Breaking the Code: A Data-Driven Look at Student Perspectives on Dress Codes

Group 4 Portfolio 3

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I. Introduction

The University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines (USTP) has long enforced a student dress code aimed at promoting professionalism, discipline, and unity within the academic environment. However, as societal norms evolve and educational institutions become more inclusive, students have expressed concerns regarding the practicality and relevance of the current dress code policies. These concerns revolve around issues such as financial burden, freedom of expression, and comfort in learning spaces.

Recognizing the importance of student feedback in shaping a more inclusive dress code policy, the Federation of Student Government (FSG) conducted a university-wide survey to gauge student perspectives. This study aims to analyze these responses, identify key concerns, and provide data-driven recommendations that balance institutional objectives with student welfare. By understanding the diverse opinions across USTP's eight campuses, this research seeks to contribute to policy revisions that foster both professionalism and inclusivity.

1.1 Survey Design & Methodology

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of student sentiments, the survey utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques:

Quantitative Data: Structured close-ended questions measured student opinions on key issues such as the enforcement of the dress code, level of support for policy revisions, and perceived impacts on academic performance and self-expression.

Qualitative Data: Open-ended questions allowed students to elaborate on their personal experiences, concerns, and suggestions, providing richer insights beyond numerical trends.

1.2 Survey Distribution & Participation

The survey was distributed across all eight USTP campuses, reaching a total of 4,090 student respondents. Below is the breakdown of responses per campus:

The sample includes students from various academic programs and year levels, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives. Data was collected over a specified period to allow for maximum participation while maintaining the reliability of the findings.

Campus Distribution

Based on Survey Data

Campus	Count
USTP Cagayan de Oro	2478
USTP Claveria	1202
USTP Oroquieta	153
USTP Jasaan	105
USTP Villanueva	77
USTP Alubijid	47
USTP Panaon	18
USTP Balubal	10

II. School Responses

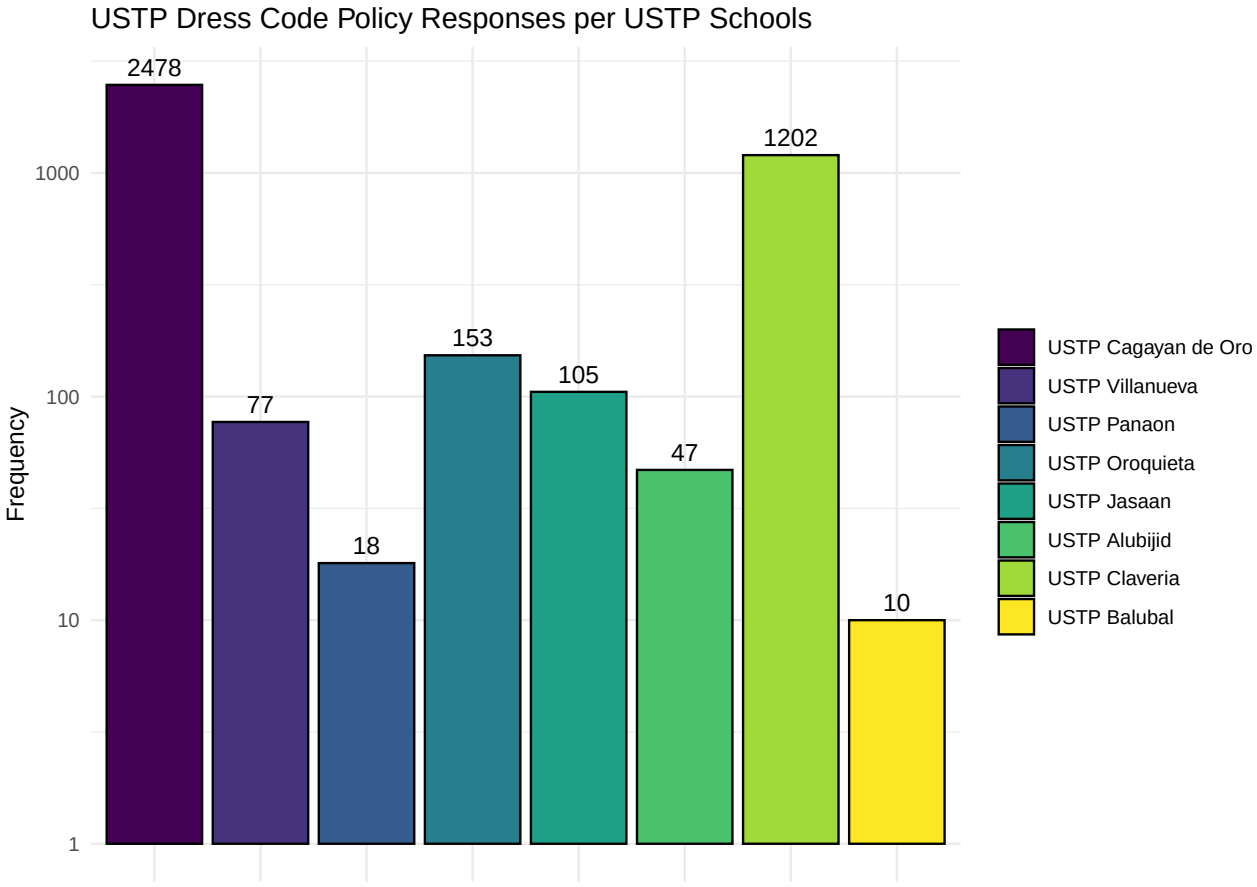

Figure 1 | Scaled in Log10

The bar chart presents the distribution of survey responses across eight USTP campuses, highlighting significant variations in participation levels.

1. **High Response Rates from USTP Cagayan de Oro and Claveria**

   USTP Cagayan de Oro (2,478 responses; 60.6%) and USTP Claveria (1,202 responses; 29.4%) account for a combined 90% of total responses.

   The significant gap between USTP CDO and Claveria suggests differences in engagement levels across campuses, with CDO showing the highest level of participation.

   The response distribution indicates that students from these two campuses had a stronger presence in shaping the overall survey results.

2. **Moderate Response Rates from USTP Oroquieta, Jasaan, and Villanueva**

   USTP Oroquieta (153 responses; 3.7%), USTP Jasaan (105 responses; 2.6%), and USTP Villanueva (77 responses; 1.9%) collectively represent 8.2% of total responses.

   Compared to the two largest campuses, the engagement from these three campuses appears significantly lower, suggesting a less dominant influence on the overall survey outcomes.

   The response counts are similar in scale, indicating a relatively balanced level of participation among these mid-sized campuses.

3. **Low Response Rates from USTP Alubijid, Panaon, and Balubal**

   USTP Alubijid (47 responses; 1.1%), USTP Panaon (18 responses; 0.4%), and USTP Balubal (10 responses; 0.2%) together account for only 1.7% of total responses.

   These numbers indicate a limited representation of perspectives from these campuses in the survey dataset.

   The wide disparity between these campuses and the highest-responding ones suggests a heavily skewed response distribution.

4. **Observations on the Overall Distribution**

   The survey response count is heavily concentrated in USTP CDO and Claveria, with other campuses contributing only a small fraction of the total responses.

   The participation trend follows a steep drop-off pattern, with responses decreasing significantly as campus size decreases.

2.1 By Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

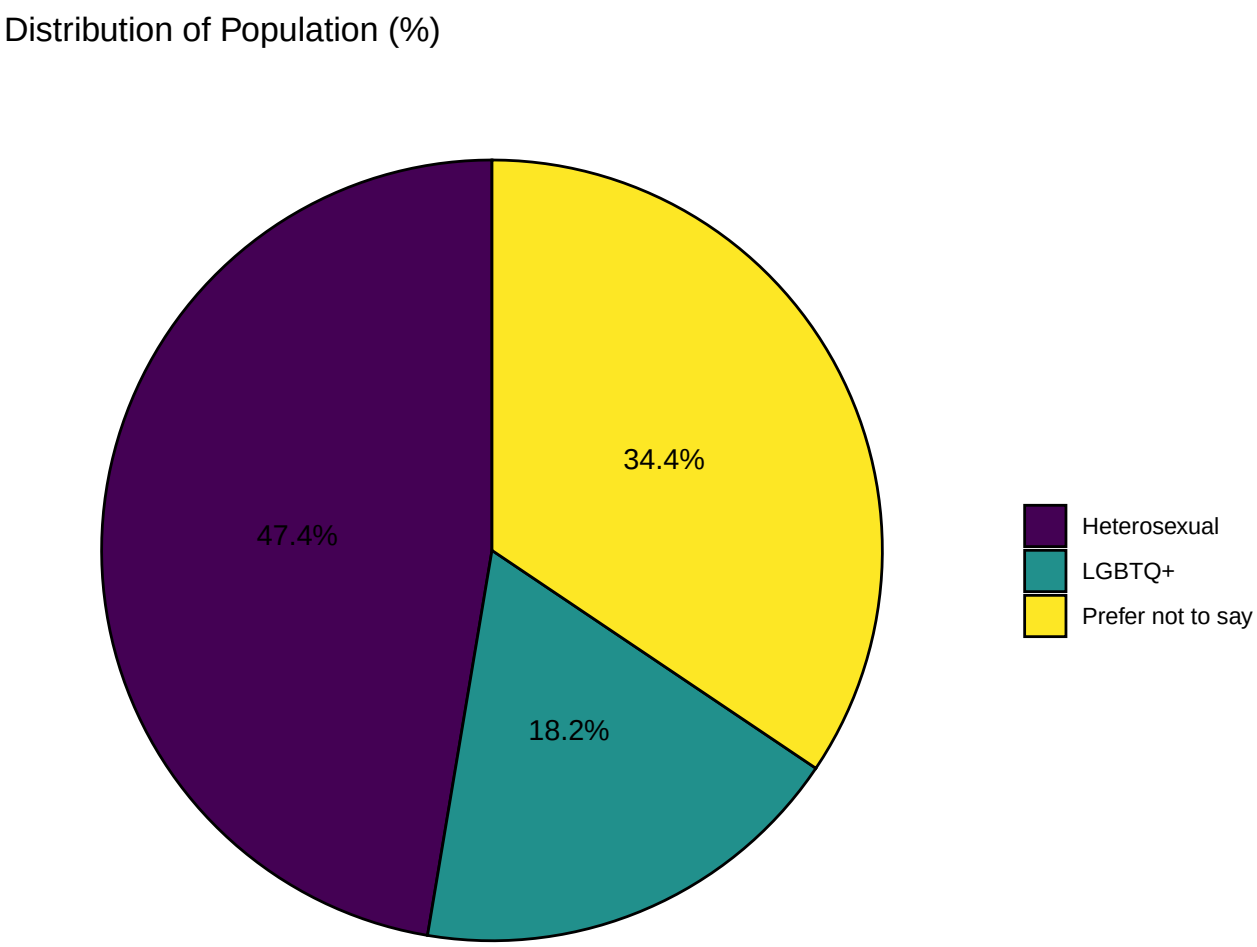

Figure 2

The pie chart illustrates the demographic distribution of survey respondents based on sexual orientation, segmented into three categories: Heterosexual (47.4%), LGBTQ+ (18.2%), and Prefer Not to Say (34.4%).

1. **Majority Identification as Heterosexual**

- Nearly half of the respondents (47.4%) identified as heterosexual, making this the largest demographic group in the survey. This suggests that heterosexual students may form the dominant perspective in discussions on dress code policies, potentially influencing majority opinion trends.

2. **Representation of LGBTQ+ Respondents**

- 18.2% of respondents identified as LGBTQ+, demonstrating notable representation within the surveyed population. While this is a smaller proportion compared to heterosexual respondents, it highlights the presence of diverse gender identities and sexual orientations within the university. The perspectives of LGBTQ+ individuals are essential in policy discussions, particularly regarding inclusivity and non-discriminatory dress code regulations.

3. **A Significant Portion Prefers Not to Disclose**

- 34.4% of respondents opted not to disclose their sexual orientation, indicating a substantial proportion of students who are either private about their identities or uncertain about how their responses might be used.
- The high percentage suggests that sensitivity and confidentiality are important factors in discussions about identity-related policies, such as dress codes.
- This also implies that there may be a larger LGBTQ+ or questioning population within the university than what is explicitly reported, as some students may have chosen not to disclose their identity due to personal reasons.

2.1.A Sexual Orientation

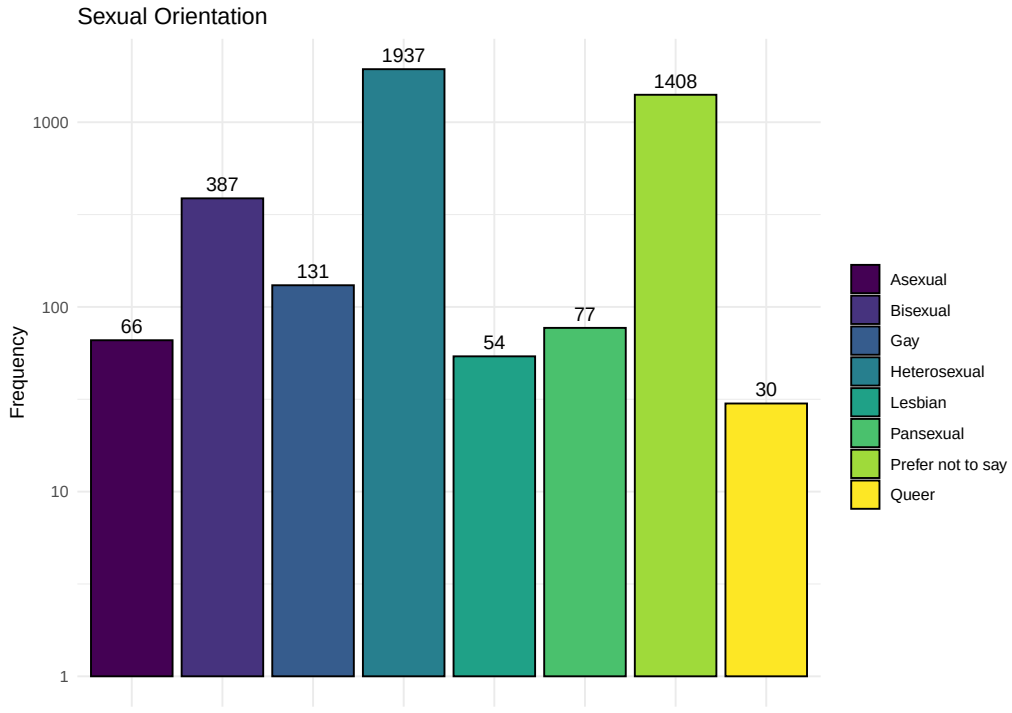

Figure 3 | Scaled in Log10

The bar chart presents the distribution of respondents based on their sexual orientation, categorizing them into various identity groups, including Heterosexual, LGBTQ+ identities, and those who preferred not to disclose.

