

Unveiling scholarly publications in Scopus contributed to the SDGs: A lesson learned from a Cambodian university

Editorial

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1. Introduction

Scopus is an abstracting and citation database, indexing various journals, book series, conference proceedings, and trade publications, among others. As of July 2024, Scopus had covered more than 97.3 million records, 28.3 thousand active serial titles, and 368 thousand books from more than seven thousand publishers and 19 million author profiles (Scopus, n.d.-a). Recently, Scopus has categorized publications based on their contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), allowing us to see which specific SDGs publications align with (Scopus, n.d.-b). Notably, the United Nations' SDGs contain 17 specific goals ranging from no poverty through to partnerships for the goals, aiming to solve real-world problems by 2030 (United Nations, n.d.). In this regard, documents in Scopus database are mapped using search queries and predictive machine element to identify each SDG. Moreover, Times Higher Education (THE), one of the leading world university rankings, has also gathered publications by SDG data from Scopus for defining university impact rankings by SDGs (Scopus, n.d.-b). Therefore, understanding research publications to SDG contributions is pivotal for researchers and academics in sharing and advancing their knowledge for addressing global challenges.

Cambodia became a lower middle-income country in 2015 (World Bank, 2024). Since then, it has been noted that Cambodian Scopus-indexed publications have significantly increased annually, especially between 2015 to 2024 with a total of 6,042 documents (see Figure 1). According to the Scopus database (Search query: [Documents within affiliation country: Cambodia]), by December 23, 2024, there had been 8,475 publications from all institutions and organizations in Cambodia. Given that only 2,433 documents were published when Cambodia was a low-income country before 2015. Despite its relatively young age, the University of Puthisastra (UP) has become the second leading publisher (e.g., 380 publications), while the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) has been the first rank with the highest publications of 517 documents among Cambodian higher institutions (HEIs), with exception to non-HEIs. A previous study by Ros and Heng (2022) reported that Cambodia published 4,511 documents in Scopus database between 1999 to 2019. During that period, UP received only 8th rank, whereas RUPP stood at the first rank among Cambodian HEIs. It is important to note that UP has started publishing in 2015, while RUPP has published since 1998. It is evident that UP has made significant progress toward scholarly research and publications in Scopus database.

This editorial unveiled the UP's publications in Scopus database to the SDG contributions among Cambodian universities. The editorial also revealed that THE has recognized UP as one of the universities pursuing SDGs in 2024 and divided into their impact rankings for individual SDG. In addition, UP established its own journal entitled "Journal of Cambodian Health (JCH)" for strengthening the research culture and publications locally and internationally. This journal has promoted awareness and understanding of knowledge that is relevant to the United Nations' SDGs. Information and progress of

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the JCH will be provided to authors, researchers, and readers for their interests in reading and publishing their research in our journal.

