INFLUENCE OF FASHION DESIGN METHODS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL PREFERENCES OF CONSUMERS: AN ANALYSIS BASED ON SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY THEORY

Baowei Wei

Abstract

Creativity and aesthetic judgment are increasingly important in fashion design. For consumers, the psychological preferences for fashion design are closely related to social psychology. Based on the theory of social psychology, this paper explores how different fashion design methods affect the psychological preferences of consumers. First, the theory of social psychology was briefly reviewed, followed by a detailed theoretical analysis on fashion design methods. Then, a questionnaire survey was conducted on different groups of consumers on their psychological preferences for different fashion design methods. Through statistical analysis on the survey data, it is concluded that the psychological preferences of consumers for fashion design methods are influenced by gender, age and average monthly income; if the fashion design method changes, the female consumers, young consumers and consumers with high average monthly income show relatively obvious variation in psychological preferences. The research results lay the theoretical basis for the application of psychology in fashion design.

Key words: Fashion Design, Psychological Preference, Social Psychology, Self-Efficacy, Cognition.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, China's fashion industry has achieved great advancement with the economic development, and the demand for clothing has become diversified. Compared with the international fashion design level, the design level of China's fashion industry is in a weak position (Liu, Wu, & Lei et al., 2018). A complete fashion design process consists of three processes: paper drawing, plate making and production. In the process from paper drawing drafts to the sample paper and to the sample garment, the effect of each link will affect the matching degree between the design drawing and the finished product (Millan & Mittal, 2017, Moody & Sinha, 2010). When consumers purchase the clothes, the first component of the garment they see is the color and the style, and the second is the fabric and the craft of the garment. As an important factor that constitutes the clothing products, garment design would affect the consumers’ purchasing decisions to some extent (Madhavan & Rastogi, 2011). From the perspective of design behavior psychology, fashion design methods not only stimulate human vision directly, but also trigger consumers’ association with other things, even influence their psychological emotions, and thereby affecting their purchasing decisions (Lisciandra, 2018).

In the book The Social Psychology of Clothing, it has been mentioned that many disciplines such as aesthetics, sociology, psychology, economics, anthropology, and cultural studies have been integrated into fashion design, and the fashion

Changshu Institute of Technology, School of art and textile and clothing engineering, Changshu 215500, China. E-Mail: shutong2000@hotmail.com
Design methods are put into various complex social and culture situations to gain a comprehensive insight (Hinsz, Stoesser, & Matz, 2013, Jacquemet, James, & Stéphane et al., 2011). The main influencing factors affecting consumers' psychological preferences include the design and the price of the garment, as people's disposable income increases, the price has become a secondary factor, and people are paying more and more attention to the design style of the garment (Staats & Hartig, 2004). From the perspective of social psychology, the individualized demand of consumers puts more and higher requirements on fashion design methods, making it harder for the traditional fashion design methods to meet the needs of the consumers (Chowdhury, 2017). Based on the theory of social psychology, this paper explores the influence of different fashion design methods on consumers' psychological preferences, and provides a theoretical basis for the application of psychology in fashion design.

THE THEORETICAL CONNOTATION AND COMPOSITION OF SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

Social psychology is an inherent psychological state hold by an individual towards the society, it has a certain structure and is relatively stable, generally including three dimensions: cognition, emotion and intention (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2015). In social life, people spontaneously generate social psychology and produce subject responses that have mutual influences. As the external world that links to the subject's life, social environment can be divided into physical environment and spiritual environment (Kasambala, Kempen, & Pandarum, 2016). As a feature of the subject individual of society and life, social psychology is formed by the interaction between individuals and between the individual and the external environment during the practice of achieving social and life goals, and it directly affects people's social activities (Orth, Keven, & Colleen, 2010). As the main body of social activities, consumers' perception of the clothes depends on their visual sense and they will identify it according to the processing system. Different visual senses are determined by the design of the clothes, and different consumers show different preferences for the different fashion designs (Janssen & Jager, 2003).

Figure 1 shows the processing mode of consumer cognition. Consumers' perceptions of fashion design methods include two processing modes: "bottom-up" and "top-down". Consumers will identify the fashion design methods according to the "bottom-up" visual processing and the "top-down" memory search, and their preference process emphasizes the recognition and memory of the characteristics of the stimuli. In terms of fashion design methods, factors affecting the consumers' psychological preferences include social factors, cultural differences, and the differences in the consumers' personal growth, etc.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE THEORETICAL SYSTEM OF FASHION DESIGN METHODS

Core contents of fashion design method system

Fashion design methods include two concepts: design and method. The process of fashion design is to pre-determine the method and drawing patterns according to certain purposes, while the method is to obtain new information and new results by means of thinking. The fashion design methods emphasize the integration of design and technology, and they have the characteristics of practical, systematic and time-sensitive. The contents of fashion design are composed of four modules: design, drawing, craft and computer-aided design, and all contents would influence, interact, and restrict each other mutually. Figure 2 is a system framework diagram of the fashion design methods. The main contents include system fundamentals and skills, system core content, system implementation process and system evaluation. Figure 3 shows the core contents of the fashion design system. The fashion design system includes four systems and methods: clothing design, structural design, craft design and computer-aided design.
Figure 2. Processing mode of consumer cognition

