



Vulindlela – making new pathways

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Exploring non-placement work-integrated-learning (WIL) through industry-endorsed hybrid-curricular projects for fashion graduate success

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Abstract

To thrive in the fast-paced fashion industry, graduates must possess critical skill sets upon entering the workforce to ensure they are fully prepared for employment. This immediate need from the fashion industry necessitates that students gain practical, experience-based inputs from the fashion curricula pitched within the fashion higher education environment.

In line with the DEFSA theme “Vulindlela: making new pathways”, this paper investigates the “Learning: new approach to design education” subtheme through explorative research into work-integrated learning. The paper emphasises the importance of equipping fashion industry graduates with critical skills and practical experience to enhance their employability. A focused approach to fashion education, where modules within a set curriculum do not account for skills and knowledge transferability, no longer successfully prepares students for entry-level career opportunities. Moreover, implementing work-integrated learning poses challenges, such as securing appropriate placements and increasing student workload.

In a comprehensive literature review, the authors argue that fashion education curricula must incorporate a hybrid learning approach to work-integrated learning that bridges the gap between academic and industry requirements. They suggest that graduate success rates and employability will improve by reintroducing work-integrated learning, which involves industry contributions and project-based curricula with reputable fashion brands. A novel conceptual framework is proposed to overcome current challenges and enhance content relevance and student engagement. The researchers explore and define a conceptual framework that effectively includes an industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum approach incorporating project-based, problem-based, theory-based work-integrated learning formats under a relevant brand umbrella. The aim is to create a sustainable pathway to increase student engagement and success in collaboration with the fashion industry.

Keywords: Fashion education, hybrid-curriculum projects, industry endorsed, non-placement wil, on-campus WIL, student engagement, work-integrated learning.

Introduction

In the dynamic and competitive fashion industry, the demand for skilled and industry-ready graduates is increasing (Leiby 2021; Modenlek 2019). Fashion higher education institutions in South Africa and worldwide face the critical task of preparing students with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and industry experience (Du Preez, Van der Merwe & Swart 2019). Graduate employability is crucial for South Africa's socio-economic development and individual prosperity, and it bridges the gap between academic education and industry needs (Lubbe, Ali & Ritalahti 2021; Govender & Taylor 2015). However, traditional lecture-based teaching methods often fail to provide students with the hands-on skills and practical experiences demanded by the fashion industry, hindering their employment prospects (Leiby 2021; Govender & Taylor 2015).

To enhance graduate employability and student engagement, the integration of real-world experiences is essential (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron & Osher 2019; Kahu 2013). Work-integrated learning (WIL) is a promising solution that allows students to apply theoretical concepts in practical contexts, fostering a deep understanding of the fashion industry and critical thinking skills (Stirling, Kerr, Banwell, MacPherson & Heron 2016; Billett & Billett 2015). Fashion education requires a WIL conceptual framework that reflects the industry's fast-paced and diverse nature, effectively preparing graduates for their roles (Pirzada 2022; Shin 2012).

Work integrated learning (WIL) is a crucial component of higher education that bridges the gap between classroom learning and real-world experience. Non-placement or on-campus WIL typically involves students participating in practical learning activities within the university or college premises, such as labs, workshops, or simulated environments. This approach allows students to gain hands-on experience while still on campus. In contrast, placement WIL also referred to as off-campus WIL takes students into external organisations, giving them the opportunity to apply their academic knowledge in real-world settings (Fleischmann 2015). This type of WIL often involves internships, co-op programmes, or industry placements, enabling students to develop valuable skills, build professional networks, and gain insights into their chosen field. Both on-campus and off-campus WIL are vital in preparing students for successful careers by blending theory with practical application.

Placement WIL, where students take on formal internships during their studies comes with multiple challenges, especially in fashion-specific industry roles that require an elevated level of skill upon entry (Fleischman 2015; Shin 2012). Non-placement WIL includes the use of methods that incorporate industry relevance into the curriculum while providing the challenge of including relevant industry-simulated experiences that practically develop the plethora of hard and soft skills in demand (Fleischman 2015; Dean, Eady & Yanamandram 2020).

