



ISSN 2964-3902 (Online)

SUJANA: Journal of Education and Learning Review

<https://journal.jfpublisher.com/index.php/sujana>

Vol. 5, Issue. 2, (2026)

doi.org/10.56943/sujana.v5i2.980

Monastic Education and Moral Development: A Study of Novice Monks at Wat Prey Speu, Cambodia

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ABSTRACT

The quality of teaching and learning within religious educational institutions remains an underexplored dimension of educational research, particularly in the context of Buddhist monastic primary schooling in Southeast Asia. This study investigates the effectiveness of Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, with particular emphasis on its role in fostering moral development, implementing transformational educational models, and advancing the influence of spiritual advisors on novice monks' holistic formation. A sequential explanatory mixed-methods design was employed, integrating quantitative survey data collected from 141 participants, selected through the Slovin formula from a total population of 220, with qualitative data derived from semi-structured interviews, student focus groups, and classroom observations. Multiple regression analysis identified the school environment as the strongest predictor of moral development ($R^2 = .822$), followed by teachers' dual roles ($R^2 = .451$) and curricular integration of Buddhist principles ($R^2 = .115$). Qualitative findings further confirmed that the monastic environment functions as an immersive pedagogical space in which Buddhist values are actively practiced rather than passively received. The study concludes that Wat Prey Speu represents a replicable model of values-based holistic education and recommends that the Cambodian Ministry of Education consider integrating its foundational principles into the national educational framework.

Keywords: *Buddhist Education, Holistic Education, Monastic Schooling, Moral Development, Novice Monks*

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism-informed education constitutes a comprehensive philosophical framework that extends well beyond the mere transmission of academic content. It systematically cultivates moral character, ethical conduct, cultural continuity, and the development of wisdom as integral outcomes alongside foundational scholastic competencies (Sapardi, 2023; Suebkrapan et al., 2025). Grounded in the canonical teachings of the Buddha, this educational tradition provides learners with a structured approach to understanding the nature of human suffering, discerning its root causes, and pursuing a mode of life oriented toward enlightenment and social harmony (Son, 2021). In societies increasingly shaped by materialist values and utilitarian educational goals, institutions that maintain a dual commitment to spiritual formation and academic preparation occupy a distinctive and irreplaceable position (Sidash, 2025; Yusuf & Rohmaniyah, 2025). Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School in Cambodia exemplifies such an institution, integrating the national curriculum comprising subjects such as Khmer language, mathematics, and science with classical Buddhist disciplines including Pali, Dhamma, and meditative practice.

The school's pedagogical approach is anchored in the foundational Buddhist principle of Threefold Training (Tisikkā), which encompasses Sīla sikkā (moral conduct), Samādhi sikkā (mental concentration), and Paññā sikkā (the cultivation of wisdom) (Chansomsak & Vale, 2008). Henriksen and Gruber (2024) believed that these dimensions of training are not treated as discrete instructional components but are practiced concurrently and applied across personal, communal, and academic spheres, thereby fostering sustainable and mindful living among students. The immersive monastic environment of Wat Prey Speu reinforces these principles not merely as subject matter but as daily lived practice, cultivating character formation and a culture of compassion that permeates all aspects of institutional life (Medhācitto, 2024). This dual emphasis on doctrinal instruction and experiential formation distinguishes monastic schooling from conventional educational settings and positions it as a uniquely holistic model of human development.

Prior scholarly work on Buddhist education in Southeast Asia has substantially advanced understanding of its philosophical foundations, historical development, and cultural significance. Research conducted across Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar has demonstrated that monastic schooling environments consistently promote prosocial behavior, communal cohesion, and ethical awareness among young learners (Tilakaratne, 2012). Comparative studies have further shown that the deliberate integration of contemplative practices into formal curricula produces measurable improvements in students' self-regulation, emotional resilience, and academic motivation, particularly within primary-level settings (Lau

& Tse, 2024). These findings collectively affirm the educational value of Buddhist institutions as sites of moral and intellectual formation.

