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An Analysis of the Fashion and Apparel Industry Perception on Kenyan University Undergraduate Fashion and Apparel Design Curriculum in Skill Training for the Industry

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According to Apollo *et al.* (2007), curriculum refers to content and it is what facilitates education. Industrial attachment is a curriculum content and it strengthens the practical training relevant to employment (Adipo, 2007). The success of an education system depends on the nature of the curriculum (courses undertaken in an educational programme). Skillfast (2005) notes that higher education courses lacked in-depth development in technical competency required to enable companies to compete in the global fashion markets. Yang *et al*. (2005) have studied competencies for industrial designers in the UK and notes that design education needed to be reviewed and updated in order to keep up with technological advances. Feather (1996) argues that higher education needs to critically evaluate the fashion design courses offered in the United States (US) and make necessary changes in curricular to strengthen the position of fashion design programs hence keep them viable. Cushman *et al.*'s (2002) study in the US has further found that there was a discrepancy between the opinion of apparel industry and the fashion academy concerning what is important in the apparel design curricula. Eskandari *et al*. (2007) suggest that it is necessary to review the industrial engineering undergraduate curriculum across US to ensure that students acquired attributes that can help them be successful in their careers in the new century. Thailand firms, including FTAs, were operating below full capacity due to skill shortages; for instance, in almost half of their firms, IT skills were very poor (Brimble & Doner, 2007).

Ikiara and Ndirangu (2004) observe that the mainstream academic institutions offering courses in the field of fashion and apparel design (FAD) have not adequately catered for the industry. An assessment of manpower utilization in Kenyan industries by the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) (Republic of Kenya, 1996) has revealed that technical graduates had no hands-on experience, had poor work attitudes and were inflexible. The study also reports that due to little co-ordination between industries and universities, industrial attachments were poorly planned and supervised. A report by the United Nations and the DIT has further indicated that Kenyan universities' training lacked a link to the industries; most employers spent up to two years retraining their recruits to equip them with skills (Siringi, 2005). Riechi (2010) recommends that the Kenyan government, and other stakeholders, be involved in the process of reviewing and re-aligning the curriculum for each degree course offered at the public universities.

Kenya's Vision 2030 identifies human resource development as a key foundation for national socio-economic transformation. To strengthen the linkages between training and research institutions and the industry, hence promote demand driven training that is responsive to industry requirements, the human resource sub-sector has recognized the need to review industrial training curricula and syllabi in education and training institutions so as to align them to the requirements of the industry and keep them in tandem with technological and other changes in the world (Government of Kenya, 2010). Thuo (2005) suggests carrying out studies to address university education and training for industrialization and economic development in order to enhance the competence of university graduates in Kenyan industries. Bosibori (2000) proposes a study to evaluate the effectiveness of fashion and apparel design programmes offered at training institutions and their relevance to the fashion and apparel industry. The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to assess the Kenyan FA industry views on the Kenyan UUGFAD curriculum. The paper analyses the FA industry's (FAD graduates and their employers) perception on the Kenyan university undergraduate fashion and apparel design (UUGFAD) curriculum used in skill training for the FA industry. It further discusses the challenges to the UFAD curriculum and the respondents' views on areas that need to be improved so that the UUGFAD curriculum can better meet the manpower needs in the skill training for the FA industry.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted at apparel design firms that have employed Kenyan university fashion and apparel design graduates (those employed in fashion designing, pattern making, garment assembly, quality control and fashion merchandising and/or retailing) across Kenya from firms/industries, including business establishments that take care of all aspects of apparel from designing garments to selling finished products to the retail trade, in Kisumu, Nakuru, Mombasa, Eldoret, Athi River and Nairobi cities. Fifty-four (54) graduates of fashion and apparel design (who were in the fashion/apparel design job market and graduated within the last five years from the time of data collection) and 24 employers were selected through snowball sampling. Questionnaires (structured and unstructured) were then administered to the graduates of university FAD and their employers/supervisors. Qualitative data was coded according to emerging patterns and then categorized and explained under themes while quantitative data was statistically analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

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RESULTS

University Graduates' (UFADGs) Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum

The UFADGs gave their views on the relevance of the UUGFAD curriculum to their current jobs in the FA industry, strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and their proposed areas that the curriculum should cover.

