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**Human and
Social
Sciences
(SHS)**

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General introduction to the subject (SHS, HUMSS)

The field of social and human sciences is so wide that it covers many topics of interest like: philosophy, psychology, sociology, educational sciences, economics, history, geography, information-communication, urban planning, anthropology and other topics associated with either social or human sciences. Actually, the boundaries between the two areas are not clear enough to sort out two distinct categories, for both revolve around a common interest which is a better understanding of mankind as both a social and psychological species. This duality makes of social and human sciences an as complex as fascinating field of investigation likely to increase our knowledge of human nature comportment. Undoubtedly, newcomers into the field of humanities and social sciences will encounter some difficulties in constructing a well-grounded body of knowledge because of the diversity and the variety of all the topics related to this field. Some of these obstacles will certainly be faced in the specific terminology in use. This is the reason why we suggest that, in an introductory chapter, students first become sufficiently acquainted with the main concepts of SHS (HUMSS) before studying its different features.

UNIT 1**Generalities on Science****Science**

Science concerns the systematic knowledge of the physical or material world gained through observation and experimentation. Also, science is a branch of knowledge or study dealing with a body of facts or truths systematically arranged and showing the operation of general laws.

Modern science was born in the 17th century, it is based on facts which can be the object of findings. In other words, using methods and techniques, science seeks to explain reality as it is presented, by applying what is called methodical experimentation. In addition, science tries to identify general laws, and tries to prove that a particular event necessarily produces certain effects (Thomas, 1970).

Example: in the weather forecast, by analyzing certain number of atmospheric elements we can predict the weather for days to come.

Scientific knowledge

Knowledge is a natural activity unique to human beings. The scientific knowledge consists of collecting as much information and intelligence as possible to attempt to distinguish the elements closest to reality based on evidence and facts (Rutherford and Ahlgren, 1991).

Example: Poverty, for some, is believed to be linked to destiny, but for economists is an index of the effectiveness of actions taken by political power of a given country.

Epilepsy is seen as the infiltration of evil spirits into the human body for some, but for a neurologist, it is a disease due to a dysfunction in the brain.

The objective of scientific knowledge is the understanding of nature and the universe from known, concrete and objective elements. In order to achieve this, the scientist must submit to very rigid rules, for scientific knowledge does not accept tastes, opinions and imagination.

Scientific method

The scientific method is a process for experimentation that is used to explore observations and answer questions about phenomena and problems. It involves developing and testing theories about the world based on empirical evidence under a series of prescribed steps (Gimbel, 2011).

Main steps of the scientific method

1. Ask a Question
2. Do Background Research
3. Construct a Hypothesis
4. Test Your Hypothesis by Doing an Experiment
5. Analyze Your Data and Draw a Conclusion
6. Communicate Your Results

Natural sciences

The natural sciences are the sciences that seek to clarify the standards that oversee the natural world through scientific methods and logical techniques, the foundation of which is measured by quantitative data. Similarly, natural science can be divided into three main branches that focus on the study of the universe and the rules of nature (Ledoux, 2002).

Life sciences such as biology, ecology, and zoology.

Formal sciences, such as mathematics, machine sciences and logic.

Physical science such as physics, chemistry, astronomy and Earth science.

Social sciences

In its broad sense, social Sciences are those disciplines that study institutions and functioning of human society and the interpersonal relationships of individuals as members of society. Most particularly, social sciences deal with human behavior in its social and cultural aspects, and context.

Social sciences encompass areas such as sociology, economics, law, education, political science, anthropology, geography, business, administration, library science, culture studies, information science, etc.

(European Science Foundation)

Human sciences (humanities)

The humanities are the learning of human activities and relations in cultural, social, environmental, political and economic circumstances. It includes a wide range of disciplines like philosophy, psychology, archeology, history, ancient and modern languages, linguistics, etc.

Origin and emergence of human and social sciences

Social sciences developed from experimental and applied sciences, its historical backdrop starts in the age of Enlightenment toward the end of the seventeenth century, which saw a transformation within natural philosophy. Social sciences approached from the moral philosophy of the time and was impacted by the age of revolutions, such as the industrial revolution.

The social and human sciences appeared in the 19th century, the emergence of these sciences are linked, primarily, to the emergence of society and the industrial revolution. The social sciences are defined as the set of sciences which deal with human beings in society, they came into after the emergence of the natural sciences. All branches and fields of human and social sciences were formed between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 20th century.

Within this regard, the first discipline is political economy which finds its origin in the classical school represented by Adam Smith who is known as “the father of economics or capitalism” and considered the pioneer of “political economy”, followed by sociology with the great theoretical constructions of Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer and Karl Marx. Then, Anthropology with Lewis Henry Morgan and his book “Ancient Society”. Afterwards, Psychology, is built around the Behaviorist and reflexology school, as well as the work undertaken by the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud.