**Social Issue Discussion**

**Essay Question 1**

**To what extent is employing foreigners beneficial to your country?**

Type of question:

Direct Link

Extent of Agreement:

Requirement of the question:

Category:

**Introduction**

Small countries like Singapore face the problem of labour shortage and will logically see the employment of foreigners as a viable solution to help Singapore expand their labour supply to achieve their economic aims. The presence of more than one million number of foreign workers in Singapore may substantially prove that it is beneficial to employ foreign workers but the extent of benefit is questionable if we examine further the influences of their role in our society from a wider angle of discussion, apart from the need for the economy.

DL 1 - The employment of foreigners is justifiable and beneficial when we examine how they help Singapore overcome our limited pool of labour supply quantitatively and qualitatively to ensure that we are equipped with the manpower to develop a sustainable and diversified economy.

Extent- It is not easy to assimilate the foreign workers as part of the dynamic workers as language, cultures, social norms and values and other complexities of differences will undermine the effective utilization of resources which many industrialists and governmental institutions fail to understand and may not actualize the effects.

DL 2 – It is also appraised by human resource specialists that cultural diversity infused into enterprises will bring about dynamism that promotes the growth of creativity and innovation, allowing enterprises to handle the complexities of the globalized world.

Extent – However, cultural diversity is a double edge sword as the cultural difference is the stumbling hindrance that will undermine the integration of diverse values that will disrupt the formation of the organization culture, pivotal to the growth of the enterprise.

Extent – Many also fail to see how the employment of foreigners will affect the way of life of the local people, socially or economically.

**Conclusion**

In this globalized world, the employment of foreigners will be an economic rationale to pursue in the interest of the economy but its negative impacts tend to be subversive and subtle, especially if the government fails to recognize them and come up with the appropriate policies to contain the issues. This impact is clearly seen from the election result in 2009 which reflected how Singaporeans felt about the employment of foreigners.

**Question 2**

**There is no cause for optimism today. What is your view?**

Analysis:

Category of discussion   
- economic perspective – a good job with a good source of income – to live without the apprehension of financial issues

* Social perspective – social interaction, social values, fairness in society
* Political perspective – human rights, freedom of speech, opportunities for life
* Psychological mindset –
* Health
* Social issues

1. understanding of the question

2. categorization – widen scope of discussion

3. Structure:

3.1 Introduction:

In this modern era, there is progressive advancement and modernization that lead to improvement in our amenities and infrastructural development, and this has led to a more comfortable and convenient way of life. This has shaped the perception that life is indeed better, and people feel more optimistic about the modern lifestyle as they believe that they have a bright future. However, those who are less fortunate will think otherwise as they feel that the society is creating more hindrances and frictions for them as it becomes more complex and complicated and they will be more pessimistic and less positive about life. In view of these polarizing opinions, this essay takes the view that there is no cause for optimism as we examine how our lives will be more undermined

Main Body

1. Opposing View

2. Rebuttal

3. Supporting view 1

4. supporting View 2

5. Supporting view 3

Conclusion

**Question 3 – social issue**

**When a government’s finances for social welfare are limited, should they be directed towards the young or the old?**

**Analysis**

Type of question:

Perspective:

1)

2)

Categorization:

Requirement of the question:

Introduction

In these past few years, since the US sub-prime crisis till the current COVID -19, the financial instability has caused economic slowdown that makes it difficult for welfare states in Europe to continue their social welfare programmes. As a result, the government of these countries are facing a dilemma on how they should conduct their welfare policies; should they focus on distributing more fund to the children or take care of the elderly. It is hard to make such a decision but, if such a decision is to be made, this essay is more inclined to the view that resources should directed to the youth than to the elderly.

Counter-argument / Opposing view:

Those who are against the view that resources should be given to the youth will argue that the state should provide welfare for the elderly for they have made contribution to the state during the past years when they were young and it is natural for the state to repay them for their contributions.