While extensive research has been conducted on WIL methods and their benefits, there is a gap regarding the successful inclusion of WIL in fashion education (Tezcan et al. 2020, Leiby & Zhao 2020; Du Preez et al. 2019). The research paper addresses this gap by first conducting a literature review to analyse and interpret the existing and current WIL practice and secondly, based on the research reviewed, exploring work-integrated learning (WIL) through endorsed hybrid-curricular projects for fashion graduate success. The researchers unpack and propose a conceptual framework that offers a method of incorporating non-placement WIL for fashion education that fosters industry collaboration to ensure relevant real-world problems are used in real-time projects, building necessary graduate attributes and skills desired by the fashion industry within a safe, meaningful learning environment (Shin 2012; Smith, Russel & Ferns 2014; Fleischman 2015).

The paper aims to provide valuable insights and recommendations to educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders, emphasising the need to effectively bridge the gap between fashion education and the fashion industry to enhance student engagement, graduate success, and employability through a meaningful application of non-placement WIL.

Research problem

The fashion industry is experiencing significant challenges and changes, requiring graduates to possess high-level skill competencies (Leiby 2021). Employability is crucial for graduates to establish and advance their careers, adapt to industry demands, and maintain long-term employability and career sustainability (De Vos, Jacobs & Verbruggen 2021).

In South Africa, the need to increase employment by 2030 is motivating higher education institutions to find innovative ways to equip graduates with industry-relevant skills, behaviours, attitudes, and attributes (Govender & Taylor 2015). Enhancing graduate employability in South Africa can lead to economic growth, reduced inequality, and addressing high youth unemployment rates. Skilled and job-ready graduates contribute to a more competitive labour market, attracting local and foreign investment, as well as promoting innovation and entrepreneurship (Govender & Taylor 2015). However, fashion higher education institutions face challenges in implementing WIL due to factors such as student workload, costs, time constraints, and the availability of appropriate industry placement opportunities (Shin 2012).

Objective 1

To explore and define a relevant non-placement WIL conceptual framework for fashion education.

Objective 2

To create a non-placement WIL conceptual framework that supports fashion student engagement and graduate workplace readiness for fashion industry needs.

Literature review

The literature review defines and explores relevant research, providing definitions of key topics and ideas to give a deeper meaning and understanding to the topic.

Fashion industry climate

The global fashion industry faces various challenges, including the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, interest rate fluctuations, uncertain energy supply, geopolitical disruptions, and evolving consumer behaviour (Amed, Balchandani, Beltrami, Hedric & Rolkens 2022). In response to these macroeconomic developments, fashion brands could reassess their manufacturing, distribution, and marketing practices (Ahmed et al. 2023). The State of Fashion 2023 report highlights the turbulence and uncertainty in the industry, emphasising the importance of integral skills development for graduates of fashion education (Ahmed et al. 2023).

Critical thinking, problem solving, knowledge application, interpersonal skills, self-direction, resourcefulness, and effective communication are identified as essential skills in the constantly changing workplace (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019). Success in the fashion industry requires higher-order learning, metacognition, resilience, curiosity, independent learning, collaboration, creativity,

and self-regulation (Peart 2019). Developing these skills involves applying knowledge to new situations, collaborative problem solving, and inquiry-based learning (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019).

The fashion industry's technological advancements and customer-centric business models have created a need for new skills across departments, particularly cross-functional skills that enable collaboration across various functions within a fashion retail environment (Leiby 2021; Modenlek 2019; Leiby & Zhao 2020). A study on merchandising roles in the South African fashion retail industry emphasises the interconnectivity of fashion merchandising departments in achieving profit strategies (Jacobs & Karpova 2022). This paper proposes the incorporation of a fashion retail brand-endorsed hybrid-curricular projects in fashion higher education to include non-placement WIL, fostering meaningful learning and preparing fashion graduates adequately for the fashion industry.

Fashion education context

With the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) influencing societies globally, there is an expectation among students at higher learning institutions to participate in non-traditional and highly engaging learning methods. Kolb and Kolb (2017) emphasise the need to establish learning spaces that stimulate inquiry, open minds, and facilitate good learning conversations, enabling participants to move from experience to deep reflection, conceptualisation, and action, thereby developing a supportive WIL environment.

