



Journal
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JoRIE



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Dr. Carolyn Bishop

I would like to extend a warm welcome to our readers and authors. It is my pleasure to introduce this Issue of the JoRIE, *Journal of Research for International Educators*. JoRIE provides a forum for authors from universities and educational entities to have access to a quality platform to submit strategic papers for publication.

JoRIE meets the need for a research space welcoming research in beginning stages, offering early review and presentation that also encourage an international exchange. This journal opportunity continues to fuel the inspiration and desire for researchers to seek global colleagues with similar research interests enabling a connected world of study. We anticipate that strategic topics each year will continue to gather experience and new authors of similar research. Often funding for researchers is based on acceptance for publication, thus JoRIE again provides an additional platform for early research. As the ongoing rigors of research develop, JoRIE will emerge on additional research stages to strengthen its authors and voices internationally.

JoRIE is pioneered and continues with the cooperative efforts of the Consortium for Global Education (CGE) Research Institute and its member faculty and students. Each year a new group of faculty and student researchers initiate abstracts and proposals within a suggested list of topics. The director of the CGE Research Institute, Dr. Jeffrey Moore from Anderson University in SC, gathers the applications and organizes them for our faculty review board. Dr. Moore serves also as JoRIE's Editor-in-Chief, and coordinator the reviewers' effort in selection of papers to be presented at a September Annual Meeting of the Consortium.

Numerous faculty members contribute their time and ideas to the scope and vision of each publication. Appreciation is expressed to those on the peer review team who provide their expertise and reviewing skills that combine evaluation, theory, context, mechanism, and methodology. Our editorial team consists of representatives from our members schools:

- *Carolyn Bishop, CGE president*
- *Anthony Casey, William Carey University, Associate Professor of Intercultural Studies*
- *Rachel Hagues, Samford University, Associate Professor of Social Work*
- *Myra Houser, Ouachita Baptist University, Associate Professor and chair of History*
- *Jeffrey Moore, Anderson University, Professor of Management, editor JoRIE*
- *Laine Scales, Baylor University, Professor of Social Work & PhD Co-Director*
- *Joy Turner, Oklahoma Baptist University, Director of Global Mobilization Professor of Christian Ministry*
- *Rey Ty, Payap University (Thailand), Professor of Peace Studies*
- *Dr. Tony Waters, Payap University (Thailand), Director of the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Peace and Lecturer in Peace Studies*

I believe that this commitment to authors will place JoRIE at the center of important, evolving research and have a far-reaching impact internationally. I look forward to this year's research papers and to a successful year. Enjoy this previous year's entries and join us with your comments and participation.

with gratitude,
Dr. Bishop

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J. Bradley Creed

Vol 3:1 2024

**Second International Conference of the Consortium for Global Education
Liverpool, England, June 19, 2023
J. Bradley Creed, President -- Campbell University**

As we explore the future of Christian higher education at this conference, we do so in a global context. Many of our questions about the future are the same questions we pose for today regardless of our geographical location. These are practical matters. As an example, how do we develop a workable and sustainable financial model? No other sector is like higher education when it comes to value. We believe that a university education is of inestimable value, so much so that it is too significant to calculate, yet we live within the parameters of budgets and the realities of thinning financial margins. What we provide to students through our institutions is priceless, of greater value than what it costs to deliver, yet we charge less than what it costs to produce. The value of a can of Coca-Cola has very little nutritional value. It costs only pennies per liter to manufacture, but the average price in the UK is three pounds per can. Financial questions are paramount as we think about the future.

So are curricular questions. What we are to teach the students? Is it the best that has been thought and said in the world throughout history as Matthew Arnold noted regarding the process of learning. In our schools, should the focus be upon presenting a worldview informed by Christian principles and perspectives? Offering programs and majors that cultivate marketable skills that prepare students for the world of work?

Other tenacious questions present themselves: How will technology negatively influence or positively enhance learning? Matthew Arnold, John Henry Newman, and the founders of all our institutions were unable to envision the world of ChatGPT and AI affecting the classroom and a student's learning experience. How do we navigate our historic relationships with the church and our sponsoring ecclesial or denominational bodies? There are challenges posed by governmental regulations and accreditation requirements. The list expands as operational and tactical questions confront us daily.

As we consider the future, rowing every day furiously just to keep up, let's not overlook the big questions: Questions of identity. Who are we as institutions of higher education and

what is our abiding purpose? Questions of mission: What are we to do because of our purpose and the times in which we live? Questions of strategy and execution: How do we go about achieving our purpose and what are the initiatives that will move us forward? What are the objectives and goals that support those initiatives as well as the processes and procedures, KPIs and best practices? For the future, a compelling and increasingly consequential question relates to partnerships and collaboration. With whom do we do our work? We need wisdom beyond our own institutional memories and organizational cultures to do our work. The word “whom” grammatically completes the meaning of a preposition in a formal way and it also completes the value proposition as we look to the future. Partnerships and collaborations are a value that CGE provides.

The value of our institutions is under scrutiny and being called into question. In some countries, tuition is free for qualified students. In the United States, a college education is no longer viewed as the best path to the good life like it once was. Increasing emphasis is on credentials and certifications for which a baccalaureate degree is not a requirement. Our current student populations and their families are debt averse. For the first time since World War 2, fewer students in the United States relative to the general populations are going to college, and there has been a decline in total numbers of college-going students – the so-called enrollment cliff. In a time when the public perception about a college is changing, it is important to reaffirm the value of learning, the task of education, and graduating men and women to lead lives of meaning and purpose through leadership and service. Throughout the history of the church, when Christians show up, schools and hospitals soon follow. The earliest followers of Jesus called him Rabbi, which means teacher. He called his followers disciples, which means learners.

Christian higher education has a dual purpose: One is to form students in their personal development and maturity as persons. We assist in orienting their moral compass to true north. Character education is what we do. We believe in human transformation, so what we do is not merely transactional. The other purpose is to prepare them to be constructive members of society, to become salt and light through service and leadership. Our students learn to do something through developing skills, sharpening their capacities of mind, and cultivating competencies. Career readiness is a vital part of a college education. Whether our students earn a BA, BBA., MS, MD, JD, or PhD, their families are expecting them to get a J-O-B. Another way to state this is that through the process of education, our students learn to be somebody, not

just anybody. We challenge them to follow a calling, pursue a vocation, and walk down a path of discovery to grow into the persons God has created them to be. Our students also learn to do something and hopefully leave our institutions ready to work and to serve. Our universities are engines of opportunity. At Campbell University, people are accustomed to hearing me say we are an opportunity school. We give students an opportunity to make a life, to make a living, and to make a difference through service and leadership. At our conference, we have an opportunity to affirm the value of what we do, and we partner and support each other in this affirmation.

As we consider how to work together, I offer a few insights for global collaboration. The first insight comes from three voices who were important missiologists and global leaders over the last one hundred years. The first is from Stephen Neill whose global ministry occurred at the height of a Western colonial approach to missions. Neill served as an Anglican Bishop in India and Professor of Theology at the University of Nairobi. He was native to neither one of those places, and as a white man leading people of color, he was as British as English afternoon tea. His key insight, however, provided a different way of seeing which planted a seed for the growth of collaboration. In his landmark book, *A History of Christian Missions*, Neill asserted that of all world religions, three are missionary religions: Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity. Only Christianity, however, has made itself a truly missionary and universal religion. It now spans the globe and finds adherents among almost all people everywhere. The central focus of his book is how a Middle Eastern religion became the dominant religion of Europe and is changing again to become a truly global religion “increasingly free from the bounds of geography and Western civilization.”¹

Another voice is from Scotland whose insight marked a shift away from a colonial mindset. Lesslie Newbigin, like Stephen Neill, served as a Bishop in India. When he returned to Britain after decades of service, he viewed Western culture like the culture of India he had encountered decades earlier – now a non-Christian culture, resistant to the Gospel. Two of his seminal works, *Foolishness to the Greeks* and *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society*, probe this theme.² Newbigin challenged his fellow Western Christians to a missionary encounter with their

¹ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Mission*. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1964), 15.

² Lesslie Newbigin, *Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), and *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989).

own culture and in so doing offered insights cultivated through spending decades of service in a non-Western culture and by working collaboratively with Indian Christian leaders.

The third voice is post-colonial. Lamin Sanneh was from The Gambia, studied in the UK, and spent significant time in Ghana. Our host school for this conference, Liverpool Hope University, bestowed upon him an honorary doctorate. Sanneh was a convert to Christianity from Islam. His book *Whose Religion is Christianity?* makes the claim that Christianity is culturally malleable. Its flexibility is its strength. The Gospel takes root and blooms in all cultures. An example of this is translation of the Bible into the vernacular and local idioms in ways that don't happen with the sacred Scriptures of other religions. There is not in Christianity an imperative to learn a sacred language as there is in Islam to learn classical Arabic. People are transformed in their own cultures and by hearing the Gospel proclaimed in their own languages. Sanneh succinctly stated, "Christianity helps Africans become renewed Africans, not remade Europeans."³

There are certainly other voices to reference. Andrew Walls has a special relationship with our host university because his books and papers, along with many other resources for the study of Global Christianity, are in a center here that bears his name. Walls' contributions and the insights of Neill, Newbigin, Sanneh, and others are worth pondering about collaboration. They remind us that the center of Christianity has shifted and is always shifting. One hundred years ago, the continent of Africa was 9% Christian. Today, some estimates have it at 65% Christian and still growing. The center of the church through history has shifted from Jerusalem to Rome to Constantinople to London to New York, and now is perhaps finding its locus in Lagos or Nairobi. One hundred years from now, it may be Beijing or some other megalopolis. It is always moving. For Christianity, there is no Mecca or Ganges River. No one culture can lay claim to express the true and authentic form of Christianity. It is always intercultural, polyglot, and at its best, collaborative.

Scripture provides additional insights for global collaboration. In the Christian year, this is the season after Pentecost. At Pentecost, God created a new community whose differences add to their unity. The miracle was not only one of speaking but also of hearing. To hear, one must listen to what the other is saying and what God is saying through the other. Many languages

³ Lamin Sanneh, *Whose Religion Is Christianity: The Gospel Beyond the West* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 43.

were spoken on the Day of Pentecost. The Jews of the Diaspora heard the Galilean followers of Jesus tell the Good News in their own language. The various language regions represented are listed specifically in five versus in the second chapter of Acts. The common understanding of the gathered believers catalyzed a missionary collaboration. Scripture says they were “amazed and perplexed,” asking, “What does this mean?” Their joy was so effusive, onlookers and bystanders accused them of being drunk.

Collaboration became possible not because of a new language, like a codified holy Esperanto, or by the imposition of a *lingua franca*, or a single commercial or royal language that would obscure their histories, gloss over their differences, and thereby dilute the richness of their association. Jerusalem was not the center. Christ was the center. Their common language was a collaborative community, not a manner of speaking, whose dissimilarities and diverse ways of seeing enhanced their value proposition.

There are many ways CGE can foster collaboration and facilitate a common commitment to higher education. It can do so through conferences like this one, faculty exchange programs, study abroad courses for students, internships, and research programs. CGE is a convening place where together we explore and address human problems and social issues that we face in our own countries but that are also truly global issues. There is a long list: public health; poverty and hunger; violence and warfare; the environment, natural resources, and climate change; the city and the village, to name a few.

In a world where dehumanization occurs, our universities can address the deepest human needs of meaning, purpose, and belonging that politics and materialism cannot. We have a different story to tell that people around the globe, including many of our students, need to hear. Their identities, who they are as persons, are not constructed, conscripted, or compelled, but are received as gifts of grace. This is the truth of the Gospel. What we are doing as educators is of infinite value. As we face our future, we recommit ourselves to our distinctive mission and purpose in higher education. As partners and collaborators, we discover new ways of seeing and hearing, finding anew the truth in ancient wisdom about the work we share together.

Dosoung Choi

Vol 3:2 2024

36th Annual Conference of the Consortium for Global Education

William Carey University, Hattiesburg, MS, September 27-29, 2023

Dosoung Choi, President – Handong Global University

Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed members of the Consortium for Global Education, I am deeply honored to speak to you today. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Carolyn Bishop, President of CGE, and Dr. Ben Burnett, President of William Carey University, for affording me this opportunity. Above all, I offer praise, honor, and glory to the God Almighty who was, who is, and who is to come.

I'd like to commence with three pressing questions that have been posed to me, and I invite you to share your wisdom in addressing them:

Question 1: How can we navigate the significant decline in the college-age population?

Question 2: Is a college education worth the investment?

Question 3: Given the rise of generative AI like Chat GPT, is there a future for the current college education model?

Declining Enrollment

In numerous advanced economies, the college-age population is dwindling, with some facing drastic declines. For example, in South Korea, this year alone, 310,000 students are expected to apply for admission to colleges and universities, while they wish to admit up to 400,000. Many universities will find themselves unable to enroll their desired number of students. Especially hard hit are the universities that are located outside of the Seoul Metropolitan Area. This trend is expected to continue until at least 2040. Even if there should be a sudden, substantial increase in baby births, this picture

will not change for the next two decades. By the year 2038, 15 years from now, more than half of the universities and colleges will have closed down. This demographic shift could potentially lead to widespread turmoil in affected communities.

Do you need a college degree?

Recent trends also highlight concerns among high school graduates and parents regarding the cost-effectiveness of higher education. Some argue that the value of a traditional four-year college education may not justify its tuition and expenses, with suggestions that two-year programs may offer comparable or even superior benefits.

(Employers relaxed degree requirement/ UDACITY) Furthermore, prominent companies like Google, Delta Airlines, and IBM have relaxed their degree requirements for certain positions, emphasizing the growing demand for practical skills over traditional academic backgrounds. Competitive advantages of four-year liberal arts education are fast disappearing as the digital economy demands employees with pragmatic skills and knowledge.

Higher Education Challenges

This leads us to a critical issue: the evolving landscape of higher education. A Korean professor humorously remarked that in many colleges and universities, a 20th-century professor is teaching 21st-century students in a 19th-century classroom. While an exaggeration, it serves as a warning.

Our educational paradigms are lagging behind the exponential growth of information and communication technology (ICT). Is college education okay the way it is? In a world driven by the 4th Industrial Revolution, the most sought-after skills include complex problem-solving, critical thinking, and creativity. While colleges and universities contribute to fostering these abilities, alternative online platforms such as Udacity, EdX, Coursera, and Google Certificate Program often do so more efficiently.

AI

The more pressing concern, however, is the advancement of artificial intelligence, especially generative AI like Chat GPT, which can sometimes surpass human abilities. As Gina Gopinath of the IMF asserts, this disruptive force requires higher education to innovate exponentially, not incrementally. We must undertake a quantum leap, harnessing our empathy and ingenuity, the qualities that make human intelligence unique.

Another Question / Survey

Within the realm of Christian Higher Education, our mission is to cultivate "whole-person global citizenship education." Rooted in Christian faith and core values such as honesty and integrity, we aim to equip our students with professional knowledge and a commission to transform the world. Yet, this holistic education is becoming increasingly challenging to impart. Faith seems to be waning among today's youth, not only in America but also in Korea, where materialism and self-centeredness often take precedence over character and faith.

GDP trajectory/ Industrial Revolutions/ VUCA

Amidst these challenges, we must consider the VUCA world we inhabit. The world's GDP trajectory over the past twenty centuries reveals that the most significant growth occurred in the last century, shaped by four industrial revolutions. The current Fourth Industrial Revolution, driven by ICT innovations such as AI, big data, and hyper-connectivity, is reshaping our reality. It is characterized by hyper-speed, hyper-connectivity, and hyper-intelligence, leading to a torrential growth of knowledge and, paradoxically a surging entropy. Yes, the world we live in is volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA).

Knowledge

In the face of these challenges, we must acknowledge that knowledge is the catalyst for growth in our contemporary world. Frank Rhodes said: “A nation’s present well-being and future destiny are no longer constrained only by its “givens” (its geography, its population, its natural resources). Knowledge has become the prime mover... Unlike other assets, whose utilization and investment are constrained by the law of diminishing returns, knowledge is autocatalytic, enlarging in the hands of its users; expanding in the range of its usefulness, even as it is applied; growing in scope, even as it is shared, increasing in refinement, even as it is questioned, challenged, and contested.” However, knowledge’s rapid expansion is paralleled by increasing entropy, making it imperative for our students to be well-prepared for the VUCA world. This is where institutions like CGE universities and Handong Global University should step in.

New Paradigms

As President of Handong Global University, I have set forth three core values: unwavering Christian identity, a global perspective, and student-centric focus. Our current curriculum and pedagogy, while noble in intention, are insufficient to prepare our students for the VUCA world. We are committed to eliminating the boundaries that fragment academic disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to research and learning.

Transdisciplinarity

Transdisciplinarity, a term often heard but not fully grasped, is a cornerstone of our approach. It represents a holistic, boundary-crossing form of learning and problem-solving that extends beyond traditional academic silos. It encourages students to draw from various fields of study, merging knowledge and insights to tackle complex, real-world challenges. Transdisciplinarity is not just a buzzword; it's a fundamental shift in our approach to education.

Consider an example of a student majoring in environmental science. In a

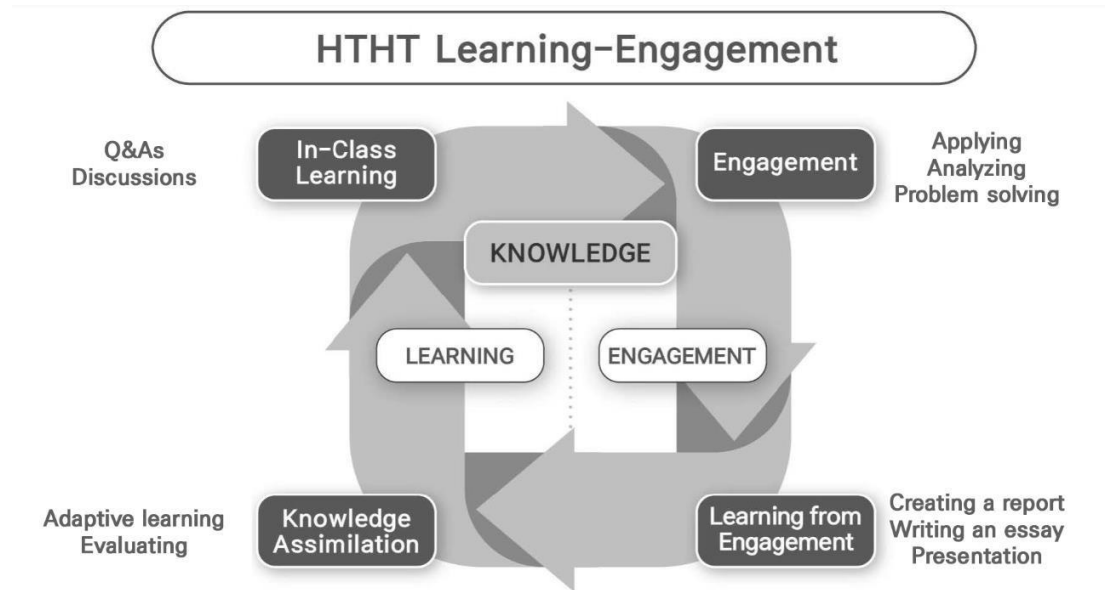
traditional educational setting, she might focus solely on her field, acquiring in–depth knowledge of ecological systems. However, in our transdisciplinary approach, she takes courses from several diverse disciplines and collaborates with students from various backgrounds such as economics, policy studies, and engineering. Together, they address a pressing issue: the impact of deforestation on local communities and global climate changes. This approach allows her to not only apply her environmental science knowledge but also understand the economic and policy factors at play, and leverage engineering solutions to mitigate deforestation.

This holistic approach transforms students into adaptive thinkers, able to navigate the complexities of the VUCA world by drawing upon various disciplines to find innovative solutions. It is not about diluting expertise but enhancing it through collaboration and interdisciplinary insights.

To address the challenges, we are working to enhance our curriculum, enabling students to pursue double majors and create their interdisciplinary majors, customizing their education to their unique interests and the needs of our fast–changing world. (I.e., getting rid of all internal boundaries.)

Autocatalytic Process of Learning

Now, let me move to the topic of the learning– engagement model I would like to highlight. The traditional teaching–learning paradigm in colleges and universities is undergoing a profound shift. Advances in technology have opened new avenues for learning, and generative AI can rival, if not surpass, human professors in certain areas. Students can access world–class lectures and materials online, and many institutions are adopting flipped learning models. Students watch and learn the course material online before they come to class. In a classroom, professors do not teach from the class material but lead a discussion by asking and answering questions with students. Professors are evolving into coaches and facilitators, guiding students through the learning– engagement process.



This paradigm shift places a renewed focus on the purpose of learning. The purpose of learning is the acquisition of knowledge to be shared through engagement with others. Learning becomes an autocatalytic process, self-reinforcing through engagement, discussion, and application. It is not enough to acquire knowledge; students must apply that knowledge to real-world challenges, both local and global, to refine and expand it. This transformational process empowers students to accumulate knowledge while shaping their character.

The autocatalytic process of learning and engagement is where we find the beating heart of education in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It emphasizes the importance of not just acquiring knowledge but also actively applying it in problem-solving scenarios. It thrives on engagement activities, where students interact with peers, professors, and the broader community to share their knowledge, test their ideas, and refine their understanding. This autocatalytic cycle creates knowledge.

Teach Learning and Help Engaging

In this evolving landscape, universities must teach students not only what to see but also how to think. Creative, critical, and analytical thinking are crucial skills in a world where knowledge is abundant but the ability to

solve complex problems remains invaluable.

Moreover, universities should equip students with the ability to communicate effectively. While machines can generate content, human creativity and nuance are irreplaceable. Writing, presenting, debating, and discussing are essential skills that universities should foster.

HTHT

Engagement activities, both local and international, are the catalysts for this transformative learning process. Yet, it is disheartening to see that many institutions underestimate their importance. Local engagement connects students with their immediate community, fostering a sense of responsibility and empathy. It provides opportunities for the practical application of knowledge, be it through internships, community service, or research collaborations.

Global Education

International engagement, on the other hand, broadens horizons and nurtures global citizenship. In a world where borders are increasingly porous, global perspectives are not a luxury but a necessity. Engaging with international communities, whether through study abroad programs, international internships, or virtual collaborations, exposes students to diverse cultures, ideas, and challenges.

