

Historical Perspectives of Business Education at the Higher Learning Institutions and Skills Development for Industry in Cambodia

Hum Chan

(Corresponding Author)

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

E-mail: chanhum_ubb@yahoo.com

Abdul Aziz Ab Latif

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Malaysia

E-mail: azizl@umk.edu.my

Accepted: Feb 02, 2012 Published: March 03, 2013

Doi:10.5296/ijld.v3i1.3074 URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v3i1.3074>

Abstract

The primary purpose of this essay is to extend the literature of business education at the higher learning institutions and skills development for industry in Cambodia. Especially, the essay stresses on how business education was developed, practiced, declined, destructed and reemerged under social and political upheaval within three historical perspectives. Data used in this essay is mainly descriptive based on secondary data: books, articles, journal, reports, and so on. The study discovered that the development and practice of curriculum for higher learning institutions aimed to enhance different skills for students in each perspective. Prior to the protectorate, higher learning curriculum did not enhance business knowledge and skills, but occupational skills for rural life. Although the French protectorate brought light to business education and skills development, but it was in a narrow-based approach to enhance administrative skills for government system. Enjoyed great explosion of academics, industry and economy in Sihanouk regime, Cambodia's higher education system, industry and economy were severe declined and destructed in Lon Nol and Khmer Rouge. Currently, new educational goal was established to articulate innovative and creative knowledge and skills to students for regional and global economy. Therefore, many business-related disciplines have been provided, for example, economics, management, accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship and other. With the insightful accounts, the essay provides all relevant stakeholders: students, educational institutions, government agencies, business actors and researchers to be better aware so that they are able to prepare, create, cooperate and improve the business education curriculum to develop compatible skills for industry.

Keywords: *Business Education, Higher Learning Institutions, Skills Development, Industry*

1. Introduction

It is noted that business education and skills development for industry has been explosively developed and played an instrumental role in boosting economies worldwide, but this area is far from clear in the context of Cambodia. Despite a large number of current studies and reports claiming that Cambodia education throughout its hierarchy has substantially expanded and

notably progressed to promote quality workforce among youth; none of previous studies have examined business education. In addition, although higher education has been significantly progressed, challenges have caused the gap between business education and skills requirements of labour market. For example, Sophal (2008); Chet (2009), and UNDP (2011) found that Cambodian graduates, especially from the field of business did not obtain sufficient skills for industry. This problem has hindered graduates in entering job market as well as restraining the growth of individual, societal and national economy. Therefore, it has been suggested to reflect upon its historical aspects. The primary purpose of the essay is to review business education in Cambodia in three historical aspects: (1) From the Empire to the Protectorate (802-1953), (2) From the Independence to the Destruction (1953-1989), and (3) From the Foreign Occupation to the Royal Government of Cambodia (1989-Present). The researcher uses predominantly descriptive data to answer questions: (1) How do business education at the higher learning institutions in Cambodia develop and practice to articulate skills of students for industry within three historical perspectives?; (2) What are the correlative impacts and challenges of business education in each perspective?; (3) Are the past impacts and challenges effecting current development and practice of business education at higher learning institutions in Cambodia today?

2. History of Cambodia's Higher Learning Institutions

2.1 From the Empire to the Protectorate (800s-1950s)

Scholars claimed that since the fall of Angkor in 1341 until after the fall of Khmer Rouge 1980s, there were massive destruction and crisis of Cambodian schooling and economic system (Dy 2004). Cambodian higher education system and skills development were broken in the timeline of history. Beyond that, historical accounts such as the curriculum, statistic of teachers, teaching methods were poorly documented, and divided the chronological periods of Cambodian education, respectively. To some aspects, Scholars claimed that Angkor Empire was the start of Cambodia higher education.

An essay of Cambodian history by Preah Sihanoukrajia Budhist University (PUB) (2009) mentioned that Cambodia already established two universities prior to the arrival of French Protectorate. The universities were managed by queen, Andradevy, the wife of King Javaraman VII (1181-1120) during the Angkor Empire. There were 18 doctorats and 740 people worked as the university. The two universities played an active role to develop knowledge, culture and skills for youth (PUB 2009). Previously Clayton (1995) described that education system was carried out in Wats (Pagoda) and Buddhist monks were the school teachers (kru), and educational philosophy was influenced by religious cosmologies. Ethics, values, and algebra were the core concepts of education (Gyallay-Pap, 1989). Teaching and learning was conducted in a traditional method. Rote learning was extensively practiced among students. Especially, the core skills developed by the education curriculum were carpentry through apprenticing to build temples, roads, bridges and dwellings, furniture and other items (Torhorst, 1966).

Table 1 Curriculum, Skill Development & Problems during Angkor Empire (800s-1341)

Schools	Curricula Content	Skills Development	Problems
---------	-------------------	--------------------	----------

Primary Education (Pagoda Schools)	Traditional Education Religious Cosmology (<i>Hindu-Buddhism</i>)	Basic reading and writing literacy skills	Curriculum had not been employed by whole educational hierarchy
Buddhist Month as Teachers (Kru)	Traditional Teaching and learning through proverb & Chbab, e.g. Reamke, Gatiloke (folktales)	Develop vocational skills such as carpentry	Less attention to develop vocational skills and teaching method
Boys stayed in Wat (pagoda) to be educated	Rote Learning	Develop human relations, sense of responsibility, appropriate behavior, social status, interpersonal and social relations	Education influenced by the king, religious concepts and political tendency
Technical Education (no data)	Higher Education (Two universities at Angkor Temples)		
18 doctorate degree			
740 university teachers			

From this table is possible to conclude that higher education institutions prior to the French protectorate had already established to develop skills for Cambodian youth. The main theme of skill development was to articulate core skills such as reading and writing, occupation skills to survive in rural living, interpersonal skills, human and social communication and ethics. By contrast, it could be argued that the core educational value at that was not yet attempted to impart business management theories and practice although Chinese delegate, Chou Ta-Kuan's commented that there were business transactions during Angkorean society (Chandler 1993, p 71-72). The educational service was provided in a narrow-based approach with less structure, under religious and political regulation that excluded girls from schooling. Education did not pay enough attention to develop quality teaching beyond traditional style. This is the main reason that educators in the French protectorate could not engage the existing curriculum to the modern educational model.