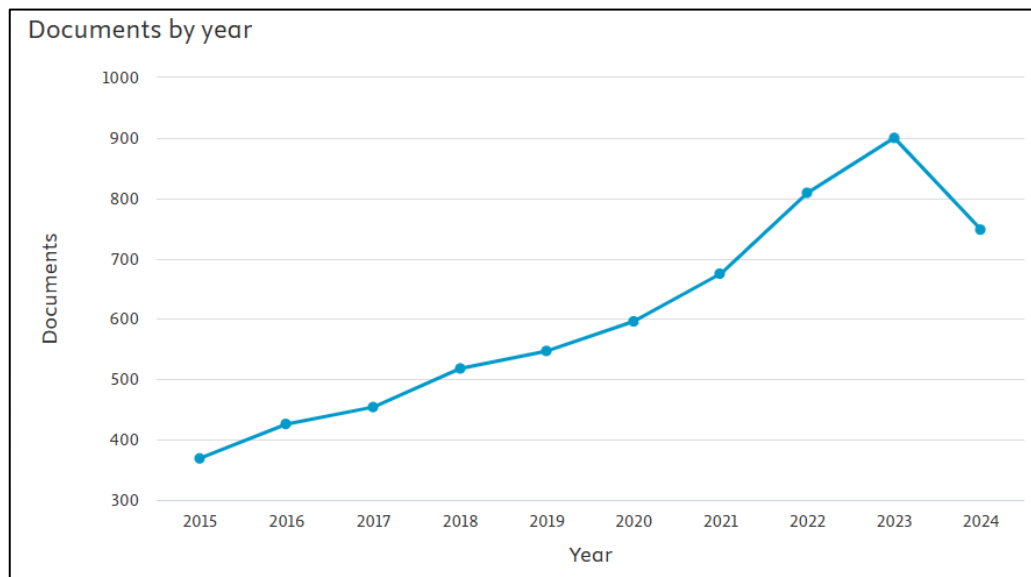


Figure 1. Cambodia's publication in Scopus database between 2015 to 2024

2. Publications by UP indexed in Scopus

UP has published research that has been indexed in Scopus since 2015. As of December 2024, there were a total of 382 publications by authors having the UP affiliation (Scopus query: search organizations, University of Puthisastra, retrieved on December 23, 2024). As shown in Figure 2, the number of publications between 2015 to 2019 slightly increased. Remarkably, the number of publications increased exponentially between 2020 to 2022 and had a slight decline in 2023 but attempted to recover and bounced back in 2024.

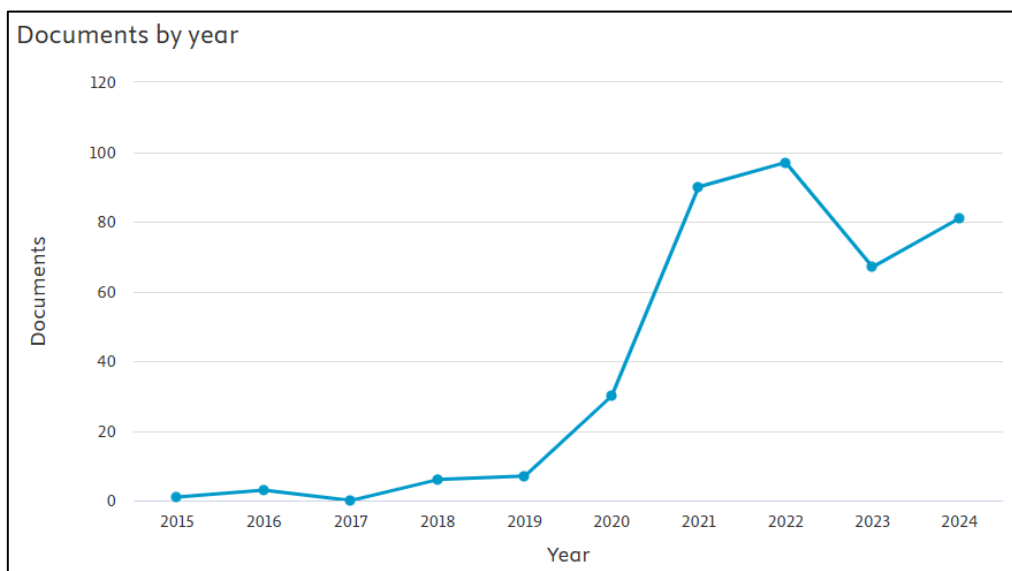


Figure 2. Publications in Scopus database between 2015 to 2024

As a private university, UP mainly focused on health sciences and technology. Thus, most publications were related to subject areas of medicine, dentistry, biochemistry genetics and molecular biology,

immunology and microbiology as shown in Table 1. This directly indicates the UP's commitment to education quality in health sciences within its research and publication. Moreover, as can be seen in Figure 3, most publications were original research and review papers with 64.4% and 19.6% respectively among 382 publications in total. This indicates that the UP's publications had a significant impact across varying disciplines, particularly through research articles.

