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The role of social science research: Some requirements for Vietnam

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Abstract---Social science research is an important field in the scientific background of almost every country. In the history of development, social science has made great contributions to the development of mankind in general as well as the socio-economic development of communities and countries in particular. Social science research helps humanity to have diverse perspectives on real life, to interpret and explain the processes of movement and development, as well as to have a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences of relationships and predict the next developments of events and phenomena in human life. However, at present, social science research in the world and in Vietnam is not really valued, so it has not been properly invested. Therefore, it is necessary to have solutions for the development of social science research, to meet the increasing demands of social life and international integration.

Keywords---research, social sciences, roles, requirements, Vietnam.

Introduction

The social sciences can be defined as the scientific study of human society and social relationships. They include the disciplines of sociology, social psychology, anthropology, social policy, human geography, political science and economics – as well as interdisciplinary fields such migration studies, science and technology studies and global health. These disciplines and fields cover a host of potential research topics and questions – and also a wide range of underpinning philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality (ontology), how we should study that reality (epistemology) and what study designs and methods we might use (methodology). Social science research can be conceptual or empirical, quantitative or qualitative, and descriptive or analytical – or a combination of all these (Greenhalgh, T, 2018).

Social science research is widely regarded as providing substantial benefits to individuals and to local, regional, national, and international communities. Some social scientists have identified a broad array of categories of such benefits. But

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they have not often done this in a systematic fashion. On occasion they have asserted that, if estimated using a monetary measure, these benefits would be large. For example, one claim made for the often maligned field of macroeconomics is that because of the insights of researchers ranging from John Maynard Keynes to Milton Friedman developed economies have avoided catastrophic recessions and rampant hyperinflation since the end of the 1930s (Vincent H. Smith, 1998).

Norton and Schuh (1981) argued that "A common thread running through most types of social science research is that the output is information rather than a new or improved product." Clearly, they did not mean to imply that information is not a commodity, but that social scientists, unlike some physical scientists, do not generally directly produce new physical products other than the products needed to create and transmit information such as books, reports, computer software, and articles.

Ruttan suggests that the first step in measuring the benefits of social science research should be to specify the sources of demand for that knowledge. He then argues that: The demand for knowledge in economics and in the other social sciences - as well as in related professions such as law, business and social service - is derived primarily from the demand for institutional change and improvements in institutional performance (Ruttan 1984, 551).

Social science is a product of human's creative process, so it is historical and has the characteristics of different eras and it moves according to the movement and development of society. But social science is also a scientific field, so it is predictive and contributes to the improvement and transformation of society to different degrees. Therefore, talking about the sciences for the socio-economic development of a country, community or locality is always a large and difficult issue. In this article, we want to discuss three main issues: The role of social science research in the socio-economic development of the world in general and Vietnam in particular; important factors in the present era have influenced the study of social sciences; some recommendations to improve social science research activities in Vietnam.

The Role of Social Science *For the world*

The role of social science research in socio-economic development seems to be a simple question that anyone in this field can answer. However, it is not simple at all because this is a complex problem. The structure of social science itself is complicated, the development process is even more complicated so it is not easy to encapsulate the role of social science in life. And this issue has been interested by many scholars. Any discipline in the social science system also asserts its role from the introductory lessons. And they also affirm their social position through the role of the industry in development. But practice is so diverse and rapidly changing that it is not easy to generalize the role of science to a few opinions. The extremely important issue that has long been interested by many researchers is the applicability of social science to the production of material wealth as well as to the development process. Not all social sciences are easy to put into application,

especially in the field of development. But it is not possible to underestimate the role of social science in the development process. The specificity of the social sciences, which is both critical and practical, should give them a distinct place between the natural sciences and philosophy. In fact, the social science researcher can be expected to be both an intellectual and an expert at the same time. That is, both thinking and practicing. Over the next few decades, the main challenge for the social sciences will be to bridge the gap between professional and intellectual cultures, and between constructivism and realism as their distinctive features.

Social sciences have always played an important role in the development of mankind, especially in the formulation, promulgation and implementation of development policies. The social sciences are capable of providing decision-makers with a rich set of information, concepts, and reasoning. All of these data can contribute to making political action more appropriate because there is a basis for a better understanding of current conditions and more likely, to achieve outcomes whereby those conditions are met. Accepted. There are times when people attach too much importance to and give priority to the development of science and technology and underestimate the role of social science. Especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, science and technology changed the entire face of the world. But it also contributed to the consequence of the outbreak of large-scale wars. Experiencing two world wars makes people rethink the position of the sciences, including the social sciences. After World War II, social scientists emphasized the role of social science in cognitive processes and development strategy planning at both the macro and micro level. These discussions have been summarized by researcher Carol Hirschon Weiss (Carol Hirschon Weiss is an American scholar of education and policy analysis. She is the Beatrice B. Whiting Professor of Education at the Harvard School of Graduate Education) and emphasized the following four main roles: (i). Reflecting on the reality, scope and distribution of social problems, describing the evolution of social problems. (ii). Analyze the source of problems and their growing causes. (iii). Research and propose comparative methods in approaching these issues in order to determine the best policies to solve social problems. (iv). Evaluate the consequences of accepted policies and programs to decide whether to continue pursuing or stopping or to change. Because of this role, social science research needs to provide guidelines for improving policies and improving humanity (Carol Hirschon Weiss).

