

The Impact of Digital Fashion Week on Fashion Trends in China

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Abstract. In an era of complex diversity, China's fashion trends are in the midst of a torrent of change, swept along by the ever-changing media, changing public aesthetics and, above all, the new consumerism brought about by the Covid-19 epidemic. Amid this torrent, digital fashion week is bursting through the boundaries of the fashion industry with the force of a mushroom while influencing the soil in which it was born in a new and changing form. This paper dissects the existing format and characteristics of digital fashion week, analyses the changes made to the original commercial sales format and the importance of the rise of digital fashion week, reviews the most common digital media technologies used in digital fashion week and their impact on the fashion show industry, gains insight into and grasps the impact that digital fashion week has had on fashion trends in terms of design, manufacturing, and marketing, and concludes with a Finally, the limitations of digital fashion week and the future direction of related developments are reasonably analyzed and predicted.

Keywords: Digital Fashion Week, Digital technologies, Fashion trends.

1. Introduction

In the post-epidemic era and under the impact of the new consumerism wave, traditional fashion weeks are gradually evolving into digital media fashion weeks, with radical changes in terms of reach, operating costs, consumption formats, and consumers. It can be said that each new digital fashion week represents a positive technological advancement and a bold creative innovation in the fashion industry on its way to digital evolution. Fashion Week is a dynamic showcase event that focuses on the launch of the latest products by fashion designers and fashion brands, and is a showcase for the convergence of the fashion and cultural industries. From an economic point of view, the innovative and diversified digital fashion week is an advanced way to meet the supply and demand of online fashion, and its study will help people in the future to come up with innovative strategies to accelerate the development of China's fashion industry and provide some guidance for the future development of several Chinese first-tier cities into "fashion capitals". It will also provide some guidance for the future development of China's first-tier cities into "fashion capitals". In terms of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Fashion Week is, in a way, a spiritual path for human beings to pursue, and the process of studying it is to help people learn from the rich creativity and experience of previous generations in the field of art and fashion, and this display will also help the world to understand, embrace and even integrate new forms of fashion aesthetics and innovation.

With the rise of digital fashion weeks, the transformation of traditional fashion has received the attention of academics concerned. The literature and academic research collected in this paper includes case studies of specific fashion weeks, with an introduction and analysis of their impact, and studies of the aesthetics and impact of "the creation of specific digital video art installations and digital media technologies in fashion weeks"; or studies of the aesthetics and impact of a specific period of time. In addition, a number of well-known and influential fashion brands are traditionally studied as a trendsetter. Instead of just referring to several well-known fashion weeks, this study focuses on those of them with a clear "digital fashion" character, analyzing the impact of the "new ideas" used in them. It is found that there is a lack of an overview, overlooked impact analysis study in current scholarly research on digital fashion weeks. Therefore, this paper will take a summary perspective to study the state of development of digital fashion weeks in China.

The main research method used in this paper is the systematic literature review method, in which the answer to a question is found in the literature of previous authors. For this paper, it collects information on many famous fashion weeks at home and abroad, as well as case studies, aesthetic judgments, and digital technology studies used in fashion weeks. Drawing on the others' literature, this paper will respond to this topic by interspersing several past cases to explain the concept, causes, effects, and perspectives of its future development, starting from the definition of digital fashion week.

In the following parts, this paper will explain the concept and definition of digital fashion weeks, analyses the reasons for their gradual rise in China, and provide an in-depth analysis of several representative digital fashion weeks, including the four major international fashion weeks and those in China's first-tier cities. Finally, the impact of these digital fashion evolution has had on fashion trends in China will be analyzed.

2. The Concept of Fashion Week

Fashion Week is a dynamic showcase event centered on the launch of the latest products by fashion designers and fashion brands. It is likewise a showcase event for the aggregated fashion and culture industry, usually held in cities with developed fashion culture and design industries. The fashion weeks are the result of a combination of national politics, economic development, cultural trends, humanities, and arts. Each fashion week is formed with its own mission, such as: to develop local designers, stimulate the city's economic development, develop the city's fashion status, and promote the city's image. At present, the world's most long-established and most popular fashion weeks are the four major international fashion weeks (New York Fashion Week, Milan Fashion Week, Paris Fashion Week, and London Fashion Week, respectively), as opposed to the four major international men's fashion weeks and Paris Haute Couture Fashion Week.

The four most influential international fashion weeks have led to the emergence of a number of countries around the world that now have an established fashion week. It is no longer a combination of several fashion shows in the traditional sense but a combination of commercial and artistic aspects and a more complete business operation model. During Fashion Week, in addition to the conventional Fashion Show, there is also the highly commercial SHOWROOM, a newer form of both art and commerce. In addition, fashion forums, media coverage, and street photography enrich Fashion Week [1].

