

Should students wear uniforms?

The question of should students wear uniforms has been a controversial issue in Thai society. In Thailand, we can see that most Thai schools and universities. This topic is still debatable between young people and the older generation. For instance, this topic became a controversial issue in social media when Bangkok Christian College started to allow students to wear casual clothing once a week since the school believed that relaxing the rule would increase student's efficiency according to the idea that happiness of coming to school; if students are happy, it would contribute to improvements in skills. The proponents who are considered as the older generation claim that wearing uniforms *prevents discrimination among students, increases student focus, and creates unity*. For the opposing side, students claim that student uniforms *are more expensive, limit freedom of expression, promote corruption in schools, and does not actually solve discrimination problems or increase student focus*.

The first pro-argument of wearing uniforms is that it can eliminate the problem of discrimination among students. When students wear uniforms it makes all students look indifferent, which can prevent physical bullying for poor students. Since every student has the same outfit so no one can bully or make fun about the appearance and outfits of whose family cannot afford expensive clothes or brand name stuff.

The second pro-argument is that student uniforms can increase student focus. Since students do not have to pay attention to what they need to wear, what the current fashion is, and the comment

or the response, they can put more focus on learning, homeworks, and school activities resulting in performance improvement.

The third pro-argument is that this creates the sense of unity in schools. Wearing uniforms can encourage students to be proud of their schools and also build community as students and, also, alumni feel attached to the school.

However, the opponent's side also proposes some reasons why uniforms should be required. Firstly, some students claim that student uniforms are more expensive than casual clothes and some cannot afford the price. And this is not worth it because they buy uniforms and only wear it when coming to school.

Secondly, wearing uniforms limits freedom of expression and can be viewed as violation of human rights. Opponents claim that dress and appearance can be considered as individual expressions so students should have the freedom to choose what they wear and allowing students to mix and match outfits also promotes creativity. Moreover, allowing students to choose their outfits creates the sense that students are maturing and promoting self-dependence.

Thirdly, forcing students to wear uniforms may lead to corruption in school. Because we can see that, in most schools, students are required to buy uniforms from the schools, this builds an incentive to corrupt for the operations, for example, buying cheap and low quality clothes and selling at very high price to students.

Fourthly, there is no evidence that supports the argument that wearing school uniforms can actually prevent discrimination and increase student focus. Even though all students wear uniforms, there are still other things that represent social status such as mobile phones, shoe brands, accessories, pencils, pens, etc. Uniform does not eliminate the root cause of the problem which is mindset; what schools need to do is to educate students rather than forcing them to wear uniforms. Apart from discrimination and bullying, there is no strong evidence supporting that uniforms could increase student focus and performance. Moreover, some students claim that too strict rules such as uniform requirements reduce student's happiness and this would even, as a result, worsen their performance.

In my opinion, I rather agree with the opponent's viewpoint due to my own experience. I used to be in the school in which the rules are quite strict and required students to wear school uniforms so I found that wearing uniforms did not really help solve discrimination and bullying in school since there are also many other factors of the issues as mentioned above. In addition, my experience in Thammasat university told me that wearing uniforms does not have a significant impact on student performance since choosing a cloth does not take too much time and even takes less time as compared to dressing university uniforms. However, I strongly believe that this kind of rule is not only considered formal rules but also informal rules which take time to be changed. Uniform is a symbol representing pride of schools or universities which is rather something cultural. This might be considered path dependence according to lessons learnt in the class which means we get locked-in to the old standard.

Reference

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