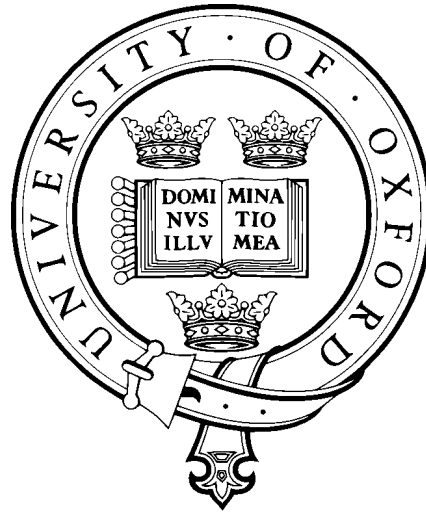


**Incentives for International Publications in the  
Humanities and Social Sciences:  
An Exploratory Study of Chinese Universities**



**Thesis Submitted for the  
Degree of DPhil in Education by**

**Xin Xu**

**Department of Education  
Lady Margaret Hall  
University of Oxford**

**Supervised by**

**Prof. Alis Oancea; Dr. Heath Rose; Prof. Hubert Ertl**

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## **Abstract**

This research aims to investigate how Chinese universities have attempted to incentivise academics in Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) to publish in internationally-indexed journals, in response to increasing emphasis on internationalisation in national policies and political discourses. In addition, it explores how HSS academics' research activities and careers have been influenced by those incentives. Institutional incentives used monetary and career-related benefits to prioritise international publications, especially publications in journals indexed by the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI). This phenomenon has provoked heated debates in China, particularly seen as detrimental to domestic publications and to other academic activities. The thesis aims to address the lack of systematic research on the scale and structure of those incentives in Chinese universities, and the lack of research on the incentive schemes' influences on HSS academics' research and careers.

The study applied a multiple-case study design, including six research-intensive universities in China, indicative of '985' and '211' universities in Chinese policy terms. It drew on interview data with 65 HSS academics, six senior university administrators, and four HSS journal editors in China. The study also included a documentary analysis of 172 institutional incentive policy documents across 113 of the '985' and '211' universities.

This research revealed that 84 out of the 113 research universities have been employing monetary bonuses or career-related incentives to promote HSS international publications. Incentives varied in their aims, the level of benefits, specific requirements, and models of policy-making. The findings suggested that higher prestige was being attached to SSCI and A&HCI publications, as demonstrated by the higher bonus value for them and higher status in academics' career development. The study also found that academic interviewees' responses to incentives clustered around four profiles: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. Academics from different sub-groups and various backgrounds reported direct and indirect influences of incentive schemes on their research and careers.

The theoretical contributions of the study include a conceptualisation of academics' responses to research incentives, and a proposed framework for understanding the relationship between incentives and international publications. It identified specific dynamics in Chinese HSS, which challenged the widely-used centre-periphery model for explaining the internationalisation of knowledge production. It also reflected on unintended influences of incentives for HSS international publications. Drawing on the discussion, the thesis proposes implications for institutional policymaking and directions for further studies.

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## List of Acronyms

ARWU	Academic Ranking of World Universities
A&HCI	Arts and Humanities Citation Index
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CNKI	China National Knowledge Infrastructure
CSSCI	Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index
CAQDAS	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software
EI	Engineering Index
ERG	Existence, relatedness and growth
ESI	Essential Science Indicators
HSS	Humanities and Social Sciences
IF	Impact Factor
ISI	Institute for Scientific Information
ITE	Initial Term of Employment
MOE	Ministry of Education
NS	Natural Sciences
REF	Research Excellence Framework
RMB	Renminbi (Chinese currency)
SA	Senior Administrator
SCI	Science Citation Index
SCIE	Science Citation Index Expanded
SSCI	Social Sciences Citation Index
THE	Times Higher Education
USD	United States Dollar
WOS	Web of Science

# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Research context**

In Chinese higher education, incentives for Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) international publications stemmed from specific political and practical contexts. Chinese universities incentivised HSS international publications, in the context of a growing policy emphasis on HSS, the changing approaches to internationalising HSS research, the implementation of ‘985’ and ‘211’ projects, and the institutional focuses on HSS international publications. Political and scholarly discussions provided conflicting arguments on incentivising HSS international publications. Such political, practical, and scholarly contexts form the background of this research.

### **1.1.1 HSS in China: An increasing policy concern**

In China, Humanities disciplines and Social Sciences disciplines are often mentioned together as ‘Humanities and Social Sciences’ (Zeng, 2001) – a concept in contrast to ‘Natural Sciences’ (NS) (D. Liu, 2003). This contrast echoes Snow’s (1959) observation of ‘two cultures’ in two polar groups of scholars: the scientists and literary intellectuals (Snow, 1959, p. 2). Although the sharp distinction of disciplines has long been challenged in academia (e.g. Becher, 1989; Kagan, 2009), the Chinese government and higher education institutions often follow this dichotomy between HSS and NS in research policy and management (B. Wang, 2009).

Compared with NS, Chinese HSS research has been ‘overlooked’ in research policy for several decades (National Education Committee, 1994)<sup>1</sup>. In the early 2000s, the status of HSS research in national policies began to improve, following several important speeches by the then President Jiang Zemin. Jiang’s speeches argued that Philosophy and Social Sciences<sup>2</sup> research had irreplaceable impacts on national development (Xinhua News Agency, 2001, 2002). Several programmes to foster the development of HSS, such as the ‘Programme for the Vigorous Development of Philosophy and Social Sciences in Higher Education Institutions’ (Ministry of Education, 2003), were then launched. The central government has also emphasised repeatedly the importance of HSS, and expressed the determination to foster their development (Ministry of Education & Ministry of Finance, 2011; National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences, 2006; The Communist Party of China Central Committee, 2004; Xi, 2016).

### **1.1.2 Internationalisation of higher education and HSS: Changing approaches**

The higher policy emphasis on developing HSS made it possible to call for the internationalisation of Chinese HSS. Since Chinese HSS research was considered less developed than international HSS scholarship (Zhu, 2009), the

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<sup>1</sup> In this thesis, documents originally in Chinese are presented as either official or the researcher’s English translations. Challenges of translation are addressed in the section **3.7 Challenges and limitations**.

<sup>2</sup> In China, the term ‘Philosophy and Social Sciences’ is usually employed as a synonym for ‘Humanities and Social Sciences’. The former term is often found in both administrative documents and academic papers, while the latter is commonly used in scholarly writings (D. Liu, 2003; B. Wang, 2009).

initial focus of internationalising HSS was to ‘learn from the advanced research in global academia’ (National Education Committee, 1994).

In the early 2000s, this approach of one-way learning began to change to both importing and exporting research, known as the ‘going-out’ strategy (Feng, Beckett, & Huang, 2013).<sup>3</sup> In 2007, the then President Hu Jintao encouraged Chinese academia to ‘introduce outstanding achievements and distinguished scholars to the world arena’, and called for enhancing the ‘soft power’ of Chinese culture (J. Hu, 2007). Under President Hu’s leadership, several important national policies were published, advocating the enhancement of academic exchanges and communications through the ‘going-out’ strategy, and emphasising the importance of improving China’s ‘discourse power’ through internationalising HSS (Ministry of Education, 2011d; Ministry of Education & Ministry of Finance, 2011; National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences, 2006, 2011; The Communist Party of China Central Committee, 2004).

The concept of ‘soft power’, as its inventor Nye (2004) explained, arises from the attractiveness of a country’s culture, political ideals, and policies. In the context of Chinese politics, scholars considered ‘discourse power’ as the ability to deliver opinions with authority and impacts, which is an essential part of the soft power and an important vehicle for promoting the image of China (Zhao & Lv, 2008; Zheng, 2011). In 2013, President Xi Jinping explicitly addressed the relationship between ‘soft power’ and ‘discourse power’, and stated that ‘to enhance China’s soft power, we should strive to increase our discourse power in

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<sup>3</sup> ‘Going-out’ was originally an economic strategy proposed by the Chinese central government in 1999, which means Chinese enterprises should increase overseas investments (Office of the State Council, 2006). It has been adopted in many other areas – for example, when used in cultural exchanges, it expresses an intention to actively introduce Chinese culture to the world (Ge, 2015).

the world’, ‘give a good narrative of China’, ‘promote mutual development’, and ‘contribute to the mankind’ (Xinhua News Agency, 2013). In 2016, President Xi Jinping’s keynote speech at a high-profile symposium on the development of HSS recommended that the internationalisation of Chinese HSS be both ‘based on Chinese reality, and open to the world’ (Xi, 2016), with aims not only to learn from international academia, but also to promote Chinese discourses internationally and gain global impacts.

The shift of approaches was nested in the change of national internationalisation strategies from ‘inward-oriented’ to ‘outward-oriented’ (Wu, 2018, p. 1), and from ‘a one-way import of foreign (Western) knowledge’ to a ‘much-improved balance between introducing the world to China and bringing China to the world’ (Yang, 2014, p. 157). A recent demonstration of China’s outward-orientation is the ‘Belt and Road Initiative’ (BRI). The BRI aims to enhance ‘the connectivity of Asian, European, and African continents and their adjacent seas’, by establishing the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Maritime Silk Road (National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, & Ministry of Commerce, 2015). In the education section, the BRI intended to establish a ‘Belt and Road educational community’ between China and countries involved in the initiative, encouraging universities and vocational schools to ‘go out’ with enterprises and establish educational or research institutions (State Council, 2017). It also called for improving international educational collaborations and communications to achieve a ‘mutually benefiting’ opening-up (State Council, 2017).

### 1.1.3 '985' and '211' universities: Building 'world-class universities'

'Project 985' and 'Project 211' are key national projects in Chinese higher education policy over the past two decades. 'Project 211' was initiated in 1995, with the mission to 'build around 100 high-level institutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century' (China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information, 2009). 'Project 985' was launched in May 1998, aiming at further enhancing the quality of Chinese higher education institutions, and fostering world-class universities in China (China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information, 2012a). In total, 116 universities were designated as '211' universities (Ministry of Education, n.d.-a)<sup>4</sup>. 39 universities of 'Project 211' were also '985' universities (China Academic Degrees & Graduate Education Information, 2012b).<sup>5</sup> '985' and '211' universities were regarded as exemplary in research and teaching quality, although '985' universities were often considered of higher prestige than '211' universities (Ma, 2007).

Universities enrolled in both projects were guaranteed national and regional funding privileges (Hayhoe, Zha, & Lin, 2005; Zha, 2009). For instance, the government's science and research allocation per each '211' university in 2015 was 12.5 times of that per each 'non-211' university (Ministry of Education, 2016a, p. 14). '985' and '211' universities received funding not only from the Ministry of Education (MOE), but also from local governments, who signed

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<sup>4</sup> Although there are 112 '211' universities listed on the MOE's website (Ministry of Education, n.d.), four of them on the list (China University of Petroleum, China University of Geosciences, North China Electric Power University, and China University of Mining) are in fact two independent universities sharing identical names. All of the eight universities are '211' universities and are included in the research.

<sup>5</sup> All '985' universities are also '211' universities. To distinguish them in this research, the term '211' universities refers to '211' universities that are not included in 'Project 985'.

collaborative agreements with the MOE to allocate auxiliary funding to the university (F. Huang, 2015).

Both '985' and '211' projects aimed at improving the research capacity of Chinese universities (Zhang, Patton, & Kenney, 2013). Particularly, the goal of building world-class universities placed '985' and '211' universities in a global benchmarking context. As a consequence, one of the major strategies for '985' and '211' universities was the internationalisation of research (F. Huang, 2015).

From September 2017, 'Project 985' and 'Project 211' began to be replaced by the 'Double First-Class Programme', with the publication of a selected list of 'double first-class universities' and 'double first-class disciplines' (Ministry of Education, Ministry of Finance, & National Development and Reform Commission, 2017). The term 'double' refers to the two targets of the programme: building both first-class universities and first-class disciplines.

There were 36 universities listed as A-class 'double first-class universities', all of which were previously '985' universities. Three previous '985' universities and three previous '211' universities became B-class 'double first-class universities' (Ministry of Education et al., 2017). A-class and B-class 'double first-class universities' were all selected with the potential to become world-class universities, while B-class universities were considered as having gaps between the A-class group (Xinhua News Agency, 2017). In addition to the 'double first-class universities', the programme also aimed to promote the development of a range of disciplines at 95 universities. Universities with 'double first-class disciplines' included 70 previous '211' universities and 25 non-'211' universities (Ministry of Education et al., 2017).

An important change of the programme was the shift from ex-ante funding to performance-based funding, as the central government's funding will fluctuate based on evaluations of universities' performance (State Council, 2015). Nonetheless, the 'Double First-Class Programme' highlighted the intention to internationalise Chinese universities and research, as it aimed to establish a number of first-class universities/disciplines in the world and make China an international higher education power by the middle of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (State Council, 2015).

#### **1.1.4 International publications as an indicator for internationalisation: Growing institutional interests**

Numbers and subsequent citations of international publications have been used as essential factors to determine global university rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015), and have become crucial indicators of higher education institutions' level of internationalisation (L. Li, 2009). Thus, publication in international journals is encouraged by governments and higher education institutions in their pursuit of becoming 'world-class universities' (Chou, 2014; K.-Y. Shin, 2007), which seems synonymous with being positioned within the top tier of global rankings (Hazelkorn, 2015).

Chinese '985' and '211' universities were also encouraged to become 'world-class universities' (F. Huang, 2015). In addition, as important research bases for HSS research, Chinese universities were required to provide full support for the 'going-out' strategy in their policies for academic evaluations, personnel assessment, and resource allocation (Ministry of Education, 2011b). Encouraging international publications through incentive schemes has, therefore, prevailed in

Chinese universities as one of the major approaches to internationalising university research (F. Huang, 2015; Yuan, 2011).

The emphasis on international publications first emerged in Chinese NS areas in the late 1980s, when financial rewards were introduced to academics who published in journals indexed by the Science Citation Index (SCI) (H. Qin & Zhang, 2008). In the past decades, China's NS outputs have gained increasing visibility in the international scientific community. For instance, the US National Science Foundation's report (2018) documented a steady growth of China's science and engineering publications from 2006 to 2016. In 2016, China surpassed the United States for the first time and ranked first as a single country, contributing to 18.6% of global science and engineering publications (p. 109). As some Chinese scientists reported, SCI publications have become a 'gold standard' for most Chinese NS scientists, and played as the 'yardstick' for their career promotion (Hvistendahl, 2013, p. 1036).

Since the early 2000s, an increasing number of Chinese universities, especially '985' and '211' universities, are adopting the same strategy and publishing incentive schemes for HSS international publications (Dang, 2005; Zhu, 2009). As revealed by the researcher's documentary study between February and May 2016 (see **Chapter 4 Incentives for HSS international publications**), 84 out of the 113 '985' and '211' universities have set up formal university-level incentive schemes for HSS international publications. In most schemes, only journals indexed by the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) and the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (A&HCI) were recognised as 'HSS international journals'. Universities offered HSS academics much larger financial bonuses for SSCI and A&HCI papers than for most domestic publications (e.g. Fudan

University, 2003; Zhejiang University, 2009). In addition to monetary incentives, SSCI and A&HCI papers were granted higher ranks and considerable weight in research evaluations (e.g. Minzu University of China, 2010). The prestige of international publications, especially SSCI and A&HCI publications, was made clear in those incentive schemes.

As demonstrated by bibliometric studies, one outcome of those policy emphases and institutional incentives has been that Chinese HSS scholars are producing an increasing number of international publications. Take SSCI publications for instance. In 1978, China's share of SSCI publications was only 0.11% in the world (W. Liu, Hu, Tang, & Wang, 2015). The percentage grew to 1.5% in 2006 (Zhou, Thijs, & Glänzel, 2008), rose to 2.41% in 2010 (Feng et al., 2013), and leapt to 4.30% in 2013 (W. Liu et al., 2015). Meanwhile, the annual number of China's SSCI publications has increased from 64 in 1978 to 8040 in 2013 (W. Liu et al., 2015). However, the global share of China's SSCI publications was still much lower than China's SCI publications (W. Liu et al., 2015).

### **1.1.5 HSS international publications: Conflicting voices**

Some scholars and national policies treated the growing number of international publications as a manifestation of the increasing influence of Chinese academics on global academia (L. Li, 2009; Luan & Jiang, 2008; Ministry of Education, 2011b; Ren & Lu, 2003). Some scholars argued that encouraging international publications is of great importance to Chinese academia's visibility in the world – they believed that without sufficient visibility,

China's HSS academia might become marginalised (Guo, 2012; L. Li, 2009; Luan & Jiang, 2008; Ren & Lu, 2003; C. Wang, 2010).

However, a cautious tone towards the norms and ideologies of international HSS academia can also be detected from the central government, who advised Chinese HSS scholars against importing knowledge indiscriminately, and warned them against the uncritical adaptation of Western ideologies (The Communist Party of China Central Committee, 2004). This warning echoed President Jiang Zemin and Xi Jinping's speeches, which required Chinese HSS researchers to remain guided by Marxism, draw critically from international theories and research outputs, and preserve Chinese culture during international knowledge exchange (China Education Daily, 2002; Xi, 2016). Some scholars were also concerned that Chinese HSS academics might focus more on Western issues, or Chinese issues that Western countries are more likely to care about (Zhu, 2009), 'accept Western concepts and theoretical frameworks without critical scrutiny and creative thinking', and 'adopt them as academic standards in the assessment of Chinese Social Sciences and Chinese development' (Deng, 2010, p. 182).

Moreover, Chinese institutions were criticised for 'worshipping' the SSCI and A&HCI publications (C. Li & Lyu, 2015, p. 173). In response, the MOE urged higher education institutions to respect both national and international research, avoid the tendency to emphasise quantity over quality, and respect the characteristics of HSS and the distinct features of each discipline in HSS research evaluations (Ministry of Education, 2006). The MOE also remarked that citation indices, such as SCI, SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI (Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index), should be used rationally in research evaluations; and universities

should establish a systematic institutional evaluation system, covering different disciplines and various types of research achievements (Ministry of Education, 2011c). A recent policy issued by the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council (2018) echoed those suggestions, pointing out that the evaluation of academics should not be based on the number of publications in SCI journals or core journals, the ranking of citations, or the ranking of impact factors (IFs)<sup>6</sup>.

The institutional emphasis on HSS international publications, especially SSCI publications, and the consequently scholarly debates also appeared in other Asian countries and regions. For instance, Shin (2007) reported that in South Korea, SSCI publications were used as ‘guiding light of social science’, resulting in the devaluation of Korean-language publications and the withering of indigenous Social Sciences (p. 113). Chou (2014) pointed out the ‘SSCI syndrome’ in Taiwan (p. 1), which emphasised SSCI publications in HSS research, leading to intensified utilitarianism and social inequity, and reinforcing ‘the academic hegemony of native English-speaking countries’ (p. 12).

## **1.2 Research questions**

More and more Chinese universities were incentivising HSS academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals, as a response to the increasing policy emphasis on internationalising HSS research. Similarly, universities in other Asian countries and regions also highlighted international publications in HSS

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<sup>6</sup> The impact factor of a journal is ‘a ratio between citations and recent citable items published’, which measures the ‘frequency with which the ‘average article’ in a journal has been cited in a particular year or period’ (Garfield, 1994).

research evaluations. Such phenomena have provoked much controversy. Scholarly and political discourse mainly focused on the national and institutional levels, discussing the influences of incentives on the development of HSS. However, as Chapter 2 reveals, there is a lack of systematic research on incentives for HSS international publications in a national context, and a lack of studies on the influences of incentives on Chinese HSS academics' research and careers. Since China is a rising power in international publications and global knowledge production (W. Liu et al., 2015), investigating the incentives and their influences in China provides opportunities to better understand research incentives and the internationalisation of HSS.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the phenomenon of incentivising HSS international publications in China by investigating the institutional and individual facets. The research questions are as follows:

**(1) How have Chinese universities attempted to incentivise Humanities and Social Sciences academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals?**

**(2) How have Chinese Humanities and Social Sciences academics' research and careers been influenced by the institutional incentives for international publications?**

The first question examines the incentives for HSS international publications at the institutional level, attempting to investigate the overall scale

and structure of incentive schemes for HSS international publications in Chinese higher education, and explore the rationale and process of policymaking.

Following up on the first question, the second question focuses on individual academics under the influence of such incentives. It aims to address Chinese HSS academics' responses to the incentives, and investigate the impacts HSS academics perceived on their research and careers.

Several terms in the research questions have various definitions in different countries and different research contexts, such as the Humanities and Social Sciences. Therefore, the key terms are further defined.

#### (1) Chinese universities

This study chose to focus on '985' and '211' universities in China. The reasons are as follows. Firstly, the mission of internationalising Chinese higher education, stated by both '985' and '211' projects, fits into the research context and aims to investigate the issue of internationalisation of Chinese HSS. Secondly, the research-oriented feature of '985' and '211' universities suits the purpose of this study to investigate academics' research activities. Thirdly, for this study, it is unrealistic to examine all 2879 universities in China (Ministry of Education, 2016b). The total number (116 universities) and the variety of '985' and '211' universities not only ensure the feasibility of this research, but also assist in presenting a dynamic and comprehensive picture of Chinese higher education. Finally, this research did not use the lists of 'double first-class universities/disciplines', as they were released after data collection and analysis. Institutional incentive documents examined in this research only focused on '985' and '211' universities. Nonetheless, all six case universities in the current study

are included in the ‘Double First-Class Programme’. The landscape of institutional incentives from ‘double first-class universities/disciplines’ may be an area of interest for future studies.

## (2) Humanities and Social Sciences

The classification of HSS disciplines varies among countries and regions (see for example: International Standard Classification of Education published by the UNESCO (2013); Joint Academic Coding System published by the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service & Higher Education Statistics Agency (2012)). This study adopts the official classification of disciplines in the *Classification and code of disciplines of People's Republic of China* (General Administration of Quality Supervision Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China, 2009). Twenty disciplines were defined as HSS disciplines: Marxism, Philosophy, Religious Studies, Linguistics, Literature, Arts, History, Archaeology, Economics, Politics, Law, Military Science, Sociology, Ethnology, Journalism and Communication, Library and Information Science, Education, Sports Science, Statistics, and Management.

## (3) Academics

This study defines academics as the academic staff employed by higher education institutions, who combine teaching and research as their primary duty. This research focuses on Chinese HSS academics, excluding foreign academics employed by Chinese universities. On the one hand, foreign academics comprise only 0.77% of the total 2,028,438 full-time and part-time faculty members in Chinese higher education institutions (Ministry of Education, n.d.-c), who are not

yet the major academic groups in Chinese higher education. On the other hand, foreign academics' experiences of publishing in internationally-indexed journals may be fundamentally different from Chinese academics, which is beyond the scope of this research. Research on foreign academics employed by Chinese universities and their perspectives on the incentives may be valuable for future studies.

#### (4) International publications

There is no consensus on the definition of 'international journals' or 'international publications'. In this study, international journals are defined as journals published outside mainland China or published in mainland China but indexed by indices outside mainland China. International publications refer to articles, reviews, and other types of publications in those journals. In contrast, 'domestic journals' refer to journals published in mainland China and are not indexed by international indices.

#### (5) Incentives for international publications

Incentives and the relevant theories are widely explored, theoretically and empirically, in a large body of literature in accounting, economics, management, and psychology (e.g. Deci, 1971; Locke, 1991; Wright & Aboul-Ezz, 1988). In terms of incentives for publications, an international study of 30 countries has identified three types of governmental incentives for publications, which are funding-related incentives for institutions, career-related incentives for individuals, and cash incentives for individuals (Franzoni, Scellato, & Stephan, 2011).

In this study, incentives for international publications are defined as institutional policies, rather than national policies, to encourage individual academics to publish in internationally indexed journals. Similar to Franzoni et al.'s research, such incentives include both monetary bonuses and career-related regulations, which will be further illustrated and discussed in **Chapter 4 Incentives for HSS international publications** and **Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion**.

### **1.3 Contents of each chapter**

The thesis comprises nine chapters. Following with the contexts and research questions framed in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 reviews the literature with focuses on three topics: the internationalisation of HSS research, incentives and HSS academics, and studies on research incentives and evaluation in HSS areas. The chapter then identifies gaps in the current literature.

Chapter 3 captures the research design and methodological discussion of this research. It explains the rationale for choosing a qualitative case study design, and presents an overview of the three-phase research process: a scoping and piloting phase (Phase I), an initial fieldwork and data analysis phase (Phase II), followed by further fieldwork, data analysis and integration (Phase III). The chapter then explains the sampling strategies for case institutions and interviewees, discusses the process and techniques used for collecting interview data, incentive documents, and bibliometric data, as well as introduces tools and processes of data analysis. It concludes with a reflection on ethical issues, methodological challenges, and limitations of the research.

Chapter 4 illustrates the scale and structure of incentives for HSS international publications. Based on the documentary analysis of 172 incentive documents and interviews with six university administrators, this chapter first presents the general landscape of incentivising HSS international publications in Chinese ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities. It analyses the geographical distribution and the publication years of incentive documents, categorises incentive documents into six types, and categories incentives into two types: monetary incentives and career-related incentives. It explores the recognised journals and target groups of the incentive documents, and discusses the requirements for first authors. The chapter compares the bonus values for publications in different types of journals, and explains the hierarchies demonstrated in the incentive documents. The chapter then examines the policy-making process of incentives. It investigates the aims and responsible divisions for formulating incentives, categorises the policy-making process, traces changes of incentives, and reports the influences perceived by administrators.

Chapter 5 discusses academics’ responses to incentives for HSS international publications, as demonstrated by their overall attitudes towards incentive policies and the intention to publish internationally. It categorises academics by their responses to incentives into four types: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. It illustrates each type of academics with reported explanations for their responses.

Chapter 6 explores how incentives for HSS international publications have influenced HSS academics’ publications. It examines academics’ accounts of the relationship between incentives and motivations to publish, their perceived

differences between international and domestic publications, as well as their choices of where and what to publish.

Chapter 7 examines incentives' wider influences on research as reported by HSS academics. The chapter first focuses on the perceived impacts on academics' international research activities, including international research collaborations, overseas academic visits, international conference attendance, and the involvement in international journals. It follows with a discussion on incentives' influences on the relationship between research and teaching. The final section explores incentives' influences on the research culture with focuses on three pairs of comparisons: quality and quantity, integrity and instrumentalism, as well as equity and inequity.

Chapter 8 investigates incentives' influences on HSS academics' careers. The chapter analyses reported impacts of incentives on academics at different career stages: from applying for academic jobs, to passing through the initial term of employment, to getting promoted, to going through annual assessments, and to gaining honorary titles.

Chapter 9 revisits the findings of the research and concludes the thesis. It discusses incentives and their influences in the context of internationalising HSS research. It draws on research findings from previous chapters, revisits theoretical discussions on the internationalisation of HSS, theorises academics' responses to institutional management and the relationship between incentives and international publications, and discusses undesirable influences of incentives. Based on the discussion, this chapter also proposes practical implications for Chinese universities and addresses implications for further research.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

This chapter reviews the literature on the internationalisation of HSS, the relationship between academics and the managerial culture, and discussions about HSS research incentives and evaluation. It provides the literary context of this research and assists in identifying gaps in the current literature.

### **2.1 The internationalisation of HSS**

There is a plethora of literature on globalisation and internationalisation; however, no consensus has been reached in defining the term ‘internationalisation’ (Knight, 1999). In the higher education sector, the internationalisation encompasses diverse emphases and approaches (e.g. Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Teichler, 2004). This section reviews major discussions related to the internationalisation of HSS, with focuses on the internationalisation of knowledge, the centre-periphery theory, the English language hegemony, and global university rankings.

#### **2.1.1 The internationalisation of research**

A review of the literature reveals that over past decades, globalisation has been playing an important role in shaping global higher education and research (e.g. Altbach & Knight, 2007; Marginson, Kaur, & Sawir, 2011; Naidoo, 2003; Scott, 2000). Globalisation can be understood as ‘a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organisation of social relations and transactions’, ‘generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of

activity, interaction, and the exercise of power' (Held, McGrew, Goldblatt, & Perraton, 1999, p. 16). In the higher education sector, Altbach and Knight (2007) defined globalisation as 'the economic, political, and societal forces pushing 21<sup>st</sup> century higher education toward greater international involvement' (p. 290).

Internationalisation and globalisation are often interpreted as two closely related but distinct concepts. For instance, Marginson (2009) argued that internationalisation and globalisation 'each create conditions of possibility for the other; they sometimes feed into each other and they sometimes substitute for each other' (p. 98-99). Teichler (2004) distinguished internationalisation from globalisation, arguing internationalisation tended to address border-crossing activities between national systems, while globalisation indicated the blurred national systems. Knight (1999) considered the internationalisation as a 'proactive response' to its 'catalyst' – globalisation (p. 14). Knight (2003) has also developed a widely cited definition of higher education internationalisation (derived from previous definitions, see: Knight, 1994; Knight & De Wit, 1997) as 'the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of post-secondary education' (p. 2).

There is a substantial literature on higher education internationalisation. In general, Kehm and Teichler (2007) identified seven broad themes with their review of past research on the internationalisation in higher education, including 'mobility of students and academic staff; mutual influences of higher education systems on each other; internationalisation of the substance of teaching, learning, and research; institutional strategies of internationalisation; knowledge transfer; cooperation and competition; and national and supranational policies as regarding the international dimension of higher education' (p. 264). With a large body of

literature on each theme, scholars have perceived a dynamic and complex landscape of higher education internationalisation in global, regional, and specific national contexts like China (e.g. Altbach & Teichler, 2001; Hou, Montgomery, & McDowell, 2014; F. Huang, 2003; Mok, 2007; Mok & Yu, 2013; Teichler, 2004; Yang, 2002).

A decade later, Knight and De Wit (2018) argued that although much research on the internationalisation of higher education has focused on all modes of international academic mobility, not enough attention has been paid to the internationalisation of research. They noted the increasing complexity of research, which ‘requires, and is distinguished by, more international collaboration than in the past’ (p. 3). A review of the literature proved the point. Although many studies have investigated the topic of the internationalisation of research, their research scope was generally limited to bibliometric studies on co-authored publications (e.g. Henriksen, 2016; F. Li, Miao, & Yang, 2015; W. Liu, Hu, Tang, & Wang, 2015). Knight and De Wit (2018) also noticed the rising notion of ‘research as a form of soft power’ (p. 3) in the context of new knowledge production and application, but they thought the notion of knowledge/research as a power was ‘characterised by competitiveness, dominance, and self-interest’ (p. 3).

As explained in Chapter 1, the increasing scholarly and political discussions about the ‘soft power’ and ‘discourse power’ in China demonstrated the growing attention to the knowledge power paradigm in higher education. However, such discourses in China did not mainly address the ‘self-interest’ as Knight and De Wit (2018) suggested; rather, their framing of ‘soft power’ displayed a notion of contributing to global exchanges and mutual benefits through knowledge production and sharing (Xinhua News Agency, 2013; Zhao &

Lv, 2008). The discourse spoke to the scholarly discussion about higher education and knowledge as global public or common goods. Stiglitz (1999) has conceptualised knowledge as the common currency and a global public good, featured with non-excludability and non-rivalry. Marginson (2007) noted that ‘knowledge in the different fields, the effects flowing from the passage of academic ideas and knowledge, and cross-border research collaborations’ are all global public goods (p. 325). He also developed the model and suggested to envisage higher education as a global common good (Marginson, 2016). In the Chinese context, Tian and Liu (2018) confirmed higher education’s contribution to (global) public goods and (global) common goods. However, scholarly discussion about knowledge/research as a global public/common good in the internationalisation of research appears limited, especially in the context of Chinese higher education.

### **2.1.2 The centre-periphery theory**

This research highlights the ‘centre-periphery’ theory (Altbach, 2009), which among other interpretations of internationalisation, captures the inequity of internationalisation around the world, and contributes to the understanding of challenges for Chinese HSS’ internationalisation and international publication.

Scholars have traditionally identified a centre-periphery or core-periphery continuum in global research, which corresponds roughly with the West/non-West divide (Alatas, 2003; Altbach, 2009; Galtung, 1971). Theoretical discourses of centre and periphery were adopted from critiques of colonialism and imperialism to explain the inequality in many global settings (Alatas, 2006; Altbach, 1998), such as the role of intellectuals in the Third World (Shils, 1972), as well as the

economic, political, military, communication, and cultural exchanges between the centre and periphery (Galtung, 1971).

When applied to the global HSS research, countries with greater academic power and influence, such as the US and the UK, were believed to be located in the centre of HSS knowledge (Alatas, 2003). Those countries generate large HSS research outputs, have a global reach of ideas, and control the major scholarly journals (Alatas, 2003; Altbach, 2009). Compared with such developed and autonomous central countries, countries on the knowledge semi-periphery or periphery tend to be underdeveloped, marginalised, and dependent on the central countries (Mosbah-Natanson & Gingras, 2014).

Scholars applying the ‘centre-periphery’ framework argued that peripheral countries’ academic quality is evaluated according to standards set by the centre (Altbach, 2011), and publications from the centre are considered as verification of academic respectability (Canagarajah, 1996; Omobowale, Akanle, Adeniran, & Adegboyega, 2014). Connell (2007) noted that ‘it has been difficult for works published in the periphery to circulate in the metropole, and to other parts of the periphery’ (p. 219). They held that Western editors and peer reviewers act both as facilitators to provide essential feedback (Belcher, 2007), and as gate-keepers for international journals to determine the relevance and publishability of research outputs (Altbach, 2009; Aydinli & Mathews, 2000; Lillis & Curry, 2010). Their criteria for selecting articles are mostly based on the centres’ interests, methodologies, and scientific norms (Altbach, 2011; Hanafi, 2011). As a consequence, scholars from peripheral countries tend to shift their attention from local issues to Western problems, and apply methodologies and theories that

prevail in the centres to cater for the requirements of Western editors (Chou, 2014; Deng, 2010).

Some scholars applied bibliometric methods to demonstrate the trends of Westernisation. For example, a bibliometric analysis of China's SSCI publications from 1978 to 2013 demonstrated that on average, 55% of China's SSCI publications are China-related, but this ratio has been dropping since 2004 (W. Liu et al., 2015). An analysis of Chinese scholars' Educational SSCI publications in 2012 revealed that most of those articles either reported Chinese educational practices for international audiences or discussed issues of interest to Western countries, neither of which would serve directly the needs of domestic educational development (Q. Liu & Ding, 2014). However, bibliometric studies with similar methodology (e.g. Mosbah-Natanson & Gingras, 2014) have been challenged, because they neglected the limitations of using already centre-dominated SCI, SSCI, and A&HCI as empirical bases (Beigel, 2014).

Compared with the global centres of HSS research, Chinese academia has been perceived by some academics as lagging behind (Flowerdew & Li, 2009). Deng (2010) argued that Chinese HSS research, as it is not at the centre of global academia, faces the challenge of being Westernised. Yang's research (2005) found that Chinese Social Sciences academics were 'emulating the strategies and standards of knowledge production in the West and aspiring to its recognition and rewards in funding, acknowledgement and publication', thus 'losing their opportunities to contribute more substantially to nurturing an international knowledge order' (p. 82). Scholars were concerned that these trends will affect Chinese HSS academics' self-confidence and lead to the predicament of 'self-colonisation' (Dang, 2005; Deng, 2010; H. Qin & Zhang, 2008).

Another problem for China and other peripheral countries is the potential loss of high-quality research in local academia (Feng et al., 2013; Ge, 2015; Shao & Shen, 2011), which has been verified by Chinese HSS journal editors (Feng et al., 2013). Since international publications are privileged in research assessment, some Chinese scholars would choose to submit their best research achievements to international journals (Shao & Shen, 2011; Zhu, 2009). Therefore, several scholars argued that this phenomenon might lead to a vacuum state in the domestic academia and impede the development of Chinese HSS research (X. Hu, Du, & Zeng, 2000; Sang, 2013).

Scholarly responses to perceived inequalities among the internationalisation of HSS include advocating for a balance between internationalisation and localisation (Yuan, 2011), looking for ‘counterhegemonic currents’ in peripheral scholarly communities (Keim, 2011, p. 130), encouraging theoretical discussions derived from the South (Connell, 2007a), and proposing ‘alternative discourses’ of HSS, such as the call for indigenisation, nationalisation, and decolonisation of the Social Sciences (Alatas, 2006, pp. 80–107).

Particularly, the Southern theory approach highlighted the existence of knowledge production in the colonised and post-colonised world (Collyer, 2016; Connell, 2007a), and criticised the ‘Northernness’ of social science theories such as the globalisation theory (Connell, 2007b, p. 378). Scholars challenged the assumption of a homogenised knowledge in various research fields, with evidence from Africa, Australia, Latin America, and Southeast Asia (Alatas, 2006; Comaroff & Comaroff, 2012; Connell, 2014; Quijano, 2000). Therefore, Connell (2014) proposed to assert alternative knowledge systems and indigenous

knowledge, independent from the Western knowledge systems, to contest the global centre-periphery model.

In Chinese academia, Deng (2014) advocated for the autonomy of Social Sciences research in China. He suggested China's Social Sciences to 'make their own contribution to the world scholarship, thus challenging the cultural hegemony of the West' (Deng, 2014, p. 240). Yang (2014) noted that the widely-employed concept of internationalisation as an integrating process was only based on and suitable for Western experience, as non-Western societies had imported the concept of modern universities without proper indigenisation. Yang (2005) argued that the 'wholesale acceptance of western-dominated social theories can be very misleading' (p. 71). Therefore, he suggested China to indigenise its HSS research by integrating scholar's reflections on the local culture/society/history into one's research, thus contributing to 'a re-balancing of western and eastern patterns of knowledge' (Yang, 2005, p. 68). Scholars also argued that by actively participating in international knowledge exchange, academics from peripheral regions might eventually become reviewers, editorial board members or editors of international journals (Flowerdew & Li, 2009). At the same time, local journals in peripheral countries could also improve their quality and raise the visibility among international academia (Flowerdew & Li, 2009).

### **2.1.3 The English language hegemony**

A dominant discussion about internationalisation and international publications is about the 'hegemony' of the English language (Ammon, 2010). Phillipson (1992) also termed such phenomena as the 'English language imperialism', which refers to the situation where 'the dominance of English

language is asserted and maintained as a dominant language through the establishment and continuous reconstituting structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages' (p. 47). He argued that the dominance of English ensured the West with a 'near monopoly of scientific research'; hence, periphery countries were allocated less structural resources and became dependent on cultural resources from the centre (Phillipson, 1992, p. 58).

Scholars considered the global use of English as an implication of power relation, as 'language use is closely connected to the rhythms of power' (Held et al., 1999, p. 346). Previous research found that, rather than being entirely due to intrinsic linguistic qualities, the dominance of English language was the result of the economic, political and scientific predominance of the British Empire and then the USA (Crystal, 1997; Hyland, 2009; Swan, 2001). Pennycook (1994) pointed out that the spread of English around the world was never a natural, neutral, and beneficial process, which demonstrated the worldwide cultural, economic, and political inequity, and could even lead to 'linguistic genocide' (p. 14).

Scholars challenged the legitimacy of English being the language of HSS, arguing that the ambiguity and richness of meaning conveyed in HSS writings might be distorted when not written in the native languages (Sang, 2013; Swan, 2001; Zhu, 2009). Swan (2001) also warned against the dangerous situation in HSS academia, where only the experiences of the English-speaking societies were presented and interpreted as universal norms.

Some scholars held the point that English publications' prestige was responsible for the lack of visibility of non-Anglophone research (M. Huang & Chang, 2008), resulting in a loss of knowledge in an international sphere (Olsson

& Sheridan, 2012). For example, Chinese HSS scholars noted that the local Chinese-medium articles they cited in the Anglophone publications never got re-cited (Feng et al., 2013). This echoes Hazelkorn's (2015) argument that researchers are most likely to cite other authors whom they know or are from their own country.

Scholars noticed the endangered mother tongue languages and the devaluation of literature in mother tongue languages in some non-English speaking countries (e.g. Curry & Lillis, 2018; Marginson, 2007). Curry and Lillis (2018) argued that the global push for English-medium publications has resulted in the loss of local knowledge, and this phenomenon has been gradually reaching HSS academics. Chinese scholars like Yuan also argued that the emphasis on international publications might lead to the depreciation of native language writings and the neglect of Chinese academic traditions (Yuan, 2011).

The literature revealed that 'international publications' are commonly considered as 'English-language publications' (Lillis & Curry, 2010). As McKinley and Rose's research (2018) on top-indexed international journals' author guidelines suggested, language appeared to be one of the top criteria for the initial review of those journals, rather than a research's contribution to knowledge. Consequently, in non-English speaking countries, the notion of a 'good researcher' is increasingly linked with the proficiency in English (Olsson & Sheridan, 2012). English-medium publications are also often associated with 'high-quality research' and are privileged (Lillis & Curry, 2010). For instance, Curry and Lillis (2004) reported a formal point system in Slovakian psychology departments, which provided English-language publications double points than

Slovakian-language publications, even if they were in journals from the same index.

The dominance of English in academic publishing has created increasing pressures for scholars from non-English speaking countries, such as China, Sweden, Denmark, and South Korea, who were put in a disadvantaged position in global academia (e.g. Berg, Hult, & King, 2001; Curry & Lillis, 2004; Petersen & Shaw, 2002; K.-Y. Shin, 2007), and suffered from higher investment in language learning and additional costs of producing linguistically appropriate writing (Ammon, 2006). Studies revealed the time-consuming nature of scholarly English writing for non-native English speaking academics (Curry & Lillis, 2004; Ge, 2015; Jiang, Borg, & Borg, 2017; Yongyan Li, 2014; J. Liu, 2004), and reported non-Anglophone scholars' experienced difficulties in academic English writing (Canagarajah, 2002; Lillis & Curry, 2010), perceptions of the potential bias against them in editorial process (Aydinli & Mathews, 2000; Belcher, 2007), and the lack of support or connections with central academic communities (Aydinli & Mathews, 2000; Belcher, 2007; Curry & Lillis, 2010). For instance, Flowerdew's research (1999) found that over two-thirds of 585 Hong Kong academics expressed the feeling of being at a disadvantage compared with native English-speaking scholars in English-medium publications. HSS academics in Mainland China also reported the language difficulties in academic English writing and publishing (Flowerdew & Li, 2009), which was verified by interviews with HSS academics from various Chinese institutions (Ge, 2015; Jiang et al., 2017; Xu & Jiang, 2018).

An exceptional group is the returnee scholars, who came back to their home country after obtaining advanced degrees abroad (J.C. Shin, Jung,

Postiglione, & Azman, 2014). They are found to be more familiar with Western languages, conventions, and research methodologies, as well as tend to contribute more international publications (Jonkers & Cruz-Castro, 2013; Jonkers & Tijssen, 2008; F. Li et al., 2015; Zweig & Yang, 2014).

Scholars expressed alternative interpretations of and responses to the global spread of English in academic research. Marginson (2004) suggested that the growth of English as a global language in higher education could lead to linguistic plurality rather than homogeneity in some cases. Phillipson (2001) urged that ‘those who believed that all languages have value, and that use of one’s mother tongue is a human right, need to be much more active in counteracting linguistic and professional imperialism’ (p. 197). Researchers also advocated for ‘de-anglicising’ English, which would enable the equal status of native and non-native speakers when sharing English in academic writing (Swan, 2001, p. 79). Gunnarsson (2001) proposed to include native-language publications in academic evaluations, and provide more generous grants for translating native-language works into English. Another approach is to encourage native-language academic journals to become internationally visible (C. Li & Lyu, 2015).

Marginson and Van der Wende (2007a) also noticed Chinese, together with English, as the only two languages spoken by one billion people. Therefore, they argued that if China develops Mandarin Chinese as a language of scientific research, ‘it is likely that it will become globally significant’ (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007a, p. 22). Flowerdew and Li (2009) suggested that the increased participation of Chinese HSS academics as international reviewers, editors, or editorial board members might lead to a decentralisation of English-language journals. The need to improve training and translation support for non-

Anglophone scholars was also emphasised in China and many non-Anglophone countries (Ammon, 2010; Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Yongyan Li, 2014). Feng, Beckett, and Huang's study revealed that some Chinese universities have started to sign contracts with translation companies to provide proofreading services for their researchers (Feng et al., 2013).

#### **2.1.4 Global university rankings**

Global university rankings have been shaping higher education in the process of globalisation and internationalisation (Hazelkorn, 2015). As Adams and Kaker's (2010) global opinion survey on university administrators, academic staff, and students revealed, few stakeholders were unaware of global university rankings. Hazelkorn (2015) noted rankings' influences on universities' decision making and strategic planning, often associated with the intention to enhance institutions' positioning in global league tables. For instance, she noticed some universities made efforts to guarantee all publications and presentations carry the university's correct names (Hazelkorn, 2015).

Scholars have identified the rationales for universities to participate in and pay attention to global university rankings. Universities, as Hazelkorn (2015) argued, desire to be recognised among the world's best institutions, by being positioned within the top tier of global rankings. Marginson (2011) argued that universities have become 'globally-referenced' (p. 10); consequently, universities regard rankings as useful tools to position themselves globally and optimise their strategies. Knight (2004) noted that the institutional drive for international profile and reputation 'relates to the quest for name recognition internationally in an attempt to attract the brightest of scholars/students, a substantial number of

international students, and, of course, high-profile research and training projects’ (p. 26).

However, the creation and use of global university rankings have been criticised for intensifying global competitiveness and inequality (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007b). Altbach (2006) remarked that rankings favour universities from English-language countries, since the publication counts emphasised mostly English-medium journals with Western norms. Marginson (2011b, 2014, 2017) argued that rankings reinforce and recycle leading universities’ advantages and reproduce the status, since ‘university status ladders are conservative’ (2011b, p. 422), ‘status becomes a circular game in which power makes itself’ (2014, p. 6).

Rankings, particularly those focusing on benchmarking research performance, relied heavily on the number and citation of publications in internationally-indexed journals (Hazelkorn, 2015; Marginson & van der Wende, 2007b). As Marginson (2017) remarked, under global university rankings, ‘knowledge is ordered by journal metrics and hierarchies, publication metrics, citation metrics and hierarchies, and crowned by rankings, which are largely based on research’ (p. 7). For instance, in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, formerly the Shanghai Jiaotong Ranking), *Nature* and *Science* papers counted for 20% in calculation, SCIE (Science Citation Index Expanded) and SSCI publications counted for 20%, and the number of highly cited researchers selected by Clarivate Analytics (based on databases like the SCIE and SSCI) counted for 20% (ARWU, 2018). Leiden ranking was based solely on publications in the Web of Science database (including SCI, SSCI and A&HCI indices) to benchmark universities’ scientific performance (Leiden

Ranking, 2018). Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings measured universities' research productivity based on publications in journals indexed by Elsevier's Scopus database, and used citations as an important indicator, which counted for a 30% weighting (THE Rankings, 2017).

Ever since the emergence of global university rankings, their weighting methodology have been examined and criticised by scholars (e.g. Altbach, 2006; Hazelkorn, 2007; Jeremic, Bulajic, Martic, & Radojicic, 2011; Taylor & Braddock, 2007). However, Hazelkorn (2015) pointed out that rankings have obtained legitimacy, despite the controversy over choices of indicators and their weighting, because of the seemingly statistically-rigorous methodology and producers' willingness to modify the methodology.

University rankings became popular in China since the mid-1990s (N. Liu, 2007). Liu (2007) observed that Chinese students and their parents have been using rankings to inform their choices; in addition, universities and governments are also paying attention to rankings. A number of studies compared and investigated university rankings in China and worldwide (Xie & Tong, 2006; Xuan, Lin, Tan, & Yi, 2007; Yu & Zhang, 2014). Niancai Liu (2007) and Li Liu (2004), both from the founding institute of the ARWU, remarked that university rankings have both positive and negative implications for Chinese universities, and that one of the positive implications is to identify the gap between Chinese universities and world-class universities. Particularly, Li Liu (2004) argued that the major gap lied in research outputs and faculty quality, as reflected by the lack of Nobel Prize winners, publications in *Nature* and *Science*, as well as highly-cited researchers in Chinese universities. Such observations correspond to the heavily-weighted indicators in the ARWU and appear to be related to Chinese

universities' striving for Nobel Prizes, international publications, and citations. However, there is a lack of scholarly discussion on the dynamics between global university rankings and the internationalisation of research in China.

## **2.2 Incentives and HSS academics**

Since institutional incentives reflected the managerial culture in higher education, this section reviews the literature on managerialism in higher education with a focus on the relationship between academics and institutions. It also draws on scholarly discussions about incentives and the impacts of incentives on individuals.

### **2.2.1 Managerialism and accountability**

The origins of incentivising international publications can be traced back to the culture of accountability, one of the distinctive features of managerialism (Keating, 2001; Kolsaker, 2008). There is a plethora of literature which speaks to managerialism (and other related terminologies like 'New Public Management' and 'New Managerialism') in higher education (e.g. Deem, 1998; Olssen & Peters, 2007; Trow, 1994). In this research, managerialism is perceived broadly as both the ideologies that insist management and managing are functionally and technologically indispensable to the economic, technological and social development (Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2007), and the actual use of techniques, values and practices derived from the private sector (Deem, 2001).

In many contemporary universities, managerialism has replaced collegiality in university governance (Thornton, 2009). In contrast to the

traditional collegial governance model, which relied on democratic voting and professional consensus of leaders and academic communities, the managerial model of governance places the emphasis on the autocratic control, the competitiveness of the work environment, and the increased accountability (Olssen, 2002). The culture of institutional accountability is reflected in Chinese universities' incentive policies: institutions initiated incentive schemes as a response to government's growing policy concerns on the internationalisation of HSS, and positioned academics into an accountable situation.

### **2.2.2 Individual academics and accountability regimes**

The governance of higher education can be analysed not only at macro level policy-making and meso-level organisational adaptation, micro-level dynamics and effects in the actual practices and performances of academic work are also unneglectable (Enders, 2004). Scholars observed that managerialism and the associated accountability regime have impacts both at the macro level on policies and systems and at the level of basic units and individuals (Henkel, 2005; Scott, 2005).

Although universities traditionally promote academics on the grounds of research and published scholarship (Clark, 1989), managerialism and the consequently increased accountability have intensified the pressure for individuals. Fanghanel (2012) noted that despite the degree of autonomy institutions enjoy in research management, the agency of individuals in relations to managed research is limited, with individual research horizons being strongly shaped by institutional strategies in research management. As Blackmore stated, 'the management of knowledge production and dissemination has become the core work of

universities, repositioning academics as managed professionals' (Blackmore, 2003, p. 5).

New models of governance in higher education have generated new approaches to conceptualising academic work, academic performance, the relationship between the different constituent parts of the university and the relationship to society and industry (Fanghanel, 2012). Research on academics under managerialism in higher education has focused on the impacts on academics' identity, researchers' autonomy, and quality assurance in teaching and research (e.g. Brew & Lucas, 2009; Kolsaker, 2008; Lucas, 2006; Slaughter & Leslie, 1997; Trow, 1994). For instance, Olssen (2016) noticed that the accountability system had emphasised too much research productivity and performativity. Consequently, it 'militates against "blue skies" research, encourages dubious research tactics and strategies for maximising publications, citations and team-based research', and encourages individual academics to conform to the external expectations of research (Olssen, 2016, p. 135).

Trowler (1998) has identified three approaches to exploring policy implementation and changes: the top-down perspective, concentrating on the successful implementation of policies from a managerial perspective; the bottom-up model, regarding the process of policy implementation as a result of the multiple interactions of numerous actors; and the 'implementation as evolution' approach (p. 106), which attempts to synthesise the polar perspectives and concentrate on the dynamics between policies and lower-level actors. While the first approach tends to regard the lower-level actors as passive receivers of policies, the other two perspectives encompass actors affected by policies in the investigation of policy implementation. When examining academic work under

managerialism, studies adopting the first approach often perceive academics as passive victims of the policy changes. For instance, Bryson's (2004) study accused managerialism of transferring power from academic autonomy to managerial prerogative, which leads to lower morale and higher instrumentalism in academic work. However, this research adopts the 'implementation as evolution' perspective, aiming to examine the dynamics between institutional incentive policies and individual academics' responses.

The responses of academics to institutional changes can be categorised based on various criteria. Notably, Merton's (1968) mode of adaptation, initially formulated to explain deviance behaviours, appeared useful in informing categorisation of individuals responding to a specific agenda. Merton (1968) categorised peoples' responses to the disjunction of goals and means into five types: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Similar typology is also found in the research of academics' responses to institutions (e.g. Trowler, 1998).

### **2.2.3 Incentives and academics' publication**

In Chinese universities, incentives for international publications are not carried out via a unified national scheme such as the REF (Research Excellence Framework) in the UK. A review of the literature reveals a lack of systematic studies on the scale and structure of such incentives. Several studies reported the existence of incentives for international publications in China, particularly monetary incentives (Hvistendahl, 2013; Stephan, 2012; Vidovich, Yang, & Currie, 2007). However, only one paper is found to investigate the scope of incentive schemes in a systematic approach. Quan, Chen, and Shu (2017)

examined the monetary bonuses for NS publications in journals indexed by the Web of Science (WOS). They examined 168 monetary incentive documents from 100 universities, and found universities offered each WOS publication in NS with a bonus of 30 USD to 165,000 USD, depending on the level of journals. However, this research did not include incentives in HSS areas, and the research scope was limited to financial incentives, as it has not examined other forms of incentives.

In research areas like accounting, economics, management, and psychology, scholars have identified various types of incentives. They have attempted to explain the relationship between incentives, motivations, and performance, based on theories such as the achievement motivation theory (McClelland, Atkinson, Clark, & Lowell, 1953), the motivation-hygiene theory (Herzberg, 1959, 1966), the theory of existence, relatedness, and growth (the ERG theory) (Alderfer, 1969) and the expectancy-value theory (Atkinson, 1964).

Particularly, many studies explored monetary incentives and their impacts on performance. Past research suggested that the influences could be positive or negative. Some found monetary incentives could enhance individuals' efforts and performance. For example, Wright and Aboul-Ezz (1988) reported positive effects of financial incentives and public recognition on performance. Bonner and Sprinkle (2002) employed a framework to explain how monetary incentives could positively impact on efforts and performance in the context of accounting. They suggested that in addition to monetary incentives, cognitive and motivational mechanisms (such as expectancies and self-interest) and a set of variables would influence efforts and task performance.

On the contrary, some theoretical and empirical evidence identified negative impacts of monetary incentives, or suggested that monetary incentives

could be contingent on other factors. For instance, cognitive-evaluation theory (Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985) proposed that monetary incentives would decrease intrinsic motivation due to the attention on the external reward, resulting in a decrease in performance. A meta-analysis of 39 studies on the relationship between financial incentives and performance also revealed that financial incentives were related to enhanced performance in quantity rather than in quality (Jenkins, Mitra, Gupta, & Shaw, 1998).

Although some argued universities are embracing the culture of enterprises (McNay, 1995), scholars found that incentives for research might demonstrate different features and impacts. For instance, Morey (2003) observed that many rewards in academic life are of intrinsic value, especially, the prestige accrued can have powerful impacts on the recognition and opportunities during academic's careers. Also, 'academics consistently report that they are more motivated by intrinsic interests than by material ones' (p. 82).

Current literature exploring the impact of research incentives and rewards mainly focused on academics' publication behaviours. Research on academics' publication behaviours from different countries shows that the target audience is one of the significant factors influencing scholars' choices of journals for publication (López-Navarro, Moreno, Quintanilla, & Rey-Rocha, 2015). Flowerdew and Li's (2009) in-depth interviews with 20 Chinese academics revealed that HSS researchers were aware of a separation between local and global academia. Studies suggested that academics selected their academic community to publish scholarly outputs according to complex reasons (Curry & Lillis, 2010; Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008). Scholars interested in national-oriented issues might choose to publish in domestic journals for a broad

readership (Flowerdew & Li, 2009; Hazelkorn, 2015). Some scholars might also publish in domestic journals to gain local public visibility and popularise their research, which might benefit them in grant applications and building connections with local enterprises (Duszak & Lewkowicz, 2008; Feng et al., 2013). Scholars with more interests in global issues might choose to publish in international journals to reach wider visibility (Lillis & Curry, 2010; López-Navarro et al., 2015; Xu, 2015).

