

MEMORIES OF HIGH SCHOOL BAND UNIFORMS:
GENDER-EXPERIENCE DIFFERENCES WHILE WEARING THE HIGH SCHOOL
MARCHING BAND UNIFORM

by

JENNIFER M. MORGAN

(Under the Direction of Monica Sklar)

ABSTRACT

High school marching band uniforms are a unisex ensemble of decorative panache, combining boxy jackets, embellishments, and strong colors. Gender differences cannot be detected from a distance as the band is uniform and unisex. Group experiences while embodying the uniform seem to be similar and positive, including winning competitions, performing the halftime show, and marching in parades. Individually, the uniform became a source of ridicule and humiliation. This research relates how these individual experiences while in uniform varied based on gender. Data were analyzed from interviews participants in a previous pilot study who focused on aesthetic response based on the form, viewer, and context while embodying the uniform with lengthy anecdotal passages and stories of their time embodying the high school marching band uniform. These experiences, however, did not deter the members from being a part of a group that required them to wear, in essence, a target on them.

INDEX WORDS: MARCHING BAND, UNIFORM, GENDER, EXPERIENCE, HISTORY, PERCEPTION, AESTHETIC RESPONSE, AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOR, APPROACH BEHAVIOR

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B.S., University of Georgia, 2015

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of The University of Georgia in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

ATHENS, GEORGIA

2020

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August 2020

DEDICATION

Family and friends have always pulled me through the highs and lows of my life. I have been fortunate enough to always have support in the paths that I have chosen, including going back to school and completing my Master of Science. I would like to dedicate this to the one person who sees things in me that I could never see and who is ALWAYS my voice of reason and my BIGGEST supporter, my husband, Jeff Morgan. None of this would have been possible if not for his never-ending love and enthusiastic support.

Thank you, CJ, you're the best! I love you!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

So many people have helped me along the path of my academic career. This space is not enough to express my eternal gratitude to these people but I want to thank them. Thankyou:

- To my core family group, **Jeff, our son, William, our sweet dog, Adele, and my parents, Bill and Bev Fitzgerald**, for your love, encouragement, and support. I could not have done this without you or my extended family, especially my **“Grama”, Edna Mae Fincher Bell**, who has graced this world for almost an entire century (100 in October 2020).
- To **Dr. Monica Sklar**, for your mentoring, friendship, guidance, source of never-ending knowledge, advice, and resources! Your endless amount of patience and your experience were instrumental to this study and challenged me as an writer, researcher, and a person. You helped me find the perfect subject and kept me going. Thank you again for everything!
- To my committee members, **Dr. Lilia Gomez-Lanier and Dr. Patricia Hunt-Hurst**. Lilia, for keeping me focused and on the path to success and making me a better-organized researcher; Dr. Hunt-Hurst, for guiding me early on and continuing to do so throughout my time at UGA. Your recommendations were invaluable to this project!
- To my great TMI and FACS family for seeing something in me and encouraging me to pursue a master’s degree. Also, I appreciate your having been mentors to me while I was an undergraduate student. **Drs. Patti Annis, Gajanan Bhat (Head of the Department), Katalin Medvedev, Laura McAndrews, Yoo-Kyoung Seock, Suraj Sharma (Graduate Coordinator), and our fantastic Dean, Dr. Linda Fox** and many others have touched my life as a student, researcher, and person.

- To **Drs. Jori Hall** and **Denise Lewis** for guiding me and teaching me how to research “qualitatively”. Your classes gave me a much-needed boost in the qual world!
- To the **members of the Costume Society of America (Southeast Region)** for your continuous support of my project. Thank you for allowing me to present, with funding at the 2018 and 2019 symposia. Thank you for all the great feedback to guide my present and future endeavors.
- To the members of the two organizations who helped spread my survey for the pilot study that led to this thesis. The **UGA Redcoat Band (past and present members)** helped to launch my research further than I could have imagined with the help of the **members of the Classic City Band**, my creative outlet. These organizations’ members forwarded information about my project and encouraged people to join the conversation! The interest, excitement, encouragement, and feedback were priceless!
- To the beginnings of this project. I would never have even thought of this idea if it hadn’t been for a conversation in the office of the maestro himself! **Dr. Brett Bawcum, Director of the UGA Redcoat Band**, for getting me started on this huge undertaking! If not for a conversation with you about past (and future) Redcoat Band uniforms, this idea might never have seen the light of day. Once a Dawg/Redcoat...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 contains the following sections: (a) background of the study, (b) statement of purpose, (c) conceptual framework, (d) objectives, (e) significance of the study. This qualitative study is about the gendered experiences of high school marching band alumni while they were wearing the uniform. The purpose of this research is to focus on gaining knowledge of gender experiences and of marching band uniform design issues. This research provides a better understanding of how socio-cultural norms and values impact the human experience when these alumni wore a high school marching band uniform. Additionally, it presents a better understanding of the effects that this particular garment has on self-identity. According to *Physical Connections between the Body and Dress* (2003), “comfort is indispensable” and being clothed properly aids in efficiency and happiness (p. 37). Comfort also leads to better experiences by “expand[ing] the self and the personality in such a way as to create strength, vigor, steadiness, or even a sense of power of being” (p. 41).

Prior research primarily centers on the marching band as a group, social aspects of the members of the band, and music and academics (Abril, 2012; Cumberledge, 2017; Matthews, 2017), but not on the uniform itself or the experiences while embodying the uniform. While some researchers do focus on stereotypes within the band, they do not include the uniform in these stereotypes (Abramo, 2016; Abril, 2012; Carter, 2013) or include marching band alumni in their data collection. According to Cumberledge (2017), the marching band uniform is highly

prized and often times influences a decision about where to go to college even more than academics or cost.

College marching band is the main emphasis of the research from Cumberledge (2017). Conversely, the high school band, where identity is formed for teenagers (Abramo, 2016, p. 2), is a step toward college and can be an influencer for a college major or even an aid in paying for school (Cumberledge, 2017). Also, the participants in past studies were members of college marching bands (Abril, 2012; Cumberledge, 2017; Matthews, 2017) rather than high school alumni focusing on their past experiences while wearing the uniform. There are studies of high school marching bands but they do not include the wearing of the uniform as part of their research (Abramo, 2016; Abril, 2012).

This research builds on a pilot study by Morgan and Sklar (2018a), during which high school marching band alumni enthusiastically spoke about their time in marching band and, as a result, gave lengthy anecdotal stories about their time wearing the uniform and generated an in-depth account of their experiences. The researchers of this pilot study found common themes upon which they developed new research questions for this analysis. Consequently, this research study builds on the previous pilot study and the unmasking of the limited literature review on this topic. This inquiry focuses on the appearance of the high school marching band with its stereotypes, associated with the uniform and group and the experiences of marching band members while wearing the uniform, all of which are related to DeLong (1998) aesthetic response through form, viewer, and context, and how they differ between males and females.

Background of the Study

Marching band uniforms are a recognizable item in fashion that combine function and flamboyance with tradition and a sense of identity. The garments have decorative rows of metallic buttons, epaulets, strong colors, and a boxy silhouette, making them an attention-grabber on and off the performance field. Historically, marching band uniforms have emulated a military uniform in design, decoration, and colors. Originally musicians wore colorful uniforms to distinguish themselves from armed soldiers on the battlefield (Lochner, 2010); however, with the inception of football and school music programs, including marching bands (Cumberledge, 2017), these colorful uniforms have become closely associated with their school's marching band (Lochner, 2010).

Marching band has a long history of rituals and traditions with its own lifestyle (Abril, 2012). The uniform is one aspect of the traditions within the group (Cumberledge, 2017). Having their roots in the military (Abril, 2012; Dobney, 2004; Matthews, 2017), marching band uniforms “signify order, conformity and discipline” (Craik, 2005, p. 3) within the band, adding to the pride held by the members. This tradition, however, is often cursed by negative stereotypes, such as those found on band-related websites and social media groups, from non-members of the band (Abeles, Hafeli, & Sears, 2014), even to the point of being bullied (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a).

The marching band uniform communicates many things to the viewer. This includes information about the school, including school colors, mascot, letters, and other symbols (i.e., shield, coat of arms, fleur-de-lis, school sports logo). The school letters, according to survey participants, could appear on an overlay or be stitched onto a sleeve or the front or back of the jacket and the colors were incorporated into the top and pants, and the accessories (Morgan &

Sklar, 2018b). Michael Cesario, marching band uniform designer for Fred J. Miller, Inc., designer and manufacturer of marching band uniforms, reports in Lochner (2010) “uniform design must meet three criteria: visibility, identity and practicality” (p. 5). The uniform unites everyone uniformly, making it difficult to distinguish males from females at a distance. The group becomes a highly visible, highly audible, unisex machine on the field while gender is hidden by unisex garments. There appears to be only one gender or no gender at all. To summarize in this case the identity of the group outweighs the identity of the individual. The uniform is a binding agent of the group (Craik, 2005; Lochner, 2010).

Identity within the group does not always align with the identity of the group from the viewers’ perspective. Stereotypes and negative perceptions from outsiders differ from the perceptions of the insiders who wear the uniform (Matthews, 2017). The outsiders sometimes view the uniform negatively and form opinions based on their negative views. Identity within the group is formed by the experiences within the group, including stereotypes (Abeles et al., 2014). Group identity and self-identity do not always align with each other because outsiders see the group differently than the individual sees him/herself or the group.

Reactions to the uniform, however, are complex in that they are based upon negative stereotypes by outsiders (Abeles et al., 2014; Abril, 2012; Morgan & Sklar, 2018b) yet highly regarded by the wearers, who experienced pride and purpose while wearing it (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). Celebrities, such as The Beatles, Beyoncé, and Fleetwood Mac have featured uniformed marching bands as part of their act. The uniform, however, still receives negative stereotypes from those who do not understand the pride instilled in its wearers (Matthews, 2017). Marching band uniform stereotypes often come from popular culture’s depiction of the uniform and the people who wear it. While pop culture has both positive and negative views of the uniform and

its wearers (Abramo, 2016), marching band alumni take much pride in wearing it (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a), focusing on social connectivity within a larger group rather than their own individualism (Matthews, 2017). The formal structure and uniformity of the group lessens the focus on the individual, shifting it to the group and the organization it represents. The wearing of a uniform, such as a choir robe or high school marching band uniform, “supports and enhances the appreciation of the performance ... by the observer” (Eicher, Evenson, & Lutz, 2008, p. 390). Thus, this study showed that the collective group identity and connectivity supersedes individual identity.

Morgan and Sklar (2018a) suggest that some noted differences in the participants’ experiences included how the marching band uniform was presented in popular culture. If the people wearing the uniform were shown respect, such as performing as a backup band for a rock musician, the marching band alumni saw it as a positive. Disrespectful usages of marching bands, such as television shows or movies depicting band members as socially awkward, the object of a joke, or nerdy outcasts; or the depiction making an entire band look bad in any form, however, elicited negative reactions from the participants (Abril, 2012; Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). These usages also impacted alumni experiences while wearing the uniform. The pilot study brought forth the negative emotional burden that popular culture and its viewers place on members of the marching band.

Statement of Purpose

This research strives to compare and contrast the experiences between males and females while wearing the high school marching band uniform, using aesthetic response by DeLong (1998) as a framework. This study builds on Morgan and Sklar (2018c) pilot study of high

school marching band alumni who wore the uniform between the decades of the 1950s to the 2010s. The previous study explored the perceptions that marching band members had about the uniforms that they wore and how the uniforms were portrayed in popular culture. Responses included descriptions of the uniform and stories about their experiences while wearing it. Some of their answers in the survey included information about form, viewer, and context. This led the researchers to the conclusion that the framework of aesthetic response by DeLong (1998) should be used to further investigate marching band alumni and the differences between male and female experiences while wearing the uniform.

Gender

Past research on musicians has focused on gender stereotypes, including crossing over gender stereotypes. One study found that adolescent musicians who played an instrument that was considered as an instrument for the opposite gender were impacted by the stereotypes and were bullied or harassed by other students, musicians and non-musicians. This study focused on the difference in experiences between genders and found that the outcomes were significant in that females were empowered and males were not (Abeles et al., 2014). Gendered experience differences were also noted in the original pilot study done by Morgan and Sklar (2018c).

