

Some Solutions to Promote Digital Transformation in Political Theory Education at Vietnamese Universities Today

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Abstract: *Digital transformation in education and training in general, and in political theory education in particular, is an inevitable trend for Vietnamese universities in the context of the current “booming” digital technology. To meet and keep up with the development trend of the era, political theory education at universities is currently transforming towards improvement of the teaching staff’s quality, innovation of contents and programs, diversification of educational methods, active investment in and upgrade of technical and technological infrastructure, increase of students’ proactiveness, positivity and creativity. The article focuses on analyzing and clarifying the actual situation of digital transformation and recommend a number of basic solutions to promote digital transformation in political theory education at Vietnamese universities in the coming time.*

Key words: *digital transformation, political theory education, Vietnamese universities.*

1. Introduction

At present, with the impact of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the process of digital transformation has become an inevitable trend in all areas of social life, including higher education in general and political theory education in particular. In the development trend of the era, Vietnamese universities have been innovating comprehensively and implementing digital transformation in political theory education and have initially achieved encouraging results that contributes to improving the quality and effectiveness of political theory education. However, digital transformation also poses many challenges in terms of legal and policy framework, quality of teaching staff, programs, contents, methods and forms, technical infrastructure, students, etc. Therefore, it is very necessary and meaningful, both theoretically and practically, to analyze and clarify the actual situation of digital transformation and propose some basic

solutions to promote digital transformation in political theory education at Vietnamese universities in the coming time.

2. Literature review

Digital transformation is one of the top concerns of technology enterprises in Vietnam. Vietnam also pays special attention to digital transformation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Vietnam is one of the first countries in the world to issue National Digital Transformation programs or strategies that makes Vietnam on par with technologically advanced countries in the world in terms of digital transformation awareness. Bui Quang Tuan, Ha Huy Ngoc (2022) co-editors of the monograph titled *Digital Transformation - International Experience and Roadmap for Vietnam*, which was published by the National Political Publishing House, have provided readers with an overview of digital transformation issues, international experience in digital transformation, and the actual situation of digital transformation in Vietnam through three pillars (digital government, digital economy and digital society). The authors believe that digital transformation has a profound and broad impact on all industries and socio-economic fields. It also has contributed to increasing labor productivity, transforming operating and business models towards innovation, thereby enhancing the country's competitiveness. In the book titled "*Digital transformation in education*" written by the group of authors Hoang Sy Tuong, Nguyen Thi My Loc, Nguyen Thi Loan, which was published in 2023 by the Information and Communication Publishing House, the authors focused on two main contents: digital transformation in management and digital transformation in education technology. The book highlighted the role of technology in educational digital transformation, in leading from the industrial revolution, the issue of education 4.0 in higher education institutions to be clarified, followed by learning skills for the future, social needs for the education system, learning orientation, technology, pedagogy, professional knowledge, digital learning, digital competencies, digital competency framework, and finally the benefits and risks of technology. On the basis of the strong development of digital transformation in many fields, including education, author Pham Son Hai in the article titled "Laws on digital transformation in education in Vietnam today" in *Hong Bang International University Science Journal*, Issue 25 (September 2023) systematized relatively complete legal regulations on digital transformation in education and training. He pointed out the shortcomings in enforcing the laws on digital transformation in education and training and recommended a number of solutions such as: necessity for regulations on protecting learners' data, sanctions for violations of regulations on protecting

learners' personal data, necessity for a legal framework to protect intellectual property rights of lecturers related to their lectures on digital platforms, etc.

The group of authors Tran Ai Cam, Nguyen Duy Minh (2024), in the article titled "Digital transformation to promote sustainability in higher education: approaches from perspectives of researchers", which was published in *Education Journal*, Issue 24 (September special issue), highlighted the sustainability in higher education with promoted digital transformation by synthesizing the research perspectives of domestic and foreign authors. The author recommended four solutions to promote digital transformation in higher education, the first of which is to clearly define the role and benefits of digital transformation to promote sustainability in education in the global context, regulations of state management agencies and internal capacity of educational institutions themselves. At present, there are many published scientific works with many different perspectives, which are very diverse and rich, provide basic theories for research on digital transformation in various fields and specialties. However, there has been no work that directly studies digital transformation in political theory education.

3. Contents of research

3.1. Theoretical basis of digital transformation in political theory education

*** Concept of digital transformation in political theory education**

Digital transformation is a concept that appeared in the digital age and has attracted the attention of and been researched by many domestic and foreign scientists in many different aspects, angles, and fields, including education and training in general and political theory education in particular.

