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Political Culture of Vietnamese Youth in the Digital Era

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Abstract

The article analyzes the current situation regarding the political culture of Vietnamese youth within the process of digitalization and fast growth of social media networks. In accordance with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh Thoughts, the political standpoints of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and modern literature on digital communication, the article describes both positive aspects and problems of the political thinking, attitude, and behavior of Vietnamese youth in their current state. According to the research results, most Vietnamese youth are patriotic, socially responsible, dedicated, and

engaged in various activities within their communities, innovations, and digitalization processes. Nevertheless, some Vietnamese youth do not pay attention to socio-political events and lack knowledge about the sources from which to obtain truthful information; thus, they become victims of misinformation and disinformation campaigns on the Internet. Thus, several measures should be taken concerning the problem.

Keywords: political culture; Vietnamese youth; social media; digital transformation; political and ideological education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Youths represent one of the most active social forces and occupy a special place in the sustainable development of the nation. In his speech, President Ho Chi Minh once stated: "Youth are the future masters of the country" [1, Vol. 5, p. 216]. In all periods of revolutionary struggle, young people are always a pioneering force in working, studying, being creative, and defending their motherland.

Under the circumstances of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the rapidly expanding digital environment provides numerous opportunities for Vietnamese youths to gain modern knowledge, advanced science, technologies, and progressive human values. However, cyberspace is also marked by the presence of multidirectional information flow, distorted and hostile views as well as the tendency of becoming pragmatical and individualistic. Thus, there arises a pressing need to foster the political culture and ideology of young people in this regard.

According to the Ministry of Information and Communications [2], up to 78 million internet users were registered in Vietnam as of 2024, occupying more than 79% of the population. Young people make up the biggest share of this number, as the statistics of Digital Vietnam 2024 shows. The average daily activity time of Vietnamese youth in cyberspace reaches 6 hours and 23 minutes. Most of them use platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram [3]. Hence, cyberspace can no longer be considered only as the virtual space, but it turns out to be a key element of the society that strongly affects the political awareness, value systems, lifestyles, and social behavior of the younger generation.

As of now, there are more than 22 million young people in Vietnam. According to the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union [4], more than 8.5 million youth union members and young people took part in volunteer activities, social welfare work, and community digital transformation initiatives in 2023 alone. Such numbers vividly demonstrate the tremendous potentials and increasing significance of youth in the socio-political life of the country.

The political culture of youth reflects their level of political awareness, idealism, faith, civic spirit, and sense of social responsibility. It represents the foundation for cultivating a new generation of young people who are politically dedicated and professionally competent as outlined by President Ho Chi Minh, who is characterized by political courage, aspirations of serving others, and adaptability. An objective analysis of the current status quo affected by digital media would help identify the scientific basis for proposing practical measures for orientation, education, and mobilizing youth in the digital environment.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Political culture is viewed as an essential component of the social culture that represents the degree of citizens' political awareness, faith, attitudes, and behaviors while engaging in socio-political processes. It does not involve mere theoretical knowledge but manifests itself in the form of the awareness of laws and ethics as well as individuals' behaviors towards the state and community.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba define political culture as "specifically political orientations toward the political system and its various parts, and attitudes toward the role of the self in the system" [5, p. 13]. Such definition emphasizes the inseparable link between the individual perceptions and their behavioral expression concerning the political system.

In the modern era, many studies indicate the deep transformation of the political socialization of youth due to the transition to the digital environment. Unlike before when people gained information and participated in politics through traditional institutions such as family, school, or state agency, nowadays, youth obtains information and engages themselves in politics using the digital media [6]. Similarly, W. Lance Bennett asserts that there exists great potential of digital communication environments to develop new forms of citizenship consciousness and motivate youth civic participation with appropriate guidance [7]. Thus, it can be concluded that creating political culture in the modern era requires the development of digital competence and digital citizenship skills.

Considering Marxist-Leninist theories and Ho Chi Minh Thought, the political culture in a socialist state always aims at fostering the progressive value system such as patriotism, collectivism spirit, respect for law, and aspiration to contribute to the nation. The Communist Party of Vietnam always maintains that education of younger generations in terms of revolutionary ideas, ethics, and lifestyle remains an ongoing strategic task towards creating quality human resources for the development of the nation [8, Vol. 1, p. 168].

