

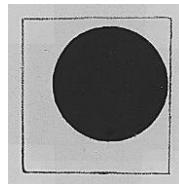
Educational Philosophy in the Digital Era: Lessons from Confucius and Comprehensive Innovation of Vietnam's Education

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Introduction

The strong development of information technology, artificial intelligence (AI) and globalization has been profoundly impacting all areas of life, especially education. The way people approach knowledge is no longer limited to traditional education models, but is increasingly shifting to flexible, learner-centered teaching methods. Technological advances help expand learning opportunities, but they also pose challenges in terms of human resource training, creative thinking development, and social responsibility.

Abstract: In the digital era, Vietnamese education is undergoing a profound transformation, requiring a flexible, modern educational philosophy that is suitable for social needs. Technological advances, especially artificial intelligence and online learning, are having a strong impact on teaching and learning, requiring education not only to impart knowledge but also to be equipped with creative thinking, adaptive thinking skills and digital ethics. Confucius's educational philosophy, although it comes from a feudal context, still carries core values that can be applied in modern education. Principles such as lifelong learning, moral education, character development, and social responsibility still play an important role in building a well-rounded education system. Combining the quintessence of tradition with technological innovation will help improve the quality of education, create human resources with capacity, ethics and the ability to adapt to the rapid changes of the times.

Keywords: Lifelong learning, moral education, flexible learning methods, digital transformation, critical thinking.

In this context, Viet Nam is carrying out education reform in a comprehensive direction, not only focusing on knowledge transfer, but also aiming to equip independent thinking skills, creativity and a sense of responsibility. This requires an appropriate educational philosophy to guide the development of the education system in the digital era. One of the important sources of inspiration that can be referred to is the educational philosophy of Confucius (Bergen, T. J., & Mi, H. F., 1995). Although it originated from the feudal period, Confucius' educational thought still has many sustainable values, which can be applied in the modern education system. He emphasizes lifelong learning, constantly cultivating knowledge and ethics to improve himself. In the digital age, continuous learning through online platforms, soft skills training programs, and professional development are extremely important to help learners adapt to the ever-changing society.

In addition, Confucius also emphasized the role of ethics and social responsibility in education (Low, K. C. P., & Ang, S. L., 2013). He said that learning does not stop at knowledge but also helps people train their personality, know how to behave with the community and contribute to society. In the digital era, when information is widely and rapidly transmitted, moral education and critical thinking skills have become even more urgent. Learners need to be equipped with the ability to analyze and evaluate information and apply technology responsibly. The application of Confucius' educational philosophy to the context of modern education does not mean keeping the conservative or limited elements of Confucianism, but needs to be selected and adjusted in accordance with the

development needs of the times. For example, in the digital education model, personalization of learning, the use of big data to optimize teaching content or the development of online learning platforms can all be combined with the principles of “self-learning” and “learning to be human” of Confucius (Tan, C.,2020).

This article will analyze the core principles of Confucius’ educational thought, thereby proposing how to integrate into Vietnam’s education system in the digital era. Combining the quintessence of tradition with technological innovation will help Vietnam’s education not only improve the quality of training but also create generations of citizens with knowledge, ethics and high adaptability in the context of globalization.

1. Confucius’ educational philosophy and its application in digital education

Confucius’ educational philosophy emphasizes that learning never stops. According to him, knowledge is not only accumulated in schools but is a lifelong process, helping individuals constantly develop themselves and adapt to changes in society. Confucius’ thought reflects the spirit of active learning, constantly practicing to improve knowledge and perfect personality.

In today’s context, when digital technology, artificial intelligence (AI), big data (Big Data) and automation are changing the way people access and process information, lifelong learning is more important than ever (Duan, Y., Edwards, J. S., & Dwivedi, Y. K. 2019). Vietnam’s education system needs to be strongly innovated, applying flexible methods to help all citizens access knowledge easily, proactively and effectively. Learning is no longer limited to the traditional classroom with a one-way teaching model, but has expanded to many different forms of learning. Learners can absorb knowledge anytime, anywhere through digital technology platforms, helping individuals improve their level without being bound by space or time (Friedman, R. S., & Deek, F. P. 2003).

