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*Editorial*

# The Cambodian Journal of Educational Research's 3rd anniversary: Reflecting on its development

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## Introduction

Welcome to a new issue (Volume 3, Issue 2) of the Cambodian Journal of Educational Research (CJER), an academic journal dedicated to the field of education, published by the Cambodian Education Forum (CEF). As CJER is approaching its 3rd anniversary, this editorial aims to reflect on its journey, including its initial development and approach to publication, peer review process, achievements, and future directions. The editorial also aims to provide an overview of all the articles included in this issue.

## CJER's initial development and approach to publication

CJER was officially launched by CEF in 2021 with a vision "to contribute to building a vibrant research culture in Cambodia" (Heng, 2021b, p. 1), particularly in the field of education and English Language Teaching. CJER aims to support writers/researchers, particularly novice ones, by offering the necessary editorial support and a credible publication platform (Heng, 2021b). CJER's first issue was published in 2021, consisting of a compilation of 11 short articles that were initially published by CEF. This first issue of CJER has set the stage for what has now evolved into a journal that accepts a diverse range of contributions, including short articles, medium-length articles, full-length articles, and book reviews (Heng, 2021a). CJER's approach to publication indicates our humble yet ambitious commitment to inclusivity, offering opportunities to

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writers/researchers at different stages of their academic and professional endeavors. This flexibility allows emerging or novice writers/researchers to contribute meaningfully, even though they may not yet be ready to write full-length empirical articles.

**CJER's rigorous peer review process**

A cornerstone of our journal publication is a rigorous peer-review process (Sol & Heng, 2022). All manuscripts submitted to CJER undergo an initial screening by the journal's editorial team and are only sent out for a blind peer review if they meet certain preliminary checks, including quality, fit with the journal's scope, completeness, and compliance with our submission guidelines. Manuscripts that pass these preliminary checks proceed to a thorough evaluation by usually two external reviewers before being assessed again by CJER's editorial team, including Associate Editors, Editors, and Editors-in-Chief. This practice has ensured the quality and credibility of our journal publications.

**Achievements**

Since its launch, CJER has achieved significant milestones. We proudly obtained our unique and standardized identifier assigned by the International Center of the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) in August 2023. CJER's ISSN is ISSN 3005-2149 (Online). This acquisition of ISSN is a testament to CJER's commitment to quality and recognition in the international academic community. Another exciting achievement is the acquisition of Digital Object Identifier (DOI) through our official membership with Crossref, a US-based organization known for its significant role in scholarly publishing and communications. CJER's unique DOI prefix is 10.62037, followed by our journal's DOI suffix. For example, this editorial's DOI is 10.62037/cjer.2023.03.02.01 or a full DOI link as https://doi.org/10.62037/cjer.2023.03.02.01. We are also able to assign DOIs to other CEF publications, including books. For instance, one of CEF's most recent edited books, entitled "Innovations and Challenges in Cambodian Education: Youth's Perspectives" (see Heng et al., 2023), has a DOI as 10.62037/cef.book.2023.09.05 or a full DOI link as https://doi.org/10.62037/cef.book.2023.09.05. These DOIs are useful in enhancing the ease of citation, discoverability, and accessibility of our publications.

## Future directions

Looking ahead, CJER is poised for ongoing growth and broader recognition. Our future directions include several ambitious goals. Specifically, we will seek to index CJER in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), a comprehensive and well-respected online directory that lists high-quality, peer-reviewed open-access journals (DOAJ, n.d.). We will also endeavor to index CJER in the ASEAN Citation Index (ACI), a regional initiative to aggregate and enhance the visibility of scholarly publications from Southeast Asian nations (ACI, n.d.). Furthermore, to streamline the publication process of CJER, we will explore the possibility of employing Open Journal Systems (OJS) – a popular, open-source software platform – to manage and standardize our article submission and peer review process.

In addition, we are in the process of introducing a fast-tracked peer review process. This fast-tracked peer review process will be available to authors for a reasonable fee; however, using this service is not compulsory. It is designed for authors who wish to have their manuscript(s) reviewed and edited in a quicker manner and possibly receive an acceptance email/letter in the shortest time possible, allowing them to meet the publication requirements of their funders, sponsors, employers, or universities. Thus, when submitting their manuscript, authors will be asked to indicate whether they want their manuscript to enter the fast-tracked peer review process, an expedited service that requires a fee after the manuscript is accepted for publication, or opt for the standard peer review process that usually takes longer time to complete. It is important to note that the decision to use this service will in no way influence the final decision on the manuscript. The acceptance of any manuscript for publication will be strictly based on the merit and quality of the manuscript, and the required fee for the rapid peer review process will be applicable only to those authors who opt for this service and whose manuscripts are accepted for publication after a rigorous peer review process.

## Overview of this issue

In this issue of CJER, there are six articles. Of the six articles, three are full-length articles, and the other three are medium-length articles. One of the three full-length articles is an original article contributed by Nathan Polley and Gina Polley. The article discussed the integration of business and liberal arts into an undergraduate course at a Cambodian public university. It employed an action research method to show how such integration can be effective in incorporating liberal arts into business education.

The second full-length article was contributed by Thach Ban and Kimkong Heng who examined issues concerning higher education in Cambodia, particularly the challenges and suggestions regarding higher education quality improvement. Drawing on secondary data and the authors' own experiences, the article provided insights into key challenges to improving the quality of Cambodian higher education and discussed suggestions for addressing the challenges and enhancing the subsector's quality.

The third full-length article brought to the spotlight opportunities and concerns in relation to the implementation of the academic or professional ranking system in Cambodia. The article was written by Kimkong Heng and Kreng Heng who have extensive knowledge about academic research development in Cambodian higher education. The article highlighted some opportunities and key concerns related to the appointment of professorial titles (Professor, Associate Professor, and Assistant Professor) in the education sector in Cambodia. It also offered a set of recommendations for improving the future implementation of the professorial ranking system in the country.

Besides these full-length articles, there are three medium-length articles in this issue. One of these articles was contributed by Sopheap Kaing and Rotha Kol. This article was published online first in October 2023. It focused on teaching and learning assessment in the 21st century. Drawing on secondary data, the article discussed various aspects of assessment, including reasons for assessment, types of assessment, and issues concerning assessment. It also discussed different approaches to assessment and concluded that there is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to assessment.

Another medium-length article was also published online first in October 2023. It was written by Samnang Yen who aimed to explain why reading matters. The article discussed various benefits of reading, identified the factors contributing to the reading habits of Cambodian people, and provided recommendations for concerned stakeholders, such as the government, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, the community, and parents, to contribute to enhancing the reading habits of Cambodians.

The final article included in this issue was published online first in September 2023. It was written by Korngleng Sear who reflected on his journey of personal growth. The article drew heavily on self-help books and the author's own experience. It discussed

some perceived facts about self-improvement and elaborated on how to develop oneself. The article concluded that self-improvement is a long process that requires passion, discipline, effort, and perseverance, among other attributes.

**Disclosure statement**

The views expressed in this editorial are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of their affiliated institutions.

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