

The Impact of Educational Stakeholders' Attitudes on Students' Academic and Career Interests in Ceramics Within the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana

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Abstract: Educational programmes whether vocational or not have the potential to shape students to be able to give back to their societies. Unfortunately, some attitudes of players of education can affect students so much to dampen their self-efficacy and interest in Ceramics education. This study investigated some educational stakeholders' and their attitudes that can possibly have negative impact on students' academic and career interest in Ceramics within the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana. Three schools offering Ceramics in the metropolis were purposively selected. They consisted of one mixed-gender, one boys-only, and one girls-only schools. The study was exploratory research and adopted the QUAN+Qual mixed-methods triangulation to conduct the investigation. 273 participants, including students, teachers, schools' heads and parents were sampled from the three selected schools. The study's findings revealed that educational stakeholders such as parents, students and their peers, teachers and schools' managers put up behaviours that discourage students' interest in Ceramics. The study found that low employment opportunities in Ceramics is the primary reason why parents, students, and teachers discourage students' academic and career interest in Ceramics. The study also conducted a chi-square to establish whether the age, programme and level in school had any correlation with their believe that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. The results found that the level of students alone to have significant correlation with $p > 0.000$.

Keywords: Academic, attitudes, career, impact of education stakeholders, interest

1. Introduction

Education stakeholders play a major role in the lives of students from their infancy into adult life. Studies have shown that parents, teachers and well-meaning people that come across the academic and career journeys of students have the tendency to offer significant direction for students' programme specializations in school (Azaglo, Oppong and Antwi-Agyei Boateng, 2021). The way people see thing have been to a greater proportion influence their own choices and that of other people closer to them. For example, students of arts are generally branded as academically low-intelligent (Azaglo, Oppong and Antwi-Agyei Boateng, 2021). Whether or not that is true, the majority of Ghanaians are frequently entrapped by this notion. Students who enroll in any of the art programmes may be classified as 'non-sharks,' which has a significant negative impact on art students' self-efficacy. The endemic influence of this notion is undeniably apparent in students' attitudes the senior high schools, where non-art students frequently mock those who pursue art (Pujiyanto and Hidajat, 2019).

It has been discovered that the environment in which a person lives, plus the opportunities people are exposed to, along with individualistic choices, are the primary elements that influence students' career choices (Borchert, 2002; Odewole, 2018). If a student

grows up in an environment where art is undervalued, definitely an overwhelming number of students will not pursue art as a viable programme to study. Interestingly, the majority of people globally, including Ghanaians, are oblivious to the significance role art plays in their daily lives, despite the fact that they use art every day. Amenuke (1995) remarked that the majority of Ghanaians are unwilling to allow their children to get arts education.

However, an art subject like Ceramics is an important component of the world's culture. This is due to the fact that Ceramics are widely utilized and are a part of both our traditional and advanced lives. For example, who in the world does not know or use Ceramic cups, bowls, flower vases or pots, or any of sanitary items such as a water closet, bath, sink, etc.? Microprocessors made of Ceramic materials enable computers to exist. Ceramics components are used to power your wristwatch or wall clock. Consider tiles, which are widely used in homes and commercial buildings around the world especially due to their durability and aesthetic appeal. Because of this, any effort to educate people in Ceramics is rather beneficial. Ceramics education, according to Okonkwo (2014), is the most effective tools a country can utilize to attain self-sufficiency.

Similarly, Odewole (2018) argues that Ceramics is a valuable instrument that may be used to encourage self-sufficiency among the teeming jobless youth. Ceramics, as part of vocational education, promotes knowledge and skill training with the goal of empowering an individual to become active, productive and self-sufficient (Odewole, 2018). Ceramics, according to Okonkwo (2014), is critical for instilling in students the necessary mental and physical capabilities and competencies to enable the individual to contribute his or her quota to national development. Unfortunately, whether due to the Ghanaian general perception of art or other factors, the Ceramics program has not been prioritized as expected in Ghana's pre-tertiary educational institutions. The country has abundance of clay to turn them into useful products to benefit the society, but the human capital is diminishing.