A study focused on WIL education in Fashion Design highlights the significance of creating an appropriate learning environment that emphasises skill acquisition, ensuring students are equipped with the necessary competencies to thrive in the 4IR fashion industry. Additionally, the study emphasises that WIL plays a vital role in student learning, particularly within applied arts and science departments (Shin 2012).

South Africa's National Development Plan and Vision for 2030 underscore the need for improved collaboration between the government, education sector, and industry to address the unemployment rate (South African Government 2012). The South African education system is governed by various bodies that exert substantial influence over curriculum development and implementation in higher education institutions. The Council of Higher Education (CHE), in conjunction with the National Qualification Conceptual framework (NQF), has oversight over the entire education evaluation process, from design to delivery, within the South African higher education system (CHE 2022). The unique South African context highlights the importance of eliminating discrimination and enhancing the education landscape to ensure equal access for all students and provide them with fair opportunities for future success (CHE 2022). Emphasis is placed on implementing effective experiential learning modules and WIL strategies to bridge the gap between higher education and graduate readiness. However, there is limited research on the most efficient approach to align the distinctive needs of the South African fashion industry with the skills development initiatives in fashion education institutions.

A crucial element of successful non-placement WIL implementation in fashion higher education is the partnership established with industry. Seifer (2002), cited in Stirling, Kerr, Banwell, MacPherson, and Heron (2016), recommends involving industry partners in the planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and celebrating of WIL activities to ensure their effectiveness and relevance. The fashion retail brand (industry) endorsement can be facilitated through relevant, well-intentioned, and applicable fashion brand(s) – from small entrepreneur fashion brands to multinational fashion companies. Before implementing the education institute's learning and teaching strategy, the fashion brand(s) review the curricula and project briefs or work together with the institution to develop

curricula and project briefs that develop and test the skills needed by graduates when entering the workplace. In order to stay updated with industry changes, this endorsement might only apply for one academic calendar cycle unless otherwise agreed upon.

Fashion student engagement and success

WIL is closely linked to student engagement as it allows students to immerse themselves in real industry settings, collaborate with professionals, and work on authentic projects (Smith, Russel & Ferns 2016; Smith et al. 2014). This engagement not only enhances learning outcomes but also has the potential to establish transferable skills, professional networks, confidence, and self-efficacy (Mebert, Barnes, Dalley, Gawarecki, Ghazi-Nezami, Shafer, Slater & Yezbick 2020; Kahu 2013).

The paper recognises that students' ability to learn and develop is influenced by their malleable cognitive system and the activation of neural pathways in the brain (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019). By integrating an authentic learning perspective through WIL, student engagement and success can be achieved. Student engagement, which includes effort, persistence, concentration, and emotional responses, is considered crucial for student success (Bowden, Tickle & Naumann 2021).

To prioritise student engagement, the proposed WIL conceptual framework suggests incorporating multiple avenues into the curriculum, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, and theory-based learning (Bowden et al. 2021). These approaches aim to holistically address cognitive, emotional, and behavioural aspects of student engagement within the WIL experience.

Work-integrated learning background and theory

The paper discusses WIL as a pedagogic methodology that facilitates the transition from being students to being employees (Khampirat, Pop & Bandaranaike 2019). WIL is a form of experiential learning that involves learning tasks resembling real workplace tasks (Oliver 2015). Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) is a dynamic theory that focuses on adult development and defines education as a process involving the whole person (Kolb & Kolb 2017). ELT emphasises student-centred learning through dynamic classroom interactions (Doolan, Piggot, Chapman & Rycroft 2019). The theory acknowledges different learning styles and emphasises the importance of combining thinking, experiencing, acting, and reflecting for flexible learning (Kolb & Kolb 2017).

WIL aligns with the stakeholder-centric model, which considers the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders involved, including students, employers, and educational institutions (Effeney 2020). This model emphasises clear communication, shared objectives, and feedback systems for continuous improvement. The benefits of WIL, according to Stirling et al. (2016) and Effeney (2020), include fostering critical reflection, translating theory into practice, developing new concepts, promoting self-directed learning, adapting to a changing work environment, improving academic success, and developing professionalism and time management skills. WIL also provides opportunities for networking and collaboration.

