

**HUMANITIES AND OTHER KNOWLEDGE DOMAINS: A DEVELOPMENTAL
PATHWAY TO EXCELLENCE**

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Abstract

The success of any discipline depends on one or two fields in the humanities, as it covers every part of the society from the past, present to the future for efficiency and development. In fact, humanities itself is life, as it revolves around the world and people therein. The paper aimed at finding out the synergy that exists between humanities and other fields (Science, Engineering, Technology and Social Sciences), so as to demonstrate the importance of humanities as a passage to other discipline's excellence which can be illustrated as 'The oesophagus that carries the food to its destination; the stomach.' It is evident that in one way or the other, language has been a tool for transmitting knowledge to other domains. More so, history and critical reasoning play a foremost role in any experiment, innovation, or research as these will act as the chain to be connected for the sustainability and development of the result aimed at. Therefore, for a machine to be built, an ailment to get a cure, an application to be designed and implemented, or an account to be calculated, one must understand the origin, do a critical thinking and correctly interpret every detail, to avoid disaster and futility of efforts. SPSS was used to analyse the data gotten from 60 respondents, where six variables (Communication Skills, Critical Thinking, Personal and Spiritual Development, Cultural Heritage, Social Values and Virtues, Aesthetic Appreciation) were listed to be arranged in hierarchy of importance to their field. The result showed that Communication Skills has the highest value followed by Critical Thinking. This paper has made known that humanities are the backbone of other discipline. Consequently, other domains should be serious with the infusion of humanities courses to their curricula for better output.

Keywords: Humanities, Communication Skills, Language, Critical and Creative Thinking, Society.

Introduction

Humanities originated from the Latin word *Humanitas* to describe good people i.e. 'Civilised' human beings, and it was first used by writer Cicero. It later gained entry into English in the 14th Century. The field of humanities include ancient and modern languages, literature, philosophy, history, human geography, law, politics, religion, art, anthropology, rhetoric, global studies etc. These subjects are based on the study of human culture and ideas. It is pertinent to note that from this field, we study and learn about people and their way of life and how this way of life shapes their being and existence. It is crucial to add that humanities is credited to the acquisition of the literary

skill (writing and speaking correctly, appropriately, clearly and properly). In which most employers of labour look out for i.e. fluency and right usage of means of communication.

Furthermore, it provides an insightful understanding into moral, ethical, political and ideological forces, in which a successful society depends upon such as selflessness, charity, courtesy, compassion, and generosity, and these are what humanities evaluates and emphasize, that is, the importance of these aforementioned features.

Through humanities, values, norms and cultures of different ethnic groups have been understood, preserved and learnt from through reading, hearing and researching human experiences from which we are motivated, guided and directed on our knowledge in and about the world. Thereby, guiding and helping us to understand the world we inhabit as a fundamental foundation for exploring and understanding the world and the people living in it. It covers all aspects of the society from past events and achievements, to human behavior and relationships among people. It also exposes us to different people and how to live amicably with them and be humane and good to everyone we come across.

The below lines of Michelle Obama capture humanities in a concise statement;

The arts and humanities define who we are as a people. That is their power- to remind us of what we each have to offer, and what we all have in common. To help us understand our history and imagine our future. To give us hope in the moments of struggle and to bring us together when nothing else will.

Do you Know? You Need to Know

- Even as a qualified candidate or applicant, you may not get that job for non-mastery of the company's historical background?
- A promotion may elude a person because of bad usage of language?
- That deal/contract may not be successful due to poor human relation?
- There may be a miscalculation for poor or lack of critical reasoning which can result to wrong interpretation?
- If you fail to study that particular person's autobiography or biography, you may lose their relationship/friendship for life because you do not understand his/her human nature and psychology?
- Your negligence of language learning and acquisition may result into earning a meager pay and losing opportunities either in the country you reside or in a foreign land?
- "Just to let you know that it is not all about your skills or field of study but humanities is the compass that leads to a successful attainment in any area of study and a peaceful co-existence among people in the society."

Importance of some Courses in the Humanities

- i. Philosophy- It will get you thinking about ethical question and a thorough critical thinking.
- ii. Language learning and acquisition- learning another language will help in gaining appreciation for the similarities in different cultures and open different opportunities and expand friendship coast.
- iii. Going through a book (Literature) from another region of the universe helps think about colonization, slave trades, apartheid, independence, democracy etc.
- iv. History opens you to the past, in relation to the present and with a picture of a clearer future and how it will look like.

