

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Members of a specific group or organisation have their own beliefs, behaviours and traditions which provide important information about the group's socialising functions (Kaiser 1998:351). The clothes that people wear and their modes of dress are important clues in acquiring specific knowledge about the wearers. Clothing symbols are not stagnant and take on different meanings, depending on when, where and how the clothes are worn (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht 2000:5). Therefore, school uniforms are an excellent example of information that is conveyed about the learners and the schools they attend. A school uniform represents the school which the learner attends, and signals meanings about the values, beliefs, ethics, traditions and general image which the school maintains, as well as the discipline sustained (Kaiser 1997:226-227). The adoption of a school uniform enables people to observe and monitor the behaviour of the wearer of the uniform (Craik 2005:52, Kaiser 1997:589).

Are uniforms then a good idea? A more detailed discussion of advantages and disadvantages of school uniforms follow in section 2.5, but a brief introduction on this aspect will be given here. The most logical response to this well known question is that nobody knows but at present supporters of school uniforms argue that uniforms serve as a social and economic equaliser, diminishing competition regarding clothing and reducing demands on parents to buy expensive, trendy clothes. It also advances learners safety as officials can recognise intruders who come into the school grounds. Other benefits mentioned are the fostering of school atmosphere and group spirit, learner self-esteem, academic achievement and maintenance of academic standards by uniformity, as well as the improvement of school attendance, discipline and respect for educators, and the reduction of behavioural and drug and alcohol problems. The fact that learners wearing school



uniform can be identified and associated with a specific school seems to be another advantage, as it instils a sense of pride. Many of those advocating the wearing of school uniforms are of the opinion that it may decrease violence and theft, help prevent gang members from wearing gang colours to school and restrain gang activities (La Point V., Holloman O. & Alleyne S.I. 1992:23, Loesch 1995:30, Caruso 1996:83, 1996:1, Kaiser 1997:377, Kizis 2000:18, Fosseen 2002:1087-B, Bodine 2003:49, Wade & Stafford 2003:400-403). In 1995, Long Beach, California (USA) drew national attention by adopting mandatory school uniforms and reporting after only one year a dramatic decrease in disciplinary problems, as well as higher test scores. There was a 91% drop in assaults, vandalism, and weapon and drug violations (Wilkins 1999:19).

Opponents of school uniforms differ by saying that uniform infringes on learners' constitutional rights to self-expression and that school uniforms cannot address the real problems that occur in the school environment (Caruso 1996:83, Kizis 2000:18). In South Africa, before 1993 the powers of school principals and their staff were vast and the rights of learners were not even considered. Consequently, obligatory school uniforms were prescribed without even allowing discussion on the topic (Alston, van Staden & Pretorius 2003:163). The *South African Schools Act* of 1996 introduced a new era in education when the rights of learners were specifically emphasised, especially with regard to freedom of speech and religion. It follows that the desirability of prescribed school wear in public schools cannot be determined only on grounds of cost implications for the parents. The rights of learners also play an important role in this choice. Advocates for learners' rights argue that learners have the right to decide on their own dress and that behavioural problems should be addressed as such and not by enforcing uniform policies and dress codes, as these might simply evade the real problems (Brunsma 2006:58). Another problem mentioned is that poor families cannot afford the required uniform (Portner 1996:3, Stanley 1996:428). Albietz (1998:2) argues that school uniforms, mostly made of good quality polycotton fabric, are far more expensive than cheap cotton clothing, and he is of the opinion that the retailing of school uniforms often goes hand in hand with unfair trade practices, favouritism and cronyism, where secret bribes are paid



for the privilege of exclusively producing and/or selling school uniforms. In addition, in South Africa colourful uniforms were previously the trademark of Model C schools, but today school uniforms are costly new fashion trends in public schools, including the schools in townships and rural areas where a majority of poor children attend school (Mvulane 2004: 38).

1.2 PROBLEMSTATEMENT

Not all school systems across the globe have prescribed school uniform policies. From the literature it is clear that disagreements exist with regard to the desirability of mandatory school uniforms. In South Africa the debate over school uniforms has a long history which is unlikely to be resolved in the near future. School uniforms are part of the educational culture and form an integral part of the schooling system. According to Section 8(1) of the South African Schools Act, governing bodies of public schools must adopt a code of conduct for learners after consultation with learners, parents and educators of the schools. This code of conduct includes school wear. Stakeholders in this issue seem to be the learners, the parents and the schools (Sangster 1989:8, Roos 2003:22, Mvulane 2004:38). Worldwide the desirability of prescribed obligatory school uniforms is still a matter for debate with involved parties asking whether public school learners should be required to wear uniforms or obey a prescribed dress code. The ongoing debate on whether to prescribe uniforms or not can be explored in terms of questions such as: *Why is there still a demand for school uniforms?* And *In what way are school uniforms still relevant in our modern society?* (Craik 2005:52).

From the above it is clear that uncertainty exists as to whether the practice of wearing school uniforms is advantageous for school, parents and learners. The research question that arises is the following: What is the desirability and viability of mandatory school uniforms in South Africa?



1.3 OBJECTIVES

The broad aim of this study is to determine the perspectives of parents, learners and educators at public schools in Vanderbijlpark on obligatory school uniforms.

Specific objectives are:

- ❖ To gather general information from parents, learners and educators regarding their overall approach towards obligatory school uniforms, the current situation at the school and ways in which uniforms are acquired
- ❖ To determine what the opinions of parents, learners and educators towards mandatory school uniforms in Vanderbijlpark are regarding the
 - Functionality
 - Economic advantages/disadvantages
 - Appearance
 - Competition
 - Time-saving aspect
 - Academic standards
 - Safety considerations
 - Social benefits
- ❖ To investigate the opinions of parents, learners and educators on more trendy school uniform items
- ❖ To determine practically significant differences between the opinions of parents, learners and educators regarding the above-mentioned aspects
- ❖ To make recommendations to the Department of Education regarding the desirability of obligatory school uniforms in Vanderbijlpark



- ❖ To make recommendations to all the stakeholders, namely parents, learners and educators on the desirability of obligatory school uniforms.

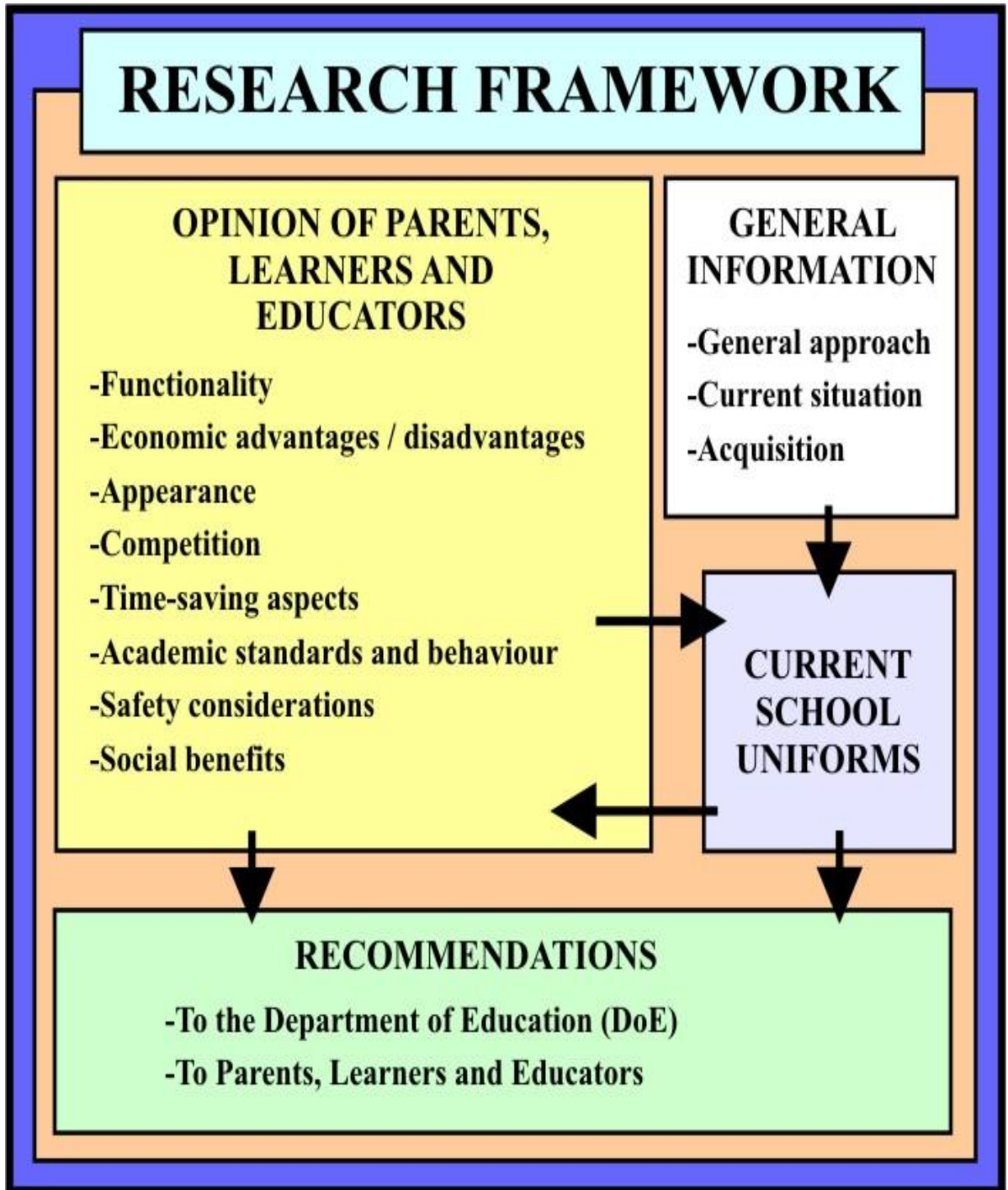


FIGURE 1. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

1.4 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



The research framework designed for the purpose of this study is depicted in Figure 1 and was designed in correspondence with the research objectives and recent literature on the uncertainties about, and the advantages and disadvantages of obligatory prescribed school uniforms (Albietz 1998:2, Wade & Stafford 2003:399-403, Mvulane 2004:38-40)

1.5 DEFINITION OF THE SAMPLE

This study will focus on grade 10 learners, their parents and educators from selected Secondary schools in Vanderbijlpark. A random sample of four schools was chosen out of the total number of 45 schools. Next, a random stratified sample of two grade 10 classes was chosen from each of the four selected schools. A total number of 200 learners were selected in this way. The parents of these selected learners (also 200) and volunteering educators (an arbitrarily chosen number of 60) in the school formed the study sample for the investigation of parents' and educators' opinions on school uniforms.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives:

The purpose of this chapter is to give an introduction to the research study and state the research problem and objectives to enable the reader to understand the purpose and logic of the inquiry. The research framework is given and the key concepts are defined.



Chapter 2: Literature review:

This chapter reviews differing standpoints on obligatory school uniforms. The emphasis is placed on aspects such as functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, appearance, competition aspects, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

In this chapter the research strategy, the research design and the methodology used in this study are discussed in detail. A method of data collection and data analysis is discussed. The study population and sample selection are explained.

Chapter 4: Results and discussions

The results of the study are given, results are interpreted and relevant literature is linked to the findings.

Chapter 5: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

This chapter gives a summary of the whole study and focuses on the conclusions drawn from the findings. Recommendations are made to all participants' parents, learners and educators. The schools taking part in this study will receive the recommendations and the Department of Education will receive the summary and outcomes of this study.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

There is an old adage “Clothing makes the man” which raises the question: does this apply to learners in the school setting? Can the way learner’s dress have an impact on aspects such as school discipline, safety, academic standards and overall behaviour (Lumsden 2001:2)?

During the pre-adolescent and the adolescent stages, children experience an increase in the awareness of themselves and of other people. Children in these age groups tend to use personal appearance as symbols in forming social perceptions. Children also attach greater value to appearance during late childhood and early adolescence. La Point, Holloman and Alleyne (1992:21) agree that clothing and appearance have an influence on individual and group behaviour. Clothes provide clues about the status of people and groups. Kaiser (1998:472-473) argues that people use clothes to express either individuality or group conformity, but she points out that the youth are more likely to go along with conformity as this is more encouraging to peer acceptance than is individuality.

When learners are left to make their own decisions on what to wear to school they might not make as responsible choices as adults would. The majority may choose what is appropriate, but there will always be those who will push the limits and arrive at school in T-shirts with slogans promoting drugs and alcohol, while some will show up in sexually provocative clothing. These issues and the desire to minimize socio-economic tension between ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ of fashionable items such as expensive sneakers, jackets and shoes with brand names, led to a the situation where some schools adopted dress codes and uniform policies, especially in the USA. Concerns about safety and discipline cannot be solved entirely by strict



dress codes and uniform policies, however, but these measures seem to make a positive contribution to the problems mentioned (Lumsden & Miller 2002:2).

2.2 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION THROUGH CLOTHING

This section will investigate the meaning of non-verbal communication as well as its application when uniforms are under consideration.

2.2.1 Non-verbal communication defined

The question is raised: what is non-verbal communication? The way we dress and the clothes that we wear form one of several modes of non-verbal communication, meaning, communication through the clothes that we wear, which does not involve verbal expressions through speaking or writing. Non-verbal communication is therefore informative and meaningful in that the clothes that we wear provide information regarding occupation, like being in school or working in a bank or belonging to the police force, and this information is conveyed without speaking to people (Damhorst, Miller & Michelman 1999:79). Apparel can be a message carrier with strong communicative power (DeLong 1998:333).

The way we are dressed and the type of clothes that we wear speak a silent language. Because it is a silent language it has a silent vocabulary which uses symbols, meaning the signs, cues or icons that we use as instruments for social interaction (Marshall, Jackson, Stanley, Kefgen & Touchie-Specht 2000:4). Symbols are physical objects which are filed, interpreted and given meaning by human beings through social interaction. People learn what objects are and what they are used for during interaction with others. Symbols can consequently also be defined as social objects used to represent that which people agree they shall represent. Symbols are meaningful, not only to the people who observe them, but also to the user. The user of symbols uses them intentionally to represent and to communicate a specific meaning to others. Symbols are used widely to represent feelings, ideas and values. Clothing is one example of symbols being used for communication. It is therefore



not what we wear, but what we think we wear and what others will see, that gives meaning to the silent language (Marshall *et al.* 2000:5).

Individuals who belong to a group or organisation share in the traditions used by the specific organisation. By being part of a group we learn the meaning of the group behaviour through signs and every group has its own beliefs, behaviours and way of doing things which provide newcomers with important socialising functions. When someone is dressed in a uniform, other people can understand the signs signalled by the wearer. Together, group members can reflect cohesiveness and their mutual interests through the clothes they are wearing (Kaiser 1997: 351).

2.2.2 Non-verbal communication by means of uniforms

According to Craik (2005:11-13), the foundation of a uniform is very specific to an organisation, institution or group and a uniform embodies specific measures to differentiate members of that particular group. The role of uniforms is to set rules of what to do and what not to do while dressed in the uniform, in other words the rules of how to wear the uniform are accepted as a natural process by the wearer because of the control that is automatically enforced by the uniform without a word being spoken. Craik believes, moreover, that organisational measures displayed in uniforms imply a series of oppositional attributes such as discipline against spontaneity, group uniqueness against individualism, formality against informality, compulsion against choice, gender against gender and sexual innocence versus sexual perversion (Craik 2005: 11, 13).

Within contemporary society, uniforms are used to convey a message of clarity and precision. Organisations that make use of uniforms are usually bureaucratic in structure. The explicitness and precision of uniforms are suitable for bureaucratic control. The message that is transmitted through uniforms is very clear in the sense that it connects groups from the same organization. Uniforms are also sometimes used for purposes of identification, visibility and indication of roles (Joseph 1986:2 & 32). In an educational institution school uniforms function as a symbol of



membership in the school community. Kaiser (1997:362) explains that individuals who wear uniforms are associated with a particular role, and uniforms allow outsiders to identify individuals as members of a group or organisation, but also allow insiders to understand their position and status, duties and privileges.

School uniforms are usually simple in style and colour and convey the school's values. They are selected by officials and mandated to learners. The presence of uniforms automatically implies a hierarchical structure, for instance superiors, who do not wear uniforms and subordinates, who do wear uniforms. Uniforms can thus serve as a sign of distinction between learners and educators. The specific characteristics of uniforms consequently maintain social control within the social environment (Joseph 1986:66).

Uniforms used within a group or organization serve a number of functions for both the organization and for the group member. Firstly because of their visibility, uniforms communicate a group image to others and enhance the perception of the organisation's salient characteristics that seems to be important. Furthermore, the uniform also implies a coherent group structure and may affect membership, morale and the feeling of belonging to a unified whole. For the members of a bureaucratic or hierarchical organization, uniforms are used to minimize role and rank confusion and serve to equalise the membership in a particular role or rank (Sproles & Burns 1994:157).

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the literature about school uniforms, very little could be found on the historical background. Consequently, a concise background of children's clothing from as early as the middle ages will be given, with brief reference to school clothing where possible.

Up to the end of the nineteenth century, children's clothing used to look exactly like that of their parents, and this style of clothing was very uncomfortable, as children



like to play and these clothes hampered their movements. From 1850, clothes for boys became more simplified than for girls, as the girls' clothes were a replica of their mothers'. After 1890 there was a sort of specialisation in clothes for women when it became fashionable to have different outfits for different occasions. It was also during this time that women became more and more interested in playing sport and for this the long dresses they used to wear were uncomfortable. The types of sports that were played by women, namely tennis, netball and gymnastics, required shorter and more comfortable clothes (Wilcox 1954:300, Coetzee 1975:4).

It was during 1885 that the "gym", a garment which can be defined as a sleeveless tunic worn over a blouse, became popular for sportswear, as it was shorter than the usual dresses. These gyms were used as school uniforms for the first time in 1885 when a Swedish teacher, Bergman Osterberg, imported the concept to England (Cunnington & Mansfield 1969:45-46).

Because women became interested in sports, sportswear had a tremendous influence on womenswear in general. The comfort and freedom of movement that is typical of sportswear was gradually incorporated into the design of regular women's wear. Because of the influence of the sportswear on women's wear the changes became noticeable in children's wear as well (Laver 1969:149). It was the custom for children to wear aprons made of cotton over their dresses and at the beginning of the nineteenth century they went to school wearing these aprons (Kestell 1940:49). The "gym" that became popular for sportswear was used as a school dress for girls during 1918. In 1930 schools started to implement school uniforms as we know them today and innovative mothers were called in to help with the planning and implementing of school uniforms at different schools. This can be seen as the start of the tradition of every school having its own unique school uniform in colours that differed from those of other schools in order to distinguish schools from each other. Because fashion played a big role, the problem occurred that there was too much variety in the school uniforms. Retailers wanted to solve the problem by standardising school uniforms, and in 1969 retailers requested the Department of Industry to examine the possibility of standardising school uniforms (Coetzee 1975:5).



Today, most private and parochial schools have a long history of using school uniforms which were designed to establish an atmosphere of uniformity, pride, loyalty, and equality among the learners. An image of professionalism has always been associated with having learners participate in a school uniform programme. School uniforms were believed to provide a more businesslike approach to learning and to remove some of the distractions with which learners were normally confronted when facing the dilemma of possessing the latest designer fashions. Wearing school uniform involved learners more and made learners part of the ‘team’ at the school. This was not meant to erase their individuality, but to include everyone on the same level as far as image and dress was concerned (Children’s World of St. John Parish 1997:1).

2.4 DRESS CODES AND SCHOOL UNIFORMS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, WORLDWIDE

In early civilisations formal schooling was not something new, as it was important for children to have some training in the academic, literary, creative and religious fields. Unfortunately little evidence could be found that these children wore a prescribed school uniform, but they did dress in a sort of similar, unique way.

It was during Europe’s “Dark Ages” that there was an interruption in the records and therefore it is unlikely that schooling in all of its forms would have been a high priority. By the time of the Middle Ages, some sort of education appeared mostly in monasteries and cathedrals, as the boys were trained to enter religious orders. It was after the fall of Rome that formal schooling in the Western countries disappeared. The only schools that existed were the song schools of the cathedrals and monasteries. Boys were chosen first because they were taught for preparation of the holy orders (Davidson 1990:11, Craik 2005:57).

The above account of the religious foundation of modern education explains the heritage of academic dress worn at universities such as Cambridge and Oxford from earliest times until recently (Craik 2005:57).



2.4.1 United States of America

For the majority of children, going to school is an experience with the world outside their home, and regardless of the popularity of school uniforms in the schools of most nations over the past century, the use of school uniforms has been extremely rare in public schools of the USA. The high price of casual clothing and the conflict associated with it caused many schools and parents to reassess the school uniform. School uniforms have varied in America over time from state to state (La Point *et al.* 1992:20).

During the 1990s the American media reported on a nationwide school epidemic during which assaults on teachers were frequent and children were killed over designer clothing. Reports like this placed pressure on schools to act quickly before the situation got out of control. The adoption of school uniforms seemed to offer a viable solution for restoring order in the nation's classrooms (Wilkins 1999:19). A number of school officials, parents, and others searched for solutions. Even President Clinton took a stand in favour of school uniforms to attempt to deal with the rise of violence in America's public schools (Kaiser 1998:589).