While existing WIL models primarily focus on industry recruitment, securing workplace placements can be complex. Students have indicated that placements significantly influence their success in WIL approaches (Gribble, Dender, Lawrence, Manning & Falkmer 2014). Innovative forms of WIL, such as world-of-work simulations or non-placement WIL, can address this challenge (Dean, Eady & Yanamandram 2020). Therefore, WIL is seen as an umbrella concept that encompasses project-based learning, problem-based learning, and theory-based learning.

Project-based learning

Project-based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that emphasises learning by doing, as proposed by Dewey (1938), who recognised the benefits of experiential education. In PBL, students work on real-world problems and complex challenges, translating theory into practical experiences and taking control over project development and delivery (Karim, Campbell & Hasan 2019; Fleischmann 2015; De Graaff & Kolmos 2007; Dewey 1938). PBL is a collaborative and long-term initiative that aims to improve socio-economic and environmental factors (Panitz & Panitz 1998).

PBL and WIL share a focus on experiential educational practices. While PBL has been shown to enhance student learning and engagement (Karim et al. 2019; Kokotsaki, Menzies & Wiggins 2016), when combined with WIL, the outcomes are further enhanced. In project-based WIL, students engage with real-world problems and collaborate directly with industry partners, effectively advancing their work-related skillset (Karim et al. 2019).

Industry-endorsed project-based WIL provides students with an immersive environment where they develop skills in team collaboration, project management, problem solving, and critical thinking. These skills are particularly crucial when entering the fashion industry or any other field where practical application and collaboration are essential.

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) is an educational approach that presents students with novel problems to solve, requiring them to generate solutions (Fradila, Razak, Satosa, Arsih & Chatri 2021; Panitz & Panitz 1998). PBL immerses students in an environment where they must refine and restructure their knowledge gained from theory-based learning to address these novel problems (Tan 2021). The approach emphasises cross-disciplinary knowledge integration as problem solving often requires the application of knowledge from different subjects and topics (Tan 2021).

The PBL environment fosters the development of argumentative, investigative, reflective thinking, and collaborative skills (Fradila et al. 2021). PBL also promotes self-directed learning, as students take ownership in identifying knowledge gaps and acquiring the necessary information to solve the presented problem (Moallem, Hung & Dabbagh 2019). This process of self-directed learning aligns with the development of lifelong learning skills, which are crucial in the world of work.

Previous studies have demonstrated that PBL increases student motivation and engagement (Moallem et al. 2019; Schmidt 1993). When students encounter a novel problem, a knowledge gap is evident, stimulating their exploratory behaviour and interest in investigating and solving the problem (Moallem et al. 2019). This phenomenon is known as the "knowledge-deprivation hypothesis of situational interest" (Moallem et al. 2019).

In summary, PBL engages students in solving novel problems, fosters cross-disciplinary knowledge integration, develops critical thinking and collaborative skills, promotes self-directed learning, and enhances student motivation and engagement.

Theory-based learning

Theory-based learning (TBL) within the context of WIL involves integrating academic theory with practical experience, following a process-based learning model that includes planning, execution, observation, and reflection (Anuradha 2020). It allows for both inductive and deductive learning, enabling students to apply theoretical concepts to real-world work scenarios (Stirling et al. 2016). One of the benefits of WIL is the opportunity for students to put theory into practice and recognise the

relevance of concepts learned in school for the workplace (Govender & Wait 2017). In order to effectively integrate theory and practice, workplace case studies and simulations are embedded within the curriculum, exposing students to both practical and theoretical elements of the workplace (Stirling et al. 2016).

Implementing TBL in WIL can be approached through targeted methodology, where WIL activities are aligned with specific module learning outcomes to enrich the learning experience (Stirling et al. 2016). Higher education institutions can incorporate TBL by introducing industry-related case studies into lessons and projects, as well as inviting industry experts as guest lecturers to demonstrate the connection between theory and practice (STADIO 2020). However, Kolb and Kolb (2017) argue that many applications of experiential learning in higher education fail to effectively bridge the gap between theoretical learning and experiential activities. Therefore, TBL alone may not provide the comprehensive learning conceptual framework required for a simulated workplace experience.

