The Research on the Context and Style of Avant-garde Fashion on Chinese Social Media Platforms

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Abstract: The way the general public comprehends, and processes fashion has evolved as a direct result of the proliferation of social media platforms, particularly the growth of the "influencer" profession, which has steadily eroded the once-dominant position of fashion magazines and editors. This study does more than only close the gaps in the knowledge of avant-garde fashion's communication and style; it also delves into the curious phenomena of niche fashion trends shared on Chinese social media. The authors analyzed the contexts of fashion-related influencers on TikTok and Xiaohongshu, like @AHALOLO, @MetaArchive, and @Instantly to fill the gaps in the understanding of fashion subcultures. The study also addressed the phenomenon of "viral" fashion trends on Wechat, Bilibili, and Tiktok. It concluded that the continued existence of labels is primarily attributed to the media's efforts. By increasing brand awareness, audience engagement, customer service, advertising income, and app downloads, media has helped firms keep their operational costs and revenue high. As facilitated by new media, the rapid and varied dissemination of fashion ideas may increase both their societal and consumer worth. The exchange of knowledge made possible by new media is assisting the fashion industry in meeting the demands of its customers. Improved fashion industry demand forecasting and production planning may result from better internal communication and consumer assessment.

Keywords: context, style, avant-garde fashion, social media platforms

1.   Introduction

In 1994, China became fully connected to the Internet, beginning the Internet era. Over the past 20 years, the world has become a "global village", and people's ways of information exchange and habits of art appreciation have undergone significant changes. Although Chinese media tools such as film, television, and newspaper were quiz on behind those in the West, fortunately, this timely connection between China's Internet and the world is the most synchronous use of media in China's modern history. On the back of the policy dividend, social media apps such as Douyin and Xiaohongshu have seen rapid development.

Chronologically, the history of social media can be traced back to the emergence of Usenet, ARPANET, and BBS systems in the 1970s and even to the telephone era before the advent of the computer age, such as the emergence of a Phone Phreaking Era in the United States in the 1950s." But it wasn't until the 1990s that social media became widespread with the development of computers

and the Internet - by the end of the 1990s, blogs had gained some traction - especially after 2004, when the Web 2.0 movement emerged and social service sites began to flourish, making social media a media force to be reckoned with [1].

The number of chat and dating software users in China has increased from 770 million in 2018 to 956 million today, and the overall market size has risen sharply from 23.1 billion yuan to 41.1 billion yuan. According to iiMedia Research, 34.9% of users use mobile social networking software for less than 2 hours a day, 42.5% of users use mobile social networking software for 2-3 hours a day, 15.1% of mobile social networking users use mobile social networking software for 3-4 hours a day, and the percentage of users who use mobile social networking software for more than 4 hours a day is relatively small, accounting for 7.5% [1].

The future of social software will be innovative, with the development of mobile Internet intelligent technology and big data algorithms, social App development technology has been quite mature, able to the user's age, personality, horoscope, interests, and other aspects of social software through the algorithm of big data for accurate matching, greatly enhancing the user's stickiness. Since Phones and social media have become the daily companions of young people fashion media also have started to create strategies for fashion communication, covering recent trends and popular culture to their audiences according to the changes in fashion trends, and through the artistic processing of fashion communication, they can maximize the stripping of obvious commercial features and influence the behavior of their audiences.

Social media has changed the way the public understands and digests fashion, including the rise of the "influencer" profession, which has increasingly erased the former supremacy of fashion magazines and editors (the announcement of the closure of Interview magazine was a sobering one).

The emergence and growth of niche apparel brands can undoubtedly contribute to the overall prosperity and development of China's apparel industry. However, the current Chinese niche brands themselves and the whole environment are still immature and there are many problems, the most prominent of which is the small audience and low visibility of niche brands, which will directly affect business success or failure, thus making it difficult for many Chinese niche brands to adhere to their original style and even disappear from the market before they mature.