During 1996 the American Education Department was challenged to adopt a national standard of excellence. All schools were challenged to teach good values and good citizenship, and if this challenge was to be the answer to stopping teenagers from pursuing violence and killing each other over designer clothing, school managements thought that public schools should be able to require learners to wear school uniforms. This adoption of the standard of excellence and the obligation of learners to wear school uniforms can be seen as the official start of a movement towards requiring learners in public schools of America to do uniform (Brunsma 2004:2).

Gursky (1996:47) believes that uniforms communicate expectations and show learners what is appropriate in terms of dress and behaviour. Research done in California showed that during the course of one year, overall school crime dropped by 36 percent amongst 58 000 learners in the California United Schools. Fighting



amongst learners went down by 51 percent, weapon possession decreased by 50 percent, assault by 34 percent, vandalism by 18 percent and student suspensions fell by with about a third. What happened, one may ask? Schools and districts around the country were looking at uniforms and strict dress codes to improve the environment for learning. Will it have any effect when learners dress in their casual uniforms of baggy pants, T-shirts with messages, and name brand sneakers for a school uniform? Educators at Baltimore Elementary School feel dressing learners in a uniform makes them realise they do not go to school dressed to play (Gursky 1996:47).

While all public schools in the USA are looking into the success of the school uniform process, the debate will increase as to whether school uniforms are really beneficial when related to the actual learning capabilities and behaviour of the learners. Americans believe that certain factors need to be taken into consideration when drawing up a school uniform policy, namely:

- Choosing the styles of all garments should involve parents, learners and educators.
- All garments should be affordable and easily available in all sizes.
- The prescribed uniform must provide for seasonal options.
- The prescribed uniform must be compulsory, yet allowing for special exemptions.
- A recycling programme embracing the selling or trading of clothing items is helpful.

(Children's World of St John Parish 1997:4).

White (2000:39) briefly reports the following research undertaken to investigate the effect of school uniforms on aspects such as academic achievement and discipline in American schools:

- In 1997 the researcher David Brunzma, a sociologist at the University of Alabama, and Kerry A. Rockquemore, also a sociologist at the University of Notre Dame, investigated the effect of school uniforms on attendance, behaviour problems, substance use and academic achievement, and their



conclusion was that the national opinion and the witness of thousands of school administrators are in agreement that school uniforms do not have a direct effect on problems like using drugs and alcohol, or behavioural and attendance problems, and have a negative effect on academic achievement.

- During 1997, a study by the *Reason Public Policy Institute* on school violence prevention and strategies to keep schools safe, examined how the school uniform policies fitted into school districts' overall safety programmes. The researchers concluded that no specific strategy would work for all American schools because schools have different demographic neighbours, different crime rates, educators of different quality, and different budgets. They felt safe not promoting a common policy for all schools, and pointed out that violent protection policies for protection from violence would differ from school to school.
- In 1996, M. Sue Stanley, an Education Professor at California State University at Long Beach postulated that school uniforms help to lessen the emphasis on fashion wars and strengthen the acceptability of more practical and cheaper school uniforms. Stanley also believes that school uniforms can fortify the link between school, work and success and that uniform helps to support better overall achievement.
- Lillian O. Holloman, a Professor in Clothing and Textiles at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University wrote an article in 1995 on violence and other antisocial behaviour in public schools and possible effects of dress codes on the problems. She points out that the gangs use colours and symbols as well as status clothes, e.g. team jackets, leather coats and sneakers, to differentiate one gang from another and that these expensive items can lead to thefts, at times at knife or gunpoint. She concludes that more research is needed to reach final conclusions as to whether dress codes can solve the problem.

To conclude, it can be said that the idea of school uniforms is not new in America, and that school uniforms have been mandatory in private and parochial schools for



centuries, but they became popular for public schools only during the last decade. The main aim behind instituting school uniform policies was to foster a team learning environment and to help the educators and administrators to maintain order and discipline, although there were many inconclusive as well as contradictory opinions as to this effect of school uniforms. Current school uniform policies differ from school to school. Some policies require that learners abide only by a dress code, for example navy or khaki pants and white shirts of their own choice. Others, on the other hand, require learners to purchase the same selection of clothes from a chosen manufacturer. Some schools even allow uniforms that are compatible with religious or personal convictions (White 2000: 36, 37, 39).

2.4.2 England

No country in the world has influenced the use of school uniforms more than England. Formal schooling for children in groups of the same age outside the boundaries of church schools was rare in England until the 10th century. The number of children going to school was limited for several centuries to follow. The development of schools throughout Europe was similar but the pattern varied significantly in the different areas. School uniforms worn at these times appeared to have some uniformity but were less common in the secular schools which slowly developed during the second millennium (Craik 2005: 57- 58).

According to Davidson (2004:25), the model for school uniforms in England for private and parochial schools had its foundation in charity schools during the sixteenth century. All children coming from poor families were forced to wear cassock-like cloaks which emphasized the lower status of these children, and as time went by these uniforms were adopted by private schools in typical British fashion. Craik (2005:58) points out that compulsory school uniforms in England were compatible with the disciplinary role of schools in the sixteenth century.

Later wearing school uniforms was associated with privileged children of the country's elite private schools, and the main purpose of school uniforms was to



prevent rich learners from making the poorer learners feel inferior. Several of the most common fundamentals of modern school uniforms as we know them today originated in England. Garments like pointed caps, Eton collar shirts, ties with stripes, formal blazers, grey flannel trousers, which used to be called knickers, knee socks with bands in the school's colours as well as sandals, originated in England. A traditional English school uniform used to consist of a blazer, a school tie and dress pants. This was the traditional school uniform worn by an English boy since the 1920s. Many of the above mentioned items are still in use at schools around the world, other countries adopted these older, formal styles and transformed them into more comfortable, informal school uniforms (HCB-SU 2004: 1-6).

Although school uniforms are currently in use in most of England's secondary schools, the effectiveness of this practice is questioned by many of the users, and also by Arkin (2004:27), who wonders whether school uniforms in England can serve as a tool for improving academic standards, or whether it is just a distraction from problems with discipline, behaviour and academic achievement.

Two case studies, where opposite effects of school uniforms are demonstrated, are reported by Arkin (2004:27). In the first case, Governors at the King Edward VI community college recently decided to pilot a no-uniform policy for three years. According to the principal this new policy ended the daily confrontations between learners and educators about school uniforms, like "tuck in your shirt, take off your trainers". The learners were held accountable for wearing proper casual clothing in an appropriate way. Some of the girls dressed too casually or inappropriately at first and showed off too much midriff and cleavage, but the principal found that after educators had talked to these girls about acceptable clothing, the new policy was more satisfactory than the previous obligatory school uniform practice. The no-uniform programme at this specific school was a great success.

In another case, however, the Hillcrest school and community college in Dudley introduced a new, more formal uniform, and according to the principal, this uniform sends out the message that students are at school to work, rather than to play around,



and the bullying among learners was reduced. The outcomes of this were that academic achievement was raised dramatically and the once struggling school is now oversubscribed. Although there is little hard evidence to support the relation between school uniform usage and the behaviour and accomplishments of learners, parents who approve of uniforms are of the opinion that school uniforms help to improve discipline, school standards and behaviour (Arkin 2004:27).

2.4.3 South Africa

In South Africa school uniforms have been worn for many years without questioning this custom and school uniforms form an integral part of the schooling system. Public schools adopt a school uniform policy after consultation with parents, learners and educators (Sangster 1989:8, Mvulane 2004:38).

South Africa, as well as many former British colonies, like Australia and New Zealand, has used uniforms based on the traditional English styles since the late 19th century. These school uniforms for boys consist of a school blazer, which can be described as a formal, lined jacket, a school tie in the school colours, a shirt and formal trousers. This outfit has been worn by boys in many countries, especially English speaking countries. This style of school uniform originally catered only for boys and there were no set uniform styles for girls. During the 20th century, pinafores became a fashionable uniform for girls. The traditional school uniform styles have persisted to the present day (HBC-SU 1998:1- 2).

As in the USA, it was during 1996 that South Africa started a new era in education. There was a drastic breakaway from the fragmented education system which originated during the apartheid years and one of the most important new aspects became the “rights” of the learners. From 1996 all learners received the freedom of speech and belief, which had an influence on stakeholders’ views on school wear (Roos 2003:22).



Minister Asmal and his nine counterparts held a meeting to discuss the extremely high costs of education for the country's 11 million school-going learners. The school uniform used by all the schools in South Africa came under the spotlight because of the high costs and in the end the report proposed that different school uniforms for every school should be eliminated and that a standardised school uniform for all schools across the country should be introduced. It was suggested that the principle of single suppliers for school uniforms should be opposed because this led to extremely high prices. A policy that regulates what schools may specify as their school uniform and which would allow a range of manufacturers was also suggested. During 2003 there was a meeting with the clothing industry to explore ways to bring down the high prices of school uniforms. What followed from the meeting was the proposal that there should be a dynamic process of long-term changes in the approach towards school uniforms. It was also suggested that the National Department of Education could assist in reducing the costs of uniforms without being over-dictatorial on sensitive matters. Another proposal was that schools must assess the costs of their uniforms and, particularly the high costs of the multicoloured blazers. Further recommendations were that the quality of the fabric should be monitored to ensure that it would withstand day-to-day wear and regular washing, that specific guidelines on school uniforms could be given, that the department could monitor whether schools followed these guidelines, and that schools could run their own school clothing shops which could lead to a substantial reduction in the costs of school uniforms (Financing schools under the spotlight 2003:21-22).

There is a difference between the meanings of the terms *school uniform policy* and *dress codes*, and therefore it is important to differentiate between the two. In the literature these two terms are frequently used interchangeably, but they are markedly different. *School uniform policies* tell learners what must be worn while attending school, while *school dress code policies* tell learners what they are not allowed to wear while obeying a set of rules concerning appearance (Weitzel 2004:6). Joseph (1986:144) points out that dress codes set limits on the styles of everyday clothes, in



this case school wear, that may be worn within the context of the organisational culture, in this case the school culture.

The following example of a school uniform policy and dress code policy is taken directly from the diary of Vaal High Secondary School. This example can be observed in the diary that is provided to all learners on the first day of school and is subsequently carried with the learners at all times.

School Uniform Policy:

GIRLS	
School skirt	Blue and green check skirt
Blouse	Short or long sleeved collar neck white shirt
Tie	Green tie with Vaal High emblem embroidered in white
Shoes	Black school shoes
Stockings	Bottle green short socks for summer or long stockings for winter
Jersey	Bottle green with white and navy stripes around the neck and wrist
Pullover	Bottle green with white and navy stripes around the neck and wrist
Scarf	White and bottle green
Long pants	Bottle green winter pants
Blazer	Bottle green with the school badge on it
Tracksuit	Bottle green, black and white top with black pants
BOYS	
Trouser	Grey, long pants
Shirt	White, long or short button-up shirt with collar
Socks	Grey, long or short socks
Shoes	Black, lace-up shoes
Tie	Green tie with white and navy stripes
Jersey	Bottle green with white and navy stripes around edges
Pullover	Bottle green with white and navy stripes around edges
Blazer	Bottle green with the school badge on it
Tracksuit	Bottle green and black with black pants



SPORTSWEAR	
Tracksuit	Bottle green and black tracksuit top with black tracksuit pants
Athletics	Emerald green, black and white top with black pants
Cricket	White cricket pants or white tracksuit pants and a white golf shirt
Hockey	White golf T-shirt
Cross country: Boys & Girls	Emerald green top with black boxer shorts or running shorts
Soccer	Shorts provided by school with white golf T-shirt and tackies
HONORARY COLOURS	
Tie	Black tie with school badge embroidered on it
Blazer	Honours: Black blazer

School Dress code policy:

GIRLS	BOYS
Fringes should be relatively short	Hair clean, tidy at all times, including participation in sport
No wispy strands of hair allowed	No permed or swept-up and dyed hair
If fringes are grown, must be clipped back neatly	Hair tapered at back of head and not stepped
If hair hangs below collar, tie neatly in a ponytail	Hair must not touch collar
Hair must be brushed and not left unruly	Side burns may not extend below middle of ear
Hair accessories allowed in school colours	Fringes should be relatively short
Bleaching and tinting of hair is not permitted	No unorthodox hairstyles, like shaving a pattern
Braided hair is conditionally permitted	Permission from Grade tutor to wear braids
	No dreadlocks
	If a boy regularly exceeds limits regarding tidiness of hair, he will be warned



JEWELLERY

No jewellery allowed, except a watch
One small pair of gold or silver button or ring
earrings

Boys are not allowed to wear extravagant
watches

The above mentioned example of the dos and don'ts of school uniforms seems very odd when listed in this way. There is a subjective plan worked out for any school uniform policies and dress codes and that is why enforcement becomes an integral part of the management of uniforms (Craik 2005:56).

In South Africa, government encourages schools to accept basic, cheaper uniforms, and although school uniforms are expensive for some parents, the involved parties are resistant in doing away with the exclusive range of uniforms, even in the underprivileged communities. An attempt to change a school's uniform in terms of style and colour can cause conflict between parents, learners, principals and the governing bodies, as all of these parties must agree upon the new style, colour or costs before it can be implemented. The National Department of Education investigated the possibility of having a uniform way of dressing in the form of a standardised school uniform for the whole country, but the national guidelines are more restrained and the decision to do this has been left in the hands of the governing bodies of each school (Peyper 2006:IV).

What happens in reality is far from the ideal that government wants for underprivileged learners. Although there is no law that dictates that learners should wear uniforms, it is found that learners do feel uncomfortable not wearing the "correct" uniforms. There are schools that have a basic school uniform which can be bought at chain stores that sell expensive school uniforms of a better quality, as well as at chain stores that sell cheaper uniforms of lesser quality. The Model C schools stick to their exclusive school uniforms, which reminds one of the private school uniforms, which are intended to communicate status. Most of the principals feel that the less fortunate learners can buy or collect school uniform items from the school's clothing bank. The production director of a big discount chain store suggests that



most schools should accept grey trousers and white shirts as a standardised school uniform for boys throughout the country (Peyper 2006:IV).

2.5 GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS ON OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

School uniforms have long been required in private, parochial and public schools and parents, learners and educators give several reasons why they are in favour or not in favour of this practice of making use of school uniforms (2006:6).

In general, most of the educators and parents support school uniforms because they believe uniforms keep children looking neat and presentable and that uniforms have a positive impact on aspects such as behaviour and academic performance of learners (2004:39). Ashton (2002:1) reports that parents support school uniforms in general but that they worry about the costs, and suggests that schools, together with their governing bodies, should think about the needs of families when they decide on a school uniform policy. Educators feel that since school uniforms were mandated in many schools, especially in the USA, the fashion-initiated competition created when wearing casual clothes to school was minimised and that all learners feel equal regardless of their social status when dressed in a school uniform (School uniforms get flair for fashion 2001: A6). The levelling of learners can avoid any discrimination which may exist against poorer learners (School Uniform 1988:4).

Learners who are in favour of school uniforms are of the opinion that uniforms communicate expectations and demonstrate what is appropriate in terms of dress and behaviour and what is not, while educators seem to have remarkably little objection to the practice of school uniforms (Gursky 1996:47).

Parents, learners and educators in favour of uniforms believe there are additional advantages such as the security of learners, improved discipline and school morale. People who object to this idea believe that the policy violates learners' constitutional rights and that educators and school officials will not experience the dramatic effects



the supporters claim it has on problems such as unsatisfactory academic performance, discipline and unwanted behaviour (De Mitchell 2000:33, Swartz 2001:1).

When authors reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of prescribed or obligatory school uniforms in the literature, they often argue in terms of functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, appearance issues, competition-related aspects, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits. These aspects will therefore be reviewed from the standpoint of advocates for and against obligatory school uniforms.

2.5.1 Functionality

When interpreting the word functionality in terms of clothing, one can say that the clothes that we wear are physically functional; in other words, they protect the body against sunlight, extreme heat or cold or anything that might injure an unprotected human body. Functionality of clothing, however, embraces much more than physical aspects only. The first aspect that comes to mind when considering functionality is probably the ease of care. School uniforms need to be easy to care for regarding washing and ironing as life is quite busy today, in addition to the fact that many learners have only two sets, and sometimes only one set of school clothes, which implies that the uniform sometimes needs to be washed at night and must dry quickly and be ready to wear again the next day. One of the biggest overall challenges to the textile industry is the demand for stain-resistant features and wrinkle-no-more materials that are appropriate for school uniforms. Care properties of fabrics are closely linked to fibre content and finish (Kadolph 2007:25).

Wearing comfort, like enough ease for movement, is very important for children because they run and play a lot, so the style must allow enough room for these lively activities (Brown & Rice 2001:126). Gordon (2006:21) reports that fitting and sizing of school uniforms is one of the most important factors influencing parent's perceptions of a school uniform. Comfort of fabrics also needs to be considered and



includes properties such as heat transfer, moisture transmission, air permeability, anti-allergenic features and softness. Heat transfer embraces the transfer of heat which is generated by the body to the surrounding atmosphere, which is imperative, especially in the South African summers, and considering the fact that most schools do not have air conditioning. Fabric thickness is of primary importance in heat transfer, and in winter this is considered the single most important factor in thermal comfort. Another problem in South African summers is that excessive moisture is sometimes produced by the body in the form of perspiration, especially when individuals are highly active. Absorption of this moisture or perspiration depends on the inherent absorbency of the fibre used in the fabric. Cellulose fibres like cotton and rayon are highly absorbent, while synthetic fibres like polyester have a very low absorbency, but can wick moisture to the fibre surface through the capillary spaces of the fibre. Moisture can also be transported through spaces between fibres. Poor moisture transport may cause the skin to feel clammy and uncomfortable (Collier & Tortora 2001:540). Air permeability is the ability of air to pass through the fabric, and if openings between yarns or fibres are large, a lot of air will pass through the fabric. Consequently, when yarns are highly twisted and weaves are compact, the flow of air is diminished, which is a desirable property for winter (Collier & Tortora 2001:540). Allergenic potential is the ability to cause some physical reaction such as skin irritation or watery eyes upon contact with certain fibres such as wool or mohair (Kadolph 2007:25). Fibres known for their high allergenic potential should be avoided in school uniforms. Softness is another desirable comfort property, especially for school uniforms. Cotton, known for its comfort, is smooth and cool to wear, while microfibres are exceptionally soft because of the flexibility of the yarns, due to the fineness of the fibres. Wool, because of the scales on the fibres, may feel scratchy and can be irritating to some people (Collier & Tortora 2001:62).

Retailer's report that parents, learners and educators look for durability, implying that the fabric must be of good quality and the seams, hems and closures must be constructed in such a manner that the uniform will last (Grade-A-fabrications drive sales in school uniform category 2005:32).



Durability of fabric includes properties such as strength, abrasion resistance, elongation and recovery, dimensional stability and colourfastness (Collier & Tortora 2001:52, 53, 58,415). Strength refers to a fabric's ability to withstand a pulling force, also expressed as the grams per denier or tex required to break the fibre (Kadolph 2007:28). Learners tug and play all day long and therefore fabric strength is imperative for school clothing. Abrasion resistance is defined as the ability of fabric to withstand rubbing it gets in use (Kadolph 2007:28). Flat abrasion occurs in places like the seat or knees of trousers, while edge abrasion takes place at edges like at collar folds, sleeve edges and blazer fronts (Collier & Tortora 2001:28). School clothing undergoes remarkable abrasion during everyday wear. Elongation refers to the amount of stretch which takes place under tensile force, while recovery after release of the force indicates the elastic recovery of the fabric. Fabrics that stretch and recover well will retain shape and be comfortable (Collier & Tortora 2001:53). Dimensional stability is defined as the ability of a fabric to retain a given size and shape through use and care (Kadolph 2007:29). It is important that school clothing should not shrink or stretch out of shape during use and that it should retain a new appearance right through the period of use. Colourfastness is the ability of a fabric to retain its colour during care and use (Collier & Tortora 2001:415). Colour can be lost during laundering or during crocking, in which case the dye rubs off onto another surface, as well as upon exposure to light, especially sunlight. School clothing is exposed to all of these situations, and it is of utmost importance that dyes of excellent quality are used for the fabrics, as faded school clothing is not acceptable to any of the stakeholders. In the past, school uniforms were typically made of pure cotton, which would fade after a few washings and there would be colour differences between uniforms of various learners, which goes against the very idea of uniformity. Today school uniforms are typically made of poly-cotton, as this keeps its colour better. Special sunprotective clothing is expensive and cannot stand frequent washing (Albietz 1998:4).

School uniforms are washed frequently and are expected to last, which is why durability is one of the most important elements in the purchase decision of school uniforms (Differentiate to make the grade 2003:A5).



2.5.2 Economic advantages and disadvantages

Some of the stakeholders of school uniforms argue that from a financial point of view school going children are a financial burden on their parents, as school uniforms are expensive and school fees need to be paid, while extramural activities and participation in sporting activities result in further expenditure. Albietz (1998:3) argues that because learners wear school uniforms, they do not have to buy many clothes, which saves money, but children will need casual clothing for activities outside the school and this implies that children will need double sets of clothing. Poorer parents, especially in South Africa, spend more than 20 percent of their salaries on school uniforms and the cost is even higher if one takes into account that it costs money to maintain the uniforms. To wash and iron the uniforms, and for that matter casual clothing as well, throughout the year, is an expense as one needs to buy detergents and use water to wash the uniforms, while electricity is needed for both the washing and ironing (Mvulane 2004:1).

