

SCHOOL UNIFORMS VERSUS NO SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Name

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### **School Uniforms versus No School Uniforms**

School uniforms improve the behavior and safety of learners while in school. Jones et al. (2020) assert that students' attendance rates improve, reported infraction cases are reduced, and bullying among learners is reduced. The administration as well as the community can identify those who might have sneaked out of school into unauthorized areas and direct them back to school. Also, the formation of gangs within the school premises and incidences of violent behaviors are reduced. Notably, the number of learners suspended by the schools also decreases reflecting an overall improvement in learners' behavior. Moreover, Jones et al. research shows that there is a perception that wearing uniforms improves learners' safety among parents (88%). It is noted that it is easier to identify intruders who may cause harm to the learners as they may not be dressed in uniforms. On the other hand, schools whose learners don't wear uniforms have high cases of absenteeism, more infraction cases, bullying among learners, and the formation of gangs. According to the National Crime Prevention Council (2014), the gang members use their freedom of dressing to wear in a certain dress code that they identify themselves with and recruit more members who start dressing the same. The other learners feel unsafe and may be prompted to join a certain gang to seek protection. Consequently, there are more cases of violence as gangs attack each other, bully other students, and commit infractions.

School uniforms promote equality and uniformity among learners. Incidences of competition on who wears more fashionable or expensive clothes are alleviated. Students who cannot afford to wear expensive clothes feel a sense of identity with the rest. According to Whitby (2017), an all-inclusive environment is created where the "price tag" aspect is eliminated. There is a sense of fairness in the treatment of every learner regardless of gender or economic background. The learners are encouraged to develop personal discipline and

self-abilities that differentiate them from the rest. The students express themselves in terms of talents as they try to distinguish themselves from their peers. Moreover, wearing uniforms promotes conformity school's rules and regulations. However, schools that do not have specific uniforms for their learners encourage fashionable and flamboyant attire among the students. The learners are comfortable showing off their price tags creating a sense of competition among them (Brookshire 2016). Those who can't afford expensive attire feel insecure and they may have less self-confidence and their self-esteem may be low. Consequently, learners pay much attention to the dress code as a way of self-expression rather than focusing on personal growth and talent development.

Wearing of uniforms promotes individuality. According to Baumann and Krskova (2016), rather than identifying with a specific group or gang, individual students focus on following their paths disregarding conventions and boundaries created by groups and gangs. They are able to think creatively, perceive situations differently, and develop innovative solutions to existing problems. The fear of not looking similar to a gang's members is alleviated as learners are less afraid of falling victim. They develop their own personalities and interests and have a clear perspective of what to do in order to be happy. True independent leaders are as well developed. On the contrary, attending school without uniforms may prompt a group of learners to dress the same way and inspire each other to behave in a similar manner. They then formulate similar interests and maybe afraid of moving on a different path as they can be cast out of the group. Unique traits and individual perspectives may not be developed.

Wearing school uniforms promotes learners' academic success. According to Jones et al. (2020), researches have shown an increase in performance in reading among boys in elementary school. This improvement can be attributed to boys paying more attention to studies rather than

dress code. Parents, as well as administrators, perceive uniforms as a way of fostering a better school climate that in turn leads to success in academic achievement (Brookshire 2016). A better learning climate may result from a better relationship among peers, students, and teachers, and conformity to school rules. The learners' discipline is fostered thus they tend to pay more focus towards learning rather than other activities. On the other hand, schools without uniforms may struggle in formulating a better academic climate and consequently have the learners performing poorly academically. Slothfulness resulting from directing too much attention to the mode of dressing and physical appearance may leave students with little time to read and revise for their exams.

Besides the various benefits, school uniforms are found to violate the students' right to self-expression. The learners might be forced to wear certain garments that they may not find comfortable. As such, the freedom to wear certain colors that exhibit their orientation towards a certain way of life is denied (Jannat, 2018). Moreover, they are denied an opportunity to have words or phrases typed on their outfits without official permission. The learners can't air their thoughts, political stand, emotions, or religious beliefs through their clothes. Their traits that may be demonstrated through dressing are also not expressed. They are as well denied an opportunity to express their likes or dislikes for various organizations such as football or basketball teams. On the other hand, learners who go to school without mandatory uniforms are granted their constitutional right to express themselves through their clothes. According to Hudson & Ghani (2017), granting learners the freedom to express their different viewpoints teach them to be tolerant of different opinions from other people. They learn to keep up with their peers' attitudes and preferences.

Notably, some parents get burdened by the cost of uniforms. According to the Study International Staff (2019), parents spend more than a billion dollars annually on school uniforms. The scenario of children outgrowing their uniforms at various stages makes the parents buy new outfits almost yearly. There have been calls to standardize the cost of uniforms and make them affordable. On the other hand, parents whose children don't have to wear uniforms to spend less. The learners attend schooling in attires that are more affordable compared to school uniforms. Parents who cannot afford uniforms are able to send their kids to school without stretching their budgets significantly. The parents focus on picking decent outfits for their kids to wear relieving them from the high cost of uniforms in the current economic setups.

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