2.2 The French Protectorate (1863-1950s)

After the fall of Angkor, Cambodia higher education system was doomed by repeated invasions from neighboring countries, and only primary education was provided in Wat schools. Until the arrival of the French Protectorate (1863-1953), Cambodia's higher education was established. The French officer, Ferryolles built the first French school in 1873 in Phnom Penh, and shortly after in other provinces such as Kompot, Kompong Cham and Kratie (Bilodeau et al. 1955). In addition, French administration tried to modernize Cambodian education from traditional model (pagoda-based learning) to European system (Franco-Khmer schools). The French also expanded and incorporated community-pagoda schools to government schools, encouraged girls to participate in learning, and trained teachers to be professional (Fergusson & Masson, 2006).

In 1893, the first higher education institution, the College du Protectorate was founded, and followed by the Ecole pratique d'Industrie which was known as the College Technique in 1903 (Bilodeu et al 1955; Clayton 2000). The most important of all, French opened the Ecole d'Aministration Cambodgience (Cambodia Civil Code) in 1917 but changed to the the Institut national d'etudes juridiques et tconomiques (National Institute of Legal and Economic Studies) in 1948. Nowadays, it is called the Royal University of Law and Economics (RULE) (Ayres 2000; Bilodeu 1955; Clayton 2000; Fergusson & Masson 2006). The French tried to build up higher learning institutions in order to envisage two ideologies of Cambodia as well as to other

colonial territories across Indochina. The first one was the civilizing mission (*mission civilisatrice*) and economic development (*mise en valeur*). The second ideology was the “superior civilization”—western government, rational administration, education, medicine, morals, capitalist economics (Furlough 2005). Therefore, the French attempted to build permanent education in Cambodia as part of a plan to control Indochina. By so doing, Cambodia higher education was expanded and absorbed students across the region. By 1920s, Tulley (2005) highlighted that it was the period of economic boom due to the expansion of public work, health and education, especially the establishment of large-scale industry on rubber plantation and the increase of natural resource exports such as rice, fish and fish products, livestock, rubber, maize, pepper, cardamom, sugar, soy beans, tobacco, cotton and coffee. Also, it was known as the start of the industrial sector, the establishment of the rubber plantation industry in 1942 (Sophal Ear (1995), cited from Prud’homme (p 86)).

Table 2 Curriculum, Skill Development and Problems during the French Protectorate (1863-1954)

Schools	Curricula Content	Skill Development	Problems
Institute national d’études juridiques et économiques (National Institute of Legal and Economic Studies) in (1948)	Transformed Traditional Curriculum to French education system (Buddhist-French Education Model) Courses= 2/3/4 yrs	Develop knowledge & skills to be Civil Servants	Rural children could not access education Higher learning targeted for strengthening the French administration
Other HEIs: Public Health Officer School, National School of Agriculture and Stock-breeding, School of Forestry, Schools of Public Work, National Institute of Khmer Civilization	Bachelor’s Degree French language instruction Diploma equivalent to the university in France, the baccalaureate of law faculties in French Union Secular Subjects: Economics, Administrative, Laws, Science Modern teaching method		Resistance among local people to the French education as they tried to abolish the Cambodian language and traditions Lack of qualified teachers Cambodian students were not familiar with the French instruction

Tulley (2005) argued that the prosperity in 1920s did not last long because the France did not have goodwill to develop Cambodian education, nor to promote Cambodian industry. Scholars like (Clayton, 1999; Bilodeu, 1955; Ayres, 2000) criticized that the main purpose of French was to only strengthen its administrative system as education mainly offered to boys and elite families to become the French civil servants. Another criticism was that the French did not build any industry in Cambodia like other colonial countries. As quoted from Prud’homme (1969: 13) in Sophal Ear (1995:36):

....France did not do anything to develop industry in Cambodia nor even to preserve the existing and evolving craft industry. ...The French neglected to boost Cambodian economy....

To some aspects, it can be concluded that the French Protectorate had brought new light to Cambodia's higher education. The French initiated a business-related program and scientific disciplines. As mentioned by Phillippe Peycamb (2007, p 9-10), like other countries in Indochina, the presence of Europeans in Cambodia through entrepreneurs, explorers, missionaries, armies, and colonial officers contributed to advancing the study of disciplines in the Western scientific concept. Especially, the French brought up new secular subjects such as geography, environment studies, telegraph engineering, administration and economics that made Cambodian higher education known across Asia. However, the purpose of educational provision was somewhat arguable whether the education had a real goal to develop skills for Cambodian youth or to build manpower for the French. This point was explicitly commented by Clayton (1995) in an essay "restriction or resistance? French education in Cambodia". Clayton went on to conclude that, on the one hand, the French tried to extend Cambodia education reaching to rural communities. On the other hand, this extension was to prepare manpower for colonial administration in Cambodia, and to remove the genesis of Cambodian education system replaced by the new model, the Franco-Cambodian Education. This assumption make clearly referring to the comment of Ayres (2000, p29) that educational theories of the French education was to transform Cambodian youth into colonial administrative system, especially the boys were trained to obtain higher positions, and children from elite family were sent to study in Vietnam and Paris. There, possibilities were the French could be influenced. Therefore, it should be commented that, instead of developing education and skills per se, the French exploited advantages from education to strengthen its political ideologies and administrative system as part of a plan to occupy Indochina.