Lifelong learning in the digital age offers many benefits, including continuous updating of knowledge, helping individuals not to fall behind in the face of rapid changes in tech-

nology. At the same time, it helps to enhance adaptability, especially in the context of the labor market that is drastically transformed by AI and automation. Continuous learning also helps individuals develop creative, critical and innovative thinking, thereby improving their ability to solve problems in practice. In addition, educational technology also helps expand learning opportunities, narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, and help everyone have equal access to knowledge.

One of the key ways to promote lifelong learning is to develop online learning platforms. In recent years, MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) platforms and learning management systems (LMS) such as Moodle, Coursera, Udemy, edX have become important tools in modern education (Eynon, R., & Malmberg, L. E. 2021). They offer thousands of courses from a variety of fields, making it possible for students to actively study without the need for a traditional classroom. In Vietnam, investing in the development of domestic online learning systems will help students and workers have the opportunity to access high-quality courses, thereby improving their skills and professional qualifications.

In addition to online learning, the Blended Learning model is becoming a trend to help optimize educational effectiveness. Instead of just learning through books or face-to-face lectures, students can access electronic materials before going to class, then spend time in class discussing, practicing, and solving practical problems. This method not only helps students understand the lesson more deeply but also promotes critical thinking and teamwork skills. Flipped Classroom is also an effective model, helping students actively study materials at home and use class time to exchange and apply knowledge in practice (Hwang, G. J., Lai, C. L., & Wang, S. Y. 2015).

Another important element of lifelong learning is the personalization of learning thanks to artificial intelligence (AI). Today’s AI systems are capable of analyzing each individual’s capacity, interests, and acquisition rate, thereby building an appropriate learning path (Makridakis, S.,2017). This allows each student to learn in his or her own way, optimizing time and improving the efficiency of knowledge acquisition. AI can also assist teachers in monitoring students’

learning progress, making appropriate recommendations to improve the learning process.

In general, the application of Confucius' lifelong learning philosophy to Vietnamese education in the digital era is a necessary direction. To achieve this, the education system needs to have a long-term strategy, including the development of educational technology infrastructure, innovation of teaching methods and teacher training in the direction of technology application. Lifelong learning not only helps individuals develop themselves but also contributes to improving the quality of human resources, meeting the requirements of an ever-changing world.

1.1. Character and moral education

Confucius' philosophy of education emphasizes that education is not merely the process of transmitting knowledge but also must train human character and morality. According to him, a society that wants to develop sustainably needs citizens who are ethical, honest, responsible and know how to behave properly. Therefore, education is not only aimed at training professional capacity but also must focus on the development of personal qualities, helping people live in harmony with the community and have a spirit of dedication to society. This is an important principle in education that even in the age of digital technology needs to be maintained and promoted.

In the context of strong technological development, artificial intelligence (AI) and big data (Big Data) are rapidly changing the way people work, learn and communicate (Obschonka, M., & Audretsch, D. B., 2020). Many traditional tasks are gradually automated, making individuals need to be equipped with more digital skills to adapt to this change. However, besides technological skills, a major challenge is how to ensure that education retains its role as a character and moral development in a world where machines and algorithms have more and more decision-making power. As technology can create content, analyze data, and support decision-making, people's ability to think ethically and perceive right and wrong becomes even more important.

One of the most pressing issues today is digital ethics – a set of principles that help individuals

behave responsibly in the online environment. As the digital world expands, people not only access and share information more quickly, but also face risks from fake news, misinformation, and irresponsible behavior on social networks. Therefore, education cannot only focus on training technological skills, but also needs to be combined with moral education to help individuals develop comprehensively.

In Vietnam, the new general education program has integrated many contents related to civic education and digital ethics, helping students understand how to use technology responsibly. The teaching not only focuses on theory but also aims to practice ethical situations in the digital environment, helping students have the skills to distinguish between real and fake information online, behave civilly on online platforms and understand the impact of technology on personal life as well as society. These contents play an important role in building healthy habits of using technology, limiting the negative impact of the digital environment and contributing to the formation of a generation of responsible citizens.

In addition to the formal curriculum, some modern teaching methods such as values-based education and experiential learning are also being applied to help students develop their personalities through practice and reflection. Value-based learning helps students form a clear awareness of moral principles such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and compassion. Meanwhile, experiential learning allows students to engage in real-life situations, practice problem-solving skills, and develop social awareness in a more realistic way.

