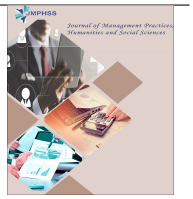
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ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

Policy Integration in Digital Governance: Faculty–Student Perceptual Incongruence on Social Media Risks in Vietnam

Tran Cao Nguyen[1], Nguyen Ho Thanh[2], Nguyen Van Duy[3], Le Thi Thanh Hieu[4], Nguyen Van Sang[5]*

[1] Faculty of Political Education, Vinh University, Nghe An, Vietnam

[2] An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

[3] Quang Binh University, Vietnam

[4,5] Vinh University, Nghe An, Vietnam

Abstract— Vietnamese universities address social-media risks through several overlapping policy domains, including cybersecurity, digital transformation, student affairs, and civic and political education. Formal overlap, however, does not ensure coherent implementation or shared assessments of the risks students encounter online. This article examines whether perceived policy integration is associated with smaller faculty/staff–student perceptual distances, whether larger perceptual distances are associated with lower reported policy effectiveness, and whether student participation moderates that association. The analysis uses a cross-sectional parallel survey of 584 respondents from selected Vietnamese universities, including 291 faculty/staff and 293 students. Four matched risk-domain items were converted into respondent-level, group-referenced absolute-distance indicators by comparing each respondent's score with the mean score of the opposite respondent group in the analytic sample. No one-to-one faculty–student matching was used. Reliability analysis, EFA, CFA, covariance-based SEM, moderation analysis, and robustness checks were conducted. Perceived policy integration was negatively associated with perceptual incongruence ($\beta = -0.415$, $p < 0.001$), whereas perceptual incongruence was negatively associated with reported policy effectiveness ($\beta = -0.326$, $p < 0.001$). Reported student participation was positively associated with policy effectiveness ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.001$), and the positive PG $\times$ SP coefficient ($\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.001$) was consistent with a weaker negative PG–PE association at higher levels of participation. Within this purposive cross-sectional sample, implementation coherence and participation were associated with smaller cross-group perceptual distances and higher reported policy effectiveness. The findings should be interpreted as respondent-level associations, not as causal effects or disagreement within matched faculty–student pairs.

Keywords— Policy integration, Digital governance, Perceptual incongruence, Student participation, Policy effectiveness

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Introduction

Social-media risks do not sit neatly within one administrative field. At universities, the same problem touches cybersecurity, information literacy, student support, civic learning, and institutional communication. Students also encounter political information in the same feeds that carry misinformation, manipulated material, and rapidly changing platform content. Recent misinformation research has therefore examined individual

*Corresponding Author: sangnv@vinhuni.edu.vn

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judgment together with information environments and intervention design rather than treating content control as a separate issue (Arechar et al., 2023; Ecker et al., 2022; Kozyreva et al., 2024).

Vietnam offers a useful setting for this question because digital transformation, cybersecurity regulation, higher education management, and youth-oriented education overlap in implementation. Decision No. 749/QĐ-TTg established the National Digital Transformation Program (Prime Minister of Vietnam, 2020), and the Law on Cybersecurity provides the national legal framework for cyberspace governance (Vietnam National Assembly, 2018). Universities then translate these broad requirements into rules, teaching activities, communication, student services, and digital-support practices. Coordination problems can therefore arise inside the institution even when the national policy directions are clear.

The issue examined here is implementation coherence. Policy-integration research separates coordination among actors from consistency among goals and instruments and from what happens during implementation (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016; Cejudo & Michel, 2017; Cejudo & Trein, 2023). That distinction matters because an integrated policy design can still be interpreted differently by the organizations that carry it out (Capano & Lepori, 2024; Sarti, 2023). University digital governance provides a setting in which this gap between design and implementation can be observed directly.

Research on policy integration has developed through several related ideas, including coordination, policy coherence, policy mixes, and implementation. A recent review of the field notes that empirical work remains methodologically diverse and that actor-level consequences are still less often tested quantitatively (Trein et al., 2023). Social-media governance fits this problem well: technical monitoring, educational responses, communication work, and student behavior are handled by different parts of the institution but concern the same risk environment.

Two questions follow. One is whether students and staff actually experience university policies as coherent, rather than whether formal documents simply exist. The other is whether the people implementing a policy and those receiving it understand the underlying problem in similar ways. Studies of perceptual congruence link disagreement among organizational actors to differences in communication, trust, and performance (Kim, 2026; Song & Meier, 2022). The analysis below brings these questions together by examining policy integration alongside faculty–student differences in assessments of social-media risk.

Faculty/staff and students view the same institutional environment from different positions. Staff commonly encounter digital risks through policy documents, teaching responsibilities, official reports, or cases handled by the university, whereas students encounter them through feeds, short videos, private groups, peer networks, and recommendation systems. Difference in perspective is not, by itself, evidence of policy failure. It becomes analytically relevant when systematic distance between the two groups is associated with how respondents assess the effectiveness of institutional responses.

