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Editorial Team

The Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS), Cambodian

Issue summary

This is the second issue of the Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS) in 2024. This issue has eight articles, including one editorial article, three review articles, three original research articles, and one book review article. All of the articles are about educational fields, English language education, and social sciences. CJESS welcomes original research articles, review articles, and book reviews. CJESS publishes two issues a year in June and December, and the authors are welcome to submit their articles year-round. However, they must notice that each article needs at least three months from submission to publication. Authors need to [register](#) and follow the instructions to submit articles to CJESS, or if they are not familiar with the open journal system (OJS), they may submit their papers directly to **cjessjournal555@gmail.com** along with the full name(s), affiliation(s), short bio(s), and email address(es). However, since OJS is more standardized and internationalized for article processing, we still encourage authors to learn and use it to submit their articles.

Message from Head of Advisory Board



Dear colleagues and readers,

“Greetings for the second issue of the Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS) in 2024. As the Head of the Advisory Board, I am honored to support this new platform dedicated to advancing interdisciplinary research in education and social sciences.”

“CJESS aims to publish high-quality, peer-reviewed studies that address key challenges and promote sustainable development in Cambodia and other areas. Our goal is to establish a cooperative environment where ideas and advancements can be shared to make a positive impact on society.”

“We appreciate your interest and support. We are excited for your input and participation.”:

Best regards,

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dina Pen

Head of Advisory Board

The Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS)

Message from Founder and Editor-in-Chief



“Through personal observation and empirical evidence, I have come to acknowledge that research in Cambodia lags behind that of other countries, including its neighboring nations. As a result, it is critical to encourage and support research and publication” in this country. This is the second issue of 2024, and we have been working very hard to make this issue possible in the scholarly cycle. Thus, on behalf of all CJESS members, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the editorial team members, reviewers, authors, and all other contributors for their essential inputs in this issue.

Kind regards,

Dr. Sereyrath Em

Founder and Editor-in-Chief

The Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS)

The Mission and Vision of The Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS)

1. Mission

To provide a dynamic platform for collecting, exchanging, and advancing knowledge in educational and social sciences through rigorous research, quality publication, fostering intellectual dialogue, and supporting evidence-based policymaking and sustainable development initiatives.

2. Vision

To be a leading academic and scientific journal, nationally and internationally recognized, that drives innovation and transformative change in educational and social sciences, contributing to sustainable development and societal progress in Cambodia and beyond.

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Enhancing the visibility and impact of Cambodian scientific journals through Open Journal System (OJS): An editorial review

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) in Cambodia is currently working on an initiative to enhance the visibility and impact of Cambodian scientific journals by implementing Open Journal Systems (OJS) in the country's higher education institutions (HEIs). During a workshop at Svay Rieng University, MoEYS emphasized its objectives to modernize the administration and publication of scholarly work, thereby facilitating more efficient peer review and open access. The objective of increasing the number of Cambodian journals indexed in international databases, including Scopus, the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI), and Web of Science among others, is a critical component of vision. This will enhance the academic credibility and global visibility of Cambodian research. At present, Cambodia maintains 52 scientific journals in various disciplines, including agriculture, education, health, and technology. While some journals, such as the Cambodia Journal of Public Health and the Cambodia Education Review, continue to operate, others have discontinued publication or encountered difficulties in maintaining consistency. The Ministry's initiative will be instrumental in the revitalization of the academic publishing infrastructure in the country and will offer essential support to journals that are currently grappling with sustainability challenges. Additionally, Cambodian journals can make a substantial contribution to regional and global academic discourse, encourage research collaborations, and attract higher-quality submissions by indexing in international databases. This action is consistent with Cambodia's overarching objective of internationalizing higher education and cultivating a more robust research culture, thereby guaranteeing the extensive recognition and global standards of local research. The strategic endeavor to enhance the quality of research output, establish Cambodia's scholarly community as a critical contributor to addressing national and global challenges, and cultivate academic partnerships is exemplified by the strategic use of OJS and the aspiration to index in prestigious databases.

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1. Introduction

Cambodia is a relatively small country located within the Indo-China Peninsula, sharing borders to the east with Vietnam, to the north with Laos and Thailand, and to the west with Thailand. It is governed by a constitutional monarchical system with a population of approximately 13.4 million residing in an area of 181, 035 square kilometers (Em et al., 2023). It emerged from decades of civil war and conflicts only recently, after signing up to the Paris Peace Agreement of 1991, which established the liberal democratic form of government and led to a constitution being drafted in 1993 (Em, Mok, et al., 2024). Since then, Cambodia has made significant progress in the social, economic, health, and development sectors (Em, 2024d; Em, Chin, et al., 2024).

Being a country renowned for its historical, cultural landmarks, and natural resources, Cambodia has strived to become more integrated with its neighbors and other global economies (Asif et al., 2023). The country has made significant progress toward a market-oriented democratic society (Heng, 2024b). This socially, environmentally, and economically motivated growth and regeneration has been largely driven by the changing patterns and nature of research and development projects which have permeated most aspects of economic and social life, as well as the imminent release of a new study on these influences, Cambodia research landscape (RGC, 2023). Pre-research insights regarding the individuals currently influencing the country's research landscape, their demands, awaited tools, and opportunities are examined and linked (Em & Khampirat, 2024; English Academic Essay, 2024).

This country analysis is expected to clearly understand the methodologies, actors, and experiences associated with the current Cambodian research landscape (Heng, 2024a). The intention is to find the advantages available and the constraints associated with the various options and opportunities, to develop a governance structure that can recommend four levels of micro-intervention by which a respective country can encourage the appropriate types of current and future research, thus building a strong economy through relevant research and sufficient political and social institutions together (Heng et al., 2022). The overall hypothesis is that how a respective country composes its knowledge economy will directly affect its performance in a neo-liberalized globalization market and will indirectly promote access to a high quality of life for the citizenry (Heng, 2024c).

However, despite the increasing discussion and debate on research conduct and output, there is only a limited amount of work exploring research-related issues at the national level to inform the debate (Em, 2024a). The article, therefore, first provides an introduction to the country, explores the current landscape of research activities, and investigates the available data and the process of research development. Data was collected through a desk-based review of the reports produced by scholars, research organizations, academic articles, education ministry, government reports, and the country-related statistical website.

2. Scientific Journals Based in Cambodia

The following table presents the found journals based in Cambodia during the current time. There might be a few more journals not included due to the difficulties of finding them. However, they will be included later.

Table 1 (see appendix) provides a comprehensive overview of 52 scientific journals based in Cambodia as of December 2024, spanning a wide range of academic disciplines including agriculture, education, health, law, technology, and the humanities. The table includes key details such as the publishers, founding years, publication status, and websites for each journal.

Major Cambodian universities and institutions, such as the Royal University of Agriculture (RUA), Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP), and the Royal Academy of Cambodia, play a significant role in hosting many of these journals.

While some journals have a long history, such as the Cambodian Journal of Agriculture (founded in 1997), many have ceased publication or have limited recent activity, reflecting the challenges in sustaining academic publishing in the country. However, several journals, such as the Cambodian Journal of Public Health and the Cambodia Education Review, remain active, continuing to provide valuable platforms for research dissemination. Additionally, there is a recent surge in academic publishing, with several new journals established in 2023 and 2024, such as the USEA Research Journal and the Journal of Cambodian Health, which are still in their early phases, reflecting a growing interest in expanding Cambodia's academic output.

The table also underscores the evolving nature of academic publishing in Cambodia, with several journals either planning their first issues or actively seeking submissions, indicating a growing research culture in the country. Journals like the Cambodia Journal for Business and Professional Practice and the Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences highlight the increasing specialization of research as Cambodian academic institutions work to meet the country's development needs while engaging in the broader regional and global academic community. Notably, two journals, the Cambodian Journal of Educational Research (CJER) and the Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS), utilize OJS for their publication processes.

3. New vision for the Cambodian scientific journals

The Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) recently unveiled a bold new plan at a workshop at Svay Rieng University, aiming to increase the awareness and accessibility of scientific journals published in Cambodia. In order to expand the journals' influence and audience, the primary objective of the workshop was to persuade higher education institutions (HEIs) to host their publications on the OJS platform. Academic institutions in Cambodia can expedite the submission, review, and publication procedures, improving the caliber and international visibility of their research output, thanks to the widely used OJS platform (see Em, 2024b, 2024c).

A key element of this new vision is the goal of increasing the number of Cambodian journals indexed in major international databases such as Web of Science, ACI (ASEAN Citation Index), and Scopus among others (see Em, 2024b). The indices play a crucial role in promoting the recognition and citation of Cambodian research, thereby elevating its global significance. These prestigious databases index Cambodian journals, attracting higher-quality contributions and enhancing their influence on the regional and global academic discourse (Heng, K., & Sol, 2024). This move aligns with the overarching objective of internationalizing higher education in the country and elevating Cambodia to a prominent position in the regional research community (Em, 2024b).

Overall, the ministry's program is considered a crucial step in bolstering Cambodia's research infrastructure, cultivating a rigorous academic culture, and guaranteeing that domestic research adheres to international standards. As more journals transition to OJS and work toward indexing, the academic community in Cambodia could expect to witness an increase in research

collaborations, better funding opportunities, and a bigger commitment to utilize high-quality research to address both national and global challenges.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, adopting OJS and pursuing international indexing under the direction of MoEYS is a huge step forward for scientific journals in Cambodia. By updating the publication procedure and making it more accessible, we can enhance the visibility and quality of research output from HEIs. This calculated action raises the profile of Cambodian research in the regional and international academic debate, promotes collaboration, and harmonizes local academic procedures with international standards. As these initiatives progress, we have the potential to fundamentally transform Cambodia's academic publishing landscape, ensuring global and national recognition and serious consideration of local research.

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Declaration of AI usage

The authors used QuillBot to polish the language in some parts of the article. However, they declared that the content of the article is totally theirs.

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Appendix

Table 1. Scientific Journals Based in Cambodia as of December 2024

No.	Journals' Names	Publishers	Years of Founding	Status	Websites/Links
1.	Cambodian Journal of Agriculture	Cambodian Agricultural Research and Development Institute	1997	Stopped publishing	http://www.cardi.org.kh/?page=document&topid=8&lg=en
2.	Siksacakr: The Journal of Cambodia Research	Center For Khmer Studies	2000	Last issue in 2021	https://khmerstudies.org/publications/siksacakr-journal-of-cambodia-research/
3.	Udaya Journal of Khmer Studies	Department of Culture and Monuments of the Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA)	2000	Last issue in 2020	https://www.yosothor.org/udaya-journal-of-khmer-studies.html
4.	Journal of Agricultural Technology and Rural Development	Royal University of Agriculture	2005	No information	Unknown
5.	Scientific Journal	Chamroeun University of Poly-Technology	2007	No information	Unknown
6.	Scientific Journal	International Relations Institute of Cambodia	2008	No information	Unknown
7.	Journal of National Language Institute of Royal Academy of Cambodia	Institute of National Language, Royal Academy of Cambodia	2008	Still active	https://rac.gov.kh/researchs-categories/6/researchs#main-container

8.	Bulletin of the National Council of Khmer Language	Office of the Council of Ministers	2008	Last issue in 2015	https://rac.gov.kh/researchs-categories/6/researchs#main-container
9.	The Cambodian Journal of Natural History	Fauna & Flora International, Partnership with RUPP	2008	Still active	http://rupp.edu.kh/cjnh/journal.php
10.	Bulletin of Cambodia Chemical Society	Cambodian Chemical Society	2010	Still active	https://www.facebook.com/ccsphnompenh/
11.	Cambodian Communication Review	Royal University of Agriculture	2010	Still active	https://dmc-cci.edu.kh/research/
12.	Cambodia Research Journal	-	2011	Not working	NA
13.	International Journal of Business and Development Research (IJBDR)	Build Bright University	2012	Last issue in 2018	https://www.bbu.edu.kh/site/view_article/199
14.	The Cambodia Law and Policy Journal (CLPJ)	Cambodian Document Center	2013	Last issue in 2014	http://cambodialpj.org/
15.	Techno-Science Research Journal (Techno-SRJ)	Institute of Technology of Cambodia	2013	Not working	https://ric.itc.edu.kh/publication/overview-of-techno-srj
16.	Research Journal	Asia Euro University	2013	Last issue in 2016	http://aeu.edu.kh/site/page/301
17.	NUM Research Series	National University of Management	2014	Still active	https://num.edu.kh/web/web/num/Pages?id=259
18.	Research Journal	Cambodian University for Specialties	2014	One issue	NA
19.	Asian Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Safety (AJEAS)	National University of Battambang	2015	Still active	https://ajaes.org/About.html
20.	The Cambodian Journal of International Studies	University of Cambodia	2016	Still active	https://uc.edu.kh/ucs/Cambodian Journal of International Studies/8/3298/

21.	Cambodia Education Review (CER)	Department of Education Policy, MoEYS	2017	Still active	http://cer.dopomoeys.com/
22.	The UC Monograph Series	University of Cambodia	2017	One issue	http://uc.edu.kh/The UC Monographs Series.php
23.	UC Occasional Paper Series	University of Cambodia	2017	Four issues	http://uc.edu.kh/The_UC_Occasional_Paper_Series.php
24.	UC Working Paper Series	University of Cambodia	2017	Five issues	http://uc.edu.kh/The_UC_Working_Paper_Series.php
25.	Journal of Management, Economics, and Industrial Organization (JOMEINO)	Paragon University	2017	Not working	NA
26.	The Cambodia Journal of Basic and Applied Research (CJBAR)	RUPP	2018	Still active	http://www.rupp.edu.kh/CJBAR/
27.	Journal of the Royal University of Fine Arts	Royal University of Fine Arts	2018?	No information	https://www.rufa.edu.kh/Kh_Cultural%20Research%20Centre/kh_research_Publicity.html
28.	Journal of Greater Mekong Studies	Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace	2019	Not working	https://cicp.org.kh/cat/journal-of-greater-mekong-studies/
29.	Cambodian Journal of Agricultural Sciences (CJAS)	Royal University of Agriculture	2019	No information	https://cicp.org.kh/cat/journal-of-greater-mekong-studies/
30.	AUB Research Series	ACLEDA University	2020	Still active	https://aub.edu.kh/tc/eng/business-research-series
31.	Cambodia Journal of Public Health	National Institute of Public Health	2020	Still active	https://cjph.niph.org.kh/index.php/cjph
32.	Cambodian Journal of Educational Development	Hiroshima University	2020	Still active	https://cjed.hiroshima-u.ac.jp/index.html
33.	Cambodian Journal of Educational Research	Cambodian Education Forum	2020	Still active	https://cefcambodia.com/cjer/ (OJS)
34.	Cambodian Review of EFL Research	Institute of Foreign Languages, RUPP	2020	No information	https://doe.ifl-rupp.com/publications/cambodian-review-of-efl-research/
35.	iTrade Bulletin	Trade Training and Research Institute	2021	Still active	https://commerce-cambodia.com/2022/08/01/itrade-bulletin-vol-2-issue-01-for-july-2022/

		(Ministry of Commerce)			
36.	Action Research Series	Phnom Penh Teacher Education College	2021	Still active	https://www.ptec.edu.kh/2021/03/1184/
37.	Action Research Series	Battambang Teacher Education College	2021	Still active	NA
38.	Cambodian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences	Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Royal Academy of Cambodia	2022	Still active	https://cjhss-journal.com/
39.	Cambodian Journal of Education and STEM (CJES)	Department of Scientific Research, MoEYS	2022	Still active	https://cjser-dsrmoey.com/
40.	Journal Of Accounting, Finance, Economics and Social Sciences	CamEd Business School	No information	Not working	https://cam-ed.com/research/
41.	CamEd Business Review	CamEd Business School	No clear information	Not working	https://cam-ed.edu.kh/camed-business-review/
42.	Journal of Agricultural Sciences and Rural Development	Royal University of Agriculture	No information	Three issues	NA
43.	PIARD Journal	Paññāsāstra University of Cambodia	2022	Call for papers for the third issue	http://piard.puc.edu.kh/
44.	AU Journal of Entrepreneurship and Green Innovation	Angkor University	2023	Still active	https://journal.angkor.edu.kh/
45.	Cambodia Journal for Business and Professional Practice (CJBPP)	ACLEDA University	2024	Planning the first issue	Research and Innovation (aub.edu.kh)
46.	International Journal of Cambodian Education	English Academic Essay	2023	Two issues	International Journal of Cambodian Education (IJCE) – English Academic Essay (EAE)

47.	Educational Psychology and Innovation	Education, Research and Innovation Center	2023	Call for papers for the first issue	https://ericcambodia.com/
48.	Journal of Science and Innovation of National Meanchey University	National Meanchey University	?	Preparing guidelines	http://www.jsinmu.edu.kh/
49.	USEA Research Journal	USEA	2024	Planning two issues a year	https://rj.usea.edu.kh/
50.	The Journal of Cambodian Health	University of Puthisastra	2024	Scheduling a new issue	https://www.journal.puthisastra.edu.kh/index.php/jch/about .
51.	Cambodian Journal of Educational and Social Sciences (CJESS)	English Academic Essay	2024	Still active	https://ejournal.educationalfields.com/index.php/CJESS (OJS)
52.	Research Journal: Social Sciences and Natural Sciences	Khemarak University	2024	One issue	https://khemarakuniversity.edu.kh/en

Source: Adapted from MoEYS (2024, pp. 1-5)

Review the advantages and disadvantages of the Funan Techo Canal project in Cambodia

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Abstract

The Cambodian government always tries its best to make the country become a civilized one. The Funan Techo Canal project in Cambodia has great potential to boost the country's economic, environmental, and social advancement. Extending across four provinces and providing answers to water management issues, the endeavor is set to serve as a driver for economic advancement, development of tourism, and enhanced regional connections. It offers chances for technological progress, employment generation, and infrastructure improvement, as well as advocating for cultural conservation and environmental protection. Despite its numerous benefits, the project also comes with mini drawbacks such as possible harm to the environment and displacement of communities. Maximizing benefits and addressing negative impacts requires stakeholders to prioritize proactive approaches to environmental management, community engagement, and social inclusion. By effectively tackling these obstacles, the Funan Techo Canal project could change the scenery of Cambodia, promoting sustainable development, resilience, and prosperity for both its inhabitants and the surrounding area.

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1. Introduction

Cambodia is a developing country with a lower middle income, and this country has been trying its best to move from a lower middle income as planned to an upper middle income in 2030 and a high-income or developed one in 2050. To achieve these goals, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) has been trying and implementing various methods with experts in each field, including education, healthcare, infrastructure, transportation, economics as well as other sectors (Em et al., 2022).

Thus, during its Second Legislature of the National Assembly from 1998-2003, RGC diligently carried out the Triangular Strategy, creating a positive atmosphere and essential conditions, both internally and externally, for Cambodia to progress with optimism and certainty toward reforms and continual growth (Cambodian Corner, n.d.).

Then the Rectangular Strategy implemented in 2004 replaced the Triangular Strategy, setting the core principles of Cambodia's development strategy for the Third Legislature of the National Assembly. From a geometric perspective, the Triangular Strategy proved its ability to withstand tough challenges and remain strong and resolute in any situation. Hence, the Rectangular Strategy could be illustrated as a unified formation of interconnected rectangles symbolizing durability and steadiness similar to how a sturdy table or chair rests firmly on four legs. The Rectangular Strategy aimed to direct RGC's agenda, incorporating elements from various sources such as the Millennium Development Goals, the Cambodia Socio-Economic Development Program, the Cambodia National Poverty Reduction Strategy, and other reform programs. These elements have been developed through extensive consultation with national and international stakeholders, including government ministries, civil society representatives, and donors (RGC, 2004).

The framework of policies dubbed "Rectangular Strategy" appeared to have been established by RGC with the purported aim of promoting economic advancement and expansion across diverse domains. These strategies centered on four principal domains to attain equitable and enduring progress: augmenting labor force competencies, broadening economic variety, fostering the expansion of the private sector, and refining infrastructure. Cambodia's primary objectives encompassed fortifying its competitive prowess, magnetizing capital inflows, and ameliorating the welfare of its populace by executing these strategies (FAO, 2004).

2. Pentagonal Strategy and the Funan Techo Canal

Following the conclusion of the Rectangular Strategy, RGC has transitioned to the Pentagonal Strategy, a sustainable development plan comprised of five distinct phases. According to Orm (2023), the strategy outlines five main goals symbolized by the edges of a pentagon. First and foremost, the plan is centered on boosting economic growth by implementing actions like promoting investments and developing infrastructure. Secondly, it focuses on tackling unemployment and underemployment by implementing initiatives such as creating jobs and providing skills training. Additionally, it highlights the importance of promoting equal access to resources and opportunities through suggested measures to decrease income disparities and improve societal integration. Additionally, the plan highlights the significance of enhancing the effectiveness of government activities and public services, which may include implementing changes to simplify administrative processes and improve governing. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of environmental sustainability, suggesting measures to address climate change and encourage sustainable development practices. RGC (2023) revealed that the main goal of the "Pentagonal Strategy Phase I" is to promote development, job creation, fairness, productivity, and environmental responsibility within the nation. This strategic framework is a foundational step toward achieving the ambitious vision of Cambodia in 2050. The Pentagonal Strategy Phase I offers a thorough plan for progressing Cambodia's development goals in different aspects to achieve the Cambodia Vision 2050.

The Funan Techo Canal, which will cost 1.7. billion USD for construction (Ministry of Information, 2023; Rim, 2024), is one of the main strategies for providing Cambodian sustainability in many sectors. It is 180 kilometers as planned (Funan Techo Canal, 2024), and it surely fulfills some parts of the Pentagonal Strategy. The project to develop the Funan Techo Canal is considered vital and is expected to significantly change the landscape of the region (Fresh News, 2024b). The canal will flow through and across four provinces: Kep, Kampot, Takeo, and Kandal, which are in the Southern parts of Cambodia (see Figure 1), and the water from the canal can also be used in the nearby provinces (Fresh News, 2024a).

In this examination, the article delves into the many advantages (some are provided in Table 1) of the project while also acknowledging a few minor drawbacks (some are provided in Table 2) that need to be considered. The project has the potential to significantly boost economic growth through creating business opportunities, funding, and jobs (Mierzejewski, 2024). Moreover, there is the potential for it to develop into a lively destination for tourists, drawing visitors with its beautiful landscapes and enjoyable experiences (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).

The canal plays a significant role in improving food security and sustainable development by effectively managing water issues like floods and irrigation (Tan, 2024). Nonetheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the possible environmental consequences of development initiatives and the importance of addressing social problems like the relocation of communities. By carefully considering these factors, stakeholders can make full use of the innovative opportunities provided by the Funan Techo Canal project while minimizing its drawbacks (Eyler et al., 2024).

Table 1. Advantages of the Funan Techo Canal project

Advantages	Descriptions
1. Economic catalyst	The Funan Techo Canal is expected to significantly boost economic development in Cambodia. The canal will create new possibilities for commerce, bring in investments, and generate jobs, ultimately fueling economic growth through improved trade and transportation. With improved connectivity and increased access to waterways, businesses can expand their customer base both at home and internationally. Moreover, the canal's strategic location and efficient transportation capabilities will enhance the competitiveness of Cambodian companies, leading to increased productivity and output levels. Consequently, the canal is ready to play a key role in speeding up Cambodia's economic growth path, promoting prosperity, and enhancing living standards for its people (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).
2. Tourism hub	The Funan Techo Canal can become a major tourist draw that could positively impact Cambodia's tourism sector. Boat tours, dining by the water, and recreational activities along the canal will draw visitors, support local businesses, and generate revenue for the area. The picturesque views of the canal, along with close cultural attractions and historical sites, will create an appealing spot for tourists from both domestic and international locations. Moreover, the canal-side development of tourism facilities like hotels, restaurants, and gift shops will create business and job growth prospects in the nearby area. In general, the canal could transform into a lively tourist center, enhancing the visitor's stay and boosting Cambodia's tourism industry's economic growth (Fresh News, 2024a; Reveal Howto, 2024).
3. Water management solution	Cambodia sees the Funan Techo Canal as a crucial solution to address issues with water, specifically in managing floods and providing irrigation. By managing water flow and ensuring a consistent water supply for agriculture, the canal is projected to improve food security, lower the likelihood of floods, and encourage sustainable water usage.

	The canal is projected to minimize changes in seasons and ensure a consistent water supply for agriculture by storing and dispersing water, resulting in higher crop yields and safeguarding farmers' incomes. Furthermore, reducing dependence on erratic rainfall and surface water storage is anticipated to mitigate the adverse effects of droughts and water shortages on agricultural ecosystems and food supply networks. In essence, the canal is a crucial investment in water infrastructure to tackle urgent water management issues and create a basis for enduring resilience and sustainability in Cambodia's agricultural industry (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).
4. Environmental stewardship	The Funan Techo Canal project offers a chance to advance environmental sustainability in various ways. Reviving ecosystems and creating homes for a variety of plants and animals will be facilitated by the restoration of habitats along the canal edges. The main goal of the water governance initiative is to improve water quality, decrease pollution, and enhance the health of aquatic environments. The canal endeavor will enhance biodiversity and furnish verdant spaces for the local populace to partake in leisure activities such as strolling, jogging, and avian observation, while concurrently supporting wildlife conservation efforts. Overall, the canal project exhibits a commitment to environmental preservation through infrastructural enhancements that seek to bolster ecosystems and elevate the standard of living for both human and animal inhabitants (Fresh News, 2024a; Tan, 2024).
5. Technological advancement	The building of the Funan Techo Canal offers a special chance for creativity and technological progress in engineering and infrastructure development, showcasing the skills of local professionals. A complex engineering approach is needed for the canal project, which is a major infrastructure development, to overcome obstacles like ground excavation, water control, and structure planning. Engineers and construction professionals can use advanced technologies and creative methods to improve project efficiency and effectiveness when dealing with these challenges. Furthermore, the canal project promotes cooperation between local stakeholders and global professionals, encouraging the sharing of knowledge and the growth of skills in the local engineering field. The canal project highlights the resourcefulness and originality of local talent, not only pushing forward infrastructure development but also enhancing Cambodia's standing as a center for innovation and technological skills. In general, the building of the canal marks a major achievement in the nation's path toward sustainable growth and highlights the transformative power of infrastructure initiatives in promoting economic advancement and social development (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).
6. Regional connectivity	The Funan Techo Canal can greatly improve trade routes and transportation networks in the region, promoting stronger connections between Cambodia and its neighboring countries. The canal's navigable waterway allows for cost-effective and efficient transportation of goods, lessening the need for congested roads and costly air freight.