The emergence of media apps can better help niche brands to promote and make niche things that are not accepted by the public slowly become acceptable. In 2001, when brands like Rick Owens began to make their mark on the runway, the public thought they were grotesque, or that they impossible to wear. However, turn to 2019, with more and more people and celebrities posting this kind of wear on the media app, people start to accept it. Current developing trend of the global mainstream social media platforms [1].

2. Literature Review

As stated by Kunming Li, under adorable material culture, this study examines the emergence of delightful aesthetics in Chinese social media fashion apparel. This study demonstrates, using corpus-enhanced case studies, how the linguistic–semiotic baby-talk register converges with the material design and embodiment of clothing to synergize the pleasant materiality of the garments in the issue. It illustrates that multimodal baby-talk emerging, paired with cuteness embodied performances, may feed a 'cultural accent' of cuteness to the clothing of different material designs, endowing the garments with new social hermeneutics. The registration indicates, on the one hand, the institutionalization of cuteness standards within fascinating material culture. Unretirement with connection to alternative paradigmatic options, on the other hand, constitutes a cluster of motivated discursive acts packed with observable intentionality. In this manner, the registration enacts a limited social sphere of understanding, manipulating the intended meanings of the fashion clothes in question. This study seeks to recalibrate the biased hermeneutics of cute material culture, which often reduces beautiful

apparel to material immediacy and consumerist passivity, by concentrating on reflective and manipulative discursive registration practices [2].

According to Liang, most of the audience's access to information has shifted from conventional to mobile media [3]. The emergence of new media has altered the public's access to information. People's attention to information began to change from the traditional media of the past to mobile media. As people's priorities change, the associated marketing must adapt too. In conventional media, media professionals are primarily responsible for transmitting information, while the public may only absorb information passively without a conduit to release information. With the introduction of new media. Many individuals have become we-media users because of significant advancements. The public is both the recipient and the source of information. The routes of information communication intertwine as the varieties of information communication grow. As a consequence, data is more broadly disseminated. In the context of the ongoing evolution of new media, the following qualities define new media marketing.

First, the deployment of new media technologies can position clients effectively. QQ, Weibo, WeChat, and other social media have arisen in the new media ecosystem to serve new media consumers. The platform for receiving and transmitting information quickly and efficiently. In addition, the practical application of new media technology can effectively collect, process, and analyze customer information for enterprises and promote enterprises to understand the market Field demand and accurate market positioning, make the enterprise fashion brand more in line with user needs, and enhance the enterprise brand's competitiveness. In addition, businesses may boost consumer happiness and loyalty by optimizing items based on user product conversation and feedback on social media. Second, the deployment of new media technologies may minimize the cost of advertising. Brand marketing has introduced new avenues and strategies for businesses with new media technologies. Under the modern media environment, the transfer of information. Applying it to fashion brand publicity may effectively lower the promotion cost due to its rapid timeliness and low price. On the intelligent side, the intelligent qualities of new media information transmission. To push information to target clients to get economic advantages for businesses without incurring excessive expenditures.

The company may discuss the enterprise via quick consumer feedback. Monitoring in public relations may also be more responsive and focused, reducing the enterprise's loss. New media technologies have reduced the gap between customers and businesses. The primary distinction between brand marketing and media marketing in the new media landscape is brand marketing. When doing brand marketing, information communication is reciprocal [2-4].

The article by Sofia P. Caldeira, Sander De Ridder, Sofie Van Bauwel offers a political study of gender representation on Instagram [5]. It embraces a broad conception of politics as "everyday politics" and "everyday activism." This also enables the examination of the political possibilities of self-representation on Instagram and the capacity of Instagram to facilitate more varied forms of gender representation. In addition, it examines the technical affordances and limits that affect expressions, such as Instagram's Terms of Service and the dispersed power exercised by Instagram users' comments [5].

