

BLACK SHOES POLICY: PARENTS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ITS IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of the study are to gain a deeper understanding on parents' perceptions and to investigate the correlation between important factors (school climates, behaviour, economy, hygiene and effectiveness) and perception on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools. The data were collected from 318 parents from urban, sub-urban and rural areas from all over the state of Melaka, Malaysia who were randomly selected using cluster sampling. The results were analysed based on demographic characteristics which were gender, place of origin, race, religion, occupation, age, higher education level and monthly income. The findings revealed that a majority of parents who had children going to school accepted the black shoes policy. They agreed with the abolishment of the previously implemented white shoes policy due to important factors such as school climate, behaviour, economy, hygiene and effectiveness. Based on the findings, the researchers found out that each important factor (school climate, behaviour, effectiveness, hygiene, and economy) had a strong significant correlation with the perception of parents as they affected the decision criteria of the parents. All variables resulted with p-value < 0.001.

Keywords: Black Shoes; New Policy; School Climate; Hygiene; Economy; Behaviour; Effectiveness; Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

During Malaysia's 14th General Election's campaign in 2018, "settling on government schools the best decision for the citizens" was inserted by Pakatan Harapan, the newly ruling

government in the country, as its 49th promise in their manifesto. The recently delegated government and Ministry of Education are seen to gain upgrades and progress on Malaysia's educational system for the advantages of the citizens and as a piece of their reorganization procedure that have been guaranteed off [1][2]. It is the way toward transforming the country towards better through education so Malaysia's would be able to comprehensively keep pace with other developed nations. The issue emerges when the approach is turning into a fervently discussed issue particularly among parents who are against the policy of black shoes for school students. Parents with various perceptions towards the policy feel that the strategy is not reasonable for their children in the aspects of hygiene, climate, and behaviour. Besides, this policy is likewise accepted to be burdensome to the parents who have financial issues. Accordingly, this study is led so as to ponder parents' perceptions towards this issue and to investigate if the policy is appropriate for each family in Malaysia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Different studies have been directed to distinguish the reasons why school students need to wear black shoes, its consequences toward both students and parents, and the acceptable level if the execution gets implemented [3]. Furthermore, the ministry is offering as long as a year for all public schools to implement dark shoes administering for students following public requests for a grace period. In addition, there will be no disciplinary actions would be made for the students who are not able to bear the cost of black shoes for the entire year [4].

2.1 Uniforms and Behavior

Since the very beginning, school uniform strategy has been practiced by global education system to instil school soul and unwaveringness among students. A study in the United States demonstrates that amid the time of 1950's and 1960's, the expression "dress right, act right" was heard all through schools with an end goal to expostulate wrongdoing [5]. Cherry Hill Elementary, in Maryland, was the principal government funded school to receive a uniform policy, while the Long Branch School system in Southern California followed up the practise by managing the school uniform. [6] agrees that uniforms have a positive effect on students' attitudes and behavior. Black shoes encourage positive relations with other students as well as teachers due to less teasing from visible stained shoes. Teachers would pay more attention to the students and well as their studies instead of their appearance from stained and dirty shoes.

2.2 Uniforms and Economy

The economy of a family significantly relies upon the monetary administration they hold. Muzaffar Syah Mallow cited Dr Maszlee Malik, Malaysia Education Minister, whereby in his statement in MalaysiaKini he stated that it costs a lot of money to maintain the cleanliness and beauty of white school shoes as parents had to buy shoes polish accessories. Most of the time, parents need to buy new shoes every year as the shoes are used in both academic and extra co-curricular thus causing an extra financial burden to the parents especially to those from low- and middle-income backgrounds. Hence, it gives a solid reason for the implementation of the black shoes school policy in government school in Malaysia [2].