Thus, the political culture of Vietnamese youth in the digital era can be defined as a dynamic system combining traditional cultural foundations and continuous reshaping under the influence of digital environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology framework of the research paper includes the application of dialectical materialism and historical materialism approaches to conducting a comprehensive analysis of socio-political phenomena within the context of their interaction with the development of digital technologies. The study will be conducted using documentary research methods based on the collection and analysis of secondary data resources in 2021–2025, such as Party documents, reports of the

Ministry of Information and Communications, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and the Institute for Youth Studies.

Specific research methods employed include the following:

- Analytical and synthetic methods are aimed at systematizing theoretical bases of political culture and synthesizing statistics related to the current situation.
- Logical-historical method is utilized for analyzing transformations in the political consciousness of the youth generation against the backdrop of Vietnam's digital transformation and international integration.
- Comparative method helps clarify the gap between the objectives set forth by the Communist Party of Vietnam and reality reflected in the political behavior of young people in cyberspace.
- Interdisciplinary approach helps to analyze socio-cultural phenomena through the prism of Political Science, Media Sociology, and Cultural Studies.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. POSITIVE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH

First, the patriotism and social responsibility of young people are continually improving. Vietnamese youth demonstrate increasing patriotism and national pride along with social responsibility towards their community and society. Various movements organized by the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union such as "Green Summer Campaign," "Exam Season Support Program," "Voluntary Blood Donation," "Youth Volunteer Movement," "Community Digital Transformation Movement," and others, attract large numbers of union members and young people to take part in them. Through participation in these movements, young people not only cultivate the spirit of voluntariness and dynamism but also develop the sense of civic responsibility, collectivism, and altruism. Young people are considered pioneers and initiators of national construction and defense; thus, their role in socioeconomic development and the protection of Vietnam's national interests should continue to be encouraged.

As per the Report on Youth Union Work and Youth Movements, in 2023 [4], there were more than 6.1 million volunteers among youth members who carried out more than 12,000 youth programs worth trillions of Vietnamese dong. Also, there were more than 1.4 million young people involved in the initiatives of environmental protection, responses to climate change, and the implementation of programs for developing new rural areas.

Within the field of digital transformation and innovation, the role of the young generation in these processes is becoming increasingly evident. As the Ministry of Science and Technology reported [9], young people make up more than half of the workforce participating in innovative start-up activities in Vietnam nowadays. Various models of technological start-ups, community digital transformation initiatives, and positive creation of digital content help to spread constructive values and increase social responsibility among the younger generation.

In particular, during the periods of natural disasters prevention, epidemics, and social assistance to communities, many young people have shown themselves ready for active participation in relevant activities. Thus, they once again proved the significance of their role in the development of society and protection of national interests.

Second, the educational level and political awareness of young people are continuously improving. Given the current trends in the development of modern science and technology and international integration, the younger generation of Vietnamese people have all the advantages of being educated in modern knowledge, technology, and world information. At the same time, young people show interest in politics, economics, culture, and social life while actively studying Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh ideology, and the directions of the policies of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Furthermore, innovations in the organization of political and ideological education at school, within Youth Union associations, and in the mass media help to improve political awareness, the level of resistance to external influences, and the ability to social criticism in the youth. Certain youth groups begin to form a clear political mindset and to be able to independently obtain and evaluate information in cyberspace.

Third, young people actively participate in the process of national construction and protection. In the present stage of international integration and digital transformation, the young generation of Vietnam plays an increasingly pronounced role in the cause of national construction and protection. Many youth participate in military service, the preservation of national sovereignty over the seas and islands, the protection of national interests in terms of security, including cybersecurity. In the cyberspace environment, the younger generation is actively fighting with distorted and hostile viewpoints while spreading constructive information and, thus, protecting the ideological foundation of the Communist Party of Vietnam and public confidence in society.

Furthermore, young people continue to occupy a pioneer position in the sphere of digital transformation, innovations, and entrepreneurship. Many young people actively participate in community digital transformation programs and the

application of technologies in learning, work, and other types of activities, thereby contributing to the development of society and the modernization of the country. This proves that the political culture of the younger generation in the new era is revealed both in terms of political consciousness and behavior and in terms of social activity and involvement in national processes.

