

## **Training Teachers in Vietnam Today: An Approach from the Educational Perspective of Ho Chi Minh**



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**ABSTRACT:** Ho Chi Minh was a distinguished political figure, a prominent leader of the Vietnamese revolution, and also a revered educator and significant cultural figure on a global scale. He laid the foundation and guided the establishment of a new educational system in Vietnam. His educational philosophy holds profound theoretical and practical significance for the revolutionary cause in Vietnam. Ho Chi Minh's educational ideology extends beyond mere intellectual and academic pursuits for individuals; it encompasses a comprehensive and profound outlook that is vivid and pragmatic. It aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals who are both "red" (revolutionary) and "expert" (competent), possessing knowledge, ideals, ethics, and health. Therefore, in shaping fundamental reforms in the current educational landscape of the nation, the application of these innovative and rational ideas is regarded as a requirement and a vital solution.

**KEYWORDS:** Ideology, Ho Chi Minh, Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the shortest way to train citizens with professional and ethical qualifications to meet the development requirements of society. Highly qualified people are the result of modern, effective, and quality education. Over the years, education in Vietnam has had orientations that closely follow the goals and requirements of the country's development, but there are still certain limitations. Therefore, the study of Ho Chi Minh's thought on education has practical theoretical and practical significance.

*The article clarifies the following two issues:*

What is the content of Ho Chi Minh's ideology?

What is the value of Ho Chi Minh's ideology on education for the cause of teacher training to meet the requirements of educational innovation in Vietnam today?

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The article is researched based on accessing data which are articles, speeches of Ho Chi Minh, documents, resolutions, directives... of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the State on education that Ho Chi Minh has acted as a decision maker; Scientific research works, books and scientific journals published by prestigious research agencies; Information sources exploited through agencies' websites, press releases, and some foreign journals... are also used to clarify relevant content.

Research methods: The article uses interdisciplinary research methods in social sciences such as analysis, synthesis, comparison, systematization, and generalization...

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **General theoretical basis**

Vietnam is a culturally refined nation, and the Vietnamese people are known for their dedication to learning, diligence, respect for teachers, and ethical values. Renowned educators in Vietnam include figures like Chu Văn An, Phan Boi Chau, Nguyen Binh Khiem, Nguyen Truong To, Nguyen Trai,... From ancient times, the Vietnamese people recognized the importance of education. Whether in urban areas or rural villages, parents always strived to provide their children with "three to five words to become human." Particularly ingrained in the Vietnamese mindset is the belief that education isn't just for personal advancement but also for the betterment of the nation. "Perhaps it's due to esteeming ethical principles in becoming human and understanding how to be human, that the Vietnamese nation has struggled to survive and mature as an independent people and a sovereign nation" (Duan, 1984, p. 4).

Vietnam's educational foundation has consistently regarded knowledge as a valuable asset for the nation. The educational level reflects a country's strength. Educational reformer Nguyen Truong To stated, "Learn to know and do, engage in practical tasks in

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the present, and work for the future" (Vietnam Institute of Educational Sciences, 1990, p. 41). Phan Boi Chau extended this concept, emphasizing the need to guide the youth toward education to build the nation.

Furthermore, Vietnam is a country that values human talent. As early as 1790, in the "Proclamation of Establishment of Schools," King Quang Trung emphasized the necessity of developing education for nation-building. To govern the country, talent had to be appreciated. All these viewpoints on education among the Vietnamese people contributed positively to Ho Chi Minh's approach to constructing his education philosophy appropriately and democratically.

Moreover, after spending 30 years abroad, exposed to various cultures from East to West, Ho Chi Minh, with his intellect and character, learned and applied progressive educational concepts from humanity's knowledge reservoir. These ideas formed the theoretical basis for developing practical and feasible educational policies and perspectives that were suitable for Vietnam's revolutionary circumstances.

In Eastern educational philosophy, Confucius is considered a great educator. He emphasized three aspects: morality, knowledge, and practice, placing a significant emphasis on nurturing moral character. His educational motto was "cultivate oneself, govern the family, rule the nation, pacify the world." Confucius highly valued education, famously stating, "Never be bored with learning, and never tire of teaching." He affirmed that education is crucial for personal development and societal contribution. Particularly, he regarded knowledgeable and capable educators as role models for students to follow. Mencius also advanced progressive ideas about education, advocating for equal education for everyone, regardless of social status.

