



HO CHI MINH THOUGHT ON LIFESTYLE EDUCATION FOR YOUTH AND ITS APPLICABLE VALUES FOR VIETNAMESE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TODAY

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Abstract:

Within the intellectual legacy of Ho Chi Minh, lifestyle education for young people constitutes a strategic component of his educational philosophy, reflecting his profound understanding of the decisive role of youth in the nation's future and the revolutionary cause. Ho Chi Minh maintained that educating young people should aim at cultivating well-rounded individuals by integrating revolutionary ideals, moral virtues, social responsibility, and a strong commitment to national development. Core values embedded in his thought on lifestyle education include patriotism; dedication to the Fatherland and the people; organizational discipline; the virtues of diligence, thrift, integrity, and righteousness; a spirit of self-directed learning; perseverance in overcoming difficulties; intellectual curiosity; respect for labor; and continuous self-improvement. In the context of the socialist-oriented market economy, international integration, and digital transformation, which are exerting profound influences on university students' perceptions, behaviors, and value systems, studying and applying Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education has become increasingly significant. It contributes to fostering a generation of Vietnamese university students equipped with firm political convictions, sound moral character, social responsibility, adaptability to contemporary challenges, and a strong aspiration to contribute to national development. This article analyzes the fundamental contents of Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education for young people and clarifies its practical significance for educating Vietnamese university students in the contemporary context.

Keywords: Ho Chi Minh Thought; lifestyle education; youth; Vietnamese university students; moral education

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1. Introduction

Young people have always occupied a pivotal position in the development of every nation. With their vitality, aspirations for contribution, and capacity to adapt to social change, they constitute an essential force shaping the country's future. In Vietnam, the Communist Party and the State consistently regard youth as the backbone of the nation, the future masters of the country, and the vanguard force in the cause of national construction and defense. Among different youth groups, university students represent a highly educated segment receiving formal tertiary education and are expected to become a high-quality workforce serving national development. Therefore, alongside the provision of professional knowledge, lifestyle education for university students constitutes a strategic task aimed at cultivating individuals who possess both professional competence and moral integrity, together with a strong sense of social responsibility.

In today's context, globalization, international integration, and the rapid advancement of science and technology—particularly digital technologies and artificial intelligence—have brought about profound transformations in social life as well as in young people's perceptions, behaviors, and value systems. University students now have unprecedented opportunities to access diverse sources of knowledge, engage with different cultural values, and pursue personal development. Nevertheless, these positive developments are accompanied by considerable challenges to the formation of students' lifestyles. A proportion of students exhibit signs of pragmatism, place excessive emphasis on personal interests, demonstrate limited responsibility toward the community, experience declining motivation for self-improvement, or become vulnerable to misinformation in cyberspace. These challenges highlight the urgent need to strengthen lifestyle education in order to foster healthy personalities, resilience, and responsibility toward oneself, one's family, and society.

Numerous studies have examined Ho Chi Minh Thought on youth, primarily focusing on revolutionary ideal education, revolutionary morality, or the role of youth in the revolutionary cause. However, most existing studies address Ho Chi Minh's views on youth from a general perspective and have yet to systematically analyze the specific contents of lifestyle education or closely connect them with the practical requirements of educating university students in the context of digital transformation. Addressing this research gap, the present study systematizes Ho Chi Minh's perspectives on the role and content of lifestyle education for young people and further examines their practical implications for Vietnamese university students today.

Throughout his revolutionary career, Ho Chi Minh consistently regarded young people as one of the most important subjects of education and development. He viewed youth not only as successors to the revolutionary cause but also as the decisive force shaping the nation's future. Consequently, he considered youth education a strategic mission for national development. As he emphasized, *"Young people are the future masters of the country. Indeed, whether the nation prospers or declines, becomes strong or weak, depends*

largely on its youth" (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 216). Based on this perspective, Ho Chi Minh developed a comprehensive educational philosophy encompassing revolutionary ideals, moral cultivation, and lifestyle education, with the objective of nurturing individuals possessing firm political commitment, exemplary moral character, a strong sense of responsibility, and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to society. In his view, education should ensure the unity of learning and self-cultivation, virtue and competence, as well as knowledge and action, thereby fostering the comprehensive development of young people's character.