2.3 From Independence to Destruction (1950s-1970s)

Sangkum Reas Niyum (Sihanouk Regime) (1953-1970)

After the 90-year patronage of France, on the 09th of November 1953, Cambodian embarked on its Independence Day. The country was ruled by the King Norodom Sihanouk (1953-1970). However, the political situation was under siege because of the civil war, Vietnam War, American bombardment in the Eastern parts of the country. Worse than this, Cambodia was repeatedly threatened by her neighbors: Vietnam and Thailand. Cited from a summary of Gordon and Cyr (1969) in Fergusson & Masson (2008) "*.....from the fear of Phnom Penh...Cambodia's neighbors wish to demolish this country from the world. The statement is directly made to Vietnam and Thailand...that seek all circumstances to take over the Khmer nation....*" For that Sihanouk sought to maintain the French administration and foreign affair in the country and resumed the genesis of French education system. A few years later, it was found that Cambodian education had greatly expanded, especially the development of higher education, which began in the 1960s (International Institute for Education Planning 2011). It was reported that Sihanouk spent up to 20% of the national budget to expand education (Ayres 2000). Within a decade after the independence, large numbers of higher education institutions had been erected across Cambodia, for example, Royal University of Phnom Penh (1960), the Technical University (1964), the Buddhist University (1963), the University of Fine Arts (1966), the University of Agronomic Science (1966), the University of Kompong Cham (1965), the University of Battambang (1968) and the University of Takeo-Kampot (1969) (Fergusson & Masson 2008, cited from Tan Kim Houn (1974)).

Relatively, it was observed that university enrolment had substantially increased from 1480 students in 1960-61 to 3708 in 1964-65, and by 3565 in 1969-70 (Fergusson & Masson 2008), and the Cambodian education curricula was reformed with the assistance of the French and Russian governments (Clayton 2000). Fergusson & Masson go on to emphasize that the French-Russian assistance on the curricula reform was to promote students' knowledge and skills for industries and commerce. It is also noted that, after the independence, Cambodia built the second industries such as cement plant, jute, textile and cotton mills, sawmills and paper and plywood factories and oil refinery (Tulley 2005). Drawing upon the report of French economist Remy Prud'homme claimed that the industries increased from over 1100 in 1956 to 2700 in 1965. The notable achievement of Cambodian higher education at that time was paralleled to the extension of higher education and industrial sector in other countries in the region.

Table 3 Curriculum, Skill Development and Problems during Sihanouk (1950s-1960s)

Schools	Curricula/subjects	Skill Development	Problems
8 HEIs, 30 Faculties	French-Russian Curriculum	Develop skills for industry & commerce	Lack of funds Adult illiterates
Royal University of Phnom Penh	Bachelor's Degree (2/3/4 yrs)	Promote leadership Build up institutional management skills	Low accessibility among school girls
Technical University	Liberal Arts (liberal curriculum)	Change social mobility from agriculture to industry	Lack of information sharing Disparity of population
Buddhist University	Humanity Studies	Articulate virtues of modernism: modern behavior, attitude and modern thoughts	Lack of teaching materials
University of Fine Arts	Buddhist socialism	Promote awareness of political arena	Lack of qualified staffs
University of Agronomic Science	Socialist democracy		Change of education structure
University of Kompong Cham	Law/economics/science Arts & humanities		Less employability
University of Battambang	Business Pedagogy		Political influence
University of Takeo-Kampt	Medicine/dentistry/ Pharmacy Arts & trades Civil engineering		

Although the impetus of Cambodian higher education incepted alongside with the explosion of industry during Sihanouk (1950s-1960s), Fergusson & Masson (1997) and Ayres (2000) gave comments on several pitfalls. First was the inadequate human and financial resource. This problem was justified by Fergusson & Masson on the contrary financial expenses claimed by Sihanouk (see Bilodeau et al. 1955, p. 56-57) and the report of Bureau Regional de l' UNESCO (1965) (Mison et al 1969, p 109). In Bilodeau et al. (1955), Sihanouk himself declared that the national budget was used more to develop education rather than strengthen the arm-forces. Contrasting to this, the report of Bureau regional de l' UNESCO found that only more than 10% of national budget funded to education, almost 30% was given to the national defense. Second was the university enrolment, although increased was only within a few faculties such as Arts, Humanities and Science due to the career trend in the government system. Third was the slow expansion of employment by industry that led to depression among graduates. Compounding the above problems, after World War II and during the Cold War, Cambodia began to fall into political upheaval and education was always a topic behind the political propaganda between political parties (Clayton 2000). Shortly thereafter, Shihanouk's

education curriculum failed short and could not produce graduates with a pool of skills to meet the demands of employment market. For this reason, intellectual people stood up against the government; teachers gave up teaching to join the army. In 1970 was the beginning of decline after Sihanouk was overthrown from power by a coup d'état led by Lon Nol backed by the United States (William, 2009).