Buddhism also holds progressive thoughts about education, focusing on cultivating compassion, forgiveness, rescue, and relief. Ho Chi Minh selected these humanistic perspectives from Buddhism to guide education, liberating individuals from oppression and exploitation.

Alongside these positive Eastern cultural perspectives, Ho Chi Minh also embraced the innovative ideas of Western culture. This culture champions human freedom, advocates for equal education for all children, and emphasizes the role of the educational environment in developing individuals holistically - morally, intellectually, physically, and in practical skills. A prominent figure in modern education, John Dewey, emphasized experiential learning and the importance of education in fostering democratic values.

One of the standout figures in modern education is Rousseau, leaving a legacy in education. Lenin acclaimed, "All of Europe must thank Rousseau, as he revolutionized education" (Thang & Am, 1998, p. 103).

Central to the soundness and revolutionary nature of Ho Chi Minh's education ideology is the Marxist-Leninist perspective. The significant contribution of Marx lies in unveiling the social essence of humans - the laws of human development and personality education in human society. Marx and Engels emphasized that to build a society, individuals must be liberated and placed at the center of all matters. In the Communist Manifesto, they advocated "comprehensive human development," a notion that became an influential modern idea with significant material implications.

Lenin further developed Marx and Engels' comprehensive human development perspective. The success of the October Revolution of 1917 contributed vital educational ideas to human cultural heritage. The Russian October Revolution established the Soviet government, a prerequisite for realizing the dreams of the global proletariat class and facilitating the transition to socialism and revolutionary cultural-educational reforms. Lenin elevated educational efforts, considering them fundamental to the success of building a socialist society. These scientific insights inherited and developed previous scientific achievements, deriving from revolutionary struggles. These viewpoints were creatively adopted by Ho Chi Minh, providing a vital foundation for his educational philosophy, which was closely linked to practice, where learning goes hand in hand with action.

In this way, with his extraordinary intellect and positive outlook, Ho Chi Minh constructed revolutionary educational viewpoints for Vietnam. Despite the challenges posed by colonialism and the policies of the ruling regimes, his optimistic educational concepts have continuously illuminated the path for generations of Vietnamese to keep up with global knowledge and contribute to the nation's intellectual growth, ultimately facilitating the construction of a robust intellectual resource base.

### Basic Contents of Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on Education

With all the cultural values of the nation and humanity about education, Ho Chi Minh creatively applied and inherited these values to establish a new educational system in Vietnam. These values can be considered the theoretical foundation for the formation of Ho Chi Minh's educational ideology. Regarding the construction of a revolutionary educational system in Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh put forth several key viewpoints:

*Firstly*, building a comprehensive education for the entire population. Recognizing the severe consequences of the French colonial policy of keeping the population ignorant and realizing the importance of education, Ho Chi Minh advocated for a comprehensive education system for everyone. He emphasized that every Vietnamese person should have a certain level of education to serve the revolution and nation-building. Ho Chi Minh demanded, "Every Vietnamese person must understand their rights and responsibilities, and they must possess the knowledge to participate in the country's construction" (Hai & Tien, 2005, p. 9). After the August Revolution in 1945, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the need to develop a national education system that focused on

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national values, modernity, and humanism. This education system should serve the homeland and its people. Therefore, it's clear that Ho Chi Minh's target for education was the "masses," reflecting his democratic and egalitarian educational philosophy.

*Secondly*, building a comprehensive education. According to Ho Chi Minh, comprehensive education should deeply penetrate the people, reaching not only specific individuals or social classes but the entire population of Vietnam. Right after gaining independence, during a precarious situation with hunger, illiteracy, and foreign invaders, President Ho Chi Minh stressed the urgent need to elevate the people's knowledge. He emphasized that all Vietnamese people needed new knowledge to participate in nation-building, and the first step was to learn how to read and write.

