

EFFECTS OF A SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY ON AN URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
by
Joshua B. Reed

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APPROVED BY: Derek L. Anderson, Ed.D.

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Abstract

The purpose of this review of literature was to describe the implications of a school uniform policy in an urban school district. This paper reviews studies utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods of research on student academic achievement, behavior, and school uniform policy implementation. Results and conclusions from the studies indicated no correlation between school uniforms and academic achievement. Some correlations were shown between school uniform policies and student behavior. Recommendations for improving the effectiveness of school uniform policies in urban school districts include cooperation between school districts and community stakeholders when creating a school uniform policy and implementing the policy at the elementary and middle school levels.

Chapter 1: Introduction

School Uniforms are used all across the country, particularly in parochial and urban school settings. In 1996, approximately three percent of all schools in the United States had a school uniform policy (Gentile & Imberman, 2009). This number grew to 21% in the year 2000. School uniforms rose to prominence in public schools because of “highly publicized murders, beginning in 1983, of youngsters by other youngsters for the purpose of stealing high-status athletic shoes or jackets” (Bodine, 2003, p. 45).

Uniform policies face approval and disdain in many school districts. The emergence of uniform policies has led to discussions over their effectiveness. Administrators often believe uniforms create a safer learning environment while students have said they notice little difference in the school. Some school administrators believe that uniforms can improve discipline and raise academic achievement (Stanley, 1996). Others believe there is a positive correlation between uniforms and test scores (Bodine, 2003). Additionally, some believe that school uniforms provide an equitable learning environment for students (Lopez, 2003). These beliefs have kept school uniform policies in place for many years.

Detractors say that uniforms are an unnecessary burden and infringe on students’ First Amendment rights (Knechtle & Mitchell, 2003). In addition, some minority groups see school uniforms as a restriction on students’ cultural expression of dress rights (Knechtle & Mitchell, 2003). Many school districts assume that uniforms are a way to fix student achievement and behavior problems.

Statement of the problem

A school uniform policy is a fundamental change in the educational environment (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). Students must relinquish some freedom in exchange for a supposed improvement in the educational environment. For this exchange to be worthwhile,

actual benefits to academic achievement and student behavior should be observed. School officials need to be aware of the positive and negative effects of school uniforms before deciding to fundamentally change school policy.

Theoretical Model

The goal of this review is to analyze school uniform policies. Bandura's social learning theory will be used to show how people learn behaviors through watching others. Bandura's theory suggests children learn behaviors by watching the social interactions of those around them (Barling, McEvoy, Tucker, & Turner, 2010).

Research Questions

What are the likely costs, benefits, and implications of instituting a school uniform policy at an urban Ohio school district?

Definition of Terms

Academic Achievement- The combined subject scores on standardized tests (Bodine, 2003).

School Uniform- Clothes or conditions can be a symbol of group membership. Uniforms can reveal someone's role, define a person's boundaries, and promote group goals (Stanley, 1996).

Summary

The goal of this study is to answer the question above. To answer the question, an analysis of literature pertaining to the positive and negative effects, including the likely costs, benefits, and implications of school uniforms will be used. In addition, attention will be given to school uniforms' effects on academic achievement and behavior. Each of these factors will be analyzed through the guise of an Ohio urban high school.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The contents of the literature review will yield information answering the research question asked above. The information in the literature review will pertain to: 1) school uniforms and academic achievement, 2) school uniforms and behavior, 3) policy implementation, and 4) school uniforms costs. The study of these areas will guide the future research recommendations and conclusions found in chapters three and four.

School Uniforms and Academic Achievement

Though there are many arguments for school uniforms, the issue of academic achievement is most pertinent in a society focused on test scores. Arguments abound in the discussion of school uniforms and their relation to academic achievement. Academic achievement, when used in various studies, is the combined subject scores on standardized tests (Bodine, 2003). A lack of quantitative research exists in the area of school uniforms and its effect of academic achievement; so many arguments are based on only a handful of studies.