Ghana in times past embarked on an agenda of import substitution industrialization (ISI) to make the nation self-sufficient during the Kwame Nkrumah' government, which saw the birth of state-owned enterprises including Ceramics factories established across the nation with the capacity of producing all forms of Ceramics product for local used, an innovation which later attracted many businessmen to invest in Ceramics. However, Asante-Kyei (2019), explained that the contradictory government agenda resorted to later such as Ghana governments pursuance of the trade liberalization policy as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) by the IMF programme resulted in Economic Recovery Programme (EPR) in the 1983-91 which abrogated the ISI and opened the economy for private investors and importations. Also, dishonest dealings of the state-owned managing directors contributed greatly to having Ceramics businesses becoming sporadic and stagnated. In addition, the proliferation of the imported cheap metal and plastic goods competed and suffocated the activities of Ceramics in the country to the point that today, Ghana is startled with collapsed of local Ceramics companies across the country (Ponimin, 2019).

Nortey and Asiamoaso (2019), showed in their study in which they sampled 500 local potters from the Ashanti and Bono Regions of Ghana, that the craftsmen and women face facing difficulties in selling their pottery products. Their study indicated that many of the potters over the past years have had to abandon their pottery business due to the difficulties they face in selling their products. Ceramics businesses which were once booming in the country are now gasping to for survival. The tragedy of Ceramics trajectory in the country in no uncertain terms has got adverse impact on Ceramics education as far as enrollment in the schools is concerned. But that has not detracted foreigners from investing in Ceramics businesses in Ghana. This is because, despite Ghana's sad experience with Ceramics, it still remains a growing sector but with foreign investors taking the lead. Ceramics as it has been widely known courtesy to the Greece and the Chinese, is globally gaining traction which calls

for a prioritization in all education fronts from the basic to tertiary.

For instance, the Indian and U.S based market research and consulting firm known as Grand View Research, in their 2021 report, it recorded that Ceramics marked for 2020 was valued at USD 247.4 billion. In 2021, the market size was valued at \$ 253.8 billion. From 2021 to 2028, the Ceramics market size is estimated to rise at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.4%. It attributed such growth to the continual increase in residential buildings across the world. The firm also estimated that Ceramics market by the end of 2028 is anticipated to value at \$348.0 billion, which growth the firm argues will be due to a shoot in demands for sanitary ware, bricks, tiles and abrasives. According to the firm, Ceramics is expected to also have a high penetration in the medical industry for bioimplants applications owing to the rising elderly population. It is expected that global demand for ceramic implants is increasing as a result of advancing medical technology and an increase in orthopedic and dental patients.

Ceramics, far from doomed as many may people think, is profitable and will continue to have a stronger future. Perhaps this is why foreign corporations have targeted Ghana in order to capitalize on the country's abundant clay reserves. Wangkang Ghana Ceramic Co., Ltd., a large Ceramic manufacturing company, has established well in Ghana with a daily output capacity of 100,000 square meters of floor and wall tiles (Akinbogun, 2021). In addition, Sentuo Ceramics Ghana which was established in 2019 in Tema at a cost of \$80 million, the company is located on 50 acres of land and has a daily production capacity of 45 million cubic meters, making it the country's largest Ceramics company (sentuogroupgh.com, 2023)

These upturn development in Ceramics productions in the country should have seen Ghana also, taking every opportunity to prioritize and educate more people. However, the case is the opposite as Nortey, Opoku-Amankwa, and Bodjawah (2013), lamented that an overwhelming majority of senior high schools across the country, including the most prestigious ones, do not even offer Ceramics. It appears till date that students are not attracted Ceramics in the senior high schools. There is paucity of data to explain the factors that have contributed to the continuous lack of interest in the academic and career pursuit in Ceramics. This study primarily sought to uncover how education stakeholders' attitude affect students' interest in Ceramics. The stakeholders in this study refers to the people who play roles in students' education (Ponimin, Ponimin, 2021). These include students themselves and their peers, teachers, parents, and school managers whose actions shape students' education in one way or the other. The study did not focus on top stakeholders in education beyond the school level.

