Proposing a Method and Framework for Investigating Creativity in Fashioning Self-Identity

Proposta de Método e Modelo Para Investigar a Criatividade na Construção da Autoidentidade Através da Moda

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In this article, a method is developed and proposed, dubbed the "Outfit of the Day Logbook", which can be used to analyze an individual's creative processes within their design context (or other). In this article, the focus is on everyday fashion activities such as getting dressed and wearing clothes through daily activities and interactions with the surrounding environment. The paper builds on ideas from theories of creativity, introducing primary theories on how creativity has been understood and how it relates to fashion design, drawing inspiration from Vlad Petre Glăveanu's (2014) theory of distributed creativity. Based on the concept of "distributed creativity", theories of the fashioned body by Joanne Entwistle (2015) and the methodology of wardrobe studies (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017), the logbook was developed for this paper. Empirical data were collected from individuals who participated in the qualitative study for which the logbook was constructed, with three case studies selected for this paper. Analyzing the respondents' answers highlights the social, emotional, and contextual elements that influence an individual's accessibility to their creative potential, which enabled the proposal of a framework of conditions that either foster or limit their use of creativity. The method serves as a qualitative research tool that can be refined, discussed, further developed, and used as interdisciplinary inspiration in other fields, such as consumer research, fashion, design, or other related practices. The focus was to formulate a proposal for a method that involves respondents in

their emotional, social, and material contexts at different times in their everyday lives.

Proposta de Método e Modelo Para Investigar a Criatividade na Construção da Autoidentidade Através da Moda

Este artigo desenvolve e propõe um método, denominado "Diário do Look do Dia", que pode ser utilizado para analisar os processos criativos de um indivíduo no contexto do design (ou de outras áreas). O foco incide sobre atividades quotidianas relacionadas com a moda, como o ato de vestir-se e o uso de roupas nas atividades diárias e nas interações com o ambiente envolvente. O artigo fundamenta-se em teorias da criatividade, apresentando as principais abordagens sobre o modo como esta tem sido compreendida e a sua relação com o design de moda, com especial destaque para a teoria da criatividade distribuída de Vlad Petre Glăveanu (2014). O diário utilizado no estudo foi desenvolvido a partir deste conceito, nas teorias do corpo modelado de Joanne Entwistle (2015) e na metodologia dos estudos do guarda-roupa (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017). Os dados empíricos foram recolhidos junto de indivíduos que participaram num estudo qualitativo concebido para esse efeito, tendo sido selecionados três estudos de caso para este artigo. A análise das respostas dos participantes evidencia os elementos sociais, emocionais e contextuais que influenciam o acesso de um indivíduo ao seu potencial criativo, permitindo a proposta de um conjunto de condições que favorecem ou limitam o uso da criatividade. O método apresentado constitui uma ferramenta de investigação qualitativa que pode ser aprimorada, debatida, desenvolvida e adaptada como inspiração interdisciplinar em áreas como a investigação do consumidor, a moda, o design ou outras práticas afins. O principal objetivo foi formular uma proposta metodológica que envolva os participantes nos seus contextos emocionais, sociais e materiais, em diferentes momentos da sua vida quotidiana.

***Palavras-chave:** criatividade distribuída, ferramenta qualitativa, método do guarda-roupa, design de moda*

Introduction

In general, the term "creativity" is commonly used in our language without a single, certain, or universally accepted meaning, which can lead to confusion. The approach of creativity being something not fully understood or used interchangeably is not useful in the long term if we wish to work with and encourage creative practices. Instead, we must take ownership of our creativity as it adds richness and complexity to our way of life (Jennings, 2011).

The connection between Fashion (capital F, referring to the Fashion system, especially high-end design) and creativity seems obvious. Fashion, as a field

of constant newness and considered part of the arts within academia, often presents the idea of creativity in this field as special and unique to those who engage with it. Fashion designers in high-end brands are frequently regarded as geniuses for the creativity they bring to their creations. This is not specific to the field of Fashion, as many art forms have historically appraised successful artists as geniuses or as possessing superior creativity. Growing up watching *Project Runway* or more recent shows like *Making the Cut* and *Next in Fashion*, it is possible to observe designers battling and struggling as they compete to be recognised as the and most talented and creative designer and therefore the "next in Fashion" decided by judges who hold status within the Fashion system themselves — as models, designers, stylists or fashion icons. This connection of creativity and Fashion is focused on geniuses, but there is also creativity connected to our everyday fashion practices. All human beings utilize creativity in various forms and are creative, not only in the arts. We all use fashion daily, as we dress for the day ahead and make choices on what to wear to best reflect our identity, feel comfortable, or convey confidence. Is this not an example of creativity in everyday life?

The Fashion system provides us with trends and what is "in style", but at the same time, each person makes their own styling choices and puts together outfits that require some amount of creativity. Often, truly reflecting one's identity requires considerable creativity and introspection. Even though we rely on the Fashion system to "tell" us what is right and wrong, maybe because we feel we are not creative enough on our own. Being creative with fashion choices can also be scary or even dangerous if you step outside what is considered the norm. This, in turn, may limit our creativity when choosing an outfit, causing us to hesitate with thoughts like "what will people think if I wear this, or that?" and so on. *Creativity Takes Courage* (Smit & van der Hulst, 2018) is the title of one of the books I use as a reference in this paper; another one is entitled *Creative Living Beyond Fear* (Gilbert, 2015). Being creative with our style takes courage, but why is there this fear and need for courage? What contextual conditions enable and limit our creative freedom in our everyday fashion practices?

Theories on Creativity

To understand what creativity is and how it relates to fashion, I researched various theories on the nature of creativity and its underlying mechanisms. The term "creativity" is challenging to define and is widely used in different contexts across multiple fields. Some might compare it to "love", suggesting that it is something not meant to be fully understood but experienced (Jennings, 2011). This approach is not useful, as it does not encourage us to take ownership of our creativity, which is essential since creativity adds to the richness and complexity of life.

Creativity is about connections and interactions, innovation, and originality, which, when we engage with it, gives us the ability to live life to the fullest

(Jennings, 2011). Creativity is not just practical, as it helps us solve problems and invent; it is also a form of self-expression (Boon, 2014), as evident in fashion, when we use clothes to shape our identity. Creativity is what truly makes fashion, rather than simply wearing clothes for practical reasons, such as keeping warm. Being creative with our fashion choices enables us to reveal our inner selves to our surroundings, as the symbols inherent in our outfits allow people to decode and understand us. Being creative, let alone expressing creative freedom in fashion, is a challenging task. As mentioned in the introduction, there has been a tendency to attribute creativity to "geniuses" in both everyday life and academia (Glăveanu, 2014). Many examples of this could be mentioned, but as Judkins (2016) explains:

> the cult of the creative genius appeared with art's first superstar, Michelangelo. In 1550, his biographer and PR guru, Vasari, promoted the idea of the "Divine Michelangelo". His talent was a gift from God, Vasari said, and claimed that God bestowed such ability only on the privileged few, the chosen ones. It fostered an elite and disempowering attitude to creativity. (p. 12)

In many fields of research, the idea that an elite possesses creative skills is being challenged today, as we try to understand creativity in different ways. Our entire system is built on promoting this idea as well as the notion that creativity thrives in certain fields, often in the arts. However, creativity is not reserved for the creative elite, the acclaimed, or the famous. It is constantly used in everyday life and is regarded as a normally distributed trait found in everyone to varying degrees (Jennings, 2011), making creativity omnipresent (Boon, 2014).

