

Article

A Comparison of Asian Law Journals Published in Asian and Western Countries

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to compare Asian law journals published in Asia with those published in Western countries to determine the characteristics of the journals in relation to the geographic region in which they are published. In this study, Western countries refer to the Anglo-Saxon English-speaking countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Using the Scimago Journal and Country Rank (SJR), 12 Asian law journals published in Asia and 8 Asian law journals published in Western countries were analyzed for performance, authorship, and topical research areas. Human rights issues affecting Asian countries were more prevalent in journals published in Western countries. In terms of journal performance, Asian law journals published in Western countries had a higher h-index, SJR, and citation rate than those published in Asia. Journals published in Western countries are published by reputable commercial publishers or university presses, and journals published in Western countries have longer coverage years. These reasons likely contributed to better visibility, which resulted in better performance.

Keywords: bibliometrics; legal studies; Asian law journals; publishers of Western countries; topical trends; authorship

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1. Introduction

Law journals play a crucial role in creating and exchanging scholarly knowledge in the field of law. The collection of law journals published in a particular region may indicate the availability of sources of law originating from that region since legal scholarship is often regarded as an indispensable source of law [1].

As Asia has increasingly drawn the world's attention in recent years, this study will focus on Asian law journals. As developing nations emerged in the 21st century, the Asian region has become influential in the globalized world [2]. Despite this, it is not surprising that Asia has lagged behind Western countries in the production of legal research and has historically looked to the United States for guidance [3,4]. Compared to the United States, Asian legal journals that are visible globally have not been as widely available for researchers in the international community. One way to gauge the state of Asian legal scholarship today is to examine total journal production by region using the Scimago Journal and Country Rank (SJR) (<https://www.scimagojr.com> accessed on 31 March 2022). Law journals that are indexed by SJR are indexed in Scopus and are also considered international journals that meet the minimum international standard. Counting journals based on country of publication is one way to assess how a particular country or region performs in producing reputable international journals.

The SJR indexes law journals under the category of law but also includes many journals that focus on law-related areas (e.g., political science and social science journals). Regardless of this categorization, only 18 law journals are published in Asia, compared to

other regions of the world. According to the 2020 SJR data, the leading regions that published law journals are Western Europe (441) and North America (216). The United Kingdom (232) and the United States (190) are the two main countries that produced journals published in Western Europe and North America, respectively. One common definition of “Western countries” is the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon countries, such as the United States and the United Kingdom. Since these two countries are considered Western countries, we assume that most SJR-indexed journals in the law category are published in Western countries, although the meaning of the term “the West” in Western civilization varies and depends on who is using the term [5]. Thus, in this study, not all countries of continental Europe were considered as Western countries. When the term “Western countries” mainly is referred to the English-speaking Anglo-Saxon countries in assessing the law journals, there is a large gap between Western and non-Western countries.

Nonetheless, comparing Asian law journals published in Asia with those published in Western countries allows us to understand the potential impacts of publishing in Western countries and their characteristics according to their geographical locations. Thus, a particular interest of this study is law journals that are thematically related to the Asian region but are published in Western countries. For example, the *Asia Pacific Law Review* is an Asian journal published by a publisher from the United Kingdom. *The Chinese Journal of International Law* is a law journal that focuses on China but is published by Oxford University Press, a renowned publisher from the United Kingdom. Since SJR mainly covers international journals published in English, the production and distribution of law journals could be influenced by the geographical location of the publication.

Examining how and where legal research works are produced is important for many stakeholders involved in the publication process [6]. The stakeholders may include authors, publishers, institutions, editors, and even the home country. These stakeholders may have similar or competing interests in journal publications. Examining law journals based on their publication location may also shed light on the potential impact of publication location on legal topics, as well as the extent to which legal scholars collaborate to produce legal research works. Hence, the objective of this study was to examine how Asian journals published in Asia and those published in Western countries differ in terms of common bibliometric attributes such as the number of publications, author keywords, citations, publishers, country of publishers, authors, and author team size.