2. Method

The study was an exploratory research and adopted the embedded mixed method design (Cresswell, 2012). Pardede (2019) explained that the embedded design "is useful for gaining a broader perspective on the research topic or for studying different groups, or levels, within a single study" (p.235). Methodological triangulation of QUAN+Qual data was collected using predominantly questionnaire and also interviews. 273 participants made up 45 teachers, 217 students, 9 parents and 2 heads of schools sampled from three schools that were offering Ceramics within the Kumasi Metropolis. The three school were KNUST Senior High School (Mixed), Kumasi High School (all-boys) and Yaa Asantewaa Girls Senior High School (all-girls). Purposive, convenience, stratified and quota sampling techniques were all employed to obtain the 273-sample size. The Kumasi Metropolitan District boast of 21 Senior high schools out of which only 6 schools offer Ceramics. The schools were purposively chosen in order to involve all the three types of senior high schools in Ghana if not the world, which is, all-boys, all-girls and mixed-gender schools.

The participant for the study were recruited based on their voluntary acceptance. They

were assured that the research was solely for academic purposes and that their identities were not going to be exposed but kept anonymous. This is a further breakdown of the participant; 2 heads of schools, and 3 parents equally selected from each of the three school. The 217 students were distributed from almost all the programme specializations in the school; 71 from KNUST SHS, 71 from Yaa Asantewaa Girls SHS and 75 from the Kumasi High SHS. As for the 45 teachers, they were sampled 15 each from the three schools and also from most of the programme specializations. Table 1 shows the breakdown of the student and teachers based on the programmes in the school.

Table 1: Sampling of students and teachers from the programmes specialization in the schools

Programme areas	Sample Size	
	Students	Teachers
Visual Art (only Ceramics)	137	5
Visual Art (all others but not Ceramics)	22	6
Science	15	6
Home Economics	10	4
Business	16	4
General Art	17	13
Mathematics	-	7
Total sample size	217	45

Source: Field Survey 2022

After gathering the primary data for the study, SPSS version 24 and excel spreadsheet applications employed to process the primary data obtained. Additionally, descriptive statistical methods such as frequency and percentage were utilized to simplify the information gathered from the participants.

3. Result and Discussion

The participants for the study were requested to respond to some attitudes of stakeholders toward students' academic enrollment into Ceramics. Table 2 provides their responses to the questions.

Table 1: Response to stakeholders' attitudes toward Ceramics enrollment in the schools

Respondents	SA		A		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1. Do parents discourage children from Ceramics?								
Students	111	51	84	39	18	8	4	1.8
Teachers	18	40	19	42	8	18		
Parents	7	78					2	22
School Heads			1	50			1	50

Total (273)	136	50	104	38	26	10	7	3
<i>2. Do peers offer discouragement to their colleagues in Ceramics</i>								
Students	149	69	55	25	11	5	2	1
Teachers	20	44	51	2	44			
Parents	9	100						
School Heads			1	50			1	50
Total (273)	178	62	107	39	55	20	3	1
<i>3. Do teachers (non-Art) discourage students from Ceramics?</i>								
Students	122	56	47	22	24	11	34	16
Teachers	7	15	11	24	18	40	9	20
Parents	5	57					4	44
School Heads			1	50			1	50
Total (273)	134	49	59	22	42	15	48	18
<i>4. Do Schools management give less priority for Ceramic?</i>								
Students	74	34	79	36	45	21	19	9
Teachers	11	24	15	33	17	38	2	4
Parents	7	48					2	22
School Heads			1	50			1	50
Total (273)	92	34	95	34	62	23	24	9
<i>5. Are the Ceramics students serious with Ceramics?</i>								
Students	57	26	80	37	61	28	19	9
Teachers	6	13	28	62	11	24		
Parents	4	44					5	56
School Heads	1	50					1	50
Total (273)	68	25	108	40	72	26	25	9
<i>6. Do parents fear there is low employments in Ceramics</i>								
Students	129	59	69	32	13	6	6	3
Teachers	22	49	17	38	6	13		