Being creative is present when an artist paints, a scientist researches, and when you pick out which shoes to wear with your jeans, there is no single best way to be creative (Jennings, 2011). This "box" that has otherwise been constructed around the genius has strong walls, both material and symbolic, and limits creative production (Glăveanu, 2014). There is a difference between being creative on a personal level and on a historical level.

> On a personal level, we are all creative to some extent (. . .). Though these actions use the brain in a creative manner, they will never enter the public arena (. . .). So, to be historically creative, you need to at least have the intention to contribute something to a creative domain. (Boon, 2014, p. 27)

As we all inherently possess creativity, acquiring it is not the challenge; instead, it is about enabling the full potential of this creativity, both in historical and personal creative practices (Jennings, 2011). To access our creative potential, we need to live a life driven more by curiosity than fear (Gilbert, 2015) because creativity is essential for finding solutions to our daily problems and for addressing societal issues (Smit & van der Hulst, 2018).

Distributed Creativity

One aspect of this involves challenging the "genius" approach to creativity, where the fear arises that we are not capable of doing something or being creative because it is perceived as a trait reserved for a select few. This perception must be addressed through changes in practice and education to foster and enrich the potential for nurturing creativity (Glăveanu & Kaufman, 2022).

Another obstacle is external judgment (Boon, 2014), along with social factors, which have often been examined in isolation when investigating creativity and psychology, focusing separately on the individual, the context, and the social, rather than adopting a dynamic conception (Glăveanu, 2014). A theory that is useful for challenging these issues and has highly influenced the method used in this paper is the theory and methodology of distributed creativity by Vlad Petre Glăveanu (2014). This theory challenges the traditional approach to investigating creativity "inside the box", that is, inside the mind of the individual, by proposing a distributed model of creativity, developed through the study of a case in folk arts. Expanding on an existing paradigm of psychology, the we-paradigm which means "away from univariate, positivistic research paradigms to more complex, constructivist, systems-oriented research models (...) based on the general idea that creativity takes place within, is constituted and influenced by, and has consequences for, a social context" (Glăveanu, 2014).

Glăveanu (2014) points not only to social relations (conceptualized as the We-paradigm) but also to interaction with artefacts and the development of creative expression over time. This method stands in clear contrast to the I- or He-paradigm, which focused on genius, non-distributed creation, or the idea that creative processes were bound to one single "centre" — the individual mind. The distributed approach, combined with the cultural psychology of creativity, extends into the social and material world, conceptualizing *creative action.* This means that

> what a cultural psychological account of distributed creativity ultimately aims to do is "seek to recover the power inherent in the term [creativity] for bringing the elevated and the mundane into conjunction, and for illuminating how exceptional and the ordinary feed off each other". (Glăveanu, 2014, p. 85)

Creative expression is possible only from within a society and culture, viewing creativity not as a "thing" but as action in and on the world (Glăveanu, 2014). This means recognizing the self as an agent within an ever-changing world, wherein we can attempt to identify the conditions that enable and limit this individual's creativity in their given context. An important point is that, even as this method focuses on the context, distributed creativity is not about the person, but rather about analyzing the person within a context. Within the framework of distributed creativity, five distinct elements are presented, with a focus on the differences within sociality, materiality, and temporality that creativity acts on.

Glăveanu (2014) writes that advancing theory and method in the psychology of creativity involves focusing on what people actually do. This focus on the context and what people actually do when they are being creative in dressing their body is the basis of the method presented in this paper, as well as its emphasis on the emotional element by combining body and mind. Combinig not only the mind's creativity, but also the embodied practice of dressing, which is influenced by the present context, as Joanne Entwistle (2015) writes in *The Fashioned Body*: "understanding dress in everyday life requires looking not only at how individuals turn to their bodies but how dress operates between individuals as an inter-subjective experience as well as a subjective one" (p. 35). These theories on creativity, everyday fashion practices, and the fashioned body all influenced the method.

Creative practices and thinking can be applied to any field or project, but they are often more visible to people and adapt more easily to analysis in what is commonly known as "creative fields" such as the arts. Craftsmanship is frequently associated with creativity. Arts such as painting, jewelry making, knitting, and crafting in general have, and will likely continue to be perceived as more creative pursuits than, for example, accounting. This paper challenges the elitist view on creativity and its value in analysis by examining a common creative practice in which all humans in civilized society engage: getting dressed.

Methods for Inspiration to Enquiry

To gather empirical data for the paper, which draws on the presented perspectives of creativity, several methodologies were combined to develop a qualitative tool, called the "Outfit of the Day Logbook", designed to collect insights into the everyday human experience with fashion. The name was derived from a popular trend, originating on the social media platform Instagram, where using "OOTD" as a hashtag was and still is, to some extent, a way to present the outfits that people had creatively put together. In the same spirit of sharing and cataloguing the daily outfits, the research required respondents to record what they wore and provide commentary based on specific questions, while also allowing them to journal freely in their own style (Gaver et al., 1999).

The method itself could be further refined by more extensively incorporating cultural probe theory and methodology (Gaver et al., 1999), embracing openness and playfulness in the exploration of creativity through the logbook. In the logbook itself, there are some similarities to the cultural probe's methodology, such as the associative task of keeping a logbook, writing thoughts down like a diary, and taking pictures. However, it could be further developed into a comprehensive tool to investigate the contextual conditions of creativity. Some respondents used the logbook more openly than scripted, akin to a probe task, which in turn yielded interesting results and sparked the idea of combining the logbook method with the cultural probe methodology.

Primarily, the inspiration was wardrobe studies, as this method focuses on gathering data through investigations into the belongings in people's wardrobes using different approaches. Upon reviewing examples of other case studies that employ this method, inspiration is drawn from three specific approaches, which will be briefly presented here. However, readers are encouraged to consult the original material for a more comprehensive understanding if they wish to apply these methods (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017). The basis for the description of outfits was inspired by method 16 (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017).

Method 16 includes a wardrobe audit worksheet that asks respondents to record the garment type, brand, type of fiber, fabric, color, pattern, details, cut, age, and damage, which are many of the descriptive features used as examples for respondents to build their outfit descriptions in the logbook. The voluntary providing of a photo of the outfit was inspired by method 20 (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017), a "daily catalogue" where they took a picture of themselves every day so they could look back on it. Method 11 (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017) involves interviews, specifically those in which participants rate and compare chosen objects. This inspired some of the examples given for the emotional description, which was vital to the research, such as their feelings towards the objects, what they like and dislike, and so on. Interestingly, one of the students who was an early respondent used the logbook as a rating system, assigning a rating from 1 to 10 to their outfits. This is also what is used in Method 11 and might be a useful addition to the logbook method, depending on the research questions one wishes to investigate. Other than that, the emotional description part, which focuses on both internal and external experiences while wearing their outfits, was developed specifically for the logbook and, in that sense, is an extension of the wardrobe method, inspired by the distributed creativity theory.

As wardrobe studies primarily focus on what is in the wardrobe itself, the focus of this paper, along with the logbook, was on the creative practices behind the clothing choices made by the respondents and the experiences they had while interacting with the world and their context. This is somewhat mentioned in method 20, where the photos were accompanied by notes on their emotions, physicality, and daily interactions. Whereas this method focused on the contents of the wardrobe and the visual, the purpose of the logbook is to analyze creativity in everyday fashion practice, focusing on the emotional, embodied, and creative experience of the respondents (Entwistle, 2015).

Introduction to Research

The "Outfit of the Day Logbook" is structured as a logbook or diary, where respondents can write down what they wear, their emotions, and any encounters they have during the day, and voluntarily take pictures to accompany their outfit descriptions. The first part includes demographic questions, such as age, gender, and occupation, which respondents are asked to answer if they feel comfortable doing so. Furthermore, it contains an anonymity clause and

a description of the research purpose to address ethical concerns, ensuring that respondents understand they are encouraged to share only what they feel comfortable disclosing, particularly if they choose not to remain anonymous. All respondents in this paper signed a statement declaring that they would not be anonymous. However, prioritizing their anonymity was deemed essential.

