Editorial Note

Social Sciences in the Age of AI and Technology

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Abstract: This special section, themed *Social Sciences in the Age of AI and Technology*, brings together 14 selected articles from the 9th International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities (ICOSH 2025). The contributions span diverse fields including social welfare, public health, education, entrepreneurship, political behaviour, security studies, cultural production, and adult education across Malaysia and the wider region. Using qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, and systematic reviews, the articles provide empirical evidence and critical perspectives on inclusion, governance, leadership, digital capability, and human-centred innovation. Collectively, this section highlights the enduring relevance of social sciences in guiding ethical, inclusive, and socially responsive technological change.

International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities 2025

This special section includes a curated selection of articles from the 9th International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities (ICOSH 2025) that was held on 9th – 11th September 2025 at the Everly Hotel, Putrajaya, Malaysia. The conference, inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, focused on a wide range of social and human sciences, including social work, psychology, language, literature, communication, security, culture, politics, religion, digital studies, economics, and other related. The conference, themed *the Human Connection: Social Sciences in the Age of AI and Technology,* bring together academics, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, professionals, and students to share their research findings and to share ideas about current social issues as they pertain to local, regional and global contexts, emphasizes the human connection through the lens of how humans relate to technology today.

As we move further into an era where our lives are increasingly automated and influenced by digital technologies, the social sciences remain crucial to inform discussions about ethics; to foster empathy and to preserve what it means to be human. In addition to influencing how societies function and interact with one another; AI and digital technologies also influence economic systems, cultural systems and social systems. Therefore, in addition to providing empirical evidence, the studies included in this special section provide critically important lenses through which to understand the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly rapidly changing landscape of AI and technology.

Highlights of the Articles

The first article aims to explore the structural factors that contribute to rural poverty among rice-farmers in Malaysia, and its findings suggest that the success of these farmers depends on sustainable, equitable, and inclusive agricultural policies. The second article examined the obstacles associated with social care, which are involved in promoting oral health in elderly residents of care facilities, and it suggests an alternative method to be used in promoting oral health based on the principles of a biopsychosocial model of health and integrated care. The third article examined public discourse concerning low blood pressure on social media. Although there was no apparent bias in the comments or responses regarding low blood pressure on social

media, the study emphasized the need for the provision of evidence-based information in educating the public about health-related matters. The fourth article evaluated the level of digital literacy and digital capability of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) entrepreneurs in Selangor, and the primary objective of this study was to examine the relationship between literacy and empowerment to promote the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the state.

The fifth article assessed the impact of student participation in volunteer programs using a systematic literature review, and demonstrated that participation in volunteer programs have a positive effect on the character development, leadership, soft-skills, social-awareness, civic-responsibility, and employability of individuals who participate in such activities. The sixth article analyzed the influence of Korean work culture on human-capital development of Malaysian participants in the Look East Policy. The objective of this study was to evaluate whether emulating work culture enhances the competence of participants. The seventh article sought to identify why Malaysian voters supported *Parti Perikatan Nasional* in the Negeri Sembilan election, by analyzing voting patterns and the factors underlying the shift in voter behavior. The eighth article explored the challenges and opportunities of developing inclusive workplace communication in higher-education institutions in Malaysia that provide employment to academics with disabilities. The objective of this study was to assess the need to develop more inclusive workplace communication policies.

The ninth article investigated the relationship between transformational leadership and the meaningful work experience of employees in creating organizational commitment in junior high school teachers in Indonesia; and the study provided guidance for improving education quality by developing teachers. The tenth article investigated the entrepreneurial intentions of students at International Islamic University Malaysia in the context of AI use and language. The results indicate how AI and support networks can enhance entrepreneurial motivation. The eleventh article examined the empowerment of adult education in Sarawak (1946–1970), aiming to understand how adult education functioned as a tool of social transformation in enhancing literacy, civic awareness, and economic participation.

The twelfth article evaluated the dynamics of the institutionalization of social work in China, and one of the key findings from the study was the need to find a balance between the state's role in guiding social work practices and the need for professional autonomy for effective social work practice. The thirteenth article analyzed the adaptation of the military doctrine of the United States in Southeast Asia. The primary objective of the study was to analyze the relationship between basing strategies, changes in doctrine, and the influence of domestic factors on regional security. Finally, the fourteenth article investigated how content creators negotiate their creative freedom within AI-mediated Chinese Web Series. The study revealed how symbolic capital, institutional power, and digital platforms interact to create boundaries for negotiating creative freedom.

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