UFADGs' Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum's Relevance to their Current Positions

According to 48(89%) of the graduates, the UUGFAD curriculum was relevant as it had a broad coverage of all areas in fashion design. The UUGFAD curriculum covered most areas but lacked deeper knowledge of the areas and just gave an insight to the FA industry hence only laid them a basic foundation to pursue a career. All areas covered in the FAD can therefore help a designer solve everyday design challenges.

Other UFADGs felt that some areas in the UUGFAD curriculum gave them a good foundation that enabled them to execute their careers. Such areas included CAD, marketing, management and fine art. Other graduates argued that most of what the current job requires was not covered in the UUGFAD curriculum; they felt that the university UUGFAD training was not enough hence one needed an in depth training in order to fit in a job. The main reason for irrelevance of their FAD training was that the UUGFAD curriculum was too theoretical. The UUGFAD curriculum had a theoretical idea but not practical.

UFADGs' Perception on Strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD Curriculum

The strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD curriculum, from the graduates' perceptions, were established by asking them to indicate the areas that they felt were strong and weak in the curriculum. The strong areas, according to some graduates, included basic training in all areas, management skills as given by 31(57%) respondents, quality control in garment workmanship by 17(31%) and fashion merchandising by 8(15%). Other areas mentioned included advertising and marketing, especially modern marketing skills in relation to changing fashion trends, fashion design and fashion illustration.

Table 1: UFADGs' Perception on Strong Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Strong Areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic training in all areas	47	87
Management	31	57
Quality Control	17	31
Fashion Merchandising	8	15

*Multiple response were allowed

Weak areas in the university FAD programmes: according to 48(89%) of the UFADGs, there was too much theory and less practical training that would impart hands-on skills, especially in areas such as apparel construction; irrelevance of CAD software used to fashion design and lack of CAM software, 40(74%); lack of specialization was indicated by 39(72%); inadequate industrial exposure by 34(63%) and old technology by 32(59%).

Table 2: UFADGs' Perception on Weak Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Weak areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate practical skills	48	89
Lack of essential learning facilities	45	83
Poor CAD/CAM experience	40	74
In adequate industrial exposure	34	63
Lack of specialization	39	72
Old technology	32	59

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Graduates' Suggestions on Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

According to the UFADGs, the starting point in curriculum development for UUFADPs should be an overview of what the industry has to offer from a current point of view, and not just local but also from international or developed countries perspective. The UFADGs suggested that all areas should be covered but at certain level of study, specialization could be introduced on areas that a student is more interested and is able to perform better. According to most UFADGs, the UUGFAD curriculum should cover all areas involving clothing production – from fabric creation to the time the consumer is wearing the garment – how and what to produce, areas that enhance creativity like fine art, fashion illustration and design, pattern creation (including freehand cutting), garment production processes, fashion marketing, graphic design, fabric selection, fabric use and care and quality control in the apparel industry.

Table 3: UFADGs' Suggestions on the Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

Areas	f	%
Fabric (construction, care and use)	28	52
Art and design	18	33
Fashion illustration	21	39
Pattern Creation (drafting, freehand pattern cutting)	28	52
Garment construction	35	65
Fashion marketing	26	48
New Computer Technology (CAD and CAM)	38	70
Entrepreneurship	36	65
Business Management	32	59
Communication skills	7	13
Fashion Shows/ Exhibition and Displays	14	26
Fashion and Media	6	11

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The UFADGs gave their views on the relevance of the UUGFAD curriculum to their current jobs in the FA industry, strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and their proposed areas that the curriculum should cover.