The participants in the pilot study by Morgan and Sklar (2018a), stated that pride, mentioned 175 times was the biggest reason for the positive experiences while wearing the marching band uniform. Their responses included information about the uniform with in-depth descriptions, the many different viewers, and the various performance venues. They also indicated a need for further interviewing of the participants about the differences in experiences while wearing the high school marching band uniform between the male and female. In addition, other studies have explored gender-related experiences, including gendering of musical

instruments (Abeles et al., 2014); therefore, showing a need for further research on gender experiences.

Conceptual Framework

Research questions

(RQ1) What are the differences between the male experience and the female experience regarding the wearing of the high school marching band uniform? (RQ2) How did aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) have a relationship to these experiences?

Identity is communicated by dress “as it announces social positions of wearer to both wearer and observers” and these announcements through dress are non-verbal in nature and can include information about the wearer (“Dress and Identity,” 1995, p. 12-13). A uniform further identifies the subculture, occupation, religion, or other group of which the wearer is a part (Craik, 2005). A marching band uniform additionally identifies the school attended by the wearer and that the wearer is a musician. It does not, however, necessarily indicate gender as uniforms tend to be unisex. Self and identity are developed over time and can change, as self is a “dynamic construct” (Lennon, Johnson, & Rudd, 2017a, para. 6).

According to Lennon, et al., (2017b), one must negotiate one’s identity through one’s own view and by others’ view, also (para. 3). Sometimes these differ, for example when a person dresses to match or not match a label that is given to him or her (para. 6). The present research views the identity and self through the lens of aesthetic response by DeLong (1998) which consists of form, viewer, and context with a goal of determining the male and female experiences while wearing the high school marching band uniform.

Objectives

This current study examines gender experience differences and how aesthetic response played into these experiences. This new study includes the following objectives:

1. To understand the differences between the male experience and the female experience regarding the wearing of the high school marching band uniform.
2. To understand how aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) had a relationship to these experiences.

Significance of the Study

A uniform provides unity and identity for the group (Craig, 2005; Lochner, 2010) and the marching band uniform is a strong example of this. Previous literature has included uniforms of all types, sports, work, military, and subcultures but there is limited focus on the marching band uniform. This research will also add to the under-documented history of marching band. High schools and colleges across the United States have marching bands and there is a need to include the high school marching band uniform in research. Experiences while wearing the uniform and aesthetics of the uniform in addition to the stereotypes of the uniform also need to be included in research. The uniform is a vital aspect of the marching band participants' lived experience. Musicians and marching band members have been studied regarding some aspects such as group dynamics, music and academics, and social aspects of the members. Almost all of this research has been conducted on the college level. There is, however, no evidence of research on the uniform worn by either college or high school band members. None of these studies have included alumni participants.

Future research opportunities

Uniform design is a significant area for growth. Participants in the pilot study by Morgan and Sklar (2018c) complained about ill-fitting and hot uniforms that were also cold in cooler temperature. Marching band uniforms are uncomfortable and there is a potential for research with physical comfort. Smart textiles and wearable technology could be a next step for these design issues.

There are numerous other areas for potential growth in the subject of marching bands, including documenting history and the culture of the musicians, marching bands and concert bands. Historically, there is much missing. The marching band history contains a lack of research recorded between the late 1800s and the 21st century. There is also a need for documenting before the 1800s and marching bands outside of the United States.

Women's history in marching bands and the history of popular culture usage needs to be studied also. This is a niche culture that needs to be studied and documented – how the members feel about the culture and why; this could be broken into demographic groups; regional study within and outside of the United States. There is a large potential for comparisons.

Documentation and research in the area of fashion could include garments influenced by marching band uniforms that have been seen in the stores and on runways.

Many disciplines could benefit from studying this culture, including but not limited to fashion and music. Sociology, including understanding how to ease stress, combating the bully behavior, and equaling gender experiences, is another discipline that could study this group. This research helps to fill a need for further exploration of this niche culture and the culture of bands, in general.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 contains the following sections: (a) modern marching band, (b) marching band history, (c) uniforms, (d) uniformity in fashion, (e) conceptual framework. The uniform is a complex part of the social and personal experience of the high school marching band member. Past research about marching bands focused on group dynamics as opposed to individual experiences within the band. These researchers have also focused on the time spent in marching band socially, as a close-knit group of people, and academically, as a class in school and how it affects other academic classes (Abril, 2012; Cumberledge, 2017; Matthews, 2017), but not specifically the experience of embodying the uniform. Some researchers did focus on stereotypes within the band but they did not include the uniform in these stereotypes (Abramo, 2016; Abril, 2012; Carter, 2013). Past research also included the benefits of being in marching band such as scholarships that encourage high school students to continue in music and marching band throughout college. The participants in these studies were members of college marching bands. One exception was Abril (2012) who focused on students in high school bands.

Modern Marching Band

Marching band is a mixture of musicians, who play an instrument while marching, and non-musicians including auxiliary units, members who do not play an instrument, and an on-field director. At a high school spirit event, the marching band is a large, loud, and highly-visible

entity. It consists of a combination of musicians and non-musicians gathered together to achieve a common goal, the marching band performance. The band leader on the field is the drum major and the band is usually accompanied by auxiliary units including the flag-line, baton twirlers, and dance-line members, who add visual effects to the music.

The performance by the marching band can take place on the football field and in the stands at a sporting event, or during a parade. Marching band members come together as an exceedingly spirit-oriented organization (Matthews, 2017) and, quite frequently, the marching band becomes the center of attention at the sporting events. Often when the band plays, the cheerleaders and band auxiliary unit members coordinate their dances to the music, adding to the experience during Friday night football.

Marching bands in the United States are diverse because they include people from various races and ethnicities, genders, and other demographic backgrounds, making it an inclusive organization but it is only open to anyone having “the capacity to participate in the socially interactive process of making music” at a required level, simultaneously making it exclusive (Abramo, 2016; Higgins & Campbell, 2010, p. 1). Members participate in established traditions and rituals and have their own language, ideologies, and lifestyle (Abril, 2012), which include and emanate pride, family, acceptance, and connection (Matthews, 2017; Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). One of the most-recognizable and visible traditions is the uniform worn by members. This uniform unites the members and helps evoke a sense of pride and a feeling of connection, family, and acceptance, aids in the preservation of the spirit of the organization (Matthews, 2017). Uniforms give the wearer a positive feeling about him/herself and “[w]earing the uniform draws pride” from the group (Lochner, 2010, p. 6; Morgan & Sklar, 2018a).

Matthews (2017) states that the marching band is a “valued member of the school community” (p. 180) and its sporting events, parades, and social events because of their prominence (Abril, 2012). Even though they have only a small percent of the school’s population (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a), they connect to other units of the school, such as the cheerleaders, sports team members, and spectators, including students, teachers, parents, and alumni, and quite frequently lead the school spirit during the event (Matthews, 2017).

Marching Band History

Marching band history can be traced back to the Middle Ages and there were many reasons for these bands, such as for entertainment and processions (Camus, 1976; Cumberledge, 2017; Garty, 2003); boosting troop morale (Dobney, 2004); communication on the battlefield (Cumberledge, 2017; “Fife, Drum, and Bugle during the Revolutionary War,” n.d.; “The United States Army Band,” n.d.); and assisting with the wounded and the dead (Garofalo & Elrod, 1985; “The Civil War Bands,” n.d.).

Modern day marching bands in colleges evolved because soldiers, returning from the Civil War, needed and wanted to continue playing and performing and began developing the first college marching bands (Abril, 2012; Dobney, 2004; Matthews, 2017). The true origin of the college marching band has been debated (Patzig, 1983), however, Wisconsin, Illinois, Purdue, Notre Dame, and Michigan State University are amongst the oldest programs in the United States (Cumberledge, 2017; Garty, 2003; Lochner, 2010). The inception of college football and the development of public school music curricula helped marching band become a major part of university music programs (Cumberledge, 2017; Haynie, 1971; Patzig, 1983). School spirit and football attendance increased furthering the popularity of marching bands through the 20th

century (Patzig, 1983). Other contributors to the popularity included televised football games, and publications relating to various areas of marching band, (Cumberledge, 2017; Patzig, 1983). In the late 1900s into the 2000s, marching band became a powerful recruiting tool for universities (Cumberledge, 2017).

Uniforms

Uniforms range from the required military, school and work attire, band and sports to the social street style and subcultures. Uniforms can be gendered or unisex. Research on gendered uniform design has focused on these topics: objectification of males or females; masculine/unisex design (Buckley, 2000; Calefato, 2000; Lauer, Zakrajsek, Fisher, Bejar, McCowan, Martin, & Vosloo, 2018). Uniforms for females, whether unisex or gendered, meet with disapproval by those who wear it and sometimes by those who view it. Female athletes perceived their uniforms as too revealing, restrictive, tight, or inappropriate (Lauer et al., 2018). Female [military] uniforms have been “feminized versions of male military” (Craig, 2005, p. 79). Female police officers were also outfitted in male uniforms. Women in the police and military have endured ill-fitting uniforms but know that to be taken seriously, they had to wear a male uniform (Craig, 2005; De Camargo, 2016). The female corporate “power suit” was designed for this same reason, for women to be taken seriously in the workplace. Uniforms identify the group that the wearer belongs to, such as a sports team, the military, or a marching band, creating group uniformity (Eicher, et al., 2008).

Fashion and uniform design inspire each other (Craig, 2005) as the structured silhouette combined with decorative embellishments panache make it an eye-catching garment in fashion. The military uniform is a desired item and has also had a profound influence on men’s fashion

(Craik, 2005), both on runways and on the streets (Buckley, 2000; Calefato, 2000). Marching band uniforms are also a familiar fashion symbol with attributes such as arranged rows of buttons, epaulets, strong colors, and a boxy silhouette, together creating a striking presentation. Fashions based on uniforms often include structured and tailored features, buttons, braids, or other decorative features; quite frequently combining several of the aspects of the uniform (Craik, 2005).

Identity and self

Uniforms intrigue both wearers and viewers as it allows wearers to perform their identity and viewers to witness the performance (Craik, 2005) as well as perceive who the wearers are. People are multi-dimensional in performing self and identity (Abeles et al., 2014; Lennon et al., 2017b). Lennon et al., (2017b) further state that identity comes from “categorization by others and by oneself” (para. 3). Abeles et al. (2014) explains “identity as formed by social and cultural influences using a model described by Abes, Jones, and McEwen (2007) this “model of multidimensions of identity (MMDI), which provides a conceptual model illustrating that an individual’s identities (female, daughter, trumpet player) should not be considered in isolation from one another” (p. 349). The model demonstrates how all aspects of identity are connected and how they “influence identity perception” (p. 349). Identity can also influence experience and whether it is positive or negative. According to Abeles et al. (2014), females had a better overall experience in band than males because “girls appeared to be able to try new and different activities more easily than boys” (p. 348), such as playing a “gender inappropriate” musical instrument, for example, a girl playing trombone which is considered an instrument for boys (p. 347).

Uniforms may have differing meanings to the wearer and to the viewer. Craik (2005) points out that uniforms have “shaped our aesthetic codes [and] our political regimes” and “prescribe a range of responses” (p. 5). Uniforms elicit responses of strength and power, and sexual objectification (Buckley, 2000; Calefato, 2000; Craik, 2005). Viewers are drawn to the uniform and the way it looks, however, there are contradictory elements tied to the wearing of the uniform, such as “pride... [yet] shame,” “unity ... [yet] rebellion,” and “status ... [yet] subversion” (Craik, 2005, pp. 4-5).

Viewer perspective plays a vital role in the identity expression of the wearer and assignment of the group to which the wearer belongs. Perceptions about the individual portions of an ensemble, the wearer and their dress as a whole package, and/or, that person within a larger context, all are aspects of the part-to-whole relationship. A single garment may be viewed differently than the garment within a larger outfit. And that outfit has a different impact solitarily than within a group or standing as an outlier (DeLong, 1998). Marching band uniforms are viewed as a part-to-whole or whole-to-part. When viewed by an outsider, the high school marching band uniform may be seen as a part or as a whole. The group can also be seen as a whole while the individual is seen as a part. These parts include the pieces of the ensemble, either a uniform part or the individual, and are perceived “by some visual path” taken by the viewer (DeLong, 1998, p. 86). The whole includes the group together or the complete uniform as a whole.

