

## The effects of teaching and learning political economy in Vietnamese educational system

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand and test the factors influencing the effectiveness of learning and teaching political economy among Vietnamese universities. Over 1500 students from different majors and different school years have taken part in this study. The data collected from questionnaires was analyzed by SPSS version 2016 and EVIEW 10. From this study, it can be said that learning motivations and teaching methods are the most important factors driving the success of teaching and learning the political economy. Furthermore, males seem to be more interested in studying this subject and getting a higher GPA compared to females. Students from higher school-year, by contrast, have lower levels of interest in studying this module, leading to the lower effectiveness in teaching and learning this module. Finally, while teaching methods and teaching quality are positively correlated with the dependent variable, the administration service and infrastructure negatively influence the teaching and learning objectives.

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## 1. Introduction

Political economics is an interdisciplinary branch of social sciences that focuses on analyzing and understanding the interaction between personal relationships with government and public policy (Ake, 1981). The political economy field is concerned with real-world capitalism or communism and the culture, history, and customs of a nation and the relationships between these factors and the political system (Ravenhill, 2017; Cohen, 2017). The term political economy is widely used and popularized in many parts of the world to describe any government policy with an economic force. Economic and politics have been becoming basic, essential and indispensable fields of social life, which directly impact basic human activities and human development. Therefore, teaching and learning the movement and development process of human society, economic issues, politics, and their relationship have been topics for discussion in many conferences around the world since the 16s (Cohen, 2017). Regarding its objectives, political economy is macro-oriented and defines the roles of economics and politics in maintaining and developing tangible and intangible resources such as human capital quality, productivity, efficiency, and policies for a country (Colander, 2005). For a long time, this discipline has become one of the education majors that are constantly interested in and facilitated by academics and practitioners (Hudson & Leftwich, 2014). This is because the political economy is responsible for training and creating competent human resources in all aspects, focusing on specialized knowledge and upgrading interpersonal skills, and enhancing intrinsic personal qualities. In the fourth industrial revolution, the dynamic and competitive environment requires the university to build a contingent of students with a high political stance and quality in terms of skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Siassakos et al., 2010). Therefore, universities are responsible for training, creating, and nurturing a generation of young people with enough talent and virtue who can participate in various professional activities. The knowledge system of political economy in transition to socialism provides basic knowledge about the logical social relationship between economy and politics. It encourages the harmony of interest relations in a socially-oriented market economy. Vietnamese and the settlement of the relationship of interests between Vietnam and other countries worldwide through

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international economic integration should be further discussed. The research and presentation method in the new curriculum has successfully been applied in many specialized research methods (DelReal, 2011). Specifically, scientific abstraction is used as the main method to show the substance, generalized into categories, concepts, laws of phenomena, objective economic processes, helping students form scientific thinking, creativity, analytical skills, evaluation and implementation of socio-economic activities in all fields of business (Felder & Brent, 1999). Political economy has contributed effectively to the formation of the methodology, the scientific basis to harmoniously resolve the relationship of interest in the development process, creating a driving force for creativity to improve society's life and spirit continuously. From there, students can apply the knowledge gathered in studying political economy to clarify interest relationships in the market economy, identify their interests, and form skills to protect their legitimate interests when starting a business or participating in socio-economic activities in today's context (Stilwell, 2012). However, many scholars worldwide expressed concern that the political economy was gradually losing its original position. A lot of pieces of evidence suggest inefficiencies and lack of interest in subject training and instruction, leading to discouragement and motivation losses among students at many levels of education (Stilwell, 2012). A majority of researchers believe that the renewal of thinking and teaching methods in the political economy is essential to improve the ability to absorb and apply subject knowledge (Stilwell, 2012). Some others said that whether students can absorb this subject depends on how knowledge is transmitted, how the program is designed, and how well the teachers can deliver the inside knowledge. However, many studies have shown that students' learning performance depends mainly on their dynamics, learning methods, hard work, and initiatives rather than external factors (Felder & Brent, 1999). Therefore, it is extremely important and urgent to research and prove the factors affecting teaching and learning this subject. This study aims to explore and understand what factors influencing the efficiency and effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy in Vietnamese education.

