Publications of Asia-Pacific International University From 2017 to 2022 in International Conference Proceedings, TCI, and SCOPUS Databases

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Abstract

This study analyzed faculty publications from Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) that were published in international conference proceedings, Thai-Journal Citation Index (TCI) Centre, and SCOPUS databases over the past five years. From 2017 to 2022, 259 research articles were published by AIU instructors from various academic disciplines. The number of publications fluctuated from year to year and did not show steady growth. Out of 259 articles, the highest number of publications was in TCI journals (46%), followed by conference proceedings (33.2%). The findings further revealed that research articles published in the SCOPUS database had the highest number of citations (64.4%). The largest contribution to articles published in SCOPUS came from the Faculty of Science, accounting for 50%. On average, each article published in SCOPUS received 10.4 citations while an article published in the TCI database had only one citation per article. Thus, an article published in the SCOPUS database had 10 times higher citations than an article published in the other databases. Some implications for AIU instructors' publication trends were discussed briefly.

Keywords: *Asia-Pacific International University, publications, conferences, quality journals*

Introduction

Asia-Pacific International University (AIU) is a Seventh-day Adventist institution of higher education located in Muaklek District, Saraburi Province in central Thailand. The university was formerly a small college representing a union of three institutions, namely Southeast Asia Union College, Bangkok Sanitarium and Hospital School of Nursing, and Mission College (Maidom, 2020). Currently, AIU has 976 undergraduate and graduate students in seven different faculties. The ratio of teaching staff to students is 1:9 (Asia Pacific International University, 2022). The university is categorized under Group B: Institutions emphasizing producing graduates at the bachelor degree level (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2017; ONESQA, 2013). Every academic year between August to September, an internal quality assurance audit requires every program of studies and faculty to disseminate self-assessment reports for educational quality. Publication scores are a key component in measuring the contribution of full-time instructors to developing the body of knowledge in their fields of expertise (Office of the Higher Education Commission, 2017). Full-time instructors are encouraged to publish their academic output in journals listed in the TCI or SCOPUS databases; however, less experienced teachers are free to start with national/international conference proceedings. Therefore, publications are a vital indicator in academic settings of instructor productivity and the quality of education (Aksnes et al., 2019). A paper published in a high-impact journal indexed in Elsevier's SCOPUS or the Web of Science, also known as Institute of Scientific Information or ISI, is perceived as the key performance index that affects institutional rankings (Sirisathitkul & Sirisathitkul, 2014). In this study, the aim was to investigate the publications of AIU responsible program instructors over the past five years to provide information to supports strategic plans for developing dissemination of research output.

Literature Review

Academic Conference Proceedings

Academic conferences play a vital role in providing a platform for both experienced and novice researchers from various fields of expertise to disseminate their knowledge and publish their research results (Meho, 2019). Conference proceedings typically consist of manuscripts presented by the

researchers who attended the conference. In many fields, conference proceedings are published as supplements to academic journals and distributed in print or electronic form after the conference ends (Kochetkov et al., 2021). Decisions to select manuscripts for wider circulation are made by the conference organizing committees (Kochetkov et al., 2021). Conference proceedings are normally disseminated by the organizing or co-organizing institutions. For example, the International Scholars' Conference (ISC) was jointly established by four Adventist institutions in Southeast Asia, including Asia-Pacific International University, Adventist University of the Philippines, Universitas Advent Indonesia, and Universitas Klabat. The ISC is hosted annually on a rotating basis by the four institutions, and welcomes experienced and novice researchers from the four partner institutions and other universities.

Thai-Journal Citation Index (TCI)

The TCI Centre was established to assess citation impact factors for Thai academic journals, and was initially sponsored by King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi in 2001 (Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre, n.d.). TCI's main objectives are to develop and maintain the TCI database system, tabulate and provide an annual report on Thai journal impact factors, disseminate research output and raise its quality to that of international standards, and establish international collaboration on research and journal quality improvement (Thai-Journal Citation Index Centre, n.d.). In 2012, the TCI database housed only 480 journal titles (Sombatsompop et al., 2012). Currently, TCI includes 1,194 on the Thai Journals Online (ThaiJO) platform, with over 239,000 articles in its e-journal database system ranging in all fields of study, including science, technology, humanities, and social sciences (ThaiJO, 2023). TCI received funding from Thailand Science Research and Innovation to develop the quality of Thai journals indexed in the SCOPUS database as part of a project entitled "System Development and Improvement of Thai Journal Quality in the Scopus Database" (Thai Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology, n.d.). As a result of this effort, 46 titles of Thai journals are in TCI-TSRI-Scopus Collaboration Project Phase 2 (Thai Journal Citation Index Centre, 2021). Through continued collaborative efforts, more titles of Thai journals are expected to be accepted for indexing in the SCOPUS database in the future.

