



Perceptions of Value in Modern Education: A Comparative Study of the Humanities and the Sciences

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ABSTRACT

English Literature and Engineering are placed at the far end of an equilibrium, to which, the marginal utility of Engineering is generally valued as relatively more economically valuable than that of English Literature due to factors that mainly involve future job prospects such as opportunity for employment, revenue earned and the labour market force outcomes. As stated by Moo & Wan, 2023, graduates' capability of employment has close connection with human capital theory and neoliberal perspectives which can affect the evaluation of educational qualifications and field of study. (Moo & Wan, 2023). This qualitative study aims to examine the cultural and interpersonal narratives that contribute to such perceived hierarchy between the humanities and sciences in Malaysia. To gain an in-depth analysis, informal interviews has been conducted with three industrial professionals each from the field of English Literature and Engineering. The findings are expected to contribute to the ongoing discourse about wage profiles, prospects and finally the idea of "value".

Keywords : English Literature, Engineering, Value, Education

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

The concept of value and the intrinsic definition of value are oftentimes loosely defined according to one's predetermined beliefs. "Values in the plural" is, namely, a bridge of people's preferences in life (Kalb, 2025). Ostensible elements that come with instantaneous gratification, fiscal gain, and the efficacy of certain outcomes are held against the fundamental anthropological definition of value. When value is measured against education, the branches disperse into distinctive realms that sustain differing significance to one's life. The concerns of economic value, employability value, cultural value, intellectual value, social value, and personal value arise as the impact of each component plays a definitive role in defining one's future.

The landscape of modern education is deeply rooted in philosophical ideologies, as the foundations of academia were historically shaped by disciplines such as epistemology, metaphysics, logic, and ethics. However, the core principles of these fundamentals have been increasingly disregarded, as philosophy and its related fields are often classified under the humanities, a domain that has seen diminishing emphasis in contemporary education. Modern educational systems have become largely practicality-driven, where the "value" of learning is frequently measured through quantitative indicators such as annual salary, employment trends, and career mobility. This shift represents a fundamental transformation in how education is perceived and valued, marking a departure from its original humanistic aims. The evolution of employability and economic return has contributed to the understanding of higher education emphasising on humanities, art and social science disciplines to show their employment and economic value. (Baron & McCormack, 2024).

In the Malaysian context, the marginalisation of the humanities is particularly evident. The Ministry of Education's Annual Report (2023) devoted an entire subsection to "enhancing STEM education," illustrating the state's prioritisation of science and technology. While the report placed significant emphasis on English



proficiency, it primarily addressed communicative competence rather than literary or cultural appreciation (Annual Report 2023, 2024).

Objectives

Furthermore, the component of English Literature faced a complete removal during the transition from Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah (KBSM) to Kurikulum Standard Sekolah Menengah (KSSR). English Literature as a subject could be derived as niche and unpopular through the statistics presented in the '2024 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) Examination Results Analysis Report'. Out of 402,918 candidates, only 467 students sat for said subject. To put this into perspective, this is only 0.115% of candidates. In contrast to a major STEM subject such as Physics which amounted to 92,282 students. This disparity highlights an alarming imbalance in Malaysia's educational landscape and raises concerns about the declining diversity of intellectual pursuits. The low participation in humanities subjects shows that these courses are less economical for career value compared to STEM courses. (McCormack & Baron, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frameworks such as human capital theory and neoliberalism are central to interpreting this phenomenon, as they provide insight into how modern societies conceptualise and categorise educational value. These frameworks also illuminate how individuals, often unconsciously, align themselves with such ideologies in their perceptions of academic worth and disciplinary relevance.

Problem Statement

The topic of Return on Investment (ROI) is often brought up in discussions regarding the pursuit of higher education focusing on the economics return after obtaining a bachelor's degree (Britton et al., 2022). Notwithstanding the public preconceptions towards distinctive fields, the comparisons between humanities and sciences are always directly equated to pragmatic factors such as job opportunities, career prospect and the inherent "usefulness" of respective university degrees (Ashton et al., 2023). The fundamental notion of education as a matter of personal interest, preference and passion is completely disregarded because people subconsciously scrutinise education as a form of investment in terms of career outcomes (Leoni, 2025). While the objective of this research is to compose an evenly proportional study towards the humanities and sciences, public opinions are generally biased against humanities related to the practical value (McCormack & Baron, 2023). However, there has been a lack of research in terms of interpersonal and interdisciplinary study of such matter among Malaysian scholars. To examine such bias through a definite focal point, the research would further comprehend such matter through the perspectives of individuals who are directly associated with the respective fields of English Literature and Engineering.

