

**International  
Institute of  
Social Studies**

The Erasmus logo, featuring a stylized, handwritten-style script of the word "Erasmus" in a dark grey color.

**Am I Happy?  
How Secondary School Students in Ho Chi Minh City  
(Vietnam) Understand Wellbeing**

A Research Paper presented by:

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## List of Acronyms

COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
ISS	International Institute of Social Studies
UN	United Nations
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SWB	Subjective Well-Being
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
THPT	Trung Học Phổ Thông (upper secondary school)
THCS	Trung Học Sơ Sở (lower secondary school)

沉醉东风 Intoxicated in East Wind

送别 Farewell Song

Guan Hanqing

咫尺的天南地北，*We stand so near yet we'll be poles apart soon;*  
霎时间月缺花飞。*In a moment flowers will fall and wane the moon.*  
手执着饯行杯，*We hold in hand the farewell cup,*  
眼阁着别离泪。*In our eyes tears well up.*  
刚道得声“保重将息”，*I have just said, "Take care to keep fit!"*  
痛煞煞教人舍不得。*How painful is it*  
好去者，*To tear myself away!*  
望前程万里！*"I can only say, "Go your way for the bright day!"*

To my mother,

Without you, I would never become the person I am today. Thank you for paving the way, and teaching me what are wrongs and rights, and what are best for me.

## **Abstract**

This research paper attempts to find out what the Vietnamese public secondary school students in Ho Chi Minh City understand their wellbeing. Speaking from the perspective of a Vietnamese national, the term wellbeing did not have an exact term or definition in Vietnamese language. By employing the concept of wellbeing in educational context, and with the help of the Vietnamese secondary school students, this paper aim finds out the definition. The factors involving in the making are emotions, health, motives and effectiveness of 118 students from 3 different schools in the city.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

Development of the students is crucial in education. The needs for improvement in the making of better wellbeing of Vietnamese students as a whole are necessary since there will always be loopholes presented in Vietnamese education system, and that can be done through lots of researches and studies. From the Children & Youth studies, Poverty and Inequality to Critical Social Policy courses, International Institute of Social Studies has helped me to develop this research paper by providing abundant resources.

## **Keywords**

Education, Vietnam, Covid-19, wellbeing, secondary school students, Online learning



# Chapter 1 : Wellbeing: A Polysemic Term

## Introduction

Growing up as Vietnamese, I had always been carrying responsibility to accomplish my duties as a child in a family even in the toughest of times. These duties will later pass down to the younger generation. But what are these duties that I am mentioning about? it begins with going school → earning the knowledge → getting good grades → being praised by teachers → graduate → repeat (for university) → getting a decent paid job → sending money to support parents → saving money to build a home → getting married → raising children and taking care of parents as they grow old → ... → on top of everything is showing gratitude to parents by making sure they live a happy life with the present of three generations in a household. Although young people have better familiarity with self-centered values from Western culture via media, entertainment, they still express a strong filial duty to their parents and acknowledge the importance of intergenerational contract (Croll 2006: 476-482). These duties would be fulfilled if I have acquired the first milestone, education.

Like any other Vietnamese students, the expectation from parents and school for me as a student to achieve good academic work has big impact on my wellbeing. I had invested most of my free times going to cram schools<sup>1</sup>, structured leisure activities such as chess, sports clubs and martial arts, and my day only ended after 11pm when I was still middle school in Vietnam. At some point, I thought if it is worth the time and money to go to different kinds of cram classes only to get good score in school when I can study by myself. Then as I grew up and work in education sector, I finally understood that the parents only want their children to be good at everything, so they could understand the class material faster than their classmates, and guarantee a high academic rank in class. It is common to be reminded that in Vietnam, the role of students in a family are to follow the expectations of parents for a better future (Đan Thanh, 2018). However, this research paper will not be about me and my experience with education, but about how the Vietnamese secondary school students understand their wellbeing.

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<sup>1</sup> Cram school: a private school that offers additional after-school instruction to enhance students' achievement (Harnisch, 1994; Oneil & Fukumura, 1992; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992 cited in Tsai & Kuo, 2008: 358).

## 1.2 Understanding the principles from Vietnamese perspective

As a Vietnamese student, from day one, the first thing you learn in primary school is the 5 principles for children and students by Uncle Ho (Ho Chi Minh):

1. “Love country, love the people (yêu tổ quốc, yêu đồng bào)
2. Study well, labour well (học tập tốt, lao động tốt)
3. Be united, be disciplined (đoàn kết tốt, kỷ luật tốt)
4. Keep the hygiene (giữ gìn vệ sinh)
5. Be modest, be truthful, be brave (khiêm tốn, thật thà, dũng cảm)” (Ho Chi Minh, 1965 in Nguyen 2021: no page)

Remembering the five principles is an easy task that every single Vietnamese student could do. However, understanding it is another story. From my experience, it took me three years (grade 1 to grade 3) to understand all the meaning behind these principles. Once I have understood the meanings by heart, I had to go through a small test in order to receive the red scarf<sup>2</sup>.

Love country – show the patriotism, maintain the culture and history of the nation

Love the people – love the ethnicity, showing love to people (family, friends, teachers)

Study well: never skip school, get good grades, not only learn from school, but also learn from the daily life activities

Labour well: do not overwork yourself, be grateful for the results from your own work or somebody else’s work, and participate in extra class activities

Be united: unite with your friends, family, and community. Help your friends when they need you

Be disciplined: follow the rules in school and in public

Keep the hygiene: keep your classroom clean, keep your own room clean and tidy

Be modest: do not show off your arrogance, respect the family and older people

Be truthful: must stay true to yourself

Be brave: acknowledge your weakness and show courage.

Every single class room in Vietnamese schools must have a framed portrait of Uncle Ho and the five principles. It is impossible for a student to not know what the 5 principles are. To become a decent human, the students need to carry these 5 principles with them until the end of grade 12 and apply it well. Yet, not every student could accomplish this without any issues.

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<sup>2</sup> Red scarf/red scarves: represent Youth Pioneer Association (founded in 1941), act as youth propaganda under Communist Party of Vietnam system. Every student in Vietnamese public school (from 9 to 15 years old) must wear it with the school uniform (Thieunhivietnam, 2020).

## 1.4 Problem Statement

Fast forward to the COVID-19 pandemic, the current situation even made it harder for students to take care of themselves. I have my niece and nephews as example, that they felt bored and got distracted from class easily. This had affected my niece's grade since she had difficult time catching up the lesson. A more concrete example is the students' anonymous confessions in Facebook groups (2004 luyện thi đại học, THPT [school name] Confession) about their issues. Many students, particularly those born in 2004, opened up about their stress from studying online class, doing homework while preparing for university entrance exam in 2022. One student said in their post "[...] *The moment that makes me want to cry the most is when I tried so hard but no one recognized my effort. I know I am not a fast learner who finish studying in 1 hour like others, I spent 3-4 hours to absorb all the lessons, and I have to invest most of my time to study just to catch up with everyone in class. Through all these years, no matter how hard I worked, they only cared about the scores. Ironically when I got high score, they said I'm lucky, but when I received low score, they said all the lessons taught to me were useless (original author used Vietnamese idiom). Everyone asked about my score, but not one asked if I am tired. Every time this happened, I could only cry and not dared to tell my parents, I don't want to upset them. [...], not long after that will be university entrance exam, but all I hear from people are "do you think you will get into university with this score?". The scores can decide things, but not everything. I know myself and I am trying to reach my goal*" (Thanh Tung, 2021). The author also attached a photo with a quote "*not many cares how much you tried, they only cared about the scores.*". The post received lots of comments and shares with sympathy from individuals (mostly students). unfortunately, this is not a new issue that happened just recently, but it is a filial duty of a child to parents.

The wellbeing of the students has been underestimated in Vietnam, and an example above is one of the cases. The image of working/studying hard has been portrayed through Vietnamese idioms that were taught in primary schools "*có công mài sắt, có ngày nên kim*" for practice makes perfect or "*khổ luyện thành tài*" for success requires hard work over time. In addition, it was barely brought up as a topic, but rather understood by lots of parents that it was the pressure that all students had to face because it will make them succeed in life.

## 1.5 Research Objective and Questions

The objective of this research paper is to find out what the Vietnamese public secondary school students in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam think about their wellbeing during COVID-19 pandemic. The main goal is to increase our knowledge about the way the students

understand their wellbeing in everyday lives as a student and how they perceive the actors who contributed to their wellbeing.

### **1.5.1 Questions**

the concept of wellbeing mentioned by Noble, T. et al. (2008) was used to find out the answers of this research paper. There are three crucial actors that are involved in the making of wellbeing: family, school, and the students themselves. The research question was developed to find out what students think of wellbeing:

How do the Vietnamese public high school students in Ho Chi Minh city understand wellbeing?

#### **Sub questions:**

- What have the lockdown in Ho Chi Minh from COVID-19 affect the wellbeing?
- How do students perceive family to contribute to their wellbeing?
- How do students perceive school to contribute to their wellbeing?

## **1.6 Chapter Outline**

This paper is organized in the following order. Chapter 2 will be covering the concepts of wellbeing. I will look into the concept used by Noble et al. (2008) and its characteristics. Furthermore, I will discuss about previous studies on well-beings of children. In Chapter 3, I will explain the framework and methodology used for this research paper. Chapter 4 will present the findings and discussion. The final chapter is the conclusion and recommendations.

## Chapter 2 : Student Wellbeing in School

This chapter gives the overview of wellbeing. It delivers several different concepts of wellbeing that were studied in previous researches. In addition, chapter 2 will review the common characteristics in the wellbeing of the students, and an update on recent studies on wellbeing during COVID-19 pandemic.

Wellbeing is, indeed, a complex term that has a lot of definition, and explanation, especially the empathy for the audience to understand in the context of the students. It does not necessarily need to be understood in the same way, as each of us can define it differently. However, regardless of numerous definitions, whether in economy, researchers, or by UN, some of the features were usually brought up into the making of definition of wellbeing. Before diverting my focus to the student wellbeing which adding to the latest national wide COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, let's delve into the common understanding of wellbeing and its features.

### 2.1 Concepts of Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a word that can be defined in many ways, and the way people understand it are culturally different from one another (Camfield, Streuli, and Woodhead 2010, p. 399). It is broad and open to multiple interpretations and research approaches (ibid.). For a child to gain the rights to live free from abuse, violence, and maintaining their best well-being, there should be sufficient resources to meet the needs such as: social participation and supportive relationships and leisure (ibid.). This understanding of well-being is rather from adult research paradigm, while it remains doubtful if the children themselves also contributed to the making of the definition, let alone the policy applications. However, whether the children acknowledge their rights or well-beings or not, it also depends on education system itself and the family.

There was lack of inclusion of the context of children to the definitions mentioned in *Table 2.1*. The definitions of wellbeing below were distinguished in different concepts and applicable well to the showed by Camfield et al., (2010) such as having (a good life), living (a good life), and locating one's life (experience and subjectivity) in previous studies but there were very little relations to the context of children in developing countries:

**Table 2.1 Some definitions of well-being**

having	living	Location
Externally assessed and approved, and thereby normatively endorsed, non-feeling features of a person's life' (Gasper, 2007, p. 59)	'The expansion of the "capabilities" of people to lead the kind of lives they value – and have reason to value' (Sen, 1999, p. 285)	The 'feelings and/or judgements of the person whose well-being is being estimated' (Gasper, 2007, p. 59)
'Economic' poverty indicators such as income per capita, income-poverty and income Inequality (Sumner, 2007, p. 8)	'What people are notionally able to do and to be, and what they have actually been able to do and to be' (Gough et al, 2007, p. 6)	'Intricately bound up with ideas about what constitutes human happiness and the sort of life it is good to lead' (Honderich, 2005 in Gough et al, 2007, p. 4)
Five 'capital assets' in the sustainable livelihoods framework (natural, human, financial, physical and social) (see Carney, 1998)	'Play[ing] an active role in creating their well-being by balancing [...] different factors, developing and making use of resources and responding to stress' (Bradshaw et al, 2007, p. 136)	'Differ[s] from place to place [...] individual perceptions are grounded in shared meanings through culture; and [...] experience is essentially constituted in relation to others' (White, 2008)
Basic needs such as health whose deprivation causes 'serious harm' (Doyal and Gough, 1991, p. 39)		

*Source: Camfield, Streuli & Woodhead 2010, p. 401*

Well-being is a difficult term to translate its true meaning into Vietnamese. I found out that there were lots of difficulties when trying to translate a word into a different language. Upon searching for a certain vocabulary to address wellbeing, I could not find an exact term. I also asked my Vietnamese colleagues what well-being is called in mother tongue, and none of them were able to get the correct and direct meaning. Subsequently when translating the term wellbeing, it came to mind that there was not a specific word to define it in Vietnamese. This was an issue as I needed at least a phrase to interpret the definition to the students.