2. Related Studies

Several previous studies have examined law journals and found characteristics that are related to the country or region where the journal is published [7–12], while other studies have attempted to identify interdisciplinary characteristics of law journals. These include psychology and law [13], psychiatry and law [14], library and information science and law [15], and public administration and law [16]. Focusing on a particular type of law journal was also a common approach to finding characteristics of law journals. A number of previous studies have examined law review journals [17,18], international law journals [19,20], student law journals [21], criminal law [22], and contract law [23]. U. Y. Shah et al. [24] analyzed open access (OA) law journals listed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). A study by László et al. [25] showed that law journals are mostly published by a small number of large, well-known publishers and university presses, and that international collaboration among researchers was generally low.

Overall, these studies suggest that many types of law journals exist and are published in Western countries. Throughout history, there has been a division between the West and the rest of the world [26], and some scholars have suggested that we move away from this binary division as we can recognize differences in both Western and non-Western cultures [27]. In the case of law, however, this division is still highly relevant because there is a large disparity between Asian countries and Western countries in the number of law journals indexed in major indices such as Scopus. With the exception of [28], who investigated the profiles of Asian law journals published in Asian countries and indexed by Scopus

and Web of Science (WoS), previous studies provide limited insight into the Asian law journals and the potential influence of publishing law journals in Western countries. Comparing law journals by region could provide insight into the overall knowledge production of a particular region. This study examined journal characteristics related to region by comparing Asian law journals published in Asia with those published in Western countries.

3. Methodology

The study examined Asian law journals indexed in 2020 SJR (<http://www.scimagojr.com>). Research data were collected and analyzed in April 2022. The SJR year 2020 was the last available year for this study. We collected our research data based on two types of Asian law journals: (1) those published in Asian countries and (2) journals published in Western countries. SJR provides many journal attributes, including country of publisher, h-index, number of documents published, SJR score, quartile of journals, coverage years, and citation rate. For the group of Asian law journals, we first considered all law journals published in the Law category in the SJR. Since the SJR contains a wide range of journals that are extremely loosely linked to law, the titles and scopes of these journals had to be reviewed individually. The result was that we identified 12 Asian law journals out of 18 journals published in Asia for the law category. For the group of Asian law journals published outside Asia, we first searched for law journals published in other regions that included either an Asian country name (e.g., China), the adjectival form of the country name (e.g., Chinese), or the name of the region (e.g., Asia). Then, the country in which these journals were published was manually checked. As a result, we found that a total of eight Asian law journals were published in Western countries.

These journals are listed in Table 1. A total of nine Asian countries are represented in this table. The Asian countries listed in this table are either populous (e.g., India) or countries with high-income economies (e.g., Singapore). Six of the eight Asian law journals published outside Asia are published in the United Kingdom, one in the Netherlands, and one in the United States. In this table, the term “regional focus” refers to a topic that is typically limited to Asia. In contrast, “country focus” refers to a specific Asian country that is generally covered by the journal. We considered various types of journal information, including the scope of journals available on their respective websites, Wikipedia, and other relevant websites.

Of the 12 journals published in Asia under the SJR category of law, only the *Journal of East Asia and International Law (JEAIL)* appears to have a regional focus on Asia, whereas two journals (*Frontiers of Law in China (FLC)* and the *Singapore Journal of Legal Studies (SJLS)*) appear to be country focused (China and Singapore). *Chinese Law and Government (CLG)* is the only Asian journal published in Western countries that focuses on a particular country. In the SJR 2020 data, 33 Asian countries published at least one journal. However, only eight Asian countries publish law journals, and the publishing countries vary widely. Singapore and India publish two law journals, whereas the other Asian countries publish one. As shown, most Asian law journals published in Western countries are published in the United Kingdom. We visited the homepages of these journals to verify their status and collected data such as the year in which the journals were established.

Table 1 also shows varying types of legal studies. As the names of the journals indicate, four journals focus on comparative law (*Indonesian Journal of International and Comparative Law (IJIC)*, *Journal of International and Comparative Law (JICL)*, *Asian Journal of Comparative Law (AJCL)*, and *Chinese Journal of Comparative Law (CJCL)*), while four others focus on international law (*IJIC*, *JEAIL*, *Asian Journal of International Law (AJIL)*, and *Chinese Journal of International Law (CJIL)*), two on intellectual property rights (*Journal of Intellectual Property Rights (JIPR)* and *NTUT Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Management (NJIPLM)*), and one on human rights issues (*Asia Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law (APJHRL)*). Only one of them is a law review journal and is published in a Western country.

