

PATRIOTISM EDUCATION FOR VIETNAMESE STUDENTS IN THE CURRENT PERIOD – SOME BASIC SOLUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Vietnam holds a significant geopolitical position in Southeast Asia, and as such, its history has always intertwined the tasks of nation-building and defense. Foreign adversaries have consistently employed various covert and destructive tactics aimed at undermining the state, attempting to destabilize the government, dismantle national unity, and incite unrest. The object that hostile forces aim for is young people, especially students. Consequently, fostering patriotism among university students has become a critical and enduring priority. This article outlines the importance of patriotism education for Vietnamese students, examines the current situation, and proposes solutions to enhance the effectiveness of such educational initiatives today.

Keywords: Patriotism, Students, Vietnam.

1. INTRODUCTION

Patriotism reflects each individual's profound affection for their homeland, encompassing a sense of belonging, acknowledgment, reverence, and pride towards one's country, nation, and culture. It serves as a moral obligation, a political principle, and a legal standard that shapes the relationship between individuals and their nation, embodying the essence of national spirit. Students represent the future of the country and are the driving force behind the continued pursuit of socialism. In the context of globalization and international integration, especially amid the explosion of information on social media, educating students on patriotism is closely linked to the success or failure of national development and progress. Therefore, solutions are needed to enhance the effectiveness of patriotic education among students.

2. RESEARCH CONTENT

2.1 The importance of patriotism education for Vietnamese students today

"Patriotism is a political and moral principle rooted in love, loyalty, and a sense of duty toward one's nation." [1; pp.518]

The Central Commission for Ideology and Culture states that "Patriotism is a concept deeply rooted in the ideological and emotional realms of the people of all nations and ethnic groups around the world." [2; pp.5].

According to Lenin, patriotism is "One of the deepest emotions, strengthened over hundreds or even thousands of years of the distinct nations' extinction." [3; pp.326].

The Vietnamese people are known for their deep-rooted patriotism, cultivated over generations and demonstrated throughout the country's long history of nation-building and defense.

President Ho Chi Minh once spoke of the Vietnamese people's patriotic spirit, saying, "Our people have a deep love for their country. Throughout history, whenever our homeland has been

invaded, this spirit has ignited and become a powerful wave, surging over all dangers and difficulties, sweeping away the traitors and the invaders.” This statement underscores the crucial role and profound significance of patriotism in the nation’s journey of building and defending the country. The patriotic spirit has since been elevated to the status of "patriotism ideology," serving as the foundational value in the moral framework of our nation. This spirit has fostered a strong sense of national unity, mutual support, and solidarity, which are vividly evident throughout our history, with the values of caring for one another and helping those in need standing at the forefront of our cultural heritage.

In the current context of national development, the education of patriotism among students has taken on a particularly significant role.

Hostile forces with insidious schemes aimed at overthrowing regimes are employing populism to incite the public, particularly targeting young people and students, to carry out 'color revolutions' in various countries. In Vietnam, populism has not yet had the opportunity or conditions to develop into a full-fledged ideology. However, populist actions and rhetoric have emerged across various platforms and in multiple areas. Adherents of populism primarily focus their offensive on the ideological front, viewing it as the most crucial battleground. This viewpoint is further reinforced by former President Richard Nixon’s declaration in his book *1999: Victory Without War*, where he emphasized that ideas hold a decisive influence on history and represent the most powerful weapon—surpassing all others: "The ideological front is the most decisive battleground. All our weapons, trade activities, aid, and economic relations will lead nowhere if we fail on the ideological front!".

The essence of populism, often espoused by hostile and opposition groups under the guise of democracy, humanitarianism, and human rights, remains rooted in opportunism, demagoguery, flattery, and deception. Using their schemes, these hostile forces exploit the rhetoric of democracy and civil rights to undermine the national unity movement and sow division between Catholic communities and other religious groups. They also seek to rally individuals dissatisfied with society or the socialist system, leveraging them as tools for propaganda on public communication channels, particularly on social media platforms. The ultimate goal of populism is to dismantle the current system, erase the leadership role of the Party, and negate the hard-won achievements for which generations have sacrificed.

