

Is there need to update Teaching Techniques in Abhidhammain Theravāda Buddhism?

Ven. Sobhana, Research Scholar, Samrat Ashok Subharti School of Buddhist Studies

Dr. Jyoti Gaur, Professor, Swami Vivekanand Subharti University

ABSTRACT

Buddhist Studies is the favorite subject of Myanmar population especially amongst monks. Buddhist literature is taught by two types of teaching techniques i.e., Mandalay and Pakkoku techniques are popular in the universities. Some universities use the modern techniques and teach the students using computers and internet. The CDs, videos, blogs, websites have developed that provide brief content to the readers and learners. But, not all teaching institutions have accepted it and are not updated. Today, almost all the academic fields have included Modern methods in their curriculum for the better understanding of the subjects. But the religious studies still follow the old methods. The reason may be many like, lack of contact with technical world, belief in old methods and lack of interest in bringing in development in curriculum. Although, both of teaching techniques are very effective for monks, as they are used to learning and teaching through old methods. But, like other fields, would it not be better to teach and train young novice using newer techniques? Will the modern techniques be useful for the religious studies?

The paper will explore and compare the old teaching techniques with the modern by assessing their impact on the knowledge of the monks and nuns who have been learning through these techniques.

Keywords: Teaching methods, Conventional, Technique, Mandalay, Pakokku, Modern, Abhidhamma, Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha

Introduction

Theravāda Buddhism follows the doctrines of Buddha which are Tipitaka or Pāli Canon and its basic teachings. Buddhist literature is taught in monasteries as well as in Intermediate Colleges and Universities (Altbach et al., 2009). These learning center help to promote the Sāsana and

especially teaching and learning of the Theravāda Abhidhamma literature (Ñānindāsabha Mahāthera Ashin, 1920). These organizations not only encourage teaching and learning but also the translation of literature from Pāḷi to Myanmar language. Usually, they do this by lecture method and religious discourses held locally in various for Dhammācariya degree, B. A

Formatted: Font: 16 pt
Formatted: Left
Formatted: Number of columns: 1

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: Font: Bold

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt
Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt
Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

and highest grade in *Pālipathamabyan*. Buddhist literature is taught by two types of teaching techniques (*The Conference in Abhidhamma Pitakamahāthāna*, 2016) i.e., *Mandalay* and *Pakkoku* which are most popular in the universities. The *Mandalay* teaching technique has a detailed study followed by the exam that the scholar needs to qualify. The *Pakokku* teaching technique, emphasizes that the scholars first study all *Pāli* literature and then, attended the higher literature. There is no formal exam that measures the knowledge of the learner, at the end of the completion of the study.

The Modern teaching methods started in Myanmar with the exchange of knowledge with other countries. The monks who wished study the foreign authors and western opinion and wanted the syllabus to be completed along with the development of cross- cultural understanding in short time followed by an examination. The colleges and universities issuing many subjects and teaching techniques. In modern teaching technique, the course material, at both primary and secondary level, is divided into teaching units. This approach has been considered to enable the teacher work systematically through the literature Hu, Y.L., Hung, C.H. and Ching, G.S. (2015).

The aim of this research is to compare the knowledge of the monks and nuns who have been learning through the three techniques.

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this research, a combination of an Exploratory and Experimental Research Design was used, to define the teaching techniques of *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha* being used in the Academic Organizations, Universities and Monasteries of Myanmar and compare the achievements of the students studying *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha* with such teaching techniques, i.e., *Mandalay*, *Pakokku* & Modern. Exploratory research is mentioned as accustomed investigation of a problem that isn't clearly outlined. It has been conducted to own a higher understanding of the prevailing problem, however, that would give conclusive results.

Sampling Design

The Researcher has used the cluster sampling method for conducting cluster sampling and divided the population into smaller groups referred to as cluster of Buddhists that lie in Universities and Monasteries.

Sample size

The sample of 90 was divided into three groups of 30 each, first learning *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha* through *Mandalay* techniques, Second Learning through *Pakokku* techniques and the third one learning through Modern techniques.

Data Collection

The knowledge test papers (n= 10) from *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha* were prepared with the help of five subject experts and the subjects were given objective test. The knowledge of each group on each test paper was assessed and compared

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt, Bold, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt, Bold, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Indent: First line: 0"

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

with the other groups to assess the effectiveness of all three methods.