The model links three ideas while keeping the level of analysis explicit. Policy Itegration (PI) refers to respondents' assessments of coherence in goals, instruments, organizational coordination, and implementation. Perceptual in Congruence (PG) is conceptualized as cross-group disagreement but operationalized here as a respondent-level, group-referenced distance measure: each respondent is compared with the mean assessment of the opposite respondent group on the same risk domain. Student Participation (SP) represents the channels through which student experience can enter institutional implementation. The analysis does not assume that complete agreement is intrinsically desirable; it tests whether larger group-referenced distances are associated with lower reported Policy Effectiveness (PE) and whether that association differs with the level of participation.

Three research questions guide the analysis. First, how coherent do respondents perceive the integration of cybersecurity, digital transformation, civic education, political education, and student-affairs activities at the university level to be? Second, how large are the faculty/staff–student differences in assessments of social-media risks and university responses when measured as respondent-level distance from the opposite-group benchmark? Third, are larger perceptual distances associated with lower reported policy effectiveness, and is this association weaker where student participation is reported to be higher?

The article adds to the literature in a limited and testable way. It measures perceived policy integration within university digital governance, operationalizes cross-group incongruence as respondent-level distance from an opposite-group reference without claiming dyadic matching, and estimates both the direct association of reported student participation with policy effectiveness and its moderating role. This operationalization is narrower than interpersonal or dyadic congruence and is interpreted accordingly. The cross-sectional design does not permit causal claims.

Universities are treated here as sites of policy implementation, not simply as teaching organizations. National rules and sectoral priorities are translated through administrative units, courses, communication channels, counseling services, and student activities. Studying that translation at the institutional level makes it possible to examine where coordination is experienced as coherent and where differences in perception remain between staff and students.

Theoretical Foundations and Research Background

Policy integration and fragmented digital governance

Policy integration concerns how public action is connected across objectives, instruments, organizations, and stages of implementation. Cejudo and Trein (2023) describe integration as a process rather than a fixed attribute of an institution. Trein et al. (2023), reviewing 413 empirical studies,

also note wide variation in concepts and methods and call for closer attention to explanation and evaluation. In this article, PI therefore measures how respondents perceive implementation inside their university; it is not presented as an objective audit of the formal policy system.

University digital governance brings together technical services, administration, teaching, and communication. Even when policy instruments are designed to fit together, organizations may respond differently when responsibilities or implementation space are ambiguous (Capano & Lepori, 2024). Sarti (2023) makes a related distinction between integrated policy outputs and integrated implementation. That distinction directs attention to the experience of people who work and study in the institution: do they encounter coordinated units, compatible messages, and shared resources in practice?

Four dimensions are used to represent PI. Document coherence concerns the consistency of institutional rules dealing with cybersecurity, digital transformation, student affairs, civic or political education, and communication management (Candel & Biesbroek, 2016; Howlett & Rayner, 2018). Inter-unit coordination concerns cooperation among faculties, student-affairs offices, communication units, youth organizations, and relevant external bodies (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). Message consistency concerns whether students receive compatible guidance across courses, official channels, extracurricular activities, and counseling. Shared resources cover training materials, reporting systems, staff capacity, and other resources used in implementation (Cejudo & Michel, 2017; Cejudo & Trein, 2023; de Wee & Ramolobe, 2025).

Recent work also gives a reason to test integration at the actor level. de Wee and Ramolobe (2025) call for closer study of the relationship between policy design and governance arrangements. Nguyen (2026), in a different Vietnamese policy field, models participation and institutional conditions together with policy outcomes. These studies do not provide a direct template for university digital governance, but they support examining integration, participation, and reported outcomes within the same empirical model.

Fragmentation can appear in ordinary university practice. Students may receive warnings about harmful information without being shown how to check a source or recognize manipulation. A lecturer may discuss political awareness without knowing which platform features students are currently encountering. Student-affairs campaigns may run separately from courses or digital-support services. In such situations, different parts of the university can address the same problem while giving students an uneven or incomplete response.

Perceptual incongruence in collaborative implementation

Perceptual incongruence refers to systematic differences in how actors assess the same organizational or policy setting. Earlier studies examined disagreement in leader–member and team relationships; later public-management work has considered congruence between managers and employees (Song & Meier, 2022) and between schools and stakeholders (Kim, 2026). Conceptually, the present study concerns cross-group incongruence. Operationally, however, PG is a group-referenced individual distance rather than a dyadic discrepancy: for each domain, a respondent's assessment is compared with the mean assessment of the opposite respondent group. This distinction is necessary because the parallel surveys did not link identifiable faculty/staff respondents to identifiable students.

