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How to Get Your Manuscript Published in the APSSR—Compliance is Key

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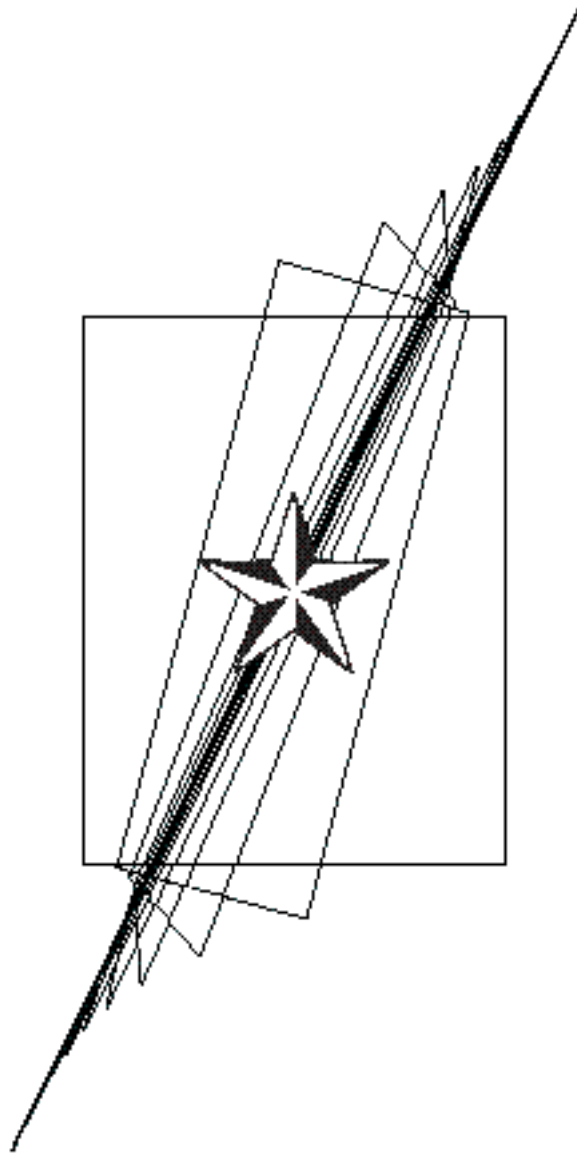
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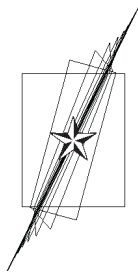
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ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

Table of Contents

FROM THE EDITOR

Romeo B. Lee

RESEARCH ARTICLES

- | | |
|--|-----|
| Green Behavior and Generation: A Multi-Group Analysis Using Structural Equation Modeling
<i>Reynaldo A. Bautista, Jr.</i> | 1 |
| Early Childhood Education: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis Concerning Thai Administrators' Creative Administration
<i>Luckana Pengruek, Kanchana Boonphak, and Boonchan Sisan</i> | 17 |
| The Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement on the Relationship of Transformational Leadership and Intention to Quit: Evidence from Local Colleges in Pampanga, Philippines
<i>Jean Paolo G. Lacap</i> | 33 |
| Generation Y Employees in Thai Workplaces: What Make Them Stay or Leave
<i>Chalermpol Chamchan and Sirinan Kittisuksathit</i> | 49 |
| Night Market as Lived Space: The Case of Davao City, Philippines
<i>Raymundo R. Pavo</i> | 66 |
| Robots Instead of Immigrants: The Positive Feedback of Japanese Migration Policy on Social Isolation and Communication Problems
<i>Pál Koudela</i> | 90 |
| Determinants of Ethical Leadership Performance of Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET) Executives
<i>Siwakorn Chomchuen, Opal Suwannamek, and Chalita Srinuan</i> | 105 |
| Social Integration and Suicidality: The Case of U.S. Hispanic Adolescents
<i>Marissa Aida Laurel-Wilson, Marcus Antonius Ynalvez, John C. Kilburn, Judith Ann Warner, Claudia E. San Miguel, and Richard J. Esqueda</i> | 125 |