The first concept of wellbeing that came to my mind was the UN's translation of wellbeing from UN Sustainable Development Goal 3<sup>3</sup>. Wellbeing as "*cộng sống tốt*", roughly translated as "*a good life*" (UN, no date). Although "having a good life" does not provide a deep meaning, it illustrates better living conditions, healthy lives, and happiness for all ages (United Nations, no date). A good life in terms of economic, according to Sen's capability approach which was built upon the notions of well-beings rather than money-metric measures, it is about maximizing choices that a person has, where incomes and education

<sup>3</sup> Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good health and well-being

are the ingredients to a good life (Fischer 2018: 53; Huijsman & Piti 2021: 165-166). The good life, in Vietnamese context, is living life of poverty free, resistant to vulnerability by maintaining income and well-being (Nguyen, Vo & Vu 2020: 143).

Tracing back to definitions of well-being as explained in *Table 2.3*, according to White (2008), the concept of well-being differs from place to place, perceptions are culturally grounded through shared culture. In order to measure the children's wellbeing, there should be a paradigm shifts from objective description where children as passive objects into children's subjective perceptions of their world and insights (Ben-Arieh 2005: 578-579). According to Ben-Arieh (2005: 577), a set of questions should be brought up to enhance a clearer picture of the children:

1. What are children doing?
2. What do children need?
3. What do children have?
4. What do children think and feel?
5. To whom or what are children connected and related?
6. What do children contribute?

To respond to Ben-Arieh's questions, I bring in Noble et al., (2008) concepts of wellbeing which stated a clearer argument given that the nature of the term itself was already difficult to define and measure. The expansive concept was created when Noble et al. reported to Australian Government about the approaches to the development of student' social, emotional, and academic, and contributed prevention of depression, self-harm, etc. The definitions from the following authors into their concept of wellbeing which was relatable more under the educational perspective:

*"Wellbeing is a positive emotional state that is the result of a harmony between the sum of specific context factors on the one hand and the personal needs and expectations towards the school on the other hand."* (Engels, Aelterman, Van Petegem, & Schepens, 2004: 128)

*"Wellbeing is the degree to which a student feels good in the school environment"* (De Fraine, Van Landeghem, Van Damme & Onghena 2005: 297)

*"Wellbeing is the degree to which a student is functioning effectively in the school community."* (Fraillon, 2004: 23-24).

This is the concept that Noble et al., used for their research report:

*"[...] a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experience at school."* (Noble et al. 2008: 21)

## 2.2 Common Characteristics Found in Wellbeing

Masters (2004: 2) believed that the development of student's wellbeing as a whole depends on the growth and the balance in the given dimensions: spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, and social.

Frailon advocated that, instead of proposing for several types of wellbeing, such as: psychological wellbeing, physical wellbeing, social wellbeing, or spiritual wellbeing, etc., it should rather be multi-dimensional models of wellbeing. The characteristics that Noble et al. (2008: 20-21) found in most definitions including the combined definitions in previous page:

- Positive effects (emotional component)
- Resilience (coping component)
- Satisfaction with relationships and other dimensions of one's life (cognitive)
- Effective functioning and maximizing one's potential (performance component)

### 2.2.1 Sustainability of positive mood and attitude (positive effects)

Positive mood and attitude play a crucial role into the contribution of wellbeing. According to Menninger (1930: 1), mental health was addressed as *"the adjustment of human beings to the world and to each other with a maximum of effectiveness and happiness"*. Moreover, WHO (2018: no page) emphasized that a foundation factor for an ideal wellbeing allows individuals to be in "a state where they recognize their own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community". Without objection, good mental health requires happiness and the coping mechanism (pleasant emotions, life satisfaction) to maximize the effectiveness in life contribution.

Similar to positive emotional components, a successful performance of physical health will bring positive outcome to good wellbeing. Physical health is the normal function of an organism, a biological process that ensures balance between survivals and reproduction with the participation in social activities, basic social functions, absence of diseases, and adjustment to constant change of external environment (Koipysheva 2018: 603). in Koipysheva (2018: 603), Lebedinsky et al. (2017) said that physical health was described as *"genetically determined motor capacity of a person (physical preparedness), which during his/ her life undergoes sound changes in the process of morphofunctional adaptation (physical development) to the changing conditions of the external environment and life activity"*.

To maximize the effectiveness and happiness, it requires physical and psychological aspects to be put in generally. Diener & Biswas-Diener (2002: 156) provided a clearer meaning which is more relevant to the student wellbeing, that "subjective wellbeing (SWB)



represents people's evaluations of their lives, and includes happiness, pleasant emotions, life satisfaction, and a relative absence of unpleasant moods and emotions". Although their research used the income groups for sampling, they obtained mood, satisfaction as well as how people spent their times from the respondents at random times in daily lives to represent people's feelings, so the results were not influenced from memory biased or scaling (ibid.). Rather than separating wellbeing into different dimensions, Diener & Biswas-Diener combined psychological, physical, and social aspects in their research.

### **2.2.2 Resilience**

It is the ability to recover and tackle the challenging tasks, produce productive outcomes to contribute to the community. Psychologically, Abiola and Udofia (2011: 4) suggested that resilience is associated with good demonstration of effective coping with stress when faced with adversity. Wang et al. (1994: 45-72) argued that the increased of academic success in spite of environmental adversity was the result of resilience. For Asian students, the fear of failing in class, receiving lower grades compare to other peers are regarded as the guilt for duty failure towards the parents' academic expectations (Li et al 2017: 3). In other words, it is the ability of the students to learn from their mistakes, deal with the problems to reach their academic achievements.

Based on previous studies, for example, the evidences were shown about academic resilience of Asian students from Sandoval-Hernandez & Bialowolski (2016: 519). The research was done using the data from Singapore, South Korea, Chinese Taipei, and Japan from TIMSS<sup>4</sup> 2011. Closest to Vietnamese culture is Singapore, under Confucianism influence, there is a long tradition of striving for success not only personally, but also for the honor of the family (ibid.). Consequently, the students themselves implicated their academic achievement more seriously as they are more likely to be under social pressure than the students from the west (Sandoval-Hernandez & Bialowolski (2016: 515).

### **2.2.3 Satisfaction with self, relationship of one's life (experience at school)**

A good wellbeing implies a sense of balance and harmony of different aspects of life, which the ability to live and work healthily to contribute to the society to acquire the life satisfaction of a person (Noble et al., 2008: 17). The term 'good life' was, rather than in the sense of money metric where education and incomes are the ingredients, it amplifies fulfilling the

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<sup>4</sup> TMSS: Trends in Mathematics and Science Study

potential and the feeling of accomplishment in life that is worthwhile (Eckersley, 2005: no page). For the students, it is important to understand what they think what are the indicators to their life satisfaction, relationship and experience at school. According to OECD (2020: no page), children at age of 15 tend to give their best into work when they are in jubilant or if there is meaning in their life regardless of how supportive the schools or families are. In 2018, they conducted an overall evaluation of life satisfaction that was based on the student's self-perception (SWB), where the average scale that Vietnamese students gave was 7.47 (moderately satisfied) out of 10 (ibid). Moreover, more than 85 percent of Vietnamese student survey participants agreed that they had clear sense of what gives meaning to their lives. Hypothetically, this would link with the academic resilience that students from Vietnam faced when the students meant by "*clear sense of what gives meaning in their lives*" which Gilman & Huebner (2006: 317) understood that the achievement from outstanding academic goals means high self-satisfaction.

## **2.2.4 Effective Functioning and Maximizing one's Potential**

Effective functioning is instead constructed on how a person response to a contextualized circumstance rather than a simple measurement (Fraillon 2004: 23). In school, the student's effective function can be clarified through their wellbeing (ibid.). For example, two students received low score for a test, one would look at the result and learn from the wrong answers, while the other one throws the test away. This tells that the second student function less effectively, and it is how effective functioning can be measured from the accomplishment from predetermined behaviors (ibid.)). The school alone, serves as a portal for delivering educational outcomes, and it offers opportunities for individuals to achieve non-academic success such as friendship, while some would experience difficult issues (financial, family, stress, anxiety, etc,...) (Phan et al. 2017: 668). Also, the effectiveness of the student also relies on the teaching method as well as teacher's engagement with the students (Noble et al. 2008: 60).

## **2.3 Students' Wellbeing under COVID-19 Pandemic**

The widespread of COVID-19 pandemic had forced the educational institution to closed down, migrating the learning and working environment entirely into digital communication platforms (Ahmadon et al. 2020: 1). However, not all students and teachers are technically ready, many teachers were not trained for technological knowledge, lack of facilities to support learning, financial crisis, and emotional impact, and domestic situation could be

challenging when working/learning from home to some individuals (Ahmadon et al.: 2020). Vu & Bosmans (2021: 10) provided evidences that among 652 Vietnamese students survey participants age ranging from 10 to 16, respondents with more COVID-19 anxiety showed little interest in learning and believed that school work was rather less important.

Not only that, COVID-19 could have impact on pupils' wellbeing, in which to some extent, the lockdowns contributed to the development of adolescent's wellbeing, which it jeopardized the Vietnamese students' academic career (Canet-Juric 2020: 2; Vu & Bosmans 2021: 9). However, the research found out that there were no correlations between COVID-19 anxiety and learning exhaustion, and it requires further research for better understanding. Besides the school, family and the students themselves are depending on each other throughout the lockdown. Upon the widespread of COVID-19 causing the fourth wave in Ho Chi Minh city back in late April, where 13 million people live and work, the social distancing scheme that was used in the previous lockdown was no longer effective, and military was sent in for helps (Tough 2021: 1).

## Chapter 3 : Methodology

This chapter will answer the research questions for this research paper which concerns about the wellbeing of the Vietnamese public secondary school students in a few schools around Ho Chi Minh city. The chapter is divided into three sections. It begins by providing the application of the framework by Noble et al., (2008) to this research design. From second section on, I will explain the data collection process. The first step will start by recruiting student peer researchers residing in Ho Chi Minh city group discussions among the peer researchers and I. The third section discusses about the use of quantitative survey. The survey is followed by in depth interviews given to some survey participants. This chapter also outlines my observation (Hennik, 2020: 169-200) towards the survey participants and peer researchers, and interviewees, and last section reveals the limitations and the ethical concerns.

### 3.1 Framework

The concepts of wellbeing are contextualized and can be subjectively different, and given that the nature of the term itself was already difficult to define and measure. To build up the ground base for this research paper, I applied Noble et al., (2008)'s definition as a framework to guide the students survey respondents to find out how they understand the wellbeing. It is “[...] *a sustainable state of positive mood and attitude, resilience, and satisfaction with self, relationships and experience at school.*” (Noble et al. 2008: 21). A good wellbeing cannot be simply determined “by saying yes I am happy”. It needs a context, it needs some components that involves in the experience, and in this case, it is about the wellbeing of the students at school. I chose this definition because it will help the students questioning themselves about what makes them happy, are they really happy, and how they understand happiness.

This concept was defined once before in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when Columbo (1986: 288) labelled wellbeing as multidimensionally constructed by mental/psychological, physical and social dimension. The following characteristics: sustainability of positive mood and attitude, resilience, satisfaction with self, relationship and experience of one's life, and effective functioning and maximizing one's potential are employed for this research paper.

#### ***Sustainability of positive mood and attitude***

Metaphorically, I need to place the characteristics in the right place where they are all perfectly fit in for a complete puzzle of student wellbeing for this research. The first chosen

piece is Diener & Biswas-Diener (2002: 156) concept of SWB for sustainability of positive mood and attitude to formulate emotions related questions and satisfaction of the students in school. The idea was well explained and combined a mixture of emotional, physical, and social aspects which is suitable in the context of this my research.

### ***Resilience***

Judith Harackiewicz (2004) reported in her study that the development of motivation of students' interest is crucial for long-term academic success, therefore the importance of resilience needs to be presented too. This second piece of puzzle, resilience, by Wang et al. (1994) was brought in to guideline the questionnaire in Vietnamese context. Resilience has the factor to limit the negative behaviors or inefficient functions but is associated with stress and pressures for a productive outcome (Waxman et al. 2003: 2).

### ***satisfaction with self, relationship and experience of one's life***

The third characteristic to be used in this research paper is the satisfaction with self, and relationship in school. According to Octavius et al. (2020: 5), COVID-19 indeed have a significant drawback on emotional wellbeing of the students. On the other hand, Ba Tuan Vu and Guy Bosmans (2021: 9) argued that staying home is a safe haven for some Vietnamese students, and protecting them from exhaustions coming from school's related distress. This paper will eventually look into this matter, and to find out if it is actually true during COVID-19 lockdown.

### ***effective functioning and maximizing one's potential***

The last piece for this puzzle is effective functioning and maximizing one's potential. Frailon (2004). The interpersonal behaviors of the students are essential for their capability to effectively function in school (Pollard & Lee 2003: 68). Moreover, the availability of facilities to support learning from home also have contribution to the effectiveness. On the other hand, the students would not get as much sufficient support from teacher as learning in-person due to lack of human interaction (Ahmadon et al. 2020: 2).

## **3.2 Education System Structure**

Here is the brief background information of the education system in Vietnam. The students normally complete 12 years of schooling before they could do university entrance exam. However, it will never be possible for me to conduct my research for every grade in the system. I only picked grade 9, 10, 11 12 as the students are believed to be more mature than primary school students. the section 3.3 will explain further.

Primary education:

- 5 years
- For children from 6 to 11
- Grade 1 to 5

Students are required to pass an entrance exam in order for admission to lower secondary (update 2021: only students who wish to go to top schools will have to take entrance exams (science, maths, English.)