Perception gaps are common where implementers and service users occupy different roles. In education, they have been studied between schools and parents, teachers and students, administrators and frontline staff, and service providers and beneficiaries (Kim, 2026; Song & Meier, 2022; Yammarino & Atwater, 1993). Such gaps matter when they alter problem diagnosis or feedback. An intervention may appear adequate from the administrative side while the intended users regard it as outdated or unrelated to what they actually encounter.

Kim (2026) offers a useful theoretical comparison because the study examines disagreement between parents and school employees in relation to educational performance. The empirical structure here is different: the current data do not contain matched faculty/staff–student pairs. The comparison is therefore used to motivate attention to cross-group misalignment in implementation, not to claim equivalence with dyadic congruence designs.

Several factors may separate the assessments of faculty/staff and students. Their exposure to platform features, institutional duties, and reporting channels is different. Recent research also finds that both vulnerability to misinformation and the effects of corrective interventions vary across users and intervention designs (Arechar et al., 2023; Ecker et al., 2022; Guay et al., 2023; Kozyreva et al., 2024). A university can therefore communicate frequently about harmful information and still miss forms of exposure that students see every day.

A perception gap can matter at two points in implementation. It may lead the institution to rank risks differently from students, which can affect where attention and resources are directed. It may also affect whether students regard official guidance as useful. These are proposed mechanisms; the cross-sectional data used here cannot establish either mechanism as causal.

Student participation and policy co-production

Student participation provides one route for information to move back from students to the units responsible for policy implementation. Public-administration research has linked participation to trust, learning, and implementation quality (Fung, 2006; Nabatchi et al., 2017; Wang & Van Wart, 2007). Collaborative-governance research likewise treats participation as part of the process through which actors develop a workable understanding of a shared problem (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012; Vangen & Huxham, 2003).

In digital governance, ordinary feedback channels can reveal problems that formal reports overlook. Peer activities, anonymous reporting, student consultation, or co-designed communication materials may expose new platform practices and weaknesses in existing interventions. This matters because misinformation interventions do not work uniformly. Hoes et al. (2024), for example, report that some interventions can reduce misperceptions while increasing skepticism toward accurate information; Pennycook et al. (2024) show that combinations of interventions can perform differently from single measures. Feedback from students is therefore relevant to implementation, not simply to participation as a procedural value.

SP enters the model in two places. The first is a direct path to PE: students who report more opportunities for discussion, feedback, peer activity, and consultation may also report stronger capacity to identify and handle harmful information. The second is an interaction with PG. Even when faculty/staff and students view risks differently, functioning feedback channels may reduce the practical consequences of that disagreement.

The structural model tests the following relationships:

H1: Higher perceived policy integration is associated with lower group-referenced faculty/staff–student perceptual incongruence regarding social-media risks.

H2: Greater group-referenced perceptual incongruence is associated with lower reported policy effectiveness.

H3a: Higher reported student participation is associated with higher reported policy effectiveness.

H3b: Reported student participation moderates the relationship between perceptual incongruence and policy effectiveness; the negative PG-PE association is weaker when participation is higher.

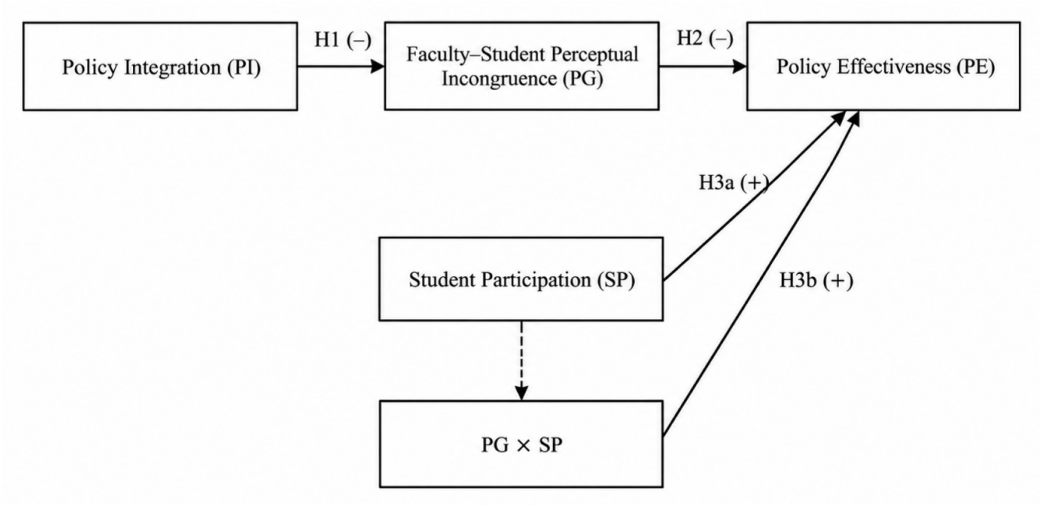


Fig. 1 *Conceptual framework*

Source: Authors' elaboration based on policy integration theory, collaborative governance, and perceptual incongruence literature.