Parents	8	89					1	11
Total (271)	159	59	86	32	19	7	7	3
<i>7. Do some Ceramics students discontinue studying Ceramics?</i>								
Students	40	18	83	38	73	34	21	10
Teachers	6	13	19	42	17	38	3	7
Total (262)	46	18	102	39	90	34	24	9

Source: Field Survey 2022

Table 2 has 7 item questions which the respondents for the study who constituted students, teachers, parents and heads of schools responded to. In item 1, the researchers wanted to find out whether parents play discouraging role to their children enrollment into Ceramics. The responses reveals that 136 (50%) of the total participant, strongly agreed, 104 (38%) agreed, whereas only 26 (10%) disagreed and 7 (3%) strongly disagreed that parents discourage their children from Ceramics. In item 2, the researchers were looking for whether or not the peers of student play a role of discouraging their colleagues in Ceramics. The results show that 179 (62%) of all the participants strongly agreed, 107 (39%) agreed, 55 (20%) disagreed and only 3 (1%) strongly disagreed. Item 3 looked at the influence of teachers, especially non-art teacher, whether or not they discourage students from enrolling in Ceramics. With this, 134 (49%) of the participants strongly agreed, 59 (22%) agreed, 42 (15%) disagreed, and 48 (18%) strongly disagreed.

Also, in item 4, the researchers wanted to find whether the participant feel that the schools' managers are neglecting Ceramics in the schools. There were 92 (34%) who strongly agreed, and 95 (34%) agreeing compared to 62 (23%) who disagreed and 25 (9%) strongly disagreeing that school managers give less priority to Ceramics. In item 5, whether or not the Ceramics students were serious with their Ceramics programme was the focus of the question. The results show that 68 (25%) of the respondent strongly agreed compare with the 25 (9%) who strongly disagreed that the Ceramics student are not serious with the programme. Also, there were 108 (40%) agreeing compared with the 72 (26%) who disagreed. With item 6 in the table, the students, teachers, and parents were required to express their views on whether or not they think parents entertain any fear that there is low employment in Ceramics. Their responses put together shows that 159 (59%) of the 271 respondents strongly agreed so compared with the 25 (9%) who strongly did not agree. Also, 86 (32%) of them agreed while 90 (34%) disagreed.

As for the last item, the researchers wanted to find out whether any pressure from the stake holders results in discontinuation of students from Ceramics. Only the students and teachers making up 262 of the total respondents were requested to respond to this query. The results from the students and teachers show that there are some Ceramics students who discontinue their enrollment since 102 (39%) of them agreed compared 90 who disagreed and also 46 (18% strongly agreeing compared with 24 (9%) who strongly disagreed.

The revelation that teachers, predominantly non-art teachers, discourage students from pursuing Ceramics confirms the view expressed by Fusheini (2020) that some well-meaning and intellectual people often give advice that discourages students from studying art. Also, Bandura (2001) social cognitive theory have posited that there is interconnectedness within socio structural systems which inadvertently offer social influences on one another's decisions in life including career choices. Bandura argued that within the sociostructural systems, people

look up to others for help and that people also observe the ones who fare well as compared to those who struggle economically. From this perspective it is highly possible that many parents, together with other well-meaning people including non-art teachers and other professionals, are aware of the collapse of local Ceramics manufacturing businesses and the economic struggles of the craftsmen and women identified in the study by Nortey and Assiamoaso (2019). As such, those stakeholders mount pressures on the students not to study art and for that matter Ceramics. These stakeholders discourage students from academic and career interest in Ceramics on the basis that Ceramics cannot guarantee employment for them after school.