	This enhanced connectivity not only makes trade easier within Cambodia but also strengthens the country's role as a regional trading hub, facilitating trade between Southeast Asian countries. Moreover, the canal's advantageous position can act as an entryway to global markets, enticing investments and fostering economic collaboration with nearby nations. By enhancing trade and working together, the canal initiative can boost economic growth and advancement in the area, promoting shared prosperity and reinforcing diplomatic relationships between Cambodia and nearby countries (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).
7. Urban development	The Funan Techo Canal could act as a trigger for urban growth and rejuvenation, sparking investment and development in nearby regions. The canal, being a significant infrastructure initiative, will not just enhance transportation and linkages but also generate possibilities for business and housing growth alongside its path. The existence of the canal is expected to draw attention from both local and foreign investors, resulting in the creation of new businesses, business areas, and housing projects nearby. Moreover, the canal initiative could rejuvenate current urban areas, motivating rejuvenation endeavors and improving the overall appeal of the region for residents, employees, and investors. The canal project boosts economic growth, creates jobs, and enhances residents' quality of life, leading Cambodia's cities toward sustainable and inclusive development in the future (Fresh News, 2024b; Office of the Council of Ministers, 2024).
8. Cultural preservation	The Funan Techo Canal project has the potential to make important contributions to cultural preservation and heritage conservation by revitalizing historical waterways and showcasing Cambodia's cultural heritage. The building of the canal on ancient water paths celebrates Cambodia's cultural heritage and reminds us of its past civilizations and trading customs. By implementing thoughtful planning and design, the project can integrate traditional Khmer architecture and art, forming a cultural passage that honors Cambodia's rich heritage. In addition, the canal's location near historical sites and cultural landmarks provides chances for interpretation and education, enabling visitors to discover Cambodia's history and value its cultural importance. The canal project helps preserve cultural treasures for future generations and promotes global cultural exchange by fostering a sense of pride and connection to the country's heritage (Office of the Council of Ministers, 2024; Tan, 2024).
9. Environmental benefits	The Funan Techo Canal project shows great potential in boosting environmental sustainability by implementing initiatives to restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity, and enhance ecosystem health. By carefully planning and carrying out tasks, the project can revive damaged areas along the canal, restoring them to their natural state and providing habitats for different plants and animals. The project for the canal protects biodiversity by conserving and improving natural habitats like wetlands and riparian areas, which help a variety of plant

	and animal species. Furthermore, by focusing on water management and quality control, the project contributes to the preservation of ecosystem health by minimizing pollution and guaranteeing the availability of clean water sources. In general, the Funan Techo Canal project shows a dedication to sustainable development practices that focus on the environment, benefiting both individuals and the Earth (Office of the Council of Ministers, 2024; Tan, 2024).
10. Job creation	The building and functioning of the Funan Techo Canal offer the potential to generate jobs in multiple industries, thus significantly contributing to poverty alleviation and socio-economic growth in Cambodia. Throughout the building process, a variety of job openings will become available, such as skilled labor, engineering, and project management positions, offering jobs for both residents and skilled employees. Moreover, after the canal is operational, the region will see a continued boost in job creation and economic stability due to ongoing maintenance, logistics, and tourism-related jobs. The canal project not only helps people and families escape poverty by offering steady jobs but also promotes the growth of skills and capabilities among the local workforce. In the end, the canal's contribution to creating jobs highlights its importance as a driving force for socio-economic progress, promoting prosperity and enhancing the quality of life for those living along its path (Fresh News, 2024a; Office of the Council of Ministers, 2024).
11. Infrastructure enhancement	The development of the Funan Techo Canal project will stimulate infrastructure improvements, introducing a new period of accessibility and connectivity in the area. In addition to building the canal, the project will also involve constructing necessary supporting infrastructure like ports, terminals, and other facilities. These enhancements will not just make the canal run smoothly but also improve regional connectivity by establishing crucial entry points for transportation and commerce. Building modern ports and terminals will improve supply chain efficiency and lower transportation expenses for businesses in the area. Additionally, the improved infrastructure will improve the overall ease of access in the area, enabling communities to reach essential services and connect with nearby regions more easily. In general, the canal project's emphasis on improving infrastructure highlights its significant effect on the region's connectivity and economic growth (Tan, 2024).
12. Diversification of transportation	The Funan Techo Canal project is a major development in the region's transportation offerings, providing a new way to transport goods and people that is both affordable and eco-friendly. The canal provides a feasible option for transporting bulk cargo and long-distance travel, serving as an alternative to conventional road and rail transportation methods. Unlike road transport with its high costs and frequent traffic congestion, or rail transport which requires extensive infrastructure and maintenance, the canal provides a more efficient and environmentally friendly option. Water transportation not only reduces operating costs

	but also emits less carbon, making it an eco-conscious choice for both cargo and passenger trips. The canal project reduces reliance on fossil fuels and boosts the region's transportation system's resilience and sustainability through a range of transportation choices (Fresh News, 2024a, 2024b).
13. Waterfront development	The Funan Techo Canal project provides many opportunities for developing the waterfront, allowing for the creation of lively public areas, gardens, and leisure amenities along its edges. The project enhances the quality of life for residents and visitors by including green spaces and recreational amenities in the canal's design. These waterfront developments serve as focal points for community gatherings, sports, and cultural festivities, fostering a sense of camaraderie and solidarity among locals. Additionally, building public spaces along the canal's edges offers locals chances for outdoor activities and stress relief, enhancing both physical and mental health. Furthermore, the creation of waterfront parks and leisure amenities draws in visitors, bolstering the economic health of the local tourism industry. In general, the focus of the canal project on developing the waterfront improves the cityscape, boosts the quality of life in nearby neighborhoods, and forms pleasant areas for relaxation and pleasure (Fresh News, 2024a; Office of the Council of Ministers, 2024).
14. Disaster resilience	The Funan Techo Canal project is vital for improving disaster resilience in the area as a water management infrastructure endeavor. The canal functions as a barrier to flooding and reduces the effects of natural disasters like heavy rain and storm surges, which helps lower the potential for severe harm to nearby communities and infrastructure. In times of increased water levels, the canal efficiently controls water flow, redirecting extra water from populated and agricultural regions, and decreasing the risk of flood disasters. Additionally, by managing water levels and utilizing a controlled drainage system, the canal helps decrease flood dangers and enhance the region's ability to withstand the impacts of climate change. Overall, the canal project boosts the area's capacity to adjust and encourages sustainability by addressing environmental challenges with water management and disaster preparedness (Fresh News, 2024b; Ministry of Tourism, 2024).

Table 2. Disadvantages of the Funan Techo Canal project

Disadvantages	Descriptions
1. Environmental impact	The construction work on the Funan Techo Canal has the possibility of disturbing natural environments and changing ecosystems in its path, underscoring the need to apply meticulous environmental management methods to minimize negative impacts. Activities like digging, removing sediment, and clearing land can disrupt habitats, interfere with ecological processes, and divide natural landscapes. To reduce these effects, thorough environmental evaluations and actions

	to lessen them must be included in both the planning and implementation stages of the project. This may include tasks such as repairing habitats, relocating wildlife, and managing erosion to diminish habitat loss and protect vulnerable species. Further actions need to be taken to reduce sedimentation and water pollution during construction to protect water quality and aquatic ecosystems. By giving importance to safeguarding the environment and preserving biodiversity, the canal project can guarantee that its lasting advantages are realized without negatively impacting the health and intactness of the nearby natural surroundings (RFA Khmer, 2024).
2. Social displacement	The building of the Funan Techo Canal may lead to communities nearby being forced to move, highlighting the need to address social issues and ensure fair outcomes for those impacted. Forced movement can cause social upheaval in neighborhoods, resulting in job loss, cultural disconnection, and mental strain on impacted people and families. Prioritizing community engagement, consultation, and participation is essential to minimize these impacts during the project's planning and implementation stages. Communities that are impacted should have a role in making decisions, be given sufficient information, and have chances to provide valuable input and receive feedback. Furthermore, it is important to establish thorough resettlement and compensation measures to assist impacted families in adjusting to new living situations and sources of income. By giving importance to social inclusion and fairness, the canal project can build strong connections with local communities and make sure that its advantages are distributed fairly among all parties involved (Vietnam Briefing, 2024).



**Figure 1. A modified version of a map provided in the MRC notification document:
Adopted from Eyler et al. (2024)**

3. The commencement plan of the construction

The project will begin on August 5, under the leadership of Prime Minister Hun Manet (Ry, 2024). Over 90 national and international journalists have registered to report on this significant occasion in Cambodia's history, as confirmed by a top official from the ministry. The senior official additionally stated that the ministry has allocated approximately ten people to aid the journalists and manage the workflow throughout the event. Additionally, he stated that the momentous occasion will be televised in real-time on the National Television of Cambodia, as well as on many television networks and multiple social media platforms, such as the official Facebook pages of Mr. Hun Manet and Mr. Hun Sen. Public institutions, educational facilities, and pagodas nationwide will celebrate the festival on August 5 with the sound of drums, gongs, and other percussion instruments (Khmer Times, 2024a).

To formally open the Funan Techo Canal, the Cambodian government has declared a one-day public holiday on August 5 (REC, 2024). Prime Minister Hun Manet announced this within a circular. An important infrastructure project aiming at enhancing water management, transportation, and regional economic development is the Funan Techo Canal. The construction of the canal marks significant progress in Cambodia's efforts to modernize its infrastructure and improve its agricultural capacity. The Prime Minister's circular emphasized the importance of the Funan Techo Canal and described it as a project that will greatly benefit Cambodians. The canal is supposed to improve water drainage, create a new trade and transportation route, and improve farmland irrigation (Khmer Times, 2024b).



Figure 2. Scheme of Funan Tech Canal: Adopted from Sok (2024)

4. Conclusion

Finally, the Funan Techo Canal initiative offers a wide range of benefits that have the potential to greatly impact Cambodia in terms of its economy, environment, and society (Seum, 2024). Its economic potential is highlighted through increased trade, tourism, and urban development,

while its environmental importance is shown through its ability to reduce floods and enhance water quality (Niem, 2024). Additionally, the project can promote unity within society and enhance the community's overall health by improving recreational areas and increasing accessibility to water resources (Habor Property, 2024).

However, despite the advantages outweighing the disadvantages, stakeholders should pay close attention to addressing minor issues such as potential environmental impacts and social disruptions. By prioritizing proactive approaches to minimize adverse effects and improve favorable results, individuals involved can effectively oversee the redevelopment of the Techo Funan Canal, resulting in lasting advantages for Cambodia and its citizens (VN Express, 2024).

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Education in Cambodia during the prehistoric period: Education started from instinctive senses to creative senses

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Abstract

Cambodian education began as soon as people settled in this region during the prehistoric period. Making tools out of wood, bamboo, horn, stone, and other materials, prehistoric men in Cambodia showed that they were skillful at dealing with a range of materials. Prehistoric stone tool sizes and types changed over time, reflecting the evolution of prehistoric people's knowledge and abilities. This article illuminates the education of prehistoric Cambodians by following their path from primitive instinctual knowledge to the development of their senses via religious beliefs and inventive holiday celebrations, all based on earlier studies and documents from the remains. The article's purpose is to examine the types of education that were prevalent at the time, the importance of teaching and demonstration, and the influence of religious convictions on educational policies. Positive educational improvements relied on natural senses and self-avoiding behavior, whereas sensory development stagnation hindered educational advancements. The analysis various documents both Khmer and other languages revealed both positive and negative effects on the educational growth of Cambodian ancestors. Thus, to maintain the nation's historical identity, the article attempts to comprehend and investigate the educational strategies of prehistoric periods by drawing on people's previous experiences for future growth.

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1. Introduction

The early inhabitants of Cambodia were responsible for shaping the culture and traditions of the land, creating a civilization based on moral principles that emphasized kindness and compassion towards the natural world (Ironsides, 2022). Evidence suggests that prehistoric Cambodian people existed during the prehistoric period, answering questions about their existence. It shows evidence of early forms of education and learning. As we delve deeper into the prehistoric period of Cambodia, it becomes apparent that education was a fundamental aspect of society (Chin et al., 2023). During the prehistoric period, it evolved from instinctive senses to creative senses, shaping the minds and skills of the early inhabitants. Education in

Cambodia took on a unique form that focused on developing the instinctive senses of the early inhabitants (Berthon, 2021). During the prehistoric age in Cambodia, the education system significantly emphasized survival skills and practical knowledge (Gutman & Hudson, 2004).

Anthropology posits that education serves as a medium for transmitting cultural heritage from one generation to the next (Ha Thuc, 2022). As a result, from the beginning until now, the Cambodian people have engaged in educational activities to ensure the transmission of their cultural heritage to the next generation (Nanetti, 2021). Initially, there was no formal organization of the educational process; instead, it emerged through spontaneous experiences tailored to everyone's life needs and tasks (Kidron, 2020). Over time, as the need for survival increased, people's abilities developed in various ways. Later, educational activities took place in chaotic organizational structures, predominantly utilizing religious institutions, the chaotic situation lasted for an undetermined number of centuries which only thorough examination and analysis of education data can clearly order the chaotic situation (Em et al., 2023).

Education in Cambodia predates the discovery of any inscriptions or concrete evidence (Stewart & Ratner, 2022). Even though there is no evidence of any kind available, it is believed that if a human being exists, education always exists because learning stems from inherent forces (Jeong et al., 2021). To support this, the article explores the development of education in Cambodia, from its instinctive beginnings to the emergence of creative senses, stated about foundation of prehistoric education, "Primitive Brain" or "Triune Brain" referred to the most basic and ancient part of the human brain, responsible for instinctual and survival functions which is used as a metaphor to represent the foundation of prehistoric education, emphasizing the instinctual and survival-based nature of early human learning by MacLean Paul (1990).

Based on MacLean Paul's Theory (1990) and Pogliano's research (2017), the study demonstrates the functions that start with instinctual sensitivity, the primary of seven basic senses, allowing us to react to our surroundings and survival instincts. Another key aspect can build emotional bonds and understand the feelings of others. Additionally, creative sense involves the capacity to create and think outside the box using artistic expression, imagination, and problem-solving skills. Next, curiosity about the unknown is investigated, leading to the discovery of fresh perspectives and information. Altruistic sense is the inclination to put others' needs and well-being before one's own interests, as the fifth trait.

Lastly, while scholastic sense involves a desire to grasp and dissect intricate concepts and ideas, cultural sensitivity involves the capacity to value, honor, and navigate various cultural norms and values. Furthermore, the following stage in evolution of prehistoric education is characterized by five essential features of the earliest period in human history, defined by basic tools and a focus on survival learning. The next step involves the advancement of educational methods, focusing on the progressive evolution of teaching approaches and techniques over time. Thirdly, educational materials and instruments are tools and resources used to enhance learning, including caves, natural objects, and ancient writings. In addition, differences in sharing wisdom are about the varied ways prehistoric cultures transmitted knowledge, skills, and values to their members with beliefs utilized by ancient societies. Limitations and challenges faced by early educational systems, such as environmental factors and resource scarcity, are constraints of prehistoric educational systems (see fig. 1).

The article also examines the impact these changes had on the society and culture of the time. Education began with instinctive senses and progressed to creative senses (Biswas, 2021). Education in Cambodia during the prehistoric period began with instinctive senses, a term that

refers to internal inherent forces; these inherent forces play supreme and imperative roles in driving humanity towards actions for internal and external equilibrium in such a way that, without these forces, the world and humanity would become extinct which many educationists support this belief, for instance, Plato believed that education has existed for a long time because it is inborn, imperishable, and eternal; Jean Jacques Rousseau emphasized that it begins at birth and continues till death (Mukherjee, 2020), and Swami Vivekananda firmly pointed out that spiritual integration of the word comes with inherent powers (Bhuyan, 2003)

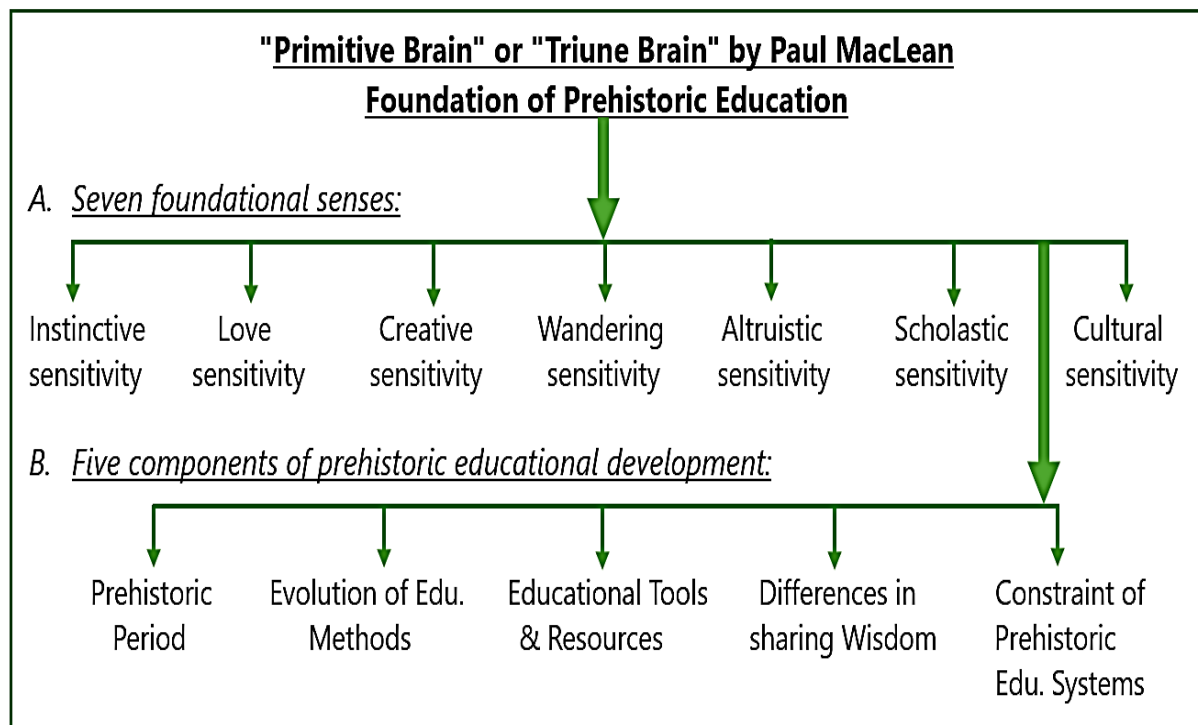


Figure 1. The foundation senses and aspects of prehistoric education (see MacLean, 1990)

The prehistoric period of Cambodia encompasses the time from the emergence of humans till the late 9th century (Moore, 2020). There is a wealth of crucial evidence of advancements from this period, including stone tools that indicate the early use of both physical and mental skills in shaping stones, leading to the ability to craft and utilize tactical knowledge for defense and assaults (Iovita et al., 2021). This suggests that humans' capabilities during this time were like those in other regions. It is widely believed that the environment, society, and education during this period were incredibly significant, intriguing, and mysterious. The Pre-Angkor Ages succeeded in the use of ceramics and metals (Silva-Gago et al., 2021).

Dwellings transitioned from tiered-ground foundation human homes to stilt-framed houses with thatched roofs. The simultaneous development of an animal and non-animal economy and specialized agriculture supplanted traditional trading and subsistence farming. The struggle for autonomy led to the establishment of the gendarmerie (Muller et al., 2022). With the decline in rice farming and increased wealth, there was a need for convenient and durable cooking utensils, leading to the rise of ceramic technology. This marks the beginning of the use of ceramics, with studies starting with cooking utensils and the discovery of pottery. Independent researchers found that a spinning wheel could churn wool fiber, transform cotton fiber into thread, and complete the weaving of cloths (Key et al., 2021).

1.1. Background of prehistoric education in Cambodia

Studying education in Cambodia during the prehistoric period may be considered a useless task due to the lack of sufficient documents for a comprehensive analysis (Miller, 2021). However, there is a belief that education began as a more advanced activity during the historic period, which is a more logical perspective on this issue. Knowledge and education began with the most instinctive human senses and gradually advanced to higher levels. Education has gone through a certain process in which hatred, violence, and other negative activities found within man's instinctive senses gradually decrease (Snyder et al., 2022).

The development of creative senses increased positive activities, leading to Plato's concept of the love of education (Maher & Macdonald, 2020). These changes occurred over many long eras in prehistoric times, before education became a deliberately organized activity within an institution or school. Since the prehistoric period, education has aimed to build a perfect life, pave the way to finding truth and beauty, and aid in the development of a multitude of souls (see Muller et al., 2022).

This paper aims to outline the evolution of education in Cambodia. The author will then present specific points from the available data to support this assertion. The first phase, known as pre-historic education, refers to the natural act of family or environmental learning and is believed to have originated from the very beginning of the first family unit, consisting of a father, mother, and children (Chevance, 2021). Education at this stage involved creating conditions for exploring and understanding the environment, identifying areas for food and rest, and being wary of wildlife hazards. While studying education in Cambodia during the prehistoric period may seem challenging due to limited documentation, it is widely held that learning became more sophisticated during the historic period, which is a reasonable assumption (Carleton & Collard, 2020).

Human civilization, from the earliest family units to the global family, is believed to have incorporated education from the dawn of creation that the core of this family civilization lies in the ability to understand and coexist harmoniously (Em, 2023; Gutek, 2022). To comprehend the various stages of educational development from prehistory to the present, we must consider that individuals are born physically when they enter the world, educated as they develop their instinctive senses, cognitively as they process experiences, and creatively as they strive to surpass developmental gaps that have preceded them (Berthon, 2021). Cambodia, in Southeast Asia, boasts a rich history. Understanding the origins and educational systems of the prehistoric period is essential before analyzing the education system, as per George Santayana's famous quote: Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it (Miller, 2020).

French scholars such as Louis Malleret and Kinkossoux have studied about Cambodia, situated in the Mekong sub-region, and have found evidence dating back to 8000–4000 BC (Cohen, 2023). The research focused on the ethnography of various cultural origins, emphasizing prehistoric civilization that the community living and learning were comparable to other countries for Cambodian scholars, understanding the current education system, it is important to delve into the origins and educational practices of prehistoric period (Loughran et al., 2004). Education is critical to personal and national development, as well as society's solidarity and prosperity that the knowledge and skills acquired from educational institutions not only promote self-reliance and independence but also contribute to the long-term development and prosperity of society and the country (Shonstrom, 2020).

1.2. Understanding prehistoric education

The primary aim of this paper is to explore the history and development of education. It will examine the origins of education, starting with the Stone Age. The paper will use Cambodia as a case study to understand the historical changes in education (see Miller, 2021). In prehistoric times, education primarily focused on survival skills and basic communication, relying on observation, imitation, storytelling, and oral traditions. As tools, techniques, and agricultural practices developed, education expanded to include practical skills (Reavill, 2022). Despite the lack of written records from prehistoric times, archaeological excavations and anthropological studies provide valuable insights into early educational practices. It is a complex issue to distinguish between education and innate learning in a prehistoric context, but through these studies, one can interpret and reconstruct early education in a broader sense (Baxter, 2022). However, as far as we know, there is a lack of research on this issue in ancient Cambodia. This study aims to provide an understanding of potential forms of prehistoric education through ethnographies. It is crucial to emphasize an emerging issue in these ethnographical studies, which is to demonstrate the continuity of prehistoric populations with those at the beginning of history (Claire, 2020). Further investigation and discussion are necessary to address the issue of education in ancient Cambodia. The range of thoughts and practices in prehistoric education worldwide justifies this concern.

The archaeological studies of written documents and methodological innovation reveal reasonable diversities and similarities in tradition, evolution, and continuity of teaching interests and practices. These studies trace the transition from instinctive to creative senses in education (LeVine, 2021). We must first understand the word education in its broad sense to fully comprehend prehistoric education, before examining its narrow meaning. Education encompasses the act or process of educating or receiving education, the outcomes or products of this process, and the concepts, skills, and knowledge it imparts (Bjorklund, 2022). In this context, we recognize teaching and schooling as forms of education. However, education in a broad sense means something more than the concepts, skills, and knowledge found within teaching or schooling.

Human senses and innate learning from birth, along with life experiences, contribute to the education of intelligent beings, not solely through schooling (Bleakley, 2020). Moreover, since it solely pertains to concepts and skills from teaching, colonial and missionary periods, or the periods and sources of the Khmer Empire, Angkor, and beyond, which exploited and annexed the lands while the colonialists civilized the monarchs and elites (see Shonstrom, 2020), under the colonizing laws of the West, the missionary schools developed people's skills in the arts and sciences (Isiani et al., 2021). The descendants of the elite were primarily interested in written records, past civilizations, and learning, with a narrow focus on these aspects. They can only delve into and impart a limited understanding of the true learning experiences that humanity has to offer. The descendants of the elite were more interested in written records, past civilizations, and learning, concentrating solely on these aspects (Bagby, 2022). They are only able to penetrate and provide a limited understanding of the real learning experiences that constitute humanity. However, the common people relied on instinctive senses to understand the world around them, developing their education through practical skills and observation (Chin et al., 2023).

In a narrow sense, many people associate the word education or educated with having a formal education, being literary and knowledgeable, and engaging in a particular job or profession as a result that some associate the word with teaching or education (Padwe, 2020). Still, others

associate the word with concepts and skills acquired through teaching, such as reasoning, language, writing, and the classic arts and sciences (see Cohen, 2023). Consequently, most people misunderstand education in the Prehistoric Period as lacking formal teaching, being uneducated, and lacking concepts and skills.

2. Definition and characteristics of prehistoric education

The term prehistoric includes any historical documents. Therefore, prehistory encompasses all eras before the invention and presentation of the first closed writing system in a readable format of a specific size (Em et al., 2022; Martin, 1994). Periodically, people reinvent and disseminate writing, but sometimes, it takes centuries for people to embrace its role and potential (Yeo, 2021). Philosophically, we can assert that education and teaching have always interacted closely with life and society, originating in the prehistoric era (Various, 2021). There is a connection between a human's initial acquisition of language and their engagement in increasingly sophisticated cognitive processes (Em, 2024). Prehistoric human origins, for any specific entity in prehistory, also indicate the initiation of education during the transition from instinctive to creative senses (Berthon, 2021). Since the prehistoric period, be it in any country, people have been using techniques for building and developing beliefs, knowledge, wisdom, and skills with which to live in a certain area, technology, and time (Em, Chin, et al., 2024; Em, Mok, et al., 2024). Education is the art and science of development. People have systematically engaged in the creation of education, making it their responsibility to develop and pass it on to the next generation (Moghtader, 2023).

The significant events of the past reveal the elements of education in human life, regardless of their location in the world that the education during the prehistoric period primarily focused on survival skills and practical knowledge for daily life, which was informal and based on the needs of the community, and adults taught children skills and knowledge through observation and imitation (Darnell, 2020). Activities such as hunting, gathering, and toolmaking primarily focused on practical skills and survival techniques, relying on the instinctive senses of observation and imitation (Phirom et al., 2022).

3. Evolution of educational methods

Generally, educational methods vary across civilizations and eras (Huot et al., 2024); however, humankind has not learned to cook rice or meat (Byrd & Dunn, 2020). A skilled Stone Age man would often discover his talent by cooking meat. Since that, various nations have invested many resources in improving their respective methods for cooking their food, and they have been experiencing trial and error among themselves (Kenrick & Lundberg-Kenrick, 2022). On the other hand, the work done by the Aborigines in technical production, which began as a proficient activity to make implements and process techniques for the necessities of life during the hunting age, evolved step by step to an advanced stage. As the hunting period waned, the Aborigines began to gather and hunt various species of fish (Willison, 2020). Up until the era of food planting, also known as agriculture, the majority of the Aboriginal people engaged in land cultivation. This practice allowed us to live as ordinary people, cultivating a variety of eatable vegetables, as well as breathing air, water, and fruits. These days, some specialists have experimented with land exploitation, aiming for high quality by cultivating dry vegetables systematically and straightforwardly for their use (Stark, 2023).

They use their production capabilities to continuously manufacture farming tools for centuries. The specialists who held full responsibility for farming land and husbandry specified the

methods implemented and recognized in certified measures to achieve a higher yield (Pariyatwisutthikhun et al., 2021). Since prehistoric times, people have tried to draw something that the numerous types of pictures adorned the walls of caves in Europe and Africa which these pictures represented people's ideas. At first, they drew pictures of animals, then geometric forms such as circles and straight lines. After that, they tried to draw pictures of people's faces (Dehouve, 2019). People in Cambodia drew animal and fabric images on the plaster of archaic temples, recently unearthed. These pictures revealed the animals and plants that existed at that time. They also reflected the differences in the culture and the abilities of each artist to express their ideas (Erlich, 2022). These senses have undergone an evolution in educational methods, transitioning from a period of education through instincts to a period of education through creative senses, for hundreds of thousands of years, instincts have educated people (Ker et al., 2020). A person's instincts shape them to adapt to natural phenomena, seek food, protect themselves from harm, and create items for specific purposes (see MacLean, 1990). Since the world began, a person's instinct reflects the cleverness of creation. Additionally, an adult could teach a small child how to make a string from plant fibers, making a needle to sew clothes from animal skins, or how to make cutting tools by sharpening rocks (Ennos, 2021).

3.1. From instinctive learning to creative learning

During that time, these items were distinct to people, even without the use of any formal art. With their finger punches, they could point to a worm and mimic the sound of a water buffalo. These actions and expressions demonstrated that education was born from instinctive learning and evolved into a creative process (Habidin et al., 2020). As humans evolved, their cognitive abilities improved, leading to the development of more complex forms of creative learning. More complex forms of creative learning allowed for the cultivation of innovation and critical thinking skills and this shift marked a significant advancement in the education system of prehistoric Cambodia (Kwangmuang et al., 2021). It allowed for the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This shift from instinctive to creative learning marked a significant advancement in the education system, as well as the development of critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities (Fadilla et al., 2021). This shift from instinctive learning to creative learning also promoted a deeper understanding of concepts and ideas that the people did not yet understand the importance of education or the significance of cumulative knowledge (see Habidin et al., 2020).

They had not yet delved into the interrelationships between each piece of knowledge, nor had they studied the relationship between knowledge and skills. They lacked encyclopedic skills to integrate their scattered knowledge into a cohesive whole and progressively enhance their capabilities (Lin et al., 2024). So that the collective community played a significant role in the preparation or adaptation of the environment for the child to easily and effectively learn (Didham & Oftei-Manu, 2020), which not only provided help for the child but also protected the child from danger, illness, and death. Individuals from the same community coexisted and worked together to overcome challenges when the people understood the importance of the environment and the child's behavior, they lived near each other and developed a method to help the child understand their surroundings, birth, warmth, change, laughter, tears, and mimicry. The children served as the children's first teachers, and their knowledge of geography, geology, climate, and environment was closely related to the regular physical activities and animal emergencies that shaped the thinking of educators during that period (Higham, 2021).

Animal observation helped develop the philosophy of the people who devoted their lives to life. The environment played an important role in shaping the philosophy and the first steps of

education. Everything has been interconnected and had an impact on the lives of individuals, families, and the community. There was a sense of invisible hands linking and supporting each other. People in the community recognized the overall relationship and its impacts (Colombino, 2023). However, these actions applied to everyone who capitalized on their shared necessities, demonstrating that mutual help was a characteristic of the prehistoric era.

