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Executive Development

The Impact of the Uniform on the Denton Firefighter

Randy L. Nickerson

Denton Fire Department

Denton, Texas

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Certification Statement

I hereby certify that this paper constitutes my own product, that where the language of others is set forth quotation marks so indicate, and that appropriate credit is given where I have used the language, ideas, expressions, or writings of another.

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Abstract

Descriptive research focused on the disruption caused by myriad uniform choices in the Denton Fire Department (DFD). The impact of uniform choice on DFD, other fire departments, and private industry was explored. Existing literature was reviewed, a survey was provided to other fire departments, DFD firefighters, and citizens, and personal interviews were conducted with fire department and citizen stakeholders.

After determining literature reviewed show uniforms have a favorable impact, synthesized results of the survey showed areas of commonality between firefighters and citizens, and stakeholder interview responses provided insight on the issues, it was recommended DFD administration and operations engage in dialogue to reach a compromise on suitable uniform choices representing acceptable comfort and a professional appearance.

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The Impact of the Uniform on the Denton Firefighter

Introduction

For centuries the uniform has been used as a means of achieving identity and projecting authority. It seems that the public is more compliant and accords more respect to individuals when the uniform they are wearing appears official and shows a higher rank or position of authority (Mansel, 2005).

Many groups, including airlines, volunteer groups, and major retailers have capitalized on the uniform as a means of gaining immediate recognition from the public. Military organizations rely heavily on it as a source of identification and stratification. According to Rubinstein (2001) it is possible to achieve a specific identity solely by wearing a uniform. Its widespread use in society seems to agree with this assumption.

The fire service is certainly dependent on the uniform as a way of communicating to the public the essence of its mission. It serves as a way of delineating first responders from the general public during chaotic situations where it is important firefighters be easily recognized.

Fire service uniform styles have changed over the years just as society's tastes have changed. Formal shirts and jackets have given way to more comfortable styles. Short pants have become acceptable as part of the everyday uniform. Fabrics have changed as developers have strived for the safest product available (National Fire Protection Association [NFPA] 1975, 2002).

One result of these changes is that myriad variations now exist within the Denton Fire Department (DFD). Firefighters, like the general population, accept change at different rates. If they become comfortable with something—say a favorite sweatshirt—they are reluctant to give it up. Without absolute deadlines for moving to the next generation of uniform, last year's fashion statement becomes today's mismatched uniform.

The research problem is this: the disparate appearance of uniforms within the DFD is causing considerable discord when addressed as an issue of professionalism. Common ground is being sought between comfort and professional appearance.

Operations firefighters in Denton must be provided uniforms that allow them to function comfortably in adverse environments. Command staff wishes to find a uniform that presents a professional appearance while affording an acceptable level of comfort. Personal preference of all involved is a factor when focusing on color and style for shirts and pants.

With diffuse and subtle choices available, it is difficult for members of the department to know what is acceptable and what is not under current guidelines. Administrators are accused of micromanaging if they comment on a firefighter they see wearing an unacceptable uniform. The confusion distracts administrators and creates animosity between divisions when the uniform becomes an issue of professional behavior. Decisions concerning discipline of those not in proper uniform become inconsistent when administrators must decide what is worth pursuing and what is considered trivial.

Descriptive research will be conducted to explore how the uniform, in its many variations, impacts firefighters and the citizens served. The questions to be explored are (a) what impact does wearing identical uniforms have on an organization, (b) what is the impact of uniform choice in other fire departments, (c) what is the impact of uniform choice in the DFD, (d) how does the public served by the DFD perceive firefighters wearing dissimilar uniforms, and (e) how does the public served by the DFD perceive firefighters wearing identical uniforms?

The research purpose is to provide a conspectus on the impact the uniform has on Denton firefighters as perceived by them and the public they serve. The opinion of all available stakeholders within the department will be considered and reported. By compiling this

information the DFD will be able to incorporate today's socially acceptable dress standard into the uniform guidelines while maintaining an outstanding professional appearance.

Background and Significance

Established in 1874, the DFD is a career (paid) department providing full emergency service. It is comprised of four divisions (operations, administration, emergency management, and prevention) with 181 employees. It currently provides service to a 69 square mile area. Denton is 40 miles north of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, in north central Texas. Growth over the years has brought adjoining jurisdictions into contact with the Denton city limits on three sides.

In April, 1979, as a recruit firefighter, the researcher received five dress style (collar, pockets with flaps, button-up front) shirts and five pairs of pants. Both were of polyester blend material. This was the only sanctioned uniform for operations personnel. However, the recruit quickly noticed shirts with a different look.

Prior to 1978 a different manufacturer had been used. The shirts provided by that company were made of 100% cotton, a slightly darker shade of blue, and had a flap covering the buttons down the front. According to an officer who was a firefighter during that period (Officer B, personal communication, December 4, 2006) the older shirts were allowed because the Chief of the Department did not wish to forbid the use of serviceable apparel, citing budget constraints. By 1981 the older shirts were worn beyond practical use, and were no longer an option for wear. This effectively took the department back to having only one uniform.

When a new Chief of the Department arrived in November, 1985 he commissioned a redesigned department logo. This caused a mix of shirts with differing sleeve patches. Attrition of the older shirts took place over a four year period, once again limiting the options available.

Operations personnel were allowed to wear t-shirts for the first time in 1987. Guidelines were vague, and soon there were t-shirts with pockets, without pockets, and unlimited shades of faded blue. White lettering was stenciled on the back and over the right chest area.

It was recognized that doing heavy work in a hot environment was less stressful on firefighters wearing the cotton shirts. The problem remained that the t-shirt did not present the professional appearance that the department leadership seemed to desire.

In 1999 a major shift in uniform policy was made. Polo type shirts were instituted as the normal daily wear. T-shirts were allowed under standard operating procedure (SOP) with clear directives concerning when and where they could be worn. The current issue of non-compliance with the SOP remains, however. Professional appearance now seems to be more subjective, with comfort being the defining attribute for uniform selection (Appendix A).

In January, 2004 the department's philosophy of discipline began to change. A desire for consistency was the dominant factor driving the change. One of the most inconsistent areas within the department was the selection and wearing of the everyday uniform. Factions lobbied tirelessly for the uniform of their choice. Much more emotion was attached to this issue than was expected. It remains a salient issue today.

Debate is still occurring over what an appropriate uniform looks like. It has produced many days of discussion and much frustration amongst all stakeholders. The Executive Development course of the Executive Fire Officer Program actually cites similar situations to illustrate leadership techniques and teach aspiring fire administrators to lead effectively (personal observation, 2006).

One operational objective of the United States Fire Administration (USFA) is, "To respond appropriately in a timely manner to emerging issues" (Executive Fire Officer Program [EFOP], 2003, p. II-2). At the time of this applied research project the issue of uniform choice is

ongoing in the DFD. Through physical proximity and shared values and missions, nearby fire departments experience many problems seen in the DFD. Defining the impact of the uniform on the firefighter is one opportunity to increase the level of professionalism in the fire service as a whole.

Literature Review

Information was gathered for this applied research project through non-periodicals, a periodical, a survey, and personal interviews. Google™ Book Search, University of North Texas Willis Library, and the Firewise Library were used as tools for identifying suitable sources. Zoomerang™ (http://info.zoomerang.com/) was used as the distribution point for a survey.

Sources were reviewed that explore the uniform as utilized within the commercial (retail and service industries) and private worlds (military and public service). From the airline industry to retail and service professions, the impact of the uniform and the psychology of how it affects the public was reviewed.

Barbaro (2006), Hutchings (2001), Mansel (2005), McCoy (2005), Rubinstein (2001), and Smith and Mackie (2000) all discuss the power the uniform wields in influencing the behavior and attitude of the public toward those wearing some fashion of uniform. The authors' works deal with the uniform as worn by various groups and persons in general. They contend that a uniform commands respect and obedience to authority, albeit to different degrees, when worn in almost any capacity as part of an organized group.

Craik (2005) discusses the affect of the uniform on the wearer and the interaction between uniformed individuals and the public. She looks at the behavior of the wearer and the expectations of the observer.

Radford (2004) pays tribute to those wearing uniforms by calling them patriots. He recognizes the association between the selfless service of the men and women and the uniforms

they wear. His view was developed by observing the actions of those uniformed individuals involved in the events of September 11, 2001.

NFPA 1975 (2002) deals with the type of materials to be used in uniforms. Prior to 1999 flame resistant material was required in uniforms supplied by fire departments. The inclusion of cotton and wool fabric allowed for more comfortable designs to be adopted. The standard does not address the issue of style.

Denton Fire Department Operations Manual (2006) details all categories of uniforms available to firefighters. It defines when each is to be worn, and is specific about the prohibition of certain combinations being worn. The document is current, having been revised during the ongoing debate discussed herein.

Buchanan (2003) stresses the importance of appearing professional in volunteer departments where firefighters must routinely respond to calls in whatever he or she may be wearing at the time. He suggests several things that allow flexibility while maintaining a continuity in the appearance of the crews that ultimately respond to the scene of an incident.

Clark (2001-2002) is included in the literature review because of his realization that the uniform has a tremendous impact on the public.

A survey was developed (Appendix A) that asked for the opinion of respondents who would have first hand knowledge of the requested information. The survey was provided to DFD personnel as a group. Other departments were surveyed as a group, thus exploring whether or not a correlation exists between the DFD and fire departments providing similar services.

Citizens were asked to answer the same questions, but from the perspective of watching firefighters during daily routines. All respondents were asked to give demographic information about themselves.

Results of the survey were totaled and contrasted (Appendix B) to graphically show how the perception of DFD firefighters correlates to that of firefighters in other departments, and how the perception of firefighters correlates to that of the public they serve. Demographic information was included in the analysis. A free-text field was included at the end of the survey (Appendix C), giving respondents an opportunity to express anything he or she might want to add. All surveys were anonymous.

A member of the DFD command staff was interviewed (Appendix D) on November 21, 2006. He has a major role in the choice and procurement of uniforms and administering the SOPs pertaining to uniforms. He has been involved in the evolution of a philosophy of enhanced professionalism in training, education, skill acquisition, and the appearance of firefighters on the street.

A company officer of DFD was interviewed (Appendix D) on November 22, 2006. He has been influential in the style of uniform worn and its procurement for over 15 years. He has a significant role in deciding what style uniform will be worn by DFD firefighters.

Two interviews were conducted through a series of emails with an Assistant Chief of a department within 50 miles of Denton, and a chief officer of a department adjoining the city limits of Denton. These officers and the DFD officers were asked the same questions (Appendix D).

To honor the researcher's assurance that all interviewees would remain anonymous a pseudonym will be used when they are cited in text. Officer A, Officer B, etc. will identify fire department personnel. Department A and Department B will identify the two fire departments discussed. Citizen A, Citizen B, etc. will identify citizen respondents.

The researcher reviewed work that looked at uniforms utilized in industry and retail, military organizations, and the fire service. All uniformed organizations are concerned with

image and the desire to succeed at their respective endeavors. In private industry that success translates to profitability. In public service organizations credibility, compliance, and respect are the desired effect.