Lower Secondary education:

- 4 years
- For children from 11 to 15
- Grade 6 to 9
- Entrance exam into upper secondary education

Upper secondary:

- 3 years
- After completing 3 years, students graduation exam/university entrance exam

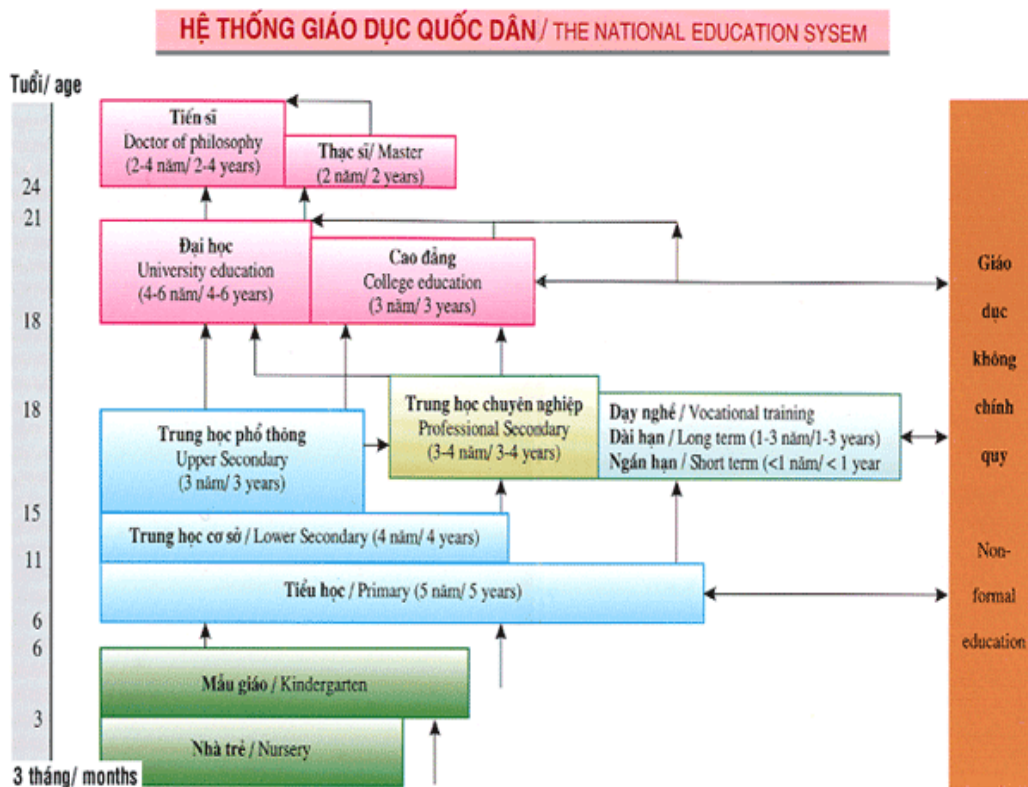


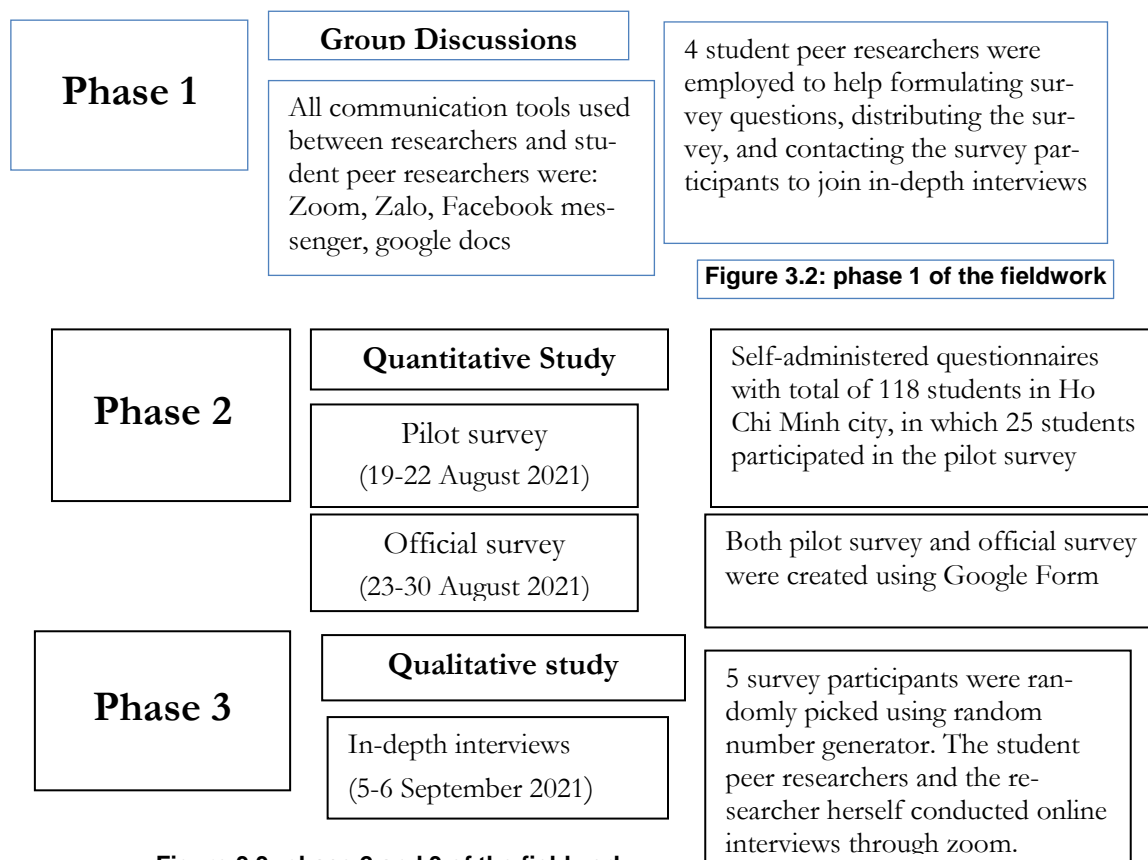
Figure 3.1: source, Ministry of Education and Training in Tran, 2014, Vietnamese education system

### 3.3 Research Design

Using the definition provided by Noble et al. (2008) of wellbeing, I had developed my research findings from the students from 3 different schools within Ho Chi Minh City. Unlike the previous researches which took place mostly at the study location, the primary data collection for this research paper happened completely online as I could not fly back to Vietnam due border closed from COVID-19 pandemic. The research applied a mixed

methods for data collection using group discussion, quantitative survey, qualitative interview, while observation was applied to report the working process with the student peer researchers and the interviewees.

In order to build this research, the study is divided into three phases. Prior the research data collection, the research problems were identified in and presented at ISS in June 2021. The field work begun in July with recruiting student peer researchers and held numerous group discussions to create the questionnaires. The second phase marks the distribution of the questionnaire to students of 3 schools (THCS Dong Khoi, THPT Nguyen Huu Huan, and THPT Duc Tri).



**Figure 3.3: phase 2 and 3 of the fieldwork**

### 3.4 Research Location and Student Peer Researcher Recruit

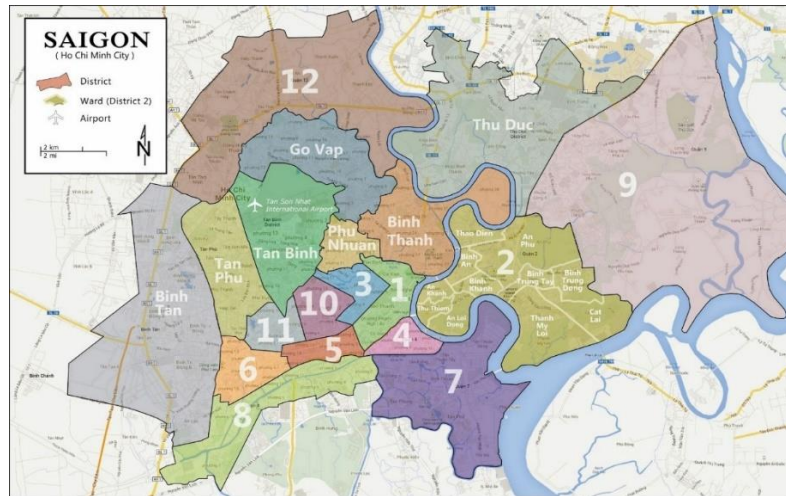


Figure 3.4 Ho Chi Minh city Map, retrieved from Orangesmile, 2021

The specific location of the study entirely dependent on the education background of the student peer researchers, therefore the recruitment criteria was demanding. The criteria were:

- Must be a student/former student of a public high school in Ho Chi Minh city
- Have connection with students from grade 10, 11, or 12 from school year 2020/2021
- Able to manage time to attend meeting sessions or work in the evening.

There were 8 candidates including current high school students, fresh high school graduate students, and university students from 5 different schools within Ho Chi Minh city were contacted through emails, AIESEC digital Youth Exchange Program, or close connections. However, only 4 were chosen due to the time available of the students, and their ambition to participate in this project. In the end, there were only 3 researchers who met the criteria, so 1 researcher from grade 9 was brought in last minute.

4 student peer researchers were recruited in July. 3 students are under 18, and required to have parental consent (see annex 1) before participating in the research. One peer researcher is a recent high school graduate in school year 2020/2021 and is 18 years old. Peer researchers Nghi and Khang are my family relatives, so it was more convenient to ask them to work with me. Peer researchers Quy and Nam are classmates and were recruited through connections of my mother.

Table 3.1: author, list of student peer researchers

Name of student peer researcher	gender	Birth year	School
Nghi	Female	2006	THCS Dong Khoi
Quy	Male	2004	THPT Nguyen Huu Huan



Khang	Male	2003	Former student of THPT Duc Tri
Nam	male	2004	THPT Nguyen Huu Huan

The research location was within Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Out of 19 districts, only 3 schools from 3 districts were selected. The decision for choosing the study location was based on the schools that the peer researchers went to in school year 2020/2021.

- THCS Đồng Khởi – district 1

A lower secondary high school situated in district 1, the fanciest and most expensive area of HCMC.

- THPT Đức Trí – district 7

An upper secondary high school located near the industrial area of district 7

- THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân – district Thủ Đức

An upper secondary high school located near the new hi-tech industrial zone and Universities Village

Trung Học Cơ Sở (THCS) – Lower secondary high school (grade 6-9)

Trung Học Phổ Thông (THPT) – Upper secondary high school (grade 10-12)

### 3.3.2 Group Discussion

The student peer researchers and I had our first meeting in late July 2021. The objectives for the group discussion sections were:

- debating what were the issues the high school or soon-to-be high school students in HCMC faced.
- Explaining how teachers and students communicate in online learning environment
- Formulating and drafting survey questions
- Updating on the survey results
- Updating on the ministry of education and schools' announcements in case there were any changes

### 3.3.3 Quantitative Study

The questionnaire was constructed based on four characteristics: positive effect (emotional component), resilience (a coping component), satisfaction with relationships and other dimensions of one's life, and effective functioning and maximizing of one's potential. These 4 characteristics all appear in all four sections of the questionnaires.

**Part 1: yourself** – the questions were set to answer whether the students were interested in online learning, if online learning had affected their physical and mental health, their convenience, functionality and how they solve those issues related to their wellbeing (if have).

**Part 2: family** - family plays in important role in every student's daily lives. Furthermore, during COVID-19 lockdown, students spent more times together with their family,

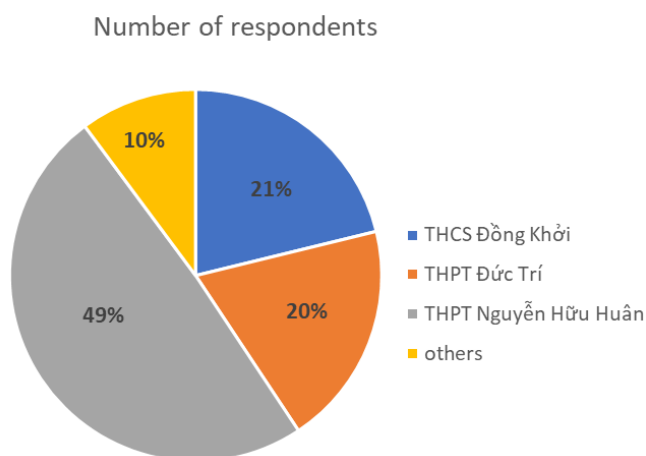
therefore their involvements in the students' affairs are indeed higher than normal days.

Part 2 aims to discover the connection of the family to the student's life satisfaction and if it encourages maximizing their potentials.

**Part 3: school** - besides family, the school delivers huge affection to the students' lives. However, with the impact of COVID-19 lockdown, a lot of things happened which both schools and students were not prepared for to face the problem. The answers from the students will result on how online learning had changed their lives, and if the school offered adequate supports.