Philippine Readiness for the 4th Industrial Revolution: A Case Study <i>Junmo Kim, Ador R. Torneo, and Seung-Bum Yang</i>	141
A Critical Political Geography of China and the South China Sea Islands Dispute <i>Alejandro Christian D. Soler</i>	156
A Structural Equation Modeling on Factors Related to Foreign Tourists' Destination Satisfaction and Destination Loyalty: The Case of Lanna Cultural Tourism in Thailand <i>Yaovapa Wongsawat and Samart Deebhijarn</i>	169
A Comparison of the Shared Activities with the Spouse Between Men and Women: Similarities and Differences <i>Fateme Modiri</i>	178
RESEARCH BRIEFS	
Antecedents of Thai Home Improvement Retailer Customer Satisfaction <i>Atisin Suebsaiaun and Thepparat Pimolsathean</i>	192
Locating the Ideological in the Functional: A Multimodal Critical Analysis of Online News Reports on Typhoon Lando <i>Karl Patrick R. Mendoza</i>	205
The Devices of Satire in Bobis' Fish Hair Woman: A Call for Change <i>Sherill A. Gilbas</i>	215
Thai Vocational College Instructor Teaching Competency: A Second Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis <i>Kritsana Thongkam, Peerawut Suwaanjan, and Phadungchai Pupat</i>	224
Why Legitimacy Matters in Times of Uncertainty: A Critical Study of the Success Story of the Constitutional Court of Indonesia <i>Martitah</i>	233
BOOK REVIEW	
How New Research Tests, Challenges, Creates Discourse on Feminism <i>Clarissa V. Militante</i>	240
DATA AT A GLANCE	
ASEAN's Improvements in Human Development Level	244
ASEAN's Sex Differences in Education versus in Labor	245

From the Editor

How to Get Your Manuscript Published in the APSSR—Compliance is Key

Great news! The Asia-Pacific Social Science Review has recently moved up, as a Scopus journal, to Quartile 2, from Quartile 3 and Quartile 4. This is a tailwind for the APSSR and its contributors to aim higher.

I fully recognize the tremendous pressure that universities in the Asia-Pacific, given their goal for further recognition and internationalization, are exerting on their teaching and research staff (TRS) to publish in reputable journals. With the institutional pressure bearing upon them, many TRS throughout the region have accepted the challenge to publish, but many, to date, are still in the process of learning the trade of publishing in good journals. In one respect, publishing should not be a big problem to them because they have, generally, convenient access to publishing resources (i.e., a wide array of research-based databases, journal websites, and publishing seminars and mentoring sessions). However, in another respect, because of the exponential growth in the number of TRS who are seeking reputable venues for their manuscripts, publishing has turned into a fiercely competitive endeavor for many of them. The pool of contributors has simply expanded while the overall quality level of manuscripts submitted to journals has likewise improved, which means that the competition is stiff and real—indeed, a glowing fixture of academic life in the 21st century. The TRS would have a higher chance of being competitive, though, if they further elevate, to the next highest possible level, their learning, mastery, and practice of and compliance to globally-acceptable publishing norms.

At APSSR, we have norms that we always share with many TRS in our effort to guide their manuscript preparation and submission and their compliance with our ethos. For example, our norms expect manuscripts to be organized and to have a compelling dataset. Manuscripts are organized if these are properly structured, written, and formatted. First, the central arguments of manuscripts must be *structured* logically and substantively and grounded in the extant literature. *Logical* means that the arguments are clear, precise, sound, and coherent; *substantive* means the arguments being advanced are of some marked importance and value; and *grounded* means that the arguments are formed from the gaps identified in the literature. Second, manuscripts must be *written* correctly, clearly, and concisely, using the active voice and adopting a style not only to express arguments but also to communicate conviction, depth, and passion. Take note that *written* here presumes originality, implying that the authors penned the manuscripts themselves. We contend that issues regarding non-originality (i.e., we determine similarities and overlaps at the early stage of the submission process) could be avoided—if and only if—all the TRS in the region are equipped with effective writing skills (as well as having core values in publishing). We further contend that the TRS can learn these writing skills (and values) over time, but it would also be to their interest to discover that the said skills could be very useful to them, with a life-long impact, across all types of human activities; in other words, if they acquire these skills, it would only be a big win for all of them—forever. Third, manuscripts must be formatted according to prescribed parts and physical arrangements. For instance,

the APSSR norms demand manuscripts to bear a title, abstract and keywords, introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusion, and references; and to physically format each of these parts according to the publication guidelines of the American Psychological Association. Proper formatting, which establishes uniformity and consistency, is enforced by APSSR, and universally by other journals, because it is a vital part of the publishing culture, not to mention that it improves reading and comprehension as well as the reputational impact of both the journal and the contributors.