By incorporating TBL into the WIL conceptual framework, the curriculum can establish meaningful connections between academic content and industry expectations, fostering continuous learning in a supportive environment (STADIO 2020). This integration of theory and practice ensures that graduates possess up-to-date knowledge relevant to the workplace.

Hybrid learning

Hybrid learning in the context of fashion higher education incorporates elements of project-based, problem-based, and theoretical-based learning, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration (Sultana & Chaudhuri 2019). It is a result of cross-curriculum and interdisciplinary collaboration within the field of fashion education. In the literature, hybrid project-based learning is explored through four definitions that help articulate the concept of WIL. These definitions include interactive learning, collaborative learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, and industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning (Sultana & Chaudhuri 2019). Hybrid learning in fashion education encourages the integration of various learning approaches and disciplines to provide students with a comprehensive and interdisciplinary educational experience.

Interactive learning

Interactive learning in higher education is a holistic approach that bridges the gap between theory and practical application, aiming to develop student success and preparedness for the industry (Woodside 2018). It combines academic knowledge with practical skills, ensuring students are equipped with the necessary attributes such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking (Woodside 2018). These skills are highly valued by employers (Govender & Taylor 2015; Shin 2012). Interactive learning is often referred to as "the win-win model" for collaboration between higher education institutions and industry (Pogatsnik 2018). Case studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of interactive learning in achieving programme outcomes and improving teamwork and soft skills (Pogatsnik 2018; Li, Lui, Yang & Yu 2017). Collaboration between academia and industry, such as through workplace shadowing initiatives, enhances the quality of learning by integrating theoretical skills into real-world practice (Jensen, Fumasoli & Stensaker 2020; Lehtinen & Aaltonen 2020). However, there is a need to further integrate practical teaching and learning practices into module and curriculum development to create a more cohesive and comprehensive approach (Woodside 2018).

Collaborative learning

Collaborative learning promotes peer-to-peer learning, leading to increased engagement and the development of problem-solving skills (Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst & Wiegant 2016). There

is a growing demand for collaborative learning practices in education, aiming to foster in-class collaboration and peer-integrated learning (PIM) (Heeg, Hundertmark & Schanze 2020). Adding industry endorsement to in-class collaboration can enhance the immersive experience and contribute to the development of a non-placement WIL conceptual framework that supports student engagement and workplace readiness.

A study by Panitz and Panitz (1998) aligns with the objective of creating a non-placement WIL conceptual framework by recognising that collaborative learning integrates pedagogical models such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and inquiry-based learning (CHE 2022; Panitz & Panitz 1998). Furthermore, Fleischman (2015) investigated on-campus (non-placement) WIL within the creative education context using industry clients within the project-based learning framework, culminating in a successful student engagement response and noting the value add to student success from this approach. Similarly, in the context of fashion education, project-based learning is a suitable method, making it a plausible learning outcome within the proposed non-placement WIL conceptual framework (CHE 2022; Panitz & Panitz 1998).

Interdisciplinary collaboration

Interdisciplinary collaboration in education aims to align the outcomes of modules within a curriculum, enhancing student comprehension. It offers numerous benefits to students, enriching their learning experience and increasing attendance and morale towards modules (Kelly, McLoughlin & Finlayson 2020). Higher education institutions should incorporate collaboration as a learning outcome in the development of projects to foster real-world working environments (Kelly et al. 2020). Stokols, Hall, Taylor, and Moser (2008), as cited by Kelly et al. (2020), proposed a categorisation of group tasks based on the degree of integration achieved. These categories include uni-disciplinary, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary integration. Uni-disciplinary tasks focus on one discipline, while multidisciplinary tasks involve multiple disciplines operating independently. Interdisciplinary tasks involve collaborative operation among multiple disciplines, and transdisciplinary tasks require multiple disciplines to collaborate to achieve a common goal (Stokols et al. 2008, cited by Kelly et al. 2020).

Industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning

Industry-endorsed hybrid learning in higher education combines interactive learning, collaborative learning, and interdisciplinary learning as an innovative strategy for development (Kelly et al. 2020; Heeg et al. 2020; Pogatsnik 2018; Woodside 2018). It encourages collaboration among modules across different disciplines to create an ecosystem. Kolb and Kolb (2017) suggest designing a curriculum that aligns instructional techniques and activities with subject matter and module objectives using the four learning modes. An example of industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning in a South African fashion institution involves integrating project-based, problem-based, and theory-based learning with industry endorsement (STADIO 2020). This integration aims to create an immersive experience, combining theoretical and practical concepts in project-based tasks to enhance student employability and community engagement (STADIO 2020). Figure 1 illustrates how fashion-related modules are integrated within the institution and their relationship to industry operations. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2019), cognitive science suggests that learning is more effective when ideas are conceptually connected and when students are fully engaged and motivated by intriguing work. Interest in learning also supports academic resilience and perseverance in challenging situations (Darling-Hammond et al. 2019).

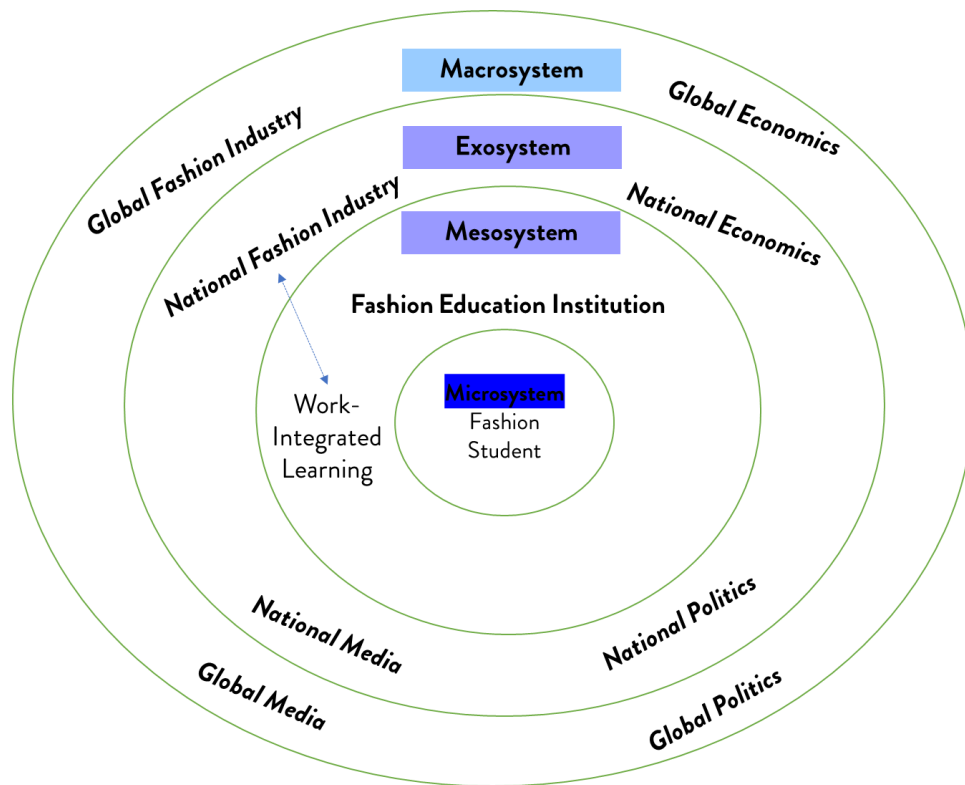


Figure 1: Model of the systems in which fashion students exist in relation to work-integrated learning (Bergh & Geldenhuys 2018, p. 71)

Methodology

The chosen methodology for this paper is a comprehensive literature review, which integrates findings and perspectives from multiple empirical studies to address research questions with a powerful synthesis (Snyder 2019). The review aims to identify areas where more research is needed and provides a meta-level view of the topic (Snyder 2019). Given the lack of focus on synthesising WIL in the fashion education curriculum, considering the unique challenges and contextual elements of the fashion industry, a comprehensive literature review is particularly relevant for this study (Snyder 2019).

The comprehensive literature review process is rooted in the constructivist paradigm, which acknowledges that a phenomenon can be understood through multiple perspectives (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016). This paper takes an explorative approach, using a constructivist-based literature review that involves inductive reasoning, rich data description, and reflectivity (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016).

