



Editorial Note

It is my pleasure to present the second issue of Volume 32 of the Asian Journal of Applied Economics (AJAE). We are delighted to share the good news that AJAE, published by the Center for Applied Economics Research, Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University, has been ranked among the top 10 Thai journals with the highest impact factor (IF 2024) in the Journal Citation Reports 2025 by Clarivate (Web of Science). This achievement reflects the collective efforts of our authors, reviewers, editorial board, and readers in advancing applied economic research with regional and global relevance.

This issue features nine research articles that address diverse and timely topics in economics, finance, trade, development, and public policy. The first article investigates how the complexity of Rules of Origin affects Thai exports under three ASEAN free trade agreements, revealing that more complex rules can act as trade barriers, particularly in certain industries. The second article extends the Human Development Index to incorporate freedom, finding that this enhanced measure has a stronger long-term effect in reducing income inequality among ASEAN countries. The third examines how financial development influences economic growth volatility, highlighting the moderating role of innovation in both developed and developing economies. The fourth uses a VAR-based approach to explore the interplay between financial development and employment structure in China, offering policy recommendations for aligning finance with labor market needs.

The fifth article explores whether remittances contribute to financial instability in selected Asia-Pacific economies, with results varying across countries and causal directions. The sixth addresses the debate between unemployment hysteresis and the natural rate hypothesis in India, finding mild evidence of hysteresis, especially in the post-COVID period. The seventh evaluates Thailand's demerit point system for road safety, showing its effectiveness in slowing the upward trend of accidents while suggesting enhancements through behavioral insights. The eighth investigates the relationship between energy poverty improvement and fossil fuel consumption in Southeast Asia, finding a non-linear pattern consistent with the Environmental Kuznets Curve. Finally, the ninth article analyzes the influence of global crude oil prices on banking sector profitability in major economies, showing a weak but positive long-term association alongside the significant roles of GDP growth, inflation, and interest rates.

On behalf of the editorial team, I extend our sincere appreciation to the authors for their valuable contributions, to the reviewers for their constructive feedback, and to our readers for their continued engagement. We look forward to fostering further dialogue and collaboration in applied economics research. We also kindly remind prospective authors to carefully review and follow the AJAE Author Guidelines, available on our journal website, before submitting manuscripts online.

This issue also marks my final term as Chief Editor of the Asian Journal of Applied Economics. Together with our editorial team and board members, whose tenure concludes in October 2025, it has been a privilege to serve our academic community. While the new editorial leadership has not yet been announced, I trust that AJAE will continue to grow as a quality journal, committed to publishing rigorous and impactful research.

Waleerat Suphannachart
Editor-in-Chief