Elsevier's SCOPUS

SCOPUS was launched in 2004 by Elsevier, an academic publishing company based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and it has grown quickly, becoming the largest index and citation database in the world (Quvae, 2023). Manuscripts indexed in the SCOPUS database must be peer-reviewed for quality and authenticity by the journals in which they are published (SCOPUS, 2023). SCOPUS assesses journals on an ongoing basis to verify that their quality is well maintained. As part of the evaluation or re-evaluation process, concerns may be raised whether to continue or discontinue a journal's indexation (Krauskopf, 2018). SCOPUS helps to combat predatory journals or untrustworthy journals that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship; by publishing misleading information, such journals threaten the integrity of the academic publishing industry (Frandsen, 2022; Hayden et al., 2021). In 2021, over 41,000 titles of academic journals covering 240 disciplines were indexed in the SCOPUS database (SCOPUS, 2023). As one of the largest academic databases that contains scholarly literature from almost every discipline, with over a quarter of a billion articles and book chapters, SCOPUS is hailed as a "global" database of knowledge widely used for bibliographic research and academic assessment (Tennant, 2020). SCOPUS also provides academic journal rankings, author profiles, and an h-index calculator–a metric used to measure a researcher's research output and impact, calculated based on the number of publications and the number of times those publications have been cited by other researchers (Paperpile LLC, 2023; Phoocharoensil, 2022), which are significant indicators for Quacquarelli Symonds world university rankings (Horta & Santos, 2016; Vernon et al., 2018).

During 2007–2014, Sirisathitkul and Sirisathitkul (2014) analyzed the research contributions of teachers from Walailak University, Thailand, in SCOPUS, ISI, and TCI databases. They found that

through national and international research collaboration, the number of international research publications increased remarkably, and most publications had multiple authors. In the current study, the aim was to investigate the research contributions of AIU, a small private international university with a student population of less than 1,000. This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How many research articles were published by AIU instructors from 2017 to 2022?
2. Where were these articles published?
3. What was the impact of various types of publications?

Materials and Method

Research Instrument and Data Collection

To investigate the number of publications, the researchers counted research and academic articles reported in self-assessment reports provided by the university's Quality Assurance Office over the past five years, from 2017 to 2022. The number of research and academic articles published in ISC and other conference proceedings, TCI Tier 1 and TCI Tier 2 journals, and the SCOPUS database were tabulated. The number of instructors from each faculty of the academic year was also used to calculate the ratio of publications per instructor. The total number of publications and ratio of publications per instructor from each faculty are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 *Total Number of Publications and Ratio of Publications Per Instructor From Each Faculty*

Faculty	2017–2018		2018–2019		2019–2020		2020–2021		2021–2022		Total	Publications/
	RA	INS	RA	INS	RA	INS	RA	INS	RA	INS	RA	INS
FAH	10	18	9	16	6	16	2	17	7	17	34	0.4
FBA	18	25.5	16	23	11	23	12	22	17	21	74	0.6
FEP	3	11	9	9	15	11	4	9	13	10	44	0.9
FIT	-	-	4	5	1	5	2	5	2	5.5	9	0.4
FNS	10	33	10	31	7	29	8	23	7	23.5	42	0.3
FRS	3	12.5	2	7	8	7	8	7	7	7	28	0.7
FSC	6	8	6	8	7	8	5	10	4	11	28	0.6
TOTAL	50		56		55		41		57		259	

Note. FAH = Faculty of Arts and Humanities; FBA = Faculty of Business Administration; FEP = Faculty of Education; FIT = Faculty of Information Technology (established in 2018); FNS = Mission Faculty of Nursing; FRS = Faculty of Religious Studies; Faculty of Science; RA = Research and Academic Articles; INS = Instructor.

