



Royal University of Law and Economics

Final Report On

Singapore Economic Development (A Lesson for Cambodia)

Name of Students:

Mr. TOURK SOVANOTDOM

Ms. CHIN DALIN

Name of Academic Advisor:

Dr. RAYMOND LEOS

International Program

Bachelor's Degree in International Relations

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ABSTRACT

Singapore economic development is a miracle that has transformed Singapore from a third to first world nation within just one generation. Back in the 1960s, Singapore was just a small fishing village plagued by serious poverty, low quality of education, poor governance, and corruption. The successful efforts in tackling corruption, reducing poverty, and educating citizens through establishing a world-class education have transformed Singapore drastically from poor to one of the richest countries in the world. The success story of Singapore economic development is an interesting lesson for Cambodia to learn and apply in accordance with its socio-economic context due to poverty, corruption, quality of education are still the hindrances of Cambodian economic development. The post independent Singapore and the current Cambodia are facing a few common economic hindrances including corruption, low quality of education, poverty, and poor governance. For these reasons, The Singapore economic development will be a good lesson for Cambodia to learn and apply in regard with its own context since Cambodian government is working effortlessly in transforming Cambodia from a lower middle-income country to a middle-income country in 2030 and a high-income country in 2050.

This thesis is divided into six parts: (1) The first is the introduction of our thesis consisting of Background scope, research problem, research questions, literature review, and methodology. (2) Chapter one is written about Singapore's geography, society, government, and economic overview. (3) Chapter 2 will reveal the key factors leading to Singapore economic success including LKY's leadership, effective governance, transparent government, and effective education system. (4) Chapter three will identify the key economic challenges and responsive solutions of Singapore from the 1960s to 1980s. (5) Chapter four is mainly about Cambodian economic challenges, similarities and challenges between Cambodia and Singapore

and lessons for Cambodia to learn from Singapore which are corruption elimination and quality of education. (6) The last part comprises a conclusion which summarizes key research findings in response to the research questions. Finally, there is a recommendation section incorporating possible suggestions concerning the quality of education, corruption, and governance for a better Cambodian economic development.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	1
Scope	2
Research Objectives	2
Research Problems	3
Research Questions	3
Literature Reviews	4
Methodology.....	6
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO SINGAPORE	7
1.1. Brief History of Singapore.....	7
1.2. Geography.....	9
1.3. Singapore society	10
1.4. Government.....	11
1.5. Overview of the Singapore Economy	13
1.5.1. International Trade	14
1.5.2. Key Economic Sectors.....	15
CHAPTER 2: FACTORS LEADING TO SINGAPORE ECONOMIC SUCCESS.....	16
2.1. LEE KUAN YEW (LKY)	16
2.1.1. LKY's Leadership styles.....	16
2.1.2. LKY's Characteristics as a Transformational Leader	17
2.2. Effective Governance	19
2.2.1. Key Principles of Effective Governance	21

2.2.1.1. Rule of Law	21
2.2.1.2. Multi-Racial and Cultural Harmony	22
2.2.1.3. Reversed Western Democracy.....	23
2.3. Transparent Government	25
2.3.1. Corruption Control Framework.....	26
Effective Law.....	27
Independence Judiciary	27
Effective Public Service	28
Effective Enforcement.....	29
2.4. Effective Education System.....	30
2.4.1. Key Evolvments of Singapore Education	30
2.4.2. Overview of the Singapore Education System.....	31
2.4.2.1. Primary Education	31
2.4.2.2. Secondary Education	33
2.4.2.3. Post-Secondary Education.....	34
CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS OF SINGAPORE’S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE	36
3.1. High Unemployment Rate	36
3.2. Low Skill Workforce.....	38
3.3. Housing Shortage	40
CHAPTER 4: LESSONS FOR CAMBODIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	43
4.1 Overview of Current Cambodia’s Economy	43
4.2. Challenges in Cambodian Economic Development.....	46
4.2.1. Corruption	46

4.2.2. Low Quality of Education.....	48
4.2.3. Ineffective governance.....	48
4.3. Summary of Similarities and Differences between Cambodia and Singapore.....	53
4.4. What Should Cambodia Learn from Singapore?	54
4.4.1. Corruption	55
4.4.1.1. Political Will.....	55
4.4.1.2. Promoting and Establishing the Whistleblower Protection Law	56
4.4.1.3. Strengthening the Effective Work of the Anti-Corruption Unit.....	58
4.4.1.4. Promoting Online Public Services.....	60
4.4.2. Quality of Education.....	61
4.4.2.1. Introducing Primary School Leaving Exam for Secondary Education.....	61
4.4.2.2. Improvement of Academic Curriculum in Secondary Education	62
4.4.2.3. Support Fund for Impoverished Students	63
4.4.2.4. Improvement of Vocational and Technical Education	64
CONCLUSION.....	66
RECOMMENDATION	69
BIBLIOGRAPHIES	

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACU	: Anti-Corruption Unit
CMIO	: Chinese Malay Indian and Other
CPF	: Central Provident Fund
CPI	: Corruption Perception Index
EDB	: Economic Development Board
GCE	: General Common Entrance
ITE	: Institute of Technical Education
NCAC	: National Council Against Corruption
NGOs	: Non-Governmental Organizations
LKY	: LEE KUAN YEW
MNCs	: Multinational Corporations
PSLE	: Primary School Leaving Exam
CPIB	: Corrupt Practice Investigation Board
HDB	: Housing Development Board
IIEP	: International Institute for Educational Planning
MoEYS	: Ministry of Education, Youths, & Sports
MoLVT	: Ministry of Labor and Vocational Training
PCA	: Prevention Corruption Act
PCO	: Prevention of Corruption Ordinance
TVET	: Technical and Vocational Education Training

INTRODUCTION

Background

After the end of the Second World War, many countries in the world including countries in Asia have gained independence. Economic development is absolutely crucial for those countries to improve economic well-being, living standard, and people's income. Economic development can be termed as "the process whereby simple, low-income national economies are transformed into modern industrial economies".¹ It is the tactics executed by the state to evolve the primordial economy to be wealthy, prosperous, and sustainable. To this extent, many countries have started from the status of 'developing countries' which have many social and economic issues to bear. They almost started with nothing; however, some countries have outstandingly transformed their economy very fast compared to other young independent nations. For instance, Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong which are the four examples of miracle economic development in Asia.

Singapore has greatly transformed its economy even though it had many problems to ponder. It gained independence in 1965 after the failed merger with Malaysia in 1963. Back in 1965, Singapore was an empty land that was plagued by poverty and instability compared to its neighborhoods. It faced many social, economic, and security struggles such as the lack of land and natural resources, even freshwater, racial tension, corruption, high unemployment rate, and poverty. However, Singapore successfully overcome these problems and became a wealthy city-state owing to its effective government, corruption-free, and work-class education. The case of Singapore is very notable and should be a good example for other third world countries

¹ Krueger, Anne O, and Hla, Myint, "Economic Development," Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., September 27, 2016, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/economic-development>. (accessed June 09, 2020).

to learn from Singapore, particularly about its economic challenges, solutions, and government effort to make economic success.

Scope

This research will be discovering the factors that have contributed to Singapore's economic success since the earlier stage after its dependence. We will give a basic study and analysis to better understand how this country has transformed its economy. Moreover, this will include challenges, solutions, and government efforts to strengthen the economy. Due to the limitation of the number of pages that we cannot provide a wider range of information about economic development between the context of Singapore and Cambodia, therefore, this paper will draw the two experiences from Singapore in containing corruption and developing a world-class education under the prime minister **LEE KUAN YEW** that are part of the key components for the economy. The twos would be the lesson for Cambodia that is currently striving to transform itself to be a developed country by learning from Singapore accordingly in order to transform its economic well-being in the future.

Research Objectives

This research paper aims to: analyze and understand how Singapore has transformed its economy, learn from its economic challenges, solutions, and government efforts to strengthen the economy, discover the key components that lead to Singapore's economic success, seek a good model that Cambodia should learn from Singapore after independence, especially for some issues encountered by Singapore such as corruption, unemployment, poverty, low quality of education, and a living standard that Cambodia is now confronting these challenges as well, and identify similarities and differences between Cambodia and Singapore regarding to economic challenges, solutions, and what Cambodia should learn accordingly in its context.

Research Problems

In ASEAN, Brunei and Singapore are the only two developed countries while the rest of the countries are in developing status. Dating back, Cambodia gained its independence about 12 years before Singapore. Comparably, Cambodia is still one of the poorest nations in ASEAN, with GDP per capita of \$1,504 above Myanmar while Singapore is now the wealthiest nation in ASEAN. There are many problems behind Cambodian economic development, one of which is corruption resulting from the government's poor governance and unwillingness to keep corruption at bay. According to the Corruption Perception Index 2019, conducted by Transparency International based in Germany, presented by Transparency International Cambodia, Cambodia is the most corrupt country in the ASEAN region.² The rise of corruption can possibly bring a negative impact on a country as it has slowed down the economy and discouraged foreign investments into a country with poor governance.³ This needs to be urgently resolved with a high effort and willingness from the government. Seeking a good example, Singapore is the most standout country where it is always best for all developments in the region. Particularly, Singapore's economic development with corruption-free should be a good example and lesson for Cambodia to learn and adapt accordingly to fighting corruption and improving governance for its economic sustainability

Research Questions

There are few important research questions that will be the guiding points leading to comprehensive research and insightful analysis for this research paper:

1. What are the key factors that contribute to Singapore's economic success?

² "Corruption Perception Index 2019, Jan 23, 2020, Transparency International Cambodia, [Corruption Perceptions Index \(CPI\) 2019 THE RESULTS](#).

³ Rinith, Taing, "Rising corruption in Cambodia: Who, What, Why and How?", *Khmer Time*, January 30, 2020, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/685222/rising-corruption-in-cambodia-who-what-why-and-how/> (accessed June 8, 2020).

2. What were the challenges and solutions of the Singapore economy after independence?
3. What are the current challenges/weaknesses in Cambodian economic development? Did Singapore face similar challenges as Cambodia? Or were they different?
4. What should Cambodia learn from Singapore?

Literature Reviews

This literature review aims to thoroughly examine recent scholars' articles, academic journals, and reports related to key components of Singapore economic success, challenges & solutions, and Singapore economic overview. Since there are many studies about Singapore's economy, hence, this paper will focus on key components to Singapore's economic success right after independence and carefully analyze how Cambodia can learn from Singapore according to its geography and social context.

Regarding literature, there is a well-documented book, "From Third World to First," written by Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of Singapore. The author (Lee Kuan Yew) showed some key points on the efforts of the Singaporean government in seeking independence, making friends with major powers as well as neighboring countries, keeping the government clean, increasing jobs, and transforming Singapore as a financial hub and regional port. As such, these points will be introduced in this paper to provide a solid understanding of Singapore's history and economy.

Furthermore, there are many journals, articles, and research papers comprehensively shown about key factors that contributed to Singapore's economic success. One of which is the research paper "Why Singapore Work: Five Secret of Singapore's Success," was written by professor Jon S.T. Quah, a retired professor at the National University of Singapore and an anti-corruption consultant based in Singapore. The author raised five main points as the important

factors that lead to answering what factors that lead to Singapore's economic success: "the pragmatic leadership of the late Lee Kuan Yew and his successors; an effective public bureaucracy; effective control of corruption; reliance on the "best and brightest" citizens through investment in education and competitive compensation; and learning from other countries."⁴ This research paper is an important source as a bridge to the understanding of major elements of the Singapore economy that will partly be cited in chapter 2. Moreover, corruption was a way of life right after independence that was a big problem for a young and small nation like Singapore. Later, the effective control of corruption became one of the key factors leading to Singapore's economic development. To have a deep understanding of effective control of corruption, there is a paper "Singapore Anti-Corruption Strategy", written by Vincent Lim, Director Investigations Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). The author looked into three main points of the history of Singapore's fight against corruption, national strategies to deal with the corruption threat, and the role and structure of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB).

Relating to Singapore economic challenges and solutions thereafter the independence, there is a research report "Singapore Economic Metropolitan Economics Strategy Report-Singapore Economic Transformation," from Global Urban Development, which was written by Gundy Cahyadi, Barbara Kursten, Dr. Marc Weiss, and Guang Yang. The report disclosed three main challenges including a high unemployment rate, low-skill population, and poor standard of living resulting from inadequate housing, etc. with some responsive and effective solutions undertaken by the Singaporean government in order to tackle the economic challenges. Therefore, the report provides a good lesson on the constant and effective solutions to building

⁴ Quach, Jon S.T., "Public Administration and Policy," Why Singapore Work: Five Secret of Singapore's Success 21, no.1 (2018): p5-21.

a miracle economic development that lifted Singapore out of severe unemployment rate, poverty, and labor based-economy from the 1960s-1980s.

There is a research paper on the relation of “Education and Fragility in Cambodia”, conducted by International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has revealed that low quality education can be a major challenge in Cambodia’s economic development as it cannot provide right direction, knowledge, skills when it comes to employment that can foster economic growth. The research has given an insightful analysis in five broad areas about the relation of education and fragility in Cambodia such as relevance education, disparities in access, (dis)engagement with the education system, teachers, and structures and governance. These areas studied on the inadequate implementation of government’s policies which is an issue in building quality of human resource with the right knowledge and skills that can contribute to Cambodian economic development.

Methodology

The Research methodology for our thesis would be based on the research material and e-books acquired from the online library, academic journal, institutional report, official documentary interview videos, and analysis article that is related to the topic, would ensure good progress in our paper. Utilizing these sources, we are able to deepen our understanding of the economic history of Singapore. Then, we will draw lessons and experiences from other sorts of sources including government policy and strategy toward particular problems of its economic endeavor.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO SINGAPORE

1.1. Brief History of Singapore

Dating back to the history of Singapore, it has many significant historical periods such as early history which was before 1819, the British colonial era, the Japanese occupation, the post-war period, internal self-governance, merger with Malaysia, and the Republic of Singapore commencing from 1965 to the present. However, this section of history will be focusing on some parts of the British colonial era to independence that will be picking up some points related to the development of Singapore's entrepot trade, administration, and efforts to fight corruption under Britain. This period is the most relevant historical event leading to wealthy Singapore today.