The 10th National Party Congress stated, 'Our country is currently facing numerous significant and interwoven challenges that are complex and multifaceted, and no challenge can be underestimated. The risk of falling further behind economically compared to many countries in the region and around the world remains. The decline in political, ideological, moral, and lifestyle standards among some officials and Party members, coupled with rampant bureaucracy, corruption, and waste, is severe. Manifestations of detachment from the goals of socialism have yet to be addressed. Hostile forces continue to pursue their schemes of 'peaceful evolution,' inciting riots and attempts to overthrow the government by employing the rhetoric of 'democracy' and 'human rights' to alter the political regime in our country." [4; pp.75].

Therefore, failing to instill a sense of patriotism in students poses a significant danger that could jeopardize the nation's survival and the socialist system. Students represent a large demographic in society, characterized by their keen awareness of current affairs and rapid access to information on social media platforms. However, they are also susceptible to provocation and manipulation, as their political ideology is not yet fully developed, limiting their resistance to erroneous and hostile arguments from adversarial forces. The current national context necessitates

that students fully recognize both opportunities and challenges to maximize their love for the country and their responsibilities to the nation. It is only through a deep commitment to patriotism and socialism that students can understand that the advancement of industrialization and modernization is fundamentally their own mission.

2.2. The current situation of patriotism education for Vietnamese students

In Vietnam today, instilling patriotism among students is primarily conducted through the national education system, as well as through political and social organizations and public media outlets. This approach has led to some positive outcomes:

Schools have integrated lessons on patriotism into classroom instruction and extracurricular activities, making teachings on national pride and the indomitable spirit of the nation more engaging and practical. Through programs in political theory courses, civic orientation sessions, discussions, and workshops, students are provided with fundamental knowledge of history and politics. These initiatives aim to cultivate patriotism and reinforce the spirit of national unity among students.

In addition, universities are placing significant emphasis on organizing activities to promote patriotic traditions and enhance political awareness among faculty, staff, and students. These efforts aim to foster a deeper understanding of national unity and instill appreciation for the sacrifices and substantial contributions made by previous generations in the cause of nation-building and defense.

Alongside the Youth Union, student associations at various universities have organized numerous activities to encourage student participation and foster a sense of patriotism. All these movements contribute to fostering students' patriotism, will and aspiration to devote themselves to the country of generations of students. Initiatives such as the 'Vietnamese Youth Study and Follow Ho Chi Minh's Ideals, Ethics, and Style' campaign, the Green Summer Volunteer Campaign, National University Entrance Exam Support Campaign, and Back to the Roots programs are widely implemented. These movements play an essential role in instilling patriotism, determination, and a desire to contribute to the country among the younger generations of students.

The Vietnam Youth Federation (VYF) at all levels has proactively implemented and registered to undertake youth projects in celebration of the National Congress of the Vietnam Youth Federation at various levels, advancing toward the 9th National Congress of the Vietnam Youth Union for the 2019-2024 term. At all levels, the Federation has intensified efforts to promote legal education, counter misinformation spread by hostile forces among youth and students, and further the dissemination of Ho Chi Minh's thoughts, ethics, and style, in alignment with Directive 05-CT/TW issued by the Political Bureau on May 15, 2016. This directive is integrated with the implementation of Resolutions of the 12th and 13th Party Central Committees. Additionally, the Federation is leveraging information technology and digital transformation to monitor youth perspectives, shape public opinion, and counteract misinformation, defamation, and falsehoods on digital platforms. The Federation regularly communicates its activities to members, young people, and the public, while also sharing successful initiatives, creative methods, exemplary individuals, and outstanding youth movements through the social media platforms of the Federation and its affiliated organizations.

