FROM REDIRECTION TO RESILIENCE: A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY ON CHALLENGES, COPING MECHANISMS, MOTIVATION, AND PERCEPTIONS OF REDIRECTED GARMENTS TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the academic journey of students who were redirected to the Garments Technology program of Mariano Marcos State University-College of Industrial Technology after they were not accepted into their priority course. Using quantitative descriptive research design, the study interviewed 81 redirected students from across year levels through a self-administered online questionnaire. The instrument was designed by researcher, which assessed five dimensions of a student's experience: circumstances leading to redirection; academic and personal challenges; coping mechanisms; motivation over time; and perceived relevance of the program to their future goals.

Findings reveal that while many students primarily entered the program due to institutional constraints, a number also cited personal interest in fashion and design. Moderate academic and technical challenges were reported, specifically in adapting hands-on activities of the course. However, emotional discouragement was generally minimal, and students demonstrated resilience by employing coping strategies. As they stayed in the program, redirected students exhibited increased motivation and passion for the field. Although some students remained uncertain about how the program aligned with their original goals, most recognized the value of the skills and entrepreneurial preparation provided.

The study highlights the transformative potential of academic redirection, showing how redirected students, despite initial difficulties, can find academic fulfillment and develop professionally. Results of this study may guide institutional support mechanisms, such as academic advising, skills enhancement, and career guidance, to help redirected students transition successfully and thrive in alternative educational pathways.

Keywords: Redirected students, Garments Technology, Course preference, Academic Redirection, Student Experiences, Vocational Education

1. Introduction

Redirected students are those who are placed in academic programs that were not their first choice represent a growing concern in higher education, particularly in systems where admissions decisions are influenced by competitive rankings, test results, and program availability (Schlossberg & Kay, 2015; Mokher & Mella-Alcazar, 2024). These students often enter programs with limited familiarity or interest, which can affect their academic adjustment, motivation, and overall satisfaction with their educational journey. Redirection, while a strategic measure to maximize enrollment and accommodate institutional constraints, may lead to unintended consequences for student engagement and performance.

Higher education institutions, such as Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU), offer a range of academic programs designed to prepare students for successful careers. However, not all students enter their first-choice programs. Some are redirected to other disciplines due to various factors such as academic performance, limited availability of slots, or personal and institutional constraints. This redirection can significantly influence a student's academic journey, especially when the assigned program is misaligned with their original interests or intended career path. For students who did not originally aspire to enter this field, adapting to its highly practical and skill-based nature can be particularly challenging (Chavez, 2023).

One such program is the Garments Technology course at MMSU, which equips students with skills in in the different core competencies of Dressmaking NC II, Tailoring NC II, fashion designing and production of different types of apparel. For some students, Garments Technology was not their initial choice but became their academic placement due to redirection. These students often face unique challenges, including adjusting to new learning environments, managing lowered motivation, and reconciling personal aspirations with institutional decisions. Schlossberg and Kay (2015) describe these transitions as critical moments that require students to reframe their goals and develop adaptive strategies to succeed.

In the context of technical-vocational education, redirection is especially significant. Mokher and Mella-Alcazar (2024) highlight that transitions within Philippine TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) programs are shaped not only by institutional policies but also by student adaptability and structural support systems. Chavez (2023) noted that redirected students often experience academic and emotional disorientation, particularly when lacking a sense of belonging in their new field. These findings resonate with the situation of redirected Garments Technology students who must navigate specialized coursework without prior interest or preparation in the domain.

Despite these difficulties, many redirected students develop coping mechanisms and gradually find motivation through peer support, institutional guidance, or renewed purpose. Lee et al. (2002) discovered that students frequently use adaptive coping mechanisms to control stress and regain focus when they are faced with academic displacement or career dilemma. The study of

Schlossberg and Kay (2015) also stressed the value of both external assistance and individual resilience in promoting smooth transitions. These elements are critical in enabling students to not only cope but also thrive in their redirected programs.

Motivation and self-efficacy play pivotal roles in academic persistence. According to Bandura (1997), students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to persevere through challenges and maintain a positive outlook on their educational progress. Pintrich and Zusho (2002) reinforced this by defining self-regulated learning as a crucial skill in student success, especially when students are required to take active responsibility for their adjustment and performance in new settings.