Among other states under the British colony, Singapore is the lucky one that benefited economically from the British than being exploited. Singapore may be the only one country that always pays its gratitude to the colonizer, in contrast, many other countries suffered and were exploited by the colonizer. Sir. Thomas Stamford Raffles was considered and respected by the Singaporeans as a founder of modern Singapore, notably, eyeing Singapore as a strategic location for an entrepot trade hub. Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles was a British East Indian administrator based in Southeast Asia and India, was sent to Singapore in 1819. After his arrival, he had the vision to transform Singapore as a strategic location for the important sea trade between India and China in addition to its existing traditional port. Meanwhile, the competition for the supremacy of power between the British and Dutch, Raffle made such an immediate move to occupy Singapore and make it a regional trading station (seaport) in the Southern part of Asia.⁵ This new modern trading post attracted foreign workers from different

⁵ Jonathan, "History: Singapore's British Colonization," *Anglotopia.net*, April 4, 2017, <https://www.anglotopia.net/news-features/history-singapores-british-colonization/> (accessed June 18, 2020).

parts of the world including Chinese, Indians, Eurasians, and Europeans to work and operate businesses in Singapore. Many years to come, the amount of trade increased dramatically due to its strategic location and efficient trading service created by the British. Eventually, Singapore became the vital commercial and military base of the British Empire among other older colonized trading posts such as Malacca and Penang in the Malay peninsula. This is the biggest advantage that Singapore has inherited from the British and continued to develop its seaport to be one of the busiest in the world. That was and still one of the major national income for the Singapore economy until now.

The presence of the British was significant in shaping a better Singapore society because of its effective administration. Before the arrival of Raffles or the British, Singapore was just a poor and swamped fishing village. Raffles had a plan for a new town in Singapore with a strong belief Singapore would one day be "a place of considerable magnitude and importance." He ordered the use of different areas of land for social and economic infrastructure. Under his plan, "commercial buildings were to be constructed of brick with tiled roofs, each with a two-meter covered walkway to provide shelter from sun and rain. Spaces were set aside for shipyards, markets, churches, theatres, police stations, and a botanical garden."⁶ Once the infrastructure is built, next is the laws governing the city-state.

To prevent the crime, he introduced the high compensation method to the victim in case of minor crimes whereas murder was to be considered a capital offense, and various work and training programs were used to turn prisoners into useful settlers.⁷ He also worked effortlessly to end gambling and slavery was shut down and heavily taxed on the sale of opium and alcohol

⁶ Barbara Leitch Lepoer, ed, "*Singapore: Founding and Early Year*," Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989.

⁷ Ibid.

in Singapore. However, he failed to eliminate the debt bondage that immigrants were often forced to work for years to pay their passage.

Eventually, Singapore declared its independence officially on 09th August 1965 after failing the merger with Malaysia. Singapore is always a special case for getting many benefits from the British, unlike other countries that were so much exploited after decolonization. The presence of Britain, notably, Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles crucially impacted what is a wealthy and prosperous Singapore today owing to the establishment of Singapore port which is one of a major source of income to its economy until now. Besides, Singapore also got a better functioning infrastructure, the legal system, mode of administration concerning social control, and corruption eradication from the British which were the important legacy of its economic development for the independent government.

1.2. Geography

Singapore is situated in Southeastern Asia which is the smallest country in ASEAN. It is officially called the Republic of Singapore with the capital city of Singapore. It shares a maritime border with Malaysia and Indonesia; besides, it has no land boundary since it is an island on the tip of the Malay peninsula. It has a total territory of 719.2 square kilometers (km) with 193 km of coastline.

The Singapore climate is tropical; hot, humid, and rainy. It has two distinct monsoon seasons; northeastern monsoon (December to March) and Southwestern monsoon (June to September); inter-monsoon - frequent afternoon and early evening thunderstorms. Even though it is just a small island, it is facing some environmental issues such as water pollution; industrial pollution; limited natural fresh water resources; limited land availability presents waste disposal

problems; air pollution; deforestation; seasonal smoke/haze resulting from forest fires in Indonesia.⁸

Unlike other countries, unfortunately, Singapore is a geographical disadvantaged country where it has no natural resources even freshwater. Fortunately, instead of natural resources, it has a strategic location for maritime trade that is one of the busiest seaports in the world.

1.3. Singapore society

Singapore has a total population of approximately 6.2 million with 1.73% growth (July 2020 est.).⁹ Dividing the overall population with the land area, Singapore is the most populous country in ASEAN and with roughly 8,634 people per square km, making it one of the highest densities of population in the world. The life expectancy of Singapore is 86 years old, ranking third place globally after Monaco and Japan, with the literacy rate 97.3% of the whole population.¹⁰

Singapore is a multiracial country that the overall population is divided into four categories including Chinese 74.3%, Malay 13.4%, Indian 9%, and Others 3.2% (CMIO) (2018 est.).¹¹ The common nationality of its people is “Singaporean(s),” in addition, everyone has to choose their own race among the four categories. Chinese Singaporeans are considered to be the local ethnic who immigrated from China and settled to live in Singapore since early history. Malay is the indigenous Malaysians and Indonesia who some settled by themselves and some were brought to Singapore by the British. Indian category is referring to South Asians such as Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, or Bangladeshi...). Others are those of Eurasians, Filipino,

⁸ “The World Factbook: Singapore-Geography,” Central Intelligence Agency (Central Intelligence Agency, February 1, 2018), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sn.html> (accessed June 10, 2020).

⁹ “The World Factbook: Singapore-People and Society,” Central Intelligence Agency (Central Intelligence Agency, February 1, 2018), <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sn.html> (accessed June 10, 2020).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Japanese... Singapore is also a multicultural and diversified country where its people are free to explore different languages and religions. It has four major religions such as Buddhism 33.2%, Christianity 18.8%, Islam 14%, Taoism 10%, Hindu 5%, other 0.6%, and none 18.5% (2015 est.).¹² In addition, there are four official languages consisting of English, Chinese, Malays, and Tamil. English is a primary language for everyone while Chinese, Malay, and Tamil are the second languages spoken by the ethnic accordingly. In this regard, the second languages are optional and people can either learn or not.

1.4. Government

Singapore is a parliamentary democratic republic whereby there are many political parties actively competing for seats in the government. The president is the head of state and the prime minister is the head of government. Currently, there are only two political parties owning seats in the parliament which are the People's Action Party and Workers' Party. Singapore has a similar governing structure with the British's Westminster system which is a parliamentary system. In this regard, Singapore consists of three important branches such as Executive, Legislative, and Judicial branches.

The executive branch consists of a cabinet and the president. The current president is Halimah Yacob, who is the head of state and the first female president in Singapore. She has certain roles and functions to act according to the cabinet's discretions like the queen of England. So, the presidency is largely ceremonial. The cabinet is a similar term of the council of ministers that takes direct control of the government. It is led by Mr. LEE Hsien Long, who is the current prime minister of Singapore and a son of the founding father of Singapore LEE KUAN YEW. Members of cabinets are the ministers from respective ministries who obtain

¹² Ibid.

membership in the parliament. They are appointed by the president on the advice of the prime minister.

The legislative branch is formed with two important actors, the parliament of Singapore and the president. Its key functions are lawmaking, managing national finance, and ministerial accountability. Singapore follows a unicameral parliament which means it has only one parliament consisting of 88 elected, 3 non-constituency, and 9 nominated members in 2019.¹³ Members of Parliament (MPs) work as a bridge to bring the community's needs and concerns to the parliament. The elected MPs are those who were elected in the general election. The non-constituency MPs are the members of the opposition parties, who are nominated by the winning party in the general election. The nominated MPs are appointed by the president according to "a constitutional provision for the appointment of up to 9 Nominated Members of Parliament (NMPs) was made in 1990 to ensure a wide representation of community views in Parliament."¹⁴

Singapore follows the English common law system in which the constitution is the supreme law. The Judicial branch comprises the supreme court and state court. The Honourable the Chief Justice is the head of the Judiciary. The Supreme Court is made up of the Court of Appeal and the High Court and hears both civil and criminal matters. It consists of the Chief Justice, Judges of Appeal, Judges, Senior Judges, International Judges, and Judicial Commissioners. The appeal court normally hears the appeals against the decision of the high court who is equivalent to the court of the first instance. The state court also hears both civil

¹³ "Members of Parliament," Members of Parliament | Parliament Of Singapore (Parliament of Singapore), 2020, <https://www.parliament.gov.sg/about-us/structure/members-of-parliament> (accessed June 17, 2020).

¹⁴ Ibid.

and criminal matters, but the main difference is the claim which is less than S\$250,000.00.¹⁵ It comprises the District Courts, Magistrates' Courts, Coroners' Court, Small Claims Tribunals, and the Juvenile Court.

1.5. Overview of the Singapore Economy

Singapore is now a highly developed and wealthy nation with a free market economy. Singapore is home to one of the busiest ports in the world, a major financial hub regionally and globally, thousands of multinational companies (MNCs). The robust economy has attracted thousands of foreign professionals to work that are the key labor forces adding to its local manpower.

As of 2019, it had S\$ 507,568 million (USD 375,976 million) of gross domestic product (GDP) with S\$ 88,991 (USD 65, 919) of GDP per capita with 0.7 percent growth.¹⁶ The GDP per capita of Singapore is higher than in most developed countries, so it has reflected the high living standard of all Singaporeans. Singapore's economic transformation is phenomenal and almost unbelievable for a young nation who just got independence in 1965. Moreover, Singapore has obtained many international recognitions placing it in the top rank globally for many things in the context of the economy. One of which is the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 Ranking 2019, Singapore ranked 1st globally when it comes to the most competitive economy in the world that followed by the U.S.¹⁷

Recently, the Singapore economy is facing some challenges from the global and regional economic environment such as the rising new regional financial hub, higher cost of

¹⁵ "What Is the Difference between the Supreme Court and the State Courts?," Supreme Court Singapore FAQs About the Supreme Court - Structure and Jurisdiction, https://www.ifaq.gov.sg/supremecourt/apps/fcd_faqlmain.aspx? (accessed June 18, 2020).

¹⁶ "Singapore Economy," Department of Statistic, <https://www.singstat.gov.sg/modules/infographics/economy> (accessed June 18, 2020).

¹⁷ Klaus Schwab, ed., "The Global Competitiveness Report 2019," (Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum, 2019), p. xiii).

operating business, and lower workforces in other countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia. However, it is still a strategic location pertaining to “the country’s extensive network of double tax treaties, strategic location within the center of all developing markets, together with its economic and political stability, the renowned legal system, extensive connectivity and talent resources, innovative business environment, and immense opportunities for business growth within the Southeast Asian region, are just a few factors that drive Singapore’s success as a preeminent business center of the modern global economy.”¹⁸

1.5.1. International Trade

Singapore's economy is highly dependent on international trade. As of 2019, the overall merchandise trade of Singapore has decreased 3.2 percent, however, the Singapore economy is still in a good balance with S\$ 1022.2 billion of total merchandise trade in 2019.¹⁹ The overall export is S\$ 532.5 billion while the import is S\$ 489.7 billion showing the economic surplus for Singapore.²⁰ Currently, Singapore has six major international trading partners in which mainland China (the People’s Republic of China) is the biggest partner followed by Malaysia, the United States, the European Union, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. In addition, there are important trading partners including Australia, Thailand, South Korea, Japan, and Indonesia. The importation in 2019 is less than that in 2018 approximately 10.5 billion. There are nine major categories of product in Singapore’s imports such as machinery and transport equipment 61.2%, chemicals, and chemical products 10.5%, miscellaneous manufactured articles 10.5%, manufactured goods 6.5%, miscellaneous excluding oil bunkers 5.8%, food and live animals

¹⁸ "Why Foreign Companies Relocate to Singapore?" GuideMeSingapore, [Why do Foreign Companies Relocate to Singapore?](#) (accessed June 19, 2020).

¹⁹ "Singapore International Trade." Base. Last modified May 5, 2020.

<https://www.singstat.gov.sg/modules/infographics/singapore-international-trade> (accessed June 19, 2020).

²⁰ Ibid.

3%, beverage and tobacco 1.3%, crude material excluding fuel 0.8%, animals & vegetable, oil, fat, and waves 0.4%.²¹

The exportation in 2019 is S\$ 532.5 billion which is less than S\$ 555.7 billion of 2018. The exported products consist of machinery and transport equipment 58.2%, chemicals, and chemical products 16.9%, miscellaneous manufactured articles 11%, manufactured goods 3.8%, miscellaneous excluding oil bunkers 4.9%, food and live animals 2.9%, beverage and tobacco 1.3%, crude material excluding fuels 1%, animals & vegetable, oil, fat, and waves 0.1%.²²

1.5.2. Key Economic Sectors

Singapore's economy is dominantly based on two important sectors of manufacturing or industrial and service sectors. In 2019, the service sector accounted for 70.4 percent of the GDP with 83 percent contribution to employment, whereas, the service sectors accounted for 25.2% with 22.5 percent contribution of employment, the remaining is 3.8% ownership of dwelling.²³ As mentioned, the service sector is the biggest component of Singapore's economy, which includes industry, business, finance and insurance, information and communication, accommodation & food, and transportation & storage. In addition, the industrial sector is the second biggest component of the economy. The sector comprises manufacturing, construction, and utility. The key industrial activities are aerospace, chemicals, electronics, pharmaceutical, and biotechnology. Resulting from the industrial and service sector, Singapore has transformed from a poor to a highly technological and industrial economy without foreign dept. As a result, Singapore now is the most stable economy with a consistent positive surplus which generates a high amount of income to the government.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ "The Economic Context of Singapore," The Economic Context of Singapore - Economic and Political Overview - Nordea Trade Portal, [The economic context of Singapore - Economic and Political Overview](#) (accessed June 19, 2020).

CHAPTER 2: FACTORS LEADING TO SINGAPORE ECONOMIC SUCCESS

2.1. LEE KUAN YEW (LKY)

LKY is a child of a wealthy Chinese family, was born on 23 September 1923 in Singapore. He studied in a top school in Singapore for his lower education. For tertiary education, he obtained an undergraduate degree majoring in Law from the University of Cambridge, UK. In 1950, he returned to Singapore, where he became a legal advisor to student and trade unions. Later, he and his colleagues founded a political party called the People's Action Party (PAP), but the party did not win the general election in 1955. However, his party and he particularly played an important role in shaping Singapore society.

Mr. LEE KUAN YEW was the first prime minister of Singapore who took office as a prime minister of Singapore from 1959 to 1990 making him the longest-serving prime minister in Singapore. LKY, a founding father of modern Singapore, was the most important leader in Singapore's economic development history. Without his effective governance and leadership, Singapore could not come this far from a third world to the first world within a single generation. Therefore, this section will be talking about two main associated points of LKY's effective governance including LKY's leadership style and his key characteristics as a transformational leader.

