How Taiwan Students View School Uniforms Nowadays

— Take the Students in Taoyuan for Example

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I. Introduction

In the history of man, uniforms have always been a symbol to distinguish different tribes, race, and cultures. The exact time of when uniforms were created is uncertain, but it has become part of our culture over history. Students wearing uniform has long been a tradition. However, era shifts, and so do concepts.

In 1987, the Ministry of Education announced the abolition of hair restrictions of students. Since then, the clothing code is governed by the schools itself. From the surface, it seemed like a big step in human rights – schools should now respect the students opinion; however, 99% of the school still has strict regulations on clothing is what we see nowadays.

In school, students used to be instilled to believe uniforms are a matter of course. There is no questioning the existence of uniforms. Nevertheless, are uniforms indispensable? What is the purpose of uniforms? What are the influences of uniforms on students?

In the era where information travels in a lightning speed it has never done before, students have numerous ways to come in contact with different cultures of uniforms of other countries. This leads to introspection of our own uniform style. As the impact of different cultures, the thirst for improvement, and the system already established clash and integrate, we would like to compare the view towards uniforms of Taiwan students. By doing this, we hope to understand what modern Taiwanese students think of uniforms.
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**Method:**
We designed a questionnaire so as to understand how Taiwan students view school uniforms nowadays. 600 copies of the questionnaire were sent out to 6 schools that were randomly chosen. The schools include Taoyuan Junior High, Ch’in-His Junior High School, Yang Ming Junior high school, Wu ling Senior high school, Chung-Li High School, and Taoyuan High School.

**II. Thesis**

(The graphs below are our analysis on the answers to the survey.)

**Questions 1 and 2**

**Why do you think uniforms were first invented? Do you think the purpose was fulfilled?**

Both junior and senior high students think the uniform system was established ultimately to better manage the school. Half of the junior high students do not think the purpose was fulfilled, while the other half think otherwise. Senior high school students generally consider the intention fulfilled however.

The reason to the different perspectives may be because junior high students only answered the purpose to be “better management of schools” because that is what the school tells them. Still, they do not really agree because they feel resistant against authorities in real life. On the other hand, senior high students are more aware of the position of schools and are clear about the values of right and wrong, so they think uniforms do fulfill the original purpose.
Question 3

**What do you think are the actual influences of school uniforms?**

Most junior high school students think what the uniform system really influenced is how it prevents students from comparing to each other. However, it in turn encourages the competition between different schools. Senior high students feel the same way but in addition believe uniforms help students develop a sense of identification towards the school.
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**Question 4**

**Does wearing uniforms change your attitude?**

The majority of senior high school students feel that wearing a uniform makes one become more aware of his behavior whereas junior high school students do not think it will make much difference. We can infer that senior high school students feel more conscious of how they are the representatives of their school when wearing uniforms. Their every action affects the school honor.

![Pie chart showing the change in attitude for senior high students](image1)

**Does wearing uniforms change your attitude? (Senior high)**

- Yes: 66%
- No: 34%

![Pie chart showing the change in attitude for junior high students](image2)

**Does wearing uniforms change your attitude? (Junior high)**

- Yes: 47%
- No: 53%

**Question 5**

**What do you think of your uniform?**

Both sides have no particular opinions about the look of their uniform, but junior high school students tend to think it is unattractive while high school students think it is desirable.

![Pie chart showing the opinion on uniform](image3)

**Wearing uniforms does change your attitude (Junior high)**

- Become more aware of one’s actions: 57%
- Become more constructive: 15%
- Become depressed: 13%
- Others: 15%

![Pie chart showing the opinion on uniform](image4)

**Wearing uniforms does change your attitude (Senior high)**

- Become more aware of one’s actions: 76%
- Become more constructive: 16%
- Become depressed: 5%
- Others: 3%
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**Question 6**

**How would you like to improve your uniform?**

Although both bodies believe uniforms have room for improvement, junior high students tend to focus on the appearance like style and color rather than the substance like the quality which senior high school students are more concerned about.

**Question 7**

**Would you like to modify your uniform to exhibit individualism?**

Both senior and junior high students do not initatively take action to display their own individualism. From the reasons they provided in the survey, it can be concluded that this is because the school regulations are strict and they think it as a troublesome matter anyway. Furthermore, senior high students have opportunities like club clothes to demonstrate their unique style.
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**Question 8**

*If possible, how many days a week would you like to wear your own clothes?*

Junior high school students tend to long for a chance to decide what to wear while senior high school students do not. It can be supposed that in contrast to how senior high school students enjoy certain extents of freedom, the strict regulations of junior highs sparked junior high school students’ desire to rebel instead.

**Question 9**

*If the Ministry of Education announced that uniforms are no longer mandatory, you would feel …*

Some junior high students feel it is ok to abandon uniforms as long as there is no harmful impact on studies; others feel happy for there are no more restrictions. On the other hand, some of the senior high school students feel no concern because uniforms do not play big role in their life and their studies will not be influenced by uniforms in anyway. Others feel troubled because in comparison to junior high school students, they lead a more colorful life where there are matters more important than uniforms they have to deal with, so they do not want to waste time and energy
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deciding what to wear every day.