1. **Majority Identification as Heterosexual**

The largest demographic group is heterosexual respondents (1,937), indicating that they form the dominant perspective within the surveyed population. This suggests that discussions on policies, including those related to inclusivity, may be influenced by a predominantly heterosexual viewpoint.

2. **Notable LGBTQ+**

- Representation A total of 719 respondents identified within the LGBTQ+ spectrum, segmented as follows:
  - Bisexual (387)
  - Gay (131)
  - Lesbian (54)
  - Pansexual (77)
  - Asexual (66)
  - Queer (30)
- This accounts for a significant portion of the respondents, highlighting the presence of diverse identities within the surveyed population.

3. **High Non-Disclosure Rate**

1,408 respondents (a substantial proportion) selected "Prefer not to say." This suggests that privacy, societal stigma, or personal uncertainty may have influenced their decision to withhold their sexual orientation. The high percentage underscores the importance of ensuring anonymity and sensitivity in discussions related to identity.

4. **Observations on the Overall Distribution**

The data reflects a diverse respondent base, with a notable LGBTQ+ presence and a significant non-disclosure rate. The large number of individuals who preferred not to disclose suggests that the actual LGBTQ+ population could be larger than reported.

When considering policies or discussions related to inclusivity, privacy, and representation, it is crucial to recognize the needs and perspectives of all groups.

2.1.B Gender Identity

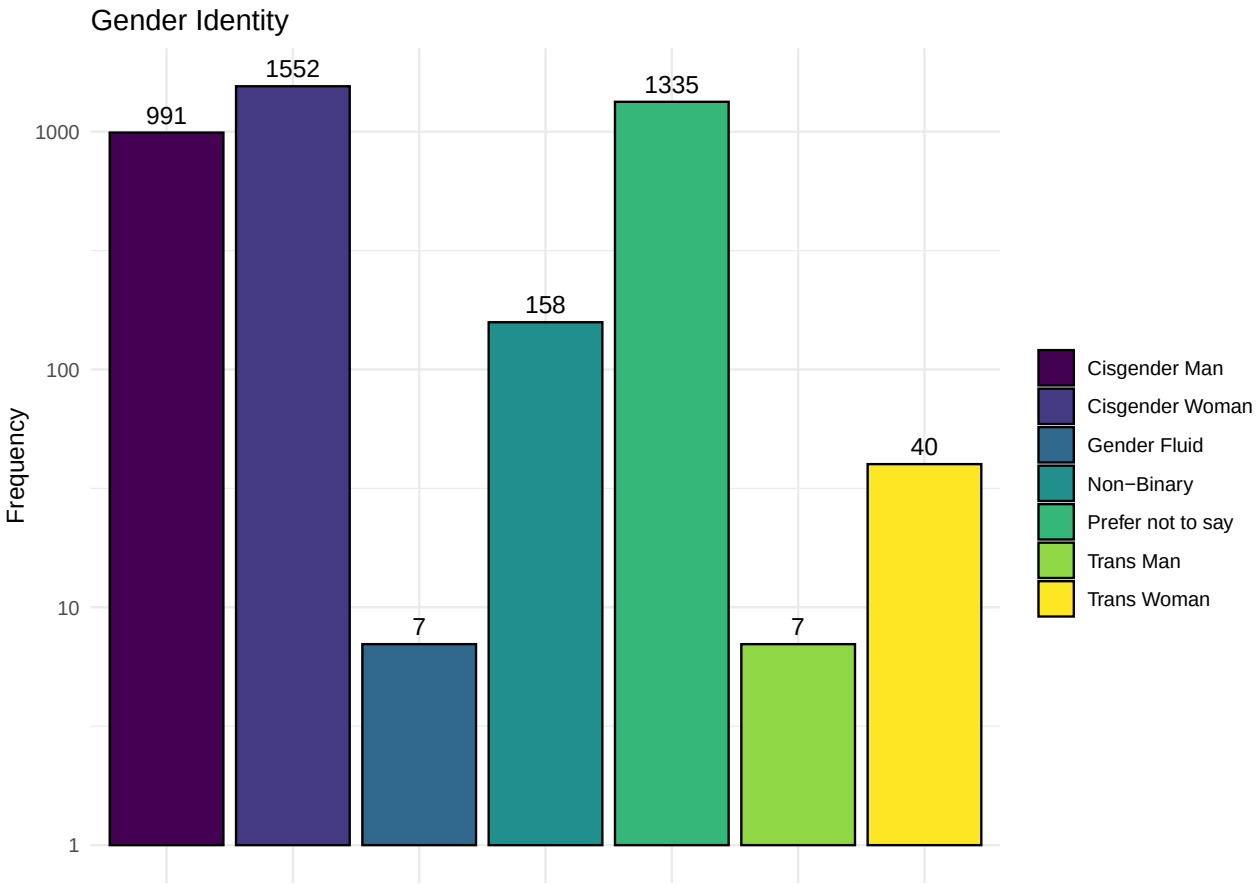

Figure 4 | Scaled in Log10

The bar chart presents the distribution of respondents based on their gender identity, categorizing them into Cisgender, Non-Binary, Gender Fluid, Transgender, and those who preferred not to disclose.

1. **Majority Identification as Cisgender**

- The largest demographic groups are Cisgender Women (1,552) and Cisgender Men (991), making up the majority of respondents. This indicates that most participants identify with their assigned gender at birth, which may shape dominant perspectives in discussions on policies and inclusivity.

2. **Representation of Gender-Diverse Individuals**

- A total of 212 respondents identified outside the binary cisgender classification, segmented as follows:
  - Non-Binary (158)
  - Gender Fluid (7)
  - Trans Man (7)
  - Trans Woman (40)
- While this represents a smaller proportion of respondents, it highlights the presence of gender-diverse identities within the surveyed population. The inclusion of these groups is essential in fostering discussions around gender inclusivity in institutional policies.

3. **High Non-Disclosure Rate**

- 1,335 respondents opted for "Prefer not to say," making up a significant portion of the dataset. This suggests that factors such as privacy concerns, societal stigma, or uncertainty about gender identity may have influenced their decision.
- The high percentage underscores the importance of maintaining confidentiality and fostering a safe environment for gender expression.

4. **Observations on the Overall Distribution**

- The data reflects a diverse respondent base, with a notable presence of gender-diverse individuals and a large non-disclosure group.
- The significant number of individuals who chose not to disclose their gender identity implies that gender diversity within the population may be more extensive than explicitly reported.

2.1.C Gender Expression

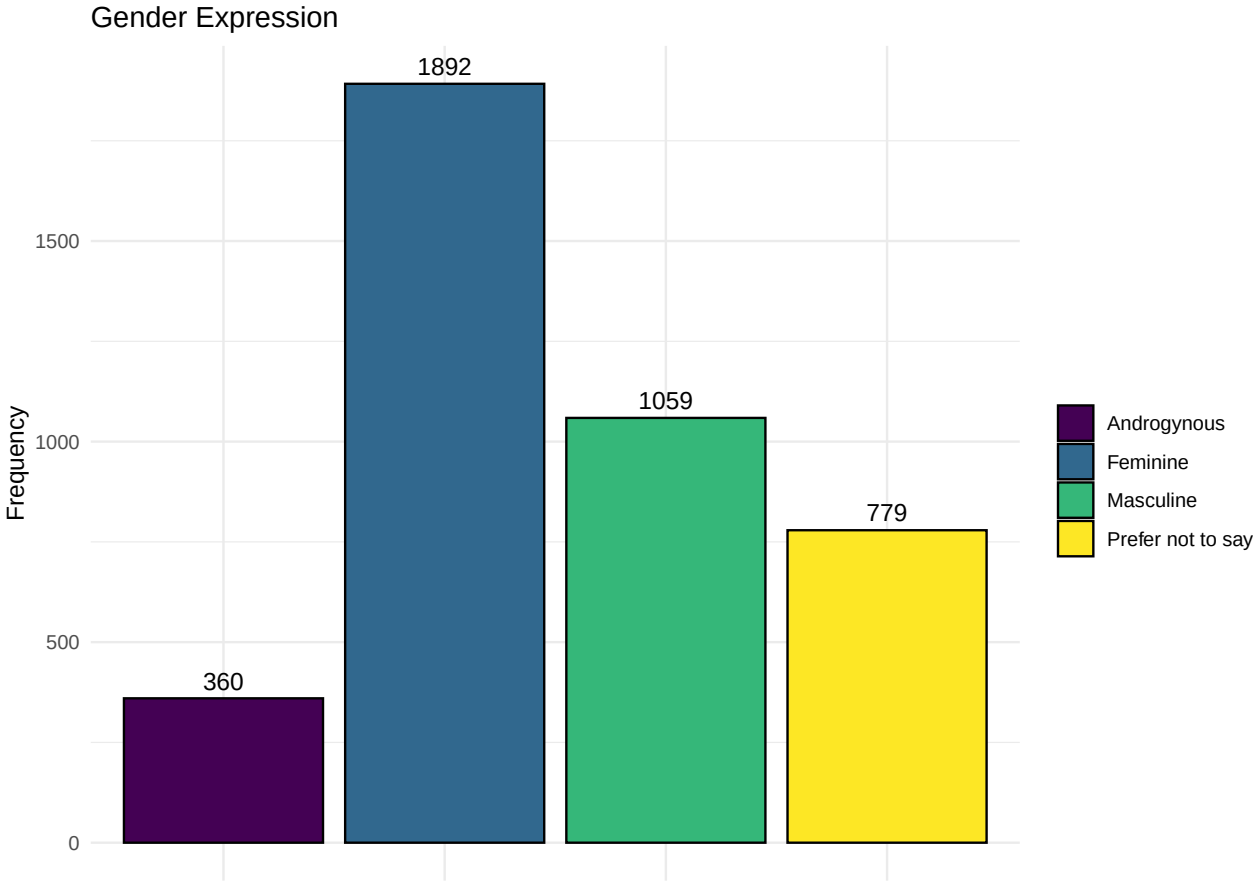

Figure 5

The bar chart presents the distribution of respondents based on their gender expression, categorizing them into Androgynous, Feminine, Masculine, and those who preferred not to disclose.

1. **Majority Identification as Feminine**

- The largest demographic group identify themselves as Feminine (1,892), followed by Masculine respondents (1059), Feminine and Masculine respondents constitute the majority of the overall respondents. There are those who prefer not to say their gender expression (779), and there is also the smallest demographic representing the Androgynous respondents (360).

2. **Representation of Gender Expressions**

- The bar chart indicates that most participants identify with their gender expression that is expected of them from our society or their immediate environments. However, there remains a demographic that are uncomfortable with expressing their true selves, and only a few who are explicitly androgynous. This indicates the dominance of both feminine and masculine respondents in discussions on inclusivity and other gender policies. A room for more inclusivity should be made for androgynous people and for those who are still unwilling to disclose themselves, so they could express themselves more freely.

2.2 Do you agree with the current dress code policy?

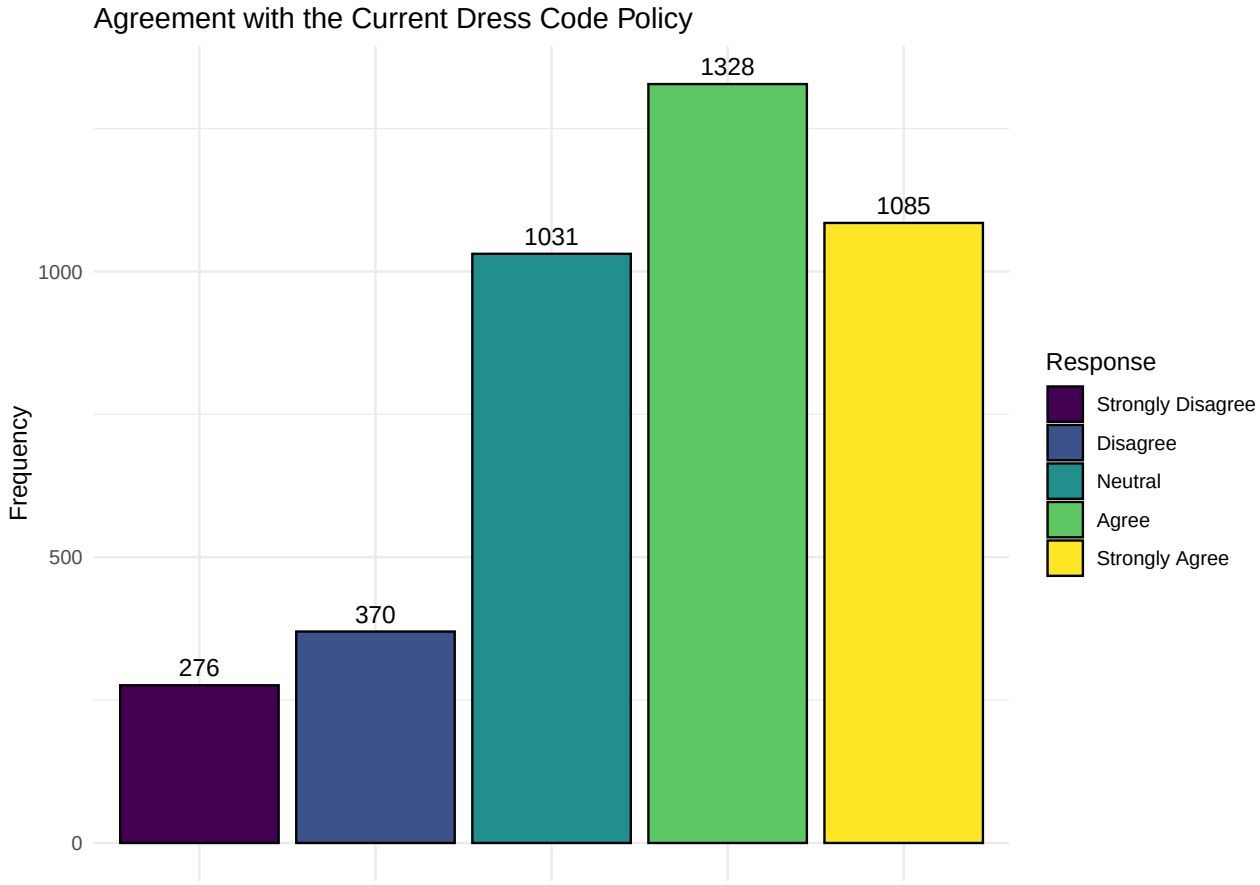

Figure 6

The bar chart presents the distribution of respondents' opinions on the current dress code policy, categorized into five levels of agreement: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

1. **Majority Support for the Dress Code Policy**

- A significant portion of respondents expressed agreement with the current dress code policy:
  - 1,328 respondents (Agree)
  - 1,085 respondents (Strongly Agree)
- These figures indicate that over half of the surveyed population (54.2%) supports the existing dress code policy.This suggests that a large number of students view the policy as reasonable, necessary, or aligned with institutional standards.

