

BUI HUY DU

Ph.D., Basic Faculty, Mekong University, Vietnam

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-9997-114X>

Email: buihuydu2018@gmail.com

Abstract: *In the context of globalization and the profound transformations taking place in global education in the 21st century, establishing a humanistic, liberal, creative, and sustainable educational philosophy has become an urgent imperative. Modern educational philosophy not only reaffirms the central role of the learner but also emphasizes the development of adaptability, critical thinking, and social responsibility in each individual in an ever-changing world. Within this intellectual current, Ho Chi Minh's educational thought with its profound views on the role of education, the goal of training well-rounded individuals, the close linkage between education and practical life, and the ideal of human liberation continues to demonstrate enduring relevance and vitality. This paper focuses on analyzing the convergence between Ho Chi Minh's educational thought and 21st-century educational philosophy, clarifying their similarities in essence, goals, and educational methods, while also assessing the significance of this convergence for the fundamental and comprehensive renewal of Vietnam's current education system.*

Keywords: *Ho Chi Minh's educational thought. 21st-century educational philosophy. humanistic education. lifelong learning. moral education*

Resumo: *No contexto da globalização e das profundas transformações que ocorrem na educação global no século XXI, estabelecer uma filosofia educacional humanística, liberal, criativa e sustentável tornou-se um imperativo urgente. A filosofia educacional moderna não apenas reafirma o papel central do aluno, mas também enfatiza o desenvolvimento da adaptabilidade, do pensamento crítico e da responsabilidade social em cada indivíduo em um mundo em constante mudança. Dentro dessa corrente intelectual, o pensamento educacional de Ho Chi Minh, com suas profundas visões sobre o papel da educação, o objetivo de formar indivíduos completos, a estreita ligação entre educação e vida prática e o ideal de libertação humana, continua a demonstrar relevância e vitalidade duradouras. Este artigo se concentra na análise da convergência entre o pensamento educacional de Ho Chi Minh e a filosofia educacional do século XXI, esclarecendo suas semelhanças em essência, objetivos e métodos educacionais, ao mesmo tempo em que avalia a importância dessa convergência para a renovação fundamental e abrangente do atual sistema educacional do Vietnã.*

Palavras-chave: *Pensamento educacional de Ho Chi Minh. Filosofia educacional do século XXI. Educação humanística. aprendizagem ao longo da vida. educação moral*

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in the development of every nation, particularly in the context of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which are profoundly reshaping all aspects of social life. In the 21st century, educational philosophy emphasizes the holistic development of individuals, highlighting creativity, critical thinking, collaborative capacity, and global civic responsibility. Nevertheless, the construction of a sustainable educational model that is responsive to the cultural and social specificities of each country requires not only innovation but also the inheritance and transformation of traditional ideological values.

Within the trajectory of Vietnamese intellectual history, Ho Chi Minh stands out not only as a prominent revolutionary leader but also as a profound thinker on education. His views on the role of education, the objective of human development, and the connection between education and social progress continue to hold significant relevance and offer valuable orientation for contemporary educational discourse. In particular, when situated in dialogue with 21st-century educational philosophy, Ho Chi Minh's educational thought reveals notable convergences from the recognition of the human being as the central subject of the educational process to the emphasis on pedagogical renewal and lifelong learning.

This article aims to examine the foundational principles of Ho Chi Minh's educational thought about the key dimensions of 21st-century educational philosophy. It identifies shared values, goals, and methodological approaches, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of the compatibility between traditional Vietnamese educational thought and modern global educational trends. By doing so, the study also explores the applicability of Ho Chi Minh's educational vision to current educational reform efforts, particularly in the context of developing countries such as Vietnam. Ultimately, the research seeks to offer theoretically grounded and practically relevant directions for Vietnam's ongoing educational renewal in the 21st century.

Literature Review

Research on Ho Chi Minh's educational thought has approached the topic from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including philosophy, the history of education, and political theory. Seminal contributions by Giau (1993), Bao (2010), and Hac (2018) underscore the pivotal role of education in national liberation, the holistic development of human beings, and the construction of a progressive society. Ho Chi Minh conceptualized education not merely as a means to eradicate illiteracy, but as a transformative force for social change and the cultivation of revolutionary ethics, advocating principles such as "learning to be human," "lifelong learning," and "learning in conjunction with practice." Notably, Hac (2018) elucidates the connection between education and personality development, highlighting Ho Chi Minh's emphasis on a liberal, egalitarian, and practice-oriented approach. Bao (2010) similarly argues that Ho Chi Minh laid the foundations for a modern Vietnamese educational philosophy through core principles such as "nationalism – science – the masses," which align with essential tenets of contemporary education.

