

A Critique of Scopus-Centrism in Philippine Universities and Educational and/or Research Agencies: Why Filipinos Should Write Research in Filipino

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ABSTRACT

Scopus is a corporate-owned database of selected journals which is considered high-quality/top-caliber by many university administrators and professors. It is owned by the Netherlands-based company Elsevier, and among the typical bases of metrics used in global university rankings. As a result, Scopus-centrism persists in the policies of Philippine universities and Philippine educational and/or research agencies. In view of this, this paper is aimed at fulfilling the following objectives: (1) present a critical introduction on Scopus and similar systems of abstract and citation databases; (2) describe the dominance of Scopus-centrism among public agencies and universities in the Philippines; (3) present a critique of Scopus-centrism in the Philippines; and (4) discuss some alternatives to Scopus-centrism. In general, this is an iteration of Ramon Guillermo's earlier study on the Institute for Scientific Information or ISI, published by the journal *Asian Studies* in 2000.

Keywords: Scopus, linguistic imperialism, Filipino as a language of research, hegemony of English, neocolonialism

Introduction: Pressure on Teachers to Publish in Scopus

Teachers' aspirations to publish in journals listed or indexed in Scopus is evident due to the pressure from their respective schools/universities, which consider publishing in Scopus-listed journals as a standard or one of the criteria for teacher promotion/career advancement. Often, financial incentives are also provided to teachers who have published in Scopus-listed journals. Within academic circles, publishing in journals listed in Scopus is considered as a measure of research productivity (Saloma 122-23; Carpenter et al.) and research impact (Carpenter et al.). However, university administrators rarely provide sufficient information about Scopus and other similar databases, nor do they offer meaningful explanations as to

why publishing in such journals is important, even for Filipino language teachers/researchers in the Philippines who are expected to contribute to local and national knowledge production before any consideration of their ability to compete globally (the tired and now nearly meaningless if not entirely useless catchphrase “global competitiveness”) is to be discussed. In this context, it is necessary to critically examine the prevailing Scopus-centrism in academia.

Critical Introduction to Scopus and Scopus-Centrism

On the website of Elsevier, the Netherlands-based company that owns Scopus, the database is described as the “largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature: scientific journals, books, and conference proceedings” (“About”). Simply put, Scopus is an entity that lists and ranks selected academic journals worldwide based on their supposed quality and caliber. The minimum “journals scope and selection criteria” of Scopus can also be found on Elsevier’s website. To qualify for Scopus’s review, journal titles have to meet the minimum criteria which include having “publicly available description of the peer review process” and “content that is relevant for and readable by an international audience, meaning: have English language abstracts and titles” (Elsevier “Content policy and selection”). Aside from these, there are five categories and criteria that Scopus’s Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) use for evaluating journals (Elsevier “Content policy and selection”; see **Table 1**). Due to Scopus’s clear criteria for journal evaluation, it is not surprising that some universities use publishing in Scopus as a proxy indicator of the quality of their teachers’ outputs. However, there are also universities that assess the quality of their publications based on the internal strengths or weaknesses of each output itself. Universities typically require outputs to be refereed or peer-reviewed as a minimum requirement for high-quality research.

Table 1. Categories and Criteria that Scopus’s Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB) Use for Evaluating Journals

Category	Criteria
Journal Policy	Convincing editorial policy Type of peer review Diversity in geographical distribution of editors Diversity in geographical distribution of authors
Content	Academic contribution to the field Clarity of abstracts Quality of and conformity to the stated aims and scope of the journal Readability of articles

Category	Criteria
Journal Standing	Citedness of journal articles in Scopus Editor standing
Publishing Regularity	No delays or interruptions in the publication schedule
Online Availability	Full journal content available online English language journal home page available Quality of journal home page

Source: Elsevier. "Content Policy and Selection." 2024, www.elsevier.com/products/scopus/content/content-policy-and-selection.

While Elsevier's selection process is supposedly rigorous, in the past, there were some publications that managed to pass through the Scopus selection process even though there were concerns on their possible predatory nature. According to Macháček and Srholec, "(u)sing the names of 'potential, possible, or probable' predatory journals and publishers on Beall's lists, we derived the ISSNs of 3,293 journals from Ulrichsweb and searched Scopus with them. A total of 324 of journals that appear in both Beall's lists and Scopus, with 164,000 articles published during 2015-2017 were identified" (859).

Aside from Scopus, Web of Science (WoS) is another well-known research database worldwide. Web of Science has been owned by Clarivate Analytics (now known simply as Clarivate) since October 2016. It is listed on the New York Stock Exchange as CLVT. Its previous owner was Thomson Reuters, and it started as the Institute for Scientific Information/ISI, also known as Thomson ISI from 1992 to 2016. In relation to Thomson ISI, Guillermo's earlier research questioned and strongly opposed the excessive importance given by administrators of the Philippines' premier state university to ISI as the almost sole arbiter of high-quality research, despite its Western orientation which is far removed from the realities and concerns of a former colony. Such critique applies to Scopus because out of seventeen members of Scopus's Content Selection and Advisory Board (CSAB), eleven are from universities in North America and Europe, one from Australia, one from Taiwan, one from Singapore, one from Hong Kong, one from South Africa, and one from India (Elsevier "Scopus Content Selection and Advisory Board").

Guillermo also criticized the practice of favoring ISI as a short-sighted de-facto promotion of English language hegemony in academia which should be fought and overturned through the use of our communities' own languages in research, taking into account that the "spread of scientific skills and consciousness and a culture that will nurture scientific advancement is not only a technical matter of efficiency but also an essential part of advancing robust and genuine people's democracy"

which will pave the way for science to be “an instrument of emancipation” towards “a more developed and more peaceful society” (147). The current study thus builds on the related insights of Guillermo’s study as well as similar research that “indicate that the use of either WoS or Scopus for research evaluation may introduce biases that favor natural sciences and engineering as well as biomedical research to the detriment of social sciences and [the] arts and humanities” and that push for the continuation of “efforts to develop methods and indicators that include scientific output that are not covered in WoS or Scopus, such as field-specific and national citation indexes” (Mongeon and Paul-Hus). Another major critique of Scopus and similar databases is that the top publishers covered by these indices are mostly big corporate ones “in the United States, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Germany, which is not surprising when considering that the major academic publishing companies are located in these countries” (Pranckutė). Parallel with neoliberal dominance in the global economy and the education system, such “commodification (i.e., the action of treating something as a mere commodity) of knowledge production has been achieved through the control of a small number of private groups over scientific publishing, that has monetized the rights of access to publications for states and universities” (Davi et al.). As the Scopus database itself is controlled by one of the biggest corporate publishing companies, the current article’s critique of Scopus-centrism is thus a critique of the dominant neoliberal knowledge production system.

Scopus-centrism in the Philippines

Government agencies and universities in the Philippines demonstrate their Scopus-centric approach through five main actions: (1) providing incentives to authors who publish in journals listed in Scopus; (2) granting funds to publishers of journals listed in Scopus; (3) granting funds to publishers developing journals to be included in the Scopus list; (4) mentioning Scopus as one of the primary criteria for high-quality research; and (5) giving premium to Scopus-listed articles in faculty promotion/career progression requirements.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) is one of the government agencies that regularly grants incentives to those who publish in Scopus. The National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) website provides information about the DOST International Publication Award: “given annually to scientists and researchers of the [DOST] who were able to publish their research outputs in [WoS/Clarivate] or Scopus indexed journals. . . .” In this scheme, nominees can receive PhP/Philippine pesos 40,000 to 100,000 (USD 707 to 1,769) per paper. Additionally, the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD), an agency under DOST, also has a Publication Incentives

Program with the aim of promoting scientific productivity by motivating researchers, authors, and PCAARRD staff to publish their research results in local refereed and/or international journals indexed by Thomson Reuters (ISI) or Scopus, or accredited/recognized by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Authors can receive PhP 60,000 to 80,000 (USD 1,061 to 1,415) per paper through this program.