3.2. Educational tools and resources

The cave served as a crucial resource for preserving the subject matter's content. During prehistoric socio-political, economic, and civilizational emancipation, and the dynamic cultural course of learning, ancient people could draw pictures, patterns, symbols, or letters on the cave wall (Allegro, 2024; Folgerø et al., 2021). Educators first developed instructional tools to support them in building an adequate education. These tools are diverse and widely used, including pictures, textbooks, films, radios, videos, televisions, telephones, computers, the internet, and multimedia featuring three-dimensional images. Prehistoric people advanced in developing tools to enhance their learning effectiveness and creativity, even before they used these supports (see Snyder et al., 2022).

In the very early period, such as the Stone Age, people created the earliest tools or implements to facilitate learning that the mountain, the cave, the rock, the skin, the charcoal, the water, the tree bark, the branches, and the soil were the learning resources commonly used by prehistoric people (Parsons & Brickell, 2021). They could utilize each object as an instructional resource for a specific educational purpose, for instance, Nleya and Siqabukik (2020) used shells and stones for counting and basic arithmetic skills.

They slowly developed their senses from instincts to creative senses with the help of these tools and resources, processing of utilizing simple tools for educational purposes, students developed strong constructive senses towards tools and resources themselves (Kozulin, 1998). It indicated that gradually, in the process of education, young students' characteristics gained shared values and concepts, as had appeared in the prehistoric period which the physical characteristics of those tools and resources revealed their own logically sensed elements, which are important to recognize as influencing the thinking and behaviors of the students (Prołowski, 2020).

4. Utilization of natural environment

In theory, if there was no way of utilizing the knowledge from natural thinking, people of the same generation would have to spend aristocratic amounts of time and think the same things with the same efforts (Strevens, 2020). People at this level fractionated the work, lacking the ability to divide it and assign responsibilities. As a result, they experienced a rapid increase in mutual exchanges, transforming natural knowledge into practices, with each community assigning representatives (see Cohen, 2023). Natural thinking not only led to an increase in mutual exchanges among them but also boosted the level and quantity of human knowledge about craftsmen's skills and their proficiency. Therefore, people who had been benefiting from and were proud of their craftsmanship shared this and that with neighbors. This sharing helped increase the community's prosperity. When the neighbors saw it, they took away a part of the prosperity, while others moved into this community, ultimately leading to the development of a large and powerful community (Prastowo, 2023).

During this period, education began with the development of instinctive and creative senses, intuitive education occurs naturally and unintentionally that it is true saying that early human

children, young scientists, are most interested in the phenomena of the environment around them (Fleer & Pramling, 2015). The things that they learn from their parents or other members of the community they are in, as well as their direct experiences with the environment, including the flora and fauna, the physical conditions that they face, and how they use the discovered things, are considered instinctive education, serving as the foundation for all human education in the future (Topoonyanont, 2023). They performed acts of propitiation for the divinities presiding over those fundamental natural laws. Consequently, Cambodian agriculture became linked to a deeply rooted religious belief in souls and deities. They believed in a Supreme Being, the preserver of all creatures. They worshipped other beings who controlled the primeval cosmic forces governing the birth and death of all things (Le & Nguyen, 2021).

4.1. Impact of prehistoric education on society

Pigments were educated about the natural features of iron dust, malachite, charred wood, and animal oil in the shell bowl. It therefore gives us modern people a chance to study the roots of educational work in the present era, from the emergence of habits to its present advanced knowledge. Pigments gradually made his life more meaningful (Im et al., 2023). And the life without pigments gave him a chance to live wholesomely, with social values conforming to good trends. They could certainly describe the roots of their education, and the study of the history of education that described in practice. Pigments demonstrate an individual's level of ability. And in order to meet the nutritional needs of our ancestors, educators today require a clear level of educational self-awareness to implement various educational practices (Hendrickson & Leroy, 2020).

Education begins as soon as a child is born, and even before birth. There is no age limit. No one forces children to sit down and read a book. A child's senses already develop in the womb (Biesta, 2021). Immediately after birth, they absorb the necessary values from adults. This value-based education can take place both during the day and at night. For example, when adults need attention, they can use a game that the child enjoys playing. Through such play, the child acquires a real education. When a child begins to crawl, they see something attractive and try to stand up and move forward. Taking a heavy step is instinctual training in progress, developing balance, coordination, and caution. Therefore, impressions begin to discern beneficial things that improve instinctual senses (Singkaslit et al., 2021).

Each period's education inherits specific objectives that shape and sustain various social relations. During the prehistoric period, education aimed at enhancing the senses. As education focused solely on this goal, Cambodia developed a society with a strong foundation of senses, leading to the creation of outstanding works in both art and architecture. History has recognized art and architecture as the primary aspects of Cambodia. It represents Cambodians' inward senses, thoughts, and beliefs (Sam et al., 2024). The prehistoric people's well-established inward senses served as the foundation for those great works.

4.2. Cultural and social development

The social development of the people went through different epochs, from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal one (Andersen et al., 2013). At each type of societal epoch, the prehistoric people founded different manners of religion, history, traditions, and cultures, as well as the forms of education, from the education of the ancestors to the education of others for the selfish individual, from empathy, speaking, writing, listening, thinking, inventing, cooperating, and communicating of the creators who received love from their subjects. The evolution of

prehistoric education led to the establishment of temples of knowledge, while the Egyptian temples of creativity became the first official universities in history (Joseph, 2020).

Scribbled writing depicted significant battles, rivers, rice fields, and other landscape features. Abstracts from crosses arranged in an ornate foolish idea, beautifully calligraphy writing, and books in gold leaf, candlelight, ink, and of the diversity of human life made of engraved writing techniques on gilded palm leaves (Coffill, 2022). We could refer to this period as the era of inventive writing, a creation of humankind. It was also during this period that the modern Khmer invented their writing system, a tool capable of storing vast amounts of information and transmitting their experiences to their descendants. The writing and word narration of our ancestors and elders, both in oral and written form, marked the beginning of life, inspiring those who lacked the knowledge to guide their grandchildren towards the right path and avoid mistakes (Metro & Brehm, 2022). Each word holds significance and imparts lessons on human behavior, morality, and social solidarity during the Spirit's era (see Parsons & Brickell, 2021), and this early idea serves as a treasure trove for the Khmer ancestors.

4.3. Comparison with modern education

Physical education has the apparent ability to form the physical factor, and music and art education have the apparent ability to form the aesthetic factor (Sang & Xu, 2022). However, these three can indirectly meld the physical factor and the aesthetic factor. How do the subjects of math and science integrate the ethical element? The answer is that because human products are reasonable individuals, they possess not only physical and aesthetic characteristics, but also logical ones (Howes, 2021). It may seem like the conclusion of humanistic education. But that is not correct. The foundation of American liberal-humanistic education came from the basic structure of mathematics and physics, which existed before written history and the philosophical era. If one discusses this matter in this way, one will realize that this is the way to construct the direction of educational history (Dana-Picard et al., 2021). There are very few philosophical discussions that try to find educational shaping by synthesizing the paths from sense education.

It is known that fingerprints contain biological information (Cole, 2020). The fingerprint datasets from life activities can direct or guide the observer through the brain. Each person has a unique, individual, or different brain (Bonci et al., 2021). In pursuit of education, brain enhancement manages the interaction of the observer and the picture. These references are required to manage an interactive process and lead to qualified observations or interpretations (Balée, 2021). The PG's representation of the viewer enables the observer to recognize the necessity without any prior notification. The direction of an exhibition with a picture involves a set of rules that have become part of the practice to ensure the observer does not fall into biases, lapses, or errors in understanding the creator's brain and what the creator depicted. The sequence incorporates the initial fingerprint dataset and the location of the viewer's eyes when the observer needs them. The result shows that the viewer's left eye is capable of scrutinizing the FAN object from the most apparent or obvious position (Cherry et al., 2021).

5. Differences in pedagogical approaches

Ancestors in any culture always foresee bright futures for their children (Huberman, 2020). However, seeing this anticipative image among descendants was quite unlikely during the prehistoric era. It is fascinating to observe the differences in educational aspects between Greeks and Cambodians during the prehistoric period in semi-civilized communities. This is

because it interests us to explore the disparity between parental attitudes and their anticipated children. The purpose of screening is not to determine accuracy, but to demonstrate the psychological connection and relationship between demographic expression in a sociological setting, and to identify variations in educational methods (Pawson, 2022).

Pedagogical foundations today link cognitive development. The analysis of Cambodian archaic writings, which is believed to have stemmed from the learned teachings of the prehistoric period, can help modify new learning or teaching strategies, techniques, or methods that are more congruent with Cambodian culture, learning styles, and ways of thinking. This encoding of earlier epistemes can facilitate the necessary re-decoding, thereby bringing forth coherent cultural legitimating factors that will benefit future generations (Burgess, 2020). People use archaic inscriptions as drawers to preserve the valuable early beliefs and teachings that shaped Cambodian civilization (Shewan et al., 2020). Among the important aspects that Cambodian civilization developed are skills, histories, social studies, stories, lessons of literature, and beliefs. These skills, histories, and other teachings took shape during the prehistoric period.

6. Constraints of prehistoric educational systems

The primary limitation of prehistoric education stems from the paucity of accumulated knowledge among the prehistoric people. This is due to the limited number of literacies and the ineffectiveness of their teachings in producing significant changes in knowledge (Migliano & Vinicius, 2022). Furthermore, the prehistoric folk struggled to retain these teachings over extended periods due to a lack of material for their writing, and they found teaching to be an extremely exhausting endeavor (Oliveira et al., 2021). As a result, the prehistoric people had difficulty retaining and recalling the vital information that they had experienced and witnessed during their lifetime; since then, they taught their posterities to rely upon their instinctive and perceptual senses to find solutions for imminent problem-solving (Puccio & Modrzejewska-Świgulska, 2022).

Young individuals, nearing adulthood, frequently needed others to focus their attention on them, necessitating an educational adaptation to assist their juniors in meeting the requirements. This required training in skill and stamina, with knowledge imparted only when necessary (Ingold, 2017). The prehistoric educational systems faced constraints due to limited resources and harsh environmental conditions that the people in the prehistoric period indeed received real education from their traditional patterns of life, including hunting, gathering, fishing, and shifting cultivation of wild plants. These were functional activities, and the people learned their functions (Bond, 2021). During the prehistoric period in Cambodia, education faced significant challenges and limitations, lacking formalized systems made it problematic to provide extensive education to the population. As consequence, access to education was limited and uneven across different regions of Cambodia (see Phirom et al., 2022).

7. Conclusion

As previously mentioned, ancient education in Cambodia existed both above and below the ground. Wild creatures and natural conditions were the learning objects. The learning process was based on instinct. 5000 years ago, people used sea scales and symbols as advanced tools to understand concepts and estimate phenomena. Educational visions and philosophies existed from the primitive age through the periods of the four major Theravada, Mahayana, and Tantrayana, and were inferred indirectly through traditional cooperation and prudence. Education started with instinctive senses and progressed to creative, advanced senses. One

could classify the unique ancient Cambodian educational culture as both respectful and developmental. This culture also used culture-dominated education as its educational approach. We can conclude that during the prehistoric period in Cambodia, education transitioned from instinctive to creative, with a primary focus on culture-dominated education.

The purpose of this article was to study Cambodian education during the prehistoric period. During this period, the research studies revealed the foundations of education. According to the studies, education during the prehistoric period in Cambodia was based on seven types of foundational senses: instinctive sensitivity, love sensitivity, creative sensitivity, wandering sensitivity, altruistic sensitivity, scholastic sensitivity, and cultural sensitivity. These foundational senses were virtues that prehistoric people learned and used to guide their lives. The primitive brain gradually developed and enlightened these senses, forming connections with the navel, heart, and head.

During prehistoric times, although there was no social organization, a basic social structure had already started to flourish. The main occupation during this period was gardening, gathering forest products, and hunting. This research focused on the education of people who had instinctive senses and were filled with wisdom during the prehistoric period. The findings of this study were valuable in reestablishing the prehistoric education system's foundation. These theories and concepts played a crucial role in enhancing the field of historical social science. People witnessed the evolution of the education system during the prehistoric period. This research revealed educational concepts enriched with problem-solving strategies, which were crucial for society.

Finally, we have recently learned that educated life has had its start and developed since the creation of human beings on earth. Since the emergence of educated life, the senses of life have evolved in tandem with mankind's material existence, drawing from the lifestyles of the prehistoric era and the cultures of the people. We have learned that the origins of education can be traced back to the prehistoric period, a time when instinctive senses began to develop and evolve into creative senses. This evolution led to the development of educated sense beings, such as the self, family, society, nation, and the world. This evidence bolsters the notion that education began in the prehistoric era, laying the groundwork for individuals, their offspring, grandchildren, and future generations. It has established and developed the way of life for the Khmer people until now and has further developed and advanced the lives of intelligent beings.

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Book review: Education in Cambodia: From Year Zero towards international standards (Education in the Asia-Pacific region: Issues, concerns and prospects, book 64)

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1. Introduction

Today, Cambodia's education system stands at a crossroads as it grapples with the tasks of improving quality and ensuring equitable access across the board. The reason is mainly that the nation is still getting over the Khmer Rouge era (1975–1979), which destroyed the educational system and claimed the lives of almost two million people, including 75% of teachers, 96% of college students, and 67% of all students enrolled in primary and secondary schools (Benveniste et al., 2008). While there has been notable progress in rebuilding schools, modernizing curricula, reforming policies, and expanding educational opportunities in all subsectors, the journey is far from complete. The current book provides a careful look at the issues at hand. This book, entitled ‘Education in Cambodia: From Year Zero Towards International Standards’, is truly a remarkable journey of Cambodia's education system. Edited by Vincent McNamara and Martin Hayden, it aims to inform readers of how the country has moved from the shadows of the Khmer Rouge era to the current efforts to match international educational standards. It nicely blends historical context and current endeavors with a vision for the future.

In a sense, this book is like a mini-library of research evidence and insights into issues in Cambodia's education subsectors, policy changes, and the inclusion of marginalized communities, such as women and multilingual. It comprehensively captures both the strides made and the challenges that persist. This makes it an invaluable read for anyone interested in the educational progress of Cambodia. In this book review, we will provide summaries of each chapter and discuss the key themes, structure, evaluation, and contributions of this book.

2. Summary of the book

The book is divided into three parts, comprising 16 chapters in total. Part 1 covers from early childhood through higher education by tracing both advancements and hurdles in each chapter. Part 2 focuses on the infrastructural elements. It tackles key topics like the evolving teaching profession, education assessments, policy-driven budgeting, and transformative university reforms. Part 3 delves into the modern principles of education. It stresses the importance of inclusivity by highlighting the roles of women and the importance of multilingual education. Notably, the chapters are written by a mix of local Cambodian scholars and international experts. Many of these contributors have firsthand experience in the Cambodian education sector.

In Chapter 1, McNamara and Hayden (2022) provided an overview of Cambodia's education system and introduced the other chapters in the book. It starts with a brief historical account of the country's setting and the impact of "Year Zero." The regulatory context of Cambodia's education system is also outlined, followed by a summary of critical challenges faced by the system, such as educational quality, grade-level repetition, disparities between rural and urban schools, and leadership and management issues. The authors also drew attention to the need to shift focus from improving access to attaining equity and quality while acknowledging the significant effort and funding required for such a transformation.

In Chapter 2, Om (2022) investigated early childhood education (ECE) in Cambodia to address its current challenges and development trends. The study found that while there has been steady growth in ECE enrollment, there are obstacles, including inadequate infrastructure, a lack of qualified teachers, and insufficient funding. The chapter also highlighted the critical importance of ECE for children's development and future academic success. It boldly advocated "An official agreement among all key stakeholders to designate specialized departments within MoEYS to manage all types of public ECE programs responsibly and effectively (p. 22), as a comprehensive policy measure and increased investment to improve access and quality while also recommending ongoing efforts to establish quality standards and develop a more robust ECE framework to establish a solid foundation for Cambodia's early-age learners.

Chapter 3 by No and Sok (2022) examined the state of primary education in Cambodia with an emphasis on the quest for quality. The study reported that while significant strides have been made in increasing enrollment rates and improving infrastructure, some challenges in educational quality persist. Issues such as inadequate teacher training, insufficient teaching materials, and large class sizes hinder effective learning. They said, "While social demand for quality primary education increases, the budget available for the public primary schools is declining." (p. 51). The chapter, therefore, appeals to the need for comprehensive reforms to focus on teacher professional development, curriculum enhancement, and better resource allocation to address the quality of primary education. Despite these struggles, the chapter

acknowledged the roles of ministerial and educational partners' support and the importance of sustained efforts to ensure all Cambodian children receive a high-quality primary education.

In Chapter 4, Bredenberg (2022) addressed the progress made in reforming secondary education in Cambodia. This chapter stressed that there have been two major reform cycles since 2000, each targeting different aspects of the education system. The first cycle focused on expanding access to secondary education, while the second one aimed at improving educational quality and school governance. The article stressed, "For the first time, current educational reforms are moving beyond access concerns to focus on educational quality and governance" (p. 77), which indicates the shift in Cambodia's educational reforms, now prioritizing both improving the quality of education and strengthening governance in schools. Despite these efforts, significant challenges remain, including disparities in access and quality between urban and rural schools, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient resources. The chapter called for sustained leadership and strategic policy implementation to continue advancing secondary education reform in Cambodia.

In Chapter 5, Daroesman (2022) studied the reforms in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Cambodia from 1970 to 2020. Key findings revealed that while there have been numerous initiatives to revitalize TVET, the sector has struggled with issues of quality, relevance, and funding. Evidently, "The government has experienced ongoing difficulty in providing a stable and adequate funding base for skills development." (p. 91) Historically, TVET has been underfunded and undervalued, leading to a mismatch between training programs and labor market needs. Recent reforms have aimed to improve infrastructure, curriculum, and teacher training, but challenges persist in ensuring that TVET graduates possess the skills demanded by employers. The chapter stressed the importance of continued investment and policy support to enhance the effectiveness of TVET and its role in Cambodia's economic development.

Sen's (2022) Chapter 6 examined how traditional cultural values constrain its development in higher education. The study highlighted that traditional hierarchical structures and social norms can influence higher education institutions and affect governance, quality assurance, and academic freedom. These cultural factors often led to centralized decision-making processes and limited autonomy for universities. The chapter also identified the need for reforms to align higher education with international standards, including the adoption of more transparent and participatory governance models, enhancement of quality assurance mechanisms, and promotion of academic independence. "As a way forward, what might be pursued is a critical examination of any cultural elements that have significant negative bearings on the development of the higher education sector and its reforms." (p. 109).

In Chapter 7, Sot et al. (2022) focused on the teaching profession in Cambodia over the past three decades and identified ongoing needs for reform. The study indicated that, although there have been notable improvements, such as enhanced teacher qualifications and better working conditions, substantial challenges remain. Many teachers still lack adequate training and resources, leading to suboptimal teaching performance. The chapter appealed to the necessity for continuous professional development, improved teacher compensation, and better working conditions to attract and retain qualified teachers. It further emphasized the importance of professional standards and evaluation to ensure effective teaching and improved student outcomes. Therefore, "The focus must be on how to make improvements for the sake of bringing about a better situation in the future." (p. 131).

Chapter 8 by Marshall and Ung (2022) was an analytical walkthrough of Cambodia's decade-long national assessment system. The key findings revealed that while there has been some progress in student achievement levels, significant challenges remain. The data indicated that student achievement is not at the expected levels, particularly in third grade, where many students are not acquiring the basic skills necessary for success in later grades. There are also substantial achievement gaps based on gender, location (e.g., urban vs. rural), and socioeconomic status (SES), with students from urban areas and higher SES backgrounds generally performing better. Despite these challenges, there are signs of improvement, particularly in Khmer and mathematics scores for third graders over the assessment period. However, the chapter emphasized the need for continued efforts to address these disparities and improve overall education quality in Cambodia. As stated in this chapter, "There is still room to improve this function, both at a technical level (such as the use of proficiency scales rather than percentage correct) and in terms of institutionalization." (p. 153).

In Chapter 9, Jones and Nagel (2022) explored the critical role of school principals in the Cambodian education system. The study emphasized the importance of leadership qualities such as transparency, strong leadership, and gaining staff cooperation, which are seen as essential in motivating teachers and improving educational outcomes. Seemingly, "There is a growing recognition of the importance of school leadership and management in Cambodian schools, not only in schools but also at the level of senior management within MoEYS." (p. 170). Despite progress, the study also identified significant challenges, including limited resources, resistance to change, and a lack of qualified leaders. It called for a more structured and merit-based approach to selecting and training school principals, which implied that professional standards and continuous development are necessary for fostering effective school leadership.

In Chapter 10, Pearson (2022) explored multifaceted capacity development in Cambodia's education sector. "Learning drawn from the discourse about global capacity development can be used as a guide to exploring challenges to achieving sustainable capacity within the Cambodian education sector." (P. 175). The integration of cultural beliefs and their influence on educational practices was highlighted, with the incorporation of Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Edgar Schein's organizational culture model lending depth to the narrative. Pearson edged on the cultural values that often clash with the principles of child-centered pedagogy, friction evident in the implementation of the Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) Policy. The chapter primarily appealed to enhanced teacher training, robust community engagement, and efforts to challenge and reshape the prevailing cultural norms. However, it could benefit from incorporating specific case studies of CFS, discussions of collaborations with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and a broader view of potential barriers to reform.

In Chapter 11, Vire et al. (2022) examined the critical role of mobilizing resources to realize the 'Education for All' objectives in Cambodia. They provided a comprehensive overview of historical commitments and highlighted the triumphs and challenges in education financing. Notably, the post-2013 era saw a remarkable increase in education budgets. No doubt, the rise in funding led to improved teacher salaries, more scholarships, and better funding for academic institutions. Evidently, "Cambodia's investment in education may not yet have fully caught up with its neighbors, but it is on the right path to do so." (p. 214). Their use of tables, charts, and graphs was highly effective. It offered a clearer picture of Cambodia's educational landscape. Nevertheless, the addition of concrete examples detailing strategies and collaborations would enhance the chapter's resonance.

In Chapter 12, Un and Sok (2022) investigated Cambodia's higher education policies and the pronounced neoliberal influences since the 1990s. "Policy discourse, if it is going to have tangible impacts on the economy and society, must be translated into concrete project intervention." (p. 223). The authors understood the pivotal role of foreign aid agencies, especially the World Bank's push for policy paradigms such as privatization. However, they critiqued this neoliberal shift, arguing that it perpetuates social inequalities and mainly benefits an elite segment. Nonetheless, they did an excellent job of advocating for a paradigm shift towards policies rooted in social justice and public welfare as they advocated for equitable benefits and more inclusive higher education.

Chapter 13 by Chet et al. (2022) studied the transformation of higher education in Cambodia. "Cambodian higher education is entering a new phase in its development." (p. 241). Their analysis, centered on the Royal University of Phnom Penh, nicely woven historical narratives with contemporary challenges and triumphs. They also critically appraised the policy environment to leverage Carden's systematic approach to shed light on the complexity of decision-making within Cambodian higher education. At the center, the chapter gave readers a well-rounded view of the complex layers surrounding institutional autonomy, policy change, governance, human resource management, financial management, and leadership's role in driving reforms.

Rath and Tao's (2022) Chapter 14 focused on accreditation in Cambodia's higher education. Their detailed analysis shone a light on the disparities and imbalances plaguing the system, including a lack of a national qualifications framework for recognition of degrees awarded by foreign universities. While some institutions stand out for excellence, others struggle due to inadequate guidelines and structured support such as quality assurance. The report also stressed other challenges within the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC), especially its inefficacy in assuring graduate program quality. Thus, this critical report called for the need for rigorous formulation and revisions to existing educational accreditation standards. Fortunately, "Reform rapidly ensued, including in the higher education sector, which in 1997 was the focus of a National Strategic Plan for Higher Education." (p. 259).

Chapter 15, by Bunry and Walker (2022), examined the challenges and opportunities for Cambodian women and girls in higher education. They found significant barriers to participation, including cultural norms, economic constraints, and limited access to educational resources. Despite these obstacles, there have been improvements in recent years, with more women enrolling in higher education and benefiting from scholarships and support programs. Notably, "Achieving enrolment equality between boys and girls in basic education has been a distinctive achievement of the Cambodian education system." (p. 275). The chapter also stressed the importance of policy interventions and societal change in further promoting gender equality in higher education settings.

In Chapter 16, Noorlander (2022) provided readers with an in-depth look at the complexity of introducing multilingual education (MLE) for Cambodia's ethnic minorities. The chapter emphasized the collaborative efforts between CARE Cambodia (a humanitarian and development NGO dedicated to fighting global poverty and inequality) and MoEYS, highlighting their journey from skepticism to the successful integration of multilingual education. Political support, the Multilingual Education National Action Plan (MENAP), provincial support, and training and promoting community teachers for the MLE in Cambodia play a vital role in its development. However, "For almost two decades, there has been slow

but consistent progress made in providing support for access to education for ethnic minority children living in the north-east region of Cambodia.” (p. 293).

3. Analysis and evaluation

3.1. Themes and style

At its core, the book addressed the pressing themes regarding efforts in educational reform, cultural resilience, and the pursuit of international standards within Cambodia's education system. At the core, it is organized in three parts and addresses sector-level issues, cross-sectoral and policy-related matters, and stakeholder inclusion; it presents a well-connected analysis across the themes. Through a narrative rich in historical context and contemporary analysis in various dimensions of Cambodian education, the book revealed the complexities of rebuilding an education system from the ground up. For instance, the chapter on secondary education reform by Bredenberg (2022) reported the challenges and successes in improving educational quality and governance for the 21st century education.

Below are the themes and foci in each chapter.

- **Overview** (Chapter 1: Education in Cambodia: An Overview)
- **Early Childhood Education** (Chapter 2: Early Childhood Education in Cambodia)
- **Quality** (Chapter 3: Primary Education in Cambodia: In Search of Quality)
- **Reform** (Chapter 4: Progress with Reforming Secondary Education in Cambodia)
- **TVET** (Chapter 5: Technical and Vocational Education and Training Reform in Cambodia 1970-2020)
- **Higher Education** (Chapter 6: Higher Education in Cambodia: The Constraining Effects of Traditional Values)
- **Teaching Profession** (Chapter 7: The Teaching Profession in Cambodia: Progress to Date and Ongoing Needs)
- **Assessment** (Chapter 8: Cambodia National Assessment: A Summary of 10 Years of Student Achievement Results)
- **School Leadership** (Chapter 9: School Leadership in Cambodian Schools)
- **Capacity Development** (Chapter 10: Capacity Development in Cambodia)
- **Policy-Based Budgeting** (Chapter 11: Policy-Based Budgeting in Cambodia's Education Sector)
- **Higher Education Policy** (Chapter 12: Higher Education Policy and Project Intervention)
- **University Reform** (Chapter 13: Reforming Cambodian Universities)
- **Accreditation** (Chapter 14: Accrediting Higher Education Institutions in Cambodia)

- **Gender Equity** (Chapter 15: Cambodian Women and Girls in Higher Education)
- **Multilingual Education** (Chapter 16: Multilingual Education for Ethnic Minorities in Cambodia)

The style of all chapters is both informative and accessible, making complex subjects, including policy discussions and leadership, understandable to a broad audience. The diverse perspectives of the contributing authors, all experts in their fields, can potentially increase the book's credibility along with depth. Compared to other works on Southeast Asian education, this book stands out for its comprehensive approach and practical insights. The thoughtful organization and clear, concise writing make it a valuable resource for educators, policymakers, and anyone interested in the intersection of education and development in Southeast Asia. To further enhance its impact, including more voices from local educators and students could provide a richer, more realistic perspective on the impact of these reforms on the ground.

3.2. Contributions

All things considered, this book significantly advances our knowledge of Cambodia's educational development. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the path taken by the nation from the destruction caused by the Khmer Rouge period to the present attempts to meet worldwide educational standards. The book sheds light on the many obstacles and triumphs encountered by the education sector, ranging from early childhood education to postsecondary education and technical training. For educators, legislators, and scholars alike, its thorough examination of policy changes, leadership styles, and the inclusion of marginalized groups provides insightful information. The book can be a comprehensive guide for anybody trying to comprehend and promote educational advancement in post-conflict cultures like Cambodia since it presents both achievements and current challenges. Besides, its depth is elevated by the inclusion of many viewpoints from national and international experts, which make it a vital resource for developing future educational programs and initiatives in Cambodia and other comparable educational settings. Although it recognizes the considerable challenges that still exist, this book motivates a practical outlook in which persistent efforts and deliberate changes may gradually enhance Cambodia's education system to meet global benchmarks, thereby enabling every child to achieve their maximum capabilities.