Studies also revealed that scholars' publication choices can be influenced by external pressures, such as rewards systems or evaluation criteria (e.g. Andersen & Pallesen, 2008; Hanafi, 2011; Jiang, Borg, & Borg, 2015; Lillis & Curry, 2010; Michels & Schmoch, 2013). For instance, Bloch and Schneider (2016) used both bibliometric data and survey findings to analyse the trends of individuals' publications, and found Norwegian performance-based research funding system has succeeded in 'activating' many researchers to publish regularly and publish in scientific channels recognised by the evaluation system (p. 10). Franzoni, Scellato, and Stephan (2011) examined incentives for publications from 30 countries, and found the incentives for international journal publications were associated with an increase in submissions to *Science*, all else equal. Particularly, career incentives for individuals were positively correlated to submissions and publications, and individual cash incentives appeared to boost submissions but were correlated with lower acceptance rates (Franzoni et al., 2011). Butler (2003) found the increase in Australian global publications has been accompanied by a decrease in relative citation impact, which contradicted the performance-based funding strategy's intention to improve research quality.

In the Chinese context, the limited research on incentives' influences on academics is centred on academic publications, and impacts on other aspects of academic life have not been discussed. For instance, Li and Zhong (2013) investigated scholars' SCI publication trends at Zhejiang University, and identified the improvement of the quality of SCI publications after the university's reward system offered more bonuses for publications in high-impact journals. Li's (2014) qualitative study on Chinese management scholars' international publications also touched upon the topic, which reported that performative pressure for tenure and promotion was scholars' primary motivation for publishing in English, other concerns including aspirations for higher reputation in the discipline and the lack of familiarity with domestic journals.

### **2.3 HSS research incentives and evaluations**

Current incentive schemes in China can be perceived as indirect or direct research evaluation tools (see **Chapter 4 Incentives for HSS International Publications**). The large body of literature centred on the evaluation of HSS research, therefore, offers a background for understanding the use of incentive schemes for HSS international publications. This section focuses on three major themes from the literature around HSS research evaluations: the disciplinary characteristics of HSS, the limitations of databases, and the application of bibliometric methods.

### **2.3.1 The disciplinary characteristics of HSS**

Academics reside in different disciplinary tribes, who share and internalise certain cultures together (Becher, 1989; Clark, 1989). As Austin (1990) suggested, the culture of each discipline implies particular values and behaviours. Although some HSS disciplines share characteristics of NS while others represent more traditional humanities patterns (Nederhof, 2006), scholars have identified several major differences between HSS and NS research regarding publication behaviours and citation patterns (Hicks, 1999; M. Huang & Chang, 2008; Nederhof, 2006).

For example, in the context of internationalisation, Altbach (1998) found that HSS demanded more domestic considerations than NS. In addition, HSS articles are more likely to be written by the single author, while team research dominates many fields of NS (Mustajoki, 2013; Nederhof, 2006). As a consequence, NS researchers tend to produce more publications than the typical single author in the HSS (Nederhof, 2006). Also, NS research is often published as journal articles; but books tend to be more important for both scholarly outputs and reference sources in HSS disciplines, which are not included in the counting of SSCI or A&HCI publication numbers or citations (Hicks, 1999; Nederhof, 2006). Moreover, scholars highlighted that English is not necessarily the ‘central medium of communications’ in some HSS areas, despite it becoming the language of science (Altbach, 2006, p. 3).

On the basis of such differences between HSS and NS disciplines, scholars suggested that HSS should not adopt the same evaluation methodologies as NS, which put significant weight on bibliometric data and might exclude the diversity in HSS publications (Hicks, 1999; M. Huang & Chang, 2008; Nederhof, 2006; H. Qin & Zhang, 2008).

### 2.3.2 The limitations of databases

The meaning of ‘foreign’ or ‘international’ varies across contexts, but in many countries, the term ‘international publications’ refers to SCI, SSCI and A&HCI publications (Chou, 2014; Lillis & Curry, 2010). This is also the case in most Chinese universities, who regarded ‘SSCI and A&HCI publications’ as synonymous with ‘HSS international publications’ (see **Chapter 4 Incentives for HSS International Publications**).

However, SSCI and A&HCI databases have been criticised for their limited coverage (Hicks & Wang, 2009), and the linguistic, geographical, and disciplinary bias (Archambault, Vignola-Gagné, Côté, Larivière, & Gingrasb, 2006; Zhou et al., 2008).

Take the geographical distribution for example. Among 3250 SSCI journals, 42.09% are US journals, and 31.08% are published in England (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b). In the A&HCI, US and UK journals comprise 32.46% and 23.32% journals respectively, with Germany following them with 7.12% journals (Clarivate Analytics, 2017a). Since journals indexed by SSCI and A&HCI are considered to be ‘international journals’, ‘international’ becomes almost synonymous with the Anglophone centre (Lillis & Curry, 2010).

Current journal lists also demonstrated the bias in language: English is the language of 89.66% journals among 3250 SSCI journals (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b). Among 1784 A&HCI journals, 1171 are published in English, which comprises 65.64% of all A&HCI journals (Clarivate Analytics, 2017a). The Chinese language is under-represented in both SSCI and A&HCI. All the ten SSCI journals published in mainland China employ English as the publishing language, and no Chinese-medium journal is indexed by SSCI (Clarivate

Analytics, 2017b). Among A&HCI journals, only two are published in Chinese (Clarivate Analytics, 2017a).

China's counterpart of the SSCI and A&HCI is the CSSCI established by Nanjing University in 2000 (Feng et al., 2013). It includes 553 Chinese-language journals (Institute for Chinese Social Sciences Research and Assessment Nanjing University, 2017). CSSCI has also been criticised for its limited coverage and unclear categorisations of journals (Chen & Wang, 2005; Zhou, Su, & Leydesdorff, 2010).

### **2.3.3 Bibliometric indicators in the HSS**

The use of bibliometric indicators has been powerfully shaped by the work of Eugene Garfield (1979) from the United States, who founded the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI). The ISI has published the SCI in the 1960s, the SSCI in 1973, and the A&HCI in 1980 (Nederhof, 2006), which provide bibliometric data about publication counts and the journal's IF.

The aim of those indices was to create a systematic way of identifying the most important journals in each field (Garfield, 1979). Scholars argued that databases like the SCI could be data sources for assessing the institutional research productivity (Toutkoushian et al., 2003). In practice, more and more institutions used the counts of papers and the IF as monitoring tools for research performance, mainly on the grounds of convenience and apparent objectivity (F. Li et al., 2015; Nederhof, 2006). Bibliometric indicators have been introduced in China in the late 1980s (Jin & Rousseau, 2004), and in most Chinese research universities, the number of SCI, SSCI and A&HCI publications and the journals'

IF have become essential indicators in research evaluation and incentives (Shao & Shen, 2012).

Major studies on international publications also rely on increasingly sophisticated bibliometric methods, because they are seen as ‘a neat and clear tool for mapping the research landscape of a discipline or a country’ (Oancea, 2009, p. 122). Some researchers considered the publication count as a reliable indicator of internationalisation (Ingwersen, 2000) and adopted bibliometric methods to investigate the research performance and level of internationalisation in different regions, countries, institutions and disciplines (e.g. Glänzel, 1996; He, 2008; Shen & Liu, 2010; Sternberg & Litzemberger, 2005).

However, scholars have challenged the dependence on bibliometric indicators (Carlsson, 2009; Good, Vermeulen, Tiefenthaler, & Arnold, 2015; Nederhof, 2006). For example, the IF is criticised for its problematic calculations caused by self-citations and limitations in reflecting the true value of research (González-Alcaide, Valderrama-Zurián, & Aleixandre-Benavent, 2012; Nederhof, 2006; Seglen, 1997). Interdisciplinary research or new research fields are disadvantaged in the IF-based evaluation system, because they often find it difficult to get published in high-impact journals (Hazelkorn, 2015; Rafols et al., 2012). As Hazelkorn (2015) noted, the dependence on bibliometric and citation rates might ‘misrepresent knowledge production and its impact and benefit for society as a whole’ (p. 81).

Scholars have offered several suggestions to improve the use of bibliometric indicators in HSS research assessment. Some proposed alternative databases that are more open and comprehensive (Hicks & Wang, 2009), some advocated for more sophisticated calculations with complex metrics (Chou, 2014)

or the normalisation of the IF (Yunrong Li, Radicchi, Castellano, & Ruiz-Castillo, 2013; Moed, 2010; Waltman, van Eck, van Leeuwen, & Visser, 2013), and some suggested combining the IF with other methods such as informed peer review (Garfield, 1994) or expert review (Franceschet & Costantini, 2011). For instance, in the REF assessment, research quality and impact are evaluated by expert panels, with some bibliometric information provided to support their assessment in some disciplines ('Expert panels: REF 2014,' n.d.). However, those proposed methods have also been challenged, and there is no absolute consensus in identifying the best method to evaluate HSS research (see Wilsdon et al., 2015).

#### **2.4 Gaps in the current literature**

The phenomenon of incentivising HSS international publications has been drawing increased political and scholarly attention in China. A review of the literature revealed two general gaps in current studies on this topic.

Firstly, the incentives for HSS international publications have not been examined systematically in China. In many countries, research assessment and incentives based on publications in certain international journals are under discussion (e.g. Butler, 2003; Franzoni, Scellato, & Stephan, 2011; Lee & Lee, 2013). The incentives for international publications were associated with debates on the internationalisation of knowledge, the unequal status of central and peripheral countries, the hegemony of the English language, the influences of global university rankings, the managerial culture behind the use of incentives for publications, and the problems and impact of metrics-based evaluations of HSS research. However, there is a lack of systematic analysis of incentives for international publications in a national context. In Chinese higher education, no

research has been identified to examine the scale and structure of either financial or career-related incentives for HSS international publications. Since China's share of HSS international publications is growing rapidly (W. Liu et al., 2015), and that encouraging international publications has been both a growing trend in China and other 'peripheral' or non-English speaking regions and countries, the case of Chinese universities might contribute to the scholarly discussions about internationalisation with a particular focus on incentives for HSS international publications.

Secondly, few studies have examined the impacts of incentives on individual academics in China. Chapter 1 presented current discussions about the impact of incentivising international publications, which mainly focused on the national and institutional levels, emphasising on how such incentives have influenced the development of Chinese HSS research or institutional research performance (Dang, 2005; Luan & Jiang, 2008; Zhu, 2009). However, as international publications are becoming central to individual scholars' progress in their academic career (Hyland, 2009; Swan, 2001), individual academics' experiences is a topic worth exploring. In other countries, several studies have investigated the influence of encouraging international publications on academics' publication behaviours (e.g. Bloch & Schneider, 2016; Hanafi, 2011). In contrast, only a few studies have examined the influence of incentives on Chinese academics, and current studies are also limited to focusing on publication behaviours. How Chinese HSS academics' research and careers have been influenced by the incentives remained largely unexamined.

This study aims to address the gaps in the current literature, investigating the internationalisation of HSS in Chinese higher education with a focus on

incentives for HSS international publications and their influences on HSS academics. It aims to understand how Chinese universities have incentivised HSS international publications in the process of internationalising HSS research, and explore how those incentives have influenced HSS academics' research and careers.

This research intends to make both scholarly and practical contributions. Firstly, it intends to contribute to the research on internationalisation. It aims to map a national landscape of incentives for HSS international publications and examine the influences of such incentives, investigating the internationalisation of HSS from the perspective of a 'peripheral' and non-English speaking country. Secondly, it intends to explore the contents, structure, and influences of a set of research incentives, thus contributing to the theorisation and understanding of research incentives, especially in HSS areas. Thirdly, it seeks to discuss academics under the managerial culture and an internationalisation agenda, investigating individual academics' responses to institutional incentives and the impacts they received in the process. Lastly, this study hopes to generate implications for Chinese universities' policymaking, particularly in their institutional policies for internationalising, evaluating, and incentivising HSS research.

## **Chapter 3 Methodology**

This research applies a qualitative multiple-case study design to investigate the influences of encouraging international publications through incentive schemes on Chinese HSS academics' research activities and careers.

From September to October 2016 and February to May 2017, I visited six case universities in China, conducted semi-structured interviews with 65 HSS academics and six senior university administrators, and interviewed four editors of four HSS journals. This research also drew on documentary studies of institutional incentive schemes for HSS international publications, and the bibliometric analysis of case universities and interviewees' SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI publications.

This section presents the theoretical considerations of research design, the research process, sampling strategies for case universities and participants, data collection and analysis methods, ethical considerations, and challenges and limitations of this study.

### **3.1 Research design**

The choice of a study design depends on the nature of research questions, the amount of control the researcher owns, and the desired results from the research (Merriam, 1998). As the literature review revealed, studies on individual academics' responses to institutional changes often use qualitative case study methods to illustrate the dynamics between individuals and institutions, and to capture the variety in individuals and institutions' interactions (e.g. Lucas, 2006;

Trow, 1994). This research, with the similar research aim of investigating individuals' relationship with institutional management, also applies a qualitative case study design.

A case study design, as defined by Yin (2013), 'is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (p. 16). The case study design was selected for this research because of the following reasons.

First of all, the case study design fits in with the nature of research problems and questions being asked. A case study design allows to answer 'how' or 'why' questions about a contemporary set of events (Yin, 2013). Incentives for international publications, the phenomenon investigated in this research, are contemporary events happening in Chinese higher education. This research examines this phenomenon on two facets, the institutional incentives and the influences on individual levels, both with exploratory 'how' questions: How have Chinese universities attempted to incentivise HSS academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals? Moreover, how have the institutional incentives for international publications influenced Chinese HSS academics' research and careers? Due to the characteristics of the research problem and the exploratory nature of the research questions, a case study design is appropriate.

Furthermore, the qualitative case study design has advantages in understanding complex phenomena and producing comprehensive and in-depth findings (Merriam, 1998). As revealed by the literature review, the phenomenon of incentivising international publication is a complex and dynamic issue in Chinese universities (Dang, 2005; L. Li, 2009; Luan & Jiang, 2008; H. Qin &

Zhang, 2008; Ren & Lu, 2003; Zhu, 2009). Therefore, this research aims to investigate the issue not only based on rich data collected from various sources, but also from a variety of stakeholders' perspectives, such as academics from different disciplines, senior administrators who designed the incentive schemes, and journal editors whose journals are ranked by universities. A case study design can lead to 'an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved' (Merriam, 1998, p. 19) and to 'strengthen the precision, validity, stability and trustworthiness of the findings' (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 33). Hence, the comprehensive nature of the case study permits this research to collect data from various sources and present the analysis with an in-depth account of different voices.

A multiple-case study design allows further investigation into similarities and variations. According to Stake (1995), the case study can be classified as intrinsic with its own interests, or instrumental in providing an understanding of issues beyond the case itself, or collective with multiple case studies to serve an instrumental purpose. This research applies a collective case study design by comparing six case institutions, to ensure that each case institution is not only instrumentally useful in throwing lights upon the understanding of incentives, but also comparable to generate findings on a variety of institutions and academics.

### **3.2 Research process**

This research consisted of three phases: the scoping and piloting phase (Phase I), the initial fieldwork and data analysis (Phase II), and further fieldwork, data analysis and integration (Phase III) (see **Figure 1 Research Process Flowchart**). Phase I framed the research scope and research design. Phase II

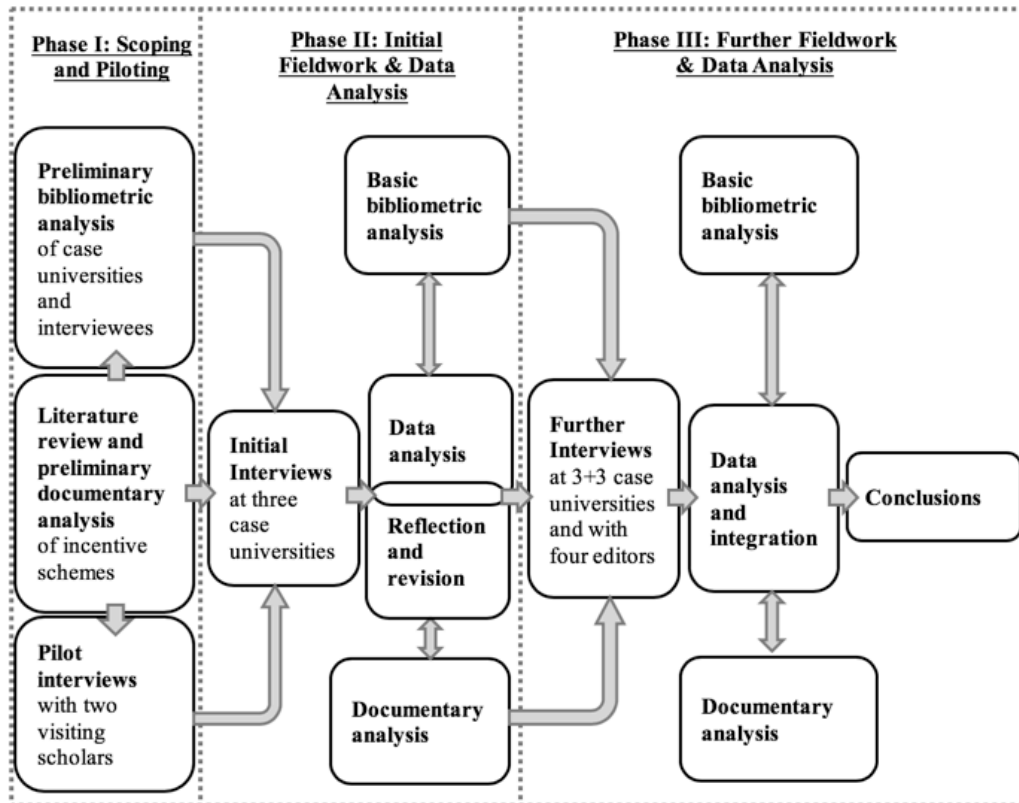
gathered initial data and tested the sampling strategies. Results of Phase II informed the further fieldwork in Phase III, which gathered the major part of interview data and generated findings.

The fieldwork was divided into two phases to test the sampling strategy, ensure the richness of research data, and guarantee documents and bibliometric data are up-to-date. Firstly, considering the substantial number<sup>7</sup> and wide diversification of Chinese universities, it is crucial to choose representative cases. Therefore, the selection criteria for case universities were tested in the initial fieldwork. Secondly, the second round of fieldwork could fill in data gaps in the previous fieldwork, and ensure the richness and depth of research data. Finally, by conducting documentary and bibliometric studies in three phases, I tried to keep track of the changing data and ensure it is up-to-date for analysis.

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<sup>7</sup> By May 30<sup>th</sup> 2016, there were 2879 higher education institutions in China (Ministry of Education, 2016b).

**Figure 1 Research Process Flowchart**



### **Phase I: Scoping and piloting**

In Phase I (from September 2015 to August 2016), I framed the research scope and research design by reviewing relevant literature, analysing institutional incentive schemes, conducting basic bibliometric analysis, designing data collection tools, and conducting pilot interviews.

The literature review identified the gaps in existing literature, framed research questions, and revealed the need for a documentary analysis of incentive schemes. The preliminary documentary study collected and reviewed ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities’ incentive schemes for HSS international publications, revealed the scale and contents of incentive schemes, and generated selection criteria for case universities. The descriptive bibliometric analysis of case institutions and

interviewees' scholarly outputs and citation counts underpinned case selections, identified potential interviewees, and provided supplementary information for interviews and data analysis. Based on the findings of the documentary analysis and bibliometric studies, six case universities and several potential interviewees were selected.

Semi-structured pilot interviews were carried out in July 2016 to test the validity of interview questions. Since I was based in Oxford then, with considerations of the accessibility to interviewees, I decided to recruit participants from Chinese visiting scholars at the University of Oxford. Eight potential interviewees were identified through searching on 29 Oxford HSS departments/schools/research centres' websites and a WeChat<sup>8</sup> group of visiting Chinese scholars in Oxford. Invitation letters were sent to them via email and WeChat, with two scholars responded positively. Both interviewees are HSS academics from '985' or '211' universities with incentive schemes for HSS international publications. Pilot interviews helped me to adjust interview questions (see **Appendix 5B: Interview protocols**), improve invitation letters, and reflect on the categorisation of incentive schemes.

## **Phase II: Initial fieldwork and data analysis**

In Phase II (from September 2016 to January 2017), I gathered first-hand data from three case universities, interviewed 21 HSS academics, tested the sampling strategies for case universities and participants, adjusted the choice of

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<sup>8</sup> WeChat is an instant messaging app used by many Chinese people ('WeChat,' n.d.).

case universities, and selected four journals for further fieldwork. Results of Phase II informed the further fieldwork in Phase III.

In September and October 2016, I visited three case universities in China and interviewed 20 HSS academics. The case universities are located respectively in Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an, thus are named as Uni-BJA, Uni-SHA, and Uni-XA. Nine of the interviewees were from Uni-BJA, seven were from Uni-SHA, and four were from Uni-XA. In addition, I conducted another interview in November, with a scholar visiting Oxford from Uni-SHA.

From October to December 2016, I transcribed the 21 interviews, translated one interview transcript for validation with my supervisors, collected the latest relevant incentive schemes and bibliometric data, and coded the data for initial analysis.

The fieldwork and preliminary analysis in Phase II led to several major changes to the sampling strategies. The selection criteria for case institutions were adjusted, and the choices of the other three case institutions were changed accordingly. Additionally, four journals were selected based on the results of Phase II. The section **3.3 Sampling strategies** presents a detailed account of the changes and the selection of journals.

### **Phase III: Further fieldwork and data analysis**

Further fieldwork and data analysis (from February 2017 to October 2018) gathered the major part of interview data, analysed research data, and generated the findings of this research.

From February to May 2017, I re-visited the three case institutions, visited three new case universities, and conducted 53 interviews in total: six with senior

university administrators from each case institution, three with journal editors, and 44 with HSS academics from six case institutions. Another interview with a journal editor was carried out later in August in London, when the editor visited the UK. Altogether, 75 interviewees participated in this research. Their information is presented in **Appendix 2: List of interviewees**.

From June to December 2017, I transcribed interviews and analysed data addressing the first research question: How have Chinese universities attempted to incentivise HSS academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals?

From January to October 2018, I first analysed interview data addressing the second research question: How have the incentives for international publications influenced Chinese HSS academics' research and careers? After the further data analysis, I integrated data analyses and reflected on the research, and completed the thesis in October 2018.

### **3.3 Sampling strategies**

In this research, case universities and interviewees were selected on the basis of 'purposive sampling', which is the same as 'criterion-based sampling', requiring the establishment of the criteria, bases, or standards necessary for units to be included in the research (Merriam, 1988, p. 48). Furthermore, this study selected case institutions and participants with both heterogeneous and homogeneous characteristics, rendering the possibility to investigate comparable units and capture a wide range of perspectives.

### 3.3.1 Selection of case universities

#### *The initial selection of case universities*

As explained in **1.2 Research questions**, this research selected 113 ‘211’ and ‘985’ universities for investigation.<sup>9</sup> Initially, the number of case universities was decided based on findings from the preliminary documentary analysis. Three major types of incentive schemes were identified in the preliminary research (see Table 1) – bonus schemes for research achievements (Type A), bonus schemes for academic paper publications (Type B), and regulations on research evaluations (Type C). To enable comparisons, I decided to select two case universities from each category; hence six case universities for this research.

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<sup>9</sup> Among the 116 ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities, three military universities were excluded from this study, because they are not classified to any provinces.

**Table 1 Initial Categories of Incentive Schemes for HSS International**

**Publications**

<b>Types of incentive schemes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Examples of incentive documents</b>
<b>Type A</b>	Bonus schemes for research achievements	A1: For HSS research	<i>Nanjing University Bonus Schemes for HSS Research Achievements</i>
		A2: For all research areas	<i>Southeast University Interim Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Achievements</i>
<b>Type B</b>	Bonus schemes for academic paper publications	B1: For HSS academic paper publications	<i>Peking University Interim Bonus Schemes for HSS International Publications</i>
		B2: For all academic paper publications	<i>Xi'an Jiaotong University Interim Bonus Schemes for Academic Papers</i>
<b>Type C</b>	Regulations on academic evaluations	C1: For HSS academic evaluations	<i>Lanzhou University Regulations on Measuring and Assessing HSS Research Performance (Revised)</i>
		C2: For all academic evaluations	<i>Communication University of China Academics' Performance Evaluation Methods</i>
	Other types of incentive schemes	To be explored in the fieldwork.	

The selection process began by categorising universities into three groups based on their types of incentive schemes. I then conducted a bibliometric search on each institution's SSCI and A&HCI publication numbers from 2001 to 2016<sup>10</sup>, and ranked universities in each category accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

I then selected one university with more publications and the other with relatively low productivity from each category, with considerations to span the following characteristics: (1) geographical location, (2) characteristics of

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<sup>10</sup> A starting point was chosen because some universities have a longer history than others. Therefore, they had SSCI and A&HCI publications when some other universities were not established. The year 2001 was selected because as revealed by the preliminary documentary analysis, it marked the beginning of incentive schemes for HSS international publications in China.

<sup>11</sup> To find an adequate number of potential interviewees, institutions with less than ten SSCI or A&HCI publications were excluded.

incentives (for instance whether the incentives had been revised), and (3) the universities' characteristics (e.g. whether it is a '985' or '211' university, and whether the university is more NS-oriented or HSS-oriented<sup>12</sup>).

Geographical location is an important sampling criterion, because '985' and '211' universities are unevenly distributed in mainland China. The uneven distribution of '985' and '211' universities, as Montgomery (2016) argued, demonstrated an association with the urban-rural divide in China. '985' and '211' universities concentrated in more modernised and developed Eastern and Central provinces, with 60% '211' universities and 72% '985' universities located in East China (Montgomery, 2016). Provincially, as Figure 2 shows, Beijing, Jiangsu, and Shanghai have a larger share of '985' and '211' universities – 26 in Beijing, 11 in Jiangsu and nine in Shanghai. Based on the uneven distribution of '985' and '211' universities, I initially decided to choose three universities from Beijing, Jiangsu, or Shanghai, and three from provinces with fewer '985' and '211' universities.

Based on the criteria, six universities were selected as the cases (detailed information is presented in **Appendix 1A: Initial selection of case universities**). I decided to visit three of them due to time constraints and the pilot nature of the first round of fieldwork. To verify the criteria of graphical location, I also decided to visit three universities in three different cities. With considerations of the geographical location and accessibility, I then visited Uni-BJA, Uni-SHA, and Uni-XA during the initial fieldwork.

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<sup>12</sup> This distinction was based on the official introduction on universities' websites.

**Figure 2 Distributions of ‘985’ and ‘211’ Universities in China**



*The selection of additional three case universities*

The selection criteria for case universities were adjusted upon completion of the initial fieldwork and the analysis of initial interviews. Interviews revealed that each university had more than one type of incentive schemes. Therefore, I decided to remove the categorisation of incentive schemes from the sampling criteria, and keep the other four criteria: (1) geographical location, (2) characteristics of the university, (3) features of the incentive documents, and (4) SSCI and A&HCI publication numbers. Since I had interviewed and set up contact with many academics at Uni-BJA, Uni-SHA, and Uni-XA, I decided to keep them as case institutions. I then attempted to select three additional universities that were both convenient for fieldwork and comparable to the

existing case institutions regarding the criteria listed above. The selection was conducted in several steps.

Firstly, the remaining '985' and '211' universities were screened by geographical location. Preferences were first given to universities located in Beijing, Shanghai, and Xi'an, cities where existing case universities are located. Secondly, as initial interviews revealed, whether a university is '985' or '211' university reflects its relative level of internationalisation and research intensity. The initial three universities are one '211' university in Beijing, one '985' university in Shanghai, and one '985' university in Xi'an. To create contrast, I examined universities in the three cities, trying to find one '985' university in Beijing, one '211' university in Shanghai, and one '211' university in Xi'an. However, no perfect match was found in this step.

Therefore, I expanded the definition of geographical location from provinces to regions. As shown in Figure 3, Liu et al.'s (2015) research demonstrated that Beijing and Shanghai each produced more than 10% of SSCI papers in Mainland China, which can be labelled as a Tier 3 region. Provinces with 2% - 10% SSCI contributions were categorised as a Tier 2 region. Shaanxi province, where Xi'an serves as the capital city, belonged to this group. Other provinces with less than 1% SSCI publications were labelled as a Tier 1 region.

**Figure 3 Distributions of SSCI Publications in Mainland China (2002-2013)**



*(Source: Adapted from W. Liu et al., 2015)*

My documentary search revealed limited incentive schemes published by universities in the Tier 1 region. To select information-rich cases, I decided to focus on only Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions. As previous three universities are one ‘211’ and one ‘985’ university in a Tier 3 region, and one ‘985’ university in a Tier 2 region, I selected one ‘985’ and one ‘211’ university from the Tier 3 region, and one ‘211’ university in the Tier 2 region with considerations of available incentives, features of the university, and SSCI and A&HCI publication numbers.

The six case universities consist of three ‘985’ universities and three ‘211’ universities, and three HSS-oriented universities and three NS-oriented universities. All three ‘985’ universities are also A-class ‘double first-class universities’, and all three ‘211’ universities are included in the ‘double first-class discipline’ project. Four universities are located in Tier 3 regions, where the overall SSCI publication records are high, and two are from Tier 2 regions, where

the overall SSCI publication numbers are comparatively lower. Two universities have more than 2,000 SSCI and A&HCI publication records, one university has more than 1,000 but less than 2,000 SSCI and A&HCI publications, and other three universities' SSCI and A&HCI publication numbers are less than 1,000 each.

Table 2 summarises the information about the six case universities.

**Table 2 Case Universities' Information**

University	SSCI/ A&HCI articles (By May 2016)	'985' or '211' university/ Double first- class university or discipline	NS- or HSS- oriented	Location	Year of publishing the university- level incentive documents
Uni-SHA	SSCI: 1939 A&HCI: 122	'985'/ Double first- class university	NS	Shanghai (Tier 3 region)	2002; Revised in 2014
Uni-SHB	SSCI: 2325 A&HCI: 217	'985'/ Double first- class university	HSS	Shanghai (Tier 3 region)	2001
Uni-BJA	SSCI: 65 A&HCI: 54	'211'/ Double first- class discipline	HSS	Beijing (Tier 3 region)	2007; Revised in 2015
Uni-BJB	SSCI: 122 A&HCI: 4	'211'/ Double first- class discipline	NS	Beijing (Tier 3 region)	2010; Revised in 2015 and 2016
Uni-XA	SSCI: 980 A&HCI: 27	'985'/ Double first- class university	NS	Xi'an, Shaanxi Province (Tier 2 region)	2001
Uni-WH	SSCI: 310 A&HCI: 204	'211'/ Double first- class discipline	HSS	Wuhan, Hubei Province (Tier 2 region)	2013; Revised in 2016

### 3.3.2 Selection and recruitment of participants

This research involved three groups of participants: HSS academics, senior university administrators, and editors of HSS academic journals.

#### *HSS academics*

Interviews with HSS academics are central to understanding the influences of incentives for international publications on their research and career. The selection procedure included both purposive sampling and snowball sampling (Merriam, 1998, p. 63). To ensure I sampled a wide range of HSS academics, I intended to find interviewees with the following characteristics: (1) academics with a substantial number or small number of international/domestic publications<sup>13</sup>; (2) academics with high or low citation impacts in SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI databases; (3) academics with different job titles (reflecting their career stages and whether they have tenure positions); and (4) academics from different disciplines. Previous research on the issue of international publications revealed a low response rate of university faculty to student researchers' interview invitations (Han, 2015; Xu, 2015)<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, I decided to identify an initial pool of 60 HSS academics at each case university to find around ten interviewees at the institution.

The procedure of selecting and approaching HSS academics comprised four steps (summarised in Table 3). The first step was using bibliometric studies

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<sup>13</sup> The researcher's previous study (Xu, 2015) and pilot interviews both involved scholars with few or no international publications, who all expressed the willingness to discuss the issue of international publications.

<sup>14</sup> Around 10% acceptance rate at Han's case university (Han, 2015), and around 30% acceptance rate in the researcher's previous research (Xu, 2015).

to identify 15 academics with high research productivity (measured by SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI publication numbers) and 15 with high citation rates (measured by times of citations in SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI databases) as prospective interviewees. Methodological details about the search are presented in the following section about data collection. Names of academics were listed, and their email addresses and other information were then acquired either from the databases or online searches. In cases where no contact information about some academics was found online, I had put them on a 'waiting list', retaining the possibility to contact via alternative means. Other academics next on the list replaced their places, who were more contactable. Altogether, there were 30 academics at each case university identified with many publications and high citation rates.

The second step was browsing the faculty lists and academics' profiles on each HSS departments' websites, and selecting 30 additional academics with different job titles from different disciplines. In cases where no publication information was provided on the web pages, I checked academics' publication records in SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI databases, to make sure there were academics with fewer international/domestic publications. I collected academics' email addresses either from the websites or by searching online with their names. When a scholar's email address was not found online, I replaced this scholar with another scholar with similar characteristics.

After generating the list of potential interviewees, I began sending out invitations via email. For the initial fieldwork, interview invitations were sent to 30 random potential interviewees at the three case institutions, with the aim to find around five interviewees at each institution. Since there were more than five

positive responses from Uni-SHA and Uni-BJA, I ended up with seven interviewees from Uni-SHA, nine from Uni-BJA, and four from Uni-XA.

For the second round of fieldwork, I initially sent out invitations to other 30 prospective interviewees at the previous three case universities, and contacted 60 potential interviewees at the three additional case universities. However, the response rate was low in some universities and disciplines. When I realised the skewed distribution of interviewees during fieldwork, I decided to repeat the second step to identify and contact more potential interviewees by browsing through the faculty lists online.

The last step of selecting and approaching HSS academics applied the snowball sampling method. After each interview, I invited the interviewee to introduce further participants. I then considered the academics recommended, ensured that they would contribute to the diversity of interviewees, and set up contact with them through the assistance of current interviewees. Less than five interviewees participated in the research through this approach.

**Table 3 The Procedure for Selecting and Approaching HSS Academics**

**Interviewees**

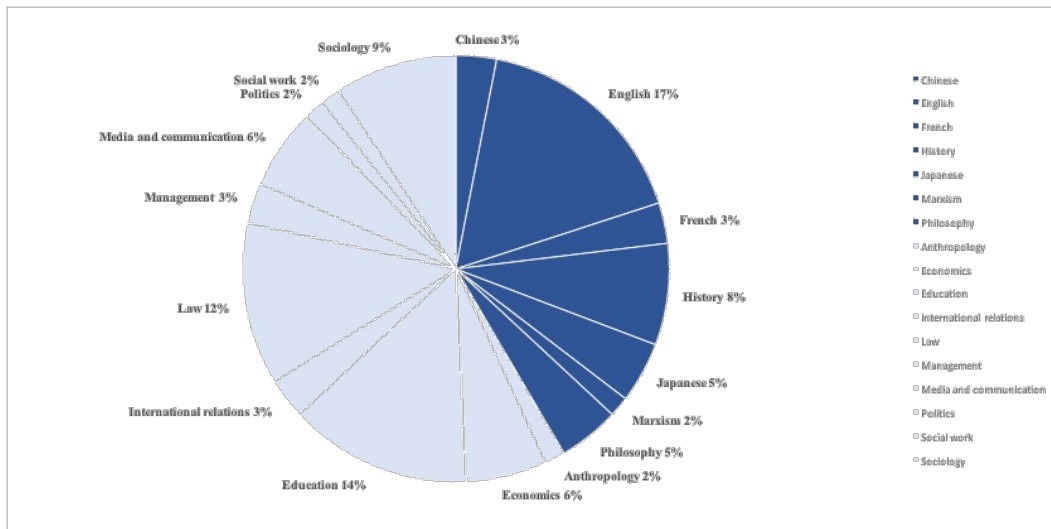
<b>Steps</b>	<b>Technique</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Potential interviewees</b>		
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Search in the SSCI and A&amp;HCI databases</b>	Ranking of publication counts (within the case university)	Top five HSS academics with most SSCI publications	<b>Minimum number of potential interviewees to be identified: 60</b>	
			Top five HSS academics with most A&HCI publications		
		Ranking of citations (within the case university)	Authors of top five most-cited SSCI publications		
			Authors of top five most-cited A&HCI publications		
	<b>Search in the CSSCI database</b>	Ranking of publication counts (within the case university)	Top five HSS academics with most CSSCI publications		<b>The target number of interviewees:10</b>
		Ranking of citations (within the case university)	Authors of top five most-cited CSSCI publications		
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Search on the university/ departments' websites</b>	Disciplines, job titles, and publication records	30+ HSS academics with similar and dissimilar characteristics		
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Sending out email invitations</b>	/	/		
<b>Step 4</b>	<b>Recommendations by current interviewees</b>	Disciplines, job titles, and publication records	HSS academics with similar and dissimilar characteristics		

In total, 65 HSS academics from six case universities were interviewed. Information about each interviewee is provided in **Appendix 2: List of interviewees**. In general, nine interviewees were from Uni-BJA, seven from Uni-BJB, 11 from Uni-SHA, 13 from Uni-SHB, ten from Uni-XA, and 15 from Uni-WH. 27 academics were from Humanities disciplines such as English and History, accounting for 42% of the academics interviewed. Other 38 academics worked in Social Sciences areas such as Education, Law, and Sociology (see Table 4 and Figure 4).

**Table 4 Interviewees' Disciplines**

	<b>Disciplines</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>
<b>Humanities (42%)</b>	Chinese	2
	English	11
	French	2
	History	5
	Japanese	3
	Marxism	1
	Philosophy	3
<b>Social Sciences (58%)</b>	Anthropology	1
	Economics	4
	Education	9
	International relations	2
	Law	8
	Management	2
	Media and communication	4
	Politics	1
	Social work	1
	Sociology	6

**Figure 4 Distributions of Interviewees' Disciplines**



Among 65 academics interviewed, 27 interviewees are female academics, and 38 are male academics (see Table 5 below). Six academics held senior administrative roles in their departments or schools. As shown in Table 6, 15 of the academics were assistant professors, 29 were associate professors, and 21 of them were professors.

**Table 5 Interviewees' Gender**

Gender	Number						Total	Percentage
	Uni-BJA	Uni-BJB	Uni-SHA	Uni-SHB	Uni-XA	Uni-WH		
Female	5	5	4	4	4	5	27	42%
Male	4	2	7	9	6	10	38	58%
Total	9	7	11	13	10	15	65	100%

**Table 6 Interviewees' Academic Titles**

<b>Number</b> <b>Academic title</b>	<b>Uni- BJA</b>	<b>Uni- BJB</b>	<b>Uni- SHA</b>	<b>Uni- SHB</b>	<b>Uni- XA</b>	<b>Uni- WH</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Assistant Professor</b>	3	2	2	4	1	3	<b>15</b>	23%
<b>Associate Professor</b>	2	4	5	4	6	8	<b>29</b>	45%
<b>Professor</b>	4	1	4	5	3	4	<b>21</b>	33%
<b>Total</b>	9	7	11	13	10	15	<b>65</b>	100%

Thirty-one academics had overseas educational background: 20 received their PhD degrees from universities outside mainland China, 11 received their doctoral degrees from universities in mainland China, but had master's degrees abroad or had participated in joint-PhD programmes<sup>15</sup> with universities abroad. Other 34 academics did not have the overseas educational background, but 26 of them had academic visiting experiences at overseas universities. Only eight academics interviewed did not have education or research experiences at institutions outside mainland China (see Table 7 and Table 8).

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<sup>15</sup> Joint-PhD programmes offer doctoral students the opportunity to conduct their doctoral research at an overseas institution for several months or years, under the supervision of advisors at the institution. However, they do not receive their PhD degrees from the university abroad.

**Table 7 Interviewees' Academic Experiences Abroad**

Overseas educational background	PhD degrees	Overseas academic experiences	Number of interviewees
<b>Overseas educational background (31 interviewees)</b>	PhD abroad (20 interviewees)	Bachelor's; Master's; PhD	1
		Bachelor's; PhD	1
		Master's; PhD	12
		PhD	6
	PhD in China (11 interviewees)	Joint PhD abroad	6
		Master's abroad; Joint PhD	1
Master's abroad		4	
<b>Non-overseas educational background (34 interviewees)</b>	PhD in China (34 interviewees)	Academic visiting experiences	26
		None	8

**Table 8 Interviewees' Educational Background**

Number Overseas education	Uni-BJA	Uni-BJB	Uni-SHA	Uni-SHB	Uni-XA	Uni-WH	Total	Percentage
	<b>Yes</b>	6	4	4	7	4	6	<b>31</b>
<b>No</b>	3	3	7	6	6	9	<b>34</b>	52%
<b>Total</b>	9	7	11	13	10	15	<b>65</b>	100%

As shown in Table 9 and Table 10, 41 academics had international publications. Among them, 33 had less than five international publications, and only one scholar had more than ten international publications. For academics with international publications, 24 of them had SSCI or A&HCI publications, and 17 had non-SSCI/A&HCI publications. The other 24 academics had not published in international journals. Among 65 academics interviewed, four academics served as editors for newly-established English journals to be indexed by international indices.

**Table 9 Interviewees' International Publication Records**

<b>Interviewees with international publications</b>	<b>International publications</b>	<b>Number of publications</b>	<b>Number of interviewees</b>
<b>Interviewees with international publications (63%)</b>	SSCI/A&HCI publications (24 interviewees)	1-4	20
		5-10	3
		> 10	1
	Non-SSCI/A&HCI publications (17 interviewees)	1-4	13
		5-10	4
<b>Interviewees without international publications (37%)</b>	None		24

**Table 10 Interviewees' International Publication Experiences**

<b>Number International publications</b>	<b>Uni-BJA</b>	<b>Uni-BJB</b>	<b>Uni-SHA</b>	<b>Uni-SHB</b>	<b>Uni-XA</b>	<b>Uni-WH</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Yes</b>	7	4	8	8	7	7	<b>41</b>	63%
<b>No</b>	2	3	3	5	3	8	<b>24</b>	37%
<b>Total</b>	9	7	11	13	10	15	<b>65</b>	100%

*Senior administrators (SA)*

Senior administrators responsible for institutional incentive schemes can provide further perspectives on incentive schemes' aims, formulation and implementation process, and the rationale for revisions and some specific requirements. Thus, they formed another important group of interviewees.

This research recruited six senior administrators, one from each case university. They had all participated in formulating incentives schemes for HSS international publications at the university level. Five of them worked full-time with leadership and management roles at relevant university offices, among whom two had previously worked as academics in HSS. One participant still had the academic position at a Social Sciences Department, and served both academic and management roles.

Participants were identified via two approaches. The first approach involved identifying the division responsible for incentive schemes through official documents, and searching online for directors' contact information. The choice of senior administrators appeared to be limited at each institution, as only two or three people were found responsible for incentive schemes, among whom some had no contact information online. Therefore, I contacted all potential interviewees with contact information. This approach was effective at two case universities, where one senior administrator accepted the interview invitation at each institution.

The second measure was taken for the other four universities, where I sought help from current interviewees or my professional network to contact potential interviewees. Through this approach, I reached senior administrators from the other four universities and interviewed one senior administrator at each institution.

### *Journal editors*

Interviews with journal editors of HSS academic journals served to 'triangulate' (Stake, 1995, p. 107) the academics and senior administrators' perspectives, and offered further insights about journal rankings from journal editors' perspectives.

The criteria for selecting journals were determined after initial data analysis, based on findings from initial interviews. Four journals were selected, with considerations of diversity in the following aspects: (1) different indices (SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI) and the rankings in incentive documents, (2) the language used for publication, (3) geographical distribution of editorial boards

and reviewers, (4) the aim and scope, and (5) whether the journal is in the Humanities or Social Sciences research areas.

Journals selected were one SSCI journal, one A&HCI journal, one CSSCI journal that ranked high on Chinese universities' journal lists, and one CSSCI journal with lower ranking on journal lists. One of the journals was published in English, one was published in both Chinese and English, and the other two were published in Chinese. Two journals had international scholars on their editorial boards, while the other two journals' editors were mostly Chinese scholars. Two journals framed their scope as to examine China-related issues, and the other two were not specific to Chinese topics. Two journals were in Humanities areas, while the other two were Social Sciences journals. Information about the journals is listed in **Appendix 4: Information about journals**. In addition, four academics interviewed also served as editors for newly-established English journals in China.

I emailed invitation letters to the chief editor, deputy chief editors, and executive editors of the four journals. Chief-editors or executive editors of three journals accepted the invitation. I succeeded in contacting an editor of the other journal, with the assistance of my professional connection.

### **3.4 Data collection**

The research collected and used three sets of first-hand data: the interview data, universities' incentive documents, and the bibliometric data. Second-hand data, such as bibliometric information about Chinese scholars' total international publications and citations, was gathered from existing literature.

### 3.4.1 Interview data

The interview data is the pivotal source to reveal incentives' influences on HSS academics' research and careers. Interview data was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with 65 HSS academics, six senior university administrators, and four HSS journal editors.

Interviews were conducted in Mandarin Chinese,<sup>16</sup> lasting from 30 minutes to around three hours. Out of the 75 interviews, 71 interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent, while four interviewees refused to be recorded. I kept detailed notes for the four interviews upon participants' consent. Most interviews took place in participants' offices, and some others in cafes or restaurants. I conducted 73 interviews during my fieldwork in China, and interviewed two participants during their visits to the UK. Eight interviews were conducted via telephone, either because the interviewees were abroad or because they preferred telephone interviews.

Interviews were designed to be semi-structured, which contained both closed and open questions, allowed room for prompts and probes, rendered a degree of freedom for interviewees, and guaranteed control from the interviewer when necessary (Drever, 2006). All the interviews were guided by some general questions, but specific questions were adjusted according to the interviewees' backgrounds and reactions. Most interview questions were open-ended, allowing the interviewee to answer in great details (interview questions can be found in **Appendix 5B: Interview protocols**). Before the interviews, I sent out an outline of questions to some interviewees upon their requests.

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<sup>16</sup> Issues of translation are discussed in **3.7.6 Validity of translation**.

Interviews with HSS academics addressed three questions: the interviewees' academic publication experiences, interviewees' perceptions of international and domestic journals and publications, and interviewees' attitudes towards incentives and the impacts on their research activities and careers.

Interviews with senior administrators focused on three aspects: the process and rationale for introducing the incentives, the influences of incentives, and explanations to the revisions of incentives.

Interviews with journal editors discussed three issues: the journal's information, such as the review process, how the journal became indexed by a specific index, and editors' opinions on domestic and international journals and indices.

After interviews, I presented each participant with a small thank-you gift and sent each of them a follow-up email or message. I kept memos right after interviews and followed up with some interviewees to clarify questions during transcription.

### **3.4.2 Incentive documents**

This research collected and analysed 172 institutional incentive documents. **Appendix 3: List of documents analysed** provides a list of incentive documents used in the research.

Incentive documents served different purposes at different research stages. In the preliminary documentary search and during fieldwork, a range of institutional incentive documents was collected, including bonus schemes, research assessment regulations, journal lists, and requirements for career promotion. Before the initial fieldwork, such documents provided the context of

research, underpinned the case selection, and contributed to the framing of research questions. After the main fieldwork, all incentive documents served as vital evidence and were analysed together with the interview data.

Incentive documents were collected through the online search and during fieldwork. Before the fieldwork, I collected 149 full-text incentive scheme documents online. From March to May 2016, I searched through the official websites of all 113 '985' and '211' universities, with keywords as 'Humanities and Social Sciences international publications', 'SSCI paper OR article OR publication', 'A&HCI paper OR article OR publication', and 'Humanities and Social Sciences research award OR reward OR bonus OR incentive'. To double-check, I then searched on search engines *Google* and *Baidu* with the above keywords plus each institution's name. 149 documents were found through this method, dating from 2001 to 2016. Among them, 144 documents were collected from universities' websites. Around 30 additional documents were mentioned in relevant documents, but are not published online or require internal access. Five of those internal documents were then found on public websites for sharing documents.

The 149 incentive documents can be categorised into four types: Bonus schemes for research achievements, bonus schemes for academic paper publications, regulations on academic evaluations, and journal lists serving as references for bonus schemes and research evaluations. The categorisation of incentive schemes based on those documents served as an essential criterion for the initial case selection (discussed in **3.3.1 Selection of case universities**).

During fieldwork, I collected additional 23 incentive documents. In addition to four types of documents found online prior to the fieldwork,

documents also included requirements for tenure promotion, employment requirement or contracts, and departmental regulations on research assessment. Some of the documents were provided by interviewees, and some were mentioned during interviews and later found online.

### **3.4.3 Bibliometric data**

Bibliometric data included case universities' and individual academics' publication and citation number, and was collected by searching in SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI databases, guided by metrics and techniques listed in Table 11. Bibliometric data served three purposes: to underpin the selection of case universities, support the selection of potential interviewees, and provide supplementary information for interviews and data analysis.

Data about institutional SSCI and A&HCI publications was found on the *Web of Science Core Collection*, which includes the SSCI (1956 – present) and A&HCI (1975 – present) databases (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b, 2017a). I first selected the name of case university from the 'Organisations - Enhanced List' (Web of Science, n.d.-b) or searched by the official English name of the institution, if not included in the list. I then checked search setting to restrict the search to SSCI database or A&HCI database, and the publication type was limited to articles. With all articles found through this search, I then generated four lists: (1) the total publication number and all publications listed by publication years<sup>17</sup>, (2) number of citations of all publications by year<sup>18</sup>, (3) top five HSS academics

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<sup>17</sup> The function of 'Results analysis' was used (Web of Science, n.d.-c).

<sup>18</sup> The function of 'Create citation report' was used (Web of Science, n.d.-a).

with most publications<sup>19</sup>, and (4) top five most-cited papers of all years<sup>20</sup>. Lists (1) and (2) supported the selection of cases and data analysis. List (3) and (4) assisted in identifying potential interviewees. Information about those authors, such as their affiliated department and email address, was found on each article's webpage.

Data about institutional CSSCI publications were gathered on the *China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI)* website, which provides access to all CSSCI publications (1998 – present) (CNKI, n.d.). I searched by the institution's Chinese name, and limited the search to CSSCI journals. The result page provided the number of publications in each year and the top 40 authors with most publications at each institution. The most cited articles in each institution were then identified by sorting those papers by citation times from highest to lowest. Authors' email addresses and department information were found in each article and double-checked via searches on the official departmental websites.

Data about individual interviewee's SSCI, A&HCI and CSSCI publications were collected through searching in databases as mentioned above with interviewees' names. Results were then refined by the name of the university and the department. Information about interviewees' publications and citations provided support for interview preparation and data analysis.

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<sup>19</sup> The function of 'Results analysis' was used (Web of Science, n.d.-c).

<sup>20</sup> The function of 'Create citation report' was used (Web of Science, n.d.-a).

**Table 11 Guiding Matrix for Bibliometric Search**

<b>Metrics</b>	<b>Questions</b>	<b>Purposes</b>	<b>Technique</b>
<b>Institutional publications</b>	How many SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI articles has the university published in total and each year?	For case selection and data analysis: Providing references for selecting case universities and data analysis	Select/search the institution name, then generate results with the Results Analysis function (SSCI/A&HCI) or on the result page (CSSCI)
<b>Individual publications</b>	Who are the academics with top five SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI articles at each university? How many publications do they have? Which departments are they from? Are their email addresses available?	For selecting participants: Identifying potential interviewees and their contact information, gathering background information about them	Select/search the institution name, then generate results with the Results Analysis function and examining the webpage of each publication (SSCI/A&HCI), or on the result page (CSSCI) and each paper's page
	How many SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI publications does the interviewee have in total and each year?	For interview preparation and data analysis: Providing background information for interviews and data analysis	Search the interviewee's name and refine with institution name, then generate results from the result pages (SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI)
<b>Institutional citations</b>	How many citations do the university have (in SSCI/A&HCI databases) in total and each year?	For case selection and data analysis: Providing references for selecting case universities and data analysis	Select/search the institution name, then generate results with the function of creating the Citation Report (SSCI/A&HCI)
<b>Individual citations</b>	Which are the top five most-cited SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI publications in each university? Who are the authors? Which departments are they from? Are their email addresses available?	For selecting participants: Identifying potential interviewees and their contact information, gathering background information about them	Select/search the institution name, generate results with the function of creating the Citation Report (SSCI/A&HCI), or by sorting articles by citation times (CSSCI), then examine each article's page (SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI)
	Which are the interviewee's most-cited SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI papers? How many citations do they have?	For interview preparation and data analysis: Providing background information for interviews and data analysis	Search the interviewee's name and refine with the university name, sort publications by times cited, then generate results from the result pages and pages of each publication (SSCI/A&HCI/CSSCI)

### **3.5 Data analysis**

The aim of data analysis is to ‘come up with reasonable conclusions and generalisations based on a preponderance of the data’ (S.J. Taylor & Bogdan, 1984, p. 139). This research analysed data through four stages with the assistance of qualitative data analysis software. This section explains the tools used for data analysis and presents the four stages of data analysis.

#### **3.5.1 Computer-assisted data analysis**

Due to the large volume of data collected in the research, I decided to use the Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS), which is effective in organising, retrieving, and searching data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

Incentive documents and interview transcripts were coded and analysed with the qualitative data analysis software NVivo 11. As explained in the previous section, bibliometric data about publication and citations counts were analysed with functions on the *Web of Science* and *CNKI*. The results were exported in Microsoft Excel 2016 for analysis.

#### **3.5.2 Data analysis process**

The data analysis consisted of four stages. Data analysis started with Stage I as the preparation stage for data immersion and organisation. Stage II was the descriptive mapping of the information about case universities and interviewees. Stage III performed coding of interviews and documents, with each single case

university as the analytical unit. Stage IV followed with cross-case analysis and integration.

*Stage I: Data immersion and organisation*

The analysis started with data immersion and organisation, including transcribing interviews, creating indices for interviews, and organising incentive documents. This stage enabled me to get familiar with and immersed in data with a systematic approach.

I listened to each interview at least twice during transcription. Transcription involved two types of verbatim transcription, one was the transcription of full interviews, and the other was the verbatim transcription of selected sections of interviews. The verbatim transcription of full interviews applied to interviews in initial fieldwork. I first listened to each interview and transcribed the whole interview, and re-listened to the interviews to check any mistakes in transcription.

Upon completing the main fieldwork, due to the time constraint and the large number of interviews to be transcribed, I decided to transcribe the remaining interviews selectively. Kvale (1996) notes that when transcribing interviews, it is allowed to omit parts of the interview that were irrelevant to the focus of the research. In this research, interview parts omitted from transcription included the warming-up and winding-up sections, my introduction to the research, detailed and irrelevant personal stories of interviewees, and detailed discussions about irrelevant topics.

To identify the useful parts of each interview, I created scripts for remaining interviews when listening to them for the first time. Scripts contained

chronological summaries of topics discussed in interviews, the exact starting and ending time for each topic, copies of note-worthy words and phrases, and reflective notes on some topics. An example of the interview script is provided in Appendix 7. Scripts created for each interview served as an index for transcription. With the assistance of the scripts, I then re-listened to the interviews, located the parts relevant to research focuses, and transcribed them.

Documents collected from different sources were organised at this stage. Hard copies of documents were scanned and transcribed into electronic documents. A project was created in Nvivo, including all electronic documents and transcriptions.

### *Stage II: Descriptive mapping*

At the stage of descriptive mapping, essential information about case universities, interviewees, and documents was logged in and organised. The descriptive account of the information was presented, complemented by bibliometric and documentary search and analysis.

Information about each case university was first gathered during case selection. Such information was updated and presented descriptively at Stage II, including the contextual introduction to the university, the bibliometric data about institutional publications and citations, and information about the incentives based on documents and interviews.

Information about interviewees was gathered during the selection and recruitment of participants. At this stage, such information was re-organised into an information sheet. A descriptive account of the demographic information about different interviewee groups was provided.

Incentive documents collected in preliminary search and during fieldwork were analysed descriptively at this stage, focusing on information such as the year of publication and the value of bonuses. I created spreadsheets in Excel to log in the essential information about incentive documents (such as the name of the university, name of the incentive document, year of publication, responsible division, bonus value for different types of publications, and important provisions) and analysed statistical data. Figure 5 below shows a screenshot of part of the spreadsheet.

