



Enhancing political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade

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Abstract

Political resilience plays a crucial role in preparing university students to become responsible citizens capable of responding to the challenges of globalization, digital transformation, and the increasingly complex information environment. This study aims to assess the current status of political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT), Vietnam, and to propose practical strategies for its enhancement. A mixed-methods approach was adopted, combining qualitative document analysis with a quantitative survey of 100 undergraduate students. Political resilience was examined through four dimensions: political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that students generally demonstrated a high level of political resilience. Political stance received the highest evaluation, reflecting students' confidence in the country's development orientation and their awareness of civic responsibility. Political qualities and political courage were also positively evaluated, whereas political competence obtained comparatively lower scores, indicating the need to strengthen students' critical thinking, policy communication, and the practical application of political knowledge. The findings suggest that universities should modernize political education by integrating ideological education with experiential learning, digital literacy, civic engagement, and professional ethics. This study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on political resilience in Vietnamese higher education and offers practical implications for improving political education in universities.

Keywords: Political resilience, political education, university students, higher education, civic responsibility, Vietnam

Introduction

In the context of globalization, digital transformation, and the rapid expansion of social media, university students are increasingly exposed to diverse political, cultural, and ideological perspectives. While this environment provides opportunities to broaden knowledge and civic participation, it also increases exposure to misinformation, ideological polarization, and conflicting values. Consequently, strengthening political resilience among university students has become an important objective of higher education systems worldwide (Levinson, 2012; Hess & McAvoy, 2015) [6, 10].

Political resilience refers to an individual's capacity to maintain firm political beliefs, exercise sound political judgment, and demonstrate responsible civic behavior when confronted with complex political and social issues. It involves political awareness, critical thinking, value commitment, and the ability to evaluate information objectively in rapidly changing social environments. Higher education institutions therefore play an important role in cultivating students' political resilience alongside professional knowledge and employability (Westheimer, 2015; Hess & McAvoy, 2015) [6].

In Vietnam, political education has long been regarded as an essential component of higher education. The Communist Party of Vietnam emphasizes the development of politically competent, ethically responsible, and socially engaged young citizens capable of contributing to national

development. These policy orientations require universities not only to provide disciplinary knowledge but also to foster students' political awareness, civic responsibility, and ideological resilience in response to the challenges of globalization and digital transformation.

Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT) represents an appropriate setting for examining this issue. As an application-oriented university specializing in economics, engineering, commerce, and technology, HUIT prepares students for an increasingly competitive labor market. Although the university has implemented political education through formal curricula, extracurricular activities, and youth organizations, challenges remain in translating political knowledge into resilient attitudes and responsible civic behavior among students.

Previous studies have mainly focused on civic education, political participation, democratic citizenship, and ideological education among university students (Levinson, 2012; Westheimer, 2015) [6, 10]. However, relatively limited empirical research has conceptualized political resilience as a multidimensional construct comprising political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage, particularly within the Vietnamese higher education context. This research gap limits the development of evidence-based strategies for strengthening political resilience among university students.

Therefore, this study aims to assess the current status of political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City

University of Industry and Trade by examining four key dimensions: political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. Based on empirical findings, the study proposes practical recommendations to enhance political resilience, thereby contributing to improving political education and supporting the development of high-quality human resources for Vietnam's sustainable development.

Literature Review

1. Political resilience among university students

Political resilience has recently emerged as an important concept in political science, civic education, and higher education research. Although the concept has traditionally been associated with the ability of political institutions or democratic systems to withstand crises, contemporary scholarship increasingly extends resilience to the individual level, emphasizing citizens' capacity to maintain political commitment, critical judgment, and constructive civic engagement under conditions of social uncertainty and political complexity (Capano *et al.*, 2019; Pospisil, 2017) [13].

Within higher education, political resilience refers to students' ability to preserve political beliefs, evaluate political information critically, resist misinformation, and demonstrate responsible civic behavior while adapting to rapidly changing political and social environments. Rather than representing ideological rigidity, political resilience reflects informed political awareness, democratic values, critical thinking, and responsible participation in public affairs (Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Westheimer, 2015) [6]. These competencies have become increasingly important as university students are exposed to diverse information sources through digital technologies and social media.