The individual parts are independent of each other and include identifying characteristics, such as colors of the school. For example, if the first thing one notices is the brightly-colored jacket or the large school initial on the jacket, this is a part-to-whole view of the uniform. Also, the wearer of the uniform may wear part of the uniform, for example, the pants without the top,

and still be identified as a marching band member. Gender and fit are included in the parts, also. The individual pieces of the uniform are, therefore, associated with the entire uniform, the part to the whole.

Conversely, the uniform as a whole, is also associated with the group and can be viewed as a whole-to-part, especially when the viewer views it from a distance and then later close-up. The recognizable boxy “silhouette is the most important continuous shape” (DeLong, 1998, p. 87) of the marching band uniform. It is distinct. The band member, wearing the entire uniform, may be viewed as a whole-to-part if the uniform is mostly one color and the decorations are smaller or less stated (DeLong, 1998, p. 87).

Uniformity in Fashion

Gendered or Not Gendered Fashion

Since the 1990s it has become commonplace for a woman to wear at least one item of menswear. This was spearheaded by the Rational Dress Society (RDS) and progressed with Coco Chanel. The RDS, founded in 1881, sought to change the way women dressed (Voight, 2000, pp. 217-218). Activities for women such as sports and working during World War II brought about more change for women’s dress (Marcketti & Angstman, 2013) as some garments seemed less rational. For example, clothes that did not fit the activities or normal actions of the day became evident when crashes took place because of the inability to see the pedals on bicycles (Jungnickel, 2015). Women who wore trousers, however, in the late 1800s to early 1900s, were susceptible to ridicule or arrest (Cunningham, 2003).

World War II further fueled women’s need for more appropriate work clothes, therefore, some women adopted garments worn by men for their work wear (Voight, 2000). Women’s

clothes became smaller than garments before World War II, using less fabric or manmade fibers to aid in the rationing of products and became more like menswear “for safety and patriotic reasons” (Marcketti & Angstman, 2013, p. 139). This included more form-fitting garments. Later in the 1900s, women borrowed menswear, leading to a more uniform look between the genders (Voight, 2000). Androgynous clothing furthered men and women dressing similarly and, according to Crepax (2017), began as early as the 1920s with trendy boyish girls (p. 19). Yves Saint Laurent designed menswear for women in the mid to late 1960s (Rees-Roberts, 2016; Voight, 2000) and, along with androgyny and unisex clothes, caused men and women to dress similarly even more (Voight, 2000). Fashion magazines and a wider following has blurred the lines between gendered clothing (Crepax, 2017).

The unisex high school marching band uniform unites the look of the marching band on the field and close-up when members are in a group while not on the field. The dress code of the band is emphasized through the united look (Eicher et al, 2008; Hillestad, 1980) instead of focusing on one individual (Carter, 2013). There is no evidence of a skirted-version of the uniform or female version in coed marching bands but there were all female bands where skirts were worn by the participants (Sullivan, 2011).

Gender and uniform

Men have worn pants for centuries even though very young Western boys, through the 19th Century, wore dresses until around five years of age (“Boy’s dress,” 2018). According to the article, “Boy’s dress”(2018), boys wore more elaborate dresses than girls but wore shorter hair and “features associated only with clothing for boys” (para. 5). While transitioning to pants was celebrated for boys, females have had challenges when trying to break the gender norms of dress, for example, wearing pants met with resistance in the past, including arrest (Cunningham, 2003).

Other examples of this dissimilarity include areas in which a uniform is worn. Women's uniforms have had two forms, either mirroring the male uniform with a female version or a uniform including a skirt or wearing the same uniform as males. Much of the time women feminized their appearance for the viewer differing from males in ways such as wearing a feminine hairstyle or cosmetics while in a male uniform. Some females decorated their desk or had a relationship with a male to display her femininity (Herbert, 1998, pp. 87-89).

Men, on the other hand, do not need to accessorize their uniforms; the viewer sees their masculinity. Buckley (2000) describes the tailored uniform jacket as articulating the chest and shoulders, causing a male wearer to appear taller and straighter as he stands and further describes the military male as a "tailored erection" (pp. 205-206). The uniform expresses his masculinity for him (Voight, 2000) with features of the style and cut of the uniform making him a "sex object" (Craik, 2005, p. 36; De Camargo, 2016).

Black (2013) explains that the "uniform is the agent of an institution.... the uniform thus creates a fundamental and all-important distinction between self and non-self" (p. 184). The wearer is governed by rules and becomes a symbol of appropriate behavior that is expected when wearing the uniform. Black (2013) continues, "we are reminded of this when someone wears a uniform in vain, and finds themselves in a court martial" (p. 184). Females feel the need to accessorize their uniforms to not look male and feel better in their uniform (Herbert, 1998).

Workplace uniforms. Uniforms are common in the workplace. The corporate world has the "power suit", a form of uniform, for women, that is more masculine than feminine (Scherer, 2017) causing women to also feminize them with accessories. In the past, female suits included skirts but rarely pants. Suits for males, however, include a tie, shirt, coat and pants, masculine components.

Other occupations that typically have uniforms include police officers, flight attendants, military and medical personnel. These uniforms tend to have a unisex version or a female form that was based on the male style. One exception to this is the flight attendant suit. This uniform, designed originally for females, has traditionally allowed a female to be the vision of authority for the airline to the viewer. The flight attendant uniform was inspired by the military and nurses uniforms and was designed by one of the first “stewardesses. [It] was one of the first civilian uniforms” (Black, 2013, p. 192) and the male uniform is a mirror of the female uniform.

The airlines have a consistency to their dress that is not necessarily uniform. The pilot wears a white shirt, and a dark coat with dark pants, the uniform having no significant changes over time, while the flight attendant wears the colors and logos of the airline, a uniform that has seen numerous changes in shape, color, and accessories but has staple garments as the foundations of the uniform (Black, 2013; “Flight attendant uniforms,” 2018). The context of this uniform’s authority is that the flight attendant is the visible representative of the airline.

Scrubs in the medical field are another form of uniform that female wearers are less satisfied with than their male counterparts. The pants were the source of greatest dissatisfaction. Also, sizing is a problem for females in the medical field as alphabetical sizing (i.e. S(mall), M(edium), L(arge), etc.) did not fit true-to-size for them and no alternatives to these uniforms have been offered to females (Kim, Brandewie, & Kim, 2017).

Military uniforms. Female cadets at West Point, the Military Academy, were subjected to a uniform change when a social event in 1976 revealed that males and females looked alike in dress (Craik, 2005; Garber, 1992, p. 24). There was great controversy over the couples who were “mirror images” of each other, resulting in a female version of the uniform and requiring females to wear skirts when dancing (Garber, 1992, p. 24). Today, military uniforms are unisex to “hide

gender differences” and possibly “defeminize servicewomen” (Scherer, 2017, para. 11). The females, like those in the medical field, are not offered an alternative to the made-for-males uniforms (Scherer, 2017). The United States Naval Academy claimed in the past to be segregating through gender by having skirts for women, therefore they have banned skirts and require women to wear pants. According to Scott (2016), “a Chief of Naval Personnel spokesperson said, ‘...being in uniform, means being uniform in appearance’” (para. 9).

Sports uniforms. Athletes wear uniforms as a part of being a team. Uniforms distinguish athletes from the opposing team and associate the individual with the team, and the school or organization the team represents. The uniform unites the team as one. Female athletes frequently wear tight or revealing uniforms or uniforms that are considered not feminine, such as for basketball. The emphasis is more on the appearance of these uniforms rather than being functionally advantageous (Lauer et al., 2018). These uniforms affect the wearer’s experiences.

Female athletes have a high risk of body image dissatisfaction relating to their uniforms. Torres-McGehee, Monsma, Dompier, & Washburn (2012) found that collegiate “cheerleaders had the greatest degree of body image dissatisfaction [when wearing] the midriff uniform” (p. 546). Other female athletes, including volleyball players, swimmers, and ballet dancers were dissatisfied with their bodies when wearing a tight or revealing uniform or a basketball uniform that was not considered feminine. This led to dieting, eating disorders, and “struggling to focus on competition when they were concerned about their body and uniform” (Lauer et al, 2018, p. 60; Torres-McGehee et al, 2012).

As with other uniform experiences, such as military or police uniforms, the gender differences were based on the unisex uniforms that were available to men and women at the time of service or membership. Unlike sports uniforms and military uniforms of the past which

included women wearing skirts, the researcher found no evidence that high school marching band females wore skirted uniforms instead of pants unless it was an all-female band, who wore skirts (Sullivan, 2011), or a drum major leading the band.

Uniforms have effect on the experience of the wearer. A comfortable, well-fitting uniform contributes positively to the experience while an uncomfortable, ill-fitting uniform has negative effects. A marching band uniform that fits and feels good to the wearer adds to the satisfaction of the experience while wearing it. Good memories can still be made and pride will always exist within the group and with the individual members that form it. In a previous survey by Morgan & Sklar (2018b), participants - high school marching band alumni who marched between the years of 1950s to 2010s - described their high school marching band experiences while in uniform. Pride, stated 175 times by 220 survey participants, was the major theme of the findings (p. 18). The sources of this pride included the overall group, performances, and the connection to the group and each other. While in the high school marching band, participants wore the uniform with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Gender, however, was a point of differentiation. The marching band uniform is a unisex garment but the experiences were not uniform between males and females (Morgan & Sklar, 2018b).

The Marching Band Uniform

The marching band uniform was originally inspired by the uniforms of the military. From the time of the first college marching bands, the military influence can be seen. These uniforms, developed from military uniforms, where functional and safety was of significance while decorative components were subordinate. Colors and decorations distinguished the musicians from armed soldiers and allowed musicians to stand out against the color of the battlefield – gun-

smoke gray – thus, protecting the musicians from gunfire (Lochner, 2010). Marching band uniforms emulated the military uniform design, decoration, and colors.

Military influence on marching band uniforms continued up to the Vietnam Conflict where the attitude toward the military began to change and the military's popularity decreased at this time (Hughes, 2018). Uniform styles began to change in the 1960s when decoration, such as school colors and symbols, overtook functionality in marching band uniform design, associating marching bands closer with their schools. Also, “athletic, streamlined and abstract” styles replaced military (Lochner, 2010, p. 4) designs to fit the more modern marching styles of curvilinear shapes on football fields versus previous straight lines in a block-formation in parades and on the field (Cumberledge, 2017; Lochner, 2010).

Uniform styles were attention-grabbing, flashier, and sometimes designed for a particular type of show through the 1980s and 1990s (Garty, 2003). At times the costume-like uniforms of Drum Corps International (DCI) members influenced high school marching band uniform designs. These designs also allowed for a more united group look from a distance versus a single item up-close appearance (Lochner, 2010). Fabrics have also developed and changed over the course of history. Wool was the fabric used in marching band uniforms in the past but today the fabrics include polyester blends and washable fabrics (Lochner, 2010). Marching band uniform designer and manufacturer “Fred J. Miller, Inc. strictly offers washable uniforms” (Lochner, 2010, p. 4). Much like military uniforms, marching band uniforms have evolved over time.

From early America to today, marching band uniforms in the military mirrored military uniforms with the band uniform colors being the opposite of soldier uniform colors. This aided in the identification and protection of the musicians (“The United States Army Band,” n.d.). During its history, views toward marching band uniforms have sometimes shifted from positive

to negative based on the views of the military, upon which the uniform was once modeled (Lochner, 2010). Attitudes toward the military changed after the Vietnam Conflict and the military was less respected (Hughes, 2018); therefore, marching band uniforms became more decorative and costume-style rather than paying homage to military uniforms (Cumberledge, 2017; Garty, 2003; Lochner, 2010).

Some schools use a uniform to aid in training children for adulthood (Craik, 2005), and marching band uniforms add to the discipline of the wearers through a dress code and allow for a group uniformity during performances (Eicher, et al., 2008). Wearing the uniform comes with a set of rules for behavior and enforcement comes through inspections, rewards, and penalties (Craik, 2005). In marching band, these rules include wearing a clean uniform correctly and completely. For example, if the uniform jacket or coat has fasteners (i.e., zippers, hooks, buttons), they are to be fastened correctly.