2. **Neutral Perspective Holds Considerable Weight**

- 1,031 respondents chose a Neutral stance, reflecting a sizable portion of individuals who neither fully support nor oppose the policy. This may indicate a lack of strong opinions, suggesting that for many, the dress code does not significantly impact their academic experience.
- It also suggests that policy adjustments might not be a pressing concern for this group unless a major issue arises.

3. **Opposition to the Dress Code Policy**

- 646 respondents expressed disapproval:
- 370 (Disagree)
- 276 (Strongly Disagree)
  - While these numbers are lower compared to those in favor, they represent a significant minority (14.5%) who find the current dress code policy restrictive or problematic.
  - These respondents may believe the policy limits personal expression, lacks inclusivity, or does not align with contemporary norms.

4. **Observations on the Overall Distribution**

- The data suggests widespread acceptance of the current dress code policy, with a combined approval rating of 54.2%.
- The large neutral group (21.1%) highlights that many students are indifferent or unaffected.
- The 14.5% who oppose the policy indicate a need to assess whether certain aspects of the dress code may be restrictive or outdated.
- If revisions are considered, they should aim to balance the needs of those who strongly support the policy with the concerns of those who oppose it.

2.3 Are you in favor of the abolishment of the dress code policy?

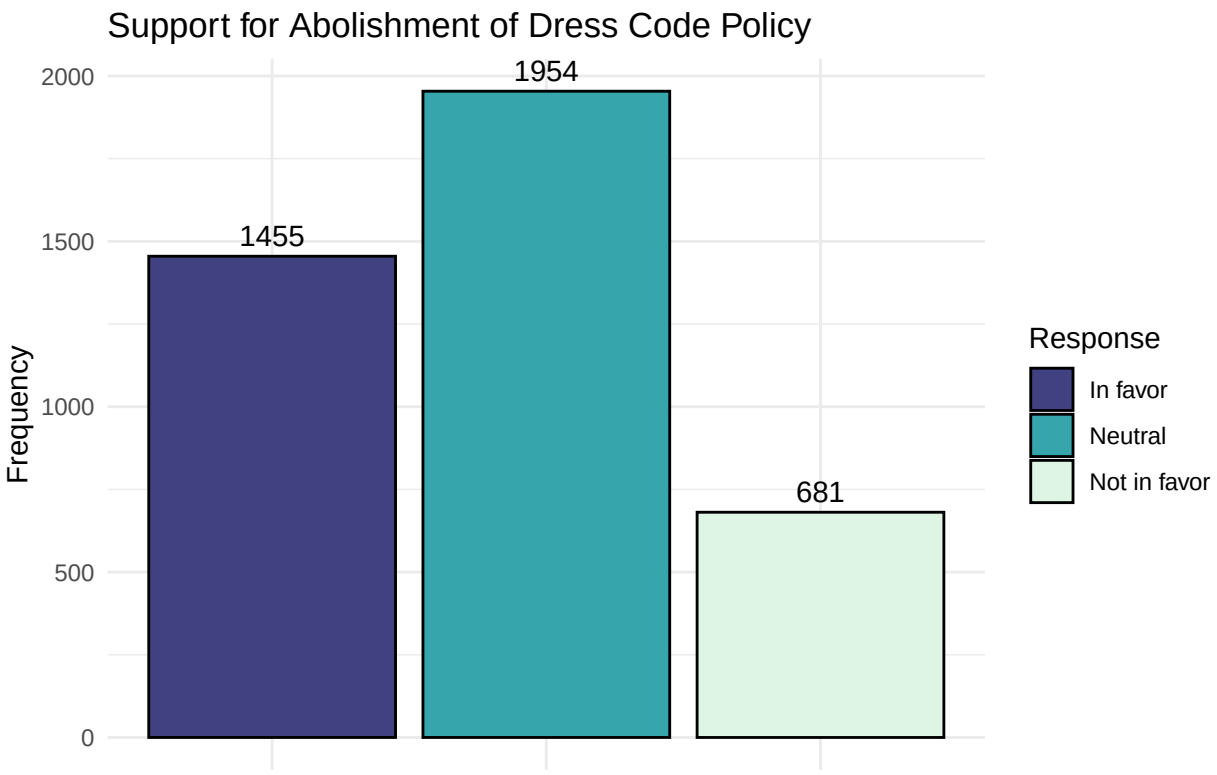

Figure 7

A plurality of 1954 respondents remain neutral with the issue of the abolishment of the dress code policy. Meanwhile, 1455 respondents agree with abolishing the dress code policy, while 681 respondents are not in favor of abolishing the dress code policy.

1. **The highest plurality is in favor of the current status quo**.

With regards to the dress code policy, the highest plurality holds no strong opinions for or against the dress code policy. There seems to be an indifferent attitude towards the dress code due to respondents being used to what they are already subjected to. It is possible that the current dress code gives the respondents a general idea of what to wear and what not to wear to help with their daily decision making. It is also possible. that the respondents simply have no idea what the dress code fully entails.

2. **More respondents are in favor of abolition rather than its retention.**

For those with strong opinions on the dress code issue, there are more respondents in favor of abolishing it rather than retaining it. It seems possible that these respondents see the dress code as too harsh or repressive. For them, keeping the dress code limits the students' freedom of expression within a public state university, supposedly a secular institution. Letting the students wear whatever they like is part of their identity. As such, most respondents would prefer wearing outfits without seeking consent of the authorities, and challenging them to focus on other administrative matters instead.

3. **Least respondents are in favor of retraining the dress code.**

There are still a few respondents who favor keeping the dress code in effect. It is possible that due to their personal beliefs, they would rather have a dress code to reflect a more modest environment within the university.They might not favor seeing students wearing outfits that may seem too liberal or unfavorable to their beliefs.

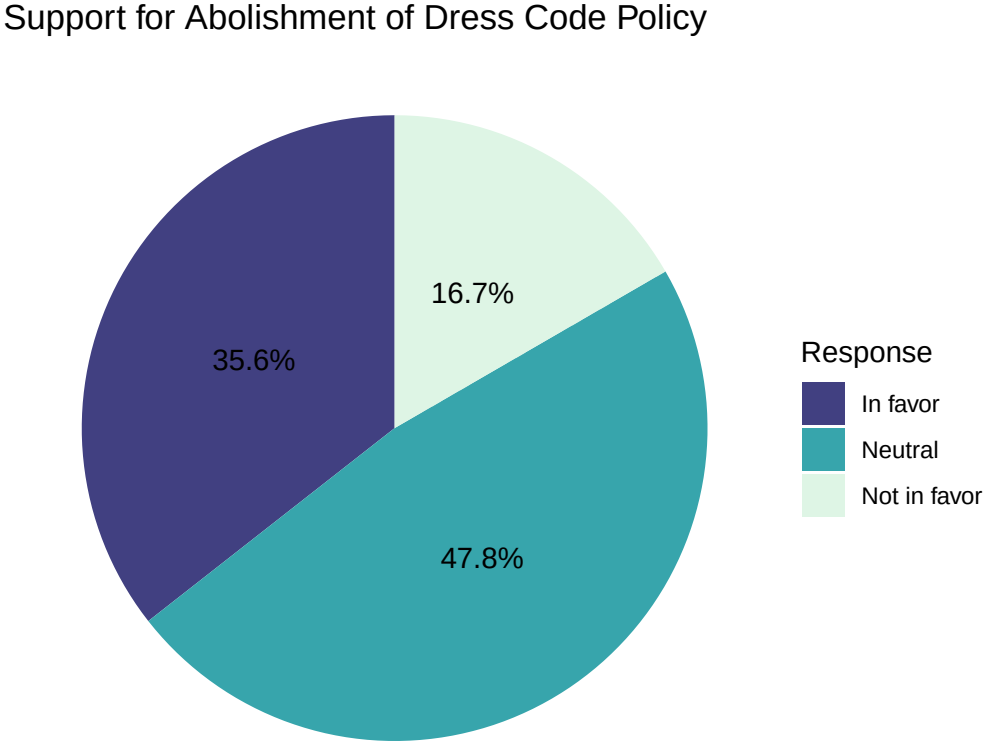

Figure 8

Based on the pie chart above, we can see that 47.8% of the respondents are neutral on the issue of the dress code policy. It is very likely that the respondents have either no strong opinions on the issue, or are content with the status quo. They might have no concerns with the dress code, or they might not have fully grasped the details of the dress code. It is also possible that the dress code gives the respondents a routine guide of what to wear or not to wear within the school premises, thus lessening the daily decisions of the respondents. For those with stronger opinions, 35.6% of the respondents are in favor of abolishing the dress code, while only 16.7% are in favor of keeping the dress code.

2.4 Are you in favor of the mandatory uniform policy?

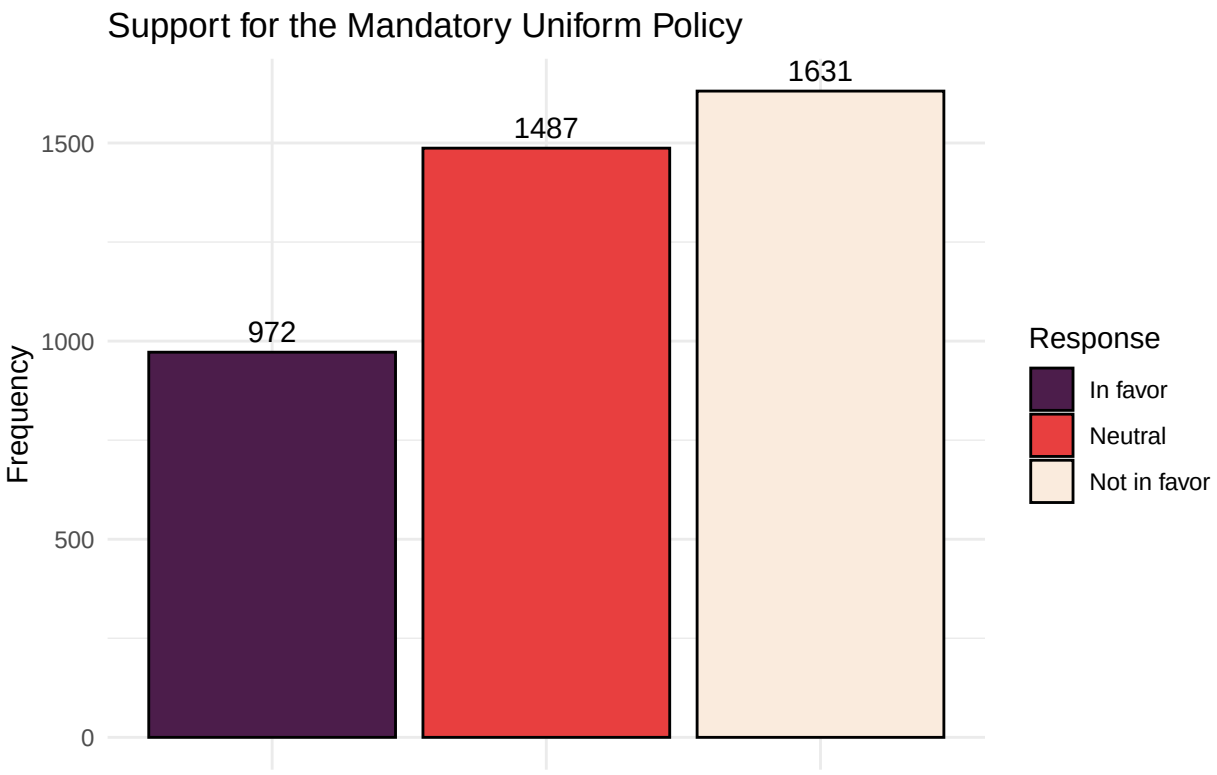

Figure 9

On the issue of the mandatory uniform policy, a plurality of 1631 respondents are against the mandatory uniform policy. Meanwhile, there are 1487 respondents who remain neutral on the mandatory uniform policy. Only 972 respondents are in favor of the mandatory uniform policy. It seems that most respondents would not want to spend more on uniforms, or at least not make uniforms mandatory within the school premises.

1. **The highest plurality is against the mandatory uniform policy**.

With regards to the mandatory uniform policy, the highest plurality holds a strong opinion against it. It seems possible that having a mandatory uniform within the school premises will be a financial burden for most, if not all, students. The respondents in this position may have concluded that buying uniforms would not only be financially heavy, but also redundant, since most students would wear what they want under the current dress code anyway. Most respondents would possibly think that as long as the school ID is worn at all times within the school premises, the guards would easily identify who is a student in USTP, and who is not.