Thus, it can be summarized that, in the current context, social science research plays an important role in the development process, especially according to the orientations and strategies of sustainable development and harmonious development. The first is the epistemological role. Social science research helps people to become more aware of the nature and variability of human society, and also of the ecological landscape related to human life. Scientific interpretations help political organizations, the state and communities to find more rational development strategies. Social science is also the foundation for people to choose a more reasonable and effective action plan, suitable for a specific context. And finally, social science also has the role of forecasting change trends to help people anticipate and calculate to reduce risks or avoid the heavy consequences that change may bring.

For Vietnam

In Vietnam, the assessment and analysis of the role of social sciences in the life and development of the community and the nation is still very limited. The role and position of the social sciences are often emphasized by managers and leaders through discourses in commemorative events about the industry or related cultural and social events. And most of these discourses are encouraging and encouraging rather than emphasizing the role and position of the social sciences in life. The interest shown by discourses alone is not enough for social science to develop, especially in the context that it is still heavily influenced by ideology, political system and state management. Because of that, Vietnam have a whole social science that does political work and propagates policies, but there are not many quality social science studies that make real contributions to the development of society and of the nation. Social administrators have not really attached importance to the role of social science, have not really sought to accept the results of social science research into the process of social governance, and are not ready to invite new stakeholders. Social scientists participate in the process of formulating and implementing development policies and projects. In the opposite direction, social scientists, for the most part, are more concerned with their "preaching" position with their colleagues and communities rather than trying to break down ideological barriers, from the political apparatus towards research works of real quality and value.

Recently, when the integration into the world deepens, the problem of social science research and social scientists has been reviewed and re-evaluated. It is also an important issue to reposition the development process of the country. It is also necessary to emphasize that: To develop and implement a policy, a development project, it is necessary to have the support of social science to perceive as well as select options and evaluate its impacts. . That limits many inadequacies, minimizes negative impacts, and minimizes risks for stakeholders. However, that is not easy. Currently, there is a situation where domestic learners understand Vietnam but do not have the theories and approaches in the West, and those who study in the West do not understand the internals of Vietnam. Both sides need time to learn, learn more. Meanwhile, language is still a barrier for us. If in Japan, the Western theoretical system is very fully translated, in our country the translation is still at the level of "skewed" and patchy. To overcome these difficulties, it is important to develop education to keep pace with the development of the world (Pham Quang Minh, 2019).

In the current context, for sustainable and healthy development, it is necessary to enhance the role of social science research, raise the status as well as create conditions for researchers to contribute more. Favorable conditions for the use of research include an open political system that values rationality, an active community of researchers dedicated to public policy-relational works, currents of solid channel capable of disseminating research results. It also includes regular dialogue between researchers and decision-makers, who are sufficiently qualified in the social sciences to be able to appreciate and understand such messages (Bui Thanh Dinh, 2021).

Some Factors Strongly Affecting Us to Social Science Research in the Current Context

The twentieth century has witnessed a century of social science flourishing, and in the first decades of the twenty-first century, great changes in the social science system in countries around the world have profoundly affected the social sciences. However, the crisis that took place over the last two decades of the twentieth century also had a strong impact on society and the social sciences. And at the beginning of the twenty-first century, social science has changed rapidly to meet the new requirements of social life as well as to ensure its valuable existence in the new context. And increasingly, the humanities and social sciences are changing more rapidly under the influence of many different factors, of which the two most powerful factors are the globalization process and the development of technology.

