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Exploring Parental and Student Perceptions of Fashion Education: A Study of Takoradi Technical University

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Abstract: Fashion education is increasingly seen as vital for Ghana's artistic and economic growth. Fashion and other Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) fields often face negative societal perceptions compared to traditional careers, such as medicine or engineering, resulting in a persistent stigma that influences parental support and limits the growth of future professionals. While stakeholder perceptions are key to shaping educational outcomes, there is a notable lack of empirical data systematically examining students' and parents' opinions on the quality, relevance, and socioeconomic value of fashion education at Takoradi Technical University (TTU). This study addresses this gap, offering a novel, evidence-based understanding that is crucial for institutional decision-making and policy development in Ghana's TVET sector. This research systematically examines the factors influencing student career choices and satisfaction in fashion education at TTU, focusing on the interplay of parental influence, institutional quality, industry exposure, and financial considerations. Using a mixed-methods approach, data were collected from 90 graduating students and 30 parents through questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses were analysed using thematic analysis. The study found that Students' career choices are overwhelmingly driven by

intrinsic passion (60% agreement), aligning with the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), which posits that intrinsic interest predicts career persistence. Nevertheless, parents express significant caution (63.6% worry) about job opportunities and the long-term financial stability of creative careers, reflecting ongoing cultural preferences for conventional professions. Both parents (63.6%) and students (60.6%) praised the knowledge and competence of TTU's fashion lecturers. However, both groups consistently raised concerns about the inadequacy of learning resources, facilities, and access to essential equipment, highlighting common infrastructural gaps in African higher education. A strong link exists between parental support and student confidence. However, students and parents emphasise the need for greater institutional support, particularly in strengthening structured industry partnerships and networking opportunities, which only 42.4% of students felt were adequate. The study concludes that addressing financial uncertainties and infrastructural inconsistencies is essential for improving the visibility, viability, and policy support for fashion/TVET education in Ghana. Takoradi Technical University's Fashion Design Department should conduct tracer studies to gather data on the job placement and career development of its graduates in the fashion industry.

Keywords: Fashion education, Industry Exposure, Takoradi Technical University, Ghana, Vocational Education, Stakeholder Engagement.

Introduction

Fashion education plays a crucial role in fostering both cultural identity and economic development, particularly in developing countries that seek to leverage the creative industries for national progress. In Ghana, fashion education has deep historical roots, dating back to precolonial times and predating colonial systems through apprenticeship programs that protected indigenous knowledge and craftsmanship (Osuanya, 2019). Today, technical schools like Takoradi Technical University (TTU) continue this tradition by offering fashion design programs that combine traditional techniques with modern teaching methods.

The success of these programs depends heavily on academic rigour and the perspectives of two key stakeholders: students and their parents. In Ghana, parental support is vital in educational decisions, reflecting their financial, emotional, and social investments (Awoniyi et al, 2025; Donkor, 2023). However, fashion education, like many areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), often faces negative perceptions. Some parents see it as a path for weaker students, believing it provides limited long-term career prospects (Saana et al, 2025). These attitudes hinder enrollment, lower morale, and limit the growth of future fashion professionals.

Student experiences are a testament to the quality and integrity of the TTU program, particularly regarding the curriculum's relevance and the availability of resources (Agordah, 2025). Research indicates that fashion programs with substantial resources are associated with improved entrepreneurial outcomes for graduates. For instance, a study conducted in Ghana highlighted a strong positive correlation between formal fashion education and the business performance of small-scale designers (Appiah et al., 2023). On the other hand, a lack of access to essential equipment, materials, or mentorship can undermine student confidence and limit career opportunities after graduation.

The rapidly changing values in global fashion education, which emphasise sustainability, inclusivity, and decolonisation, require TTU to update its curriculum to align with emerging professional standards (Bella, 2021). In this context, understanding the perceptions of both parents and students goes beyond simple academic research; it helps guide institutional decisions on resource allocation, curriculum updates,

and community engagement. This study examines the perspectives of students and parents at TTU, focusing on their opinions regarding fashion education, academic engagement, access to resources, and faculty expertise.

The research aims to identify factors that support or hinder student success, ultimately shaping policies, making curricula more relevant, and encouraging greater parental involvement. The findings will offer a more profound, evidence-based understanding of the role of fashion education in Ghana's creative economy. The study will also contribute to broader discussions about vocational training and societal perceptions.

Statement of the Problem

In recent years, fashion education has garnered increasing attention within Ghana's higher education sector, particularly as a promising avenue for youth employment and the development of the creative industry. Institutions like Takoradi Technical University (TTU) have invested significantly in fashion design programs, aiming to equip students with the practical and entrepreneurial skills needed in a competitive global market. However, despite these efforts, societal views of fashion education still pose challenges to its full acceptance and expansion (Darko & Afful, 2020).

In many Ghanaian households, career choices in fashion and the creative arts are often viewed as less valuable or less stable than in traditional fields such as medicine, engineering, or law (Owusu-Ansah, 2021). This has resulted in a persistent stigma around fashion education, which influences parental support and, in turn, student confidence and career success. While a personal passion for design drives some students, they often encounter a lack of parental support, as parents worry about the financial viability and social status associated with fashion careers (Mensah & Amponsah, 2022; Boateng, 2019).

