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Prerequisites for Millinery Art Skills Acquisition by Higher National Diploma Fashion Design Students in Ghana

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Keywords:

Prerequisite skills,
Millinery,
Acquisition,
Interest,
Fashion.

The art of millinery has been in decline despite its significant contribution to the performance of fashion design students in the industry. This study investigated the prerequisite skills of HND fashion design students in the acquisition of millinery art skills in technical universities in Ghana. The sample consisted of 249 HND level 200 students and 31 millinery art lecturers from five selected Technical Universities. The study employed multistage and stratified sampling methods to gather data from the participants. Data was gathered through the utilisation of an interest inventory and a semi-structured interview guide. The study data was analysed using frequency tables to assess the relationship between prerequisite skills and the acquisition of millinery art skills. A Chi-square Test of Independence was conducted to examine the association between the millinery art skills acquired and practised in the participants' institutions. The findings revealed that the students possessed the necessary skills and exhibited a genuine interest in millinery art before enrolling in the Fashion Design program. However, their interest waned following their instruction in millinery art at different educational institutions. The null hypothesis indicating that there is no relationship between the institution attended and the millinery art skills acquired and practised by students, was rejected based on the statistical analysis. The chi-square value was 135.42, with 4 degrees of freedom and a sample size of 249. The p-value was found to be 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The study suggests that Technical Universities should assist lecturers in obtaining industrial training in millinery art. This will improve the acquisition of millinery art skills.

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INTRODUCTION

The learning process is greatly influenced by prior knowledge and skills, which can either be improved or diminished in the learning environment. Learners have inherent abilities that contribute to their learning process. According to Mrsstrickey (2021), there is a significant correlation between students' previous knowledge, skills and academic performance. When learners possess the necessary basic knowledge and skills in a particular area of study, they are more likely to be motivated to perform at a higher level.

The decision of learners to enrol in a program is influenced by various intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Effective skills/knowledge acquisition and performance are influenced by various factors such as interest, talents, motivation, abilities, and discipline (Herpratiwi & Tohir, 2022). While some learners are motivated by their interests, others are motivated by the course requirements or the convenience of fitting them into their schedules. These factors have implications for the learning process and the acquisition of necessary knowledge and skills.

Vibulphol (2016) suggests that various factors such as interests, talents, psychological factors, abilities, motivation, attitudes, maturity, and discipline play a crucial role in achieving favourable learning outcomes. The study assesses the interest of HND fashion design students in acquiring millinery art skills and identifies the fundamental skills necessary for the effective acquisition of these skills. Arlianty (2017) asserts that learners' interest can be observed through their positive feelings and motivation, which encourage active engagement in studying and

practising skills. According to Vibulphol (2016), the majority of students show a significant level of motivation and internal interest in pursuing any academic program. However, unforeseen challenges in the educational environment hinder learners from achieving optimal results in their learning endeavours. The study of millinery art skills in fashion design has been conducted at Ghanaian technical universities for over fifteen years.

Limited research has been conducted on the skills of millinery art in Ghana. As a result, instructional resources for millinery art skills acquisition are unavailable in the fashion design programs at technical universities in Ghana (Agordah et al., 2023). In 2017, Wovenu conducted a study that evaluated the professional achievements of fashion design graduates in the Ghanaian fashion industry. The study found that fashion design students lack practical experience in millinery art skills, which negatively impacts their skill acquisition process. The study aims to highlight the interest level of HND fashion design students in millinery art and its impact on their skill acquisition process. Additionally, the research results will expose any shortcomings in the current curriculum implementation, which, when addressed, can facilitate effective training in fashion design at Ghanaian technical universities. The study will also help bridge the gap in limited empirical research in millinery art in technical universities and support the implementation of Competency-Based Training/Learning (CBT/L) for better success.