## 2. Literature review

The education sector is the backbone of the economy, making an important contribution to its development (Colander, 2005). The quality of education can be assessed and determined by students' performance regarding their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Siassakos et al., 2010). On the supply-side, universities have generated and nurtured high-quality human resources for the country. On the demand-side, organizations become the place to consume and use human resources, which are education products, intending to convert those human costs into expected organizational outcomes. Students, besides being learners, are also customers who use the services provided by a university. Berry et al. (1995) argue that education service is one of the most important positive value enhancement factors that can affect a university's success. Moreover, higher education can be seen as a pure service, showing its unique features. Therefore, trying to evaluate the level of service quality and understanding the various factors that affect the overall service quality is very important, that is, the factor for educational institutions (Lindsay, Breen, & Jenkins, 2002). Lecturers are one of the important factors and have a huge impact on student satisfaction (Hargreaves, 1988; Broder & Dorfman, 1994). The more satisfied and comfortable the lecturer, the higher the ability to impart knowledge, making the learners more satisfied and vice versa. Thereby, it can be seen that the satisfaction of students and faculty has a close connection with each other. Firdaus (2006) pointed out in HedPERF model Non-professional activities, Professional activities, Training programs, access, and reputation are the decisive factors for service quality in higher education. Kuh and Hu (2001) stated that the effective interaction between students and faculty strongly impacts student satisfaction. The quality of teaching depends much on the capabilities of two main subjects that are teachers and students. The lecturers' capacity is strong in professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, and correct attitudes towards the subject. Therefore, it is essential to organize training courses for professional skills, training on teaching methods, and strengthen scientific research activities, seminars, and seminars for lecturers.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Teachers' quality is positively correlated with the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy.*

Universities can design their services in the best possible way (Firdaus, 2006) to improve teaching and learning effectiveness. This is because the higher the effectiveness of a university's teaching and learning, the more attractive and famous it will be (Lomas & Nicholls, 2005). Teaching and studying political economy is no exception. Improving the quality of education requires universities to improve teaching and learning efficiency in the political economy that is a compulsory subject in Vietnam's higher education system at any educational institution. Because according to Vietnamese government regulations, this subject is the foundation to build the ideology and the relationship between the national policy mechanism and the political, economic, and cultural system of the state. However, the quality of teaching and learning this subject is controversial when a series of researchers pointed out that the backwardness and weight of the subject's theory negatively affect the quality of teaching and applying knowledge. That requires universities to recognize and evaluate the effectiveness in teaching and learning political economics. Therefore, it is necessary to find and discover factors that influence teaching and learning.

**Hypothesis 2:** *Administration service can influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy.*

The curriculum's presentation format with thematic chapters is logically designed according to the university level's pedagogical principles associated with the political economy's knowledge system (Holubova, 2008). Each chapter and item's content clearly shows the objectives, objects, research methods, and functions of the subject (Jacobs, Diamond & Stevak, 2010). It is presented with logic, clarity, coherence, short, close to life, easy to understand (Vaughn & Baker, 2001). According to the cognitive process requirements, it helps students access and practice scientific thinking methods, leading readers to

understand the content of concepts, categories, and laws of the scriptures fully and properly, forming the necessary skills when participating in practical activities. Changing for development is an urgent requirement in industrial revolution 4.0 (Bafaeovich & Baratovna, 2021). With digital transformation, strong artificial intelligence has created breakthroughs and advances in all fields in life. The social life of many countries. In teaching political economy, the change of forms, teaching methods, digital transformation is an indispensable way to convey the spirit fully and properly, though, basic content, the advantages of the new curriculum (Felder & Brent, 1999). The change in lecturers and students' capacity are decisive factors for the effectiveness of method innovation, improving the teaching quality of political economics in the spirit of innovation, improving the quality of higher education in the new period.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Teaching methods are positively associated with the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy.*

Students' self-study capacity is reflected in their activeness, self-awareness, and initiative in using books, textbooks, listening, taking notes, searching for information, thereby cultivating the products, which are the flexible, independent, creative substance of thinking (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007). Please pay attention to training students so that they know how to read textbooks and study materials, know how to self-find the learned knowledge, know how to reason to discover and discover new knowledge, students manipulate thinking such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, ... to form and develop their creative potential gradually (Littlejohn et al., 2016). Also, learning motivation and time spent studying are important factors determining the effectiveness of learning. Because many researchers have shown that defining their own learning goals will create learning motivation for that individual, thereby improving the ability to absorb knowledge. Learning motivation is an important decisive factor for the quality and effectiveness of learners (Bafaeovich & Baratovna, 2021). Those who go to school without any other motivation to learn like passers-by just walk around because not on purpose (Felder & Brent, 1999). On the other hand, a student who goes to school has a clear learning motivation, but if he does not consolidate and develop his learning motivation, he is like a determined passer-by, every time having difficulty, he will be discouraged to change direction. Or stop taking a break.