Students and parents have expressed concerns about the resources, practical training, and industry exposure offered by tertiary institutions (Amoako & Osei-Poku, 2023). These concerns are particularly urgent at Takoradi Technical University (TTU), where the integration of academic training and industry engagement is still in its early stages (Adom, 2020). While stakeholder perceptions are key to shaping educational outcomes and institutional reputation, empirical data on how students and parents view fashion education at TTU are lacking. This study aims to address this gap by systematically examining students' and parents' opinions on the quality, relevance, and socioeconomic value of fashion education at TTU. Understanding these perceptions will actively guide institutional policies, curriculum development, and stakeholder engagement strategies. This approach is vital for improving the quality and effectiveness of fashion education in Ghana.

Objectives of the Study

This study examines the factors influencing student career choices and satisfaction in fashion education at Takoradi Technical University, focusing on parental influence, institutional quality, industry exposure, and financial considerations. The study outlines specific objectives as follows: -

- 1.To assess parental perceptions, encouragement, and concerns regarding fashion education as a viable career path for their children at TTU.
- 2.To examine students' career perceptions and motivations for choosing fashion design as an academic and professional pursuit.

- 3.To evaluate the perceived quality of education and learning resources available to fashion design students at TTU.

Review of related literature

Concept of Fashion Education

Fashion education is a specialised field that blends creativity, technical knowledge, and skills with the development of entrepreneurial abilities. It features structured instruction in areas such as fashion design, textile science, pattern and garment making, fashion illustration, and garment construction. Globally, fashion education is recognised as a catalyst for innovation and cultural preservation, significantly contributing to the creative economy (Asobayire et al., 2025; Daitey et al., 2025). In Ghana, fashion education is increasingly integrated into technical universities, such as Takoradi Technical University (TTU), where it plays a vital role in training the next generation of designers, tailors, and fashion entrepreneurs.

One of the key features of fashion education in Ghana is its link to indigenous culture. Many fashion programs at institutions like TTU include courses that focus on traditional Ghanaian textiles such as Kente, adinkra, and batik. This not only encourages creativity but also helps preserve cultural heritage. A notable example is Beatrice Agyeman, a TTU graduate who launched a fashion brand that uses handwoven Kente fabrics in modern women's apparel. The brand aims to blend traditional Ghanaian artistry with contemporary fashion trends, drawing a diverse customer base. This involves integrating Kente into garments such as dresses, skirts, and tops, highlighting the fabric's vibrant colours and patterns through innovative designs (Plate 1). Her creations have been showcased at Accra Fashion Week, demonstrating how fashion education can serve as a platform for both cultural recognition and business success.

Plate 1

Showing Beatrice Agyeman's designs, featuring handwoven Kente fabrics in modern men's and women's clothing.



Source: [YouTube-Just4WomenAfrica-24 Aug 2025](#)

Another example is the success story of Elikem Kumordzie, a Ghanaian fashion designer and former reality TV star. Although he did not graduate from TTU, Kumordzie trained in fashion design and later became a prominent figure in Ghana's fashion scene (Thiga, 2025). His career path shows how formal fashion training, combined with creativity and media exposure, can lead to professional recognition and entrepreneurial success. His public profile has inspired many young Ghanaians to take fashion education seriously and see it as a legitimate career choice.

Despite its increasing significance, fashion education in Ghana still faces obstacles. Limited access to modern equipment, inconsistent industry partnerships, and societal views that consider fashion less prestigious than academic disciplines remain common barriers (Amoako & Osei-Poku, 2023; UNESCO, 2017). A 2020 report by the Ghana National Association of Tailors and Dressmakers found that many fashion graduates still rely on outdated sewing machines and lack exposure to digital design technologies (Zurek, 2022), thereby affecting their competitiveness in both local and international markets.

Efforts are underway to close these gaps. For example, TTU has partnered with local fashion houses to offer internship placements and mentorship programs. Students now regularly participate in public exhibitions and fashion shows (Plate 2), which provide platforms to showcase their talents. TTU's annual Fashion and Design Exhibition, for example, provides students with the opportunity to present their final-year collections to the public, industry stakeholders, and potential employers (Agordah, 2025; Department of Fashion Design and Technology, n.d). These hands-on experiences are essential for transforming theoretical knowledge into market-ready skills.

Plate 2

TTU Students Showcase Sustainable Fashion at Technique Style 2025.



Source: <https://web.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1346918384109011&set=pcb.1346919220775594>

Agordah further emphasised that the event not only celebrates fashion as an art form but also showcases students' talent to the public, promotes the department, and highlights TTU's dedication to nurturing generations of innovators.

Basically, fashion education in Ghana is transforming from a last resort into a respected, multifaceted field that empowers youth, builds cultural identity, and boosts economic development in creative jobs (UNESCO, 2023). Its full potential will only be achieved once infrastructural problems are fixed and public perception shifts to recognise its social and economic value.

Parental Perception and Influence on Career Choice

Parental perceptions play a vital role in shaping students' academic and career choices, particularly in collectivist societies like Ghana, where family values and expectations significantly influence decisions

(Mensah & Amponsah, 2022; Diabour et al., 2021). Parents' influence often extends beyond emotional support to include determining which fields of study are considered prestigious and rewarding, because families view education as an investment, weighing costs against future returns, which aligns with Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory. In many Ghanaian households, careers such as medicine, law, engineering, and accounting are favoured for their perceived stability, social prestige, and financial security. As a result, creative fields like fashion design are often viewed as non-traditional or less profitable (Owusu-Ansah, 2021).

