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HO CHI MINH'S THOUGHT ON PATRIOTISM - THEORETICAL BASIS FOR EDUCATING LIFE IDEALS FOR STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF POLITICAL EDUCATION, THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism constitutes a distinctive theoretical system, formed on the basis of inheriting the nation's patriotic tradition and creatively adopting Marxism-Leninism to the specific conditions of Vietnam. This article focuses on clarifying the nature, characteristics, and core content of Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism, thereby analyzing the significance of that theoretical system as a theoretical basis for educating life ideals for students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education. The article demonstrates that Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism not only provides rich content for life ideal education but also identifies the methods, pathways, and conditions for forming those ideals in a sustainable manner, particularly suited to the dual requirement characteristic of Political Education students: they must both develop solid patriotic ideals for themselves and possess the capacity to educate those ideals in future students in the midland and mountainous regions of northern Vietnam.

Keywords: Patriotism; Ho Chi Minh's thought; Life ideals; Pedagogical students; Faculty of Political Education

1 INTRODUCTION

Patriotism is one of the core values of the Vietnamese nation, inherited, elevated, and developed by President Ho Chi Minh into a complete theoretical system of profound scientific and revolutionary character. He affirmed: "Our people possess an ardent love for their country. That is a precious tradition of ours" [1], and asserted that genuine patriotism is not an abstract sentiment but must be transformed into concrete practical action in every domain of life. The Resolution of the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam continues to emphasize the goal of building Vietnamese people with unwavering revolutionary ideals, deep love for their country, and a strong national spirit, placing an urgent demand for the construction of a solid theoretical basis for the education of patriotic ideals for the younger generation in the current context of national renewal and international integration.

For Thai Nguyen University of Education, one of the seven national key pedagogical universities entrusted with the mission of training teachers for the northern midland and mountainous provinces, the issue of educating life ideals according to Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism carries particular strategic importance. The working locations of graduates are largely remote and mountainous areas inhabited by ethnic minority communities facing numerous socioeconomic difficulties, where hostile forces regularly exploit local characteristics to disseminate false arguments, incite separatist sentiments, and deny revolutionary values. In that context, teachers of political theory and Civic Education are not merely transmitters of knowledge but directly assume the mission of defending the Party's ideological foundation, preserving national unity, and nurturing patriotic ideals for the younger generation in strategically important localities. Thai Nguyen Province also holds a distinctive historical-geographical advantage with the ATK Dinh Hoa Revolutionary Base, where President Ho Chi Minh and the Party Central Committee lived and worked during the arduous years of the resistance war against French colonialism, creating uniquely favorable conditions for educating patriotic ideals not only through textbooks but also through direct and vivid historical experiences.

Students of the Faculty of Political Education bear a distinctive dual requirement: they must not only develop solid patriotic ideals for themselves but also possess the capacity to educate those ideals in students in specific localities. Although numerous research works have addressed Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism and the issue of educating life ideals for students, no work has focused specifically on clarifying that thought as the theoretical basis for educating life ideals for students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education. This article aims to address that theoretical gap.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

This article employs the analytical-synthetic method to systematize and clarify Ho Chi Minh's arguments on patriotism as presented in Ho Chi Minh's Complete Works and other classical texts; the logical-historical method to combine the study of the formation and development of that thought with an elucidation of its nature and significance under current conditions; and the comparative method to highlight the revolutionary and creative character of Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism relative to other patriotic conceptions.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The Nature and Characteristics of Patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

3.1.1 The Nature of Patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

Patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought does not represent a straightforward continuation of the nation's patriotic tradition but rather constitutes a revolutionary elevation grounded in the reception of Marxism-Leninism and the finest achievements of world culture. Before Ho Chi Minh, Vietnamese patriots, despite their intense patriotic spirit, had not found the correct path to national salvation because they lacked a scientific theoretical framework for guidance. Ho Chi Minh resolved that problem by elevating patriotism from the category of sentiment to the category of scientific thought and revolutionary action, from spontaneity to consciousness, and from the narrow scope of the ruling classes to the broad scope of the entire laboring people.

