

Only 17.2 out of 10,000 academic articles published are controversial, says Mustapha

By [Qistina Sallehuddin](#), [Nor Ain Mohamed Radhi](#) - March 18, 2024 @ 2:44pm



Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Sakmud. - NSTP file pic

KUALA LUMPUR: Only 17.2 out of 10,000 research articles published in Malaysia are deemed controversial and retracted, the Dewan Rakyat heard today.

Deputy Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapha Sakmud said the number was relatively low despite Malaysia being placed sixth among countries with the highest rate of research paper retraction.

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"We are ranked sixth, but in terms of statistics, only 17.2 out of 10,000 (research) articles in Malaysia are controversial.

"Hence, in terms of number, it may not be very alarming. The ministry has made efforts to ensure that our researchers and their research are screened as thoroughly as possible," he said in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Mustapha said this in response to a question from Tan Hong Ping (Pakatan Harapan-Bakri), who questioned whether factors like the absence of autonomy in the academic environment had contributed to Malaysia being placed sixth for retraction of research articles.

He added that universities would screen research papers before publishing and that these would again be screened by publishers upon submission.

"Our universities screen them (the research articles) first and these are sent to the publishing stage, they (publishers) also have their own procedures to screen these articles.

"If there are issues, especially like what happened at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), the research article will be returned.

Previously, French historian Serge Jardin [accused two UPM academics of misrepresenting historical facts](#) related to Malay maritime history and questioned the credibility of the academic article it was published in.

Jardin, took to Facebook when he named Rozita Che Rodi and Hashim Musa — both academics affiliated with UPM — as the authors of a paper titled "The Jongs and The Galleys: Traditional Ships of The Past Malay Maritime Civilisation" that was published in the International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, Vol.13, Issue 11, 2023.

Jardin alleged that an image used in their paper to show a model of Malay Jongs (a type of sailing ship originating from Java, Indonesia that was widely used by Javanese, Sundanese, and later, also by Peguan and Malay sailors) is a Foochow Pole Junk (a type of cargo vessel) from China.

UPM has since defended its [research on Malay maritime history](#) by two of its academics after the duo were accused of distorting facts.

Earlier, Mustapha said a committee, led by experts from various fields from universities, had been formed by the ministry to examine patterns in the publication of predatory journals and the retraction of research papers within public universities.

He added that the committee, had proposed several suggestions to curb the publication of research articles in predatory journals.

"This includes sharing a list of predatory journals and revising the criteria in the Malaysia Research Assessment (MyRA) 2.0."