

The Development and Popularity of Hip Hop Culture and Its Clothing: Supreme vs. Louis Vuitton

Jiaying Yue *

Department of Applied Arts, Wuhan Technology and Business University, Wuhan, China

* Corresponding Author Email: yjy18611763363@outlook.com

Abstract. In recent years, hip-hop culture spread more and more widely. That influence is also growing. Among them, there are obvious manifestations in its clothing. Hip-hop clothing is diverse and widely used in everyday wear, fashion design, and a range of cultural activities. The unique rebellious courage, sense of freedom and anti-traditional significance of hip hop culture have derived various kinds of clothing and peripheral products. At present, hip hop style clothing blending different cultures has become an important cultural expression and fashion trend. This paper first combs the historical development of hip-hop clothing, and then takes the joint name of Supreme and Louis Vuitton (LV) as an example to describe the extensive application of hip hop in the fashion industry. In addition, the paper further investigates the current hip hop clothing costume matching and fashion elements and draws a conclusion that hip hop clothing has become a mainstream fashion worldwide.

Keywords: Hip-hop clothing; hip-hop culture; co-brand.

1. Introduction

In the context of rapid development of the fashion industry, the field of fashion design faces many challenges, such as the saturation of the design market and the repetition of elements. In the 1960s, hip-hop culture since the birth. Hip-hop culture was widely circulated. In the 1980s, hip-hop by virtue of its song and dance became popular. By the 1990s, hip hop culture had spread to the East because of its popularity in the West. The unique rebellious courage, sense of freedom and anti-traditional significance of hip hop culture have derived various kinds of clothing and peripheral products. In terms of clothing design, hip hop culture provides an effective reference and direction. So far, the clothing of hip hop culture has had a significant impact on the design of modern clothing. At the same time, it also further highlights the importance of cultural connotation in clothing design. But with the development and growth of hip hop clothing, it has also attracted many brands to cooperate. It is known as “co-branding.” This essay gives examples of Supreme vs. LV joint analysis and detailed discussion.

The case of Supreme vs LV co-branding is not very well studied. For example, Ma Jianxiang and Liu Qiang said from the article on the joint marketing strategy of I and Supreme brand that due to the younger audience and consumer market of luxury brands, IV made adjustments to adapt to the new changes in the luxury market and began to carry out joint marketing with younger trend brands [1]. Based on the existing research, this essay discusses the birth and development of hip hop culture and the wide application of hip hop clothing in the fashion industry, summarizes and analyzes the case study, and deeply analyzes the current status of clothing design and the overall lack of thinking and direction.

Regarding the above problems, this study not only puts forward the corresponding solutions, but also analyzes the market environment, deeply exploring the current situation of the apparel industry and looking forward to its future development. Hip hop clothing, as a type of clothing with greater influence, should be correctly promoted and applied to achieve better integration and improvement in the development of clothing, so that the hip hop clothing industry can further expand its influence. Specifically, the paper first discusses the historical development and cultural connotation of hip hop clothing. By combining with the joint case of hip hop brands Supreme and IV, the study further illustrates the popularity and influence of hip hop brands and clothing in detail.

2. Hip-Hop Culture and Its Clothing

2.1. Birth and Development of Hip Hop Culture

In the 1960s to the early 1970s, the Bronx district of New York gradually became a poor area with economic depression, high crime rate and drug abuse. Many black people live here, and they suffer from severe racial discrimination and face severe economic oppression. In the social environment of that time, black teenagers began to find their own cultural expression. Other scholars also mentioned that due to the backward economic development of the region at that time, people generally had low education level, low basic quality, low employment difficulties, low income, and many unemployed people, "Black groups gradually formed their own special popular culture to seek fun, give play to the inherent advantages of black people, and hip-hop culture was born" [2].

In the early stage of the development of hip hop culture, it mainly exists as an underground culture, although the spread of limited scope, but the influence cannot be ignored. According to Chen Li, these black people vent and express their dissatisfaction with society based on their own language habits and rap music and dance from cultural backgrounds. At the same time, their fierce anti-tradition, anti-authority and anti-racial ideology can be clearly seen in the graffiti on the streets [3]. Through improvisation, rappers tell their life experiences and observations on society, and this authentic and powerful expression quickly wins the resonance of their peers. At the same time, street dance and graffiti art have also become important symbols of hip hop culture. Their display in public space not only shows the unique charm of hip hop culture, but also arouses widespread concern and discussion in society. However, the scholar Chen Li once said: "Before it really becomes a cultural form, it is a simple youth activity existing in a way of leisure and entertainment" [3]. Thus, it can be seen that hip hop was not recognized in the earliest days. Hip hop also mainly relies on its entertainment music and dance unique personality and propaganda anti-tradition, anti-authority, anti-racial discrimination spirit to develop and spread.