Consider media, especially social media, as performance, McLuhan implores, by defining global telecommunications as digital. Seeing interaction in new media as "making, not pretending"; is a set of tools, websites, and methods for putting buried truths, other worlds, and confronting challenges. Therefore, the public's adaptability is required before audiences of any size and for any length. In particular, if digital networks are seen as constituting a phrase as a global stag to enables people to examine these networks [6]. Potential to serve as theatrical productions (as theater works). McLuhan's writings on new media represented an early technological wave. The technologies that made up the information revolution continue to this day [7]. This upheaval brought him a new age of networked,

virtual technology. He felt that performance might influence the path of history. At a minimum, he believed that artists could impact the world. He thought that performing changes the people who engage in it. As a result, he predicted or hoped that an increasing number of people would become performers due to the revolution of technology. Large numbers of recipients/consumers/audiences are transformed into actors. McLuhan's perspective on new media as performance spaces may be engulfed the world. Mince is crucial to understanding what he considers the possibilities of contemporary media. Since according to McLuhan, the medium, not the content, has cultural and social significance. McLuhan thought that the range, which is always the message, is always the message. The global stage is the new media [6,7,8].

Anastasia Denisova proposed that from the time of artisans until the contemporary period of mass manufacturing, psychology, society, and politics have been intricately intertwined with fashion [9]. Fashion must account for a fourth player: the environment in the twenty-first century. Research demonstrates that teaching individuals with logical arguments alone are never sufficient; media coverage of "doing the right thing" must also appeal to passion and desire—the psychological motivations for purchasing clothing stem from one's sense of self-worth. The bulk of clothing seen on the pages of Vogue, ELLE, Marie Claire, and Grazia tends to be casual, while approximately forty percent is dedicated to formal dress. Although it is understood that fashion publications serve an aspirational role, more attention must be paid to clothing that is acceptable for the workplace. Workwear appears in barely 1–20% of the periodicals examined. While it is acknowledged that many 'casual' things might be worn to work in more relaxed office settings, the emphasis of fashion journals is undeniably on less practical clothing. Gossip weeklies dominate the occasion wear market sector (OK! HELLO!). Fifty-five percent of all garments are extravagant attires, such as ball gowns, party dresses, and red-carpet gowns, which are unsuitable for city dwellers' daily activities. The fashion coverage in magazines glorifies a fantastical, idealized picture of womanhood [9].

Even though much research has been done on fashion and social media's impacts, none has analyzed the contexts of avant-garde fashion on different Chinese platforms nor the influences they have given to the public. This paper not only fills the research gaps in the study of communication and fashion but also investigates the phenomena of niche fashion styles published on Chinese social applications. The paper will review and explore the state of affairs as well as public target audiences in social media, such as WeChat public accounts, Bilibili, Xiaohongshu, and TikTok, conclude the communal aspects of avant-garde fashion through media platforms.

3. Methodology

Observations have mostly been done on four platforms: Xiaohongshu, WeChat, Bilibili, and TikTok. First, the authors reviewed the database of WeChat public articles' CTR through WeChat index, according to tags such as "Rick Owens," "Maison Margiela," "Yohji Yamamoto," and "Avant-garde"; studied the contexts of fashion-related influencers on TikTok and Xiaohongshu such as @AHALOLO, @MetaArchive, and @Insdaily; in order to reflect them to the concept of the influences of avant-garde brands to the public. The contexts include videos and pictures of daily outfit showing and brand history/runway analysis, articles of avant-garde theory and future trend predictions, pieces/ work recommendations and promotions.