Statement of the Problem

The achievement of competency-based training in technical universities relies on learners' passion

for their chosen program, as it enhances their effective acquisition of knowledge and skills. Prerequisite skills are crucial for both career advancement and the acquisition of professional expertise. Learners possessing these background skills enhance the successful implementation of the curriculum to attain the intended objectives of each program. According to Vibulphol (2016), the majority of students exhibited a significant level of motivation and internal interest in pursuing various courses of study. However, individuals may occasionally become frustrated and relinquish their interest as a result of encountering challenges. Existing literature on fashion design in Ghana has not extensively explored millinery skills (Wovenu 2017; Agordah 2016; Foster & Ampong 2012). According to Wovenu (2017), fashion design graduates in the fashion industry are not utilising their millinery art skills due to their below-average proficiency in this area. In light of Wovenu's (2017) findings, further investigation is required to determine whether graduates' lack of engagement in millinery art is a result of disinterest or insufficient skills. This study did not investigate the factors contributing to the students' below-average skill level. It is necessary to assess the interest and current skills/knowledge of fashion design students in millinery art to determine their potential for acquiring millinery skills in technical universities. Proficiency in millinery art is crucial for optimal performance in the fashion industry as it enables designers to create comprehensive fashion statements. This scholarly study aims to examine the interest and skill level of students in technical universities regarding their acquisition of millinery art skills.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are: -

- Examine the interest of higher national diploma fashion design students in millinery art skills acquisition at Ghanaian technical universities.
- Identify fundamental skills that facilitate effective millinery art skills acquisition

among the higher national diploma students in technical universities in Ghana.

Hypothesis

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between interest in millinery art skills practised and the institutions of the students

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Interest in Acquiring the Art of Millinery Skills

According to Gyansah & Guantai (2018), students who can identify their interests are more likely to put in consistent effort to acquire the necessary competencies, resulting in better outcomes. Additionally, students who are passionate about their interests tend to be more motivated and persistent in their pursuit of excellence (Herpratiwi & Tohir, 2022). However, to sustain learners' interest, competent personnel with mastery of the subject matter must deliver the content (Djatkika, 2023; Kigwili & Akala, 2017). As Ko & Bakkum (2014) stated, content proficiency is essential for delivery on any subject.

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors are the two main categories that influence skill acquisition, according to research (Arlianty, 2017; Nyamwunge, 2016). Intrinsic factors include personality, interest, self-concept, attitude, and cultural identity, while extrinsic factors include social contacts, role models, fundamental skills, and resources such as finances, globalisation, and ethnic background.

Individuals' skills, aptitudes, and strengths (talents) play an important role in developing their interests, which often leads to a passion for the subject matter (Ho et al., 2022; Gretchen, 2014). By developing their interests, individuals can acquire skills and expertise that can lead to better career prospects compared to those with limited areas of expertise (Kapur, 2018). However, Marathe & Wagani (2022) argued that only a few learners follow their passion in most career-focused studies, and most are primarily motivated by the potential for high earnings. To explore fashion design and technology students' interest

in acquiring and utilising millinery skills in the fashion industry, this study will examine the level of interest among students in this area.

Fundamental Skills in the Art of Millinery

In the fashion industry, a designer's creative character is reflected in their ability to acquire high-level skills in garment design and construction. To make a garment stand out, it is important to accessorise it well for specific use and purpose. Customers are fascinated with garments that come complete with the needed accessories, as it saves them a lot of time looking for matching accessories. It also helps to distinguish a dressmaker from a fashion designer (McQuerry, 2019). Casual wear can be made sophisticated and elegant with effective styling and accessories (Rodriguez, 2020).

Fashion designers communicate a specific non-verbal message through their clothing lines. To achieve the desired look, designers must have the ability to style their garments with the right accessories. Designing and constructing accessories such as hats, hairbands, and fascinators can accentuate a garment and make it more versatile. Due to globalisation, the fashion industry has become more complex, and designers need to be innovative to meet their demands. (Chavan, 2018; Aris et al., 2020).

An excellent way designers can attract more customers is by using the needle and thread technique (Lynnette, 2020). This is because fashion models look for unique features that can be easily achieved by hand-sewing. A major unique feature of a designer is their ability to work permanent, inconspicuous stitches on the product using thread and needle (Guarda, 2019). The milliner's ability to leave a unique fingerprint on their product through excellent hand-stitching skills is essential (Fowler, 2021). The ability of trainees in millinery to hand-stitch excellently facilitates effective skill acquisition (Lomax & Skinner, 2017). This is because most hats and other forms of headdresses are hand-stitched, and the ability to finish millinery products neatly and securely is paramount. However, this can only be