The philosophy of 21st-century education has been profoundly shaped by globalization, the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the imperative of sustainable development. Key international frameworks, including those published by UNESCO (2015), the OECD (2020), and the World Economic Forum (2018), consistently stress the centrality of education in fostering comprehensive human development. These frameworks highlight competencies such as critical thinking, digital literacy, lifelong learning, and global civic responsibility.

Contemporary theorists such as Biesta (2006), Nussbaum (2010), Senge (2012), and Dewey (1916) have laid critical theoretical foundations for modern educational thought. Biesta (2006) emphasizes a paradigmatic shift from knowledge transmission to subjectification and democratic participation. Nussbaum's (2010) capabilities approach provides a normative basis for liberal education in a global context, advocating for the cultivation of critical reasoning and empathetic citizenship.

Although rooted in distinct historical and socio-cultural contexts, Ho Chi Minh's educational

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thought and 21st-century educational philosophy share key points of convergence: respect for human dignity, the emphasis on holistic human development, the integration of theory and practice, and the recognition of education as an instrument for building a just and sustainable society. Recent studies (e.g., Loc, 2021) have begun to highlight the relevance and referential value of Ho Chi Minh's thought for Vietnam's ongoing educational reform. However, systematic philosophical comparisons remain limited.

This study seeks to address this gap by systematically examining the convergences between these two educational paradigms: one emerging from a national revolutionary context, the other shaped by the dynamics of globalization and the digital knowledge economy. From this comparative perspective, the study aims to generate both theoretical insights and practical implications to inform Vietnam's contemporary educational reform efforts.

Methodology

This study is grounded in a comparative philosophical approach, integrating historical materialist perspectives with elements of contemporary critical pedagogy. Ho Chi Minh's educational thought is analyzed through the lens of Marxist humanism. In contrast, the philosophy of 21st-century education is constructed by drawing on core frameworks from global citizenship education (UNESCO, 2015), the capabilities approach (Sen & Nussbaum, 1999; Nussbaum, 2010), and learner-centered pedagogy (Biesta, 2006). This dual theoretical framework facilitates a cross-contextual dialogue in which educational ideas are not evaluated in isolation but in terms of their enduring relevance, ethical orientation, and transformative potential.

This research employs a qualitative philosophical method, primarily through interpretative and comparative analysis, based on textual and content analysis of both primary and secondary sources. The study unfolds in three main stages. The first stage is textual analysis, in which Ho Chi Minh's speeches addressed to educators and youth, as well as educational policies during his leadership, are systematically examined to extract key philosophical insights into education. The second stage involves the construction of a comparative framework. In this phase, Ho Chi Minh's educational principles are juxtaposed with core principles of 21st-century educational philosophy, drawn from global policy frameworks (UNESCO, OECD...) and the scholarly works of leading educational theorists such as Biesta, Nussbaum, and Senge. The comparison focuses on key themes such as the aims of education, the nature of the learner, pedagogical approaches, and the role of education in society. Finally, the third stage is thematic synthesis, which organizes the convergences and divergences into broader philosophical categories and considers how these points of convergence may inform contemporary educational reform, particularly within postcolonial and transitional societies. Although theoretical, this methodological approach is grounded in real-world educational contexts, aiming to build conceptual bridges between revolutionary historical thought and current pedagogical challenges.

Results and Discussion

Overview of Ho Chi Minh's Educational Thought and the Core Contents of 21st-Century Educational Philosophy

Ho Chi Minh, a world cultural figure and resilient revolutionary leader, was not only a political strategist but also a visionary educator. He taught at Duc Thanh School (Phan Thiet), organized youth training classes in Guangzhou (1925–1927), and delivered military training in early 1941. With his profound educational thought, Ho Chi Minh contributed significantly to laying the foundations of a new Vietnamese education system. He consistently regarded education as the key to national prosperity aimed at enlightening the populace, cultivating human resources, and nurturing talent, thereby fostering development and enabling Vietnam to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with global powers.

Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy was expressed not only through his speeches and writings but also through his lifelong example as a committed learner. His thought inherited the values of both Vietnamese and global educational traditions, while creatively applying Marxist–Leninist educational principles to Vietnam's specific historical conditions. He criticized the inherent limitations of feudal and colonial education systems, particularly their scholasticism, conservatism, and dogmatism, as well as the colonial policy of deliberate ignorance. In response, he established a new educational paradigm directed toward the comprehensive development of learners.

First, educational goals and content. The fundamental goal of the new education, according to Ho Chi Minh, is the holistic development of the individual particularly in forming the “new socialist person” a useful citizen, and a capable cadre who would help shape the future of the nation. This is the core of Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy and remains a guiding principle for Vietnam's educational reforms in the modern era.

In a letter to students on the first day of school in the newly independent Democratic Republic of Vietnam, he wrote: “Today, you are more fortunate than your elders in receiving an education from an independent nation an education that will help train you to become useful citizens of Vietnam, developing fully your innate abilities... Whether Vietnam can become beautiful, and whether our people can reach the glorious heights to stand shoulder to shoulder with global powers, depends greatly on your learning efforts” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 4, p. 34–35).

In September 1949, at the opening ceremony of the first training course at the Central Nguyen Ai Quoc School in Viet Bac, he wrote in the school's Golden Book of Traditions: “Study to work, to be human, to be a cadre. Study to serve the organization, the class, the people, the Fatherland, and humanity” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 208).

During a speech to youth camp instructors on June 12, 1956, he emphasized: “Education is a very important and honorable task. Without teachers, there is no education. We are building a democratic republic of Vietnam, gradually moving toward socialism... Without cadres, nothing can be accomplished. Without education and cadres, there is no economic or cultural development” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 10, p. 345).

At a political training session for secondary school teachers in North Vietnam on September 13, 1958, he advised: “For the benefit of ten years, plant trees; for the benefit of a hundred years, cultivate people... The people, the Party, and the Government entrust you with the task of educating the next generation. It is a heavy, but very glorious responsibility”.

He affirmed that the purpose of education is to serve the people and the nation and to align with the Party's and Government's political directions closely tied to productive life and the lived experiences of the people. This reflects his deep commitment to “people-oriented education”, aiming to cultivate a wise and enlightened Vietnamese population.

Regarding the content of education, in a letter to students dated October 24, 1954, he wrote: “For you, education includes:

Physical education: to develop a strong and healthy body, while maintaining personal and communal hygiene;

Intellectual education: to review what has been learned and to gain new knowledge;

Aesthetic education: to distinguish between beauty and ugliness;

Moral education: to love the Fatherland, love the people, love labor, love science, and respect public property (the five loves)” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 10, p. 171).

For Ho Chi Minh, knowledge is necessary for national construction and defense, but morality is the foundation for human development. He asserted that the liberation of the nation and humanity cannot be achieved without ethical foundations. He frequently reminded teachers and education administrators to cultivate young people's love for their families, friends, and comrades; respect for teachers; patriotism; community spirit; discipline; honesty; humility; and a sense of collective responsibility: “each for all and all for each”.

Accordingly, education must simultaneously develop revolutionary ethics, socialist ideals, cultural understanding, technical knowledge, and labor capacity. Young people should be equipped with ideals, ethics, and knowledge as the foundation for becoming the “new person” in a socialist society. Schools must help them master the treasure trove of human knowledge, grasp the basics of science and technology, and apply them in practice developing the skills and work habits needed for national development.

Second, on educational methods. Ho Chi Minh placed great importance on educational methods. He emphasized that to achieve good learning outcomes, the right educational methods must be employed, stimulating self-discipline and a proactive attitude in students. Only then can knowledge be absorbed quickly, and effectively, and reach the desired goals.

He pointed out that teaching should proceed step by step: from easy to difficult, from basic to advanced; it should avoid overloading or cramming. Education must be tailored to the specific circumstances and real conditions, requiring perseverance and planning, and cannot be rushed.

In his letter to teachers, students, officials, and youth on October 31, 1955, Ho Chi Minh affirmed the need to diversify educational methods according to different educational levels: “For universities, we need to combine scientific theory with practice, strive to study advanced theories and sciences from other countries, and apply them to the reality of our country to practically contribute to the national construction. For secondary schools, we need to provide students with solid, practical, and suitable knowledge that aligns with the needs and preconditions for building our country, eliminating unnecessary materials for real life. For elementary schools, we must educate children to love the nation, love the people, love labor, love science, and respect public property” (Minh, 2011, vol. 10, p. 186).