The first core dimension of the nature of patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought is its profound popular character. He clearly defined that genuine patriotism is patriotism linked to love for the laboring people, not patriotism in the manner of the ruling classes who invoke the nation's name to exploit the people. This argument establishes a clear boundary between genuine and false patriotism: one cannot claim to love the country while severing ties from the interests of the laboring people, nor can one invoke the name of patriotism to oppress or betray the people. That popular character gives Ho Chi Minh's patriotism a distinct class dimension and a qualitative difference from the narrow nationalism of the bourgeoisie.

The second core dimension is its thoroughgoing revolutionary character. Ho Chi Minh did not stop at the goal of national liberation but linked the patriotic ideal to the cause of building socialism, recognizing clearly that national independence without socialism would be an unstable independence in which the people remained untruly liberated. This constitutes a dialectical linkage between national independence and socialism, forming the thoroughgoing and internally consistent character of his entire thought system on patriotism.

3.1.2 The Characteristics of Patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's Thought

Stemming from the nature analyzed above, patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought possesses three prominent characteristics that distinguish it from other patriotic conceptions.

First, patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought is inseparably linked to proletarian internationalism. Ho Chi Minh did not oppose patriotism to the spirit of international solidarity but identified their dialectical unity: the liberation struggle of each nation is a component of the common liberation struggle of humanity, while international solidarity simultaneously constitutes an important source of strength for each nation's liberation struggle. This characteristic clearly distinguishes Ho Chi Minh's patriotism from narrow nationalism that only exalts its own nation while failing to perceive its connection to the common struggle of humanity.

Second, patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought is linked to the cause of the comprehensive liberation and development of human beings. The patriotic ideal does not merely stop at recovering national independence but aims at building a society in which every person lives in freedom, happiness, and comprehensive self-development. This characteristic gives Ho Chi Minh's patriotism a profound humanistic character and a scope that transcends the national framework, oriented toward universal human values.

Third, patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought has a high practical character, requiring expression through concrete action in every domain of life and not accepting patriotism expressed only through words or transient emotions. That practical characteristic carries important educational significance: it transforms patriotism from a distant ideal into daily practice, linked to every specific act in each person's life. For students of the Faculty of Political Education, studying diligently, developing pedagogical competencies, and living honestly and responsibly are all concrete manifestations of patriotism befitting the circumstances of a learner.

3.2 Content of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Patriotism in Orienting Life Ideals

From the nature and characteristics analyzed above, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism crystallizes into specific content capable of orienting life ideals for the younger generation in a practical and sustainable manner.

First, patriotism must be linked to the ideal of dedicated and unconditional service to the people. This is the most fundamental content governing Ho Chi Minh's entire thought system on patriotism. The spirit of serving the people is not a bestowing of favors or one-sided sacrifice but rather the genuine source of strength and meaning in life. For students of the Faculty of Political Education, this content is concretized into the requirement of diligent study and professional development to become truly useful teachers for future students, particularly in difficult localities where the spirit of dedicated service constitutes the prerequisite for sustaining long-term commitment to the profession.

Second, patriotism must be manifested through continuous creative study and labor in service of the nation's common cause. Ho Chi Minh affirmed: "Study in order to serve the collective, the class, the people, the Fatherland, and humanity" [2]. This conception clearly orients the purpose of study: not to obtain degrees or status, but to acquire the capacity to serve the country and the people. This is an important point of connection between patriotic ideals and professional ideals for pedagogical students: rigorous study, scientific research, and the development of excellent pedagogical competencies are not activities separate from patriotic ideals but are precisely the most appropriate form of expressing those ideals in the circumstances of the learner.