Methodology

Research design

The research uses a cross-sectional parallel survey. Faculty/staff and students answered matched questions on the same four domains of social-media risk. The questionnaires were parallel, but individual respondents were not paired. PG therefore measures each respondent's distance from an opposite-group reference value; it does not represent disagreement within an identifiable faculty–student dyad, class, department, or other matched cluster. The reference value used in the primary analysis is the mean of the opposite respondent group in the analytic sample for the corresponding domain.

PI is specified as an antecedent of PG, PE as the outcome, and SP as both a direct predictor of PE and a moderator of the PG–PE association. The model is estimated at the respondent level and pooled across the two respondent groups. It does not estimate institution-level random effects, dyadic effects, or group-specific structural paths. PG is not described as a mediator because no separate indirect-effect test is reported. Given the cross-sectional design, all paths are interpreted as associations.

Sample and data collection

A stratified purposive strategy was used to obtain respondents from different institutional roles, study programs, and student cohorts in the participating universities. The faculty/staff group included lecturers and personnel working in student affairs, youth activities, communication, or

digital and cybersecurity awareness. Students came from the same participating institutional settings and corresponding programs, but they were not individually linked to faculty/staff respondents. The sampling plan sought variation for analysis rather than statistical representation of all Vietnamese universities.

The questionnaires were distributed through institutional and academic networks in paper and online forms. Participation was voluntary. Respondents were told the academic purpose of the survey before answering, and no personally identifying information was collected. The dataset was analyzed in aggregate form.

Of 600 questionnaires distributed, 584 were retained for analysis after completeness screening (97.3% of the distributed questionnaires): 291 from faculty/staff and 293 from students. Lecturers accounted for 52.6% of the faculty/staff group, student-affairs officers 21.3%, youth-organization advisers 14.8%, and communication or digital-support staff 11.3%. Among students, 32.1% were in the first or second year, 43.7% in the third year, and 24.2% in the final year. For brevity, the construct label retains the term faculty–student perceptual incongruence, but the empirical comparison is between the full faculty/staff group and students.

The coefficients reported below describe respondent-level relationships within these surveyed settings. Because the sample is purposive and institutionally bounded, the estimates should not be interpreted as probability estimates for the Vietnamese university population. The pooled design also does not identify institution-specific effects or causal effects.

Ethics statement

The survey involved adults, was anonymous, and collected no sensitive personal identifiers. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained before the questionnaire began, and respondents could skip questions or discontinue participation. Under the institutional procedures applicable to this minimal-risk anonymous survey, separate ethics-board approval was not required. The data were used only for academic analysis and are reported in aggregate form.

Measurement

All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

PI was measured with four items covering document coherence, coordination among units, consistency of institutional messages, and shared implementation resources. The construct captures respondents' experience of policy integration in practice; it is not an objective audit of formal policy documents or institutional compliance.

PG was constructed from four parallel items covering (1) the sophistication of harmful information, (2) the frequency of student exposure, (3) the influence of social media on political awareness, and (4) the usefulness of current university interventions. The individual respondent was the unit of analysis. For respondent *i* and domain *k*, $PG_{ik} = |x_{ik} - \bar{x}_{(-g,k)}|$, where x_{ik} is the respondent's score, *g* identifies the respondent group, and $\bar{x}_{(-g,k)}$ is the mean score for the same domain in the opposite respondent group within the analytic sample. Each of the 584 respondents therefore received four domain-specific absolute-distance scores. These respondent-level distances, rather than four aggregate faculty/staff–student mean differences, were used as the PG indicators in the CFA and SEM. Larger values indicate greater distance from the opposite-group benchmark. The four indicators are modeled reflectively because the analysis treats covariation in domain-specific distances as manifestations of a broader tendency toward cross-group perceptual misalignment; the CFA evaluates whether that empirical specification is tenable. This operationalization does not imply one-to-one faculty–student pairing or establish that all forms of perceptual incongruence are unidimensional.

SP was measured with four items covering opportunities for open discussion, opportunities to provide feedback, participation in peer-based activities, and access to reporting or consultation channels. The construct therefore represents respondents' assessments of the institutional channels through which student experience can enter implementation, rather than a direct behavioral count of individual student participation.

PE was measured with five items concerning students' ability to identify false or misleading information, confidence in evaluating controversial information, verification before sharing, responsible online behavior, and knowledge of where to seek support. Because both respondent groups assessed these outcomes, PE is interpreted as reported policy effectiveness rather than as an objective behavioral measure or a student-only self-report. In line with Seo et al. (2025), the construct concerns reported implementation outcomes rather than the mere presence of formal policy instruments.