The digital fashion show is a new way of presenting the traditional fashion show with digital media art, which includes the live show, virtual video set, 3D lights and shadow technology, VR showroom, and other digital technology as the main way to spread the brand's design concept for the new season in the show. This is a new kind of cross-industry collaboration which has become popular over the past few years. In the autumn/winter of 2006 Alexander McQueen used holographic projections of Kate Moss in mid-air for one of his shows. Holographic projection technology is one type of digital technology.

3. The Rise and Change of Digital Fashion Weeks- Seeking a Change in the Form of Commercial Sales

Whereas traditional fashion weeks emphasize group participation, digital fashion weeks focus on a more individual sense of spectacle. The sense of atmosphere and the sense of envelopment connected by a single point on the catwalk at a traditional fashion week site is very different from that of digital fashion week. Digital Fashion Week does not bring the same vital, instantaneous social attributes as traditional Fashion Week. However, it is no longer limited to the actual physical space due to its digital release format but brings a more diverse and newer experience to the audience. It also gives brands more room to play, which are the crucial factors that make up the gradual rise of Digital Fashion Week in recent years.

Faced with the limitations imposed by the epidemic, many sales-oriented fashion weeks have not survived as well as they could have. Faced with the problems of narrower distribution and smaller audiences, traditional fashion weeks have changed their offline format. At one time, for example, Burberry moved up its design calendar by a few months to 'show and sell', with key retailers and the fashion press invited to Burberry's headquarters in Westminster in July for a preview of the new season. In August, the brand released its advertising campaign in advance on various social media platforms, including in September, the new collection was unveiled during London Fashion Week, and immediately after the show, it was available in selected shops around the world. The complete September collection is displayed on mannequins on the first floor of the runway, and staff will contact a vehicle to take prospective buyers to the flagship shop on Reagan Street, which has been transformed with the new season's advertising campaign and has a transparent window with the words "now in shop," 70-80% of the styles on show are available in the shop. Within a few hours of opening, many racks were empty, and some of the clothes were already sold out. At the same time, a live online consultation service has been added to make the "show-and-sell" process more fluid.

Since 2016, the 'show-and-sell' has been a hot topic on the front pages of the fashion press, with brands such as Tom Ford, Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, and others launching in New York entering the 'show-and-sell' mode. However, the founder of French fashion house A.P.C. said, "The show-and-sell is just a show for the press, and once the big houses adopt this model, within two seasons, they will have a problem with inventory."

This seemingly stable and mature process, although on the surface a good "war chest" in terms of sales, is costly in terms of manpower, material, and time to maintain in the fashion week and the industry behind it, and traditional fashion weeks require offline venues, personnel and unrelated workforce that cost much money. Traditional fashion weeks require significant resources in terms of venues, staff and unrelated personnel, and the uncertainty of offline venues (force majeure factors such as epidemics). This is not to suggest that traditional offline fashion weeks and the 'buy-as-you-go' consumer format are more backward than digital fashion weeks, but rather that the rise of digital fashion weeks is of some significance.

Pete Fitzgerald, director of Google UK at its headquarters in the US, told the audience: "E-commerce and online marketing are expanding to become the dominant way of marketing British fashion brands, and this advanced form of consumption is meeting the supply and demand for online fashion." According to data published by Mintel Market Research in 2014: UK, fashion sales increased by 14.5% to £10.7 billion in 2014 through online sales. In addition, as many as 70% of UK internet users at the time bought clothing and footwear online, showing that today's clothing and footwear sales are predominantly made through the internet [2].

The research previously collected the financial reports of some fashion brands to find some comparison between online and offline revenue, but in the process of doing so, I will gradually forget the fact that the commercial revenue generated by a brand "online" and the offline revenue of the brand cannot be completely separated for comparison and contrast (because of the different and complex nature of the two consumer groups. On the contrary, the two can complement each other, contributing to each other's online and offline revenues.

In short, Digital Fashion Week is a highly effective way to expand communication, improve marketing efficiency and facilitate the transformation of consumer formats in an era of economic downturn.

4. Digital Technologies Used in Digital Fashion Weeks

The use of digital media technology in fashion shows has become the epitome of innovation in the fashion industry today. It is also a way of exploring and thinking about the future of the fashion industry in the post-epidemic era. Digital media technology in fashion shows includes digital projection, CG compositing, 3D virtual technology, and live video clouds, among other novel ideas for the future of fashion communication. The impact is that it not only enriches the design of the stage

and expands the size of the audience but also expands the space of the show and is energy efficient and environmentally friendly [3].

