Uniforms: to wear or not to wear, that is a question

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指導老師:

林雅珮 老師
I. Introduction

Uniform is a symbol of unity, image, obedience, and belongingness. Kuo (2004) mentioned in her thesis that corporate uniforms have become an extension of the service image and they are also a part of formalization. Theoretically, the fundamental purpose of formalization is to improve the performance and efficiency of employees. However, formalization will increase job stress which would ruin employees’ performance and efficiency.

The same finding can be applied to students’ uniforms. When wearing uniforms, one is the representative of his or her school. Wearing uniforms not only makes students look neat and tidy but also reveals the equal status at school. Poor or wealthy, every student just wears and looks the same. Each suit of uniforms implies various and unique meanings and expectations. The styles of schools also play decisive role in the designs of their uniforms. For example, some schools are open and democratic, so their uniforms would be fashionable and popular among students. Some of them are even allowed to design their own uniforms such as Shilin Vocational High School, Jing-Ho Senior High School, and so on. By contrast, some schools are used to be conservative and conventional, so their uniforms would look more fixed and traditional. In addition, wearing uniforms provides students with more belongingness. From what uniforms one wears, we can easily distinguish which schools they enter.

However, like every coin has two sides. A number of high school students disapprove wearing uniforms to school. Some consider wearing uniforms is out-of-fashion and desire to have more creativities and options. Others are not willing to spend extra money on buying the uniforms they dislike. Since wearing uniforms meets the same goal of unity, still others exclaim that as long as they wear the same clothes (like class uniforms), they can reach the same goal of unity, not merely limited in wearing uniforms. Besides, because of the fixed form and texture, most uniforms
do not fit individual student’s figure, so they do not feel cozy when wearing them. Most important of all, wearing uniforms sometimes increases or decreases pressure to students. Some students believe that when they do not behave well or even get into trouble outside of the campus, they won’t directly ruin the fame of their schools.

This research aims to investigate senior high school students’ viewpoints toward wearing uniforms in Taiwan. Through the questionnaire, and an oral interview with an exchange student from Canada, we intend to obtain further understanding of students’ thoughts toward wearing uniforms so that we are able to provide teachers, educators, or experts of related fields with some references toward how to deal with the uniform battle.

II. Motivation

Wearing uniforms to school or not has been a never ending debate between students and teachers. One of the researchers of this study had studied abroad in Costa Rica for one year and she had found that only few students wear uniforms to school there. However, almost every student in Taiwan is required to wear uniforms to school. Therefore, we are interested in senior high school students’ points of view in Taiwan. Is it possible that students in Taiwan are voluntary to wear uniforms to school? Or, is it a regulation from every school or MOE (Minister of Education)? Are students all satisfied with what they have been wearing now?

III. Data Analysis

We sent out 110 questionnaires and received 100 valid ones. According to the result of our research, there are 69% of students consider that we should wear uniform to school. By contrast, 31% of them did not think so. The researchers were surprised at the result. Originally, we thought that only few students would like to wear
uniforms to school, but the result is beyond our expectations. Besides, different grades hold different attitudes toward wearing uniforms. From Figure 1, we found that in tenth grade, there are 72% of students believe we should wear uniforms to school, 61% of eleventh graders, and 75% of twelfth graders have the same point of view.

![Figure 1: Students from different grades](Total: 100 students)

Among 69 students who consider that we should wear uniforms to school, 54% of them think that they don’t have to worry about what to wear everyday, because thinking about what to wear and what accessories to go with are really time-
consuming. Worst of all, this could lead to being late to school. Besides, 42% of students convinced that wearing uniforms looks more united. One of a tenth graders said that “uniforms make us look more neat and tidy.” By contrast, only 8% of them believe that they will behave well when wearing uniforms. Because it’s easier to identify him or her a student or not when putting on uniforms, students dare not to do something illegal. As for a sense of belongingness, around 9% agreed that they belong to the same groups when wearing uniforms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reasons of wearing uniform to school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I don't have to worry about what to wear everyday.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Wearing uniform looks more united.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Uniforms match the role of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I can save lots of money on buying other clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I represent my school when wearing uniform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wearing uniform has more belongingness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I will behave much well when wearing uniform</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Reasons of wearing uniform to school