At the same time, with the passage of time and the endless emergence of works in the 1980s ushered in their era. According to some research data, a large number of black people living in the slums are not afraid of the humble environment and give full play to their innate dance talent [4]. The dancing talent carved into the genes soon brought breakdancing with the religious beliefs of the African continent to every corner. The authors of the study, Zhang Jun and Yan Xinming, added: "Black people in the United States pursue happiness and liberation in this ancient way. Break dancing also originated from gang warfare, in order to attract attention and inspire, gangs in the 'fight' before the 'dance fight' will be used on both sides of the street each prop up a simple platform, both sides by a skilled master led a group of people to perform at the same time. Due to the nature of the competition, break dance choreographed a large number of highly skilled and difficult movements, endowed with aggression. The poor hardware conditions of the street lack of musical accompaniment, the audience has a high demand for visual effects of dance, and the early break dance is more like a miscellaneous. These boys who break dance are called break boys, or B-boys for short" [4].

However, because B-boys could not enjoy themselves on the dance floor in the early days, it was difficult to drive the atmosphere. Thus, there was the birth of the rap form of hip hop culture. There are DJs who play music (disc jockey). They choose songs with strong rhythm as the background music, make remixes in order to prolong the dance time, and then learn the disc rolling technique in the later stage. Finally, they can combine various pieces of music in their own way [4].

In addition to dance, there is also rap, such as Beatboxer. Beatboxer uses the lips, tongue, throat and voice to produce sound. It is the rap form that's taken it to a whole new level. There are many singers who learn beatboxing, such as rapper Doug E. Fresh shows off his beatboxing in the 1984 film *Beat Street*. In the mid-1980s, Biz Markey began practicing beatboxing. Among them, the one who is best able to bring the atmosphere and write the words and raps is known as MC (master of ceremonies). Therefore, when hip hop became popular, it shows everyone in a very mature form. With hip-hop on the stage of singing in the 1980s, it spread in Japan and South Korea until it was introduced into China in the 1990s.

2.2. Cultural Connotations of Hip Hop Clothing

Hip-hop clothing is famous for its distinctive personality characteristics and rich design elements. It is not bound by the rules of traditional dress, emphasizing freedom, randomness and individuality. In terms of color, most of the hip hop clothing uses bright and contrasting colors to show vitality and enthusiasm; Graffiti art, street elements or political statements are often incorporated into the pattern, conveying the unique perspective and values of hip hop culture. According to records and some literature, the colors and patterns used in hip hop clothing have a lot to do with the graffiti used by the early hip hop development community. In the early days of hip-hop musicians, they used positive ways to deal with the social difficulties of the time. It started as graffiti to help gang members mark their territory, but over time it became a form of artistic expression [5]. It can be seen that the colors and patterns of today's Ha clothing contain the spirit connotation of optimism and positivism in early graffiti and the spirit of challenging tradition and resisting adversity at that time.

Hip-hop clothing contains the expression of individuality and self-expression, the spirit of rebellion and challenge, the sense of unity and community, and the expression of innovation and integration. The patterns of clothes are one of the important expressions of their cultural connotations. "Hip hop pays great attention to the patterns on clothes and can even be used as a tool to convey the world view, which is also the meaning of hip hop clothing" [6]. This feature fully reflects the way they convey their cultural connotations.

3. The Widespread Use of Hip Hop Clothing in the Fashion Industry

3.1. Hip Hop Clothing: Supreme vs Louis Vuitton Co-Branding

As the basic elements of hip hop activities, clothing is usually characterized by rich and colorful colors, novel patterns, and exaggerated expressions such as breaking the conventional clothing structure and "casual matching" clothing behavior, which gives people a strong visual impact and thus evolves into a popular fashion in the world. The development and continuation of hip hop has infused the whole fashion industry with full enthusiasm and fresh blood [2]. Hip hop style clothing has become an important vane of the global fashion industry. Because of its huge influence, it has attracted many brands to cooperate and co-sign. Scholars Zhang Jian and Kou Xiaohui have introduced that there are three forms of brand joint naming: brand x brand, the second is brand IP, and the third is brand celebrity [7]. This article focuses on the joint name between the brand and the brand in hip hop clothing and will take the Supreme vs LV joint case as an example.