2.3 Uniforms and Effectiveness

A research by Dulin [6], demonstrated that there is no connection between uniform clothing regulations and absenteeism. The findings of the research did not bolster the possibility that uniform clothing regulations diminished absenteeism among secondary school students. In any case, an increasingly common-sense view would propose a plausibility that the decision on wearing black shoes may affect a student's attendance or absenteeism.

2.4 Uniforms and School Climate

Hernandez and Seem [7] express that a protected school atmosphere is made when sets of accepted rules and school rules are set to characterize adequate conduct. At the point when the order of wearing black shoes is executed, it is considered as a feature of the adequate dress to be worn by students. They likewise express that school viciousness could mirror a school's atmosphere. It makes fear and enthusiastic distress and it impedes a student's accomplishment.

2.5 Uniforms and Hygiene

According to Madhutandra Sarkar [8], the future of a society greatly depends on the health of its children. This is the reason why maintenance of personal hygiene among the primary school children is important in order to improve the quality of life and longevity. Parents and school teachers play a vital role in shaping the children's health behaviors in early education of children on personal hygiene. Moreover, even though black shoes are quite pricey to the low-income family, it provides high quality material to its owner as black shoes are not made up from synthetic materials as it does not allow the shoes to breath, producing proliferation of bacteria and fungi and bad odor [9].

2.6 Perception of School Uniforms

The implementation of black shoes policy to government school starting 2021 is giving an impact towards the perception of parents regarding the policy. Wearing black shoes to school helps to influence the decision making of the parents, as the biggest trial of not having to wash the shoes often had been resolved. Although black school shoes are pricey compared to white school shoes, but it offers various reason for parents to not disagree with the new policy [10]. Minister of Education, Dr Maszlee Malik, has come out with this policy to encounter with parents' complaints on the white school shoes [11].

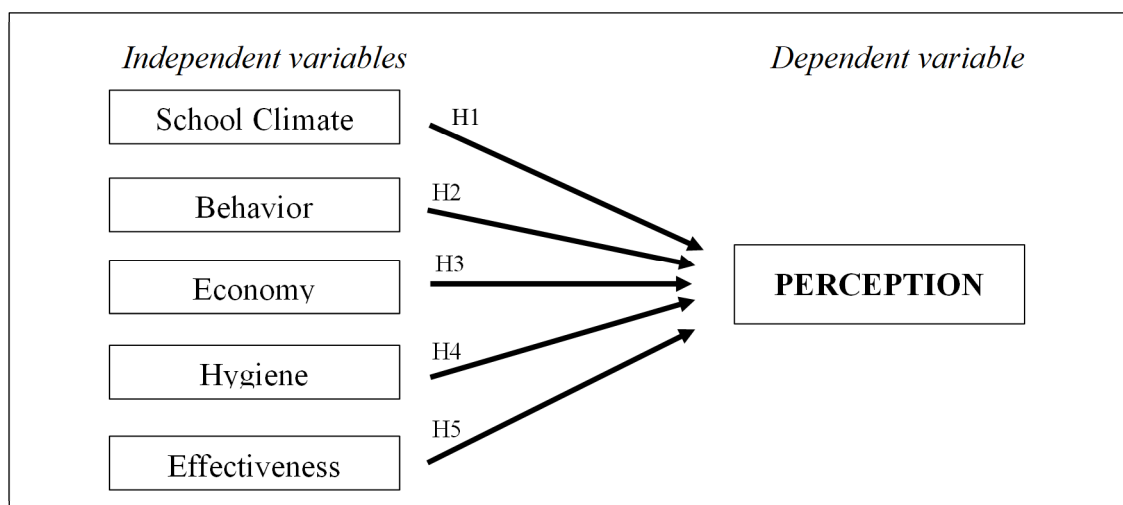


Fig.1. Proposed Research Model

There were numerous articles, journals, analyst reports and different distributed materials accumulated from the web sites identifies with the school uniform papers. In light of the information and data gathered, and discussion from previous section, the following research model is proposed. Based on figure above, this study proposes the following hypotheses bases on the above past studies: H1: There is a relationship between school climate and parents' perceptions on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools. H2: There is a relationship between behavior of the school children and parents' perceptions on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools. H3: There is a relationship between economy or financial stability of the family and parents' perceptions on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools. H4: There is a relationship between hygiene of the school shoes and parents' perceptions on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools. H5: There is a relationship between the effectiveness of implementing black shoes policy to all government schools in the country and parents' perceptions on the wearing of black shoes in Malaysian schools.

3. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design using a quantitative approach through a cross sectional study was applied with a self-administered questionnaire to cover the major aspects of perception of parents towards the black shoes policy. Multistage sampling method, which include cluster sampling and stratified sampling were used. Initially, areas in Melaka are divided into three strata which were urban, sub-urban and rural. Then, two primary schools from each area were selected using simple random sampling and were treated as one cluster. All parents from selected cluster were selected as sample. However, only three hundred and eighteen parents were given their response in this study. The survey respondents were asked to answer seven major sections of their perception and some questions on demographic data. Section A was comprised of nine questions using nominal and ratio scale focused on respondents' demographic profile. Section B was created to determine the school climates (5 items), while Section C was concerned with the behaviour of students (5 items), and Section D examined the economy of family (5 items). Section E was designed to investigate the hygiene (5 items) and five items were used in Section F in determining the effectiveness of the black shoes policy. Section G required the students to rate statements about the perception of parents that were affected by internal and external factors on the implementation of black shoes policy on 2021(6 items). Respondents were required to translate their views using Likert scale ranging from 1 with "totally disagree" to 5 "totally agree". Before the survey got its final form, it was piloted to verify the reliability and validity of the items used. The data were coded and keyed into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23 for analysis.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Profiles

Three hundred and eighteen parents from Urban (62.58%), Sub-Urban (22.33%), and Rural (15.09%) areas from all over the state of Melaka, Malaysia participated in this study on the perception of parents towards the black shoes policy. Out of the total number of the respondents, 30.5% were male and 69.5% were female. A majority of the respondents were between 30 to 40 years old. Slightly over half of them were Malay and Muslim. In terms of education level, 38.99% of the respondents had a bachelor's degree. In terms of occupation, 34.8% of the respondents worked in the public sector. In terms of income, more than half of the respondents earned between less than RM1000 and RM3000 per month.

4.2 School Climate

From the mean score, they agreed that students would not be teased by other students as black shoes are not visibly stained ($M = 3.94$, item 1), students would not be reprimanded by their teachers as dirt is not visible on black shoes ($M = 3.94$, item 2), students would have better relationship with other students and teachers as they would not be ridiculed for wearing visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.69$, item 3), teachers would pay more attention on the students' studies rather than their shoe cleanliness ($M = 3.71$, item 4) and students would feel more comfortable to study as there would be no teasing from other students for wearing visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.78$, item 5). Result indicated that most of the parents agreed that black shoes policy gives positive school climate for the children. The result is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. School Climate

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std Dev.
School Climate	318	1.00	5.00	3.8119	1.16488

4.3 Behaviour

Positive outcomes on wearing black shoes of the school children were recorded when a majority of the respondents agreed that students will spend more time to study than washing their dirty shoes ($M = 3.53$, item 1), students will not be afraid to engage in activities that could stain their shoes ($M = 3.86$, item 2), students will pay more attention in class than on their shoes ($M = 3.63$, item 3), teachers will pay more attention on the students and their studies instead of their visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.68$, item 4) and students would not tease other students for wearing visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.75$, item 5). The result is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Behaviour

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Behaviour	318	1.00	5.00	3.6522	1.19933

4.4 Economy

Most of the respondents agreed that they do not need to buy extra pairs of shoes as black shoes are not visibly stained ($M = 3.92$, item 1), they do not need to buy shoes whitener for black shoes ($M = 4.07$, item 2), they would be able to save more as black shoes could be worn to school as well as in extra-curricular activities ($M = 4.14$, item 3), they would be able to save more as black shoes could also be worn for activities outside of school such as sight-seeing (M