5. RESTRICTIONS ON THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH

5.1. FIRST, A PORTION OF YOUTH DISPLAYS INDIFFERENCE TO SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES

Despite the emergence of positive factors, part of Vietnamese youth continues to show low levels of interest in socio-political issues, reluctance towards learning political theory, and lack of awareness of the history of the country, its law and civic sense. Young people are showing certain attitudes towards political indifference and become "distant from the Party, detached from Youth Union activities, and disinterested in politics," focusing exclusively on personal affairs, reducing participation in social activities, and having no feeling of responsibility towards the community. The political culture of youth in the era of digital technologies is influenced not only by family education, schooling and involvement of social organizations in the upbringing of young people but also by the digital communication environment and social networking sites.

Thus, due to the emergence of digital technologies, the formation of political culture, attitudes, and behavior of young people have become much more multifaceted and complicated as compared to other historical periods.

According to the research conducted in 2023 by the Institute for Youth Studies [10], about 27% of respondents considered socio-political topics as "less directly relevant" for them, while nearly 35% mainly used social media to gather social information. Thus, the political awareness of part of youth is significantly influenced by the digital communication environment and multidirectional trends of receiving information on the internet.

Furthermore, the issue of the circulation of fake information and the inappropriate conduct in cyberspace remain relevant. According to data collected by the Ministry of Information and Communications [2], in 2023 several thousands of incidents regarding the dissemination of incorrect information and fake news on social networks were reported with part of perpetrators being young people.

This fact indicates the negative impact of the market economy, individualistic way of life on the political culture and awareness of contemporary young people, which is reflected in the decreasing level of political trust and legal consciousness, pragmatism, and distancing from the traditional cultural values of the nation.

5.2. SECOND, YOUTH ARE PRONE TO NEGATIVE INFLUENCES THROUGH "INFORMATION TRAPS" ON THE INTERNET

Due to the rapid development of technologies of the digital communication environment, young people easily and conveniently have access to multidimensional information. At the same time, these environments provide ample opportunities to distribute incorrect and distorted information that may manipulate minds.

The internet of today is characterized by the possibility to build information echo chambers and algorithmic traps for users of social networks such as TikTok, Facebook, or YouTube. The algorithms that social media platforms apply to make users spend as much time as possible on the network tend to provide information that is closer to the interests and views of the user. Therefore, if the segment of youth is often using negative, distorted or politically-biased information, then algorithm will continue to recommend similar content even more frequently.

Such one-sided and repeated consumption of information distorts political awareness and thinking of young people, makes them lose objectivity in assessing socio-political issues and leads to a significant decline in political resilience. Moreover, youth is often not aware of the fact that they are manipulated in an ideological way through digital algorithmic environments and thus require the development of such skills as media literacy and critical attitude towards information received.

According to the Digital Vietnam 2024 report [3], more than 90% of Vietnamese youth are actively using social media at present. While the internet provides opportunities to obtain new knowledge and integrate into the global world, the negative consequences, including distorted information, are inevitable in case if digital literacy is not sufficient enough. Moreover, with the tendency of social media to prefer controversial content, young people are prone to being manipulated emotionally and psychologically in a case of low political resilience.

Apart from inappropriate online speech, distribution of fake information, and uncivilized behavior on the internet remain issues among a segment of youth that have an impact on the cultural environment and social life. Hostile forces try to implement their strategies of peaceful evolution to influence the ideological position of young people and the Communist Party of Vietnam with the help of the internet.

5.3. THIRD, PRAGMATIC AND DEVIANT LIFESTYLE TRENDS APPEAR

A segment of contemporary youth shows tendencies towards materialism, consumerism, hedonistic way of life without having life ideals and the spirit of self-dedication to society. Violations of the law, acts of violence at school, negligence in obeying traffic rules and low social responsibility continue to persist.

This trend reflects the lack of moral education, life ideals' education, and low political resilience of a segment of young people due to globalization and powerful impact of digital communication environment on young people. Ho Chi Minh noted the importance of revolutionary moral education of young people in order to prepare successors ready to build socialism as individuals "who politically know what they are going to do and professionally how to do this." He stated that: "To foster the revolutionary generations for future ones is a great and imperative task." [11, Vol. 15, p. 622].