**Part 4: Are you really happy?** – the last section of the questionnaire is a space for students to reflect thoughts on their lives as students. Also, it is a place for students to mention the problems that was never brought up, and how keen they are to achieve their goals and targets (life satisfaction and maximizing ones' potential)

The respondents were recruited by the peer researcher through Zalo<sup>5</sup> chats and Facebook Messenger class group chats, close friends group chats, and individual chats. All of the survey participants from THCS Đồng Khởi, by august 2021, became former students of the school as they would have to transfer to an upper secondary school. Out of the total of 118 students participated in the online questionnaire, 49% of the respondents came from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân, while students from other schools covered 10% of the total survey. The respondents from the pilot survey had also contributed to enhance the perception of individuals even if their opinions do not represent the entire student population in Ho Chi Minh city. There were 25 students and former students participated in the pilot testing questionnaire before it was officially distributed.



**Figure 3.5: author, percentage of survey participants by school (2021)**

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<sup>5</sup> Zalo: A Vietnamese popular instant messaging app (like Whatsapp) provided by VNG Corporation.

### 3.3.4 Qualitative Study

5 survey participants were originally randomly selected to participate in semi-structured interviews. 5 students represented the birth years, school, and the class grade they were in in school year 2020/2021. However, 1 student rejected the interview as they felt uncomfortable to speak in front of stranger. Moreover, the identity of the interviewees will not be disclosed under any circumstances. The process of choosing the interviewees were as followed:

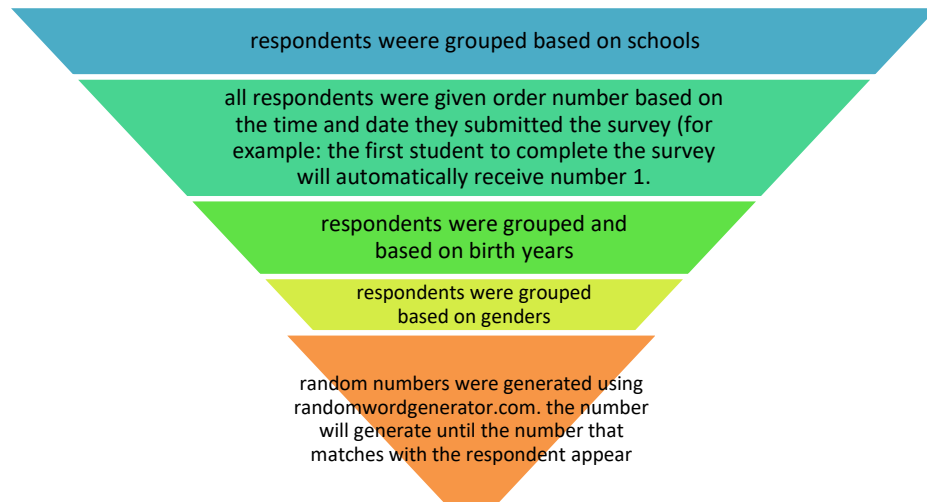


Figure 3.6: author, process of selecting interviewees

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
n	Timestamp	Năm sinh:	Giới tính	Trường đã/dang theo học	Khối lớp (2020-2021)	Họ và Tên	
1	8/19/2021 14:29:20	2004	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 11		
2	8/20/2021 4:49:12	2004	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 11		
3	8/20/2021 5:48:05	2004	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 11		
4	8/20/2021 5:50:30	2004	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 11		
5	8/20/2021 12:43:55	2004	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 11		
6	8/20/2021 14:20:13	2005	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 10		
7	8/20/2021 14:22:50	2003	Nam	Cựu học sinh THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 12		
8	8/20/2021 14:45:25	2005	Nữ	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 10		
9	8/20/2021 14:48:37	2005	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 10		
10	8/20/2021 14:56:39	2005	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 10		
11	8/20/2021 15:15:05	2005	Nam	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Khối 10		
12							

Figure 3.7 author, how respondents were grouped into same categories (2021)

Table 3.2: Information about the interviews

Date	Interviewee information	interviewer	facilitator
5 sep 2021	Female; 2006; from THCS Đồng Khởi	Minh Ngoc Lam	Nghi
5 Sep 2021	Male; 2005; from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Quy	Ngoc
6 Sep 2021	Male; 2004; from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân	Nam	Ngoc
6 Sep 2021	Female; 2003; from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Thọ (from pilot questionnaire)	Nam	Ngoc, Khang

6 Sep 2021	Male; 2003; from THPT Đức Trí	Nam	Ngoc, Khang
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### 3.3.5 Observation

The observation was carried out throughout the entire data collection process, starting from the very first interaction sessions with the peer researchers to the group discussion, and until the end of the data collection period on Zalo chat and Google doc. It was applied to this research paper to systematically observe and record the student peer researchers, survey participants, and interviewees behaviour, actions and interactions (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey: 170). Since this research paper is about how the students understand wellbeing, it is necessary to record the attitude of the students when they are participating in the research, and to what extent do they want to exploit their own issues through formulating and answering the survey questions.

## 3.5 Limitations

### 3.5.1 Before data collection

In the beginning of the peer researcher recruitment, there were 8 candidates from 5 different schools in total who lived and studied in Ho Chi Minh city and have connections to the high school students and teachers. Due to different time zones and schedule conflicts, the research reduced its scale down to 3 schools with 4 peer researchers. Using connections from family and the advantage of having 2 relatives between ages (15 to 18), 4 peer researchers were eventually recruited. It was a new experience for that 2 relatives-turned-to peer researchers as they have never really done any surveys about wellbeing before as well as assisting for research. Moreover, they have never met the 2 other students.

The chances for choosing which and how many schools to participate was very low due to city-wide lockdown from high number of COVID-19 cases begun in May 2021. Using what and the people I already have, I was only able to complete the data collection in less than 2 weeks before my findings seminar took place in the end of September.

### 3.5.2 During data collection

3 student peer researchers had to take online cram classes while also working on this research, 1 peer researcher volunteered to distribute foods and basic groceries to the households in the slums around district 7 during lockdown, so their schedules were usually conflicted when we planned for group meetings to discuss about the surveys. By the time that

all the peer researchers and I found perfect time for meeting scheduling, the COVID-19 situation in HCMC turned worse. HCMC was under lockdown from May 2021 and restriction was tightened in August as the central government imposed on the campaign “*ai ở đâu ở yên đó*” (remain at one place), no one were allowed to go out, not even to buy groceries (Reuters: 2021). The foods and other basic groceries could only be ordered online and delivered by the soldiers or volunteers. Khang, one of the peer researchers was the volunteer to distribute food and groceries. This eventually made it even more difficult for me and the rest of the peer researchers to communicate with him since he was responsible for distributing survey to THPT Đức Trí students and contact the interviewees.

The interviews were postponed many times due to schedule conflicts from the peer researcher, the interviewees, and I. There were slow of responses and/or confirmation from both sides due to time differences and lack of attentions as I work part-time for Thuisbezorgd as a courier while the peer researchers were busy (mentioned above).

### 3.6 Ethical Concerns

Working with children under 18 is an ethical issue if the consent was not asked to the parents and teachers. One of the cases occurred where the student peer researcher refused to tell his parents about his work for this research paper because of having bad term in relationship with the parents. The other case was that the peer researcher decided to wait until his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday passed by before he could participate in the research, so I would not have to ask for his parent consent.

The consent letter provided to the parents the tasks that the children were going to do, and to allow the student to participate in online research. I thought it was needed since this “work” involves money in it, and to letting the parents understand this is real research and not an online scam.

Ethical concern was also highlighted as 3 interviewees were underage. This issue was explained carefully as I instructed the peer researchers to personally contact the respondents instead of me since they were classmates/friends. As revealed by the student peer researchers themselves, asking parents or teachers of the respondents’ consent could end up losing its nature while enhanced the formality. It could be that the parents may monitor the students during their interview, and this would have made the whole atmosphere of semi-structured interviews uncomfortable, and interviewees would provide less answers.

## Chapter 4 : Data Findings

This chapter provides an overview result of the data findings gathered from the fieldwork. The findings include group discussion, quantitative study, qualitative interviews, and observations. Following the findings is discussion on the result and its relation to all four characteristics that defined the students' wellbeing. The four characteristics are: positive effect (emotional components), resilience (coping components), satisfaction with relationships and other dimensions of one's life, and effective functioning and maximizing one's potential during the online learning process. The final section in this chapter will discuss the limitations in this data findings and results.

### 4.1 Group discussions

I held 9 meetings in total with student peer researchers between almost 3 months of online fieldwork (July-September). Most of the meetings took place approximately 1 hour with effective work outcomes. The 4 peer researchers tend to agree on the opinion brought up by one another about the feelings towards their satisfaction with the school's management in the meeting. Despite the agreements, there were opposed opinion on the design of the questionnaires, and how it should be structured.

#### *Timeline of group discussions*

**15 July to 20 July:** student peer researcher recruitment

**23 July 1<sup>st</sup> meeting:** first meeting with all student peer researchers. The purpose of this meeting was to break the ice and get to know each other.

**25 July 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting:** the purpose of the meeting was to introduce the 4 characteristics identified by Noble et al., to the peer researchers. Nam and Quy came up with a set of arguments about effective functioning to maximize one's potential which revolved around the school's support towards the students during pandemic in Vietnam. They said that the school was rather caught off guard from unforeseen COVID-19 situation, so the teachers were not trained to teach online. Luckily, by the time the 4<sup>th</sup> wave started, the school year was almost over, and most students (except for grade 9, grade 12 students had their university entrance exam in mid-June) have already done their final exam. In the end, the peer researchers and I were able to come up with questions asking whether the school's provide adequate support to students during pandemic (teachers' supports, online extra-curricular activities, mental supports, facilities...). The peer researchers and I created ourselves a homework: write 3 questions about the school's support during pandemic.

**27 July 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting:** Khang was not presented due to COVID-19 vaccine side effect. The purpose for this meeting was to discuss about the role of the family that contributed to the wellbeing of the students. Parental support was the main argument for this topic. Nghi and Quy both said that parents change the way they care for their children's academic performance. Quy added, from his experience plus bad term with his parents, he is one of the top (according to Nam) students in class who is put under pressure of hectic cram class schedules and outstanding academic achievement while he only wanted to spend little bit of his free time to do everything he liked. The session ended with an addition of questions about parents' involvement in the students' life.

**1 August 4<sup>th</sup> meeting:** the meeting's purpose was to identify questions that are able to explore the 4 characteristics in the student. Questions like whether the students' effectiveness has lost from online schooling, their psychological and physical health was affected, and how they tackled such issues to go through the hardship. The session ended with peer researchers and I finalizing the drafted questionnaire before sending it to my RP supervisor (Roy).

**3-4 August:** the drafted questions were translated into English with the help of Nam. Main communication tool was through Zalo texts. The draft was sent in to RP supervisor.

**5 august 5<sup>th</sup> meeting:** an impromptu meeting without the present of Muoi and Khang to discuss the feedback from supervisor.

**10 August 6<sup>th</sup> meeting:** review the feedbacks and edit the survey. Quy emphasized on the importance of the 4 characteristics in section 1 (yourself) and section 4 (are you really happy?) that the questions need to be more direct so the respondents would provide longer answers.

**15 August:** most editing and communication took place on Zalo. the process of finalizing the draft was slowed down when Khang was out of reach due to his volunteer work. The draft was sent to supervisor on 12/8 and received feedback.

**18-19 august 7<sup>th</sup> meeting:** sent out pilot survey. The responses came back quick shortly after the survey was sent. However, it took longer for Khang to distribute the survey to his former classmates.

**19-21 August:** pilot testing completed with 25 respondents and was officially distributed to the students on 21/8

**31/8 8<sup>th</sup> meeting:** Khang was not presented. A short meeting took place to summarize the survey result and to discuss about the role of each peer researcher for the qualitative interviews. Each peer researcher was assigned to contact the respondents from the school/class. For example, Nghi was assigned to get in touch with a respondent from THCS Đồng Khởi, and Quý was asked to contact the interviewee from grade 10 of THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân.

**1 September:** I random select interviewees using randomwordgenerator.com by placing the number on each respondent based on the time and date they filled in the survey in descending order. For example, student A from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân was the first to submitted the survey (19 August 13:01pm), they are placed as number 1.

**4/9 9<sup>th</sup> meeting:** Khang was not presented at the last meeting before the interviews. However, all important messages and information were passed down by Nghi and I through Facebook Messenger.

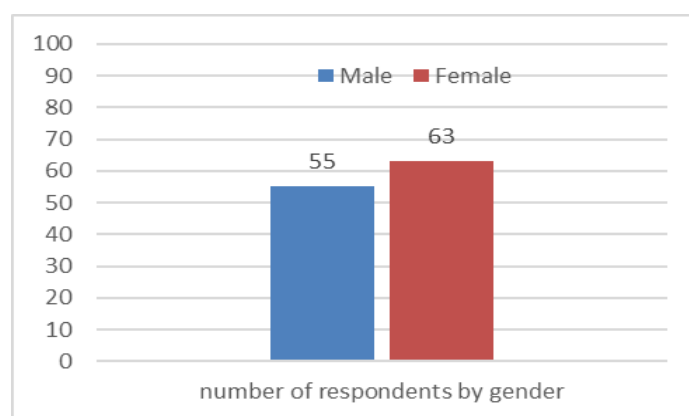
## 4.2 Quantitative Study

The quantitative results were place in the order accordingly to the sections in the questionnaire. The table below indicated the gender and age year of the respondents. There were more female respondents, 63, than male, 55. The number of respondents from THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân was the highest as respondents born in 2004 and 2005 were from the same campus. Among 25 students from THCS Đồng Khởi, 80% of the respondents were female. Having Nghi as the distributor of the survey could be the reason why there were more female than male. Nghi was more closed to her female friends, and she also sent out the survey to individual chats asking her friends for some inputs. This could be the same case for Quý, who was in charge of sending the survey to students born in 2005. Being friends with a person whose friend lists is dominated by a certain gender brings out a bias in the survey result. However, this is not the case for Nam and Khang, since the number of male and female respondents are almost equal.

