



## FACTORS AFFECTING THE MANAGEMENT OF POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN CYBERSPACE

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### Abstract:

In the context of strong digital transformation, cyberspace has become an important channel in education and political and ideological education for university students. Effective management of this activity poses many new challenges for educational institutions. The article focuses on analyzing factors affecting the management of information technology education activities in cyberspace, based on systemic theory, digital learner behavior, and a synthesis of practical research. The results show that there are five main groups of factors affecting management effectiveness, including (1) Political awareness and online behavior of students; (2) Digital capacity and political qualities of lecturers and managers; (3) Policy mechanisms and governance models of the university; (4) Technical infrastructure and supporting technology; and (5) Impact of media and public opinion. Based on the analysis, the article proposes some feasible management implications, such as building a digital political education strategy, developing a digital ideological ecosystem, improving digital communication capacity for cadres, establishing a set of evaluation criteria, and promoting a positive political culture on the network platform. The study contributes to supplementing the theoretical and practical basis for the management of political and ideological education in the context of digital universities in Vietnam.

**Keywords:** political and ideological education, educational management, university students, cyberspace, digital transformation

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## 1. Introduction

In the context of globalization and strong digital transformation today, cyberspace has become an indispensable part of the learning, research, living, and communication life of university students. Not only a tool for connecting and sharing information, cyberspace is also a place for educational activities, including political and ideological education, a basic, regular, and strategic task of higher education institutions. Political and ideological education for students not only contributes to orienting ideology and enhancing political capacity, but also builds personality and civic awareness in the new era. Effective management of this activity in the network environment requires identifying influencing factors and designing a management mechanism suitable for current conditions (An *et al.*, 2018).

The 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam emphasized the task of strengthening the education of revolutionary ideals, ethics, and cultural lifestyle for the young generation, comprehensively developing their intelligence, physical strength, morality, creativity, and civic awareness (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021). University students are the core young intellectual force, and are being influenced by multi-dimensional information. There is a lot of false and distorted information that is widely spread in cyberspace. This context poses an urgent requirement for information technology education and the management of information technology education activities in the digital environment to be effective, scientific, and suitable to the characteristics of today's learners.

Recent studies show that organizing information technology education in cyberspace is a transformation from in-person to online, a profound change in methods, content, objects, tools, and educational environment. This requires the management of IT activities to adapt quickly, innovate approaches, and effectively integrate technology, communication, data, and proactive student participation. The management of IT in cyberspace still has many limitations, manifested through the lack of uniformity in the policy system, limited technical capacity of management staff, lack of coordination mechanisms between stakeholders, and especially the lack of tools to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of educational activities in the virtual environment (Le Thanh & Ngoc, 2023).

In addition, students are the direct subjects of educational activities; there are changes in information access habits, the tendency to receive quickly but lack depth, and they are easily affected by online public opinion, fake news, and deviant phenomena on digital platforms. This shows that factors such as students' digital competence, political awareness, critical thinking skills, or self-study ability in an open environment are all important variables that affect the results of IT education activities. At the same time, external factors such as digital infrastructure, university support policies, and the capacity and awareness of managers also have a profound impact on the implementation, coordination, and evaluation of this activity.

Based on the practical requirements and research gaps mentioned above, the article focuses on analyzing factors affecting the management of political and ideological education activities for university students in cyberspace. Based on the synthesis of theory and previous research results, the article aims to identify the main groups of factors, analyze the influence of each group of factors, and propose management implications to improve the effectiveness of ICT education activities in the current context. Thereby, the article not only contributes to clarifying the theoretical basis of educational management in the digital environment but also provides valuable reference information for policymakers, university education managers, and lecturers who are carrying out ideological work in the digital age.

## **2. Theoretical Basis and Research Overview**

### **2.1. Theoretical Basis**

Systems theory in educational management is one of the important theoretical foundations widely applied in modern educational management. An educational organization is an open system, consisting of many closely related parts, operating towards specific goals. Applied to the management of political and ideological education activities, systems theory shows the comprehensiveness and connection between elements such as educational objects (students), content, methods, environment (cyberspace), influencing forces (lecturers, managers), and input and output factors of the educational process (Toulouse & Luke, 2013).

In the cyberspace environment, political and ideological education activities for students should also be viewed as a system of factors, including political and ideological information, technology platforms, communication channels, control systems, evaluation, and feedback. Effective management of this activity requires the coordination of its constituent elements, as well as the ability to flexibly adjust in a rapidly changing digital environment.