**Figure 5 A Screenshot of the Spreadsheet for Data Analysis**

University Name	Document Title	Publication Year	Responsible divisions	SSCI	A&HCI	Social Sciences in China	CSSCI或: Nature/Science	SCI	EI	Important provisions
中国矿业大学	矿业大学高水平	2009	人事处	5000 /			1000 10万	5000	2000	论文奖励第一单在
中国药科大学	药科大学专项津	2015	人事处	5000 /			指定学科: 20万	影响因子	500	单篇论文5年内他
中国矿业大学	矿业大学高水平	2009	人事处	5000 /			1000			论文奖励第一单在
南京师范大学	师范大学突出成	2013	人事处	1万	5000		一级期刊5000; 二级期刊	2000		奖励的各项成果
华中农业大学	农业大学综合奖	2009	人事处	2500	2500	发到学院, 学院根据学科分类指导原则	10万			
江南大学	大学科研教学优	2009	人事处	K4: 6000	K4: 6000		K1: 400	影响因子	K1: 400	
江南大学	大学科研教学优	2012	人事处	K5: 6000	K5: 6000		K2: 400 K9: 50万	影响因子	大于20: 8	对于《SCIENCE》
东南大学	大学突出成果奖	2007	人事处	第一作者50	第一作者: 第一作者1万		15万			
南京师范大学	师范大学突出成	2016	人力资源部	1万	5000		一级期刊: 15万	TOP期刊	1万; 其他	奖励的各项成果
电子科技大学	科技大学奖励办	2015	人力资源部	3000 /			2	50万+配套50	(第一区、二区、三区、	
武汉大学	大学哲学社会科	2011	人文社会科学研究院	学科分类中	学科分类中	影响因子排名第一: 20万; 影响因子2-10: 10万; 其余1万				署名“武汉大学”为?
苏州大学	大学科研奖励办	2014	人文社会科学学院	1万	1万		指定期刊5000元			不奖励学术会议
苏州大学	大学科研成果奖	2008	人文社科处	8000	(4000 8000 (4000现金; 4000科研经费)		指定期刊3000元。不包含各类学术会议综述、			
贵州大学	大学人文社科科	2010	人文社科处	影响因子2.1	影响因子2.0以上: A级期刊 5万; B级期刊 2万; C级期刊 1万					在指定的期刊上
北京大学	大学人文社科国	2009	北京大学社会科学部	6000	(Artic 6000 (Art/					书籍章节和会议论
武汉理工大学	理工大学奖励管	2009	奖励委员会办公室	0.2权重; 210.2权重: 2000元			/			
中南财经政法大学	财经政法大学科	2009	学术委员会	三类期刊	三类期刊					三类
华中师范大学	师范大学奖励实	2013	学校办公室	A区 (各研)	AHCI发表 (校内期刊发表论文三年3000-8000 20万			A区 1000 A类: 300		一区: 3) 5000 奖励论文原则上
湖南师范大学	师范大学教学和	2011	教务处、社会科学处、	2万	2万		20万			
四川农业大学	农业大学教职工	2008	教务处研究生处科技管	根据影响因	1500		500 100万			根据影响 核心板15
上海大学	大学文科论文奖	2011	文科处	5000	5000					予以奖励的学术

### Stage III: Coding

Codes are tags or labels assigned to entire documents or segments of documents to identify and to categorise key themes (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). Instead of a linear process, the development of a comprehensive code structure requires an iterative process (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). At this stage, interviews and documents were coded through three rounds of coding.

In this research, interviews and documents were first coded in an open coding approach. Codes derived from contents of interviews and documents, and tended to be descriptive. The second round of coding aimed to develop categories from the first cycle codes (Saldaña, 2015). The pattern coding strategy was used

to identify and categorise similar codes, and develop major themes from the data (Saldaña, 2015). The last step was to analyse the categories by clustering, comparing and contrasting, building logical connections between them, and generate themes (Miles et al., 2014).

For instance, for interviews with senior administrators from case universities about the policy-making process, four themes were generated after the coding process, which are: intention, formulation, revision, and results. Table 12 displays examples of codes and themes generated from texts.

**Table 12 Examples of Codes**

<b>Interview Excerpts</b>	<b>Open Coding</b>	<b>Pattern Coding</b>	<b>Themes</b>
‘We initiated our incentives for HSS international publications because we would like to enhance our performance in the ranking of ESI (Essential Science Indicators) and to improve our impacts.’	Initiating incentives to enhance ESI performance  Ranking of ESI  Improving impacts	Rationale for initiating incentives  Institutional performative goals	Intention
‘After drafting the incentive document, we sought advice with focused group discussions with junior and senior academics, and with department heads.’	Incentives drafted by the office  Incentives discussed before publication	Top-down policy-making process	Formulation
‘We intend to increase the bonuses for SSCI and A&HCI.’	More bonuses for SSCI and A&HCI	Rationale for increasing bonuses	Revision
‘Actually, the policy affects only a certain group of academics – the academics who have the ability to publish in international journals.’	The policy affects academics with the ability to publish internationally	Partial influences on academics	Results

*Stage IV: Cross-case comparison and integration*

The multiple-case study aims to ‘build a general abstraction across cases’, which can ‘increase the potential for generalising beyond the particular case’

(Merriam, 1988, p. 154). After analysing documents and interviews from each single case institution, the stage IV assembled and compared codes generated from the previous stage. Categories and themes across multiple cases were identified. To assist data analysis, I also created memos to reflect on interviews, coding strategies, and some specific codes and themes (Saldaña, 2015; Strauss, 1987).

### **3.6 Ethical considerations**

Ethical consideration is an integral part of an academic research project. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Departmental Research Ethics Committee of the Department of Education, University of Oxford. Throughout the research process, I have taken essential measures to guarantee the informed consent from participants and minimise the risks of violating the anonymity of case universities and interviewees.

I ensured the informed consent from participants through the following procedure. When reaching out to potential interviewees, I sent out invitations with participant's information about the research. Prior to interviews, I presented a copy of participant's information sheet and consent form for each interviewee on-site, and acquired their written or oral consent to participate and to be recorded. For telephone interviews, I read the participant's information to interviewees and gained their oral consent to participate and to be recorded. For interviewees refused to be recorded, I was given consent to keep notes during interviews. Throughout the interview process, participants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the research and how the data will be used and presented. After each interview, I sent out a letter or message to the interviewee, expressing

gratitude and reiterating their rights to raise questions or concerns at any time. Samples of consent forms can be found in **Appendix 5A: Consent forms**.

When presenting research findings, I applied several practices to protect the anonymity of case universities and participants. I informed participants of the risks of being identified before the research started. When analysing and presenting the data, I gave case universities and participants pseudonyms and presented their information with essential camouflage. For example, if the interviewee has published the most SSCI publications at the university, s/he would be presented as 'among the top five academics with most SSCI publications at the university'. Moreover, I sent back relevant chapters to several interviewees upon completing the draft thesis, who required reviewing the relevant manuscript before publication.

### **3.7 Challenges and limitations**

This section reviews the challenges and limitations of this research, such as the impacts of researcher's identity, the difficulty in accessing incentive documents and interviewees, the limitation of bibliometric search and analysis, and the strategies to improve translation accuracy.

#### **3.7.1 The researcher's identity**

As a researcher, my own identity could have various impacts on the study. I have been constantly reflecting on the challenges, and was trained to deal with these situations. First, as a Chinese student studying abroad, I could be identified as an 'indigenous-outsider' (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 412) to this research on

Chinese higher education. My familiarity with the Chinese context reduced cultural gaps in framing research questions, accessing participants, and conducting interviews. Since I am studying abroad and completing the data analysis abroad, physical and psychological distance existed between me and the research scenario, creating a relatively objective and critical space for me as a researcher. However, the distance also caused difficulties in accessing up-to-date data and inside knowledge of the cases.

Then, as a female doctoral student in my 20s, I faced risks of being in the unequal power-relation when interviewing those senior experts or ‘elites’ (Mikecz, 2012; Flick, 2014, p. 227), who were all more senior in ages and social ranks than me. I was conscious of potential challenges and was well-prepared by getting informed beforehand, being open and benign during the interview, and demonstrating professional competence and reliability to the participants (Mikecz, 2012). During interviews, I managed to steer most discussions back to major research questions when the interviewees started to dominate the conversation and went off track.

Finally, my personal career goal as a scholar, hence my identity as a potential academic, also influenced my research on academic life. This identity both inspired me to examine issues in academia with enduring interests and dedication, and assisted me in gaining trust and reducing the distance from interviewees who regarded me as a peer scholar. The latter influence was particularly obvious in interviews with junior scholars, returnee scholars, and scholars conducting educational research, who resonated with my own experiences to some extent and tended to be open during interviews. Although I benefited from my empathy with academics during fieldwork, negative influences

came when I was transcribing and reflecting on the interviews. When completed the second phase of fieldwork and immersed in a large number of life stories of my interviewees, I found it difficult not to relate their experiences, some of which were emotional and negative, to my perceptions and expectations of academia. I was aware of the danger of such closeness to research data, so I sought help and advice from supervisors, senior academics and experts. I then regained a safe and unbiased distance to the research data by creating interview scripts first, transcribing parts of the interviews, and leaving out some stories that are emotional but irrelevant to research questions.

### **3.7.2 Limitations of the chosen universities**

This research has chosen 113 ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities for documentary studies on incentives for HSS international publications, and selected six case universities with considerations of geographical location, characteristics of the university, features of the incentive documents, and SSCI and A&HCI publication numbers. Although all of the six case universities are now included in the newly-initiated ‘Double First-Class Programme’, this research did not investigate institutional incentives at some universities, which were not included in ‘Project 985’ or ‘Project 211’, but are now added to the ‘Double First-Class Programme’. In addition, there might be differences in institutional policies or academics’ voices from other universities, such as universities that have not been included in those national projects.

### **3.7.3 Access to documents**

I acknowledged the limitation of documents acquired for the research. The preliminary search on incentive schemes revealed that some documents were not available online. I dealt with this issue by asking for those documents during interviews, which helped me to acquire more incentive documents. I also addressed the problem of unknown documents, and provided detailed accounts of the documentary search and documents analysed (see **Appendix 3: List of documents analysed**).

### **3.7.4 Access to interviewees**

Due to the controversial nature of the research topic, gaining access to interviewees proved to be a challenge. I tackled this issue with the following strategies. Firstly, during pilot interviews, I sought advice on previous invitation letters and improved them accordingly. Then, I gathered and contacted a large pool of potential interviewees (see **3.3.2 Selection and recruitment of participants**). Moreover, I applied both purposive and snowball sampling strategies, constantly asking help from existing participants to refer more interviewees.

Although I succeeded in conducting interviews that provided me with sufficient data, it proved difficult to have access to interviewees in certain case universities and certain disciplines. I acknowledged the skewed sampling during fieldwork and attempted to contact more academics. However, I then encountered two problems. The first problem was getting contact information. In some universities or departments, not every academic's contact information can be

found online, and some academics' profile pages were not updated for many years, leaving me with invalid email addresses.

The second problem was the low response rate. Even when I sent out emails to almost every academic with contact information in the certain department, only one or two replied. Among them, some never replied after the initial contact, and some cancelled the plan prior to interviews. Due to time constraints, the limitation of current samples remains. However, as each interview was information-rich and in-depth, I collected adequate information needed to address the research questions.

### **3.7.5 Limitations of bibliometric search and analysis**

In this research, the bibliometric studies mainly comprised the descriptive analysis of publication counts and citation counts, not attempting more sophisticated analytical methods as used in some purely bibliometric-based studies, because this would go beyond the scope of this research. Future studies on this topic could conduct further bibliometric analysis, such as the analysis of citation cycles in the certain discipline.

I was aware of the limitations of searching in SSCI, A&HCI, and CSSCI databases and generating lists of academics accordingly. For instance, institutions' English names may have different spellings (e.g. University of Oxford, Uni. of Oxford, and Oxford Uni). Academics with identical initials may be identified as one person. Some authors may be students, some have left the university, and some may be academics from science and technology disciplines. Also, not all publications of each interviewee were found in the three databases. I tried to increase the accuracy by searching several times using the variations of the

university names and double-checking academics' information on university websites. Also, each interviewee's publication profile was complemented by either their curricula vitae (collected online or during interviews) or their own account in the interview.

### **3.7.6 Validity of translation**

Translation is an essential element of researching multilingually (Holmes, Fay, Andrews, & Attia, 2013), which provides both challenges such as increasing the workload (Halai, 2007) and benefits for researchers such as the opportunities to mediate between different linguistic worlds (Shklarov, 2007). Since this study applied a bilingual approach, the validity of translation is vital for the research.

I used Chinese (Mandarin) for data collection and analysis, and English for the presentation of findings. Data in Chinese included all interview scripts and transcripts, incentive documents, government policies and relevant Chinese-medium academic publications. Some policies and articles were originally accompanied with English titles and abstracts, but other Chinese-medium materials were presented as my own translations. Some participants used English words and phrases in interviews. When quoting them, I put every English word and phrase used by interviewees in italics. Take an excerpt from the interview with Academic-BJB2 for instance. The original texts are presented as follows:

但是国际的论文你投出去之后，比如说你发给他是 20 多页，他给你 comments 至少有 10 页，非常仔细的这样的一个 comment。所以说 comments, revision 都非常 manageable, 你可以知道怎么去修改，都有出处什么之类的。

Here is the English translation with English phrases marked in italics:

For papers submitted to international journals, if the paper is about 20 pages, then you can get at least ten pages of *comments*, very detailed *comment*. So the *comments* or *revision* is very *manageable* – you know how to revise, and everything has a reference.

To improve the accuracy of translation and guarantee research validity, I referred to government websites, university websites, and English-medium academic publications for translations of some terminologies. I validated the translation of interviews with my supervisors, by presenting one piece of a translated information-rich interview and four pieces of translated interview scripts for their review (for instance see Appendix 6 and Appendix 7), making sure there was no confusing phrases or expressions. When quoting directly from some interviews with ambiguous phrases, I sent back the translations of ambiguous words and phrases to interviewees for advice.

I validated the translation of part of an incentive document with the back-translation strategy (Brislin, 1970). I first translated the Chinese text into English, which was translated back into Chinese by a bilingual Chinese postgraduate student from Social Sciences background at the University of Oxford, without knowing what the original text was. I then compared the translated Chinese text with the original one. Most differences between the two texts were different uses of synonyms or different sentence orders, meaning that the English translation was accurate to present the original meaning. A few minor changes were made based on the back-translation, where the meaning of some Chinese text was lost during the translation. The original Chinese text, original English translation, translated Chinese text and comments, and revised English translation are

presented in **Appendix 8: An example of the back-translation**. I also used the back-translation strategy for translating some important terms in incentive documents and interview transcripts.

## **Chapter 4 Incentives for HSS International Publications**

This chapter addresses the research question of how Chinese universities have attempted to incentivise HSS international publications. It captures the general landscape of incentivising HSS international publications in Chinese ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities, highlights the features of incentives, illustrates the policy-making process of incentives, discusses the rationale for adjusting incentives, and explores the potential influences of the incentives perceived by senior administrators. The findings draw on the analysis of 172 incentive documents and interviews with senior administrators at six case universities.

By 31<sup>st</sup> May 2016, 84 out of the 113 ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities have published incentive schemes for HSS international publications at the university level, or both at university and departmental levels. Additionally, there were five universities with only departmental incentive schemes. Details of the search can be found in **3.4.2 Incentive documents**, and information about the incentive documents are presented in **Appendix 3: List of documents analysed**.

### **4.1 A national landscape of incentives for HSS international publications**

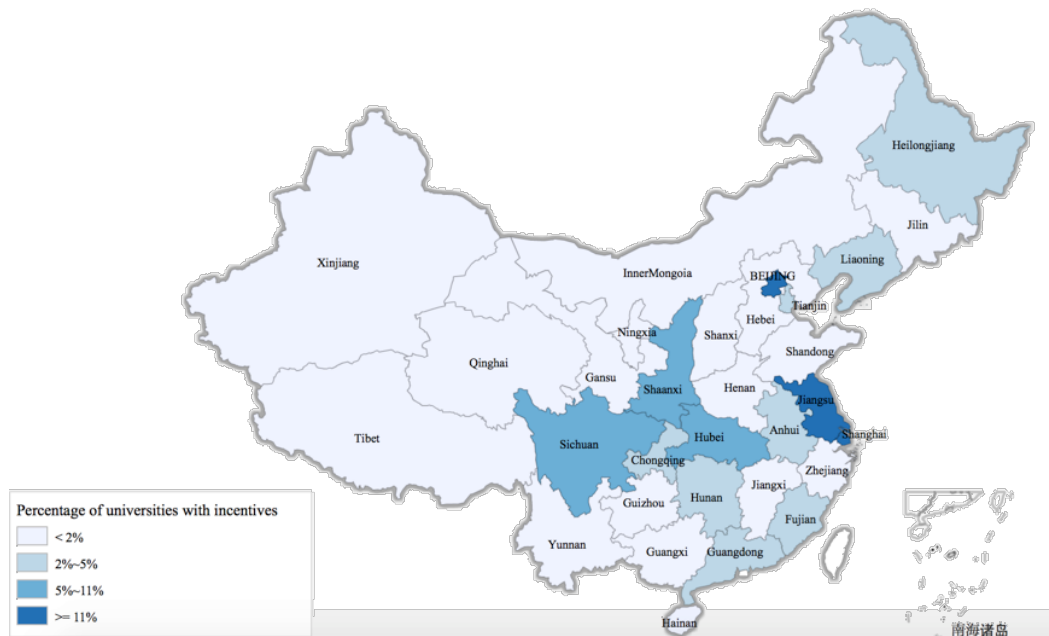
This section illustrates a national landscape of incentives for HSS international publications in ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities in China. It summarises and discusses the regional distribution and publication year of incentive documents, classifies incentive documents and incentive schemes into different types, introduces recognised journals, the target group, and the requirement for

the first author in incentive documents, and analyses the value of monetary bonuses for different types of publications and the hierarchies in incentives.

#### **4.1.1 Regional distribution**

Echoing the location of ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities (see **Figure 2 Distributions of ‘985’ and ‘211’ Universities in China**), universities with incentives for HSS international publications were also unevenly distributed. Figure 6 shows the percentage of ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities with university-level incentive schemes out of the 84 universities. It is noticeable that none of the ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities in Tibet, Qinghai, Yunnan, Ningxia, Jiangxi, and Henan had such incentive schemes. Beijing, Jiangsu, and Shanghai ranked top with 19, 10, and nine universities launching incentive schemes, counting for 22.62%, 11.90%, and 10.71% out of all 84 universities with university-level incentives.

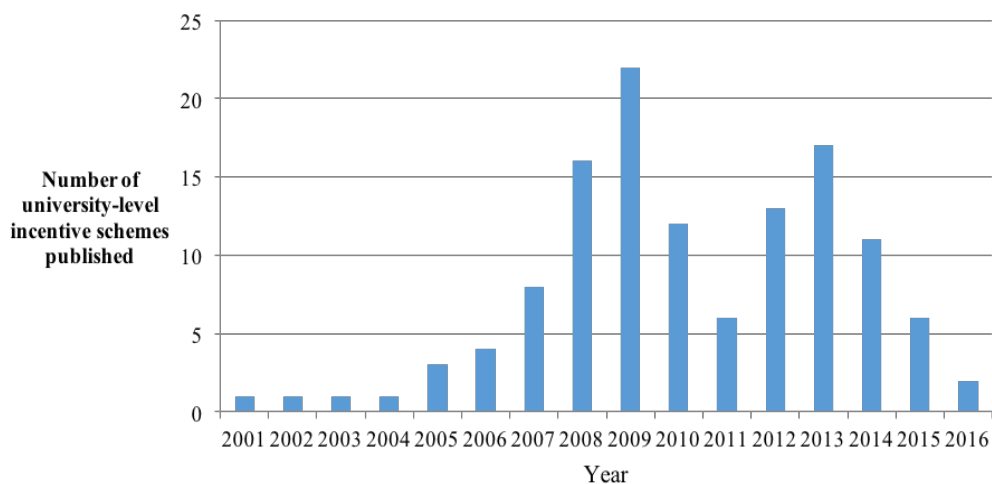
**Figure 6 The Percentage of ‘985’ and ‘211’ Universities with Incentives for HSS International Publications**



#### 4.1.2 Publication years of incentive documents

Among all incentive documents found in this research, the first one was published in 2001. Figure 7 displays the publication year of university-level incentives for HSS international publications. In general, the annual number of incentive schemes published from 2001 to 2005 was lower than any year after 2006 (excluding 2016). The number grew radically during 2006 – 2009 and 2011 – 2013, which coincided with the publication of important national policies for the internationalisation of HSS in 2006 and 2011 (for example: Ministry of Education & Ministry of Finance, 2011; Ministry of Education, 2006, 2011a; National Planning Committee of Philosophy and Social Sciences, 2006, 2011).

**Figure 7 Publication Years of Incentive Documents**



#### **4.1.3 Types of incentive documents**

Incentive documents encompass explicit incentives and indirect incentives. Explicit incentive documents can be detected from the titles, such as ‘Bonus schemes for international publications’, while the information about indirect incentives was scattered in documents such as job contracts, tenure regulations, or research evaluation regulations. In general, the 172 incentive documents for HSS international publications identified by this research can be categorised into six types (summarised in Table 13, and a translated example of part of the documents can be found in **Appendix 8: An example of the back-translation**).

**Table 13 Categories of Incentive Documents**

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Examples</b>	<b>Related provisions</b>
<b>Bonus schemes for research achievements</b>	<i>Nanjing University Bonus Schemes for HSS Research Achievements</i>	SSCI and A&HCI publications were regarded as the highest level of publications and granted with the highest bonuses of ¥3,000 <sup>21</sup> .
<b>Bonus schemes for academic paper publications</b>	<i>Peking University Interim Bonus Schemes for HSS International publications</i>	Each SSCI/A&HCI/SCI article publication was rewarded ¥6,000, and other types of publication were rewarded ¥4,000.
<b>Regulations on academic evaluations</b>	<i>Lanzhou University Regulations on Measuring and Assessing HSS Research Performance (Revised)</i>	Each SSCI and A&HCI publication was worth 40 points, while other publications were worth 1-15 points.
<b>Journal lists</b>	<i>Sun Yat-Sen University the list of important HSS journals</i>	SSCI, A&HCI journals were the first-class core journals.
<b>Promotion requirements</b>	<i>Xidian University Revision on the Standards of Academics' Promotion</i>	One SSCI/A&HCI publication equalled two or four CSSCI publications.
<b>Employment documents</b>	<i>Beijing Jiaotong University Job Advertisement for Academics' Positions 2017</i>	For the position of the Lecturer, the applicant should have at least seven CSSCI publications or one SSCI/A&HCI publication.

*Bonus schemes for research achievements*

The title of these documents indicated whether it was designed specifically for HSS research achievements or for research achievements in general. The bonus schemes covered several kinds of research achievements: research projects, national academic awards, patents, political consulting reports, and both domestic and international paper and book publications.

For instance, in the *Nanjing University Bonus Schemes for HSS Research Achievements*, HSS academics were awarded for four types of research outputs: papers, books, political consulting reports to provincial or national government, and provincial or national outstanding academic awards (summarised in Table 14). In this document, SSCI and A&HCI publications, along with publications in

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<sup>21</sup> ¥1,000 equals approximately £112.

*Social Sciences in China* and other non-English publications in some top international journals, were regarded as the highest level publications and granted with the highest bonuses of ¥3,000. Publications in top Chinese journals were rewarded ¥1,000 or ¥200, demonstrating the prestige of international publications in HSS (Nanjing University, 2007).

**Table 14 Nanjing University Bonus Schemes for HSS Research Achievements**

Type of outputs	Bonuses	Requirements
<b>Journal publications</b>	¥3,000 (A-type publications)	(1) Publications in <i>Social Sciences in China</i> ; (2) SSCI or A&HCI papers; (3) Papers published in top non-English international journals (the quality of journals to be reviewed by experts in the discipline).
	¥1,000 (B-type publications)	Publications in the core journals listed by the university, more than 3,000 words.
	¥200	(1) CSSCI papers, more than 3,000 words; (2) Publications in the <i>People's Daily</i> and <i>Guangming Daily</i> , more than 2000 words; (3) Publications reprinted in the <i>Xinhua Digest</i> , <i>Chinese Social Sciences Digest</i> , and <i>Universities' Humanities Digest</i> , more than 3,000 words.
<b>Books</b>	¥3,000	Books assessed by the university.
<b>Political consulting reports</b>	¥3,000	Consulting reports accepted by the national government or marked as important by key state leaders.
	¥1,000	Consulting reports accepted by the provincial government or marked as important by key provincial leaders.
<b>Academic awards</b>	Double the award value	Awarded the National Excellent HSS Research Outputs.
	Double the award value	Awarded the Provincial Excellent HSS Research Outputs.

*Bonus schemes for academic paper publications*

Those documents were titled as ‘Bonus schemes for outstanding academic paper publications’, indicating that they only offered awards to academic papers considered as ‘outstanding’. Therefore, only papers published in certain journals were eligible for the rewards. The title also indicated whether it only rewarded HSS publications. For example, the *Peking University Interim Bonus Schemes for*

*HSS International Publications* only targeted at rewarding international publications. It rewarded SSCI, A&HCI and SCI publications, under the condition that the paper can be searched through the *Web of Science*, and that the author's organisation must include Peking University. Each article publication was rewarded ¥6,000 as research funding, and other types of publication were rewarded ¥4,000. Book chapters, conference proceedings, and meeting abstracts were not rewarded (Peking University, 2009).

#### *Regulations on academic evaluations*

Regulations explained methods to calculate the faculty's workload, including teaching, research outputs, and social services. International publications, along with other research achievements, were often marked with points. Under the point-system, academics must achieve a certain number of points in total to pass the assessment.

For instance, Lanzhou University's incentive document regulated the formula to calculate academics' annual workload, including funded research projects, research funding, academic publications, political consulting reports, and academic services. For academic publications, each SSCI and A&HCI publication was worth 40 points, while other publications were worth 1 to 15 points, depending on the ranking of the journal (Lanzhou University, 2013).

#### *Journal lists*

Journal lists were published either as independent documents or as attachments to bonus schemes and regulations. They ranked journals to serve as references for bonus schemes and research evaluations. In HSS journal lists,

‘SSCI and A&HCI journals’ was often used as a single concept and ranked top on the journal list.

Domestic journals were sorted according to disciplines, and categorised such as ‘Top journals’, ‘A-level journals’, ‘B-level journals’, and ‘C-level journals’. Almost all domestic journals ranked lower than the SSCI and A&HCI journals, except for *Social Sciences in China* (Chinese edition and English edition). It always ranked on the top of the journal list, with bonuses or points higher or identical to SSCI and A&HCI papers. The journal lists were updated every one or few years, altering journal rankings occasionally.

#### *Promotion requirements*

Requirements for promotion were rarely found online, and I collected most of such documents during fieldwork. When applying for the position of the professor or associate professor, requirements were generally about research outputs, awards, teaching, and social services. For research outputs, some universities demanded a certain number of SSCI or A&HCI publications for HSS academics to be qualified to apply for the position. Some institutions regulated that one SSCI publication could equal two or more other publications.

For example, in Xidian University’s regulations on promotion, the requirements for applying to the title of associate professor included teaching evaluation, teaching workload, publications, research projects, awards or patents. For publications, an academic must have at least two CSSCI publications or one SSCI/A&HCI publication if he was responsible for both teaching and research. If the academic was taking a research-oriented role, he must have at least four

CSSCI publications or one SSCI/A&HCI publication to be eligible to apply (Xidian University, 2014).

#### *Employment documents*

Employment documents included both job advertisements and employment contracts. At some universities, such documents contained requirements for academics of a certain number of SSCI and A&HCI publications, either before application or after being recruited. For instance, in Beijing Jiaotong University's job advertisement, it was required that the applicant for the Lecturer position should have at least seven CSSCI publications or one SSCI/A&HCI publication (Beijing Jiaotong University, 2016).

#### **4.1.4 Types of incentives**

Based on the incentive documents collected online and during fieldwork, incentives for HSS international publications were categorised into two types: monetary incentives and career-related incentives.

Monetary incentives encouraged HSS academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals by providing them with cash rewards or research funding. For instance, Peking University (2009) provided ¥6,000 bonus as research funding for each SSCI publication. Nanjing University (2007) offered ¥3,000 cash bonus for each SSCI or A&HCI publication.

Career-related incentives were reflected in the emphasis on or requirement for international publications in HSS academics' research evaluation, employment, and careers. For example, in assessing whether an academic in HSS can get the title of professor, Jiangnan University (2010) required the applicant to have at

least eight publications in top journals listed by the university. However, if the applicant had three or more SSCI publications in the past two years, he or she can ignore this requirement and apply through a ‘convenient pathway’ for the professorship.

Between two types of incentives, monetary incentives appeared as more visible in documentary search and interviews. Firstly, most incentive documents for HSS international publications found in this research were monetary bonuses. In documents titled ‘Incentives or Bonus schemes for (HSS) research or international publications’, incentives appeared as financial bonuses for each international publication. None of those documents entailed career-related regulations. Comparatively, career-related incentives were only scattered and identified in other types of documents such as employment advertisements. Secondly, in interviews with most senior administrators and academics, their first response to ‘incentives for international publications’ was about monetary bonuses, referring to institutional bonus schemes for international publications. However, compared with career-related incentives, interviews revealed less concern from academics about monetary incentives. Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 will explore the influences of each type of incentives, and Chapter 9 will further discuss the use of monetary incentives.

#### **4.1.5 Recognised journals**

For HSS disciplines, articles published in SSCI and A&HCI journals, selected domestic journals (such as CSSCI journals), and selected non-SSCI and

non-A&HCI international journals (e.g. Nanjing University, 2007) were rewarded. Among 84 universities, only 14 of them used the IF, quartile rankings<sup>22</sup>, or their own journal lists to further categorise SSCI and A&HCI journals and rewarded them accordingly. Others did not make detailed classifications among SSCI and A&HCI journals.

University of International Business and Economics, among a few other universities, distinguished publications in domestically-based SSCI/A&HCI journals and internationally-based SSCI/A&HCI journals. The former publications were granted lower bonuses or points. For instance, University of International Business and Economics regulated that each article published in SSCI, SCI, EI, and A&HCI journals would be rewarded ¥10,000, providing the journals were also published outside China. Comparably, the bonuses for publications in journals published in China but indexed by the abovementioned indices were only ¥7,000 (University of International Business and Economics, 2009).

For NS disciplines, articles published in *Nature*, *Science*, other SCI or SCIE journals, and EI (Engineering Index) journals were rewarded. In 64 universities that rewarded SCI publications, 49 of them rewarded or assessed SCI papers according to the IF or the quartile rankings.

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<sup>22</sup> The quartile ranking of a journal is calculated by:  $X =$  the journal rank in the category according to the metric (Journal Impact Factor, Total Citations, etc.);  $Y =$  the number of journals in the category; and  $Z =$  Percentile rank ( $X/Y$ ). Journals are then categorised into four tiers: Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4. Q1:  $0.0 < Z \leq 0.25$ ; Q2:  $0.25 < Z \leq 0.5$ ; Q3:  $0.5 < Z \leq 0.75$ ; Q4:  $0.75 < Z$ . Q1 journals are considered as the best ('Quartiles in JCR on the InCites Platform,' n.d.).

#### **4.1.6 Target groups**

All incentives were targeted at academics employed (or to be employed) by the university. In addition, universities like Nanjing Normal University (2016) included undergraduates and graduates in the bonus schemes. Cash bonuses were offered to students, on condition that they were the first author of an SSCI and A&HCI publication, and the university was listed as the first institution in the address. If the student's supervisor was the second or corresponding author of that publication, bonuses were allocated to the supervisor, who was to decide how to distribute the bonus (e.g. Nanjing Normal University, 2016; Northwestern Polytechnical University, 2014). The rationale behind the provision, as the senior administrator at Uni-BJA explained, was to encourage students to engage with international academia, enhance the institution's level of internationalisation, and boost the number of international publications.

#### **4.1.7 The requirement for the first author**

All incentive schemes emphasised that the university should be listed as the first author's institution. Interviews with senior administrators revealed the rationale for such requirements. On the one hand, senior administrators from Uni-BJA and Uni-XA thought such condition reflected their respect and consideration for researchers with more contributions to the publication, as they presumed the first authors had played the most pivotal role. On the other hand, some senior administrators interviewed provided a clear goal-oriented explanation, that one of the aims of encouraging international publications was to enhance the ranking in national and international league tables (SA-XA and SA-WH). Those senior administrators acknowledged that some rankings, such as the national disciplinary

assessment, only counted first-author publication, while others counted corresponding-author or second-author publications. Therefore, to make sure the institution was not wasting its resources in incentivising HSS international publications, they preferred to play safe and requested the first-authorship (SA-XA and SA-WH). As the senior administrator from Uni-WH remarked:

Many national and international evaluations and rankings are only counting the first authors, so we have to follow the rules to play the game. (SA-WH)

#### **4.1.8 The value of monetary bonuses**

Among the 172 incentive documents collected, 94 documents had provisions of giving monetary bonuses for SSCI publications, 78 documents provided monetary bonuses for A&HCI publications, and 61 documents mentioned offering bonuses for publications in Chinese HSS journals. Monetary bonuses were also provided for NS publications. Fifty-four documents offered bonuses for publications in *Nature* and *Science*, and 59 provided bonuses for SCI publications.

The bonus value varied between publications in different types of journals. Within the same document, SSCI and A&HCI publications, CSSCI publications, and SCI publications inevitably got different bonuses. Within each category, there were two ways of regulating the value of bonuses. One was the fixed value, meaning each publication in journals from the same index got a fixed amount of money. For instance, Nanjing University (2007) offered ¥3,000 cash bonuses for each SSCI or A&HCI publication.

The other way of giving bonuses was flexible. The document regulated a range for the bonus value, and the value changed according to the journal's IF, rankings, or other circumstances. For instance, Beijing Forestry University offered ¥3,000 to ¥10,000 (depending on the journals' quartile rankings) to an SCI or SSCI article when the academic had not achieved the required annual publication number. However, for each extra SCI or SSCI publication, bonuses would increase to ¥5,000 to ¥15,000 (Beijing Forestry University, 2013).

The value of bonuses also changed depending on whether the author was the first author or corresponding author of the article. The highest value of bonuses was given to the first author, and other authors may get a decreased amount of bonuses. For instance, as displayed in Table 15, Peking University regulated in the incentive document that if there were more than one author, and the first author or corresponding author was from Peking University, he or she could get the full bonus amount and was responsible to distribute the bonuses to other authors from Peking University. If the first author was not from Peking University, but the second author was, the second author got 80% bonuses to distribute with the following authors from Peking University. If the third author was from Peking University, but the first and second were not, the third author was granted with 50% of the bonus value to distribute with other authors from Peking University. Authors listed as the fourth or followings were not eligible for the bonuses (Peking University, 2009).

**Table 15 Peking University’s Regulation on Bonuses’ Distribution**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Bonuses</b>
The 1 <sup>st</sup> author is from Peking University	100% (to distribute with following authors from Peking University)
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> author is from Peking University	80% (to distribute with following authors from Peking University)
The 3 <sup>rd</sup> author is from Peking University	50% (to distribute with following authors from Peking University)
The 4 <sup>th</sup> or 5 <sup>th</sup> ... author is from Peking University	0%

*Bonuses for SSCI publications*

Among the 94 documents providing monetary rewards for SSCI publications, 69 documents reported a fixed bonus value for each SSCI publication, ranging from ¥2,000 to ¥30,000 (see Table 17). For flexible bonuses, the maximum bonus value ranged from ¥1,500 to ¥200,000. Moreover, the minimum bonuses ranged from ¥300 to ¥50,000. For flexible bonuses, the maximum and minimum bonus value could also be determined based on the IF of the journal. For instance, Sichuan Agricultural University offered bonuses for SSCI publications based on journals’ IFs. If the journal’s IF was less than 1.0, a publication could be awarded ¥2,000. As shown in Table 16, the maximum bonus value was for publications in journals with an IF higher than 10.0, and the bonus was calculated as ¥10,000 multiplied by the IF (Sichuan Agricultural University, 2008).

**Table 16 Sichuan Agricultural University’s Bonuses for SSCI Publications**

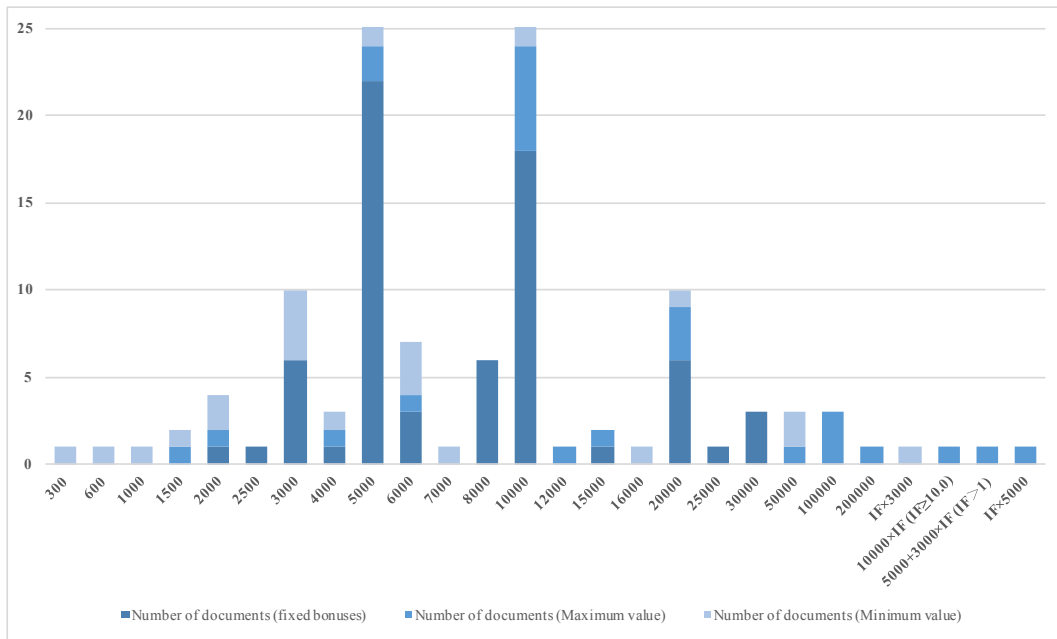
<b>The Impact Factor of the SSCI journal</b>	<b>Bonus Value (¥)</b>
IF < 1.0	2,000
1.0 ≤ IF < 2.0	2,500 × IF
2.0 ≤ IF < 3.0	3,000 × IF
3.0 ≤ IF < 5.0	4,000 × IF
5.0 ≤ IF < 10.0	6,000 × IF
IF ≥ 10.0	10,000 × IF

As shown in Table 17 and Figure 8, the highest bonus value recorded was ¥200,000. It was offered by Wuhan University (2011) for articles published in the SSCI journals with the highest IF in each discipline. However, the provision was changed in the later revised incentive document, which offered ¥5,000, ¥10,000, or ¥20,000 for publications in different tiers of SSCI journals (Wuhan University, 2014). The most common bonus values for an SSCI publication were ¥5,000 and ¥10,000, recorded in 25 and 26 documents as the fixed bonus value or the maximum/minimum value. The bonus values of ¥3,000 and ¥20,000 were also popular choices, and each appeared in ten documents.

**Table 17 Bonus Value for SSCI Publications**

Fixed bonus value		Flexible bonus value: Maximum value		Flexible bonus value: Minimum value	
Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents
2,000	1	1,500	1	300	1
2,500	1	2,000	1	600	1
3,000	6	4,000	1	1,000	1
4,000	1	5,000	2	1,500	1
5,000	22	6,000	1	2,000	2
6,000	3	10,000	6	3,000	4
8,000	6	12,000	1	4,000	1
10,000	18	15,000	1	5,000	3
15,000	1	20,000	3	6,000	3
20,000	6	50,000	1	7,000	1
25,000	1	100,000	3	10,000	2
30,000	3	200,000	1	16,000	1
		10,000×IF (IF≥10.0)	1	20,000	1
		5,000+3,000×IF (IF > 1)	1	50,000	2
		IF×5,000	1	IF×3,000	1
	Total: 69		Total: 25		Total: 25

**Figure 8 Bonus Value for SSCI Publications**



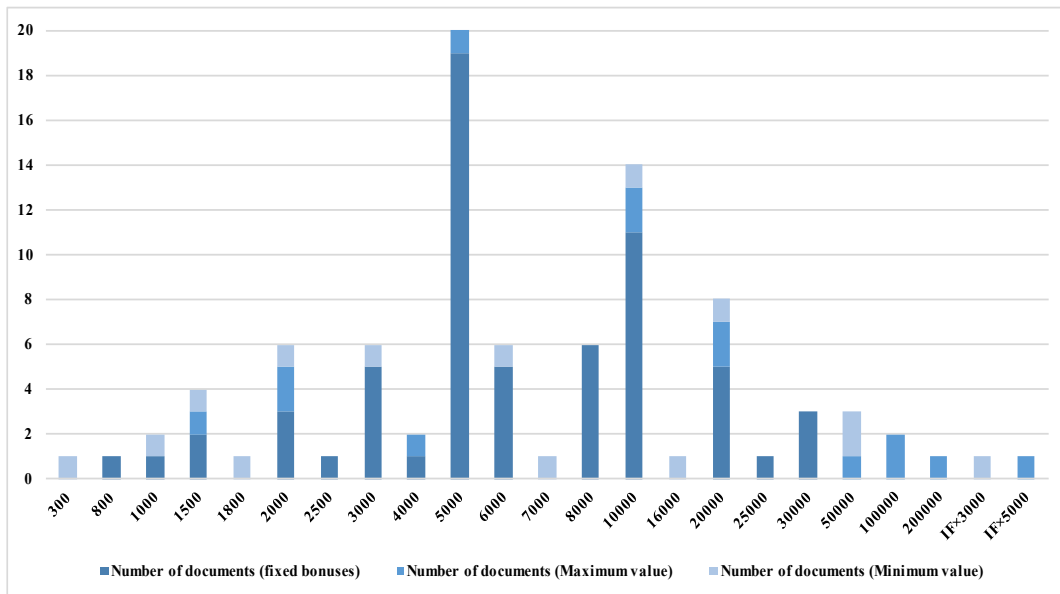
*Bonuses for A&HCI publications*

Seventy-eight incentive documents provided bonuses for A&HCI publications. 64 of them were fixed-value bonuses, and 14 offered flexible bonuses for A&HCI publications. Same as bonuses for SSCI publications, the maximum value for an A&HCI publication was documented in the *Wuhan University Special Bonus Schemes for Important Philosophy and Social Sciences Development Indicators (2011)*, providing ¥200,000 for publications in journals with the highest IF in each discipline. Similar to bonuses for SSCI publications, the two most common bonus values for A&HCI publications were ¥5,000 and ¥10,000, followed by ¥20,000 (see Table 18 and Figure 9).

**Table 18 Bonus Value for A&HCI Publications**

Fixed bonus value		Flexible bonus value: Maximum value		Flexible bonus value: Minimum value	
Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents
800	1	1,500	1	300	1
1,000	1	2,000	2	1,000	1
1,500	2	4,000	1	1,500	1
2,000	3	5,000	1	1,800	1
2,500	1	10,000	2	2,000	1
3,000	5	20,000	2	3,000	1
4,000	1	50,000	1	6,000	1
5,000	19	100,000	2	7,000	1
6,000	5	200,000	1	10,000	1
8,000	6	IF×5,000	1	16,000	1
10,000	11			20,000	1
20,000	5			50,000	2
25,000	1			IF×3,000	1
30,000	3				
	Total: 64		Total: 14		Total: 14

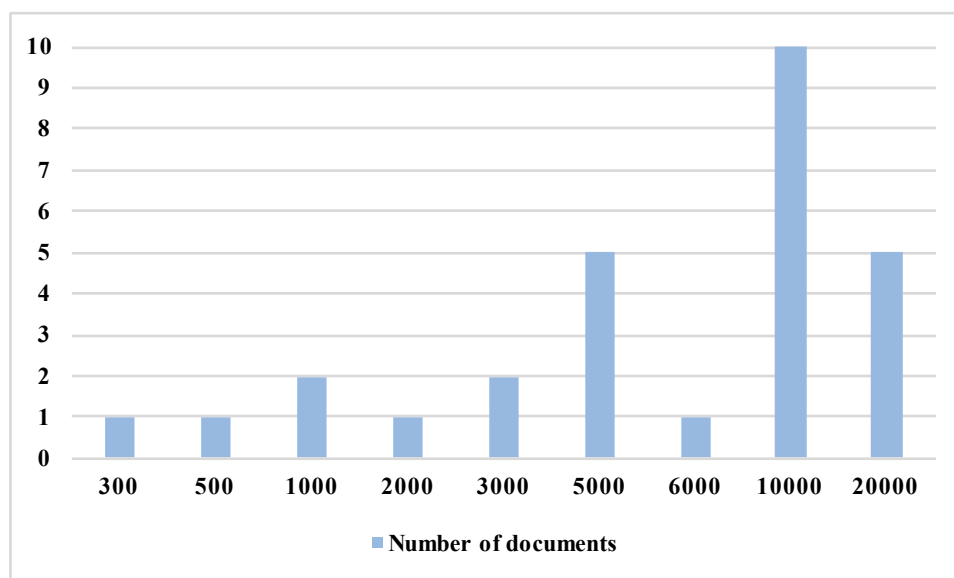
**Figure 9 Bonus Value for A&HCI Publications**



### *Bonuses for publications in Social Sciences in China*

For domestic publications, one noticeable journal is *Social Sciences in China*. *Social Sciences in China (Chinese edition)* ('Zhongguo Shehui Kexue [Social Sciences in China],' n.d.) and *Social Sciences in China (English edition)* ('Social Sciences in China (English edition),' n.d.) are journals published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, which are not indexed by the SSCI or A&HCI (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b, 2017a). They were often referred to as '*Social Sciences in China* (including the English edition)' in the incentive documents. 28 documents had specific bonuses for publications in this journal. All bonuses had fixed values, with the maximum value as ¥20,000, the minimum value as ¥300, and the most common value as ¥10,000.

**Figure 10 Bonus Value for Publications in *Social Sciences in China***



### *Bonuses for publications in Chinese journals*

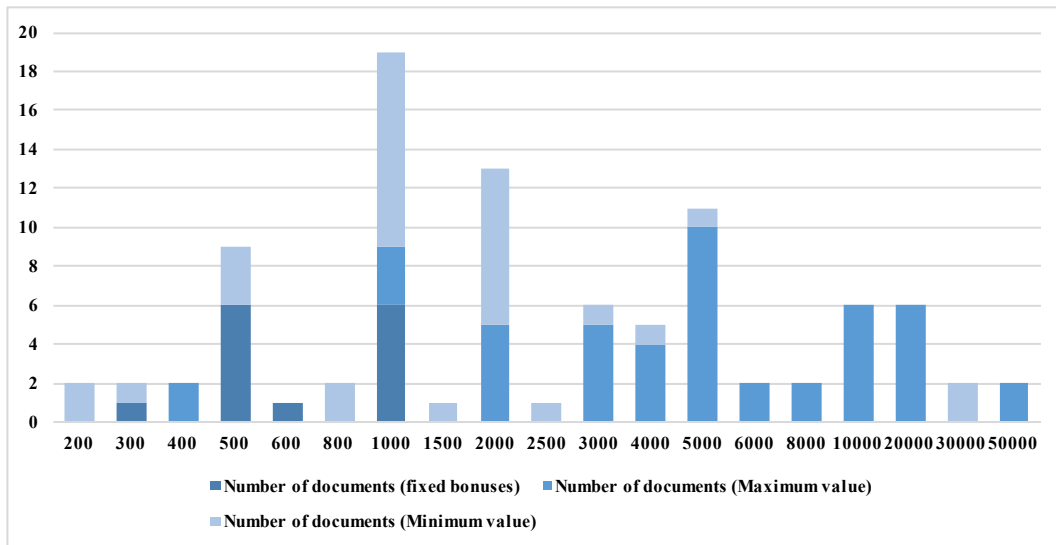
Except for publications in *Social Sciences in China*, 61 documents offered bonuses for publications in other Chinese HSS journals. Only 14 of them provided

fixed-value bonuses, ranging from ¥300 to ¥1,000. Other domestic publications were rewarded based on the journal ranking. The highest bonus value was ¥50,000, provided by the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in their incentive documents published in 2009 and 2013. In each document, domestic publications were categorised according to the journal rankings. Publications in journals classified as the top level journals got ¥50,000, and publications in lower level journals got ¥5,000, ¥20,000, or ¥30,000 bonuses (Southwestern University of Finance and Economics, 2009, 2013). As shown in Table 19 and Figure 11, the most common bonus values for domestic publications were ¥1,000, ¥2,000, and ¥5,000.

**Table 19 Bonus Value for other Domestic Publications**

Fixed bonus value		Flexible bonus value: Maximum value		Flexible bonus value: Minimum value	
Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents
300	1	400	2	0	14
500	6	1,000	3	200	2
600	1	2,000	5	300	1
1,000	6	3,000	5	500	3
		4,000	4	800	2
		5,000	10	1,000	10
		6,000	2	1,500	1
		8,000	2	2,000	8
		10,000	6	2,500	1
		20,000	6	3,000	1
		50,000	2	4,000	1
				5,000	1
				30,000	2
	Total: 14		Total: 47		Total: 47

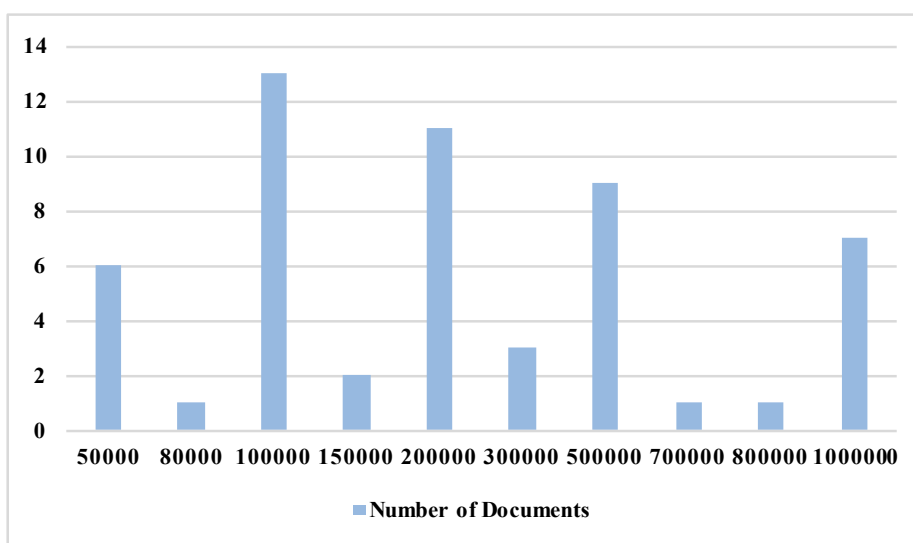
**Figure 11 Bonus Value for other Domestic Publications**



*Bonuses for publications in Nature and Science*

As for NS publications, 54 documents had bonuses for publications in *Nature* and *Science*. As Figure 12 shows, the minimum bonus value for a paper published in *Nature* or *Science* was ¥50,000, and the highest value was one million Yuan Renminbi (RMB). The most popular choices of bonus values were ¥100,000 (reported in 13 documents), ¥200,000 (reported in 11 documents), and ¥500,000 (reported in nine documents).

**Figure 12 Bonus Value for Publications in *Nature* and *Science***



*Bonuses for SCI publications*

SCI publications were also rewarded in 59 documents. Fixed-value bonuses were recorded in eight documents. Other documents diversified the rewards based on either the journal’s IF or the quartile ranking. If the journal’s IF was higher than 10.0 or 20.0, the paper would be rewarded more than ¥100,000. If the IF was lower than 2.0 or 3.0, the bonus would normally be less than ¥3,000. In documents using the quartile rankings, papers in Q1 SCI journals were granted the highest bonuses, ranging from ¥8,000 to ¥100,000. In contrast, publications in Q4 journals would be rewarded no more than ¥5,000.

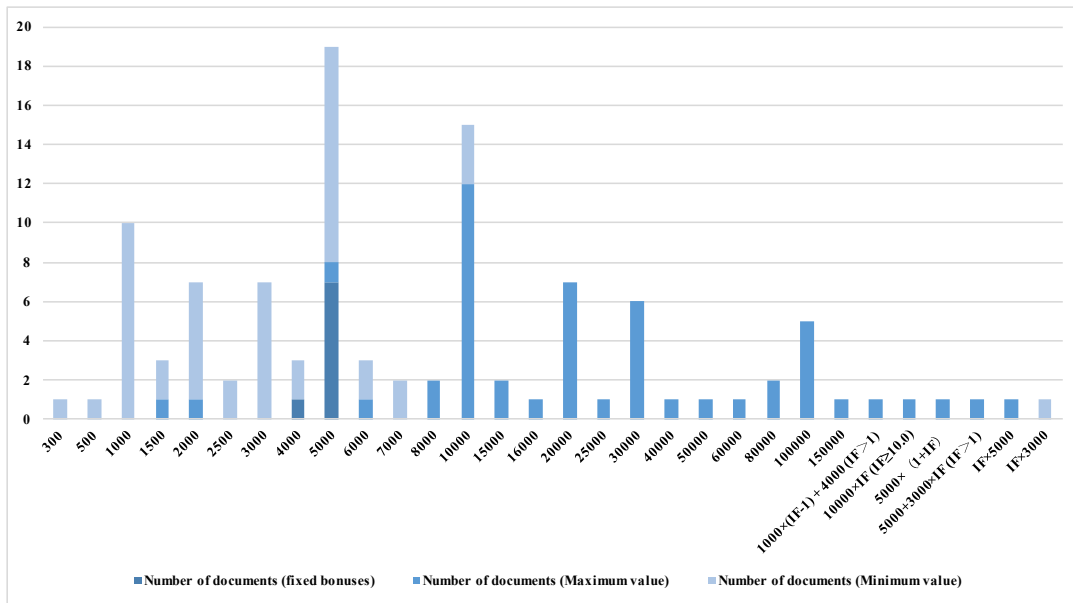
The highest bonus value for an SCI paper was ¥150,000, provided by Nanjing Agricultural University (2012) for publications in SCI journals with the IF higher than 20.0, on condition that Nanjing Agricultural University was listed as both the first author’s institution and the corresponding author’s institution. As shown in Table 20 and Figure 13, the most common minimum bonus values for

SCI publications were ¥1,000 and ¥5,000, and the most common maximum rewards were ¥10,000 and ¥20,000.

**Table 20 Bonus Value for SCI Publications**

Fixed bonus value		Flexible bonus value: Maximum value		Flexible bonus value: Minimum value	
Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents	Bonus value (¥)	Number of documents
4,000	1	1,500	1	0	1
5,000	7	2,000	1	300	1
		5,000	1	500	1
		6,000	1	1,000	10
		8,000	2	1,500	2
		10,000	12	2,000	6
		15,000	2	2,500	2
		16,000	1	3,000	7
		20,000	7	4,000	2
		25,000	1	5,000	11
		30,000	6	6,000	2
		40,000	1	7,000	2
		50,000	1	10,000	3
		60,000	1	IF×3,000	1
		80,000	2		
		100,000	5		
		150,000	1		
		1,000 × (IF-1) + 4,000 (IF > 1)	1		
		10,000×IF (IF≥10.0)	1		
		5,000× (1+IF)	1		
		5,000+3,000×IF (IF > 1)	1		
		IF×5,000	1		
	Total: 8		Total: 51		Total: 51

**Figure 13 Bonus Value for SCI Publications**



#### 4.1.9 Hierarchies in incentives for publications

##### *NS' higher prestige over the HSS*

The prestige of the NS over the HSS research was reflected in incentives for international publications. First, when searching for incentive documents, I discovered that six universities only rewarded NS research achievements or papers, even though there were HSS disciplines in the university. For example, Nanchang University, a comprehensive university with both HSS and NS disciplines, provided ¥8,000 to ¥30,000 rewards for SCI publications; however, no such provision was found at the institution for HSS publications (Nanchang University, 2012).

Moreover, at institutions where both NS and HSS disciplines were rewarded, bonuses for NS publications were invariably higher than that for HSS publications. For instance, South China Normal University (2012) awarded ¥30,000 for an SSCI or A&HCI article, and this bonus was the same as that for a

Q2 SCI paper. In the same document, higher level bonuses for NS articles included ¥50,000 for a Q1 SCI paper, ¥100,000 if the journal's IF was higher than 10.0, and ¥300,000 for *Nature* and *Science* publications (South China Normal University, 2012).

SA-BJB and SA-WH explained that part of the bonuses was provided as research funding. Since NS research generally required larger research funding than HSS, they supposed it was fair to provide more bonuses for NS research.