In addition, extracurricular activities, career programs and community projects also play an important role in training students in ethics and social responsibility. Through these activities, students not only learn how to cooperate and work in a team, but also understand the meaning of contributing to the community, developing a sense of responsibility to society. Students can participate in volunteer projects, protect the environment, support disadvantaged communities, thereby forming personality and compassion (Frey, N., Fisher, D., & Everlove, S., 2009).

However, character and moral education is not only the responsibility of the school but

also requires close cooperation between the family, the school and society. Parents and teachers need to act as role models for students to follow, create a healthy educational environment, and encourage a spirit of respect, responsibility and compassion. Adults themselves also need to be equipped with digital knowledge and skills to teach their children how to use technology properly and responsibly. In general, in the digital age, education cannot only focus on equipping technological skills but needs to be combined with moral and personality education, helping learners develop comprehensively, be socially conscious and know how to use technology responsibly. The integration of core values from Confucius' educational philosophy into the modern education system will contribute to building a generation of citizens with good moral qualities, ready to face the challenges of the new era.

1.2. Flexible teaching methods

In the context of modern education, the application of flexible teaching methods is a prerequisite to meet the increasingly diverse learning needs of learners. When technology is drastically changing the way knowledge is acquired, education cannot only be encapsulated in the traditional teaching model but needs to be innovated in the direction of combining traditional methods and digital technology. The application of technology not only optimizes the teaching process but also promotes students' self-learning, creative thinking, and problem-solving skills. Confucius's philosophy of "self-learning" – emphasizing perseverance and self-discipline in learning – is completely in line with the current trend of personalized learning (Low, K. C. P., 2016). Personalized education is a model in which each student has a unique learning path, tailored to his or her abilities, interests, and pace of acquisition. This helps learners maximize their potential without being constrained by the rigid framework of traditional teaching methods. Digital technology plays an important role in realizing this model, through artificial intelligence (AI) and big data (Big Data) to track learning progress, analyze the needs of each individual, and make appropriate learning recommendations. In order to promote flexible teaching methods,

many modern education models are being widely applied in the world and in Vietnam, helping to improve teaching efficiency and enhance learners' initiative.

Modern teaching methods

Blended Learning is a method that combines face-to-face learning in class and online learning, helping students actively absorb theory before coming to class, thereby optimizing learning time in class to discuss, practice and solve practical problems. This method allows students to learn at their own pace, while allowing teachers to personalize the teaching content to suit each student. In addition, the use of a learning management system (LMS – Learning Management System) such as Moodle, Blackboard or Google Classroom helps track the learning process of each student, provide learning materials, tests and feedback immediately. This makes learning more flexible, while reducing reliance on traditional teaching (Knezovic, A., 2024).

Flipped Classroom is a teaching model in which students actively approach the content of the lesson at home first, and then use the time in class to discuss, practice, and solve in-depth problems. Instead of teachers lecturing directly in class, students will watch lecture videos and read materials first, thereby helping them to be better prepared when coming to class. The benefits of this model are that it encourages critical thinking, enhances initiative, and helps students develop teamwork skills. With the help of technology, teachers can use video lectures, online tests, and digital learning platforms to help students master knowledge before going to class.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a method of learning through participation in real-life projects in which students will have to learn, research, and come up with creative solutions to a specific problem. This method helps students develop teamwork, critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, and combines theory and practice. With the help of technology, students can connect with experts, collect data, use analysis software, and present research results visually. For example, in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) education, students can work on projects on science simulation, applied programming, or digital

model design, helping them better understand scientific concepts and develop practical skills.

The role of teachers in flexible teaching methods

In the traditional education model, teachers often play the role of imparting knowledge, while students absorb passively. However, with modern teaching methods, the role of teachers also needs to change, becoming instructors and mentors to help students discover and build their own knowledge. Teachers need to know how to use digital technology to support teaching, including smart interactive whiteboards, mobile learning apps, and online learning platforms. These tools help teachers personalize their teaching methods, track student progress, and provide feedback quickly. In addition, teachers also need to encourage critical and creative thinking, helping students not only absorb knowledge but also know how to ask questions, solve problems and apply them in practice.

