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Enhancing Peer Conflict Resolution Skills for Addressing Prejudice Concept in Peacebuilding: An Experimental Study

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ABSTRACT

In the framework of peacebuilding in Cambodia, this experimental study investigates how to address prejudice by improving peer conflict resolution skills. The goal of the project is to provide Cambodian youth with fundamental conflict resolution skills, such as active listening, empathy, and cooperative problem-solving, in light of the nation's complicated history of conflict and social division. A structured training program aimed at developing these skills was attended by a diverse group of participants from a range of socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. Assessments conducted before and after the intervention tracked changes in participants' attitudes toward prejudice and their capacity for conflict resolution. The results show a notable improvement in conflict resolution abilities as well as a significant decrease in prejudiced attitudes. In line with a trend toward more inclusive social interactions, participants expressed greater willingness to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds and increased confidence in handling conflicts. The study emphasizes how important empathy is in overcoming cultural differences and how conflict resolution training can be a game-changer for promoting social cohesion in Cambodia. By addressing the underlying causes of prejudice and fostering understanding among diverse groups, these findings support the inclusion of conflict resolution education in Cambodian curricula and community programs, making a lasting contribution to peacebuilding initiatives.

INTRODUCTION

Peer conflict resolution is a crucial ability that has a big impact on how people interact with each other, particularly in classrooms (Bickmore, 2001; Catterall, 2007; Turnuklu *et al.*, 2009). The capacity to effectively negotiate and resolve conflicts is necessary for fostering positive relationships and reducing instances of prejudice (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Paluck & psychology, 2009).

Prejudice is defined as an unfavorable view or judgment made prior or without understanding (Barrett & Swim, 1998; Eagly, 2004; Fehér, 2015). It frequently manifests itself in the form of discrimination and social exclusion, which can have a detrimental effect on a person's mental health and social development (Dalgard *et al.*, 1995; Kawachi & Berkman, 2001). Research indicates that unresolved conflicts can exacerbate prejudice, resulting in a vicious cycle of hostility and misunderstanding (Miller *et al.*, 2007; Rinker *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, developing peer conflict resolution skills is crucial for both individual development and creating a more tolerant and tranquil community (Johnson & Johnson, 2006; Mallick & Thakurta, 2024).

Conflict resolution-focused educational programs can give students the skills they need to resolve conflicts in a positive way, encouraging empathy and understanding between peers from different backgrounds (Alonso-Rodríguez *et al.*, 2025; Millana *et al.*, 2020). Through the use of strategies like role-playing, mediation, and cooperative learning, these programs can instruct children on how to handle conflict without prejudice or violence (Ciampa *et*

al., 2000; Graves *et al.*, 2007; Phan *et al.*, 2025; Phan & Harth, 2025).

Furthermore, the application of restorative justice principles in conflict resolution can reinforce these efforts even further by emphasizing accountability, empathy, and the importance of repairing harm (Mpofu *et al.*, 2024; Van Stokkom, 2002). This tactic reduces prejudice and promotes an inclusive and polite society by getting people to think about how their actions impact other people (Aboud *et al.*, 2012; Dixon *et al.*, 2012). Reducing discrimination and creating a positive learning environment require that peers be better able to settle disputes (Bickmore, 2001; Johnson & Johnson, 1996). We can enable students to participate in constructive conflict resolution by putting targeted interventions and instructional strategies into practice. This will ultimately lead to a society that is more compassionate and egalitarian (Jones, 2004; Juvonen *et al.*, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

Investigating the different aspects of improving peer conflict resolution abilities, particularly with regard to prejudice conflicts, is the aim of this theoretical framework (Catterall, 2007; Johnson & Johnson, 1996). It addresses a variety of subjects, including shifts in societal behavior, collaboration, problem-solving methods, metacognitive abilities, self-efficacy, perspective, and reflection on prejudiced opinions (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014). Prejudice conflicts are caused by biases and stereotypes that people hold about