VYF at all levels organizes activities to implement the movement "I love my country" in diverse forms, creating a positive effect among the young generation, especially students. The Federation levels are also continuously innovating their methods of outreach, organizing initiatives

to celebrate national holidays and other significant cultural events. These activities have been effectively implemented in numerous schools, using formats such as historical documentary screenings, tribute events to honor those who have served the nation, and efforts to preserve, restore, and promote historical and cultural sites with broad-reaching influence.

The task of fostering patriotism, readiness for defense, and awareness of national sovereignty and territorial integrity among association members and youth is being actively maintained by various levels of the VYF through tangible initiatives. Notable efforts include the 'Sentiment for the Nation's Border' campaign, the 'For Friends in the Military' movement, and the 'For Our Homeland's Seas and Islands' journey. Additionally, the 'I Love My Country' program traveled to Dien Bien in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the Dien Bien Phu Victory (May 7, 1954 – May 7, 2024). The 'Youth for Our Homeland's Seas and Islands' journey, with the theme 'I Love My Country,' also visited soldiers and residents on the Truong Sa (Spratly) Islands and the DK1 offshore platform to celebrate the 9th National Congress of the Vietnam Youth Federation for the 2024–2029 term.

Efforts to engage youth and promote the positive traditions of the country, as well as to preserve, build, and develop an advanced culture rich in national identity, have been effectively implemented. The campaign 'A Good News Every Day, A Beautiful Story Every Week' has been widely promoted by various levels of the Student Association through websites, social media platforms, fan pages, and the Association's bulletins. Positive stories from everyday life are regularly shared, receiving enthusiastic support from young people."

Activities of promoting young people, propagating about the good traditions of the country, culture and people of Vietnam, preserving, building and developing an advanced culture imbued with national identity have been effectively implemented. The campaign "Every day is good news, every week is a beautiful story" is widely deployed by all levels of the Student Union on its website, social networks, fanpage, newsletters, positive information in daily life is regularly posted, receiving the response of a large number of young people.

Despite the achievements made, there remain certain limitations in promoting patriotism among Vietnamese students.

Many subjects in schools, particularly political theory courses, play a crucial role in strengthening students' political awareness and fostering patriotism. However, it is quite common for students to show a lack of interest in these subjects or to invest insufficient time in studying and researching them. As a result, a significant number of university students have not mastered the fundamental knowledge of national history, and their limited political understanding greatly impacts the promotion of the nation's patriotic traditions.

Many educational institutions have yet to prioritize the issue of instilling patriotism in students, and the integration of this topic into lectures by numerous instructors remains limited, failing to meet the current demands. Furthermore, some schools, youth organizations, and student associations have not given adequate attention to this matter, significantly impacting the education of patriotism among students.

Mass media platforms have not effectively promoted or advocated for a balanced approach to educating students about patriotism, particularly in fostering a resolute attitude against adversaries and addressing social injustices. The initiatives to engage students in combating and rebutting the erroneous and hostile viewpoints of adversarial forces, as well as defending the ideological foundations of the Party, have not received significant attention from many educational institutions.

2.3. Some solutions to improve the effectiveness of patriotism education for Vietnamese students today

Secondly, strengthening awareness education. The love for the country expressed by young people is sincere and simple, yet it often lacks clarity. Therefore, it is essential to strengthen awareness education for university students, placing them within the context of historical events and social realities. This approach should emphasize the teaching of history, particularly the history of the Party, the history of Vietnam, the renovation process, and the development of socialism, to help students grasp the national spirit and understand the fundamental causes behind the country's significant achievements. Additionally, practical education must be emphasized, allowing students to gain real-world experiences and insights into the challenges faced during the development process, as well as recognizing that contradictions serve as the fundamental driving force behind social progress. Students must proactively explore the roots of patriotism, remaining engaged with global developments and accurately understanding the origins of current social conflicts and their inevitability. Educators should empathize with university students to comprehend their thoughts and actions, as well as their growth patterns. It is essential to incorporate patriotism education into the daily lives of students, encouraging them to apply these lessons in practice, thereby enhancing their experiences and talents. This approach can help dispel misconceptions and skepticism about patriotism among students, guiding them to successfully navigate the first steps of their lives.