Building upon this foundation, more recent investigations have examined the structural and institutional dimensions of Buddhist schooling, including the role of curriculum design, teacher preparation, and leadership in sustaining educational quality. Nyanabhadrā et al. (2025) observed that the future development of Buddhist education in Indonesia depends substantially on institutional capacity, instructor competence, and deliberate curricular reform. Similarly, research from the Cambodian higher education context has underscored how institutional leadership directly shapes educational outcomes and the quality of learning environments (Paradise & Prak, 2024). The analytical study by Medhacitto (2025) further demonstrated that traditional Buddhist teaching methods, when applied with pedagogical intentionality, retain considerable effectiveness in contemporary educational settings, thereby validating the continued relevance of classical instructional approaches within modern schooling frameworks.

Notwithstanding these contributions, significant gaps persist in the empirical literature concerning the specific quality of teaching and learning within Cambodian monastic primary schools. The majority of existing studies have concentrated on macro-level policy dimensions or idealized theoretical frameworks, with comparatively limited attention devoted to the lived instructional experiences of novice monks within community-based religious schools. The particular challenges of reconciling traditional Buddhist pedagogy with contemporary national curriculum requirements, including the need for specialized teacher training and coherent curricular integration, remain insufficiently examined in the Cambodian context. Furthermore, the interplay between monastic identity, cultural preservation, and measurable educational quality at the primary school level constitutes a largely underexplored area of scholarly inquiry.

The present study addresses these gaps by investigating the quality of teaching and learning at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School, with particular emphasis on how the monastic environment, the Threefold Training framework, and the role of spiritual advisors collectively shape the moral and educational development of novice monks. This research contributes a contextually grounded empirical perspective that is currently absent from the existing literature on Buddhist primary education in Cambodia. By examining both the strengths and structural tensions inherent in this educational model, the study provides a basis for evidence-informed recommendations directed at the school administration and the Cambodian Ministry of Education. In doing so, it positions Wat Prey Speu as a potentially replicable model for values-based education within the national educational framework.

In pursuit of these aims, the study is guided by three research questions. First, what is the effectiveness of transformational models as applied to Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu? Second, in what ways does Buddhist education foster

moral development among novice monks? Third, why does Buddhist education hold particular significance for novice monks enrolled at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School? These questions collectively orient the investigation toward a comprehensive understanding of how religious schooling environments can serve as powerful instruments for shaping both individual character and broader community values.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework of this study integrates three interrelated constructs, namely moral growth, transformational models, and the role of spiritual advisors, as the principal variables shaping the quality of Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School. These constructs are examined within the broader context of the Buddhist Threefold Training (Tisikkā), which serves as the overarching conceptual lens through which teaching and learning quality is assessed. The relationships among these variables are illustrated in the conceptual model presented in Figure 1.

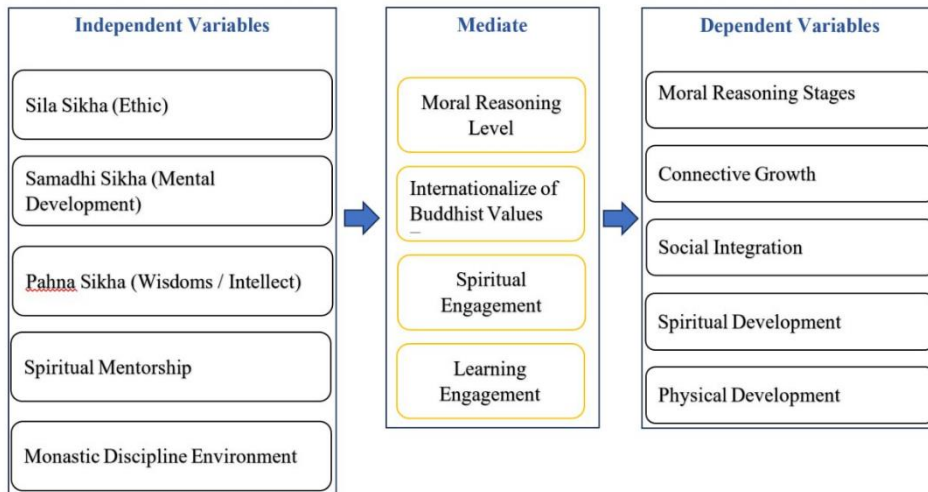


Figure 1 Conceptual Model: Buddhist Education at WAT PREY SPEU
Source: Proposed by Researchers (2025)