Regardless of the perspective of the reviewed work the impact appears to be the same. While an observer may have a different expectation of the person wearing it, depending on the sector of society it is observed in (Wal-Mart employee or firefighter), research shows that the uniform and the way it is worn have a profound affect on society. It gives the wearer a higher level of credibility than would otherwise be afforded. It appears to have a positive effect on the behavior of the wearer, also.

Procedures

Research Procedures

Research began by compiling a list of published works relevant to the issue of the impact of the uniform on its wearer. Each identified source was then studied in-depth to determine its relevance. Sources were selected that look at uniforms as worn by civilian groups, military organizations, and the fire service.

A survey (Appendix A) was used to assess the contemporary view of firefighters and citizens who may have observed firefighters in action. It was distributed through the Zoomerang™ website. This service allows the user control over the survey format. Once a survey is constructed, the owner (the researcher) is provided a link that takes respondents directly to it. This allows the owner to control access to the survey by providing the link to only appropriate respondents.

All respondents remained anonymous. The owner of a Zoomerang™ survey has no way of knowing who among those provided with the link participated. One can only track the total number of respondents who answer each question. Figures reported were compiled and

expressed as percentages in analyzing the results (Appendix B). Free text responses offered at the end of the survey were collected and reported verbatim (Appendix C).

Questions were asked that mirrored four of the five research questions originally posed. These pertained to the impact of uniforms within the fire service (see introduction). Questions not specifically related to the original research questions explored issues arising from the choice of uniforms within a fire department and the impact those issues have on the professional health of a fire department. These indirect inquiries ultimately led to a cogent conclusion regarding the original research questions.

Questions were structured to allow a response on one of two spectrums. As appropriate to the question, respondents had the option of answering (a) essential, (b) extremely important, (c) somewhat important, or (d) not important. Other questions were answered as having (a) major impact, (b) moderate impact, (c) minor impact, or (d) no impact.

Two versions of the survey were developed. One was directed to career and volunteer firefighters. In the other, the same questions were reworded to be appropriate when asked to citizens who may have observed or interacted with firefighters providing services to the public. This version was directed to Denton citizens.

Citizen respondents were asked about the nature of their relationship to firefighters. This was considered in the results as relevant to the level of bias that might be anticipated from the respondents.

Several questions were asked on both versions of the survey requesting demographic information. Age, gender, and education level were queried on both the public and fire service version. This allowed a more accurate picture of the population represented. Questions concerning rank and department details were included on the version available to firefighters.

All DFD personnel were provided the link to the survey. It was identical to the other fire service version, but the responses were segregated from those of other fire departments. Of the 181 employees of the DFD, 87 responded.

Approximately 350 firefighters from outside departments were offered the survey link. Of these, 103 completed it. This group was attained through 17 contacts the researcher developed during the National Fire Academy Executive Development class of 2006 and the personal acquaintance of 11 officers in departments that interact often with the DFD. Each was asked to make the website link available to their respective department personnel. Results from these other departments were tabulated as a group. Fire departments across the United States were represented in the survey responses. Departments responding were either career or career and volunteer (combination) departments.

The public population targeted was anyone likely to have had occasion to witness, either first-hand or as a bystander, a working fire service crew, thus observing the way the crew was dressed. The survey was offered to 250 undergraduate students enrolled in the University of North Texas psychology program. Dr. Bert Hayslip, a professor in the program, delivered the website link to his students during a regular semester session. Each student who successfully completed the survey received one point toward their final grade. Of this group, 73 completed the survey.

Personal interviews (Appendix D) were conducted with four fire officers known to the researcher to be formally involved with the uniform selection and administration within their respective departments. Two of the officers work for the DFD and were interviewed in person. Two officers from other departments were interviewed through a series of telephone calls and emails.

The interview with Officer A was conducted by appointment in his office on November 21, 2006. After assuring him that all conversation was confidential the questions were asked verbatim from a written copy (Appendix D). All responses were written down verbatim. The interview lasted approximately 35 minutes.

Officer C was interviewed on November 22, 2006 at his assigned fire station. He was on duty as the supervisor of an engine crew. An assurance of confidentiality was given and the same questions were asked that were used in the other interviews (Appendix D). His responses were written down verbatim. The interview lasted approximately 25 minutes.

Beginning on December 12, 2006, Officers B and D were contacted by telephone and asked to participate in the research project. The project was explained, as well as the basic content of the questions to be asked via email. They were assured that all responses would remain confidential.

The questions were emailed to both. Once responses were received follow-up questions were asked, through email, to both officers. The entire process occurred over three days.

Departments A and B were chosen because of (a) their dissimilar size to each other, (b) geographical proximity to DFD, (c) known cultural similarity to DFD, (d) the composition of personnel being career in Department A and combination in Department B, and (e) the researcher's knowledge of the officers' involvement in their respective departments.

Research Limitations

A primary limitation encountered in this project was the anonymity of survey respondents. Citizen respondents, most of whom were collegians, may have been more concerned with receiving extra credit in their course work than actually responding honestly to the survey. Completing it may have been more important than taking time to truthfully answer all questions.

Seventy-five percent of the public respondents were under 25 years of age. Approximately 80% of the firefighter respondents were between 26 and 50 years of age. Life experience cannot be discounted as a factor in the formation of opinions about the world we live in.

Anonymous firefighters may have skewed their responses if an ulterior motive on the part of the researcher was perceived, or if they believe the outcome could become punitive toward their department. The veracity of respondents could be questioned.

The vested interest and personal bias of fire officers interviewed must be considered. The researcher, being intimately involved in the research problem, had to be vigilant of personal bias affecting the underlying theme of the project.

Results

Results of Research Question A

The impact of a uniform on an organization, which is the original research question, appears to be an intangible but predictable behavior observable in those wearing a uniform and in the public they encounter. Those wearing a uniform seem to be aware of a responsibility toward the sponsoring organization. They understand they are authorized agents and that they should act accordingly (Craik, 2005).

Those who recognize the wearer of a uniform as a person of authority are likely to give that person more respect than someone not wearing a uniform, according to Rubinstein (2001). She illustrates that an actor wearing a police officer's uniform can convince the public to act in a certain way simply because of the uniform. Even when the actor intentionally exhibited unprofessional behavior, those around her—including real police officers—were willing to overlook it, presumably because of the uniform (Rubinstein, 2001).

Society has come to expect certain behavior from those wearing uniforms identifying them as members of a specific group (Craik, 2005). Conversely, society exhibits certain predictable behavior when interacting with uniformed persons. We respond to those in recognizable uniforms by being more respectful and compliant to their demands than someone not in uniform (Smith & Mackie, 2000). We expect those who wear the familiar shirt, tie, and hat of an airline pilot to be capable of flying an airplane. We entrust our lives to them primarily because they look like the trained professionals we have come to recognize as pilots.

Barbaro (2006) believes that a uniform can affect the way an employee perceives his or her status in society. Wal-Mart is considering changing from the familiar blue vests to polo type shirts and khaki pants. According to Barbaro, if employees are comfortable in their attire they will be happier in their job, thus projecting a positive image on the company. It then follows, he thinks, employees will be more productive, which is the ultimate goal in a retail business.

Results of Research Question B

The intent of the research question was to examine the impact of the uniform in other fire departments. A survey was distributed to fire departments from Oregon to New Hampshire. Two chief officers from departments near Denton were interviewed.

Interviews with officers in other departments.

Officers from Departments A and B described similar uniform options available to their operations personnel. Interviews with these officers revealed similar beliefs about the impact of uniform choice on their firefighters. While both have similar guidelines governing acceptable combinations of uniforms, subtle differences were noted.

Officer B is a member of administration in a department of 150 employees. The municipality is approximately 50 miles from Denton. The urban nature of their fire district is

very similar to that of DFD. He interacts with DFD officers often at joint training exercises and professional organization meetings.

Along with a workplace advisory committee, Officer B helps determine the uniform worn by operations firefighters. The Fire Chief must give final approval to any changes; however, Officer B says the Chief almost always goes along with recommendations made by staff and the committee (Officer B, personal communication, December 7, 2006).

Officer D picks the uniform worn by firefighters in his department of 40 paid and 15 volunteer firefighters. He allows input from operations personnel, but has ultimate say in what is worn. His department recently transitioned from an all-volunteer force to a combination department. He has been closely involved in the evolution of the department since the change. With common boundaries between this department and Denton, the two work closely on a daily basis.

At Department A button-up shirts and long pants are required for company inspections and public education events (Officer B, personal communication, November 22, 2006). The standard duty shirt at Department B is a polo type shirt. It is worn for inspections and special events. Button-up shirts are not provided at Department B (Officer D, personal communication, November 22, 2006).

T-shirts are allowed during certain times (e.g. during work-outs, late evenings) at both departments (Officers B & D, personal communications, November 22, 2006). Long-sleeved or short-sleeved t-shirts may be worn by firefighters at Department A (Officer B, personal communication, November 23, 2006). Only short-sleeved t-shirts are allowed at Department B (Officer D, personal communication, November 23, 2006).

Both departments allow the wearing of caps although guidelines for when it may be worn differ (Officers B & D, personal communications, December 12, 2006). Caps may not be worn

off-duty or turned backwards by firefighters at Department A (Officer B, personal communication, December 12, 2006). According to Officer D there are no restrictions on when or where caps may be worn at Department B, but firefighters must, "show respect to others!" (Officer D, personal communication, December 12, 2006). Short pants are worn at Department A during warm weather (Officer B, personal communication, December 8, 2006). After a trial period at Department B short pants are no longer allowed (Officer D, personal communication, December 8, 2006).

Officer B believes crew integrity (uniform wise) is important because it makes identifying firefighters easier. He also believes that identical uniforms promote pride in the profession and in the department association. Officer B states the system his department uses works well, and he is satisfied with the result it produces (Officer B, personal communication, December 12, 2006).

Officer D believes that identically uniformed crews get more respect from the public. He thinks it promotes pride in the firefighters and in the job they are doing. All are expected to wear the same uniform while responding to calls. He stated that while most of his firefighters agree with the uniform choices made in his department, some would always complain (Officer D, personal communication, December 7, 2006).

After a period of trial and error Officer D is now satisfied with his department's uniform selection process. Early in his tenure a firefighter was allowed considerable control over the process of selection and vendor choice with unacceptable results. The department was overcharged on some items, and the style choices were not acceptable to Officer D. This experience prompted him to begin exercising more control over the process (Officer D, personal communication, December 7, 2006).

Buchanan (2003) believes there should be a compromise in departments utilizing volunteers. He states that volunteers should be required to display a department logo in some fashion when responding to emergency calls. He thinks a professional appearance should be balanced with the necessity of volunteers responding to the scene.

The volunteers in Department B, a combination department, must adhere to strict requirements concerning their response to emergency scenes. Firefighters living within the corporate limits must respond from the fire station to calls. He or she must wear the same uniform as on-duty paid firefighters. Volunteer officers may respond directly to emergency scenes, but must be in uniform upon arrival. He or she must also wear the same uniform as paid personnel when responding. Volunteer firefighters living outside the corporate limits must allot time to come to the station and work a prescribed shift. He or she may not respond directly to emergency scenes (Officer D, personal communication, December 7, 2006).

Survey of firefighters in other departments.