The methodology involves four phases: designing the literature review, conducting the review of existing literature, analysing the literature, and writing up the literature review (Snyder 2019). The paper adopts a mixed methods approach, utilising both qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the collected data. The sub-topics covered in the paper are outlined in a table, along with a list of authors under each sub-topic, and the percentage indicates the amount of data used for each sub-topic in the paper (Snyder 2019).

Table 1: Literature conducted on work-integrated learning within higher education

Sub-Topic	Author	Percentage contribution
Fashion Industry Climate	Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B. & Osher, D. 2019 Modenlek, A. 2019 Peart, N. 2019 Leiby, N. & Zhao, L. 2020 Leiby, N.R. 2021 Jacobs, B. & Karpova, E. 2022	13%
Fashion Education Context	Shin, K. 2012 South African Government. 2012 Stirling, A., Kerr, G., Banwell, J., MacPherson, E. & Heron, A. 2016 Kolb, A.Y. & Kolb, D.A. 2017 CHE. 2022	11%
Fashion Student Engagement and Success	Dewey, J. 1938 Panitz, T. & Panitz, P. 1998 De Graaff, E. & Kolmos, A. 2007 Kahu, E.R. 2013 Kokotsaki, D., Menzies, V. & Wiggins, A. 2016 Smith, C., Ferns, S. & Russell, L. 2016 Stirling, A., Kerr, G., Banwell, J., MacPherson, E. & Heron, A. 2016 Govender, C. & Wait, M. 2017 Darling-Hammond, L., Flook, L., Cook-Harvey, C., Barron, B. & Osher, D. 2019 Karim, A., Campbell, M. & Hasan, M. 2019 Mebert, L., Barnes, R., Dalley, J., Gawarecki, L., Ghazi-Nezami, F., Shafer, G., Slater, J.A. & Yezbick, E.L. 2020 Moallem, M., Hung, W. & Dabbagh, N. 2019 Anuradha, K. 2020 STADIO, 2020 Bowden, J.L.-H., Tickle, L. & Naumann, K. 2021 Fradila, E., Razak, A., Satosa, T.A., Arsih, F. & Chatri, M. 2021 Tan, O.-S. 2021	39%

Work Integrated Learning	Dewey, J. 1938 Panitz, T. & Panitz, P. 1998 De Graaff, E. & Kolmos, A. 2007 Shin, K. 2012 Gribble, N., Dender, A., Lawrence, E., Manning, K. & Falkmer, T. 2014 Oliver, B. 2015 Kokotsaki, D., Menzies, V. & Wiggins, A. 2016 Scager, K., Boonstra, J., Peeters, T., Vulperhorst, J. & Wiegant, F.A.C. 2016 Stirling, A., Kerr, G., Banwell, J., MacPherson, E. & Heron, A. 2016 Govender, C. & Wait, M. 2017 Kolb, A.Y. & Kolb, D.A. 2017 Rands, M.L. & Gansemer-Topf, A.M. 2017 Pogatsnik, M. 2018 Woodside, J.M. 2018 Karim, A., Campbell, M. & Hasan, M. 2019 Khampirat, B., Pop, C. & Bandaranaike, S. 2019 Moallem, M., Hung, W. & Dabbagh, N. 2019 Anuradha, K. 2020 Dean, B., Eady, M.J. & Yanamandram, V. 2020 Effeney, G. 2020 Fleischmann, K. 2015. Heeg, J., Hundertmark, S. & Schanze, S. 2020 Kelly, R., McLoughlin, E. & Finlayson, O.E. 2020 Lehtinen, J. & Aaltonen, K. 2020 Li, Y., Liu, X.-L., Yang, J.-J. & Yu, W.-X. 2017 Jensen, K., Fumasoli, T. & Stensaker, B. 2020 STADIO, 2020 Tezcan, N., Durakovic, I., Lloyd, E. & D'arcy, S. 2020 Fradila, E., Razak, A., Satosa, T.A., Arsih, F. & Chatri, M. 2021 Tan, O.-S. 2021	67%
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Hybrid Learning	Shin, K. 2012 Scager, K., Boonstra, J., Peeters, T., Vulperhorst, J. & Wiegant, F.A.C. 2016 Govender, C. & Wait, M. 2017 Li, Y., Liu, X.-L., Yang, J.-J. & Yu, W.-X. 2017 Pogatsnik, M. 2018 Woodside, J.M. 2018 Heeg, J., Hundertmark, S. & Schanze, S. 2020 Jensen, K., Fumasoli, T. & Stensaker, B. 2020 Kelly, R., McLoughlin, E. & Finlayson, O.E. 2020 Lehtinen, J. & Aaltonen, K. 2020 STADIO, 2020	24%
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Conceptual framework

