



School Uniform

Background

The summary below presents the research evidence on school uniform in the Arab World context.

The Teaching & Learning Toolkit focuses on impact of outcomes for learners; it presents an estimate of the average impact of school uniform in schools on learning progress, based on the synthesis of a large number of quantitative studies from around the world.

This page offers a summary and analysis of individual studies on school uniform in the Arab world. In contrast to the Toolkit it includes studies which do not estimate impact, but instead investigate the implementation of interventions and how they are perceived by school leaders, teachers and students using a range of research methods. This information is valuable for leaders and teachers interested in finding out more about particular examples of school uniform use in the Arab world.



Summary of the research in the Arab World

There is no robust evidence that introducing a school uniform will, by itself, improve academic performance. While none of the studies in this review examined the link between school uniform and student achievement, these studies do indicate that school uniform is related to other facets of school life. School uniform is identified as a major source of commitment for students in Oman. Dressing appropriately and accepting school uniforms and following the rules about school attendance and class time were perceived by 44 Omani school principals to be an utmost educational value that would result in the improvement of the school's overall performance and of student achievement (Al-Ani & Al-Harhi, 2017). However, studies like Igei and Yuki (2015) indicated that the price of school uniforms is associated in parents decisions on the enrollment of girls in schools in Yemen. Survey responses of school managers and parents showed that school uniforms cannot be easily afforded by poor families and as a result, parents choose to keep their girls at home and send the boys to school instead.

When investigating the experiences of a group of Yemeni students (n=4) on an ESL science class, Fradi (2016) found that the dress code has an impact on participants' interactions in the classroom which in turn affected their academic achievement. Yemeni female students are expected to be dressed in the most traditional Islamic attire, consisting of a black gown, scarf (hijab), and a sheer veil (niqab) that covered their face at all times while some of the non-Yemeni Arab Muslim peers wore pants to the school. Hence, interviews conducted with these participants in an American high school, uncovered the struggles of female students due to their unique dress code that set them apart from the other female students (including those from less strict Arabic cultures). This in turn led to a sense of being different, which resulted in isolation from their peers.

In a survey design study, Ibrahim and Al-Siami (2019) examined perceptions of a random sample of middle school students (n=200), general education schoolteachers (n=30), parents (n=30), and specialized arbitrators (n=10) regarding proposed designs for the school uniform for female students in line with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia environmental criteria and in line with the requirements of the physical and psychological adolescence stage. Findings of



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this study found that designing a unified school uniform that is aligned with the culture and Islamic beliefs and at the same time modern and suitable to the needs of adolescents female students is important for their self-fulfillment and the need to look good.



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Summary paragraph:

There is very limited evidence about the effect of school uniform on learning in the Arab world. Studies in Oman and Saudi Arabia revealed that school uniform is viewed as a major source of commitment for students and will uplift their self-fulfillment if designed appropriate with the needs of female adolescents and aligned with the Islamic beliefs.

However, two studies in Yemen (quantitative and qualitative) showed that the traditional Islamic school uniform has an impact on female students interactions in the classroom and its cost affect their enrollment in schools.

The severe lack of evidence not just in the Arab context, but also around the world, suggests the need for more research aimed to investigate the implementation of this practice and its impact on students' outcomes.



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References

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Igei, K., & Yuki, T. (2015). *Determinants of School Enrollment of Girls in Rural Yemen: Parental Aspirations and Attitudes toward Girls' Education* (No. 107). JICA Research Institute.



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Search Terms

School uniform; achievement; school; academic achievement.

Databases searched

Academic search complete

ERIC (EBSCO)

Education Source

Google scholar

ProQuest Central

ProQuest Dissertations

PsycInfo

Web of Science