#### *SSCI and A&HCI publications' prestige over domestic HSS publications*

Within HSS research areas, the incentives demonstrated an overall picture of valuing SSCI and A&HCI publications over domestic publications. For one thing, not all incentive schemes for HSS research offered bonuses for domestic publications. Among 94 documents with bonuses for SSCI publications, 33 of them did not offer bonuses for domestic publications. For another, most universities ranked SSCI and A&HCI journals on the top of journal list or offered SSCI and A&HCI publications the highest level of awards or points without further categorisation, indicating an assumption that all SSCI and A&HCI journals and publications are of equally high quality. However, 47 out of 61 documents made classification of domestic journals, and publications in those journals were granted with lower bonuses or points (see Table 19 and Figure 11).

For example, Northwestern Polytechnical University (2014) offered ¥6,000 to SSCI and A&HCI publications, and only ¥1,000 for other domestic publications. When calculating the research outputs, Minzu University of China (2010) gave SSCI and A&HCI publications each 50 points, while other HSS publications were counted much less as 30, 10 or 3 points.

Interviews with senior administrators revealed several reasons for the international publications' prestige over domestic publications. First, international publications, especially SSCI publications, were considered by senior administrators interviewed as more rigorous, of higher quality, and enjoying larger impacts than most domestic publications. SA-BJB argued that offering international publications more bonuses and higher status in career progression could encourage academics to improve their research capacities and contribute to their development.

In addition, SA-SHA and SA-WH believed incentivising SSCI and A&HCI publications could increase academics' awareness of internationalisation, hence was beneficial to academics with the capability to involve in international cooperation and knowledge exchange. Also, all six senior administrators agreed that incentivising international publications, particularly those published in internationally-indexed journals, nested in the institution's internationalisation agenda, and could contribute to improving its reputation and performance in international and national league tables.

#### *Hierarchies in HSS international publications*

Within HSS international publications, SSCI publications were regarded as the most privileged ones, followed by A&HCI publications, and publications in other international journals.

SSCI articles were more valued than A&HCI articles in some universities. Among the 87 universities, East China Normal University (2007) was the only institution to give more bonuses to A&HCI articles, which was ¥10,000, ¥2,000 more than the bonus for SSCI articles. Among other universities, 13 of them

offered a higher bonus value or points for SSCI articles than for A&HCI articles. 14 universities only gave bonuses to SSCI articles without mentioning A&HCI publications. Although most of those universities were NS-oriented universities, they were all comprehensive universities with HSS disciplines. Senior administrators' explanation for the situation was that SSCI 'seems to be more internationally recognised' (SA-XA), and that 'SSCI has higher standards than A&HCI when selecting journals' (SA-WH).

Publications in non-SSCI/A&HCI international journals, although can also be regarded as 'international publications', were ranked lower than SSCI and A&HCI publications and even domestic publications. For instance, Harbin Institute of Technology categorised international journals into three tiers: SSCI and A&HCI publications were A-type publications with bonuses of ¥10,000. Publications in non-SSCI/A&HCI international journals 'with a good reputation' were B-type publications, with bonuses of ¥4,000. Publications in other 'ordinary' international journals were classified as C-type publications and were rewarded ¥2,000 (Harbin Institute of Technology, 2009).

Senior administrators also reported that at Uni-BJA and Uni-WH, non-SSCI/A&HCI publications were not included in the university-level bonus schemes even if they were published in journals outside China. The senior administrator from Uni-WH was aware of the situation, but he emphasised that SSCI and A&HCI journals were more internationally recognised, and that they were more convenient and objective tools to evaluate the quality of a journal publication. SA-WH remarked that if a journal was not indexed by SSCI or A&HCI, it proved difficult to make judgements about the quality of its publications.

## **4.2 Making incentives for HSS international publications**

This section follows on the documentary analysis of incentives and draws on interview data with senior administrators. It discusses the aims of incentives, illustrates the policy-making processes, explores the reasons for revising certain incentives, and investigates the expected influences of incentives from policymakers' perspectives.

### **4.2.1 Aims of incentives for HSS international publications**

Universities had their own agenda when formulating the incentives. However, when comparing the aims stated in each document, similarities began to emerge. The keywords shared by the incentive documents were related to three areas: (1) Responding to national policies, such as 'in order to further implement the Ministry of Education's policy'; (2) facilitating research, such as 'encouraging innovation', 'improving research quality', and 'enhancing research robustness'; and (3) promoting internationalisation, such as 'increasing the level of internationalisation in HSS research'.

Interviews with senior administrators from the case universities also highlighted the abovementioned goals. For instance, the senior administrator from Uni-SHA stated that incentivising international publications was one of the approaches to promoting internationalisation, which echoed the university's mission to become a 'world-class university':

In the past ten years, our university has been emphasising internationalisation. For us, internationalisation means international publications, recruiting international faculty members, setting up courses in foreign languages, promoting international student exchanges, and so on. Encouraging academics to publish

internationally is one of the most important approaches to internationalisation. We would like to guide academics, push them, or even force them to publish internationally. (SA-SHA)

The senior administrator from Uni-WH also emphasised that the university's incentive for HSS international publications was 'initiated as a response to the national "going-out" policy', and that 'it is also an essential way for us to improve the quality of HSS research and enhance the impacts both nationally and internationally.'

In addition, interviews with senior administrators revealed performance-based aims such as enhancing the institution's ranking within league tables, as expressed by the senior administrator from Uni-XA:

We initiated our incentives for HSS international publications because we would like to enhance our performance in the ranking of ESI and to improve our impacts. (SA-XA)

The ESI ranking is based on the publication and citations from *Web of Science Core Collections*, with publication counts derived from journals indexed in the SCIE and SSCI over a 10-year period, and citation counts derived from SCIE, SSCI and A&HCI journals (Essential Science Indicators, n.d.). The senior administrator from Uni-XA explained that since ESI ranking only counted publications and citations, and that the ranking is discipline-based; it was regarded by the university leadership as an effective and authoritative bibliometric tool to benchmark the institutions' research performance. He noted that:

For us, the Economics discipline has reached the top 1% in the world on the ESI ranking, but our ESI ranking of Social Sciences disciplines is not as high as Economics. Therefore, we are encouraging HSS academics to publish in SSCI and A&HCI

journals. We believe our Social Sciences disciplines will eventually reach the world top 1% on the ESI ranking. (SA-XA)

#### **4.2.2 Responsible offices**

Most university-level incentive documents included one statement, saying a certain office was responsible for explaining the document. Among all the 87 universities, four types of offices were found responsible for the incentive documents: the HSS Division or Office (also termed as the HSS Development Office such as in Shanghai Jiaotong University), the Science and Technology Division or Office (it also had alternative names, such as the Scientific Research Office in Minzu University of China), the Human Resources Office, and the Principal's Office. The former two offices served similar duties, only for different disciplines.

As an illustrative example, the Social Sciences Office at Uni-WH was a university-level administrative division, which was responsible for (1) keeping university leaders updated about HSS research trends at home and abroad, and assisting them in developing research policies; (2) administrating HSS projects and research platforms (centres), including funding application, project management, outputs transformation and promotion, research evaluations; and (3) providing support for HSS research, including conducting personnel training for HSS academics, promoting distinguished HSS researchers, publishing annual reports on the development of HSS research, and administrating academic conference (Social Sciences Office of Uni-WH, official website). As explained by the senior administrator from Uni-BJA, such offices often took major responsibilities in drafting, revising, and finalising the incentive documents.

### **4.2.3 The policy-making process**

The processes of formulating incentive schemes were not mentioned in the documents. Interviews with senior administrators revealed three approaches to formulating incentive documents: the authoritative model, the top-down model, and the bottom-up model.

The authoritative model was employed by Uni-BJA, Uni-SHB, and Uni-WH, featuring a centralised decision-making mechanism by the universities' authorities. At the three institutions, incentive documents were drafted by responsible offices, such as the HSS Office, and then the documents were reviewed by other relevant offices and university leaders. Sometimes, university leaders sought out advice from a panel of experts, such as reported by SA-SHB. Based on the feedback from other offices, university leaders, and experts, the documents were finalised and published by the responsible offices. The majority of academics, excluding the experts consulted by university leaders before, were able to view the incentives only after they were published. At both Uni-SHB and Uni-WH, the presidents' judgements were also considered by senior administrators as vital in formulating the incentive documents.

The top-down model began with a similar practice as the authoritative model, but followed by engagements with a larger pool of academics in the policy-making process. Uni-BJB and Uni-XA applied this top-down model. SA-BJB introduced their process of formulating the incentive documents: the draft documents were first proposed by the Science and Development Office and reviewed by relevant university leaders, and then a draft document was circulated within the university for academics' feedback. Based on the feedback, the Science and Development Office then adjusted and finalised the incentive document.

Based on the accounts of SA-XA, Uni-XA employed a similar approach, only the feedback process was conducted in the forms of focused group discussions with junior academics, senior academics, and department heads. The senior administrator from Uni-XA reported that it took them around two years to gather comments and revise the incentive document accordingly.

In contrast to the authoritative model and top-down model, the bottom-up model started with suggestions at individual and departmental levels, and the suggestions were later integrated by university offices to formulate the policy. SA-SHA said that at Uni-SHA, the lists of journal rankings were compiled through this manner: journal rankings were first proposed by each department's academic committee, then reviewed by the university's academic committee, and finally adjusted and published by the responsible office.

All of the six senior administrators admitted that they had examined the incentive documents of other universities, and had copied some provisions in the process of drafting or finalising their own incentives. For instance, when asked about the requirement for first-author publications, the first reason provided by SA-WH was: 'That is what other universities do. We see they are all doing this (rewarding only first-author publications).' Senior administrators interviewed also reported a trend to learn from universities with similar features:

When we initiated the incentive scheme, we first studied the incentive documents from universities with similar characteristics like us, such as other NS-oriented universities in Beijing. We learnt a lot from their experience. (SA-BJB)

#### 4.2.4 Reasons for revising incentives

Among the 84 universities with incentive schemes for HSS international publications, 31 of them had revised their incentive schemes at least once since they were first issued. They added more specific requirements, changed the bonus value, or changed the incentive schemes completely. Among the 31 universities, 15 increased the bonus value for international publications. Major revisions of incentives reflected important shifts in institutions' agenda, such as the increased status of HSS research and the emphasis on research quality.

##### *The increased status of HSS research*

For NS-oriented universities, incentive documents can be revised due to the improved status of HSS. Take Uni-BJB as an example. Uni-BJB was a '211' university with an orientation on NS. It only had four schools in HSS and ten other schools in NS disciplines. The university had 9759 publications in SCIE journals, while only 139 SSCI publications by the end of 2016.

The university initiated its university-level incentive for SSCI publications in 2010, in a document titled the *Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*. In rewarding publications, the highest award was given to the paper published in *Nature* or *Science*, which was ¥50,000. Bonuses for HSS research outputs were spotted in sections for NS research. Both SCI and SSCI papers were awarded according to the journal's IFs (summarised in Table 21). The highest reward was ¥5,000 for an article published in an SCIE journal with the IF higher than 5.0 or an SSCI journal with the IF higher than 4.0. Four schools, including the School of Economics and Management, were offered more bonuses for papers published in low-impact SCIE journals in the document. The senior administrator explained

that it was because of the departmental willingness to encourage more international publications. SA-BJB also explained different thresholds created for the IF of SCIE and SSCI journals, because institutional policymakers realised that SSCI journals tend to have lower IF than SCIE journals.

**Table 21 Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology (Uni-BJB)**

<b>Bonuses</b>	<b>SCIE papers</b>	<b>SSCI papers</b>
¥5,000	IF $\geq$ 5	IF $\geq$ 4
¥1,500	1 $\leq$ IF < 5	0 $\leq$ IF < 4
¥1,000	IF < 1 and the first author is from the School of Economics and Management, School of Information Engineering, School of Mechanics Engineering, or School of Construction and Environment Engineering	
¥600	IF < 1 and the first author is from other schools and departments	

In 2015, the Scientific Research and Development Office revised the bonus scheme. SA-BJB emphasised two significant changes as ‘breakthroughs’: one was to dedicate a separate section for HSS research achievements, and the other one was to boost the bonuses for HSS international publications. In the new incentive document, both SSCI and A&HCI publications were rewarded with ¥10,000, regardless of their IFs. Depending on the journals’ rankings, CSCI publications were offered ¥1,000 or ¥3,000 bonuses. The bonuses for a *Nature* or *Science* article was increased six-folds to ¥300,000, and the highest value for an SCIE paper reached ¥20,000. Although the bonuses for HSS international publications were not increased as much as those for NS papers, the senior administrator underlined the importance of such changes:

It is an important signal to demonstrate that our university values HSS research, and that we encourage HSS academics to publish important outputs on important platforms. (SA-BJB)

Senior administrators from Uni-SHA and Uni-XA, the other two NS-oriented universities, also expressed the similar intention to encourage the development of HSS by incentivising HSS research outputs. As expressed by SA-XA:

We are traditionally renowned for our NS research. We are incredibly competitive in our performance of the NS research. However, the performance of our HSS research is not as good as the NS. Therefore, we have been putting much effort to encourage the development of HSS disciplines. (SA-XA)

*The emphasis on research quality*

Another type of revision signalled the institutions' intention to emphasise high-quality research. For instance, Uni-WH had raised the thresholds for rewarding SSCI publications twice. In the beginning, each SSCI publication was rewarded ¥3,000, regardless of the journals' ranking. Senior administrators at Uni-WH then found that certain disciplines, such as psychology, had far more SSCI publications than other disciplines, which can reach 50 each year. However, when they examined those publications, most of them were in conference proceedings indexed by the SSCI. 'Apparently, those conference proceedings do not necessarily reflect the research quality, and cannot be equal to journal publications' (SA-WH).

Uni-WH started to revise the conditions for rewarding SSCI publications in 2011. As the senior administrator recalled, the idea of differentiating SSCI journals was 'borrowed' from some other universities, who made classifications of SSCI journals. In the incentive document published in 2013, SSCI journals were categorised into four tiers, and publications in different journals were

rewarded accordingly. Except for D-tier publications, the bonus value for SSCI publications was increased (see Table 22).

**Table 22 Bonuses for SSCI Publications 2013 (Uni-WH)**

<b>SSCI journals</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Bonuses (¥)</b>
A Tier	The top one journals in each research area	20,000
B Tier	Except for the top one journal, other journals with the top 50% IF in each research area	8,000
C Tier	Journals with IF ranking between 51% to 70% in each research area	5,000
D Tier	Journals with IF ranking lower than 70% in each research area	3,000

In 2016, the university changed the provision for rewarding SSCI publications for the second time. As shown in Table 23, publications in lower-ranking SSCI journals are no longer eligible for bonuses, and the bonus value for publications in the top 50% SSCI journals was increased. SA-WH commented that the revision was proposed and insisted by the university president, who held the opinion that the change would encourage more high-quality SSCI publications. Some other senior administrators hesitated on this revision, because they worried the increased standards might discourage academics to publish in SSCI journals – if they were not capable of publishing in A-tier or B-tier SSCI journals, publishing in domestic journals may be more convenient and efficient than aiming at SSCI journals. Despite such doubts, the revision was finalised eventually, and as SA-WH commented, partly because it was the president’s will, partly because the revision demonstrated the university’s determination to promote high-quality research:

The university concerns not only about the number of publications, but also the quality. It is not just about numbers. Instead, we value the quality of research and welcome high-quality publications. So, the university must set high standards. ... After all, we make university-level policies. However, each department or school can create their own incentives, and maybe reward other SSCI publications. (SA-WH)

**Table 23 Bonuses for SSCI Publications 2016 (Uni-WH)**

<b>SSCI journals</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Bonuses (¥)</b>
A Tier	The top one journals in each research area	30,000
B Tier	Except for the top one journal, other journals with the top 50% IF in each research area	20,000
Others	Other SSCI journals	None

Similarly, SA-SHA said that Uni-SHA was also aware of the need to reward SSCI publications according to the journal’s quality, since ‘not all SSCI journals are good journals ... some of the international journals are not even comparable to domestic journals’ (SA-SHA). However, no revision was made so far. SA-SHA explained that:

Policies should not be changed too frequently. Otherwise, our academics will feel very confused. We have only published a revised version in 2013 or 2014, so there will not be big changes for now. However, I think we will definitely create categories for SSCI journals in our next revision. ... Some other universities are already doing this [classifying SSCI journals]. (SA-SHA)

#### **4.2.5 Influences of incentive documents**

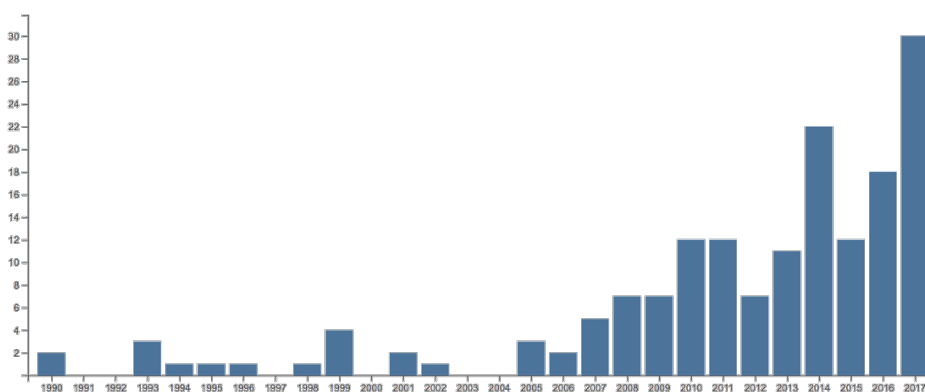
Senior administrators from the six institutions were all aware that the incentive documents would have influences on institution’s performance and academics. In terms of the institutional publication volume, as shown in Figure 14, the number of SSCI and A&HCI publications grew in all six case universities

from 1990 to 2018. Particularly, the number increased after the year when a university-level incentive document was released or revised (underlined in the graph). Some senior administrators, such as SA-XA, thought the publication of incentives would lead to the growth in SSCI and A&HCI publications. However, some other senior administrators interviewed did not think it demonstrated a causal relation between the incentives and the increased publication number. For instance, SA-SHB commented that the university’s continuous growth in SSCI and A&HCI publications could be attributed to outstanding faculty members the university recruited, who were not necessarily returnee academics, but were talented and capable of publishing internationally:

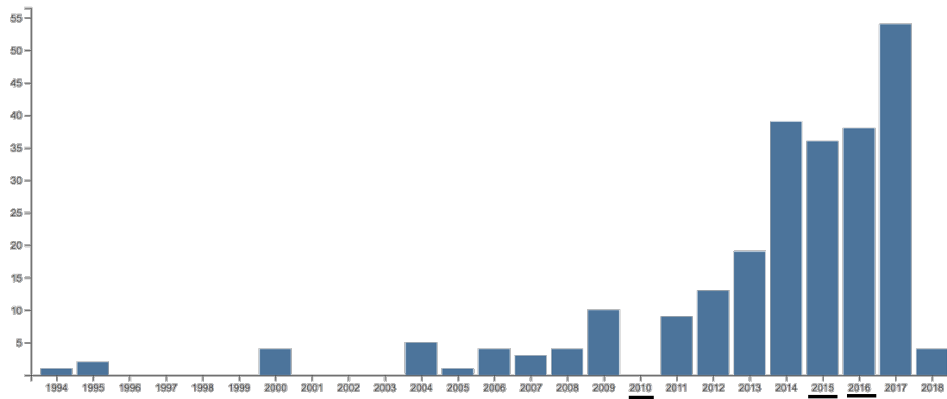
Even if we do not offer them any bonuses, they will publish very good articles in high-level journals, domestically or internationally.  
(SA-SHB)

**Figure 14 SSCI and A&HCI Publication Numbers in the Six Case Universities (1990-2018)**

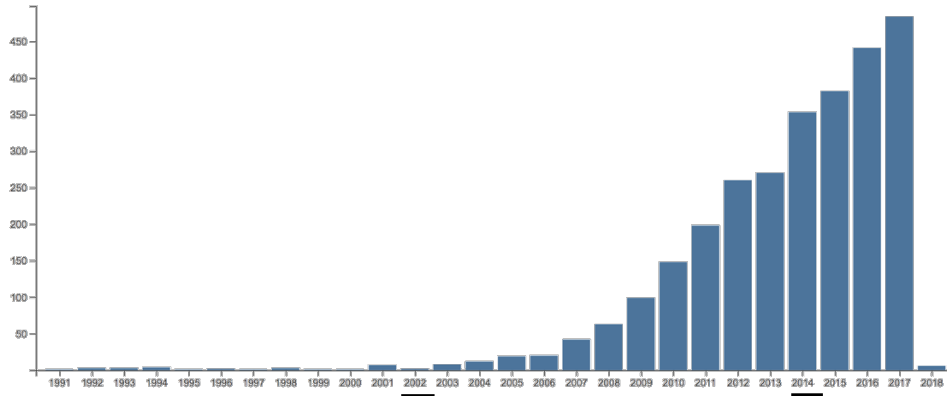
**Uni-BJA SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 172 (By 2018/01/01)**



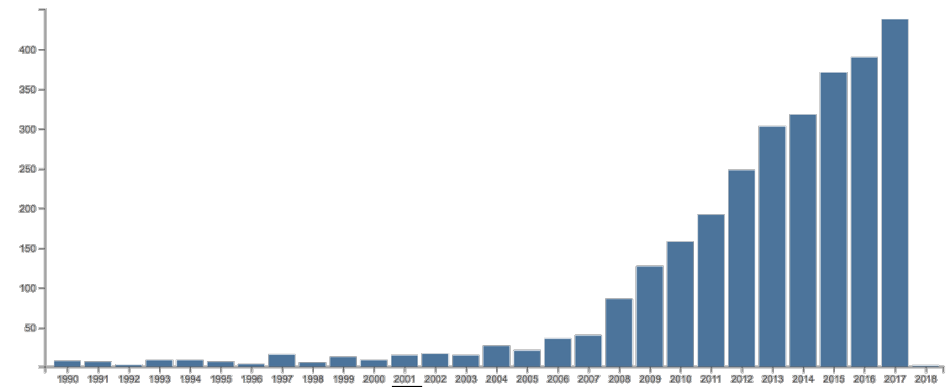
**Uni-BJB SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 246 (By 2018/01/01)**



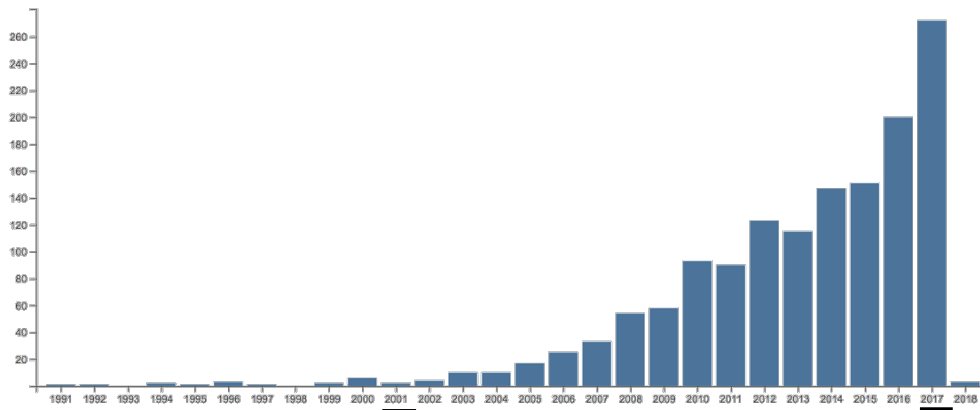
**Uni-SHA SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 2834 (By 2018/01/01)**



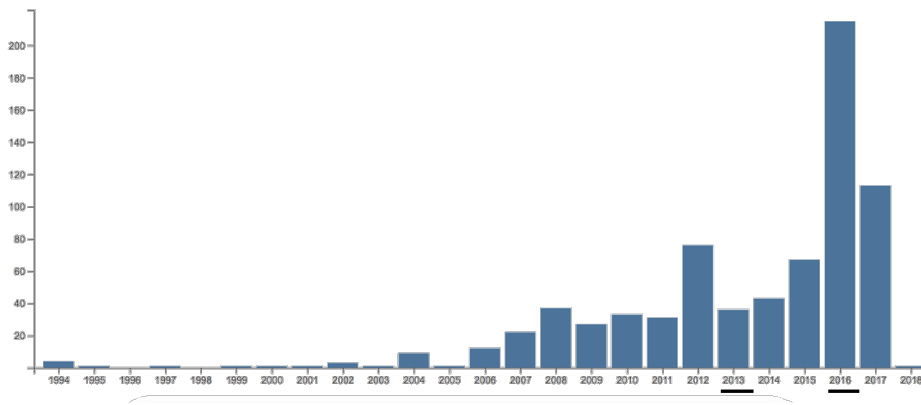
**Uni-SHB SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 2895 (By 2018/01/01)**



**Uni-XA SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 1424 (By 2018/01/01)**



**Uni-WH SSCI and A&HCI publication number: 736 (By 2018/01/01)**



Senior administrators from six case universities all noted that incentive policies would have impacts on HSS academics. For instance, SA-SHA remarked that the incentives might have influences on HSS academics in general, because it released a signal that the university attempted to emphasise the development of HSS research, and that internationalisation was an essential factor in the university's strategic plan. Consequently, SA-SHA perceived that their academics got motivated to participate in more international knowledge exchange activities. Senior administrators from Uni-BJA, Uni-BJB, and Uni-WH also reported similar observations, that their academics were more eager to be involved in international academic activities.

However, SA-WH also presumed that not all HSS academics at the university would be affected directly by incentives for international publications:

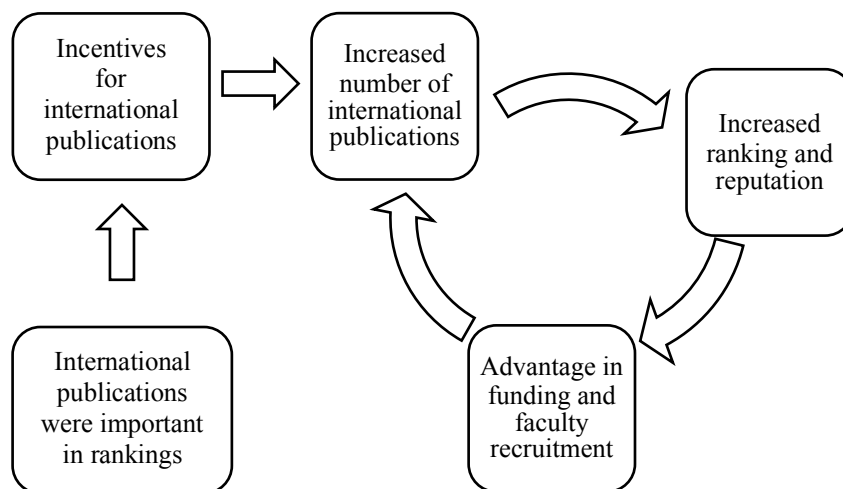
In China, academics are polarised: some are capable of international publications while others are not. The policy affects only a certain group of academics – those who can publish in international journals. For them, if they have the capability to publish internationally, our policy may incentivise them to do so. However, for those academics in some disciplines, such as Chinese literature, or for some senior academics who may not be fluent in English, they will not be able to publish in international journals whatever bonuses we provide for them. We were aware of this fact when making the policies. (SA-WH)

### **4.3 Conclusions**

Incentivising international publications in HSS has been an increasing trend in Chinese universities. As illustrated in this chapter, 84 out of the 113 ‘985’ and ‘211’ universities have been employing monetary bonuses or career-related incentives to promote international publications. The aims of such incentives included responding to national policies, developing HSS research, promoting the level of internationalisation, and fulfilling performative goals. Universities had different approaches to formulating incentive policies, but they learnt from other institutions’ incentive documents in making the incentive policies. Incentives for international publications varied in the bonus values and specific requirements, but in general, the prestige of SSCI and A&HCI publications was demonstrated by the higher bonus value for them and higher status in academics’ career development. The rationale reported by senior administrators interviewed was the presumed high quality of SSCI and A&HCI publications, and the increasing emphasis on promoting the internationalisation of HSS research.

Some senior administrators attributed the growth in SSCI and A&HCI publications to incentives. In general, senior administrators acknowledged the importance of international publication and citation numbers in national and international benchmarking. Therefore, they considered incentives for international publications as an approach to increase the number of international publications, thus the ranking of the institution on domestic and international league tables. Figure 15 summarises some administrators' expectations as a potentially 'virtuous' cycle.

**Figure 15 Senior Administrators' Expectation of Incentives and Rankings**



As shown in Figure 15, some universities tended to consider international publications as an opportunity to break through the established ranking hierarchy. They formulated incentives to promote international publications. Incentives included several regulations, such as requiring the university to be listed as the first author's institution or requiring publications only in certain indices used by ranking institutes, to ensure academics' international publications could be

counted in rankings. If the incentive mechanism succeeded, they expected the institution to rank higher on league tables and gain more reputation, resulting in advantages in funding and faculty recruitment. Benefits of funding would guarantee more financial incentives. Moreover, more new faculty members with the capability to publish internationally would generate more international publications. However, some senior administrators questioned the direct causal relation between incentives and publication numbers. Whether incentives and international publications demonstrated a causal relation will be evidenced by findings from Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, and will be further discussed in Chapter 9.

Interviews with senior administrators confirmed that HSS academics would be affected by the incentives directly or indirectly. What influences academics perceived and how incentives have influenced them will be further explored in Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 from HSS academics' perspectives.

## **Chapter 5 Academics' Responses to Incentives**

This chapter categorises HSS academics under the incentives for international publications, based on participants' attitudes towards the incentive schemes and their intentions to publish internationally. It draws on the interview data with 65 academics from six case universities and categorises HSS academics into four types: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. It illustrates academics' attitudes towards the incentives and the intentions to publish internationally in each category and explains the differences beyond and within each category.

### **5.1 The categorisation of HSS academics**

There are different groups of scholars in academia. As Chapter 3 discusses, this research recruited a wide range of academics with variations in their academic title, academic stage, research area, education background, and publication experiences. In addition, this research identifies another approach to categorising HSS academics, based on their responses to incentives for international publications.

Through coding and analysing interview scripts, two patterns surrounding the relationship between academics and incentive schemes began to emerge. As shown in Table 24, the first pattern code concentrated on academics' attitudes towards incentive schemes, and the second pattern code revealed academics' intentions to publish or not to publish internationally.

Both codes were related to how academics responded to incentives for international publications; hence the theme 'academics' responses' was generated.

The ‘response’ referred to a more conceptual stance rather than a behavioural response, and academics’ behaviours under incentives will be discussed in the following chapters. Academics were categorised into four types according to the constructs of ‘attitudes’ and ‘intentions’ (displayed in **Figure 16 Categories of Academics Based on their Responses to Incentives**). The following sections will discuss ‘attitudes’ and ‘intentions’, and illustrate how academics were categorised based on the two criteria.

**Table 24 Coding Examples of Academics’ Responses**

<b>Excerpts</b>	<b>Open coding</b>	<b>Pattern coding</b>	<b>Themes</b>
‘I do not believe it is a good thing to give bonuses for SSCI papers.’	Disapproval of incentives	Attitudes towards incentives	Academics’ responses
‘I think encouraging international publications are of importance to the development of scholars and our university.’	Positive views about incentives		
‘It is really difficult for me to publish an SSCI article, and I do not have the intention to do so right now.’	Not intending to publish internationally	Intention to publish internationally	
‘I have now shifted my focus to publishing internationally.’	Intending to publish internationally		

### **5.1.1 Attitudes**

The term ‘attitude’ can ‘only be used with reference to a person’s location on the affective dimension vis-a-vis a given object’ (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1972, p. 494). As Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) argued, the major characteristic of ‘attitude’ is its evaluative or affective nature, which distinguishes itself from other psychological concepts, such as the ‘belief’. They also suggested that attitudes should be measured by ‘a procedure which locates the subject on a bipolar

affective or evaluative dimension vis-à-vis a given object' (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 11).

This study examines academics' attitudes towards the fact that their universities or departments were giving either monetary bonuses or career-related incentives to encourage HSS academics to publish internationally; rather than their attitudes towards each single incentive document published by their universities or departments. As discussed in the previous chapter, incentives for international publications varied from university to university. Even in the same university, incentive schemes were revised from time to time, and different departments could have diverse approaches to incentivising international publications. Therefore, it would be impossible to summarise each academics' attitude towards each specific incentive scheme and generate a pattern.

Data about academics' attitudes was mostly generated from the answers to the interview question: 'What do you think about incentivising international publications?' Interviewees' answers to other questions also contributed to comprehending and explaining their attitudes, such as 'What do you think about international publications and domestic publications?' and 'What do you think about the university's or the department's incentives for international publications?' Academics' attitudes were measured by the degree of their positive perceptions of incentivising HSS international publications, with both monetary rewards and career-related measures.

Academics' attitudes towards incentives for HSS international publications can be located on a continuum from unfavourable to favourable. Although academics were then divided into two categories with 'unfavourable attitudes' and 'favourable attitudes', the degree of their attitudes differed in each category. For

instance, some academics might be completely in favour of incentives for HSS international publications, while some others expressed generally positive attitudes towards the practice of incentivising international publications, but disapproved some practical issues like rewarding only the top 50% journals in SSCI. The latter attitude was also categorised as a 'favourable' attitude and will be further discussed in the explanation of each category.

### **5.1.2 Intentions**

'Behaviour intentions are instructions that people give to themselves to behave in certain ways' (Triandis, 1980, p. 203). Social psychologists proposed that intentions could serve as a predictor of certain behaviour (Ajzen, 2005; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Triandis, 1980). Intentions can be measured by the contents and strength: the content of an intention is determined by the behaviour that is to be performed, and the strength is assessed by a measure of probability (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975, p. 59).

This section focuses on academics' intention to publish internationally. Through analysing interviews with academics, many concepts emerged as related to the theme of 'publication'. Among them, four sub-themes were most richly covered and discussed: the intention to publish internationally or domestically, motivations to publish, the perceived differences between international and domestic publications, and the choices of where and what to publish. Issues around academic publications can be well-enveloped by each sub-theme. Academics' intention to publish internationally appeared as an essential factor in examining the relationship between academics and incentives. Therefore, this section focuses on this subtheme, and the other three themes will be discussed in

## Chapter 6.

‘Intentions to publish internationally’ should not be misinterpreted as ‘intentions to follow incentives’. As the following sections will demonstrate, academics’ reported intention to publish internationally was not always in line with their attitudes towards incentives. For instance, some academics did not agree with the aims of incentives and did not intend to follow incentives; however, they had to publish internationally due to limited choices of domestic journals in their research areas. Therefore, there might be a mismatch between ‘intentions to publish internationally’ and ‘intentions to follow incentives’. Since interview data revealed that ‘intentions to follow incentives’ were related to ‘attitudes towards incentives’, this research chose to use ‘intentions to publish internationally’ as the other axis to conceptualise academics’ responses and capture the conflicts between their attitudes and intentions.

Same as academics’ attitudes towards incentives, academics’ intentions to publish internationally also formed a continuum from ‘intend to publish internationally’ to ‘publish domestically’. Logically speaking, the opposite of ‘publishing in international journals’ should be ‘not publishing in international journals’, meaning either publishing in non-international journals or not publishing in journals at all. As explained in **1.2 Research questions**, the concept of ‘international journal’ was coined as a contrast to ‘domestic journals’ in this study, thus ‘non-international journals’ referred to domestic journals. Also, in the interviews with HSS academics, none of them expressed the intention to stop publishing in academic journals. Therefore, when illustrating academics’ intentions, the opposite side of ‘publishing internationally’ was defined as ‘publishing domestically’.

The analysis of academics' intentions to publish internationally was based on their answers to questions and the follow-up questions such as 'Do you intend to publish in international journals?' or 'What is your publication plan for the next few years?' The degree of willingness to publish internationally reported by interviewees formed the basis to locate each academic.

Variations existed in the categorisation of intentions. Academics who expressed strong intention to publish in international journals may also want to publish in domestic journals under some circumstances. Those academics were further asked about their priorities in choosing journals and were categorised accordingly. The following sections will discuss such cases.

### **5.1.3 Categories of academics by responses to incentives**

Among different universities and across different disciplines, academics reported diverse responses to the incentives for HSS international publications. As explained in previous sections, academics differed in their attitudes towards the incentives and their intentions to publish internationally.

The analysis of interviews with 65 HSS academics revealed that for some academics, their attitudes towards incentives for international publications corresponded with their intentions to publish internationally, but the correspondence did not appear in all cases. Academics with positive attitudes expressed either willingness or unwillingness to publish internationally, and the same was true for academics with unfavourable attitudes. To further illustrate academics' responses, this research introduced a quadrant chart formed by two axes: academics' attitudes towards incentives for international publications and academics' intentions to publish internationally.

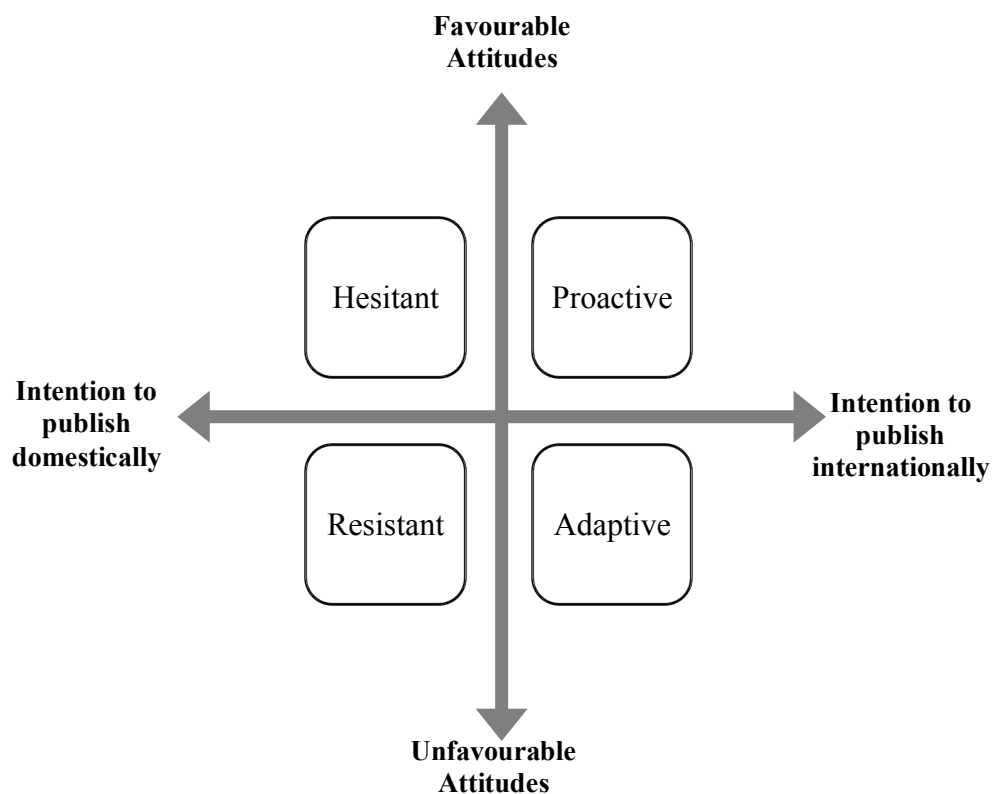
Figure 16 represents a summary of these categories of academics based on their responses to incentives for HSS international publications. These categories represent the types of 65 academics from six case universities in China, not the types of all Chinese HSS academics. Academics' stances may move from one category to another during different stages of their academic life, and this figure captures a static picture of academics' responses at the time of interviews. The categorisation was based on qualitative judgments. The distinctions among different types of academics are not as clear-cut as shown in the figure. Depending on the degree of their favourable attitudes and the degree of their probability to publish internationally, academics can be located on different spots in each quadrant. Some academics can be identified as the optimised representation of their categories, while others may appear very close to other categories. However, each academic interviewed can be located in one of the four categories: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant.

In this research, 65 academics were unevenly distributed in four categories: most academics fell into the proactive category, followed by adaptive, resistant, and hesitant category. However, this distribution could not be seen as a representation of Chinese HSS academics, since the sampling of academics might be influenced by their attitudes and intentions – academics with unfavourable attitudes towards incentives might not accept interview invitations in the first place.

Academics' attitudes and intentions corresponded in proactive and resistant categories, as academics with favourable attitudes towards incentives for international publications expressed the inclination to publish internationally, and academics with negative attitudes reported the unwillingness to publish

internationally. Academics in hesitant and adaptive categories demonstrated seemingly conflicting attitudes and intentions. Hesitant academics expressed positive attitudes but refused to publish internationally, and adaptive academics reported unfavourable attitudes but intend to publish internationally. The following chapter discusses the characteristics of academics in each category and the reasons for different attitudes and intentions.

**Figure 16 Categories of Academics Based on their Responses to Incentives**



## 5.2 Academics in different categories

Based on the categorisation of their attitudes and intentions, HSS academics were categorised into four types: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. The following chapter illustrates the features of academics in each category and explains the rationales reported for their attitudes and intentions.

### 5.2.1 Proactive

Academics with proactive responses not only embraced the idea of encouraging HSS international publications with incentive schemes, but also expressed the willingness to publish more articles in international journals in the future. For some academics, incentives for international publications corresponded to their academic values and research plans, such as Academic-XA5 expressed:

Personally speaking, I have now shifted my focus to publishing internationally, because I already had quite a lot of Chinese publications. After publishing many articles in Chinese journals, I felt a strong impulse to make a breakthrough in my academic life and improve myself. I managed to turn to publishing internationally due to two causes. The first one was that many Chinese universities, particularly the top ones, started to have requirements for SSCI or international publications. Back then in my university, it was regulated that if you can publish two SSCI papers, you can surely get a professor position. Although I realised the importance of publishing SSCI articles, I did not know how to do that. The second factor was that I got the opportunity to visit an American university for a year, during which time I achieved the huge breakthrough and published two SSCI papers. (Academic-XA5)

‘Owing to the SSCI publications,’ Academic-XA5 was soon promoted to professor from the associate professor. He held the opinion that it was of high importance for Chinese universities to promote international publications, because he perceived quality gaps between Chinese and international publications based on his own experiences:

I have published many articles in Chinese journals. However, when comparing my Chinese publications with international publications, I think my Chinese publications are not as good as the international ones, regarding the conformity to research standards, the use of

methodology, the depth of the research, and the length of the article. (Academic-XA5)

The quality gap between international and Chinese publications was also reported by other academics who supported the incentives for international publications. Those academics argued that some domestic journals were not as rigorous as international journals (Academic-SHA2), the review process for many domestic journals was not well-established (Academic-SHA9), and there was much to learn from international academia (Academic-SHA6). Therefore, they suggested that it would be beneficial for academics to publish internationally, because ‘they must comply with international standards and improve their research to publish in international journals’ (Academic-SHA2), ‘the sense of achievement will be higher when publishing in international journals’ (Academic-SHA9), and ‘the research quality can be well verified if it can be published in international journals’ (Academic-BJA9).

In addition to the concern over quality, another explanation for academics’ support for the incentives was the belief that incentivising international publications can contribute to the internationalisation of HSS research. The perception not only echoed the central government’s rationale for encouraging international publications (as discussed in Chapter 1), but also addressed institutions’ aims of enhancing the level of internationalisation when initiating incentives for international publications (as presented in Chapter 4). For instance, Academic-BJA1 argued that it was of high importance to encourage international publications as a means for HSS research to ‘go out’ – the same term advocated by the central government to promote the internationalisation of Chinese research. At the institutional level, an academic from Uni-SHA noticed that the university

recruited many returnee scholars in recent years, which was an advantage compared with other Chinese universities; therefore, incentivising HSS international publications can be used as a ‘strategy’ of the university to improve its overall SSCI publications and rankings among Chinese universities (Academic-SHA11).

Some academics interviewed also perceived the improved level of research internationalisation as essential to academics’ personal development. Academic-WH8, a mid-career academic in Management, provided a case of the perception. He supported the universities’ incentives for international publications, not because he already had four SSCI publications, but because he believed that such policies were beneficial to academics, by increasing their awareness of becoming internationalised and involving in global academic exchanges. Academic-WH8 became aware of the fact that the Management discipline was becoming highly internationalised during his doctoral studies when he attended a conference:

It was a huge national conference in my field of study. The organiser was a top Chinese scholar in this field, an internationally renowned scholar, who worked in an American university but endeavoured to promote the internationalisation of Management research in China. When I attended the conference, I was only in my first year of PhD studies, but I learnt so much at the conference. There were so many scholars, not only from mainland China, but also from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and foreign countries. At that time, right when I started my academic journey, I realised that it had to be internationalised. (Academic-WH8)

As Academic-WH8 recalled, his realisation did not prove wrong, since he observed that it had become ‘the norm’ for academics working in the field of Management in China to publish internationally. He argued that the

internationalisation of research was an inevitable trend; therefore, universities should help academics and incentivise them to participate in this global trend, before it became too late. His argument was shared by some other academics across different disciplines and career stages, such as an assistant professor from Anthropology (Academic-SHA3), an associate professor from Law (Academic-XA3), and a professor from English (Academic-BJB2).

Proactive academics shared a generally positive attitude and the intention to publish internationally, due to the perceived quality gap and the emphasis on internationalisation. However, their responses differ in some dimensions. Those differences can be perceived in three areas: whether they supported the incentives completely, whether their intention of publishing internationally was related to incentives, and whether they would only publish internationally.

Some academics articulated their favourable attitudes towards incentives without any criticisms. Often, academics also expressed a generally supportive attitude but tempered it with worries or complaints about those incentives. As they indicated, those complaints were meant to be constructive criticisms for current incentives, with the intention to improve them. For instance, Academic-SHA7 supported incentivising international publications in HSS, as he saw the trend of internationalisation inevitable. However, he also realised that current incentives were overly dependent on quantity-oriented assessment methods. He said:

There will be problems with the metric-based assessment. I do not think it is the perfect way to do it. However, it is the most objective method now. Moreover, we can always improve the method for incentives. (Academic-SHA7)

Academic-BJA5 also advocated for incentives for HSS international

publications, because he perceived a ‘shocking quality gap’ between domestic and international journals. In his case, he complained that the current incentives were not strong enough, as the value of monetary bonuses for HSS research was far lower than NS research, and not compatible to the efforts academics paid into publishing internationally. His viewpoint was shared with some other academics, regardless of whether they had had international publication experiences, such as Academic-BJB4 and Academic-XA10. At Uni-WH, Academic-WH3 and Academic-WH12 complained about the recent revision of incentives, which only rewarded top 50% SSCI publications (as discussed in **4.2.4 Reasons for revising incentives**). They perceived the increased difficulty in getting rewards under the revised incentive scheme. However, both of them supported the incentives for international publications.

Some academics associated their intention to publish internationally with the direct or indirect benefits attached to incentives. For instance, Academic-WH15 was an early career academic graduated from an English-speaking country. He stated that his intention to publish in SSCI journals started when he browsed through job advertisements during his doctoral studies:

I have looked up many universities’ requirements for employment, and found that SSCI publications are essential. Therefore, I figured I should have some SSCI publications if I want to come back and apply for a job in China. (Academic-WH15)

He then published several SSCI papers with the help of his doctoral supervisor, and was offered the title of associate professor upon returning to Uni-WH. He suggested that he will make SSCI a priority when selecting journals to submit in the future, because as an early career researcher who did not have many

research projects at hand, he had to be ‘strategic’ about where to publish and ‘follow the incentives’. Academic-WH15 was not the only one to relate their intention to publish internationally with incentives. Other academics, such as Academic-WH12 and Academic-XA7, also emphasised universities’ incentive policies when explaining why they intended to publish internationally.

Another group of proactive academics, on the contrary, emphasised that their choice of publishing internationally was due to their research interests and targeted audience, which would not be affected by incentives. They explained that ‘academics publish not for the sake of rewards, but for the sake of research’ (Academic-SHA6) or ‘for the sake of personal academic development’ (Academic-BJB4), and ‘if you can publish internationally, you will do that with or without incentives; if you do not have the ability to publish internationally, then incentives will not make any difference’ (Academic-BJB2). It is noticeable that most of those academics, compared with other junior academics, faced less evaluative pressure, because they were either tenured professors or associate professors, or assistant professors who had completed the evaluation requirements. As Academic-WH3 put it:

I realised the importance of international publications in the academic evaluation, and the significance to publish SSCI papers to enter global academia. ... But to publish SSCI papers is not just for the rewards, it is more about personal development. (Academic-WH3)

Some academics expressed the intention to focus entirely on international publications in the future, such as Academic-XA5. However, another group of academics stated that the choice of international publications or domestic publications would not be an either-or question for them. They not only intended

to publish in international journals, but also reserved the option to publish in domestic journals, depending on the personal career development and the nature of the research project. Excerpts from three participants within this group illustrated the case:

If the project was supported by foreign funders, then the publications should be in international journals. But if it was a more domestically-related topic, I will submit it to a domestic journal. (Academic-SHA11)

If I had many international publications in recent years, I would publish some in domestic journals, and vice versa. I would like to achieve a dynamic balance [between publish internationally and domestically] in my academic career. (Academic-BJA3)

If the project is suitable for international journals, for instance with a large dataset, then I will submit it to an international journal. If the research is a small-scale research or literature review, it can be submitted to a domestic journal. If the research is more helpful to the Chinese context, it will be published domestically, and vice versa. (Academic-WH11)

To summarise, academics with proactive responses supported incentivising HSS international publications, because the value of incentivising international publications corresponded with their perceptions of the importance of internationalisation and the quality gap between international and domestic publications. They also intended to publish internationally for various reasons: some reported the significance of incentives in their decision to publish internationally, while others disentangled their intention to publish internationally from incentives. Although all proactive academics intend to publish internationally, some of them also retained the option to publish domestically.

### 5.2.2 Adaptive

Unlike proactive academics, who held positive attitudes towards the incentives, some academics were not completely persuaded by the idea of incentivising HSS international publications. Nonetheless, they chose to respond to such incentives strategically. Despite the doubts they had about incentivising international publications in HSS, they decided to either follow their own research interests or adjust themselves to incentive policies to publish internationally.

Those academics were not in favour of incentivising international publications, because they had doubts about the aims and consequences of such incentives, as well as the quality and value of international publications as compared with domestic publications. On the one hand, some academics argued that the over-emphasis on the number of international publications might result in the neglect of research quality (Academic-SHA1). They noted that each discipline had its own features; thus peer review should be a more reliable method to assess the quality of research, rather than where it was published and whether the journal had been indexed by SSCI or A&HCI (e.g. Academic-SHB5 and XA9).

Other academics held the opinion that international publications were not necessarily better than domestic publications regarding their quality and impact on Chinese society. Academic-SHA8 from Law and Academic-SHB4 from Media both commented that for some international publications, if translated back into Chinese, their quality would be equal to average Chinese articles, or even worse:

I have read loads of international publications. To be honest, for some of them, if you translate them into Chinese, it is not high-level research, or just equals to the level of our masters' research paper. (Academic-SHA8)

In terms of the contribution to knowledge production, those academics held that many international publications by Chinese academics only acted as English introductions to the Chinese situation, which has low academic value and less practical impact on Chinese society (Academic-SHA8 and BJA8).

Although these academics had reservations about incentivising HSS international publications, they were still inclined to publish in international journals, either to satisfy institutional requirements to ‘survive’ the academic life (Academic-SHA1), or because they had almost no choice other than to publish internationally.

The first group of academics chose to ‘compromise’ (Academic-XA9) to the evaluation systems and publish a certain number of international papers, to prove their capability to achieve evaluative requirements. As Academic-SHA1 stated:

In my opinion, since incentives are high for us academics, why not just publish a few articles in international journals to prove that ‘I can do this’. After that, you can do whatever you like, because as an individual, on the one hand, you have your personal pursuit of your dreams or ideals. On the other hand, you have to bow to the reality. Under such circumstances, why not just fulfil the requirements? Anyhow, it does no harm to you. (Academic-SHA1)

Similar comments from Academic-XA9 also provided the explanation for this decision to publish internationally:

You should not surrender to the system. But you cannot go against it even if it is problematic. So, just make a compromise sometime. I will publish as required, but I will not sacrifice everything and make myself miserable for publishing. I will follow my own interests, but I will not abandon utilitarian aims. Those [rewards] are not the purpose for me to do research, rather, they are what I

deserve to earn for my own academic interests and efforts.  
(Academic-XA9)

For other academics, publishing in international journals was a necessity for their academic life even if they were not in favour of incentive policies for international publications. Those academics stated that they would publish internationally as part of their academic career, with or without incentives: either because their research had a target readership outside China, or because in cases they found it more difficult to publish in domestic journals than in international journals.

For some academics, particularly those conducting research on topics not limited to China, the targeted readership was outside Chinese academia. Academic-SHB2 conducted research on the history of East-Asian and Mid-Asian countries. He explained that he had to publish his research in international journals for communication with international peer scholars, because publications in Chinese would simply be ignored due to the language barrier:

Nowadays, Western academics' ability to read Chinese has been decreasing. Even for those distinguished researchers in East-Asian Studies, their capability to read academic Chinese is far worse than their past generations.... In addition, there are so many Chinese articles published each year, and they do not know how to screen all of them. Consequently, those Western academics would choose to overlook Chinese publications. It is not just for Chinese academia, it is the same for the whole East-Asian academia, including Japan and Korea. Therefore, if you want to raise a new point and exchange ideas with others, it has to be put in English.  
(Academic-SHB2)

Although Academic-SHB2 did not hold favourable attitudes towards the incentives, because he disapproved the mandatory classifications of journals based on certain indices, he recognised the essential role English was playing the

international academia. This explained his strong intention to publish internationally, as a means to participate in global scholarly discussions, despite unfavourable attitudes towards the policies themselves.

Some other academics decided to publish internationally because they found domestic publications more difficult. One group of such academics were returnee academics, particularly during their ‘transitional period’ (Academic-BJB3 and BJA9) of adjusting to academic life in Chinese universities. On the one hand, publishing in international journals was more ‘convenient’ for them (Academic-SHB5), because most returnee academics received their doctoral training in English; thus they were more adapted to writing academic articles in English. On the other hand, their doctoral theses, which were mostly written in English, were often revised into the first few international publications.

In addition, many returnee academics acknowledged difficulties in publishing in domestic journals. Academic-BJB2 noted that during the first few years when she started working at Uni-BJB after graduating from a foreign university, the ‘transitional period’ was ‘painful’, especially when she tried to publish in domestic journals. She not only found herself more accustomed to the foreign academic writing systems, but also realised her lack of support and network in domestic academia to help familiarising herself with publishing in domestic journals.

Another reason for publishing in international journals was the lack of domestic journals to publish in small or emerging research areas. For instance, because Academic-WH10 conducted research on frontier issues in domestic academia, he struggled to find domestic journals whose aims and scope would match his research interests. Comparatively, he had ‘far more choices of

international journals to contribute to’, hence the decision to focus on international publications.

The last group were some of the junior academics, for whom publishing internationally was considered as a gateway to escape from the ‘academic monopoly’ in domestic academia:

For junior researchers, incentivising international publications is not beneficial, because it forces you to put much effort into writing English articles. ... Publishing English articles takes a long time, and if you use that time well, you can do more valuable research. However, the positive side of such incentives is to provide junior academics with an alternative [for publication]. As you know, the ecology of current Chinese academia is not that healthy, particularly in Law... Junior academics can barely be noticed, not to mention to come to prominence. In applying for grants, being assessed for awards, publishing in journals, all those academic resources were monopolised by prominent academics. (Academic-SHA8)

Such observation of ‘academic monopoly by prominent academics’ was also reported by some other academics in Law areas (e.g. Academic-XA3 and Academic-SHA8). Academic-XA3 and Academic-SHA8 perceived a ‘Matthew Effect’ (as discussed by Merton, 1968) in their areas, where eminent academics gained more reputation, publications, awards, and impacts much easily than unknown junior academics. They noted that established academics tended to have easier access to publishing in top domestic journals, either due to their familiarity with the editors, or because journals would invite contributions from renowned academics. Consequently, publishing in international journals, outside the control of established academics in domestic academia, was perceived as an alternative gateway for some junior academics.

In general, although academics placed in the Adaptive quadrant were not

in favour of incentives for international publications, they tended to publish more international papers either because of the evaluative pressures or their personal needs to publish internationally. The latter case was particularly represented by academics with a readership outside China, whose research area was too small domestically, as well as some returnee or junior academics, who found it less difficult to publish internationally than to publish domestically.