Araba Mensimah, a fashion design student at Takoradi Technical University, shared that her parents initially opposed her decision to study fashion, believing she would not find a job, and pressured her to pursue nursing. Their views changed after seeing her innovative Kente-inspired collection, which was praised at her school's fashion show, demonstrating how exposure and experience can alter parental attitudes.

Similarly, some parents who initially viewed fashion design as a backup career changed their views after witnessing the success of fashion entrepreneurs. Joyce Ababio, a renowned Ghanaian fashion designer and founder of JACCD, frequently cites parental resistance as a factor affecting her students (B&FT, 2021). However, many parents become supporters after seeing their children's success in exhibitions and internships (O'Sullivan, 2023). Research by Darko and Afful (2020) also revealed that over 60% of parents initially discouraged their children from pursuing fashion programs. However, their attitudes shifted after witnessing tangible results, such as internships, media features, or small entrepreneurial ventures.

Despite recent developments, many people hesitate to pursue careers in the fashion industry because they are unaware of its economic potential and global reach. The Ghanaian fashion sector makes significant contributions to employment, tourism, and exports, but these achievements are rarely recognised (Appiah et al, 2025; Arhin et al, 2024). As a result, parents often cling to outdated beliefs or fear social judgment, which weakens their support for their children's career choices. To close this perception gap, institutions like TTU should take steps such as organising open days for parents and students, sharing alumni success stories, and holding community seminars on fashion careers. As Amoako and Osei-Poku (2023) note, increasing parental involvement through fashion exhibitions and forums can boost both parental support and student confidence.

There is a need to enhance career prospects and employment opportunities for fashion students. Establishing partnerships with fashion brands, textile firms, and retail outlets is essential, as these can facilitate internships and job placements. Creating a dedicated fashion career centre can also assist students with job applications, resume building, and portfolio creation, boosting hands-on learning and industry exposure (Amoako & Osei-Poku, 2023). Upgrading fashion design labs with modern equipment, textiles, and digital design software is crucial (Milliam et al, 2025). Additionally, hosting fashion shows, design competitions, and exhibitions provides students with valuable opportunities to display their work. Ultimately, participating in exchange programs with leading fashion schools can significantly enhance their educational experience.

There is also a need to enhance financial transparency and affordability to provide scholarships and assistance to fashion students, and to offer low-cost sourcing options for materials and tools to reduce costs. The institution should clearly communicate the return on investment (ROI) by sharing data on alumni employment rates (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Integrate business and technology into fashion education, including entrepreneurship and marketing courses, to help students launch their own brands (Alo & Akintaro, 2022). Teach fashion technology, such as 3D modelling, digital fashion, and sustainable

design. Provide hands-on experience with software like CLO 3D, Adobe Illustrator, and pattern-making tools (Prasata et al, 2025). Increase parental engagement and communication by hosting informational sessions about career opportunities in the fashion industry. Send regular newsletters showcasing student achievements and industry collaborations. Invite parents to fashion exhibitions, open house events, and award ceremonies to highlight their child's progress.

Conceptual Framework

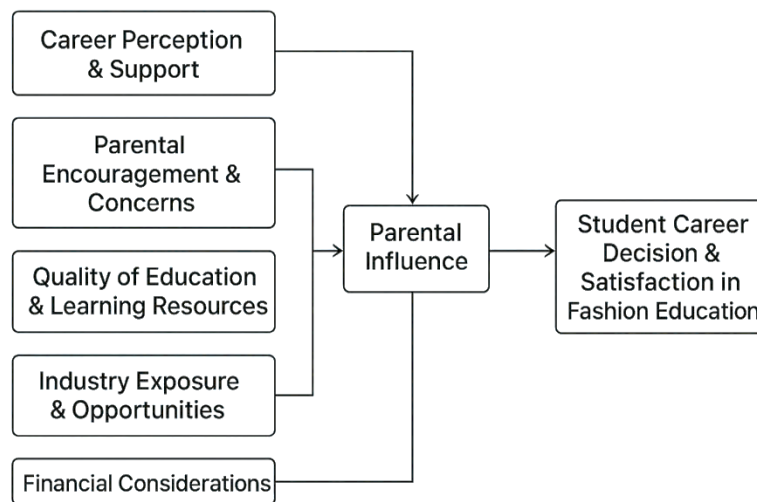


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the study. Source: Study Data

The conceptual framework in Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among five key factors influencing students' career choices and satisfaction in fashion education at Takoradi Technical University (TTU). These factors include Career Perception and Support, Parental Encouragement and Concerns, Quality of Education and Learning Resources, Industry Exposure and Opportunities, and Financial Considerations. These serve as independent variables that shape both parental and student attitudes toward fashion education. The framework also emphasises parental influence as a moderating factor connecting these variables to the dependent variables: student career decision-making and satisfaction in fashion education. It also illustrates Super's (1990) career development theory, demonstrating how support systems facilitate career development.

