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Social Science Research: Publication Through the Lens of Social Responsibility

Broad and diverse, basic or applied, social science research has a wide reach that can have a strong impact on society in general. For social scientists, research is at the core of their functions, and so is publishing. Although most, if not all, social scientists perceive research as a social responsibility, not too many may have the same perspective about publication. Social science researchers view publishing differently. Some are highly motivated and inspired to publish to contribute to their discipline and to society. Some others may view publishing as an academic exercise, needing to publish so as not to perish. A few may be even nonchalant about publication. Whatever the intent is and the level of motivation, social science publication, just like social science research, may be viewed using the lens of social responsibility. In this regard, overcoming the challenges of publishing is part of social responsibility.

Using the lens of social responsibility, publishing is more than an academic exercise. It is more than a race for the journal with a high impact factor. The impact factor and the citation index are all relevant research indices, numbers that contribute to social impact. Researchers can aim to continuously improve their ranking, and yes, this is likewise a pathway to fulfilling their social responsibility as social scientists. Publication completes the process of research and contributes to the collective understanding of social issues and phenomena. Knowledge about global warming and other environmental issues, economic, political issues, sociological, medical and health, and psychological issues are broadened and deepened when empirical data and evidence-based arguments are presented through published work.

The published papers connect the different social scientists, building on one another’s work and validating research findings. Publications provide opportunities for researchers to collaborate and work together and to bring their respective expertise to come up with a multidisciplinary approach to arrive at a common basic understanding of social phenomena and even find solutions to some of these social problems. This collaborative effort may be more difficult to achieve without publicly reporting the research findings.

Using the lens of social responsibility, publication may be viewed as a reputable way of disseminating research findings. The publication process, including peer reviews, provides quality control to the kind of research social scientists do and, hence, ensures the reliability of the research findings. Aside from providing quality control, publication safeguards ethical ways of doing research and presenting findings. Informed consent, confidentiality, privacy, potential risks to participants, data trustworthiness, and integrity are some of the ethical issues that need to be consistently ensured.

When validated and corroborated by several researchers, published papers may carry greater weight to inform policies, guidelines, standards, and solutions for various social science phenomena. For example, some of the laws on environmental issues, governance, social norms, child and women’s rights and protection, and SDG (sustainable development goals) related issues stem from the published work of social scientists. Using the social responsibility lens, publication may be one of the highest forms, if not the highest form, of research dissemination for social science research, resulting in high social impact and benefits for society.

APSSR, therefore, invites all social scientists in the Asia-Pacific region and neighboring countries to take up the challenge of seeing publication as a social responsibility. Our research is never complete and does not meet
our social responsibility unless it is shared in a public domain where the findings can be scrutinized, validated, and, in the end, valued for society’s benefit.

In this issue of APSSR, social responsibility is at the core of the six research articles. The authors tackled important social issues that range from protecting the environment to protecting people in different contexts. Using a political ecological lens, Antonio Contreras offered Cullen’s theory of transitional governmentality as an alternative theoretical framework that could be used in resolving an environmental conflict. Mary Grace Agcaoili, on the other hand, presented the academic, legal, and practical interpretation of the best interests of the child (BIC) in juvenile justice and child protection of children in conflict with the law (CICL) in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand. Khauthar Ismail studied Malaysian students, particularly how ethnicity and its boundaries within friendship are socially constructed, maintained, and heightened depending on social actors’ particular needs, situations, and socio-political context. For her paper, Sterling Plata focused on the whole-university approach to mental health leadership, particularly for faculty members and staff who are frontliners in addressing mental health issues. Vincent Co analyzed Rawls’ theories on the nature of justice and equitable distribution and addressed their limitations to establish a framework for the vaccine patent debate. Finally, the paper of Alexi Basileo and Dennis Erasga developed and validated the Fear of COVID-19 Scale, a tool that can be adapted even beyond the pandemic.

I would like to thank the editors and reviewers for their consistent support for the journal. 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.

Maria Caridad H. Tarroja
Editor-in-Chief
Asia-Pacific Social Science Review
1. The APSSR welcomes original and unpublished manuscripts discussing any topic in the social sciences situated in or with significant implications for the Asia-Pacific region.[1] As a multidisciplinary journal, the APSSR encourages diversity and inclusiveness and welcomes submissions from the various social science disciplines and authors in all regions and countries of the Asia-Pacific. The APSSR is also hospitable to Humanities research and will consider submissions in Literary, Translation, and/or Cultural Studies, particularly if they engage with issues pertaining to the Asia-Pacific region.

