Digital Transformation in Teaching Social Sciences and Humanities at Universities in Vietnam: From Awareness to Practice

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Abstract— *Digital transformation is an inevitable teaching trend in higher education in Vietnam today. With the ability to be flexible, interactive, and self-study, digital transformation contributes to innovating teaching methods, improving and enhancing the quality of comprehensive education, and meeting the trend of globalization and international integ ration. This article focuses on the significance of changing "perception" for the success of digital transformation in education in general, and digital transformation in teaching social sciences and humanities at Vietnamese universities in particular.*

Keywords— *Digital transformation, teaching, social sciences and humanities, university, perception.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The fourth industrial revolution, focusing on digital transformation, has an increasingly strong and profound impact on a global scale. Many opportunities and challenges have opened up for Vietnam in all areas of social life in general and education in particular. In Vietnam, within the system of subjects included in the training programs at universities, social sciences, and humanities have an important position and role. Through these subjects, learners are equipped with the knowledge, contributing to forming a worldview, scientific methodology, and communist outlook on life; building in learners' beliefs, revolutionary ideals, political mettle, steadfast ideological stance, ethics, lifestyle, and good personality. On that basis, they actively contributed to the struggle in the field of ideology and theory, protecting the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and maintaining the orientation and path of building Vietnam. This is of particular importance for human resources to meet the requirements of innovation, industrialization, and modernization of the country in the context of internationalization and integration. However, social sciences and humanities are not considered attractive subjects, stimulating the interest in learning and research for the majority of learners, but on the contrary, they are very dry, easy to get bored, and limit the ability to apply and apply knowledge into practice. There are many objective and subjective reasons, but first of all, it is the responsibility of those directly involved in teaching.

Joining hands in the digital transformation process in Vietnam today, first of all, digital transformation in higher education in Vietnam, contributing to building a digital human resource with the capacity to go global, it is necessary to grasp the viewpoint on the role of awareness thoroughly; Vietnamese people; institutions and technology; digital platform; network safety and security; the participation of the political system. It is necessary to affirm the decisive role of awareness in the digital transformation process in Vietnam in general and digital transformation in higher education in particular. As those who directly participate in teaching, the team of lecturers of social sciences and humanities at higher education institutions in Vietnam, to effectively implement digital transformation in teaching, first of all, need to change awareness.

II. TEACHING SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES AT UNIVERSITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN VIETNAM

On June 3, 2020, the Prime Minister of Vietnam signed Decision No. 749/QD-TTg approving the "National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, with a vision to 2030" [1]. Accordingly, Education is the second priority sector for digital transformation after the healthcare sector. This shows the importance of education and digital transformation in the education sector plays a very important role, not only for the industry but also has a great impact on the country. So what is digital transformation and digital transformation in education? Digital transformation is a process of overall and comprehensive change of individuals and organizations in the way of life, working and production methods based on digital technologies [2]. It became popular in the world around 2015 - 2017 and by 2018, digital transformation was mentioned a lot in Vietnam. As one of the eight priority areas in implementing digital transformation, digital transformation in education is the application of digital technology in management, teaching, and learning; digitizing documents and textbooks; building a platform to share teaching and learning resources in both direct and online forms; personalizing learning content by applying digital and smart technologies [1]. Digital transformation in education focuses on two main contents: digital transformation in education management and digital transformation in teaching, learning, testing, evaluation, and scientific research. In education management, it includes digitizing management information, creating large interconnected database systems, deploying online public services, and applying 4.0 technologies (AI, blockchain, data analysis, ...) to manage, operate, forecast, and support decision-making in education quickly and accurately. In teaching, learning, testing, and evaluation, it includes digitizing learning materials (electronic textbooks, electronic lectures, E-learning lecture warehouses, multiple-choice question banks), digital libraries, virtual laboratories,

deploying online training systems, and building virtual universities (cyber universities). Based on the digital transformation process, teaching still operates according to inherent rules and principles. However, in all stages of teaching activities, technical factors, teaching technology, and teaching environment have changed. These factors affect the entire teaching system, changing the way teaching is prepared and implemented, the organization of teaching, and the testing and assessment of learning outcomes. Digital transformation in teaching will support lecturers to teach more effectively, helping to differentiate teaching more thoroughly.

