

Editorial: Promotion of Research Culture at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Cambodia

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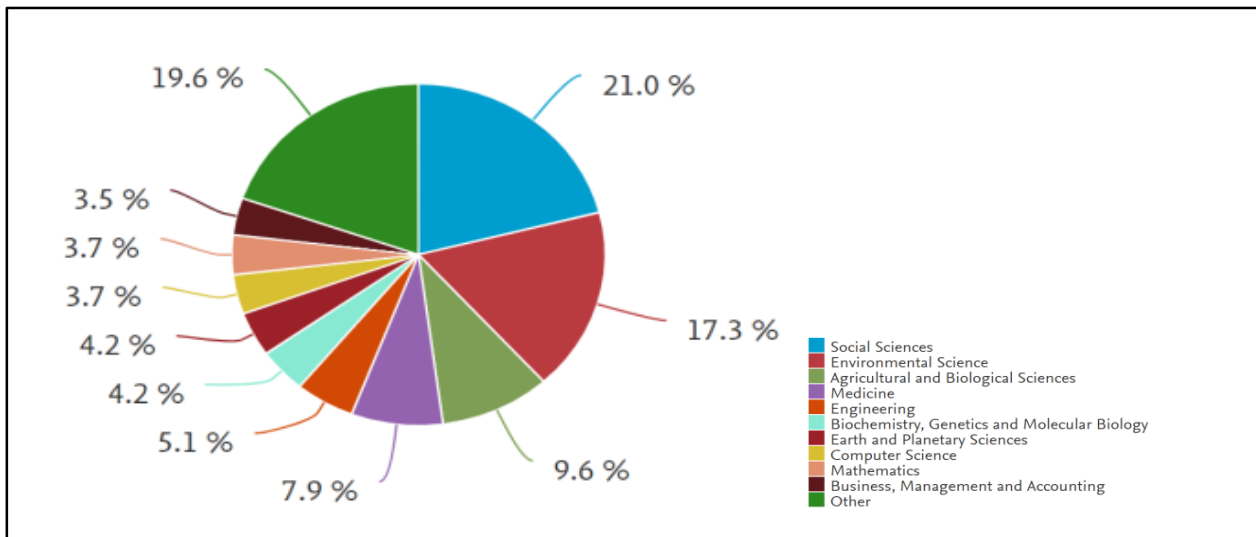
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A well-known saying by Albert Einstein quotes ‘scientific research is based on the idea that everything that takes place is determined by laws of nature, and therefore this holds for the actions of people’. In this modern era, research conducted by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is enormously significant (Migosi et al., 2012) and faculty members are obligated to get involved in research especially academic one (Arimoto, 2014). It is the fact that a product of academic research helps to predict not only to advance knowledge in differing discipline fields but also to enhance teaching effectiveness and improve student learning outcomes (Scott, 2004). Moreover, the HEIs learning exist to accomplish functions associated with scholarly publishing, which circulates research findings and advance new ideas and knowledge leading into creativity and innovation. The number of journal articles published by faculty members has been used for university ranking, and scholarly publications are also used to consider during hire or promotion of faculty members.

As the result, research has been significantly highlighted as a compulsory pursuit of academics at most universities especially research-oriented universities (Altbach, 2014). In the same time, job opportunity and academic promotion at HEIs are now relying upon the achievements in scholarly publication. When faculty members are publishing in the academic world; the publication outlet can determine a scholar’s qualification or status both within the local research community and internationally. In addition, scholarly research and publishing have become an essential piece of the academic community. At the most universities has recognized publication and the center of the scholarly communication process is the academic reward system (Darko-Ampem, 2003).

In Cambodia, the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) is widely considered to be the nation's leading HEIs, in terms of research outcomes. The latest search of international peer-reviewed research publications including an author with an institutional affiliation worked with faculty member at RUPP in Scopus, a worldwide abstract and citation database returned 245 documents and 124 authors. Figure 1 shows that faculty members from RUPP and their research partners has published in various field ranging from science, engineering, social science, environment, medicine and business. Out of the total, Social Science was recorded as high as 21.2% following by Environmental Science (17.2%), Agricultural and Biological Sciences (9.5%). Faculty members at RUPP have worked with researchers across disciplines around the worlds for their research activities and publication. The international affiliations have played a very important role in providing sources of funds and technical support for research and publication.

Figure 1. Publication by faculty and researcher affiliated with RUPP by field of study.



Source: Elsevier, 2020¹

While individual faculty members and academics at RUPP currently publish scientific research, this is driven by individual interests and passions, as well as an ability to mobilize external resources. However, there are few existing mechanisms capable of promoting the development of a research culture of scientific research and publication at either the institutional or national level. In response, RUPP has been selected by relevant government agencies and international finance institutions such as the World Bank, to showcase best-practice HEIs in

¹ <https://www.scopus.com/affil/profile.uri?afid=60071997>

Cambodia. This privilege has been granted as a result of the strong effort demonstrated by RUPP in promoting the publication of scientific research by faculty members.

Up-to-date, RUPP is one of the few public universities in Cambodia that possesses the capacity to promote quality research and development output due to strong research background and capacity of faculty members. In promoting a culture of research and publication, the RUPP has developed the RUPP Strategic Plan (2019–2023) and Policy on Research Development and Innovation for implementing research-oriented university. In addition, RUPP now hosts various journals such as the Cambodia Journal of Natural History; *Insight: Cambodia Journal of Basic and Applied Research*; and the Cambodia Communication Review as part of the process of establishing these new scientific communities. These journals publish academic and applied research from both within Cambodia; and outside of Cambodia that contributes to the social, economic, and environmental development of Cambodia and the region.

In early 2020, RUPP will soon launch the Policy on Research Development and Innovation and it is an instrumental in stimulating RUPP as a research-intensive university. Within the next 10 years, RUPP is still working to promote research-related activities and publication; the mission of RUPP is exploring and investigating theories, concepts, ideas and social phenomena for establishing novel knowledge and scientific evidence in priority fields at RUPP, for both academic and applied purposes, recognizing and motivating achievements of research development and innovation produced by RUPP faculty and staff, building the knowledge, skills, and competencies that enhance the opportunities available to RUPP researchers to conduct and publish academic and applied research, and creating enhanced national, regional, and international collaborative research partnerships that support RUPP faculty and staff through grants and exchange programs.

The newly-established Policy on Research Development and Innovation will illustrate how RUPP plans to conduct research-related activities such as grant management, publication and hosting knowledge hubs. It is also very important for the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and development partners such as the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Through this document they can clearly observe to the approach of RUPP to research, development and innovation.

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