

Foreword

Welcome to the third issue of 2026 of the *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (PJSSH)*!

PJSSH is an open-access journal for studies in the field of Social Sciences and Humanities published by Universiti Putra Malaysia Press. It is independently owned and managed by the university for the benefit of the world-wide science community.

This issue contains 25 regular articles. The authors of these articles come from different countries namely Australia, Bulgaria, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Thailand, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United States, and Vietnam.

The article entitled “Generational Cohort Shifts in Post-COVID-19 Purchasing Patterns: Anxiety-Driven Consumption” presents a timely sociological examination of how the COVID-19 pandemic and endemic phases reshaped consumer behaviour across different generational cohorts in Malaysia. Focusing on the Silent Generation, Baby Boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Corona, the study investigates how health anxiety, economic anxiety, job security concerns, and educational disruption influenced purchasing patterns during and after the pandemic. Based on survey data from 883 respondents across selected Malaysian regions, the study applies one-way ANOVA and multiple regression analyses to identify both similarities and differences in generational consumption responses. The findings show that younger generations demonstrated stronger adaptation toward digital and anxiety-driven consumption, while older generations were more closely associated with health-related concerns and essential purchasing behaviour. By applying Generational Cohort Theory within the context of a major global crisis, this article contributes valuable empirical evidence on how collective uncertainty shapes consumer priorities, social adaptation, and post-pandemic market behaviour. Further details of this study can be found on page 1245.

The issue also features the article titled “Mapping Pre-Service Teachers’ Experiences in Integrating Design Thinking and ChatGPT: An Analysis of 21st-Century Learning Tools Development”, which explores how pre-service teachers in Indonesia integrate Design Thinking and generative artificial intelligence into instructional design. Employing a qualitative exploratory approach and the Gioia method, the study draws on semi-structured interviews with 20 pre-service teachers

enrolled in the Teacher Professional Education programme. The findings highlight the pedagogical role of ChatGPT as a cognitive support tool for ideation, content generation, and feedback, while Design Thinking provides a structured process through the stages of empathise, define, ideate, prototype, and test. The study further identifies reflective digital literacy as an emerging competency required for effective and responsible AI integration in teacher education. By linking Design Thinking, ChatGPT, and 21st-century learning tool development, this article offers meaningful insights into how future teachers can become reflective, adaptive, and innovative practitioners in technology-enhanced classrooms. Further details of this study can be found on page 1405.

Another noteworthy contribution is the article entitled “A Quasi-Experimental Study on Smartphone Dependency and Toxicity”, which addresses the growing concern of nomophobia and excessive smartphone dependency among university students. The study introduces the concept of a smartphone placebo as a non-digital and low-cost intervention designed to reduce dependency without requiring complete digital detoxification. Using a quasi-experimental mixed design involving 200 undergraduate students, the research compares an experimental group that used a smartphone placebo with a control group that continued without intervention. The findings indicate a significant reduction in smartphone dependency and digital toxicity among participants exposed to the placebo intervention. This contribution is particularly relevant to digital well-being, higher education, and communication behaviour studies, as it demonstrates that symbolic substitutes may help regulate digital attachment and reduce unhealthy smartphone use. The study provides practical implications for universities seeking accessible and non-technological strategies to support students’ psychological and behavioural well-being in an increasingly connected digital environment. Full details of this study are available on page 1535.

We anticipate that you will find the evidence presented in this issue to be intriguing, thought-provoking and useful in reaching new milestones in your own research. Please recommend the journal to your colleagues and students to make this endeavour meaningful.

All the papers published in this edition underwent Pertanika’s stringent peer-review process involving a minimum of two reviewers comprising internal as well as external referees. This was to ensure that the quality of the papers justified the high ranking of the journal, which is renowned as a heavily-cited journal not only

by authors and researchers in Malaysia but by those in other countries around the world as well.

We would also like to express our gratitude to all the contributors, namely the authors, reviewers, and Editorial Board Members of PJSSH, who have made this issue possible.

PJSSH is currently accepting manuscripts for upcoming issues based on original qualitative or quantitative research that opens new areas of inquiry and investigation.

Editor-in-Chief

Puvaneswaran Kunasekaran