

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

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**Abstract:** The Fourth Industrial Revolution and the rapid development of digital technologies have fundamentally transformed higher education systems worldwide. In Vietnam, digital transformation has become a strategic priority in educational reform, aiming to improve teaching quality, learning experiences, and institutional governance. Political education, which plays a critical role in cultivating political awareness, civic responsibility, and ideological orientation among university students, is also experiencing significant changes under the influence of digital technologies. However, the implementation of digital transformation in political education remains uneven due to limitations in digital infrastructure, pedagogical innovation, digital competencies of lecturers, and the availability of digital learning resources. This paper examines the current state of digital transformation and innovation in political education in Vietnamese universities. Using a qualitative approach based on document analysis and a systematic review of national policies and recent studies, the study identifies key opportunities and challenges associated with digital transformation in political education. The findings indicate that digital technologies contribute significantly to enhancing student engagement, facilitating interactive learning environments, diversifying teaching methods, and promoting personalized learning experiences. Nevertheless, several barriers continue to hinder effective implementation, including inadequate technological infrastructure, insufficient digital pedagogical competencies among lecturers, cybersecurity concerns, and the lack of high-quality digital content specifically designed for political education. The study proposes policy implications focusing on strengthening digital infrastructure, improving lecturers' digital competencies, developing digital learning resources, promoting blended learning models, and establishing comprehensive policies to support sustainable digital transformation in political education. The findings contribute to the growing literature on educational digital transformation and provide practical recommendations for policymakers and higher education institutions in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Digital transformation; Innovation; Political education; Higher education; Vietnamese universities.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has emerged as a defining trend in higher education, fundamentally reshaping teaching, learning, and institutional management worldwide. The rapid development of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, learning management systems, and online educational platforms, has created new opportunities for universities to enhance educational quality, improve accessibility, and strengthen institutional competitiveness. Consequently, higher education institutions are increasingly adopting digital technologies to respond to the demands of the digital economy and knowledge society.

In Vietnam, digital transformation has become a strategic priority in national educational development. Government policies and educational reforms emphasize the integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning activities, the modernization of educational management, and the promotion of innovative pedagogical approaches. These initiatives aim to establish a more open, flexible, and learner-centered higher education system capable of meeting the challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Political education constitutes an essential component of Vietnamese higher education. Courses on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thought, and the political system of Vietnam play an important role in developing students' political awareness, civic

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responsibility, ethical values, and critical thinking. However, political education has often been criticized for relying heavily on traditional, teacher-centered approaches that limit student engagement and reduce learning effectiveness. In this context, digital transformation offers significant opportunities to innovate teaching methods, create interactive learning environments, and enhance students' learning experiences.

Despite these opportunities, the implementation of digital transformation in political education faces several challenges, including inadequate technological infrastructure, disparities in lecturers' digital competencies, limited digital learning resources, and concerns regarding information security. Moreover, empirical studies specifically addressing digital transformation in political education in Vietnamese universities remain limited. Therefore, this study examines the current state, opportunities, challenges, and policy implications of digital transformation and innovation in political education in Vietnam.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Digital Transformation in Higher Education

Digital transformation has become a central strategy for reforming higher education systems worldwide. It refers to the integration of digital technologies into all dimensions of university activities, including teaching, learning, research, administration, and stakeholder engagement. Unlike the simple adoption of information technology, digital transformation involves a comprehensive change in organizational culture, educational practices, and institutional strategies. It requires universities to redesign their educational processes and develop new models of teaching and learning that are compatible with the digital age.

The rapid advancement of technologies such as artificial intelligence, cloud computing, big data analytics, learning management systems, and mobile applications has significantly altered traditional educational practices. Universities increasingly employ digital technologies to provide flexible learning environments, expand access to educational resources, and improve communication between lecturers and students. Digital transformation also enables institutions to make data-driven decisions, improve governance efficiency, and enhance their competitiveness in a global educational market.