The derived conceptual framework, based on the literature review, presents an argument that a relationship exists between the investigated concepts (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016). The review of the literature, as presented in Table 1, leads to a proposed conceptual framework that combines project-

based learning, problem-based learning, and theory-based learning under the endorsement of a relevant umbrella brand in the fashion industry (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016). The conceptual framework presents a possible WIL format for fashion education and the importance of industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning that engages fashion students through an industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum and prepares them for the workplace, ultimately promoting their employability as graduates (Onwuegbuzie & Frels 2016).

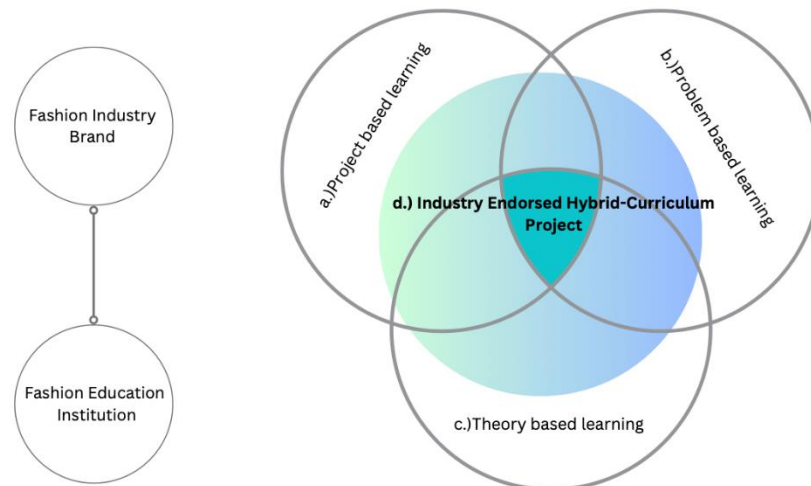


Figure 2: Conceptual framework for non-placement industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum projects

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, the paper provides a comprehensive literature review and analysis to define an effective non-placement WIL conceptual framework for fashion higher education. The proposed conceptual framework combines project-based, problem-based, and theory-based learning through an industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning approach, incorporating an umbrella fashion brand (Heeg et al. 2020; Kelly et al. 2020; Pogatsnik 2018; Woodside 2018; Panitz & Panitz 1998). This research addresses a gap in existing academic research on WIL conceptual frameworks for fashion higher education and offers a promising avenue for integrating WIL into the field both in South Africa and internationally. An industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum provides a comprehensive learning experience, equipping fashion students with practical skills, critical thinking abilities, and an in-depth understanding of the fashion industry (Stirling et al. 2016).

The integrated approach aligns with the evolving needs of the fashion industry and prepares graduates to thrive in a dynamic and competitive fashion landscape (Leiby & Zhao 2020; Du Preez et al. 2019). By combining multiple learning approaches within a fashion brand context, the WIL conceptual framework develops well-rounded and adaptable skill sets that are relevant to the industry (Du Preez et al. 2019; Leiby & Zhao 2020). Collaboration with an umbrella fashion brand enhances the learning experience, offering insights into current trends and market demands and improving employability prospects for fashion graduates (Stirling et al. 2016; Lubbe et al. 2021).

However, the implementation of an industry-endorsed hybrid-curriculum learning approach requires careful planning, collaboration between academic institutions and industry partners, and adequate

support for faculty members (Lubbe et al. 2021). Future research should focus on the practical application and impact of the proposed conceptual framework in a fashion higher education institution, specifically examining teaching and learning outcomes and the development of graduate attributes through student engagement.

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