UFADGs' Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum's Relevance to their Current Positions

According to 48(89%) of the graduates, the UUGFAD curriculum was relevant as it had a broad coverage of all areas in fashion design. The UUGFAD curriculum covered most areas but lacked deeper knowledge of the areas and just gave an insight to the FA industry hence only laid them a basic foundation to pursue a career. All areas covered in the FAD can therefore help a designer solve everyday design challenges.

Other UFADGs felt that some areas in the UUGFAD curriculum gave them a good foundation that enabled them to execute their careers. Such areas included CAD, marketing, management and fine art. Other graduates argued that most of what the current job requires was not covered in the UUGFAD curriculum; they felt that the university UUGFAD training was not enough hence one needed an in depth training in order to fit in a job. The main reason for irrelevance of their FAD training was that the UUGFAD curriculum was too theoretical. The UUGFAD curriculum had a theoretical idea but not practical.

UFADGs' Perception on Strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD Curriculum

The strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD curriculum, from the graduates' perceptions, were established by asking them to indicate the areas that they felt were strong and weak in the curriculum. The strong areas, according to some graduates, included basic training in all areas, management skills as given by 31(57%) respondents, quality control in garment workmanship by 17(31%) and fashion merchandising by 8(15%). Other areas mentioned included advertising and marketing, especially modern marketing skills in relation to changing fashion trends, fashion design and fashion illustration.

Table 1: UFADGs' Perception on Strong Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Strong Areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic training in all areas	47	87
Management	31	57
Quality Control	17	31
Fashion Merchandising	8	15

*Multiple response were allowed

Weak areas in the university FAD programmes: according to 48(89%) of the UFADGs, there was too much theory and less practical training that would impart hands-on skills, especially in areas such as apparel construction; irrelevance of CAD software used to fashion design and lack of CAM software, 40(74%); lack of specialization was indicated by 39(72%); inadequate industrial exposure by 34(63%) and old technology by 32(59%).

Table 2: UFADGs' Perception on Weak Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Weak areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate practical skills	48	89
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Graduates' Suggestions on Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

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Table 3: UFADGs' Suggestions on the Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

Areas	f	%
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Other UFADGs felt that some areas in the UUGFAD curriculum gave them a good foundation that enabled them to execute their careers. Such areas included CAD, marketing, management and fine art. Other graduates argued that most of what the current job requires was not covered in the UUGFAD curriculum; they felt that the university UUGFAD training was not enough hence one needed an in depth training in order to fit in a job. The main reason for irrelevance of their FAD training was that the UUGFAD curriculum was too theoretical. The UUGFAD curriculum had a theoretical idea but not practical.

UFADGs' Perception on Strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD Curriculum

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Table 1: UFADGs' Perception on Strong Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Strong Areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic training in all areas	47	87
Management	31	57
Quality Control	17	31
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Weak areas in the university FAD programmes: according to 48(89%) of the UFADGs, there was too much theory and less practical training that would impart hands-on skills, especially in areas such as apparel construction; irrelevance of CAD software used to fashion design and lack of CAM software, 40(74%); lack of specialization was indicated by 39(72%); inadequate industrial exposure by 34(63%) and old technology by 32(59%).

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Areas	f	%
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Other UFADGs felt that some areas in the UUGFAD curriculum gave them a good foundation that enabled them to execute their careers. Such areas included CAD, marketing, management and fine art. Other graduates argued that most of what the current job requires was not covered in the UUGFAD curriculum; they felt that the university UUGFAD training was not enough hence one needed an in depth training in order to fit in a job. The main reason for irrelevance of their FAD training was that the UUGFAD curriculum was too theoretical. The UUGFAD curriculum had a theoretical idea but not practical.

UFADGs' Perception on Strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD Curriculum

The strengths and weaknesses of UUGFAD curriculum, from the graduates' perceptions, were established by asking them to indicate the areas that they felt were strong and weak in the curriculum. The strong areas, according to some graduates, included basic training in all areas, management skills as given by 31(57%) respondents, quality control in garment workmanship by 17(31%) and fashion merchandising by 8(15%). Other areas mentioned included advertising and marketing, especially modern marketing skills in relation to changing fashion trends, fashion design and fashion illustration.