2.1.1. LKY's Leadership styles

The word leadership can be simply defined as a state of being a leader whose functions are to guide and lead a group or organization. There are many types of leadership such as charismatic, transformational, quiet, participative, transactional leadership, etc. Based on the observation of Mr. LEE KUAN YEW, there is one leadership style that can be best described as "Transformational Leadership". Transformational leadership is a theory developed by James

McGregor Burns who was an American historian and political scientist. According to Burns, transformational leadership is “a process in which leaders and followers assist each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation; the transforming approach creates a significant change in the life of people and organizations.”²⁴ The transformational leader often poses with vision, adaptability, courage, charisma, and inspiration for his/her followers and the organization.

2.1.2. LKY’s Characteristics as a Transformational Leader

As mentioned, his excellent leadership properly matches what is the transformational leader. This section will be talking about three main characteristics of transformational leadership such as vision, charisma, and flexibility that will be elaborating in the following paragraphs.

The first characteristic is a vision which simply means thinking about or planning the future with imagination or wisdom. LKY’s main vision was to build Singapore's economy drastically with a strong intention to make Singapore as a financial hub with wealthy and sustainable economic growth. To make it achievable, he mainly focuses on “drawing world-class manpower; building state of the art infrastructure and excellent air and sea linkages; a low and transparent tax regime; clean and efficient bureaucracy; a strong regulatory and legal framework; a neutral diplomatic policy which has ensured it is an ally of the US as well as China, and developing a clean and green city, have ensured Singapore's stupendous economic success.”²⁵ Moreover, Resulting from a tax incentive policy and relatively free corruption, thousands of MNCs and banks drastically moved to settle in Singapore seeking the expansion of business opportunities in Asia. These missions worked effectively, particularly the effective

²⁴ Burns, J.M, Leadership, N.Y, Harper and Row, 1978.

²⁵ Zarina Hussain and Navnita Sarma, "How Lee Kuan Yew Engineered Singapore's Economic Miracle," *BBC News*, March 24, 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-32028693> (accessed June 22, 2020).

governance, and the cleanliness of the government was the most pushing factor to make LEE's vision reachable. The government effort to fight corruption led to a very high payment of wages that brought a very good living standard for all Singaporeans. Therefore, LKY's vision is still realized presently since Singapore is now an important financial hub and the most competitive economy in the world.

Another characteristic is charisma. "Charismatic leadership is basically the method of encouraging particular behaviors in others by way of eloquent communication, persuasion, and force of personality."²⁶ LKY is an empirical exemplar, he had a great capability to inspire, attract, and touch the heart of his followers to be on his side. He had a powerful and great influence over his followers and Singapore as a whole. For instance, a landslide victory in the 1959 general election which was the first time of PAP's legitimacy in leading Singapore. This success could not happen if there was no LKY who was an extremely skillful and persuasive leader of the PAP. Notably, LKY's main achievements as a PM are keeping Singapore free of corruption, slum, and poverty. As a result, in 1990, even though he decided to step down from being a PM, he was still nominated to hold several senior positions such as mentor minister, senior minister, and advisor in the government.

Last but not least, flexibility is another of LKY's key characteristics. Flexibility refers to the ways or methods that are used to adapt to the change and particular circumstance. Earlier in the 1960s, Singapore was an impoverished society with a high unemployment rate. To solve these issues, Lee and his successors must be flexible from being a dogmatic approach (anti-American and MNCs) to a pragmatic approach; Lee had to allow and attract MNCs and as many as Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) to come in Singapore since they had capital, technology,

²⁶ Belsan, "What Is Charismatic Leadership?," Teamwork Definition Information, accessed June 23, 2020, <https://teamworkdefinition.com/charismaticleadership/>.

market, and techniques.²⁷ As a result, those MNCs could create more jobs for Singaporeans. At the same time, he focused on building technical skill citizens to make sure that his locals were able to perform their jobs for the coming MNCs, however, in the early 1960s, the jobs were mostly labor-based. Due to the high living standard and the comparative advantages in the outside world, Singapore could not heavily rely on the labor-based economy for subsistence, so LKY wanted to transform Singapore to be a knowledge-based economy where people must be well-educated before actively participating in the workforce. So, LKY heavily focuses on education to make sure his citizens will be ready for the knowledge-based industry in the decades to come. Even though there were many difficulties, as mentioned, LKY was very pragmatic and flexible to the changes. Consequently, LKY's flexibility indeed worked for Singapore's economic transformation.

In conclusion, as a transformational leader, LKY posed three essential features including vision, charisma, and flexibility. He was a monumental and inspirational leader who got so many international praises for his amazing political leadership in transforming Singapore. Therefore, he was actually crucial for Singapore's social and economic development and became a role model for many Singaporeans politicians and world leaders.

2.2. Effective Governance

Governance can be defined as “the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced; the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies; and the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them.”²⁸ Merely having a well-written policy may not be called

²⁷ Jon S.T. Quah, “Pragmatic Leadership: Lee Kuan Yew's Legacy,” *Why Singapore Works: Five Secrets of Singapore's Success*, 21(2018): p. 6, <https://doi.org/DOI 10.1108/PAP-06-2018-002>.

²⁸ Daniel Kaufmann and Aart Kraay, “What Is Governance?,” WGI-Home (World Bank), <https://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/> (accessed June 24, 2020).

having good governance as long as there is an effective implementation or execution of the written policy.

Generally, governance was and is still an essential indicator for Singapore's economic growth. Without good governance, Singapore cannot be prosperous and wealthy as today. No matter how much or less natural resources are available in a country, it does not matter without good governance which is relatively about the effective government who is able to use the resources effectively. For an example of many countries with so many natural resources, yet they are still struggling to be a wealthy state like Singapore. Good governance reflects the “Government Effectiveness” which actually matters. For years back, Singapore was an outstanding country when it comes to government effectiveness (see table 1).²⁹ According to the World Government Index, 2018, Singapore ranked number one out of 193 countries globally.³⁰ This impressive rank made Singapore have the most effective government in the world that is a good lesson for many developed and developing countries.

Table 1: Government effectiveness in Singapore

Year	Government effectiveness score (-2.5 to +2.5)	Percentile rank (0–100)
1996	2.10	100.00
1998	2.12	100.00
2000	2.17	100.00
2002	1.85	93.66
2003	1.96	96.59
2004	2.03	96.10
2005	2.00	99.02
2006	2.18	99.51
2007	2.37	100.00
2008	2.43	100.00
2009	2.28	100.00
2010	2.26	100.00
2011	2.17	99.53
2012	2.15	99.52
2013	2.07	99.52
2014	2.19	100.00
2015	2.30	100.00
2016	2.20	100.00

Source: World Bank (2017)

²⁹ Jon S.T. Quah, “A good piano playing good music: an effective public bureaucracy,”

Why Singapore Works: Five Secrets of Singapore's Success, 21(2018): p. 8, <https://doi.org/DOI.10.1108/PAP-06-2018-002>.

³⁰ World Bank, “Government Effectiveness by Country, around the World,” TheGlobalEconomy.com, [Government effectiveness by country, around the world](#) (accessed June 25, 2020).

2.2.1. Key Principles of Effective Governance

As mentioned about the success and Singapore's global rank regarding the effectiveness of government above, there will be a question pondering in mind: were there any principles leading to Singapore's effective governance? In this regard, there are three essential indicators including rule of law, multi-racial and cultural harmony, and reversed western democracy. These three indicators were the key components leading to effective governance in Singapore that will be elaborating in the following subordinated points.

2.2.1.1. Rule of Law

The rule of law is a legal principle that requires everyone, including the government, to obey the law. Rule of law is always the foundation for Singapore society since it gained independence. It has developed over time and is the tool of good governance in suppressing social disorder, crime, and subversion as well as managing a better socio-economic development. As written in chapter 1, the constitution is the supreme law in Singapore in which all passing laws must be compatible with the constitution compulsorily before promulgation. The constitution clearly provided the independence of the judiciary to make sure there is a fair justice system for all in Singapore society regardless of power, wealth, and fame. "This would give ordinary people confidence that, if they should ever go to court, they would be treated no differently than the powerful and rich people."³¹ The credible and independent rule of law has got so much public trust from all strata of Singaporeans for decades. In addition, the effective rule of law has played an important role to fulfil LKY's dream to transform Singapore as a regional and global financial hub. Consequently, thousands of MNCs and FDIs were drastically relocated and invested in Singapore with billions of money because they were and are still

³¹Lecture on "The Principles of Good Governance" by Professor Tommy Koh, Ambassador at Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and IPS Special Advice at the Workshop on Good Governance, 07 October, 2009.

confident that their money is completely safe. Externally, the rule of law in Singapore made it to be one of the most effective one in the world. According to the Rule of Law index, 2020, Singapore obtained 12th rank out of 128 countries in the world, measured by the World Justice Project.³² Therefore, the rule of law is an important principle for good governance in Singapore. It has made public trust between Singaporeans and their judiciary that indicates a fair justice system for all.

2.2.1.2. Multi-Racial and Cultural Harmony

Even though the fact that Singapore is a multi-racial country, however, it has a strong cohesion among all races nationwide. The common nationality of its people is “Singaporean(s),” in addition, everyone has to choose their own race among the four categories of Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Others. In this regard, people might have wondered how the Singapore government worked to contain racial harmony?

The constitution of Singapore is a major cause of racial harmony. It prohibited all forms of discrimination against all Singaporeans regardless of race, religion, and descent of birth.³³ There are three principles carried out by the Singapore government to ensure racial harmony in accordance with its constitution. First, the recognition of all races. At the point of the independence, then Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew declared:

“We are going to have a multiracial nation in Singapore. We will set an example. This is not a Malay nation; this is not a Chinese nation; this is not an Indian nation. Everybody will have his place: equal; language, culture, religion.”³⁴

As such, the government divided and recognized four races such as Chinese, Malay, Indian, and others to avoid racial tension. To satisfy and build a sense of identity and belonging

³² “Rule of Law Index, 2020” (Washington, DC 20005, USA: World Justice Project), p. 7, https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/WJP-ROLI-2020-Online_0.pdf (accessed June 26, 2020).

³³ Article 12(1), Singapore Constitution.

³⁴ Shanmugam K., “Racial Harmony: Five Critical Steps to Keep the Peace,” October 14, 2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/racial-harmony-five-critical-steps-to-keep-the-peace>.

for all ethnicities, the government welcomes the diversity of culture and religion that each ethnicity has brought into Singapore. People are free to choose their own religion. Second, the languages' unification. To increase the sense of belonging, Singapore was set to have four official languages: English is the common language for all; Chinese, Malay, and Tamil are secondary languages optionally chosen by all. The third principle is meritocracy. Meritocracy basically means everyone is awarded based on his/her merits which are the talent, skill, and level of education. This is an applicable approach for a multi-racial nation like Singapore in dealing with racial jealousy and tension. Thus, individuals must be very skillful and knowledgeable in order to build personal merits and compete for available jobs and opportunities.

2.2.1.3. Reversed Western Democracy

The Singapore government wanted to strictly maintain good social order. In fact, Singapore is a democratic country with free and fair elections participated by many political parties. After independence, to have better governance and social control, the Singapore government has followed opposite ways of western democracy in which civil liberties and human rights are partially restricted for decades until now. Even though the Singapore government often got many criticisms about its democracy, however, the PAP government always portrays it as a “trade-off” between economic growth and high standard of living, and human and political rights.³⁵

Freedom of expression, especially concerning politics, is restricted, consequently, people and opposition political leaders were often sued by the government when there were critics on sensitive issues against the government. Consequently, some were detained without

³⁵ Kirsten Han, By, and Johanna Son, “On Freedom of Expression and Civil Liberties in Singapore: Heinrich Böll Foundation: Southeast Asia Regional Office,” Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, April 22, 2019, <https://th.boell.org/en/2019/04/22/freedom-expression-and-civil-liberties-singapore>.

trial under the Internal Security Act. People are banned to join or lead protests, demonstrations, and riots, the protest must be done in a peaceful manner. The peaceful protest will be done unless there is permission from the government. However, the permit was rarely given. In January, Mr. Jolovan Wham, a human right activist, was found guilty of “organizing a public assembly without a permit” under the Public Order Act and sentenced to a fine of S\$3,200 (US\$2,367), or by default, 16 days in jail, He was appealing the decision.³⁶

One more thing, presses were closely monitored by the government, so that they cannot write news against the government. Singapore has the Newspaper and Printing Press Act giving excessive right to restrict the freedom of the press. There were a few lawsuits filed by PAP members to the news publication such as the Far Eastern Economic Review or the International Herald Tribune concerning the defamation.³⁷ So, the media institutions had to go for the government otherwise, they would be in trouble.

Unlike many democratic nations, Singapore is still retaining capital punishment. The mandatory crimes lead to the execution are drug trafficking, terrorism, murder, and possession of unauthorized firearms, ammunition, or explosives.³⁸ Most crimes are drug trafficking-related crimes. The only reason behind the mandatory death penalty is to keep all Singaporeans out of drug since human resource is the key to Singapore economic success. So that the government has zero-tolerance with drug trafficking.

In conclusion, under the leadership of the Singaporean governments, parts of civil and political rights have been restricted to have effective governance nationwide. As mentioned,

³⁶ Singapore: Joint statement on the sentencing of human rights defender Jolovan Wham (statement, 22 February). As cited in “Everything You Need to Know about Human Rights in Singapore,” Everything you need to know about human rights in Singapore| Amnesty International | Amnesty International, accessed June 29, 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/asia-and-the-pacific/singapore/report-singapore/>.

³⁷(Han and Son, 2019)

³⁸ Saw Su Hui, “Death Penalty in Singapore: Is It Time to Abolish It?,” SingaporeLegalAdvice.com, November 1, 2019, <https://singaporelegaladvice.com/death-penalty-singapore/>.

freedom of press and speech are part of the restriction plus the death penalty which is a means to keep Singapore out of the drug. Both people and the media could not go for protest easily and publish whatever they want to express. However, the Singapore government has admitted that the partial restriction of human rights is the exchange for better economic growth and prosperity of Singapore society and economy.

2.3. Transparent Government

According to a study by Dr. Leslie Palmier, the key reasons for corruption were: “Low Salaries, Ample Opportunities for Corruption and Ineffective Policing.”³⁹ When it comes to corruption, Singapore is one of the least corrupt countries in the world. According to the 2019’s corruption perception index, Singapore got the fourth rank out of 180 territories globally as the least corrupt country in the world.⁴⁰ Back then, Singapore under the British was seriously plagued by corruption even though there were laws, the Prevention of Corruption Ordinance 1937 (PCO), and designated Corrupt Practice Investigation Bureau (CPIB) to deal with the increasing corruption. Corruption kept happening such a way of life due to there being no harsh punishment in place. Once the PAP government took office in 1959, LKY and his political peers had a strong intention to create a transparent government.