Understanding the experiences of redirected Garments Technology students is therefore critical not only for improving institutional support systems but also for informing how academic redirection is managed in technical-vocational programs. This study aims to explore the circumstances that led to redirection, the challenges encountered, the coping mechanisms employed, and the perceived motivation and growth of these students throughout their time in the program. As Trasmonte and Fajardo (2023) emphasized, gaining insight into students' motivations and program alignment can enhance the responsiveness of educational institutions to learner needs.

By shedding light on the experiences of redirected students, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of academic transitions, strengthens the foundation for inclusive student services, and informs educators and administrators on how best to support students placed in programs outside their original academic preferences. It also seeks to bridge the gap between initial career aspirations and the realities of educational redirection, particularly within the technical-vocational context of Garments Technology.

2. Methodology

This section discusses the methodology of the study which includes the research design, locale of the study, population and sample, data gathering procedures, research instrument and data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive research design to explore the challenges, coping mechanisms, motivation, and perceptions of redirected students enrolled in the Garments Technology program. Descriptive research is appropriate for this study because it seeks to systematically describe a phenomenon, population, or situation as it exists in its current state. It does not involve manipulation of variables but instead aims to identify and interpret patterns, characteristics, or trends within a given group (Creswell, 2014).

2.2 Locale of Study

The study was conducted at Mariano Marcos State University- College of Industrial technology (MMSU-CIT), specifically within the Garments Technology program. MMSU offers various academic programs across multiple disciplines. The Garments Technology program serves as the specific context for this research, as it represents a specialized field where students may find themselves redirected from other programs due to various factors. The university setting provides an ideal environment for studying academic redirection phenomena, given its diverse program offerings and the likelihood of student transfers between disciplines.

2.3 Population and Sample

The respondents of the study consisted of officially enrolled students in the Garments Technology program for A.Y. 2024-2025 at MMSU-CIT who were redirected from their original program choices. Based on the data collected, a total of 81 respondents from different year levels within the program. The sample included both male and female students, with predominantly female representation reflecting the typical demographic composition of Garments Technology programs.

The study utilized a purposive sampling technique to ensure that only students who were redirected to the program rather than those who originally chose it as their first preference were included in the research. This sampling method was essential to maintain the focus of the study which is on the specific experiences of redirected students.

2.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to the conduct of the study, the researcher sought and secured approval from the concerned authorities to ensure ethical compliance and proper coordination. The data collection process utilized an online, self-administered structured questionnaire designed to gather quantitative data on the experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of redirected students enrolled in the Garments Technology program.

The instrument employed a 4-point Likert scale to measure the level of agreement of respondents with various statements across key dimensions of their academic journey. To effectively reach the target participants, the researcher created a Google Forms version of the questionnaire and distributed the survey link through group chats of Garments Technology students across all year levels. This method leveraged the common use of messaging platforms among university students, ensuring broad and efficient communication with potential respondents.

2.5 Research Instrument

The researcher utilized a researcher-made questionnaire as the primary data-gathering instrument. To ensure its content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed and validated by experts. Their feedback was incorporated to refine the questionnaire in terms of clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of items. The questionnaire employed a 4-point Likert scale to measure the level of

agreement of the respondents with the given statements, ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (4)*. The instrument was divided into two main sections. Section I focused on the demographic profile of the respondents and Section II was composed of five parts that explored various dimensions of the respondents' experiences which includes: (1) Circumstances Leading to Redirection- examined the factors or conditions that influence the entry of redirected students to the program; (2) Academic and Personal Challenges- investigated the challenges encountered by the students in adjusting to the program; (3) Coping Mechanisms-identified the strategies of the students in order to overcome challenges; (4) Motivation and Interest Over Time- explored how students drive and enthusiasm for the course of their studies and (5) Perceived Relevance to Future Goals- assessed the students views on how the program aligns with their personal and professional aspirations.