3.3. Cohesion and structure

The book is organized in a manner that provides a thorough examination of Cambodia's education system. It is structured into three primary sections: sector-level concerns, cross-sectoral and policy-related topics, and stakeholder inclusion, which is useful for a comprehensive examination of every aspect of the education system. Subsequent chapters are constructed upon the foundation of the preceding ones. This method is effective in establishing a coherent storyline that leads the reader through the historical background, current challenges, and future possibilities of education in Cambodia. Nevertheless, while the organization of the content allows for a thorough comprehension of the topics, the complex scholarly terminology used in some parts can provide difficulties for average readers. Furthermore, a greater degree of systematic incorporation of case studies and stakeholders' voices might improve the coherence of the story and provide a more practical viewpoint on the changes under consideration. In general, the book's organized approach helps readers understand the interaction between policy, practice, and progress in Cambodia's educational system. Despite

occasional technical terms and complex statistical data, it remains a valuable reference for further investigation into Cambodia's education system.

4. Personal reflection

To date, this book is a comprehensive report on Cambodia's educational system. The progression from early childhood to higher education in the first section provides readers with a holistic understanding, while the systemic introspection in the second section brings out the complex layers of policy, assessment, and university reforms. It is not a myth that the emphasis on inclusivity, especially the roles of women and multilingual education in the third segment, is particularly significant in this era. This focus highlights the importance of diverse voices and perspectives in shaping a more equitable educational landscape (UNESCO, 2021). Each chapter, penned by various experts, attempts to capture distinct facets of the connection between historical context with present achievements and issues. As such, the multiple-perspective approach can help increase and inform readers' various perspectives on the subject. For instance, Chapter 5 by Daroesman (2022) further connects TVET programs with industry needs, including broad categories such as learning to learn, communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, while fostering public-private partnerships, enhancing inclusivity, integrating soft skills, and incorporating technology in training (ILO, n.d.).

While the book does an excellent job of detailing the status of Cambodia's education with reliable statistical findings and visuals, it could benefit from incorporating more comparative studies to situate Cambodia's trajectory within the broader Southeast Asian or global context. Some chapters, though informative, might delve deeper into the tangible impacts, as in strategies, policies, reforms and implementations, which can be useful with additional specific case studies to illustrate successes and pitfalls. Moreover, a bold focus on forward-looking strategies, especially in light of emerging global educational trends such as educational technology, could offer readers, not just a fresh understanding of where Cambodia's education stands but also where it could potentially head in the future. In another respect, a more explicit emphasis on stakeholders' voices, including students, parents, and educators, might also provide a ground-up perspective, complementing the top-down policy examination. This approach would appeal to the experiences and insights of those directly impacted by educational policies and implementations for more effective and inclusive reforms. As highlighted in the World Bank Education Report, engaging stakeholders at all levels is crucial for the successful implementation and sustainability of educational initiatives (World Bank, n.d.).

Some chapters could be further strengthened with the inclusion of statistical information and illustrations, specific examples, and even case studies. For instance, Pearson's (2022) discussion on the CFS Policy would benefit greatly from real-world instances of its implementation; deeper dives into NGO collaborations would offer a broader understanding of potential solutions. The chapter on education financing in Cambodia (Chet et al., 2022; Un & Sok, 2022; Vire et al., 2022), while enriched with data visualizations, would be more impactful if it demonstrated tangible outcomes of financial strategies and collaborations. A consistent critique across multiple chapters is the need for concrete, on-ground examples that allow readers to connect theoretical frameworks to practical implementations. Additionally, a more balanced perspective to address the successes, potential barriers, and related narratives would provide a well-rounded view of the complexities involved in educational reforms.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this book embodies a groundbreaking effort to bridge the knowledge gap about Cambodia's education system. It brings together Cambodian and international education experts to explore the nation's educational landscape in detail. Indeed, it gives a thorough and deep look at contemporary education in Cambodia. It nicely balances historical context, current challenges, and future aspirations while also offering valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers. The book's structured approach and diverse perspectives make it a useful resource, though some sections may benefit from simpler language, more visuals, and case studies. Despite these minor limitations, the book succeeds in painting a realistic yet hopeful picture of Cambodia's journey toward educational excellence. We believe it stands as evidence of the resilience and determination of those working to transform Cambodia's education system. As a teacher and teacher trainer, reflecting on its contents, we are inspired to contribute to this ongoing progress and continually believe in the potential for every Cambodian child to receive a quality education that prepares them for a brighter future.

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Keywords

Educational Reform: The process of implementing changes and improvements in educational policies, practices, and structures to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education systems.

Inclusivity: The practice of ensuring that education systems are accessible and equitable for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, gender, ethnicity, or geographic location.

MoEYS: This is the acronym of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of Cambodia.

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs): Collaborative arrangements between government agencies and private sector entities to enhance the quality, relevance, and delivery of educational programs and services.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A set of global objectives established by the United Nations to address various social, economic, and environmental challenges, with specific targets related to education (e.g., SDG 4: Quality Education).

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET): Programs and policies aimed at equipping individuals with practical skills and knowledge for specific trades, industries, and occupations.

Year Zero: The period of the destruction of the previous regime, many of its officials and teachers, and its education system following the Khmer Rouge takeover of Cambodia in April 1975. The Khmer Rouge declared Year Zero to signify a radical restructuring of Cambodian society, which caused the devastation of the educational infrastructure and the elimination of a significant portion of the educated population.

A correlational study on teacher-student relationships and students' engagement in EFL classes

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Abstract

This study aims to investigate the levels of teacher-student relationships (TSR) and student engagement (SE) within an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context among general English (GE) level students enrolled in an English course at a private language school in Indonesia. This study also seeks to examine the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes. In finding the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes, this study attempts to fill a gap in the existing literature by employing a quantitative method, specifically a survey-based approach, to systematically collect and analyze data from a diverse pool of participants. The choice of quantitative method is grounded in the need for standardized data collection and analysis to determine the degree of relationship between TSR and SE among GE-level students. By administering surveys to GE-level students, this study seeks to gain insights into their perceptions of TSR and its impact on their engagement in EFL classes. This study found that the TSR and the SE levels were high. Moreover, this study found a statistically significant positive correlation between TSR and SE. The findings of this research endeavor to provide valuable insights into how TSR can catalyze SE and subsequently enhance language proficiency among EFL learners in Indonesia, with implications for both theory and practice in EFL education.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

In the field of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the significance of teacher-student relationships (TSR) and student engagement (SE) has garnered increasing attention. A crucial aspect of an excellent education is generally acknowledged to be good teacher-student relationships (Jederlund et al., 2023). TSR, characterized by mutual trust, guidance, and support between educators and learners, is pivotal in shaping the teaching and learning experience (Syahabuddin et al., 2020). A positive TSR impacts student learning, including motivation, academic performance, and self-efficacy (Wanders et al., 2020). Students who formed a deep emotional connection with their teachers showed higher motivation, academic engagement, and better academic performance (Mahfud., 2023). On the other hand, in instances

of a negative relationship, classroom procedures may serve as a moderating factor in addressing students' behavioral issues. Put differently, kids who engage in inappropriate relationships with teachers and have problems in the classroom face challenges like dropping out, experiencing rejection, feeling unaccepted by their peers, and exhibiting more unsuitable behaviors (Gan, 2021).

Student engagement is among the finest indicators of academic achievement and personal development (Abubakar et al., 2017). In general, student engagement refers to a dedication to meeting learning objectives and active involvement in various academic activities (Ginting, 2021). Kourieos et al. (2013) found that an effective language teacher now considers their students' peculiarities, language anxiety, talents, and interests while creating learning environments rather than using a dictatorial and authoritarian approach to teaching. Engaged students demonstrate effective collaboration and innovative application of knowledge, leading to enhanced language proficiency (Saeed et al., 2012). On the other hand, disengagement occurs when students need to recognize the importance of learning, education is not given priority, and studying is seen merely as a means to attain a degree (Li, 2022). According to Xue (2023), disengaged students act passively, simply following instructions without actively participating in discussions, interacting with English language materials, or responding to attempts to customize lessons to their interests, goals, and preferences. In conclusion, researching student engagement is crucial to enhancing awareness among both students and teachers regarding their level of involvement in the classroom.

1.2. Research gap

Recognizing the vital role of TSR in promoting SE, this study aims to investigate the correlation between TSR and SE among General English (GE) level students enrolling in an English course in a private language school in Indonesia. The importance of this study lies in addressing a gap in the existing literature, particularly within the Indonesian context. While studies abroad have explored the relationship between TSR and SE (Li et al., 2024; Mallik, 2023; Martin et al., 2019; Pérez-Salas et al., 2021; Zhang, 2023), these kinds of studies are still limited in Indonesia that focus on senior high school students as the participants (Mahfud & Ode Riniati, 2023b; Suryani, 2018; Yusriyah et al., 2021). By delving into this topic, the researcher aims to provide valuable insights into how TSR can catalyze SE and subsequently enhance language proficiency among EFL learners in Indonesia. However, the specific dynamics of TSR within the Indonesian EFL context warrant further investigation. By focusing on GE-level students in an English course, the researcher aims to shed light on the TSR in a setting where students interact with multiple teachers, potentially influencing their engagement levels differently (Martin et al., 2019). Research on TSR and SE primarily occurs in school settings. However, studies conducted within English courses involving students with diverse abilities remained inadequate.

Furthermore, the choice of quantitative method, precisely a survey-based approach, is grounded in the need for systematic data collection and analysis. A quantitative approach is employed to ascertain the presence and extent of a relationship among two or more variables among a specific group of people (Apuke, 2017). This aligns with the objectives of our study, which seeks to establish a correlation between TSR and SE among GE-level students in an English course. The rationale for selecting the survey method stems from its efficiency in gathering large-scale data from a diverse pool of participants. With those considerations, using questionnaires is considered appropriate because it is by the principle of the quantitative method that a structured format facilitates standardized data collection, organization, and

analysis (Kuphanga, 2024). By administering surveys to GE-level students, the researcher can understand their perceptions of TSR and its impact on their engagement in EFL classes.

This research is expected to benefit several parties, such as students, teachers, researchers, and the institution. Students can benefit from understanding the correlation between their relationship with teachers and their engagement in the learning process. This knowledge can empower students to actively seek supportive relationships with their teachers, leading to increased motivation, participation, and, ultimately, better learning outcomes. As for the teachers, the research outcomes can offer valuable guidance to teachers on the significance of fostering positive relationships with their students in EFL classrooms. Teachers can better understand how their interactions with students influence students' engagement levels, allowing them to adopt strategies to enhance TSR and promote student engagement. The study results can contribute to the literature on teacher-student relationships and student engagement in EFL settings. Researchers can use these findings to explore the complex dynamics of TSR and its impact on student learning and well-being. Lastly, educational institutions can benefit from the research findings by incorporating insights into teacher-student relationships and student engagement into their professional development programs for teachers. By prioritizing the development of positive TSR and student engagement strategies, institutions can create supportive learning environments that facilitate student success.

1.3. Research objectives

This study examines the impact of TSR on SE in EFL. That is, this study intends:

1. To explore the TSR level in EFL classes.
2. To explore the SE level in EFL classes.
3. To explore the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes.

1.4. Research questions

By considering the rationale of the research stated above, the following research questions were addressed in the present study:

1. What is the TSR level in EFL classes?
2. What is the SE level in EFL classes?
3. What is the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes?

2. Literature review

2.1. Teacher-student relationships in ELT

The essence of educational communication lies in establishing strong relationships, serving as the bedrock for practical instruction, and facilitating students' learning journeys (Meng, 2021). According to Baker et al. (2008), numerous beneficial educational outcomes are linked to the affective quality of children's relationships with their teachers. Klem (2004) found that students who experience nurturing and encouraging interpersonal relationships at school report higher academic satisfaction and good attitudes and values. Bankole (2011) emphasized that the level of trust between students and teachers significantly influences students' attitudes toward learning and their overall well-being. Similarly, Thompson (2018) highlighted in an Indian setting that mutual respect between teachers and students correlates with improved behavior and learning outcomes. Marvi (2023) shed light on how teachers' attitudes toward diversity

profoundly impact the learning environment and students' experiences in ELT classrooms. Prioritizing diversity fosters inclusivity and empowers students from diverse backgrounds to actively participate in learning (Mahfud et al., 2023; Ork et al., 2024). Understanding the dynamics of diverse TSRs is pivotal for creating a supportive and inclusive learning environment (Serin, 2017).

Effective communication between students and teachers constitutes another critical aspect of TSR in ELT. When students feel at ease communicating with their teachers and trust that their concerns will be heard and addressed, it cultivates a robust bond of trust and rapport (Elsbree, 2019). This trust encourages students to seek assistance, enhancing their academic success and overall well-being (Pérez-Salas et al., 2021). Positive attitudes towards diversity among teachers significantly shape the learning environment and contribute to students' sense of belonging and empowerment (Abdullah, 2022). Additionally, a strong correlation exists between students' enthusiasm for learning English and the quality of their relationships with their teachers (Yusriyah et al., 2021). Marvi (2023) emphasized that teachers who value diversity create inclusive classrooms where all students feel respected and supported. Effective communication channels between students and teachers foster TSR and drive students' academic success (Asrar et al., 2018). When students feel safe and supported by their teachers, they are more likely to engage actively in learning (Maghfirah, 2019).

Studies on TSR have been conducted in diverse contexts, including Pakistan (Afzal et al., 2023), Indonesia (Kurniatillah et al., 2022; Mahfud et al., 2023), Sweden (Jederlund & von Rosen, 2023). Afzal et al. (2023) employed a quantitative method in eight public and private universities in Lahore, involving 800 students, and found a significant positive impact of teacher-student solid relationships on academic achievement. Conversely, Kurniatillah et al. (2022) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were English teachers who teach ninth-grade students at 176 Junior High Schools in Jakarta, Indonesia. This study indicates successful interactions between teachers and students, contributing to an engaging classroom environment. Mahfud et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative research study among elementary school students in West Java, Indonesia, demonstrating that an environment favorable to learning is fostered by educators who build friendly, sympathetic, and courteous relationships with their students. Jederlund et al. (2023) conducted a mixed-method study involving 198 middle-school students and 184 secondary-school students attending five public schools in a big city county, revealing the importance of students' self-efficacy beliefs in impacting their academic achievement across different domains.

2.2. Students' engagement in ELT

One of the better indicators of learning and personal growth is typically seen to be student engagement Carini et al., (2006). The literature on student engagement underscores its historical emphasis on enhancing academic performance, fostering positive behaviors, and nurturing a sense of belonging to improve student retention in educational institutions (Taylor & Parsons, 2011). Across diverse educational settings and levels, student engagement, comprising cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, is recognized as pivotal for achieving academic goals effectively (Trowler, 2010). Cognitive engagement is identified as strategies employed by students in doing and finishing the learning tasks. Emotional engagement refers to students' emotional responses to learning activities. These responses might be feelings of interest, boredom, or anxiety. Finally, behavioral engagement refers to the student's participation in academic and extracurricular activities. These types of engagement can be seen in research findings conducted in Indonesia. Research by Susanti (2020) reveals

that engaged students actively participate in class discussions, utilizing their senses and emotions to aid learning outcomes. Moreover, the involvement of teachers in selecting appropriate strategies and teaching methods is crucial for fostering classroom engagement and sustaining student interest in the learning process (Firdaus & Fatimah, 2021).

Similarly, Marcus et al. (2021) in Malaysia identify the significant roles of instructors, peers, course design, and personal values in fostering positive emotional engagement among students. Meanwhile, studies in Bhutan by Tshering et al. (2024) underscore the efficacy of active learning strategies in enhancing behavioral engagement, mainly through increased student participation and expression of thoughts. In Indonesia, Sesmiyanti (2016) emphasizes the importance of cognitive engagement, focusing on students' active involvement in learning tasks that stimulate their thinking and knowledge acquisition. Additionally, Latipah (2020) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were five students in a private school in Indonesia. This study provides insights into behavioral and emotional engagement among students, demonstrating their enthusiasm and commitment to learning tasks, particularly in English language acquisition. Silvola et al. (2021) emphasize the holistic improvement of academic performance achieved through a well-rounded combination of behavioral, cognitive, and emotional engagement factors, underlining their interconnectedness with educational standards. Meanwhile, Torto (2020) conducted a quantitative study involving 61 English language teachers in the Cape Coast metropolis in Ghana, revealing that while all three dimensions of student engagement were present, the emotional dimension emerged as the predominant factor.

Further afield, Jabulisile and Sphelele (2023), in the African context, advocates for collaborative activities to foster positive interdependence, interaction, and the development of self-confidence and interpersonal skills among learners. Meanwhile, Aliabadi and Weisi (2023) conducted a qualitative study to examine the strategies employed by 10 Iranian EFL teachers to enhance learners' engagement, highlighting the significance of various motivational techniques, self-assessment practices, and the promotion of learner autonomy to foster behavioral emotional, and cognitive engagement effectively. This broad perspective recognizes the diverse nature of student engagement and its broader impact on students' overall educational experiences and outcomes. Therefore, identifying the interplay between various dimensions of student engagement is essential for designing effective educational interventions that promote holistic development and academic success.

2.3. The impact of TSR on SE in EFL

The impact of TSR on SE in EFL classrooms is a critical area of research, often yielding significant insights into effective teaching practices and student learning outcomes. Many studies have demonstrated the pivotal role of TSR in influencing students' enthusiasm, academic achievement, and overall engagement in the learning process (AlMunawwarah, 2018; Rost, 2006; Sirait, 2016). In the Indonesian context, AlMunawwarah (2018) and Sirait (2016) found that Positive TSR characterized by warmth, encouragement, and effective communication fosters an environment conducive to active student participation and collaboration. When teachers establish supportive relationships with their students, it cultivates trust and rapport, laying the foundation for meaningful learning experiences (Koca, 2016). Li (2022)), in the Chinese context, found that teachers who demonstrate interest and passion for teaching, provide more academic and emotional support, and actively work to develop warm, compassionate relationships with their students can all help students become more engaged in the classroom.

Furthermore, such relationships empower students to take risks, express their ideas, and actively participate in classroom activities (Putri et al., 2021). Conversely, a strained or hostile TSR can impede students' engagement and diminish their learning motivation (Rost, 2006). When students feel disrespected or undervalued by their teachers, it can lead to disengagement and apathy towards learning (Nayir, 2017). In the Indonesian context, Yusriyah et al. (2021) found that a lack of enthusiasm from students can render the classroom environment dull and uninspiring, hindering effective teaching and learning processes. Therefore, nurturing positive TSR is essential for creating an engaging and conducive learning environment where students feel motivated and empowered to participate actively in their education (Williams, 2011).

The correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classrooms has been a subject of considerable scholarly inquiry. Kurthen (2014) conducted a mixed-method study examining the factors impacting classroom interaction by analyzing 320 class observations at a major undergraduate college in the U.S. Midwest. This study found a strong positive relationship between TSR and SE, indicating that the quality of TSR significantly influences students' levels of engagement. When teachers establish supportive and encouraging relationships with their students, it fosters a sense of belonging and investment in learning. Students who feel valued and respected by their teachers are more likely to actively participate in classroom activities, ask questions, and collaborate with their peers (Kansil et al., 2022). This active participation signifies a deeper level of engagement and promotes a more dynamic and interactive learning environment (Abdullah et al., 2012).

Moreover, Katiandagho et al. (2022) conducted a study in grades 10, 11, and 12 of a private high school in North Sulawesi, Indonesia. This study found that students' self-confidence is crucial in shaping their engagement levels in EFL classrooms. Students with high self-confidence exhibit greater ease in communicating and sharing their opinions, contributing to the overall effectiveness of classroom learning (Saidah, 2024).

Conversely, students who need more confidence in their abilities may hesitate to participate actively in class discussions or activities, limiting their engagement and learning opportunities. Students' sense of responsibility and ownership over their learning contributes significantly to their engagement levels in EFL classrooms (Dizaj et al., 2016). Responsible students demonstrate self-control, actively engage in classroom activities, and collaborate effectively with their peers (Sitorus et al., 2022). Solikhah et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative study; the participants were one teacher and three students at an Islamic senior secondary school in Pekalongan City in Central Java, Indonesia. Encouraging students to take ownership of their learning process through active participation in class discussions, seeking out knowledge, and reflecting on their experiences fosters a culture of accountability and engagement, as demonstrated by this study. The relationship between TSR and SE in EFL classrooms is multifaceted and complex, encompassing teacher-student rapport, student self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility. Therefore, fostering positive TSR and empowering students to take ownership of their learning are essential strategies for enhancing engagement and promoting academic success in EFL classrooms.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study employs a survey-based research design to analyze the phenomenon through numeric opinions, trends, and attitudes within the sample population (Creswell, 2014).

Utilizing this method enables the establishment of correlations and the identification of patterns and trends within the data. Specifically, the quantitative method is applied to investigate the correlation of TSR on SE. This approach aims to give researchers a fresh understanding of the dynamics among Indonesian GE-level students. Previous studies exploring TSR and SE have utilized various methodologies, including quantitative (Afzal et al., 2023; Kwabena et al.; Li et al., 2024), qualitative methods (Culver, 2020; Mahfud., 2023), mixed-methods (Estes et al., 2021; Mallik, 2023; Syahabuddin et al., 2020). Given the nature of investigating the correlation between TSR and SE, a survey emerges as the most suitable method, especially considering the time constraints of this research. Moreover, selecting a quantitative approach aligns with the researcher's positivist paradigm, which assumes that a single tangible reality exists—one that can be understood, identified, and measured (Park et al., 2020).

3.2. Samples and sampling techniques

Table 1. Participants' Demographic Information

Demographic category	Subcategory	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	29	35.80%
	Female	52	64.20%
Age	10-15	39	48.10%
	16-20	42	51.85%

The study's participants are English course students in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, targeting those enrolled in the GE level. The GE level is one of the levels in a private English language school in Yogyakarta, at the GE level attended by students consisting of GE classes, Elementary GE, Pre-Intermediate GE, Intermediate GE, and Post-Intermediate Level GE. Students who enroll in GE lessons come from 33 different high schools in Yogyakarta. The selection criteria for participants were based on several factors. Firstly, participants were chosen because they had been relatively underrepresented in previous research, particularly within the Indonesian context. Second, consideration was given to the age demographic of the students. Most of the participants were high school-aged students, as this demographic often experiences unique dynamics in teacher-student relationships and engagement within the classroom setting (Gouda et al., 2019). A purposive sampling technique was used in this study to select the participants based on some criteria. This sampling technique allowed the researchers to select participants who were relevant to the focus of the study. Eighty-one participants participated in this study. There were 29 males (35.8%) and 52 females (64.2%). The minimum age of the participants was 12, and the maximum was 20.

3.3. Instruments

The data collection method employed in this study utilized questionnaires as the primary instrument. These questionnaires were adapted from two existing studies (Mallik, 2023; Susanti, 2020). The questionnaire comprised two sub-components of TSR and students' engagement: the first section, encompassing seven statements (numbered 1-7), aimed at gauging TSR levels in EFL classes, adapted from Mallik (2023); meanwhile, the second section, comprising ten statements (numbered 8-17), focused on evaluating SE levels in EFL

classes, adapted from Susanti (2020). Given the target demographic and ensuring understanding clarity, the questionnaires were prepared in Indonesian. This approach aimed to facilitate respondents' comprehension and enable them to provide responses that accurately reflected their experiences without encountering ambiguity. Each question in the questionnaire utilized a Likert scale, ranging from 1 to 4. Participants were instructed to assign a score corresponding to their level of agreement, with 4 indicating "strongly agree," 3 for "agree," 2 for "disagree," and 1 for "strongly disagree." Notably, a neutral option was intentionally omitted to prevent respondents from selecting it when uncertain about their stance, thereby promoting more decisive responses.

3.4. Data collection procedures

The methodology employed in this study involved the distribution of questionnaires as the primary means of data collection. Initially, the researcher sought permission from the gatekeeper. After obtaining permission from the gatekeeper, the researcher contacted the teachers who teach students at the GE level and asked their permission to distribute the questionnaires to their classes. Subsequently, questionnaires were distributed to participants, facilitated by English teachers who shared Google Form links via WhatsApp groups and direct messages. In certain instances, to ensure questionnaire completion, the researcher personally attended English classes to administer the online surveys.

3.5. Data analysis

Table 2. The interpretation of the correlation

The value	Correlation level
0.00 to 0.24	Weak or no correlation
0.25 to 0.49	Moderate
0.50 to 0.74	Moderately strong
0.75 to 0.99	Strong
-1 or 1	Perfect

After the questionnaires were distributed, the data were downloaded into Microsoft Excel and subjected to analysis using SPSS. The data analysis followed the procedure done by Bon et al. (2022) in analyzing the relationships between variables. Descriptive analysis addressed RQ1 and RQ2, while correlation data analysis was employed to answer RQ3. In addition, the researchers used Pearson Product Moment Correlation to investigate the strength of the relationship between TSR and SE, and the interpretation can be seen in Table 2.

The detailed sequence of data collection and analysis will be illustrated in the following figure.

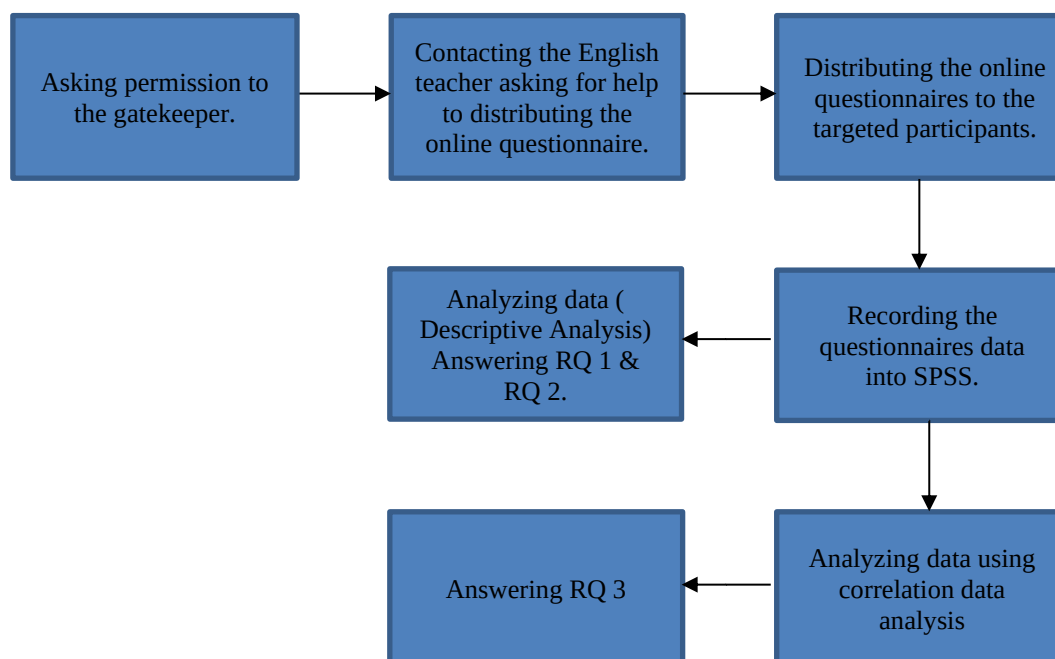


Figure 1. Sequence of data collection and analysis

3.6. Ethical consideration

When investigating the impact of TSR on SE in EFL classes, the researcher prioritizes several ethical considerations. These considerations adhere to four fundamental principles of research ethics: autonomy, anonymity, beneficence, and justice (María et al., 2012). Firstly, all participants were asked for their informed consent before participating in the study. They were provided with clear information regarding the study's objectives and procedures. Participants' names were omitted to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, and all data were kept private. The study began with an informed consent form presented on the initial page of the online survey, outlining participants' voluntary involvement.

Furthermore, questionnaire items have been translated into Bahasa Indonesia to accommodate participants and enhance their understanding of the survey. Respecting participants' autonomy and privacy is paramount throughout this study. The informed consent form explicitly states that participant confidentiality was upheld and that their information was not to be disclosed or published. As a token of appreciation, participants received a small gift. Moreover, the study's findings will implicitly benefit students, teachers, and other researchers, contributing valuable insights into TSR and SE levels and their correlation. This study is conducted with adherence to ethical standards, ensuring participants' rights and privacy are safeguarded while yielding meaningful contributions to the field.

4. Findings

4.1. What is the TSR level in EFL classes?

Table 3. Descriptive data of TSR

No	Items	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	The teachers in my English class show a strong interest in helping us learn.	3.42	46	56.8	25	30.9	8	9.9	2	2.5
2.	I feel comfortable communicating with my English teacher outside of class time.	3.2	29	35.8	42	51.9	7	8.6	3	3.7
3.	My English teachers treat students fairly and respect our opinions.	3.6	53	65.4	26	32.1	0	0	2	2.5
4.	I feel more enthusiastic about learning English because of the good relationship with my teachers.	3.46	45	55.6	30	37	4	4.9	2	2.5
5.	My English teachers provide the necessary encouragement and support in learning English.	3.44	40	49.4	38	46.9	2	2.5	1	1.2
6.	My English teachers listen well when we have questions or problems.	3.56	49	60.5	29	35.8	2	2.5	1	1.2
7.	My English teachers value diversity in the classroom.	3.68	58	71.6	21	25.9	1	1.2	1	1.2

From the indication in the sequence of data collection, descriptive analysis was used to answer RQ1. The students' data were analyzed using descriptive analysis in SPSS. Table 3 shows the extent of students' level of TSR in EFL classes.

