

Why students  
do not  
complain?

Why teachers  
do not care?

A true story

A concern

# Pluralism in Economics: A Taiwanese Perspective

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Why students  
do not  
complain?

1 Why students do not complain?

Why teachers  
do not care?

2 Why teachers do not care?

A true story

3 A true story

A concern

4 A concern

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- ISIPE (International Student Initiative for Pluralism in Economics)
- The teaching of economics is in crisis
- Pluralistic and diverse approach
- in theoretical, methodological and interdisciplinary

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- Economics is not only applied mathematics
- Real world problems should be discussed in class
- Alternative models/theories should be presented

# Consumers complain

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- ISIPE: consumers (students) complain about the service quality
- Consumers complaint is pretty normal in a market economy
- How to complain in a market economy?
  - Return the item (i.e., attend the other university)
  - Do not buy again

# Taiwan's economics teaching

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- Probably more serious than other countries
- Taiwanese students do not complain
- Why?

## Why students do not complain?

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- Students not sure what is better. Maybe the current situation is the best?
- Even though most the material is mathematical derivation without much economic reasoning, what is taught in the class is **useful in a sense**
- Useful for students to pass the graduate school entrance exam.

# Useful for the future?

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- Student do not know
- Most students do not have working experiences before graduation, so difficult for them to judge what is useful



# Tuition is low

Why students  
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- Another reason, Taiwan tuition is low (about 1,200 euros per year)
- If it is cheap, you can not complain
- Also most of the tuition are paid by parents
- **But the true cost is pretty high** (maybe about 10,000 euros for NTU students)

# Teachers do not care

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- Even if students complain, many teachers do not care
- Why?
- Teaching evaluation results do not affect teacher's promotion and salary

# System design

Why students  
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- Why the system is designed this way?
- I don't know

# Why complaining is important

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- In market economy, firms care about the customers's response
- Only if customers are satisfied, can firms survive and have profit
- Customer complaining plus firm's response is the key to quality improvement

## However ...

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- However, if system is designed in such a way that teachers **need not** to care about students's complaint, then it it is difficult to improve teaching quality

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## Stanford MBA's dean to a young teacher

“When you start teaching, your students will line up outside my office to complain about your teaching. If the length of the line is decreasing as the semester goes, then you are fine.”

- This is a better system

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## Stanford MBA, one of the best in the world

- Students pay tuition themselves
- Tuition is very high. In 2014, tuition is US\$61,875 per year
- Stanford demands incoming students to have at least 3 years of working experiences
- US government do not directly subsidize Stanford MBA program

# Taiwan's system

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- Tuition subsidy from government
- Parents pay tuition for their children
- Many universities are public enterprises, subsidized by government
- Tuition control (price control) on private universities



# Public enterprises and control

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- Taiwan's system is an example that public enterprises and price control is inefficient

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- If government do not subsidize ...
- Children from poor family were not able to pay for the high tuition

## Children from poor family

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- Actually it is pretty easy to solve the problem
- If tuition is raised by, say, about 40%, from 1,200 euros to about 1,700 euros, and the government subsidy to the public universities is reduced accordingly
- There will be enough fund left to subsidize the children from poor family