**Question 10**

**What do you think of the countries that do not have the system of uniforms?**

Most students feel indifferent to the countries that have no school uniform system because they think uniforms are just a kind of culture. However, some junior high school students slightly envy their freedom because that is what they do not have.

**Question 11**

**Of which country’s uniform do you prefer?**

Some junior high school students do not particularly like any other uniforms of other countries, perhaps because they are not well informed. Others, like most senior high school students, prefer the English and Japanese style. It can be inferred that students are deeply influenced by the media. For example, the trend of uniform is changing from Japanese style to English style recently.
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Of which country’s uniform do you prefer? (Junior High)

- Japan: 38%
- England: 16%
- South East Asia: 10%
- Australia, New Zealand: 5%
- None: 1%

Of which country’s uniform do you prefer? (Senior High)

- Japan: 45%
- England: 24%
- South East Asia: 20%
- Australia, New Zealand: 10%
- None: 1%
Ⅲ. Conclusion

When we split modern Taiwan students into two bodies, junior high and senior high students, we find some difference as to their concepts of uniforms. No matter from the question of how satisfied junior and senior high school students are to their uniforms or the how much they want to wear casual clothes, the result of the survey shows that senior high students generally consider uniforms to be helpful to building a sense of identification. That is the major difference of view between junior high and senior high school students. Due to the emphasis of how important uniforms are in junior high, students feel rebellious instead. The restriction to personal style display only further strengthens their resent.

On the other hand, senior high school students who enjoy more freedom believe uniforms are part of the culture. Besides, they have other ways to demonstrate their distinguishing characteristics such as class clothes. Thus, they consider uniforms to help in building the sense of identification towards the school and give their approval to uniforms.

From the reactions of the two bodies, we see that although junior high school students generally do not like uniforms, they tend to grow a liking for it as they experience more and restrictions lessen. Perhaps if junior highs do not overly restrain students desire to show oneself through clothes or other ways, junior high students may approve the value of school uniforms like senior high students.

In addition, from the last inquiry of our questionnaire, we reason that the values modern students of Taiwan hold of uniforms are greatly influenced by the media. Furthermore, a great proportion of Taiwanese students are unfamiliar with the uniform system of other countries. In way of conclusion, modern students of Taiwan hold positive attitude towards students’ uniform, thinking of it as a display of unique culture.
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Hello, everyone! We want to write a thesis on school uniforms so we hope to understand your viewpoint on this topic. Below are some questions on school uniforms. All you need to do is check the one you think best describes how you feel. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

1. Why do you think uniforms were first invented? (single choice)
   - To prevent students from comparing to each other
   - To keep students focused on their studies
   - To better manage and direct students
   - To build a sense of identification within the students
   - Others ______________________    why? _____________________________

2. (Followed by Question 1) Do you think the purpose was fulfilled?
   - Yes         No      Why?________________________________________

3. What do you think are the actual influences of school uniforms? (Maximum of 3 choices)
   - Prevent comparison between students
   - Feel resentful of going to school
   - No influence
   - A sense of identification
   - Comparison between schools
   - Focused on studies
   - Become an economic burden
   - Constraint on personal characteristic
   - Feel happy about going to school
   - Others ____________________

4. Does wearing uniforms change your attitude? (If yes, please fill in the reason into the box)
   - Yes   (A) Become more constructive
          (B) Become depressed
          (C) Become more aware of one’s actions
   - No

5. What do you think of your uniform?
   - Very good-looking
   - Good-looking
   - Indifferent
   - Bad-looking
   - Very bad-looking

6. How would you like to improve your uniform? (Maximum of 2 choices)
   - Color
   - Style
   - Quality
   - Price
   - No change is necessary
   - It does not matter
   - Others____________________

7. Would you like to modify your uniform to exhibit individualism?  (Ex. Wear pants in a baggy way/ lengthening or shortening the skirt)
   - Yes   - No   - Why? __________________________________________
   - How would you like to distinguish yourself?____________________

8. If possible, how many days a week would you like to wear your own clothes?
9. If the Ministry of Education announced that uniforms are no longer mandatory, you would feel ……
   [ ] Happy   [ ] Troubled  [ ] Unconcerned  [ ] Unconcern as long as it does not influence studies

10. What do you think of the countries that do not have the system of uniforms?
   [ ] Long for it strongly  [ ] Envious  [ ] Unconcerned  [ ] It does not suit our country
   [ ] Disapprove

11. Of which country’s uniform do you prefer?
   [ ] Japan   [ ] England   [ ] South East Asia   [ ] Australia, New Zealand   [ ] None
   [ ] Others________________

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire! If you have any complements, please tell us so we can improve!

IV. References

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