Nine out of ten times school uniforms are less expensive than the casual clothing that teenagers typically want to wear, and yet the cost of purchasing a school uniform, or school uniforms if the family has more than one school-going child, may be a burden on many families (Daugherty 2000: 390). Ashton (2002:1) agrees that governing bodies should think about the needs of families when deciding on school uniform policies, particularly with regard to the affordability and practicality when introducing or changing school uniforms. If learners' parents cannot afford the prescribed school uniform, learners might feel stigmatised.

When school uniform policies and dress code policies were implemented in the schools in the USA, the main argument for doing so was to lower the costs of children's clothing expenses for parents, because it would help cut down on the costs of brand-name clothing, especially for the poorer parent. Many parents agreed that uniforms saved money in comparison to what they spent before the uniform policy was enacted (Firmin, Smith & Perry 2006:154,155,160). Caruso (1996:85) argues that the uniforms for the year will cost far less because when learners are under peer



pressure they are driven to keep up with the latest fashions, which might be very costly, but once a uniform is bought it can in most cases be carried over to the next year.

During the last couple of years, however, a new malpractice regarding school uniforms in South Africa has emerged, namely the advent of the new-school-uniforms trend in public schools. Since 1996 the number of public schools adopting new school uniforms and strong new dress codes has grown more than tenfold. Previously, colourful uniforms were the trademark of Model C schools, but today school uniforms are new fashion trends in public schools, including the schools in townships and rural areas where a majority of poor children attend school (Mvulane 2004: 38). Especially when changing or introducing a school uniforms the school must ensure that it is affordable and practical, to avoid exclusion of learners coming from less well-off backgrounds (Ashton 2002:1).

2.5.3 Appearance

For centuries most of the private and public schools around the world have made use of dress codes which entail a uniform appearance of the learners. Socialisation and education are social needs that are associated with the culture they it serve and school uniforms form part of the schools' culture (Kaiser 1997:377).

Over the past few years, public schools where learners wore casual clothes to school have experienced many problems related to the learners' appearance. Learners would delay purchasing of books and stationery, and instead, use their money to buy expensive casual clothes and accessories and even pay for expensive hairstyles. Learners have even gone as far as staying away from school, or working for long hours after school just to finance fashionable wardrobes. Many learners viewed the school as a major arena in which to display the latest fashions. The result of this was that there was big competition amongst learners over appearance, which also caused verbal taunts and fights. In addition, this created many problems with theft due to jealousy and learners' desire to possess clothing similar to that of their more well-off



counterparts. In addition specific types of clothes and accessories became symbolic of a certain lifestyle of drugs, violence and disrespect for authority. Schools have attempted to play a major role to develop strategies that can address the abovementioned problems related to appearance, as school is the place where children of different age groups are grouped together (La Point 1993:32). Parents seem to be of the opinion that school uniforms might fulfil the objective of teaching learners to dress appropriately in different environments, while learners agree to a moderate extent with this idea of dressing appropriately (Firmin *et al* 2006:157-158).

Contrary to the positive perspectives, Fred Albiez, who is not in favour of school uniforms, believes that when you are employed, you are not likely to have to wear a uniform. The question is: what are the odds that children will have to wear a uniform later in life? He feels the jobs where people have to wear a uniform are the lower paid jobs. According to him, well-paid jobs tend to reject uniformity, and for good reason, as the demands of the future include qualities such as assertiveness, creativity, individuality, originality, a spontaneous personality, being a self-starter, taking initiative, being able to cope with change and so on. He questions the logic behind forcing children into uniforms (Albiez 1998:2).

For all involved parties' parents, learners, educators and administrators the issue of school uniforms boils down to one simple argument: all improper and careless ways of dressing, including inappropriate hairstyles, send the wrong message to fellow learners. Setting suitable standards of dressing for learners, the argument goes forces learners to dress in a way that helps them to respect themselves and the school they attend and this creates a better environment for discipline and learning (Stover 1990: 26).

2.5.4 Competition

According to Gursky (1996:48), wearing uniforms levels the playfield for learners. People in favour of uniforms feel that uniforms help minimise the costly, destructive competition amongst learners as to who can afford to wear the nicest clothes,



competition that inevitably leaves low-income learners disadvantaged. According to parents as well as educators, the peer pressure over what should be worn is diminished to a great extent by wearing school uniforms, although learners are not always as convinced as the other two parties that competition is eliminated by this practice (Firmin *et al.* 2006:155-156).

On the other hand, according to Albietz (1998:3), the argument that differences between children from rich and from poor families will not be noticed when everybody wears uniforms is often put forward, and he believes that it is a purely socialist argument and it may be rejected for this reason alone. He feels that in a democratic country, schools should not indoctrinate children with a specific political ideology, especially not schools that are funded by the government. A school uniform makes all learners look alike, but why do the teachers not wear the same uniforms? He contends that the master-slave relationship obviously present at school is deliberately magnified by uniforms which clearly emphasise differences between learners and educators.

Mary Rutledge, a Board member of a Dallas School, emphasises that having a dress code eliminates competition amongst learners for the latest fashion in jeans and sneakers. Moreover she says that when you use a strict dress code and a school uniform policy, much discrimination of a group of haves against a group of have-nots disappears. She is also of the opinion that when school uniforms are worn, there is more emphasis on studies and excelling in the academic field than on what fellow learners are wearing (Stover 1990:26).

Teenagers have the habit of competing amongst one another especially regarding the way they are dressed, and after in-depth research it was found that school uniforms do help to lessen competition amongst learners and level the social field, and that the major factor of 'fitting in' with the right group is less critical when wearing school uniforms (School uniformity yields high marks 2004:39).



2.5.5 Time-saving aspect

Have you ever heard the expression that time is money? Have you ever wasted precious time standing in front of the wardrobe, not knowing what to wear? In the case of having a uniform to put on, one can say that time-wise it is very economical as it saves precious minutes which would otherwise be spent on decisions. When learners get dressed in a uniform, the speculation over what to wear to school is eliminated. Since wearing school uniforms became popular during 1996 in the USA, there has been positive feedback from the learners' side that school uniforms make getting dressed in the morning much easier as they do not have to stand in front of the cupboard and wonder what to wear for the day. Parents promoting school uniforms believe that it helps learners to advance their own efficiency and their ability to organise (Forest 1997:34, Isaacson 1998:3, Daugherty 2000:391).

In industry there is a big demand by retailers and consumers for stain-resistant and wrinkle-no-more kinds of fabrics, which would be less time-consuming to care for, as uniforms made of these fabrics would be easy to wash and require little ironing. Long lasting fabrics would also mean that school uniforms would have to be replaced less frequently, which is another time-saving consideration. Manufacturers are constantly trying to find better ways of assuring that the school uniforms are easy to care for and durable, because these are the first priorities of parents when buying school wear. In a study in 2001 it was found that 89% of parents choose school uniforms based on how durable they are (Grade-A-fabrications drive sales in school uniform category 2005:32).

2.5.6 Academic standards and behaviour

The aim of any school around the world is to have an environment that is educational in nature, with high standards that can be measured according to the learners' performance. Learners dressed in a school uniform seem to have their attention focused on their school work and academic achievement, but when wearing casual clothing their attention seems to shift to what is in fashion and what is not. It also



creates a business-like atmosphere and causes learners to have more respect for their school (Daugherty 2000:391, Starr 2000:114). Firmin *et al.* (2006:154) confirm that educators are of the opinion that the implementation of school uniforms may help to remove other preoccupations from the academic focus of learners' daily lives, create the best learning environment and eliminate distractions.

According to Mancini (1997:3), school uniforms give educators a chance to recognise the potential of every learner, as they are all dressed alike and cannot be judged by the clothes they are wearing, but are evaluated by their academic achievements. Instead of limiting the individuality of learners, uniforms can help learners to stand out in this way. If learners do not wear uniforms, less affluent learners can be identified immediately by their peers, while when school uniform is worn, it is more difficult telling which learner comes from which type of environment, making it difficult to link academic achievement to the learner's background (Mancini 1997:3). Advocates of uniforms believe that a further advantage of school uniforms is that it reduces gang influence, which also helps in improving academic standards (Loesch 1995:30).

Studies in the USA showed that, upon implementation of school uniforms, academic standards rose across the school districts, violence diminished dramatically and academic achievements went up, which contributed to the implementation of school uniform policies (School uniformity yields high marks 2004:39).

The influence of school uniforms on discipline in schools is another matter which is addressed in the literature. Discipline in a school setting should not be based on fear of authority as this type of social control does not prepare students for a democratic society in which they will become adults. Learners must understand that rules are there to give everyone equal rights and this ensure society's safety and well-being (Wilkins 1999:20) Uniforms apparently encourage learners to abide by a group standard, and educators have found that they spend much less time on classroom discipline issues since the institution of school uniforms (Caruso 1996:85). Schools in the USA seem to have a constant battle against academic distractions such as



drugs, violence and the lack of discipline. Educators believe that school uniforms can help to re establish discipline; unity and focus on learning, and firmer dress codes and obligatory uniform policies have had remarkably positive effects on discipline, school attendance and academic achievement (Simonson, 1998:2).

2.5.7 Safety considerations

When considering the benefits that can be gained from the assurance of safety, it can be said that the certainty of a one's safety, protection and well-being is one of these benefits. If we assume that by making use of a school uniform policy, the violence can be decreased dramatically and the theft of designer clothing diminished, then fewer problems with safety in schools can be expected. Another argument is that intruders entering the school grounds without wearing a school uniform can be identified more easily, and therefore the school grounds can become safer. In addition, the influence of gangs and the gang attire that starts to become more widely adopted, can be lessened when all learners are forced to look alike by wearing a school uniform (Daugherty 2000: 391). In the USA, most of the safety problems in a school environment occur because of gang behaviour, especially in the urban settings. These problems spread to suburban and rural areas. It has become critical to parents and educators to understand gang identity through clothing as well as how to recognise the visual indicators of gang identity. In Los Angeles as well as other communities that deal with the destructive activities of gangs, a dress code helps to maintain the peace amongst competitor gangs by forbidding the wearing of clothes associated with a specific gang. Gang related items, such as hats, gloves, bandannas, shoelaces and clothes dominated by a specific colour are banned by the use of a dress code and this is supported by the majority of parents and administrators. In response to this concern, parents and educators started feeling it would be a solution to control clothing and appearance choices and to impose dress codes to provide a safer environment (Stover 1990:27, Hethorn 1994:4, Evans 1996:139).

Childhood can be viewed as a time of innocence but this is not the case for many children. Violence has become part of their everyday lives, especially for children



living below the poverty levels who are confronted with violence in their neighbourhoods as well as in their homes. Television, in addition to the media, exposes children to violence. War, weapons and power are promoted through newspapers, magazines and radio and international conflict is solved through fighting. Children are exposed to situations that promote violence as an acceptable way to handle conflict, and this is very detrimental to children. This type of climate can put an entire school into a state of crisis if not handled correctly (Lane, Swartz, Richardson & Van Berkum 1996:4).

Various studies have been done in the USA to investigate factors affecting school safety (Cohn 1996:23, Cook 2000:12, Starr 2000:114). In one case study it was found that, since mandatory uniform policies were launched in 56 elementary and 14 middle schools in Long Beach, California during the fall of 1994, violence and discipline problems have decreased dramatically. When policies regarding school uniforms were required after 1993-1994, assaults and battering cases in classes up to grade 8 dropped by 34 percent in comparison with the previous years. Physical fights between learners have dropped by 51 percent and there were 32 percent fewer suspensions of learners. The uniformity seems to reinforce the safety aspect as it makes it easier to spot individuals who may not belong on the school grounds. Educators, who teach in areas where gangs are prevalent, argue that students are safer walking to school when dressed in a school uniform (Portner 1996:1, Stanley 1996:430 -433).

A contradictory perspective on the influence of school uniforms on safety is given by some authors. Albietz (1998:6) questions whether a uniformed learner is really safer than learners wearing casual clothes. He argues that danger is not created by the absence of uniforms, but by the way the school operates. A uniformed learner walking down the road is an easy target. What kind of people are school uniforms supposed to protect the learners from? Why would rapists, pedophiles, gang leaders and other bullies go to the school where so many people can spot their faces? They would rather attack learners who are walking home on their own. The uniform the learner is wearing makes the learner a more identifiable and predictable target,



especially when the same road is followed every day. He also points out that an argument used in the USA is that school uniforms help prevention of theft, especially of expensive footwear, but offers an alternative solution: why not forbid expensive footwear? In addition, he is of the opinion that school uniforms will not curb violence and gang activities, and suggests that if one wants to prevent gangs operating in school, one will have to concentrate on that issue.

Bodine (2003:48) shares the viewpoints of Albietz (1998:6) and points out that violence is not always the true motivation for implementing school uniforms, as school districts which do not experience gang problems and violence also implement school uniforms, having other motivations for adopting school uniforms under the pretence that it is done for safety reasons. She argues that schools may have various motives for introducing school uniform policies, such as social, educational, economic and familial reasons, and then justify this practice under the pretext of gang and violence deterrence. She also disagrees with the argument that that school uniforms offer protection against sexual violence and argues that clothing has no effect on the dreadfulness of rape.

2.5.8 Social benefits

To define the social benefits of school uniforms, it can be said that school uniforms serve as a shared or group advantage to all parties involved in making use of school uniforms-parents, learners and educators. Research has shown that if learners react positively to the school they are attending, the chances are good that they will stay in that school, and that they will develop a lasting attachment to learning and use to their benefit all the regulations set by the school. It is not only the school uniforms that determine the climate of the school, but it is the overall climate established by the school and in a specific classroom attended by the learner that determines the achievements of the learner and how that learner will behave as an individual thus it can be said that a positive school climate promotes a successful school (Murray 1997:106).



Everybody is part of a community, and in a community people are grouped together: as a result they profit in feel they fit in and have a feeling of belonging. Within a school environment, school uniforms can help to promote a sense of identity and friendship amongst learners, educators and parents. Many schools use their school uniform as a symbol to make the school and their learners special and to create a culture that identifies the school as unique, to uphold traditional values and to instil a sense of pride and belonging. Within this community created by the school, the difference between different income groups is lessened because all learners look alike and nobody is dressed according to what they can afford. The majority of all involved parties see uniforms as a way to reduce economic competition amongst learners and they feel the uniforms have a levelling effect as they eliminates the differences that may occur between learners coming from rich or poor families (Sangster 1989:8, Mancini 1997:1, Swain 2002:66). This result in a dramatic reduction in conflicts which may occur when more affluent learners wear clothes that are of the latest fashion (Daugherty 2000:391).

School uniforms play an important role in many facets of the child's development but learners must be in an environment that is sensitive to their developmental needs, where they are treated fairly and with respect, where they receive age-appropriate and challenging instructions, and where they are held accountable for their dress, behaviour and school work (Mancini 1997:3).

In school environment critics feels that the majority of high school learners given a choice, would not want to wear a uniform to school because they are teenagers and that teenagers need to express themselves through the clothes they are wearing. At this stage in their lives they are searching for autonomy and responsibility, and appearance and clothing choices become tools for meeting these needs (Starr 2000:115, DaCosta 2006:49).



2.6 SUMMARY

The desirability of obligatory school uniforms and dress code policies was discussed with reference to the advantages and disadvantages of these practices as given in the literature. A brief historical overview of the development of school uniforms in a few countries was given. Factors influencing the desirability of obligatory school uniforms, which were identified from the literature, were subsequently discussed, namely functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, appearance considerations, competition considerations, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits. These factors were discussed from the viewpoints of parents, learners and educators worldwide.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a description of the procedures and methods used to execute the study. The nature of this study is quantitative, descriptive and exploratory, because relatively little research on the desirability of mandatory school uniforms in South Africa has been done up to now. The broad research objective of this exploratory study was to determine the perspectives of parents, learners and educators in Vanderbijpark secondary schools on the application of obligatory school uniforms. The objectives of the study were outlined in detail in Chapter 1, paragraph 1.4.

A quantitative research design method was chosen because it is a very practical and economical method of assessing group opinions by means of a structured questionnaire (Fouché & Delpont 2002:174). This study is categorised as an exploratory study because relatively little research on the desirability of mandatory school uniforms in South Africa has been done before this, and the research that could be found is comparatively old. This research project was conducted in three phases:

Phase 1 comprised a literature study which was undertaken to gather relevant information on the use of school uniforms around the world as well as in South Africa. Guidelines for conducting a review of literature as suggested by Fouché & Delpont (2002:129-131) were followed, including the delineation of the theme which was investigated by the reading of several literature articles and books such as Joseph (1986), Wilkins (1999), Lumsden (2002), Craik (2005) and Evans (2005), on the topic of the advantages and disadvantages of obligatory school uniforms. A methodical selection of relevant journal articles, an overview of relevant dissertations and theses, a thorough literature search on various databases, selection and sifting of



the sources, and establishment of a logical filing system through which the bibliography could systematically be accessed, were carried out.

Phase 2 comprised the investigation of the opinions of all the stakeholders, namely parents, learners and educators at school uniforms in Vanderbijlpark on obligatory school uniforms means of structured questionnaires for each of the involved parties.

Phase 3 comprised the statistical analysis of the results as described in paragraph 3.6.

3.2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A self-administered, structured questionnaire (Annexure B, C and D) was compiled and used to collect the needed data. The thorough literature search which was undertaken beforehand served as the basis for this step. It is of utmost importance to have a sound knowledge of the content domain under investigation when a structured questionnaire is to be used, as only then is it possible to compile a content-valid measuring instrument. In addition it is important to determine the boundaries of the content domain to make sure that all the test items are content valid. (Murphy and Davidshofer 2001:148). The content domain was established by studying several research articles in the study field. Several researchers such as Sangster (1989), Stover (1990), Starr (2000), White (2002) and Weitzel (2004) have researched the question of whether school uniforms should be prescribed or not, and the relevant aspects identified by these researchers were applied in this questionnaire.

The process of questionnaire development as suggested by Murphy and Davidshofer (2001:215) was followed. The first stage involved item writing, while the second stage comprised standardisation (paragraph 3.7) of the measuring instrument. The questionnaire, or series of questions, was comprehensive of all the advantages and disadvantages of prescribed school uniforms encountered in the literature in previous studies on the ongoing debate over school uniforms or not, namely functionality, economic advantages/disadvantages, appearance, competition, time-saving considerations, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits. All the items in the questionnaire were representative of the above-



mentioned research area to further ensure content validity. The constructs in section 1 and 2 were operationalised in correspondence with guidelines given by Babbie (2005:42-43). The author postulates that an operational definition provides the process involved in measuring a variable and specifies the meaning of a concept. For this study, descriptions of the abovementioned variables were obtained from authoritative literature on the various aspects. The questionnaire consisted of different sections and was compiled in accordance with the study objectives (paragraph 1.4) and the research framework discussed in Chapter 1 (Figure 1). Separate questionnaires were compiled for parents, learners and educators, but the item content was basically the same. The categorisation of the sections and subsets is depicted in Table 3.1.

Section 1: Section 1 comprised general information, covering the pros and cons of obligatory school uniforms and the attitude towards a school uniform standardised across the country. Questions were asked to establish opinions on current school uniforms, especially regarding their colour scheme, fabric the difference in winter and summer uniforms, the numbers of sets of uniforms learners have, and when school uniforms are replaced.

Section 2: Section 2 dealt with the advantages and disadvantages of obligatory school uniforms, with subsets such as those listed in Table 3.1.

Section 3: Section 3 contained a selection of sketches of more trendy school uniforms for boys and girls and out of the range the respondents had to indicate a preference for each clothing item.

Section 4: Only the parents' questionnaire contained demographic information as depicted in Table 3.1.



TABLE 1: CATEGORIES AND SUBSETS OF PERSPECTIVES OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS ON OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

SECTION	SUBSETS	NUMBER OF QUESTIONS	TOTAL PER SECTION
<u>Section 1:</u> General	Preferences for uniforms Present options Uniform usage When bought	7 2 2 4	15
<u>Section 2:</u> Advantages and disadvantages	Functionality Economic advantages/disadvantages Appearance Competition Time-saving aspect Academic standards and behaviour Safety considerations Social benefits	6 9 7 6 6 7 6 7	54
<u>Section 3:</u> More trendy suggestions	Girls Boys	9 6	15
<u>Section 4:</u> Demographics (parents only)	Age, population group, qualification, number of children, marital status, costs of school clothing, where and how acquired, how often bought, income group.	11	11



All applicable criteria used for selection of the questions as given by Rikhotso (2004:36) were applied, namely:

- Inclusion of a variety of sections and subsets that were identified as important in the literature
- Applicability of these items to the perspectives on obligatory school uniforms
- Comprehensibility of the questions to the respondents
- Applicability of the various questions to the study population involved

A five-point Likert-type scale varying from 5 -1 was used for the questionnaire, where

5 = strongly agree

4 = mildly agree

3 = not sure

2 = mildly disagree

1 = strongly disagree

The questionnaire was translated into Afrikaans as most of the respondents were Afrikaans-speaking.