Globalization of social science research

Globalization of the social sciences manifests itself in many aspects, of which the most prominent is the creation of a system of criteria for assessing the social sciences as well as the setting of global goals for the sciences. The first is the race for international publication of research results in the humanities and social sciences (and of course other scientific fields). Prestigious international journals formed with a system of evaluation criteria and rigorous scientific review process become reliable addresses in the race for international publication of research results. And this journal system is also evaluated according to a system of criteria to rank the journals themselves. From here, the race for international publication spread to research and training institutions as well as the network of researchers. Universities and research institutes consider the number of articles published internationally in prestigious international journals as an important goal to pursue. Many institutions have offered great rewards for research published internationally in prestigious journals. It further accelerates the process of globalization of the social sciences, as the research from here is directed towards the interest of international journals as well as the technical process as well as the theory, methodology and perception. They try to get their research accepted by international journals. And vice versa, when there are many international publications, it also helps researchers, research and training institutions “become more prestigious” in the academic community. Titles such as international expert, prestigious international expert or international scholar become the goals and titles that researchers aim for. The second is the race to rank research and training institutions. It is a ranking of universities to consider the prestige and quality of universities in the world, in the region as well as in the country. In scientific ranking, international publication is also an important criterion for evaluation. Two races for international publication and scientific ranking according to global criteria have drastically changed the face of social sciences, from local and national orientation to global and national orientation.

The races for scientific ranking as well as international publication, although large, are also narrow, because it mainly focuses on the English language community, especially international publications. And basically, the benefits are mainly for researchers and research and training institutions. Researchers with

many international publications gain the title of international experts, international prestigious scholars and have conditions to access other resources or gain other benefits from society as well as other benefits. Universities and research institutes with many international publications and high rankings also become prestigious scientific institutions and can enroll students more easily and attract more attention. But the object of study of the social sciences, which is the person that researchers exploit the documentary information to study obtained from the globalization of the social sciences, becomes an important question.

Digital impact on social science research

The scientific and technological revolution has increasingly profoundly impacted the research activities of the social sciences. Especially the development of digital and the process of digitizing scientific databases. Digital and information technology have brought the academic community closer together to discuss, exchange views and share scientific research results. It helps to form specialized and interdisciplinary academic communities, based on a variety of linkages from research subjects, research objectives, research theories, research methods or schools and perspectives. These groups are constantly expanding their connections and delving into academic interests to make an impact on the community. This creates a new development direction of social science based on large, diverse and multidimensional databases.

In the past, scientific sources were concentrated mainly in libraries and archives. But today, everything has completely changed. Science and technology and digital technology make it possible for researchers to quickly access academic resources in remote locations thousands of kilometers away. The formation of academic networks also creates space for scholars to share resources and discuss academic perspectives with each other more easily. Academic institutions have digitized scientific documents to form big data systems and are available to share with interested scholars on a free or fee basis, depending on the institution, depending on the document. . But that makes it easier for researchers to access the material. And the digitized document sources are also diverse, multidimensional, not restricted in terms of subjects, methods or research objectives as well as political ideologies.

Another important consequence that information and digital technologies bring to the social sciences is to change the relationship between researchers and research subjects. Previously, the activity of producing knowledge was the prerogative of researchers. Research subjects are almost independent of the knowledge production of researchers, even though they are important data providers and databases in social science research. But with the development of information technology and digital, it has made it possible for ordinary people, who are considered as research subjects, to also participate in the production and evaluation of relevant scientific knowledge. Or people who are research subjects can also read and comment on studies related to them by researchers published in journals and shared on the internet. That is, science and technology and digital technology have created conditions for research subjects to participate in the production of knowledge or evaluate and discuss scientific knowledge related to them, which was previously a problem.

Vietnam is in the early stages of social science globalization and digital transformation. In the past decade or so, the process of participating in the international publishing race as well as the ranking of scientific institutions has been continuously promoted. On the one hand, it helps Vietnam's social sciences to integrate more strongly and deeply with the social sciences in the world. On the other hand, it also pushes the social sciences beyond the country's actual development, so that the application also faces many difficulties. Especially the relationship between the researcher and the research object also changes. However, in general, because it is at the beginning of the transition, the ambiguity between black and white, between science and politics and economics is still unclear. The dynamics related to scientific research are still unpredictable, making the role of the social sciences all the more ambiguous. This has a significant impact on research in the social sciences.

Some Recommendations to Improve the Efficiency of Social Science Research

Firstly, it is necessary to determine the directions of social science research that the State needs to invest in, and the investment capital taken from the State budget. Thus, the State needs to have a strategy for social science development, which sets out research orientations (basic research, applied research) and needs to be invested in each phase.

Second, improve the scientific research management mechanism in general, and social science research management in particular. The scientific research management mechanism is related to three important issues, namely: Funding mechanism, mechanism for selecting organizations and individuals to assign research topics are effective, fair and efficient. Carry out supervision of research implementation and acceptance of the topic.

The funding mechanism must be consistent with the current budgetary decentralization mechanism. The current budget is divided into two levels, mainly central and local. It is necessary to identify the types of topics belonging to the local budget and the types of topics under the central budget based on the criteria of the scope of application and use of the project's products. The research projects ordered by the locality are funded by the local budget for the purpose of local socio-economic development. These types of topics are applicable in the local area. The topics funded by the central budget must have a wide influence on the national level, serving the development of basic research, applied research, industry development, and socio-economic development of the country.