### **5.2.3 Resistant**

A resistant response was detected from academics who held unfavourable attitudes towards the incentives for HSS international publications and expressed less or no intention to publish in international journals. Their negative attitudes towards incentives arose from similar reasons for those discussed for adaptive academics, as they questioned the legitimacy of incentivising international publications and doubted the quality and value of international publications. For instance, Academic-SHA10 remarked that:

Those incentives may lead to actions that can bring instant or short-term benefits, and lead academics to publish without thinking about the value and meaning of the research. They may just publish for the sake of publishing. ...It is heart-breaking to see some young researchers wasting their valuable time trying to publish internationally. ... Current evaluation system only uses labels, such as the SSCI, to judge the research quality. ... If all the best research was published in English journals, then Chinese journals will inevitably be affected. (Academic-SHA10)

Some academics used the word 'rebellious' to explain their feelings towards the incentives that they perceived as mandatory. Academic-WH13 said that encouraging international publications might be of benefit, but when it

became compulsory to publish in certain journals required by the institution, ‘I felt rebellious towards that’. Some other academics, such as Academic-BJA4 and Academic-XA4, expressed the same stance of ‘feeling rebellious towards the compulsion’. For those academics, the incentives had discouraged them to publish internationally.

For some academics, not to publish in international journals was a natural choice due to their research area and targeted audience. Some research areas were believed to be more suitable for domestic publications. For instance, Academic-WH7 was limited in his choice of journals as a Chinese literature scholar, and he held the opinion that the research on Chinese language and literature should be conducted and conveyed in Chinese.

Intended impacts, either in academia or in society, was another determining factor underlined by some academics. Academic-BJA4, an educational researcher, pointed out that her choice of journals was dependent on the target audience of the research, who were mostly Chinese teachers:

I hope my research can be beneficial to Chinese teachers. Of course, it will be good to publish internationally and let international peers learn more about the situation in China. However, I enjoy it more when teachers in China resonated with and even got inspired by my research. I think this is more meaningful. So, I am not that passionate about international publications. I know that in recent years, the pressure of publishing internationally has been growing. .... But personally, I prefer to share my research with my peers in China. (Academic-BJA4)

Similar stances were reported by some other academics, who all expressed the intention to contribute their research to Chinese academia and society. An academic in Law said: ‘I do not have any plans to write English articles, because I want to conduct some rigorous research on the pending questions in Chinese

academia' (Academic-SHA5). Another educational researcher also stated that:

Educational research is not universal. It is closely associated with the circumstances of a country. I hope to conduct research that can 'touch the ground', and the questions I am concerned about are the burning questions Chinese universities are facing; therefore, I would love to be rooted in the Chinese context. ... Educational research also has practical implications, so I hope my research can be read by policy-makers of Chinese universities. ... As they would not read that many English publications, the best way is to publish in Chinese. (Academic-SHB12)

Overall, resistant academics delivered unfavourable attitudes towards incentives and reported the unwillingness to publish in international journals. Their decisions to publish domestically were largely related to the 'rebellious' feelings about the mandatory incentives, the nature and readership of their research, and their consideration of research impact. It is noticeable that most of the academics in this category did not face pending evaluative pressures, since 7 out of 13 of them already secured the professor title, and three reported that they already fulfilled the evaluative requirements as an assistant professor or associate professor.

#### **5.2.4 Hesitant**

Academics with hesitant responses held favourable attitudes towards incentivising HSS international publications, with similar reasons provided by academics with proactive stances. However, they did not intend to publish internationally due to either self-reported lack of competence to publish internationally, or the perceived stress of achieving institutional requirements on publication numbers.

The perceived difficulty in writing and publishing academic papers in English was the first reason reported to hinder academics' intention to publish internationally. Academic-WH2 is a good illustrative case of this stance. As a professor in Educational studies, Academic-WH2 received his doctoral training from a domestic university many years ago. He expressed highly favourable attitudes towards the incentives for international publications, with considerations discussed in the previous section about research quality and the level of internationalisation:

Incentivising international publications represents our determination to chase other countries in academic research. Within the HSS research areas, I think China is still not as good as the US and the UK. Since they have the higher level of research, if our academics can publish in their journals, it means we are gradually approaching or reaching the level of international research. (Academic-WH2)

Despite his positive attitudes towards incentivising international publications, he hesitated upon the question of whether he would publish internationally:

I may have thought about publishing SSCI papers, because the university is highly emphasising SSCI. However, as I observed in my research field, most SSCI publications by Chinese academics are adopting Western methodologies, such as qualitative study methods to investigate issues of Chinese education. As for myself, I relied on the literature, rather than empirical studies, to conduct most of my research. My research topic was mainly introducing foreign educational practices into China.... Also, writing English articles is no easy task for me. So, it is difficult for me to publish an SSCI article, and I do not have the intention to do so right now. (Academic-WH2)

Another participant reported a barrier for academics to publish

internationally, which was the required number of publications for career assessment and progression. Since Academic-WH2 had secured his tenure position as a professor at the university, he did not face the pressure from employment contracts or tenure application, as did some other academics, such as Academic-XA8. Academic-XA8 was an associate professor in Sociology, who obtained his master's and doctoral degrees abroad. Although Uni-XA had been supportive of international publications, he perceived that in his department, domestic publications were also highly regarded, and that the departmental incentives for international publications were not that high. In addition, he found publishing in Chinese journals more 'controllable' in terms of the timeframe, since international publications often required an unpredictable timeframe to review, revise, and publish than domestic journals. As a consequence, to ensure a number of publications before applying for the title of professor, he preferred to focus on publishing more domestic articles at his current career stage. He concluded that: 'I will be able to follow my own interest and publish wherever I want, after I got the professorship.'

As demonstrated by the cases of Academic-WH2 and Academic-XA8, academics with hesitant responses appeared to have favourable attitudes towards incentives for international publications, but they did not intend to publish internationally due to the perceived lack of capability or external evaluative pressure. As illustrated by the statement of Academic-XA8 about being able to 'follow [his] own interest and publish wherever' after getting the professorship, academics in this category might move to the category of Proactive if they conquered the hindrance to international publications.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

This chapter categorises HSS academics based on their responses to incentives, illustrates academics in each category, and outlines the rationale for their different attitudes and intentions. In general, HSS academics had diversified responses to the incentives for international publications. Based on whether their attitudes were favourable or unfavourable, and whether they intended to publish in international journals or domestic journals, HSS academics fell into four categories: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant.

The reasons for the different attitudes and intentions provided by academics were also diverse. Academics related their attitudes towards the incentives with their perceptions of the aims, values, and consequences of such incentives, as well as the quality and value of international publications. Academics' intentions to publish in international journals or domestic journals were related to their personal research interests, targeted readership, intended impacts, the capability to publish internationally or domestically, as well as the external environment and evaluative pressures.

This research classified academics into four types according to their responses to incentives for international publications. Based on the emergent categories of academics, the following chapters will explore academics' accounts of how incentives have influenced their research and careers with the employment of those categories.

## **Chapter 6 Incentives' Influences on Academic Publications**

This chapter explores participants' accounts of incentives' influences on HSS academics' publications. It mainly draws on interview data with academics, which are supplemented with insights from the analysis of incentive documents. As revealed in Chapter 5, four themes regarding publications emerged from the analysis of interviews with academics. Chapter 5 addressed the first them, the intention to publish internationally. This chapter follows to explore the other three themes: motivations to publish, the perceived differences between international and domestic publications, and the choices of where and what to publish.

### **6.1 The relationship between incentives and motivations to publish**

Academics' accounts of motivations to publish varied across different disciplines and institutions. To summarise, academics reported being motivated to publish for numerous reasons, including obtaining monetary rewards, gaining recognition through the scheme, getting recognition from academia, making contributions, achieving practical impacts, as well as achieving personal development.

Academics reported complex relations between those motivations and institutional incentives. Among all motivations discussed, monetary rewards and recognition by the evaluation system were closely associated with incentives for international publications. Between them, academics associated their motivation to publication with institutional recognition more than monetary rewards, since some academics admitted that they were driven by incentives to achieve

institutional recognition, and some others argued that monetary rewards were not the major drivers for publication. Other motivations, like academic recognition and influences, impacts and social contributions, and self-development and actualisation, were shown as less closely linked to incentives for international publications. However, academics' accounts demonstrated that those motivations were also indirectly shaped or challenged by the incentives. Academics experienced tensions between institutional and academic recognition, reported conflicts between intended impacts and the value of incentives, and perceived the value of publishing internationally as attached to personal development. Each of these aspects and their associated tensions will be discussed in further detail in this section.

### **6.1.1 Monetary rewards**

None of the academics interviewed claimed monetary rewards as the primary motivation for them to publish. However, for some academics, monetary rewards were described as 'jin shang tian hua' (a Chinese idiom meaning 'the icing on the cake', as used by Academic-WH8, WH9, and WH10) and they expected bonuses when preparing for publication. Academic-SHA2 said: 'I will surely be delighted if there are rewards. After all, there is living pressure, right?' Although they said they did not publish for the sake of earning bonuses, nor did they deny that monetary rewards could serve as partial motivation to publish in certain journals:

Imagine I have a paper that can be either written in English or Chinese, while both take me the similar amount of time, and if written in English, I may get some bonuses, I will write in English.

It does not matter, right? Everybody likes money. However, I am not writing for the money. ... Let us just say, if the money is given to me for nothing and does not take me too much time, then I will surely take it. But if it takes time, and the bonus is not too much, then I would rather not have it. (Academic-XA4)

Academic-SHA8 and Academic-WH2 all pointed out monetary incentives could help with some academics because of the low salary level in China. They argued that many Chinese academics were not well-paid concerning the amount of work and their competence. Consequently, financial rewards by publications could serve as a bonus or compensation for their efforts. For instance, Academic-XA3 made a rough calculation that the ¥8,000 bonus for an SSCI publication could be equal to an academic's average annual teaching income (paid according to the total hours of teaching in a year). Academic-XA5 remarked that publishing in international journals cost more time and energy; therefore, there should be bonuses to compensate for it. Other interviewees, like Academic-BJB2, also commented that offering more bonuses for international publications was justified, since he thought international publications are of higher value than domestic publications:

Domestic publications, in terms of the quality, the IF, and bonuses received, are inferior to international publications. The higher the price is, the better the quality is. The quality, the number of words, and the workload in each international publication are far more than a domestic publication. (Academic-BJB2)

Not all academics interviewed expressed interests in monetary rewards, since not every academic perceived the same level of financial pressure. As Academic-SHA5 explained:

It all depends on academics' moral integrity and their living pressures. If s/he is under a lot of living pressure, there is nothing s/he can do but to follow it. However, if the living pressure or financial pressure is not that strong, then s/he can enjoy some freedom to do their own thinking. (Academic-SHA5)

Some academics complained that the low level of monetary incentives for HSS publications would not be as strong of an impetus for academics to publish. Particularly, academics were aware that bonuses for publications in NS areas were much higher than that in the HSS. As demonstrated in **4.1.8 The value of monetary bonuses**, the highest bonus value for publications in NS was ¥1,000,000, for a paper published in *Nature* or *Science*. However, the highest value for a publication in HSS was ¥30,000 within the '985' and '211' universities. Consequently, some HSS academics did not think the current bonus value could serve as the motivator for their publications. For instance, although the bonuses for an SSCI publication was ¥30,000 at Uni-WH, the highest for SSCI publications among '985' and '211' universities in China, Academic-WH8 complained about the unbalanced bonuses between NS and HSS, saying the bonuses for HSS are not sufficient to serve as the motivator for him to publish internationally:

I think ¥30,000 is too little. ... I could make money in other ways if I wanted. Do you think ¥30,000 would be a *motivation* for me? I do not think it would be all. It is, of course, recognition for my work, and the icing on the cake. However, I do not think the rewards would be a huge motivation for me. If we add a zero at the end and make it ¥300,000, then yes, I would be very likely to do it and make efforts too. ... For publications in *Nature* or *Science*, the bonus value is ¥500,000, but this is impossible for us. (Academic-WH8)

Academic-BJA3 and Academic-BJA5 also confirmed the statements above,

that those monetary incentives were not high enough to motivate academics. For some academics, their salaries and rewards from the university were not their main income source, and they could earn profits from part-time jobs outside the university, hence their lower interests in monetary rewards:

I think most academics are not publishing for the sake of money, because this does not fit in the economic analysis of cost and benefits. For instance, for those who teach foreign languages, they could make money outside the university, and their daily income could be much more than the research rewards in a year. (Academic-BJA3)

I do not care about the rewards. It does not matter if you reward me with ¥8,000, ¥6,000, or ¥10,000. If we look at those who could do a part-time job as simultaneous interpreters, they can earn as much as ¥500,000 in a year – who would care about the rewards? ... I think academics value such bonuses differently. For example, for some of our colleagues who also serve as the vice-principal or principal of some foreign language teaching institutions, their annual income could be about ¥1,000,000, then why should they care about the rewards? (Academic-BJA5)

Some academics, such as Academic-SHA6 and Academic-SHA9, stated that they were not concerned about financial rewards for international publications, not only because bonuses did not serve as their principal motivation to publish, but also because a certain percentage of the rewards would be paid as research funding only for reimbursement. Since the bonuses were not directly paid as part of their salaries, they must bear this in mind and figure out how to spend it. In the end, the bonuses sometimes got ‘forgotten and unspent’ (Academic-SHA9). Academic-SHA6 noted: ‘I do not know how to reimburse it or use it, and it is just burdensome.’

Academics believed that monetary bonuses could not incentivise academics to publish internationally, if those academics did not have the

capability to do so:

In general, monetary bonuses may incentivise academics, but it depends on each person. For instance, we all know smoking damages health, but those who enjoy smoking will keep the habit, while others who do not smoke will still not do that. Everyone knows publishing internationally could be beneficial both financially and in tenure promotion, but those who can publish will continue publishing anyway, while those who cannot or would not like to do so will still not publish. (Academic-XA1)

Academics from other disciplines and universities shared the opinion. They remarked that monetary bonuses might not change the fact that some academics were ‘incapable of publishing internationally’ due to the lack of language capacity or research training (Academic-BJA3 and XA10).

### **6.1.2 Recognition by the evaluation system**

Some academics, such as Academic-WH2, Academic-XA5, and Academic-SHB6, were aware of the institutional emphasis on international publications through incentive schemes. Therefore, they argued that it was of high importance to ‘get recognised’ with publications in revered journals; otherwise, it would be a ‘waste of effort’ (Academic-XA5). Academic-WH15 said: ‘If you publish two papers, but they are not recognised in the evaluation, it might be better just to publish one in a recognised journal.’

The concern of getting recognised was also central to some academics’ choices in domestic publications. Those academics, such as Academic-XA1, stated that they would only consider CSSCI journals in choosing where to publish domestically, since only CSSCI journals were rewarded and authorised by current regulations. Academic-WH12 also prioritised recognition by the system over

recognition by peers:

We have some new journals in our field, some are of high quality, but they are not indexed. Here comes the question of making choices – if you submit your paper there, and it is not a CSSCI journal, then you cannot benefit from it; however, it is recognised by peers. My own choice is to consider them after I manage to make a living. If you do not solve the problem of survival, you will never have the strength to do other things. (Academic-WH12)

It is noticeable that the priority of institutional recognition was common among junior academics across different institutions, such as expressed by Academic-WH11, Academic-WH12, and Academic-WH15 from Uni-WH, Academic-XA6 and Academic-XA7 from Uni-XA, Academic-BJB5 from Uni-BJB. They were aware of the limited research outputs in the early stage of their careers, thus attempting to ‘make the best use of them’ in choosing where to publish – ideally international journals recognised by the evaluation system. They all mentioned that if they had sufficient research outputs in the future, they might care less about whether the journals were recognised by institutions.

### **6.1.3 Academic recognition, communication, and contributions**

While some academics reported the determination to only publish in journals recognised by incentives, some academics argued that they valued the recognition by their peers more than the recognition by the system. Therefore, they said they would publish wherever and whatever would be acknowledged by their peers in academia, domestically and internationally.

Some academics did not associate recognition by the system with a high research level, as Academic-SHA8 from Law put it: ‘I do not think publishing in

English means I have a high-level research capacity. I will only be benefiting from it and getting recognised by the system.’ Academic-SHB2 from History also observed ‘a gap between the reputation among peers and indicators decided by bureaucracies’ – that top journals in his field were not included in or recognised by the evaluation system. For him, a good journal in Humanities should not be judged by the IF; rather, its quality could be examined by other academic factors, such as whether the journal has published seminal articles by established academics.

An example of an academic from Law School illustrated the conflict between recognition by the system and by academia. As a Law scholar conducting interdisciplinary research in History, he published a paper in a CSSCI journal in History. Although the journal was ‘very well-acknowledged’ in History, since it was not a Law journal, that paper was granted half of the points in research evaluation, same as some ‘random journals such as *Journal of Veterinary*’. Although resigned and disappointed about that evaluation, the participant said that he would continue to publish in History journals because he needed ‘friends from both Law and History, influences on both fields, and recognition from both sides, which were more meaningful’.

The attitude of this academic reflected the intention to communicate with and get recognised by peers, in addition to, or instead of getting recognised by senior administrators. The attitude was shared by some other academics such as Academic-WH3 and Academic-WH14. When asked about whether he would submit to a high-quality international journal if it is not indexed by SSCI or A&HCI, Academic-WH14 did not hesitate to say ‘yes’:

Yes, this is a matter of recognition. It is unnecessary to publish papers in an international journal that is not well-received by our peers overseas. For instance, there is a journal by Harvard in our field and of high reputation there, although it is not an SSCI journal, it would be good to publish there. Also, in China, we have renowned journals such as that published by Peking University. Regardless of institutional journal lists, if you publish in that journal, it means huge recognition in this field. My point is that it is better to get recognised by your peers. If you publish in some journals and get rewards, but it is not recognised in the field, it would eventually harm you. (Academic-WH14)

Contribution to academia, particularly to the specific field of research, was another significant motivation for academics' publications. When considering publishing internationally, some academics regarded international publications as 'making contributions to the research field' (Academic-BJB1 and SHA6) or even 'making contributions to humankind' (Academic-XA1). However, academics like Academic-SHA8 expressed his doubts over the contribution of international publications in some fields. Since he observed that many international publications in his field by Chinese scholars were introducing Chinese legal systems, he did not think those publications 'would contribute anything to my own academic research, nor to academia'. The differences in the scope of international and domestic publications will be further discussed in the following section.

#### **6.1.4 Impacts and practical contributions**

As discussed in Chapter 5, academics also made distinctions between where to publish, either internationally or domestically, depending on the intended contributions to practices and expected receivers of impacts. In general, academics conducting research with practical implications reported an intention to

publish domestically, with the attempt to make an impact on domestic issues and solve problems in contemporary China. Academics with such perceptions reported a perceived conflict between the incentives for international publications and their intention to generate impacts in China.

### **6.1.5 Learning and personal development**

Academics interviewed were appreciative of the comments offered by peer reviewers and editors throughout the publication process. Some academics regarded the process of publication, especially international publication, as a ‘learning process’ (Academic-SHA7). Academic-SHA6, who had rich experiences of publishing in and reviewing for international journals, underscored the value of publishing in international journals for personal development as a researcher:

Relatively speaking, publishing in international journals has been of great help to me. To publish an article in an international journal, from conceiving the idea, to going through the review process, and to being published – although it was a long process, I found it very beneficial. (Academic-SHA6)

For some academics, publishing was a natural choice rooted from their passion and interests in research. Academic-BJA5 said he was fond of writing papers and doing research, to the extent that he stayed in Beijing for the whole year doing research, without going back to his hometown even during the holidays. Academics like him claimed that they enjoyed doing research, and expected nothing more than the pleasure of pursuing academic interests. Academics who were ‘interest-oriented’ reported that they regarded publishing as a natural part of research to disseminate findings and achieve self-actualisation.

Such as stated by Academic-BJB2:

I publish only for the sake of my personal interests, rather than for bonuses. What can I do with just ¥10,000? I spent three years conducting the experiment and published a paper, and the time cost would be worth much more than the ¥10,000 rewards. (Academic-BJB2)

For some academics, publishing in top journals appeared to be a personal challenge that they would like to complete. Since more and more incentives were positioning international journals as top journals, some academics who were aware of this said that they had shifted their attention from domestic publications to international publications. For instance, Academic-XA5 started to focus on international publications because he felt ‘a decreasing sense of achievement for publishing domestically’, accompanied by an increasing aspiration to ‘surpass oneself’ by publishing internationally. Similarly, Academic-SHA9 also associated publishing internationally with a ‘sense of achievement’, and she stated that international publications could bring her more satisfaction than domestic publications.

## **6.2 Perceived differences between international and domestic publications**

Academics from different institutions and disciplines underscored different aspects when comparing international and domestic publications. Discussions in Chapter 5 have touched upon some of the differences. This section focuses on these tensions, highlighting common arguments which emerging from the data. Differences perceived by the 65 HSS academics between international and domestic publications can be summarised as the following aspects: language

issues, style and format, estimated time and the peer review process, research questions, research context, methodological and theoretical considerations, and the originality of research. Those differences, as perceived by some academics, were not indicators for the quality or value of international or domestic publications, as Academic-SHB10 stated:

The requirements for international or domestic publications are not the same. The differences are not necessarily good or bad, high or low; sometimes they are differences in *social norms*. (Academic-SHB10)

### 6.2.1 Language issues

Writing papers in academic English constituted a significant challenge for some academics, particularly those who had not received training or conducted research in an English-speaking environment. They complained about the difficulty in writing papers in academic English:

The language issue is just giving me a headache. After all, we are not from English-speaking countries. There are questions like how to express it in English. Ah, a real headache. (Academic-SHA1)

There is a lack of proper terminologies in English, since many vocabularies were originally translated into Chinese from German or Japanese. ... For some terms in Law, there is no corresponding word in English, so it is quite difficult to write in English. (Academic-SHA8)

It is very troublesome if you want to turn your Chinese works into English and reach their requirements for publication. With my English ability, I have to find someone to help me proofread and edit it, which is too much trouble. It is just too troublesome. (Academic-SHB4)

However, for those academics who intended to publish internationally, they managed to figure out different approaches to overcoming the language difficulties, such as constant training, using proofreading services, and collaborating.

Training for academic English writing was considered a long-term procedure, so those who came back with a doctoral degree from an English-speaking country – especially from ‘elite universities’ in the US and UK – were rendered a great advantage by many non-returnee academics. The latter group often expressed inferior feelings when compared to their returnee peers, believing that those returnee academics had received more rigorous and authentic training in academic English writing. However, returnee academics highlighted that despite their relative fluency in English, they were not well adjusted to writing academic papers in Chinese upon returning (e.g. Academic-WH11 and WH15). Some of them, like Academic-WH1, chose to abandon writing and publishing in Chinese due to the ‘painful’ experiences of switching back to Chinese academic writing. In addition, some academics with high English proficiency argued that native language writings should be ‘treasured and preserved’ (Academic-SHA10).

Some academics pointed out that language was important in international publications, but they perceived it as manageable with the help of proofreading services. The statement of Academic-XA7 represented the opinion of some academics:

Language is a big obstacle for me, and particularly, there is room for improvement in expressions and the use of certain terms. Most of the time, I learnt certain expressions from other publications. But I have to keep writing, since there is no shortcut. You must keep practising and improving your language ability. Sometimes, editors would suggest using professional proofreading services

after submission, and many platforms have such services. So, I think the language problem can be tackled, since the key is to have the *idea*, and make editors believe that this paper will have a *contribution*. (Academic-XA7)

Some academics also mentioned proofreading or editing services as a method to overcome the language obstacle. As an editor and reviewer for international journals, Academic-SHA6 suggested some academics to seek help from professional editors, who can assist in polishing the language. Academic-BJA5 and Academic-WH8 both had experiences of using the service or recommending colleagues to use those services, which all generated successful publications. However, different voices came from other academics like Academic-SHB2 and Academic-WH12, who did not find such services professional enough to edit highly specialised academic papers.

For some academics, collaborating with others with higher English proficiency, particularly native English speakers or academics working in or graduated from English speaking countries, seemed to be a practical solution to the language problem. The section **7.1.1 International research collaborations** will further discuss this issue.

It is worth noticing that during interviews, some academics, particularly those who have been involved in publishing internationally, tended to express specific terms in English instead of Chinese, even though the interviews were carried out in Chinese. Take an excerpt from the interview with Academic-BJB2 for instance. She discussed the peer review process of international publications here:

For papers submitted to international journals, if the paper is about 20 pages, then you can get at least ten pages of *comments*, very

detailed *comment*. So the *comments* or *revision* is very *manageable* – you know how to revise, and everything has a reference. So, this is the biggest difference – international publications are manageable, if this paper is not good enough, you can revise it during the *revision*; and if *rejected*, you can submit it to other journals, whereas the paper has been enhanced during the process. (Academic-BJB2)

As a returnee scholar, Academic-BJB2 had relatively more experience in academic English writing and publishing. However, non-returnee academics or those who had not published internationally also brought up English terms throughout the interviews. Most of the terms were procedure languages used in English academic writing and publications, such as *peer review* (used by Academic-BJA5, BJA7, SHA7, XA7, and SHA9), *reviewer* (used by Academic-WH1, BJA5, SHA6, XA7, WH9, SHA9, and SHB13), *editor* (used by Academic-SHA2, SHB2, BJA5, SHA6, XA7, and WH13), *paper* (used by Academic-BJB1, WH1, BJA3, XA4, XA6, WH9, WH12, and WH13), and *accept(ed)* or *reject(ed)* (used by Academic-BJB2, XA5, BJA5, and WH13).

### **6.2.2 Style and format**

Academics from various disciplines, regardless of whether they were returnee scholars or not, reached the consensus that both domestic and international publications had their own established norms in writing, such as the structure. For instance, Academic-SHA3 stated that domestic publications tended to consist of five sections, with the first one introducing the context, literature review, research questions and methodology, and three following sections presenting findings, and the last one serving as the conclusion. Similarly, Academic-WH3 and Academic-SHA7 also recognised the ‘norms’ used in many

international publications, which can be learnt through training and practice.

Differences were also spotted in the style and requirements for footnotes and bibliographies. Academic-XA3 noted that when switching between Chinese and English writings, much time was devoted to adjusting technical issues such as editing footnotes, since the styles differed from each other. As noted by Academic-BJA5, there were some ‘strange’ requirements with references in some cases. He had an experience with a domestic journal, which required no more than ten references for a paper; otherwise, the editor would think the paper was lacking in originality. As a returnee scholar who had once written a review paper with 149 references, the limitation on the number of bibliographies struck him as ‘really strange’ (Academic-BJA5).

International and domestic publications also differed in the requirements of length. As Academic-BJB2 perceived, international publications tended to be longer than domestic ones, and the comparison varies across disciplines. For instance, Academic-XA10 from Education reported that an average international publication was around 7,000 to 8,000 words, while a domestic publication can be only 3,000 to 4,000 words. Academic-XA5 from Media and Communication also noticed that international publications in this field were often more than 20 pages, while domestic publications, even the top ones, could only be less than 20 pages. Academic-SHB2 from History appreciated a top-tier journal from Taiwan, because it did not have a word limit; meanwhile, domestic journals often limited the article to less than 20,000 words, which was not considered by him as sufficient to make a thorough discussion. To adjust to the reduced word limit in domestic journals, Academic-WH11, a returnee scholar familiar with writing papers in English, found it necessary to learn how to ‘revise big pieces into

smaller ones' by condensing some sections and extracting the essence.

However, some academics noticed that the situation had started to change, when more and more domestic journals now required longer papers. Academic- BJA7 from International Relations said that journal articles in his field used to be less than eight pages in length, but now journals were requiring longer papers (Academic- BJA7). Academic- BJA8 also commented that in Law areas, good domestic journals now preferred long papers no less than 15,000 words, rather than papers of 7,000 to 8,000 words in the past.

### **6.2.3 Estimated time for publication and the peer review process**

How long it takes to publish remained a critical issue, given the requirements in most incentive documents that the publications must be published to be recognised – and by 'published', they often referred to being printed out in journals rather than released online.

Different academics had their own estimated time devoted to an international publication or domestic publication, depending on their own perceptions of personal capability and the expectation of the review process. The whole publication process was divided by those two factors: the former one influenced academics' estimation of the time used to prepare and write the paper, while the latter impacted on academics' expectations on the time spent for review and revision.

For preparing and writing papers, academics reported at least a one-year timeframe for an international publication (Academic- BJA3, SHA7, and SHA8), with some spending three to four years from conceiving the idea to completing the writing of a paper (Academic- WH3). The time for preparing and writing

international publications were described as much ‘longer’ than domestic publications (Academic-BJA3 and XA8), due to the familiarity with native language writing for domestic publications.

There was a broad consensus among academics interviewed that international journals had a more rigorous peer review procedure than domestic journals. For instance, Academic-WH3 noticed that ‘international publications demand reliable references for each statement’. Although domestic publications also paid attention to references, he argued that it was not as rigid as international ones. Academics who had international publication experiences all agreed that the peer review procedure, usually consisting the editorial review and double-blind reviewers’ review, was helpful in improving the quality of submissions (Academic-BJA5 and SHA6), demonstrated more equality (Academic-XA10), and represented more academic rigour and higher standards (Academic-BJA4).

Compared with the review process of international publications, seven academics described their submissions to domestic journals with the same Chinese idiom – ‘shi chen da hai’ (translated as ‘like a pebble dropped into the ocean’) – meaning they never heard anything back and they would never get any response. Many domestic journals, except for some top journals, only have the editorial review (Academic-SHA9) or provided limited comments from reviewers (Academic-BJB2):

The peer review process of domestic journals is not rigorous: they seldom give you any manageable revision, and the comments are very general – something like the data is not analysed properly – but they would not tell you how to revise, only telling you something like the references or theories are not adequate. The revision comments are just about 30 words, and some submissions were just gone, like a pebble dropped in the ocean, there was no response at all. (Academic-BJB2)

In addition, 30 academics interviewed talked about non-academic factors that could influence the review of articles in domestic journals. Some academics mentioned it briefly as ‘some other factors’ (Academic-SHA2 and BJB4), while some spelt out those factors, which they thought were irrelevant to the quality of the paper, but could determine whether the paper can be published or not. Those non-academic issues discussed by participants included the monopoly of some senior academics (Academic-SHA5), since the journals would reserve some sections for ‘flagship professors’ or who had ‘*authority*’ in academia (Academic-SHA3, XA10, and WH12); the consideration for colleagues, as some journals would reserve some space for authors from their own institutions (Academic-SHA4); the power of networks and relations such as teacher-student relationship (Academic-XA2, BJB3, BJA5, SHA8, and WH8); the monetary exchanges such as extra ‘publication charges’ (Academic-WH2, BJA4, and BJA7); the preference for papers from research projects supported by prestigious grants (Academic-WH5 and WH12); and the conflicts between different theoretical schools among authors and editors (Academic-SHA8 and WH9).

A group of academics interviewed expressed their intention to change the situation, by providing comprehensive and professional comments when serving as reviewers for domestic journals (Academic-SHB12), and carrying out rigorous peer review procedure when establishing or editing domestic journals (Academic-SHA8).

Some perceived the peer review process as the reason for the prolonged process of international publication. For most academics, the review process for international publications took about half a year to one year. Some were as short as three to six months like described by Academic-BJB2, while some were longer

as evidenced by Academic-SHA6, who waited for three years for a paper to go through the review process.

Some academics argued that compared with the standardised peer review process for most international journals, the ‘obscure’ (Academic-XA3) or ‘*black box-like*’ (Academic-SHB13) review process of domestic journals accounted for a longer process to publish domestically. Academic-WH12 also reported that for top domestic Economics journals, it could take two years to publish a paper in the journal.

#### **6.2.4 Research questions**

Academics identified huge differences in the questions international and domestic journals were concerned with, that international journals appeared to pay little attention to issues in China:

In most cases, Social Sciences research was about domestic issues. If you would like to publish in American journals, they would not normally be interested in Chinese issues, except that you have a comparative perspective. For example, if you just investigated the water pollution in a village in Xi’an, or examined the environmental consciousness or behaviours of Chinese people, foreign readers may not be interested at all. (Academic-XA8)

Some academics believed in HSS areas, research interests and questions took roots in the socio-cultural context of each country. Therefore, even if international journals appeared to be interested in issues in China, they only cared about ‘what they seemed to be interested in’ (Academic-SHB4), and ‘what can help solving their problems’ (Academic-SHA5), rather than ‘the biggest problem in China or questions worth researching’ (Academic-SHB4). Academics with

resistant or adaptive stances, such as Academic-SHA4 and Academic-SHA8, also held this opinion, arguing that international journals seemed to care less about what was important in China, while the value of HSS research should address the pressing questions China was facing, such as the reforms of media system (Academic-SHA4). Academic-XA4 perceived the process of trying to publish internationally as a process of ‘*alienation*’, since most internationally renowned journals in his field were ‘controlled by Americans’; as a consequence, one had to choose the right research question to be published:

If you do research on race issues, it is easy to be published. If you do research on ethnic issues in China, you may publish there, but if your research is about ethnic issues in the US, it is much easier to be published. Or, investigate criminal issues, it would be easier to publish as well, because those are what they are concerned about. (Academic-XA4)

Academic-XA4 commented that research topics in international journals aimed to solve problems outside China, not problems China was facing, thus international publications should not be valued or incentivised.

This stance contrasts with other academics, who noticed increasing interests in ‘Chinese stories’ in global academia (Academic- XA3 and BJA4), and perceived the advantage of being a Chinese academic as such that their identity associated them with authority and easier access to many China-related issues. Academic-SHA11 reflected that it could be an advantage for Chinese academics conducting China-related research:

More and more international audiences are interested in China, but they could not write those issues themselves, due to the lack of knowledge of China. But there are interests. So, it has to be Chinese academics who can address these issues. For Chinese

academics, investigating Chinese issues is quite convenient compared with writing about issues in other countries. It would be rather bizarre if a Chinese scholar at a Chinese university is investigating problems in American education, since you are unlikely to get the information; whereas if you examine the issues in Chinese universities, you can gather the information very easily. (Academic-SHA11)

In other areas, Academic-BJA7 also noticed a growing number of Chinese authors in some international journals on Chinese politics, whose major contributors used to be foreign academics. Observing such a trend, Academic-BJA7 commented that ‘research conducted by foreign academics on China cannot be as in-depth as those conducted by Chinese academics’. This was supported by an example given by Academic-XA2, who used to work on a project with a foreign scholar, examining organisations at the grass-roots level in China. When they were conducting fieldwork, since people were curious and cautious about a ‘foreigner’, the foreign scholar faced tremendous difficulties in getting access to data. On the contrary, Academic-XA2 was able to talk to people who were less curious and cautious to him, ask for documents, and make constant observations as a Chinese researcher. In the end, he generated fruitful data from the field, which then led to a good publication.

The ideological and political sensitivity of the research topic was another factor discussed by participants. Some academics, especially those doing Social Sciences research like Law, Economics, and Politics, were aware of the sensitivity of some research topics. Academic-BJB5 pointed out that some ‘sensitive issues’ would better be published in international journals, since ‘it could present more evidence and would not be censored’. Academic-SHA5 from Law, Academic-BJA7 from International Relations, and Academic-WH12 from Economics all made similar comments that some issues might be difficult to publish in domestic

journals due to its sensitive nature.

Take a recent research project of Academic-BJB5 for example. The topic he would explore was about Chinese police, with a ‘sensitive’ research question that had not been addressed either in domestic or international academia. Therefore, he intended to ‘desensitise’ some concepts if it was to be submitted to domestic journals, and write up other papers in English for international journals. Similarly, another academic has conducted research on the Cultural Revolution for several years, a topic ‘too sensitive and difficult to be published in domestic journals’. He said that he was left with no choice but to publish in international journals.

#### **6.2.5 Research context**

Some participants perceived that unfamiliarity with the Chinese context by international journals had increased the difficulty for Chinese academics to publish internationally, since academics were required to make more explanation for the context too familiar to them. Academic-BJA4 and some other academics noticed that during the review process of international papers, some issues that she used to ‘*take for granted*’ were picked upon by foreign academics:

Because of the cultural differences, sometimes what I took for granted turned out to be something unfamiliar to international audiences, hence the requirement for plenty of explanations. I found it quite troublesome and tiring, not being understood by international journals or those people [reviewers]. It was not just academic issues, since the paper involved many socio-cultural issues, it appeared to be quite tricky. (Academic-BJA4)

Academic-SHA6 and Academic-SHB11 both shared similar experiences

and observations. Academic-SHA8 gave an example of a common comment in Law by international reviewers, who often seemed to be most interested in the party organisation of China and pointed out this should be further discussed in the paper. Academic-SHA8 argued that such organisation was different from Western countries, but it was a fact known to every Chinese scholar and had been discussed in China for about three decades. Therefore, he thought there was no point, in terms of the contribution to knowledge, in analysing this issue and telling them in English once again; however, this appeared to be the issue international journals and reviewers were most interested in.

#### **6.2.6 Methodological and theoretical considerations**

In the interview data, academics from the Social Sciences disciplines in particular reported that international journals tended to favour empirical studies, especially quantitative studies, compared to domestic journals. For instance, Academic-WH13 from Social Work observed that most international publications applied quantitative methods, and domestic publications were also attempting to shift their focuses to quantitative studies. Academic-WH2 from Education, Academic-XA4 from Sociology, and Academic-WH8 from Management all noticed the growing emphasis on empirical or quantitative research in international publications. On the contrary, academics noticed that domestic journals preferred theoretical discussions, and ‘it would be rather difficult to publish in the top ones if you only have empirical analysis without theoretical discussions’ (Academic-BJB3). Therefore, academics who intended to publish internationally, particularly those academics with proactive stances like Academic-WH13, expressed the determination to ‘be familiar with and employ

quantitative methods in future research' (Academic-WH13).

Academics also pointed out different approaches to theoretical frameworks between international and domestic publications. For instance, Academic-XA9 argued that some Chinese academics lacked the training to construct appropriate theoretical frameworks, but publications in English often demanded one. Similarly, Academic-SHB4 commented that international publications often required a systematic review of literature and theories, and expected theoretical contributions. However, he thought 'European or American academics may not accept Chinese academic works, because Chinese experiences did not stem from those Western theoretical discussions. Academic-BJA3, reviewing the development of research in International Relations, also summarised that the origin of this research field was in the US, where theoretical discussions had been well developed, rendering it more difficult to make original contributions to the field, particularly by Chinese academics.

### **6.2.7 The originality of research**

Some academics held the opinion that international journals had higher demands in the originality of research. For instance, Academic-WH13 compared international journals and domestic journals she often read, and noticed a higher repetition rate in domestic journals than international ones:

Some opinions are repetitive, and many scholars tend to hold the same opinion – sometimes I cannot tell the differences. To be honest, and this may hurt, I think it is a waste of paper to write them. As for international publications, they are a bit better, in a way that it was more frequent for me to feel 'wow' while reading them. But for domestic journals, only one paper might catch my attention after reading ten of them. (Academic-WH13)

Academic-SHB10 from Economics shared the same observation that international journals were more concerned with ‘what is new, rather than something right but had been said’, while domestic journals were focused on ‘what is right, even if it is repeating what others had said before’.

Some academics countered the idea of international publications being more original, especially for some papers published by Chinese academics. For instance, Academic-SHA8 pointed out that some academics were serving as ‘academic porters’, because their major research topics were introducing Chinese legal systems to foreigners, and introducing foreign systems to China – although it was not meaningless, as perceived by him, such work had limited academic value and originality. Academic-XA2 and Academic-XA7, who were also from Law, made comments on this phenomenon:

If you write a paper for an international journal, you can introduce the Chinese legal system. Since you are facing international readers, who have limited knowledge of the system, you can catch their eyes if you write it as novel as you can – such papers are easier to publish. But if you write this in Chinese, I assume it would not be accepted by good journals in China, because it needs more analysis than merely the introduction to that background information. (Academic-XA7)

Some academics have published SSCI papers, but maybe his level of research or the level of originality was not high. His data was new to foreigners though, and they would be curious. The same is true for some highly-cited papers. From the perspective of knowledge production, are those highly-cited papers all strong in their originality? (Academic-XA2)

### **6.3 The choices of where and what to publish**

When making choices of where and what to publish, academics shared different views on whether to identify the target journal before writing or starting

the research. Six academics, all of whom are proactive academics, expressed the idea of finding a targeted journal first and tailoring the submission to it. Because as discussed above, academics found journals from international or domestic communities had different ‘tastes’ (Academic-SHB10) in terms of the language, style and format, questions and methodologies; therefore, ‘it is a research in itself of learning the journal’s research focus, writing styles, and methodology’ (Academic-XA2) and ‘it would save efforts to first consider which journal I am submitting to’ (Academic-SHA3).

Some academics chose what journals to submit to before writing, while others followed the opposite procedure:

You conducted the research, and after it is done, you have an estimation of its value and where it could be published. If it is not worth that much, I may just submit it to a conference and develop it later. ... I will not first consider which journal to submit to and then tailor my research; it should not be like this. ... It should not be submission-oriented. (Academic-BJA9)

As Academic-BJA9 mentioned, those who intended to make decisions after writing the article tended only to target journals at that time. As described by Academic-BJA3, Academic-SHB11, and Academic-WH12, they would make a judgement of their work, list a range of journals from top to lower levels, submit to the journal at the highest or the ‘ideal journal’ (Academic-SHB11), and then submit to lower levels if rejected.

In addition to the work itself, academics also reported that they made choices depending on self-evaluation of their competency and familiarity with different types of publications. For instance, Academic-XA1 decided not to publish internationally now, because she deemed international publications to be

‘difficult’ to her, and that she ‘cannot achieve the level now’ and ‘will definitely fail’. Some academics decided to publish in certain journals due to the familiarity with certain types of journals. For instance, they chose certain journals because they felt ‘familiar with the journals after publishing in them for a long time’ (Academic-SHB2), or because they ‘know well about how to publish in SSCI journals’ (Academic-XA2).

The types of publications discussed by interviewees centred on journal articles (publications in journals ranging from SSCI and A&HCI journals, non-SSCI and non-A&HCI international journals, top domestic journals, and other domestic journals), monographs, book chapters, and publications in conference proceedings. Publications in conference proceedings will be discussed in the section **7.1.3 International conferences**. Academics interviewed hardly mentioned other types of publications. Although SA-WH and SA-XA stated that their universities also rewarded consultation reports for governments, none of the academics interviewed had talked about writing such reports.

### **6.3.1 SSCI and A&HCI journals**

For academics in need of recognition in evaluations, SSCI and A&HCI journals were their targeted journals for publishing internationally. Many academics held the opinion that the average quality of SSCI journals and publications was good, as reflected by their IFs (Academic-SHA11) and their reputation in academia (Academic-BJA3).

However, some academics argued that ‘SSCI publications’ should not be seen as equal to good publications. Academic-SHA10 said: ‘I think it is a myth to think anything foreign is good, and any SSCI publication is good.’ There was no

denying among academics that not all SSCI journals were of high standards. For instance, Academic-SHA7 divided SSCI journals by a ‘two-and-eight’ standard. He estimated that around 80% of SSCI journals were good, while the other 20% were not that good. Other academics, such as Academic-SHA5 and Academic-BJA8, argued that not all SSCI journals were of better quality than domestic journals in their field of Law. Realising the stratification of SSCI journals, some academics reported that there were cases when people chose to only aim at lower tier SSCI journals, with the intention to gain benefits from incentives. The impacts of such behaviours will be discussed in the section **7.3 Research culture**.

### **6.3.2 Non-SSCI and non-A&HCI international journals**

As illustrated in the analysis of incentive documents and reported by academics interviewed, international publications in non-SSCI or non-A&HCI journals were valued less than SSCI or A&HCI publications. Academics from different institutions revealed that such publications were often equal to or less than CSSCI publications in rewards and evaluations (Academic-WH1), hence were considered as ‘useless in assessment’ (Academic-SHB6 and SHB11).

Academics who were concerned about getting recognition in evaluations were hesitant about publishing in non-SSCI or non-A&HCI international journals. For instance, Academic-WH2 explicitly said that he would not consider publishing in non-SSCI or non-A&HCI international journals:

Putting much effort to write a paper and not publishing in a good journal would be unnecessary – we do not recognise journals not indexed by SSCI or A&HCI. Our research is limited to many external constraints in general, and there are many concerns about fulfilling those external demands. I would be happy if I could fulfil

my internal demands, and publish wherever I want, as long as it is peer-reviewed or of high quality. But under current circumstances, I would not consider publishing in non-SSCI or non-A&HCI journals. (Academic-WH2)

As discussed in the literature review, an uneven distribution of language exists in SSCI and A&HCI indices, since 89.66% SSCI journals and 65.64% A&HCI journals were published in English (Clarivate Analytics, 2017b, 2017a). For non-SSCI or non-A&HCI international journals published in languages other than English, getting recognition in incentives and evaluation were reported as problematic. For instance, academics conducting research on Japanese or French Literature found it difficult to get recognised for publications in Japanese or French journals, given that most of those journals were not indexed by SSCI or A&HCI. Academic-BJB7 described the ‘troublesome’ procedure of getting Japanese publications recognised in evaluations:

Once published, even if it is a top journal in Japan and of high reputation in our field, you have to submit an additional document to prove that it is a top journal, with the same or higher level of quality of CSCI journals. The whole process requires extra efforts to justify for yourself, and it is just like to prove my mom is actually my mom. ... I would rather publish in CSCI journals instead of Japanese journals – it was too troublesome to prove the value of my Japanese publications. (Academic-BJB7)

Academic-BJB3 shared similar experiences of ‘fighting for recognition for years’ to make some Japanese journals recognised by the university. Because of the difficulty in getting recognition, some academics from those areas said that they preferred to publish in domestic journals instead of international ones.

### 6.3.3 Top domestic journals

Among Chinese journals, academics interviewed revealed that the top journal was the *Social Sciences in China*. In addition, there was only one top journal in each discipline regulated by institutions as the ‘core journal’. Those journals were administrated by either the state ministries or the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. For instance, *Educational Research*, the core journal in Education, was administrated by the MOE; and *Historical Research*, the core journal in History, was administrated by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

As revealed in the previous chapter on incentive schemes, *Social Sciences in China* was the only Chinese journal with equal or higher status than SSCI and A&HCI journals in incentive documents. As Academic-WH3 explained, *Social Sciences in China* was regarded as the *Science* or *Nature* in Chinese HSS areas, because it was the only comprehensive journal in Social Sciences administrated by the highest level of research academy in China. Interviews with academics further revealed that for many HSS academics, to publish in *Social Sciences in China* would be regarded as a tremendous success (Academic-SHA9 and WH12). However, publishing in *Social Sciences in China* was considered more difficult than publishing SSCI papers, since it attracted top submissions across China but only published a small number of papers from each discipline in each issue, hence the fierce competition (Academic-WH2). For instance, Academic-WH2 remarked that since the 1980s, less than ten academics in Education had published in *Social Sciences in China*.

Some academics chose to publish in top domestic journals, as an approach to gaining reputation and demonstrating influences on domestic academia, such as Academic-WH2:

If I had to choose SSCI journals or *Educational Research*, I wish to publish in *Educational Research*. Because it is *Educational Research*, a journal every domestic educational scholar would read. (Academic-WH2)

Similarly, in Economics, Academic-WH4, Academic-SHB6, and Academic-WH12 also noted the importance of publishing in *Economic Research Journal*, the core domestic journal in Economics. They highlighted that *Economic Research Journal* had a focus on Chinese issues, thus could contribute to the Chinese economy (Academic-WH4) and could generate considerable influences in academia (Academic-SHB6).

#### **6.3.4 Other domestic journals**

Other domestic journals appeared to be the major choice for some academics holding a hesitant or resistant stance towards incentives and international publications. Except for the top one journal in each field, academics made their own judgements on the quality of journals and targeted audience, and they chose where to publish accordingly. Also, other domestic journals remained as ‘safe choices’ to increase the number of publications and reach the requirements in assessment (Academic-XA8).

Among domestic journals, those not recognised by incentives and assessments, such as non-CSSCI journals, were briefly mentioned by participants. Academics reported that they might choose to publish in such journals, but it would not be their first choice. As an example, Academic-BJA3 published some papers in non-CSSCI journals to support them, whose editors invited him to contribute. However, he commented that if judging from a ‘utilitarian’ and incentive-driven perspective, it would be better to publish in CSSCI journals that

could be recognised by the incentives.

### **6.3.5 Monographs and book chapters**

Although incentives varied across universities and departments, it was a shared notion that monographs ‘were not valued’ or ‘did not count too much’ (Academic-BJB3) in all case institutions. According to Academic-SHA8 from the Law School of Uni-SHA, an SSCI publication was worth 300 points in their annual evaluation, and the top one Chinese Law journal was worth 240 points. A book was worth 180 to 240 points depending on the publisher: books published by foreign publishers would get 240 points. In such policies, a monograph was regarded as equal to a domestic publication, and the same was true in other institutions like Uni-XA (Academic-XA2 and XA3). For tenure promotion, while some departments required a monograph as in Uni-SHB (Academic-SHB11) and Uni-WH (Academic-WH4, WH5, and WH11), in the Department of Humanities of Uni-SHA, a monograph was not demanded or counted in tenure evaluation (Academic-SHA3).

Some academics explained that the academic value of books was ‘diluted’ in the current publishing market, since ‘you can easily get your books published by paying the publisher’ (Academic-WH2, BJB3, and SHB6), and ‘in theory, you can have poor-quality research published as a book, but not as journal articles’ (Academic-SHA3). Participants perceived that although publishers had review procedures, they did not seem to be as rigorous as that of journal publications. For instance, Academic-BJB3 noticed that in the department, nobody ever got rejected from any publisher, and everyone had at least one monograph published.

Despite the lower recognition in rewards and evaluations, monographs

were considered as essential carriers to convey a scholar's research and thinking, particularly in some disciplines like History. Academic-SHA5 said:

I think books are important. Nobody dislikes reading books. A monograph is a complete system, a whole substance to present your argumentation. (Academic-SHA5)

The notion of monographs being 'a complete system of logic' and 'of significant academic value' was shared by academics from other disciplines, such as Academic-BJB1 from Japanese, Academic-SHB2 from Law, and Academic-BJA7 from International Relations. Academic-SHB5 from the Department of Chinese questioned the undervaluing of monographs, given that 'writing a monograph takes greater pains than writing a journal article.' Despite being undervalued, Academic-SHB2 said he would continue to publish monographs, not for getting bonuses, but for personal development and teaching facilitation.

Book chapters counted less than monographs as reported by participants. Academic-BJA5 was constantly invited to contribute chapters to edited books published internationally. His contributions only counted as 13 points in research evaluation, although some of them were in books edited by renowned academics and costing him as much time as to write an SSCI paper. The points given were less than CSSCI and SSCI papers. Despite feeling he was 'putting in efforts to gain nothing', he said he would continue to write book chapters if invited, because 'it was an *honour* to be invited, particularly as a *junior researcher*, since they looked for experts in this field'.

## 6.4 Conclusions

This chapter examines HSS scholars' academic publications under incentives for international publications, with a focus on the motivation to publication, the differences perceived between international and domestic publications, and the choices of where and what to publish.

Among the motivations for academic publications identified, monetary rewards and the recognition by the evaluation system were closely associated with incentives in the form of financial bonuses and research evaluation. Moreover, the other motivators – academic recognition, impact, and self-development – were shown as indirectly shaped by incentives for international publications, as represented by the perceived tension between institutional and academic recognition, conflicts between international publications and impacts on local community, as well as the value of publishing internationally as attached to personal development.

As for the comparisons between domestic and international publications and the choices of where and what to publish, incentives for international publications played a vital role as reported by many academics. Interviews with academics revealed influences not only on their perceptions of the value of international publications, but also on their publication behaviours, such as tailoring research questions and methodologies to get higher chances of publishing SSCI papers, preparing a longer period for international publications, or neglecting and avoiding non-SSCI or non-A&HCI journals. As illustrated in this chapter, despite their stances towards incentives and international publications, the academic publication behaviours of HSS scholars had, in many ways, been reported as being shaped by the incentives for international publications. The

relationship between incentives, internationalisation, and international publications will be further conceptualised and discussed in **9.2 Discussion of findings**.

The next chapter continues to explore incentives' influences on academics' research activities in a broader sense, with a focus on international research activities, teaching and supervision, and research culture.

## **Chapter 7 Incentives' Wider Influences on Research**

This chapter investigates the reported influences of incentives for HSS international publications on academics' research activities in addition to publications. It relied on interviews with academics, coupled with interviews with senior administrators and journal editors, examining the perceived influences of incentives on international activities, teaching and supervision, and the research culture.

### **7.1 International research activities**

One of the most mentioned topics about incentives' influences was an increased awareness of internationalisation, as 45 interviewees talked about 'internationalisation', including one journal editor, two senior administrators, and 42 academics. Many participants reported that their institutions had a clear tendency to become internationalised, demonstrated in various aspects, such as encouraging international publications, employing new faculty members from abroad (Academic-SHA2, SHA3, WH3, SHB7, WH8, and WH15), valuing international research outputs in evaluations (Academic-SHA2, WH2, WH5, and SHB7), establishing cross-institutional cooperation for student exchanges (Academic-SHA3 and SA-SHA), requiring the internationalisation of teaching (Academic-WH1, WH3, and BJA6), and as will be discussed in the following section, requiring or encouraging academics to go abroad for academic visits (Academic-WH3, BJB5, and WH15).

Most academics interviewed considered the gist of incentives for

international publications as promoting internationalisation. They perceived such incentives as ‘the signal released by the university’ (Academic-WH8) or ‘the leverage for internationalisation’ (Academic-SHA8), to ‘guide and motivate’ academics to become internationalised (Academic-WH8).

Some academics interviewed deemed the trend of internationalisation as ‘essential’ or ‘inevitable’ to the development of their discipline or institution (e.g. Academic-SHA3, WH8, and XA10), and they reported a supportive or compliant attitude: ‘Since it is inevitable, what we can do is to adapt to it’ (Academic-WH12). International publications, under such circumstances, were treated by some participants as ‘carriers’ or ‘instruments’ for internationalisation:

For internationalisation or international communications, international publications might be very important carriers or instruments. Papers lasted longer, right? Once published, it stays there forever. For people conducting research on the same topic around the world, if you publish in English, they will learn about you; but if you publish in Chinese, communications would normally be restrained to domestic academia. There might be exceptions for some China-related topics or some particularly good papers, which might be learnt by some foreign academics researching on China. (Academic-BJA3)

Some interviewees argued that the domestic research appeared to be treated as inferior to international research, so they proposed to change the approaches to internationalisation from ‘superficial level’ to ‘going out’. Some academics argued that internationalisation should not concentrate on the ‘superficial level’ (Academic-WH1), ‘chanting slogans’ about internationalisation (Academic-WH9) or merely focusing on metrics or rankings. Academic-SHB4 argued the university used to place too much emphasis on internationalisation, reflecting a lack of confidence in domestic research. However, he underlined that

at the current stage where it was not difficult for most of his colleagues to publish internationally, the real question should be on research quality and impacts: ‘We should see whether those publications have real influences and are genuinely good articles’. Similarly, Academic-XA2 commented that:

Most universities in China now lack confidence, relying on others’ standards for evaluation. But in the future, I believe they will have more self-confidence, thinking we are doing excellent research, and we do not need to borrow external standards for assessments. (Academic-XA2)

‘Going out’ and ‘discourse power’, the two terms highlighted in Chinese national policies for internationalisation, also appeared in interviews with 14 academics, two senior administrators, and one journal editor. Most were aligned with government policies, advocating Chinese academics to ‘go out’ and enhance the ‘discourse power’ of Chinese research in the world:

I think emphasising on SSCI publications is more about conveying a signal, that Chinese academics must become internationalised, and that we must improve our discourse power. If you think about Social Sciences research, ever since 1500, the terms, concepts, or the whole discourse system were shaped by Western research. We failed to dig up our uniqueness or interpret Chinese experiences or evidence. Now we are just borrowing Western theories to interpret some facts in China, rather than use our cases to further develop theories. (Academic-BJB5)

Some participants shared similar opinions, arguing that Chinese academics should ‘go out’ to ‘introduce more Chinese research to the world and deepen discussions with each other’ (SA-SHA), or ‘to become recognised and accepted internationally’ (Academic-WH14 and Editor-4). Academics like Academic-XA4

also thought that internationalisation through promoting Chinese research to the world reflected the improved level of self-confidence in Chinese research:

Promulgating and spreading the civilisation means we are confident...It would be better if our internationalisation is based on domestic research, and if we are more confident. The aim of our internationalisation should be to disseminate our ideas, not just to learn from them – we can learn from them, but learning should be just for better communication. (Academic-XA4)

Despite various perceptions of internationalisation, academics interviewed recognised the association between internationalisation, incentives for international publications, international publications, and international research activities. Particularly, academics reported a connection between participating in international academic activities and producing international publications. As Academic-XA10 observed and described, academics would generally engage in some international research activities to have international publications:

In our department, academics who can publish internationally are those who had received education abroad, served as post-doctoral researchers overseas, conducted academic visits at foreign institutions, or collaborated with foreign academics to publish internationally. Only through such processes, will they gradually become familiar with it. Academics who had international publications like me all shared similar experiences. (Academic-XA10)

In general, academics reported that their participation in international research activities, such as initiating international collaborations, conducting academic visits abroad, attending international conferences, reviewing and editing international journals, was influenced by the incentives in many ways as will be discussed in the following sections.