Rebuttal

Supporting View 1

Supporting view 2

Supporting view 3

Conclusion

Question 4 – social Issue

**How far do you agree that loneliness is a major problem in city life?**

Clarifications of terms:

* Loneliness**:**  feeling of being cut off, disconnected, isolated and alienated from other people.
* City life: urban environment (focus on the characteristics of this environment, e.g. pollution level, pace of life, high standard of living, etc.)

Analysis of discusion

* Loneliness is a problem in city life
* The conditions of city life cause loneliness.
* There are other problems in city life besides loneliness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Loneliness is a major problem in city life**  **Proposition** | **Loneliness is a minor problem in city life.**  **EOA** |
| City life is fiercely competitive and fast-paced and has caused people to be self-centered and individualistic giving rise to mistrust and alienation from others. This sense of alienation makes it easier for people to indulge in anti-social activities such as committing crime. | Loneliness is not a great problem in city life as there are social support systems available such as religious institutions, welfare and leisure activities that can provide its dwellers with the opportunity to interact. |
| The technological advances in a city have caused less face to face interaction among people as people communicate via electronic means. This increases the likelihood of conflicts and misunderstanding due to poor social skills/ineptitude. | Through technological advances, there are more opportunities for one to make friends and to connect with loved ones via electronic means. |
| The high cost of living and the fact that work has become a central feature of city life necessitate people to spend long hours in their work. This has caused many people to put off their marriage, contributing to the loneliness of singlehood. | Loneliness is a minor problem compared to other problems that plague city life such as pollution, overcrowding and high unemployment rate which have wider and graver consequences. |

Is the future for the youths of Singapore exciting and inspiring?

Requirements of key terms

* Exciting – thrilling (but not necessarily inspiring)
* Inspiring – something that is inspiring is both exciting and makes one feel strongly interested/ enthusiastic/invigorated

Question Analysis

Candidates need to understand what the future entails for Singaporean youths, before taking a stand to agree or disagree if the future is one that is exciting and/or inspiring. For balance, they would have to raise opposing viewpoints and counter them, or they can take a conditional stand.

Possible arguments to prove that the future is exciting and inspiring

* Diverse educational opportunities await them – youths can look forward to receiving first class education, which will provide more areas of specialisation
  + Fourth university, with a focus in the humanities
  + Tertiary institutions, including the polytechnics, are offering more tie-ups, internships, with top-notch universities and companies overseas
* Singapore’s foray into new emerging industries present to them a diversity of career options – there will be more pathways to success. Youths are also able to develop their talents and passion, even in the creative industries
  + Opportunities in tourism and hospitality industry with the Integrated Resorts (Marina Bay and Sentosa) and F1
  + Development of biomedical industries, R&D – the government has set up Biopolis and is aggressively recruiting top scientists to develop our own scientists. Recent successes of young Singaporeans making breakthroughs in their research (e.g. ? ) are inspiring role models to young Singaporeans
  + Taking the lead in sustainable development in South East Asia
  + Interactive and digital media
  + Development in the Arts, Culture and Heritage – the government is increasing its funding in the Arts, to create a more vibrant city. There are now more opportunities for youths to showcase their artistic talents. Successful homegrown artists are inspiring models to the young e.g. Royston Tan, Eric Khoo (film directors) and Ashley Hisham (designer)
* Singapore’s organization for the Youth Olympics
* Singapore gaining more international presence gives confidence to the Singapore brand name. Our younger generation will thus be more motivated to develop their entrepreneurial spirit
  + More Singapore brands going overseas (egs. Newater, Breadtalk, Old Chang Kee, Charles & Keith)

Possible arguments to prove that the future is not exciting and inspiring

* More intense competition from foreign talent – Singapore being one of the most liveable cities in the world today has attracted talents all over the world to settle here. Our young people are thus not shielded from the competition posed by foreigners
* Ageing population, declining birth rates – results in greater economic burden on the young
* Higher expectations placed on them – with the government investing heavily on educating the young and creating diverse opportunities for them, it is expected that they will be able to deliver. Already, today’s education system is seen as stressful to many of our youths. Yet, the education system is becoming more multifaceted, and students are expected to be more intelligent and more creative at the same time.