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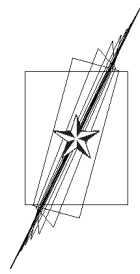
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FROM THE EDITOR

Our December 2013 issue features research-based articles with topics focusing on a spectrum of issues—from human capital public expenditures on reducing fertility and poverty levels to research productivity, and from ethnic minorities to moral decadence and suicide in young people. Let me add my brief perspectives on some of these issues.

Gargi Bhattacharya and Sushil K. Haldar utilize data to investigate the nexus between Indian government's spending on human capital on the one hand, and birth and poverty rates on the other. The analysis is very useful not only for its given theoretical and empirical value but for its political significance. Indeed, if India with its elevated fertility and poverty levels were to further advance its national and global development goals, it has to manage these twin issues effectively. Purposive and well-designed interventions are seen as necessary for fertility and poverty reductions, albeit very few systematic investigations are informing us, in definitive terms, if such efforts are efficacious. In appreciating the analysis, one has to take note of the established association between fertility and poverty.

A group of researchers in the US led by Susan Marie Aguilar examines research productivity among East Asian scientists. In particular, they determine if cosmopolitanism measured in terms of one's networking, collaborating and conferencing is related with one's total journal productivity and productivity in high-impact journals. Read the article for its findings on these hypothesized associations. The manuscript is highly informative especially for most of the region's universities that are continuing to harness their modest academic resources to have their publications featured in high-impact publications, and thus, improve their national, regional and world ranking.

Dalmacito A. Cordero, Jr. examines moral decline in teenagers and identifies and discusses its distinct sources—mass media, peer pressure, and poor family involvement. The published research literature has abundant information on the roles of the mass media and key social groups on the basis that these are ubiquitous social agents of adolescents. Rather than just single out the influencing sources of moral decline, the author recommends “an effective evangelization” through contextual theology in which religious education uses the process of engagement. As teens nowadays are a generation of techies, educators should be able to define a role for e-technology in contextual theology.

Ramses Amer and Gerry Lanuza provide two separate research perspectives on ethnic minorities; the former on ethnic Vietnamese in Cambodia and the latter on Muslim students in the Philippines. Though their framework differs (the first is a national-level analysis while the second is micro), both articles highlight some patterns, dynamics and complexities of relations between the social majority and minority. The evidence has ramifications for discourses and actions related to peace, security, and stability especially in Asia-Pacific where there dwell upon thousands of ethnic minorities.

In addition to the aforementioned full-length research articles, we also feature in this issue research briefs (mini-articles of not more than 2,000 words) on vulnerable children and trafficking and television viewing practices; and a book review. For more than a decade now, the Asia-Pacific Social Science Review has been an active partner in publishing manuscripts that advance burning issues and viewpoints affecting the region. We seek to further strengthen this role as we move forward even more.

Romeo B. Lee, Ph.D.
Editor