2.6 Data Analysis

The responses collected were analyzed using the mean as the sole statistical tool to determine the average level of agreement of the respondents on each statement. This method allowed the researcher to summarize the general tendencies of the redirected students about the experiences and factors being studied

3. Results

3.1 Circumstances Leading to Redirection

Item	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I was redirected to Garments Technology because my first-choice program was unavailable.	2.73	Agree
I was advised to pursue Garments Technology by a faculty member.	2.36	Agree
I was redirected to this program due to my lack of qualifications for other programs.	2.34	Agree
I chose the Garments Technology program because I was interested in a career in fashion or design.	3.05	Agree
I enrolled in the Garments Technology program due to family or peer influence.	2.61	Agree
Composite Mean	**2.62**	**Agree**

Note: Range of Mean Interval-DI, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24- Agree; 1.75-2.49- Disagree; 1.0-1.74- Strongly Disagree

The results indicate that students redirected to the Garments Technology program were influenced by a combination of institutional circumstances and personal interest, rather than predominantly by social pressure. The composite mean of 2.62, which falls within the "Agree" range, suggests that redirection was influenced by factors such as program availability, academic guidance, and personal motivation. Specifically, the item "I was redirected to Garments Technology because my first-choice program was unavailable" had a mean of 2.73, indicating that limited access to preferred programs was a significant factor in students' redirection. This finding aligns with Kniveton (2004), who identified that students' career choices are often shaped by practical constraints such as program availability alongside personal motivations.

The item "I chose the Garments Technology program because I was interested in a career in fashion or design" scored the highest mean of 3.05, reflecting that intrinsic interest in the field remains a strong motivator despite the redirection. This complements UNESCO-UNEVOC's (2013) emphasis on vocational education programs responding to both learner interests and labor market demands, which suggests that student motivation and career aspirations are key in TVET enrollment.

On the other hand, items related to social influence, such as "I enrolled due to family or peer influence" (mean 2.61) and "I was advised to pursue Garments Technology by a faculty member" (mean 2.36), while still within the "Agree" range, show comparatively lower agreement levels. This implies that although social factors and faculty advice play a role, they are less dominant compared to academic and personal interest factors. This partly contrasts with Kniveton's (2004) findings that parents and peers have traditionally strong influences on career decisions, indicating that in this context, institutional and personal factors outweigh social influence.

3.2 Academic and Personal Challenges

Redirected students are facing notable academic and personal challenges as they adjust to a course they may not have initially intended to pursue. Based on the composite mean of 2.69, which falls under the "Agree" category, it is evident that these students are encountering moderate levels of difficulty in both technical and emotional aspects of the program. Among the items, the highest mean score was for the statement "The technical tasks and hands-on work in the program are challenging for me" with 2.98, suggesting that most redirected students find practical components such as sewing, drafting, and pattern drafting to be particularly demanding. This is followed closely by "I feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the course content" (mean = 2.83), indicating that academic pressure is a significant challenge the students are facing.

Item	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I have difficulty keeping up with the academic workload in Garments Technology.	2.65	Agree
The technical tasks and hands-on work in the program are challenging for me.	2.98	Agree
I feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the course content.	2.83	Agree
I struggle to balance my academic responsibilities with personal life.	2.56	Agree
I often feel discouraged due to the program not being my first choice.	2.44	Agree
Composite Mean	**2.69**	**Agree**

Note: Range of Mean Interval-DI, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24- Agree; 1.75-2.49- Disagree; 1.0-1.74- Strongly Disagree

Although students also agree that they struggle to balance academic responsibilities with personal life (mean = 2.56) and keeping up with the workload (mean = 2.65), the item with the lowest agreement was "I often feel discouraged due to the program not being my first choice" (mean = 2.44). This suggests that while academic and technical challenges are evident, emotional discouragement from being redirected may not be as dominant factor. These findings support Sevinc and Gizir's (2014) observation that students redirected into unfamiliar academic tracks often struggle with adaptation, especially when they lack foundational skills or prior interest in the discipline.

In line with this, the challenges appear to be more institutional and academic rather than rooted in external personal obligations. This reinforces the importance of targeted support systems for redirected students such as skills-bridging workshops and tailored academic advising to help them succeed in environments where their initial preparation may be lacking. As UNESCO-UNEVOC (2013) also emphasizes, effective technical and vocational education must consider learner backgrounds and provide responsive structures to promote retention, confidence, and career alignment.

