**Lecture Three: Characteristics of Social and Human Sciences**

**Objectives:** Students are expected to:

* Understand the main features of social and human sciences.

The study of social and human sciences helps us to understand humans and their behavior in society, orientations, occupations, expectations, etc. Those studies owe much to the overall understanding of the nature of human existence throughout history. The previous lecture shows how social and human sciences date back the old times of the Greeks and Romans, and that humans were always interested in uncovering mysteries about life in order to live in better conditions. In a nutshell, they enable people to become more aware of so many aspects and issues and contribute to the development of their nations. Some of the main characteristics of social and human sciences are illustrated in what follows:

* The main purpose of social and human sciences is the study of human society, and human relationships, interactions and various activities in society. The disciplines of social and human sciences enable us to ***develop knowledge*** about the world we live in from different perspectives and points of view. Every branch illustrates the way we behave in relation to a given component like culture, economy, society, human rights, language, art, etc. Therefore, it becomes possible to establish rules and laws that govern a given society or nation. This knowledge incorporates issues from the past, the present and even speculations about the future.
* Social and human sciences are ***complex*** and ***interdisciplinary*** in nature because trying to understand and interpret human-related behaviors and phenomena involves the juxtaposition of a number of fields.
* Social and human sciences rely on ***current data*** in order to interpret and seek answers and explanations to recent issues.
* The main feature of social science is ***the use of the scientific method*** for research and investigation (empirical nature). According to Omosulu (2013), “the scientific methods which the social sciences use while carrying out any social investigation are; experiment, measurement, hypothesis, observation, data collection, data analysis, objectivity, generalisation, sampling, etc.” (p. 1911). The humanities, however, do not rely on this method. Therefore, they are considered as analytical and subjective.
* Social sciences use ***statistical measurements*** i.e., they rely on surveys of groups of people in order to study a given social issue. According to Cohen and Lea (2004) “social and behavioral scientists need statistics more than most other scientists” (p.1). Human sciences do not rely on this method; they use criticism, analysis, description, intuition, debate, etc.
* Social sciences have largely contributed to “the development of the society through the introduction of different concepts aimed at explaining and regulating human behaviour” (Omosulu, 2013, p. 1916).

**List of References**

Omosulu, R. (2013). The main features and constraints of social science’s research methods. *International Journal of Development and Sustainability, 2*(3), 1907-1918.

Cohen, B. H. & Lea, R. B. (2004). *Essentials of statistics for the social and behavioral sciences*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.,