In the survey offered to firefighters outside DFD (Appendix A), 94% consider the uniform extremely important or essential in identifying firefighters to the public. Slightly fewer, at 75%, think it extremely important or essential that all firefighters on a crew wear identical uniforms.

A major issue in uniform choice is whether it should be chosen for comfort or professional appearance. Of the firefighters responding, 84% believe that a uniform being chosen for comfort is somewhat or extremely important. Comfort is essential according to 14% of the respondents. When asked how important professional appearance is, 87% think it somewhat or extremely important. Five percent believe it is essential.

When asked to quantify the importance of who should choose the uniform style, 85% of respondents think it essential or extremely important that the firefighters be allowed to choose,

while 64% believe it is essential or extremely important that fire department management be allowed to choose.

When asked how important the uniform is in the firefighter's self-perception as a professional, 79% of the respondents think it essential or extremely important.

When asked if the uniform is a factor in the taxpayers' perception of the value gained from their tax dollars, results were divided. While 48% think the uniform is essential or extremely important, 52% think it somewhat or not important.

Firefighters were queried about the importance of the uniform to citizens being assisted by firefighters, and also about family members of citizens being assisted by firefighters. In the question of citizens being assisted, 36% of the respondents think the uniform is essential or extremely important. Responding to the question of whether they believe family members think the uniform is important, 44% think it essential or extremely important.

When asked if they believe it important for firefighters' uniforms to be clean, without smoke smell or visible grime, 93% believe it essential or extremely important. No respondents thought it was not important.

Respondents were asked if they thought wearing a baseball style cap had any bearing on the perception of firefighters as professionals. Seventy-one percent believe wearing a cap has minor or no impact on the public's perception of them as professionals.

When asked about the impact of a uniform on implying a firefighter's trustworthiness, 73% think it has minor or no impact.

As an indication of firefighters being well-trained professionals, 88% believe the uniform has a moderate or major impact on the public.

Whether the uniform inspires the public's trust in firefighters performing in a professional manner, 83% believe it has a moderate or major impact.

A majority of the firefighters from other departments involved in this research seem to believe the uniform is an important identifier for them. They think it implies they are trustworthy, well trained, and will perform in a professional manner. The impact of the uniform in other departments evokes differing opinions concerning appearance and choice, however.

There remains debate between choosing a uniform for comfort or professional appearance. Only half of respondents think comfort is essential or extremely important, yet 73% believe professional appearance is somewhat or not important.

The structure of the questions may have lent some confusion to the issue. Respondents were asked to quantify the importance of comfort on one question and professional appearance on the next. A clearer view may have been garnered by allowing one choice exclusive of the other.

Results of Research Question C

To determine the impact of the uniform within the DFD the researcher attempted to summarize the opinions of a majority of the stakeholders in the department. The officers interviewed represent positions of authority, with the ability to influence any decision made that affects the department.

The survey designed specific to firefighters was made available to all members of the DFD through Zoomerang™. Of the 181 employees receiving the link 87 completed the survey. The entire results of the survey may be found in Appendix B.

The uniform choices available to DFD firefighters are comparable to those in neighboring departments (Departments A and B). Polo type shirts are worn as the primary duty shirt. T-shirts may be worn during heavy work situations and after 7:00 p.m. Short pants are allowed during summer months. Baseball type caps may be worn with restrictions (Denton Fire Department Operations Manual, 2006).

Survey of Denton firefighters.

The first question on the survey asks how important the uniform is in identifying firefighters to the public. Eighty percent of the respondents believe it is extremely important or essential.

On the question of how important it is all firefighters be wearing the same uniform (i.e. same color, type shirt, type pants) 39% think it is extremely important or essential.

Thirty percent of respondents believe it is extremely important or essential a uniform be chosen for professional appearance, while 52% believe comfort is extremely important or essential.

On the question of who should have a voice in uniform selection—the firefighters or administrative staff—82% believe firefighters should be consulted, and 37% believe administrative staff should have a voice in the decision.

Sixty-nine percent of DFD respondents view the uniform as extremely important or essential in their self-perception as professionals.

Thirty-six percent of respondents believe the uniform is extremely important or essential to the taxpayer's perception of value gained for tax dollars spent.

Respondents were asked about the importance of the uniform to citizens being assisted by firefighters and about its importance to family members of citizens being assisted. Concerning citizens being assisted, 22% of respondents think it is extremely important or essential. In the situation of family members observing firefighters assisting a relative, 25% believe it is extremely important or essential.

Of the respondents answering the question concerning the importance of uniforms being clean (no smoke smell, no grime from previous incidents), 47% think it is extremely important or essential.

Concerning the impact wearing a baseball cap has on the public's perception of firefighters as professionals, 20% of respondents believe it has a moderate or major impact. Fifty-eight percent believe it has no impact.

Forty-seven percent of respondents believe the uniform has a moderate or major impact on implying a firefighter's trustworthiness.

Fifty-two percent believe the uniform has a moderate or major impact on the public's perception of firefighters as well-trained professionals.

Forty-eight percent believe the uniform has a moderate or major impact on inspiring the public's trust in firefighters performing in a professional matter.

Interviews with officers at DFD.

Officer A is a member of command staff at DFD. He states that he listens to all recommendations operations personnel and chief officers may have on uniform issues and participates in the decision making process. When changes are recommended Officer A says they are usually approved unless the Chief of the Department feels strongly that a different course should be taken (Officer A, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

Officer A considers crews wearing identical uniforms to be very important in projecting a professional image to the public. He believes this is one of the simplest things his department can do to foster that image in the community. All it takes, according to Officer A, is minimal attention to detail (Officer A, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

When asked if he thinks firefighters are satisfied with the uniform options and the guidelines dictating acceptable combinations at DFD he replied that he believes they are content with the options available, but that it seems they wish there were no guidelines regarding the combinations allowed (Officer A, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

Officer A's primary concern with how uniforms are handled at DFD is his belief that, as a rule, professional appearance should take precedence over comfort. He says he understands the desire for a comfortable uniform, having spent over 20 years living in that environment, but he thinks a majority of the operations firefighters would prefer a uniform that is too casual to look professional (Officer A, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

Officer C, having been involved in uniform choice and procurement for over eighteen years, continues to be influential today in what the DFD firefighter wears. He is always diligent to register his opinion on uniform issues that are brought to the firefighters for discussion.

When asked if he considers crew integrity (uniform wise) important, Officer C stated that it is imperative, in his opinion. He believes the more effort a person makes to look professional, the easier it is for that person to gain the confidence and support of the public being served (Officer C, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

On the issue of firefighter satisfaction with current uniforms and guidelines, Officer C believes Denton firefighters are content, so long as their personal preference is met. He states it is a challenge, as a company officer, to ensure that guidelines are followed on a daily basis. He believes fewer options in uniform style would alleviate some of this administrative difficulty (Officer C, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

When asked if he is satisfied with the uniform process Officer C said his only concern is one of personal preference. He prefers a shirt that is more formal than the polo type currently worn and he believes short pants look unprofessional. (Officer C, personal communication, November 21, 2006).

Results of Research Question D

Research was done to examine the public's perception of Denton firefighters wearing dissimilar uniforms. The question was asked on the survey available to citizens of Denton

(Appendix A). Seven citizens were contacted through email and asked to express their opinion about Denton firefighters they may have seen working at an emergency scene, or while conducting other business about town as a crew.

Research question D and E elicited similar responses due to the construction of the questionnaire. To avoid duplication the bulk of the survey responses will be discussed in the context of the final research question, which explores the impact of firefighters wearing similar uniforms.

Survey of Denton citizens.

Eighty-one percent of the public survey respondents believe a uniform is extremely important or essential in identifying firefighters to the public. Of this group, 82% think it is extremely important or essential that firefighters on a crew all be wearing the same uniform (i.e. same color, type shirt, type pants).

Four persons responded to an email request for an opinion on firefighters wearing dissimilar uniforms. All were sent the same questions (Appendix D). All respondents are known to the researcher to be citizens of Denton.

Interviews of Denton citizens.

Citizen A has observed firefighters working in an emergency situation, having dealt with a relative who required emergency medical care on several occasions. She has observed several uniform changes in DFD over the years. She remembers seeing crews on which some firefighters wore blue t-shirts with white lettering (mentioned previously as an option) and others wore a button-up shirt. She assumed the older firefighters wore the button-up shirts. She equated the different shirt to a signification of seniority. Citizen A believes officers should be easily recognizable on emergency scenes (Citizen A, personal communication, December 28, 2006).

Citizen A goes on to say a person being assisted by firefighters may not remember faces, but will remember the uniform the firefighters were wearing. She believes the uniform conveys the attitude and professional behavior expected of the person wearing it. She qualified all her statements by saying that during the emergency encounters she was more concerned about the care her relative was receiving than what the firefighters were wearing (Citizen A, personal communication, December 28, 2006).

Citizen A wore a uniform in a public service position for several years. Drawing from this experience she thinks an informal uniform (i.e. t-shirts, short pants) subconsciously influences the professionalism of the wearer and diminishes the public's positive perception of the wearer as a professional. Her advice on appearance is to be consistent throughout the department (Citizen A, personal communication, December 28, 2006).

Citizen B has experienced fire department crews first-hand, also. He called for emergency medical assistance on several occasions during a relative's extended illness. He says it was a stressful time for him; hence he did not recall details about the uniforms they were wearing. He went on to speak of how impressed he was by how sharply and neatly they were dressed "even if it was in the wee hours of the morning" (Citizen B, personal communication, December 27, 2006). Citizen B says the uniformed firefighters made a lasting impression. He believes the uniform speaks well of their professionalism (Citizen B, personal communication, December 27, 2006).

Citizen C says he has regular occasion to witness Denton firefighters in his neighborhood. As he recalls, they are always wearing very similar uniforms, and seem to always be dressed alike. He believes they look more professional than other firefighters he has seen in nearby jurisdictions. Although the uniforms seem simple to him—he has only noticed t-shirts

and dark pants—they lend a measure of credibility to what he perceives as their mission (Citizen C, personal communication, December 27, 2006).

Citizen D says he has never witnessed a crew working on an emergency scene, and admits not noticing the uniform worn by crews he has seen from a distance. However, he believes anyone willing to risk his or her life for a stranger is a hero. He says that a person placing himself or herself in that position should be wearing whatever he or she is comfortable in. He goes on to say that the polo type shirts seem reasonable. "They are comfortable, identify the person as a firefighter, and don't cost a fortune. Using a fire-resistant fabric might make sense" (Citizen D, personal communication, December 28, 2006).

Results of Research Question E

The final question asks how the public perceives Denton firefighters wearing identical uniforms. The same survey question cited to show the perception of firefighters wearing dissimilar uniforms may answer this question as well.

Survey of Denton citizens.

According to the results of the survey (Appendix B) 81% of the respondents believe a uniform is extremely important or essential in identifying firefighters to the public. Identical uniforms also seem to be important to them, with 82% indicating this is extremely important or essential.

In response to the question of choosing a uniform for professional appearance, 83% of citizen respondents believe it is somewhat important or not important. Sixty-four percent believe a comfortable uniform is extremely important or essential.

Sixty-six percent of those surveyed believe it is extremely important or essential firefighters have a voice in uniform selection. Forty-six percent think it is extremely important or essential that fire management participate in uniform related decisions.