In the early 1980s, Kate Galloway and Shelley Rabinowitz's *Hole in Space* attempted to connect audiences in Los Angeles and New York via a videoconferencing installation placed in a street window using satellite broadcast technology. In this case, it was a concrete example of the trans-media production of video art in open spaces, given the technical conditions of the time. On the one hand, it transformed the video content from video to real-time. On the other hand, it redefined public space as a place of open communication and a place to perceive the differences in urban living spaces. This was one of the early ways of thinking about video technology in the context of art displays [4].

Similarly, exploring how virtual digital media video art can effectively intervene in a physical open space like Fashion Week is an important consideration for every director and technician involved, including how to make the visual elements rich and appropriate, how to create an immersive experience, how to visualize ideas and creativity, how to reflect the cultural identity of the brand, and how to express "One of the most important priorities is how to create a sense of presence for the audience - digital projection, CG compositing, 3D virtual technology and live video clouds are some of the best ways to achieve this.

For example, holographic 3D imaging systems were used for the McQueen Autumn/Winter 2006 fashion show. A virtual image of supermodel Kate Moss danced through the air, overturning previous staging techniques and creating a powerful performance that was the highlight of the show. In April 2020, the art and fashion launch organization XCOMMONS held an immersive digital fashion show called 'Parallel Reality' on major social media platforms, where the virtual show used CG synthesis technology to recreate scenes from New York, allowing viewers to experience the streets of New York at night in winter. "It was also broadcast live on social media platforms and was available on the official website, Weibo platform, WeChat applet, and all major domestic video sites such as Tencent, NetEase, and Bilibili, giving it great exposure. The 2022 China International Fashion Week virtual show also broke the definition of traditional fashion shows through the form of live streaming on multiple platforms such as video numbers and Jitterbug, using new 3D technology to create different official scenes carefully, respectively, contemporary art grassland fantasy, three science fiction galaxies, each with its own characteristics under the evolution of industrial design, reflecting the design concept of "from reality, beyond reality" [5].

The combination of the above examples shows that digital projection technology, CG synthesis technology, and 3D virtual technology have combined virtual and physical space, image and clothing, technology and performance, enriching the stage design effect, changing the way the fashion show is presented, extending space and time beyond the show, expanding the composition and scale of the audience, creating a more open and universal fashion space than before. It will also be more environmentally friendly and in line with the concept of sustainable development.

The development of digital media technology has diversified the way shows are presented, but it has also impacted the fashion industry. Designer Alexander McQueen said, "for the future, technology will lead the way in fashion". It is clear that the digitalization of fashion shows may become a new trend in the fashion art industry. Virtual reality, intelligence, and green concepts will become an essential part of the fashion scene. The new digital fashion show is a showcase for clothes, and the proliferation of mobile, portable devices will allow viewers to access the pieces themselves and manipulate, observe and even 'recreate' them. At the same time, the high speed and low latency transmission medium provided by digital technology allow the audience to have a live immersive experience in real-time, achieving a dynamic face-to-face reality without leaving home.

The use of digital media technology in fashion shows has become a microcosm of innovation in today's fashion industry and is a prelude to the future changes in the fashion industry, which will reveal a new face of the industry and its concepts through this technological change.

5. 2020 China's First Digital Shanghai Fashion Week Season

After 17 years of effort, Shanghai Fashion Week has leaped to become the fifth-largest fashion week in the world, attracting over 1,500 brands from more than 30 countries and regions each season. 2020 Shanghai Fashion Week is one of the most notable and innovative online fashion weeks in history - all in the "on cloud" format.

Brands such as SHUSHU/ TONG used cloud casting for their fashion presentations, using virtual 3D scenes and spaces for their shows, while some brands used stage shows or virtual catwalk shows to showcase the season's clothing themes. For the Fall/Winter 2019 show, the Congolese brand HANIFA used 3D rendering technology to present its latest collection instead of using a real-life model. During the show, the clothes could only be seen floating in mid-air as they moved along the catwalk, like disembodied spirits walking in the clothes. The use of 3D virtual technology made the whole show more technological and enhanced the visual impact on the audience [6].

The show was a "Cloud Show + Cloud Live Streaming + Cloud Shopping" event that allowed the audience to see the debut of new fashion products. Many merchants, new buyers, fashion malls, trendy suppliers, designer collectors, and other new fashion businesses used the Fashion Week platform to enter Tmall. The show, together with Tmall, used AR rendering and other technologies to build a digital new product launch channel and provide an immersive experience for the audience, creating an upgraded version of the "show and buy" cloud shopping experience. With the presentation of the works of Fashion Week on the Cloud, visitors can purchase their favourite products at the first click, realizing "show and buy". Additionally, the show venue has also set up a one-stop service platform, providing direct logistics services. With the support of SF, flash shoppers can also enjoy 2-hour delivery in the same city in the centre of Shanghai.

