

Analysis on Cultural Development and Marketing Strategies of High Street Fashion Brands: A Case Study of the Brand Fear of God

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Abstract: With the changes of the times and the rapid development of economy, high street fashion has become the object pursued by many young people. The development of high street fashion is not only the embodiment of social progress, but also a cultural concept. This paper analyzes the cultural development and marketing strategies of high street fashion brands, as well as the important position of high street fashion in the field of design. The relationship between high street fashion in cultural development and marketing is also explored based on the current development situation and market trend of the clothing industry.

Keywords: High street fashion; Brand culture; Marketing

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1. Introduction

Concerning high street brands, there were HBA (Hood by Air) and Rick Owens ten years ago as well as Off-White five years ago. High street style is not a fixed style, but rather a casual dress on the street. The term “high street fashion” refers to the stores at the main commercial streets of Britain. These stores imitate some show models and make ready-made clothes, which are deeply loved by the public, and then form a fast fashion culture. In recent years, high street fashion has prevailed, especially in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai. It has gained much attention from people and is deeply loved by young people. The brand Fear of God founded by Jerry Lorenzo has become the hottest high street brand today with its unique style and avant-garde design.

2. Features of high street style

2.1. Layer, sense of layering

As a type of non-fixed style, high street style emphasizes the most basic layer form and the sense of layering. For example, the contrast between outer clothing and inner clothing in modeling is compared; the outer clothing may be short-sleeved, whereas the inner clothing may be long-sleeved, creating a sense of hierarchy in vision (**Figure 1**).

Compared with traditional matching of clothing, in high street style, a shirt may be directly tied at the waist, which not only strengthens the lack of layering in traditional matching but creates a sense of randomness. In order to make it more convenient for young people to wear and match, it is made into a shirt-like hem in the design of contemporary clothing (**Figure 2**).

Among many high street costumes, it is common to see some “ragged” shadows, such as holes in the hem of clothes and torn decorative elements. Clothes with destructive elements have a more fashionable sense than smooth and complete clothes. Rough selvages, rag strips, holes, and splicing are the characteristics of high street style (**Figure 3**).



Figure 1. Overlapping wear
(from Baidu Gallery)



Figure 2. Shirt-like hem
(from Baidu Gallery)



Figure 3. Ripped jeans
(from Baidu Gallery)

2.2. Graffiti, street style

In high street fashion, another element that is commonly seen is graffiti. Graffiti originated from the streets of the United States. Graffiti made on the walls by young people can be seen everywhere on the streets of the United States, representing the personality and bold creative ideas of young people in the United States. High street style clothing also integrates graffiti art. Designers apply these graffiti elements to their clothing designs, rearrange and combine these graffiti elements, and then create the clothing.

2.3. Mainly black, with many accessories

Black is known as the “eternal classic.” The color black is mysterious, yet casual. In high street style, the general choice of color is mainly black. It is common to see youngsters wearing a dark jacket, a torn version of the inner match, black or dark straight trousers or overalls, and a pair of simple white canvas shoes or black daddy shoes to create some functional sense. As a high street style, clothing accessories have also become the highlight of this era. As a branch of clothing, jewelry no longer plays a single effect, but rather focuses on the whole and cooperates with clothing, so as to create the finishing touch (**Figure 4**).

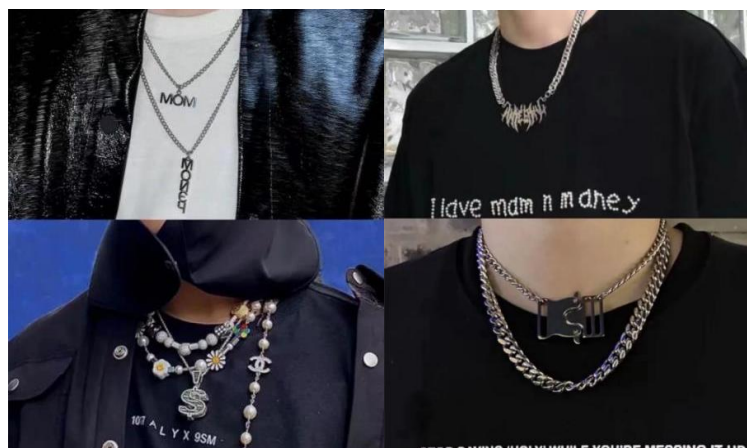


Figure 4. Necklaces (from Baidu Gallery)