**Hypothesis 4:** *Intrinsic motivations can influence the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy.*

Ultimately, teaching and learning depend on the school facilities' quality, creating a learning and research environment for both faculty and students (Kember, Ho & Hong, 2008). Creating an effective learning environment requires investment in equipment, machinery, science, and technology in teaching and promoting faculty members' available competencies (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). Students' opportunity to have access to a modern facility with libraries containing many useful and necessary learning materials is indispensable at each of these advanced educational institutions. From there, students can learn and experience an ideal learning environment (Banerjee & Hausafus, 2007). First, the school's technical facilities must create a comfortable space for students to learn and live from the airy, hygienic atmosphere, temperature, sound, light, and environment. The school's technical facilities are necessary for students to study so that teachers reduce presentation, expression, chapter words, and spend time organizing for students to approach, interact, experience, actively explore and create in acquiring knowledge and practicing skills. The school's technical and physical facilities must be up to date, practical, suitable for daily life, and attractive, attracting students to learn (Littlejohn et al., 2016). Try to avoid fake borrowing, "where do you get it" in an arbitrary way that is detrimental to science, away from reality and unattractive, and does not attract students (Jacobs, Diamond & Stevak, 2010).

**Hypothesis 5:** *Infrastructure is correlated with the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy.*

### 3. Methodology

My investigations to find answers to the questions posed earlier were based on data generated utilizing a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire was adopted from (Maignan 2001) and was later used in studies by (Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009) and (Kolk et al., 2015) in the context of China. The questionnaire has consisted of 22 questions, of which 16 questions evaluate what motivates students to study Political Economy. These factors include intrinsic motivations (MOT), teachers' quality (Teacher), supporting services (SER), teaching methods (METHOD), and infrastructure (INF). The four additional questions are related to the students' demographics: students' age, genders, and emails. One statement called the Overall Responsibility is entered to measure the overall social responsibilities of businesses. Respondents were asked to rate these 22 statements on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was translated from English to Vietnamese, and then it was subjected to a pilot study of 20 students who could be approached in the proximity of the author. Any confusion and ambiguity would be corrected and checked again with the participants who had met that confusion along the way.

This study focuses on the perception of students in Vietnam towards Political Economy and aims at providing insights into the comparison between two different groups of genders concerning this matter. All questionnaires were delivered online, and there were a total of 1550 respondents from both genders. After unusable responses (inconsistent answers and missing values) were excluded, 1546 responses remained, of which 998 respondents are female and 548 respondents are males. The demographics of respondents in terms of gender and study year are provided in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**  
Sample collection

Genders	School year	Number of respondents	Percentage
Females	1	333	998 64.55%
	2	219	
	3	160	
	4	154	
	5	132	
Males	1	162	548 35.45%
	2	182	
	3	97	
	4	74	
	5	33	
Grand Total		1546	1546 100%

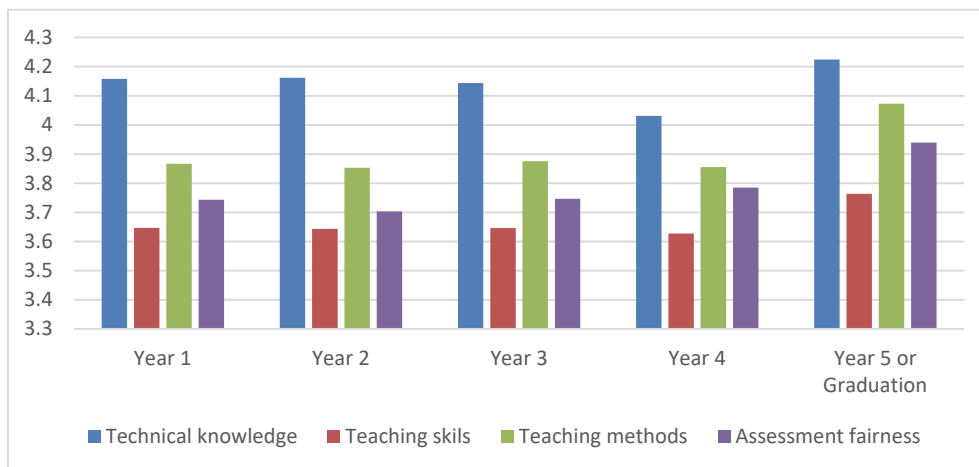
Regression model:

$$GPA = \alpha + \beta_1 \times Teacher + \beta_2 \times SER + \beta_3 \times METHOD + \beta_4 \times INF + \beta_5 \times MOT + \beta_6 \times Gender + \beta_7 \times YEAR + u$$

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Descriptive analysis

Fig. 1 illustrates how students in different school years assess about their teachers' capacity, teaching skills, teaching methods, and assessment fairness. Overall, professional qualification is the most appreciated criterion, while teaching skills are the lowest evaluated criterion. This indicates that students find their teachers have the expertise and knowledge to teach the subject matter but lack the experience and appropriate teaching methods to teach them, leading to confusion, omission, and ambiguity. More specifically, on a 5-point scale, most students rated teacher proficiency from over 80% to 100%, accounting for 4.3 overall. This is a good sign because as such, the lecturers are capable and capable of teaching this political economy. About teaching methods, most students think that current teaching methods are relatively good, but still lack professionalism, confidence, innovation and creativity. Next, student grading and assessment are believed to be inaccurate and truthful, reflect correctly, adequately, and in a timely manner learning performance of students. Therefore, the assessment fairness is only rated about 3.6 overall points.



**Fig. 1.** Assessment of teaching quality among students in different school years

Last but not least, the most alarming indicator is the teaching skills of teachers. Most of the students have said that teaching skills in education are an important factor determining the effectiveness of learning and teaching in any subject, Political Economy is no exception. However, due to the specificity of the subject, which requires broad understanding, the lessons of the subject need to be designed and conveyed in a natural and attractive way that students can understand, remember, and apply in practice. Fig. 2 shows the assessment of teaching methods in terms of up-to-date, reliable, relevant, understandable, and complete. First, the updated factor is the lowest evaluation of the five factors, only accounting for 3.3 points, while the reliability and related factor are the two most highly appreciated factors in the teaching method of the teacher. Third year students are also the ones who rate these indicators higher than students in other school years. More specifically, in the five

criteria for evaluating teaching methods of political economy, the most underestimated factor is the update and improvement in teaching methods. This is because most courses are used and used over the years, ignoring the updates, negatively affecting the quality of teaching and learning the subject.

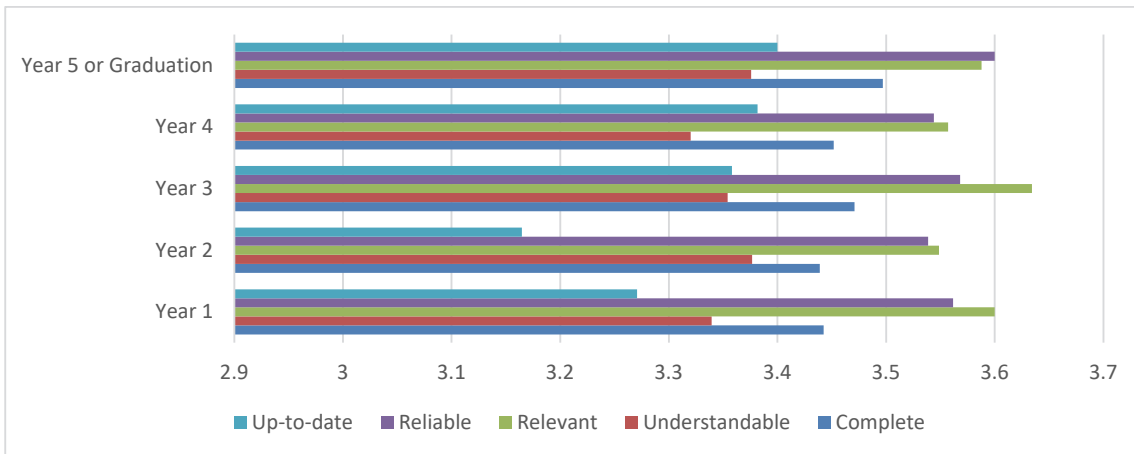


Fig. 2. Assessment of teaching methods among students in different school years

4.2. Regression analysis

4.2.1. Reliable analysis

First of all, it is necessary to take Cronbach Alpha test to assess the reliability among different measures for five independent variables. They are teaching quality (Teacher), administration service (SER), infrastructure (INF), teaching methods (METHOD), and intrinsic factors or learning motivations (MOT).