The National Research Council of the Philippines (NRCP) has the Support to Research Dissemination in Local and International Platforms (RDLIP) program, which includes a Financial Grant for Publication in ISI or Scopus-indexed journals, amounting to PhP 20,000 (USD 359) per individual. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has the CHED Research and Publication (REPUBLICA) Awards, following CHED Memorandum Order/CMO No. 23, S. of 2013. The REPUBLICA Qualifier Awards cover “ISI/SCOPUS-indexed journals,” with a grant of PhP 50,000 (USD 884) per paper. However, as of March 1, 2018, CHED temporarily suspended the REPUBLICA Awards based on a memorandum dated February 12, 2018. Like educational and/or research agencies, universities also compete in providing incentives to their teachers who publish in journals listed in Scopus, as shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Selected Philippine Universities’ Incentives for Faculty Members Who Publish in Scopus-Indexed Journals

Institution	Details of Incentives	Amount of incentives
University of the Philippines (UP)	UP System International Publication Award for professors, researchers, students who are able to publish in “Thomson Reuters-listed or SCOPUS-listed journals.”	PhP 55,000-80,000 (USD 973-1,415) per paper
Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU)	University Scholarly Publication Awards	PhP 30,000-65,000 (USD 530-1,150) per paper
De La Salle University (DLSU)-Manila	Science Foundation Publication Incentives (different amounts based on the SCImago tier of the Scopus-listed journal)	PhP 20,000-200,000 (USD 353-3,538) per paper
University of Santo Tomas (UST)	International Publications Award for “...all full time faculty members teaching only in UST for the publication of their research outputs in journal/s and books indexed in the [WoS]/ Scopus.”	PhP 50,000 (USD 884) per paper

Institution	Details of Incentives	Amount of incentives
Batangas State University (BatStateU)	Research Publication Incentive “...applicable to research papers authored or co-authored by BatStateU faculty researchers or personnel, published in regional, national, or international refereed journal accredited by the [CHED] and/or SCOPUS or ISI indexed.”	PhP 30,000 (USD 530) per paper

Source: Mostly culled from various publicly available sources. Data on the amount of incentive in UST was supplied by a full-time faculty member informant who wishes to remain anonymous.

There is a strong possibility that these incentives will increase in the coming years and decades because CHED itself has a clear Scopus-centric direction, as evidenced by their provision of incentives to publishers of journals listed or being developed for inclusion in Scopus. The said agency implemented the CHED Journal Incentive Program (JIP) in accordance with CMO No. 53, S. of 2016. It covers the Journal Challenge (JC) and Journal Incubation (JI) grants. The JC grant is for journals already indexed in Scopus or WoS, while the JI grant is for journals being developed to be included in the Scopus or WoS list. According to the mentioned CMO, each JI grantee received PhP 500,000 (USD 8,970) per year for three years, along with technical support from CHED, while each JC grantee received PhP 400,000 (USD 7,156) per year for three years, also with technical support from CHED.

Beginning December 1, 2018, CHED temporarily suspended the JIP, in line with a memorandum dated November 29, 2018. Through a public Freedom of Information (FOI) request sent to CHED on May 17, 2021, the researcher attempted to confirm the actual funding given to each CHED-JIP grantee listed in CMO No. 50 & 66 s. 2017. Instead of providing a direct answer, the FOI officer reiterated the public information stated in CMO 53, S. of 2016 in a correspondence dated May 27, 2021. The said FOI officer added that “(t)he grants for three years for each grantee are subject to submission of deliverables/targets listed in the CMO.” The details and thread of the FOI request can be read on the FOI Philippines website.

In addition to CHED’s Scopus-centric financial support and the cash incentives from agencies and universities, another evidence of Scopus-centrism is the mention of Scopus database as one of the primary criteria for high-quality research. On the CHED website, one can read this Scopus-centric analysis of the research situation in the country, which the agency also uses as a justification to further promote Scopus-centrism: “...the country is far behind in science publishing compared to its Asian neighbors and the rest of the world. CHED believes that the inclusion of

scholarly and scientific writings” in WoS and Scopus collections “is not just a mark of achievement but is also a factor in considering in terms of tenure, promotion, and other scholarly recognitions.” In the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) and CHED Joint Circular No. 3, series of 2022 (which is implemented in public universities in the Philippines), for research requirements of faculty promotion/ career progression, “journal articles must be published in a journal listed in the database of international indexing bodies such as ASEAN Citation Index, Scopus (by Elsevier), and [WoS] (by Clarivate Analytics)” though “journal articles written in Filipino that are not publishable in journals that are listed in the database of international indexing bodies but published in a peer-reviewed journal” can be also given consideration.

One of the declared goals of the Research Management Office of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) is to increase the number of articles published in Scopus: “To exponentially increase the CHED-recognized/ISI/Scopus-indexed research presentation and publications of all faculty and employees in all campuses and branches of the University.” This is similar to the declared goal of the University Journal Publication (UJP) of Bulacan State University/BuLSU: “This journal aims to upgrade itself as a Philippine journal towards the path to meet even just the minimum generally accepted standards for Scopus, [WoS] indexability, and ASEAN Citation Index.” From the University Research Agenda of DLSU-Dasmariñas, one can also observe a similar Scopus-centric declaration: “In the past five years, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of publications by the university’s faculty researchers in journals that are listed in Thomson Reuters and SCOPUS . . . it is now the goal of the university to raise its publication performance. . . .”

It is not surprising that publishing in Scopus-listed journals is included by universities in their research agendas because the dominant university rankings also promote Scopus-centrism. For example, in the “THE [Times Higher Education] World University Rankings 2020: methodology,” it is directly mentioned that the Scopus database is the primary source for measuring research productivity of ranked universities. Their rival, Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), also states in their “QS World University Rankings-Methodology” (one of their quality metrics is “Citations per faculty”) that some of their data are also from Scopus. Elsevier’s recent briefer confirms such information (“Understanding Scopus”).

Based on the document review conducted, it is clear that Scopus-centrism is now a policy preference for CHED, NRCPC, DOST, and other government agencies. It is also a clear preference of the top universities in the country. As a result, publishing in journals listed in Scopus and similar entities (especially those in Clarivate’s WoS) is gradually becoming a preference, if not a primary criterion, for many universities

in the Philippines, whether for incentivizing their teachers or for faculty promotion and career advancement. Building on contributions of previous studies, this article will now present a detailed critique of Scopus-centrism.

Scopus’s Western-centrism

Even researchers from institutions which are considered Scopus-centric (by providing incentives for teachers who publish in Scopus) have criticized the dominance of Scopus-centrism. For example, a multidisciplinary group of researchers from DLSU, including Dr. Jose Isagani Janairo, Dr. Charibeth Cheng, Dr. Nelson Arboleda Jr., and Dr. Feorillo Demeterio III, explicitly criticized the Western-centric nature of Scopus in an article published in the THE:

...most of [sic] research-oriented universities rely on giant citation indices, such as [WoS] and Scopus, in measuring their research productivities and in identifying research journals to which their faculty members should publish. . . the team raised the question of why Filipino researchers are forced to publish in such journals, considering that these might have issues and concerns totally different from that of the local journals. (De La Salle University, “How Can We Boost Philippine Research?”).

Erfanmanesh et al.’s study provided quantitative evidence supporting this critique of Scopus-centrism: “The journals are predominantly from Western Europe (48.9%) and North America (27.7%), with the United States and the United Kingdom dominating with a total of 11,522 (51%) journals” (425) (see **Fig. 1**).