3.3 PILOT TESTING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire was pre-tested under the same conditions as for the main research. The most important reason for the pilot study was to identify potential problems and to make sure that respondents could understand all the questions and to determine whether the 30 minutes allocated for the completion of the questionnaire were adequate. Parents, learners and educators from Suncrest High School who did not participate in the final study were asked to fill in the questionnaire. These respondents were asked to comment on any problems experienced, or unclear terminology they encountered by making notes on the questionnaire for the researcher to follow up. The researcher coordinated the completion of the questionnaire during a school break when the learners and educators were available, and these learners took the parents' questionnaire home for completion. After pre-



testing a number of amendments were made. One of the far-reaching comments was that learners felt that their school uniforms were very old fashioned, and that this was not addressed in the questionnaire, upon which the researcher decided to include sketches of a range of more trendy school uniform items and test the respondents' opinion on these. A few concepts were also not clear, so the terminology was adapted.

3.4 STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

The study population chosen for this study consisted of 45 public secondary schools in the Sedibeng West School District. Permission to conduct the research at selected schools was granted by the office of the senior manager of the Sedibeng West School District. A random sample was first selected from the secondary schools in the Sedibeng West School District so that all the schools in the district would have the same chance to be selected (Fouché & Delpont 2002:202). A complete name list of all the secondary schools in the district was obtained from the office of this School District. In consultation with the statistical consultation services of the North-West University, Potchefstroom, a random sample of four schools was chosen out of the total number of 45 schools, namely one English medium and three Afrikaans medium schools. Next, a random stratified sample of two grade 10 classes was selected from each of the four selected schools. This was done by numbering the grade 10 classes at each school, and choosing two classes randomly at each school according to the method described by Fouché & Delpont (2002:202-203). A total number of 200 learners were selected in this way. The parents of these selected learners (also 200) and volunteering educators (an arbitrarily chosen number of 60) in the school formed the study sample for the investigation of parents' and educators' opinions on school uniforms. The criteria for choosing the sample were:

- Approximately equal numbers of boys and girls from the four participating schools were chosen
- The parents of the learners in the sample also had to complete the questionnaire



- Volunteering educators in each school were requested to complete the questionnaire

Table 3.2 portrays the distribution of parents, learners and educators in the sample between the different secondary schools, as well as the response rate. Three of the schools' learners responded very well, while the learners in only one school yielded a low response rate of 52.00 percent. Two of the schools' parents responded satisfactorily, while the other two schools' parents responded disappointingly. Regarding the educators, the overall response rate was satisfactory, except for one school.

TABLE 2: SAMPLE SIZE AND RESPONSE RATE

School	Sample Size			Response (n / percentage)		
	Parents	Learners	Educators	Parents	Learners	Educators
High School Transvalia	50	50	15	36 / 72.00%	41 / 82.00%	10 / 66.67%
High School Driehoek	50	50	15	34 / 68.00%	26 / 52.00%	14 / 93.33%
High School Vanderbijlpark	50	50	15	23 / 46.00%	47 / 94.00%	11 / 73.33%
Vaal High School	50	50	15	20 / 40.00%	48 / 96.00%	11 / 73.33%
TOTAL	200	200	60	113 / 57.00%	162 / 81.00%	46 / 76.66%

3.5 QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTRATION AND DATA GATHERING

The four participating schools chosen for the sample were contacted by the researcher personally and a verbal agreement to participate in the study was obtained from the principals at the different schools. The principals referred the researcher to a specific Grade 10 educator at each school who distributed the questionnaires amongst the learners in the two selected grade 10 classes, and he also requested the



learners to hand a separate questionnaire to their parents. The same educator recruited volunteer educators to fill in the questionnaire for educators. This educator also collected the completed questionnaires from the learners, parents and educators. Two hundred (200) questionnaires were handed out to the learner, which means fifty questionnaires at each of the schools, with the aim of getting approximately equal numbers of boys and girls to complete the questionnaires. The same number, namely two hundred (200) questionnaires was handed to the parents, as the parents of the learners who completed the questionnaires had to complete a separate questionnaire as well. Sixty (60) questionnaires for educators were handed to the educators at the four schools, as the aim was that fifteen educators at each school should complete the questionnaire for educators. Table 3.2 indicates that from the learners, a total number of one hundred and sixty two (162) questionnaires was completed and returned (a response rate of. 81.00%), from the parents a total number of one hundred and thirteen (113) questionnaires was completed and returned, (a response rate of 57.00 percent), and from the educators forty-six (46) questionnaires (a response rate of 76.66 percent) came back completed.

3.6 DATA PROCESSING AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

After completion of the questionnaires, the researcher tried to identify errors that may have occurred in completing the questionnaire. All raw data were checked and possible mistakes were corrected before data analysis commenced. The data were entered into the computer by people who are experienced in data fixation.

All statistical analyses were performed by the Department of Statistical Services of the North-West University with the use of the SAS statistical package (SAS Institute Inc., 2005). The programme used is the SAS System for Windows Releaser 9.1 TS Level 1MO Copyright 2002-2005 by SAS Institute Inc., Cary, NC, USA. The analyses of the data were done in consultation with the head statistician, Prof. H.S. Steyn, who also performed the processing of the data. The following analyses were done:



- The Frequency analyses of all the sections in the questionnaire. (Results as outlined in Chapter 4).
- Confirmatory factor analysis for Section 2 for the three different questionnaires to determine the construct validity of the advantages and disadvantages of prescribed school uniforms used in the study. (Method and Results discussed in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.1.2).
- Testing the reliability by computing alpha coefficients for section 2 (Results in Chapter 4, paragraph 4.3.2).
- Practically significant differences between the means yielded by parents, learners and educators were determined for section 2 by computing d-values (Steyn 2000:1).

3.7 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

This instrument was investigated for content validity and construct validity, while reliability was investigated by computing alpha coefficients. The procedures followed and the results of these will be discussed in Chapter 4, paragraphs 4.3.1.1, 4.3.1.2 and 4.3.2 respectively.

The researcher made use of ethically correct procedures during the survey and ethical considerations in this study comprised treating the respondents with respect, dignity and courtesy (Huysamen 1994:178). Permission to participate in the study was obtained from each respondent by means of a cover letter attached to the questionnaire (See annexure B, C and D): they were informed beforehand as to the nature and purpose of the study and the participation of everybody was voluntary and anonymous.



3.8 SUMMARY

The analyses of all data for this study were performed in correspondence with the aims and objectives of the study, and expert advice from the Department of Statistical Services (North-West University) was sought on how to investigate these aspects. The broad research goal was to determine the perspectives of parents, learners and educators on the use of obligatory school uniforms in Vanderbijlpark secondary schools. Frequency analyses rendered the answers required. Objectives included the determination of the advantages and disadvantages of school uniforms regarding functionality, economic aspects, appearance, competition, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits. Another objective was to investigate the respondents' opinions on more trendy school uniform items. The measuring instrument was tested for construct validity as well as reliability by performing factor analyses and computing alpha coefficients. Practically significant differences between responses of the three groups of respondents were determined.



CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was designed to investigate the perspectives of parents, learners and educators in Vanderbijlpark on obligatory school uniforms. In chapter 3, the research design (methodology) of this study was described. A detailed description of the sample selection and composition, questionnaire development, as well as data collection and statistical analysis was given.

A questionnaire was developed and distributed amongst the involved parties, namely learners, their parents and educators from four selected secondary schools in Vanderbijlpark. The questionnaire aimed to determine first, the present situation regarding their opinion and use of school uniforms and secondly their perceptions of the functionality, economic advantages/disadvantages, appearance, competition, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits as related to school uniforms. Thirdly, they were exposed to ideas for a more modern school uniform, and their preferences for various demonstrated items were determined. Lastly, demographic information of the parents was determined.

This chapter focuses on the statistical analysis of the data and the consequent findings. The results obtained from this empirical study were analysed to show the views of the selected grade 10 learners, their parents and educators, regarding school uniforms. Although the sample was limited, the results of this study can provide future researchers, school authorities, parents and retailers with insight into the South African school uniform situation in the context of the above mentioned variables. The results of this study were compared with those in the relevant literature discussed in the literature chapter.



The SAS statistical package (SAS Institute: 2002-2005) was used for all statistical procedures. First, a description of the demographic characteristics of the sample will be presented, followed by an evaluation and discussion of the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Next, the frequency analyses of the stakeholders' responses regarding their opinions and use of school uniforms as well as their opinions about functionality, economic advantages/disadvantages, appearance, competition, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits of school uniforms will be given. The preferences of all the stakeholders regarding more modern school uniforms will also be shown. Practically significant differences between the opinions of parents, learners and educators in the form of d-values will be given. After completion of the analyses, the researcher will interpret the findings within the framework of existing theory and past research.

4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF PARENTS

Various authors (La Point et al. 1992:22, Cohn 1996:24, Cole 1999:8.) point out that demographic characteristics influence the way in which people tend to dress. Different types of demographic information, such as social status, occupation, ethnic, political and religious affiliation and marital status can influence people's ideas and principles on specific clothing like school uniforms. The demographic information of the parents is depicted in Table 3.

TABLE 3: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARENTS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	N	n	%
62. Age in years			
25-30	113	1	0.88
31-35	113	6	5.31
36-40	113	39	34.51
41-45	113	45	39.82
46-50	113	17	15.04
51years and older	113	5	4.42



63. Population group	N	n	%
Asian	113	0	0.0
Black	113	16	14.16
Coloured	113	2	1.77
Caucasian/White	113	95	84.07
64. Highest formal qualification			
Lower than grade 12	113	17	15.18
Grade 12	113	42	37.50
Diploma/Certificate	113	27	24.11
Degree	113	26	23.21
65. Number of school-going children			
1 child	107	39	36.45
2 children	107	49	45.79
3 children	107	18	16.82
4 children	107	0	0.00
5 children	107	0	0.00
6 children	107	1	0.93
66. Marital status			
Cohabitation/Living together	108	4	3.70
Married/Traditionally married	108	79	73.15
Never married	108	1	0.93
Divorced/Separated	108	18	16.67
Widow/Widower	108	6	5.56
67. +/- how much do you spend on s.u. per year, per child?			
R300-R600	108	15	13.89
R601-R900	108	17	15.74
R901-R1200	108	35	32.41
R1201-R1500	108	21	19.44
R1501-R1800	108	7	6.48
More than R1800	108	13	12.04
68. Where and how do you acquire school wear?			
A Shops e.g. Sedgars, Ekspaar, White Cross	113	103	91.15
B Buy it at school clothing shop	113	8	7.08
C Make it myself	113	1	0.88
D Buy it at home-sewing business	113	0	0.00
E School clothing bank	113	7	6.19
F Handed down from brother, sister, relative or friend	113	10	8.85
69. How often do you buy uniforms?			
2 x per year	111	26	23.42
3 x per year	111	2	1.80
Once a year	111	19	17.12
Only when needed	111	64	57.66
70. In which income group do you fall?			
High income group	107	14	13.08
Middle income group	107	72	67.29
Low income group	107	21	19.63



71. Is your grade 10 child a			
1. Boy?	113	56	49.56
2. Girl?	113	57	50.44
72. Are you			
1. The mother?	113	98	86.73
2. The father?	113	12	10.62
3. The guardian?	113	3	2.65

Table 3 shows that most of the parents (39.82 percent) were between 41 and 45 years of age, followed by 34.51 percent who were between 36 and 40 years old. Only 5 percent were older than 50 years of age, while only 1 was younger than 30. The biggest group consequently consisted of boomers, followed by about a third who belonged to generation X (Codrington, 2004:81, 87). According to Codrington (2004:85, 86) parents in the boomers generation group are labelled as the “Me-Generation” and are rather selfish and materialistic. Boomers are inclined to rely on schools to impose discipline on their children, which could lead to the conclusion that this group of parents may be in favour of school uniforms.

Only three population groups, namely Black, Coloured and White people, were represented in the sample. The majority of the parents (84.07 percent) were white, while 14.16 percent were black.

Most parents (37.5 percent) had a formal qualification of grade 12, while nearly equal numbers (24.11 percent and 23.21 percent respectively) had a diploma/certificate or a degree. It is thus clear that about half of the respondents had a tertiary qualification. Codrington (2004:91,92) points out that women belonging to generation X place strong emphasis on tertiary education and interact well with their children. They are inclined to overprotect their children and teach them to accept instructions, so consequently they might be in favour of school uniforms.

Regarding the number of school-going children, 45.79 percent of the parents had two children, while 36.45 percent had one child only, and 16.82 percent had three children, while only one parent had six school-going children.



Nearly three-quarters of the parents (73.15 percent) were married or traditionally married, while 16.67 percent were divorced or separated. Small numbers were widowed or living together, while only one parent was never married. This is in contrast to Codrington's testimony that both boomers and Xers are the most divorced groups of all generations (Codrington 2004:86,89).

Nearly a third (32.41percent) of the parents indicated that they spent R901-R1200 per year on school uniforms, followed by 19.44 percent who spent R1201-R1500 per year, while 15.74 percent spent R601-R900 per year. The fact that more than 12 percent spend more than R1800 per year is perhaps an indication that this group of parents needs to buy more expensive items like sportswear.

A source for acquiring school uniforms used by nearly all the parents (91.15 percent) is stores that stock this commodity. Three other ways of acquiring school uniforms used nearly equally often were the handing down from brothers, sisters, relatives or friends (8.85 percent), buying at a school clothing shop (7.08 percent) and obtaining them from a school clothing bank (6.19 percent).

More than half (57.66 percent) of the parents indicated that they bought school uniforms only when needed, and not on a regular basis, while 23.42 percent bought twice a year and 17.12 percent buy only once a year.

Most of the parents (67.29 percent) were of the opinion that they fell in the middle income group, followed by nearly a fifth (19.63 percent) who felt they were in the low income group.

The respondents had about equal numbers of boys and girls (49.56 percent and 50.44 percent respectively).

Interestingly, the questionnaires were mostly completed in by the mothers (86.73 percent), while just more than 10 percent were completed by the fathers, probably indicating that mothers assume most responsibility for the school clothing.



4.3 PSYCHOMETRIC PROPERTIES OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The measuring instrument was tested for validity as well as reliability.

4.3.1 Validity

According to Fouché & Delpont (2002:166) validity of an instrument can be seen in a dual context: A valid instrument measures the concept under consideration, and the concept is measured accurately. The first of these two aspects is the most essential prerequisite for validity.

Various types of validity can be addressed when investigating the validity of a measuring instrument, depending upon the instrument's purpose or purposes (Fouché & Delpont, 2002:166). For the purpose of this instrument, content and construct validity will be addressed.

4.3.1.1 Content validity in this study

Content validity refers to the representativeness of the items of a measuring instrument (Fouché & Delpont, 2002:167). It can be further explained as the extent to which a measure covers the range of meanings within the concept that is investigated (Babbie & Mouton 2001:123). A content domain represents the entire range of variables that could possibly measure a specific concept and a content domain has a number of properties that can be used to assess content validity. A content domain also has boundaries which have to be respected. If a content domain is described in detail, the researcher can ensure that each test item lies within the boundaries of the content domain (Murphy & Davidshofer 2001:148-149). For this study, the researcher aimed to determine whether the instrument really measured the variables under consideration, namely functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, appearance, competition-related aspects, time-savings aspects, academic-related characteristics, safety considerations and social benefits of school uniforms, and



secondly, to assess whether the subscales entailed a sufficient collection of items representing the concept, as suggested by Fouché & Delport (2002:167). Consequently, the researcher deems this instrument content valid.

4.3.1.2 Construct validity in this study

Construct validity is a measure of validity which indicates the relationships between items in a subscale of a measuring instrument (Babbie & Mouton 2001:123). Construct validity for this study was assessed by means of confirmatory factor analysis, as described by Van Aardt and Steyn (1991:47). Each of the subscales was subjected to a factor analysis, using principal components for factor extraction. The FACTOR procedure of SAS Institute Inc. (2002-2005) was used for this analysis. According to Smith et al. (1988:20), a scale displays good construct validity when one factor (the ideal) is extracted, or only a few factors which together explain a substantial proportion of the variance are extracted and when high communalities are obtained for each statement.

- **Results of construct validity in this study**

The number of factors extracted, the percentage of total variance explained by these extracted factors and the range of communalities on the statements for each subscale are given in Tables 4 a, b and c.



**TABLE 4 a: FACTORS EXTRACTED, TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED
AND RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES ON THE STATEMENTS
FOR EACH SCHOOL UNIFORM SUBSCALE: PARENTS
(N = 113)**

SCHOOL UNIFORM FACTORS	SUBFACTORS EXTRACTED	TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY EXTRACTED SUBFACTORS (%)	RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES
1. Functionality	2	57.08	0.44 – 0.73
2. Economic Aspects	3	67.65	0.57 – 0.84
3. Appearance	2	60.53	0.55 – 0.79
4. Competition	2	59.90	0.44 – 0.70
5. Time-Saving Aspect	2	62.13	0.48 – 0.73
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	1	68.92	0.59 – 0.77
7. Safety Considerations	2	71.37	0.61 – 0.78
8. Social Benefits	2	60.70	0.23 – 0.71

**TABLE 4 b: FACTORS EXTRACTED, TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED
AND RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES ON THE STATEMENTS
FOR EACH SCHOOL UNIFORM SUBSCALE: LEARNERS
(N = 164).**

SCHOOL UNIFORM FACTORS	SUBFACTORS EXTRACTED	TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY EXTRACTED SUBFACTORS (%)	RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES
1. Functionality	2	55.42	0.35 – 0.69
2. Economic Aspects	3	61.54	0.45 – 0.75
3. Appearance	2	55.34	0.38 – 0.63
4. Competition	2	58.38	0.30 – 0.72
5. Time-Saving Aspect	2	64.56	0.42 – 0.76
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	1	64.97	0.58 – 0.75
7. Safety Considerations	1	48.41	0.06 – 0.70
8. Social Benefits	2	59.03	0.46 – 0.64



**TABLE 4 c: FACTORS EXTRACTED, TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED
AND RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES ON THE STATEMENTS
FOR EACH SCHOOL UNIFORM SUBSCALE: EDUCATORS
(N = 43)**

SCHOOL UNIFORM FACTORS	SUBFACTORS EXTRACTED	TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED BY EXTRACTED SUBFACTORS (%)	RANGE OF COMMUNALITIES
1. Functionality	2	67.61	0.55 – 0.83
2. Economic Aspects	3	69.58	0.49 – 0.83
3. Appearance	3	78.49	0.47 – 0.88
4. Competition	2	59.45	0.40 – 0.74
5. Time-Saving Aspect	2	66.40	0.31 – 0.90
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	1	69.64	0.52 – 0.85
7. Safety Considerations	2	76.31	0.54 – 0.92
8. Social Benefits	3	69.76	0.53 – 0.83

When comparing Tables 4 a, b and c with Table 1, it is clear that relatively few factors in relation to the number of items in each subscale were extracted. Although the ideal is to extract only one factor, this is seldom achieved in practice. The extracted sub-factors in Table 4 a (factor analysis for *parents*), together explained a substantial proportion of the total variance for each of the subscales. The Mineigen criterion was used to determine how many factors were extracted. The communality on each statement comprised more than half of the total variance for most of the statements in all eight factors, while 5 of the statements in all the factors yielded communalities < 0.5, with the lowest communality being 0.23. The eight factors together contained 54 statements and the communalities of 49 of these statements comprised more than half of the total variance. The instrument for parents can consequently be deemed valid.

Table 4 b displays the factor analysis results for *learners*. The extracted sub-factors together explained a satisfactory proportion of the total variance for each of the subscales, although all but one of the subscales explained less variance than in the case of the parents' results. In the case of safety considerations, the subscale



explained much less variance for learners (only 48.41 percent) than for parents (71.37 percent). Of the total of 54 statements in all eight factors, 9 statements yielded communalities of < 0.5 , which is still acceptable when evaluating validity.

In Table 4 c, the results of the factor analysis for *educators* are revealed. All the sub-factors for educators explained quite a satisfactory percentage of the total variance for each of the subscales. The subscales concerning appearance and safety considerations explained as much as 76 percent and 78 percent of the variance respectively. Regarding the range of the communalities, only 5 of the 54 statements showed communalities of < 0.5 , which is quite satisfactory.

As the factor analysis results for this instrument complies to a large extent with the requirements for good construct validity, the researcher is of the opinion that the measuring instruments for parents, learners and educators have satisfactory construct validity.

4.3.2 Reliability

Reliability of a measuring instrument can be explained as the extent to which a measuring instrument will yield the same or similar responses when administered independently under comparable circumstances (Fouché & Delpont, 2002:168). Test reliability can be determined in many ways. Computation of Cronbach's alpha coefficients is a suitable measure for tests with multiple-scored items which is administered only once, as was the case in this study. The procedure comprises the determination of the variance of all respondents' scores for each item and the addition of these variances across all items (Anastasi, 1988:124).

- **Results of reliability in this study**

The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the factors related to mandatory school uniforms are given in Table 5 a, b and c, as determined for parents, learners and educators.