“We were sickened by the greed, corruption, and decadence of many Asian leaders...One important decision we made before the May 1959 general election highlighted our position on corruption....We had a deep sense of mission to establish a clean and effective government. When we took the oath of office at the ceremony in the city council chamber in June 1959, we all wore white shirts and white slacks to symbolize purity and honesty in our personal behavior and our public life.”⁴¹ (LKY)

In 1960, there were some significant changes. The Parliament enacted a revised anti-corruption law, the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), to replace the PCO inherited from the

³⁹ Dr Leslie H Palmier, *The Control of Bureaucratic Corruption: Case Studies in Asia 1985*. (as cited in Lim, Vincent, “Early Struggles,” *An Overview Of Singapore’s Anti-corruption Strategy And The Role Of The Cpib In Fighting Corruption*, p93.)

⁴⁰ Corruption Perception Index, 2019, Transparency International.

⁴¹ LKY, *Keeping the Government Clean, From Third to First World: Singapore Story 1965-200*, (New York: HarperCollins, 2000),157, 158.

British; the new PCA eased the more effective anti-corruption enforcement and prosecution; since then, PCA has been amended for many time to increase the power of investigation of the CPIB officers, and to enhance the punishment for corruption and plug any loophole to prevent exploitation by criminals.⁴² In the 60s, the Singapore government tackled corruption by adopting a two-prong strategy: (1) reducing the opportunities for corruption through strengthening the existing legislation to fight graft, and increasing the penalty for corrupt behavior; and (2) reducing incentives for official abuse by “improving salary and working conditions in the civil service.”⁴³ Last but not least, to ensure the confidentiality of the informants, the Singapore government has created a broad “Whistleblowing Policy.” Whistleblowers can report their concerns in good faith concerning three types of improprieties such as Corruption and Bribery, Fraud, and Unlawful Conduct⁴⁴ without fear of leaking identity and the concerns raised will be kept confidential.

2.3.1. Corruption Control Framework

There are four corruption control frameworks in Singapore including effective law, an independent judiciary, vigorous enforcement, and responsive public service that is strongly supported by the political will (see diagram A).⁴⁵ The political will should be credited to the



Diagram A. Singapore's corruption control framework

⁴² Lim, Vincent, “Early Struggles,” An Overview of Singapore’s Anti-corruption Strategy and The Role of The Cpib In Fighting Corruption, p93.

⁴³ Dr. Jon S T Quah, Corruption in Asian Countries: Can’t It Be Minimized? December 1999. As cited in (Vincent, p93).

⁴⁴ “Whistleblowing Policy,” edb.gov.sg (Singapore Economic Development Board), accessed August 20, 2020, <https://www.edb.gov.sg/en/other-pages/whistleblowing.html>.

⁴⁵ (Vincent, p93-95)

late founding father of Singapore, LKY, whose commitment was to stamp out corruption in every single level regardless of rank, wealth, and power in Singapore society.

Effective Law

Concerning the effective laws, Singapore has two anti-corruption laws. One is the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA). The PCA has a large scale of power concerning bribery in both the public and private sectors. Another one is the Corruption, Drug Trafficking, and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act (CDSA). The CDSA, when invoked, confiscates ill-gotten gains from corrupt offenders, and this includes not only confiscating benefits from the receiver but also profits that were made by individuals or companies due to bribery to win contracts.⁴⁶

Independence Judiciary

The independent judiciary ensured everyone is equal under the law regardless of power and social strata. Under the constitution, the judiciary's mission is completely independent without any intervention from executive and legislative. The judiciary carried out the anti-corruption laws very effectively by meting out stiff fines and imprisonment towards corrupt offenders according to the courts' decision. There were many examples of Singapore high ranking officers who were punished resulting from corruption. For example, Phey Yew Kok, the president of the NTUC and a PAP MP, was charged on four counts of criminal breach of trust involving a total sum of S\$83,000; Wee Toon Boon was minister of state in the ministry of the environ-ment in 1975; and many other serious cases in the From Third to First World by LKY.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ (Vincent, p94)

⁴⁷ (Kuan Yew, p156)

Effective Public Service

The Singapore Public Service is guided by a Code of Conduct, which sets out the high standards of behavior expected of public officers based on principles of integrity, incorruptibility, and transparency and this is enshrined in the Government Instruction Manual (IM), as follows:

- a public officer cannot borrow money from any person who has official dealings with him;
- a public officers unsecured debts and liabilities cannot at any time be more than three times his monthly salary;
- a public officer cannot use any official information to further his private interest;
- a public officer is required to declare his assets at his first appointment and also annually;
- a public officer cannot engage in trade or business or undertake any part-time employment without approval;
- a public officer cannot receive entertainment or presents in any form from members of the public.⁴⁸

The public service in Singapore is very convenient and accessible through electronic services. In the 1980s, a national ICT master-plan was put in place, the government used the technology to improve the efficiency in providing service. Consequently, it was an innovative approach that reduced the potential corruption happening in public offices since people did it online without physical communication. GeBIZ is an example of the government's online procurement portal where all government procurement is done through the internet. Everyone who wishes to take part in the procurement process can see the procurement specifications

⁴⁸ (Vincent, p94)

posted by respective government agencies online. In doing this way, there is almost no chance to commit corruption, in contrast, it enhances transparency and integrity. An online service is an excellent approach that provides effective government service to the public and builds a culture of anti-corruption in Singapore for decades until now.

Effective Enforcement

To enforce the anti-corruption laws effectively, the Singapore government has a special institution called the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), which was originally established by the British in 1952. CPIB is the only anti-corruption body for the Singapore government, working directly under the PM's office. Its key function is to investigate corruption offences and many related offences independently in both public and private sectors under the Prevention of Corruption Act. It is led by a director who reports corruption-related issues directly to the Prime Minister. To have an effective investigation, CPIB was granted power by the government to work closely with various governments, organizations, and private agencies to investigate corruption cases. In addition, to boost the more effective mission against corruption, CPIB strongly welcomes the public for any corruption complaints or offences. People can report online through the website, hotline, walk-in, email, and fax. In case the complainants tell the complaints which corruption-related offence, those complaints will be referred to relevant government agencies. This the "No Wrong Door"⁴⁹ policy of the Singapore government to get as much civic engagement in CPIB for better transparent Singapore.

After explaining the four key anti-corruption frameworks such as effective law, an independent judiciary, effective public service, and effective enforcement. There is a clear inference reflecting that the "Political Will" is the bedrock leading to the effective anti-corruption in addition to a well-written law, policy, and enforcement institution (CPIB) in place. This is a

⁴⁹ (Vincent, p97)

successful experience that many countries where corruption is still a way of life could or may have learned from Singapore. The Singapore government realized since they commenced their duties as the government that corruption could not be tolerated, otherwise Singapore will still be a slum and poor nation resulting from corruption.

2.4. Effective Education System

2.4.1. Key Evolutions of Singapore Education

Over the decades, Singapore education has evolved for a few significant developments based on global challenges and workforce demands. In 1947, the British established the Ten Year Programme for Education Policy which was called a universal education system. From the 1950s and 1960s, Singapore started to develop its own economy, Singapore adopted a "survival-driven education" system to provide only a skilled workforce for Singapore's industrial program as well as to lower unemployment.⁵⁰ However, the education system at that time was not really fruitful in producing competent human resources. Later in the 1980s, Singapore's education system shifted from quantity to quality resulting from a prosperous economy in which students were separated based on their academic abilities to study in a different educational institution such as revamping vocational education under the new Institute of Technology and splitting of the Normal stream in secondary schools into Normal (Academic) and Normal (Technical) streams. The Gifted Education Programme was also set up to cater to more academically inclined students.⁵¹ In 1997, there was another change so-called "Thinking Schools, Learning Nations," under the vision of PM Goh Chok Tong. This policy emphasized on ICT literacy, national education, creative thinking, and collaborative learning. Schools became more diverse and were given greater autonomy in deciding their own curriculum and

⁵⁰ "History of Education in Singapore," k12academics.com (K12academics), accessed June 30, 2020, <https://www.k12academics.com/Education%20Worldwide/education-singapore>.

⁵¹ Ibid.

developing their own niche areas.⁵² Lastly, The Compulsory Education Act, which makes primary school education compulsory for all children in Singapore, was passed by parliament on 9 October 2000 and enacted on 1 January 2003.⁵³

2.4.2. Overview of the Singapore Education System

Education is “a national investment” and has increased government expenditure on education by about 200 times from S\$63.39m in 1959 to S\$12,660m in 2016.⁵⁴ The education system is overseen by the Ministry of Education (MOE) whose functions are to implement policies on education structure, curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and oversee the development and management of Government-funded schools, the Institute of Technical Education, polytechnics and autonomous universities. For schooling, Singapore followed a British-style system in which the main qualifications were the Cambridge University administered General Common Entrance (GCE) Ordinary Level (O level) and Advanced level (A level) examinations. The basic structure was a six-year primary school, a four-year secondary school, a two-year junior college for those preparing to enter higher education and English is the official language for all content of education from primary school to university.

2.4.2.1. Primary Education

Primary school’s structure is designed for a six-years compulsory education that allows children who are seven-year-olds to register in primary one. MOE offers the curriculum which focuses on three main aspects of education. The first aspect is “Subject disciplines” which comprise subject areas such as languages, humanities, and the arts, and mathematics and

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ The Compulsory Education Act 2000 (Act 27 of 2000) as cited in Nadirah Norrudin, “Ministry of Education,” Infopedia (National Library Board Singapore, January 16, 2018), [Ministry of Education | Infopedia](#).

⁵⁴ Jon S.T. Quah, “Nurturing the “best and brightest”: education and competitive compensation,” *Why Singapore Works: Five Secrets of Singapore's Success*, 21(2018): p. 12, <https://doi.org/DOI.10.1108/PAP-06-2018-002>.

sciences provide a good grounding in different fields of study.⁵⁵ The science subject is taught in the primary 3 onward. The second aspect is the “Knowledge skills” that focus on developing student’s thinking and communication skills. Knowledge skills are taught through a variety of subjects and often through a project- work approach.⁵⁶ As a result, a student can use his knowledge skills to indicate what he has acquired individually or collaboratively. The last feature is “Character development,” which is facilitated through daily interactions, as well as the different learning experiences planned by the school.⁵⁷ These experiences focus on instilling sound values and building character so that students will have many opportunities to develop values and skills for life and civic responsibility through Character and Citizenship Education, and Co-curricular Activities.⁵⁸ In primary 6, all the students have to take the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) which examines three important categories of subjects including standard, foundation, and optional subjects. Standard subjects comprise English & Mother-tongue language, Mathematics, and Science; foundation subjects comprise the foundation of English & mother-tongue language, mathematics, and sciences; optional subject comprise. Notably, students offer standard or foundation subjects depending on their learning needs and strengths in each subject.

The primary school is not only the place where students can get a standard knowledge, but it also provides skill sets, competencies, and values to students through the Framework for the 21st Century Competency and Values. The framework incorporates: Core Values (respect, responsibility, resilience, integrity, care, harmony); social and emotional competencies (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship management, responsible

⁵⁵ Ministry of Education, “Primary School Education,” Ministry of Education, Singapore (Communication and Engagement Group, MOE, May 2020), p3, [PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION](#).

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

decision- making); and 21st Century Competencies for a Globalized World (critical and inventive thinking; communication, collaboration, and information skills; civic literacy, global awareness, and cross-cultural skills).⁵⁹

2.4.2.2. Secondary Education

Secondary education is mandatory. PSLE's results determined the students' ability to participate in different courses at secondary school which normally lasts from four to six years. Students in secondary school are streamed into three different ability groups such as express, normal academic, and normal technical stream. The express stream is home for students who want to pursue their tertiary education at university. A normal academic stream is a place for students who head for polytechnics. The normal technical stream is for students who are interested in going on to vocational schools in the future. In general Singapore secondary schools offer a wide range of subjects such as English language, mother tongue languages, mathematics, science, character and citizenship education, design and technology, food and consumer education, physical education, computer application, art, music, project work, humanities, such as geography, history, and literature in English.

The secondary curricular has positively impacted Singapore students. It has created confident citizens who have a strong sense of right and wrong, are adaptable and resilient, are discerning in judgment, think independently and critically, and communicate effectively.⁶⁰ Moreover, students become self-directed learners who question, reflect, and persevere and take responsibility for their own learning.⁶¹ The curriculum has transformed the students to be active contributors who are able to work effectively in teams, are innovative, exercise initiative, take

⁵⁹ (Ministry of Education, p1)

⁶⁰ Ministry of Education, "Secondary School Education," Ministry of Education, Singapore (Communication and Engagement Group, MOE, May 2020), p4, SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION.

⁶¹ Ibid.

calculated risks, and strive for excellence.⁶² Last, it produces the concerned citizens who are rooted in Singapore, has a strong sense of civic responsibility, is informed about Singapore and the world, and plays an active part in bettering the lives of others.⁶³

2.4.2.3. Post-Secondary Education

Post-secondary education comprises Junior Colleges (JC), Polytechnics (Poly), Institute of Technical Educations (ITE), Art Institutions (AI), and Universities. Junior college is a pre-university education that prepares students for the GCE A-Level examinations or the International Baccalaureate diploma at the end of the 2-year. Poly is the practice-based-learning institution that offers students a variety of practical courses such as biotechnology, business, design, engineering, information technology, optometry, maritime studies, media & communication, etc. that prepare the graduates for the workforce. ITE is the technical skills and knowledge training institution (learning by doing), provides up-to-date courses such as mechatronics & robotics, marine & offshore technology, aerospace avionics, culinary, paramedics, and more according to industry demands. The ITE's graduates will receive certificates recognizing their skills accordingly. For AI, it is the practice-based program in creative arts such as animation, fine arts, broadcast media, interior design, audio production, dance, advertising, theatre, music teaching, arts management, and more. Notably, both JC and Poly's graduates with GCE A level are qualified to apply for university education. There are six autonomous universities in Singapore which provide a comprehensive and research-intensive discipline in sciences, medicine, social sciences, arts, engineering, and technology. Outside curricular, students are given many options for both local and international internships, exchange programs to many top universities, start-ups, and MNCs in the world. To prove world-

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

class education, two of Singapore's universities have obtained amazing global ranks. The National University of Singapore and Nanyang Technological University are the top 11th universities in the world in 2020 QS world university ranking.⁶⁴ The methodology of ranking is according to six metrics including academic reputation, employer reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, international faculty ratio, international student ratio.⁶⁵

All in all, the education system is the most important investment in shaping Singapore's economy since it's the only natural resources are human resources. To ensure sustainable economic growth, human resources development is still the key focus of the Singapore government. As a result, students are offered many up-to-date courses, specializations, technical and practical skills upon their preferences to ensure they can find their fullest potential and obtain a job after graduation. Therefore, through educational policies' evolutions and effective implementation have made a world-class education system that produces knowledgeable, skillful, and competitive workforce for the success of Singapore's knowledge-based-economy.