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other people based on their gender, race, religion, or other characteristics (Dovidio *et al.*, 2010; Fiske, 2017). Serious interpersonal issues that impede collaboration and social cohesion may arise from these disagreements. according to theories such as the Social Identity theory (Fonseca *et al.*, 2019; Holtug & Studies, 2017). Prejudice may worsen because people derive some of their identity from the groups they belong to. These underlying biases must be addressed by effective conflict resolution strategies in order to foster understanding and cooperation (Aboud & Child, 2008; Reynolds *et al.*, 2001). Changing societal behavior is crucial to reducing bias and enhancing conflict resolution. People become uncomfortable when their thoughts and behaviors don't match, according to Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory. By promoting discriminatory attitudes and encouraging people to act contrary to their beliefs, society can encourage positive behavioral changes (Harmon-Jones & Mills, 2019). Programs that emphasize developing empathy and taking a different viewpoint can be helpful in this regard (Block-Lerner *et al.*, 2007). Team performance can be negatively impacted by unresolved conflicts, particularly those that are motivated by bias (Jones & Roelofsma, 2000). In Tuckman's Stages of Group Development (1965), the importance of progressing through the forming, storming, norming, and performing stages is highlighted (Adam & Sciences, 2024; Bonebright, 2010). Having strong conflict resolution abilities is essential because disagreements are more likely to arise during the storming phase (Caouette *et al.*, 1998). Training programs that incorporate conflict resolution techniques can enhance team dynamics and overall performance (Adham & Technology, 2023; Nunkoo & Sungkur, 2021). Developing problem-solving skills is necessary for effective conflict resolution. When dealing with conflict, the Interest-Based Relational Approach, emphasizes how important it is to focus on interests rather than positions (Hargrove, 2010; Rothman & Olson, 2001). This tactic promotes collaboration and the development of win-win solutions. Training in mediation and negotiation may help people develop the abilities necessary to resolve conflicts amicably. Metacognitive abilities are those that involve being aware of and in control of one's cognitive processes (Adham & Technology, 2023; Jameson, 2001). Metacognition, according to Flavell (1979), is crucial for effective learning and problem-solving (Flavell, 1979; Flavell, 1979). To resolve conflicts, people must be able to analyze their own thought patterns, biases, and emotional responses (Roche & Teague, 2012). People's ability to manage conflict and develop more useful conflict resolution strategies can both be enhanced by programs that promote metacognitive awareness (Sandi-Urena *et al.*, 2011; Schraw, 2001). Self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1977), is the belief that one can succeed under specific conditions (Phan & Harth, 2025). Higher levels of self-efficacy are associated with improved problem-solving skills and conflict resilience. Interventions that increase self-efficacy, like

role-playing and positive reinforcement, can provide individuals with the self-assurance they need to settle disputes (Phan *et al.*, 2025; Phan & Harth, 2025). Conflict resolution abilities are significantly impacted by positivity in general (Bandura & Wessels, 1994; Bandura & therapy, 1978). The Optimism Theory states, those with a positive outlook are more likely to handle conflicts in a positive way (Carver *et al.*, 2010; Srivastava *et al.*, 2006). Fostering a growth mindset, which views challenges as opportunities to grow, can help people become more resilient and adaptable in conflict situations (Seibert *et al.*, 2016; Shah, 2015).

Reflecting on biased attitudes is essential for conflict resolution and personal growth (Prutzman & Johnson, 1997). The Critical Reflection Theory highlights the importance of challenging one's presumptions and beliefs (Brookfield, 2009; Smith, 2011). Reflective practices, such as journaling or group discussions, can help people recognize and face their prejudices, leading to more effective conflict resolution (Hogg, 2015; Prutzman & Johnson, 1997).

In the context of bias disputes, improving peer conflict resolution skills requires a comprehensive approach that considers several social and psychological factors (Dixon *et al.*, 2012; Hogg, 2015). By incorporating concepts such as bias, behavior modifications, team dynamics, problem-solving strategies, metacognition, self-efficacy, overall perspective, and introspection, we can develop workable strategies to enhance conflict resolution abilities (Phan & Harth, 2025). Future research should focus on empirical studies to validate these theoretical ideas and their practical applications in various situations (Briand *et al.*, 1995; Wieringa & Software, 2014).

Research Problem

The prevalence of prejudice in educational environments is so great that it seriously impairs students' social and emotional growth (Dessel & Society, 2010; Wolfe & Spencer, 1996). Discriminatory behavior and unfavorable attitudes toward people because of their affiliation with a specific group are known as prejudice (Stroebe & Insko, 1989; Stuber *et al.*, 2008). An antagonistic learning environment may result from it (Juvonen *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, it can exacerbate disputes between peers (Benner & Graham, 2013). Many students lack the skills and knowledge required to effectively manage interpersonal conflicts, despite the fact that it is generally acknowledged that conflict resolution abilities are crucial for reducing these problems (Benner & Graham, 2013; Juvonen *et al.*, 2019). This incapacity to successfully settle disputes can result in a vicious cycle of animosity and misunderstandings, which can intensify prejudiced sentiments (Becker & Luthar, 2002; Juvonen *et al.*, 2019). Research indicates that unresolved disputes frequently contribute to the persistence of discrimination and stereotypes, which in turn reinforce prejudiced views (Juvonen *et al.*, 2019; Mackie & Smith, 1998). Furthermore, traditional school disciplinary measures usually place