Table 1. *Positive and Negative Aspects of the Political Culture of Vietnamese Youth*

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
Rise in the spirit of voluntary activity and community responsibility	A portion of youth is indifferent to socio-political issues
Higher sense of social responsibility and self-dedication	Pragmatic lifestyle trends
Active involvement in the process of digital transformation	Vulnerability to fake news on the internet
Developing entrepreneurial and innovative spirit	Lack of critical thinking and verification skills in cyberspace
Actively looking for knowledge and engaging in internationalization	Lack of ideals of life and political resilience

As indicated in Table 1, the current political culture of youth in Vietnam is characterized by both positive and negative aspects due to digital transformation and globalization.

5.4. REASONS FOR THE CURRENT STATUS QUO

Objective Reasons. The current status of political culture of youth is significantly determined by globalization processes, the development of the market economy, and fast growing information technologies. Cultural exchanges and the influx of individualistic and pragmatic lifestyle impacted the awareness, way of life, and behavior of youth in Vietnam.

In addition, hostile forces are increasing their sabotage activities in the ideological and cultural spheres via internet and social media attempting to influence the political awareness of youth. This situation poses serious problems before the education in the field of political and ideological issues and value-oriented orientation for contemporary youth.

Finally, the negative aspects of the market economy and globalization also affect the ideology, moral values, and lifestyles of a segment of contemporary youth.

Subjective Reasons. The processes of political and ideological education remain formalistic in some regions; the educational content and methods are not relevant and do not correspond to the features and information consumption preferences of youth of today.

Moreover, in some families parents are not paying enough attention to moral, idealistic and social-oriented education of their children. In addition, the activities carried out by youth and their unions lack creativity and are unable to interest youth in them.

Finally, a segment of youth itself suffers from lack of self-discipline in studying, improving and gaining political resilience, as well as critical thinking and verification skills in the cyberspace.

These factors play a significant role in the current situation in the political culture of Vietnamese youth. Finally, innovations in the field of the content and methodologies of political and ideological education of youth remain relatively slow.

6. WAYS TO IMPROVE THE POLITICAL CULTURE OF VIETNAMESE YOUTH

1. Modernization of Political and Ideological Education Among Youth

Political and ideological education for youth in the age of digital transformation and international integration requires comprehensive renewal in terms of its content and methods of implementation. The educational content must be oriented towards real problems and current social concerns of young people, at the same time increasing practical orientation, dialogue potential, and ability to critically analyze society.

It is also necessary to promote the use of advanced digital technologies, social networks, and means of mass communication in political education and ideological guidance aimed at increasing the accessibility and attraction of such activities for younger generations. Political theory and practice, Marxist-Leninist ideology, Ho Chi Minh thought, national history, civic consciousness, and social activism should be implemented creatively taking into account the psychophysiological and informational features of contemporary youth.

Since the majority (over 70%) of young people receive information in the digital space, political and ideological education should be increasingly transferred to digital communication channels and modern methods. Development of visual and concise media products – short movies, podcasts, infographics, online platforms for education, and using of

artificial intelligence in political education will significantly increase accessibility and popularity among contemporary youth.

The Communist Party of Vietnam stresses the need for strengthening the ideological education of younger generations in revolutionary ideology, morality, cultural lifestyle; patriotism and national dignity; aspiration, ambitions, striving for development; and social responsibility [8, Vol. 1, p. 168].

In addition, teaching of political theories in educational institutions needs to be changed in such a way that promotes critical independent thinking of young people and their creative potential. Such measures will help overcome the shortcomings of traditional theoretical and socialless approach to political education.

2. Increasing the Role of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union in Forming a Political Culture

To attract the interest of youth in participating in social and community movements as well as political education, the Youth Union should develop and innovate forms of its activities, focusing on socially useful directions associated with innovation and practical application of skills gained by younger generations. Such practical activities will contribute to the formation of political resilience and civil consciousness of youth.

At the same time, the Youth Union needs to pay increased attention to the ideologic work related to understanding the aspirations of youth, timely refutation of distortions and hostile positions, and spreading positive values throughout society.

The Communist Party of Vietnam considers it necessary to focus on the development of quality propaganda and ideological education of Youth Union members and youth, creating conditions for them to be trained and involved in society, fostering innovation and ideologic safety of the party in the new context [8, Vol. 1, pp. 221–222].

3. Increasing the Involvement of Families, Schools, and Society in the Process of Youth Education

Family plays an important role in shaping the personality, character, and lifestyle of youth. Consequently, parents should pay much attention to education of morality, life ideals, social responsibility, and civil consciousness among young people.