According to Bandura (1986) and Choo, Norsia and Tan (2012), elements including family, friends and other social supports exert powerful influences on people's career decisions. Bandura pointed out that those elements offer shared responsibilities in the form of helpfulness, cooperation and ideas sharing. Congruent to that, the results found in Table 2 show that elements like parents, friends and teachers (non-art teachers) offer strong influence on students' academic and career interest in Ceramics. Shellenbarger (2006) and Aidoo (2018) have argued that because parents are against art education, any interest shown by students to pursue art can be hardly fought. Therefore, the discovery that some Ceramics students discontinue after their enrollment in Ceramics cannot be contentious. It is likely that as students are unable to develop strong self-efficacy, they would give in to external pressures that may be piled on them by any of the education stakeholder especially the parents, which can result in discontinuation from Ceramics in the schools. This is because Bandura (1986) and Schunk (1995) held the view that as the students' self-efficacy is adequately developed, even when they encounter failure, they will not be adversely affected. A Ceramics student in one of the three schools with whom the researcher interacted revealed this; *My parents did not like when I told them that I was enrolled in Ceramics. My mum who is also a teacher had to travel from Tamale to Kumasi to persuade the school's management to switch my programme from Ceramics to another one. Unfortunately, her request did not succeed.*

In addition, students in the study were identified to have lack of seriousness for Ceramics. students are always students; they feed on encouragement to be serious and work harder, the lack of it could lead to the opposition. Schunk (1995) emphasized that compliments from parents and teachers such as "you can do this" can convince students to perform tasks. Schunk posited that positive responses boost self-efficacy, but if this fails, the students seriousness will disappear. The students' lack of seriousness can be also linked to the schools management's neglect for Ceramics as discovered by the study. One of the three schools' visual art head of department bemoaned about their situation and expressed this: *The issues with the Ceramics programme are becoming like a chronic illness. We don't know what more to do to attract the attention of school managers. We don't have a tap water, for our activities such as for cleansing oneself after working nor for clay processing. All four of our age-old manual potters' wheels are spoilt for quite some years now. I have submitted requisitions and proposals severally but to no avail. Whenever we have to practice throwing the students have to be transported to the KNUST Ceramics Section, before they could use their machines to learn. It hasn't been easy but we will keep fighting till we get results.*

The researchers observed first-hand the negative attitudes of some of the Ceramics students as they engage in practical activities in one of the schools studied. In an interaction with one of the three schools' Ceramics teacher, he felt helpless and that lamented: *Some of the students don't appear to take things seriously. In spite of being in form three, one student has never taken part in our practical activities since his enrollment in first year. Some students may not even bother to bring sketchbooks or other necessary materials to class, such as modeling tools. When you ask them why, they will respond that they lack the funds to buy them. What else can I do after series of personal advice? I just have to act like all is well and*

focus on my demonstrations to the class for the serious ones to be carried along. Even some students in their final don't even bother that they are going to sit for the WASSCE exams. It is pathetic!

Further, to all the respondents, who are also part of the stakeholders in the study, were asked if there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. Table shows their results of their responses.

Table 3: Responses to whether or not there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics

Respondents	SA		A		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students	99	46	69	32	21	12	22	10
Teachers	19	42	16	36	15	33	2	4
Parents	7	78					2	22
School Heads					1	50	1	50
Total (of 273)	125	46	85	31	47	17	27	10

Source: Field Survey 2022

The rationale to this question was to verify whether or not the students, teachers, parents and schools heads also believe that Ceramics offer low employment opportunity for students. Table 3 shows that 125 (46%) of the respondents agreed strongly compared with 27 (10%) who strongly disagreed that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. Also, 85 (31%) agreed compared with 47 (17%) who disagreed to the notion. From the table, there were 99 students who strongly agreed that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. The researchers took interest to segregate the data to determine the programmes specialties of the students and their believe in the notion.

