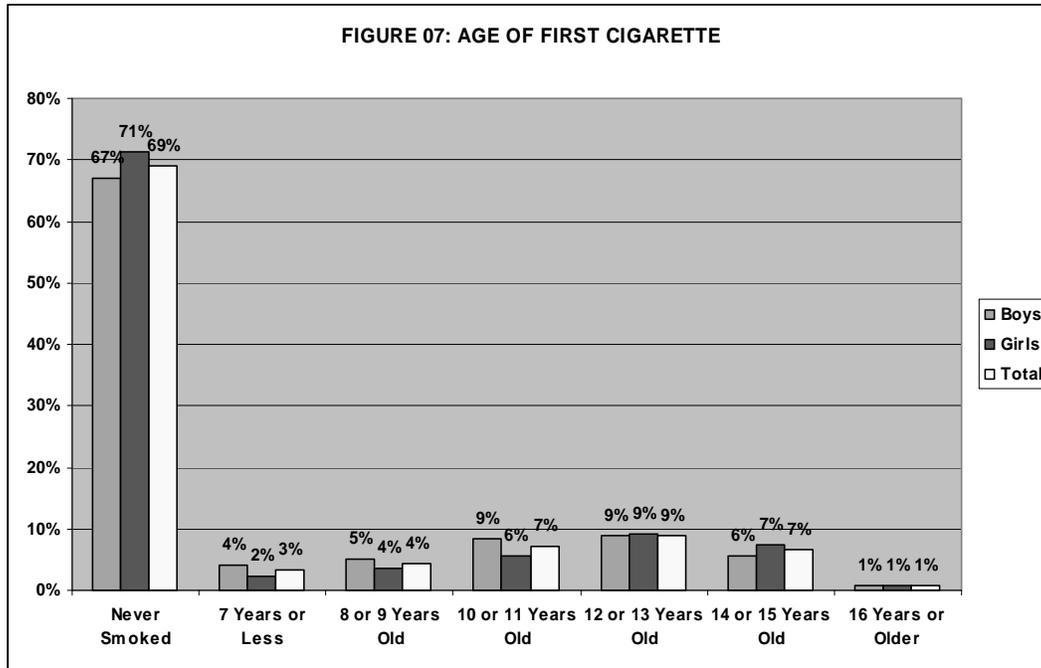


7.0: TOBACCO USE:

Apart from the broad issue of experimentation, the survey established the age at which most students smoked for the first time (figure 07). This was between the ages of 10 and 12 for boys and 12 or 13 for girls and this is similar to the pattern detected in 1999. Very young smokers (7 years or younger) accounted for 4% and 2% of boys and girls respectively and this too was unchanged over the past three years. Though relatively few students started smoking at a very young age (7 or younger), it is still an area of concern.



Among smokers, the trend suggests that smoking is relatively light and occasional and not part of a daily ritual. This trend is reflected in figure 08, where it can be seen that most of the students who admitted to having smoked, used less than one cigarette per day 3%, while students who smoked more than 20 cigarettes per day only accounted for 0.5% of the sample. Additionally, students who smoked for all 30 days of the month accounted for only 0.7% and those who smoked for 1 or 2 days a month accounted for 4.1%. This pattern holds true for both boys and girls in most of the form-levels surveyed, although second formers showed a slightly higher proclivity to use less than one cigarette per day. These trends were similar to those established in 1999.

