



Implementing Sustainable Fashion Upcycling in Casual Fashion as the Sustainable Fashion Course Outcome

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ABSTRACT

Rapid trend changes from time to time affect fashion industry development extremely and eventually bring about the ready-to-wear concept in the fast-fashion industry. This concept brings on fashion at an affordable price, easy to access, and with massive and quick production capacity, causing new issues, e.g., increased fashion waste and environmental pollution due to non-degradable waste. Addressing these issues calls for relevant education, which can be given by fashion actors, such as fashion schools, by delivering sustainable fashion courses. This research aims to assess sustainable fashion upcycling products aesthetically and analyze fashion school preparedness to deliver the sustainable fashion course. A qualitative method was used to generate descriptive data, which were then analyzed to acquire the results of the aesthetical assessment of upcycling products. Primary data were collected through structured interviews with several panelists, composed of designers and lecturers at fashion schools. Secondary data were collected through a literature study. Data was obtained from five panelists with the data analysis technique used was the narrative qualitative data analysis technique. The results demonstrated that aesthetic indicators in design elements and principles were notable in all upcycling products, making those products reliable references to fashion school students enrolling in the sustainable fashion course.

Keywords: *Aesthetic, Fashion School, Sustainable Fashion*

1. INTRODUCTION

Rapid trend changes from time to time impact fashion industry development and contribute to the advent of the ready-to-wear concept in the fast-fashion industry. The concept begets more affordable fashion, which is also easy to access and suitable for massive and quick production. The development of the fast-fashion industry induces new issues in the fashion industry as the first industry produces massively and markets the products to consumers continually, posing a high number of disposed products then turning into non-degradable waste and resulting in environmental problems, e.g., environmental pollution. As stated by Arifin Rudiyanto, Deputy for Maritime Affairs and Natural Resources, Ministry of National Development Planning (PPN)/National Development Planning Agency (BAPPENAS), Indonesia produced 2.3 million tons of textile waste in 2021, equivalent to 12 percent of household waste. (reported from [kompas.com](https://www.kompas.com) on 09 March 2022 at 23:29). This statement is in accordance with the results of research conducted by Nidia and Suhartini (2020) entitled Impact of Fast Fashion and The Role of Designers in Creating Sustainable Fashion. They said

that fast fashion is a business model that offers cheap and trendy clothing, the result of collaboration between producers, suppliers, and consumers, whose turnover is very fast changing to meet and dominate the fashion market. The fast fashion industry has grown faster than any other fashion industry, thereby encouraging greater disposition. The fashion industry is a contributor to waste textiles that end up in landfills, while synthetic materials cannot be decomposed.

This phenomenon makes the government continue to look for solutions that can be done to reduce environmental problems caused by the fashion industry. For example, the issuance of a regulation by the Minister of Environment and Forestry of the Republic of Indonesia regarding Waste Water Quality Standards and the concept of circular fashion which is an invitation from BAPPENAS in collaboration with the Danish royal government as an effort to communicate a circular economy to the Indonesian people. Circular fashion is not just waste management, but also resource management. Production no longer takes raw materials from nature but can be done by recycling materials that have been processed so that when they become one there will be savings in capital and resources.

Circular fashion, such as sustainable fashion, has been implemented in Indonesia. Research like this has already been carried out, discussing the application of upcycling to decorate clothing. Meanwhile, this research does not only discuss decorating but also more broadly, such as changing models and combining them, because based on interviews with 30 respondents, they said that sustainable fashion by decorating clothes is still relatively ordinary and nothing unique is seen. Based on the results of previous research (Riskia, 2023) the assessment of upcycled denim clothing products with thread attachment decoration techniques has good value in the dimensional aspects of product quality as well as design principles and elements. The researchers are interested in investigating the implementation, especially related to sustainable fashion upcycling in casual fashion. The upcycling technique was chosen because of its easy production process and access to the required materials and tools. This research aims to assess Sustainable Fashion Upcycle products aesthetically and to determine the readiness of fashion schools to implement sustainable fashion courses.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Sustainable Fashion