The sub-components of TSR were used to categorize and analyze the findings of TSR. The sub-components comprise teacher support and responsiveness, teacher interest and enthusiasm, and communication between students and teachers. Teacher support and responsiveness can be seen in questionnaire items 3 and 7. Teacher interest and enthusiasm can be seen in questionnaire items 1, 4, and 5. Finally, communication between students and teachers can be seen in questionnaire items 2 and 6. Each sub-component is explained in the following paragraphs.

Items number 3 and 7 had the highest mean score among participants. Item number 3, with a mean score of 3.6, stated, ‘My English teachers value diversity in the classroom’ and obtained the agreement of 79 (97,5%) participants. Another statement from item number 7, ‘My English teachers treat students fairly and respect our opinions.’ obtained a mean score of 3.68, with 79 (97,5%) participants. Based on statements 3 and 7, students highly perceived a positive impact of teachers' attitudes on the learning process.

Items 1, 4, and 5 discuss their interest and enthusiasm for learning English. In statement number 1, ‘The teachers in my English class show a strong interest in helping us learn,’ with a mean score of 3.42 and agreement from 71 (87,7%) participants. Item number 4 stated, ‘I feel more enthusiastic about learning English because of the good relationship with my teachers’ obtained agreement from 75 (92,6%) participants. Item number 5, with the statement ‘My English teachers provide the necessary encouragement and support in learning English.’ obtained a mean score of 3,44 and agreement from 78 (96,3%) participants.

Items number 2 and 6 discuss the communication between students and their teachers. Item number 2, with the statement ‘I feel comfortable communicating with my English teacher outside of class time,’ obtained agreement from 71 (87,7%) participants. Then, the statement of item number 6 was, ‘My English teachers listen well when we have questions or problems.’ It obtained agreement from the 78 (96,3%) participants. Such findings underscore the significance of effective communication channels in fostering TSR within EFL classes. When students feel comfortable communicating with their teachers during and outside of class time and have confidence that their questions will be listened to and addressed with attention, it indicates a strong bond of trust and rapport between students and teachers.

4.2. What is the SE level in EFL classes?

Table 4. Descriptive data of SE

No	Items	Mean	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
8.	I have the opportunity to participate in class.	3.57	49	60.5	30	37.5	1	1.2	1	1.2
9.	I actively answer questions from the teacher in class.	2.94	20	24.7	39	48.1	19	23.5	3	3.7
10.	I enjoy working together with my friends in class.	3.48	46	56.8	30	37	3	3.7	2	2.5
11.	I ask questions when I don't understand the material presented by the teacher.	3.16	29	35.8	38	46.9	12	14.8	2	2.5

12. I am eager to do the tasks in class.	3.05	26	32.1	35	43.2	18	22.2	2	2.5
13. I am eager to attend class regularly.	3.22	33	40.7	35	43.2	11	13.6	2	2.5
14. I am confident expressing my ideas in class.	3.04	26	32.1	36	44.4	15	18.5	4	4.9
15. I help each other in class.	3.49	48	59.3	27	33.3	4	4.9	2	2.5
16. I enthusiastically carry out instructions given by the teacher.	3.33	35	43.2	39	48.1	6	7.4	1	1.2
17. I am responsible for the tasks in class.	3.37	41	50.6	31	38.3	7	8.6	2	2.5

As can be seen in Table 4, the data reveals that the overall mean is 3.26, suggesting a high level of SE within EFL classes (Upura et al., 2023). The results shown are similar to the research of Dincer et al. (2019), whose study explored Self-Determination and Classroom Engagement of EFL Learners through a mixed-method study; the participants were freshmen EFL students in Turkey. Their research revealed that most students have positive motivational experiences in their EFL classes. It showed that positive experience reports were regularly accompanied by lower absenteeism rates, involvement, satisfaction with the classroom environment, and fundamental needs met.

The sub-components of SE were used to categorize and analyze the findings of SE. The sub-components align with the types of SE, i.e. cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagements. Cognitive engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 17. Emotional engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 10 and 14. Finally, behavioral engagement can be seen in questionnaire items 8, 9, and 14. Each sub-component is explained in the following paragraphs.

Item number 11, with the statement ‘I ask questions when I do not understand the material presented by the teacher,’ obtained agreement from 67 (82,7%) participants and a mean score of 3.16. Item number 12, with the statement ‘I am eager to do the tasks in class,’ obtained agreement from 61 (76,5%) participants and a mean score of 3.05. Additionally, item number 13, with the statement ‘I am eager to attend class regularly,’ obtained agreement from 68 (83,9%) participants; the mean score for this statement was 3.22. Items 15, 16, and 17, with the statements ‘I help each other in class’ in number 15, obtained a mean score of 3.59, and 75 (92,6%) participants agreed. Item number 16, with the statement ‘I enthusiastically carry out the instructions given by the teacher,’ obtained a mean score of 3.33, and 74 (91,3%) participants agreed. Then, item 17, with the statement ‘I am responsible for tasks in class,’ obtained a mean score of 3.37, and 72 (88,9%) participants agreed.

Item number 10, with the statement ‘I enjoy working with my friends in class,’ obtained agreement from 76 (93,8%) participants and a mean score of 3.48. Moreover, item number 14,

with the statement ‘I am confident expressing my ideas in class,’ obtained agreement from 62 (76,5%) participants and a mean score of 3.04.

Item number 8 had the highest mean score (3.57), with the statement ‘I have the opportunity to participate in class’ obtained the agreement of 49 (60.5%) participants. From the result, most students at the GE level feel that they all have the same opportunity to participate in class activities. Active participation in class activities, such as asking questions, sharing opinions, and collaborating with peers, signifies engagement in the learning process (Abdullah et al., 2012). This statement resonates with the responses to other items in Table 2, collectively reflecting students' perceived involvement in classroom activities. Items 9, 10, and 14 are about their participation. Item number 9, with the statement ‘I actively answer questions from the teacher in class,’ obtained agreement from 59 (72,8%) participants. Then, the mean score was 2.94.

4.3. What is the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes?

Table 5. Correlation between TSR and SE

	tot_tsr	tot_se
tot_tsr	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	81
tot_se	Pearson correlation	.679***
	Sig. (2-tailed)	< .001
	N	81

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

Table 5 above shows that the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes was significantly positive, $r(79) = .67$, $p < .01$. This correlation suggests that as TSR increases, so does students' engagement in EFL classes.

5. Discussion

The data reveals an overall mean of 3.48, suggesting a high level of TSR as it closely approaches the score of 4.00 (Upara et al., 2023). These findings bear resemblance to previous research conducted by Afzal et al. (2023), Koenen et al. (2019), Sun et al. (2022), and Thornberg et al. (2022), which delved into TSR within an English classroom setting through various methods. Sun et al. (2022) conducted a study about the role of TSR on 497 Chinese EFL students. In their research, the positive impact of teacher-student rapport and teacher support on the affective learning of Chinese students was evident. Consequently, EFL students who foster positive relationships with their teachers and receive consistent support and guidance will likely achieve favorable learning outcomes.

The findings indicate that recognition of diversity is crucial, as classrooms are dynamic spaces where students bring a rich tapestry of backgrounds, characters, personalities, and behaviors (Abdullah, 2022). This finding was aligned with the study conducted by Marvi (2023), who emphasizes the importance of teachers' impressions and attitudes toward culturally diverse students in inspiring and improving their education. Prioritizing diversity fosters an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and empowered, thus enhancing their educational experiences. The prevalence of fair attitudes towards diversity among teachers significantly shapes the learning environment, fostering an atmosphere where students feel valued and respected regardless of their backgrounds. Understanding the dynamics of these relationships is paramount, given the complex interplay of cultural norms, diverse student backgrounds, and individual learning needs in Indonesia (Mahfud et al., 2023). Most students express satisfaction with their relationships with teachers, possibly due to the teachers' supportive stance towards diversity. While instructing a diverse student body presents challenges, classroom activities engaging students from varied cultural backgrounds could foster cohesion (Serin, 2017). This highlights the importance of educators treating children fairly and valuing their individuality.

The findings suggest a strong correlation between students' enthusiasm for learning English and the quality of their relationships with their teachers. This correlation underscores the crucial role of fostering supportive and nurturing teacher-student relationships in cultivating students' intrinsic motivation and eagerness to engage with the subject matter. As discussed by Yusriyah et al. (2021), enthusiasm for learning is manifested through various indicators such as facial expressions, excitement, and overall happiness during the learning process. It reflects students' positive attitudes towards learning English, indicating active involvement and genuine interest. Furthermore, Maghfirah (2019) found that students universally seek a sense of safety and security, both physically and emotionally, within the classroom environment. This sense of security is bolstered when students can rely on and trust their teachers. The impact of trusting student-teacher relationships can extend to various aspects, such as students' perception of the significance of school as a place they value and belong to, as well as their readiness to seek and embrace the assistance and support necessary for thriving in a demanding academic setting with high expectations (Bankole, 2011). Moreover, Pérez-Salas et al. (2021) mention that teachers who value students' ideas and prioritize their well-being can establish a strong bond with their students. Thus, nurturing these relationships might be essential for academic success and student well-being.

The findings indicate a strong bond of trust and rapport between students and teachers. This trust encourages students to seek assistance when facing challenges actively. This statement was supported by the findings of Elsbree (2019), which suggests that the quality of the student-teacher relationship significantly impacts students' inclination to seek help. Effective communication from teachers, whether verbal or non-verbal, is a crucial element that students need for success in their educational endeavors, driving them to improve their skills and abilities (Asrar et al., 2018). Based on the result and the similarity between the previous and present studies, students may perceive assistance from their teachers due to the positive communication dynamic they share.

The findings showing students' engagement and active class participation might be attributed to various factors, including self-confidence (Abdullah et al., 2012; Kurthen, 2014). Student self-confidence, defined as belief in one's abilities, strengths, and judgment, is significant in fostering classroom participation (Kansil et al., 2022). According to Katiandagho et al. (2022), highly self-confident students easily communicate and share opinions with peers and instructors without fear of making mistakes. Students who demonstrate confidence in their

abilities contribute to effective classroom learning and are more likely to attain maximum learning objectives. Conversely, students who lack self-confidence are prone to underperforming in class due to their lack of belief in their capabilities (Saidah, 2024). Therefore, the students' average level of engagement in the classroom might be because they were pretty confident with their English competence.

Additionally, the findings indicate that students generally concur with the importance of collaborative learning, active participation, and accountability in the classroom. This finding was in line with Yusriyah et al. (2021) on interest and enthusiasm in learning English among high school students in Indonesia, emphasizing these factors' significance in students' academic achievement. The students' agreement with these statements in this study suggests that students recognize the value of cooperation and mutual support among peers and the significance of following instructions diligently and taking ownership of their assigned tasks. This positive attitude towards collaborative learning and responsibility contributes to a conducive learning environment where students actively engage with the material and participate in their learning process.

Students need to be aware of their responsibilities in class to perform tasks the teacher assigns, for example, when the teacher gives instructions to work in groups or be responsible for their assignments. This statement aligned with the finding of Dizaj et al. (2016) that responsible students demonstrate self-control over both their internal and external environments; they actively engage in classroom activities, collaborate effectively with peers, complete assignments diligently, and possess accurate perceptions of their academic environment. These characteristics contribute significantly to their academic progress and overall success. Sitorus et al. (2022) state that students' low sense of responsibility is evident in their lack of awareness regarding personal task completion, preparation before studying, and engagement in group discussions. Students who want to become active learners must actively participate in class sessions, seek knowledge, participate in discussions, and reflect on their experiences (Solikhah., 2023). Along with improving language skills, this method fosters a sense of ownership and accountability for the learning process, which may be consistent with modern educational paradigms that strongly emphasize learner-centered and participatory methods.

This finding shows a strong positive correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes, which aligns with previous research by Pérez-Salas et al. (2021). Their study involved 9th-grade students recruited from 38 public mainstream schools in the Biobio Region in Chile. They demonstrated a positive correlation between positive TSR and various dimensions of student engagement, further underlining the significance of fostering supportive teacher-student relationships in EFL settings. The study's results indicate that a high TSR correlates with increased levels of engagement. Moreover, Sánchez et al. (2013), Mahfud et al. (2023), Suryani (2018), and Yusuf et al. (2023) collectively emphasize the pivotal role of TSR in shaping students' attitudes toward learning and their academic success in the EFL context. These collective findings highlight the multifaceted impact of TSR on student engagement and academic outcomes, emphasizing the need for educators to prioritize cultivating positive relationships with their students to create an environment conducive to learning and success. Investing in TSR perhaps enhances student engagement and fosters a supportive and enriching educational experience for all students.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

This study investigated the three research questions: The TSR level in EFL classes, the SE level in EFL classes, and the correlation between TSR and SE in EFL classes. First, related to TSR level, this study found that the GE students' TSR level was high, with 3.48 as the mean score. This study also found that the level of SE was high, with 3.26 as the mean score. Moreover, this study found a high correlation between TSR and SE, suggesting a strong positive relationship between TSR and SE. This implies that students are likelier to engage in their learning activities when the TSR is positive and supportive. Further analysis revealed that specific aspects of TSR, such as teacher supportiveness, communication, and rapport, were particularly influential in fostering student engagement. These findings emphasize the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships to enhance SE and ultimately improve learning outcomes in EFL classrooms.

There are some implications based on the findings of this study. First, EFL teachers must know the significant role of teacher support and student engagement in language learning. Understanding that a supportive classroom environment and actively engaged students contribute positively to learning outcomes can guide instructors in designing more effective instructional strategies. Recognizing the correlation between teacher support and student engagement underscores the importance of fostering positive teacher-student relationships. Teachers should strive to create an environment where students feel valued, respected, and supported, as this can enhance both their engagement and overall learning experience.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that educational policymakers and curriculum developers can use the insights from this study to inform decisions related to EFL curriculum design and implementation. Emphasizing the importance of incorporating elements that promote TSR and SE can lead to more engaging and effective language learning experiences for students. In terms of contribution, this study adds to the existing literature on TSR and SE in the context of EFL classes. By investigating the relationship between these two variables, this research provides valuable insights into factors that influence language learning outcomes. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics within the EFL classroom and can inform practices aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in this context.

7. Limitations and future studies

While this study provides valuable insights, it has limitations. One limitation is the use of self-report measures to assess TSR and SE, which may be subject to bias. Future research could employ a combination of self-report measures and observational methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of these constructs. This study focused on involving specific groups of EFL students in a particular context and population, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore TSR and SE across different EFL settings and student populations to determine the extent to which the results hold in diverse contexts.

Furthermore, this study examined the correlation between teacher support and student engagement but did not explore potential mediating or moderating variables that may influence this relationship. Future research could investigate factors such as student motivation, classroom environment, and teaching strategies to better understand the mechanisms underlying the link between TSR and SE. In conclusion, while this study sheds light on the relationship between TSR and SE in EFL classes, further research is needed to address the

limitations and explore additional factors that may impact language learning outcomes. By continuing to investigate these critical variables, researchers can contribute to the ongoing effort to enhance teaching and learning in the field of EFL education.

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Considerations for the continuation of blended learning and teaching modes in English education within Cambodian public schools

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Abstract

The global language of English is widely acknowledged for connecting people worldwide, including in Cambodia, where the field of English education has been working to incorporate blended learning (BL) and blended teaching modes into public schools. This integration is aimed at addressing the shortage of qualified English teachers and learning resources for English for specific purpose courses, showing significant potential in enhancing the educational experience for students. A comprehensive study was conducted to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of this innovative approach, focusing on various aspects of English knowledge content delivery. The study revealed major concerns over the use of certain knowledge content websites, led by the European Union and the Cambodian government to act toward regulating and improving the quality of such sources; however, the primary responsibility for ensuring that selected knowledge content meeting the need of students lies in the schools themselves. It is essential to address the challenges and concerns related to the selection and preparation of English knowledge content sources to fully realize the potential of blended learning and teaching modes in English education in Cambodia. By collaborating with external stakeholders, schools can play a crucial role in providing students with high-quality and appropriate English content. Future studies can consider the effectiveness and concerns of BL in different educational settings using different research designs.

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1. Introduction

One possible administrator of a blended or distance education English program in public teacher education institutions might be a teacher considered as a professional teacher educator (Bragg et al., 2021; Quezada et al., 2020), which the acronym P-T.E. is applied to this study. Among both P.T.E.s and university students were enrolled in teacher training institution for bachelor or master degree programs, there exists a low level of exposure to and practical knowledge and experience of such online systems and their application to educational

instruction (Joshi et al., 2021; Oliveira et al., 2021). However, a 2020 national study on higher education e-learning concluded that the majority of institutions that responded to a questionnaire would like blended learning to increase and operationalize their responsibilities (Alqahtani & Rajkhan, 2020; Turnbull et al., 2021). Most of the universities included academics and candidates for bachelor and master of education degrees in additional academic programs, the position is perhaps additive (Kim et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2024). This study focuses on a group of foreign academics and students who finished work within a Bachelor of Education (psychology) over many university classroom themes to commerce a global component of Skype or other video conferences (Getie, 2020; Onishchuk et al., 2020). Cambodian higher education institutions have received increasing calls to further incorporate blended learning courses in the English educational curriculum through institution-specific Learning Management System software (L.M.S.) (Vann & Ziguras, 2017). Cambodia's major teacher activity institution is beginning to operate in this manner. Furthermore, some built lessons operated on other commercial L.M.S. programs are being carried for facilitation in real universities and youth educational centers in Phnom Penh (Peou, 2017; World Bank, 2021). There is an advancement from the face-to-face mode; nonetheless, blended learning modes, or possibly due online modes, are yet to be routine (Ban & Heng, 2023; Martin et al., 2013).

In recent years, blended learning, which originated in the face-to-face classroom and involves the deliberate integration of online and offline activities of learning with a focus on language, is an initiative that has been instigated under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) in public schools across Cambodia (Heng & Koemhong, 2021; Sim & Em, 2023). The practice of students from multiple backgrounds actively involved and collaborative learning is demonstrated in the language classroom of a public school. In addition, blended learning serves as a position from which to prepare the English language and learning process through constructing a learning platform suitable for Cambodian background students to be ready for English and learning on the global stage (Ibrahim et al., 2024; Vireak et al., 2024). The consideration for this study has been prompted by the willingness of school leaders, local education authorities, and contributing students and volunteers to continue blended learning classes after participating in an initial pilot study. The shared motivation of key stakeholders to continue after a pilot study of provision is evident that blended learning has been received favourably among its Cambodian stakeholders (Reimers, 2022).

2. Background of English education in Cambodian public schools

Education throughout the mid to late 20th century struggled, with few citizens even able to read or write (Mandler, 2020; Woodson, 2023). Between 1979 and 1992, some public schools were established, with an estimated 90% of teachers having had very little or no formal pre-service teacher training (Özer & Torun, 2024). During this period, significant numbers of graduating students left Cambodia to study overseas, and similarly, foreign lecturers and educational professionals began to teach in Cambodia during the 1990s (Sok & Bunry, 2021; Un & Sok, 2022). In the 2008, Education Action Plan, the popularity of English as a foreign language subject and as a medium of instruction had been growing steadily (Lin et al., 2024; Zein et al., 2020). This was especially true for children in the major urban centres and for the children of the elite, who have private tutors. In the provinces, however, there were fewer opportunities, and outdated curricula and ELT materials prevented learners from developing their language skills. English language teaching has been embedded within Cambodia over a century (Chea & Kuon, 2024). For instance, in 1923, the Ministry of Education, Music and Fine Arts was established and included an incorporated English medium system of education to show how ingrained English teaching was within Cambodia (Philippe, 2020). In the early

1970s, the brutal regime of the Khmer Rouge, led by Pol Pot, aimed to systematically purge the country of any form of foreign influence or impurities (Khan, 2020). This resulted in the deaths of an estimated 1.7 million individuals, including many educationalists (Jacobs, 2019; Um, 2021; Williams & Keo, 2023). This genocide strongly shaped Cambodia and significantly stunted the country's development but also had a severe impact on the education system. After the Khmer Rouge eventually disintegrated, the Cambodian government persisted in using French as its first foreign language until it was officially replaced with English in 2002 (Honig, 2020; Lim, 2020; Moore & Bounchan, 2020). This shift was intended to align Cambodia with global trends and facilitate greater access to international communication and opportunities. The history of English in Cambodia is remarkable and goes back many years (Em et al., 2023; McFarland, 2021). The Lun Nol Period, when Lun Nol ruled Cambodia from 1970 to 1975 (Neau, 2003), is when it originally appeared. English was the most popular foreign language at the time and was used in schools as the primary foreign language of learning and teaching (Igawa, 2008; Tarnopolsky, 2016). The establishment of the Khmer Rouge dictatorship, however, caused a substantial change in Cambodia's linguistic environment in 1975 (Olson & Speidel, 2023). Intellectualism and foreign languages were prohibited during Pol Pot's cruel dictatorship (Kiernan, 1999). As a result, there was a halt in the teaching and study of English, and the language suffered. After the Khmer Rouge government was overthrown in 1979, Cambodia started to reconstruct its educational system (Frings, 2022). English reemerged as a significant foreign language. English became more significant in the 1990s as a result of the influx of foreign aid and the nation's reintegration into the world community (Ear, 2012). Then it came associated with chances for employment, advanced learning, and participation in the world market (Peou, 2017).

English has developed and grown quickly in Cambodia in recent years. Along with Khmer, the official language, it is now widely acknowledged as the second language of the nation (Rost, 2023). To meet the demand for English competence, English language schools, institutes, and private tutoring facilities have sprung up throughout the nation (Zhang & Bray, 2021). From primary through postsecondary education, English is currently a required subject in public schools in Cambodia so that English language instruction has received a lot of attention from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS), which regards it as essential for the growth of the nation's economy and society (Chea & Lo, 2022). To standardize the teaching and learning process, English textbooks and curriculum materials have been designed and applied in public schools. The adoption of English language instruction in Cambodian public schools still faces obstacles, though. Effective English instruction is hampered by a lack of resources, including competent teachers, textbooks, and instructional aids. Due to infrastructure issues and teacher shortage, providing high-quality English instruction in rural locations frequently presents more severe challenges (Lor, 2021; Ravet & Mtika, 2024). Despite these difficulties, English is still highly viewed in Cambodian culture. Particularly, in industries like tourism, hospitality, and international organizations, proficiency in English is considered a path to increased work chances. The International English Language Testing System (IELTS) and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) are two well-known English language competency exams that Cambodian students and professionals take to study or work abroad (Petraki & Khat, 2022; Zein & Stroupe, 2019).

All in all, English has advanced considerably in Cambodia since it was first introduced. English has evolved from being a minor subject during the French colonial era to its current standing as a required subject in public schools. It now plays a crucial role in Cambodian society and education. Despite ongoing difficulties, there is a growing demand for English speakers, which highlights the language's significance for the nation's goals of development and global

integration. This section delves into the historical and contextual background of English education in Cambodian public schools. It may cover aspects such as the evolution of English language teaching in the country, the status of English education, and any pertinent challenges or achievements. Comprehending this history is vital in grasping the factors that have impacted the current condition of English education and the possible consequences of incorporating blended learning.

3. Blended learning: Definition and benefits

The benefits of blended learning within higher and K-12 education are visible, such as increasing flexibility and control of the schedule of a student. Others have noted that with properly implemented blended learning methods, it can improve student learning and engagement as well as reduce academic failure (Bazelais & Doleck, 2018; Oeun & Heng, 2024; Villanueva et al., 2022). The use of blended learning has also been noted to increase student academic outcomes, as shown by the work of Negash, Eshete and Hanago (2022). Blended learning is a potential solution that can be offered and implemented into the continuously growing infrastructure of Cambodian public schools. Contrary to blended learning from the education sector, this article will concern the relevance of blended learning as opposed to practice in the context of English education within Cambodia, with a specific focus on public schools (Boy & Water, 2023).

Some researchers have worked to classify blended learning within existing pedagogy and instructional methods. They have attributed blended learning to the combination of online and digital learning methods or utilizing digital technology during the learning and teaching process in addition to the traditional classroom-based learning methods (Vallée et al., 2020). Central to the definition provided, where blended learning is described as the effective combination of the right technology with the best facilitator to provide a superior and individualized learning experience (Kumar et al., 2021). This can also include learning that takes place within the context of onboarding and professional development of an organization or company. As with many things in technology and education, blended learning also reflects a wide spectrum of learning based on combinations of face-to-face and online components (Castillo, 2024).

4. Challenges and opportunities in implementing blended learning in Cambodian public schools

Despite these challenges, widespread support of blended learning through ICT has grown rapidly following the reactive methodology of lockdowns adopted nationally and internationally to combat the COVID-19 pandemic (Adarkwah, 2021; see Kumar et al., 2021). As such, the acceptance and practical experience of blended learning as a modality within these schools are prevalent. Both local, national, and Phnom Penh speakers agree that there are significant distinctions between fully online learning and the less engaging versions found in traditional face-to-face education (Müller & Mildemberger, 2021). Blended learning is considered more engaging and interactive than traditional face-to-face education in terms of increased creativity, group, and collaboration, and the benefit of the different types of learning activities is highly valued. It is also recognized as a significant benefit for those who are unwell or busy since the teaching can still take place. However, interestingly, blended learning activity as a version of online learning is not much appreciated and, perhaps rightly thought, to be no more beneficial than standard education (Mali & Lim, 2021; Soeung & Chim, 2022).

Thus far, we have established several critical insights regarding blended learning that might be undertaken as programs of continued operations as the government reopened schools throughout the whole elementary and secondary systems post-COVID-19. Before discussing such strategies and recommendations, it is critical that we understand the specific set of challenges of Cambodians, both public and private schools, and students face when considering the implementation of blended learning within a wider educational strategy, as well as the opportunities available. Public schools do have their set of challenges; they have limited infrastructure that provides internet access and ICT (Ork et al., 2024).

5. Pedagogical strategies for effective blended learning in English education

Algorithms are a systematic and automated process that is repeated and used to solve and execute solutions to a series of problems and dilemmas (Gad, 2022; Tsamados et al., 2021). In English skills, the guerrilla algorithms are introduced for the first time by national lecturers in the form of a storyline (Gigerenzer, 2022). Subsequently, the storyline is developed in the form of an algorithm. Algorithms-based teaching materials in English present a new method as a result of the development of a blended learning approach that allows for simultaneous learning to be carried out both face to face (offline) and via the internet (online) interrelatedly (Teo, 2021). This is done so that students can attempt to process the order of sequential steps of the algorithm. A constructive, cooperative, collaborative, and connective approach underlies the learning, teaching, and educative process of English studies which blended learning requires various pedagogical arrangements such as facilitation, opportunities for students to cooperate in collaborative learning, facilities to find out the students in the problem-based learning, and strategies to help the students with self-directed learning (Ashraf et al., 2022; Dridi et al., 2020; Yang et al., 2022). This eclectic study is aimed at producing English instruction with the concept of an algorithm in the form of blended learning, which is oriented toward the study abroad experience of students (Saint et al., 2022).

Blended learning, or the 'flipped classroom', allows for a combination of traditional face-to-face learning and independent studies through simulations, task completion, multimedia, and online initiatives (Le, 2024). For effective implementation of such a learning mode, an essential foundation must be made regarding a range of pedagogical strategies (Yung et al., 2024). These should align with various aspects of instruction and curriculum such as cooperative learning, literacy, adolescent general education, and content football. Constructivism is the foundation of instructional design theory, and the curriculum is constantly changing as it connects with students in their learning process, encouraging discovery, exploration, and the connection between new and existing knowledge to encourage deeper learning (Mohammed & Kinjo, 2020; Yunjo, 2020). With the encouragement of an increased focus on the use of meaningful ways, word lists can become more sustainable and interwoven with the close connection (Suhendi et al., 2021). Recent studies have shown that blended learning tends to be more effective than face-to-face instruction.

6. Technological infrastructure and resources for blended learning in Cambodian public schools

Correspondents found that although Cambodia has a reasonable supply of internet services in various forms, services at low prices (including external coverage) are limited, especially in rural areas where most public schools are located (Banihashem et al., 2022), while other digital devices are now starting to penetrate the Cambodian market, not all students have their own facility. Implicitly, documents written in support of the study of qualifications raise the

following findings, which can be followed. To be able to effectively deliver a blended learning experience, you must meet five basic technological building blocks.

