

A Study on the Influence of Christian Uniformed Group on facilitating the Growth of

Youth Members and Adult Leaders

Executive Summary

The Boys' Brigade, Hong Kong (BBHK) cooperated with the Department of Social Work, Hong Kong Baptist University from 2008 to 2010 to work on the Study on the Influence of the Christian Uniformed Group on the Members and Leaders. The aim of the study is to understand the impacts of the Christian uniformed groups on the children and youth members and adult leaders in the sense of Identity Formation, Initiative Experience, Global Skills, Interpersonal Relationship, Team-building Skills, Negative Experience, Moral Values & Integrity, Resilience and Basic Psychological Needs (sense of autonomy, sense of competence and the sense of relatedness). The study includes two parts. The first part is on BBHK members and leaders. Data was collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The second part is on the comparison group (non-uniformed group members- those who have not joined any uniformed groups before). Data were collected only through questionnaires. 1,456 and 473 valid questionnaires were collected on the BBHK group and the comparison group respectively. 16 in-depth interviews were also conducted with the BBHK group to understand how the impacts happened. The results of study reveal that there are positive impacts on BBHK members of different age groups and leaders; while BBHK members performed better in every researched aspect comparing to the non-uniformed group members.

Questionnaire investigation

The results of study reveal that there are positive impacts on the youth and adults joining BBHK. For the Pre-Junior Section (5-8 year old / kindergarten K.3 to Primary 3 students), the positive impact is mainly on their Identity Formation and Interpersonal Relationship. For the Junior Section (8 to 12 years old / Primary 4 to 6 students), the positive impact is on their Moral Values & Integrity. For Company Section (11 to 18 years old / Secondary school students), the positive impacts are on the Identity Formation, Moral Values & Integrity. For the Officers (over 18 years old), the impacts are on the Moral Values & Integrity, Team-building Skills, Identity Formation and Global Skills.

The study also shows that the discipline training including obedience, good ability of complying

to the rules, willingness to bear responsibilities and learning to take care themselves within the Boys' Brigade would have positive impacts on Identity Formation, Initiative Experience, Global Skills, Interpersonal Relationship, Team-building Skills, Moral Values & Integrity, Resilience and Basic Psychological Needs for the members and leaders. The Christian Identity Formation is also having positive impact on the Identity Formation, Initiative Experience, development of Global Skills, Interpersonal Relationship, Team-building Skills, Moral Values & Integrity, Resilience and Basic Psychological Needs for the Junior Section and Company Section. To the Officers under this same topic, there is also a positive impact for the development of Global Skills, Interpersonal Relationship, Team-building Skills, Moral Values & Integrity, Resilience and Basic Psychological Needs.

Award training / thematic activities establish a positive impact on Company Section's Team-building Skills; & Officers' Initiative Experience and Team-building Skills. Members of Junior Section with leader badge is found to have better Initiative Experience and Team-building Skills; and with less Negative Experience; while those who got the Gold Achievement Badge have better Interpersonal Relationship. The data also reveals that the award badges have a positive relationship with initiative experience and resilience of Company Section members. Those who have joined BBHK for longer time, positive impact of Moral value & Integrity and Team-building Skills of Junior Section is found, positive impact of Identity Formation, Initiative Experience and Team-building Skills among Officers is found; but negative impact of Negative Experience is found among Company Section.

For the sex difference, the male Officers in the Boys' Brigade rather than the female Officers reported more improvement on Global Skills and Interpersonal Relationship; but the boys rather than girls have more Negative Experience. For the education level, Officers with lower education level is found to have better Team-building Skills; while both Junior Section and Officers with lower education level reported to have more Negative Experience.

In whole, BBHK members get higher mean score in most of the researched aspects of the study than the non-uniformed group participants. In Junior Section, BBHK members are better in every aspect comparing to the comparison group, especially in the aspect of Moral Values & Integrity. In Company Section (Form 1 to Form 3 group), the mean score differences between the two groups are

relatively smaller than in the Junior Section but the BBHK group performs better on the Moral Values & Integrity aspects but the comparison group performs better on the aspects of Interpersonal Relationship and Team-building Skills. In the Form 4 to Form 5 group, BBHK members also perform better than the comparison group in most categories of the research aspect, the differences are greater especially in Identity Formation, Initiative Experience and Global Skills. However, the mean score of their sense of autonomy and sense of relatedness are not as good as the non-uniformed comparison group.

Individual interview

Four individual interviews were conducted in each of Pre-Junior Section, Junior Section, Company Section and Officers' group of the BBHK research participants to understand the changes in their lives and the reasons for these changes after joining BBHK. All of them answered the questions on their own except the Pre-Junior Section members who were accompanied by their parents.

The data reveals that Pre-Junior Section members show better sense of discipline after joining BBHK, while Junior Section members obviously have more involvement in religious activities and better understanding and frequent contact with God than before. The main change after joining the BBHK of Company Section and Officers is having a tighter time table that affects their resting time and working performance. Pre-Junior Section & Junior Section members think that their changes mainly come from the team building and disciplinary training of the BBHK which promote their control in emotions, spirit in discipline, knowledge in Christianity and participation in their activities. For Company Section and Officers, the interviewees think that the main reason for their changes is their participation in more activities which leads to improvement in their time management, skill learning, leadership and interpersonal relationship skills.

All four groups of interviewees think that they are more honest, having more courage to try new things, paying more attention to discipline and willing to help people in different needs after joining BBHK. The reasons leading to these changes include the positive influences by the performance of the Officers, learning the teaching of God in Bible study and discipline training such as foot drill which makes them more disciplined. The 3 groups interviewees (apart from Pre-Junior Section) expressed

that they got to know more about Christianity and to use different method to gospel preaching after joining BBHK. The interviewees in Company Section and Officers stated that they got to know how to seek help from church members, Officers and God and they are braver to face their problems after joining BBHK. The interviewees said that their satisfactory level to their basic needs increased after joining BBHK that their boring time is reduced and their self confidence, sense of satisfaction and sense of happiness are increased.

Recommendations

After the data analysis, the research team would have the following suggestions to BBHK: (1) Maintaining the religious elements such as the Bible studies and praying time in their training that helps the spiritual development and other aspects mentioned above. (2) Emphasizing on the training of the discipline that helps the members learn about obeying the rules, being responsible in the team and restraining from improper behavior. (3) Paying attention to the selection and training of the leaders(Officers) which is very important for influencing the youth members to learn from the behaviors of the leaders that become a person with Moral Values & Integrity. (4) Further developing of the award system for the members. The level of the difficulties should be made appropriate to the ability of the participants to enhance the growth of the members in the assessment process. (5) Developing team spirit. Organizing more group and cooperative activities to promote the care and cooperation among members, among leaders and among the members and leaders. (6) Holding different kinds of activities such as game, competition, service, experiential, physical and intelligence challenge activities for members to take part according to their needs. (7) Increasing the manpower of leaders to reduce the service time of Captains and Officers. Seasonal adjustment should also be made on activities to enhance the participations of the members. (8) Striving balance between discipline and the sense of autonomy, so that the members can be satisfied in both aspects.