

Project title:	Increasing the life of clothes
Discipline	Design
Key words:	Reuse, repair, circularity, cultural attitudes to reuse, upcycling
Supervisory team:	Dr Clive Hilton, Prof Claudia Eckert,
URL for lead supervisor's OU profile	http://www.open.ac.uk/people/cme8

Project Highlights:

- Understanding attitudes to reuse of clothing in different cultures
- Identifying enablers for attitude shifts

Overview:

The throw away culture of fast fashion is a huge problem for the planet. Many clothes are never worn and other are discarded long before their useful life is over. One reason is that people want to be seen in new clothes, but often they don't have the skills to repair or up cycle. Attitudes to reuse and repair of clothes varies enormously between age groups, social groups and national cultures. This PhD researches the attitude to how sustainability behaviour in clothing consumptions can be enhanced in particular groups.



Figure 1. Second-hand clothing

Enablers could include educating the general public or a specific consumer group, developing methods for working directly with consumers through workshops, repair cafes or on-line offers. The PhD could also target the way retailers offer second hand clothing or empowering designers to design for longevity or make use of second-hand clothing as a resource.

Methodology:

The Ph. D draws on social science methods, like interviews or focus groups to understand attitude to clothing and skills of in repairing or upcycling clothing. It devises and try out interventions to create behaviour shifts targeted to particular groups.

References & Further reading:

1. Black, S., 2008. *Eco-chic: The fashion paradox*. Black Dog.
2. Diddi, S. and Yan, R.-N. (2019) 'Consumer Perceptions Related to Clothing Repair and Community Mending Events: A Circular Economy Perspective', *Sustainability*, 11(19).
3. Zhang, L. and Hale, J. (2022) 'Extending the Lifetime of Clothing through Repair and Repurpose: An Investigation of Barriers and Enablers in UK Citizens', *Sustainability*, 14(17).

Further details:

This PhD suits someone with a master level degree and a background or a keen interest in fashion, who wants to applying social science methodology to making a different to fashion sustainability. The PhD requires good people and numeracy skills. Please contact claudia.eckert@open.ac.uk

Applications should include:

- A 1000 word cover letter outlining why the project is of interest to you and how your skills match those required
- an academic CV containing contact details of three academic references
- an Open University application form, downloadable from: <http://www.open.ac.uk/postgraduate/research-degrees/how-to-apply/mphil-and-phd-application-process>
- IELTS test scores where English is an additional language

Applications should be sent to

STEM-EI-PhD@open.ac.uk by 15.02.2023