⁶⁴ "Singapore," Top Universities, March 17, 2020, <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings-articles/qs-best-student-cities/singapore>.

⁶⁵ "QS World University Rankings – Methodology," June 9, 2020, <https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings/methodology>.

CHAPTER 3: CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS OF SINGAPORE'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AFTER THE INDEPENDENCE

This chapter will be picking up a few major challenges and responsive solutions for Singapore economic development as the case studies after independence, from the 1960s to 1980s, when it was a developing nation. Once Singapore attained its independence from the British and Malaysia, there were some challenges in its economic development such as unemployment, inadequate housing⁶⁶, low skill workforce and ethnic tensions.⁶⁷ Besides, corruption was also another matter for Singapore's economic development. However, corruption and racial tension were already mentioned as two of the key sectors for economic success and effective governance in chapter 2. Therefore, in terms of challenges, this chapter will only cover three challenges and solutions of unemployment, low skill workforce and housing shortage.

3.1. High Unemployment Rate

Being a young nation, normally, Singapore must have faced poverty unavoidably. After independence, Singapore became a very small domestic market which depended completely on the outside world not just for food and energy, but even water. In addition, it had no natural resources, hinterland, and industry. In 1965, Singapore's GDP per capita was USD 516⁶⁸, meanwhile, the unemployment rate was approximately 9%⁶⁹ of the 1.8 million population.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Soon Teck Wong and Tan C Suan, "The Lesson of East Asia" (Washington, DC, USA: The World Bank, 1993), p. 8.

⁶⁷ Cheryl Sim, "People's Action Party: Post-Independence Years," Infopedia (National Library Board Singapore, February 3, 2015), [People's Action Party: Post-independence years | Infopedia](#).

⁶⁸ "GDP per Capita (Current US\$)," Data (World Bank Group), accessed July 21, 2020, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2017>.

⁶⁹ Ravi Menon, "Ravi Menon: An Economic History of Singapore - 1965-2065," The Bank for International Settlements, August 7, 2015, <https://www.bis.org/review/r150807b.htm>.

⁷⁰ "Population Pyramids of the World from 1950 to 2100," PopulationPyramid.net, accessed July 21, 2020, <https://www.populationpyramid.net/singapore/1965/>.

The amount GDP per capita and unemployment rate clearly indicate how poor and difficult Singapore was in its post-independence, as a result, Singapore was seriously plagued by poverty resulting from unemployment.

In the 1960s, having jobs for citizens was the best way to reduce poverty and increase the employment rate. In this regard, in 1961, the Singapore government established an Economic Development Board (EDB) whose functions were to attract foreign capital and promote industrial activities in Singapore. EDB officials went to the US and other countries in Western Europe, promoting Singapore as the right place to build low-cost manufacturing bases for the big corporations since Singapore was politically stable with a great workforce who spoke English fairly. In 1967, the Economic Expansion Incentives Act was passed, granting the EDB the right to give ‘pioneer’ status to foreign corporations, with tax benefits until. To ensure success, EDB had a strong power to “grant loans or advances to, or subscribe to stocks, shares, bonds or debentures of, industrial enterprises; and to acquire land for the purpose of industrial sites⁷¹.” As a result, most foreign investors found that their production costs were lowered by about 20%⁷² and many corporations moved drastically to Singapore that became a big part of Singapore’s economic growth.

However, that was not enough since the unemployment rate was still nearly 10% due to the British withdrawal from the island and left many Singaporean jobless⁷³. Again, to lower unemployment, the Singapore government kept focusing seriously on EDB. EDB introduced the tax incentive scheme to attract foreign investors and MNCs.⁷⁴ The tax incentives and

⁷¹ Soon Teck Wong and Tan C Suan, 1993, p9.

⁷² Ermisch, J., Huff, W, “Hypergrowth in an East Asian NIC: Public Policy and Capital Accumulation in Singapore. *World Development*,” 27(1), 21-38,(as cited in Cahyadi and others, 2004).

⁷³ Gundy Cahyadi et al., “Singapore's Economic Transformation,” (Global Urban Development, June 2004), p5, <https://globalurban.org/GUD%20Singapore%20MES%20Report.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Gundy et al., 2004, p6.

benefits significantly cut production costs by more than 33%.⁷⁵ Notably, currently, Singapore is still a competitive economy because of its tax incentive for investors. Furthermore, the government updated the existing Central Provident Fund (CPF) social security scheme, which was already in place since 1955. The CPF is compulsory for every worker to pay a certain amount of money that will be used for housing purchase and medical expenses. The CPF was an inspiration for producing a hard-working workforce for the economy. Besides, Singapore offered a good labor environment for investors in effectively preventing and solving labor issues between employees and employers through the Employment Act.⁷⁶ In 1968, strikes and lock-outs were prohibited and replaced by the compulsory arbitration and conciliation in case there were any labor-related issues, as a result, there has not been a strike since the end of the 1960s.⁷⁷ Last but not least, a single national labor union to oversee employment and wage problems called the National Trade Union Congress (NTUC) was also established.⁷⁸ Consequently, the manufacturing sector continued to grow to about 25% of GDP, at the same time, the unemployment rate was just approximately 3.5% in the 1970s.⁷⁹ Therefore, Singapore was beginning to gain international recognition with its annual GDP growth rate of 10%.⁸⁰

3.2. Low Skill Workforce

After the unemployment issue was over, Singapore became a fast pace of industrialization with high capital inflows. Later, due to the drastic rise in living costs, it required companies to pay much higher wages for Singaporean workers. In the 1980s,

⁷⁵ Ermisch, J., Huff, W, "Hypergrowth in an East Asian NIC: Public Policy and Capital Accumulation in Singapore. *World Development*," 27(1), 21-38.

⁷⁶ Gundy et al., 2004, p6.

⁷⁷ Chua Beng Huat, "Singapore: Growing Wealth, Poverty Avoidance and Management," (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development: Geneva, July, 2008), p3.

⁷⁸ Singapore Ministry of Trade and Industry, Economic Development in Singapore [Http://www.mti.gov.sg/public/ECD/frm_ECD_Default.asp?sid=10](http://www.mti.gov.sg/public/ECD/frm_ECD_Default.asp?sid=10), (as cited in Cahyadi and others, 2004).

⁷⁹ Gundy et al., 2004, p6.

⁸⁰ World Resources Institute: Annual growth rate in GDP [Http://www.earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/variables/227.htm](http://www.earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/variables/227.htm).

Singapore faced another challenge of a very tight labor market with increasingly high pressures on workers' wages resulting from the emerging new low-cost labor market economies in the region.⁸¹ To remain competitive in the global market, the Singapore government evolved its strategy that transformed Singapore to be a high value-added industrial economy in which the workforce needed to upgrade its employment skill level to enable the country to move out of manufacturing into the service industry.⁸²

In response, the government established the National Computer Board (NCB) in September 1981, whose functions were to implement the computerization of the Civil Service, to coordinate computer education and training, to develop and promote the computer services industry.⁸³ In that time, training was a key focus of the NCB. The NCB has overseen the development of the implementation of IT as part of the growing infrastructure and developed a plan to implement a culture of IT use and application all throughout Singapore's firms as well as to increase the local IT development such as to enable businesses in Singapore to be linked up with others in the West.⁸⁴ To make it work, the Singapore government spent a huge amount of money on building and developing the new infrastructure. Government spending on infrastructures went up as high as 3 times the amount of direct foreign investment in the 1980s.⁸⁵ It was a good initiative for Singapore to transform step by step from a labor-based to a service-based economy. In the 1980s, having skillful workforces in IT was the best way for Singaporeans to obtain labor-less and well-paid jobs since many other countries in the region, especially ASEAN countries were still focusing on creating labor-based jobs while IT-related

⁸¹ Gundy et al., 2004, p7.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ National Computer Board, "Annual Report: National Computer Board," 1982/83, p. 1.

⁸⁴ Wong, T., "The transition from physical infrastructure to infostructure: infrastructure as a modernizing agent in Singapore," *GeoJournal*, 49(3), 1999, 279-288, (as cited in Gundy et al., 2004.)

⁸⁵ Ermisch, J., Huff, W., "Hypergrowth in an East Asian NIC: Public Policy and Capital Accumulation in Singapore. *World Development*," 27(1), 1999, 21-38, as cited in Cahyadi and others, 2004).

jobs were still far to get for their citizens. Besides, EDB was still important in providing tax incentives and benefits for attracting MNCs, financial service providers, and manufacturing firms to set up headquarters in Singapore. Last but not least, education also played an important role in producing skillful workforces for the Singapore economy as written in chapter 2. As a result of the above economic strategies, during the 1980s, Singapore's economic growth rate was at an average of 7.3%.⁸⁶ In the meantime, the proportion of skilled employees had risen from 11% to 22% in 1979 and 1985⁸⁷ while the amount of IT domestic and export sales had increased by more than 10 times by 1990,⁸⁸ hence, these were the impressive results for upgrading Singapore's workforce and economy during the 1980s onward.

3.3. Housing Shortage

Housing was another issue for Singapore's economic development since it was the indicator proving the standard of living of all Singaporeans as well as the economy. Due to land scarcity with approximately 1.8 million in the 1960s, most of Singaporeans did not have a proper house and were living in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. Apparently, only 9% of Singaporeans lived in government flats, while others yearned for a place to call home in 1960.⁸⁹

To respond to the pressing issue of inadequate housing, the Singapore government established a Housing & Development Board (HDB) in 1960. HDB is a Singapore's housing authority whose functions are to "plan and develop Singapore's housing estates; building homes and transforming towns to create a quality living environment for all; and provide various

⁸⁶ World Resources Institute: Annual growth rate in GDP <http://www.earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/variables/227.htm>, (as cited in Gundy et al., 2004).

⁸⁷ World Resources Institute: Annual growth rate in GDP <http://www.earthtrends.wri.org/text/ECN/variables/227.htm>.

⁸⁸ Yuen, B.(ed), *Planning Singapore: From Plan to Implementation*, 1st edn. Singapore Institute of Planners, Singapore, 1998, (as cited in Gundy et al., 2004).

⁸⁹ "HDB History and Towns," History - Housing & Development Board (HDB), accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/about-us/history>.

commercial, recreational, and social amenities for residents' convenience⁹⁰." To ease the effective work of planning and building the HDB flats, the government introduced the Land Acquisition Act (LAC) in 1967 which offered the legal right for the government in acquiring and managing land with the amount of compensation to the landowners nationwide.⁹¹ As a result, the state-owned of more than 90% of the land in Singapore that eased the effective urbanization plan. At the primary stage, HDB's main missions were to clear the slum area, build public housing, and relocate people who lived in the congested area to live in the newly built public housing. Within just five years after the formation of the HDB, 54,000 flats were built by the HDB to house low-income families. The families had to buy HDB flats. In this regard, most of the low-income families refused to relocate from the slum area to HDB flats. From 1964, HDB units were ready for sale at below market price, on a 99 years leasehold basis, under its "Home Ownership for the People" scheme.⁹² To ensure affordable homeownership for all Singaporeans, the government allowed the property to make down payments and housing loan repayments using their savings in the central provident fund from 1968 onwards.⁹³ This was a good provision to ensure all Singaporeans will have proper shelters so that they just keep working hard for the country's economy.

Resulting from the establishment of HBD and its effective work in building public housing, finally, the housing crisis was resolved in a fruitful achievement. The percentage of Singaporeans who relocated and settled in HDB flats was 73% and 87% in 1980 and 1990.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ "About Housing Development Board," accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.hdb.gov.sg/cs/infoweb/about-us>.

⁹¹ "Land Acquisition Act, 1966," *Infopedia*, accessed July 23, 2020, https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_2014-04-09_112938.html.

⁹² PHANG, Sock Yong and KIM, Kyunghwan, Singapore's Housing Policies: 1960-2013, *Frontiers in Development Policy: Innovative Development Case Studies* [Workshop, Seoul, November 21-22], 2013, 126.

⁹³ National Library Board & National Archives of Singapore, "*Singapore: The first ten years of independence, 1965 to 1975*," Singapore: National Library Board and National Archives of Singapore, 2007, p198.

⁹⁴ PHANG, Sock Yong and KIM, Kyunghwan, Singapore's Housing Policies: 1960-2013, *Frontiers in Development Policy: Innovative Development Case Studies* [Workshop, Seoul, November 21-22], 2013, 133.

These percentages clearly indicate the drastic improvement of Singaporean's living standard through relocation in the HDB flat. "The result was that not only did people get housing, but it stimulated the economy to the point where Singapore has become one of the most successful countries in the world⁹⁵." Therefore, public housing was very significant in improving Singaporeans' living standards, organizing well-planned urbanization, and producing hard-working citizens for the future of Singapore's economic development.

⁹⁵ ASLA staff, "From Slums to Sky Gardens – Singapore's Public Housing Success," The Field, September 6, 2018, <https://thefield.asla.org/2018/09/06/from-slums-to-sky-gardens-singapores-public-housing-success/>.

CHAPTER 4: LESSONS FOR CAMBODIAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Overview of Current Cambodia's Economy

Cambodia gained independence from French in 1953.⁹⁶ Cambodia was not economically stable due to political instability which had brought constant changes of regimes and caused a civil war until the establishment of the Paris Peace Agreement in 1991 to end all of those toxic situations. This agreement created the United Nations Transitional Authority (UNTAC) which aimed to prepare and supervise the first general election for Cambodia in 1993.⁹⁷

Following years after the intervention of the UNTAC, Cambodia has embraced a market economy system, as clearly stated in the article 56 of Cambodia's constitution, which integrated Cambodia's economy into the region and the world. As a result, Cambodia became a member of the Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) in 1999 and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2004, including numerous bilateral trade agreements with many leading economic countries both within and outside the regions.⁹⁸ Membership of these organizations and trading partners with those countries have given Cambodia more opportunities to liberalize trade in goods and services and foreign capital ownership to advance the economy.

⁹⁶ Kenneth T. So, "Independence: The Road to Khmer Independence," Cambodia Information Centre, [Independence - Government, Constitution, National Anthem and Facts of Cambodia](#) (accessed: June 23, 2020).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ministry of Commerce, "Trade agreements," www.moc.gov.kh/en-us/trade-agreements (accessed: July 19, 2020).

