

“Academic Success is the best way for people to have a bright future.” Is this a valid claim for your society?

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As the late Nelson Mandela once said, “Education is a powerful tool which can be used to change the world.” The Education System in Singaporean society has been a point of national pride for decades now. Although Singapore lacks natural resources when compared to other rising economic powerhouses, it is rich in manpower as it boasts a relatively large population despite its small size. As such, developing and enhancing the skills of our workforce has become a priority of our government. This has led to the importance of education in our society being stressed upon time and time again. Resultantly, academic success is held in high regard. To a consumerist and capitalistic society such as in Singapore, achieving a bright future is usually defined by obtaining a respectable high-paying career and having a high income as a result. I believe that in my society, academic success is in fact the best way for one to achieve this bright future, as academic success provides one the qualifications needed, important skills, and the ability to remain relevant in their field. While some may argue that this is not always the case, and there are many instances of people not requiring academic success to achieve the Singaporean idealised “bright future”, I believe that such cases are irrelevant to the vast majority of people.

In Singaporean society today, competition in all fields have been growing at an exponential rate, due in part to the rapid growth of Singapore’s population, which is projected to soar to 7 million by the year 2030. While in and of itself 7 million people is but a speck compared to the populations of countries such as Indonesia, the United States of America, and the Philippines, this results in a country like Singapore having an extremely high density population due to its miniscule land space. Such conditions mean that competition for resources is huge and vicious. Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the Singaporean job market. Academic success, however, plays such a large role in tipping the scales in one’s favour. For example, having a degree or diploma in a certain field would make one appear much more desirable to potential employers, as it conveys the message that these applicants are well versed in the proficiencies required for the job. Furthermore, for other highly coveted occupations, such as in the fields of law or medicine, a degree in those fields are a requirement for one to obtain a job there. As such we can see that academic success becomes a sort of ticket to the working world, as they provide one with the necessary qualifications to impress employers and make the applicant stand out among the others, hence increasing the chances of employment. Thus, academic success is the best way to secure a bright future.

Academic success also imparts upon the students many important skills for them to thrive in society. These skills have been dubbed “21st century competencies” and include a wide range of skills such as critical thinking, technological expertise, collaboration and entrepreneurial dare. These skills are highly sought after by potential employers, as they show that the applicant would be able to adapt well to and survive in the ever-changing dynamics of our modern world. Education imparts these skills upon a person through subjects such as project work and Design and Technology, which both develop one’s critical thinking skills and collaborative expertise. In order for one to achieve academic success, he will be put through these subjects at the secondary and tertiary levels, and he would have to excel in them.

In order for students to do well for such subjects, they would have to learn to use the aforementioned skills. As such, academic success is the best way for one to achieve a bright future in my society.

Moreover, a bright future does not stop upon getting one's dream occupation. After beginning their new career, one still needs to climb up the corporate ladder and continually strive for excellence, to ensure that they can cling on to their positions to continue to fund their lifestyles. As such, one would need to ensure that they are constantly keeping up to date, and not be replaced once their knowledge becomes outdated or obsolete. In order to do so, most occupations ask their employees to turn back to education for their answer. For example, teachers are often given subsidies to further their educations to the Masters or even doctorate level, to enhance their skills and ensure they are kept up to date. As such we can see that academic success is imperative in securing one's future, and an aversion to the striving for academic success would only hinder one's growth and ability to climb the corporate ladder. Hence, I agree that academic success is the best way for people to have bright future in my society.

However, there are those that argue that academic success is not the best way to secure a bright future. Achieving academic success is a long, arduous, and often expensive task, and some therefore argue that it pales in comparison to securing a bright future through creative innovation and expression. In my society today, we can see the emergence of people gaining fame on new platforms such as social media and the internet. The most popular of whom often bring in large amounts of money from their loyal fanbases and advertisers eager to hop on the bandwagon of their success. Some examples of the big names in this field include "Dee Kosh", "Night Owl Cinematics", "Tree Potatoes" and many others. The simplicity of starting out one of these channels makes people wonder why we even bother striving for academic success, when in reality with a video camera, a smartphone and a laptop one could theoretically begin the life of a social media influencer. On top of that, through this route, one gets to express themselves on top of earning money, making it far more enjoyable a process than studying. Other than that, people often cite the example of the gaming giant "Razer", whose CEO dropped out of NUS Law School to pursue his dream of producing gaming peripherals. Examples like this show us that academic success is not the best way to secure a bright future, because as long as we have a dream we are willing to pursue and some rudimentary means of getting there, we can still secure a bright future through sheer determination, vision, and to a certain extent luck, in a much more enjoyable manner than through achieving academic success.

All in all though, I still feel that academic success is the best way to achieve a bright future in the Singapore context, as obtaining a bright future through the other routes does not guarantee success. Very few people who attempt to take the unconventional route to success strike it big. Countless others have fallen before them. There is no guarantee that our dreams would be accepted by the public enough for one to achieve success. On the other hand, academic success is more straightforward in that it doesn't require us to take risks or be different, or even express our beliefs to others. By simply following instructions, we can achieve a bright future. Furthermore, the fame gained from being a social media influencer is fleeting, and the volatile dynamics of the platform's popularity is ever-changing, so there is no way for us to predict the next big thing. One could very well lose his fame as quickly as he got it. However, as seen in the quote I started this essay with, education is a timeless virtue that has been sought after for years, and is unlikely to fade in relevance anytime soon. Hence, I wholeheartedly agree that the claim "academic success is the best way for people to have a bright future" is valid for my society.

Comments:

A highly relevant essay with a consistent stand and coherent arguments. (Except for the conflation of academic success and lifelong learning which is not quite how academic success should be interpreted.) Some expression errors but otherwise quite fluently written.