achieved when instructional resources for skills acquisition in millinery art are available, adequate and used to transfer the needed skills (Agordah et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study will investigate the interest of fashion design students in the art of millinery and the prerequisite skills for acquiring millinery art. The findings will help influence their skill acquisition and utilisation of the art of millinery in their performance during an internship in the fashion industry.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out in five technical universities across five regions in Ghana. The study utilised a cross-sectional descriptive survey design (Creswell 2014), enabling the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data while minimising costs. The design was suitable for the study as it involved collecting data from numerous sampled populations across five regions in Ghana within a limited timeframe (Cohen et al., 2018). The data collection instruments included a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The close-ended interest inventory questionnaire was created utilising a five-point Likert scale. Data was collected from students using a survey, while data from lecturers who taught millinery art was collected through a semi-structured interview guide. The instruments assessed students' interest in millinery art and their proficiency in acquiring basic millinery skills in technical universities. The questionnaire's reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha test to evaluate the internal consistency of the instruments through the split-half method. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the nominal scale was 0.8, while for the ordinal scale it was 0.9. According to Burns and Bush (2010), reliability test results must be equal to or greater than 0.7 to be considered acceptable. The study adopted the sample determination formula of Fox et al. (2007)

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \sigma^2 N}{e^2 (N-1) + Z_{\alpha/2}^2 \sigma^2}$$

Population and Sampling Procedure

This research centres on students pursuing fashion design at the Higher National Diploma (HND) level in technical universities in Ghana. The students enrolled in the HND L200 program were selected for consideration due to their recent completion of an eight-week industrial internship and subsequent return to the academic setting. The researchers employed a cluster sample methodology to identify and pick the five most established technical universities within the southern, middle, and northern zones of Ghana. Three universities were chosen from a pool of five in the southern zone, while one institution was picked from both the middle and northern zones, each of which had two institutions. The research employed a proportionate random sampling technique to determine the appropriate sample size of HND fashion design students from a selection of Technical Universities. This was accomplished by utilising the standard statistical formula developed by Fox et al. (2007). The sample size determined for the study was $n = 249$. The researchers employed a systematic random selection method to choose student participants from each institution, with careful attention given to the distribution of gender (male and female population). The study purposively selected 31 lecturers of millinery art.

Data Collection

The process of data gathering commenced in October 2021 and concluded in January 2022, coinciding with the student's reintegration into the five chosen Technical Universities following their industrial internships. The purpose of implementing this measure was to mitigate any temporal gaps in the process of data collection since such gaps have the potential to compromise the quality of the collected data (Omair, 2016). The questionnaire comprised an interest inventory guide on a five-point Likert scale for the students, and an interview guide was used to collect data

from lecturers. Concurrent collection of qualitative and quantitative data was undertaken due to their complementary nature, which facilitates a thorough response to the research goals. The researcher, in collaboration with research assistants, personally gathered the data.

Data Analysis

The qualitative and quantitative data were categorised based on institutional labels denoted by the alphabetical sequence A, B, C, D, and E, reflecting the order in which the data was obtained. The data underwent coding and input procedures utilising SPSS version 26. Subsequently, a thorough examination was conducted to identify any missing items, outliers, and general errors in data entry. The data was analysed in accordance with the specified goals. The quantitative data was subjected to analysis through the utilisation of frequency percentage tables and an independent t-test. Additionally, the semi-structured interviews were transcribed, cleaned, and assessed for consistency. Subsequently, an analysis was conducted based on identified themes.

Logical and Ethical Considerations

The research followed ethical principles and respected the right of participants to withdraw. It was approved and authorised by Kenyatta University Graduate School. The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (IRB) in Ghana granted ethical clearance for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Demographic Information of Respondents

Demographic data analysis serves as an important statistical analysis method that provides an overview of the participant's basic information collected with the study questionnaire. The main areas covered in the analysis of demographic variables in this study were Institutions, Gender, and Age.

Table 1: Institution, Gender, and Age of Respondents

Variable	Responses	f	%
Institution	A	50	20.1
	B	64	25.7
	C	40	16.1
	D	65	26.1
	F	30	12.0
Gender	Male	40	16.1
	Female	209	83.9
Age	20 – 22 years	63	25.3
	23 – 25 years	106	42.6
	26 – 28 years	55	22.1
	29 years and above	23	9.2
	No response	2	0.8

Source: Study data 2022

Table 1 provides a comprehensive depiction of the frequency distribution according to the respondents' institutional affiliation, gender, and age. Institution D has the most representation, accounting for 26.1% of the students. Conversely, Institution E has the lowest representation, comprising just 12.0% of the overall sample. These percentages were determined based on the sample size calculation, which took into account the number of male and female students at the 200 level at each institution. In a similar vein, it can be observed that a significant proportion of the student population consists of females, accounting for 83.5% of the total. This suggests that the

fashion design program within Technical Universities has a gender imbalance, with a majority of female participants. Moreover, a significant proportion of the student population, specifically 42.6%, is within the age range of 23-25 years. The majority of students enrolled in fashion design programs at technical universities often fall between the age range of 20 to 25 years.