Digital transformation in political theory education at universities is the process of transforming the method of political theory education from offline to online education on modern digital technology platforms that aims to develop competencies, increase self-study and research abilities, create opportunities of anytime, anywhere, lifelong learning, and personalize learning activities for students.

*** Manifestations of digital transformation in political theory education at universities**

- Subjects of digital transformation in political theory education at universities: leaders, managers, subjects imparting political theory knowledge (lecturers), and supporting subjects. In particular, political theory lecturers are direct subjects of digital transformation in political theory education: awareness, professional qualifications, use of active teaching methods, use of modern teaching aids, design of e-lectures, etc.

- Programs and contents of political theory: According to the current regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training, there are two programs: First, the program and curriculum use common political theory subjects for undergraduate majors specialized in political theory. Second, the program and curriculum use common political theory subjects for undergraduate majors not specialized in political theory. Contents of political theory follow the curriculum standards of the Ministry of Education and Training as being scientific, modern, creative, practical.

- Methods of political theory education at universities:

Traditional lecture combined with modern methods: online discussion, problem-posing, visualization, game, case study, brainstorming, expert, mind map, etc.

Forms of organizing digital transformation at universities: combine offline and online classes, use online learning platforms, interactive software, political theory videos, podcasts, infographics, etc.

Technical and technological infrastructure, teaching aids and equipment for digital transformation in political theory education at universities: high-speed internet, computer rooms, multi-purpose classrooms, laptops, cameras, smart boards, smartphones, teaching and learning software.

Students during the process of digital transformation in political theory education at universities: extent of application of information technology, self-study, independent thinking, critical thinking, etc.

3.2. Research methods

We used a written questionnaire as our main research method. Contents of the questionnaire were processed by frequency formula. In addition, we used the method of document analysis to develop a theoretical basis and recommend solutions for promoting digital transformation in political theory education at universities in the coming time.

The subjects of our survey are 225 lecturers teaching political theory modules at universities.

3.3. Actual situation of digital transformation in political theory education at Vietnamese universities today

3.3.1. Several initial successes of digital transformation in political theory education at Vietnamese universities today

First, digital transformation in education and training in general, and in political theory education in particular, is an important content that attracts special attention of the Party and the State. The Resolution no. 52-NQ/TW of the Ministry of Politics on a number of guidelines and policies of proactive participation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution affirmed: “*Innovate teaching*

*and learning methods by application of digital technology, etc. Encourage new digital platform-based education and training models” [2, p. 6]. On 3 June 2020, the Prime Minister signed the Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg approving the “National Digital Transformation Program by 2025, with a vision to 2030”, which aims to bring our country into the group of 50 leading countries in E-Government Development Index (EGDI). In education and training, digital transformation focuses on “development of platforms to support remote teaching and learning; thorough application of digital technology in management, teaching and learning; digitization of documents and textbooks; development of platforms to share teaching and learning resources in both offline and online forms; development of supporting technology in education towards personalized training; 100% of educational institutions implementing remote teaching and learning, including pilot programs that allow students to study online at least 20% of the curriculum, etc.” [3, p. 15]. Documents of the 13th National Congress continue to affirm: “Effectively deploy the new national education system according to the goals of fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training. Diversify training methods based on open education models, the national qualification framework, linked to the market and satisfying the requirements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; prepare human resources for digital transformation, develop the digital economy and digital society” [1, p. 136]. On 15 June 2021, the Prime Minister promulgated the Decision No. 942/QĐ-TTg approving the *E-Government Development Strategy towards the digital government in the 2021-2025 period, with a vision to 2030*. On 22 April 2024, the Ministry of Politics promulgated the *Resolution No. 57-NQ/TW on breakthroughs in science and technology development, innovation and national digital transformation*.*

Second, the majority of political theory lecturers at educational institutions today have proper recognition and high professional qualifications. They also have deep and broad background in political theory, using modern and smart teaching aids in teaching political theory subjects, focusing on digitizing lectures, applying software to develop electronic lectures for political theory subjects, innovating teaching methods, applying new teaching techniques, interacting with students in digital environments and digital spaces, exploiting information technology to teach political theory subjects intelligently in the new context. According to the survey results, 84% of lecturers have a master’s degree or higher, 80% of political theory lecturers are trained in the right major, and 77.7% of lecturers have “digital competency”.

