



YOUTH EDUCATION AND ORIENTATION TOWARD HO CHI MINH'S IDEOLOGY IN THE CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT

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Abstract:

During his time, Former President Ho Chi Minh had consistently emphasized the central role, position, and competence of the young generation in realizing the Party and the people's revolutionary path. He believed, *"The youth are the future owners of the home country. Indeed, the vitality of the home country, whether it is prosperous or wilting, depends largely on the youth."* Before passing, his words had become the guiding principle for leaders of the Communist Party of Vietnam, *"Nurturing future revolutionary generations is of utmost importance and necessity."* Especially, given that the functioning of the current market economy has revealed its multiple drawbacks, it is salient to educate and orient the youth following Ho Chi Minh's ideology to produce a young generation that is moral in ethics and efficient in labour.

Keywords: youth, Ho Chi Minh's ideology

1. Introduction

During his time, Ho Chi Minh always believed that the youth is the country's foundational and primary force, the nation's future, and every family's happiness. The youth is a dynamic, creative, and vigorous force, that possesses noble wills and is able to overtake and accomplish satisfactorily the formidable missions assigned by the needs of the revolutionary process. Orienting the youth toward Ho Chi Minh's ideology is the nurturing of ethics, way of life, and intellect in the young generation; applying the educational content and methods that aim to assist them in constructing new ethical qualities and way of life that can adapt to the requirements of the revolution. In this stage of the revolution, the prescription of Ho Chi Minh's ideology for this all-round education of the youth's ethics, way of life, intellect, and physics plays a decisive role in generating

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the mighty force to propel the revolutionizing, industrializing, and modernizing processes of the country.

2. Research Results

2.1. Content of youth orientation toward Ho Chi Minh's ideology

2.1.1 Nurturing revolutionary ethics

a. Nurturing patriotism and national pride

Regarding the nurturing of revolutionary ethical qualities for the young generation, Ho Chi Minh was primarily concerned about the method through which the youth could be educated about revolutionary ethics: *"Distinguish what is right from what is wrong. Hold one's ground. Loyalty to the country. Filial piety to the people."* [4, p.480]. Loyalty and filial piety are timeless concepts that have persisted in the traditional Vietnamese and Eastern ethical ideology, which Ho Chi Minh utilized and incorporated into the new education of the young generation.

In moving toward socialist transformations, especially pushing forward the industrialization and modernization of the country, loyalty to the country and filial piety to the people are located in patriotic and nationalistic sentiments. Patriotism must be expressed through specific actions regarding the protection and construction of the state. First and foremost, patriotism means resilience in pursuing the goals of national independence and realizing socialist transformations; exclusive loyalty to the state, as well as the people and the Party's interests; solidarity, anti-fragmentation, and anti-disruption in the country's renovation. Patriotism is first entangled with the love for one's family and hometown, and their readiness to devote wholeheartedly to their Fatherland and the people. Moreover, patriotism is also nested in one's self-reliant mentality and intolerance of poverty and backwardness, expressed in their eagerness to labour, study, and contribute to the country's renovation process.

b. Nurturing empathy for humanity

To construct revolutionary ethics is also to instill empathy for humanity in the youth. According to Ho Chi Minh, to empathize with humans is, firstly, to appreciate their inner qualities, to go above and beyond in enhancing their abilities, and to educate them so that the good in them can bloom like flowers do in spring and the bad can gradually vanish. Empathizing and sympathizing are not synonymous with covering up one's mistakes, but instead helping them to redress their wrongdoings. Revolutionary ethics come in the form of actions. Therefore, empathizing with humanity must not stop at dogma but must be expressed in specific actions, for example, fulfilling humans' basic needs, firmly fighting any actions that insult and affront one's dignity; to strive for national independence, freedom, and the happiness of the people. Participation in voluntary work or blood donation is among the commons. This empathy is not restricted by national boundaries but extended to all humanity.