In 2018, Cambodia's GDP was approximately US\$24.57 Billion with US\$1512 of GDP per capita.⁹⁹ Consequently, there has been a significant economic performance in the last decades which led Cambodia to become one of the fastest economies in the world. Particularly, Cambodia has been experiencing a sustainable growth of GDP between 1998 and 2018 with an average annual rate of over 8% and is estimated to slowly reach 7.1% in 2019.¹⁰⁰ Besides, compared to other post-conflict countries, Cambodia's economic performance has been even more successful in reducing poverty. Cambodia's poverty rate in 1992 has dramatically decreased from 50% to 13.5% in 2014, according to the statistics of the Ministry of Planning.¹⁰¹ With this rapid growth and transformation, currently, Cambodia's economy has achieved lower-middle-income status which has been officially classified by the World Bank since 2016.¹⁰²

Cambodia's economy depends on three major sectors such as services, industry, and agriculture. Though the service sector comprises many crucial sub-sectors such as retail trade, transport, and communications, hotels and restaurants, real estate, finances, and public services, the tourism sector has most significantly driven the growth in each sub-sector. The arrival of tourists "have a positive impact on the sub-sectors hotels and restaurants, transport and communications and retail trade, which together had a real GDP share of 20.4 percent in

⁹⁹ "CountryProfile," DataBank | The World Bank,

https://databank.worldbank.org/views/reports/reportwidget.aspx?Report_Name=CountryProfile&Id=b450fd57&tbar=y&dd=y&inf=n&zm=n&coun (accessed July 26, 2020).

¹⁰⁰ "GDP Growth (annual %) - Cambodia," <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG?locations=KH> (accessed July 23, 2020).

¹⁰¹ "Overview," World Bank in Cambodia, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview> (accessed August 2, 2020).

¹⁰² "East Asia/Southeast Asia: Cambodia-The World Factbook," Central Intelligence Agency, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html> (accessed July 23, 2020).

2011”¹⁰³ and 41.9 percent in 2017 for the service sector.¹⁰⁴ Following the service sector, the industrial sector has also brought a huge impact on the GDP of Cambodia. In 2017, this sector contributed 32.8 percent to real GDP.¹⁰⁵ The industrial sector comprises tourism, garments, construction, rice milling, fishing, wood and wood products, rubber, cement, gem mining, textiles. Even though Cambodia is known as an agricultural base, the agricultural sector contributed to the real GDP only 25.3 percent in the same year.¹⁰⁶ Products in agriculture are rice, rubber, corn, vegetables, cashews, cassava (manioc, tapioca), and silk.

Looking at international trade, as of 2017, Cambodia’s amount of import and export was USD 14.37 and USD 11.42 billion.¹⁰⁷ China and the European Union were and remain the first and second biggest international trade partners for the kingdom.¹⁰⁸ The key exports were petroleum products, cigarettes, gold, construction materials, machinery, motor vehicles, and pharmaceutical products, mainly from China 34.1%, Singapore 12.8%, Thailand 12.4%, Vietnam 10.1% in 2017.¹⁰⁹ For exports, Cambodia exported some products such as clothing, timber, rubber, rice, fish, tobacco, footwear. The key exports’ market for Cambodia were the US 21.5%, UK 9%, Germany 8.6%, Japan 7.6%, China 6.9%, Canada 6.7%, Spain 4.7%, Belgium 4.5%.¹¹⁰ Based on the amount of import and export, Cambodia was still challenging the trade deficit since the total import exceeded the exports. Even though Cambodia has

¹⁰³ Anne, Renzenbrink, "Service sector grows amid challenges: ADB," *Phnom Penh Post* (Phnom Penh), October 9, 2012, [https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/service-sector-grows-amid-challenges-
adb#:~:text=Sub%2Dsectors%20of%20Cambodia's%20service,tourism%2C%](https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/service-sector-grows-amid-challenges-adb#:~:text=Sub%2Dsectors%20of%20Cambodia's%20service,tourism%2C%20).

¹⁰⁴ "East Asia/Southeast Asia: Cambodia — The World Factbook," Central Intelligence Agency. Accessed July 23, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/cb.html>.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Open Development Cambodia, "Economy and Commerce: Trade" (Open Development Cambodia, March 3, 2015), <https://opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/topics/economy-and-commerce/>.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

experienced the fast pace of economic growth with approximately 8 percent in the last few decades, however, Cambodian economy still faced a negative balance in which the expenditure was much more than the revenue.

4.2. Challenges in Cambodian Economic Development

Even though Cambodia has been experiencing significant economic progress and success, there are still many challenges remaining alongside the current economic development that need to be addressed. A large number of studies about such challenges have revealed three common major challenges such as corruption, poor educational system, and ineffective governance.

4.2.1. Corruption

The Royal Government of Cambodia always considers corruption as obstacles to economic development, rule of law, democracy, social stability, as well as the main cause of poverty. In response, the Cambodian government has ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2007 and established the Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU), National Council Against Corruption (NCAC), and Anti-Corruption Law in 2011, as the tools eliminating corruption. This effort has shown the political will of the Cambodian government in fighting corruption, especially in the government offices. Then, people started to be aware and scared of corruption and many corrupt officials were found guilty and sentenced in accordance with the anti-corruption law. For example, an arrest of the Pursat provincial land management department director, and two of his subordinates for allegedly seeking bribes to approve a construction project.¹¹¹ However, corruption still spread through “every aspect of the Cambodian social fabric; the elite has monopolized procurement, land concessions and

¹¹¹ Ben Sokhean, “PM Issues Stern Warning to Corrupt Officials,” August 5, 2019, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/630155/pm-issues-stern-warning-to-corrupt-officials/>.

access to resources through the establishment of patron-client networks.”¹¹² Cambodian public sector corruption was ranked 162nd on a worldwide list in CPI 2019 which is just a slight decline from last year’s ranking of 161st.¹¹³ Despite a relatively good anti-corruption law that came into full force in 2011, its implementation has been weak and corrupt entities continue to function with impunity,¹¹⁴ Cambodia still gained a very bad reputation when it comes to corruption which has been considered as one of the major challenges in economic development.

Consequently, corruption leads to bad economic consequences. It compromises the achievement of sustainable development for Cambodia.¹¹⁵ For bribery, less or much, it results in additional business costs, a burden to small entrepreneurs, and the allocation of the country’s human capital and talent.¹¹⁶ Bribery seems to be acceptable for the big companies, however, it threatens the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) that don’t have many resources and capital like the big ones. Moreover, corruption leads to unfair competition between companies. Some companies are lowering their business scales in order to pay less tax to the government, in exchange, those companies would pay some amount of money to the government officials instead. Another case, “the cost of doing business in Cambodia is not similar for all. Companies with links to “senior officials” pay less for inspections. Paying at least 5.5 percent of business annual revenues in unofficial fees could be just too high for many.”¹¹⁷ As a result, tax evasion will lead to the loss of the state’s revenue and decrease foreign and domestic investments

¹¹² Kaunain, Rahman, “Cambodia: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption,” ed. Matthew Jenkins, October 31, 2016, p1, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Country-profile-Cambodia-2016.pdf>.

¹¹³ "Corruption Perception Index 2019." Transparency.org. Last modified November 25, 2019. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019>.

¹¹⁴ Kaunain, Rahman, “Cambodia: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption,” ed. Matthew Jenkins, October 31, 2016, p1, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Country-profile-Cambodia-2016.pdf>.

¹¹⁵ Vathanak Sina Neang, “Corruption: The Case in Cambodia,” Transparency International Cambodia, p81.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Phnom Penh Post, June 4-17, 2004, as cited in Vathanak Sina Neang, “Corruption: The Case in Cambodia,” Transparency International Cambodia, p83.

because it is perceived as a form of taxation.¹¹⁸ One more thing, the embezzlement in the national projects committed by corrupt officials has resulted in a poor quality of service and infrastructure. For example, the quality of roads in the countryside is very poor. Roads are frequently fragmented or broken within just a year following the construction due to insufficient material supply and budget resulting from the embezzlement of the national budget for road construction. Since there is no specific data indicating how much Cambodia has lost for corruption, however, its estimated cost was USD 500 millions of loss for corruption, US Ambassador Carol Rodley said during a speech at an anti-corruption concert in 2009.¹¹⁹ The \$500 million figure was derived from a 2004 study prepared by the US Agency for International Development. That study attributed an estimated loss of between \$300 million and \$500 million from the public purse to information obtained from unnamed informants.¹²⁰ Even though, there are no recent studies showing how much Cambodia has lost for corruption, but, the amount of loss must be higher since Cambodia's corruption ranks in recent years are getting worse.

4.2.2. Low Quality of Education

The Royal Government has actually acknowledged that the educational sector plays an important role as a key sector aiming to develop more human resources to be capable of future economic growth and competitiveness of the nation. This priority requires building a quality education which ensures that people have the right knowledge and relevant skills. Following this, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) has firmly taken the responsibility and has made the educational sector significantly progressive. In 2016-2017, Cambodia had

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Bethany Lindsay, "Corruption Costing Up to \$500 Million a Year, Official Says," The Cambodia Daily, June 4, 2009, <https://english.cambodiadaily.com/news/corruption-costing-up-to-500-million-a-year-official-says-84772/>.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

12889 schools across the country and student enrollment was 3077, 660, including 1516, 147 girls.¹²¹ Furthermore, the UNICEF has also highlighted that Cambodia has made good progress in educating its children by increasing the number of children enrolled in primary education from 82 percent in 1997 to over 97 percent in school year 2017/2018.¹²²

Even though MoEYS has made some impressive achievements in increasing school enrollment rate and school facilities in the whole country, quantity cannot yet define a huge success in promoting equality education. Cambodia still has a number of challenges such as low quality of the academic curriculum, insufficient well-qualified teachers and a high number of school dropouts.

Quality of academic curriculum is still limited which doesn't provide relevant skills and knowledge for students to prepare for demanding labor markets, especially contributing to the main sectors that can foster economic growth. Since the world is developing into industrial 4.0, economic development is heavily dependent on technologies as assistance in all sectors, especially in industry. However, Cambodia's academic curriculum hasn't been designed well enough to encourage or attract students to study any subjects like science, engineering, and agriculture which MoEYS has also considered as the main areas of study that can provide the key skills to foster economic growth of Cambodia.¹²³ This is a principal concern that MoEYS has noticed when the majority of students in higher education opt to study irrelevant subjects while only a small number of them choose to study such relevant subjects. Regarding this matter, in their research paper on Education and Fragility in Cambodia, International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has stressed on the weaknesses in implementing such good policies of the Ministry itself by drawing the relation between education and fragility in five

¹²¹ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, "Public education statistics and indicators 2016–2017", 2017, Accessed 22 August 2020.

¹²² Todd, Brown "Education," UNICEF, 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/education>. Accessed August 23, 2020.

¹²³ Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport, 2014, "Policy on higher education vision 2030", Accessed August 25, 2020.

broad areas. One of which is the “relevance of education.” In this area, IIEP has mentioned that Cambodia’s education relevant to economics is still limited.¹²⁴ Furthermore, Cambodian schools largely fail to prioritize skills related to the sectors that can contribute to economic growth based on its geography. For instance, none of the educational curriculum has been used to address the agricultural sector even Cambodia has recognized it as an important sector that contributes to the economic development after independence, according to Ayres.¹²⁵

Besides, teachers play a very important role in delivering the knowledge and implement educational guidelines to develop more quality of human resources through education. Unfortunately, building well-qualified teachers remains a big challenge for Cambodia. After the Khmer Rouge Regime, the number of teachers has significantly increased. There are around 18,000 teachers who are university graduates. Remaining, 51,820 teachers obtain upper secondary education; 19,267 teachers obtained lower secondary education; and 1,779 teachers who have only attended primary school classes as their highest level of education.¹²⁶ However, a huge number of them have received very low levels of service training which make their teaching performance very unqualified. The IIEP’s research paper showed a report which said that “only 15 percent of lower secondary schools’ teachers have attended service training sessions during the 2005/06 academic year, regardless of school type.”¹²⁷ This makes their professionalism seem to be not prioritized. In addition, the paper further highlighted the perception of which teachers of Cambodia seem to focus on teaching rather than encourage students to learn or participate which is called a student-centered teaching approach.¹²⁸ As a

¹²⁴ “Education and Fragility in Cambodia,” 2011, International Institute for Educational Planning, Accessed August 25, 2020.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. 2017. “Public education statistics and indicators 2016–2017”, Accessed August 25, 2020.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

result, this shows a bad relationship between teachers and pupils in delivering and absorbing the sufficient knowledge and guidance that can build their analyzing skills.

At last, despite a huge success of MoEYS in increasing the school enrolment rate in all levels of education programs, the rise of students dropping out from school is also an important challenge since it caused the decrease of school completion rate. Evidently, total completion rates fall dramatically after primary school which is from 79.9% at primary school to 42.6% at lower secondary and 20.2% at upper secondary.¹²⁹ Government figures indicate that for each year at primary school, at least 4.6% of children dropped out. For lower secondary, the figures are 17% of children dropping out each year and for upper secondary, at least 19.4% are dropping out. According to UNICEF, there are a number of fundamental reasons that lead Cambodian children to drop out of school, including not being adequately prepared for school, experiencing poor quality teaching and learning, and attending school irregularly due to poverty.¹³⁰

To sum up, three major challenges that Cambodia faces in building quality education in order to produce human resources such as poor quality of academic curriculum, lack of well-qualified teachers and a rise of children dropouts. Such challenges make quality education of Cambodia remain in a weak status in which it does not yet produce sufficient human resources who have enough ability to contribute to long-term economic development.

4.2.3. Ineffective governance

In general, governance is defined in this study as the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development. The governance in Cambodia is not really effective and responsive in using resources and powers to deal with social issues. In general, the weaknesses of Cambodian governance are having a

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Todd, Brown, "Education," UNICEF, 2018, <https://www.unicef.org/cambodia/education> (accessed August 23, 2020).

well-written policy yet the implementation is not really executed well like what the police said. For example, the Anti-Corruption Law, the law is very comprehensive in tackling corruption through the establishment of ACU. However, the enforcement institution (ACU) is not as effective as what is written in the law. One more thing, the New School Generation Policy (NSGP) which was already in place since 2016, but the actual implementation is not started yet. Until now it is still under experimentation at the national levels. The NSGP is a well-written policy aiming to mainly improve the quality of education that will focus on STEM, teaching standards, students' future career paths, life skills, and critical thinking.¹³¹ This policy is very comprehensive in improving a better quality of education including the support fund for poor students. Unfortunately, one hindrance is lack of financial support so that the policy will not be nationally implemented, it will be available in some applicable areas, especially at the provincial levels. In addition, there are more examples of ineffective governance happening in a lot of government projects of infrastructure development resulting from the lack of accountability and transparency in using available resources. In addition, Cambodian laws are very well-written, however, the efficient enforcement of the law is not yet fully implemented by a relevant body like court. Resulting from poor enforcement of the law, Cambodian society is often plagued by many forms of crimes such as human trafficking, drug, rape, murder, corruption, etc. Therefore, the poor enforcement of the law, lack of accountability and transparency, and the poor implementation of the national policy are still the biggest issues that indicate ineffective governance in Cambodia.