**TABLE 5a: COEFFICIENT ALPHA FOR FACTORS RELATED TO
MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS: PARENTS (N = 113)**

SCHOOL UNIFORM-RELATED FACTORS	NUMBER OF ITEMS	COEFFICIENT ALPHA
1. Functionality	6	0.62
2. Economic advantages/disadvantages	9	0.80
3. Appearance	7	0.44
4. Competition	6	0.70
5. Time-Saving Aspect	6	0.64
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	7	0.92
7. Safety Considerations	6	0.73
8. Social Benefits	7	0.58

**TABLE 5b: COEFFICIENT ALPHA FOR FACTORS RELATED TO
MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS: LEARNERS (N = 162)**

SCHOOL UNIFORM-RELATED FACTORS	NUMBER OF ITEMS	COEFFICIENT ALPHA
1. Functionality	6	0.59
2. Economic advantages/disadvantages	9	0.76
3. Appearance	7	0.48
4. Competition	6	0.68
5. Time-Saving Aspect	6	0.69
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	7	0.91
7. Safety Considerations	6	0.76
8. Social Benefits	7	0.37

**TABLE 5c: COEFFICIENT ALPHA FOR FACTORS RELATED TO
MANDATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS: EDUCATORS (N = 43)**

SCHOOL UNIFORM-RELATED FACTORS	NUMBER OF ITEMS	COEFFICIENT ALPHA
1. Functionality	6	0.73
2. Economic advantages/disadvantages	9	0.81
3. Appearance	7	0.08
4. Competition	6	0.52
5. Time-Saving Aspect	6	0.70
6. Academic Standards & Behaviour	7	0.92
7. Safety Considerations	6	0.75
8. Social Benefits	7	0.55



From Table 5a (*Parents*), it is clear that the alpha coefficient of one factor, concerned with academic standards and behaviour, was very high (0.92). Only one factor, namely appearance, yielded a low coefficient alpha of 0.44. All the other factors yielded alpha coefficients ranging between 0.58 and 0.80, which is evidence of good reliability.

In Table 5b, the alpha coefficients for *learners* indicated that, as was the case for parents, academic standards and behaviour yielded an alpha coefficient of 0.91, which is high, but alpha coefficients for social benefits and appearance were low, with alpha coefficients of 0.37 and 0.48 respectively. The rest of the factors displayed satisfactory reliability with alpha coefficients ranging between 0.59 and 0.76.

From Table 5c (*Educators*) it is clear that the alpha coefficients for the overall scale, except for one factor, ranged from 0.52 - 0.92, indicating good to very good reliability. In the case of the other two questionnaires (parents and learners), appearance also yielded a very low alpha coefficient of 0.08, indicating unsatisfactory reliability for this factor.

In conclusion, it can be said that Section B of the questionnaire, which tested the perception of the advantages and disadvantages of mandatory school uniforms by parents, learners and educators was found both valid and reliable, with a few exceptions, especially with regard to appearance in the questionnaire for learners, and could consequently be recommended for further use with minor amendments.



4.4 OPINION OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS REGARDING PRESCRIBED SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Tables 6 a, b and c depict the opinions of all the stakeholders in this study, namely the parents, learners and educators regarding general information on prescribed school uniforms

**TABLE 6a: OPINION ON OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS:
PARENTS**

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
Information regarding obligatory school uniforms						
1.1 Are you in favour of school uniforms?	112	100	89.29	112	12	10.71
1.2 Are you in favor of countrywide standardised uniform?	108	51	47.22	108	57	52.78
2 Do you prefer different uniforms for winter or summer	111	51	45.95	111	60	54.05
3. Are you happy with current uniform regarding						
3.1 Style of uniform?	111	80	72.07	111	31	27.93
3.2 Colour scheme of uniform?	112	91	81.25	112	21	18.75
3.3 Fabric of uniform?	113	86	76.11	113	27	23.89

**TABLE 6b: OPINION ON OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS:
LEARNERS**

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
Information regarding obligatory school uniforms						
1.1 Are you in favour of school uniforms?	161	98	60.87	161	63	39.13
1.2 Are you in favor of countrywide standardized uniform?	153	74	48.37	153	79	51.6
2. Do you prefer different uniforms for winter or summer?	161	114	70.81	161	47	29.19
3. Are you happy current uniform regarding						
3.1 Style of uniform?	161	78	48.45	161	83	51.55
3.2 Colour scheme of uniform?	161	102	63.35	161	59	36.65
3.3 Fabric of uniform?	161	89	55.28	161	72	44.72



**TABLE 6c: OPINION ON OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS:
EDUCATORS**

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
Information regarding obligatory school uniforms						
1.1 Are you in favour of school uniforms?	46	45	97.83	46	1	2.17
1.2 Are you in favor of countrywide Standardized uniform?	46	14	30.43	46	32	69.57
2. You prefer different uniforms for winter or summer?	46	31	67.39	46	15	32.61
3. Are you happy current uniform regarding						
3.1 Style of uniform?	46	39	84.78	46	7	15.22
3.2 Colour scheme of uniform?	46	38	82.61	46	8	17.39
3.3 Fabric of uniform?	46	37	80.43	46	9	19.57

From Tables 6a, b and c it is clear that parents and educators (89.29 percent and 97.83 percent respectively) were highly in favour of school uniforms, while 60.87 percent of the learners were also in favour of this practice. Stover (1990:26) reveals that recently in the USA there has been a tendency to turn back the clock and put renewed emphasis on standards for school dress. In the literature there are numerous examples of advantages of prescribed school uniforms for schools, learners and parents in South Africa as well as overseas (Cohn 1996:22, Isaacson 1998:1, McLean 1999:39, Wilkins 1999:19).

Just more than half of the parents and the learners were not in favour of a countrywide standardised school uniform, while the majority (69.57 percent) of the educators was not in favour of this. Peyper (2006: IV) reports that the National Department of Education investigated the possibility of enforcing a standardised uniform for all government schools across the country, but decided to leave the decision in the hands of the boards of control.

Nearly equal numbers of learners and educators (70.81 percent and 67.39 percent respectively) preferred different uniforms for winter and summer, while only 45.95 percent of the parents preferred different uniforms for the various seasons, probably



because of the cost implications in the case of different uniforms. Regarding style, colour and fabric of current school uniforms, both parents and educators rated satisfaction with all three variables very high (between 72.07 percent and 84.78 percent), but the learners were less satisfied, particularly with the style.

4.5 OPINION OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS REGARDING SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN PRACTICE

The opinions of all the stakeholders are depicted in Tables 7a, b and

TABLE 7a: SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN PRACTICE: PARENTS

	N	n	%
4.1 Uniforms differ totally from winter to summer	106	15	14.15
4.2 Summer uniform adjusted slightly for winter	106	91	85.85
5.1 How many sets of uniform does child have?			
1 Set	99	15	15.15
2 Sets	99	52	52.53
3 Sets	99	21	21.21
4 Sets	99	7	7.07
5 Sets	99	2	2.02
6 Sets	99	1	1.01
7 Sets	99	1	1.01
5.2 For how many years is school uniforms is worn before replacement?			
1 year	98	29	29.59
2 years	98	49	50.00
3 years	98	18	18.37
4 years	98	1	1.02
5 years	98	1	1.02





TABLE 7b: SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN PRACTICE: LEARNERS

	N	n	%
4.1 Uniforms differ totally from winter to summer	143	43	30.07
4.2 Summer uniform adjusted slightly for winter	143	100	69.93
5.1 How many sets of uniform does child have?			
1Set	144	34	23.61
2 Sets	144	64	44.44
3 Sets	144	30	20.83
4 Sets	144	9	6.25
5 Sets	144	3	2.08
6 Sets			
7 Sets	144	1	0.69
5.2 For how many years is school uniforms is worn before replacement?			
1 year	139	48	34.53
2 years	139	63	45.32
3 years	139	15	10.79
4 years	139	5	3.60
5 years	139	6	4.32

TABLE 7c: SCHOOL UNIFORMS IN PRACTICE: EDUCATORS

	N	n	%
4.1 Uniforms differ totally from winter to summer	45	4	8.89
4.2 Summer uniform adjusted slightly for winter	45	41	91.11
5.1 How many sets of uniform does child have?			
1Set	41	3	7.32
2 Sets	41	34	82.93
3 Sets	41	4	9.76
4 Sets	-	-	-
5 Sets	-	-	-
6 Sets	-	-	-
7 Sets	-	-	-
5.2 For how many years is school uniforms is worn before replacement?			
1 year	40	6	15.00
2 years	40	15	37.50
3 years	40	16	40.00
4 years	40	2	5.00
5 years	40	1	2.50

From Table 7a, b and c it is clear that parents, learners and educators differ in their perceptions of the nature of the school uniforms and the number of sets of school uniform the learners possess. Very few educators (8.89 percent) indicated that winter and summer uniforms differed totally, while slightly more parents (14.15 percent)



were of the same opinion. More learners (30.07 percent), however, were under the impression that there was a difference between winter and summer uniforms. Educators and parents probably have the most objective idea of the nature of the uniforms, so it can probably be assumed that summer and winter uniforms do not really differ. Regarding the number of school uniform sets that learners possess, the majority of all three parties indicated a number of two sets, although 23.6 percent of the learners responded that they possessed only one set. With reference to the need for replacement, half of the parents and the majority of the learners indicated that school uniforms were replaced every second year, while 40 percent of the educators were of the opinion that replacement took place every third year.

4.6 TIME OF PURCHASING SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Tables 8a, b and c show when school uniforms are bought, as indicated by parents, learners and educators.

TABLE 8a: PURCHASING OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: PARENTS

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
When do you buy school uniforms?						
6.1 Before school opens in January	85	78	91.76	85	7	8.24
6.2 After school closes in December	36	21	58.33	36	15	41.67
6.3 Any time except January and December	41	25	60.98	41	16	39.02
6.4 Winter uniform in April	68	63	92.65	68	5	7.35

TABLE 8b: PURCHASING OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: LEARNERS

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
When do you buy school uniforms?						
6.1 Before school opens in January	142	130	91.55	142	12	8.45
6.2 After school closes in December	103	19	32.20	103	40	67.80
6.3 Any time except January and December	96	26	39.39	96	40	60.61
6.4 Winter uniform in April	110	80	72.73	110	30	27.27



TABLE 8c: PURCHASING OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: EDUCATORS

	YES			NO		
	N	n	%	N	n	%
When do you buy school uniforms?						
6.1 Before school opens in January	44	44	100.00	0	0	0.00
6.2 After school closes in December	18	5	27.78	18	13	72.22
6.3 Any time except January and December	15	7	46.67	15	8	53.33
6.4 Winter uniform in April	38	37	97.37	38	1	2.63

At the beginning of each school year there is an enormous back-to-school campaign to alert parents to buy school requirements. In tables 8 a, b and c it is revealed that by far the majority of all three stakeholders (91.55 percent-100 percent) indicated that school uniforms are bought in January before schools start. This corresponds with a statement by Cole (1999:8) that parents make multiple purchases of school uniforms when the “Back-to-School season” begins, and they expect these uniforms to last for at least the entire year.

The least popular times for buying school uniforms were “after schools close in December” and “any time except January and December”.

4.7 FUNCTIONALITY OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

The functional benefits of school uniforms as valued by parents, learners and educators are displayed in Tables 9a, b and c.



TABLE 9a: FUNCTIONALITY OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	N	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%					
7. School uniforms are easy to care for		57	35	16	3	1	92	16	4			
		50.89	31.25	14.29	2.68	0.89	82.14	14.29	3.57	4.30	0.90	1
8. School uniforms are comfortable to wear	113	45	35	19	7	7	80	19	14			
		39.82	30.97	16.81	6.19	6.19	70.80	16.81	12.38	3.90	1.20	3
9. School uniforms are durable	109	47	31	16	12	3	78	16	15			
		43.12	28.44	14.68	11.01	2.75	71.56	14.68	13.76	4.00	1.10	2
10. School uniforms fade, wear out quickly	110	21	30	23	19	17	51	23	36			
		19.09	27.27	20.91	17.27	15.45	46.36	20.91	32.72	3.2	1.3	4
11. School uniforms too hot for S.A. summers	110	13	14	16	31	36	27	16	67			
		11.82	12.73	14.55	28.18	32.73	24.55	14.55	60.91	2.4	1.4	5
12. Sandals preferable to shoes in summer	112	15	16	10	10	61	31	10	71			
		13.39	14.29	8.93	8.93	54.46	27.68	8.93	63.39	2.20	1.50	6

TABLE 9b: FUNCTIONALITY OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	N	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%					
7. School uniforms are easy to care for	161	49	55	25	14	18	104	25	32			
		30.43	34.16	15.53	8.70	11.18	64.60	15.53	19.88	3.6	1.3	2
8. School uniforms are comfortable to wear	162	36	52	17	31	26	88	17	57			
		22.22	32.10	10.49	19.14	16.05	54.32	10.49	35.19	3.3	1.4	3
9. School uniforms are durable	157	55	47	35	14	6	102	35	20			
		35.03	29.94	22.29	8.92	3.82	64.97	22.29	12.74	3.9	1.1	1
10. School uniforms fade, wear out quickly	162	48	37	22	30	25	85	22	55			
		29.63	22.84	13.58	18.52	15.43	52.47	13.58	33.95	3.3	1.5	3
11. School uniforms too hot for S.A. summers	161	27	16	24	41	53	43	24	94			
		16.77	9.94	14.91	25.47	32.92	26.71	14.91	58.39	2.5	1.5	4
12. Sandals preferable to shoes in summer	162	33	12	19	19	79	45	19	98			
		20.37	7.41	11.73	11.73	48.77	27.78	11.73	60.49	2.4	1.6	5



TABLE 9c: FUNCTIONALITY OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%					
7. School uniforms are easy to care for	46	27	14	2	1	2	41	2	3			
		58.70	30.43	4.35	2.17	4.35	89.13	4.35	6.52	4.4	1.0	1
8. School uniforms are comfortable to wear	46	24	13	1	6	2	37	1	8			
		52.17	28.26	2.17	13.04	4.35	80.43	2.17	17.39	4.1	1.2	3
9. School uniforms are durable	46	24	15	5	2	0	39	5	2			
		52.17	32.61	10.87	4.35	0.00	84.78	10.87	4.35	4.3	0.8	2
10. School uniforms fade, wear out quickly	46	9	13	5	8	11	22	5	19			
		19.57	28.26	10.87	17.39	23.91	47.83	10.87	41.30	3.0	1.5	4
11. School uniforms too hot for S.A. summers	46	7	6	6	9	18	13	6	27			
		15.22	13.04	13.04	19.57	39.13	28.26	13.04	58.70	2.5	1.5	5
12. Sandals preferable to shoes in summer	46	4	5	5	2	30	9	5	32			
		8.70	10.87	10.87	4.35	65.22	19.57	10.87	69.57	1.9	1.4	6

Tables 9a, b and c show that all three groups of respondents found durability and ease of care the most outstanding aspects of functionality, with mean score ratings between 4.00 and 4.4 for parents and educators, while learners rated these aspects slightly lower at 3.90 and 3.60 respectively.

The comfort of school uniforms was rated third by all three groups of respondents, followed by the fact that the uniforms are not colourfast and fade quickly. None of the three groups found school uniforms too hot, as more respondents in all three groups were negative than were positive about the statement.

Regarding the preference of sandals for summer, more respondents in all three groups were negative about this option (parents 63.39 percent, learners 60.49 percent and educators 69.57 percent) than were positive. From the literature it is clear that parents put a high premium on durability and ease of care (2005:32). Albiez (1998:4) points out that school uniforms should not be too hot, especially in hot



climates (like South Africa). He also mentions that poly-cotton keeps its colour better than cotton, but may be hot.

4.8 ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES

The economic advantages/disadvantages of school uniforms as judged by all three respondents namely parents, learners and educators are displayed in Tables 10 a, b and

**TABLE 10 a: ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:
PARENTS**

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
13 School uniforms are too expensive	113	63 55.75	31 27.43	3 2.65	11 9.73	5 4.42	94 83.19	3 2.65	16 14.16	4.2	1.2	1
14. Casual wear of own choice will cost less	113	23 20.35	15 13.27	13 11.50	15 13.27	47 41.59	38 33.63	13 11.50	62 54.87	2.6	1.6	8
15. School uniforms are a financial burden on parents	113	40 35.40	32 28.32	8 7.08	22 19.47	11 9.73	72 63.72	8 7.08	33 29.20	3.6	1.4	3
16. Prescribed uniforms are an additional expense	113	34 30.09	35 30.97	14 12.39	15 13.27	15 13.27	69 61.06	14 12.39	30 26.55	3.5	1.4	4
17 .School uniforms need not be replaced frequently	113	29 25.66	36 31.86	16 14.16	19 16.81	13 11.50	56 57.52	16 14.16	32 28.32	3.4	1.3	5
18. School uniforms last long	112	30 26.79	37 33.04	13 11.61	24 21.43	8 7.14	67 59.82	13 11.61	32 28.57	3.5	1.3	4
19. School uniforms are affordable	111	18 16.22	20 18.02	17 15.32	30 27.03	26 23.42	38 34.23	17 15.32	56 50.45	2.8	1.4	7
20 School uniforms are worth the money paid for it	112	20 17.86	24 21.43	20 17.86	26 23.21	22 19.64	44 39.29	20 17.86	48 42.86	2.9	1.4	6
21. Prescribed sportswear is very expensive	112	48 42.86	27 24.11	24 21.43	6 5.36	7 6.25	75 66.96	24 21.43	13 11.61	3.9	1.2	2



**TABLE 10 b: ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:
LEARNERS**

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
13 School uniforms are too expensive	162	95 58.64	36 22.22	12 7.41	8 4.94	11 6.79	131 80.86	12 7.41	19 11.73	4.2	1.2	1
14. Casual wear of own choice will cost less	162	70 43.21	31 19.14	21 12.96	16 9.88	24 14.81	101 62.35	21 12.96	40 24.69	3.7	1.5	4
15. School uniforms are a financial burden on parents	161	64 39.75	32 19.88	25 15.53	17 10.56	23 14.29	96 59.63	25 15.53	40 24.84	3.6	1.5	5
16. Prescribed uniforms are an additional expense	161	60 37.27	46 28.57	28 17.39	18 11.18	9 5.59	106 65.84	28 17.39	27 16.77	3.8	1.2	3
17 .School uniforms need not be replaced frequently	162	33 20.37	32 19.75	36 22.22	32 19.75	29 19.90	65 40.12	36 22.22	61 37.65	3.0	1.4	7
18. School uniforms last long	161	30 18.63	41 25.47	31 19.25	30 18.63	29 10.01	71 44.10	31 19.25	59 36.65	3.1	1.4	6
19. School uniforms are affordable	161	12 7.45	27 16.77	32 19.88	42 26.09	48 29.81	39 24.22	32 19.88	90 55.90	2.5	1.3	8
20 School uniforms are worth the money paid for it	161	27 16.77	40 24.84	36 22.36	31 19.25	27 16.77	67 41.61	36 22.36	58 36.02	3.1	1.3	6
21. Prescribed sportswear is very expensive	161	71 44.10	34 21.12	37 22.98	10 6.21	9 5.59	105 65.22	37 22.98	19 11.80	3.9	1.2	2



**TABLE 10 c ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES:
EDUCATORS**

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
13 School uniforms are too ex-pensive	46	21	13	4	3	5	34	4	8			
		45.65	28.26	8.70	6.52	10.87	73.91	8.70	17.39	3.9	1.3	4
14. Casual wear of own choice will cost less	46	5	5	3	8	25	10	3	33			
		10.87	10.87	6.52	17.39	54.35	21.74	6.52	71.74	2.1	1.4	9
15. School uniforms are a financial burden on parents	46	8	6	7	12	13	14	7	25			
		17.39	13.04	15.22	26.09	28.26	30.43	15.22	54.35	2.7	1.5	7
16. Prescribed uniforms are an additional expense	46	7	7	7	12	13	14	7	25			
		15.22	15.22	15.22	26.09	28.26	30.43	15.22	54.35	2.6	1.4	8
17 .School uniforms need not be replaced frequently	46	16	24	2	3	1	40	2	4			
		34.78	52.17	4.35	6.52	2.17	86.96	4.35	8.70	4.1	0.9	3
18. School uniforms last long	46	20	18	4	3	1	38	4	4			
		43.48	39.13	8.70	6.52	2.17	82.61	8.70	8.70	4.2	1.0	2
19. School uniforms are affordable	45	9	12	7	9	8	21	7	17			
		20.00	26.67	15.56	20.00	17.78	46.67	15.56	37.78	3.1	1.4	6
20 School uniforms are worth the money paid for it	46	11	18	5	7	5	29	5	12			
		23.91	39.13	10.87	15.22	10.87	63.04	10.87	26.09	3.5	1.3	5
21. Prescribed sportswear is very expensive	46	24	16	3	1	2	40	3	3			
		52.17	34.78	6.52	2.17	4.35	86.96	6.52	6.52	4.3	1.0	1

Regarding economic advantages and disadvantages, Tables 10 a, b and c reveal that both parents and learners were of the opinion that prescribed school uniforms were too expensive, which was the most important disadvantage, with a mean score rating of 4.2 for both parties. This corresponds with the viewpoint of Albietz (1998:3), while Ashton (2002:1) and Mvulane (2004:38) also warn against school uniforms that are not affordable. Secondly, parents and learners felt that the prescribed sportswear was too expensive, with a mean score rating of 3.9. Educators also felt that prescribed sportswear was much too expensive, and, to a lesser extent, that mandatory school uniforms were too expensive, with mean score ratings between 4.3 and 3.9. The aspect rated third most important by the parents, was the statement that prescribed school uniforms are a financial burden, with a mean score of 3.6, while the learners felt that prescribed school uniforms were an additional cost and that



casual clothing of their own choice would be cheaper than school uniforms. Educators rated the fact that school uniforms need not be replaced frequently as an important advantage, with a mean score of 4.1. Parents also felt that prescribed school uniforms were an additional expense, but need not be replaced frequently, while learners said that school uniforms were a financial burden for their parents. On the other hand, the educators felt that the school uniform was worth the money paid for it. The parents were of the opinion that casual wear of own choice would not be economical at all, with a mean score of 2.6. Daugherty (2002:391) agrees with this opinion.