2.1.2. Constructing way of life

a. Appreciating labour, living with modesty, honesty, and bravery

The youth is the primary labour force of society. Whether a society develops depends on the youth's attitude toward labour. From this recognition, Ho Chi Minh paid special attention to nurturing a sense of appreciation and willingness to labour in the youth. For the youth to learn to appreciate labour, it is of utmost importance to raise awareness regarding one's labouring duty with the country. He taught: "*Labour is our sacred duty, our source of life, and our cause of happiness*" [6, p. 313]. To appreciate labour, the youth must appreciate the fruits of labour; protect public commodities, spend appropriately, avoid wasteful luxury; must zealously emulate production and saving; must maintain labour discipline; must labour with schemes, and prioritize practicality and efficiency.

Appreciating labour in Ho Chi Minh's ideology is also a specific expression of revolutionary ethics, of "*loyalty to the country*" and "*filial piety to the people*". In order to practice loyalty to the country and filial piety to the people, the youth must actively engage in productive labour, put effort into cultivating themselves, and contribute to strengthening the country and enriching the people. Without actions, verbal expressions of loyalty to the country and the people remain cheap talk. Appreciating labour is the beauty of the new people and the new way of life.

Besides appreciating labour, the youth must practice a modest, honest, and brave way of life. According to Ho Chi Minh, modesty is the way of life of the new generation. Living modestly means "*living and dressing neatly, modestly, and appropriately, avoiding unnecessary, extravagance, and flamboyance*" [3, p. 99]. This means living reasonably, moderately, hygienically, with few materialistic desires, and with consideration for context.

b. Living with ideals, will, and progressive spirit

One must live with aspirations and ideals. If humans do not have ideals they aspire to realize or concerns they need to address, the complacency of their minds will turn them into unliving bodies that only know indulgence [1, p. 199]. Ideals are the noblest goals that people aim for and attempt to realize. Every individual has their own ideals to pursue. However, one's ideals must align with the common goals of the class, the nation, and humanity. Ho Chi Minh often reminded the youth to live with ideals and aspirations. Identifying one's ideals is hard, realizing those ideals is even more challenging. The realization of one's ideals and goals are brimmed with obstacles and burdens, demanding that one must be strong-willed and resilient enough to overcome any challenges. Therefore, the youth must practice persistence, resilience, patience, and willingness. To maximize one's ability and potential, the youth must have a progressive attitude and a willingness to learn. Learn anywhere, anytime, from anyone. One must learn with humility and consider learning a lifetime duty.

c. Building and maintaining genuine friendship and love

Genuine friendship and love is another expression of modesty, generosity, kindness, loyalty, and lenience that Ho Chi Minh aimed to orient the youth toward. Pure friendship and love mean truly caring for and genuinely assisting each other without personal interests and selfish, trivial calculations. To have pure friendship and love, Ho Chi Minh taught the youth to love and help each other like brothers by blood. Loving must start with respecting one's values, sincerely helping each other to overcome any hardships in life; being empathetic and generous with each other's mistakes; genuinely advising to help each other improve weaknesses; staying faithful, caring toward each other, and thoughtful in every action and word. Friendship is the foundation for long-lasting and genuine love.

2.1.3 Enhancing intellect

Stemming from the demand and request of the contemporary stage of the revolution, the enhancement of the youth's level of intellect, skill, and profession is of utmost importance. During his lifetime, Ho Chi Minh recommended that the youth must *“zealously attempt to study, enhance knowledge and understanding in politics, culture, and military science and technology to contribute even more for our Fatherland, for the nation”* [8, p. 505].

President Ho Chi Minh always cared about the practicality and effectiveness of what was learned. He emphasized that the core value of learning is enriching one's knowledge and applying that knowledge in practice. Learning without practical application is meaningless. However, many have lost sight of this core value, attempting to strive for unrealistic knowledge that has little use in reality. If knowledge is to be detached from practice, that knowledge is only an “ornament” for one to “flaunt”.

Nowadays, recent scientific and technological achievements have given rise to the interdisciplinary integration of multiple scientific fields, leading to changes in the professional characteristics of the labour force. The competition in times of intellectual culture demands that the youth must simultaneously possess a high level of development as well as skills and strategic thinking to lead the nation to victory not only on the battlefield but also in the market. Thus, it is vital that the young labour force must be educated, nurtured, and reoriented toward increasing both intelligence and practical skills to renew and enrich professional knowledge to suit new demands and new professions.