It is necessary to have an effective and transparent mechanism to select qualified organizations and individuals who meet the standards of qualifications, capacity and ability to run an organization to conduct a research on order. State's products, scientific management units are representative of the State's research capital in branches and localities. How to create conditions for scientists to do research, create creative ability in the field of socio-economic, who will have access to receive research topics? The answer is that all scientists, but the person assigned to carry out the project, receiving funding for research is not everything, but must be scientists with research ability, ability to organize research. The

current scientific management mechanism also has bidding notices, but the bidding criteria are not reasonable. Scientific management is still heavy on administrative and paperwork, ineffective and unprofessional. To professionalize the management of scientific research, it is necessary to establish research programs in the way of project management. The program and project management board will supervise the steps of implementing the project according to the main contract, sub-contract, according to the stages of implementation commitment, intermediate products and output products. There should be a mechanism to give autonomy to program directors, provide a method for selecting program directors, and develop criteria for evaluating research results according to the stages of projects and programs (Nguyen Thi Canh, 2012).

Third, in monitoring, in addition to having a general information network about research in the social sciences, it is necessary to define criteria for evaluating scientific journals where scientific results are published. Research results (except for some special works with state secrets) will be published in domestic and foreign journals. On the basis of research articles published in journals, research articles can be classified. On the other hand, in the requirements for output products of a research project, there should be regulations depending on the level of investment for each topic that require the output of research or published scientific articles in the field of research. Articles published in international or domestic journals.

Fourth, along with perfecting the social science research management mechanism, there must be standards for classifying scientific articles and scientific journals. The concept of what is a scientific article and what is a scientific journal must be clarified. Scientific articles are not news articles or commentary from other people's opinions. Scientific articles must show research results from the foundation of the set goals, based on scientific implementation methods to achieve the goals, and the achieved research results must have new discoveries of the author. It is necessary to re-evaluate Vietnam's current specialized journals, which types of journals are academic, which types of journals only show specialized scientific information, not where scientific research results are published. It is necessary to define a scientific journal as a journal that must serve the output of scientific research results, not heavy on information gathering.

Fifth, associate social science research with training in social sciences. Research programs in the social sciences, which require outputs beyond research products, must have training products at the master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral levels. The training product of a research program needs to have how many graduate students and doctoral students perform any research stages under the guidance of leading officials and experts participating in the research program. In the research cost estimate of each program there should be a cost for conducting practical training to do this research. The part of costs in programs and projects must be regulated according to the scholarship policy, through which PhD students who want to receive a research scholarship must go through the selection process. If selected, they will be able to participate in research projects that both serve to perform some stages of the research, and improve the research capacity of the PhD student, the research results of the PhD student in the

research topics. Social science research paper by chosen field is an important part of doctoral thesis.

Sixth, on the part of research institutions, it is necessary to renew the planning of social science research activities and the financial mechanism. The plan of social science research activities must be based on the capacity of each institution, each institute, the ability to diversify financial sources in scientific research, and the training plan. Scientific research in schools and institutes can be funded from many sources (1) the state budget according to the orders of state agencies; (2) sources from enterprises according to orders of economic organizations; (3) international funding under international cooperation projects. The State supervises the budget capital, but it also needs to understand the capacity of the research units by the ability to generate other financial sources as shown in the financial statements in accordance with the provisions of current law. This is also the basis for assessing the research capacity of organizations (schools, institutes) when considering and assigning programs/themes.

Seventh, it is necessary to create diverse research and training cooperative relationships with bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation between training institutions and research institutions. When bidding for research, it is possible to link between organizations (schools, institutes) to cooperate in implementing a research program or project. In addition, the results of social science research must be exchanged on a broader scale, including at the national (universities, domestic research institutes), regional and international levels. Conducting research exchanges on the basis of forming specialized associations, establishing information networks, forming specialized research journals not only of a university or an institute but also a collaborative scientific journal. , the association of many schools and institutes participating in specialized associations, improving the prestige of specialized scientific journals by ranking journals and publishing the results of annual scientific journals. High-ranking scientific journals can participate in international ranking tests. This is also a channel to monitor the quality of social science research works (Nguyen Thi Canh, 2012).

Conclusion

Social science research will provide important scientific arguments for other fields, profoundly impacting all areas of social life. However, the position and role of social science in general and social science research in particular have not been properly recognized, and investment in this sector is still limited. In order to contribute a small part to social science research activities to meet the increasing demand of the times, the article makes a number of recommendations and hopes for social science research activities in research institutes, universities and colleges. Vietnam's universities will make changes, making real contributions to the country's economic development and integration process, and thereby can improve the quality of human resource training in economics, management and society, bringing the level of training and social science research of Vietnam closer to the regional and international ones.

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