Schools, colleges, and universities should ensure an effective combination of knowledge-oriented education, socialization of youth, and their political socialization. Educational institutions should organize extracurricular activity and practice, teach traditions of national history to nurture patriotism and civic responsibility among students.

At the same time, society should create a healthy environment for the comprehensive development of youth. Media, socio-political organizations, and local communities should encourage young people to live a meaningful and socially constructive life.

Youth education should be conducted jointly in family, school, and societal contexts to raise generations with both high moral standards and professional competence, physically fit and productive citizens.

4. Strengthening Informational Work and Creating a Positive Cultural Environment in Cyberspace

Cyberspace has a great impact on the consciousness, attitudes, and behavior of contemporary youth. Therefore, it is required to conduct intensive informational work and struggle against negative influence on the Internet, social networks, and other digital platforms.

State authorities need to work together with schools, the Youth Union, and families to educate youth in digital and informational literacy, as well as the ability to critically analyze arguments and counteract distortion of facts on the Internet and social networks. At the same time, it is necessary to encourage youth to communicate on digital platforms in a constructive and responsible way, promoting constructive values, healthy informational environment, and patriotism in cyberspace.

Besides, it is also important to develop digital media products to engage young people and promote political and ideological education.

The Communist Party of Vietnam emphasizes the necessity of reinforcing ideological security of the Party and constant and consistent struggle against distortion, hostility, and politically opportunistic views. It is considered an important task of the entire political system and society [8, Vol. 1, p. 183].

5. Promotion of Consciousness and Activity of Young People

Each young individual should increase his or her level of self-study, self-development, and self-cultivation of political resilience. Every young person should form right life ideals, strive for contribution to development, and feel personal social responsibility toward himself or herself, his/her family, and society.

According to Ho Chi Minh, the youth should be both politically engaged and professionally competent, which means that it should constantly build up revolutionary spirit and professional qualifications to serve the nation and people. Every young man or woman should seek continuous education, develop their professional and vocational qualification, and actively participate in communal and socio-political activities to become an overall-developed individual.

Today, in the era of international integration and digital transformation, the active position of youth, its creativity and social responsibility is especially important for forming political culture and developing a competent youth workforce.

7. CONCLUSION

Political culture becomes even more crucial for fostering the formation of Vietnamese youth personality traits, their ideal vision of life, political endurance, and civic awareness and responsibility. In addition to being the basis of raising a generation of youths who would be both politically engaged and professionally skilled, political culture has become an important prerequisite for ensuring the sustainability and stability of Vietnam's political environment, its national development, and the safety of the ideology of the Communist Party of Vietnam in conditions of international integration and digitalization.

On the one hand, according to the results of the study, there have been numerous achievements recorded in political culture in recent years. Vietnamese youths have shown their patriotism, social responsibility, readiness to devote themselves, and willingness to actively learn and apply modern knowledge in their participation in social and political activities, as well as their contribution to national defense and development. On the other hand, there is a significant part of Vietnamese youths, which can be described as indifferent to socio-political issues, having no ideal life vision, remaining susceptible to false information in cyberspace, and leading practical and egoist lifestyles.

All those shortcomings arise because of certain objective and subjective reasons, such as globalization processes, negative sides of the market economy, the extensive presence of social networks, and flaws of political and ideological education. Thus, it becomes essential for further improvement to innovate the content and methods of political culture education for Vietnamese youth according to the conditions of the digital era.

It will be important to foster the political culture of Vietnamese youths through close interaction of family members, schools, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, and the rest of the society to educate the younger generation in terms of revolutionary and communist ideals, moral values, proper lifestyles, and civic responsibility. Simultaneously, it will be important for young Vietnamese people themselves to develop politically, socially, and digitally to meet the requirements of international integration and digital revolution.

Under present-day conditions, the political culture construction for youths becomes not only a goal of social and political organizations' activity but also one of the key missions of all Vietnamese society, the achievement of which will result in the creation of a highly professional young generation able to contribute to the process of industrialization and modernization in Vietnam.

Thus, the paper expands approaches to political culture of youths within the scope of modern digital communication environments and social media. At the same time, it offers useful references to politics and ideological education, youth policies, and digital citizenship among Vietnamese youth today.

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