Third, patriotism must be linked to revolutionary ethics and an honest, incorruptible way of life. Ho Chi Minh emphasized: "Talent without virtue is useless." [3]. The unity of talent and virtue establishes a clear principle: patriotic ideals cannot be separated from ethical and personal ideals. This is the boundary distinguishing genuine from false patriotism and also a distinctive professional requirement for pedagogical students: a teacher who lacks honesty in study and in life will not have the moral authority to educate students in the virtue of honesty and the spirit of dedication [5].

Fourth, patriotism must be linked to firm political resolve and persistent revolutionary spirit. Ho Chi Minh clearly stated: "Revolutionary ethics does not fall from the sky. It develops and consolidates through daily struggle and persevering cultivation. Just as jade becomes more brilliant the more it is polished, gold becomes purer the more it is refined" [4]. This content demonstrates that patriotic ideals must be formed and consolidated through continuous cultivation and through practical trials demanding genuine choice and commitment. This requirement is particularly pressing for students of the Faculty of Political Education: after graduation, they will work in localities where firm political resolve is the prerequisite for fulfilling their professional mission.

Fifth, patriotism must be linked to an exemplary spirit and consistency between words and actions. Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized that consistency between words and actions constitutes the fundamental ethical requirement of a revolutionary cadre and the indispensable pedagogical principle of a teacher. A teacher can only nurture in students the values that they themselves genuinely believe in and genuinely live by. This content carries particular significance for students of the Faculty of Political Education: future teachers who will educate students about patriotism can only do so convincingly when they themselves truly live and work according to that spirit in all circumstances.

3.3 Significance of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Patriotism as a Theoretical Basis for Educating Life Ideals for Students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education

Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism holds distinctive and comprehensive significance as a theoretical basis for educating life ideals for students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education. That significance extends beyond merely providing educational content to encompassing the orientation of both method and the conditions necessary for life ideal education to achieve genuine effectiveness.

First, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism provides comprehensive, systematic, and practice-oriented content for life ideal education. This thought encompasses all dimensions of life ideals: political ideals, ethical and personal ideals, professional ideals, and social-relational ideals. That comprehensiveness creates consistency in life ideal education: every educational activity at the university can find its theoretical basis and direction in Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism, not limited to a few separate political theory courses but permeating the entire learning and living environment of the institution. This is particularly important because life ideal education is only effective when implemented consistently and continuously throughout the entire training process, not confined to certain designated class hours. This comprehensive educational orientation is broadly compatible with UNESCO's approach to global citizenship education, which integrates cognitive, socio-emotional, and behavioral dimensions of learning [6]. For Thai Nguyen University of Education specifically, that comprehensiveness carries a distinctive meaning: educating life ideals for students cannot be separated from preparing them with the capacity to educate patriotic ideals for students in the characteristic localities of the northern midland and mountainous regions, where teachers are required to possess comprehensive and consistent life ideals in all circumstances.

Second, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism identifies a theoretically convincing mechanism for connecting individual ideals with community ideals, addressing one of the greatest challenges of life ideal education in the contemporary context. The increasingly pronounced trend toward individualization in modern society raises a critical question: how can students come to feel that patriotic ideals are not an external imposition but an internal need arising from within? Ho Chi Minh's thought addresses this by identifying the dialectical unity between individual development and service to the community: when individuals orient their ideals toward serving the country and the people, they not only contribute to society but also find genuine meaning and lasting happiness for themselves. This is not an abstract argument but was demonstrated by Ho Chi Minh through his own life: a life wholly dedicated to the country and the people that simultaneously constituted the most meaningful life and left the most enduring spiritual legacy in the nation's history. This theoretical basis ensures that life ideal education does not fall into opposition between individual and social demands, while providing persuasive arguments for students to voluntarily embrace patriotic ideals rather than receiving them passively or superficially. From the perspective of self-determination theory, the internalization of social values is more sustainable when learners develop autonomous motivation rather than merely responding to external demands [7].