Previous studies have shown that digital transformation contributes substantially to improving teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes. Digital platforms facilitate interactive and collaborative learning, encourage active student participation, and support personalized learning experiences. Moreover, digital technologies promote lifelong learning by enabling learners to access educational resources

regardless of geographical and temporal constraints. Consequently, digital transformation is widely recognized as a critical factor in the modernization and sustainable development of higher education.

### 2.2. Innovation in Political Education

Educational innovation refers to the introduction of new pedagogical approaches, technologies, and organizational practices designed to improve educational effectiveness and learning outcomes. In higher education, innovation has become increasingly important as universities seek to respond to changing societal demands and the learning preferences of digital-native students.

Political education occupies a unique position in Vietnamese higher education because it aims not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate political awareness, civic responsibility, ethical values, and critical thinking among students. However, political education has often been criticized for relying heavily on traditional lecture-based methods that emphasize the transmission of theoretical knowledge and limit students' active participation in the learning process. Such approaches may reduce students' motivation and negatively affect learning outcomes.

To address these limitations, many universities have introduced innovative teaching approaches in political education. Blended learning combines face-to-face instruction with online learning activities, allowing students to access learning materials more flexibly and engage in self-directed learning. Flipped classrooms encourage students to study theoretical content before class and use classroom time for discussion and problem-solving activities. Problem-based learning promotes critical thinking by requiring students to analyze and address real-world issues related to political and social development.

Other innovative approaches, such as gamification, digital storytelling, and collaborative online discussions, have also been increasingly adopted. These methods create more interactive and engaging learning environments and encourage students to actively construct knowledge rather than passively receive information. As a result, educational innovation plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality and effectiveness of political education.

### 2.3. Digital Transformation and Political Education

The integration of digital transformation and educational innovation has created significant opportunities for the modernization of political education. Digital technologies provide access to a wide range of educational resources, including electronic textbooks, multimedia materials, online databases, and open educational resources. These technologies enable lecturers to diversify instructional methods and create

more dynamic and student-centered learning environments.

Digital transformation also facilitates communication and collaboration between lecturers and students through online platforms, virtual classrooms, and social learning networks. Interactive technologies can increase students' motivation, encourage active participation, and support personalized learning experiences that accommodate different learning styles and needs.

Despite these benefits, the successful implementation of digital transformation in political education depends on several important factors. Adequate technological infrastructure is essential for ensuring reliable access to digital learning environments. The digital competencies of lecturers significantly influence their ability to integrate technology effectively into teaching practices. Institutional leadership and administrative support are also critical for providing strategic direction and allocating resources for digital transformation initiatives.

Furthermore, the availability of high-quality digital learning resources specifically designed for political education remains a major challenge. Effective digital transformation also requires supportive policies and regulatory frameworks that address issues such as data security, digital ethics, and quality assurance. Therefore, the modernization of political education through digital transformation requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach involving technological, pedagogical, organizational, and policy dimensions.

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine the current state of digital transformation and innovation in political education in Vietnamese universities. A qualitative design is considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of policies, institutional practices, and emerging challenges associated with the integration of digital technologies into political education.

The research is based primarily on document analysis and a systematic review of relevant literature. Data were collected from four main sources. First, government policies, legal documents, and strategic plans related to digital transformation and educational reform in Vietnam were reviewed to understand the national policy context. Second, previous studies on digital transformation, educational innovation, and political education were examined to identify existing theoretical perspectives and research findings. Third, reports and policy documents issued by Vietnamese higher education institutions were analyzed to explore institutional practices and experiences in implementing digital transformation initiatives. Finally, international literature on digital transformation in higher education

was reviewed to provide comparative perspectives and identify global trends.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method enabled the identification and categorization of major themes concerning the opportunities, challenges, and policy implications of digital transformation in political education. The findings derived from these themes provide a comprehensive understanding of the current situation and offer recommendations for promoting sustainable digital transformation in Vietnamese universities.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Opportunities of Digital Transformation in Political Education

The findings indicate that digital transformation has created significant opportunities for improving the quality and effectiveness of political education in Vietnamese universities. The integration of digital technologies into teaching and learning activities has not only changed traditional instructional practices but also opened new possibilities for innovation in educational delivery and management.