This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, in which a quantitative phase preceded and informed a subsequent qualitative phase (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). This design was selected to first quantify the relationships among the study variables and subsequently explain the underlying mechanisms through qualitative perspectives. The quantitative phase utilized a structured survey instrument measuring three independent variables: moral growth, transformational models, and spiritual advisors, with the primary goal of gathering numerical data and generating predictions regarding the broader population. The qualitative phase comprised semi-structured interviews with high-performing novice monks, community members, and school administrators, aimed at understanding human behavior and exploring the meanings behind observed

patterns, thereby serving as a cross-validation mechanism for the quantitative findings. Multiple regression analysis was further applied to examine the directional relationships among the identified variables and to determine the nature and

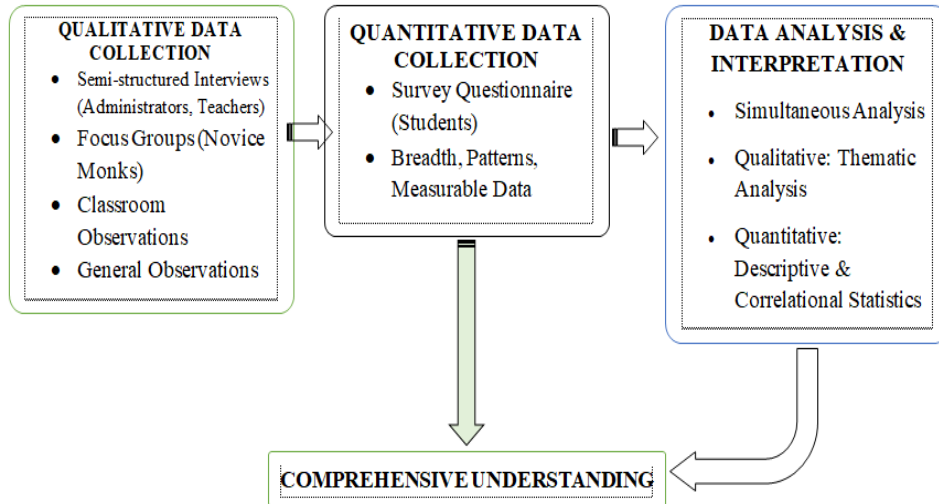


Figure 2 Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Design
Source: Proposed by Researchers (2025)

strength of their associations. The overall mixed-methods design is illustrated in Figure 2.

The study was conducted at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School, Prey Speu Village, Sangkat Chaom Chao II, Khan Po Senchey, Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The total accessible population comprised 220 individuals, including novice monks, community members, and school administrators. The required sample size was determined using the Slovin formula as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

where n denotes the sample size, N the total population (220), and e the acceptable margin of error set at 0.05. Applying this formula yielded a final sample of 141 participants. Questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to ensure respondent comprehension and to facilitate the building of rapport with participants at the study site. A random sampling approach was additionally applied to select a smaller cohort for face-to-face structured interviews.