Brunsma and Rockquemore (1998) studied the effects of school uniforms on behavior, attendance, and academic achievement. Stratified data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS 88) of 1988 and three follow up studies were analyzed to measure school uniforms' influence on the above-mentioned areas. Students selected for the study were in the 8th grade. Due to oversampling of certain minority groups in the NELS 88 study, Brunsma and Rockquemore adjusted the amount of student data used for analysis from the original study's 25,000 students to a number more representative of the United States population. The participants in the study were selected from both public and private schools. Data for the study were gathered using surveys. Areas of categorization were based on independent variables such as race and gender and dependent variables which consisted of student outcomes including academic achievement and problem behaviors. Data from the initial year of the study yielded a

positive correlation between students who wear uniforms and academic achievement ($p < .05$). While a statistically significant correlation was shown, further analysis of this correlation showed that this increase in academic achievement disappeared in subsequent years. Students who were forced to wear uniforms after the initial year of the study had a three-point decrease in standardized test scores. In addition, students who never wore a uniform during the study had little change in test scores (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998). Overall, the authors conclude that little correlation was shown between the use of school uniforms and academic achievement.

The NELS 88 study was effective in showing no correlation between school uniforms and academic achievement in a large population sample. While the sample was large, results could have been impacted by Brunsma and Rockquemore's (1998) adjustment of the sample population. The authors failed to provide tangible information with regards to the sample adjustment. Additionally, the study combined both public and private school students. The combination of different school populations could skew results and makes it difficult to make any concrete judgments about the study's results.

Another quantitative study, conducted in 2009, looked at the effects of school uniforms on academic achievement in public and private school elementary students. Yeung (2009) used data from the longitudinal ECLS-K study, which examines a cohort of elementary school student academic data beginning in kindergarten. Academic data were gathered from students in waves, with one wave of data gathered each year until the students reached the fifth grade. Academic data were gathered from 8,867 students who were randomly chosen using a multistage probability sample design. Student data were gathered using school academic records. In addition to student data, parent, teacher, administrator, and school office staff data were gathered. Yeung (2009) separated the ECLS-K data into two categories, with one being student

data from schools with uniform policies and the other being student data from schools with no uniform policy. A value added approach was used to analyze the ECLS-K information with data being further broken down by school subject, student socio-economic data, and parental involvement. Students who wore school uniforms consistently produced similar academic scores to their non-uniformed peers. Scores further analyzed with regards to socio-economic status showed a decrease in scores for uniformed students with a low socio-economic status. Overall conclusions from the study showed little correlation between school uniforms and academic achievement (Yeung, 2009).

The ECLS-K study supports the results of the earlier NELS 88 study by suggesting little correlation between school uniforms and academic achievement. The ECLS-K shows some relevance to urban schools by revealing a slight negative correlation between low socio-economic students and the use of school uniforms. While no specific reasons are given for this correlation, the data suggests that uniforms should not be treated as an answer to urban schools' academic troubles. The ECLS-K study shares flaws with the NELS 88 study. Both public and private school student data are lumped together making it difficult to ascertain meaningful conclusions about either.

Proponents of school uniforms often cite many reasons for improved academic achievement (Knechtle & Mitchell, 2003). They claim that uniforms produce a safer school environment, increased attendance, and a positive school attitude. More research is needed to paint a clearer picture of school uniforms' impact on academic achievement.

School Uniforms and Behavior

Poor behavior is a problem that has plagued formal education since its inception. A variety of means have been used to try to curtail the issue. School officials have a duty to protect

the safety of their students. In support of this duty, The United States Supreme Court ruled that states have the power to control the conduct of students (Knechtle & Mitchell, 2003). The need for safety and control has led school officials to try new methods of controlling behavior (Cheurprakobkit & Bartsch, 2005). Some methods, such as zero tolerance policies, have been considered unethical, causing school districts to look at other ways to curb problem behaviors (Stefkovich, 2006). In recent years, some urban public schools have implemented uniform policies in hopes of improving student behavior. Administrators have chosen this method because they believe that uniforms have a positive effect on school violence and reduce the need for disciplinary action (Knechtle & Mitchell, 2003). One study that is consistently championed as an example of school uniforms effects on behavior is the Long Beach Unified School District study.

