



HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON TALENT AND THE EMPLOYMENT OF TALENT: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL VALUES

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Abstract:

Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and the utilization of talents constitutes a vital component of his ideological framework on cadre work and national development. Affirming that "*National construction requires talents*", Ho Chi Minh underscored the pivotal role of human capital in the revolutionary endeavor. His conception of talent was comprehensive, transcending the boundaries of Party membership and state officials to embrace all individuals endowed with capability, virtue, and a spirit of service to the nation. According to Ho Chi Minh, true talent must harmoniously integrate both "*ability*" and "*ethics*"; it must be systematically identified, selected, assigned, and utilized in accordance with individual competencies within a democratic and transparent environment. Moreover, he placed particular emphasis on the role of those responsible for cadre work, asserting that such individuals must embody ethical integrity, strategic vision, and practical competence — in other words, they must possess "*virtue, vision, and ability*" in human resource management. Ho Chi Minh's thought offers not only profound theoretical insights but also enduring practical relevance, especially in the contemporary context where Vietnam is vigorously pursuing industrialization, modernization, and global integration. The creative application of his thought on talent cultivation and utilization stands as a critical key to building a high-caliber cadre contingent, thereby fostering rapid and sustainable national development.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh, talents, talent utilization, cadre development, political thought, organizational governance

1. Introduction

In the history of modern Vietnamese thought, Ho Chi Minh stands out as the figure who laid profound theoretical and practical foundations for cadre work, with his thought on talents and the utilization of talents occupying a particularly significant position. Arising

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from the recognition that human beings are the decisive factor determining the success or failure of the revolutionary cause, Ho Chi Minh established a scientific system of views on the role, criteria, and methods for identifying and utilizing talents to serve the objectives of national liberation, construction, and development. This body of thought did not emerge spontaneously; rather, it represents the culmination of Vietnam's longstanding tradition of valuing talents, the creative application of Marxism–Leninism, the selective assimilation of the cultural quintessence of humanity, and the rigorous testing and refinement through the practice of leading the Vietnamese revolution.

Ho Chi Minh approached the concept of talent with a comprehensive and democratic vision, unrestricted by political status, social background, or Party affiliation. In his view, talents are individuals who embody intellectual capacity, moral integrity, and a spirit of dedication to the interests of the nation and the people. This perspective consistently bridges theory and practice, emphasizing the necessity of harmonizing “*ability*” and “*ethics*”, professional competence and political integrity, practical effectiveness and social responsibility in evaluating and utilizing talents. Ho Chi Minh further asserted that the utilization of talents is not merely a short-term task but a long-term strategic endeavor that must be implemented systematically, scientifically, and impartially in cadre organization and management.

In the current context, as Vietnam accelerates its industrialization, modernization, and deep international integration, the demand for high-quality human resources has become more urgent than ever. Confronted with new challenges of the era, the study, thorough understanding, and creative application of Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and their utilization bear not only profound theoretical significance but also urgent practical implications. It provides a crucial foundation for building a contingent of cadres who are both politically steadfast and professionally competent (“*both virtuous and talented*”), possessing the qualities, capabilities, and prestige necessary to meet the demands of sustainable national development in the new era. In this spirit, the article focuses on analyzing Ho Chi Minh's system of views on talents and their utilization, clarifying both the theoretical and practical values of this thought for contemporary nation-building efforts.

2. Research Methods

This study employs a variety of research methods, including logical reasoning, historical methods, analytical approaches, document synthesis, and the critical inheritance of research outcomes from established organizations and scholars.

3. Research Results

3.1. Ho Chi Minh's Perspective on Talents

Throughout Ho Chi Minh's ideological legacy, the question of talents and the utilization of talents occupies a particularly prominent position. Ho Chi Minh did not merely regard

talents as an elite segment of society, but considered them one of the decisive factors determining the prosperity or decline of a nation and the fate of a people. His thought was not the product of abstract theorization; rather, it emerged from the synthesis of the Vietnamese spirit of patriotism, the long-standing national tradition of honoring intellectuals, the revolutionary scientific spirit of Marxism-Leninism, and deep reflection upon the practical experiences of national struggle, nation-building, and defense.

Immediately after achieving national independence, amidst conditions of fragile governance structures, scarce material resources, and limited human capital, Ho Chi Minh emphasized: *"National construction requires talents. Although our country does not yet have many talents, if we skillfully select, allocate, and employ them, their numbers will steadily grow"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 4, p. 114). This call to action was not only an expression of faith in Vietnamese intellect but also a strategic declaration affirming the central role of human beings — particularly talented individuals — in national reconstruction and development.