Previous studies have consistently emphasized that universities play an essential role in developing students' political awareness and civic responsibility. Levinson (2012) [10] argues that higher education should cultivate informed citizens capable of participating effectively in democratic governance. Similarly, Hess and McAvoy (2015) [6] demonstrated that classroom discussions of controversial political issues contribute significantly to students' political reasoning, tolerance, and democratic competence. Westheimer (2015) [6] further suggests that civic education should move beyond knowledge transmission to develop responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented citizens.

Recent international research has expanded this perspective by examining how educational engagement contributes to democratic resilience among young people. Political participation in educational settings, including student organizations and civic activities, has been found to strengthen political trust, reduce intolerance, and improve democratic resilience (Dimitrova *et al.*, 2024). Likewise, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES, 2025) [8] emphasizes that universities are critical environments for promoting democratic resilience through civic participation, political literacy, and inclusive governance.

Despite these advances, empirical studies focusing specifically on political resilience remain limited, particularly in developing countries. Most previous research has concentrated on civic engagement, political participation, democratic citizenship, or political trust, while relatively few studies conceptualize political resilience as a

multidimensional construct integrating political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. Moreover, empirical evidence from Vietnamese universities remains scarce despite the country's increasing emphasis on political education within higher education institutions.

To address these limitations, the present study conceptualizes political resilience as comprising four interrelated dimensions: political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. By examining these dimensions among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, this study contributes empirical evidence to the literature on political resilience in higher education while providing practical recommendations for strengthening political education in Vietnam.

Research Methods

1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design by integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches to investigate political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade. The qualitative approach was used to establish the theoretical framework through document analysis, synthesis, historical-logical analysis, comparative analysis, and interdisciplinary perspectives. The quantitative approach was employed to examine the current status of political resilience and provide empirical evidence for proposing practical recommendations (Creswell & Creswell, 2023) [3].

2. Research Participants

The study was conducted at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade, Vietnam. Undergraduate students were selected as the primary participants because they are the direct beneficiaries of political education programs implemented by the university. A total of 100 valid questionnaires were collected and analyzed. The respondents represented different academic years and disciplines, providing a broad perspective on students' political resilience.

3. Sampling Technique

A convenience sampling technique was adopted due to the accessibility of participants and the exploratory nature of the study. Students voluntarily participated in the survey after being informed about the research objectives. Participation was anonymous, and all responses were treated confidentially in accordance with academic research ethics.

4. Research Instrument

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on the theoretical framework of political resilience and relevant literature. The questionnaire consisted of two sections.

The first section gathered demographic information about respondents. The second section measured political resilience through four dimensions: Political stance; Political qualities; Political competence; Political courage. Each dimension comprised several observable indicators measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Higher scores indicated higher levels of political resilience. The questionnaire was reviewed and refined before implementation to ensure content validity and clarity.

5. Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected through a direct sociological survey conducted at HUIT during the research period. In addition to the questionnaire survey, documentary sources, including government documents, Party resolutions, university reports, and previous academic studies, were reviewed to support the theoretical analysis and interpretation of empirical findings.

6. Data Analysis

The collected data were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques. Mean values and standard deviations were calculated to evaluate students' perceptions across the four dimensions of political resilience. Qualitative information obtained from document analysis was synthesized to explain the empirical findings and provide comprehensive policy recommendations.

7. Ethical Considerations

Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. Respondents were informed of the research objectives before completing the questionnaire and were assured that all responses would remain anonymous and be used exclusively for academic purposes. No personal identifying information was collected, and all data were analyzed in aggregate form to protect participants' privacy.

Results

1. Students' Perceptions of the Importance of Political Resilience

The survey results indicate that students highly recognized the importance of strengthening political resilience. As presented in **Table 1**, 71% of respondents strongly agreed and 24% agreed that enhancing political resilience is necessary. Only 5% expressed a neutral opinion, while no respondents considered it unnecessary. The overall mean score was 4.66 (SD = 0.57), demonstrating a high level of awareness regarding the significance of political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT).