2. **The second highest plurality is neutral on the mandatory uniform policy.**

While the highest plurality is against making uniforms mandatory within the school premises, there is a noticeable high plurality that remains neutral on this issue. It seems that there are also a significant number of respondents who have no strong opinions on this issue, nor fully aware of the details within the mandatory uniform policy. It is possible that having a mandatory uniform or not does not really change their daily outlook on what outfits to wear, as long as it is within the current dress code of the university. The mindset of these specific respondents is that those who can wear uniforms can do so, and those who do not want to wear uniforms may opt not to.

3. **Least respondents are in favor of the mandatory uniform policy.**

There are still a few respondents who favor the mandatory uniform policy. It is possible that due to their personal beliefs, they would rather have all students wear the official uniform of the USTP to reflect a more modest environment within the university, as well as standardize the outfits of every student entering the school premises.They might also believe that having a mandatory uniform simplifies the decision making of every student since they would just think of getting a uniform and not worry what other clothes to wear.

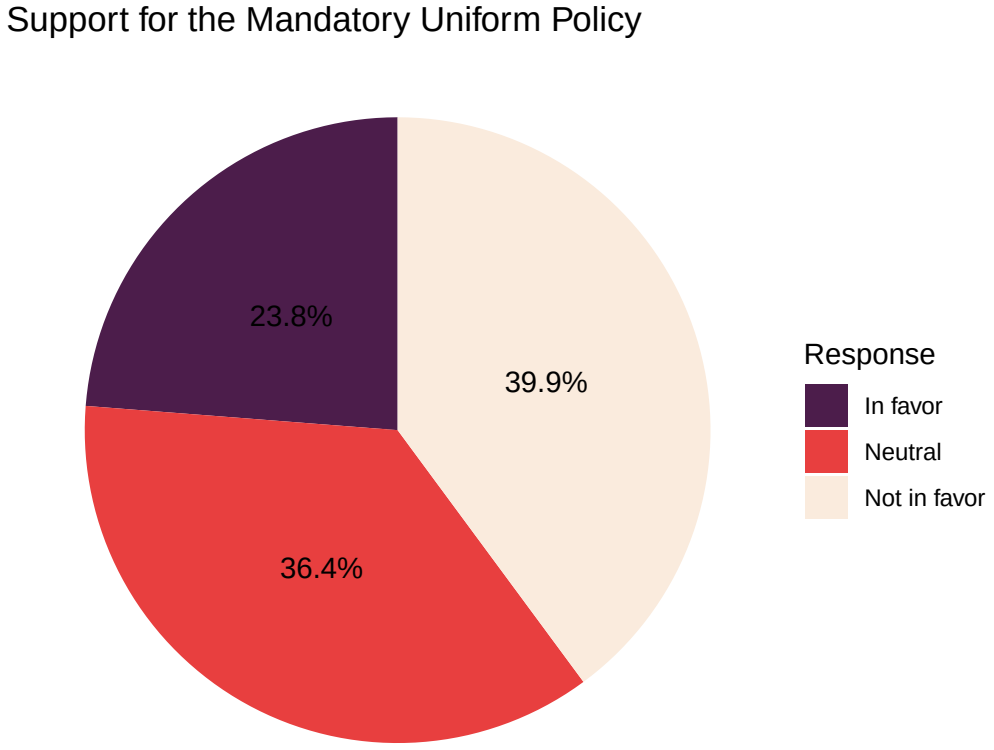

Figure 10

Based on the pie chart above, we can see that 39.9% of the respondents are against the mandatory uniform policy. It is very likely that the respondents see the mandatory uniform as too restrictive of the students' freedom of expression within a public state university. For them, it is also a financial burden that would take away from their own budgets. Meanwhile, 36.4% of the respondents are neutral on this issue. They might have no strong opinions on this issue, or they are just content with letting students decide whether they want to wear uniforms or not, so long as they are within the current dress code. Only 23.8% of the respondents are in favor of the mandatory uniform policy. This could reflect a more conservative outlook and a desire for a more standardized policy for all students.

III. Analysis

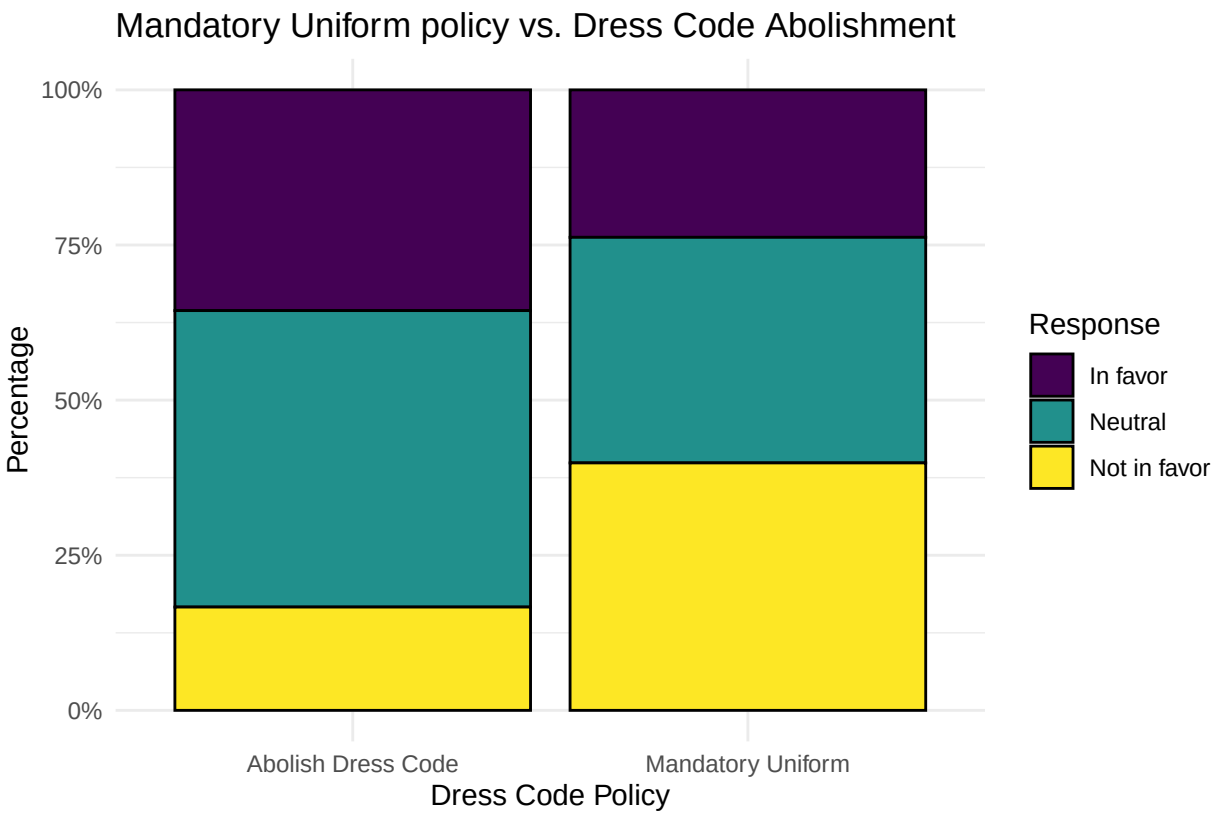

Figure 11

The stacked bar chart compares student responses to two dress code policies: **Abolish Dress Code** and **Mandatory Uniform**. Each bar is divided into three segments representing the percentage of students who are **In favor**, **Neutral**, or **Not in favor**. The chart provides a clear visual comparison of student sentiment toward each policy.

1. **Abolish Dress Code Receives Stronger Support**:
   The data indicates that a larger proportion of students support abolishing the dress code compared to those who support mandatory uniforms. Opposition to abolishing the dress code is relatively low, with only 16.65% of students not in favor, suggesting that most students are open to this policy change. The high number of neutral respondents further indicates that many students may not feel strongly about the current policy but are willing to consider alternatives.

2. **Mandatory Uniforms Face Significant Resistance**:
   Despite some students potentially viewing uniforms as affordable, the data reveals that a substantial number of students oppose mandatory uniforms, with 39.88% not in favor. This opposition may stem from concerns about practicality, comfort, or individuality, as reflected in qualitative feedback. The lower number of neutral respondents for mandatory uniforms compared to abolishing the dress code suggests that resistance to uniforms is more pronounced and deeply rooted.

3. **Neutral Respondents Represent a Key Opportunity**:
   A significant portion of students remain neutral on both policies, with the highest neutrality observed for abolishing the dress code (47.78%). This suggests that many students are open to change but may need more information or reassurance. For mandatory uniforms, the lower neutrality and higher opposition indicate that neutral students are less likely to support the policy without addressing their concerns. Engaging this group through targeted communication could help build broader consensus.

3.1 Sexual Orientation to Gender Expression to Favor of the Dress Code Policy Abolishment

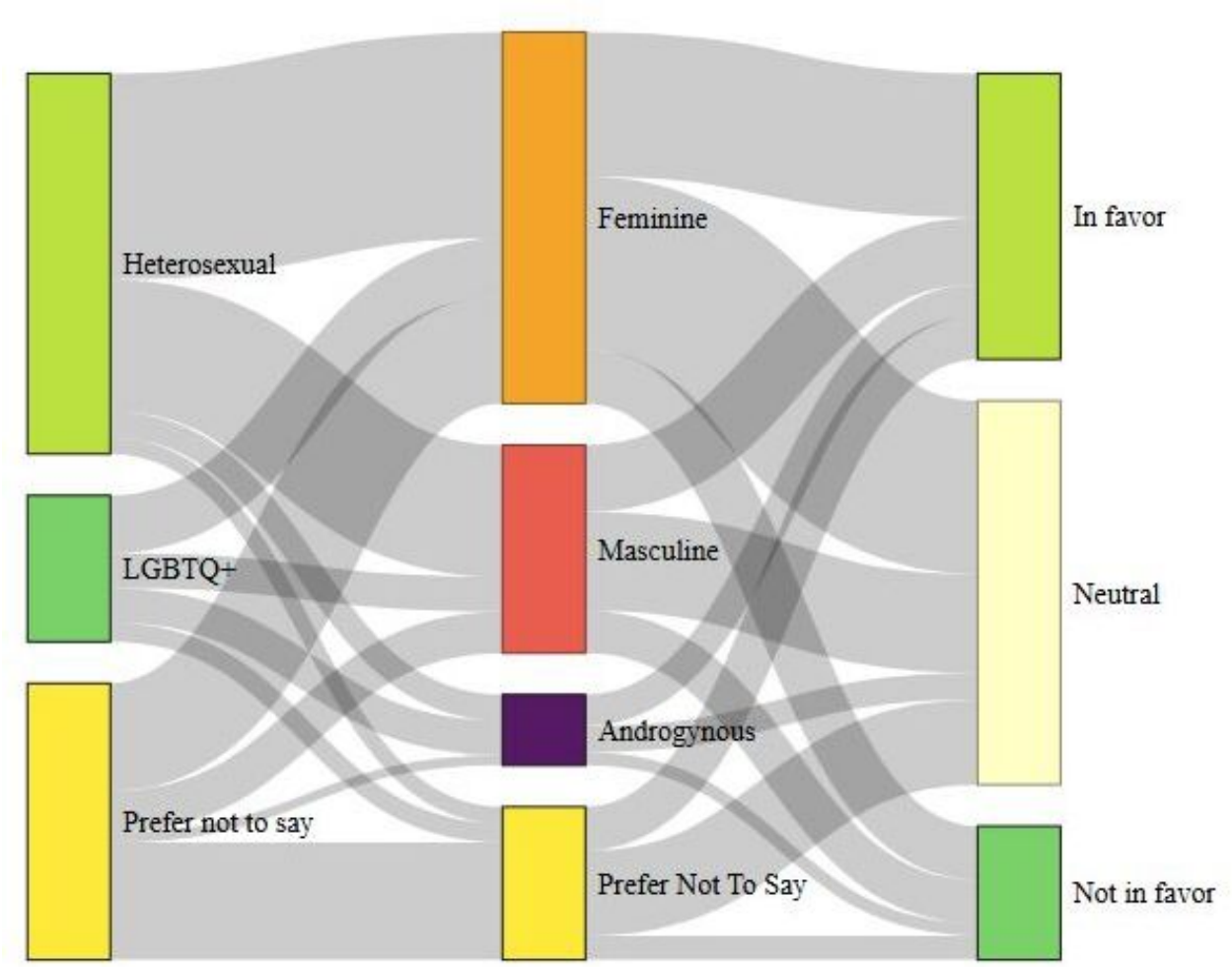

Figure 12: Sankey Diagram Showing the Flow from Sexual Orientation to Gender Expression to Dress Code Abolishment Opinions

The Sankey chart shows the flow of student responses across **Sexual Orientation**, **Gender Expression**, and **Favor of the Dress Code Policy**, illustrating how these factors influence **support**, **neutrality**, or **opposition** to the policy.

1. **Heterosexual Students Show Varied Preferences Based on Gender Expression:**
   Heterosexual students, the largest group, primarily identify as feminine or masculine in gender expression. Feminine-expressing students tend to be neutral or in favor of the policy, while masculine-expressing students are more likely to oppose it. This suggests that gender expression significantly influences policy preferences, even within the heterosexual group.
2. **LGBTQ+ Students Exhibit Diverse Responses:**
   LGBTQ+ students, though fewer in number, display a wide range of gender expressions, with many identifying as feminine or androgynous. Their responses are more evenly distributed across in favor, neutral, and not in favor, reflecting the diversity of perspectives within this group.
3. **Gender Expression Strongly Shapes Policy Attitudes:**
   - Feminine-expressing students (across all sexual orientations) show the highest level of support for the dress code policy, with many also remaining neutral.

- Masculine-expressing students are more likely to oppose the policy, particularly among heterosexual and LGBTQ+ groups.
- Androgynous students are relatively divided, with a slight lean toward in favor or neutral, indicating mixed feelings about the policy.

4. **Prefer Not to Say Group Highlights Ambiguity:**
   Students who prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation or gender expression show a strong tendency toward neutrality regarding the dress code policy. This suggests that this group may lack strong opinions, require more information, or prefer not to take a definitive stance.

