

## Scaling up British fashion upcycling businesses: Multi-stakeholder perspectives

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** Fashion upcycling, the process of using waste clothing and textiles to create new products, is an alternative to business-as-usual practices which can effectively address concerns on excessive consumption of energy and material resources and use of chemicals in the fashion industry. Scaling up fashion upcycling businesses could enable the transition of the fashion industry towards sustainability. Past studies in fashion upcycling have paid attention to limited aspects of the businesses and comprehensive synthesis of viewpoints from diverse stakeholders involved in the business is lacking. This paper therefore aims to provide such a synthesis, focusing on the challenges and success factors for expanding (or scaling up) British upcycling businesses in fashion industry.

**Design/methodology/approach:** This study used semi-structured interviews with 23 stakeholders of British fashion upcycling businesses (small- and medium-sized): 7 consumers and 16 practitioners including material suppliers, upcycling designers and makers, and retailers. All

interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed and analysed by thematic analysis with QSR NVivo 10 software.

**Findings:** Four different perspectives (by material suppliers, upcyclers, retailers and consumers) on challenges and success factors for scaling up upcycling businesses in the UK as well as suitable actors to take actions for positive change were identified. Common challenges and success factors across stakeholders were highlighted.

**Originality/value:** The paper partially corroborated previous research and provided new information on perceived challenges and success factors for scaling up by extended stakeholders. The findings could be useful to interested direct and indirect stakeholders for their actions towards sustainability.

**Keywords:** Design; Fashion; Scaling up; Sustainability; Sustainable Business; Sustainable Consumption; Sustainable Production; Upcycling

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