According to several band directors, they are not aware of any written rules for the uniformity of hair and jewelry. Band directors set their own rules. The National Association for Music Educators (2020) has no rules posted on their website governing how to wear longer hair or jewelry. According to these band directors, their own band rules include no visible jewelry and short hair are also part of the uniform. If a member has long hair it must be pulled up off the shoulders and, if it is long enough, needed to be inside of the hat. There is no jewelry allowed except small stud earrings or anything that could be hidden inside the uniform. These rules, according to one band director, seem to be an “unwritten standard” within the marching band community.

Features including color, badges, lettering, and other decorations unify the look of the organization, making it coherent to the viewer. These parts of the uniform communicate

information about the high school, including school colors, mascot, letters, and other symbols (i.e., shield, coat of arms, fleur-de-lis, school sports logo). The school letters, according to survey participants, could appear on an overlay or be stitched onto a sleeve or the front or back of the jacket and the colors were incorporated into the top and pants, and the accessories (Morgan & Sklar, 2018b). In addition to the decorations to signify school representation, sometimes the uniform includes “secret codes” that are only identifiable to members or to those who are extremely familiar with the group, such as other bands from other schools (Craik, 2005, p. 193).

The formal structure and uniformity of the high school marching band lessens the focus on the individual, shifting it to the group and the organization it represents (Eicher et al., 2008). Uniformity in dress happens “when materials, processes and techniques are combined” and worn on the body “in terms of the purposes they fulfill” (Hillestad, 1980, p. 117-119) so that a “dress code” is established. Carter (2013) found the marching band uniform to be a way for an individual to blend in with the group while the group is being noticed (p. 36). Marching band uniforms allow individual members to become a part of the group.

Negative stereotypes and perceptions. The marching band uniform can be a source of undesirable perceptions when outsiders, and sometimes marching band members themselves, perceive it as a negative (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). Outsiders, including social media and popular culture sources, who did not understand the pride in wearing the uniform described the uniform and its wearers (Abeles et al., 2014; Abril, 2012) using terms such as ‘geeky’, ‘dorky’, and ‘nerdy’ (Abramo, 2016, p.127; Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). During the 2015 Rose Bowl, a sports commentator referred to marching band members on the field as “dorks”; his social media post angered “marching band enthusiasts and music educators [who] launched a social media campaign” against him causing him to publicly apologize (Abramo, 2016, p. 113). This is one of

many examples of the conflicting views of the uniform and its wearers. Students within the band, however, saw themselves positively, even though, outside of the group, they were negatively stereotyped (Abril, 2012; Morgan & Sklar, 2018b).

The social media campaign against the sports commentator showed that marching band members are proud of who they and their organizations are. Abramo (2016) found the phrase “dork pride” (p.120) came from marching members and alumni who posted that they were proud of being a “band dork, geek, [or] nerd” and other monikers and many embraced the terms and even referred to themselves with these labels (Abeles et al., 2014; Abramo, 2016, p. 127; Abril, 2012). Many others, however, took offense to it and called him a bully (Abramo, 2016, p. 121).

Popular culture is not the only source of the negative stereotypes as negative views of the military also reflected on the perceptions of marching band uniforms, causing marching bands to change the basis for the uniforms’ appearance (Hughes, 2018; Lochner, 2010). Due to of the beginnings of a negative view towards the military in the 1960s (Hughes, 2018), the styles and designs of marching band uniforms changed to reflect styles popularized by DCI and to fit marching techniques as well as the types of shows performed by the bands. Also, Michigan State University had a non-military uniform as early as 1952 (Lochner, 2010, p. 4).

Conversely the organization’s dress typically is held in high regard by the high school marching band members despite how others view the uniform or its wearers. Members of the high school marching band wore their uniform with enough pride that they did not care how others viewed it (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a). Despite stereotypes and negative emotions while wearing the uniform, high school band alumni focused on positive aspects, such as strong connections, the feeling of family, and acceptance amongst group members (Matthews, 2017) rather than their own negative responses to the appearance of the uniform (Morgan & Sklar,

2018a). As a result, common perceptions of high school marching band uniforms by the original wearer and outside viewers vary as widely as the uniforms themselves and the people who wear them.

Conceptual Framework

This research performed the data analysis utilizing a conceptual framework of aesthetic response by DeLong (1998). These interviews focused on aesthetic response based on the form, viewer, and context while marching band members were embodying the uniform. Interview questions were formulated based on these three aspects of the framework.

Aesthetic Response Theory

DeLong (1998) defined aesthetic response as having three parts: “(1) form, (2) viewer, and (3) context” (p. 9). It communicates to others who the wearer is (p. 10) and, in this case, the wearers are the high school marching band members, as individuals or as a group. The form has three parts as follows: the uniform itself; the instrument; the body of the wearer; and the group as a whole. The viewer is either the wearer seeing her/himself and the viewer looking at the wearer (or wearers), as a group or individuals. In essence, the person looking at the uniform, including other band members and people outside of the band. High school marching band has many viewers; the members view themselves and each other and everyone outside of the band is also a viewer. The audience views the entire band together or members individually, depending on the context of the viewing.

The context includes the time period, place, and the society or culture of the time of wearing it. The time period may be a decade, time of war or other conflict or any other time. The place includes the stadium, parade, or any other place the uniform is present. The societal or

cultural aspects can include events such as the Vietnam Conflict or a movie that depicts a marching band or its members negatively or positively. Morgan & Sklar (2018b; see also Morgan & Sklar, 2018a) found this to be a large influence on the feelings about the marching band by viewers and wearers, alike.

Aesthetic response leads to one of two behaviors, approach or avoidance. Approach behavior is associated with a positive aesthetic response since it reflects an attraction to a design and willingness to observe it (Bloch, 1995). This would include popular culture using marching band uniforms in a positive light, such as on-stage with a popular celebrity such as Beyoncé (Horowitz, 2018). Avoidance behavior, on the other hand, results from negative feelings about the product, the uniform of the marching band (Bloch, 1995). This would include using marching band uniforms in negative ways, such as memes that portray marching band members as “geeky.”

Aesthetic Response – Form. Aesthetic response includes several aspects in its communication about the high school marching band uniform. It refers to the form and, in marching band the form includes the individual in the marching band uniform, characterizing the wearer as a member, and the band, as a whole, in uniform. In this study the form is the marching band uniform embodied by the wearer.

The uniform unites the members of one band and distinguishes them from other marching bands by having different styles and colors of the uniform and accessories, such as a shoes, cummerbund, gloves and gauntlets, sash, bow tie, plumes, and types of hats. Styles of the uniform include military-based designs and non-military-based designs. Styles also included a tuxedo- or suit-style and may include another piece (see figure 1) that attached to the uniform top

and covered most of it. This piece, called an overlay, buttoned to the uniform top, from the shoulder to the waist.

These pieces communicate that the group is a high school marching band, what high school the band belongs to, what the high school's official colors are and, sometimes, who their mascot is. The form includes an instrument that is a supplement to the body because it “can enclose the body, be directly attached to the body, held by the wearer, or ... by another” (Eicher et al., 2008, p.15).



Figure 1- Detachable overlay on a marching band uniform

Aesthetic Response – Viewer. The viewer includes the wearer of an item or the person looking at the wearer of the item (DeLong, 1998, p. 16). There are two forms of the viewer, to include wearer and viewer (DeLong, 1998, p. 16). The term wearer is the person wearing the uniform and the viewer is the person who is looking at the wearer, including other band members and people outside of the band. The viewer can include the wearer looking at him or herself (i.e. looking at a mirror). To avoid confusion, the terms wearer and non-wearer are used. The non-

wearer is used when referring to the outsider who is viewing the wearer. The term viewer is only used when both are included together.

The non-wearer has many opportunities to view the wearer of the high school marching band uniform. The wearer also has opportunities to view the uniform. These include on and off the body. The wearer sees the uniform as it hangs on a clothes hanger or lays on a bed, for example, in addition to the mirror image.

The viewer observes the form through their own personal lens, forming opinions of the wearer and must take into consideration the way clothing looks and feels on the body (DeLong, 1998, p. 18). High school marching band has many viewers; the members view themselves and each other and outsiders are also viewers. The audience views the entire band together or members individually, depending on the context of the viewing.

Aesthetic Response – Context. The context can be physical or cultural. In this study, the main focus is on the physical context but also includes the cultural context as defined below. When high school marching band uniforms communicate messages about the wearer (Dobbs, 2014), positive or negative impressions are formed based on the viewer and the context in which the uniform is worn (Nunes, Garcia-Marques, Ferreira, & Ramos, 2017). Physical context includes “immediate physical space or environment and how all aspects of this space interact with the clothed body,” (DeLong, 1998, p. 18). Physical spaces include high school football stadiums, parades, practice fields, and other public places where a marching band member or the entire band might be seen. Seeing a high school marching band on a football field at halftime may elicit a different response, based on context, than seeing a marching band member individually.

Weather is a contributor to the context of the experience. If the weather is not comfortable, the wearer's experience may also not be comfortable. Weather, time of the year, and location will also affect what people find aesthetically pleasing (DeLong, 1998, p. 18). For example, a marching band uniform that is made of wool or a wool-blend will be uncomfortable in the heat, therefore, a wool uniform in the winter will prompt a different response than a wool uniform in the heat of summer. Light, colors, and other surroundings may also affect the way people view clothing.

The cultural context includes "date, time, and place, as well as the values and ideals of a society," (DeLong, 1998, p. 18). Viewing a marching band uniform worn on a Friday night in the fall on a high school campus makes sense but on a Tuesday morning in the middle of the spring does not. The context of these examples could result in a negative response to the uniform and the wearer. Other cultural contexts include how a person feels about high school marching band members. If the viewer has a negative view of band members, thinking of them as nerdy or as geeky, that could negatively impact the viewer's response to the uniform, also.

The context in this research is the setting of the wearing of the uniform, the performance or practice venue. It contains two parts: physical - immediate physical space or environment and how all aspects of this space interact with the clothed body; cultural - date, time, and place, as well as the values and ideals of a society. The context for the wearing of the marching band uniform was the stadium of a home game or away game or other performance venue. High school marching band members attend home football games and travel to all games on the road.

Aesthetic Response – Approach or Avoidance Behavior. Aesthetic response can lead to approaching an item for purchase; or avoiding and not purchasing the item because this involves a perception of quality (Fiore & Damhorst, 1992). Approach or avoidance behaviors are

based on positive or “negative feelings about the product” (Seifert & Chattaraman, 2017, p. 5). Aesthetic responses lead to behavioral intentions which can be either avoidance or approach (Bloch, 1995). Avoidance behavior results from negative feelings about the product. Approach behavior, on the other hand, is associated with a positive aesthetic response since it reflects an attraction to a design and willingness to observe it (Bloch, 1995).

Positive feelings about a pleasing product design may lead to greater intentions to make a purchase, whereas consumers who have negative feelings about the design may even avoid it. This “significantly impacts product evaluation” (Seifert & Chattaraman, 2017, p. 5-6). An example of this was when marching band uniforms styles started to change in the late 1900s, possibly due to the decline in the popularity of the military following the Vietnam Conflict (Hughes, 2018; Lochner, 2010, p. 4) or stereotypes developed over time about marching band members and their uniform. Appearance changes over time and in the context of society or culture (Hillestad, 1980), such as reactions to a war causing a change in marching band uniform appearance or the overall attitude towards it. Aesthetic response in this case was negative due to the cultural context.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

Chapter 3 contains the following sections: (a) research design, (b) case selection, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis. Informed by the literature and this framework, the research questions that guided this qualitative investigation are: (RQ1) What are the differences between the male experience and the female experience regarding the wearing of the high school marching band uniform? (RQ2) How did aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) have a relationship to these experiences?

Research Design

This research was qualitative in design using structured interviews. Interview questions were designed to determine high school marching band alumni experiences while wearing their uniform. The online survey answers of the initial pilot study by Morgan and Sklar (2018s) were the basis for this research. The participants of the Morgan and Sklar (2018s) pilot study gave responses that included anecdotes and lengthy narratives about their time in marching band and the researchers found common themes within the pilot study to then develop into new research questions. Based on their responses and enthusiastic telling of stories, there was evidence of the need to explore the gender differences in their experiences. Many of the participants told about positive experiences while wearing the uniform but also included many negative experiences. The researchers chose to further explore the negative experiences.

