20 Years Building a Brighter Future

SUMMER 2024

CONNECTIONS

A PERIODICAL MAGAZINE AT THE BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN DUBAI CONNECTING MINDS

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FOREWORD

Professor Abdullah Alshamsi,
Vice-Chancellor at the British University in Dubai

Welcome to the Summer 2024 issue of Connections magazine, BUiD's student centric magazine highlighting the work and achievements of our university community. As another academic year draws to a close, we are delighted to again take you on a journey through the thoughts, words, images, and ideas conveyed by our student and staff community in the past year. We celebrate and acknowledge the diversity of thought, the richness of student experiences and the boundless potential that lies within BUiD.

In an era defined by technological advancement, most notably as we tackle issues of authenticity and integrity in an AI environment as an academic institution, we grapple with finding new and innovative ways to challenge and engage students to write, be creative and approach learning purposefully. This is by no means only us but a global issue in higher education. Despite these arising challenges, it gives me great satisfaction that as a university we are still capable and most certainly proud of our ability to consistently produce a compilation of original articles that reflects the quirks and unique characteristics of our community.

As we move into BUiD's vision to 2030 we reflect on our four strategic themes: Enriched Student Experience, Excellence-driven Research and Innovation, Expansive University Environment and Dynamic Academic and Societal Engagement. These clear strategic themes and the avenues through which we express them, like this magazine, align with what we said we will do and our ability to remain mission focused on all our endeavours. As a university we have seen the achievement of our goals, whilst also acknowledging there is still work to be done, but we are on a clear, coherent path toward future growth and success.

I hope you enjoy reading Connections as much as I have and sharing it with your friends and family. We at The British University in Dubai hope you have an enjoyable summer vacation, and we look forward to seeing you in academic year 2024/2025.

EDITOR IN CHIEF
REMARKS

Professor Khalid Almarri
Dean of Research and Editor-in-Chief the British University in Dubai

We are again placed in a fortunate position to be able to showcase the work of our BUiD community through the publication of Connections magazine. Connections magazine has become a yearly fixture in the literary output of both our student and academic community. This is our fourth year of doing this and by no means are we experts, but we relish the expertise we have gained as a publication team and the enthusiasm and excitement it draws from our university community. Every issue we see new faces and different dimensions of our community, this year we are excited to include the work of some of our postgraduate students from the Faculty of Business and Law and the Faculty of Education.

We also see the return of the work of our undergraduate students in the spheres of diversity and multiculturism and philosophy. As I say every year the latter reflects our roots and the initial intention of this publication.

Also included in this issue is the work of our academic community, more specifically, that of Professor Christopher Hill, Dr Nahia Mourad and Dr Rekha Pillai. Professor Hill highlights the contribution that podcasting has made to his research, and he has graciously included a couple of these podcasts for your enjoyment. Dr Pillai showcases the work she has done over the past year in our undergraduate business programme as she seeks to provide students with the much-needed exposure to not only academic environments but also the linkage between the academy and industry and Dr Mourad takes us through the ups and downs of doing things for the first time.

Congratulations to the students whose work was selected; they can be justifiably proud of having their work chosen for publication, and we are happy to acknowledge their achievement.

Now, we invite you to read their writing in Connections, and we very much hope you enjoy this issue.

CONNECTIONS

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THE INNATENESS THEORY NATURE VS NURTURE?

by ***Abdulsalam Alturk***

Greek philosopher Plato, who is considered one of the founders of philosophical thought, hypothesized that humans are born with the concept of innateness or ideas rather than being born with a 'blank state'. This is contrary to empiricism which states that knowledge is only obtained through experience and observations.

Epistemology, also known as knowledge, comes from the Greek terms "episteme" and "logos" where episteme means knowledge or understanding, and logos means reason or argument. Knowledge can be defined as awareness of facts or as practical skills and may also refer to familiarity with objects or situations.

Knowledge can be obtained through numerous sources such as introspection (the study of conscious thoughts and feelings), the five senses, memory (the faculty where information is stored), rational intuition (the ability to solve mathematical problems swiftly), inference, testimony and finally innateness.

In philosophy, innateness is considered to be knowledge or conviction that is known universally to the entirety of mankind, basically something that people are born with rather than learned through experience and observation. Experiences may trigger a process through which this knowledge is brought to consciousness, but these experiences do not provide us with knowledge itself; it has in some way, been with us all along.

While being an extremely controversial doctrine and is thought to be an aspect of the "nature vs nurture" debate, many people nowadays do tend to believe it mostly due to religious as opposed to scientific reasons.

The concept and ideology of innatism (or innateness) was first coined in the period 1375 to 1425 by famous philosophers such as Plato, Descartes, John Locke, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. The history of philosophy includes the innatism debate sparked from our daily lives: does our inherent character include any principles, convictions, concepts, or knowledge? Or do we start with tabula rasa (blank slates) and perceive all our knowledge through worldly means like perception and observation? Nativists (people who believe in innatism) believe in the former while empiricists lean towards the latter. Innateness has been in the spotlight for two periods – each time rising, and then falling. In ancient times, it played a vital role in Plato's philosophy but was not included in the Aristotelian system that took over the philosophical way of thinking.

During an uprising in the 17th and 18th century it played a key role in Descartes's theory of knowledge, Locke made a refuting argument at the beginning of his essay however, Leibniz constructed a written rebuttal against Locke that changed his view.

THE INNATENESS THEORY – NATURE VS NURTURE?

by ***Abdulsalam Alturk***

There are many arguments that support the existence of innatism. Some of these both religious and scientific are explored below:

FITRA (IN ARABIC: فطرة) IS THE ORIGINAL DISPOSITION IN HUMAN NATURE TO BELIEVE IN ONE GOD OR CREATOR.

In Islam, this is one of the core fundamentals of its values and is present in everybody, as well as in the prophetic traditions (known as hadith or hadeeth), which is a collection of traditions containing major sources of guidance for Muslims other than the Qur'an (the Islamic text). In its text it mentions "No one is born except according to intrinsic nature, but their parents make them Jews, or Christians, or Magians, just as a cow gives birth to a calf that is whole do you find it mutilated?"

A three-year study done by Oxford researcher Justin Barret shows that children below the age of five find it easier to believe in superhuman properties to understand similar human limitations. Dr Justin Barret, claims that young people have a predisposition to believe in a supreme being because they assume that everything in the world was created with a purpose and said, "If we threw a handful on an island and they raised themselves, I think they would believe in god". Barret also said that children are more likely to accept creationism (the inclination that the universe and all living organisms originate from a divine creation) rather than evolution.

Right from the beginning, babies have some extent of knowledge about the world around them when they are born as well as the laws of physics. But how exactly is that true when babies as young as five months old can barely speak? Babies can conclude that two objects cannot be in two distinct locations at the same time, objects can take space, and the motion of objects in space and time.

Photo by Suzy Hazelwood

In a representative experiment, a baby was presented with an expected experiment (fit for their understanding) while their attention was being monitored on a screen. The babies then became very shocked when they saw something on the screen that they did not expect, for example, imagine if someone was holding a ball in their hands and then lets it go, the typical reaction would be the ball falling and hitting the ground then bouncing away. **Now imagine if the ball did not fall and kept levitating in the air, you would be very astonished and would not believe your eyes.** Babies that are five months old could not believe it either due to it being surreal or violating the natural laws of gravity. In another experiment, babies have also shown a level of understanding in mathematics and probabilities, the experiment began with showing the babies a box with four balls, four green and one red, the box was then closed off and a third party placed their hand inside the box and pulled out a red ball, what do you think happened?

THE INNATENESS THEORY – NATURE VS NURTURE?

by ***Abdulsalam Alturk***

Photo by Karolina Kaboompics

The babies scrutinised the ball longer than usual – a clear affirmation that they realised such an event was less likely to happen than pulling out a green ball. They also did the reverse, where the babies could infer the contents of the box only by seeing the balls getting drawn from it, here, a blindfolded third party came and started drawing out balls at random that most of them were red, the babies were then shocked to find out that the box contained a majority of green balls, presumably wondering how it was possible that red balls were being drawn the most when the box had a higher ratio of green balls than red.

While all the mentioned might not be absolute definitive proof that we are truly born with innate knowledge, it still begs the question of what is the source of some instinctive knowledge that we have like the three-dimensional world and how we know how to perceive it?

We can only keep guessing and running more studies and experiments, unfortunately though, this is a topic that sort of has its own wave in terms of popularity - where its interest rises suddenly and dies down equally as quickly.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

*by **Abeer Al Yammahi***

Photo by Quintin Gellar

In recent times, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has increasingly become integrated into the strategic planning of a business. CSR as defined by the Corporate Finance Institute are "strategies that companies put into action as part of corporate governance that are designed to ensure the company's operations are ethical and beneficial for society." As societal expectations evolve, businesses face increasing pressure to show their commitment to ethical practices and social responsibilities to their stakeholders. Business stakeholders can be categorised as primary stakeholders or secondary stakeholders, where primary stakeholders are described as having direct influence on the organisation's actions such as shareholders, customers, employees, and suppliers. Whereas the secondary stakeholders are those who indirectly influenced the business, such as government agencies, local communities, NGOs, media, and the public. Customers are considered as one of the key players that can affect business growth and success. Trustworthy and socially responsible businesses tend to have sustainable and loyal customer bases, and overall better investors and ties to the community. This article endeavours to share with you the inextricable link between stakeholder theory and customer loyalty as it directly relates to the influences of CSR, measuring its application and limitations in the current business environment.

Stakeholder theory states that: "organisations have a moral obligation to consider the interests of all stakeholders, including customers, employees, shareholders, suppliers, communities, and the environment"

From this perspective, customer loyalty can be viewed as interconnected with stakeholder theory in many ways. To begin with, customers are considered as one of the primary stakeholders of an organisation which has a direct influence on the business. I believe that embracing customer loyalty and satisfaction by addressing their needs leads the business towards success and growth. This can be interpreted as being an approach where the customer's voice matters and the business welcomes those needs, which will positively impact sustaining the business in today's market.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

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by ***Abeer Al Yammahi***

Photo by Jeffry Surianto: https://www.pexels.com

Furthermore, satisfying customers' needs can result in having long-term relationships rather than one-time experiences. A great example of this is the case of Emirates Airline. Nowadays, many people prefer travelling with Emirates Airline because of their exceptional reputation in the market even though there is fierce competition between airlines to attract potential customers. Customer satisfaction incorporates several dimensions as described in many academic studies, the most applicable being: **"reliability, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility, security and safety, and communications".** Based on their solid customer following, Emirates Airline is considered trustworthy, professional, innovative, and one of the leading global airline companies that possesses sustained customer loyalty not only presently but over its almost 40-year history. This example truly shows how Emirates is being consistent in focusing on the long-term relationship with its stakeholders.

Moreover, the theory emphasises creating shared value with all stakeholders by finding the point of intersection between the impact of inside-out activities and identifying the outside-in issues. Finding that common point and addressing the raised issues show the customers how valued they are among the stakeholders. Additionally, businesses should always be keen toward identifying the links where they can have a competitive advantage in the market. An example of creating shared value with customers is the case of Aramex.