Ho Chi Minh's conception of talents reflects a broad, democratic, and profound vision. In his view, talents were not confined by social status, background, or political affiliation. He emphasized: *"There are many talented people outside the Party... we must sincerely unite with them and support them"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 315). This outlook demonstrates not only an open-minded and meritocratic spirit but also a scientific and pragmatic approach to cadre organization — a domain Ho Chi Minh consistently regarded as decisive for the success or failure of any revolutionary cause. He refused to impose political barriers in selecting talents, instead applying effectiveness, morality, and patriotism as the principal criteria.

Beyond rhetoric, Ho Chi Minh consistently implemented his ideas on talent utilisation throughout his revolutionary leadership. Numerous intellectuals, experts, lawyers, and physicians — many of whom had served under previous regimes or were educated abroad — were invited to hold key positions within the revolutionary government. Figures such as Tran Dai Nghia, Ta Quang Buu, Phan Anh, Bui Bang Doan, and Nguyen Van Huyen stand as vivid examples of Ho Chi Minh's inclusive and trust-based policy on attracting and employing talents, regardless of background or Party membership.

Ho Chi Minh also emphasized the dialectical relationship between talent and morality. He asserted: *"A revolutionary must have ethics; without ethics, no matter how talented, one cannot lead the people"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 2, p. 292). In Ho Chi Minh's view, true talent represents a harmonious synthesis of *"ability"* and *"virtue"* — combining professional competence with civic responsibility, creative ambition with the ideal of serving the nation. Thus, talented individuals are not simply those who *"know much,"* but those who *"accomplish much for the people and the nation."*

Particularly noteworthy is Ho Chi Minh's emphasis on the role of leadership and organizational structures in discovering and fostering talents. He sharply criticized manifestations of favoritism, parochialism, factionalism, and clique formation within cadre work. He warned: *"Because of narrow-mindedness, talents are not recognized, and one*

tries to monopolize all tasks. To hold on to everything inevitably leads to failure" (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 278). At the same time, he emphasized: *"With skillful leadership, small talents can become great talents; with poor leadership, great talents can be reduced to nothing"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 320). These insights are not only practical organizational experiences but also constitute methodological principles for modern cadre work: cultivating talents requires leaders who themselves know how to recognize, trust, and empower talents.

3.2. Criteria and Methods for Talent Utilization in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

In Ho Chi Minh's ideological framework, the utilization of talents represents a matter of strategic significance. He not only affirmed the pivotal role of talents in the revolutionary cause but also established a comprehensive system of criteria, principles, and methods for employing talents, combining profound theoretical insights with rich practical implications. Specifically:

First, the evaluation of talents must be based on the harmonious combination of ability and virtue. Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized that morality is the "root" and "foundation" of both individuals and society. He wrote: *"Just as a river must have a source to have water, and a tree must have roots to thrive, a revolutionary must have ethics; without ethics, no matter how talented, one cannot lead the people"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 292). For Ho Chi Minh, talents cannot be sustainably cultivated without revolutionary ethics. Talented individuals must embody sincerity, humility, altruism, and a willingness to dedicate themselves to the interests of the people and the nation. This perspective reflects a profound synthesis between Vietnam's traditional moral values and Marxist-Leninist revolutionary ideals.

Second, practical competence must be regarded as a key measure of talent. Ho Chi Minh did not assess talents solely based on academic degrees. He asserted: *"A person's capability is not entirely innate but largely forged through work and practice"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 320). This perspective underscores the decisive role of practice in honing, testing, and proving one's abilities. An individual without high academic credentials but with effective problem-solving skills, sharp situational awareness, and close connections to the people still qualifies as true talent. Evaluating talents based on practical knowledge and performance lays a solid foundation for eliminating formalism and credentialism, issues that remain pressing in modern societies.

Third, talents must be assigned and utilized appropriately according to their capabilities and at the right time. Ho Chi Minh consistently advocated utilizing individuals according to their strengths without coercion or imposition. He stated: *"Those with great talents should be assigned great tasks; those with modest talents should be assigned suitable tasks. Assign individuals to tasks according to their capabilities"* (Minh, 2011, vol. 4, p. 43). Misassigning talents not only leads to a waste of human resources but also undermines organizational effectiveness and demoralizes the cadre team. A proper match between individual competencies and job positions is essential to fully unleash talents and achieve high organizational efficiency.