Third, many universities regularly innovate their political theory education programs and contents to keep up with the rapid development of the era and

meet the requirements of digital transformation. Contents of political theory education, including textbooks, lectures, and documents, are digitized to help political theory lecturers easily access and share them and are innovated towards the enhancement of integrated, interdisciplinary, general subjects, and the update of new knowledge. Political theory programs are developed in the orientation of interdisciplinary research, enhancing practicality, and equipping students with practical knowledge in political and social activities. The survey results show that the majority of lecturers assess the current programs and contents of political theory as being scientific, modern, creative, and practical.

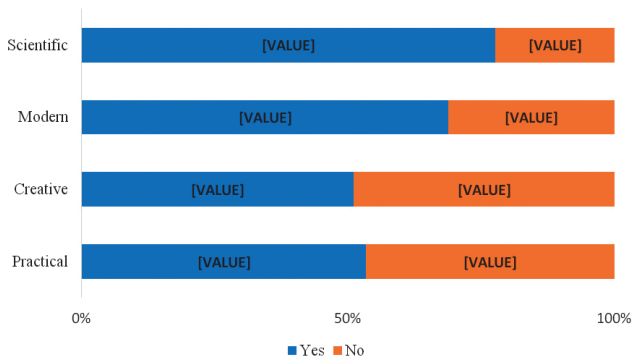


Chart 1: Programs and Contents of political theory education at universities in the context of digital transformation

Fourth, universities have deployed various new methods and forms in political theory education with the active teaching methods such as online discussion, problem-posing, visualization, game, case study, brainstorming, expert, mind map, etc.

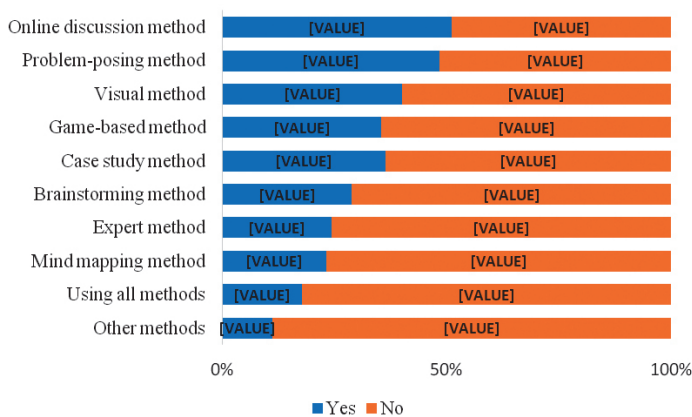


Chart 2: Methods of political theory education at universities in the context of digital transformation

Forms of political theory education indicate flexible combination of offline and online forms (blended learning); using online learning management systems (LMS), interactive software (Kahoot, Mentimeter, Padlet, etc.), video learning materials, podcasts, political infographics, etc. In particular, during the digital transformation, many universities have implemented political theory teaching models in the direction of developing competencies and creative thinking, combining with group discussions to improve the quality and effectiveness of political theory education. The survey results show that lecturers at universities have used various methods and forms of political theory education in the context of digital transformation.

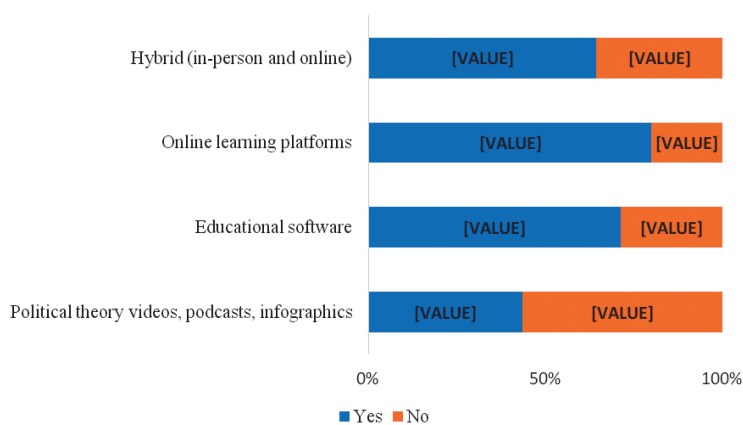


Chart 3: Forms of political theory education at universities in the context of digital transformation

Fifth, universities have actively invested in and upgraded network infrastructure with high-speed transmission lines, computer rooms, multi-purpose classrooms with modern equipment, facilities, smart devices such as laptops, cameras, digital boards, smartphones, etc... They have upgraded electronic information portals, purchased video conferencing equipment, dedicated network systems for video conferencing, created virtual classrooms for remote access, developed digital libraries including e-learning materials such as textbooks, reference books, lectures, electronic theses, electronic dissertations, etc., online political theory teaching software, learning software, especially learning management system (LMS), etc. to meet the requirements of digital transformation today. According to the survey results, 80% of lecturers at universities assess technical and technological infrastructure and other facilities for digital transformation in political theory education as being good and quite good.

