

**Title:** The Corruption-Inequality Income Trap: A Study of Asian Countries

**Journal:** Economics (E-Journal)

This paper investigates the mutual effects between corruption and income inequality. Using data from Asian countries, the authors find that a high level of corruption is associated with a high level of income inequality and vice versa.

Although the topic is quiet interesting, the paper needs to be totally re-written. It does not motivate the topic or show its importance. Thus, it falls short of publishing in this journal, as explained below:

1. Introduction is not so motivated. It could be improved if the topic is linked to the characteristics of Asian countries and the papers recently published. Also, research questions are not clear; importance of questions not documented well; and not explained how this study is different from other studies. Overall, the paper needs to be motivated further. The current version of the introduction is just a summary of existing literature.
2. No highlight on relative contributions of the paper. The authors must implicitly explain the contributions of the paper.
3. In Abstract, the authors refer to two hypotheses “the grease the wheel” and “sand the wheel”, but we do not see any explanation of these two theories in the paper. In addition, the authors need to explain the channels through which corruption affect income inequality and/or vice versa.
4. A separate section for hypothesis development needs to be added. The readers do not know what the authors attempt to do, the economic theory behind, and how this paper develop existing literature.
5. The literature review section needs to be rearranged and edited. The current version is just a summary of previous findings and does not find any gap, and how the paper aims to fill this gap. Also, some important missing papers:  

Dutta and Mishra (2013), Journal of public Economic Theory  
Dobson and Rumlogan-Dobson (2010), Economics Letters  
Policardo et al. (2018), Economic Analysis and Policy
6. No justification about selected explanatory variables. There are several other important variables that explain corruption/inequality, but not considered in this paper (such as proxies for culture, political stability, and financial development).
7. The methodology is not well saturated. For instance, some diagnostic tests are necessary. Based on the nature of the study, some advanced econometric techniques such as simultaneous equations and panel cointegration may need to be applied to address endogeneity issue.
8. The interpretation of results should be improved. We are interested to know for one standard deviation increase in corruption what would happen to income inequality. Also, there is no data section. We do not know how data are obtained and constructed.
9. And finally, the whole paper needs to be re-written. The paper reads badly – both linguistically and economically!