While designing the research, several potentially dangerous situations took place during the fall 2019 marching band season. These involved uniformed marching band members from two different colleges being physically and verbally abused by fans of opposing teams and one confrontation with a football player of the opposing team. These altercations took place before, during, and after football games where the band had traveled away from home to support their team in the sporting event. These events solidified the decision to center the research around the negative aspects of wearing the high school marching band uniform.

Research instruments

The researchers used the framework of DeLong (1998) to evaluate how aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) had a relationship to the experiences of high school marching band members while wearing the uniform. Interview questions were designed by the researcher. The interview questions focused on form, viewer, and context of the individual's wearing of the uniform. The questions were phrased to elicit responses in a conversational manner and to understand the differences between the male experience and the female experience while wearing the high school marching band uniform. They were also designed to help understand how males and females reacted and were impacted differently by these experiences, regarding their pride.

Research participants and pilot study

Research participants grew from a previous survey of 221 high school marching band alumni who performed an online survey. (One of the participants was a minor and those answers were not included.) The participants were from across the United States, in particular the South, Midwest, and Northeast. From the participants who listed contact information including the state

where they attended high school, only 18 states were listed. Participants in the pilot study were found through social media and email, utilizing snowball sampling.

Using SurveyMonkey.com in the pilot study by Morgan and Sklar (2018s), participants answered open-ended questions, averaging fifteen minutes to complete. Their brief explanations to lengthy stories about wearing the uniform generated an account of their experiences. The purpose of the pilot study was to analyze marching band alumni perceptions of the uniform and wearers, positive and negative, and juxtapose these perceptions with the usage of the uniform in pop culture settings. Through the survey the researchers discovered that no matter how much the uniform was negatively stereotyped and ridiculed, these participants continued to participate proudly in the marching band while they were members.

This new interview-based research builds from the pilot study (Morgan & Sklar, 2018s) anecdotes and narratives about their perceptions of the uniform and focuses on gender and experiences. A convenience sample of eleven males and eleven females were interviewed. They were obtained through the contact information that they gave previously for the pilot study and were the first 22 to respond to requests for interviews. Prior to the interview process the newly-created interview questions and process were submitted to and reviewed by Institutional Review Board (IRB). Upon approval this research commenced. All names have been changed.

Case Selection

Participants for this interview identified as either male or female for the purpose of selection. They attended high school in the 1970s to 2000s. The time periods given were non-specific, date ranges or decades. The schools represented were from the states of Georgia with 17 schools from rural and urban areas, South Carolina with two schools from a rural area, Alabama

with one school from a rural area, Florida with one school from a major city, and one high school was in Wisconsin. All of the participants were white except for one African-American male.

Interviews were conducted, emphasizing the marching band experience while wearing the uniform in the group and as an individual. The aim was to document how the uniform related to the individual wearer's physical experience while wearing the uniform and discover the differences between male and female experiences. Interviews were conducted from the month of January 2019 until January 2020. Due to the locations of the participants and the researcher, 21 interviews were conducted via phone and one in person. All interviews were audio-recorded.

Twenty-one of the high school band members went to high school in the south in one of four states, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, or Florida. One high school was in Wisconsin. In the initial pilot study at least eighteen states were represented (not all participants listed their information about where they marched in high school), however, only five states were listed in this research.

Data Collection

The structured interviews consisted of 11 open-ended questions regarding participant experiences in high school marching band while wearing the uniform. These questions were created by the researcher and were included in a script with limited deviation. One prompt was used at the end of the interview to acquire any further information they wished to add. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. Questions were broken-down into one for the background data, and three questions about form; three questions about viewer; and three questions about context to match the DeLong (1998) framework. The final question was for the interviewee to add anything else that might be relevant to the present research. Form, viewer, and

context questions were alternated with the goal of priming them for the narrative answers given by the interviewee.

Questions included:

1. Background: Tell me about the time you spent in high school marching band, i.e., where and when you attended high school, instrument(s) played in marching band, and any supporting roles you had; how many years did you participate.

Approximately how big was the high school you attended and how many people were in your marching band?
2. Form: Describe in as much detail as possible what your marching band uniform looked like (i.e., shape, colors, cut, decorations, etc.)? Did you have more than one uniform (i.e., hot weather vs. cold weather or in the stands versus on the field)?
3. Viewer: What physical features of the marching band uniform were appealing to you? Did others around you make positive comments about your marching band uniform? If so, what were their comments?
4. Context: Tell me about your home football stadium. How did your home team fans and opponents treat you while wearing the uniform? What positive and negative experiences did you have while wearing the uniform in this place?
5. Form: Tell me about how the uniform made you feel while wearing it while in the group.
6. Viewer: What physical features of the marching band uniform were not appeal to you? Did others around you make negative comments about your marching band uniform? If so, what were their comments?

7. Context: Where did you wear your uniform other than your home football stadium?
What positive and negative experiences did you have while wearing the uniform in these places?
8. Form: Tell me about the fit of your personal uniform and how it made you feel while wearing while by yourself.
9. Viewer: Tell me about times of extreme feelings of negativity and positivity while wearing the uniform.
10. Context: What contexts did you wear the uniform, (i.e., performances, in public) and what were your experiences with that?
11. Prompt: What would you like to add to this interview outside of what you have already mentioned?

Secondary data was collected through a literature review of academic and mass market, providing background on uniforms, marching band, its history and its uniform, as well as general context and aesthetic response. Also, many of the texts produced within the marching band culture and pop culture included images and passages written by the participants of previous research (Abramo, 2016; Abril, 2012; Carter, 2013).

Data Analysis

After transcribing the interviews, the data were manually coded with the researcher looking for patterns of repetitive words, phrases, and concepts that indicated significance for each of the framework concepts and answers to the overall research questions (Patton, 2015; Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The data were reviewed for variations between the men and women,

regarding wearer experience in the uniform, per the aim of the research questions. Once the data were coded and analyzed, the concepts were compared and reviewed for commonalities with pertinent secondary data from literature as well as informed by the previous study by this researcher.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Chapter 4 contains the following sections: (a) form - viewer – context, (b) aesthetic response. The information presented in this chapter is the result of analysis of the data collected in the interviews and supported by secondary literature; no disputes in the literature were found. The following research questions were addressed:

1. RQ1: To understand the differences between the male experience and the female experience regarding the wearing of the high school marching band uniform.
2. RQ2: To understand how aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) had a relationship to these experiences.

The results of the research questions were divided into three components of the framework, form, viewer, and context.

Form – Viewer - Context

Form

Form. Marching band uniform styles vary widely while simultaneously having similar basic features. Two categories of uniform were described by participants, traditional that was military in style and structure, or non-traditional in style and structure, not the traditional military-styled uniform. Twenty-three uniforms were described in detail by the participants. One participant had two uniforms, a non-traditional uniform of shorts and a t-shirt as an alternative warm weather uniform that was later in the season replaced by a traditional, military-styled

uniform. Marching band uniforms for nineteen of these interviewees were traditional, military in structure and style. Four of the twenty-two participants had what they considered non-traditional uniforms, not styled after the military. These include a homemade uniform from basic guidelines; an accessorized uniform based on the band's show theme; an alternative uniform for warmer weather; and a uniform based on the Scottish Highlander uniform.

For the females interviewed, part of being in uniform included the body itself. Their requirement for hair was for it to be pulled up and off the shoulders. If it was long enough it needed to be inside of the hat. There was no jewelry allowed except small stud earrings. These guidelines were set by their respective band directors. Males made no mention of these requirements.

Traditional uniform description. Participants in this research wore the same basic parts of the uniform. These parts included pants, tops, shoes, gloves, and hats as standard uniform pieces. Nineteen of the 23 uniforms described were traditional military-style uniforms. These uniforms included either a boxy jacket or longer coat that zipped up the front. These tops had squared-off shoulders. Accessories such as a cape (Participant Melissa, 2019), gauntlets (Participants Heather and Billy, 2019), or an overlay (Participants David, Samuel, and Sandra, 2019) were added to six of the marching band uniforms to give the uniform a unique look. Marching band uniforms had multiple functions as they were worn on the marching band field and, after the season ended, three participants also wore it on the concert band stage. Twenty-three uniforms were described by participants. All participants had one uniform except Participant Thomas, who had two, one for warmer weather and one for cooler weather.

Top and pants. Three of the 23 uniforms, such as the uniform belonging to Participant David had an overlay, including school letters, that he wore on the marching band field. The

overlay was designed, according to all three of the participants who wore them, to be worn over the jacket and it laid like a poncho and attached with large buttons (see figure 1). It was specifically designed to display spirit-related items, such as the school mascot, school initials, and school colors. The overlay was removed for the concert band stage. Participants Samuel and Sandra had a similar overlay for their marching uniform that was also removed for on-stage use. All three of them stated that the uniform was tuxedo- or suit-like in structure and they would wear a cummerbund and a tie with it as a formal uniform on stage.

The traditional pants were straight legged and had no curve to them. Participants Billy, David, and Samuel all complained about the fit but not as much as Participants Melissa, Renae, and Sandra. The three males had issues with the waist fitting too loose or too tight but at least they could adjust a zipper at the sides to increase or decrease the waist-size. The three females stated that there was very little that fit either one of them. All males, except Participant Cameron, and all females described their uniform as too hot in the warm months of marching band and too cool in the cooler months.

Participant Heather explained that her pants were the newer version called bibbers (See figure 2). She said they were similar to overalls and had adjustable straps at the shoulders. According to DeMoulin (2020), a seller and designer of marching band bibbers, they are 100% polyester and machine washable. The leg length is also easily adjusted with snaps inside the legs for easy hemming of the pants. They are unisex, however, deluxe 100% polyester versions sold by Band Shoppe (2020) now include a female form. The fabric stretches enough for a better fit.

Shoes. Shoes were part of the basic uniform and were either black or white. Shoes could be covered in spats. This gave the shoes a two-toned look and made the band look more formal, according to the three participants who wore them. Participant Cameron wore white shoes and

hated them because he said that they readily revealed marching issues such as one member being on the wrong foot, all of the members not having the same height or length of marching step, or if the timing of footwork was the least bit off between marchers. White shoes were very unforgiving to the mistakes that can plague a marching unit, according to the one participant who wore them (Participant Cameron, 2019).



Figure 2 - The modern style of bibbers.

Gloves. Gloves were another basic uniform item. Participant Samuel said the white gloves of his marching band's uniform were optional and therefore most members did not wear them unless it was cold outside. Participant Heather's marching band wore white gloves and added silver gauntlets to her arms. Participant Billy's band also wore gauntlets that were black and extended the look of the black gloves. He laughed as he stated that "they made your forearms look really long." He was drum major his last year in band and he remembered that they "looked very sharp from the podium in front of the band" and imagined they looked "even

better from a much larger distance.” He said that after the performance, when he would review the video of his band’s performance, he saw that the gauntlets added a unique look to the group as a whole.

Capes. Some uniforms, such as Participant Melissa’s, added a cape that flipped open when they made a sharp turn. She stated that the band director would write their shows so that “they had to change direction suddenly” and the effect “was a loud pop sound that made freshmen jump during their first show.” Her director learned that they needed dress rehearsals that included time wearing the cape so that newcomers would know what to expect and everyone was comfortable with the sound the capes made. She said she thought the sound was funny but had friends who were very uncomfortable with it.

Overall fit. Both males and females commented on the fit of the uniform. There were few complaints about the fit by males. Females, however, had many problems with the fit, as they believed that the uniform was not made for a female body. The commonality between the two genders was the fact that the uniform held in heat during the warmer months and did the opposite in cooler months. During the warmer months, band members would wear a t-shirt and shorts underneath but layered heavier clothes underneath the uniform in colder months which would alter the fit even more. Participant Stephanie said her uniform fit “decently in the warmer months but it was hard to move with the layers underneath when it was cold. We had a parade we marched in and it was in January. I wore a sweatshirt underneath and had trouble breathing.” Participant Dylan wore long pants underneath making the pants too tight but was able to partially remedy that problem by expanding the waist and it did help with the temperature.