From the citizen respondents' perspective, 81% view the uniform as extremely important or essential in the firefighter's self-perception as a professional.

As potential taxpayers, 73% of the citizen respondents think a uniform is somewhat important or not important in showing value gained for tax dollars spent.

While 23% of citizen respondents have been recipients of fire department services according to the survey, and 30% have observed family members being assisted, 47% think the uniform is extremely important or essential to those being assisted, and 56% think it is extremely important or essential to family members of those being assisted.

Fifty-seven percent of the citizen respondents consider a clean uniform to be extremely important or essential.

Twenty-eight percent see wearing a baseball type cap as having a moderate or major impact on the perception of firefighters as professionals.

Fifty-four percent see the uniform as having a moderate or major impact on implying a firefighter's trustworthiness.

The uniform has a moderate or major impact on the perception of firefighters as well-trained professionals according to 66% of the public respondents.

About the same number of respondents, at 62%, think the uniform has a moderate or major impact on inspiring the public's trust in firefighters performing in a professional manner.

Interviews with Denton citizens.

The citizens interviewed via email were asked if they consider uniform selection a significant factor, thus having an impact on the day-to-day operation of the fire department. Three respondents expressed a sentiment for the impact a uniform makes on the public.

All firefighters should wear similar uniforms, according to Citizen A. She admits to some confusion when confronted by a crew wearing a mix of t-shirts and light blue button-up

shirts. She believes that confusion could be alleviated if all the firefighters would wear the same style shirt (Citizen A, personal communication, December 28, 2006).

To Citizen B the uniform neatness and cleanliness is more important than sameness, and is possibly the biggest factor in impacting the public with the fire department's mission. He believes most people make an assumption about a person's competence in their job performance based on his or her appearance (Citizen B, personal communication, December 27, 2006).

Citizen B thinks uniforms should be considered a significant issue within the department. He states that firefighters are in the public view most of their workday. They serve as a display and are making an impression simply by their presence. He believes that well-groomed firefighters instill confidence in the public. Conversely, a dirty or unkempt uniform can detract from that confidence. Citizen B believes the public equates appearance to competence (Citizen B, personal communication, December 27, 2006).

Citizen C says crews wearing similar uniforms appear to share camaraderie, and take pride in their profession. He says that when he sees a crew wearing identical uniforms, though it may be a simple t-shirt and dark pants, it gives him a sense of trust and security. Citizen C says standardized uniforms should definitely be a factor in the running of a fire department (Citizen C, personal communication, December 27, 2006).

Discussion

Discussion of Published Works

General Wesley H. Clark, U.S. Army (ret.) (2001-2002) understands that a uniform is a powerful form of communication.

> "Nice suit, Tony," I offered one morning as Lake settled into his seat on the aircraft. "I'll trade you, he said, gesturing to my Army green uniform with the three stars, ribbons, and right shoulder combat patch.

> It was a surprising rejoinder. It wasn't that I wasn't proud of serving or wearing the uniform—I hadn't realized the impact of a uniform in a group of civilians. It may be the ultimate "power suit," connoting authority and experience, and helping its wearer stand out in a crowd. (p. 52)

Police officers overlook an actor impersonating a motorcycle officer who is stumbling and making obvious mistakes (Rubinstein, 2001). A few people give money to a man for his parking meter when ordered to do so by a casually dressed stranger. Performing the same role while wearing a security guard's uniform, many more people comply with the stranger's demand (Smith and Mackie, 2000).

Restaurant patrons are more likely to return if the uniform of the staff is congruent with what has become acceptable in society. Food and drink establishments are much more successful if patrons are made to feel at ease by the employees' uniforms. For this reason restaurants are reluctant to have personnel wearing security guard uniforms in sight of patrons (Hutchings, 2001). With competition fierce in the air industry, airlines recognize the importance of impeccable hygiene and appearance by its employees, and the effect that has on its returning customers. Most have strict requirements for the dress of all employees (McCoy, 2005).

Whether it identifies the wearer as belonging to the military, the airline industry, or the fire service, a uniform sends a significant message. The literature reviewed is relatively clear on this fact. The sources found on this subject suggest only positive impact from a proper uniform. No evidence was found indicating a negative connotation attached to the uniform of a person behaving in a fashion seen as acceptable by the public.

Discussion of Survey Conducted

Denton firefighters, firefighters from other departments, and public respondents place a high importance on the uniform in identifying firefighters. Beyond that, opinions differ.

According to the survey (Appendix B), 82% of the public respondents think identical uniforms are extremely important or essential. Seventy-five percent of the firefighters from other departments responding agree. Only 39% of the Denton firefighters responding registered the same sentiment. This offers evidence relevant to the extent of the problem in DFD. Denton operations personnel do not appear to consider this issue as important as do some administrative leaders in DFD and the other departments surveyed. DFD operations firefighters believe they should be allowed to pick whatever combination they choose. Senior staff believes uniformity is important.

Two questions were asked concerning the selection of uniforms for professional appearance versus comfort. While 65% was the biggest majority registered, this being the public respondents belief that comfort is more important than professional appearance, it may be concluded that firefighters and the public consider comfort more important than appearance. Results are not overwhelming, however. While 8% of the respondents (Denton firefighters) consider professional appearance essential, only 18% think comfort is essential.

The structure of these two questions may have contributed to mixed results on this issue. Respondents could not clearly register an opinion on which is more important, comfort or appearance. It is worth noting that 24% of the public and 30% of the Denton firefighter respondents think professional appearance, as opposed to comfort, is not important. Only 8% of firefighter respondents from other departments hold this assertion. This is not surprising, given the current discussion over uniforms in the DFD. It may also be an indication that volunteer firefighters or those from combination departments view the uniform differently than career firefighters.

Volunteer firefighters may see their position as a privilege. They earn their livelihood in other professions and respond to emergencies out of a true spirit of service to others. Perception is the key in their view of what the uniform means.

The issue of whether operations firefighters or department management should pick the uniform worn was explored with two questions. Similar to the issue of appearance versus comfort, results may have been inconclusive due to the structure of the survey. It is worth mentioning, however, that Denton firefighters as a group, at 37%, think it least important for fire department management to have a voice in uniform choice. Again, this is an indication of the level of the divisiveness caused by this issue.

Eighty-one percent of the public respondents, 69% of the Denton respondents, and 79% of the respondents from other departments believe the uniform is extremely important or essential to a firefighter's perception of themselves as professionals. The fact that the public's response is higher than the firefighters' is reasonable. This research indicates a uniform is a significant factor in inferring a position of power and authority.

Having established that a uniform has significant impact on the public one would expect the public to deem it more important than would firefighters. Though the uniform definitely impacts the firefighters' opinions, their self-perception relies on a personal instinct each one considers when defining himself or herself as a professional.

On the questions concerning the impact of a uniform on citizens being assisted by firefighters it appears uniforms are more important to citizen respondents than firefighters. One question targets citizens being assisted. The other refers to family members of citizens being assisted. In regard to citizens being assisted, 47% of public respondents think it is extremely important or essential. Respondents from other departments and Denton firefighter respondents think it is extremely important or essential 36% and 22% of the time, respectively. Similar

responses were received regarding family members being assisted. Fifty-six percent of public respondents, 44% of firefighter respondents from other departments, and 25% of Denton firefighters responding think it is extremely important or essential. Notably, over half of Denton respondents thought it not important to citizens being assisted, and 43% thought it not important to family members of those being assisted.

It appears firefighters from other departments think a clean uniform is more important than do citizen and DFD respondents. Ninety-three percent of respondents from other fire departments think it is extremely important or essential. Only 47% of DFD respondents share that opinion, while 57% of citizen respondents think it is extremely important or essential.

A discussion held recently at DFD concerned the wearing of baseball caps. Rules were instituted dictating where it is appropriate to remove one's cap. The survey responses bear out the belief that caps, as a part of a professional uniform, are not an important issue. Fifty-eight percent of Denton firefighter respondents think a cap has no impact on professionalism. Forty-four percent of respondents from other fire departments and 40% of citizen respondents agree.

While the body of work examined supports the idea that a uniform impacts both the wearer and the observer, the survey conducted is inconclusive on the notion that it implies the trustworthiness of firefighters. Fifty-four percent of public respondents think it extremely important or essential, only 27% and 47% of respondents from other departments and Denton respondents, respectively, think it extremely important or essential. This conclusion may be affected by the idea that character traits like trustworthiness are internal to individuals, and not so susceptible to outside influence, such as a uniform.

Eighty-eight percent of respondents from other departments view the uniform as extremely important or essential in the perception of firefighters as being well-trained

professionals. Fifty-two percent of DFD respondents think it is extremely important or essential, as do 66% of the public respondents.

One possible explanation for this is the composition of the groups involved. Twelve percent of the departments included in the group of other departments are combination departments. This means that in some cases a majority of the firefighters in a department may be volunteers. As discussed previously, these individuals sacrifice personal time to receive training, thus qualifying them as firefighters. They must change life priorities to allow time to respond to emergencies. Not to minimize the commitment of the career firefighter, but one who must make a personal sacrifice of time and money may take the uniform more seriously.

The same argument may apply to the question concerning the public's trust in firefighters performing in a professional manner. Respondents from other departments considered this extremely important or essential at 83%. Only 48% of Denton firefighters think it is extremely important or essential. The career firefighters of DFD may consider professionalism a common trait of their everyday routine. Firefighters from combination departments may consider it a privilege to wear the uniform and perform the duties of a firefighter.

The results of this research provide insight into underlying issues present at DFD today. The sources cited indicate the uniform is important in establishing an identity. Beyond that, opinions differ on how important appearance is if that means sacrificing comfort, and how important it is for crews to be dressed in identical uniforms.

Recommendations

Recommendations to DFD Personnel

A divide exists between the desire of DFD administration to raise the department's standard of professionalism and the operations firefighters' wish to maintain personal comfort

and control over the process. The research reveals areas that may be explored more thoroughly in order to reach compromise on issues of contention.

One such issue is whether all members on a crew should be dressed identically. Of those questionnaire respondents indicating this as essential, the percentage of Denton firefighters (18%) is less than half that of firefighters in other departments (37%), and significantly lower than the public respondents (33%). Thirty percent—almost one third of the department—think identical crew uniforms are not important at all. This opposed to 3% in other departments and 1% of the public surveyed (Appendix B).

The questionnaire results indicate professional appearance is less important than comfort to all respondents. Denton firefighters, at 8%, think it is essential that uniforms be chosen for professional appearance. Other firefighter and citizen respondents, at 5% and 4% respectively, think professional appearance is essential. Three citizens interviewed indicated a similar attitude. Officers interviewed expressed a desire to place more emphasis on professional appearance than on comfort.

It is recommended that a compromise be reached on these issues. While it may be very subjective criteria for attaining professionalism, the questionnaire results support its pursuit. DFD administration must educate its operations firefighters as to the difference between their perception and that of the public they serve and other firefighters.

DFD administration must be willing to compromise. All members of senior staff at DFD have advanced through the ranks. Contrary to a popular accusation that administration doesn't understand what it is like in the station every key decision maker in the department knows the difference between practical reality and the desire to deliver unexpected exceptional service. Staff must use this experience to balance the desire for change in uniform appearance with the

reality of operating in harsh environments. Personal preference must be tempered by practicality and public opinion, as indicated by the survey.