Aramex is a logistics and transportation company based in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Aramex's innovative business model was made by integrating technologies in their operations in transportation and customers interaction with their services.

Through initiatives like big data analytics and smart apps, Aramex enhances customer experiences by providing efficient and innovative logistics solutions. This example shows how Aramex succeeded in having a competitive advantage in the Middle East.

In addition, the theory emphasises the ethical responsibilities of their actions towards their stakeholders, including customers. Dealing transparently and ethically by having fair pricing, labour rights and product quality and safety enhances the trust and loyalty of the customers. For instance, let us take the initiative done by Chipotle Mexican Grills - "Food with Integrity". This initiative illustrates how to satisfy customers' needs of requiring fresh and high-quality ingredients sourced food at a time when social and environmental awareness is increasing, Chipotle has built a loyal customer base that values authenticity and sustainability.

While Stakeholder theory provides clear direction on how businesses should address the interest of their stakeholders, it also has some drawbacks and limitations if implemented. As stated earlier, different stakeholders have different interests and those interests can be contradicting. Prioritising the right stakeholder might be challenging since it mainly depends on their power and influence when creating value, making this difficult for the business to determine which stakeholder to be prioritised.

CUSTOMER LOYALTY

IN THE CONTEXT OF GOVERNANCE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

by ***Abeer Al Yammahi***

Moreover, acknowledging the interest of one stakeholder over another can be challenging and might cause conflicts between different stakeholders. For example, raising the product prices or service fees will cause customer dissatisfaction while it will please the shareholders. Customers will always be keen on having low prices for the products or services received, however that increase will maximize the shareholders' profits.

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Lastly, I believe that theory implementation toward customers' needs require sufficient resources such as time and money. In today's market, smaller businesses might struggle to allocate sufficient resources due to having financial constraints enabling them to juggle the stakeholder interests compared to bigger businesses with more readily available resources. With that said, the lack of engagement could lead to customer dissatisfaction, mistrust, and a tense relationship between smaller businesses and their stakeholders. This could likely be why customers in the long run might prefer to engage with bigger businesses and neglect SME's which inadvertently affects businesses' success and growth.

In conclusion, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Stakeholder Theory play crucial roles in shaping the engagement between businesses and their stakeholders, particularly customers. By incorporating CSR principles and considering the interests of all stakeholders, businesses can foster trust, loyalty, and sustainable relationships with their customers. Examples such as Emirates Airline, Aramex, and Chipotle Mexican Grill illustrate how businesses can create shared value, enhance customer experiences, and build long-term loyalty through ethical and transparent practices. However, while stakeholder theory provides valuable guidance, it also leads to challenges such as conflicting interests. Moreover, resource constraints may affect smaller businesses from effectively implementing CSR initiatives and engaging with stakeholders, potentially affecting their competitiveness and growth. Therefore, it is essential for businesses to have a strategic perspective by addressing the customer's interest that leads to competitive advantage in today's market.

Unlocking student potential:
How the Harkness method transforms secondary education

by ***Amr Elshemy***

The Harkness method is making waves in secondary education, promising a shift from traditional teacher-led instruction to a more collaborative, **student-centered approach**. This teaching strategy, with its emphasis on open dialogue and student-led discussions, aims to enhance student engagement, interaction, and motivation. This article provides an overview of the research conducted in a Dubai secondary school, delves into the effectiveness of the Harkness method across different subjects and identifies key factors that facilitate a dynamic learning environment.

Originating from Phillips Exeter Academy in 1931, the Harkness method encourages students to sit in a circular arrangement and engage in discussions that are student-led but guided by an instructor. This setup fosters a democratic atmosphere where each student feels empowered to voice their opinions and listen to others. The essence of Harkness is active participation, critical thinking, and intrinsic motivation, making it a promising pedagogical tool for today's classrooms.

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The primary goal of my research was to evaluate the impact of the Harkness method on student engagement and interaction in a secondary education setting. Additionally, I sought to uncover the factors that contribute to a successful Harkness classroom. By observing Islamic Studies and Mathematics lessons, I aimed to understand how the Harkness method influences different subjects and to what extent it boosts student motivation.

Understanding these dynamics is crucial. Student engagement and motivation are fundamental to the learning process. When students are actively involved, they are more likely to retain information and develop critical thinking skills. The Harkness method, with its focus on student ownership of learning, has the potential to transform educational experiences.

This study utilised a mix method approach, observing two lessons—one in Islamic Studies and another in Mathematics. Each session lasted 50 minutes and involved detailed observations and data collection using the Equity app. This tool allowed me to objectively record instances of student engagement and interaction, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights.

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The key finding once the classes were completed were not only interesting by corroborated my initial thoughts. I have presented these below with my insights:

Processes of Learning

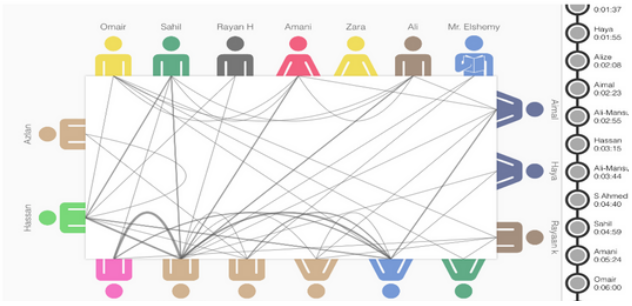
Islamic Studies: In this subject, the Harkness method was particularly effective. Students were deeply engaged, actively sharing their perspectives and critically analyzing texts. The circular table arrangement promoted inclusive discussions, with students using their pre-reading and prior knowledge to contribute meaningfully. The absence of electronic devices maintained focus, and the use of a mapping application during discussions enhanced personalized feedback.

Mathematics: Surprisingly, the Harkness method also showed promise in Mathematics. Here, the emphasis was on solving pre-assigned problems and discussing various approaches to these problems in pairs. This not only fostered a deep understanding of mathematical concepts but also promoted critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The feedback loop, involving peer and teacher feedback, was crucial in refining students' understanding.

Factors Facilitating an Interactive Learning Environment

Several factors were identified as critical to the success of the Harkness method:

- **Class Size:** Smaller class sizes allowed for more personalized interactions and meaningful discussions.
- **Teacher Training:** Effective teacher training was essential in facilitating discussions and creating an engaging learning environment.
- **Pre-Lesson Preparation:** Students' preparation before the lesson played a significant role in the effectiveness of the discussions.



A map noting the interaction pattern and participant responses' duration.

Subject-Specific Insights

The effectiveness of the Harkness method varies across subjects. It excels in disciplines that involve discussion and interpretation, such as Islamic Studies. In Mathematics, the method requires adaptation, focusing more on problem-solving and peer feedback. These findings suggest that while the Harkness method is versatile, its implementation needs to be tailored to the specific requirements of each subject.

Implications for Teaching Practice

Teachers should consider the subject-specific nature of the Harkness strategy when implementing it in their classrooms. Training tailored to the subject area is crucial. Additionally, using tracking tools like the Equity app can help monitor student engagement and provide personalized feedback.

For educators hesitant to relinquish control, combining the Harkness method with a flipped classroom approach could be beneficial. Recording lectures and making them available online allows students to review material at their own pace, complementing the in-class discussions and ensuring a solid foundation of knowledge.

Unlocking student potential:
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1. **Receive Subject-Specific Training:** Teachers need training tailored to their subject to effectively implement the Harkness method.
2. **Adapt the Strategy to Fit the Subject:** Consider the nature of the subject and make necessary adjustments, especially for subjects requiring individual problem-solving.
3. **Utilize Tracking Tools:** Monitoring engagement and providing personalized feedback can enhance the learning experience.

Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of the Harkness method and its impact across various subject areas. By continuing to investigate and refine this approach, educators can unlock the full potential of their students, fostering a more engaging and dynamic learning environment.

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN BUSINESS PROFITABILITY AND CSR STRATEGY

by ***Dalia Barrani***

In today's corporate landscape, the conversation around corporate social responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a charitable enterprise to a strategic imperative for businesses. This reflective piece critically examines the relationship between business profitability and CSR from a holistic perspective. I seek to provide an understanding of how CSR initiatives can impact financial performance while navigating the complexities of stakeholder expectations and competitive dynamics as well as the perception that employees have towards the company's CSR strategy and how that will affect the profitability of the business. Understanding the interplay between social responsibility and financial outcomes is crucial for businesses seeking to align their strategic objectives with societal expectations and long-term sustainability goals.

Key theoretical frameworks underpinning the relationship between CSR and business profitability include stakeholder theory, agency theory, and shared value creation. A critical aspect to consider is the measurement and evaluation of CSR outcomes. While financial metrics such as return on investment (ROI) and profit margins provide tangible indicators of business performance, capturing the intangible benefits of CSR, such as brand reputation, employee morale, and stakeholder trust, poses methodological challenges. Traditional accounting frameworks often fail to account for the long-term value creation potential of CSR initiatives, leading to a narrow focus on short-term financial gains at the expense of broader societal impacts.

Furthermore, the mechanisms through which CSR affects financial performance are multifaceted and contingent upon firms' strategic intent, stakeholder engagement strategies, and competitive positioning. CSR initiatives that enhance brand reputation, mitigate operational risks, and foster innovation can contribute to long-term competitive advantage and financial resilience. However, the short-term costs associated with CSR implementation and the potential trade-offs between social and financial objectives pose challenges for businesses seeking to balance profit motives with social responsibilities. Therefore, the antagonistic relationship between CSR and corporate financial performance has been extensively and yet inconclusively debated in the sustainability literature. As such this article critically analysis the theoretical perspectives to see if they support this debate of CSR improving business performance or not.

Stakeholder theory suggests that businesses should consider the interests of all stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, and the environment, to achieve sustainable value creation. Moreover, the inclusivity and effectiveness of stakeholder engagement processes can vary significantly across industries and organizations. Despite the best intentions, businesses may encounter difficulties in engaging diverse stakeholders with competing interests and power dynamics effectively. This can result in engagement efforts that fail to genuinely incorporate stakeholder input into decision-making processes, undermining the credibility and impact of environmental initiatives.

As I reflect on that, while proactive engagement with stakeholders can foster trust and legitimacy, reactive responses to external pressures, such as consumer boycotts or regulatory mandates, may result in compliance-driven CSR initiatives that lack genuine commitment to social and environmental objectives. In my opinion, it is critical for the CSR Strategy to consider the interests of their key stakeholders during the stakeholder mapping and planning process.

An example of a well-known CSR initiative that tried to address stakeholder needs but did not consider the conflicting interests which directly affected profitability is the Nike sweatshop controversy in the 1990s.