¹³¹ The Ministry of Education, Youth, & Sports, Policy Guidelines: New Generation School, September 2016, p2.

4.3. Summary of Similarities and Differences between Cambodia and Singapore

Apparently, Cambodia and Singapore have both similarities and differences. In General, there are many similarities and differences between Cambodia and Singapore. To remain in scope, this section will be covering the similarities and differences between current Cambodia and past Singapore when it was a poor nation (1960s-1980s). One simple similarity is the democracy that both countries are following. Besides, current Cambodia and past Singapore from the 1960s to 1980s, both have faced a few similar challenges such as poverty, unemployment, low skill workers, ineffective governance, and corruption. These economic challenges were faced by Singapore for decades already, however, those are also some economic challenges that Cambodia is confronting now. Therefore, the mentioned challenges are good case studies for Cambodia to learn about responsive solutions from Singapore in the next section.

Looking at the differences, Singapore and Cambodia have three significant differences. The first difference is natural resources. Unfortunately, Singapore has no natural resources, so its natural resources are human resources, alternatively, Cambodia has a variety of natural resources such as tin, gold, oil, mine, etc. Apparently, the Cambodian economy gained a lot of economic advantages from its natural resources while Singapore didn't. However, having no natural resources could be paid off for Singapore because it has a strategic location for international trade which is one of the busiest ports in the world. The second difference is a form of society. Singapore is a multiracial country that comprises four major races such as Chinese, Malays, Indians, and Others as well as many religions (chapter 1). In contrast, Cambodia is not a diversified country like Singapore when the constitution recognized only Buddhism as the official religion. Singapore is just a small island, inhabited by more than 5

million people. The level of competition in both societies also varies, especially the level of job competition. Meritocracy is the main principle of governance that is used to avoid tension and jealousy among races. However, meritocracy cannot be easily applied in Cambodia since there are many disadvantaged people living in poverty, some have no even opportunity to attend school due to the distance, lack of schools in the countryside, and financial support. So, they still don't have equal opportunity to enjoy social goods provided by the state and compete equally with others yet. The last alternative is dealing with the housing issue. Unlike Singapore, Cambodia will not be able to build the high-rise public housing and sell to the people like Singapore. Even though the poverty rate was only 13.5% in 2014, those who are not falling into poverty are still struggling to afford a house. According to a World Bank study, around 4.5 million Cambodian remain near-poor, vulnerable to falling back into poverty when exposed to economic and other external shocks¹³² such as having a serious illness, low paid jobs, poor job prospects, and inequality between income and expenses. In addition, Cambodians have no social security fund that is used to buy houses like Singaporeans do (central provident fund), thus, the Cambodian government will not be able to bear all the cost of housing construction for its citizens since there are many sectors such as national infrastructure, security, health, and education, etc. that need a large amount of money to get them done.

4.4. What Should Cambodia Learn from Singapore?

Apparently, Cambodia cannot just copy and paste everything that Singapore has done for its economic development because the two countries are not completely the same in terms of human resources, size, social issues, social formation, etc. Referring to Singapore's economic challenges back in the 1960s when it was a developing nation and the current economic challenges of developing Cambodia, both have a few common challenges including

¹³² World Bank, "Overview," April 17, 2020, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cambodia/overview>.

poverty, unemployment, poor education system, and corruption. As a result, Singapore has successfully overcome those economic challenges and drastically transformed itself from the third to first world country within just one generation which is an impressive economic miracle. Yet Cambodia is still struggling with the above-mentioned economic challenges. In addition, after identifying the similarities and differences between Cambodia and Singapore, the effective elimination of corruption and a world-class education system should best be the great lessons for Cambodia to observe and learn accordingly for its future economic development.

4.4.1. Corruption

4.4.1.1. Political Will

Looking at Singapore's experiences, "Political Will" is the bedrock leading to the effective anti-corruption in addition to a well-written law, policy, and enforcement institution in place. The PM LKY worked directly with many of his political peers, directly supervised, and monitored the implementation of enforcement institutions (CPIB). Political will means having a strong commitment or determination in doing something that is led by the political leaders who are the role models for subordinates.

A statement by a spokesman of CNRP, Mr. Yan Sovann said "If there is no political ambition, corruption cannot be eliminated and law enforcement will not be effective in solving this issue.¹³³" Apparently, the political will in fighting corruption in Cambodia remains weak since nepotism is still strongly rooting in Cambodian public bureaucracy, especially at the national levels. A large scale of corruption in many national bidding projects, procurement procedures, land concessions, and access to resources through the establishment of patron-

¹³³ Mom, Kunthea, "ACU to Create Provincial Offices," Khmer Times, January 8, 2017, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/60046/acu-to-create-provincial-offices/>.

client networks remain unwillingly careless from the governments.¹³⁴ Many high ranking government officials actually acknowledge the extent of corruption in Cambodian public bureaucracy, yet the willingness to get rid of corruption is still reluctant since it is a very sensitive issue involving many high ranking and powerful government officials. A political will made by Cambodian prime minister, “Prime Minister Hun Sen is committed to strictly implement the fifth approach, a ‘surgical’ way to get rid of corrupt officials, and warned of dismissal and the seizure of properties of those in the government and armed forces who use their positions to steal state properties, conduct illegal logging and grab state land, they must face the law.”¹³⁵ The statement clearly shows the PM’s will, but the PM alone cannot effectively stamp out corruption, it must have a willing and drastic participation from all subordinated political leaders of all levels of bureaucracy like what Singapore has done to suppress corruption. In this regard, each ministry and government institution should initiate its own mechanism in reporting corruption in accordance with anti-corruption law and work cooperatively with ACU to deal with that wrongdoing. Therefore, having a well-written law and enforcement institutions are a good sign for future transparent Cambodia, in addition, leaders in all levels must be committed to having zero tolerance toward corruption by putting utmost efforts and initiatives to combat corruption.

4.4.1.2. Promoting and Establishing the Whistleblower Protection

Law

The current anti-corruption law is not comprehensive enough in ensuring confidentiality for informants who want to report corruption cases. The law seems to be neglected in protecting

¹³⁴ Kaunain, Rahman, “Cambodia: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption,” ed. Matthew Jenkins, October 31, 2016, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Country-profile-Cambodia-2016.pdf>.

¹³⁵ Ben Sokhean, “PM Issues Stern Warning to Corrupt Officials,” August 5, 2019, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/630155/pm-issues-stern-warning-to-corrupt-officials/>.

the whistleblower of corruption. There is a phrase in the Article 13, “Keep absolute confidentiality of corruption-related information sources,¹³⁶” however, there is no specific section or other articles clearly stated about the procedures and how to protect the confidentiality of the informants. In addition, according to article 41, proper protection for whistleblowers that report in good faith is not assured and the threat of imprisonment still exists¹³⁷ for any informants who made defamation and disinformation which is still a big obstacle hindering a broader corruption’s reporting. To encourage people to speak up, article 41, should be amended so that people can freely report about any corruption cases without fear of imprisonment.

Furthermore, another way to gain civic engagement in combating corruption is to have a good “Whistleblower Protection Law.” Even though Cambodia has ACU as an enforcement institution against corruption, it cannot fully oversee all aspects of corruption happening in various government offices across the nation. Citizens and private corporations will be the important informants in reporting corruption since they have received direct services from the government officials, in case there is corruption happening, they will be the ones who report corruptions. Yet people tend to be scared and silent when they face or know about corruption, especially the systematic corruption that involves high ranking government officials. To encourage people to speak up, legal protection is essential in ensuring the confidentiality of the reporters. Previously, the Royal Government of Cambodia has announced plans to draft a whistleblower protection law, however, until now, the law is not yet drafted. Since the Royal Government of Cambodia has ratified the UNCAC, so Cambodian anti-corruption law should be in accordance with the specifications of Article 33 on the protection of reporting persons.

¹³⁶ Article 3, Cambodian Anti-Corruption Law, 2010

¹³⁷ Renata Suter, “The Need for a Good Whistleblower Protection Law In Cambodia,” January 2016, http://ticambodia.org/library/wp-content/files_mf/1454898389PolicyBrief_English_FA_lowres_forweb.pdf.

Specifically, the new law should protect any person reporting corrupt practices, in good faith and on reasonable grounds, from any unjustified treatment. Hopefully, the current Law on Anti-Corruption will be amended in order to protect whistleblowers and encourage reporting.¹³⁸

4.4.1.3. Strengthening the Effective Work of the Anti-Corruption Unit

ACU is an independent anti-corruption body whose main functions are “monitor, investigate, check, and do research as well as propose measures related to corrupt practices in ministries, institutions, public and private units, in conformity with the procedures in force.¹³⁹” The anti-corruption law has given power, competency, and authority to ACU in tackling corruption yet corruption is still a way of life in Cambodia. Cambodia is still the most corrupt country in the ASEAN region, according to the 2019’s corruption perception index, published by Transparency International¹⁴⁰ which indicates the low effective works of ACU back then.

To strengthen the effective work of the ACU, ACU must strengthen the existing anti-corruption law enforcement. The weakness of Cambodian governance is having a well-written law, but the implementation is not really well-regulated or enforced as what the law says. Based on article 11 since the chairman and vice-chairman are still appointed by the Royal decree at the request of the Prime Minister,¹⁴¹ thus, ACU’s independence is still a debate among citizens and private companies¹⁴² whether it is really a politically independent body. To gain more public trust, the chairman and vice-chairman should be appointed by a special committee whose

¹³⁸ Kaunain, Rahman, “Cambodia: Overview of Corruption and Anti-Corruption,” ed. Matthew Jenkins, October 31, 2016, p1, <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/assets/uploads/helpdesk/Country-profile-Cambodia-2016.pdf>.

¹³⁹ Article 13, Cambodian Anti-Corruption Law.

¹⁴⁰ "Corruption Perception Index 2019." Transparency.org. Last modified November 25, 2019. <https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2019>.

¹⁴¹ Article 11, Cambodian Anti-Corruption Law.

¹⁴² Kali Kotoski, “Analysis: Is ACU's Political Face Bad for Business?” May 6, 2016, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/business/analysis-acus-political-face-bad-business>.

members are from NGOs and all political parties. Moreover, ACU must work hard on corruption offenses and punishment. The petty corruption for survival in public service seems to be acceptable for most Cambodians, however, it affects the daily livelihood of citizens, especially the poor. Article 43 is clearly written about petty corruption offenses and punishment which is a legal demand to tackle petty corruption. Crucially, to fight against the large scale of corruption, the ACU must carry out article 36 and 38 seriously which are about the illicit enrichment and punishment for not declaring assets and liabilities. Illicit enrichment is “an increase in the wealth of an individual and the individual cannot provide a reasonable explanation of its increase in comparison to his or her legal income¹⁴³.” Last but not least, the ACU should establish its affiliates in all provinces so that those offices may increase the effective work and enforce the law in a broader way.

Another way to strengthen the ACU’s work is to start cooperation with NGOs. To prevent illicit payments to government officials and create a clean and transparent business environment, ACU has signed 100 MoUs with companies, associations, chambers of commerce, special economic zones, public and private entities 19 were with Japan in the Phnom Penh Special Economic Zone, 59 were with Chinese companies, five with US firms, six with Cambodian enterprises, two with Malaysian businesses and one each from Indian, Swedish, Norwegian, German, Singaporean, Denmark, Thai, and EU organizations.¹⁴⁴ None of the MoUs is with NGOs. Many NGOs are working directly and indirectly on corruption such as Transparency International Cambodia and ActionAid Cambodia, yet their missions are still challenging due to the lack of government’s institutional support. In this regard, ACU should partner and work cooperatively with NGOs who have similar mission and vision because NGOs are also the focal

¹⁴³ Article 36, Cambodian Anti-Corruption Law.

¹⁴⁴ Chan Sok, “Fighting Corruption in Business,” Khmer Times, March 27, 2020, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/706190/fighting-corruption-in-business/>.

bodies in solving social issues like corruption. Therefore, full participation from NGOs in reporting, educating, and drafting policies or laws concerning corruption with ACU will be great cooperation in the fight against corruption.

4.4.1.4. Promoting Online Public Services

To reduce the possibility of corruption happening in public service delivery, the Cambodian government should use technology to improve efficiency in providing public service. For example, in Singapore, GeBIZ is an example of the government's online procurement portal where all government procurement is done through the internet. Everyone who wishes to take part in the procurement process can see the procurement specifications posted by respective government agencies online. In doing this way, there is almost no chance to commit corruption, in contrast, it enhances transparency and integrity (Chapter 2). Back in Cambodia, the government should start to promote the online public service by establishing an online platform that will be convenient and accessible nationwide in applying and monitoring public service delivery in all levels of respective administration. The online platform should be utilized in different functions such as service application, time frame and fee for specific service, service monitoring, and messaging for citizens to question, complain, and give feedback anonymously. Each respective administration should appoint an independent working group to oversee, monitor, and manage the online platform to ensure timely and transparent public service delivery. For complaints and feedback about corruption, the working group must compile them to the ACU and other relevant government institutions directly. Consequently, it will be an innovative approach that will reduce potential corrupt offenses happening in public offices since people did it online without physical communication. Therefore, an online platform will be an excellent approach that provides effective government services to the public and builds a culture of anti-corruption for the future of transparent Cambodia.

4.4.2. Quality of Education

The Cambodian education system seems to produce quantity rather than the quality of education because many graduates from universities are still struggling to obtain good jobs due to a lack of required skill demands. Having quality of education is crucial in producing human resources and workforce for Cambodian economic development as what Singapore successfully did in shifting from quantity to quality of education. To improve the quality of education, what Cambodia should learn from Singapore are introducing the primary leaving exam, reforming academic curriculum, establishing educational support for poor students, and founding more vocational and technical training schools.

4.4.2.1. Introducing Primary School Leaving Exam for Secondary Education

Unlike the two national examinations in secondary education (grades 9 & 12), primary education still has no national and standard examination for all. What Cambodia should learn from the Singapore experience is to initiate a “Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE)” in which students were grouped in different levels at secondary school based on the PSLE’s results. Students in Singapore’s secondary school are streamed into three different ability groups such as express, normal academic, and normal technical stream for students who wish to pursue different higher education such as universities, polytechnics, and vocational schools (chapter 2). In the context of the current education system, Cambodia cannot group students into three streams like Singapore since it has a different higher education system. Otherwise, Cambodia should group secondary students into two groups such as social science and absolute sciences instead of grouping them in high school like what the current system does because students will be late to identify their preferences. So, classes in secondary schools should be divided into social science and science.