Table 1. Five basic technological building blocks

Building blocks	What to consider
Internet access	At acceptable speed
Devices	Current and maintained devices of a reasonably consistent nature and age
Software	Ability to access easy-to-use, ‘off-the-shelf’ digital applications
Data	A simple reporting system that provides easy-to-read data on student progress and submits information back to a central location
Support	All employees should have the good knowledge and resources to provide technology advice and a robust level of technical support

Yes, technology can make a significant difference in the language learning experience. For English language teachers working in Cambodian public schools and considering moving forwards to blend ELT, there are several considerations that need to be researched/considered to set up a climate that is conducive (Jie et al., 2020). This section prompts you as a reader to think about a range of factors that need to be in place to get started. If you want to know what the future of Cambodian blended learning looks like, continue this also, to be clear about the potential this delivery mode has to support you as a driver of quality in operational schools (Gao, 2021). If there is a lack of promising prospects in English education for teaching and learning, it may be prudent to consider integrating somatic voice learning in order to sustain the relevance of human teachers in the future (Orak, 2021).

7. Professional development for teachers in blended learning environments

Teacher professional development: Professional development, when linked to the new teaching and learning model, was referred as unnecessary. Instead, plans which ensured that the teacher held up-to-date knowledge in their subject and grade level would be more beneficial. The new blended model was expected to benefit from two years of piloting and small remediations, meaning there would be no need for specific professional development (Donaher & Wu, 2020). However, when undertaken, continuous professional development was considered necessary in order to prepare teachers to use technology and to develop ICT skills (Sancar et al., 2021). Other impacts of professional development experiences were reported to focus almost exclusively on the current author's perspective. For example, Mohammadi & Zarei (2022) took part in an e-learning program and experienced a significant shift in their approach to ICT which was a strong emphasis on promoting independent thinking, collaboration, and respect among students, which resulted in noticeable improvements in their teaching methods. Plus, they also participated in a middle-management course and found that it helped them improve communication between management and teachers while also boosting their confidence. The narratives provided no evidence of significant pedagogical change or an improvement in the modernization of one's teaching approach. Asking to explain limitations of many bad quoted texts in the survey, both current and culminating authors argued that the research questions, and therefore the survey design, failed to elucidate reasons for identified opinions of poor

blending within the curriculum (Meades, 2021). However, there were queries, too, concerning the sampling size and processes. Very likely of more concern, as David suggested, is the fact that content analysis plays directly to the obligation to quote on categories generated by the researchers; here, the Liability and Barriers involved (Luo, 2021). Within a point of more positive application, it is argued that the way policies were being developed, and the opinions captured by their interviewees, were of very limited use to the organization seeking reliable data on which to plan changes (Meeson, 2021).

Since 'teaching skill' appears significantly correlated with student performance within blended learning contexts, it is imperative that teachers support in gaining expertise in blended learning, with emphasis on enabling effectively-designed planned integration, flexible teaching strategies, and active student interactions (Lynch, 2021). Teachers' 'Professional Development' (PD) is considered an integral component of the overall success of teacher retention in international and blended learning settings (Dong et al., 2023). PD programs developed to provide a student-centred orientation within Blended Learning Environments include training to create quality videos for students to engage with, as well as opportunities to co-develop lesson planning within blended coursework. The PD programs also provide cross-departmental teaching workshops around student-centred teaching strategies which can also align with best practice within Blended Learning Environments (Brown, 2021; Eastman et al., 2023). Blended learning and teaching modes have become an integral part of English education within Cambodian public schools, posing important considerations for their continuation.

8. Parental involvement

Parental involvement in students' blended learning experiences is indeed crucial for their educational success (Huot et al., 2024). When parents are actively engaged in their children's education, they become valuable partners in the learning process. To foster this involvement, schools should prioritize effective communication with parents. Regular and transparent communication channels can assist parents to stay informed about their child's curriculum, assignments, and progress (Ihmeideh et al., 2020; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). One-way schools can promote parental involvement is by providing parents with comprehensive information about the curriculum and digital tools being used in the blended learning environment. By sharing this information, parents can better understand the educational goals and objectives set for their children (Martin et al., 2023). They can also familiarize themselves with the digital tools and resources used in the classroom, enabling them to support their children's learning at home more effectively.

Engagement between schools and parents should extend beyond mere information sharing. Schools can actively involve parents by organizing workshops, seminars, or training sessions focused on the blended learning environment. These events can help parents develop a deeper understanding of the teaching methods and strategies used in the classroom (see Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). By being knowledgeable about the educational approach, parents can provide targeted support to their children, aligning their efforts with what is being taught in school. Moreover, schools can encourage parents to actively participate in their children's learning at home. This involvement can take various forms, such as monitoring homework completion, discussing daily learning experiences, and maintaining open lines of communication with teachers (Bhamani et al., 2020). By engaging in these activities, parents can gain insights into their child's strengths and challenges, allowing them to provide personalized support and encouragement. Lastly, schools should create a welcoming and inclusive environment where parental involvement is valued. By fostering a sense of

partnership between schools and families, parents will feel more comfortable reaching out for assistance or sharing their ideas and concerns. When parents are empowered and actively involved, students are more likely to thrive academically, as they benefit from the consistent support and guidance received both at school and at home (Ribeiro et al., 2021).

In conclusion, parental involvement plays a key role in students' blended learning experiences. Schools should prioritize effective communication with parents, provide them with comprehensive information about the curriculum and digital tools, and engage them through workshops and training sessions. Encouraging parents to actively participate in their children's learning at home and creating a welcoming environment will strengthen the partnership between schools and families, ultimately enhancing the educational journey of the students.

9. Engagement and support for students in blended learning environments

This approach is essential for fostering this community of practice along with a commitment to upholding human-individual communication in addition to the use of existing digital tools provided (Lewis, 2021). A further strategic direction lies in the understanding of students on their own terms or placing them both in the centre of their learning while at the same time considering their external learning environment. Many students remain cautious about their return to in-person interactions and activities following long periods of limited engagement (Felson & Adamczyk, 2021; Theodosiou & Corbin, 2020). In the motivational approach, incorporating a variety of stimuli and community-centred goals that are project-based or inquiry-driven integrated with real-life experiences, supports the return to social communication and collaboration (Poland et al., 2021). Providing support and opportunities for digital literacy, students and teachers in schools can understand, or attempt to understand, distinct and sensitively marked differences within their technical approaches to learning (see Sim & Em, 2023). Providing guidance at the vocational, technical, and learning-oriented level builds community awareness and acceptance for all students (Susilowati & Suyatno, 2021).

"Engagement" and "Support" are words often mentioned when it comes to the effectiveness of adding additional technology into classrooms (also known as "Blended Learning") (Lane et al., 2021; Simbolon, 2021). The pedagogy of the English School Blended Teaching (ESBT) projects begins with and falls under the Cambodian school-based curriculum (see Lor, 2021; Ourn et al., 2023, 2023; Sol, 2023). If working with these support considerations is taken into account when planning and teaching in any blended learning classroom, students are more likely to feel engaged and supported in their learning environment and the projects in public schools, then the act of earmarking these considerations and inquiring after them should be able to be accounted for with ease and practicality (Brito et al., 2021; Chiu, 2021; Yang et al., 2021). Interaction to the support and engagement, whether by humans or technological software, is heavily reliant upon the desire to communicate and the necessity of seeing and hearing in order to do so, where provisions are made for this human and in-the-moment instruction, as well as where the very practical considerations regarding the computing devices used for facilitating digital access are deeply integrated into the design and implementation of these projects, student interaction and connectedness can be assured (Ahmed & Opoku, 2022; Ewing & Cooper, 2021; Nuere & Miguel, 2021; Yurtseven et al., 2020).

10. Monitoring and evaluation of blended learning programs

Monitoring and evaluation serve as crucial tools for gathering evidence on various aspects, including learners' motivation (see Huot et al., 2024; Tuong et al., 2022). Over the course of

an academic year, we are not only able to observe potential impacts on English literacy, but also gain insight into learners' attitudes towards learning and the participation of girls in technical subjects (Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021; Pov et al., 2021). Furthermore, we can gain a better understanding of the practicality of establishing assessment criteria and test various methods of data collection (Hirakawa & Taniguchi, 2021; Newman et al., 2021). Considering the diverse contexts of the schools involved in the current study, this would be an invaluable asset when planning for future research (Berlian & Huda, 2022; Rowan et al., 2021). Regrettably, the integration of feedback from monitoring and evaluation processes into the daily practices of teaching, interventions is not a common practice, and the feedback provided seldom contributes to shaping improvements or bringing about changes in organizational models and staff capacity (Edwards et al., 2020; Errida & Lotfi, 2021). We advocate for a problem-based approach to evaluation that is driven by the urgency to implement such changes. This approach would place less emphasis on the positivist paradigms dictated by what is being measured, and instead prioritize the production of contextually relevant outcomes that could drive continuous improvement (Sisternans, 2020; Tan, 2021). Although there is a growing amount of evidence regarding the impact of blended learning, there remains a scarcity of experimental studies investigating the effects of interventions in low-income nations (Bryan et al., 2021; Eriksen et al., 2021; Islam et al., 2020). In a chapter discussing the landscape of blended learning in Cambodia, various inquiries and suggestions were emphasized. It was proposed that data pertaining to these inquiries be gathered to more effectively address them with supporting evidence.

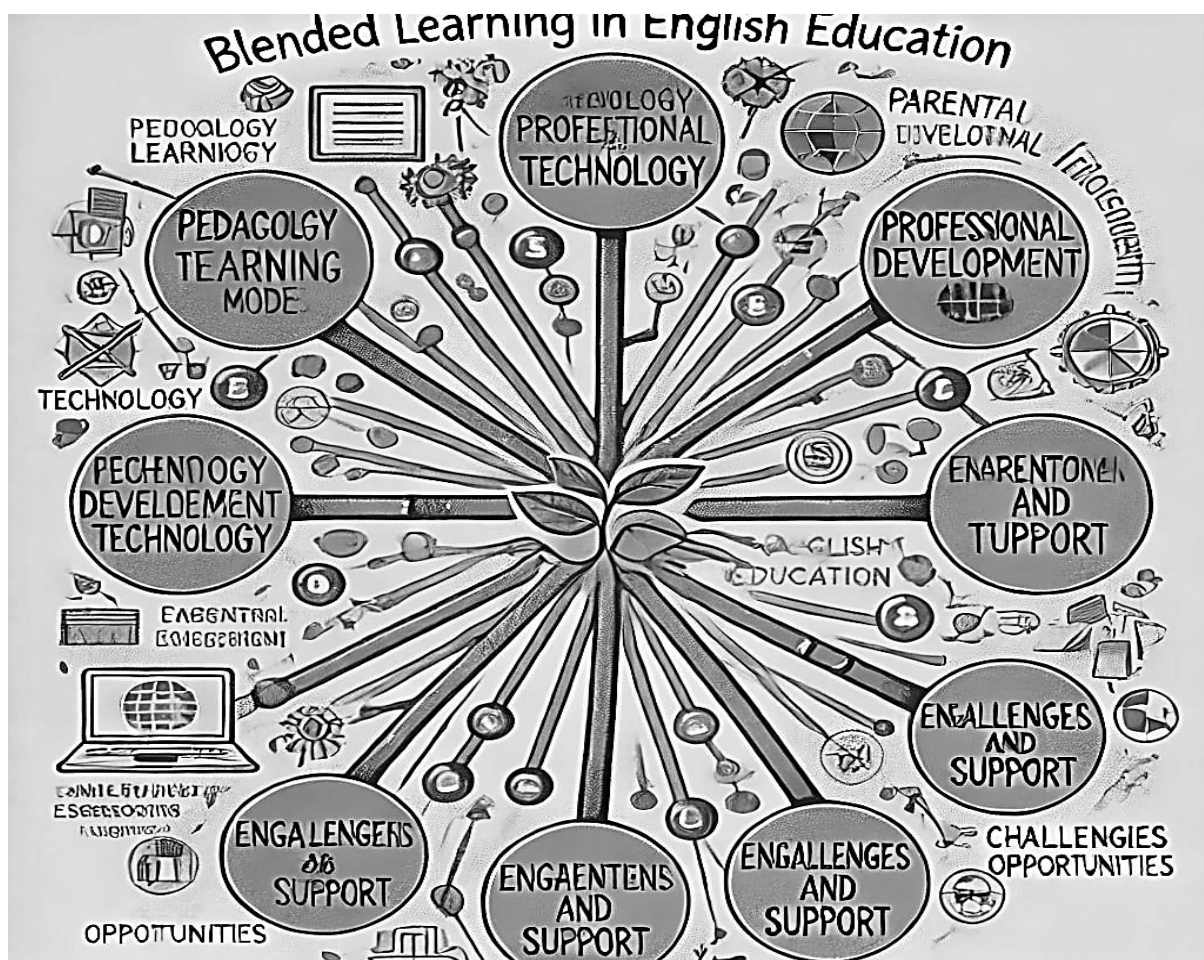


Figure 1. Conceptual figure of blended learning in English education

11. Policy recommendations for the integration of blended learning in English education in Cambodian public schools

Considering resource allocation, a financing strategy for empirical decision-making would be to fund a process for prioritizing incentivizing and promoting models of teacher support and training relevant for blended learning. The Ministry should consider a financing strategy for understanding the potential of online resources for student learning, and the utility of including them into an offer at all. We also suggest the Ministry could consider financing for performance evaluation of this policy experiment. If it is found that there was some association between parents not seeking fully online resources and factors such as poverty, areas under large lockdown, no English spoken in the home (and so on) then the Ministry could, depending on those results, shift the orientation of this strand of work to piloting some forms of subsidy for onsite hardware and online English learning content. Considering the teaching strategy, the Ministry should look into financing in order to support educators and educate Ministry's staff on potential IT solutions for mentoring, coaching, supervising. Providing resources for teachers to watch and learn from video examples of MCA approaches for blended learning, e.g., from large pilot schools could be an advantage that should be considered as well. Finally, identification of two pilot schools (from the aforementioned three) provides the potential decision to promote and evaluate the potential to include enhanced English language teacher support alongside the blended learning provisions which may further help to promote teacher competency overall.

Recommendations provided in this report make several concrete proposals that we hope will influence policy-decision makers and policymakers for the sustainable integration of blended learning for English education if/when action is taken up more generally in the education sector. A worthwhile starting point for those drafted to consider policy based around changes to teaching modalities in pilot schools is to attenuate some level of regulatory change to allow for the implementation of a blended learning approach pairing synchronous and asynchronous learning interventions, though this does little to guarantee the uptake of student attendance in such programming. This section outlines policy recommendations for the integration of blended learning of English language in the formal policies and systems of Cambodian public schools. In keeping with how blended learning is practiced, we provide suggestions for integrating some amount of online learning for offline teaching and learning methodologies. Recommendations have been grouped into possible regulatory changes, resource allocation, and possible alignment with educational objectives. We envision that allowed teachers could apply blended learning in their teaching and learning activities. Contextual variances existing in pilot schools also highlight the possible ways in which feasibility can be pursued in considering the introduction of blended approaches.

12. Conclusion and future directions

It is vital to appreciate the country of Cambodia's need for effective education systems that provide students with life skill development. From presenting participants with workshop information and following their discussions to the evaluation sheet, we feel that our aim was achieved to extend a foreign understanding of potential classroom dynamics. Therefore, cultural understandings were briefly touched upon by engaging in an educational and professional workshop in a country that possesses particular consideration for the introduction and use of blended learning modes of English language education. We hope that more Cambodian country-specific connections can be formed that will inform supportive environments in the best interests of the local student population. As a way forward, a study

exploring workshop design and implementation on a large scale could be explored. Such participants could include future English-language educators across all levels of the Cambodian educational system, from kindergarten through to post-bachelor studies. This would allow triangulation of findings and the preliminary exploration would become far-reaching. Given the time required to align regularity or participant numbers, it would be beneficial to begin organizational discussions. Moreover, it would be beneficial to engage in follow-up conversations with those involved in the present workshop to determine whether changes were discussed and whether there were general feelings of impact within classroom contexts.

The purpose of the present essay was to explore current exposure to technology in the classroom for Cambodian language educators and to provide a pedagogical training workshop to offer support for the introduction of blended learning modes into their current practices. Through discussion of relevant literature, links were made to possible connections between exposure to technology in the classroom and an increasing use of technology for professional and private communication. Strategies for the inclusion of blended learning and teaching modes were discussed, as well as the connections between these and theories of learning and teaching. Practical information and contexts were also included. As the findings revealed, participants were indeed quite familiar with technology in the form of a mobile phone for daily life and professional activities. Sentiments from our participants regarding the value of this pedagogical workshop supported the notion that our discussion concentrated on both contemporary and valid data. As a result, it may be beneficial to continue the identification of experiences, attitudes, and perspectives regarding the use of digital learning, teaching, or education within English academic contexts. Besides, it is equally as important to gain deeper insights into the reasons why increasing or decreasing experience with technology is held in particular regard by teachers.

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Declaration of AI usage

The authors used ChatGPT to generate figure 1 and QuillBot to polish the language in some parts of the article. However, they declared that the content of the article is totally theirs.

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Students' perception of the impact of AI-generative tools in learning the English language

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Abstract

The advancement of AI techniques has presented several challenges for teachers and learners in language classrooms. Yet, students have demonstrated rapid improvements when given direct opportunities to experiment with advanced software. Despite AI's substantial progress, the core of teacher-learner exchanges remains deeply anchored in human intelligence. As technology becomes more integrated into language classrooms, AI needs to imitate and complement human interactions effectively. This study aimed to investigate students' perceptions of generative tools' impacts on their writing abilities. A quantitative design was employed, and the research was conducted at the National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear. The study involved 120 participants, consisting of 38 males and 82 females. Students' writing capabilities using the generative tools were evaluated across different dimensions as part of a broader research framework. The findings emphasize the significance of AI advancements in enhancing students' writing skills while preserving key human-centered teaching dynamics. Future studies should be conducted with a bigger sample size with more universities using more advanced statistics. Qualitative and combined designs should also be taken into consideration.

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1. Introduction

The English language plays a vital role in the 21st century as it is widely spoken and used in the fields of business, education, entertainment, and science. Enhancing students' ability to learn the language is important and challenging. Many generative tools in artificial intelligence are used to enhance students' abilities to learn various subjects, and these tools have

demonstrated their worth (Ruiz-Rojas et al., 2023). Recent studies on pronoun correction and sentence simplification have shown that these generative tools can provide a beneficial learning platform. Using AI-generative tools in learning has shown good results, as students are able to overcome difficulties and also experience an increase in cognitive engagement (Chan et al., 2024). In English learning, students may have difficulties in sentence correction and sentence simplification due to the complex structures and problematic regions found in the sentences (Pesovski et al., 2024). Lengthy and incomprehensible sentences may lead to lower promotion skills among students. Difficult sentences about the subject matter can also reduce cognitive engagement levels and may hinder the learning process. These problems can be overcome by using appropriate generative tools in AI. However, an important question remains: What is students' perception of the impact of AI-generative tools on learning English? This study aims to determine the students' perception regarding the impact of AI-generative tools in learning English (see Chan & Hu, 2023).

1.1. Background and rationale

The outbreak of the late 2019 pandemic came as a turning point in the educational and linguistic fields, creating a new generation of learners in terms of having a contextual learning environment through the use of AI technologies (Em, 2021, 2023). The outbreak has forced students to interact with their electronic devices in a different way than before, making extensive use of the many technological tools available anywhere in the world (Em et al., 2023; Heng & Sol, 2021; Sim & Em, 2023). Many students today use or interact with AI-generative tools, either with or without the assistance of an adult (Wood & Moss, 2024; Yilmaz & Yilmaz, 2023).

Because of this, we need to find out how students actually feel about the effects of AI-generative tools on their learning by looking at the changes these tools make to the way they learn. These advances have not yet been looked at from the point of view of primary school students around the world. Different studies highlight the importance of giving primary school students a space where they can explore new technologies, stating that children should receive an introduction to media literacy in the early years so they can build coping and resilience while they are still young (Martinez, 2021).

In addition, as children grow older, they will gain greater exposure to technology, thus becoming more proficient in resolving conflicts that arise as a result of developing rational and ethical behavior. We are currently dealing with an era where primary school children are much more sophisticated consumers because of their exposure to television, computers, the Internet, and mobile devices. Students in the digital age have access to an extensive variety of technologies. The possibility of being immersed very strongly in the digital age means that students can gain socio-cultural awareness from the incredible variety of information available, as well as the need to develop new digital skills that are indispensable for the training of future generations to facilitate communication with the digital world in the classroom. This is an interesting avenue for primary school students to develop digital citizenship skills that distinguish knowledge of the digital world and digital media (Williams, 2023).

Defining digital citizenship is associated with education, as primary school students who use digital technologies can do so autonomously and responsibly to minimize risks and maximize positive opportunities, as well as to make informed decisions about their technology use. Our most important goal as educators today is to create a balanced approach to educating young students, addressing the skills that they need to succeed and the knowledge needed to achieve understanding (Parker & Lee, 2022). The ability for students to develop a sense of digital citizenship is not only the responsibility of parents, teachers, and youth but is a comprehensive

process that society can engage in to guide students to have a positive and safe experience in the classroom. This is why there is a need to provide teachers with educational resources to facilitate instructional training if students devote themselves to the use of the tools when they need to use AI devices (Thompson, 2023).

1.2. Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to explore the following statement:

1. To examine the impact of AI tools on learners' independence, skill development, and task efficiency in learning the English language.
2. To identify to what extent the key challenges learners face when using AI-generative tools in learning the English language.
3. To explore the perception of ethical considerations for using AI-generative tools in learning the English language.

2. Literature review

Language learning using AI-generative tools is quite promising due to the many transformations in the digital era. Generation teaching is no longer dependent solely on the teacher, but involves learning together with AI to create a teaching text that is useful in helping learners' language skills (Adams, 2022). Moreover, the results have been processed routinely at various levels, particularly in internships held because students need to build a portfolio to complement their job search flexibility in today's knowledge economy (Chen & Zhao, 2023). AI tools that are generative and based on language are designed to work particularly in the English language. They are not designed to translate English into Malay or any other language but to produce human-like text, including tasks that involve writing, language generation, translation, self-supervised learning, summarization, and dialogue.

English language practice is identified as one of the key tools necessary for teachers to improve essential skills among university students. However, doing this without increasing the teacher-to-student ratio or requiring student-centered tasks, because the quality of the teacher must be alive and highly skilled, is thus a difficult task for any language teacher for any student (Brown & Smith, 2022). Many online writing platforms are available, but they usually include feedback to correct errors and fix problems or require programs that may or may not be able to generate the human-like programs needed in specific taught language contexts (Lee, 2021). Based on the features of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, improvements in learning English as a Foreign Language must lead to skills beyond those typically associated with traditional language proficiency, including negotiation, participation, and control (Thompson, 2023).

2.1. AI-generative tools in education

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools have been used successfully in different application fields, and education has been one of the most recent (Lopez & Garcia, 2023). Different tools can support education-specific functions and processes, such as automatic generation of questions, trainers for skill development, and artistic production, among others. In language learning, AI can provide generation tools to speed up the composition, assessment, and improvement of texts in English as a second language. Generative tools can be broadly divided into text-generation and image-generation tools (Miller, 2021). AI-generative tools in education is a mixed-method study that aimed to evaluate if tools for the automatic generation of questions and texts, both images and written natural language from AI, which were trained using cross-platform

knowledge transfer with language multimodal learning, showed any improvement in comprehensive learning for Italian students in the first course of the study program with Italian as the primary language of communication (Zhang, 2022).

2.2. Language learning and technology

Learning a language is a very challenging process. Language learners face numerous problems and difficulties during the process. It is generally a time-consuming and expensive process. Most learners do not have the opportunity to learn a second or foreign language in the country where the target language is spoken. Of course, there are countries where learning English is taught in schools, and the environment itself offers a linguistic landscape that helps learn the language effectively (Jones & Taylor, 2022). However, learning English in non-English-speaking countries reveals an expensive process, a lack of competent professionals, limited access to native speakers, and audio-visual support. Most students do not use the target language outside the classroom and don't practice the language often enough. In recent years, much language educational research has focused on the role that technologies play in language acquisition. Research suggests that these technologies have the power to improve language acquisition (Patel, 2021). Students respond favorably to instruction with positive experiences using technology. The new technologies are also motivating for today's learners; the visual and oral components that computer-based materials offer are unbeatable for generating interest, and students gain confidence using technology in the classroom, an attribute that can smooth the integration of technology into instruction in other areas of study (Rivera, 2023).

2.3. Challenges and Opportunities

Artificial intelligence (AI) possesses the potential to allow a certain level of hypothesis-driven learning by providing education and training professionals with a variety of ideas and processes that guide, simplify, and provoke learning (Klein & Hart, 2023). Generative AI tools available today are assisting human beings in the creation of visionary and innovative works in the arts or in creative, high-quality humanistic projects such as the creation of poetry, narrative, music, or the development of conversational bots able to interact with humans engagingly (Nguyen, 2022). All of these tools hold the promise of assisting in the expansion of specific cognitive, communicative, and expressive abilities. Specifically, generative AI can extend the palette that individuals use in their personal learning and development process, implicitly generating knowledge or direct learning materials, or offering the capability for one to learn a new skill or a vocational competence by itself (Smith & Brown, 2021).

The opportunities that arise from the integration of generative AI applications in the current world and the resulting creative enhancement appear to be many and meaningful for education systems and students who will have the opportunity to integrate this new form of technology (Jones & Patel, 2022). Generative AI software confidently guides users in a human experience that lasts just 10 minutes, but the result, fueled by artificial intelligence, is a plausible human-like conversation. As far as language teaching is concerned, it is possible to produce exercises or provide support services to those involved in real-time in removing the barriers and challenges associated with foreign languages (Chan et al., 2021; Nguyen, 2023). Efforts in the use of AI to support or simplify foreign language learning are many and are designed in such a way that they can be easily applied in the classroom context for schools but also to assist students in their autonomous language learning (Smith & Lee, 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

This study employs a quantitative survey design to evaluate a logic number, score, mean, percentage, Skewness, Kurtosis, and standard deviation to investigate students' perceptions of AI-generative tools in learning the English language. The study also clarifies students' opportunities to use AI-generative tools, the key challenges faced when using AI-generative tools, and the ethics of using AI-generative tools in the future.

3.2. Population and sampling

The National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear (NUCK), Kampong Cham Campus, was chosen to conduct this study to explore students' opportunities to use AI-generative tools, the challenges of AI tools, and the ethics of using AI-generative tools for future utilization. Bachelor students of the department in English major (years 2–4) in NUCK joined in this study to provide answers for the questionnaires. The students had to offer the answers to students' opportunities for AI-generative tools in English language learning, the key challenges that they face when using AI-generative tools, and the ethics for improving AI-tool's related work in the future.

The study employed a non-probability random sampling technique to select participants for the study, collecting information through questionnaires that explored the opportunities, challenges, and ethical considerations associated with AI-generative tools for English language learning.

3.3. Data collection and procedure

The current study examines students' perceptions of the impact of AI-generative tools on learning the English language and examines their opportunities, challenges, and ethics regarding AI-generated tools. For the data collection procedure, initially, the first author requested a permission letter from the university to conduct the study. After being approved, the first author met the population and chose them randomly as the samples for the study. The details of the data collection processes are presented in Figure 1.

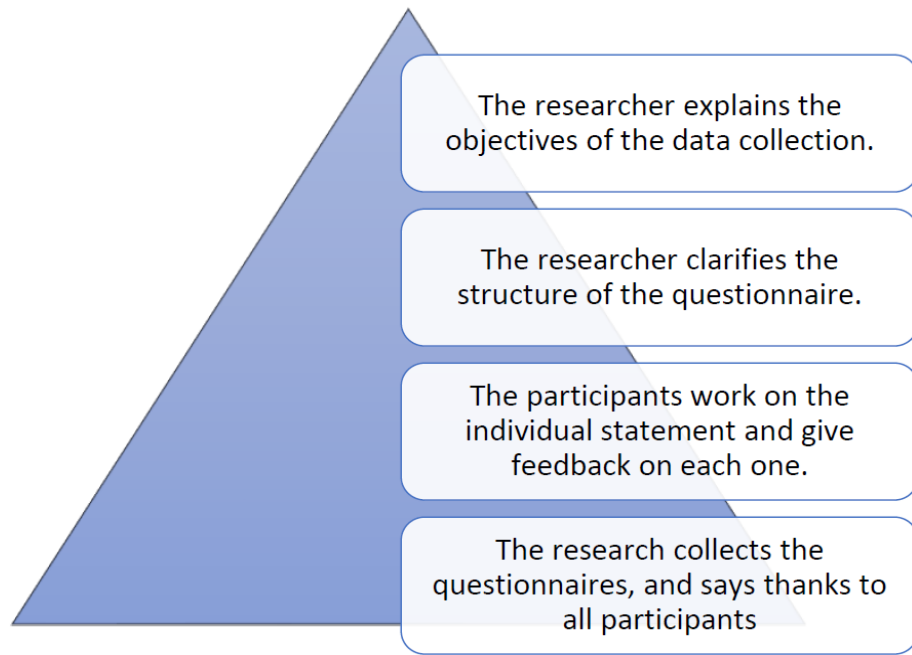


Figure 1. Data collection procedures

3.4. Research instrument

To conduct this study, the following instruments were used as tools for collecting data. To examine the impact of AI tools on learners' independence, skill development, and task efficiency in learning the English language, the authors decided to select the questionnaire to collect the data. The tool of the questionnaire is developed into four parts. The first part is relevant to student information such as age, gender, and year of study.

