

## Case Report

# The Study on Improving the Political Theory Education for the Undergraduate Students in Vietnam – from the Political Theory Education Experience in China

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**Abstract:** Educating political theory for university students is an integral part of political ideology, playing a very important role in shaping, developing and perfecting the political pathways, assuring the leadership of the Communist Party for the whole of society in all periods of revolution. The paper outlines the role of political theory education in universities, the current situation and the need for political theory education in Vietnamese universities, some aspects given in view of the work of political theory education in undergraduate curricula in China. From there, the author offers a number of solutions to improve the quality of political theory education for students in universities in Vietnam today.

**Keywords:** Vietnam, China, Political Theory Education, Students

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## 1. The Role of Political Theory in Teaching Activities at Universities

The work of political theory is a fundamental activity in the political system in which the lecturer is the subject who assumes the task of transmitting the Communist Party's theoretical system to the students to establishing a scientific worldview, reasonable methodology based on the ideology, stance of the workers' class, Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's thought theory system. The education of political theory really constitutes the cornerstone of political thoughts and holds the viewpoint of the student force - the important force and the future owner of the cause of industrialization, modernization and international integration. Therefore, improving the effectiveness and quality of teaching political theory to students in universities now really plays a very important role for the following reasons:

*Firstly*, political theory gives students a deeper, fuller and more comprehensive understanding of political and administrative theory knowledge, thereby equipping them with theoretical knowledge directly serving their study and activities in life, as a basis for the preparation before starting their work.

*Secondly*, the study of political theory aims to consolidate the belief and political will, consciousness, class viewpoint and patriotism of students. From there, motivating them to become aware of the sense self-consciousness, voluntary, enthusiasm to successfully implement revolutionary tasks set by the Party.

*Thirdly*, the study and research of political theory aim to provide students with worldview and revolutionary and scientific methodology as the basis, the foundation for direct application in the learning process and the life reality, in handling work, in social relationships.

*Fourthly*, in the new situation and tasks, the requirements

for improving professional qualification and specialties trained at the education establishments, the tasks of the citizens before the socio-economic development of the country guarantees the construction and protection of the socialist Vietnam, the study of the political theory of the university students is the important basis, the cornerstone, the theory foundation for the future owners of the country. Thereby, each individual identifies the right path, responsibility for himself/herself and the society in the new age.

*Fifthly*, in the integration period, Vietnam is building a socialist-oriented market economy, together with the development of science and technology, has had a great impact on the younger generation. Especially students in universities - core forces, important to the future of the country. This has had a great impact on the way of life, sentiment, morals, ideas and ideas of life.... So, the issue of enhancing the education of political theory for today's students is significant. Very important in the work of the Party in the new era.

All of these reasons require the whole political system to have comprehensive and long-term solutions to train the country's own owners who are both good at expertise and ensure the political point of view, stuff and the loyalty to the nation in all the circumstances, revolutionary periods. To accomplish this great task, requiring efforts not only for the education sector, not only for the subjects implementing education in universities, but also the determination of the efforts of the whole political system.

## 2. A general Assessment of the Work of Political Theory in Universities over the Past Few Years

In 2004, the Ministry of Education and Training promulgated Decision 02/2004/QD-Ministry of Education and Training on the fact that the regular training students of universities and colleges has to take final course exams on the Marxist-Leninist science, Ho Chi Minh's thoughts, consisting of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, Ho Chi Minh thoughts, political economy, scientific socialism, and history of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The total number of theoretical subjects covered by the curriculum is 330 to 375 periods (22-25 units), accounting for 11% of the university training curricula.

By 2008, according to the Decision 52/2008/QD-BGDT of the Ministry of Education and Training promulgating undergraduate political theory for the non-major students. This curricula has a total of 225 classes (10 credits equivalent to 15 credits, accounting for about 7% of the student's curricula.

Therefore, by 2008 the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training already had specific regulations in the curriculum of political theories to enhance the political ideology of major and non-major students.