Table 1: Humanities courses and their Importance

S/N	Subjects	Importance/ Usage
1.	Language	It helps with the literary/ communication skills
2.	Literature	It reflects and teaches human about life
3.	Philosophy	It arouses critical reasoning/ thinking
4.	Religious Studies	It helps with morals and virtues
5.	Civic Education	It teaches us civic duties
6.	History	It records the past, present and future experiences/ references

Sequel to this is a rhetorical question thus: “which knowledge domains do not need one, two or all of these factors for its development and direction?’ Before giving an answer, remember that the first thing needed by any knowledge domain before exploring its field proper is language; the medium/tool of communication for dissemination of information; which is a sub of humanities. Through the exploration of the humanities we all learn how to think afresh, creatively and critically, to reason, express and ask questions because these skills allow us to gain insight into everything around us.

Why you Need to Take Humanities Seriously:

Dalbert (2011) highlighted ten reasons why we study humanities and why students pursuing other careers should augment their education with a strong foundation in the humanities as follow:

- i. Humanities prepare us to fulfil our civic and cultural responsibilities.
- ii. It helps to get familiar with and use the creative ideas from great minds outside of science through biography, literature and history which serve as window into life.
- iii. Mastering the humanities provide tools such as tool of communication for scientific knowledge and techniques learnt in college.

- iv. It strengthens ability to communicate and work with others.
- v. You will gain knowledge of foreign languages and cultures.
- vi. The walls that exist among disciplines have been lowered and students can move across disciplines more freely.
- vii. Students can benefit from advice on which courses to take.
- viii. It helps to understand the impact that science, technology and medicine have had on society and understand the future scientific needs of society.
- ix. Interdisciplinary learning adds value to one's degree.
- x. It teaches that the supposedly sharp dichotomies that separate science from humanities do not exist. Scientists believe they deal with fact while humanities deal with values.

In order to add to these points of his are the implant of humanities identified within other field of study as listed below;

- Science traces **history** of a disease/ailment in order to get a way out i.e. the cure/solution.
- Engineering must study, **understand and do a critical reasoning** of a system/machine before carrying out a design and implementation on it.
- Social Sciences such as Economics must use **Language** for their analyses and derivations.

The rhetorical question now is which domain can succeed without the input of the humanities?

Humanities necessity and desirability in other fields are evident in our colleges and tertiary institutions where general courses in the humanities especially English Language is compulsory for all students to offer and a must pass at both secondary and tertiary levels. Failure to be effective and efficient in this language is detrimental to the progress of the individual and the society at large. No wonder it was stated by Nicholas Kristof that "... the humanities should be part of our repertory. They may not enrich our wallets, but they do enrich our lives. They civilize us. They provide context."

Relationship of Humanities with Other Knowledge Domains

Humanities Scientific Committee Opinion Paper (2015: 9-10) describes that the interdisciplinary collaborations of humanities with the field of sciences give birth to courses such as Archaeology (i.e. History plus the use of natural resources), Botany, Geology, Agronomy, Hydrology, Ethnology, Medicine etc. The cordial relationship which exists between medicine and literature is evident in the birth of department in the literature which is referred to as medicine literature where we have the infusion of both medicine and literature as a therapy to medical situations such as depression.

Humanities together with the social sciences produce Geography, Urban Studies, Psychiatry, Sociology, Political Sciences etc.

The importance of humanities was reinforced by Humanities Scientific Committee Opinion Paper (2015: 15) where it was posited that:

Europe is now being overtaken by other nations who seek to transform their cultures of reproduction through innovation-driven progress. They are doing this by bringing the humanities to the centre of technological and scientific developments.

This is an astute move and decision by these other nations because nothing and no country moves or works without humanities in place as emphasised by Lyndon B. Johnson that 'Art is a nation's most precious heritage. For it is in our works of art that we reveal to ourselves and to others the inner vision which guides us as a nation. And where there is no vision, the people perish.'