A distinctive feature of Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education lies in its close integration of the objective of cultivating the new socialist individual with the comprehensive development of each person. He expected young people to possess lofty ideals, aspirations, a spirit of lifelong learning, perseverance in overcoming difficulties, and the ability to place the interests of the nation and the people above personal interests. At the same time, Ho Chi Minh emphasized the educational value of practical experience, productive labor, and social movements as indispensable means of youth development. These principles have served as enduring guidelines for educating successive generations of Vietnamese youth throughout different historical periods.

Today, as Vietnam strives to develop high-quality human resources, promote comprehensive human development, and enter a new stage of national development, studying and applying Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education for young people carries profound theoretical and practical significance. It provides an important foundation for orienting educational activities in higher education institutions, encouraging students' self-learning and self-cultivation, and fostering a generation of Vietnamese university students characterized by firm political conviction, sound moral character, a cultured lifestyle, social responsibility, and a strong aspiration to contribute to a prosperous and happy nation. Accordingly, this article seeks to clarify the fundamental contents of Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education for young people and to analyze its practical significance for Vietnamese university students in the contemporary era.

2. Research Methods

To achieve the research objectives, this study employs a combination of qualitative research methods commonly used in the social sciences. The historical-logical method is applied to examine Ho Chi Minh's views on lifestyle education for young people within the historical process of their formation and development, closely associated with the practice of the Vietnamese revolution across different periods. Document analysis and synthesis are employed to identify and systematize Ho Chi Minh's principal arguments on the role and content of lifestyle education based on *Ho Chi Minh Complete Works* (National Political Publishing House, 2011). In addition, the comparative method is used to examine the relationship between Ho Chi Minh's educational thought and the contemporary lifestyle characteristics of Vietnamese university students, thereby

providing a basis for analyzing the practical applicability of his ideas. All quotations used in this article are drawn directly from the 2011 edition of *Ho Chi Minh Complete Works* (15 volumes), ensuring the authenticity and reliability of the research data.

3. Research Findings

3.1. Ho Chi Minh Thought on Lifestyle Education for Youth

3.1.1. Ho Chi Minh's Views on the Role of Lifestyle Education for Youth

First, lifestyle education contributes to personality formation and value orientation among young people. In Ho Chi Minh Thought, the primary role of lifestyle education is to cultivate young people's character and shape their value system. Ho Chi Minh regarded youth as a social group undergoing rapid physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. Although they are highly receptive to new ideas, they are also vulnerable to the negative influences of their social environment. Therefore, lifestyle education serves as an essential means of helping young people establish appropriate life goals and develop sound standards of conduct. He emphasized that *"In education and learning, equal attention should be paid to all aspects, including revolutionary morality, socialist consciousness, culture, technology, labor, and production"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 12, p. 647). According to Ho Chi Minh, character is not an innate quality but is gradually formed through education, self-education, and continuous practice in real life. Young people should constantly engage in self-reflection and self-improvement to become useful members of society. As he advised: *"The duty of young people is not to ask what the country has done for them, but rather to ask themselves what they have done for the country... How much have they sacrificed and striven for the nation's interests?"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 265).

Second, lifestyle education is essential for preparing young people to carry forward the revolutionary cause of the Party and the nation. Ho Chi Minh regarded lifestyle education as fundamental to preparing young people to become successors to the revolutionary cause initiated by the Communist Party and the Vietnamese people. He understood that revolution is a continuous historical process passed from one generation to the next; therefore, each generation must be equipped with the moral qualities, capabilities, and political determination necessary to preserve and further develop the achievements of previous generations. Ho Chi Minh stated: *"Young people are those who continue the revolutionary cause of the older generation, while at the same time guiding and educating the younger generation — the children who will become the youth of tomorrow"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 13, p. 298). This perspective indicates that young people are not merely participants in the revolutionary process but also the principal force ensuring its continuity. Such continuity, however, cannot occur spontaneously; it must be cultivated through long-term education, self-cultivation, and practical experience.

According to Ho Chi Minh, succession in the revolutionary cause is fundamentally the inheritance of revolutionary ideals and moral values. A generation possessing knowledge but lacking ideals and social responsibility would be incapable of undertaking the important tasks entrusted by the revolution. In his *Testament*, he stressed

that *"Fostering the revolutionary generation for the future is a matter of great importance and absolute necessity"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 15, p. 622), reflecting his strategic vision for youth development and the country's long-term future. For Ho Chi Minh, educating young people extends far beyond providing knowledge or vocational training; it also involves cultivating character, ideals, and lifestyle, thereby fostering a strong sense of voluntary dedication to the nation. As he reminded young people: *"The duty of young people is not to ask what the country has done for them, but to ask themselves what they have done for the country and how they can contribute even more to its benefit"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 265).