In 1994, the Long Beach Unified School District implemented a mandatory school uniform policy for all of its elementary and middle schools. The policy was implemented as part of a strategy to address the district's overwhelming behavior issues (Stanley, 1996). In concurrence with the policy, the district launched a longitudinal study to analyze the policy's effects on student behavior. In addition to behavioral data, the study surveyed all elementary and middle school teachers (2,050), administrators (65), counselors (97), and middle (12,051) and elementary school students in the 4th and 5th grades (10,325) to obtain information regarding their perception of the school uniform policy. Parents were also surveyed during the summer months for their opinions. Data were collected through the use of an annual all-district survey. Behavioral data were analyzed through the categorization of behavior issues before and after the uniform policy's implementation, while opinion data were placed into positive and negative categories. A significant drop in school discipline issues was shown with suspensions for

elementary and middle school student reducing by 28% and 36% respectively. Additionally, serious crime such as sex offense and vandalism decreased by 74% and 18%. School employee and parent opinion survey data were also positive, with 85.6% of all counselors and 66.1% of all classroom teachers reporting positive effects with regards to the uniform policy. Parents said they felt the effects as well, with 67% reporting they perceived a better school environment. While these behavioral effects were positive, Stanley (1996) suggested that more years of study need to be completed in order to draw a clear correlation between uniforms and student behavior. Other school district safety policy changes could have had an impact on behavior as well. Additionally, study data were hindered due to a limited design. Opinion data were limited to positive and negative categorization which could easily be skewed or misinterpreted.

The Long Beach Unified School District mandatory uniform policy gained national attention for its perceived effects on student behavior. In 1996, President Bill Clinton commended the Long Beach Unified School District on their successful creation and implementation of a mandatory school uniform policy. This commendation in turn led to further adoption of uniform policies in urban schools and to the creation of federal guidance with respect to school uniform policies (Alleyne, LaPoint, Lee, & Mitchell, 2003). The attention placed on school uniforms and behavior led to other studies which sought to confirm or deny a positive correlation.

One such study, conducted by Han (2010), looked at the correlation between urban schools' uniform policies and their crime rates. The study was conducted using the School Survey on Crime and Safety's (SSOCS) 2003-2004 data. A stratified sampling method was used to choose the study's participants from all K-12 public schools. City schools with a minority student population of more than 50% were selected. The analysis, therefore, included 421 urban

schools out of 2,772 samples. Han used a questionnaire that contained 227 questions under eight categories. The questionnaire consisted of three types of choices: a dichotomous variable, a categorical variable, and providing an actual number or percentage. According to the study, approximately 34% of all urban high schools had adopted uniform policies (Han, 2010).

Approximately 44% of elementary and middle schools and 12% of high schools had adopted uniform policies. The study found that schools without uniform policies had more problems with student behavior than schools with uniform policies. A small majority of schools without uniform policies (54.9%) had at least one weapon-related incident, whereas only 38.9% of schools with uniform policies had a weapon-related incident. Incidents relating to firearms, drugs, alcohol, and gangs occurred more in schools without uniform policies than in schools with uniform policies. However, there was a positive correlation between problem behavior in high school students and uniform policies. This was shown with multiple regression analysis once school characteristics such as safety initiatives were controlled for. Elementary and middle schools with uniform policies tended to have fewer behavioral problems than schools without uniform policies, but the opposite correlation was observed in high schools. The authors' findings suggested uniform policies are a viable option for elementary and middle schools, but for high schools, parental involvement, community involvement, and teacher training were more closely correlated with fewer incidents of bad student behavior.