This study further focused on analysing the demographic factors of the lecturers, considering education, gender, rank, age, and teaching experience.

Table 2: Education, gender, rank, age, and teaching experience

Variable	Responses	f	%
Educational Level	PhD	1	3.2
	Masters	30	96.8
Gender	Male	2	6.5
	Female	29	93.5
Rank	Assistant Lecturer	18	58
	Lecturer	9	29
	Senior Lecture	4	12.9
Age	35-40	10	32
	41-45	10	32
	46-50	6	19
	50 years and above	5	16
Experience	1-4 years	16	51.6
	5-8 years	9	29
	9 years and above	6	19

Table 2. The findings indicate that a significant majority of individuals, namely 98.8%, possess a master's degree. Furthermore, a substantial

proportion of the sample, around 93.5%, identify as female. In terms of occupation, 58% of the participants have positions as assistant lecturers. It

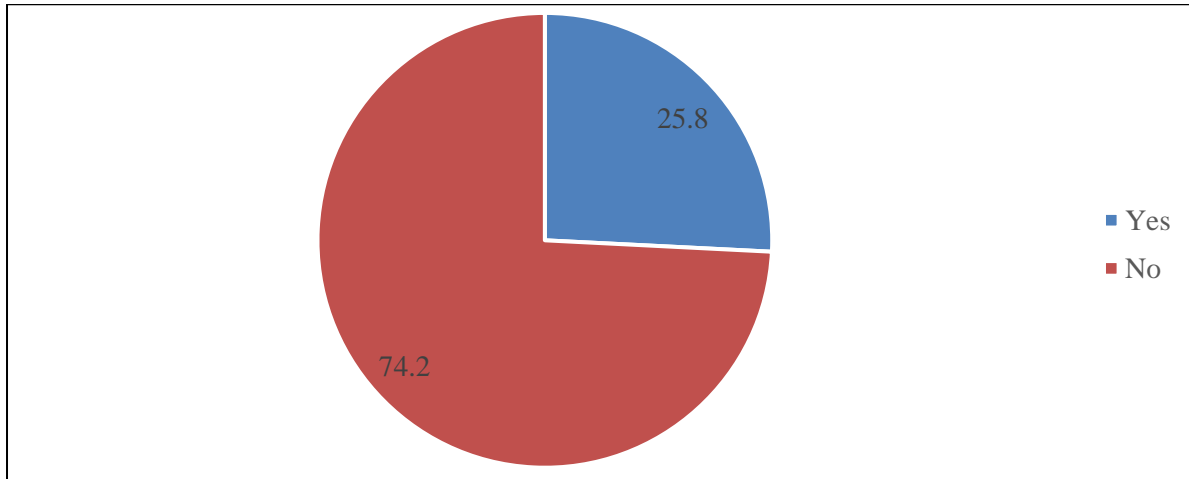
is noteworthy that a majority of the respondents fall within the age range of 35 to 45 years. Around 64% and 51.6% of individuals have engaged in the instruction of millinery art for a duration ranging from one to four years. Furthermore, around 19% of individuals possess a teaching experience of nine years or more in the field of millinery art. The individuals' experiences contribute valuable insights towards the acquisition of millinery art

skills and can give good accounts. The research also examines the proficiency lecturers in the field of millinery art, as seen in Figure 4.1.

Professional Training of Lecturers in Millinery Art

Figure 1 summarises the industrial/professional training received by the lecturers in millinery art in the Technical Universities.

Figure 1: Lecturers/instructors' industrial/professional training



According to the result obtained in Figure 1, it was found that a majority of 74.2% (n=23) of the lecturers had not received any industrial training. Only 25.8% (n=8) of them had received industrial training in millinery art. As noted by Djatmika (2023), competent lecturers are crucial in facilitating effective skill and knowledge acquisition of their students through the innovative application of both hard and soft skills. This can only be achieved in the acquisition of millinery art skills if the lecturers themselves have acquired professional/industrial skills in millinery art.