No.	Publishing Country	No. of Journals (2014)	% Growth 2005–2014
1	US	6046	12.95
2	UK	5476	39.16
3	Netherlands	1847	29.70
4	Germany	1341	30.83
5	China	594	21.72
6	France	577	22.24
7	Italy	501	51.82
8	Japan	500	12.61
9	Spain	467	125.60
10	India	452	131.80

Fig. 1. Top Ten Countries in Terms of the Quantity of Scopus Journals

(Source: Erfanmanesh et al. 426)

Guillermo's earlier critique on ISI is still applicable to Scopus in general:

Will the development of science in countries like the Philippines be pursued if the main directions of scientific research are determined and dictated by countries that dominate the world? ... No other group of scientists and experts can judge—not only on matters related to quality but also significance of—any research conducted here in the Philippines, if not specifically about the Philippines, other than Filipino academics themselves. ... The constant seeking of the approval of former colonial masters in all 'indigenous' intellectual activities is a classic symptom of colonial mentality." (147)

Meanwhile, a very recent study analyzed the Scopus database and discovered that "journals published in Europe, Oceania, and North America were more likely to be indexed in Scopus and [WoS] compared to other world regions" pointing to the prevailing trends on "regional disparities" in journal coverage, with journals in sub-Saharan Africa "four times less likely to be indexed than those published in Europe" (Asubiaro et al.). As part of the developing world, journals in the Philippines (especially those written in local languages) are also still way outside the Scopus realm. Scopus, a database owned by a European corporate giant, expectedly maintains the pre-existing Western-centrism of what passes as global academia. This is a business-related matter as Elsevier offers English language editing services (Elsevier, "Elsevier Language Editing") which can only remain profitable for as long as the system dominated by Western, mostly English-speaking countries is maintained.

English Language's Hegemony in Scopus

The dominance of journals from English-speaking countries such as the US and UK obviously points to English language hegemony in the Scopus database. Existing research confirms that English is indeed the dominant language in Scopus (van Weijen, "The Language"; Moskaleva and Akoev 1, 5; Vera-Baceta et al. 1806). Currently, there are 7.9 billion people in the world (Worldometers), and 1.35 billion people speak English (Ethnologue). Based on the data from Worldometers and Ethnologue, English is spoken by 17% of the world's population, while according to van Weijen, 80% of the journals in Scopus are in English ("The Language"). This supports one of the findings by Moskaleva and Akoev regarding the lack of correlation between the world's major languages and the dominant languages in Scopus (1-5). As Tennant succinctly puts it, "[WoS] and Scopus are not global databases of knowledge... both platforms are structurally biased against research produced in non-Western countries, non-English language research, and research from the arts, humanities, and social sciences" and such "systematic inequities" have inflicted "damage" on

the production of knowledge around the world (1). Such “linguistic neo-imperialism in academia” maintains a system where “journal titles and articles written in a language other than English” will face hurdles and indeed find it very difficult to “penetrate one of the most coveted journal indexing”—none other than the Scopus database (Zeng et al.) as Elsevier’s own “journals scope and selection criteria” include having “content that is relevant for and readable by an international audience, meaning: have English language abstracts and titles.” Essentially, non-English journals (and their contributors) will have to spend time (and money) translating titles and abstracts into English for Elsevier to at least notice them. Moreover, to reiterate, Scopus’s CSAB also requires the availability of an “English language journal home page” for a journal to be formally evaluated for possible inclusion into the Scopus database (Elsevier “Content Policy”). Another recent study also found that “Scopus and [WoS] disproportionately index English language publications in all world regions” (Asubiaro et al.). An earlier five-year study on the Scopus database indicates “that English is clearly the dominant language of publication in the arts and humanities. . .” (van Weijen, “Publication Languages” 20). Such trends persist especially in the top journals for the said disciplines. For the arts and humanities, SCImago’s Scopus-powered list of top 100 journals include only thirteen journals that are not from the predominantly English-speaking US and UK, and only one out of these thirteen publishes articles in a non-English language (see **Table 3**). As Dr. Yves Gingras (science historian at Université du Québec à Montréal/UQAM) points out, this “trend of anglicizing humanities and social sciences research” is “insidious” as “subjects of study in these fields are often of national, if not local, interest . . . (t)o be able to publish in a major English-language journal, say from the United States, researchers will choose more theoretical or more universal topics, to the detriment of subjects that are of vital significance to the local community. That creates tension between the best interests of the research and those of the researcher’s career” (Venne). In pursuing Scopus-centric, mostly English publications, academics from non-English-speaking regions could get career advancement but lose social relevance in their own local and national communities.

Table 3. Headquarters and Language of Non-UK and Non-US Journals in Top 100 Arts and Humanities Journals

Journal's Name	Country of Headquarters	Language of Articles in Current Issue (as of September 2024)
<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>Decision Support Systems</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry</i>	Germany	English

Journal's Name	Country of Headquarters	Language of Articles in Current Issue (as of September 2024)
<i>Postdigital Science and Education</i>	Switzerland	English
<i>Minds and Machines</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>Philosophy and Technology</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>Translation Spaces</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>Theory and Society</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>Anuario Lope de Vega</i>	Spain	Spanish
<i>Journal of Writing Research</i>	Belgium	English
<i>Philosophical Studies</i>	Netherlands	English
<i>International Journal of Social Robotics</i>	Germany	English
<i>Linguistics and Philosophy</i>	Netherlands	English

Source: Data on language of articles verified by visiting each journal's homepage and archives. Data on journal's name and headquarters culled by the researcher from SCImago's Scopus-powered list: SCImago. "Arts and Humanities Journal Ranks (Top 1-100)." Sep. 2024. www.scimagojr.com/journalrank.php?area=1200&page=2&total_size=4683.

In general, the hegemony of the English language in Scopus journals negatively affects Filipino researchers and third-world researchers writing in a non-English language, considering the additional burden of writing or, worse, writing solely in English for intellectuals whose first language is not English. Furthermore, such inclination towards English publications entails additional expenses, as emphasized by Curry and Lillis:

... achieving these valued English-medium publications adds burdens to the work of many multilingual scholars ... they can't just get their work translated—even if scholars have funds for translation (which is expensive), it's virtually impossible for most scholars to find translators who have a high level of academic English and know both the disciplinary content and the rhetorical conventions of academic journal articles ("The Dangers of English")

They further added that the dominance of English also contributes to the loss of local knowledge in local languages due to the taboo against dual publishing: "... pressures for English are now reaching social sciences and humanities scholars. As a result, scholars who write about, for example, Hungarian history are now being pushed to publish in English, even though a large part of their research community

is likely to be local or regional” (Curry and Lillis “The Dangers of English”). In the Philippines, this is equivalent to Filipino researchers being obliged to write in English even if their topics are about the indigenous way of life in the Philippines or the lives and struggles of workers and farmers, for example—topics that should be written in their own language if the main purpose of research is to contribute to the community from which the data originated. Scientists and researchers in science and technology are particularly affected by this reality, as English is almost automatically used in research, also due to the global hegemony of English as the language of science (Elnathan). Therefore, it remains a significant challenge for Filipino scientists and science communicators to gradually bring their research closer to the communities of the country they are in by using local languages in their research (Navarro and McKinnon). The deeper implications of English as the favored language of research have been eloquently discussed in an earlier intervention by a Brazilian academic: “English, by virtue of its ubiquity, acquires the capacity to ‘guide’ intellectual debate on a global scale. To ‘guide’ means to select those issues that will become relevant and visible from a much wider range of possible issues... the English language has the power to shape the intellectual agenda” (Ortiz). English language speakers’ capacity to make issues relevant and visible renders a good number of issues and concerns communicated by non-English speakers seemingly less relevant and less visible in academia and in the halls of power. This (re)produces and multiplies existing epistemic inequalities and limits ways of understanding contemporary realities and problems (and consequently hinders the crafting of a variety of solutions based on varying experiences) considering that “about five billion people are native speakers of just twenty-five languages” and of these twenty-five languages, English is the native language of only 379,682,200 people (Zeidan). The hegemony of English in favored research databases would thus render academia partly blind, mute, and deaf to the pressing problems of non-English speakers especially in developing countries like the Philippines. For researchers in the Philippines who use Filipino or other Philippine languages, this hegemony of English aggravates the current situation where everything is stacked against them in a system where the colonial-era imposition of English as the main language of higher education and academia (and by extension, in the domains of power) remains in place (San Juan, *Language and Education* 36-63).