Table 1. Asian Law Journals Published in Asia and Western Countries.

Publishing Region	No.	Journal	Asian Region Focus	Asian Country Focus	Country of Publisher
Asia	1	<i>Asian Journal of WTO and International Health Law and Policy (AJWIHL)</i>	N	N	TW
	2	<i>Frontiers of Law in China (FLC)</i>	N	Y	CN
	3	<i>International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences (IJCJS)</i>	N	N	IN
	4	<i>Indonesian Journal of International and Comparative Law (IJICL)</i>	N	N	ID
	5	<i>Journal of East Asia and International Law (JEAIL)</i>	Y	N	KR
	6	<i>Journal of International and Comparative Law (JICL)</i>	N	N	HK
	7	<i>Journal of Intellectual Property Rights (JIPR)</i>	N	N	IN
	8	<i>Japanese Journal of Legal Medicine (JJLM)</i>	N	N	JP
	9	<i>NTUT Journal of Intellectual Property Law and Management (NJIPLM)</i>	N	N	TW
	10	<i>Singapore Academy of Law Journal (SALJ)</i>	N	N	SG
	11	<i>Singapore Journal of Legal Studies (SJLS)</i>	N	Y	SG
	12	<i>UUM Journal of Legal Studies (UJLS)</i>	N	N	MY
Western Countries	1	<i>Asia Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law (APJHRL)</i>	Y	N	NL
	2	<i>Asia Pacific Law Review (APLR)</i>	Y	N	UK
	3	<i>Asian Journal of Comparative Law (AJCL)</i>	Y	N	UK
	4	<i>Asian Journal of International Law (AJIL)</i>	Y	N	UK
	5	<i>Asian Journal of Law and Society (AJLS)</i>	Y	N	UK
	6	<i>Chinese Journal of Comparative Law (CJCL)</i>	N	N	UK
	7	<i>Chinese Journal of International Law (CJIL)</i>	N	N	UK
	8	<i>Chinese Law and Government (CLG)</i>	N	Y	US

Note. TW: Taiwan; CN: China; ID: Indonesia; IN: India; JP: Japan; KR: South Korea; HK: Hong Kong; SG: Singapore; MY: Malaysia; NL: the Netherlands; UK: the United Kingdom; US: the United States.

In this study, UNIX scripting tools such as sed and awk [29,30] were used to find patterns of authorship in journals published by Asian and Western countries. Microsoft Excel was also used to analyze the results. Author keywords of articles published in each Asian law journal between 2000 and 2020 were also downloaded from Scopus. Analysis of author keywords revealed the legal research interests of authors who contributed to Asian law journals. Using VOSViewer software [31], the topic areas of legal journals published in Asia and in Western countries were compared based on the co-occurring networks of author keywords.

4. Journal Status and SJR Coverage Years

Table 2 shows the status of the various journals and the years of coverage by Scopus. SJR provided us with the status of open access (OA) journals. In OA journals, all articles are freely available online. According to SJR 2020 data, *JIPR* and *UUM Journal of Legal Studies (UJLS)* were the only OA journals published in Asia. Elsevier considers journals registered in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ) and the Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources (ROAD) in its classification of open access journals [32]. In contrast to journals published in Asia, no Asian OA law journals are published in Western countries. The number of years covered is displayed for both Asian and Western journals. The average number of years covered by journals published in Asia (10.1) is slightly lower than the average number of years covered by journals published in Western countries (15.8).

Table 2. Open Access Status and SJR Coverage Years.

