

The hardship of vietnamese students education essay



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In a developing Asian country like Vietnam, studying is the most important activity in ones life. Unlike in the United States where going to school brings children happiness, Vietnamese schools are often considered a kind of mental and intellectual training. Except for some special students who are intelligent by birth, most ordinary students have to struggle in order to keep up with very strict requirements of the education system in Vietnam. This reality, however, is not commonly recognized by responsible adults. Because I used to be in that kind of environment, in my point of view, Vietnamese students are constantly suffering from enormous stress.

First, parents' expectations put students under a lot of pressure. As a matter of fact, most of Vietnamese families struggle to earn enough income to support their lives, and this has not changed at all for several centuries, even when the economic situation has improved a lot. As a result, most parents want their kids to live more comfortable life than the previous generation. This kind of wish is not wrong, because it comes from the hearts of parents who do not want their children to suffer like they did. However, parents use that reason to push the poor children beyond their threshold, for they think that the kids are a tool for them to fulfill the wishes they could not complete when they were young. Most people make their children go to cram school every day, and do not bring them home until eight in the evening. Some other parents make their children learn various subjects, like violin, piano, ballet, or martial arts after school time. They think that those actions help them express their love for the kids. However, the adults do not understand that children need rest after school as much as they need rest after work. Personally, I have seen children in the age below twelve dozing off behind

their parents on the motorbike when going home from a martial arts course. Regarding Vietnam's transportation situation, it is very dangerous because the kids can fall off the bike any moments. Their own parents do not care, though. Moreover, parents in Vietnam lack sympathy for their children. They do not feel the need to understand their children's problems because they are parents. When the kids get bad grades, instead of getting encouragement or at least consolation from their beloved parents, they only get some nasty words and even violence. Another mistake that most parents do is that they keep comparing their kids to some other kids on newspaper. The adults think that comparing will make their kids reflect on themselves and behave, but it only brings out negative effects on the children. Additionally, parents do not encourage their children to pursue their own dreams, but force the kids to become what the parents want. Most students do not have the chance to choose their paths, and it will lead to many bad consequences in the future if the students are not suitable for that major. To me and most of my friends when we were still in school, going home does not bring any kind of happiness, but only stress and pain.

Second, the whole society's idea of success places even more stress on the students. In Vietnam, it is very hard to get a job without having powerful parents. In order to get a good position, a person from ordinary background must have excellent intellectual abilities, which is proved through their degrees and certificates. Therefore, students must study hard ever since elementary school in order to get in famous schools, and eventually graduate from the most well-known universities so as to get a job. Ever since they are young, students are taught that school performance is the only way

to determine a person's value. Consequently, if a student cannot excel in class, he or she will be regarded as a useless person who will never get a good life and will probably spend the rest of his or her life collecting trash on the sidewalk for a living.

Teachers also cause stress on their students. This traces back to the fact that teachers in Vietnam do not earn much income compared to other professions. As a result, teachers tend to do whatever they can to earn more money for their families. Most teachers have to open extra classes at home as an alternate source of income, which becomes another session of school for children. Unfortunate students are given extremely difficult tests so that they get bad results; then, they are threatened that they can never get good grades unless they become students at their teachers' extra classes after school. Unfortunately, most parents do not detect this kind of evil actions of the teachers; they think the children are neglecting their studying, and blame them for the bad grades. This unjust action makes children very disappointed and even under more stress. In addition, many teachers teach their students very wrong ideas about the relation between success in school and in life. In their opinion, if a student can do math and write good essays, that child will be rich in the future. On the other hand, if a student cannot do math or cannot write a decent essay, the child will most likely lead a pathetic life regardless of other talents that the kid may have. Some teachers, especially homeschool teachers, create a gap between good students and bad students, causing the bad ones many negative feelings toward their better classmates. Moreover, a small number of teachers have a tendency to treat one or two students better than the rest of the class due to their

excellence in studying, or just because their parents are rich. In other words, students are taught that the value of one person do not depend on their personalities but on their social background and intellectual abilities.

As if there is not enough pressure from their superiors, students create pressure on themselves and on their peers. Most children strive for their parents' satisfaction, so they push themselves as hard as they can. They think that only through good grades can they be loved by their parents. Although they do realize that all the adults are wrong about the importance of school grades, they have no way to escape from it, nor do they have enough courage to break out of those invisible chains. As a result, they become the same as the adults who used to mentally abuse them, thus maintaining the vicious circle. Besides, students subconsciously become their classmates' source of pressure. Because young children learn a lot from their peers, they are usually confused by their friends' hard work and doubt whether they are already doing their best or not, which intensifies the competitiveness between classmates.

Another factor that contributes to academic pressure on students is the excessive amount of schoolwork, especially in high school. At my high school, an average student has to attend class lectures for four hours every day from Monday to Friday in the morning. Three afternoons per week, the student have to go to school for another four hours; also, the student has another two more hours on Saturdays for extracurricular activities. After getting out of school at five in the afternoon, the student will most likely engage in another session of cram school, which usually last two hours or even more. Because most teachers offer extra classes which usually last four

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or three hours per week , or even six hours for major subjects like mathematics, and a student often has to take at least two different extra classes, the total time for cram school can easily exceed eight to ten hours every week. In total, an average student at my high school spends at least 40 hours per week on going to schools and extra classes, as much time as a normal full-time worker does. However, it does not end there. At home, an ordinary student has to do homework and study for upcoming exams. The time for self-studying varies from one student to another, but as far as I know, half of my class stayed up late to do homework, and the other half did not go to sleep until past midnight. For students in middle and elementary schools, this amount of time is slightly reduced, but it does not mean that the amount of work is. From middle school, a student has to learn 13 subjects a week, all year long, and all of them are compulsory. If the student gets a final score of less than eight in any of those 13 subjects, he or she will probably lose the chance of getting a title of good student, which is very important for scholarships or other benefits in Vietnam. To make things even worse, none of those subjects can be considered easy. One friend of mine said ironically, " At school, we have to be as knowledgeable as Einstein, run as fast as Usain Bolt, draw as beautifully as Picasso, sing as well as Elvis Presley, have communist ideals like Karl Marx, and be as good a person as Mother Theresa." She was not entirely exaggerating, since her words practically described much of the education system in Vietnam, no matter how unbelievable it may sound. Even for pre-school children, the situation is not better, for they are expected to read and write smoothly before actually entering their first school year. Except for my elementary teachers who were all very nice to me, many other teachers will not hesitate to hit a young kid

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for making a mistake on their exams. Indeed, violence adds to academic pressure as well.

Those kinds of pressure has become a part of everyday life, so no students can recognize how stressful their school years are until they get to university and look back on the previous time. Working hard in a long time is not all wasteful, however, because, in one way or another, it strengthens students' mind and provides them with more than enough knowledge so as to prevail in foreign countries' universities. Still, I hope that one day all those unfair stresses will be lifted away, so that the children can actually enjoy their childhood and no longer see their schools as a kind of prison, just like what I used to do throughout twelve years of my life.