The context of declining quality in training, and lagging in social science and humanities research, has led to a lack of knowledge in social sciences and humanities of the young generation trained in schools, limiting the promotion of Vietnamese cultural image in the world [3], a part of them disregards and deviates from national cultural standards and identity, political mettle, and ideological stance is lacking, not steadfast in the face of complex and unpredictable changes in the world and domestic economic and political situation. Faced with the characteristics of social sciences and humanities (dry, difficult to attract learners), being confined in traditional teaching and learning methods (direct teaching, mainly presentations, passive knowledge reception, lack of practicality), social sciences and humanities lecturers control the cognitive and practical activities of learners in social sciences and humanities by applying digital technology; Sharing teaching and learning resources both in-person and online; personalizing learning content of social science and humanities subjects for learners by applying digital and smart technologies will create positive changes in the quality of teaching and learning of these subjects. Digital transformation becomes a tool, a means, creating a technical environment in which teaching activities take place more effectively, to achieve the goal optimally. Digital transformation will affect all elements of the teaching process of social sciences and humanities such as: ensuring facilities, classroom management techniques, teaching environment, lecturers (preparing teaching activities, organizing teaching in the direction of interacting with students in digital space, exploiting information technology for teaching, using active teaching methods, personalizing learning content for students by applying digital technology, smart technology...), testing and evaluating learning outcomes of social sciences and humanities. Applying information technology and digital transformation are important measures, of urgent significance, contributing positively to improving the quality of teaching social sciences and humanities at Vietnamese universities today.

III. Digital Transformation In Teaching Social Sciences And Humanities At Universities In Vietnam Starts With A Change In Perception

Along with healthcare, education is a priority sector for digital transformation in Vietnam to create a modern, flexible, fair educational environment that comprehensively develops learners' capacity and qualities to meet the requirements of the digital age and international integration. This is also a sector that has a social impact, is related to people's daily lives,

changes perceptions the fastest, brings efficiency, helps save costs, and needs to be prioritized for digital transformation first. Successful digital transformation of education will create momentum for digital transformation for other industries.

Based on digital technology, many opinions believe that the decisive factor for the success of digital transformation in general, digital transformation in education in particular, is to ensure digital infrastructure, and digital platform along with the creation of appropriate institutions and legal corridors. However, Vietnam's National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, with a vision to 2030, affirms that "awareness plays a decisive role in digital transformation". Digital transformation is first and foremost a transformation of awareness. When educators fully and correctly perceive the nature, position, role, goals, and significance of digital transformation, digital transformation in education, and especially university lecturers, including lecturers of social sciences and humanities, gradually perceive and actively and proactively transform digitally in teaching, contributing to improving the quality of education and training of human resources - digital citizens of Vietnam.

In the context of digital transformation, the quality of university teaching in general, and teaching of social sciences and humanities in particular, is determined by specific factors regarding the level of information technology and digital capacity of social sciences and humanities lecturers, and the quality of teaching methods for social sciences and humanities subjects based on the application of information technology and digital technology based on the ability to exploit and use facilities and modern technical means of social sciences and humanities lecturers. Only when realizing the necessity and the values that digital transformation brings to lecturers in the process of implementing teaching activities can we create great motivation for each lecturer of social sciences and humanities, who is inherently limited in the ability to access modern technology and techniques, to become active and proactive in researching, learning, and improving their level of information technology, digital capacity, and effectively applying them in teaching social sciences and humanities subjects.

