



Ho Chi Minh's thought on Education and its Significance for the Career of Education in Vietnam Today

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ABSTRACT

One of the most profound and enduring legacies Ho Chi Minh bestowed upon our nation is his thoughts on education, especially in moral education. His educational philosophy is characterized by deep and comprehensive insights, addressing not only the fundamental role and objectives of education but also the content, methodology, and approach to teaching. Ho Chi Minh emphasized the cultivation of knowledge alongside the development of moral character, integrating humanistic values that underscore the importance of educating individuals to become knowledgeable and ethically grounded members of society. His teachings continue to resonate today, serving as both a theoretical framework and a practical guide for shaping educational policies and practices in modern times. These ideas reflect a timeless vision that places equal importance on intellectual and moral development, ensuring that education contributes to the holistic betterment of individuals and the nation as a whole.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in social development, serving not only as the primary means of shaping and nurturing human personality but also as a driving force for advancing nations across all periods of history. Recognizing this, Ho Chi Minh consistently prioritized the cause of education throughout his leadership. His educational thought represents a harmonious blend of the finest elements of national and human culture, while also reflecting the practical realities of the Vietnamese revolution and the unique characteristics of the times, shaped by Vietnam's specific historical conditions. Ho Chi Minh's philosophy of education, particularly his views on moral education, forms a cohesive system that encompasses the role, purpose, content, and methods of education. His insights not only highlight the importance of moral cultivation alongside intellectual development but also emphasize education's role in fostering the well-being of individuals and society. This comprehensive vision continues to hold profound theoretical and practical significance, not only for the broader Vietnamese revolutionary cause but also for the ongoing, fundamental reform of education and training in Vietnam today. Through his educational thought, Ho Chi Minh provided a framework that remains relevant, offering guidance on how education can be both a means of personal development and a vehicle for national progress. His ideas serve as a cornerstone for Vietnam's ongoing efforts to modernize its educational system while retaining the core humanistic values that have long defined its cultural and intellectual heritage.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education, including moral education is one of the profound viewpoints expressing noble goals, ideals and noble humanity. For that reason, this topic has attracted many studies by scientists at home and abroad. Research works on Ho Chi Minh's ideology on socialism can be summarized in the following topics:

1. The first topic is the research related to the historical context and theoretical premises for the formation of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education, including moral education. Related to this topic, we can mention the works of authors such as: "Understanding some issues in the ideology of President Ho Chi Minh", Publishing House. Truth, Hanoi, 1982; "Ho Chi Minh's thought and Vietnam's revolutionary path" by General Vo Nguyen Giap, editor-in-chief, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 1997; "The basic formation of Ho Chi Minh's ideology" by Prof. Tran Van Giau, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 1997; "Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education with the issue of fundamental and comprehensive innovation in Vietnam's education today" by Ly Viet Quang (Editor), Publishing House. National politics, Hanoi, 2020...
2. The second topic, research related to the content of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education, including moral education, typically includes the works: "On building a new human" by Ho Chi Minh, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 1995; "The goal of socialism in Ho Chi Minh's thought" by

Prof. Dr. Nguyen Trong Chuan, Journal of Philosophy (No. 5-2000); "Ho Chi Minh's Thought and the cause of building the comprehensive development of Vietnamese people" by Associate Professor, PhD. Thanh Duy, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 2002; "Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on national independence and socialism" of Party History Magazine, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 2003; "Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on culture" by the Central Cultural Ideology Committee, Hanoi, 2004; "Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on the socialist people of Vietnam" by Prof. Tran Xuan Truong, People's Army Publishing House, Hanoi, 2008; "Ho Chi Minh - The essence and spirit of the nation" by Pham Van Dong, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 2009; "The value of Ho Chi Minh's heritage in today's time" by author Bui Dinh Phong, Publishing House. Youth, 2010; "Ho Chi Minh with the cause of national independence and socialism in Vietnam" by Associate Professor. Dr. Vu Dinh Hoe and Associate Professor. Dr. Bui Dinh Phong, co-editor, Publishing House. National Politics, Hanoi, 2010

METHODOLOGY

Purpose: This article aims to systematically present the core content of Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy, including his thoughts on moral education. By doing so, it seeks to draw out both the theoretical and practical implications of Ho Chi Minh's educational ideology in the current context of education, training, and the task of nation-building and defense.

Methodology

The article employs an approach rooted in historical philosophy, cultural philosophy, and value philosophy. Additionally, it utilizes specific research methods such as the integration of logic and history, analysis and synthesis, induction and interpretation, abstraction, generalization, comparison, and literary analysis.

