

# Preface

In an era characterised by rapid globalisation, technological transformation and increasing stakeholder expectations, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a voluntary corporate initiative into a strategic imperative for organisations seeking to achieve sustainable and ethical business practices.

Having been actively engaged in academic teaching, research and scholarship in corporate social responsibility since 1997 including the publication of more than 50 scholarly articles on social responsibility, it is both an honour and a privilege to present this Special Issue. The themes explored throughout this volume reflect not only the continuing evolution of CSR theory and practice but also their close alignment with Malaysia's aspirations towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030. It is hoped that the diverse contributions presented here will enrich scholarly discourse, foster meaningful collaboration among researchers and practitioners, and provide valuable insights for advancing responsible, ethical and sustainable business practices.

This special issue *Corporate Social Responsibility in the Modern Era: Innovations, Practices, and Perspectives*, is a scholarly outcome of the **11th International Conference on Social Responsibility, Ethics and Sustainable Business (ICSR 2024)**, held in Putrajaya, Malaysia from **5–7 September 2024**. This significant gathering brought together scholars, practitioners and policymakers from across the globe to exchange insights, share research findings and explore innovative approaches to responsible business, ethics and sustainability. Now in its eleventh edition, ICSR has established itself as a recognised international platform for fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, promoting collaborative research and advancing scholarship and professional practice in corporate social responsibility, ethics and sustainable business.

The papers featured in this special issue represent selected contributions from the conference and have undergone a rigorous peer-review process to ensure their scholarly quality, originality and relevance. Collectively, they provide fresh perspectives on the evolving landscape of CSR and examine contemporary issues that are shaping responsible business practices across different sectors and regions.

The contributions explore a wide range of themes, including strategic CSR communication and storytelling, stakeholder engagement, sustainability reporting, emerging technologies such as blockchain for transparency and accountability, cultural influences on CSR implementation, ethical leadership and the unique challenges encountered by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and organisations operating in emerging markets. By

integrating theoretical insights with practical applications, this publication aspires to serve not only as an academic resource but also as an essential tool for practitioners aiming to enhance their CSR strategies and outcomes.

Collectively, the articles underscore the importance of a holistic approach to responsible corporate practices that strengthens organisational reputation while contributing to sustainable economic and social development. As CSR continues to shape business strategy and stakeholder engagement, this Special Issue offers critical insights to inform and empower organisations across diverse sectors.

It is our hope that the diverse perspectives presented in this volume will stimulate further research, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and inspire organisations to adopt more responsible, transparent and sustainable approaches to governance and business practice. The knowledge shared by the contributors demonstrates that meaningful progress towards sustainable development requires continuous dialogue, innovation and collective commitment among academia, industry, government and civil society.

This Special Issue will be of interest to academics, researchers, practitioners, students, policymakers and non-governmental organisations seeking deeper insights into the evolving theory and practice of corporate social responsibility.

On behalf of the Editorial Team, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to all authors for their valuable contributions, the reviewers for their constructive evaluations, and the members of the Scientific and Organising Committees whose dedication and professionalism have made both ICSR 2024 and this Special Issue possible. Their collective efforts have helped produce a publication that we hope will make a meaningful contribution to the advancement of corporate social responsibility scholarship and practice.

As we embark on this journey through the pages of this special issue, we invite our readers to engage deeply with the content. It is our hope that the lessons learned and strategies discussed will inspire transformative changes in corporate practices, ultimately fostering enhanced trust, strengthened stakeholder relationships, and sustainable growth. Together, let us embrace the opportunities ahead to advance responsible and ethical business conduct.

**Guest Editor:**

Jamilah Hj. Ahmad (Prof. Dr.)