



## Digital Transformation and Innovation in Political Education in Vietnamese Universities: Challenges and Policy Implications

Nguyen Thi Ngoc<sup>1\*</sup>, Doan Thi Hong Viet<sup>2</sup>, Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen<sup>2</sup>, Do Thi Thuy Hoa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Political Education and Educational Psychology - Hung Vuong University, Phu Tho Province, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup>Phu Tho Provincial School of Politics, Vietnam

**Abstract:** The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed higher education systems worldwide, creating new opportunities and challenges for teaching and learning. In Vietnam, digital transformation has become a strategic priority for national development and has significantly influenced the implementation of political education in universities. This study aims to examine the impact of digital transformation on political education in Vietnamese higher education institutions and to identify the opportunities, challenges, and policy implications associated with this process. The study adopts a qualitative research design based on document analysis and policy review. Academic literature, government documents, and reports from international organizations were systematically analyzed to explore the relationship between digital transformation and political education. The findings indicate that digital transformation promotes pedagogical innovation, expands access to educational resources, and enhances student engagement through interactive and learner-centered approaches. However, the implementation of digital political education also faces several challenges, including unequal access to digital infrastructure, limited digital competencies among lecturers and students, and the increasing spread of misinformation and ideologically biased content in digital environments. The study argues that successful digital transformation in political education requires comprehensive strategies that integrate technological innovation with curriculum reform, digital literacy, and civic education. Universities should strengthen digital competencies, redesign political education curricula, and promote critical thinking and responsible digital citizenship among students. The findings contribute to the growing literature on digital transformation and political education and provide practical recommendations for policymakers and higher education institutions in Vietnam and other developing countries undergoing similar educational transitions.

**Keywords:** Digital Transformation, Political Education, Higher Education, Digital Citizenship, Educational Innovation, Vietnam.

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### Research Paper

**\*Corresponding Author:**

*Nguyen Thi Ngoc*  
Faculty of Political Education and Educational Psychology - Hung Vuong University, Phu Tho Province, Vietnam

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has become one of the most significant forces reshaping contemporary higher education. The rapid development of artificial intelligence, big data, cloud computing, and digital communication technologies has fundamentally changed the ways knowledge is produced, disseminated, and consumed. Universities worldwide are increasingly integrating digital technologies into teaching, learning, and institutional management in order to improve educational quality and respond to the demands of the knowledge economy.

In recent years, digital transformation has emerged as a strategic priority in Vietnam's national development agenda. Government policies have emphasized the importance of developing a digital government, digital economy, and digital society as essential components of modernization and international integration. The higher education sector has consequently been encouraged to adopt digital technologies and innovative pedagogical approaches to enhance educational effectiveness and institutional competitiveness.

Within the Vietnamese higher education system, political education occupies a distinctive and

important position. Courses on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, the History of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and the Party's guidelines and policies are compulsory subjects for undergraduate students. Beyond the transmission of political knowledge, these courses aim to cultivate political awareness, civic responsibility, moral values, and national identity among young people. Political education therefore plays an essential role in preparing students to become responsible citizens and active participants in social development.

Despite its significance, political education in Vietnam faces numerous challenges. Traditional teaching methods have frequently been criticized for emphasizing theoretical knowledge and memorization while providing limited opportunities for active learning, critical thinking, and practical application. Many students perceive political theory courses as abstract and disconnected from contemporary social realities, resulting in low levels of motivation and engagement. Consequently, improving the quality and relevance of political education has become a major concern for educators and policymakers.

Digital transformation presents both opportunities and challenges for political education. On the one hand, digital technologies can diversify teaching methods, expand access to educational resources, and create more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Online platforms, multimedia resources, and virtual discussions can make political education more engaging and responsive to students' needs and expectations. On the other hand, digital environments expose students to vast amounts of information, including misinformation, ideological bias, and conflicting political perspectives. These developments create new challenges for political socialization and the cultivation of civic values.

Although numerous studies have examined digital transformation in higher education, relatively limited attention has been devoted to its implications for political education, particularly in developing countries. Existing research has primarily focused on technological adoption and online learning, while the specific characteristics and objectives of political education remain underexplored. The Vietnamese context therefore provides an important case for examining how digital transformation influences political education and what strategies are needed to improve its effectiveness.