Table 4: Crosstab for specialization and low employment opportunity

Crosstab					
Programme Specialization	Low Employment Opportunity in Ceramics				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Ceramics	58	38	22	19	137
General Arts	5	9	2	1	17
Business	11	5			16
Science	8	7			15
Home Economics	7	1	2		10
Visual Art	10	9	1	2	22
Total	99	69	27	22	217

Source: Field Survey 2022

Table 4's data shows that the 99 strongly agreed responses came from 58 Ceramics (part of visual art) students, 5 General Art students, 11 Business students, 8 Science students, 7 Home Economics students and 10 other visual art students.

Pearson chi-square test was run and the outcome with 15 degree of freedom which gave $p > 0.063$, showing there was no statistical significance between the students' programme specialization and the believe that Ceramics has low employment opportunities.

Also, there were 49 (49%) males and 50 (51%) females that constituted the 99 students who strongly agreed in Table 3 and 4. Again, a Chi-square test was run to establish whether the gender of the students had any bearing to their believe that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. The test results gave a p-value of $p > 0.201$ which did not imply any statistical basis for correlation.

Table 5: Crosstab for students' level in school and low employment opportunity

Crosstab					
Level of Students	Low Employment Opportunity in Ceramics				
	SA	A	D	SD	Total
Form one	26	29	18	13	86
Form two	49	10	2	1	62
Form three	24	30	7	8	69
Total	99	69	27	22	217

Source: Field Survey 2022

The data in Table 5 is a result of cross tabulation of levels of the students in the school with regard their response to the notion of low employment opportunity in Ceramics. From the table, there were 26 form ones, 49 form twos, and 24 form threes that constituted the 99 strongly agree responses. Also, the study tried to establish if there were any correlation between the levels of the students and their believe that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. the Chi-square test gave $p > 0.000$ on a 6 degree of freedom, which shows a significant statistical basis to say that there is relationship between the level of the student and the view that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. Hence, on the basis of the correlation test results and the form twos response, which is 49 (79%), it can be said the from two students highly believe that there is a low employment opportunity in Ceramics. this also shows that the form two Ceramics students are more likely to give up and discontinue studying Ceramics.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

The study's goal was to look at the influence of education stakeholders' attitudes on students' academic and career interest in Ceramics. According to the findings of the study, some education stakeholders, such as parents, students and their peers, non-art teachers, and schools' managements, play a role in students academic and career interest in Ceramics. Parents were discovered to discourage their children from pursuing Ceramics. The students themselves were discovered to be lacking seriousness for Ceramics. Peers of students offering other programmes were discovered to put pressure on their colleagues in Ceramics. Non-art teachers were also shown to dissuade students from having academic or career interest in Ceramics. The study also showed that schools management do not prioritize Ceramics, therefore materials that could aid in the teaching and learning of Ceramics are not provided.

According to the study, these behaviors by education stakeholders have the potential to weaken student self-efficacy and contribute to attrition in Ceramics.

According to the study, low opportunities for employment in Ceramics are the main reason why parents, teachers, and students discourage students' interest in Ceramics. Except for the level of students ($p > 0.000$), the Chi-square test found no correlation between students' age or programme specialization and their perception of low employment in Ceramics. According to the data on the students' levels in the schools, 79% of form two students strongly believed that there is a low employment in Ceramics. It is the researchers view that, considering the increasing demand for abrasives, tiles, and sanitary products around the world, it is imperative that more students be encouraged to receive Ceramics training in order to position the country well enough to compete strongly in the Ceramics manufacturing, which is heavily exploited by foreign companies.

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