**"Revive and Thrive: Enhancing Wellbeing and Value through Therapeutic Repair Workshops in Circular Fashion"**

Dr. Meryem Akin

Senior Lecturer Business and Management

Bath Business School, Bath Spa University, UK

Contact: [m.akin2@Bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:m.akin2@Bathspa.ac.uk)

Kirsty Bennetta

Lecturer Fashion Marketing and Management

Bath Business School, Bath Spa University, UK

Contact: [K.bennetta@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:K.bennetta@bathspa.ac.uk)

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**Abstract:**

The fashion industry has long been characterized by fast production cycles and disposable consumption patterns, leading to significant environmental and social challenges. The intersection of circular fashion, consumer wellbeing, and skill-based therapeutic interventions presents a novel approach to sustainable fashion. This study explores how therapeutic repair workshops in circular fashion not only promote sustainability but also enhance consumer wellbeing and create additional value. By integrating the concepts of circular economy and mental health, this research offers insights into the multifaceted benefits of repairing skills within the fashion industry. The "Creative Denim Redesign and Repair Workshop Series" emerges as a response to the growing need for sustainable fashion practices. With a commitment to fostering conscious consumption, this initiative aims to empower individuals with practical skills that not only breathe new life into their wardrobes but also contribute to a more sustainable and mindful approach to style as well as enhancing their well-being and values.

**Introduction:**

The fashion industry is at a pivotal moment, grappling with its significant environmental impact and the growing demand for sustainable practices. Circular fashion, which emphasizes recycling, repurposing, and extending the life of garments, has emerged as a key solution. Simultaneously, there is increasing recognition of the role that creative and hands-on activities can play in promoting mental wellbeing. This study aims to bridge these domains by investigating how repair workshops, a core component of circular fashion, can serve as therapeutic interventions that enhance consumer wellbeing and create new value in the fashion ecosystem.

**Literature Review:**

A range of studies have explored the impact of therapeutic workshops on wellbeing. Martins (2010) found that these workshops can promote positive feelings and social engagement, while Smith (2019) highlighted the role of craft workshops in creating atmospheres of care and recovery. Hood (2007) emphasized the importance of leisure activities in enhancing wellbeing, and Silva (2022) specifically focused on the benefits of a therapeutic embroidery workshop for women with psychological distress. These studies collectively suggest that therapeutic repair workshops in circular fashion can enhance wellbeing by promoting positive emotions, social engagement, and the development of personal resources.

**Circular Fashion:** Circular fashion refers to a restorative and regenerative system in which clothing and textiles are designed, sourced, produced, and provided with the intention of being used and circulated responsibly and effectively in society for as long as possible, in their most valuable form, and then returned safely to the biosphere when no longer of use. Recent studies highlight the environmental benefits of circular fashion, including reduced waste and lower carbon footprints (Ellen MacArthur Foundation, 2021).

**Wellbeing and Creative Activities:** Engaging in creative activities has been shown to have significant positive effects on mental health and wellbeing. Repairing clothes can provide a sense of accomplishment, enhance mood, and serve as a form of mindfulness (Bell, 2020). This aligns with the concept of "craftfulness," which emphasizes the therapeutic benefits of making and mending (Hegarty, 2019).

**Therapeutic Repair Workshops:** Repair workshops, where participants learn to mend and upcycle clothing, combine the principles of circular fashion with therapeutic practice. These workshops offer a space for social interaction, skill-building, and personal expression, all of which contribute to overall wellbeing. The social aspect of these workshops also helps in building a community around sustainable practice (Fletcher, 2018).

**Methodology:**

This study employs a qualitative approach to assess the impact of repair workshops on participants' wellbeing and perceptions of value creation. Semi-structured interview questions have been asked to the participants before and after the workshops. The research was conducted in Bath Business School and Bath School of Art and Design repair workshops. In-depth interviews were conducted with a subset of participants to gather detailed insights into their experiences during the workshops. These interviews focused on the therapeutic aspects of the activities, the skills acquired, and the perceived value created through the repair process.

**Results:**

The findings indicate significant improvements in participants' wellbeing scores post-workshop, with many reporting feelings of relaxation, accomplishment, and enhanced mood. Participants also expressed a greater appreciation for the value of their clothing and an increased intention to engage in sustainable practices. The qualitative interviews revealed that the workshops provided a sense of community and belonging, and the act of repairing was described as both empowering and therapeutic. By the end of the workshop series, participants will have gained valuable insights and practical tools to revolutionize their approach to fashion, aligning their wardrobes with sustainability, individuality, and a heightened awareness of the environmental impact of their choices. Participants in the "Creative Denim Redesign and Repair Workshop Series" can anticipate a range of impactful takeaways and learning outcomes: practical skills for sustainable fashion, joy in handmade creations, empowerment through skills, individuality and personal style, reduced fashion waste and conscious consumption.

**Enhanced Wellbeing:** The data showed indications of improved mental health and wellbeing among participants. This aligns with existing research on the benefits of creative and hands-on activities for mental health (Ryff, 2019).

**Value Creation:** Participants noted a renewed sense of value in their clothing, viewing repaired items as unique and personal. This shift in perception supports the principles of circular fashion, where the longevity and emotional durability of garments are prioritized (Chapman, 2021).

**Skill Development:** The workshops were effective in teaching practical repairing skills, which participants felt confident to use independently in the future. This skill development is crucial for fostering a culture of repair and reuse, essential components of the circular economy (Woolridge, 2020).

**Discussions**

The integration of therapeutic repair workshops within the framework of circular fashion offers a holistic approach to sustainability that encompasses environmental, economic, and social dimensions. By enhancing consumer wellbeing and creating value through the repair and reuse of clothing, these workshops address multiple challenges faced by the fashion industry.

**Sustainability and Consumer Engagement:** Repair workshops engage consumers in sustainable practices, fostering a deeper connection to their clothing and a greater understanding of the environmental impact of fashion. This engagement is crucial for the broader adoption of circular fashion principles (Bocken et al., 2016).

**Mental Health Benefits:** The mental health benefits observed in this study underscore the potential for repair workshops to serve as therapeutic interventions. This aligns with broader trends in mental health care that emphasize the importance of creative and social activities for wellbeing (Cohen et al., 2018).

**Community Building:** The social interactions facilitated by the workshops help build a community of like-minded individuals committed to sustainability. This sense of community can enhance the overall impact of circular fashion initiatives by creating a supportive network of advocates and practitioners (Lehmann et al., 2021).

**Conclusion**:

Therapeutic repair workshops in circular fashion not only promote environmental sustainability but also contribute to consumer wellbeing and value creation. By fostering skills, enhancing mental health, and building community, these workshops represent a powerful tool for driving the transition to a more sustainable and resilient fashion industry. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of such workshops and investigate ways to scale these initiatives to reach a broader audience.

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