

THE NEW CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE DISSERTATION

Dissertation title: **Policy communication on digital transformation of ministerial-level agencies in Vietnam today.**

Major: Public Relations Code: 9320108

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1. New theoretical contributions

Firstly, the dissertation discovers and substantiates the dialectical relationship between policy communication and digital transformation — a proposition that previous studies have not made explicit. The novelty lies not in placing the two fields side by side, but in showing that digital transformation plays two roles simultaneously in relation to policy communication: it is at once the subject matter that communication must convey and a means by which policy communication renovates itself. On this basis, the dissertation proposes a new approach — applying the digital transformation process itself (strategy – people – process – technology – data) to the organisation, operation and measurement of policy communication, rather than treating digital transformation merely as a topic to report on. This proposition is examined through the principle of development in Marxist–Leninist philosophy, thereby establishing a methodological foundation for a relationship that is already unfolding in practice but remains under-theorised.

Secondly, the dissertation is the first work to build an interdisciplinary analytical framework dedicated to policy communication on digital transformation in Vietnam's public sector. The contribution is not the mere synthesis of theories, but the operationalisation of otherwise disparate theories (agenda-setting, diffusion of innovations, political communication, policy communication and digital transformation) into a system of indicators and measurement scales that can be applied to real data. On this basis, the dissertation proposes a set of criteria for assessing the quality of policy communication on digital transformation, linked to five components (communicator, message, channel, audience and social environment) — an instrument not provided by earlier studies and reusable for other policy fields.

Thirdly, the dissertation helps reposition policy communication on digital transformation as an independent research object within the field of Public Relations, rather than a sub-branch of political communication or of state management. This framing opens a new line of inquiry and provides a theoretical premise and reference point for subsequent studies on policy communication in the context of digitalisation.

2. New practical contributions

Firstly, the most salient practical contribution of the dissertation is that it provides empirical evidence of the shift in policy communication before and after the reorganisation and merging of the organisational apparatus under Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW. This is a timely novelty: the dissertation captures the exact moment of institutional transition (notably the merger of the Ministry of Information and Communications into the Ministry of Science and Technology, and of the Ministry of Planning and Investment into the Ministry of Finance) to compare the organisational models, modes of operation and communication quality of the agencies before and after the merger. This finding adds an evaluative dimension that virtually no prior work has been able to record, while offering direct references for consolidating communication units at ministerial-level agencies after restructuring.

Secondly, the dissertation builds an empirical survey database of considerable scale and currency, collected through mixed methods: content analysis of 545 press articles and 257 social-media posts using a coding scheme, participant observation of 27 events, in-depth interviews with 12 experts and managers, and 738 public survey responses. The novelty lies in its multi-layered comparative design: it compares not only across the four ministerial-level agencies, but also across communication channels and across message quality (in both content and form), enabling a precise identification of the strengths and bottlenecks of each actor — something that earlier single-track assessments could hardly reveal.

Thirdly, drawing on the survey findings, the dissertation proposes a functional model of policy communication on digital transformation for ministerial-level agencies, comprising five components operating as a closed cycle: the communicator; the strategy-building process; the implementation process; the group of relevant stakeholders; and the target audience. Unlike the familiar linear communication models, this model emphasises feedback and data exploitation as a mandatory link for adjusting policy, thereby turning policy communication into a governance process that can be standardised, monitored and improved — a practical operational tool for officials and staff at state agencies.

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