The direction of Vietnam's education in the digital era

In general, the application of flexible teaching methods not only helps to improve learning efficiency but also creates a positive, creative and proactive educational environment. This is especially important in the context that Vietnamese education is moving towards a digital transformation model, combining tradition and technology to build an advanced education. Combining Confucius' spirit of learning – emphasizing self-discipline, perseverance and responsibility – with technological advances will help students access knowledge proactively, develop creative thinking and be able to adapt to the changes of modern society. This not only helps to improve the quality of education but also prepares the young generation well for the requirements of the knowledge economy in the future.

1.3. Adaptive and creative skills education

Confucius emphasized that learning is not only to know, but more importantly to act and become a useful person for society. According

to him, education is not merely a process of acquiring knowledge but also must be combined with moral training, skill development and practical application. In the digital era, this idea becomes even more important when people not only need to have knowledge but also have to be able to adapt to the rapid changes in technology, the working environment and modern society.

Modern education cannot only focus on theoretical teaching, but should focus on training adaptive skills, creative thinking and problem-solving ability. The digital world has changed the structure of the workforce, as many traditional jobs are gradually being replaced by artificial intelligence (AI), automation and big data (Tschang, F. T., & Almirall, E., 2021). This requires education to equip students with academic and work flexibility, helping them to be ready to face the challenges of the modern labor market.

Besides professional knowledge, soft skills such as critical thinking, teamwork, intercultural communication, and innovative thinking become essential elements. As digital technology develops, students not only need to understand technology but also know how to apply it creatively to solve practical problems. Practicing lifelong learning, proactively adapting to changes and developing creative thinking will help learners develop sustainably in the future.

One of the advanced educational methods that help improve students' applicability is STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) and STEAM (STEM + Arts) education (Kang, N. H., 2019). This is an integrated education model, helping students not only master scientific knowledge but also apply it in practice flexibly. STEM helps students develop scientific, technical, and practical thinking, from which they can apply their knowledge to solve real-world problems, develop technology, and create new solutions. STEAM expands STEM by integrating the arts, which enhances creativity and aesthetic thinking. This helps students not only master technology but also know how to apply it to the fields of design, art, communication, and creative product development. The combination of science and art helps learners to think holistically, develop both analytical and creative skills at the same time.

The implementation of STEM and STEAM education in Vietnam can contribute to promoting the spirit of innovation, giving students more opportunities to practice instead of just learning theory passively. These methods also help connect knowledge with practice, helping students clearly see the application of what they learn to life and work later. In addition to STEM and STEAM, an important approach in modern education is experiential learning. This is a teaching method that helps students develop skills through practice and application to real life. Instead of just learning theory in books, students will be able to participate in practical projects, study cases, conduct experiments and solve problems in a real environment. This helps students develop the ability to think creatively, work in teams, and analyze information effectively.

Experiential learning not only enhances learning motivation but also equips learners with the skills they need to succeed in modern society, including communication, problem-solving, time management, and critical thinking. For example, in business education, students can participate in practical business planning projects, experience simulated business operations. In environmental education, students can participate in programs such as tree planting, forest protection, and research on the impacts of climate change. These practical experiences help students better understand the meaning of knowledge and practice applied skills in life.

In general, education in the digital era does not stop at acquiring knowledge, but must also focus on developing action capacity, adaptability and innovation. Confucius's educational thought on learning to be a human still retains its value in the modern context, but needs to be adjusted to suit the requirements of the digital age.

Viet Nam needs to continue to innovate its education in the direction of encouraging creativity in learning and teaching, helping students develop the ability to think independently. At the same time, integrating essential skills into the curriculum, including digital skills, soft skills, and problem-solving skills, is essential. In addition, the development of STEM education, STEAM and experiential learning will help students have more opportunities to practice and clearly see the application of knowledge in practice.

The combination of Confucius' educational philosophy and modern educational innovation will help Vietnam build an advanced education system, equipping the younger generation not only with knowledge but also with the capacity to act, be creative and adapt to a changing society (Ruhail, M., Linxin, Q., Shaofeng, L., Liberte, E. E. A., Dilshod, M., Mafruhah, S., & Awan, A., 2024). Only when students can turn knowledge into action can they truly master their own future and contribute effectively to the development of society.

2. Challenges and opportunities in applying Confucius' educational philosophy

Applying Confucius' educational thought to digital education is not an easy process. Some of his views are conservative and influenced by the context of feudal history, so they are no longer fully relevant to modern society. However, if we know how to select and adjust, the core values of Confucius' educational philosophy can still contribute to the process of educational innovation in Vietnam, helping to build a humane, flexible and creative education in the digital era.

