



Research on Brand Image Shaping of Avant-Garde Garment in the New Media Era

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Abstract. With the rapid development of Internet and new media technology, the way of shaping the image of garment brands is also constantly developing and changing. New media has played an important role in the shaping of avant-garde fashion brand image. In order to better promote the construction of the brand image of pioneer apparel, this paper preliminarily discusses how pioneer clothing brands shape their brand image through new media through classification and data research. After summarizing the main characteristics of the current development of new media, this paper focuses on the main strategies of shaping the brand image of pioneer clothing from two aspects of appearance and internal image. This paper holds that the form and content of pioneer clothing are constantly developing and innovating, and its brand image shaping is obviously affected by the development of new media technology. It puts more emphasis on brand story, spiritual pursuit and value orientation, highlighting the pioneer consciousness and innovative expression of pioneer clothing. Although there are still some deficiencies in this study, it will still be beneficial to provide new research cases for the interaction between new media technology and fashion brands.

Keywords: New media · Avant-garde garment · Brand image building

1 Introduction

New media is a form of media based on network technology and digital technology, as opposed to traditional media. It is a communication technology that allows users to interact with information, changing from passive acceptance to active communication, from interaction to co-action, and users reprocess and re-disseminate information under the experience of new media. Compared to traditional media, new media has transformed from a bottom-up, centralised and linear form of communication to a flat, discrete and nodal form of communication. The essential characteristics of new media are interactivity and digitalisation, as well as speed, scope, multimedia, low cost, group intelligence, hypertext, easy retrieval, large volume of information and rich content [1].

In the context of the internet era, new media is occupying an increasingly important position in people's productive lives. According to survey data, as of January 2022, the number of global Internet users alone has reached 4.95 billion, with Internet users accounting for 62.5% of the global population, while data shows that the average time

spent online by global Internet users is 6 h and 58 min, accounting for about a quarter of a day, which shows that the impact of social media on people's lives is so profound [2]. This has led to a change in brand image building strategies for all types of brands.

New media creates four contexts for users, the first is the virtual world, the second is the mirror world, such as VR, live street view in mapping services, knowledge links, etc., and the third is the life record, such as the circle of friends, TikTok to record the good life, major platform Vlog, sports app keep, etc. In the new media era, some "non-media" are invading, the scope of media is expanding, media boundaries are gradually disappearing, and the media landscape is showing a trend of reshaping.

In previous studies, many scholars have explored the media's contribution to brand image building and its impact on consumer choice, indicating the current state of media development and the advantages of using media communication for brands [3–6]. Existing research is not yet specific enough about brand image building to be applied intuitively to some niche style brands. The aim of this paper is to discuss the link between new media and the brand image shaping of avant-garde garment, and to analyze how avant-garde garment brands can reshape their image and express their unique spirituality through new media.

2 The Advantages of New Media

2.1 Participation in the Change of the Main Body of Communication

With the development of new media technology, the subjects involved in communication have expanded, from professional media communication in the traditional media era to user participation in communication. The information is instantly taken and transmitted, and the cost of dissemination is low [1]. And the user base is huge, the cognitive surplus is further developed, the time users usually pay on the cell phone can create value, and users are happy to produce quality content and realize it. This has created the conditions for Avant-garde image building.

Most of the Avant-garde garment brands are low-luxury high-end line brands, consumer experience and feedback play an important role in shaping their brand image. Consumers personally publish their consumer experience of Pioneer garment brands and their understanding of Pioneer garment brands through social media platforms, why they choose this niche brand of Avant-garde garment, what they want to express through Avant-garde dressing, so as to shape the Avant-garde garment brand image. For example, some bloggers post their photography works or photos of visiting exhibitions on Weibo, Xiaohongshu, TikTok and other open social media wearing pioneer brand garment, and express their understanding of pioneer brand garment through emojis, photo coloring or copywriting. At the same time, they express themselves through pioneer garment, elaborate on their self-perception and spiritual pursuit, their pursuit of freedom, and their attitude towards life of being themselves. What is more, due to their presentation forms and platform characteristics, different platforms are suitable for publishing content on the platform in different forms of expression. For example, the Shake Yin platform is based on short videos, the pursuit of information concentration, concise and efficient, while the beeper is suitable for long videos, the pursuit of information volume and information depth, multi-dimensional understanding. Yohji Yamamoto's brand is mainly a showcase

on Jitterbug, while on Beeper it is a face-to-face interview with Yohji Yamamoto, which is a Avant-garde brand image shaped by the different content presentation on multiple platforms, from the external image to the spiritual core.

2.2 Multi-platform Shaping

Traditional media forms are relatively single and limited, including only television, radio, newspapers, magazines and so on, mainly paper media, which is more harmful than beneficial for brand image building, especially for niche style brands such as pioneer apparel, appearing in traditional newspapers and other media less frequently, and the audience positioning is not clear. The advantages of multi-platform and multi-form new media are highlighted. New media communication forms contain a wide range, from the development timeline from front to back, there are website communication, forum, instant messaging, blog, wiki, SNS, APP communication, mobile video live, WeChat, micro-blog, etc.