The study had many limitations. Since the data were cross-sectional, the causality among variables could not be determined. Much of the data lacked important detail due to the dichotomous-type choice on the questionnaire. The data included school safety practices and programs for students, parents, and teachers. While the study had flaws, both the Long Beach and SSOCS study data suggest that a correlation between school uniforms and student behavior

may exist. Additionally, both studies suggest that school uniforms could offer positive effects on behavior for elementary and middle school aged students in urban schools.

Student Perceptions of Uniforms

Most studies on school uniforms and behavior include data on school personnel's perception of the policy's effect on behavior. To fully understand the impact of school uniforms on behavior, it might be best to ask those who are forced to wear the uniforms. If there is a correlation between school uniforms and student behavior, then maybe the students would be able to explain the reason.

In the Long Beach Unified School District study mentioned above, 4th and 5th grade elementary and all middle school students were surveyed for their opinions of the school uniform policy. Students felt uniforms did not lessen the occurrence of fights (80.9%) and a majority of students did not feel safer at school (Stanley, 1996). Stanley (1996) could not explain the discrepancies in opinions between the adults and students surveyed in the Long Beach Unified School District study. One hypothesis offered was that students became bored of the school uniforms. In-depth interviews with students could provide a better answer to these discrepancies.

Another study (DaCosta, 2006) looked at the responses of urban high school students to a newly implemented uniform policy. The qualitative study focused on responses of urban high school students to a newly implemented uniform policy about the students' compliance and academic achievement. The longitudinal study, conducted as part of the Student Life in High Schools Project (SLP), was administered to students in major urban school districts in the American Midwest. Twenty-two participants of the SLP study were selected from a stratified random sample of eighth--grade elementary school students who were planning to attend Brookside High School. Data were collected using a series of semi-structured interviews

conducted over a two-year period. The student interviews addressed various topics including school engagement, self-perceptions, family support, teacher support, and school issues. Students frequently referenced school uniforms as part of their responses to the above topics (DaCosta, 2006). Data from the interviews were analyzed by placing general appraisals of the uniform policy into favorable and non-favorable categories. Categorized data were then studied for patterns using theory-based coding. Interviews with the twenty-two students found 75% (n=16) of the students were opposed to the policy. The students who opposed the policy were further questioned about their opposition. Reasons cited by students for opposing the uniform policy included restriction of freedom (n=9), uniform expense (n=4), and policy futility (n=3). Only two students consistently complied with the uniform policy. Many of the students felt the school uniform policy had little impact on the social dynamic of the school and even found ways to express individuality by making minor alterations to the school uniform. DaCosta (2006) concluded that policy noncompliance could have been avoided if the school district had given students input into the implementation of the school uniform policy. Allowing the students to co-design the school uniform and equitable policy enforcement among students were cited as ways to improve policy acceptance. Information from the study had some limitations. Categorization of data was limited to positive and negative answers, leaving little room for detailed analysis.

Both of the above studies suggest that cooperation between uniform policy makers and wearers could improve the results of a district-wide uniform policy. The manner in which uniform policies are implemented could drastically impact whether a school uniform policy is successful in an urban school district.

Implementation

The implementation of school uniform policies can influence how uniforms are perceived in a school district. The Long Beach Unified School District recommends a series of strategies to ensure positive implementation (Stanley, 1996). These strategies include: (1) a unified school board in support of the policy, (2) collaboration with parents, schools, and community members, (3) resources to defend the school district against legal challenges, (4) support of school administration, and (5) a plan to provide uniforms to low-income students (LBUSD, 1997). An additional strategy suggested by some researchers is to begin implementation with younger students (Alleyne, LaPoint, Lee, & Mitchell, 2003).