Sustainable fashion was derived from the word “sustainable” and contains values we can refer to for sustaining the ecosystem (Amalia, 2022). Kaikobad (2015) argues that sustainable fashion covers fashion itself, lifestyle development, ecological balance, natural-disasters-minimizing efforts, and eco-friendliness. It has three aspects, i.e., environmental, social, and economic, and two additional ones, which are aesthetic and cultural, associated with the culture or ethics to expand resources or laborers decently (Kozlowksi & Bardecki, 2019). It can be concluded that in producing sustainable fashion, it is necessary to pay attention to these five aspects, namely environmental, social, cultural, economic, aesthetic, and cultural aspects. Apart from that, it is also necessary to pay attention to its sustainability characteristics

Additionally, sustainable fashion aims to draw together all parties engaged in the fashion industry to alter and improve consumption and production manners. The intended parties are fashion designers, producers, distributors, and consumers (Kulsum, 2020). Shafie et al. (2021) convey some advantages sustainable fashion carries, e.g., decreasing environmental pollution by manifesting a production process that does not pollute the environment and results in scarcity. Recycling fashion items into new shapes or different models is also a sustainable fashion implementation. Sustainably produced fashion comes in good quality and durability, allowing consumers to cut expenses for buying new clothes and save money. It can be concluded that sustainable fashion will not be successful if there is no support and cooperation from consumers, producers, and distributors.

Sustainable fashion also gives consumers convenience by producing good-quality products that are comfortable to wear. It also augments community welfare if business owners consistently fulfill workers’ rights, preventing them from stress and elevating their welfare. This is what is said to be the application of the sustainable fashion aspect, namely the so aspect (Kozlowksi & Bardecki, 2019).

One of the sustainable fashion techniques is upcycling, comprising three techniques as follows (Suhartini et al., 2017):

1. Changing the model (upcycling clothing by changing the model).
2. Combining (upcycling by merging two clothes).
3. Adding other materials or ornaments (upcycling by adding materials or decoration).

These three techniques have different functions and processes, resulting in different product forms as well. This research applies these three techniques to produce products with different appearances

In fashion upcycling, the design is made using the same technique in general design making, i.e., sketching, creating a mood board, or carrying out technical drawing. However, in fashion upcycling, the design must refer to the available materials that meet upcycling products’ criteria.

2.2. Aesthetics

Sofiana (2015) proposes that when making a product, we must pay attention to the aesthetics of the product’s design elements and principles. Design elements are the simplest components in making a design. Meanwhile, design principles refer to the order of design elements to form attractive unity (Sumaryati, 2013). Therefore, to produce products that have good aesthetic value and are attractive, it is necessary to pay attention to the order of design principles and elements.

Djelantik (1999:17) remarks that esthetics have three elements as follows:

- a. Form or visual is associated with the shape and the composition or structure, visible, therefore can be sensed by eyes and ears.
- b. Weight or content is associated with the mood of an idea, concept, or message observers desire to deliver.
- c. Presentation or display is associated with presenting or displaying artwork to art connoisseurs.

A work or product will be said to be aesthetic if it contains every aesthetic element

3. METHOD

A qualitative approach with a descriptive method was implemented to collect data and information about assessing sustainable fashion upcycling casually. As

regards the research procedure, we carried out the following research steps.

First, the researchers made a research design after performing preliminary observation through 30 random respondents to collect data in the preliminary stage and general interviews and recording the results. Second, data were collected from selected informants as many 5 people as the research sources. Third, the advanced interviews. This interview was undertaken with 5 people who were reliable as informants/panelists. Fourth, the researchers collected data from observation, interviews, and documentation. The indicators used are the shape or appearance of the product, namely Design Elements which include shape, size, and color. The appearance or presentation of the product is the Design Principles which include Proportion, Center of Attention, Harmony, and Rhythm. Fifth, we analyzed the data and made a research report.

This research used the Miles and Huberman model as the data analysis technique. Miles and Huberman (1984) suggested that activities in data analysis encompassed data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. These processes could be performed once all data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The researcher collected data until they were considered credible and eligible for further analysis.

Data validity was checked using credibility criteria (internal validity), constituting one of the measurements of the truth of the data collected and referred to as internal validity in qualitative research. Credibility in qualitative research defined the suitability of the researcher's and the informant's concepts.