Table I
Constructs, measurement items, and sources

Construct	Code	Measurement item	Main sources
Policy integration	PI1	Institutional documents on cybersecurity, digital transformation, civic education, political education, and student affairs are mutually consistent.	(Candel & Biesbroek, 2016; Cejudo & Michel, 2017; de Wee & Ramolobe, 2025)

Construct	Code	Measurement item	Main sources
Policy integration	PI2	University units regularly coordinate to address social media risks among students.	(Ansell & Gash, 2008; Cejudo & Trein, 2023; Emerson et al., 2012)
Policy integration	PI3	Messages delivered to students about harmful online information are consistent across courses, student activities, and official communication channels.	(Howlett & Rayner, 2018; Peters, 2015)
Policy integration	PI4	The university has shared resources, training materials, or reporting mechanisms to support digital risk governance.	(Cejudo & Michel, 2017; de Wee & Ramolobe, 2025)
Perceptual incongruence	PG1	Absolute distance derived from the parallel item: "Harmful information and fake news on social media are increasingly sophisticated."	(Benlian, 2014; Kim, 2026; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017)
Perceptual incongruence	PG2	Absolute distance derived from the parallel item: "Students are frequently exposed to harmful or misleading political information on social media."	(Guess & Lyons, 2020; Kim, 2026; Lazer et al., 2018)
Perceptual incongruence	PG3	Absolute distance derived from the parallel item: "Social media significantly influences students' political awareness and civic attitudes."	(Kahne & Bowyer, 2017; Tucker et al., 2018)
Perceptual incongruence	PG4	Absolute distance derived from the parallel item: "Current university measures are useful in helping students recognize and resist harmful information."	(Bashshur et al., 2011; Kim, 2026; Song & Meier, 2022)
Student participation	SP1	Students are encouraged to discuss social media risks openly in class or institutional forums.	(Fung, 2006; Nabatchi et al., 2017)
Student participation	SP2	Students can provide feedback on university communication and awareness programs.	(Osborne et al., 2016; Wang & Van Wart, 2007)
Student participation	SP3	Students participate in peer-based activities related to digital literacy or responsible online behavior.	(McDougall et al., 2019; Nabatchi et al., 2017)
Student participation	SP4	The university provides accessible channels for students to report or discuss suspicious online content.	(Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012)
Policy effectiveness	PE1	Students can identify fake news, misleading sources, and manipulated content.	(Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Wineburg & McGrew, 2019)
Policy effectiveness	PE2	Students feel confident when evaluating controversial or harmful political information online.	(Kahne & Bowyer, 2017; Lewandowsky et al., 2017)
Policy effectiveness	PE3	Students verify information before sharing it on social media.	(Pennycook & Rand, 2019; Wineburg & McGrew, 2019)
Policy effectiveness	PE4	Students avoid engaging in or spreading hostile, misleading, or socially harmful online content.	(Lazer et al., 2018; Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017)
Policy effectiveness	PE5	Students know where to seek support when encountering suspicious or harmful online information.	(McDougall et al., 2019; Seo et al., 2025)

Note. All original survey items used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. PG1-PG4 are derived respondent-level absolute-distance indicators computed from the four parallel faculty/staff and student items using the mean of the opposite respondent group in the analytic sample as the reference benchmark. No one-to-one faculty student matching was used.
Source: Authors' synthesis based on the cited literature.

Analytical strategy

SPSS was used for data screening, descriptive statistics, correlations, reliability testing, and EFA. CFA and covariance-based SEM were estimated in AMOS. The measurement model was assessed with Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, AVE, standardized loadings, and global fit indices. The structural model estimated H1, H2, the direct SP $\rightarrow$ PE path (H3a), and the PG $\times$ SP interaction (H3b). The SEM is a pooled respondent-level model; latent mean comparisons between faculty/staff and students, measurement-invariance tests across respondent groups, and multilevel institutional effects are outside the present specification. Robustness checks introduced the reported demographic and usage controls and, in Model 4, recalculated PG after standardizing the parallel source items before computing respondent-level distance from the opposite-group benchmark. Because EFA and CFA use the same cross-sectional dataset, the fit and significance statistics assess internal model specification rather than independent external validation.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics

Table II reports the distributions used in the model. The mean scores were 3.48 for PI (*SD* = 0.71), 3.36 for SP (*SD* = 0.76), and 3.61 for PE (*SD* = 0.68). PG averaged 0.64 (*SD* = 0.31) and ranged from 0.05 to 1.55. The variation in PG is across respondents because each respondent's score was compared with the opposite group's sample mean for the same domain; it is not variation among four aggregate group-mean differences. Accordingly, PG should be read as a sample-referenced respondent-level distance measure.

Table II
Descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Policy integration (PI)	3.48	0.71	1.50	5.00
Perceptual incongruence (PG)	0.64	0.31	0.05	1.55
Student participation (SP)	3.36	0.76	1.25	5.00
Policy effectiveness (PE)	3.61	0.68	1.40	5.00

Source: Authors' calculations from the survey data.

The parallel source items can also be summarized at the group level, but those statistics answer a different question. Faculty/staff rated the usefulness of current university interventions at 3.82 on average, whereas the student mean was 3.29. These are descriptive group means; they are not the PG values entered into the CFA or SEM.