Validity, Reliability, and Triangulation

The research instrument underwent pilot testing with 10 students who were excluded from the main sample. Construct validity was established through correlation analysis of linked constructs, supplemented by confirmatory factor analysis to verify the measurement structure. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha for each scale, with results indicating good to excellent reliability across all instruments, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Results

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha (α)	Interpretation
Buddhist Education Importance Scale	0.87	Good
Moral Development Scale	0.92	Excellent
Curriculum Integration Scale	0.85	Good
Overall Instrument	0.89	Good

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

For qualitative data, triangulation was achieved through the convergence of interview transcripts, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. Inter-rater reliability was assessed by two independent coders reviewing the interview transcripts, yielding a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.81, indicating substantial agreement. Test-retest reliability was further evaluated using a subsample of 20 participants who completed the survey on two occasions separated by a two-week interval, producing a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.83, which reflects strong temporal dependability.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Sample Description and Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the 141 respondents provides meaningful contextual information about the teaching and learning environment at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School. With respect to age distribution, the majority of respondents (65.2%) were between 12 and 14 years of age, indicating that the institution primarily serves novice monks during a formative stage of moral and cognitive development, when Buddhist instruction is particularly consequential for character formation. A further 25.5% were aged 15 to 17, representing older novices with greater experience in monastic life, while 9.2% fell within the 9 to 11 age range, reflecting that younger novices constitute a smaller proportion of the student body.

The gender distribution is consistent with the monastic character of the institution, as 96.5% of respondents were male, reflecting the traditional Cambodian practice whereby males enter monasteries for spiritual formation and Buddhist study. The remaining 3.5% were female, most likely representing lay students from surrounding communities. Regarding residential status, 86.5% of respondents resided within the Prey Speu Monastery compound, indicating full immersion in monastic life and daily Buddhist activities. A further 12.8% lived in other monasteries but attended classes at Wat Prey Speu, while a negligible proportion (0.7%) were classified as other. The high proportion of resident novices reinforces the institution's dual character as both an academic establishment and a spiritual community, where learning extends beyond the formal classroom into daily routines, communal rituals, and shared monastic life.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the Morals and Character Development scale across 141 respondents. The overall mean score of 3.68 (SD = 0.82) indicates a generally positive perceived impact of Buddhist instruction on students' ethical conduct, interpersonal attitudes, and sense of social responsibility. Among individual items, the highest mean was recorded for C4, pertaining to Buddhist education teaching students to be good citizens (M = 4.19, SD = 0.520), followed by C5, which concerns increased respect for teachers, elders, and peers (M = 4.11, SD = 0.620). By contrast, C1, pertaining to personal discipline, obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.01, SD = 1.626), suggesting that while students broadly affirm the moral value of Buddhist education, the internalization of specific dimensions such as self-discipline remains variable and may require more targeted pedagogical attention.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics on Morals and Character Development

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
C1. Studying Buddhism has helped me become a more disciplined person.	141	1	5	3.01	1.626
C2. Learning about compassion has made me kinder to others.	141	1	5	4.09	0.638
C3. Meditation practice helps me control my anger and bad feelings.	141	1	5	2.99	1.637
C4. Buddhist education teaches me how to be a good citizen in society.	141	3	5	4.19	0.520
C5. I have more respect for my teachers, elders, and friends.	140	1	5	4.11	0.620
Total	141	2.20	5.00	3.68	0.822

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

Table 3 presents student perceptions regarding the importance and curricular integration of Buddhist education, with an overall mean of 4.07 (SD = 0.47), reflecting strong and consistent positive attitudes. The highest-scoring item was D4, indicating that learning the Dhamma provides students with inner strength and hope (M = 4.44, SD = 0.798), followed by D2 and D8, which respectively address Buddhist education's contribution to understanding Cambodian culture (M = 4.42) and the use of Buddhist narratives by teachers across disciplines (M = 4.42). Conversely, D9, pertaining to the practice of mindfulness across non-meditation classes, obtained the lowest mean (M = 3.37, SD = 1.244) with the largest standard deviation in the table, suggesting considerable variability in how mindfulness is implemented beyond dedicated meditation sessions.