3.2 Uncomfortability Levels

3.2.A Uncomfortability Levels by Group

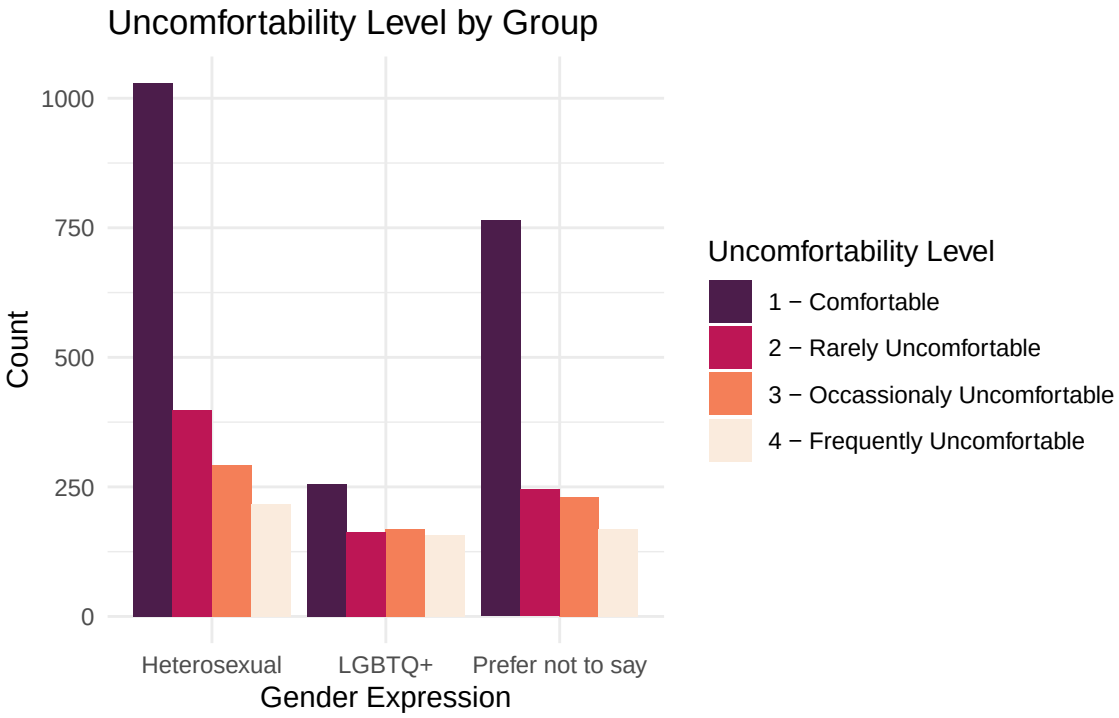

Figure 13

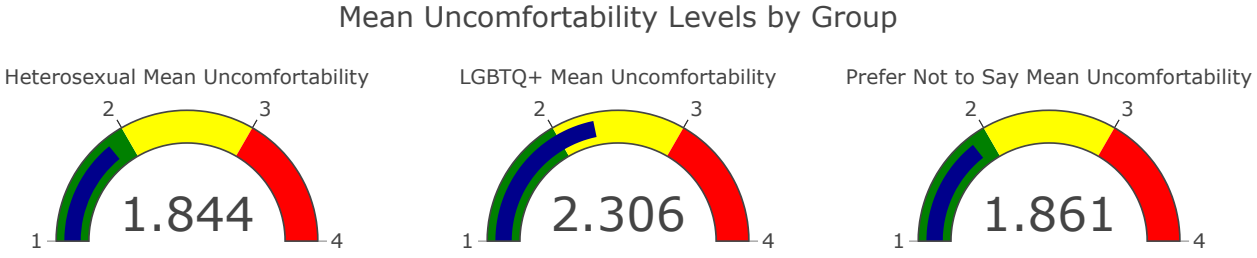

Figure 14

The triple bar chart shows the level of comfortability (never, occasionally, often, rarely) due to the dress code, categorized by heterosexual students, LGBTQ+ students, and those who prefer not to say their gender orientation. The y-axis ranges from 0 to 1000, indicating the frequency of responses. A gauge chart is also

included, displaying the mean comfort level for each group. The lesser the mean, the less uncomfortable students are towards the current dress code.

1. **Heterosexual Students: Highest Comfort ("Never")**

- **Heterosexual students** report the **highest comfort**, with most indicating they are "Never" uncomfortable.
- The **mean score of 1.963** suggests that this group feels the **least discomfort** with the current dress code.

2. **LGBTQ+ Students: Lower Comfort ("Never")**

- **LGBTQ+ students** also report **"Never" as the most frequent response**, but with slightly lower frequency compared to heterosexual students.
- The **mean score of 2.44** reflects a **higher level of uncomfortability** compared to the other groups, with a broader range of responses.

3. **Prefer Not to Say: Moderate Comfort ("Never")**

- Students who prefer not to disclose their sexual orientation report **moderate comfort,** with many indicating **"Never"** discomfort.
- With a **mean score of 1.944**, this group experiences a balance between comfort and discomfort, indicating more varied responses.

4. **Comparison of the Three Groups:**

- **Heterosexual students** report the **least uncomfortability with the dress code**, while **LGBTQ+ students** show a **higher level of discomfort**.
- The mean scores indicate that LGBTQ+ students feel more uncomfortable compared to heterosexual and "Prefer not to say" groups, suggesting room for increased inclusivity and accommodation for diverse needs.

3.2.B Gender Expression to Uncomfortability Level to Favor of The Abolishment of Dress Code Policy

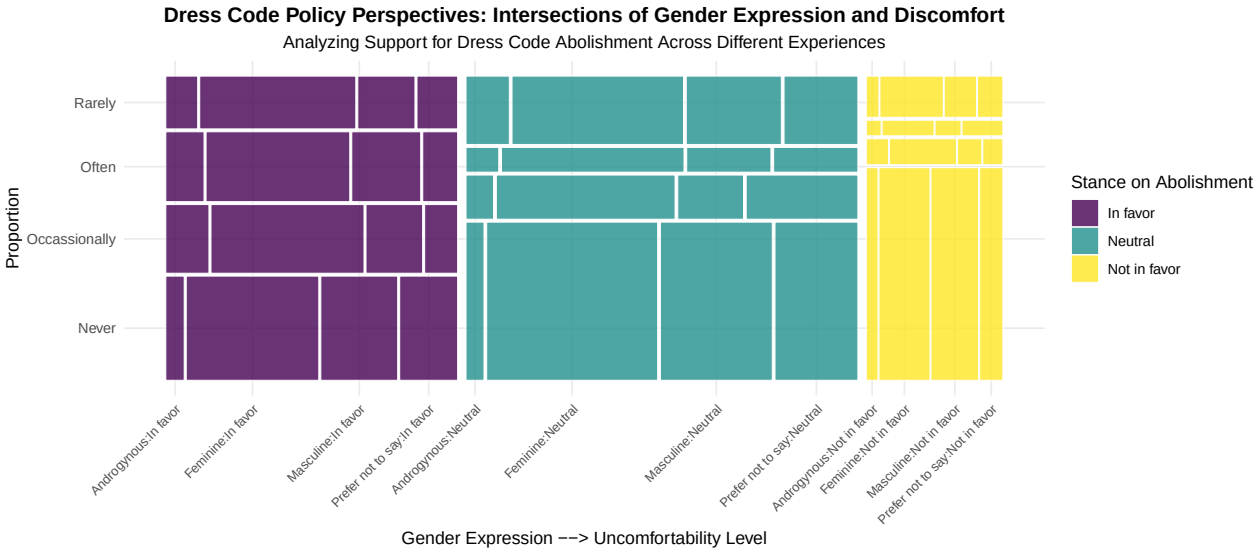

Figure 15

The mosaic plot displays the connection between Gender Expression, Uncomfortability Level, and the Support for Abolishing the Dress Code Policy. It highlights how students' discomfort levels influence their stance on the dress code abolition, segmented by gender expression.

1. **Feminine-Expressing Students: High Comfort, Moderate Support for Abolishment**:

- **Feminine-expressing students** report the **highest levels of comfort**, with a significant portion indicating they never feel uncomfortable.
- Despite this, **many are neutral or in favor of abolishing the dress code**, suggesting that comfort alone does not fully determine their policy preferences.
- Other factors may influence their stance.

2. **Masculine-Expressing Students: Moderate Discomfort, Lower Support for Abolishment**:

- **Masculine-expressing students** report **moderate discomfort**, with a notable number indicating occasional or frequent discomfort.
- However, this group is **less likely to support abolishing the dress code**, suggesting that their discomfort may not be severe enough to drive policy change, or that they may prioritize other aspects of the policy.

3. **Androgynous Students: Mixed Comfort Levels, Divided Opinions**:

- **Androgynous students** exhibit a **wide range of discomfort levels**, from never to often feeling uncomfortable.
- Their **responses to abolishing the dress code are similarly divided**, with some in favor, some neutral, and some opposed. This reflects the diverse experiences and perspectives within this group.

4. **Prefer Not to Say Group: High Neutrality, Moderate Comfort**:

- Students who prefer not to disclose their gender expression report **moderate levels of comfort**, with many indicating they never feel uncomfortable.
- This group tends to be **neutral regarding abolishing the dress code**, suggesting they may not have strong opinions or might need more information to form a clear stance.

5. **Discomfort Influences but Does Not Fully Determine Policy Preferences**:

- Students who report feeling **uncomfortable occasionally or often** are **more likely to support abolishing the dress code**.
- However, those who report feeling uncomfortable rarely or never tend to be neutral or opposed to the policy.
- The data also shows that even some comfortable students support abolishing the dress code, indicating that factors such as self-expression, inclusivity, or financial concerns also play a significant role in shaping their preferences.

3.2.C Uncomfortable Sentiment Levels

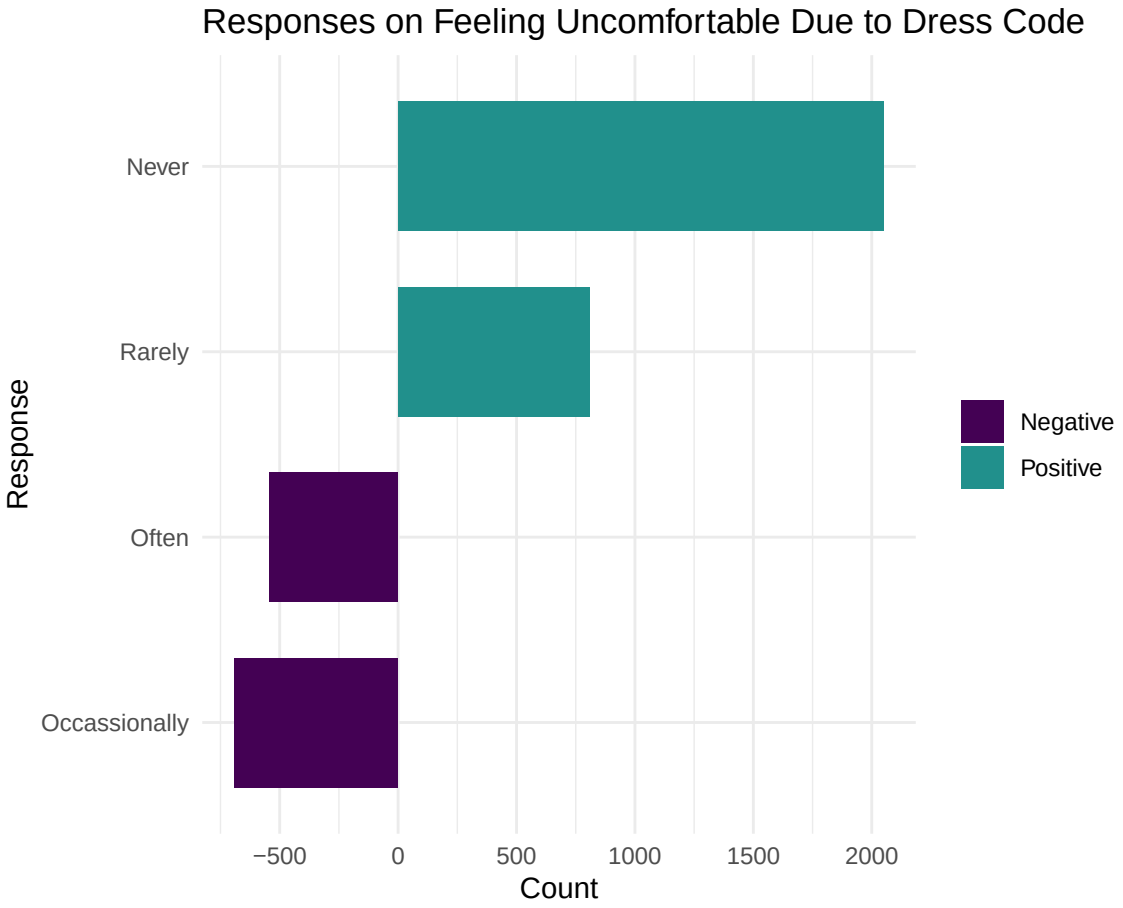

Figure 16

The diverging bar chart visualizes student responses about feeling uncomfortable due to the dress code, categorized into **Never**, **Rarely**, **Occasionally**, and **Often**. It shows the count and sentiment of students in each category, with positive values indicating comfort and negative values indicating discomfort.

1. **Most Students Feel Comfortable or Rarely Uncomfortable**:
   A significant majority of students (**69.83%**) report feeling uncomfortable **never** or **rarely**, indicating that the dress code aligns well with the preferences and comfort levels of most students. This suggests the current policy is effective for the majority, though minor adjustments could address occasional discomfort.

2. **A Notable Minority Experience Frequent Discomfort**:
   A notable portion of students (**30.17%**) feel uncomfortable **occasionally** or **often**, highlighting a clear need to address their concerns. This group's discomfort may drive calls for policy changes, as their experiences differ significantly from the majority.

