy, self-control, and humility; and 3) moral action—doing the good, competence, will, and habit.

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Moral Development. This study takes into consideration the following six stages: 1) obedience and punishment; 2) individualism and exchange; 3) developing good interpersonal relationships; 4) maintaining social order; 5) social contract and individual rights; and 6) universal principles.

Ethical Leadership. The researcher has reviewed and synthesized theories, concepts, and the results of experts' interviews. Finally, ethical leadership has been categorized into seven components: 1) integrity, 2) patience, 3) gratitude, 4) respect, 5) honesty, 6) loyalty, and 7) discipline.

Discussion

The results of the survey with 390 students show that the current state of character education, moral development, and ethical leadership is at the middle level. The findings indicate that the current curriculum and instruction implementation are insufficient due to teachers' capacity and limited teaching experience. Hansen et al. (2002) conclude that adequately trained teachers with a wealth of experience contribute to positive learning outcomes. Research evidence shows that various kinds of teacher education, capacity building, and work experience have positive effects on education quality. Having well-trained and experienced teachers working at high schools is just as vital and necessary as having access to quality education materials and positive relationships between teachers and communities.

The findings also show that schools focus on ethical leadership programs, which is an investment in the leaders of tomorrow. Character education for youth is the process of learning the common attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of young people. The choices they make today will have a tremendous ripple effect on the future of the country.

By developing strong ethical leadership skills, students will be able to create positive change in their communities, countries, and the world. They will be equipped with

the skills, knowledge, and experience to build trust with others. If our youth are properly taught by competent educators, they will undoubtedly inspire others to do the right thing. Furthermore, they will hold themselves and others accountable for any wrongdoing.

There are many ways for young people to cultivate ethical leadership qualities. The researcher has a few ideas: Present students with ethical dilemmas and teach them how to resolve them using team projects. Many resources, such as books, articles, and case studies, are available online and in libraries. To get involved in the community, students should participate in volunteer activities or social justice initiatives; both provide valuable experience in working with others and making ethical decisions. Students will reflect on their own values and think about the weight of their actions in a communal setting. Additionally, they can find mentors who embody the qualities of ethical leadership. These mentors could be teachers, community leaders, or older, experienced peers. More importantly, they should have opportunities to practice making ethical decisions in everyday life. Even small choices, like standing up for what they believe in or admitting when they are wrong, can help them develop their ethical leadership skills.

Character education is important to cultivate desired characteristics in future leaders. It is a multifaceted endeavor that may hold significant rewards. The researcher offers some key principles and strategies to consider. First, in understanding character, define values to determine the specific character traits educators want to nurture in young people. Second, the developmental stage of the target audience must be considered. Younger children learn best through play and practical experiences, while older teenagers might benefit from discussions, learning by doing, and solving authentic ethical dilemmas. A holistic approach, beyond academic programs, can be applied to character education and moral development. It can be integrated into all learning activities, ranging from classroom activities to social interactions and community involvement. Students can be provided opportunities to engage with the community through service projects. Volunteer work is a practice of selflessness where a leader learns how to give back to others. This fosters empathy, responsibility, and a sense of belonging. School-community partnerships with

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parents, teachers, community leaders, and mentors can formulate a consistent and unified approach to character education.

The research findings reveal that self-awareness helps youth reflect on themselves and care about fairness for others at the highest level. Self-awareness is important for students to know the good, love the good, and do the good.

Ethical leadership is a demonstration of normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions, interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to peers and subordinates through two-way communication, reinforcement, and decision-making. It means that individuals behave according to a set of principles and values that are recognized by relevant professions and society. These include integrity, respect, trust, fairness, transparency, honesty, responsibility, and accountability.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

This study confirms that academic management comprises three key components: 1) Curriculum: a) identify learning outcomes and b) use learning outcomes; 2) Instruction: a) organize learning activities, b) develop teaching materials, and c) create a supportive learning environment; and 3) Assessment of authentic achievement: a) construction of knowledge, b) disciplined inquiry, and c) value beyond school.

Character education consists of three key components: 1) Moral knowing—including knowing the good, moral awareness, perspective-taking, moral reasoning, decision-making, and self-awareness; 2) Moral feeling—including loving the good, conscience, self-esteem, empathy, self-control, and humility; and 3) Moral action—including doing the good, competence, will, and habit.

Moral development comprises six stages: 1) obedience and punishment; 2) individualism and exchange; 3) developing good interpersonal relationships; 4) maintaining social order; 5) social contract and individual rights; and 6) universal principles.

Ethical leadership is categorized into seven components: 1) integrity, 2) patience, 3) gratitude, 4) respect, 5) honesty, 6) loyalty, and 7) discipline.

Implications

Policy Implications

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) should have rigorous guidelines for the implementation of character education, moral development, and ethical leadership programs at the secondary school level to cultivate integrity, patience, gratitude, respect, honesty, loyalty, and discipline among Cambodia's youth. MoEYS should consider:

Academic Management. Achieving excellent academic management requires a wealth of experienced experts to 1) develop a constructive curriculum in accordance with expertise that enables the identification and assessment of learning outcomes; 2) develop clear instructional materials that support learning outcomes that are easy to follow; and 3) develop a fair assessment of authentic achievement of the learning outcomes.

Character Education. Character education is about moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. It is recommended that MoEYS promote character education at general schools by adopting Buddhist principles and teachings, which will help boost students' morals in knowing good deeds, loving good deeds, and doing good deeds.

Moral Development. Moral development is fundamental to human existence. Teaching morals to students at a young age is the best practice. Kohlberg's Theory of Moral

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Development should be introduced at grade schools to positively shape young students' morals, behaviors, and attitudes.

Ethical Leadership. The success or failure of a school, its programs, and its students rests on the leadership of school management. It is imperative that school principals and management are committed to lifelong learning. Therefore, MoEYS should not neglect providing leadership training to school principals and management on a regular basis. When school leaders receive full support from MoEYS, it boosts their moral ethics. Once ethical leadership takes root at schools, the establishment and its individuals will succeed, students and educators alike.

Practical Implications

School principals, administrators, and teachers may revise academic management, including curriculum, instruction, and assessment related to character education, moral development, and ethical leadership. The curriculum should integrate many subjects with project-based learning and stakeholder engagement, especially at the community level, to be more effective. The instructors should include internal and external instructional resources to promote character education, moral development, and ethical leadership at the general school level. Assessment should score not only academic achievement but also character education. The achievement of student development in intellectual and behavioral skills through the teaching and learning process based on assessment standards of authentic student achievement includes 1) the construction of knowledge, 2) disciplined inquiry, and 3) value beyond school.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The implementation of character education, moral development, and ethical leadership programs should be further explored at the school level with a larger sample size and a broader content of character education. Future studies should include not only

secondary education but all levels of academia, from kindergarten to higher education. Comparative studies of the Cambodian context and the global context should also be conducted.

Future research should apply various methods, such as quantitative/qualitative approaches or other interdisciplinary theories, to delve into the current and desirable states of implementation of academic management structures based on character education and moral development to promote ethical leadership for Cambodia's youth.

In conclusion, education can certainly help young people stand on their feet and improve their financial status in the future. However, without character education, youth will inevitably experience a misstep of moral values, which will be detrimental for the country if power falls into the wrong hands. Therefore, character education and moral development are the key ingredients for building human capital with moral value, which is the road to peace and prosperity for humanity. To strengthen character education and ethical leadership for Cambodia's youth, public-private collaborations should increase and be structured towards building knowledge and human capital to the benefit of all.

A Framework of academic management, character education, moral development, and ethical leadership in secondary school in Cambodia: Insights from a mixed methods study

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*Enhancing teaching styles through CONTESSA: A case of teacher training
in Cambodia*

Meas Nearyroth

Abstract

The CONTESSA (Contemporary Teaching Skills for South Asia) project, part of the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) initiative, aimed to enhance learner-centered teaching practices and educational leadership in Cambodia through modern pedagogical approaches. This research evaluates the project's impact on teacher training, focusing on the use of five training modules designed for both blended and distance learning formats. Data were collected from 156 participants, including pre-service and in-service teachers, as well as teacher trainers, using a mixed-methods approach involving surveys and interviews by asking them to rate the key components in the five modules. Key findings reveal that the majority of respondents, particularly pre-service teachers aged 21-30, rated the CONTESSA modules positively, acknowledging their contribution to professional growth and the adoption of learner-centered teaching techniques. Educational leaders highlighted the program's role in fostering collaboration and classroom leadership, though participants noted a need for greater interactivity and practical application of digital tools in both asynchronous and synchronous learning environments. Despite these successes, the study identifies the necessity for ongoing capacity building and tailored professional development to ensure sustained progress. This research provides valuable insights for educational institutions, policymakers, and future teacher training initiatives. Recommendations include increasing the interactivity of training modules, expanding localized content, and supporting gender equity in educational leadership roles. The evaluation underscores the importance of continued investment in teacher development to foster long-term improvements in Cambodia's education system.

Keywords: CONTESSA, teaching styles, interactivity, self-assessment, learning and support

*Enhancing teaching styles through CONTESSA: A case of teacher training
in Cambodia*

Introduction

Teacher education has played an important role in developing education in Cambodia after the war. Teacher training programs have evolved significantly over the years to meet the diverse needs of educators. Traditional mentorship has been a cornerstone of teacher induction, providing support and guidance to new teachers as they navigate their roles in the classroom (Ravitch, 2003; Fulton et al., 2005). Educational academics have supported new instructors for decades. Education lacks a systematic method of educating and certifying new instructors like law and medicine (Ravitch, 2003). Beginning teachers have traditionally been mentored. Fulton et al. (2005) found that a good mentor helps new teachers. “A poorly prepared or over-extended mentor can be of little value and may even perpetuate bad practice” (Fulton et al., 2005, 4). Mentoring is part of a comprehensive training process, according to several academics (Feiman-Nemser, 2003; Moir, 2003; Wong, 2005). Most training programs include structured mentorship programs where specially selected and trained mentors work with new instructors (Feiman-Nemser, Schwille, Carver, & Yusko, 1999; Ingersoll, 2003; Wong, 2004b). Hence, mentoring is part of a full induction experience. However, contemporary approaches to teacher training, such as those implemented in the CONTESSA Project, go beyond mere mentorship to offer comprehensive online modules that address various aspects of teaching and professional development.

Ingersoll and Smith (2004) found that 4 in 10 US beginning teachers engaged in a structured teacher training program in 1990-1991. Beginning instructors participated in training programs at 80% by 1999-2000. Formal induction programs enhanced the variety of activities. Teacher training programs can include lessons, workshops, orientations, seminars, and mentorship, according to Ingersoll and Smith. One must first grasp education induction history due to the variety of teacher induction programs.

It cannot be denied that teaching is one of the few professions in which a first-year teacher is immediately responsible for the same things as the most seasoned veteran. Despite the fact that all teachers, regardless of experience, have a wide range of responsibilities, the level of assistance provided to new teachers varies greatly from one school and district to the next. In some schools, novice educators are paired with an experienced educator who can serve as a mentor and provide advice and assistance. Some other schools use a training process that includes mentoring and other forms of professional development (New Teacher Center, 2007).

In the realm of capacity building in higher education (CBHE), the Erasmus+ project known as CONTESSA (Contemporary Teaching Skills for South Asia), which ran from November 2018 all the way through November 2022, was one of the projects that was officially recognized by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport. It is an EU-funded Erasmus+ program for capacity building in higher education that aims to promote learner-centered teaching practice rather than being a top-down instructor, where there is a belief that the teacher should try to be a guide and facilitator for the personal development of individual students. The project is coordinated by the University of Graz in Austria with the Technical University of Dresden in Germany. The University of Cambodia and Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia have been the Cambodian partners in this enterprise, and there are two Sri Lankan universities that are also actively involved.

Following extensive research, the University of Graz discovered that teacher education is a critical issue in South Asian schools. Teachers are an essential component of the educational world, and improving the teaching skills of future and current educators in both Cambodia and Sri Lanka will make a significant contribution with long-term individual and societal implications. The development of modern education and training programs by partner institutions in Austria, Cambodia, Germany, and Sri Lanka provided the necessary tools for teachers and institutions to meet international standards (CONTESSA, 2023).

The CONTESSA Project is the training program for teacher educators, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers; it aims to design, implement, and test a teacher training program to help both current and aspiring educators better engage, empower, and educate their students. The major objective of CONTESSA is to strengthen the educational systems in Austria, Cambodia, Germany, and Sri Lanka.

The primary focus of CONTESSA is on three subsets of the primary education teaching community:

- **Teacher educators**, also called teacher trainers, who are professionals educating and training future teachers
- **In-Service teachers**, that is, fully qualified professionals who teach in primary schools
- **Pre-Service teachers**, also called future teachers or trainee teachers, i.e., students who are currently qualifying for the teaching profession

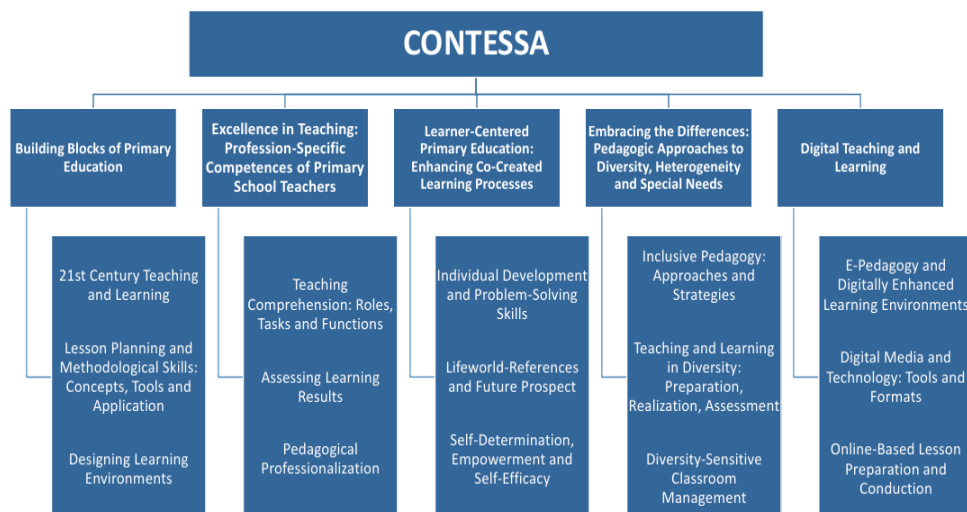
It is an EU-funded initiative aimed at improving teaching practices and educational leadership in Cambodia and Sri Lanka through a learner-centered approach. Implemented under the Erasmus+ Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) program, CONTESSA's goal was to shift traditional teaching methods from a top-down structure to a more participatory model where teachers guide students through their learning journey. Launched in November 2018 and concluding in November 2022, the project involved the collaboration of European institutions, including the University of Graz (Austria) and the Technical University of Dresden (Germany), alongside educational partners in Cambodia and Sri Lanka. Five key training modules were developed, focusing on modern teaching techniques such as e-education, classroom diversity, and learner-centered teaching methods. These modules were designed to be used in blended and distance learning formats, providing flexibility for teachers and educational leaders in Cambodia. This research aims to assess the effectiveness of the CONTESSA project in enhancing the professional development of teachers, fostering educational leadership, and addressing the challenges posed by asynchronous and synchronous learning tools, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed full implementation.

Enhancing teaching styles through CONTESSA: A case of teacher training in Cambodia

Partnering with institutions like Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia (PUC), the project addressed the critical issue of teacher education in South Asian schools. With teaching being a profession where novices immediately shoulder significant responsibilities, the need for mentorship and induction programs is evident. Mentoring, integral to induction training, plays a crucial role in teachers' professional development, fostering leadership in classrooms and communities. The CONTESSA Project, targeting teacher educators, in-service, and pre-service teachers, focused on designing, implementing, and testing training programs to enhance student engagement and empowerment. A series of five modules related to the use of modern teaching techniques in primary education has been designed for blended and distance-learning approaches. The material covers best practices related to e-education subjects and learner-centered teaching methods, the role of teachers in the educational sphere, diversity in the classroom, and other topics crucial to modern-day teaching. It is designed for use both as course material for degree programs and for train-the-trainers workshops to help teacher trainees, trainers, and existing teachers to further develop and upgrade their pedagogical skills.