**Table 4.1:author, number of respondents by year and gender**

		Gender		THCS Đồng Khởi		THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân		THPT Đức Trí		other schools (pilot survey)	
Birth year	num-ber	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	female
2002	1	0	1							1	
2003	25	11	14			1		9	10	1	4
2004	38	19	19			17	14	1	2	1	3
2005	28	19	9			18	8	1		1	
2006	26	6	20	5	20					1	
total		55	63	25		58		23		12	
		118									





**Figure 4.1: number of respondents by gender**

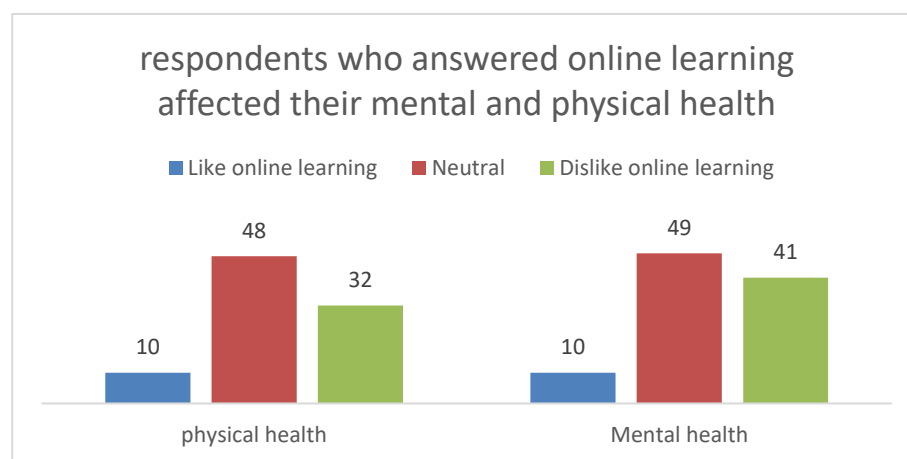
#### 4.2.1 Part 1: yourself

28 out of 118 (23.72%) respondents said that online learning did not affect their physical health negatively. Meanwhile 90 (76%) students said it affected their health. The number witnessed a small change in mental health as 100 (84%) said their mental health were affected.

**Table 4.2: students' preference on Online learning**

preference on Online learning	THCS Đồng Khởi (25 respondents)					
	like		neutral		dislike	
no. of respondents	4		12		9	
impact on physical health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	2	2	8	4	6	3
impact on mental health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	2	2	9	3	7	2
preference on Online learning	THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân (58 respondents)					
	like		neutral		dislike	
no. of respondents	7		31		20	
impact on physical health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	4	3	28	3	17	3
impact on mental health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	3	4	27	4	20	0
preference on Online learning	THPT Đức Trí (23 respondents)					
	like		neutral		dislike	
no. of respondents	3		9		11	
impact on physical health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	2	1	8	1	8	3
impact on mental health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	3		8	1	10	1
preference on Online learning	Others (12 respondents)					
	like		neutral		dislike	
no. of respondents	2		6		4	
impact on physical health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no

no. of respondents	2	0	4	2	1	3
impact on mental health	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
no. of respondents	2	0	5	1	4	0



#### 4.2.2 Part 2: Family

The students had to rank (out of 5) the supportive level of the family to their education, their relationships, and how much they have involved in the students' lives at school and home during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- **Positive involvement:** listen to the student's opinion, care about the study process, supportive to the students' decision making, create convenient environment for students to study from home,
- **Mixed feelings: supportive,** care about the study process but put some pressures, strong interference, cause stress
- **Negative involvement:** only pay attention at the results, students being forced to study, caused stress

**Table 4.3: nature of family's involvement by student's birth year**

family involvement in students' life	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Positive involvement	1	14	30	13	20	77
Mixed feelings		8	5	9	5	27
Negative involvement		3	2	5		11
Neutral			1		1	2
Do not care			1			1

From the table, it is showed that majority of the answer laid on positive involvement, but 10 (8.47%) experienced negative family involvement. Among these students, 7 responded they felt stressed, lost motivation and self-confident. they all chose family putting too much pressures and only cared what they wanted the students to do. Also, these respondents chose to stay quiet from family and carried on doing the things they like.

Within the groups “mixed feelings” and “negative involvement”, 11 students said that parents interfered too much the student’s personal affair, they felt that parents did not respect their privacy, and personal goals although they cared about the students’ learning process. 1 female student (2004) said “*my father usually joke that I should quit school, what’s the point of studying. He joked about this since I was little and I got used to it, but lately I have been thinking a lot about his words and have been feeling really down.*” On the other hand, a male student (2005) said “*it’s not that the parents hate you for not following their expectation, they only want their children to go on their most convenient road, so if you want to prove that your parents should trust your decision, you have to spend time and do it, don’t just say they do not support you.*”

### 4.2.3 Part 3: School

**Table 4.4: education preference**

Online education	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	total
prefer online education		5	9	5	9	28
Neutral response		1	5	2	1	9
Prefer in-person	1	19	24	21	16	81

The survey participants could pick on multiple answer for this question. As the result has shown, majority of students prefer in-persons class over online learning when almost 30 students chose otherwise. The responses of the 28 students who preferred online education over in-person are categorized into 3 different tones: negative response, mixed, and positive response. This also applied for students who ticked in-person class or neutral, but I will only focus on those who favoured online education.

**Negative:** Lack of communication between students and teachers/parents and students cannot catch up with the school’s announcements/ inconvenient for students to do exams

**Mixed:** the negative factors mentioned above + creating new learning space through online class

**Positive:** create new learning space through online class

Negative	15
Mixed	7
positive	6

No surprise, none of the 15 students who chose negative answered “*defer until the lockdown is over*” on section 3, question 5 (Annex II), and 8 students were satisfied with everything happened at the moment. 2 students wrote that they felt luckier than other kids and very happy. However, 7 students were not happy, a respondent said they were worried about their health and their learning condition in the future, and could not help but regularly feeling empty. Another respondent commented that “*even though learning online is more convenient for parents as they do not have to pick-up/ drop-off to school every day, they get to witness the class through the screen and I am comfortable about it. However, I am short-sighted so learning online will only worsen my condition, and it will be hard to ask the teacher if I do not understand the lesson.*”

Since this is a short answer question, a lot of respondents have written their perspective on online schooling. I cannot capture every single respondent’s answer, but some of the responses will provide better look at what the Vietnamese secondary school students are going through during COVID-19 lockdown.

“*I don’t like online learning because of its limit to communication with everyone around me. I hope there will be better changes in the future*”. M. from grade 11

“*I am not satisfied; I hope the pandemic is over so the students can go back to school. Students born in 2003 were the most disadvantaged in school year 2020-2021*” N. from grade 12

#### **4.2.4 Part 4: Are you really happy?**

The final part of the survey is the space where the respondents share their thoughts about their happiness. It is not mandatory for everyone to speak up about their personal being. Here are some notable responses from the students:

“*My parents took really good care of me; I get to come to school and learn from the amazing teachers. I get to meet new friends and expand my connections, join extra-curricular clubs and create good memories. There will be times where I feel stressed and exhausted and things will be tough, but my family is always there to cheer me up, and I will give my best in school for better future. I am very thankful for my parents to show me the world and I am very happy at this moment.*” H. from grade 10.

“*I have to do supplementary classes to catch up with the lessons in class. it’s tiring, waste a lot of time and money*” no name from grade 10.

“*I am not really happy, every day I go to school and study without knowing if it is worthy for my future. I have yet to identify my goals and dreams.*” A. from grade 10

## 4.4 Qualitative Study

The interviews took place through Zoom meetings. 3 meetings were scheduled after the interviewees were confirmed to participate. The first meeting was held on 5 September, and 2 meetings were held on 6 September. The second interview session at 4:09PM on 6 September hosted two interviewees. The atmosphere in all sessions were rather similar to casual conversations between peers than formal interviews to make the participants, interviewers and facilitator feel comfortable.

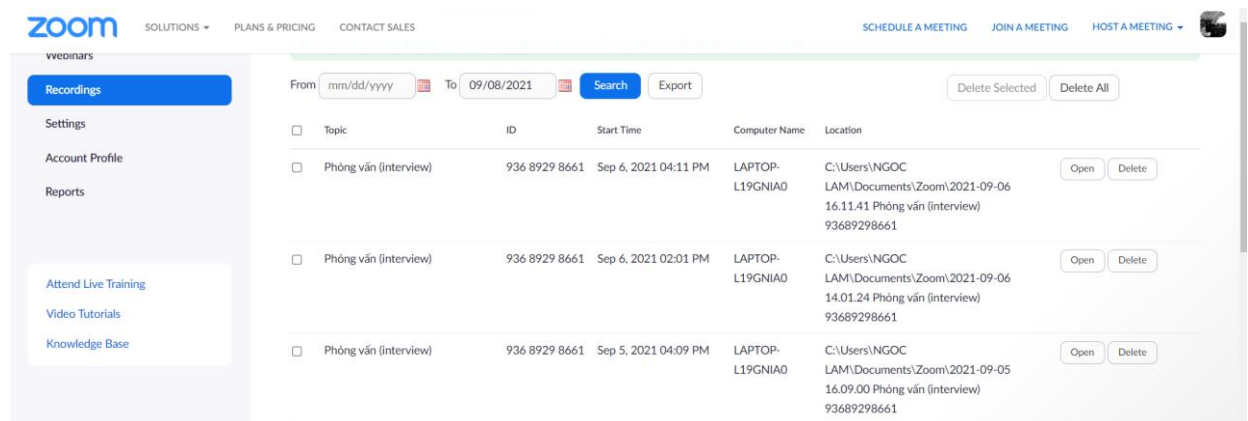


Figure 4.2: zoom meeting

### Interview 1

Born 2006, female

Opinion on online school: less focused, easily got distracted when staring at the screen whole day. In contrast, online classes are more convenient for student to check information, helps parents to keep track of the students learning better than in-person class.

**Family:** the family were able to support enough materials for online education in the upcoming academic school year (internet connection, electronic devices. Although sometimes too much of distraction from family members also affected learning process.

**School:** the lockdown begun when she had already done her exam, so online classes were not a problem. She said *“now that I am in a new school, but the school year have not started yet, so I don’t need any help from the teachers. I think if I there is any problem, the school will help me.”* And *“I have not made friends yet because it is awkward to talk to someone new without seeing their face in-person”*

**Physical health:** the interviewee said she had a pretty healthy life now, in which diet was one of them so she could be ready to fit in Áo Dài when in-person’s education resumed.

**Meaning of Wellbeing:** she explained that wellbeing was *“family, my health, my mental, money, food, and sleep. If someone does not eat well, their sleep will be affected and so as their health.”*

The first interviewee's wellbeing said there were consequences from online classes like distraction from family and from staring at the screen whole day. However, her mental health was not affected much. This could be because she had already finished her exams before the lockdown begun. Also, her family was her main support during the hard time, but her main worry was the new learning environment with new people whom she never met before. The resilience was found in the problem of new school and new class in which she needs to tackle it.

### ***Interview 2***

Born 2005, Male

The student liked online learning in the beginning, but now it caused health issues: eyes pain, feeling despair. He said *"to me, every day in the week is the same since the lockdown."*

Family: create bonding time with family. Father has been quarantined at his work place for over 1 month, and has not gone home ever since.

School: the student felt uncomfortable to unmute the mic and talk to the teachers. Online class schedule was divided unevenly. Some days have full classes from 7am to 10:30am, and 1pm to 4pm, some days in the week were left empty. This created more available time for cram class (online). Also, he had yet to think about his wellbeing. He added that Vietnamese parents still have the old understanding about their children, that they have to do as parents say.

### ***Interview 3***

Born 2004, Male

the third interviewee preferred online learning. He stated that it's better to stay focused than in-person, did not feel tired, and he had more time to do what he want.

Disadvantage: internet problem, cannot meet friends and teachers, takes more time to communicate through social media than in-person

Family: *"my parents always feel that I have not studied enough"*. He added, *"not going for cram class is your big loss as a student because the amount of knowledge you learn only from school is not enough, while you can understand the lessons that have not taught in class better, and could catch up with your classmates."*

### ***Interview 4***

Male, born 2003

COVID-19 lockdown happened when everyone was busy getting ready for graduation exam, so the respondent was not bothered. He was not worried about the exam result since

already considered applying for private university, which admission criteria was based on the student's report, not the exam.

School: thanks to online learning, the student was able to have more time to study the subjects that he was weak at on Youtube. He said *"no one can control me on online class, and my parents do not know much about technology. However, I will get bored and distracted if I have to study online for a long time."* The student added that he had a private math tutor to study for the graduation exam. The respondent said that school only cared about the result, or if they have submitted all the exams, but not the student's wellbeing.