Never should the desire to raise the level of professionalism—in every aspect—be abandoned. It should be the paramount reason for persisting. But there must be an amicable balance between professionalism and personal preference.

In order for progress to be made toward presenting a professional appearance operations firefighters must realize they are accountable. They must realize that organizational direction, while heavily influenced by their input, will sometimes not be to their liking. Operations firefighters must realize the intended results of a controversial decision may not be evident. A modicum of faith is required of those in subordinate positions if exceptional results are to be achieved by this organization.

DFD administration should strive to better educate subordinates when pushing for change. An illustration of this is the issue of baseball caps. On the surface, restrictions placed on the wearing of caps, while not supported by the results of the survey (Appendix B), appear to stem from administration's distasteof all baseball caps and those who wear them. The actual intent of the SOP on baseball caps is to have DFD operations firefighters appear in public as exceptional in their behavior and self-discipline. There was a time when removing one's cap when entering a building was considered proper behavior. Only the eroding of common courtesy in society has made it otherwise. Senior staff believes removing one's cap indoors is a minor concession for setting the DFD apart as striving for an unexpected level of professionalism.

Recommendations to Future Researchers

The researcher suggests any questionnaires or surveys conducted be very carefully constructed. Research questions should not parallel one another. Limitations brought about by

the similarity and vagueness of some questions (e.g. the perception of similar versus dissimilar uniforms) will allow criticism of any recommendations coming from the research.

The researcher suggests that the underlying cause of the research problem be very carefully dissected beforehand to avoid unexpected results. Considerable time may be spent pursuing a line of thought only to find a solution to the original problem will not deliver results worthy of the time spent on the project.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

Questions Appropriate for Firefighter Respondents

1. How important do you think a uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to the public in identifying you as a firefighter?
2. How important do you think it is to the public that all firefighters on a crew be wearing the same uniform (same color, type shirt, type pants)?
3. How important do you think it is for a firefighter's uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to be chosen for professional appearance, as opposed to comfort?
4. How important do you think it is for a firefighter's uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to be chosen for comfort, as opposed to professional appearance?
5. How important do you think it is for firefighters to have a voice in the style uniform (collared or t-shirt, shorts or long pants) worn by firefighters?
6. How important do you think it is for fire department management to have a voice in the style uniform (collared or t-shirt, shorts or long pants) worn by firefighters?
7. How important is the everyday uniform to you, as a firefighter, in your perception of yourself as a professional?
8. What impact does the wearing of a baseball style cap have on your perception of yourself as a professional?
9. What impact do you think the wearing of a baseball cap has on the public's perception of firefighters as professionals?
10. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to the public, as taxpayers, in their perception of value gained for tax dollars spent?

11. What impact does the uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) have on your confidence in your ability to do your job as a firefighter effectively?
12. What impact do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) has on the public's confidence in a firefighter's ability to do his/her job effectively?
13. What impact do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) has on the public in implying a firefighter's trustworthiness?
14. What impact do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) has on the public's perception of firefighters as well-trained professionals?
15. What impact do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) has on inspiring the public's trust in firefighters doing their jobs in a professional manner?
16. How important do you think the uniform is in making citizens feel safe while being assisted by firefighters?
17. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to citizens receiving emergency care from firefighters?
18. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to citizens whose family members are being cared for by firefighters?
19. How important do you think it is that firefighters' uniforms (lettered shirt, work pants) be clean (no smoke smell, no grime from previous incidents) when arriving to assist citizens?
20. Has any citizen ever remarked to you about the uniform you, or someone on your crew was wearing?
21. The department I work for is:
22. My primary assignment is in:
23. My rank is:

24. What is your education level?

25. What is your age?

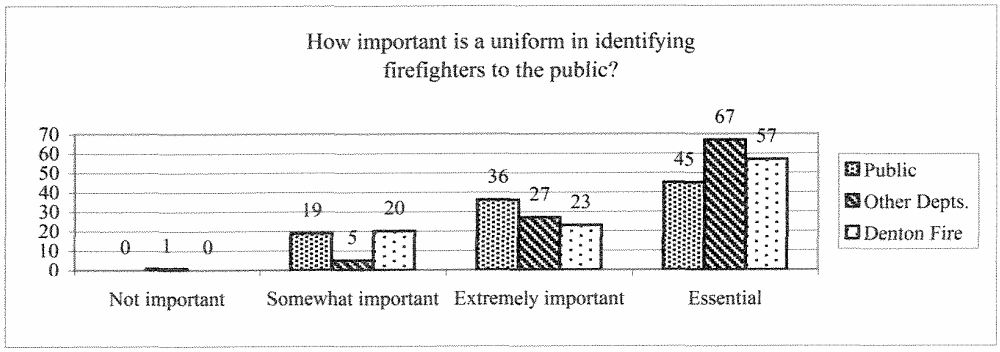
Questions Appropriate for Citizen Respondents

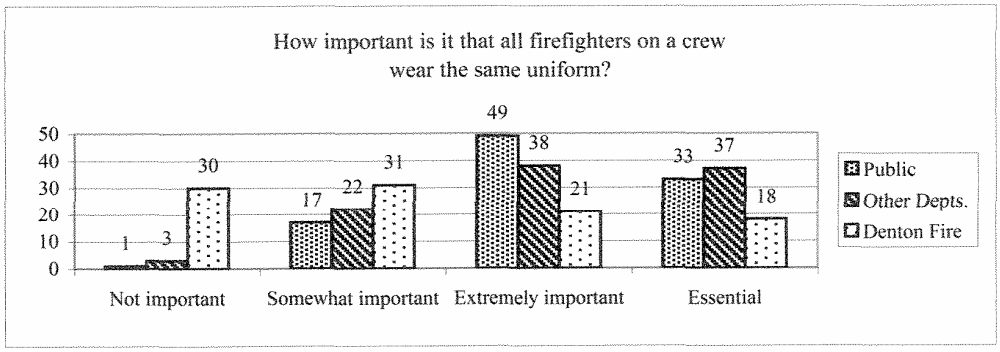
1. How important is a uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to you, as a citizen, in identifying firefighters to the public?
2. How important do you think it is for all firefighters on a crew to be wearing the same uniform (same color, type shirt, type pants)?
3. How important do you think it is for a firefighter's uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to be chosen for professional appearance, as opposed to comfort?
4. How important do you think it is for a firefighter's uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to be chosen for comfort, as opposed to professional appearance?
5. How important do you think it is for firefighters to have a voice in the style uniform (collared or t-shirt, shorts or long pants) worn?
6. How important do you think it is for fire department management to have a voice in the style uniform (collared shirt, shorts or long pants) worn by firefighters?
7. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to firefighters in their perception of themselves as professionals?
8. What impact does the wearing of a baseball style cap have on your perception of firefighters as professionals?
9. How important is the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) to you, as a taxpayer, in your perception of value gained for tax dollars spent?
10. What impact does the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) have on your confidence in a firefighter's ability to do his/her job?

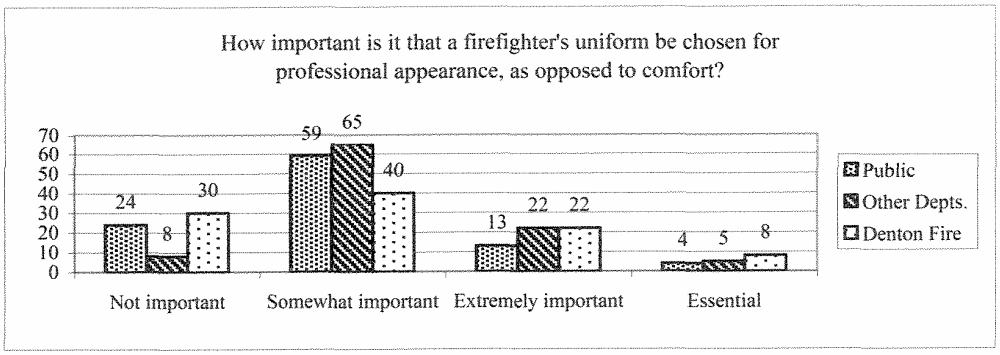
11. What impact does the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) have on implying a firefighter's trustworthiness?
12. What impact does the every day uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) have on your perception of firefighters as well-trained professionals?
13. What impact does the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) have on inspiring your trust in firefighters doing their jobs in a professional manner?
14. How important is the firefighter's uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) in making you feel safe while being assisted by them?
15. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to citizens receiving emergency care from firefighters?
16. How important do you think the everyday uniform (lettered shirt, work pants) is to family members of citizens being cared for by firefighters?
17. How important is it that firefighters' uniforms (lettered shirt, work pants) be clean (no smoke smell, no grime from previous incidents) when arriving to assist you?
18. Have you ever been the recipient of services provided by a professional fire department?
19. Have you ever observed a professional fire department deliver services to someone you know well, or are related to?
20. How closely are you associated with a professional firefighter?
21. What is your age?
22. What is your gender?
23. What is your education level?

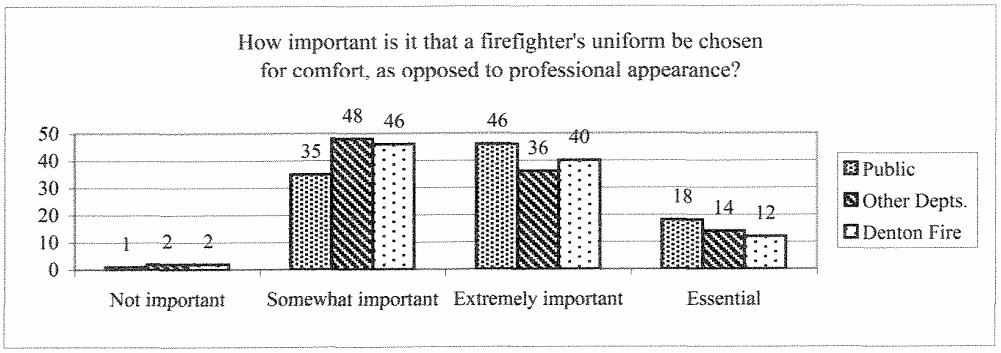
Appendix B

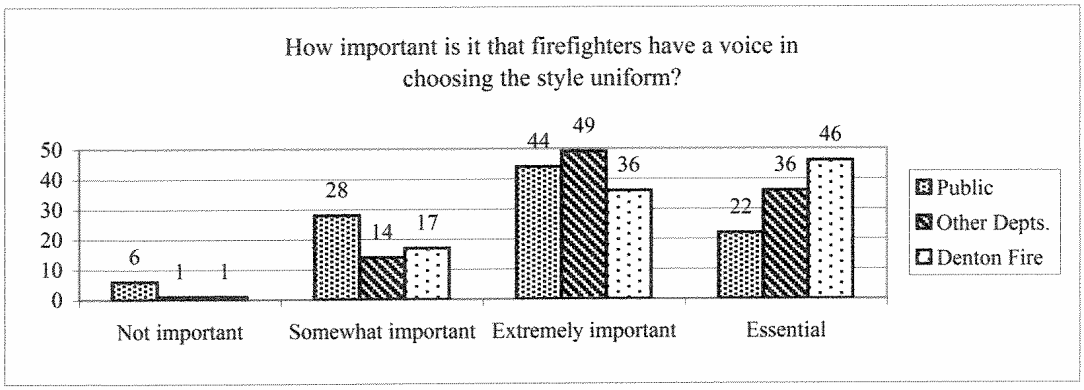
Survey of the Impact of the Uniform on Firefighters