The theory of learner behavior in online environments, the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), indicates that the level of learner acceptance and interaction with digital platforms depends on three factors: perceived usefulness, ease of use, and personal attitudes toward technology. In the context of students spending more and more time on social networks, their learning behavior is influenced by factors such as self-direction, information analysis skills, critical thinking ability, and political awareness.

Therefore, to effectively manage political and ideological education activities for students in cyberspace, it is necessary to integrate technical factors (platform design, interface, interactive tools), pedagogical factors (attractive content, practical methods) and psychological factors (the appeal of social networks, popular speech trends, the appeal of fake news).

## 2.2. Research Overview

In the world, studies by Gao (2023), Li (2021), and Zhang (2023) have shown the strong transformation of political education in the context of the Internet and digital technology (Gao, 2023). According to these authors, ideological and political education is no longer simply taking place in traditional classrooms, but is gradually shifting to digital platforms such as social networks, online forums, Learning Management Systems (LMS), and multimedia channels (Li, 2021). This environment opens up great opportunities for expanding audiences, high interactivity, and rapid dissemination; at the same time, it also brings challenges in content control, the risk of ideological "disorientation," and the infiltration of disinformation (Zhang, 2023).

Today's university students are a digital native generation. They access political information not through books or traditional lectures but mainly through YouTube, TikTok, Facebook and short-term media channels. Ideological education, therefore, requires innovative approaches, and educational institutions need to have a tight, flexible management system that can quickly adapt to changes in public opinion.

Models integrating technology and ideological and political education such as the model "Integrating Content - Technology - Criticism" by Liu (2020) or the "Online Ecological Environment Model" by Gao (2023) are proposed as a systematic approach in organizing and managing ideological education for students (Liu, 2020; Gao, 2023).

In Vietnam, studies by Lich and Van Lich (2022), Lien (2022) agree that the application of digital technology in ideological and political education is an inevitable trend. However, the management of this activity still faces many barriers, from the awareness of managers, lecturers to the digital capacity of students (Lich & Van Lich, 2022). Many studies warn that without proper supervision, guidance, and control, students are easily caught up in the vortex of misleading, offensive, or non-political information, especially on platforms such as TikTok and Facebook (Lien, 2022).

In addition, some works also propose practical solutions, such as developing a team of lecturers who are also digital content managers by Yen (2022), building an integrated political and ideological education information portal, connecting university, students, online communities, strengthening activities of "*orienting online public opinion*" with positive content (Yen, 2022).

From the theoretical foundations and research overview, it can be seen that managing political and ideological education for students in the online environment is a complex process, influenced by many groups of factors inside and outside the education system. According to Lien (2024), identifying and analyzing these factors is the basis for proposing appropriate solutions, ensuring that political education not only exists but also develops sustainably and effectively in the digital space (Lien, 2024).

## 3. Methodology

To clarify the factors affecting the management of political and ideological education activities for university students in cyberspace, the article uses a qualitative research

method combined with document content analysis. This method allows researchers to take a comprehensive and in-depth approach to theoretical and practical issues in the specific context of political and ideological education in the digital environment.

Specifically, the article analyzes secondary documents from valuable academic sources, including monographs, research reports, and scientific articles from prestigious domestic and foreign journals indexed on databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The selected documents have topics related to (1) management of political and ideological education, (2) ideological education on digital platforms, (3) learning behavior and information reception of students in the network environment, and (4) educational management models in the context of digital transformation.