The framework suggests that interactions between individual goals and external factors influence students' educational and career choices. Parents' perceptions, encouragement, and financial capacity are key psychosocial factors that either support or restrict students' career paths (Fayzilloyevich, 2025). Institutional factors, such as the quality of education, learning resources, and exposure to industry practices, shape the structural and environmental conditions that affect how students perceive the value and employability of fashion education (Mondol et al, 2024). Financial considerations impact both parents' willingness to support and students' perseverance in completing their programs, particularly in creative fields that may be viewed as financially uncertain (Moneva et al, 2020).

In this model, parental influence acts as a moderating variable, either strengthening or weakening the effects of institutional and personal factors on students' career satisfaction. This is because when parents see fashion as a viable career choice, students are more likely to feel motivated, confident, and satisfied (Riya & Neha, 2025; Kolmos, 2020; Essel, 2019). Conversely, when parental attitudes are sceptical or

financial resources are limited, students may experience anxiety and become less engaged academically, even if institutional conditions are favourable (Moneva et al, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT), developed by Lent et al. (1994). SCCT provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how personal traits, external influences, and experiential learning interact to shape career development. The theory emphasizes three primary constructs relevant to this research:

1. Self-Efficacy – the belief in one’s ability to perform tasks necessary for career success. In this context, students’ self-efficacy is reflected in their confidence in their fashion design skills and in their belief that TTU’s programme can lead to rewarding employment.
2. Outcome Expectations – individuals’ beliefs about the results of engaging in specific career-related behaviours. For students, this refers to whether they see fashion education as leading to a stable income and societal recognition.
3. Environmental Supports and Barriers – external factors that can either promote or hinder career development. Support from parents, financial stability, and access to quality education act as environmental supports, while limited exposure or negative perceptions serve as barriers.

The mediating role of parental influence closely aligns with the environmental supports and barriers dimension of SCCT. According to Lent et al. (2000), family expectations and encouragement are among the most significant social factors shaping career choices, particularly in collectivist societies where parental approval has a profound influence on young people’s career paths. Likewise, institutional quality and industry exposure serve as environmental supports that enhance self-efficacy by offering students practical, hands-on experiences that boost confidence and employability (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020; Bandura, 1997).

The interactive nature of the variables involved justifies integrating SCCT into this framework. The theory explains how personal cognition (career perception), environmental factors (such as parental and institutional influences), and behavioural outcomes (career decisions and satisfaction) are interconnected in shaping academic and career results. The framework suggests that fashion students’ satisfaction and persistence in their programs depend on the supportive alignment of these elements.

Furthermore, the framework encourages systemic interactions among TTU, government, industry, and parents. TTU provides quality education and relevant learning resources; the government provides policy and infrastructure support; industry provides exposure and job opportunities; and parents provide moral, financial, and emotional support. According to Gautam & Shailashri (2025), these actors need to collaborate with various stakeholders to ensure curriculum coherence, employ skilled teachers, motivate learners, foster strong leadership, and promote parental involvement, thereby creating a comprehensive ecosystem essential for educational success and alignment with global standards.

Basically, the framework illustrates a layered, context-aware application of SCCT, positioning parental influence as a key mediator that connects environmental supports to individual career outcomes. It highlights that sustainable development in fashion education requires integrating family, institutional, and societal factors to ensure that student choices are informed, supported, and aligned with labour market realities.

Methodology

This section outlines the methodological approach used to investigate factors influencing students' career decisions and satisfaction in fashion education at Takoradi Technical University (TTU). The study adopted a mixed-method design, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a comprehensive understanding of how parental influence, institutional quality, industry exposure, and financial factors shape students' perceptions and choices. The methodology was grounded in pragmatism, emphasizing the use of diverse data sources and methods to explore complex social phenomena (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Population for the study

The target population consisted of 148 students from the graduating class of 2023/24, including those pursuing Higher National Diplomas and Bachelor's degrees in Fashion Design and Technology, who showcased their collections on the runway, and parents who attended the programme to support their wards.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

Simple random sampling was used to select participants for the study. Ninety graduating students were chosen, and 30 parents were selected during a runway presentation of the students' collections.

Instruments

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather data from students, and a structured interview guide was employed to collect information from parents. It was designed with clear, simple language to improve understanding among respondents and to examine how parental influence, institutional quality, industry exposure, and financial factors affect students' perceptions and decisions. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions to facilitate coding and analysis, making data processing straightforward. A three-point Likert scale was used to structure the questionnaire.

Pre-Test

The questionnaire was pre-tested on the graduating class of Diploma Technology Fashion to eliminate ambiguity and ensure clarity. Experts reviewed it to correct and improve its effectiveness, establishing its face validity. It was also tested for reliability in the Fashion Design and Textiles Department at a different university.

Data Collection Procedure

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data simultaneously. This approach was appropriate because it enabled the assessment of attitudes, perceptions, and experiences within a specific period (Saunders et al, 2019). Data were gathered from students and parents over three days, with each day focusing on 30 graduating students from the Higher National Diploma and Bachelor of Technology in Fashion, and 10 parents per day. The data collection coincided with the three-day runway presentation, which ran from Wednesday to Friday and involved 90 graduating students and 30 parents.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data measured the strength of relationships among variables using structured questionnaires, with frequencies and percentages, while the qualitative data provided interpretive depth

through interviews and open-ended responses. The study’s purpose justified the use of a mixed-methods approach to capture both measurable patterns and subtle perspectives on fashion education. According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), this methodological triangulation enhances validity by combining the breadth of quantitative research with the depth of qualitative insights.