We at Handong Global University are planning to institute a program that sends out students for a semester to a local community or to an international extension site. They will go out in teams with a coaching professor and spend a semester abroad or away from the university campus. Each team, comprised of about 10 students with diverse backgrounds (majors), will be given a mission of conducting a project – a community development project, a business development project, a startup project, among many others. They will be joined by the local students and/or residents. This engagement exercise will give the students experiences of learning from each other, learning from the project, and

learning from engagement.

It is through engagement activities, both local and international, that we translate knowledge into action, embodying the values and principles we hold dear. As we engage with others, whether in our immediate communities or on the global stage, we have the opportunity to impact lives, effect change, and refine our character. (In sum, we are also getting rid of all the boundaries that separate the university campus from downside.)

THE QUOTE

A comment on the global reach of education is in order. Peace and prosperity in the 21st Century depend on increasing the capacity of people to think and work on a global and intercultural basis. As technology opens borders, higher education and intellectual and/or professional exchanges open minds. International student exchanges provide opportunities to gain understanding of different cultures of the world. Advanced information technology may allow universities and colleges to reach students who live overseas, thus cannot come to class for face-to-face education. Higher educational institutions in advanced countries can assist universities and colleges in developing countries with capacity-building programs. Handong Global University has been actively assisting higher educational institutions to build educational capacity by working together with universities and colleges in developing countries through the university twinning program (UNITWIN) of UNESCO.

Global Citizenship Education

In sum, the autocatalytic process of learning and engagement, steeped in the values of global citizenship and RC living, is at the heart of Christian higher education's response to the challenges of the VUCA world. We must embrace transdisciplinarity, harness technology, emphasize engagement, and prepare students not only with knowledge but also with the skills, character, and ethical compass to navigate this complex and uncertain world.

Why American's Faith?

Before I finish my talk, I would like to touch upon the spirituality aspect of Christian higher education, especially in conjunction with character formation. It has been asserted by many that “America is losing religious faith,” an increasing number of Americans are leaving churches. A Korean survey also shows a similar pattern. Moreover, especially in Korea, there seems to be hatred against and hostility toward evangelical Christians and churches, thus making it harder now for young people to maintain faith in a secular society. Some students are even concealing their Christian identity.

Bonhoeffer

Christian college students are becoming a spiritual minority. However, as Bonhoeffer said, it may be the case that it is the commission, the work of Christians and, especially, of Christian college students to be in the midst of cultural and/or religious foes. As the Lord Jesus was persecuted, we should be happy to face the persecution. At Handong Global University, we emphasize global citizenship education and community living and learning in residential colleges (RCs). Through them, the students form good and healthy character such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, compassion, and leadership.

I also encourage my students to do scripture reading, worship, and praying regularly. Through the Public Reading of Scripture (PRS) program, virtually all the students participate in the movement to read the entire Bible in one year. The program has an excellent impact on the student community, making them more loving, more caring, more tolerant, and more cooperative, among other positive qualities.

Faithful Presence / Faithful Presence of Creative Minorities

In conclusion, Christian higher education is in peril, at least in Korea. Fast-paced technological innovations in this VUCA era are bringing about difficulties in educating students in Christian colleges and universities. In this

speech, I propose that we should transform the educational paradigm from the teaching–learning model in an isolated ivory tower to the learning–engaging model in a boundaryless, global campus. Moreover, we should attempt to encourage our students to prepare themselves for character formation through community living in residential college housing. Also, we provide them with opportunities to engage with fellow students around the world through global engagement programs.

Christian colleges and universities want our students to make a positive influence on our society, communities, and businesses. They will be commissioned into the society with a mission to change the world. The mission is not an easy one. Historically, the world change was not made by politicians, military powers, political powers, or the majorities of any societies. Rather, the changes were made by minorities, creative minorities, or what I call spiritual minorities. These minorities changed the world with their faithful presence. As Hunter (2010) puts it, the world isn't changed by politicians or political power, but is changed by the faithful presence of silent but creative minorities. We are given the mission of educating globally capable, creative minorities who can perform the role of faithful presence.

Why Not Change the World?

Thank you, and may God bless our efforts in Christian Higher Education.

Rachel Hagues

Samford University

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Abstract: International education and exposure to other cultures is one way to further a desire within our students to work towards a world where all people have the opportunity to flourish as human beings. Herein, I use an ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) to map out human flourishing at various systemic levels with a focus on the macro level. Human flourishing cannot happen if a person is merely surviving; a person must be thriving. All ecological levels – from the micro to the macro – must support or provide opportunity for thriving across physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological domains. I argue that the role of educators – particularly those in higher education – is to help create a space where our students are exposed to different cultures, ways of living, and even injustice, so that in turn they become passionate about ensuring that all people can flourish.

Key words: human flourishing, ecological theory, service-learning, international and global education

Promoting human flourishing through international education:

Pursuing a world where all can thrive

International education and exposure to other cultures is one way to further a desire within our students to work towards a world where all people have the opportunity to flourish as human beings. Herein, I use the ecological approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1994) to map out human flourishing at various systemic levels with a focus on the macro level. Human flourishing cannot happen if a person is merely surviving, but a person must be thriving in his or her life, and all

ecological levels – from the micro to the macro – must support or provide opportunity for such thriving. The definition of “thriving”, for our purposes, according to the American Heritage Dictionary of English Language, is “to grow vigorously” or “to be successful or make steady progress; prosper...” (2011). That thriving should be across physical, spiritual, emotional, and psychological domains. VanderWeele (2017) explains that for flourishing to take place, all aspects of a person’s life must be good and not only momentarily, but sustained over time. I argue that the role of educators – particularly those in higher education – is to help create a space where our students are exposed to different cultures, ways of living, and even injustice, so that in turn they become passionate about ensuring that all people can flourish.

The Ecological Model

Urie Bronfenbrenner is credited with developing the ecological model of human development. Bronfenbrenner’s model maps out the following subsystems: micro-, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-system. An individual exists and develops within each of these systems. I will explain the systems in greater detail below, though I do not give much attention to the chrono system in this paper. While each of these levels or systems are important for creating an environment that promotes and encourages human flourishing, in this paper I spend most of my efforts focusing on the importance of the macro level. My goal is to convince educators of all types of the importance of exposing our students to macro level systems and beyond. However, I start by walking through the other systems.

Micro

As defined by Bronfenbrenner (1994), a microsystem includes the

pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and

symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. (p. 39)

Some make the point that while the individual is influenced by his or her immediate environment (the family, for example), he or she also is an agent or influencer within that environment, and that the environment as well as the individual both are changed through their transaction with one another (Cicchetti & Toth, 2000). The microsystem includes things like the neighborhood, classroom, immediate work setting, but probably the strongest influencer is the family, and for that reason I will discuss it here.

Family. Family can allow for the pursuit of human flourishing, or it can crush the freedom to pursue what causes one to flourish. How can families operate in a way that allows each of their members to flourish? Accepting all family members as valuable and important and valuing the role each member plays are good starting points.

Some of my research (BLIND, 2017, 2019) focuses on gender discrimination of schoolgirls in a remote part of Northern Tanzania. I became interested in this research after participating in a service-learning study abroad program in 2008, and ultimately ended up conducting my dissertation research in this community in 2012; my participation in this study abroad program ultimately led me to this area of research.

One of the many things that I learned in this work is that historically, girls were not valued to the same degree as boys were in families specifically or in society in general. Particularly in families, girls had many more domestic chores than boys, had less time to focus on their schoolwork, and were the first to be pulled out of school if parents could not afford fees for all of their children. One of the most troubling things I heard from women and girls alike was that in some families, parents tell their daughters as young teenagers that they can no longer

afford her cost of living and that she must go and find their own supplies elsewhere. For many young girls who did not yet have a trade, this led to their use of sex as a commodity that they could trade for simple needs -- such as soap. Yet if girls were valued, protected, and parents provided for their needs, much less disease, early pregnancy, and quitting of school would take place. If girls were valued in their families for who they are as individuals and given an opportunity to pursue an education or a trade, they would be more likely to go from simply surviving, to (potentially) thriving. They would also likely see themselves as valuable if their parents valued them and would be less likely to see their bodies as commodities.

Mesosystem

Bronfenbrenner's model also includes a mesosystem, where microsystems that include the developing person interact to influence each other. In his own words, "a mesosystem is a system of microsystems," (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). An example of this that could create an environment for flourishing could include a neighborhood (microsystem 1) where crime is low and education is a priority, so the public schools are quality (microsystem 2 - each school classroom). Within this neighborhood, parents (microsystem 3 - families) are involved in their kids' educations in a supportive manner, read with them at home, help them with homework when needed, and feed their children fresh and healthy food. All these systems interact with and work together to create a supportive mesosystem for children around the issue of their education. This mesosystem (a supportive neighborhood, supportive teachers and mentors, and a supportive family) creates an environment where students are more likely to value learning, are more likely to finish high school, and may be more prone to seek out obtaining a higher education.

Exosystem

The exosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1994), is comprised of various systems -- two or more -- that are somehow linked together and interact to influence the other's well-being, ultimately influencing the developing individual or family. At least one of these systems does not directly impact the developing person, but only impacts the person *indirectly*. Bronfenbrenner provides an example of the parents' workplace impacting the rest of the family, the families' social networks, and neighborhood-community contexts (1994). Much of what would be considered our students' exosystem is outside the reach of our classroom but does indeed impact our students and the worldview to which they hold. Thus, we need to work to create a space that mitigates the part of the exosystem that may have a negative impact on our students' ability to be challenged by difference, think critically, and apply what we are teaching them. While we can do this in the classroom, taking students abroad is a powerful way to challenge students' assumptions and help them develop an open mind and heart.

For example, last year I was able to take some students with me to Tanzania for a service-learning program. One of those students, studying social work, had never left the United States and had only flown once. This trip opened her eyes to many cultural and socioeconomic differences. She wrote the following in her journal after leading a hygiene class for adolescent girls,

I learned how to work/teach with a translator. This was a bit of a challenge for me at first and definitely took some getting used to. I also learned that there is such a lack of knowledge for girls in this community about how their own body works...this is so important to me and my future [social work] practice when working with diverse client

populations. I am also a lot more aware of the lack of resources many cultures and communities are facing which I also think will aid my future social work endeavors. - *service-learning participant 2022*

This knowledge can of course be taught in the classroom, but it can have a lasting impact when knowledge is gleaned through wrestling with new experiences that challenge students' worldviews.

Macro

The macrosystem, according to Bronfenbrenner (1994), “consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, lifestyles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems” (p. 41). There are several values that exist at the macro-level that can make it possible for a society to reach flourishing. One is the freedom to adhere to a faith or religion; another is politics and economics.

Faith and/or religion. In some societies, the religious institution is held in such high esteem that it controls what people do and think even more than the government does. As such, faith ultimately impacts people from the macro level all the way down to the individual level -- whether a person responds to their faith from the heart versus out of obligation. Our faith can also be something that compels us to pursue certain things (justice, mercy, or hope, for example).

Faith can be life-giving; participation in faith can ultimately leading to a healthy physical and mental state (Levin, 2001). There is now longitudinal empirical evidence that participation in a religious community is associated with flourishing (VanderWeele, 2017). What needs to be in place in order for faith to be life-giving? One of the most important things might be that an

individual has the freedom to walk away from their faith without penalty within the family or in society. Governments need to allow freedom of religion for this to take place.

Policies and economics. Policies and economics often work together to reinforce culture and belief systems, as well as years and years of customs and expectations passed from generation to generation. An example of the power of macro-level systems comes again from Tanzania.

In Tanzania, primary school is compulsory and public (paid for by the government), but secondary school is not. When families decide whether or not to send their children to school, many factors are considered. First and foremost is whether or not the family can afford the cost (which includes supplies, uniforms, traveling costs, etc.). In many families, another question they consider is whether the potential secondary school student is a girl. While there is now equal opportunity for girls to attend school, parents still are less likely to send their girls to get more than a primary education. In research conducted in 2012, I found that historically, girls are not valued the same as boys, and when it comes to education, parents historically have been known to favor sons. In fact, one of the common proverbs I heard was: “Educating a girl is like watering your neighbor’s garden. You are not going to get the benefit of it” (BLIND, 2017). This belief system – that girls are not equal to boys – and the culture of not educating girls or pulling them out of school more quickly – is held at the macro level in Tanzania (and in many other developing countries as well). This macro-level view of women has other macro-level implications, which impact every other system-level as well. For example, the consequences of not educating women to the same degree as men are massive. To name a few: educating girls means a reduction of death in childbirth, mothers’ education means better child nutrition, girls who have higher education are also more likely to delay marriage and childbirth, educated

women are more likely to earn more and to find work (UNESCO, 2013). All of this results in families – and ultimately society – doing better as a whole. Policy and agreements can result in changes here, for example, it has only been since 2002 that primary school in Tanzania has been compulsory, and this was a result of the government adopting the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) (UN Chronicle, 2007). Yet there are things – values and expectations – broader than policy changes or changes in cultural acceptance of educated girls that are needed in order for real, lasting change to take place. These elements penetrate each level of the ecological system and can be taught through international and cross-cultural educational opportunities.

Values that transcend each of these systems

The following values or ideals are necessary for us to live in a world where all can flourish: freedom, justice, and peace. While these must exist at each level of the ecological system, it is the macro level that sets the tone for these to exist and establishes the laws to reinforce their existence.

Freedom. The basics of human flourishing must begin with human freedom and the protection of it. Government cannot privilege some individuals' freedoms over others. Government exists to protect the freedom of the people within its borders, while limiting the misuse of or “overstep” of that freedom so that it does not become too powerful. A government for the people, by the people, where all have the ability to exercise their rights, and those rights are protected, is ideal. While the United States (U.S.) provides for such freedom and equality in the U.S. Constitution, institutionalized discrimination, lack of power and education, and cyclical poverty prevent many in the U.S. from fully realizing such freedom. Sometimes students who

grew up in more privileged households do not realize the level of inequality and injustice in the world until they are exposed to cross-cultural experiences.

Additionally, government can (and often does) fail to perform its duty to protect when it is characterized by power and corruption. Historically, we have seen regimes fall when some groups are privileged over others or when power is unbalanced. The quest for power among leaders has led to the crumbling of nations. For example, recent history has witnessed a crumbling of the Syrian government because President Bashar al-Assad was so reluctant to make changes within his government that there was an uprising against him. Rather than working with rebels to reach an agreement, he instead systematically destroyed them, along with any civilians that were in the way. In 2021, the world watched as the Taliban regained control in Afghanistan and the United States military left. At the time of this writing, women and girls are again facing oppression and discrimination and are no longer able to pursue freedom, education, or basic human rights.

A lack of stability among leaders leads to a lack of equity and flourishing among people; countries with such instability continue to remain at the bottom of the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI). The HDI was created "to emphasize that people and their capabilities should be the ultimate criteria for assessing the development of a country, not economic growth alone," (United Nations Development Programme, 2023). Another organization, Transparency International, ranked 168 of the world's countries in 2015 on their "perceived level of public sector corruption." Interestingly, eight of the fifteen most corrupt countries fall within the UNHDI's lowest human development category. Protection against corrupt governments is one of the first ways we can create an environment that cherishes freedom, which ultimately would

support the health and flourishing of people. However, ensuring justice can be received and is upheld is required for there to be true freedom.

Justice. Michael Sandel, author of *Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?* and Harvard professor, defines a just society as one that distributes duties, rights, power, opportunity, income, and wealth in the right way (2009, p. 19). The just society “gives each person his or her due” (2009, p. 19), but must be achieved by ensuring that people have the opportunity and ability to dialogue and reason together, leaving room for disagreements. But what is each person’s due? This needs to come with a foundation of human dignity. Christians believe that people are made in the very image of God. The first book of the Old Testament in the Bible, Genesis chapter 1 verses 26 and 27 says,

²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

If that’s the case, then we should treat other people as though they are God’s likeness. Not that we should worship them, but that we should care deeply about their well-being if nothing else, because God loves us enough to create us all in His image! Then, when we see people hurting or in need, we are led to compassion and want to do what we can to help bring their situation to healing and wholeness. One of the best examples of what this could and should look like today is a hospitable and compassionate response to the current refugee crisis. If we currently were seeking refuge due to war, conflict, or famine, we would want other governments to welcome us with open arms. We would long for safety, shelter, food, protection. Jesus also discusses this in

Matthew chapter 25 when talking about the final judgement. He says that the Father will bless those that fed him when hungry, those that gave him a drink when thirsty, welcomed him when a stranger/wanderer. Is this not what we too would want?

In a sermon by Tim Keller (2016), he sums up justice as including three things: 1) people are treated equally regardless of their race, ethnicity, or social standing; 2) the poor and most vulnerable (orphans, widows, sojourners, etc.) are cared for and that we speak for them; and 3) that we are willing to humble ourselves and identify ourselves with the poor, and spend ourselves for them, as Christ Jesus did. Keller claims that biblically, we are under obligation to help the poor if we claim to be Christians. He bases this definition of justice from a passage from the Bible, Isaiah 58: 1-14. In this passage, the LORD condemns his people for not honoring Him with their hearts and says that although they are religious, true worship would include seeking justice. The thought can be summed up in verses 6-7,

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?

Jesus challenges those who follow him to demonstrate their love for him keeping his commandments (John 14) and feeding his sheep (John 21).

A society that is willing to seek justice at all levels -- within government, among communities, within neighborhoods -- where doing justly becomes normalized within the culture, is a society that lays the groundwork for all people within it to flourish. As Kleinig and Evans (2012) claim,

The social character of flourishing, and the universalization of human dignity, grounded in our status as normative, self-legislating beings, carry with them the implication that

although the options open for our flourishing are indeterminate, they will be bounded not only by physical limitations...but also by certain moral constraints (our flourishing generally needs to have regard to the possibilities of others' flourishing). (p. 558)

Ultimately, Sandel (2009) argues that justice is not only society working to distribute duties, rights, etc., but that it includes reasoning “together about the meaning of the good life” and creating “a public culture hospitable to the disagreements that will inevitably arise” (p. 261). Such reasoning is not possible unless all people are treated with respect and dignity -- whether or not we agree with them.

Peace. Peace goes beyond lack of war between countries or conflict (internal or external), but must include lack of racial discrimination and prejudices, gender discrimination, classism, ableism, etc. A country can be “at peace”, in terms of not being involved in any conflict, but still not feel like a place of peace when prejudice and discrimination exists. There is a Swahili proverb that says “Peace has no aversion” [Raha haina karaha]. Societies that are characterized by peace are those that are accepting of differences, those that do not limit people’s opportunities because of the color or their skin or whether they are female or not. According to Lynch and Lynch (2012), “there is no political, social, environmental, or ethical factor that does not contribute to peace, or that could possibly disturb an existing peace or hinder the achievement of peace.” In sum, this means that the existence of or lack of peace penetrates every level of our lives, our students’ lives, and the people with whom and where our students will eventually work.

Individual response

Isaiah 58 has words for individuals, too. At the beginning of verse 9, the LORD makes this promise:

If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. (Isaiah 58:9-11)

Here, the Lord is not only talking to a nation, but he is also talking to individuals within that nation. We must pour ourselves out for the hungry, satisfy the desire of the afflicted. And if we do that, the Lord will guide us and bless us. He again will identify himself with us.

Kleinig and Evans (2012) connect human flourishing with human dignity and claim that part of human dignity is recognizing that we can author our obligations but that when we do that, we also should be willing to *subject ourselves* to those obligations (p. 562). They claim that this, demands authenticity. That is, what we recognize as our obligations we recognize as ours in the sense that we do not merely adhere or conform to them, but own or commit to them as expressions of who and what we are. (p. 562)

Thus, when we recognize that others are in need, what is required of us to help meet that need? The God of the Bible would say that our responsibilities are to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with Him (Micah 6:8). Our responsibilities to others in need are to partner with them to seek justice and to seek mercy alongside them.

Our Duty as Educators

With this as our grounding, are there ways we can ensure human flourishing in peoples' lives at each of these levels is something our students want to pursue? The importance of access to justice in laying the foundation for health and human flourishing cannot be understated.

Exposure to injustices in the classroom and during global experiences (service-learning, study abroad, or cultural exchanges) can alert students to modern day injustices and put the desire in their heart and mind to do something about it. While all students may not have the opportunity to participate in international education abroad, we can bring the international community to our classrooms by inviting guest lecturers from other cultures, utilizing case studies set in different parts of the world, or even exposing students to cultures that are different than their own within our own region of the globe. Lack of ability to travel does not need to impede our ability to expose our students to global issues of injustice and the need for all people to have access to conditions that will uphold human dignity and allow for human flourishing.

Recognizing Flourishing

How do we know when we have reached flourishing? *Flourishing* would be synonymous with what some call, “the good life” (Sandel, 2009). Some would say that it is characterized by joy, which is “the emotional dimension of life that goes well and that is led well, a positive affective response to life going well and life being led well...” (Volf, 2015, p. 135). In his essay on “Joy and Human Flourishing,” Volf says that,

For the most part, segments of our life, often entire chunks of it, aren't going well and much of it we don't live well. Given that joy attaches to life going well and being lived well, must joy be lost to us? It need not be. We can rejoice over the many small good we experience, and for those of us who are religious, we can find joy in the One Good that is both the source and the goal of our existence. Though fragmentary, all small joys celebrate goods in our lives that are and remain wonderful, at times no more than tender plants in the cracks of our otherwise heavily cemented and gray lives. And in all true joys

we yearn for, and perhaps also faintly experience, a world in which all things and all manner of things shall be well. (Volf, 2015, p. 135)

Returning to the question raised earlier – how do we help our students contribute to the creation of a world where human flourishing is the norm? How do we mitigate the negative impacts of situations that are outside of their control, such that often come from the exo- or macro-system? We can do this by exposing them to opportunities to pursue justice and by seeking justice and mercy alongside them, helping them learn to identify areas to rejoice over in their lives, and helping them integrate faith as a strength to tap into in their lives. While creating global classroom experiences is not the “ultimate”, in that there are other ways to pursue peace and justice in the world that can lead to flourishing, international education does have the potential to build bridges and tear down walls of difference. Ultimately, flourishing must take place in communities with conditions that allow us all to have joy. All of us must learn to pursue this together, for “joy is best experienced in community” (Volf, 2015, p. 135). As educators, we must be doing this in our own lives, too, in order to be able to sustain a community-oriented and joyful classroom. Let us cultivate communities that promote an atmosphere and provide society structures where flourishing is possible—both in the classroom and beyond.