The logbook has two columns: one describes the assignment, and the other is designated for written responses (Figure 1). Each day is represented by two rows: one for describing the outfit and the other for reflecting on the emotional experience that day. To keep the logbook open for interpretation and give the respondents some freedom, each column has only suggestions of what you could write about in keyword segments. This is to maintain some openness to the assignment while keeping it bounded in the form that requires them to fill out both a description of clothes and emotions. As a tool for qualitative research, it is based on ideas such as journaling, interviewing, and observation, similar to the wardrobe method and related approaches from anthropology (Bundgaard & Mogensen, 2018). The goal is not to elicit data aimed at achieving statistically significant results, but rather to explore the potential uses of this logbook format as an experimental approach to researching creative experiences. The logbook has 14 pages for 14 days to fill out, but it can be used for a longer or shorter period, depending on the material that needs to be gathered.

Figure 1: *Screenshot of the layout of the "Outfit of the Day Logbook"*

Some respondents requested the ability to write on their phones in their own notes or in other formats to customize their use of the logbook. As long as the structure of maintaining a logbook or diary is preserved, the method and underlying concepts remain intact and may, in fact, enhance the outcome of

qualitative data obtained. As this paper examines creativity in everyday fashion practices, the investigative method should also prioritize encouraging creative freedom among respondents.

The three respondents utilized all 14 days of the logbook, which is the primary data collected for the analysis in this paper, attempting to provide examples of answers to the question: "what conditions enable or limit the possibility of creative expressions in everyday fashion practice?". The three respondents vary in gender and age, comprising two males and one female, with ages ranging from 27 to 38 years. Besides them, a group of young students under 18, all of whom are part of the LGBTQIA+ community, participated but for different reasons, did not complete the logbook, and are therefore not included in the paper because they presented insufficient data for comparison with the other respondents. Nevertheless, they had interesting ways of approaching the assignment as well as experiences with their clothes that could serve as inspiration for further work on perfecting the method itself, as well as research on the relationship between clothes, creativity, identity, and gender.

As an experimental study and, in this sense, a "prototype" for understanding everyday fashion practices, the respondents were chosen randomly through connections and references. Two male respondents were selected based on their prior participation in research on gender and fashion. The female respondent and younger participants were recruited through a call for individuals interested in exploring their relationship with the clothes they wear daily. No interviews were conducted, as the logbook was intended to provide the necessary data to examine possible outcomes. The respondent's demographic data is also of less interest within the scope of this paper.

Analysis of Logbooks

To analyze the data collected from the three complete logbooks, the analytical approach was inspired by method 19 from wardrobe studies (Fletcher & Klepp, 2017). This method involved identifying responses that revealed common themes or offered novel and surprising insights. The data from each respondent was compiled and presented as a collage, capturing their most significant reflections. These collages, used to create keywords for each participant, were especially descriptive advertisements that they frequently used to convey their feelings. In addition to their descriptions, two of the respondents included pictures, which were also compiled into a collage to provide a comprehensive view of their outfit choices side by side (Figure 2, Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9 and Figure 10).

1. 6/2/23

I made the decision several years ago to attempt to wear a uniform rather than switching up my looks. Having a signature look cuts back on the time it takes to get dressed, it makes me recognizable and it means that I don't need to go and buy stuff I don't need.

It is important to me that my outfit in comfortable i.e that I can move in it, that it is breathable, that it keeps me warm and that the textiles are of a relatively high quality.

I have very little emotional response to the outfit. I personally find sweat pants really ugly but I wear them for such a short time and the comfort makes up for it.

2. 7/2/23

Black mesh nike trainers, colorful socks, faded levi's 501's, white boxer briefs, old white t shirt (tight fit), grey sweater by Anerkjendt in 100 percent wool, watch by David Wellington with black leather strap, when outside navy blue coat and when biking a black helmet.

3. 8/2/23

Comfortable and practical – I was giving a lecture in Holstebro so it had to be something that was fast to get in and out of so I could do my makeup and get into costume fast

Drag performance – black shoes with ankle strap, stockings (1 pair of light pink stockings and two pairs of nude stockings), hip pads, bra, silicone cutlets size 85E, Floral dress (white with green and red tropical flowers flowers), clip on earrings (gold), pearl necklace, 6 pairs of eyelashes, short black synthetic wig.

Constricting, tight, hot, but I looked amazingly frumpy

5. 10/2/23

I was travelling for work and was on my feet all day. I had to wear something that was comfortable, practical, and that brought as little attention to me as possible (I was conducting field work in Sønderborg).

6 7. 12/2/23

I spent the majority of the day with my nephews. I had to wear something casual and practical

8. 13/2/23

Black mesh nikes, colorful socks, black levis 501s, tight white t shirt by JBS, greay sweat shirt by Reigning Champ (bought in Canada in 2014).

9. 14/2/23

I remember putting on the sweat shirt this morning and remembering the day I bought it. I was in Canada visiting a friend and we went shopping before we had brunch. Good times.

Hot and sweaty, but I looked great

Gave presentation at library in drag. Black kitten heels, three pairs of stockings, hip pads, lycra body stocking, black bra and silicone cutlets, cream dress with flowers, pearl noclace, vintage Lanvin gold clip ons, black short synthetic wig.

friend tonight. I wanted to wear something inconspicuous that does not look sloppy. It still has to be casual and comfortable.

I fluctuate very little emotionally during the day. I generally pay little attention to my inner life.

Bio: (the more knowledge the better, but only fill out what you are comfortable with)

Nam [redacted] Larsen

Age: ___

Gender: ___

Nationality: ___

Occupation: ___

Do you wish to be anonymous? Yes ___ No_x__

Will you be available for follow up questions by e-mail or otherwise agreed? Yes_x__ No___

Comfortable
practical
casual
Inconspicous

Affection:
memories
sweatshirt

Drag:
Hot
tight
constricting
look great
frumpy
amazingly

Figure 2: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 1*

1. 6/2/23

Checked weather for the day -

what meetings I'm having -

so I am ok to dress casual

. bleached my hair so I want clothes that go well with it

Painted nails silver, so going with a silver and black color scheme

Feeling good about my wardrobe and my nails

My colleagues are used to my unique fashion choices by now, they do not even comment

I'm very comfortable physically and mentally with these clothes, this is how I often dress

think about if I look professional in more casual clothes

s think about if I should dress more "my age"

outfit shows that I am professional yet still relaxed and with a slight twist

I don't want to look too "normal" and just fit in

2. 7/2/23 This pink color is one of my favorites, it just makes me happy

I ran out of time to iron my shirt in the morning, and this bothered me a bit

The collar of the shirt underneath is a bit too big and this bothered me a bit as well

3. 8/2/23 Today I am teaching so I tried to be a bit more professional with dress pants and button up shirt with a sweater on top

It is the second time I am with this group of students, so they do not know me very well yet which makes me think a bit more closely about what I wear and how I present myself

4. 9/2/23 I worked from home today, and had some things to do around town

For some reason I felt like being a bit nerdy/fancy/Max Headroomy so I wore a tie and a short sleeve shirt

I felt good about these clothes when I was walking around

5. 10/2/23 But at one point (on the train) I felt a bit odd because not many people here wear ties

Today I taught a new class of engineering students for the first time this semester

I wanted to be professional but relaxed at the same time NASA shirt on, which shows that I am a nerd too and hopefully my students will relate