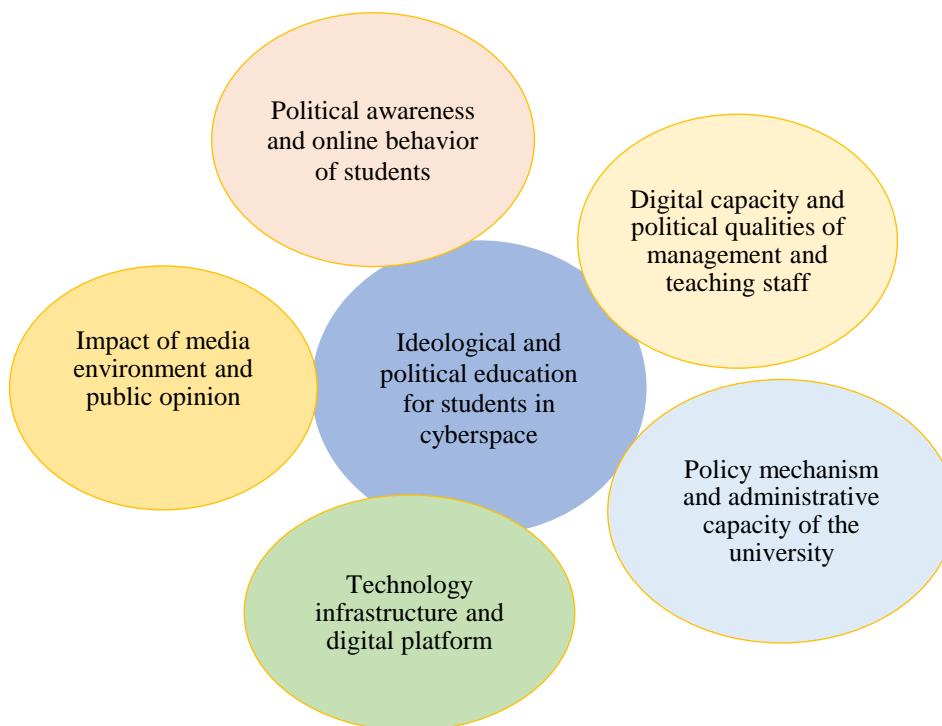
In addition, the study also applies the content analysis method to systematize, compare, and synthesize previous research results, thereby drawing out the main groups of factors affecting the process of managing political and ideological education activities for students in the online environment. The analyzed contents focus on three aspects, including (i) human factors (students, lecturers, managers), (ii) organizational and policy factors, and (iii) digital environmental factors.

To ensure objectivity, the article also compares different theoretical perspectives, combined with a comparison of management practices at a number of higher education institutions in Vietnam in recent years. Thereby, the article aims to generalize the factors that are universal and have a wide influence on the effectiveness of managing political and ideological education activities in the new context. This approach creates the premise to propose practical management implications, contributing to improving the quality of political and ideological education for students in the digital age.

#### **4. Factors Affecting the Management of Political and Ideological Education for Students in Cyberspace**

Political and ideological education in cyberspace is a new form of development in the current university education environment. However, the effectiveness of this activity depends on many factors, from the human side, the organization, to technological conditions and the social environment. Below are five main groups of factors that directly affect the management of political and ideological education activities for students in cyberspace.

**Figure 1:** Factors affecting the management of political and ideological education for students in cyberspace



#### 4.1. Political Awareness and Online Behavior of Students

Students are the central subjects of political and ideological education. In the online environment, they are not only passive recipients but also actively search, share, debate, and create content. Therefore, students' political awareness and cyberspace behavior deeply affect management effectiveness.

A segment of students today shows signs of indifference to politics, pays little attention to theoretical information, or tends to receive information in an emotional and distorted way. This stems from the fact that they are caught up in the "vortex" of fast, short, strong information on social networks, easily influenced by public opinion trends instead of oriented critical thinking. According to the survey, more than 40% of students use social networks to update social information, but only 18% can accurately distinguish between official and unofficial information (Weng & Weng, 2021).

In addition, the psychology of "illusion of personal power", the tendency to express personality in cyberspace, or the lack of knowledge about information security and digital ethics also make students easily fall into the trap of bad media. Therefore, management must be able to predict student behavior in the digital environment, while promoting them to become active and responsible subjects in learning activities and spreading positive political values.

#### **4.2. Digital Capacity and Political Qualities of the Management Team and Lecturers**

Another key factor affecting the effectiveness of political and ideological education management is the professional capacity, technological capacity, and political courage of the management team and lecturers.

In many higher education institutions, political theory lecturers and officers in charge of ideological work are not fully equipped with the skills to use digital tools, do not understand the behavior of learners in the online environment, and cannot interact flexibly with students through digital platforms. This makes many political and ideological educational contents still one-sided, rigid, unattractive, and not suitable for the reception of today's generation of students.

In addition, some cadres have not yet fully recognized the role of cyberspace in protecting the Party's ideological foundation, and do not have a proactive strategy to dominate the media and positively orient public opinion among young people. In that context, fostering digital media thinking capacity, skills in digitizing ideological content, as well as the ability to organize and lead online political interactions, are urgent requirements for the current ideological education team.

#### **4.3. Policy Mechanism and University Management Capacity**

The effectiveness of political and ideological education management in cyberspace cannot be separated from the organization and management mechanism of political education in universities. Many universities do not have a strategy for political and ideological education activities in cyberspace, have not built a system to evaluate, inspect, and monitor the effectiveness of these activities, and do not have a specific set of criteria for digital capacity and digital ethics for students and lecturers.

Some universities are confused about the role of units (student affairs department, youth union, political theory department) in managing content and online political education activities. This leads to overlap in implementation, a lack of coordination and clear assignment, reducing efficiency and wasting resources.