Filipino Journals’ Exclusion from the Scopus Database

Currently, there are only four journals (*Humanities Diliman* from the University of the Philippines; *Kritike* from the Department of Philosophy, University of Santo Tomas; *Kritika Kultura* from the Ateneo de Manila University; and *Plaridel* from the University of the Philippines) on the Scopus list that accept articles written in the Filipino language (see **Table 4**). Based on the aforementioned table, there are

twenty-one journals from the Philippines on the Scopus list. Meanwhile, based on the SCImago database, Malaysia has 105 journals in Scopus, Indonesia has sixty-nine, and Thailand has sixty-two. It should be noted that the journals listed in Table 4 are not monolingual in Filipino (unlike, for example, *Malay* journal from DLSU or *Daluyan* from the Sentro ng Wikang Filipino/Center on Filipino Language of the University of the Philippines, or *Filipinolohiya* from PUP, or *Hasaan* from UST), but instead have a bilingual policy (accepting articles in English or in Filipino). Filipino monolingual journals are automatically excluded from prospective inclusion because their homepages are in Filipino, in contrast with the Scopus's CSAB requirement of having an "English language journal home page" for a journal to be formally evaluated for possible inclusion in the Scopus database (Elsevier "Content Policy"). In this context, Scopus-centrism is tantamount to the automatic institutionalization of English hegemony—of English as the dominant language of research—in the Philippines and the prioritization of the problems and research agenda of foreign journals. Due to the lack of Filipino journals listed in Scopus and the Scopus-centrism of universities, Filipino researchers are compelled to align their research with the problems and agendas of foreign journals just to be able to publish in journals listed in Scopus, which can further marginalize the community-based direction of developing countries' own problems and research agendas. This leads to a very ironic and unfortunate (if not self-defeating) situation where Filipino researchers continue to discuss local issues and realities but in a language that most Filipinos do not generally use.

Table 4. Scopus-Listed Journals Published by Institutions in the Philippines¹

Journal Name	Publisher
1. Acta Medica Philippina	University of the Philippines Manila
2. Asia Life Sciences	Rushing Water Publishers Ltd.
3. Asia-Pacific Social Science Review	De La Salle University
4. DLSU Business and Economics Review	De La Salle University
5. Humanities Diliman	University of the Philippines
6. Journal of the International Society for Southeast Asian Agricultural Sciences	International Society for Southeast Asian Agricultural Sciences
7. Journal of Environmental Science and Management	University of the Philippines Los Baños
8. Journal of the ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies	ASEAN Federation of Endocrine Societies (AFES)
9. Kritike	Department of Philosophy, University of Santo Tomas

Journal Name	Publisher
10. Kritika Kultura	Ateneo de Manila University
11. Mindanao Journal of Science and Technology	University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines Press
12. Philippine Statistician	Philippine Statistical Association
13. Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints	Ateneo de Manila University
14. Philippine Journal of Internal Medicine	Philippine College of Physicians
15. Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology	Association of Systematic Biologists of the Philippines
16. Philippine Journal of Veterinary Medicine	University of the Philippines
17. Philippine Journal of Science	Department of Science and Technology
18. Philippine Agricultural Scientist	University of the Philippines Los Baños
19. Philosophia (Philippines)	Philippine National Philosophical Research Society
20. Plaridel	University of the Philippines
21. Western Pacific Surveillance and Response Journal (WPSAR)	World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Unrelenting Scopus-Centrism in the Philippines’ National Higher Education Research Agenda (NHERA)

Related to the documented lack of Filipino journals in the Scopus database (and the underlying hegemony of English that poses obstacles to non-English journals), Filipino researchers are deprived of some power and/or opportunities to expand and deepen the capabilities and experiences of emerging researchers in the Philippines who have the potential to become research leaders in the country and the world. International perspectives, consultants, and authorities have always been prioritized by many Philippine journals to the extent that some journals now only have Filipino consultants who are mostly in the diaspora.

By constantly pursuing the standards of Scopus and other foreign corporate databases, Filipino researchers, education agencies, and universities neglect our original social function as a beacon of enlightenment for and well-being of the nation (see Article XIII, Sections 5, 7, and 12; Article XIV, Sections 10 and 12 of the Constitution). While the primary goal stated in the NHERA II (2009-2018) is related to the ability to compete internationally, attention should also be given to the fourth (and final) goal stated in NHERA II: “Promote and facilitate dissemination and

utilization of research outputs.” Widespread dissemination of research is impossible without utilizing our own languages. The details of NHERA III (2019-2028) have not been released to the public, but the latest official update from the Facebook page of the CHED Research Management Division (May 2018) indicates the continued dominance of Scopus-centrism in the direction of research in the country: “. . . we will have UP Diliman and De La Salle University, the top two universities in terms of research output in Scopus, join forces with CHED Research to craft NHERA III (2019-2028) and evaluate NHERA II. We will gather data (research agenda from different agencies and countries, bibliometrics, etc.) and incorporate all inputs gathered from CM1-CM4 to the document.”

Due to this institutionalization of English as the dominant (if not outrightly preferred) language of research in the Philippines through the prioritization of journals listed in Scopus, researchers who write solely or mostly in Filipino are automatically excluded or face additional barriers. More resources are allocated to research written in English, and even worse, research is often conducted not for local communities but for foreign communities. In the promotion/advancement of teachers' ranks, many schools have a declared preference for “international” publications, which are usually synonymous with publications in English. Filipino teachers/researchers in disciplines such as Philippine studies, Philippine history, Philippine literature, indigenous studies, and related fields are often compelled, against common sense, to write in English or write more in English.

There will come a point where we will lose expert researchers in Philippine Studies and other disciplines who are still proficient in writing in Filipino. We will also reach a point where we will lose Filipino expert researchers in Southeast Asian studies who are proficient in writing in Filipino (in other words, Southeast Asian Studies in the Philippines will only be conducted in English, which should not happen). In that case, since the use of local languages will still prevail in data collection in the country—because 99% of Filipinos do not speak English at home according to the latest Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) statistical tables released in 2023, with the number of households speaking English at home pegged at 37,425 only—research in the Philippines or about the Philippines will become costlier and slower. For example, questionnaires or focus group discussion (FGD) questions will have to be translated first into Filipino or other local languages; interpreters will be needed during the actual conduct of the survey or FGD; and transcripts will have to be transcribed and translated. Research participants (ordinary Filipinos) will not even be able to read or benefit from research about them or produced based on data they provided.

The Exploitative System of Research Production and Dissemination in Corporate Databases

In general, researchers and universities are exploited by the system of research production and dissemination, which is dominated by corporations, mostly foreign and influential ones like Elsevier's Scopus. In this system, many journals obtain research for free, but not everyone can freely access them. Reviewers of the articles are also mostly unpaid, while authors often have to pay substantial fees to publish their work as many corporate-owned journals charge a processing fee before or after review or acceptance (these are usually called article processing charges/APC, on top of ironically named open-access fees or fees paid by the researcher or his/her institution so his/her article which has been accepted for publication will be immediately accessible.

