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Editor-in-Chief

Dr.K.Sasi Kumar

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EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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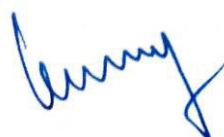
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EDITORIAL MESSAGE

We take great pleasure in welcoming you to our Edited Book. The immediacy of e-based publication makes it possible for us all to be fully connected to each other and to developments in our field and to be directly involved in ongoing knowledge construction.

With innovative concepts in mind, we invited with scholarly discussions to facilitate new ideas for emerging sectors. This book also stands as a platform for Students and research scholars to express their innovative business models and solutions.

We are thankful to all academicians, research scholars and students who have contributed for this edited book. We also acknowledge the valuable suggestions and support offered by our colleagues and students. We are delighted that you are joining us as readers and hope you will also join us as contributors.



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>S.no.</i>	<i>Contents</i>
1.	<i>A STUDY ON CUSTOMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS ATM SERVICES DURING COVID-19 WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY</i> <i>Dr. S. Renugadevi & Dr. B. Maheswari</i>
2.	<i>A STUDY ON ATM SERVICES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COIMBATORE CITY</i> <i>Dr. S. Renugadevi & P.Kalaiselvi</i>
3.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS</i> <i>Dr P Divaya Sri, Dr.V.Sabari ,Dr S. Bamini</i>
4.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS</i> <i>Dr A Ashwini , Dr R Priya , Dr V Sabari</i>
5.	<i>SOCIAL IMPACT ON RECENT TECHNOLOGIES IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AND APPLICATIONS</i> <i>Dr K.Priya , Ms. S. Syamala Dr V Sabari</i>
6.	<i>ECO CRITICISM AND LITERARY CONCEPTS</i> <i>DR HEMAMALINI N</i>
7.	<i>ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES</i> <i>L.RATHIKA</i>
8.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS</i> <i>M. Elakia , M.Astalakshmi , Dr V Sabari</i>
9.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS</i> <i>K.R. Karthiga, Dr R Priya , Dr V Sabari</i>
10.	<i>A NEW ERA FOR LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES</i> <i>1Dr O.Lavanya , 1Dr V Sabari</i>
11.	<i>FOCUS ON SOCIAL INTERACTION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR</i> <i>Dr M.V.Kavya , Dr V Sabari</i>
12.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS</i> <i>P.Uma , Dr.V.Sabari, Dr.S.Bamini</i>
13	<i>PROGRAMMES AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES BY ADOPTING THE LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCE</i>

	<i>Dr.S.Arumugam, Dr.D.Ruby, Dr.J.Jeyachidra</i>
14.	<i>COMPARISON OF TRADITIONAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE WITH LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE Dr.D.Ruby, Dr.S.Arumugam, Dr.J.Jeyachidra</i>
15.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH Dr R Priya Dr A Ashwini , Dr V Sabari</i>
16.	<i>GLOBAL CHANGES AND EMERGING POSSIBILITIES C.Shanthi , Dr.V.Sabari, N.Pragathi</i>
17.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES Dr R.Snega, Dr V Sabari</i>
18.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS Sowmiya.S, Dr.V.Sabari, Mayuri</i>
19.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH Subasree, Dr A Ashwini , Dr V Sabari</i>
20.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL SOCIAL SCIENCE Suvalakshmi.S , Dr.V.Sabari, C.P.Devipriya</i>
21.	<i>EMERGING TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS P.Thrisha , Dr.V.Sabari, B.Prabavathi</i>
22.	<i>PSYCHOLOGY V.Nisha , Dr.V.Sabari, P.Praveena</i>
23.	<i>GLOBAL TRENDS IN LIBERAL ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE EDUCATION M.Vishnupriya, Dr.K.Priya, Dr V Sabari</i>

FOCUS ON SOCIAL INTERACTION AND HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