It is clear that all three stakeholders were of the opinion that there were many economic disadvantages attached to prescribed school uniforms. All three parties felt that prescribed school uniforms were too expensive and that sportswear was extraordinarily expensive. Parents and learners also indicated that prescribed school uniforms were an additional expense and a financial burden. Parents and educators agreed, however, that school uniforms last long and that they need not be replaced frequently, while, in addition, educators were of the opinion that school uniforms were worth the money paid for them.

4.9 APPEARANCE

The opinions of parents, learners and educators on the appearance of learners in school uniforms is reflected in Tables 11 a, b and c.



TABLE 11 a: APPEARANCE: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
22.It serves the purpose that all learners look alike	113	85 75.2 2	14 12.3 9	3 2.65	4 3.54	7 6.19	99 87.6 1	3 2.65	11 9.73			
23.Every school has its own colour scheme		84 74.3 4	10 8.85	5 4.42	8 7.08	6 5.31	94 83.1 9	5 4.42	14 12.3 9			
24. Fashion plays a role in design of uniform	113	31 27.4 3	23 20.3 5	20 17.7 0	16 14.1 6	23 20.3 5	54 47.7 9	20 17.7 0	39 34.5 1			
25. Learners generally feel proud of uniform	112	47 41.9 6	28 25.0 0	22 19.6 4	10 8.93	5 4.46	75 66.9 6	22 19.6 4	15 13.3 9			
26. School uniforms promote neatness	113	76 27.4 3	16 20.3 5	7 17.7 0	9 14.1 6	5 20.3 5	92 41.4 2	7 6.19	14 12.3 9			
27. School uniforms keep up with latest fashion	112	18 16.0 7	21 18.7 5	22 19.6 4	19 16.9 6	32 28.5 7	39 34.8 2	22 19.6 4	51 45.5 4			
28. My child's uniform is old fashioned	111	18 16.2 2	28 25.2 3	17 15.3 2	18 16.2 2	30 27.0 3	46 41.4 4	17 15.3 2	48 43.2 4			



TABLE 11 b: APPEARANCE: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
22.It serves the purpose that all learners look alike	162	109 67. 28	20 12. 35	11 6.7 9	6 3.7 0	16 9.8 8	129 79. 63	11 6.7 9	22 13. 58	4. 2	1. 3	2
23. Every school has its own colour scheme	162	125 77. 16	16 9.8 8	8 4.9 4	5 3.0 9	8 4.9 4	141 87. 04	8 4.9 4	13 8.0 2	4. 5	1. 1	1
24. Fashion plays a role in design of uniform	162	98 60. 49	27 16. 67	15 9.2 6	11 6.7 9	11 6.7 9	125 77. 16	15 9.2 6	22 13. 58	4. 2	1. 2	3
25. Learners generally feel proud of uniform	162	45 27. 78	46 28. 40	23 14. 20	23 14. 20	25 15. 43	91 56. 17	23 14. 20	48 29. 63	3. 4	1. 4	6
26. School uniforms promote neatness	162	93 57. 41	30 18. 52	18 11. 11	11 6.7 9	10 5.1 7	123 75. 93	18 11. 11	21 12. 96	4. 1	1. 2	4
27. School uniforms keep up with latest fashion	161	55 34. 16	25 15. 53	28 17. 39	21 13. 04	32 19. 88	80 49. 69	28 17. 39	53 32. 92	3. 3	1. 5	6
28. My child's uniform is old fashioned	162	64 39. 51	24 14. 81	30 18. 52	21 12. 96	23 14. 20	88 54. 32	30 18. 52	44 27. 16	3. 5	1. 5	5



TABLE 11 c: APPEARANCE: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
22.It serves the purpose that all learners look alike	46	37	7	1	0	1	44	1	1	4.7	0.7	1
		80.43	15.22	2.17	0.00	2.17	95.65	2.17	2.17			
23. Every school has its own colour scheme	45	30	7	5	2	1	37	5	3	4.4	1.0	2
		66.67	15.56	11.11	4.44	2.22	82.22	11.11	6.67			
24. Fashion plays a role in design of uniform	46	12	8	7	5	14	20	7	19	3.0	1.6	5
		26.09	17.39	15.22	10.87	30.43	43.48	15.22	41.30			
25. Learners generally feel proud of uniform	46	12	16	8	6	4	28	8	10	3.6	1.3	4
		26.09	43.78	17.39	13.04	8.70	60.87	17.39	21.74			
26. School uniforms promote neatness	46	28	11	3	3	1	39	3	4	4.3	1.0	3
		60.87	23.91	6.52	6.52	2.17	84.78	6.52	8.70			
27. School uniforms keep up with latest fashion	44	8	2	4	9	21	10	4	30	2.3	1.5	7
		18.18	4.55	9.09	20.45	47.73	22.73	9.09	68.18			
28. My child's uniform is old fashioned	45	6	16	5	5	13	22	5	18	2.9	1.5	6
		13.33	35.56	11.11	11.11	28.89	48.89	11.11	40.00			

Regarding the opinions of the appearance of learners wearing school uniforms as depicted in Tables 11 a, b and c, all three stakeholders namely parents, learners and educators, were strongly convinced that uniforms serve a purpose if all learners look alike, with mean scores between 4.2 and 4.7, and that every school should have its own unique colour scheme, with mean scores between 4.4 and 4.5, probably because this could serve as identification of a school of which they are proud.

Sangster (1989:8) reports that learners are proud of their school colours because they cause the learners to stand out clearly, especially on the sports field. On the other hand, LaPoint (1993:32) points out that problems can be encountered when the similar look is overemphasised, as youngsters may use the money allocated for school requirements, for clothing, accessories and hairstyling.

The parents and educators believed that school uniforms promote a sense of neatness, while the learners believed that fashion plays a role in designing of uniforms. In the



third place, parents and educators felt that in general school uniforms promote a sense of neatness, with a mean score of 4.3, while learners felt fashion should play a role in the design of school uniforms. None of the three stakeholders was of the opinion that school uniforms are old-fashioned, as this statement was rated unimportant.

The literature points out that the clothing choices made create a certain appearance used as a method of communication. According to Craik (2005:62) the use of different colours for every school indicates learners' membership of their school,

4.10 COMPETITION

Results regarding the aspect of competition with regard to school clothing are depicted in Tables 12 a, b and c.



TABLE 12 a: COMPETITION: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
29. Eliminates differences between rich and poor	113	63	21	10	7	12	84	10	19			
		55.75	18.58	8.85	6.19	10.62	74.34	8.85	16.81	4.0	1.4	4
30. Disadvantaged learners do not feel excluded when wearing s.u.	113	69	20	13	7	4	89	13	11			
		61.06	17.70	11.50	6.19	3.54	78.76	11.50	9.73	4.30	1.10	3
31. S.u eliminates competition in dress.	113	83	15	10	3	2	98	10	5			
		73.45	13.27	8.85	2.65	1.77	86.73	8.85	4.42	4.50	0.90	1
32. S.u promotes competition between schools	113	54	27	16	9	7	81	16	16			
		47.79	23.89	14.16	7.96	6.19	71.68	14.16	14.16	4.00	1.20	4
33. S.u makes learners proud to be associated with school	111	72	23	12	1	3	95	12	4			
		64.86	20.72	10.81	0.90	2.70	85.59	10.81	3.60	4.40	0.90	2
34. S.u lessens competition among learners in same school	112	58	25	12	8	9	83	12	17			
		51.79	22.32	10.71	7.14	8.04	74.11	10.71	15.18	4.00	1.30	4



TABLE 12 b: COMPETITION: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
29. Eliminates differences between rich and poor	162	80	20	21	11	30	100	21	41			
		49.38	12.35	12.96	6.79	18.52	61.73	12.96	25.31	3.7	1.6	4
30. Disadvantaged learners do not feel excluded when wearing s.u.	161	81	22	28	9	21	103	28	30			
		50.31	13.66	17.39	5.59	13.04	63.98	17.39	18.63	3.8	1.4	3
31. S.u eliminates competition in dress.	161	70	27	27	14	23	97	27	37			
		43.48	16.77	16.77	8.70	14.29	60.25	16.77	22.98	3.7	1.5	4
32. S.u promotes competition between schools	162	78	32	24	12	16	110	24	28			
		48.15	19.75	14.81	7.41	9.88	67.90	14.81	17.28	3.9	1.3	2
33. S.u makes learners proud to be associated with school	162	80	32	27	9	14	112	27	23			
		49.38	19.75	16.67	5.56	8.64	69.14	16.67	14.20	4.0	1.3	1
34. S.u lessens competition among learners in same school	161	70	27	32	17	15	97	32	32			
		43.48	16.77	19.88	10.56	9.32	60.25	19.88	19.88	3.7	1.4	4

TABLE 12 c: COMPETITION: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
29. Eliminates differences between rich and poor	46	41	3	0	0	2	44	0	2			
		89.13	6.52	0.00	0.00	4.35	95.65	0.00	4.35	4.8	0.8	2
30. Disadvantaged learners do not feel excluded when wearing s.u.	46	39	3	1	0	3	42	1	3			
		84.78	6.65	2.17	0.00	6.52	91.30	2.17	6.52	4.6	1.0	4
31. S.u eliminates competition in dress.	46	43	3	0	0	0	46	0	0			
		93.48	6.52	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	4.9	0.2	1
32. S.u promotes competition between schools	46	24	12	5	3	2	36	5	5			
		52.17	26.09	10.87	6.52	4.35	78.26	10.87	10.87	4.2	1.1	6
33. S.u makes learners proud to be associated with school	46	32	13	0	1	0	45	0	1			
		69.57	28.26	0.00	2.17	0.00	97.83	0.00	2.17	4.7	0.6	3
34. S.u lessens competition among learners in same school	46	29	12	4	1	0	41	4	1			
		63.04	26.09	8.70	2.17	0.00	89.13	8.70	2.17	4.5	0.8	5

The role that school uniforms play in competition, as seen by parents, learners and educators, is depicted in Tables 12 a, b and c. Both the parents and educators were



strongly convinced that school uniforms eliminate competition in dress, with mean scores of 4.5 and 4.9 respectively. Learners gave high priority to the statement that school uniforms make learners proud to be associated with their schools (mean score 4.0), as is confirmed by Simonson, Lewis and Rocca (1998:2), followed by the premise that school uniforms promote competition between schools. According to educators, the fact that school uniforms eliminate differences between rich and poor is very important, with a high mean score of 4.8, followed by the opinion that disadvantaged learners do not feel excluded when wearing school uniforms, a viewpoint which was rated highly by all three parties, with mean scores varying between 3.8 and 4.6. Gursky (1996:48) confirms that school uniforms help to play down the expensive, negative competition among learners that inevitably does an injustice to poor learners. All three groups of respondents also felt that school uniforms lessened competition between learners in the same school (mean scores 3.7 – 4.5), a perspective which is strongly supported in the literature (Sangster 1989:8, Stover 1990:26, Isaacson 1998:2, 3).

4.11 TIME-SAVING ASPECT

Responses from the three participating stakeholders on the statements regarding the time-saving aspect of school uniforms are given in Tables 13 a, b and c.



TABLE 13 a: TIME-SAVING ASPECT: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
35. Child's uniform quick and easy to wash	113	61 53.98	29 25.66	19 16.81	4 3.54	0 0.00	90 79.65	19 16.81	4 3.54	4.3	0.90	2
36. Child's uniform dries quickly	113	44 38.94	37 32.74	19 16.81	10 8.85	3 2.65	81 71.68	19 16.81	13 11.50	4.0	1.1	3
37. Uniform requires little/no ironing	113	29 25.66	40 35.40	17 15.04	18 15.93	9 7.96	69 61.06	17 15.04	27 23.89	3.5	1.3	5
38. Saves time need not decide what to wear	112	81 72.32	19 16.96	3 2.68	6 5.36	3 2.68	100 89.29	3 2.68	9 8.04	4.5	1.0	1
39. Worn only once before having to be washed	111	16 14.41	28 25.23	21 18.92	29 26.13	17 15.32	44 39.6	21 18.92	46 41.45	3.0	1.3	6
40. Can be worn twice before having to be washed	112	35 31.25	42 37.50	13 11.61	10 8.93	12 10.71	77 68.75	13 11.61	22 19.64	3.7	1.3	4

TABLE 13 b: TIME-SAVING ASPECT: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
35. Child's uniform quick and easy to wash	161	39 24.22	39 24.22	33 20.50	19 11.80	31 19.25	78 48.45	33 20.50	50 31.06	3.2	1.4	3
36. Child's uniform dries quickly	161	29 18.01	34 21.12	33 20.50	35 21.74	30 18.63	63 39.13	33 20.50	65 40.37	3.0	1.4	4
37. Uniform requires little/no ironing	160	19 11.88	31 19.38	29 18.13	26 16.25	55 34.38	50 31.25	29 18.13	81 50.63	3.0	1.4	6
38. Saves time need not decide what to wear	162	91 56.17	30 18.52	7 4.32	10 6.17	24 14.81	121 74.69	7 4.32	34 20.99	4.0	1.5	1
39. Worn only once before having to be washed	162	36 22.22	25 15.43	28 17.28	40 24.69	33 20.37	61 37.65	28 17.28	73 45.06	2.9	1.5	5
40. Can be worn twice before having to be washed	160	51 31.88	44 27.50	22 13.75	17 10.63	26 16.25	95 59.38	22 13.75	43 26.88	3.5	1.4	2



TABLE 13 c: TIME-SAVING ASPECT: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
35. Child's uniform quick and easy to wash	45	23	13	6	1	2	36	6	3			
		51.11	28.89	13.33	2.22	4.44	80.00	13.33	6.67	4.2	1.1	2
36. Child's uniform dries quickly	45	19	12	10	2	2	31	10	4			
		42.22	26.67	22.22	4.44	4.44	68.89	22.22	8.89	4.0	1.1	3
37. Uniform requires little/no ironing	44	11	18	7	5	3	29	7	8			
		25.00	40.91	15.91	11.36	6.82	65.91	15.91	18.18	3.7	1.2	4
38. Saves time need not decide what to wear	45	30	11	2	1	1	41	2	2			
		66.67	24.44	4.44	2.22	2.22	91.11	4.44	4.44	4.5	0.9	1
39. Worn only once before having to be washed	45	5	10	13	7	10	15	13	17			
		11.11	22.22	28.89	15.56	22.22	33.33	28.89	37.78	2.8	1.3	5
40. Can be worn twice before having to be washed	45	13	13	12	6	1	26	12	7			
		28.89	28.89	26.67	13.33	2.22	57.78	26.67	15.56	3.7	1.1	4

From Tables 13 a, b and c it is clear that parents, learners and educators unanimously indicated that school uniforms save time because one need not decide what to wear every morning. They rated this statement highest, with mean scores varying between 4.0 and 4.5.

Isaacson (1998:3) and Forest (1997:34) found that learners in the USA find dressing in school uniforms a lot easier and quicker, while Daugherty (2002:391) confirms that uniforms promote efficiency and organization, and abolish discussions over what to wear to school. Parents and educators rated the fact that the uniforms are quick and easy to wash second, with mean scores 4.3 and 4.2 respectively, followed by the fact that the uniforms dry quickly and require little or no ironing. The learners also rated the statements on washing and drying important. None of the three groups did not agree with the statement that uniforms can be worn only once before having to be washed.



4.12 ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR

Results with regard to influence of school uniforms on academic standards and behaviour are given Tables 14 a, b and c.

TABLE 14 a: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
41 Promote better academic achievements	113	20	20	20	16	37	40	20	53			
		17.70	17.70	17.70	14.16	32.74	35.40	17.70	46.90	2.70	1.50	4
42. General conduct improves wearing school uniform	113	30	30	9	26	18	60	9	44			
		26.55	26.55	7.96	23.01	15.93	53.10	7.96	38.94	3.20	1.50	2
43. S.u. instils discipline amongst learners	113	35	28	11	23	16	63	11	39			
		30.97	24.78	9.73	20.35	14.16	55.75	9.73	34.51	3.40	1.50	1
44. Crime diminishes when uniforms are worn	113	20	14	27	30	22	34	27	52			
		17.70	12.39	23.89	26.55	19.47	30.09	23.89	46.02	2.80	1.40	3
45. Less violence where school uniforms are worn	113	17	11	34	23	28	28	34	51			
		15.04	9.73	30.09	20.35	24.78	24.78	30.09	45.13	2.70	1.30	4
46. S.u. help learners concentrate on work	112	18	15	16	28	35	33	16	63			
		16.07	13.39	14.29	25.00	31.25	29.46	14.29	56.25	2.60	1.50	5
47. S.u. reduce drug-taking, smoking	113	9	15	22	19	48	24	22	67			
		7.96	13.27	19.47	16.81	42.48	21.24	19.47	59.29	2.30	1.30	6



TABLE 14 b: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
41 Promote better academic achievements	161	33	15	28	22	63	48	28	85	2.6	1.6	3
		20.50	9.32	17.39	13.66	39.13	29.81	17.39	52.80			
42. General conduct improves wearing school uniform	162	34	26	32	28	42	60	32	70	2.9	1.5	2
		20.99	16.05	19.75	17.28	25.93	37.04	19.75	43.21			
43. S.u. instils discipline amongst learners	159	29	38	30	23	39	67	30	62	3.0	1.5	1
		18.24	23.90	18.87	14.47	24.53	42.14	18.87	38.99			
44. Crime diminishes when uniforms are worn	160	24	22	35	27	52	46	35	79	2.6	1.4	3
		15.00	13.75	21.88	16.88	32.50	28.75	21.88	49.38			
45. Less violence where school uniforms are worn	162	23	12	39	36	52	35	39	88	2.5	1.4	4
		14.20	7.41	24.07	22.22	32.10	21.60	24.07	54.32			
46. S.u. help learners concentrate on work	162	23	21	21	31	66	44	21	97	2.4	1.5	5
		14.20	12.96	12.96	19.14	40.74	27.16	12.96	59.88			
47. S.u. reduce drug-taking, smoking	162	14	9	25	31	83	23	25	114	2.0	1.3	6
		8.64	5.56	15.43	19.14	51.23	14.20	15.43	70.37			

TABLE 14 c: ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND BEHAVIOUR: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
41 Promote better academic achievements	46	10	6	11	9	10	16	11	19	2.9	1.5	6
		21.74	13.04	23.91	19.57	21.74	34.78	23.91	41.30			
42. General conduct improves wearing school uniform	46	21	12	4	6	3	33	4	9	3.9	1.3	2
		45.65	26.09	8.70	13.04	6.52	71.74	8.70	19.57			
43. S.u. instils discipline amongst learners	46	22	14	3	4	3	36	3	7	4.0	1.2	1
		47.83	30.43	6.52	8.70	6.52	78.26	6.52	15.22			
44. Crime diminishes when uniforms are worn	46	14	8	15	4	5	22	15	9	3.5	1.3	3
		30.43	17.39	32.61	8.70	10.87	47.83	32.61	19.57			
45. Less violence where school uniforms are worn	46	14	8	15	4	5	22	15	9	3.5	1.3	3
		30.43	19.39	32.61	8.70	10.89	47.83	32.61	19.57			
46. S.u. help learners concentrate on work	45	11	12	10	5	7	23	10	12	3.3	1.4	4
		24.44	26.67	22.22	11.11	15.56	51.11	22.22	26.67			
47. S.u. reduce drug-taking, smoking	46	8	13	12	5	8	21	12	13	3.2	1.3	5
		17.39	28.26	26.09	10.89	17.39	45.65	26.09	28.26			



Tables 14 a, b and c reveal that parents, learners and educators felt that wearing of school uniforms can instil discipline among learners, and this aspect yielded a mean score of 3.0 – 4.0, followed by statements maintaining that learners’ general conduct improves when wearing school uniforms, crime diminishes in schools where school uniforms are worn, school uniforms help learners to concentrate on their work and reduce undesirable behaviour like using drugs and smoking. Parents and learners were not convinced about the last four statements, as mean scores of only 2.0 – 2.8 were yielded. Educators were slightly more positive about the last four issues.