Publishing Region	Journal	OA	Coverage Years	No. of Coverage Years
Asia	<i>AJWIHLP</i>	N	2009–2012, 2016–2018	4
	<i>FLC</i>	N	2006–2019	14
	<i>IJIC</i>	N	2018–2020	3
	<i>IJCJS</i>	N	2017–2019	3
	<i>JEAIL</i>	N	2011–2019	9
	<i>JICL</i>	N	2018–2020	3
	<i>JIPR</i>	Y	2008–2020	13
	<i>JJLM</i>	N	1961–2015, 2018	56
	<i>NJIPLM</i>	N	2012–2019	8
	<i>SALJ</i>	N	2019	1
	<i>SJLS</i>	N	2012–2013, 2019–2020	4
	<i>UJLS</i>	Y	2018–2020	3
Mean and SD				10.1 and 15.1
Western Countries	<i>APJHRL</i>	N	2000–2019	20
	<i>APLR</i>	N	2008–2019	12
	<i>AJCL</i>	N	2009–2020	12
	<i>AJIL</i>	N	2011–2020	10
	<i>AJLS</i>	N	2014–2020	7
	<i>CJCL</i>	N	2013–2019	7
	<i>CJIL</i>	N	2008–2019	12
	<i>CLG</i>	N	1968–1995, 2002–2019	46
Mean and SD				15.8 and 12.9

5. Publishers of Asian Law Journals

We compared the publishers of Asian law journals located in Asia with those in Western countries based on publisher's age and establishment type (Table 3). Western publishers are generally much older than Asian publishers. Seven of the twelve publishers in Asia have been around since 2000, but in Western countries, almost all the publishers were founded before 1900s. Publishers in Asia are on average 46 years old, while they are 314.5 years old in Western countries. The type of journal publisher also differs slightly. Commercial companies, university presses, and non-profit organizations published law journals in Asian countries, while commercial companies and university presses published law journals in Western countries. Publishers in Western countries are all well-known. Taylor & Francis, Cambridge University Press, and Oxford University Press rank among the top 50 publishers in the world [33].

Table 3. Publishers of Asian Law Journals.

Publishing Region	Journal	Publisher Name	Year Founded	Establishment Type
Asia	<i>AJWIHLP</i>	National Taiwan University Press: Asian Center for WTO & International Health Law and Policy	2003	U
	<i>FLC</i>	Higher Education Press	2006	C
	<i>IJIC</i>	Institute for Migrant Rights Press	2007	C
	<i>IJCJS</i>	South Asian Society of Criminology and Victimology (SASCV)	2009	N
	<i>JEAIL</i>	Yijun Institute of International Law	2007	N
	<i>JICL</i>	Sweet & Maxwell–Thomson Reuters	1889	C
	<i>JIPR</i>	National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (NISCAIR)	2002	N
	<i>JJLM</i>	Medico-Legal Society of Japan	1914	N
	<i>NJIPLM</i>	National Taipei University of Technology	1912	U
	<i>SALJ</i>	Academy Publishing	2007	C
	<i>SJLS</i>	National University of Singapore Faculty of Law	1956	U

	<i>UJLS</i>	Universiti Utara Malaysia Press	1988	U
	Average Age		46.0 years	
	<i>APJHRL</i>	Martinus Nijhoff Publishers	1853	C
	<i>APLR</i>	Taylor & Francis	1852	C
	<i>AJCL</i>	Walter De Gruyter GmbH	1749	C
	<i>AJIL</i>	Cambridge University Press	1534	U
	<i>AJLS</i>	Cambridge University Press	1534	U
	<i>CJCL</i>	Oxford University Press	1586	U
	<i>CJIL</i>	Oxford University Press	1586	U
	<i>CLG</i>	Francis and Taylor	1958	C
	Average Age		314.5 years	

Note. C: Commercial Company; N: Non-Profit Organization; U: University Press.

6. Performance Measurement of Asian Law Journals

SJR's website provides a variety of information on the journal's performances. Journal performance measurements for Asian law journals were obtained from SJR for 2020. These include total documents (2020), citation rate, h-index, and SJR score (Table 4). The total number of published documents in Asian law journals from Western countries was slightly higher than that of Asian law journals published in Asia. The citation rate is calculated by dividing the number of citations by the number of documents published in the last two years. The H-index takes into account both citation counts and the total number of documents published [34,35]. On average, the citation rate, h-index, and SJR scores were all higher for journals published in Western countries (0.37, 8.75, and 0.23, respectively) than for those published in Asia (0.13, 5.0, and 0.13, respectively). Elsevier uses the SJR score to rank and categorize its indexed journals into four quartiles (Q1 to Q4). The average SJR quartile of journals published in Western countries was lower than those published in Asia (2.6 versus 3.6).

Table 4. Performance Measurements of Asian Law Journals.