2. The APSSR encourages and welcomes submissions from different social science disciplines, regions, countries, and epistemological, ontological, and methodological traditions. The journal may decline a second or third consecutive submission from authors whose works have been recently published or accepted in APSSR to maintain the diversity of contributors and provide publication opportunities for other scholars.

3. The APSSR categorizes manuscripts into two—Research Articles and Research Briefs. Research articles are full-length submissions longer than 5,000 words but less than or equal to 8,000 words, including references. Research Briefs are shorter manuscripts that are less than or equal to 5,000 words in length but are short of a full article. It may present partial results or preliminary findings of ongoing research. Manuscripts submitted as Research Briefs cannot be converted to a Research Article after submission.

4. Authors may submit manuscripts anytime through the APSSR’s ScholarOne™ Submission Platform. Submissions to APSSR must be a single MS Word file bearing the Abstract and keywords (note: these parts are not applicable to Research Briefs), Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References, Acknowledgements, and declarations of Funding Source/s, Ownership, Conflict of Interest and Ethical Clearance, as appropriate. The Abstract must state the rationale, objectives, methods, results, and conclusions but should be no more than 500 words.

5. Authors may include a maximum of five tables and high-resolution figures in a manuscript. These should be placed in their exact locations within the manuscript rather than at its end or in a separate file. Tables, figures, in-text citations, and references should abide by the rules of the American Psychological Association 7th Edition (APA). References in non-Roman scripts and non-English languages must have their English versions. Include the URL or DOI of each of the cited sources in the References section. Lastly, author names and affiliations should not appear on the document. The journal will only entertain manuscripts that follow the journal guidelines.

6. All submitted manuscripts will undergo preliminary screening, which includes: similarity check (is the similarity rating justifiable and acceptable?), writing (is the English Language expression correct and clear?), completeness, and organization (does it have all the required sections?), and formatting (are the sections appropriately done according to the rules of the journal and the APA Style guide?). The journal editors may decide to review, unsubmit, or reject manuscripts at this stage.

7. Manuscripts that pass the screening are queued for desk review and evaluation by the journal editors. The APSSR editors evaluate submitted manuscripts based on several criteria, which may include but are not limited to:
   • Alignment of the topic to the scope of APSSR (i.e., interesting, relevant, or emerging topics situated within or with implications to the Asia-Pacific region)
   • A compelling rationale for the study (i.e., clear research problem, well-articulated research questions or objectives, compelling significance)
   • Soundness and clarity of methodology (i.e., appropriateness of the selected method for the study and sufficiency of information about the research design and specific method of data collection and analysis)
   • Quality of data and analytical rigor (i.e., adequacy of data and how well the analysis supports the interpretation and conclusion)
• Coherence and organization of the manuscript (i.e., the manuscript is well-organized and the different parts and sections go well together)
• Potential contribution to scholarship or practice (i.e., the value of the contributions of the manuscript justify publication)

8. The APSSR editors will determine which manuscripts will proceed to external review during desk review and evaluation. The editors may decide to proceed to external review, unsubmit, or reject submissions at this stage.

9. A queued manuscript means it will be considered for publication but only after it is peer-reviewed. APSSR adopts a double-blind review process. Review results are sent to the corresponding author once available. The reviewers may recommend to accept, make minor revisions, make major revisions, or reject. The editors will consolidate and relay the results of the review along with comments and instructions.

10. Authors whose manuscripts have been recommended for revision are expected to provide their detailed responses to the comments provided by the reviewers and editors. Authors are also expected to provide information to facilitate further review. These include brief descriptions of changes to the manuscript and information on where these are located (e.g., page number, paragraph, line). Final decisions on manuscripts recommended for revisions will be made based on the evaluation of the revised manuscripts and the response to the reviewers and editors.

11. Acceptance of a manuscript for publication is tentative until the authors have satisfactorily addressed the required revisions and complied with the journal instructions. The APSSR reserves the right not to publish an accepted manuscript if the author fails to carry out requested revisions, promptly return a signed Copyright Agreement form, and comply with other journal requirements or instructions.

12. All decisions regarding the review, acceptance, and publication of manuscripts shall rest with the journal’s Editorial Board. Manuscripts accepted for publication are queued on a first-come, first-served basis, according to the four regular editions—March (online edition only), June (online and print editions), September (online edition only), and December (online and print editions).

13. Accepted manuscripts are copyedited and are e-mailed to the corresponding authors for the appropriate action based on the suggested changes of the copy editor. Thereafter, the copyedited and author-checked version is formatted. Finally, the proof, along with instructions on accessing and completing the Copyright Agreement, is e-mailed to the corresponding author for proper action.

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