3. Current high street branding trend

3.1. Embodiment of high street brands in different countries

3.1.1. United States

American high street culture exudes a sense of “yuppie” fashion. The design elements used in American high street fashion clothing are nothing more than hip-hop and graffiti. Compared with the orthodox design and high price of modern mainstream fashion, young American men and women, who are deeply influenced by fashion culture, tend to be more keen on free and personalized fashion brands. Among the fashion brands, Supreme and Off-White (Figure 5) use pattern elements boldly and exaggerate their design concepts, thus attracting the local young people [1].



Figure 5. Supreme and Off-White (from Baidu Gallery)

3.1.2. Europe

The European culture has always been dominated by romance and precision. European designers prefer to elaborate details in their design preferences and emphasize iconic British tailoring. For example, designs by Superdry, a British brand, and LSDZW, an Italian men’s clothing brand (Figure 6), allow us to appreciate the hippie youth on the streets of Europe and America, wearing worn and asymmetric free-draping ready-made clothes, thus visually displaying a kind of domineering sense and debauchery belonging to dandies. These are the unique trends among Europeans.



Figure 6. Superdry and LSDZW (from Baidu Gallery)

3.1.3. Asia-Pacific

The Asia Pacific region, led by Japan, has gathered many fashion trend lovers, who are keen on their own local brands, such as BAPE and EVISU (Figure 7). As a huge animation country, Japan, influenced by its cartoon art, mostly selects lovely elements in its design, such as the head of an ape, other animals, nature, camouflage, illustrations, and so on.



Figure 7. Bape and EVISU (from Baidu Gallery)

In the Chinese market, the people's preference is not to express themselves through clothes like in other countries, but they pay more attention to artistic conception and internal expression, reflecting their preference for fashion in a tactful form as exemplified by various fashion brands, such as STAYREAL in China. Among these fashion brands, the expression of their clothing is mostly displayed on the streets with a positive energy, with attention to the continuation of positive fashion energy culture.

3.2. Cooperation and integration of luxury brands and high street brands

The cross-border cooperation of brands is not the first. Most of the products of cross-border cooperation are generally produced in the form of limited edition. When an object is scarce, it is precious, which makes consumers more fascinated ^[2]. For example, the cooperation between Hermes and Vans, which combines and takes into account their respective brand culture to launch a canvas shoe with elements of Hermes's luxury style and Vans's trendy style. Vans, a trendy brand, boldly innovated, broke the traditional style of black-and-white grid and designed it on shoes by using the pattern elements in Hermes's scarves ^[3] (**Figure 8**).



Figure 8. Co-branded shoes by Hermes and Vans (from Baidu Gallery)

4. Fear of God

Unlike Off-White, Yeezy, and other fashion brands which are closely related to hip-hop culture, the brand culture held by Fear of God keeps pace with the times. In terms of design, it is not limited to one area, but it has broken the boundaries in fashion, blurring the boundaries between trendy brand and fashion brand, with the continuous integration of the two and respective development. On the whole, it shows various emotions shrouded around young people [4].

4.1. Band development process

4.1.1. Origin

The 1920s was Rick Owens's time. Jerry Lorenzo was a loyal fan of the brand. In order to promote Rick Owens's style, Jerry designed the first season of Fear of God products. Taking Rick Owens's style as a frame for reference, Jerry's style at that time was not mature, and there was no independent brand style. However, he added a metal element zipper design to Rick Owens's basic models (shirts, T-shirts, hoodies, etc.). This small attempt broke the constraints of clothing element design at that time and attracted a large number of fashion enthusiasts, leading to the first batch of products being sold out quickly.

4.1.2. Development

Based on the results of the first quarter, Jerry continued to try. In the product design and development of the second quarter, several fashion icons, such as Justin Bieber, began to pay attention to this brand. Later, he even cooperated with Fear of God to produce the "Purpose" Tour series (**Figure 9**). Through cooperation and publicity, Jerry's style gradually gained affection by the majority of fashionable young people in high street, and they started purchasing Fear of God pieces and imitated them.