The second part explored the students 'opportunities to use AI-generative tools in learning the English language through a rating scale ('strongly disagree = 1', 'disagree = 2', 'not sure = 3', 'agree = 4', and 'strongly agree = 5') to investigate student opportunities of using AI-generative tools to learn the English language.

The next part is the key challenges of AI-generative tools in learning the English language via a rating scale as well ('strongly disagree = 1' 'disagree = 2' 'not sure = 3' 'agree = 4' 'strongly agree = 5'). Tools to mismeasure students' challenges highlight students' and teachers' concerns about privacy, security, cost, bias, ethical considerations, transparency, and fairness in their learning.

The last part is to survey the ethics of AI-generative tools in learning the English language in the future by rating scale answering ('strongly disagree = 1' 'disagree = 2' 'not sure = 3' 'agree = 4' 'strongly agree = 5'). To explore the ethics of using AI-generative tools in learning the English language in the future. Tools for investigating these categories are approved by the technique that outlines proposed processes and actions at different phases of AI development that try to incorporate six ethical values or principles: agency, privacy, fairness, well-being, openness, and responsibility.

3.5. Validity and reliability

3.5.1. Validity

Validity is an absolute requirement in quantitative research. Because an invalid test or instrument is useless, validity is critical to doing worthwhile analysis. The ability of an instrument to calculate is a quality construct (Swanborn, 1996). A key component of ensuring the study produces positive results is the validity and reliability of the scales utilized. As a result, it helps to know how the researchers accurately estimate validity and reliability (Borsboom et al., 2004).

The validity of the data collection tools in the current study is crucial for ensuring the reliability and credibility of its findings (Riege, 2003). To achieve this, the tools were carefully reviewed and confirmed by three experts in the field. This expert validation process significantly enhanced the content validity, ensuring that the tools were well-aligned with the study's objectives and capable of accurately capturing the intended data.

The experts meticulously evaluated the appropriateness, relevance, and clarity of the items, ensuring that they comprehensively covered the constructs being measured without including irrelevant or redundant content. They also provided feedback to address potential ambiguities, refine the language, and ensure cultural and contextual suitability for the study's participants.

Through this rigorous validation, the data collection tools were refined to minimize bias and maximize their effectiveness, establishing a robust foundation for the study. As a result, the tools are expected to generate accurate and meaningful data that support reliable analysis and contribute to the overall success of the research.

3.5.2. Reliability

According to Fink and Litwin (1995) and Yilmaz (2013), in research, research tool reliability means how consistently and steadily a measuring tool gives the same results over time in similar conditions. A good research tool makes sure that the data it collects is free of random errors, giving reliable data for drawing conclusions and making assumptions. The absence of reliability may jeopardize the credibility and reproducibility of study findings, and the authors also provided the following points into consideration.

Test-retest reliability is an important part of dependability because it measures how well a tool can produce consistent results when given to the same group at different times. In the absence of substantial alterations in the measured variable, the results should stay consistent. This form of reliability is essential for instruments intended to evaluate constructions anticipated to remain stable throughout time.

Internal consistency is a vital aspect of reliability, concentrating on whether all items inside a tool assess the same construct. In a questionnaire, items intended to evaluate a certain variable should produce consistent replies. Cronbach's alpha is a common way to check for internal consistency because it gives a statistical picture of how items on a scale are related to each other.

Inter-rater reliability assesses the consistency of outcomes when several individuals utilize or interpret the instrument. This kind of trustworthiness is especially important for qualitative

research or evaluations that need subjective evaluations. It makes sure that personal biases or points of view don't change the results.

There are also parallel-form reliability and split-half reliability. Parallel-forms reliability checks whether two versions of the same instrument give similar results. Split-half reliability looks at the consistency of each half of the instrument. These methods offer further means to validate the reliability of measurement equipment.

Ultimately, dependable research instruments are crucial for producing credible and reproducible findings. High dependability guarantees that a study's conclusions can be regularly replicated, enhancing the overall credibility and rigor of the research process.

Table 1. Reliability of the Indicators According to Cronbach's alpha's Analysis

Constructs	Number of Statements	Cronbach's alpha
Opportunities	10	0.87
Challenges	10	0.76
Ethics	10	0.90

The table presents the reliability analysis of various constructs as measured by Cronbach's alpha, detailing the number of statements associated with each construct and their corresponding alpha values, which indicate internal consistency. The construct of "Opportunities" includes 10 statements and has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87, falling within the "Good" range ($0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$) and indicating a strong level of internal consistency among the items. The construct "Challenges" also consists of 10 statements, with an alpha value of 0.76, placing it in the "Acceptable" range ($0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$), suggesting a decent level of internal consistency but indicating room for improvement. Meanwhile, the "Ethics" construct, which also contains 10 statements, achieves a Cronbach's alpha of 0.90, categorizing it in the "Excellent" range ($\alpha \geq 0.9$) and demonstrating a very high level of internal consistency among its items. Overall, the alpha coefficients highlight that the constructs of opportunities and ethics are measured reliably, while the challenge construct is acceptable but could benefit from further refinement to enhance its internal consistency.

Table 2. Selection of the Alpha Coefficient

Cronbach's alpha	Internal Consistency
$\alpha \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > \alpha \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > \alpha \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > \alpha \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > \alpha \geq 0.5$	Poor

$0.5 > \alpha$	Unacceptable
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Source: Adapted from Siswaningsih et al. (2017, p. 7).

The table shows the ranges of Cronbach's alpha values and the accompanying internal consistency levels. An alpha of 0.9 or higher is regarded as exceptional, and values in the range of 0.8 to 0.9 are classified as good in the table. Alpha values that fall between 0.6 and 0.7 are deemed worrisome, whereas those that fall between 0.7 and 0.8 are deemed acceptable. Any Cronbach's alpha value between 0.5 and 0.6 is regarded as poor by the researcher, and any number below 0.5 is deemed unacceptable. This way of classifying things helps researchers check the accuracy of their measuring tools and makes sure they get a good picture of how consistent the items are with each other.

3.6. Data analysis

For the result of a questionnaire that was obtained from respondents, the researchers used SPSS Version 27 for data analysis of the descriptive statistics. This method generates the logic number, mean, score, percentage, Skewness, Kurtosis, and standard deviation. It focuses on providing a comprehensive and precise representation of the data collected, which can be valuable for generating hypotheses, exploring trends, and identifying patterns in the statistics.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Demographic information of the samples

Table 3. Demographic information of the samples (n = 120)

Variables	Values	Number	Percentages
Sex	Male	38	68.3
	Female	82	31.7
Age	16-25	103	85.8
	26-30	14	11.7
	31-Over	03	2.5
Year	Year 2	40	33.3
	Year 3	47	39.2
	Year 4	33	27.5

The table shows the demographic information for the sample population of 120 respondents. In terms of gender, males make up 68.3% (38 persons), while females make up 31.7% (82 individuals). In terms of age distribution, 85.8% of respondents (103 in total) are between the ages of 16 and 25, showing a primarily young demographic. The elder age categories are underrepresented, with 11.7% (14 persons) aged 26 to 30 and only 2.5% (3 individuals) aged 31 and up. Furthermore, the year of research shows a diverse representation among

respondents: Year 3 participants are the largest group at 39.2% (47 persons), followed by Year 2 at 33.3% (40 individuals) and Year 4 at 27.5% (33 individuals). Overall, the sample consists primarily of young males, with a balanced distribution over the different years of research.

4.2. Opportunities of using AI tools for learning the English language

Table 5. Opportunities of using AI tools for learning the English language

Statements	N	Min	Max	M	SD
1. I become an independent learner.	120	1.00	5.00	3.7083	.94732
2. I can improve macro skills in English (reading, listening, writing, speaking).	120	1.00	5.00	3.9083	.92578
3. I complete tasks easily and quickly.	120	1.00	5.00	3.9667	.68518
4. My mind is opened to new ways of learning.	120	1.00	5.00	3.8000	.70532
5. I can cooperatively learn with AI tools.	120	1.00	5.00	4.1083	.88684
6. I can develop skills in using new technology.	120	1.00	5.00	4.0750	.80087
7. I get more experience in learning English.	120	1.00	5.00	3.9750	1.03276
8. I can use AI tools for 24/7 support.	120	1.00	5.00	3.8667	.78786
9. I can use AI tools to create slides and other content designs.	120	1.00	5.00	4.1417	.67731
10. I can run up to the new generation of technology.	120	1.00	5.00	3.5917	.88399

Note 1: N = Number, Min = Minimum, Max = Maximum, M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation

Note 2: Mean score of 1.00-1.80 = Lowest, 1.81-2.60 = Low, 2.61-3.40 = Moderate, 3.41-4.20 = High, and 4.21-5.00 = Highest

The table summarizes the benefits of utilizing AI technologies to learn English, based on replies from 120 participants. Each characteristic is graded on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating different perspectives on AI's contribution to language learning. The statistics show that there is a generally optimistic perspective for the incorporation of AI into educational procedures. The statement addressing the usage of AI technologies to produce slides and other content designs

received the highest mean score ($M = 4.1417$), indicating that participants are very confident in this area. The ability to jointly learn with AI tools ($M = 4.1083$) and gain abilities in new technologies ($M = 4.0750$) closely follows, indicating a high belief in the supportive role of AI in enhancing learning experiences.

Participants also stated that they could develop their macro abilities in English ($M = 3.9083$) and complete tasks easily and fast ($M = 3.9667$), indicating a sense of efficacy in their learning processes. The mean score for becoming an independent learner was slightly lower ($M = 3.7083$), indicating possible difficulties in self-directed learning. In contrast, the lowest score was for transitioning to a new generation of technology ($M = 3.5917$), indicating some hesitancy or difficulties in this area.

The standard deviations for the responses varied, with the most agreement on the ease of task completion ($SD = 0.68518$) and the greatest variety in gaining experience studying English ($SD = 1.03276$). Overall, the table demonstrates both significant prospects and some potential limitations to employing AI techniques for English language acquisition, highlighting areas for further provision and growth.

4.3. Challenges of using AI-generative tools in learning the English language

Table 6. Challenges of using AI-generative tools in learning the English language

Statements	N	Min	Max	M	SD
1. I lack the of use technology to access AI-generative tools.	120	1.00	5.00	3.7750	0.91176
2. I am concerned about my account being hacked when connecting to AI tools	120	1.00	5.00	3.0833	1.00070
3. Paying the most cost to process AI tools.	120	1.00	5.00	3.0583	0.95527
4. AI provides bias and errors in information when generating tasks.	120	1.00	5.00	3.4667	0.94321
5. AI tools have limitations of using AI-generative tools (time, space, source...).	120	1.00	5.00	3.5167	1.05307
6. AI can reduce human critical thinking and self-practice.	120	1.00	5.00	2.9417	1.10230
7. I cut off interaction and engagement with the environment of learning.	120	1.00	5.00	3.1833	0.97862

8. I don't know how to connect with AI Tools.	120	1.00	5.00	3.1667	1.02353
9. I feel untrusted about using AI-generative tools.	120	1.00	5.00	3.6333	0.94321
10. I spend a lot of data to access it.	120	1.00	5.00	4.1250	1.03358

The table summarizes the challenges of utilizing AI-generative tools to learn English, based on feedback from 120 participants. Each challenge is graded on a scale of 1 to 5, showing different levels of concern and difficulty encountered by learners. The highest mean score ($M = 4.1250$) corresponds to anxiety about the quantity of internet usage required to access AI tools, demonstrating that participants are well aware of and may be frustrated by these technologies' resource demands.

Following this, the assumption that individuals cannot effectively use technology to access AI-generative tools obtained a mean score of 3.7750, indicating a strong technical skill barrier. Concerns about the possibility of hacking when connecting to AI technologies received an average grade of 3.0833, but concerns regarding the expenses of processing AI tools were slightly lower ($M = 3.0583$). These scores indicate a moderate level of concern about security and financial repercussions. Participants also noticed the possibility of bias and inaccuracies in AI-generated information ($M = 3.4667$) and acknowledged some limits in using AI tools, such as time and resource constraints ($M = 3.5167$).

Furthermore, there is a sense that AI may harm human critical thinking and self-practice, as seen by a lower mean score of 2.9417, showing that participants are concerned but not convinced about this issue. Concerns about reducing involvement and engagement with the learning environment ($M = 3.1833$) and ambiguity about how to connect with AI tools ($M = 3.1667$) demonstrate the challenge of incorporating AI in learning environments. Finally, participants reported a general lack of trust in AI-generating tools, with a mean score of 3.6333, indicating that while they perceive potential in AI, significant difficulties must be solved to foster broader adoption and effective application.

The standard deviations across these items show heterogeneity in replies, particularly for worries about cost and trust (SDs of 0.95527 and 0.94321, respectively), indicating different levels of perceived obstacles among participants. Overall, the table identifies numerous important barriers that learners encounter when using AI-generative tools for language acquisition, highlighting areas that demand attention and improvement to improve user experience and confidence.

4.4. Ethical of using AI-generative tools in learning the English language

Table 7. Ethical of using AI-generative tools in learning the English language

Statements	N	Min	Max	M	SD
1. AI tools should keep the privacy and security of users' personal account information.	120	1.00	5.00	3.8833	0.77982

2. AI tools should offer users with low price to generate information.	120	1.00	5.00	4.0667	0.71870
3. AI tools should set clear policies for using AI-generative tools.	120	1.00	5.00	4.2083	0.73216
4. AI tools should show up with clear information about the trust in using AI.	120	1.00	5.00	4.0167	0.88861
5. AI tools should have open-course training for people widely.	120	1.00	5.00	4.0417	0.83410
6. AI tools should use easy steps to connect.	120	1.00	5.00	3.8667	0.87863
7. AI tools should allow big space for use.	120	1.00	5.00	4.1667	0.77061
8. AI tools give true information to users.	120	1.00	5.00	3.8417	0.97011
9. AI tools should sign up for free.	120	1.00	5.00	4.2750	0.73293
10. AI tools should assign people with problems.	120	1.00	5.00	4.2750	0.73293

The table shows the ethical considerations related to using AI-generative tools to learn English, as indicated by 120 participants. The scores for each characteristic, calculated on a scale of 1 to 5, reveal users' attitudes and expectations about the ethical aspects of AI tool usage. The expectation that AI tools allow users to sign up for free receives the highest mean score in this table ($M = 4.2750$), underscoring the importance of accessibility and inclusion. This is closely followed by the expectation that AI technologies should assign support to users experiencing problems, which similarly received a mean score of 4.2750, showing a high desire for responsive customer support and assistance.

Participants believe that AI tools should have explicit policies guiding their use ($M = 4.2083$), indicating a need for transparency and ethical governance in how AI technologies are used. Furthermore, the assumption that AI tools will supply users with low-cost knowledge creation ($M = 4.0667$) emphasizes the importance of affordability in ethical use. Another important factor is trust, with participants agreeing that AI technologies should provide explicit information regarding their reliability ($M = 4.0167$).

This shows that people are concerned about the reliability of AI technologies and seek guarantees that the information generated is reliable. Furthermore, the provision of open-course training received a high grade ($M = 4.0417$), indicating that participants recognized the importance of AI tool instruction in empowering users effectively. The capability of AI techniques to preserve privacy and the security of users' account information obtained a

considerable mean score ($M = 3.8833$), emphasizing users' ethical concerns about data protection.

The expectation for AI tools to have simple connection steps ($M = 3.8667$) and enough capacity for use ($M = 4.1667$) demonstrates user-friendliness and practicality in the ethical deployment of technology. Finally, the necessity of AI tools giving correct information to consumers was recognized, but with a mean score of 3.8417, indicating concern about the integrity of the content supplied.

Overall, the low to moderate standard deviations of these responses show that participants agree with the ethical expectations they have for AI-generative tools in language acquisition. The data demonstrates a strong emphasis on accessibility, transparency, trust, and support, which are necessary for promoting ethical practices when using AI technologies.

5. Conclusion and future direction

In conclusion, the findings from this survey revealed that 42% of the participants used recruiting AI tools during the pandemic. For most participants, the use of AI-generative tools achieved more personalized support for individual students, as the students can ask questions and receive immediate feedback and answers to their individualized questions. Most are willing to access AI tutoring, which indicates the perceived usefulness of these generative AI tools for teaching. On the other hand, almost half of the participants said the tools cannot solve all the problems. This survey provides an initial exploration of the extent of the impact of AI tutoring tools in learning written English by a broad, diverse population. The next steps of this study will include adopting the tools, creating more anonymous surveys to diminish the language and AI tool issues, increasing their validity and reliability, and verifying the depth of their impact according to big data. The impact could be linguistic insights into how AI improves language learning and personalized support for one-on-one interaction with AI to allow individual spatiotemporal circumstances. The data modeling will begin by developing a methodology to comprehend users' behaviors related to AI-recruited tutoring. As the novelty of the results, and social and ethical questions outweigh the technical benefits of using AI for learning, future research must incorporate a variety of software features, training paradigms, multimedia, introductory policies, and device interactions to efficiently realize AI's maximum potential. With a new generation of technologically savvy learners coming and a workforce that continually adjusts to rapid changes due to AI, it will take collective responsibility to construct technology that increases these possibilities and makes them work.

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The authors used QuillBot to polish the language in some parts of the article. However, they declared that the content of the article is totally theirs.

Research approval

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The political evolutionary process of the Cambodian People's Party from 2008 to 2017: A critical review

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Abstract

This study examines the Cambodian People's Party (CPP), originally founded in 1951 as the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP), and traces its political development from 2008 to 2017. It explores the factors that have contributed to the CPP's political resilience, including its surge in popularity in 2008 and the decline it experienced by 2017. The research highlights the party's organizational strengths, patronage networks, and its use of coercive tactics to maintain power. It also looks at the role of socio-economic policies and national stability in the party's success. However, by 2017, the CPP faced growing challenges, particularly from a politically aware youth and dissatisfaction with its increasing authoritarianism, media suppression, and restrictions on opposition. Using a qualitative, descriptive approach, the study draws on secondary sources like academic articles, NGO reports, and media coverage. The findings suggest that while the CPP has managed to maintain its hold on power, its reliance on authoritarian methods may not be sustainable. The study concludes with recommendations for improving governance, encouraging political competition, engaging the youth, and strengthening democratic institutions in Cambodia. Future research could explore the CPP's post-2017 strategies, the role of digital media in youth political engagement, or the long-term impacts of its socio-economic policies on governance and public trust in Cambodia.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background information

Under French colonial rule from 1863, the Kingdom of Cambodia gained independence in 1953. During King Sisowath's reign, a Royal Decree in March 1913 established a 39-member Consultative Assembly representing 10 provinces (Pen et al., 2024). Cambodia's political history before French colonization in 1863 was characterized by weak leadership and dependence on stronger neighbors like Siam (Thailand) and Vietnam for protection (Chandler & Overton, 2024). In 1946, the first Cambodian Electoral Act allowed the formation of political parties, leading to the establishment of three political entities (Chandler, 2008).

Cambodia's trajectory has been marked by phases of peace, conflict, and reconstruction. Following a period of relative stability from 1953 to 1970, the country endured wars, genocide, foreign occupation, and economic embargoes from 1970 until the Paris Peace Agreements in 1991. The post-1993 period saw Cambodia rebuild itself with international aid, transitioning into a "quasi-democracy" marked by notable but uneven economic growth and social development (L. Un & Sok, 2018).

Since the Khmer Rouge regime, Cambodia has undergone major transformations: from civil war to reconstruction, from socialism to a multiparty system, and from a planned economy to a market economy. The CPP's one-party rule ended with the 1993 elections, ushering in a multiparty system although the CPP continued to dominate political life. Scholars argue that this dominance has limited civil and political rights and weakened institutional accountability, while the CPP's power relies on balancing repression, co-optation, and legitimization strategies (Croissant & Lorenz, 2018). The CPP's control has also been bolstered by Hun Sen's ability to maintain elite loyalty through economic incentives, which reduces the need for overt repression and limits international pressure.

Since 1979, the CPP has remained the country's dominant political force (FreedomHouse, 2024). In 2017, the Supreme Court, heavily influenced by the CPP, softened the main opposition party, the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), followed by further restrictions on independent media, criminalization of dissent, and the establishment of state-controlled media (Lamb et al., 2018). Despite facing economic and political challenges, the CPP has maintained control through strategic responses to both domestic opposition and international scrutiny (Bektimirova, 2023).

1.2. Statement of the problems

Cambodia's political landscape is dominated by the CPP, which has growing authoritarian tendencies. This study explores the CPP's political strategies and adaptations from 2008 to 2017, a period marked by increasing challenges to its authority, including a younger, politically aware electorate and opposition movements (Peou, 2020).

1.3. Research gap

While much research addresses the CPP's electoral strategies, there is limited analysis of its political evolution and popularity shifts between 2008 and 2017. This study addresses this gap by focusing on the CPP's resilience, key strategies, and shifts in public perception during this critical period.

1.4. Research Objectives

The primary objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the strengths contributing to the CPP's resilience in Cambodian politics.
2. To analyze the factors that led to the CPP's increased popularity in 2008.
3. To investigate the reasons behind the CPP's decline in popularity in 2017.

1.5. Research questions

The following questions guide the investigation.

1. What were the key strengths of the CPP during the specified period?
2. What factors contributed to the increase in the CPP's popularity in 2008?
3. What led to the decline in the CPP's popularity in 2017?

1.6. Significance of the study

This study offers insights into the CPP's political evolution, contributing to a deeper understanding of its governance strategies and public perception. Findings can inform policymakers and analysts about Cambodia's relationship between governance, public perception, and political legitimacy.

2. Literature Review

This literature review critically evaluates and synthesizes existing research on the Cambodian People's Party's (CPP) political evolution from 2008 to 2017. Understanding previous research establishes a foundation for analyzing CPP's strengths, shifts in popularity, and governance strategies.

2.1. Political evolution and consolidation of power (2008-2017)

The CPP's political trajectory from 2008 to 2017 reflects a consolidation of authoritarian power under Prime Minister Hun Sen. This period saw intensified suppression of opposition, media, and civil society, signaling a shift from competitive to hegemonic authoritarianism. The death of CPP President Chea Sim in 2015 removed internal constraints on Hun Sen, allowing greater personal control over the party (Sutton, 2018). The CPP's crackdown on the opposition intensified after the 2017 local elections, targeting the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and independent media (Croissant, 2018). The CPP's actions led to a transformation of Cambodia's political landscape, with the regime increasingly resembling a patrimonial dictatorship (Croissant, 2018). By 2018, the CPP conducted a sham election that further solidified its grip on power while maintaining a facade of democratic processes (Morgenbesser, 2019).

2.2. Regime durability and role of coercion

The CPP's durability is attributed to a coercion-dominant coalition, where state and economic elites collaborated to suppress dissent and maintain control. This coalition prioritized repression over reform, marginalizing the majority of Cambodians from political and economic benefits (Loughlin, 2019).

Patron-client networks have been crucial, allowing the regime to extract rents from public goods while co-opting potential challengers and thus maintaining political stability (Young, 2021). The CPP's durability is attributed to its coercion-dominant coalition, which integrates state security forces and economic elites, ensuring a tight grip on power despite electoral challenges (Loughlin, 2019).

2.3. Electoral strategy and consolidation (2008-2017)

The CPP's dominance from 2008 to 2017 highlights its strategy of securing power through electoral manipulation, economic patronage, and suppression of opposition. The CPP has historically employed a mix of elite and mass clientelism to maintain control, particularly through the distribution of resources to secure electoral support (Loughlin, 2020). Despite this,

the party's reliance on coercion has increased, especially following the 2013 elections, where popular opposition surged, prompting a crackdown on dissent (Loughlin, 2019).

Cambodia's fourth national elections were held on July 27, following the 1991 conflict. In 2007, the National Electoral Committee removed 586,160 names from the voter list due to death, duplication, and other reasons. The list was publicly displayed for 35 days, allowing citizens to contest the deletions, and according to a U.S. Embassy report, most protests resulted in reinstatement (Thayer, 2009).

The CPP achieved a decisive victory in the 2008 election, bolstered by: control over local authorities, which facilitated vote delivery; marginalization of opposition parties, limiting their electoral impact; economic patronage stemming from a boom; enhancing public support; and exploitation of nationalistic sentiments related to a border dispute with Thailand (Hughes, 2009).

Cambodia has achieved substantial economic growth, with annual rates in the double digits over recent years. This impressive economic expansion, coupled with political stability, provides the country with significant opportunities to strengthen and renew its social sector (Chet, 2009).

2.4. Increasing authoritarianism (2013-2017)

By 2017, the CPP intensified its crackdown on civil society, independent media, and political opposition, effectively dismantling the remnants of a competitive political landscape (Croissant, 2018; Morgenbesser, 2019). The CPP's attempts with China strengthened, providing economic support that reduced reliance on Western powers, further entrenching its authoritarian rules (Croissant, 2018).

Cambodia made global headlines in November 2017 when the Supreme Court, dominated by judges linked to the ruling CPP, dissolved the main opposition party. This led to legal reforms, the closure of independent media, the criminalization of activists, the creation of state-controlled social media, and broader geopolitical shifts that supported authoritarian rule, setting the stage for a crackdown (Lamb et al., 2018).

2.5. Transition to Hegemonic Authoritarianism

The political environment shifted from competitive authoritarianism to hegemonic authoritarianism, with the CPP maintaining power through sham elections and the suppression of dissent (Peou, 2011; Morgenbesser, 2019).

Cambodia, under Prime Minister Hun Sen, has become increasingly authoritarian, resulting in a hegemonic party system where the opposition is too weak to challenge the ruling CPP. Despite the country's democratic transition beginning in 1991 with the signing of the Paris Peace Agreements, Cambodia's democracy remains unconsolidated. The first national elections in 1993 led to a coalition government and a liberal constitution. However, the CPP has since gained overwhelming control over the electoral system, legislature, and judiciary, with little to no checks and balances remaining in the government (Peou, 2011).

While the CPP's consolidation of power has led to a more authoritarian regime, some scholars argue that the historical context of political transitions in Cambodia suggests potential for future democratic movements, albeit under challenging circumstances (Roberts, 2003).

2.6. Historical context and emergence of the CPP

The CPP traces its origins back to 1951 (Vickery, 1994; DBpedia, n.d.; Cheunboran, 2019) when the Khmer People's Revolutionary Party (KPRP) was founded. They aimed to preserve a connection to this early organization while distancing themselves from Democratic Kampuchea's party, which was founded in 1960. For Democratic Kampuchea (DK), that 1960 congress marked the party's founding, but the PRPK saw it as the second congress in its history (Vickery, 1994).

According to DBpedia (n.d.) and Em et al. (2024), the CPP has governed Cambodia since 1979. Initiated in 1951 as the Kampuchean People's Revolutionary Party KPRP, it initially aligned with Vietnam and the Soviet Union, contrasting with Pol Pot's pro-Chinese faction. After helping topple the Khmer Rouge, the CPP ruled the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979–1989), and later the State of Cambodia (1989–1991). In 1991, the CPP dropped socialism, adopting a mixed economy and conservative authoritarianism. Now, it is affiliated with the Centrist Democrat International along with European center-right parties.

The CPP's origins date back to the Khmer Rouge period and the Vietnamese-backed ousting of the Pol Pot regime in 1979. Originally called the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, the party was renamed the CPP in the 1990s as it worked to legitimize its authority in the post-Cold War period (Chandler, 2008). During the early years, the CPP operated within a fragile political environment, characterized by internal conflicts and external pressures, particularly from Western nations advocating for democratic reforms. The CPP evolved within a politically volatile environment, balancing internal conflicts and external pressures, especially from Western pro-democracy advocates (Vickery, 1994).

2.7. Implications and sustainability of CPP's authoritarian model

The CPP's shift towards repression over reform has been a response to rising contestation, indicating a strategic retreat from competitive authoritarianism to a more overtly authoritarian regime (Loughlin, 2020; Croissant & Lorenz, 2018). This reliance on coercion raises questions about the sustainability of the CPP's governance model, particularly in the face of potential international pressures and internal dissent (Strangio, 2014).