Third, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism provides a distinctive and irreplaceable theoretical basis for the dual requirement of students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education. This constitutes the core distinction between life ideal education for Political Education students and that for students of other disciplines. Political Education students must not only form patriotic ideals for themselves but also possess the capacity to educate those ideals in students in localities characterized by complex ethnic, cultural, and ideological dimensions. Ho Chi Minh's thought on exemplary conduct and the consistency between words and actions provides a solid theoretical basis for that dual requirement: only when students genuinely live according to patriotic ideals can they convey those ideals to their future students convincingly and authentically. This is not merely a moral requirement but a scientific pedagogical principle: the effectiveness of ideal education depends directly on the authenticity of the educator. For that reason, students of the Faculty of Political Education cannot be evaluated solely on the basis of academic results in theoretical courses but must be assessed through the consistency between theoretical understanding and practical behavior throughout the entire process of study and life at the university. This perspective is also consistent with social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of observational learning and behavioral modeling in the development of learners' attitudes and behaviors [8].

Fourth, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism identifies the method for forming sustainable life ideals, addressing one of the most important methodological issues in ideal education. His view on cultivating revolutionary ethics through persevering daily struggle in practice carries profound methodological significance: life ideals cannot be formed merely through theoretical lectures or superficial formal activities but must be developed through deep practical experiences and through situations demanding genuine choice and commitment. That principle provides clear direction for both the content and the method of life ideal education: it is necessary to organize substantive practical activities that place students in circumstances where their ideals must be expressed through real action. For Thai Nguyen University of Education, that principle suggests maximizing the distinctive historical-geographical advantage of the ATK Dinh Hoa Revolutionary Base in the work of educating life ideals for students.

Fifth, Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism links life ideals to the specific historical mission of each period and each work location, providing a theoretical basis for concretizing patriotic ideals into distinctive professional ideals suited to the specific conditions of Thai Nguyen University of Education. He did not define patriotic ideals in a rigid or immutable way but always linked them to the demands of each historical period and specific circumstances. That conception provides a theoretical basis for identifying the specific content of professional ideals for Political Education students under current conditions: readiness to work in difficult areas and to maintain long-term commitment to those localities; persistent dedication to the cause of educating the younger generation in resource-scarce environments; the capacity to defend the Party's ideological foundation against false arguments in strategically important locations; and the ability to educate the spirit of national unity among students from many different ethnic minority groups. These contents of professional ideals are not externally imposed but constitute the logical and necessary concretization of patriotic ideals in Ho Chi Minh's thought into the distinctive conditions of the future teachers trained at Thai Nguyen University of Education.

3.4 Some Theoretical Issues Arising from the Application of Ho Chi Minh's Thought on Patriotism to the Education of Life Ideals for Students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education

Alongside the great theoretical values analyzed above, the application of Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism to educating life ideals for students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education also raises several important theoretical issues requiring continued systematic and rigorous research.

First, the theoretical issue concerning the relationship between patriotic ideals and professional ideals linked to the distinctive work locations of students of the Faculty of Political Education, Thai Nguyen University of Education. Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism has a general and universal orienting character, whereas Political Education students need to be educated in patriotic ideals linked to the distinctive professional ideals of teachers of political theory and Civic Education in the northern midland and mountainous regions. This is an important distinctive feature: teachers of these subjects in multi-ethnic localities do not merely transmit knowledge but directly defend the Party's ideological foundation, counter false arguments that exploit ethnic cultural characteristics for subversive purposes, and cultivate the spirit of national unity among students from widely diverse cultural backgrounds. The theoretical issue that arises is: what mechanism is needed for integrating general patriotic ideals with these distinctive professional ideals, so that life ideal education remains closely and convincingly tied to the practical demands of the profession and the work location rather than degenerating into empty rhetoric? This constitutes an important theoretical gap that Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism has pointed toward but has not yet fully concretized for the specific conditions of teacher training in a multi-ethnic region in the contemporary period.