During this time, Nike faced significant public scrutiny and criticism for its labor practices in overseas factories, particularly in countries like Indonesia, where workers, including many children, were subjected to poor working conditions, low wages, and long hours. Activists and media outlets exposed these practices, leading to widespread public outrage and calls for Nike to improve its CSR efforts. Nike responded by implementing various CSR initiatives aimed at improving labour conditions in its supply chain, including monitoring and auditing factories, increasing wages, and implementing codes of conduct. However, these efforts came at a cost to the company's profitability. Nike faced increased expenses related to monitoring and improving labour conditions, as well as potential losses from boycotts and negative publicity. Additionally, the company's sales and stock prices were initially impacted as consumers became more aware of the sweatshop controversy and shifted their purchasing behaviour away from Nike products.

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While Nike's CSR initiatives eventually helped improve its reputation and regained consumer trust, the initial financial costs and negative impact on profitability demonstrate the direct relationship between stakeholder conflicting interest's efforts and how that affects business performance.

A key takeaway from this is that they tried to reduce costs and please their investors by lowering wages, they upset the community stakeholder and the media which resulted in the boycott, directly reducing the profitability of the business.

This is a solid example of how conflicting interests of stakeholders such as customers, media, and community bring different responses to the organization's implemented CSR impacting performance.

Agency theory emphasizes the alignment of incentives between principals (shareholders) and agents (management) to mitigate conflicts of interest and maximize firm value. It focuses on the relationship between a company's management (agents) and its shareholders (principals). This theory suggests that managers may pursue CSR initiatives not solely out of humanity or ethical considerations but rather to mitigate agency conflicts and align their interests with those of shareholders. By engaging in CSR initiatives, managers can potentially reduce agency costs by signaling their commitment to stakeholders, including customers, employees, and the community. Such initiatives may enhance the company's reputation, improve employee morale and productivity, foster customer loyalty, and mitigate regulatory risks. However, critics argue that managers might exploit CSR as a tool to serve their own interests, such as enhancing personal reputation or easing activist shareholders, without necessarily benefiting the firm or its stakeholders in the long run. Additionally, there may be tensions between short-term financial goals and long-term CSR objectives. Based on the above it can be said that agency CSR theory provides insights into the complex motivations behind CSR initiatives within corporations, highlighting the interplay between managerial discretion, shareholder interests, and corporate behavior.

Shared value creation entails leveraging CSR initiatives to generate economic value while addressing societal needs, thereby creating mutual benefits for businesses and society. However, navigating this interconnection is burdened with challenges.

One prominent obstacle is the perception of CSR as a cost center rather than an investment in long-term sustainability. Moreover, the absence of clear metrics for evaluating the financial impact of CSR initiatives poses a significant challenge for businesses seeking to justify their investments in social responsibility. Furthermore, conflicting stakeholder interests and divergent regulatory landscapes add layers of complexity to the integration of CSR into business strategies.

An example of shared value creation is IKEA, which is committed to sustainability across its operations, from product design to supply chain management. By investing in renewable energy, resource efficiency, and circular economy initiatives, IKEA has reduced costs, minimized waste, and enhanced its brand image as a responsible corporate citizen. Furthermore, IKEA's emphasis on affordability and sustainability has resonated with consumers, driving sales and profitability.

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN BUSINESS PROFITABILITY AND CSR STRATEGY

by ***Dalia Barrani***

PHOTO BY ANN H


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PHOTO BY MARKUS WINKLER

While CSR initiatives are generally aimed at fostering positive outcomes for both the company and society, there are circumstances where they may inadvertently demotivate employees. If employees perceive that their contributions to CSR initiatives are not recognized or rewarded appropriately, they may feel undervalued and demotivated. Also, if CSR initiatives are perceived as mere marketing tactics or attempts to improve the company's public image without genuine commitment to social or environmental responsibility, employees may feel cynical and demotivated. In this case it would be perceived as hypocrisy or greenwashing. Therefore, CSR initiatives have the potential to demotivate employees if they are perceived as lacking impact, conflicting with employee priorities, failing to recognize or reward contributions, characterized by ineffective communication, or perceived as hypocritical or insincere.

In conclusion, the link between business profitability and CSR strategies is complex and dynamic. While challenges such as cost constraints, measurement issues, and stakeholder conflicts persist, businesses have much to gain from integrating CSR into their core strategies. By critically examining theoretical frameworks, empirical evidence, and real-world examples, businesses can navigate the details of CSR strategy implementation to achieve sustainable value creation and stakeholder satisfaction and a positive societal impact in turn bringing more profit to the business through a successful CSR strategy.

While some examples demonstrated how CSR initiatives can benefit the business profitability, when integrated strategically into business operations through enhancing brand reputation, attracting customers and talent, reducing costs, and driving innovation, there were other examples where they lead to decreased profitability; therefore, its crucial to test the CSR strategy from different viewpoints before implementation. This underscores the importance of carefully balancing CSR commitments with business objectives and stakeholder interests to ensure sustainable value creation for all stakeholders.

CHARACTERS AS MIRRORS: REFLECTIONS OF REALITY THROUGH LITERATURE

by **Fakeha Ansari**

Self-reflection is not a task done subconsciously; certain events force you to face yourself. Step out of your skin and analyze yourself as if it were a third person standing before you. Going through every fine detail of action usually isn't a pleasant experience, and leads to wondering a lot of what ifs, “What if I had done this? “What if I had said that?”, “Maybe I shouldn't have brought it up at all?” Taking time for oneself is not the only way self-reflection is done. There are other ways most of us do, and that is through hobbies of self-expression.

Photo by cottonbro studio

Creative writing can be used as a mirror for self-reflection and expression. Characters that are formed through words, ones that settle in different dimensions, between pages and ink are mirrors. These mirrors do not produce reflections using light of what stands before them. Segments of the artist slip through the ink and form a silhouette of the world they are in. These beings are born from events and experiences around us.

This phenomenon does not only exist in literature but also all forms of art. Artists infuse their work with reflections of themselves, the world around them, and how it is perceived in their eyes. Creating pieces that resonate with their truths and introspections.

Charles Dickens, wrote **“Great Expectations”** in which he drew inspiration from his own life. He created a world hidden in words, built one sentence at a time, based on people who were active in his life. His character Pip is a reflection of himself, the orphan, despite having a different path in life than Dickens, who shares the same rags-to-riches story. Other characters like Miss Havisham, stand for the expectations set by society and personal heartbreak Dickens observed in the Victorian Era of England.

“Literature and writing are not only mirrors for the author alone. It creates a realm, one that exists simultaneously with the real world, expanding with every sentence laid into ink.”

The world built offers a unique lens through which our relationships and behaviours can be examined. The protagonist usually contains fragments of the author who created them. The characters surrounding them take life from fragments of the author's surroundings. Setting up scenarios with how these fictional beings communicate and interact leads to an exploration and deeper understanding of why people act the way they do, and how events play a hand in their actions and relationships.

CHARACTERS AS MIRRORS: REFLECTIONS OF REALITY THROUGH LITERATURE

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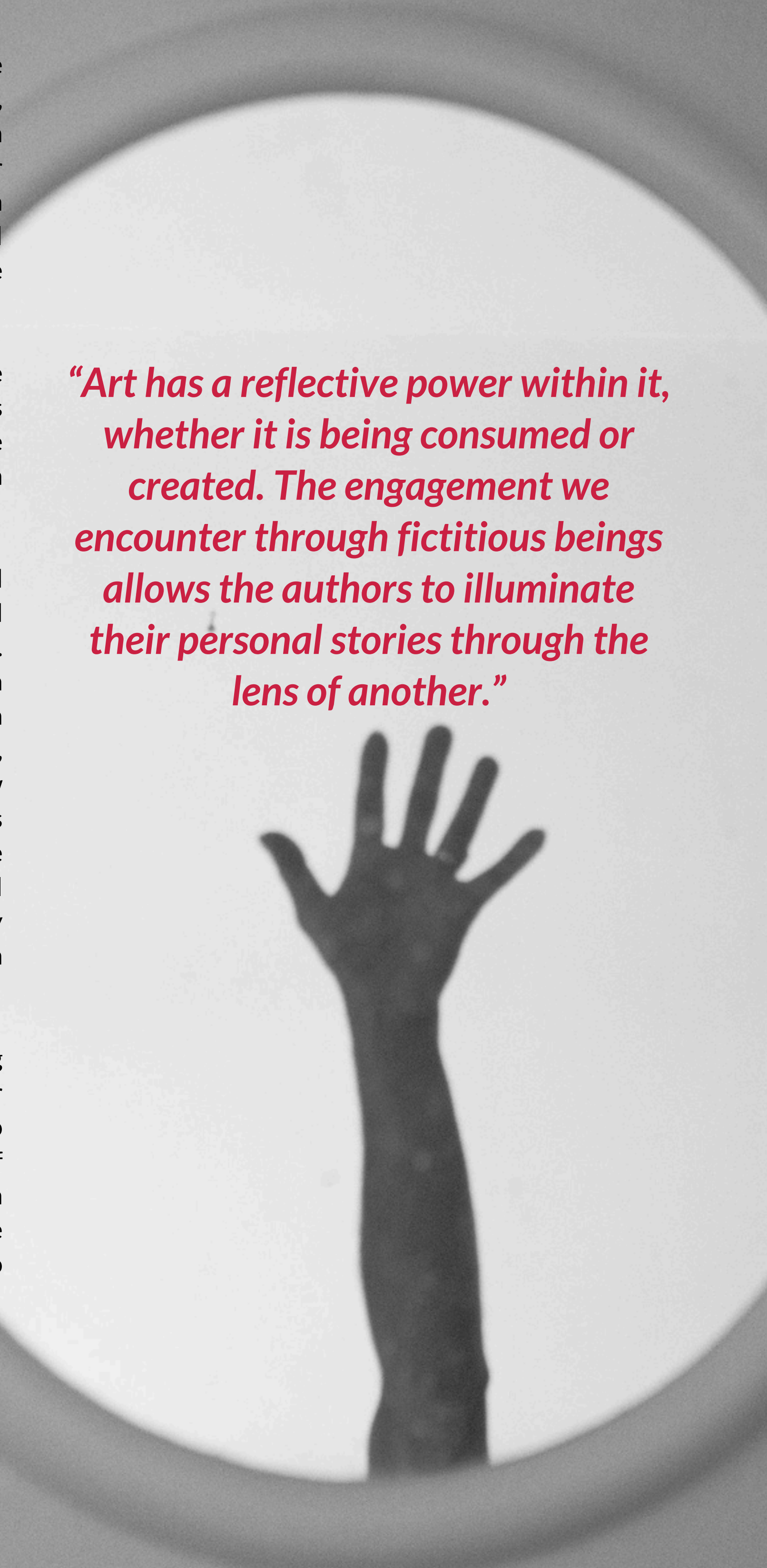
Due to this, readers far and wide feel immersed in the fictitious world. The characters feel as if they were real, the events that sadden the characters have an effect on the readers. Similarly, a joyous event fills the reader with a sense of happiness. The fictitious beings though created by words, and sculpted by the author, feel authentic and realistic because they are the representation of the person who created them.