Accordingly, this study addresses three research questions: (1) How does digital transformation influence political education in Vietnamese universities? (2) What opportunities and challenges emerge during the implementation of digital political education? and (3) What policy measures can enhance the effectiveness of political education in the digital era? By addressing these questions, the study seeks to contribute to the literature

on educational transformation and provide practical recommendations for policymakers and higher education institutions in Vietnam and other developing countries experiencing similar digital transitions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Digital Transformation in Higher Education

Digital transformation has become a major trend in higher education worldwide. Although the concept is often associated with the use of information and communication technologies, scholars argue that digital transformation is a much broader process involving organizational, pedagogical, and cultural changes. It refers to the systematic integration of digital technologies into teaching, learning, research, and university governance in order to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

The rapid development of digital technologies has significantly changed the traditional model of higher education. Learning management systems, virtual classrooms, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and digital libraries have enabled universities to provide more flexible and accessible learning opportunities. Digital transformation has also accelerated the transition from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered learning by promoting interaction, collaboration, and personalized educational experiences.

Several studies suggest that digital transformation offers important benefits for higher education institutions. First, digital technologies increase access to educational resources by removing geographical and temporal barriers. Students can access learning materials, academic databases, and online courses regardless of their physical location. Second, digital technologies facilitate innovative pedagogical approaches, including blended learning, flipped classrooms, and collaborative learning. Third, digital transformation improves institutional efficiency through digital administration, online assessment, and data-driven decision-making.

However, scholars also identify several challenges associated with digital transformation. Educational inequalities remain a major concern because access to digital technologies and technological competencies differs considerably among institutions and students. Furthermore, many universities experience difficulties in adapting their pedagogical practices to digital environments. The effectiveness of digital transformation therefore depends not only on technological investment but also on institutional readiness, professional development, and organizational change.

### 2.2. Political Education in the Digital Era

Political education has traditionally been regarded as an important mechanism for cultivating civic

responsibility, political awareness, and social values among students. In many countries, political education aims to prepare young people for democratic participation and responsible citizenship. Educational institutions play an essential role in helping students understand political systems, public affairs, and social responsibilities.

In Vietnam, political education has a broader mission that includes ideological education and nation-building. Political theory courses seek to equip students with knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the development strategies of the Communist Party of Vietnam. Consequently, political education constitutes an integral component of the national education system and contributes to social cohesion and national development.

Despite its importance, political education has encountered numerous challenges in recent decades. Traditional teaching approaches are often criticized for emphasizing knowledge transmission and memorization while paying insufficient attention to critical thinking and active learning. Many students perceive political theory courses as highly theoretical and disconnected from contemporary social issues. These challenges have encouraged educators to seek innovative approaches that can improve student engagement and learning outcomes.

The digital era has fundamentally changed the environment in which political education operates. Students increasingly acquire political information from digital media, online communities, and social networking platforms. The abundance of information available through digital technologies creates opportunities for independent learning and political participation. At the same time, it also exposes students to misinformation, ideological polarization, and unreliable sources of information. Consequently, political education in the digital era must focus not only on knowledge transmission but also on the development of critical thinking, information literacy, and responsible digital citizenship.

### 2.3. Digital Transformation and Political Education

The relationship between digital transformation and political education has received increasing scholarly attention in recent years. Researchers argue that digital technologies can significantly improve the quality and effectiveness of political education by diversifying teaching methods and promoting student engagement.

Digital platforms and multimedia resources enable educators to present political concepts in more interactive and accessible ways. Online discussions, digital simulations, and project-based learning activities can encourage students to actively participate in the learning process and connect theoretical knowledge with contemporary political and social issues. Moreover,

digital technologies support personalized learning by allowing students to access educational materials according to their individual needs and learning preferences.

Nevertheless, the digitalization of political education also generates important challenges. The widespread availability of information through digital media has reduced the exclusive role of educational institutions in political socialization. Students are increasingly influenced by social media platforms and online communities that may disseminate inaccurate information or promote ideological extremism. Therefore, political education must adapt to the new information environment by strengthening students' abilities to critically evaluate information and participate responsibly in digital society.

### 2.4. Research Gap

Although numerous studies have investigated digital transformation in higher education, relatively limited attention has been devoted to its implications for political education, particularly in developing countries. Existing research primarily focuses on technological adoption, online learning, and educational management, while the specific characteristics and objectives of political education remain underexplored.

In the Vietnamese context, previous studies have concentrated largely on digital transformation policies and the application of educational technologies in general teaching activities. There is still limited understanding of how digital transformation influences the content, methods, and objectives of political education in universities. Furthermore, few studies have examined the opportunities and challenges associated with digital political education and their implications for educational policy.