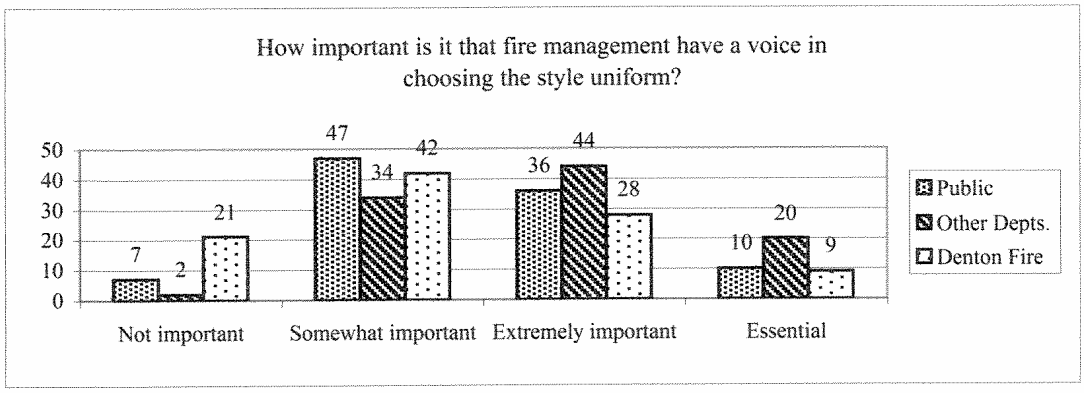


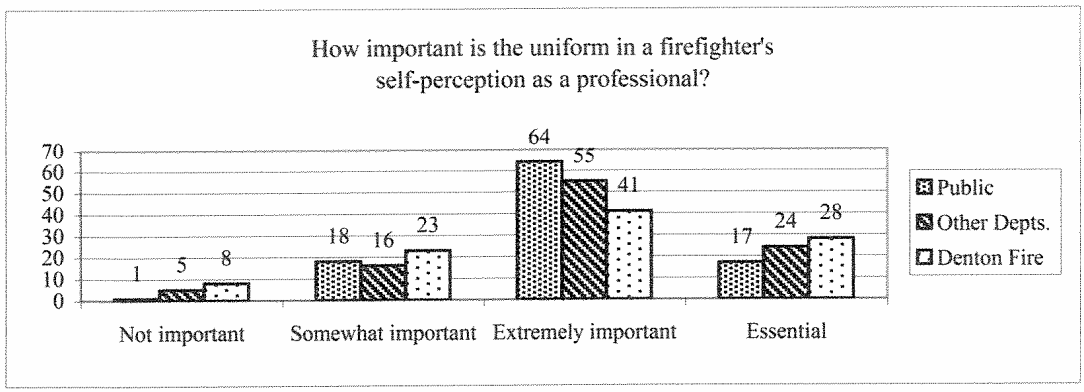


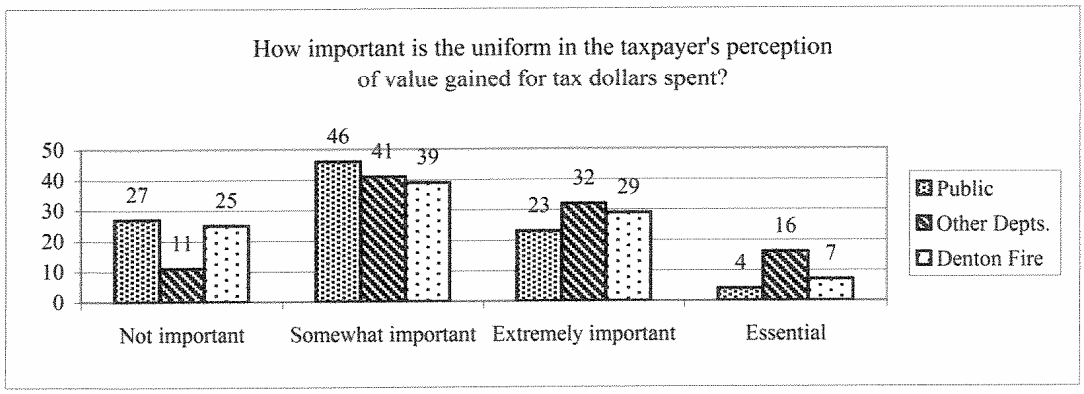


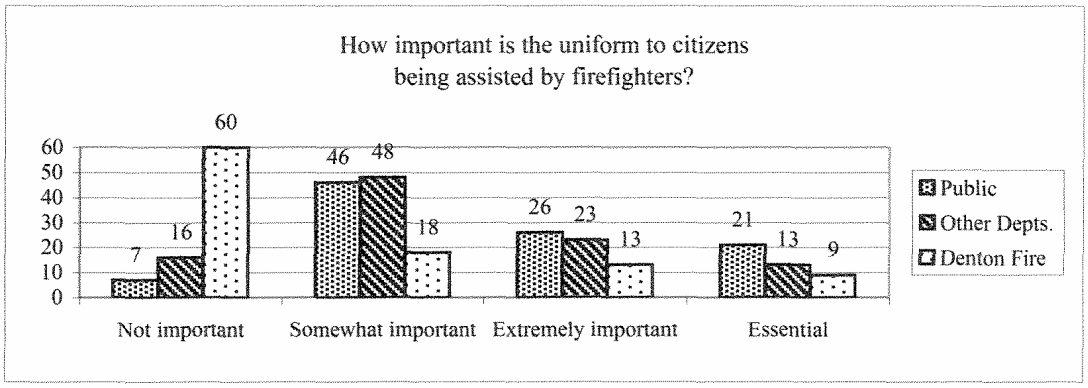


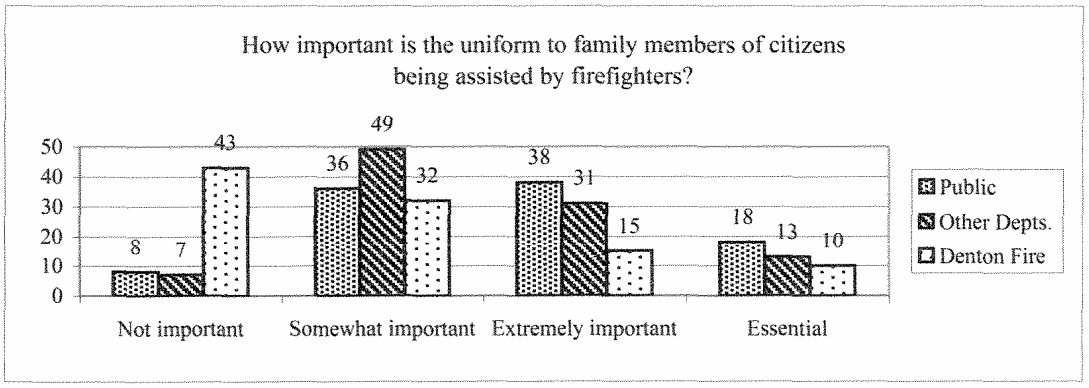

How important is it that firefighters have a voice in choosing the style uniform?
50
40
30
20
10
0
6
1
1
28
14
17
44
49
36
22
36
46
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

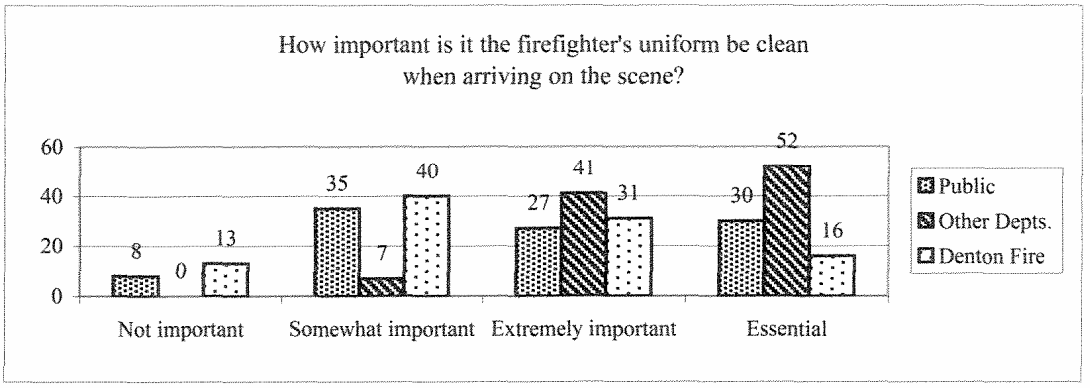

How important is it that fire management have a voice in choosing the style uniform?
50
40
30
20
10
0
7
2
21
47
34
42
36
44
28
10
20
9
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

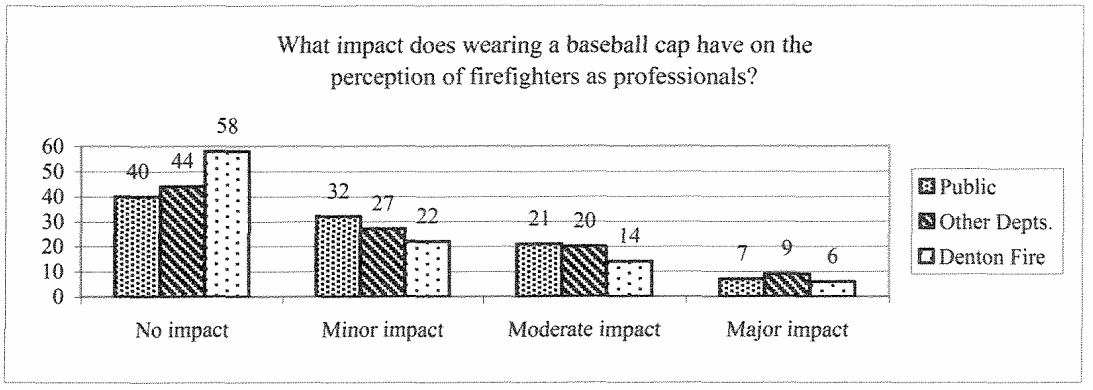

How important is the uniform in a firefighter's self-perception as a professional?
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
5
8
18
16
23
64
55
41
17
24
28
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