6. 11/2/23 , I felt good and relaxed about my clothes today

I chose clothes that are warm because the shop is chilly in the winter

I felt totally comfortable with these clothes, and the only people I was with today were friends so I don't feel judged by strangers

7. 12/2/23

Today I worked in the workshop again, but I also went out to run errands and go to a second hand clothing market so I wanted clothes that are practical but also a little cool

I have a lot of memories associated with this sh

It's from a different time in my life

I like how it has my name on it, maybe people I don't know will see it and feel more comfortable to say hi or smile

I felt good about the clothes, at the clothing event as well which is where people are very focused

Figure 3: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 2*

8. 13/2/23

I repaired this shirt - it had some small rips at the elbows - so I wanted to wear it again

I really like the color blue, and the way the shirt is fitted

I decided to class it up a bit with fancier shoes

I felt good in these clothes, professional yet relaxed

9. 14/2/23

I was going to a speed dating event in the evening, and I added a black sweater and grey blazer over the shirt, plus a black scarf to look a bit fancier

I felt very confident in these clothes, it's nice to be fancy sometimes

shoes are

10. 15/2/23

Today I was teaching again, so I wanted to look casual-professional

I saw my old converse shoes and decided to put them into rotation

I went with a navy shirt and sweater combo, it's fun to just look nerdy some days

I felt good in this outfit today, but I felt a little self conscious about how shabby my old

11. 16/2/23 (TEDxTalk)

I had to wear a dress for the occasion :-)

It is very comfortable to wear!

I worked from home today, so I didn't feel any judgment from outside about my clothes

I had friends come over in the evening, one said they liked the dress and the other didn't

I think your friends will get used to any style you choose, and be accepting of it

12. 17/2/23

I stayed home sick today :-/

I wore my sweats all day

It was cozy and warm, but it sucks to be ill

Today I saw my green pants in the closet and decided to wear them

I went shopping for new pillows, and I felt a bit under-dressed in one of those fancy home shops

But it didn't bother me too much :-)

13. 18/2/23

14. 19/2/23

I was still feeling the effects of the cold today, so I dressed in warm clothes with a wool sweater and scarf