In Hồ Chí Minh's view of comprehensive education, moral education was a fundamental and crucial aspect in forming and developing human character. He held high regard for the role of ethics, particularly revolutionary ethics, stating that ethics were the nourishment and development of individuals, like the roots of a tree or the source of a stream. He said, "Just as a river needs a source to have water, without a source, the river dries up. A tree needs roots, without roots, the tree withers. A revolutionary person must have ethics; without ethics, no matter how skilled, they can't lead the people" (Minh, 2002, pp. 252-253).

Ho Chi Minh also emphasized intellectual education, as he considered developing intelligence a significant task of education. After the August Revolution, he called for the eradication of illiteracy due to the colonial policies that left 95% of the population illiterate. Ho Chi Minh believed that building a new education system for Vietnam was a vital and strategic long-term task because he understood that an ignorant nation was a weak nation.

Health was deemed the highest right to life by Ho Chi Minh. He considered health a person's happiness, the people's happiness, and therefore, he attached great importance to health education. He introduced physical education into schools at an early stage. Ho Chi Minh's most profound philosophy regarding physical fitness was "a strong populace leads to a prosperous nation, signifying that a healthy population led to a healthy society and, consequently, a prosperous nation. Recognizing that health was a prerequisite for learning and working, Ho Chi Minh constantly encouraged physical exercise to contribute to a strong and prosperous nation.

To build a comprehensive education, Ho Chi Minh also stressed the importance of political education, promoting Marxist-Leninist ideology, and enhancing revolutionary ethics for party members and the masses. This aimed at unifying their thoughts, willpower, revolutionary character, and practical capacities, guiding them in applying this knowledge to life.

In formulating his view on comprehensive human development, Ho Chi Minh inherited the Marxist-Leninist view that human nature is a complex of social relationships. Only through comprehensive education can individuals perfect their characters and contribute their talents to the nation.

*Thirdly*, learning in conjunction with action, theory tied to practice. For Ho Chi Minh, the principle of learning accompanied by action was of paramount importance in developing both the person's skills and intellect. This principle could be considered the golden rule of pedagogy. This principle enabled learners to simultaneously develop knowledge and skills, while also fostering a well-rounded personality. Ho Chi Minh believed, "You should not study by rote, like a parrot. Learning must involve thinking, connecting with reality, experimentation, and practice. Learning and practice must go hand in hand" (Minh, 2002, p. 331). He criticized the one-track education system of the feudal society, advocating for immediate integration of learning and practice.

To achieve the goal of the new education system, Ho Chi Minh demanded that everyone continue to learn incessantly, progressing continuously. The more they progressed, the more they had to learn and, most importantly, learning shouldn't be limited to acquiring knowledge but also to applying that knowledge to practice. Learning in conjunction with action was not only a principle but also the philosophy of the new national education system, as well as the learning method for educational institutions and each individual.

In conclusion, Ho Chi Minh creatively utilized the cultural values of the nation and humanity to construct a revolutionary and comprehensive educational philosophy for Vietnam. He emphasized building a comprehensive education for all, fostering ethics, intelligence, physical health, and practical skills. He believed in the principle of learning alongside action, where theory is closely linked to practice. Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy was deeply rooted in the values of democracy, equality, and practicality, serving as a guidepost for Vietnam's educational development.

### **The value of Ho Chi Minh's Ideology on Education for the career of teacher training to meet the requirements of educational innovation in Vietnam today**

In Vietnam, since Marxism-Leninism was spread into our country, many teachers have followed the communists, making worthy contributions to the revolution and the nation. The highest responsibility of the Party and State was also a teacher such as Tran Phu, Nguyen Van Cu, Le Hong Phong, Truong Chinh, Pham Van Dong, and Vo Nguyen Giap. Many outstanding cadres of the Party during the period of secret activities were also teachers such as To Hieu, Ngo Gia Tu... During the resistance war against the French colonialists (1945-1954) and the war against the US, to save the country (1954-1975), many senior cadres of the Party and State grew up from teachers. Particularly during the period of anti-Americanism and national salvation, there were about 3,000 officials and teachers who were supported for the southern battlefield with 29 waves (1961 - 1975) and over 9,000 teachers of the

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resistance on the spot from hamlets to subcommittee officers district and provincial education has created a team of teachers active in the liberated area...