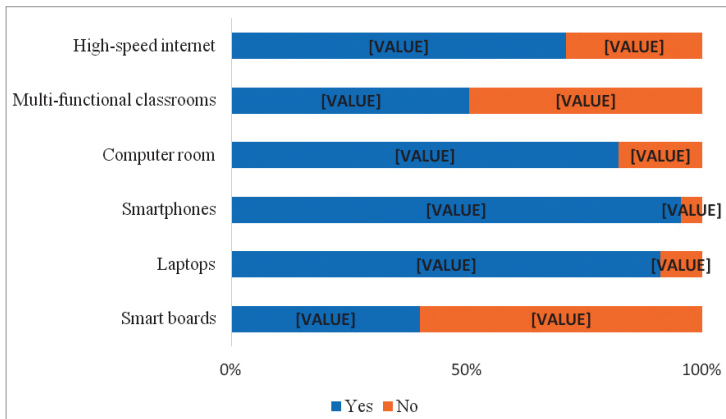


Chart 4: Technical and technological infrastructure, teaching aids and equipment in the context of digital transformation

Sixth, universities always encourage and require students to proactively apply information technology in their studies that makes them gradually get familiar with online learning. Students can easily access and look for learning materials on Internet-connected computers. As a result, students are becoming more and more active, proactive in self-studying, self-researching political issues without being limited by the political theory knowledge provided by lecturers. The survey results show that 71.1% of students actively apply information technology in learning.

3.3.2. Difficulties, challenges in digital transformation in political theory education at Vietnamese universities today

Firstly, the legal framework and policies on digital transformation are sometimes incomplete. Regulations and rules to ensure the development and implementation of digital transformation are still lacking, such as issues of confidentiality, cyber security, and regulations on learning materials such as intellectual property rights and copyright are not specific. Policies related to political theory training and retraining; online political theory teaching and learning programs; testing, assessment of teaching and learning quality and recognition of online political theory learning results are still general, neither specific nor detailed.

Secondly, digital technology requires the readiness of the teaching staff in terms of mindset, position and strength. Meanwhile, in fact, a number of lecturers have not been well-prepared in terms of awareness, attitude and skills to be ready for digital transformation. Many lecturers are still confused in using technology, do not have proficient skills in using online teaching software, modern teaching aids and equipment, and applying modern technology

platforms in teaching. This reduces the adaptability and effectiveness of digital transformation in political theory education.

Thirdly, some programs and contents of political theory subjects, especially the system of textbooks, documents, reference books, monographs, lectures, test banks, answers, research topics, scientific initiatives in data warehouses, etc. are digitized slowly and also lack consistency and reliability. Some contents and programs are innovated slowly; lacking integrated practical knowledge especially current issues, international trends, new challenges to the Party's ideological foundation. They have also failed to respond promptly to the rapid changes of the digital age. Some programs and contents are not suitable for output goals and standards.

Fourthly, methods and forms of political theory education sometimes have not been strongly innovated. New scientific and technological achievements and inventions have a large number of lecturers and students unable to adapt to the changes and continuous development of the era. A number of lecturers are slow to innovate methods of political theory education, and are sometimes confused in using electronic lesson plans. Many classes still use traditional methods of lecturing and explaining, lacking dialogues so political theory lessons become too academic and monotonous, losing students' interest in studying.

Fifthly, the technical and technological infrastructure and facilities for digital transformation in political theory education at universities are currently inadequate and inconsistent. Many universities still lack technical and IT infrastructure, internet, smart devices and facilities for political theory education in digital transformation. At the same time, these modern facilities are not equipped synchronously and do not have specific and clear user guides.

Sixthly, a number of university students are not proficient in using information technology and lack online learning skills. A number of students are not confident in contributing ideas and are not active in debating issues raised by lecturers that results in passive and mechanical acquisition of political theory knowledge.