3. **Clear Divide in Student Sentiment**:
   The data reveals a distinct split: while a majority feels no or rare discomfort, a significant portion experiences frequent discomfort. This polarization underscores the need for a balanced approach to policy revisions that addresses the concerns of all students while maintaining the benefits for those who are comfortable.

3.3 Affordability

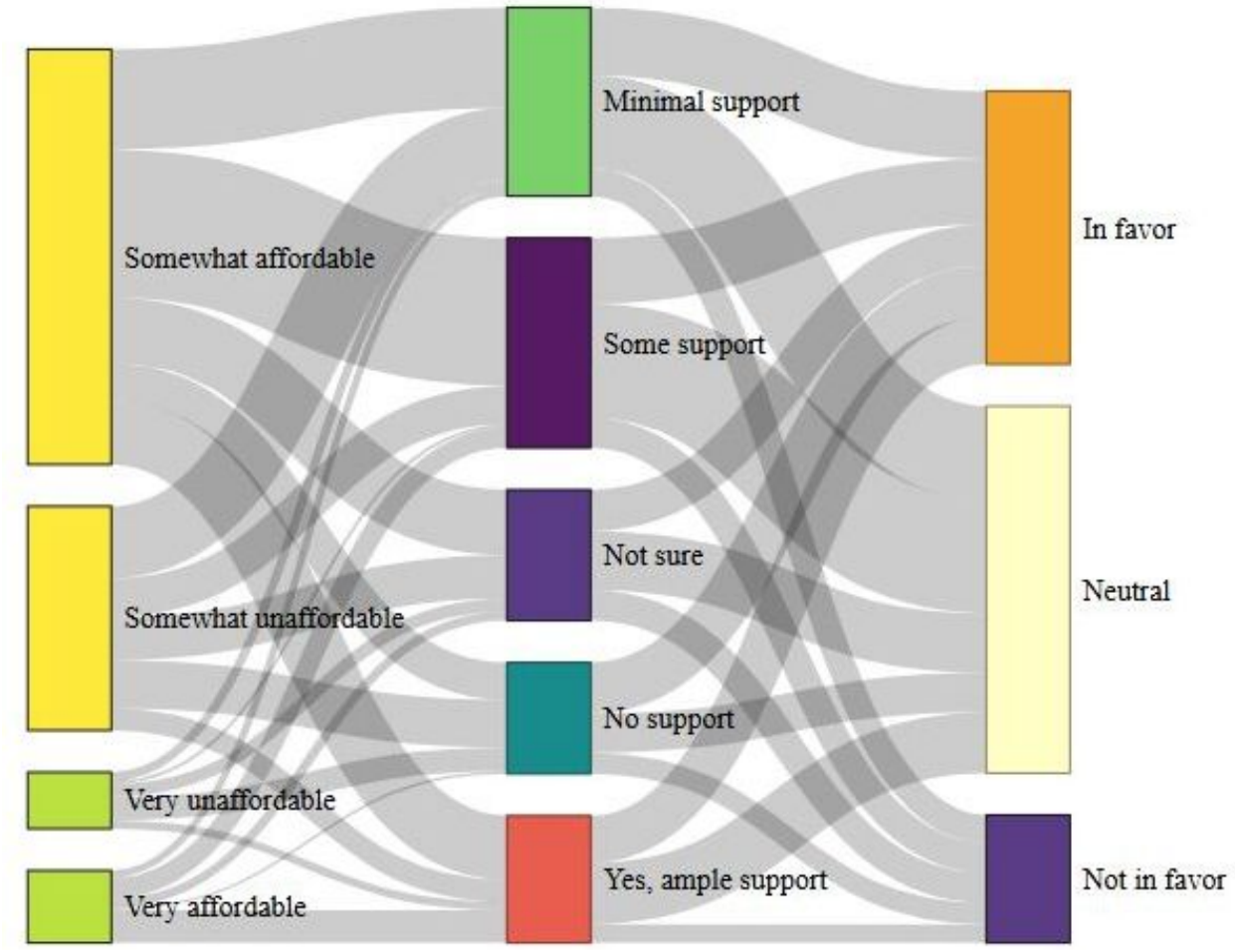

Figure 17: Sankey Diagram Showing the Flow from Affordability to School Support to Dress Code Abolishment Opinions

The Sankey chart illustrates the relationship between **Level of Affordability of School Uniform**, **Need for Support for Uniform Cost**, and **Abolishment of Dress Code Policy**. It shows how affordability and the need for financial support influence students' stance on abolishing the dress code.

1. **Somewhat Affordable Uniforms: Mixed Need for Support, Moderate Favor for Abolishment**:
   Students who find uniforms somewhat affordable show a wide range of needs for financial support, from minimal to ample. Despite this, many are neutral or in favor of abolishing the dress code, suggesting that affordability alone does not fully determine their policy preferences. Other factors, such as comfort or self-expression, may also play a role.

2. **Somewhat Unaffordable Uniforms: Moderate Need for Support, Higher Favor for Abolishment**:
   Students who find uniforms somewhat unaffordable report a moderate need for support, with the largest group requesting minimal support. However, a notable portion also requests some support or ample support. This group is more likely to support abolishing the dress code, indicating that financial strain is a significant driver of their policy preferences.

3. **Somewhat Unaffordable Uniforms: Moderate Need for Support, Mixed Sentiments**

   Students who find uniforms somewhat unaffordable express a moderate need for support, with many seeking minimal or some support. Sentiments toward abolishing the policy are mixed, with a notable percentage in favor but a larger group remaining neutral. This reflects financial strain but also a willingness to consider alternatives rather than outright policy change.

4. **Very Unaffordable Uniforms: Complex Need for Support, Strong Favor for Abolishment**

   Students who find uniforms very unaffordable show a complex need for support. Some seek ample assistance, while others decline support, preferring policy changes instead. Despite these mixed responses, there is strong favor for abolishing the dress code, reflecting the considerable financial burden they face.

5. **Neutrality Dominates Across Affordability Levels**:
   Across all affordability levels, a significant portion of students remain **neutral** regarding abolishing the dress code. This suggests that while affordability influences policy preferences, many students may lack strong opinions or require more information to form a stance.

IV. Priority Areas for Relaxation in the Dress Code Policy

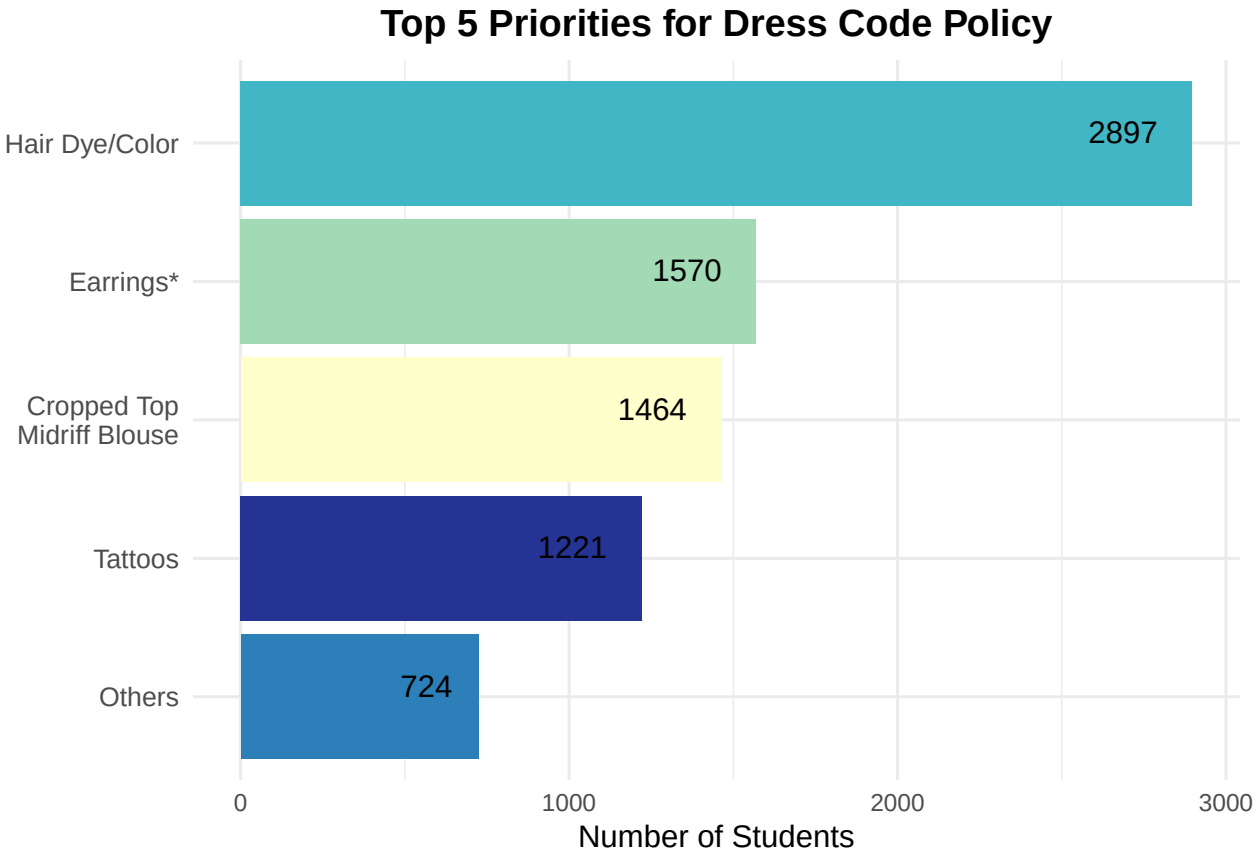

Figure 18

*Earrings (for men) / multiple piercings (for women)

The horizontal bar chart ranks student-requested dress code modifications by frequency, revealing clear priorities for policy updates. Each bar represents a specific clothing/item category students want relaxed.

1. **Hair Dye/Color**

   With **2,897 requests (38%)**, hair dye/color is the top student priority. This significant demand highlights students' desire for more freedom of expression, especially as societal norms shift toward accepting diverse hair styles in both academic and professional environments. Revising this policy would help align USTP's dress code with modern values of self-expression while maintaining professionalism.

2. **Earring and Piercing**

   There were 1,570 requests (21%) for modifications to earring policies, particularly regarding the restriction on multiple piercings for women and the ban on earrings for men. This suggests that the current earring policy may not fully align with evolving student preferences, where personal expression through accessories is becoming more widely accepted. Updating these rules would promote a more inclusive environment and better reflect students' expectations for personal expression.

3. **Climate-Appropriate Clothing Needs**

   Requests for **cropped tops/midriff blouses (1,464)** and items in the **"Others"** category (724 for slippers, shorts, etc.) reflect the practical need for climate-appropriate attire. These **19%** of requests show that students are seeking more comfortable, suitable clothing for tropical climates. Relaxing these policies would address practical concerns and enhance the learning environment. ## 4.1 Other Prioritization

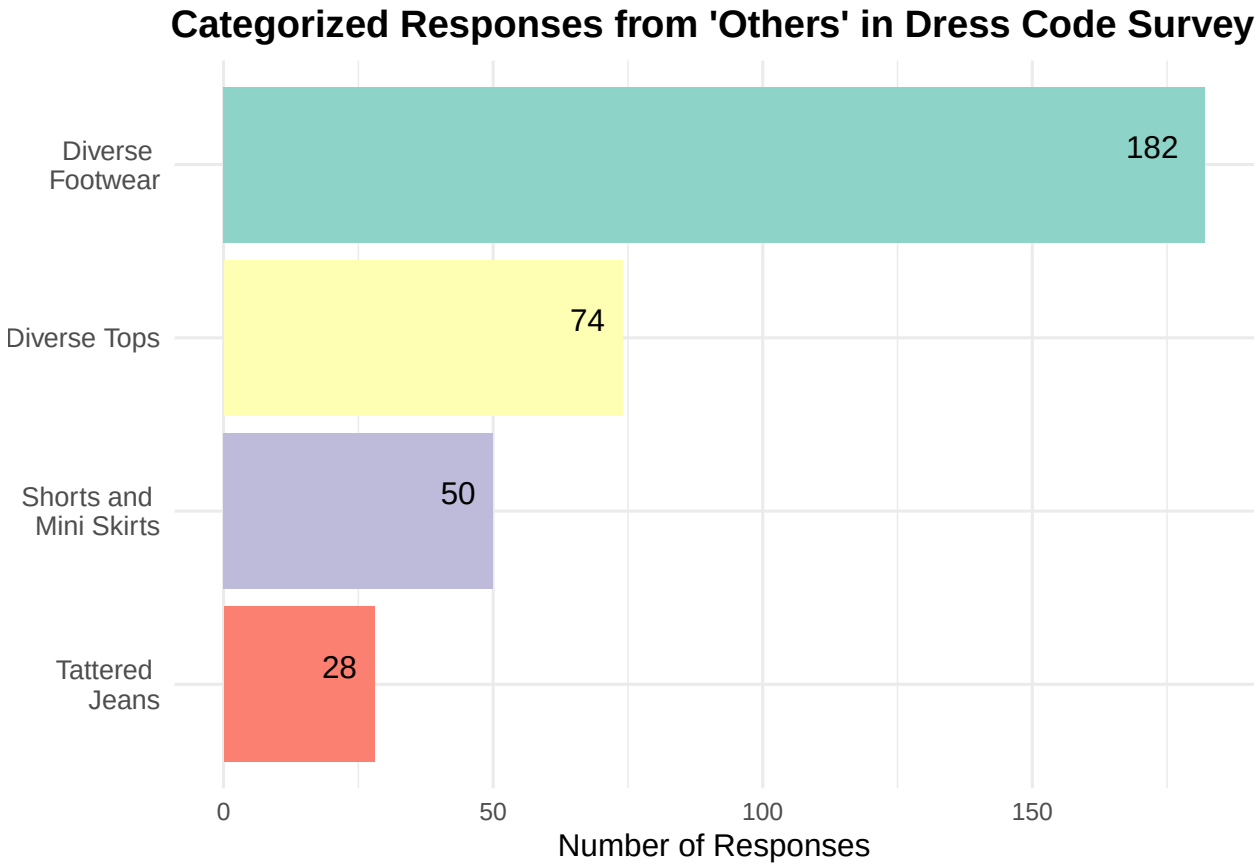

Figure 19

Dropped 'None' responses: 342 | Irrelevant responses: 48

The additional horizontal bar chart visualizes student requests for further dress code modifications in categories such as Diverse Footwear, Diverse Tops, Shorts and Mini Skirts, and Tattered Jeans (excluding 342 "None" responses and 48 irrelevant responses from the data that don't provide useful insights). The chart shows the number of requests for each category, providing insight into other areas where students seek more flexibility in dress code policies.