Table 1: Perceived Importance of Strengthening Political Resilience among Students (N = 100)

Item	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
Necessity of strengthening political resilience	0	0	5	24	71	4.66	0.57

Note. 1 = Strongly disagree; 5 = Strongly agree.

2. Descriptive Statistics of Political Resilience

The descriptive statistics for the four dimensions of political resilience are presented in **Table 2**. Political stance achieved the highest mean score (M = 4.50), followed by political qualities (M = 4.45), political courage (M = 4.41), and political competence (M = 4.32). Although all four dimensions received relatively high evaluations, political competence recorded the lowest mean score, suggesting that students experienced greater difficulty applying political knowledge in practical situations than developing political awareness and attitudes.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Political Resilience Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SD	Rank
Political Stance	4.50	0.65	1
Political Qualities	4.45	0.68	2
Political Courage	4.41	0.69	3
Political Competence	4.32	0.75	4

Note. Higher scores indicate stronger political resilience.

3. Performance of Individual Indicators

The detailed results for individual indicators are summarized in **Table 3**. Among the twelve observed indicators, PC3 ("Maintaining the reputation and image of HUIT students") obtained the highest mean score (M = 4.59), followed by LT2 ("Confidence in the socialist development path") (M = 4.54) and LT1 ("Trust in the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam") (M = 4.52). These findings indicate that students demonstrated strong political identification and institutional commitment. By contrast, NL3 ("Ability to explain socio-economic policies to others") recorded the lowest mean score (M = 4.24), followed by NL2 ("Regularly updating Party documents and government policies") (M = 4.28) and DK3 ("Readiness to undertake challenging tasks") (M = 4.28). These comparatively lower scores suggest that while students possess positive political attitudes, further efforts are required to strengthen practical political competence and active civic engagement.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Political Resilience Indicators (N = 100)

Dimension	Indicator	Mean	SD
Political Stance	LT1	4.52	0.60
	LT2	4.54	0.59
	LT3	4.43	0.75
Political Qualities	PC1	4.44	0.69
	PC2	4.32	0.78
	PC3	4.59	0.58
Political Competence	NL1	4.44	0.67
	NL2	4.28	0.77
	NL3	4.24	0.81
Political Courage	DK1	4.47	0.65
	DK2	4.47	0.65
	DK3	4.28	0.77

4. Priority Strategies for Strengthening Political Resilience

To complement the student survey, lecturers and university administrators were invited to identify priority strategies for enhancing political resilience among students. As shown in **Table 4**, modernizing political education content integrated with professional ethics was considered the highest priority (50.0%), followed by expanding experiential learning activities (46.1%). Strengthening guidance on social media and developing political resilience assessment criteria each received support from 36.3% of respondents. These findings indicate that future political education should emphasize practical learning experiences and digital communication alongside traditional classroom instruction.

Table 4: Priority Strategies for Strengthening Political Resilience

Strategy	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Rank
Modernizing teaching content integrated with professional ethics	51	50.0	1
Expanding experiential learning activities	47	46.1	2
Strengthening guidance on social media	37	36.3	3
Developing political resilience assessment criteria	37	36.3	3
Other recommendations	13	12.7	4

Note. Multiple responses were permitted (N = 102).

Discussion

The findings indicate that students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade generally demonstrated a high level of political resilience across the four dimensions examined. The overall results suggest that students possess positive political awareness, a strong sense of civic responsibility, and confidence in the country's political orientation. These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that higher education institutions play a fundamental role in fostering civic responsibility, political literacy, and democratic participation among young people (Levinson, 2012; Hess & McAvoy, 2015; Westheimer, 2015) ^[6, 10].

Among the four dimensions, political stance achieved the highest mean score ($M = 4.50$). This finding suggests that students generally maintain strong confidence in national development and recognize their responsibilities as future contributors to society. The result may reflect the effectiveness of political education courses, ideological education activities, and extracurricular programs organized by the university. Similar findings have been reported by Hess and McAvoy (2015) ^[6], who argued that sustained exposure to civic and political education enhances students' political awareness and strengthens democratic values.