One study conducted by Alleyne, LaPoint, Lee, and Mitchell (2003) looked at student and educator views on student dress and behavior. The study was conducted in a middle school in the northeastern United States. The middle school used for the study had implemented a uniform policy the previous year. Data were collected from 16 educators and 199 students in the sixth through eighth grades using quantitative surveys. For the surveys, students and teachers were asked identical questions which covered four areas including 1) demographic background, 2) knowledge about dress and behavior, 3) attitudes about dress and behavior, and 4) personal experiences and practices. Data from the survey were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and chi-square tests to measure differences in student and educator answers. Results from school personnel surveys showed that a majority believe student dress impacts behavior. Data from student surveys showed that younger students were more likely to agree with school personnel answers than older students. Alleyne, LaPoint, Lee, and Mitchell (2003) concluded that younger students were found to be more receptive to school uniforms due to their willingness to obey parents and teachers.

The study had several limitations. First, the sample size of educators was limited with only 16 respondents. The difference in sample size between students and educators could skew results. Second, the middle school used for the survey only had a uniform policy for one year. The limited duration of the uniform policy makes the difference in answers between sixth and eighth grade students suspect because the eighth grade students did not have a uniform policy the previous year. This sudden change in policy could have contributed toward the differences in younger and older student results.

The literature on school uniform policy implementation suggests the need for cooperation between schools and their community. Without cooperation, districts could face opposition from community in the form legal challenges. In addition, it is important to have support from district administrators as well. Administrators will be faced with having to enforce uniform policies so their understanding and support of the policy is paramount.

Uniform Cost

There is limited research on school uniform costs. Some proponents of school uniforms believe they are cheaper than other school clothing. According to the New York Post (2010), American families spent an average of \$729.50 on school clothes and supplies in 2010.

An article on Uniform Web showed figures for a year's worth (five tops and five bottoms) of uniforms. This cost is listed as \$150. FrenchToast.com, a website that sells school uniforms, listed specific prices on their website. For boys' uniform tops and bottoms in sizes 8-14, prices ranged between \$9 and \$20 (<http://www.frenchtoast.com/>). Young Men sizes ranged between \$8 and \$41. For girls' uniform tops and bottoms in sizes 7-14, prices ranged between \$7.50 and \$29. Young Women sizes ranged between \$13 and \$21. Sweaters were generally the most expensive type of item, and short sleeve tops were generally the cheapest.

There are several limitations associated with an attempt to compare the two figures provided for school clothing costs. The New York Post's figure encompassed all back-to-school spending rather than just clothing. This included school supplies and electronic devices such as cell phones. Also, the Uniform Web article did not include footwear or outerwear. There are many families who would not spend anywhere near the national average on school clothing. For many of these families, \$150 would be too expensive for school uniforms. Overall, the literature on school uniform cost is lacking and requires future study.

Summary

No correlation was shown between school uniforms and academic achievement. A negative correlation was shown between uniforms and student behavior in elementary and middle school students, while a positive correlation was shown for high school students. However, students did not perceive uniforms to affect behavior problems in their schools. Cooperation between school districts and community stakeholders is necessary when implementing a uniform policy. Research on school uniform costs is limited, so estimates provided by retailers and newspapers are the primary sources of information.

Chapter III: Results and Analysis Relative to the Problem

The literature reviewed on school uniforms provides some insight into the possible benefits of school uniforms in urban schools. The literature review produced some trends with regards to: 1) school uniforms and academic achievement, 2) school uniforms and behavior, 3) implementation, and 4) school uniform costs. These trends will be used to answer the research question and guide the recommendations and conclusions found in Chapter Four.

School Uniforms and Academic Achievement

Neither the NELS 88 nor the ECLS-K study showed a correlation between the use of school uniforms and academic achievement. In terms of student age, a correlation was still not shown. The ECLS-K study focused on students beginning in kindergarten and measured their academic data yearly until the fifth grade. Yeung's (2009) analysis showed no change in student academic achievement. The NELS 88 study measured students beginning in the eighth grade and measured data yearly for three years. Brunsmma and Rockquemore's (1998) analysis showed no correlation between academic achievement and the use of school uniforms. Together, these studies show that academic achievement was not impacted for either elementary or secondary age students.