1. **Diverse Footwear**

   With 182 requests, students are asking for more flexibility in footwear, particularly sandals, crocs, and clogs. This reflects a need for more practical footwear choices, especially in response to weather conditions like rain. Allowing these types of footwear would accommodate student comfort while maintaining professionalism.

2. **Diverse Tops**

   There were 74 requests for more variety in tops, including tank tops and sleeveless shirts. While not as frequently requested, this shows that students seek breathable clothing for hot weather. Modifying the dress code to allow these tops would help students stay comfortable without compromising the dress code's standards.

3. **Shorts and Mini Skirts**

   With 50 requests for shorts and mini skirts, including suggestions for above-the-knee skirts that aren't too short, students are expressing a desire for more freedom to express their personal style. While not a top priority, allowing these items would provide better comfort in warm weather and give students a greater sense of confidence in their appearance.

4. **Tattered Jeans**

   28 requests were made for tattered jeans, showing some interest in more relaxed clothing options. While this is the least requested change, it still reflects a desire among students for more casual and personalized dress, suggesting it could be considered for minor flexibility in specific contexts.

4.2 Priority Areas for Relaxation in the Dress Code Policy by Group

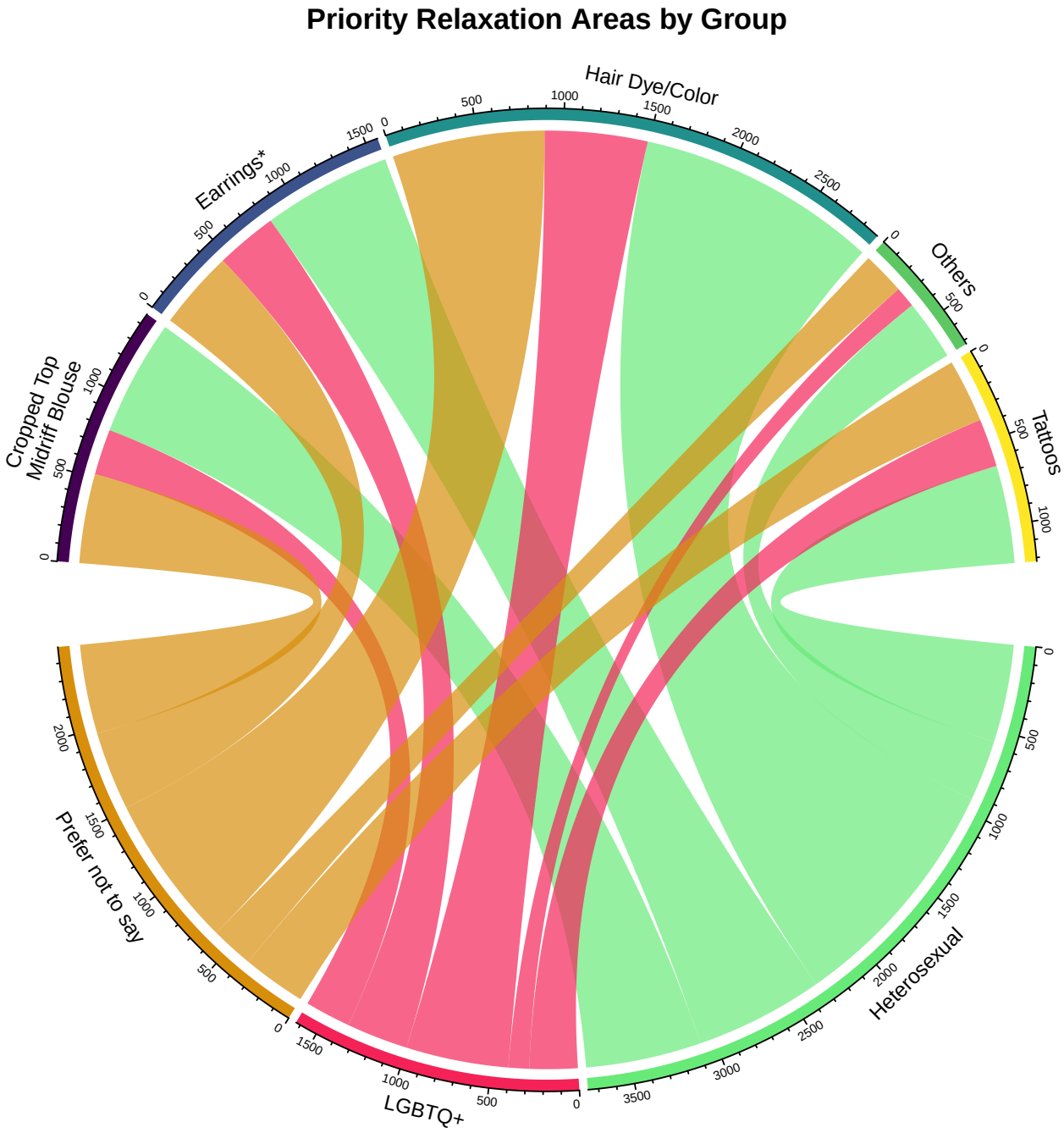

Figure 20

*Earrings (for men) / multiple piercings (for women)

The circular chart displays student requests for dress code modifications by sexual orientation, focusing on

areas such as cropped top/midriff blouses, earrings, hair dye/color, others, and tattoos. It illustrates the priority of these requests across Heterosexual, LGBTQ+, and Prefer not to say groups.

1. **Heterosexual Students:**

- **Hair dye/color is the top priority**, followed by requests for more gender-neutral earring policies.
- **Cropped tops and midriff blouse**s are also requested **but are less of a priority** compared to appearance-related modifications.

2. **LGBTQ+ Students:**

- **Hair Dye/Color and earring modifications** are also **top priorities for LGBTQ+ students**, highlighting a shared interest in self-expression and gender inclusivity.
- Requests for clothing modifications like cropped tops are present but less frequent compared to appearance-related changes, indicating other factors may influence their preferences.

3. **Prefer Not to Say Group:**

- The **Prefer not to say group** mirrors the priorities of both Heterosexual and LGBTQ+ students, with **strong demand** for **hair dye/color** and **earring policy changes.**
- They show moderate interest in clothing modifications, similar to LGBTQ+ students, but the demand is not as strong as for appearance-related changes.

4. **Comparative Overview:**

- **Hair dye/color** and **earrings** are c**onsistent priorities across all groups**, highlighting a common desire for self-expression and gender inclusivity.
- Clothing policy modifications like cropped tops are important but not as urgent for LGBTQ+ and Prefer not to say groups, with Heterosexual students showing stronger demand.

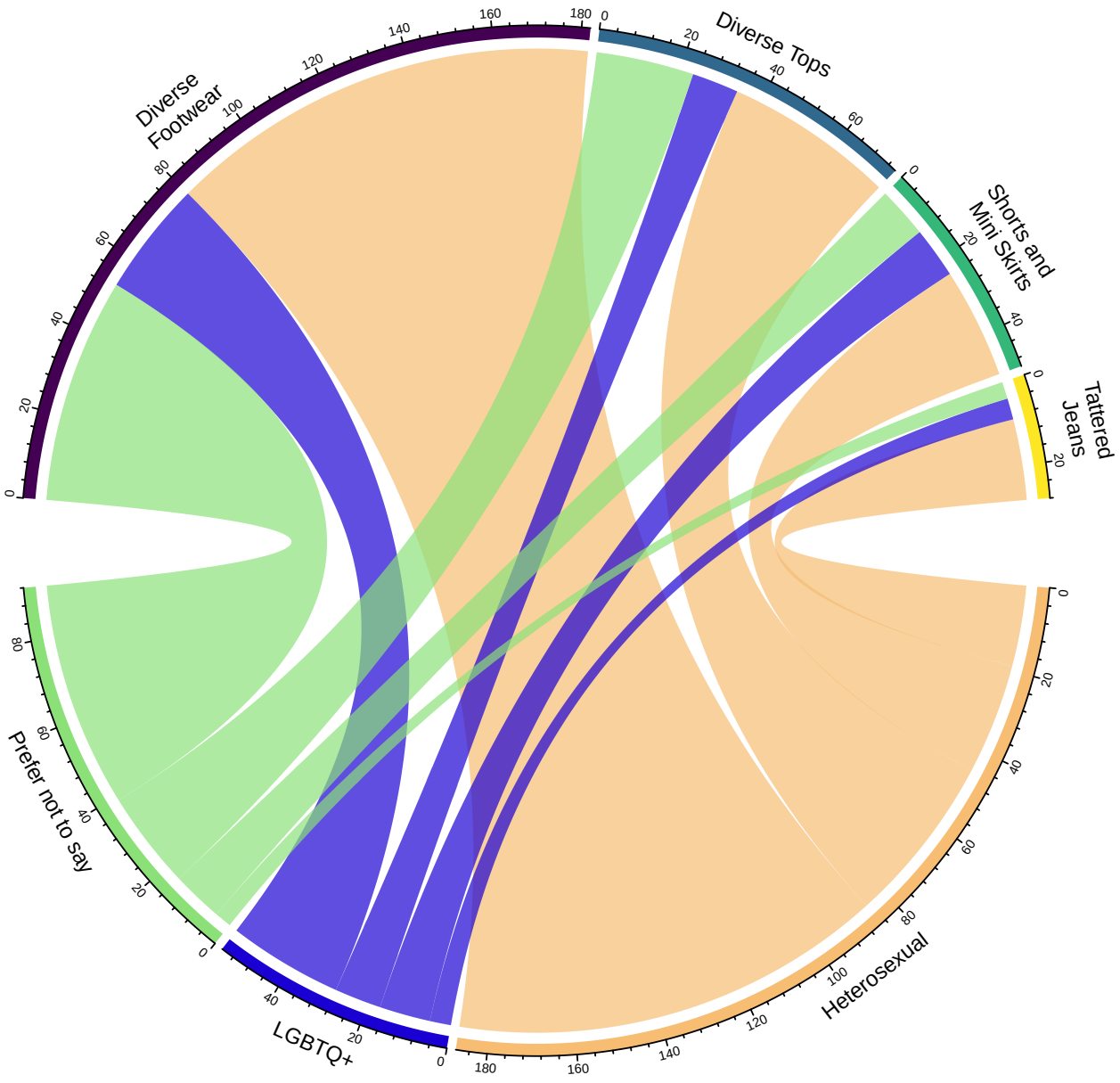

Figure 21

Dropped 'None' responses: 342 | Irrelevant responses: 48

The additional circular chart breaks down student requests for modifications in the "Others" category, highlighting areas like Diverse Footwear, Diverse Tops, Shorts and Mini Skirts, and Tattered Jeans. It shows how these requests vary across Heterosexual, LGBTQ+, and Prefer not to say groups.

1. **Heterosexual Students:**

- **Diverse Footwear** is the **top priority**, indicating a strong need for more footwear options.
- **Diverse Tops and Shorts/Mini Skirts** are also requested, but are not as high of a priority

compared to footwear.

2. **LGBTQ+ Students:**

- **Diverse Footwear** is still a **top priority**, just like for Heterosexual students.
- The requests for Shorts/Mini Skirts and Diverse Tops suggest a preference for more gender-inclusive clothing options, reflecting the need for clothing that accommodates diverse gender expressions.

3. **Prefer Not to Say Group:**

- **Diverse Footwear** is the **most requested modification**, aligning with both Heterosexual and LGBTQ+ students.
- The demand for Shorts/Mini Skirts and Diverse Tops is moderate, reflecting a need for more flexibility in clothing choices.

4. **Comparative Overview:**

- **Diverse Footwear** is **consistently the top priority across all groups**, highlighting the need for practical footwear options.
- Tattered Jeans sees the least demand, indicating it's a lower priority for students overall.

4.3 Word Cloud

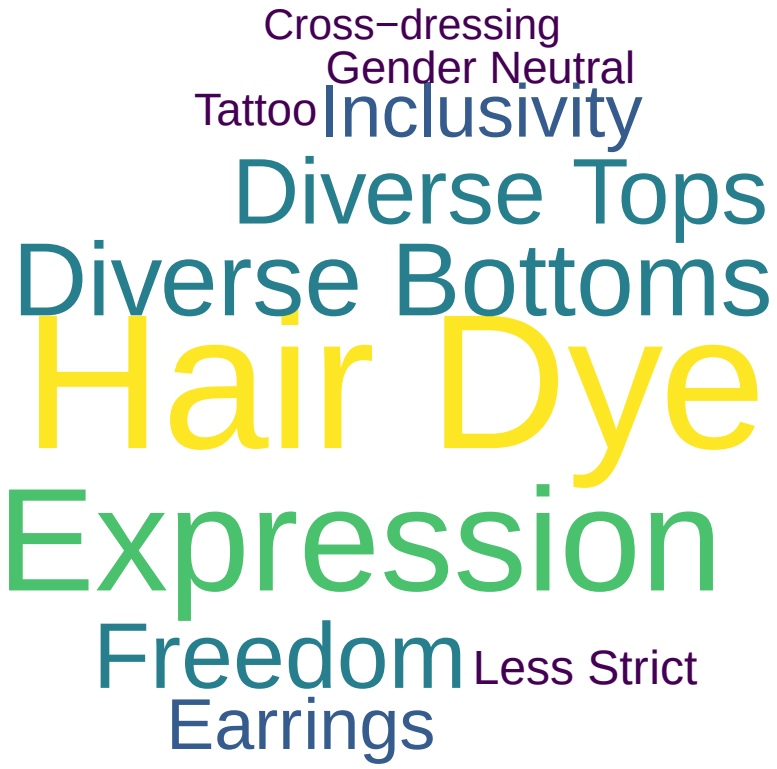

Figure 22: Wordcloud for the suggested changes in Dress Code Policy

The word cloud above shows the most frequently used terms by all our respondents with regards to the dress code and their preferred changes. As we can see, the most common terms include "Hair Dye" and "Expression", followed by "Diverse Footwear" and "Diverse Bottoms". Other terms include "Diverse Tops", "Freedom", "Earrings", "Inclusivity", "Cross-dressing", "Less Strict", "Tattoo", and "Gender Neutral". Based on the generated frequent terms, we can see that most respondents see hair dye as a form of expression by individual students, and that there is nothing wrong with respondents who apply hair dye on themselves. Respondents also seek their right to wear diverse outfits from tops and bottoms to footwear, and even earrings for male respondents. There is indeed a call to more inclusivity within the dress code, and respondents would prefer that the dress code be less strict or allow students to cross dress as part of their freedom of expression.