Reliability and validity

Internal consistency and convergent validity met the stated criteria. Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.82 to 0.91, composite reliability from 0.84 to 0.92, and AVE from 0.57 to 0.70 (Table III). For PG, these statistics indicate that the four respondent-level distance indicators covary sufficiently under the specified reflective model; they should not be interpreted as validation of a dyadic faculty student construct.

Table III
Reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Items	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Policy integration (PI)	4	0.88	0.89	0.67
Perceptual incongruence (PG)	4	0.82	0.84	0.57
Student participation (SP)	4	0.86	0.87	0.63
Policy effectiveness (PE)	5	0.91	0.92	0.70

Source: Authors' calculation from survey data.

EFA extracted four factors with eigenvalues above 1.0. The KMO statistic was 0.91, and Bartlett's test was significant, χ^2 = 4,286.73, $p < 0.001$. These results indicated that the item correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis.

The CFA results were χ^2/df = 2.31, CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.947, RMSEA = 0.047, and SRMR = 0.041. Standardized loadings ranged from 0.68 to 0.87 and were statistically significant.

Correlation analysis

The bivariate results follow the direction specified in the model. PI correlated negatively with PG and positively with SP and PE; PG correlated negatively with PE; and SP correlated positively with PE. The diagonal entries in Table IV are the square roots of AVE and exceed the corresponding inter-construct correlations.

Table IV
Correlations among constructs

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Policy integration	(0.82)			
2. Perceptual incongruence	−0.41***	(0.75)		
3. Student participation	0.46***	−0.28***	(0.79)	
4. Policy effectiveness	0.52***	−0.45***	0.49***	(0.84)

Notes: Values in parentheses on the diagonal are the square roots of AVE. ***$p < 0.001$.

Source: Authors' calculations from survey data.

Structural equation modeling

The structural model yielded χ^2/df = 2.44, CFI = 0.951, TLI = 0.942, RMSEA = 0.050, and SRMR = 0.045. It accounted for 17.2% of the variance in PG and 48.6% of the variance in PE.

Table V
Structural path results

Hypothesis	Path	Standardized coefficient	SE	*t*-value	*p*-value	Result
H1	PI → PG	−0.415	0.052	−7.98	<0.001	Supported
H2	PG → PE	−0.326	0.047	−6.94	<0.001	Supported
H3a	SP → PE	0.381	0.044	8.66	<0.001	Supported
H3b	PG × SP → PE	0.148	0.039	3.79	<0.001	Supported

Source: Authors' calculation from survey data.

For H1, the estimated PI → PG coefficient was −0.415 ($p < 0.001$). Respondents who perceived university policy arrangements as more coherent and coordinated also tended to be closer to the opposite group's benchmark on the four risk domains. Because both variables are respondent-level measures in a cross-sectional pooled model, the coefficient does not establish that institutional integration caused a reduction in perceptual distance.

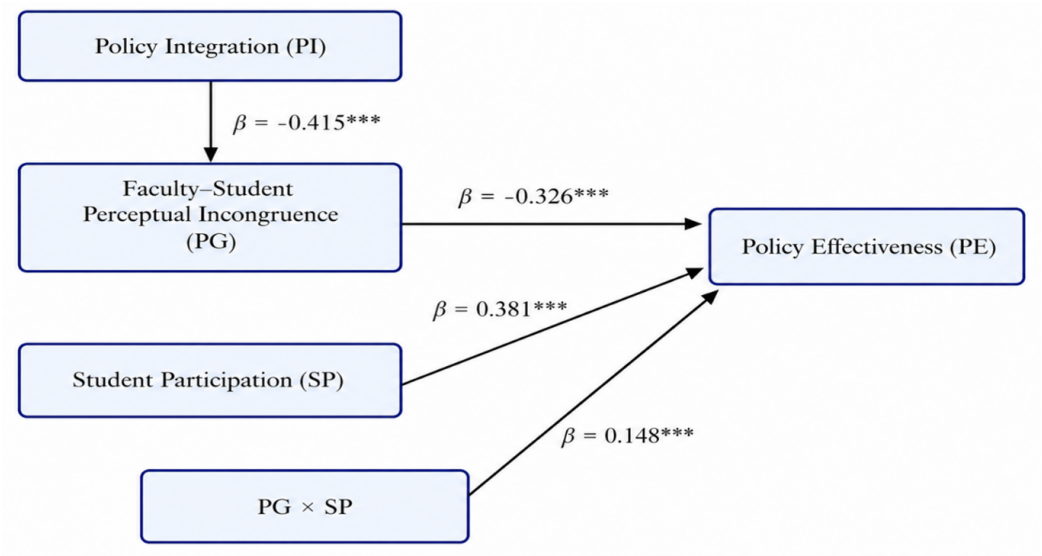


Fig. 2 *Structural equation model results*
*Note. Standardized coefficients are reported. ***p < 0.001. PI = policy integration; PG = faculty student perceptual incongruence; SP = student participation; PE = policy effectiveness.*
Source: Authors' calculation from survey data.