Table 1. Documents published by subject area between 2015 to 2024

Documents by subject area	No. of documents (%)
Medicine	32.2
Dentistry	25.1
Biochemistry Genetics and Molecular Biology	6.9
Immunology and Microbiology	6.9
Multidisciplinary	4.8
Pharmacology, Toxicology and Pharmaceutics	3.9
Environmental Science	3.0
Materials Science	2.5
Health Professions	2.0
Nursing	2.0
Other	10.7

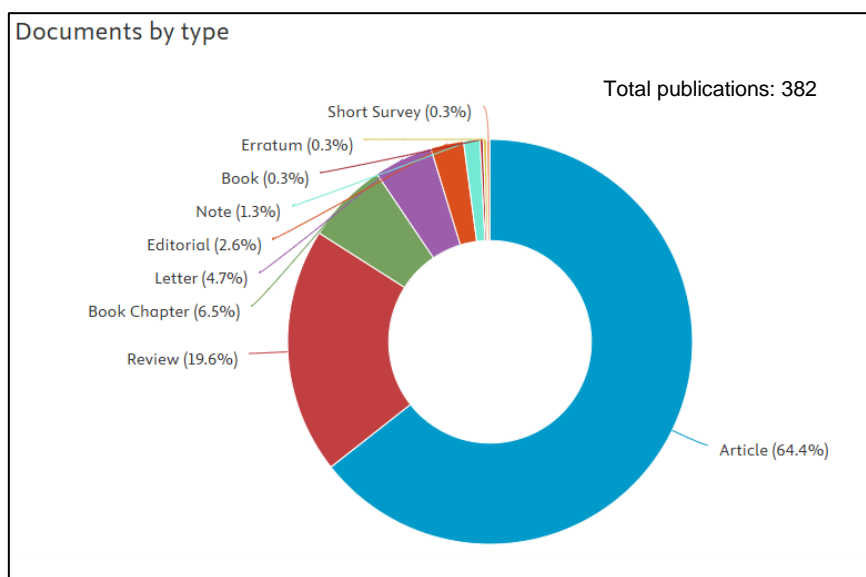


Figure 3. Types of publication in Scopus between 2015 to 2024

3. Contribution to the SDGs

Figure 4 shows the Scopus-indexed publications by the UP contributed to the United Nations SDGs, which have published from 2015 to 2024. UP has significant contributions to SDG 3: Good health and well-being and SDG 17: Partnership for the goals, respectively 112 and 69 documents. This is because UP's research projects and education have mostly related to health and well-being. Furthermore, there were 150 organizations and institutions which collaborated with UP, and whose support and resulting outputs have provided UP with robust research collaborations. Similarly, a report on university Impact Rankings for 2024 by THE (2024) stated that UP was ranked between 1001 and 1500, with scores of 60.0–67.5, 43.1–52.7, 34.7–43.5, and 36.9–52.8% for SDG 3, 8, 1, and 17, respectively, among 1,963 universities worldwide. The overall score was 45.0–58.7%, highlighting UP's excellence in SDG 3 while

pursuing the SDGs in 2024. However, according to the SDG progress report in 2024, SDG 3 has a slow progress since 2015 due to many challenges in maternal mortality, premature deaths from major noncommunicable diseases, and access to essential healthcare (United Nations, 2024). Consequently, UP has acted as a driving factor in meeting SDG 3 by 2030 and is committed to strengthening its education and research in health sciences among Cambodian universities and the region.