#### *Improving Student Engagement*

One of the most important benefits of digital transformation is its ability to enhance student engagement and participation. Traditional political education has often been criticized for its reliance on lecture-based instruction and one-way knowledge transmission, which may reduce students' motivation and interest. Digital technologies provide opportunities to create interactive learning environments where students can actively participate in discussions, share opinions, and collaborate with their peers.

Online discussion forums, virtual classrooms, educational applications, and social learning platforms enable students to engage with learning materials more effectively. Multimedia content, including videos, infographics, simulations, and interactive presentations, makes abstract political concepts more accessible and attractive. As a result, students become more actively involved in the learning process and demonstrate greater motivation and participation.

#### *Diversifying Teaching Methods*

Digital transformation also enables lecturers to diversify their teaching approaches and adopt more innovative pedagogical practices. The availability of digital technologies allows lecturers to combine traditional teaching methods with online activities and multimedia resources. Instead of relying solely on classroom lectures, instructors can integrate videos, digital documents, case studies, online discussions, and collaborative projects into their courses.

Blended learning models have become increasingly popular because they provide flexibility and

encourage active learning. Digital tools also facilitate the application of student-centered approaches such as flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, and collaborative learning. These approaches promote critical thinking, communication skills, and independent learning, which are essential competencies for university students in the digital age.

### ***Supporting Personalized Learning***

Another significant opportunity associated with digital transformation is the development of personalized learning experiences. Learning management systems and digital platforms provide students with flexible access to educational materials regardless of time and location. Students can review lectures, access additional learning resources, and learn at their own pace according to their individual needs and preferences.

Personalized learning is particularly important in political education because students often have different levels of background knowledge, learning styles, and interests. Digital technologies enable lecturers to provide diverse learning materials and activities that accommodate these differences. Consequently, students are able to take greater responsibility for their learning and develop self-directed learning skills.

### ***Enhancing Educational Management***

Digital transformation has also improved educational management and administrative efficiency. Digital technologies facilitate communication between lecturers, students, and university administrators. Online systems enable the management of course materials, assignments, assessments, and academic records in a more efficient and transparent manner.

The use of digital platforms for assessment and feedback also contributes to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Universities can collect and analyze educational data to monitor students' learning progress and identify areas requiring improvement. Therefore, digital transformation supports evidence-based decision-making and enhances institutional effectiveness.

## **4.2. Challenges of Digital Transformation in Political Education**

Despite these opportunities, the findings reveal several challenges that continue to hinder the successful implementation of digital transformation in political education.

### ***Inadequate Technological Infrastructure***

The first challenge concerns limitations in technological infrastructure. Although many universities have invested in digital technologies, disparities in infrastructure quality remain significant. Some institutions still face problems related to internet connectivity, insufficient digital equipment, and limited access to modern educational technologies.

These limitations reduce the effectiveness of online learning activities and create inequalities in educational opportunities among institutions and students. The lack of adequate technological infrastructure therefore remains a major barrier to the sustainable implementation of digital transformation initiatives.

### ***Limited Digital Competencies of Lecturers***

The successful integration of digital technologies largely depends on the digital competencies of lecturers. However, the findings indicate considerable differences in lecturers' abilities to use educational technologies effectively. While some lecturers have successfully adopted innovative teaching methods and digital tools, others continue to rely on traditional instructional approaches.

Insufficient training opportunities and resistance to pedagogical change further constrain the effective implementation of digital transformation. Consequently, enhancing lecturers' digital competencies and promoting continuous professional development have become essential requirements for educational reform.

### ***Lack of Digital Learning Resources***

Another major challenge is the shortage of high-quality digital learning materials specifically designed for political education. Although numerous digital resources are available in many academic disciplines, political education still lacks comprehensive digital textbooks, interactive learning materials, multimedia resources, and specialized online databases.

The development of digital learning resources requires substantial investment, collaboration among experts, and continuous updating of educational content. Without adequate digital resources, lecturers may encounter difficulties in designing engaging and effective learning experiences.