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ABSTRACT

Although Christianity is a minority religion in Myanmar, Christians throughout Myanmar's history have played a critical role in promoting peace amidst continuing conflict. This is a challenge promoting peace especially today when the country is in turmoil. Myanmar people are discontent about the country's current political situation. This paper addresses the practices of Christian organizations in peacebuilding activities in Myanmar. It also investigates the challenges of Christian organizations after the political changes in Myanmar in 2021. Research **methods** in this study are interview, literature review, document analysis, and monitoring news coverage. The data sources in this study included books, journals, dissertations, news from mainstream media, and social media. The **findings** revealed the practices and challenges of Christian organizations in Myanmar in their peacebuilding activities, to **contribute** with real-case reference for future Christian endeavors and religious education in Myanmar.

Key Terms: Myanmar Christian Organizations, Myanmar Military, Peacebuilding, Religion, Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

After the political change in Myanmar in February 2021, many Myanmar people were against the military coup including Christian organizations that normally avoided participating in social and political movements. In the early stage of the uprising, many Christian organizations released strong statements against the military coup and show that they were standing with the Myanmar people and supporting as well as demanding to release of the political detainees. Later there is no or less information about the participation of Christian organizations and a lack of detail and proper study about the challenges for Christian organizations to participate in the peacebuilding activities in Myanmar after the 2021 military coup. This paper will fill the literature gap by investigating the practices of Christian organizations in peacebuilding activities and the challenges to participating after February 2021.

Research Questions

This paper answered the following two questions.

1. What peacebuilding activities have Myanmar Christian Organizations participated in?
2. What are the challenges for Christian Organizations in Myanmar to participate in peacebuilding activities after February 2021?

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand the activities of Myanmar Christian Organizations in peacebuilding and their challenges to participate in peace works after the military coup in February 2021.

Contributions

This paper contributed to strengthening awareness of the situations of Myanmar Christian organizations in country peace activities and difficulties in the standing points of them in the country when relating to political issues. It also contributed to religious education in Myanmar in terms of acknowledging the position of Christianity and Christian organizations in Myanmar.

Limitations of the Study

The overall scope of the study is the challenges of Christian organizations (Baptist organizations which recognized by the government of Myanmar) in Myanmar to participate in the country's nonviolent peacebuilding activities after February 2021. This study also addresses the peacebuilding activities of Christian organizations in Myanmar before February 2021. This study is limited by the scarcity of literature and insufficiency of important references for the relationship between Christian Organizations and peacebuilding activities in Myanmar, after February 2021. The term "Christian organizations" is majorly focused on the Baptist organizations or institutions which recognized by the government of Myanmar; however, the paper also highlighted some significant works of prominent leaders from the Catholic Church of Myanmar.

Definitions of the Term

Peacebuilding: Peacebuilding encompasses efforts to foster sustainable peace through measures that address conflict non-violently and tackle its root causes. It involves but goes far beyond conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and reconciliation. And it seeks a peace that is more than the absence of violence-one in which human security is engendered through equal

and sufficient opportunity, fair distribution of power and resources, inclusive decision-making, and protection under the law. (Shannahan & Payne, 2016)

Non-violence: Nonviolence can be defined as a methodology, an ethical-political doctrine, a way to build a peace that is oriented towards a coherent philosophy, seeking a love of knowledge, experimentation, and life. (Martinez, 2015)

Christians Organizations (in Myanmar): Christian Organizations in this study included mainly Baptist Organizations and Catholic Church in Myanmar. The first Christian mission to arrive in present-day Myanmar was the Roman Catholic Barnabite Mission in 1722. In 1807 the English Baptists opened a mission, but the first permanent Baptist Evangelists and mission came in 1813 from America, under Adoniram Judson. During his lifetime, only the Burman, Mon, and Karen ethnic groups responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ. At his death in 1850, there were 74 churches and 7904 baptized members. Gradually the Baptist mission spread out to all the people in Myanmar. In 1865, the Baptist churches in Burma organized themselves under the name “Burma Baptist Missionary Convention”. In 1954, the name was changed to Burma Baptist Convention. Today, the Myanmar Baptist Convention represents all Baptists in the country (World Council of Churches, 2022).

The coup (in Myanmar): The coup by the Myanmar military pre-empted the swearing-in of a new parliament led by the previously ruling, now overwhelmingly confirmed, National League for Democracy (NLD) (Drechsler, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents the literature related to Christianity and peacebuilding. Bartoli (2004) argues that relationship between the Christianity and peacebuilding is dauntingly rich, complex, and yet somehow elusive. There are many examples of Christian organizations contributing to peace which

are highly significant and recognized, for example, Mennonite and Quakers. Christianity focuses on the relationship between human family and the one and only God in the historical time. In Christianity, the relationship is important, and being a good example is crucial too. Jesus refused to use violence against the adversaries and shared messages of forgiveness and reconciliation. Bartoli highlighted the line between religious and secular by Jesus' words as "Repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God" (Bartoli, 2004, p. 148) which is a clear interpretation that led eventually to a distinction between religious and secular powers, when human need distinctions and develop tolerant practices. Likewise, Jesus' command to love the enemies and pray for them who were persecuted and his word of the "Blessed are the peacemakers" had very different resonance throughout the history, and to response to the world. It is hard to claim a satisfactory explanation of the relationship between Christianity and peacebuilding based on the assumption of a uniformity shared and agreed on by all Christian communities. Diversity, unity, loving kindness, and agreement motivates those committed to peacebuilding. The Scripture, shared and recognized by the great majority of Christians today, strongly encourages a radical commitment to peace. On the other hand, two major tendencies have contributed to the aspects of Christianity into an obstacle to peacebuilding. The first is the intolerant and at times violent treatment of differences both internally (heretics) and externally (nonbelievers). Another one is forced conversions. In the countries colonized by "Christian" nations were pressured to convert the colonized peoples to Christianity. Both tendencies involve the use of political and military power to resolve differences perceived as threats to truth. Christianity becomes an obstacle to peacebuilding when it aligns itself too closely with secular power, while at the same time developing in intolerant attitude toward others. As the Christianity for peacebuilding, peace has been central to the understanding of God's plan for the whole creation and Jesus brought his peace,

“reconcile all things in him”, said Paul later (Bartoli, 2004, p. 154). In the modern world when Christian act as caretakers during the conflict periods, and if unjust conditions exist, peace can be achieved through war under particular conditions. However, the final aim is always to restore peace. In today’s crises, Christian helps the victims, defends human rights, educates children and adults, defends the space of civil society from the oppression of violence. Christianity contributes the today’s peacebuilding by offering a remarkable network of people across the world, which is transnational and constantly moves people, goods, services, information, and ideas making. Christianity is basically engaged in a search for a sustainable and just peace for all and may still contribute significantly to the peacemaking as well as the nonviolent resolution of conflicts arising from an unequal distribution of resources and opportunities. Interconnection between Christianity and peacemaking is emerging, Bartoli concluded. (Bartoli, 2004).

Appleby (2000) also addresses the role of Christian organizations in the peace works by highlighting the works of Mennonite as a peace church. This group is a pioneer in faith-based conflict transformation and has played a constructive peacebuilding role since the mid-1980s. They contributed to international relief works and humanitarian missions. Nonviolence is their priority and rejects all forms of violence as their principle. The concept of the organization moved to believe that conflict transformation and peacebuilding should be integrated with their relief and development work. Their religious and moral commitments could help the lives of people affected by war and poverty (Appleby, 2000).

Schirch (2005) wrote in her book of the strategic peacebuilding as the field of peacebuilding is complex and wider and contains actors in many different arenas such as the community members, nonviolent activist, peacekeeper, religious leaders, relief workers, mediators

and so on. Building a just and sustainable peace requires that the various actors and actions are coordinated into an overarching framework (Schirch, 2005).

Mang (2022) argues that political, ethnic, and religious conflict have gravely rocked the modern state of Myanmar since 1948 when Myanmar became independent. Racial hatred and religious intolerance have been seen as the negative impacts of unchecked ethno-religious bigotry. The Christians in Myanmar are carefully considered to contribute to the political and sensitive situations. To go back to history, remarkable success of Christian missionaries among the hill tribal groups and the people in the highlands mostly embraced Christianity such as Kachin, Chin and Karen. That situation distanced them from the other lowland people. Mang pointed out that the Myanmar politicians deliberately started the ethnically narrow policy as Myanmar people as majority led other ethnic groups to protect, promote and cherish their own ethnic identity, since then. Christians had more restrictions and persecution in the later decades that followed with the authorities expelling missionaries, nationalizing church properties, restricting church activities, preventing church leaders from leaving the country, and oppressing the Christians. In short, Myanmar under military rule has been a getting worse for minorities. He explored how Christians embody their public faith in the particularly turbulent context of Myanmar, by connecting with the historical condition. Many church leaders are condemning the suffering of people due to the political oppression, religious persecution and massive human rights violation, by military, but privately, and prefer to remain silent in public more because they are really afraid of reprisal from the military than because they necessarily stand with the regime (Mang, 2022).

Kadoe (2016) also argues that Christianity is unfavored by the Myanmar government and the Buddhist Myanmar is the favoritism given to the Christians under the British colonial rule. Christianity is associated with colonialism and considered as a colonial religion in many Asian

countries. The success of Christian mission among the minorities became an issue for the Buddhist dominant government after the Myanmar's independence in 1948. She also argues that the government after the independence-called Ne Win's government- the situation of the Christian became worse because the government at that time are xenophobic, like all Myanmar politicians, regard Christianity as an alien religion, and spirit of Myanmar nationalism in Myanmar. She also mentioned similarly with other Myanmar scholars that Myanmar Christians are conservative in tradition and mission-minded. They see politics as a worldly affair and their goal is to go to heaven, the other world. She quotes the Gary North as the Christian should take an action which promises to bring peace, or justice, or righteousness, or economic equality, or any other goals which are not against the basic biblical principles (Kadoe, 2016).

Likewise, Tun (2020) argues that the Christian in Myanmar to exist for others is to respond to the suffering in their society. The pro-military government and successors have brutalized minority-populated areas for more than half of a century. In his dissertation, he highlighted the militarization and Christian's reluctance to become involved in society in the context the suffering of the people under militarization (Tun, 2020).

Mang (2011) argues that the church in Myanmar must daringly resist the state when the state denies social justice, political liberty, religious freedom, human rights, and democratic principle, and that its silence in the face of social evils simply means betraying Christ who was unfairly accused, trialed, tortured, and condemned to death for the liberation of those oppressed, persecuted, and dehumanized (Mang, 2011).

Mang, Kadoe, and Tun concluded in their research as there are the reasons Christian in Myanmar are mostly silent in crisis times due to some reasons, such as Baptist doctrine of separation of church and state, many of Myanmar Christian are under the strong influence of

world-denying theology, and their minority status in Myanmar, in general. However, their literature and findings could not cover exploring the situation such as responses and challenges of Christian organizations after the political changes due to the military coup in February 2021.

This paper fills the gap of literature by focusing on the activities of Christian organizations in peace process before, and the responses and challenges of Christian organizations to participate in peacebuilding after the political changes in February 2021.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative case study research to explore a real-life cases since the research focus is to develop an in-depth description and analysis of a case or multiple cases as well as the research problem is also to provide an in-depth understanding of a case or cases (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In a qualitative case study research, the unit of analysis is studying an event, a program, and activity, or more than one individual and, the unit of analysis in this paper is the Christian organizations especially focus on Baptist organizations in Myanmar which are officially recognized by the government of Myanmar, such as Myanmar Councils of Churches (MCC), Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT), however, highlight some of the significant acts by Catholic leader. The forms of data collection in this study are using multiple resources such as interview, literature review, documents analysis, monitoring news coverage. The data are collected from sources such as books, journals, dissertations, news from mainstream media and social media which are writing about politics, religion, conflict, violence and peace and statement and press releases from the religious organization such as MBC and MCC. Online interview was conducted with one professor from a theological institute in Myanmar to obtain the views and opinions from the interviewee about the nature and challenges of Christians in the political movements. Member checking was conducted after the interview and the drafting

of the paper for the purpose of accuracy of the findings and maintain the validity since validity is one of the important factors of qualitative research by taking the specific descriptions back to the interviewee to determine whether the understanding and writing of author are reflected to the interviewee's views and opinions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). After member check, the paper was revised for the more appropriate wording and approved.

FINDINGS

The findings of this paper answer (1) What peacebuilding activities have Myanmar Christian organizations participate in? and (2) What are the challenges for Christian Organizations in Myanmar to participate in peacebuilding activities after February 2021?

Peacebuilding Activities of Myanmar Christian Organizations

This section covered a brief background history of conflict in Myanmar and followed by the peacebuilding activities of the Christian organizations involved in previous peace processes.

A brief background of a conflict

Thang (2019) argues that the rise of Buddhist nationalism among Burmese (Myanmar) majority, and the rise of ethnic's minorities who embraced Christianity, have challenged for the peaceful coexistence and vision of a secular state as aspirated by Myanmar founding fathers in post-colonial time. The author argues that the failure to adopt the principles of secularism which the Myanmar founding fathers agreed to adopt, was the root cause of ethnic conflict that has raged the country for over a half of century. The word "secularism" has different interpretations from one country to another. It does not mean secularization of human life or belief, nor does it mean denying the importance of religious teachings for morality. The idea is that the Church should not exploit the state for its own good; likewise, the state should not exploit the church for its own political means. Secularism in Myanmar as envisioned by its founding fathers was not a stance

against religion. It was neutrality of the state regarding religious matters. However, some Burman (Myanmar) politicians went as far as to think that independence would be meaningless if Buddhism could not be made a state religion. Fortunately, the founding fathers of Independent Myanmar recognized that secularism was the only way to respond to the diversity of the new Union and accommodate all ethno-religious groups. However, in 1950s, some Myanmar nationalists sought to create a homogenous society. They wanted to create Buddhist country and they tried to reverse the secular principle that the late leaders agreed, and replace it with a more confessional religious principle, which provisioned Buddhism to a special position over other religions (Thang, 2019). Later, some ethnic groups who embraced the Christianity had chosen to against the government.

Peacebuilding activities of Christian Organizations in Myanmar in the previous peace process

It is necessary to see how Myanmar Christians participated in peacebuilding activities within their minority role. Concerning Myanmar Christian peacebuilding activities in the past, this study is indebted to Si Thu Tun's doctoral dissertation and his findings (Tun, 2020). By using Schirch's framework of peacebuilding, he provides significant insight into the four areas of Christian peacebuilding in Myanmar. Some of the ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) are the tribal groups of Kachin, Chin and Karen, and they embraced the Christianity and led by the Christian leadership. Christian organizations play the important roles in negotiations of peace talks and cease fires agreements. They have been able to be mediators between conflicting parties to some degree, since some ethnic areas have substantial Christian populations.

Some Christian leaders have practiced *monitoring and advocacy*. Tun (2020) revealed that well known Cardinal Charles Maung Bo encouraged the people to participate in peace and urged them to stay away from hatred, injustice, and ethnic conflict. In addition, he proposed to adopt

attributes of peace, such as compassion, tolerance, reconciliation, forgiveness, justice, and respect for human dignity and rights. He appealed to the government and ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to cease the fires and try to stop the prolong conflict between them and highlighted the peace as the only way forward for Myanmar. He also argued that the church is the instrument of peace, and the church needs to work with all stakeholders to build peace on justice in Myanmar (Tun, 2020). Cardinal Bo continued that the Roman Catholic Church would use her all efforts for a durable peace in Myanmar (Vatican News, 2018).

World Council of Churches also appreciated about Myanmar Christian organizations in their central committee meeting from 28 August to 5 September 2012 as Christian in Myanmar have often accused as the agents of waging war against the government. The new political landscape and prospects for changes are paving the way for Christians to participate in the peace process, reconciliation, and nation-building for Myanmar. Christian leaders from the different organizations are widely recognized their active role in peace talks and negotiation processes. Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC) had engaged in a process to reflect on the pathway to reconciliation, sustainable peace and security in Myanmar and role of the churches in serving justice and peace (World Council of Churches, 2012).

To reduce the direct violence, representatives of Christian organizations involved in the *ceasefire agreements* between Myanmar army and ethnic armed groups, in both biliteral ceasefire agreements (between two groups) and nationwide ceasefire agreement (NCA, for the whole country). The Christian organizations involved by their efforts in peace talks, negotiation and mediation process as well as the signing the nationwide ceasefire agreements. Due to the armed conflicts in some ethnic areas, the number of displaced persons increased as a by-product of conflicts. Some Baptist and Catholic churches were working together with other non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) to support the aid for conflict-affected people. Their efforts also extended to provide education for the children from the displaced families. They also extended their support to help the victims of war with several programs such as mine-risk education and victim assistance for landmine survivors, agriculture and livelihood, and peacebuilding. Many churches open their doors to accommodate displaced people.

Transforming and having the right relationship is important in peacebuilding. Some respective Christian leaders including Baptist leaders played important role in the mediation and negotiation processes between military government and Christian dominant ethnic armed organizations around 1990s. Their efforts contributed to signing the ceasefire agreement between opposition parties. Without their efforts, there would be no right *relationship* between the parties, and they would not reach the trusted level to move forward. They are the trusted representatives of both sides, states governments and ethnic groups and became the designated mediators later. During the mediation process, these Christians leaders help by carrying information between two sides, facilitating contacts, clarifying and interpreting messages, helping tension to be eased, providing their opinions to both sides, and organizing the meeting places. Myanmar Institute of Theology, a well-known theological institution in Myanmar, also offers the *Trauma healing* programs and Trauma awareness trainings (Tun, 2020).

Capacity building that included education, training, development, military conversion, and research and evaluation, is also important to create the culture of just peace. Sustainability is a key principle of this category of peacebuilding. Some Christian organizations were founded after the ceasefire agreement between states owned troops and respective ethnic armed groups for social development work. They supported *sustainable community projects and humanitarian emergencies, facilitated skills training*, and connected with other similar organizations. Their goal

is to build the sustainable peace in Myanmar with justice. Apart from the social development work, the Peace Study Center at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) offered peace education. It offered the high-quality theological *education* and academic *research* to interfaith relations for peace. They also work with other organizations. Interfaith Dialogue Studies, Peace Journalism, Peace Studies, Trauma Awareness and Trauma Healing trainings are well known programs of them.

Challenges for Christian Organizations in Myanmar to Participate in Peacebuilding Activities after February 2021

When Christians populations were involved in anti-coup movements actively, there is no additional movements or activities of Christian organizations apart from the statements they issued right after the coup. It is necessary to explore the challenges or the reasons why Christian organizations reluctant to join actively and continuously in political and societal movements in the country.

Since before the military coup in February 2021, Christian's response to the authorities has been for most of the silence, when compare with its Buddhists country-part Christian organizations and their churches have been silencing them in the face of inhumane social-political evil. Christian organizations and leaders in Myanmar have been accused of non-involvement in politics by Buddhist and other religious leaders and even by some young Christians. Scholars argue that there would be many reasons for Christians to be silent and decided not to try to seek changes in country in the sufferings that militarization brings about. First, the Baptist doctrine of separation of church and state discourages them not to involve in political situations. Second, many of Myanmar Christians are under a strong influence of the world-denying theology, and that theology makes them away from societal issues. Third, the minority status of these Christians keeps them from becoming the change agents. Fourth, Christianity as an unfavorable religion in Myanmar. Fifth,

the government's persecution towards minority religions. Sixth, the Myanmar Christians' mentality in politics (Kadoe, 2016; Mang, 2022; Tun, 2020), and lastly, the position being held between two opposing parties.

The findings have been divided into two groups. Religious standards and secular pressures of Christian organizations. The following presentations are indebted to the findings of the Myanmar scholars, *Mang, Kadoe, and Tun*, and professor from theological institute in Myanmar who response the online interview, and the below findings are presented as combinations of their existing literatures and ground findings of the author of this paper.

Religious Standards

Doctrine of separation of church and state

Many Christians in Myanmar are reluctant to be players in the change process when they face militarization and its evil spirit and acts. Christians believe that they should not become involved in government related matters. The government refers to rulers of a society, but the states mean the unit that includes both the rulers and ruled, Tun (2020) refers the Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The author argues that the distinction between government and state or society is necessary for the further clarification because the doctrine of separation of church and state is not about separation of church and society, but separation between church and government.

Christians and society: the world-denying theology

Tun (2020) argues that many Christians in Myanmar not only reluctant to get involved in government related issues, but they are also reluctant to become involved in broader societal related issues. The world-denying theology, which has less regard for this world, influences many Christians in Myanmar. This theology leads to the desire to separate Christians from the larger

society. To seek the Kingdom of God first (Matthew 6:33 in the Bible) and some of the Christian songs like “*This World Is Not My Home*” could be related with those Christians who believe and follow this mindset. The world-denying theology may wrongly suggest that the Christian church is sacred while society outside the church is evil. Actually, many of them believe that society is broken or evil beyond repair. Since society is broken beyond repair, these Christians also have to try to improve their society. Long militarization in Myanmar in some ways reflected to confirm that broken society. As this militarization seems to be going for long term in this society, it is hard to see the Christians in Myanmar to do something for something good (Tun, 2020). Thang (2019) also argues that the people who adopted Christianity see themselves as a people chosen by God to spread light throughout the world and even see the others who do not embrace Christianity are those who left in the dark (Thang, 2019).

Secular Pressures

Minority Status

In Myanmar, the total population is about 52 million and majority is the Buddhism, almost about 87.9%, and Christian population is about 6.2% (Evason, 2017). Christians are a minority and less powerful and influential than Buddhists in Myanmar. This minority status Christian in Myanmar discourages their involvement in both government related matters and societal matters. Christians in Myanmar face discriminations, and even persecution that come from the government. Christians in some parts of Myanmar have suffered persecution that came from government troops since a long time before. Many Christian villages in minority ethnics areas happened to be in the conflict zones, and they were ethnically affiliated to ethnic armed groups. Christians in these areas have suffered different forms of human rights violations, especially at the hands of government troops. Christians also faced the restrictions and discriminations under the military government,

while the government gave a more favorable treatment to Buddhism. In some Christian majority areas, the government sent Buddhist monks as missionaries and forcible conversions to Buddhism. The seizing and burning of thousands of Bibles happened along with the destruction and burning of churches and Christian symbols. For instance, building Buddhist pagoda in Church compound in Karen state, shelling bomb to the Christian church in Shan state, burning churches in Kachin state (BNI, 2011; Kachinland News, 2013; Karen News, 2015). To get permission to build new churches or even to repair existing churches from authorities was very challenging. Christians also faced restrictions on holding meetings and some Christians pastors faced harassments, arrests, and torture simply because they practiced their religion. Even in some outskirts areas of big cities, the permission is needed to perform Christian gathering and devotion. Thus, many Christians in Myanmar fear the government as they are a small minority that faces such harassments, restrictions, and persecution at the hands of government authorities and military. Decades-long acts of terror from governments have created fear in the hearts of not only Christians, but also the majority of the people of Myanmar. Some scholars observe that fear is the most common emotion constructed by the regime. Christians in Myanmar do not escape this fear, which almost everyone in Myanmar exhibits. Myanmar Christians have a good reason to fear the government more than the majority of the population. In addition to the government's military general mistreatment of the whole population, they suffer extra mistreatment from the government because they are a religious minority. When this fear is combined with the world-denying theology, it is not surprising that Christians in Myanmar simply refrain from the engaging in society.