Some of the reasons from the lectures include the following: -

I have not received any training from the industry due to the high cost of training. The training is sometimes residential and expensive. You cannot attend if you don't have good support (14 lecturers)

No, the department needs to help us acquire current skills so that we can do better. We

need to update our skills in the art of millinery if we are to become effective lecturers (4 lecturers)

We need qualified lecturers because the school is not ready to help us get training to effectively teach millinery, so we always focus on the bead-making aspect of the curriculum (3 lecturers)

We have not participated in any millinery skill development workshop. The main problem is the lack of support from the institution to help us get the skills (lecturers)

These comments from the lecturers in millinery art have a serious implication for millinery art skills acquisition in the fashion departments of technical universities. Vibulphol (2016) states that most students possess a high level of motivation and interest in pursuing academic programs. However, unanticipated challenges in the educational environment impede learners from achieving their full potential in their academic pursuits.

Interest in Higher National Diploma Fashion Design Students in Millinery Art

Assessing the interest of the students in acquiring millinery arts skills. The analysis presents the data on the students' broad interest in enrolling in the fashion design programme at the technical universities *Table 3*. This was built around identifying the reason students enrolled for the fashion design programme in the technical universities.

The second section specifically explored their interests in millinery skills acquisition by finding

out the fashion design skills they practise most during their spare time. *Table 4*, while *Table 5* presents a Chi-Square test of independence to assess the relationship between the skill practised and the institutions of the students. This finding is important because it helped the study to identify specific skills of interest of the students. The third stage involved analyses of lecturers' views on students' interest in millinery arts skills (*Table 6*) and the student's fundamental skills in hand stitching skills in millinery arts (*Tables 7 & 8*).

Table 3: Reasons the students enrolled in the fashion design programme at the technical universities

Interested in	Interested	Fairly Interested	Not Interested
Certificate	247 (99.2)	2 (0.8)	0 (0)
Garment Construction	242 (97.2)	6 (2.4)	1 (0.4)
Garment Designing	239 (96.0)	8 (3.2)	2 (0.8)
Hat making	182 (82.1)	21(56)	9 (3.6)
Accessory development	205 (82.3)	32(12.9)	12 (4.8)
Modelling	80 (32.1)	131(52.6)	38 (15.2)
Pattern-making	207 (83.2)	28 (11.2)	14 (5.6)
Designing garments with accessories	214 (86.0)	24 (9.6)	13 (4.4)
Hairdressing and cosmetology	34 (13.6)	80 (32.1)	135 (54.2)

Source: Study Data 2022

According to *Table 4*, almost all students are interested in pursuing a career in the fashion industry, and their goals tend to centre on obtaining a certificate, developing expertise in garment construction, designing, hat making, accessory development, modelling, pattern making, or designing garment accessories, while only a small percentage are drawn to hairdressing and cosmetics. Since these students have expressed an interest in learning about hat-making and accessory design, it follows that they would benefit greatly from an environment conducive to this pursuit. Students who focus on what they find interesting are more likely to put in the time and energy required to develop the skills necessary to succeed, as stated (Gyansah & Guantai, 2018). Due to their interest, they will persevere in the skill acquisition process to acquire the millinery art skills.

Because of their desire to learn both hat-making and accessory-design techniques, these students

have the potential to become highly skilled millinery artists given the right teaching environment. Students who focus on what they find interesting are more likely to put in the time and energy required to develop the skills necessary to succeed, as stated (Gyansah & Guantai, 2018).

The following is a summary of the analysis of the skills that students practice in their free time to determine their interest in millinery arts skills acquisition. *Table 4* presents the cumulative results of the analysis, which show that students practised a variety of skills, such as sketching designs, decorating, manipulating fabrics, draping to make fascinators, pattern drafting, sewing for customers, hand sewing to create designs, and hair styling. Among these, surfing the internet for new fashion trends was the most commonly practised skill, while hair styling with headdresses, producing fascinators to sell, and blocking to make hats were the least practised skills. *Table 3*

shows that 81.1% of the students enrolled in the fashion design program because they were interested in hat-making, while 86% were interested in designing garments with accessories. However, it is surprising to note that in *Table 4*, only 10.4% of the students practice blocking skills to make hats often. Interestingly, 74.2% of the

students practice draping to make fascinators and only 25.9% practice fabric manipulation to make hairdressers. This lack of balanced practice can be attributed to the challenges faced by learners in the educational environment that hinder optimal results in their learning endeavours (Vibulphol, 2016).