Our country's development is oriented toward industry - services - agriculture, which means that in youth orientation, the Party and the State always have to locate the goals of education in producing individuals with ethics and talent to satisfy the demands for national development. The content of this education focuses on: enhancing the youth's ability to apply science and technology in practice, with a priority on informational technology and other spearhead industries; constructing a sense of career orientation; building a young and dynamic cadre fluent in science and technology, increasing the ratio of young officials in administrative and managerial cadres.

It is possible to assert that the further the scientific and technological revolution progresses, the more important the role of the youth becomes. Having to face the challenges of the new scientific and technological era, the young generation has to capitalize on their knowledge and talent to raise the country's global status to a higher level. Educating the youth is the responsibility of the entire society and is not exclusive to any organization or individual. Only then would the education process bear great fruits.

2.1.4 Increasing physical capabilities

Ho Chi Minh always cared about enhancing individuals' physical capabilities, stating: *"Exercising and enhancing physical health are the duty of any patriot"*. Especially for the youth, Ho Chi Minh always advised keeping personal hygiene and exercising to improve physical health *"It is only by exercising and having good health that one is able to contribute persistently and resiliently in tasks that benefit the country and the nation"* [5, p. 264].

In the new age, there is a need to apply extensively Ho Chi Minh's ideology in building physical capacity for the youth, creating the best conditions, and having multiple methods and activities through which the youth can exercise and enhance physical their well-being. This must be considered equally important with other contents in orienting the youth to become people of the new age. The fundamental content includes:

- Raising the youth's awareness regarding health and hygiene in daily life, exercise to fence off diseases in the youth, primarily those that are caused by physical and nutritional conditions, and contagious and occupational diseases; stopping and preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS in the young generation.
- Launching movements that aim at encouraging exercising in offices and units, regularly organizing activities such as sports competitions and events for the youth.

Youth orientation in ethics, intellect, and ideals is overwhelmingly important, but without physical education, it is impossible to create an all-rounded and dynamic young generation.

2.2. Method of youth orientation toward Ho Chi Minh's ideology

2.2.1 Collaboration between family, school, and society

According to Ho Chi Minh, constructing the youth's ethics and way of life is a common responsibility of the family, the school, and society. In his congratulatory speech at the opening ceremony of Vietnam's University of the People, he emphasized: *"Universities, families, and youth unions must remain closely interlinked in educating and orienting the youth"* [4, p. 456].

Ho Chi Minh highly valued the role of the family, because the family is the environment in which people firstly and continuously receive education to construct and develop their inner qualities. Through families, the youth also receive moral values, a way of life, discipline, and social values. It is precisely the affection, role model, and

advice of family members that have provided youth orientation. By practicing satisfactorily their educational function, the family contributes to educating and creating good citizens for society.

Besides familial relationships, the youth also have social relationships, such as those with their teachers, friends, compatriots, comrades, etc. Through those relationships, the youth continue to receive education and orientation from the school and society. Thus, Ho Chi Minh demanded a collaboration between three institutions, namely the family, the school, and society, in youth education and orientation. Together with the family, the school and society must look after and create the most favourable conditions for the youth to develop in an all-rounded manner, encompassing intellect, ethics, physics, and aesthetics, and detect and timely correct deviant expressions in the youth's awareness and behaviour.

2.2.2 Utilizing the role of socio-political organizations

According to Ho Chi Minh, youth orientation must rely on the strength of organizations and of the collective. He propelled the inclusion of the youth into socio-political institutions, such as the Youth Union, the Student Association, the Women's Union, etc. It is through the activities of these organizations that the youth are educated and oriented. Ho Chi Minh highly acclaimed the role of the Youth Union in recruiting, educating, enlightening, and training the youth *"The Labour Youth Union must be an effective limb of the Party in organizing, educating, and orienting the youth to become soldiers who are absolutely loyal to the cause of national construction and defense"* [6, p. 21]. The content of education embraced by these Unions is political orientation and way of life for the youth. Through revolutionary movements and campaigns, Unions must attract the youth to actively engage in socio-political activities, help them gradually realize their revolutionary ideals, and avoid falling into hostile forces. Unions must organize collective entertainment activities such as cultural, artistic, and sports activities, etc. in order to simultaneously satisfy the youth's entertainment demands and orient them towards healthy and beneficial activities, shielding them from the negative impact of society.