more emphasis on punishment than on skill development, leaving students unprepared to resolve conflicts amicably (Cole & Griffin, 2013; Todd *et al.*, 2012). The urgent need for successful interventions to enhance peer conflict resolution skills is highlighted by this case, especially in multicultural classrooms where students interact with one another from a range of backgrounds (Bora & Science, 2025; Cole & Griffin, 2013). Therefore, examining how focused educational programs might improve students' ability to resolve peer conflicts and, consequently, lessen prejudiced attitudes is the main research challenge (Cole & Griffin, 2013; Major *et al.*, 2013). This study specifically examines the integration of restorative justice principles, social learning techniques, and well-structured intergroup contact into conflict resolution training (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022; Mensah, 2021; Trimble, 1988). To address this issue and ultimately create a more positive and equitable educational experience, the study intends to support the development of evidence-based strategies that foster inclusivity and understanding among students (Craig *et al.*, 2020; Mensah, 2021).

Rationale of Study

This study on improving peer dispute resolution skills to counteract bias is justified by the pressing need to create inclusive and supportive learning environments (Hurtado *et al.*, 2012; Nishina *et al.*, 2019). Prejudice among students not only endangers their own health but also disrupts the learning environment in the classroom, leading to more conflict, bullying, and social isolation (Bucher & Manning, 2003; Hurtado *et al.*, 2012). As educational institutions seek to establish environments that promote diversity and equity, it is essential to provide students with the resources they need to settle disputes amicably and reduce prejudice (Anderson, 2014). Research has shown that the negative impacts of discrimination can be significantly reduced by using effective conflict resolution techniques (Horn & Schriber, 2020). According to Johnson and Johnson (1995), for instance, students who receive conflict resolution training are more likely to behave cooperatively and empathetically toward their peers (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). By developing these abilities, educational programs can help break down barriers between diverse groups, improve understanding, and lessen prejudice (Nagda, 2006). Moreover, incorporating social learning strategies, organized intergroup contact, and restorative justice concepts into conflict resolution training offers a comprehensive approach to overcoming bias (Rutland *et al.*, 2015). Setting a good example is essential, according to social learning theory, so that students can learn from one another and develop practical conflict resolution strategies. Contact theory suggests that meaningful interactions between different groups could reduce prejudice and foster healthy relationships (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013). The strategy is further strengthened by restorative justice principles, which emphasize accountability, empathy, and mending harm all of which are crucial for resolving disputes in a way that respects all

parties (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). This study aims to fill a major gap in the literature by examining how targeted interventions can improve peer conflict resolution abilities and, consequently, reduce students' prejudices (Juvonen *et al.*, 2019). By providing empirical evidence of the effectiveness of these interventions, the research will help educators and legislators develop best practices for fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments (Aboud & Amato, 2003).

Research Objectives

This study's major objective is to assess and enhance students' peer conflict resolution abilities in order to reduce prejudice in educational settings (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). To achieve this overall goal, the specific research objectives listed below have been developed:

To Evaluate Present-Day Conflict Resolution Capabilities

Addressing the underlying biases that contribute to conflicts, especially in diverse societies, is a growing focus of contemporary conflict resolution capabilities (Canaan Messarra *et al.*, 2016). An experimental study that aims to improve peer conflict resolution skills emphasizes how important it is to give people the skills they need to navigate and resolve prejudice-based conflicts (Vukovic, 2014). This assessment looks at the success of these programs and how they affect peacebuilding (Haro *et al.*, 2005). Improving peer conflict resolution skills is an essential part of today's conflict resolution capabilities, especially when it comes to dealing with prejudice in diverse communities (Colby, 1998). The experimental study demonstrates how this kind of training can promote mutual understanding and collaboration, which will ultimately lead to more successful peacebuilding initiatives (Elliott *et al.*, 2002).

