

Thinking on Fashion Talents and its Current Education Situation in China

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Abstract—In view of the current situation that students are generally lacking market awareness in employment, this paper started from the new problems in costume design teaching of colleges and universities in China and the clothing industry status to put forward that clothing teaching should be based on the “market” and that it should be combined with “higher education”, and then the applied talents of “combination of art and skills” can be cultivated completely.

Keywords—costume design; skill education; market; talents

I. INTRODUCTION

Today, China holds the largest amount of clothing sales and production volume in the world, and it is also the largest consumer of clothing. Especially since China joining the WTO, clothing industry has experienced rapid development in China, like bamboo shoots after a spring rain. A clothing industrial zone is gradually formed in the southeast coastal area of Guangdong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, Shandong, Fujian, Shanghai and so on.

At the same time, clothing teaching education in China develops rapidly. Our clothing educators are constantly groping forward in order to cultivate more suitable talents for enterprises. However, with new changes in costume design field in recent years, enterprises' demand for talents is constantly improved and diversified. Seeing from a number of enterprises' feedback on employment, clothing enterprises are in great need of advanced and professional talents who can handle skilled practice operation, have strong hands-on ability, can be able to recognize and grasp prevalent market information, understand epidemic prevalence in market and market development trend, can be familiar with various clothing brands and can accurately grasp customers' aesthetic needs and style positioning of clothing brands. In view of this, what enterprises really need is modern applied talents who can solve practical problems in clothing brand operation and actual operation of products and can keep pace with the times.

II. PROFESSIONAL CLOTHING TALENT TRAINING

Clothing educators in colleges and universities are fully aware of that: in order to adapt to new requirements of the clothing industry with increasingly fierce competition, we need to help students have a good market awareness during study period. Students should be in constant contact with popular information in domestic and foreign market. As to have a firm grasp on the market, effective guidance and in-

depth teaching should be provided, including seizing popular style on the market, classification, summary and analysis of new techniques on the market, and knowledge concerning detailed design and clothing accessories and so on. It is undoubted that the part of market and enterprise imitation practice should be promoted during the teaching process. In the 2009 Clothing Industry Informatization High Level Forum, experts also demanded that clothing education should combine with the market to cultivate talents needed on the market.

Judging from the current employment situation of graduates from costume design, students generally lack market awareness and they even fail in efficient information collection and market development. Their design can only stay in the stage of creating works. Students fail in development of products based on brand positioning and market quotations. Namely, they just complete a piece of work. Although there is personality in their designs, it can not be transformed into commodity. Therefore, many colleges take development of and research on market as the primary subject of costume design industry and costume design curriculum reform. It can be said that there is competition in skill education even during undergraduate studies.

The talent training objective of “Combine bachelor degree with vocational skill education” was put forward several years ago by some clothing colleges. Under guidance of this objective, some clothing colleges constantly conduct teaching reform in the following couple of years' teaching process. At the same time, they carry out reform on training mode of professional clothing talent and effective adjustment on curriculum and other aspects by going deep into clothing enterprises to have a comprehensive and detailed understanding of enterprises' need of talents. Through in-depth and effective investigation and analysis on enterprises, teachers' and students' in-depth practice in enterprises and so on, enterprises' needs for future education direction are clearer.

III. CURRENT SITUATION OF COSTUME DESIGN TEACHING IN PRIVATE COLLEGES

At present, curriculum features are rather vague. As the main course of costume design, there is a certain gap between the too regular curriculum setting and requirement for cultivation of talents needed by enterprises. Major course setting is still consistent with the guiding ideology promoted

by National Textile Industry Ministry and clothing industry in early time, namely: too much emphasis on fashion, originality and art manifestation, paying more attention to theory teaching in curriculum setting, less practical classes, and almost no courses combining with enterprises. Under this kind of cultivation mode, many graduates are single-ability type and they are not very adaptable to their work.