An example of such irony is the article "Arc and Backarc Geochemical Signatures of the Proto-Philippine Sea Plate: Insights from the Petrography and Geochemistry of the Samar Ophiolite Volcanic Section," written by Filipinos about the Philippines. This article, published in an Elsevier journal listed in Scopus, is cited in this paper to expose the exploitative nature of the prevailing system. The research funding details for the said study are not provided, but some of the analyses were conducted in a facility of the Philippines' premier state university. The majority of the authors are from the UP System and they were also awarded by UP the International Publication Award, which includes a grant of PhP 100,000 (USD 1,788), based on the impact factor of the journal in which they published. It is ironic that a publication that can be considered government-/Filipino people-funded is not easily accessible to the public due to Elsevier's system of commodifying research. Access to this article costs USD 41.95 or PhP 2,345 ("for academic use"). Many critics have exposed this exploitative system of the academic publishing industry, where the workers, mostly underpaid teachers, contribute their articles that generate huge profits for corporations like Elsevier which then resell the research to universities—whose faculty produced the research in the first place—through subscription fees (Buranyi; Fox). The data from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Libraries reveals the extent of corporate profits in this system: "Elsevier is one of the largest publishers of scholarly journals in the world, publishing more than 2,600 titles. Other large publishers are Taylor & Francis, Springer, and Wiley. RELX, the parent company of Elsevier, had revenues of USD 9.8 billion (PhP 554.76 billion) in 2019 (Elsevier's profits account for about 34% of RELX's total profits.). By contrast, Informa, Taylor & Francis' parent company, had revenues of USD 3.6 billion (PhP 203.79 billion) in 2019. RELX reports its profit margins at 31.3% for 2018." Even during the pandemic, the mother company of Elsevier continued to amass profits. It distributed £1.224 billion (PhP 82.4 billion) to its shareholders in 2020 (Fig. 2).

RELX financial summary

REPORTED FIGURES					
For the year ended 31 December	2020 €m	2019 €m	Change	Change at constant currencies	Change underlying
Revenue	7,110	7,874	-10%	-10%	-9%
Operating profit	1,525	2,101	-27%		
Profit before tax	1,483	1,847	-20%		
Net profit attributable to RELX PLC shareholders	1,224	1,505	-19%		
Net margin	17.2%	19.1%			
Net borrowings	6,898	6,191			
Reported earnings per share	63.5p	77.4p	-18%		
Ordinary dividend per RELX PLC share	47.0p	45.7p	+3%		

Fig. 2. Profit of RELX (Mother Company of Elsevier) Shareholders in 2020

(Source: RELX, 2.)

In March 2021, the DOST of the Philippines renewed its “journal access subscription” with Elsevier (“DOST Renews”). There were no publicly available documents regarding the government expenses related to this subscription, so the researcher decided to obtain the data by filing a public FOI request on May 15, 2021. Initially, the FOI officer did not provide a positive response, prompting the researcher to appeal to the DOST authority following the process outlined in the FOI officer’s response. On May 29, 2021, the researcher received a letter from DOST via email. The said letter contained the data (Table 5) initially requested through the public FOI request, which can also be found on the FOI Philippines website. According to the letter signed by Mr. Alan C. Taule, “The DOST-[Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD)] started subscribing. . . [to journals] from Elsevier and other similar companies only in 2018.... The grand total cost of DOST’s journal subscription from 2018 to 2021 is USD 1,008,385.00.”

Table 5. Philippine Government Expenses for SciVal, Science Direct, and Scopus Subscription (2018-2021)

For 2018 subscription (January 1, 2018-December 31, 2018)	
SciVal:	USD 40,000.00
Science Direct:	USD 215,655.00
Scopus:	USD 58,345.00
Total:	USD 314,000.00 (PhP 18,506,752.62)

For 2019-2020 subscription (October 1, 2019-September 30, 2020)	
Scopus:	USD 63,596.00
Elsevier:	USD 235,064.00
Total:	USD 298,660.00 (PhP 15,629,325.79)

For 2020-2021 subscription (October 1, 2020-December 31, 2021)	
Scopus:	USD 84,265.00
Elsevier:	USD 311,460.00
Total:	USD 395,725.00 (PhP 19,182,796.38)

Source: Ngangay, Nelly. "Re: Response to your FOI Request on DOST's Journal Subscription." Received by David Michael San Juan, 29 May 2021.

Meanwhile, for comparison, Norwegian institutions paid a total of "USD 9 million in subscription fees" to Elsevier in 2018 (McKenzie). Before the University of California canceled its subscription with Elsevier, they were paying an annual subscription fee of USD 11 million or PhP 622.69 million (Gaind). According to a survey by the Korea University and College Library Association, their members paid a total of USD 33 million (PhP 1.868 billion) in annual fees to Elsevier for access to ScienceDirect (Normile). Some countries that have canceled their subscriptions with Elsevier due to expensive subscription costs include Germany, Sweden, Hungary, and Norway (Qureshi). Neylon's research demonstrated significant cost savings in canceling journal subscriptions, which could be used to transition to Open Access (Neylon).

In general, in the Philippines, research expenses are typically "covered" by universities or professional societies that manage journals, and the researchers themselves. The costs of data collection (time spent for searching relevant literature, conducting interviews, etc.) are usually shouldered by the authors and their university. The time invested for article review (time spent by editorial boards and reviewers) is covered by the journal administration and reviewers (reviewers are rarely paid, and editors often work on a voluntary basis; although some journals provide a small honorarium for reviewers, it is still considered a labor of love due to the significant time spent for each review). There are also costs associated with printing and/or electronically publishing an article (time spent on copyediting and layout preparation, website maintenance costs, and for print editions, printing expenses).

Because the work, expenses, and investments are already "covered" by the author, university, professional organizations, editorial boards, reviewers, copyeditors, and layout artists, journals in the Philippines are typically freely accessible or open access (especially those written in Filipino, except for print issues that are usually available by subscription). In the context of high subscription costs with corporations like Elsevier, it is more cost-effective to invest in the work covered by authors, universities, etc., as Neylon's research has demonstrated.

Scopus-centrism’s Detrimental Impact on Humanities Scholarship

Citing earlier studies, Engles et al. emphasized that in the social sciences and humanities (SSH), “book publishing takes a prominent role, both in terms of communicating with international peers and with a broader intelligentsia.”

However, as Scopus-centrism takes hold in the academe, the “decline in publication and purchase of the scholarly monograph in the humanities” which has been observed as early as the mid-2000s could only worsen and its impact more felt, “as library collections of monographs in the humanities continue to shrink, humanities scholars are clearly confronting difficult challenges in performing and publishing their research” (Thompson). As explained by Mrva-Montoya and Luca, “because a metrics environment”—such as what the Scopus database and the firms that peddle global university rankings with data culled from Scopus promote—“emphasizes journal articles over books, it privileges the disciplines of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), which are better captured by citation analysis.” Such focus on STEM and lack of ample space for the humanities is evident in the number of Scopus-listed journals per discipline (see **Table 6** below).

Table 6. Disciplines and Number of Times Mentioned in the Scopus Source Title List

Discipline	Number of Times Mentioned in the Scopus Source Title List as of August 2024
Agricultural and Biological Sciences	3,339
Arts and Humanities	6,739
Biochemistry, Genetics, and Molecular Biology	3,280
Business, Management, and Accounting	2,206
Chemical Engineering	1,269
Chemistry	6,058
Computer Science	2,668
Decision Sciences	594
Dentistry	502
Earth and Planetary Sciences	2,454
Economics, Econometrics, and Finance	1,580
Energy	1,332
Engineering	9,393
Environmental Science	3,115

Discipline	Number of Times Mentioned in the Scopus Source Title List as of August 2024
Health Professions	854
Health Sciences	15,340
Immunology and Microbiology	996
Life Sciences	8,337
Materials Science	2,210
Mathematics	2,651
Medicine	16,439
Neuroscience	1,015
Nursing	1,633
Pharmacology, Toxicology, and Pharmaceutics	1,268
Physics and Astronomy	1,631
Psychology	2,241
Physical Sciences	15,451
Social Sciences	26,051
Veterinary	650

Source: Elsevier. "Source Title List." Aug. 2024, downloads.ctfassets.net/o78em1y1w4i4/7xtaTxNiNcWRTeZkV86eNy/737495b0e838d2c6c38c0a686cbb3384/ext_list_August_2024.xlsx.