The study is aimed to investigate the existing perception towards the idea of value between the humanities and the sciences. The study aims to identify the perceptions towards the humanities and the sciences of Malaysian professionals. Secondly, to obtain views towards the perceived value of English Literature and Engineering through informal and unstructured interviews. Next, is to discuss the respective roles of humanities and sciences in modern education. Finally, to examine the importance of the coexistence of both humanities and sciences in Malaysian education.

Significance of the Study

Perceptions of value are inherently subjective and shaped by various social, cultural, and economic factors. By interviewing scholars who are experienced in these respective fields, this study will be able to capture the underlying assumptions influencing such perceptions. These perspectives will not only reveal the reasons behind differing attitudes toward the humanities and sciences but will also be interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of Human Capital Theory and neoliberalism. This integration allows the research to examine the issue from both an economic standpoint and a subjective, interpretive lens. Moreover, the direct comparison between professionals from two distinctive field adds an additional layer of significance, offering



a comprehensive understanding of how perceptions of educational value are formed, reinforced, and potentially challenged across different stakeholder groups.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural and economic perception of humanities

Ashton et al. (2023) has raised a significant point regarding the fact that “humanities constituted a practical discipline that equipped students not only to read, write, speak and persuade, but also to govern and exercise moral discrimination” (Ashton et al., 2023). Despite that, the loss of a reputable body of literary works, the absence of a fundamental humanist curriculum at universities, the diminishing worth of the humanities in relation to the sciences, and the arduousness and extensive nature of the humanities compared to the rapidly developing and pristine effectiveness of contemporary technologies have all contributed to a notion that the humanities are less concrete, relevant, practical, or indispensable (Ashton et al., 2023).

There is a sense that studying the humanities has become uninteresting at first particularly for the demographic that used to make up its primary constituency. Critics note that in an effort to accommodate new disciplinary interests, the humanities have abandoned the rigorous pursuit of truth in favour of secondary pursuits. The focus on traditional humanities curricula has decreased as frivolous topics like gender studies, literary theories, sexuality, film, and popular culture have become part of the mainstream study of the humanities. Also, the public's inability to connect century-old literature to modern living has also been faulted on the humanities for not being sufficiently inventive in a world that is continuously changing. (Moran, 2022)

The Prestige and Practical Value of the Sciences

The factors of specification of skills, occupational mobility and structural change play a major role in solidifying the marginal increase of demand for science majors. For instance, STEM expertise is more technical and specific, while non-STEM skills can frequently be more broadly defined. STEM graduates have a shorter academic to employment phase and typically earn better average salaries at the outset of their careers in the workforce. For individuals with non-STEM qualifications, their employment transition period can be more turbulent as they may require additional education or training (Britton et al., 2022). STEM and non-STEM personnel possess varied productive roles across numerous institutional frameworks. More capable undergraduates may choose to work in disciplines and jobs that yield greater anticipated income. STEM-related endeavours tend to generate wealth, while non-STEM ventures are generally redistributive activities (Alexeev, Chernina, Gimpelson, & Zinchenko, 2025). A study in Stanford University has shown that computing occupations and Engineers has the highest prospects in terms job growth and job openings which explains the enrolment in STEM related fields. (Zhang & Liu, 2026)

Human Capital Theory

The concept of human capital, as defined by Leoni that human capital as an investment in a person to obtain future pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns (Leoni, 2025). In the context of education, tuition fees, family income, and personal preferences all played a role in determining educational opportunities. The consumption demand included the "ability" to consume the commodity in issue (Leoni, 2025). The concept of individuality is almost non-existent in light of human capital theory as it has the hallmark of emphasising individuals as labour rather than fundamentally human. Thus, linking education as intrinsically productivity driven is harmful to academia because individuals may not be entirely financially motivated in their pursuit for higher education. Such assumptions are especially detrimental towards the humanities unlike Engineering assignments that are mainly comprised of problem sets that requires quantitative solutions, literature students are taught to emphasise and analyse intangible elements like thoughts and emotions through poetry and fiction. In Adam Smith's 'Theory of Moral Sentiments', the emphasis on reading, writing and accounting as essential skills prove the fact that one's ability to sympathise is greater than the skill to blindly repeat assigned tasks (Leoni, 2025).