IV. PROFESSIONAL TALENT TYPES NEEDED BY CLOTHING ENTERPRISES

In recent years, with rapid development of the clothing industry, clothing talents from various kinds of vocational colleges, junior colleges, undergraduate colleges and short-term training organizations in society increase rapidly. School levels are uneven. There is great difference among talents due to different starting points. On the contrary, enterprises' demand for talents is more and more sophisticated. Enterprises make more detailed, more refined and more professional requirements. Due to severe competition in the market, some abilities are greatly needed, such as understanding skills, strong practical operation ability, accurate grasp of popular trend, understanding market dynamics, understanding planning, collection of and analysis on popular information in market, selection of auxiliary material, product development, advertisement and store furnishing (Domestic professional clothing display personnel are very few, and costume designers do it as a part-time job in many enterprises).

Take clothing enterprises in Henan as an example, and we can divide them into two types: The first type is native clothing enterprises of Henan. Their bosses are usually local clothing merchants of Henan in early time with rich market experience. They experience the ups and downs of market and they are rather sensitive to the market. The second type is marketing enterprise. But in recent years, private clothing enterprises are showing momentum of development by leaps and bounds, and enterprises of Dark Violet type emerge in large numbers. Operators themselves begin to have brand awareness and a group of self-owned brands with strong market competitiveness are established. Emergence of brand awareness compels enterprises to have branding and multi-level requirement for talents. Apart from solid basic theory, basic skills and good aesthetic sense, practitioners should be able to accurately control the market and carry out the design plan.

V. ADVISES ON COSTUME DESIGN CURRICULUM REFORM OF CLOTHING COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

At present, many private colleges and universities take cultivating excellent "art plus skill" talents as the tenet of running a school. This policy is very proper at the time. According to training objective and positioning of the major, deepen teaching of major courses in four years step by step. Follow the sequence of "Guide into professional theory course from professional basic course" and "Guide into professional skills practice course from professional skills course" and finally get into the actual combat of product design. The details are as follows:

A. *Teaching should Combine with Local Advantages to Strengthen the Cultivation Mode of School-Enterprise Combination*

Take the Central Plains area as an example, although it's clothing industry is not as developed as that of Jiangsu and Zhejiang and it is not the fashion forefront, there is the popular saying of "come to Zhengzhou for Chinese panty" in recent two years. Teaching should combine with local advantages -- combine costume design teaching with local panty brand enterprise. Or directly take panty design as the topic of a design course and contact local panty enterprise to conduct actual practice of the topic. Adopt "combination mode of teachers in school and in enterprise" in course setting. Let school teachers play the key role in the theoretical part and make enterprise teachers play the key role in the product development part, thus enabling students to get training in practical work process. Through the practice, theoretical knowledge learned in school can be applied in practice, and analysis method of clothing manufacturing process and skills in assembly line production of ready-made clothes can be grasped as well.

B. *Emphasis on Teachers' Self Improvement*

Schools' education decision-making and professional teachers' correct guidance is of great importance for students. The teachers must experience the mode of clothing enterprise to get enough experience and to explain for students. Without high-quality professional clothing teachers, teaching plan combining with market can not be well developed and implemented. Therefore, it is very important to improve teachers' comprehensive quality. If teachers have no systematic knowledge structure, skilled clothing manufacturing process and technique, experience concerning operation and management of enterprises' production, and information concerning technology development of modern enterprises, there will be no way for them to display guidance in market. Therefore, schools should organize teachers to visit enterprises, learn or take part in training there, and participate in clothing expo regularly. Encourage teachers to be part-time designers in enterprises in order to fully understand the market and continue to understand market information. Most of the teachers take the job immediately after graduation. Only with this kind of personal experience, can they correctly guide students in how to adapt to enterprises. Firstly, it can enrich teaching content. Secondly, it can enable teachers to continuously bring new and leading edge knowledge to students in teaching. Of course, schools should have the courage to try to break the concept of emphasis on teachers' educational background and professional title, and they should hire some experienced masters from enterprises to promote the overall comprehensive quality of teachers. Enterprise teachers and school teachers should make efforts together, constantly communicate, learn from each other and make progress together to achieve better teaching objective.