Ethical Clearance

All participants were informed of their right to participate voluntarily and that they could withdraw from the research at any time.

Limitations

The study examines the impact of parental influence, institutional quality, industry exposure, and financial factors on students' perceptions and decisions regarding their program choices in Fashion Higher National Diplomas and Bachelor of Technology programs. Although the study could have included students in the Diploma in Technology in Fashion, their program lasts only two years, so they do not have enough experience to share, even though their collections were showcased as a runway teaser.

Presentation of Study Results

Career Perception and Support in Fashion Education at TTU

Career perception and support are essential in shaping students’ motivation and persistence in higher education. In creative fields like fashion design, where professional paths are often undervalued compared to traditional careers such as medicine, law, or engineering, family and societal views have a strong influence (Mensah & Amponsah, 2022; Owusu-Ansah, 2021). This section examines parents' and students’ perceptions of fashion design as a career, highlighting its value, legitimacy, and financial potential.

Table 1

Career Perception and Support

Parent Responses			
Statement	Response	Freq (f)	Percentage (%)
I believe fashion design is a valuable career choice for my child	Agree	18	54.50%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
Fashion design is as important as other professional careers like engineering or medicine	Agree	21	63.60%
	Neutral	6	18.20%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
Student Responses			

Statement	Response	freq (f)	Percentage
I chose to study fashion design because I am passionate about it	Agree	54	60.00%
	Neutral	24	26.70%
	Disagree	12	13.30%
Fashion education is a good financial investment	Agree	45	50.00%
	Neutral	27	30.00%
	Disagree	18	20.00%

Source: Study Data 2025

The study in Table 1 shows that 54.5% of participating parents consider fashion design a valuable career for their child, while 18.2% disagree and 27.3% remain neutral. 63.6% agree that fashion is as important as traditional professional careers; however, 18.2% disagree, reflecting a minority who still rank it lower than professions such as engineering or medicine. The study also shows that 60% of students who participated chose fashion because of their personal passion, while 26.7% were neutral, and 13.3% disagreed. Half (50%) of the participating students agree that fashion education is a worthwhile financial investment, while 30% are neutral and 20% disagree.

Parental Encouragement and Concerns in Fashion Education

Parental encouragement and concerns are crucial in shaping students' educational journeys, especially in creative fields like fashion. Parents' support or discouragement can influence career ambitions, confidence levels, and persistence in education (Mensah & Amponsah, 2022; Owusu-Ansah, 2021). Meanwhile, concerns about job opportunities, financial stability, and industry competition may lead to hesitation (Mondol et al., 2024). This section examines both parent and student views on encouragement and concerns in fashion design education at TTU.

Table 2

Parental Encouragement and Concerns in Fashion Education

Parent Responses			
Statement	Responses	Freq (f)	Percentage (%)
I encouraged my child to pursue fashion design	Agree	24	72.70%
	Neutral	6	18.20%
	Disagree	3	9.10%
I am concerned about job opportunities in fashion design	Agree	21	63.60%
	Neutral	6	18.20%
	Disagree	6	18.20%

Student Responses			
Statement	Responses	Freq (f)	Percentage
My parents encouraged me to study fashion design	Agree	57	57.60%
	Neutral	27	27.30%
	Disagree	15	15.20%
My parents are worried about my job opportunities	Agree	48	48.50%
	Neutral	33	33.30%
	Disagree	18	18.20%

Source: Study Data 2025

The results in Table 2 show that a large majority (72.7%) of parents actively encourage their children to pursue fashion, with only 9.1% opposed. Despite this encouragement, 63.6% admitted to feeling worried about future job opportunities in fashion design. One respondent mentioned, “My biggest concern was the practical aspect, and not getting a job opportunity after graduating.” Table 2 also shows that 57.6% of students reported parental encouragement, while 15.2% reported feeling discouraged. Nearly half (48.5%) agreed that their parents expressed concern about their job prospects, with 33.3% indicating neutral views. This section examines both parent and student views on the adequacy of educational quality and resources.

Table 3

Quality of Education and Learning Resources

Parent Responses			
Statement	Responses	Freq (f)	Percentage (%)
TTU provides enough industry exposure and networking opportunities for fashion students	Agree	18	54.50%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
The fashion education programme provides enough hands-on training in design and garment production at TTU, has met my expectations	Agree	15	45.50%
	Neutral	12	36.40%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
The university provides sufficient learning materials and facilities (sewing machines, fabrics, design tools)	Agree	12	36.40%
	Neutral	12	36.40%
	Disagree	9	27.30%
The fashion lecturers at TTU are experienced and knowledgeable	Agree	21	63.60%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	3	9.10%
Student Responses			