Table 4: Skills Fashion Design Students Practice most at their Spare time (interest inventory)

Variables on Skill Prerequisites	Often	Undecided	Rarely
Sketching design	179 (71.1)	30 (12.0)	40 (16.1)
Decorations	162 (65.0)	48 (19.3)	39 (15.7)
Manipulating fabrics to create hairdressers	67 (25.9)	128 (51.4)	128 (51.4)
Draping to make a fascinator	157 (74.3)	51 (20.5)	36 (14.5)
Pattern drafting	185 (74.3)	40 (16.1)	24 (9.6)
Sewing with machine for customers	182 (76.6)	50 (20.1)	17 (6.8)
Hand sewing to create a design	136 (54.6)	60 (24.1)	53 (21.3)
Hair styling with headdresses	26 (10.4)	21 (8.4)	202 (81.1)
Produce fascinators to sell	26 (10.4)	40 (16.1)	40 (16.1)
Blocking to make hats	26 (10.4)	44 (17.7)	44 (17.7)
Beading	173 (69.5)	24 (9.6)	24 (9.6)
Modelling designs to check for fit	136 (54.6)	75 (30.1)	72 (28.9)
Reading fashion-related books	207 (83.2)	31 (12.4)	11 (12.4)
Surfing the internet for new fashion trends	245 (98.4)	3 (1.2)	1 (0.4)

Source: Study Data

Table 5 presents the results of a Chi-Square test of independence that was conducted to assess the relationship between the skills practised and the institutions where the students are enrolled. The study found a significant relationship between the skills practised and the institution of the

respondents, which means that the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, the institution attended by the student significantly influences the fashion design skills that they practice during their free time. The results are presented as follows: level of significance (α) = 0.05.

Table 5: Chi-square test of independence on fashion design skills students practised and the institution

Skills Practiced	Test statistics		Institutions Practising Degree					
	Chi.sq.	p	Sig.	A	B	C	D	E
Sketching design	131.52			3	3	2	2	1
Decorations	135.42			3	3	2	2	1
Manipulation of fabrics to create headdresses	108.89			2	1	1	1	1
Draping to make fascinators	118.21			1	1	1	1	1
Pattern drafting	73.64			3	3	3	3	3
Sewing with machine	106.17			3	3	3	3	3
Hand sewing to create design	181.07			3	3	1	2	1
Hair styling	101.92	0.000	0.05	2	1	1	1	1
Producing Fascinators to sell	128.40			2	1	1	1	1
Blocking to make hats	110.57			1	1	1	1	1
Beading	174.24			3	3	3	3	1
Modelling design to check for fit	146.0			3	3	3	3	1
Surfing on the internet for new fashion trends	61.08			3	3	3	3	2

Keys: 3 = Well Practised, 2 = Practised, 1 = Rarely Practised

The students from institutions A, B, C, D, and E demonstrated a high level of proficiency in pattern drawing and machine sewing. Nevertheless, the findings indicate that at Institution E, there is a limited frequency of engagement in skills other than machine sewing, pattern drawing, and online fashion trend research.

The utilisation of blocking techniques for hat-making and draping techniques for fascinator-making is hardly observed among the five universities. In addition to institution A, students from institutions B, C, and D exhibit little engagement in the practical application of fabric manipulation techniques to craft headdresses and produce fascinators for commercial purposes. In general, the students at Technical Universities have demonstrated a limited degree of enthusiasm for engaging in the practice of millinery art skills. Additionally, it has been observed that the

majority of students at Institution E rarely engage in the practical application of these skills.

The table presents a summary of the distribution of each variable, namely the skills practised, which were utilised to assess the statistical significance of the findings. The findings of the study revealed that the Chi-Square values provided evidence of a statistically significant relationship between the educational institutions attended by the students and their level of interest in the skills they engage in. The research conducted yielded a p-value of 0.000, which is below the significance level of 0.05 for all variables. Consequently, the null hypothesis is rejected based on these findings. Hence, a notable correlation exists between the skills that students engage in and the fashion design programme in the technical universities A, B, C, D, and E.