Locale

The data was gathered from various national and international universities that teach Buddhist Studies and run graduate and post graduate program

Tools and Techniques

Lesson Tests consisting of multiple-choice questions were prepared in English and translated in Myanmar language and content validity checked by five subject experts, by sending them for suggestions. Their suggestions were incorporated to prepare the final question papers. The papers consisted the questions from *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha* based on Compendium of consciousness, Compendium of mental factors, Compendium of Miscellaneous, Compendium of Mental Process, Compendium of the passive

mental process, Compendium of matter, Compendium of Categories, Compendium of causality, Compendium of meditation subjects, and Combination of all above topics.

Statistical Analysis

To test the data pertaining to the research entitled, “Critical Analysis of Teaching Techniques in *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha*”, the data was put in the Statistical Software, SPSS 26 to calculate ANOVA (Between- Within), with the level of significance set at .05 for the comparison between the groups.

Results and Discussions

To test the null hypothesis, “There is no difference in the knowledge of monks learning through Mandalay, Pakokku and Modern teaching techniques of *Abhidhammattha-Saṅgaha*”, the data was put for analysis and being presented below-

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: List Paragraph, Left
Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: List Paragraph, Left
Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Font color: Text 1
Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, Italic, Font color: Text 1
Formatted: Left, Add space between paragraphs of the same style
Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: List Paragraph, Left
Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Table 1: One-way ANOVA for the knowledge of Monks learning through Mandalay, Pakokku and Modern teaching techniques

Formatted: Number of columns: 1

source	sum of squares SS	degrees of freedom vv	mean square MS	F statistic	p-value
treatment	7,088.6667	2	3,544.3333	17.9239	2.8045e-07
error	17,796.9032	90	197.7434		
total	24,885.5699	92			

*.05 Significance level

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) on these conditions, $F(2, 90) = 17.9239$, $p = 2.8045e-07$ scores again yielded significant variation among (Table 1).

Table 2: Post-hoc Tukey HSD Test of Monks learning through Mandalay, Pakokku and Modern teaching techniques

treatments pair	Tukey HSD Q statistic	Tukey HSD p-value	Tukey HSD inference
Mandalay vs Pakokku	8.3531	0.001005 3	** $p < 0.01$
Mandalay vs Modern	2.9759	0.094656 9	insignificant
Pakokku vs Modern	5.3771	0.001005 3	** $p < 0.01$

*.05 Significance level

A post hoc Tukey test (Table 7) showed that the Group Mandalay vs Pakokku (Mean= 88.9032 and 67.8065 ; SD= 12.918 and 16.7838) and Pakokku vs Modern (Mean 67.8065 and 81.3871; SD= 16.7838 and 21.3473) differed significantly while the groups Mandalay vs Modern (Mean= 88.9032 and 81.3871; SD= 12.918 and 21.3473) were not significantly different at $p < .05$, clearly stating that as modern teaching technique is not yet popular, Mandalay Technique still works best for them. However, Pakokku technique was not found to be that effective. Also, a combination of Mandalay and Modern techniques will be quite beneficial with the changing scenario.

References

1. Altbach, P.G., Reisberg, L. and Rumbley, L.E. (2009). Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution, UNESCO, Paris.
2. Hu, Y.L., Hung, C.H. and Ching, G.S. (2015). Student-faculty interaction: mediating between student engagement factors and educational outcome gains, International Journal of Research Studies in Education, Vol. 4 No. 1, 43-53, available at: <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrse.2014.800>
3. Nānindāsabha Mahāthera Ashin (1920). Vibhāvinī Yojanā, volume I, II, yangon, Myanmar.

Formatted: Number of columns: 1

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt

Formatted: Font: Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: Section start: Continuous, Number of columns: 2

Formatted: Numbered + Level: 1 + Numbering Style: 1, 2, 3, ... + Start at: 1 + Alignment: Left + Aligned at: 0.25" + Indent at: 0.5"

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Formatted: Font: Bold, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)

Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Indent: Left: 0", First line: 0"

Keywords: Teaching methods, Conventional, Technique, Mandalay, Pakolku, Modern, Abhidhamma, Abhidhammattha saṅgaha

Formatted: Font: 12 pt, Font color: Teal, English (United Kingdom)
Formatted: List Paragraph, Left, Space Before: 0 pt, After: 0 pt