Neo-liberalism

Neoliberalism, characterised by economic policies such as deregulation, privatisation, and the reduction of government spending, has profoundly reshaped the structure and purpose of higher education. Within this framework, education is increasingly treated as a market commodity, leading to the over-commercialisation of academic institutions. The further privatisation of education will intensify the crisis of the humanities, as disciplines perceived as less economically productive face continual threats of defunding. By over commercialising education, the neoliberal emphasis on efficiency, competition, and employability has eroded the fundamental reason for the pursuit of knowledge. As Ceven & Korumaz described that neoliberal and human capital have continuously shaped the education of the graduates with an increased competitiveness among career prospect (Ceven & Korumaz, 2025). This is harmful towards the psyche of students who are especially susceptible towards the tendency of overanalysing the idea failure. Such projected anxiety may therefore influence their decision of choosing a “suitable” major.

Furthermore, there is this illusion of choice where university majors are perceived as a personal choice. However, students are often pushed towards one direction or another due to external factors, mainly financial ones like debts. Needless to say, the degrees and courses that students are ready to suffer financial repercussions for are the ones that will enable them to get employment straight out of their degree and pay back their debts. This has created a phenomenon where education is seen as a root for Return on Investment (ROI) where it is seen a ‘give-and-take’: they ‘give’ up their actual interests and pursue said ‘higher value degree’ with the hopes to ‘take’ a higher pay in the future. Thus, loan-driven education sacrifices educational and other ambitions in favour of instrumental ones, compromising the substantive prospects that young people may have. Due to the lack of a direct correlation between their degrees and employment, courses and disciplines with low enrolment may suffer the same fate as departments at certain institutions that have dissolved. In the article from The Guardian titled ‘The Guardian view on humanities in universities: closing English Literature courses signals a crisis’, Canterbury Christ Church University in Kent has stopped offering English Literature degrees because of its decline in popularity with tuition fees and the idea of investment hindering choices (The Guardian, 2024). This implies that the financial and market pressure may threaten the number of students enrolment into programmes in particular when universities focus on sustainable programmes (The Guardian, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

Experimental design

An exploratory qualitative method via unstructured interviews was utilised (Messersmith, 2026). Three professionals are recruited for both respective fields. For English Literature, two university lecturers and a PhD scholar cum teacher were chosen. As educators in the field, their perceptions of value are deemed as opinions that hold substantial weight. In terms of Engineering, an Electrical Engineer, a Software Engineer and an Engineering Consultant were recruited. As Engineers of varying fields, the diverse nature of their occupations could provide a comprehensive outlook on the concentrated field of Engineering.

The interviews are unstructured with a set duration of one hour and fifteen minutes. Consent for recording has been obtained for both web and telephone interviews.

Individual interviews

This has allowed me to gain detailed information about the specific personal views of each person. Since respondents have absolute freedom in expressing their views through a 1-on-1 basis, opinions that were highly predisposed were disclosed. Such views had helped the research in tremendous ways because it showed that people had strong and demanding opinions and the fear of being held accountable was what held them back from expressing opinions.



Web interviews

Two of the interviewees had opted for face-to-face interviews and was conducted through Google Meet. This format has allowed the researcher to record and replay as it was transcribed into verbatim.

Telephone interviews

Most of the interviewees had opted for telephone interviews because of the difficulties of matching the schedules. The advantage of telephone interviews was the respondents would speak casually without hesitation of mincing their own words. To which this has provided a lot of freedom for the researcher to ask controversial questions without restrictions.

Population/Sample Size/Sampling Techniques

This exploratory qualitative sample was targeted towards Malaysian industrial professionals. The target sample size was 6 as a concentrated study would allow the study to yield non-repetitive but also diverse results (S, JM, & GD, 2022). Stratified sampling was utilised for this study pertaining to interview subjects with profession as the main strata. This method had allowed the researcher to obtain more precise results as the inconsistency within each stratum was limited.

Data Analysis Techniques

A narrative analysis had been prioritised for the research to be more comprehensive as it had allowed the interviewees to be more personal regarding their experience (Ghelbash, 2026).

Instrumentation

Interviews are done verbally so recordings were made and notes were taken down by hand. Since this was not a structured interview but unstructured interview, the researcher had questions to prompt the interviewees. The conversation was then transcribed for clarity and information extraction.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The findings from the interviews with field experts and the survey conducted among undergraduate students reveal several contrasting perspectives regarding Engineering and English Literature. The use of unstructured interviews allowed the experts to express their opinions freely and provide insights based on their professional and academic experiences. When compared with students' perceptions, the interviews highlighted differences in how the two disciplines are viewed in terms of employability, salary, skills, career flexibility, and their contribution to society.