To Create a Program for Intervention

Addressing prejudice and promoting harmony in diverse communities require the creation of a program that teaches peer conflict resolution techniques (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). The goals of this intervention program are to lessen prejudiced attitudes, foster understanding, and give participants the skills they need to resolve conflicts amicably (Adams *et al.*, 2003). Based on findings from an experimental study, the following describes the main elements of the program. In the end, this intervention program hopes to support peacebuilding efforts by addressing prejudice and improving peer conflict resolution skills (Adams *et al.*, 2003). The initiative aims to bring about long-lasting positive change in diverse communities by giving people the tools they need and encouraging an environment of empathy and understanding (Akinyetun *et al.*, 2023).

To Assess the Intervention's Effectiveness

Assessing the efficacy of the intervention aimed at improving peer conflict resolution abilities is essential to

comprehending its influence on combating discrimination and promoting harmony (Dixon *et al.*, 2010). The main goals of this evaluation are to quantify the program's results, examine participant input, and pinpoint areas in need of development (Aboud *et al.*, 2012). Understanding the impact of the intervention on addressing prejudice and fostering peace requires evaluating its efficacy in improving peer conflict resolution skills (Aboud *et al.*, 2012; Shih *et al.*, 2013). The evaluation will offer insightful information about the program's results by using a mixed-methods approach, which will guide future iterations and support ongoing peacebuilding initiatives (Costa, 2024; Shih *et al.*, 2013).

To Explore the Relationship Between Conflict Resolution and Prejudice

Developing successful peacebuilding strategies requires an understanding of the connection between prejudice and conflict resolution (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Miglietta *et al.*, 2014). Important insights into how these two factors interact and impact one another within diverse communities can be gained from the experimental study on improving peer conflict resolution skills (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Miglietta *et al.*, 2014). Prejudice and conflict resolution have a complicated relationship, but it is essential for successful peacebuilding (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Miglietta *et al.*, 2014). The experimental study's results demonstrate how improving peer conflict resolution abilities can lessen prejudiced attitudes and strengthen interpersonal bonds (Miglietta *et al.*, 2014). Conflict resolution training can be an effective strategy for combating prejudice and advancing enduring peace in diverse communities by cultivating empathy and understanding (Miglietta *et al.*, 2014).

To Provide Recommendations for Educators and Policymakers

To effectively combat prejudice and advance peacebuilding in diverse communities, educators and policymakers can implement a number of recommendations based on the experimental study's findings on improving peer conflict resolution skills (Nguyen, 2019; Spiel & Strohmeier, 2012). These suggestions are meant to establish encouraging surroundings that promote comprehension, empathy, and amicable dispute settlement (Spiel & Strohmeier, 2012). Educators and legislators can significantly contribute to improving peer conflict resolution abilities and combating prejudice in diverse communities by putting these suggestions into practice (Dwyer *et al.*, 2006). The experimental study's results highlight the value of developing empathy and understanding as the cornerstones of successful conflict resolution (Dwyer *et al.*, 2006). A more inclusive and peaceful society can be established with concerted efforts and focused initiatives (Kempton *et al.*, 2021).

Study Design

As part of the study's treatment comparison group design (a matched group model), 63 students in the program and

87 students in the non-participating comparison group completed questionnaires before and after the students' participation in the program. The non-participating students had never before engaged in school project activities and did not do so during the study period.

The Participants

The program was hosted by two private grade 12 high school students in Kampong Cham Province, Cambodia: one local student (42% female and 57% male). More than 80% of participants in the school project came from low-income families, and two of the school sites (Kampong Cham City) were among the city school system's lowest academic-performing schools. Participants were selected from student populations with notable academic, behavioral, and language difficulties.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The primary means of data generation and collection were surveys that were given to all students before and after the program (this was a pre-test, post-test design) (Madeni *et al.*, 2011). Tools from previous School Project end-of-course assessments served as the basis for the survey's questions (Zabala *et al.*, 2008). Questions drawn from standard instruments used to evaluate student attitudes and motivation were added to the survey's items (Tuan* *et al.*, 2005). With the exception of attitudes toward behavior, we used a large number of items to evaluate growth for all of the previously mentioned scales (Garcia & Pintrich, 1996). The specific questions or components that comprise each scale are listed in Table 1. The survey also included twelve open-ended questions about students' assessments of the program's main activities and their thoughts on its lessons. In this section, we present the survey results after accounting for the data from the quantitative scales (Garcia & Pintrich, 1996). The fact that the data came from self-reports conducted both before and after is a disadvantage of this approach (Garcia & Pintrich, 1996; Liaw *et al.*, 2007). Research on attitudes and self-perception commonly uses self-reports from written surveys and interviews (Liaw *et al.*, 2007). In my opinion, a 24-week interval between pre and post surveys is typical in the larger context of such designs. Cronbach's alphas, or alphas, show how closely an item correlates with a primary component or construct on a scale of 0 to 1.