Table 1: UFADGs' Perception on Strong Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Strong Areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Basic training in all areas	47	87
Management	31	57
Quality Control	17	31
Fashion Merchandising	8	15

*Multiple response were allowed

Weak areas in the university FAD programmes: according to 48(89%) of the UFADGs, there was too much theory and less practical training that would impart hands-on skills, especially in areas such as apparel construction; irrelevance of CAD software used to fashion design and lack of CAM software, 40(74%); lack of specialization was indicated by 39(72%); inadequate industrial exposure by 34(63%) and old technology by 32(59%).

Table 2: UFADGs' Perception on Weak Areas in the UUGFAD Curriculum

Weak areas	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Inadequate practical skills	48	89
Lack of essential learning facilities	45	83
Poor CAD/CAM experience	40	74
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Graduates' Suggestions on Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

According to the UFADGs, the starting point in curriculum development for UUFADPs should be an overview of what the industry has to offer from a current point of view, and not just local but also from international or developed countries perspective. The UFADGs suggested that all areas should be covered but at certain level of study, specialization could be introduced on areas that a student is more interested and is able to perform better. According to most UFADGs, the UUGFAD curriculum should cover all areas involving clothing production – from fabric creation to the time the consumer is wearing the garment – how and what to produce, areas that enhance creativity like fine art, fashion illustration and design, pattern creation (including freehand cutting), garment production processes, fashion marketing, graphic design, fabric selection, fabric use and care and quality control in the apparel industry.

Table 3: UFADGs' Suggestions on the Areas that UUGFAD Curriculum Should Cover

Areas	f	%
Fabric (construction, care and use)	28	52
Art and design	18	33
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The curriculum, as suggested by the UFADGs, should encompass new computer technology in the fashion industry production, with relevant CAD and CAM that should be taught practically. The inclusion

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University Graduates' (UFADGs) Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum

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of more business and market-oriented courses such as product sales and marketing, packaging, branding, advertising and detailed entrepreneurship and project management was a great concern to many UFADGs. Graduates from universities where interior designing was not incorporated suggested that some units in interior design could be included. Other areas that needed to be improved as suggested by UFADGs included embroidery, accessory making and beadwork, free-hand cutting techniques, intensive design courses which incorporate fine art courses to boost creativity and design illustration. Exhibition and display design, communication skills, event planning and fashion in the media were also suggested. Fashion shows and exhibitions were proposed as part of the UUGFAD curriculum. Almost all UFAD courses, according to UFADGs, should be practical with proper guidance from the lecturers/technicians but not left to the student's discretion, because the job market needed graduates with hands on experience. Relevant machinery and materials were particularly crucial in learning these courses, hence the need to improve on the teaching aids such as mannequins and dummies.

In the view of the UFADGs, exposure of the students to current fashion trends was important, as it would give them a chance to be creative; for example, the departments can have exchange programmes with other universities both locally and abroad. FAD departments should also hold frequent fashion shows, exhibitions and workshops at the university to be attended and participated by students. Class fashion competitions could also be organized and prizes awarded to winners. Having industrial attachments every year at different setting each year may also give the UUFADSs more exposure to the FA industry. Incorporating fashion in the media as proposed by the UFADGs would also expose FAD students to the FA industry.

Employers' (EUFADGs) Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum

The EUFADGS gave their views with respect to whether they were involved in the UUGFAD curriculum development, the relevance the curriculum to the FA industry, weak areas in the curriculum and their suggestions on how to improve the curriculum.

EUFADGs' Involvement in UUGFAD Curriculum Development

Table 4 below shows that 22(92%) of the EUFADGs said they were not involved in university FAD curriculum development. The EUFADGs noted that the FAD departments should involve them in designing their curricula because the employers knew the actual needs of the FA industry and the challenges involved. These FA industry needs would then be incorporated in the UFAD curriculum.