To address these gaps, this study examines the relationship between digital transformation and political education in Vietnamese universities. By integrating perspectives from digital transformation and political socialization, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the opportunities, challenges, and policy implications of political education in the digital era.

## 3. Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two complementary theoretical perspectives: Digital Transformation Theory and Political Socialization Theory. The integration of these perspectives provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how digital transformation influences political education in Vietnamese universities.

### 3.1. Digital Transformation Theory

Digital Transformation Theory argues that technological change in education involves more than

the adoption of digital tools or online platforms. Instead, it represents a fundamental transformation of educational philosophies, pedagogical practices, organizational structures, and relationships among educational stakeholders. In higher education, digital transformation is viewed as a strategic process that integrates digital technologies into teaching, learning, research, and institutional governance in order to improve educational quality and institutional effectiveness.

From this perspective, digital technologies such as learning management systems, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and digital communication platforms create new opportunities for innovation in teaching and learning. They facilitate interactive learning, personalized instruction, and greater access to educational resources. Consequently, universities are increasingly required to redesign their curricula, teaching methods, and assessment systems to adapt to rapidly changing technological environments.

However, Digital Transformation Theory also recognizes that technological innovation alone cannot guarantee educational improvement. Successful transformation depends on institutional readiness, digital competencies, leadership support, and the ability of educational institutions to manage organizational change. Therefore, the theory provides an appropriate framework for examining both the opportunities and challenges associated with digital political education.

### 3.2. Political Socialization Theory

Political Socialization Theory explains how individuals acquire political knowledge, values, attitudes, and behaviors that enable them to participate effectively in society. Political socialization occurs through various agents, including family, schools, peer groups, mass media, and social institutions. Among these agents, educational institutions play a particularly important role because they provide formal opportunities for the development of political awareness and civic responsibility.

In the Vietnamese context, political education functions as an institutional mechanism of political socialization. Through political theory courses, universities seek to cultivate students' understanding of national development, political values, civic responsibilities, and social obligations. Political education therefore contributes not only to knowledge acquisition but also to the formation of responsible citizenship and national identity.

The digital era has significantly transformed the process of political socialization. Students increasingly obtain political information from social media, online communities, and digital platforms rather than solely from formal educational institutions. Consequently, universities no longer possess exclusive authority in

shaping political knowledge and values. Political education must therefore equip students with critical thinking skills, information literacy, and the ability to evaluate diverse and sometimes contradictory information sources.

### 3.3. Conceptual Framework

Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study assumes that digital transformation directly influences political education through several mechanisms, including pedagogical innovation, expanded access to educational resources, increased student engagement, and exposure to diverse information environments. These developments create both opportunities and challenges for political education.

The effectiveness of digital political education depends on the interaction between technological factors, institutional support, and students' capacities for critical and responsible participation in digital society. Accordingly, this study employs Digital Transformation Theory and Political Socialization Theory to analyze how Vietnamese universities can adapt political education to the opportunities and challenges of the digital era.

## 4. METHODOLOGY

### 4.1. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design based on document analysis and policy review. A qualitative approach is appropriate because the study seeks to explore and interpret the relationship between digital transformation and political education rather than to test causal relationships through statistical methods. Since digital political education is an emerging research area in Vietnam, an exploratory qualitative design provides valuable insights into its opportunities, challenges, and policy implications.

### 4.2. Data Collection

The study relies exclusively on secondary data collected from three major sources.

The first source consists of academic literature on digital transformation, higher education, political education, and digital pedagogy. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, conference proceedings, and research reports published in both international and Vietnamese contexts were systematically reviewed to identify major themes and theoretical perspectives.

The second source includes official policy documents issued by the Vietnamese government and educational authorities. These documents comprise national digital transformation strategies, higher education reform policies, and regulations concerning political education and digital learning.

The third source consists of reports and publications from international organizations such as UNESCO, the World Bank, and the OECD. These documents provide comparative perspectives on educational transformation and digital policies in different countries and offer useful references for analyzing the Vietnamese experience.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis

The collected materials were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. This method allows researchers to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within textual information. The analysis was conducted in three stages.

First, relevant documents were selected and organized according to their thematic relevance. Second, the materials were coded to identify key concepts related to digital transformation, political education, opportunities, challenges, and policy responses. Finally, the coded information was synthesized and interpreted using the theoretical framework developed in this study.