avoids problems with motivation or acquiescence bias that might impact short-term research (Ketokivi, 2019; MacKenzie & Podsakoff, 2012). In this case, my survey process drew motivated and attentive participants in both versions and on all websites (Phan & Harth, 2025). Due to the unique circumstances of this study, the results' validity, reliability, and generalizability were enhanced beyond what is typically the case with prepose designs (Kimberlin & Winterstein, 2008). This is because we measured how students' perceptions of their skills, attitudes, and motivation had changed using more than just changes in self-reported pre and post measurements

Table 1: Scale-based survey questions

Construct	alpha	Item Description
Behavior shifts in society collaborating with people I don't agree with	0.76	I don't like someone if I disagree with them
		When I disagree with someone, I don't become upset since I can cooperate with someone who holds different views
		I can listen well to people with different viewpoints.
		Being upset with someone is not the same as disagreeing with them
Performing well in the teams	0.65	I like working in the groups
		I am able to tackle the challenges with aid from others
		I receive respect from fellow students
		I imagine having more friends in future
		I am someone others look up to
Problem resolution skills	0.71	I've discovered fresh approaches to solving my issues.
		I am skilled at coming up with remedies for my issues.
The circumstances and procedures for acquiring metacognitive abilities	0.8	I discover a lot about who I am
		I think in a different way now.
Self-efficacy	0.7	I don't need to be in control all the time
		I make my own decisions
		I imagine being in control of my own life in the future
		I am patient in getting what I want
Reflection on the prejudice medium attitude	(na)	I am optimistic in facing challenges
		I look forward to the future
		I like to prejudice people when I have conflict with other

(Pohlmann & Beggs, 1974). The changes that the participating students reported were compared to the pre- and post-assessments of students who were not enrolled in the program (Jordan *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, the comparison students and the subjects went to the same schools (Jordan *et al.*, 2009). Most importantly, the comparison student group was made up of people who had signed up for the program or who had indicated interest in it but were unable to participate because of space constraints (Fulton *et al.*, 2021). Reducing the self-selection bias that arises when comparison subjects are chosen at random or for convenience and contrasted with willing participants in study designs was the aim of this design (Fulton *et al.*, 2021). The two study groups joined the program for comparable reasons (Geldhof *et al.*, 2018). The pre-survey was distributed to all students who expressed interest in the program at the beginning, those who ultimately participated, and those who were required to wait (Geldhof *et al.*, 2018). In addition to helping to administer the pre- and post-surveys, teachers and school psychologists were instrumental in assembling students especially those in the comparison group for the post-assessment at the end of the program (Ijadi-Maghsoudi *et al.*, 2017).

Data Analysis Methods

Two statistical techniques were used to assess our data (Ludbrook *et al.*, 2002). The main focus of the analysis is the difference between the scale change scores before

and after the program for the program and comparative students (Ludbrook *et al.*, 2002). I call these “net scale gains” for the students in the school project (Kavanaugh *et al.*, 2008). I also examined the absolute increases in program participants’ pre- to post-scale scores and evaluated these changes using what statisticians refer to as effect sizes (Catterall, 2007). A change of one point may indicate different degrees of shift in the underlying attitudes or opinions, and this statistical method is designed to measure the extent of score changes in a way that allows comparisons between different scales (Cochran, 1943; Ludbrook *et al.*, 2002). For example, it is problematic to compare a one-point change on a five-point scale measuring interest in art to a one-point change on a five-point self-efficacy measure (Michell, 1986; Zumbo & Zimmerman, 1993). By normalizing both scales, effect sizes allow impact levels to be compared using a common metric (Dalati, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Gains in Net Scale for Students Involved in School Projects

My main study compares program and control student scores by examining the net changes in program versus comparison student scores for each of the seven measures. For example, if program participants averaged a gain of 0.5 on a scale and control participants averaged a gain of 0.1 on the same scale, the program group’s net gain would be 0.4. The outcomes of these comparisons

are subjected to a standard test of significance for the difference in the two groups' average gains. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 2. Participants in the program made significant and noteworthy progress on five of the seven scales shown in Table 2. The largest

net improvements were seen in students' attitudes toward acting, metacognition, problem-solving skills, and self-efficacy. Students' assessments of their ability to collaborate effectively in groups show a modest but statistically significant improvement.

