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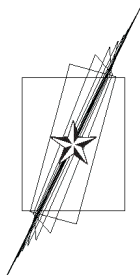
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Romeo B. Lee

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From the Editor

High-Impact Journal Article Publishing—Knowledge Production, Science, and Responsibility: Some Notes for Promising Social Scientists

In pursuit of the much-coveted global, regional, and domestic rankings of higher educational institutions, which are anchored partly on citation metrics, the region's universities have been consistently challenging their pool of social scientists to publish in high-impact journals. At the same time, these universities are very well aware that—if they were to sustain their respectable ranking—they would have to systematically train their promising social scientists (PSS) on how to publish in high-tiered journals. Providing these scientists with relevant resources is key to developing their publishing career, but their long-term productivity would depend on the depth of their learning of the publishing culture. At this introductory section of the *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* (APSSR), we have been providing critical viewpoints related to journal publishing. For example, we discussed, in December 2018, “Citations, Ranking, and the Challenging Yet Promising Role of Universities and Social Sciences Journals and Authors”; in March 2019, “How to Get Your Manuscripts Published in the APSSR—Compliance is Key”; and in this current edition, June 2019, we offer higher-level viewpoints on three key interrelated elements—knowledge production, science, and responsibility. Why dwell on publishing culture at length? Well, we would like to contribute to strengthening the culture of journal article publishing among the young generation.

Once a research-based article is published in a high-impact journal, that article—with its proffered viewpoints—automatically contributes to knowledge production. Whether the viewpoints of the published article are novel or seeking to support, challenge, or deepen our knowledge of a phenomenon, the article—once it sees print—gets integrated right away into the current body of knowledge. This means that the article gets counted as a featured publication in a journal's edition, its pdf is produced, and its title, authors, abstract, and entire text, including its URL or DOI, are displayed prominently at a journal's offline and online sites. The published article joins the multitude of articles that have come from every nook and cranny of the world, and that article awaits to be accessed, and more importantly, cited as a knowledge source. In Scopus-abstracted journals alone, there are tens of millions of these articles covering a dizzying array of topics and specializations, and their numbers continue to grow each day, which is hardly surprising given the rabid call for more publications and higher university rankings. The sheer volumes of journal articles alone are indicative of the extensive engagements of the various stakeholders in knowledge production as well as the vibrancy of the publishing culture itself. PSS must learn that, when we publish an article, we help widen and deepen that engagement, and at the same time, we add vigor to the culture, keeping it in flux, and heightening its life and status as a result. Moreover, PSS have to learn that when we produce knowledge, that knowledge gets utilized down the line to improve attitudes, behaviors, and interventions—generally for the benefit of humankind. Journal publications are, thus, not just pieces of information but tools for changing human lives; in effect, articles are life-changing in themselves.

Within the context of high-impact journal publishing, we produce knowledge purposefully according to and following a system. Each of the moves that we take must be informed by and grounded on science. Our courses of action—from the conception, collection, and analysis to the reporting and dissemination of knowledge—are guided by science, or are scientific. For example, in constructing articles, we abide with science-based publishing

norms, such that we write in technical and scientific terms; we format and substantiate our article according to the expected parts; we limit the number of words, tables, and figures; we declare our conflict of interest and ethical clearance; we cite our references; and most importantly, we attest to the originality of our work. Journals execute these norms by formatting and presenting the featured articles in a uniform manner, and editing them so that they proffer knowledge clearly and concisely, using, for instance, a simple and a straightforward language. PSS need to learn there is science behind prescribing and enforcing this set of norms. Each part of the journal article—including its attendant substantive and technical requirements—is anchored on the logic of science, thus when we piece all the parts of an article together, for example, we achieve unity and coherence in our knowledge production. Monolithic norm sets structure, process, and outcomes that, in turn, defines patterns, expectations, and predictability, all of which are critical for sustaining a mutual understanding between and among journal publishing stakeholders. PSS must learn a great deal about all of these norms; however, their top learning priority must focus upon honing, mastering, and executing their technical writing skills. Effective technical writing skills, which can be acquired over time if the craft is taken with heart, zest, and goal, are a key foundation of science, as well as one's springboard to a successful career in high-impact journal article publishing.

The continuity and movement of both knowledge production and science throughout the world do certainly rest upon the hands and brains of the current crop of stakeholders (i.e., scientists, publishers, and editors). These stakeholders ensure, among others, that the disciplinary norms are adhered to by the current and future generations of social scientists. These stakeholders are expected to always look for the normative elements in each of the journal articles submitted to them, because doing so is germane to their responsibility (and not because they are whimsical or power-trippers as many would say). It is likewise the responsibility of such stakeholders to continually scrutinize and refine prevailing norms, but it should be known that many of these norms cannot be changed overnight on account of varying demands from some authors, as there is a collective process to follow, not to mention that many of these demands are top-of-the-heap. PSS may need to temper their propensity to request for magical changes in the publishing norms; what they ought to do is to fully imbibe the culture of high-impact journal article publishing so that they elevate their sense of publishing responsibility. Doing so would enable them to understand the culture of journal article publishing from inside out, to form the critical internal traits (e.g., having reflexive and independent judgments), and to carve the pathways towards forming personal agency and self-sufficiency. Given their phenomenal access to online database resources nowadays, fostering such responsibility among PSS is very realistic—and highly doable. Rather than asking editors about how they can improve their articles, PSS would be better off—in the long term—if they can learn from the tens of thousands of model journals and articles available 24/7365 at Scopus (<https://www.scopus.com>). Responsibility starts when PSS masters the art of self-learning.

For PSS seeking to have their articles considered here at APSSR, all they need to do is to scour our published editions (<http://apssr.com>) and get an idea or two about how articles are formatted, presented, and expressed. Of the mentioned characteristics, expression must be a top consideration for crafting an article without which there is no other way for us to determine the value of a submission. From this June 2019 edition alone, where we feature 14 research articles (!), PSS can learn so much about how good articles are presented in substantive and technical terms. For instance, we have articles on over-skilling (from authors in South Korea), breast cancer (from authors in the Philippines), farming families (from author in Singapore), BRICS (from author in the Russian Federation), Indian-ness (from author in Malaysia), and dengue fever (from authors in Thailand). Our current features are indeed a showcase of the booming knowledge production, science, and responsibility in the region, and a guide for many PSS in our midst as they embark on or sustain their journal article publishing activities—for their professional, personal, and institutional development.

I look forward to receiving good submissions from PSS in the very near future.

Romeo B. Lee

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