Unfavorable Religion in Myanmar

The reason of Christian as an unfavorable religion in Myanmar by the Myanmar government and Myanmar Buddhist is the favoritism given to the Christian under the British

colonial rule. Christianity is associated with colonialism and considered as a colonial religion. The success of Christian mission among the minorities became an issue for the Buddhist dominant government in Myanmar. The Myanmar Christians who had been favored by the British were feeling threatened to be the target of persecution by the Buddhist majority. Christianity is no longer a favorable religion after the independence, but Buddhism has been favored by the successive Myanmar Buddhist dominant governments. Another factor that caused Christianity as an unfavorable religion in Myanmar is the Myanmar nationalism spirit. To be a Myanmar, one should be a Buddhist, is the mentality of Myanmar nationalism.

The Government's Persecution

Religious minorities have been discriminated against, restricted and persecuted since long time ago in Myanmar after independence. In 1960 and 1961, Buddhism had been attempted to be recognized as the state religion made the religious minorities to feel insecure, and the religious minority groups resisted against that attempt. Although proposal was failed, due to wide protests by religious minorities, the government limited the religious freedom of Christian in the later years. In 1965, the government began to take over Christian mission schools and hospitals. The churches lost most of their prosperity. A year later, all foreign missionaries, except some aged foreign Catholic fathers, were expelled from the country. The press and publications of Christians were restricted and subjected to strict control. Minority languages, which used to be taught in schools, were prohibited and no more teaching. Promotions within the military and the civil service are the candidates who follow the Buddhism. The government discouraged Christians and Muslims from enlisting in the military, and Christian or Muslim military officers who aspired for promotion beyond the rank of major were encouraged by their superiors to convert to Buddhism.

The role of Middleman between two opposing groups

In addition to all of above, and after the military coup in February 2021, inhumane acts of military force to the people and places to crack down the resistance made more worrisome for Christian organizations and avoiding head-to-head with powerful opponents may also one strategy they used. Due to the political chaos, the Christians' involvements in peace process are also blurred that the current progress of peace process is very much uncertain. Many Myanmar people including Christians do not accepted the military regime, therefore, there is a big challenge for Christian organizations when they need to deal with state authority. For instance, The Myanmar Council of Christian Churches (MCC) issued the statement on 14 February 2022 apologizing for calling for organizations to attend and pre-peace meeting and Union Day celebrations that were held by the Military regime on 12 February 2022. The statement apologizes for inconveniencing member churches and affiliated organizations, many Christian brothers and sisters were disturbed and saddened by the petition for lasting peace in the Republic of the Union of Myanmar issued on 11 February. Criticism from Christian societies has risen sharply since the statement was made calling for participation in the pre-peace meeting and Union Day celebrations organized by the military council (Mizzima, 2022). Table 1 shows the summary of the challenges of Christian organization in Myanmar to participate in peacebuilding activities especially after political changes in 2021 February. See Table 1 below:

Table 1: Challenges of Christian Organization in Myanmar

Religious Standards	Secular Pressures
Doctrine of separation of church and state	Minority Status
	Unfavorable Religion in Myanmar
Christians and society: the world-denying theology	The Government's Persecution

	The Role of Middleman between two opposing groups
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The quotes of online interview with the professor from the theological institute show in the Table 2. See Table 2 below:

Table 2: Quotes from the Interviewee

Interview	Professor from a Theological Institute
1. On religion	“Christians are a minority and less powerful/influential than Buddhists.”
2. On violence	“The armed resistance organizations such as Karen National Liberation Army, Karenni National Defense Force and Kachin Independence Army are led by the Christian leadership.”
3. On peace	“The military leaders do not have trust and respect in the Christian religious leaders (even in the Buddhist monks).”
4. On challenges	“Peace making or negotiation between the armed groups needs mutual trust and respect. Christian leaders are willing to go between the two opposing groups, but their congregations may misunderstand that they are siding with the military or traitors/betrayers. (e.g., MCC). Now the situation is getting worse, and no one would like to negotiate with the military (there is no negotiation in blood debt).”

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATION, CONCLUSION

Summary

Responses to Research Question 1. Christian’s representatives of their respective organizations contributed a lot in the country peacebuilding process. In both bilateral ceasefire agreements and nationwide ceasefire agreements (NCA), Christian leaders were participated. They are well respected mediators from both conflicted parties. Although the agreements have broken due to some reasons later, the contributions of Christian leaders were historically recognized.

Responses to Research Question 2. Long history of Christianity in Myanmar can reflect what challenges Myanmar Christians organizations face today. For the leaders of particular Christian

organization, and as the top leaders of each organization, the consequences of their decision can hugely impact on their whole organization. The theological aspect and being of Christianity in Myanmar are playing in crucial roles in the Christians in Myanmar to participate in sensitive political and societal conflicts.

Recommendations

Christian organizations should find some ways to support in the unjust situations. Their status about not actively participating in political and societal movements is already known. But they should try to support removing the bad things and strengthening the good things in the country instead of enjoying the status quo. There are many Words and Examples of what Jesus did and taught in the Bible which built up the relationship with the world. They should promote the way of thinking that Christian organizations should not be separated from the society where they existed. Christians organizations should cooperate each other not only with the same denomination but also between different groups, such as Baptist and Catholic, and find out what will be the best response, and they should listen and open the doors for women and youths. In addition, peace education should be expanded. There are existing Christian organizations which provide the peace education, but not covered for the whole country. Psychological support programs are also necessary such as Trauma Healing, to the conflict affected people and communities. That would be helpful for those people to reintegrate into society. Mostly, Myanmar people are known as the ones who love peace. There are many rituals of peace in Myanmar. Those practices should be re-explored by doing research and promotion. The Christian organizations should expand their horizons.

Conclusion

“Wise as Serpents and Harmless as Doves” (Matthew 10:16) reflected the today Christians in Myanmar followed in many cases. Christians organizations have been accused by their Buddhist counterparts and the young Christians generations for not being active in the anti-coup movements. However, the long history of oppression and discrimination may not obviously be seen by today’s young and urban generations. Building the relationship is important in the peacebuilding process after the post-conflict era, and it should also be sustained. So far, there is no harm to the society due to the acts of Christians organizations after the February 2021. Historical oppressions and experienced could not be a catalyst for the Christians to highly take risk to involve the political issues, as an organization. Individually participating in the anti-coup movements by Christians should not be ignored. Every organization has a different way. As a minority status in the country, keeping the status is more important when silently participating the political issues for the Christian organization. They have more opportunities to contribute the peace under the elected civilian government but more difficulties under the military dictatorship. The overall findings will also contribute to the religious education in both formal and informal ways in terms of understanding the activities and challenges of Christian organizations in participating in country peacebuilding processes as well as the position of Christian organizations as a minority status in the country.

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Abstract

Nagas are an ethnic and religious minority in India, and they are a Christian minority in Hindu majority India. Nagas in the northeastern part of India have been in violent conflicts for more than seventy years. This **problem** originated as a struggle for independence from the Union of India but degenerated into a cycle of the Naga political group's factional clashes that have drawn the society into a whirlwind of hatred, suspicion, and vengeance. The **purpose** of this research is to show the impact of religious institutions on peacebuilding and restoring stability in Nagaland. This paper discusses the role of a Christian prayer center, namely, Naga Shisha Hoho, in the formation of the Naga Forum for Reconciliation and the reconciliatory journey it took among the Nagas. The **literature** used in this work consists of religion and violence and religion and peace. The research **methodology** used in this article was the qualitative case study research design focusing on the work of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation. **Findings** reveal that the peace initiative in Nagaland by religious institutions has a positive impact on peacebuilding. This paper **recommended** the potential of religious actors to resolve conflict and decrease tensions.

Keywords: Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), Naga Shisha Hoho (SH), Religious peacebuilding, Nagaland, Religious Institution.

INTRODUCTION

Background and Context of the Nagas

Nagaland⁴ is the north-eastern state in India, it borders Manipur to the south, Assam to the west, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam to the North, and Myanmar to the east. Many Naga scholars are of the view that they migrated from southwest China through Myanmar during the Great Wall construction or at the end of the construction following different directions and places. Scholars believe that: (1) migration took place from Southwest China during the Great Wall construction under a tyrant ruler, (2) the Nagas migrated out from the same origin but traveled out intermittently, (3) geographic and mountainous isolation began to develop ethnic or tribal grouping and variations of dialects and languages, and (4) subsequent migrations followed the route of the pioneering migrants who processed both mixed settlement and crossover, and bypass took place as well (Changkiri, 2015; Dozo, 2017; Iralu, 2009; Jamir & Lanunungsang, 2005). Under the British annexation in the late nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, they came under British rule. (Chaise & Hazarika 2009).

With the declaration of Indian independence from Great Britain in 1947, Naga Hills territory was simply transferred to India. Under this circumstance, the Nagas became a part of it the power of control over the Naga Hills – Naga inhabited areas was transferred to the Indian Union. The Indian government faced opposition from the Nagas, who did not wish to become part of India. Despite the tension, Naga Statehood was signed between the Indian government and the Naga People's Convention, and a small group of Nagas served as government officials in

⁴ Nagaland was inaugurated as a state in the federation of India, made up of 29 states and 7 union territories. Nagaland was formally recognized as a separate state on 1st December 1963, with Kohima being declared as its capital.

the Assam Government (Chasie & Hazarika, 2009; Iralu, 2009). Prior to all these events, the first political organization established by the Nagas was the Naga Club in 1918. The next step in the Naga political organization was the formation of the Naga National Council (NNC) in 1946 with its goal of unifying all the Naga tribes and their freedom. Not wanting to be a part of the Indian Union NNC declared independence on August 14, 1947, one day before India, even though it was unable to materialize under the heavy hand of the Indian Union. With the passage of time due to the differentiation of the opinion another faction emerged, namely, the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in the 1980s but later on it was split into two groups – NSCN(IM) and NSCN(K). The proliferation and fragmentation of insurgent factions in Nagaland has led to an increase in the number of such groups in the region. In the process of all this, there was a lot of bloodshed and political unrest in the state among the faction groups coupled with the Government of India's draconian law Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) where the military and paramilitary to interrogate, beat, shoot to death, and arrest anybody without any warrant, who is suspected of being an insurgent (Iralu, 2017; Jaiswal, 2021; Saikia, 2014; The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, 1958). Against the backdrop of that violent context in Nagaland, the formation of FNR through the religious group SH is critical.

Problem Statement

The Nagas have been immersed in one of the world's longest violent battles for nearly seven decades. The Naga conflict began as a struggle for Naga independence but has now devolved into a cycle of factional and inter-tribal feuds that have engulfed Naga civilization in a vortex of hatred, bloodshed, and retribution. The murder among Naga factions came to a halt until after the creation of the FNR. Going back in time, it was the religious group, Shisha Hoho, that played a vital part in the founding of the FNR, putting an end to the bloodshed in Nagaland

(P. R. J. Schreiter & Jorgensen, 2013). Nevertheless, there exists a dearth of comprehensive research regarding the role of the Christian prayer center, Naga Shisha Hoho, in the facilitation on the formation of the FNR, a pivotal factor in fostering peace among the various insurgent factions in Nagaland.

Research Question and Research Purpose

Factional clashes among the Naga Insurgencies group were daily experiences while this researcher was growing up in Nagaland. Following the active function of the FNR, the violence and bloodshed among the different factions have come to a halt. Against the backdrop of those experiences, this research paper is developed to answer the following questions.

1. What was the role played by the Christian prayer Center – Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR?
2. How did the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contribute to the peace in Nagaland?

This paper contributes to the continuing scholarship on religious peacebuilding by highlighting the importance of Naga Shisha Hoho, the development of FNR, and its contribution to peacebuilding in Naga society. The work will be significant due to the lack of research on the origin and function of FNR, which may be due to its being overlooked in the larger context of conflicts in North East India.

Definition of Terms

Religion, Naga Shisha Hoho (NSH), Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR), and Naga Peace Convention are the key terms defined in this paper.

Religion: Religion is by definition, a yearning for transcendence, for moving and reaching beyond the mundane, the spatial and temporal, the physical and contingent (Appleby, 2000). Furthermore, it implicitly or explicitly makes the claim that, as human beings, we possess an

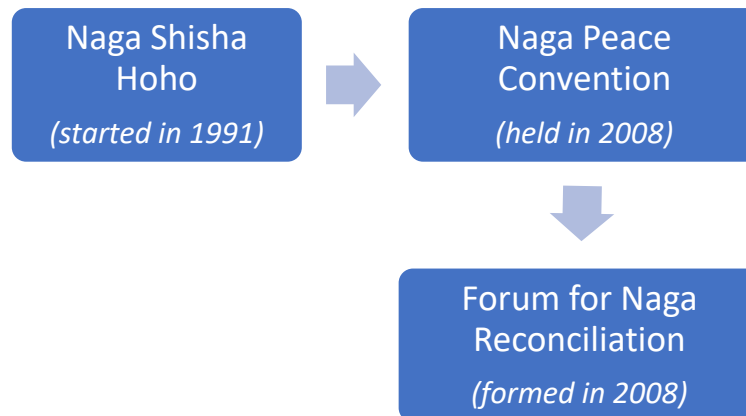
inherent inclination toward a future that transcends the confined of the past. Consequently, the metaphysical assertion elicits the manifestation of self-sacrifice as a significant behavioral pattern. Religion exhibits a range of dynamics, encompassing both violent and pacifist tendencies. Appleby named that dynamic as ‘militance’ bearing double meaning. By ‘militance,’ he means the willingness and, under certain conditions, even an eagerness to sacrifice oneself, one's family, one’s loved ones, and one’s most precious possessions in the service of a noble cause that is perceived to be transcendent, sacred, beyond time and space, engaging at the deepest level of humanity.

Naga Shisha Hoho (NSH): A Christian prayer group, a driving force behind the formation of FNR. Shisha means “doing in obedience,” and Hoho means “organization” (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Naga Peace Convention: A three-day program organized by Naga Shisha Hoho in Dimapur to pray and contemplate unity among the Nagas. (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR): Formed in 2008 after the Naga Peace Convention organized by Naga Shisha Hoho. FNR was instrumental in facilitating the “Covenant of Common Hope” and the “Covenant of Reconciliation” among the Naga armed groups. The consistent involvement of the FNR in peacebuilding initiatives has played a significant role in mitigating instances of violence withing Naga nationalist factions, leading to a notable reduction in casualties (Schreiter & Jorgensen, 2013). See Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Formation of FNR



LITERATURE REVIEW

This article examines two sets of literature. The first one deals with religion and violence. The second set is concerned with religion and peace. Critiques of religion's negative effects in conflict scenarios abound on library and bookstore shelves. For many years, many scholars have questioned and stereotyped religion as a source of conflict. However, some contemporary scholars claim that religious institutions play an important role in peacemaking (Abu-Nimer & Garred, 2018; Appleby, 2000; Broadhead & Keown, 2007).

Religion and violence

The study of religion and violence shows two prominent types of violence associated with religion (Appleby, 2000). The first type is *ethnoreligious or ethnonationalist violence*. Here the power and militance of religion are brought to bear in a cause that is, strictly speaking, not religious, or not primarily for religious goals. In ethnoreligious violence, religion itself claims that its institutional self-understanding and prerogatives are implicitly or unconsciously subordinate to a different ideology, such as the nation-state or the ethnic group. Nationalist and ethnic leaders recruit religion to make sacred their struggles are therefore legitimate. This kind of

dynamism and activity includes martyrdom and suicide, as well as acts of sacrifice and compassion for fellow countryman and woman or other co-religionists. It is an extreme form of religious militancy that legitimizes violence and sometimes sees violence as a sacred duty or obligation.

The second type of religious violence is *religious extremism* which is often called “fundamentalism”. Fundamentalists believe the solution to problems besetting society is the building up of religion as a viable alternative to secular society, which has replaced religion or rivals it. Therefore, these so-called extremist religious movements in which the component of religion is very strong, tend to sustain good momentum over time, superior organization, and can be transnational. Many religious movements in the world today are fundamentalist in the sense that they are defending and promoting a version of religion as the answer to society’s sickness.

Religion and Non-Violence

There are numerous pieces of literature that discuss the negative impact of religion in a conflict scenario. However, there are several academicians (Appleby, 2000; Coward & Smith, 2004; Creamer et al., 2015) who suggest that religious organizations play a more positive role in conflict than a simply negative one. Faith-based organizations, and their workers, are often found on the frontlines of conflict throughout the world, conducting conflict management and resolution activities as well as advancing peacebuilding initiatives.

Religion fulfills four basic social functions which define its role in politics, society, and conflict. Firstly, it provides a meaningful framework for understanding the world. Secondly, it provides rules and standards of behavior that link individual actions and goals to this meaningful framework. Thirdly, it organizes its adherents through its institutions. Lastly, it provides legitimacy to all related actors, actions, and institutions (Fox, 1998). These functions engage

society in many ways, on many levels, and usually peacefully so. Well-versed people in that religious basics, which Appleby termed as “nonviolent religious militant” and “religious virtuosi” – holy monks and gurus, learned rabbis and mullahs, dedicated priests and ministers, and devout laity, are the people who place themselves in jeopardy by working in conflict zones among the poor and dispossessed (Appleby, 2000). These are the people who make themselves available as conflict mediators, and they take responsibility for rebuilding the institutions of war-ravaged societies. Religious actors dedicated to pursuing justice and peace through non-violent means operate at various distances from life-threatening conflict, in various relations to the religious community and its official structures need to be taken seriously. For nonviolent religious militancy becomes politically effective over the long term. Furthermore, political effectiveness is not the only measure of social potency, but it is critical to accomplishing sustainable peace in society.

An increasing number of scholars in the field of international relations have come to devote their attention to phenomena such as ‘religion as a conversation starter’ (Merdjanova & Brodeur, 2009), ‘the global resurgence of religion and the transformation in international relations’ (Thomas, 2005), ‘making peace with faith’ (Mohammed Abu-Nimer & Garred, 2018). For an overview of this phenomenon let us consider the argument of Thomas (2005). He stated, “a global struggle for authenticity and development is taking place, and learning how to take cultural and religious pluralism seriously has become one of the most important aspects of foreign policy in the twenty-first century” (Thomas, 2005). More specifically, many recent academic writings describe religion as a key factor for peacebuilding: religious actors have some distinctive features that make them particularly valuable as peace-building agents. In her edited publication, *Bridge or Barrier*, Gerrier ter Haar argues that “... religious actors tend to enjoy

institutional legitimacy, have an available methodology, and possess the structures and networks necessary for the mobilization of people” (Haar & Busuttil, 2005). In addition, she expresses concern about the fact that insufficient attention is paid to the non-material aspects of social change.

In summary, religion plays a dual role. It promotes violence as well as peace. This paper explores the way in which religion, in this case through NSH, promoted peace. This paper fills the gap in the area of religion in peacebuilding in the context of Nagaland.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In dealing with the religion and peacebuilding Appleby posits two pertinent questions. Firstly, why and under what conditions do some religious actors choose the path of violence, while others seek justice through non-violent means and work for reconciliation among combatants?" Secondly, what might be gained by involving what he calls "nonviolent religious militants" in peacebuilding? (Appleby, 2000). Under the premises of those two questions this paper is developed and append on the positive side of the religious institution on peacebuilding.

This research work used the qualitative research design and done ethnographic case study on the work of FNR. Data collection for this research includes reviewing the FNR documents, publications, books, newspaper articles, and digital data posted on social media. Employing Qualitative interviews, the researcher conducted telephonic interviews, which are unstructured and generally open-ended questions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) designed to elicit the viewpoints of the key leaders, members of the FNR committee, and leaders of Shisha Hoho. Member Check was conducted through follow-up emails and messages to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the research findings by emailing the interviewee. It involves sharing data with

participants and asking them to review it and provide feedback. This feedback helps validate the researcher's findings, identify errors or misunderstandings, and improve the overall quality of the research

FINDINGS

This section provided the answers to the two research questions. The first question is, what was the role played by the Christian prayer Center – Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR? The second research question is, how does the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contribute to the peace in Nagaland?

Table 1

Structural-Functional Relationship

Elements	RQ1: Prayer Center (NSH)	RQ2: FNR
Date Origin	1991	2008
Religion	Christian	Christian
Relationship	Mother	Offspring
Structure	One prayer center	Coalition of Naga leaders
Functions	Programs for leaders to pray together	Joint actions vis-à-vis government & Naga political groups

Christian prayer group NSH – A Force in Naga Peacebuilding

The ‘Shisha’ means ‘doing in obedience’, while ‘Hoho’ is a word representing an organization or a conference. Shisha Hoho was started in a small village, Kutsapo under the Phek district of Nagaland (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020). This small village was one of the last villages to accept Christianity in a predominantly Christian state. Although Christianity arrived in Kutsapo in 1948, the spread was slow. Even up to the 1990s, when Christianity had entrenched itself fully in many parts of Nagaland, in Kutsapo

village only 30% of the population was Christian. In 1991, something dramatic happened that saw an increase in Christian numbers. It was down to one man named Chosayi Lohe and the Naga Shisha Hoho prayer house (Kraft et al., 2020; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016). Chosayi, the main figure behind the Naga Shisha Hoho, is a shy 61-year-old man who was told by God to cease working in the fields and work for Him instead. He was hesitant to obey, but a series of misfortune and supernatural events hit his life he surrendered to God. He hears God's words in dreams and tongues in prayer, sometimes undecipherable even to himself (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022).