Figure 1

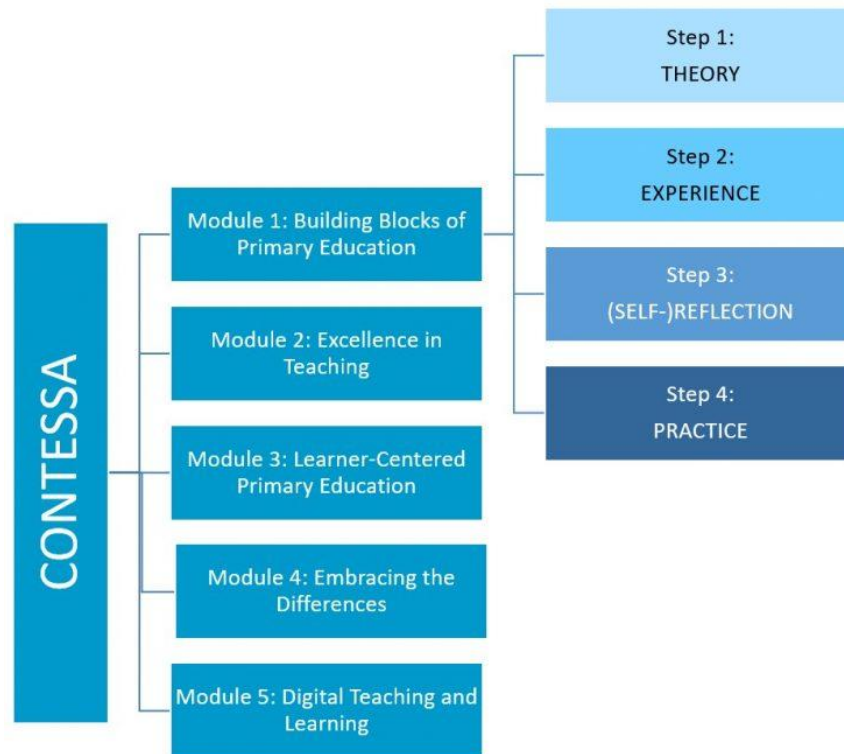
Overview of CONTESSA Modules



Source: Sandra Bohlinger, Christian Muller, and Andreas Durrschmidt, June 2020, “CONTESSA, WP2: Structure & Elements of Teacher Training,” *Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union*. (<https://contessa-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Training-Needs-Analysis-June2019.pdf>; retrieved 14 April 2023)

Figure 2

Structure of CONTESSA Online Modules



Source: Sandra Bohlinger, Christian Muller, and Andreas Durrschmidt, June 2020, “CONTESSA, WP2: Structure & Elements of Teacher Training,” *Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union*. (<https://contessa-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Training-Needs-Analysis-June2019.pdf>; retrieved 14 April 2023)

The CONTESSA project was first introduced to the Cambodian education sector with very selected universities. It has never been evaluated to what extent the project has contributed to or inducted into the education sector. It has been introduced into the education sector, but it has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It may have been interrupted by the delay. The main focus may have been derailed, and expected outcomes may have been changed. In this regard, an impact assessment will be needed with empirical evidence from teachers and school administrators who participated in the CONTESSA training program.

This paper is part of the dissertation that evaluates the CONTESSA Project's impact on professional growth, exploring perspectives of trained teachers, mentors, and training center supervisors. Through this evaluation, it seeks to provide insights into the effectiveness of the project in Cambodia.

Method

The design of this study was survey research to collect quantitative data. The methodology that was utilized in the study was quantitative in design using a Likert-type scale survey. The researcher developed the instruments for the current study. The first part of the survey contained demographic items. The second section of the survey asked the participants to reflect on their participation in the CONTESSA Training Modules that they had attended and to rate how beneficial each of the modules was to them. The final item of the survey was open-ended responses pertaining to the purpose of the Teacher Training Modules of the CONTESSA Project. Participants were asked to share their thoughts concerning how the Teacher Training Modules met their purposes of acculturating them in the learning organization and accelerating their professional growth. The survey forms were distributed to 156 certified teachers who participated in the CONTESSA Training Modules. Data collection took place in person.

Results

In the study, a comparison was made between the responses of teacher educators, in-service teachers, and pre-service teachers to the specific delivery of the CONTESSA Training Modules that each of these three groups has experienced. In addition, the perceptions of the teachers' supervisors, head teachers, directors, and principals of the various institutions and training schools that implemented the CONTESSA Training Project specifically on the improvement of those teachers who attended the program in terms of classroom teaching, leadership styles, and other insights on personal development, are presented.

Demographic profiles of respondents

Gender of respondents

Table 1

Gender Profile of the Respondents

Gender	In-Service		Pre-service		Teacher Trainer	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Male	5	21.70	22	33.80	34	50.75
Female	18	78.30	43	66.20	33	49.25
Total	23	100.00	65	100.00	67	100.00

Table 1 shows a total of 65 respondents participated as pre-service teachers, with 22 men (33.8%) and 43 women (66.2%). In contrast, 67 teacher trainers participated, with 34 male participants (50%) and 33 female participants (48.5%). This indicates a higher number of female respondents among pre-service teachers, while the gender distribution among teacher trainers is nearly balanced, with a slight male predominance.

Age profile of the respondents

Table 2

Age Profile of the Respondents

Age	In-Service		Pre-Service Teacher		Teacher Trainer	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
21-30 years old	12	52.20	62	95.40	9	13.43
31-40 years old	5	21.70	1	1.50	33	49.25
41-50 years old	4	17.40	2	3.10	19	28.36
51-60 years old	2	8.70	-	-	2	2.99
61 and above	-	-	-	-	4	5.97
	23	100.00	65	100.00	67	100.00

As shown in the table above, the majority of the age group of the respondents falls within the range of 21-30 years old in the in-service teacher and pre-service teacher, while the teacher trainer falls within the range of 31-40 years old.

Teaching years profile of the respondents

Table 3

Teaching Years Profile of the Respondents

Teaching Years	In-Service Teacher		Pre-Service Teacher		Teacher Trainer	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.00	3	13.00	13	20.00	-	-
2.00	2	8.70	26	40.0	1	1.5
3.00	2	8.70	10	15.40	4	5.9
4.00	1	4.30	11	16.90	4	5.9
5.00	6	26.10	3	4.60	3	4.4
6.00	3	13.00	-	-	2	2.9
7.00	3	13.00	-	-	10	14.9
10.00	1	4.30	2	3.10	3	4.4
11.00	1	4.30	-	-	5	7.4
12			-	-	3	4.4
13					2	2.9
14					1	1.5
15					2	2.9
16					2	2.9
17					6	8.8
18					2	2.9
19					1	1.5
20					3	4.5
21					4	5.9
22					1	1.5
25	1	4.30			5	7.4
26					1	1.5
38					2	2.9
Total	23	100.0	65	100.0	67	100.0

In terms of teaching years, in-service teachers responded that they have been teaching for about 5 years, 6 or 26.1%; while the others have been in-service teachers for about 1 year, 3 or 13%; and the others were teaching for only 2 or 3 years, 2 or 8.7%. There were in-service teachers who had been teaching for over 6 years to 7 years, 3 or 13%. It was surprising that there are in-service teachers who have been teaching for 10 years to as much as 4.3%.

The extent the respondents evaluate the CONTESSA Online Modules Coursework (COMC) across various dimensions

Content

Table 4

Content Evaluation of the Respondents of the CONTESSA Project

Content	In-Service		Pre- Service Teacher		Teacher Trainer	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
CO1	3.65	Somewhat Agree	3.97	Somewhat Agree	3.97	Somewhat Agree
CO2	4.13	Somewhat Agree	4.18	Somewhat Agree	4.10	Somewhat Agree
CO3	4.04	Somewhat Agree	4.04	Somewhat Agree	4.13	Somewhat Agree
CO4	4.22	Somewhat Agree	4.52	Somewhat Agree	4.33	Somewhat Agree
CO5	3.87	Somewhat Agree	3.97	Somewhat Agree	4.19	Somewhat Agree
CO6	3.87	Somewhat Agree	4.38	Somewhat Agree	4.30	Somewhat Agree
Total Weighted Mean	3.96	Somewhat Agree	4.17	Somewhat Agree	4.17	Somewhat Agree

Based on the table above, the content evaluation of the respondents of the CONTESSA Project reached the total weighted mean of 3.96 for in-service teachers, 4.17 for pre-service teachers, and 4.17 for teacher trainers, indicating a general trend of somewhat agreement across all respondent groups regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of the CONTESSA Project's content, which includes the consistency of terminology used throughout the five modules, the relevant concepts and examples, the accuracy and currency of the learning materials, etc.

Learning and Support

Table 5

Learning and Support Evaluation of the Respondents

Content Items	In-Service Teacher		Pre-Service Teacher		Teacher Trainer	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
LS1	4.17	Somewhat Agree	4.17	Somewhat Agree	4.06	Somewhat Agree
LS2	3.87	Somewhat Agree	4.58	Somewhat Agree	4.24	Somewhat Agree
LS3	3.87	Somewhat Agree	4.46	Somewhat Agree	4.07	Somewhat Agree
LS4	4.26	Somewhat Agree	4.51	Somewhat Agree	4.10	Somewhat Agree
Total Weighted Mean	4.04	Somewhat Agree	4.43	Somewhat Agree	4.12	Somewhat Agree

Based on Table 5, the learning and support evaluation of the respondents of the CONTESSA Project can be interpreted that the total weighted mean for learning and support evaluation is 4.04 for in-service teachers, 4.43 for pre-service teachers, and 4.12

for teacher trainers, suggesting a general trend of some agreement across all respondent groups regarding the adequacy of learning support provided by the CONTESSA Project. The evaluation of the CONTESSA Online Modules Coursework (COMC) by respondents highlights several key findings regarding the learning and support provided by the courseware.

- **Tailored Feedback (LS1):** Tailored feedback provided at specific times related to the content being studied received a weighted mean of 4.17 among in-service teachers, 4.17 among pre-service teachers, and 4.06 among teacher trainers. This indicates some agreement across all groups, suggesting that the tailored feedback is perceived as beneficial. According to Nicol and Macfarlane-Dick (2006), effective feedback is crucial for learning as it helps students understand their progress and identify areas for improvement.
- **Support for Applying New Knowledge (LS2):** The support provided by the COMC for applying new knowledge and skills while learning new things received a weighted mean of 3.87 among in-service teachers, 4.58 among pre-service teachers, and 4.24 among teacher trainers. This shows particularly strong agreement among pre-service teachers. This aligns with the findings of Hattie and Timperley (2007), who emphasize the importance of instructional support in helping learners apply new knowledge to practical contexts.
- **Opportunities for Self-Assessment (LS3):** The provision of opportunities for self-assessment to enhance learner achievement received a weighted mean of 3.87 among in-service teachers, 4.46 among pre-service teachers, and 4.07 among teacher trainers. Self-assessment is a vital component of formative assessment, as it encourages learners to reflect on their own learning and identify their strengths and areas for improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998).
- **Availability of Appropriate Facilities (LS4):** The availability of appropriate facilities to support the learning process provided by the COMC received a

weighted mean of 4.26 among in-service teachers, 4.51 among pre-service teachers, and 4.10 among teacher trainers, indicating some agreement across all groups. This finding supports the assertion by Garrison and Vaughan (2008) that access to adequate resources and facilities is essential for effective learning in blended and online environments.

Interactivity

Table 6

Interactivity Evaluation of the Respondents of the CONTESSA Project

Content	In-Service Teacher		Pre-Service Teachers		Teacher Trainer	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
IN1	4.26	Somewhat Agree	4.29	Somewhat Agree	4.29	Somewhat Agree
IN2	3.96	Somewhat Agree	4.20	Somewhat Agree	4.24	Somewhat Agree
IN3	4.09	Somewhat Agree	4.77	Somewhat Agree	4.63	Somewhat Agree
IN4	4.09	Somewhat Agree	4.34	Somewhat Agree	4.15	Somewhat Agree
IN5	3.96	Somewhat Agree	3.83	Somewhat Agree	4.28	Somewhat Agree
Total Weighted Mean	4.07	Somewhat Agree	4.29	Somewhat Agree	4.32	Somewhat Agree

Based on the table above, the interactivity evaluation of the respondents of the CONTESSA Project can be interpreted as follows: the total weighted mean for interactivity evaluation is 4.07 for in-service teachers, 4.29 for pre-service teachers, and 4.32 for teacher trainers, suggesting a general trend of some agreement across all respondent groups

regarding the effectiveness of interactive elements in the CONTESSA Project's learning materials.

The interactivity evaluation of the respondents of the CONTESSA Project reveals several key insights about the effectiveness of interactive elements within the coursework.

- **Utilization of Interactive Elements (IN1):** The use of quizzes, e-portfolio tasks, and case studies to enhance engagement and motivation in the learning process received high ratings, with weighted means of 4.26 among in-service teachers, 4.29 among pre-service teachers, and 4.29 among teacher trainers. This indicates some agreement across all groups, suggesting that these elements are effective in maintaining learner interest. This finding aligns with the research by Mayer (2003), who emphasizes the importance of active learning strategies in fostering deep learning and student engagement.
- **Meaningful Interactions during Long Texts (IN2):** The provision of meaningful interactions, such as embedded quizzes and tests during long sections of text, received weighted means of 3.96 among in-service teachers, 4.20 among pre-service teachers, and 4.24 among teacher trainers. This indicates some agreement across all groups, reinforcing the importance of integrating interactive elements within textual content to maintain learner attention and comprehension (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004).
- **Access to Varied Resources (IN3):** Access to a variety of resources, including web links, case studies, and e-portfolio tasks, received high ratings, with a particularly strong agreement among pre-service teachers (4.77). The weighted means were 4.09 for in-service teachers and 4.63 for teacher trainers. The positive reception of these resources highlights their relevance and applicability to real-world contexts, which is critical for effective learning (Herrington, Reeves, & Oliver, 2014).

- **Alignment with Learning Goals (IN4):** Engagement in tasks closely aligned with learning goals and objectives received weighted means of 4.09 among in-service teachers, 4.34 among pre-service teachers, and 4.15 among teacher trainers. This consistency underscores the importance of designing learning activities that directly support educational objectives (Biggs & Tang, 2011).
- **Use of Graphics and Multimedia (IN5):** The use of graphics and multimedia to facilitate understanding received some agreement across all groups, with weighted means of 3.96 among in-service teachers, 3.83 among pre-service teachers, and 4.28 among teacher trainers. This finding suggests that while multimedia elements are generally seen as beneficial, their effectiveness may vary depending on their implementation. Mayer (2009) argues that multimedia learning can enhance comprehension when used appropriately to support the learning content rather than distract from it.

Self-Assessment and Learnability

Table 7

Self-Assessment and Learnability Evaluation of the Respondents

Content Items	In-Service Teacher		Pre-Service Teacher		Teacher Trainer	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
SA1	3.39	Neither Agree or Disagree	3.85	Somewhat Agree	3.99	Somewhat Agree
SA2	4.04	Somewhat Agree	3.98	Somewhat Agree	4.03	Somewhat Agree
SA3	4.22	Somewhat Agree	4.34	Somewhat Agree	4.31	Somewhat Agree
SA4	4.22	Somewhat Agree	4.51	Somewhat Agree	4.36	Somewhat Agree

Total Weighted Mean	3.97	Somewhat Agree	4.17	Somewhat Agree	4.15	Somewhat Agree
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Overall, the total weighted mean for self-assessment and learnability evaluation is 3.97 for in-service teachers, 4.17 for pre-service teachers, and 4.15 for teacher trainers, suggesting a general trend of some agreement across all respondent groups regarding the effectiveness of self-assessment opportunities and learnability aspects provided by the CONTESSA Project.

The self-assessment and learnability evaluation of the CONTESSA Project respondents, as detailed in Table 7, provide significant insights into the perceived effectiveness of the coursework.

- **Predicting Outcomes of Actions (SA1):** The ability to predict the general result of clicking on each button or link received weighted means of 3.39 among in-service teachers, 3.85 among pre-service teachers, and 3.99 among teacher trainers. This indicates neither agreement nor disagreement among in-service teachers and some agreement among pre-service teachers and teacher trainers. This finding is indicative of the mixed perceptions regarding the intuitiveness of the interface. According to Nielsen (1993), the usability of an interface greatly impacts the user's ability to navigate and predict outcomes, which is critical for effective learning in online environments.
- **Clarity of Objectives and Outcomes (SA2):** The clarity regarding what is to be accomplished and what will be gained from using the COMC received weighted means of 4.04 among in-service teachers, 3.98 among pre-service teachers, and 4.03 among teacher trainers. This indicates some agreement across all groups, suggesting that the COMC generally provides clear learning objectives and outcomes. This aligns with Chickering and Gamson's (1987) principles of good

practice in undergraduate education, which emphasize the importance of clear goals and expectations.

- Opportunities for Self-Assessment (SA3):** The provision of opportunities for self-assessment (post-tests and other assessments) that advance achievements according to the learning objectives by the COMC received weighted means of 4.22 among in-service teachers, 4.34 among pre-service teachers, and 4.31 among teacher trainers. This indicates some agreement across all groups, highlighting the value of self-assessment in enhancing learner achievements. Black and Wiliam (1998) support this, noting that formative assessments significantly improve student learning by providing continuous feedback.
- Preparation for Applying New Knowledge (SA4):** The assessments in the COMC that prepare users to apply new knowledge and skills in daily life received weighted means of 4.22 among in-service teachers, 4.51 among pre-service teachers, and 4.36 among teacher trainers. This also indicates some agreement across all groups, suggesting that the coursework is effective in equipping learners with practical skills. This finding is consistent with Kolb's (1984) experiential learning theory, which stresses the importance of applying learned knowledge to real-world contexts.