Republic Kampuchea (Lon Nol) (1970-1975)

Cambodian higher learning as well as learning at compulsory level rapidly declined after the toppling of Sihanouk. The Monarchism was abolished in a military coup led by Lon Nol who was supported by the United States. In between 1970-1975, Nol Lon took power, and Cambodia returned to severe political unrest and war. Although the government of Lon Nol had outlined four main objectives: *culture, ethics, politics, and societal economy* for the higher learning institutions, the shortages of finance to put forwards this plan was really critical. Despite the university enrolment was slightly increased or was stable in urban areas, the figures of students steadily decreased among provincial universities. Although the government tried to promote salaries, honors, lecturer's opportunities, and build up research skills, provide extensive trainings and consultancy, funds were insufficient; curriculum development and teaching method was slowly [not] progressed (Fergusson & Masson 1997). For this, Dy (2004) commented as the time of degrading education and economy in Cambodia. Worse than this, corruption widely existed; civil war was widespread; schools were destroyed; and teachers and students fled to join the army. Another factor to effect Cambodian's education and economy was the United States' bombardment that destroyed schools and infrastructures. By the 1974, Duggan (1997) claimed that 50% of physical achievements such as hospitals and schools were devastated. This evidence can be testified through the claim of Fergusson and Masson (1997) that the American bombardment completely destroyed Takeo-Kompot Universities and partially damaged University of Kompong Cham. The worse impact was the economic crisis and inflation due to a reduction of exports, financial deficits, shortages in resources and work skills, and industrial competition among neighboring countries, especially Vietnam (Tulley 2005). In April, 1975, the government of Lon Nol was vanquished by Khmer Rouge, but the situation was not better. Of course, it was a turning point of Cambodian history, a time of server upheaval.

Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) (1975-1979)

Democratic Kumpuchea (DK), notoriously known as Khmer Rouge, took over Cambodia on the 17th April 1975, and ended on the 7th January 1979. The new page of Cambodian history began and it is called the Dark Age or the Killing Fields. The DK society called for the non-existence of the previous systems, such as education, economy and religion. People were removed from Phnom Penh with the excuse to escape from the American bombs. The ideologies of the Khmer Rouge were to convert Cambodian society into an egalitarian society. Schools, teachers, educators and scholars were destroyed. According to the discussion in an essay of Ayres (1999), 75 percent of teachers, 96 percent of university students, 67 percent of primary and secondary pupils were killed (cited from the report of People's Republic of Kampuchea, Ministry of Education in the People's Republic of Kampuchea 7/1/1984, Phnom Penh 1984). Also, this regime considered business and the free market system as the mechanism of exploitation, which created inequality in society. Based on Fergusson & Masson (1997) and (Tulley 2005), the eight political ideologies in the Standard of Total View (STV) of Khmer Rouge are:

(1) *Sending people to the work camps (paddy-fields);*

- (2) Abolishing markets and industries;*
- (3) Demolishing all previous government system and currency;*
- (4) Abolishing the religious practices;*
- (5) Murdering all Lon Nol's government officers (the people of 17 April);*
- (6) Living and eating as community;*
- (7) Excelling Vietnamese from Cambodia, and*
- (8) Sending army to the border, especially Vietnam border*

The evidence was clearly made by Pol Pot himself that “the Democratic Kampuchea was the unprecedented societal model, no schools, faculties and no universities”. This remark was strongly supported by his comrade, Khieu Samphorn, who asserted that the previous education system was nothing as they could not teach students to differentiate the reality, to learn the truth of science, to work on agriculture, neither to develop the national economy (Ayres 1999, source: Stanic: Kampuchea 1978, p 67; Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Reports on 18 April 1977, H6). Ayres went on to emphasize that there were no monetary use, no business transactions, no public transportations, no physical infrastructure constructions, no power supplies, no industries and no formal education.

However, a contrary point was made about the existence of education under the Khmer Rouge. To argue this, Ayres highlighted three sources that can testify the existence of education during the Khmer Rouge. The first source is an interview with a member of the former Khmer Rouge army who attended a conference in Phnom Penh on May 5 1975, but the answers were somewhat vague to justify whether education was really existed or abolished. The second source referred to the documents prepared by the Party Centre in September 1975, which mentioned that education was provided to children as a part-time system (normally in the afternoon) which received significant outcomes. The third evidence was the four-year plan created by the Party Centre in a meeting from the 21st July to the 2nd August 1976. In the four-year plan, the Angkar had outlined education policies as the following:

Table 4 Curriculum, Skill Development and Problem during Khmer Rouge (197-1979)

<i>Schools</i>	<i>Curriculum</i>	<i>Skills development</i>	<i>Problems</i>
----------------	-------------------	---------------------------	-----------------

Primary education	3-year programs	Develop Basic Reading	No clear curriculum
General Secondary education	2 elements of ideologies in education (basic literacy and numeracy & technology)	& Writing Cultivate Basic Technical Skills	was mentioned More educational abolition, rather than development
Technical secondary education/ tertiary education	Reading and writing Mathematics Geography Natural Science Physics, Chemistry History of Revolution Party's Politics Consciousness Organization Revolutionary Song (Love Angkar)	Cultivate practical knowledge of technology Articulate cultural awareness & political conscience	Education was fragmented Hostility of social and population mobility Inadequate teachers Unqualified teaching methods Lack of schools/ not teaching and learning materials

To this point, Ayres (1999) made his conclusion on the education in Khmer Rouge as the complicated issue of efforts that occurred without true willingness and enthusiasm to develop under the new aspect of self-independence. However, it is undeniable that Khmer Rouge' attempt was made to build up the power of its revolutionary regime through education, and the philosophical education turned away from the universal education concepts to develop the real intellectual people for the nation. Also, there was no connection between the existing curriculum or replicating curriculum model from industrial countries, especially the United States and France. By contrast, the model of education was framed according to the revolutionary ideology of Maoism that focused on egalitarian society. That means, there was no existence of higher education institution to provide any specific field of study. Business, market and industry were all terminated. Therefore, in between 1975-1979, business education at the higher learning institutions and skill development for industry was nonexistent.