Data Analysis

The researchers examined the authorship of each article and categorized it into single authorship or multiple authors. The number of citations of all the research and academic articles, including conference proceedings published by instructors from AIU during 2017–2022, were traced in Google Scholar, TCI, and SCOPUS databases.

Findings

To respond to Research Question 1 concerning the number of research articles published by AIU instructors, it was found that from 2017 to 2022, 259 research and academic articles were published by AIU instructors. The instructors from the Faculty of Business Administration (FBA) produced the highest number, which made up 28.6% of the total, followed by 17% by the Faculty of Education (FEP), and 16.2% by the Faculty of Nursing (FNS). The instructors from the Faculty of Information Technology (FIT) published the fewest articles (3.5%). However, it is worth noting that FIT was only established in 2018, and so the FIT had no publications during the 2017–2018 academic year. Table 2 displays the number of publications, percentages contributed by different faculties, and the ratio of publications per instructor.

Table 2 *Number of Publications, Percentages by Faculties, and Ratio of Publications Per Instructor*

Faculty	No. of Publications	Percentage	Ratio of Publications Per Instructor
FAH	34	13.1	0.4
FBA	74	28.6	0.6
FEP	44	17.0	0.9
FIT	9	3.5	0.4
FNS	42	16.2	0.3
FSC	28	10.8	0.6
FRS	28	10.8	0.7
Total	259	100.0	0.6

As seen from Table 2, instructors from FEP tended to produce slightly more publications compared to instructors from other faculties when the ratio of full-time instructors per research article was calculated. This implies that, on average, each instructor from FEP had 0.9 papers per academic year. The second highest ratio of publication per instructor was from FRS, which published an average of 0.7 papers per instructor per academic year. This was calculated based on the number of full-time instructors teaching in each academic year.

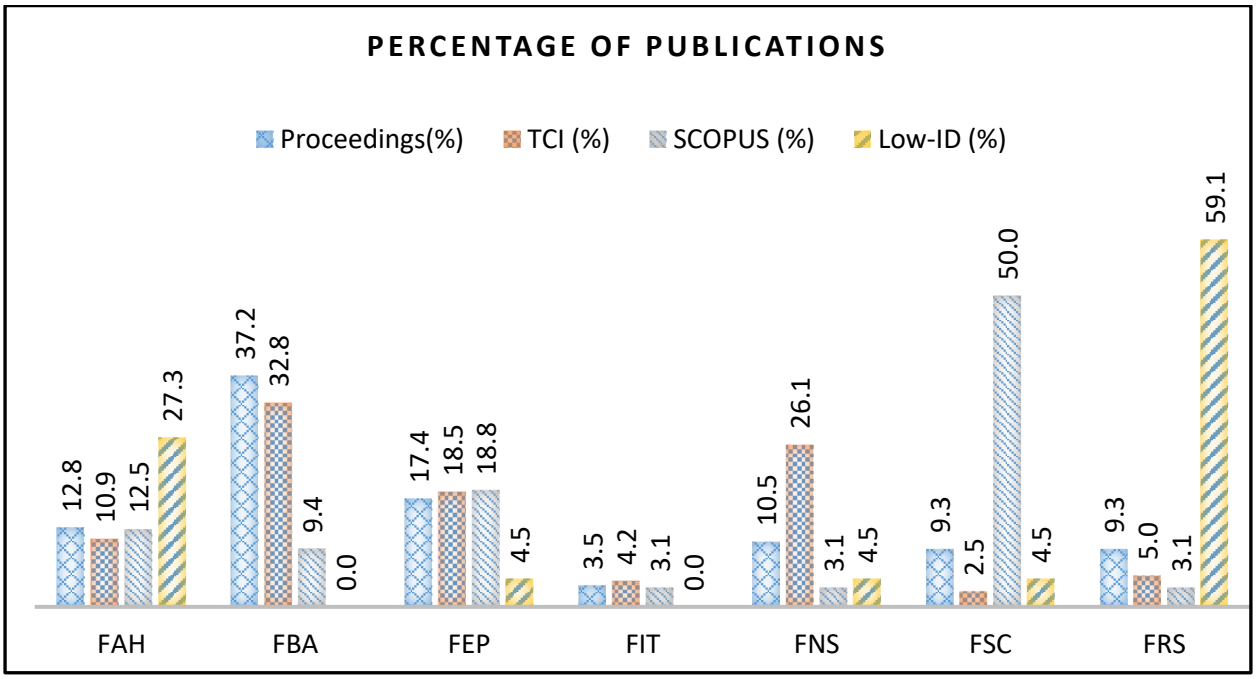
To address Research Question 2 regarding the venues used by AIU instructors, it was found that of the 259 articles, 86 of them were published in conference proceedings, 65 in TCI Tier 1 journals, 54 in TCI Tier 2 journals, 32 in SCOPUS, and 22 papers were published in low-impact journals. The number of publications fluctuated from year to year and did not show steady growth. It was found that 190, or 73.4% of the research articles had multiple authors, whereas 69 papers, or 26.6% were published by single authors. The number of publications in different databases is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 *Number of Publications of AIU Instructors in Proceedings, TCI, SCOPUS, and Low-impact Databases*