In recent years, many Vietnamese teachers with high academic titles and degrees: professors, associate professors, doctors, and masters have made many important contributions to the renovation cause initiated and led by the Party. was conferred by the State the noble title of People's Teacher, Excellent Teacher, typically teachers Nguyen Lan, Dinh Xuan Lam, Tran Van Giau, Nguyen Van Dao, Nguyen Canh Toan, Nguyen Thuc Hao, Hoang Minh Thao, Ha Minh Duc, Phan Cu De, Dang Thai Mai... not only inherit and promote but also protect the tradition of Vietnamese teachers in new conditions.

How can the generation of teachers and teachers in the integration period be "both pink and professional", who have practical and specific educational mottos, comprehensive human education methods... and being suitable to new conditions is an urgent requirement for education reform in particular and the development of the country today. The requirements and ideas of President Ho Chi Minh on education are still intact and are solutions that need to be studied and applied from many different aspects, but first of all, it is necessary to pay attention to the following contents stand behind:

*Firstly*, deeply grasping the goal of education and training of human resources is to aim to realize the goal of comprehensive human resource development: physical, intellectual, will, capable, and moral; having the ability to self-study, self-training, dynamism, initiative, self-reliance, creativity, high professional knowledge and skills, ability to quickly adapt and take initiative in living and working environment. At the same time, strongly innovate the contents and methods of education and training. The content of education must be comprehensive in literacy, vocational training, and human education. It is necessary to pay more attention to the education of human moral qualities, the education of patriotism and the sense of mastery of the workers, the sense of responsibility and professional conscience; teamwork, cooperation at work, self-advocacy, independence, creativity, and honesty of employees. Therefore, it is necessary to standardize training programs and curricula to ensure conformity with the requirements of social practice. Increase the training of thinking methods, independent creative capacity, practical problem-solving ability, and the ability of each employee to self-train, foster, and self-improve to adapt to changes rapidly changing social reality. Bringing new information technology into all levels of education, overcoming the evils of cramming knowledge, and dogma, away from reality. Implement educational management reform fundamentally and comprehensively in both thinking and management methods towards improving the efficiency of state management of education and training and expanding the scale in parallel with improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training.

*Secondly*, build and standardize the teaching staff in terms of both quantity and quality, be responsible and have a professional conscience, wholeheartedly devoted to the cause of education, etc., improve the living standards and working conditions of teachers, pay them enough wages to live and work conscientiously; establishing and honoring the noble position of the teacher; adopt policies to attract many good people to the education and training sector; improve the quality of training and arrange, rationally and effectively use the teaching staff; strengthen exchanges and cooperation in the field of education and training with countries with developed education backgrounds.

To have a class of teachers who are both professional, passionate about their profession, and live an ideal life, it is necessary to attach importance to and pay attention to the issue of training and fostering the team. This work is seen as a key task, a guarantee for success in innovation and improvement of training quality. From this interest we have achieved many results from the rapid increase in the number of teachers with postgraduate qualifications; creating a change in teaching method innovation... On the other hand, to implement the practical and specific teaching motto that both meets practical requirements and easily transmits new knowledge to its students. Besides learning, teachers themselves need to do scientific research to meet the requirements of society.

### CONCLUSION

From absorbing national and human cultural values, Ho Chi Minh's views on education are fully scientific and revolutionary. His thought on education is close to everyone and suitable for application to the actual conditions of Vietnam to build a "modern, scientific and popular" education. His theoretical point of view on education is an extremely important contribution to enriching the treasure of Marxism-Leninism and is a source of light for the development of Vietnamese education. Standing at the beginning of the twenty-first century, looking back, humanity has had an overview over the past hundred years, luck and pride for our generation, there is a teacher: Ho Chi Minh. His actions, his teachings, and his concerns about education are valuable assets and a theoretical basis for determining strategies for training people. Thorough understanding and application of Ho Chi Minh's thought on education in the practice of fundamental and comprehensive reform of the country's education, including the training of teachers in the spirit of the Resolution of the 12th Party Congress, will help train the young generation of Vietnam to develop more and more comprehensively, worthy of the Ho Chi Minh generation, following the tradition of our ancestors to build our country to become richer, stronger and more prosperous.

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