Table 4: EUFADGs Involvement in the UUFAD Curriculum Development

Involved	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	2	92
No	22	8
Total	24	100

The involvement of EUFADGs in designing the UUFAD curriculum according to the employers would enable the FA industry to give feedback on the current industry status as far as skills required for their employees in the fashion industry are concerned. The EUFADGs reiterated that the UFAD departments should also involve the FA industry to give them practical market situations and effective management of enterprises. According to the EUFADGs, the industry has a better understanding of the current fashion trends in terms of consumer preference and, therefore, they can show these trends to UFAD departments. The media too should be involved as far as fashion and media is concerned, in order to understand what is required in dressing the artists as per the relevant media productions.

Relevance of UUGFADPs as Perceived by EUFADGs

The relevance or of UUGFAD curriculum to the FA industry as perceived by the EUFADGs shows that 7(29%) of the EUFADGs agreed that the UFAD curriculum was relevant to the apparel industry in the 21st century, 7(29%) did not agree while 10(41%) said the curriculum would be relevant if a few areas were improved. Most EUFADGs perceived the degree fashion graduates to have less practical skills compared to diploma fashion graduates who were perceived to be more competent in technical skills. The EUFADGs further noted that the UFADGs had wider knowledge and lacked specialization implying that the UUFAD curriculum is too general. The EUFADGs identified the following areas as weak in the university UUGFAD curriculum: Lacked practical training, 20(83%), in apparel construction and market-relevant selling strategies and current market trends. Skills in some areas such as free hand cutting and garment construction were perceived to be insufficient.

EUFADGs' Suggestions on Areas to Improve in UUGFAD Curriculum

Table 5 shows suggestions by EUFADGs on areas that needed to be improved in the UUGFADPs.

Table 5: EUFADGs' Suggestions on Areas to Improve in UUGFAD Curriculum

Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Practicals	20	83
More industrial exposure	18	75
More business related courses	16	67
Modern machines and IT	15	63
Creativity	10	42
Incorporate Media in costume	2	8

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Employers' (EUFADGs) Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum

The EUFADGS gave their views with respect to whether they were involved in the UUGFAD curriculum development, the relevance the curriculum to the FA industry, weak areas in the curriculum and their suggestions on how to improve the curriculum.

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Table 4 below shows that 22(92%) of the EUFADGs said they were not involved in university FAD curriculum development. The EUFADGs noted that the FAD departments should involve them in designing their curricula because the employers knew the actual needs of the FA industry and the challenges involved. These FA industry needs would then be incorporated in the UFAD curriculum.

Table 4: EUFADGs Involvement in the UUFAD Curriculum Development

Involved	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	2	92
No	22	8
Total	24	100

The involvement of EUFADGs in designing the UUFAD curriculum according to the employers would enable the FA industry to give feedback on the current industry status as far as skills required for their employees in the fashion industry are concerned. The EUFADGs reiterated that the UFAD departments should also involve the FA industry to give them practical market situations and effective management of enterprises. According to the EUFADGs, the industry has a better understanding of the current fashion trends in terms of consumer preference and, therefore, they can show these trends to UFAD departments. The media too should be involved as far as fashion and media is concerned, in order to understand what is required in dressing the artists as per the relevant media productions.

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Involved	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	2	92
No	22	8
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The relevance or of UUGFAD curriculum to the FA industry as perceived by the EUFADGs shows that 7(29%) of the EUFADGs agreed that the UFAD curriculum was relevant to the apparel industry in the 21st century, 7(29%) did not agree while 10(41%) said the curriculum would be relevant if a few areas were improved. Most EUFADGs perceived the degree fashion graduates to have less practical skills compared to diploma fashion graduates who were perceived to be more competent in technical skills. The EUFADGs further noted that the UFADGs had wider knowledge and lacked specialization implying that the UUFAD curriculum is too general. The EUFADGs identified the following areas as weak in the university UUGFAD curriculum: Lacked practical training, 20(83%), in apparel construction and market-relevant selling strategies and current market trends. Skills in some areas such as free hand cutting and garment construction were perceived to be insufficient.