These studies are useful in showing little statistical change in student academic achievement in urban schools. The studies themselves leave many unanswered questions. First, both studies used mixed samples of students making it difficult to retrieve clear information for urban schools. Second, neither study is clear on whether the uniform policy was recently implemented or had existed for the students entire academic careers. These issues make it

difficult to give a clear answer to the impact of school uniforms on academic achievement in urban schools.

School Uniforms and Behavior

The Long Beach Unified School District suggested a lower number of behavior incidences when school uniform policies were introduced. In addition to a statistically lower number of behavior incidences, school personnel and parents perceived positive outcomes of uniforms. The SSOCS study also suggested a lower number of behavior incidences in the presence of a uniform policy, but only at the elementary and middle school levels. For high school students, the SSOCS study showed a higher number of behavior problems in the presence of uniform policies.

Since these studies both exclusively looked at urban school districts, they were useful in showing how uniform policies affect behavior in urban schools. The Long Beach Unified School District and SSOCS studies both showed that uniform policies can lower the number of behavior problems for elementary and middle school students. This was not shown for high school students.

Many issues remain unclear. The studies did not report any specific school-wide behavior policies. A decrease in behavior problems may have been a result of the implementation of such a policy. The SSOCS study did not report how long uniform policies had been in place. Neither study reported long-term effects of uniform policies on behavior problems.

Student Perceptions of Uniforms

The literature showed negative student perception of school uniform policies. Fourth and fifth graders in the Long Beach Unified School District study overwhelmingly reported that their

uniform policy did not make them feel safer. The SLP study showed similar results for secondary students. Students in the SLP study opposed uniforms because of limitations on freedom of expression, cost, and perceived futility. Furthermore, most students did not adhere to the policy.

Both studies were useful in showing poor student perception of uniforms in urban schools. Moreover, they were useful in showing this trend at all age levels. It is very clear from the literature that urban students have a negative perception of uniforms for a variety of reasons. Still, it is unclear why students from both studies believed their uniform policies were ineffective in lowering behavior problems, when a negative correlation has been shown between uniform policies and behavior problems.

Implementation

Study of the literature on school uniform implementation plans yielded several key themes. First, the school needs to engage with parents, students, and the community when designing a school uniform policy in order to avoid opposition and legal challenges (Essex, 2006). As pointed out by Stanley (1996), engagement with school community stakeholders can help schools to avoid legal challenges when implementing a school uniform policy.

A second theme that emerged from the literature on school uniform policy implementation is the effectiveness of school uniforms on younger students. In the SSOCS study, Han (2010) found that behavior incidents among elementary and middle school students dropped when school uniform policies were implemented, while behavior incidents rose for high school students. Similarly, Alleyne, LaPoint, Lee, and Mitchell (2003) found that sixth grade students were more likely than their eighth-grade peers to agree with their teachers' positive

views on school uniforms. The similar findings of these studies showed younger students may be more receptive to school uniforms than their older counterparts.

In terms of implementation, the literature reviewed on the subject offers clear recommendations. Unlike the literature on academic achievement, the implementation literature was focused on urban schools. This focus offers a clearer picture to urban school administrators who may be considering a school uniform plan.

Uniform Costs

Uniform cost is a part of the school uniform equation that seems to get little attention from researchers. The clearest information on school uniform cost is garnered from newspaper articles and clothing web sites. The cost provided by the New York Post and FrenchToast.com were estimates for school clothing costs. Thus, it is difficult to provide meaningful information as to their impact on urban schools. The only information pertaining to urban schools found in the literature was the recommendations made by the Long Beach Unified School District. The Long Beach Unified School District recommended that districts make a plan to provide school uniforms to low income families.

Chapter IV: Recommendations and Conclusion

The review and analysis of literature on school uniforms' impact on academic achievement, behavior, cost, and implementation revealed differing information. Specific recommendations will be made with regards to 1) school uniforms and academic achievement, 2) school uniforms and behavior, and 3) school uniform plan implementation and cost.