### 7.1.1 International research collaborations

Many academics interviewed regarded international research collaborations as an efficient approach to generating more international publications. An academic in Economics argued:

To publish international papers, you need a long time to write the article, wait for the review, and revise it. Let's say it takes six years to publish an article. You can collaborate with one professor in the six years for an article, and collaborate with another professor for another article, and so on. If you have enough collaborators, you will have articles published each year. (Academic-WH12)

Academics who believed that collaboration rendered higher productivity expressed the willingness to find more collaborators. Most of these academics also displayed proactive or adaptive stances towards incentives for international publications. For instance, Academic-WH3, a proactive academic towards incentives and international publications, stated that he had formed a team with international academics and had sustainable cooperation with them. They had a grand research plan and intended to publish five to ten papers and some books from their project in the next few years. In comparison, hesitant or resistant academics seldom demonstrated interests in international collaborations.

#### *The collaborators*

Collaborators' common characteristics discussed in interviews were their proficiency in English and their familiarity with international publications. Based on their nationalities and working institutions, four types of collaborators were mentioned: foreign academics working abroad, Chinese academics working abroad, Chinese academics at home, and foreign academics working in China.

However, the last type was rarely mentioned.

Foreign collaborators, except for those from certain disciplines like French Literature, were all reported to be based in English-speaking countries like the US, the UK, and Australia. Some collaborators were former supervisors of the interviewees, which was the common case for returnee academics (e.g. Academic-SHA6, XA10, and WH11). Some academics said they became acquainted with their collaborators through international academic activities such as conducting academic visits abroad or attending international conferences (e.g. Academic-WH3, WH8, SHB9, and WH10).

Chinese collaborators, either working abroad or at home, were reported to be sought after because of language proficiency and familiarity with Western research as well as with Chinese language and context. Academics interviewed emphasised that such collaborator ‘was better at English than me’ (Academic-SHA7), or ‘got his doctoral degree in the US’ (Academic-SHA1), or ‘was an early career scholar at a US university’ (Academic-WH8). Those collaborators were their former supervisors (e.g. Academic-XA7), fellow students from the same doctoral programme (e.g. Academic-WH11), colleagues working at the same institution (e.g. Academic-SHA7), or acquaintances made through overseas academic activities (e.g. Academic-WH8).

Foreign academics working at Chinese institutions were rarely mentioned as collaborators. Only Academic-XA7 noted that he had a draft paper at hand to submit to international journals. He intended to work with a foreign colleague in the department: ‘I hope he could help me to polish the language and maybe we could do something with it together.’

Returnee academics were considered to have more opportunities for

international research collaborations. Almost all returnee academics interviewed reported that they had either collaborated with their doctoral supervisors to publish from their doctoral theses (e.g. Academic-SHA6 and XA10), or had on-going projects conducted in cooperation with their supervisors or academics acquainted during their studies abroad (e.g. Academic-WH11 and WH15). Academic-XA10 had obtained her master's and doctoral degrees at different institutions abroad, and had published with both her master's and doctoral supervisors. She commented that her supervisors were her first choices in choosing collaborators, with whom she enjoyed the smoothest collaborations:

I really enjoyed our collaborations. My supervisors and I certainly shared similar research interests, and we could understand each other much better than others do. It was difficult to find collaborators as such. I can surely collaborate with my own students, but they might not be capable. To form collaborations, you need to find someone suitable, who is both capable of research, and shares common ground with you on the topic. (Academic-XA10)

Other returnee interviewees agreed with this point and noted that their doctoral supervisors often shared with them similar interests, similar approaches to conducting research, and they had more familiarity with each other – they argued that all of the features cultivated during doctoral studies were valuable for generating long-lasting collaborations. For those who did not have overseas educational backgrounds, conducting academic visits became an important practice for them to find potential collaborators, and this will be further discussed in the section **7.1.2 Overseas academic visits**.

### *Contributions of collaborators*

Participants depicted their collaborators' contributions as to improving the language and the research. Eight interviewees expressed the expectation that their collaborators, who were either native English language speakers or Chinese academics with a high level of English proficiency, should be responsible for proofreading and polishing the language. For instance, Academic-WH14 suggested: 'In the worst case, if you have problems with the language, you can invite your students or overseas collaborators to work together.'

Some academics noted collaborators' contributions in addition to improving the language – they were also involved in 'brainstorming, building conceptual frameworks, and writing and revising the drafts' (Academic-XA7). The collaboration of Academic-SHB9 with an American scholar exemplified such case. Academic-SHB9 was educated in China with overseas academic experiences. During his visit to a US institution, Academic-SHB9 discovered shared interests and similar 'trains of thought' with an American scholar on a historical topic. Their ten-year collaboration then started, resulting in eight SSCI papers. Normally, Academic-SHB9 would first prepare the draft and the American scholar would polish the language and provide feedback. Academic-SHB9 commented that the American scholar, as an established sociologist, not only helped with improving the language, but also complemented the historical research with sociological perspectives, and brought in many theoretical discussions. Academic-SHB9 remarked that his collaborator helped him to form a systematic theoretical foundation of the topic:

Before our collaboration, I did not have a solid theoretical foundation about this topic, nor was I familiar with the theoretical

discussions in Western academia. However, through our collaborations in the past ten years, I grew to be familiar with relevant Western literature and theories, many of which were recommended by him [the collaborator]. It helped me a lot in building a systematic theoretical foundation. And now, I can trace the development of theoretical discussions, comprehend the fundamental concepts and theories very well, and can discuss them in English easily. (Academic-SHB9)

Only a few early-career academics stated that their collaborators also played important roles in obtaining grants and initiating research projects. For instance, Academic-WH11 was collaborating with her doctoral supervisor and working on her ‘supervisor’s projects’. For most interviewees, it was them, not their collaborators, who were responsible for getting funding. For example, Academic-WH14 talked about a friend of him, who initiated a research project with another scholar in the UK, using a grant his friend had obtained in China.

#### *The hesitance in collaboration*

Some academics with hesitant or resistant stance towards incentives and international publications expressed lower interests and hesitance to seek out collaborations. For instance, Academic-XA3 considered it difficult to find suitable collaborators. She was also concerned about the authorship order in collaboration. Since institutions required academics to serve as the first author or corresponding author, she felt ‘tricky’ to negotiate with collaborators:

Most of my works were single-authored, and I am accustomed to working by myself. It would not be easy to find collaborators. Also, it would be tricky to rank the order of authors. I think our department only acknowledges the first author or the corresponding author. (Academic-XA3)

Similarly, academics who were accustomed to conducting research by

themselves, especially in Humanities areas, expressed little interests in conducting research collaboratively. Academic-BJA6 noticed that there was less collaboration in Humanities research than in scientific research:

Humanities research can be completed with only researchers' mind work, hence can be conducted by single authors. However, scientific research often involves huge projects and the use of various technologies, which would require collaborations in many ways. (Academic-BJA6)

In addition, as a returnee scholar in English studies, Academic-BJA6 felt confident in her English proficiency. As discussed above, one of the perceived purposes of finding a collaborator was to improve the language, so she rendered it unnecessary to build collaborations: 'There was no need for English major academics to seek foreign collaborators to improve the writing. Researchers in English should have proficiency in the language.'

### **7.1.2 Overseas academic visits**

Many academics described overseas academic visits as valuable opportunities to conduct research at an overseas institution, often supervised by a senior academic at the institution. As discussed above, participants perceived returnee academics' advantages in finding international networks and potential collaborations. Individuals and institutions seemed to consider not graduating from overseas institutions as a drawback, which can be overcome by visiting foreign institutions for half a year or one year. Therefore, non-returnee academics tended to regard overseas academic visits as significant to academic development, particularly for proactive and adaptive academics, who expressed a generally

favourable attitude towards overseas academic experiences.

Participants reported various reasons for engaging in overseas academic visits. Some sought out the opportunities proactively, and some were required to have such experiences for career advancement. Academics actively pursued such chances tended to be proactive or adaptive. Some treated the visiting experiences as precious opportunities to produce international publications (e.g. Academic-XA5), and some considered the visiting experiences as invaluable to their personal development (e.g. Academic-WH10). For instance, Academic-WH12 was a non-returnee academic at the early career stage, who had not yet conducted academic visits overseas; hence the ‘personal goal’ to conduct postdoctoral or academic visits abroad to improve research capacity and become more internationalised.

Some academics from Uni-SHA and Uni-BJB said they went abroad because overseas research experiences were mandatory for promotion. Uni-SHA and Uni-BJB regulated that non-returnee scholars must have at least half-a-year research experiences abroad for promotion from assistant professor to associate professor, and at least one-year overseas research experiences from associate professor to professor. Under such regulations, some academics became aware of the strong institutional emphasis on internationalisation (e.g. Academic-SHA3 and BJB5). Some reported to have gone abroad unwillingly:

For promotion, I must have overseas experiences. But that was during my first few years here at Uni-SHA, so there were lots of things during term time. Consequently, I decided to go to the US during the summer vacation. When I arrived there, they were also on vacation, so I could not use their offices. It was not convenient at all, but I had no choice back then. (Academic-SHA7)

Academics interviewed perceived overseas academic visits as helpful for international publications. They found their visits useful in improving English proficiency, enhancing their familiarity with Western research, rendering academics with a period of free time and easier access to resources, and broadening international networks and cultivating potential collaborations.

### *English proficiency*

Most academics interviewed chose to conduct academic visits in English-speaking countries or regions, with the intention to improve their English proficiency. For example, Academic-WH3 noted that overseas academic visits helped him to improve his English level. However, he said because he started learning English too late and lacked a solid foundation, as soon as he came back to China, he began to ‘forget the way to use English properly’. Therefore, he visited the US several times, and he said he was trying to maintain the level of proficiency for a longer time.

### *Familiarity with Western research*

Academics described conducting overseas academic visits as helpful to become familiarised with Western research. Academics stated that they understood the academic environment in Western academia better (Academic-SHA7) and learnt from frontier research in the field (Academic-XA1). For instance, Academic-XA5 produced four papers during his one-year stay in the US, among which two were published in SSCI journals, and one was accepted by an SSCI journal. He attributed those SSCI publications to his visiting experience, during which time he received training on ‘new research paradigms’. Also,

American scholars encouraged him to employ some ‘bold’ concepts, which would be considered inappropriate in the political context of China. He thought those concepts appeared to be interesting to international journals and contributed to his SSCI publications.

#### *Time and resources*

Many academics interviewed perceived the period of academic visiting as similar to a sabbatical leave. They reported to be less involved in administrative duties, thus could ‘calm down and do some serious thinking’ (Academic-XA9). Academic-XA5 commented that his time in the US was relatively free, which provided him with the proper environment for writing the four SSCI articles:

When I was in China, I was always hassled by various things. But in the US, I could take a break, and devote myself to thinking and writing. This was particularly important to my SSCI publications. (Academic-XA5)

Participants also revealed that some overseas institutions offered easier access to academic resources, such as the access to more databases and books (e.g. Academic-XA9). They noted that those resources provided them with a better platform to conduct research and prepare for international publications.

#### *International networks*

All interviewees who conducted overseas academic visits reported an expansion of international networks during their visits. For instance, Academic-WH10 still worked with scholars he had met during his visits to Hong Kong and the US. Academic-WH8 continued the scholarly cooperation established during

his visits to the US. Academic-XA9 also went to the US once again to cooperate with her previous collaborator. Academic-WH12 said he longed for the opportunity to conduct academic visits abroad, and to establish international cooperation:

The trend of internationalisation is inevitable, so we must adjust to it. There are many returnee scholars nowadays. So, we have to become one of them, to go overseas and experience it.... We have to play with those people [international scholars]. You might find my words amusing, since you are already playing with those people. But for us, we have to do everything to play with them. (Academic-WH12)

Same as Academic-WH12, many academics perceived conducting academic visits abroad as a valuable opportunity to know ‘those people’ in person, exchange ideas with them, and nurture potential opportunities for future collaborations. Therefore, most academics interviewed had had visiting experiences in at least one foreign institution. Among 34 interviewees without the overseas education background, 26 had had overseas academic visiting experiences. Among the rest eight participants, proactive and adaptive academics expressed strong intention to go abroad in the future.

### **7.1.3 International conferences**

Some academics interviewed associated attending international conferences with internationalisation and international publications, and regarded attending international conferences as another way to participate in international communications and expanding international networks. Such perceptions were shared by academics through different disciplines, across different career stages,

and by returnees and non-returnees alike. For instance, as Academic-SHB11 from History observed and described, academics with international publications were those who had strong international networks, and were often invited to attend conferences or organise symposia.

Proactive and adaptive academics perceived participating in international conferences as another way to generate potential international publications, by receiving feedback on working papers and expanding professional networks. Take the experience of Academic-BJB5 for instance. After finding a new research idea, Academic-BJB5 attended an international conference to discuss it with renowned scholars from top American universities, and received positive feedback and collaboration interests of several scholars. He then decided to cooperate with those scholars, and prepare papers for submission to SSCI journals.

Some resistant and hesitant academics did not oppose participating in international conferences. For instance, as a resistant scholar, Academic-SHB4 thought international publications were ‘troublesome’. However, he acknowledged the importance of international communications, and attending conferences seemed to be a less ‘troublesome’ approach for him:

I think international knowledge exchange should be encouraged. I had papers published in Chinese, and the abstracts were included in some conference proceedings. When some foreign academics read the abstracts and became interested, they contacted me for further details. (Academic-SHB4)

Academics reported that institutions did not acknowledge the participation or publications in conference proceedings, even if they were invited as the *keynote speaker* (Academic-SHA6). Nevertheless, some academics appreciated conference presentations for communication and knowledge exchange. Academic-

XA9, who had attended many international conferences, commented that:

In our research evaluation, presentations on international conferences do not count at all, nor do publications in conference proceedings. ... Despite that, I am attending the conferences and presenting my works. Because after all, I would like to have attention and comments from my peer scholars. (Academic-XA9)

For some Humanities disciplines, papers included in the proceedings of the symposia in their research fields were regarded as international publications by themselves, although those papers were not recognised in incentive policies. For instance, Academic-SHB7 from Philosophy found it challenging to identify appropriate journals for submission, due to her narrow research area. Consequently, she only published papers as invited contributions or in proceedings of symposia. Another scholar from Philosophy also emphasised the importance of invited contributions to symposia: ‘There were not so many Chinese scholars in my field in international academia. And only a few Chinese scholars can be invited to attend the conferences.’ (Academic-SHA9)

#### **7.1.4 Reviewing and editing international journals**

Incentives for international publications resulted in more attention to international journals from academics. Therefore, academics became engaged with international journals not only through the process of contributing to them, but also through serving as reviewers and editors of those journals.

##### *Reviewing international journals*

Most interviewees who served as reviewers for international journals were

proactive academics. Their favourable attitudes towards incentives for international publications were partly rooted in positive views on the quality of international publications. As discussed in Chapter 6, academics regarded international journals' review process as more 'rigorous' and the quality of their contents as more guaranteed. Based on their own reviewing experiences, they also found that papers submitted to those international journals were of high quality:

I have reviewed about six or seven articles [for SSCI journals]. ... I think in general the quality is good. There were not so many problems regarding research norms, what needed improvements were the contents and methods. (Academic-WH11)

Participants noted that reviewing for international journals helped them to familiarise themselves with the standards and norms of international publications. Academics found it helpful to better understand the review process as a reviewer, rather than as an author (Academic-WH11). Academic-SHA2 described it as a 'learning process':

I am very willing to review submissions for them, because it is beneficial. One of the differences between reviewing for international journals and for domestic journals is that, after the review process for international journals, you can see the feedback and results from other reviewers. Many would agree that this is also a learning process. You can find that other experts' reviews were quite serious and reliable, which gave you the pressure to avoid providing amateur comments. This is a good opportunity to learn from others, which is very helpful to me. (Academic-SHA2)

Other academics, such as Academic-SHA6, also viewed the process of reviewing for international journals as 'very helpful' and 'challenging'. She argued that since every reviewer can see each other's comments, one can learn how to make criticism on one article from different perspectives.

### *Editing international journals*

Some proactive academics participated in the process of establishing new international journals in China. Those journals, although edited in China, were published in English and often by foreign publishers. Participants often said they intend to make those journals indexed by international indices in the future. Therefore, they were referred to as international journals.

One significant impact of incentives on domestic editors was that all of them intended to bring their journals to the SSCI index. As discussed in Chapter 4, most universities in China regarded SSCI and A&HCI publications as equal to international publications, particularly, SSCI journals were sometimes valued more. Thus, all editors of newly established English journals interviewed intended to bring their journals to the SSCI index:

This is our goal, very clear goal [to be indexed by SSCI]. We will start by making it an annual journal, so the pressure of editing is relatively low. We will certainly invite contributions from internationally renowned scholars, excluding our editorial board members. Then, we will standardise the whole procedures, including the reviewing process. We hope to get recognised quickly by the international academic community. ... In summary, we certainly hope that this journal could become an SSCI journal through our efforts. (Academic-SHA2)

One editor (Academic-XA7) of a newly established English journal described their ‘embarrassing situation’, that their journal might be overlooked by some domestic scholars, since it had not been indexed by SSCI:

Chinese academics may not look at our journal, because it is not an SSCI journal. I feel that Asian academics cared a lot about SSCI journals, while American or British academics may not be so concerned. ... Our journal has to become an SSCI journal, so that we can have better sources of contributions. Among our current

contributions, we do not have many domestic scholars yet.  
(Academic-XA7)

However, the idea that SSCI journals would necessarily attract top contributions was demystified by an editor of an SSCI journal published in China. The editor reported an increase in the quality of submissions after the journal became an SSCI journal. However, he said they still lacked top-impact contributions, which were published mostly in the US, ‘the centre of the discipline’. The editor described their journal as ‘hanging in between’, not as highly valued as SSCI journals from the US, while not completely ignored as other non-SSCI English journals published domestically.

## **7.2 The relationship between research and teaching**

Some participants discussed incentives’ influences on teaching and supervision. They reported a tension between teaching and research resulted by incentives. In addition, some academics suggested that they would pass on the emphasis on international publications to their supervisees.

### **7.2.1 Teaching**

Some academics perceived incentives’ influences on teaching as intensifying the tension between teaching and research and devaluing teaching. Because compared with international publications, teaching was not equally weighed in incentives and evaluations.

Some participants, particularly those teaching foreign languages, reported a tension between teaching and research. They felt the pressure of preparing for

both ‘*content courses*’ and ‘*language skill courses*’ (Academic-BJA6). Take the testimony of Academic-BJA4 from English as an example. She pointed out that in the department, many academics were facing heavy teaching loads as her, who perceived ‘a continuous *tension* between teaching and research’:

Teaching is like a bottomless pit – as long as you participate in teaching, you will try to fulfil teaching needs first. Our department heads are very interesting. They told us on our meetings that we should split our energy 50% to 50%, meaning that we should never devote 80% of the energy into teaching. But in reality, it is natural for many of us to devote 70% to 80% of our energy into teaching. (Academic-BJA4)

Junior academics also reported that teaching was time-demanding for them. Because as participants noted, some senior academics would not teach basic lessons. Therefore, junior academics might be required to teach those courses, despite that they might not be familiar with the topics (Academic-WH4, SHA7, and WH12). A few junior academics said they treated teaching very seriously as a beginner teacher, and that they would devote extra time or more time than others to teaching, because they said they want to be responsible for students (Academic-SHA5 and WH12).

Some academics expressed positive attitudes towards the teaching and research nexus and regarded teaching and research as ‘interdependent’ (Academic-BJA3). For instance, Academic-BJA8 thought teaching and research were not conflicted, and she commented that ‘if you truly love academic research, then your teaching will not be bad – if you are a profound scholar, you will integrate everything into academic life.’

All participants who talked about teaching agreed that teaching was not equally valued as publications. Teaching was, as many reported, a ‘basic’

(Academic-SHA2) or ‘default’ (Academic-SHA2) duty for academics in universities – ‘as important as it is, teaching is inferior to research’ (Academic-XA4) and ‘there was no need to put extra emphasis on it’ (Academic-SHA2). Regulations on the teaching workload varied among institutions. Some required a certain number of courses in one year (e.g. Academic-SHA3 reported two courses per a year). Some demanded certain points each year (e.g. Academic-BJA5 reported two points for an undergraduate course and three points for a graduate course). And some requested a certain number of teaching hours for a year (e.g. Academic-WH15 reported 340 teaching hours per a year).

Teaching assessment was based on students’ evaluation after each semester. The evaluation results would influence academics in two ways, one was to be awarded bonuses, like at Uni-BJA, ‘one can get ¥3,000 if you win the teaching award’ (Academic-BJA5). The other common impact concerned promotion. Many institutions had a bottom-line requirement for teaching evaluation in the promotion, either measured by scores or by rankings. Take one department at Uni-BJB for instance:

Students will rate teachers anonymously at the end of each semester. We will look at the ratio for excellent or good performance, and if one’s rating was not higher than 90%, you would not be eligible to apply for the professor title. (Academic-BJB3)

Although there were bottom-line requirements for teaching workloads and assessment results, academics found those requirements easy to achieve. For instance, Academic-SHB8 said that in tenure evaluation, ‘they did not care about teaching at all’. Academic-SHA8 also remarked: ‘There is only one thing about teaching – just do not mess up on it.’ Some academics pointed out the potential

negative impacts such policies may bring to teaching, as Academic-SHB5 and Academic-SHB7 reflected:

The current evaluation was only based on research, what about teaching? There must be some academics who spent less time and efforts on teaching, that is for sure – since the evaluation only looks at research outputs, in the end, we sacrificed our students. (Academic-SHB5)

Now we must find a balance between one's own research and what is required, also between research and teaching. Although academics' primary responsibility should be conducting research, but again, particularly for some highly theoretical subjects like Philosophy, if you spend little time on teaching, and if no student is interested in it any more, it is unnecessary for the subject to exist any longer. (Academic-SHB7)

Similarly, some academics considered the incentives for international publications would '*devalue* teaching' (Academic-WH11), resulting in some '*academic celebrit[ies]*' (Academic-WH11) who '*prioritised publications*' (Academic-SHB8) and '*sacrificed students' needs*' (Academic-WH11). They pointed out that teaching should be of equal importance to research; however, they noticed it was not equally treated in incentives and evaluations.

### **7.2.2 Supervising doctoral students**

Some academics, particularly proactive and adaptive academics, talked about encouraging their doctoral supervisees to produce international publications. At four case universities, academics revealed that doctoral students were required to publish a certain number of papers in CSSCI or higher-level journals to graduate (such as Academic-XA2, WH5, SHA6, and SHB6 reported). Some academics argued that doctoral students should not be required to publish to

graduate, not to mention to publish internationally. Some of them compared the doctoral training in China with international systems, such as in the UK, and appreciated universities where HSS doctoral students did not have to publish to graduate:

It is no easy task to write a good doctoral thesis. You can extract some contents for publication later, and start conducting your own research after graduation. I think this is more applicable. But here, our students started doctoral studies with the mission to publish some papers first, and compared to that, the final thesis has become a minor issue. (Academic-SHA6)

However, some academics thought it was not sufficient just publishing in domestic journals. Academic-SHA7 and Academic-WH11 both encouraged their supervisees to participate in international exchanges and publications, and had co-authored English publications with them. Academics like them thought doctoral training should be internationalised, providing students with opportunities to read English papers, write in English, study abroad for a period, and publish internationally (Academic-XA4, XA5, WH8, and WH12):

I told my doctoral students that you must have an international horizon, and do not put too much emphasis on domestic publications – not only now, but also in the long run. (Academic-SHA2)

Academic-SHA1, as an adaptive scholar, said he would provide international opportunities for his students, due to a concern that students may fail in the current system, which ‘would value internationalisation much more in the next ten to 15 years’. Some resistant or hesitant academics also encouraged doctoral students to publish internationally. For instance, although Academic-

BJA4 held a general resistant stance, she told her students to publish internationally, because she did not wish her students ‘to begin with a preference or a fear of difficulty at the start of their publication experiences’.

### **7.3 Research culture**

Many interviewees were aware of the incentives for HSS international publications and the potential influences they may cast on the research culture. Incentive schemes and relevant evaluation measures, as six academics and one senior administrator depicted in interviews, were like ‘batons’ to guide and influence academics. Such as SA-WH commented, ‘one of the characteristics of Chinese culture is to follow batons’. Five interviewees maintained that incentives and the attached values would influence the ‘ecology of academia’ in various ways. Participants argued that incentives for international publications had challenged or reinforced certain internal and external conflicts in research values, norms, and standards. Discussions about incentives’ influences on the research culture were focused on three pairs of conflicts: quality and qualification, integrity and instrumentalism, as well as equity and inequity.

#### **7.3.1 Quality and quantity**

Although some academics and senior administrators considered incentives as focusing more on quality than quantity, 26 participants commented on ‘quantitative evaluation’ during interviews. They referred to ‘quantity’ as the number of publications, the IF, or citations counts, which were used in institutional incentive documents or evaluation policies. For instance, Academic-

SHA1 remarked: 'If you look at our university, we only look at numbers. How many so-called SSCI papers you have published, this is countable.' Academic-XA8 also pointed out: 'Although we emphasise quality, you have to fulfil the requirements on quantity first, since they will count how many publications you have in the first place.'

Some academics criticised the quantitative evaluation culture, suggesting that 'assessing research based on quantity will ruin academic research' (Academic-SHA5), and that 'management and evaluation based on quantity correspond to the bureaucratic and administrative culture in higher education' (Academic-SHB9). Academic-BJB1 had recently failed in the promotion assessment, and she questioned the incentives for international publications, arguing those incentives would lead to an evaluation environment where only numbers mattered:

Everyone will focus on papers, the more, the merrier; and English papers are better than others. ... They do not care about results, or what is being published, what is the contribution to society, whether it is innovative or not. This is the impression my department has left me, because they told me this is the case, that I did not have an adequate number of publications. (Academic-BJB1)

Academic-XA4 found it complicated for policymakers. On the one hand, he reflected that policymakers need a convenient measure for setting up norms; but on the other hand, he considered it difficult to assess individuals, due to the complexity in human nature. He held that evaluation tended to look for 'homogeneity' and 'average', while the *variety*, *outliers*, and *heterogeneity* might be neglected. He maintained that through such process of '*reification*', academics were not assessed as individuals, but as something reflected by external

characteristics like the number of publications. Academic-SHB8 echoed the statement, saying the '*Academic GDPism*' would simplify academics' life into one dimension, only assessing academics based on publications, rather than their whole academic life comprising teaching, publications, moral standards, and the sense of social responsibility.

Some participants believed such quantitative evaluations were most objective, while acknowledging their limitations. Academic-SHA4, Academic-BJB7, Academic-SHB10, and SA-WH all compared such quantitative evaluation to the Chinese national college entrance exams. They argued that although there existed inequality in the college entrance exams, it was relatively the most 'equal', 'objective', and 'manageable' system for selection; so were evaluations based on quantity. According to their accounts, although '*numeric targets*' (Academic-SHB10) may lead to a simple association of research quality to publication numbers, evaluations based on quantity were considered more objective.

Academic-SHB1 viewed using IFs as opening the 'Pandora's box', as he noted that although using IFs produced positive influences on technical development in the world, there might be negative impacts accompanying. He commented that indicators and rankings were like 'distorting mirrors' in amusement parks, providing an image for one's reference, while one should be aware that the image did not present the entire truth:

I often think looking at rankings or statistics was like looking at a distorting mirror – they will change your shapes, making you look thinner or fatter. Images will appear differently on each distorting mirror, and we are looking at a different image of ourselves from what we really are without those mirrors. However, since they are mirrors, we can at least have a rough idea of what we look like. We can have a rough image of ourselves, while at the same time

realising the image is twisted. ... So, we can choose to look at them, but do not regard them as the whole truth. (Academic-SHB1)

Similarly, academics like Academic-SHA1 and Academic-SHA7 believed that quantitative evaluation might be problematic, but it remained as an objective standard relatively free from human intervention, and was ‘the best option before a healthy academic community was formed’ (Academic-SHA1). They think the current academic community was not objective enough to be the sole reliance in academic evaluations, as they doubted there might be corruptions in peer reviews.

### **7.3.2 Integrity and instrumentalism**

Some participants argued that the increasing incentives for international publications challenged academic integrity. For instance, some academics were concerned that incentivising international publications may lead to people ‘flooding’ in SSCI journals (Academic-WH4 and WH12), producing more SSCI publications with relatively lower quality or fewer contributions. A few academics were worried about plagiarism or faking research data in publications, as had been revealed in some NS publications (Academic-XA2 and BJA4). In general, academics discussed incentives’ influences on academic integrity, with a focus on the conflicts between maintaining one’s academic values and being instrumental.

#### *Academic values*

Interviews revealed that certain academic values shared in academia were perceived as being challenged or fortified by institutional incentives. Particularly, academics depicted the perceived threats to the commitment to the pursuit of truth, but they also noted a reinforced notion of academic rigour.

Some academics perceived a conflict between the internal commitment to the pursuit of truth and the external motivation from incentives. Academic-XA9 and Academic-SHA10 both underscored that one of the ends of academic research was to ‘pursue the truth’, and academics should have their own judgments and be guided by such inner pursuit, rather than by external guidance. Academic-SHA10 remarked that current systems tended to use administrative power to guide academic research, which was a violation of pure academic pursuit. Participants thought that the motivation of research should not be ‘getting higher scores’ (Academic-BJA4) or ‘making money’ (Academic-BJB1); if so, they must ‘fight with’ their values and ideals (Academic-BJB1 and WH1), because ‘this will be betraying the fundamental purpose of doing research’ (Academic-BJA4 and WH10), or because ‘the research will not be uncontaminated if you are looking at incentives’ (Academic-WH13).

Academics perceived an enhanced awareness of professionalism and rigour in academia, which they attributed to learning from foreign academics and journals through international exchanges and publications. As discussed in Chapter 6, many academics perceived the ‘rigid’ peer review process as a guarantee for more standardised and rigorous outputs. In addition, some academics observed the decreasing power of non-academic factors in academia. As discussed in **6.2.3 Estimated time for publication and the peer review process**, some participants perceived that non-academic factors in Chinese academia, such as personal relations, influenced publications. However, some participants noted a change to the situation, since more and more academics were having international publications or overseas experiences, improving research to a more rigid level. Academic-SHB12 commented:

I believe overall, the level of rigour is improving, particularly with more and more academics coming back like us. After seeing how to do things in a more standardised way, you will naturally try your best to do it that way, so the situation is improving. (Academic-SHB12)

### *Instrumentalism*

Academics interviewed also demonstrated a common concern of instrumentalism shaped by the incentives. Fifteen interviewees used the term ‘gong li’ in discussions about research culture, whose literal translation was ‘utility and efficacy’ or ‘fame and wealth’; and when used as an adjective, the synonym in English was ‘utilitarian’. A relevant phrase ‘ji gong jin li’ was brought up by five participants, meaning ‘seeking instant success and quick profits’. Six academics also used the word ‘tou ji’, meaning ‘opportunism’, to express their concerns about incentives’ influences on the research culture.

‘Fame and wealth’, as perceived by some academics, were lurking in academia nowadays (Academic-WH6). Such as Academic-XA9 admitted, although interest was one of the biggest motivations for her research, she had ‘utilitarian’ motivations like promoting to the professor. Academic-WH1 and Academic-SHB1 commented that the incentives for publications in top journals like SSCI or A&HCI journals were leading academics to chase ‘fame and wealth’.

Academic-SHB5 remarked:

The problem is why policymakers would not simply provide more salaries for academics, for them to do research and teaching without further concerns. On the one hand, the salaries are low; on the other hand, they are employing baits to lure academics, just like bidding for some projects. I think this is disrupting research. ... This system makes some academics become academic labourers, as making money with papers is like the way labourers earn money. ... Is it a way of making a living? This is a horrible thing. (Academic-SHB5)

Academics provided cases where other ‘opportunist’ scholars made use of the system to gain benefits. For instance, an interviewee talked about ‘*a big joke*’ of an ‘SSCI professor’ in HSS: An academic published five SSCI papers in five years after graduation. Although all were published in one journal in NS area, and s/he had not published any paper in Chinese, s/he was promoted to the professor with ‘a spaceship’s speed’. Other interviewees mentioned similar examples in other areas (e.g. Academic-XA2 and SHA8). They argued that good HSS research need a long time of immersion and thinking, while incentives encouraged instant and short-term achievements. Academic-XA2 commented that the environment of chasing instant benefits reflected ‘an anxiety’ in academia and across institutions, which was a ‘terrible thing’:

This is an interesting academic ecology – what are awarded, and what you can produce to get those benefits. This is totally legal, and through this process, I can get lots of money, lots of titles, and more money behind those titles. ... But research needs immersion and accumulation, not impetuosity. ... I think such policies may work in the short-term. But if you keep doing it, in the end, academics would not be incentivised to conduct deep and delicate research. For instance, if you spend lots of time doing a study of 3000 pages, you cannot get the outcome immediately; neither would you be recognised soon. However, others may spend a few days writing a paper and get hundreds of thousands of bonuses. I think it would be a tremendous appeal to anyone. (Academic-XA2)

A few interviewees, although opposed to opportunism, revealed that they felt obliged to fit into the system. Take Academic-SHA1 for instance. Academic-SHA1 thought the system might result in opportunism, which was ‘a strike to academics committed to pursuing the truth and doing things steadily and seriously’. However, he told his supervisee, a newly employed assistant professor,

to ‘first fit into the system’. Because his supervisee was fluent in English, he encouraged him/her to publish in English:

I told him/her, why not make use of the system? – As long as you remain true to your original values, why not? Such systems could produce some opportunists, but so long as you do not become over-utilitarian in the future. You first try to adapt to it. You must pass the assessment, since there is no other way around. What else can we do? (Academic-SHA1)

For Academic-SHA1, ‘surviving’ the system was the first mission in the academic journey. He perceived less external pressure as a professor, but he realised that his supervisees were under a circumstance where one may have to ‘surrender’ to live on. Some academics also talked about their changed ideas in response to the environment, that one may need to compromise and think less about academic values. Take the argument of Academic-WH12 for instance:

I am treating it as a job now, not something else we used to think it was, especially how we thought it was when we were students. When you treat it as a job, you feel okay with many things. Just do a good job, and do not be too idealistic. After all, you have to consider your family. (Academic-WH12)

The observation of Academic-SHB7 reinforced such statement. She identified three types of academics: one group adapted to the system well, because they treated institutional requirements as some tasks to be completed; one group cannot adapt to the system, because they perceived constant conflicts between institutional requirements and their own academic values; and the last group of academics also felt conflicts, but they separated their job into two parts, one for fulfilling requirements and the other for their own academic interests. The first and last group of academics, echoing the interviews with participants, expressed

the intention to become instrumental about their choices under institutional incentives.

Among participants who complained about the potential consequence of utilitarian culture, Academic-SHA1 felt optimistic. He argued that the current stage would be temporary, and when more and more academics can reach the current requirement, the university will raise its standards and ‘eliminate those opportunists’.

### **7.3.3 Equity and inequity**

When reflecting on incentives’ influences, conflicting voices emerged from interviews about equity and inequity in academia. Academics presented various views on whether incentives had increased the level of equality or intensified the dilemma of inequality, debating against other scholars from various backgrounds, disciplines, institutions, and age groups.

#### *Equity*

As discussed above, some academics considered the incentives for international publications and the consequent metric-based evaluations as relatively ‘fair’ and ‘equal’ criteria (Academic-BJB7). As Academic-BJA9 stated, ‘the best standard in academic research now is fair – to test whether you have done good research, just try to publish it in English’.

In addition, some academics found publishing internationally as an alternative to escape from the perceived monopoly of established academics, creating a field for ‘fair competition’ (Academic-XA2). For instance, based on his observation of ‘the ecology of Chinese academia’, Academic-WH6 described five

‘types’ of Chinese academics: superstar academics, academic teachers, academic researchers, academic officials, and pure academics. He argued that superstar academics and academic officials enjoyed more resources than others. Participants commented that the concentration of resources and the ‘Matthew effect’ (Academic-WH5) were not only reflected in publications, but also in research evaluation, grant applications, and career promotion (mentioned by Academic-SHA1, WH5, SHB5, SHA7, and SHA8). For example, an academic mentioned that for the highest-level institutional research awards, winners were generally ‘big names’, who had had a lengthy career, were advanced in years, and had huge influences in the university. Under such circumstances, some academics suggested that international publications might be a route for junior academics to ‘break through the oppression’ (Academic-SHA8) from the ‘academic moguls’ (Academic-SHA5 and WH5) or ‘faction leaders’ (Academic-SHA5 and SHA8). Academic-BJB5 remarked:

The monopoly in academia is fiercer than that in enterprises. Once a magnate becomes a renowned scholar, s/he will stay as a renowned scholar through his/her life. There is less and less space for junior academics. For instance, when you come back from Oxford, there is limited space for you to break through, unless you are really something, publishing 30 SSCI papers a year, people might be impressed and admire you. (Academic-BJB5)

### *Inequity*

Some interviewees perceived a reinforced inequity in academia, directly or indirectly shaped by incentives for international publications. Participants argued that academics from different institutions, disciplines, backgrounds, or at different career stages faced different levels of difficulty in publishing internationally, and that those who can publish internationally were like ‘feng mao lin jiao’ (a Chinese

idiom used by Academic-WH5, literally translated as ‘phoenix’s feather and unicorn’s horn’, meaning ‘extremely rare’). Some participants considered it unequal to every academic if international publications were prioritised, as Academic-SHB3 noted: ‘The reward for some people is the deprivation of others’.

A commonly raised reason for inequality was the perceived ‘yi dao qie’ (a Chinese term literally translated as ‘cutting everything with one stroke’, meaning ‘one size fits all’) philosophy in policymaking and policy implementation. Nine interviews from different institutions and disciplines used this term to describe the incentives and evaluation policy, which they accused of judging academics from various backgrounds by a single standard. Academic-SHB12 commented that:

It is not respectful for the nature of academic research; it is only applicable in management. The ‘yi dao qie’ management is definitely not the delicate management. (Academic-SHB12)

Academic-WH1 made a similar comment that ‘yi dao qie’ policy did not ‘respect the dignity of academics’, since ‘everyone has his/her own *peculiarity*, policy should encourage everyone to bring the best out of oneself.’ Some academics agreed that the disrespect for each academic’s expertise and characteristics could be considered as the primary reason for generating inequality in academia.

Interviews with academics identified five groups of comparison under incentives for international publications. To summarise, they were academics from different universities, academics from HSS and NS, academics from different disciplines and departments, returnees and non-returnees, as well as junior and senior academics.

### *Academics from different universities*

This study involved six case universities; and as explained in Chapter 3, they shared similarities and differences from each other. Interestingly, many academics interviewed compared their own university to others', some of which were also the case universities in this study. Interviews revealed a distinction between 'NS-oriented universities' and 'HSS-oriented universities'. Academics from Uni-SHA, Uni-BJB, and Uni-XA constantly mentioned that since their universities were traditionally science-oriented, senior administrators were 'more science-minded' and were more familiar with outputs in NS, hence the tendency to focus on statistics in incentive policies (e.g. Academic-SHA4, BJB4, and XA10).

Particularly, Uni-SHA and Uni-SHB were brought up in interviews as a pair of comparison. Interviewees described Uni-SHA as more NS-oriented and Uni-SHB more HSS-oriented. They reported that although Uni-SHB incentivised HSS international publications, international publications were not a requisite for promotion or research evaluations like in some departments at Uni-SHA. They perceived incentive policies at Uni-SHB as not 'strict', 'intense' or 'imposing' (Academic-SHB7, SHB8, and SHB9), and considered the research environment as relatively 'relaxing' (Academic-SHB1 and SHB5), 'free' (Academic-SHB5, SHB6, and SHB12), and 'humanitarian' (Academic-SHB8 and SHB12). A few academics from Uni-SHA admired the 'better atmosphere and less pressure' (Academic-SHA5) at Uni-SHB (e.g. Academic-SHA1 and SHA8). Academic-SHB1 concluded that Uni-SHA might be more like industrial society, focusing on efficiency, while Uni-SHB was like the agricultural society with a free environment. Although Academic-SHB1 remarked that the 'relaxing' style might

lead to Uni-SHB being surpassed by Uni-SHA on university rankings, participants reported less pressure at Uni-SHB.

Interviewees also compared other universities to their own university, to complain about how their own university should offer more monetary bonuses for international publications. For instance, Academic-BJA5 complained that a university in Shandong Province awarded more than ¥30,000 for SSCI publications, much more than that in Uni-BJA. Academic-BJB2 said her SSCI publications could earn her ¥80,000 or ¥30,000 in some other universities, while it was only ¥10,000 in her university. Moreover, Academic-WH4 pointed out a top international publication in Finance could worth ¥100,000 at a university in Shanghai, but not in Uni-WH. Academics also noticed that some non-‘985’ or non-‘211’ universities implemented stronger incentives for international publications due to a lack of such publications at lower-level institutions (Academic-SHB1, XA5, and SHB6). In general, some academics felt unjustified receiving fewer monetary rewards at certain universities than academics from other universities.

#### *HSS and NS academics*

Relevant to the distinction between ‘HSS-oriented universities’ and ‘NS-oriented universities’, participants also drew comparisons between incentives for international publications in HSS and NS within their own universities. Commonly, academics with such comparison suggested that international publications seemed to be easier in NS than in HSS, that HSS was not equally valued as NS research in those incentives, and that HSS research should not be evaluated and incentivised the same way as NS.

Firstly, academics argued that NS subjects might be more suitable than HSS to become internationalised, because as some commented, HSS research took roots in the local context:

If I do research on the cement, American academics can also examine the cement. However, Social Sciences research is about people, who are influenced by social structures, socio-economic development, and socio-cultural elements. Therefore, some disciplines can be internationalised, while others are difficult to become internationalised. (Academic-XA8)

Secondly, academics argued that publishing internationally was more difficult in HSS than in NS. Academic-SHA2 noticed that it was so common for NS academics to publish in SCI journals, that the university stopped providing extra bonuses for SCI publications. Participants argued that the language requirements for NS publications might be lower than that for HSS publications. In NS, ‘one can make a clear point with an equation’ (Academic-WH15) and ‘papers are largely based on numeric data’ (Academic-SHB7), but ‘HSS publications may require literary delicacy’ (Academic-WH5). Another reported reason was that NS dealt with ‘universal’ problems, while as discussed in Chapter 6, questions in HSS research were often restrained by the local context (Academic-BJA3, XA4, and XA8). Academic-BJA5 also argued that SCI papers were easy to write, since each paper can be only 3000 words, and he noted that one could produce a series of SCI papers with a series of experiments, replicating the template and only replacing the data section. He also found that SCI journals outnumbered SSCI journals in general. For instance, he said there were thousands of SCI journals in Computer Sciences, but only around ten in Translation. Academic-BJB4, Academic-BJA6, and Academic-XA10 also pointed out that NS

publications took less time to prepare, since they were normally produced by teams, while team-working was not common in every HSS discipline.

Thirdly, academics acknowledged that HSS international publications were not as highly valued as NS publications in incentives. Twelve academics found publications in *Nature* and *Science* could bring more than millions of bonuses, far more than the bonuses for HSS top publications. For instance, despite university administrators' efforts to emphasise the development of HSS at Uni-BJB (discussed in **4.2.4 Reasons for revising incentives**), HSS academics from Uni-BJB remarked that HSS international publications were not highly valued as NS international publications. Academic-BJB5 noticed that the university would publish a front-page news article on the website and hang a huge banner on campus for a publication in *Nature*. In addition, he reported that the university would award a paper in *Nature* with millions of bonuses; whereas the top publication in HSS was only worth a bonus of ten thousand. Academic-BJB4 also noticed the banner for *Nature* or *Science* papers, and he commented:

Since we all work in the same institution, you will compare with other disciplines and other departments. ... Our university is overly concerned about NS. For example, if we have *Nature* or *Science* publications, the university will hang banners on campus, and give them awards of ¥500,000 or much more. Everyone would think they are awesome. ... Publishing an SSCI paper would not make the heart of university leaders miss a beat, but a paper in *Nature* will. ... We did not expect to be as highly valued as NS, but it would be good if we have more space or platforms for development. (Academic-BJB4)

Finally, academics suggested a differentiation in approaches to incentivising and assessing HSS research, based on the different nature of HSS and NS research. Academics across disciplines (e.g. Academic-BJA2 from French,

Academic-SHA4 from Media, and Academic-SHB5 from Chinese) perceived HSS research required a long period of accumulation, while NS research demanded creativity and innovation. As Academic-SHA4 put it, ‘a professor in HSS may not reach his or her peak time in the 30s or 40s’, but ‘many professors in NS made their greatest achievements at younger ages’. Consequently, academics opposed the incentives of expecting a certain number of HSS publications in certain years, since they argued an academic in HSS might need many years to produce a great piece of work. Interviewees like Academic-BJA7 also suggested that different forms of publications should be valued differently in NS and HSS, as they thought monographs were often undervalued in incentives but were essential to HSS research.

#### *Academics from different HSS disciplines*

Within HSS disciplines, academics reported inequality among various subjects, mostly because they thought incentives placed an overall emphasis on international publications, but some disciplines were deemed as less internationalised or more difficult to produce international publications than others. As academics within or outside those disciplines observed, Economics, Management, and Business were highly internationalised, and publishing in international journals had become a norm in those disciplines (noted by Academic-BJA2, XA4, SHB4, BJA7, WH8, SHA11, and WH12).

Participants also reported that those departments tended to offer higher bonuses for international publications than other departments, some even surpassing the university-level bonuses. For instance, a participant mentioned the Department of Economics in Uni-SHB awarded SSCI publications with ¥200,000,

¥100,000, ¥30,000, or ¥20,000, depending on journals' ranking, much higher than most university-level bonuses. In addition, as discussed in **7.1.1 International research collaborations**, academics from English discipline were thought by some participants to be more capable of publishing internationally because of their language proficiency.

Within each discipline, academics conducting research on different topics perceived different levels of or demands for internationalisation. For instance, Academic-SHB11 from Chinese History confronted the idea that there might be a huge gap between international and domestic research on Chinese History. He argued that internationalisation should not be used as a 'positive' or 'essential' indicator in evaluations. He thought it 'hilarious' in his discipline to 'think only internationalisation could help us reach a good goal or foster academic development'. On the contrary, Academic-WH14 from History noticed those researching on World History might be less 'reserved' than other historians in international communications and publications. Similarly, Academic-SHA9 suggested scholars in Western Philosophy might be more internationalised than those in Chinese Philosophy.

#### *Returnees and non-returnees*

As discussed in the previous sections on publication languages and international collaborations, returnee academics were considered by most as having advantages over their non-returnee peers in international publications. Some non-returnee academics expressed an inferior stance to returnee academics in interviews. For instance, returnees had a nickname in Chinese as 'hai gui' (literally translated as 'sea turtle'), as the homonym of 'return from overseas' in

Chinese. The antonym coined for non-returnees was ‘tu bie’ (literally translated as ‘local softshell turtle’) with a slight sarcastic connotation. Five interviewees used ‘tu bie’ to describe non-returnees, among whom four referred to themselves. For instance, Academic-WH12 said:

I am a tu bie – I studied all the way in China, so I started publishing with a focus on domestic journals. ... The recently reformed incentive policy is, as we tu bie see it, very striking. Returnees like you are bringing us huge impacts. (Academic-WH12)

Academics noticed that returnee academics enjoyed advantages in international publications because they had received many years of ‘systematic research training abroad’ (Academic-WH14). Therefore, they were considered to be familiar with international research norms, publication formats, research questions, and academic English writing, as well as had potential international networks and collaborations. For instance, ten returnee academics confirmed that they all published or plan to publish papers in English based on their master’s or doctoral theses, which were written in English and could be more easily converted into international publications. In comparison, a few participants like Academic-SHA2 and Academic-XA10 perceived doctoral training at home as inadequate. They commented that some students were still learning basic rather than advanced knowledge at the doctoral level, reflecting a lack of rigorous training.

#### *Junior academics and senior academics*

As previous sections presented, several participants perceived that some senior academics were ‘controlling’ the academia. However, some interviewees thought senior academics were less capable of publishing internationally. For

instance, Academic-BJA3 commented that junior academics might be generally better than senior academics in their knowledge bases, academic vision, and the capability to communicate internationally. Academic-BJB2 noted that some established academics in her field were not capable of publishing in English, because she thought they lacked English proficiency and proper research training.

Some academics and senior administrator did not think senior academics were relevant to incentives for international publications. Such as SA-WH explained, those senior academics who could not publish internationally were not the target group in formulating incentive policies. Consequently, although some participants considered incentivising international publications as providing an equal opportunity for junior academics, some found it unequal to senior academics, who were not qualified for bonuses or further promotion due to a lack of international publications (Academic-XA3).

#### **7.4 Conclusions**

This chapter explores academics' accounts of incentives' influences on their academic activities in a broader sense. In the context of incentivising international publications, HSS academics perceived influences on academics' international activities, teaching and supervision, as well as the research culture in several ways.

Firstly, academics were aware of the growing institutional emphasis on internationalisation. Academics perceived the pursuit of internationalisation and the approaches to internationalisation differently, but they became aware of the relationship between internationalisation, incentives for international publications, and international research activities. Academics reported that they voluntarily or

involuntarily became more active in participating in international research activities, such as forming collaborations, conducting academic visits to overseas institutions, attending and presenting at international conferences, and reviewing for or editing international journals.

Secondly, academics also reported a tension between teaching and research, since incentives valued publications much more than teaching. Some doctoral supervisors interviewed disapproved encouraging doctoral students to publish internationally, while some brought the issue of international publication on board with their doctoral supervisees. They argued that publishing internationally would enhance students' research competency and competitiveness in future development.

Finally, academics perceived some external and internal research cultures as being challenged or reinforced by incentives, reflected by the tension between quality and quantity, integrity and instrumentalism, and equity and inequity in academia. Some academics noted the potential positive influences incentives might cast on the research culture, such as the improved awareness of academic rigour and reinforced equity in some cases. However, some academics pointed out potential negative influences generated from incentives on the research culture, such as the conflicts between academic values and external incentives, the potential trend of utilitarian and opportunist culture, and the intensified inequality among academics from different institutions, disciplines, and backgrounds. Some academics interviewed urged for improvements, and some academics admitted compliance to such changes in the research culture.

The increased awareness of internationalisation and unintended influences of incentives will be further discussed and conceptualised in Chapter 9. The next

chapter continues to investigate the perceived influences of incentives on HSS academics, with a focus on their reported impacts on employment and career progression.

## **Chapter 8 Incentives' Influences on Academics' Careers**

This chapter explores how incentives for HSS international publications have influenced HSS academics' careers. It draws on interview data with academics from six case universities. As several participants argued, they and their colleagues tended to be more concerned with career-related incentives, particularly those associated with the promotion, than monetary incentives. Although from different institutions with diverse backgrounds, the interviewed academics revealed that international publications were playing an increasingly influential role throughout their academic life: from employment, to the initial term of employment to promotion, to annual assessments, and to honorary titles. This chapter explores the significance of international publications at different stages and discusses the impact of incentives on academics' careers.

### **8.1 Faculty employment**

Participants across institutions reported that when recruiting new faculty members, the emphasis on international publications was demonstrated in two ways: the preference for returnees over non-returnees, and the preference for international publications in evaluating applicants.

Academics noted that recruiting returnees, particularly those obtaining doctoral degrees from and having work experiences at top overseas institutions, had become one of the methods to increase international publications (e.g. Academic-SHA1, WH3, BJA5, and SHB7). Some participants, such as Academic-XA5 and Academic-SHB10, observed that in top universities and certain

disciplines like Economics, newly recruited faculty members were usually graduates from top overseas institutions. Academics from some case universities said that their institutions might not put ‘we prefer returnee scholars’ on employment advertisements. However, as interviewees said, ‘those who had the final say have a scale in their mind, the more internationalised, the better’, and ‘in principle, the university prefers someone with a doctoral degree from a top overseas university’ (Academic-SHA3 and SHA5). One participant said their university regulated that more than 30% or 40% of academics recruited each year had to be returnees, and those with international academic visiting experiences could not count as returnees. Another interviewee also reported that at a top university, a Humanities department was lacking in faculty members due to the difficulty in finding returnee academics in that discipline, under the ‘returnee-only’ recruitment policy at the university. Under the ‘returnee-friendly’ employment system (Academic-SHA1), six academics predicted that there would be more and more returnee academics working in Chinese universities (Academic-SHA1, SHA3, BJA5, WH8, SHA11, and WH12).

The rationale for recruiting returnee academics, as perceived by some participants, was ‘the expectation that returnee academics could produce more international publications in a shorter period than others’ (Academic-SHA1). Several academics interviewed thought such preference in employment reflected institutions’ ‘development strategy’ (Academic-SHA1 and SHA11). As Academic-SHA1 and Academic-SHB8 noted, the university tended to conduct a ‘structural change’ by recruiting more returnee academics. Academic-SHB8 considered such ‘structural change’ as a means to accelerate the renewal of the faculty and to get ‘new blood’ for the institution, with the aim to generate more international

publications. He commented that:

We are doing this to accelerate the renewal of blood and the changes of generations. Tu bie (non-returnees) got eliminated when hai gui (returnees) got back: this is a law of academia, a metabolic process. Here is another thing: when returnees come back to our institutions, you must become hens to lay eggs for us. Everyone is a clucking hen, laying eggs for us every day. (Academic-SHB8)

Returnee academics, as revealed from interviews, also understood the institutions' expectations that they should publish internationally, particularly in SSCI journals as incentivised. In addition, as discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, returnee academics tended to find it less difficult to publish internationally than domestically. Accounts of Academic-WH11 and Academic-SHA11 captured such a situation:

The department wants us young returnee scholars, coming back from abroad, to publish more international papers. As for me, I will publish internationally if possible. But I think I will publish both internationally and domestically. (Academic-WH11)

Many newly recruited faculty members graduated from top universities abroad. For many of them, you do not need to guide them or incentivise them, and they would prefer to publish SSCI papers themselves – they may have to learn more about CSSCI publications. So, as there are more and more new academics from abroad, there will be an increase in SSCI publications. (Academic-SHA11)

Some participants commented that international publications could also play a key role in employment. Academic-BJB4 reported they had a basic requirement for two top publications upon applying for the position as an assistant professor, which included SSCI and A&HCI publications. Academic-WH8 said

although it was not required to have international publications, applicants with international publications would earn ‘extra points’. He noticed in recent two or three years, those newly recruited academics in his team all had international publications upon application. Academic-WH12 observed and noted that non-returnee doctors had a chance of being employed ‘as an exception’, if they had good publications. Academic-SHA2 also observed that international publications would be valued more in recruiting new faculty members, as he said:

In recent years, when recruiting new members, even if someone has loads of publications, but his competitor has fewer publications but has high-level international publications, then the result is obvious. Even if you have gained reputation domestically, the university will hardly care. (Academic-SHA2)

Under such circumstances, Academic-BJB5 expected that more and more doctoral students would aim to have international publications as a ‘stepping stone’ to finding an academic position. As presented in the section **5.2.1 Proactive**, the experiences of Academic-WH15 illustrated the case. He said he had a clear purpose when deciding whether and where to publish during his doctoral studies. By browsing through the requirements published by some universities, he found that SSCI publications were ‘recognised’ by most Chinese universities. Therefore, he took it as a ‘guidance’ and ‘motivation’ to publish in those journals to secure an academic job.

## **8.2 Initial term of employment (ITE)**

International publications, as participants perceived, were playing an increasingly influential role in tenure assessment. In Chinese universities, the

academic job used to be described as an ‘iron rice bowl’ (‘tie fan wan’, Academic-WH8), meaning faculty members would be tenured upon being employed. However, many participants reported that Chinese universities were introducing an ‘up-or-out’ (‘fei sheng ji zou’ in Chinese, used by 15 interviewees) ‘*tenure-track system*’. Academics would first be employed for three to six years as the ITE. They signed contracts with the department and university, detailing requirements they must achieve before the end of the ITE. Requirements varied across institutions. However, academics would be tenured only if they achieved those requirements and were promoted to the associate professor before ITE ended. Otherwise, they would be dismissed.