= 3.73, item 4) and they would be able to save more as they only need to buy one or two pairs of black shoes as compared to white shoes which are easily stained ($M = 3.99$, item 5). The result is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Economy

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Economy	318	1.00	5.00	3.9679	1.03240

4.5 Hygiene

A majority of the respondents agreed that by wearing black shoes, their children will keep on being disciplined with the routine of washing school shoes ($M = 3.48$, item 1), black shoes are not easily dirtied unless the children play at the field and they get mud on it ($M = 4.16$, item 2), stains or marks on black shoes are not easily visible ($M = 4.14$, item 3), black shoes do not produce an unpleasant smell even they have not been washed regularly ($M = 2.61$, item 4) and the washing process of black shoes is easier and required only a short time ($M = 4.04$, item 5). The result is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Hygiene

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Hygiene	318	1.00	5.00	3.6673	0.93990

4.6 Effectiveness

From the mean score, they agreed that wearing black shoes could encourage students not to miss school as they would not fear of being ridiculed for wearing visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.45$, item 1), students would be able to concentrate on their studies rather than their shoes ($M = 3.49$, item 2), the relationship between the students and other students as well as teachers would be better as they would not be ridiculed for wearing visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.50$, item 3), teachers and students are able to concentrate on the students' performance more rather than the issue of visibly stained shoes ($M = 3.53$, item 4) and parents are able to save more as they do not need to buy more pairs of white shoes which are easily stained ($M = 3.86$, item 5). The result is summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Effectiveness

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Effectiveness	318	1.00	5.00	3.5245	1.22058

4.7 Perception

A majority of the respondents agreed that the implementation of black shoes will ease parents' burden especially for those who have many children ($M = 3.87$, item 1) good effort to enhance school educational achievement ($M = 3.53$, item 2), will produce a good climate at school ($M = 3.54$, item 3), will be easier to maintain a neat school uniform protocol for students ($M = 3.90$, item 4) and brings numerous advantages towards parents, teachers and students ($M = 3.77$, item 5). The result is summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Perception

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Perception	318	1.00	5.00	3.6818	1.09803

4.8 Correlation analyses

Correlation analyses were carried out to examine the strength of the relationships between independent variables which are school climate, behaviour, economy, hygiene, effectiveness and dependent variable which is perception.

Table 7. Correlation Coefficient among School Climates, Behaviour, Economy, Hygiene, Effectiveness and Perception

	H1 School Climate	H2 Behaviour	H3 Economy	H4 Hygiene	H5 Effectiveness
Perception	0.757**	0.800**	0.770**	0.825**	0.847**
	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$

As shown in Table 7, it can be seen that there is a significant strong positive correlation between the perception of parents on the black shoes policy and the school climate ($r = 0.757$, p -value < 0.001), behaviour of the students on their shoes ($r = 0.800$, p -value < 0.001), the economy status ($r = 0.770$, p -value < 0.001), hygiene of the school shoes ($r = 0.825$, p -value < 0.001) and the effectiveness of implementing the black shoes policy ($r = 0.847$, p -value < 0.001). Hence, it can be concluded that all independent variables (school climate, behaviour, economy, hygiene, and effectiveness) are significantly correlated to the dependent variable (perception). Therefore, the hypotheses proposed in this study (H1 to H5) are accepted.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings have revealed that parents who have children going to school were welcoming the black shoes policy. They agreed with the abolishment of white shoes policy due to the important

factors which are school climate, behaviour, economy, hygiene and effectiveness. Based on the findings, it found out that each important factor (school climate, behaviour, effectiveness, hygiene, and economy) has a correlation with the perception of parents as they had been affecting the decision criteria of the parents. All variables resulted with p-value < 0.001.

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