Male experiences. The biggest difference between the male and female experience regarding form was the fit. The male participants complained very little about the fit except for

specific issues listed by Participants Samuel and Billy, such as the neck and waist. Earlier uniforms were unisex and had adjustments such as zippers on the side to pull the fabric from the front of the pants over the fabric of the back of the pants. This consisted of an allowance of extra fabric to adjust for different waist sizes. Participant Billy said his pants were high-waisted and had this feature. He said that the extra fabric added more heat to an already hot uniform and the zipper was “hard to work with and would slide off the zipper track.”

Participants Samuel and Billy both had a hook at the neck that poked them. Participant Billy said he would immediately unhook his as soon as their band’s show was done. He also stated that the neck of the top would rub his neck. He laughed as he added that “having an Adam’s apple did not help.” He said that he did not consider how much his neck expanded when playing his trumpet and, as a result, his collar was too small when he played. He had to get a bigger top after the first game.

Female experiences. Female participants complained that the uniform was not made for a woman’s shape. Overall fit, which is part of “how the clothing and the body interrelate” (DeLong, 1998, p.11), was a problem for the female body but not for the male body. Females had a fit problem with wearing a “uniform that was made for a guy” (Participant Sandra, 2019). Participant Colleen also had a uniform that she did not like for the same reason. The unisex marching band uniform was not made for the curvy female form.

As a sousaphone player, however, Participant Colleen felt like she was a “girl in a guy’s world.” Because all of the sousaphone players she knew in high school (and all but one in college) were male and her uniform was “built for a guy’s body,” she claimed that she became more of a “tomboy as she got older because her uniform made her feel less like a girl and more like a guy.” Her uniform made her look less like a female and “more like a male.” She said that

she was glad her instrument covered enough of her uniform that it “did not look so terrible,” even though it did not fit her.

Participants Colleen and Jeanette had a few encounters with fans that were pushed back by the swinging of the bell of her instrument in high school. They both played sousaphone and marched together in college. They attended different high schools in different states, however, they both told of feeling very masculine in the ranks. The uniform made them genderless but the instrument is largely considered a “male instrument” because it is primarily played by males (Participants Colleen and Jeanette, 2019). Jeanette, who is four-feet, ten inches tall, said she felt empowered with the height that wearing her sousaphone added to her. She considered it to be part of her uniform because she “wore it” when she marched. Both were thankful that it covered the ill-fitting, unsightly uniforms that were part of being in their respective high school marching bands.

The “straight, not form-fitting” (Participant Melissa, 2019) pants for most of the band members sat at their natural waistline. The pants were adjustable with zippers on the side to pull the fabric from the front of the pants over the fabric of the back of the pants. Participant Melissa said she had a “cantankerous zipper” on hers. One exception to that was Participant Heather’s uniform that included the more modern version of pants called bibbers (see figure 2). Bibbers are form-fitting, one-piece, high-cut pants that cover the member up to the chest area. A t-shirt worn underneath allows bibbers to be worn without a coat over it and can be a warmer weather uniform (Participants Heather and Brian, 2020).

The tops of the uniform were boxy in structure and uncomfortable. Participant Heather “felt like a giant box in it!” She stated that there was nothing flattering about it but “it wasn’t a fashion contest so nobody really cared.” She did like the bibbers but was uncomfortable in the

top. One participant who is a marching band director and a former graduate assistant, says he has overheard female band members “complain about all kinds of things regarding fit. My uniform managers have told me stories about the girls getting very descriptive in the ways the uniform doesn’t fit right.” He laughed and said that sometimes it was “inappropriate to talk about but it was safe to say that there were very few parts of the [female] body that I haven’t heard about where the uniform was uncomfortable.” He added that over the time that he has been a band director, “uniform designers have made great strides in trying to fit women better but they, in my opinion, have a long way to go.” He did add that some bibber manufacturers sell a “female version but even it has its problems” (Participant Brian, 2020).

Non-traditional uniform description. Marching band uniforms may include traditional, with military aspects, or non-traditional, without military aspects. Non-traditional uniforms were not styled after military uniforms. Participant Cameron’s uniform was one exception to the military style. He wore a handmade white satin-like shirt with a red ascot. He commented that because everyone made their own, and they were not professionally made, that the shirts had variations in them that gave the band an inconsistent look. The band was supposed to look uniform but the uniform caused the members to look more like a group of individuals rather than an individual group. Also, the shirt would stick to the body and members would wear a t-shirt underneath so oftentimes, there was a visible printed t-shirt showing through the uniform top. He disliked the uniform so much that he was relieved to move to another school but he regretted admitting that his new uniform was even worse.

Other marching bands incorporated costume-like pieces into their uniform for performances. One particular marching band used pool toys for a beach music show one season in the 1990s. Participant Steven was a member of this band but marched percussion. He wrapped

“an inflatable duck around his drum but it fell off during a rehearsal and looked like it was a centerpiece for the show. The director liked it so much that they used it in a kiddie pool and I had to find another prop for my uniform accessory.” Other non-traditional uniforms included black shorts and the band’s t-shirts for Georgia summer/early fall football games.

Participant Thomas marched in South Georgia and he said his band wore this type of uniform until the weather turned cooler. It was usually the middle or end of October when they wore full uniforms. “We would build our uniforms,” he said, “starting with shorts and t-shirts and then switching to our band pants. We wore our jackets for competition and when it was colder.” He said they had specific band shoes, gloves, and socks, so that they were uniform within the group. He was the only participant who had this experience but he said that many of the bands in that area would also change-up their attire in the same way.

Participant Leann was the only female participant who did not complain about the fit of her uniform. She said that her highlander-styled uniform was actually fitted to her. Her uniform added a tartan and a sporran – a leather pouch/purse that hangs on a belt and was made with horsehair. She loved her uniform and said that “everyone in her band was so proud of the uniform.” She was heartbroken when hers “got caught in a car door and ripped.” She was so upset that it did not occur to her that she might have been injured or strangled until her “mother panicked about it.”

Male experiences. The three males who had non-traditional uniforms told of the uniform fitting well. With the exception of Participant Cameron, the males had positive experiences based on alternative uniforms or accessories being added to it. Participants Steven and Thomas were in bands that modified or changed up their uniforms. Participant Steven said that they always accessorized their outdated uniforms based on the theme of their shows. He said he wore

pool toys, multi-colored drums, and bandanas that went along with their show. He had great experiences while wearing the uniform.

Participant Thomas had an alternate uniform that his band wore for the warmer South Georgia weather. This uniform changed as the weather changed. They wore a t-shirt that was designed around their band's halftime show with black shorts and added to it. As the year progressed, they would wear long black pants and later add their uniform tops as the weather got cooler. According to him, his band director was very focused on the comfort of the band. He stated that he thought this helped their uniforms look new for the competitions that they would attend.

Males showed no concern about the form of the traditional high school marching band uniform beyond looks and small issues with fit. The uniform fit the male body because, according to the male participants, it was originally designed for males and grounded in military designs. Male participants who wore the traditional style expressed dissatisfaction about the neck being tight or the waist being tight and hard to adjust but had no negative experiences due to these concerns.

Regarding form, the three males who wore a non-traditional high school marching band uniform focused more on the look of the uniform than the fit of it. One uniform was handmade specifically for the wearer. A second one was decorated for the show they were performing. The last one started out as a summer set of shorts and a t-shirt and ended as a full traditionally-styled uniform once it was cooler. These high school marching band alumni focused on the look more than fit of the uniform.

Female experiences. Only one female participant, Leann, wore a non-traditional uniform. She had no complaints about the fit as it was made specifically for her. She did,

however, describe the look of her uniform in detail. She said that her highlander-styled uniform had a plain top and pants but a tartan and a sporran decorated it. She loved her uniform and was proud of the way it looked on and off her body. So much so that she recounted a story of her tartan being damaged. She said that it still upset her sometimes that it happened even though it was decades ago.

The type of uniform worn did not make a difference to the wearers concerning form. Traditional and non-traditional uniforms had their problems. The more common themes were fit and comfort issues. Fit and physical discomfort were the main concerns followed by overall appearance. Participant comments about physical discomfort included that it was not suited for the temperature or it did not fit right. Males had less overall fit problems than females and wearers of non-traditional uniforms reported no problems with fit but did mention that temperature was a problem. Some were allowed to compensate for the issues with form by decorating their uniform, wearing alternate pieces, adjusting the size, or adding to the uniform throughout the season. Wearing the uniform had challenges for marching band alumni.

Viewer

The viewer of the high school marching band uniform includes the wearer and non-wearer. The non-wearer looks at it from an outsider's perspective and forms opinions about it, possibly without knowledge of what it represents. The wearer is a part of the group that it represents and understands what the uniform symbolizes. Even though the wearer and non-wearer of the uniform viewed the uniform and formed opinions about it and were aware of the stereotypes, none of the participants reported being direct recipients of the negative comments. The comments were overheard or seen through other sources, such as popular culture.

Male view of self. Wearers had varying opinions of the uniform they wore. One participant passionately stated that his uniform “was the ugliest thing you ever saw” but, he added, “the uniform was not the reason we marched.” He further explained that there were many reasons marching band members continued to march, the biggest of which being “love - for music, marching, friends,” etc. (Participant Cameron, 2019). He claimed that his uniform was unappealing and he felt like the stereotype in his “god-awful uniform.” His view of the uniform created an emotional response. He had a love for the group and what he was doing but not for the uniform he was wearing.

Participant Billy, who was a drum major and, therefore, wore a different uniform his senior year, became a non-wearer who viewed the uniform he had worn in the previous years. He said he loved the way his band’s uniforms looked from a distance. He said outside of the temperature-related discomfort that he had experienced, he loved the uniform. He said he had more pride in the look of his band as a result and looking back was glad that he did not complain about the look of the uniform when he wore it.

Participant Jerry had mixed views of his uniform. He saw himself in a uniform that looked good as a group but not by themselves. The uniforms were not as pleasing individually but he remembered getting compliments from other band members at football games and marching band competitions. He also stated that while in a group of band members, he was not focused on his uniform but the friends and fun times and conversations.

Female view of self. As a high school freshman and sophomore, Participant Colleen wore “a hideous uniform” in high school. She was relieved, however, that the sousaphone she played, which wrapped around her body, “thankfully covered” up her unsightly uniform. She claimed that she overheard comments about her band uniform being so unattractive but she and

her fellow band members took pride in being in the band and wearing the uniform because it was a symbol of the band family; however, she was “much relieved to graduate to a new uniform her junior year” and wear a different uniform in college. Further, she looks back and is happy that she stayed in band and endured that unappealing uniform because of all the friendships she has maintained since high school and regained through social media in the last 10 to 15 years. She said they all agreed that “the uniform left a lot to be desired but the feeling of family that we have with other band people couldn’t be replaced by any other feeling.”

Non-wearer views about the uniforms. Outsider views differed based on how the uniform looked. If it was old and outdated, it was viewed negatively by non-wearers. Participant Renae told of overhearing people at other schools making fun of the uniform her marching band wore. She also said that occasionally people at her school made comments about the outdated uniform that “looked like it was left over from the disco era that ended in the previous decade.” None of these comments were directed at or said to her. She claimed that her band was picked on because the uniform was unattractive but she and her fellow band members ignored the comments.

Participant Steven said that people were fascinated with his drum and uniform. As a result, people were always reaching for him and trying to touch his drum or drum sticks and as a result of these incidences he most likely bruised someone’s hand. He claimed that it probably happened more than once but only remembered one particular time. He was unsure about whether it was a positive obsession or not but he compared the feeling to “like being a rock star.”

Participant Bob and other band directors he knows have discussed marching band uniforms. He said they talked about budget restrictions and how it affected the viewers’ opinions of the uniform. “Oftentimes, the uniform has to last 8-10 or more years before they can be

replaced by update styles” (Participant Bob, 2020) Wearing outdated uniforms, he felt affected the wearer’s confidence when the wearer was alone or in smaller groups. He said, however, that he “never once noticed a lack of confidence when they were performing as a group.” He even commented that his band, as a whole, was “great at acting like their uniforms were the best article of clothing that they had ever worn.”

Differences in the perception of the individual’s uniform between males and females were detected in the participant responses. One male thought of it as ugly while only one female really liked the uniform. Other females liked things about the uniform such the color, the cape or the spats. All participants except one admitted to overhearing negative comments from outsiders. Participant Leann said that everyone loved their uniforms “probably because of the uniqueness and the fact that they were modeled after the Scottish Highlanders.”