Motivation to Learn

Table 8

Motivation to Learn Evaluation of the Respondents of CONTESSA

Content	In-Service Teacher		Pre-Service Teachers		Teacher Trainer	
	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
MO1	4.26	Somewhat Agree	4.12	Somewhat Agree	4.24	Somewhat Agree

MO2	3.83	Somewhat Agree	4.14	Somewhat Agree	4.40	Somewhat Agree
MO3	4.26	Somewhat Agree	4.42	Somewhat Agree	4.34	Somewhat Agree
MO4	4.22	Somewhat Agree	4.29	Somewhat Agree	4.27	Somewhat Agree
MO5	3.96	Somewhat Agree	4.29	Somewhat Agree	4.27	Somewhat Agree
MO6	3.83	Somewhat Agree	4.17	Somewhat Agree	4.37	Somewhat Agree
MO7	3.96	Somewhat Agree	4.15	Somewhat Agree	4.25	Somewhat Agree
MO8	3.74	Somewhat Agree	4.34	Somewhat Agree	4.31	Somewhat Agree
MO9	4.09	Somewhat Agree	4.31	Somewhat Agree	4.24	Somewhat Agree
Total Weighted Mean	4.02	Somewhat Agree	4.25	Somewhat Agree	4.30	Somewhat Agree

Overall, the total weighted mean for motivation to learn evaluation is 4.02 for in-service teachers, 4.25 for pre-service teachers, and 4.30 for teacher trainers, suggesting a general trend of some agreement across all respondent groups regarding the motivation-enhancing aspects of the CONTESSA Project's learning materials.

Structure of the Modules

The CONTESSA modules are well-structured, addressing a broad range of essential teaching elements from pedagogy to psychology, which supports comprehensive teacher development. This aligns with the findings of Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who emphasize the importance of structured professional development programs that enhance

both teaching and learning experiences by covering critical pedagogical knowledge and skills.

Materials and Teaching Instructions

While the materials are generally well-received and contextually relevant, certain texts and topics pose challenges, particularly in remote areas. Clear instructions and practical examples aid comprehension, but better language support, especially for audio-visual materials, is necessary. Shulman (1987) highlights the significance of pedagogical content knowledge and the need for materials that are accessible and practical across diverse contexts. Additionally, Snow (2010) emphasizes the importance of clear communication and effective translation in multilingual educational settings, supporting the need for improved language support in the modules.

Reflections

The training in the CONTESSA project has been beneficial in shaping participants' ideas and understanding in teaching and learning, fostering mutual understanding, networking, sharing, and respect. There is strong interest in updates and revisions to the CONTESSA modules, indicating a desire for ongoing learning and improvement. Larrivee (2008) emphasizes the importance of reflective practice in professional development, while Borko (2004) highlights the value of continuous professional growth and adaptation to evolving educational needs.

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight important trends in teacher training and leadership development in Cambodia. The high proportion of young pre-service teachers indicates a fresh wave of new educators entering the profession, while the balanced gender distribution among teacher trainers suggests progress in promoting gender equity in educational leadership. The positive reception of the CONTESSA modules underscores the

program's effectiveness in fostering professional growth and improving teaching practices, though there is a clear need for more interactivity and practical application of digital tools.

The study also reveals the importance of mentorship and collaboration in fostering educational leadership. Teachers who participated in the CONTESSA program reported increased confidence in their classroom leadership skills, while educational leaders emphasized the program's role in promoting a collaborative culture within schools. However, the need for ongoing professional development remains critical, particularly in ensuring that the benefits of the program are sustained over time.

Conclusion

The study reveals the positive impact of CONTESSA project modules on teaching practices in Cambodia. The respondents highly recommend using the modules as supplemental materials for teacher training. The results also strongly agree that the integration of diverse teaching materials and methods is very important for enhancing teaching and learning in this 21st century.

In contrast, to make CONTESSA modules more efficient, other components have to be taken into consideration. They include the improvement of the translation of the key terms in the learning modules, adding various interactive teaching and learning techniques, more emphasis on critical areas such as stress management and critical thinking, more technology integration, and more opportunities to foster collaboration and peer learning and familiarize context to match Cambodian settings more. In conclusion, the CONTESSA project has had a positive impact on teaching practices, particularly in boosting confidence and fostering more innovative teaching strategies. While the modules are well-structured and generally well-received, there are clear areas for improvement, particularly in terms of content depth, practical applications, and language support. The ongoing refinement of these elements, along with continued collaboration and professional development, will further enhance the effectiveness of the project and ensure its lasting impact on educational practices.

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Telegram App: A game-changer for academic communication in Cambodia

Johny Barliyanta

Abstract

The latest report released by the World Population Review in 2023 stated that there were over 10 million active users of the Telegram app in Cambodia. In a related report, the Digital Marketing Agency added that the majority of Telegram app users are young adults, aged 18-34. In the field of education, Telegram is a popular means of communication among students and teachers. It is only natural that this country's second most popular app, after a game app—Solo Leveling: Arise—brings a major change to the teaching and learning approach in schools. As the app is most prevalently used by young parents, this paper is going to focus on how Telegram has benefitted kindergarten and primary education. However, there are some controversies around the use of Telegram as well, so some notes should be taken into consideration if the academic community opts to use the Telegram app to support their activities.

Keywords: Telegram app, education, means of communication, school

Telegram App: A game-changer for academic communication in Cambodia

Introduction

The Telegram app has become a means of communication among millions of users in Cambodia, a big chunk of the population being in the school settings. It sits as the second most-downloaded app after Facebook Messenger in Cambodia. Some features in the app suit so many users in the country that the Telegram app has been prevalently used among the school management, teachers, students, and parents or guardians. This study will look at how the school community has reaped the benefits of this messenger app to an extent that even the traditional note-taking and oral instructions prior to this innovation would never think possible. Among schools, it has become a plus selling point in the midst of fierce competition in the country where the quota of schools is not clearly limited by the government.

In the country, the public and private schools can be located within a few meters of each other. New schools with fresh and uplifted optimism emerge in every corner of the city, all competing to grab a small portion of the number of students in the area. Some popular schools can get over 30 students in each class, while the unpopular ones may only have below ten students. Hence, everyone is watching everyone else because once they miss a step, they may see their students moving to another school. With the arrival of new technologies in messenger apps, thanks to the COVID-19 era for popularizing them, schools seek the best messenger app to strengthen their academic side in the hope of establishing their marketing power. The Telegram app seems to have answered the need. It has ticked most of the requirements to be the standard means of communication among faculty members.

The Telegram App

The Telegram app enables users to send and receive messages in the forms of writing, photos, videos, audios, and other formats such as Word Doc, PPT, Excel, etc. The

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messages can be sent and received in an instant, well, of course, depending on the availability of the Internet connection and the size of the message. In order to reach out to users with weak Internet connections, small-sized messages can be used. For instance, it happened during the COVID-19 lockdown when some students could not join online classes through Zoom and Google Meet. Teachers turned to the Telegram app to send their lessons in photos, recorded voice, YouTube links, and chats to conduct lessons that would not leave anyone behind. Students who could not join the online lessons through Zoom or Google Meet could catch up with the lessons when they got the Internet connection strong enough to receive the messages sent by their teachers.

The Telegram app can accommodate large-sized groups of up to 200,000 members. The owner and admin members of the group have some authoritative control over what is happening in the group. The information exchanges in the app are cloud-based, which means that the messages and media are stored on Telegram's servers. This allows users to access the messages at anytime and anywhere. Messages can also be saved into the user's system for personal usage. The app is equipped with features like end-to-end encryption, secret chats, and the ability to delete messages automatically. If one wishes to go to the next level, the app allows them to create bots and integrate other services into the app. Last but not least, light-hearted users can use various stickers, emojis, and emoticons to express their feelings.

What Parents Want

The school is a community where parents can leave their children in a safe, friendly, and educational place. After parents and guardians drop their children at school, they go to work or back home to do their adult obligations. The upbringing of the children is then entrusted to the school. However, parents also miss their children, and they would like to know what their children are doing and how they are treated at school. When the children are at school, their communication with their parents is technically cut off. Students are in the school precinct and in classrooms that are not accessible for the public unless the school gives permission. The Class Telegram group provides an answer to the need. When home

teachers send photos and videos of the students doing class activities, the parents are able to observe their children. Through the app, teachers and parents or guardians are able to work together to educate the students.

As mentioned earlier, the competition among schools is high, especially in the city. Schools are now like open restaurants that display their menu for potential buyers to choose from. In regards to the quality of teaching in class, parents observe their children's notebooks, exercises, homework, and exams. Parents are educated, and they believe in quality teaching. Some parents may even think they know what lessons are best for their children, what teaching methodology is best to be applied, how their children should be treated, and so on. When a school does not conform to most of the parents' "standards," parents can easily move their children to another school. It is therefore paramount for the school to share the whiteboard notes with the class Telegram group. Furthermore, teachers are expected to give assignments in written instructions so that parents will be able to see the quality of the teaching. Thus in the Class Telegram group, for instance, a teacher sends a message: "Dear students, for your homework please do the workbook on page 12. Please submit your homework on Wednesday." Another teacher may write, "Please open page 15 and read the passage aloud. Video record it when you read the passage, and send the video to the class Telegram group." Furthermore, another teacher who is concerned with students' spelling and listening skills would write, "Please listen to dictation in the audio attached, write the words in your notebook, and submit it tomorrow in class."

In Cambodia, getting good grades is regarded as a respectable achievement. Children are expected to get high academic achievements as part of being good children in the eyes of the parents. As a result, when there is an exam without prior notice, parents will surely complain. There are also numerous school events of which dates and times need to be announced. The class Telegram group comes to the rescue. The announcement can be made quickly and reach all the students, parents, and guardians in a mere click away. In short, parents would like to be notified of all the activities at school. They have the right to know what is happening and what is about to happen for the well-being of their loved ones.

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In Cambodia, it is believed that teachers are parents to their students. Teachers are expected to act like parents to the students. The efforts that teachers do in class to educate the students should also be shared with the parents and guardians at home. With synchronized efforts, there will be a better chance to achieve the educational goals. In a way, the communication through Class Telegram groups, where assignments are sent, is also a way to build parent-child bonds. Thus, the Telegram app, as a means of communication, has now become a cornerstone in building the community.

Compromised Resistances

Homework is compulsory, as schools normally treat homework as 5% of the final grade. However, it can become overwhelming for students, because a class is taught by several different teachers. Students must respond to different kinds of homework from those teachers. With 10 to 13 different subjects to study, for example, students will have to respond to at least one piece of homework from one teacher per week. That is about two pieces of homework every day. Not to mention, some teachers would like to have more than one piece of homework per week. A student may need to do two or three pieces of homework from different teachers in a day. Some students are reported to study at school for 8 hours, then at home for 30 minutes to one hour. It is not uncommon for students to sleep late in order to complete their homework. As homework is sent through the app, the students somehow get pressure from the parents as their parents see whether their children have homework to complete or not. There is no escape.

Parents are divided in regards to this compulsory homework. On the one hand, some parents believe that homework is necessary to build the student's learning habit and discipline. They believe that students doing homework is better than those playing games on their phones and computers. On the other hand, some parents pity their children as they look even more hard at their work than adults making ends meet. To reduce the home study time, which may cause too much pressure to students, teachers limit their homework to be finished within 5-10 minutes. When it is a video or audio recording, students can finish

their homework in less than a minute. Still, some students feel bombarded with homework as they have to study long hours at school and at home, even on the weekends.

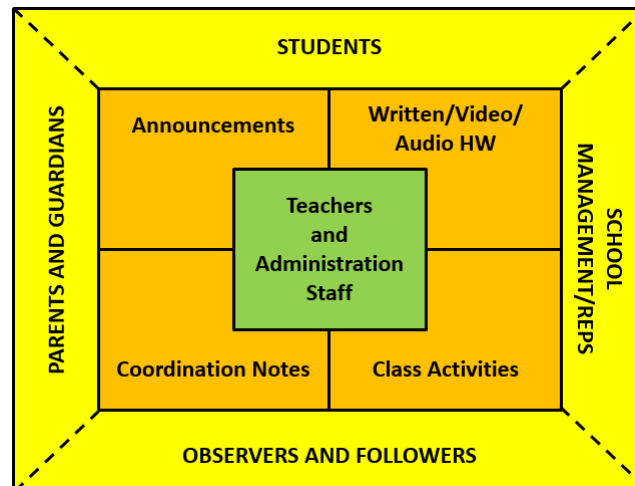
Videos of kids reading English words and passages can be so cute. Some might even become viral. However, not all parents are pleased to see their children's photos and videos shared in public for fear of misuse by a third party. Now the Telegram app is encrypted, which has increased the security for its users. An app that is encrypted means that the app undergoes a process in which the information is encoded to prevent anyone other than the intended recipients from viewing the information. Still, some parents are skeptical about the Telegram app and opt to distance themselves from using it for such purposes. If one user shares a photo or video with another user outside the Class Telegram group, for example, there will be no stopping this photo or video from going viral.

To teachers who are not into social media and messaging, the school's policy to apply the Telegram app as part of the teaching can be quite a learning curve. It takes not only a habit but also some training on how to use the Telegram app effectively. Some teachers might not share the belief that the Telegram app can improve the quality of their teaching, and despite the school's policy and training, they might feel reluctant to implement the new technology. In a way, it is like teaching an old dog how to bark. They believe that they already have the qualification, knowledge, and experience that it takes to deliver successful teaching, and it is not easy to move on to a new way while they doubt the benefits for them and for the students. Additionally, a teacher will need to be in as many groups as the number of classes that they teach because they need to monitor and give comments as necessary. That means their phone will send notifications that can reach tens in a day, 24/7. However, that could still be good news, as the school principal could get hundreds of notifications, for s/he is in every group there is in the school.

The following chart shows how the Telegram app facilitates information exchanges among the group members:

Figure 1

Telegram Group Communication Chart



The chart can be elaborated as follows:

1. The teachers and administration staff post announcements, video/audio homework, photos and videos of class activities, or coordination notes to the relevant telegram group.
 - a. Announcements: e.g., holidays and school closures, exam dates, parent-teacher meeting dates, special events, etc.
 - b. Video and audio homework: e.g., teachers assign students to record their voice or video while reading a text.
 - c. Class activities: e.g., photos and videos of students doing their assignments in class, taking notes, playing games, etc.
 - d. Coordination notes: e.g., the admin staff explain the procedures of registering for a field trip, the itinerary of a trip, ordering food at the canteen, etc.
2. The receivers of the information sent by the teachers and administration staff are the students, parents and guardians, school management/representatives, and observers and followers. The responses that the receivers give back can vary.

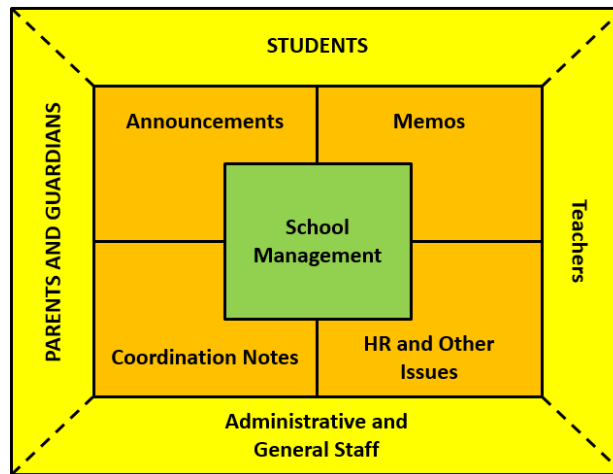
- a. Students: e.g., do the assignments given by the teacher, feel proud or self-conscious for being shown what they achieve to the limited community.
- b. Parents and guardians: e.g., able to check the school's accountability, able to monitor their children's progress, able to provide support to their children, able to give feedback to the teachers and school, etc.
- c. School management/representatives could be the school principal, the deputy principal, and related management personnel, e.g., able to monitor the quality of the school's services, able to provide remedy should any irregularities occur, able to establish the school's portfolio of best practices, etc.
- d. Observers and followers [family and friends, school's competitors who have a connection with the school's inner circle]: e.g., feel proud or unimpressed by the students' performance, able to see the strengths and weaknesses of the school, inspired by the school, etc.

The dotted lines that separate the receivers' telegram groups (STUDENTS, SCHOOL MANAGEMENT/REPS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS, and OBSERVERS AND FOLLOWERS) signify that although Telegram has applied the end-to-end encryption, it still allows members to forward messages from a particular group to a Telegram user outside the group. From this point on, the messages can go viral. In other words, messages within a group are secure inside the particular group, but once they are taken out of the group, they can go viral outside the group.

In order to avoid the hustle of shifting from one app to another, the school management could also use the Telegram App for internal communication. As seen in Figure 2, the way the school management uses the app follows the same principles as the teachers and admin staff's. Unfortunately, some information is classified as confidential.

Figure 2

Telegram Group Communication Chart



Blurred Limits between Work, Studies, and Social Life

Since the Telegram app has then become the standard means of communication at school, all members are required to respond when they are called upon. That means the members of the online community need to check their phones every now and then. For example, when there is an important message from the management—which might come knocking on an unsuspecting host—the receiver ought to respond accordingly. And, when they fail to respond as expected, they will get reprimanded, “Teacher, why didn’t you come to the meeting? Didn’t you check your phone?” To some, that can be perceived as an invasion of privacy. The distinction between being at work and off work becomes unclear.

While the school can benefit from not using paper too much (paperless) for worksheets and supplementary materials, as class materials and homework are sent through the online platform, the teachers still need to give feedback to students’ work sent online. The easiest way to do this is by sending an emoji, such as a heart, thumb-up, smiley, fire, hand clapping, thank-you icon, etc. Such emoji sending can be done without checking the students’ works. Some teachers could be a little bit more appreciative, such as by sending written comments, “Well done, Sophea! You did a great job! You are a legend!” These

favorable comments can also be done without the teacher having to open the students' works. However, a dedicated teacher would go to the whole extent of opening the students' works and pointing out the parts that need improvement, although that will take a lot of the teacher's private time.