The development and implementation of the policy of "protecting students from harmful information" is still formal, lacking tools to support monitoring and feedback, and not yet associated with clear disciplinary sanctions. Meanwhile, the legal basis for handling violations of political ethics online (offensive statements, sharing distorted content) is still lacking or not widely disseminated in the university environment. Therefore, the management of political and ideological education in the digital environment requires a flexible, transparent mechanism, linking education, technology, and law, and needs to be integrated with the university's digital transformation strategy.

#### **4.4. Technology Infrastructure and Digital Platform**

Technology is the foundation that determines the level of implementation, expansion and optimization of political and ideological education activities in cyberspace. However, the reality shows that many universities in Vietnam still lack synchronous investment in

technical infrastructure serving digital education in general and political and ideological education in particular (Graham & Khosravi, 2002).

Learning management systems, student portals, online learning applications, and online assessment tools have not yet effectively integrated ideological education content. Meanwhile, students spend most of their time on social networking platforms outside of university, such as TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook, where the management of educational institutions is limited.

The lack of a two-way interactive platform also reduces the ability to "connect politics, technology, learning experience". In particular, many ideological and political education contents are still being transmitted in the form of static documents (PDF, PowerPoint, plain text), without applying new technologies such as infographics, short videos, podcasts, gamification, or interactive AI to attract students.

Therefore, to improve management efficiency, universities need to establish an integrated digital ecosystem, including an ideological - moral - political education subsystem with a friendly interface, attractive content, and clear learning behavior tracking tools.

#### **4.5. Impact of the Media Environment and Public Opinion**

Cyberspace is where information spreads at high speed, without borders, without control, and in multiple directions. In this environment, media factors - public opinion, recommendation algorithms have a strong influence on students' perceptions, behaviors, and political attitudes.

Students are more easily influenced by short videos, memes, and "stormy" public opinion trends than traditional lectures. Offensive, misleading, conspiracy-theory, and subversive content is often spread in the form of humor or in the direction of "one-sided criticism", making it difficult for students to distinguish right from wrong if they lack a theoretical foundation and political courage (Xiao, 2019).

Many hostile forces and reactionary organizations use cyberspace as a tool of "peaceful evolution," targeting young people, especially through controversial topics such as democracy, human rights, social ethics, and personal freedom. In that context, if the management of political and ideological education does not proactively dominate the media and does not apply digital public opinion data analysis, it will be difficult to create a "positive influence zone" for students.

From the above analysis, it can be affirmed that effectively managing political and ideological education activities for students in cyberspace is a complex task, requiring full identification of groups of influencing factors. Factors related to people, organizations, technology, and the social environment do not exist independently but are interrelated and have mutual effects. Therefore, the construction of a management mechanism needs to be systematic, adaptive, and based on practical data to ensure feasibility and long-term effectiveness.



## **5. Management Implications**

From the analysis of groups of factors affecting the management of ideological and political education activities for students in cyberspace, it can be seen that to improve management efficiency, higher education institutions need to have fundamental innovations in awareness, organization, technology, and approach. Below are the key management implications to adapt to the context of digital transformation, while promoting the role of ideological and political education as a pillar to protect the ideological and political foundation in the modern academic environment.

### **5.1. Developing a Comprehensive Strategy for Political and Ideological Education in Cyberspace**

Educational institutions need to establish a comprehensive strategy for political and ideological education in the digital environment, which clearly defines the goals, content, methods, tools, staff, and effectiveness assessment. This strategy must be integrated into the university development plan and linked to digital transformation programs in education.

The content of the strategy should be based on the principles of (i) taking students as the center; (ii) developing critical thinking and political digital capacity; (iii) making the most of technology to spread positive values; and (iv) building a safe, proactive and creative “digital ideological space”. Re-planning the space for political education in digital platforms should be considered a core task rather than a supplement, thereby helping the implementation to no longer be fragmented, formal, or reactive.

### **5.2. Developing a Digital Technology Ecosystem to Support Political and Ideological Education**

One of the urgent requirements today is to develop technology platforms that integrate ideological - moral - political education content in a creative, effective and student-friendly way. These systems are not only places to provide learning materials, but also spaces for two-way interaction, where students are encouraged to respond, debate and propose positive political ideas (Spring, 2012).

Universities should build an open learning system with political and ideological education content presented in the form of short videos, podcasts, infographics, and interactive questions to help students easily access and spread on social networks. Design online ideological forums (webinars, livestreams, group discussions) with the participation of staff, lecturers, and prestigious guests to enhance students' political depth. Applying artificial intelligence to analyze students' learning behavior and acceptance level, thereby providing timely feedback and adjusting appropriate educational content. Deploying an early warning system for signs of accessing harmful information in the student community through online public opinion data analysis tools. Investing in technology infrastructure for political and ideological education should be

linked to the strategy of building a digital university and taking humanistic and political values as the foundation of digital transformation in education.