High school marching band alumni sometimes had issues with self-esteem while wearing the uniform. Even though they felt pride while wearing it (Morgan & Sklar, 2018a), they also lacked confidence in their appearance. This lack of self-esteem and confidence, however, seemed only to be the case when the wearer was alone. Alumni said that they felt better when in a group of band members. Some said that they were less awkward while in a group. The group helped them blend in or even be distracted from the self-conscious feelings in uniform. Participant Stephanie said even though she was fairly self-conscious when she was alone, it was “easy to forget about how you were dressed when you were laughing and joking with your best friends.”

Context

Time, societal beliefs and values, and place all affect the context of dress. The participants in this study covered a wide range of backgrounds and time periods. As a result, there was no evidence to support if one gender’s experience was different from another based on

cultural context. More research is needed to strongly conclude if and how cultural context affected the individual's experiences. The contextual commonality between the participants from all of these backgrounds and time periods was place. The participants primarily focused on the places where they wore the uniform in the interview questions about context.

Marching band members had opportunity to wear their uniforms in places that ranged from parades to competitions to exhibitions and festivals where they were a member of a group representing their own band and wearing their uniform, as well as home or away football games. Parades ranged in length from homecoming parades with a small route to much longer routes such as marching through Walt Disney World in Orlando, Florida. Marching in other venues strengthened friendships and bettered the experiences of the high school marching band alumni during their time in uniform. Place influenced wearer's experience. No other physical factors were mentioned by the participants.

Male experiences. Participant Jerry enjoyed wearing his full uniform at marching band competitions. He said that he was always disappointed when his band director would tell them to hang up their uniform tops and just wear their pants and t-shirts when they were not performing. He said that he looked forward to cooler months when they wore the full uniform throughout the entire football game.

Wearing the uniform in these settings helped to cultivate friendships between band members. Participant Jerry said that "during competitions band members would comment on opposing bands' uniforms, even if it was not a great uniform. It was a way of connecting with other band members. I once commented on a band's uniform and later ran into the person I complimented at All-State Band. It was totally cool. We remembered each other from the competition and even remembered each other's uniforms."

One participant, who is now a band director, stated that there were problems when his band traveled. They would encounter verbal abuse at some schools in “more rural areas” (Participant Bob, 2020). He instructed his students ahead of time to ignore it and “get an adult quickly.” There were never any physical situations but there was quite frequently name-calling by the opposing teams’ fans as they entered or left the stadium. He said that the band “was always applauded by fans as they performed top-notch halftime shows.”

Participant Bob felt that in the context of an away football stadium, “the uniform had the potential for having negative attention due to its visibility and the large number of people wearing something what no other fans were wearing but it never turned violent.” There were never any physical or verbal altercations beyond the occasional bantering from opposing football fans. He did not remember any harmful words being said but added that “band members are pretty immune to being called names, such as geek or nerd. In fact, they will often refer to themselves or the group playfully as these terms.” Bob felt like high visibility, especially at an away stadium, was part of the reason that marching band members had to “be on their toes, watching for anything that could be potentially harmful or even dangerous to the group.”

Participant Steven once accidentally hit a male football fan who tried to grab his drum. He went on to talk about his uniform and how he would position his snare drum carrier underneath the uniform. They had special carriers that would fit underneath the uniforms and the uniform jacket was made bigger and specially for drum carriers. He said that although he considered his drum to be part of his uniform when he was marching it was hard to justify that considering most of it went underneath his uniform and was unseen as a result.

He marched in a high school band that had “really cool looking uniforms” his senior year. He said that the old uniforms were outdated but were “probably cool for the time period they

were bought” and that it was unfortunate that they weren’t replaced until his senior year. He felt like the uniform that he wore brought on positive attention from his team’s fans but not from the opposing team’s fans. To update the old uniform, his band director would allow them to accessorize the uniform and instrument with items that fit the theme of the band’s show for the year. He stated that these uniforms “would have been better in a different time period, ten years earlier” (Participant Steven, 2019).

Participant Thomas marched in a band that had “positive feedback in the earlier part of the season” when they wore their “warm weather uniform of shorts and t-shirts.” People would complement his shirt that always reflected the marching band show for the season. He did not recall hearing any negative comments about the “summer uniform.” He also stated that he did not recall anything specific about the full uniform that was negative in the latter part of the season either.

Female experiences. Participant Leann marched in several non-local parades because of her uniform being so unusual. Her band marched in parades in Florida and Georgia. Her high school mascot and their uniform, with its tartan and a sash, emulated the Scottish Highlanders. She said she felt very fortunate that her uniform was well-received wherever her band went. She also felt that it afforded her many trips that she might not have taken otherwise.

Participant Jeanette said she felt more comfortable in a group of marching band members, even if they were from other bands and wearing different uniforms for a competition or an outside organization. Her uniform was well-received in most places they went apart from their football team’s across-town rivals. She said that the only time she ever overheard negative comments was at a football game at the rival’s stadium. The band was lining-up to march to their seats and a group of girls was pointing and talking about the school colors. The comments were

more of an insult to her school than her band uniform so she said she was not offended. She referred to it as the “typical bantering back and forth between school football rivals.”

The wearing of the uniform had some bearing on the male or female experience, according to participants. Treatment by opposing fans and non-wearers of the uniform did also deter members from being in the band (Morgan & Sklar, 2018b) and wearing the uniform. A major player in the desire to continue in the marching band, however, was pride in themselves and, more importantly, in the group. Pride overshadowed any negative experiences and when the participants spoke of their experiences in marching band, they spoke positively even about the negative experiences. Participants Steven and Colleen told of incidences that they considered negative but there was no potential danger as both situations were unintentional.

Aesthetic response

While wearing the uniform, males and females were subjected to violence, name-calling, and other unwanted negative behaviors. Both males and females responded consistently. These incidents included outsiders breaking ranks by trying to cut through the band while they were in a marching formation. “There is a set of rules and band members follow it or things can get ugly,” said Participant Dylan. He continued that “wearing a band uniform can be like wearing a target so we abide by the rules we are taught. Peer pressure helps with that. Male or female, you have to be disciplined.”

According to Participants Bob, Colleen, Brian, and Steven, who have all been band directors, a non-marching band member breaking through the ranks has the potential to be more dangerous for the outsider because band members have been trained to keep going, march on, despite obstacles. Steven told a story about his college band marching in formation and a few

members having to “slide across the front of a golf cart because it was in the way and the driver had to move for the rest of the band to pass-by. Band members don’t move for anything. Things and people move for the band.”

Participant Colleen stated that when you have a group that is “very large, probably around 150 - 200 people, and in college, 400 or so, and they are all dressed alike, they are highly visible. Add to that the music or cheering that is an audible attraction, and you have a group that gets attention. Away games add a whole other level of this because [the opposing fans] always seem to want to create chaos, pick on the away team. The band is visible and loud and, therefore, easy to find.” She added that “sometimes the attention is not wanted and verbal or physical things happen.” She is now a band director and was surprised her first marching season that the sousaphones and drumline used very few visual effects. These maneuvers keep a distance between the wearers and the viewers so that there is an added layer of safety and, therefore, a better experience for both.

Although she saw the potential danger of wearing the uniform, Participant Colleen also saw the protection that the uniformed body, the marching band as a large group, provides. As a uniformed group, the band shielded itself from certain dangers by not allowing anyone to cut through the band or by placing larger instruments on the outside. She felt like the uniform offers protection, also, through the fabric it is made from, which is heavy-duty and designed to last for years. This fabric is tough enough to protect a person’s body from minor physical damage, such as scrapes. She said that as a result, it adds another layer of protection between the marching band member and any danger that could come from outsiders. She said that “a fan kicked-up some rocks, unintentionally, at the band, while playing around with his friends” but no harm

came to anyone as they hit the pants leg of the uniform of two or three band members. The only result was dirty shoes and pants that the band members brushed-off with their hands.

Women found the added protection of large instruments on the outside comforting but still were victims of being grabbed or hit by thrown objects. Some were subjected to being grabbed, sometimes in “private places” (Participant Dana, 2019). Both males and females were aware of potential dangers and stayed alert as a result. This, however, did not take away from their experiences. Participant Dana was resolute in that “nothing could have taken away my love of marching band and being in the group and in uniform.” All participants agree that males and females alike learned to respond and adjust to the situation, if necessary. The marching band members called for help from adult chaperones if the situation warranted.

Conclusion

Form. High school marching band alumni were content with the uniform regarding form. The type of uniform worn did not make a difference to them. Traditional and non-traditional uniforms alike had their problems and members of the marching band decorated their uniform or added to the uniform throughout the season. Wearing the uniform had many challenges for marching band alumni. It was too hot or it did not fit right were the biggest complaints about the form. Although males had less overall fit problems than females, both had specific issues but females had more of those also. Wearers of non-traditional uniforms had no problems with fit but three of the four did not like that it was hot. The fourth had an alternate warm weather uniform. The main pattern regarding form was that it was not suited for the temperature.

Viewer. Differences in the perception of the individual’s uniform between males and females were detected. While the uniform was unappealing to only one male, only one female found it appealing. Other females liked things about the uniform such the color, the cape or the

spats. All participants except one admitted to overhearing negative comments from outsiders. These participants said that they felt better when in a group of band members and were less awkward while in a group.

Marching band alumni felt that the uniform gave them a group identity and it was positive. They felt less awkward and it was usually because they were with others who were similarly dressed or distracted by the conversations going on within the group. Conversely, when they were away from the group, each of them felt more self-conscious and less like they belonged to a group. The one exception was Participant Leann who was so proud of her uniform that she always felt like she looked good with or without the group.

Although the group and its dynamics unite the members of the marching band, it is the uniform that unites them to outsiders. The uniform identifies who they are, marching band members. The uniform also identifies their school, colors, mascot, and other identifying characteristics.

Context. High school marching band alumni told of potentially dangerous situations while wearing the uniform. They agreed that the uniform brought on negative attention in unfriendly places such as an opposing team's stadium. Participant Colleen had a solution to helping with the negative responses. She incorporated instrumental movements to help prevent fans from getting too close. She says that it is to protect band members, fans, and expensive instruments. She added techniques from her marching experiences, other marching bands' movements, and the ideas of her band members, the auxiliary coordinators, and her own. When they are marching into a stadium, especially an away stadium, she said these moves "help minimize the potential for someone getting too close." She added that no matter where they were, the band has room to maneuver and help keep potential problems away.

Aesthetic Response. Form, viewer, and context combine to create the aesthetic response, communicating who the wearer is to the viewer (DeLong, 1998). The marching band uniform communicates many things and causes one of two behaviors: approach or avoidance (DeLong, 1998). Normally, avoidance behavior results from negative feelings about the product, the uniform of the marching band and approach behavior is associated with a positive aesthetic response since it reflects an attraction to a design and willingness to observe it (DeLong, 1998). The participant responses in this research indicated differently. Approach behavior happened more frequently because of negative feelings about the uniform and its wearers while avoidance behavior happened more frequently because of positive feelings about the uniform and its wearers.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 contains the following sections: (a) form – viewer – context (b) conclusion, (c) limitations, (d) implications. The research questions for this study were:

1. What are the differences between the male and female experience while wearing the high school marching band uniform?
2. How did aesthetic response (form, viewer, and context) have a relationship to these experiences?

The participants in this research had various experiences that ranged from positive to negative. The positive experiences included having pride in the group, having fun, and making great memories that they enjoyed recounting during the interviews. The negative included potentially dangerous encounters with “obnoxious fans” (Participant Dylan, 2020).

Form – Viewer - Context

Form, viewer, and context affected the experiences of both males and females in different ways. Males had more issues with the viewer and context while females had more issues with form. Males endured heckling and physical encounters with viewers which were more common in a less friendly environment. These were usually as a result of them playing larger instruments and being placed on the outside of the marching formations when there was the potential for encountering fans especially in an away-from-the-home-stadium setting.

Marching band is a highly visible entity that attracts attention through sights and sounds. Marching band alumni had positive and negative experiences while in uniform. All the participants in this research agreed that the uniform they wore drew attention to the group and individuals. Most of them agreed that sometimes the attention was negative. Participant Leann was the only one who did not hear any negative comments about or experience any negative treatment toward her uniform.