3.3. Some solutions to promote digital transformation in political theory education at universities in the coming time.

First, studying, developing, promulgating guidelines and policies of the Party, the State on digital transformation and concretizing them into resolutions, plans, strategies of universities

Universities need to study, review, supplement and strictly implement the Party's documents, resolutions and directives on digital transformation. At the

same time, universities need to promote the development of specific strategies and plans, and complete regulations and rules on digital transformation in political theory education in order to motivate students to actively participate in self-study, self-learning, self-research of learning materials, anytime and anywhere study personalized learning, and building a lifelong learning society.

Besides, universities need to develop and complete regulations and rules related to online political theory teaching and learning programs, testing, assessment of teaching and learning quality, and recognition of online political theory learning results, especially the issue of copyright of digital lectures.

Second, improving quality, ensuring quick adaptability of lecturers in the age of digital transformation

Political theory teaching and learning in cyberspace are completely different from traditional teaching and learning. This requires lecturers to use modern information technology, new technologies, learning management systems (LMS), digital learning tools proficiently, and at the same time apply modern teaching methods in teaching to arouse students' passion, positivity, proactiveness, and creativity in learning. Lecturers not only flexibly use modern teaching methods such as case study, problem-posing, dialogue, discussion, expert, mind map, project, game, etc., but also have strong political standpoint, good moral qualities, enthusiasm, inspire students, flexibly handle situations, increase the connectivity among students, between lecturers and students, between lecturers and lecturers, etc. in cyberspace.

Third, continuing innovating contents, programs, methods of political theory education in digital transformation in scientific, practical, creative, and modern directions, meeting the needs of self-study and lifelong learning

In the digital environment, students tend to receive diverse and fast sources of information. This calls for innovation in educational contents, programs, and teaching methods so that they become more scientific, practical, creative, and modern to meet the needs of self-study and lifelong learning. Therefore, universities need to modernize, digitize and encrypt their learning contents, in which theoretical contents are linked to the political and social realities of the country and the world, integrate current issues, topics related to digital transformation, cyber security, digital communications in teaching, and develop open, selective topics to increase students' proactiveness and interest. In addition, universities need to create warehouses of digital learning materials, open learning materials for sharing and common use to meet the needs of self-study and lifelong learning. At the same time, they should diversify teaching methods. Universities need to enhance active teaching methods using modern

applications such as Prezi, Google drive, Top hat, Pandora, etc., implement student-centered learning method and develop students' competencies and creative thinking, flexibly combine offline and online forms, use online learning platforms, interactive software, video learning materials, podcasts, political infographics, etc. This is one of the breakthroughs to improve the quality and effectiveness of political theory education in the context of digital transformation.

Fourth, enhancing investment in developing information technology infrastructure for digital transformation in political theory education at universities

In the rapid and drastic development of science and technology, universities need to increase investment in developing information technology infrastructure for digital transformation in political theory education. Universities need to prioritize investment in key areas such as upgrading network systems, ensuring sufficient bandwidth, stable structure, investing in system software integrated with subject software, investing in online learning platforms, providing high-quality online courses, investing in security solutions to protect universities' data, using artificial intelligence to apply modern technology platforms such as cloud, big data applications, IoT applications, blockchain technology applications or software, websites, digital libraries, multimedia classrooms, specialized rooms, virtual simulator systems, real teaching equipment, etc. Universities should invest in smart devices for classrooms and conference rooms such as: Video recorders, smart digital boards, smart desks, etc.

Fifth, forming and developing digital skills and critical thinking for students in digital transformation in political theory education

An important goal of digital transformation in political theory education is to form and develop digital skills and critical thinking for students. Students not only master political theory knowledge but also form and develop digital skills, independent thinking and critical thinking skills. The digital platform encourages students to express their personal viewpoints, analyze and debate issues of political theory. Students are encouraged to ask questions, analyze theoretical issues from different perspectives, thereby develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

4. Conclusion

Digital transformation in political theory education is completely consistent with the current globalization trend. For successful digital transformation in this field, universities should research, develop, and promulgate policies and guidelines of the Party and State on digital transformation and concretize

them into resolutions, plans, and strategies of universities associated with improving quality, ensuring the rapid adaptation of lecturers in the era of digital transformation. They also need to continue innovating contents, programs, and methods of political theory education in scientific, practical, creative, and modern directions, meeting the needs of self-study and lifelong learning. At the same time, it is necessary to increase investment in developing information technology infrastructure, forming and enhancing digital skills and critical thinking skills for students in digital transformation of political theory education./.

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