#### 4.4. Reliability and Limitations

To improve the credibility of the findings, the study adopted data triangulation by using multiple sources of information, including academic publications, policy documents, and international reports. Priority was given to authoritative and peer-reviewed sources.

Nevertheless, the study has several limitations. Since it relies exclusively on secondary data, it cannot directly capture the perceptions and experiences of lecturers and students. Furthermore, the findings are primarily based on the Vietnamese context and may not be fully generalizable to other educational systems. Despite these limitations, the qualitative approach provides a comprehensive understanding of digital transformation and its implications for political education in higher education institutions.

## 5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Digital Transformation as a Driver of Pedagogical Innovation

The findings indicate that digital transformation has become an important driver of pedagogical innovation in political education in Vietnamese universities. Traditionally, political theory courses were primarily delivered through lecture-based approaches characterized by one-way knowledge transmission and a heavy reliance on textbooks and classroom presentations. Although these methods contributed to the dissemination of political knowledge, they often limited student participation and reduced learning motivation.

The integration of digital technologies has gradually changed this situation. Learning management systems, virtual classrooms, online discussion platforms, and multimedia resources have enabled lecturers to

diversify instructional methods and create more interactive learning environments. Digital technologies allow educators to incorporate videos, infographics, online debates, and case studies into political education, making abstract political concepts more understandable and relevant to students' experiences.

Moreover, digital transformation has facilitated the adoption of blended learning and flipped classroom models. Students are increasingly encouraged to review learning materials before class and participate in discussions, presentations, and problem-solving activities during class sessions. Such approaches promote active learning and improve students' engagement with political theory subjects. These developments support the argument that digital transformation can modernize political education and make it more responsive to the needs of contemporary learners.

### 5.2. Expanding Access to Educational Resources

Another important finding concerns the expansion of access to educational resources. In the traditional educational environment, students mainly depended on textbooks and materials provided by lecturers. Digital transformation has significantly increased access to information by providing students with online libraries, electronic databases, and open educational resources.

Digital platforms enable students to access a wide range of political documents, policy reports, academic articles, and historical materials from both domestic and international sources. Such opportunities encourage independent learning and allow students to explore political issues beyond the classroom. Furthermore, digital technologies facilitate interdisciplinary learning by connecting political education with economics, sociology, law, and international relations.

For lecturers, digital transformation provides opportunities to update course content and integrate contemporary political and social issues into teaching activities. Current events, public policy debates, and global challenges such as climate change, digital governance, and cybersecurity can be incorporated into political education to increase its relevance and practical significance.

However, the abundance of information available in digital environments also presents challenges. Students often face difficulties distinguishing reliable information from misinformation and ideologically biased content. Therefore, increased access to information does not automatically lead to improved learning outcomes. Educational institutions must also strengthen students' information literacy and critical evaluation skills.

### 5.3. Enhancing Student Engagement and Active Learning

The findings suggest that digital transformation has contributed significantly to increasing student engagement in political education. One of the longstanding challenges of political theory courses has been students' perceptions that these subjects are highly theoretical and disconnected from practical realities. Consequently, maintaining students' motivation and participation has been a persistent concern.

Digital technologies create opportunities to address this challenge by promoting more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Online discussion forums, collaborative projects, and digital presentations encourage students to actively participate in the learning process and express their opinions on contemporary political and social issues. Interactive activities also help students connect theoretical concepts with real-world situations and develop critical thinking skills.

Furthermore, digital learning environments support self-directed learning and lifelong learning competencies. Students become more responsible for their own learning processes by searching for information, evaluating evidence, and engaging in collaborative knowledge construction. These competencies are increasingly important in contemporary societies characterized by rapid technological and social changes.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of digital learning depends heavily on students' self-discipline and digital competencies. Some students experience difficulties managing their learning activities in online environments and may become distracted by social media and non-academic digital content. Therefore, digital transformation should be accompanied by strategies that promote self-regulation and responsible use of technology.

### 5.4. Challenges of Digital Competencies and Infrastructure

Despite the opportunities created by digital transformation, several challenges remain. The findings reveal that disparities in technological infrastructure continue to affect the implementation of digital education. While some universities have invested substantially in digital technologies, others still face financial limitations and insufficient technological resources. Unequal access to technology may therefore increase educational inequalities among institutions and students.

Another important challenge concerns digital competencies. Effective digital political education requires lecturers to possess both technological and pedagogical skills. However, many educators still

encounter difficulties in designing interactive digital learning environments and integrating technology into teaching practices. In some cases, digital technologies are merely used to reproduce traditional lecture-based methods rather than to promote genuine pedagogical innovation.