Furthermore, an international study pointed out that

... the emphasis on journal article publication may come at the expense of book publication and may be driven by increasing article publishing expectations on the youngest age cohort. ... Declining book publications may have detrimental effects for social sciences disciplines most closely related to the humanities. Long-form scholarly publishing provides the place and space to explore a topic in detail, analyzing subjects with greater contextualization than shorter-form journal articles typically allow. (Savage and Olejniczak)

As books remain highly relevant and essential in many disciplines, using metrics that "do not adequately consider books" is "problematic" (Vandewalle et al.).

In the Philippines, recognition of scholars in the humanities is usually tied with the books they publish rather than Scopus-listed articles they produce. For example, many of the Philippines' national artists (and very well-known scholars) such as Bienvenido Lumbera, Virgilio Almario, and Resil Mojares are not listed as among

the Philippines' well-cited and/or prolific authors in the Scopus database yet their works are more routinely read and well-known locally and internationally. While some forms of books can be included in the Scopus database, books may be evaluated if they meet the "minimum criteria" which include availability in digital format; "books only available in hard-copy are ineligible" (Elsevier, "Content Policy"). This automatically excludes most outputs of the Philippines' leading university presses as they mostly produce printed books (with the exception of Ateneo de Manila University Press which has a relatively long list of e-books in its catalogue). Scopus's emphasis on journal publications could thus encourage scholars to churn out more journal articles while neglecting the vital work of writing books that more comprehensively tackle issues and produce more valuable insights in the long run. Scopus-centrism could deprive humankind of future contributors to the book writing legacy of earlier generations of scholars. The relative authoritativeness and permanency of books compared with journal articles has been emphasized in one experienced professor's comment: "... books travel between disciplines much more readily, and are much more widely read" while the bulk of journal publications "are barely read and largely forgotten" (Elden).

Scopus-Centrism as a Driver of "Problematic" Global University Rankings

As Scopus-listed publications are given prominence in determining the global university rankings, Scopus-centrism drives universities away from their original mission-vision and the innate objectives of Higher Education Institutions/HEIs (e.g. quality education for students and knowledge production and innovation to improve humankind's quality of life), towards the race for top posts in global university rankings. THE World University Rankings 2024's methodology measures research quality through assessing citation impact, research strength, research excellence, and research influence, all of which are measured using Elsevier's Scopus database (Times Higher Education 4-5). THE World University Rankings 2024's data on research productivity is also produced using the same database. Hence, in general, THE World University Rankings ignores research not included in the Scopus database, which means a good number of outputs (especially from non-English speaking countries and/or countries where most outputs are in local, non-Scopus-listed journals or books with no e-book versions in prestigious local university presses) of many high-quality HEIs are not even counted. This means that HEIs are incentivized to prioritize Scopus-listed outputs and faculty members are disincentivized (if not outrightly discouraged) from prioritizing socially relevant research agenda which have little space in Scopus-listed journals, especially local ones that are widely read in the faculty member's research fields and communities that they serve or operate in. In pursuit of such goals, HEIs may rechannel resources

away from research that genuinely have social impact (e.g. community research, research prioritizing local and regional needs) and towards prospective articles for Scopus-listed journals. Research budget may thus be used for consultancies aimed at producing more Scopus articles and consequently reaching higher rankings, rather than on actual, community-based research aimed at resolving social problems or at least understanding contemporary realities. It is thus not surprising that even some top universities like Rhodes University (South Africa), the University of Zurich (Switzerland), and Utrecht University (the Netherlands), along with other universities totalling sixteen have boycotted and promised not to cooperate with ranking agencies (Holmes). In an official news article, the University of Zurich explained its decision “to withdraw from the [THE] World University Ranking” as “the ranking is not able to reflect the wide range of activities in teaching and research undertaken by universities... . Rankings generally focus on measurable output, which can have unintended consequences, for example leading universities to concentrate on increasing the number of publications instead of improving the quality of their content. Although rankings purport to comprehensively measure universities’ diverse achievements in teaching and research, they cannot do so as they reduce indicators to a score and focus on quantitative criteria” (UZH Communications). Such idolatry of rankings (and consequently, its main source of data, which is the Scopus database) may lead to some faculty members focusing only on research while neglecting their teaching duties. In the near future, it may even revive talks about a two-tier system where one set of faculty members will just churn out research while another set do all the teaching jobs. The University of Zurich also reiterated its “emphasis... on quality over quantity” and for “scientific quality” to “be the decisive factor in all research policy decisions” (UZH Communications). For its part, “Utrecht University decided to move away from rankings” and refused to submit data for the purpose of rankings as a “conscious choice” based on three grounds:

- (1) Prioritising collaboration: Rankings put too much stress on scoring and competition, while we want to focus on collaboration and Open Science. Collaboration and Open Science are two of our guiding principles.
- (2) Complexity of quality: It is almost impossible to capture the quality of an entire university, with all its different education, research, and impact, in one number.
- (3) Questionable methods: Research shows that rankings are often based on self-reported data by universities and on methodologies that are not very transparent. (Utrecht University)

The mention of Open Science as the anti-thesis of university rankings that rely on Scopus-centric data is justified as Elsevier’s Scopus database is full of its own journals that exact APC from researchers, ranging from USD 900 to USD 10,400 or roughly to

PhP 50,946 to PhP 588,718 (Elsevier). The upper limit in such APC range is absurdly high as it is way above the maximum funding available (PhP 500,000 or USD 8,832) for each “community research” proposal under the Philippine National Commission for Culture and the Arts’ annual call for research proposals. The University of the Philippines Manila provides a maximum publication fee amounting to USD 500 (PhP 28,034) for faculty members whose articles are accepted in “Scopus-indexed journals requiring payment of publication fee.” Some Philippine universities also provide funding for APC for Scopus-listed journals.

The Independent Expert Group (IEG) convened by the United Nations University International Institute for Global Healths also did not mince words in listing nine reasons “why global university rankings are problematic,” namely, that they “are conceptually invalid”; “based on flawed and insufficiently transparent data and methods”; “biased towards research, STEM subjects, and English-speaking scholars and universities”; “are colonial and accentuate global, regional, and national inequalities”; “undermine the development of higher education as a sector”; “pressure universities to adapt to frequent and short-term ranking cycles”; “produce reputational anxiety that negatively affects university behaviour”; “are extractive and exploitative”; and “have a conflict of interest.” The said statement’s mention of “well-established data quality issues with citation counts and their use as a measure of research quality” is definitely a criticism of Scopus-centrism as the citation data used by top ranking agencies are from Scopus. A related United Nations University policy brief on the same subject of rankings also criticized the neoliberal nature of the global university rankings which

both reflect and reinforce a neoliberal logic of market competition within the higher education sector. By encouraging competition within an increasingly financialised economic environment, they contribute to the commercialisation and commodification of higher education, with ensuing consequences. In treating public and private universities alike, they also put public universities with social responsibilities and a broader public mission at a disadvantage with respect to competing with private universities that are more narrowly focused on delivering a service to paying customers. This in turn may also cause some public universities to also act like businesses and reduce access for poorer and disadvantaged students who are considered a risk to their financial performance and to their rankings. (Nassiri-Ansari and McCoy 17)

In view of this, Philippine universities may use a recent CHED memorandum (CHED Memorandum Order/CMO No. 15, s. of 2019) that requires graduate students to publish at least a peer-reviewed article (for masteral students) and a journal article

in an indexed publication (for doctoral students) as a pre-text for selecting only students who can potentially publish in a Scopus-listed journal as a way to hit two birds with one stone (in compliance with the CHED memorandum and the opportunity to use such to improve their rankings).

Why Should Filipinos Continue Writing Research in Filipino?