For H2, PG was negatively associated with PE ($\beta = -0.326$, $p < 0.001$). Respondents with larger group-referenced perceptual distances tended to report lower policy effectiveness. The coefficient concerns distance from the opposite group's average assessment, not disagreement within matched faculty student pairs, and it is associational rather than causal.

SP had a positive direct association with PE ($\beta = 0.381$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3a. The PG × SP coefficient was positive ($\beta = 0.148$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3b. Within the fitted specification, the sign of the interaction is consistent with an attenuation of the negative PG-PE association as reported student participation increases. This result is interpreted as moderation within the statistical model, not as evidence that participation causally corrects perceptual disagreement.

Robustness checks

The sensitivity checks changed the specification without changing the direction of the main coefficients. Models 1-3 added the listed demographic, role-related, and social-media-use controls. Model 4 addressed the construction of PG more directly: the four parallel source items were standardized first, after which each respondent's absolute distance from the opposite-group benchmark was recalculated on the standardized

metric. The estimates remained close to those in the baseline model. These checks indicate stability across the reported alternative specifications; they do not resolve the limits associated with purposive sampling, pooled institutional data, or cross-sectional measurement.

Table VI
Robustness checks

Model	Added controls / alternative specification	PI → PG	PG → PE	SP → PE	PG × SP → PE	Conclusion
Baseline SEM	No additional controls	−0.415***	−0.326***	0.381***	0.148***	Main model supported
Model 1	Gender and year of study	−0.402***	−0.318***	0.372***	0.141***	Robust
Model 2	Field of study and faculty role	−0.397***	−0.311***	0.365***	0.136***	Robust
Model 3	Frequency of social media use	−0.389***	−0.304***	0.359***	0.132**	Robust
Model 4	PG recomputed after standardizing the four parallel source items; respondent-level absolute distance to the opposite-group mean retained	−0.421***	−0.337***	0.376***	0.151***	Robust

Notes: Standardized coefficients are reported. $^{**}p < 0.01$; $^{***}p < 0.001$.
Source: Authors' calculation from survey data.

Discussion

The empirical pattern is consistent across the main and sensitivity models. Respondents who perceived university policies as more coherent tended to lie closer to the opposite group's assessment of social-media risks, larger group-referenced distances were associated with lower reported policy effectiveness, and reported student participation was positively associated with PE. The positive interaction term indicates that the negative PG-PE association is weaker at higher reported levels of participation within the fitted model. These results are interpretable only at the respondent level because the survey does not contain matched faculty-student dyads or institution-specific perceptual-gap estimates.

Treating the university as an implementation site helps locate these relationships. National and sectoral policies reach students through institutional rules, administrative units, courses, communication channels, and support services. Formal regulation is therefore only one part of the picture. The survey captures how respondents experience the institutional arrangements through which those policies are carried out.

The negative PI-PG coefficient is consistent with process-oriented accounts of policy integration. Cejudo and Trein (2023) and Trein et al. (2023) emphasize relationships across policy subsystems and implementation stages, while Sarti (2023) and Capano and Lepori (2024) explain why formal design and implementation can diverge. In the present data, respondents who experience more coherent implementation also show smaller distances from the other group's benchmark. The association is compatible with the proposition that coordination and consistent implementation may reduce cross-group misalignment, but the design cannot establish temporal order or causal direction.

The PG-PE coefficient extends perceptual-congruence research into a digital-governance setting, but the comparison must remain at the correct level of analysis. PG is the distance from the opposite group's sample mean, not disagreement between a named lecturer and a named student or within a specific class or institution. The finding therefore concerns respondent-level alignment with a cross-group benchmark. It should not be read as evidence about interpersonal congruence within faculty-student pairs, nor does a smaller distance necessarily imply normatively preferable agreement in every domain (Kim, 2026; Song & Meier, 2022). Its relevance in this study derives from the observed association with reported implementation outcomes.

Why might the association matter? One plausible explanation is that staff and students identify different problems as urgent, leaving institutional responses less well matched to student experience. Another is that students may place less value on guidance that does not correspond to the risks they see online. Earlier congruence research links perceptual misalignment with trust, commitment, and organizational performance (Bashshur et al., 2011; Benlian, 2014; Kim, 2026; Song & Meier, 2022). The present data are compatible with these explanations but do not test the mechanisms directly.

The interaction with SP is consistent with a feedback interpretation. Where respondents reported more discussion, feedback opportunities, peer activity, and accessible reporting channels, the negative association between PG and PE was smaller. One plausible interpretation is that usable feedback channels allow institutions to respond when staff and students understand emerging online risks differently. The present model does not directly observe that mechanism, however; establishing it would require longitudinal, experimental, or process-tracing evidence.

