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A Note from the Editor-in-Chief: Professionalization of Academics and Quality Journals

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A Note from the Editor-in-Chief: Professionalization of Academics and Quality Journals

With the push for professionalization and performativity of academics (Debowksi, 2012), the performance of academics all over the world is being measured by their publications, assuming that published research reflects professionalization. This pressure results in the increasing number of publications. A report from Nature revealed that in 2018, the number of published scientific papers hit an all-time high, with some countries showing an improvement of 15–20% of research output (Makri, 2018). However, Adler and Harzing (2009) warn us that the increasing number of publications may not reflect the rise of meaningful research. It may induce the likelihood of false positives and come at the cost of accuracy of research (Munafò et al., 2017). Sarawitz (2016) even goes as far as saying that the pressure to publish destroys the quality of research just as cancer terminates a living cell.

What was once intended to push for an increase of competence in research, creativity in writing and development of knowledge, has sadly taken a wrong turn. In the last four years in Indonesia, I have witnessed the proliferation of journals with no commitment to quality. Many of these journals apply limited, if any, peer reviews, which are still the corner stone of publishing (Nicholas, 2015) and thus forget about intellectual rigor. It should be noted that these journals are not predatory journals. Most of them are created by universities for the benefit of their own academics. They are produced because of institutional pressure as universities are threatened to show how many of their academics are able to publish. In other words, these journals provide a place for academics to fulfill their obligation to publish and grant publication numbers for universities, with limited concern on quality. It seems that the tendency of increasing number of low-quality journals is not uniquely Indonesian; other countries may also experience similar situations. This is in line with Edwards and Roy's (2017) observation that the actual effects of the push for publication is that journals are accepting substandard papers, poor method, reduced quality of peer review and bad science. Instead of professionalization, what has happened is the de-professionalization of academics, erosion of academic integrity and threat to knowledge.

Makara Human Behavior Studies in Asia, however, is taking a different route. We are dedicated to applying the best practices of rigorous journals: focus on quality research, and demand for systematic and creative writing that demonstrates the novelty of the research. For

this, the use of double-blind reviews is our golden rule. As we focus on quality articles, we choose editors and reviewers that are respected in their own disciplines from many countries in Asia, Australia, Europe and America. We have revised our referee report to make sure that reviewers are detailed and provide constructive feedback for authors. In addition, we have conducted capacity building for our Indonesian reviewers. Further, we are also committed to our identity as a journal that disseminates human behavior knowledge of Asian people—those who live in Asia, or Asians that live abroad—from various perspectives, such as cultural studies, communication science, psychology, behavioral economics, and sociology.

Our continuous commitment to uphold the golden rules of quality journals has rewarded us by being indexed in Clarivate Analytics's Emerging Sources Citation Indexed (ESCI)—a testament to the quality of articles published in our journals and their impacts in advancing the development of knowledge in human behavior. We continue striving to improve the quality of articles we publish and to seek being indexed in other reputable data bases, such as Scopus (we applied in November 2018) and other data bases. We hope that our readers and prospective authors grow with us, to be committed to intellectual rigor, professionalization of academics and the development of knowledge.

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