EUFADGs' Suggestions on Areas to Improve in UUGFAD Curriculum

Table 5 shows suggestions by EUFADGs on areas that needed to be improved in the UUGFADPs.

Table 5: EUFADGs' Suggestions on Areas to Improve in UUGFAD Curriculum

Area	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Practicals	20	83
More industrial exposure	18	75
More business related courses	16	67
Modern machines and IT	15	63
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of more business and market-oriented courses such as product sales and marketing, packaging, branding, advertising and detailed entrepreneurship and project management was a great concern to many UFADGs. Graduates from universities where interior designing was not incorporated suggested that some units in interior design could be included. Other areas that needed to be improved as suggested by UFADGs included embroidery, accessory making and beadwork, free-hand cutting techniques, intensive design courses which incorporate fine art courses to boost creativity and design illustration. Exhibition and display design, communication skills, event planning and fashion in the media were also suggested. Fashion shows and exhibitions were proposed as part of the UUGFAD curriculum. Almost all UFAD courses, according to UFADGs, should be practical with proper guidance from the lecturers/technicians but not left to the student's discretion, because the job market needed graduates with hands on experience. Relevant machinery and materials were particularly crucial in learning these courses, hence the need to improve on the teaching aids such as mannequins and dummies.

In the view of the UFADGs, exposure of the students to current fashion trends was important, as it would give them a chance to be creative; for example, the departments can have exchange programmes with other universities both locally and abroad. FAD departments should also hold frequent fashion shows, exhibitions and workshops at the university to be attended and participated by students. Class fashion competitions could also be organized and prizes awarded to winners. Having industrial attachments every year at different setting each year may also give the UUFADSs more exposure to the FA industry. Incorporating fashion in the media as proposed by the UFADGs would also expose FAD students to the FA industry.

Employers' (EUFADGs) Perception of UUGFAD Curriculum

The EUFADGS gave their views with respect to whether they were involved in the UUGFAD curriculum development, the relevance the curriculum to the FA industry, weak areas in the curriculum and their suggestions on how to improve the curriculum.

EUFADGs' Involvement in UUGFAD Curriculum Development

Table 4 below shows that 22(92%) of the EUFADGs said they were not involved in university FAD curriculum development. The EUFADGs noted that the FAD departments should involve them in designing their curricula because the employers knew the actual needs of the FA industry and the challenges involved. These FA industry needs would then be incorporated in the UFAD curriculum.

Table 4: EUFADGs Involvement in the UUFAD Curriculum Development

Involved	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	2	92
No	22	8
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From the views of the EUFADGs, the Kenyan UUGFAD curriculum should improve on practical courses, as suggested by 20(83%) of the employers. Practical courses, particularly fashion illustration and developing good drawings as a way to express a fashion designer's thoughts, portfolio and story-board presentation, should be encouraged. The practical aspect should also be improved in pattern development and cutting of different styles of outfits from fabric and joining them to produce neat garments. Technical skills and details in garment making, freehand cutting techniques, economics in material consumption and speed in garment construction should be polished. According to 18(75%) of the employers, students should be given more exposure to the FA industry and current fashion trends. The UFAD students should also be encouraged to learn more on the global fashion developments through the internet. During the training, students could visit various places and FA industries of interest to learn more about the actual job. The FAD departments as suggested by the EUFADGs should work closely with the FA industry. The FAD students could even be taught in a practical factory set-up in terms of machines, production processes and marketing.