These platforms are more or less involved in the branding of Avant-garde garment. For example, the famous brands in the pioneer school of garment Yohji Yamamoto, Rei Kawakubo, Professor.E, Untitlab, etc. all have official websites built in major search engines, shaping the brand image through the brand website image, website layout, form and color are all brand image shaping. At the same time, most of these brands have official accounts on microblogging, ins and other platforms, in which they regularly publish some brand-related content. For example, Yohji Yamamoto, a well-known brand of avant-garde garment, has an official account named “Yohji Yamamoto official mall” on microblogging, with a black avatar and background and white text, giving people a mysterious, mysterious and mysterious image. As the founder and designer himself, Mr. Yohji Yamamoto, said in his explanation of the brand’s spirit, “What is more boring than wearing rules and regulations?”.

2.3 Fused Media Expression

With the continuous development and maturity of new media technology, the means of media expression is no longer limited to the single media at the beginning, i.e. simple text and pictures, but is gradually moving towards multimedia, i.e. a combination of various forms of expression at will, and then to the current integrated media, short videos, H5, etc. which facilitate brand image building in terms of sensory stimulation, especially visual expression. For example, Yohji Yamamoto’s official website starts with a short video of the show. There is no catwalk, three models are standing on the same platform with the audience, almost without distance, wearing the brand’s avant-garde style clothes, irregular white colour blocks inlaid with black dresses, the models’ hair is free and unrestrained, their faces are cold, no smile at all, the models’ images are “misanthropic face”. The model’s image is represented by a “misanthropic face”, with the lower three eyes white, giving a sense of coldness and unrestrainedness, and walking with the wind of freedom, a strong visual stimulus shaping the image of Yohji Yamamoto’s brand of unrestrained freedom, compared to pictures alone, which cannot bring such vivid and strong sensory stimulation to the user. This view can also be illustrated by the following example, Chanel has used H5 to show the life experience of the brand’s

founder, Mademoiselle Chanel, and the brand building process on its official website, so that consumers can understand the brand's philosophy more visually and vividly, thus creating a fuller brand.

3 Branding Contents

3.1 Outward Appearance

3.1.1 Product Images

As a style of garment, the external image, i.e. the design of the garment itself, is undoubtedly an important part of the brand image of the avant-garde style of garment. The garment itself and the design are the first impressions that consumers have of the brand, and the avant-garde garment style itself is extremely mysterious and attractive in terms of its external image. The avant-garde garment style is the expression of avant-garde culture and art in the field of garment. Its shape and unique spiritual connotation have always been the hot topic of the major fashion weeks and the object of the major fashion communication media. Bold special, free, rebellion, even unconventional have become synonymous with the avant-garde brand garment brand.

3.1.2 Style Images

Style positioning is an important step in shaping the memory of a brand, a silent articulation of the brand's own understanding of its self-image. Through the construction of the official website, the style of the pages, the style and colour palette of the promotional images and videos, the form of the fashion launch, the way the fashion show is run, the style of the set, etc. are all important parts of the brand's style shaping. For example, Carol Christian Poell, a Avant-garde garment brand known as the "King of Pioneer Darkness", uses black and white interspersed with colourful book pages to express its "rebellious" style with a strong visual impact. The brand's Spring/Summer 2004 collection, "Main Stream-Downstream", featured an unprecedented "floating corpse" show, in which models were shown as "corpses" lying naturally flat along a canal. The models floated along the canal as if they were "corpses", rejecting the traditional show and abandoning the idea of the "model" as a specific medium essential to a traditional fashion show. The official website of Yohji Yamamoto, for example, uses black and white as the colour palette to express the brand's 'rebellious' style.

3.1.3 Model Images

Human model is a common element in brand image shaping, and is the visual carrier of brand image intuitively [7]. Through the professionalism, artistic expression ability, aesthetic ability, fashion perception of the model, as well as the combination of the model's own external image, makeup modeling, expression and garment, the visual elaboration of brand image is completed.

From the perspective of use and satisfaction theory, consumers buy such products to satisfy their pursuit of the most basic functions of the products themselves, such as the need to express their spiritual pursuit, the need to express their aesthetic needs and

the pursuit of artistic values, etc [8]. Therefore, the pioneer apparel brands show their unique aesthetic taste. By this way, the avant-garde garment brands show their unique artistic expression in the selection of models, makeup expression, micro-expressions and body language. For example, most of the models of Yohji Yamamoto brand have angular faces, the corners of the models' mouths are mostly downward, the lower three eyes are white, giving people a sense of coldness and mystery, the age limit is small, the height is different from the traditional sense that models must have a tall body and other superior conditions, the makeup hue saturation is low, the modeling is unconventional, and even the hair is placed on the model's head randomly, shaping the brand in addition to The image of "rebellious", "free" and "pioneer". At the same time, the models' micro-expressions were mostly neutral when the clothes were displayed, giving people a sense of detachment that was difficult to approach, in line with the mysterious image of "unreachable" Avant-garde clothes. Research by Wu Yening in 2016 showed that facial expressions have an impact on individuals' perception of product prices and images, and this finding is reflected in the branding of avant-garde garment.