Nerdy   Proffessional   casual   relaxed

fancy   not look "normal"   Judged

Dress

relations to people you encounter   cozy & warm   sick

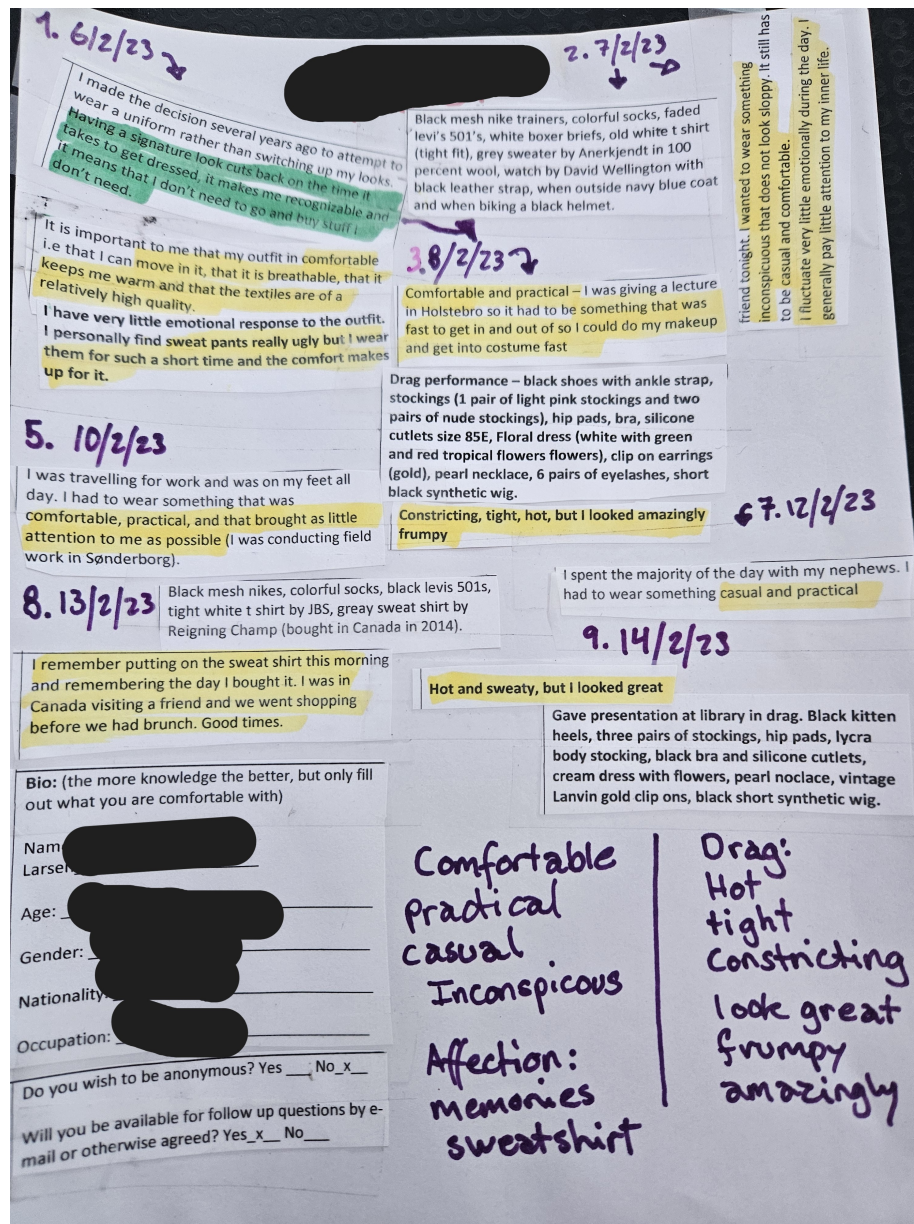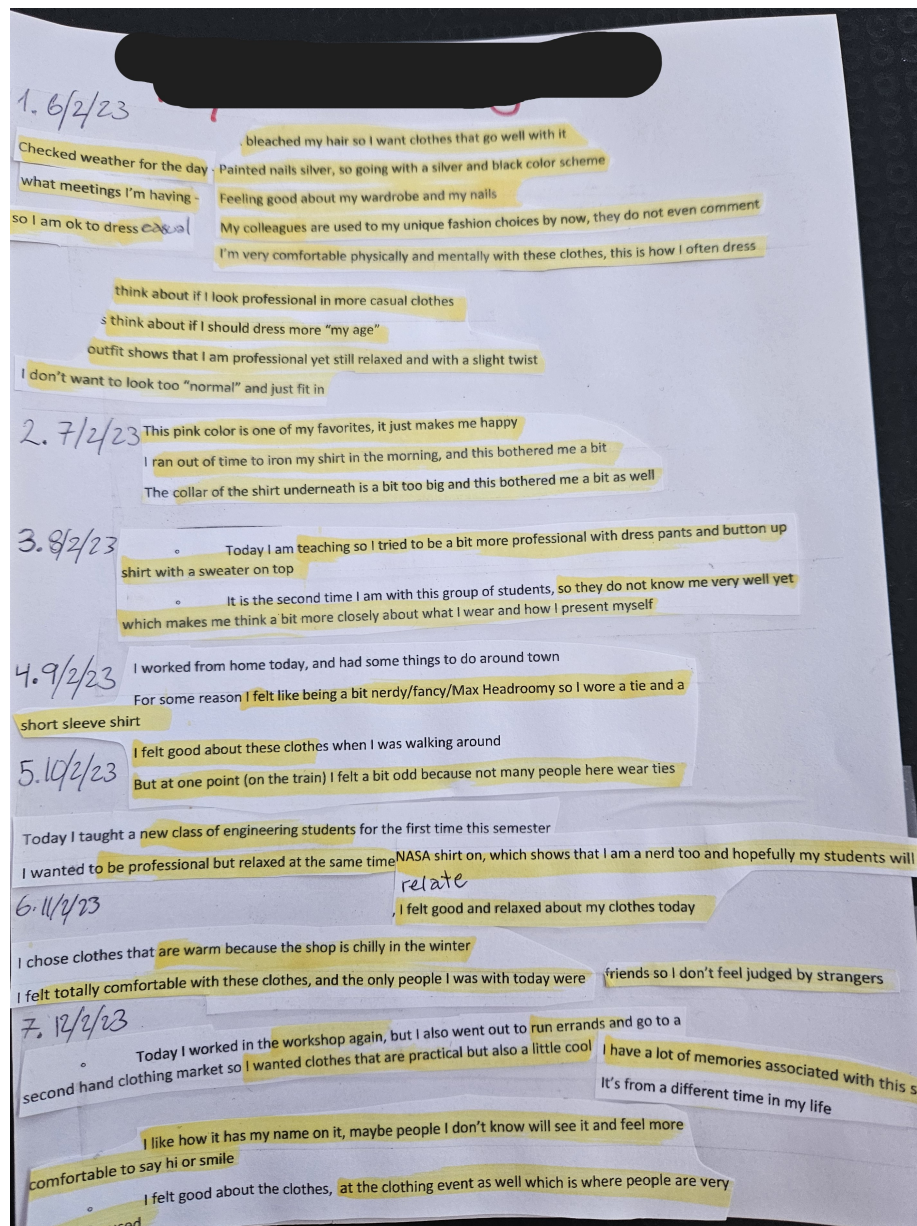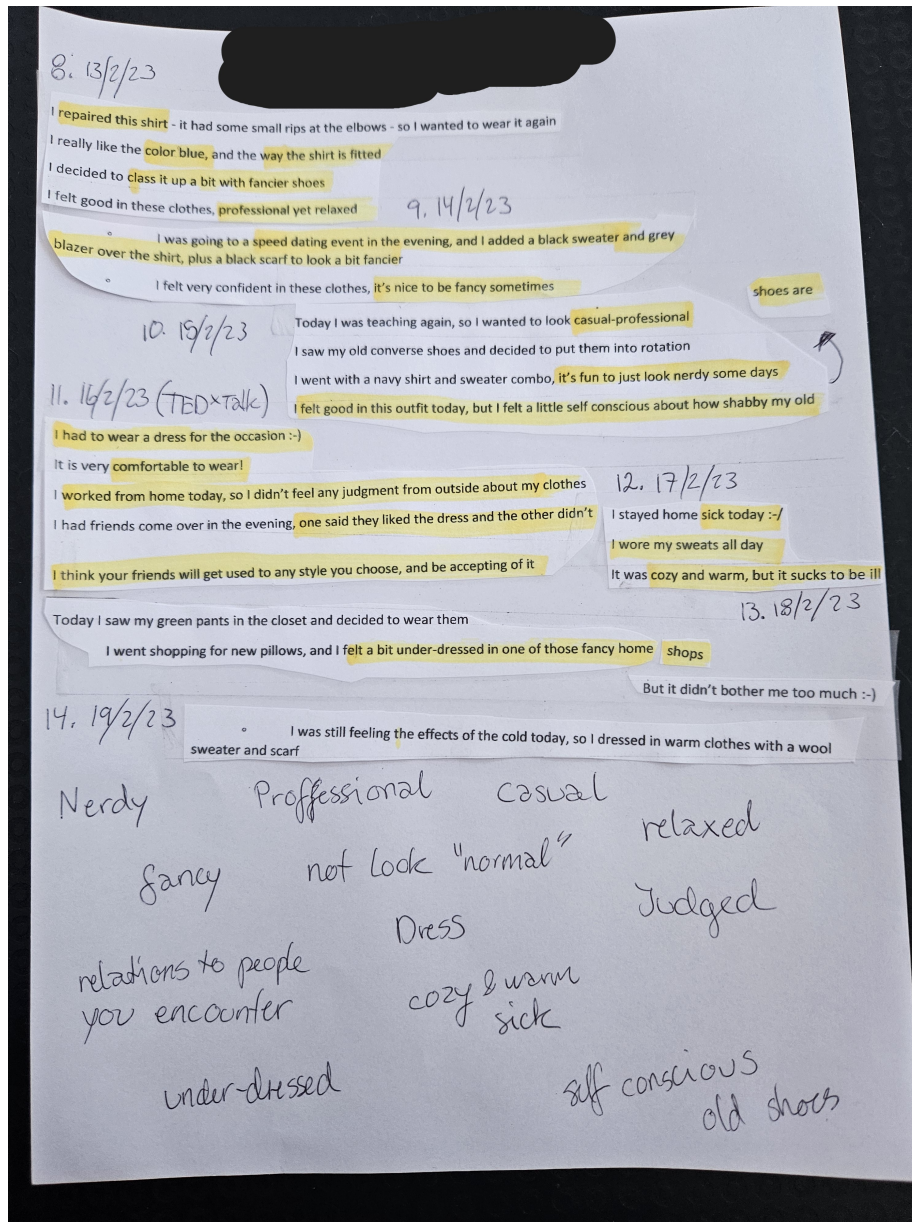under-dressed   self conscious   old shoes

Figure 4: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 2*
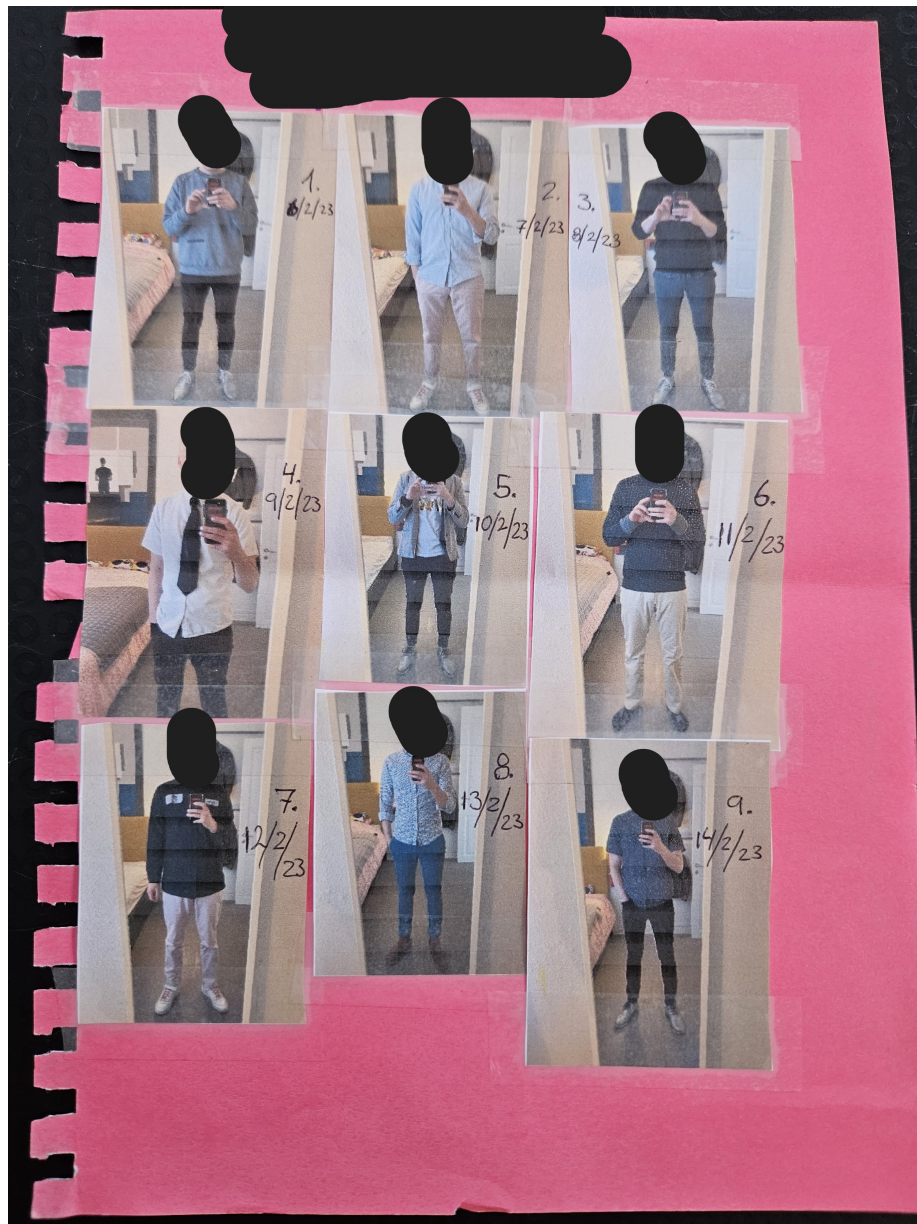
Figure 5: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 2*

