Design and Selling Recycled Fashion: Acceptance of Upcycled Secondhand Clothes by Female Consumers, Age 25-65

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Abstract
Fast fashion offers low prices and lots of choices with the opportunity to binge on fashion. Wardrobes are overflowing, and consumers are considering the options for disposal and recycling of their clothes. Upcycling is one way for designers and manufacturers to recycle textiles wherein secondhand fashion is deconstructed and reconstructed into current fashion. Twenty women, ages 25-65, were asked how they recycle their discarded clothing and whether they would be open to buying secondhand clothes if they were upcycled into garments that reflect current trends. Women reported that style and price were more important than environmental causes in their upcycled purchases. Purchase motivators included knowing the genealogy of secondhand textiles and the artistic treatment of upcycled clothes. Barriers to upcycled fashion purchases included concerns about sanitation and an increase in price over comparable garments. Designers, manufacturers, and retailers can use the results to design, market, and sell upcycled fashion.

Degree
Master of Science

URI
http://hdl.handle.net/10365/23189

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Trash to trend: using upcycling in fashion design. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Estonian Academy of Arts, Tallinn, Estonia. Ad. through recycling or upcycling. For clothing it has been seen that the environmental impact can be strongly influenced by the use phase of the consumer in the care phase or laundering; additionally, it is possible to involve all the stages of the lifecycle, including at the systems design level [10]. This study investigates into the slow fashion concept and the contemporary design. Solutions are proposing to incorporate more sustainability into design and to trigger trendsetting [22]. This overview can benefit the future development of new solutions in sustainable clothing design, in further research the acceptance of the various concepts needs testing. Acknowledgements. The present study is part of a PhD project in Sustainable Management and Design for Textiles (SMDTex). Upcycling can be done using either pre-consumer or post-consumer waste or a combination of the two. Pre-consumer waste is produced while items are being manufactured (such as the pieces of fabric leftover after cutting out a pattern) and post-consumer waste results from the finished product reaching the end of its useful life for the consumer (such as a T-shirt that doesn’t fit anymore). As consumers start realizing the devastating effects of fast fashion, they will begin looking for innovative ways to change their wardrobe. Upcycled apparel can be a part of this revolution – helping people make meaningful choices with their clothing while appreciating the history of the industry. Images courtesy of Redress and "ReFashioned" by Sass Brown.