While sending messages through the Telegram group enables teachers to get the students involved in the learning processes, it can also expose the teachers' strengths and weaknesses. An English teacher whose grammar mastery is not great, for example, can write comments that can become a laughing stock among parents and guardians whose English is more superior. Notes written on the board that are sent by teachers to the Telegram group are highly appreciated, but they can backfire when the notes are of low language quality. Although teachers are hired as they have met the qualifications and passed the selection tests, in reality they may show their lack of knowledge. The information exchanges on the Telegram group are there for everyone to access unless they are deleted. Sadly, the quality of the information exchange can be used by parents and guardians to assess the quality of a school. For that reason, the school needs to have someone who monitors the comments and provides training to remedy any mishaps.

Anything that is written, physically pictured, or recorded in audio or video is hard evidence that can either benefit us or fire back at us. There are two principles that need to be observed by users of apps: firstly, 'Think first before you send a message in the Telegram group,' and secondly, 'Don't blindly trust anything that you see.' A group owner has the power to control the contents of the group. Although the group owner might have set the group's code of conduct, some messages sent to the group might have unfavorable contents. Once such contents are seen by the members of the group, they might trigger wild reactions. When this first instance occurs, users should apply the second principle—not to believe in anything that they see. The members should understand that the creation of the group is to reap the common benefits, so the principles of a peaceful community must be upheld. There is also a setting in the Telegram app where members are not allowed (unable) to send comments to the chat box. This one-way communication could be used to maintain

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order in the group. All in all, every group should have an admin who acts as a moderator and peacekeeper in the group.

Conclusion

Since the era of online learning, prompted by the Covid-19 lockdown, some schools have realized the benefits of using messenger apps to boost their services. The Telegram app is chosen by most schools in Cambodia—thanks to its popularity and features that serve as the main means of online communication among the members of the school community. The app has proved to benefit all stakeholders socially and academically, but there is a need for a general controller who is wise enough to maintain the peace and usefulness among the users. A set of codes of conduct is needed to give the members some clear guidelines to use the app. School staff and teachers need some training not only on the use of the app but also on how to deal with issues, write rhetorical comments, and share profound knowledge. The use of the Telegram app must be carefully controlled and supervised; otherwise, it might give more headaches rather than benefits.

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Ethnic culture in the age of globalization and advanced technology

Markus Soegiarto H.

Abstract

Kolintang is an Indonesian xylophone with a trough resonator used by the Minahasa tribe. Studying Minahasa cannot be separated from the three figures of its ancestors, namely Toar, the Sun God; Lumimuut, the Goddess of the Earth; and Karema, the Goddess that discusses ancient astronomy. There is about a holistic balance in the solar system, bringing together motion, ratio, feeling, and harmony of tone. The word Kolintang is an onomatopoeia of Tong Ting Tang, which consists of Tong low, Tang medium, and Ting high tone. Tong Ting Tang can also be interpreted as a balance between two opposite directions with its center in the middle. The sun's circulation can be described as a great vibration when viewed from the Earth. Based on *Maimo Kumolintang's* book about learning music through ancestral concepts. To play music, we can use the Kolintang Hand method. With finger movements, one can play a melody, and chords can be played with hand claps, moving in an imaginary cube in the air. Uniquely, it can be automatically applied to play the kolintang instrument. We can create directional symbols and chords that are no less complete than the chords of Roman letters or numbers. Direction signs are suitable for the era of globalization because they are easier to understand; even animals can understand directions. Notes that can be determined by position, distance, and direction of movement can be easily communicated visually, helping people who have difficulty hearing notes to play music. This method of learning kolintang has been successfully applied to the deaf community. We can hear the music we play with our bare hands in real time using virtual reality devices. Kolintang can survive the disruptive era because it teaches life balance and is universal to everyone in the solar system.

Keywords: ethnic culture, Indonesian music, kolintang hand, Minahasa, Maimo Kumolintang

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Introduction

The world is experiencing an era of disruption or uprooting, which is a significant change. This change is perhaps the essential keyword in addressing the progress of science and technology. The change covers all aspects of human life, including ethnic culture towards a dynamic balance. Therefore anyone, any aspect, inevitably hastens to follow the change; if he doesn't want to follow it, then you can be sure he will be left behind.

Minahasa is part of Indonesia, located in North Sulawesi bordering the Philippines, and will be used as an object of research in facing globalization and technological developments. The advantage of Minahasa from ancient times has been connected with foreign cultures because its location is a world trade route. Minahasa comes from the word Minaesa or makes one unit. Making the many and varied into one unit is not easy; it requires the ability to adjust the balance and direction of movement so that it is not scattered. According to the myth, the Minahasa ancestor was the sun god, and in Minahasa, there are thousands of megalithic sites with isosceles triangular roofs.

Minahasa, like Babylon, had astronomy and geometry known for thousands of years, proving they had an advanced culture since ancient times. In ancient times, science and art were inseparable unity.

The music that is developing today is Western music culture. Western music comes from the Mediterranean countries that adhere to the sun god or ancient astronomy. However, at this time, the music culture is more inclined to the field of art rather than science. The feeling ability is required to tune the tone, so not everyone can do so.

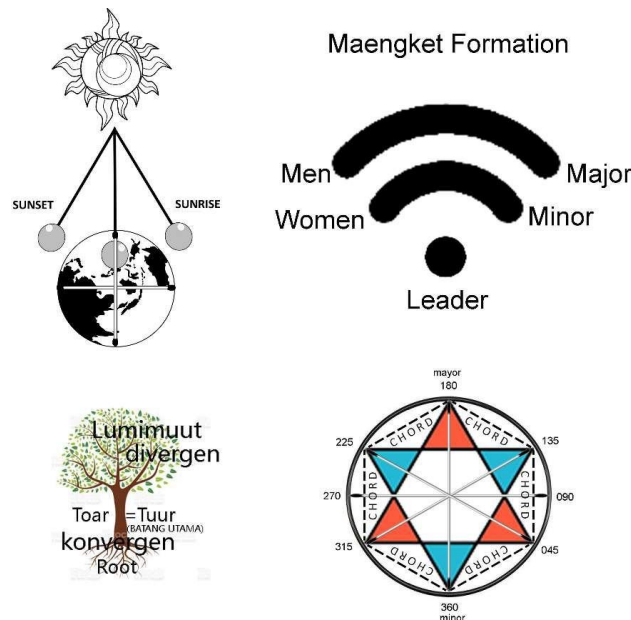
Before the era of colonialism, Minahasa people naturally could sing by dividing their voices harmoniously. So, one of the Minahasa sub-tribes is called the Sangir tribe, which etymologically comes from the word *zanger* (Dutch, which means singer). It is

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because singing has become part of people's daily activities. The concept of the balance of motion that blends with the harmony of this tone is the basis for the Kolintang Hand method. Minahasa culture, which follows the balance of the universe, including the harmony of tones, is suitable for facing an era of disruption or major shocks that uproot it from its roots.

Minahasa Ethnic Culture

An ethnomusicological study using a qualitative method is based on literature, sources from the Minahasa community, and personal experiences as a cultural activist and member of a Minahasa ethnic musical instrument craft family.



According to Minahasa myths, the ancestors of the Minahasa were Toar, the god of the Sun; Lumimuut, the earth goddess; and Karema, the star goddess. At first, the Goddess Karema met Lumimuut, and they worked together to manage the Earth.

Dewi Karema felt their cooperation needed to be completed, so she tried to find a partner for Lumimuut. After Lumimuut rotated toward Southeast, Northeast, Northwest, and Southwest, Toar (sunrise) was born. After Toar grew up (Noon), Karema asked them

to separate, and at one point, they met again as husband and wife (Sunset). Their offspring add up in multiples of the number three.

The myth of Toar Lumimuut tells about the Earth's circulation system and the Sun. The cultured region of the Sun god adherents came from a high culture in the past because they studied ancient astronomy like Babylon. They already know the balance of the solar system, know the direction, can measure angles and time, and have a number system.

The ancient Maengket dance from Minahasa, whose formation looks like a wifi icon, also tells about the balance of east and west motion, the balance of the major circle and the minor circle, and the balance of men and women with their axis at the center of the circle.

Minahasa, which contains 'esa,' means one in the word. It is okay if we discuss numbers in Minahasa culture. Minahasa has a favorite number, namely the number three and its multiples. If expressed as a number, Toar is an odd number because it has a stem in the middle, and the highest value is the number 9. Meanwhile, Lumimuut is an even number. The sound of the Manguni bird is believed to be a good sign when it sings 1, 3, or 9 times. In grouping something, Minahasa people tend to multiply by three. Likewise, the musical scale is a multiple of the tritonic.

Besides being described as the sun god, Toar is also called Tu'ur, or tree trunk near the root (root), and his partner Lumimuut are leaves that grow in all directions. It depicts a balance between the convergent Toar Character and the divergent Lumimuut Character.

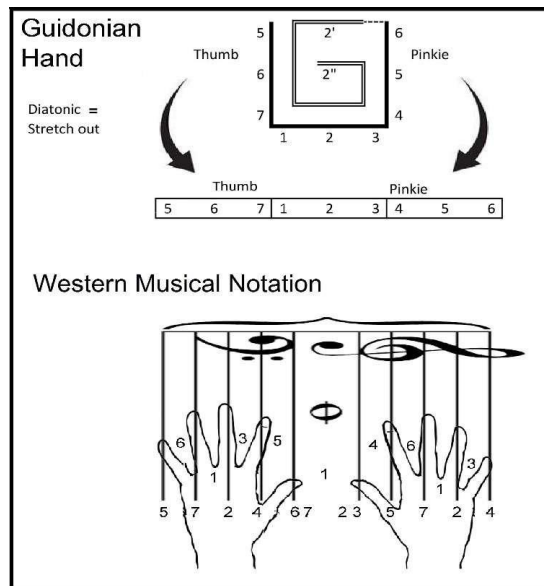
Lumimuut rotates to the southeast (angle 45 degrees), to the northeast (angle 135 degrees), to the northwest (angle 225 degrees), and finally to the southwest (angle 270 degrees) to get Toar. The sum of the degree digits of the direction traversed by Lumimuut all refers to the Toar number. $4 + 5 = 1 + 3 + 5 = 2 + 2 + 5 = 2 + 7 + 0 = 9$.

Kolintang Hand

The music culture developing globally now is the diatonic tonal music system of western music originating from Mediterranean countries that adhere to the sun god (ancient astronomy). Tonal music systems came to Europe via Greece.

Western music notation originates from Guido of Arezzo, an Italian monk who invented the Guidonian Hand method for teaching diatonic music in the early eleventh century. The Guidonian hand is a hand in which each finger joint represents a note with a range of almost three octaves. If we look at it in geometric form, the Guidonian hand is a symmetrical container with the right and left sides in the form of the thumb and little finger, and inside the container, some lines form the letter G. When the thumb and little finger are stretched, the container produces a diatonic scale of 5, 6, 7, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. The word diatonic in Greek means stretches out.

From the Guidonian Hand, it develops into a staff notation whose pitch range is nearly 3 octaves. Staff notation, which is now known as the grand staff, the notes can be mapped in a pair of palms symmetrically by placing them on the fingers and between the fingers.



Kolintang Hand is a method from Minahasa culture that can adapt Western music tones. Kolintang is an Indonesian xylophone with a trough resonator used by the Minahasa people. The word Kolintang is the onomatopoeia of Tong Ting Tang, which consists of the tones of low Tong, medium Tang, and high Ting. Tong Ting Tang can also be interpreted as a balance between two opposite directions, with the center in the middle. Tong Ting Tang likes the movement of Tong (left) and Ting (right) and always back to the middle like the infinity symbol. Solar circulation can be described as a great vibration when viewed from Earth.

The notes are represented by the fingers in a chromatic arrangement, for a diatonic arrangement, without using the index and middle fingers. The medium for placing the notes is an imaginary cube in three-dimensional space. So that the range of tones achieved by the Kolintang hand is 6 fields x 2 front and back x 5 finger tones = 60 chromatic tones, or 5 octaves. Forming a diatonic arrangement of 9 notes {5, 6, 7, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6} requires three surfaces of a cube.

The diagram illustrates the Kolintang Hand method. At the top, a piano keyboard is shown with keys colored in purple, blue, and green. Below it, three hand positions are depicted on a 3D grid, labeled with finger numbers and notes: 4# 5, 6 7 1#, and 6# 1 2. A central diagram shows two hands with notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and Ir (Indonesian) positioned above them. A legend on the right defines chord codes: Major (represented by a hand with fingers 1, 2, 3), Minor (represented by a hand with fingers 1, 2, 3), Symmetric (represented by a hand with fingers 1, 2, 3, 4), and Seventh (represented by a hand with fingers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5). At the bottom, a finger numbering system is shown: Second left (2, 3, 4# 5, 6), Middle (1, 2, 3, 4), and Right (6). Below this is a diagram of a Kolintang instrument with notes placed on its keys.

Play a melody by tapping ten fingers to the direction of clapping

Chord code:

- Major
- Minor
- Symmetric
- Seventh

Second left | Middle | Right

2 3 4# 5 6 | 1 2 3 4 | 6

@kolintang

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With the Kolintang Hand method, we can make a complete harmonic chord using the 12 basic notes with just one hand. Using your right and left hands together, you can play more complex chords that use more than three notes. The kolintang hand starts from the Fis (F#) chord by the left hand and ends with the Cis (C#) chord with the right hand, forming a Fici word that looks like Vici (conquered) is known as Kolintang greeting.

Sample Song:

Caca Marica (Chan Mali Chan)

Ma - na di ma - na a - nak kam - bing sa - ya? A -
Ma - na di ma - na jan - tung ha - ti sa - ya? Jan -

5
nak kam - bing tu - an a - da di po - hon wa - ru
tung ha - ti tu - an a - da di kam - pung ba - ru

9
Ca - ca ma - ri - ca hey hey Ca - ca ma - ri - ca hey hey

13
Ca - ca ma - ri - ca a - da di - kam - pung ba - ru ru

To Coda ↑ D.S. al Coda ↑

Maimo Kumolintang

Developments in Western music theory and diatonic scales are now more often written as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1 with the Tonika chord 1, 3, 5. The root tone "1" is not placed in the center, which obscures the orientation of the keynote that used to be in the middle. Music is difficult to play for people who cannot distinguish tones because it cannot be understood visually.

Maimo Kumolintang is an invitation from the Minahasa regional language to do 'Tong Ting Tang'; a deeper meaning is an invitation to return to the roots.

Benefits go back to the roots.

- a. The direction symbol directly points to the orientation, and the symmetry is visible. Directions are easy to understand. Even animals can be directed. The balance of Kolintang's movements allows everyone to play music without the need for talent and inexpensively without the need for instruments.
- b. Directional symbols in the form of vectors that can be calculated for angles, positions, distances, and the time correlation make music a science. For example, a Rubik's Cube brain teaser puzzle can be solved with musical direction symbols.
- c. You can still follow scales other than diatonic with a balanced concept in the middle, for example, for the Chinese pentatonic scale (slendro) with the arrangement {56, 123, 56}, for the hexatonic scale (pelog) {57, 13, 46}, and the Balinese tetratonic scale {7, 13, 4}.
- d. Up to date with current technology, now there are 'Freedrum or Aerodrums' applications that play musical rhythms in the air without drum instruments (motion sensor-based). With the kolintang hand, it is possible to play notes in the air. This method is a preparation for entering the future technology of the

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metaverse environment. We can hear the music we play with our bare hands in real-time using a virtual reality device.

Conclusion

The harmony of tones that blends with the balance of life is a fundamental skill humans must master to survive in the era of disruption.

The Minahasa Ethnic Culture regarding the balance of Kolintang motion is global for everyone who lives in the solar system and applies all the time.

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Advantages of solid oxide fuel cell

Meas Marin

Abstract

Solid Oxide Fuel Cells (SOFCs) represent a significant advancement in fuel cell technology, characterized by their ability to convert chemical energy directly into electricity through a solid oxide or ceramic electrolyte. This paper examines the unique construction and operation of SOFCs, focusing on the two primary designs: planar and tubular. SOFCs are distinguished by their high efficiency, fuel flexibility, and minimal environmental impact, offering a cleaner and more reliable alternative to traditional power generation methods. Unlike other fuel cells, SOFCs can utilize a variety of readily available fuels, including natural gas, light hydrocarbons, and heavier hydrocarbons like gasoline and diesel, without the need for expensive catalysts. Their application spans stationary power generation, transportation, and military sectors, where they provide substantial benefits such as noise reduction, low emissions, and enhanced energy efficiency. Despite challenges like high operational temperatures and start-up times, the potential of SOFCs in reducing fossil fuel dependency and meeting global energy demands is undeniable. This paper highlights the ongoing advancements in SOFC technology, its advantages over other fuel cell types, and its potential for widespread adoption in various energy applications.