Statement	Responses	Freq (f)	Percentage
Fashion education programme provides enough hands-on training in design and garment production at TTU, has met my expectations	Agree	51	51.50%
	Neutral	30	30.30%
	Disagree	18	18.20%
The university provides sufficient learning materials and facilities (sewing machines, fabrics, design tools)	Agree	42	42.40%
	Neutral	33	33.30%
	Disagree	24	24.20%
The fashion lecturers at TTU are experienced and knowledgeable	Agree	60	60.60%
	Neutral	24	24.20%
	Disagree	15	15.20%

Source: Study Data 2025

The results in Table 3 show that 54.5% of parents agreed that TTU provides sufficient exposure, while 18.2% disagreed. 45.5% felt expectations were met, although 36.4% remained neutral, indicating mixed perceptions. Only 36.4% agreed that resources were adequate, whereas 27.3% disagreed, raising concerns about the adequacy of facilities. A strong 63.6% of respondents recognised lecturers as knowledgeable, with minimal disagreement. The study in Table 3 also indicates that a majority (51.5%) agreed that training met expectations, though 30.3% were neutral, reflecting inconsistent experiences. Only 42.4% agreed that resources were sufficient, while 24.2% disagreed, pointing to resource shortages. Additionally, 60.6% praised lecturers' knowledge, highlighting faculty as a key strength.

Industry Exposure and Opportunities in Fashion Education

Industry exposure and career opportunities are crucial for a fashion education, as they bridge the gap between theoretical learning and practical experience. Collaborations with industry partners, internships, fashion shows, and networking opportunities enhance students' employability and bolster parents' confidence in the relevance of the programs. In creative fields, where career paths are less defined compared to traditional professions, exposure to industry practices is a key factor in achieving career success. This section examines parents' and students' perspectives on the extent to which TTU provides adequate industry exposure and career opportunities.

Table 4

Industry Exposure and Opportunities in Fashion Education

Statement to Parents	Responses	Freq(f)	%
TTU organizes sufficient fashion shows, exhibitions, and competitions to showcase student talent	Agree	18	54.50%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	6	18.20%

I believe TTU equips students with adequate networking opportunities with industry stakeholders	Agree	15	45.50%
	Neutral	12	36.40%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
The program prepares students for self-employment and entrepreneurship in the fashion sector	Agree	21	63.60%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	3	9.10%
Statement to Students	Responses	freq	%
TTU organizes sufficient fashion shows, exhibitions, and competitions to showcase student talent	Agree	51	51.50%
	Neutral	30	30.30%
	Disagree	18	18.20%
I believe TTU equips me with adequate networking opportunities with industry stakeholders	Agree	42	42.40%
	Neutral	33	33.30%
	Disagree	24	24.20%
The program prepares me for self-employment and entrepreneurship in the fashion sector	Agree	57	57.60%
	Neutral	27	27.30%
	Disagree	15	15.20%

Source: Study Data 2025

The study findings in Table 4 show that over half (54.5%) of the participants agree that TTU offers platforms like shows and competitions, while 18.2% disagree. Only 45.5% believe networking opportunities are sufficient, with 36.4% remaining neutral, indicating mixed opinions. A strong 63.6% of respondents feel that TTU prepares students for self-employment, although nearly a third (27.3%) are neutral. The study also found that 51.5% of students agree they have enough platforms to showcase talent, while 18.2% disagree. Only 42.4% think networking opportunities are enough, whereas about one-third (33.3%) are neutral. Additionally, 57.6% agree that TTU prepares them for entrepreneurship, though 27.3% remain neutral, reflecting cautious optimism.

Financial Considerations in Fashion Education

Financial considerations are crucial in higher education decisions, especially in developing economies where household income directly influences access to tertiary education. In creative fields like fashion, where financial returns may not be immediate or guaranteed, both parents and students evaluate the cost of education against the perceived economic benefits of the career path. The results in Table 5 examine parents' and students' views on the affordability and perceived financial value of TTU's fashion design program.

Table 5

Financial Considerations in Fashion Education

Parent Responses			
Statement to Parents	Responses	Freq (f)	%

I am willing to invest financially in my child's fashion education	Agree	21	63.60%
	Neutral	9	27.30%
	Disagree	3	9.10%
I worry about the long-term financial stability of a career in fashion	Agree	18	54.50%
	Neutral	6	18.20%
	Disagree	9	27.30%
The cost of studying fashion at TTU is reasonable compared to potential career benefits	Agree	15	45.50%
	Neutral	12	36.40%
	Disagree	6	18.20%
Student Responses			
Statement to Students	Responses	Freq(f)	Percentage
My parents fully support my decision to study fashion at TTU	Agree	60	58.80%
	Neutral	27	26.50%
	Disagree	15	14.70%
Fashion education is a good financial investment	Agree	45	50.00%
	Neutral	27	30.00%
	Disagree	18	20.00%
I worry about the financial risks of pursuing a career in fashion	Agree	42	41.20%
	Neutral	36	35.30%
	Disagree	30	23.50%

Source: Study Data 2025

The study in Table 5 indicates that a majority (63.6%) of parents are willing to invest in fashion education, though nearly a third remain neutral. Over half (54.5%) worry about long-term financial stability, while 27.3% disagree, showing divided opinions. Only 45.5% agree that the cost is reasonable compared to the benefits, with 36.4% neutral, indicating uncertainty. Also, the study shows that 58.8% of respondents received full parental support, while 14.7% faced opposition. Half (50%) see fashion education as a good financial investment, while 20% disagree. Additionally, 41.2% worry about career-related financial risks, with a notable 35.3% neutral, reflecting ambivalence.