4. RESULTS

In terms of the design elements of color, size, and form, the upcycling technique modified the model of all products, i.e., products 1-5, bringing about significant changes in their form but still aligned with the functions. The products' size was adjusted to standard Indonesian teenagers or all-size. The products' color could be improved to make it more appealing by applying specific treatments, such as *shibori* or painting, accentuating the color and escalating the creativity value without degrading the sustainability concept. It was commensurate with the color design element theory by Riyanto (2009), who affirmed that color made all objects exquisite and attractive. The color pattern on the products' ornament design constituted color composition generated through color combination. Color enabled us to merge different design forms and elements.



Figure 1. Model Modification

In terms of the upcycling technique by “combination”, products 1, 2, and 3 had interesting, unique, and characterized forms and came in a suitable size for Indonesian teenagers. However, their color element needed color combination comporting with the form. It conforms to color theory, as described by Riyanto (2009), that an artwork's color plays a critical role in defining its movement, tension, space, form, expression, and others.



Figure 2. Combination

In terms of the upcycling technique by “adding other materials”, products 1, 2, and 3 had attractive, distinguished, and characterized forms, colors, and sizes suitable for Indonesian teenagers' age, characters, and sizes. Nevertheless, we noticed a weakness in the decoration added, which functioned to conceal defects on the jacket. The decoration should be proportional to the area it was applied to, thus maintaining the product's balanced proportion. It was congruent with the design element theory related to size by Sumaryati (2013), that every object came with sizes, and every size was different depending on its purpose, and an object's size was strongly correlated to the space to which it would belong. Elements applied to a design had to be in a well-considered size, helping the design be proportional.





Figure 3. Adding Other Materials

In terms of design principles concerning proportion, the center of interest, rhythm, and harmony, the upcycling technique altered all products' models. All products, which were products 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, were proportional yet had an insignificant center of interest due to the absence of decoration striking the eyes. It conflicted with the design principle theory related to the center of interest by Yuliarma (2016), that the center of interest was a design principle that made a certain area or decoration first glanced at by observers. Implementing the center of interest principle on a design would accentuate a product, making it more interesting. The design principle related to rhythm was suitable and noticeable in all products, and all products were considered harmonious in terms of overall appearance.

In terms of the upcycling technique by "combination", based on our interviews with four panelists, products 1, 2, and 3 were proportional. Nonetheless, they had no clear center of interest, bringing on no attractiveness when worn. It contradicted the design principle theory related to the center of interest by Sumaryati (2013), that this center of interest would direct the observers' eyes to the most eye-catching area of the product. Meanwhile, the design principle related to rhythm was considered good, and the overall appearance was in harmony.

In terms of the upcycling technique by "adding other materials", products 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 were proportional, but their center of interest, related to color and pattern, was still unfocused. It was inconsistent with Yuliarma (2016) and Sumaryati (2013), that the center of interest was the design principle which allowed an area or decoration to catch and draw the observers' first eyes and interests. Applying this design principle to a product design would accentuate the product, making it more appealing. The center of interest would direct the observers' eyes to the product's most attractive part.

Meanwhile, the design principle regarding rhythm was notable in the products' pattern, which was well organized and repeated, hence eye-satisfying. It corresponded with the design principle theory related to rhythm by Riyanto (2017), that rhythm referred to well-organized movement repetition, which was satisfying to the eyes. The rhythm would create a movement impression. It was in accord with Sumaryati (2013), that rhythm referred to eye movement which directed the eyes from one point to another without skipping any part of the points. The rhythm made the eyes move smoothly/in an organized way or not skip anything when observing clothes. Rhythm could be created by repetition, diversion,

and radiation exposure in a design element. It allowed a harmonious appearance. It was in accordance with Sumaryati (2013), that harmony indicated all design elements working together to engender desired and successful visual effects. Harmony was hence the impression of unity after perceiving suitability or conformity between design elements.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first, second, and third authors decided on the research theme under the consideration of the existing problem. The first author wrote the proposal and started the writing by making the concept map. The second author found references, literature reviews, and a suitable method. The third author asked panelists to assess products and analyze them in line with the literature reviewed. The second and third authors concluded, and the first author made the final, thorough report and the journal article.

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