Publishing Region	Journal	Total Documents (2020)	Citation Rate (2 years)	H-Index	SJR Score	Quartile
Asia	<i>AJWIHLP</i>	0	0.00	8	0.11	Q4
	<i>FLC</i>	6	0.11	6	0.14	Q3
	<i>IJCJS</i>	19	0.03	1	0.11	Q3
	<i>IJIC</i>	0	0.41	3	0.14	Q3
	<i>JEAIL</i>	0	0.00	14	0.13	Q4
	<i>JICL</i>	23	0.20	5	0.11	Q4
	<i>JIPR</i>	21	0.21	13	0.19	Q3
	<i>JJLM</i>	10	0.05	1	0.1	Q4
	<i>NJIPLM</i>	9	0.06	2	0.1	Q4
	<i>SALJ</i>	12	0.00	0	0.1	Q4
	<i>SJLS</i>	33	0.12	5	0.11	Q4
	<i>UJLS</i>	16	0.36	2	0.16	Q3
	Average	12.4	0.13	5.0	0.13	3.6
	<i>APJHRL</i>	10	0.08	10	0.1	Q4
Western Countries	<i>APLR</i>	11	0.38	7	0.25	Q2
	<i>AJCL</i>	8	0.25	8	0.15	Q3
	<i>AJIL</i>	22	0.56	10	0.31	Q2
	<i>AJLS</i>	22	0.76	8	0.26	Q2
	<i>CJCL</i>	24	0.30	5	0.18	Q3
	<i>CJIL</i>	27	0.61	18	0.45	Q1
	<i>CJIL</i>					
	<i>CLG</i>	0	0.01	4	0.1	Q4
	Average	15.5	0.37	8.75	0.23	2.6

7. Countries of Publishers and Authors

We also examined the extent to which authors had published articles in law journals in their own countries. Table 5 shows the frequency of the publishers' country and the first author's country. Only first authors were considered, as these are usually the most accurately recorded in Scopus. The shaded cells indicate whether the country of a journal's publisher matches the country of the first author. In 8 of 12 law journals published in Asia, the countries of the publisher match the most common country of the first author. In 2 of 12 law journals published in Asia, the publisher's countries match the second most common country of the first author. In contrast, for law journals published in Western countries, none of the most common first author's countries match the publisher's country, although three of the publisher's countries match the second most common first author's country. In terms of the percentage of documents whose first authors were from the same country as the journal publisher, *JILM* was the highest (92.5%), while *IJIC* was the lowest (20.9%).

Table 5. Frequency of Publishers' Country and the First Author's Country.

Publishing Region	Journal	Publisher's Country	Most Common Country of the First Author		Second Most Common Country of the First Author	
			Country	Number of Documents	Country	Number of Documents
Asia	<i>AJWIHL</i>	TW	TW	18 (30.0%)	US	7 (11.7%)
	<i>FLC</i>	CN	CN	267 (78.1%)	US	18 (30.0%)
	<i>IJCJS</i>	IN	US	19 (33.3%)	ID	9 (15.0%)
	<i>IJIC</i>	ID	IN	24 (20.9%)	US	22 (36.7%)
	<i>JEAIL</i>	KR	CN	35 (26.5%)	KR	29 (48.3%)
	<i>JICL</i>	HK	UK	30 (44.1%)	HK	4 (6.7%)
	<i>JIPR</i>	IN	IN	322 (65.4%)	US	36 (60%)
	<i>JJLM</i>	JP	JP	37 (92.5%)	DE	1 (1.7%)
	<i>NJIPLM</i>	TW	TW	42 (44.2%)	US	16 (26.7%)
	<i>SALJ</i>	SG	SG	10 (76.9%)	UK	1 (1.7%)
	<i>SJLS</i>	SG	SG	69 (63.3%)	UK	10 (16.7%)
	<i>UJLS</i>	MY	MY	55 (79.7%)	ID	4 (6.7%)
Western Countries	<i>APJHRL</i>	NL	AU	30 (16.9%)	UK	17 (9.6%)
	<i>APLR</i>	UK	CN	38 (21.0%)	HK	32 (17.7%)
	<i>AJCL</i>	UK	SG	44 (23.9%)	AU	43 (23.4%)
	<i>AJIL</i>	UK	SG	35 (18.2%)	UK	28 (14.6%)
	<i>AJLS</i>	UK	US	33 (16.1%)	CN	23 (11.2%)
	<i>CJCL</i>	UK	AU	23 (17.7%)	CN	22 (16.9%)
	<i>CJIL</i>	UK	CN	135 (31%)	UK	47 (10.8%)
	<i>CLG</i>	US	CN	23 (35.9%)	US	18 (28.1%)