Figure 6: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 2*

1. 31/3/23

Uni is cold, so to keep me warm I need thick vest. Black skinny jeans and dusty green sweater both from Vero Moda. Black vest from Object. The vest is big and like wearing a quilt.
The vest is a few months old, cold uni investment. Sweater about a year. Pants around 1,5 year.
No damage.

I was late, and needed to rush out of the door, so took what on "the chair". But on the same time knew uni was going to be cold.
The green sweater is comfy and nice. The vest like wearing a big quilt.

2. 3/4/23

Wearing tight blue jeans, Vero Moda and an oversize sweater from H&M.
No damage
Both items are around a year old.

The plan of the day was to split up the report and get started writing.
I feel confidence wearing the pants, and needed that, because written exams/reports are not my strength.

3. 4/4/23

Knitted blue sweater and black skinny jeans.
The sweater is few months old, oversized. Jeans about a year.
No damage by start day, but pull a thread from the knitted by end day.

I have therapy today, and want to be comfortable. Want to be warm.
I am having mom close, because she knitted it. There is a lot of family issues at the moment.

4. 6/4/23

My "Sunday uniform"
Extremely soft pants, leopard print I brown, t-shirt I wouldn't wear in public, black with flowers and print, warm cardigan, brown.
Everything I loose.
The pants are 3 or 4 years old. T-shirt about a year old, the sweater almost two years old.

I am having the day off, laying on my couch, not leaving my apartment.
I'm stress about uni, and all my problems(!!!!), which choices to do, and write exams.
These total day off are necessary for my mental health, and for me to have energy again.

5. 8/4/23

I am wearing a new striped shirt, and ripped blue jeans.
The fit is tight, but I feel confident, and want to enjoy the great weather, and not be wearing a big sweater.
The ripped jeans are about a year.
No damage. Shirt is from Only, pants Vero Moda.

I am going to my grandpa, and having my first day at my new job later. The sun is shining, the weather is amazing.
I felt great, little nervous about later. Happy about being with my grandpa.
Feeling great in my clothes, not usually wearing this tight a blouse.

6. 11/4/23 textured t-

Today I'm wearing my new black pant, a textured t-shirt, and a new light pink blazer.
The t-shirt is from H&M, and is about a year. The pants and blazer from only, and is new.
The t-shirt is tight, but the texture makes me fell confident.

Today we (me and my study group) presenting our findings from our thrift research.
I hate we have to do this in front of the class, I do not feel comfortable in. I'm wearing the new light pink blazer it makes me feel like a boss-bitch. I cannot wait to be done with the presentation.
When I got up this morning, I needed something that made me feel special, this outfit did this.

7. 12/4/23

I'm wearing a loose white blouse and black skinny jeans.
The collar of the blouse has white pearls.
Both items are around a year old.
No damage. Because it is the second owning the blouse the first got ripped, but loved it so much, I bought it again.

I work in a volunteer group, (IMCC), and I need to meet a new woman, and wanted to look very professional.
The blouse is so pretty, it makes be feel confident, in a business way. As mentioned, loved it so much I have bought it twice.
The jeans make my butt look great, which also makes be feel confident

Figure 7: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 3*

8. 13/4/23

Loose black pants, loose pink! T-shirt, loose oversize black blazer.
The pants and t-shirt are new

No big plans, just go to uni, but the weather make me feel spring.
The pants and t-shirt make me feel so confident!
The pants make my butt look great, the t-shirt bright pink really adds color and spring vibe.
The blazer is to keep me warm, and a bit business kinda.

9. 14/4/23

Today I'm wearing beige vest, blue blouse, black skinny jeans.
The blue blouse is a little tight, but the oversize vest gives a good balance, and "break up" the tight outfit.
The jeans and blouse are from Only, the vest from ByIC. The vest is some years old. The blouse about half year.
No damage

The weather is colder today, and that means a colder uni. I'm in good mood, just having a regular uni day.
I have the blouse in a few different colors because it makes me feel so good wearing.
The vest is warm, and comfortable.

10. 17/4/23

I'm a home knitted sweater made by my mom. Three different shades, white, light blue, dark blue and black skinny jeans. The sweater is oversize and cosy.
There are not damage on the items. And the jeans are from Only.

We are soon need to hand in our report, and I need to get started writing, I'm stress, but know I have time to do it still.
The mood changed during the day, when we were told how to do the end term, of a big course. But before that I was in an okay mood.
The sweater is so soft, and oozes cosy vibes. Needed for when I have to write.

11. 18/4/23

Today I'm wearing one of my favorite blouses. The color is hard to describe, because it is depending on the light. It can be brown, burgundy, purple. But the fit of the blouse is so comfortable, the quality hides the bumps from my body. The puffy sleeves makes it feminine. I love it so much I have it three different colors. The color makes it hard to see I have used it quite a bit. It is around a year old.
The pants blue, and a little tight at the thighs, but loose around the ankles. They are about a year old. The pants are from Vero Moda. The blouse from Jacqueline de young.

I must write 5 (uni) pages for the exam, and I know it is going to be a long night, so want to wear something comfortable I feel confident in.
I'm so stress and feel awful about not have written anything yet. I'm thinking about moving, because my rent is too expensive to what I can afford on SU. Wanting to quit my job, but only been there twice, but I feel anxious about going back. Family issues on top, planning to sell my car.
The blouse is a total favorite, I feel amazing wearing it.
The jeans are comfortable. Are not tight, just pleasant to wear.

12. 19/4/23

Tomorrow do we (my study group and I) need to hand in midterm. I have worked until 4.30 am in the morning to finish my part and feel like shit because of the lack of sleep and stress about the exam.
To get the thrift vibe of the midterm I'm wearing my "new" Red Cross blouse which I love! The color is red/vibrant pink, depending on the lighting. The fit I loose, and it so soft. The brand is Fynch-Hatton.
The blue jeans are skinny jeans, and from Vero Moda, high rise (of cause). The blouse covers my stomach, so even though the pants are tight I feel comfortable.
There is no damage on either of the pieces.
The jeans are a few years old; I think.