From the very beginning, the team of lecturers of social sciences and humanities needs to have full access to specific guidance documents on the application of information technology and digital transformation in education such as Resolution No. 29-NQ/TW of the Central Executive Committee of the Party (11th tenure) on comprehensive fundamental innovation in education and training (Central Executive Committee, 2013); Project to enhance the application of information technology in educational management, support innovation in teaching-learning, scientific research deployed throughout the sector (Prime Minister, 2017); Regulations on the application of information technology in management and organization of online training; Regulations on distance learning at university level; annual guidance on information technology tasks for universities of the Ministry of Education and Training;... Especially the National Digital Transformation Program approved by the Prime Minister in June 2020. This can be considered a milestone marking Vietnam's transition from the stage of applying information technology and developing e-government to the stage of focusing on comprehensive digital

transformation for the entire population. These documents not only complete the legal framework but also directly impact the awareness and activities of university lecturers in Vietnam in general, including lecturers of social sciences and humanities.

Up to now, the entire Vietnamese higher education sector has deployed online school management software, using electronic grade books, electronic transcripts, etc. Private educational enterprises that use software for management are gradually digitized by asset management software, specialized school management software, etc. Applying this technology helps learners easily look up information when coming to the library, or lecturers and managers can manage student transcripts, timetables, or other information. In innovating teaching and learning methods, the role of information technology has become increasingly clear with the deployment of solutions for electronic classrooms, smart classrooms, digital learning material warehouses, electronic libraries, electronic textbooks, shared e-learning lecture warehouses, etc. In addition, with a learner-centered development strategy, several universities have now developed investment policies to develop information centers specializing in research and development of programs applying modern information technology to management, especially teaching and practice for students; at the same time, carrying out research activities to transfer software technology.[4].

Universities in Vietnam have also applied digital transformation in teaching methods through the use of smart devices in classrooms such as video recorders, smart desks, smart electronic boards, etc. have been put into use. The school also creates conditions for students to participate in experiences, access high technology, and even participate in virtual reality tours. Digital transformation applications in teaching methods are being widely used such as E-learning online courses, Project-based learning methods, Virtual reality learning methods, etc. This is the result of positive changes in awareness, thinking, and action of the entire Vietnamese education system implementing digital transformation in education. The quality of Vietnamese higher education in general, and the quality of teaching and learning of social sciences and humanities in particular, will certainly improve, in the direction of gradually catching up and integrating with the world in the digital age.

However, the application of information technology and digital transformation in teaching social sciences and humanities at universities still faces many difficulties and shortcomings such as the level and knowledge of information technology, computer skills and support tools of social sciences and humanities lecturers are uneven, the information technology skills of some lecturers are not enough to exceed the threshold in using basic operations, leading to avoidance. Most teachers have not exploited information technology properly and properly in teaching to achieve high efficiency, ... have not focused on fully exploiting the benefits of information technology as a strong "breakthrough" factor in modern teaching aids of lecturers. Awareness and thinking about digital transformation, digital transformation in teaching of a part of social sciences and humanities lecturers are still limited, traditional teaching methods are like a rut, habits are difficult to

change, confusion in exploiting and promoting the role and superiority of modern teaching aids. For universities that do not specialize in training human resources for social sciences and humanities, a part of the school has the concept that political subjects are basic, secondary and theoretical subjects [5], so the way to organize classes, the attention to investing in facilities for social sciences and humanities subjects is very limited. These are obstacles for social sciences and humanities lecturers who want to improve their qualifications and apply information technology, and digital transformation in teaching.

IV. CONCLUSION

To successfully transform digital education in Vietnam requires synchronization from institutions and technology; digital platforms; network safety and security; the participation of the political system and especially awareness plays a decisive role. Teaching social sciences and humanities with many unique characteristics requires the efforts of the teaching staff to directly perform the teaching tasks. The obvious changes in the awareness of this team have created significant changes in digital transformation in teaching social sciences and humanities at the university level in Vietnam. It is necessary to continue to raise the awareness of the teaching staff, combining synchronous implementation with other solutions to bring Vietnamese higher education in general, and teaching social sciences and humanities in particular, to truly enter the digital age and integrate internationally.

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