The EUFADGs encouraged the UFAD departments to teach students more of entrepreneurship and business management courses, as noted by 16(67%) of the EUFADGs. Students should be encouraged to market themselves and their products by teaching business management courses such as accounting, marketing, management and consultancy skills. Fifteen (63%) of the EUFADGs suggested that production techniques, for example, use of modern (IT) design tools in design such as CAD which can boost creativity should be improved. More creativity, as cited by 10(42%), among UUFADSs should be encouraged and there was need to incorporate African culture (designs) in UFAD as most designs created by graduates seemed to be western. In the case of costume designing, it was suggested by 2(8%) of the employers that TV fashion set-ups, fashion shows and display designs could be incorporated in the UUGFAD curriculum.

DISCUSSION

The UFADGs and EUFADGs gave their views concerning the UUGFAD curriculum. The respondents' perception on the relevance of the curriculum to the FA industry varied with a larger proportion of UFADGs agreeing that the curriculum was relevant to their positions though challenged by a few issues. Smaller proportion of the employers perceived to be relevant to the FA industry and they mentioned similar challenges as given by the UFADGs. Both sets of respondents' views gave an impression that the UUGFAD curriculum was broad without depth and specialization. The findings from the respondents further imply that the UFAD curriculum was mainly theory-oriented. This agrees with what Kipruto *et al*. (2007) have observed, that the curricular in Kenyan public universities for programmes leading to the award of bachelor's degree in the fields of engineering laid great emphasis on theory and that the inadequacy in practical components had been a weakness that has been pointed out by the private and public employers of the graduates. Adequate creativity may have been impaired by less exposure to the FA industry. Both creativity and practical experience could be enhanced by having more industrial attachment and work integrated learning as proposed. Adipo (2007) opines that industrial attachment being part of curriculum content would strengthen the practical training by providing trainees with an opportunity to acquire and sharpen knowledge, skills and attitude from real work environment.

The findings show that the FA industry is less involved in the UFAD curriculum. This implies that the UUGFAD training hence may not be giving enough relevant skills for the FA industry. The employers felt that the FAD departments should involve them in designing their curricula because the FAD employers know the actual needs of the FA industry and the challenges involved. These industry needs would then be incorporated in the UFAD curriculum. This way the UFAD would be able to give better skill training for the FA industry. Riechi (2010) also recommends that the Kenyan university fashion and apparel curriculum should be developed by all key players in the apparel industry. The curriculum, as proposed by the UFADGs, should encompass new computer technology and more business and market oriented courses such as product sales and marketing, packaging, branding and advertising, detailed entrepreneurship and project management. Less business and entrepreneurship experience in the UUGFAD curriculum implies that the curriculum did not meet the expectations of the graduates because, being an entrepreneurship course, among the factors that motivated candidates to join FAD profession was to be self-employed through business and enterprising in FAD. The finding differs with that of Rao and Joshi (2011) who note that educationists should be cognizant of entrepreneurship requirements of the FAD training since the educators, including universities have an obligation to meet students' expectations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the Kenyan UUGFAD curriculum, the FA industry perceives that the UFAD programmes offers skill training for the FA industries which give basic knowledge in FAD but lacked depth, specialization and adequate practicals. From the study, it is clear that the FA industry is less involved in the development of the UUGFAD curriculum, an

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The UFADGs and EUFADGs gave their views concerning the UUGFAD curriculum. The respondents' perception on the relevance of the curriculum to the FA industry varied with a larger proportion of UFADGs agreeing that the curriculum was relevant to their positions though challenged by a few issues. Smaller proportion of the employers perceived to be relevant to the FA industry and they mentioned similar challenges as given by the UFADGs. Both sets of respondents' views gave an impression that the UUGFAD curriculum was broad without depth and specialization. The findings from the respondents further imply that the UFAD curriculum was mainly theory-oriented. This agrees with what Kipruto *et al*. (2007) have observed, that the curricular in Kenyan public universities for programmes leading to the award of bachelor's degree in the fields of engineering laid great emphasis on theory and that the inadequacy in practical components had been a weakness that has been pointed out by the private and public employers of the graduates. Adequate creativity may have been impaired by less exposure to the FA industry. Both creativity and practical experience could be enhanced by having more industrial attachment and work integrated learning as proposed. Adipo (2007) opines that industrial attachment being part of curriculum content would strengthen the practical training by providing trainees with an opportunity to acquire and sharpen knowledge, skills and attitude from real work environment.