In the context of the above discussion, this paper will now emphasize reasons why Filipino researchers should continue writing in Filipino to counter the wave of Scopus-centrism. The first point is that Filipino is the language of Filipinos. The second point is that Filipino is an effective language for the socio-political mobilization of Filipinos. As Karl Marx said, “Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.” By using the language of the people in research, intellectuals also contribute to societal change, to some extent, because the use of one’s own language in research is a “crucial dimension of any broader and more extensive endeavor to change and/or influence public discourse to a minimum, and support social movements that aspire towards a sustainable and meaningful change for a more just, peaceful, progressive, and democratic society, to the best of their ability...” (San Juan, “Panimulang Pagsipat”).

The third point is that writing in Filipino will broaden, increase, and deepen research in the Philippines (Guillermo). Researchers in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam have a natural advantage as bilingual researchers in their own language and in English, unlike the majority of researchers in the Philippines who, although they can write in English, can hardly write or truly cannot write research papers in Filipino, let alone in other local languages. Indeed, there are also very few Filipino language journal publications.² **Table 7** shows that relatively fewer Filipino researchers are able to write in Filipino compared with more Indonesian and Malaysian academics who write in Bahasa. The sheer volume of available online corpus (harvested from written texts) for Bahasa Indonesia (Kwary) compared with Philippine languages (Dita and Roxas) is also very telling.

Table 7. Google Scholar Search Results for Selected Keywords for Bahasa Melayu, Bahasa Indonesia, and Filipino (as of September 4, 2024)

Keyword	Language of Most Results	Number of Results
pandemik	Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu	30,100
pandemya	Filipino	451
sosialisme	Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu	23,000
sosyalismo	Filipino	106
sastra	Bahasa Indonesia	974,000
panitikan	Filipino	2,030

Source: Google Scholar keyword search

The fourth point is that research papers written in Filipino have a greater impact on Filipino readers and are more widely read by Filipinos (Demeterio and Felicilda; **Fig. 3**).

Rank	Journal Name	Publisher	Total Visits
1	MALAY	De La Salle University	3,834,328
2	Ani: Letran Calamba Research Report	Colegio de San Juan de Letran - Calamba	2,679,679
3	The Journal of History	Philippine National Historical Society	2,029,351
4	The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher	De La Salle University	1,206,096
5	DLSU Business & Economics Review	De La Salle University	1,140,974
6	Philippine Journal of Psychology	Psychological Association of the Philippines	1,113,036
7	JPAIR Multidisciplinary Research Journal	Philippine Association of Institutions for Research	1,093,801
8	International Rice Research Notes	International Rice Research Institute	1,088,992
9	Asia-Pacific Social Science Review	De La Salle University	1,063,811
10	Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research	Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas	994,520

Fig. 3. Ten Most Read Journals in ejournals.ph

Fifth point: It is the obligation of Filipino researchers to provide some form of service back to the community, even just through research, to the nation that has funded the education of many of them through the recently implemented free tuition scheme in public universities and/or through scholarships in various universities, and considering that the Philippine government has also allotted millions of Pesos in direct and indirect grants to private universities—from Expanded Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education/E-GASTPE and research grants to the voucher system and Tertiary Education Subsidy/TES (Lanuza and San Juan 161-164). In short, writing in the language of the people is a way of expressing gratitude to the national community that subsidized the Filipino researchers' education and/or research.

The sixth point is that writing in the national language contributes to its strengthening, which is an important element in social cohesion, especially in the context of our multicultural, multilingual, and neocolonial country. The seventh point is that the majority of data collected in communities across the country is in the local language, so it is only fitting to “give back” the data in the form of research written in the local languages—at the very least, in Filipino.

The eighth point is that almost all journals in Filipino and bilingual journals that accept Filipino articles are open access and freely available to all readers, contributing more to the dissemination of knowledge, unlike many foreign-language journals that require payment for access. In the spirit of all the points discussed, it is only right to gradually break the hegemony of English language-

dominated Scopus-centrism in universities, as well as educational and research agencies in the country by continuing to write in our own languages.

Lastly, writing and translating articles into Filipino is among the necessary steps for the country's education system and research infrastructure to more effectively contribute to efforts towards national industrialization as informed by Japan's early success story on this matter (Juhász et al. 18-20).

Some Alternatives to Scopus-Centrism

Alternatives to Scopus-centrism must help build the “self-sustaining/autonomous communicative community” (Guillermo) of academics, community leaders, public servants, and ordinary citizens that discuss their realities in their own languages and in the formats they are comfortable with, rather than in paywalled journals owned and/or managed by profit-oriented corporate giants. Journal publications in our own languages will certainly be in a better position to prioritize a research agenda grounded on our people's problems, interests, and experiences (San Juan, “Pagbuo ng Makabuluhang”). On a practical level, alternatives to Scopus could also include developing and sustaining an effective national citation index, preferably, one co-managed by Philippine agencies (such as CHED, NRCP, etc.) and Philippine HEIs. While DLSU's Andrew Gonzalez Philippine Citation Index (AGPCI) is a worthy initiative, a broader national citation index similar to what other Southeast Asian countries have must be developed. Private initiatives such as AGPCI could have limited sustainability as it relies on private sector funding and the managing of universities' priorities (which may swiftly change over time). Meanwhile, if a citation index is co-managed by state-funded entities with both human and financial resources, sustainability could be better ensured. Indonesia has Sinta/Science and Technology Index, while Malaysia has the MyCite/Malaysian Citation Index. While Thailand's Thai-Journal Citation Index/TCI Centre is not managed by a state entity, it is clearly partly publicly-funded (Sombatsompop). Such national citation indices enable Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand to help local journals reach a certain level of quality that matches the national standard set by the government (or in the case of Thailand, the national organization of journals). Moreover, such national citation indices raise the online visibility (and consequently, citations) of the local journals indexed there, which can eventually pave the way for Scopus to notice, and eventually, include such journals in their own more prestigious database. To help local journals reach the national standard, concrete steps towards capacitating them should be taken. For example, resource-rich private HEIs and state-funded agencies should help local journals be equipped with easy-to-use journal management systems. Simon Fraser University's Public Knowledge Project (SFU PKP) offers the free software Open Journal Systems (OJS) that manages the “entire researcher-

to-reader workflow for submission, peer review, and production from one place,” and is described as “the world’s most widely used end-to-end scholarly publishing platform” (SFU PKP). Though the software is free, journals need to have a functioning compatible website, which is costly. SFU PKP offers OJS Enterprise (USD 2,700 or PhP 150,498 annually per journal) and OJS Professional (USD 1,500 or PhP 83,610 annually per journal) options for such journal web hosting. Cheaper (and even free) options exist but compatibility can be an issue, and external technical help (which will again cost money) will be needed to navigate through the technical process of linking an external web hosting site with the OJS. Wordpress offers cheaper hosting options, while C&E Publishing and KITE E-Learning Solutions’ Philippine E-Journals offers a free one.³

DLSU’s Animo Repository, a “digital repository of scholarly and creative works of the faculty, students, and researchers of the [DLSU]” which “also hosts digital archival contents, including university events, publications, and photo diaries” as well as issues of at least eight journals, offers another two-in-one yet free option. At least one of the journals housed in DLSU’s Animo Repository (*Dalumat: Multikultural at Multidisyiplinaryong E-Journal sa Araling Pilipino/Dalumat: Multicultural and Multidisciplinary E-Journal of Philippine Studies*) was originally solely managed by Networked Learning PH, Inc., and is now co-managed by the DLSU’s Department of Filipino. Based on the researcher’s personal knowledge (as one of the witnesses in the signing of the memorandum of agreement between these two entities), DLSU’s Animo Repository is open to any external journal’s free use of its journal management system and archiving component for as long as the said journal has a formal linkage with any of DLSU’s research centers or departments. Meanwhile, proprietary journal management systems offer efficient solutions but these are generally very costly. For example, when the researcher inquired about the pricing of a well-known proprietary journal management system on behalf of a small professional organization that manages a local journal, the company’s account manager gave a quote of USD 18,500 (PhP 1,034,233) per year for one journal with 151 to 300 annual submissions (Chico). An alternative to such costly systems is the state-funded development of a similar system. The NRCP’s Scientific Knowledge Management System (SKMS) currently includes a journal submission option for its own journal, the NRCP Research Journal. Surely, it can be expanded to include more local journal submissions if funding is made available. Giving local journals free access to journal management and hosting systems will definitely help improve their overall quality and visibility, both of which are necessary to increase reads/views and citation counts.