Note. Publisher's country that matches the first author's country is shaded. TW: Taiwan; CN: China; ID: Indonesia; IN: India; JP: Japan; KR: South Korea; HK: Hong Kong; SG: Singapore; MY: Malaysia; NL: the Netherlands; UK: the United Kingdom; US: the United States; AU: Australia; DE: Germany.

8. Authorship of Asian Law Journals

Utilizing the Scopus data, the authorship of Asian law journals was analyzed in terms of international collaboration and author team size. Table 6 summarizes the results. This table shows the *international collaboration intensity (ICI)* and the *international collaboration rate (ICR)* for each journal. The *ICI* represents the number of publications that contain at least one researcher from outside the country, while the *ICR* represents the ratio of the *ICI* to the total number of publications [36]. The journal with the highest *ICR* is *JICL* (16.2%). On average, the *ICR* of journals published in Asia (2.2%) was slightly higher than those published in Western countries (1.9%). Author team size refers to how many authors are involved in producing an article. Journals published in Asia have a larger average author team size (2.2) than journals published in Western countries (1.4). Western countries have a median author team size of only 1.0, indicating that one author writes most articles in

law journals. In general, the results suggest that collaboration is more common in Asian law journals published in Asia than in Western law journals.

Table 6. Authorship of Asian Law Journals Published in Asia and Western Countries

Publishing Region	Journal	P	ICI (ICR)	Author Team Size		
				Mean	Median	SD
Asia	<i>AJWIHLP</i>	60	4 (6.7%)	2.4	1.0	3.1
	<i>FLC</i>	342	5 (1.5%)	1.6	1.0	1.0
	<i>IJIC</i>	57	0 (0%)	1.2	1.0	0.7
	<i>IJCJS</i>	115	4 (3.5%)	2.7	3.0	1.6
	<i>JEAIL</i>	132	4 (3%)	1.8	1.0	1.5
	<i>JICL</i>	68	11 (16.2%)	1.8	1.0	1.3
	<i>JIPR</i>	492	2 (0.4%)	2.1	1.0	1.4
	<i>JJLM</i>	40	0 (0%)	4.2	3.5	3.3
	<i>NJIPLM</i>	95	4 (4.2%)	1.8	1.0	1.3
	<i>SALJ</i>	13	0 (0%)	1.5	1.0	0.9
	<i>SJLS</i>	109	1 (0.9%)	1.4	1.0	1.0
	<i>UJLS</i>	69	0 (0%)	3.5	4.0	1.5
	Average	132.7	2.9 (2.2%)	2.2	1.6	1.6
Western Countries	<i>APJHRL</i>	178	7 (3.9%)	1.4	1.0	1.0
	<i>APLR</i>	181	8 (4.4%)	1.5	1.0	1.0
	<i>AJCL</i>	184	6 (3.3%)	1.5	1.0	1.1
	<i>AJIL</i>	192	2 (1%)	1.3	1.0	0.8
	<i>AJLS</i>	205	9 (4.4%)	1.6	1.0	1.1
	<i>CJCL</i>	130	4 (3.1%)	1.6	1.0	1.0
	<i>CJIL</i>	436	6 (1.4%)	1.2	1.0	0.7
	<i>CLG</i>	934	4 (0.4%)	1.1	1.0	0.6
	Average	305.0	5.8 (1.9%)	1.4	1.0	0.9

Note. P: total number of publications; ICI: international collaboration intensity; ICR: international collaboration rate; SD: standard deviation.