Table 3 Descriptive Statistics on Importance and Integration of Buddhist Education

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
D1. Studying Buddhism is very important for my future.	140	1	5	4.11	0.707
D2. Buddhist education helps me understand Cambodian culture.	140	1	5	4.42	0.814
D3. Buddhist studies helps me solve problems in my life.	140	1	5	4.11	0.584
D4. Learning the Dhamma gives me strength and hope.	140	1	5	4.44	0.798
D5. Khmer Language class.	140	1	5	4.15	0.719
D6. Social Studies / History class.	140	1	5	3.91	0.852
D7. Even in Science class, we learn about interconnection.	141	1	5	3.70	0.992
D8. Teachers often use Buddhist stories to explain lessons.	141	1	5	4.42	0.785
D9. We practice mindfulness not just in meditation, but in other classes.	141	1	5	3.37	1.244
Total	141	2.22	5.00	4.07	0.469

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

Table 4 addresses student perceptions of the dual teaching roles fulfilled by both monk and lay instructors, as well as the overall transformational impact of attending Wat Prey Speu. The overall mean of 4.05 (SD = 0.49) reflects a high and favorable assessment. Notably, E5, which asserts that studying at Wat Prey Speu helps students become better people, obtained the highest mean (M = 4.19, SD = 0.533), closely followed by E4, which concerns students' willingness to recommend the school to other novices (M = 4.13). Lay teachers received strong recognition for their contribution to moral instruction (M = 4.12, SD = 0.514), while monk teachers were highly regarded for their dual competency in Dhamma and secular subjects (M = 4.05, SD = 0.618).

Table 4 Descriptive Statistics on the Dual Role of Teacher and Overall Impact

Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
E1. Monk teachers are good at teaching both Dhamma and other subjects.	139	1	5	4.05	0.618
E2. Lay teachers also teach us about good morals and behavior.	141	2	5	4.12	0.514
E3. Because of my education here, I feel encouraged to achieve my goals.	141	2	5	3.76	0.792
E4. I would recommend a Buddhist school like this to other novices.	141	2	5	4.13	0.576
E5. Overall, studying at Wat Prey Speu helps me become a better person.	141	2	5	4.19	0.533
Total	141	2.20	5.00	4.05	0.491

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

Correlation Analysis

The Pearson correlation analysis examined the directional relationships among four principal variables: the school environment (B), morals and character development (C), the importance and integration of Buddhist education (D), and the dual role of teachers and overall impact (E). As presented in Table 5, the most notable finding is the exceptionally strong positive correlation between the school environment and students' moral development ($r = .906$, $p < .001$), indicating that a compassionate, disciplined, and spiritually oriented institutional atmosphere is the most powerful single correlate of moral growth among the novice monks studied. A strong positive relationship was also identified between teachers' dual roles and students' moral development ($r = .672$, $p < .001$). A moderate positive correlation was observed between moral development and the importance and integration of Buddhist education ($r = .340$, $p < .001$). In contrast, the relationship between the school environment and the importance of Buddhist education was weak and non-significant ($r = .142$, $p = .092$), suggesting that students' valuation of Buddhist education operates independently of their assessments of the physical and social school environment.

Table 5 Pearson Correlation Matrix

Variable	B	C	D	E
B: School Environment	1	.906**	.142	.535**
C: Morals and Character Development	.906**	1	.340**	.672**
D: Importance and Integration of Buddhist Education	.142	.340**	1	.498**
E: Dual Role of Teacher and Overall Impact	.535**	.672**	.498**	1

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

*Note: ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis was employed to determine the relative predictive strength of each independent variable on students' moral and character development. As summarized in Tables 6 and 7, the school environment emerged as the strongest predictor, accounting for 82.2% of the variance in moral development scores ($R = .906$, $R^2 = .822$, $\beta = .906$, $t = 25.296$, $p < .001$). Teachers' dual roles ranked second in predictive strength, explaining 45.1% of variance ($R = .672$, $R^2 = .451$, $\beta = .672$, $t = 10.686$, $p < .001$), with the highest unstandardized coefficient among all predictors ($B = 1.123$). The importance and integration of Buddhist education accounted for the smallest proportion of variance ($R = .340$, $R^2 = .115$, $\beta = .340$, $t = 4.259$, $p < .001$), though its contribution remains statistically significant.