Additionally, the pursuit to be constantly productive with the pervasive digital distractions can make hobbies seem like a luxury rather than a necessity. Yet, these are the very moments of solace in which we truly learn about ourselves,

The same is true for me. From early childhood, I had been an avid reader, but because of the priority I placed on academia, I left little time for myself to write. However,the gap between transitioning from a high school student to a university student combined with restrictions on going out due to the COVID pandemic, allowed me to explore writing creatively. I drew inspiration from people around me, the group of friends I created mirrored my own, and the family of the protagonist was based on my family. I published "All That's in Between" a fictional world, intertwined closely with reality, setting up a gateway of my journey through self-discovery for anyone who wants to explore it.

Art has a reflective power within it, whether it is being consumed or created. The engagement we encounter through fictitious beings allows the authors to illuminate their personal stories through the lens of another. This process not only takes us out of a digitalized fast-paced world to explore and appreciate the beauty of creativity but also embarks on a road to self-discovery and growth.

"Art has a reflective power within it, whether it is being consumed or created. The engagement we encounter through fictitious beings allows the authors to illuminate their personal stories through the lens of another."



FROM DIAPERS TO DISSERTATIONS: A MOM'S PHD JOURNEY

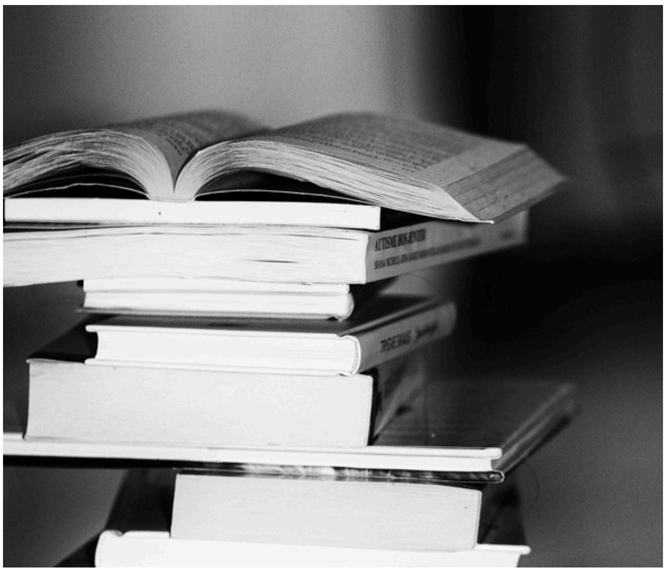
by **Farrah Zafar**

Embarking on a PhD journey is like signing up for a rollercoaster ride—full of ups, downs, twists, and turns. Being a mother of two and solely managing my home as a multitasker superwoman, I already had so much on my plate, but I decided to add a recipe for some serious chaos. I began my PhD journey amid the pandemic in 2020, and like many, my world turned upside down. Online classes became the norm, and with two kids hovering around, every session was an adventure. Picture this: I am deep in an online lecture on advanced research methods, and suddenly, a shriek pierces the air. My kids are in a battlefield—arguing over who gets the last cookie. Balancing a laptop, muting myself, and mediating a cookie fight became my new normal. Between handling assignments and stopping sibling fights, I often felt like a circus performer. One moment, I would answer the question related to teaching experience; the next, I would resolve a dispute over toy cars. The highlight? I was trying to write assignments with one child on my lap and the other insisting I help build a doll's house.

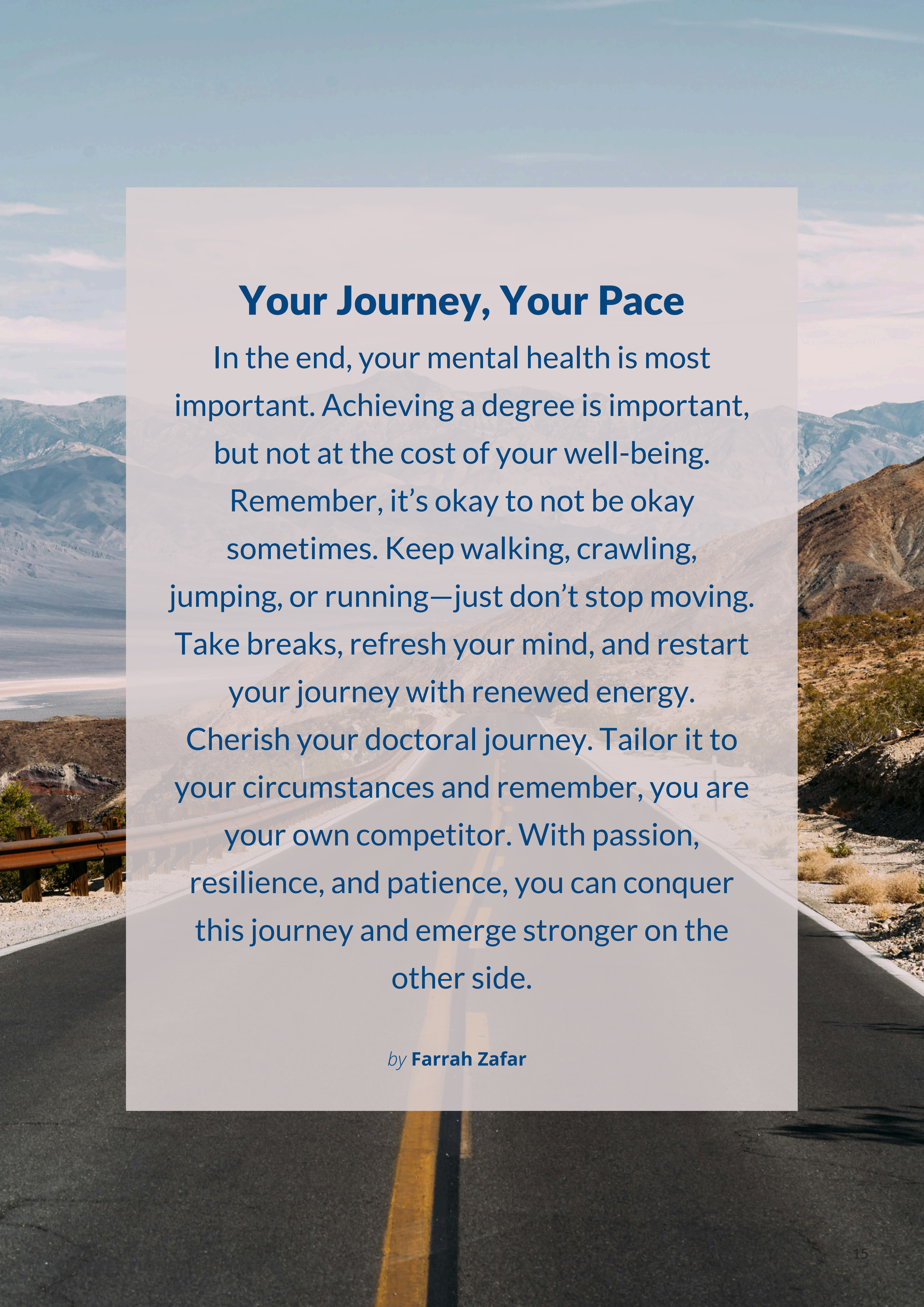
As if managing home and studies wasn't enough, the financial strain hit hard. Transitioning from one job to another during the pandemic was a nightmare. I had secured a new position, but before I could start, lockdown stopped everything. With fees to pay, I turned to freelance writing to keep going. Every article written late into the night felt like a tiny victory. Amidst all this, homeschooling became an added responsibility. Teaching basic math while drafting an assignment is no small feat. There were days when I questioned my decision to pursue a PhD at such a chaotic time. Managing the children's online classes, ensuring they stayed focused, and meeting my deadlines felt like a never-ending cycle. Throughout this rollercoaster, the consistent motivation from my PhD supervisor was a lifeline. His encouragement during tough times made a world of difference. For anyone considering a PhD, know this: it's a journey full of highs and lows. There will be days of pure joy and days where you question everything.

Tips for a Successful PhD Journey

1. **Embrace Resilience:** Your passion is your fuel. No matter where or how you fall, keep your spirits high. If you stumble, get back up. Your resilience is your superpower.
2. **Balance is Key:** Maintain a healthy balance between personal, professional, and academic life. Enjoy the little moments and cherish your journey, even if you reach the finish line a bit later than others. Your path is unique to you.
3. **Build a Support System:** Surround yourself with positive, motivated people who lift you up on tough days. It's okay to lean on others for support.
4. **Keep Moving Forward:** Your energy levels will vary, but keep progressing. Take breaks to rejuvenate. Rest is not a luxury; it's a necessity.
5. **Prioritize Mental Health:** Sleep well, exercise, spend time in nature, and connect with yourself. Keeping a journal can help you manage stress and understand your emotions.
6. **Celebrate Small Wins:** Every step forward is a victory. Embrace your weak days and recharge to come back stronger.



Farrah Zafar
With a Bachelor's degree in Journalism and Psychology, an MA in English, an M.Phil in English Literature, and TESOL certification, I am a well-rounded individual with a passion for language, education, and writing. I am pursuing a PhD in Education (concentration in TESOL) to further my knowledge and expertise in the field. I am the author of two literary pieces. You can visit my website to learn more about my writings: [www.farrahzafar.com]



Your Journey, Your Pace

In the end, your mental health is most important. Achieving a degree is important, but not at the cost of your well-being. Remember, it's okay to not be okay sometimes. Keep walking, crawling, jumping, or running—just don't stop moving. Take breaks, refresh your mind, and restart your journey with renewed energy. Cherish your doctoral journey. Tailor it to your circumstances and remember, you are your own competitor. With passion, resilience, and patience, you can conquer this journey and emerge stronger on the other side.

by **Farrah Zafar**

COLLECTIVISM VS INDIVIDUALISM

By **Noor Al Swailmeen**

One of the most well-known distinctions between the various types of cultures in the world is the distinction between individualism and collectivism. I hope to compare both ideologies to highlight their fundamental differences. In addition, their advantages and disadvantages will be examined to highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and to demonstrate that these ideologies do not always result in the desired outcome when choosing one over the other.

Philosophers have long debated whether the group or the individual should be considered more valuable and superior but have rarely reached a consensus. This unresolved debate is essential, because the way a society organises itself and, consequently, the quality of life for its citizens is significantly influenced by the dominant viewpoints on this topic. This article aims to, present the two ideologies and highlight the strengths and weaknesses of each theory. Furthermore, it will examine the differences between them, the advantages, disadvantages, their supporters and lastly, their thoughts and perspectives on them. This section of discussion will help demonstrate that these ideologies rarely result in the desired outcome, and it will show how individualism can lead to the disaster of the masses, whereas collectivism can lead to the disaster of the individual.

Collectivism is a political theory linked to communism. In a broader sense, it refers to the notion and belief that the welfare of the society as a whole should take precedence over an individual's welfare. This suggests that in collectivist cultures, each person's identity is heavily influenced by their relationships with others and their interconnectedness. It is argued that the submission to the "general will" of the community is the only way for an individual to discover his true identity and freedom. In addition, the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel, argued at the beginning of the 19th century, that the only way an individual can fully realise his true self and freedom was to submit unreservedly to the laws and institutions of the nation-state, which Hegel considered to be the pinnacle of social morality.