C. *Take Clothing Brand Design Course as Real Training Task of Students before They Leave School*

Take bold attempts in clothing brand design course. Be based on learning in original costume design course, and ask

students to combine with their interests and hobbies in conducting market research and report of relevant brands. Make in-depth research on one brand and establish a self-owned competitive brand for it. Students should be demanded to handle name and positioning of the brand, enterprise connotation, and positioning of consumer individually, and complete planning scheme of the self-owned brand's next season's clothing finally. The whole process should be in accordance with enterprises' requirement for clothing designer, especially that design specification should be in strict accordance with enterprises' manufacture order in order to make students understand what kind of presentation of clothing design drawing is needed by future post of duty. Although the time is short, most of the students get a clear understanding of work after graduation. It also has been confirmed in previous summer internship of students. During the internship, more or less clothing design products of several students are adopted and produced by enterprises.

D. Paying Attention to Implementation of Practice in School

In the field of clothing, it is impossible to cultivate a qualified costume designer, pattern designer or craftsman in one or two years. It is obvious that the mode of centralized theory in school and centralized practice after graduation is unable to meet the needs of the market. Thus, an abundance of time of the students and enterprises is wasted. Therefore, practice during internship is the key part of clothing teaching and we should attach great importance to enterprises' teaching practice, including internship. Internship is of strong practicability. Whether internship is successful or not will not only influence improvement of graduates' practical ability and other abilities, it will even have a great influence on future employment and profession prospect.

The only way to combine with enterprises during the period of college is internship, which is also an important part of costume design teaching and a direct and effective way to develop students' actual operation ability. An administrative staff member of a hiring enterprise once told me: "Students do not lack theoretical knowledge, and what's more important is their weak practical ability". Schools need to have enough teaching practice base to provide skill education for students. According to incomplete statistics, about 50% of costume design graduates change jobs every year, however, many clothing enterprises complain about failing to hire needed talents. In the viewpoint of enterprises, there is disconnection between students' theory and market, and schools fail to cultivate the kind of talents needed by enterprises. It is very timely that our school proposed the decision of cultivating top-class talents during the "Three-new" meeting several days ago. Our school teaches students basic theoretical knowledge and enterprises cultivate their ability and teach them employment knowledge. If students have experienced internship or part-time jobs in enterprises, it will be easier for them to understand the class. Otherwise, even if teachers tell them a lot of enterprise knowledge, it will be very difficult for them to come to an agreement with it. Students will have no idea what teachers are saying. After a period of internship, students get to know what kind of

knowledge and ability are needed by enterprises. In my opinion, it is very useful to students entering into the work role after graduation.

Internship in enterprises enables students to come into contact with a lot of advanced sewing equipment. What distinguishes costume design from other designs is that some design ideas need certain sewing equipment to realize and the realization effect of some certain sewing equipment can inspire design inspiration. Of course, it is impossible and unnecessary for schools to purchase this increasingly updated sewing equipment every year.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, market is the driving force behind production of clothing enterprises. Continuous need of market pushes forward development of clothing enterprises, and development of enterprises needs a large number of costume design, pattern making and marketing management talents. Facing students' poor adaptation to market after graduation reflected by many enterprises at present, we get to know that the fundamental reason is students' lack of market practice. The deceased designer MacQueen once said "I have not failed and everything I do has a solid foundation rather than on a spontaneous whim. I think I am the most successful British designer, because I know market. Giving people some things recognized by them is one of my strategies. Some designers are too arrogant and they always indulge in fantasy, so it is very difficult for other people to get along with them. As to this point, my working-class background helps me, because people can get along well with me. I am an ordinary man who becomes a costume designer by chance." Therefore, in order to establish students' market awareness, develop students' ability to solve practical problems and cultivate their team cooperation spirit, we have to carry out reform on clothing teaching system. Students do not lack theoretical knowledge, so we can say that the basis of costume design teaching innovation is combination with specialized courses to accomplish practice. Only by letting students take the initiative to recognize and experience the market, can we be able to develop excellent and professional talents who have theoretical basis, skills and strong actual operational ability under the new circumstance of "art plus skill".

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