Main Results

First, the article clarifies Ho Chi Minh's views on the role, goals, and mission of education, with a focus on moral education. Second, it presents and analyzes the foundational aspects of his educational thought, including the purposes, content, and methods of education. Third, it examines the theoretical and practical significance of Ho Chi Minh's educational ideology, particularly in the context of moral education, for contemporary Vietnam.

RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Throughout his life, career, and ideology, Ho Chi Minh consistently valued the role of education, with particular emphasis on moral education. His thoughts on education were not only articulated through numerous speeches and writings, but also reflected in his unwavering dedication to the cause of education and his personal example of lifelong learning. With a deep understanding of the limitations inherent in both feudal and colonial educational systems, Ho Chi Minh used his practical experience and sharp

insights to critique these systems. He criticized the conservatism and rigidity of feudal education, while also exposing the ignorant and oppressive nature of colonial education, which, as he pointed out, "taught young people to love a Fatherland that was not their own and that was oppressing them" (Minh, 2011, vol. 1, p. 399). He condemned the colonial cultural policy for its limited, elitist goals, noting that under such a regime, "the purpose of going to school was to get a degree to become a scholar," and that "the purpose of educating slaves was only to train slave intellectuals to serve them" (Minh, 2011, vol. 3, p. 32).

Recognizing these flaws, Ho Chi Minh was deeply invested in creating a new educational system for an independent Vietnam one focused on the holistic development of human beings, where learning is a means to acquire knowledge, work productively, and become a morally sound individual. He advocated for the eradication of colonial remnants in education, such as indifference to society and detachment from the struggles of the people. He criticized the practice of studying solely for the sake of obtaining a degree and the indoctrination-style teaching methods. Instead, Ho Chi Minh called for a new approach: "Efforts must be made to cleanse the remaining colonial influences of enslaving education, such as indifferent attitudes towards society and distance from the working life and struggles of the people. Study not just to get a degree, but to serve the Fatherland and the people" (Minh, 2011, vol. 7, p. 80). Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education, especially moral education, are both scientific and humanistic, deeply philosophical in nature, and revolve around the following core principles:

Comprehensive Knowledge Development

According to Ho Chi Minh, education plays a decisive role in equipping individuals with a wide range of knowledge, from social sciences and natural sciences to professional and technical skills. He believed that education should cover all aspects of human development, including ideals, ethics, aesthetics, and physical well-being. Education, in his view, is essential for producing useful citizens who contribute to the nation's progress. He asserted that to maintain independence, create prosperity, and build a strong nation, every Vietnamese citizen must be aware of their rights and responsibilities, acquire new knowledge, and first and foremost, learn to read and write to actively participate in national construction.

Human Personality and Capability Development

Ho Chi Minh believed that education plays a vital role in shaping human personality and abilities. Under the leadership of the Party, the Vietnamese revolution aimed to bring benefits to all, ensuring freedom and happiness for the people. Ho Chi Minh believed that the great revolutionary cause must be carried out by the people themselves, and education is the driving force that guides them towards the values of truth, goodness, and beauty. By forming and nurturing a new socialist person, education lays the foundation for building socialism. Ho Chi Minh saw these individuals, with their qualities of integrity, knowledge, and dedication, as the key to creating a socialist society.

Building a Learning Society

Education, in Ho Chi Minh's view, is essential for expanding and enhancing people's knowledge, creating a "learning society" that is critical to the rapid and sustainable development of the country. He warned that ignorance is a dangerous internal enemy, stating that "an ignorant nation is a weak nation" (Minh, 2011, vol. 3, p. 7). To combat this, he stressed the importance of developing education to bring Vietnam on par with advanced countries around the world. By improving education, the country would create opportunities for people to engage in creative activities and enjoy cultural values. He envisioned transforming an "ignorant and extremely poor country into one with high culture and a joyful and happy life" (Minh, 2011, vol. 7, p. 494). Through these ideas, Ho Chi Minh positioned education as a cornerstone for both individual growth and national progress, highlighting its indispensable role in the formation of a just, prosperous, and independent society.

Ho Chi Minh's views on the goals and mission of a new education system are marked by his visionary outlook. He identified the core objective of education under the new regime as the cultivation of a new generation of Vietnamese people who are well-rounded, loyal to the nation, devoted to the people, and embody virtues such as love for humanity, thrift, integrity, fairness, and impartiality. He emphasized the importance of fostering an internationalist spirit, with a commitment to serving the Fatherland and the people. For him, the essence of education was clear: "Study to work, to become a human being, to become a cadre. Learn to serve the collective, the class, the people, the Fatherland, and humanity" (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 208).

