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An investigation of instruction in research publishing offered in doctoral programs : the Hong Kong case

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Abstract

As a result of globalization, universities in some Asian countries now require their faculty members, by way of carrot or stick, to research and publish internationally. In tenure, promotion, contract renewal and faculty recruitment exercises, rate of publication in reputed journals based in the US and the UK has become a major criterion of assessment. The stakes involved in publication in many of these contexts, have created ripple effects on their doctoral students, many of whom are now under pressure to publish internationally during their doctoral tenure in order to secure professoriate employment upon graduation. Yet, publishing during the doctoral years is rarely an easy task not least because it is a taxing endeavor even for practicing academics. Challenges of publishing multiply when it is done in a period when the new researcher is already intensively engaged in the daunting tasks of researching and thesis-writing. However, what make publishing most challenging for students in these contexts are perhaps its linguistic demands and the need to make their work relevant to the international academic community. Given the stakes and difficulties involved in publishing

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internationally during and beyond the doctoral years, instruction in research publication (IRP) need be given some priority in doctoral programs in the Asian contexts. However, to what extent is IRP in place and to what extent can the instruction prepare students to face the various challenges of publishing in the early phase of their academic career? The questions remain largely under-explored in the literature. The study reported in this paper is a response to this lacuna by examining the IRP provided in the universities in Hong Kong. The study assumes that to succeed in publishing internationally, one needs to develop competence of three major domains, namely, scholarly communication, strategic research conception, strategic management of publishing. And in the context of doctoral undertaking, an added domain is that of strategic management of thesis-publishing. The study investigated the extent to which the IRP provided in the context under study attends to the four domains of competence. Methods of investigation involved an analysis of documents of research degree programs and courses (n = 155) offered in seven doctoral degree granting universities and interviews with doctoral students (n = 30). Findings suggest that instructional attention tends to be skewed towards developing students' scholarly communication while competence in the other three domains remains relatively under-addressed. Pedagogical implications will be discussed. (HRK / Abstract übernommen) Kwan, Becky Siu Chu, E-Mail: enbkwan@cityu.edu.hk