Actually, up to now, the number of public and non-public universities and colleges in Vietnam has been increasing

rapidly in recent years: in 2006, there were 227 universities and colleges in Vietnam; 2014 increases to 414 and 2016 to 427<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, the number of lecturers has increased rapidly, in 2012 the country has totally 48.6 thousand lecturers, in 2010 increased to 84.1 thousand lecturers and in 2014 increased to 90.6 thousand lecturers<sup>2</sup>. The number of students trained annually has also increased rapidly, by 2015 the number of students was 1387.1 thousand, in 2016 increased to 2178.6 thousand students<sup>3</sup>. If properly calculated as per the stipulation, 11% of classes for students specializing in political theory and 7% of classes for the non-specialized students in the undergraduate curricula, this is a structure that is perfectly suited to the requirements of the curricula. However, it is also necessary to confirm that some aspects that in the past time the work of political theory education for students has achieved some results as well as some limitations as follows:

### Advantages

The university and college system in Vietnam has enough political theory lecturer force, the political theory lecturing in the universities and colleges have been carried out as per the stipulated time and quality. According to the survey results of some universities and colleges in Vietnam in 2016 on quality assessment of lecturers as follows: enthusiasm, good teaching quality reached 48%, fairly good: 40.5%. On morals, lifestyle: Good: 62.6%, fairly good: 26.7%. So most students highly appreciate the professional capacity and ethics of the lecturers' lifestyle.

On the quality of lecturing force, it has been constantly improved: According to the survey results to 156 lecturers in Vietnam, showing that the professional qualifications of lecturers with masters degree or higher accounts for 74.4%, and this number has been constantly improved in terms of professional qualifications, and especially the annual lecturer recruitment has always been paid attention to assure annual curricula.

Regarding the content of the curricula: According to the latest survey on Ho Chi Minh ideology, up to 60.9% said that the curricula was very helpful, and 59.6% said that courses of political theory at the universities and colleges is very modest and consistent. The remaining 36.6% said that it was not very useful and 2.5% said it was not useful.

Regarding the study results: According to survey on the study results of political theory courses, over 90% of the students have good and excellent results.

The system of theory teachers is well-trained, has expertise and experience in teaching, many lecturers are leaders in scientific work, have extensive experience in theoretical research, the reality summarization, many lecturers have many scientific works of high theoretical and practical value.

### Limitations

Besides the advantages, the work of political theory education still has certain limitations: The lecturing quality of

1, 2, 3 General Statistics of Vietnam, *Annual Publication*, Statistics Publishing House 2016, page 670

some sections of lecturers still not guarantee the contents, methods and style. Many of the contents, methods are slow in innovation, inflexible with much theory, causing the boredom to the students and learners, many practical issues are updated late in the lectures. "The expansion of training and fostering is not linked to quality improvement. The contents and curricula of training and retraining are slowly renewed, supplemented, updated and duplicated, failing to meet the requirements for raising the capacity of practical activities, training of political, ethical and moral ideas. Leadership, management"<sup>4</sup> Especially, the method of political theory education in universities and colleges in the national education system has been slow in innovating, dogmatic and much theoretical; Theory doesn't go with reality; Delivering theory in a inflexible, passive, one-dimensional way, does not promote the critical, scientific and creative thinking of the learners; The level of some political theory lecturers is still limited; The teaching aids are poor, the material and technical conditions in many training institutions are still inadequate... That is one of the reasons leading to the phenomenon of students who are not interested in learning, researching the political theory.

In the period of market economy, due to the impact on all aspects of social life along with the emphasis on the study of the discipline, so many students have been less interested in learning political theory, have not seen the role. The role of political theory work in the activities of social life, directly is to equip the worldview, the scientific methodology to directly serve effectively the task of special study task, to have an important "luggage" after graduation looking for work.

### 3. Learning from the Political Theory Education in Chinese Universities

In China since the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, especially after the birth of the People's Republic of China, the Marxist theoretical system has been more fully applied in all aspects of the theory development as well as political theory education for students at all levels. From ministries, educational units, party schools, universities, although with different functions and duties, the content and method requirements are united in terms of theoretical contents.

Up to now, in the university curricula, political theory work follows the mandatory curriculum framework and is implemented comprehensively across the specific requirements:

Maintaining the Party's principles to increase understanding of Marxism, faith and sense of service to the people.

Persistence of theory related to the practice makes the staff to grasp the theoretical and practical application of the system, focusing on four areas: loyalty education (base) constructing competency as a core, nurturing the Party features (making the main path), learning creativity (to accomplish mission).

On training content: Persistence on Marxist, Mao Zedong's thought, the focus is on Deng Xiaoping's theory, Jiang's "three representatives" theory, Hú Jǐntāo "building up harmonious society".

In fact, in the past years, the political theories in the university and the Party schools have been oriented towards the persistence of training people (cadres, students, etc.) in the Marxist worldview, building a sense of serving the people.

On education features: At present, China is gradually developing its theoretical based system in which the student-centered theoretical curriculum is part of the curriculum framework. Focus on the issues of political education, theoretical systems, positioning ideas, patriotic education and national pride in order to create a future staff that meets the requirements of the development of the country that both have a political stance and loyalty to the motherland.