When it comes to those who disapprove of wearing uniforms to school, thirty one out of one hundred students hold different attitudes. Ca (1995) was convinced that asking students to wear uniform both deprives their rights of choosing what to wear and indirectly controls their thoughts. It is a serious “white terrorism!” And the truth also reflects this situation, among the thirty one students, there are 22% students bearing the feeling that uniforms are in lack of design and sometimes out-of-fashion.
Teenagers are those who care their appearance most; thus, they would be very unwilling to wear uniforms to school. Moreover, the data showed that 16% of them do not feel like to be controlled when wearing uniforms; it seems that they’re trapped in certain fixed forms. They long for wearing something casual and cozy, but uniforms just fail to reach these demands. Like every coin has two sides, not wearing uniforms to school also brings some edges. For instance, 9% of students suggested that as long as they didn’t wear uniforms to school, they would not directly ruin the fame of their schools when they had made any mistake.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Uniform lacks trendy design.</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I don’t like to be controlled.</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Wearing other clothes is more comfortable.</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Other clothes are better than uniform.</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The expense of uniform is too expensive.</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Wearing class uniform is also united.</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>When students did not behave well outside of school, they will not affect the honor of school directly.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Uniform is out-of-fashion and it does not match our age.</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 Reasons for NOT wearing uniforms

From Figure 5, we are able to infer that if students are permitted to decide how many days in a week that they should wear uniforms to school 30% of the students are
convinced that it’s necessary to wear uniforms to school every class day. As for four days, three days, and two days, there are 15%, 26% and 12% of students, respectively. Merely 7% of them approved to wear uniform only one day in a week. Even 10% of them claimed that they do not need to wear uniform to school at all. Therefore, we could have a rough conclusion that most students agreed that they should wear uniforms to school at least one day in a week. Some even said that they do not look like a student without wearing uniforms.

![Figure 6: How many days in a week do you think we should wear uniform to school](image)

What if students were provided with an opportunity to design uniforms of their own, are they willing to give it a try? Most of the students (67%) show strong interest in designing uniforms by themselves based on their preferences and creativities. Moreover, 56% of them insisted that the self-designed uniforms would more correspond to their self-images. Still 48% of them think this kind of uniforms reveal their own singularity. Furthermore, 16% of them laid more emphasis on the coziness of their self-designed uniforms. Last but not the least, 3% of students is indulged in the sense of achievement on designing their own uniforms.
Students want to design uniforms of their own

Figure 7 The percentage of students hopes to design uniforms of their own

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Designing uniforms by ourselves will match our self-images.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I believe uniform designed by ourselves will be more special.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>It will be more fashionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>It will be more comfortable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Reasons why students want to design their own uniforms

Figure 8 Reasons why students want to design their own uniforms

By contrast, approximately 33% preferred not to design uniforms of their own. Around 30% of those found it annoying to spend time designing uniforms. While 12% of them believe the uniforms designed by teachers or experts would be safer and proper for students. Only few students (1%) had problems in designing their own uniforms.
That will be lots of annoys.

The uniform that designed by teacher looks safer and goes well with the image of the school.

Others.

Table 4 Reasons why students DON’T want to design their own uniforms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>That will be lots of annoys.</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The uniform that designed by teacher looks safer and goes well with the image of the school.</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Others.</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 9 Reasons why students DON'T want to design their own uniforms

IV. Conclusion

With the development of democracy, high school students are given more rights and space to express their opinions and they are more courageous to fight for their needs. Apart from school works, students care their appearances most. Originally, researchers consider most high school students do not like to wear uniforms, but we found that it was just a bias after doing this research. The most decisive reason is that they don’t have to concern about what to wear everyday. Liu (2007) even believes if schools had well-designed uniforms which correspond to students’ needs and preferences; actually, they would be fond of wearing uniforms to school.

We are also curious about foreign student’s attitude toward wearing uniforms; therefore, we orally interviewed one exchange student from Canada at our school who are not required to wear uniform to school in Canada. She replied, “In Canada, only private school students have to wear uniforms and public schools are unable to request students to do it.” We are even surprised at her reply that it is illegal if schools ask
students to wear uniforms to school in public schools. Furthermore, when being asked if she agreed or disagreed to wear uniforms to school, she gave us a positive answer. She considered that it saved lots of money and time and it is easier to put on uniforms than to worry about what to wear every morning.

As a result, we conclude that uniforms indeed play a crucial role in the times of being a student. It cannot be denied that wearing uniforms means more than just being the same; it carries one’s honors and memories as well. Schools and students are able to hit a balance by endowing students with more rights to express their thoughts and creativities on their uniforms but under certain reasonable regulations. In addition, schools should also deliver the concept to students --- “No design in the world will satisfy everyone’s favor,” what they have to do is learn to accept and to appreciate. After all, it is always easy to change and decorate one’s appearance, but it is the “inner temperament and cultivation” that really counts!

V. References

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VI. Appendixes

Dear Friends,

We are eleventh graders from National Chunan Senior High School. We are doing a research on high school students’ viewpoints toward wearing uniforms to school in Taiwan. Your opinions will be very beneficial to this research. We sincerely hope you can provide your precious opinions and all these answers to the questions will be served as academic use only. Thanks for filling out this questionnaire.