### **5.3. Strengthening Digital Communication Capacity Training for Staff and Lecturers**

The team of managers and lecturers is the key force in managing and implementing political and ideological education activities. However, reality shows that a part of them are still limited in their skills in using technology, digital communication skills and have not grasped the reception trends of modern students (Luo, 2022).

Therefore, universities should organize in-depth training courses on political communication skills on digital platforms, skills in designing ideologically oriented digital content, and social network interaction techniques. Foster cultural behavior skills in the online environment, especially the skills of active criticism, analyzing fake news, and orienting public opinion. Form a "digital ideological lecturer community" - a group of experienced teachers, capable of leading political and ideological content and spreading positive influence in the student community on digital platforms (Joo *et al.*, 2011). Assign responsibility to each faculty and each organization to build and operate at least one highly interactive ideological communication channel with students, managed by a team of excellent lecturers and students.

### **5.4. Establishing Competency Standards and Tools to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Political and Ideological Education in Cyberspace**

Many political and ideological education activities have been implemented, but there is no clear set of criteria to evaluate the effectiveness, both in terms of content, methods, and impact on students' awareness. Therefore, universities should build a digital ideological-ethical-political competency framework for students, including criteria such as political analysis ability, attitude towards social issues, behavioral skills in cyberspace, and the ability to identify false information (Li *et al.*, 2023).

Develop a multi-dimensional assessment system from lecturers, classmates, union officials, to students' self-assessment - combining qualitative and quantitative assessments. Apply technology to monitor the progress of political and ideological education through platforms (LMS), interactive tests, micro-learning modules, and personal reflection exercises. Linking the assessment of political and ideological education with reward and discipline activities, recognizing political and social capacity as a criterion in considering scholarships, academic performance, or considering the title of exemplary student.

### **5.5. Promoting Positive University Political Culture on Digital Platforms**

Building a healthy political and cultural environment in cyberspace is a long-term solution to create positive effects throughout the university (Huang, 2024). Some measures to manage digital political culture include: Encouraging students to produce content that spreads positive values, such as videos, articles, and communication campaigns on the topics of patriotism, civic ethics, and university culture; Organizing

competitions to create digital ideological content (video clips, infographics, online essays) and publishing them on popular platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube; Coordinating with mainstream press and media agencies to spread positive ideological products from students, while refuting false and distorted arguments online; Strengthening the activities of student political and media clubs, connecting university - businesses - state agencies to expand the space for thinking and political awareness for students.

The proposed management implications not only aim to overcome the weaknesses in the current management of political and ideological education, but also aim to restructure the ideological education system to suit the digital environment and the mindset of the modern student generation (Ogunlana, 2019). The shift from the traditional education model to an integrated, flexible, highly interactive education model in cyberspace requires higher education institutions to be pioneers, innovate, and truly invest deeply in human resources, technology, and institutions. Only by creating a solid digital political and ideological environment can universities fulfill their mission of training digital citizens who are knowledgeable, skilled, idealistic, courageous, and ethical in the new era.

## 6. Conclusion

In the context of globalization and strong digital transformation, cyberspace has become a new educational environment, bringing both opportunities and challenges for political and ideological education in higher education institutions. Effective management of political and ideological education activities on digital platforms requires a comprehensive and systematic identification of factors affecting this process, thereby having appropriate, timely, and effective management solutions.

The study has pointed out five main groups of factors affecting the management of political and ideological education in cyberspace: (1) Political awareness and online behavior of students; (2) Digital capacity and political qualities of lecturers and managers; (3) Policy mechanisms and administrative capacity of the university; (4) Technology infrastructure and digital platforms; and (5) Impact of the media environment and public opinion. These factors do not exist independently but have close interactions, directly affecting the quality and effectiveness of political and ideological education activities in the network environment.

On that basis, the article proposes several systematic and practical management implications, including building a digital-integrated political and ideological education strategy; developing a digital technology ecosystem to support ideological education; improving digital communication capacity for lecturers and staff; establishing tools to evaluate the effectiveness of political and ideological education; and building a positive university political culture on the network platform.

These suggestions are not only aimed at adapting to technological trends, but also aim at the deeper goal of enhancing political capacity, revolutionary ethics and civic responsibility for students - the future owners of the country in the digital age.

### Authors' Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the conception and writing of the manuscript.

### Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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