Fourth, the use of talents must adhere to the principles of objectivity and impartiality, eliminating manifestations of individualism. Ho Chi Minh strongly criticized favoritism,

parochialism, and factionalism. He warned: "*Favoring relatives, acquaintances, or friends, believing them to be more reliable than outsiders; favoring flatterers while disliking upright individuals; favoring those with compatible temperaments while avoiding those with different temperaments... such attitudes inevitably ruin the Party's work*" (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 318). Cadre work must be grounded in objectivity and fairness. Otherwise, capable individuals will be marginalized, while the incompetent are promoted, leading to injustice and eroding public trust. Talent utilization must be rooted in ethical and legal foundations, rejecting all forms of group interests and opportunistic mindsets.

Fifth, a democratic, fair, and innovation - encouraging environment must be established to foster talent development. Ho Chi Minh emphasized the need to trust, support, and avoid jealousy or narrow-mindedness towards talented individuals. A healthy environment not only enables talents to fully realize their intellectual potential but also encourages innovation and risk-taking. In such an environment, talents feel respected, protected, and free from unhealthy competition or mistrust. This requires organizations to formulate reasonable incentive policies and to establish mechanisms for fair recognition, evaluation, and reward.

Sixth, leaders and managers must possess the insight, intellect, and organizational capacity to discover and deploy talents. Ho Chi Minh metaphorically stated: "*A skillful craftsman can use all types of wood — big or small, straight or curved — depending on the place and purpose*" (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 88). This metaphor reflects a profound organizational principle: leaders must recognize the potential of human resources and appropriately assign individuals to suitable positions. Competent and visionary leadership can inspire and develop talents, aligning them with the organization's common objectives. Conversely, incompetent leadership that misuses personnel for personal gain stifles talent and inflicts long-term damage on the administrative apparatus.

Seventh, the discovery and nurturing of talents must be conducted systematically and strategically. Ho Chi Minh asserted: "*With good cadres, anything can be accomplished. The success or failure of all undertakings depends on the quality of cadres*" (Minh, 2011, vol. 5, p. 280). Building a pool of talented individuals must not rely on chance or temporary needs but must be strategically planned. This includes open and scientific processes of planning, training, rotation, testing, and appointment, aligned with the evolving developmental needs of the country. It is a regular, long-term task that must be directly overseen by Party and government organizations at all levels.

Thus, Ho Chi Minh's thought on the criteria and methods for utilizing talents forms a coherent and comprehensive system, skillfully integrating political theory with the practical realities of human resource governance. The criteria he set forth are not shaped by superficial factors or organizational prejudices but are consistently centered on human beings — individuals endowed with intellect, morality, and a burning aspiration to serve the nation.

3.3. Theoretical and Practical Values of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Talents and Talent Utilization

3.3.1 Theoretical Values

Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and the utilization of talents was formed based on the inheritance of the national tradition of honoring intellectuals, the creative application of Marxism-Leninism, and the selective assimilation of global cultural achievements. It constitutes a systematically structured theoretical system that vividly reflects Ho Chi Minh's strategic vision regarding the central role of human beings in the revolutionary cause and national development. His thought does not merely rest at the level of theoretical awareness but is crystallized into a system of viewpoints with guiding significance for cadre work and long-term human resource development policies.

One of the core elements of Ho Chi Minh's thought is his conception of talent. According to him, talents are not limited by social status, background, or Party membership. Anyone possessing intellect, virtue, and the capacity to contribute can become a precious resource for the nation. This approach embodies a profound democratic and humanistic vision, using actual service to the nation as the principal criterion of evaluation, rather than formal titles or political backgrounds. Through this perspective, Ho Chi Minh expanded the notion of talent from an elite category to a dynamic entity closely tied to the developmental needs of the nation throughout various historical stages.

Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents is inseparable from issues of morality and revolutionary character. He emphasized the dialectical relationship between talent and ethics, asserting that morality constitutes the fundamental foundation that ensures talents are developed in the right direction and in a sustainable manner. This viewpoint helped shape a theoretical standard for the revolutionary cadre's personality, wherein professional competence must be inseparably linked with a spirit of service and political responsibility. The integration of "*virtue*," "*vision*," and "*ability*" in the identification and utilization of talents represents not only an ethical standard but also a methodological principle in organizational science.

In addition to the conceptual content and evaluative standards, Ho Chi Minh particularly emphasized the method of employing talents. He highlighted the importance of "*skillful selection, skillful allocation, and skillful utilization*," considering it a scientific process in human resource organization. He did not perceive the use of personnel as an emotional matter but as an art that combines organizational rationality with political acumen. Properly placing the right people in the right positions at the right time was, for Ho Chi Minh, a decisive factor in enabling talents to maximize their contributions to the revolutionary cause.