3. From the Foreign Occupations to the Royal Government of Cambodian (1979-Present)

People' Republic Cambodia (Soviet-Vietnam Occupation) (1979-1989)

After three-years, eight-months and twenty-day of destruction by the Khmer Rouge, a new aspect of Cambodian higher education reemerged. An essay of Clayton (1999) gives elaborate comments regarding this respect. By 1979, the end of genocide, all levels of education system were restored and developed. Higher education institutions were reopened to provide educational services to Cambodian youth. The first Cambodian higher learning institution to reopen its doors to Cambodian students was the Royal University of Phnom Penh (1979) (Duggan 1997). The faculties of medicine and education were first welcomed to students in the same year, followed by the Khmer-Soviet Friendship Higher Technical Institute in 1981, the Economics Institute in 1984, and the Agricultural Institute in 1985 (Clayton 1999). Higher education mainly was supported by foreign countries, especially Vietnam and Soviet-Union. Clayton pinpointed that in between 1980-83, 10-20 Vietnamese doctors worked in the faculty of medicine, 40 Vietnamese professors in the faculty of education, 35-40 Vietnamese professors in the Economics Institute, and 56 Soviet professors in the Khmer-Soviet

Institute (Clayton 1999). Moreover, he states that thousands of Cambodian students were sent to study overseas. This was testified by Chandler (1993, p 235) that around 5,000 Cambodian students were offered scholarship to Soviet Union and Eastern bloc countries. This estimated figure was 1,000 less than the number provided by Virak (2009). Virak went on to single out that over six thousands of Cambodian students, more than one thousand of them female, were sent to study in Bulgaria, Cuba, the Czech Republic, East Germany, Hungary, Laos, Mongolia, Poland, Russia, and Vietnam. After ten years (in between 1979-1989), there were 2,650 Cambodian graduates from the Soviet Union, East Germany, Vietnam, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Cuba. A year later, there were 977 doctors, dentists, or pharmacists, 2,196 senior secondary teachers, 1,481 foreign language specialists, 474 technical engineers, 400 economists, and 184 agricultural engineers (Clayton 1999).

Table 5 Curriculum, Skill Development and Problem during the Foreign Occupation (1979-1990)

Schools	Curriculum	Skill development	problem
Economics Institute	5-year courses	Political Training	Conflict of
Faculty of Business	Agricultural	(socialism theories,	political ideology
Khmer-Soviet	Economy	e.g. Maxism-Lenism)	existed in higher
Friendship Higher	Industrial Economy	Technical Training	education
Technical Institute	Commerce	(trade, language,	Lack of human
Medical Institute	Finance	agriculture, and	and financial
Agricultural Institute	Economic Planning	technical knowledge &	resources
Faculty of Education		skills)	Lack of assistance
Russey Technical			
College			

It has been noted that Cambodia's higher education institutions between 1979 and 1989 did not really aim to enhance knowledge and employability skills for the labor market. In turn, the educational philosophy and curricula content attempted to instill communism ideology, to articulate the idea of political issues and interests, and to brainwash people's thinking. As firmly asserted by scholars, higher education under the Russian-Vietnamese occupation was characterized by political ideology of Maxism-Lenism (Clayton 1999; Ayres 2000). The ideology was to transform Cambodia into a socialism bloc that was dominated by Soviet Union against the imperialism of the United States.

Royal Government of Cambodia (1990-present)

Opposed to the Vietnamese occupation in Cambodia, great efforts were made among relevant parties. As a result, several stages of negotiations were processed cooperatively among the three political fractions (Government of Heng Samrin, Seurn San and Khmer Rouge (Khieu Samphon) with regional and international assistance. In July 1988, an informal meeting was held in Jarkarta, Indonesia. Two agendas were discussed: (1) to free Cambodia from Vietnamese occupation and (2) to reconcile the three political fractions and form a new coalition government (Lizee 2000). Consequently, with pressure from Western and regional countries, especially the impact of economic embargo on Hanoi government, and losing support from Soviet Union, Vietnam withdrew the army from Cambodia in September 1989 (Clayton 1999; Ayres 2000; Chandler 1993; Lizee 2000). In 1990, the United States, Australia and China played a role in bringing peace to Cambodia. After the failure of the Peace Agreement in Paris (1989), the second attempt was cautiously made. To this end, on October

1991, the Paris Peace Accord came to the agreement and was signed in 1992, and the Cambodian Nation Election went ahead with the assistance of the United Nations Treaty Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). In 1993, a new government of Cambodia was established, namely, the Royal Government of Cambodia (Kingdom of Cambodia).

Along with the light and hope, Cambodia and its people came to the new page of human living, which is called “Globalization”. Globalization has pulled Cambodia into the global economy. In the new era, it has been noted that high knowledge and skills are necessary, and industry is one of the catalysts in the economic sphere. Therefore, the Government of Cambodia set several National Development Plans, and one element of the development plan is the improvement of higher education to achieve the four angles in the Rectangular Strategy. In responding to the growth of industry and demand of labor force, on the one hand, the Government of Cambodia resumes greater efforts to develop human capital through public universities and on the other hand, the government through the line Ministries has privatized higher education to private sector. Since the first private university, Norton University, opened in 1997, the growth of higher learning institutions has been aggressive. As a result, since 2000, Duggan (1997) claimed that Cambodia’s higher education, faculties, curriculums and subject matters have been significantly developed. In this regard, Cambodian higher education institutions have changed their Policies, Management Structure, Academic Program and Quality Standard.

