



# A prologue on the special issue: symposium on international business, innovation and governance: shaping the futures of smart economy (articles 9–13)

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Digital technology has revolutionised the development of cities and transformed the living of billions of people. Data-centric networking has made urban infrastructure progressively interconnected, enhancing the overall efficiency of transportation, water supply and power grids, whereas the wider applications of artificial intelligence have improved the analyses and decision-making processes in finance, public policy, national security and various business sectors. New businesses, such as eBanking, eTourism and eSports, have emerged, while a growing range of products and services are now integrated into mobile devices, including banking services, P2P money transfer, voice command, online collaboration and social apps, appointment management and food ordering, among many others. All these technologies have been given a new and transversal goal of managing our business continuity and finance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amidst celebrations for the various opportunities digital technology has created, the adoption of smart city technologies is compelled to further accelerate to build resilience and new digital solutions for survival and success so that entrepreneurs and companies can bounce back quickly from the collapse of markets and broken supply chains. Such a proliferating penetration into the many facets of our lives also raises a series of important policy, regulatory and ethical issues. A plethora of academic research has studied the impacts of digital transformation on the efficiency of governments, businesses, financial institutions and non-government organisations, while other studies have analysed how organisations should structure themselves, both within and across organisational boundaries, to embrace digitalisation and innovation at various levels of their operations in order to stay sophisticated and competitive. However, the applicability and generalizability of the rules for survival and success derived from these studies may no longer be as valid as they once were.

With the growing concern about how human rights could be safeguarded amid the pandemic and in the digital age, cybersecurity and network surveillance is playing a

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more significant role in information technology. A growing number of studies have also enriched our understanding of the drastic changes brought by disruptive innovations and the major barriers preventing consumers from adopting digital services in different social, economic, political, technological and legislative environments. At the heart of these research priorities is the question of why, how and under what conditions digitalisation, the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence could help shape a business ecosystem and the moral economy that guarantees the quality of life across time and conditions.

Building on the success of the past exchanges, the Institute of International Business and Governance (IIBG) at Hong Kong Metropolitan University organised its 4th Annual Academia-Industry Exchange 'International Business, Innovation & Governance: Shaping the Futures of Smart Economy' on 4 December 2020. Four research articles by the participants were selected for the Special Issue. The findings of which provide a good range of insights and opinions to offer new approaches to sustainable development across different units of analysis. The first article entitled 'The impacts of COVID-19 on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong' written by Mei-ling Wong unfolds the impacts of COVID-19 on the foreign domestic workers in both home and host country which has largely not been examined. The inequalities they faced, their sacrifices and their contributions to the Hong Kong economy have not received the attention they deserved. Wong's study shows that the uncertainty as to which approaches to follow was intensified by the worsening working conditions, employment rights and entitlements during the pandemic. The second article entitled 'The Dark Side of Customer Analytics: The Ethics of Retailing' by Goi Chai-lee establishes the relationship between ethics in customer analytics and customer confidence and satisfaction. By reviewing the process of customer analytics, the characteristics of input and the relevant applications, the author uncovered a good range of undesired properties of customer analytics. The third article entitled 'Does Corporate Social Responsibility Affect Generation Z Purchase Intention in the Food Industry' by Wong Man-chung provides an analysis on how corporate social responsibility of firms can affect the consumer patterns of the over 100 generation Z respondents. Seven CSR categories influencing purchase intention were affected. The fourth article entitled 'Supply Chain 4.0: The impact of supply chain digitalisation and integration on firm performance' by David Liu and Weisheng Chiu used data from 264 Chinese employees to analyse the effects of supply chain digitalisation and internal integrity on firm performance to financial goals. Such an insightful analysis was extended to address the need for meeting ethical goals and developing sustainability in the supply chain.

Several colleagues at the business school of Hong Kong Metropolitan University have contributed to the selection process of this special issue of the journal. We wish to acknowledge and sincerely thank the Editor-in-Chief, Professor Allan Chan for allowing the Special Issue to proceed and for helping us deal with all kinds of problems along the way. We also wish to thank all the authors, reviewers and journal personnel whose hard work and dedicated efforts have made this Special Issue possible.

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