### ***Interview 5***

Female, born 2003

School: the teachers liked to put pressure on students to submit assignment on time, or they will get 0. When teaching in class, most teachers only summarized the lessons while barely had any interaction with the students. Also, the class usually overtook breaktime.

Since the lockdown, the student had less interactions on social media with classmates due to screen fatigue. Even the school could not do anything to help students because even teachers were struggling to teach. Most of the teachers were not trained to conduct online classes, they were basically technically not ready to teach in an online class with roughly 40 students.

## **4.5 Observation**

The first 2 meetings with the student peer researchers were awkward and did not receive enough contributions from everyone to the research. However, as the peer researchers gotten to know each other through meetings for group discussions and Zalo group chat, they became friends and were more open to comfortable discussions in the sessions.

As the peer researchers begun the survey distribution, Nghi sent the survey to her close friends group saying that *"My auntie is doing a research for her Master thesis, so help me fill in the survey"*. The result was that some of the answers came from the students born in 2006 were very formal and precise compared to other group age. Another encounter involving survey distribution was that Khang said he did not know many people from his old class, mostly students from different schools. However, this was not the case with Nam and Quy. It is important to acknowledge the connections the peer researchers have to work together; without these 4 students, I will never get the answers for my research questions.

Linking to the findings, with Nghi in charge of her own school made it easier for her to connect to her friends, which most of them were female friends. This happened the other way around to THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân as 2 peer researchers were male. Although there were more female questionnaire respondents, and 45 of them left contact information as the approval to participate in the interview, 2 female respondents turned down the interview request with the reason of not feeling comfortable. It could be that the students did not read the survey description before filling in their personal information.

## 4.6 Discussion

The result findings of this research paper provided some answers from the respondents whether staying home is actually a safe haven than going to school like Vu and Bosmans (2021: 9) argued. It was a safe haven to them as short-term outcome since they did not have to face the early morning routine like normal days. For students in big cities like HCMC, it is completely exhausting, particularly to those students who live far from school, to wake up early morning to avoid traffic jams and not be late for morning class at 7am (Dang, 2015: no page). Apart from that, based on the findings in this research, studying from home caused several changes to the effectiveness, the mentality, physical health and affected a person's capability. To support my arguments, I will apply some famous Vietnamese proverbs and metaphors that were taught or said by older generations.

### ***Positive mood and attitude***

Studying online had taken a toll on the students' mental health, the feeling of despair, lonely, trapped and demotivated. One respondent mentioned that due to lockdown, all medical centres, not related to COVID-19 support, were closed so it was impossible to get health check, causing regular mental breakdown for this student. However, unlike the majority, there were 18 respondents (15.25%) who said otherwise; 8 students stated they were happy, and some felt lucky to be students because not everyone could afford to go to school. The tone in their written language rather indicated their humbleness, in a way it referred to the endurance, one of the values in Confucianism (Cho & Choi 2018: 378).

### ***Resilience***

There were about 71% (84 respondents) chose "*keep studying regardless of the situation*" (question 5 section 3, annex II). The multiple choices answer only proved the resilience in very modest accuracy, but with the provision of quantitatively subjective similar answers from the students, it presents the evidences. The following answers "*learn in my way*", "*combine self-*



*study with online classes”, “adapt to the circumstances” “this opportunity help me to be more independent in learning and be more decisive”* all included the factor of ‘self-study’ and enhance independency in learning during difficult time. There is a famous Vietnamese proverb that many parents, including my mother, said “*trong cái khó ló cái khôn*” translated into adversity brings wisdom (idlehearts: no date), meaning when you are in difficult time, you will find solutions to solve the problem.

### ***Satisfaction with self, relationship...***

Not everyone experienced a decent student life full of joy with peers, supportive parents, and caring teachers. The respondents referred their issues that kept them away from their lives’ satisfaction as pressures from good grades, splitting the friendships (bullying), family financial issues, or parents fighting. Being left out by their own friends, for example, impacted the emotional wellbeing of the students. Some intended to find their happiness in school with their peers rather than at home. Also, the fact that the students were locked in their houses for months helped them creating more bonding times with family.

### ***Effective functioning***

Generally, Vietnamese people believe that to be a virtuous person, they need to have acquired the five Vietnamese life virtues Humanness, Righteousness, Rite, Knowledge/intelligence, integrity (Truong 2013: 9-10). A person with Intelligence (Trí) is regarded as a hard-working individual from their academic achievements (Nguyen & Habok 2020: 125). Many respondents acknowledged that lockdown had compressed their work efficiency, some believed that it created incentive for future success. However, one student said that now that they are in high school, everyone should be aware that the class assignments are more intense with the pressure of passing university entrance exam, so studying online would bring bad long-term outcome if the student’s health is not guaranteed.

## **4.6.1 Definition of Wellbeing by Vietnamese Secondary School Students**

The students show their gratefulness to the teachers and for the education they accumulated in 12 years of students’ life and parents for raising them. It is a cultural celebration, which Vietnamese people, including myself see National Teacher’s Day as (20/11) one of the most important day of the year in Vietnam to show our gratitude to not only our teachers but also parents. Therefore, the need to emphasize teachers and parents as one of the main actors contributing to the wellbeing of the student cannot be ignored. Whether the impact from these actors are good or bad, the image of family closeness represents social

harmony in a society where Confucius philosophy are dominating (Sandoval-Hernandez & Bialowolski (2016: 519).

Associating with teachers and family, friends were mentioned by majority of the respondents. To them, friends brought joy and supports the mentality of the students throughout the school year. One respondent who was the victim of bullying by the entire class said it was depressing for them to go through such unwelcoming atmosphere the whole school year. To Vietnamese students, being a student is the best phase in a person's life; this was proved through Vietnamese songs *xe đạp, mong ước kỷ niệm xưa, bụi phấn*, etc. Majority (72%) of students said that they were proud to be in school, to be with teachers and friends, happy to live a student's life, and one student said school life is their best childhood memory. No doubt, the word friends (*bạn bè*) was mentioned over 20 times by the respondents who provided additional answers

By navigating the words mentioned in the survey, the key words were mentioned along with the mentality of the students. the word teacher and family usually associated with hardships (*khó khăn*), motivation (*động lực*), pressure (*áp lực*), pride/proud (*tự hào*), future (*tương lai*). these words linked with resilience, life satisfaction in the tone used by the respondents' answers, and effectiveness. I have come up with a set of key words that were mentioned most by the respondents:

Friends (*bạn bè*), family (*gia đình*), teachers (*thầy cô*), memories (*kỷ niệm*), grateful (*biết ơn*), academic results/score (*điểm/kết quả học tập*), together with/collective... (*cùng với...*), student (*học sinh*), future (*tương lai*), health (*sức khỏe*)

According to one of the respondents from this research paper, wellbeing is:

*"Family, health, my mental, money, food, and sleep. If someone does not eat well, their sleep will be affected and so as their health."* (Interviewee 1 2021: 30)

I had also come up with my own definition based on the responses and keywords mentioned by the respondents:

*"Wellbeing is maintaining good health, creating pleasant memories with friends, and being grateful for the time and efforts the teachers and family put in to guide the student to brighter future by achieving good academic results."*

## 4.7 Limitation in Findings

As a researcher, it is necessary to bring in positivism approach. However, I am more adequate in qualitative, constructivist approach. This research may not be precise enough as it

demands more statistical and involvement of mathematical calculation to some readers, but it constructed based on the perceptions of the students. In other words, they are the ones that influenced in the making of the definition subjectively, while I only play my role as an interpreter for this research. This research was only taken in very small scale. Given that the time limitation itself was already a big issue, the COVID-19 situation in Vietnam, borders closed, and time differences made it hard for me to work on this research from distance. Also, this research paper does not represent Vietnamese students as a whole. However, like I have mentioned, it brought up the issues that the students individually are facing using their own voices through the survey and interviews.

The survey questionnaire only offered the insights of what students think about their wellbeing during the COVID-19 lockdown in Ho Chi Minh city. Although I have received very critical answers from majority of the respondents, there were still a small proportion who rather just filled in the survey for fun. There was lack of correlations found in the answers of the students as at one point, for example, answered that the parents are very supportive then on next section, they chose parents interfered in too much of a students' wellbeing. Also, some answers were invalid as the respondent ticked in all answer options.

Moving away from the issues with respondents, there are also biases found in this survey. When the student peer researchers distributed it, some of them did not send it to the class group chat as they were not comfortable with the present of certain individuals. There were also uneven number of survey participants based on age group. The number of respondents born in 2004 and 2005 dominated the survey, while 2003 and 2006 had relatively small number.

## Chapter 5 : Conclusion and Recommendations

With all the love I have for my family members and the ambition to work with children, wellbeing was brought into my attention. I intended to do this research because it reflected on the problems my niece and nephew as well as many Vietnamese students were facing. It was stress, lack of free time, academic expectation and competition. Living up to the expectation to fulfil the duty of a child is an obligation for many Vietnamese youths as it was hugely influenced from the Confucianism. Therefore the fear of being a disappointment to the family is not avoidable. As the result, this research paper set out to identify how students from public secondary school in HCMC understand wellbeing. Further, it delivered the perceptions the students had about their family and school that contributed to their wellbeing.

For the main objective of this research, it was defined subjectively based on the responses of the students. The concept by Noble et al. was adopted to construct the base for this research paper along with the four relevant characteristics sustainability of positive mood and attitudes, resilience, satisfaction in life and relationships, and effective functioning. The methodologies applied in this research paper included the group discussions, quantitative questionnaire and qualitative interviews, and observation. Out of 118 students who participated in the survey, the terms including: family, friends, school, academic results, memories, etc., were mentioned by majority of the respondents many times. These common terms were combined then formed a constructivist definition “*Wellbeing is maintaining good health, creating pleasant memories with friends, and being grateful for the time and efforts the teachers and family put in to guide the student to brighter future by achieving good academic results.*” It is only a suggestive idea that was created together with a very small number of research participants, therefore demands further research.

The sub objectives of this research paper looked at the perception of the survey participants about their family and school. These two actors are important for social reproduction and identification of the student’s position in the social structure. Vietnamese society was influenced from Confucianism, where family and teachers appreciate the positive outcomes as the result of hard work, put students under heavy pressures to aim for success and opportunities in life. Although there will always be conflicts with family and school amidst the development of the students, the students never failed to show respect to the people who took care of them.

## **Recommendation**

- The need of positivism for future research is very much necessary
- The research should be carried out in larger scale for policy recommendation

# Annexes

## Annex 1 Parental Consent letter (English and Vietnamese translation)

### Parental Consent for Participating in Data Collection

#### Survey on the Wellbeing of the Vietnamese High School students in Ho Chi Minh City amidst COVID Pandemic

##### Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide parents/guardians information on the research study which your child/children are participating in this research study. If you decide to let your child be involved in this study, this form will be used to record your permission.

##### Purpose of the Study

This research paper (Master Thesis) is conducted by an MA candidate Minh Ngoc, Lam from International Institute of Social Studies from The Hague, Netherlands. This research aims to find out what the students in Vietnamese public high school in Ho Chi Minh city think of their own happiness, physical and mental health. The data collection process will be conducted using online survey questionnaire and in-depth interviews.

##### What is my child going to be asked to do?

If you allow your child to participate as a peer researcher for data collection, they will be asked to:

- Assist formulating questions for the survey and interview questions
- Distribute the online surveys to their peers
- In charge of contacting the chosen participants for in-depth interviews
- Contribute their opinion on the 4 elements of the surveys: self-reflection upon online learning environment, family's involvement on their learning process, school, and whether they are really happy with everything.

This study will take place entirely ONLINE from The Hague, The Netherlands and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The main communication tools used by both author and peer researcher are Zoom, Zalo, Facebook Messenger, Google Doc, and Google Spreadsheet. In addition, there will be 4 peer researchers in total in this study.

##### NOTE:

This study does not involve in any in-person contact that identifies a health concern given that both research author and peer researchers only interact through digital communication platform. Moreover, the peer researchers must comply to the “5K” regulation by Vietnamese government if they are asked to have human contact during their participation in the research. This is a research study and, therefore, not intended to provide any medical, therapeutic diagnosis or treatment.

The peer researchers [will or may] be audio/video recorded when they participate in in-depth interviews if the interviewees accept to be recorded. Any **[audio and/or video]** recordings will be stored securely and only the research author will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be kept until the final draft of the research paper is submitted (November 2021) and then erased.

- The names of the peer researchers will be mentioned in the research paper unless they request to remain anonymous.
- The peer researchers must help the research author contacting teachers regarding consent for survey distribution.

**What will my child possibly get out of this study as a peer researcher?**

- The peer researcher will have a better insight of what a Master thesis is and how the data is being collected.
- The peer researcher will be able to reflect on their wellbeing at school amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The peer researcher will gain new knowledge and experience by taking an important role for data collection in this research.
- The peer researcher [will or may] be able to raise their concerns to school/parents regarding their wellbeing in school.
- Monetary compensation of 500,000VND (approx. €18). The compensation would include internet fees from 28<sup>th</sup> July to 30<sup>th</sup> September which is below 3 hours for every meeting session.
- A complimentary meal of choice (below 100,000VND/€4) provided by GRAB/NOW delivery

**Does my child have to participate?**

No, your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. You can agree to allow your child to be take part of the research now and change your mind later.