Recommendation

Both the NELS 88 and ECLS-K studies revealed no correlation between the use of school uniforms and academic achievement (Brunsma & Rockquemore, 1998; Yeung, 2009). Due to this lack of correlation, it is this author's opinion that school uniforms should not be implemented for the reason of improving academic achievement. School districts have many other avenues available to improve student academic achievement. Programs such as additional teacher training and at-risk student intervention could be more viable options to improve academic achievement in urban schools. A focus should be given to these other options if a district's goal is to improve academic achievement.

The literature reviewed on school uniforms and behavior offered some correlation between the use of school uniforms and lower incidences of problem behaviors. More specifically, uniforms have the most positive impact on elementary and middle school students (Han, 2010). In addition, the literature reviewed on behavior suggested that parents and school personnel perceived a safer school environment when uniforms were introduced (Stanley, 1996). Students surveyed with regards to school uniforms and behavior stated that they did not feel safer when a school uniform policy was implemented. The literature was not clear if uniforms were solely responsible for the changes in behavior incidences. Given the correlation between

school uniforms and student behavior, uniforms appear to be a viable option for elementary and middle-school administrators in urban school districts.

Care must be taken when implementing the uniform policy to ensure that school personnel, parents, and students perceive benefits to the school environment. To improve student cooperation and attitude, it is recommended that students be consulted when designing and implementing a school uniform policy. This cooperation between the school and community should be maintained when it comes to the cost of school uniforms. As economic problems are more pronounced in urban areas, schools must take care to ensure that all students have the ability to obtain school uniforms.

Recommendations for Further Research

Much of the literature pertaining to school uniforms focuses on large groups of students from disparate communities, making it difficult to ascertain specific information about any single group. Additional research needs to be completed in order to properly answer the research question. A future study should focus on a single urban school district.

The sample for the study would include all students, parents, and teachers in an Ohio urban district. This sample would allow for simultaneous study of a school uniform policy's effects on elementary, middle, and high school students. Data would be collected through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods. Student academic and behavioral data should be collected before and after the uniform policy is implemented. This would allow for a direct comparison to determine the immediate impact of school uniforms on academic achievement and student behavior. Further longitudinal study would reveal the effects of school uniforms on academic achievement and student behavior over time. In addition, a random selection of students, parents, and school personnel should be interviewed in order to gauge their perceptions

of the school uniform policy. Interview questions should be centered on the perceived effect of school uniforms on academic achievement, student behavior, and how the policy was implemented.

In addition to areas of study listed above, a further quantitative study should be completed with regards to the cost of the school uniform policy. Data should be collected on the total cost each parent incurred when purchasing a year's worth of school uniforms. This data should produce a total average cost of school uniforms for the district where the study was performed.

Conclusion

There is no consensus on the overall effect of a school uniform policy in an urban school district. However, trends can be observed in various categories of study. Literature pertaining to school uniforms and academic achievement suggested no correlation between the two. Studies reviewed on school uniforms and behavior suggested a negative correlation between uniform policies and student problem behaviors in elementary and middle school students, but a positive correlation in high school students. The literature showed that student perceptions were negative at all age levels. Many students in the studies believed their uniform policies were ineffective at controlling problem behavior. Cooperation between the school district and community stakeholders was shown to improve implementation of a school uniform policy. It is difficult to draw a conclusion regarding costs, as literature pertaining to it is limited.

Since no correlation has been shown between student academic achievement and uniform policies, a uniform policy should not be implemented solely for the purpose of improving academic achievement. However, uniform policies are recommended to urban elementary and middle schools looking to curb problem behaviors. These policies should be used in conjunction

with other behavior programs. Students, community members, and parents should be involved in the creation of the uniform policy. This cooperation should limit legal challenges and increase student satisfaction with the policy.

It is recommended that further research be done into the areas of academic achievement, student behavior, implementation, and cost. This study should focus on a single school district over a number of years.

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