3.1.4 Designer's Image

In the Avant-garde brand image, the designer image is also an important part of it. From the origin and development of avant-garde garment, this style of garment has been accompanied by a rebellious spirit and a unique personality from the very beginning. To some extent, this style of garment is difficult to understand in the public's view, which contains the unique personality expression and life experience of the designer. Research shows that the designer's personal image and aesthetic taste represent the aesthetic pursuit of fans to a certain extent, that is, it is difficult to separate the image of the brand from the designer's image in fans' minds [9]. For example, Mr. Yohji Yamamoto, as the founder and designer of Yohji Yamamoto, appears in the public eye with his unrestrained image, his thick eyebrows, randomly shaped beard, and long male hair that is different from the existing mainstream aesthetics of the world, all of which express his garment design philosophy and brand image, while his close friend Ms. Rei Kawakubo, who is also the founder and designer of a famous avant-garde brand, expresses his unique personality in terms of his hair choice and His friend Rei Kawakubo, who is also the founder and designer of the famous avant-garde brand, has shaped her brand from her hair choice, dressing to her casual attitude towards life.

3.2 Inner Image

The inner image of the brand is the performance of the brand pursuit, spiritual connotation and values, which is an important part of the brand image and an important reflection of the brand depth. In the new media era, the audience's pursuit of spiritual and cultural connotation is gradually revealed in garment selection, and the brand's inner image becomes more important.

3.2.1 Designer's Inner Image

Designers usually add their own thoughts and spiritual pursuits when designing clothes, which makes the inner image of the designer the best expression of the brand's spiritual

and cultural image. From the origin of the avant-garde, it was born out of revolution and protest, with the original intention of “expressing ideas through garment”. The designers and founders express their understanding of the world, life, human nature, gender and so on through the avant-garde garment design, forming the precious inner spiritual image of the avant-garde garment brand. For example, Yohji Yamamoto’s unconventional and gender-neutral garment design style. Mr. Yamamoto is keen on designing women’s garment based on male concepts, covering women’s body shape with exaggerated proportions, bringing out the concept of androgynous aesthetics while expressing his understanding of gender and the body. He believes that body shape should not be a limiting factor for dressing, and not only should the wearer be independent, the clothes should also be free from the fate of an accessory and become one with the wearer, while also reflecting his thoughts on women’s rights. Rei Kawakubo, a close friend of Mr. Yamamoto, is also highly sought after for her unique spiritual core in Avant-garde fashion design. Rei Kawakubo is used to wearing pure black clothes, and her hair style is asymmetrical black shoulder-length hair with heavy bangs. As she said, “As long as I like it, what’s not to like” [10]. At the same time, her clothes are designed with a passion for adding asymmetrical, disruptive and bizarre elements to express her resistance to the traditional notion of women dressing to please men, a protest that is also reflected in the name of her brand, *Comme des Garçons*, which means “like a boy” in French. In Rei Kawakubo’s eyes, it is human nature to fear change, and *Comme des Garçons* is a stage for her to express her personal thoughts and spiritual pursuits, ignoring all questions and opinions, and expressing her attitude with her clothes, without compromising on the mainstream aesthetics, creating her personal style and brand image.

In the era of new media, media plays an important role in shaping the image of designers. For example, there are many personal interviews and documentaries about Mr. Yamamoto on Beping, Shake, and Weibo, in which Mr. Yamamoto talks about his life experience, design philosophy, why he created this brand, his spiritual pursuit, etc., showing his self-image and reflecting the brand image. At the same time, there are also a lot of tweets in the form of pictures and texts of Mr. Yamamoto’s life, interviews and quotes on Weibo and WeChat, which show his self-image and reflect the brand image in multi-media and multi-forms.

3.2.2 Value Orientation of the Brand

In the early stage of establishment, brands usually make a portrait of their target consumers, that is, what kind of people will like this style of garment, what kind of value orientation the brand wants to express, and what kind of spiritual pursuit consumers want to express themselves through wearing this kind of garment. For example, Rei Kawakubo’s avant-garde garment brand has the value orientation of rethinking the original purpose of women’s garment, believing that women should dress to please themselves and that women should not rely on their bodies to attract the opposite sex, but on their hearts.

4 Conclusion

By reviewing and summarizing the main advantages and characteristics of new media, especially paying attention to the subjective expression in the context of new media,

this paper focuses on the main strategies of the pioneer garment brand image shaping from two aspects of outward appearance and inner Image. This paper holds that in the new media era, the pioneer garment brand image shaping has been influenced by the development of new media technology, and the shaping form and content have been changed and innovated. Among the many advantages of new media, the pioneer garment brand tells its own brand story, spiritual pursuit and value orientation by shaping both internal and external images, continues to carry forward the pioneer consciousness and innovative expression of pioneer garment, and continues to inspire audiences with its rebellious spirit. This paper will be beneficial to provide new research cases for the research of new media, fashion and clothing brands.

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