Figure 9. "Purpose" Tour series (from Baidu Gallery)

In 2016, Fear of God innovated again, challenged new things, and tested shoes for the first time. It mainly focused on military style elements and integrated these elements into shoes. Its product was named Military Sneaker, which attracted the attention of young people at the beginning of its exposure (**Figure 10**).



Figure 10. Military Sneaker (from Baidu Gallery)

4.2. Brand design features

4.2.1. Product features

The first season's clothing design elements are based on metal elements, giving it a unique design. Based on the original style, the traditional suture is replaced by a zipper (**Figure 11**), thus reflecting a different feeling.

The most striking piece in the second season is an olive-green jacket. The uniqueness of this piece lies in the seam on its sleeves (**Figure 12**). Upon adding this seam, the wrinkle effect on the sleeves arouses people's desire to buy.

In the third season, Jerry's design was more mature, and his style was expressed incisively and vividly. The brand also became well known by the public. When talking about high street fashion, people would first think of Fear of God. Jerry had influenced the trend of fashion at that time.

The real peak of Fear of God is in the fourth season. In the fourth season, Fear of God launched a new style – blue tannin clothing (**Figure 13**). At the same time, Fear of God began to design and sell shoes. Jerry combined sports and leisure shoes with military boots, and finally designed a pair of exaggerated high barrel military boots made from nylon and soft leather.



Figure 11. First season
(from Baidu Gallery)



Figure 12. Second Season
(from Baidu Gallery)



Figure 13. Fourth season
(from Baidu Gallery)

4.2.2. Price positioning

The price of clothing products in the first season of Fear of God is positioned at more than 400 USD. With

the hot sales of products and its popularity among the public, the price rises. With the passage of time, Jerry launched a season of relatively cheap clothes and established a relatively cheap branch brand in order to attract more people, who have preference for high street fashion, to wear products from Fear of God.

4.3. Brand marketing strategy

4.3.1. Co-branding

In the first quarter of 2020, Fear of God chose to cooperate with Ermenegildo Zegna, an Italian luxury fashion brand. The two brands combined their own brand characteristics for innovation, and finally launched a series of co-branded clothes.

In December 2020, Adidas announced a long-term partnership with Jerry Lorenzo, the owner and founder of the street clothing brand Fear of God, who will take charge of the basketball department of the brand. The two sides will cooperate to launch fashion sports devices, which are expected to include basketball sportswear and lifestyle products. In addition, the brand also works with Alessandro Sartori, the artistic director of Ermenegildo Zegna.

4.3.2. Distinctive style

The difference between Fear of God and other street brands is that Fear of God does not use an exaggerated logo to declare itself, but instead, it emphasizes on the material and profile of clothes. It is constantly innovating. As a fashion designer, Jerry had some ideas of his own, which were difficult to foresee in the fashion trend at that time, such as the stacking of proportion, the ingenious use of colors and clothing materials, etc. It made its own patterns by folding and wearing, as well as performed great color matching and tailoring. It is one of the most influential brands in American street fashion. It does not stack logos, and its style is also more suitable for matching rather than stacking items compared to skateboarding brands, such as Supreme ^[5].

4.4. Brand evaluation

As the favorite of high street fashion brands in the new era, Fear of God is bold, but it does not lack fashion sense from the initial Gothic style to the later integration of various fashion elements. With the improvement of its brand status, unlike many other fashion brands, Fear of God chooses a low-key approach, and its design is just right. The overall design of its clothing is exquisite but not exaggerated. Today, Fear of God is increasingly co-branding with various brands, such as Vans, Converse, Nike, etc., and this cooperation is more conducive to the development and promotion of the brand.

5. Conclusion

In the development process, high street fashion, with its own influence and communication power, constantly promotes the development of fashion trends in new directions. High street fashion has become the core force leading the fashion industry. At present, most people still keep a distance from high street fashion. In order to really improve the status of high street culture in the hearts of the public and integrate it into the general trend of fashion design, designers should not be satisfied with the present; instead, they need to learn more from the essence of high street elements at home and abroad, make progress in practice, as well as innovate on the basis of the past ^[6].

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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