From the perspective of **an Electrical Engineer cum Project Manager**, Engineering is often misunderstood as a degree that automatically provides higher salaries and better employment opportunities. He argued that salary levels depend largely on job scope and industry rather than simply on whether an individual holds an Engineering qualification. He also observed a decline in the number of fresh graduates seeking Engineering positions, while competition for administrative positions has increased. According to him, this may be partly attributed to the demanding nature of Engineering education, which requires students to deal with subjects such as mathematics and physics. He suggested that some students therefore prefer humanities because they perceive these disciplines as less rigid and more manageable.

He also highlighted concerns regarding **government funding and support for Engineering in Malaysia**. Although funding opportunities exist, he believed that they remain insufficient for local Engineering projects to compete with international markets. Limited funding can also affect university facilities, laboratories, and opportunities for practical training. As a result, highly capable students may choose to pursue their education overseas, while those who remain in Malaysia may have fewer opportunities to access advanced facilities. In contrast, he viewed English Literature as relatively flexible because graduates can enter various occupations,



including journalism, administration, creative writing, and communication-related fields. He believed that humanities graduates develop transferable skills that allow them to move between industries, whereas Engineering graduates may be more restricted by the specialised nature of their technical training.

Similarly, a **Software Engineer**, questioned the assumption that Engineering automatically guarantees stable employment. She argued that the Engineering labour market has become increasingly saturated, with many graduates possessing similar qualifications. Consequently, graduates may need additional certifications, practical experience, or site exposure to distinguish themselves from other applicants. She also identified a **mismatch between university theory and workplace practice**, explaining that some Engineering graduates enter the workforce without sufficient practical competencies. This gap may discourage employers from hiring inexperienced graduates. In addition, she challenged the common perception that Engineering graduates receive high starting salaries. According to her experience, starting salaries in Malaysia can be relatively modest and comparable to those in some non-STEM fields, while salary progression may remain slow without overseas exposure.

She further noted that declining interest in Engineering may be associated with **parental pressure and a lack of genuine student interest**. Some students may enrol in Engineering because their parents perceive it as a prestigious or secure career rather than because they have a genuine passion or aptitude for the discipline. In comparison, she viewed English Literature as a more versatile degree because its graduates can pursue different career paths. She particularly appreciated the communication skills developed through literature studies, arguing that engineers may sometimes struggle to communicate complex ideas clearly. Nevertheless, she acknowledged that humanities graduates may face challenges in achieving long-term economic stability, particularly in regions where creative and cultural industries are limited.

Another perspective was provided by an **Engineering Consultant**, who focused on workplace conditions, national development, and the long-term sustainability of the Engineering profession. She highlighted **retention problems within Engineering**, particularly among young professionals, due to long working hours and limited flexibility. She argued that these realities are not always communicated to students before they choose Engineering as their field of study. She also expressed concern that Engineering is becoming undervalued despite its importance to national infrastructure and technological development. Inadequate government funding and weak collaboration between universities and industry were identified as barriers to innovation and professional development. According to her, continued decline in the attractiveness of Engineering could create a long-term dependence on foreign expertise and potentially weaken Malaysia's technological self-sufficiency.

From her perspective, English Literature should not simply be evaluated according to immediate employment outcomes. She acknowledged that literature develops **critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and cultural awareness**, but she questioned whether its employability value should be overstated when the discipline is not connected to practical applications. She suggested that English Literature may become more economically valuable when combined with areas such as education, communication, or public policy. Thus, while she recognised the cultural and intellectual importance of the discipline, she viewed its economic contribution as more indirect compared with professionally specialised fields.

The academic perspective was further demonstrated by a **university lecturer**, who strongly emphasised the transferable skills associated with English Literature. She explained that her degree developed her abilities in analytical reading, persuasive writing, and audience awareness, which she subsequently applied to areas such as content planning and branding. She also argued that English Literature provides considerable **career flexibility**, allowing graduates to move into marketing, media, communications, and other industries without necessarily requiring additional formal qualifications. In her view, the assumption that humanities degrees have little economic value fails to recognise the increasing importance of communication skills in the modern digital economy.