In this regard, the MoEYS should introduce a national PSLE exam for all primary schools like what it is in grade 12's exam. The PSLE's results or scores will be the most important indicators determining which group will a student study in secondary school. If a student scores well in social science, he/she will be automatically grouped in a social science group, then, he/she will just register directly with the nearest public secondary schools. In case of a dilemma from parents between putting children in science or social science, parents must consult thoroughly with a classroom teacher who teaches their children and submit a final decision form to the secondary school they want their children to study. Thus, the MoEYS should draft a general policy guideline on the PSLE's procedures and division between science and social science classes and focused subjects of each in secondary education. When students are grouped based on their ability to learn and what they are specialized in, students will be able to keep focusing on what they like to study. Students will be easier to catch up on lessons and pursue what they actually want to do and be in their future professional careers. As a result, the dropout rate in secondary school will be decreased since students are grouped in a place where they belong to be like Singaporean students.

4.4.2.2. Improvement of Academic Curriculum in Secondary Education

Improving the academic curriculum in secondary education is another alternative in strengthening the quality of education. Currently, the world is moving forward into industrial 4.0 in which technological knowledge will be the most demanding skill for jobs. For this reason, first of all, the MoEYS must design an up-to-date and well-designed academic curriculum in both social science and science-focused secondary schools to make sure Cambodian human resources will be able to not only work in the current job markets but also the future job competition like what Singapore did. The curriculum should be more focusing on STEM

subjects for science, whereas, social science should be taught with trending subjects (history, literature, sociology, etc) that will link to future career demands. Similarly, “New Generation School Policy” was successfully drafted by MoEYS aiming to mainly improve the quality of education that will focus on STEM, teaching standards, students’ future career paths, life skills, and critical thinking.¹⁴⁵ Still, the new generation school policy is not yet implemented since currently, the MoEYS is still experimenting at the national level and the lack of budget. Hopefully, it will be shortly implemented because it is a good policy that will improve the quality of education in Cambodia. Moreover, the MoEYS must incorporate some compulsory skills of the 21st century such as analytical and creative thinking and problem-solving, communication, leadership, and teamwork¹⁴⁶ into the academic curriculum since they are crucial soft skills needed for everyone. Besides, the MoEYS must work with NGOs and private companies to discuss and identify the future trending job demand and skills, so that MoEYS itself will design a responsive academic curriculum for students not just in secondary, but also in tertiary education that prepares students to be ready for future job opportunity awaiting them.

4.4.2.3. Support Fund for Impoverished Students

The effects of poverty on education are detrimental as economic pressures often result in children being forced to drop out of school at both the primary and secondary level when parents cannot afford academic expenses such as school uniforms and school supplies.¹⁴⁷ Impoverished students remain likely to drop out of school. To retain dropout numbers and equal access to education, the government should establish a “Support Fund for Impoverished Students” whose family is poor. The fund should be a public fund under direct supervision of

¹⁴⁵ The Ministry of Education, Youth, & Sports, Policy Guidelines: New Generation School, September 2016, p2.

¹⁴⁶ Davida Sims, “Soft Skills & 21st Century Education,” August 30, 2017, <https://www.adsrm.org/news-detail?pk=894777>.

¹⁴⁷ ChildFund International, “Improving Education in Cambodia,” August 27, 2013, <https://www.childfund.org/Content/NewsDetail/2147488882/>.

the MoEYS in which citizens, private companies, and NGOs can voluntarily contribute to the fund. The MoEYS must use the funds in a transparent manner to ensure people in need are actually benefited from the funds. In this context, the MoEYS must issue a policy guideline concerning who will be entitled to receive support, eligibility in applying for support, benefits obtained by impoverished students, and terms and conditions in obtaining, ending, and renewing support from the fund. In addition, the fund should be step by step for primary, lower, and higher secondary education in which funds for a student will be ended once he/she graduates primary school, thus, he/she must apply for support again when he/she enters secondary school. To boost the effective work of the fund, the MoEYS should establish a new department which will only work on fund-related works and delegate responsibilities to all MoEYS's provincial departments and district offices. Besides, concerning the benefits given to the impoverished students, there should be 2 sets of school uniforms, monthly allowance, and needed school materials. As a result, if the support fund for impoverished students is established and implemented nationwide, the fund will partially release financial burden for poor students whose parents cannot afford their academic expenses. Therefore, impoverished students will be able to pursue higher education, in the meantime, the dropout rate will also decrease.

4.4.2.4. Improvement of Vocational and Technical Education

Vocational and technical education is also important for students who have poor academic performance, besides pursuing tertiary education, they also can obtain skills from exiting vocational and technical institutions. Concerning this, there is a “Cambodia's New Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Policy 2017-2025, aiming to transform and modernize Cambodia's skills development system to better serve new labor force

entrants, existing workers, and Cambodia's future development.¹⁴⁸ However, the quality of the TVET system does not respond to labor market demands due to a lack of a quality assurance system, outdated training methods and equipment, trainers lack of direct industry experience, and poor training infrastructure.¹⁴⁹ Moreover, the number of enrollment is very low. According to the most recent labor force survey in 2012, only about 28% of Cambodia's working-age population of 10.7 million had completed secondary education, and only 1% attended vocational training.¹⁵⁰

In response, the ministry of labor and vocational training (MoLVT) must build partnerships with local companies where there are vocational and technical skills demands. The MoLVT and the companies must work closely with each other to identify the future skills and knowledge demands and design a responsive training curriculum and methodology for training like what Singapore did. In the partnerships, the ministry and companies can take advantage to improve the TVET system by offering scholarships for poor students, women, and indigenous people, organizing internship and industrial exchange visits, and conducting job matching for vocational and technical graduates. Moreover, the MoLVT must put efforts into recruiting more experienced professionals and trainers from various companies that it partners with. Besides, training facilities must be increasingly built in the provinces to ease the convenience of distance for students. In line with training facilities, training equipment must be fully equipped in accordance with training demands, therefore, students will gain both theoretical and practical skills.

¹⁴⁸ "Cambodia's New Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy," Manila: Asian Development Bank, February 2018, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/BRF189240>.

¹⁴⁹ "Cambodia's New Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy," Manila: Asian Development Bank, February 2018, p2, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/BRF189240>.

¹⁵⁰ "Cambodia's New Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy," Manila: Asian Development Bank, February 2018, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22617/BRF189240>.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in response to a research question about key factors leading to Singapore's economic success, there are four factors of our research finding. First, Singapore has a great leader who is Mr. Lee Kuan Yew. Apparently, Singapore could not be successful as it is without the presence of the founding father, LKY, who had clear vision, charisma, and flexibility in transforming Singapore from a poor to a wealthy nation. Second, the government put a strong commitment and political will in fighting corruption. Concerning corruption, a paper written by an author, Mr. Vincent Lim has fully supported and given us so much idea of Singapore's fight against corruption, national strategies to deal with the corruption threat, and the role and structure of the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). Third, educational policies' evolutions, effective educational policy's implementation, and well-equipped schools have made a world-class education system that produces a competitive workforce for the success of Singapore's knowledge-based-economy. Fourth, effective governance through effective implementation of government policies concerning the rule of laws and racial harmony policy that create stability and relatively crime-free Singapore. The written policies, regulations, and laws are effectively carried out by the government institutions, citizens, and private corporations resulting from a reversed western democracy with harsh punishments carried out by the Singaporean government in ensuring the stability and steady growth for the Singapore economy. The four points of our research findings above are partially in line with a theoretical framework from Professor Jon S.T. Quah who raised five key points that led to Singapore's economic success such as the pragmatic leadership of the late Lee Kuan Yew, an effective public bureaucracy, effective control of corruption, reliance on the best and brightest citizens through investment in education and competitive compensation, and learning from other countries. Yet, the "learning from other countries" that the author has made didn't support

our research findings. Learning from other countries is just a lesson, the most important factors that we found and link with the author's findings are effective corruption elimination, responsive governance, quality of education, and LKY's leadership.

Concerning Singapore's economic challenges, Gundy Cahyadi, Barbara Kursten, Dr. Marc Weiss, and Guang Yang have jointly written about Singapore's main challenges and responsive solutions after its independence. They have made three pressing challenges including a high unemployment rate, low-skill population, and poor standard of living. We totally agree with the three pressing challenges found by the authors, yet, we also found other pressing challenges such as poverty, inadequate housing, ethnic tensions, corruption, and poor education system. Two of which are corruption and poor quality of education that Singapore government treated as the pressing challenges since corruption is the hindrance of healthy economic growth, in the meantime, the quality of education could produce human resources for Singapore's economy.

Link to current Cambodia, it is also facing some pressing socio-economic issues such as low skill workforce, corruption, low quality of education, and poor governance resulting from ineffective policy implementation from the government institutions. In this regard, we found that Singapore in the 60s and current Cambodia has a few common challenges including poverty, low skill workforce, poor education system, and corruption. The CPI index from Transparency International which shows the worst corrupt rank for Cambodia among all ASEAN countries has given us a comprehensive idea to identify corruption as the most pressing issue for Cambodian economy. Besides, a research paper from IIEP called "Education and Fragility in Cambodia." The paper shows the relations of education and fragility in Cambodia such as relevance education, disparities in access, (dis)engagement with the education system, low skill teachers, and lack of future career prospects for students. The finding from this paper

has helped us to identify the fragility of education as the pressing economic challenges after corruption.

After identifying the two pressing issues of Cambodian economy, there are two significant points that Cambodia should learn from Singapore, however, Cambodia should learn and apply these two points in accordance with its own context and possibility to adopt. The first point is the effective elimination of corruption. The ACU has authority and competency in tackling corruption must have the political will, promoting and establishing the whistleblower protection law, strengthening the effective work of the anti-corruption unit, and promoting online public services. The second point is improving the quality of education in Cambodia aiming to create a world-class education like Singapore. For the betterment of the quality of education in Cambodia, the government and the MoEYS must take efforts introducing primary school leaving exam for secondary education, improving the academic curriculum in secondary education, and establishing a support fund for impoverished students, and improving the vocational and technical training education.

RECOMMENDATION

After identify the key factors leading to Singapore's economic success, economic challenges hindering Singapore economy, and responsive solutions carried out by Singapore government. For Cambodia who is also facing a few common economic challenges such as corruption, low skill labor, low quality of education, and poor governance that Singapore used to face and successfully overcome these economic challenges. In this part, there are two points that Cambodia should change as a summary of recommendation concerning corruption eradication and improvement the quality of education.

Corruption eradication

- **Building Political Will:** Cambodia should build “political will” among political leaders who can be role models and highly committed to eliminate corruption from Cambodia society. Each ministry and government institution should initiate its own mechanism in reporting corruption in accordance with anti-corruption law and work cooperatively with ACU to deal with that wrongdoing.
- **Promoting and Establishing the Whistleblower Protection Law:** (1) Anti-corruption law of Cambodia should be amended, specifically broaden and strengthening the enforcement of Article 13, 33, 41 to better protect the reporters of corruption cases from any serious threats (2) Cambodia should consider on establishing a separate law on “Whistleblower Protection Law” to gain civic engagement in reporting corruption offences.
- **Strengthening the Effective Work of the ACU:**
 - The chairman and vice-chairman should be appointed by a special committee whose members are from NGOs and all political parties.

- ACU must work hard on corruption offenses and punishment by firmly carry out the implementation based the existing law.
 - ACU should expend its facilities and establish its affiliates in all provinces so that those offices may increase the effective work and enforce the law in a broader way.
 - Strengthening cooperation with NGOs and work with NGOs in drafting responsive policy or law to have a better elimination of corruption.
- **Promoting Online Public Services**
 - Cambodia government should incorporate technology, online platform to improve efficiency in providing public service to reduce the possibility of corruption happening in public service delivery.
 - The online platform should be utilized in different functions such as service application, time frame and fee for specific service, service monitoring, and messaging for citizens to question, complain, and give feedback anonymously.
 - Each respective administration should appoint an independent working group to oversee, monitor, and manage the online platform to ensure timely and transparent public service delivery.
 - For complaints and feedback about corruption, the working group must compile them to the ACU and other relevant government institutions directly.

Quality of Education

- **Introducing Primary School Leaving Exam for Secondary Education**
 - Cambodia should introduce PSLE at the end of primary. Students will be grouped into two groups (Social science & Absolute Science) based on their scores when they enter secondary school.

- MoEYS should draft a general policy guideline on the PSLE's procedures and division between science and social science classes and focused subjects of each in secondary education.

- **Improvement of Academic Curriculum in Secondary Education**

- Improving the academic curriculum in secondary education by promoting technological or scient knowledge in both social and absolute science classes as a respond to the involvement of society to industrial 4.0.
- The curriculum should be more focusing on STEM subjects for science, whereas, social science should be taught with trending subjects (history, literature, sociology, etc.) that will link to future career demands.
- Increase national budget to strengthen quality of implementation of New Generation School Policy nationwide.
- MoEYS must incorporate some compulsory skills of the 21st century such as analytical and creative thinking and problem-solving, communication, leadership, and teamwork into academic curriculum.
- MoEYS must work with NGOs and private companies to discuss and identify the future trending job demand and skills, so that MoEYS itself will design a responsive academic curriculum for students not just in secondary, but also in tertiary education that prepares students to be ready for future job opportunity awaiting them.

- **Support Fund for Impoverished Students**

- The government should establish a “Support Fund for Impoverished Students” whose family is poor.
- The fund should be a public fund under direct supervision of the MoEYS in which citizens, private companies, and NGOs can voluntarily contribute to the fund.

- The MoEYS must use the funds in a transparent manner to ensure people in need are actually benefited from the funds.
- MoEYS must issue a policy guideline concerning who will be entitled to receive support, eligibility in applying for support, benefits obtained by impoverished students, and terms and conditions in obtaining, ending, and renewing support from the fund, and implementing department. The fund should be step by step for primary, lower, and higher secondary education in which funds for a student will be ended once he/she graduates primary school, thus, he/she must apply for support again when he/she enters secondary school.

- **Improvement of Vocational and Technical Education**

- MoLVT must partner with local companies where there are vocational and technical skills demands and work to improve the TVET system by offering scholarships for poor students, women, and indigenous people, organizing internship and industrial exchange visits, and conducting job matching for vocational and technical graduates.
- Increase number of experienced professionals and trainers
- Increase TVET's training facilities in the provinces to ease the convenience of distance for students. In line with training facilities, training equipment must be fully equipped in accordance with training demands, therefore, students will gain both theoretical and practical skills.

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