Keywords: Solid Oxide Fuel Cell (SOFC), fuel flexibility, high efficiency, environmental impact, planar design, tubular design, renewable energy, natural gas, power generation, fuel cell technology

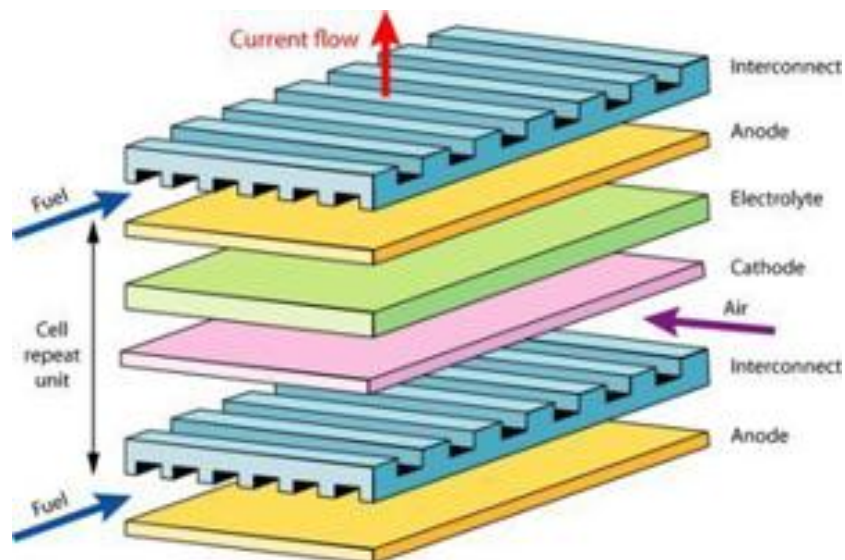
Advantages of solid oxide fuel cell

General Description

A solid oxide fuel cell directly converts chemical energy from oxidizing fuel into electricity. This type of fuel cell design differs from the others in that it uses solid oxide or ceramic as its electrolyte material. The electrolyte is sandwiched between two porous electrodes in its basic construction. To supply oxygen, air is allowed to pass through the cathode's sides. When an oxygen molecule makes contact with the cathode/electrolyte interface, it catalytically acquires four electrons from the cathode and later splits into two oxygen ions. The oxygen ions will then diffuse into the electrolyte material and migrate to the fuel cell's other side, where they react with fuel at the anode. The catalytic reaction at the anode/electrolyte interface produces water, carbon dioxide, heat, and electrons. The electrons are transported from the anode to the external circuit and back to the cathode, providing a source of useful electrical energy in the external circuit.

Figure 1

Flat Panel Solid Oxide Fuel Cell

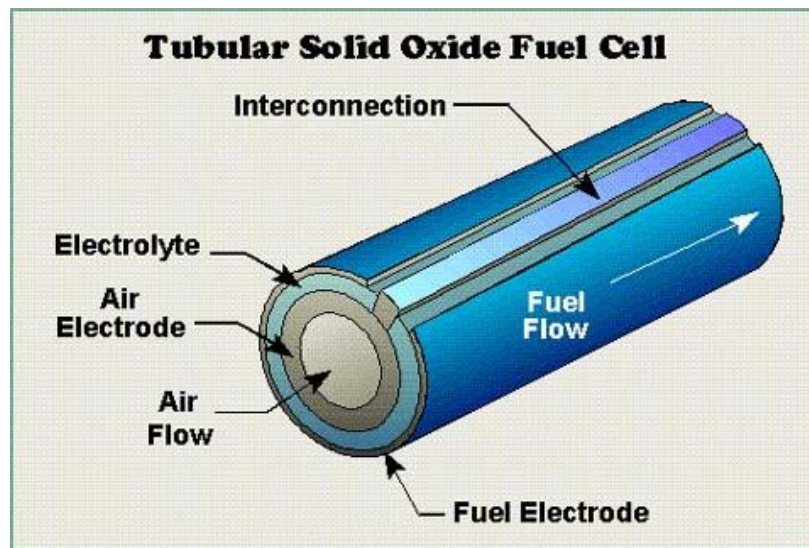


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There are two common design prototypes for SOFC: a planar design and a tubular design. In the planar design, the components are assembled in flat stacks, with air and fuel flowing through channels built into the cathode and anode (Figure 1). The components in the tubular design consist of a hollow tube with the cell constructed in layers around a tubular cathode; air flows through the inside of the tube, and fuel flows around the exterior (Figure 2). The tubular design is advantageous because it is much easier to seal air from the fuel. Other variations of SOFC designs include modified planar fuel cell designs, which consist of a wave-like structure that replaces the traditional flat configuration of the planar cell. Modified planar fuel cell designs are highly promising because they combine the advantages of both planar cells (low resistance) and tubular cells.

Figure 2

Tubular Solid Oxide Fuel Cell

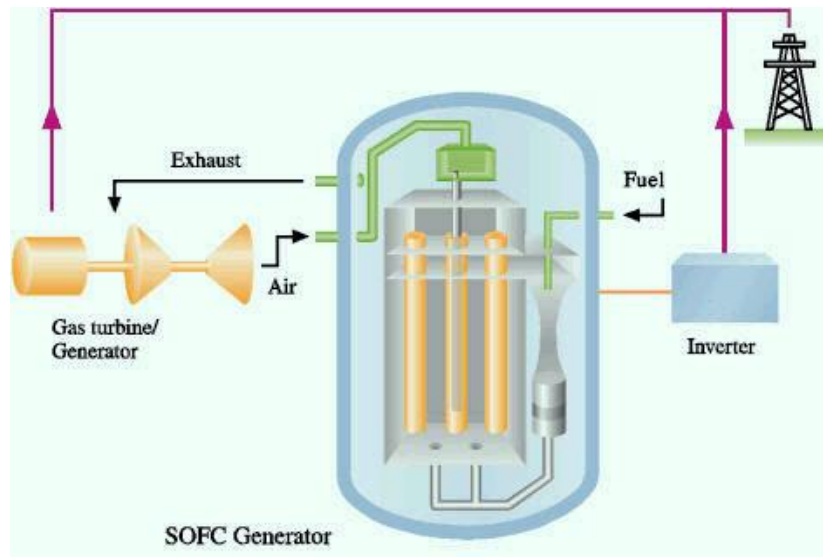


The Siemens Energy solid oxide fuel cell (SOFC) prototype is constructed using an electrolyte and two electrode layers in a unique tubular design (Figure 3.). This type of design eliminates the sealing requirement, as seen in other types of fuel cells, and also allows for thermal expansion. In a tubular SOFC design, air is allowed to pass through the interior of the cell while fuel flows on the exterior. High operating temperatures allow the oxygen in the air to ionize, and the resulting ions flow through the electrolyte and combine

with the fuel on the cell's exterior. Several electrons are released in the process, which can be circled to power an external appliance. Siemens SOFC's unique tubular cell stack is cooled using processed air and, during normal operation, consumes no external water. It has also integrated a natural gas reformer within its anode that produces the hydrogen and carbon monoxide used by the cell, both thermally and hydraulically. No external heat source is needed except during start-up.

Figure 3

Siemens Tubular Solid Oxide Fuel Cell



SOFC Advantages

Considerable fuel cell technology advancement can be credited to solid oxide fuel cells due to their wide range of fuel flexibility and high efficiency (40–60% unassisted, up to 70% in pressurized hybrid systems) compared to heat engines and modern thermal power plants (30–40% efficiency). The theoretical efficiency of a SOFC device can exceed 60 percent. SOFC technology leads other fuel cell technologies due to its ability to use readily available fossil fuels, thus reducing operating costs. Light hydrocarbon fuels, such as methane, propane, and butane, when exposed to high temperatures, can be internally reformed within the anode. Heavier hydrocarbons, such as gasoline, diesel, jet fuel (JP-8),

Advantages of solid oxide fuel cell

or biofuels, can be used as fuel by reforming them external to SOFC. Other fuel cell technologies, such as molten carbonate, polymer electrolyte, phosphoric acid, and alkali, are limited to hydrogen as their fuel source.

Improved efficiency and fuel flexibility are not the only advantages of solid-oxide fuel cells. SOFC is attractive as a power source because it is clean, reliable, and almost entirely nonpolluting. There are no moving parts, and the individual cells operate without any noticeable vibration, both of which present a distinct advantage over the noise pollution associated with other modes of power generation. At high operating temperatures (600°C–1,000°C), SOFCs do not require the expensive platinum catalyst material and are not susceptible to carbon monoxide catalyst poisoning. They are, however, susceptible to sulfur poisoning, which must be removed before entering the cell using adsorbent beds or other means. The main downside of SOFCs is that at these high operating temperatures, a longer start-up time is required. SOFC with planar sandwich geometry requires on the order of an hour to be uniformly heated to light-off temperature. Microtubular fuel cell design geometries are known to have much faster start-up times, typically on the order of minutes. Siemens SOFC tubular technology that uses natural gas as fuel claims across-the-board improvements in emission, efficiency, handling, and reliability from that of other fuel cell technologies, as tabulated in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of Solid Oxide Fuel Cell with Other Fuel Cell Design Options

* Target for pressurized SOFC hybrids is 70%

	PEM	PAFC	MCFC	SOFC	Micro-GT	Diesel Engine	Stirling Engine
Electrical efficiency using natural gas (net AC/LHV), %	35	40	45-50	45-50*	30	35	30
Performance degradation, %/1000 hrs	>1	0.44	0.60	<0.10	0.20	0.20	Na

Emissions using natural gas: NOx, g/MWh	<20	<10	<10	<10	300	700	200
SOx, g/MWh	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1	1	1	1
Noise, dBA @ 10 m <60	<60	60	65	65	65	80-90	60
Water consumption, gal/MWh	0	90	88	0	0	0	0
Total fuel efficiency using natural gas (net AC/LHV), %	35	65	70	80-85	~75	~78	~77

Defense and Mass Applications

SOFCs are suitable as a power source in three energy applications: stationary energy sources, transportation, and military applications. Due to SOFCs' overall distinctive advantages over other fuel cell technologies, the United States government is expediting the technology through the Solid-State Energy Conversion Alliance (SECA), which is coordinated by the Department of Energy and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. The near-term technical goal is to develop mass-produced, modular SOFC units capable of 3–10 kW at a price of \$400/kW. SECA's approach is to develop industrial collaborations and extend financial support for technical research. It is estimated that the overall market demand for fuel cell technology could reach \$95 billion by the year 2010. No estimated figure is currently available for the market share of SOFCs, but it will play a significant role in the electrical power generation industry. SOFC stationary units could be installed as primary or auxiliary power sources in such facilities as homes, office buildings, industrial sites, ports, and military installations. These units are ideal for mini-power-grid applications at places like universities, sewage treatment plants, and military bases. SOFC technology is anticipated to meet the ever-increasing demand for electricity, particularly for growing economies with minimal infrastructure.

Advantages of solid oxide fuel cell

Siemens Energy is the industry leader in SOFC tubular technology, working with the US Department of Energy's (DOE) advanced fuel cell research program and the German Ministry of Economics and Labor (BMWA). Siemens Energy's Stationary Fuel Cells (SFC) division plans to complete the commercialization of solid oxide fuel cells and anticipates having its first commercial product available in 2012. Siemens Westinghouse has confirmed the commercial electricity-producing potential of several SOFC prototype tubular systems. A SOFC power plant in the Netherlands has been in use for a number of years, following an earlier prototype installation that had been operating simultaneously for six years prior. These fuel cells have been operational for well over 100 thermal cycles, with a voltage degradation rate of less than 0.1%/thousand hours during the test period. Ceramic Fuel Cells, Ltd., an Australian company, has been operating prototype planar fuel cell plants since 2001 and has entered mass production two years later.

In the transportation sector, SOFCs are well adapted for applications in both trucks and automobiles. SOFCs could be used in diesel trucks as auxiliary power units to run electrical systems like air conditioning and on-board electronics. This application would replace the need to leave diesel trucks running at rest stops, thereby leading to a savings in diesel fuel expenditures and a significant reduction in both diesel exhaust and truck noise. Automobile manufacturers have actively pursued SOFC technology by investing over \$4.5 billion in fuel cell research. Environmental concerns have increasingly become a top political issue for most governments in developed countries such as the United States and the European Union. Automobile manufacturers are under growing pressure to reduce pollution in their vehicles.

SOFCs are particularly suitable for mobile military equipment because they can be installed on-site in remote locations, are quiet, and are non-polluting. Another advantage of fuel cells is that they will significantly reduce deployment costs since 70% of the material that the military transports is fuel.

Conclusion

With growing awareness of the environmental impacts of fossil fuels and their depleting resources, governments in developed and developing countries are imposing stringent regulations on utility producers and automakers in order to come up with a safer and more fuel-efficient alternative. SOFCs and other types of fuel cells are becoming an integral energy solution among the many renewable energy sources, including wind, solar, biofuels, and ocean waves, to meet the growing demand for renewable, non-polluting electricity. SOFC was first successfully demonstrated some forty years ago. Since then, more innovative advances in materials science, along with extensive research and a commitment to developing alternative energy sources, have been integrated into SOFC, which in turn presents a more reliable, robust, and cost-effective energy alternative.

Advantages of solid oxide fuel cell

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*A hybrid way to do peacebuilding: Practice before theory Sasakawa and
the Nippon Foundation in Myanmar 2012-2022*

Desmond Molloy

Abstract

This paper examines The Nippon Foundation's (TNF) peacebuilding efforts in Myanmar from 2012 to 2022 under the leadership of Yohei Sasakawa. In contrast to Western development models, which emphasize structured frameworks, accountability, and transparency, TNF adopted a hybrid diplomatic approach, integrating second- and third-track diplomacy with targeted development initiatives. Through Sustained Incremental Trust Establishment and Support (SITES), TNF prioritized trust-building, pragmatic engagement, and culturally sensitive mediation to facilitate dialogue between the Myanmar government, the Tatmadaw (TMD), and ethnic armed groups (EAGs).

TNF's interventions, including its role in brokering humanitarian ceasefires in Rakhine State (2020, 2022), illustrate how Asian diplomatic traditions and localized conflict-sensitive approaches can maintain engagement in complex, protracted conflicts. While TNF's model fostered temporary stability and peace dividends for affected communities, its long-term effectiveness remains uncertain, particularly following Myanmar's 2021 military coup and renewed armed resistance. This study contributes to the discourse on alternative peacebuilding models and the limitations of formalized Western interventions in fragile, deeply mistrustful political environments.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Hybrid Diplomacy, Ethnic Armed Groups (EAGs), Sustained Trust-Building, Myanmar Conflict Resolution, The Nippon Foundation (TNF)

A hybrid way to do peacebuilding: Practice before theory Sasakawa and the Nippon Foundation in Myanmar 2012-2022

The Peace Process in Myanmar

For more than fifty years of military authoritarian rule, multiple related sub-national ethnic conflicts in the peripheral ethnic states and central government versus ethnic armed groups (EAGs) have contributed to stuttering low-intensity warfare, frequent forcible movement of communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, and the associated uncertainty and poverty. Under withering international pressure, including economic sanctions, particularly by the USA and EU, and encouraging advocacy from closer neighbors, including Japan, the Tatmadaw (TMD) in August 2012 permitted the establishment of a quasi-civilian government under President General (retired) Thein Sein and the United Solidarity and Development Party (USDP). EAGs, and indeed many in the international community, have believed that minority grievances can be addressed by the achievement of levels of decentralization and the creation of greater autonomy through federal solutions for selected ethnic minorities, as promised by General Aung San at the 1947 Panglong Conference. Prime Minister U Nu had made a start on the related constitutional reform, but that was brought to a sudden end by the military coup of 1962. More than twenty EAGs have since been resisting the Government of Myanmar (GoM) and TMD. However, generally, they have been unable to demonstrate any sustainable level of united front and have been susceptible to the TMD policy of ‘divide and conquer.’

In late 2012, peace talks were launched with selected EAGs associated with those ethnic states, focusing initially on the establishment of a Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA). To participate in such an NCA, the relevant EAGs were required to open communications, and thus relations, with their associated regional or state governments for preliminary discussions. From the EAG perspective, this was with the view to renegotiating the 2008 Constitution, as drafted by TMD, leaning heavily towards TMD aspirations and pushed through in the aftermath of the calamitous cyclone Nargis.

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EAGs had experienced the TMD policy of divide and conquer for decades, where bilateral ceasefires were negotiated between TMD and individual EAGs, allowing TMD to control the agenda and adhere to the agreements only as long as it suited their purposes, which frequently related to access to natural resources and/or main supply routes. Initially, EAGs were reluctant to engage in this NCA process until the GoM would agree to meet with all of the EAGs acting under a collective banner. What became the United Nationalities Federal Council (UNFC) was established in February 2011, seeing twelve EAGs agreeing to support each other's territories against TMD attack and to only negotiate with GoM collectively. This council met in Chiang Mai, Thailand, for security purposes. The agreement was short-lived, as each EAG, other than the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), negotiated bilateral ceasefires with the GoM. Concurrently, President Thein Sein established the semi-independent Myanmar Peace Center (MPC) led by Minister Aung Min under the President's office to drive the peace process on behalf of GoM.

Earlier, in June 2011, a seventeen-year-old ceasefire between KIA and TMD had broken down under TMD attacks, leading to continuing intractable conflict and further IDP misery in natural-resource-rich Kachin State, through which wind the main supply routes to China's Yunnan Province. Since the opening-up of 2011, the international community, particularly bilateral organizations and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) from western countries, flocked to Myanmar to establish economic ties and to implement both development and peace support programs to stabilize the process of democratization. The application of evolved Western development theory, often in form more than in practice, was perceived as 'supply-driven' and not always deemed appropriate by local actors.