**Whom to contact with questions about the research?**

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the research paper author Minh Ngoc, Lam at **+31 687867451** or send an email to **577358ml@eur.nl** for any questions.

**Signature**

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow them to participate in the study. If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the research, you may discontinue his or her participation at any time.

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Name of the peer researcher

---

birth year of peer researcher

---

Signature of Parent(s) or Guardian

---

Date

*(Vietnamese translation)*

**Đơn Chấp Thuận Tham Gia Nghiên Cứu Khảo Sát**

## **Mức Độ Hạnh Phúc của Học Sinh Trung Học Phổ Thông tại TPHCM Trong Đại Dịch COVID**

### **Mở Đầu**

Mục đích của mẫu đơn này để cung cấp cho phụ huynh/người giám hộ thông tin về nghiên cứu khảo sát. Nếu quý phụ huynh đồng ý cho con em mình tham gia, đơn chấp thuận này sẽ được sử dụng để ghi lại sự cho phép của anh/chị.

### **Mục đích của nghiên cứu**

Bài luận văn thạc sỹ nghiên cứu này được thực hiện bởi bà/chị Lâm Minh Ngọc thuộc International Institute of Social Studies tại The Hague, Netherlands. Mục đích của bài luận văn nghiên cứu này để tìm hiểu về định nghĩa của “wellbeing”, trong Tiếng Việt nghĩa là hạnh phúc dưới góc nhìn của học sinh trung học phổ thông tại thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Sự hạnh phúc bao gồm niềm vui, sức khỏe, tinh thần và thể chất của học sinh. Quy trình thu thập dữ liệu sẽ bao gồm khảo sát trực tuyến chủ yếu với học sinh lớp 9 thuộc trường THCS Đồng Khởi, học sinh lớp 10, 11, 12 thuộc THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân, THPT Đức Trí, trong năm học 2020/2021. Ngoài ra, 5 bạn học sinh sẽ được chọn ngẫu nhiên từ kết quả khảo sát để tham gia phỏng vấn chuyên sâu.

### **Con/em tôi sẽ được giao những công việc gì?**

Nếu quý phụ huynh đồng ý cho con/em mình tham gia làm nghiên cứu sinh để thu thập thông tin, những công việc sẽ bao gồm:

- Hỗ trợ xây dựng câu hỏi cho cuộc khảo sát và câu hỏi phỏng vấn
- Gửi phiếu khảo sát trực tuyến cho bạn bè
- Phụ trách liên hệ những người tham gia khảo sát được chọn để phỏng vấn chuyên sâu
- Đóng góp ý kiến về 4 yếu tố trong cuộc khảo sát: tự phản ánh về môi trường học tập Online, sự tham gia của gia đình trong quá trình học tập, trường học, và liệu học sinh có hài lòng về mọi thứ không

Quy trình thu thập thông tin cho bài nghiên cứu này sẽ được diễn ra hoàn toàn trên các nền tảng trực tuyến từ The Hague, Hà Lan và TPHCM, Việt Nam, và sẽ không có tiếp xúc trực tiếp giữa người. những nền tảng được sử dụng bởi nghiên cứu sinh và nghiên cứu sinh bao gồm: Zoom, Zalo, Facebook Messenger, Google Doc, và Google Spreadsheet. Ngoài ra, sẽ có tổng cộng 4 nghiên cứu sinh tham gia vào nghiên cứu này.

### **GHI CHÚ:**

Quá trình hoàn thành bài nghiên cứu này sẽ không có bất kỳ tiếp xúc trực tiếp dẫn đến nguy cơ ảnh hưởng đến sức khỏe vì lý do giãn cách xã hội, chống dịch COVID-19. Các nghiên cứu sinh vui lòng tuân thủ theo quy định 5K của chính phủ Việt Nam trong quá trình tham gia nghiên cứu (trong trường hợp có tiếp xúc trực tiếp). đây chỉ là bài nghiên cứu luận văn thạc sỹ, do đó sẽ không cung cấp bất kỳ chuẩn đoán hoặc điều trị y tế.

Các nghiên cứu sinh [có thể hoặc sẽ] được ghi âm/video khi tham gia vào cuộc phỏng vấn chuyên sâu nếu như người tham gia phỏng vấn chấp nhận. Mọi bản ghi âm/video sẽ được lưu trữ an toàn, và chỉ tác giả của nghiên cứu này có quyền truy cập. dữ liệu sẽ được ưu giữ cho đến khi bản thảo cuối cùng của bài luận văn thạc sỹ này được đệ trình (tháng 11 năm 2021), sau đó sẽ được xóa.



- Tên của các nghiên cứu sinh sẽ được nhắc đến trừ khi họ yêu cầu giấu tên
- Các nghiên cứu sinh phải giúp tác giả nghiên cứu liên hệ với các giáo viên về sự đồng ý phân phối khảo sát.

**Con/em của quý phụ huynh sẽ rút ra những gì từ tham gia nghiên cứu này?**

- Con/em sẽ có cái nhìn sâu sắc hơn về luận văn thạc sĩ là gì và dữ liệu được thu thập như thế nào
- Con/em sẽ/có thể phản ánh về sự hạnh phúc trong quá trình học tập trong đại dịch COVID-19
- Con/em sẽ/có thể tiếp thu kiến thức mới và kinh nghiệm từ vai trò quan trọng cho việc thu thập dữ liệu trong nghiên cứu này
- Con/em sẽ/có thể nêu lên mối quan tâm về phúc lợi, sự hạnh phúc (wellbeing) của họ với phụ huynh hoặc nhà trường
- Các nghiên cứu sinh sẽ được hỗ trợ 500,000VND/€18 (internet, những buổi gặp mặt và thời gian làm việc (28/7 đến 30/9, dưới 3 giờ mỗi phiên họp)
- Các nghiên cứu sinh sẽ được thưởng một bữa ăn được giao hàng miễn phí có trị giá dưới 100,000VND bởi GRAB/NOW

**Con/em mình có bắt buộc phải tham gia không?**

Không, quyết định tham gia của con/em là hoàn toàn tự nguyện. con/em có quyền từ chối tham gia hoặc rút khỏi nghiên cứu này bất kỳ lúc nào. Quý phụ huynh có quyền cho chép con/em mình tham gia bây giờ và vẫn có thể thay đổi quyết định.

**Phụ huynh/người giám hộ nên liên hệ với ai khi có thắc mắc về nghiên cứu?**

Trước, trong hoặc sau khi tham gia, quý phụ huynh có thể liên hệ với tác giả bài nghiên cứu, Lâm Minh Ngọc theo số điện thoại **+31 687867451** hoặc gửi mail đến **577358ml@eur.nl**

**Chữ Ký**

Chữ ký của quý phụ huynh/người giám hộ cho rằng quý vị đã đọc kỹ những thông tin ở trên và đã quyết định cho con/em mình tham gia nghiên cứu. Quý phụ huynh có thể thay đổi ý định cho con/em của mình ngừng tham gia bất cứ lúc nào.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tên của nghiên cứu sinh

\_\_\_\_\_  
năm sinh

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chữ ký của phụ huynh/người giám hộ

\_\_\_\_\_  
ngày/tháng/năm

## **Annex 2: Questionnaire (Vietnamese and English Translation)**

### **KHẢO SÁT MỨC ĐỘ HẠNH PHÚC, SỨC KHỎE VÀ TINH THẦN CỦA HỌC SINH TRONG THỜI ĐẠI COVID 19.**

Bảng khảo sát dưới đây được xây dựng với sự giúp đỡ của các bạn học sinh (từ 16 đến 18 tuổi) đến từ 3 trường công lập khác nhau. Theo báo cáo được phát triển bởi Noble, T., Wyatt, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S., & Rowling, L. (2008) thuộc, định nghĩa về hạnh phúc của học sinh dựa trên bốn đặc điểm: tác động tích cực (thành phần cảm xúc), khả năng phục hồi (thành phần đối phó), sự hài lòng với các mối quan hệ và các khía cạnh khác của cuộc sống đối với mỗi cá nhân và hoạt động hiệu quả, tối đa hóa tiềm năng của một người. Các tác nhân đóng vai trò quan trọng trong việc xây dựng bảng câu hỏi dựa trên các yếu tố có thể tác động đến sức khỏe và tinh thần là: gia đình, nhà trường và bản thân học sinh. Thứ nhất, học sinh sẽ đánh giá sự an toàn về sức khỏe tinh thần thể chất (trong việc học online). Thứ hai, học sinh sẽ đánh giá vai trò của gia đình đóng góp vào kết quả học tập cũng như mối quan tâm. Thứ 3 học sinh sẽ đánh giá vai trò của giáo viên và nhà trường đối với các em. Cuối cùng, học sinh sẽ phản ánh về bản thân và những gì có thể làm để đảm bảo những lợi ích tốt nhất cho bản thân. Bảng câu hỏi này sẽ nhằm mục đích tìm hiểu xem học trực tuyến có mang lại nhiều mặt tích cực/ tiêu cực cho hạnh phúc của học sinh hay không, và liệu phụ huynh với giáo viên đã quan tâm đầy đủ đến các hay chưa. Khi tham gia khảo sát vui lòng điền vào biểu mẫu và để lại thông tin cá nhân của bạn nếu bạn muốn được liên lạc để phỏng vấn chuyên sâu. Những ai tham gia phỏng vấn chuyên sâu sẽ nhận được bữa ăn miễn phí tự chọn (do GRAB/NOW cung cấp).

This questionnaire was formulated with the help of the student peer-researchers (from 16 to 18 years old) from 3 different public schools. According to the report developed by Noble, T., Wyatt, T., McGrath, H., Roffey, S., & Rowling, L. (2008). The definition of student well-being was based on four characteristics: positive effect (emotional component), resilience (a coping component), satisfaction with relationships and other dimensions of one's life, and effective functioning and maximizing of one's potential. The actors that play vital roles in formulating the questionnaire according to the characteristics of well-being are: family, school, and the students themselves. Firstly, the students will evaluate their mental and physical health safety at school. Secondly, the students will evaluate the role of the family that contributes to their academic performance as well as their concerns. Thirdly, the students will evaluate the role of the teachers and school to the students' themselves. Lastly, the students will reflect on themselves and what can be done to secure their well-being. This questionnaire aims to find out whether studying online brings many negatives/positive sides for the well-being of the students, and if both the parents and teachers have paid enough attention to them. The survey participants are welcomed to fill in the form and leave their personal information if they wish to be contacted for an in-depth interview. Participants of in-depth interviews will receive a complimentary meal of choice (delivered by GRAB/NOW).

1. **Họ và Tên:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. **Thông tin liên lạc (link facebook/ số điện thoại/ email ...)**  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. **Năm sinh: \***  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **Giới tính \***  
*Mark only one oval.*  
☐ Nữ  
☐ Nam
5. **Trường đã/đang theo học trong năm học 2020/2021: \***  
*Mark only one oval.*  
☐ THPT Nguyễn Hữu Huân  
☐ THPT Đức Trí  
☐ THCS Đồng Khởi  
☐ THPT Nguyễn Huệ  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
6. **Khối lớp (2020-2021) \***  
*Mark only one oval.*  
☐ Khối 9  
☐ Khối 10  
☐ Khối 11  
☐ Khối 12

## PHẦN1- BẢN THÂN

Thời đại dịch bệnh Covid 19 hoành hành phức tạp, làm việc và học tập online dần trở thành một phần thiết yếu trong cuộc sống. Dẫu vậy, không ít những điều bất tiện đã, đang diễn ra và sự ảnh hưởng rõ nhất được nhận thấy từ chính bản thân mỗi người.