Faculty	Conference Proceedings	TCI Journals		SCOPUS Journals	Low Impact Publications	Total
		Tier 1	Tier 2			
FAH	11	9	4	4	6	34
FBA	32	18	21	3	0	74
FEP	15	10	12	6	1	44
FIT	3	3	2	1	0	9
FNS	9	22	9	1	1	42
FSC	8	1	2	16	1	28
FRS	8	2	4	1	13	28
Total	86	65	54	32	22	259

As shown in Table 3, the largest group of publications produced by AIU instructors was in TCI journals (46%), followed by conference proceedings (33.2%). The instructors from the Faculty of Business Administration produced the highest number, which made up 28.6%. However, those publications were mostly in conference proceedings. Instructors from the Faculty of Science published the highest number of articles in the SCOPUS database (50%), followed by the Faculty of Education and Psychology (18.8%), and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities (12.5%). The percentage of publications produced by different faculties is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 *Percentage of Publications Produced by Different Faculties*



From 2017 to 2022, most AIU instructors were found to co-author research and academic articles with colleagues from the faculty and from outside institutions, which accounted for 72.6% of publications, whereas 27.4% of the articles had single authors. This suggests that collaboration and teamwork are common practices among AIU instructors, which can have some implications. For example, collaborative research can lead to more diverse perspectives, innovative ideas, and improved research quality. Additionally, the high proportion of co-authored articles may indicate a strong research culture and networking opportunities within and outside the institution. The publications produced by AIU instructors were classified in terms of authorship and number of citations, as illustrated in Table 4.

Table 4 *Publications of AIU Instructors Analyzed According to Authorship and Number of Citations*

Faculty	Total Publications	Single Author	Multiple Authors	Total Citations
FAH	34	7	27	105
FBA	74	22	52	94
FEP	44	12	32	146
FIT	9	2	7	3
FNS	42	8	34	7
FSC	28	5	23	149
FRS	28	15	13	15
Total	259	71	188	519

Note. The number of citations was retrieved on February 21, 2023

To address Research Question 3 concerning the type of publications with a good impact, it was found that the research and academic articles published by the instructors from FSC received the highest citations (149 citations or 28.7%) over the past five years, followed by articles published by the instructors from FEP (146 citations or 28.1%), and FAH (105 citations or 20.2%). The impact of research articles can be measured through the substantial rise in citations by other researchers in a similar field. The top five research articles that received the highest citations were “Comparative heterochromatin profiling reveals conserved and unique epigenome signatures linked to adaptation

and development of malaria parasites" published in *Cell Host Microbe*, 2018, with 89 citations, "Factors that explain academic dishonesty among university students in Thailand" published in *Ethics & Behavior*, 2017, with 62 citations, "Reading habits and their influence on academic achievement among students at Asia-Pacific International University, published in *Proceedings of International Scholars Conference*, 2019, with 33 citations, "The effects of cash conversion cycle on profitability: An insight into the agriculture and food industries in Thailand" published in *Asian Journal of Business and Accounting*, 2018, with 31 citations, and "We need to start thinking about promoting the demand, uptake, and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccine NOW!" published in *Public Health in Practice*, 2020, with 19 citations. The first two, fourth, and fifth articles were published in the SCOPUS database, while the third article was in the international conference proceedings.