The Nippon Foundation in Myanmar

Japan has been engaged in Burma/Myanmar since the founding of the state in 1948. The Nippon Foundation (TNF) has been active in Myanmar since 1976, initially delivering TNF's global mandate in the eradication of leprosy and since 2002 through the delivery of the Sasakawa Peace Mission, which focuses on the promotion of dialogue among

stakeholders, community building, and human resource development. Current grant assisted projects, i.e. those funded by TNF directly from Tokyo and working with local NGOs, some of which were established with TNF support, include education opportunities for people with mental, visual, hearing or mobility disabilities; funding for the Faculty of Prosthetics Orthotists in Yangon University; support for prosthetics clinics in Yangon and Mandalay; training for “seeing hands” blind massage; agricultural support particularly in the area of sustainable herbal medicine culture in Kayin State in collaboration with the State Ministry of Agriculture; and education support and capacity building through the construction of over five hundred school buildings with community participation in Rakhine State, Ayerarwady Region, Shan State and more recently in Kayeh State. The subsequent peacebuilding program, support to the peace process [SH1] in Myanmar, was funded mostly by Japanese public funds from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

This research paper will focus on the application of an alternative integrated approach to diplomacy by Yohei Sasakawa, guided by the philosophy of the Sasakawa Peace Mission, to support the national peace process in Myanmar. This approach, while acknowledging the substance of western development theory, prioritizes the elements of awareness of context, building trust and personal relationships through dialogue, and pragmatism above empirical methods of accountability and transparency. Sasakawa did this as Special Envoy for the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation in Myanmar and as Chairman of The Nippon Foundation. The approach spans 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy [SH2] in tandem with pragmatic peace-support investment. This represents a personal role, drawing on 40 years of experience of humanitarian work in Myanmar. This paper considers how traditional Asian approaches to local negotiation, based largely on trust between principals, are adapted into a new way to conduct peacebuilding that sidelines much of the formality associated with western approaches and stands pragmatically on the platform of trust and the maintenance of face between principals. In the complexity, context specificity, intractability, and existence of deep distrust between parties in the multiple subnational conflicts in Myanmar, this constitutes a hybrid form of diplomacy.

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The details of the TNF programs in Myanmar can be found in routine internal TNF reports. Here, rather than the programs, we focus on the multi-tracked approach to peacebuilding that has offered an alternative to the western approach. This can be expressed as process over form in that it prioritizes trust and continuing dialogue in seeking elements of common ground before focusing on the scheduled and sequential achievement of concrete agreements. Yohei Sasakawa, grasping opportunities, brought resources to focus on encouraging GoM, TMD, and EAGs to remain engaged in peace dialogue while advocating gradual progress towards democratization and federal solutions through demonstrating peace dividends to conflict-affected communities. Concurrently, TNF initially implemented a program providing for immediate nutritional needs in conflict-affected communities to address urgent humanitarian shortfalls and to strengthen the engagement of relevant EAGs in addressing the peace process. From 2015, this has taken place through multiple vital community infrastructural construction projects implemented specifically in collaboration between State Governments and EAGs.

Design and implementation methods focused on delivering a theory of change that encourages sustained dialogue in the volatile and complex conflict environment, encouraging community bottom-up advocacy, facilitating parties to the peace process to work cooperatively and collaboratively, moving forward steadily in logical small steps, and incrementally building trust to deliver vital benefits to conflict-affected communities. This methodology was intended to contribute to maintaining alternative informal channels of communication between adversaries and exploit basic levels of interpersonal between officials when formal channels may be strained, particularly between state-level actors and EAGs. This approach also built confidence in the community that the benefits of peace outweigh the alternatives. This methodology was termed by the Program Director as ‘Sustained Incremental Trust Establishment and Support’ (SITES).

This approach required TNF, in keeping with the focus of the Sasakawa Peace Mission, to maintain independence from the constraining entanglements of templated thinking as an implementing organization, avoiding engagement in coordinated collectives that might apply what would be perceived as the constricting parameters of what is

considered a western approach with its prioritization of accountability and transparency. This independence allowed TNF to avoid a fluctuating relationship with GoM and EAG partners that could be driven by bilateral, transnational, regional organization attitudes to ongoing events in Myanmar. The TNF's holistic and adaptive approach largely resembles the western 'systems approach' (Woodrow and Chigas 2011) that espouses, in theory, acute conflict sensitivity that responds dynamically to feedback and feedforward loops, but it is also different in terms of a pragmatism that permits, in practice, rapid refocus in light of changing circumstances. The juxtaposition of 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy associated with this program, and that most funding for the program, approximately \$130 million to 2022, was from Japanese public funds, has demanded the balancing of Japanese foreign policy and TNF independence as concerns TNF relations with both GoM and the EAGs.

Western Development Theory as Applied in Myanmar, The ASEAN Way and Sasakawa's Approach

“Western development theory,” a disputed term that offers guidance for global development interventions in the reality of local context, is often difficult to apply. This is particularly so in the context of multiple complex subnational conflicts and heterogeneous structural conditions that exist across townships, states, and regions of Myanmar. A pervasive attitude among national actors in Myanmar has been those western approaches, as applied very early in the ‘opening-up of Myanmar,’ reflected a ‘common wisdom’ drawn from evolving western development theory, perhaps some level of neo-colonialism, supply-driven mindsets, insensitivity to local context, and, on occasion, even insensitivity to the thorny issue of disputed local sovereignty. Sasakawa's efforts to overcome these challenges led to the development and implementation of TNF's hybrid approach to peacebuilding.

Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI) 2012-2013¹

¹ *Myanmar Peace Support Initiative. MPSI, March 2012 to March 2013, Lessons learned*, MPSI, March 2014.

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In 2011, soon after the initiation of the change in national direction towards broader democratization and peace, it was expected that western countries would play a leading role in supporting the path towards peace. President Thein Sein approached Norway, a leading and innovative proponent of support to global peace processes, for assistance in working with the ethnic minority communities and encouraging them toward peace, initially through engagement in a national ceasefire agreement (NCA). Norway was the first such empowered actor. Norway designed the Myanmar Peace Support Initiative (MPSI), drawing from the framework for Engagement in Fragile States from the Busan ‘New Deal’² and the principles for ‘Good Engagement in Fragile States and Situations’ (FSP).³ This was to be a program to support the emergence and consolidation of peace, “in the absence of appropriate alternative longer-term solutions, as other sustainable international support was being mobilized, and that could be carried on by local actors.”

The MPSI secured funds from Norway, Finland, Denmark, the United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland, the EU, and Australia and contracted Charles Petrie, former UN Resident Representative to Myanmar, to manage the program. The MPSI was to support the implementation of pilot projects that were “small but politically significant...promoting women’s participation, offering a platform for expansion and replication...” that “build trust and confidence, test ceasefires, and disseminate lessons...and that attempt to strengthen local and international coordination.” It operated in five ethnic states, Chin, Shan, Mon, Kayin, and Kayeh, and the regions of Bago and Tanintharyi, in partnership with seven EAGs in implementing intensive pilot projects.

From the outset, MPSI staff found the prospect of working without an established ‘blueprint’ challenging. The theory made sense, but in practice, considering the disputed

² <https://www.pbsdialogue.org/en/new-deal/about-new-deal/> (accessed Oct 12, 2019)

New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States is the output of the G7 meeting in Busan, South Korea in November 2011, signed-up to by 20 states, members of the International Dialogue on Peace-building and State-building, to create a framework for effective development cooperation. It developed a framework that defines a global approach to international interventions in fragile states, considering the transition from fragility to development. It sets out 3 specific objectives and outlines the relevant principles for; a) peace-building and state-building goals, b) focus on engagement to support country-owned and led pathways out of fragility and c) mutual trust and strong partnerships between countries and their international partners.

³ Principles for Good Engagement in Fragile States and Situations, OECD 2007, Drawn from MPSI Lessons Learned, Op. cit, 27.

levels of local consultation and the bureaucracy associated with project selection, disbursement, and accountability, both EAGs and beneficiary communities felt ‘untrusted.’ Further, among some leadership of EAGs, there was a perception that the projects opened stealthy access by GoM and therefore TMD to EAG-controlled territories.

Here, rather than considering the achievements of MPSI, we draw on post-implementation internal evaluations to look at the lessons learned.⁴ Generally, it is agreed that the implementation could have been more conflict sensitive and more deliberate in its broad consultation. It would have been important to be better acquainted with local context and for local consultation to be meaningful and better resourced in considering a longer-term view. A high level of flexibility and nimbleness in bureaucracy and funding mechanisms that recognized local capacity, and indeed to reinforce that capacity, would have been appropriate. The MPSI should have broadened engagement and inclusiveness in the peace process and the national peace-building plan.

In summarizing the challenges faced in the lessons learned document of March 2014,⁵ it is noted that ethnic stakeholders had limited confidence in the political process and limited capacity to articulate their concerns. Funding mechanisms were cumbersome and “non-responsive to emergent confidence-building needs. “The MPSI communications strategy needed to balance speed with the necessity for broad consultations. Procuring appropriately qualified staff also proved to be a problem.”

MPSI suffered considerable criticism from both civil society and GoM. Further, ethnic stakeholders expressed concern that GoM was using the MPSI to pursue the development agenda in the absence of political dialogue. In mature hindsight, the appropriateness of the Busan New Deal Framework and indeed the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) principles for Fragile States (FSP) that were designed to address fragile states as opposed to sub-national conflict is highly questionable, despite a robust defense in the document (MPSI 2014).

⁴ MPSI, Lessons Learned, 2014, Op. cit.

⁵ Ibid.

JICA Development Plan for Southeastern Myanmar: 2013-2014

In October 2013, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs published its *Preparatory Survey for the Integrated Regional Development for Ethnic Minorities in Southeastern Myanmar, Final Report*, a task contracted to a consortium that included RECS International Inc., Nippon Koei Co. Ltd., and Oriental Consultants Ltd.⁶ This was an ambitious study that proposed to “clarify directions of regional development in Southeastern Myanmar,” specifically Kayin and Mon States.

“to realize full potentials and define the scope of works for subsequent integrated regional development master planning; to conduct a pre-feasibility study of the highest priority infrastructure project to be identified for early realization by JICA support; and to identify needs related to basic infrastructure facilities and livelihood activities to support the return and resettlement of refugees and IDPs.”⁷

It is a complex and detailed document of 593 pages proposing major projects, including roads, industrial estates, and rubber plantations, across multiple economic sectors in Kayin and Mon that JICA hoped would be received enthusiastically by the perspective beneficiary communities. However, this was not the case. In September 2014, the Karen Peace Support Network (KPSN), a network of almost thirty Kayin civil society community organizations, including environmental watchdogs, published its elaborate *Critique of JICA's Blueprint for Development in Southeastern Burma/Myanmar*, which was well covered by local media.⁸ This report claimed that JICA's proposals were poorly consulted with ethnic stakeholders, had ignored local voices, were “premature and flawed,” and could, contrary to the intentions, fuel the conflict. It states that JICA had ignored the

⁶ RECS International Inc., Nippon Koei Co. Ltd., and Oriental Consultants Ltd. *Preparatory Survey for the Integrated Regional Development for Ethnic Minorities in Southeastern Myanmar, Final Report*, JICA 2013.

⁷ Ibid, 1-3.

⁸ KPSN, *Critique of JICA's Blueprint for Development in Southeastern Burma/Myanmar*. September 2014.

underlying causes of the conflict and “neither sufficiently recognizes the uncertain political context nor proposes people-centered development alternatives.” A spokesperson for JICA stated that it was always the intention to consult all stakeholders, having developed an initial plan, prior to any implementation.⁹ However, the damage was done, and trust was undermined.¹⁰ KPSN concluded that this plan was “not the right kind of international aid.” It recommended that JICA must be informed by...

“...deep, comprehensive, and independent analysis of the causes of conflict in the region; must make explicit guarantees that the process and implementation of development in the Southeast will at the very least honor international humanitarian development principles; must integrate environmental considerations into its policies; must reform its consultation process; and must explicitly ensure that any development projects connected with its blueprint establish meaningful partnerships with local civil society organizations in order to strengthen local capacity and ensure sustainability...”¹¹

Contested Corners of Asia, TAF

In 2013, The Asia Foundation (TAF), a US-based private, non-profit development organization, commissioned a study to investigate the characteristics of contested areas in Asia and the current related practices of international development agencies.¹² This study noted that in the previous ten years, 60% of the world's active sub-national conflicts were in Asia and that in Myanmar alone there were seven separate sub-national conflicts, with six of them having lasted in excess of five decades. It differentiates between sub-national

⁹ Drawn from Karen news site article, KIC.

¹⁰ As an element of the consultant's (RECS, etc.) post-mortem on the damage caused by this criticism, they interviewed Molloy and Umemura of TNF, primarily to ask how TNF was avoiding such opprobrium from the community. On arrival at the meeting, TNF was faced by a phalanx of six besuited Japanese technical experts—engineers, economists, etc.—and one young lady on the end of the line, a former student of Molloy's, who identified herself as the community liaison officer. Molloy joked that perhaps six community liaison officers and one engineer might have been more appropriate.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Thomas Parks, Nat Colletta, and Ben Oppenheim, *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflict and International Development Assistance*, TAF, 2013.

conflicts and the issue of fragile states. Subnational conflicts are generally in contested areas and characterized by conflict of low intensity, which is often largely ignored, as they tend to be in remote areas and involve minority populations.¹³

Approximately \$6 billion was contributed towards post-conflict activities between 2001 and 2010 in Asia, 88% of it towards traditional development sectors. Peace-support activities were especially active in Sri Lanka, Baluchistan, and Southern Thailand. While international aid can support the resolution of sub-national conflict, a very different approach to intervention is needed as opposed to development investment. Aid does not equal peace. It is a very delicate and conflict-prone environment where the minority concern is often that development aid is being used to extend state reach. Clear understanding of conflict dynamics is necessary. Focus needs to be on broadening confidence and in transforming institutions, thus achieving transformational outcomes. Such activities are fundamentally political.¹⁴ These activities must expand beyond traditional economic growth and poverty alleviation into security and governance... in [-] addressing the unique circumstance of sub-national conflict. Sub-national conflict is often “poorly understood by outsiders.” Most focus is on fragile states, and such approaches are not suited to subnational conflict.¹⁵ In addressing sub-national conflict, this study recommends applying international aid in delivering strategies for transformation from conflict to durable peace in line with the World Development Report 2011 framework. This involves a) addressing the most critical areas of contestation, b) focusing on transformative outcomes, c) calibrating program strategies, and d) ensuring that effective approaches are locally owned to legitimize “external validity” and that material support is closely attuned to local circumstances. ...recognizing that issues vary from place to place.” Actors must “be realistic about what can be achieved” [and recognize] “major weakness in the theories of change to link development with impact on conflict dynamics,” leading to the risk of exaggerated claims. [They must] “revisit core assumptions that underpin mainstream aid models, [and remember that] “aid in conflict has explicit sets of normative goals, e.g.,

¹³ Ibid., 1-3.

¹⁴ Drawn largely from the Durable Peace Framework, World Bank, *World Development Report 2011, Conflict, Security and Development*, WB, 2011.

¹⁵ Parks, Colletta, and Oppenheim, Op. cit, 4-).

inclusion, reducing elite capture, increasing state capacity, etc. Unfortunately, such assumptions can lead us down the wrong path and can fail to adequately consider conflict dynamics, political dynamics, and elite capture.¹⁶

The authors advise the following actions to avoid failure. Build institutional knowledge; demonstrate greater flexibility/adaptability to local dynamics; prioritize evidence; realign incentives; implement large-scale programs that are long-term and conflict-sensitive; and understand local conflict and political dynamics.¹⁷

Contested Corners of Myanmar (TAF)

In 2017, TAF Myanmar built on this study of contested corners of Asia while looking directly at Myanmar sub-national conflicts—a study that, based on deep research and five years of experience in Myanmar, takes the thinking of the 2013 study substantially forward.¹⁸ The vital lessons of this study are in the conclusions. They note that the subnational conflict in Myanmar is intrinsically linked to national politics and the nature of the state. At the local level, conflict dynamics vary greatly and are complex. One size fits all approaches will not be effective. While ceasefires and peace negotiations are vital steps in achieving peace, the long-term fix will require a system of government that is considered legitimate by all people. Underdevelopment is not the cause of the multiple conflicts; this can be attributed to political issues. Development policies often contribute to uneven power dynamics. Aid must be conflict sensitive. Well-designed and implemented conflict-sensitive development programs that are targeted at conflict-affected communities can improve relations and build momentum towards peace.

The TAF analysts drafting this report consulted with The Nippon Foundation’s Peace Support Program and reviewed their methodology, as intimated in the conclusion that “new approaches [and] good practice already exist. However, while aid agencies can

¹⁶ WB, *Op. cit.*, 135-137.

¹⁷ Parks, Colletta, and Oppenheim, *Op Sit* p140

¹⁸ *The Contested Areas of Myanmar: Sub-national: Sub-national conflict, aid, and development.* TAF 2017.

