

Roberto B. Corcino, Leetsch Charles Hsu, and Evelyn L. Tan  
*A  $q$ -analogue of generalized Stirling numbers*,  
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**Abstract**

We investigate a kind of  $q$ -analogue which involves a unified generalization of Stirling numbers as a limiting case with  $q \rightarrow 1$ . Some basic properties and explicit formulas will be derived, and certain applications related to previously known results will be discussed.