Considering the Progressive Possibility of Scopus-centrism

In general, the researcher acknowledges that a sudden paradigm shift in educational policy within and outside universities is unlikely in the short term. Therefore, instead of completely rejecting Scopus-centrism, the researcher proposes taking the middle path that considers the progressive possibilities of Scopus-centrism, aligning with the rapid advancement of the national language according to the standards of “global competitiveness” and actively participating in the nationalist and populist project of writing more research in the language of the people. This could be done while social movements capable of upturning the neoliberal status quo are gathering strength to help achieve more emancipatory alternatives to prevailing university and knowledge production paradigms. The dominance of English as the language of research and in academia, especially in higher education in the Philippines, has been unchallenged for a long time, due to the colonial—and now neocolonial—language policy implemented by the government. Thus, it poses a significant challenge for advocates of the Filipino language and journals that publish in Filipino to try to capitalize on the potential of Scopus-centrism and gradually gain recognition and support from educational agencies and universities for research written in our own language.

One concrete step that Filipino journals can take is to initiate benchmarking (and if possible, mentoring) with Scopus-listed journals in the Philippines. Related to this, the AGPCI initiative, the widest “journal indexing and citation database” for Philippine journals, started by DLSU, is commendable. Such projects which are primarily focused on strengthening the quality of research within the country can help ensure that local journals are guided and gradually directed towards higher global standards by featuring local journals that serve as pioneers or models in terms of caliber and quality. In this spirit, these projects can also contribute to the strengthening of the “self-sustaining/autonomous communicative community in the discipline of Philippine studies” (Guillermo), promoting and fostering national and inter-regional discourse and discussions focused on the issues, interests, realities, and contexts of Filipino communities within and outside the Philippines.

The standards of Scopus are indeed high in terms of the quality of articles, quality of editors and reviewers, regular publication of journals on schedule, and other factors. However, it is possible to achieve these standards, as proven by the journals in the Philippines that have crossed the Scopus threshold or have reached the standards of AGPCI, ASEAN Citation Index, and other similar national and regional databases. The quality of submitted articles can be improved through regular journal writeshops and partnerships between universities with graduate programs and professional organizations that also publish journals. Meanwhile, the quality of editors and reviewers can be enhanced by expanding the network of journals

within and outside the Philippines. This can be facilitated by the establishment of a local consortium or organization of journals publishing in Filipino, as well as collaboration with Filipino intellectuals and professors in foreign universities who have extensive experience and international prestige.

Meanwhile, ensuring the regular release of issues can be achieved through dedicated support personnel solely focused on journal operations, in addition to an editorial board typically composed of full-time professors who are also busy with their respective institutions. For journals managed by universities, it is recommended to provide deloading to teachers with journal assignments as editors. The CHED and other national agencies such as the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino/Commission on the Filipino Language (KWF) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) can provide grants to these journals for employing support personnel. CHED can also consider allocating grants that can be used to provide financial incentives to journal reviewers. The allocation of sufficient funds for these purposes by CHED and other agencies will undoubtedly accelerate the improvement and elevation of the quality of Filipino journals, and will also facilitate the increase in the number of local journals listed in Scopus. To achieve this, it is necessary to encourage the national government to increase the budget for Research and Development (R&D), approaching the R&D budget of regional research powerhouses such as Singapore. The Philippines still has a long way to go in this crucial aspect because, based on World Bank data, Singapore allocates nearly 2% of its GDP to R&D, while the Philippines only allocates 0.2% of its GDP.

To effectively assist universities in the intelligent and efficient use of larger public funding for R&D, the leading universities in each region of the country can consider collaborating in the transition towards becoming research universities that also promote the use of the local language in research and consider local and national research agendas, through any model suitable for their respective contexts (Demeterio and Felicilda 17-19). Through this transition, the capability and confidence of local universities can be gradually strengthened in establishing their own research standards that contribute to improving the lives of communities in the country and society as a whole, free from the control of corporations focused solely on private profit.

Towards a Non-Neoliberal University and Knowledge Production Models

The aforementioned long-term end of the middle-of-the-road approach still circles back to the unavoidable eventual interrogation and hopefully, elimination of the dominant neoliberal system of higher education and knowledge production that prioritize corporate-defined metrics and favors competition while not offering

affirmative action for tailenders (usually, the academics and other citizens in non-English speaking, developing, mostly formerly colonized countries). The urgent call “for research funders to unite to form a more globally representative, non-profit, community-controlled infrastructure for the global pool of research knowledge” must be echoed (Tennant 1) and post-neoliberal education systems (Newfield) and knowledge production models must be imagined and eventually built. The details of such systems and models are better left as a topic for future articles. In the meantime, within the context of the discussions above, allow this researcher to provide an outline of general principles which may help the builders of non-neoliberal alternatives in their work: (1) emphasize cooperation and collaboration between universities rather than competition; (2) abandon the use of global university rankings while providing opportunities for benchmarking aimed at replicating best practices; (3) stop funding APCs to corporate-owned journals and rechannel funds to actually socially relevant research; (4) fund all actual research needs of communities rather than set a maximum annual budget for which proponents will have to compete; (5) support and build the capacity of journals towards publishing in multiple languages, especially in non-English ones; (6) craft alternative research formats (beyond journal articles and books) that are more attuned to community needs and interests; (7) promote the development of citation indices that veer away from English language dominance and Western-centric standards; (8) provide greater state subsidy (preferably from a tax on corporate giants’ profits) to socially relevant research (such as those that actually contribute to achieving sustainable development goals/SDGs or harness quantitative or qualitative data from local communities); (9) support and fund easy-to-use journal management systems towards more high-quality fully open access publications especially in developing countries; and (10) ensure that mechanisms for faculty promotion/professional career advancement of academics are holistic and take into consideration non-Scopus-listed articles which are nevertheless socially relevant to communities and to the general goal of understanding the root causes of today’s social ills, thinking of ways to resolve such problems, and thereby improving humankind’s overall quality of life. In pursuing these general principles towards non-neoliberal alternatives, it is necessary for robust discussions on these matters to continue and expand within and beyond universities. Academics are thus called upon to come down from the ivory tower of Scopus-centrism and into the real world of the communities that most universities claim to serve in their lofty mission-visions.

NOTES

1. Journals that accept articles written in Filipino are set in bold. The researcher's comparative analysis of SCImago data and downloadable data from Scopus is as of April 2021, from the Elsevier website. In the SCImago list, there are twenty-seven journals listed in the Philippines' "Country Rank." However, some journals listed by SCImago are marked as "coverage discontinued in Scopus" as of the actual year of publication of the original Filipino version of this paper (2022; antedated as 2021 by the journal), such as the *Philippine Journal of Nursing*, or they are no longer published by a Philippine-based official publisher, such as the *Philippine Political Science Journal*, which is published by Taylor & Francis, a UK-headquartered company, as stated in the Scopus database (but the original registration of the print issue is in the Philippines), or the *Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, which is published by Springer Nature, also a UK-headquartered company, as stated in the Scopus database (but the original registration of the print and online issue is in the Philippines as well). As a result, only twenty-one journals were included in the list created by the researcher. The details and impact of changes in the "official publisher" of some journals originally registered by Philippine organizations/entities would be a worthy topic for another paper.
2. For example, here are the number of of journals that publish in Southeast Asian languages in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ): Tagalog–six; Indonesian–1,804; Malay–thirty-six; Vietnamese–nine; and Thai–seven.
3. However, based on personal experience, downloading articles here is generally slow.

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