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promote wider engagement in the peace process by working with both the government and the other parties, it is critical to be realistic about the potential impact of the programs. In the end, building confidence amongst conflict-affected peoples in Myanmar will need meaningful political progress.”¹⁹

The ASEAN Way

Masilamani and Paterson consider the “normative-pragmatic balance of ASEAN’s constructive engagement policy” in applying a particularly culturally sensitive perspective to inter-member engagement, including in its internal relations with Burma.²⁰ Burma was conscious of the scope of such policy when it sought membership in ASEAN in 1997. Constructive engagement is a Western idea, originally applied by the USA in its interaction with apartheid South Africa. However, ASEAN application takes constructive engagement to a more personal level and evolved because of relations between ASEAN elites in their interaction with Burma under military dictatorship. Pragmatic issues such as trade, access to scarce resources, regional security, and member state economic interests took precedence over normative issues such as human rights or progress towards democracy. This was also with the view to ASEAN engagement regulating Chinese influence on Burma and the region.

While many of the principles of ASEAN policy mirror that of ‘western policy,’ it takes a more “stringent interpretation of the UN Charter’s principles of the inviolability of state sovereignty and non-intervention” and favors quiet diplomacy in addressing issues.²¹ Respectful consultation, compromise, and consensus, while avoiding open criticism on sensitive issues and working together in an informal and personal way, is the ASEAN Way. The objective is to broaden and deepen political, economic, and social ties amongst member states by building trust and avoiding any interaction that might contribute to alienation. Pragmatism is key with a gradual movement towards “flexible consensus

¹⁹ Ibid., Chapter 7.1, 85-91.

²⁰ Masilamani, Logan; Paterson, Jimmy (15 Oct 2014), The ASEAN Way: The Structural Underpinnings of Constructive Engagement, *Foreign Policy Journal*.

²¹ Ibid.

building” while being cautious in protecting the principle of non-interference.²² The ASEAN Way policy is probably the closest we can come to the evolution of an eastern development theory against which to compare western development theory.

TNF Views on Western Suggested Voluntary Operating Principles for Engagement in Myanmar

Peace Donor Support Group (PDSG), associated initially with the MPSI, was led by Norway and made up of donors and diplomats of the western countries/institutions, initially Australia, the UK, the EU, the United Nations (UN), and the World Bank (WB). Its role was to support the nationally owned and directed peace process. Later the PDSG evolved to create a more effective coordinated mechanism by pooling funds to establish the Joint Peace Fund (JPF) with eleven members: Australia, Canada, the EU, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA, and expected to operate until at least 2021. Meetings were attended by ambassadors or representatives, and it was supported by an expert technical secretariat and a trustee and contract manager, a position held in 2021 by the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS).²³ From the outside, the structure and decision-making process of the JPF were considered somewhat convoluted, complex, and laborious.

Prior to the establishment of the JPF, in late 2014, members of the PDSG drafted and proposed a set of principles to direct their engagement in Myanmar. Considering the almost four decades of experience of The Sasakawa Peace Mission and the new foray into peacebuilding, these ideas were shared with TNF for review and comment. Naturally, the proposed principles reflected accepted Western development theory and good practice. Drawing from the experience of JICA and MPSI in southeastern Myanmar, and conscious of the appropriateness of their own hybrid approach to peace support programming, more closely aligned with The ASEAN Way, TNF took a position of caution as regards the application of western approaches in Myanmar, where “best international practice and

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

adherence to international norms and standards was invoked. TNF recommended the adaptation to the reality of local context in ensuring conflict sensitivity in tone, relationships, and mechanisms. As regards assessment, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E), transparency and accountability, considering the general absence of trust between stakeholders and the limitations imposed by the nature of 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy, and drawing on the guidance from MPC, TNF recommended pragmatism in operating within the constraints of feasibility and appropriateness while avoiding patently ‘western’ technical terminology. Consultation with stakeholders must be a contributing factor in trust building. Where PDSG was recommending the establishment of “coordinating mechanisms” between donors. TNF took a cautious view and advised that coordination should be through mutual consultation and information sharing rather than adherence to a constrained set of rules that might undermine trust, pragmatism, and the value of personal relationships.

TNF, Western Expertise, and Local Attitudes

Prior to 2012, TNF had relative inexperience in engaging in complex peacebuilding programs, in working with non-state armed groups, and in handling the requirements of extreme conflict sensitivity in delicate post-conflict environments. In consideration of this, TNF hired a global expert in post-conflict recovery with strong Asian credentials, who was a proponent of a ‘systems approach to conflict sensitivity’ as TNF Program Director (Myanmar Liaison Office).²⁴ His role was to navigate the TNF team in their daily activities through the rocky shoals of conflict sensitivity, and also, considering the expected centrality of western countries (particularly Australia, the EU, Norway, Switzerland, the UK, and the USA) in early peace support, he would provide liaison, networking, and information sharing with international actors, including bilateral and INGO partners-in-peace. He would also operate liaison and information sharing with other potential collaborating partners, INGO and NGO. He would maintain a listening-watch on developments in both conflict and political analysis and provide priority guidance to TNF leadership as required. He would assist in the human resources function in the office and

²⁴ Systems Approach to Conflict Sensitivity. (See Footnote 4)

would consider the safety and security of all staff members in Yangon and during field trips. Further, he would provide specialized training to staff members in post-conflict recovery elements of the program and in relevant aspects of project cycle management. It is noteworthy that some local actors expressed reservations about the TNF Program Director's western descent.

Western v. Sasakawa Approach

Western development theory is the sum of a complex collection of approaches governed within the parameters of agreed principles hashed out at global conferences and articulated in co-signed documents with soundbite titles such as The New Deal, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Principles for Fragile States, Durable Solutions 2012, and Sustaining Peace.

The East doesn't claim a development theory. It has many approaches: PR China's infrastructure-focused Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Taiwan's more human-focused New Southbound Policy (NSP), and the ASEAN Way among them. Japan tends to take a pragmatic, case-by-case approach towards development assistance adapted to reflect its unique relationship with the relevant host country that is somehow related to the ASEAN Way.

In Myanmar post-2011, Japan suffered a hiccup in its effort to support development in Myanmar with the abortive launch of JICA's Development Plan for Southeast Myanmar in what appeared to apply a western approach. Conscious of these failings, Sasakawa and TNF strove to be more culturally and conflict sensitive to the complex environment, drawing on Japan's historical relationship with Myanmar and adapting the more pragmatic ASEAN approach while listening carefully to the well-informed local advice from both the MPC and EAG leadership. The following table offers a cursory list of perceived differences between western approaches, loosely based on western development theory, and Sasakawa's approach to support the peace process in Myanmar, from TNF's perspective.

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It considers these differences primarily in light of qualitative considerations, drawing from a heuristic overview.

Table 1

Western Development Approach v. Sasakawa Approach to Support to the Peace Process in Myanmar 2012-2019, from TNF perspective

Issue	TNF's perception of applied Western development theory is based on observations of its implementation in Myanmar	TNF perception of the application of the Sasakawa approach in Myanmar
Western Development Theory vs. Sasakawa Approach	The concept is the sum of sets of principles defined and agreed upon broadly between bilateral development actors, transnational institutions, and the non-profit, INGO actors in development/peacebuilding.	Pragmatic engagement based on often long-term mutual interests, deeply context-specific, conflict-sensitive, and nimble, valuing personal relations and associated honor, honesty, and loyalty.
Interests vs. Cultural Sensitivity and Respect	While those principles always include attributes such as context specificity, agility, nimbleness, flexibility, sound planning, and local ownership, there is a perception in the east that western priorities are on their short- to medium-term interests and associated return on investment, western values of accountability, transparency, approach to human rights, rule of law, gender perspective, and contribution to the western concept of democracy.	Acknowledgment of varying cultural and religious interpretations of values associated with human rights, the rule of law, gender perspective, and differing systems of government.
Inflexible Values vs. Pragmatism	A tendency to address issues of conflicting values in an assertive way that may lead to obstruction in the implementation of intervention. This tendency can be perceived as ‘interference’ and be deemed as an aspect of neocolonialism.	A willingness to circumvent issues of conflicting values to address common ground and make progress.
Intervention	A tendency to ‘intervene.’	A willingness to ‘accompany.’

vs. Accompaniment		
Local Ownership	Local ownership is an aspiration but not always a priority.	Local ownership is sacrosanct.
Tested theory vs. Context specificity	The peace process should be designed and implemented in accordance with tested theory, i.e., guided by international expertise.	The peace process is a nationally designed and implemented mechanism to be accompanied and cajoled in small steps to a successful conclusion through the practice of innovative pragmatism.
Accountability and Transparency	Accountability and transparency are essential, primarily to appease donors.	Accountability and transparency are necessary attributes to be achieved through flexible and perhaps innovative means. It cannot trump impact.
Convenient memory	Colonial memory is often muted with an apparent absence of self-awareness.	Colonial memory is stark if somewhat sanitized, but historic relationships are valued and emphasized.
Conditionality	Trade for Aid (quid pro quo) is frequently attached to Western bilateral assistance in the medium term.	Any expected quid pro quo is informal and based on relationships and mutual long-term interests.
Timeframes	Results are expected within program cycles.	Impact is a result of long-term engagement.
Flexible values	The weighting of the western focus on western values, especially as regards human rights and gender equality, is dependent on the power relations with the host country.	A consciousness of the duplicitous approach of western countries to the insistence upon western values, depending on power relations with the host country.
Interests vs. Face	Interests before Face.	Face and Interests are closely aligned.
Caution vs. Faith	Test the ground and build trust with pilot projects.	Take a leap of faith and launch the program in demonstrating trust.
Different interpretation	“Accountability” and “Transparency” are often based on international accounting standards.	“Accountability” and “Transparency” must be weighted in light of cultural values, trust, and respect, offering broad parameters in implementation and the perspective of the interpreter

		vis-à-vis the legitimacy or otherwise of the donor. ²⁵
Quantitative vs. Qualitative	Tendency to take a quantitative approach to development planning, implementation, and evaluation.	Tendency to take a qualitative approach to development planning and implementation with higher weighting on qualitative indicators in evaluation.
Self-Awareness	Lacking acute self-awareness regarding the level of reticence that Myanmar actors in the peace process (GoM and EAG) have in dealing with western interlocutors	Conscious that Myanmar actors in the peace process (GoM and EAG) are more comfortable in dealing with Asian interlocutors, particularly Japanese, because they have faith in Japanese conflict sensitivity and value neutral engagement.

Sasakawa and TNF are encouraged to undertake peacebuilding in Myanmar

In view of his long relationship with Myanmar through the activities of TNF in the delivery of the Sasakawa Peace Mission, including in the eradication of leprosy and grant-assisted programs, in 2012 Yohei Sasakawa was approached by President Thein Sein and requested to act, at a personal level, in encouraging the EAGs to engage in the peace process, particularly in achieving an NCA. Concurrently, in an astute decision by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he was appointed as the Special Envoy of the Government of Japan for National Reconciliation of Myanmar. Sasakawa, in light of the evolving environment, realized that the best application of his skills would be in applying a typical Japanese collegial style of conflict resolution, drawing on the ASEAN approach and the quiet development of trust through harnessing excellent personal relations with principals across the political spectrum. These principals included President Thein Sein; Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and later State Counsellor; Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces; and each leader of the EAGs. This was combined with light-footprint, non-instructive advocacy,

²⁵ Interpolated from consideration of the multiple narratives surrounding aspects of donor accountability in Myanmar as discussed in Tamas Wells, *Narratives of Donor Accountability in Support of Peace Processes: The Case of the Joint Peace Fund in Myanmar*, *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*, 2019, 1-13.

where entry points would arise as an intermediary in a systems approach between all the most critical parties to the national peace process. He would focus on gently nudging the peace process forward rather than dwelling on difficulties. This constituted a “backstage role in bringing peace.”²⁶ He noted that this is a non-binary, complex conflict with many actors, all with differing perspectives and demands and with mistrust and resentment built up over decades. “Sasakawa believes that undoing the tangled threads requires repeated dialogue and patience. While this seems like the long route, it is actually the shortest.”²⁷ He would not be involved directly in negotiations but would act as an intermediary, as this is an exclusively nationally owned peace process. This is a form of conflict management rather than peacebuilding. The approach can be closely aligned with western mediation theory, but rarely has the western mediator had the resources nor the imprimatur to implement the approach in practice, as Sasakawa had. As Chairman of TNF, Sasakawa had at his disposal the strong financial and implementational capacity of TNF and, in the role of Special Envoy for Japan, had the legitimacy of Japan that could be brought to bear on peace-support needs. In the earlier phases, as progress was made in the peace process, both the Government of Japan and TNF could offer humanitarian support to conflict-affected communities that would demonstrate a peace dividend. Vital community infrastructural support would mutually engage state governments and EAGs. All of this used specially designed, flexible, and nimble funding and implementation mechanisms. Sasakawa noted that while the EAGs were impatient for progress, it was important to see that the benefits of peace reached the hands of the general population. It was therefore better to take time on the political negotiations.²⁸

In 2012, Sasakawa met the principals of the EAGs that had formed the UNFC in Chiang Mai, Thailand, and he immediately began to develop the required trust, initially offering logistical and material support to dialogue while carefully encouraging meetings between the Myanmar government peace negotiators (MPC) and EAG principals. He even brought the leadership of the relevant EAGs on a visit to Japan where, to the consternation

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

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of GoM, they met Prime Minister Abe. When a breakdown in discussions had appeared imminent, Sasakawa offered himself as a guarantor to persuade EAGs not to leave the table. In pursuing his commitment to this task, Yohei Sasakawa travelled to meetings in Myanmar with GoM principals, MPC, or with EAGs either in their remote areas of the Myanmar frontier or in Thailand one hundred and seven (107) times from 2012 to mid-January 2020.

In seeking a moniker that would give substance to the approach, a term that was coined to describe this evolution in the implementation of Sasakawa Peace Mission and a new style of peacebuilding, a hybrid approach, was the “Sustained Incremental Trust Establishment and Support” (SITES) approach.

Concurrent 2nd and 3rd Track Diplomacy and Conflict Sensitivity

With TNF programs supporting the peace process, and in his role as Special Envoy of Japan, Sasakawa was engaged in the concurrent application of both 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy.²⁹ Through ‘back-channel’ or informal contacts, both with GoM and TMD in the administrative capital, Naypyitaw, and the leadership of EAGs in either their remote frontier lairs or at Chiang Mai, he continuously sought entry points to advance the peace process. As an aspect of an integrated theory of change, the spread of TNF engagement in this process included the funding of a Japanese language school in the TMD Military College; support for graduates attending staff college with the Japanese Self-defense Forces (JSDF) in Japan; and sponsoring regular visits of senior officers of TMD to JSDF in Japan to understand the operation of a national military in a democratic context. TNF has also supported several high-level state visits of the Commander in Chief of TMD to

²⁹ Drawn and adapted from <https://www.civildaily.com/different-levels-of-diplomacy-track1-track2-track3/> (accessed Oct 15, 2019).

Track 2 diplomacy, backchannel or unofficial diplomacy, is where non-governmental or informal actors are supporting Track 1 (official) diplomacy. Sometimes where official and unofficial actors (Track 1 and Track 2) are cooperating more directly in conflict resolution is referred to as 1.5 track diplomacy. Track 3 diplomacy refers to people-to-people interaction in seeking diplomatic solutions to conflict. In Myanmar, while representing Japan as the Special Envoy for Reconciliation, Sasakawa further uses his personal relationships to contribute to the peace process. This demonstrates a hybrid combination of Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy. Further still, as Chairman of TNF, I also contributed materially through implementing peace support programs.

Japan, where he met both Prime Minister Abe and the leadership of JSDF. On the side of the EAGs, this included support for fact-finding visits and the funding of logistic support for peace conferences and meetings with GoM. Further, Sasakawa acted as a guarantor of EAG leadership security when such meetings were held in Myanmar. Other support for the Myanmar humanitarian needs includes discrete projects like the provision of vital medical drugs to Dr. Cynthia Maung's famous Mae Tao Clinic serving Myanmar refugees and migrant workers in Mai Sot, Thailand; a sustainable generic medical-box project for remote rural villages; and support to address interim needs in remote frontier areas near the Thai border through part-funding 'the Back-pack Medics Program. All of these activities, as well as addressing real demand-driven needs, contributed to a slow and steady establishment of trust that allowed Sasakawa to maintain a position of positive influence.

Since the GoM request to Sasakawa in 2012, TNF has engaged in a peace process support presence in Myanmar; its first foray into this nature of presence anywhere in the world. TNF opened its Myanmar Liaison Office in Yangon under Executive Director and Roving Head of Office Yuji Mori, with Deputy Head of Office Takehero Umemura in situ handling day-to-day management. This was TNF's first overseas office, intended to permit better support for humanitarian and development programming and also to deliver the new peace-support programs. In supporting the peace process through the NCA and beyond, TNF expected to contribute to an eventual comprehensive peace accord (CPA) for Myanmar in the context of increasing democratization through agreed federal solutions. This program implementation worked directly with the EAGs and GoM, initially through the MPC. Its intention was to demonstrate the peace dividend to communities and to encourage EAGs to remain engaged in the peace process. Movement toward such a normative environment was to contribute to stabilization, improved livelihoods, and community development that would encourage the resettlement of IDPs and refugees.