Have you ever wondered how some protocols were being broken for your sake? – I will simply say the answer is in the humanities. How?- What I know is that those with the knowledge of the humanities and who can as well apply it into their way of life are being helped by the field of humanities because it opens door of opportunities before your field does as buttresses by Ellen Ullman, "Humanities break into the closed society where code gets written: invade it." Why and how you may ask? The answer cannot be far-fetched, let us consider this simple analogy, where protocols can be exempted and you simply hear responses such as 'I cannot really explain why, but I just naturally like you that was why you were being hired (I have heard this a couple of times).' I can boldly say it is the power of humanities at work due to **virtues, good command of language usage and confidence** as a result of the outward implementation of critical reasoning all which are credited to the field of humanities.

In sum, good exploration of humanities can single one for favour and success and its negligence can lead to failure and rejection because the calling of the humanities is to makes us truly human in the best sense of the word (Irwin Miller) and as we cannot do anything correctly without wisdom that is why Jean Bodin connection of wisdom, learning and history has been encompassed into this simple statement, 'The study of history is the beginning of wisdom'.

Findings and Result

In regards to Holm *et al* (2015:12-13), the impacts of humanities have been summarized into six;

1. Communication/ Literary Skill – Languages
2. Critical thinking/ innovation – Philosophy
3. Personal and Spiritual Development – Religious Studies
4. Cultural Heritage - History
5. Social Values and Virtues (Ethics, civic duties, social cohesion, morals) – Religious Studies, Civic Education etc
6. Aesthetic Appreciation – Music, Theatre Arts, History, Arts etc

60 respondents, which include students and workers from other fields other than the humanities such as sciences (17), engineering (14), social sciences (25), and technology

(4) were interviewed on how effective they perceive humanities on the progress of their career. Their responses are being summarized below;

Summary of Result

SCIENCE :

	CS	CT	PSD	CH	SVV	AA		TOTAL
1 -	10	7	0	0	0	0	=	17
2 -	6	9	0	0	1	1	=	17
3 -	0	1	3	5	5	3	=	17
4 -	0	0	7	2	3	5	=	17
5 -	0	0	4	4	6	3	=	17
6 -	1	0	3	6	2	5	=	17

ENGINEERING:

	CS	CT	PSD	CH	SVV	AA		TOTAL
1 -	3	4	2	5	0	0	=	14
2 -	6	2	5	1	0	0	=	14
3 -	2	3	0	1	4	4	=	14
4 -	2	2	3	3	3	1	=	14
5 -	0	3	1	3	3	4	=	14
6 -	1	0	3	1	4	5	=	14

SOCIAL SCIENCE:

	CS	CT	PSD	CH	SVV	AA		TOTAL
1 -	14	6	2	1	0	2	=	25
2 -	8	4	9	1	2	1	=	25
3 -	0	6	8	6	4	1	=	25
4 -	2	2	4	5	9	3	=	25
5 -	1	5	1	6	6	6	=	25
6 -	0	2	1	6	4	12	=	25

TECHNOLOGY:

	CS	CT	PSD	CH	SVV	AA		TOTAL
1 -	4	0	0	0	0	0	=	04
2 -	0	1	1	1	1	0	=	04
3 -	0	0	1	1	1	1	=	04
4 -	0	3	0	0	1	0	=	04
5 -	0	1	0	1	1	1	=	04
6 -	0	0	0	2	0	2	=	04

CS - Communication Skill

CT - Critical Thinking

PSD - Personal and Spiritual Development

CH - Cultural Heritage
 SVV - Social Value and Virtues
 AA - Aesthetic Appreciation

Representation of Results on Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 23
Table 2 **Statistics for Sciences**

Values	No	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cultural Heritage	17	1.00	4.00	2.3529	1.27187
Aesthetic Appreciation	17	1.00	5.00	2.5294	1.28051
Personal and Spiritual Development	17	1.00	4.00	2.5882	1.00367
Social Values and Virtues	17	1.00	5.00	2.8235	1.18508
Critical Thinking	17	4.00	6.00	5.3529	.60634
Communication Skills	17	1.00	6.00	5.3529	1.22174