I have sleep much because I cannot write assignments until I'm late. But I feel amazing about have written 5,3 (uni) pages, I want to have this midterm done. My mental state is alright.
I feel like since I'm wearing my Red Cross blouse (some of my clothes from the thing/previously party I have wore the piece at). Since I only own one shirt from Red Cross, it has gotten the name. As written before, the midterm was about thrifting, I was the one in the group who knew the least about thrifting, but wearing the blouse made me more comfortable. I am not very patient, and going through thrift stores not finding any in my size or I like/love doesn't sound fun for me. But after some participant observations I'm beginning to see the enjoyment others had talked about.

Figure 8: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 3*

13. 20/4/23

Today I'm going to the pre-departure meeting for going exchange in the fall. And feel AMAZING about have handed in the midterm yesterday, I want to wear colors
I am wearing a flower shirt, green, with daisies on. Skinny black jeans and a big oversize blazer. The blazer is for cold uni, I didn't want to wear for the networking thing after the meeting, but the shirt is too cold without.
The shirt is loose, with stitching around it to make it a bit "puffy".
The shirt and the blazer are 1,5 old, the jeans I don't remember. I stopped my "adult job" around a year and half ago. At the job there was staff clothing, that did I was not used to wear my own clothes, so when I have to do it every day, I felt the clothing closet need a boost.
The blazer is from mbym. The shirt and jeans from Vero Moda.
No damage.

I want people to see me as open, not intimidating, colorful.
Another reason of using the flower shirt I wore it to job interview and ended up getting the job, so it has good memories.
After handing in the (big) midterm paper, I felt amazing, wanted to enjoy spring, the weather getting warmer, uni slowly stop being cold. I felt happy.
After feeling very overwhelmed the last days, thinking about moving, selling my car, getting a job, and the midterm. I finally felt like I could breathe, and solve each other the previously things, one by one.

I started talking with some people at the networking thing after the pre-departure meeting, two who was going to Prague as I am. I felt great wearing the outfit, confident, open and colorful.

14. 27/4/23

Today I wore light blue straight jeans, a black sweater with a zipper.
I have gotten tired of skinny jeans and how it is hard to breath and fit my hormonal cycle in them while feeling comfortable. Feeling comfortable in my clothes is very very important for me, and if I doesn't feel that I am not going to wear that anymore. It will then be donated to Red Cross or something similar.
The jeans are new, first time wearing them.
The black sweater is about 1,5 years old. There is no damage on either of the pieces.
The jeans are from Only and the sweater is from Vero Moda. These are the two places I buy most of my clothes.

I got some bad news the day before, and though it is spring, and I want to wear color and color prints, my mood is not great, my mental state is mad. And on top of this, the university is cold, because of the poor heating, and I freeze very easily.
I feel comfortable in my outfit today. There is room in my clothes, I'm not showing which underwear I'm wearing which I hate. I'm not showing every curve, bump and so on.
During the day I got great news, got invited to a job interview. After I read the text, I would have loved a more colorful outfit, to celebrate the invitation and my great mood. But I did not regret my black sweater because uni was kind of cold.

comfortable   cold   body   open
curv   bump   confident
nice   warm   not showing   colourful
exams   great   nervous   special
mom close   not tight   professional
family issues   business

Figure 9: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 3*

Figure 10: *Collage created from the data retrieved: logbook entries from Respondent 3*

One of the male respondents (Figure 1), referred to as Respondent 1, began his logbook by describing how, a few years ago, he decided to wear what he refers to as

"a uniform". His reasoning was to save time, maintain recognizability, and reduce consumption. His uniform and overall clothing choices were centered on comfort, practicality, and blending inconspicuously into his daily life. This emphasis on comfort was closely tied to his workdays, during which he travelled extensively, as he described. He also mentioned that, although he finds sweatpants ugly, he appreciates the comfort they provide. He generally did not ascribe any emotional significance to his uniform, except on one occasion when he wore a sweatshirt purchased in Canada while visiting a friend, which evoked positive memories and thus held affectionate value. Respondent 1's descriptions of his outfits, emotions, and the contexts revealed little expression of creative processes.

Interestingly, Respondent 1 performed drag and had several performances over the weeks, during which his expression of creativity in fashion became more evident. In contrast to his usual, inconspicuous uniform, his drag outfits were described as featuring numerous creative elements, including objects, colors, and accessories, all combined to create his drag persona. While engaging in this fashion activity, his emotional response was ambivalent, oscillating between enjoyment of how striking and frumpy he looked and discomfort with the transformation process. His words to describe the experience were "tight", "hot", and "constricting". While Respondent 1 uses drag performance as a means of expressing creativity, he also experiences bodily and material constraints that limit both his creative process and enjoyment. Simultaneously, these conditions, along with social and societal acceptance, seem to influence his choice of a "uniform" that helps maintain a professional appearance. The ideas presented by Respondent 1 — expressing comfort in wearing garments like sweatpants, which he simultaneously described as "ugly" and inappropriate — contrast with his concept of a "uniform" deemed suitable for most situations, illustrating Goffman's notion of "front stage" and "back stage" (Entwistle, 2015). These social and societal conditions contribute to why we present different "selves" depending on the context. Specifically, there is the notion that we present ourselves in one way on the "front stage" in public, and another way on the "back stage" in private settings such as at home.

The other male respondent, Respondent 2, took daily notes on his phone, accompanied by pictures, instead of using the logbook itself while answering the same questions (Figure 3, Figure 4, Figure 5, and Figure 6). Many of Respondent 2's clothing choices were influenced by his daily schedule, as he took into account how his lectures or daily errands affected his decisions. Respondent 2 himself experiments with wearing dresses and skirts and mentions in the logbook that he tries not to look "normal". In his reflections, he noted that, looking back, he would have loved to be more creative and challenging. Many of his outfits focused on looking professional, casual, and nerdy when lecturing, especially when encountering students who were new to him. He was also self-conscious about wearing old shoes and feeling underdressed while visiting a home design store, influenced by the cultural environment and social relations surrounding him. Respondent 2 was sick while using the logbook, which clearly affected his outfits and limited his creativity due to bodily conditions, as his focus was on feeling warm and cozy instead of having fun with his style, as he usually does.

In many respects, these conditions demonstrate how Respondent 2 planned for the spaces he would encounter throughout his day, meaning he had to consider the differing norms of these environments, which varied significantly depending on whether he was teaching at the university or resting at home while sick (Entwistle, 2015).

The female respondent, Respondent 3, devoted much of the logbook to expressing her emotions and struggles over the weeks, including personal, family, work-related, and study-related challenges (Figure 7, Figure 8, Figure 9, and Figure 10). These emotional descriptions revealed the significant impact of her social conditions on her choices and creativity. As she navigated daily struggles, she felt compelled to either dress colorfully to boost her confidence or choose comfortable clothing to alleviate stress. Unlike the other respondents, her descriptions consistently included considerations of the age and wear of the garments, indicating a greater concern for the longevity and materiality of what she wore. Like the other respondents, she selected her clothing based on the people she was meeting and the cultural context she was entering. However, interestingly, throughout the logbook, her choices were also heavily influenced by the weather. Seasonal changes, as well as environmental factors — such as the cold temperature in university classrooms — had a detrimental effect on what she felt able to wear. As the weather improved, her energy increased, and she became more engaged with creativity and enjoyment through wearing dresses, vibrant colors, and floral prints. These environmental changes, both in specific locations and the weather, conditioned the nature of her creative process while simultaneously affecting how she managed other conditions.