This show is a positive thinking and experiment for Shanghai Fashion Week at a special time through this novel form, to bring the outside world a new and convenient experience to watch the show, but also to let more people feel the creative source of fashion, comprehensive power in the quality-of-life consumption, together for the development of China's local fashion industry to take off. It is hoped that more innovative show formats will emerge in the future, bringing more avant-garde ideas to the public for organizing events and decorating a better life with unlimited creativity [7].

6. How has Digital Fashion Week Influenced Fashion Trends

Digital Fashion Week is both commercial and artistic. In the commercial sphere, Digital Fashion Week explores a better business model within the traditional system, for example, how to better market and attract buyers to generate brand profits. While in the artistic sphere, Digital Fashion Week needs to consider how to present the brand's image and proposition, the directors need to use the most advanced digital media technology and the most exciting content to express the brand's concept and design. This involves pre-production scripting, post-production choreography, technically sound and appropriate implementation, and all aspects of execution, making it a complete work of art. Such a vast work of art is exported through the Digital Fashion Week platform, bringing a constant stream of creative thinking and technical innovation to China's fashion trends. Digital fashion week is a great opportunity for the fashion industry in China.

The underlying logic of the impact of Digital Fashion Week on fashion trends is that, on a macro level, each Digital Fashion Week represents a step forward in the digital evolution of the fashion industry, including design, manufacturing, and marketing.

In terms of digital design, Digital Fashion Week is a catalyst for new designs and ideas. Virtual icons, digital clothes, virtual clothing, gaming gear, NFT clothing, etc. may seem untouchable, but they are all real and exist in people's perceptions and memories. William J. Mitchell, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has said: "It is problematic to distinguish between the physical space of the current world and the virtual space of the computer world. It is as if the automobile had been called a 'carriage without a horse'". It is no coincidence that he describes the

reality of virtual space in the same way as the hero of *The Matrix 2*: "All the rationality and irrationality of reality is the responsibility of a real but real program You don't always see them, but they are real" [8]. The digital design represents the direction of the output of digital fashion in the field of design, which currently revolves around the design of people and the design of things, with Digital Fashion Week acting as a catalyst at a fixed point, catalyzing the production of new designs at an unexpected rate in both parts. With the social, cultural, economic, market, technological, and other factors at play, these digital designs may follow the needs of the future and extend their domain further.

In terms of digital manufacturing, Digital Fashion Week is the embodiment of the highest efficiency and standards. The fashion manufacturing system is moving towards a new era, with intelligent manufacturing tools to achieve precise production automation and increase the efficiency of the work of designers and manufacturers. In fact, even before the acceleration of digital manufacturing, people have already seen a gradual change in the perception of manufacturing in the fast fashion industry, especially with the aid of information and communication technologies (ICT), which can drastically change the traditional manufacturing and sales cycle. This vertically integrated ICT chain based on the apparel industry allows for the rapid collection of customer purchase data and demand feedback from retail channels, enabling data-driven manufacturing to quickly meet customer requirements for styles and quantities of garments. Nowadays, several cutting-edge technologies are changing the manufacturing process in the fashion industry today, such as laser cutting, digital printing, and 3D printing. These are slowly being embraced by designers in China's existing market and are being used at major fashion events such as Fashion Week to shorten the production process of garments and accessories and to reduce the costly process of prototyping, especially for smaller garments and accessories such as bags, jewellery, shoes, and hats.

In terms of digital marketing, Digital Fashion Week is an important opportunity. Every digitalization in the fashion industry redefines how consumers interact with brands and the clothes themselves, but no matter how far fashion has come, product marketing has always revolved around the customer experience. Forward-thinking brands will not sit on the sidelines during times like the epidemic but will instead see each digital fashion week as an opportunity to accelerate their online presence and digital innovation, creating new marketing tools that are closely aligned with the internet. At the same time, the focus of marketing may no longer be on selling merchandise but on creating a value-added customer experience based on brand storytelling, increasing customer loyalty, and enhancing brand image. This will be achieved through various means such as game placements, online launches, streaming fashion films, and virtual try-ons to provide consumers with a more varied online shopping experience. As early as Spring/Summer 2015 London Fashion Week, organizers began to lead the way with digital innovation in fashion, encouraging designers to adopt digital technology to expand their reach and increase sales. For example, Burberry used Twitter's innovative 'buy' button; Hunter partnered with Grabyo Digital Video to broadcast live on Twitter and Instagram; and House of Holland worked with Metail to enable consumers to try on and buy clothes in real-time. These examples show that new and effective digital marketing tools are being explored in digital fashion weeks to reach a wider audience for the fashion itself [2].