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"Collectivism is a political theory linked to communism."

In contrast to the belief of collectivism, the individualism theory believes that the welfare of the individual should come before the society and the state control. Meaning that the political and social philosophy of individualism places an emphasis on the moral worth of each individual, and on each person's rights and issues. Not only do individualistic cultures encourage individuality and independence, but also individuals from individualistic cultures may believe that their own goals and well-being are of a much greater value and importance. Although the idea of an individual may appear straightforward, there are numerous theoretical and practical approaches to understanding it. For instance, the cult of individual genius in Germany was fuelled, in part, by the concepts of individual uniqueness and self-realization, which later evolved into an organic theory of national community. This perspective holds that the state and society are distinct cultural wholes that are self-sufficient rather than artificial constructs erected on the basis of a social contract. However, individualism in England encompassed economic liberalism in its various forms, including laissez-faire and moderate state-interventionist approaches, as well as religious nonconformity.

COLLECTIVISM VS INDIVIDUALISM

***By* Noor Al Swailmeen**

Even though principles, practices, political theories, and cultural patterns are found in collectivism and individualism, both ideologies are the total opposite of each other. To demonstrate this, individualism focuses on each person's rights and concerns, whereas collectivism emphasizes the significance of the community. Individualistic cultures place a premium on individual identity and independence, whereas collectivist cultures place a premium on unity, selflessness, or altruism. Additionally, being loyal to the group and maintaining harmony are two of collectivism's fundamental principles. Uniqueness and autonomy, on the other hand, are characteristics of individualism. Moreover, because it advocates making sacrifices for the greater good, collectivism opposes individualism. Individualism, alternatively, denies that religion and tradition can determine an individual's limitations. It goes against collectivism's views, which place a high value on conventionality and interdependence.

The advantages of collectivism can be summed up in five main virtues, which are, stability, peace, help, efficiency, and encouraging selflessness. To elaborate further, the system is stable because of the strong bonds among its members, and when everyone is working together toward a common goal, there are fewer arguments in a collectivist setting, which fosters peace among its members. Also, collectivists are quick to reject anything that would compromise their shared goals, and because everyone else's problem is yours, it's easy to get help from the group. Moreover, if everyone puts their resources in the same place, the economy of the country is more productive as it is simpler to begin and finish projects and work. Lastly, collectivism encourages selflessness because, individuals who engage in collectivism are required to give up their individual desires. Meaning that they do it for the benefit of their country. In turn, it teaches people to be kind and compassionate toward others, which makes a collectivist society sustained by mutual trust and harmony.

"Individualistic cultures encourage people to express their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs because they want them to have a strong sense of self-worth and significance."

As for the individualism, individualistic communities are much more likely to be aware of and openly support diversity of thought, background, experience, appearance, and so on because individualistic culture is based on the idea that each person is unique. Furthermore, individualistic cultures encourage people to express their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs because they want them to have a strong sense of self-worth and significance. Last but not least, an individualistic culture believes that every person has the potential and obligation to grow and improve over the course of their lives. As a result, it fosters a community that recognises and celebrates each individual's accomplishments and progress. These cultures typically have individuals who are more self-reliant and self-assured about their capacity to support themselves without external validation.

Collectivism's main disadvantage is that collectivists tend to live their lives according to a set of particular ideologies, which may lead to a person being unable to accomplish his objectives and goals, leading to their downfall or unhappiness. On the other hand, with individualism, the group's unity and cohesiveness can be negatively affected when communities contain several self-focused individuals. There may be a tendency among individuals to emphasise their cultural differences, resulting in an overall discord which impacts the group.

Image by fauxels

COLLECTIVISM VS INDIVIDUALISM

By **Noor Al Swailmeen**

Image by jibarofoto

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher who believed in collectivism, wrote about collectivism in his well-known book "The Social Contract." In it, Rousseau argued against the belief that the society should be divided into classes and that people should only act in their own interests. Instead, he was supporting the opinion that everyone in society is bound by a social contract that requires them to consider the interests of the group as a whole. Thomas Hobbes, like Rousseau, was in favour of the idea of a social contract in society. His understanding of the social contract was that people in society should give up some of their freedom for the sake of safety to a strong central authority. He argued in favour of a society ruled by an absolute monarch, believing that the monarch's role was to maintain security and order.

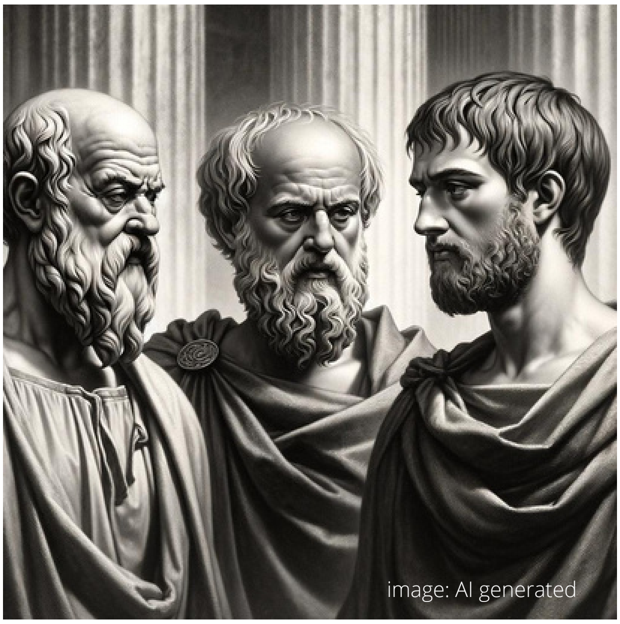
In direct contrast to the work of Rousseau and Hobbes was Alexis de Tocqueville, a French aristocratic political philosopher who supported individualism and referred to it as a mode of moderate selfishness in which people were only concerned with their own intimate circle of family and friends. Individualism, as Tocqueville understood it, has long been panned and criticized from both the right and the left, as well as from religious and secular perspectives, for its endorsement of private pleasures and control over one's personal environment and its neglect of public involvement and community attachment.

To conclude, both collectivism and individualism have their own merits and downsides. Humans long for independence and individuality, but no man is an island, and we are not wired to be antisocial. How can these two extremes be balanced most effectively? Deciding between the two? Obviously not. To get the best of both worlds, striking a balance between individualism and collectivism is needed. To clarify, take the value of teamwork from collectivism, while supporting every group member's unique inventiveness.

"Individualism, as Tocqueville understood it, has long been panned and criticized from both the right and the left, as well as from religious and secular perspectives, for its endorsement of private pleasures and control over one's personal environment and its neglect of public involvement and community attachment."

THE THREE BIG GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

***by* Rand Abu Sirdaneh**



To have a great understanding of philosophy, a researcher must know the thoughts and teachings of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. This article will focus not only on the contribution of these philosophers but on the connections between them and their contributions, theories, arguments, and concepts. We start with Socrates and his significant contributions that established and resulted in the Socratic method, then move through Plato's dialogues which shows the strong relationship between Plato and Socrates and the detailed thoughts of Socrates that were written by Plato which has become the basis of many modern-day ideologies. Lastly, Aristotle's logical thoughts and beliefs are explored as well as the effect that Plato had on these.

As the term philosophy is mentioned, numerous beliefs are not only presented but also discussed and argued depending on a person's perspective of life, their experiences, the incidents they have faced, and the way they endured those experiences.

Questions one may ask about philosophy include - What is philosophy? How did these three big Greek philosophers contribute to knowledge and modern day thinking?

As mentioned by many academic sources the birth of ancient Greek philosophy began during the 6th century BC and flourished through the Hellenistic era (323BC – 30BC). The ancient Greek philosophy covers countless matters and areas such as political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, ontology, logic, biology, rhetoric, and aesthetics.

We begin this discussion around Socrates' approach to philosophy. Socrates is considered the leading philosopher and founder of Western philosophy in ancient Athens. Born in Athens in 469BC, this ancient Greek philosopher dedicated his entire life to determine the most effective method to live a moral life. Surprisingly, it is interesting to note that Socrates did not write any philosophical findings. All documentations about him are completely dependent on the writings and works of philosophers like Plato and Xenophon. Instead, Socrates simply spoke his mind, valued challenging questions, and engaged in intellectual discussions which led to the development of the popular Socratic Method. For example, Plato wrote various discussions done by Socrates one being that the law (nomos) does not change. Justice, beauty, bravery, and honesty are indeed principles that remain constant (forms). Thus, the process of seeking out those truths is what is termed the Socratic method. it is believed that unlike the pre-Socratic philosophers Socrates attempted to point out not only inconsistencies but flaws in his student's discussions and arguments which led them to rational, tenable conclusions. Therefore, this deductive method confirmed that learning occurs when students apply logic, critical thinking, and reasoning to issues. Moreover, it has shown its success since it is still used in modern life. For example, the University of Chicago uses the Socratic method in their law school because it helps students identify gaps in their own hypotheses and thoughts and then patching them making students better critical tinkers.

THE THREE BIG GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

by **Rand Abu Sirdaneh**

It can be argued that in history there is no one like Socrates nor will there be anyone like him in the future. Socrates triggered the reasoning capacity of people from all aspects of life unlike anyone. It is believed that his interest in learning grew stronger because of the poverty he experienced throughout his life that prevented him from attending school at a young age. Thus, creating a powerful attraction towards education with an open mind to learn. For instance, he stated that to let solutions into the mind, one must approach the situation with an open mind. Moreover, a well-known statement of his reads “I know that I know nothing” - this shows how he looks forward to learning new things and his desire to think about issues from different points of view.

It is also noteworthy that Socrates did not always face a receptive audience and Athens at that point in time was divided into two opposing factions. Firstly, the authorities and elites who accused and convicted Socrates of corrupting young people and disregarding the Greek gods and goddesses of Athens and was deemed as an endangerment to Greece's stability. As a direct result of this Socrates was executed by an Athenian court charged with impiety and corrupting the youth. The other faction was that of, the younger individuals of Athens who saw Socrates as a messenger of hope.

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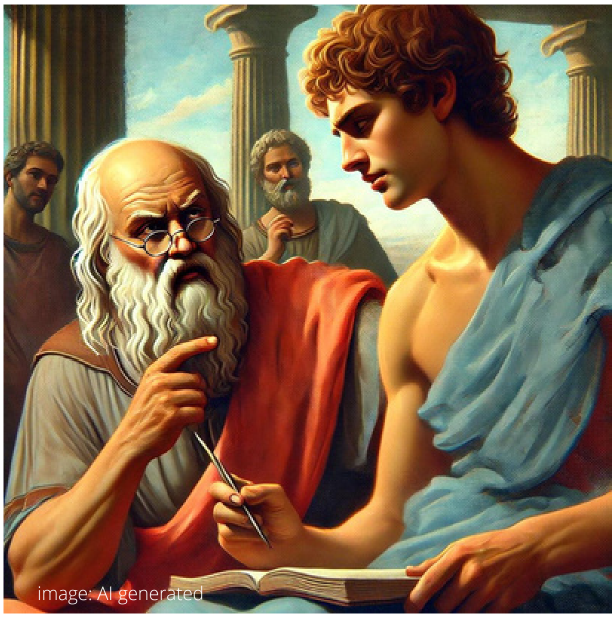
He helped them develop new ways of thinking and seeing the world. This article recognises Socrates as the one who broke the chains that were tightly holding the young men at that time. He encouraged and insisted on the importance of philosophy. However, Socrates was wise, cautious, and careful warning them against making assumptions without consulting authority figures. As an aspiring researcher it believed that being thoughtful and wise is what made him a supported figure even as he faced a narrow-minded society and jury. His response was, instead of escaping jail he thought that by using logic and reasoning the jury will reevaluate the accusations.



