

# Upholding Integrity: The Paradox of Vietnamese Youth



**Hanoi, September 10, 2019** – *One in every three Vietnamese youth respondents is willing to engage in corrupt practices to gain an advantage for her/himself or her/his family, despite the aspiration to live in an integrity-rooted society and the belief that corruption is harmful to her/his generation, the economy and the development of Vietnam. On the bright side, four in every five youths interviewed are aware of their responsibility and are willing to take action to tackle corruption, according to the Vietnam Youth Integrity Survey 2019 (YIS 2019) released today.*

The above key findings of the YIS 2019 reflect **the paradox of Vietnamese youth in upholding and practicing integrity.** The

survey was conducted by Towards Transparency, the national contact of Transparency International in Vietnam. Built on the success of the first two editions in 2011 and 2014, **YIS 2019 explores what integrity means to young people and how they experience and respond to corruption.**

Corruption remains a serious problem in Vietnam despite continued efforts and strong determination of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the State to tackle it. Vietnam has brought to light many grand corruption cases. However, compared with 2014, **young people reported to have experienced more corruption in 2018 when accessing surveyed key public services.** In particular, four in ten of the surveyed young people had to bribe to get a document or a permit, while almost every other youth had to act corruptly to get better medicine or medical attention for themselves or their family. Noticeably, **youth with lower living standards seem more vulnerable to corruption.** Effective measures to tackle petty corruption in traffic police, public health and education services are indeed lacking according to the Prime Minister's Directive CT-TTg dated 22 April 2019.

While knowing well what integrity is about, **Vietnamese youth end up rationalizing corrupt behaviors.** Half of them say that a person could be lying and cheating and still has integrity, if it could help resolve difficulties for themselves or their family. One in six of the surveyed youths agrees that lying, cheating, breaking laws, and acting corruptly brings greater chance of success in life. Strikingly, **one in two is willing to engage in corrupt transactions to get into a good school or company.**

*“Almost two decades of fast economic growth have propelled Vietnam's status to a middle income country. However, the wealth accumulation seems not to go hand in hand with the accrual of the core values of transparency and integrity”,* said Prof. Nguyen Minh Thuyet, Former vice Chair of National Assembly's Committee for Culture, Education, Youth and

Children, Advisory member of Towards Transparency. *“Integrity is somewhat lacking and fragile, and has failed to keep pace with the nation’s economic progress”*, he commented.

The importance of the traditional role models (i.e. family and education institutions) viewed by youths is seen on the decline. Although remaining good models of integrity, they are less influential on the young people in terms of providing information and shaping their views on integrity. In 2018 as in earlier YIS editions, fewer young people consider political leaders, business people, the media, and celebrities as good examples of integrity. Unsurprisingly, **Internet and social networks play an increasing role.**

Looking on the bright side, the large majority of youths surveyed believe that corruption and a lack of integrity are harmful to different facets of society, and **four in every five believe that they have a role to play in fighting corruption.** Making up half Vietnam’s population, what youth thus need to play that role is an enabling environment where the value of integrity, not corruption is established as the norm.

To make it happen, the report provides **recommendations to the government, education institutions, parents and other role models** on how to create such an environment for youth to practice and promote integrity. Nguyen Thi Kieu Vien, Executive Director of Towards Transparency highlights that: “The surge in youth willingness to engage in corruption in 2018 is alarming. There is an urgent need for all of us to accept joint responsibility and take action to create an environment where integrity can take root and grow, and where youth can experience and uphold integrity”.

**Download the YIS 2019 reports:**

Executive Summary: English Vietnamese

Full Reports: English Vietnamese

**About YIS 2019:** Vietnam Youth Integrity Survey 2019 (YIS 2019) examines over time Vietnamese young people's understanding of integrity, their concrete experiences and the challenges they face in exercising their values in daily life. This is the third time Towards Transparency conducted this survey in Vietnam, following 2011 and 2014 editions. The data was collected from October 2nd to November 29th 2018 through face-to-face interviews with 1,173 young people aged 15-30 and a group of 465 adults aged 31-55 in twelve cities and provinces across Vietnam. The data collection was conducted by Indochina Research. The data analysis and report writing was performed by Towards Transparency with external reviews.

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*Towards Transparency (TT) is the National Contact of TI in Vietnam, working to contribute to the prevention of and fight against corruption. Transparency International (TI) is the leading civil society organisation in anti-corruption.*

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