Third, lifestyle education contributes to building the new socialist person. In Ho Chi Minh Thought, building socialism fundamentally requires building socialist people. Consequently, lifestyle education plays a vital role in cultivating the qualities expected of the new socialist individual. Ho Chi Minh affirmed that *"To build socialism, it is first necessary to have socialist people"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 13, p. 66). Through lifestyle education, young people are encouraged to develop a strong work ethic, collective consciousness, civic responsibility, simplicity, honesty, and a spirit of serving the people. Ho Chi Minh consistently argued that education should promote comprehensive human development by integrating virtue with competence, revolutionary commitment with professional expertise, while giving balanced attention to morality, culture, science and technology, labor, and production. This demonstrates that lifestyle education constitutes an indispensable component of the broader strategy for cultivating the new socialist person.

Fourth, lifestyle education motivates young people to dedicate themselves to the Fatherland and the people. Another important role of lifestyle education in Ho Chi Minh Thought is its capacity to inspire and strengthen young people's commitment to serving the nation. Ho Chi Minh urged young people to *"take the lead and set exemplary standards in patriotic emulation movements"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 13, p. 90), while consistently emphasizing the pioneering spirit embodied in the slogan *"Wherever the nation needs, young people are ready to go"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 13, p. 70). According to him, the vitality and potential of youth can only be fully realized when guided by lofty ideals and a sound lifestyle. He emphasized that studying should be regarded as a responsibility toward the nation's future because *"the primary duty of students is to study"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 9, p. 178). At the same time, young people should *"study culture, politics, and professional skills"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 464) in order to acquire the knowledge and competence necessary to serve the Fatherland. Therefore, lifestyle education not only enables young people to live according to appropriate moral standards but also generates a powerful inner motivation for them to devote their knowledge, talents, and enthusiasm to national development and public service.

These four dimensions demonstrate that, in Ho Chi Minh's conception, lifestyle education is not a supplementary educational activity but rather a fundamental pillar determining the comprehensive development of young people. This raises the

subsequent question of which specific educational contents should be emphasized in order to fully realize these essential functions of lifestyle education.

3.1.2. Ho Chi Minh's Views on the Content of Lifestyle Education for Youth

The five core components of lifestyle education—patriotism and revolutionary ideals, revolutionary morality, the spirit of self-learning, the spirit of labor, and organizational discipline—are not isolated elements but are dialectically interconnected, forming a coherent and unified whole. Patriotism serves as the foundation for value orientation; revolutionary morality constitutes the basis of character formation; self-learning and labor provide the means of realizing revolutionary ideals; while discipline and continuous self-cultivation ensure that these qualities are sustained and developed through practical life.

First, educating patriotism, revolutionary ideals, and the aspiration to contribute to the nation. In Ho Chi Minh Thought, fostering patriotism constitutes the cornerstone of lifestyle education, laying the foundation for the development of a revolutionary way of life, noble ideals, and a strong aspiration to contribute to society. Ho Chi Minh affirmed: *"Our people possess an ardent patriotism. It is our precious tradition... Whenever the Fatherland is invaded, this spirit surges powerfully, forming an immense wave that sweeps away every danger and hardship and overwhelms all traitors and aggressors"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 7, p. 38). For young people, patriotic education should first awaken national pride, strengthen their sense of responsibility toward the Fatherland, and inspire their willingness to dedicate themselves to the nation. He emphasized that it was necessary *"to explain, propagate, organize, and lead so that everyone's patriotism is translated into concrete patriotic actions"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, pp. 38–39).

Alongside patriotic education, Ho Chi Minh attached great importance to educating young people in revolutionary ideals by encouraging them to align their personal aspirations with the cause of national construction and defense. Reflecting on his own revolutionary journey, he stated: *"It was patriotism that led me to follow Lenin"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 15, p. 588). At the same time, he cautioned that patriotism should be cultivated as genuine patriotism rather than degenerate into narrow or extreme nationalism. As he explained, *"Chauvinism means loving one's own country while despising other countries"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 120). These views provide an important theoretical foundation for fostering a generation of Vietnamese youth possessing firm political convictions, sound revolutionary ideals, and a strong commitment to serving the Fatherland and the people in the context of international integration.

