

# ASIA-PACIFIC SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW

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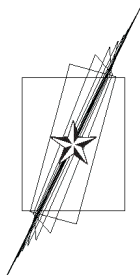
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# From the Editor

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## **Responding to the Challenges of Global Disinformation: The Era of Post-Truth and the Social Sciences**

Social media and its global reach have allowed for constant interconnectedness among individuals. It has become a powerful force in contemporary life, allowing for the rise of digital participatory cultures, social movements, and even the demise of oppressive regimes. Users of various social media platforms have been empowered to create content that is directed to large audiences with the possibility of immediate response. Although social media has brought forth significant changes in the way people interact, it has also fomented a shift in the way information is consumed. News agencies, universities, and other similar institutions are re-examining their roles in relation to the exigencies of new technological developments.

Traditional producers and gatekeepers of knowledge have found it more challenging to dispense their responsibilities. This is caused by the rising intolerance on social media incited by a deluge of disinformation and misinformation. Both are considered falsehoods, the former imbued with malicious intent while the latter is without. When these are channeled through social media, the speed and extent of its reach are immense. In essence, social media has become an accelerant for the spread of distorted facts, manipulated information, and other malicious content. This has real-life implications with people distrusting science and facts, for example, political polarization, vaccine hesitancy, disbelieving the science on climate change, and disregarding facts pertaining to COVID-19.

Some scholars have intimated that we are experiencing the post-truth era, where facts have become less significant in shaping public discourse. This increasing bias against facts coalescing with strong appeals to personal convictions and emotions has led to the perception of an alternative reality and even an alternative epistemology. Cultural theorist Raymond Williams predicted that we would experience the waning of affect in the postmodern condition, which supposedly manifests the cultural logic of late capitalism and places emphasis on surface rather than depth. On the contrary, part of the success of post-truth is that people rely on the supposed intelligence of feelings. It can now be observed that knowledge-producing institutions and their members are gradually being undermined by misguided and sometimes dangerous narratives.

Despite these challenges, social scientists have continuously upheld their duty of advocating evidence-based discourse and developing new ways to communicate science. The social sciences, and even the humanities, remain central in responding to ongoing technological and societal changes. I attribute great importance to the work constantly being done by scholars in defending facts and advancing truth against global disinformation.

This issue of the APSSR contains 13 articles coming from different locations in the Asia-Pacific region. This particular issue represents an extensive range of studies in the social sciences. Zheng et al. examined Fintech ecosystems of the ASEAN-6 by constructing an index focusing on readiness and capacity, demand, and future growth. Lacap and Sicap explored the experiential quality and loyalty of a select group of consumers in the Philippines. Kaewsopa et al. put into perspective the effect of personal income tax on economic growth in China

and Thailand. Negi and Azeez examined the impacts of development-induced displacement in India. El Islami et al. compared the science curricula of Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Lacap and Alfonso studied patient satisfaction vis-à-vis physical environment and intention to recommend in the Philippines. Miah et al. explored patient-pharmacist interaction patterns through a scoping review. Ramly and Ramli investigated the effect of board capital on commercial bank risk-taking in Malaysia. Zhu probed the attitudes and perspectives of Chinese parents towards their children embarking on working holidays in New Zealand. Bekema examined the experiences of stigma pertaining to COVID-19 positive individuals during the early stages of the pandemic in the Philippines. Jabar et al. studied the predictors of intention to vaccinate in the Philippines. Boyles et al. put into perspective the concept of technological singularity in relation to COVID-19. Lastly, Caboverde explored the environmental regulatory burden on SME profit growth.

The contents of this issue emphasize the role of the *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* in advancing social science research in the region. I extend my appreciation to the authors who contributed to this issue. Most of all, I thank our readers, reviewers, and colleagues who continuously support the endeavors of the APSSR. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome our incoming Editor-in-Chief, Ador Torneo, who will lead the APSSR to new and exciting directions.

I look forward to receiving your submissions. Our website is at <https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/research/publishing-house/journals/apssr/> and our ScholarOne submission platform is at <https://mc04.manuscriptcentral.com/apssr>.

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