Discussion of the Study Results

Table 1 shows that Ghanaian parents increasingly see fashion design as a viable career, reflecting changing cultural attitudes toward creative professions. Still, 18.2% of respondents remain pessimistic and prefer traditional, science-related careers. One participant expressed concern about employability: "I was mainly worried about the practical part and not getting a job after graduation." Diabour et al. (2021) suggest that in African cultures, creative careers are viewed as financially unstable, which explains this worry. However, 63.6% of parents consider fashion a reputable career path, indicating a growing acceptance of fashion education.

This reflects global acknowledgment of the creative economy as a major driver of innovation and employment (UNESCO, 2015). In Ghana, Diabour et al. (2021) discovered that families are increasingly recognizing the economic and cultural significance of arts careers. Table 1 indicates that most students are motivated by passion, aligning with Self-Determination Theory, which states that intrinsic motivation fosters perseverance and success in creative fields (Essel, 2019). This suggests that students mainly choose careers based on their personal identity and motivations rather than external social pressures. However, opinions on financial viability vary. Half of the respondents see fashion education as a worthwhile investment, while the sizable proportion of indifferent (30%) and disagreeing (20%) responses suggest some doubts about its long-term benefits.

Many creative graduates in Ghana face a tough job market and often turn to multiple careers to secure a stable income. Students tend to feel excited but uncertain about financial outcomes. According to the study's findings, both parents and students see fashion design as a respected career choice. Parents are increasingly viewing it as similar to traditional jobs, while students are mainly driven by their passion. Both groups share financial worries: parents doubt the profession's stability, and students question its financial rewards. These findings highlight the need for TTU to improve career counselling, entrepreneurial training, and industry connections to bridge the gap between passion-driven education and financial stability (Alo et al, 2022).

Parental Encouragement and Concerns in Fashion Education

Table 2 indicates that parents are supportive yet cautious. There appears to be an increase in support for fashion as a potential career option, mirroring earlier research showing a shift in how African parents view creative professions (Diabour et al., 2021). However, worries about job opportunities reflect ongoing doubts about the financial stability of creative careers. Super's Career Development Theory emphasises the balance between support and concern, illustrating how parental values and job expectations influence children's career choices (Super, 1990). Mensah and Amponsah (2022) note that in Ghana, parents are becoming more supportive of careers in the arts, but still have doubts about the long-term financial prospects due to the limited availability of formal job opportunities in the field.

Students feel encouraged, but with parental concern, reflecting parental reactions. Parental encouragement boosts confidence and dedication, aligned with Bandura's (1997) Social Cognitive Theory, which links parental support to confidence and determination. Nearly half notice their parents' worries, indicating that concerns about job-market instability influence their outlook, supporting Lent et al. (1994) and Social Cognitive Career Theory, which discuss how support and barriers affect career choices. Parental support fosters interest, but worries about employment highlight the need for improved career pathways, industry connections, and employability programs at TTU to link passion with sustainable careers.

Quality of Education and Learning Resources

Parents are satisfied with the quality of teaching, especially faculty expertise, but worry about resources and hands-on training. This aligns with Osuanyi's (2019) findings that access to industry-standard facilities affects parental confidence. The quality of education and access to learning resources are crucial factors for student success in higher education, particularly in skill-based fields such as fashion design. Adequate teaching resources, hands-on experience, and experienced faculty members not only develop students' skills but also boost parents' confidence in the program (Amoako & Osei-Poku, 2023; Appiah, 2023). At TTU, these factors are vital to producing competent graduates who meet both local and global industry standards.

The moderate confidence in industry exposure indicates that TTU is improving, but it needs stronger collaborations and more internships. Kolmos et al. (2020) note that experiential learning builds trust by showing practical results. While TTU's faculty is praised, concerns about infrastructure may undermine full support. Students share these views, recognizing faculty expertise but also citing facility and resource issues that need to be addressed.

The strong support for hands-on training shows that TTU's pedagogy is generally effective; however, the many neutral and disagreeing responses reveal inconsistencies in its implementation. This suggests that student satisfaction and retention are affected not only by instruction but also by institutional support systems such as facilities and access to materials. Additionally, inadequate facilities can decrease student motivation and hinder skill development, as noted by UNESCO (2017), emphasising the importance of well-equipped technical and vocational institutions in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Even though parents and students at TTU recognise faculty expertise as a key advantage of the fashion program, concerns about learning resources and facilities consistently arise among both groups, highlighting a significant institutional gap. While hands-on training is generally well-received, neutral responses suggest inconsistencies in program delivery. To enhance parental trust and student satisfaction, TTU should enhance its infrastructure, expand access to modern design tools, and strengthen industry partnerships.

Industry Exposure and Opportunities in Fashion Education

Parents recognise TTU's efforts in organising shows and exhibitions, which significantly increase visibility in the fashion industry. This supports Adom's (2020) observations, emphasising the importance of public displays in building credibility in creative fields. However, declining confidence in networking suggests that TTU may lack the strong industry connections parents expect for future career opportunities. The focus on entrepreneurship training reflects Ghana's economic landscape, where many graduates in creative fields choose self-employment (Boateng, 2019). This aligns with UNESCO's (2017) insights that fashion education in Africa should prioritise entrepreneurship and sustainability, given the limited official job opportunities available. Nonetheless, neutral responses indicate that some parents remain unsure about the effectiveness of TTU's entrepreneurial programs.