None of the three groups was convinced that school uniforms promote better academic achievements either, which is contrary to assertions in the USA that the wearing of school uniforms increases academic performance, improves the educational environment due to elimination of clothing distractions and minimizes social activities in favour of academic presentation (Caruso 1996:86, Simonson et al. 1998:2, Daugherty 2002:391). In review, it can be inferred that none of the three groups of respondents was particularly optimistic with reference to the positive relationship between school uniforms and academic achievement. This corresponds with the viewpoint of Wilkins (1999:21), who postulates that it is simply ludicrous to think that learners will be able to focus on learning if they do not have to think about what they are going to wear to school each day.

4.13 SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

The results regarding aspects of safety with reference to school uniforms are depicted in Tables 15 a, b and c.



TABLE 15 a: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
48. S.u. should be flame-retardant	113	67	22	15	2	7	89	15	9			
		59.29	19.47	13.27	1.77	6.19	78.76	13.27	7.96	4.2	1.10	2
49 S.u. help identify intruders in the school	113	76	26	6	2	3	102	6	5			
		67.26	23.01	5.31	1.77	2.65	90.27	5.31	4.42	4.5	0.90	1
50 S.u. serve as part of school safety programme	112	47	35	21	4	5	82	21	9			
		41.96	31.25	18.75	3.57	4.46	73.21	18.75	8.04	4.0	1.10	3
51. S.u. lessen hi-jacking possibilities	111	21	25	18	22	25	46	18	47			
		18.92	22.52	16.22	19.82	22.52	74.4	16.22	42.34	3.0	1.40	4
52. S.u. diminish bullying among learners	113	19	17	15	28	34	36	15	62			
		16.81	15.04	13.27	24.78	30.09	31.86	13.27	54.87	2.6	1.50	5
53. S.u. discourage theft of clothing	113	19	16	13	31	34	35	13	65			
		16.81	14.16	11.50	27.43	30.09	30.97	11.50	57.52	2.6	1.50	5



TABLE 15 b: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
48. S.u. should be flame-retardant	161	56 34.78	32 19.88	46 28.57	9 5.59	18 11.18	88 54.66	46 28.57	27 16.77	3.6	1.3	2
49 S.u. help identify intruders in the school	162	84 51.85	45 27.78	11 6.79	10 6.17	12 7.41	129 79.63	11 6.79	22 13.58	4.1	1.2	1
50 S.u. serve as part of school safety programme	160	34 21.25	38 23.75	59 36.88	14 8.75	15 9.38	72 45.00	59 36.88	29 18.13	3.4	1.2	3
51. S.u. lessen hi-jacking possibilities	160	28 17.50	16 10.00	44 27.50	28 17.50	44 27.50	44 27.50	44 27.50	72 45.00	2.7	1.4	5
52. S.u. diminish bullying among learners	161	16 9.94	18 11.18	23 14.29	35 21.74	69 42.86	34 21.12	23 14.29	104 64.60	2.2	1.4	6
53. S.u. discourage theft of clothing	162	36 22.22	27 16.67	18 11.11	27 16.67	54 33.33	63 38.89	18 11.11	81 50.00	2.8	1.6	4

TABLE 15 c: SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
48. S.u. should be flame-retardant	46	24 52.17	12 26.09	6 13.04	0 0.00	4 8.70	36 78.26	6 13.04	4 8.70	4.1	1.2	3
49 S.u. help identify intruders in the school	46	34 73.91	8 17.39	1 2.17	1 2.17	2 4.35	42 91.30	1 2.17	3 6.52	4.5	1.0	1
50 S.u. serve as part of school safety programme	46	24 52.17	15 32.61	6 13.04	1 2.17	0 0.00	39 84.78	6 13.04	1 2.17	4.3	1.2	2
51. S.u. lessen hi-jacking possibilities	46	8 17.39	7 15.22	19 41.30	8 17.39	4 8.70	15 32.61	19 41.30	12 26.09	3.2	1.2	4
52. S.u. diminish bullying among learners	46	7 15.22	7 15.22	13 28.26	11 23.91	8 17.39	14 30.43	13 28.26	19 41.30	2.9	1.3	6
53. S.u. discourage theft of clothing	46	11 23.91	7 15.22	11 23.91	8 17.39	9 19.57	18 39.13	11 23.91	17 36.96	3.1	1.5	5

Table 15 a, b and c reveal that all three groups of respondents, namely parents, learners and educators, overwhelmingly agreed that school uniforms would help to



identify intruders in the school (mean scores 4.1-4.5), but not that they would contribute much to reducing theft of clothes (mean score 2.6-3.1). Parents and Educators were optimistic about the possibility that school uniforms could serve as an integral part of the school safety programme, with mean scores varying between 4.0 and 4.3. Cohn (1996:23) points out that school uniforms in the USA provide a safe passage for learners who must negotiate their way through gang territories and activities. However, not all authors on the topic of safety and school uniforms are of the opinion that uniforms will advance safety (Wilkins 1999:20-21, Hethorn 2000:27A). Few of the respondents were of the opinion that school uniforms would help to lessen bullying amongst learners (mean score varying between 2.6 and 3.1) and diminish hi-jacking possibilities (mean score 2.7-3.2), which is contrary to beliefs in the USA about this aspect. Cook (2000:12) reports that since mandated school uniforms have been implemented recently, crime and fighting among learners that wear school uniforms has diminished and school principals are of the opinion that learners' concentration has improved. All three parties gave high priority to the requirement that school uniforms should be flame- retardand (mean scores 3.4-4.2).

4.14 SOCIAL BENEFITS

The opinions of all three stakeholders regarding the social benefits of wearing school uniforms are depicted in Tables 16 a, b and c.



TABLE 16 a: SOCIAL BENEFITS: PARENTS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
54. S.u. instill sense of belonging and pride	113	65 57.52	33 29.20	9 7.96	5 4.42	1 0.88	98 86.73	9 7.96	6 5.31	4.4	0.9	1
55. S.u. lessen social barriers between learners	113	41 36.28	30 26.55	29 25.66	8 7.08	5 4.42	71 62.83	29 25.66	13 11.50	3.8	1.1	2
56. S.u. level the social field	113	42 37.17	24 21.24	22 19.47	17 15.04	8 7.08	66 58.41	22 19.41	25 22.12	3.7	1.3	3
57. S.u. violate freedom of expression	112	13 11.61	27 24.11	22 19.64	23 20.54	27 24.11	40 35.71	22 19.64	50 44.64	2.8	1.4	5
58 S.u. interfere with religious principles	113	10 8.85	7 6.19	34 30.09	19 16.81	43 38.05	17 15.04	34 30.09	62 54.87	2.3	1.3	6
59 S.u. improve self-esteem of learners	113	35 30.97	36 31.86	17 15.04	13 11.50	12 10.62	71 62.83	17 15.04	25 22.12	3.6	1.3	4
60 S.u. don't disguise social and economic status	113	18 15.93	20 17.70	22 19.47	32 28.32	21 18.58	38 33.63	22 19.47	53 46.90	2.8	1.4	5

TABLE 16 b: SOCIAL BENEFITS: LEARNERS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
54. S.u. instill sense of belonging and pride	161	73 45.34	41 25.47	23 14.29	9 5.59	15 9.32	114 70.81	23 14.29	24 14.91	3.9	1.3	1
55. S.u. lessen social barriers between learners	161	40 24.84	43 26.71	38 23.60	22 13.66	18 11.18	83 51.55	38 23.60	40 24.84	3.4	1.3	2
56. S.u. level the social field	162	39 24.07	30 18.52	36 22.22	29 17.90	28 17.28	69 42.59	36 22.22	57 35.19	3.1	1.4	3
57. S.u. violate freedom of expression	161	34 21.12	32 19.88	42 26.09	24 14.91	29 18.01	66 40.99	42 26.09	53 32.92	3.1	1.4	3
58 S.u. interfere with religious principles	161	31 19.25	16 9.94	47 29.19	18 11.18	49 30.43	47 29.19	47 29.19	67 41.61	2.8	1.5	6
59 S.u. improve self-esteem of learners	161	39 24.22	31 19.25	29 18.01	23 14.29	39 24.22	70 43.48	29 18.01	62 38.51	3.0	1.5	4
60 S.u. don't disguise social and economic status	161	30 18.63	23 14.29	47 29.19	27 16.77	34 21.12	53 32.92	47 29.19	61 37.89	2.9	1.4	5



TABLE 16 c: SOCIAL BENEFITS: EDUCATORS

	N	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Not sure	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
54. S.u. instill sense of belonging and pride	46	34	12	0	0	0	46	0	0			
		73.91	26.09	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	4.7	0.4	1
55. S.u. lessen social barriers between learners	46	28	15	0	0	3	43	3	0			
		60.87	32.61	0.00	0.00	6.52	93.48	6.52	0.00	4.4	1.0	3
56. S.u. level the social field	46	31	10	3	2	0	41	3	2			
		67.39	21.74	6.52	4.35	0.00	89.13	6.52	4.35	4.5	0.8	2
57. S.u. violate freedom of expression	46	6	5	10	11	14	11	10	25			
		13.04	10.87	21.74	23.91	30.43	23.91	21.74	54.35	2.5	1.4	5
58 S.u. interfere with religious principles	46	3	2	3	13	25	3	5	38			
		6.52	4.35	6.52	28.26	54.35	10.87	6.52	82.61	1.8	1.2	7
59 S.u. improve self-esteem of learners	46	15	15	9	5	2	30	9	7			
		32.61	32.61	19.57	10.87	4.35	65.22	19.57	15.22	3.8	1.2	4
60 S.u. don't disguise social and economic status	46	2	7	8	12	17	9	8	29			
		4.35	15.22	17.39	26.09	36.96	19.57	17.39	63.04	2.2	1.2	6

With reference to the social benefits, the majority of the stakeholders, namely 78 – 94% was of the opinion that school uniforms instil a sense of pride and belonging. This aspect was scored highest by all three parties, with mean scores varying between 3.9 and 4.7. All three groups of respondents were also strongly convinced that school uniforms reduced social barriers between learners, with mean scores varying between 3.8 and 4.4. Educators felt strongly that school uniforms level the social field, with a mean score of 4.5. Parents and educators did not feel strongly that school uniforms violate freedom of expression or that mandatory uniforms interferes with religious principles, with mean scores of 1.8-2.8, while learners were not very convinced about this, with mean scores of 2.8-3.1. It is generally agreed by psychologists that clothing influences group behaviour and that young people endeavour to be accepted in a group by dressing in a specific manner (La Point, Holloman & Alleyne 1992:21). Various researchers (Sangster 1989:9, Hethorn 1994:45, Swain 2002:66) are strongly convinced that the wearing of school uniforms

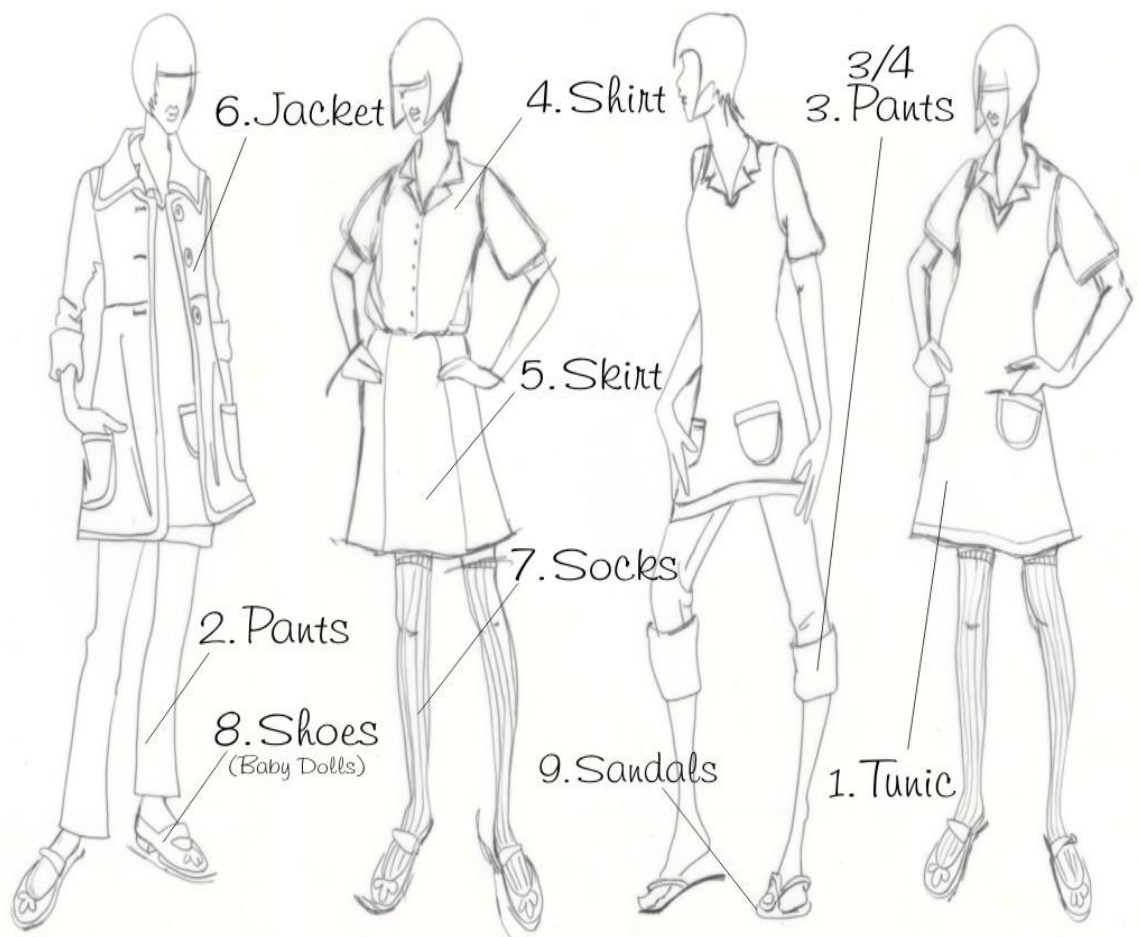


diminishes the danger of discrimination, reduces differences in social class and improves self-esteem of learners.

4.15 APPROACH TOWARDS A MORE MODERN AND SLIGHTLY MORE INFORMAL SCHOOL UNIFORM

In an effort to accommodate all three stakeholders' opinions regarding a more fashionable school uniform, sketches proposing more trendy uniforms for boys and girls were included in the questionnaire (See Figure 2). The opinions on the newly proposed uniforms for *girls* are depicted in Tables 17 a, b and c and for *boys* in Tables 18 a, b and c.

FIGURE 2: MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS AND BOYS



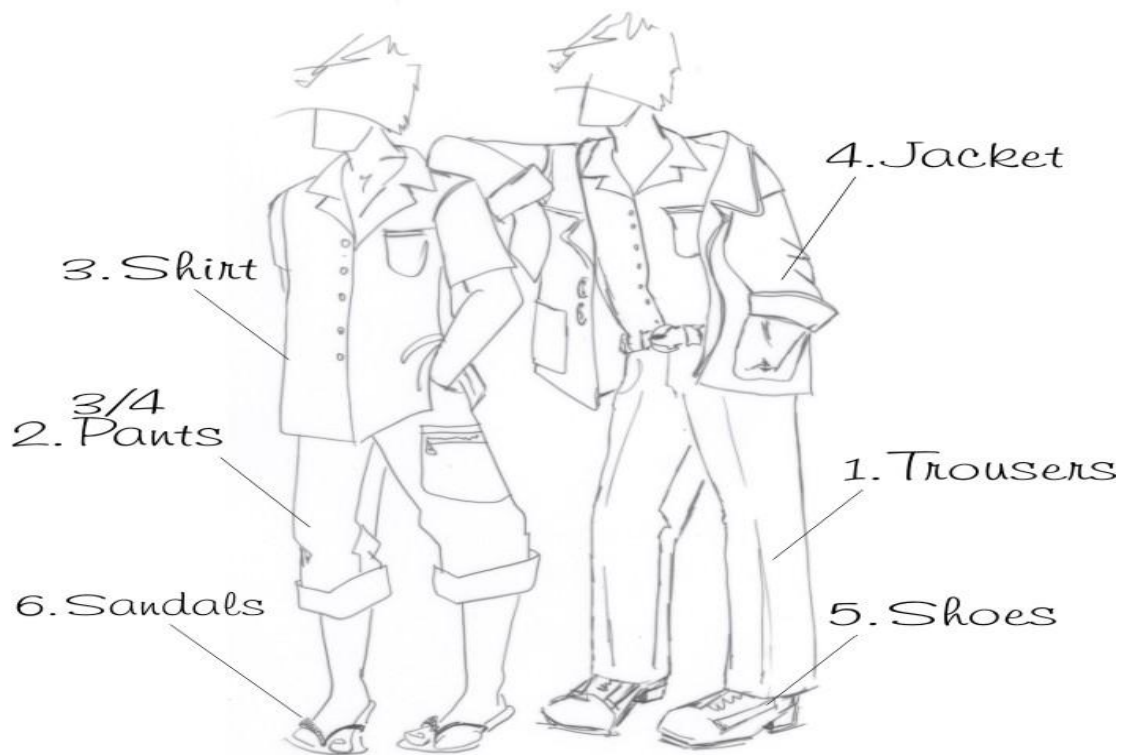


TABLE 17 a: PARENTS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%				
61.1 Tunic	58	14	6	4	7	27	20	4	34			
		24.14	10.34	6.90	12.07	46.55	34.48	6.90	58.62	2.5	1.7	8
61.2 Pants	57	39	12	3	2	1	51	3	3			
		68.42	21.05	5.26	3.51	1.75	89.47	5.26	5.26	4.5	0.9	1
61.3 3/4 pants	58	18	13	0	5	22	31	0	27			
		31.03	22.41	0.00	8.62	37.93	53.45	0.00	46.55	3.0	1.8	6
61.4 Shirt	58	37	16	0	4	1	53	0	5			
		63.79	27.59	0.00	6.90	1.72	91.38	0.00	8.62	4.4	0.9	2
61.5 Skirt	58	30	9	3	9	7	39	3	16			
		51.72	15.52	5.17	15.52	12.07	67.24	5.17	27.59	3.8	1.5	5
61.6 Jacket	56	35	6	6	5	4	41	6	9			
		62.50	10.71	10.71	8.93	7.14	73.21	10.71	16.07	4.1	1.3	3
61.7 Long socks above knees	57	12	6	9	11	19	18	9	30			
		21.05	10.53	15.79	19.30	33.33	31.58	15.79	52.63	2.7	1.6	7
61.8 Shoes (Baby dolls)	57	32	12	2	1	10	44	2	11			
		56.14	21.05	3.51	1.75	17.54	77.19	3.51	19.30	4.0	1.5	4
61.9 Sandals for summer	57	9	11	3	4	30	20	3	34			
		15.79	19.30	5.26	7.02	52.63	35.09	5.26	59.65	2.4	1.6	9



TABLE 17 b: LEARNERS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
61.1 Tunic	81	12 14.81	13 16.05	6 7.41	8 9.88	42 51.85	25 30.86	6 7.41	50 61.73	2.3	1.6	9
61.2 Pants	81	44 54.32	23 28.40	4 4.94	9 11.11	1 1.23	67 82.72	4 4.94	10 12.35	4.2	1.1	1
61.3 3/4 pants	82	23 39.02	20 24.39	5 6.10	7 8.54	18 21.95	52 63.41	5 6.10	25 30.49	3.5	1.6	5
61.4 Shirt	81	35 43.21	21 25.93	9 11.11	9 11.11	7 8.64	56 69.14	9 11.11	16 19.75	3.8	1.3	3
61.5 Skirt	82	26 31.71	24 29.27	5 6.10	11 13.41	16 19.51	50 60.98	5 6.10	27 32.93	3.4	1.5	6
61.6 Jacket	81	37 54.68	23 28.40	9 11.11	7 8.64	5 6.17	60 74.07	9 11.11	12 14.81	4.0	1.2	2
61.7 Long socks above knees	80	27 33.75	15 18.75	8 10.00	8 10.00	22 27.50	42 52.50	8 10.00	30 37.50	3.2	1.7	7
61.8 Shoes (Baby dolls)	81	35 43.21	20 24.69	4 4.94	7 8.64	15 18.52	55 67.90	4 4.94	22 27.16	3.7	1.6	4
61.9 Sandals for summer	82	21 25.61	11 13.41	9 10.98	14 17.07	27 32.93	32 39.02	9 10.98	41 50.00	2.8	1.6	8



TABLE 17 c: EDUCATORS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR GIRLS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
61.1 Tunic	45	13	8	6	3	15	21	6	18			
		28.89	17.78	13.33	6.67	33.33	46.67	13.33	40.00	3.0	1.7	6
61.2 Pants	46	33	11	1	1	0	44	1	1			
		71.74	13.91	2.17	2.17	0.00	95.65	2.17	2.17	4.7	0.6	1
61.3 3/4 pants	45	7	8	5	2	23	15	5	25			
		15.56	17.78	11.11	4.44	51.11	33.33	11.11	55.56	2.4	1.6	7
61.4 Shirt	46	27	12	2	4	1	39	2	5			
		58.70	26.09	4.35	8.70	2.17	84.78	4.35	10.87	4.3	1.1	4
61.5 Skirt	46	21	17	2	4	2	38	2	6			
		45.65	36.96	4.35	8.70	4.35	82.61	4.35	13.04	4.1	1.1	5
61.6 Jacket	44	224	16	3	0	1	40	3	1			
		54.55	36.36	6.82	0.00	2.27	90.91	6.82	2.27	4.4	0.8	3
61.7 Long socks above knees	44	6	6	7	2	23	12	7	25			
		13.64	13.64	15.91	4.55	52.27	27.27	15.91	56.82	2.3	1.6	8
61.8 Shoes (Baby dolls)	46	32	10	3	0	1	42	3	1			
		69.57	21.74	6.52	0.00	2.17	91.30	6.52	2.17	4.6	0.8	2
61.9 Sandals for summer	45	11	2	4	5	23	13	4	28			
		24.44	4.44	8.89	11.11	51.11	28.89	8.89	62.22	2.4	1.7	7

Tables 17 a, b and c reveal a surprisingly similar reaction from parents, learners and educators on more trendy school uniforms for girls. Parents and educators indicated a high preference for the pants, especially, but also the shirt, jacket and baby-doll shoes, with mean scores varying between 4.2 and 4.7. Girls also indicated a high preference for the pants, followed by the jacket and the shirt, with mean score ratings of 3.8-4.2. All parties showed only a slight interest in three-quarter pants (mean score ratings 2.4-3.5), and sandals were rated very low by all parties, with mean score ratings varying between 2.4 and 2.8. In recent literature (Detail continue to drive uniform sales 2004:26) it is argued that girls are quite fashion conscious with regard to school uniforms and that manufacturers have found that there is a potential for fashion variation in girls' uniforms.