The findings show that the FA industry is less involved in the UFAD curriculum. This implies that the UUGFAD training hence may not be giving enough relevant skills for the FA industry. The employers felt that the FAD departments should involve them in designing their curricula because the FAD employers know the actual needs of the FA industry and the challenges involved. These industry needs would then be incorporated in the UFAD curriculum. This way the UFAD would be able to give better skill training for the FA industry. Riechi (2010) also recommends that the Kenyan university fashion and apparel curriculum should be developed by all key players in the apparel industry. The curriculum, as proposed by the UFADGs, should encompass new computer technology and more business and market oriented courses such as product sales and marketing, packaging, branding and advertising, detailed entrepreneurship and project management. Less business and entrepreneurship experience in the UUGFAD curriculum implies that the curriculum did not meet the expectations of the graduates because, being an entrepreneurship course, among the factors that motivated candidates to join FAD profession was to be self-employed through business and enterprising in FAD. The finding differs with that of Rao and Joshi (2011) who note that educationists should be cognizant of entrepreneurship requirements of the FAD training since the educators, including universities have an obligation to meet students' expectations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the Kenyan UUGFAD curriculum, the FA industry perceives that the UFAD programmes offers skill training for the FA industries which give basic knowledge in FAD but lacked depth, specialization and adequate practicals. From the study, it is clear that the FA industry is less involved in the development of the UUGFAD curriculum, an

From the views of the EUFADGs, the Kenyan UUGFAD curriculum should improve on practical courses, as suggested by 20(83%) of the employers. Practical courses, particularly fashion illustration and developing good drawings as a way to express a fashion designer's thoughts, portfolio and story-board presentation, should be encouraged. The practical aspect should also be improved in pattern development and cutting of different styles of outfits from fabric and joining them to produce neat garments. Technical skills and details in garment making, freehand cutting techniques, economics in material consumption and speed in garment construction should be polished. According to 18(75%) of the employers, students should be given more exposure to the FA industry and current fashion trends. The UFAD students should also be encouraged to learn more on the global fashion developments through the internet. During the training, students could visit various places and FA industries of interest to learn more about the actual job. The FAD departments as suggested by the EUFADGs should work closely with the FA industry. The FAD students could even be taught in a practical factory set-up in terms of machines, production processes and marketing.

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attribute that may interfere with the relevance of the UUGFAD training in skill training for the FA industry. The following challenges in the UUGFAD curriculum have been pointed out: lack of specialization, not updated, inadequate materials and equipment, lack of industrial exposure and too much theory or lack of enough practical/experience in FAD. These challenges thus render the UUGFAD curriculum not relevant enough to the man power needs of the FA industry as perceived by the FA industry (UFAD graduates and their employers). It is thus concluded that for the curriculum to give adequate training for a competitive Kenyan FA industry in the 21st century, the Kenyan UFAD departments must ensure the involvement of FA industry in developing a relevant curriculum and address the given challenges for the required skills to be imparted to UFAD trainees. To make this a reality, the following recommendations are made:

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2. The UUFADSs should be given maximum exposure to the FA industry. First, this can be through at least three industrial attachment sessions, every year from the 2nd to 4th years of study. Second, exposure to the industry can also be ensured through involving the students in fashion events such as fashion shows, fashion exhibitions, and fashion competitions that are jointly organized by the UFAD departments and the FA industry.

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2. The UUFADSs should be given maximum exposure to the FA industry. First, this can be through at least three industrial attachment sessions, every year from the 2nd to 4th years of study. Second, exposure to the industry can also be ensured through involving the students in fashion events such as fashion shows, fashion exhibitions, and fashion competitions that are jointly organized by the UFAD departments and the FA industry.

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