Figure 3. Core contents of the fashion design system

Application and evaluation of fashion design methods

Table 1 shows the evaluation criteria of artificers and senior workers in terms of the four modules. The evaluation of fashion design methods is mainly conducted from four aspects: style design, structural design, craftsmanship and computer-aided design. The evaluation standards of artificers are higher, when performing structural design, it's required that the matching degree of the costume structural design and the design intention reaches 95% at least, and the garment structural design of artificers should have more aesthetic feeling; while for senior workers, the requirement is just to conform to the sample plate of the garment design; for the craftsmanship of the artificers, it’s required that the manufactured product has a fine and beautiful overall appearance; while for the senior workers, it’s required that appearance of their finished products should meet the related requirements of the ready-to-wear clothing production. Figure 4 shows the implementation path of fashion design methods. The market research, design conception, fabric selection, structural design and craft production are carried out according to the design task.

| Evaluation items       | Artificer                                                                 | Senior worker                                                                 |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Style design           | Requirements can be based on brand style series design; style design, color matching, fabric selection can reflect the brand style concept. | Require series design fashion, series style is changeable, but also have a sense of series; high matching of fabrics; clothing color matching fit fashion, cultivate overall coordination and beauty. |
| Structural design      | The design of garment structure is required to have at least 95% matching degree with design intention, and the design of garment structure is full of aesthetic feeling. | It requires that the design of garment structure should have at least 80% matching degree with the design intention, and the pattern should meet the requirements of industrial pattern. |
| Craftsmanship          | The whole appearance of the finished product is exquisite and has a sense of quality. | It is required that the appearance of process sewing products can meet the requirements of garment making, that the process of garment making be analyzed, and that the appropriate combination of process sewing methods and equipment be selected for garment making. |
| Computer-aided design  | Require skilled use of clothing computer design software for clothing series design expression, can use clothing CAD for structural drawing, use 3D COLO software for virtual fitting; | Apparel computer design software should be used to express the design of garment series. The style drawing should be accurate in proportion, smooth in line and harmonious in color matching. |
garment, consumers have reasonable expectations for the design of the garment and hope that the result of the purchase is consistent with their expectation or even higher than expected.

Figure 5 is a model of the differences in consumers’ psychological expectations. Consumers’ psychological expectations include consumer perceived value, expected product value, clothing brand’s expected value, and the expected service and marketing value, etc., and the influence is on the consumers’ perceived value, attitude, and behavior. When the fashion design methods have satisfied the consumer’s psychological preferences, consumers will gain spiritual and material satisfaction.

Experiment on the influence of fashion design methods on consumers’ psychological preferences

Consumer consumption is a process of self-perceived value and self-efficacy release. Consumers’ gender, age, academic background, income, occupation, purchasing experience and season would all affect the consumer preferences. Taking clothing trading as an example, Figure 6 shows the scale and growth rate of China’s clothing trading market. It can be clearly seen that the scale of the clothing trading market has been expanding continuously in recent years, and the annual growth rate is above 20%. In order to explore the influence of fashion design methods on consumers’ psychological preferences, this study adopted the questionnaire survey method to investigate different groups. The data of the subjects are shown in Table 2. The influences of gender, age and average monthly income on the consumers’ psychological preferences were investigated respectively. The survey data were statistically analyzed by SPSS software, and the influence of fashion design methods on consumer psychological preference was subject to related analysis and regression analysis.
Table 2. Basic data of the subjects

| Type                      | Classify     | Quantity | Percentage/% |
|---------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| Gender                    | Male         | 71       | 34.98%       |
|                           | Female       | 132      | 65.02%       |
|                           | 18-25        | 65       | 32.02%       |
|                           | 26-30        | 47       | 23.15%       |
|                           | 30-40        | 42       | 20.69%       |
|                           | >40          | 49       | 14.14%       |
|                           | 3001-5000    | 23       | 11.33%       |
|                           | 5001-8000    | 82       | 40.39%       |
|                           | 8001-12000   | 77       | 37.93%       |
|                           | >12000       | 21       | 10.34%       |

Figure 6. The scale and growth rate of China's clothing trading market

Figure 7 shows the influence of fashion design on consumers' psychological preference. Figure 7(a) is the gender factor; it can be clearly seen that different fashion design methods have a greater impact on female consumers' psychological preferences; while more than 10% of male consumers feel that the fashion design methods have no effect on their psychological preferences. Figure 7(b) is the age factor, it can be clearly seen that with the increase of age, the influence of different fashion design methods on consumers' psychological preferences is lower, younger people have higher requirements for the fashion design methods, and they would pay more attention to the garment’s style, fabric and matching, etc.; Figure 7(c) is the average monthly income factor. It can be clearly seen that with the increase of the average monthly income, the influence of different fashion design methods on the consumers' psychological preferences is higher, and consumers with higher average monthly income have higher requirements for fashion design methods. Regression analysis of gender, age and average monthly income factors showed that all three factors have a significant influence on consumers' psychological preferences in terms of fashion design methods.

Figure 7. Influence of fashion design methods on consumers' psychological preferences

(a) Gender

(b) Age

(c) Post-tax monthly income
CONCLUSIONS

Based on the theory of social psychology, this paper explored the influence of different fashion design methods on consumers’ psychological preferences. The specific conclusions are as follows:

(1) In terms of the fashion design methods, the factors affecting the consumers’ psychological preferences include social factors, cultural differences and differences in consumers’ personal growth. The consumers’ preference process emphasizes the recognition and memory of the characteristics of the stimuli.

(2) The process of the fashion design methods is to conduct market research, design conception, fabric selection, structural design and craft production according to the design task; the design methods include style design, structural design, craftsmanship and computer-aided design; and the design requirements of artificers and senior workers are different.

(3) In terms of fashion design methods, gender, age and average monthly income factors all have a significant influence on consumers’ psychological preferences. Fashion design methods have a greater impact on female consumers’ psychological preferences; with the increase of age, the influence of different fashion design methods on consumers’ psychological preferences is lower; while with the increase of the average monthly income, the influence of different fashion design methods on the consumers’ psychological preferences is higher.

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