Requirements generally included a certain number of publications in designated journals, one nationally or provincially funded project, and some teaching requirements. As discussed in **7.2 The relationship between research and teaching**, academics felt less pressure completing teaching requirements. Therefore, the primary pressure came from publications and funded projects. Participants revealed that journals recognised in those contracts were SSCI, A&HCI, and medium to top-level CSSCI journals. A few participants heard that for some universities, returnee academics would sign different contracts, which demanded only SSCI papers for the section of research publications.

Assessments were conducted twice during the ITE, one in the middle and the other at the end of the ITE. Academics from Uni-SHA said academics who failed the assessment would have a one-year extension to complete the requirements (Academic-SHA3), but the requirements would be adjusted to a higher level (Academic-SHA5). The system was not strictly implemented at each institution. Participants from Uni-BJA talked about the assessment as not ‘strictly

conducted' (e.g. Academic-BJA6). However, seven out of 11 participants from Uni-SHA, eight out of 13 from Uni-SHB, four out of seven from Uni-BJB, nine out of 15 from Uni-WH, and eight out of ten from Uni-XA discussed the importance of tenure assessments.

Most universities employed a 'dual-track system' (Academic-SHB2), 'applying old requirements for old people and new requirements for new people' (Academic-SHA1, BJB1, BJB5, and SHB8). Subsequently, in most universities, the new tenure system and ITE assessments applied mainly to newly recruited faculty members. Those who had not been promoted to associate professor may not be dismissed, if they were employed before the implementation of the new tenure system. Consequently, junior academics interviewed reported a general 'anxiety' or 'pressure' (e.g. Academic-SHA3, SHA5, BJB4, BJB5, and WH6) over the assessment at the end of the ITE. Only when having achieved the requirements, would they feel 'a sense of security' (Academic-SHA3 and WH9). Therefore, they would orient academic life around the ITE contracts, 'schedule the research activities according to the ITE requirements' (Academic-SHA3), and 'publish wherever and as much as the contract required' (Academic-WH9).

International publications were included in the ITE requirements, and SSCI and A&HCI journals were often listed as the highest rank in publications. Academics also understood the institutional expectation for international publications. Academic-WH11 said her contract required two papers in the first three years, one SSCI paper plus one SSCI or top domestic publication. She understood that for the second paper, the department 'hoped for an international publication', and 'it would be better if it would be published internationally'.

However, academics admitted that sometimes they had to choose domestic

publications to guarantee their job. ITE assessments demanded a certain number of publications within three to six years, and in some departments, those publications must be in print rather than merely accepted or published online. However, as already discussed in **6.2.3 Estimated time for publication and the peer review process**, participants perceived international publications took much longer time than domestic publications, in terms of time spent on preparation, peer review, and getting in print. ‘I might be discharged before the paper gets printed out’, Academic-BJB4 worried.

Meanwhile, top domestic publications could replace international publications. The account of Academic-SHA9 exemplified this case. Her ITE required one paper in A-level or B-level journals, and three in C-level or D-level journals. A-level journals included SSCI and A&HCI journals, together with *Social Sciences in China* and *Philosophical Researches*. B-level journals were mainly domestic journals. Therefore, even if one did not have SSCI or A&HCI publications, s/he could achieve the ITE requirements by publishing in *Social Sciences in China*, *Philosophical Researches*, and other B-level journals in Chinese – although as discussed in **6.3.3 Top domestic journals**, publishing in the former two journals was rendered even more difficult than some international publications.

With these regulations, the conflict between quantified requirements and the ‘risky’ (Academic-XA8) international publications led to several participants prioritising domestic publications at the initial stage of ITE. For instance, Academic-XA6 said he had an English paper in revision that seemed ‘so far away’, that he determined to focus on domestic publications first, as ‘they can be published faster to fulfil the assessment requirements’:

Our strategy is to publish enough papers in Chinese in the first or second year, and emphasise international publications during the rest of ITE. (Academic-XA6)

Academics perceived such ‘delayed incentives’ in ITE, arguing that incentives would not necessarily generate more international publications at this stage, since domestic publications were also recognised and the utmost issue at this stage was to ‘keep the rice bowl [job]’ (Academic-BJB5). However, those junior academics also became aware of the importance of international publications, as reflected in institutional requirements. Hence, some of them expressed the intention to pursue international publications, when they had the job security after successfully passing this ‘up-or-out’ period.

### **8.3 Promotion**

Under the ‘dual-system’, tenure-track regulations only applied to newly recruited faculty. However, both newly recruited and previously recruited faculty faced the same procedure for promotion to ranks of associate professor or professor. As interviews revealed, international publications weighed increasingly more in promotional evaluations in some disciplines. More and more academics found the importance of international publications in the promotion as a strong incentive, compared with monetary bonuses. Interviewees like Academic-SHA2, Academic-WH3, and Academic-SHA11 stressed: ‘For many academics, the promotion of titles might be more important than money’.

The promotional review varied slightly at each department and university. However, it followed a standard procedure as reported by participants from case universities. The university conducted the promotional review often once in a year.

Faculty members could apply for a higher rank after a certain number of years of serving with their current title. Eligible applicants first submitted applications to the department, which was allocated by the university a certain number of associate professor and professor titles each year. The quota was extremely limited, sometimes only one or two for a department or school, resulting in fierce competition. The departmental promotional review committee voted for applicants based on their publications (mainly journal publications, not books), teaching, and funded projects. The publication was often considered as the vital factor (e.g. Academic-SHB8). The university committee would further review successful applicants from different disciplines. External reviewers would also be invited to assess applicants' materials throughout the process. Applicants could be promoted once they passed all reviews.

The significance of international publications in the promotion varied at different institutions, depending on the dominant approach to the promotional review and whether international peer reviewers were involved. Those factors also influenced how academics perceived the impact of incentives for international publications.

### **8.3.1 Quantified indicators**

All case universities were employing or used to employ quantified indicators in the promotional review. Uni-SHA exemplified the growing importance of international publications when employing such indicators. According to Academic-SHA11, the university had a 'clear list' of required publications for promotion to different titles, including a certain number of CSSCI and SSCI publications. Publications in journals not included in the list would not

be ‘helpful’ or ‘qualified’. In recent years, academics from Uni-SHA perceived increasing attention on quality in addition to quantity. Academic-SHA2 commented that for promotion, the institution expected not only a certain number of publications, but also ‘weighty’ publications in certain A-level journals, meaning *Social Sciences in China*, SSCI, and A&HCI journals. Since academics agreed it was difficult to publish in *Social Sciences in China*, SSCI and A&HCI publications appeared to be more applicable. In some departments, one SSCI publication could count as several domestic publications (Academic-SHA4). In general, ‘the more international publications you have, the more competitive you are, that is for sure’ (Academic-SHA9). Hence, academics who longed for promotion reported a tendency to aim at SSCI and A&HCI journals.

Similarly, Uni-BJB had ‘a quantitative requirement’ and applicants must ‘reach various indicators to be considered for promotion’ (Academic-BJB7). International publications were more heavily weighted than domestic publications. One SSCI paper equalled two CSSCI papers in some departments (Academic-BJB4), and international publications were considered as ‘*top* publications’ (Academic-BJB1). Academic-BJB5 argued this would lead to academics pursuing more international publications:

For instance, if I have two papers in *Sociological Research*, but my competitor has a paper in an SSCI journal like *China Quarterly*, the latter one with the English publication would be more likely to win. They worship this very much. It is not just about weighting. So we are all trying [to publish in SSCI journals]. (Academic-BJB5)

Under the quantified system, several participants reported further bonuses of having SSCI and A&HCI publications in the promotion. Participants reported that in some institutions, if the applicant had a certain number of SSCI papers,

s/he could make an exception if s/he did not fulfil other promotional requirements, like the total year of serving as an assistant professor. Several interviewees also mentioned in some institutions, an applicant could be guaranteed the title of associate professor or professor, as long as they had a certain number of SSCI publications. In addition, a few participants predicted the ‘inflation’ (Academic-XA6) of international publications, with more and more eligible applicants publishing internationally, as was the situation in NS:

In the past, you could be promoted with three English papers in NS. Now the bottom-line becomes five. You might be knocked out with just five English papers, since many have eight or nine of them. (Academic-XA6)

In general, under such system, participants perceived that international publications became increasingly valued, particularly publications in SSCI and A&HCI journals. The importance of international publications in the promotion, therefore, was reported as a strong motivator for some academics. The example of Academic-XA5 presented in **5.2.1 Proactive** illustrated the case. The interviewee said he decided to publish SSCI papers because at that time, one could secure the title of professor with two SSCI papers at the university. Although Uni-BJA did not require a certain number of SSCI papers in the promotion, both Academic-BJA3 and Academic-BJA7 remarked that if in the future, one cannot apply for the title of professor without SSCI papers, they would definitely publish in SSCI journals.

### **8.3.2 Representative works**

Another approach for promotion evaluation was a ‘Representative Works

System' (Dai Biao Zuo Zhi). It assesses applicants' research based on the quality of representative works they completed in certain years prior to the promotion. The MOE encouraged institutions to assess academics by their representative works in a policy published in 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2011c). A recent policy document on evaluations of projects, academics, and institutions also advocated for evaluating academics with representative works (General Office of the CPC Central Committee & General Office of the State Council, 2018). Participants revealed that Uni-WH, Uni-XA, and Uni-BJB were introducing or experimenting with the system, and Uni-SHB used to apply this system as an option in the promotion. Faculty members could apply for a promotion if they did not reach the total required number of publications. Each applicant could submit one to three representative works for peer review. Participants from other case universities had also heard of this system.

Some academics expected the 'Representative Works System' to pay less attention to quantity, since one can only submit one to three pieces of work (e.g. Academic-WH3). Also, some speculated that this system might not weigh SSCI publications highly, since they perceived that peer reviewers would have professional judgements on academic quality rather than relying on metrics (e.g. Academic-WH3 and BJA7).

However, several participants suspected that international publications, particularly SSCI and A&HCI publications, may still be valued under the system, and that this system could not replace the quantified system. They argued that the review committee might have a 'preconceived bias' that 'good papers should be published in good journals' (Academic-XA7); and by 'good journals', they often referred to those ranked as high by universities. In addition, participants expressed

a shared concern that this system may not be fair and may encourage corruptions. They argued that China is a society of relationships (Academic-XA2, WH5, and SHB5), and Chinese academia lacked a credit system (Academic-XA2), so reviewers may consider ‘doing someone a favour’ in the process (Academic-XA2) and ‘turning pure academic research into pulling strings’ (Academic-SHA3). Academic-SHB8 complained ‘such system was designed for someone’, who ‘did not have so many publications’. Therefore, they did not think the system could completely replace the quantity-based promotional review method.

### **8.3.3 International peer reviewers**

Fieldwork data revealed that Uni-SHA was emphasising the involvement of international peer reviewers in recent years. Some schools in Uni-SHA had started inviting international academics to review promotion materials. Academic-SHA2 remarked that such tendency to include international reviewers would lead to a growing intention among academics to publish in international journals, since not all international reviewers were familiar with domestic publications:

The university is gradually stressing on the so-called ‘international peer review’, which will certainly be a trend in the future. Some schools are already doing this, while some schools are not this fast. In some schools, when applying for promotion, your application is no longer reviewed domestically, but reviewed by international experts. ... For international peer review, your publications must be in international journals then. (Academic-SHA2)

Although no participant interviewed experienced international peer review for promotion, several interviewees echoed the comment of Academic-SHA2, that they would bear in mind this tendency and make preparation for it. Academic-

SHA4 argued that inviting international peer reviewers would contribute to a growth of international publications.

### **8.3.4 Perceived influences on promotion**

Perceiving the growing stress on international publications in the promotion, most academics with intentions for promotion intended to publish as required, meaning, publishing in SSCI, A&HCI and core CSSCI journals. As Academic-BJA4 commented: ‘Why do most academics allow themselves to be pushed, a major reason is that they need to be promoted.’ Among them, academics in institutions using quantified indicators tended to care more about the type of journals recognised by the institution, while academics promoted or to be promoted via representative works system cared less about that.

In general, academics without the intention for further promotion expressed less interest in following institutional requirements. For example, Academic-SHB5 described her title of professor as ‘a route to freedom’. Academic-WH2 commented that he would not pursue international publications, because he felt that as a professor, ‘everything seemed to be sufficient’, including the title and income. However, he argued that ‘it might be different for junior academics.’ Several participants, such as Academic-BJA5, BJB5, and SHB5, remarked that some academics did not care about international publications, if they were content with serving as an associate professor until retirement.

## **8.4 Annual assessments**

Participants from different institutions discussed annual research

assessments at their departments or schools. For instance, Academic-SHA3 reported that every winter, the secretary of research would collect information about research publications and grants, which would be converted into points to assess if academics have reached the requirements. Academic-SHA5 and Academic-SHA8 also said that there were certain requirements for academics at different ranks. Academic-SHA5 also reported a 30% increase in the annual assessment requirements for academics at all levels at that year.

International publications, particularly SSCI publications were worth more points in those annual assessments, as some academics interviewed revealed. For instance, Academic-SHB13 reported that the annual bonuses for international publications used to be double the value of that for domestic publications. Academic-SHA8 reported that in his institution, publications in *Social Sciences in China* was worth 360 points, publications in *Chinese Journal of Law* and SSCI journals were worth 300 points, and other publications were counted as either 90 or 240 points. He said that for example, if the required points for an associate professor were 100 points per year, it would not be sufficient to have only one domestic publication of 90 points.

Participants reported that such assessments would influence academics' income. Eight academics interviewed compared the annual assessments, which counted papers and converted them into points, to the 'Workpoint System' ('Gong Fen Zhi' in Chinese). 'Workpoint System' was used in Chinese agricultural production, under the collective system during the Maoist era. As Academic-SHB8 remarked:

Now we are back to the Workpoint System, just like before the Reform and Opening-up, when most production teams in rural

areas employed the Workpoint System. At that time, you had to reach certain workload to earn workpoints, and only with those workpoints can you exchange for food. (Academic-SHB8)

Similar to the 'Workpoint System', which allocated food by workload, the performance in annual assessments would influence the amount of annual bonus. Academic-XA1, Academic-SHB8, and Academic-XA9 all stated that if someone failed to reach the required points, s/he would lose certain annual bonuses. For instance, Academic-SHB8 said that 70% of academics' salaries were given as regular salaries, and 30% were left as the annual bonus. Only if one reached the requirements, s/he could earn the bonus.

'Losing face' was another consequence of not passing annual reviews. 'Face' (Mian zi) is a common and important concept in Chinese culture. It has rich meaning and can be understood as the reputation of someone, the degree of respect s/he received, and the feelings of the prestige of him/herself. 'Losing face' refers to the damage to one's 'face'. Participants said the results of annual assessments would be available for every faculty member; hence it created peer pressure. As Academic-XA1 commented, not passing the assessments may lead to some financial losses, but what appeared to be more important was 'the loss of face and the impairment of dignity'.

Since the consequences of failing annual assessments would not impact job security or promotion, academics with a negative attitude towards those assessments and with less interest in bonuses appeared to be less motivated by such incentives. Several participants complained about the annual assessments. They argued publications took time from preparing and getting in print, which contradicted the logic of annual assessments, that academics should have continuous outputs. For instance, Academic-SHA5 said academics might have

‘good years’ and ‘bad years’, and he found it ‘repelling’ to have to reach certain requirements each year. Academic-XA10 also considered it ‘unreasonable’ to demand everyone to have publications every year.

### **8.5 Honorary titles**

In addition to regular academic ranks like the assistant professor, associate professor, and professor, participants reported honorary titles beyond those positions and their association with international publications. Honorary titles were often offered under some national, regional, or institutional talent programmes. For instance, seven participants talked about ‘Chang Jiang Scholars Programme’, which was a national talent programme initiated in 1998, with the aim to recruit and reward outstanding academics both at home and abroad (Ministry of Education, n.d.-b). Since 2011, each year the ‘Chang Jiang Scholars Programme’ awarded 150 ‘Chang Jiang Distinguished Professors’, with a bonus of ¥200,000 per year for five years, and 50 ‘Chang Jiang Adjunct Professors’ with ¥30,000 per month, continuing for three years (Ministry of Education, 2011a). Some interviewees said they were aware of such honorary titles and the subsequent benefits behind them. For instance, Academic-SHA4 said:

Although we are all professors, there are different ranks of professors: fourth-rank, third-rank, first-rank, and distinguished professors. Financial benefits and such will follow with those ranks. (Academic-SHA4)

Some participants associated those honorary titles with international publications, such as shown in the testimony of Academic-SHA2:

For many high-level assessments in the university, even if you present an abundant of research achievements for the preliminary assessments, it is impossible for you to pass the assessment or get any good results, if the university found that you do not have any international publications. (Academic-SHA2)

Academics from other institutions also reported the observed importance of international publications in assessments for national, regional, and institutional honorary programmes. For instance, Academic-SHB8 mentioned a governmental-supported programme, ‘Gaofeng Gaoyuan Programme’ in Shanghai, which he noticed invested billions (3.6 billion RMB for the first stage from 2014 to 2017 (Shanghai Municipal Education Commission, 2016)) to support the development of top disciplines. He commented that such programmes, with the aim to ‘cultivate top disciplines’, were looking at papers, particularly papers published in core journals and top international journals. Academic-BJA1 talked about a programme in Uni-BJA: once selected, the university would fund academics to conduct overseas academic visits. Meanwhile, they were committed to publishing a certain number of papers during that time. As reported, the required number of publications varied for academics at different career stages, but it was regulated that one SSCI, A&HCI, or ‘core CSSCI’ (top one in each discipline) paper could count for three other CSSCI papers.

Academic-XA2 argued that the association of SSCI publications with honorary titles would influence the ecology of academia. He said he knew someone who ‘learnt the tricks’, publishing plenty of SSCI papers and got rewarded with many honours like ‘Chang Jiang Scholar’, but he commented that some of them ‘made very limited contributions to research’.

However, the association could act as a motivation for international publications. Academics perceived the signal released in those high-profile

evaluations, that international publications were considered of high academic and utilitarian value. Consequently, academics expressed the intention to publish internationally, if they aspired for more honours; such as Academic-WH2 stated:

Now in Social Sciences, no matter for regular assessments or other evaluations of talents, such as the assessment of Chang Jiang Scholars, whether you have English publications or SSCI papers might influence the assessment results. It seems that publishing SSCI papers have become a symbol of high-level scholars. So, I think it is a motivation for us to pursue SSCI publications. (Academic-WH2)

## **8.6 Conclusions**

Interviews with academics revealed that compared with monetary incentives, academics became much more concerned with international publications when associated with their careers. As shown in interviews, career-related incentives influenced academics' job security, career progression, relevant income, and dignity to various degrees. Academics perceived those influences throughout their academic life, including being employed, passing the ITE assessment, getting promoted to higher ranks, going through annual reviews, and pursuing honorary titles. Firstly, faculty employment and the ITE were related to job security, which was perceived by participants as fundamental to their academic careers. Secondly, promotion appeared to be the next greatest concern in career development for most participants, after they secured a job. As interviews revealed, international publications played varied roles in the promotional review with varied influences across institutions and academics' experiences. Lastly, annual assessments and honorary titles affected academics' income and reputation with a carrot and stick approach – not passing annual assessments would lead to

punishment, while gaining honorary titles appeared to be a huge reward for some academics.

Interviews demonstrated that career-related incentives might not have resulted in an increase of international publications for academics at certain career stages. Some academics, who had secured their job and cared less about further promotion or income, felt less influenced by incentives for international publications. In addition, interviews revealed a tension between incentives for international publications and the requirements of a certain number of publications in certain years. Publishing in a certain timeframe appeared to be significant in faculty employment, ITE assessment, promotion, and annual assessments. However, as previously discussed in Chapter 6, academics perceived that international publications required a longer amount of time to produce. Consequently, incentives for international publications may not necessarily lead to a growth in productivity when academics were at certain stages. As Academic-BJB5 argued, the requirements for international publications would lead to academics concentrating international publications in two periods – during doctoral studies and during promotion from associate professor to professor. The relationship between incentives and international publication volumes will be further discussed in **9.2.2 Theorising incentives**.

Nevertheless, those pursuing the job security, aspiring for promotion, and concerned with income and reputation reported being more directly driven by incentives for career progression. As commented by Academic-SHB5, ‘the system works well because people care about it so much’. Moreover, the requirements or preference for international publications released signals to academics that

international publications were essential to their career progression, due to the perceived value attached to them.

This chapter is the final chapter on research findings of incentives' influences on academics' research and careers. Next chapter will summarise and discuss the findings of this study, and offer implications for future policymaking and further studies.

## **Chapter 9 Discussion and Conclusion**

### **9.1 Summary of findings**

This research investigated the incentives for HSS international publications in Chinese universities and incentives' influences on HSS academics' research and careers. This section summarises research findings based on the documentary analysis of 172 institutional incentive documents and interviews with 75 HSS academics, senior administrators, and HSS journal editors.

#### **9.1.1 Incentives for HSS international publications in China**

The first research question of this study was **'How have Chinese universities attempted to incentivise HSS academics to publish in internationally-indexed journals?'**

Chapter 4 addressed this question by mapping a national landscape of incentives for HSS international publications. In Chinese universities, incentivising international publications in HSS has been an increasing trend – 84 out of the 113 '985' and '211' universities have been employing monetary or career-related incentives to promote HSS international publications. Those incentives aimed at responding to national policies, fostering HSS research, enhancing the level of internationalisation, and achieving performative goals such as increasing institutional rankings. Universities learnt from each other's policymaking, but demonstrated three different approaches to formulating incentive policies: the authoritative model, top-down model, and bottom-up model. Monetary incentives for international publications varied in the bonus values and

award requirements. In both monetary and career-related incentives, the prestige of SSCI and A&HCI publications was demonstrated by a higher bonus value for publications in these journals and a higher status in assessment for career development. Senior administrators attributed the emphasis on SSCI and A&HCI publications to the presumed high quality of SSCI and A&HCI publications, and to the attention to the internationalisation of HSS research. Some senior administrators argued that incentives could increase the number of SSCI and A&HCI publications, while some questioned the likelihood of a direct causal relationship between incentives and publication numbers.

### **9.1.2 Incentives' influences on HSS academics' research and careers**

The second research question was **'How have Chinese HSS academics' research and careers been influenced by the institutional incentives for international publications?'** It drew on two aspects of academic life: research activities and careers. Chapter 5 to Chapter 8 addressed this research question and argued that Chinese HSS academics displayed four types of responses to incentives: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. Different sub-groups of academics reported they had been directly or indirectly influenced by incentives to various degrees in their research lives and careers.

Chapter 5 identified four types of academics' responses to incentives for HSS international publications. Based on whether their attitudes were favourable or unfavourable towards incentives, and whether they intended to publish internationally or domestically, HSS academics fell into four categories: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. Proactive academics welcomed the incentives for HSS international publications and expressed a willingness to publish

internationally. Adaptive academics opposed incentivising HSS international publications, but they still intended to publish internationally. Resistant academics held unfavourable attitudes towards the incentives for HSS international publications and expressed lower or no intention to publish in international journals. Hesitant academics expressed favourable attitudes towards incentivising HSS international publications, but they did not declare an immediate intention to publish internationally.

Academics provided various reasons for these different attitudes and intentions. They related their attitudes towards the incentives with their perceptions of the aims, values, and consequences of such incentives, as well as the quality and value of international publications. Academics associated their intentions to publish in international journals or domestic journals to individual research interests, targeted readership, expected impacts, the capability to publish internationally or domestically, as well as the external environment and evaluative pressures.

Chapter 6 examined HSS scholars' academic publications under incentives for international publications, and explored academics' motivations to publish, the perceived differences between international and domestic publications, and the choices of where and what to publish. Interviews with HSS academic revealed that incentives had reinforced or shaped academics' motivation to publish internationally. Particularly, incentive policies appeared to be closely linked with the motivation for monetary rewards and evaluative recognition, although academics expressed more attention to the recognition than financial rewards. Other motivators – academic recognition, impact, and self-development – were shown as indirectly shaped by incentives. For instance, academics described in

their interviews the perceived tension between incentives and academic recognition and the conflicts between focusing on international publications and generating impact within the local community. However, some academics considered international publication as valuable learning experiences, beneficial to individual academic development.

Incentives also played a significant role in academics' perceptions of domestic and international publications, and on their choices of where and what to publish. Academics reported incentives' influences on their perceptions of the value of international publications, and also on their publication behaviours. For instance, some academics would tailor research questions and methodologies for SSCI journals, some intended to allow time for a longer period in preparation for international publications, and some tended to avoid submitting to non-SSCI or non-A&HCI journals.

Chapter 7 examined the influences of incentives on academics' research activities in a broader sense. In general, incentives for international publications had increased HSS academics' awareness of and participation in internationalisation. As discussed in Chapter 4, senior administrators associated incentives for international publications with internationalisation. They believed incentives for international publications could convey a signal to HSS academics, that internationalisation was becoming essential to academic research. Consequently, more academics would participate in international research activities, and the university could become more internationalised. Chapter 7 revealed that academics had captured the institutional signal, as many mentioned the perceived importance of becoming internationalised, in the context where internationalisation was underscored by universities. Consequently, some

participants oriented their academic life towards a more internationalised route, by seeking opportunities for international collaborations, conducting overseas academic visits, participating in international conferences, as well as reviewing and editing international journals. Some academics became more active in those international activities with the intention to generate more international publications, while some were not associating those behaviours with international publications. For instance, some chose to participate in international conferences, although this activity would not be recognised or incentivised by institutions.

Academics had reported a tension between teaching and research, since incentives valued publications much more than teaching. Some doctoral supervisors encouraged their doctoral supervisees to publish internationally, as they considered publishing internationally as beneficial to students' research and future competitiveness.

Academics perceived some aspects of the external and internal research culture as being challenged or reinforced by incentives, reflected by the tensions between quality and quantity, integrity and instrumentalism, and equity and inequity. Some academics noted the potential positive influences, such as the enhanced awareness of academic rigour and, in some cases, reinforced equity. However, some academics pointed out potential negative influences, demonstrated by the conflicts between academic values and incentives, the potential emergence of utilitarian and opportunist culture, and the intensified inequality in academia. While some academics interviewed urged for improvements, others admitted compliance to such changes in the research culture.

Chapter 8 explored the reported influences of incentives on academic careers. It revealed that academics reported more concern over career-related incentives than monetary incentives. Career-related incentives influenced academics' job security, career progression, relevant income, and dignity. Academics could experience those influences throughout their academic life, from being employed, to passing the ITE assessment, to getting promoted, to going through annual reviews, and to gaining honorary titles. Moreover, the requirements or preference for international publications released signals to academics that international publications were essential to their career progression.

## **9.2 Discussion of findings**

This section reviews several findings of the research and discusses them in the context of previous literature. It intends to make contributions to the theoretical understandings and practices of internationalisation and research incentives. By examining the case of Chinese HSS, it acknowledges and challenges the centre-periphery model. It also revisits findings on research incentives, aiming to advance the conceptualisation of research incentives by discussing the typology of academics' responses and proposing a framework for incentives and international publications. This section follows with the discussion on a series of undesirable influences of incentives in their implementation.

### **9.2.1 Beyond the centre-periphery model**

Both documentary analysis and interviews revealed some traces of the unequalled internationalisation in Chinese HSS, particularly echoing to the centre-

periphery model. However, the findings of this research also showed alternative dynamics in Chinese HSS to challenge and reshape the centre-periphery model in global knowledge production.

### *Echoing the centre-periphery model*

The findings of this research suggested that Chinese HSS research displayed some features of the centre-periphery model and exemplified the English hegemony, in the context of incentivising international publications.

At the institutional level, the review of incentive policies and interviews with stakeholders revealed the national emphasis on SSCI and A&HCI publications in higher education. As previous research suggested, SSCI and A&HCI publications demonstrated the dominance of Western knowledge and the English language (Archambault et al., 2006; Zhou et al., 2008). In incentivising those publications, Chinese universities have been adopting these standards and norms from global knowledge centres to assess domestic knowledge production. At individual academics' level, some academics interviewed observed a clear constraint of the international publications produced when Chinese academics conformed to such standards. They argued that employing Western theories to interpret Chinese cases offered limited theoretical contributions to knowledge. Such research exemplified a type of literature depicted by Connell (2007b) as 'methodological projection', framing data from the periphery by concepts, debates, and methodologies from the centres (p. 380).

A pervasive preference in Chinese HSS for communicating with and learning from global centres was also demonstrated in other ways. Interviewees perceived most institutions favoured returnee academics in recruitment, especially

those educated in global centres. Some institutions required academics to have overseas research experiences for promotion. Academics reported choosing English-speaking countries, especially the US, as destinations for overseas academic visits. Participants described their collaborators with an emphasis on their English-language ability or whether they were native English-speakers. Editors of newly established journals also shared the desire to make their journals indexed by SSCI and A&HCI.

Language-wise, the appreciation of English-language publications and the devaluation of non-English publications were clear in both incentive documents and interviews. Firstly, universities simplified ‘international publications’ as ‘English-language publications’, with their focuses only on SSCI and A&HCI publications, where the majority were published in English. Research published in other non-English foreign languages, mostly in non-SSCI and non-A&HCI international journals, were treated as inferior to English-medium publications and sometimes inferior to domestic publications. Under current incentive schemes, whether the research was published in English has become a criterion for evaluating HSS research, while a variety of HSS research areas demanded the use of non-English foreign languages, such as Japanese literature or French philosophy. Such a situation positioned academics working with non-English foreign languages at disadvantages in research and careers, and might discourage them to contribute to global knowledge production and exchange in the legitimate language of their research.

Moreover, institutional incentives demonstrated a tendency to devalue Chinese-language publications. Marginson and van der Wende (2007a) once speculated that the Chinese language might become globally significant, if China

promotes it as the language of scientific research. They also suggested English might be dominant in NS, while linguistic plurality might develop in HSS (Marginson & van der Wende, 2007a). However, the findings of this research revealed the opposite. The analysis of incentive documents, as well as interviews with senior administrators and academics all suggested the increasing importance of English language in Chinese HSS. English-medium publications were more valued in incentives than most Chinese-language publications, institutions tended to recruit academics with high English proficiency, and academics without the mastery of academic English felt unconfident and intended to improve their English level by conducting overseas academic visits. In addition, participants also tended to express many terms in English during the interviews, such as ‘reviewers’, ‘comments’, and ‘accepted’, as presented in **6.2.1 Language issues**. Those terms all had synonyms in the Chinese context and can be expressed in Chinese, but the English phrases were integrated into academics’ expressions about international publications throughout interviews. The constant usage of such English terms in the interviews suggested the socialisation of academic English language for some academics, in their academic work or even in everyday life. All the evidence suggested an increasing dominance of English in Chinese HSS research.

#### *Alternative dynamics*

Notwithstanding some demonstrations of the centre-periphery model and English hegemony, this research identified alternative dynamics within Chinese HSS to challenge the hegemony of Western knowledge centres. Such dynamics were demonstrated by the growing notion of ‘going-out’ in HSS, the attempts to

establish internationally recognised journals based in China, and some institutions' revised policies to value top domestic journals and classify international journals.

Firstly, the findings of this research revealed a shift in individuals' understandings of internationalisation, as reflected by the commonly perceived notion of 'going-out'. In interviews, some senior administrators, academics, and journal editors used the term 'going-out' and talked about the 'going-out' as an advanced approach compared with the one-way learning in the past. Their accounts well echoed the shift in the central government's political discourses and orientations as discussed in Chapter 1.

However, interviews revealed different understandings of the 'going-out' of HSS research, reflected by controversies over a certain type of international publications that mainly introduced Chinese contexts and experiences to the world (presented in **6.2 Perceived differences between international and domestic publications**). Some academics considered such publications as the demonstration of 'going-out', and they observed the international community had become increasingly interested in Chinese stories. On the contrary, some academics argued that those publications did not represent genuine 'going-out', since they were considered as barely introducing Chinese contexts and not contributing to original knowledge production. Therefore, those academics believed that Chinese HSS scholars should try to advance theories and debates in international academia, which they thought would constitute the real 'going-out' of Chinese HSS.

Based on the findings of this research and previous scholarly and political discussion, both claims were partially grounded. If examining the publications from the perspective of knowledge as a global public/common good (Marginson,

2007, 2016), such research could contribute to the global knowledge production by pluralising and widening the global knowledge of Chinese experiences and discourses. Therefore, those studies were not of no academic value as some participants considered. In addition, those studies were in line with the political calling for ‘going-out’ and promoting Chinese discourses to the world. Therefore, they had practical and political implications for supporting national strategies. However, such studies’ contribution to domestic knowledge production could be limited, since as some participants reported, some of them only introduced common knowledge in China and would not be considered as original research if published in Chinese. In conclusion, contributions to both domestic and global knowledge production should be equally valued; while there is no denying in their contributions to the global knowledge production, there is no need to prioritise those ‘introductory’ studies in research incentives and evaluations.

In general, ‘going-out’ of Chinese HSS could be conceptualised as an ascending process, starting from basic levels of introducing Chinese contexts, and progressing to more profound and critical engagements with global knowledge production and dissemination. Despite the controversies, academics’ accounts of ‘going-out’ attempts, particularly some academics’ determination to participate in global theoretical discussions, revealed a tendency to establish and promote Chinese HSS knowledge in the global knowledge system, as an alternative to only learning from and staying inferior to global knowledge centres.

Secondly, some Chinese academics were making efforts to establish journals that could be recognised internationally. Although those journals were published in English, exemplifying the prestige of English language in academic research, the chief-editors and editorial boards involved many Chinese HSS

academics. This displayed a change from the previous Western-dominated international academic publishing industry (Altbach, 2009; Belcher, 2007). In addition, although those journals' scope would be internationally-targeted, editors expressed the intention to maintain some China-related focuses. The development of those journals might contribute to a less Western-oriented field for international publication and knowledge production. In addition, interviews also revealed that many Chinese HSS had been reviewing for international journals, which may also lead to a more diverse group of 'gate-keepers' in international publications (Altbach, 2009).

Finally, some institutions were also making changes to incentives, trying to move towards a balance between international and domestic publications. Although incentive documents revealed the prestige of SSCI and A&HCI publications over most domestic publications, the Chinese-language journal *Social Sciences in China* had equal or higher status than SSCI and A&HCI journals in some universities' incentive documents. Interviews with senior administrators and academics also revealed the high reputation of *Social Sciences in China* in Chinese academia. Senior academics talked about the tendency to place more emphasis on top Chinese journals like *Social Sciences in China*, and mentioned the intention to classify SSCI and A&HCI journals into different tiers. Those changes might diminish the over-emphasis on SSCI and A&HCI publications in HSS, and may change the situation of devaluating domestic knowledge.

### 9.2.2 Theorising incentives

This section revisits theoretical discussions on individuals' responses to incentives and the influences of incentives. It mainly reflects on the typology of academics' responses to incentives, discusses the use of monetary incentives, and proposes a framework to understand and explain the relationship between incentives and international publications.

#### *Typology of academics' responses to incentives*

This research conceptualised four types of academics' responses to incentives as proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. The categorisation echoed earlier studies on individuals' responses to institutional policies. For instance, Trowler (1998) examined academics' responses to the introduction of a credit framework in higher education in the first half of the 1990s. He categorised academics' responses into four types: swimming (content and accept the status quo), policy reconstruction (content but work around or eager to change policy), sinking (discontent but accept the status quo), and using coping strategies (discontent and decide to change policy) (Trowler, 1998). Merton's (1968) typology classified individuals' responses to the strain caused by a gap between cultural norms and institutionalised means into five types: conformity (accepting the agenda), innovation (accept the goals but adapting means by themselves), ritualism (surface compliance), retreatism (rejection of cultural goals and institutional means), and rebellion (seeking for changes to existing structure).

In general, classifying academics based on their responses to introduced change appeared to be useful in capturing and theorising the relationship between academics and institutional changes. However, the categorisation in this research

differed from Merton's (1968) typology, as Merton's classification mainly focused on individuals' reactions towards conflicting goals and means imposed on individuals. The categorisation in the current study resembled Trowler's (1998) categorisation because both frameworks included two factors: academics' attitudes and behaviours. However, the categorisation in the current study has focused on the cognitive level of action, namely intentions, rather than the actual behavioural responses as depicted in Trowler's categorisation.

This study chose the concept of 'intention' rather than 'behaviour' because academics' behavioural responses may change over time; while 'behaviour' was used in Trowler's study as a summary of actions taken in the past and/or at the present and/or in the future, 'intention' could capture an individual's expression of intent at a certain moment. For instance, an academic could have no international publications before, but expressed strong intention to publish internationally, as a response to the newly-revised incentive document. In this case, the participant's intention, rather than past behaviours of not publishing internationally, illustrated his/her response to current incentives. While the 'intention' can be documented at the time of the interview, it would be difficult to generalise the conflicting actions or future behavioural changes with the concept of 'behaviour'.

Moreover, using 'intention' and 'attitude' could build a coherent framework at the cognitive level, which allows room for exploring the dynamics between cognitive responses and actual behaviours. For instance, findings revealed a close relationship between being proactive academics and participating in international collaborations. However, the research also identified some resistant academics who had previously been internationally active and had

international publications. The correlation or inconsistency between participants' cognitive responses and actual (past/present/future) behaviours allowed room for more comprehensive discussions on incentives' influences.

Finally, the categorisation in this study focused on academics' intention to achieve the stated goals of incentives, rather than the intention to follow the incentives. As revealed in Chapter 5, there might be a mismatch between the intention to follow the incentive, and the intention to reach the goal encouraged by the incentive, that is, to publish internationally in this study. Therefore, the typology in this study could be useful to explore individuals' responses to certain incentives, where individuals' intention to achieve the goals incentivised might be inconsistent with their intentions to follow the incentives.

#### *The use of monetary incentives*

Chapter 4 revealed that current incentives for HSS international publications in Chinese universities appeared as two forms: monetary incentives and career-related incentives. Between them, interviews indicated that both senior administrators and academics were more aware of monetary incentives, which were mentioned as explicit and straightforward incentives. Nonetheless, in interviews with academics, most of them expressed less concern with the financial bonuses than with the career-related incentives.

Academics' lower concern with monetary incentives may be explained by academics' pursuit of intrinsic motivations and reputations. As some academics reported in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, academics' motivations for publications might be intrinsic values that academics should pursue the truth and contribute to academia and society. Providing them with monetary bonuses for publications

challenged or changed the relationship between their intrinsic values and academic work, since they believed the aim of research should not be about fame and wealth. As Chapter 5 revealed, some academics even felt rebellious towards international publications due to such incentives. This echoed arguments and findings by many behavioural economists and psychologists that monetary incentives may backfire, as providing external bonuses could decrease one's own intrinsic motivation (e.g. Deci, 1971; Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Academics also expected intangible rewards – reputation in academic work. As Merton (1957) noted, scientific researchers considered reputation as a reward and the recognition for originality as a form of intellectual property. In Chapter 6, some participants' accounts exemplified the statement, since their reported motivation for publication was the pursuit of academic recognition. As Chapter 8 discussed, reputation was attached to some career-related incentives. For instance, having many international publications could increase academics' chances of getting honorary titles, leading to heightened reputation in academia. In turn, higher reputation may lead to more honorary titles, prestigious grants, and important positions in academic associations. Comparatively, monetary bonuses were less directly associated with reputation; hence most academics expressed less interest in monetary incentives than career-related ones.

Another explanation is, as discussed in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7, that monetary bonuses for HSS international publications were not high enough to stimulate motivation for all academics in the study, particularly when compared with the bonus value for NS international publications.

The last explanation might be that not all interviewees would feel comfortable talking about publication-for-money in front of me, a junior student

and a potential academic peer. Compared to publication-for-money, highlighting other publication motivations such as academic development, personal pursuits, or career advancement might be seen as more politically correct.

#### *A framework for incentives and international publications*

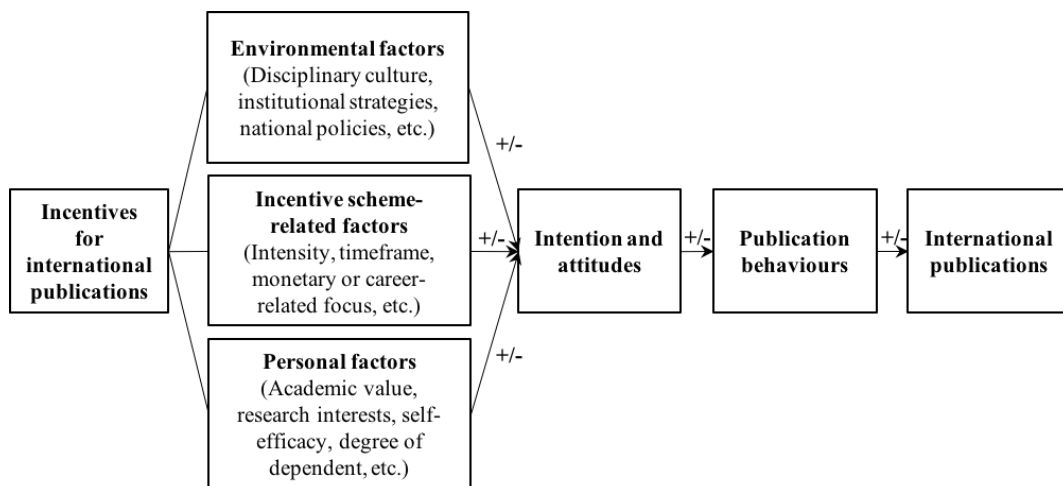
This research indicates that incentives directly or indirectly affected HSS academics' publication motivations, perceptions, and behaviours. However, there is little evidence to infer a linear and automatic causal relation between incentives for HSS international publications and the growth of international publication numbers.

As Chapter 4 discussed, some senior administrators acknowledged the importance of international publication and citation numbers in national and international benchmarking. Therefore, they considered incentives for international publications as an approach to increase the number of international publications, thus the ranking of the institution on domestic and international league tables. They regarded increasing HSS international publications as a chance to break through the recycle of the status of global university rankings, as suggested in the previous literature (Marginson, 2011b, 2014, 2017). Figure 15 in Chapter 4 summarised the imagining of some senior administrators as a potentially 'virtuous' cycle.

However, interviews with academics revealed that the relationship between incentives for international publications and the number of international publications did not always correspond to an automatic positive causal relation expected by some senior administrators. The following framework (Figure 17) illustrates a possible relation between incentives and international publications,

which are likely to be dependent on academics' attitudes, intentions, and behaviours, as well as on a range of other factors: environmental factors, incentive schemes-related factors, and personal factors.

**Figure 17 A Framework for Incentives and International Publications**



The framework was inspired by Bonner and Sprinkle's (2002) framework to explain how monetary incentives could positively impact on effort and performance. It has been developed further by employing variables conceptualised from the findings of the current study. In addition, it not only illustrates the positive outcomes of incentives as in Bonner and Sprinkle's (2002) framework, but also shows how incentives could fail to achieve their goals and promote academics' international publications. The following sections explain each factor and the relations between them.

*(1) Environmental factors*

Environmental factors include external variables that could influence the impact of incentives, positively or negatively. The political contexts introduced in Chapter 1, institutional strategies discussed in Chapter 4, and academics' perceptions of national policies, institutional agenda, and disciplinary cultures explored in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 laid the ground for generating this variable.

As Chapter 7 suggested, disciplinary culture played a vital role as an external factor to influence academics' attitudes and intentions. Academics reported that some disciplines might demand more international communications than others, and publishing internationally has become the norm in some HSS disciplines. Therefore, academics from disciplines with less demand on international communications may have no intention to publish internationally.

The institutional strategic mission could also affect academics' intention and efforts. For instance, Chapter 6 revealed that some academics' motivations to publish were consistent with an institutional agenda, hence the positive attitudes and intention to publish internationally. Chapter 7 showed that some academics were aware of the institutional strategy of promoting internationalisation, so they intend to prepare themselves by accumulating more international publications.

National policies could also draw academics' attention to certain agendas. As Chapter 7 discussed, some academics supported the national 'going-out' policy orientation, thus displaying favourable attitudes towards incentives and stronger intentions to publish internationally.

## *(2) Incentive scheme-related factors*

Incentives' influences on academics' attitudes and intentions were also dependant on factors specific to an incentive scheme. Generating from some characteristics of incentives from Chapter 4 and academics' accounts in Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, this study found several influential incentive scheme-related factors: the intensity of incentives, the required timeframe, and the type of incentives.

Some academics may feel discouraged and uncomfortable towards incentives if they were mandatory, generating 'rebellious' feelings as discussed in Chapter 5. In Chapter 7, academics' discussions of the differences between Uni-SHA and Uni-SHB also exemplified this case. However, Chapter 8 showed that mandatory incentives, such as some career-related ones, may succeed in forcing academics to decide to publish internationally despite their reported discomfort.

Requiring publications in a restrained timeframe, such as three years for the ITE assessment or one year for annual assessment and bonuses, could also make academics feel discouraged to publish internationally. As Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 discussed, some academics perceived the generally longer time needed to devote to international publications, resulting in decisions to publish domestically in order to secure their jobs and titles at certain career stages.

The type of incentives could also influence academics' intention and attitudes. As illustrated in Chapter 8 and discussed in **9.2.2 Theorising incentives**, monetary incentives may not be the best approach to provoke academics' intention to publish internationally. Moreover, Chapter 7 also presented cases where some academics detested monetary incentives as they associated them with a perceived utilitarian culture.

### *(3) Personal factors*

Personal factors also influenced whether incentives could generate favourable or unfavourable attitudes or increase or decrease academics' intention. Personal factors were generated from findings in Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, and included academics' values, research interests, and self-efficacy.

Academic values held by individual scholars could be influential. As Chapter 7 discussed, academics pursuing the intrinsic value of research would feel challenged by incentives, which advocated for external benefits. However, those who perceived academic work as task-based may welcome incentives, which provide extra bonuses for work.

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 demonstrated that academics perceived incentives differently, depending on their research interests: some conducting research on certain topics difficult to be recognised and published domestically. Those scholars had little choice but to publish internationally. In their cases, incentives for international publications acted not as impetus, but as an assurance for them that their international publications would not only be recognised, but also could bring other benefits.

Self-efficacy is the judgement of 'how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations' (Bandura, 1982, p. 122). In Chapter 5 to Chapter 7, academics described their self-efficacy in international publications as dependant on their self-evaluated English proficiency, research training, education background, and experiences with international research activities. For academics with a reported high perception of self-efficacy, incentives could validate those with international publication experiences and stimulate those without international publications. However, incentives could also

discourage those with a low perception of self-efficacy, since they perceived themselves as not capable of generating international publications. Some academics with hesitant and resistant responses to incentives exemplified such cases.

How dependant academics were on incentives also shaped their intention and efforts to publish internationally. Academics' accounts in Chapter 6 and Chapter 8 demonstrated that for either monetary or career-related incentives, some academics expressed a higher level of dependency on them than others. Some academics may need the monetary bonus to relieve financial burdens, while others were not concerned with the bonus value; and some academics may rely on career-related incentives for job security or promotion, while others had already secured their academic positions and titles. Chapter 7 also presented the case where senior academics with a low-level of dependency on incentives encouraged junior students and academics to publish internationally, whose academic development and career advancement were considered as largely dependent on incentive schemes. In general, academics who were more dependent on incentives may not necessarily express favourable attitudes, but they could voluntarily or involuntarily become more active in their intentions to publish internationally.

#### *(4) Intentions, attitudes, and publication behaviours*

Drawing from findings in Chapter 5 to Chapter 8, this study argues that environmental factors, incentive scheme's factors, and personal factors could bring negative or positive impacts on academics' intentions and efforts to publish internationally.

Intentions and attitudes were also influencing academics' publication behaviours. For instance, most proactive academics reported a strong interest to collaborate internationally, with the intention to generate more international publications. Some resistant academics chose to write academic papers in Chinese instead of English, thus reducing the possibility to publish internationally. However as discussed in Chapter 5, academics' intentions and attitudes may not be in line with their academic publication behaviours. Adaptive and proactive academics, for instance, may put more effort into writing papers targeted at the international audience. However, they may not generate immediate international publications due to time constraints.

As Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 illustrated, academics' publication behaviours may lead to an increase or decrease in the volume of international publications. Some participants made an effort to publish internationally, such as by participating in international research activities, thus contributing to the growth of international publications. Other academics worked towards disseminating knowledge within the domestic realm, leading to no increase in international publication volumes.

In conclusion, the framework illustrates that incentives' influence on the number of international publications was complicated and far from a linear causal relation. Particularly, incentives would not necessarily, or automatically, result in more international publications. Whether incentives could promote or discourage international publications was dependent on environmental factors, incentive scheme-related factors, personal factors, as well as academics' attitudes, intentions, and publication behaviours. The framework proposed here aims to

capture the complexity of this relationship, map the interactions among these variables, and provide a tool to explain how incentives could succeed or fail to reach their goals.

### **9.2.3 ‘Opening Pandora’s box’: Undesirable influences of incentives**

Academic-SHA1, as a senior expert on Chinese higher education research, made a strong statement in the interview that some research incentives and evaluation methods may ‘open Pandora’s box’, resulting in undesirable consequences that could harm the HSS and China’s academia. The findings of the current study resonate with the statement, as interview data revealed several undesirable influences of incentives for HSS international publications.

Drawing on the review of institutional incentive policies and interviews with relevant stakeholders, this research suggested the existence of managerialism in Chinese HSS. The study also revealed some unintended influences, demonstrated by the conflicts between quality and quantity in HSS evaluation, intensified inequity in Chinese HSS academia, a mismatch between incentives’ intention to promote international collaborations and the actual impacts on cooperation, the possible vicious influences of only incentivising SSCI and A&HCI publications, and a contradiction between specific incentive regulations and the open knowledge practices.

#### *Managerialism and negative consequences*

The review of 172 incentive documents, as discussed in Chapter 4, suggested that the use of incentives for HSS international publications exemplified the managerialism and accountability culture in higher education.

Those incentives increased the institutional accountability of Chinese HSS academics and positioned them as ‘managed professionals’ (Blackmore, 2003, p. 5). Academic interviewees’ accounts of perceived influences also echoed some consequences of managerialism found in the previous research (Blackmore, 2003; Fanghanel, 2012). Incentives’ emphasis on productivity and performativity also shaped HSS academics’ research and careers, just as Olssen (2016) argued, leading to some academics conforming to external regulations and motivations, some of which at odds with aspects of their academic values. For instance, some academics reported a diminishing of their agency in research, particularly illustrated by some adaptive academics’ intentions to publish internationally despite their unfavourable attitudes towards incentives.

In addition, incentives’ influences on the relationship between research and teaching illustrated the negative impact of incentives found in the previous literature. Prendergast (1999) argued that incentives on certain aspects of the work could lead to agents’ ‘gaming’ with the compensation system, and reallocating activities towards directly compensated ones and away from uncompensated activities (p. 8-9). Examples in Chapter 7 illustrated the case. Since many incentives mainly focused on the number of international publications in certain journals, some academics had chosen to or were hesitant to play the incentive game, concentrating only on publishing in certain international journals, and ignoring other activities such as teaching, conducting long-term research, and publishing domestically.

### *Conflicts between quantity and quality*

The focus on publication quantity rather than quality, as illustrated in the review of incentives and perceived by academics interviewed, suggested a tendency that institutions valued measurable forms of knowledge production much more than the intrinsic value of research. For instance, many academics perceived that current incentives were focused on the increased number of international publications, without assessing the originality, contribution, and impacts of those publications.

Instrumentalism, as academics concerned, might be a relevant consequence undesirable to HSS academia. As interviews illustrated, academics were worried the utilitarian culture might be fostered by the quantity-oriented incentives. Participants also reported some HSS academics who deliberately sought for benefits from incentives through a utilitarian approach. Although interviewees did not report misconducts or academic frauds in HSS international publications, there have been media reports about academic frauds and misconducts in NS, along with the institutional incentives for and individuals' emphasis on SCI publications (e.g. Normile, 2017; A. Qin, 2017). Should incentives for HSS international publications insist on emphasising quantity rather than quality, there is a risk that the utilitarian culture perceived by academics might pervade in Chinese HSS.

In addition, evaluating academics based on publication numbers might result in the reification of HSS academics, as one interviewee Academic-XA4 pointed out. Reification refers to the treatment of people as things (Lukács, 1971). Research findings suggested that current incentives and evaluation methods narrowed academics' contributions to international publications. Academics'

research capability and achievements were simplified to the number of publications in certain journals, leading to the tendency to regard academics as paper producing instruments. As academics already complained, the tendency would not contribute to the development of individual academics or the advancement of Chinese HSS.

### *Inequity in HSS academia*

Interviews revealed enormous disparities perceived by HSS academics across different institutions, disciplines, and backgrounds. Some perceived incentives as challenging the hierarchies rooted among Chinese universities and between junior and senior academics. However, those challenges to inequity were based on the accepted prestigious status of international publications, which as academic interviewees discussed, was not necessarily beneficial to Chinese HSS. Therefore, incentivising international publications may generate and cement inequity in Chinese HSS academia, because the incentives evaluate various academics based on a single unified standard: publications in certain internationally-indexed journals.

Incentives for international publications may fortify the inferior status of HSS research in comparison with NS research and generate hierarchies within HSS research, since some disciplines and research areas were perceived as more productive in the international publication. In addition, incentives may reinforce returnee academics' privileges in academia. In line with previous research on returnees (Jonkers & Cruz-Castro, 2013; F. Li et al., 2015; Zweig & Yang, 2014), returnee academics in this research also expressed a willingness to publish internationally and perceived themselves as capable of producing international

publications. Most returnee academics, except for those returning from non-English speaking countries, fell into either proactive or adaptive category. For some of them, publishing internationally was the only choice, because they lacked training in Chinese-medium publication. However, those international publications turned out to be ‘a blessing in disguise’ under current incentives, resulting in more benefits for returnee academics than their non-returnee peers.

Interviews revealed that the unified evaluation standard was particularly influential in career-related incentive. The underlying assumption of those career-related incentives was that, HSS academics should have enough number of publications in certain international journals to prove one’s research capability. However, this assumption could bring damage to Chinese HSS academia. Under current incentives, each academic was evaluated with a standardised criterion at various career stages, with the focus on international publications rather than their research quality, contributions, and impacts. In some cases, academics reported the key to success being simplified as having more international publications than others. Consequently, academics pursuing job security, aspiring for promotion, and concerned with income and reputation would be driven by incentives and strive to publish internationally. Otherwise, they would be left in a disadvantaged position.

Some academics perceived the inequity and intended to change the situation by adjusting their research life. However, those attempts could lead them into a homogenised situation. For instance, some non-returnees intended to go abroad, to gain experiences in international research and to acknowledge foreign academics just like their returnee peers. The consequence of those attempts, as Academic-WH1 commented, was that ‘everyone is like a clone, and everyone is

the same'. Both the attempts to change the unequal situation and the outcome of being homogenised reflected the existence of inequity in HSS, and illustrated how powerful incentives were in strengthening the inequity.

#### *Adverse effects on international collaborations*

As discussed in Chapter 4, senior administrators claimed that one of the aims of incentives was to foster the internationalisation of HSS research. However, most incentives mandated academics to be the first author or corresponding author for full bonuses and recognition. Senior administrators explained the requirement as to recognise major contributors, and more importantly, to make every international publication count in university rankings – as they acknowledged, some rankings only counted first author or corresponding author's publications.

However, some academics perceived such regulations as discouraging collaboration, which was deemed crucial to international publications by many participants. In Chapter 7, some academics interviewed expressed hesitance in international collaborations. They felt that the pressure to negotiate the first authorship had a negative impact on the dynamics of potential collaborations. At the same time, since incentives only recognised the first or corresponding author, they may result in Chinese academics being reluctant to collaborate if they could only be the second or third author.

Moreover, the requirement for the first or corresponding author placed other collaborators, especially foreign collaborators, in a minor position in producing international publications. Some Chinese academics might be prompted to seek foreign collaborators with limited expectations on their own contributions, such as only expecting them to polish the language. Findings in Chapter 7

supported this argument. Some academics mentioned their co-authors more as proof-readers, rather than collaborators who contributed to other aspects like research design, data collection, and theoretical discussions. Those academics were content with the situation, since their collaborators were usually not the first or corresponding author of the paper. However, such collaborations stopped short of a genuine knowledge exchange, which limited their contribution to the development of both Chinese academia and international research.