Students also demonstrate varying levels of digital literacy. Although many are familiar with digital devices and social media platforms, they often lack advanced competencies in information evaluation, academic research, and critical analysis. Consequently, strengthening digital competencies among both educators and students should become a strategic priority for higher education institutions.

### 5.5. Misinformation and the Changing Nature of Political Socialization

One of the most important findings concerns the impact of digital environments on political socialization. Social media and digital platforms have become major sources of political information for university students. While access to diverse information sources can enrich learning experiences, it also exposes students to misinformation, disinformation, and conflicting ideological perspectives.

Educational institutions no longer possess exclusive authority in shaping political knowledge and values. Students increasingly form political opinions through online interactions and digital communities that operate outside formal educational settings. Consequently, political education faces the challenge of helping students critically evaluate information and develop informed political judgments.

This finding highlights the growing importance of media literacy and digital citizenship education. Political education should not only transmit knowledge but also equip students with the skills necessary to identify unreliable information, respect diverse perspectives, and participate responsibly in digital society.

### 5.6. Toward a New Model of Political Education

Overall, the findings suggest that digital transformation is fundamentally reshaping political education in Vietnamese universities. The objective is no longer simply to digitize traditional teaching materials but to develop a new educational model that integrates technological innovation with the broader goals of political socialization and citizenship education.

A modern model of political education should combine interactive pedagogies, digital literacy, critical thinking, and civic responsibility. Universities must therefore balance technological innovation with the fundamental mission of political education: preparing

students to become informed, responsible, and active citizens in an increasingly digital world.

The Vietnamese experience demonstrates that digital transformation creates both opportunities and challenges. The successful implementation of digital political education therefore depends on the ability of educational institutions to invest in technology, strengthen digital competencies, and redesign political education to meet the demands of contemporary society.

## 6. Policy Implications

The findings of this study suggest several important policy implications for improving the effectiveness of political education in Vietnamese universities in the digital era.

First, higher education institutions should develop comprehensive digital transformation strategies that integrate technological innovation with the objectives of political education. Digital transformation should not be limited to the adoption of online platforms but should also involve curriculum redesign, innovative teaching methods, and student-centered pedagogical approaches. Universities should encourage the use of blended learning, digital simulations, and interactive teaching tools to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

Second, policymakers should invest in digital infrastructure and ensure equitable access to educational technologies. Significant disparities in technological resources among institutions and students may exacerbate educational inequalities. Therefore, adequate funding, high-quality internet access, and the provision of digital learning resources are essential for the successful implementation of digital political education.

Third, improving digital competencies should become a strategic priority. Universities need to provide professional development programs that equip lecturers with both technological and pedagogical skills. At the same time, students should receive systematic training in information literacy, critical thinking, and responsible digital citizenship to enable them to navigate increasingly complex information environments.

Finally, political education curricula should incorporate contemporary issues such as cybersecurity, misinformation, digital ethics, and global citizenship. Integrating these topics into political education can increase the relevance of political theory courses and better prepare students for active and responsible participation in digital society. Effective cooperation among universities, government agencies, and technology providers is also necessary to develop sustainable digital educational ecosystems and promote long-term educational innovation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

This study examined the implications of digital transformation for political education in Vietnamese universities and explored the opportunities, challenges, and policy responses associated with this process. The findings indicate that digital transformation has fundamentally reshaped political education by promoting pedagogical innovation, expanding access to educational resources, and enhancing student engagement. Digital technologies have created more flexible and interactive learning environments that encourage active learning and independent knowledge acquisition.

However, the study also demonstrates that digital transformation presents significant challenges. Unequal access to technological infrastructure, limited digital competencies among lecturers and students, and the widespread dissemination of misinformation continue to affect the quality and effectiveness of political education. Furthermore, the rapid growth of digital media has transformed the process of political socialization, requiring universities to reconsider how political knowledge, civic values, and critical thinking skills are cultivated among students.

The study contributes to the existing literature by integrating perspectives from digital transformation and political socialization to explain the changing nature of political education in the digital era. It also provides empirical insights from the Vietnamese higher education context and highlights issues that may be relevant to other developing countries undergoing similar educational transitions.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that successful digital transformation requires comprehensive strategies that combine technological investment with curriculum reform, professional development, and the promotion of digital citizenship. Future studies may employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to examine the perceptions and experiences of lecturers and students and to evaluate the long-term impacts of digital transformation on political education and learning outcomes.

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