1. Bạn có cảm thấy hứng thú với việc học online không? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Rất thích (like it very much)  
☐ Thích (like)  
☐ Bình thường (neutral)  
☐ Không Thích (don't like)  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Học online ảnh hưởng đến chất lượng học tập của bạn như thế nào? have your online studies been affected? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Không ảnh hưởng (not affected)  
☐ Ảnh hưởng ít (little affect)  
☐ Ảnh hưởng rất nhiều (affected a lot)

3. Những bất tiện bạn gặp phải khi học online? What are the drawbacks of online classes \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Khó tiếp thu kiến thức (harder to understand teacher)  
☐ Hạn chế sự tương tác giữa giáo viên và học sinh (limit interaction between students and teachers)  
☐ Khó trao đổi thông tin giữa học sinh với giáo viên và học sinh với nhau (difficult to talk to teachers)  
☐ Khó khăn trong việc sử dụng các nền tảng học online (difficult in using online learning platform)  
☐ Thiết bị học tập không đủ đáp ứng nhu cầu (máy tính, điện thoại, internet....) (lack of facilities)  
Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

4. Những yếu tố kể trên tác động tiêu cực đến tinh thần của bạn như thế nào? How have the problems above affected your mentality? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Căng thẳng (stress)  
☐ Cảm thấy chán ghét, sợ hãi việc đi học (scared of learning)  
☐ Mất tập trung trong việc học (lose concentration)  
☐ Không bị tác động tiêu cực (not negatively affected)  
Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Những tác động tiêu cực đến sức khỏe của bạn? (How it has affected your health?) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Đau đầu (headache)  
☐ Ảnh hưởng nhiều đến mắt (đau mỏi mắt, cận thị...) (eyes problems)  
☐ thiếu thời gian vận động thể chất ( thể thao,...) (lack of time for physical exercise)  
☐ không có (none)  
Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

6. Những lợi ích mà việc học online đem lại? (what are the benefits of online classes) \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Thoải mái trong việc lập thời khóa biểu (convenient to plan schedule)  
☐ Dễ dàng tiếp thu kiến thức (easy to study)  
☐ Giúp bản thân hứng thú hơn trong học tập (more interesting to study) Có  
☐ thêm trải nghiệm học tập mới lạ (new learning experience)  
☐ Tiện lợi cho việc tra cứu thông tin (easy to check information)  
Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

7. Khi gặp phải những vấn đề ảnh hưởng đến bản thân, bạn giải quyết như thế nào?  
(how do you solve the issues that affect you?) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Xây dựng thời khóa biểu học tập (plan yourself a schedule)
- ☐ Bổ sung nhiều chất dinh dưỡng, dành thêm thời gian luyện tập thể dục cải thiện sức khỏe (eat healthily, exercise frequently)
- ☐ Tổ chức nhiều hoạt động mới lạ trong giờ học online (organize more activities during online class)
- ☐ Nói chuyện và trao đổi với thầy cô hoặc gia đình (talk to teacher/family)
- ☐ Cố chịu đựng vì cảm thấy không có cách giải quyết (endure with the issues because there is no solution)
- ☐ Mặc kệ luôn việc học vì quá áp lực (ignore studying because you feel stressed)
- Other:

## PHẦN 2- GIA ĐÌNH

Gia đình luôn đóng một phần đặc biệt quan trọng đối với cuộc sống của mỗi người. Hơn thế nữa, trong thời đại Covid 19, thời gian tiếp xúc và sự ảnh hưởng của gia đình đối với việc học tập càng lớn hơn.

1. Mức độ ảnh hưởng của Bố mẹ đối với bạn? please rank your parents' affection to you \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
không ảnh hưởng (no affection)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	ảnh hưởng rất nhiều ( a lot )

2. Các hành động, lời nói của bố mẹ ảnh hưởng đến vấn đề học tập của bạn như thế nào? (how did the actions and words from family affected your study) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Bắt ép bạn học quá nhiều (forced you to study too much)
- ☐ Thường hay quan tâm, nói chuyện với bạn về vấn đề học (usually listen, care, and talk to you about your study)
- ☐ Lắng nghe và đáp ứng nhu cầu, điều mà bạn mong muốn (listen and agree with your opinion)
- ☐ Chỉ quan tâm điều họ muốn bạn làm, không tôn trọng sự riêng tư, đam mê riêng của bạn. (only care about the things family want you to do. not respect your privacy, your ambitions)
- ☐ Áp đặt, can thiệp quá sâu vào chuyện riêng của bạn (interfere too much into your personal affair)
- Other:

3. Gia đình có tác động như thế nào đến bạn trong việc học tập trong mùa dịch? (how have your family impact to your study during lockdown)? \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Hoàn toàn không có sự tác động nào cả (no impact)
- ☐ Có sự tác động nhẹ đến việc học online của bạn (some impacts)
- ☐ Tạo nhiều điều kiện tốt giúp học tập tốt hơn. (provide good condition to study)
- ☐ Other:

4. Bạn cảm thấy việc đó có ảnh hưởng đến bạn như thế nào? (what do you think about your family impact) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Gây stress (create stress)
- ☐ Mất động lực, sự tự tin ở chính mình (lose motivation and confident)
- ☐ Có thêm động lực, lí do để phát triển (create motivation, reason to improve)
- ☐ Được tự do, tự quyết hơn trong nhiều vấn đề (can be free and decisive)
- ☐ Không ảnh hưởng nhiều (none)
- Other:

5. Nếu phải chịu những tác động tiêu cực, bạn sẽ giải quyết với gia đình như thế nào? (if you encounter negative impact, how do you solve the problems with your family) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Im lặng chịu đựng và không làm gì (keep quiet and endure the problems)
- ☐ Im lặng nhưng bạn âm thầm làm theo ý mình (keep quiet but do what you want to do) Nói chuyện và chỉ ra các vấn đề của mình với ba mẹ (talk to family about your problems)
- ☐ Chứng minh khả năng của mình với bố mẹ bằng hành động cụ thể (prove what you are capable of doing to your family)
- ☐ Phán bác và không đáp ứng mọi yêu cầu của bố mẹ (oppose and not responding to family's requests)
- Other:

6. Kết quả bạn nhận lại được từ hướng giải quyết đó là gì? Có như bạn mong muốn? (what is the result, and was it solved as you wish? \*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Bố mẹ không những không hiểu mà còn làm khó hơn (your family not only not understand but made it more difficult for you)
- ☐ Bố mẹ chịu lắng nghe bạn và cả 2 bên cùng tìm đc tiếng nói chung (your family listened and agreed)
- ☐ Other:

## PHẦN 3- TRƯỜNG HỌC

Bên cạnh gia đình, trường học đóng vai trò quan trọng nhất đối với việc học tập của tất cả chúng ta. Tuy nhiên, dưới tác động của làn sóng Covid 19, có rất nhiều vấn đề xảy ra đối với môi trường học tập của mỗi người. (besides family, the school's role is important and contribute to giving you knowledge. however, under the impact of COVID-19, a lot of things happened to your learning environment.)

1. Việc học ở trường có tốt đối với bạn không? (is your study at school alright? \*)

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Rất tốt (very good)
- ☐ Tốt (good)
- ☐ Không tốt (not good)
- ☐ Rất tệ (very bad)

2. Thời gian cho việc học online chiếm của bạn bao lâu 1 ngày? (how much time do you spend for online classes) \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Ít hơn 4 tiếng (less than 4hrs)
- ☐ 4-8 tiếng (hours)
- ☐ Hơn 8 tiếng (more than 8 hours)

3. Bạn nghĩ học Online có thoải mái hơn hay học ở trường không? (Do you think it is more convenient to study online than in school?) \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Có thoải mái hơn (yes)
- ☐ Vẫn như cũ (still the same)
- ☐ Không, học ở trường tốt hơn (no, it's better to learn in school)

4. Trường học, thầy cô và bạn bè có ảnh hưởng (tiêu cực/ tích cực) đến bạn như thế nào khi học online? (how do the school/teacher/friends affect(negatively/positively) you in online classes?) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Khó có sự kết nối giữa giáo viên và học sinh (lack of connections between teachers and students)
- ☐ Bất tiện trong việc kiểm tra, thi cử (hard to take exams/tests)
- ☐ Phụ huynh, học sinh khó nắm bắt thông tin trường lớp (parents/guardians and students could not catch with the school's announcements)
- ☐ Tạo thành một trường học mới lạ, sôi động (create a new learning vibe)

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

5. Bạn làm gì để giải quyết những vấn đề gặp phải trong việc học online? (What do you to deal with the hardships during your online education?) \*

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Bỏ dở chờ đến khi hết dịch rồi học sau (defer until the lockdown is over)
- ☐ Cứ học, bất chấp hoàn cảnh (keep on studying regardless of the situation)
- ☐ Liên hệ nhà trường để tìm hướng giải quyết (contact the school to find solutions)

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

7. Sau khi giải quyết xong, kết quả bạn nhận lại được là gì? (after solving the issues, what re the results?) \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Mọi thứ thay đổi rất tích cực (everything changed in positive direction)
- ☐ Có sự thay đổi nhưng chưa nhiều (slight changes)
- ☐ Hầu như không đạt được kết quả như mong đợi (not receiving the result as you wish)

8. Bạn có cảm thấy hài lòng với những gì đang diễn ra hiện tại không? (are you satisfied with everything that is happening right now?) \*

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Phần 4 -  
Bạn có  
thật sự  
hạnh  
phúc?  
(are you  
really  
happy?)

Việc học Online đã đem lại những lợi ích và bất tiện đến sinh hoạt hằng ngày của bạn. Ngoài những bất tiện được nêu lên, cuộc sống hiện tại của bạn vẫn còn rất nhiều vấn đề chưa được đề cập đến. (online learning has brought both advantages and drawbacks to your daily lives. however, there are problems in your life that has yet to be mentioned)

Với cuộc sống hiện tại là 1 học sinh còn trên ghế nhà trường bạn có thật sự hạnh phúc không? (living your life as a student at the moment, are you really happy?) \*

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28. Có vấn đề nào bạn đang gặp phải mà bản thân chưa đề cập? (is there any problem you encounter that has not been mentioned) \*

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Bạn làm cách nào để thực hiện điều mà mình muốn? (what do you do to make progress to your goals?) \*

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Bạn có thực sự chắc chắn làm theo những thứ mà mình đề ra một cách nghiêm túc và quyết tâm? (when is the perfect time to make progress?) \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Chắc chắn và ngay bây giờ. (right now)
- ☐ Sẽ làm nó trong tương lai gần. (in near future)
- ☐ hiện tại chỉ là kế hoạch và chưa có ý định cụ thể để thực hiện. (just planning, has yet to have intention to do it)
- ☐ chưa thích hợp để làm. (not feasible to do it now)

### Annex 3: Survey Respondents' Notable Short Answer Responses (Vietnamese)

“Bản thân mình không thích việc học online vì nó còn nhiều bất lợi trong việc học và điều mình cảm thấy khó chịu nhất là không thể trao đổi một cách dễ dàng với mọi người xung quanh, nên mình mong muốn sẽ có nhiều sự thay đổi hơn trong tương lai về vấn đề học online.” – N., học sinh khối 11

“Gần đây, mỗi ngày em đều tập thói quen nói về 3 điều mình biết ơn trong ngày, và khi bản thân luôn cảm thấy đủ thì đó là lúc em biết mình đang hạnh phúc” – T. học sinh khối 11 năm học 2020-2021

“Không hẳn là không hài lòng, không thật sự hạnh phúc nhưng tạm chấp nhận được. Nỗi lo lớn nhất của mình là vấn đề về mắt, mình phải nhìn chăm chú vào màn hình điện tử hơn 8 tiếng 1 ngày. Thật đáng lo ngại”. không tên. Học sinh lớp 10 năm học 2020-2021

“Dạ cũng không hẳn tại vì dịch Covid mà phải ở nhà học onl, khó theo sát được bài học mà khi lên cấp 3 thì lại rất nhiều cái để chú ý nhưng nếu học onl thì em cũng có thể hoàn thành được chương trình và bảo đảm sức khỏe của bản thân nói riêng và gia đình nói chung.” Q. học sinh lớp 9 năm 2020-2021

“em hài lòng với việc có thời gian rảnh nhiều hơn để làm nhiều việc khác, hài lòng với việc học online dù thỉnh thoảng trực tuyến xảy ra. Tuy nhiên, em nghĩ việc kiểm tra online bằng trắc nghiệm sẽ có nhiều hạn chế đối với học sinh. Em hài lòng với việc ba mẹ tạo điều kiện học tập cho em nhưng chưa hài lòng về một vài lời nói về chuyện riêng tư của em. Em rất thích việc học tập trên trường như cũ. Vì học tại trường việc trao đổi giữa hs với gv diễn ra dễ dàng hơn và việc trao đổi học tập với nhau giữa hs cũng thuận tiện hơn. Em mong mọi thứ trở lại như cũ.” K. học sinh khối 10

“Mình được bố mẹ quan tâm, chăm sóc đầy đủ để có cơ hội được đến trường, được tiếp thu kiến thức từ những người thầy người cô đã đi trước, rồi được làm quen với các bạn ở trường để mở rộng mối quan hệ, hay được tham gia các câu lạc bộ với nhiều hoạt động thú vị và cùng mọi người lưu giữ kỉ niệm với nhau. Dù trong quá trình học tập và thi cử thì có căng thẳng và mệt mỏi thật, nhưng mình được gia đình động viên, và bản thân mình cũng cố gắng vì tương lai nên mình chịu khó. Nhưng mình cũng thật sự biết ơn vì bố mẹ cho mình đi học để biết thêm về thế giới xung quanh mình, và mình thấy thực sự hạnh phúc về khoảng thời gian này.” H. học sinh khối 10

“Việc học online là không ai mong muốn nên chấp nhận học cũng là 1 cách để mình chấp nhận thực trạng hiện tại. Chỉ mong mọi thứ sớm quay về bình thường, vì không có cách học nào tốt hơn việc đến trường, vừa có giáo viên đốc thúc sự tập trung, vừa có bạn bè để cùng chơi sau những tiết học.” V. học sinh khối 11

“Mình vẫn cảm thấy khá hài lòng với kết quả mình làm trong mùa dịch. Nói chung nâng cao được khả năng tự học và tự giải quyết vấn đề, song vẫn có nhiều khó khăn trong việc trao đổi học tập trực tiếp. Mình nghĩ mình vẫn có thể chịu được hoàn cảnh này hết hk1 với kết quả không tệ, nhưng nếu cả năm thì nó rất bất ổn và gây hoang mang cho kết quả thi tuyển sinh năm sau” H. học sinh khối 11.

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