Table 6 Model Summary

Predictor	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error
School Environment (B)	.906	.822	.820	.348
Importance and Integration of Buddhist Education (D)	.340	.115	.109	.776
Dual Role of Teacher and Overall Impact (E)	.672	.451	.447	.611

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

Table 7 Coefficients and Collinearity Statistics

Model	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.275	0.063		36.221	.000
School Environment	0.470	0.019	.906	25.296	.000
(Constant)	1.259	0.572		2.200	.029
Importance and Integration	0.595	0.140	.340	4.259	.000
(Constant)	-0.869	0.429		-2.028	.044
Dual Role of Teacher	1.123	0.105	.672	10.686	.000

Source: Researchers Analysis (2025)

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative data gathered through semi-structured interviews with administrators and instructors, supplemented by student focus groups and classroom observations, provide important interpretive depth to the quantitative results. The findings affirm that Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu effectively implements the holistic development strategy advocated in the scholarly literature. In accordance with the principles outlined by Medhācitto (2024), the school demonstrably incorporates the Threefold Training (Tisikkā) encompassing moral discipline (sīla), mental discipline (samādhi), and wisdom (paññā) into its daily educational practices. The quantitative data further corroborate this integration, revealing statistically significant correlations between regular meditation practice and improved academic concentration ($r = .68, p < .01$), as well as between Buddhist ethical instruction and demonstrated prosocial behaviors among students ($r = .72, p < .01$).

Interview data shed additional light on the practical application of these principles within classroom settings. One senior instructor observed that Buddhist teachings and academic subjects are not treated as separate domains at the school. When students study mathematics, the values of precision and honesty are emphasized; when they engage with science, the principles of interconnectedness and compassion for living beings are made explicit. This integrated instructional approach is consistent with Bhandari's (2023) argument that Buddhist education must transcend academic content delivery to cultivate practical wisdom applicable across all domains of life. The deliberate weaving of Dhamma into secular subjects

reflects a pedagogical philosophy in which moral formation and academic learning are understood as mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives.

Observational data further affirmed the centrality of the monastic environment in reinforcing Buddhist educational values. The physical and social setting of Wat Prey Speu was found to foster an immersive learning experience in which Buddhist principles are not only formally taught but continuously practiced through daily institutional life. One administrator articulated this by noting that the monastery itself functions as a classroom, wherein every interaction, routine, and physical space serves to reinforce the teachings. This observation aligns with the regression findings, which identified the school environment as the single strongest predictor of moral development ($R^2 = .822$), and with Sapardi's (2023) contention that context is an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of Buddhist education. The study further revealed that students residing on the monastery compound demonstrated a notably deeper internalization of Buddhist values compared to day students, as evidenced by both self-reported survey responses and behavioral observations, reinforcing the view that full immersion in a spiritually oriented community substantially amplifies educational outcomes.

The findings of this study provide robust empirical support for the effectiveness of Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu in promoting holistic moral development among novice monks. The quantitative data consistently demonstrate that the quality of the institutional environment, the pedagogical roles of teachers, and the integration of Buddhist principles into the curriculum collectively constitute a coherent and functionally effective educational system. These results extend the existing literature in several important respects and provide original empirical grounding to claims that have previously rested on theoretical or descriptive foundations.

The exceptionally strong relationship between the school environment and students' moral development ($r = .906$; $R^2 = .822$) represents one of the most significant empirical contributions of this study. This finding directly extends the work of Medhācitto (2024), who theoretically argued that Buddhist education fosters moral and spiritual development through immersive community living, and provides the first quantifiable evidence that this relationship holds within a Cambodian primary monastic school context. It further corroborates the broader educational literature on school climate, which has established that the institutional ethos and relational quality of a learning environment are powerful mediators of students' ethical and social development (Chen et al., 2023). The finding that resident novices demonstrated deeper internalization of Buddhist values than non-resident students aligns with Chansomsak and Vale (2008) foundational argument that the concurrent and embedded practice of the Threefold Training across all dimensions of daily life, rather than isolated classroom instruction, is what renders Buddhist education distinctively effective.