Ho Chi Minh also advocated for democratic methods and dialogue in teaching and learning. He emphasized: “In schools, there must be democracy. For every issue, teachers and students should discuss together, everyone should honestly express their opinions, and if there is anything unclear, they should ask and discuss until it is clear. Democracy must exist, but students must respect teachers, and teachers must value students, not just in a ‘tit-for-tat’ manner” (Minh, 2011, vol. 9, p. 264). This viewpoint reflects the modern educational spirit, which today is known as the “learner-centered” approach.

Third, on self-study. Ho Chi Minh emphasized the role of self-study in acquiring knowledge, developing a well-rounded person, and meeting the practical demands of the revolution. In 1961, in a conversation with long-standing cadres and party members, he affirmed: “I am 71 years old, and every day I must study. Whether it is big or small, I must participate. The work progresses continuously. Without study, I cannot keep up, and the work will leave me behind” (Minh, 2011, vol. 12, p. 91). Ho Chi Minh defined the goal of self-study as being directly linked to serving the nation and the people: “To serve the nation, serve the people, make the people prosperous, and the country strong, is to fulfill the mission of being the owner of the country” (Minh, 2011, vol. 9, p. 179).

According to him, self-study is a vital need and must be maintained throughout one’s life: “We must study forever, lifelong” (Minh, 2011, vol. 15, p. 670). Ho Chi Minh encouraged students to proactively learn at all times and places, to learn from books, to learn from each other, and especially to learn from the people. He stressed: “Learn from school, learn from books, learn from each other, and learn from the people; not learning from the people is a great omission” (Minh, 2011, vol. 6, p. 361).

To ensure effective self-study, he required students to have a serious attitude, maintain consistent learning, and combine theory with practice. He advised: “We must uphold an independent thinking style and freedom of thought. When reading materials, we must delve deeply and understand thoroughly, not blindly trust every word in the books. If something is unclear, we must boldly raise questions and discuss to clarify” (Minh, 2011, vol. 11, p. 98).

The 21st Century educational philosophy

As we enter the 21st century, humanity faces profound global transformations. The Fourth Industrial Revolution, with rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, big data, the Internet of Things, and more, is fundamentally changing how people live, learn, and work. Additionally, global challenges such as climate change, pandemics, social inequality, cultural conflicts, and moral crises urgently require the redefinition of the role, goals, and methods of education in this new era.

In 1996, based on the Delors Commission Report, UNESCO proposed the four pillars of education for the 21st century: “learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.” The report also emphasizes the specific functions of education, such as preparing

students for research and teaching activities, providing specialized training to meet socio-economic needs, expanding educational opportunities for all people, responding to various aspects of lifelong education, and fostering international cooperation through the internationalization of research, technology, creating networks, and facilitating the free flow of ideas and researchers.

The philosophy of education for the 21st century has been shaped as an open, humanistic, and adaptive ideology. According to the UNESCO report (2015), education in the 21st century must focus on “building lifelong learning for all” and developing the ability to act responsibly, creatively, and sustainably in a diverse and interconnected society. In line with this view, the OECD (2018) emphasizes that modern education should not only provide vocational skills but also cultivate comprehensive competencies, including critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and civic ethics, so that learners can become “architects of the future. Core elements of the 21st-century educational philosophy:

Placing people at the center of development. Modern education does not merely transmit knowledge but also nurtures individual potential, forming well-rounded individuals with intellectual, ethical, physical, aesthetic, and emotional development. Learners are active agents in the process of constructing knowledge, values, and personal identity. This viewpoint is reflected in the humanistic philosophy of education – holistic education and constructivist education (Gutek, 2009).

Promoting lifelong learning. In a rapidly changing world, the ability to learn continuously, and autonomously, and to update oneself regularly has become essential. Learning is not confined to schools but extends throughout life, in all circumstances and environments – this is the way for individuals to continuously adapt and master the future. UNESCO refers to this as the “learning society” – an educational model that centers learning throughout the entire life cycle of individuals (UNESCO, 2016).