Firstly, it is essential to enhance the effectiveness of patriotism education for students by updating the content and teaching methods of various subjects, particularly political theory courses. Current education on patriotism should extend beyond theoretical concepts, textbooks, and dogma; it is crucial to impart lessons through the rich history of the nation, traditions, and the examples set by previous generations characterized by resilience, self-reliance, and fortitude. This approach will help students strengthen their national pride and recognize their personal responsibilities in the effort to build and protect the homeland.

Secondly, it is essential to create a cultural educational environment that promotes democracy in education. In teaching patriotism to students, the cultural environment is primarily reflected in the family, schools, and the influence of public media in society. A cultural educational environment plays a crucial role in motivating students to engage in personal development while highlighting the advantages of a socialist system that prioritizes and values human welfare. Additionally, fostering democracy in education enhances the quality of teaching and learning by increasing interaction between instructors and students. Modern education centers on the learner, serving as a driving force for educational development, which underscores the need to promote democratic principles in the educational process.

Thirdly, it is essential to enhance the role of youth organizations. Educating students about patriotism is the responsibility of socio-political organizations under the leadership of the Communist Party of Vietnam, with a particular emphasis on the responsibilities of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, the Vietnam Youth Federation, and the Vietnam Student Association.

These organizations play a vital role in guiding, organizing, and fostering a spirit of patriotism, as well as educating students about nationalism through various action programs and initiatives.

Fourthly, alongside the collaborative efforts of all levels, sectors, and the entire political system, as well as educational institutions, students must also focus on self-education and develop an awareness of their responsibilities in promoting patriotism. To achieve this, it is essential to create an environment where students can assert themselves and receive timely recognition and rewards for exemplary individuals. Additionally, students should actively participate in practical activities that allow them to challenge and develop themselves, engaging in movements aimed at cultivating personal growth and embodying the principles of 'Studying and following the ideology, example, and moral values of President Ho Chi Minh.

Secondly, enhancing the role of cyberspace is crucial. With the advancement of information technology, communication channels and methods among students have undergone significant changes. To strengthen the education of patriotism among students, it is essential to integrate these new changes and characteristics of today's students with innovative educational methods, combining both online and offline educational formats. Patriotism is inherently contemporary and needs to align with current themes. It is important to modernize the approach to advocacy, selecting relevant content that resonates with young people's interests and habits. This involves producing and disseminating literary works, animations, audiobooks, and short online videos that are relatable and accessible. By effectively utilizing Internet thinking and new media language, we can tell compelling stories of patriotism, promote core values, and ensure that the spirit of patriotism permeates the digital landscape. Active innovation in communication methods is essential, emphasizing relevant themes and adopting flexible strategies. By leveraging social media platforms and utilizing a diverse range of high-quality media products, the spirit of patriotism can be conveyed subtly. This approach aims to create a new educational environment for patriotism, fostering a deep understanding of national pride that resonates with students' minds and hearts, ultimately translating into concrete actions.

3. CONCLUDE

Patriotism is one of the most cherished traditions of the Vietnamese people, elevated to the status of a patriotic ideology. It serves as an intrinsic source of strength for the nation's development. Vietnamese students have consistently demonstrated their patriotic spirit in various historical contexts. However, in the current period, various objective and subjective factors influence students' thoughts and emotions, causing a segment of the student population to exhibit uncertainty and wavering commitment to patriotism, resulting in political apathy. Consequently, educating Vietnamese students about patriotism has become an urgent issue, significant both theoretically and practically. Patriotism is a noble tradition and the foundational value that shapes other values in the development of the Vietnamese character. In the context of globalization and international integration, especially amid the explosion of information on the Internet and the current socio-economic challenges, implementing comprehensive and synchronized solutions to enhance patriotic education for students—the future leaders of the nation—has never been more critical.

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