The recruitment of the youth into organizations, movements, and collection activities is crucial, as Ho Chi Minh valued integrating the process of self-cultivation and self-training regarding the ethics of the youth. He routinely called for the youth to self-cultivate, especially in terms of ethics, revolutionary ideals, intellect, profession, mentality, and physical health. According to Ho Chi Minh, the strength of the youth lies in that they are zealous and have a voluntary spirit, but their weakness is that they often prioritize appearance with little regard for practicality. This is a common psychological characteristic in the youth, making their self-cultivation indispensable.

2.2.3 Creating favourable environment and conditions for the youth to cultivate and practice construction-prevention

According to Ho Chi Minh, *"Revolutionary ethics do not come from the sky. It is from struggling, from training resiliently daily that they are developed and consolidated. They are like*

gems that take grinding to shine bright and golds that take refining to shine clear" [5, p. 293]. In order to obtain moral ethics and a healthy way of life, the youth must have the courage to admit and resolutely resist their vices, and continue to study and cultivate revolutionary ethics restlessly. The process of constructing revolutionary ethics is challenging but with determination, patience, and training, success is attainable. He believed that youth education on ethics and way of life must also fuse construction with prevention. Construction means constructing and putting forward new standards and values that are progressive and suitable to the current socio-economic conditions. Prevention means preventing the resurgence of the bad and the evil that represent ethical remnants of the old way of life, which may give rise to new issues. Construction and prevention must go together, but construction must be prioritized.

In new ethical education, it is vital that the bad, the evil, and the unethical, which will proliferate in case cultivation is neglected, be battled. Society always develops progressively, leading to the changing of standards and social values. Through social relationships, each individual may learn the true value of life. On that basis, individuals practice self-reflection and self-correction to cohere with society. Therefore, construction and prevention in ethics is extremely complicated. It is a complex, strenuous, and long-lasting struggle, which takes place anytime, anywhere, in any organization and any individual. Construction must be coupled with prevention, in order to construct, one must prevent. The construction of new ethics must start with the education of inner qualities and ethical standards in the family, the school, and society, putting forward new standards and values that are progressive and appropriate to the current socio-economic conditions to encourage every individual to self-cultivate and enhance revolutionary ethics.

2.2.4 Constructing role models and complimenting good people and good behaviours

President Ho Chi Minh affirmed the critical role of constructing role models and setting examples in youth orientation. He believed that constructing and propagating role models is an effective method and a lever to encourage a sense of responsibility, helping the youth to maximize their potential and creativity in fulfilling their duties.

President Ho Chi Minh's procedure of propagating role models in movements is to popularize beneficial experiences and propagating methods in nationalistic movements: *"Gather ideas. Draw from experiences, summarize experiences, communicate, and popularize experiences. Ideas and experiences are the common good of the people. We must enrich and distribute them to no limits. First is to spread them to a unit, a factory, a village, etc. until they circulate widely in the army, the entire technological sector, and the entire state. Ideas and experiences are like small streams that pour into large rivers, and then to great seas. The failure to appreciate and circulate experiences is wasteful of the nation"* [4, p. 404].

According to Ho Chi Minh, youth education and orientation not only are framed in dry and ineffective propagating speeches but must come in creative and diverse forms. Complimenting good people and behaviours in the mass to set examples and construct role models is a method with high levels of relatability and persuasion. The basis that

allowed Ho Chi Minh to put forward such a method was his deep understanding of Eastern culture. He believed: “Generally speaking, nations from the Eastern civilization are affectionate, and to them, one living role model is more valuable than a hundred propaganda speeches combined” [2, p. 263]. Secondly, it is vital that the youth's psychological characteristics are taken into account. The youth is characterized by a desire to attain beauty and nobility, and they have the tendency to look up to and follow the steps of role models in society. This is the reason why Ho Chi Minh believed that education by compliment and imitation is the best way to construct new people and a new way of life.

3. Conclusion

The youth is a great force in society and the future and resourceful vitality of the country's development. In each historical period, the youth has always been the vanguard participating in completing the vital tasks assigned by the country and the people. In Ho Chi Minh's era, in light of nationalism and revolutionary heroism, the Vietnamese youth under the Youth Union's leadership made valuable achievements, contributing to the cause of the struggle for national liberation, construction, and defense.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

About the Author(s)

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