9. Topical Areas of Asian Law Journals

We compared the topical areas of journals published in Asia and those published in Western countries based on author keywords. Figure 1 shows a VOSViewer diagram of author keywords for journals published in Asia and Western countries. Using the top 35 author keywords from each journal type, we examined the number of keywords for each journal type. The keywords relate to the topical areas of the journals published in each region. The size of the node indicates the frequency of occurrence of the keywords, and the lines indicate their co-occurrence. The frequency of keywords “intellectual property,” “copyright,” “trademark,” “infringement,” “innovation” and “intellectual property rights” in journals published in Asia indicates an interest in these topics, with “human rights” also appearing with a high frequency in journals published in Western countries. However, country names (i.e., “China,” “Indonesia,” and “Hong Kong”) were more frequently mentioned as keywords in journals published in Western countries. In comparison, topics on intellectual property were researched more often in journals published in Asia than in Western countries.

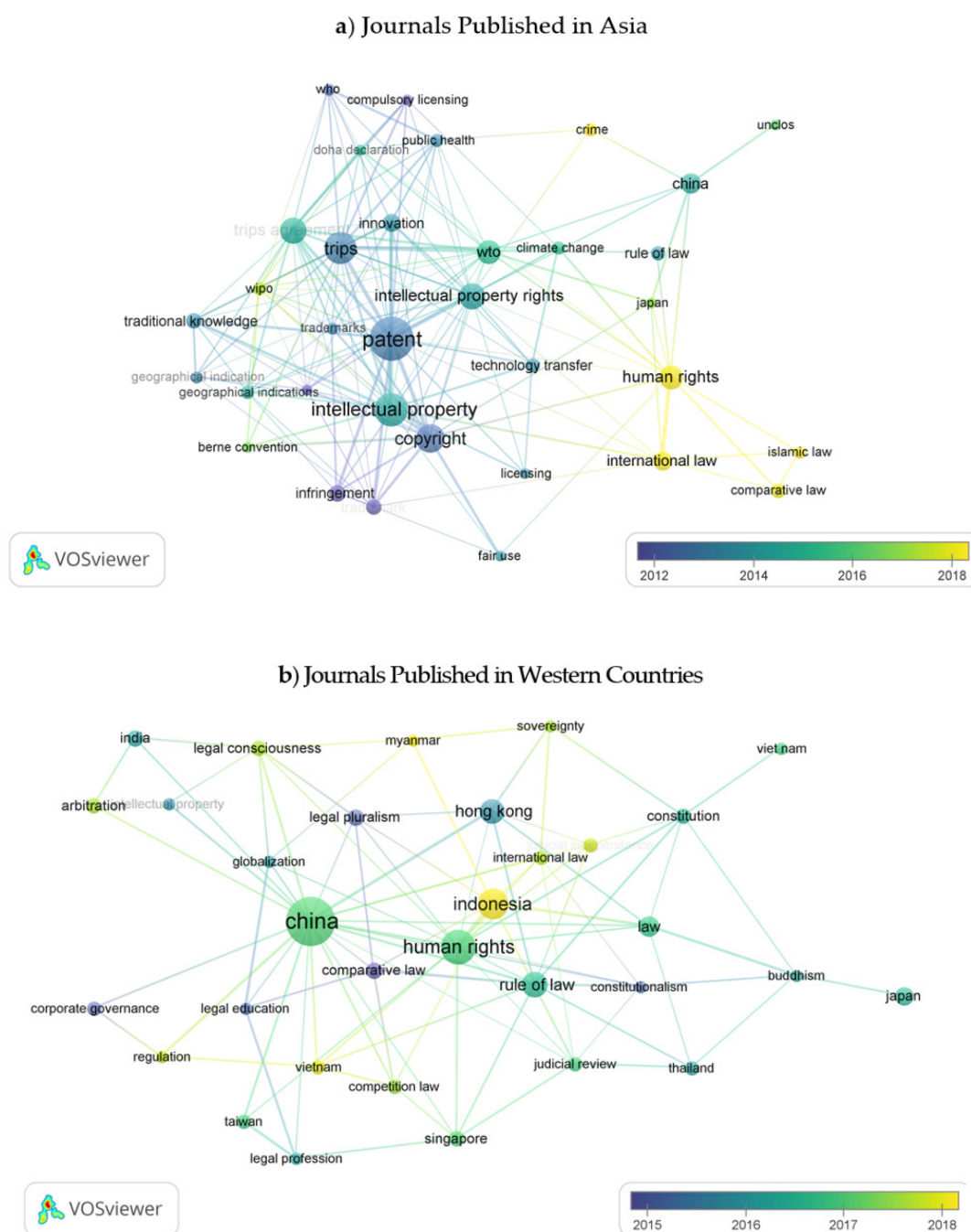


Figure 1. VOSviewer Representation of Author Keywords of Asian Law Journals.