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As said earlier, it is accepted that Plato’s inspiration came from Socrates, his teacher. After exploring the interactions between these two great thinkers this article is built on the belief, they had a significant impact on how the world is now. Moreover, it is believed that Plato is recognised for having established the foundational structures necessary for any critical thinking and self-analysis of one's thoughts and thinking process through the writing of Socrates’ discussions.

THE THREE BIG GREEK PHILOSOPHERS

by **Rand Abu Sirdaneh**

Plato's dialogue of the middle period The Republic is one of his most well-known dialogues. As cited in Adrian Collage it observes Socrates forming a perspective on justice and how it relates to eudaimonia (happiness). In The Republic thoughts are written about the detailed, convoluted, but convincing argument of Socrates for a balanced life and its essential relationship to happiness while using evidence. A major concept that enabled Socrates thoughts to flourish and become a famously read dialogue is its way of analysing all the perspectives and taking them into consideration. Two main issues are discussed in the conversation.

As mentioned by Adrian College - What defines justice is the first query. Socrates responds to this query by discussing both the individual person, soul, and political communities. Is the just person happier than the unjust person? The second query and dialogue's central question, he addresses it by asking the question "How do justice and happiness relate to one another?". It is thought that Plato's philosophical interests in the dialogue are ethical and political considering the two primary topics of discussion. Socrates and his interlocutors created the Kalli polis, a just/ rightful city, in speech to answer these two problems. They do this to define justice before going on to use an analogy to show justice in the human spirit.

In his defence of the righteous life, Socrates is said to have examined a wide range of subjects, including various competing theories of justice, opposing concepts of what makes a person happy, education, the nature and significance of philosophy and philosophers, knowledge, the structure of reality, the Forms, the virtues and vices, good and bad souls, good and bad systems of government, the family, the role of women in society, the role of art in community, and even the afterlife.

The conversation is said to provide a number of interpretive issues that have resulted in hundreds of scholarly publications. It is also said that one struggles to understand the dialogue's argument as a whole because of these difficulties.
Aristotle was a firm supporter of eudaimonia and saw it as a virtue that could be achieved by growing intellectually and maintaining a moral life.

According to Aristotle, the excessive expression of strong emotion serves people by allowing for the painful discharge of negative emotions rather than preventing the growth of such emotions.

Aristotle favours a sensitive, practical, tangible view of reality. Plato tends to appreciate reality in an abstract, speculative, and philosophical way.
It is seen after research that Plato is more utopian, irrational, and inadequate with his thoughts - for instance he starts his dialogue with a perfect society and goes on to describe the perfect city with its government. While Aristotle tends to be more empirical and logical.

In conclusion its believed that these masterful works of literature is a result of all the connections between Socrates and Plato along with Aristotle. It is also viewed that Plato's Republic aids in restoring the political health of our communities. Moreover, it is believed that acquiring knowledge and the ability to learn new things comes from wanting to explore and seek different perspectives.

BUiD CELEBRATES ITS 18TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

Under the chancellorship of His Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, president President of the Dubai Civil Aviation Authority, and CEO and Chairman of the Emirates Group, The British University in Dubai (BUiD) celebrated the graduation of its eighteenth cohort of graduates at the Cultural and Scientific Association. The ceremony was attended by the University's Council members, academic and administrative staff, and family and friends of the graduates.

Since its inception in 2003, BUiD has offered postgraduate programmes on the Masters and doctoral levels, the first Bachelor's programme was offered in 2018. Last year, BUiD has celebrated the first cohort of undergraduates from two programmes, Business Management and Computer Science - Artificial Intelligence. This year BUiD is celebrating the first cohort of undergraduates from the Electromechanical Engineering programme.

NAVIGATING THE TIDES OF CHANGE

by **Sally Abdel Gawad**

Change is an inevitable force that shapes organisations and drives progress in today's dynamic business landscape. However, successfully implementing change within an organization requires effective leadership that can guide and inspire individuals through the transformational journey. This article explores the critical relationship between leadership and change management, highlighting the key principles and strategies that leaders should embrace to navigate the tides of change and drive organizational success.

Leadership in change management encompasses the ability to envision a desired future state, communicate a compelling vision, and mobilise individuals towards the common goal. It involves creating a positive and supportive organisational culture that embraces change as an opportunity for growth and innovation. Effective leaders in change management understand the complexities and challenges associated with change and own the skills to inspire, motivate, and empower their teams to adapt and thrive in the face of uncertainty.

Leaders play a multifaceted role in change management, serving as catalysts for organisational transformation. Firstly, leaders must set up a clear and compelling vision that articulates the need for change and outlines the future direction of the organization. This vision serves as a roadmap for employees, providing them with a sense of purpose and direction during times of change.

Furthermore, leaders must effectively communicate the vision, ensuring that it resonates with all stakeholders and inspires commitment and buy-in. Transparent and open communication, coupled with active listening, builds trust and fosters a sense of shared ownership in the change process.

In addition, leaders must lead by example and show a willingness to embrace change themselves. By modeling the desired behaviors and mindset, leaders inspire others to embrace change and overcome resistance. They create a safe and supportive environment where employees feel empowered to contribute their ideas and actively take part in the change process.

To effectively lead change, leaders should employ multiple strategies that foster engagement, resilience, and adaptability. Firstly, leaders should emphasise the importance of continuous learning and create opportunities for employees to develop the skills and competencies needed to navigate change successfully. This can be achieved through training programs, coaching, and mentoring initiatives.

Secondly, leaders should foster a culture of innovation and experimentation, encouraging employees to think creatively and embrace innovative ideas. By celebrating successes and learning from failures, leaders create an environment that encourages risk-taking and promotes a growth mindset.

NAVIGATING THE TIDES OF CHANGE

by **Sally Abdel Gawad**

Moreover, leaders should provide ongoing support and resources to employees throughout the change process. This includes offering guidance, removing barriers, and recognizing and rewarding individuals' efforts and contributions. By offering support, leaders prove their commitment to the success of the change initiative and create a sense of camaraderie and shared responsibility.

Lastly, leaders must be adaptable and flexible, recognizing that change is an iterative process. They should continuously check progress, gather feedback, and make necessary adjustments to ensure the change initiative still is aligned with the organizational goals and aims.

Leadership plays a pivotal role in change management, providing the vision, guidance, and support necessary to navigate the complexities of organizational transformation. By embracing the principles of effective leadership in change management, organizations can foster a culture of agility, innovation, and resilience. Through transparent communication, empowerment, and continuous learning, leaders inspire individuals to embrace change and contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.

As the business landscape continues to evolve at a rapid pace, the importance of effective leadership in change management cannot be overstated. By recognizing the significance of leadership in driving successful change initiatives, organizations can position themselves for long-term growth and remain competitive in an ever-changing world.

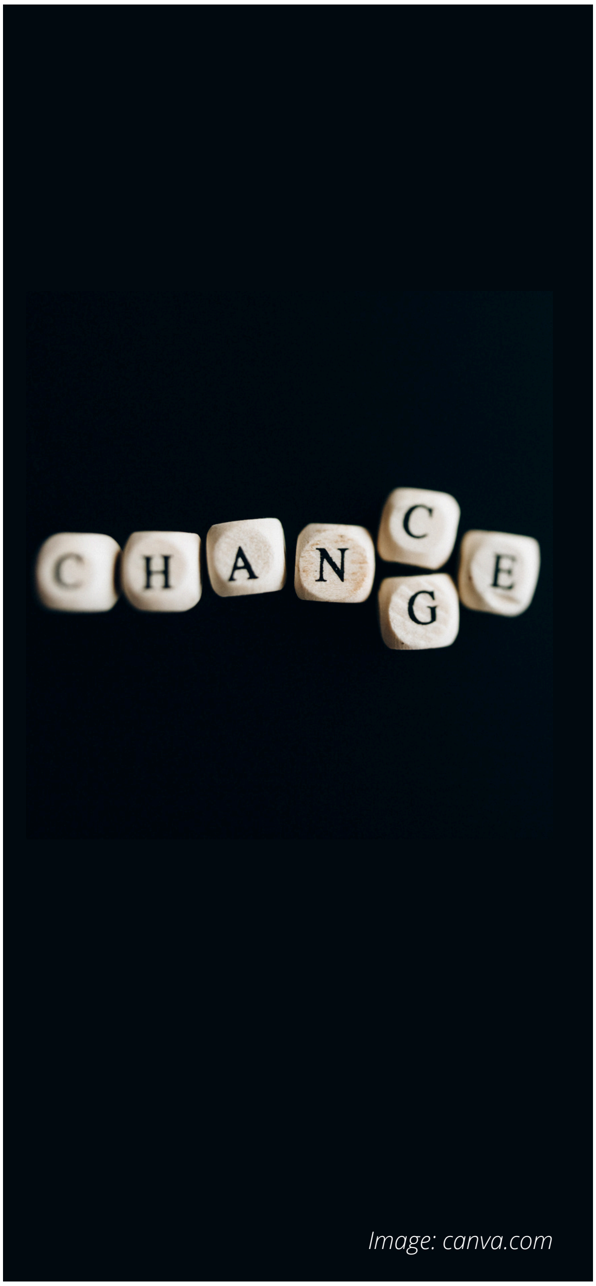

Image: canva.com

NAVIGATING THE MIDDLE

by ***Vanessa Fernando***

Wikipedia defines religion as a system of faith and the belief in God while interfaith is the involvement of people from different groups and backgrounds. India is the land of 1.3 billion people and three thousand castes and religions; yet it is reported that the country witnesses only 5% of inter-faith marriages. To elaborate further on interfaith competence and religious relations this article will express my opinion surrounding society's approach to faith and conflicts among communal groups.

My experience dates to an inter-caste union between my parents - my mother being a Tamil Brahmin, and my father a Roman Catholic. They never had any issues in terms of religion amongst themselves, but the challenges began with the revelation of their relationship to their respective families. The highlight of this story being my mother deciding to convert herself to Christianity, for obvious reasons. However, I believe the conversion of faith cannot delete years of devotion one once had for their initial religion. I follow my paternal religion, but as I entered my teens, I got a taste of different cultures and traditions from both sides of my family. When I began to practice both religions, I came to realise that I am an inter-caste child and that is my identity. Growing up, people would question me; from classmates being curious to teachers questioning me in front of an audience to extended relatives avoiding communication and invitation.