#### *Potential consequences of only incentivising SSCI and A&HCI publications*

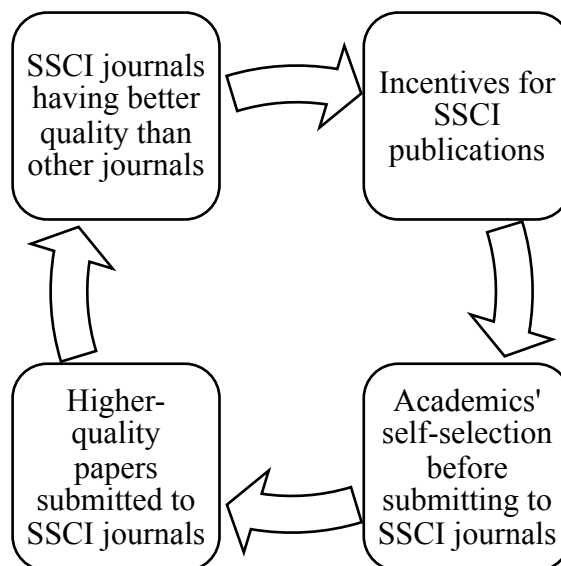
The review of incentive documents revealed that institutions formulated incentives to encourage international publications, but many defined HSS international publications as merely SSCI and A&HCI publications. As the literature review revealed, the SSCI and A&HCI databases had limitations in their coverage, as reflected by the languages and countries of publications. However, senior administrators were not completely concerned with those limitations. Some of them simply borrowed the provision from other institutions or from NS areas, considering SSCI as the counterpart of SCI in HSS. Some institutions were even found not to recognise A&HCI journals, although HSS academics considered A&HCI important to Humanities areas. Some academics internalised the quality assumptions behind the regulation, and consequently regarded all SSCI publications as of the highest quality in HSS. While often academics were aware of the value of other journals, they still felt compelled to focus on SSCI publications to get recognised.

Consequently, as revealed in Chapter 6, academics working in non-English research areas, like Japanese and French, experienced disadvantages

under current incentives for limited international publications; although they could publish in international journals, those publications may not be recognised in incentives and evaluations because they were not in SSCI or A&HCI journals. In addition, many English journals were not indexed by SSCI or A&HCI indices but might be indexed by other international indices like SCOPUS. However, academics became hesitant in choosing those journals because they were not SSCI or A&HCI journals.

In contrast with the policy justification of a focus on SSCI and A&HCI journals on the grounds of perceived high quality, this research proposes a possible cycle of encouraging publications in certain journals. This cycle (illustrated in Figure 18) was supported by accounts of senior administrators, academic interviewees, and journal editors.

**Figure 18 Possible Cycle of Incentivising SSCI Publications**



As Figure 18 indicates, institutions encouraged SSCI publications due to a notion that SSCI journals may have better quality. Since incentives emphasised

SSCI publications, academics who would follow incentives made self-selection before submission and chose only their best research for SSCI journals to increase their chances for publication. SSCI journals thus gained better sources of contributions and maintained their high quality. Interviews with academics revealed the self-selection process for some academics, as shown in **6.3 Choices of where and what to publish**. Journal editors of the SSCI and A&HCI journals also confirmed an enhancement of submission quality after their journals were indexed by SSCI and A&HCI.

It appeared difficult for outsiders, namely both domestic journals and international journals not indexed by SSCI/A&HCI, to enter the cycle and receive high-quality submissions. This could lead to a ‘Matthew effect’ in journals – high-status journals reproduced its reputation through institutional incentives, and journals incentivised due to the high quality would keep flourishing, while others would gradually wither. One solution for other journals appeared as striving to enter this cycle. Interviews with Chinese editors of newly established English-language journals showed that they all shared this speculation, that only SSCI journals could attract better contributions under current incentives. Consequently, they were all determined to make their journals SSCI journals. However, those journals’ efforts to become indexed by SSCI only reinforced the legitimacy of SSCI journals and the hierarchies among HSS journals, which would not benefit the development of Chinese and international HSS research.

#### *Tensions rising from prioritising print-format publications*

Finally, the requirement for print-format publication rather than online publication of many incentive schemes, as some interviewees revealed, caused

tensions for academics. With the development of open access and online publication, it has become an increasingly normal practice for journals to publish accepted papers in the online format before they were allocated a place in print-format journals (for instance, known as ‘online first’ by Springer, n.d.). However, some Chinese universities did not recognise online publications in incentive policies. As a consequence, academics reported facing the tension between institutional requirements for print-format and the notion of open knowledge sharing and circulation.

### **9.3 Implications for institutional policymaking**

Based on reflections on the internationalisation of HSS, the use of research incentives, and the undesirable influences of such incentives, this research proposes several recommendations for Chinese universities in institutional policymaking to improve HSS research and foster the internationalisation of HSS.

(1) As national policies, senior university administrators, and some HSS academics all proposed, the internationalisation of Chinese HSS should not simply follow global knowledge centres and accept Western norms in research incentive and evaluations. Universities were making efforts to promote Chinese HSS research by incentivising international publications, but current incentives worked partially to strengthen the peripheral status of Chinese HSS research. Therefore, universities should pay attention to the balance between international and indigenous knowledge production, as well as the balance between English-language publications and publications in other languages, particularly in the Chinese language. In addition, universities should provide more support for the development of domestic journals and recently-established international journals

based within Chinese institutions. Domestic journals should also establish a more rigorous peer review process, and minimise the influences of non-academic factors in domestic publications, as reported by academics in Chapter 6.

(2) This research suggests that the cash-for-publication scheme may not be the best approach for incentivising international publications, because monetary bonuses may backfire or get ignored by academics. This research also found that academics paid more attention to career-related incentives. Therefore, universities should take great care when formulating incentives, particularly career-related ones. They should consider employing other forms of incentives, rather than (or in addition to) monetary incentives or career-related incentives, if they intend to stimulate international publication numbers. For instance, institutions could improve facilities for a more convenient environment to conduct research internationally, such as guaranteeing easier access to international databases. Institutions could also provide support and training for academics on English academic writing, as many participants considered it as the major hindrance to their international publications.

(3) The findings of this research indicate that although incentives for international publications could influence academics' publication behaviours, incentives do not always lead to an automatic increase in international publication numbers. In addition, this research reveals that the growing number of international publications is only one aspect of the internationalisation of HSS. Hence, universities should make a clear judgement of the relationship between internationalisation, international publications, and incentives for HSS international publications.

(4) Considering the negative influences of the managerial approach in current incentives, universities should engage more HSS academics in decision-making. In general, incentive policies should not be imposed on academics from a top-down model.

(5) Incentives should shift the focus from quantity to quality, and try to be aligned with academics' intrinsic motivations and academic values. The evaluation of international publications should not be only based on publication counts, but also evaluate the originality, contribution, and impacts of the research. Moreover, universities should nurture and cultivate academics as scholars, rather than treating them as 'paper producers', forcing or tempting them to publish.

(6) Universities should acknowledge the complexity of incentivising HSS research. This study revealed that academics responded to incentives differently and perceived the impacts of incentives differently, which derived from differences among disciplines, institutions, and educational backgrounds. Current incentives generated and cemented the inequity in HSS academia by employing a uniformed standard without differentiation. To change the unequal situation, universities should acknowledge and address the variety of HSS academic research in making incentives. Incentives for and evaluations of HSS should not simply follow the approach of assessing NS research. Moreover, there may not be a necessity to incentivise international publications in certain HSS areas.

(7) Universities should also remove or revise certain provisions, such as only incentivising publications in journals indexed by certain databases, demanding academics to be the first authors to be recognised, and requiring publications to be in hard-copy format. Those regulations contradicted to the nature of knowledge production, collaboration, and dissemination, and would stop

some academics from contributing to international knowledge generation and circulation.

In conclusion, Chinese universities should make efforts to promote the internationalisation of HSS. However, incentives should be formulated to serve the purposes of HSS research, rather than the purposes of HSS research being shaped by unintended influences of incentives.

#### **9.4 Implications for further studies**

This research identifies several directions for future studies on the issue of incentives and the internationalisation of HSS research.

(1) This research suggested alternative dynamics in the Chinese HSS beyond the ‘centre-periphery’ model. It builds upon previous scholarly discussions in other ‘peripheral’ countries. However, this research also indicated that Chinese HSS is at the earlier stages of ‘going-out’; therefore, future research could track the future development of internationalisation of Chinese HSS.

(2) The classification of academics based on their responses to incentives (dependent on attitudes and intentions) may be of theoretical interests for future studies exploring individuals’ responses to institutional agenda, particularly when individuals’ behaviours were not consistent. In addition, the framework for the relationship between incentive and international publications may be further explored and employed in studies on the influences of incentives.

(3) Both documentary analyses and interviews indicated that Chinese universities were changing their incentive approaches. Therefore, there may be further developments in the context of building ‘double first-class universities/disciplines’. Further studies may trace and compare the development

of institutional incentives in the future. In addition, since there were limitations to the sampling of case universities and the access to HSS academics and incentive documents (discussed in Chapter 3), future studies might address those limitations and investigate universities or academics with characteristics different from the cases of this study.

(4) This research found that incentives for international publications may also influence doctoral students, as some interviewees suggested that they would encourage their doctoral supervisees to publish internationally. Since only a few participants touched upon this topic, it does not allow for a generalisation of this observation. However, further studies on doctoral training and internationalisation might address this area.

(5) Some participants mentioned grant applications as essential in Chinese academics' career progression. As Chapter 7 mentioned, some Chinese academics would invite foreign collaborators after securing domestic grants, and international academics were not reported to contribute to grant applications. However, with insufficient evidence, the relationship between international publications and grant applications remains unclear. Questions like whether grants could facilitate international publications may be of interests for future studies. Furthermore, it is of interest to explore whether applicants' international publication experiences or the potential to publish funded-research internationally could benefit grant applications.

## **9.5 Conclusions**

This research investigated the incentives for HSS international publications and the influences on Chinese HSS academics' research and careers.

It applied a multiple-case study design with six case universities in China, and drew on a documentary analysis of 172 institutional incentive schemes for HSS international publications, as well as the analysis on interview data with 65 HSS academics, six university administrators, and four HSS journal editors.

This study mapped a national landscape of incentives for HSS international publication in China and identified a growing trend of incentivising HSS international publications among Chinese universities. It presented and discussed the scale, structure, formulation, and implementation of institutional incentives for HSS international publications. This research proposed a typology of academics based on their responses to incentives: proactive, adaptive, resistant, and hesitant. In general, incentives for HSS international publications had directly or indirectly shaped diverse types of HSS academics' research and careers to various degrees.

Based on research findings, this study reflected on the internationalisation of HSS research. It intended to make theoretical contributions by identifying the existence of the centre-periphery model in the internationalisation of Chinese HSS, while presenting and discussing alternative dynamics in Chinese HSS to challenge the Western-oriented model. It also attempted to contribute to the conceptualisation of research incentives and incentives' influences, by developing the typology to classify academics' responses to incentives, and revisited incentive theories with evidence of this research. It also proposed a framework to understand the relationship between incentives and international publications, which pointed out that incentives may not lead to an automatic increase in international publication numbers. This research reviewed the unintended influences of incentives, such as the managerialism culture in HSS, the conflicts

between quantity and quality, the negative influences on international collaborations, the consequences of only incentivising SSCI and A&HCI publications, and the contradiction to the notion and practices of open knowledge.

Theoretical discussions about internationalisation and incentives, as well as the reflections on undesirable influences laid the foundation for practical implications for Chinese universities' policymaking. This study concluded by proposing suggestions for institutional policymaking and further studies. It demonstrated the intention of this research to make practical and scholarly contributions, both to the understanding of internationalisation and incentives, and to the enhanced approaches to internationalising Chinese HSS.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: List of case universities

#### 1A: Initial selection of case universities

University	Types of Incentive schemes	SSCI/ A&HCI articles	'985' or '211'	NS or HSS-oriented	Location	Year of publishing incentive schemes
Uni-SHA	Type A: Bonus schemes for HSS research achievements (originally bonus schemes for HSS academic publications)	SSCI: 1939 A&HCI: 122	'985'	NS	Shanghai	2002; Revised in 2014
Uni-CQ [Deleted in the second-round fieldwork]	Type A: Bonus schemes for research achievements	SSCI: 722 A&HCI: 28	'211'	HSS	Chongqing	2008
Uni-XA	Type B: Bonus schemes for HSS academic paper publications	SSCI: 980 A&HCI: 27	'985'	NS	Shaanxi Province	2001
Uni-SH-2 [Deleted in the second-round fieldwork]	Type B: Bonus schemes for HSS academic paper publications (originally regulation on academic evaluation)	SSCI: 701 A&HCI: 15	'211'	HSS	Shanghai	2009; Revised in 2013
Uni-BJA	Type C: Regulations on academic evaluations (originally bonus scheme for research achievements)	SSCI: 65 A&HCI: 54	'211'	HSS	Beijing	2007; Revised in 2015
Uni-GS [Deleted in the second-round fieldwork]	Type C: Regulations on HSS academic evaluations (originally regulations on academic evaluations)	SSCI: 214 A&HCI: 38	'985'	NS	Gansu Province	2008; Revised in 2010 and 2013

**1B: Final selection of case universities**

University	SSCI/ A&HCI articles (by May 2016)	'985' or '211' university/ Double first- class university or discipline	NS- or HSS- oriented	Location	Year of publishing the university- level incentive documents
Uni-SHA	SSCI: 1939 A&HCI: 122	'985' / Double first- class university	NS	Shanghai (Tier 3 region)	2002; Revised in 2014
Uni-SHB	SSCI: 2325 A&HCI: 217	'985' / Double first- class university	HSS	Shanghai (Tier 3 region)	2001
Uni-BJA	SSCI: 65 A&HCI: 54	'211' / Double first- class discipline	HSS	Beijing (Tier 3 region)	2007; Revised in 2015
Uni-BJB	SSCI: 122 A&HCI: 4	'211' / Double first- class discipline	NS	Beijing (Tier 3 region)	2010; Revised in 2015 and 2016
Uni-XA	SSCI: 980 A&HCI: 27	'985' / Double first- class university	NS	Xi'an, Shaanxi Province (Tier 2 region)	2001; Revised in 2017
Uni-WH	SSCI: 310 A&HCI: 204	'211' / Double first- class discipline	HSS	Wuhan, Hubei Province (Tier 2 region)	2013; Revised in 2016

## Appendix 2: List of interviewees

Name	Discipline/ Offices	Academic title	Degrees obtained abroad	International publication experiences	Senior Administrative roles
<b>Uni-BJA</b>					
SA-BJA	Office of Human Resources				
Academic -BJA1	Marxism and philosophy	Professor		Yes	
Academic -BJA2	French	Professor		Yes	Yes
Academic -BJA3	International relations	Associate Professor		Yes	
Academic -BJA4	English	Professor	Master's; PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJA5	English	Assistant Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJA6	English	Associate Professor	Master's; PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJA7	International relations	Assistant Professor	Joint PhD		
Academic -BJA8	Law	Professor	Master's	Yes	Yes
Academic -BJA9	French	Assistant Professor	Master's; PhD		
<b>Uni-BJB</b>					
SA-BJB	Office of Human Resources				
Academic -BJB1	Japanese	Assistant Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJB2	English	Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJB3	Japanese	Associate Professor	Master's; PhD	Yes	
Academic -BJB4	Sociology	Associate Professor	Joint PhD		
Academic -BJB5	Management	Assistant Professor			
Academic -BJB6	English	Associate Professor			
Academic -BJB7	Japanese	Associate Professor		Yes	
<b>Uni-SHA</b>					
SA-SHA	Office of Social Sciences				
Academic -SHA1	History	Professor		Yes	Yes
Academic -SHA2	English	Associate Professor		Yes	
Academic -SHA3	Anthropology	Assistant Professor	Master's; Joint PhD	Yes	

Academic -SHA4	Media and communication	Professor			
Academic -SHA5	Law	Assistant Professor	Joint PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHA6	English	Professor		Yes	
Academic -SHA7	Media and communication	Associate Professor			
Academic -SHA8	Law	Associate Professor		Yes	
Academic -SHA9	Philosophy	Associate Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHA10	English	Professor			
Academic -SHA11	Education	Associate Professor	Bachelor's Master's PhD	Yes	
<b>Uni-SHB</b>					
SA-SHB	Office of Social Sciences				
Academic -SHB1	Education	Professor		Yes	Yes
Academic -SHB2	History	Assistant Professor			
Academic -SHB3	Law	Assistant Professor	Master's		
Academic -SHB4	Media and communication	Professor			
Academic -SHB5	Chinese	Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHB6	Economics	Associate Professor			
Academic -SHB7	Philosophy	Assistant Professor	Master's PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHB8	Philosophy	Associate Professor			
Academic -SHB9	History	Professor		Yes	
Academic -SHB10	Economics	Professor	Bachelor's PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHB11	History	Associate Professor	Joint PhD	Yes	
Academic -SHB12	Education	Associate Professor	Master's	Yes	
Academic -SHB13	Sociology	Assistant Professor	Master's PhD	Yes	
<b>Uni-XA</b>					
SA-XA	Office of Social Sciences				
Academic -XA1	English	Associate Professor			
Academic -XA2	Law	Associate Professor		Yes	Yes
Academic -XA3	Law	Associate Professor	Master's	Yes	

Academic -XA4	Sociology	Professor			
Academic -XA5	Media and communication	Professor		Yes	
Academic -XA6	Sociology	Assistant Professor			
Academic -XA7	Law	Associate Professor	Joint PhD	Yes	
Academic -XA8	Sociology	Associate Professor	Master's PhD	Yes	
Academic -XA9	English	Professor	Master's PhD	Yes	Yes
Academic -XA10	Education	Associate Professor		Yes	
<b>Uni-WH</b>					
SA-WH	Office of Social Sciences				
Academic -WH1	English	Associate Professor	Master's; PhD	Yes	
Academic -WH2	Education	Professor			
Academic -WH3	Social work	Associate Professor		Yes	
Academic -WH4	Economics	Assistant Professor	Joint PhD		
Academic -WH5	Education	Associate Professor			
Academic -WH6	Politics	Associate Professor			
Academic -WH7	Chinese	Professor			
Academic -WH8	Management	Associate Professor		Yes	
Academic -WH9	Sociology	Assistant Professor	Master's PhD		
Academic -WH10	Education	Professor		Yes	
Academic -WH11	Education	Associate Professor	PhD	Yes	
Academic -WH12	Economics	Assistant Professor			
Academic -WH13	Law	Associate Professor	Master's PhD		
Academic -WH14	History	Professor		Yes	
Academic -WH15	Education	Associate Professor	Master's PhD	Yes	
<b>Journal Editors</b>					
Editor-1	Social Sciences	Top CSSCI journal			
Editor-2	Social Sciences	SSCI journal			
Editor-3	Humanities	CSSCI journal			
Editor-4	Humanities	A&HCI journal			

### Appendix 3: List of documents analysed<sup>23</sup>

1. *Anhui University Interim Bonus Schemes for Research*
2. *Anhui University Interim Bonus Schemes for Research*
3. *Beijing Foreign Studies University Regulations on Research Achievements*
4. *Beijing Foreign Studies University Scientific Research Performance Score Table*
5. *Beijing Forestry University Regulations on Personnel Training and Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
6. *Beijing Institute of Technology Bonus Schemes for Academic Achievements*
7. *Beijing Institute of Technology Regulations on Bonuses for Academic Achievements*
8. *Beijing Jiaotong University Job Advertisement for Academics' Positions*
9. *Beijing Jiaotong University the Classification of Academic Papers*
10. *Beijing Normal University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Allowances*
11. *Beijing Normal University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Allowances (Revised in 2012)*
12. *Beijing Normal University Journal Lists for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Allowances*
13. *Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics School of Economics and Management Bonus Schemes for Academics' Research Papers*
14. *Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics School of Economics and Management Bonus Schemes for Academics' Research Papers*
15. *Beijing University of Chinese Medicine Notice of Filling in The Application Form for Academic Papers' Allowances*
16. *Beijing University of Science and Technology Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
17. *Beijing University of Science and Technology Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology (Pilot)*
18. *Beijing University of Technology Bonus Schemes*
19. *Central China Normal University Implementation Measures for Bonuses (Pilot)*
20. *Central South University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Academic Papers and Patents*
21. *Central South University Bonus Schemes for Research Achievements*
22. *Central South University Interim Bonus Schemes*
23. *Central University of Finance and Economics Lists of Core Foreign Journals*
24. *Chang'an University Interim Measures for Managing Research Funding*
25. *China Agricultural University Bonus Schemes for Technological Achievements*
26. *China Agricultural University School of Humanities and Development*

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<sup>23</sup> Documents' titles are presented as English translations. Unless appeared in the original title, this list does not include the year of publication. Documents with the same titles were published in different years.

*Research Bonus Schemes*

27. *China Agricultural University School of Humanities and Development Research Bonus Schemes*
28. *China Agricultural University School of Ideological and Political Education Bonus and Funding Scheme for Research*
29. *China Pharmaceutical University Regulations on Special Allowances (Pilot)*
30. *China University of Geosciences (Beijing) Bonus Schemes for Academic Paper Publications*
31. *China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) Implementation Measures for Rewarding Outstanding Contributions*
32. *China University of Geosciences (Wuhan) the Classification of Journal Publications (Pilot)*
33. *China University of Mining Bonus Schemes for High-Level Academic Achievements*
34. *China University of Mining Bonus Schemes for High-Level Achievements*
35. *China University of Petroleum (East China) Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
36. *China University of Political Science and Law Bonus Schemes for Research Achievements*
37. *China University of Political Science and Law the Classification of Academic Journals*
38. *China University of Science and Technology Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
39. *Chongqing University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research (Pilot)*
40. *Communication University of China Academics' Performance Evaluation Methods*
41. *Dalian University of Technology Notice of Collecting Data of Humanities and Social Sciences Achievements for 2015 Technology Awards Conference*
42. *Dalian University of Technology Notice of Collecting Data of Humanities and Social Sciences Achievements for 2016 Technology Awards Conference*
43. *Donghua University Bonus Schemes for Teaching, Research and Academic Training*
44. *Donghua University the Classification of Philosophy and Social Sciences Academic Journals (Pilot)*
45. *East China Normal University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Achievements Implementing Rules*
46. *East China University of Science and Technology Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Papers*
47. *Fudan University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Publications*
48. *Fuzhou University Bonus and Punishment Schemes for Science and Technology (Revised) (Discussion Paper)*
49. *Fuzhou University the List of Core Academic Journals and Relevant Regulations (2013 Edition)*
50. *Fuzhou University the Selection Measure for Science and Technology Awards (Pilot)*

51. *Guangxi University Regulations on Bonuses for Research Achievements*
52. *Guizhou University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Achievements (Pilot)*
53. *Hainan University Research Bonus Schemes (Interim)*
54. *Harbin Engineering University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology (Pilot)*
55. *Harbin Engineering University Implementing Measures for Rewarding Academic Papers*
56. *Harbin Engineering University Implementing Measures for Rewarding Academic Papers (Interim)*
57. *Harbin Institute of Technology Bonus and Funding Schemes for Social Sciences Papers and Books (Pilot)*
58. *Harbin Institute of Technology the Management of Bonuses and Funding for Social Sciences Papers and Books*
59. *Hebei University of Technology Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
60. *Hefei University Interim Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Performance*
61. *Hehai University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology (Revised)*
62. *Hehai University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology (Revised)*
63. *Huazhong Agricultural University Interim Comprehensive Bonus Schemes*
64. *Huazhong Agricultural University School of Marxism Bonus Schemes*
65. *Huazhong University of Science and Technology Wenhua College Bonus Schemes for Research*
66. *Hunan Normal University Regulations on Teaching and Research Allowances*
67. *Hunan University Measures for Scientific Research Awards*
68. *Inner Mongolia University Directory for Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Paper Awards*
69. *Jiangnan University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Research and Teaching Achievements*
70. *Jiangnan University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Research and Teaching Achievements*
71. *Jiangnan University Regulations on the Evaluation of the Qualifications of Full-Time Academics (Research)*
72. *Jilin University College of Foreign Languages Bonus Schemes and Regulations on 2012-2013 Research Achievements*
73. *Lanzhou University Bonus Schemes for Research (Pilot)*
74. *Lanzhou University Regulations on Measuring and Assessing Humanities and Social Sciences Research Performance (Pilot)*
75. *Lanzhou University Regulations on Measuring and Assessing Humanities and Social Sciences Research Performance (Revised)*
76. *Lanzhou University School of Education Bonus Schemes for Research Achievements*
77. *Lanzhou University the Classification of Humanities and Social Sciences Research Achievements (Pilot)*
78. *Minzu University of China Research Assessment and Bonus Schemes*
79. *Nanchang University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology Achievements*
80. *Nanjing Agricultural University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology Achievements*

81. *Nanjing Normal University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Achievements*
82. *Nanjing Normal University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Achievements*
83. *Nanjing University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Achievements*
84. *Nanjing University Regulations on Academics' Promotion to Advanced Positions (Humanities and Social Sciences)*
85. *Nanjing University School of Business Bonus Schemes for Teaching and Research*
86. *Nankai University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
87. *North China Electric Power University Adjusted Programme for Academics' Evaluation and Allowances (Pilot)*
88. *North China Electric Power University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
89. *North China Electric Power University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
90. *North China Electric Power University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
91. *North China Electric Power University Notice of Adjusting the Workload Measures and Performance Allowances for Academics' Research and Teaching*
92. *Northeast Agricultural University School of Humanities and Law Interim Bonus Schemes for Research*
93. *Northeast Forestry University Implementing Measures for Research Allowances*
94. *Northeast Normal University Bonus Schemes for Social Science Research (Discussion Paper)*
95. *Northeast Normal University Notice for the Implementation of SSCI and A&HCI Publications Funding Scheme*
96. *Northeastern University Interim Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
97. *Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University Department of Ideology and Politics Management and Bonus Schemes for Research*
98. *Northwestern Polytechnical University Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
99. *Northwestern Polytechnical University Detailed Measures for Science and Technology Rewards (Pilot)*
100. *Ocean University of China the List of Core Humanities and Social Sciences Journals*
101. *Peking University Interim Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences International Publications*
102. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2006 Research Achievements*
103. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2007 Research Achievements*
104. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2008 Research Achievements*
105. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2009 Research Achievements*
106. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2011*

- And 2012 Research Achievements*
107. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2013 Research Achievements*
  108. *Renmin University Notice of the Application for the Allowances for 2014 Research Achievements*
  109. *Shaanxi Normal University Bonus Schemes and Funding for Signature Research Achievements (Revised)*
  110. *Shandong University School of Economics Regulations on Academic Paper Rewards*
  111. *Shandong University School of Medicine Bonus Schemes for High-Quality Academic Papers*
  112. *Shanghai International Studies University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Research Achievements*
  113. *Shanghai Jiaotong University Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Papers*
  114. *Shanghai Jiaotong University Incentive Scheme for Humanities and Social Sciences*
  115. *Shanghai Jiaotong University Job Advertisement*
  116. *Shanghai Jiaotong University the Classification of Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Journals*
  117. *Shanghai University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Papers*
  118. *Shanghai University of Finance and Economics Bonus Schemes For SSCI/SCI/A&HCI Papers (Revised)*
  119. *Shanghai University of Finance and Economics Regulations on Scientific Workload Management*
  120. *Shihezi University Bonus Schemes for Scientific and Technological Innovation Activities*
  121. *Shihezi University Bonus Schemes for Scientific and Technological Innovation Activities*
  122. *Sichuan Agricultural University Bonus Schemes for Faculty Members*
  123. *Sichuan University Bonus Schemes for Philosophy and Social Sciences Research Achievements and Projects*
  124. *Sichuan University School of Economics Bonus Schemes for Research Achievements and Supporting Funding for Projects*
  125. *South China Normal University Pilot Measures for Distributing Performance Allowances (Revised)*
  126. *South China Normal University Research Performance Evaluation Programme*
  127. *South China University of Technology Bonus Schemes for Teaching, Research and Discipline Building (Pilot)*
  128. *Southeast University Interim Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Achievements*
  129. *Southwest Jiaotong University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Achievements (Discussion Paper)*
  130. *Southwest University Measures for Distributing Teaching and Scientific Research Allowances (Pilot)*
  131. *Southwestern University of Finance and Economics Regulations on Research Management*
  132. *Southwestern University of Finance and Economics Standards and Bonus*

- Schemes for Academics' Teaching, Research, and Social Services Achievements*
133. *Southwestern University the Selection Measures for T-Class/A-Class Journals and Papers (Pilot)*
  134. *Sun Yat-Sen University Implementation Measures for Bonus Allowances for Individuals with Outstanding Research Achievements (Pilot)*
  135. *Sun Yat-Sen University the List of Important Humanities and Social Sciences Journals (2004)*
  136. *Sun Yat-Sen University the List of Important Humanities and Social Sciences Journals (2008)*
  137. *Sun Yat-Sen University the List of Important Humanities and Social Sciences Journals (2014)*
  138. *Suzhou University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
  139. *Suzhou University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Achievements*
  140. *Taiyuan University of Technology Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology Work (Pilot)*
  141. *Tianjin University on the Management of 2013-2014 Performance Allowances*
  142. *Tianjin University the Notice of Additional Bonuses for High-Level Academic Papers*
  143. *Tongji University Pilot Research Funding and Bonus Schemes for Philosophy and Social Sciences*
  144. *Tsinghua University Calculating Measures for Humanities and Social Sciences Research Workloads (Discussion Paper)*
  145. *University of Electronic Science and Technology Bonus Schemes*
  146. *University of Electronic Science and Technology Notice Regarding the Improvement of Distributing Bonuses*
  147. *University of International Business and Economics Bonus Schemes for Excellent Research Outputs*
  148. *Wuhan University Bonus Schemes for High-Level Research Achievements*
  149. *Wuhan University Classification of Humanities and Social Sciences Academic Journals*
  150. *Wuhan University of Technology Interim Management Measures for Rewards*
  151. *Wuhan University Special Bonus Schemes for Important Philosophy and Social Sciences Development Indicators*
  152. *Xi'an Jiaotong University Interim Bonus Schemes for Academic Papers*
  153. *Xiamen University Interim Implementation Measures for Research Rewards*
  154. *Xidian University Bonus Schemes for Research (Pilot)*
  155. *Xidian University Revision on the Standards of Academics' Promotion*
  156. *Zhejiang University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
  157. *Zhejiang University Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
  158. *Zhejiang University Job Advertisement*
  159. *Zhongnan University of Economics and Law Bonus Schemes for Research Achievements*

**Other documents from case universities:**

- 160. Uni-BJA Regulations on Academics' Training*
- 161. Uni-BJA School of Business Regulations on Research Allowances*
- 162. Uni-BJA Academics' Evaluation Methods*
- 163. Uni-BJB Bonus Schemes for Science and Technology*
- 164. Uni-SHA Bonus Schemes for Humanities and Social Sciences Research*
- 165. Uni-SHA Faculty's Contract*
- 166. Uni-SHA School of Media Annual Assessment Form*
- 167. Uni-SHB Bonus Schemes for International Publications*
- 168. Uni-SHB School of Law Regulations on Academics' Annual Assessment*
- 169. Uni-WH Bonus Schemes*
- 170. Uni-XA Bonus Schemes for Research*
- 171. Uni-XA Bonus Schemes for Research*
- 172. Uni-XA Faculty's Employment Contract*

#### Appendix 4: Information about journals

Journal	Language	Indexed by	Editorial board/ reviewers	Ranking in incentive documents	Aim and scope	Humanities or Social Sciences subjects
Journal-A	Chinese and English	Chinese version: CSSCI  English version: SCOPUS; Thomson Reuters Emerging Sources Citation Index, etc.	Editorial board/ reviewers: mostly Chinese scholars	Top tier, sometimes below SSCI/ A&HCI	China- related studies	Social Sciences
Journal-B	English	SSCI	Chief and executive editors: Chinese scholars  Editorial board: international scholars	Top tier, equal to or sometimes below <i>Social Sciences in China</i>	Mainly China- related	Social Sciences
Journal-C	Mostly in Chinese; titles and abstracts in English	A&HCI	Chief and executive editors: Chinese scholars  Editorial board: international scholars	Top to middle tier, sometimes below <i>Social Sciences in China</i> and/or SSCI journals	Mostly about foreign (non- Chinese) literature	Humanities
Journal-D	Chinese	CSSCI	Editorial board and reviewers: mostly Chinese scholars	Middle – lower tier	Not limited to China- related studies	Humanities

## Appendix 5: Interview data collection instruments

### 5A: Consent forms

#### Consent Form

**STUDY TITLE:** The Influence of Incentives for International Publications on Chinese Humanities and Social Sciences Faculty's Research and Careers

**RESEARCHER DETAILS:** Xin Xu, doctoral student, Department of Education, University of Oxford

**PURPOSE OF STUDY:** The study investigates how incentives for international publications have influenced Chinese Humanities and Social Sciences scholars' research and careers, how the influences differ from different scholars and institutions, and how to make future policies on internationalisation of Humanities and Social Sciences in China.

#### Participant initials

1. I have read the study information, have asked questions and received satisfactory answers.

2. I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford Central University Research Ethics Committee.

3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw myself or the data at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse.

4. I understand only the researcher will have access to personal data provided.

5. I understand my personal data will be stored according to the Data Protection Act, and will be stored for at least three years after the publication of thesis.

6. I understand research will be written up as researcher's doctoral thesis and will be published online.

7. I understand how to raise concerns or make a complaint.

8. I consent to being audio recorded.

9. I agree to take part in the study.

Name of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of researcher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Consent Form (Chinese edition)

### 知情同意书

研究题目：国际发表奖励政策对中国人文社科教师学术活动及职业发展的影响

研究者：许心，牛津大学教育系博士生

研究目的：本研究旨在探讨中国高校奖励国际期刊论文发表对于人文社科教师学术活动及职业发展的影响，探讨不同高校和不同学者所呈现出的影响差异，并探索如何进一步制定实施中国人文社会科学的国际化政策。

#### 参与研究者签名

1. 我已阅读研究信息说明，针对不清楚的内容提出了疑惑并得到了满意解答。

2. 我知道这项研究已经被牛津大学研究伦理委员会审核，且通过了研究伦理审查。

3. 我知道研究是自愿参与的。我可以随时退出研究或是撤回数据，无需提供任何理由，也不会接受任何惩罚。

4. 我知道只有研究者可以掌握我所提供的信息。

5. 我知道我所提供的个人信息将被依据《数据保护法》进行保存，并将被保存到研究发表的三年后。

6. 我知道这项研究将成为研究者博士论文的一部分，并将在网络上公开发表。

7. 我知道如何提出疑问和投诉。

8. 我同意将访谈录音。

9. 我同意参与这项研究。

参与者姓名:

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签字:

日期:

---

研究者姓名:

---

签字:

日期:

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## 5B: Interview protocols

### Interview Questions for HSS Academics

1. **Could you briefly review your academic publication experiences?**  
*Additional questions (If not covered in the previous responses.)*
  - When did you publish your first academic article?
  - (If applicable) When and how did you publish your first international publication?
  
2. **In your past experiences, have you been mostly concentrated on domestic or international publication? Why?**
  - *(For researchers with both domestic and international publications)* **In general, how do you evaluate your own publications in domestic and international journals respectively?**  
*Additional questions (If not covered in the previous responses.)*
    - Do you perceive any differences in the writing / publication process?
    - Do you perceive any differences regarding the quality/contents/methodologies of articles published in domestic and international journals in your discipline?
    - Do you perceive any differences in terms of the target audience of domestic and international journals in your discipline?
    - What are the factors that influenced your choices of publishing in domestic or international journals? Among them, is the incentive scheme an important one?
    - What are the obstacles/problems hindering your publication in international/domestic journals?
    - Do you perceive any differences between you and other (non-)returnee scholars in publishing international articles?
  - *(For researchers with only domestic/international publications)* **Have you ever considered publishing papers in international/domestic journals? Why?**  
*Additional questions (If not covered in the previous responses.)*
    - What are the factors that influenced your choices of publishing in domestic or international journals? Among them, is the incentive scheme an important one?
    - What are the obstacles/problems hindering your publication in international/domestic journals?
    - How do you perceive the differences between international and domestic publications?
    - Do you perceive any differences between you and other (non-)returnee scholars in publishing international articles?

**3. Are you familiar with the incentive scheme for Humanities and Social Sciences international publications carried out since [Year] at your university?**

- *(If familiar)* **Has the policy affected your research activities?**

*Additional questions (If not covered in the previous responses.)*

- Are there other policies in your institution that have influenced your research activities? How?
- Has it influenced your academic publication process?
- Has it influenced your career?
- What do you think of encouraging Humanities and Social Sciences international publications?
- What do you think of giving monetary awards for Humanities and Social Sciences international publications?
- What do you think of giving international publications higher prestige in research evaluations?
- (If applicable) What do you think of the current journal list used by your university for research evaluations in Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines?
- Have you observed any colleagues that have been influenced by the incentives? How?

- *(If not familiar)* **[Present the document and offer a brief introduction]. Could you tell me your impressions of this policy?**

*Additional questions (If not covered in the previous responses.)*

- Are there other policies in your institution that have influenced your research activities?
- What do you think of encouraging Humanities and Social Sciences international publications?
- What do you think of giving monetary awards for Humanities and Social Sciences international publications?
- What do you think of giving international publications higher prestige in research evaluations?
- (If applicable) What do you think of the current journal list used by your university for research evaluations in Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines?
- Have you observed any colleagues that have been influenced by the incentives?
- Do you think the policy will influence your future academic publication? Why and how?
- Do you think the policy will influence your career? Why and how?

**4. We have mainly discussed \_\_\_\_\_ in the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add?**

## Interview Questions for Academics (Chinese edition)

### 访谈提纲（高校教师）

1. 您能简单回顾一下您的学术发表经历吗？

*备选问题（如果没有在前一问题中涉及）*

- 您的首篇学术论文是什么时候发表的呢？
- （如果适用）您能介绍一下您发表第一篇国际期刊论文的经历吗？

2. 在您迄今为止的学术发表中，您主要侧重于国际发表还是国内发表呢？为什么呢？

• （针对有国际和国内发表的教师）总体而言，您如何评价自己在国内和国际期刊上发表的论文呢？

*备选问题（如果没有在前一问题中涉及）*

- 您感到写作/发表的过程会有哪些区别吗？
- 在您的学科领域，您认为发表在国内外期刊和国际期刊的论文在质量、内容、研究范式等方面有哪些区别呢？
- 在您的学科领域，您认为国内和国际期刊的交流对象有哪些差别吗？
- 哪些因素影响了您选择投稿的期刊呢？学校的奖励政策会是其中的重要因素吗？
- 在向国内/国际期刊投稿时都遇到过哪些问题或障碍呢？
- 您认为和（非）海归教师相比，你们在国际发表中会有哪些不同吗？

• （针对只有国内或国际发表的教师）您考虑过在国际/国内期刊发表论文吗？为什么呢？

*备选问题（如果没有在前一问题中涉及）*

- 哪些因素影响了您选择投稿的期刊呢？学校的奖励政策会是其中的重要因素吗？
- 在向国内/国际期刊投稿时都有哪些问题或障碍呢？
- 您认为国际发表和国内发表都有哪些区别呢？
- 您认为和（非）海归教师相比，你们在国际发表中会有哪些不同吗？

3. 贵校在\_\_\_\_\_年发布了奖励人文社科国际发表的政策，您熟悉这个政策吗？

• （如果熟悉）您觉得自己的科研活动有被这个政策影响吗？

*备选问题（如果没有在前一问题中涉及）*

- 学校或者学院有其他相关政策影响到您的科研吗？
  - 政策影响到了您的学术发表吗？
  - 政策影响到了您的职业发展吗？
  - 您如何看待鼓励人文社科学者在国际期刊发表论文呢？
  - 您如何看待对人文社科国际发表给予物质奖励呢？
  - 您如何看待学术评价中国际期刊论文比国内期刊论文地位更高的情况呢？
  - （如果适用）您如何看待学校的期刊列表呢？
  - 您有观察到被奖励政策影响的老师吗？
- （如果不熟悉）【展示政策文件并简短介绍】请问您对这一政策有怎样的印象呢？

*备选问题（如果没有在前一问题中涉及）*

- 学校或者学院有其他相关政策影响到您的科研吗？
  - 您如何看待鼓励人文社科学者在国际期刊发表论文呢？
  - 您如何看待对人文社科国际发表给予物质奖励呢？
  - 您如何看待学术评价中国际期刊论文比国内期刊论文地位更高的情况呢？
  - （如果适用）您如何看待学校的期刊列表呢？
  - 您有观察到被奖励政策影响的老师吗？
  - 在了解了政策之后，您认为它会影响您的学术发表吗？
  - 在了解了政策之后，您认为它会影响您的职业发展吗？
4. 我们的访谈涉及了\_\_\_\_\_，还有哪些您觉得需要补充的吗？

## Interview Questions for Senior Administrators

### 1. Could you review the process of publishing the incentive scheme for Humanities and Social Sciences international publications?

*Additional questions* (If not covered in the previous responses.)

- When and how did the first discussions arise?
- Who were involved in the policy-making process?
- How was the incentive formulated?
- Why did the university publish the incentive scheme for Humanities and Social Sciences international publications? Do you think the primary goal has been reached so far?
- How did the faculty members react to the incentive scheme?
- (If applicable) How was the journal list compiled?
- (If applicable) Why was the policy revised?
- (If applicable) Why is there a requirement for the first-author publication?

### 2. In general, how do you evaluate domestic and international publications respectively?

*Additional questions* (If not covered in the previous responses.)

- Do you perceive any differences in the writing/ publication process?
- Do you perceive any differences regarding the quality/ contents/ methodologies of articles published in domestic and international journals?
- Do you perceive any differences in terms of the target audience?
- What do you think of giving international publications higher prestige in research evaluations?
- Have you observed any faculty members that have been influenced by the incentives?
- Have you perceived any differences in faculty's reactions?
- Have you considered providing support for translating Chinese articles published by the scholars?
- (For senior administrators who are also researchers) How would you perceive the issue of encouraging international publications if you are not a senior administrator but only a researcher?

### 3. We have mainly discussed \_\_\_\_\_ in the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Interview Questions for Senior Administrators (Chinese edition)

### 访谈提纲（高校负责国际发表奖励政策的管理者）

1. 您能回顾一下贵校出台奖励人文社科国际发表政策的过程吗？

*备选问题（如果没有在上一问题中涉及）*

- 最初的讨论是什么时间/怎样开始的呢？
- 都有谁参与了政策制定的过程呢？
- 政策的具体制定过程是怎样的呢？
- 为什么学校会开始奖励人文社科国际期刊发表呢？您认为这些最初的目标实现了吗？
- 就您的了解，老师们对于这一政策有何反应呢？
- （如果适用）期刊列表是如何制定的呢？
- （如果适用）为什么在\_\_\_\_\_年要对奖励条例进行修改呢？
- （如果适用）请问对第一作者的要求用意是什么呢？

2. 总体而言，您如何评价国内和国际期刊论文发表呢？

*备选问题（如果没有在上一问题中涉及）*

- 您认为写作/发表的过程会有哪些区别吗？
- 您认为发表在国内外期刊和国际期刊的论文在质量、内容、研究范式等方面有哪些区别呢？
- 您认为国内和国际期刊的交流对象有哪些差别吗？
- 您怎么看待学术评价中国际期刊论文比国内期刊论文地位更高的情况呢？
- 您有观察到被奖励政策影响的老师吗？
- 您认为政策对不同的教师会有不同的影响吗？
- 学校会考虑支持教师翻译中文学术成果到国际期刊发表吗？
- （针对同是教师和管理者的受访者）如果您不是管理者，作为教师的话您会有不同看法吗？

3. 我们的访谈涉及了\_\_\_\_\_，还有哪些您觉得需要补充的吗？

## Interview Questions for Journal Editors

### 1. Could you describe the current status of your journal in domestic and international academia?

*Additional questions* (If not covered in the previous responses.)

- Who are the target readers of your journal?
- Who are contributing to your journal?
- Who are the reviewers of your journal and how does the review process work?
- Why is the journal published in Chinese/English language? Have you considered adding another language or changing the current language? Why?
- How do you think of the fact that most domestic journals are ranked below SSCI/A&HCI journals in universities' journal lists for research evaluations?
- How do you think of the fact that all SSCI/A&HCI journals are regarded as top journals?
- (If applicable) Have you considered letting your journal be indexed by the SSCI and/or A&HCI?
- (If applicable) How/why did your journal become indexed by the SSCI and/or A&HCI?
- (If applicable) Your journal ranks ... on most journal lists, how do you perceive the current ranking?

### 2. In general, how do you evaluate domestic and international publications respectively?

*Additional questions* (If not covered in the previous responses.)

- Do you perceive any differences in the publication process?
- Do you perceive any differences regarding the quality/contents/methodologies of articles published in domestic and international journals, especially in your disciplines?
- Do you perceive any differences in terms of the target audience?
- What do you think of giving international publications higher prestige in research evaluations?
- Have you observed any changes with the increasing encouragement of international publications?

### 3. We have mainly discussed \_\_\_\_\_ in the interview. Is there anything else you would like to add?

## Interview Questions for Journal Editors (Chinese edition)

### 访谈提纲（期刊编辑）

1. 请您介绍一下您的期刊在国内和国际学术界的地位？  
*备选问题（如果没有在上一问题中涉及）*
  - 请问贵刊的目标读者群体是？
  - 请问贵刊的主要投稿来自于哪些群体呢？
  - 请问贵刊的评审都来自哪里？审稿工作是怎样进行的呢？
  - 为什么目前刊物是以中文/英文出版的呢？请问有考虑过以英文/中文出版吗？为什么？
  - 在国内高校制定的期刊列表中，国内期刊几乎全部位列 SSCI/A&HCI 期刊之下，请问您怎么看待这一问题呢？
  - 您如何看待将所有 SSCI/A&HCI 期刊看作一流学术期刊的做法呢？
  - （如果适用）您的刊物有考虑过加入 SSCI 或 A&HCI 吗？为什么？
  - （如果适用）您能介绍下您的期刊被 SSCI 或 A&HCI 数据库索引的过程吗？
  - （如果适用）目前贵刊在大多数高校的期刊列表上排在\_\_\_\_\_，对此您如何评价呢？
  
2. 总体而言，您如何评价国内和国际期刊论文发表呢？  
*备选问题（如果没有在上一问题中涉及）*
  - 您认为发表的过程会有哪些区别呢？
  - 您认为发表在国内期刊和国际期刊的论文在质量、内容、研究范式等方面有哪些区别呢？
  - 您认为国内和国际期刊论文的交流对象有哪些差别吗？
  - 您怎么看待学术评价中国际期刊论文比国内期刊论文地位更高的情况呢？
  - 随着国内高校越来越鼓励国际期刊论文发表，您在您的期刊来稿等方面观察到哪些变化吗？
  
3. 我们的访谈涉及了\_\_\_\_\_，还有哪些您觉得需要补充的吗？

## Appendix 6: An example of a translated interview excerpt

访谈者：现在国内很多高校在奖励国际期刊的论文发表，在人文社科领域主要是针对 SSCI 和 A&HCI 论文。请问咱们学校对国际发表也有相关奖励对吗？

受访者：恩，对的。这个也要看，我们可能对文科这一块就比较大，但实际上理工科这一块没有什么。因为对他们来说，这是件非常常见的一件事情，所以说他们并没有什么特别的那种（鼓励）。但是文科嘛，因为我们要建设综合性大学嘛，所以他可能要更多地支持这一块。

访谈者：这儿有一份对文科国际发表的奖励办法。（展示文件）

受访者：对，我知道这份文件。

.....

### Translation:

**Interviewer:** Many universities in China have published incentives for international publications, especially for SSCI and A&HCI publications in HSS areas. Among them, your university also has incentives for international publications, right?

**Interviewee:** Yes, you are right. In fact, our university provides more support for HSS international publications, and almost nothing for NS, because for them, international publications are too common to be encouraged. But for HSS, since our university aims to become a comprehensive university, we might need to provide more support for the development of HSS subjects.

**Interviewer:** Here is a document about bonuses for HSS international publication.  
[Presenting the document]

**Interviewee:** Yes, I know this document.

...

## Appendix 7: An example of the interview script

**Table 25 The Script of an Interview with an Academic**

Minutes	Theme	Keywords/Notes
1:30 – 11:00	<p>Publication experiences</p> <p>Started her career as a university English teacher</p> <p>One-year Masters' degree abroad led to a self-revelation: love to do research in English and would love to get a PhD in the UK</p> <p>Failed to publish in Chinese</p> <p>Felt at home when in the English-speaking environment</p>	<p>'I have been in love with English for many years.'</p> <p>'English is my life'</p> <p>The interviewee uses many colloquial phrases in English</p>
11:01 – 21:18	<p>Opinions of incentives</p> <p>Incentives are for ranking rather than to improve research</p> <p>Incentives ignore/impair teaching</p> <p>Self-evaluation: loves teaching, but did not get any recognition from the department</p> <p>'Policy-makers are simple-minded.'</p> <p>Other academics, who only care about publication but are poor in teaching, were rewarded by the incentives</p>	<p>Did not get promoted to Professor – lacks a national funding project, which requires proposals in Chinese.</p> <p>'I think I am a good teacher, I am very responsible for my students.'</p>
...	...	...
1:14:21 – 1:17:30	<p>Personal attitudes</p> <p>Not doing research for the sake of anybody, but for the research itself</p>	<p>'Some colleagues always accuse me of being too idealistic.'</p>
1:17:31 – 1:21:22	<p>Opinions of the incentives</p> <p>Worship the databases: policy-makers are ignorant of what 'real research' means</p> <p>University/department only focuses on outputs, not scholars themselves</p> <p>The policy shows no respect for scholars who could not reach its requirements</p>	<p>Lack of support</p>

## Appendix 8: An example of the back-translation

### 8A: Original incentive document in Chinese

#### X大学优秀科研成果奖励办法

(2008年修订)

为进一步贯彻落实《教育部关于大力提高高等学校哲学社会科学研究质量的意见》，充分调动广大教师从事科研工作的积极性，鼓励教师多出创新性科研精品，促进我校学术地位和学科建设水平不断提高，实现从教学研究型向研究型国家重点大学转变的战略目标，特制定本办法。

……

#### 第三条 优秀科研成果奖励的类型和奖励标准

##### (一) 学术论文奖及其标准

1. 在被《人文社会科学索引》(SSCI)、《科学引文索引》(SCI)、《工程索引》(EI)和《艺术人文引文索引》(A&HCI)收录的国外期刊上发表的学术论文每篇奖励10000元，在被上述索引收录的国内期刊上发表的学术论文每篇奖励7000元。上述期刊均应以中国科技信息所等有关机构提供的年度检索报告为依据，由作者所在单位统一提交论文原件(或期刊封面及全文复印件)以及检索证明。

2. 在国内A类(CSSCI目录中当年各类排名第一)核心期刊上发表的学术论文，经济学、法学、管理、综合性社科期刊类每篇奖励10000元，其余各类每篇奖励6000元；在国内B类(CSSCI目录中当年各类排名前20%)核心期刊上发表的学术论文，每篇奖励2000元。

……

第十条 本办法自2009年1月1日起执行，由科研处负责解释。

## 8B: Original English translation

### University X Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Research Achievements

(Revised in 2008)

In order to further implement the *Ministry of Education's Opinions on Improving Higher Education Institutions' Quality of Research in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, fully motivate most academics' engagement in scientific research, encourage academics to create more innovative scientific research outputs with high quality, promote the continuous improvement of our university's academic status and the level of disciplinary building, and to realise our strategic goal of transforming from a teaching-research university to a research-oriented national key university, this bonus scheme is formulated.

...

Article 3 Types of outstanding scientific research achievements and standards for rewards

#### (1) Awards for academic papers and the standards

1. Each academic paper published in foreign journals indexed by SSCI, SCI, EI and A&HCI is rewarded with ¥10,000. Each paper published in domestic journals indexed by the abovementioned indices is rewarded with ¥7,000. The above journals shall be based on the annual reports provided by relevant agencies such as China Science and Technology Information Institute. The author's organisation should submit the original paper (or the copy of the journal's cover and the paper in full-text) and the proof of indices.

2. For papers published in A-class domestic core journals (the first one journal in each category of the CSSCI catalogue that year), those published in

Economics, Law, Management, and comprehensive Social Sciences journals are rewarded with ¥10,000 each, the rest is rewarded with ¥6,000 each. Academic papers published in the B-class domestic core journals (the top 20% journals in each category of the CSSCI catalogue that year) are rewarded with ¥2,000.

...

Article 10 This bonus scheme shall be implemented from January 1, 2009, onwards. It shall be explained by the Scientific Research Division.

## 8C: Back translation in Chinese and comments

### X 大学优秀科研成果奖励办法

(2008 年修订)

1 为进一步 实施贯彻落实 《教育部关于 大力提高高等教育机构学校 哲学社会科  
2 学 研究科研 质量的意见》，充分 激励调动大部分 广大教师 从事科研工作的积极  
3 性的科研参与度，鼓励教师 创造更多高质量的创新科研成果 多出创新性科研精  
4 品，促进 我 本校学术地位和学科建设水平的不断提 高升，实现 我们 从教学科研  
5 型 大学 向科研 导向型 国家重点大学转 变化 的战略目标，特 此 制定本 奖励 办法。

.....

6 第三条 优秀科研成果的 类型和 奖励标准

7 (1) 学术论文 奖励及 标准

8 1. 每篇发表 在被 SSCI、SCI、SCI、EI 及 A&HCI 收录索引 的国外期刊上 发表的  
9 学术论文，每篇 奖励人民币 1 万元。每篇发表 在被上述索引收录的国内期刊上  
10 发表的 学术论文，每篇 奖励人民币 7000 元。上述期刊 均应基于以中国科学  
11 技术信息中心等相 有关机构 (如中国科学技术信息中心) 的年度报告 为依据。  
12 由 作者所在 机构单位统一 应当提交 原始论文原件 (或期刊封面的复印件和及 论  
13 文全文复印件) 以及和索引检索 的相关证明。

14 2. 发表在 国内 A 级类国内核心期刊 (CSSCI 目录中当年各类排名第一 当年各  
15 类别中排名第一的 CSSCI 期刊) 核心期刊上发表的 的 学术 论文，发表在 经济  
16 学、法学 律、管理学、综合性社会科学 期刊 类的论文，每篇 奖励人民币 1 万  
17 元，其余各类发表在其他刊物的论文 每篇 奖励人民币 6000 元。发表在 国内 B  
18 类 (CSSCI 目录中当年各类排名前 20%) 级国内核心期刊上 发表 (当年各 类别  
19 中排名前 20% 的 CSSCI 期刊) 的学术论文，每篇 奖励人民币 2000 元。

.....

20 第十条 本奖励办法自 2009 年 1 月 1 日起 实施执行，由科研 处 负责 部解释。

**Comments:**

1. Differences highlighted are translations that need to be revised.
2. Other differences are either synonyms (such as the ‘和’ and ‘及’ in line 6, both meaning ‘and’ in Chinese) or differences in the sentence order (such as the sentence in line 8 and 9, the meaning is the same as the original text even though the sentence order is different).

## 8D: Revised English translation

### University X Bonus Schemes for Outstanding Research Achievements

(Revised in 2008)

In order to further implement the *Ministry of Education's Opinions on Improving Higher Education Institutions' Quality of Research in Philosophy and Social Sciences*, fully ~~motivate—improve most—our~~ academics' ~~engagement~~ motivation in participating in scientific research activities, encourage academics to create more innovative scientific research outputs with high quality, promote the continuous improvement of our university's academic status and the level of disciplinary building, and to realise our strategic goal of transforming from a teaching-research university to a research-oriented national key university, this ~~bonus~~ scheme is formulated.

...

Article 3 Types of outstanding scientific research achievements and standards for rewards

(1) Awards for academic papers and the standards

1. Each academic paper published in foreign journals indexed by SSCI, SCI, EI and A&HCI is rewarded with ¥10,000. Each paper published in domestic journals indexed by the abovementioned indices is rewarded with ¥7,000. The evidence for above journals shall be ~~based on the~~ annual reports provided by China Science and Technology Information Institute and other relevant agencies ~~such as China Science and Technology Information Institute~~. The author's organisation—department or school should submit ~~the all~~ original paper papers (or

the cop~~ies~~y of both the journal's cover and the paper in full-text) and the proof of indices.

2. For papers published in A-class domestic core journals (the first one journal in each category of the CSSCI catalogue that year), those published in Economics, Law, Management, and comprehensive Social Sciences journals are rewarded with ¥10,000 each, the rest is rewarded with ¥6,000 each. Academic papers published in the B-class domestic core journals (the top 20% journals in each category of the CSSCI catalogue that year) are rewarded with ¥2,000.

...

Article 10 This bonus scheme shall be implemented from January 1, 2009, onwards. ~~It shall be explained by the~~The Scientific Research Division ~~is responsible for explaining the scheme.~~

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