

Implications of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts and approach in the Party's cadre affairs in Vietnam at present

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ABSTRACT

As the founder and leader of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), Ho Chi Minh always put a great priority on the cadre affairs. He said: "the cadre is the success factor in all our works". His thoughts and approach in cadre affairs remain highly valuable and applicable in present context of Vietnam, where the CPV has been strengthening its Party's building efforts, particularly in in cadre affairs.

Key implications of his thoughts and approach in cadre affairs in Vietnam at present include: (i) paying greater attention to cadre selection process; (ii) renewing the cadre training and development process; (iii) fair cadre assessment process with clear criteria; (iv) relevant and proper use of the cadres; and (v) good remuneration for cadres.

Keywords

Ho Chi Minh thoughts; Party; cadre affairs; Vietnam

Introduction

As the founder and leader of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV), Ho Chi Minh always put a great priority on the cadre affairs. He said: "the cadre is the success factor in all our works"¹. He stressed the importance of capability and the morality, ability to associate and mobilize people as well as ability to learn from the people and practical experience. His thoughts and approach in cadre affairs remain highly valuable and applicable in present context of Vietnam, where the CPV has been strengthening its Party's building efforts, particularly in in cadre selection, development, and management affairs.

Literature Review

Nguyen Huu Lap² indicated that the leadership and management style of Ho Chi Minh plays a decisive role in the correctness of guidelines and leadership of the ruling Party; management decisions of the State of Vietnam, creating social consensus, ensuring the Vietnamese revolution always has enough strength to overcome all difficulties and challenges in the development process. That style remains intact and is of

particular importance to Vietnam in the current fierce political competition.

Nguyen, Y. H. ³ clarified the basic contents of Ho Chi Minh ideology on developing cadres and the practical application in training cadres who are members of the Civil Affairs Committee of the Provincial People's Committee. She concluded that following the Ho Chi Minh ideology will enhance the quality and efficiency of the organization thanks to the cadres' better performance of their assigned tasks.

Nguyen Thi Hong Minh and Maria Luisa A. Valdez⁴ revealed that Ho Chi Minh's selected speeches vividly exhibited the aspects of his political ideologies as expressed in his ideological strategy on continuous proletarian revolution specifically on national liberation manifested through independence and unity; on national independence and unity expressed through democracy, freedom, welfare and happiness; and on socialism as one of his ideologies' major creative points. Moreover, the manifestations of

¹ Ho Chi Minh *Complete Works* (2004), National Political Publishing House, Vol 5, pp. 269

² "The Leadership & Management Style of Ho Chi Minh Practical Value and Significance" (2019). International Research Journal of Advanced Engineering and Science, Volume 4, Issue 1, pp. 71-74

³ "Cadre training according to Ho Chi Minh ideology: A case study on cadres of Civil Affairs Committee of Provincial People's Committees" (2020). Vietnam Journal of Education, 4(2), 74-79.

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⁴ "Ideologies Reflected in the Selected Speeches of Ho Chi Minh" (2019). International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL) Volume 7, Issue 4, PP 17-28 ISSN 2347-3126 (Print) & ISSN 2347-3134 (Online) <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2347-3134.0704002>

the themes of patriotism, humanity, internal peace and moral philosophy are also evident in the literary works. With regard to the implications of his ideologies to the thinking of the Vietnamese youth, Ho Chi Minh's ideologies serve as the lighting torch leading the youth towards positive thinking, good virtues and practical actions contributory to the building and defense of their country.

Anthony R. Welch⁵ argued that the current Vietnamese higher education system is a site of contradiction, between the demands of socialism and the trend towards a market economy. While moves to extend market principles in Viet Nam continue, the role of its higher education system and its Higher Education Institutions in promoting socialism has been retained. Significant cultural differences remain between a more entrepreneurial South, and a more conservative and cultural North. Various social, political and historical constraints have persisted to slow or prevent reforms in the higher education sector. The mix of public and private universities raises problems such as lack of resources, over-enrolment, entry standards, and especially the quality of education. Even so, and within the framework of socialism, it is likely that private sector growth will outstrip growth in the public sector in the future in an attempt to meet growing educational demand.