Second, educating revolutionary morality and the virtues of diligence, thrift, integrity, and righteousness. Together with patriotism and revolutionary ideals, Ho Chi Minh regarded revolutionary morality and the cultivation of the virtues of diligence, thrift, integrity, and righteousness as the moral foundation of young people's character and the source of their resilience against temptation. He wrote: *"Heaven has four seasons: spring, summer, autumn, and winter. The earth has four directions: east, west, south, and north. Human beings possess four virtues: diligence, thrift, integrity, and righteousness. Without one*

season, heaven would be incomplete; without one direction, the earth would be incomplete; without one virtue, a person cannot become a true human being” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 117).

According to Ho Chi Minh, morality constitutes the "root" of a revolutionary. Young people should cultivate diligence in learning and work, practice thrift in using time and public resources, maintain integrity by avoiding greed and personal gain, and uphold righteousness through honesty and fairness in both thought and action. On this basis, he urged young people to resolutely combat individualism, materialism, hedonism, and the tendency to place personal interests above collective interests, regarding these as obstacles to moral development and personal growth. Revolutionary moral education, therefore, is not merely a matter of personal virtue but also an essential condition for enabling young people to maintain moral integrity and fulfill their responsibilities as successors to the revolutionary cause.

Third, educating the spirit of self-learning, the pursuit of progress, and perseverance in overcoming difficulties. Ho Chi Minh also placed particular emphasis on fostering self-directed learning, continuous self-improvement, and perseverance, considering them indispensable for lifelong personal development. He reminded young people that *“Learning is a lifelong undertaking”* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 134), emphasizing that knowledge cannot be acquired automatically but must result from persistent study, combining formal education with learning through work and everyday life. Young people should cultivate intellectual curiosity, maintain humility, strive continuously for improvement, and never become complacent with their achievements. At the same time, Ho Chi Minh consistently praised perseverance and determination in overcoming hardships and challenges as indispensable qualities of the younger generation engaged in national construction and defense. Consequently, educating young people to embrace lifelong learning and resilience equips them with the capacity for continuous self-development and enables them to adapt proactively to the rapid changes of contemporary society.

Fourth, educating the spirit of labor and social responsibility. Cultivating a respect for labor and a strong sense of social responsibility also occupies an important place in Ho Chi Minh's conception of lifestyle education. He affirmed that *“Labor is a sacred obligation, the source of life, and the source of happiness for every individual as well as for future generations”* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 15, p. 678). Labor is also a source of honor and a means through which individuals realize their own value. Therefore, young people should respect all forms of labor without discriminating between manual and intellectual work, while appreciating the achievements created by others.

Ho Chi Minh further emphasized that learning should always be integrated with productive labor and that theory should be closely connected with practice. Young people should apply their knowledge and abilities to serving the common interests of the community and the nation. Accordingly, educating a positive attitude toward labor not only fosters professional responsibility but also nurtures social responsibility and a willingness to contribute to national development.

Fifth, educating organizational discipline and the spirit of continuous self-cultivation. Finally, Ho Chi Minh attached particular importance to fostering organizational discipline and the habit of continuous self-cultivation among young people, regarding these as essential conditions for ensuring consistency between knowledge and action within collective life. He expected young people to respect organizational principles, strictly observe common regulations, and place collective interests above personal interests whenever necessary.

At the same time, Ho Chi Minh emphasized self-criticism and criticism as indispensable methods for personal improvement. He advised: *"Every cadre and Party member should examine themselves, practice self-criticism, and correct their shortcomings every day, just as they wash their face every day"* (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, Vol. 5, p. 279). Furthermore, he repeatedly reminded young people that moral cultivation and lifestyle improvement should continue throughout life because revolutionary morality can only be strengthened through constant practice in work and daily life. Consequently, organizational discipline and continuous self-cultivation form the foundation for developing a serious work ethic, self-discipline, and the lifelong pursuit of self-improvement.

In summary, Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education for youth constitutes a comprehensive and coherent theoretical system that integrates value orientation with concrete educational content. It combines profound theoretical significance with enduring practical relevance. This theoretical framework provides an important foundation for examining how Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy can be applied to lifestyle education for Vietnamese university students in the context of international integration and digital transformation today.