In the 1990s Naga Shisha Hoho prayer center was started. It was established at a crucial time. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, factional violence between the NSCN-K, NSCN-IM, and the NNC was at its height. It was a time when the situations of the Naga Political Groups (NPG) were in a state of epic weariness because of the situation between the various factions. At this juncture, the so-called NPGs sought the help of the church and the village where they could come together and energize their spiritual growth and also get physical aid. It is also to be noted that, at this point in time, there was no other prayer center in Nagaland. The prayer center became a place where irrespective of position or profession, whoever has the heart and burden for society comes together for prayer and fasting. During this period Chosayi heard the voice of God for the Nagas to come together. But he was unsure how to put this into practice. God then instructed him to go to the various nationalist leaders and “say to the leaders that they must stop killing each other” (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016).

Although Chosayi had no background in dealing with nationalist leaders, God directed him to speak. Some believed while others doubted Chosayi's intentions. Violence continued

amongst the various factions, but eventually, they realized the futility of it and people started to believe in him. Chosayi’s role as God’s emissary allows him to travel to different Naga political group leaders and different locations (P. Khusoh, personal communication, December 2022; Kraft et al., 2020), See Table 1 below.

Table 2

Chronological development of Shisha Hoho Prayer Center at Kutsapo Village and its work towards the formation of FNR (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Source: (Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016)

Timeline	Events
1964	Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC) requested the NNC to hold talks and make a ceasefire with GOI. Following that Kutsapo villagers hosted the meeting and 700 delegates attended. At this meeting, the NNC resolved to accept the Bi-lateral ceasefire with the GOI, and the representative were appointed.
1991	In a spiritual awakening at Kutsapo village the divine revelation of “Shisha” meaning, ‘doing in obedience’ came to Chosayi and thus, Shisha Hoho was stated.
1993	First Shisha Hoho -As directed by the Lord to spread Shisha, three series of meetings were hosted at Kutsapo where they resolved to name the prayer center as Naga Shisha Hoho, since it concerned all Nagas. Also resolved to invite all the Naga political groups to the second Naga Shisha Hoho meeting.
November 1993	The Second Naga Shisha Hoho – Around 15,000 delegates attended the conference at Kutsapo village. All the different factions were represented.

	At that conference, Chosayi prophesied and rebuked Nagas for not being united, and for killing among themselves.
February 1994	The Third Naga Shisha Hoho – It was held from February 16-18 1994, at Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland. About 1,50,000 delegates attended.
March 2004	The Fourth Naga Shisha Hoho – was held at Lozaphühü village. After the mass service, there was a meeting of the leaders of the factions and the public leaders on how to unite the Nagas.
April 2007	The Fifth Naga Shisha Hoho – The main purpose of this conference was to stop killings and bloodshed among the Nagas but owing to the lack of concern of the NPGs and tribal leaders the purpose could not be served.
February 2008	The Naga Peace Convention was organized by the Naga Shisha Hoho. During this convention, FNR was formed in principle through Naga Shisha Hoho to facilitate reconciliation among the Naga political groups. One of the convention's main speakers Rev. Dr. Wati Aier was assigned to lead the Forum as convener. The members of the Forum comprise of representing Churches, different tribal organizations, civil society, and frontal organizations.
Post FNR	The Naga Shisha Hoho continues to be held till date, praying for reconciliation and peace but the following details are not presented in a safe space and time.

FNR and the Peace Process in Nagaland

This section responded to the second research question, What is the contribution of FNR to peace in Nagaland? The Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) was formed at a time when Naga society was torn apart with intense “interfactual” violence, suspicion, distrust, and divisive political rhetoric. Indian leading Newspaper *Hindustan Time* has reported that between 2002 and 2005, 171 persons were killed in militancy-related violence in the state, with 113 (66.08%) militants, 52 (30.40%) civilians, and 6 (3.50%) security force SF personnel. Most militant deaths have been the result of factional clashes. (Hindustan Times, 2008; Singh, 2006). FNR was formed in principle on February 24, 2008, as one of the outcomes of the Naga Peace Convention organized by the Naga Shisha Hoho in Dimapur. It was christened on March 25, 2008, at Kohima with the support of 39 Naga frontal organizations, the Nagaland Baptist Church Council (NBCC), and the Council of Naga Baptist Churches (CNBC). In 2008, the forum comprised 14 members, and Wati Aier, a prominent Naga theologian, was the founding convener (MorungExpress, 2017). Chosayi and Wati are one of those religious virtuosi in whose dedication and commitment FNR is founded and the violence among the Naga factions came to a halt. The echo of such commitment is seen in Wati’s *A. Kevichusa Citizenship Award* receiving speech; “We must immediately shun the fallacy that seeking forgiveness is a sign of weakness. Rather it is the other way around. Seeking forgiveness should be the greatest power of the Nagas at this moment. By not forgiving, are we not destroying the thing we all wanted? ... as a mark of our faith in Christ, the Naga identity needs transformation through forgiveness, healing, and peace.” (MorungExpress, 2019)

The FNR comprises members representing Naga Churches, tribal councils, and civil society organizations. FNR is a neutral body that is neither affiliated nor supportive of any Naga

political group or any party involved in electoral politics in Nagaland. It continues to work for Naga reconciliation in an impartial and fair manner keeping in mind the interest and rights of the Naga people as its primary principle, see table 2 below.

Table 3

FNR reconciliatory activities since March 2008 (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Source: (Aier, 2019; MorungExpress, 2011, 2017, 2019; Naga Shisha Hoho Prayer Centre, 2016)

Number of Events	Person involved	Place
Eleven official Reconciliation meetings	Different Naga political groups, Naga Hoho, Naga Student Federation, Nagaland Baptist Church Convention, Nagaland Christian Forum, the Catholic Church, ENPO, Nagas from Burma, and various tribal organizations.	Chiang Mai, Thailand; Nagaland, India.
Four public consultations	Naga Hoho, tribe hohos, churches, civil society organizations, and one consultation with the Naga intelligentsia	Nagaland, India
Seventy-two official meetings	Naga political groups jointly and separately	Nagaland, India
Five meetings with NSCN	Khaplang, Chairman NSCN and NSCN leaders.	NSCN HQ, Myanmar

Three meetings with NNC	Adino Phizo, President NNC	London, UK Nagaland, India
Twelve special programs (soccer matches, special church services, joint social work, joint food and relief distribution)	Different Naga Political groups	
Nineteen public meetings in various Naga towns	Naga public	Nagaland, India

The factional killings in recent memory took place during the months and years leading up to the ‘Covenant of Reconciliation’, signed on June 13, 2009. The years 2007 and 2008 were particularly bad as the commercial hub of Dimapur and its surroundings became almost a battleground for rival groups to seek and kill. The state of affairs was so severe that the Nagaland State government was powerless to do anything. Even the Government of India seemed helpless despite the ceasefire regime in place. There was a deep hurt and anger felt by each of the rival groups against the other. This made it even more difficult to contain the situation. Despite the hopelessness, timely mediation and back-channel diplomacy were being pursued. A 10-point ‘A Covenant of Common Hope’ was adopted by representatives of Naga political groups, frontal Hohos, Churches, and Civil Societies during the Naga Peace Summit III at Chiang Mai, Thailand, on August 21, 2008. This became the basis for the subsequent “Covenant of Reconciliation”. All this took place under the initiative of the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR). Independent observers, government officials, and even the security establishment in

Delhi publicly admitted that killings arising out of factionalism all but ended post-2009 because of FNR’s efforts (MorungExpress, 2017, 2019)

Sanjib Baruah in his *In the Name of the Nation: India and Its Northeast* a book on the critical and historical account of India’s troubled relations with the borderland region, he noted that for a number of years following the ceasefire agreement of 1997 between the Indian government and the NSCN-IM, fatalities as a result of inter-factional warfare increased, whereas violence between armed rebels and security personnel came down. The killings were reduced only after a covenant for reconciliation was signed between Naga factions in 2008. See Table 3 below. The role of the Christian themes of covenant and reconciliation in this context is noteworthy.

Table 4

Agreements Between Naga Political Groups under the purview of FNR toward peace in Nagaland (Original Table by the Author of this Article)

Sources: (MorungExpress, 2011, 2017, 2019; Today, 2022)

Title	Date	Remarks
Covenant of Reconciliation	June 13, 2009	The signatories committed before God to offer themselves to Naga Reconciliation and Forgiveness based on the Historical and Political Rights of the Nagas. They resolved to work together in the spirit of love, nonviolence, peace, and respect to resolve outstanding issues among themselves. The Covenant of Reconciliation was instrumental

		in the cessation of armed confrontation and bloodshed among the Naga Political Groups.
A Public Affirmation	December 8, 2009	The Affirmation was made to honor “A Joint Declaration” signed on September 28, 2009 to “jointly reject any form of conditional package offered to the Nagas by the Government of India.”
Joint Appeal	March 10, 2010	The Appeal reaffirmed “to cease all offensive activities in toto; and all Naga army commanders in the Naga areas are hereby requested to uphold and abide by this principle.”
Statement	August 22, 2011	The signatories stated, “... In the spirit of love, respect and understanding, have agreed to strengthen and broaden the peace process based on the “Uniqueness of Naga History.”
August 2011 Meetings of Naga Leaders Agreement	August 24 & 25, 2011	The signatories stated that they have arrived “to work towards a shared Naga future on the foundation of our Historical and Political rights.” In this statement they accorded on the following six points, which reads as: “RECONCILED on the basis of the historical and political rights of the Nagas;

		<p>ACKNOWLEDGED that we have hurt one another and that in the spirit of love, we have forgiven each other, and are prepared to understand each other towards a shared future; REAFFIRM the resolve not to harbor any non-Naga organizations adverse to the Naga political cause Furthermore, serious note is taken on the harboring of non-Naga organizations opposed to the Naga political cause and hence, strongly denounce such acts; DISENGAGE in and from all forms of actions and associations detrimental to the Historical and Political cause of the Nagas; AFFIRM to work for the territorial integrity of all Nagas; and ANY INTERIM arrangement of the political rights of the Nagas shall be outside the purview of the Indian Constitution per se.”</p>
<p>Naga Concordant</p>	<p>August 26, 2011</p>	<p>The signatories stated: “Having Reconciled on the basis of the Historical and Political Rights, the top Naga leaders have agreed that Nagas are ONE. Therefore, in pursuance of this agreement, the following signatories have</p>

		<p>resolved in principle to work towards the formation of one Naga National Government.</p> <p>To expedite this process of eventually forming the Naga National Government, a High-Level Commission was formed with the Forum for Naga Reconciliation as facilitators.”</p>
Lenten Agreement	March 28, 2014	<p>In the Agreement, the signatories stated: “We request the FNR to work out the modalities to expedite the process. While this task is being carried out, we call for the maintenance of the status quo, by vigilantly refraining from any unwarranted activities by the Nagas.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the spirit of Naga unity, through reconciliation and peace, we remain open to other Naga groups who are committed to Naga reconciliation and agree, to abide by and uphold its aim and purposes.”</p>
Joint Statement	2022	<p>The signatories stated: “The Covenant of Reconciliation (COR) of June 13, 2009— signed by the late Isak Chishi Swu, late SS Khaplang, and Brig (Retired) S. Singnya— will be honored in letter and in spirit. Hence,</p>

		<p>we renew to work together in the spirit of love, and desist from all forms of armed violence, and refrain from indulging in violence of words through print and social media among Naga Political Groups and the general public. From this time forward, in order to chart a path forward, we remain committed to “peace and respect and to resolve outstanding issues among us (COR).”</p>
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CONCLUSION

Summary

Response to Research Question 1. Research question 1 inquired about the Naga Shisha Hoho prayer center establishment. The Finding revealed the role played by the Christian prayer Center Naga Shisha Hoho (religious institution) in the formation of FNR. The Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) was formed in 2008 to work for Naga reconciliation in an impartial and fair manner, with the interest and rights of the Naga people as its primary principle.

Response to Research Question 2. Research question 2 inquired whether the Forum for Naga Reconciliation contributes to the peace in Nagaland. A Covenant of Common Hope was adopted at the Naga Peace Summit III in 2008, which became the basis for the subsequent "Covenant of Reconciliation" by FNR.

Conclusion

In Nagaland, religious institutions have played a vital role in promoting peace. If religious virtuosi like Chosayi and Wati Aier's commitment to promoting peace is absent, there will be factional fighting and bloodshed among the Nagas, which could have been worse. It is worth noting the role of NSH, FNR, and the NBCC played in the 1960s in pressing for a bilateral cease-fire agreement between the GOI and the NNC. These actions are motivated by a strong belief in Jesus' message of love and forgiveness, which is evident in their activities.

Recommendations

Popular perceptions about religious fundamentalism have led, to both a widening gap between different religious communities and to an increasing awareness among (secular) policymakers that religion can play an instrumental, potentially problematic role in local, national, and international conflicts. At the same time, there is a growing appreciation among practitioners of the fact that religious actors also have great potential to resolve conflict and decrease tensions. This holds true, in the case of the Nagas where religion has contributed to a wide range of peace-building activities. Religious communities are 'drivers of change' in peacebuilding because of their moral authority and ability to instill a genuine commitment to peace among large segments of the population, of which 87.93% are Christian.

The spiritual dimension of peacebuilding is largely neglected by secularists; however, religious actors can play a positive role in conflict settings by combining spiritual guidance with organizational capacity. Religious actors have contributed positively to peace and have been engaged in a wide range of peace-building activities in both religious and non-religious conflict settings. They have specific strengths and weaknesses in terms of peacebuilding and encourage

donor agencies to recognize and utilize their peacebuilding potential. They should be considered with some caution, but policymakers should also acknowledge the potential for religion to build a sustainable peace. This paper filled the gap of research on the origin and function of FNR in the context of conflicts in North East India. This paper recommends further exploration and research on the peacebuilding models used by FNR both Naga indigenous model as well as Christian faith principles.

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Ethical Leadership and Business Practices: A Case Study of Small Businesses in Eastern Turkey Amidst Challenges

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Abstract

In recent years, Turkey's economy has faced a series of challenges, including an economic crisis, high inflation rates, and natural disasters. In times of crisis, the temptation to compromise ethics for immediate survival can be strong. However, maintaining strong business ethics has been proven to yield better results in the long run. This study focuses on the ethical landscape of small businesses in Eastern Turkey, aiming to understand how ethical practices are established, sustained, and impact society. By analyzing the experiences of business owners and managers, this research seeks to offer insights that can be replicated for the betterment of the country.

Keywords: Small Business, Eastern Turkey, Ethical Practices.

INTRODUCTION

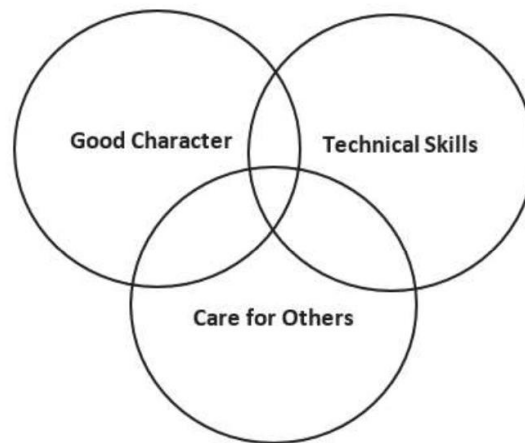
Turkey has encountered significant economic turbulence, marked by an economic crisis (Shlimon & Kazem, 2021) and soaring inflation rates. At the end of 2021, its inflation rate reached a record of 36.08% (Özer, Grubişic, Küçüksakarya, 2023). To make matters worse, the country experienced devastating earthquakes. While such crises can encourage ethical compromises, evidence suggests that upholding business ethics is a strategic advantage (Zheng, Luo, Wang, 2013). During times of crises', it can be tempting to abandon one's ethics for the sake of immediate survival, but business ethics have proven to outperform businesses with poor ethics (Zheng, Luo, Wang, 2013). Furthermore, a disregard for ethics can contribute to societal decline, as history has shown. Murphy (2005), quotes a Roman author saying: "our moral decline made us unable to "endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them." The objective of this study is to investigate the ethical practices of small businesses in Eastern Turkey, exploring their establishment, perpetuation, and societal effects. This research aims to facilitate the dissemination of valuable findings that could contribute to Turkey's progress.

Ethics is an integral aspect of effective management, fostering employee loyalty and trust. Ethical business leaders serve as role models, guiding their teams to create a culture of respect, trust, and accountability. Ethical business conduct extends to employee treatment, customer interactions, and social responsibility. The link between ethical leadership and successful outcomes is well-established, particularly in fostering teamwork and motivating employees to excel. Friedman & Friedman (1988) said, "ethics is at the heart of good management". Employees are seen to be more loyal and trusting of good and ethical managers (Elçi, Kitapçi, & Ertürk, 2007). Moore & Hanson present the ideal ethical Moroccan business

leader as having good character, adequate technical skills, and a care for others (see Figure 1), (Moore & Hanson, 2017).

Figure 1

BUSINESS ROLE MODEL ATTRIBUTES



If the manager is not ethical then employees will seek their own interests (Tyler, 2005). Turkey has witnessed financial success from entrepreneurs who create a culture of ethical upstanding within their companies. Employees who buy into the company’s vision seek not only the good of the company, but also the good of their country (Uygur, Spence, Simpson, & Karakas, 2017). These ethically aware entrepreneurs see their financial success as a way to give back and improve their country for the greater good (Uygur, Spence, Simpson, & Karakas, 2017). Thousands of schools in Turkey and abroad have been started by these entrepreneurs (Yavuz, 2003; Yilmaz, 2005).

The importance of knowing Turkish business ethics is not just helpful for Turks, but also for anyone doing business with Turks. If you are doing business with another country and you are ignorant of their ethical systems, then it allows great risk of damaging your company’s

reputation and trust within your stakeholders (Oumlil & Balloun, 2009: 457). As the world increases in globalization it will be even more important to know non-Western ethical systems.

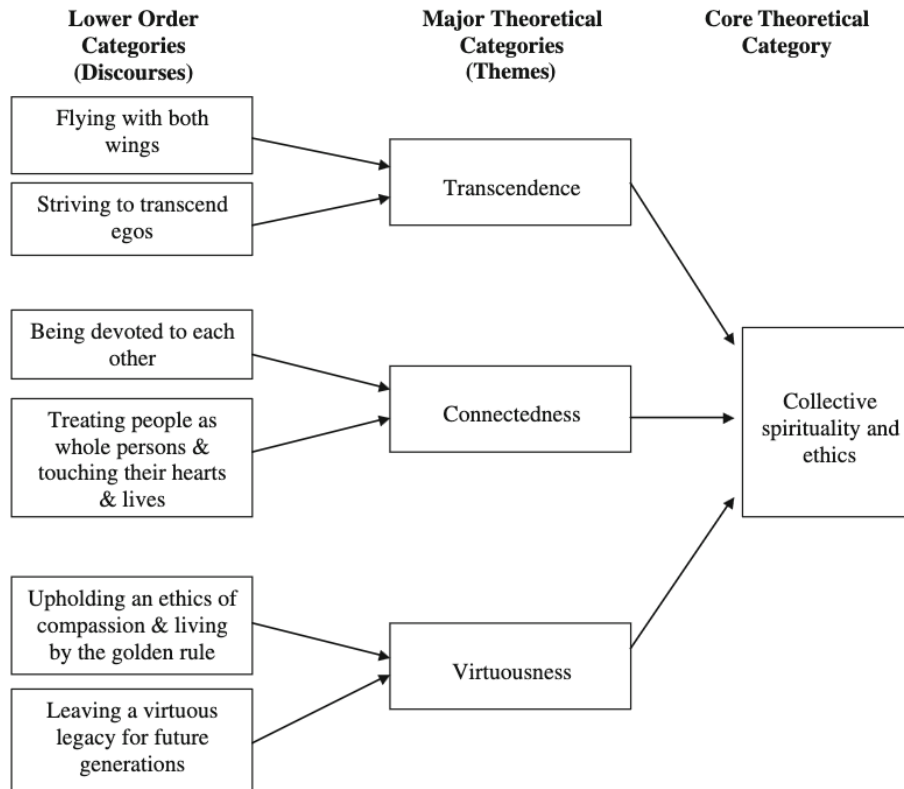
Cultural Perspective

Turkey is uniquely located between Europe and the Middle East. Its major city, Istanbul, is the only city in the world that is on two continents (Europe and Asia). This unique positioning has resulted in an influx of Western culture to a traditionally labeled middle eastern country. This has made Turkey often seen as one of the most modern middle eastern countries. Traditionally it has had a better economy with its Turkish Lira stronger than most of its Middle Eastern currencies' counterparts.

Despite Turkey's strong economy and western influence, its culture is still very different from a traditionally Western countries' culture. While Turkey was officially founded as a secular state, several signs demonstrate that religion continues to be a core value in the country which greatly affects its workplaces. The Turkish national flag has the Islamic symbol on it. Turkey's population is 99% Muslim (US State department, 2018). It is mandatory for every Turkish child to attend Islamic religion classes from elementary until high school. The state heavily funds the Presidency of Religious Affairs, (Diyanet) which is a state institution mandated to "promote and enable the practice of Sunni Islam" (US State department, 2018). It funds every imam (Muslim priest) in the country and even sends imams abroad. Its budget was over 2 billion Turkish Lira in 2016 (Öztürk, 2016). The Diyanet writes every Friday sermon that every imam across the country and abroad reads at their mosque. These facts show that Islam has a major effect in the culture of the country and even the identity of the Turkish person that most Western countries lack (Waxman, 1997). One study showed that every participant felt accountable to God and their success in this life directly affects their eternal life. At the same time, they still sought modern

technology and sciences to further their businesses. This principle was described as “Flying with both wings” see Figure 2 (Karakas, Sarigollu, Kavas 2014).

Figure 2



Another study showed Turks’ religiosity improved their mental toughness, mindfulness, and political skill in the workplace. It shared how important it was to promote religious friendly environments in the workplace (Wang, Chi, Erkılıç, 2021). For Western companies, a religious friendly workplace is going to look different than a Middle Eastern company’s religiously friendly workplace. One clear difference is having a specific room for Muslims to conduct their

daily prayers. This is one of many differences that Western companies must learn to have effective businesses and partnerships in the Middle East.