Examples of this negative attention included physical and/or verbal altercations. Recently, in the news several marching bands at the college level were victims of negative attention and these highly-publicized instances include physical and verbal altercations, such as name-calling or physical contact. One physical instance resulted in a band director being physically hurt (Carroll, 2019; Morgan & Sklar, 2019).

There were differences between the male and female experiences while wearing the high school marching band uniform. Gender differences, such as males being placed as a barrier when marching to or from their seats in the stadium, were noted. They would march on the outside of the formation, as protection for the group. This put a barrier between fans and the uniformed marchers, preventing potential danger.

Fit and comfort were a problem for females as the uniforms were not made for a female body. Uniforms were not made to fit the curvy female form. Even though they told of physical harassment, their main focus was on the fit of the uniform. There is no evidence to say that these experiences changed over time from the 1970s to the 2000s. No matter the time period, they had the same issues with the uniform fit and comfort.

When asked about their experiences, the majority elaborated on the positive with little mention of the negative. When a participant spoke of a bad experience, it was a brief mention,

such as “it was hot,” versus a lengthy narrative. Still others spoke briefly of extreme situations where they thought that wearing the uniform actually put them at risk of potential danger. Still others encountered dangerous situations. Participant Dylan said that he was grabbed once “and the guy said my uniform looked like something a not nice name would wear. I don’t even want to repeat what he called me because it was a horrible name.” Negative experiences existed for both males and females; however, it was evident that males had more negative experiences than females.

Form

These negative experiences were largely owing to the high visibility of the band. Alumni who are now band directors or had been band directors in the past agreed that much of that was because of the uniform. “The band stands out because of the way they are dressed,” stated Participant Colleen. Participants Bob and Brian agreed it is partly because of the uniform. Both males and females took pride in wearing the uniform but, when asked if they felt like it drew negative attention to them, they agreed that potentially, yes, but most of them did not experience it firsthand. Participants such as Leann, in fact, stated that they never personally had dangerous situations while wearing the high school marching band uniform. Participants Renae and Jeanette told of stories that they had heard from friends from other bands or from fellow college band members about their high school experiences.

Viewer

Wearers and non-wearers had differing opinions of the marching band uniforms. The majority of wearers generally did not care about the uniform while in a group but three females were self-conscious individually (Participants Renae, Colleen, and Stephanie, 2019). While in the group they were more focused on socializing with friends or the upcoming performance.

Pride in the group kept them from worrying about the uniform and how it looked. Participant Jeanette said she felt more comfortable in the group than by herself when in uniform. She said she rarely heard any unkind words when she was with others in the marching band. She remembered hearing negative comments about her uniform when she was alone. She laughed as she continued saying “they were always the stereotypes, never original ideas.”

Participants reported hearing non-wearers comment negatively about the uniform but the alumni said they paid very little attention to their words, even when they were aware of the criticism. Participant Cameron said that the band members were not in band to please others. How the uniform looked to others did not concern the members of the group, especially when they were together. Participant Dana called them “immature critiques” and said she “ignored their harassment.”

Context

Certain contexts created more positive experiences than others, based on the interviews. All the participants agreed that the home field made for better reception because they were amongst their own fans. They also agreed that band- or music-related events, such as All-State or other honor bands were more uniform-friendly because everyone was a musician. The wearing of the uniform had some bearing on the male or female experience, according to participants. Treatment by opposing fans and outside viewers of the uniform did sometimes deter members from being in the band (Morgan & Sklar, 2018b) and wearing the uniform. Participants agreed that wearing the uniform around like-minded people provided them a more positive experience.

Place (i.e. home versus away stadium) was the overall influencing factor for a positive or negative experience for both males and females. For most of these participants, wearing the marching band uniform for these alumni in their own stadium or at a marching band/music-

related event, alumni experienced better reception than in other venues, such as away games. The home stadium or other band-friendly places band competitions, or a parade route were supportive to a positive marching band experience while in uniform. Neither time period, size of school, usage in popular culture, or other contextual factor contributed to these alumni's experiences, according to the interviews.

Context was mentioned the highest number of times in alumni, especially by males, as having an influence on a marching band member's experience while wearing the uniform. At home or in a specifically music-related or band venue, the experience was positive. At an away game, however, there were negative experiences. Men found that fans were more likely to hit them or call them names. Some of the males interviewed mentioned thrown objects but they mainly focused on the verbal and physical attacks they were subjected to while wearing the uniform. Male members told of being told to march on the outside of the band to protect others within the ranks, placing an added layer of protection between fans and other uniformed band members.

Conclusion

The male band members had the potential of having a negative experience while wearing the uniform. Their experiences were more related to the context of the wearing of the uniform or who was viewing it than the uniform itself. Physical or verbal harassment took place and was more often experienced at an away football game by the opposing fans. Opposing fans at away games were more likely to create a verbal or physical altercation than the home fans at the band's own stadium. Form had very little to do with their negative experiences.

Conversely, females had limited negative experiences based on the viewer and context of the wearing of the uniform but the form of the uniform contributed more to negative experiences. Place sometimes had an influence on their experience. Away games contributed more than home games as the opposing fans were less friendly to the visiting band. High visibility and the size of the group were also contributing factors in this. The band wears a uniform that stands out and has bright colors and is a large group.

Female responses focused more on the positive experiences, including being with friends. Females reacted to danger and potential danger by walking away from the scene of the danger or potential danger. Female members were also more likely to move to the center of the group and away from potential danger. The form of the marching band member and the uniform had no gender distinction but the reaction to the situation did. Female members wanted to “blend in” to the group (Participant Stephanie, 2020). However, form was always mentioned more as a negative, excepting one participant.

Aesthetic response

Aesthetic response leads to one of two behaviors, avoidance or approach. Avoidance behavior results from negative feelings about the product and approach behavior is associated with a positive aesthetic response since it reflects an attraction to a design and willingness to observe it (Bloch, 1995). The viewer will either have a positive or negative response to the form.

According to the participants in this research, the opposite was true for marching band members. Opposing fans would approach them because of negative feelings about the uniform. Hatred for the opposing team brought negative feelings toward the members of the band who were wearing the full uniform, including colors and symbols representing the school. Uniformed members would endure heckling from opposing fans. Whether it was a context of a controversial

issue or the outcome of a game, marching band members were sometimes targeted because of their uniform being highly visible and that they were accessible.

Alumni of the marching band said that fans of their own team would approach them but they did not feel that it was because of the uniform. One participant said that he felt the fans approached the band because of school spirit. “I don’t think that our fans really noticed our uniforms as much because they saw them at every game. Opposing fans were more likely to look closer because they hadn’t seen us before or at least since last year” (Participant Thomas, 2019).

Participants stated that they ignored the fact that the uniform could bring negative attention to themselves but were still vigilant about it. They were always “alert and aware of their surroundings” (Participant Bob, 2020). Even though all the participants claimed the uniform had the potential to draw attention to the band and its individual members, however, none of them blamed the uniform directly for unwanted attention. In fact, most of them blamed the stereotypes placed on band members as a whole and the negative use in popular culture. Participant Valerie said her band received positive comments after performances about how good the band looked and sounded. The participants blamed the stereotypes and not the uniform, “even if the uniform was unsightly” (Participant Cameron, 2019). Attention due to the uniform was positive and rarely negative.

Limitations

The research had limitations. The research participants were obtained through a convenience sample. The first eleven males and eleven females who responded to the request for participants were interviewed and those individuals had been selected through a previous pilot study reducing the potential pool. The participants in this research were high school marching

band alumni who marched between the times of the 1970s to the 2000s. This was a limited timeframe and did not include older alumni or younger alumni as comparisons. Marching band uniform pants changed to bibbers and more research on the form and viewer aspects of the aesthetic response is needed.

Context was limited. Twenty-one of the twenty-two high school band members went to high school in the south, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, or Florida. The exception was a high school in Wisconsin. In the initial pilot study at least eighteen states were represented (not all participants listed their information about where they marched in high school), however, only five states were listed in this research. This limitation was due to snowball and convenience sampling. The researcher has many connections locally and, even though social media was utilized, the groups advertised in were limited to local groups of which the participant was a member.

Another limitation was cultural context. The only context mentioned by participants was place. Time periods and societal beliefs and values were not stated by the participants in this study, even though they covered a range of backgrounds and time periods. As a result, there was no evidence to support if one gender's experience was different from another based on cultural context. More research is needed to strongly conclude if and how cultural context affected the individual's experiences.

Implications

There are numerous areas for potential growth in the subject of marching band uniforms. These areas range from fashion design, including integrating smart textiles or wearable technology; to documenting history, including women's history and the history of popular

culture usage; to sociology, including understanding how to ease stress, combating the bully behavior, and equaling gender experiences. Marching band uniforms are uncomfortable and there is a potential for research with physical comfort. These are all areas that can be studied and the opportunities for future research are vast.

The potential for future research on marching bands, their history, and their uniforms is immense. First, there is a need to document marching band historically as there is much missing. Marching band history contains a lack of research recorded between the late 1800s and the 21st century. There is also a need for documenting before the 1800s and marching bands outside of the United States. High school marching band history is also lacking.

The history of marching bands could also be studied as a paradigm shift, as the marching band and its uniform have gone from respected and desired in post-Civil War times to disrespected and undesired and possibly shifting back. It could also be broken down within each category, such as college football divisions and conferences, and a comparison of traditions between college bands. High school band history and traditions could also be broken down and compared. A study could be done, for example, comparing traditions in high school marching bands in one state or a region within a state. This is a niche culture that needs to be studied in-depth and has the potential to produce vast amounts of research.

Demographic groups are another area for future research; regional study within and outside of the United States. There is a large potential for comparisons. Many disciplines could benefit from studying this niche culture, including but not limited to fashion, music, and the social sciences. These are just some of the areas that could expand on this. There is a need to document experiences geographically as there is much missing here, also. Four states in the southern United States and one in Wisconsin were represented in this research.

There is much-needed research in the area of fashion. There are numerous areas of study in this capacity. Garments influenced by marching band uniforms have been seen in the stores and on runways. This needs documenting. Other areas within fashion could benefit from research on this topic: material science; retailing and merchandising; and cultural aspects of dress. Design of the uniform is an area that needs significant improvement. Marching band uniforms need to be highly durable and yet comfortable. The fabrics used in construction are too hot in the warmer weather and too cold in cooler weather. Also, integrating wearable technology could be researched for use during performances for visual effects.

Sustainability of the uniforms is another area of conceivable research. The potential here is also vast. What to do with the uniform after its use is a concern. Research is needed on how to upcycle, recycle, reuse, or repurpose the uniforms rather than throw them into landfills once they are retired. Research could be done also on how to lengthen the use of these uniforms or how to recycle and reuse them. Their potential end-use needs to be explored.

Past research about marching bands focused on group dynamics but not on the uniform itself and the time spent in it. Past researchers have also focused on the time spent in marching band socially, as a close-knit group of people, and academically, as a class in school and how it affects other academic classes (Abril, 2012; Cumberledge, 2017; Matthews, 2017), but not specifically about the experience of embodying the uniform or about the history of the garment.

While some researchers did include stereotypes within the band, they did not mention the uniform amongst these stereotypes (Abramo, 2016; Abril, 2012; Carter, 2013). Also, the participants in these studies were members of college marching bands rather than high school bands or alumni of marching bands focusing on their past experiences while wearing the uniform with the exception of Abril (2012) who studied students who were in high school.

Marching band members enthusiastically shared about their time in marching band and, as a result, gave lengthy anecdotal stories about wearing the uniform and generated an in-depth account of their experiences (Morgan & Sklar, 2018s). This interview-based research built from their narratives. Social sciences could delve into this and study how the band members were affected, short-term and long-term, by negative occurrences. These are just some of the areas that could expand on this.

Researching marching bands, its members, its uniforms, and its history, has the potential to produce an extensive amount of work. There are many gaps in the written history as well as documentation of a broad range of topics. Various areas could benefit from studying this niche group and all its intricate parts as current research is extremely limited; fashion, music, and sociology are only a few of those areas. Future research, including reviewing primary sources, such as material culture; studying the traditions and rituals within marching bands; and interviewing the members and former members will reveal important insights that could accomplish a better understanding of marching bands, its members, and their uniforms; therefore, this area of scholarship has a great deal of potential growth and impact on the current literature.

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