

FACTORS IN THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL LITERACY OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Li Haoran

Belarus, Mogilev State University named after A. A. Kuleshov
elenasnopkova@mail.ru

Abstract. The formation of political literacy among university students in contemporary higher education is increasingly shaped by the processes of digitalization and the expansion of the digital educational environment. These processes transform not only the channels of information transmission but also the mechanisms of value formation, political cognition, participation, and reflection.

Keywords: political literacy; university students; digitalization of education; factors in the formation of students' political literacy.

The digitalization of higher education is profoundly reshaping how political literacy is formed among university students. Traditional channels of value transmission and political cognition now interact with rapidly expanding digital learning environments, creating both opportunities and challenges. Conventional models fail to address key digital-age issues, including information bubbles, algorithmic filtering, misinformation risks, ideological manipulation, passive content consumption, and students' lack of critical thinking and digital self-regulation. Furthermore, the enhanced agency of students in digital spaces often outpaces their ability to engage responsibly and reflectively. This research proposes a five-component model that integrates socio-cultural, pedagogical, information/media, personality-behavioral, and activity-based factors. The core problem addressed in this article is the lack of a systematic, comprehensive, and multi-dimensional analytical framework for influencing the formation of college students' political literacy in the context of digital higher education. At the same time, it responds to the dilemma that traditional models cannot cope with digital risks or make full use of digital opportunities, and provides an actionable list of factors and theoretical basis for political education in colleges and universities [1; 2].

This article will systematically introduce the factors that influence the political literacy of college students in the digital age. These factors will have a real impact on the effectiveness of political literacy education for college students.

Socio-cultural, Institutional, and Digital-Contextual Factors. In the context of the People's Republic of China, the formation of political literacy is determined by the interaction between traditional institutional mechanisms and the rapidly evolving digital environment. Alongside the system of Ideological and Political Education, an increasingly important role is played by: state-regulated digital information space; official online educational platforms and ideological resources; digital communication channels shaping public discourse. State-regulated digital spaces, including official news portals and government-managed social media, disseminate authoritative policy interpretations. Official educational platforms and digital communication channels embed political discourse into daily interactions, while curated online events and campaigns further construct political meanings, complementing institutional frameworks.

Pedagogical and Digital-Didactic Factors. Digitalization significantly transforms the pedagogical conditions of political literacy formation. Key factors include: integration of digital educational technologies (online courses, learning platforms, smart classrooms); use of interactive digital tools (forums, simulations, virtual discussions); blended learning models, combining face-to-face and online instruction; digital pedagogical design, ensuring meaningful engagement rather than passive content consumption. Specifically, digitalization replaces one-way transmission with dialogic, participatory learning environments. It makes political education more responsive by adapting content to individual progress and interests. It also

multiplies authentic materials – from policy briefings to civic scenarios – available instantly, while enabling peer collaboration across locations. Digital tools expand opportunities for visualization, personalization, and interaction, but require purposeful pedagogical structuring to support value-oriented and reflective learning.

Thanks to these changes, students can learn at their own pace and in ways that suit them best. Visual tools make abstract political ideas easier to grasp. Interactive features like simulations and discussions turn learning into an active, enjoyable experience. Teachers can also track progress more easily and offer timely support. When digital tools are well arranged, they help students not only gain knowledge but also develop thoughtful views and responsible attitudes. Digitalization makes political literacy learning more engaging, effective, and fit for today's world [3].

Information and Media Environment Factors. Digitalization can bring risks and challenges, such as misinformation and algorithmic cocoons, which can undermine public opinion and political rationality [4]. The digital information space becomes a central factor in shaping political literacy. Its influence is manifested through: high accessibility of political information; plurality of viewpoints and interpretations; algorithmic filtering and information bubbles; risks of misinformation and ideological manipulation. Under these conditions, political literacy formation increasingly depends on the development of critical thinking and media literacy, which become essential components of the cognitive and reflexive domains. At the same time, the digital space also offers clear advantages. Easy access to a wide range of political information allows students to compare different viewpoints and form well-rounded opinions. Algorithmic recommendations can help them discover relevant educational content aligned with their learning needs. Many official platforms and verified sources provide reliable materials that support informed judgment. When students actively engage with diverse and credible information, they strengthen their ability to understand complex political issues. Thus, the digital environment, when used wisely, becomes a powerful tool for building political literacy. In this environment, students must learn to interrogate digital content, recognize latent biases, and assess the credibility of sources across multiple platforms. The very abundance of information demands not just fact-checking skills but also reflective judgment about which voices are authoritative and which narratives serve particular interests.