Michael P. Mau⁶ pointed out that the success of the Lao Dong Party (now the Communist Party of Vietnam) in its leadership position depends largely on the effectiveness of its members.

Bui Phuong Dinh and Nguyen Thi Thanh Tam⁷ argued that it is necessary to practice the important capability of establishing contact with

people according to Ho Chi Minh: "To make the people sincerely express their opinions, cadres must be sincere, hardworking and tactful in inspiring them to speak out"⁸. The ability to gain knowledge management through training, mentoring, and practical experience is considered one of the core abilities of the current and future leaders.

Tran Thi Minh Tuyet⁹ indicated that it is necessary to take opinions of the local people before appointing a cadre from that locality. Moreover, people's access to information should be facilitated. The Law on Information Access, which is on effect since July 01, 2018, should avoid the abuse of "top secret" classified information to prevent people's legitimate right to access. There should be mechanisms to ensure grassroots democracy and protect whistleblowers. The dismissal of delegates is another way for people to control power, thus the need for a Law on Dismissal of Delegates with a clear procedure. People's direct ownership of power should be facilitated through referendum.

Vu Trung Kien¹⁰ showed that Ho Chi Minh thoughts on intelligentsia took shape when he was active in foreign countries and demonstrated clearly after the August 1945 Revolution, especially in the establishment of the government at that time. As a result, Ho Chi Minh gathered around him many famous intellectuals who devoted to the country and the people.

Ngoc Loi Pham¹¹ concluded that: (i) The Marxism-Leninism is a scientific and legal theory; (ii) the collapse of socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries was only the breakdown of a model; (iii) the selection and

⁵ "Ho Chi Minh Meets the Market: Public and Private Higher Education in Vietnam" (2007). International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives, 8(3), 35-56. ISSN 1443-1475 © 2007 Shannon Research Press. <http://www.iejcomparative.org>

⁶ "The Training of Cadres in the Lao Dong Party of North Vietnam, 1960-1967" (1969). Asian Survey, Vol. 9, No. 4, pp. 281-296 (16 pages), published by University of California Press, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2642546>

⁷ "Ho Chi Minh's viewpoint on "modes of leadership" and its application today" (2018). Political Theory Journal.

⁸ Ho Chi Minh *Complete Works* (1995), Vol. 5, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp 295

⁹ "Ho Chi Minh thought on power control (2019)". Political Theory Journal

¹⁰ "Ho Chi Minh Thought on respectful use of intellectuals and suggestions for us today" (2019). Communist Review

¹¹ "Fighting against the wrong argument that the Communist Party of Vietnam should not consider Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought the ideological foundation" (2020). Advances in Sciences and Humanities 2020; 6(3): 89-93

<http://www.sciencepublishinggroup.com/j/ash> doi: 10.11648/j.ash.20200603.12

application of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's Thought in Vietnam as the ideological foundation is a right choice of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Ho Chi Minh key thoughts and approach in the Party's cadre affairs

Key thoughts and approach of Ho Chi Minh in cadre affairs include:

First, good cadre training. Ho Chi Minh stressed that good cadre training is a core work of the Party, which will help produce capable cadres. The cadre training should be conducted in a comprehensive, focused and scientific manner. There are Party cadres, government cadres, mass organization cadres, central and local cadres, which should be trained appropriately in line with their responsible area and specific level. As a result, it is important to develop relevant training agenda and content for each type of cadres. This is a long-term process, which requires patience and great efforts and investment.

Second, good understanding and relevant assessment of the cadres. This is important and extremely difficult process. Relevant assessment means identification of strong and weak cadres, their strengths and weaknesses of every cadre, ability to delivery results and relationship with people. The appointment and promotion of cadres should be based on this assessment, which should be fair, transparent and impartial. There should be clear and updated criteria for cadre assessment in respective periods.