Table 2  
Cronbach’s Alpha test

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach’s Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach’s Alpha
Teacher1	11.301	4.644	.616	.806	0.831
Teacher2	11.790	4.273	.727	.757	
Teacher3	11.561	4.398	.646	.794	
Teacher4	11.685	4.296	.653	.791	
SER1	13.783	10.519	.648	.841	0.861
SER2	13.884	10.445	.669	.835	
SER3	13.652	11.018	.675	.834	
SER4	13.679	10.410	.762	.813	
SER5	13.949	10.379	.656	.839	
INF1	18.506	13.951	.666	.847	0.868
INF2	18.011	13.957	.698	.842	
INF3	18.284	13.396	.703	.840	
INF4	18.272	13.020	.755	.830	
INF5	18.277	13.391	.628	.853	
INF6	18.608	13.147	.586	.864	
METHOD1	13.966	11.996	.699	.813	0.852
METHOD2	14.442	11.857	.698	.813	
METHOD3	14.665	11.971	.646	.827	
METHOD4	14.419	11.762	.709	.810	
METHOD5	14.099	13.127	.572	.845	
MOT1	20.387	8.033	.698	.168	0.432
MOT2	20.595	8.169	.698	.178	
MOT3	20.662	7.997	.724	.160	
MOT4	<b>21.896</b>	<b>14.077</b>	<b>-.375</b>	<b>.716</b>	
MOT5	<b>20.548</b>	<b>14.020</b>	<b>-.370</b>	<b>.715</b>	
MOT6	20.638	7.634	.734	.129	
MOT7	20.605	8.181	.590	.204	

Table 2 shows Cronbach's Alpha test. Overall, all measures from all groups of variables are reliable, except for MOT 4, and MOT 5 in learning motivations. This is because the Cronbach’s Alpha of MOT if these measures are deleted are 0.716 and 0.715 respectively. Thus, it is reasonable to eliminate these measures out of the learning motivation measurement sets. By contrast, other independent variables including teaching quality, administration service, infrastructure, teaching method ac-

count for 0.831, 0.861, 0.868, and 0.852 respectively, showing that these variables are really reliable in representing measurement. Thus, after this step, the author eliminated two measures, which are MOT 4 and MOT 5 in order to increase the Cronbach's alpha test from 0.432 to 0.716 for the independent variable learning motivations or intrinsic factors.

#### 4.2.2. Correlation analysis

After eliminating the MOT 4 and MOT 5, all remaining variables are input in the SPSS file to calculate the mean, median, maximum, minimum, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis, Jarque-Bera, probability, sum, sum of square deviations, and the number of observations. Table 3 shows the descriptive analysis between these variables. In general, the average score of students in this subject is assessed at a pretty good level - accounting for 3.8 out of 5. Meanwhile, with independent variables, teaching quality is the highest rating, while facilities and administration service were rated with 3.58 and 3.45 respectively.

**Table 3**  
Descriptive analysis

	GPA	TEACHER	SER	STR	INF	MOT
Mean	3.80	3.86	3.45	3.67	3.58	3.64
Median	4.00	4.00	3.40	3.67	3.60	3.60
Maximum	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Std. Dev.	0.85	0.68	0.80	0.72	0.86	0.70
Skewness	-1.80	-0.82	-0.28	-0.45	-0.44	-0.06
Kurtosis	7.16	5.17	3.33	3.82	3.07	2.95
Jarque-Bera	1950.78	476.03	26.69	95.82	50.22	1.04
Probability	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.59
Sum	5875	5970	5330	5667	5534	5634
Sum Sq. Dev.	1119	716	985	812	1131	748
Observations	1546	1546	1546	1546	1546	1546