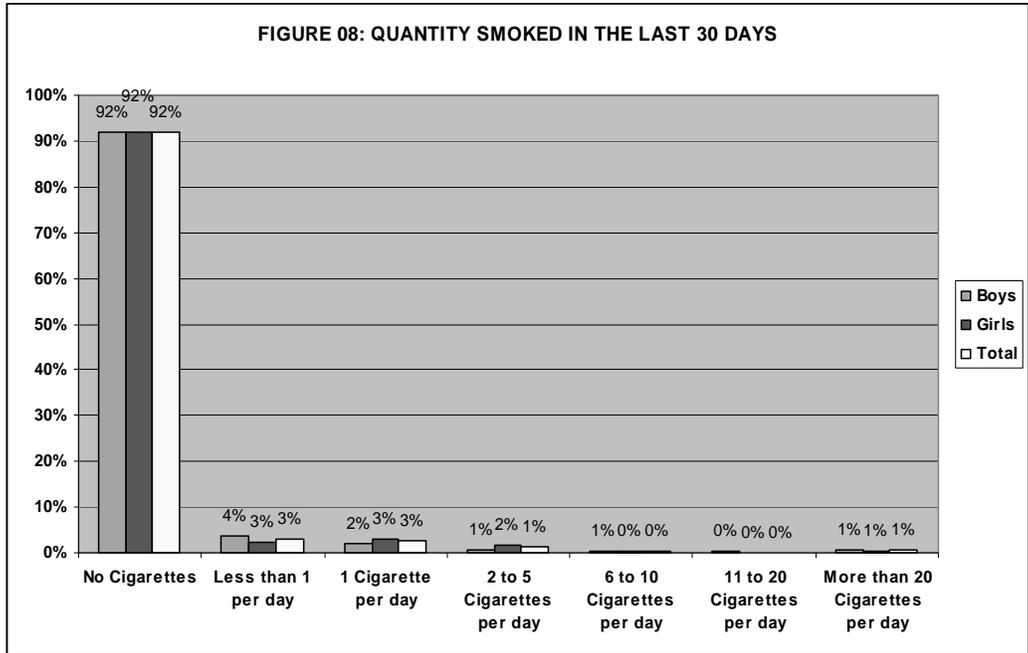
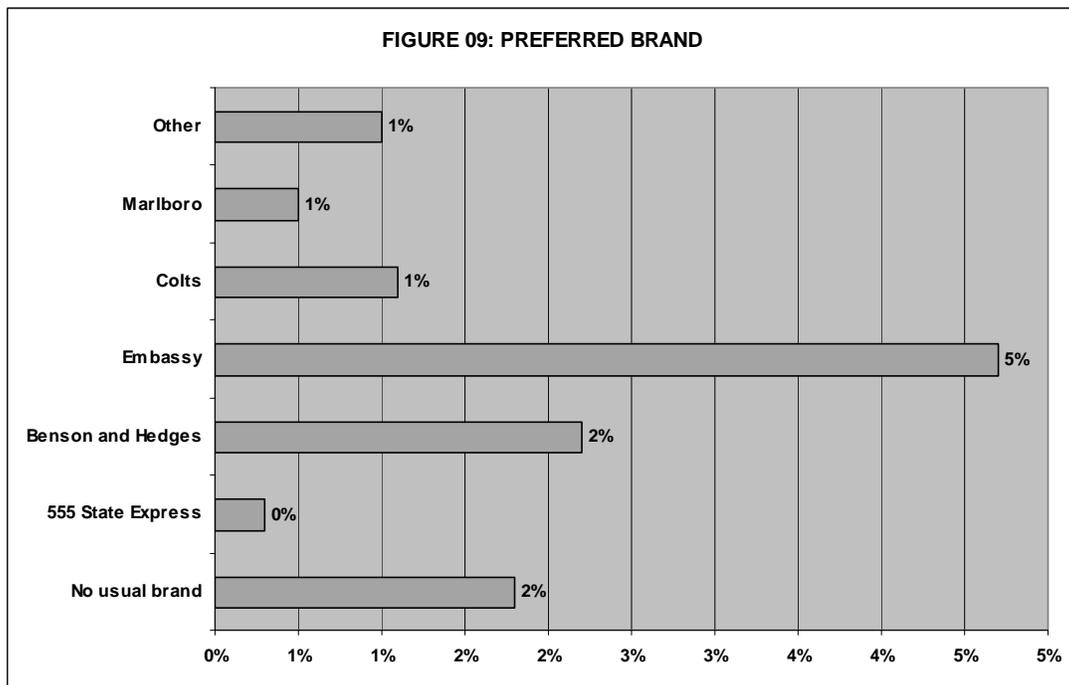


Figure 09 conveys information on the preferred brand of cigarettes for students and as in 1999; Embassy has emerged at the preferred brand for students who smoked in both gender groups. The popularity of this brand is likely to be related to cost factors, since this brand is known to be inexpensive. These data also help to support the view that smoking is an occasional activity for students who smoke and hence no brand loyalty has been established. In this instance choice appeared to have been dictated more by price or availability.



As in 1999, this 2002 study suggests that tobacco products other than cigarettes continued to be unpopular among students, with only 10% of those sampled admitting that they had ever used a product like snuff, or chewing tobacco. In this group there were 3% more boys than girls and form-level 2, emerged as the class in which tobacco products were most popular. In this class such products were twice as popular as they were in other classes.

The home continues to be the most popular place for smoking in this 2002 study, although the level of "*in home*" smoking has moved from 12% in 1999, to 9% currently. Smoking at friends' houses also continues to be the second most popular place where 5% of students smoked and while in 1999, public places and social events accounted for 6% of students, on this occasion, it was chosen by 7% of students. There were no significant gender differences between places that children smoked and the school was the venue for smoking in less than 1% of cases.

The study also asked students if they encountered difficulty buying cigarettes and only 2% of the 6% of students who attempted to buy cigarettes were prevented from doing so because of their age. This implies that more than half of students attempting to buy cigarettes were able to do so without reference to their age. It is, however, noteworthy that the largest group of students reporting difficulty in gaining access to cigarettes was those who were 12 years old and younger.

A key indicator of tobacco addiction which is the morning cigarette was used as an indicator that would assess the extent of addiction among smokers. In less than 1% of cases did respondents always feel like having a morning cigarette and this was sometimes the case among 1% of respondents. The desire for a morning cigarette was generally 4% lower in this study, than in 1999.