4. Results

Texts and pictures in media cannot contain any links to social networks or websites where users can share text or images from the site, they are viewing with others online, nor can they contain hyperlinks to external sites that may not be related to the site's topic at all. Since text and image-dominated social media is primarily composed of creators' onboard outputs and insights, social platforms mainly

consist of content producers for unilateral content output. Its community attributes are mostly limited to interacting with people with the same interests in the comment section. In contrast, the video content creation platforms represented by TikTok and Bilibili are more cautious in controlling the rigor and depth of content due to their natural creation attributes and higher creation costs than other text- and picture-driven platforms. In contrast, the platforms create the "bullet-chat culture" and "comment window" functions, further providing more outstanding dynamics for the interaction between platform creators and viewers.

Differences between video, text, and pictures in media are a question that arises quite often. A video is a form of visual communication that has been around for a long time. People have used it to communicate with each other through television screens or movies and on computers and laptops. Video is also known as moving images. It is an electronic file format containing information about the sound and image of any given scene recorded on film or digital camera. It can also contain subtitles and audio tracks for different languages if required. In short, video files are made up of two parts: one part containing the sounds while another contains visuals like images, videos, and graphics.

Text is words written using letters/characters to convey meaning or message to others who will read them later on. Texts have existed for ages, but they were not always easy to understand because they were written using characters from different languages. So, it was difficult for people who did not know these languages to read them properly without getting confused due to the language barrier. Only when someone would translate them into their language so that everyone could easily understand what was written there without any confusion.

Compared to authors on other platforms, WeChat public account's articles have enormous viewers, mainly because the publishers were under the control of MCN (multi-channel network) companies. Multi-channel network companies provide a full range of marketing services to their clients. Marketing consulting and training are done by providing individuals with all the tools that they need to become successful in business. It also provides opportunities to learn from other people's experiences so that people can avoid making mistakes when it comes time for their own business. They are familiar with building fame by adding keywords related to well-known people and grasping the topic to carry on the trend. For example, the tabi shoes caused chaos in the Chinese fashion market due to their niche style and novel shape. However, most audiences are not intimate with the name "tabi"; instead, they were called split-toe shoes. The most viewed article under the keyword "tabi shoes Margiela" is by Insdaily（@insdaily）, which is a public account under an MCN company. They introduced the brand Maison Margiela's history and idea by starting with celebrities' outfit share of tabi shoes. They did gain plenty of viewers and interactors under this article. Nevertheless, most comments are not related to the information shared on history and concepts but to the closets of the celebrities or audiences. In one sentence, this approach could provide self-exposure and fame but seldom knowledge of avant-garde fashion nor finding people with the same interest.

AHALOLO (@AHALOLO) are two fashion design graduates and now fashion journalists; they have accounts across platforms but are all run by themselves, which caused unbalanced data on different social media communities. The context of their channel is mainly focused on runway analysis, brand history/culture development, and red-carpet critiques. Most of them are in-depth on the fashion industry and design thinking, which benefits the public and fashion enthusiasts better to understand complex theories through simple, edited programs. On TikTok, a short video media, AHALOLO only has about 15k followers and 62k likes. When the video contexts are about celebrities and the red carpet, the view could be about 1k-2k, around 3k likes, and comments could be up to 300. The same phenomena as WeChat public account articles have shown here: the comments are hugely skewed to complement the celebrities. Unlike TikTok, AHALOLO has around 872k followers, near 6mlilion likes, and on average 5k comments for each video. The quality of comments, audience responses, and interactions are much more evaluated; Reflections that are equal and more than 100

words are commonly seen in the comment area. AHALOLO often asks questions and encourages viewers to answer through bullet chat in the videos, which gained more engagement and allowed the channel to become a fashion community for everyone who wants to learn. The same video about Balenciaga 2022 Haute Couture has been posted on both TikTok and Bilibili, yet the audiences provided dissimilar feedback and data. From such outcome, the tonality of different platforms is very clear. AHALOLO's content strategy follows the concept that "fashion is not only about clothes but also about being fashionable," which means that AHALOLO aims to create and share fashion ideas through various social media platforms, including Xiaohongshu, Bilibili, TikTok, and Weibo. It has become their primary source for generating revenue from advertisement sales instead of subscription fees because they have found out that this type of marketing works better when there are more opportunities for viewers to interact with the channel. AHALOLO has been a part of Xiaohongshu's "Fashion Week" since 2016, which is an event that allows fashion designers and brands to promote their new products and designs through live broadcasts on the platform. As of 2017, AHALOLO has become one of the most influential fashion channels in China, attracting over 10 million followers across various social media platforms [10].