3.2. Practical Implications of Ho Chi Minh Thought on Lifestyle Education for Vietnamese University Students Today

3.2.1. Fostering Life Ideals and Political Conviction among University Students

Applying Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education to contemporary educational practice requires, first and foremost, strengthening university students' life ideals and political conviction. In the context of deepening international integration and accelerating digital transformation, students should be equipped with a sound political understanding of Vietnam's development path, the leadership role of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and the national goal of building an independent, democratic, and prosperous country. On this foundation, they can develop a strong aspiration to contribute to society by aligning their personal ambitions with the nation's long-term development.

At the same time, higher education institutions and youth organizations should strengthen students' ability to identify, critically evaluate, and refute false and misleading information in cyberspace. This will enable students to maintain firm political conviction and avoid being influenced by narratives that distort or undermine the ideological foundation of the Party.

3.2.2. Promoting a Cultured, Responsible, and Humane Lifestyle

Beyond strengthening political conviction, applying Ho Chi Minh Thought also requires cultivating a cultured, responsible, and humane lifestyle among university students. Students should be educated to develop a strong sense of responsibility toward their families, educational institutions, and society, while demonstrating empathy, solidarity, and respect for others instead of focusing solely on personal interests.

Given the rapid expansion of social media and digital communication, students should also develop a healthy digital culture characterized by responsible online behavior, critical information literacy, respect for truth, and respect for others when participating in cyberspace. Furthermore, greater emphasis should be placed on fostering respect for the law and adherence to social and ethical norms, thereby promoting disciplined, honest, and responsible conduct in both academic life and everyday activities.

3.2.3. Promoting Self-Learning, Innovation, and Career Development

Ho Chi Minh's emphasis on lifelong learning and perseverance continues to offer valuable guidance for enhancing university students' capacity for self-learning, innovation, and career development. In response to the demands of the knowledge economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, students should cultivate the habit of lifelong learning by proactively updating their knowledge and professional skills rather than relying solely on what is taught in formal education.

At the same time, students should actively adapt to the requirements of digital transformation in learning, research, and future professional practice by strengthening independent thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. On this basis, universities should encourage students to nurture aspirations for personal advancement, continuously strive for self-development, establish successful careers, and make meaningful contributions to national development.

3.2.4. Innovating Approaches to Lifestyle Education in Accordance with Ho Chi Minh Thought

To ensure the effective application of Ho Chi Minh Thought to lifestyle education, educational approaches should be comprehensively renewed so that they become more flexible, practical, and closely connected with students' real-life experiences.

First, universities should strengthen their role by systematically integrating education on ideals, morality, and lifestyle into political theory courses as well as extracurricular activities, thereby avoiding the separation of lifestyle education from professional training. Second, greater attention should be given to the role of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union and the Vietnam Student Association in organizing revolutionary movements, experiential learning activities, volunteer programs, and community service initiatives that provide authentic environments for students to cultivate positive values and behaviors.

Furthermore, closer cooperation among families, educational institutions, and society should be promoted in order to ensure consistency in value orientation and

establish a comprehensive, coordinated, and sustainable educational environment for students' moral and lifestyle development.

4. Conclusion

Ho Chi Minh Thought on lifestyle education for youth represents a valuable theoretical and practical legacy that reflects the harmonious integration of the objective of cultivating the new socialist individual with the comprehensive development of each person. By examining the role of lifestyle education in personality formation, preparing successors to the revolutionary cause, cultivating the new socialist person, and inspiring dedication to the nation, together with its core educational contents—including patriotism, revolutionary morality, lifelong learning, respect for labor, and organizational discipline—this study has clarified the systematic and comprehensive nature of Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy.

In light of the contemporary challenges identified in the introduction, including the growing tendency among some university students toward pragmatism, declining motivation for self-improvement, and vulnerability to negative influences in cyberspace, applying Ho Chi Minh Thought to lifestyle education has become increasingly important. Such application should encompass strengthening students' life ideals and political conviction, fostering a cultured, responsible, and humane lifestyle, promoting lifelong learning and innovation, and renewing educational approaches in ways that are closely connected with social practice.

Accordingly, educational institutions should continue to strengthen the teaching of revolutionary ideals, moral values, and lifestyle education while promoting close collaboration among families, universities, and society. These efforts will contribute to cultivating a generation of Vietnamese university students characterized by firm political conviction, exemplary moral character, social responsibility, and a strong aspiration to contribute to a prosperous, happy, and sustainably developed Vietnam in the new era.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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