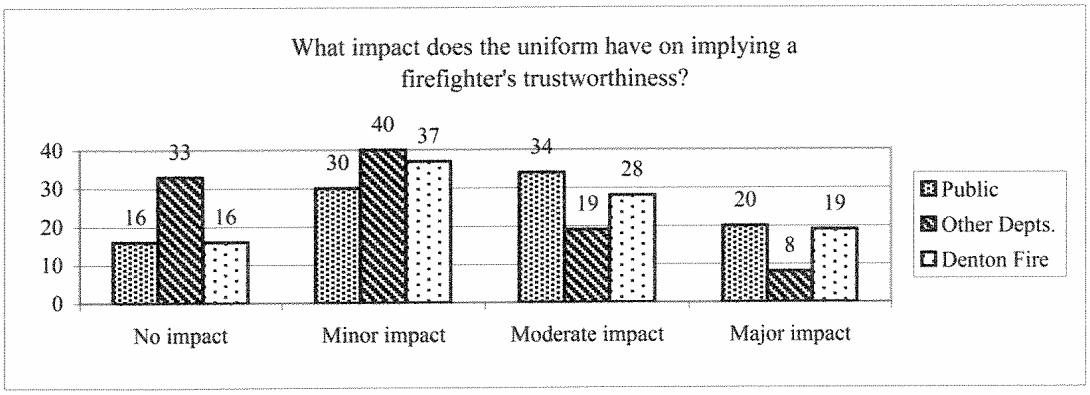

How important is the uniform in the taxpayer's perception of value gained for tax dollars spent?
50
40
30
20
10
0
27
11
25
46
41
39
23
32
29
4
16
7
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

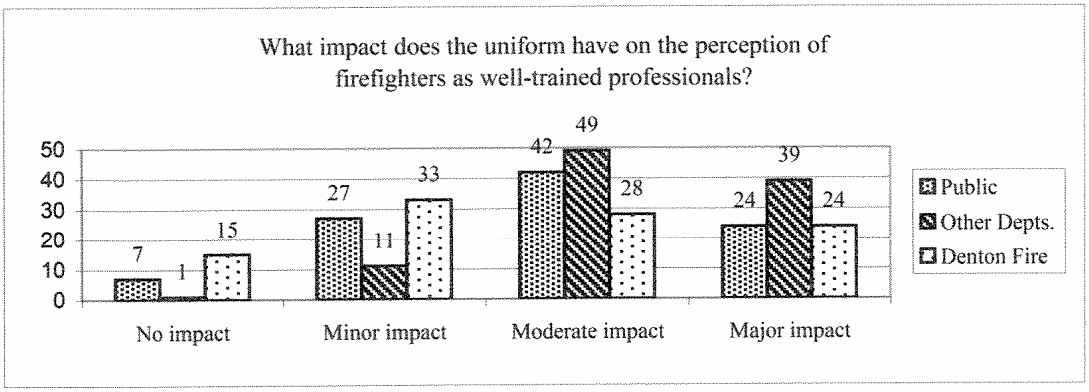

How important is the uniform to citizens being assisted by firefighters?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
7
16
60
46
48
18
26
23
13
21
13
9
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

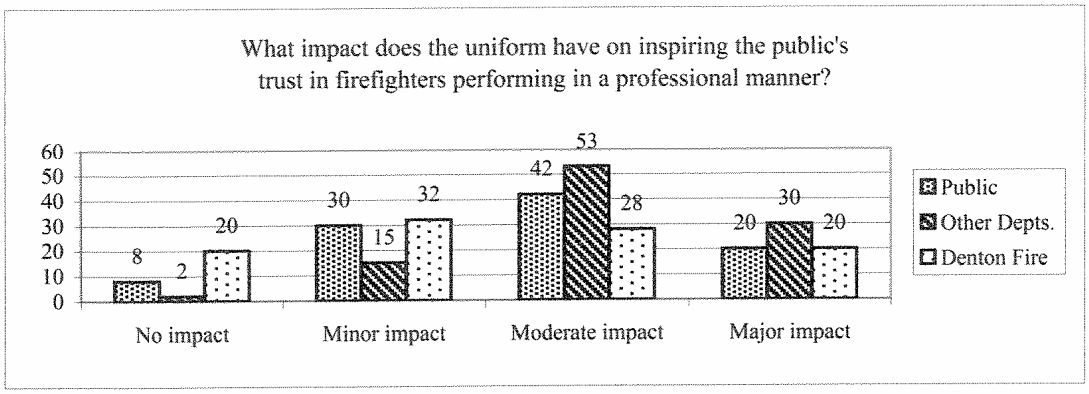

How important is the uniform to family members of citizens being assisted by firefighters?
50
40
30
20
10
0
8
7
43
36
49
32
38
31
15
18
13
10
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

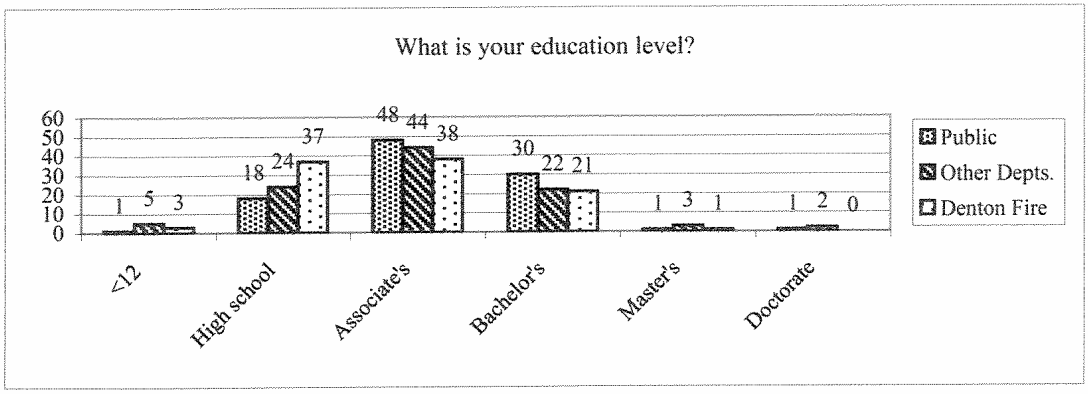

How important is it the firefighter's uniform be clean when arriving on the scene?
60
40
20
0
8
0
13
35
7
40
27
41
31
30
52
16
Not important
Somewhat important
Extremely important
Essential
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

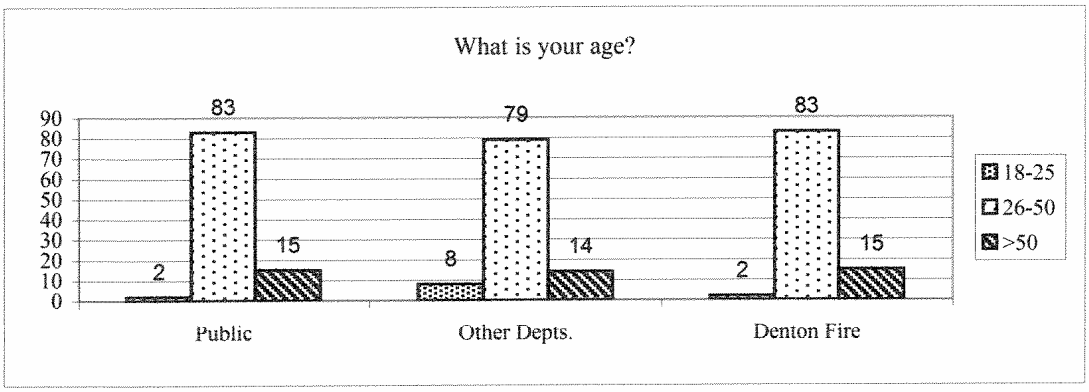

What impact does wearing a baseball cap have on the perception of firefighters as professionals?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
40
44
58
32
27
22
21
20
14
7
9
6
No impact
Minor impact
Moderate impact
Major impact
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

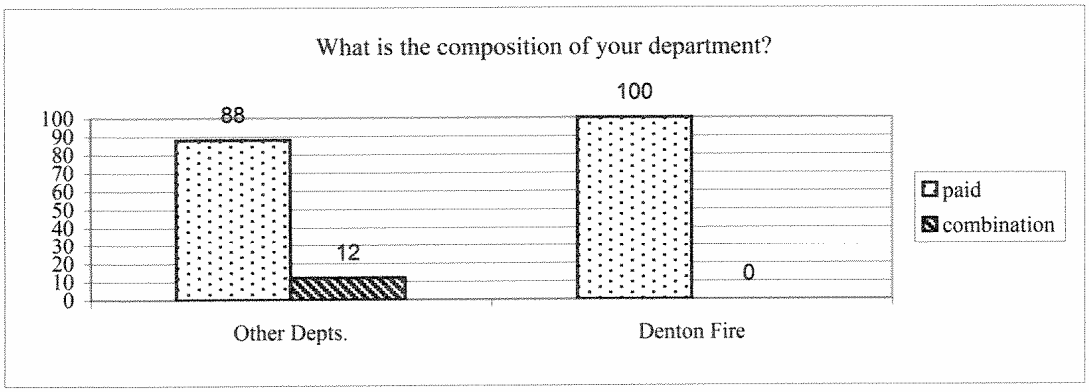

What impact does the uniform have on implying a firefighter's trustworthiness?
40
30
20
10
0
16
33
16
30
40
37
34
19
28
20
8
19
No impact
Minor impact
Moderate impact
Major impact
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

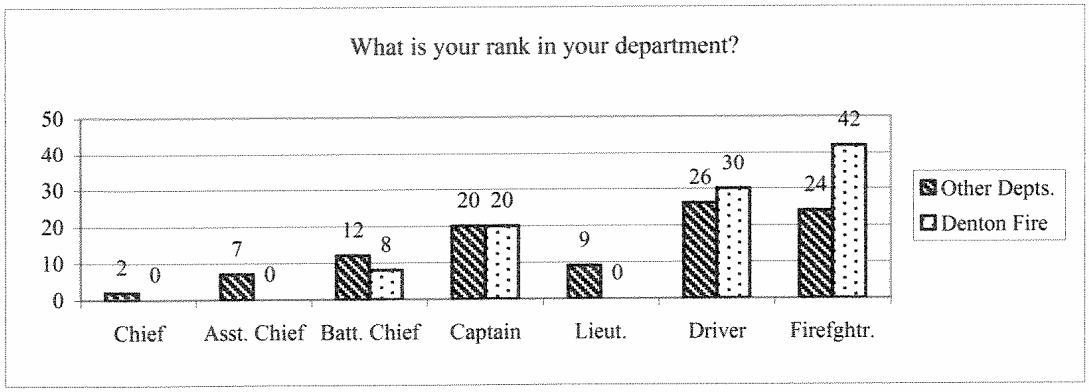

What impact does the uniform have on the perception of firefighters as well-trained professionals?
50
40
30
20
10
0
7
1
15
27
11
33
42
49
28
24
39
24
No impact
Minor impact
Moderate impact
Major impact
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