The articles with their associated number of citations were retrieved from Google Scholar, SCOPUS, and TCI databases and the details are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 *Frequency of Citations and Indexing Databases*

Indexing Databases	No. of Publications	Frequency of Citations	Percentage
Proceedings	86	60	11.6
TCI	119	115	22.2
SCOPUS	32	334	64.4
Low-impact Databases	22	10	1.9

As seen in Table 5, 32 research articles published in the SCOPUS database received the highest number of citations (334 citations or 64.4%) compared to a far greater number of articles published in TCI or proceedings but with a lower number of citations. On average, one article published in the SCOPUS database received 10.43 citations, while an article published in the TCI databaseor in conference proceedings received only 1.43 citations per article. In other words, an article in the SCOPUS database received 10 times more citations than articles published in the other databases. Thus, the type of publications with a high impact were the ones published in the SCOPUS database.

Discussion

This study revealed that 259 research and academic articles were published by AIU instructors from 2017 to 2022. The instructors from FBA produced the largest number of research articles; however, instructors from FEP had the highest ratio of publications per full-time instructor. In other words, instructors from FEP were the most active contributors to publications. One explanation for this occurrence might be because the FBA offers a Master of Business Administration degree and the FEP operates a Master of Education program (Asia-Pacific International University, 2022). Graduate students in the master's degree programs are required to publish their research findings in conference proceedings or a peer-reviewed journal to fulfill graduation requirements (OHEC, 2017).

The other five faculties deliver undergraduate programs where each full-time teaching instructor is required to publish a minimum of one research article during a five-year period (ONESQA, 2013). Some instructors may only meet bare minimum requirements due to inadequate training from their alma mater, limited personal interest, or insufficient commitment to research, which results in a low number of publications. Based on the internal quality assurance criterion, a low number of publications or academic output reflects the quality of study programs when viewed by stakeholders in the education sector (Sattayawaksakul et al., 2013). As reported in Table 2, the overall ratio of publication per AIU instructor (0.6 per year) was slightly low. The findings showed that the number of publications from 2017 to 2022 fluctuated from year to year, and showed no constant growth. The academic administrators and deans need to urge teaching instructors under their supervision to actively engage in research activities; perhaps a remuneration package should be established as a motivational tool to increase publications. As defined by OHEC (2017), full-time tertiary instructors need to develop their academic potential by regularly adding to the body of knowledge in their areas of expertise through participation in research and dissemination of their findings to benefit the

academic sector and improve national competitiveness. If a research culture is not mandated, university instructors may not be motivated to publish nationally and internationally, and a small and self-funded university may not be competitive in the international arena, for its recognition is limited in international ranking systems (Crocco, 2018).

Regarding publication venues, the instructors published their academic outputs in four different platforms: International conference proceedings, TCI journals, SCOPUS journals, and low-impact databases. The study showed that most research and academic articles were published in the TCI database, which accounted for nearly half of all publications, followed by international conference proceedings, which contributed to one-third, and SCOPUS, which made a small portion of one-tenth. Most instructors published their research in national journals to increase the quality of dissemination of research findings in their countries (Thai-Journal Citation Index Center, n.d.). Furthermore, national journals indexed in the TCI database are varied and cover many academic disciplines (ThaiJO, 2023). Many TCI journals welcome manuscripts in the Thai language, which helps improve scholarly communication among Thai scholars from various disciplines (Thai-Journal Citation Index Center, n.d.). As reported in Figure 1, the instructors from FBA and FNS published the highest number of articles in TCI, for most full-time instructors from these two faculties are Thai. Interestingly, FSC, which had the third lowest number of full-time instructors (as shown in Table 1, an average of nine instructors per academic year) after FIT and FRS, published the largest number of articles in SCOPUS (50%) followed by instructors from FEP (almost one-fifth). One plausible explanation for this phenomenon was that FSC had experienced instructors with broad-based skills in publishing in high-impact journals. This evidence is reflected by the university self-assessment reports, which follow the criteria defined by the OHEC (2017) and ONESQA (2013) manuals.

Another indicator that contributes to such findings was the ratio of full-time science instructors with doctoral degrees. This was higher compared to instructors in other faculties, as shown in the university academic bulletin (Maidom, 2020). Horta and Santos (2016) claimed that instructors who published while completing their Ph.D. studies were found to have more productive academic careers compared to those who did not publish during their Ph.D. studies, or those with a lower level of university degrees. Thus, the academic degree hierarchy is perceived to be the pinnacle of educational achievement, which leads to greater academic output and visibility in the long run (Jairam & Kahl, 2012). On the contrary, instructors from FRS published nearly half (46.4%) of all their research in journals indexed in low-impact databases over the past five years. This might be because manuscripts discussing religious dogmas are produced in response to local needs or address issues related to biblical principles and applications for the congregational members. Journals that publish such articles may be underrepresented in the databases considered in this review. However, further investigation by engaging in interviews with FRS instructors is needed for a more comprehensive understanding of such findings.