An important cultural element that we used in our survey is the Ahi system. The Ahi system was brought forth in the Ottoman empire that started among tradesman for the purpose of honest relationships and building their society (Baz, 2015). One study summarized the basic mission of Ahkism as “to achieve perfect communities by training excellent individuals, serve humanity and the people...” The Ahi system “institutionalized over time... to organize the relationship between producer and consumer in best way and to make honesty dominant over business life” (Uyar & Erdoğan, 2005). The foundation of the organization was ethics and the organization “raised upon it” (Karatop, Karahan, & Kubat, (2011). The Ahi organization was so successful and respected that one study called it “the greatest and most organized non-governmental organization instituted in the Ottoman state” (Ülger, Ülger (2005).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Our research inquiry for this case study centers around the question, "How does manager ethical behaviors impact Eastern Turkish small business? Our supporting questions follows: “How do we establish and sustain ethical practices? Queries that explore the 'how' facets naturally lend themselves to the development of theories and models aimed at understanding and potentially resolving the issues or challenges being investigated (Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Yin, 2003).

The grounded theory case study methodology boasts a distinctive capacity, merging elements such as a) real-life observations, b) interviews, and c) archival records, thereby yielding insights that can be extrapolated to broader contexts (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). Notably, the

contextual backdrop and the artifacts within the work environment assume pivotal roles in furnishing significance to the outcomes. Our overarching aim is to employ the research findings to shape a dynamic model (Yin, 2003) that encapsulates the process of fostering and embedding ethical values. This study is fundamentally underpinned by a constructionist epistemological perspective, wherein the collective interpretation – and thereby the values – are engendered by the members of the organization (Crotty, 2003). Our methodology for data collection and analysis gravitates toward qualitative techniques, conducive to unearthing the collective organizational beliefs, values, and norms inherent in the workforce. Qualitative methods meticulously deconstruct data, aggregating or "abstracting" it through thematic analysis (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This approach minimizes individual viewpoints, while accentuating the collective stance. In essence, we elevate data to a level where the perspectives of the participants harmonize.

Data Collection

In the realm of qualitative research, data can be harnessed through interviews, observations, and artifacts. Our observational data collection transcended mere observation of individual or group behaviors; it encompassed informal interactions with employees.

Furthermore, we noted artifacts, including company communication and cultural elements that shape the ambience of the workplace (photographs, displayed values, exhibit cases, etc.).

These interviews were carried out on-site in a private setting to afford frontline participants a sense of confidentiality and to eliminate extraneous disturbances. Participants were duly informed of the voluntary nature of these interviews, with the freedom to withdraw at any point. Our interview structure encompassed semi-structured, open-ended questions designed to

delve into the 'how' and 'why' of issues, allowing us to clarify and pursue emergent themes until we reached data saturation.

This was a qualitative study with 14 questions on the conducted surveys. Twenty surveys were distributed to small business owners or managers. None of the participants managed more than 20 employees, while most managed under 10. Only one of the manager participants was a woman. The surveys were either given to the managers and the manager filled out the surveys on their own time or they were interviewed directly. The age range of participants vary from mid 30s to mid 60s. All the participants were Turkic people (Turks, Kurds, or Zazas) except for three Arab refugees (2 Syrians and 1 Iraqi). The participants worked in a variety of business sectors: government education, medical professionals, tradesmen, realtors, salesmen, food industry, etc. All the participants reside and work in Elazığ, Turkey.

Analysis

To navigate the qualitative data, we drew upon Strass and Corbin's (1990) three-step coding approach, renowned for its rigorous analytical procedures. In the realm of open coding, we disassembled interview data into phrases. In axial coding, we meticulously sorted and resorted related data, grouping them into overarching categories and subcategories that encapsulated content or meaning. Subsequently, we engaged in selective coding, pinpointing the central or core category. This step also entailed comprehending the relationships between categories. When constructing process models, this phase could elucidate the sequential flow of activities that culminate in the phenomenon under scrutiny. Each of these steps was meticulously documented with coding notes, meticulously tracing each progression and eventual conclusions.

As a product of our thorough analysis, we formulated an initial model encapsulating the pivotal organizational values and behaviors imperative for effective leadership. To validate this

model, we subjected our findings to participant scrutiny through a member check, ensuring that the conclusions remained rooted in organizational perspectives, devoid of researcher bias (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

FINDINGS

This study was driven by a twofold inquiry: probing into the impact of ethical management practices in small businesses in Eastern Turkey, and understanding the process of instilling and upholding ethical practices. In the course of this exploration, ethical leadership emerged as a pivotal determinant.

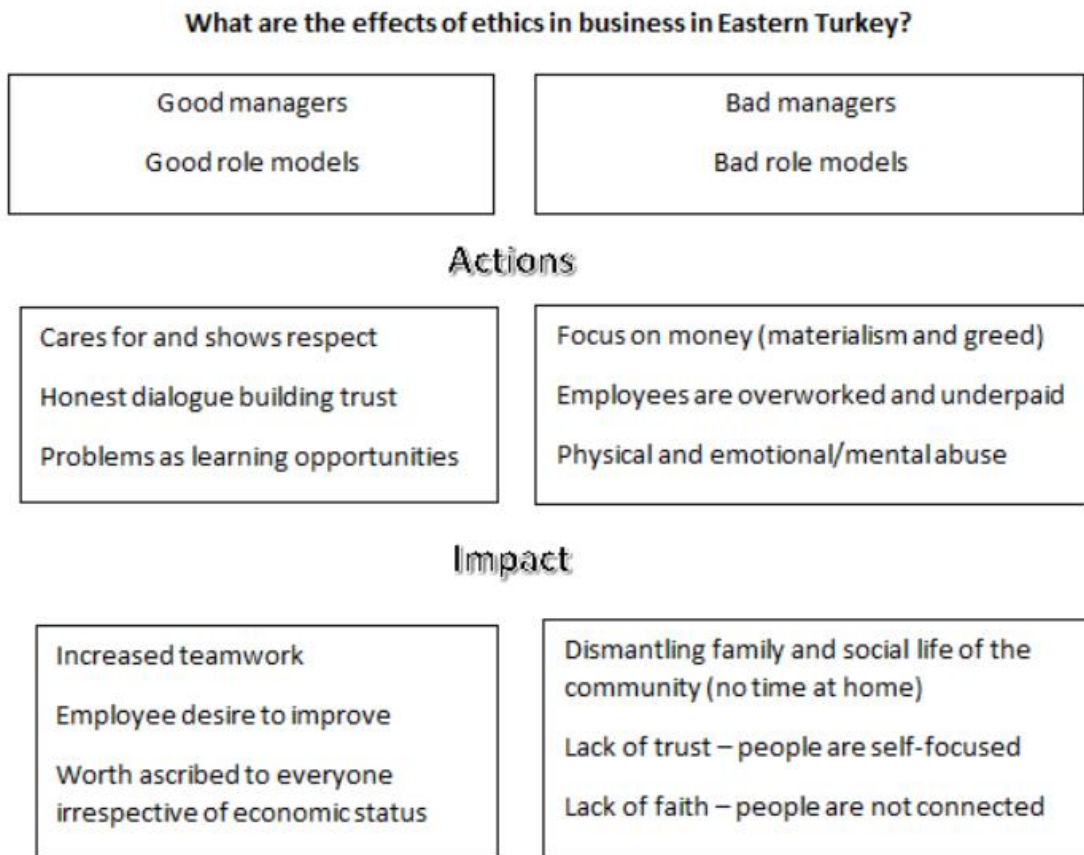
Impact of ethical management practices: Role models

Notably, the influence of ethical role models manifested as a crucial factor, fostering a climate of trust, collaboration, and motivation within the employee cohort. In contrast, leadership that accentuated materialism and monetary gains engendered adverse consequences, resulting in overburdened personnel, strained family dynamics, and a decline in trust levels. Challenges surfaced in the form of economic pressures and the sway of the media, while historical values and faith exerted a positive influence on the practice of ethics.

Regarding the first facet of inquiry (depicted in Figure 3), several salient discoveries came to light. The profound significance of adept managerial wisdom stood out as a resounding revelation. An ethical manager not only assumes the role of a commendable role model but also exhibits genuine concern and respect for others. Such managers foster an environment characterized by transparency and trust, thereby nurturing a collaborative milieu. Their impact further extends to cultivating enhanced teamwork among their staff, and they actively fuel their employees' drive for improvement. Conversely, the detrimental impact of managers fixated on monetary gains and materialistic pursuits was starkly evident. Such managerial practices

invariably translated into overburdened and undercompensated employees, which, in turn, unraveled into the disintegration of familial units and a pervasive erosion of relational trust.

Figure 3



The narratives collected during the study, as encapsulated in Table 1, paint a vivid picture of these dynamics. The assertion that "managers are role models" resonates deeply, underscoring the profound ripple effect of managerial conduct. This sentiment was further corroborated by the practice of transparently addressing issues, as underscored by the quote "we meet constantly and never cover up problems." Additionally, the ethos of equality and shared learning was notably embraced, as illuminated by the statement, "we meet together and learn from everyone, everyone is treated equally."

TABLE 1
What are the effects of ethics in business in Eastern Turkey?

Ethical role model	Representative Quotes
<p>Good Leadership Ethical role model</p> <p><u>Actions:</u> Cares & shows respect</p> <p>Honest & builds trust</p> <p>Problems as learning opportunities</p> <p><u>Impact:</u> Increased teamwork</p> <p>Employee desire to improve</p> <p>Worth ascribed to everyone irrespective of eco. status</p>	<p>Managers are role models, if they're good then workers are good if they're bad then they're bad. If the boss is good then the employees are good.</p> <p>Managers need to show they care for their employees needs/wants and try to fulfill them. Apply the rules and rights to the employees. Give them their rights and benefits because we are like family.</p> <p>The foundation of our work is to be honest. If you are honest and truthful to your customers and employees then they will be honest to you. You need to have an honest heart and mind. Whatever is in your heart and mind, that will guide your actions. If you do not act honestly then you will lose trust from your employees and customers.</p> <p>We meet constantly and never cover up problems. We take suggestions from employees seriously even from entry level employees. We are comfortable to share anything with each other. Even ethics outside of our occupation are important to us.</p> <p>We always need to be careful and attentive, I need to give my patients ethical treatment. With time I get tired but as we work together and learn each other (employees and managers) the work gets easier because we know everyone's strengths and weaknesses.</p> <p>But for people who want to grow, we become more experienced and improve ourselves then we can be more ethical.</p> <p>We also tell our employees to welcome people when they come in and be polite when they leave regardless of whether or not they buy anything. We teach our employees to help whoever comes into the door.</p> <p>We teach our employees to never raise the price of a book that is set. Some places when they see a rich person or a foreigner then they may say a higher price. We always say the same price.</p>
<p>Negative Leadership</p>	<p>If the boss is bad then the employees can't be good or efficient.</p>

Non-ethical role model

Actions:

Focus on money (materialism & greed)

Employees are overworked and underpaid

Physical and emotional/mental abuse

People are becoming blind by money

Bosses are going blind by money as time goes on

Right now our personnel number is low, low salary, high performance expectation, and high stress level job

Employees are not comfortable at the workplace, The employee deserves his/her salary (for example they may get paid very little or below min wage), physical or mental abuse (would cause their motivation to decrease), these all negatively impact the ethics and make them cold to working and being good employees

Impact:

Dismantling family and social life (no time at home)

Lack of trust – people are self-focused

Lack of faith – people are not connected

We don't spend enough time with our family or friends and our ethics get worse

Trust is no more. Instead of getting help from your family or friends, you go to the bank for a loan.

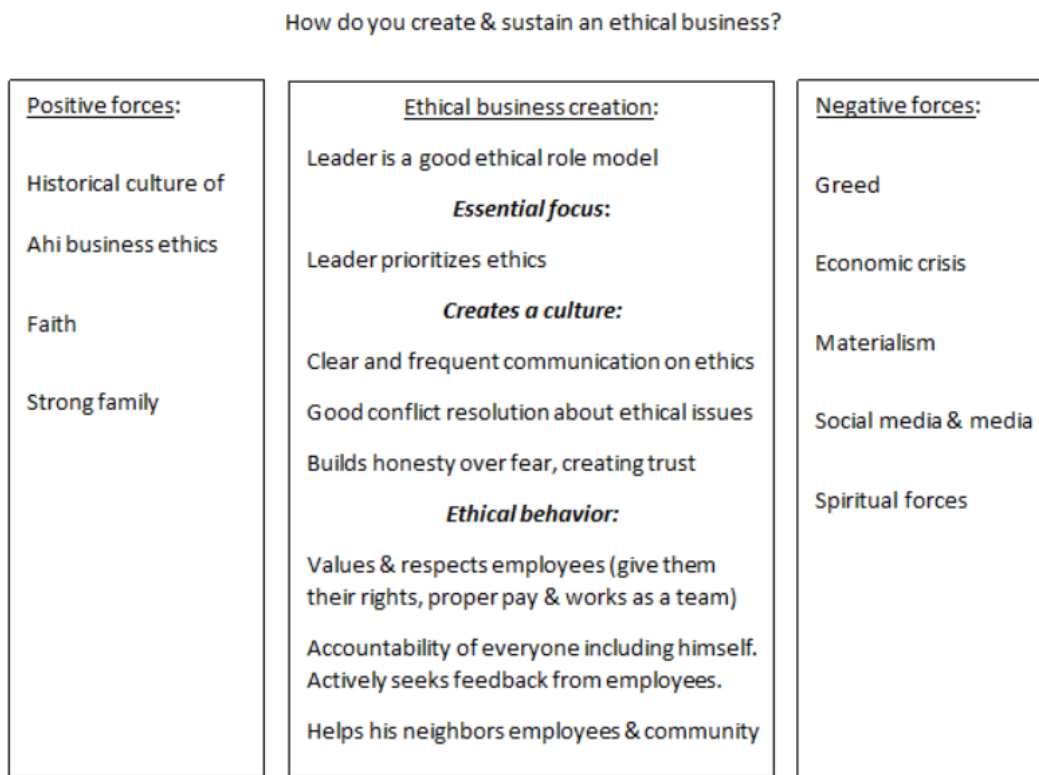
In a smaller area, we found something similar to this between 6-7 shops. It was good until they invested the money poorly and then it went bankrupt. Now trust is broken. Ottomans had a good system, trust was good, but now it's terrible, Dads don't trust their own sons.

A somber undercurrent was unearthed – the alarming number of managers who exhibited a reluctance to provide their employees with their due rights, encompassing minimum wage and benefits. The dark allure of financial gains seemed to blind these managers to ethical considerations. Two poignant quotes from the participants (Table 1) succinctly encapsulate this reality. “Right now our personnel number is low, low salary, high performance expectation, and high stress level.” The second, “We don't spend enough time with our family or friends and our ethics get worse” unveils the human toll extracted by these unscrupulous practices.

Establishing and sustaining ethical practices

How do you create and sustain an ethical business? Foremost is the presence of a competent and principled leader. The leader assumes the crucial role of championing ethics within the organizational framework. This commitment is reflected in the establishment of a culture characterized by open and effective communication, alongside a foundation of trust that invariably fosters a climate conducive to ethical conduct. This intricate process, as delineated in Figure 4, is influenced by an array of factors that either bolster or undermine the ethical fabric of the workplace.

Figure 4



They create a culture of good communication and trust that leads to good ethical behavior. In Figure 4 you see on the sides are positive and negative forces in the culture that influence the workplace. On the negative side, you see greed, an economic crisis, media, and

spiritual forces. On the positive side, you see a history of good ethics dating back to the ottoman empire with faith and family. Note this important quote, “the lack of family life caused a depreciation in ethics” (Table 1). One emerging theme was the departure from ancient core values illustrated by the comment: “we are moving away from our religion. We act as if God doesn’t exist. Someone who fears God, would not do these things.”

TABLE 2
How do you create & sustain an ethical business?

Ethical business creation	Representative Quotes
Leader is an Ethical Role Model <u>Essential focus:</u> Leader prioritizes ethics	My restaurant is better in ethics because I see them as important. We take our ethics seriously, work attentively, and work honestly.
<u>Creating a culture:</u> Clear and frequent communication on ethics	Everyone needs to be sure of their ethics and we need to constantly remind them. If the employees are lacking in ethics then we need to give them education. Managers and employees need to have open and honest communication.
Good conflict resolution about ethical issues	I apply my own rules and openly share them with my employees and remind them of them in our meetings. If there is a problem then I meet with my employee individually and listen to them and work together to create a solution. If we work hard and the problem is still not fixed, then we will fire them.
Builds honesty over fear, creating trust	We meet constantly and never cover up problems. We take suggestions from employees seriously even from entry level employees. We are comfortable to share anything with each other.
<u>Ethical behavior:</u>	Managers need to show they care for their employees needs/wants and try to fulfill them. Apply the rules and rights to the employees. Give them their rights and benefits because we are like family.
Values & respects employees (give them their rights, proper	The workers should not leave the set company ethical principles. Every so often we have quality control around the workplace. We use a control system with several steps to help us do this. We check different

pay & works as a team)	people over and over again. We don't leave anyone out. In our meetings we talk about what we can do better and whatever we decide, we put into action.
Accountability of everyone including himself. Actively seeks feedback from employees.	If I get good profit then I can be generous and sell cheaper than other people and give support to my customers.
Helps his neighbors employees & community	The biggest reason in our country is the economic crisis. Economically our country isn't stable. This is bad problem that causes mental problems and affects our work in a negative fashion. I know this is bad, but its not something I can help. Its always in my head. I work really hard and earn very little.
Negative pressures on ethics	
Economy	Everything is about money now. People just care about earning money The standard of living has changed. Everyone wants to live a luxurious life. Everyone wants to be rich. Before you just had the rich and they lived like that and no one else really cared to be like that. But now everyone wants to be like that
Greed Materialism	I think a lot of this (lack of ethics in business) is due to social media economic circumstances, internet, the press, bad moral tv (like propaganda), holes in education.
Social media & media	I think Satan has a big influence
Spiritual forces	
Positive pressures on ethics	
Historical culture of Ahi business ethics	But the things that were really good was people were more concerned about helping their immediate neighbor than making money. For example, beside my store is a barber. I go to him to get my haircut because he is my neighbor. I could go somewhere else to get a cheaper haircut, but I want to help the man closest to me. They would do that for all their business needs.
	Constantly education, responsibility, discipline work ethics, religiosity
Faith	We try to make good relationships with our customers and treat them like family.
Customer loyalty	Positive things for us are consistent customers. They give us support. A couple years ago there was a bad earthquake and we lost our building. Our customers came back when we reopened. They would overpay as a way to help us. If the dessert was 100TL then they would give 200TL. This was a huge help to us.

A principled leader focuses ethics as a fundamental priority, continually reinforcing ethical guidelines among the employees. This was articulated by a manager who affirmed, "my restaurant is better in ethics because I see them as important" (Table 2). Ethical managers within this cultural context function as crucial gatekeepers. In their absence, fundamental ethical decisions, such as ensuring workers' rights encompassing minimum wage and benefits, tend to falter. Conversely, when ethical leadership is manifest, it cultivates a thriving milieu for the workforce. Notably, trust occupies an elevated position in Turkish culture, exerting a profound impact. This is why the presence of a competent manager assumes paramount importance. Trust serves as the linchpin that binds employees to their roles – a foundation that crumbles in the face of managerial hypocrisy, eroding loyalty and trust. Conversely, a trusted manager fosters loyalty and steadfast dedication among the workforce.

Figure 4 delineates the influential dynamics at play, both constructive and detrimental. Among the most potent negative influences are the economic crisis and the media. Participants underlined how media platforms showcase opulent lifestyles, inciting desires that often clash with individuals' actual circumstances. Consequently, individuals resort to shortcuts and compromise ethics in their pursuit of such lifestyles. One participant insightfully noted, "The standard of living has changed. Everyone wants to live a luxurious life. Everyone wants to be rich. Before you just had the rich and they lived like that and no one else really cared to be like that. But now everyone wants to be like that" (Table 2).

Conversely, the positive side of Figure 4 captures a cultural ethos that champions communal solidarity over personal gain. A local store owner's sentiment, "Beside me is a barber. I could go somewhere else to get a cheaper haircut, but I want to help the man closest to me. The

Ahi system would do this for all their business needs" (Table 2), encapsulates this ethos. The historical context further enriches this perspective. The Ahi system, driven by the aim to please God and aid neighbors, resonates as a testament to this benevolent approach (Baz, 2015).

IMPLICATIONS

The study's implications extend to both education and family life. Promoting ethical values in Turkish elementary schools can lay the foundation for future generations of ethical business leaders. Recognizing the role of family values and societal pressures in shaping ethical behaviors can aid in fostering a more ethical society and business environment.

Our heart is to share this information with the next generation of business leaders and citizens to promote good business ethics in Turkey. The study showed how important it is for employees and for the community. We believe the best place to start with ethics in Turkey is looking into the elementary grade school curriculums on ethics. Schools are often one of the easiest places to provide character education (Berkowitz, 2002). Turkish schools have sought to teach ethics and values systemically and at different intensities since 2003 (Gündoğdu, Çelik, Yanar, Kahyaoğlu, & Dönük, 2017). Recently there has been a rise in interest and research in this area over the past couple of decades in Turkey (Gündoğdu, Çelik, Yanar, Kahyaoğlu, & Dönük, 2017). We hope our findings could benefit the character education taught in Turkish elementary schools.

One researcher stated the importance of having models of character demonstrated to their students. It is vital for students to see character being lived out by the adults in their lives (Berkowitz, 2014). As a result, it is important to know what ethics are being taught and modeled in the home of Turkish children. One study noted the strong influence family values have on

business ethics in Turkey (Akman, 2011). For the next generation of Turkish business leaders to be ethically successful they must be taught in their schools and in their homes. We hope that our findings can also be shared in the homes of the Turkish people to further promote better ethics in the society.

CONCLUSIONS

Ethical leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the ethical landscape of businesses in Eastern Turkey. This study underscores the importance of ethical managers as role models and emphasizes the significance of strong character in driving ethical practices. Despite cultural nuances, the principles of ethical leadership are applicable across businesses, promoting a positive work environment and societal impact.

Ethical managers in this culture function like a bottle neck. If you do not have an ethical manager, then basic ethical decisions will not happen such as giving workers their rights like minimum wage or benefits. If the manager is good, then they create a trusting environment that benefits their employees and community. Trust is one of the main reasons why having a good manager is so important. If the workers see hypocrisy among the manager, then they lose trust and loyalty. But if the employee trusts the manager, then they stay loyal to their job.

Once a good manager is established, he/she establishes and sustains ethical practices in the business. The manager does this by prioritizing ethics and creating a culture of ethics with clear and frequent communication, good conflict resolution, and trust. This culture then leads to key values that champion behaviors in which employees are valued, healthy accountability is established, and the community is improved. These types of businesses are usually influenced from positive sources in the community like the historical culture of Ahkism, their faith, and family.