Our journal norms similarly expect manuscripts to feature compelling datasets, that is, data with breadth and complexity. *Breadth* indicates the range and depth of the scope and coverage of datasets. *Breadth* also suggests the quality of the thoughts and efforts that have gone into the collection, analysis, and presentation of datasets. *Complexity* refers to the level of difficulty involved in analyzing and presenting datasets. Like breadth, *complexity* also mirrors the quality, as well as the accuracy, of both the process and performance involved in the organization and analysis of datasets. Overall, compelling datasets are given more consideration in the publication process because their nuanced information offers more rigor and promise, and are therefore more useful to knowledge production in general.

APSSR's publishing norms on organization and dataset do not start and end when manuscripts are compliant to the respective requirements of the said norms. The journal has one more norm, on completeness—our standard practice of checking and ensuring that the conditions required for every part of the manuscript are fully met. In other words, besides being organized and with compelling datasets, manuscripts must be complete in each of these respects. Incompleteness, including errors, is relatively prevalent in the manuscript's text, tables and figures, and references. Several of these gaps are overlooked early on in the submission and review process (due to volumes of submission), but these are promptly flagged up to us by our eagle-eyed copyediting and lay-outting staff. Unless the incompleteness stems from our side (e.g., lay-outting mistakes), we alert authors to rectify it—and their full compliance is expected. Specifically, we advise authors to focus on each gap and earnestly correct it. We further advise them that, rather than acting hastily, they should concentrate very carefully on what is being asked and to carry this out with utmost accuracy and precision. It is for the good of authors that we advise them this way. Manuscripts, even if they have been copyedited and laid out, can be rejected if authors are non-compliant to final corrections (and requirements, such as submitting a signed copyright form).

We institute publishing norms because these are the ways of life of research journals. We aim for high standards in journal publishing, so these norms help us in attaining our publishing goal. These norms are not beyond the capabilities of the TRS; with passion, commitment, and time, any one of them should be able to imbibe the culture of publishing. They ought to practice their learnings, however, by writing manuscripts and submitting them to good social sciences journals (thousands from every nook and cranny of the world are listed in Scopus). Manuscript rejections must never be a reason for TRS to stop writing and submitting; on the contrary, rejections should be an impetus, an inspiration for them to persevere. The most strategic response to rejections is to understand and address the missing elements in the submitted manuscripts. If the lacking elements have to do with organization, authors must re-organize their manuscripts; if what is lacking is complexity, authors have to elevate the level of their analysis and presentation. The point is to earnestly revise the manuscripts so that these truly reflect and are compliant with the norms of journals. While they can tap various external sources for assistance, the TRS would be greatly advantaged if they develop and harness their own capabilities in publishing (by extension, this means that authors must truly own, and be solely responsible for, their manuscripts rather than be dependent on others). An occasional call for outside help may work, but overall, nothing beats if the TRS hold the wherewithal for publishing at their fingertips. Compliance is easiest if authors are equipped with the rightful resources.

Since introducing our website (<http://apssr.com>) and Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/DLSUAPSSR/>) almost a year ago, compliant manuscripts have been coming the APSSR's way (we are gleeful that this is happening). Some of these are featured in this edition dwelling, as is the case, on the

burning issues of the day, such as green purchase intention, early childhood education, generation Y, ethical leadership, immigration, fertility, home improvement, and teaching competency. Our book review—on gender entanglements in rapidly changing Asia—is equally fiery as are our Data at a Glance features on human development, sex gaps in education and labor, and gender equality in the economic sphere. We will publish more issues of the times in our future editions. Please join us in celebrating APSSR’s new milestone by submitting your suitably-crafted manuscripts.

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