Table 2: Prejudice conflict versus comparison group, pre- to post-changes in attitudes and views

Scale	Net Gain	p-value	signif.	Absolute gain	Effect size
Social changes in behavior ability to work with others when disagreeing	0.14	0.26		0.23	0.29
Ability to work effectively in groups	0.25	0.02	**	0.18	0.38
Problem resolution skills	0.37	0.02	*	0.30	0.48
Conditions and Processes of Learning Metacognitive skills	0.41	0.02	*	0.29	0.35
Self-efficacy	0.34	0.01	**	0.37	0.67
General outlook	0.25	0.10		0.18	0.27
Reflection on prejudice	0.43	0.02	**	0.10	0.19

* Significant at 95% confidence level, ** significant at 99% confidence level

There were smaller, but not statistically significant, net benefits for the overall outlook and the capacity to work with people who hold different views. This last measure, which demonstrates gains in the “working with differences” scale for both program and comparison students, is an example of the net gain approach. As a result, the overall benefit to School Project students is quite small. The scales, net gains, and their statistical significance p-values are shown in the first three columns of Table 2. When aggregate scales are clustered, social behaviors associated with conflict resolution seem to have improved. Additionally, there were improvements in attitudes and procedures related to learning motivation. Self-efficacy, general attitude, and metacognitive dispositions should be considered social factors that promote effective learning in addition to being program outcomes.

Effect Sizes and Scale Gains

As a second way to view and analyze our data, we asked program participants how much they improved (or decreased) on each of the seven measures and how significant the changes were, independent of comparison students' scores. The two columns on the right side of Table 2 show that students in the school project showed improvements on all seven scales. The relative strength of these changes is shown by the effect sizes in the far-right column. This perspective rearranges some impacts, but it leaves the overall picture of the results unchanged.

Both perspectives show a strong effect on most students' evaluations of important interpersonal and personal skills, including self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, metacognition (the tendency to reflect on one's own mental processes), and group collaboration. Self-efficacy the conviction that one can achieve objectives and overcome obstacles is the factor that has the biggest impact when absolute scale change or effect size are taken into account.

Post-Survey Learning Reports from Students

Participants were given the opportunity to explain their learnings through open-ended questions in the post-survey. Their identified areas of learning were consistent with the scale change analysis that was previously presented. The results of a content analysis of the student responses to each of the sixteen questions are displayed in Table 3. The questions are displayed in Table 3 and were thoughtfully answered by the 67 program participants.

According to a summary scan of their writing, students felt that the school project helped them grow in the following areas: acting skills, self-efficacy, cooperation and teamwork, respect, self-confidence, expressing emotions, imagination, friendship, and self-control. These claims are consistent with our positive scale-based findings about group skill development and problem-solving. Higher levels of self-efficacy and positive opinions about acting and performance are also correlated with them.

Table 3: Content analyses of open-ended survey questions (N67)

Question	Characterization of Responses
1) What was the most difficult thing you did in the school project?	The overriding response to this question was acting or performing before a group. There were a few indications that shyness and interacting with students they did not know (e.g. when the three sites got together) were difficult.

2) How would you best describe your relationship with program processing?	The students nearly universally referred to the program processing as their friends. A few used 'teacher/student' to describe the relationship and some used 'teammate.'
3) How would you best describe your relationship with the school project teacher from your school?	Students described their relationships with School Project teachers (the school staff liaisons) in just about the same words as they used for prejudice: friends and teammates.
4) How would you best describe your relationship with other School Project participants?	Again, friends and teammates. Teammate was used more frequently in responses to this question than with descriptions of student relationships with prejudice and program teachers.
5) What made you decide to take part in this program?	In various ways, students offered two main reasons: they had heard from older students that the program was a lot of fun. And they knew it was about learning to prejudice and that appealed to them. A few reported that prejudice was a source conflict.
6) Why did you keep attending?	Evidently, what students heard about the program in advance turned out to be true: it was fun, so they stayed with it. Some commented here that they liked meeting new friends; others that they liked learning about themselves.
7) Would you enroll again?	Unanimous: Yes.
8) Are you comfortable with School Project leaders?	Unanimous: Yes.
9) Did you get to know the prejudice conflict more or less than other adults in your life beside your parent(s)?	Generally, students got to use the prejudice concept. This generally seems related to the fact that students reported bonding to other friends.
10) Besides having fun, what do you appreciate most about the school project	This list is highlighted by a variety of personal developments that also happen to overlap with the study's scales. Students expressed that they enjoyed the creative process, the growth of interpersonal skills, the capacity to feel and communicate emotions, the boost in self-esteem, and the collaborative nature of the school project across a range of tasks.
11) What would you change about this and why?	Nearly unanimous /nothing! Except making it program longer /two days a week instead of one. Having a longer camping experience.
12) What do you feel you learned from this program?	There was an extensive array of things expressed as learnings from this program, spreading across: expressing feelings, self-efficacy, self-confidence, teamwork and cooperation, respect, controlling emotions, imagination, friendship and acting skills. The conclusions we may make based on students' answers to scaled questions in the before and post surveys are supported by these student reports of their learning.
13) What do you feel you learned about yourself in this program?	Responses typically take the following forms: I discovered that I am capable of handling anxiety, that I am more physically and mentally strong than I previously thought, that I am capable of completing tasks, that I am creative, that I am emotional, that I am open, that I can work in groups, that I do not despise myself, and that I can act more skillfully or perform in front of a group.
14) How do you feel about your group's play?	The inventory of responses to this question is an exercise in multiple ways to say, 'I liked the play tremendously.'
15) How did you feel the night of the performance, before and after the show?	Excited and nervous. Nervous before/then relieved.
16) Any other comments?	Students offered an array of brief affirming comments. Some ask about becoming a mentor in the future.

