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EDITORIAL

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Editorial on the Second ITFP-GH International Conference 2025: A Landmark in Sustainable Textiles and Fashion Innovation

Eric Bruce-Amartey Jnr.*, Moses Akrofi
Department of Textile Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana.

Correspondence (*)
Name: Eric Bruce-Amartey Jnr.
Affiliation: Department of Textile Design and Technology, Takoradi Technical University, Takoradi, Ghana.
Email: eric.bruce-amartey@ttu.edu.gh

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This special issue of the *Fashion and Textiles Review* has arisen as a result of the successful 2nd Institute of Textiles and Fashion Professionals-Ghana (ITFP-GH) International Conference, held from September 3rd to 5th, 2025, at the Nicholas Aidoo Taylor Auditorium of Takoradi Technical University. This conference forms part of the annual international conference of ITFP-GH, with a theme "Innovating for a Sustainable Future: Advancing Technology, Circularity, Design, and Education in Textiles and Fashion", marking a pivotal milestone in the evolution of sustainable textiles and fashion in Africa and beyond. The conference assembled a distinguished cadre of scholars, industry practitioners, educators, and policy makers committed to shaping a resilient, innovative, and environmentally responsible fashion ecosystem.

The aim of the ITFP-GH International Conference 2025 is to unite academics, researchers, practitioners, and industry partners to explore global trends and local impacts in textiles and fashion and to provide a platform for presenting innovations in smart textiles, sustainability, AI applications, and ethical practices. Whilst textiles and fashion innovation continue to advance across various applications, ongoing research continues to be driven by lessons from practical industry and academic experience. In this regard, the 2nd ITFP-GH International Conference 2025 was considered particularly successful. The conference attracted over eighty (80+) abstracts across eight (8) focus areas, submitted from six countries: the UK, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, Ghana, South Africa, and Bangladesh. The conference attracted a diverse body of delegates, with strong representation from both industry and academia. Papers span sustainability, digital transformation, AI, and design, reflecting the breadth of innovation in the field. Authors of selected contributions submitted full papers, several of which are published in this special issue.

A Confluence of Visionary Thought Leaders and Rich Discourse

The conference's opening was graced by the Vice-Chancellor of Takoradi Technical University, Rev. Prof. John Frank Eshun, and the National President of ITFP-GH, Prof. Richard Acquaye, whose welcoming remarks set an aspirational tone. Over three days, the gathering catalysed a vibrant exchange of ideas through keynote addresses, technical sessions, and interactive panels, covering an extensive spectrum of contemporary issues in textiles and fashion.

Pioneering Innovations in Sustainable Materials and Technologies

The conference's intellectual core was exemplified by distinguished keynote speakers, including Dr Theo Hughes-Riley of Nottingham Trent University, who presented on "Advancements in Electronic Textiles in the Era of Sustainability," highlighting cutting-edge innovations such as sensor-integrated garments and their sustainability implications. Prof. Claire Lerpiniere from De Montfort University delved into "Beyond Circularity," emphasising the integration of technology, consumer insights, and education

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to foster a sustainable future. Prof. Soney C. George from India introduced groundbreaking research on nanocomposites with graphene-based electrodes, emphasising the role of nanotechnology in energy storage and smart textiles. The presentations highlighted a vital shift towards electronic textiles, nanomaterials, and energy harvesting devices and technologies that promise to revolutionise wearable health monitoring, energy-efficient apparel, and sustainable production processes.

Advancing Circularity and Sustainable Practices

A core component of the conference was dedicated to circularity, evidenced by sessions on upcycling masquerade costumes in Sekondi-Takoradi, innovative textile recycling practices, and the utilisation of indigenous Ghanaian fabrics. Noteworthy were studies on warp yarn printing, which significantly reduce water and chemical use, and the circular economy approach to festival costumes, which demonstrate how cultural heritage can be harmonised with eco-conscious design. Research on fashion and textile waste in Ghana provides insight into localised waste patterns to support effective circular and sustainable management practices and/or interventions. Others on dry-process surface modification techniques for denim fabrics and on upcycling denim waste into functional floor mats exemplified the creative potential of community-led sustainability initiatives. Such projects not only address environmental concerns but also empower local artisans and stimulate economic growth, embodying the conference's commitment to social responsibility.

