



PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Yunhee Kim, Marilyn DeLong, Karen LaBat
University of Minnesota, St. Paul, MN 55108

Currently, there is a nationwide trend to adopt stricter dress codes in public schools in the United States. The decision to adopt school uniforms is most often made by a school advisory board consisting of parents, teachers, and administrators. The research purpose was to explore perspectives of parents, teachers, and students on uniforms from three high schools which varied in school dress codes.

The framework involves consideration of the viewer, form, and context (DeLong, 1998). The viewers in this study are the parents, teachers, and administrators. The form is the variation of codes where uniforms are required, to a flexible dress code, to no required uniforms. The contexts are private schools in an urban area in the United States. A questionnaire about perceptions of school uniforms was developed and distributed.

From the responses of 204 students, 72 teachers, and 76 parents, parents and teachers were more positive about students wearing uniforms than were students. Also, flexible uniforms were perceived more positively than restrictive uniforms. The cost of a student's school wardrobe decreased with school uniforms. Finally, students were more positive the more flexible the school dress code and the younger the student was when he/she began wearing a uniform.

Further research could consider issues of comfort and fit. Schools could adopt a grade school uniform policy that was flexible rather than restrictive.

DeLong, M. R. (1998). The way we look: Dress and aesthetics. New York: Fairchild.