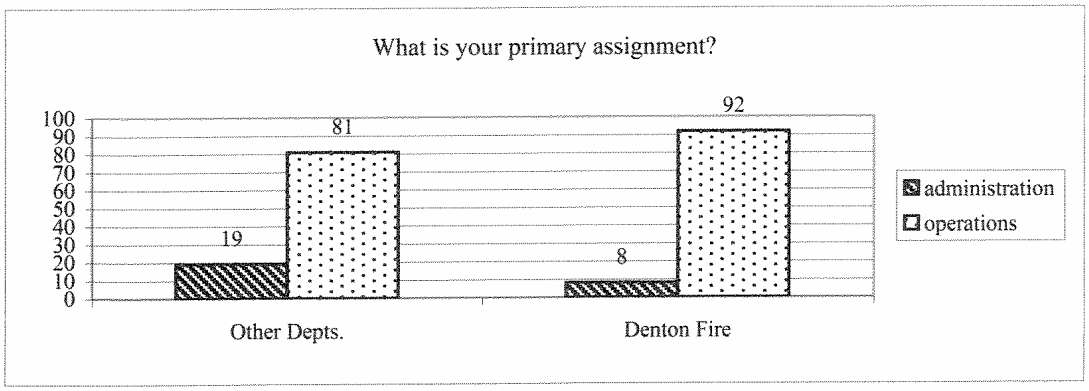

What impact does the uniform have on inspiring the public's trust in firefighters performing in a professional manner?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
8
2
20
30
15
32
42
53
28
20
30
20
No impact
Minor impact
Moderate impact
Major impact
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

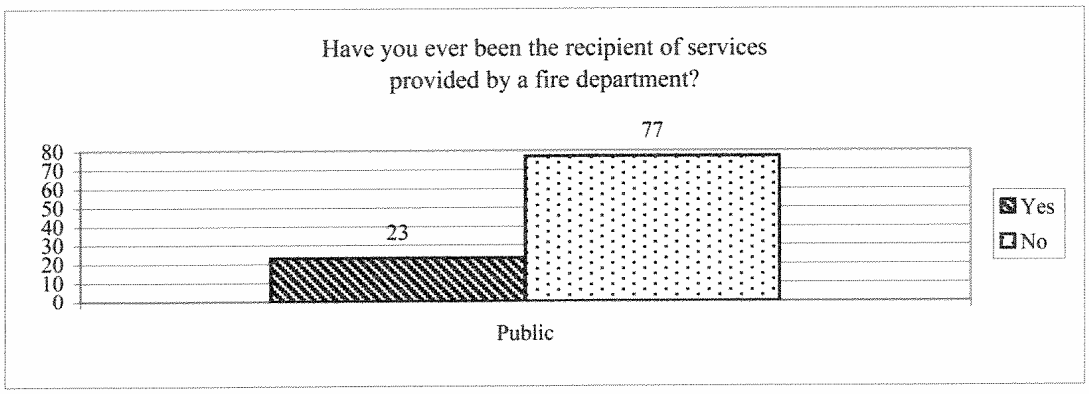

What is your education level?
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
5
3
18
24
37
48
44
38
30
22
21
1
3
1
1
2
0
<12
High school
Associate's
Bachelor's
Master's
Doctorate
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire

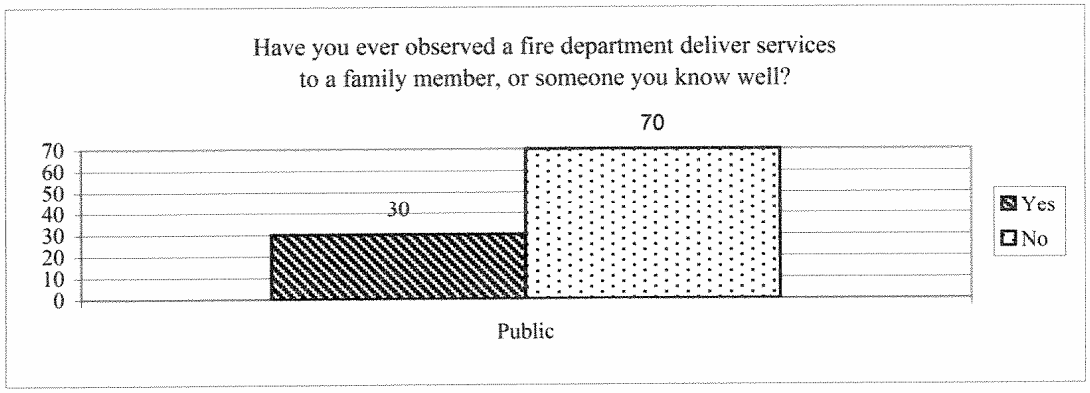

What is your age?
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
83
2
15
79
8
14
83
2
15
Public
Other Depts.
Denton Fire
18-25
26-50
>50

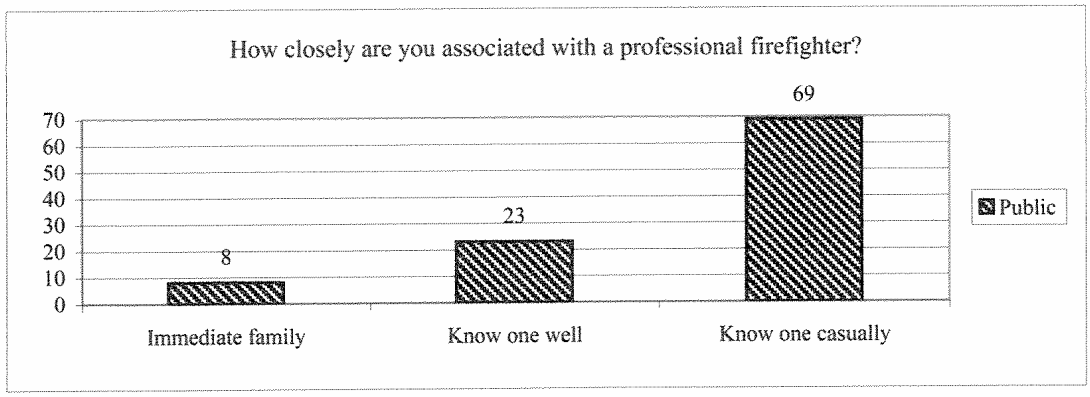

What is the composition of your department?
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
88
12
100
0
Other Depts.
Denton Fire
paid
combination


What is your rank in your department?
50
40
30
20
10
0
2
0
7
0
12
8
20
20
9
0
26
30
24
42
Chief
Asst. Chief
Batt. Chief
Captain
Lieut.
Driver
Firefghtr.
Other Depts.
Denton Fire


What is your primary assignment?
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
19
81
8
92
Other Depts.
Denton Fire
administration
operations


Have you ever been the recipient of services provided by a fire department?
77
23
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Yes
No
Public


Have you ever observed a fire department deliver services to a family member, or someone you know well?
70
30
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Yes
No
Public


How closely are you associated with a professional firefighter?
69
23
8
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
Public
Immediate family
Know one well
Know one casually

Appendix C

Anonymous Comments on Survey

Replies of Citizens

1. I must say that in the crisis of the moment, I wouldn't have minded if they were wearing pink leotards, but I was greatly reassured by the professional appearance of the firefighters who responded to the emergency.
2. I am in my sophomore year in gerontology studies. I am from Ecuador in South America.
3. They do their job in [*sic*] professional manner.
4. When my grandmother blacked out, fire fighters came with the ambulance.
5. I belive [*sic*] fire fighters should be taken seriously and respected. I don't think citizens need pressed uniforms to be reminded of this. I think when a fire fighter is coming to help you a uniform is needed to let you know they are there to help, however I think the last thing on my mind would be whether or not they have on a collered [*sic*] shirt.
6. Even though I never experience [*sic*] services from the fire department I had the opportunity of experiencing how busy a fire station can be.
7. A close friend was on the fire fighting program. Therefore I had a close view of how the fire departement [*sic*] works.
8. I think the uniforms inspire a sense of trust within the community. People often feel safer or more at ease when seeing a unifrom [*sic*], whether it is a firefighter or police officer. This is especially true for children, and elderly citizens.
9. I just want to thank all firefighters for doing such a wonderful job to their community and to let them know they are greatly appreciated and way underpaid.

Replies of Firefighters From Other Departments

1. Uniforms are associated with help and trust.
2. Let the firefighters choose!! [*sic*]
3. Maximizing functional ability is what matters.

Replies of Firefighters From Denton

All responses in this section [*sic*].

1. Poorly worded questions= non valid conclusions.
2. blue button up. I would prefer badges and name pt
3. comfort, professionalism, 1st impression, rank
4. The uniform affords a professional head start.
5. not enough space to make comments
6. Don't we have better things to worry about?
7. Not enough space to properly comment!
8. self confidence in ability outweighs uniformity
9. uniform identifies us 2 the public, need more spac
10. Excellent survey
11. some of thees questions are not applicable.
12. This is not a desk job. COMFORT is IMPORTANT.
13. Merry Xmas
14. No category for some college. #25
15. Uniform = perception, not fact. Performance = fact
16. Our grey polo's are not as prof as our button down
17. Comfort and Workability is tops with me.

18. t-shirts are good

19. Uniform only needs to be appropriate for occasion.

20. I think it's important to look like a professional.

21. Men make the uniform, no uniform makes a man!!

22. Uniforms also affect moral & attitude towards admin

23. It's the man that makes the uniform, ie- Brunacini

24. Your appearance should show professionalism.

Appendix D

Personal Interview Questions to Fire Officers and Citizens

Interview Questions for Fire Department Officers

Text of email to officers.

Chief _____:

I am sending this email per our conversation concerning my Executive Fire Officer Program research project. I am sending you the following questions. Please answer the questions as they apply to your department. Feel free to elaborate on all your answers.

Thanks very much for your help with this project. All information you choose to give me will be kept in confidence. You will remain anonymous in the text of the submitted paper. If you have questions please call me. Thanks again for your help.

Randy Nickerson

Battalion Chief

Denton Fire Department

940.349.8853

Text of questions asked to officers.

1. Name:
2. Department:
3. Paid Volunteer Combination
4. Who picks uniform style, color, etc.?
5. Who has ultimate say in uniform style?
6. Does that person generally go along with recommendations?
7. Do you consider crew integrity (uniform wise) important?

8. How many combinations do you have (polo, t-shirt, button-up---long pants, shorts)?
9. Do you wear caps?
10. Are there restrictions on when, where caps may be worn?
11. Are firefighters satisfied with uniforms provided, and guidelines dictating uniform requirements?
12. Are you satisfied with how uniforms are handled in your department?

Interview Questions for Citizens

Text of email to citizens.

Friends:

I would like to ask your help on a project I am doing as part of the Executive Fire Officer Program, at the National Fire Academy.

I am doing a research paper concerning the impact of the uniform on our firefighters and how the public perceives the uniform. If you could take a few minutes to answer the questions below I would greatly appreciate it.

This project is primarily based on the opinions of others, so feel free to express yourself generously. My intent is to present a summary view of the prevailing sentiment real people have toward the way our firefighters are dressed.

Thanks very much for your help on this project.

Randy Nickerson

Battalion Chief

Denton Fire Department

940.349.8853

Text of questions asked to citizens.

1. Have you ever had occasion to witness Denton firefighters working at an emergency scene? If so, what did you notice about the way they were dressed? Were they all wearing the same type shirt (e.g. polo, t-shirt, sweatshirt, etc.)?
2. If you have never seen crews working at an emergency, have you seen them around town, as a crew (all riding on one vehicle)? If so, what did you notice about the way they were dressed? Were they all wearing the same type shirt (e.g. polo, t-shirt, sweat-shirt, etc.)?
3. Do you think the uniform carries enough impact to be a significant factor that should be considered in the administration and day-to-day operation of the Denton Fire Department?
4. What suggestions would you make to the Denton Fire Department in regard to the everyday uniforms the firefighters wear?