But unfortunately, while growing up I did not have the maturity to understand how this was shaping my identity nor how to respond appropriately, essentially, I was navigating the middle of two disparate worlds.

One recent trigger that resurfaced my vexation surrounding the **"lack of acceptance to communities"** and that encouraged me to explore this topic was the distressing news of the 'Hijab Ban', a protest where Muslim women in India are forbidden from wearing their hijab. According to nbcnews.com, the conflict started when the Hindu boys of a governmental college in Udupi, Karnataka started revolting against their Muslim classmates, saying that the hijab is not a part of their uniform, and the girls would be denied education if they continue to adorn it. I believe these communal riots and internal feuds are the effects of a deeper historical scar. The history behind this started in the late 1940's. The British rule in India originally sparked communal rift and hatred among the citizens of India. The Muslim-Hindu tension was one of the main reasons the country split into two. Pradesh and Pradesh (2021) elaborately explain that the British were vying for resources found in India with the British fulfilled their goal of bringing down the kingdom rule of India, however the people joined hands and revolted. The British were very much aware of the religious sentiments and morals that Indians held and took advantage of the very same. 'Divide and Rule', caused many brawls between the two main religions, the Hindus, and Muslims. In the non-violence era, led by Mahatma Gandhi, he requested the Muslims and Hindus reconcile their differences and come together to end the British rule. However, this unity was not permanent, and finally, when the nation acquired freedom, the situation was not pretty at all.

NAVIGATING THE MIDDLE

by ***Vanessa Fernando***

The British Viceroy, Mountbatten came to mark an end to the 'British Rule' but in return, he drew a line cutting through the country and declared two nations India and Pakistan, one for Hindus and one for Muslims but left the choice of migration to the people. 'Samjhauta Express', the train commuting between these two countries ended up becoming the vehicle of death, with stacks of dead bodies and endless bloodshed.

Post independence, India had a large minority group of Muslims which comprised approximately 213 million of the total population. Christians, Sikhs, and Buddhists are also in the minority and comprise even lower percentages of the population. India has a rigid caste system where the Scheduled caste – Dalits and the scheduled tribes – Adivasi come at the bottom of the pyramid. (India - World Directory of Minorities & Indigenous Peoples, 2022). George Jacob Holyoak coined the term secularism. Even though India is a secular country, it fails to achieve its true ideology. Before independence, the term secularism was simply used to keep the Hindu-Muslim conflicts at bay. There were multiple discussions of minority rights in the constituent assembly, and it was decided that religious matters would now be a public affair and the country would not have an official state religion.

Articles 30 and 29 of the constitution allow minorities to follow their culture and build educational institutions for the same.

These steps were merely the outcome of communal struggle before independence and therefore at present social cohesion is mutual tolerance, which sometimes is broken.

image: toolshero.com

Geert Hofstede, popular sociologist of culture and anthropologist, in his cultural dimension's theory helps us understand cultural differences among countries and even regions. Two of Hofstede's dimensions directly address this - power distance and long-term orientation. Power distance is when the common man accepts the power that lies with a small group of powerful and influential people. The religious cultures of India divide the society into superiors and their subordinates from areas like family values to the hierarchical caste system. Long-term orientation is all about how strong a connection one has to their roots and whether they are flexible in receiving new ideas. According to the Hofstede country comparison website India has a score of 51 in long-term orientation, where the exact dominance cannot be determined and probably has traits of rigid roots as well as an acceptance of modern ideologies. However, according to our research, interfaith conflicts show how the country wants to maintain its age-old traditions rather than having a pragmatic approach to a modern lifestyle.

NAVIGATING THE MIDDLE

*by **Vanessa Fernando***

Hindus comprise most of India's population and perhaps automatically get the upper hand in decision-making. Many political parties back up the religions in the country and formulate policies that only benefit the electing parties and the citizens of a particular faith for a short period.

Moreover, in the caste system, the Brahmins and Kshatriyas get their authoritative power from their lineage and the knowledge passed from generation to generation. Therefore, the lower castes are highly discriminated against and are unable to experience the basic pleasures of society. It is challenging to break the philosophy of such an old civilization; however, social media has and can continue to educate and enlighten many people. Some solutions are the migration of individuals for work or a better lifestyle that can provide better perspectives. Enrolling children in non-communal schools, where they learn to socially interact and respect every child.

My own experience and research help me broaden my perspective and understand communities better. Nevertheless, my experience is just an instance of a societal hurdle in the mindful progress of India. In conclusion, it can be said that whilst the formulation of policies that protect the rights of minority groups not only in India but globally is important the true value of its authenticity lies in the vigour of its implementation.

FREE WILL AND HOW IT AFFECTS GOOD AND EVIL

by **Wafiq Abo Daken**

The paradox of free will and evil has existed for centuries, yet no universal answer has been given to - If God exists and if he is all-powerful and mighty, then why does he allow evil to exist? Well, the obvious answer to this is the idea of free will, but then one must also ask himself, if God knows the future and what we are going to do, do we really have free will, or is it that God's knowing the future does not interfere with my decisions in every possible context? As such this article aims to explore these ideas and connections between free will, good and evil.

The idea of free will cannot be simply explained but can be defined by three factors, the first one being the ability to do otherwise. It is common sense that to be free, there must be at least two different options or possible courses of action, for instance for one to select what university he wishes to study in, one must have multiple options, while if he had only one, is he really free to choose? Or was he obligated to do so? The second factor is control over one's choices as the person making the decisions should be the same one acting upon them. The third factor is responsiveness to reason, meaning one's decision must be based on reason and not on chance to be considered free. If I flip a coin to decide whether I move to another country or not, can my decision be considered free? Even if I willingly flipped that coin the consequences of my actions cannot fall under the concept of free will.

Free will and the problem of causal determinism

Compatibilism exists as a solution to the problem of causal determinism, but what is causal determinism in the first place? McKenna & Coates in their 2019 writings state causal determinism or hard determinism claims that every action taken or done by someone is as a result of the unchangeable laws of nature and actions that were taken by people before them.

This means that every decision you make is due to cause and effect, and not your own mind. In this case, one cannot do anything other than what he is decided to do, thus, breaking the first pillar of free will, the ability to do otherwise. Soft determinism or compatibilism represents a neutral position, where one has a choice, but his choice is a affected by external factors. For instance, being born poor does not force you to become a thief, but it raises the chances of you becoming one.

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Good and Evil

Evil has existed since the dawn of time and has been exercised by many individuals throughout history. While many people blame free will for the existence of evil, others tend to lay the blame on the conditions they were born and raised. Considering the first argument we would count free will as the cause of evil. However, if God did not create a world with free will where he would not interfere in the actions of individuals, the world would have been a script where everything was previously set. Thus, the world would be a timeline with set actions where there is no good or bad but only a series of scenarios forcibly played by us. On the other hand, if God created a world with free will but stripped us from having evil thoughts and actions, it would not prevent us from choosing not to do good deeds that would greatly help others and it certainly would not stop evil caused by natural disasters, since the laws of nature cannot be neglected, as a world without physical laws is an unbalanced one. The concept of good is subjective, as humans define it as what brings benefit to them or others. Each of us carries the potential for good and evil, the battle to see which will prevail is continuous, and neither can exist independently without the other. However, good and evil are not set standards but are values and morals set by our opinions and views on each different matter independently.

Alvin Plantinga's free-will defense

Alvin Plantinga is a modern philosopher born in 1932, he created one of the most well-known theories to answer the logical problem of evil and free will, known as the free will defense. It argues with the idea that the existence of an all-powerful being (God) simply cannot exist alongside evil.

The logical problem of evil concludes with the following:

1)If God who is all-powerful and all-good exists,

2)Evil exists.

3)Therefore, one of them cannot exist with the other.

In our world, evil certainly exists which implies that God does not exist in the words of this theory, but many theologians, philosophers, and believers refuse to accept this theory as they believe in God, so the philosopher Alvin Plantinga produced an answer to solve this issue. According to Plantinga in a 2010 interview with Ehrman project he states that if God wanted to create a world with free people who do moral good then he cannot deny them from doing moral evil, as good cannot exist without evil, and if God were to deny us from doing what is wrong and force us to only do what is right, then we are not doing what is right out of our own free will.

Free will In Islam

Muslims believe in Al-Qadr which means that Allah already knows what will happen in the future and what our choices will be, but he is not the reason that we chose those choices, instead, Allah gave us the ability to select our actions based on our free will. Believing in free will is something all Muslims do as they all know that this life is only a test from Allah which we will be accounted for, as all wrong deeds and evil done by someone will lead him to punishment and suffering while people who do honorable deeds and devote themselves to spreading good will be rewarded.

Evil exists in this life as a test from Allah to determine which of us are worthy of his paradise, Allah gave us free will with the option of doing evil so that only those who choose not to do it are rewarded, while if he didn't give us the ability to commit evil, all of us will go to paradise without being worthy of it as we cannot do otherwise.

Photo by cottonbro studio

BUiD ORGANISES ITS FOURTH TEDX TALKS WITH THE THEME 'DIVERSITY MATTERS'

The British University in Dubai (BUiD) organised its fourth TEDx Talk at the Radisson RED Hotel in Silicon Oasis with the theme 'Diversity matters'. Six speakers representing staff and students discussed various issues surrounding diversity, sharing their personal experiences and unique perspectives.

With this fourth event, BUiD continues its commitment to playing a meaningful role by engaging the local community and wider society with thought provoking ideas.









PODCASTING: THE SUBTLE ART OF CONVERSATION

by **Professor Christopher Hill**

A lot of time spent as an academic is in reading. We read; we digest; we reflect; we write; we lecture. This is the cycle and you can often get stuck in your own head, even while connecting with the thoughts and writings of colleagues around the world. It is good to find outlets where you can learn and engage with ideas – not just from the page, but from people themselves.

I love conferences. From the first time I presented as a bundle of nerves, to those I am fortunate enough to attend today, where I can listen and learn. Sadly, conference attendance is not always possible – funding is incredibly difficult to come by; travel takes time and effort; there are environmental issues to consider. Not that long ago during the pandemic, travel was impossible and yet we found a way to reach out and connect with others. Conferences are about presenting your work but they are also about being exposed to new ideas (some of which you will agree with and others you will absolutely not) and people. They are a chance to connect with the wider world and to gain a greater understanding of how thinking and ideas are developing. If you are lucky, you will come away from a conference changed.This aspect of my academic life is critical to my continued development and growth. It impacts my thinking, my writing and my teaching. As it is not always possible, it makes sense to look for alternatives.

I had a podcast prior to the pandemic but I was not all that diligent in recording regular episodes and so it was more of a trial thing that I didn't do all that much with. During the pandemic, however, I began the process of writing a book with a UK colleague of mine (Professor Judith Lamie). We met regularly online and, over the course of a few months, wrote a book together.We quickly realised that the weekly online conversations had been instrumental in developing our ideas and reflections. We bounced ideas off each other, we debated, we talked about things we had read, we listened. 'We should have recorded these', was our regular refrain. Why hadn't we? Hard to say.I suppose we just hadn't thought about it at the time.