Research on misinformation gives a further reason for caution about uniform solutions. Accuracy prompts and digital-literacy cues improve discernment in many settings, but their effects vary across populations and intervention types (Arechar et al., 2023; Kozyreva et al., 2024). Hoes et al. (2024) report skeptical spillovers from some interventions, and Pennycook et al. (2024) find that combined interventions can perform differently from single measures. A university response should therefore be evaluated against the risks and users it is meant to address rather than assumed to work by design.

For the participating universities, the results direct attention to implementation coherence rather than to the sheer number of policies. Cybersecurity, digital transformation, student affairs, and civic or political education may each contain relevant measures, but respondents

encounter them through messages, services, teaching, and feedback channels. PI captures perceived coherence across those arrangements. Because the benchmark for PG is the opposite group's pooled sample mean and the SEM is not multilevel, the estimates should not be extended to institution-specific effects or to the Vietnamese higher-education system as a whole.

Policy Implications

A practical implication is to review how the units already dealing with digital risk exchange information. Communication, student affairs, teaching, counseling, and digital or cybersecurity staff may encounter different parts of the same problem. The data do not identify one organizational model as superior, but they support treating fragmentation as an implementation issue that can be measured, discussed, and periodically reviewed.

Technical information about emerging online risks also needs a clear route into teaching, student support, and institutional communication. The relevant management question is not only whether information exists, but whether it reaches the units that can act on it and whether students receive compatible guidance across institutional channels.

Parallel surveys can be useful for monitoring perception gaps only when the statistic and unit of analysis are stated explicitly. Aggregate group means, respondent-level group-referenced distances, cluster-level gaps, and matched dyadic discrepancies answer different questions and should not be treated as interchangeable. Where data permit, universities should prefer benchmarks aligned with the organizational level at which decisions are made.

Student participation is most useful when it changes what the institution does. Reporting new risks, reviewing communication materials, evaluating training, and identifying platform-specific problems are concrete ways to create that feedback. Consultation that is collected but never linked to implementation would not serve the same purpose.

Digital and civic education can also place more emphasis on practice: comparing sources, checking information laterally, identifying manipulation, and deciding when not to share. Recent intervention studies show why these activities should be evaluated rather than assumed to work equally well in every context (Guay et al., 2023; Hoes et al., 2024; Kozyreva et al., 2024).

Limitations and Future Research

Several limitations define the scope of the findings. First, the cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causality. Second, purposive sampling and the institutional bounds of the survey limit statistical generalization beyond the participating settings. Third, PG is a respondent-level distance from the pooled mean of the opposite respondent group, not a dyadic, class-level, department-level, or institution-specific discrepancy. This operationalization directly solves the case-level variation problem required for CFA and SEM, but it can also absorb compositional differences across institutional settings. Future research should compare pooled, institution-specific, cluster-level, and genuinely dyadic benchmarks where sample structure permits.

Fourth, the pooled SEM does not test whether PI, SP, and PE have equivalent measurement properties across faculty/staff and students, nor does it estimate respondent-group-specific structural paths or institutional nesting. Multi-group CFA/SEM and multilevel models would be appropriate extensions when group and institution cell sizes are sufficient. Fifth, PE is based on reported assessments rather than observed online behavior, and PI, SP, and PE are collected through the same survey process, leaving room for common-source and self-report bias. Behavioral verification tasks, administrative records, and longitudinal designs would provide stronger outcome evidence.

Finally, the four PG indicators are modeled reflectively as manifestations of a broader tendency toward cross-group perceptual misalignment. The reliability and CFA results support that specification within this dataset, but alternative composite or formative specifications remain plausible because the four domains are substantively distinct. EFA and CFA were also conducted on the same sample, so the measurement structure has not been independently cross-validated. Replication with separate calibration and validation samples, alternative PG specifications, and explicit conditional-effect plots for moderation would provide a stricter test of the model.

Conclusion

This study examines university digital governance as an implementation problem linking perceived policy integration, group-referenced faculty/staff-student perceptual incongruence, reported student participation, and reported policy effectiveness. The measurement of PG is explicitly respondent-level: on each of four parallel domains, a respondent's answer is compared with the mean answer of the opposite respondent group. This construction produces case-level variation suitable for the reported CFA and SEM while avoiding any claim of one-to-one faculty-student matching.

Within the surveyed sample, higher perceived policy integration was associated with smaller perceptual distances, larger distances were associated with lower reported policy effectiveness, and higher reported student participation was associated with higher PE and a weaker negative PG-PE relationship. These findings support a bounded implementation interpretation: coherence and feedback are related to how similarly staff

and students understand digital risks and to how effective institutional responses are reported to be. The evidence remains cross-sectional, sample-referenced, and non-dyadic, so causal, institution-specific, and population-level claims require further research.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no known financial or non-financial conflicts of interest that could have influenced the conduct, results, or reporting of this research.

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