In addition to recognising the fashion show organised by the fashion department at TTU, the respondents are also concerned about the limited networking opportunities. This aligns with Mensah and Amponsah (2022), who noted that although higher education institutions often host creative showcases, they sometimes overlook the importance of structured employer networking. The moderate support for entrepreneurship training suggests that TTU's curriculum matches the self-employment focus typical of Ghana's fashion industry (Boateng, 2019). However, the large number of neutral responses indicates inconsistent delivery, possibly due to a lack of incubation spaces or insufficient financial support for student entrepreneurs (Moneva et al., 2020).

Bridging the networking gap could improve employability and lessen uncertainties for both parents and students about future careers.

Financial Considerations in Fashion Education

Parents demonstrate financial support for their children but are cautious about the expectations they place on them in return. This aligns with Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory, which states that families view education as an investment, weighing costs against future earnings. Their main concerns are about

long-term stability and the profitability of careers in creative industries (Becker, 1993; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Neutral perspectives on costs and benefits may stem from the lack of industry guarantees in Ghana's fashion sector. UNESCO (2023) reports that many families in Sub-Saharan Africa struggle to balance the high costs of specialized education with the uncertain prospects of creative jobs.

The study shows that students feel hopeful but also cautious, reflecting their parents' worries. Only half of the people see fashion education as a worthwhile financial investment, indicating ongoing doubts about future benefits. Lent et al. (1994), in their Social Cognitive Career Theory, highlight those perceived barriers, such as financial risks, can lower career commitment even when there is intense passion. Financial risks are a genuine concern, as Awoniyi (2025) points out. They note that the fashion industry often has unpredictable income, especially for those just starting their careers. However, the strong parental support seen in 58.8% of students suggests that family backing helps ease these fears, giving students the confidence to pursue their chosen path (O'Sullivan, 2023).

Financial factors expose a common conflict between support and doubt. Parents are willing to invest but cautious about long-term stability, while students balance hope with an awareness of financial risks. The findings emphasize the need for TTU to improve career services, strengthen industry connections, and enhance entrepreneurship training to boost confidence in sustainable career paths for both parents and students. TTU can also improve ties to both formal and self-employment, ensuring that educational investments translate into better economic outcomes.

Conclusion

This study investigates the perspectives of parents and students regarding fashion education at Takoradi Technical University, focusing on five principal constructs: career perception and support, parental encouragement and concerns, quality of education and learning resources, industry exposure and opportunities, and financial considerations. The findings reveal a nuanced interplay of optimism and caution among respondents. Both parents and students largely acknowledge fashion education as a valid and legitimate professional pathway, comparable to traditional fields such as medicine and engineering. Notably, a majority of students indicated that their motivations for pursuing fashion are driven by intrinsic passion, consistent with Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), which posits that intrinsic interest is a significant predictor of career choice. Nevertheless, parental scepticism about the long-term job security of careers in fashion underscores a persistent cultural preference for conventional professions in Ghana, corroborating Amoako and Osei-Poku's (2023) previous research.

Parental influence significantly shapes students' career decisions, often providing strong support but also raising concerns about employability and market competition (Donkor, 2023). Evaluations of TTU's program quality show mixed perceptions; while both parents and students appreciate the competence of lecturers and practical training, there are notable concerns about learning materials and access to essential equipment, such as sewing machines. This reflects infrastructural gaps in African higher education, as noted by UNESCO (2017).

Moreover, although TTU hosts events such as fashion shows, students and parents emphasize the need for greater industry linkages and structured internships. This disconnect between institutional training and industry demands reinforces. Amoako and Osei-Poku (2023) argue that effective partnerships between academia and the fashion industry are vital, as the lack of such opportunities heightens the risk of graduate underemployment in this sector.

Financial concerns were a major issue for both parents and students in the fashion education system. Parents were willing to invest but questioned the return, while students worried about financial risks and affordability. This aligns with Becker's (1993) Human Capital Theory, which views education as an investment evaluated by future earnings. Both groups strongly called for scholarships, subsidies, and industry sponsorships to make education more affordable.

In summary, although fashion education at TTU is respected and driven by enthusiasm, it is crucial to address financial, infrastructure, and industry-related challenges. This study emphasizes the need for policy reforms, institutional changes, and greater industry collaboration to unlock the full potential of fashion education in Ghana and beyond.

Recommendations

1. The Fashion Design department must collaborate more with the fashion industry to expose students to all career opportunities in the program.
2. The Fashion Design department should regularly hold career workshops for students to support their career development in fashion through networking.
3. The department must improve the quality of teaching through regular industrial visits.

Suggestion for Future Research

1. Takoradi Technical University Fashion Design Department should contact tracer research on their past students to gather empirical data on graduates' job placement and career progression in the fashion industry.
2. A comparative research should be conducted by sampling more technical universities to explore students' and parents' perspectives, and measure motivation, support, program quality, career opportunities, financial concerns, and industry exposure.

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Conflict of Interest

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