7. Discussion about Digital Fashion Week

7.1. Comparison with Traditional Fashion Weeks

Offline Fashion Week, as a traditional launch, is a format that can bring the audience an immersive experience, not only in terms of visual and auditory satisfaction but also through the senses of smell, touch, and taste to stimulate more feelings. At the same time, the offline launch provides a platform for face-to-face communication, allowing people to share their feelings and speak freely. It's like looking at the spectacular queues at the door before people even get inside the show, one can probably tell what kind of brand it is, and the hectic and intense atmosphere is enough to get people's blood

pumping. You could say that physical fashion weeks are like movies, where the audience can only give their full attention to one thing for a whole period of time [9].

Digital Fashion Week is more like a TV series, where the audience can watch a visual clip on their mobile phones with their surroundings intact, so the brands participating in Digital Fashion Week try to express their concepts and interpret their creative designs in as short a time as possible, using the most exciting technical means and graphic content. The online format also allows the community to communicate with each other, breaking the boundaries of time, space, and geography, allowing everyone to get to know the brands in more detail through the screen. Meanwhile, the online digital fashion week can be saved and played back forever. Some people believe that digital fashion week is a more inclusive and sustainable way of presenting the collections online at the same time, and that it offers more possibilities and scope.

7.2. The debate on 'traditional' and 'digital'

In an increasingly sustainable world, digital fashion weeks are a greener solution. Some believe that traditional fashion weeks will inevitably fade away or be overwhelmed by fashion trends. But there are also those who believe that Digital fashion weeks cannot wholly replace traditional fashion weeks.

Fashion week has been a concept since the beginning, and whether it is traditional or not depends on whether the format it is interpreted in can evolve with the times. The digital format is one part of the future of fashion week that can be presented as an option. 'Traditional' and 'digital' are complementary to each other. Just as the imaginary and the real complement each other, tradition and technology - it is the online launch coupled with the actual offline launch that can fully express the meaning of the design itself.

Under the premise of sustainability, how to systematically mobilize technology, media and content resources to enhance the depth of digitalization and create stronger visual impact experience is the problem that fashion week really needs to explore all the time [10].

7.3. Limitations of Digital Fashion Weeks

Compared to traditional offline fashion weeks, digital fashion weeks do have some obvious drawbacks, and if these shortcomings and limitations can be addressed in the short term, it is believed that digital fashion weeks will immediately become a significant trend.

The first is the length of time people spend watching. In an era where traffic is king in digital media, digital fashion weeks have significantly reduced the cost of entry and, if the content is not compelling enough, the cost of exit. When viewers watch digital fashion weeks, the channel change is in the hands of their mobile phone or TV remote control, and if the first few seconds of the video do not engage them and make their eyes linger, they are immediately panned out. However, when viewers are at an offline fashion week, they are not likely to leave in the middle of the show due to social demands and social norms. As a result, digital fashion week viewing is somehow more lacking in integrity.

Secondly, in terms of product authenticity, it is difficult to combine 'reality with reality'. Digital Fashion Week requires high-tech electronic devices to convey the ideas of designers and artists in a virtual way, and the ideas and concepts expressed in these virtual performances are often not visually reflected in the reality of real design.

From a practical point of view, the challenge is to translate the actual costume designs into a digital version, followed by how to organize the limited activities of the practitioners during the epidemic and the lack of human resources. The video and music are much bigger projects. But this is all due to inexperience.

8. Conclusion

In summary, Digital Fashion Week is rapidly evolving at the right time and is influencing fashion trends and related industries in China in all aspects of design, technology, manufacturing and

marketing. This paper provides a more comprehensive understanding of the nature of digital fashion week and its significance in terms of communication.

As the founder of DRESSX, Modnova, says: "Digital fashion is not going to replace physical clothing, but it is definitely going to become an integral part of us. Digital fashion is an important opportunity to redefine business models and build a more sustainable future. "Brands, businesses, and organizers will need to find their own niche and find ways to promote digital fashion weeks, which have neither predecessors nor paradigms, and if they want to be pioneers of the digital fashion movement, they will have to start acting now and putting in place a range of possible directions for the future, rather than living in a virtual fantasy. This article speculates that these could include digital assets, digital virtual auction houses, digital rights management, and metaverse, to name a few and that these will allow consumers to interact with the fashion industry in various ways.

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