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ABSTRACT

A large body of research exists on systems designed to help users in changing their behaviours, for instance, to exercise more regularly or to reduce energy consumption. Increasingly, these systems focus on multiple users, often to encourage open-ended reflection rather than prescribing a particular course of action. The present study examines the influence of social context on the use of emoticons in Internet communication. Secondary school students (N = 158) responded to short internet chats. Social context (task-oriented vs. socio-emotional) and valence of the context (positive vs. negative) were manipulated in these chats. Participants were permitted to respond with text, emoticon or a combination of both. Results showed that participants used more emoticons in socio-emotional than in task-oriented social contexts. Furthermore, students used more positive emoticons in positive contexts and more negative emoticons in negative contexts. An interaction was found between valence and kind of context; in negative, task-oriented contexts subjects used the least emoticons. Results are related to research about the expression of emotions in face-to-face interaction. As background for this theme issue, this book chapter discuss on behaviour change support systems that focus on social interaction and reflection.

Key Words: *Internet communication, face-to-face interaction, Human Sciences Research Council*

INTRODUCTION

Social Science is the opportunity to complete original research. This book chapter is designed for transfer to four-year programs in social science and related fields. Students intending to transfer to a four year psychology major should work closely with their advisor to ensure that appropriate courses are selected. The psychology faculty have developed specific recommendations for the social science capstone; social science electives (based on area of interest in psychology); math and science courses; and unrestricted electives requirements.

GRADUATES OF THE LIBERAL ARTS & SCIENCES – SOCIAL SCIENCE A.S. PROGRAM WILL:

- Demonstrate appropriate and effective written and oral communication skills that reflect social science reasoning
- Demonstrate the ability to locate, critically evaluate, and effectively use social scientific research

- Demonstrate knowledge of social science research, methods, and theoretical principles
- Articulate an understanding of how privilege and inequality are socially and historically constructed

CAREERS ON CAREER COACH

About the curriculum for this program is designed primarily for transfer to a bachelor's degree program, students develop vital transferrable skills that support them in the workplace as well. A quality liberal arts education provides students with one of the many lenses through which they view the world and prepares them to pursue a wide array of careers. We encourage students to intentionally engage in applied learning opportunities (such as volunteering, services learning, internships, jobs, research, etc.) as well to gain valuable hands-on experience. Learn about some of the many jobs students explore:



A DEGREE IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

- 74% of employers surveyed would recommend a liberal arts education to prepare for success in today's global economy. In addition, 3/4 of employers want new hires with the skills that the humanities teach: critical thinking, complex problem solving, and written and oral communications.
- A report by the Campaign for Social Science shows that “84% of social science graduates were in employment [3.5 years after they finished their degree], compared with 78% of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics)” graduates.
- Unemployment rates are low for liberal arts graduates and decline over time: “The unemployment rate for recent liberal arts graduates is 5.2 percent. The unemployment rate for mature workers with liberal arts degrees (41-50) is 3.5 percent—just .04 percent higher than the rates for those with a professional or preprofessional degree.”
-
- A 2010 IBM survey of CEOs names creativity, one of the central competencies taught in the humanities and social sciences, as “the most crucial factor for future success.”

SOCIALSCIENCE ARTS AND HUMANITIES

This module introduces students to the Social Science, Arts and Humanities disciplines taught in the School. Students develop an understanding of how each discipline

approaches the study of major global issues such as migration, human rights, the environment and the nation-state. They consider how the disciplines relate to each other and gain an insight into the value of different disciplinary perspectives. Students are introduced to the key skills required for studying the different disciplines. The taster of each discipline that they receive helps inform their degree choice after the foundation year, while the module's global focus provides a basis for later choices about regions and topics that students may wish to study in more detail. The different disciplines are organized into a series of broad thematic approaches focusing on History, Economics, Society, Politics and Culture.

ON SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THIS MODULE A STUDENT WILL BE ABLE TO:

1. Describe the different Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities disciplines.
2. Discuss how the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities approach the study of major global issues.
3. Employ a wide range of academic skills and techniques appropriate for UG study in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities.

The knowledge and understanding delivered in the module and the skills to be developed have been determined with the programme aims in mind – including the overall aim of preparing students for UG study at SOAS. The introduction to the different disciplines and approaches will prepare students for the UG programme of their choosing and help inform their degree choice.