She also challenged the perception that English Literature is academically easier than Engineering. She explained that literary studies require students to engage with abstract concepts, theoretical perspectives, com-



plex texts, and sustained critical writing. Unlike technical disciplines where problems may often have a clearly defined answer, literature requires students to develop and defend interpretations using evidence and reasoning. This process requires intellectual independence and the ability to tolerate ambiguity. Regarding Engineering, she acknowledged its intellectual difficulty and importance to society but argued that Engineering education can sometimes be too isolated from interdisciplinary perspectives. She suggested that engineers with stronger communication and humanities skills may be better prepared for leadership positions because technical knowledge alone is insufficient when dealing with organisations, stakeholders, and the wider public.

A university lecturer, similarly defended the academic value of English Literature. He argued that literary study requires sustained critical reading, theoretical engagement, and the ability to defend interpretations under scrutiny. Because literature does not always provide one definitive answer, students must develop independent reasoning and learn to deal with uncertainty. He therefore viewed English Literature as a long-term investment in skills such as interpretive sensitivity, rhetorical awareness, and adaptability. According to him, these abilities may become increasingly valuable as graduates progress into management and leadership positions. He also argued that the absence of a fixed career pathway can allow literature graduates to adapt to changing organisational requirements.

At the same time, he recognised the **technical indispensability of Engineering**. However, he criticised an educational model that may prioritise efficiency and technical optimisation without giving sufficient attention to social, ethical, and environmental considerations. He argued that engineers may require humanities-trained professionals to translate complex technical information into accessible narratives for clients, stakeholders, and the public. This is particularly relevant to areas involving sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility. Therefore, rather than viewing Engineering and English Literature as completely separate disciplines, he suggested that their strengths are complementary. Engineering provides technical and problem-solving capabilities, while humanities contribute communication, interpretation, and ethical awareness.

Finally, **a PhD scholar cum teacher**, described English Literature as a discipline that trains individuals to operate effectively in situations involving ambiguity and uncertainty. She explained that literary analysis requires students to consider multiple interpretations, construct arguments without always having definitive answers, and understand context and subtext. She believed that these skills are transferable to modern industries involving branding, corporate communication, narrative construction, and audience engagement. Her own professional experience demonstrated the relevance of English Literature to tasks such as drafting corporate narratives, crisis communication, and stakeholder engagement.

She further emphasised **professional adaptability and leadership skills** as important advantages of humanities education. She argued that humanities graduates are trained to interpret context and nuance, which can be particularly valuable in management and organisational decision-making. In her comparison, Engineering develops technical precision and structured problem-solving, whereas English Literature develops judgement, interpretive insight, and communication. She therefore concluded that both disciplines contribute different but important forms of knowledge to modern organisations.

Overall, the expert interviews demonstrated that perceptions of Engineering and English Literature were more complex than the traditional assumption that **STEM provided superior employment prospects while humanities provide limited economic value**. The Engineering experts highlighted challenges such as market saturation, modest starting salaries, skills mismatches, long working hours, insufficient funding, and declining student interest. Meanwhile, the humanities-oriented experts emphasised transferable communication skills, adaptability, critical thinking, judgement, and career mobility. However, the interviews also revealed that English Literature faced limitations, particularly in terms of direct vocational pathways and economic stability in areas with limited creative industries. Therefore, the findings suggested that neither discipline can be categorically considered superior. Instead, their value depends on how their knowledge and skills were applied within the labour market. The comparison also indicated the potential benefits of greater **interdisciplinary integration**, where technical expertise from Engineering was combined with communication, ethical reasoning, and critical thinking developed through the Humanities.

Thus, rather than having a straightforward cause-and-effect relationship, degree enrolment and employment prospects were tied to numerous interacting factors. The results casted doubt on the notion that selecting Engineering would inevitably result in greater employment or that selecting English literature will inevitably result in worse career prospects. More precisely, employment seems to depend on things like industry demand, experience, transferable abilities, practical skills, working conditions, and how graduates use their knowledge in the job market.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to investigate the perceived value of the humanities and the sciences within the context of modern Malaysian education, using English Literature and Engineering as representative disciplines. Through qualitative, unstructured interviews with both industry professionals and academics, the research revealed that perceptions of value were neither fixed nor purely economic, nonetheless was shaped by institutional structures, labour market narratives, and dominant ideological frameworks such as Human Capital Theory and neoliberalism.

Objective 1: To identify the perceptions towards the humanities and the sciences of Malaysian professionals.