Advisor: Lin Ya-Pei
Students: Kuo Ching-Ying
Chen Ying-Ting
Cho Wei

Autumn, 2009

I. Background information

Q1: Are you a __________
○ boy
○ girl

Q2: What grades are you in senior high school?
○ Tenth grade
○ Eleventh grade
○ Twelfth grade

II. Content of the questionnaire

Q1: Do you think we should wear uniform to school? (Include PE uniform)
○ Yes. (To answer Q2)
○ No. (To answer Q3)

Q2: According to Q1, for what reasons do you think that we should wear uniform to school?
○ Uniforms match the role of students.
○ I don’t have to worry about what to wear everyday.
○ Wearing uniform looks more united.
○ I will behave much well when wearing uniform.
○ Wearing uniform has more belongingness.
○ I represent my school when wearing uniform.
○ I can save lots of money on buying other clothes.
Q3: Based on Q1, you don’t think that we have to wear uniform to school, why not?
○ I don’t like to be controlled.
○ Uniform is out-of-fashion and it doesn’t match our age.
○ Other clothes are better than uniform.
○ Wearing uniform of one’s class is also united.
○ Wearing other clothes is more comfortable.
○ The expense of uniform is too expensive.
○ Uniform lacks trendy design.
○ When students didn’t behave well outside of school, they wont affect the honor of school directly.

Q4: How many days do you think we should wear uniform to school?
○ One day.
○ Two days.
○ Three days.
○ Four days.
○ Everyday.
○ Never wear it.

Q5: If you are allowed to design your own uniform, will you do that?
○ Yes, I will. (To answer Q6)
○ No, I won’t. (To answer Q7)

Q6: On the basis of Q5, you feel like designing uniform of your own, why?
○ I believe my uniform will be more special
○ It will be more fashionable
○ It will be more comfortable
○ Designing uniform by ourselves will match our self-images
○ Others

Q7: According to Q5, you are not interested in designing uniform of your own, why?
○ The uniform that designed by teachers looks safer and goes well with the image of the school.
○ That will be lots of annoys.
○ Others

Q8: Please write one sentence to describe your uniform:

This is the end of this questionnaire!

Thanks for filling it out.
親愛的朋友您好:

我們是竹南高中二年級的學生，目前正在研究台灣高中生對穿制服的看法，您們的意見將會成為本研究重要的依據。希望您們能不吝提供寶貴意見，此問卷內容僅做學術研究之用絕不外洩。感謝您們能夠撥空填此問卷。

竹南高中二年十班 學生:古靜穎 陳怡廷 邱威 敬上 2009.10

一、基本資料
Q1: 請問你的性別是?
   ○男生
   ○女生
Q2: 請問你目前就讀高中幾年級?
   ○一年級
   ○二年級
   ○三年級

二、問卷內容
Q1: 請問您認為該不該穿制服上學(包含體育服)?
   ○該穿 (請回答第 2 題)
   ○不該穿 (請回答第 3 題)
Q2: 承 Q1，您認為應該穿制服上學，為什麼? (可複選)
   ○制服很符合學生的角色
   ○穿制服不用費心想要穿什麼衣服
   ○穿制服看起來比較統一
   ○穿制服時會比較注意自己的言行
   ○穿制服會比較有歸屬感
   ○穿制服我就代表整個學校
   ○可省治裝費
   ○其他____________________________
Q3: 承 Q1，您認為不應該穿制服上學，為什麼不? (可複選)
   ○不喜歡受控制
   ○制服太制式應該不符合年齡的穿著
   ○穿便服，比較好看
   ○穿班服也可以代表團結
   ○穿便服比較舒服
   ○制服好貴
   ○學校制服缺乏設計感
   ○若學生在外有不良的行為，不會直接影響校譽
   ○其他____________
Q4: 您認為一週應該穿幾天制服上學？
○1天
○2天
○3天
○4天
○每天
○不穿

Q5: 您會想穿自己設計的制服嗎？
○會（請回答第6題）
○不會（請回答第7題）

Q6: 承Q5，您會想自己設計制服，為什麼？(可複選)
○自己設計的比較有特色
○較具流行感
○比較舒服
○自己設計的制服會比較符合彼此心中理想的形象
○其他______________________

Q7: 承Q5，您不會想自己設計制服，為什麼？(可複選)
○師長設計的比較安全且有形象
○太麻煩了
○其他______________________

Q8: 如果用一句話來形容您目前穿的制服，您會說________________________

謝謝您們的寶貴意見