LV brand is a long-established luxury brand, but according to research data: "In 2011, China's luxury sales growth rate as high as 30%. In 2013, the growth rate was only 2%, and since then sales have fallen into the trough. China's luxury market fell 1% in 2014, with sales falling to 115 billion yuan. In the same year, LVMH, the world's largest luxury goods group, saw sales shrink in China and first-half net profit fall 4.3 percent. In 2016, IV had its worst sales performance in eight years, revenue growth plummeted to 1% in the first three quarters, and it was forced to close five stores, the most in the industry, due to continued declines in performance" [1].

Luxury consumption has become younger, and LV, known for its "high-end, mature and big logo", once fell to a low point [1]. Based on the above data, one scholar also concluded that in order to adapt to the new market of fashionable luxury goods, IV began to co-name [1]. In fact, the effect of joint branding is good for both sides of the brand. Scholar Zhu Ruotong has said that the audience of luxury goods is relatively high-end elite class, while the customers of fashion brands are new guests. So, luxury brands want to attract new customers to expand consumer groups, while fashion brands also hope to enhance their brand image by co-branding with luxury goods, have better development in the future, and have better competitiveness compared with similar brands [8]. Hence, the combination of luxury and fashion. The following essay will introduce the case of Supreme and LV co-name.

On June 30, 2017, Supreme vs LV was officially released. There are overalls, jeans, suspenders, coats, jackets, pajamas, hoodies, T-shirts, caps, scarves, sunglasses, gloves, shoes, backpacks, key

chains, etc. These fashion pieces perfectly blend IV's traditional presbyopia and Supreme's red with hip-hop signature pieces. The data show that New York fashion and French luxury are colliding. The co-branded product was sold in IV stores in limited quantities, triggering a rush of buying [1]. The reason why we can achieve such success is that "Supreme can help LV to hit the young market, and IV can help Supreme to improve brand awareness, and the two advantages complement each other [1]". In addition, limited sales can ensure the scarcity of the brand, making it difficult to find one thing, and extend the positioning of the brand, complement each other's advantages, harvest more audience groups and fixed customers, and ultimately bring significant benefits to both parties [1].

Therefore, luxury brands similar to LV can choose to cooperate with hip hop clothing brands or young brands to find new business opportunities in the luxury market to boost its sales and expand its audience.

3.2. Development of Hip Hop Clothing in the Fashion Industry

Hip-hop clothing with its unique personality, bold color and pattern mixing style and creative use of cultural symbols, a wide variety of pieces and ways to wear for the popular clothing has brought profound inspiration. Examples include some of the threading methods listed by other authors. A baggy top and pants, a scarf or fat shoes, a shirt and whitewashed jeans, mission boots and a fisherman's hat. Subdivision of hip hop can also be divided into several factions.

Overall, the United States, the birthplace of hip hop, is still the mainstream style, which is low-key, minimalist Japanese hip hop, belongs to the minority trend. The American style is as crisp, bright and free as California, with winter hat T-shirts (hooded T-shirts) and summer T-shirts with saggy pants [2]. For example, well-known hip-hop brands include Off-White, FOG, Essentials, Stussy, Vlone, and X-Large. These not only break the framework of traditional clothing, promote the diversified development of the fashion industry, but also inspire designers to pursue individuality and innovation. The extensive integration of hip hop elements in popular clothing not only enriches the types and styles of clothing, but also makes fashion closer to young, free and real-life attitude.

4. Conclusion

Nowadays, hip hop clothing has become an integral part of the fashion industry. Whether it is the runway of international fashion week, or the streets of daily life, hip-hop style can be seen. Hip-hop clothing is gradually gaining acceptance in the mainstream fashion industry. The co-branding of Supreme and Louis Vuitton also opened a new door, and many international brands began to collaborate with hip hop stars to launch co-branded clothing, incorporating hip hop elements into high-end fashion designs. These collaborations not only increase the visibility and influence of hip hop apparel, but also promote diversity and inclusion in the fashion industry.

The birth of hip hop clothing has injected new power into the fashion industry. With the wide application of hip hop clothing, it deeply reflects the integration of cultural diversity and individual expression. It transcends the boundaries of musical style and becomes a unique visual language that allows the wearer to confidently express their attitude and uninhibited spirit. From the streets to the international runway, the clever integration of hip hop elements has revitalized traditional clothing, and also injected a steady stream of creativity and vitality into the fashion industry. This wide acceptance and application marks that hip hop culture has moved from the fringe to the mainstream, becoming a fashion bridge connecting different groups and crossing national borders.

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