To deepen the understanding of ethical leadership in Eastern Turkey, future research could explore the impact of cultural influences on business ethics and investigate the efficacy of incorporating ethical education into various levels of the educational system.

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Öz

Son yıllarda Türkiye ekonomisi ekonomik kriz, yüksek enflasyon oranları ve doğal afetler gibi bir dizi zorlukla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Kriz zamanlarında, hızlı bir şekilde ayakta kalmaya devam edebilmek için etikten ödün verme eğilimi güçlü olabilmektedir. Ancak güçlü iş ahlakını sürdürmenin uzun vadede daha iyi sonuçlar doğurduğu kanıtlanmıştır. Bu çalışma, etik uygulamaların nasıl oluşturulduğunu, sürdürüldüğünü ve toplumu nasıl etkilediğini anlamayı amaçlayarak Türkiye'nin doğusundaki küçük işletmelerin etik ortamına odaklanmaktadır. İşletme sahiplerinin ve yöneticilerinin deneyimlerini analiz eden bu araştırma, ülkenin kalkınması için tekrarlanabilecek öngörüler sunmayı amaçlamaktadır.

GİRİŞ

Türkiye, ekonomik kriz (Shlimon ve Kazem, 2021) ve yükselen enflasyon oranlarının damgasını vurduğu önemli bir ekonomik dar boğazla karşı karşıya kaldı. 2021 yılı sonunda enflasyon oranı %36,08 gibi rekor bir seviyeye ulaştı (Özer, Grubişç, Küçüksakarya, 2023). Daha da kötüsü, ülkede yıkıcı depremler yaşandı. Bu tür krizler etik davranışlardan taviz vermeyi teşvik edebilirken, eldeki bulgular iş etiğini korumanın stratejik bir avantaj olduğunu göstermektedir (Zheng, Luo, Wang, 2013). Kriz zamanlarında, ayakta kalabilmek adına kişinin etikten vazgeçmesi cazip olabilir ancak iş etiğinin, yetersiz etik uygulamalarla yönetilen işletmelerden daha iyi performans gösterdiği kanıtlanmıştır (Zheng, Luo, Wang, 2013). Dahası, tarihin de gösterdiği gibi, etiğin göz ardı edilmesi toplumsal gerilemeye katkıda bulunabilir. Murphy (2005), Romalı bir yazarın şu sözlerini aktarıyor: "Ahlaki çöküşümüz, bizi "kötü alışkanlıklarımıza katlanamayacak ve onları iyileştirmek için gereken çarelerle yüzleşemeyecek hale getirdi". Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'nin doğusundaki küçük işletmelerdeki etik uygulamaları araştırmak, bunların oluşumunu, sürdürülmesini ve toplumsal etkilerini araştırmaktır.

Etik, çalışanların sadakatini ve güvenini artıran, etkili yönetimin ayrılmaz bir parçasıdır. Etik iş liderleri, ekiplerine saygı, güven ve hesap verebilirlik kültürü yaratma konusunda rehberlik ederek onların rol modelleri olarak hizmet ederler. Etik iş davranışı, çalışanlara yönelik muameleyi, müşteri etkileşimlerini ve sosyal sorumluluğu da kapsar. Etik liderlik ile başarılı sonuçlar arasındaki bağlantı, özellikle ekip çalışmasının teşvik edilmesi ve çalışanların mükemmelliğe motive edilmesi konusunda iyi bir şekilde kurulmuştur. Friedman ve Friedman (1988) "etik, iyi yönetimin kalbinde yer alır" demiştir. Çalışanların iyi ve ahlaklı yöneticilere daha sadık oldukları ve onlara güvendikleri görülmektedir (Elçi, Kitapçı ve Ertürk, 2007). Moore

ve Hanson ideal etik Faslı iş liderini iyi karaktere sahip, yeterli teknik becerilere sahip ve başkalarına önem veren biri olarak sunmaktadır (bkz. Şekil 1), (Moore ve Hanson, 2017).

Şekil 1

İŞ ROL MODELİ ÖZELLİKLERİ



Eğer yönetici etik davranmıyorsa çalışanlar kendi çıkarlarını arayacaklardır (Tyler, 2005).

Türkiye, şirketlerinde etik değerlere dayalı bir kültür yaratan girişimcilerin finansal başarısına tanık olmuştur. Şirketin vizyonunu benimseyen çalışanlar sadece şirketin iyiliğini değil aynı zamanda ülkelerinin iyiliğini de gözetirler (Uygur, Spence, Simpson ve Karakas, 2017). Etik açıdan bilinçli bu girişimciler, finansal başarılarını ülkelerinin iyiliği için fedakarlık yapmanın ve geliştirmenin bir yolu olarak görüyorlar (Uygur, Spence, Simpson ve Karakas, 2017). Bu girişimciler tarafından yurt içinde ve yurt dışında binlerce okul açılmıştır (Yavuz, 2003; Yılmaz, 2005).

Türk iş ahlakını bilmenin önemi sadece Türkler için değil, Türklerle iş yapan herkes için de faydalıdır. Başka bir ülkeyle iş yapıyorsanız ve o ülkenin etik sistemlerinden habersizseniz, bu

durumda şirketinizin itibarına ve paydaşlarınız nezdindeki güvenine zarar verme riski büyüktür (Oumlil ve Balloun, 2009: 457). Dünyada küreselleşme arttıkça Batılı olmayan etik sistemleri bilmek daha da önemli hale gelecektir.

Kültürel Perspektif

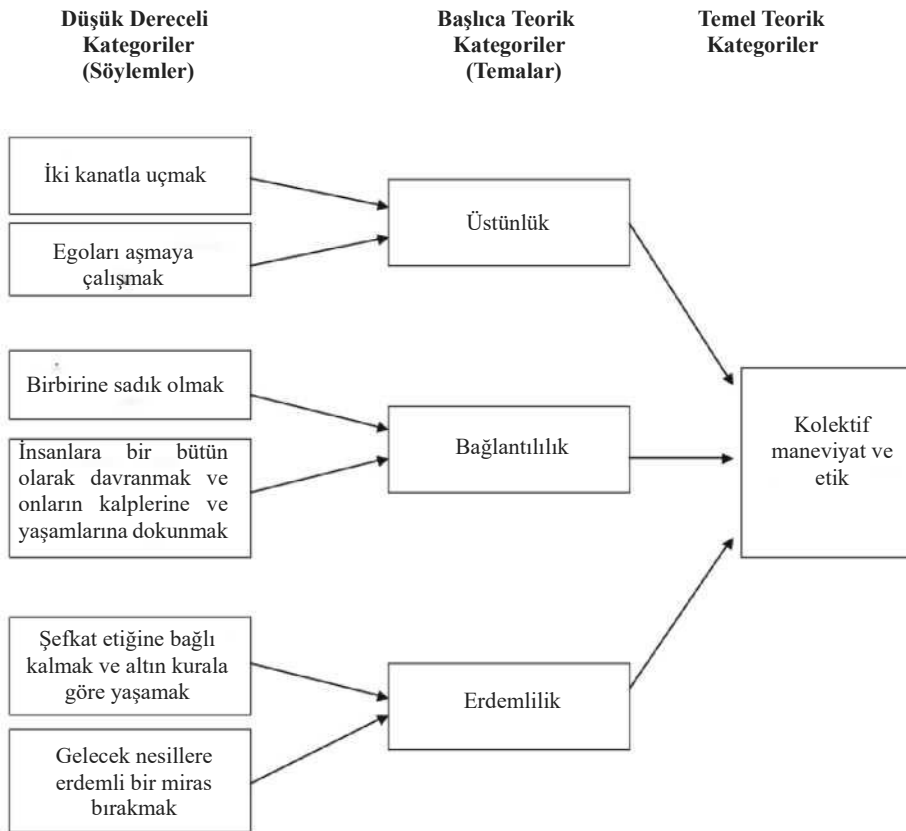
Türkiye, Avrupa ile Orta Doğu arasında eşsiz bir konuma sahiptir. En gelişmiş şehri İstanbul, dünyada iki kıtada (Avrupa ve Asya) yer alan tek şehirdir. Bu eşsiz konumlandırma, Batı kültürünün geleneksel olarak etiketlenmiş bir Orta Doğu ülkesine nüfuz etmesiyle sonuçlanmıştır. Bu durum Türkiye'nin çoğu zaman en modern orta doğu ülkelerinden biri olarak görülmesine neden olmuştur. Geleneksel olarak Türk Lirası'nın Orta Doğu para birimlerinin çoğundan daha güçlü olması nedeniyle görece daha iyi bir ekonomiye sahip olmuştur.

Türkiye'nin güçlü ekonomisine ve Batı etkisine rağmen kültürel özellikleri, geleneksel Batı ülkelerinin kültüründen hala çok farklıdır. Türkiye resmi olarak laik bir devlet olarak kurulmuş olsa da, dini değerlerin ülkede işyerlerini büyük ölçüde etkileyen temel bir değer olmaya devam ettiğini gösteren birçok işaret var. Türk bayrağı üzerinde İslam sembolünü taşımaktadır. Türkiye nüfusunun %99'u Müslümandır (ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2018). İlkokuldan liseye kadar her Türk çocuğunun İslam dini derslerine katılması zorunludur. Devlet, “Sünni İslam'ın uygulanmasını teşvik etmek ve mümkün kılmakla” görevli bir devlet kurumu olan Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı'na büyük miktarda fon sağlamaktadır (ABD Dışişleri Bakanlığı, 2018). Ülkedeki imamlar (Müslüman din adamı) maaş karşılığı çalışmaktadır ve hatta yurt dışına imam gönderilmektedir. Başkanlığın 2016 yılında bütçesi 2 milyar Türk Lirasının üzerinde gerçekleşmiştir (Öztürk, 2016). Diyanet, her cuma günü yurt içi ve yurt dışındaki her imamın camisinde okuması için bir hutbe hazırlamaktadır. Bu gerçekler, İslam'ın ülke kültüründe ve hatta Türk kişiliği üzerinde çoğu Batı ülkesinde mevcut olmayan büyük bir etkiye sahip olduğunu

göstermektedir (Waxman, 1997). Bir çalışma, her katılımcının kendini Tanrı'ya karşı sorumlu hissettiğini ve bu hayattaki başarılarının sonsuz yaşamlarını doğrudan etkileyeceğine inandığını ortaya koymuştur. Aynı zamanda işlerini ilerletmek için hâlâ modern teknoloji ve bilimin peşinden gitmeye devam ettiler. Bu prensip “İki kanatla uçmak” olarak tarif edilmiştir (bkz. Şekil 2). (Karakaş, Sarıgöllü, Kavas 2014).

Başka bir çalışma, Türklerin dindar yaşam tarzının işyerinde zihinsel dayanıklılıklarını,

Şekil 2



farkındalıklarını ve politik becerilerini geliştirdiğini gösterdi. İşyerinde din dostu ortamları teşvik etmenin ne kadar önemli olduğu çalışmada anlatıldı (Wang, Chi, Erkılıç, 2021). Batılı şirketler için din dostu bir işyeri, Orta Doğulu bir şirketin din dostu işyerinden farklı olacaktır. Açık farklardan biri, Müslümanların günlük ibadetlerini yapabilmeleri için özel bir odalarının olmasıdır. Bu, Batılı şirketlerin Orta Doğu'da etkili işlere ve ortaklıklara sahip olmak için öğrenmesi gereken birçok farklılıktan biridir.

Araştırmamızda kullandığımız önemli bir kültürel unsur da Ahilik sistemidir. Ahilik sistemi, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda esnaf arasında dürüst ilişkiler kurmak ve toplum inşa etmek amacıyla ortaya çıkmıştır (Baz, 2015). Bir çalışmada Ahiliğin temel misyonu “mükemmel bireyler yetiştirerek mükemmel toplumlara ulaşmak, insanlığa ve millete hizmet etmek...” şeklinde özetlenmişti. Ahilik sistemi “üretici-tüketici ilişkisini en iyi şekilde düzenlemek ve dürüstlüğü iş yaşamına hakim kılmak”... amacıyla zamanla kurumsallaşmıştır” (Uyar ve Erdoğan, 2005). Örgütün temeli etikdir ve örgüt “bunun üzerine yükselmiştir” (Karatop, Karahan ve Kubat, (2011). Ahilik örgütü o kadar başarılı ve saygındı ki, bir çalışma onu “Osmanlı Devleti'nde kurulmuş en büyük ve en organize sivil toplum örgütü” olarak adlandırmıştı (Ülger, Ülger (2005).

ARAŞTIRMANIN TASARIMI

Bu vaka çalışması için araştırmamız şu soru etrafında yoğunlaşıyor: "Yöneticinin etik davranışları Türkiye'nin Doğusundaki küçük işletmeleri nasıl etkiler?? Destekleyici sorularımız ise şunlardır: “Etik uygulamaları nasıl kurar ve sürdürürüz? 'Nasıl' sorusuna cevap arayan sorgular, doğal olarak, araştırılan sorunları veya zorlukları anlamayı ve potansiyel olarak çözmeyi amaçlayan teorilerin ve modellerin geliştirilmesine katkıda bulunur (Strauss ve Corbin,

1990; Yin, 2003).

Gömülü teori vaka çalışması metodolojisi, a) gerçek hayattaki gözlemler, b) röportajlar ve c) arşiv kayıtları gibi unsurları birleştiren ve böylece daha geniş bağlamlara yansıtılabilecek kavrayışlar sağlayan ayırt edici bir kapasiteye sahiptir (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2003). Özellikle bağlamsal arka plan ve çalışma ortamındaki eserler, sonuçlara önem verilmesinde önemli roller üstleniyor. Kapsamlı amacımız, etik değerleri geliştirme ve yerleştirme sürecini kapsayan dinamik bir modeli (Yin, 2003) şekillendirmek için araştırma bulgularını kullanmaktır. Bu çalışma temel olarak kolektif yorumun ve dolayısıyla değerlerin örgüt üyeleri tarafından oluşturulduğu yapılandırmacı epistemolojik bir bakış açısıyla desteklenmektedir (Crotty, 2003). Veri toplama ve analiz metodolojimiz, işgücünün doğasında olan kolektif kurumsal inançları, değerleri ve normları ortaya çıkarmaya yardımcı olan niteliksel tekniklere yönelmektedir. Nitel yöntemler, verileri tematik analiz yoluyla bir araya getirerek veya "soyutlayarak" titizlikle verileri yapı sökümü uğrattır (Eisenhardt ve Graebner, 2007; Merriam, 2009; Strauss ve Corbin, 1990). Bu yaklaşım bireysel bakış açılarını en aza indirirken kolektif duruşu ön plana çıkarmaktadır. Temelde verileri, katılımcıların bakış açılarının uyumlu olacağı bir düzeye yükseltmekteyiz.

Veri Toplama

Nitel araştırma alanında verilerden görüşmeler, gözlemler ve eserler yoluyla istifade edinilebilir. Gözlemsel veri toplama faaliyetimiz, çalışanlarla gayri resmi etkileşimleri de kapsayacak şekilde bireysel veya grup davranışlarının salt gözlemlenmesinin ötesine geçmiştir. Ayrıca, şirket iletişimi ve işyerinin ambiyansını şekillendiren kültürel unsurlar (fotoğraflar, sergilenen değerler, sergi vitrinleri vb.) dahil olmak üzere ortaya çıkan eserlere dikkat çekilmiştir.

Bu görüşmeler, ön saflardaki katılımcılara gizlilik duygusunu hissettirmek ve konu dışı

rahatsızlıkları ortadan kaldırmak için özel bir ortamda yerinde gerçekleştirildi. Katılımcılar, bu görüşmelerin gönüllülük esasına dayalı olduğu ve herhangi bir noktada geri çekilme özgürlüğüne sahip olduğu konusunda usulüne uygun olarak bilgilendirildi. Mülakat yapımız, sorunların 'nasıl' ve 'neden'ini araştırmak için tasarlanmış yarı yapılandırılmış, açık uçlu soruları içeriyordu ve veri doyunluğuna ulaşana kadar ortaya çıkan temaları netleştirmemize ve takip etmemize olanak sağladı.

Bu, yapılan anketlere ilişkin 14 sorudan oluşan nitel bir çalışmadır. Küçük işletme sahiplerine veya yöneticilerine yirmi adet anket dağıtıldı. Katılımcıların hiçbirisi 20 den fazla çalışmanı yönetmezken çoğu da 10 un altında çalışmanı yönetiyordu. Yönetici katılımcılardan yalnızca biri kadındı. Anketler ya yöneticilere verildi ve yönetici kendine ayrılan zamanda anketleri doldurdu ya da doğrudan onlarla görüşme yapıldı. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 30'lu yaşların ortalarından 60'lı yaşların ortalarına kadar değişmektedir. Üç Arap mülteci (2 Suriyeli ve 1 Iraklı) dışında tüm katılımcılar Türklerden oluşuyordu (Türkler, Kürtler veya Zazalar). Katılımcılar çeşitli iş sektörlerinde çalışmışlardır: eğitim, tıp uzmanları, esnaf, emlakçılar, satıcılar, gıda endüstrisi vb. Tüm katılımcılar Elazığ, Türkiye'de ikamet etmekte ve çalışmaktadır.

Analiz

Niteliksel verileri işlemek için Strass ve Corbin'in (1990) titiz analitik prosedürleriyle tanınan üç adımlı kodlama yaklaşımından yararlandık. Açık kodlama alanında görüşme verilerini cümlelere ayırdık. Eksensel kodlamada ilgili verileri içerik veya anlamı kapsayan kapsayıcı kategoriler ve alt kategoriler halinde gruplayarak titizlikle sıraladık ve kullandık, Daha sonra, merkezi veya temel kategoriye belirleyerek seçici kodlamaya giriştik. Bu adım aynı zamanda kategoriler arasındaki ilişkilerin anlaşılmasını da gerektiriyordu. Süreç modelleri oluşturulurken bu aşama, incelenen olguyla sonuçlanan faaliyetlerin sıralı akışını açıklayabilir. Bu adımların her

biri, kodlama notlarıyla titizlikle belgelendi; her ilerleme ve nihai sonuçlar titizlikle izlendi

Kapsamlı analizimizin bir ürünü olarak, etkili liderlik için zorunlu olan temel kurumsal değerleri ve davranışları kapsayan bir başlangıç modeli formüle ettik. Bu modeli doğrulamak için bulgularımızı bir üye kontrolü yoluyla katılımcı incelemesine tabi tuttuk ve sonuçların araştırmacı önyargısından uzak, kurumsal perspektiflere dayalı kalmasını sağladık (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

BULGULAR

Bu çalışma iki yönlü bir araştırmayla yürütülmüştür: Türkiye'nin doğusundaki küçük işletmelerde etik yönetim uygulamalarının etkisini araştırmak ve etik uygulamaları yerleştirme ve sürdürme sürecini anlamak. Bu araştırma sırasında etik liderlik önemli bir belirleyici olarak ortaya çıkmıştır.

Etik yönetim uygulamalarının etkisi: Rol modeller

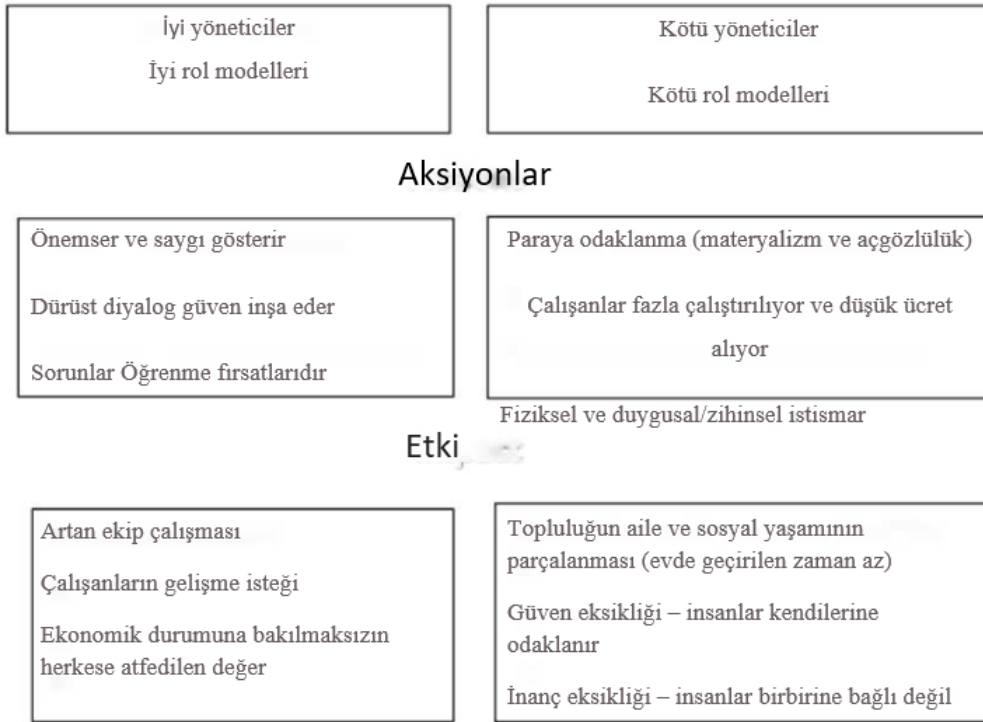
Özellikle etik rol modellerinin etkisi, çalışan grubunda güven, işbirliği ve motivasyon ortamını teşvik eden çok önemli bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Buna karşılık, materyalizmi ve parasal kazanımları öne çıkararak liderlik, olumsuz sonuçlara yol açarak personelin aşırı sorumluluk yüklenmesine, aile dinamiklerinin gerginleşmesine ve güven düzeylerinin azalmasına neden olmuştur. Ekonomik baskılar ve medyanın etkisi şeklinde zorluklar ortaya çıkarken, tarihsel değerler ve inanç da etik uygulamaları üzerinde olumlu bir etki yaratmıştır.