Education, in Ho Chi Minh's view, plays a cultural role by nurturing noble ideals and feelings, broadening and deepening knowledge, and cultivating good moral character and behavior. In essence, education is the means to shape individuals who are valuable to society. Under a new social system where the people are the true masters, education's mission is to train generations of individuals who will carry forward the revolutionary cause, serving their communities, classes, and nation—not to become mandarins as in the old society. He criticized the outdated model of education, where people learned only to recite from books, quoting Marx and Lenin, but neglected practical responsibilities, like allowing a house to fill with trash (Minh, 2011, vol. 11, p. 554).

With these noble aspirations, education becomes a key front in the nation-building process. Ho Chi Minh's vision for education in the 1950s where learning is not just for knowledge, but for becoming a responsible human being and contributing to society aligns closely with UNESCO's 1997 concept that modern education should be focused on "learning to know, to work, to live together, and to be." This striking alignment underscores Ho Chi Minh's forward-thinking nature and his remarkable ability to foresee the evolving purposes of education long before these ideas became widely accepted.

Ho Chi Minh's perspective on comprehensive educational content reflects his vision for a holistic and noble goal: the complete development of the human being. He believed that education must encompass a broad and integrated curriculum, one that aligns with the nature of schools under the new

regime and resonates with Vietnamese characteristics while considering the broader global context. The educational content he envisioned included not only academic knowledge but also cultural competence, professional expertise, moral values, physical and aesthetic development, national consciousness, patriotism, and a strong sense of international solidarity.

In terms of knowledge, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the need for comprehensive education that spans multiple disciplines—cultural education, scientific and technical knowledge, professional expertise, and political awareness. He stressed the interconnection of these fields, asserting that one cannot advance without the other. For instance, he noted that without cultural education, one cannot fully grasp technology, and without technological knowledge, the nation will struggle to meet its economic needs. Moreover, while mastering culture and technology is crucial, he argued that political education is equally vital. Without political insight, “it is like walking with your eyes closed,” as he put it. Political education, in Ho Chi Minh’s view, meant studying Marxism-Leninism not just as an abstract theory but as a practical and dynamic tool for understanding and solving the country’s issues. He described it as “the spirit of handling all matters, towards all people and towards oneself” (Minh, 2011, vol. 8, p. 292), emphasizing the need for creative application of Marxist principles to the specific realities of Vietnam.

Furthermore, Ho Chi Minh advocated for the study of dialectical materialism and the revolutionary spirit that it fosters, guiding individuals toward accurate perceptions and effective actions. He saw this as crucial for resolving the challenges posed by the nation’s circumstances. His educational philosophy called for integrating school-based learning with public education and political indoctrination, emphasizing that this combination could “foster new thoughts to defeat old thoughts, and break with the old person to become a new person” (Minh, 2011, vol. 6, p. 148). In this way, he believed that education could fundamentally transform both individuals and society, shaping the new socialist person necessary for national development.

The comprehensiveness of educational content in Ho Chi Minh's thought is reflected in his belief that education must cultivate individuals holistically, focusing on virtue, intellect, physical well-being, and aesthetics. Among these, revolutionary moral education was considered paramount. Ho Chi Minh stressed the importance of morality as the foundation of personal and societal development, stating, “Just like a river, there is a source to have water; without a source, the river dries up. The tree must have roots, without roots the tree will wither. Revolutionaries must have morality. Without morality, no matter how talented they are, they cannot lead the people” (Minh, 2011, vol. 4, p. 252).

This belief underscores the idea that moral integrity is indispensable for leaders and revolutionaries alike. Thus, he emphasized that educational content must prioritize the cultivation of revolutionary ethics, particularly for officials and the broader population. For Ho Chi Minh, the ethical foundation of individuals, especially those in positions of leadership, was crucial not only for personal development but also for ensuring the success and sustainability of the

revolutionary cause. Moral education, therefore, is not just one aspect of learning but the core that upholds all other aspects of education.