It is critical to assess cadres in their working scope and context. There should be regular and periodical assessment. The information should be collected from various sources for fair analysis and selection. This will help cadres build on their strengths and improve their weaknesses.

The people responsible for cadre selection, development and management affairs play important role in cadre assessment. They should be good, clean and capable people. He argued that: "To know the cadres well and treat various types of people properly, first and foremost, it is important for people in charge of cadre affairs to

avoid and correct one's mistakes. The less mistakes they have, the better their assessment will be".¹²

Third, appropriate appointment and promotion of cadres. This requires appointment of the right people for the right positions, depending on their capability, skills and experience. In addition, it needs a combination of old and young people, retainment, and promotion of both Party and non-party talents. Promotion of young and potential cadres to positions of leaders, managers should be encouraged.

Fourth, fast-track promotion and development of capable and talented cadres. Capable and particularly talented people should be fast-track promoted, trained and nurtured. He said: "The cadre promotion should be based on their talent and capability and for the work result delivery. This help motivate other colleagues. As a result, works will be done effectively".¹³ The promotion should be well assessed in advance with open mind and long-term view. After promotion, it is important to support, encourage and build their confidence for their good performance.

Fifth, value the talents and nurturing the cadres. It takes long time to identify, select and train good cadres. In addition, there are challenges and risks. It is therefore important for the Party to nurture and protect its cadres. Nurturing should be carried out by learning promotion, solving difficulties, paying close attention and fixing mistakes... Timely action and support to encourage and build their will, build on their successes and draw lessons learnt from their failures. There should be a certain room for tolerance of mistakes during the working process. This aims to help cadres to fix and learn from their mistakes with a constructive manner. He reiterated: "It is important to value the talents, capable cadres and those who contribute to our common works".¹⁴

¹² Ho Chi Minh *Complete Works* (1995), Vol. 5, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp. 211

¹³ Ho Chi Minh *Complete Works* (1995), Vol. 5, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp. 281-282

¹⁴ Ho Chi Minh *Complete Works* (1995), Vol. 5, National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, pp. 273

Discussion

The CPV is well aware of limitations and challenges in its current cadre affairs. Understanding and undertaking the Ho Chi Minh's thoughts and approach in cadre affairs is valuable in improving the quality and effectiveness of the Party's cadre affairs. As a result, the Party issued resolution No. 26-NQ/TW dated 19 May 2018 on development of capable, qualified and reputational cadres at various levels, particularly at the strategic level. The resolution pointed out: "Cadre affairs is the success factor and the key of the Party and political system building affairs. Development of cadres, particularly at the strategic level, is the most important task of the Party. This should be carried out constantly, cautiously, scientifically and effectively. This is our investment for long-term and sustainable development".¹⁵

Key implications of the Ho Chi Minh's thoughts and approach in cadre selection, development and management affairs in present context are as follows:

First, paying greater attention to cadre selection process. Ho Chi Minh's key criteria for cadre selection include: (i) loyal and enthusiastic cadres in the works and struggle; (ii) cadres that are closely connected with people and have in-depth understanding on local affairs; (iii) cadres that take charge in difficult situation. Leaders should take charge and have initiative; (iv) cadres that abide well by the disciplines.

In line with these criteria, the CPV has promulgated many documents on the cadre affairs. These include Directive No. 35-CT/TW, Regulations No. 89-QD/TW, Regulation No. 90-QD/TW of Politburo tenure XII, Regulation No. 101-QD/TW dated 07 June 2016 of the Secretariat, Regulation No. 205-QD/TW, Regulation No. 55-QD/TW dated 19 December 2016 of the Politburo, Regulation No. 08-Qdi/TW dated 25 October 2018 of the Central Committee, Regulation No. 214-QD/TW dated 02 January 2020 of the Central Committee, tenure XII on the

standards, selection criteria for the high-profile cadres that are under the management of Central Committee, Politburo and Secretariat. The focus is to filter and prevent the politically weak, morally degraded and/or corrupted people from coming into the pipeline of the new leadership as well as bribery or corruption in relations with the cadre affairs. Basically, the legal documents on the cadre selection is relatively comprehensive and clear. The specific interpretation and implementation of these documents at local level matters.