Araştırmanın ilk bölümüne (Şekil 3'te gösterilen) ilişkin olarak, birkaç keşif göze çarptı ve ortaya çıktı. Usta yönetsel bilgeliğin derin önemi, yankı uyandıran bir vahiy olarak göze çarpmaktaydı. Etik bir yönetici yalnızca övgüye değer bir rol modeli rolünü üstlenmekle kalmaz, aynı zamanda başkalarına karşı gerçek bir ilgi ve saygı da gösterir. Bu tür yöneticiler şeffaflık ve güven ile karakterize edilen bir ortamı teşvik ederek işbirliğine dayalı bir ortamı besler. Etkileri,

çalışanları arasında gelişmiş ekip çalışmasının geliştirilmesine kadar uzanır ve çalışanlarının gelişim dürtüsünü aktif olarak artırır. Tersine, parasal kazançlara ve materyalist arayışlara odaklanan yöneticilerin zararlı etkisi açıkça ortadaydı. Bu tür yönetsel uygulamalar her zaman aşırı iş yüküne ve yetersiz ücretlendirilen çalışanlara yol açtı. Bu da aile birimlerinin parçalanmasına ve ilişkisel güvenin yaygın bir şekilde erozyona uğramasına yol açtı.

Şekil 3

Türkiye'nin Doğusunda etişin iş hayatına etkileri nelerdir?



Çalışma sırasında toplanan anlatılar, Tablo 1'de özetlendiği üzere, bu dinamiklerin canlı bir resmini ortaya koymaktadır. "Yöneticilerin rol modelleri olduğu" iddiası, yönetsel davranışın derin dalga etkisinin altını çizerek derinden yankı bulmaktadır. Bu duygu, "Sürekli bir araya geliriz ve asla sorunları örtbas etmeyiz" sözünün de vurguladığı gibi, sorunları şeffaf bir şekilde ele alma uygulamasıyla daha da desteklenmiştir. Ek olarak, eşitlik ve paylaşılan öğrenme ahlakı, "bir araya geliriz ve herkesten öğreniriz, herkese eşit davranılır" ifadesiyle de vurgulandığı gibi, dikkate değer bir şekilde benimsenmiştir."

TABLO 1
Türkiye'nin Doğusunda etiğin iş hayatına etkileri nelerdir?

Etik rol modeli	Temsilci alıntıları
İyi Liderlik Etik rol modeli Aksiyonlar: Önemser ve saygı gösterir	Yöneticiler rol modeldir, eğer iyiye çalışanlar iyidir, kötüye çalışanlar da kötüdür. Patron iyiye çalışanlar da iyidir. Yöneticilerin çalışanlarının ihtiyaçlarını/isteklerini önemsediklerini göstermeleri ve bunları karşılamaya çalışmaları gerekir. Çalışanlara haklarını verin ve onlara kurallara uygun davranın. Onlara haklarını ve menfaatlerini verin çünkü biz bir aileyiz.
Dürüst & güven inşa eder	İşimizin temeli dürüst olmaktır. Müşterilerinize ve çalışanlarınıza karşı dürüst olursanız, onlar da size karşı dürüst olacaktır. Dürüst bir kalbe ve akla sahip olmanız gerekir. Kalbinizde ve zihninizde ne varsa, eylemlerinize yön verecektir. Dürüst davranmazsanız çalışanlarınızın ve müşterilerinizin güvenini kaybedersiniz.
Öğrenme fırsatları olarak problemler	Sürekli bir araya geliyoruz ve hiçbir zaman sorunların üstünü kapatmıyoruz. Çalışanlarımızın önerilerini, yeni işe başlayanlarda gelseler dahi ciddiye alıyoruz. Birbirimizle her şeyi paylaşma konusunda rahatız. Mesleğimizin dışındaki etik değerler bile bizim için önemlidir
Etki: Artan ekip çalışması	Her zaman dikkatli ve özenli olmamız gerekiyor, hastalarımızı tedavi ederken etik davranmam gerekiyor. Zamanla yoruluyorum ama birlikte çalışıp birbirimizi tanıdıkça (çalışanlar ve yöneticiler) herkesin güçlü ve zayıf yönlerini bildiğimiz için iş kolaylaşıyor
Çalışanların gelişme isteği	Gelişmek isteyenler için daha tecrübeli oluyoruz, kendimizi geliştiriyoruz, o zaman daha ahlaklı olabiliyoruz. Ayrıca çalışanlarımıza, bir şey alıp almamalarına bakmaksızın, insanları içeri girdiklerinde hoş karşılamalarını ve ayrılırken nazik olmalarını söylüyoruz. Çalışanlarımıza, kapıya kim gelirse yardım etmeyi öğretiyoruz.
Ekonomik durumuna bakılmaksızın herkese atfedilen değer	Çalışanlarımıza belirlenen bir kitabın fiyatını asla artırmamalarını öğretiyoruz. Bazı satıcılar müşteriye zengin ya da yabancı olarak değerlendirdiğinde daha yüksek fiyat verebiliyorlar. Hep aynı fiyatı veriyoruz.
Olumsuz Liderlik Etik olmayan rol model	Patron kötüye çalışanlar iyi ya da verimli olamaz
Aksiyonlar: Paraya odaklanma (materyalizm ve acgözlülük) Çalışanlar fazla çalıştırılıyor ve düşük ücret alıyor	İnsanlar para yüzünden kör oluyor Zaman geçtikçe patronlar para yüzünden kör oluyor Şu anda personel sayımız az, maaşı düşük, performans beklentisi yüksek, stres düzeyi yüksek bir iş.
Fiziksel ve duygusal/zihinsel istismar	Çalışanlar işyerinde rahat değil. Çalışanın maaşını hak etmesi (örneğin çok az ya da asgari ücretin altında ücret alırlar), fiziksel ya da zihinsel istismar (motivasyonunun düşmesine neden olması), bunların hepsi etiği olumsuz etkileyerek çalışmaktan ve iyi çalışan olmaktan soğumasına neden olur.

Etki:

Aile ve sosyal yaşamın parçalanması (evde vakit geçirememesi)	Ailemizle veya arkadaşlarımızla yeterince zaman geçirmiyoruz ve etikten uzaklaşıyoruz.
Güven eksikliği – insanlar kendilerine odaklanırlar	Güven artık yok. Ailenizden ya da arkadaşlarınızdan yardım almak yerine kredi almak için bankaya gidirsiniz.
İnanç eksikliği – insanlar birbirine bağlı değil	Daha küçük bir alanda 6-7 dükkân arasında buna benzer bir şey bulduk. Yanlış yatırım yapana ve sonra iflas edene kadar iyiydi. Artık güven kırıldı. Osmanlı'da iyi bir sistem vardı, güven iyiydi ama şimdi durum berbat, babalar kendi oğullarına güvenmiyor.

Kasvetli bir dip akıntısıyla karşı karşıya kaldık: Çalışanlara asgari ücret ve sosyal yardımlar da dahil olmak üzere gerekli haklarını sağlama konusunda isteksizlik sergileyen endişe verici sayıda yönetici. Finansal kazançların karanlık cazibesi, bu yöneticileri etik hususlara karşı kör etmiş gibi görünüyor. Katılımcılardan alınan iki çarpıcı alıntı (Tablo 1) bu gerçeği kısa ve öz bir şekilde özetlemektedir. “Şu anda personel sayımız az, maaşımız düşük, performans beklentimiz yüksek, stresimiz yüksek.” İkincisi, “Ailemizle, arkadaşlarımızla yeterince zaman geçirmiyoruz ve ahlakımız bozuluyor”, ise bu vicdansız uygulamaların insani bedelini ortaya koyuyor.

Etik uygulamaların oluşturulması ve sürdürülmesi

Etik bir işi nasıl yaratır ve sürdürürsünüz? Her şeyden önce yetkin ve ilkeli bir liderin varlığı gereklidir. Lider, örgütsel çerçeve içerisinde etiği yüceltme konusunda önemli bir rol üstlenir. Bu taahhüt, açık ve etkili iletişim ile karakterize edilen bir kültürün oluşturulmasında ve ayrıca etik davranışa olanak sağlayan bir iklimi her zaman teşvik eden bir güven temelini oluşturulmasında ifade bulmaktadır. Şekil 4'te gösterildiği gibi bu karmaşık süreç, işyerinin etik dokusunu güçlendiren veya zayıflatan bir dizi faktörden etkilenir.

Şekil 4

Etik bir işi nasıl yaratır ve sürdürürsünüz?

<u>Olumlu etmenler:</u>	<u>Etik iş yaratma:</u>	<u>Olumsuz etmenler:</u>
Ahilik iş ahlakının tarihi kültürü	Lider iyi bir etik rol modelidir	Açgözlülük
İnanç	<i>Temel odak:</i>	Ekonomik kriz
Güçlü aile	Lider etiğe öncelik verir	Materyalizm
	<i>Aşağıdaki özelliklerde bir kültür yaratır:</i>	Sosyal medya ve medya
	Etik konusunda açık ve sık iletişim	
	Etik konularda iyi çatışma çözümü	
	Korku yerine dürüstlüğü inşa ederek güven yaratır	
	<i>Etik davranış:</i>	
	Çalışanlara değer verir ve saygı duyar (onlara haklarını, uygun ücreti verir ve ekip olarak çalışır)	
	Kendisi dahil herkesin hesap verebilirliği.	
	Aktif olarak çalışanlardan geri bildirim arar.	
	Çevresindeki çalışanlara ve topluluğa yardım eder	

İyi etik davranışlara yol açan iyi bir iletişim ve güven kültürü yaratırlar. Şekil 4'te, iş yerini etkileyen kültürdeki olumlu ve olumsuz etmenlerin yanlarda listelendiğini görüyorsunuz. Olumsuz tarafta ise açgözlülük, ekonomik kriz, medya ve manevi güçler var. Olumlu tarafta, inanç ve aileyle birlikte Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'na kadar uzanan bir güzel ahlak tarihi görüyorsunuz. Şu önemli alıntıya dikkat edin: “Aile hayatının olmayışı etiğin yıpranmasına neden oldu” (Tablo 1). Ortaya çıkan temalardan biri şu yorumun gösterdiği kadim temel değerlerden ayrılış ifadesiydi: “Dinimizden uzaklaşıyoruz. Sanki Tanrı yokmuş gibi davranıyoruz. Allah'tan korkan bir insan bunları yapmaz.”

Etik iş yaratma

Temsilci alıntıları

**Lider Etik Bir
Rol Modeldir**

Temel odak:

Lider etiğe öncelik verir

Restoranım etik açıdan daha iyidir çünkü bunu önemsiyorum.
Etik kurallarımızı ciddiye alır, dikkatli ve dürüst çalışırız.

Kültür Yarat:

Etik konusunda açık ve
sık iletişim

Herkesin kendi etiğinden emin olması gerekiyor ve bizim de onlara sürekli hatırlatmamız gerekiyor. Eğer çalışanlarda etik eksikliği varsa onlara eğitim vermemiz gerekiyor. Yöneticiler ve çalışanlar açık ve dürüst bir iletişim kurmalı.

Etik konularda iyi çatışma
çözümü

Kendi kurallarımı uyguluyor, çalışanlarımla açıkça paylaşıyor ve toplantılarımızda onlara hatırlatıyorum. Bir sorun varsa çalışanımla bireysel olarak görüşüp onları dinlerim ve birlikte çözüm üretmek için çalışırım. Eğer çok uğraştığımız halde sorun hala çözülmezse onları işten çıkartırız.

Korku yerine dürüstlüğü
inşa eder, güven yaratır

Sürekli bir araya geliyoruz ve hiçbir zaman sorunların üstünü kapatmıyoruz. Yeni başlayanlar dahil çalışanlarımızın önerilerini ciddiye alıyoruz. Birbirimizle her şeyi paylaşma konusunda rahatız.

Etik davranış:

Çalışanlara değer verir ve
saygı duyar (onlara
haklarını verir, uygun
ücret verir ve ekip olarak
çalışır)

Yöneticilerin çalışanlarının ihtiyaçlarını/isteklerini önemsediklerini göstermeleri ve bunları karşılamaya çalışmaları gerekir. Çalışanlara haklarını verin ve onlara kurallara uygun davranın. Onlara haklarını ve menfaatlerini verin çünkü biz bir aileyiz.

Kendisi dahil herkesin
hesap verebilirliği. Aktif
olarak çalışanlardan geri
bildirim alır.

Çalışanlar belirlenen şirket etik ilkelerinin dışına çıkmamalıdır. Ara sıra işyerinde kalite kontrolümüz olur. Bunu yapmamıza yardımcı olacak birkaç adımdan oluşan bir kontrol sistemimiz var. Farklı insanları tekrar tekrar kontrol ediyoruz. Kimseyi dışarıda bırakmıyoruz. Toplantılarımızda neleri daha iyi yapabileceğimizi konuşuyoruz ve neye karar verirse onu hayata geçiriyoruz.

Komşu çalışanlarına ve
topluluğa yardım eder

İyi bir kâr elde edersem cömert olabilirim, diğer insanlardan daha ucuza satış yapabilirim ve müşterilerime destek verebilirim.

**Etik üzerindeki olumsuz
baskılar
Ekonomi**

Açgözlülük
Materyalizm

Ülkemizdeki en büyük sorun ekonomik krizdir. Ekonomik olarak ülkemiz istikrarlı değil. Bu, ruhsal sorunlara neden olan ve işimizi olumsuz yönde etkileyen kötü bir durum. Bunun kötü olduğunu biliyorum ama yapabileceğim bir şey yok. Her zaman aklımda. Gerçekten çok çalışıyorum ve çok az kazanıyorum.

Artık her şey parayla alakalı. İnsanlar sadece para kazanmayı düşünüyor

Yaşam standardı değişti. Herkes lüks bir hayat yaşamak ister. Herkes zengin olmak ister. Önceleri sadece zenginler vardı ve onlar da bu şekilde yaşıyorlardı ve hiç kimse böyle olmayı gerçekten umursamazdı. Ama artık herkes böyle olmak istiyor.

TABLO 2
Etik bir işi nasıl yaratır ve sürdürürsünüz?

Sosyal medya ve medya	Bunların çoğunun (iş hayatındaki etik eksikliği) sosyal medyadan, ekonomik koşullardan, internette, basından, kötü ahlaktan, televizyondan (propaganda gibi), eğitimdeki boşluklardan kaynaklandığını düşünüyorum
Manevi güçler	Şeytanın büyük bir etkisi olduğunu düşünüyorum
Etik üzerindeki olumlu baskılar Ahilik iş ahlakının tarihi kültürü	Ancak gerçekten iyi olan, insanların para kazanmaktan çok komşularına yardım etmeye ilgilendikleri. Mesela dükkanımın yanında bir berber var. Komşum olduğu için saçımı kestirmeye gidiyorum. Daha ucuz bir saç kesimi için başka bir yere gidebilirdim ama en yakınımındaki komşuma yardım etmek istiyorum. Bütün ihtiyaçlar böyle karşılanırdı.
İnanç	Sürekli eğitim, sorumluluk, disiplinli iş ahlakı, dindarlık
Müşteri sadakati	Müşterilerimizle iyi ilişkiler kurmaya ve onlara aile gibi davranmaya çalışıyoruz. Bizim için önemli olan devamlı müşterilerdir. Bize destek veriyorlar. Birkaç yıl önce şiddetli bir deprem oldu ve binamızı kaybettik. Tekrar açıldığımızda müşterilerimiz geri geldi. Bize yardım etmek için fazla para öderlerdi. Tatlı 100 TL olsa 200 TL öderlerdi. Bunun bize çok büyük bir yardım oldu

İlkeli bir lider, etik kuralları temel bir öncelik olarak görür ve çalışanlar arasında etik kuralları sürekli olarak güçlendirir. Bu, "restoranım etik açıdan daha iyi çünkü onları önemli görüyorum" diyen bir yönetici tarafından ifade edildi (Tablo 2). Kültürel bağlamda etik yöneticiler çok önemli bekçiler olarak işlev görürler. Bunların yokluğunda, asgari ücret ve sosyal yardımları kapsayan işçi haklarının güvence altına alınması gibi temel etik kararlar bocalama eğilimindedir. Tersine, etik liderlik ortaya çıktığında, iş gücü için gelişen bir ortam yaratır. Özellikle güvenin Türk kültüründe önemli bir yeri var ve derin bir etki yaratır. Bu nedenle yetkin bir yöneticinin varlığı büyük önem taşımaktadır. Güven, çalışanları rollerine bağlayan temel fonksiyondur; yönetsel ikiyüzlülük karşısında parçalanan, sadakati ve güveni aşındıran bir temel. Tersine, güvenilir bir yönetici, iş gücü arasında sadakati ve kararlı bağlılığı teşvik eder.

Şekil 4, hem yapıcı hem de zararlı olarak etki eden dinamikleri tasvir etmektedir. En güçlü olumsuz etkiler arasında ekonomik kriz ve medya yer almaktadır. Katılımcılar, medya platformlarının nasıl zengin yaşam tarzlarını sergilediğini, bireylerin gerçek koşullarıyla sıklıkla çatışan arzuları nasıl teşvik ettiğini vurguladılar. Sonuç olarak, bireyler bu tür yaşam tarzlarını takip ederken kısa yollara başvurur ve etikten ödün verirler. Bir katılımcı net bir şekilde şunları kaydetti: "Yaşam standardı değişti. Herkes lüks bir hayat yaşamak istiyor. Herkes zengin olmak istiyor. Önceleri sadece zenginler vardı ve onlar da böyle yaşıyordu ve hiç kimse böyle olmayı gerçekten umursamazdı. Ama artık herkes böyle olmak istiyor" (Tablo 2).

Aksine, Şekil 4'ün olumlu tarafı, kişisel kazançtan ziyade toplumsal dayanışmayı savunan kültürel ahlakı yansıtır. Yerel bir mağaza sahibi, "Yanımda bir berber var. Daha ucuza saç kestirmek için başka bir yere gidebilirim ama en yakınımdeki kişiye yardım etmek istiyorum. Ahilik sistemi tüm iş ihtiyaçları için bunu gerektirir" (Tablo 2)), bu ahlakı özetlemektedir. Tarihsel bağlam bu bakış açısını daha da zenginleştiriyor. Allah'ı memnun etmek ve komşulara yardım etmek amacıyla hareket eden Ahilik sistemi de bu hayırsever yaklaşımın bir kanıtı olarak yerini bulmaktadır (Baz, 2015).

Çıkarımlar

Araştırmanın sonuçları hem eğitim hem de aile hayatını kapsamaktadır. Türk ilkokullarında etik değerlerin desteklenmesi, gelecek nesil etik iş dünyası liderlerinin temelini oluşturabilir. Etik davranışların şekillenmesinde aile değerlerinin ve toplumsal baskıların rolünün kabul edilmesi, daha etik bir toplum ve iş ortamının geliştirilmesine yardımcı olabilir.

Arzumuz, Türkiye'de iyi iş ahlakını teşvik etmek için bu bilgiyi gelecek nesil iş liderleri ve vatandaşlarla paylaşmaktır. Araştırma bunun çalışanlar ve toplum için ne kadar önemli

olduğunu gösterdi. Türkiye'de etik konusuna başlamak için en iyi yerin ilkokul etik müfredatlarına bakmak olduğuna inanıyoruz. Okullar genellikle karakter eğitiminin verileceği en kolay yerlerden biridir (Berkowitz, 2002). Türk okulları 2003 yılından bu yana etik ve değerleri sistematik ve farklı yoğunluklarda öğretmeye çalışmaktadır (Gündoğdu, Çelik, Yanar, Kahyaoğlu ve Dönük, 2017). Türkiye'de son birkaç on yıldır bu alana ilgi ve araştırmalarda artış gözlenmektedir (Gündoğdu, Çelik, Yanar, Kahyaoğlu ve Dönük, 2017). Bulgularımızın Türk ilkokullarında öğretilen karakter eğitimine fayda sağlayacağını umuyoruz.

Bir araştırmacı karakter modellerinin öğrencilerine gösterilmesinin önemini belirtti. Öğrencilerin hayatlarındaki yetişkinler tarafından canlandırılan karakterleri görmeleri hayati önem taşımaktadır (Berkowitz, 2014). Sonuç olarak Türk çocuklarına evde hangi etik kurallarının öğretildiğini ve modellendiğini bilmek önemlidir. Bir çalışmada Türkiye'de aile değerlerinin iş etiği üzerindeki güçlü etkisine dikkat çekilmiştir (Akman, 2011). Gelecek nesil Türk iş dünyasının liderlerinin etik açıdan başarılı olabilmesi için bunların okullarda ve evlerde öğretilmesi gerekmektedir. Bulgularımızın, toplumda daha iyi etik kuralların desteklenmesi amacıyla Türk halkının evlerinde de anlatılabileceğini umuyoruz.

Sonuç

Etik liderlik, Doğu Türkiye'deki işletmelerin etik manzarasını şekillendirmede çok önemli bir rol oynamaktadır. Bu çalışma, rol model olarak etik yöneticilerin önemini altını çizmekte ve etik uygulamaları yönlendirmede güçlü karakterin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Kültürel nüanslara rağmen, etik liderlik ilkeleri işletmeler genelinde uygulanabilir ve olumlu bir çalışma ortamını ve toplumsal etkiyi teşvik eder.

Bu kültürde etik yöneticiler darboğaz işlevi görür. Etik bir yöneticiniz yoksa işçilere asgari ücret, yan haklar gibi haklarının verilmesi gibi temel etik kararlar da alınamaz. Yönetici

iyiyse, çalışanlarına ve topluma fayda sağlayan güven dolu bir ortam yaratır. Güven, iyi bir yöneticiye sahip olmanın bu kadar önemli olmasının ana nedenlerinden biridir. İşçiler yöneticiler arasında ikiyüzlülük görürlerse güven ve sadakatlerini kaybederler. Ancak çalışan yöneticisine güvenirse işine sadık kalır.

İyi bir yönetim oluşturulduktan sonra işletmede etik uygulamalar oluşturulur ve sürdürülür. Yönetici bunu etiği ön planda tutarak ve açık ve sık iletişim, iyi çatışma çözümü ve güven ile bir etik kültürü yaratarak yapar. Bu kültür daha sonra çalışanlara değer verilen, sağlıklı sorumlulukların tesis edildiği ve toplumun geliştirildiği davranışları destekleyen temel değerlerin oluşmasına yol açar. Bu tür işletmeler genellikle Ahiliğin tarihi kültürü, inanç, aile gibi toplumdaki olumlu kaynaklardan etkilenir.

Türkiye'nin Doğusunda etik liderlik anlayışını derinleştirmek için gelecekteki araştırmalar kültürel etkilerin iş etiği üzerindeki etkisini araştırabilir ve etik eğitiminin eğitim sisteminin çeşitli düzeylerine dahil edilmesinin etkinliğini araştırabilir.

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