3.3 Coping Strategies

Item	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I seek help from my instructors when I face difficulties in the course.	3.15	Agree
I try to practice skills learned in class outside of my scheduled hours.	3.07	Agree
I stay motivated by thinking about future job or business opportunities.	3.26	Strongly Agree
I rely on peer support to overcome challenges in the program.	3.01	Agree
I focus on improving my skills through additional resources (e.g., online tutorials).	3.28	Strongly Agree
Composite Mean	**3.15**	**Agree**

Note: Range of Mean Interval-DI, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24- Agree; 1.75-2.49- Disagree; 1.0-1.74- Strongly Disagree

The data in Table 3.3 reveals that redirected students adopt a range of coping strategies to manage the demands of their course, as reflected by a composite mean of 3.15, interpreted as "Agree." This suggests that, overall, students demonstrate a proactive and positive approach to overcoming academic and personal challenges associated with their redirection.

Among the coping strategies listed, the highest mean was observed in the item “I focus on improving my skills through additional resources (e.g., online tutorials)” with a score of 3.28, falling under the “Strongly Agree” category. This indicates that many students turn to digital and self-directed learning to supplement their technical skills. Similarly, “I stay motivated by thinking about future job or business opportunities” also received a high mean of 3.26, showing that students draw strength from long-term goals and aspirations to stay engaged in the program. These results are consistent with findings by Kniveton (2004), who emphasized that personal ambition and future career outlooks play a crucial role in sustaining motivation, especially in programs requiring specialized skill development.

Other strategies, such as seeking help from instructors (3.15) and practicing skills beyond scheduled hours (3.07), also scored high in the “Agree” range, indicating that students are not only resourceful but also committed to improving their performance through active practice and faculty interaction. Peer support also plays a role (mean = 3.01), suggesting a collaborative learning environment where students help each other navigate challenges.

These findings reflect what UNESCO-UNEVOC (2013) describes as essential behaviors in vocational education: student resilience, adaptability, and the utilization of support systems. Overall, the results suggest that although redirected students face difficulties, they are employing

constructive strategies to cope—strategies that reinforce both academic persistence and skill development in their new learning environment.

3.4 Changes in Motivation and Interest

Item	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
My motivation to succeed in Garments Technology has increased over time.	3.17	Agree
I am now more interested in the Garments Technology program than when I first enrolled.	3.24	Agree
I feel more engaged in my coursework as I continue in the program.	3.26	Strongly Disagree
My interest in the Garments Technology program has stayed the same since I started.	3.05	Agree
I have developed a genuine passion for the field of Garments Technology.	3.26	Strongly Disagree
Composite mean	**3.19**	**Agree**

Note: Range of Mean Interval-DI, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24- Agree; 1.75-2.49- Disagree; 1.0-1.74- Strongly Disagree

It can be gleaned from the table that redirected students in the Garments Technology program have developed a moderate and gradually increasing level of motivation and interest, as shown by the composite mean of 3.19, interpreted as "Agree." This suggests that although many of these students may not have originally intended to pursue Garments Technology, their commitment and engagement to the course have grown over time.

The item "I feel more engaged in my coursework as I continue in the program" and "I have developed a genuine passion for the field of Garments Technology" both scored 3.26, the highest among all items and categorized under "Strongly Agree." These findings point to a deepening involvement and emotional investment in the course, reflecting an increasing alignment between students' evolving interests and the nature of the program. This supports Kniveton's (2004) argument that student motivation and career interest can shift over time, especially when they begin to see the value and applicability of their studies.

Similarly, the items "I am now more interested in the Garments Technology program than when I first enrolled" (mean = 3.24) and "My motivation to succeed in Garments Technology has increased over time" (mean = 3.17) indicate a growing enthusiasm and internal drive among students as they become more immersed in the curriculum. These trends affirm UNESCO-UNEVOC's (2013) position that relevant and hands-on learning in TVET programs can strengthen learners' motivation, especially when they start to visualize career pathways in the field.