Second, renewing the cadre training and development process. The approach follows the Ho Chi Minh's point, e.g. training focus should be cadres works, practical and demand-based, clear agenda, with relevant trainers for various trainees and focused topics. The CPV has been paying great attention to cadre training and development. Yet, the gap between theoretical training and practical demands. As a result, the Resolution of the 7th Central Committee Plenum, tenure XII indicated the the urgent need to develop a national programme on position-based training, improvement and development with intensive rotation for leaders and managers' practical training and testing in various fields and locations.

Third, fair cadre assessment process with clear criteria. Ho Chi Minh's approach is that the assessment should be comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the cadre's historical background, work experience and performance. Despite many documents promulgated such as Regulation No. 89-QD/TW and Regulation No. 90-QD/TW dated 04 August 2017 of the Politburo, this remains relatively weak as the 7th Central Committee Plenum, tenure XII admitted: "This remains a weak process, which is not result-based. Sometimes assessment is easy, personal and prejudiced...". As a result, the Central Committee issued the Regulation No. 214-QD/TW on the framework criteria for assessment of high-profile cadres, which are under the management of Central Committee, Politburo and Secretariat. There is a need for more specific regulations for each type of cadres, particularly holding the heads of agencies accountable for cadre assessment quality.

¹⁵ Communist Party of Vietnam: *Central Committee seventh plenum, tenure XII document* (2018), Central Committee's Office, pp. 54

Fourth, relevant and proper use of the cadres. Ho Chi Minh summarized it briefly “right people for right jobs”. He also pointed out the common mistakes: (i) preference of relatives, friends, known people rather than unknown people; (ii) preference of flattering people rather than honest and decent people; (iii) preference of people that have suitable personalities rather than different personalities. These have been relatively common over the past decades and caused negative impacts. As a result, the 7th Central Committee Plenum, tenure XII held the leader and Party’s committees responsible for identification and recommendation of talented and good people as well as appointment of their own successors. In addition, the leaders and Party’s committees should plan for training, development, appointment and promotion of capable young people, women, ethnic minority people. This requires strong political will and specific regulations for various levels and types of cadres.

Fifth, good remuneration for cadres. There are many existing limitations and inconsistency across levels, agencies and localities in housing, salary, merit awards. As a result, the Central Committee 7th Plenum set the following tasks and solutions: “Carry out relevant salary reform roadmap for specific groups of cadres according to their job descriptions, titles, positions, performance and available resources. Construct housing policy, in which the state issues the policy and mechanisms, the localities develop land and housing planning, cadres and official purchase or lease the houses. Merit awards should be done in strict, fair and precise manner.”¹⁶ The Party’s committees at various levels are tasked to develop detailed plans and roadmap for each category of cadres at various levels and sectors.

Conclusion

In short, Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts on cadre affairs remain valuable both theoretically and practically in nowadays context. While there are many achievements in cadre affairs after 20 years of implementation the the resolution of the Third

Central Committee Plenum, tenure VIII on cadre strategy, there are limitations and room for improvement. The widespread corruption and wrongdoings, including the cadre affairs, pose a risk of weakening the cadre selection, development and management. It is therefore important to further understand and undertake Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts and approach in cadre affairs in Vietnam at present.

Key implications of Ho Chi Minh’s thoughts and approach in cadre affairs include: (i) paying greater attention to cadre selection process; (ii) renewing the cadre training and development process; (iii) fair cadre assessment process with clear criteria; (iv) relevant and proper use of the cadres; and (v) good remuneration for cadres.

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