TABLE 18 a: PARENTS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR BOYS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
61.1 Trousers	55	41	11	0	1	2	52	0	3			
		74.55	20.00	0.00	1.82	3.64	94.55	0.00	5.45	4.6	0.9	1
61.2 3/4 pants	55	18	3	1	4	29	21	1	33			
		32.73	5.45	1.82	7.27	52.73	38.18	1.82	60.00	2.6	1.9	3
61.3 Shirt	55	40	11	3	1	0	51	3	1			
		72.73	20.00	5.45	1.82	0.00	92.73	5.45	1.82	4.6	0.7	1
61.4 Jacket	55	38	9	3	3	2	47	3	5			
		69.09	16.36	5.45	5.45	3.64	85.45	5.45	9.09	4.4	1.1	2
61.5 Shoes	55	39	12	2	0	2	51	2	2			
		70.91	21.82	3.64	0.00	3.64	92.73	3.64	3.64	4.6	0.9	1
61.6 Sandals for summer	54	7	5	7	6	29	12	7	35			
		12.96	9.26	12.96	11.11	53.70	22.22	12.96	64.81	2.2	1.5	4

TABLE 18 b: LEARNERS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR BOYS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
61.1 Trousers	79	58	12	3	1	5	70	3	6			
		73.42	15.19	3.80	1.27	6.33	88.61	3.80	7.59	4.5	1.1	2
61.2 3/4 pants	79	22	5	8	7	37	27	8	44			
		27.85	6.33	10.13	8.86	46.84	34.18	10.13	55.70	2.6	1.7	4
61.3 Shirt	79	62	9	3	1	4	71	3	5			
		78.48	11.39	3.80	1.27	5.06	89.87	3.80	6.33	4.6	1.0	1
61.4 Jacket	78	38	17	6	7	10	55	6	17			
		48.72	21.79	7.69	8.97	12.82	70.51	7.69	21.79	3.8	1.4	3
61.5 Shoes	79	56	12	5	3	3	68	5	6			
		70.89	15.19	6.33	3.80	3.80	86.08	6.33	7.59	4.5	1.0	2
61.6 Sandals for summer	78	19	4	12	14	29	23	12	43			
		24.63	5.13	15.38	17.95	37.19	29.49	15.38	55.13	2.6	1.6	4



TABLE 18 c: EDUCATORS' OPINIONS ON MORE TRENDY SCHOOL UNIFORMS FOR BOYS

	N	Very much	Fairly much	Not sure	A little	Not at all	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Mean Score	Standard Dev	Ranking Order
		5	4	3	2	1	4+5	3	1+2			
		n	n	n	n	n	n	n	n			
		%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%			
61.1 Trousers	45	38	7	0	0	0	45	0	0			
		84.44	15.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	4.8	0.4	1
61.2 3/4 pants	45	9	0	1	2	33	9	1	35			
		20.00	0.00	2.22	4.44	73.33	20.00	2.22	77.78	1.9	1.6	3
61.3 Shirt	44	37	7	0	0	0	4	0	0			
		84.09	15.91	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00	0.00	4.8	0.4	1
61.4 Jacket	45	36	6	0	0	1	0	42	3			
		80.00	13.33	0.00	0.00	6.67	0.00	93.33	6.67	4.6	1.0	2
61.5 Shoes	45	38	5	1	0	1	43	1	1			
		84.44	11.11	2.22	0.00	2.22	95.56	2.22	2.22	4.8	0.7	1
61.6 Sandals for summer	44	5	4	3	2	30	9	3	32			
		11.36	9.09	6.82	4.55	68.18	20.45	6.82	72.73	1.9	1.5	3

Regarding more modern school wear for boys, Tables 18 a, b and c reveal that the parents and educators greatly favoured the long pants, open-neck shirt, informal jacket and proper shoes, with mean scores varying between 4.5 and 4.8. The boys also indicated a high preference for the shirt, followed by the trousers and the shoes, with mean scores of 4.5-4.6, and the informal jacket, with a mean score of 3.8. Three-quarter pants were less popular amongst all three parties, with mean score ratings varying between 1.9 and 2.6, while sandals were not acceptable at all, especially to educators and parents. From the literature it can be gleaned that fashion can play a role even in boys' school uniforms. Thomas (2007:1) postulates that fashion is a form of free speech and a language of signs, symbols and icons that convey information about the wearers and groups to observers. Thomas also points out that fashion can enhance the sense of belonging and promote group affiliation. Being fashionable can also be associated with having good taste, which becomes a social regulator and a way to control abuse (Dussel 2005:185).



4.16 COMPARISON BETWEEN GROUPS OF RESPONDENTS:

PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANS FOR ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF OBLIGATORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

In this study it will be useful to compare the means obtained by parents, learners and educators regarding the functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, competition, time-saving aspect, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations, social benefits and the role of fashion technology on mandatory school uniforms. This will enable the researcher to compare the opinions of the stakeholders regarding the advantages and disadvantages of the above-mentioned aspects of prescribed school uniforms.

The determination of the practical significance of the difference in means is a method suggested by Steyn (2000:1) for making these comparisons. Steyn postulates that by using an effect size (which does not depend on the sample sizes) as a measure of significance, a conclusion can be made per fairing to the importance of the difference between the means. The formula used to compute the effect size d is the following:

$$d = \frac{\bar{X}_1 - \bar{X}_2}{SD}$$

Where \bar{X}_1 = means of group 1

\bar{X}_2 = means of group 2

SD = standard deviation of the mean of either group 1 or group 2, depending on which one is the bigger (Steyn 2000: 3).

In this study the opinions of the three groups of respondents, namely parents, learners and educators, will be compared and the effect size d will be computed to judge the importance of the difference in opinion between parents and learners, between learners and educators and between educators and parents. The following guidelines will be followed to interpret the effect size: $d = 0.2$ - small difference

$d = 0.5$ - medium difference



d = 0.8 - big difference

The means and standard deviations for each of the investigated aspects concerning prescribed school uniforms, as well as the d-values for each of the comparisons, are given in Table 19 and the comparisons between educators and the other two groups are left out, as the alpha coefficient for appearance for educators was very low and this aspect in the measuring instrument is consequently deemed unreliable.

TABLE 19 PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DIFFERENCE IN MEANS FOR VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Aspects	Parents	Learners	Educators	Parents Versus Learners	Learners Versus Educators	Educators Versus Parents
	Mean(S.D)	Mean(S.D)	Mean(S.D)	d	d	d
Functionality	3.73(0.74)	3.41(0.80)	3.90(0.83)	0.4	0.5	0.2
Economic aspect	2.76(0.85)	2.50(0.77)	3.26(0.80)	0.3	0.9	0.5
Appearance	3.74(0.63)	3.75(0.66)	3.63(0.50)	0.015	0.18	0.19
Competition	4.21(0.72)	3.79(0.88)	4.61(0.45)	0.4	0.9	0.5
Time saving	3.84(0.68)	3.22(0.92)	3.86(0.71)	0.6	0.6	0.02
Academic aspect	2.82(1.18)	2.57(1.15)	3.48(1.11)	0.2	0.8	0.6
Safety aspect	3.49(0.82)	3.15(0.91)	3.68(0.78)	0.3	0.5	0.2
Social benefit	3.65(0.66)	3.25(0.64)	4.13(0.56)	0.6	1.3	0.7

Table 19 reveals that regarding the aspect of functionality, the d-value for the difference between learners and educators was 0,5 (medium effect size) implying that these two parties differed somewhat regarding the functional aspects, but that the educators (mean = 3.90) were more positive about the functionality of mandatory school uniforms. Parents were also more positive than learners about the functionality of school uniforms and there was a medium practical difference (effect



size $d = 0.4$) between them. Educators and parents differed only slightly with regard to functionality ($d = 0.2$).

With reference to the economic aspect, it is clear that educators differed greatly from learners and were much more positive (mean = 3.26 versus 2.5), with $d = 0.9$ (large difference). The difference between educators and parents was to a medium effect ($d = 0.5$), with educators being more positive than parents about the economic advantages of school uniforms, while parents and learners differed only slightly on this aspect ($d = 0.3$, small effect size).

When surveying the differences regarding appearance, only small practically significant differences were found between all the parties, with all the d -values smaller than 0.2.

The competition aspect yielded medium to large practically significant differences between the parties, with the difference between learners and educators being the largest ($d = 0.9$) and educators being more positive than learners (mean score 4.61 versus 3.79) about the advantages of uniforms with regard to competition. Educators versus parents as well as parents versus learners yielded a medium effect ($d = 0.5$ and 0.4 respectively). The educators were more positive in both cases.

Regarding time-saving advantages, both parents versus learners and learners versus educators yielded medium effect size differences ($d = 0.6$), while educators differed from parents to a very small effect ($d = 0.02$). Parents and educators were about equally positive in respect of this aspect, while learners were less positive (mean scores 3.84, 3.86 and 3.22 respectively).

With regard to academic standards and behaviour, there was a clear practically significant difference between educators and the other two groups of respondents, with d -values for educators versus learners = 0.8 and educators versus parents = 0.6. There was a small practically significant difference between parents and learners ($d =$



0.2). Educators were the most positive about the influence of school uniforms on academic standards and behaviour.

Safety considerations yielded small to medium effects, with learners versus educators obtaining a d-value of 0.5 (medium effect size), while educators versus learners as well as parents versus learners differed to a small effect ($d = 0.2$ and 0.3 respectively). Educators were the most positive about the safety advantages associated with school uniforms, closely followed by parents (mean scores = 3.68 and 3.49 respectively).

Regarding social benefits of wearing school uniforms, educators differed greatly from learners (d-value = 1.3), while parents versus educators also differed to a large effect (d-value 0.7). Parents differed from learners to a medium effect (d-value 0.6). Educators were the most positive about the social advantages of school uniforms, followed by parents and learners (mean scores 4.13, 3.65 and 3.25 respectively).

To summarise, it can be said that educators differed from learners to a medium or large effect in all the advantages regarding the wearing of school uniforms. Practically significant differences between educators and parents, as well as between parents and learners, varied between medium and small.

4.17 SUMMARY

The demographic characteristics of the parents were discussed and the reliability, construct validity and content validity of the instrument were analysed. The opinions of the parents, learners and educators regarding current practices, advantages and disadvantages of obligatory school uniforms and the desirability of more trendy uniforms were compared and discussed in correspondence with the aim and objectives of the study. In the last instance, practically significant differences between the opinions of parents, learners and educators were discussed. The next chapter deals with conclusions, recommendations and implications for future research.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The broad aim of this study was to investigate the perspectives of parents, learners and educators in Vanderbijlpark secondary schools on obligatory school uniforms. Chapter 1 consisted of an introduction to the research study and stated the research problem and objectives. Chapter 2 reviewed differing opinions from the literature on obligatory school uniforms, with emphasis on aspects such as functionality, economic advantages and disadvantages, appearance, competition aspects, time-saving aspects, academic standards and behaviour, safety considerations and social benefits. In chapter 3 the research strategy, the research design and the methodology used in this study were discussed in detail. The method of data collection and data analysis was discussed. The study population and sample selection were explained. The results of the study were given in chapter 4, findings were interpreted and relevant literature was linked to the findings. Chapter 5 will give a summary of the whole study and will focus on the conclusions drawn from the findings. Recommendations will be made to all participants as well as the Department of Education.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

A literature study (chapter 2) was undertaken on the advantages and disadvantages of obligatory school uniforms from the viewpoint of parents, learners and educators worldwide. The research framework proposed for the purpose of this study was designed in correspondence with the research objectives and recent literature on the positive and negative viewpoints regarding obligatory prescribed school uniforms.

Three structured questionnaires were compiled to investigate the opinions of the three groups of stakeholders regarding obligatory school uniforms. The psychometric



properties of the questionnaires were investigated and in conclusion, it can be said that Section B of the questionnaire, which tested perceptions on the advantages and disadvantages of obligatory school uniforms, was found both construct and content valid as well as reliable.

A demographic profile of the parents was compiled. Most of the parents were between 41 and 45 years of age and consequently fell into the group known as boomers, followed by about a third that belonged to generation X. Boomers are inclined to rely on schools to impose discipline on their children, which could lead to the conclusion that this group of parents may be in favour of school uniforms.

Only three population groups, namely black, coloured and white people, were represented in the sample. By far the majority of the parents were white.

The highest qualification of more than a third of the parents was grade 12, while nearly a quarter had a diploma/certificate and another quarter a degree. It is thus clear that about half of the respondents had a tertiary qualification.

Nearly three-quarters of the parents were married or traditionally married, while 16.67 percent were divorced or separated.

Nearly a third of the parents spent R901-R1200 per year on school uniforms, followed by a fifth who spent R1201-R1500 per year. More than 12 percent spent more than R1800 per year, which could be an indication that this group of parents needed to buy more expensive items like sportswear. Two thirds were of the opinion that they fell in the middle income group, followed by nearly a fifth who felt they were in the low income group.

Interestingly, the questionnaires were mostly filled in by the mothers, while just more than 10 percent were filled by the fathers, probably indicating that mothers assume most responsibility for the school clothing.



Regarding the general attitude towards school uniforms, it is clear that parents and educators were very much in favour of school uniforms, while 60.87% of the learners were also in favour of this practice. With reference to style, colour and fabric of current school uniforms, both parents and educators rated satisfaction with all three variables very high, but the learners were less satisfied, especially the style.

Regarding the advantages and disadvantages of eight factors with reference to obligatory school uniforms as perceived by parents, learners and educators, the findings are summarised in Table 20.

TABLE 20 COMPARISONS BETWEEN MEANS OF PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS WITH REFERENCE TO VARIOUS ASPECTS OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Aspects	Parents		Learners		Educators	
	Mean	Ranking order	Mean	Ranking order	Mean	Ranking order
Functionality	3.73	4	3.41	3	3.90	3
Economic aspect	2.76	8	2.50	8	3.26	8
Appearance	3.74	3	3.75	2	3.63	6
Competition	4.21	1	3.79	1	4.61	1
Time saving	3.84	2	3.22	5	3.86	4
Academic aspect	2.82	7	2.57	7	3.48	7
Safety aspect	3.49	6	3.15	6	3.68	5
Social benefit	3.65	5	3.25	4	4.13	2

The educators rated seven of the eight factors higher than did parents and learners; while parents rated the same factors higher than learners did, implying that learners were the least positive about school uniforms. Educators were most convinced that academic advantages could be linked to obligatory school uniforms, while parents, followed by learners, were significantly less convinced about this. Educators were also quite convinced that school uniforms embraced social benefits, while parents



and learners were less convinced about this. Although the three parties may have differed regarding the advantageous extent of the various aspects, the order in which they ranked the importance of the advantages was often the same or similar. They all ranked the competition aspect first, the academic aspect seventh and the economic aspect eighth, while functionality was ranked almost the same, either third or fourth.

Practically significant differences in opinion between the three parties (parents versus learners, learners versus educators and educators versus parents) revealed very small differences regarding appearance, while only parents differed little but practically significantly from learners regarding economic aspects: educators differed little from parents regarding functionality, time-saving and safety advantages. Parents differed practically significantly from learners to a small extent regarding academic and safety aspects. All the other practically significant differences were medium to large.

More trendy school uniforms for boys and girls were suggested to all three parties as a possible rejuvenation of traditional school uniform styles. Parents, learners and educators had surprisingly corresponding ideas on the matter. All the stakeholders were in favour of the more traditional pants, shirt and proper shoes for both boys and girls, with a slightly more informal jacket instead of the traditional blazer. Three-quarter pants and sandals were rated very low in popularity. It seems that although learners generally complain that their uniforms are not stylish, they are also not willing to adapt to a more trendy design.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

One limitation was the fact that, owing to time and financial restrictions, the study sample was small and included stakeholders of only four secondary schools in the Vaal Region, with the implication that the results cannot be generalised to all parents, learners and educators in South African schools.



Secondly, all typically South African population groups were not randomly represented in the sample; therefore the findings may be biased regarding cultural influences, lifestyle and living circumstances.

Thirdly, although the distribution of questionnaires to the learners and educators was not problematic, the access to the parents was limited as the researcher had no direct contact with them and had to rely on the learners to hand the questionnaires to their parents and also to return the completed questionnaires. Consequently, the response rate for learners and educators was good, but the response rate for parents was only moderate and some of these questionnaires were incompletely filled in and could not be used.

In the fourth place, very limited research has been done in South Africa on the desirability of school uniforms. Only one comprehensive study that was undertaken in 1975 could be found. Consequently, the findings of the current study could not be compared to findings of similar studies in South Africa.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further research on the use and desirability of school uniforms can be conducted with the involvement of a bigger geographic area that includes more schools out of the different provinces, as every province has its own culture and educational orientation. When making use of a bigger sample, more statistically grounded conclusions regarding opinions on obligatory prescribed school uniforms can be drawn. Future studies must also ensure better representation of all sub-cultural groups in South Africa.

Qualitative studies, or a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques, may reveal additional concerns and viewpoints of stakeholders that might shed light on the topic and give a more comprehensive view of perceptions on school wear, whether it be prescribed school uniforms or use of dress codes.



5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALL THE STAKEHOLDERS: PARENTS, LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

From findings of this study it is clear that most of the stakeholders involved were in favour of school uniform and did not question the custom, as they felt that it serves a purpose if all learners dress alike. It can therefore be recommended that, since the wearing of school uniforms is a custom that works for our South African schools it must not be done away with.

If a school considers changing the school uniform, the findings of this study regarding the functional aspects must be considered, since these were rated important by all the stakeholders. The material used in producing the school uniforms must be durable and easy to care for. It is further recommended that the uniform must be psychologically and physiologically comfortable during wear and it must not be too hot, especially for the South African climate.

All three stakeholders were of the opinion that there were many economic disadvantages attached to prescribed school uniforms and rated economic advantages lowest of all aspects. Sportswear, especially, was found extraordinarily expensive. It is therefore recommended that schools and governing bodies must consider possibilities for cheaper schoolwear, such as prescribing regular pants, shirts and track suits that can be bought at various department stores. Schools should also provide an infrastructure for buying second-hand uniforms of good quality and should encourage parents and learners to support this venture. Schools could even consider a non-profit business enterprise for selling new school uniforms.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

In general, parents, learners and educators are in favour of obligatory, prescribed school uniforms. It is consequently recommended that this practice should remain in use.



The idea of a national, standardised school uniform used countrywide seems viable and beneficial, especially the less affluent learners and their parents, as learners would be able to use the same uniform when moving or changing schools, and with such a practice, the cost of the uniform could probably be reduced. However, the national standardisation of school uniforms was a proposition the stakeholders did not want to buy into and it is therefore recommended that the practice of every school having its own unique school uniform should stay as it is.

All the stakeholders found school uniforms and especially school sportswear too expensive. It is consequently recommended that the Department of Education take note of this problem and that it should implement measures to restrict the costs of prescribed school uniforms and exclude all possibilities of undercover deals that would benefit retailers.

5.7 CONCLUDING REMARK

In South Africa, obligatory prescribed school uniforms have been part of traditional school attire for many years. In 1996, however, transformation and the consequent change to a constitutional democracy have had a profound effect on schools. According to the new constitution, everyone, including the learner, has the right to freedom of expression, and school wear can be regarded as an expression of the self. In recent times, people concerned with this matter have started questioning the tradition of prescribed school uniforms, and advocates for and against obligatory school uniforms have expressed their opinion in writing. Consequently, a need arose to investigate the opinions of stakeholders regarding this issue. This study attempted to gain an insight into the opinions of the stakeholders and to disseminate this information to policy makers in education for consideration when creating guiding principles regarding school wear.



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