Respecting cultural diversity and sustainable development. Education must equip learners with the ability to live inclusively, engage in dialogue amidst differences, show empathy, and collaborate across national, cultural, and belief boundaries. At the same time, education must contribute to fostering a sense of responsibility toward the environment and promoting economic and social development equitably and sustainably. This is the core spirit of the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) program initiated by the United Nations (UNESCO, 2020).

Transforming teaching and learning models. The role of teachers is no longer that of a “knowledge transmitter” but a “designer and guide of the learning process,” while learners are no longer “passive recipients” but active agents in constructing knowledge, collaborating, critically reflecting, and self-directing. 21st-century education promotes active, personalized learning models and the application of high technology (Fullan & Langworthy, 2014).

Developing digital literacy and creative thinking. In the digital age, education needs to shift from teaching “what” to teaching “how,” from “memorization” to “creativity and problem-solving.” Digital literacy, data understanding, and programming thinking are new requirements for global citizens in the 21st century (OECD, 2019).

The philosophy of education for the 21st century not only reflects the need to adapt to a rapidly changing world but also embodies the aspiration to build a humanistic, sustainable, and inclusive society. It places urgent demands on countries – including Vietnam – to restructure their education systems based on this new philosophy, which is both modern and connected to the values of national culture.

Commonalities between Ho Chi Minh’s Educational Thought and 21st-Century Educational Philosophy

The philosophy of 21st-century education reflects the urgent need for educational reform in the context of deepening globalization and rapid technological advancements. Modern education upholds a humanistic, holistic, and progressive value system aimed at building a learning society that is inclusive and sustainable. Against this backdrop, revisiting Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought formulated in the mid-20th century reveals profound and, at times, unexpected parallels with

contemporary educational directions. This not only affirms the enduring significance of Ho Chi Minh's ideas but also offers practical insights for Vietnam's ongoing comprehensive educational reform.

First, UNESCO has repeatedly emphasized the principle of “lifelong learning” a vision that Ho Chi Minh articulated more than half a century ago. Why must self-directed learning become a lifelong process? In the modern era, science and technology have become direct productive forces, and human knowledge continues to expand and renew at an unprecedented pace. The rapid advancement of digital technology and the Internet has fundamentally transformed how people access, process, and apply information. Knowledge is now more accessible than ever but also becomes obsolete more quickly. As a result, education today must move beyond merely transmitting existing knowledge to equipping learners with the capacity for lifelong learning, critical thinking, flexible adaptation, and creative innovation—skills necessary to avoid errors born of ignorance in a rapidly changing world. In the process of revolution and development, there is no fixed path; continuous exploration, innovation, and adjustment are imperative. To maintain foresight and the ability to respond effectively to complex situations, individuals must constantly update and renew themselves through self-directed learning. Thus, lifelong learning is not merely a personal choice but a vital necessity in the modern age.

Second, in terms of educational goals, UNESCO identifies four foundational pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. This holistic approach affirms that education is not only about imparting knowledge but also about nurturing character, professional competence, and the ability to coexist harmoniously within society. Ho Chi Minh articulated this comprehensive vision early on. In September 1949, at the opening ceremony of the first course of the Nguyen Ai Quoc Central School, he wrote in the institution's golden book of tradition:

“Study to work,
to be human,
to be a cadre,
Study to serve the Party,
the class and the people,
the nation and humanity.

To achieve these goals, one must practice diligence, thrift, integrity, righteousness, and impartiality.” (Minh, 2011, Vol. 6, p. 208)

Although written in the context of cadre training, Ho Chi Minh's words clearly express a vision of holistic education: learning not only to gain a profession or position but, above all, to cultivate character and serve society. Within this vision, “learning to do” and “learning to be” directly align with the humanistic orientation later championed by UNESCO at the end of the 20th century.

Third, regarding educational methodology: UNESCO emphasizes the principle of “learning how to learn” in which the effectiveness of teaching is measured by the effectiveness of learning. According to modern educational thinking, teaching must enable learners to grasp the essence of issues. To achieve this, teachers should regularly check learners' understanding through questioning, dialogue, and by adjusting content and teaching methods appropriately. If learners do not yet understand, they must continue to study until they fully comprehend. This mindset is encapsulated in UNESCO's formula: Learn – Question – Understand – Act.