Table 3 **Statistics for Engineering**

	CSrev	CTrev	PSDrev	CHrev	SVVrev	AArev
N (Valid)	14	14	14	14	14	14
(Missing)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	4.5000	4.1429	3.6429	3.9286	2.5000	2.2857
Std. Error of Mean	.37431	.41744	.49843	.49685	.32733	.33853
Std. Deviation	1.40055	1.56191	1.86495	1.85904	1.22474	1.26665
Minimum	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	4.00	4.00

Table 4: Statistics for Social Sciences

		Communication Skills	Critical Thinking	Personal and Spiritual Development	Cultural Heritage	Social Values and Virtues	Aesthetic Appreciation
N	(Valid)	25	25	25	25	25	25
	(Missing)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		5.2800	3.9200	4.1600	2.7200	2.7600	2.1600
Std. Error of Mean		.22000	.33625	.23580	.28000	.23295	.31454
Std. Deviation		1.10000	1.68127	1.17898	1.40000	1.16476	1.57268
Minimum		2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum		6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	5.00	6.00

Table 5 Statistics for Technology

		Communication Skills	Critical Thinking	Personal and Spiritual Development	Cultural Heritage	Social Values and Virtues	Aesthetic Appreciation
N	(Valid)	4	4	4	4	4	4
	(Missing)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		6.0000	3.2500	3.5000	2.7500	3.5000	2.0000
Std. Error of Mean		.00000	.62915	.64550	1.03078	.64550	.70711
Std. Deviation		.00000	1.25831	1.29099	2.06155	1.29099	1.41421
Minimum		6.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	1.00
Maximum		6.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00

Discussion

In order to get the average point for these values, the Likert Scale which is based on degree and variation has been considered as follows; Number of values + 1= 7 (i.e. 7-6=1 and 7-1=6).

$$\frac{6+1(7)}{2} = 3.5$$

This implies that any value greater than 3.5 will be seen to be relevant and crucial, while any value lesser than the average grade is not important to the field of study under consideration.

Sciences - It has been concluded from this result that CT and CS were perceived to be the most important values for this field, with the mean result of 5.3529 for each value.

Engineering - CS, CT, PSD and CH were chosen to be useful in this field with the mean of 4.5000, 4.1429, 3.6429 and 3.9286 respectively. With CS being the most useful, followed by CT, CH and PSD.

Social Science - In this field, CS (5.2800), CT (3.9200) and PSD (4.1600) were concluded to be valuable to them. Whereby, CS has the highest value, then PSD and CT.

Technology - The technologists on their part believed that CS, PSD and SVV are considered in their field. Such that the most relevant is CS with 6.0000 and then PSD and SVV with 3.5000 each.

The SPSS shows that CS is perceived to be the most preferred to CT, before CH, PSD and SVV and this also buttresses one of my tutors point as he once asked his students this question, 'In which language do we think?' That means a language must be in place before engaging in our thoughts. Therefore, CS has been assigned the work of "a vehicle transporting a passenger to its destination". That is, a means of information delivery and attainment of goal and the end result of any field of study, as well as a device or tool for thought.

Generally, humanities add value to other career and all facets of life as evident from the observation about people's way of life and the interview that was conducted. It was deduced from the conducted interview where the respondents approved that communication skill is the most important in this scale of preference, followed by critical thinking. No wonder most curriculum vitae do start with humanities qualities an applicant possesses, as an appraisal and introduction, which is why most do carry description such as; "I have excellent communication skills, good interpersonal relation and a good team player". All these are attributed to humanities and mostly being used by all applicants no matter their field of study, because they know the effect these aforementioned features can produce on an employer of labour. This shows that humanities is fundamental to all forms of education.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The importance of humanities to other field can be alluded to the biblical verse of John 15:4-5 where it was stated that '.... As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; ...without me ye can do nothing.' These verses capture the essence of this paper as humanities is the conveyor to other disciplines' destination.

Therefore, other fields of study are encouraged to take any of the humanities courses being offered seriously as these courses are not solely for the humanities but for the usefulness of an individual and the general public.

More so, every school and institution are to reinforce the importance of offering these general courses especially those pertaining to the humanities to their students, in order to disregard any negative feelings and nonchalant attitude expressed by students of other fields of study.

Conclusively, all the aforementioned values of the humanities were said to be important to other fields of study as evident from the respondents. Although, with different degrees and views, thereby showing the essential features of the humanities as not only noble but useful in all facets of life.

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