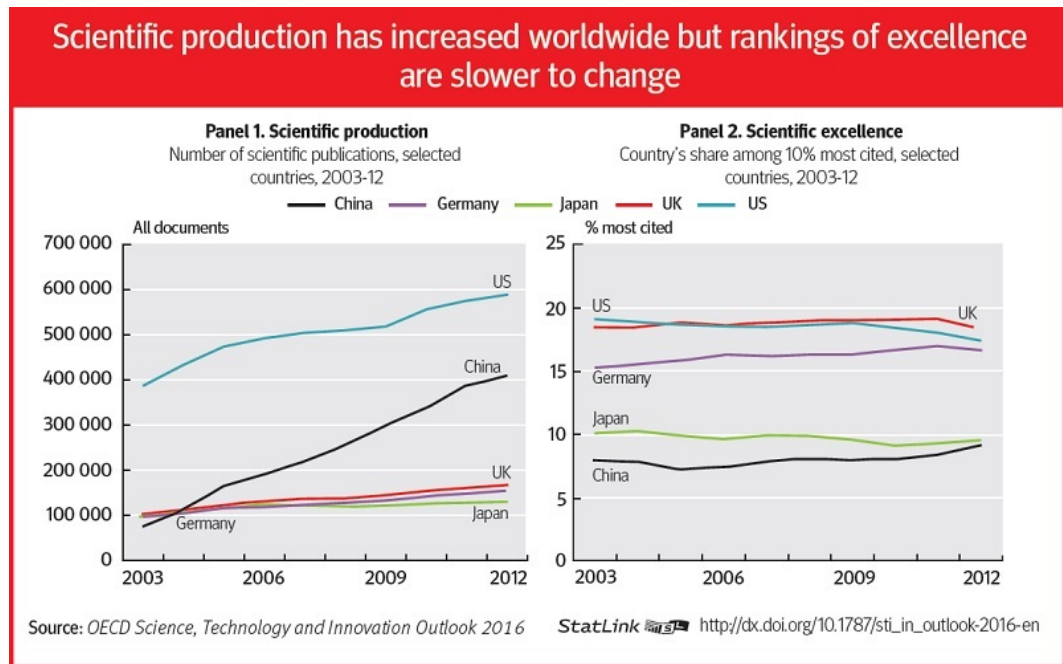


The race for excellence in scientific publishing

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Seneca, a Roman philosopher, argued that quality mattered more than quantity. It is a dictum that may apply to scientific production, according to recent data for citations. The total amount of scientific publications per year in China, Germany, Japan, the UK and the US doubled from 765,000 in 2003 to almost 1.5 million in 2012, thanks to increased investment in public research. The US leads in quantity terms, with China catching up.

But while China published more than four times as many articles in 2012 as they did in 2003, their share among the 10% most cited publications only slightly increased. At the same time, Germany increased its scientific excellence approximately to the same extent as China, despite a significantly smaller volume of scientific output. Meanwhile, the US's share among the most cited articles fell below that of the United Kingdom, despite a 50% rise in the number of scientific publications.

The UK and the US are home to the world's highest ranked universities in terms of scientific excellence, Germany and China are on the rise. A factor that may

determine which universities lead in future will be the extent to which these countries will be able to draw students from diverse countries around the world. Openness, as well as quality, matters.

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References

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