The primary working principle, developed in consultation with all parties, consisted of the "Four Green Light Rule." TNF must have the approval of the EAG, the State Government (initially through the State Minister for Border Affairs); the Union Government (Union Ministry of Border Affairs) and TMD for all its activities. Needs and

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target communities were negotiated in discussions between EAGs and State Governments which would then offer a mutually agreed request to TNF. The arrangement of all TNF liaisons with the Union Government, TMD, and introduction to State Government was handled, from 2012 to 2016, by MPC under Minister Aung Min and directly by the MPC Director of Operations, U Kyaw Soe Hlaing. TNF's meetings with EAGs were also notified to MPC. U Kyaw Soe Hlaing provided robust day-to-day conflict sensitivity advice and guidance to TNF. In reflecting the delicacy and conflict sensitivity of the program and the required light footprint, especially as regards media publicity, his frequent admonishment to TNF was, "Make no noise!"

The shock caused by the strong criticism of JICA's plans for the Southeast by KPSN in 2014 caused them to take a step back and for the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Tokyo and the Embassy in Yangon to reassess its engagement with the ethnic minorities in Myanmar and indeed with the EAGs. MoFA Japan, noting the conflict sensitivity of the Sasakawa and TNF 'SITES' approach, requested of Sasakawa that TNF take control of coordination of the MoFA fund of, initially, approximately \$100 million over five years in support of the peace process, working directly with ethnic minorities. TNF, having commenced its support to the Conflict-affected Communities Program working with the EAG parties to the peace process using its own funding, agreed to coordinate this MoFA funding, apply it to its peacebuilding program, and encourage engagement of other Japanese NGOs. In pursuing this encouragement, TNF brought together Japanese NGOs and provided the facilities of their conference room in Yangon for monthly information-sharing meetings in seeking opportunities for collaboration.

The Sustained Incremental Trust Establishment and Support (SITES) Approach?

TNF views the application of western approaches for engagement in Myanmar as offering useful parameters that would ensure a level of mutual understanding as regards terminology and underlying principles to facilitate information sharing and collaboration between bilateral and institutional donors in contributing constructively to the peace-support process in Myanmar. However, while the theory is sound, the practice must

frequently be questioned in the Myanmar context. Any approach, if it is to be successful, must reflect the views and sensitivities of parties to the peace process. Some western standards, if reviewed in the context of post-structural analysis, reflect a discourse that has caused some frustrations on the side of the Myanmar government and amongst the leadership of EAGs, parties to the peace process.³⁰ Uncritically taking these western standards on board risks creating ‘template thinking’ amongst and between implementing agencies in circumstances and contexts where such an approach can be inappropriate. Further, the ‘tone’ in which such standards are presented, if they are to be accepted by a broad range of stakeholders, must address regional and local sensitivities. Japan in Myanmar, while maintaining an awareness of its colonial history, has tended to successfully focus emphasis on post-WWII positives such as its contribution to the Myanmar economy through its post-war reparations programs and more recent development and humanitarian support. Together with the goodwill thus generated and implementation in proximity to the ASEAN Way rather than the western way, Sasakawa could create a unique niche of trust with the Myanmar parties to the peace process.

TNF made clear that it was committed to expending both private and Japanese public funds on the implementation of peace support projects in Myanmar in the medium to long term (5 to 10 years). It saw it as mutually beneficial and constructive for all actors in peace support to share information and to collaborate in building both bilateral and local trust and in ensuring positive outcomes through a multi-dimensional approach involving the mobilization of unique relationships and exceptional resources. The various

³⁰ Post-structuralism “focuses on the ways that language and narratives construct reality” (Minkler and Wallerstein, 2003, 36). It examines how “socially and culturally produced patterns of language, known as ‘discourses,’ construct people and the power relationships among them in particular ways.” (Bank, 2007, 55) [...] Post-structuralism borrows from literary criticism, allowing exploration of “socially and culturally produced patterns of language [discourses] that constitute power by producing [or positioning] objects (or subjects) in particular ways” (Bank, 2007, 56). [...]

Language and ‘discourse’ are the central concerns of post-structuralism, as language is seen as the place where ‘our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (Weedon, 1997, 21). Rather than seeing language as reflecting human experience, language “constitutes social reality for us” (Weedon, 1997, 22); “meaning is produced within language rather than reflected by language” (Weedon, 1997, 23). Holden describes “the importance of narrative in the construction of identity itself” (2008, 6) and emphasizes “how the ways in which a story is told are integral to its meaning.

Extracted and adapted from E. Molloy, *“Gender and the Discourse of DDR. A Post-structural Analysis of the Gendered Discourse of the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Standards and the Post Conflict Situation.”* University of London, 2012.

perspectives of peace-support crosscut the spectrum of ‘normalization’ activities, including emergency support, humanitarian support, 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy, confidence-building measures, interim stabilization measures, post-conflict stabilization, and development assistance. Striking a balance in applying such a range of mutually supporting activities requires context-specific flexibility. Standards, while offering broad parameters to be considered, are not context specific and may be inappropriate. Standards should not curtail flexibility to address the reality of local circumstances and sensitivities. It was necessary for Yohei Sasakawa and TNF to think innovatively.

In early 2013, in the context of the Sasakawa Peace Mission, TNF (MLO) launched the Support to Conflict-affected Communities Program in Myanmar in initiating its “Sustained Incremental Trust Establishment and Support” (SITES) approach as the learning phase in a medium- to long-term commitment to the peace process. Support was incremental in that its progress was to be achieved in many small steps over a sustained period. Trust is the element in short supply in the peace process, and its creation is paramount. It was to be established through a process of respectful and non-intrusive engagement with parties to the peace process while demonstrating capacity to bring parties closer together. It was to be initially established through personal relations and influence and then supported through consistent effort in the integration of 2nd and 3rd track diplomacy together with supporting programs.

In the context of programming, ‘SITES’ reflects consistent, flexible, and nimble mechanisms of funding and implementation with ‘light-footprint foreign presence’ and non-intrusive dynamic monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment methods designed and tested on the basis of trust and respect.³¹ As devised by Sasakawa and TNF, the ‘SITES’ approach is based on the establishment and maintenance of personal relations of trust between empowered principals, i.e., those who can make the decisions. It involves personal contact, affability, and the development of kindred, respectful relations that reflect integrity, access to resources, and the capacity to deliver. It reflects both responsiveness to requests and proactivity in anticipating needs. This respectfulness is purposefully

³¹ Dynamic M,E&A. (See Annex “C”)

permeated from the principal officer down through the staff members of TNF (MLO) and represents a mainstreamed approach. Trust, respect, and patience are demonstrated through the design of consistent policy for decision-making and simple, functional mechanisms of funding and implementation that minimize bureaucracy and optimize cash and resource flows. Word is bond. This requires consistency in implementation, excellent quality, clear lines of communication, careful and thoughtful consultation, and patience in moving slowly and with determination.

Table 2

SITES

Sustained	Support for the peace process is committed to the medium or long term with unfaltering engagement in focusing on entry points for progress and in adroitly and pragmatically circumventing obstacles.
Incremental	Progress is expected in multiple small steps, acceptable and palatable to parties and contributing directly or indirectly to exploiting elements of common ground in advancing the peace process.
Trust	Trust and mutual confidence are paramount. They cannot be programmed or directed but must evolve naturally because of consistency in the context of honest relationships concerned with mutual interests. It must be earned. Word is bond, and honor within the relationship is critical. Maintenance of ‘face’ within a relationship of honor is a particularly Asian imperative.
Establishment	Trust is in short supply in the context of ongoing conflict or in the immediate reality of the cessation of armed violence. Trust is initially a leap of faith established with reference to one’s relationship, reputation, and previous record.

Support	Trust is supported and maintained, in deference to Asian imperatives, by delivering consistent adherence to one's word and sense of honor. Support is demand-driven in addressing context and culturally sensitive, locally developed processes. It is offered as accompaniment rather than as instructive or invasive interventions. Consistency in these matters is self-fulfilling in that it ensures that mutual trust will grow.
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In with the program ongoing in 2018, independent MoFA Japan and TNF internal evaluations have demonstrated that physical outputs were achieved; food and non-food items were effectively distributed to conflict-affected communities; and vital social infrastructure was built and made available to the appropriate beneficiaries, contributing to their coping mechanisms. Findings in relation to longer-term outcomes and impact, i.e., the program's contribution to the peace process and reconciliation in Myanmar, are more difficult to measure in the context of a non-linear, stuttering peace process. However, while overtaken by the coup of 1st February 2020, proxy indicators suggested that the contribution had been positive. Participating EAGs signed and maintained their commitment to the NCA; the attitude of beneficiary communities was that TNF programs had improved the quality of life, although much more is needed, particularly in the area of sustainable livelihoods; international engagement in the 'gray zones' brought a perception of increasing normalization of the environment and reduced disruption of life by either EAG or GoM activity; there was a perception that the program was contributing to the stabilization of the peace process, despite occasional disrupting incidents and a continuing lack of trust between parties. The implementation of this program, and the manner of implementation using the SITES approach, ensured that both Japan and TNF, as represented by Yohei Sasakawa, could maintain a functional level of trust with parties to the peace process, GoM, TMD, and EAG. Prior to the shock of the coup, the parties maintained access and some influence at a time when these commodities were in diminishing supply between the parties and most Western actors and contributed to peace-support programs applying this SITES approach.

Rakhine State 2020 and 2022 Ceasefires

It is important to recognize that the shocking coup of February 1, 2021, has halted the gradual and positive developments in the peace process and threatens to set Myanmar back from the vaunted objectives of a federal democracy. While the NLD gained power within the provisions of the 2008 Constitution in the general election of 2015, an outcome that considerably sidelined the influence of the Tatmadaw's political wing, USDP, the result of the general election of 8 November 2020 in which the NLD strengthened its majority worsened the environment for both the Tatmadaw and the USDP. This result may be seen as the lighting of the fuse that ignited the subsequent coup.

Prior to this general election, the then Election Commission had decided not to hold elections in some areas of Rakhine State claiming that the insecurity caused by fighting between the Tatmadaw and the Arakan Army (AA) made it impossible. Sasakawa, who had visited Myanmar as the head of the Japanese government's election monitoring mission and believed that elections for all people are the foundation of democracy, consulted with the Chairman of the Election Commission before the election and obtained a statement from him assuring that additional elections would be held in Rakhine State after the polling day if security conditions were stabilized. Sasakawa then mediated between the Tatmadaw and the AA, and on November 12, both sides agreed to a ceasefire. The following month, Sasakawa personally visited the electoral districts in Rakhine State where the heaviest fighting had taken place and spoke with ordinary people on the streets to confirm their wish to hold elections. He also held a press conference in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State, to announce that he had received a request from Rakhine State legislators to inform Nay Pyi Taw that they were ready to hold elections. Immediately thereafter, he met directly with the head of the Election Commission and State Counselor, Aung San Suu Kyi, to inform them that elections could be held in Rakhine State. Despite this, neither of them expressed a clear and positive attitude toward holding additional elections.³² While the schedule for the implementation of additional elections in Rakhine State remained unclear, concurrently, the USDP side repeatedly demanded that the NLD administration investigate

³² This is detailed in "From Elections to Ceasefire in Myanmar's Rakhine State," International Crisis Group, December 23, 2020.

alleged election fraud. Such allegations, to an extent that could influence the outcome of the election, were not supported by independent observers.

Furthermore, in response to the abduction of three NLD candidates by the AA, an action that NLD identified as an additional blockage to the holding of elections in Rakhine State, Sasakawa negotiated with the AA and achieved their release on January 1, 2021. However, the NLD government attempted to hold the first parliamentary session after the general election on February 1, 2021, without announcing a schedule for additional elections in Rakhine State. With all of these issues in mind, the Tatmadaw staged a coup d'état in the early morning hours of February 1.

We can speculate that had elections been held in Rakhine State and had the USDP allegations of electoral fraud been taken seriously by Aung Sang Suu Kyi or had a functional working relationship with the Commander in Chief of the Tatmadaw, the coup and the subsequent destructive civil war might have been averted. Now we are watching a 'slow-motion train crash,' a lose/lose situation where the people of Myanmar are the victims. Notwithstanding the current intransigence on both sides, Yohei Sasakawa and the Nippon Foundation have learned the lessons of supporting the peace process through the SITES approach and continue to actively engage in humanitarian aid activities for the people of Myanmar.

As civil unrest has raged on throughout Myanmar, perhaps some of the most intense fighting has occurred between the TMD and the AA in Rakhine State. The humanitarian impact of the conflict has been immense, with roads and waterways between communities and markets, schools, hospitals, and relatives, and between farmers and their crops, blocked. In November 2022 the state of food insecurity and the displacement of IDPs had reached a critical point in Rakhine.

A temporary ceasefire was agreed upon on November 24 when Sasakawa met the Senior General Min Aung Hlain, face to face in Nay Pyi Taw and then met the leader of

the AA, General Twan Mrat Naing, online in Yangon on the same day.³³ Both parties agreed to the ceasefire for humanitarian purposes. In other words, both parties agreed to stop fighting to bring humanitarian aid to the war-affected people in Rakhine State. According to these parties, it is not a ceasefire in terms of political and military aspects but is a purely humanitarian ceasefire. This critical humanitarian issue and the intercession of TNF offered an urgent and legitimate entry point for a ceasefire in light of the undeniable humanitarian stress, an action that would not be disputed by the members of the Northern Alliance. From the perspective of TNF, even intermittent and informal ceasefires would facilitate aid distribution and would offer a ‘chink of light’ to the heretofore ‘zero-sum options.’ While humanitarian support for conflict-affected communities has always been an aspect of SITES in the context of supporting the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA), in this post-coup era this application of a ‘humanitarian ceasefire’ may prove a useful new facet in ending carnage between the TMD and EAGs, to add to the concept of SITES. This is especially so as the belief in the achievability of zero-sum objectives may be evaporating in the TMD following the progress of the counter-offensive launched by the Three Brother Alliance in Northern Shan and Rakhine in October 2023, supported by the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), successes now being replicated by the EAGs and CDF in the Southeast and Chin.

Concluding Remarks

Japan has been constructively engaged in Burma/Myanmar since the founding of the state in 1948; TNF since 1976. In that time, both have developed the reputation as benevolent advocates and providers, with distinctly non-directive and non-intrusive Asian approaches for peaceful development and for reconciliation between people in dispute in Myanmar. Since 2012, at the request of GoM, Yohei Sasakawa, in the delivery of The Sasakawa Peace Mission, both as Special Envoy for Japan and Chairman of TNF, has

³³ The Irrawaddy, November 28, 2022, “Myanmar military and the Arakan Army agree to a temporary truce in Rakhine State” <https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/war-against-the-junta/myanmar-military-and-arakan-army-agree> (accessed December 25, 2022), and NHK World-Japan, November 30, 2022, “Myanmar Military Agrees to Ceasefire with Armed Group.” https://www3.nhk.or.jp/nhkworld/en/news/20221130_42/ (accessed December 25, 2022).

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brought the “light footprint” influence of Japan and TNF to bear on advancing the peace process in Myanmar. In the intervening years, through a torturous, fluctuating peace process, as western influence has diminished in contributing to peace in inverse proportion to its application of ‘western development theory’ and its criticism of GoM’s shocking and controversial methods of addressing internal conflict. While regional powers have strengthened their positions in advancing their interests in Myanmar, Japan, prior to the coup, was able to maintain stable relationships of trust with GoM and the EAGs through the application of a pragmatic Asian approach to non-judgmental and respectful advocacy with the parties to the peace process. For TNF this is reflected in the ‘SITES’ approach. It can be expected that Japan and TNF will continue to pragmatically grasp appropriate entry points for engagement in the peace process, where gaps exist and at the appropriate time, in order to progress it towards the ultimate goal of a fair, comprehensive peace accord, appropriate systemic change, and ostensibly workable federal solutions to the conflict, and ultimately, peacefully improving sustainable livelihoods and quality of life for people of Myanmar.

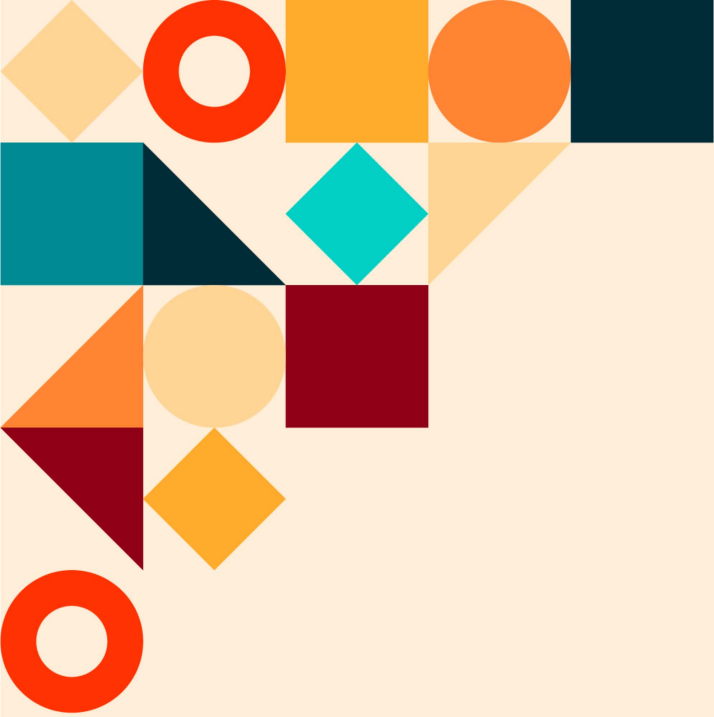
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