Educational Innovation and Capacity Building

The conference also placed a major emphasis on education and skills development. Presentations on integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into fashion curricula, adopting digital design tools, and exploring collaborative, project-based learning reflect a forward-looking approach to cultivating the next generation of sustainable fashion leaders. Studies on the awareness and ethical use of AI among Ghanaian students highlighted both opportunities and challenges in aligning technological advancement with ethical standards. Other studies examined key organisational drivers of technology adoption in small- and medium-scale fashion enterprises in Ghana to improve sustainability and competitiveness. Furthermore, the discussions on fashion education underscored the need to bridge theory and practice, with proposals for curriculum reforms that embed sustainability, digital literacy, and indigenous knowledge systems.

Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Design

Ghana's rich textile traditions were vividly showcased through research on the reinterpretation of Kente, Adinkra, and traditional funeral motifs. The innovative adaptation of these cultural symbols into contemporary fashion and festival attire demonstrates how heritage can be preserved and revitalised through creative design, fostering cultural pride and economic resilience. Studies exploring gender-neutral fashion, body diversity, and cultural symbolism reveal a vibrant dialogue on identity, social inclusion, and the transformative power of fashion in societal narratives.

Policy, Industry, and Market Dynamics

The conference's discussions extended into the realm of policy and industry strategy. Papers on the competitiveness of Ghana's apparel sector, supply chain development, and the impact of digital technology adoption provided critical insights for stakeholders seeking to position Ghana as a formidable player in the global fashion economy. Emphasis was placed on harnessing regional trade agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), modernising manufacturing infrastructure, and promoting innovation clusters.

Towards a Sustainable and Inclusive Future

The conference's culmination was marked by a vibrant panel on "Transforming Ghanaian Fashion through Policy and Community Engagement," where policymakers and grassroots innovators discussed pathways to embed sustainability into the fabric of Ghana's cultural industries. The call for integrated frameworks that balance tradition, innovation, and environmental stewardship resonated strongly.

Conclusion: A Catalyst for Africa's Sustainable Fashion Revolution

The 2nd ITFP-GH Conference exemplified a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to addressing global and local challenges in textiles and fashion. It reaffirmed that sustainable innovation requires collaboration across academia, industry, policy, and communities. The diverse research outputs, ranging from nanotechnology to cultural revival, from digital education to circular economy models, forge

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a resilient blueprint for a future where fashion is not only a reflection of identity and culture but also a powerful agent of environmental and social transformation. As Ghana and Africa at large step into this new era, the conference's insights and networks will undoubtedly serve as catalysts for sustainable development, economic empowerment, and cultural pride. The conference's success highlights the importance of continuous dialogue, research, and action in realising a sustainable future, one that honours heritage while embracing innovation. In a nutshell, the Second ITFP-GH Conference 2025 was a landmark gathering that inspires hope, ignites innovation, and charts a course for a resilient, inclusive, and sustainable textiles and fashion industry in Ghana and beyond.

As readers read this special issue, it is hoped that readers are encouraged to suggest a special issue with a specific area in textile and fashion research, attend future ITFP-GH international conferences (https://conference.itfpgh.com/home), and publish their latest research works with *Fashion and Textiles Review*.

Eric Bruce-Amartey Jnr.
Takoradi Technical University

and

Moses Akrofi
Takoradi Technical University

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Eric Bruce-Amartey Jnr. (PhD) is an Associate Professor in the Textile Design and Technology Department at Takoradi Technical University. An accredited TVET facilitator, he has extensive experience in teaching and in curriculum development in textiles, product design, laundry, fabric care, and health and safety management. He holds a PhD and MPhil in Arts and Culture, specialising in Textile Industry Performance from UEW, Winneba, as well as a Higher National Diploma and a Bachelor of Technology in Industrial Arts (Textiles). He has authored numerous publications on Ghana's textile industry and gained practical industry experience with Tex Styles Ghana. Known for his leadership, negotiation skills, and community contributions, Eric has secured significant projects and scholarships for TTU.

Moses Akrofi (PhD) serves as a Senior Lecturer in Textile Design and Technology at Takoradi Technical University in Ghana. He holds a PhD in Textile Design Technology from KNUST and has extensive experience in teaching, research, curriculum development, and industry collaboration. His knowledge encompasses sustainable textile fibres, management of garment waste, traditional loom technologies, and competence curricula based on TVET. Dr Akrofi is a published academic and author of textbooks, participates in national standards and curriculum committees, and is dedicated to promoting sustainable, industry-oriented, and Made-in-Ghana textile education via innovation, research, and community involvement for nationwide impact.