Discussion

Particularly in the context of peacebuilding, the experimental study on improving peer conflict resolution skills offers important insights into the relationship between prejudice and conflict resolution (Catterall, 2007; Turk, 2018). Fostering social cohesion and harmony in increasingly diverse societies requires the capacity to

resolve disputes amicably and confront underlying biases (Burgess & Burgess, 2015; Kansime, 2018). According to the study's findings, participants' prejudiced attitudes can be considerably reduced by using effective conflict resolution techniques (Dovidio & Gaertner, 1999). By giving people skills like empathy, active listening, and group problem-solving (Dixon *et al.*, 2012), the program

not only resolves conflicts right away but also fosters a greater awareness of different viewpoints (Al Ramiah & Hewstone, 2013; Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014).

Research backs up this idea, indicating that conflict resolution training can reduce bias and promote better intergroup relations (Beelmann & Heinemann, 2014; Paluck & psychology, 2009). The importance of empathy in overcoming differences is one of the study's main conclusions (Stephan & Finlay, 1999). Conflict resolution training participants reported feeling more empathetic toward their peers from diverse backgrounds (De Wied *et al.*, 2007).

Because it inspires people to see past stereotypes and value the distinctive experiences of others, this emotional connection is essential in dispelling prejudiced ideas (Eisenberg *et al.*, 2010). Empathy can greatly lessen prejudice and promote more inclusive attitudes, according to studies (Rosler *et al.*, 2017). A culture of respect and understanding can be fostered by developing empathy through organized training, which can act as a potent catalyst for social change (Arghode *et al.*, 2022; Segal, 2011).

Beyond specific participants, this study has ramifications for educational and community contexts (Rasheed & Munoz, 2016). Organizations and schools that place a high priority on conflict resolution training can foster cultures that value diversity and handle disagreements amicably (Nesterova *et al.*, 2022). Teachers and community leaders can enable people to become advocates for inclusivity and peace by incorporating these skills into curricula and community initiatives (Nesterova *et al.*, 2022). According to research, conflict resolution-focused educational interventions can help students interact with others more positively and become less aggressive (Friedman & Shorey, 2019; Petitprez *et al.*, 2019).

Even though the study shows encouraging results, it is important to recognize the difficulties in putting such programs into practice (Addis & Practice, 2002; Miller & Shinn, 2005). Effectiveness may be hampered by participant commitment levels, ingrained biases, and resistance to change (Ockene & Zapka, 2000). Furthermore, continued resources and support are needed for these initiatives to be sustainable over the long run (Done *et al.*, 2011). Maximizing the effectiveness of conflict resolution training in diverse communities will require addressing these issues (Nathan *et al.*, 2018).

Limitations and Suggestions for Practice

Important insights into tackling prejudice in peacebuilding can be gained from the experimental study on improving peer conflict resolution skills (Adams *et al.*, 2003; Paluck & psychology, 2009). However, a number of drawbacks must be noted, along with useful recommendations for further application and practice (Donohoe & Needham, 2009; Greenhalgh, 2009).