Second, the theoretical issue concerning the mechanism for transforming ideals from the cognitive dimension to ideals manifested through practical action under the current conditions of Political Education students. Practice shows that a considerable number of students possess good theoretical understanding of patriotic ideals while their practical behavioral manifestations remain insufficient, reflecting a significant gap between the two dimensions of the ideal. Ho Chi Minh identified the principle that ideals are formed only through persistent cultivation in practice, but the specific mechanism of that transformation under the current conditions of pedagogical students has new features that theory has not yet fully clarified. Students today receive information from many different sources and are subject to the influence of many different value systems, particularly from the digital environment and social media, which can destabilize ideals. Moreover, the pressure of specialized study and concern about post-graduation employment creates competition for the time and effort devoted to ideal cultivation. For Thai Nguyen University of Education, this issue has a distinctive dimension: students need to be well-prepared in terms of action ideals to be ready to overcome the challenges of their work environment after graduation, where the gap between ideals absorbed in the lecture hall and the harsh realities of remote localities may constitute the greatest test of a teacher's resolve and commitment. The theoretical issue that arises is the need to identify which forms of practical activity are most capable of transforming cognitive understanding of ideals into sustainable action ideals, appropriate to the psychological characteristics of the age group and the specific training conditions of the university. This issue can also be approached through social cognitive theory, which highlights the reciprocal relationships among personal factors, behavioral practices, and environmental influences in shaping human action [7].

Third, the theoretical issue concerning the role of self-awareness in forming sustainable life ideals and the mechanism for awakening students' intrinsic motivation to voluntarily receive and practice patriotic ideals. Ho Chi Minh's thought implies that ideals cannot be externally imposed but must arise from the enlightenment and voluntary commitment of each individual. This is a fundamental theoretical principle that simultaneously poses a significant challenge: under conditions in which many factors compete for students' attention and behavioral orientation, what specific conditions, mechanisms, and methods are needed for students to voluntarily embrace patriotic ideals arising from genuine internal enlightenment rather than external pressure? According to self-determination theory, educational environments that support learners' autonomy, competence, and relatedness can facilitate the internalization of values and the

development of self-determined motivation [6]. For Thai Nguyen University of Education, the answer to this theoretical issue may be found in part in the locality's distinctive historical-geographical advantage: when students directly set foot on the land of the ATK Dinh Hoa Revolutionary Base and hear firsthand accounts of the arduous life and resolute patriotic spirit of Ho Chi Minh and local people during the years of resistance, patriotic ideals will no longer remain an abstract concept but will become a genuine emotional experience more capable of enduringly influencing and guiding behavior than any theoretical lecture. However, the specific mechanism of the transformation from historical emotion to sustainable action ideals, from transient experience to long-term commitment, remains a theoretical issue requiring continued rigorous research in subsequent scholarly work.

4 CONCLUSION

Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism is a distinctive and comprehensive theoretical system, possessing scientific character when built on the foundation of Marxism-Leninism, revolutionary character when linking patriotism to the cause of liberating and developing the people, and high practical character in its constant demand that ideals be expressed through concrete action. This article has clarified the nature and characteristics of patriotism in Ho Chi Minh's thought, analyzed five core contents in orienting life ideals, identified five dimensions of theoretical significance as a basis for life ideal education, and determined three theoretical issues requiring continued research.

The distinctive value of this theoretical basis for Thai Nguyen University of Education lies in the following: Ho Chi Minh's thought on patriotism not only defines the content of the ideals to be educated but also identifies the method for forming those ideals in a sustainable manner and the prerequisite condition for effectively conveying them to students, namely the consistency between the teacher's words and actions. These two requirements constitute the distinctive character of life ideal education for pedagogical students as compared to students of other disciplines, and they are consistent with the university's mission of training political theory teachers with firm patriotic ideals, strong political resolve, and the capacity to cultivate those ideals in future students across the northern midland and mountainous regions. The research further demonstrates that Thai Nguyen University of Education possesses distinctive favorable conditions for fulfilling that mission, in which the historical-geographical advantage of the ATK Dinh Hoa Revolutionary Base and other revolutionary sites across Thai Nguyen Province constitutes a precious resource warranting more systematic and substantive exploitation in the work of educating life ideals for students.

STATEMENTS ON COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

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Statement of informed consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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