Political qualities also received a relatively high evaluation ($M = 4.45$), indicating that students demonstrated positive ethical values, collective responsibility, and institutional identification. However, the lower score observed for participation in traditional educational activities suggests that students tend to express political commitment more strongly through personal attitudes than through active participation in organized activities. This observation supports Westheimer's (2015) ^[6] argument that effective citizenship education should move beyond knowledge transmission and encourage meaningful civic engagement through authentic learning experiences.

The lowest mean score was observed for political competence ($M = 4.32$). Although students reported confidence in identifying misinformation and recognizing inappropriate political narratives, they expressed less confidence in explaining public policies and applying political knowledge in practical contexts. This finding indicates that political education should strengthen students' analytical reasoning, communication skills, and evidence-based argumentation. Similar conclusions have been drawn in previous research, which emphasizes that political literacy requires not only knowledge acquisition but also the capacity to interpret, evaluate, and communicate political information critically (Levinson, 2012) ^[10].

The results also highlight that political courage remains an important area for continuous development. Although students expressed willingness to defend appropriate values and oppose misinformation, comparatively lower scores for undertaking challenging responsibilities suggest that translating political awareness into concrete action remains a challenge. This finding reflects a common issue identified in higher education research, where students often possess positive civic attitudes but participate less actively in practical political and community activities (Westheimer, 2015) ^[6].

The survey of lecturers and university administrators further supports these findings. Respondents identified curriculum modernization, experiential learning, and digital communication as the highest priorities for strengthening

political resilience. These recommendations correspond closely with contemporary international approaches that advocate integrating political education with real-world experiences, service learning, and digital citizenship education to enhance students' civic competence and resilience in increasingly complex information environments (UNESCO, 2023).

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by conceptualizing political resilience as a multidimensional construct consisting of political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. Unlike many previous studies focusing primarily on civic participation or political awareness, this research provides empirical evidence from a Vietnamese university and demonstrates that strengthening political resilience requires a balanced approach combining ideological education, critical thinking, practical engagement, and digital literacy. These findings offer valuable implications for universities seeking to improve political education while preparing students to become responsible citizens capable of contributing to Vietnam's sustainable development.

Conclusion

This study examined political resilience among students at Ho Chi Minh City University of Industry and Trade (HUIT), Vietnam, by investigating four dimensions: political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage. The findings indicate that students generally demonstrated a relatively high level of political resilience. Political stance achieved the highest evaluation, reflecting students' confidence in the country's development orientation and their recognition of civic responsibilities. Political qualities and political courage also received positive evaluations, while political competence obtained comparatively lower scores, suggesting that students require greater opportunities to develop practical political knowledge, critical thinking, and communication skills.

The study contributes to the existing literature by conceptualizing political resilience as a multidimensional construct and providing empirical evidence from the Vietnamese higher education context. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on civic participation or political awareness, this research integrates political stance, political qualities, political competence, and political courage into a comprehensive analytical framework. The findings enrich current understanding of political education in higher education and provide a basis for future comparative studies in similar educational settings.

From a practical perspective, the results suggest that universities should strengthen political education by integrating ideological education with experiential learning, civic engagement, digital literacy, and professional ethics. Modernizing teaching methods, expanding extracurricular activities, promoting critical discussion of contemporary political and social issues, and improving students' ability to evaluate information in digital environments may contribute to strengthening political resilience among university students. These strategies are particularly important in the context of globalization and digital transformation, where young people increasingly encounter diverse and often conflicting sources of information.

Despite these contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted at a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the

findings to other higher education institutions in Vietnam. Second, the sample size was relatively modest and relied on a cross-sectional survey, making it difficult to examine changes in political resilience over time. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples across different universities and regions. Longitudinal research and advanced statistical techniques, such as structural equation modeling or multilevel analysis, may provide deeper insights into the determinants and development of political resilience among university students.

Overall, strengthening political resilience should be regarded as an integral component of higher education in Vietnam. By combining political education with critical thinking, civic engagement, and digital competence, universities can better prepare students to become responsible citizens capable of contributing to national development and responding effectively to the social, political, and technological challenges of the twenty-first century.

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