

The Impact of the Objectives of Fashion Design and Textiles Programme of Koforidua Technical University on Employment

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Abstract

There has been no assessment of Higher National Diploma programmes that provide an accurate record of former fashion design and textile graduates' current positions and job responsibilities. The objective of this study was to evaluate the programme objectives of fashion design and textiles graduates of Koforidua Technical University. To assess the graduates employment status in relation to programme rationale and objectives. Researchers used quantitative approach for the study. Purposive, and snowball sampling procedures were employed to sample respondents. Descriptive inferential statistics was used for the analysis. The study revealed that programme objectives of fashion design and textiles are geared towards acquisition of workable skills that are relevant to the industry. The study found that there should be new competencies and teaching techniques in the fashion design and textiles programme to adequately prepare students to the job market.

Keywords— Textiles: Skills: Competencies: Training

I. INTRODUCTION

Higher-quality, "workplace-relevant" education is vital in combatting rising unemployment and meeting the demands of workers [1]. One of the most common claims made by institutions is that their right to success is based on the employability of their graduates [2]. Tracer studies, according to [3] examine graduates' perceptions of their college learning experience. Institutions will be able to better assess student preparation and graduation success as a result of this research. Although tracer studies have been used since the late 1980s and early 1990s [2], there is a scarcity of research available for a variety of reasons, including a fear that these studies will have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning at a particular institution. This is in line with [4] observation that releasing these studies could reveal institutional problems. Graduate tracer studies gather information on graduates' professional performance (whether or not they are

employed), as well as the relevance of knowledge and skills acquired at the institution to their current roles in the workplace.

II. LABOUR MARKET AND EMPLOYABILITY STATUS OF GRADUATES

According to [5], the link between higher education and the world of work includes defining and interpreting employability in connection to gradueness, the argument against the notion of skills being associated with labor market requirements, and employer demands and expectations. Gradueness can be defined as the characteristics that graduates of a higher education institution possess as employable individuals who can contribute to a knowledge-based society. This in line with the research question seeks to determine the graduates' employment status in relation to the program rationale and objectives of fashion design and textiles graduates because it is believed that the institutions' main goal is to

train students to acquire employable skills and even better self-developmental skills in order for them to start their own businesses after completing their education.

The goal of incorporating fashion and textiles into higher education means preparing prospective graduates to have hands-on experience in bringing desired change to the larger community. This affirms [6] assertion that fashion and textile institutes of higher learning should prepare students to start a business and/or compete in a diminishing global workforce is reinforced. There are concerns that universities are increasingly being pressured to produce graduates who are ready for work [5], yet the link between academics and employment should not limit academic freedom. A number of theories have been propounded in connection to the academic industry relations which include Human Capital and Labour market theories.

III. THE THEORY OF HUMAN CAPITAL

[7] proposed the human capital theory, which emphasizes the significance of education in the development of people and the economy. With the help of investments or financial contributions, the quality of education and its facilities could be considerably improved. Education, on the other hand, aids in the development of talent and potential. In other words, education can be used to discipline, train, and expose one's ability. As a result, education may be used to groom students into productive workers, and it can thus be considered a type of human investment. Investing in education, according to this viewpoint, is not a waste of money. Without a doubt, as worker productivity grows, so does the country's economy; education develops a high-quality workforce, which in turn boosts the country's production, resulting in considerable economic gains [7].

IV. LABOUR MARKET THEORIES

The labour market is a major factor that shapes the types of jobs that are available. Several educational and training programs, according to [8], strive to improve the job market by offering

more information about courses, qualifications, and people's successes. This is accomplished by streamlining the information accessible and making it easy for the many participants in the system to grasp the connections between the various staging points and courses taken. As a result, steps were taken to improve the quality and accessibility of information about a person's performance and transition from school to work. Students, on the other hand, are free to make their own decisions. According to research conducted in the United Kingdom, young people are incredibly resourceful, capable of adjusting to sudden changes in status, and able to reconcile themselves to the realities of the labor market [8]. Higher education must design its course content to fulfill the need for a highly qualified and competent workforce.

[8] backs up this notion by noting that in the 1990s, the labor market wanted and expected consistently high-quality university courses. As a result, the National Records of Achievement were established to ensure that graduates' achievements in the British Qualification System were transparent. A significant amount of change was made. Action plans were implemented to help with progression planning and review. Clearly, comparable actions must be made in the South African Qualification System to adjust courses and qualifications structures in order to improve the character and scope of course delivery through enhanced access and participation through better course packages. To put it another way, higher institutions must "scale up" to meet the rising needs of the workplace.

Many "pull" (positive) factors encourage graduates to continue their education.

According to [9], those who favor certification approaches to learning believe that having a certificate is beneficial because it brings learning to a more recognizable level. A university degree is a draw factor that elevates an individual's standing and, presumably, opens numerous doors to greater work opportunities, which can be obtained through increasing one's

human and social capital. A student is motivated to gain a distinct advantage over the next candidate applying for the same job in order to sell himself in a highly competitive environment. It is widely acknowledged that the prestige associated with university degrees ensures that those who have completed training and have certificates as confirmation of their degrees receive prestigious employment with greater incomes than those who do not. This is a common misconception among students who are starting their post-secondary education. Human capital development and strengthening is becoming a popular trend in today's business environment. It is regarded vital because in real-life working scenarios, people are confronted with difficult conditions that they must overcome in order to survive. Education equips people with the skills they need to deal effectively with a wide range of situations, as well as assisting in the alignment of professional, academic, and general knowledge. Universities are designed to teach students how to make the most of their cognitive abilities. People with a higher level of education who enter the labor market are practically certain to succeed compared to those with a lower level of education. Despite widespread criticism that schools and higher education do not adequately prepare students for the profession, the researchers believe that an educated person can boost workplace productivity. As a result, those who are lucky enough to receive higher education qualifications have a competitive advantage in both the work market and the international society.