Table 3: Lecturers’ views on students’ interest in acquiring millinery art skills

Specific Interest Areas	High	Undecided	Low	Total
Hand Sewing	27 (87.1)	4 (12.9)	0 (00)	31(100)
Designing garments with headdresses	29 (93.5)	0 (00)	2 (6.5)	31 (100)
Styling with headdresses	29 (93.5)	0 (00)	2 (6.5)	31 (100)

Source: Study Data

The findings of lecturers’ perspectives on students’ interest in the field of millinery art are outlined in *Table 7*. This discovery proved significant in elucidating the motivational variables that contribute to students’ acquisition of millinery art skills. The findings reveal that a significant majority of lecturers, namely 87.1% (n = 27), reported that their pupils possess proficient hand-stitching abilities. Lomax & Skinner (2017) indicated that the ability of trainees in millinery to hand-stitch excellently facilitates effective skill acquisition. The bulk of the teachers also expressed that their students had a keen interest in

incorporating headdresses into their project designs. This suggests that the students in question possess a keen interest in developing their proficiency in the art of millinery, as they demonstrate a desire to enhance their designs through the use of headdresses. However, the result in *Table 4* reported that most of the students do not practise hat-making, fabric manipulation and fascinator-making during their free time to perfect their skills in millinery art even though they enrolled in the fashion design programme because they were interested in millinery art.

Table 4: Students' Fundamental Skills in Hand Stitching

Types of stitches	Good	Fairly Good	Poor
Back stitches	219 (88.0)	20 (8.0)	10 (4.0)
Double stitches	213 (85.5)	22 (8.8)	14 (5.6)
Blanket or wire stitch	161 (64.6)	39 (15.7)	49 (19.7)
Stab stitches	135 (55.2)	36 (14.5)	78 (33.3)
Cross stitch	174 (69.8)	29 (11.6)	46 (18.5)
Invisible felt stitch	101 (40.5)	68 (27.3)	80 (32.1)
Angle or diagonal stitch	133 (53.4)	51 (20.5)	65 (26.1)
Slip stitch	108 (43.3)	62 (24.9)	79 (31.7)

Source: Study Data 2021

The cumulative results of the descriptive analyses of particular hand-stitching abilities in millinery art are presented in *Table 8*. This table aims to assess the proficiency of students in assembling various components of millinery products, including the crown, brim, and decorations. In addition to back stitches (88% n = 219) and double stitches (85.5% n = 213), which were identified by the majority of students as abilities in which they possess strong proficiency, it is evident that their skill levels are suboptimal in the majority of other hand stitching techniques required. The inference arises that a majority of fashion design students engage in the application of adhesive substances throughout the process of assembling various components of millinery items. According to Fowler (2021), a fundamental talent that couture designers should possess is the art of hand stitching. The act of manually stitching your patterns will distinguish your work from the mass-produced imports. The students' lack of proficiency in hand stitching is a constraint since it hinders their ability to embellish their outfits and fully express their design sensibilities via their creations.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the requirements for learning millinery art in fashion design programs offered by technical universities in Ghana. The study reveals that there are challenges in acquiring millinery skills, and a primary concern is the lack of sustained interest in millinery art among HND fashion design students after their enrolment in the fashion design program.

The study shows that 82.1% of students who enrol in fashion design programs at technical universities in Ghana express an interest in hat-making. However, the majority of these students do not practise hat-making after receiving instruction. Only 10.4% of students continue practising hat-making skills in their free time. This aligns with Lyons' (2012) assertion that effective teaching skills are crucial for facilitating learners' acquisition of practical skills.

The study suggests that HND fashion design students in Ghanaian Technical Universities exhibit an interest in millinery art before enrolling in the fashion design program, but their interest significantly diminishes after enrollment. Further investigation is necessary to address the challenges at hand. The student's proficiency in hand stitching techniques was only slightly above average. The lecturers in millinery art observed that the students (*Table 4.6*) demonstrated a tendency to focus more on designing and styling their garments with accessories, while their proficiency in hand stitching was lacking. Based on Figure 1, it was found that 74.2% of the lecturers expressed that their skills in millinery art do not meet the requirements of the industry. Therefore, they believe that acquiring professional training in the field is essential for them to sustain and develop the student's interest and perform better in their duties. Moreover, achieving competency-based learning and teaching can only be possible through a well-planned curriculum, which can be implemented by those who have a mastery of the content.

Recommendations

The fashion design departments must bring the lack of professional skills in millinery art to the attention of management at technical universities. This will enable lecturers to receive the necessary support to improve their teaching and sustain the interest of Fashion Design students.

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