Long before this principle was popularized, Ho Chi Minh had already underscored the close connection between learning and practice. In his speech at the First National Conference on Training and Learning Work (May 1950), he affirmed: “Learning must go hand in hand with practice. Learning without practice is useless. Practicing without learning will not go smoothly” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol. 6, p. 361). Ho Chi Minh's view not only highlights the role of practical educational methods but has also become a foundational principle and guiding philosophy of Vietnam's education today: measuring learning by its application in practice, and using knowledge as the basis for correct action.

Fourth, regarding the role of self-study – “Lifelong Learning”. UNESCO regards lifelong learning as the foundation of 21st-century education. Accordingly, learners must develop self-study capabilities and learn anytime, anywhere, in order to adapt to the rapid transformations of the knowledge society. This idea aligns closely with Ho Chi Minh's thought, who, very early on, emphasized the vital role of self-study throughout one's life.

In 1961, speaking to officials and Party members, Ho Chi Minh shared: “I am 71 years old this

year, and I still have to study every day... Without learning, one cannot keep up, and work will leave you behind” (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol. 12, p. 91). He asserted that learning is not only for knowledge but, more importantly, for serving the nation and the people, and for fulfilling the responsibilities of a citizen and owner of the country (Ho Chi Minh, 2011, vol. 9, p. 179). This idea resonates strongly with modern educational philosophy: learning is a lifelong process, not limited to the classroom, but taking place continuously through all life experiences especially learning from practice and from the people. Ho Chi Minh stressed this point: “Learn at school, learn from books, learn from one another, and learn from the people. Not learning from the people is a grave shortcoming” (Minh, 2011, vol. 6, p. 361).

From the perspectives of educational goals, learning methodology, the role of the learner, and lifelong self-learning, it is clear that Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought is not only pioneering but also profoundly aligned with modern educational philosophies proposed by UNESCO. His thought places people at the center, emphasizes holistic development, promotes lifelong learning, and encourages action for the benefit of the community.

Its Significance for Educational Reform in Vietnam

In the process of undertaking a fundamental and comprehensive renewal of the national education system, re-examining Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought through the lens of modern educational philosophy holds not only theoretical significance but also provides strategic practical guidance for Vietnam’s current educational reform efforts. The convergence between Ho Chi Minh’s educational ideas and 21st-century educational philosophy establishes a solid theoretical and practical foundation for building a humanistic, liberal, and modern education system that meets the requirements of the country’s sustainable development.

In terms of theoretical significance. This research deepens scientific understanding of Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought within the broader system of Vietnamese ideological heritage. Ho Chi Minh consistently emphasized the central role of human beings in education and nation-building, underlining the need for the comprehensive development of each individual in morality, intellect, physical well-being, and aesthetics. He also advocated lifelong learning closely linked to practical labor, production, and the construction of a new society, reflecting a modern, progressive educational mindset that was ahead of his time.

Examining the convergence between Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought and 21st-century educational philosophy which promotes lifelong learning, learner-centered approaches, the development of creativity and critical thinking, and alignment with sustainable development goals demonstrates the enduring value, openness, and high adaptability of Ho Chi Minh’s thought to the demands of education in the era of globalization (UNESCO, 1996). This not only affirms the contemporaneity of his ideas but also helps strengthen the theoretical system of educational science within Vietnam’s social sciences. Furthermore, this research provides a scientific basis for constructing a modern Vietnamese educational philosophy. As emphasized in the 13th National Party Congress Document: “Greater focus should be placed on educating ethics, character, creativity, and core values, especially fostering patriotism, national pride, cultural identity, historical consciousness, and social responsibility among all strata of the population, particularly the young generation; preserving and promoting the fine cultural identity of the Vietnamese people; inspiring the aspiration for a prosperous, happy country and firmly defending the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, and life skills education must be closely linked with physical education to enhance the stature of the Vietnamese people” (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 136–137). Analyzing this convergence clarifies how Ho Chi Minh’s thought can be applied to develop Vietnam’s educational philosophy in the new context, ensuring inheritance, adaptation, and creative development.

Moreover, as Vietnam seeks to define and establish a foundational educational philosophy for a new stage of national development, Ho Chi Minh’s educational thought can serve as a “philosophical identity” that embodies national spirit while expanding the dialogue space with global educational philosophies. Fundamental principles such as education in the service of the people, education linked to national development, and education for social progress can serve as the core to build a modern, humanistic, and sustainable system of educational values for Vietnam.