Personality-Oriented and Digital-Behavioral Factors. Digitalization transforms students' modes of participation, communication, and identity construction. Relevant factors include: students' digital competencies and information behavior; patterns of online political engagement (discussion, commenting, sharing); individual strategies of information selection and interpretation; level of digital reflexivity and self-regulation. The digital environment enhances students' agency but also increases the need for conscious self-regulation and responsible behavior. Digital didactics emphasizes active, independent student engagement. Digitalization enables students to curate their own information flows, engage in political discussions across platforms, and construct civic identities online. At the same time, it exposes them to polarizing content, instant feedback loops, and algorithmic recommendations that shape their interpretive choices. Digital reflexivity – monitoring one's own online behavior and its political consequences – emerges as a core factor. Self-regulation becomes necessary to counter impulsive reactions and uncritical acceptance of dominant narratives. Self-regulation manifests as thoughtful evaluation of information before sharing or responding, fostering responsible digital citizenship.

Activity-Based and Digital Participation Factors. Political literacy formation increasingly occurs through digitally mediated forms of activity. These include: participation in online discussions and forums; engagement in digital civic initiatives and campaigns; involvement in virtual communities and academic networks; use of digital tools for collaborative problem-solving. These digitally mediated forms of activity also cultivate digital literacy and information management abilities, as students learn to navigate online platforms efficiently and contribute meaningfully. When properly guided by educators, such activities reinforce legal awareness and

ethical online behavior while promoting reflective engagement. Ultimately, these experiences transform political literacy from abstract knowledge into practiced competence, preparing students for informed and responsible participation in both digital and traditional civic spaces.

Thus, the conducted analysis demonstrates that the formation of political literacy among university students in the context of digital transformation of higher education is a complex, multidimensional, and systematically organized process determined by the interaction of socio-cultural, pedagogical, informational, personal, and activity-based factors.

The study has shown that digitalization significantly changes not only the forms and channels of political education but also the mechanisms of political socialization, value formation, participation, and reflection. The digital educational environment becomes an active space for the construction, transmission, interpretation, and practical implementation of political meanings. Under these conditions, political literacy formation requires the integration of traditional educational approaches with the opportunities and challenges of digital technologies.

The proposed system of factors makes it possible to overcome the limitations of traditional approaches that primarily focus on knowledge transmission while insufficiently considering the influence of digital communication, media environments, online participation, and students' information behavior. In contrast, the presented multidimensional framework reflects the hybrid nature of contemporary higher education and allows political literacy to be considered as an integrative personal quality developing through the unity of values, cognition, activity, communication, and reflexivity.

Particular significance is attached to the role of digital educational environments and media spaces, which simultaneously create new opportunities for political engagement and generate risks associated with misinformation, algorithmic filtering, fragmented perception, and reduced criticality. Therefore, the development of critical thinking, media literacy, digital reflexivity, and self-regulation becomes a necessary condition for effective political literacy formation.

The analysis also confirms that students' active participation in digitally mediated civic and communicative practices contributes to the transformation of political literacy from abstract knowledge into practical competence and responsible social behavior. At the same time, the effectiveness of such participation largely depends on pedagogical guidance, value orientation, and the purposeful organization of the educational process.

Consequently, the identified factors form a conceptual basis for the further development of pedagogical technologies and methodological support aimed at enhancing political literacy among university students in the People's Republic of China. The presented results may serve as a theoretical foundation for designing educational models that correspond to the realities of digital society and the strategic objectives of contemporary higher education.

References

1. Snopkova E.I., Li H. Political literacy of students as an object of scientific research: a pedagogical review // Mogilev State A. Kuleshov University Bulletin. Series C. Psychological and Pedagogical Sciences (Psychology, Pedagogy, Methodology). 2025. No. 2(66). P. 7-13.
2. Snopkova E.I., Li H. A theoretical model of students' political literacy in the context of higher education in China // Mogilev State A. Kuleshov University Bulletin. Series C. Psychological and Pedagogical Sciences (Psychology, Pedagogy, Methodology). 2026. No. 1(67). P. 51-58.
3. Снопкова Е.И. Потенциальные эффекты разработки и применения инновационных технологий в педагогическом образовании // Преподаватель высшей школы: традиции, проблемы, перспективы. Тамбов: Издательский дом "Державинский", 2025. С. 169-176.

4. Снопкова Е.И. Когнитивные эффекты и потенциальные риски внедрения инновационных технологий в образовательный процесс // Вестник образования. 2026. № 1(277). С. 27-37.