Education Policies

As accorded by the fourth National Assembly in 2008, the Royal Government of Cambodia formulated her National Education Policies as one wing of the Rectangular Strategy. The new policies are (1) to promote accessibility, (2) to strengthen quality and efficiency, and (3) to develop institutional capacity and management in order to develop human resource and capacity-building (ESP 2010) which is one of the angles set in the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP, 2006). To achieve the main policies, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) set up four strategies: (1). Continue developing the existing policies and strategies for HEIs, (2) give academic freedom and autonomy to HEIs for providing educational service, (3) support HEIs to develop study programs and administrations in line with the assurance quality standard of Accreditation Committee of Cambodia, and (4) strengthen quality and efficiency of HEIs throughout the country level. For this end, the management system has been revised and restructured.

Management Structure

The National Strategic Development Plan and Rectangular Strategic Plan create the sub-sector plans that are directly implemented by the line ministries. For example, the Educational Strategic Plan (ESP) is in charge of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). Through the ESP, the MoEYS outlines several policies and strategies to develop the education system. In part, higher education is one of the priority plans in ESP which is directed by two ministries: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and Ministry of Labour and Vocation Training (MoLVT). The two ministries function differently, but relatively. The MoEYS is in charge of academia while the MoEYS supervises the Vocational stream. Moreover, the two ministries have to cooperate with the line ministries such as Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy and Finance etc. In support of the (MoEYS) in term of Academia, agencies were established: (1) the Department of Higher Education (DHE) and (2) the

Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC). The DHE directly works with the MoEYS while the ACC was established on 31 March, 2003, as an independent agency to ensure the quality standard for higher education. To reach this end, the ACC has to monitor, assess and evaluate 9 minimum standards of HEIs: 1. *Mission*, 2. *Governing Structure, Management and Planning*, 3. *Academic Program*, 4. *Academic Staff*, 5. *Students and Student Services*, 6. *Learning Services*, 7. *Physical Plant*, 8. *Financial Plan and Management*, and 9. *Information Dissemination* (Accreditation Committee of Cambodia, 2009).

Current higher learning institutions are categorized into three divisions: the Royal Academy, University and Specialized School/Institute. Yet, the structures and functions of these institutions are hard to distinguish (Chealy 2009) as they are faced with several constraints, for example, human resources, budget, and management. A part the University operates its educational provisions under the direction of the MoEYS (DHE) and the ACC. With massive development the universities has licensed to academic freedom and autonomous management. The top management of universities is the Rectorate Department that delegates the tasks to the Academic Affair and Management Department. The faculty is entitled accordingly with the name of the subject studies, for example, the Faculty of Business and Management, the Faculty of Social Science, or the Faculty of Laws.

Academic Program

Improving the quality of academic program is the 3rd standard of Higher Education Institution in ACC's agenda. The quality of academic program must fine-tune with the national development goal & be responsive to the demands of labour market and the needs of students. Therefore, the HEI's curriculum encompasses nine indicators:

1. HEI's curriculum must be created through the Curriculum Development Committee and Advisory Board
2. HEI's curricula contents and structure must be designed based on the (Circulation 04/04 ACC/SSR, dated 19 November 2004, on Credit System and Credit Transfer) in line with the mission of HEI that complies with the national development policies and employment market.
3. HEI's curriculum must encompass the system of credit system and credit transfer.
4. HEI's curriculum must comprise of teaching effectiveness.
5. HEI's curriculum must comprise of learning assessment.
6. HEI's curriculum must contain research skill.
7. HEI's curriculum must ensure internal quality assurance consistent to the policies and guideline of MoEYS and ACC.
8. HEI's curriculum must have an efficient filling management and maintaining system.
9. HEI's curriculum must be reviewed, assessed, evaluated and updated to articulate specialized skills in the needs of participants and employment market.

For curricula content (subjects) and credits in the first academic year (the Foundation Year) of a bachelor's degree is directed by the standard of ACC. The students must pass all the core subjects to fulfill the number of credits of the first year; otherwise they are not permitted to go on to study in the following years. The purpose of the foundation year is to provide a flexible program for participants so that they are able to transfer their studies. While curricula content and credits for 2nd/3rd/4th years are designed by the curriculum development committee and advisory board of HEI.

Example of Business Management Curriculum

University X was before the affiliation of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. It was opened in 1984 under foreign assistance, especially from western bloc countries. A few years later, due to great diversification responsive to the demands of participants and market, the institute was transformed to a university.

Table 6 Curriculum of Business Management

Academic Year	Subject Disciplines of Business Management	
	Semester I	Semester I
(Year 1)	Khmer History	Khmer Culture and Civilization
Foundation year	Mathematical Analysis	Basic Computer
48 hrs * 10 courses = 30 credits (1 course = 48hrs= 3 credits/year I)	History of Economic Thoughts	Public Administration
	English Part I	English Part II
	Principle of Management	Principle of Marketing
Year II 48hrs*12 courses = 36 credits (1 course = 48 hrs=3 credits/year II)	Introduction to Business	Marketing Management
	Marketing for Services	Macroeconomics
	Principle of Accounting	Contract Law
	Business Statistics and Forecasting	Organizational Behavior
	Macroeconomics	Managerial Accounting
	Business English	Business English
	Computer *	Computer *
	Marketing Research	Cross Cultural Management
Year III	Financial Management	Environmental Business Management
48hrs*12 courses = 36 credits (1 course = 48 hrs=3 credits/year III)	Inventory Management	Office Management
	Human Resource Management	Commercial Transactions
	Production/Operations Management	Corporate Finance
	Business English	Business English
	Computer *	Computer *
	Research Methodology	Business Ethics
Year IV	Management of Technology	Entrepreneurship
48hrs* 9 courses = 27 credits (1 course = 48 hrs=3 credits/year IV)	Investment Management	International Business Management **
	Project Management	Strategic Management **
	Total Quality Management	Writing Research & Presentation ***