The findings indicated a clear divergence in how value was constructed across disciplines. Engineering professionals consistently highlighted issues of wage disparity, market saturation, insufficient funding, and structural rigidity within their field. Contrary to the widespread assumption that Engineering guarantees financial security, respondents revealed that salaries were highly contingent on job scope, experience, and overseas exposure. Simultaneously, English Literature professionals emphasised the intellectual rigour, adaptability, and long-term relevance of humanities training, challenging the notion that such disciplines were inherently “less valuable.” These findings suggest that professional perceptions were shaped less by intrinsic disciplinary merit and more by external economic and policy-driven conditions.

Objective 2: To obtain views towards the perceived value of English Literature and Engineering through informal interviews.

The unstructured interview format proved effective in uncovering candid and often critical reflections. Engineers acknowledged the communicative and transferable strengths of English Literature graduates, while questioning the economic tangibility of humanities pathways in a STEM-oriented economy. Conversely, literature professionals recognised the technical necessity and societal importance of Engineering yet critiqued its narrow educational focus and lack of interdisciplinary engagement. This reciprocal evaluation highlights that neither discipline exists in isolation. Instead, each was perceived as incomplete without the competencies provided by the other.

Objective 3: To discuss the respective roles of humanities and sciences in modern education.

The study demonstrated that Engineering fulfils a crucial role in technological advancement, infrastructure development, and national progress, but is increasingly constrained by funding limitations, policy neglect, and unrealistic societal expectations. English Literature, on the other hand, played a vital role in cultivating critical thinking, ethical reasoning, interpretive judgment, and communicative competence—skills that were less immediately measurable yet increasingly indispensable in complex organisational and social environment. The marginalisation of the humanities, therefore, represented not a lack of usefulness, but a systemic bias toward quantifiable outcomes.

Objective 4: To examine the importance of the coexistence of both humanities and sciences in Malaysian education.

The findings strongly supported the argument that the perceived hierarchy between the humanities and sciences was artificial and counterproductive. Engineering professionals acknowledged reliance on humanities-trained individuals to translate technical knowledge into accessible narratives, while humanities



professionals recognised the foundational role of scientific and technical expertise in societal development. This interdependence underscored the necessity of an educational ecosystem that valued coexistence rather than competition between disciplines.

In conclusion, this research reveals that the prevailing discourse surrounding educational “value” in Malaysia is heavily influenced by neoliberal and human capital ideologies that prioritise short-term economic returns over holistic intellectual development. Such a framework disproportionately restricted the humanities while simultaneously obscuring the structural challenges faced by the sciences. Reframing education beyond Return on Investment (ROI) was therefore essential. A balanced educational system—one that recognised both the instrumental contributions of the sciences and the interpretive, ethical, and cultural significance of the humanities; was crucial for sustaining not only economic growth, but also social coherence and intellectual vitality.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study had several limitations that should be noted, although it provided insightful information about the perceived worth of the humanities and sciences. A small number of Malaysian professionals made up the purposefully modest and targeted sample size. The results cannot be applied to the larger Malaysian population, though this study was suitable for a qualitative, in-depth investigation. The study's emphasis on depth of view over statistical representativeness limited its application outside of comparable professional and demographic situations. Also, this research was made for extensive use of unstructured interviews, which added subjectivity and researcher biasness during data interpretation although the respondents were good at generating complex replies. Despite attempts to maintain analytical objectivity, narrative analysis was intrinsically dependent on the researcher's interpretative lens, which may affect theme focus. Furthermore, the research focused exclusively on English Literature and Engineering as representatives of the humanities and sciences. While these disciplines were intentionally chosen due to their contrasting perceived values, yet this study do not encompass the full diversity within their respective domains. Other humanities fields such as philosophy or history, and other sciences such as medicine or data science, may yield different perceptions of value.

Future research could address these limitations by adopting a larger and more diverse sample, incorporating participants from multiple universities, industries, and socio-economic backgrounds. Expanding the scope to include policymakers and employers could also provide a more comprehensive understanding of how perceptions of educational value are formed and institutionalized. Additionally, future studies may benefit from employing a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative surveys. This would allow for both statistical validation of trends and deeper interpretive analysis, strengthening the robustness of findings. Further research could also explore additional disciplines within the humanities and sciences to determine whether the patterns observed in English Literature and Engineering are consistent across other fields. Comparative studies involving emerging disciplines, such as digital humanities or applied data science, may be particularly valuable in understanding how interdisciplinary reshapes perceptions of value. Finally, longitudinal research tracking students from university into the workforce could provide insight into how perceptions of value evolve over time and whether initial expectations align with lived professional experiences. Such studies would contribute meaningfully to policy discussions surrounding educational planning, funding allocation, and curriculum reform.

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