No money, no honey

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“Không tiền cạp đất mà ăn” (Literally: No money, eat dirt).

This is a famous quote from a (in)famous model. The public often ridicules her for the quote. However, there is no better way to capture the money-hungry mindset of Vietnamese people.

Vietnam has become rich very recently. In fact, the *Đổi Mới* happened only 35 years ago. So, as Napier and Vuong (2014) observed, Vietnamese people desperately want to be rich [1]. Being rich often means a better social status [1], or sometimes, it is actually a matter of life or death [2]. Throughout 35 years of economic development, there were some hiccups that originated from the outside, such as the Asian financial crisis in 1997 or the global financial crisis in 2007-2008 [3]. However, the country still maintains an average growth rate of around 7% in the 1990-2019 period [4]. Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic [5], Vietnam is still expecting a growth rate of 2.7% [6]. In such a resilient economy, even the loan sharks can be eaten by their ‘prey’ [7].

Why don’t Vietnam teach its people how to make money sooner?

The comedian Ronny Chieng jokes about how Chinese people love money [8]. Indeed, the joke can be applied to Vietnamese people too. We have a God of Money (or *Thần Tài*), or we pray for wealth (or *Tài lộc*) during the New Year. Well, praying is the way many people think about it. They pray for marrying into a good family. They pray for good fortune. They also pray for winning the lottery after 4 PM.

I wonder why we did not have basic economics in the high school curriculum, or even sooner. The idea certainly has been circulated [9]; however, I think it is still a subject for the adult. Nonetheless, I think mathematics can be more interesting once economics is involved. One of my teachers used to make us thought about money when we were stuck at a calculation. Statistics, which we totally neglected during high school, will be useful. In fact, statistics should be a priority. The difference between investment and lottery can also be clarified early on, allowing the young mind to understand the importance of long-term thinking. Even the stock market [10], which is often thought of as gambling, can be taught and help the student know a thing or two about scouting information and making good use of it.

In truth, Vietnamese people have been fortunate with stable economic development. Teaching high school students basic economics is a sustainable way for the future.

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