

Journal Status Report 2018

Starting in this regular issue, a total of twenty peer-reviewed articles will be featured in every quarterly publication of the Journal in order to enhance the timely dissemination of original and novel scientific knowledge, particularly to the Filipino scientific community and other stakeholders in the public and private sector. The increase in issue capacity is also called for by the larger number of manuscript submissions that is now being processed by the Editorial Office. The Journal publisher, the Department of Science and Technology through the Science and Technology Information Institute, would still continue with its policy of not asking publication charges from successful authors.

Until 2015, the Journal published two issues (in June and December) a year and a total of twenty-two articles were featured for Volume 144. The number of issues was increased to four (March, June, September, and December) for Volume 145 (2016)—with each issue containing ten articles—and continued until Issue 2 of Volume 146. The number of articles per issue was increased to fifteen in Volume 146 Issue 3 (September 2017) until Volume 147 Issue 2 (June 2018).

In 2015, the Office received a total of 60 submissions at the rate of 5.00 ± 1.54 per month, with 67% (40) of their corresponding authors working in Philippine-based institutions. In 2016 and 2017, the number increased to 72 (6.00 ± 2.76 per month) and 113 (9.42 ± 3.63 per month), respectively. Locals accounted for 79.2% and 76.1% of all corresponding authors during those years. In the first six months of 2018, a total of 55 submissions were received at 9.17 ± 3.31 per month, with 29% of corresponding authors affiliated with foreign institutions.

After hurdling preliminary screening at the Office, a manuscript is sent for evaluation to two independent reviewers (at least) whose identities are kept confidential. A total of 252 scientists and researchers served as expert reviewers in 2017, with 41% (102) of them based in foreign institutions located in twenty-nine different countries. In the year prior, there were 164 reviewers with 54.88% of them from abroad. As a token of appreciation for their generosity, the names and affiliations of the reviewers are listed in the last issue of each volume.

The average review duration (in weeks) per article was 62.3, 29.8, and 19.8 in 2015, 2016, and 2017, respectively. In the first six months of 2018, the average length was reduced further to 10.4 weeks. The 83% reduction in review time gained in the last 3.5 years has been mainly due to improved communication and better cooperation between our professional reviewers and the Office, which has allowed us to handle the 83% rise in the corresponding monthly submission rate. The acceptance rate per volume has remained steady at 49.95 ± 1.57 percent for manuscripts received in a given year in the last three years ending 2017.

In 2017, thirty-one publications represented 55.36% of total featured corresponding authors who were from eleven higher education institutions (HEIs)—with UP Diliman (10), UP Los Baños (6), and De La Salle University Manila (4) as the top three contributors. The Commission on Higher Education Philippines accredited 1,906 HEIs in AY 2017–2018, including 111 state universities and colleges. In 2016, thirty publications (85.71%) had corresponding authors from fourteen HEIs— with UP Diliman (10), UP Los Baños, (7) and De La Salle University Manila (2) accounting for 63%. In 2015, eighteen publications (81.82%) had corresponding authors from ten HEIs—with UP Diliman (6), UP Los Baños (3), and Ateneo de Manila University (2) contributing 61%.

More than sixty-one percent (61.58%) of the 113 submissions in 2017 were classified in the areas of Agriculture and Forestry (26.55%), Biological Sciences (27.43%), and Nutrition, Food Science and Technology (7.6%). In 2016, 61.6% of the 72 submissions were in Agriculture and Forestry (26.39%), Chemical Sciences (7.6%), and the Biological Sciences (5%).

Agriculture and Forestry (32.14%) and the Biological Sciences (32.14%) accounted for 64% of the 56 articles that were submitted and accepted in 2017. Chemistry (7.14%) and the Social Sciences (7.14%) together contributed 14.28%. Together, the two areas accounted for 54.29% of the accepted manuscripts (35) in 2016—with Biology at 34.29%.

The number of submissions featuring authors hailing from two or more collaborating institutions is on an upward trend from 2015 (with 15 or 25%) to 2016 (24; 33.33%) and 2017 (36; 31.86%). In the first six months of 2018, 54.55% of submissions were outcomes of multi-institutional research collaborations.

This Journal serves several functions for the Philippine scientific enterprise system. It acts as an invaluable repository of the outputs of past research investigations that were conducted in the archipelago since the turn of the 20th century. The field measurements and methodologies, as well as data analyses and interpretation that are archived systematically, provide a treasure trove of valuable information that would allow the development of a reliable account of the history of science in Philippine society. Such is essential if Filipino taxpayers are to see immediate tangible benefits from their earnest investment in scientific R&D that is intended to produce new knowledge that, when applied successfully, would improve the quality of life of Filipinos.

A more accurate understanding of the phenomena is an essential prerequisite in finding an effective national strategy for decelerating the worsening income inequality in society and to ease the wasteful utilization of human and natural resources that is bringing serious damage to the environment. Past interventions that were developed from the simplistic hypothesis, that graft and corruption is the primary root of our national misery, has not made them disappear or even less rampant. Corruption perception has remained high due to the lack of transparency, predictability, and inclusivity in the manner in which our socio-political and economic institutions and social networks operate and function. Nation building requires the relentless effort of indefatigable government leaders who are not merely honest and duly elected or appointed, but also positionally fit to do the job at hand.

Bureaucratic inertia and traffic gridlock are complex conundrums—they are not solved by first-order approximations borne out of worn-out general principles and ideologies. The unintended consequence of these stop-gap measures to the population is to transform one form of misery to another. The search for effective solutions would require the high-resolution sampling and high-speed processing of large amounts of reliable data for the purpose of unearthing and establishing all possible spatio-temporal interdependences among numerous dynamical factors and dimensions that shape the problem.

This Journal is duty-bound to present a coherent picture of the state of scientific R&D in the country and to provide crucial opportunities for young Filipino scientists and researchers to lead their own research teams and become senior investigators. Considerable effort is being exerted by the Office and the Journal Editorial Board to enlarge and deepen the pool of Filipino technical reviewers, as well as to enhance public awareness about the challenges facing the domestic science community. The availability of many productive scientists and expert reviewers working inside the country is vital in making the Philippine scientific enterprise system highly capable of absorbing the availability of more public funds for R&D activities that is made possible by a growing Philippine GDP. The DOST Budget for FY 2018 is PHP 20.9072B, which is 9.01% and 280.47% bigger than they were in FY 2015 and FY 2008, respectively.

The Editorial Office is proactively promoting the practice of highest ethical standards in the conduct of human and animal investigations as provided by existing laws and regulations, particularly those that directly affect the conduct of scientific R&D such as Republic Act No. 8485—The Animal Welfare Act of 1998—and Republic Act No. 9147—The Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act. It requires submissions by all concerned authors to include a certificate indicating prior approval of their experimental methodologies by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

CAESAR SALOMA
Editor-In-Chief