* Optional Courses

** Required for Graduate Examination

*** Not Required to take any courses in year 4, Semester 2

Quality Standard

The key government agencies play a central role to ensure quality standards of higher education institutions. As previously mentioned, to achieve the quality standards, each HEI must implement the nine minimum standards. Yet, the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia has not reached its standard since there are some constraints, for example, lack of experience, lack of clear guidelines and qualification framework, lack of cooperation among relevant agencies and stakeholders and lack of independence. However, with its struggling efforts, the Accreditation Committee of Cambodia has received positive results. Despite remaining issues,

current progress shows that the steps to reach standard policies and quality accordance with regional and global level are a long journey. The notable achievement of HEIs can be testified through the current report of the MoEYS (2011). The report claimed that 91 higher education institutions including public and private in Cambodia are opening to provide educational service to 981 (5.6% female) doctoral students, 12, 887 (estimated 18.18% female) master students, 173, 274 (40.95% female) bachelor's degree and 20,719 (31.49% female) associate degree. In addition, by that time, 29,008 students (about 38.91% female) had already graduated and 53.42% of them were offered scholarship grants from the government. In addition, it was found that business education has absorbed the majority of enrolment at university level. The MoEYS further emphasized that that 65,734 university entrants registered in business education in 2009. This number if compared to other fields account for 50% of the national enrolment. Also the major of business management absorbed the highest enrolment, 13% of the total enrolment at university. Today, there are many prestigious universities offering business programs, especially the major of business management education.

4. Conclusion

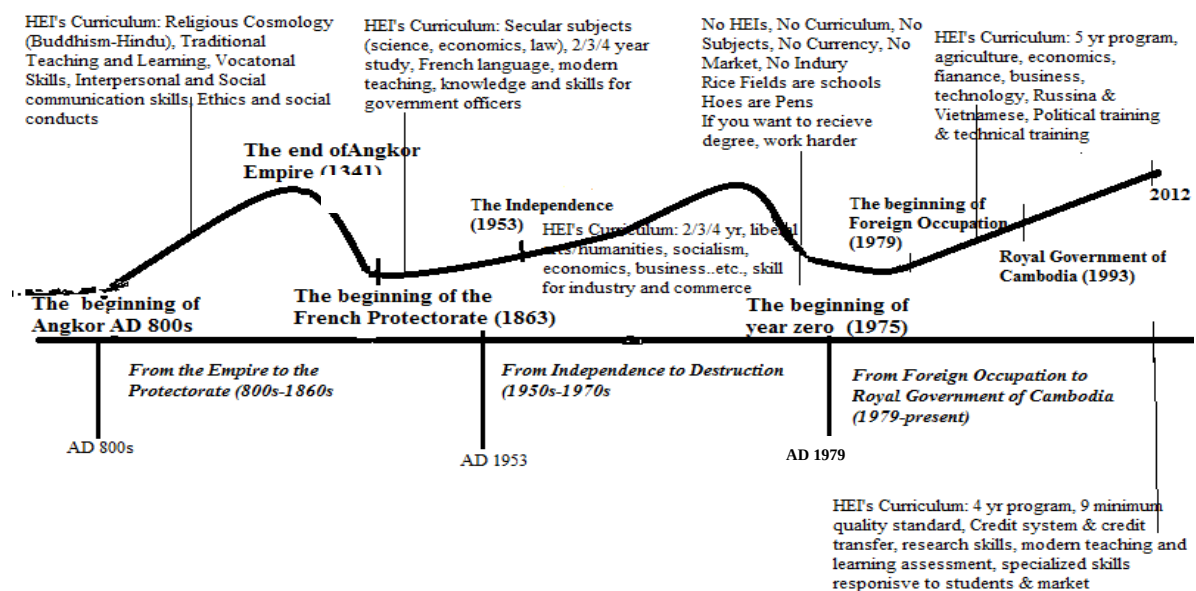


Figure 1: Brief overview of Business Education and Skills Development at Cambodia's University

In short, the brief overview in figure 1 show that business education at the higher learning institutions and skills development in Cambodia has been evolved respectively within each historical perspective. The evolution has been discontinuously and painstakingly influenced by different philosophies to develop knowledge and skills to students. As such, during the Angkor Empire, educational philosophy was abounded by religious cosmology to develop religious concepts, basic literacy, and vocational skills for rural life. Upon the arrival of French Protectorate, education policy was modernized into the Franco-Cambodian model to enhance administrative skills for the government system. In Sihanouk regime, Cambodian higher education was gloriously blooming to provincial level expanded faculties and updated curriculum to develop leadership, management skills, virtue of modernism and political conscience for the birth of industry and commerce. However, education and economy was declined and totally destroyed under the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979). The new chapter of Cambodia's educational history began in 1979 with foreign assistance but was overwhelmed by political issues and interests. Higher learning institutions aimed to articulate knowledge and

skills such as socialism concepts, language, technical knowledge and trade. With massive reforms, today Cambodia's higher learning institutions have been significantly developed due to the ever-increasing demand of labour market in national, regional and global market and political economy. Therefore, several business-related subjects such as economics, management, accounting, marketing, entrepreneurship and others become the fundamental subjects to enhance knowledge, skills, innovative and creative ideas, enterprise spirit, ethics, and morality to students for industry.