The labour market theory's importance to this study is that it shows the benefit that may be accrued from incorporating graduate tracer strategies in Koforidua Technical University. Hence graduate tracer study will improve the academic operational performance at Koforidua Technical University.

V. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the objectives of Fashion Design and Textiles Programme of Koforidua Technical University?
2. What are the graduates' employment status in relation to programme rationale and objectives of the Fashion Design and Textiles Programme at Koforidua Technical University?

VI. METHODOLOGY

For the investigation, the researchers used a strictly quantitative method. There is a wealth of research on the subject, allowing the researchers to design numerical structures that can be used to reliably quantify the variable. The respondents who made up the study's population were chosen using purposive and snowball sampling approaches.

The study used graduates of the fashion design and textiles programme from 2015 to 2020. In all, the population for the study was six hundred and sixty-three (663) graduates (Student Service, Koforidua Technical University, 2021). With a confidence level of 95%, coefficient of variation of 0.5 and precision level of 5%, the sample size of this study was three hundred and eighty (380). The selected respondents were issued with questionnaire. The use of descriptive and other inferential statistics were used to enable better analysis of data.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Programme objectives of fashion design and textiles programme (KTU)

The study investigated programme objective of fashion design and textiles in Koforidua Technical University. This was on a five (5) point Likert scale (where 1= strongly disagree 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree and 5= strongly agree). In order to achieve this objective, the hypothesis was tested (Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Result for Program objective

	M	SD
The objectives set out for the courses are met upon completion	3.74	1.26
The course studied are relevant to the industry	3.69	1.09
Some of the courses are not relevant to the industry	3.63	1.22

The program should have specific areas (like majoring in fashion, textiles or retail).	3.74	1.12
The facilities in the university are up-to-date with modern technology (tools and equipment to aid studies).	3.74	1.03
The library resources are very helpful in aiding studies	3.35	1.31

Source: Researcher's field data, 2021

From the descriptive statistics performed, mean responses with the highest effects included: The objectives set out for the courses are met upon completion [M=3.74], The course studied are relevant to the industry [M=3.69] and "The program should have specific areas (like majoring in fashion, textiles or retail) and "facilities in the university are up-to-date with modern technology (tools and equipment to aid studies)." [M=3.74]. The rest of the variable responses to disagreement are minor responses. Based on the response by the graduate the objective of fashion and textile design are geared towards acquisition of workable skills, able to set up your own business and ready to join existing garment businesses without skills and knowledgeable deficiency. [10] affirms that, the core skills for employability are both vital to employers' enlistment and develop individual's ability to obtain job, maintain employment.

Employment Status

Tables 2 shows the respondents' current work status and the length of time they have had their first job.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics Result for Employment status

	M	SD
<i>Current Employment Status</i>		
Employed	3.74	1.26
Not Employed	3.14	0.92
Self-Employed	3.69	1.09
<i>Length of Time the First Job was Acquired</i>	M	SD

Less than a month	3.84	1.34
1-6 months	3.79	1.40
7-11 months	3.32	1.32
1 year to less than 2 years	3.44	1.48
2 years to less than 3 years	3.67	1.30
3 years to less than 4 years	3.12	0.87
4 years or more	3.19	0.98
<i>Type of Employment Status</i>	M	SD
Full time/Permanent/Regular	3.89	1.59
Part Time	3.49	1.14
Probationary	3.01	1.70
Temporary/Casual	3.17	1.38

Source: Researcher's field data, 2021

As revealed in Table 2, the majority of the respondents were already employed [M=3.74, SD=1.26] and [M=3.69, SD=1.09] and most of them [M=3.79, SD=1.40] immediately acquired their first job within 6 months after graduation as shown in Table 2. Table 2 also shows that most of the respondents were already in their Full Time/Permanent/Regular status working for themselves (self-employment) [M= 3.89, SD=1.59].

Those who were unemployed, on the other hand, cited the following reasons: no available/vacant work, not available for employment due to family responsibilities, and having recently graduated. The foregoing findings disproved [11] claim that graduates from higher education institutions (HEIs) have low quality because they lack required qualities such as self-confidence, soft skills, English proficiency, and a positive attitude toward work. [12] compared the skills of European and Japanese graduates in a study that looked at employability from an international perspective. The ability to learn came out on top in this study throughout Europe, particularly in the United Kingdom. Other research on employability centered on employers' rankings of the relevance of employability abilities. This study revealed employable features among the graduate from fashion and textile design from Koforidua Technical University. This can

largely be attributed to the technical nature of the programme as compared to the theoretical courses.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that the existing fashion and textile design curriculum in Koforidua Technical University does not adequately prepare students for the job market. As a result, it leaves graduates to be ineffective in the workplace. Another factor that supports this assertion was the ineffectiveness of teaching technique among some lecturers. Graduate employability is often dependent on student-related activities and the overall quality of the programme.

Graduates who have gone through the fashion and textiles programme and are now working have offered direct input to the study. According to the survey, Koforidua Technical University fashion design and textile graduates need to acquire enough skills and competencies in Fashion Design and Textiles to prepare students well for the job market.

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