Concerning the type of publication with good impact, the findings revealed that research articles published in the SCOPUS database produced a positive impact as evidenced by the number of citations. It was found that, on average, one article published in the SCOPUS database received 10 times morecitations than articles published in the TCI database or conference proceedings. Interestingly, four out of five top articles that received the highest citations were published in the SCOPUS database. These findings are congruent with data presented by Sirisathitkul and Sirisathitkul's (2015), who reported that a publication in SCOPUS or ISI had a greater impact factor than an article published in a less popular database, including TCI. In a similar vein, Phoocharoensil (2022) claimed that researchers or scholars today are likely to invest efforts and strive to publish their manuscripts in SCOPUS-indexed journals for recognition, broader visibility, and career development. Several universities in Thailand, particularly the national research universities that offer graduate degree programs, require graduate students to publish their articles in SCOPUS-indexed journals before graduation. This could help improve the university's reputation, as citations in high-impact journals play a significant role in the global university ranking system. Ebrahim (2015) posited that as higher education institutions are competing in the world of academia, publications and citations become

significant indicators to gauge institutional achievement in the global arena in terms of global and regional research contributions. Additionally, Vernon et al. (2018) found in a systematic review of university ranking systems that research performance measures and citations are the most weighted indicators that influence the ranking system. Thus, publications in a well-known database, such as SCOPUS, can have a positive influence on academic reputation.

Conclusions and Implications

In conclusion, this study investigated the publications of AIU instructors from 2017 to 2022. The findings showed that during the five years, 259 publications were produced by AIU instructors from seven academic disciplines. The findings revealed that the number of research articles showed no steady growth. Most articles were published in national journals indexed in the TCI database, followed by conference proceedings. A small portion of the articles were published in SCOPUS and in low-impact databases. Nearly three-fourths of these publications had multiple authors. Instructors from FBA had the highest number of publications and published their articles in conference proceedings and the TCI database. However, when calculating the ratio of full-time instructors per publication, instructors from FEP were found to be more productive in research activities. Instructors from FSC had the highest number of publications in the SCOPUS database despite a small number of full-time instructors compared to other faculties. The articles published in SCOPUS-indexed journals, although limited in number, yield a more positive impact, as evidenced by a higher number of citations.

These findings provide some implications for academic administrators and faculty deans who oversee academic standards and the quality of study programs. The academic administrators and deans should encourage instructors under their supervision to take part in research studies and make attainable plans for research and publication to improve the institution's academic reputation. These instructors can access sources of information and networks of professional support when engaging in research activities in their areas of expertise that would assist them in resolving particular problems arising in their classrooms more effectively. The results obtained from the present study may help university administrators, the research office, and the internal quality assurance office to establish research strategies and operational plans to promote a research culture among university instructors to increase their research output and establish collaborative agreements with partner institutions or Seventh-day Adventist institutions across the globe. In addition, the findings may also inform the teaching instructors about their research performance and contributions when the ratio of published articles per instructor per year is compared to the performance of other instructors within and outside the university. Self-appraisal helps instructors to know their accomplishments or shortcomings, in that they can find opportunities for improvement to optimize their full potential.

Future research initiatives could focus on the reasons behind the lack of steady growth in the number of research articles published by AIU instructors. This could include exploring potential barriers to research and publication, such as lack of funding support, or incompetent research skills, as well as examining potential strategies for increasing research output, such as providing incentives or resources to faculty members. Examining the impact of publications in different databases on academic reputation and recognition could be another area for future research. For example, further investigation could be done to explore the differences in citation impact between articles published in national journals indexed in the TCI database versus those published in SCOPUS-indexed journals, as well as exploring potential strategies for increasing publication in higher-impact databases.

Limitation

The current analysis focused on the number of citations as a metric for measuring the impact of publication. We did not include an evaluation of the quality of the papers published. Evaluating the quality of papers published is an essential aspect that should be considered in future studies. Including an evaluation of the quality of the papers published in future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of a publication and its overall significance to the field.

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