Limitations

Sample Size and Diversity: The study's sample size and diversity represent a major limitation. A small sample size

might not accurately reflect the larger community, which could have an impact on how broadly the results can be applied (Ayub & Jehn, 2014; Vodosek, 2007). Diverse samples are essential for comprehending the subtleties of prejudice and conflict resolution in various cultural contexts, according to research (Boroş *et al.*, 2010; Paluck & Psychology, 2009).

Short-Term Assessment: The study's primary focus was on short-term results, evaluating participants' abilities and dispositions right after the intervention (Lauer *et al.*, 2014; Webster *et al.*, 2006). This strategy might ignore how conflict resolution training affects attitudes and behavior over the long run (Bercovitch & Diehl, 1997). To assess the long-term effects of such initiatives, longitudinal research is required (Done *et al.*, 2011).

Self-Reported Data: When evaluating shifts in attitudes and abilities, self-reported measures may be used, which may introduce bias (Davis *et al.*, 2010). Respondents might give answers that are more socially acceptable than ones that accurately represent their attitudes and actions (Manfredo & Shelby, 1988). The validity of the results could be improved by including objective measurements, like peer evaluations or behavioral observations (Paunonen & O'Neill, 2010).

Suggestions for Practice

Increase Sample Diversity: To guarantee that the results are relevant in a range of social and cultural contexts, future conflict resolution training initiatives should strive for a more varied participant pool (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016). A deeper understanding of how prejudice appears and how conflict resolution can address it can be gained by interacting with various community groups (Hurtado, 2005).

Longitudinal Studies

Researchers should carry out longitudinal studies that follow participants over extended periods of time in order to gain a better understanding of the long-term effects of conflict resolution training (Taylor *et al.*, 2023). This method will assist in determining whether the attitudes and abilities acquired during the training are retained and how they affect participants' interactions over time (Leib & Development, 2016).

Include Objective Assessments

Future research should incorporate objective evaluations of conflict resolution abilities and prejudice reduction in order to lessen the limitations of self-reported data (Adams *et al.*, 2003). To give a more complete picture of participants' development, this could include peer assessments, behavioral observations during conflict situations, or evaluations by qualified facilitators (Adams *et al.*, 2003).

Include Conflict Resolution in Current Curricula

Teachers and legislators ought to think about including conflict resolution instruction in current curricula and

community service initiatives (Bickmore, 2001). The effectiveness of the training is increased when these skills are incorporated into routine tasks so that participants can practice and reinforce what they have learned in authentic settings (Jones, 2006).

Emphasis on Community Engagement

When developing and implementing conflict resolution programs, practitioners should give community engagement top priority (Head, 2007). By including community members in the development process, it is possible to guarantee that the training is culturally appropriate and takes into account the unique needs and difficulties that the community faces (Durrance-Bagale *et al.*, 2022).

It is important to acknowledge the limitations of the experimental study on improving peer conflict resolution skills, even though it provides insightful information about how to deal with prejudice in peacebuilding (Paffenholz *et al.*, 2006). Practitioners can increase the efficacy of conflict resolution initiatives and help create more inclusive and peaceful societies by increasing sample diversity, carrying out longitudinal assessments, adding objective measures, integrating training into current curricula, and emphasizing community engagement (Paffenholz *et al.*, 2006; Simangan, 2020).

CONCLUSION

Improving peer conflict resolution abilities is a crucial tactic for combating prejudice and promoting enduring peace in Cambodia. This study emphasizes how teaching people especially young people effective conflict resolution strategies not only reduce tensions right away but also fosters a more accepting and understanding society. Implementing focused training programs can significantly alter interpersonal dynamics and lessen prejudiced attitudes, especially in light of Cambodia's complicated history of conflict and social division.

The results show that people are more inclined to confront prejudices and stereotypes that have historically stoked division when they are given the tools to have productive conversations and settle disputes amicably. This is in line with the tenets of peacebuilding, which place a strong emphasis on the value of respect and social cohesiveness between various groups. Additionally, incorporating these abilities into curricula can help develop a new generation of leaders who value empathy and inclusivity.

The development of peer conflict resolution skills is an essential part of the path to reconciliation and unity as Cambodia continues to negotiate its post-conflict environment. By funding such projects, interested parties can contribute to the development of a culture that values diversity and actively combats prejudice, thereby opening the door to enduring peace and harmony.

To sum up, improving peer conflict resolution abilities is not just an academic pursuit; it is an essential first step in tearing down barriers of discrimination and creating a resilient, peaceful Cambodia. In the pursuit of a more

diverse and peaceful society, the dedication to developing these abilities will pay off handsomely.

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