Despite this, the role of humanities and social science research tends to go largely unrecognized and undervalued. Discussions of the “knowledge society” tend to focus on science and technology research as the way to build and develop nations towards becoming knowledge societies. The role that humanities and social sciences can play in innovation; policy making; business and economy; and in addressing societal problems are not generally recognized by humanities and social sciences researchers themselves, their institutions and, society.

Few humanities researchers are of the opinion that humanities research cannot be applied research the way that social science research can be and that it is predominantly basic research. This view is held despite the fact that innovation and commercialization processes include book writing as well as the development of media technologies which are based on social science and humanities disciplines. That humanities and social sciences research is important should not in any way be in doubt, but efforts need to be made to ensure that their role and contribution is understood not only by us, but also by researchers in other disciplines, as well as policy makers, business and industry, etc.

More importantly, the need for interconnectedness of various disciplines in producing knowledge of different types is something that must never be taken for granted or overlooked. For example, the innovation value chain may begin with pure sciences but at the point of commercialization, or taking the product to the market, it is the business expertise that becomes critical.

IMPORTANCE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR RESEARCH

Humanities and social science research also has an important role to play in the innovation system, just as much as research in science and technology (Bakhshi, et al, 2008 and Wright 2007). Further, the Nairobi Report of 2009 states that the humanities and social sciences are critical for development: “the perspective and knowledge which they offer on history, culture, social interactions, political systems, economics, and much more are vital to development and well being ... it is only by engaging with history and its expressions through literature and performance that communities and nations are able to understand and reflect on their origins, to understand their past and define their place in the world” (Nairobi Report, 2009:6).

Humanities and social science research also has an important role to play in the innovation system, just as much as research in science and technology (Bakhshi, et al, 2008). Contrary to conventional belief, the natural sciences, the humanities and social sciences are complementary and provide a broad way of considering innovation, its impact and acceptability to society. The relationship between these areas is not hierarchical as might be suggested by the funding opportunities and general belief that innovation can only be driven by knowledge generated in science and technology research. Whilst science and technology research might generate innovation, it is humanities and social science research that will ask fundamental questions about the acceptability of an innovation and therefore inform the public and thus address the social and ethical dimensions of an innovation (Mette, 2008).

The public is not only interested in the technical scientific facts but the wider implications of the technology as well. The humanities and social sciences provide the avenue for a critical assessment of any innovation in order to inform the public such that they can make informed judgment. Humanities and social sciences research also has a role to play in business and in generating income as shown by the results of a DEA study carried out in Denmark. The study surveyed 100 companies about their challenges and needs to which H&SS research could help provide solutions. The results came up with 7 themes which H&SS researchers could consider. Research in the humanities and social sciences has an impact on policy makers and the public because it can contribute to an understanding of the human and social side of any phenomenon. As such, research should, therefore, inform policy making.

HUMAN SCIENCES RESEARCH COUNCIL

However, such research does not receive much attention in general; humanities research, in particular, is viewed as research into esoteric issues that have no bearing on real life. According to the British Academy Report (2008), the full value of humanities and social sciences research has yet to be realized by policy-makers. This is because they may not be aware of the available research and humanities and social science researchers may not have the networks that would make their research known. What is therefore needed is a link for dialog and exchange. A visit to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) website in South Africa shows the kinds of research projects undertaken in the human and social

sciences area. The research speaks to the needs of South Africa, and indeed other African countries in that it focuses on the areas that require more understanding in for them to be addressed.

Such areas include education; poverty, employment and growth; service delivery; child, youth, family and social development; democracy and governance; education, science and skills development; knowledge systems; social aspects of HIV and AIDs, etc. Further, if one considers the millennium development goals (MDGs), one sees that to tackle the challenges that face African and other developing areas in the world, there is need for concerted effort to conduct research in a holistic manner that links the humanities, social sciences and science and technology.

In this interrelationship, the humanities and social sciences have the potential to help us understand why there is so much poverty, why there is disease and illness, and why democracy seems to be such an elusive concept in Africa, and what can be done. Yet, we see that such potential is not realized because it would appear that the research that has been conducted in problematic areas has not had the impact which would be manifest in policies that address the issues. Pohoryles and Schadauer (2009) state that there is discrepancy between the potential importance of humanities and social sciences research/knowledge and the comparative low attention they receive from policy makers, other research communities, and the public as a whole.