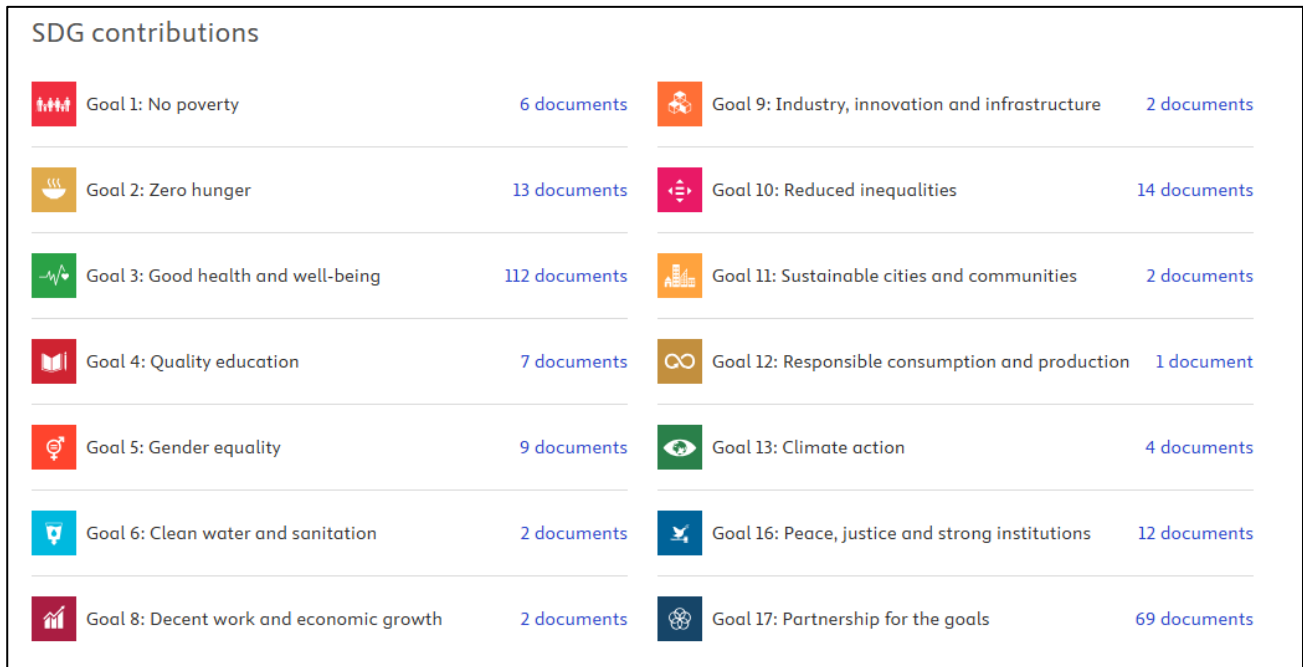


Figure 4. Publications to SDG contributions by the UP between 2015-2024

4. Establishment of JCH to SDG contributions

The JCH was created in 2021 with four published articles. The JCH had been inactive during 2022 and 2023; however, it has become active again in March 2024 using Open Journal System (OJS), which is free and open-source software used by many publishers. The JCH is a double-blind, peer review and open access journal that aims to publish two issues annually in the areas of health sciences and interdisciplinary research. Currently, the JCH received ISSN: 2744-5771 and become a member of Crossref with a journal DOI (<https://doi.org/10.70243/jch>). The JCH has two volumes with nine published articles related to health sciences. The JCH is committed to maintaining the scholarly publication and research quality, by contributing research findings to all researchers and readers in different areas, especially in health for achieving global health goals of the United Nations SDG 3.

Author contributions

Kong. S.: Conceptualization, investigation, writing—original manuscript preparation, writing—review and editing, and Sok. S.: Conceptualization, investigation, writing—review and editing. Both authors agreed with the final version.

Data availability statement

These data were extracted from the Scopus database that were accessed under a license of the Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia. Some data in Scopus database were slightly different due to varying search queries. For example, UP found 380 documents when using a search query of [Documents within

affiliation country: Cambodia]. However, there were 382 documents when using a search query of [Organizations: University of Puthisastra]. Additional information can be requested from the first author in this editorial.

Acknowledgment

Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declared that there are no conflicts of interest for the paper published.

Supplementary materials

Not applicable.

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