Conclusion

The portfolio findings provide a compelling argument for the revision—not abolition—of dress code policies. The results highlight a strong preference for increased flexibility while maintaining a sense of professionalism and institutional identity. While students do not overwhelmingly support abolishing dress codes, they express a clear desire for reforms that allow greater autonomy over personal appearance.

Preference for Personal Expression and Autonomy

A significant portion of respondents emphasized the importance of self-expression through clothing, hairstyles, and accessories. The data reveal that many students find current dress code policies too restrictive, particularly regarding hair color, accessories, and limited clothing options. This aligns with existing research emphasizing the role of clothing in identity formation, particularly in adolescence and early adulthood (Arnett, 2007). Clothing serves as a medium for self-discovery, social belonging, and individuality, all of which contribute to students' overall well-being and confidence.

While some level of regulation is necessary for maintaining decorum, excessive restrictions may hinder students' ability to express their identity. The study suggests that educational institutions should consider policies that maintain a balance—ensuring professionalism while granting students the freedom to present themselves in ways that reflect their personalities.

Perceived Relevance of Dress Code Policies

A key theme emerging from the portfolio is the perception that some aspects of the dress code are outdated or unnecessary. Students noted that specific regulations—such as prohibitions on hair dye, earrings, and certain clothing styles—do not significantly contribute to academic performance or discipline. Instead, such rules may feel arbitrary and disconnected from the realities of modern student life.

This aligns with broader discussions on the evolving role of dress codes in educational settings. Research suggests that rigid dress policies, unless directly tied to safety or professional preparation, can create unnecessary friction between students and institutions (Entwistle, 2020). A more adaptive approach—where policies evolve in response to student feedback—can foster a more positive and cooperative school culture.

Impact on Student Confidence and Engagement

The data also suggest that dress code policies impact students' confidence and engagement. Many respondents expressed that feeling comfortable in their attire contributes to their ability to focus and participate in academic activities. When students feel constrained by overly rigid policies, it can create unnecessary stress and dissatisfaction, potentially affecting their engagement with coursework and extracurricular activities.

This aligns with studies highlighting the psychological effects of self-presentation in learning environments (Lindsay et al., 2023). A dress code that allows for reasonable self-expression can contribute to a more inclusive and psychologically supportive academic setting. Institutions should consider student feedback when formulating policies to ensure that regulations contribute to, rather than detract from, a positive learning experience.

Recommendations for a Balanced Approach

Based on the portfolio findings, it is evident that a progressive and inclusive dress code policy would better align with student needs. The following recommendations emerge from the data:

1. **Flexibility in Personal Styling** – Allowing for self-expression through hair color, accessories, and varied clothing choices while maintaining professional standards.

2. Periodic Policy Review – Engaging students in discussions to assess the relevance of dress code policies and making necessary updates.

3. Student-Centered Implementation – Ensuring that policies support student well-being, confidence, and academic engagement.

By adopting a more balanced approach, institutions can create an environment that respects individuality while maintaining a professional and disciplined atmosphere. Future policy revisions should involve student participation to ensure that rules reflect the diverse needs of the academic community.

V. References

Arnett, J. J. (2007). Adolescence and emerging adulthood: A cultural approach. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Entwistle, J. (2020a). Clothing and gender: A sociocultural perspective. Routledge.

Entwistle, J. (2020b). Clothing and identity. Routledge.

Entwistle, J. (2020c). The clothed body: Clothing, dress, and modern social theory. Polity Press.

Lindsay, B. L., Bernier, E., Boman, J., & Boyce, M. A. (2023). Understanding the connection between student well-being and teaching and learning at a Canadian research university: A qualitative student perspective. Pedagogy & Health Promotion, 9(1), 5–16.

VI. Appendix

6.1 General Dataset Overview - survey_data_raw

6.1.A Class of survey_data_main

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## [1] "data.frame"
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6.1.B Dimension of survey_data_raw

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6.1.C Colnames of survey_data_raw

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##  [4] "Full.Name..Family.Name..First.Name..M..I.."
##  [5] "Student.ID"
##  [6] "USTP.Campus.Satellite"
##  [7] "What.is.your.sexual.orientation...Sexual.orientation.is.direction.of.emotional.sexual.attracti
##  [8] "What.is.your.gender.identity...Gender.identity.is.how.you.identify.and.see.yourself.in.terms.o
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```
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## [10] "X.Do.you.agree.with.the.current.dress.code.policy.at.the.university..."
## [11] "Which.area.of.the.Dress.Code.Policy.do.you.think.should.be.prioritized.to.be.allowed...Select.a
## [12] "Have.you.ever.felt.uncomfortable.or.restricted.by.the.university.s.dress.code.because.of.your.g
## [13] "How.would.you.rate.the.affordability.of.the.current.school.uniform.options."
## [14] "Do.you.think.the.school.provides.adequate.support.or.resources.for.families.who.struggle.with.s
## [15] "Are.you.in.favor.of.the.abolishment.of.the.dress.code.policy.of.the.university."
## [16] "Are.you.in.favor.of.the.mandatory.uniform.policy.within.the.university."
## [17] "What.changes..if.any..would.you.like.to.see.in.the.dress.code.to.better.reflect.over.all.inclus
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6.1.D Missing Values in survey_data_raw

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6.1.E Number of unique values per columns

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6.2 General Dataset Overview - survey_data_main

6.2.A Class of survey_data_main

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6.2.B Dimension of survey_data_main

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6.2.C Colnames of survey_data_main

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##  [6] "uncomfortability_level"
##  [7] "affordability"
##  [8] "school_support_for_uniform_cost"
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```
## [10] "are_you_in_favor_of_the_mandatory_uniform_policy?"
## [11] "changes_suggestion"
## [12] "sexual_orientation_grouped"
```

6.1.D Missing Values in survey_data_main

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##                                             gender_identity
##                                                            0
##                                            gender_expression
##                                                            0
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##                                                            0
##                                dress_code_policy_prioritization
##                                                            1
##                                         uncomfortability_level
##                                                            0
##                                                affordability
##                                                            0
##                                school_support_for_uniform_cost
##                                                            0
## are_you_in_favor_of_the_abolishment_of_the_dress_code_policy
##                                                            0
##            are_you_in_favor_of_the_mandatory_uniform_policy?
##                                                            0
##                                              changes_suggestion
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##                                      sexual_orientation_grouped
##                                                            0
```

6.1.E Number of unique values per columns

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##                                             gender_identity
##                                                            7
##                                            gender_expression
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##                                dress_code_policy_prioritization
##                                                          556
##                                         uncomfortability_level
##                                                            4
##                                                affordability
##                                                            4
##                                school_support_for_uniform_cost
##                                                            5
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##                                                            3
##            are_you_in_favor_of_the_mandatory_uniform_policy?
##                                                            3
```

Figure 2 | Sexual Orientation Distribution

sexual_orientation_grouped	n	percentage
Heterosexual	1937	47.36
LGBTQ+	745	18.22
Prefer not to say	1408	34.43

```
##                                changes_suggestion
##                                              2249
##                          sexual_orientation_grouped
##                                                 3
```

6.3 Table Counts

6.3.A Figure 2 - LGBTQ_summary

6.3.B Figure 12 - Sankey Data Table

6.3.C Figure 13 - Uncomfortability levels by Group

6.3.D Figure 14 - Uncomfortability Mean Levels by Group

6.3.E Figure 16 - Uncomfortable Sentiment

6.3.F Figure 17 - Affordability

6.3.H Figure 20 - Prioritization Counts

6.3.I Figure 21 - Prioritization Counts Other Category

6.3.J Figure 22 Word Cloud

Figure 12 Data

Sexual Orientation to Gender Expression to Dress Code Abolishment Opinions

source	**target**	**value**	**IDsource**	**IDtarget**
Heterosexual	Androgynous	133	0	3
Heterosexual	Feminine	1049	0	4
Heterosexual	Masculine	671	0	5
Heterosexual	Prefer Not To Say	84	0	6
LGBTQ+	Androgynous	177	1	3
LGBTQ+	Feminine	293	1	4
LGBTQ+	Masculine	177	1	5
LGBTQ+	Prefer Not To Say	98	1	6
Prefer not to say	Androgynous	50	2	3
Prefer not to say	Feminine	550	2	4
Prefer not to say	Masculine	211	2	5
Prefer not to say	Prefer Not To Say	597	2	6
Androgynous	In favor	159	3	7
Androgynous	Neutral	135	3	8
Androgynous	Not in favor	66	3	9
Feminine	In favor	734	4	7
Feminine	Neutral	882	4	8
Feminine	Not in favor	276	4	9
Masculine	In favor	340	5	7
Masculine	Neutral	503	5	8
Masculine	Not in favor	216	5	9
Prefer Not To Say	In favor	222	6	7
Prefer Not To Say	Neutral	434	6	8
Prefer Not To Say	Not in favor	123	6	9

Figure 13 Data

Uncomfortability Levels by group

sexual_orientation_grouped	uncomfortability_level	**count**
Heterosexual	Never	1029
Heterosexual	Occassionally	292
Heterosexual	Often	217
Heterosexual	Rarely	399
LGBTQ+	Never	256
LGBTQ+	Occassionally	168
LGBTQ+	Often	158
LGBTQ+	Rarely	163
Prefer not to say	Never	764
Prefer not to say	Occassionally	230
Prefer not to say	Often	169
Prefer not to say	Rarely	245

Figure 14 Data
Uncomfortability Mean Levels by group

sexual_orientation_grouped	total_count	mean_uncomfortability	median_uncomfortability	mode_
Heterosexual	1937	1.843573	1	
LGBTQ+	745	2.306040	2	
Prefer not to say	1408	1.860795	1	

Figure 16 Data
Uncomfortable Sentiment

uncomfortability_level	**Count**	**Percentage**	**Sentiment**
Never	2049	50.09780	2049
Occassionally	690	16.87042	-690
Often	544	13.30073	-544
Rarely	807	19.73105	807

Figure 17 Data

Affordability Sankey Chart

source	target	value	IDsource	IDtarget
Somewhat affordable	Minimal support	535	0	4
Somewhat affordable	No support	198	0	5
Somewhat affordable	Not sure	348	0	6
Somewhat affordable	Some support	788	0	7
Somewhat affordable	Yes, ample support	342	0	8
Somewhat unaffordable	Minimal support	384	1	4
Somewhat unaffordable	No support	255	1	5
Somewhat unaffordable	Not sure	232	1	6
Somewhat unaffordable	Some support	204	1	7
Somewhat unaffordable	Yes, ample support	118	1	8
Very affordable	Minimal support	39	2	4
Very affordable	No support	14	2	5
Very affordable	Not sure	49	2	6
Very affordable	Some support	110	2	7
Very affordable	Yes, ample support	173	2	8
Very unaffordable	Minimal support	47	3	4
Very unaffordable	No support	126	3	5
Very unaffordable	Not sure	68	3	6
Very unaffordable	Some support	16	3	7
Very unaffordable	Yes, ample support	44	3	8
Minimal support	In favor	362	4	9
Minimal support	Neutral	495	4	10
Minimal support	Not in favor	148	4	11
No support	In favor	272	5	9
No support	Neutral	208	5	10
No support	Not in favor	113	5	11
Not sure	In favor	220	6	9
Not sure	Neutral	316	6	10
Not sure	Not in favor	161	6	11
Some support	In favor	349	7	9
Some support	Neutral	609	7	10
Some support	Not in favor	160	7	11
Yes, ample support	In favor	252	8	9
Yes, ample support	Neutral	326	8	10
Yes, ample support	Not in favor	99	8	11

Figure 20 Data
Prioritization Count

sexual_orientation	**Response**	**Count**
Heterosexual	Cropped Top Midriff Blouse	676
Heterosexual	Earrings*	751
Heterosexual	Hair Dye/Color	1408
Heterosexual	Others	354
Heterosexual	Tattoos	570
LGBTQ+	Cropped Top Midriff Blouse	267
LGBTQ+	Earrings*	359
LGBTQ+	Hair Dye/Color	599
LGBTQ+	Others	121
LGBTQ+	Tattoos	281
Prefer not to say	Cropped Top Midriff Blouse	521
Prefer not to say	Earrings*	460
Prefer not to say	Hair Dye/Color	890
Prefer not to say	Others	249
Prefer not to say	Tattoos	370

Figure 21 Data
Prioritization Counts Other Category

sexual_orientation	**Response**	**Count**
Heterosexual	Diverse Footwear	102
Heterosexual	Diverse Tops	40
Heterosexual	Shorts and Mini Skirts	26
Heterosexual	Tattered Jeans	19
LGBTQ+	Diverse Footwear	27
LGBTQ+	Diverse Tops	11
LGBTQ+	Shorts and Mini Skirts	12
LGBTQ+	Tattered Jeans	5
Prefer not to say	Diverse Footwear	53
Prefer not to say	Diverse Tops	23
Prefer not to say	Shorts and Mini Skirts	12
Prefer not to say	Tattered Jeans	4

Figure 22 Data
Wordcloud

category	freq
Cross-dressing	30
Diverse Bottoms	226
Diverse Footwear	258
Diverse Tops	193
Earrings	128
Expression	356
Freedom	189
Gender Neutral	44
Hair Dye	502
Inclusivity	131
Less Strict	51
Tattoo	40