HOW DO THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES INTELLECTUALS AND RESEARCHERS ACT TO ADDRESS THIS CONUNDRUM

There are many reasons for this which shall be discussed below. As it shall become evident, misconceptions often arise because of the failure of some scholars to notice the multifaceted linkage between the knowledge base and the knowledge outcomes. Research challenges Research is generally classified as either basic research or applied research. Each type of research has its time and merits, and therefore there is none that has supremacy over the other. What is important is that any researcher should endeavor to strike some balance in the type of research that is undertaken.

- a) It is a good idea to pursue research in one's own interest, but also be engaged in research that is applicable to some challenge or need in society.
- b) It is likewise not a problem to undertake desk research but also prudent to also undertake empirical research.
- c) The critical thing is to develop the mind of a well rounded researcher, as opposed to merely delving into specific research.
- d) Researchers in the humanities have been accused of undertaking more desk than empirical research.
- e) Colleagues in the Humanities state that they do not need much by way of funding because they can do their research in the library or in the archives, or that raising research funding should not be a requirement for promotion because they can conduct research without access to funds.

It is the author's view that those colleagues are focusing more on "ivory tower" type of research instead of also finding ways of addressing topical issues such as climate change, HIV and AIDS, gender based violence, and so many others that require an understanding of human behavior and how it contributes to such issues and what can be done.

In addition, academics need funding to run their graduate programmes and have graduate students. This includes academics in the humanities and the social sciences. Sawyrr's vision for African research is the "sustained indigenous generation of world class research results and new knowledge that helps our understanding of African conditions and contribute to the advancement of its people" (Swayrr 2004:216). The research must be determined by the African researchers themselves and be relevant to the local context.

As different nations in the continent of Africa, we have specific challenges that require research to understand and address. Researchers in the humanities and social sciences are better placed to do this because of their focus on the human condition and their interpretative abilities. The value of this research is more visible only after the research outcomes from the humanities are applied elsewhere in the knowledge development chain, including the application of science and technology. Research in the humanities is considered by many to be totally different from that of the natural sciences in terms of theory and methodology. Claims are made that humanities are not part of what is called "the sciences", especially history and the literary studies since they are exclusively based on textual sources.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

First, we must find out what the policy makers need in order to influence policy and make decisions. One of the major factors to bear in mind is that no one problem can be addressed in a one-sided way; there is need for an integrated approach drawing on the expertise of scientists, business, as well as humanities and social sciences.

A typical example of such a problem is HIV and AIDS where there is also need to consider behavior as well as the science of producing a vaccine or drugs that will lessen the impact of having HIV in one's body. I recall a statement made some years ago by a Botswana Government Minister that researchers did not produce research that impacted policy. There are so many issues that plague African societies and economies such as the effects of globalization, economic prosperity, social justice, distribution of wealth and opportunity, climate change, public sector reforms, health, etc that could benefit from humanities and social science researchers working together and with other disciplines.

As such, a University Research Strategy has been developed and is being implemented as a way of laying the ground towards that goal. The goals are identified as:

- To increase staff participation in research;
- To increase and enhance student research training;
- To increase internal and external research funding;
- To increase international collaborative research;
- To increase the volume and quality of research outputs
- To enhance the impact of research; and
- To improve the integration of research and teaching.

CONCLUSION:

Finally conclude this book chapter has highlighted the crucial role that research in the humanities and social sciences can and should play in policy making, business, innovation, etc., and also identified the challenges faced by researchers in the humanities and social sciences and these include the continued marginalization of such research compared with research in the natural sciences disciplines; the relegation of humanities and social sciences theory and methodology; the lack of funding of research; the lack of time for researchers due to increased teaching loads and administration. Opportunities have been identified that can be seized to make research visible by ensuring that it answers the needs of society and policy makers, and that there is more collaboration, partnership and interdisciplinary research. It is hoped that this chapter has succeeded in demonstrating the dangers of considering humanities and the social sciences separately from natural sciences when we consider the knowledge generation process.

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