The item "My interest in the Garments Technology program has stayed the same since I started" received a lower but still "Agree" rating of 3.05, suggesting that while some students experienced growth in interest, others maintained a consistent level of motivation throughout. This reflects the variability in personal experiences and adaptation, with some students potentially needing more time or targeted support to fully engage.

3.5 Perceived Relevance of the Program to Future Goals

Item	Mean	Descriptive Interpretation
I believe the skills I am learning will be useful in my future career.	3.36	Strongly Agree
The Garments Technology program is helping me prepare for entrepreneurial opportunities.	3.25	Strongly Agree
I can see how the knowledge gained from the program will be applicable to my future goals.	3.26	Strongly Agree
I believe the program is relevant to the kind of work I want to do in the future.	2.36	Disagree
I feel more confident about pursuing a career in the Garments Technology field.	3.24	Agree
Composite Mean	**3.09**	**Agree**

Note: Range of Mean Interval-DI, 3.25-4.00- Strongly Agree; 2.50-3.24- Agree; 1.75-2.49- Disagree; 1.0-1.74- Strongly Disagree

The results in Table 3.5 show that redirected students generally perceive the Garments Technology program as relevant to their future goals, with a composite mean of 3.09, interpreted as "Agree." This indicates a moderately high level of recognition among students that the skills and knowledge they are gaining are valuable for their career aspirations.

The highest-rated item, “I believe the skills I am learning will be useful in my future career” (mean = 3.36), falls under “Strongly Agree”, suggesting that students see practical value in the competencies they acquire. This reflects an appreciation for the hands-on, skill-based nature of the program, which is often a key feature of Technical-Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs like Garments Technology.

Other items such as “The Garments Technology program is helping me prepare for entrepreneurial opportunities” (mean = 3.25) and “I can see how the knowledge gained from the program will be applicable to my future goals” (mean = 3.26) also received “Strongly Agree” ratings. These responses highlight the students' growing awareness that the program equips them not only for employment but also for self-employment or business ventures, aligning with the entrepreneurial thrust of the TVET curriculum.

The statement “I believe the program is relevant to the kind of work I want to do in the future” received a mean of 2.36, which falls under “Disagree” suggests that some students may still feel uncertain or disconnected between the current program and their ideal career paths, perhaps because they had initially intended to pursue a different field. The item “I feel more confident about pursuing a career in the Garments Technology field” (mean = 3.24) was interpreted as “Agree,” indicating growing, yet still cautious, optimism about building a future in this field.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, redirected students enrolled in the Garments Technology program demonstrate a multifaceted response to their academic redirection, characterized by both challenges and adaptive growth.

The circumstances leading to redirection reveal that students were primarily influenced by institutional factors such as program availability and academic advisement, rather than by external pressures from family or peers. A significant number still chose the program based on personal interest, particularly in fashion and design. Students report experiencing moderate academic and personal challenges, particularly in handling technical tasks and managing course complexity. Despite this, emotional discouragement related to being redirected is less noticeable, suggesting that difficulties are more academic than motivational in nature.

Students are actively employing constructive coping strategies, such as seeking help from instructors, utilizing online resources, and drawing motivation from future career opportunities. These adaptive behaviors reflect a strong sense of initiative and resilience. Furthermore, there is a positive shift in motivation and interest over time. Students increasingly express engagement with their coursework and a growing passion for the field, indicating that redirection does not necessarily hinder long-term academic satisfaction or identity formation in the chosen program.

While students generally perceive the program as relevant to their future careers, especially in terms of skills development and entrepreneurial preparation, a small portion remains uncertain about how the program aligns with their original career goals. Although redirected students face initial challenges, they gradually adapt and develop a stronger connection with the Garments Technology program. With appropriate academic support, career counseling, and skills-building opportunities, redirection can evolve into a meaningful and successful educational pathway.

3. Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that peer mentoring programs should be strengthened to help redirected students adjust better to the Garments Technology course. Faculty members should also continue to play an active role in guiding and motivating students, as many respondents said their teachers influenced them positively. Career guidance should be improved to help students make informed decisions, especially those who were not originally interested in this course. Providing short skills training or bridging programs may also help students who feel unprepared for the technical tasks. Lastly, the university should highlight possible career paths in Garments Technology and offer seminars or workshops to show students the opportunities waiting for them after graduation.

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