10. Discussion and Conclusions

Thus far, we have compared Asian law journals published in Asia with those published in Western countries regarding performance, authorship, and topical research areas. We found that a relatively few number of countries published Asian law journals as only eight Asian countries and three Western countries are represented in publishing law journals. The most notable difference is the type of publishers and the coverage years of journals. Publishers of Asian law journals in Asia are much younger than publishers of Asian law journals in the West. Judging by the publication years of the journals, Asian law journals published in Western countries have a longer publication period and produce more articles than those published in Asia. There are more non-profit organizations

among Asian publishers than among Western publishers, which suggests a lack of commercial interest in law journals published in Asian countries. Most large commercial publishers are based in developed countries to maximize profits from their published journals [37]. We found that Asian law journal publishers are no different in this regard. Other notable differences between the two groups of journals are as follows.

First, the results show that Asian law journals published by Western publishers perform better on several journal evaluation indicators: h-index, SJR, and citation ratio. We need to consider the coverage years of a journal in reputable databases such as Scopus and WoS, as it takes a considerable amount of time for a journal to reach a high score in these metrics.

Second, unlike Western journals, Asian authors are more likely to publish in journals published in their own countries, and Asian journals published in Asian countries may heavily rely on contributions from authors in that country. In almost all Asian law journals published in Asia, the country of the publisher and the country of the first author were identical. An earlier study showed that a similar pattern was found in Asian journals published in the field of library and information science [38]. The result of this study also suggested that journals published in Asia lack internationality compared to those published in Western countries, as they rely heavily on contributions from authors in their own countries. In contrast, journals published in Western countries show a different pattern. While six Asian law journals were published in the United Kingdom, the most common country of the first author in these journals was not the United Kingdom.

Third, Asian law journals have generally shown a low level of collaboration. An earlier study by S. A. Shah et al. [39] suggested that single authorship is more common in law journals than in other disciplines. The difference was that, in the case of Asian law journals, the size of the author team and the frequency of international collaboration did not influence the citation rate.

Lastly, Western law journals have addressed human rights issues to a greater extent than those in Asia, whereas law journals published in Asia published more articles on intellectual property and copyright issues. The growing interest in topics related to human rights is consistent with the findings by Gulyamov and Rustambekov [40]. They suggest that human rights, cyber law, and counterterrorism were the most relevant legal research topics in 2020. In many Asian countries, human rights issues are politically sensitive [41], which may influence researchers to publish articles on human rights issues in law journals published in Western countries. Nevertheless, a relatively small number of articles on human rights issues have been published in law journals based in Asia since 2018.

We have highlighted differences between law journals published in Asian and Western countries. The impact of publishing in Western countries could be measured with the use of citation ratios and h-indices based on scientometrics. However, the differences in topical interests between journals published in Asian countries and those published in Western countries would be more interesting from the perspective of legal scholarship since they reflect contrastive research interests and perspectives.

Since the large multinational publishers are mostly based in Western countries, there seems to be an advantage to publishing in Western countries in terms of visibility. Large publishers such as Elsevier have expertise in publishing journals, have significant operating funding, and manage and publish many journals efficiently. Some have been in the publishing business for hundreds of years [42]. Thus, the increased visibility of law journals is likely due to their longer publication life and the fact that large commercial companies publish these journals. Although this study only examined a small set of data to examine the journal publishing patterns between the two regions, the results of this study suggest that it is useful to examine the topical area coverage based on journal articles published in differing regions in order to identify the contrastive publishing patterns.

Beyond legal studies, the results of this study suggest that a considerable amount of research with a non-Western regional or country focus could be published in Western

countries. The results shown in this study can serve as a basis for conducting future studies in order to uncover regional differences in journal publications in other areas of study. Since many non-Western journals have been outsourced to large commercial companies in Western countries in recent years [43], the differences between Western and non-Western journals in other fields of study should be investigated to learn the effects of shifting the location of publication.

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