The challenge of applying Confucius' educational philosophy to modern education. Confucius' educational philosophy emphasizes respect for tradition, moral obedience, and strict discipline. This can create a number of obstacles when applied to modern education, where creative thinking, innovation, and the freedom to develop individuals are becoming important factors. In today's education, the encouragement of critical thinking and personal development plays a core role, while Confucian ideology sometimes emphasizes adherence and tradition rather than innovation and creativity.

Education in the digital age requires flexibility and constant updates to keep up with the pace of technological development (Ng, W., 2015). The traditional education model, with a focus on stereotypical learning and teacher-listening, is no longer suitable for the modern learning environment. The application of Confucius' philosophy to digital education needs to be adjusted to combine the preservation of moral values and the promotion of innovation in the approach to

knowledge. One of the biggest challenges of educational innovation in Vietnam is the quality of teachers. The application of technology to teaching requires teachers not only to master their expertise but also to know how to use technology effectively. Meanwhile, a part of teachers are still used to traditional teaching methods, not really ready to adapt to the new learning environment.

In addition, teachers need to change from the role of knowledge transmitters to instructors and mentors, helping students develop independent thinking and self-learning ability. This requires the teacher training program to be drastically improved, combining traditional educational philosophy with modern teaching methods. Although digital technology opens up many new learning opportunities, not everyone has access to modern educational tools. The digital divide between urban and rural areas, between different economic groups remains a matter of concern. Without reasonable policies to universalize digital education, inequality in education will increase.

2.1 Opportunities for educational innovation in Vietnam from the perspective of Confucius philosophy

One of the core values of Confucius' educational philosophy is moral education and social responsibility. In the age of digital technology, when information is spread rapidly, it is more important than ever to equip yourself with critical thinking skills and digital ethics. Vietnamese education can integrate traditional ethical principles into the curriculum to help students sense a sense of responsibility when using technology, and at the same time develop skills in analyzing and evaluating information and protecting themselves in the digital environment. Confucius emphasized that learning never stops, people need to constantly improve their knowledge to develop themselves (Tu, W. M., 1998). This is completely in line with the trend of lifelong learning in the digital age. Educational Technology (EdTech) has made learning easier through MOOC platforms, LMS, and online learning systems, making it possible for anyone to learn anywhere, anytime. Confucius' philosophy attaches great importance to the

spirit of self-learning, which is in line with today's personalized learning model. With the help of technology, education can be customized to each student's needs and abilities, helping them learn at their own pace and promote their personal strengths. Artificial intelligence (AI) systems can analyze learning data and offer appropriate curriculums, helping students learn more effectively. Another important factor in education innovation is the cooperation between the state, businesses and social organizations to improve the quality of education and train human resources to meet practical needs. The development of programs in collaboration with businesses helps students not only have theoretical knowledge but also practice practical skills, increasing their ability to adapt to the labor market in the digital era.

2.2 Strategies for implementing sustainable education innovation

To take advantage of the opportunities and overcome the challenges of applying Confucius' educational philosophy to modern education, Vietnam needs a long-term and comprehensive strategy. First, the renewal of the teacher training program is a prerequisite, helping the teaching team to have the ability to apply advanced technology and educational methods. At the same time, investing in digital education infrastructure is an important factor, ensuring that all students, whether in urban or rural areas, have the opportunity to access online learning, narrowing the education gap. In addition, it is necessary to develop policies to support lifelong learning, encouraging workers and students to constantly improve their knowledge and skills to adapt to rapid changes in technology. In particular, the combination of traditional moral education with modern technological skills will help learners not only have a solid knowledge foundation but also know how to behave responsibly in the digital environment. The harmonious combination of the quintessence of Confucius education and technological innovation will help Vietnam develop a flexible, humane and creative education system, meet the needs of the digital era and prepare well for the future of global integration.

Conclusion

Confucius' educational philosophy, with a focus on lifelong learning, moral education, and flexible learning methods, still has a lot of value in the context of modern education. Combining the quintessence of tradition with technological innovation will help Vietnam improve the quality of education, create human resources to meet the requirements of the digital era. Learning is not only about acquiring knowledge but also about developing thinking, ethics and skills to integrate and thrive in a changing world

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