### ***Cybersecurity and Data Protection Risks***

The increasing use of digital technologies also raises concerns regarding information security and data protection. Educational institutions store large amounts of personal and academic data on digital platforms, making them vulnerable to cybersecurity threats and data breaches.

Ensuring cybersecurity has therefore become an important issue in the implementation of digital transformation strategies. Universities need to establish effective policies and technical measures to protect data privacy, maintain system security, and promote responsible and ethical use of digital technologies.

Overall, the findings suggest that digital transformation offers considerable opportunities for modernizing political education in Vietnamese

universities. However, the successful realization of these opportunities requires comprehensive strategies that address infrastructural limitations, strengthen lecturers' digital competencies, develop high-quality digital resources, and ensure cybersecurity and data protection.

## 5. Policy Implications

The findings of this study suggest that the successful implementation of digital transformation in political education requires comprehensive and coordinated policy interventions at both institutional and national levels. To ensure sustainable digital transformation and improve the quality of political education in Vietnamese universities, several policy implications should be considered.

First, universities should continue investing in digital infrastructure and educational technologies. Reliable internet connectivity, modern learning management systems, digital libraries, and multimedia facilities are essential prerequisites for effective digital teaching and learning. Higher education institutions should allocate adequate financial resources to upgrade technological infrastructure and ensure equitable access to digital learning environments for both lecturers and students.

Second, improving lecturers' digital competencies should become a strategic priority. The effectiveness of digital transformation depends largely on lecturers' ability to integrate technology into their teaching practices. Universities should provide continuous professional development programs focusing on digital literacy, instructional design, online teaching methods, and the use of emerging educational technologies. Regular training and professional support can help lecturers adapt to technological changes and improve the quality of digital instruction.

Third, the development of high-quality digital learning resources specifically designed for political education is essential. Universities should encourage lecturers and academic experts to develop electronic textbooks, multimedia materials, digital case studies, and interactive learning resources that reflect the characteristics and objectives of political education. The establishment of shared digital repositories and open educational resources can also facilitate access to high-quality learning materials and promote collaboration among institutions.

Fourth, universities should promote blended learning and student-centered pedagogical approaches. Digital transformation should not simply transfer traditional teaching activities to online environments; rather, it should encourage pedagogical innovation that increases student engagement and active participation. The adoption of blended learning, flipped classrooms, collaborative learning, and problem-based learning can

create more interactive and meaningful educational experiences.

Fifth, higher education institutions need to establish comprehensive policies and strategic frameworks to support digital transformation. Institutional strategies should clearly define objectives, responsibilities, implementation plans, and evaluation mechanisms. Effective leadership and administrative support are necessary to coordinate digital transformation initiatives and ensure their long-term sustainability.

Sixth, cybersecurity and data protection should receive greater attention. As universities increasingly rely on digital platforms, protecting personal and academic data becomes a critical requirement. Institutions should develop clear regulations on data management, strengthen cybersecurity systems, and provide training on digital ethics and information security for both lecturers and students.

Finally, digital transformation requires close collaboration among universities, government agencies, and technology providers. Government support through funding mechanisms, policy guidance, and national digital education strategies is essential for accelerating digital transformation initiatives. Partnerships with technology companies can also facilitate access to advanced technologies, technical expertise, and innovative educational solutions. Through these collaborative efforts, Vietnamese universities can create a sustainable digital ecosystem that supports the modernization and continuous improvement of political education.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Digital transformation and innovation are reshaping political education in Vietnamese universities. While digital technologies offer significant opportunities to improve teaching quality, student engagement, and educational effectiveness, substantial challenges remain. Sustainable digital transformation requires coordinated efforts from policymakers, university leaders, lecturers, and technology stakeholders.

The findings of this study contribute to the literature on digital transformation in higher education and provide practical implications for the modernization of political education in Vietnam. Future studies may employ empirical approaches to examine the relationships among digital competencies, technological readiness, and learning outcomes in political education.

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