5. Discussion

As media, fashion new media disseminating fashion industry-related information to the public is still the most basic interaction between the two industries. With this as the foundation, fashion new media can get audience resources and attention resources to help the fashion industry spread fashion culture, lead fashion trends, market fashion products, collect fashion consumer feedback, etc. Richer content resources and faster dissemination speed make the content products of new media richer and delivered to fashion designers in less time, thus enhancing the knowledge spillover effect. Moreover, as the intermediary of fashion industry information and customer information transmission, new media can transmit more comprehensive and accurate information of each other to both sides faster, which can alleviate the information asymmetry between both sides, thus improving the economic efficiency and value of both sides. Specifically, the new media industry has different degrees of influence on the three modules of the fashion industry: design, production, and brand marketing.

Yohji Yamamoto held his first solo press conference in Tokyo in 1976 and founded Yohji Yamamoto Design Studio in 1988. But it is only now, 30 or 40 years later, that he has become a household name. The peak viewership of Yohji was in 2021 when the epidemic was raging, and people were more likely to be at home looking at their phones and browsing TikTok or Xiaohongshu. Yohji has gained a lot of traction in recent years due to widespread popularity on social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Pinterest. In fact, niche things are not necessarily just because it is niche itself, a large part of the reason is because of publicity and exposure. So, it is necessary to use the mass media to show these things in front of the public, so that people first to understand before they can love and try.

The emergence of the media has helped many brands to survive. Many brands are unable to maintain high operating costs while making a profit. The fabrics, designs, ideas, and cuts needed for avant-garde fashion are special and expensive. Even if the owner is rich, he can't keep burning like a bottomless pit, because he is running an experimental fashion. Social media marketing is now an industry standard for fashion brands.

In the traditional way, designers in the fashion industry provide product designs and fashion consumers make passive choices, but in the context of the new media era, because of the two-way communication feature of the Internet, each consumer can fully express his or her own opinion, and then actively influence the design of fashion products through the knowledge spillover effect and information transfer effect of the new media. For example, after collecting and analyzing the information posted by customers on the Internet and understanding the personality traits and

psychological needs of their target customers, fashion companies can improve the design of product style and product appearance, thus truly realizing customer-oriented product design. In addition, new media, as an important vehicle for presenting fashion concepts and fashion samples, can also be disseminated faster and in more forms than traditional media, thus better realizing social benefits and enhancing customer value [11]. Fashion companies can also understand customers' needs better through the knowledge spillover effect and information transfer effect generated by new media.

6. Conclusion

The publishing of technological avant-garde fashion trends is the subject of this investigational essay, which focuses on a recently discovered phenomenon on Chinese social networking sites. After evaluating and researching the current state of affairs, as well as the public target audiences in social media platforms such as WeChat public accounts, Bilibili, Xiaohongshu, and TikTok, a conclusion was reached regarding the collective aspects of avant-garde fashion that can be achieved via various media platforms. First, the media has assisted businesses to survive. Many brands could not maintain high operational expenditures and profit, which media has given the benefit include brand awareness, audience participation, customer service, advertising, and app traffic. New media may disseminate fashion concepts and samples more rapidly and in various forms than traditional media, enhancing social benefits and consumer value. The knowledge spillover and information transfer impacts of new media aid fashion companies in understanding customer needs. The transfer of information from internal communication and evaluation of target customer groups encourages producers to pay more attention to product quality, enhancing the fashion industry's market demand forecasts and production plans.

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