Critical Analysis of the Article “What the United Kingdom Can Teach the United States About School Uniforms” by Angela Walmsley (2011)

For many people in the USA, uniforms are perceived as an indicator of violence in public schools, and they are positively accepted in private and high-poverty schools only. The article “What the United Kingdom Can Teach the United States About School Uniforms” by A. Walmsley (2011) tries to emphasize the importance of uniform to the school environment, how it leads to the emergence of respect and responsibility between student-teacher and the decrease in the number of dress code cases in the UK. Despite the author’s use of relevant scientific examples, arguments, citations, and a strong purpose, the article contains logical fallacies, including overgeneralization and a non-logical sequence.

A. Walmsley (2011) introduces the article by giving background information regarding general British Education and the significance of uniforms in the UK. Then, the author mentions that uniforms do not have costly alternatives, because of the higher demand in the UK. Furthermore, A. Walmsley (2011) discusses the development of responsibility among students and respect between student-teacher and the decline in the number of dress code cases, due to the implementation of school uniforms. Finally, A. Walmsley (2011) highlights how uniforms have helped certain schools increase student motivation and self-confidence.

In “What the United Kingdom Can Teach the United States About School Uniforms” by A. Walmsley (2011), arguments are perfectly given and develop logically, nevertheless, logical fallacies are not fully avoided. Firstly, one thought from the article is that “most high-poverty schools suggest school uniforms because they believe that will reduce the threat of violence” (Walmsley, 2011, p.65). This idea is an overgeneralization. Because the statement “poverty schools are suggesting school uniforms in terms of decreasing violence level” is not used by all parents, only some of them might use it. Moreover, Walmsley (2011) partially agrees that “we're creating a culture where parents think that a public school where children wear uniforms is an unsafe place to send their child” (p.65). There is a misperception that violence and school uniforms are connected with one another. In addition, there is one weakness that breaks the logical sequence again: “making school uniforms obligatory would not be enforceable”. Although the article denies that this is the case, our writer reveals that this idea is wrong. Because to official statistics in many schools wearing school uniforms is mandatory. “For those schools that adopt school uniform policies, about 40% make the wearing of uniforms voluntary while 60% make wearing uniforms mandatory” (Walmsley, 2011, p.65).

Over the course of the article, in spite of providing a substantial number of fallacies, the article also demonstrates a strong purpose which makes strong the author’s position. To increase

the impact on the readers, Walmsley (2011) compares the benefits of school uniforms in the

UK with the US. Walmsley (2011) states that public schools might create a culture where the

students take pride in their schools and put respect their teachers by requiring them to wear

school uniforms for the reason which diminishes the number of cases of violence between

these schools. The author supports her claim by sharing a piece of evidence (Wade and Stafford

2003; White 2000) on how wearing uniforms leads to a benefit for both parents and students

in the UK. To be more precise, school uniforms are the most considerable perspective for

parents to convince themselves to send out their children. It would have been better if the

author had given more evidence on why wearing school uniforms is superior in the

UK than in the US.

Other strengths of the article are the examples and statistics provided by Walmsley. In this article, the author compares the positive and negative sides of uniforms. He also compares the importance of uniforms in different countries, by providing examples and statistics: In the United States 40% of students wear uniforms voluntarily while the other 60% do not, but in the UK the percentage of wearing uniforms voluntarily is much higher (Walmsley, 2011, p.65). The author also mentions that in the USA, schools do not provide uniforms for the poor, but in the UK, students go to school as a job and they have to wear a uniform. As the author mentions, private schools in the USA have uniforms that belong only to them as the sign of their school that can be bought in 1-2 places, but in the UK, uniforms are usually found everywhere. Walmsley (2011) also provides the differences between private schools and state schools and gives detailed facts about each of them. Walmsley (2011) states that in comparison to the USA, The UK is stricter about the value of uniforms as it is considered as the indicator of schools in which student is studying.

Overall, the article “What can The United Kingdom can teach The United States about school uniforms” by A. Walmsley (2011) provides information about the positive impacts that uniforms have brought to British education and about the reasons why uniforms should be implemented in American education. Although A. Walmsley (2011) has engaged her readers by giving certain examples, proper citations, and up-to-date statistics, logical fallacies, such as overgeneralization and a non-logical sequence are observed in the article.

# References

Walmsley, A. (2011). What the United Kingdom Can Teach the United States About School Uniforms. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 63-66.