Ho Chi Minh's views on educational mottos and methods highlight the need for education to be both scientifically grounded and practically relevant. He firmly believed that education is a science, requiring rigorous study, research, and continuous improvement. As he asserted, "Children's education is a science. So you must try to study, research, exchange experiences, to progress forever" (Minh, 2011, vol. 4, p. 713). This perspective underscores the importance of adopting correct and scientific educational principles and methods, which distinguish the new education system of the people's democratic regime from the outdated, oppressive systems of the semi-feudal colonial era. Ho Chi Minh's educational motto stresses that learning must be closely linked to real-life needs and practical application. He articulated that educational content should be relevant and responsive to the needs of the people and the State: "Teaching and learning must follow the needs of the people and the State. Teachers teach well, students learn well, providing enough staff for agriculture, industry, economic and cultural sectors. That is the glorious task of teachers" (Minh, 2011, vol. 7, p. 138). This motto highlights the importance of ensuring that education not only imparts knowledge but also equips students to contribute effectively to society.

Furthermore, Ho Chi Minh emphasized that education must integrate theory with practice. He believed that learning should involve active engagement and practical application: "Learning must think, learning must be related to reality, there must be experiments and practice. Learning and practice must be combined together" (Minh, 2011, vol. 10, p. 331). This approach ensures that theoretical knowledge is applied in practical settings, bridging the gap between learning and real-world challenges.

In his broader educational vision, Ho Chi Minh viewed education as a collective revolutionary endeavor that requires collaboration among family, school, and society. He advocated for self-directed learning and the use of various methods to acquire knowledge, including learning from books, peers, and practical experiences. According to Ho Chi Minh, "It's not just at school, going to class, that we can learn, cultivate, practice and improve ourselves. In all revolutionary activities, we can and must learn and self-reform" (Minh, 2011, vol. 8, p. 284). This perspective emphasizes the importance of continuous self-study and the application of learning in all aspects of life. Ho Chi Minh's own journey as an exceptional cultural figure and revolutionary educator was marked by his commitment to self-study and constant learning. His experiences from his early education to his travels and leadership roles demonstrate his belief in the value of lifelong learning. Ho Chi Minh's modern views on education, grounded in his deep awareness and practical experiences, continue to inspire and guide educational practices. Ho Chi Minh's educational ideology stands as a profound theoretical legacy that has significantly shaped our nation's journey towards independence and its ongoing pursuit of building a new society. His ideas are characterized by their depth, richness, and practicality, embodying a scientific, pragmatic, and humanistic approach. By

synthesizing both national educational traditions and global cultural achievements, Ho Chi Minh distilled timeless philosophical insights into education that remain profoundly relevant today. His theories continue to provide a solid foundation for the essential reforms needed in Vietnam's education and training systems. In alignment with Ho Chi Minh's scientific and humanistic principles regarding intellectual development, the Vietnamese State has embarked on transformative reforms in education and training. These reforms are guided by policies and strategies aimed at achieving a comprehensive overhaul of the education system. The goal is to effect substantial improvements in the quality and effectiveness of education, addressing the increasing demands of national development and the educational needs of the population. The core principles of these reforms emphasize that education and training are vital national priorities. They are seen as critical to advancing the nation's development and ensuring its defense. As stated by the Communist Party of Vietnam, "Education and training is the top national policy, the decisive factor for the successful implementation of the cause of building and defending the Fatherland, the cause of the entire people" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2013, p. 1). This underscores a profound commitment to elevating the quality of education as a fundamental pillar of national progress and societal well-being.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ho Chi Minh's thoughts on education, particularly moral education, form a rich, profound, coherent, and comprehensive system. Regarding the role of education, Ho Chi Minh emphasized, "For the benefit of ten years, we must plant trees; for the benefit of a hundred years, we must cultivate people" (Minh, 2011, vol. 11, p.528). He defined the purpose of education as: "Study to become a human being, to become a cadre. Study to serve the collective, to serve the class, to serve the people, to serve the Fatherland and humanity" (Minh, 2011, vol. 6, p. 208). In terms of educational content, Ho Chi Minh advocated for the comprehensive development of the Vietnamese people, encompassing education in cultural and professional knowledge, ideal viewpoints, moral qualities, physical fitness, aesthetics, national consciousness, patriotism, and an international spirit. Regarding educational methods, he promoted a dynamic and practical approach, emphasizing the integration of learning with practice, and theory with real-life application. He believed that education should be tailored to the needs of each individual, encouraging self-study, continuous learning, and practice anytime and anywhere. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of setting an example in learning.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

This research still has limitations so further research needs to be done on the topic "Ho Chi Minh's thought on Education and its Significance for the Career of Education in Vietnam Today."

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