The CPP's win in the 2008 elections secured 90 parliamentary seats, strengthened by its control over local authorities and economic patronage (Hughes, 2009; Sok, 2016). Since the fall of the Khmer Rouge in 1979, Cambodia has been largely ruled by the CPP, which increased its vote share and parliamentary seats over time: 41% (64 seats) in 1998, 47% (73 seats) in 2003, and 58% (90 seats) in 2008 (Sok, 2016).

The CPP secured legislative control in 2008 due to four factors: control over local authorities, marginalization of the opposition, economic patronage from a boom, and exploitation of a border dispute with Thailand (Hughes, 2009). The party exploited nationalistic sentiments, particularly regarding border disputes with Thailand, to rally support and distract from governance issues (Hughes, 2009).

3. Methodology

This section describes the methodological approach used to investigate the CPP from 2008 to 2017, focusing on its political strengths, factors contributing to its popularity in 2008, and reasons for its decline by 2017. A qualitative, descriptive design was employed to gain a

comprehensive understanding of the CPP's governance strategies, socio-economic policies, and shifts in public perception.

3.1 Research design

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive design, which is appropriate for exploring complex political phenomena. By focusing on secondary data, the research examines how the CPP sustained its dominance and responded to shifting political challenges. A descriptive approach was chosen to systematically document the patterns and themes of the CPP's political strategies, particularly its popularity surges and declines.

The thematic analysis used in this study enables a synthesis of existing literature to identify recurring themes in the CPP's political trajectory. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of the interrelated factors contributing to the CPP's resilience and the growing political awareness among the Cambodian electorate.

3.2. Secondary data sources

This research relies on secondary data drawn from various sources to ensure a comprehensive analysis of the CPP's strategies and public perception. The sources include:

Academic literature: peer-reviewed journal articles and books discussing Cambodian politics, the CPP's governance, and the socio-political dynamics in Cambodia. These sources provide insights into the CPP's historical context, electoral strategies, and responses to political challenges.

NGO and government reports: reports from organizations like Freedom House and the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia provide data on political processes, electoral outcomes, and governance challenges. These reports help illustrate external perspectives on the CPP's political evolution and the responses from international observers.

News and Media Archives: Media sources, such as news articles and press releases, provide detailed accounts of major political events, including the CPP's 2008 electoral success and the 2017 crackdown on the opposition. These sources capture public reactions and offer context on the CPP's socio-economic policies and authoritarian practices.

3.3. Selection criteria

To ensure relevance and rigor, sources were selected based on the following criteria: Relevance to the CPP's political evolution: Priority was given to literature and reports that focus specifically on the CPP's strategies, electoral dynamics, and socio-economic policies. Date of publication: Sources published between 2008 and 2023 were prioritized to provide a current understanding of the period in question. Credibility and academic rigor: emphasis was placed on peer-reviewed articles, government and NGO reports, and reputable news sources to maintain data accuracy and reliability.

3.4. Data analysis

The study uses thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes across the collected literature, focusing on factors that contributed to the CPP's strengths, shifts in popularity, and eventual

decline in 2017. This approach involved coding, categorization, and synthesis of data to construct a cohesive narrative of the CPP's political strategies and public perception.

3.5. Coding and categorization

Initial coding: Key statements, themes, and insights from each source were identified and coded based on relevance to the research questions. Codes included aspects such as organizational strengths, grassroots mobilization, economic policies, youth engagement, and authoritarian measures.

Categorization: Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, such as CPP's strengths, factors driving popularity in 2008, reasons for decline in 2017, and sustainability of authoritarianism. These categories reflect the primary aspects of the CPP's evolution and highlight the complex dynamics influencing its political resilience.

Thematic Synthesis: The categories were synthesized into major themes, allowing for a clear narrative that connects the CPP's strategic maneuvers with shifts in public perception.

3.6. Key thematic areas

The analysis focuses on the following five thematic areas:

Organizational strengths: examines the CPP's internal structure, local engagement, and effective governance, which have contributed to its political resilience.

Socio-economic policies: analyzes the role of economic growth, infrastructure development, and patronage networks in bolstering the CPP's popularity, particularly during the 2008 elections.

Electoral strategies: Investigates the CPP's use of patronage, clientelism, and control over electoral processes to secure public support and marginalize opposition.

Youth political awareness: explores the impact of a politically active and younger electorate, particularly in challenging the CPP's long-standing dominance by 2017.

Authoritarian shift: Analyzes the CPP's transition from competitive to hegemonic authoritarianism, with a focus on media control, suppression of dissent, and dissolution of opposition.

3.7. Limitations of the study

This study's reliance on secondary data limits direct insights into Cambodian public sentiment and the CPP's internal decision-making. Potential biases resulting from international reports and media coverage influenced by external perspectives are mitigated by cross-referencing multiple sources. Additionally, the study's focus on 2008–2017 restricts applicability to more recent developments in the CPP's governance model.

3.8. Ethical consideration

This research uses publicly accessible secondary sources, ensuring full compliance with ethical standards. Proper attribution is given to all referenced sources, and findings are presented

objectively to avoid misrepresentation. An impartial approach is maintained, particularly when discussing politically sensitive issues, to provide a balanced interpretation of the CPP's evolution.

4. Findings

This section explores the key strengths of the CPP during the specified period, factors contributing to its popularity surge in 2008, and the primary reasons for its popularity decline by 2017.

4.1. Strengths of the CPP

Strong organizational structure: The CPP's evolution from a liberation movement has fostered a robust party identity, creating enduring partisan loyalties among its leadership. The party has established a hierarchical structure that facilitates effective communication and mobilization at local levels, ensuring a strong grassroots presence (Luo & Un, 2022). The analysis identifies several key strengths that have contributed to the CPP's political resilience. The CPP's strong organizational structure and effective governance emerged as primary factors, with participants noting the party's ability to mobilize grassroots support and maintain a robust presence in local communities as a significant strength (Cheunboran, 2019). Additionally, the CPP's focus on economic development and infrastructure projects resonated with voters, reinforcing its legitimacy and authority.

Patron-Client Networks: The CPP has effectively utilized patron-client networks to maintain power, allowing for the extraction of resources and distribution of benefits to loyal constituents. This system not only secures political support but also enables the party to co-opt potential challengers, thereby minimizing opposition (Young, 2021).

Coercive Strategies: The CPP has employed coercive measures to suppress dissent and maintain control, particularly in response to electoral challenges. The party's ability to navigate political threats through repression has reinforced its dominance, allowing it to disregard electoral outcomes when necessary (Loughlin, 2019).

Political Transformations: According to Cheunboran, (2019), the CPP has maintained a strong historical continuity by remaining loyal to the late King-Father Norodom Sihanouk and upholding the Cambodian monarchy. The party has also undergone three significant political transformations: 1) The adoption of a free-market economy and liberal plural democracy, which facilitated political competition through elections starting in 1993. 2) The CPP played a key role in establishing lasting peace and national reconciliation in Cambodia, with its "Win-Win Policy" bringing an end to the civil war. 3) The CPP has consistently advocated for neutrality, regional integration, and international engagement.

While the CPP's strengths are evident, it is important to consider the potential for emerging opposition movements. Recent years have seen increased grassroots activism and calls for reform, which may challenge the CPP's long-standing grip on power, indicating a dynamic political landscape that could evolve in response to public sentiment.

4.2. Factors contributing to popularity in 2008

In 2008, the CPP saw a significant increase in popularity, largely driven by its successful economic policies and well-executed electoral campaigns. The government's focus on infrastructure development and attracting foreign investment were key factors that earned the support of the public (Thayer, 2015).

Historical Dominance: The CPP has a long-standing presence in Cambodian politics, having been established during the Khmer Rouge era and evolving through various political landscapes since the 1993 elections (Strangio, 2014). Its control over state resources, including the judiciary and security apparatus, has facilitated its ability to suppress opposition and maintain power (K. Un, 2015). The party's ability to adapt to political challenges, such as the rise of the opposition, has been crucial. For instance, it has engaged in political compromises to quell dissent (K. Un, 2015). Conversely, the emergence of a younger, more educated electorate poses a challenge to the CPP's popularity, as this demographic increasingly demands transparency and accountability from their leaders (Eng & Hughes, 2017). The Paris Peace Agreements in 1991 aimed to establish a multiparty democracy, but the political landscape quickly shifted towards a hegemonic party system dominated by the CPP (Shen, 2023).

Socio-Economic Policies: Economic growth and infrastructural development have bolstered the CPP's image, as many citizens associate the party with stability and progress (Eng & Hughes, 2017). The distribution of resources and benefits, particularly in rural areas, has helped maintain loyalty among constituents despite criticisms of corruption and authoritarianism (Strangio, 2014). The CPP's promises of continued economic growth and stability, especially during uncertain times, helped solidify its position as the preferred choice for voters who saw the party as the best option to ensure ongoing progress and development. This combination of historical influence, strategic political moves, and effective socio-economic policies has allowed the CPP to maintain a stronghold in Cambodian politics despite facing new challenges (Thayer, 2015).

4.3. Factors leading to a decline in popularity in 2017

The decline in the CPP's popularity from 2008 to 2017 can be attributed to several interrelated factors, including increased political awareness, the emergence of a youthful electorate, and the party's authoritarian tendencies. These elements collectively contributed to a growing discontent among the populace, particularly among younger voters.

By 2017, the CPP faced significant challenges that led to a decline in its popularity. Participants expressed concerns regarding governance issues, allegations of corruption, and a perceived lack of responsiveness to public grievances. The crackdown on opposition movements and the suppression of dissent were also noted as factors that eroded public trust in the CPP (Peou, 2020). The emergence of a more politically active and vocal citizenry, particularly among the youth, indicated a shift in public sentiment that the CPP struggled to address.

The evolution of interparty and intraparty factionalism in Cambodian politics, especially since the 1990s, also played a role. Historical conflicts and power dynamics among political elites, including divisions within the CPP and FUNCINPEC, have impacted political stability (Peou, 2020). The transition from a multiparty to a

dominant one-party system led to internal competition and division within the CPP, affecting its cohesion and stability.

Increase Political Awareness: The CPP's governance style, characterized by a patronage system, has led to a rise in political activism and awareness among citizens, particularly through community-based organizations. The emergence of a united opposition, notably the Cambodian National Rescue Party, has galvanized public sentiment against the CPP (K. Un, 2020).

Youthful Electorate: A significant demographic shift occurred, with a younger, more educated electorate that aspires to better governance and economic opportunities (Eng & Hughes, 2017). This generation, having experienced relative peace and economic growth, has different expectations compared to older generations, leading to increased dissatisfaction with the CPP's performance (Eng & Hughes, 2017).

Authoritarian Shift: The CPP's return to authoritarianism, marked by intensified repression of media and opposition, alienated many voters (Croissant, 2018). Despite economic growth, the lack of institutional improvement and social justice further fueled public discontent (Croissant, 2018). The violent removal of Norodom Ranariddh in 1997 marked a critical turning point, leading to the consolidation of power within the CPP and diminishing the role of FUNCINPEC (Peou, 2020).

Intraparty Dynamics: The CPP has experienced internal divisions, with factions vying for control, which can lead to instability and affect electoral outcomes (Peou, 2020). The CPP has experienced internal divisions, with factions vying for control, which can lead to instability and affect electoral outcomes (Peou, 2014).

Conversely, while the CPP faced declining popularity, it maintained a strong grip on power through coercive measures and patronage, suggesting that the decline may not lead to immediate political change. The party's ability to adapt and suppress dissent remains a critical factor in its continued dominance.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to explore the political evolution of the CPP from 2008 to 2017, focusing on its strengths, the factors behind its surge in popularity in 2008, and the reasons for its decline by 2017. The findings highlight a complex interplay of organizational strength, socio-economic policies, and authoritarian shifts that shaped the party's dominance and vulnerability during this period.

5.1. Organizational strengths and governance

The CPP's enduring organizational strength was one of the central factors contributing to its resilience. The party's ability to maintain a hierarchical structure that effectively mobilized grassroots support allowed it to consolidate power even amid external challenges. The CPP's strategic use of patron-client networks helped secure loyalty from local communities and distribute resources, ensuring continued political support despite criticisms of corruption. As noted by Cheunboran (2019), the CPP's historical continuity, including its loyalty to the late King-Father Norodom Sihanouk and its role in maintaining the monarchy, further strengthened its legitimacy.

The findings also corroborate previous research suggesting that the CPP's dominance relied not only on traditional political tools but also on the active suppression of opposition movements. The party's coercive strategies, such as limiting media freedoms and repressing dissent, played a significant role in ensuring the CPP's grip on power, particularly during periods when electoral challenges arose. While these measures were successful in the short term, they also contributed to growing discontent among younger, politically aware voters, who increasingly saw the regime's tactics as incompatible with democratic principles (Peou, 2020).

5.2. Popularity surge in 2008

The period leading up to the 2008 elections marked a significant surge in the CPP's popularity. The party capitalized on economic growth, infrastructure development, and the attraction of foreign investment to strengthen its appeal, especially among rural voters. The economic boom helped improve living conditions in certain areas, increasing public support for the regime. As highlighted in the findings, the party's promises of continued economic growth and stability during a time of uncertainty resonated strongly with voters (Thayer, 2015).

The CPP's historical dominance also played a crucial role in its success during this period. The control over state resources, including the judiciary and security apparatus, allowed the party to suppress opposition and ensure favorable electoral outcomes (K. Un, 2015). However, this dominance came at the cost of democratic principles, as the political landscape shifted toward a hegemonic party system rather than a truly competitive multiparty democracy. The exploitation of nationalistic sentiments surrounding the border dispute with Thailand further helped the CPP rally support, distract from governance issues, and position itself as the defender of national sovereignty in Thailand (Hughes, 2009).

5.3. Decline in popularity by 2017

The decline in the CPP's popularity by 2017 was multifaceted, with several interrelated factors contributing to the erosion of public trust. The emergence of a younger, more educated electorate, which increasingly demanded transparency, accountability, and social justice, posed a significant challenge to the party. As noted in the findings, this demographic shift led to a growing disillusionment with the CPP, particularly as younger voters began to question the party's ability to deliver meaningful reforms and political freedoms (Eng & Hughes, 2017).

Moreover, the CPP's authoritarian shift, marked by the dissolution of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and the further suppression of dissent, alienated many voters who once supported the regime. The findings underscore that the crackdown on opposition movements, independent media, and civil society was a critical factor in the decline of the CPP's popularity (Croissant, 2018). While the party retained its power through coercion and patronage, its ability to suppress opposition began to erode its legitimacy, particularly among the more politically active youth (Peou, 2020).

In addition, the internal divisions within the CPP, as factions vied for control, contributed to instability within the party. These divisions impacted the party's cohesion and were perceived by the public as a sign of weakening leadership, further diminishing trust in the regime. As seen in previous studies, internal power struggles, such as those between the CPP and FUNCINPEC, have long been a feature of Cambodia's political landscape, with these tensions often spilling into the public sphere (Peou, 2020).

5.4. Sustainability of the CPP's authoritarian model

While the CPP's authoritarian model of governance has been successful in maintaining its hold on power, questions regarding the sustainability of this model persist. The party's reliance on coercion and patronage rather than meaningful democratic reforms suggests that its current political model may be difficult to sustain in the long term, particularly given the increasing political awareness of the electorate and the growing calls for democratic reforms.

The CPP's ability to suppress dissent through coercive measures may provide short-term stability, but this strategy risks alienating future generations who are increasingly disillusioned with the lack of political freedoms and the absence of institutional checks and balances. As highlighted by Strangio (2014), the authoritarian model employed by the CPP is not immune to the pressures of internal dissent and international scrutiny, particularly as Cambodia's younger generations become more politically engaged and critical of the regime's tactics.

In conclusion, the CPP's ability to maintain political dominance over the past decade has been shaped by its organizational strengths, strategic electoral policies, and coercive strategies. However, the evolving political landscape, characterized by a younger and more politically aware electorate, internal divisions within the party, and increased international scrutiny, may present significant challenges to the sustainability of the CPP's authoritarian model in the years to come.

6. Conclusion and recommendation

6.1. Conclusion

This study explored the political evolution of the CPP from 2008 to 2017, focusing on its strengths, factors behind its surge in popularity in 2008, and reasons for its decline by 2017. The CPP's ability to sustain power during this period was largely due to a combination of organizational strengths, effective patronage networks, and coercive strategies that helped maintain political control. The party's dominance was bolstered by a strong grassroots presence, control over state resources, and a historical legacy that appealed to segments of the electorate.

The 2008 surge in popularity can be attributed to the CPP's successful economic policies, infrastructure development, and its focus on national stability and growth, which resonated particularly with rural voters. However, by 2017, the CPP faced challenges stemming from an increasingly politically aware electorate, particularly the youth, who demanded greater political freedoms and accountability. Additionally, the CPP's authoritarian turn, marked by the suppression of opposition movements, media freedoms, and civil society, contributed to a decline in its legitimacy and popular support.

Despite these challenges, the CPP retained control through its ability to suppress dissent and manipulate electoral processes. However, this reliance on coercion raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of its governance model. The findings suggest that while the CPP's power may persist in the short term, growing internal divisions, a more politically engaged youth, and increasing international scrutiny may threaten the party's dominance in the future.

6.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are offered to the CPP, the Cambodian government, and other stakeholders in the political landscape to address the challenges identified and improve the country's political system.

Promote Political Pluralism: To enhance democratic legitimacy, the CPP should encourage a more open political environment by allowing opposition parties to function freely. Electoral reforms should be introduced to ensure fair and transparent elections, reducing political interference and promoting competition.

Increase transparency and accountability: The CPP must tackle corruption and improve governance by establishing independent anti-corruption bodies and ensuring transparency in the allocation of state resources. This will help rebuild public trust and strengthen the party's credibility.

Engage with the Youth: The CPP should prioritize engaging young Cambodians in policy-making by creating platforms for youth participation. Addressing their needs through education, job creation, and social mobility policies will help bridge the gap between the government and the younger electorate.

Focus on Inclusive Economic Growth: To reduce inequality, the CPP should focus on policies that ensure economic growth benefits all segments of society, particularly rural and marginalized communities. Investments in infrastructure, education, and job creation will foster a more inclusive economy.

Respect Human Rights and Political Freedoms: The CPP should uphold fundamental freedoms such as speech, press, and assembly. Lifting restrictions on independent media and allowing greater political freedom will help strengthen Cambodia's democratic institutions and improve the public's confidence in the political system.

Improve Internal Party Cohesion: The CPP should strengthen internal democracy by promoting transparent, merit-based leadership transitions and reducing factionalism. This will improve the party's stability and ensure a more unified approach to governance.

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Declaration of AI usage

The author(s) used ChatGPT and QuillBot to polish the language in some parts of the article. However, they declared that the content of the article is totally theirs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Foreign Experts of CJESS

No.	Full Name	Degree	Country
1.	Buratin Khampirat	PhD	Thailand
2.	Robby Yuli Endra	MA	Indonesia
3.	Aung Myo Hein	MA	Myanmar
4.	Ganda Febri Kurniawan	MA	Indonesia
5.	Tharatep Sanlee	MA	Thailand
6.	Ei Thandar Win	MA	Myanmar

Appendix 2. Core Editorial Members of CJESS

No.	Full Name	Role	Degree	Country
1.	Sereyrath Em	Chief Editor	PhD	Cambodia
2.	Dina Pen	Manager	PhD	Cambodia
3.	Buratin Khampirat	Editor	PhD	Thailand
4.	Saban Bon	Editor	PhD	Cambodia
5.	Mardy Serey	Editor	PhD	Cambodia
6.	Ganda Febri Kurniawan	Editor	MA	Indonesia
7.	Tharatep Sanlee	Associate Editor	MA	Thailand
8.	Ei Thandar Win	Associate Editor	MA	Myanmar
9.	Robby Yuli Endra	Technical Support	MA	Indonesia

Appendix 3. Current Guidelines for Authors and Reviewers

1. For authors

You must read and acknowledge that you've completed the requirements below before proceeding.

- The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).
- The submission file is in OpenOffice, Microsoft Word, or RTF document file format.
- Where available, URLs for the references have been provided.
- The text is single-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics, rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures, and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
- The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined in the Author's Guidelines.
- The manuscript must be written in English with no plagiarism and has never been published before or is currently being submitted for publication elsewhere.
- The manuscripts require a minimum of at least 1500 words for book reviews, 3000–4000 words for short articles, and 6000–8000 words for full-length articles including everything.
- Manuscripts, except for book reviews, must include an English abstract of no more than 250 words, followed by five keywords.

- Use a reference management and formatting program like [Mendeley](#), [EndNote](#), or [Zotero](#). The authors can also do citations and references manually, but they must ensure the consistency between citations and references. The reference list needs to follow APA 7th style, and the citation needs to be in-text.
- Make sure to prepare your manuscript using the paper template and format provided by CJESS.

2. For reviewers

- **Contribution to editorial decisions**

Peer review assists editors in making editorial decisions and, through editorial communications with authors, may assist authors in improving their manuscripts. Peer review is an essential component of formal scholarly communication and lies at the heart of scientific endeavor. CJESS shares many views that all scholars who wish to contribute to the scientific process must do their fair share of reviewing.

- **Promptness**

Invited reviewers who feel unqualified to review the research reported in a manuscript or know that its prompt review will be impossible should immediately notify the editors and decline the invitation to review so that alternative reviewers can be contacted.

- **Confidentiality**

The Editor-in-Chief (who would only do so under exceptional and specific circumstances) must authorize the display or discussion of any manuscripts received for review as confidential documents. This is also true for invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

- **Standards of objectivity**

To improve the manuscript, authors should conduct objective reviews and formulate observations clearly with supporting arguments. Personal criticism of the authors is inappropriate, and the reviewers may reject this.

- **Acknowledgment of sources**

Reviewers should locate pertinent published work that the authors have not yet cited. The relevant citation should accompany any statement, observation, derivation, or argument reported in previous publications. Reviewers should also notify the editors of any substantial similarity or overlap between the manuscript under consideration and any other manuscript (published or unpublished) of which they have personal knowledge.

- **Disclosure and conflicts of interest**

To contact alternative reviewers, any invited reviewers who have conflicts of interest due to competitive, collaborative, or other relationships or connections with any of the authors, companies, or institutions connected to the manuscript and the work described therein should immediately notify the editors, declare their conflicts of interest, and decline the invitation to review.

Reviewers cannot use unpublished material from a submitted manuscript in their research without the authors' express written consent. The reviewers must maintain the

confidentiality of privileged information or ideas acquired through peer review and refrain from using them for personal gain. This is also true for invited reviewers who decline the review invitation.

Appendix 4. Peer Review Process

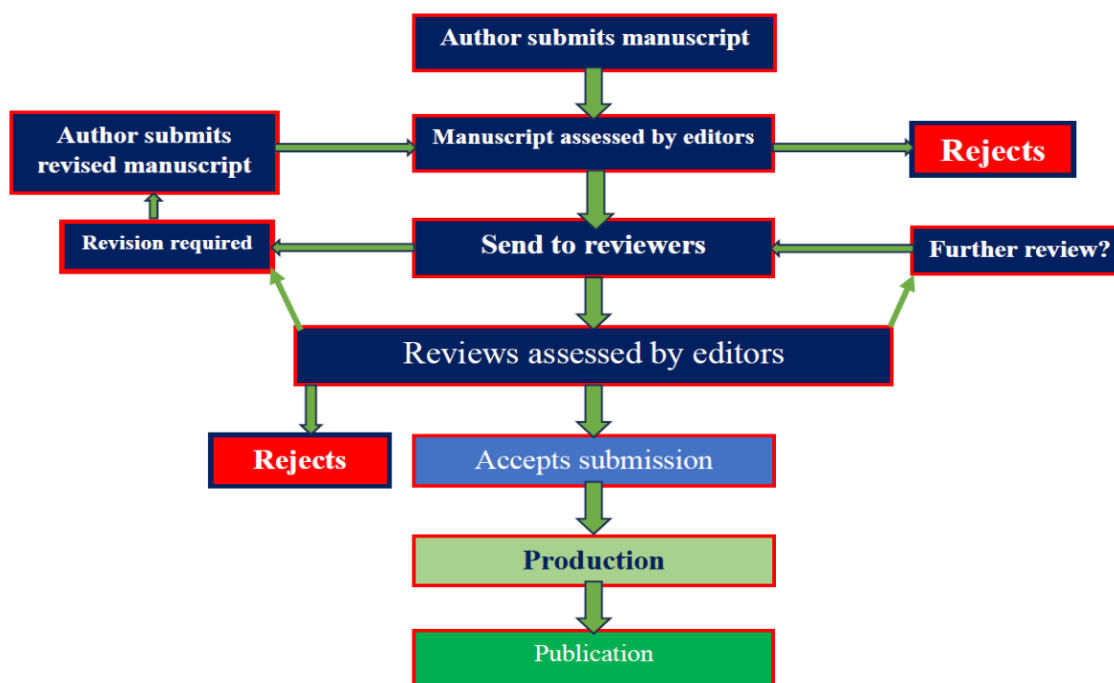


Figure 4.1 Peer Review Process

1. Submitting a manuscript

The corresponding or submitting author submits the manuscript to the journal through the Open Journal System (OJS). Occasionally, our journal may accept submissions by email.

2. Editorial office assessment

The journal checks the manuscript's composition and arrangement against the journal's author guidelines to make sure it includes the required sections and stylizations. The journal does not assess the manuscript's quality at this point.

3. The Editor-in-Chief's evaluation

The editor-in-chief ensures that the paper is appropriate for the journal, sufficiently original, and interesting. If not, the editor-in-chief may reject the paper without further review.

4. The Editor-in-Chief assigns an editor

Some journals have associate editors who handle peer review. At this stage, if they undergo peer review, they will receive an assignment.

5. Invitation to reviewers

The handling editor sends invitations to individuals he or she believes would be appropriate reviewers. After receiving responses, the handling editor issues additional invitations as needed, aiming to secure the required number of acceptances, typically two, although journal-specific variations may exist.

6. Respond to invitations

Potential reviewers consider the invitation against their expertise, conflicts of interest, and availability. They then accept or decline. If possible, they might also suggest alternative reviewers when declining.

7. A review-initiative process

The reviewer sets aside time to read the paper several times. The reviewer uses the first read to form an initial impression of the work. If the reviewer finds major problems at this stage, they may feel comfortable rejecting the manuscript without further work. Otherwise, they will read the paper several more times, taking notes to build a detailed point-by-point review. The journal then receives the review, either with a recommendation to accept or reject it or else with a revision request (usually flagged as either major or minor) before reconsideration.

8. The journal's review assessment

Before making an overall decision, the handling editor considers all of the returned reviews. If the reviews differ widely, the editor may invite another reviewer to get an additional opinion before making a decision.

9. The decision's communication

The editor sends a decision email to the author, including any relevant reviewer comments. Whether the comments are anonymous or not will depend on the type of peer review that the journal operates.

10. Next steps

After acceptance, the paper goes into production. If the handling editor rejects the article or sends it back for a major or minor revision, they should incorporate constructive comments from the reviewers to assist the author in improving the article. From here, the handling editor should email or write to the reviewers to inform them of their results. If the handling editor sends the paper back for revision, the reviewers should expect to receive a revised version, unless they have chosen not to participate further. However, if only minor changes were required, the handling editor could complete this follow-up review.

Appendix 5. All Editorial Team Members as of December 2024

Editorial	Total Count	Cambodian	Foreigner	Master	Doctoral
Advisory Board	05	03	02	03	02
Editor-in-Chief	01	01	n/a	n/a	01
Editors	09	07	02	06	03
Associate Editors	02	n/a	02	02	n/a
Technical Support	01	n/a	01	n/a	01
Reviewers	26	26	n/a	24	03

Advisory Board

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dina Pen (Scopus ID: 59316667400)

- Lecturer, Svay Rieng University (SRU), Svay Rieng, Cambodia
- PhD in Political Science, Khemarak University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- PhD Candidate in Educational Science, The University of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Pisith Chin (Scopus ID: 59316333200)

- Executive Director, the National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear (NUCK), Kampong Cham Campus, Cambodia
- PhD Candidate in Educational Science, the National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear (NUCK), Cambodia

Thach Ban

- Academic Office, the National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear, Kampong Cham, Cambodia
- PhD Candidate in Educational Science, the National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear (NUCK), Cambodia

Robby Yuli Endra, S.Kom., M.Kom. (Scopus ID: 57212685168)

- Full-Time Lecturer at Universitas Bandar Lampung, Indonesia
- Head of Laboratory Computer (2012-2018), Universitas Bandar Lampung, Indonesia

Aung Myo Hein

- Former Lecturer, Department of English, Yangon University of Foreign Languages, Ministry of Education, Myanmar
- PhD Candidate, the Graduate School of Global Studies, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan

Founder and Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Sereyrath Em (Scopus ID: 58000264900)

- Lecturer, National University of Cheasim Kamchaymear (NUCK), Cambodia
- PhD in Educational Science, Khemarak University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
- PhD Candidate in Educational Administration, The University of Cambodia (UC), Phnom Penh, Cambodia
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