References

- Accreditation Committee of Cambodia (ACC) (2009). Minimum Standard for Accreditation Higher Education Institutions. Phnom Penh, 18 February 2009, Cambodia.
- Ayres, M.D. (1999). The Khmer Rouge and education: beyond the discourse of destruction, *Journal of History of Education*, 28(2), 205-218.
- Ayres, M. D. (2000). *Anatomy of a Crisis: Education, Development, and a State in Cambodia 1953-1998*. University of Hawaii Press. United State of America
- Bilodeau, C, Pathammavong, S. & Hong, Q.L. (1955). *Compulsory Education In Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam*. The United Nation Education, Science And Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris.
- CAMFEBA-YEP Project (2008). *Youth and Employment: Bridging the Gap. A study about youth and Employers perspectives on education, skills and opportunities and the future*. Prepared by BDLINK Cambodia Co.,ltd, ILO ACT/EMP, July 2008
- Chet, C.(2009). Higher Education in Cambodia. In Hirosato and Y. Kitamura (eds.). *The Political Economy of Education Reforms and Capacity Development in South East Asia*. Springer Science + Business Media B. V.
- Clayton, T. (1995). Restriction or Resistance? French Colonial Educational Development in Cambodia. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 3(19)-1-14.
- Clayton, T. (1999). *Education under Occupation: Political Violence, Schooling, and Response in Cambodia, 1979-1989*. University Kentucky
- Chandler, D.P (1993). *A History of Cambodia* (2nd Ed.). Westview Press, Inc. The United States
- D'Amico, S. (2009). Cambodia's Human Resource Development: Building a Skilled Labour Force. Cambodian Outlook Conference. Cambodian Development Research Institute & Australian Newtzerland Bank, Plc.
- Dy, S. S. (2004). Strategies and Policies for Basic Education in Cambodia: Historical Perspectives. *International Education Journal*, 5(1), 90-98.
- Duggan, J. S. (1997). The role of international organizations in the financing of higher Education in Cambodia. *Journal of Higher Education* 34: 1–22. Netherland: Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Ford, D. (2006). Cambodia-Growing Pains. *International Higher Education*. The Boston College for International Higher Education, Volume 44-10-11, November 2006.
- Fergusson, C. L. & Gildas Le Masson (1997): A culture under siege: post-colonial higher Education and teacher education in Cambodia from 1953 to 1979. *Journal of History of Education*, 26:1, 91-112.
- Furlough, E. (2005). *Representing Cambodia: French Cultural Politics in "Indochina"*. Teaching Cambodia workshop, Marlboro College and the Hill Center for World Studies, 3 April 2005 University of Kentucky
- Gyallay-Pap, P. (1989). Reclaiming a shattered past: Education for the displaced Khmer in Thailand. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 2, 257-275.

International Finance Cooperation & The Asian Foundation (2009). Listing of Business Establishments in Cambodia's Provincial Towns and Selected Urban Areas. March 2009, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) (2011). Education and Fragility in Cambodia. IIEP Research Paper. Paris, France.

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2007) ILO Policy Brief on Youth Employment in Cambodia. ILO Sub Regional Office for East Asia

International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011). Decent Work Country Program Cambodia (2010-2015). Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Lizee, P.P. (2000). Peace, Power and Resistance in Cambodia: Global Governance and the Failure of International Conflict Resolution. McMillan Press Ltd. London Great Britain.

Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University (PUB) (2009). History of Cambodia. Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Pycam, P. (2007). Negotiating Inter-cultural dialogue in a postcolonial environment; the evolution of institutional knowledge- production in modern Cambodia. Prepared for the New School University Conference on "Ideas Changing History" Panel on: "institutions and ideas"

Royal Government of Cambodia (2004). Policy for Curriculum Development 2005-2009. Government of Cambodia. December 2004. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Royal Government of Cambodia (2009). Education Statistics & Indicators 2008/2009. Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. March 2009, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Royal Government of Cambodia (2010a). National Strategic Development Plan 2009-2013: Triangular Strategic Development Plan. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Royal Government of Cambodia (2010b). Education Strategic Plan (2009/2013). Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport September 2010. 22-24 March 2011, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Royal Government of Cambodia (2011a). Education Statistics and Indicators (2010/2011). EMIS Office, Department of Planning. Phnom Penh, March 2011.

Royal Government of Cambodia (2011b). Summary Report on the Education, Youth and Sport Performance in the Academic Year 2009-2010 and the Academic Year 2010-2011. Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Sophal Ear (1995). Cambodia's Economic Development in Historical Perspective: A Contribution to the Study of Cambodia's Economy. Department of Economics University of California, Berkeley

Torhorst, M. (1966). The development of the educational system in the Kingdom of Cambodia. In Educational Systems of some developing countries in Africa and Asia (pp. 147- 168). Dresden: Verlag Zeit im Bild.

Tulley, J. (2005). Short History of Cambodia: From Empire to Survival. Published in 2005 by Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW 2065, Australia.

Virak, Y (2009). Student Mobility in Southeast Asia. The Case of Cambodia. Paper Presented at the Regional Seminar on Student Mobility in South East Asia. Kula Lumpur, Malaysia.

Williams, F. C. (2009). Educating a Nation: Education as a means to peace in Cambodia? Challenges to Peace building in Cambodia, ISA West Conference 2009

World Bank (2012). Matching Aspiration: Skills for Implementing Cambodia's Growth Strategy. TheWorld Bank, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.