Another aspect that became clear when comparing the logbooks of the three respondents was the financial situation. While this warrants further analysis, it was clear that there were occupational differences, and therefore financial disparities, among them, with two being academics and one a student. This condition also limits or enables the extent of creative expression possible in relation to the types of clothing one can acquire. During the logbook period, Respondent 3 discovered second-hand shopping, which can foster greater creativity without imposing financial burdens. Additionally, both she and Respondent 2 described repairing their clothing as part of their practice.

The commonalities and differences among the respondents also help to highlight the conditions that shape creativity. While both Respondent 2 and Respondent 3 expressed a need for confidence and feelings of nervousness, Respondent 1 and Respondent 3 described various bodily or material conditions, such as tightness, revealing or concealing curves or bumps, and the importance of comfort.

Additional observations from the logbook that may offer insight into how the respondents engage with their clothing and sense of self include comparing the collage images — focusing on materials, colors, and other elements — with their corresponding emotional descriptions. For example, Respondent 3 described choosing a pink blazer to feel more confident when attending an interview — a material condition that enabled her creativity and enriched her day. This example

also highlights an aspect of creativity explored by Kaufman and Glăveanu (2025), who write:

> the emotional expression inherent in creativity can serve as a powerful tool for coping with adversity, helping individuals process difficult experiences and find new perspectives. This adaptability is particularly valuable in navigating life's uncertainties, making creativity not just a source of joy but also a key contributor to psychological resilience and overall well-being. (p. 3)

The idea that creativity in everyday practices can contribute to overall well-being is another area that warrants further exploration.

One aspect that did not emerge prominently in the respondents' answers — but remains integral to the cultural and societal/political context — is the issue of gender and race. These conditions influence the ways we consciously dress in response to our gendered experiences and embodied identities; these differences inform our decisions when selecting clothing (Entwistle, 2015). As noted, this topic has been explored by Entwistle and others, but it could be examined further through this proposed method in future studies, perhaps by including targeted questions or selecting respondents with these aspects in mind.

Conclusion on Further Possibilities

At the beginning of this paper, various theories on creativity were introduced with a particular emphasis on distributed creativity, which proved to be the most influential in developing the methodology. The study of the simple, everyday act of dressing — and the feelings associated with it — was presented as an attempt to highlight creative practice beyond traditional art forms or other fields typically regarded as domains of exceptional creativity. By investigating this common practice, the aim was to explore how respondents expressed creativity through their outfits and what factors enabled or limited their reflective creativity and sense of self. Although the scope of this paper was limited, it identified several conditions that appeared to influence creativity, many of which may be relevant to a wide range of activities and practices that either constrain or foster creative freedom.

This paper develops and proposes a method — "the logbook" or "Outfit of the Day Logbook" — which can be used to analyze the creative processes of individuals within their specific contexts. Grounded in both wardrobe studies and the theory of distributed creativity, the method highlights the social, emotional, and contextual factors that influence an individual's access to their creative potential. Furthermore, it serves as a qualitative research tool with interdisciplinary potential, applicable in fields such as consumer research, fashion design, and other related practices where engaging respondents in their emotional, social, and material contexts is essential. At this stage, the method remains an initial proposal and should be further refined or adapted to suit specific research

questions and study designs.

A possible contribution of this work is the integration of qualitative methods from fashion studies and theoretical perspectives on creativity into our understanding of creative experiences and expressions in everyday life, rather than merely as finished products (Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021). As Verger et al. (2024) note, "more recent theorisations are moving in the direction of a process approach to creation that moves away from viewing creativity as tied to the products created" (p. 277).

Within fashion studies, this method expands upon traditional wardrobe methods, which tend to focus on the object in a static place (the wardrobe). Although not the central focus of this study, given its emphasis on distributed creativity, the logbook method offers a more phenomenological approach, centering on the dressed body and its lived experience, thus framing clothing as objects in use by the subject. As Entwistle (2015) writes:

> even the literature which takes account of the body tends to focus on the textual or discursive body and not the lived, experiential body that is articulated through practices of dress. Dress in everyday life is about the experience of living and acting on the body. (p. 5)

This perspective is crucial to understanding how creativity operates beyond the mind and the individualistic I-paradigm.

Grounded in the theoretical basis and supported by the findings from the analysis, this paper proposes a preliminary framework for investigating the degree of creative freedom within everyday fashion practices. The framework assesses how various conditions influence the ability to engage creatively with dress. Similar to the theory of distributed creativity, the analysis identified seven contextual conditions that may either enable or constrain the freedom to engage with one's creativity, specifically within fashion practices.

Conditions that limit or enable creativity include bodily, material, financial, social, societal/political, cultural, and environmental factors.

Each condition varies in its degree of influence and can be affected by others, resulting in an interdependent relationship that either facilitates or constrains the freedom to creatively fashion oneself. With further analysis, this framework could be refined and extended beyond fashion to other domains where assessing the conditions of creativity would be valuable.

Overall, the research provided insight into the importance of creativity within fashion practices, highlighting how we use clothing to construct our self-image. The analysis revealed that both internal and external conditions influence the extent to which respondents feel free to express their creativity. In particular, contextual factors such as cultural, social, and societal conditions were found to play a significant role in either limiting or enabling the respondents' confidence to experiment with their style, thereby shaping their everyday fashion practices. Just as weather, materials, and body influence our clothing choices, so too

do the surrounding culture, the people we meet or socialize with, and the values and symbols embedded in society. These contextual factors critically shape the conditions that either limit or enable creativity within fashion choices. Understanding such conditions may empower us to challenge the limitations they impose, thereby fostering greater creativity and allowing more authentic expressions of self-identity. As we become more conscious of what we wear and why, we may be encouraged to reuse clothing that boosts our confidence, brings joy, and aligns with our style or body. By engaging more deeply with our creativity and becoming mindful of the conditions that influence us as creative consumers, we may also use our wardrobes in more sustainable ways. Recent research by Glăveanu and other authors explores how creativity can support degrowth — a concept that encourages reimagining society and questioning the assumptions underpinning current modes of resource use (Verger et al., 2024). They argue that we "need to contribute to imagining new ways of relating to materiality within our ecosystem" (Verger et al., 2024, p. 269) and propose a framework of creative preservation. They describe practices aligned with this approach as follows: "the creative preservation framework brings together practices that help to create a harmonious and sustainable cohabitation between humans and the things-in-the-world" (Himley et al., 2021, as cited in Verger et al., 2024, p. 269). Such cohabitation becomes possible through forms of creation that connect the past, present, and the future, thus ensuring the continuity of objects and ideas in a world of perpetual change (Verger et al., 2024).

Even within the scope of this small study, there is evidence of a respondent who focused on materials, second-hand clothing, and ways to extend the lifespan of garments. By focusing more closely on this subject and drawing on ideas about how creativity can be used not only to produce new goods but also to find new purposes for what we already have, future research could expand this line of inquiry. It would be valuable, for instance, to use a method like the logbook to better understand why individuals or collectives engage in practices that support degrowth, such as upcycling, second-hand shopping, or restyling used clothes (Verger et al., 2024). As the authors ask in the article: "what if the greatest way for thinking about how to improve the future was, in fact, thinking about preservation and renewal?" (Verger et al., 2024, p. 269).

This serves as just one example of how the method can be applied in practice by consumers, designers, fashion researchers, or the fashion industry. Beyond everyday practice, the research also offers insights into how a method situated at the intersection of fashion studies, psychology, and creativity theory can be utilized and further developed across other fields. While the use of journals or logbooks, as referenced in the development of the Logbook concept, is not new, this particular focus on recording emotional experiences alongside the material experience of embodiment presents a valuable approach for studying the relationship between body and mind within various everyday contexts.

Biographical Note

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