The quality of education in recent years can be summarized as follows: The political theory system is unified from central to grassroots levels, from special places in the higher education curricula. The work of political theory education guarantees in terms of the amount of time. The team of theoretical lecturers has a stance, a high level of professional expertise and is constantly improving, the content of the theoretical education curricula for students in united university...

Educating political theory for generations over periods in an educational curricula of different educational backgrounds, state institutions, social structures and socio-economic structures is different. Political theory in accordance with the characteristics of each society, the country especially with China - a country with large area, large population, long-standing culture, strong economy, developing education and especially, China has a large student force in universities - the future owners and the important new force in the Chinese nation. Thus, educating the political theory of students not only directs the team to a new future, but also gives them theoretical knowledge and strong political will, but also generates responsible generations who have loyalty to the motherland.

### 4. Some Solutions to Improve the Educational Theoretical Education for Undergraduate Students in Vietnam

*Firstly*, improve the quality of lecturers both in terms of professional capacity and ethics of lifestyles. To do this, in addition to the regular training of lecturers of political theory in the universities and colleges yearly needs to well carry out three works:

First of all, do a good job of recruiting, training and employing lecturers of political theory to ensure the right place, the right subjects and the right majors. To accomplish this task, three requirements should be met:

The first requirement: Recruiting and training in the right discipline when using trainers, avoiding professional condition failures to ensure professional quality or taking time and money for re-training.

<sup>4</sup> Decree No. 32-NQ/TW on the continuation of improving the training work, fostering the political theory for the managerial staffs, of the Ministry of Politics, 26 May 2014.

The second requirement: Recruiting and using of lecturers of political theories should ensure the quality of staff, especially the recruitment of non-qualified staff, not recruit the unqualified staff, but the priority should be given to good and experienced staffs.

The third requirement: using appropriate lecturers to with right specialization, majors to avoid professional and specialty overlapping.

All these requirements are aimed at ensuring the good performance of staff work, and directly, lecturers in schools and universities, to promote the professional skills of each lecturer, to avoid any waste, overlapping, resulting in the non-promotion of the lecturers' capacity, competency.

Secondly, there should be policies on preference, well treatment, incentives, to attract political theory lecturers. Especially, for young, talented and qualified young lecturers who are qualified to give lecture, once recruited, can assume the teaching work. This work helps each college/university attract good staff, shortening the training time. At the same time, creating an important motivation for staffs to strive for self training, improving their levels in all aspects for research and teaching. Along with the treatment regimes there should "mechanisms to remove, dismiss those who do not complete the task, disciplinary violations."<sup>5</sup>

Thirdly, "Well carry out the work of educating politics, ideology, traditions, ideals, morals and lifestyles"<sup>6</sup> for young lecturers. This is an indispensable requirement to become a principle for every political theorist who is truly exemplary to the student. Good political education helps young cadres "insist on Marxism-Leninism, Ho Chi Minh thoughts, the goal of national independence and socialism."<sup>7</sup> At the same time, is the basis for lecturers to be loyal to the workplace, dedicated, devoted to work, for the collective in the most long term and effective way.

Fourthly, enhance the actual research activities, study and research on economic, political, cultural and social issues... in the region, in the country and abroad. These field research trips have important implications for adding practical knowledge, learning experiences, and adding basic contents to the lecture, especially for young instructors who are in shortage and need of practical knowledge, ensuring the linkage, the attachment between theory and practice.

Secondly, constantly innovating content and methods of political theory education, this is a demand set out by the realities and limitations of the education curricula for students in recent years. There is still a lot of content that is not really suitable for students, especially between the major and non-major section, especially for non-majors in the fields of science and technology.

For teaching methods of political theory, the innovation of teaching method is very important in order to attract students, especially in the present stage when information technology

has developed step Strong, also with real problems, requires lecturers to use a variety of teaching methods to impart the best amount of knowledge and interest to attract learners to bring about the highest possible effect.

Thirdly, to build the educational environment in the family, the school and the society, combining professional training with ideal educational activities and moral ethics. The educational environment is not only in the lessons, in the books, in the environment of communication, but also in the actions of life in concrete ways for each student and society.

## 5. Conclusion

In the new conditions, situations of the new requirements of industrialization, modernization and international integration, all the political and ideological implications for the young generation, especially the students - an important force for the socio-economic development of the country, therefore, there need to be comprehensive solutions in the education of political theory for students in general and university students in particular, it is not only an important political task in the theoretical work of the Communist Party, but also assures that a contingent of officials with sufficient qualities and abilities actually undertake important tasks in the era of industrialization, modernization of the country./.

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