A distinctive feature of Ho Chi Minh's thought lies in the close relationship between leadership quality and the effectiveness of talent utilization. He clearly identified the critical role of leadership in fostering a democratic and impartial environment, combating individualism, and overcoming parochialism and factionalism—factors that often diminish the ability to discover and use talents. Ho Chi

Minh sharply criticized the abuse of power in cadre work, viewing it as a major cause for the dissipation of the nation's human resource potential.

From these aspects, it is evident that Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and talent utilization not only forms a component of the theoretical system concerning cadre work but also serves as a guiding compass for the strategy of human development in Vietnam throughout the revolutionary process. It provides a durable theoretical foundation that can be flexibly applied in the contemporary context to build a contingent of cadres with sufficient virtue, capability, and prestige, meeting the demands of sustainable national development in the new era—the era of Vietnam's national resurgence.

3.3.2 Practical Values

Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and the utilization of talents have been demonstrated through tangible effectiveness across various stages of Vietnam's national development. As early as the first years following the August Revolution of 1945, Ho Chi Minh proactively invited intellectuals, experts, lawyers, engineers, and physicians — both domestically and abroad, irrespective of political affiliation or past activities — to participate in the task of national reconstruction. Figures such as Tran Dai Nghia, Phan Anh, Bui Bang Doan, and Nguyen Van Huyen stand as concrete examples of Ho Chi Minh's comprehensive, open, and effective policy of talent attraction and utilization, which he personally and directly implemented.

Throughout the course of Vietnam's revolutionary development, Ho Chi Minh's thought on talent utilization has continued to be inherited and institutionalized through the Party's various policies and directives. From the Resolution of the 3rd Plenum of the 8th Central Committee in 1997 to the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam, the development of high-quality human resources has consistently been identified as a strategic priority, aimed at building a cadre contingent capable of meeting the demands of international integration, modernization, and economic model transformation. The clear emphasis on developing and utilizing talents regardless of Party membership or domestic or overseas background reflects the enduring imprint of Ho Chi Minh's thought in shaping Vietnam's national development strategy.

Contemporary practice shows that numerous policies have been implemented in line with the spirit of Ho Chi Minh's thought. Mechanisms such as the public recruitment of civil servants through competitive examinations, preferential policies for experts and intellectuals, programs to attract outstanding graduates into public service, policies for developing young talents, and incentives for overseas Vietnamese to return and contribute are concrete manifestations of the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought to modern human resource policies. These measures not only demonstrate the inheritance of Ho Chi Minh's ideas but also affirm their feasibility, effectiveness, and practical value when institutionalized consistently.

Particularly in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and profound digital transformation, the demand for a highly skilled workforce capable of adapting to new technologies and integrating globally has become more urgent than ever. The

principles advocated by Ho Chi Minh — such as employing the right people, evaluating based on practical competencies, creating a democratic environment, and ensuring fairness and transparency in personnel organization — are increasingly becoming benchmarks of modern governance. This affirms that Ho Chi Minh's thought transcends historical limitations and continues to hold guiding and practical relevance in contemporary conditions.

In conclusion, Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents does not merely remain at the level of theoretical declarations; it has consistently proven its value through its concrete application within Vietnam's political and administrative system. The application of his thought into institutional policies has made and continues to make significant contributions to enhancing the effectiveness of national governance, developing human capital, and strengthening the foundation for the country's sustainable development in the 21st century.

4. Conclusion

The thought on talents and the utilization of talents constitutes an important component of Ho Chi Minh's ideological system, reflecting his profound and strategic vision regarding the central role of human beings in the revolutionary cause and national development. In Ho Chi Minh's perspective, talents are a valuable resource that directly influences the prosperity or decline of the nation. He consistently emphasized that moral integrity must accompany professional competence. According to his viewpoint, talent cannot be separated from ethical standards and a sense of responsibility toward the community. The evaluation of talents is not based on academic degrees or social status but on the practical effectiveness of one's contributions. This represents a significant development in his cadre-related thinking, aiming at building a contingent of personnel who embody *virtue, vision, and ability*.

In practice, Ho Chi Minh effectively applied this thought by proactively inviting and utilizing many highly qualified intellectuals within the State apparatus, regardless of their origins or past affiliations. Today, Ho Chi Minh's thought on talents and their utilization continues to be creatively applied within the national human resource development strategy, especially in the context of transforming growth models, deepening international integration, and advancing digital transformation. His thought remains a solid theoretical foundation for the ongoing efforts to build a qualified cadre and talent pool capable of driving Vietnam's sustainable national development in the new era.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

About the Author

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