As the first book turned into the second book, we brought in collaborators and in so doing, opened the door for what would be our podcast – Think Education.

We took the opportunity to talk to people around the world about their ideas, reflections, experiences. At times, we used this a platform for chapter development, and in others, we simply relished the opportunity to listen to somebody and learn from them.

In 2023, we released 50 episodes – very nearly one a week. For variety, we mixed interviews with external colleagues and our own discussions. We talked about current events in higher education; we responded to things we had read or heard; we reflected on conferences and events we had attended and organised; we talked to people about their careers, experiences and journeys.In short, we were not constrained by a model or framework. We talked and we listened.

Over the course of the last year and a half of regular podcasting, I have come to relish the lack of structure and free-flowing style that we adopt. We don't overly plan sessions in advance and more often than not, we let them evolve organically. We have an idea of what we want to talk about but we listen and we ask questions as they arise. The art of active listening is not practiced as much as it should be and this has been quite the education in staying in the moment and paying attention.I have been continuously impressed by how honest and open people are. This is likely a result of being relaxed and engaged but it is always appreciated and enjoyed.

Academics spend a lot of time reading and lecturing. Having the freedom to be able to listen and learn is a privilege not to be squandered. Podcasting has given me just such an opportunity.

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE MEETS INDUSTRY RELEVANCE: A WINNING RECIPE FOR UNDERGRADUATES

Dr **Rekha Pillai**

In today's dynamic and ever-evolving world, the conventional boundaries between academia and industry are gradually becoming blurred. As technological advancements and global economic shifts redesign the job market, it is imperative to equip undergraduate students with practical industry experience alongside their academic studies. This integration of theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience not only augments students' learning but also significantly enhances their employability and career readiness.

One of the key benefits of exposing undergraduates to industry is the development of practical skills. While classroom learning provides a solid footing of theoretical knowledge, it does not translate into practical knowledge.Engaging with industry allows students to apply theoretical and conceptual knowledge in real-world settings, thereby deepening their understanding, widening their mental horizons and honing their skills. This can be fruitful through internships, guest lectures, industry projects or cooperative education programs as these platforms provide valuable insights to students equipping them with resources required to navigate the challenges and demands of professional environments.

Furthermore, **industry exposure** helps students establish a robust professional network. Networking is a critical component of career development, and early connections can open doors to future opportunities. Collaborating with industry professionals and establishing relationships with mentors, peers, and potential employers can provide guidance, support, and referrals that can be instrumental in securing job placements after graduation. Moreover, networking within the industry aids students in staying abreast of the latest market trends and developments, thus enhancing their competitive advantage over their peers.

Another significant advantage of industry exposure is the enhancement of soft skills such as **communication, leadership, teamwork, problem-solving, and adaptability,** all of which are highly valued by current employers. Classroom learning is insufficient to bring out the hidden leader within them. These traits and skills are often best developed in applied settings where students are required to collaborate with colleagues, meet deadlines, and solve real-world problems. Through industry experiences, students learn to navigate workplace dynamics, manage time efficiently and effectively, and communicate their ideas clearly and diplomatically.

Industry exposure also plays a crucial role in helping students make informed career choices. The transition from academia to the workforce can be daunting, as many students are apprehensive and uncertain about their career paths. Engaging with industry provides a vivid picture of what different roles entail and what is anticipated in various professions.

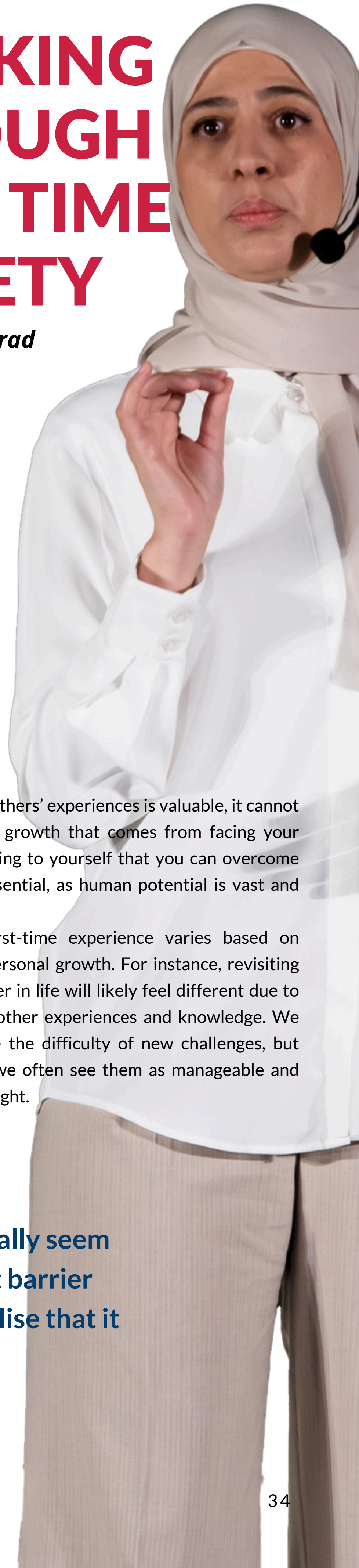
Moreover, the collaboration between academia and industry drives innovation and keeps educational programs relevant. Feedback from industry professionals also helps academic institutions tailor their curricula to meet current and future market needs.

In conclusion, the integration of industry exposure into undergraduate education is essential for moulding students for the complexities of the modern workforce. As we look to the future, fostering robust connections between academia and industry will be central in cultivating a skilled, adaptable, and innovative workforce well prepared to meet the unprecedented challenges of tomorrow. Encouraging undergraduates to engage with industry alongside their academic studies is not just beneficial; but is the success mantra for one's overall personality development and the advancement of society.

'PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT IS A MAJOR TIME-SAVER. THE BETTER YOU BECOME, THE LESS TIME IT TAKES YOU TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS'
BRIAN TRACY

BREAKING THROUGH FIRST TIME ANXIETY

By ***Dr Nahia Mourad***



When you're experiencing something for the first time, what do you feel? And how do you react? Don't hide your answer; this is normal! Experiencing something for the first time often triggers a mix of emotions such as fear, frustration, and a loss of confidence. These feelings are completely normal and occur because you are venturing into unknown territory. Whether it's your first presentation at university, your first job interview, or your first day at a new job, these first-time events leave a lasting impact on your life.

The nervousness and anxiety associated with first-time experiences are universal and happen throughout all stages of a lifetime. These experiences begin early in life, such as a baby's first steps, which come with the fear of falling but also the determination to keep trying until success is achieved. Becoming a parent for the first time is another example of an overwhelming yet significant experience.

Physiologically, our bodies react to these new experiences in various ways. An increased heart rate, muscle tension, and visible signs like sweating and shaking are common. For example, during my first public talk, my mouth became so dry that it felt as though my salivary glands had stopped working. Psychologically, our minds are working overtime to process new information, which can lead to increased stress and anxiety.

These physical and mental reactions can have significant consequences that can change our paths in life. It's important to manage them to avoid negative outcomes, such as failing a job interview due to nervousness.

Here are some strategies to help reduce the fear of first-time experiences:

- **Acceptance: Understand that the reactions you're experiencing are normal and universal.**
- **Preparation: Train your mind to adapt to new scenarios through learning and skill development.**
- **Perspective: View each first-time experience as a learning opportunity, regardless of the outcome.**
- **Continuous Learning: See each new experience as part of a chain that builds your personality and capabilities.**
- **Practice: Prepare thoroughly and practice diligently, as success requires effort.**

While learning from others' experiences is valuable, it cannot replace the personal growth that comes from facing your own challenges. Proving to yourself that you can overcome these obstacles is essential, as human potential is vast and largely untapped.

The impact of a first-time experience varies based on circumstances and personal growth. For instance, revisiting an old experience later in life will likely feel different due to the accumulation of other experiences and knowledge. We tend to overestimate the difficulty of new challenges, but once they are over, we often see them as manageable and less daunting in hindsight.

Remember, each new experience might initially seem insurmountable, but breaking through that barrier transforms your perspective, making you realise that it was both normal and achievable.

BUID ALUMNI GALA DINNER

COMMEMORATION OF ITS 20TH ANNIVERSARY ON THE 6TH JUNE 2024

The British University in Dubai was thrilled to host an Alumni Gala Dinner in commemoration of its 20th anniversary on the 6th June 2024 at the Radisson Red Hotel – Dubai Digital Park -Dubai Silicon Oasis. This prestigious event brought together alumni, faculty, university council members, advisory board members and distinguished guests for an evening of celebration, reconnection and reflection on the achievements of the esteemed graduates and the university.

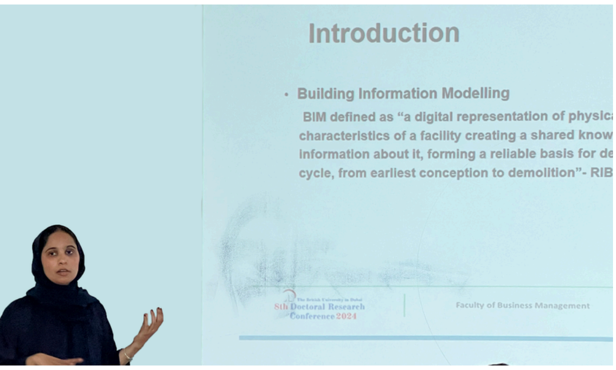
The Alumni Gala Dinner featured keynote addresses from university council member HE Mirza Al Sayegh and Vice Chancellor Professor Abdullah AlShamsi. It was also attended by representatives from the KHDA, RTA, Digital School, the International Centre for Biosaline Agriculture, GARP, CIOB and PMI.

The British University in Dubai was indeed excited to host such an event that embodies the spirit and tradition of BUiD.

The British University in Dubai

8th Doctoral Research Conference 2024

BDRC 2024



The 8th BUiD Doctoral Research Conference (BDRC) 2024 was held on the 29 June 2024 at The British University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. It was no doubt an excellent opportunity for students to get present their research work and enable their work to be visible to the wider regional and international research community. The Call for Papers was announced in February 2024, asking students to submit full papers. The submission deadline was on the 30 April 2024. Students were not limited in the number of papers they were allowed to submit nor the number of authors per paper. We received submissions from various levels of the university including Undergraduate, Postgraduate (both at the master's and doctoral level) and as well as BUiD alumni and students from our affiliated universities.

Emphasis was placed on the quality of submissions. The review process was rigorous whereby all papers underwent a blind review process. There were an impressive 162 submissions of which 57 qualified to the presentation stage. Based on the outcome of the presentations at the conference the top 25 will be published in a Scopus indexed conferencing proceeding.

BDRC 2024 and by extension the wider BUiD community saw the presentation of papers from various fields including Education, Business & Law and Engineering & Computer Science.

The 8th BUiD Doctoral Research Conference 2024 focused on providing students with an international forum through which their work can be shared and published. It most certainly brought together a diverse group to present and discuss the latest trends, discoveries, praxis and interests in these various areas.

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SEE YOU SOON IN THE NEXT ISSUE!