In terms of practical significance

This research provides strategic guidance for Vietnam's educational reform in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and deep international integration. Core principles drawn from Ho Chi Minh's educational thought such as emphasizing self-study, self-discipline, linking learning with practice, and learning to serve the Fatherland and the people remain fully relevant for building an education model that fosters learners' qualities, competencies, and nurtures their sense of autonomy and creativity key objectives of 21st-century education.

The study of this convergence also helps to operationalize specific solutions for renewing the content and methods of education and training in Vietnam today. These include: transforming the role of teachers into facilitators and creators of learning environments; developing open, interdisciplinary curricula; integrating ethics education, global citizenship, and sustainable development into learning programs; and encouraging lifelong learning within communities. These orientations align with the goal of "improving people's intellectual standards, training human resources, and nurturing talent". The 13th National Party Congress affirms this approach: "Shift the educational process strongly from mainly providing knowledge to comprehensively developing learners' competencies and qualities; from primarily classroom-based learning to organizing diverse learning formats, with emphasis on online learning, internet-based and television-based learning, social activities, extracurricular activities, and scientific research; combining school education with family education and social education" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2021, p. 233). The aim is to educate citizens who "engage in lifelong learning so that they dare to think, dare to speak, dare to act, dare to take responsibility, dare to sacrifice for the common good, and become useful members of society" (Lam, 2025).

More importantly, the convergence between Ho Chi Minh's educational thought and 21st-century educational philosophy not only lays the foundation for developing educational policies that align with global trends but also contributes to preserving and promoting Vietnam's cultural values and national identity in the context of integration. In a globalized and rapidly changing world, Ho Chi Minh's educational thought with its philosophical depth, humanistic orientation, and flexible adaptability has become a powerful spiritual resource for Vietnam to nurture global citizens who embody Vietnamese characteristics: patriotism, social responsibility, mastery of knowledge, and willingness to contribute to the community.

In addition, amid globalization's challenges regarding cultural integration and shifting values, this research underscores the vital role of education in preserving national identity, cultivating ideals, ethics, and a sense of global citizenship among Vietnam's young generation. Ho Chi Minh's view of educating people to be both "morally upright and professionally competent" remains a guiding compass for developing a modern Vietnamese education system that stays rooted in the nation's cultural identity.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates that Ho Chi Minh's educational thought holds not only historical value but also profound philosophical significance, with numerous similarities and convergences with the progressive educational trends of the 21st century. Principles such as "learning to be human," "lifelong education", "learning must go hand in hand with practice," and "education for humanity" reflect a humanistic, comprehensive, and liberal vision that aligns with the demands for educational reform in the modern and globalized context. Revisiting Ho Chi Minh's educational thought from the perspective of educational philosophy not only affirms the enduring value of the nation's ideological heritage but also provides a theoretical foundation for formulating educational policies that are suitable for both Vietnam's practical realities and international development trends. Based on the analysis presented, this article proposes several policy recommendations as follows:

Develop a modern Vietnamese educational philosophy: This should be built upon the foundation of Ho Chi Minh's thought while integrating the achievements of global educational philosophies, to create a consistent educational value system that aligns with Vietnam's cultural

characteristics, social context, and country's goal of sustainable development.

Restructure the curriculum and teaching methods: The curriculum and methods should aim at the comprehensive development of individuals, emphasizing ethics, critical thinking, creativity, and social responsibility. Active teaching methods that place the learner at the center, combining theory with practice, should be further encouraged.

Build a lifelong education system and learning society: Expand learning opportunities for all citizens, particularly for vulnerable groups, by developing community education, retraining the workforce, and enhancing digital education and online learning capacities.

Integrate ethics, ideals, and citizenship responsibility into education: The entire education system, from primary to higher education, should incorporate education on ethics, life ideals, and civic responsibility, aiming to produce individuals who are not only experts in their fields but also possess integrity, strong character, and a commitment to contributing to the nation.

Strengthen research and academic dialogue on Ho Chi Minh's educational thought: Establish forums for research and dialogue regarding Ho Chi Minh's educational philosophy to modern educational philosophies, ensuring that this ideological heritage is continuously updated, applied, and developed in the new context.

By exploring the depth of Ho Chi Minh's thought and engaging with the educational philosophy of the 21st century, Vietnam can establish an educational system that not only meets the demands of economic and social development but also contributes to the creation of a new generation of Vietnamese people globalized, humanistic, and creative.

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