#### 4.3. Regression analysis

Table 4 shows the relationship between five independent variables including teaching quality, administration service, teaching methods, infrastructure, and learning motivations. In addition, the model also takes into account the impact of demographic factors comprising genders and school years on the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy. It should be emphasized first that the R-square of the makes up 0.1082 model, which shows that the change in the dependent variable is explained by 10.82% of the variation in the independent variables. In other words, the effectiveness of teaching and learning political economy is dependent 10.82% on the teaching quality, administration services, teaching methods, infrastructure, learning motivations, genders, and school years. Next, because the Prob (F-statistic) of this model is equal to 0.000, showing that this model is reliable. Particularly, all independent variables are statistically significant, except for teaching quality and infrastructure because their probs account for 0.3448 and 0.1476, higher than 0.05. While learning motivations and teaching methods are the most significant variables determining the efficiency of teaching and learning political economy, the genders and school-year of students account for a slightly lower level of implication. Moreover, administration service and school-year are negatively correlated with the dependent variable while the remaining variables positively influence the efficiency of teaching and learning the political economy.

**Table 4**  
Regression analysis

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	3.193129	0.143535	22.24631	0.0000
TEACHER	0.044390	0.046970	0.945059	0.3448
SER	-0.075699	0.039162	-1.932950	0.0534
INF	-0.070054	0.048348	-1.448954	0.1476
METHOD	0.110148	0.033005	3.337361	0.0009
MOT	0.392435	0.032486	12.08011	0.0000
GENDER	0.087887	0.043188	2.035003	0.0420
YEAR	-0.046210	0.015265	-3.027277	0.0025
R-squared	0.108179	Mean dependent var		3.800129
Adjusted R-squared	0.104120	S.D. dependent var		0.851133
S.E. of regression	0.805605	Akaike info criterion		2.410715
Sum squared resid	998.1614	Schwarz criterion		2.438365
Log likelihood	-1855.483	F-statistic		26.65170
Durbin-Watson stat	1.900721	Prob(F-statistic)		0.000000

Dependent Variable: DFF Method: Least Squares Sample: 1 1546 Included Observations: 1546

## 5. Conclusion

This study aims to understand and test the factors influencing the effectiveness of learning and teaching political economy among Vietnamese universities. Over 1500 students from different majors and different school years have taken part in this study. The data collected from questionnaires was analysed by SPSS version 2016 and EVIEW 10. From this study, it can be said that learning motivations and teaching methods are the most important factors driving the success of teaching and learning the political economy. Furthermore, males seem to be more interested in studying this subject and getting a higher GPA compared to females. Students from higher school-year, by contrast, have lower levels of interest in studying this module, leading to the lower effectiveness in teaching and learning this module. Finally, while teaching methods and teaching quality are positively correlated with the dependent variable, the administration service and infrastructure negatively influence the teaching and learning objectives. From the results, several recommendations are made. First of all, lecturers need to have an adequate investment in research and firmly grasp the structure, objectives, basic content, spirit, ideology, and advantages of the curriculum; regularly update, grasp the views, lines, and policies of the Party and State in association with specific conditions and circumstances of the country and the world, build lectures, discussion questions, exercises, testing and evaluating results of high professional quality, practical, useful, attracting the attention, attention, and interest of students in the subject. Through the teaching and guidance of lecturers, students have the condition to understand the basic and core knowledge of the curriculum fully and properly and at the same time understand the views, lines, and policies of the Party and House. Current country, seeing the correctness of that viewpoint and way to participate and contribute practically to promoting economic development towards progress, from which to participate actively, more self-consciously in learning. Modern forms and education methods are being popularized in many countries, becoming the general trend of education in the world today. In educational innovation in our country, schools from primary to university have applied and obtained positive results. Notably, active teaching methods, teaching based on capacity development, and online teaching are associated with modern technology. The resonance of these forms and methods will create a change in both the teacher and the learner. The learner-centred motto is gradually realized, education and training are qualitatively changed.

Regarding teaching methods, they combine various methods, including improving traditional methods, using active methods (problem-solving, situation solving, action-oriented) associated with the use of teaching facilities and information technology suitable to the subject's cognitive characteristics and requirements. In addition to using general methods for many subjects, it is necessary to use specific Marxist-Leninist political economy methods, such as abstraction, solving quantitative problems to clarify the categories of quantity. Commodity value, invariant capital, volatile capital, surplus value, profit, surplus-value rate, rate of profit; essay exercises, and case-solving exercises associated with theory with the country's reality socio-economic development. In innovating the methodology, it is necessary to use E-Learning most effectively.

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