The strong predictive role of teachers' dual functions ($\beta = .672$) resonates with and extends Lau and Tse (2024) findings from the Hong Kong Buddhist schooling context, which demonstrated that Buddhicised education is most effective when educators actively model moral values and integrate ethical content into routine classroom practice. The present study deepens this understanding by empirically distinguishing the contributions of monastic and lay teachers, demonstrating that both are perceived as equally essential to students' moral formation. This finding adds nuance to Tilakaratne's (2012) position regarding the prosocial function of Buddhist schooling by confirming that such a function is actively co-constructed through a complementary relationship between monk and lay educators. The comparatively modest variance explained by curricular integration ($R^2 = .115$), while statistically significant, suggests that formal curriculum design plays a supporting rather than primary role in moral outcomes, which partially contradicts policy-oriented literature that tends to privilege curricular reform as the central lever of educational improvement.

The variability observed in mindfulness integration across non-meditation classes ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.244$) neither fully supports nor contradicts prior research, but identifies a meaningful gap between aspirational Buddhist pedagogical principles and their operational realization across the curriculum. Nyanabhadra et al. (2025) identified teacher competency and institutional capacity as key determinants of effective Buddhist educational development, and the present data suggest that this observation applies directly to Wat Prey Speu, where inconsistent mindfulness practice likely reflects differences in instructors' preparation and subject-specific pedagogical confidence. In aggregate, the results confirm and extend the position advanced by Sapardi's (2023) that Buddhist education, when implemented within a coherent institutional framework, functions as a genuinely effective model for moral formation.

Policy Implications

The findings of this study carry several significant implications for educational practice and policy in Cambodia. First, the documented effectiveness of Buddhist education in fostering moral development suggests that elements of this model could be selectively integrated into mainstream public education, and the Cambodian Ministry of Education may consider establishing curriculum standards for incorporating Buddhist ethical principles into character education programs across all school types. Second, the study underscores the critical importance of specialized teacher training programs that prepare educators to deliver both Buddhist and secular curricular content with competence and coherence, as many instructors currently navigate this dual role without adequate institutional preparation. Third, the findings position Buddhist monastic schools such as Wat Prey Speu as viable models for holistic education that effectively integrates spiritual formation with academic achievement, and other educational institutions, both

within Cambodia and in comparable regional contexts, may benefit from studying and adapting the integrated curricular and community-building approaches developed at this institution.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Buddhist education at Wat Prey Speu Buddhist Primary School constitutes an effective and contextually grounded model for fostering holistic development among novice monks. The quantitative and qualitative evidence collectively affirm that the school environment, the complementary roles of monastic and lay educators, and the systematic application of the Threefold Training framework are the principal determinants of students' moral and character development. Resident novices, in particular, demonstrated a deeper internalization of Buddhist values, underscoring the irreplaceable role of full immersion in a spiritually oriented community as a condition for meaningful educational outcomes.

Notwithstanding these achievements, the study identifies persistent challenges that warrant institutional and policy-level attention. These include the uneven integration of contemplative practices across secular subject areas, the insufficient preparation of teachers to navigate their dual instructional responsibilities, and the ongoing tension between preserving traditional Buddhist pedagogy and satisfying the demands of a nationally standardized modern curriculum. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate investment in specialized teacher training, coherent curricular design, and sustained institutional support from the Cambodian Ministry of Education.

The findings position Wat Prey Speu as a replicable model for values-based and morally grounded education, with implications that extend beyond the monastic context into the broader national educational framework. Future research should examine the long-term developmental outcomes of graduates from Buddhist primary schools, explore comparative models across Southeast Asian monastic educational institutions, and investigate policy mechanisms through which the integrative strengths of Buddhist education can be systematically embedded within Cambodia's mainstream schooling system.

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