

# Analysis on the Current Status of Seoul Fashion Week and Study on the Methods of its Mid- and Long-Term Development

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**Abstract:** Since several years ago, Seoul Fashion Week has been positioned to be recognized as one of the world's five greatest Fashion Weeks. Though it is true that Seoul Fashion Week has been showing noticeable growth for the last twenty or so years, it is still evaluated to be somewhat insufficient in its qualitative growth. It still exhibits some radical problems resulting from its transitional status and so cannot yet be considered as an international Fashion Week. .

Therefore, this study aims to examine how to improve Seoul Fashion Week by analyzing its current status and providing mid- and long-term development methods for it to grow qualitatively to be an international Fashion Week.

According to the results of this study, Seoul Fashion Week, currently in a transitional state, can realize qualitative growth and mid- and long-term development through the following: first, supporting and sponsoring organizations should be distinguished, and the planning of the events should be freed from governmental initiatives and be independent; second, through a precise SWOT analysis on fashion in Korea, Seoul Fashion Week should reorganize its own original planning and concept; third, it should diversify its channels of publicity and conduct specialized and constant marketing plans; lastly, support of the overseas market should be systemized by centering around the practical affairs of trading, and professional manpower, who can provide more practical support, should be cultivated.

If the aims mentioned above can be fulfilled, it is expected that Seoul Fashion Week will establish its identity as its own collection and secure further competitiveness in the global market so that it can exploit a new market to grow as one of the world's five greatest Fashion Weeks, not simply have the image as Asia's top Fashion Week.

**Key words:** *Fashion Week, Fashion collection, Seoul Fashion Week, Fashion fair*

## **1. Introduction**

### **1-1. Objectives**

As being one of the largest elements to form the brand images of the national and regional brands of the fashion industries, the Fashion Week is gradually gaining its importance as the core event of creating high-values in the deepening global competitions. In addition, it is expanding its role throughout the cultural, economical, and business contexts in the world market to promote the city and its content as part of the business culture.

This year marks the 11<sup>th</sup> year of Seoul Fashion Week, and it has made huge progressions based on past experiences; however, it has yet to be ranked as one of the major global fashion events.

It takes much time and effort to award the Fashion Week as a world-class event. Except for Paris, Milan, New York, and London, the four major fashion cities in the world, other cities worldwide self-claim to be in the fifth or the sixth position, while in reality, they all belong in the transition period. Though it is true that Seoul Fashion Week has been showing noticeable growth for the last twenty or so years, it is still evaluated to be somewhat insufficient in its qualitative growth. And to be an international Fashion Week, it still exhibits some radical problems being stuck in transitional aspects.

Currently referred to as the number one Fashion Week in Asia, Tokyo Fashion Week in Japan has not yet produced a single star designer since Issey Miyake, the fashion designer who first introduced Japanese culture and traditions in the fashion market worldwide, and due to the massive earthquake that occurred in the year 2011, the country is just recovering from a long-term economic and cultural recession. Under these circumstances, world's leading fashion experts claim this time to be the suitable time for Seoul Fashion Week to leap as Asia's largest fashion business event and develop as the number five major fashion city in the world.

At a point where such qualitative transition and growth of domestic Fashion Week is required, the improvements of Seoul Fashion Week is reviewed through the analysis of its current status and the mid- and long-term development methods are sought for its growth as a national culture content.

### **1-2. Methodology and scope**

Most theoretical resources and leading researches for Seoul Fashion Week were lacking in amount, and because fashion changes every season, there were limitations to theoretical analysis through reviewing of literatures and statistical data collections. Reference books were analyzed primarily, and for the sections that required complementary and practical verification, additional field studies were taken thereafter.

The methods of concrete research are as follows.

In order to achieve the purpose of this study, first, a variety of document resources such as monthly fashion magazines and newspapers, primary journals, research papers, various reports and statistics for internal release, National Statistical Office(NSO) publications, data analysis intended for Seoul Fashion Week exhibitors, etc. were collected and analyzed.

Secondly, in-depth interviews, field surveys, and case studies were completed with the support of the

Professional Advisory Council, the experts of Seoul Fashion Week, and the agency representatives who have steadily participated in the Seoul Fashion Week for more than three years.

Finally, the field survey of Seoul Fashion Week and exhibitor interviews and surveys started from October 2008 until March 2012, for a total of over seven seasons.

## 2. General study of the Fashion Week

### 2-1. Definition and properties of the Fashion Week

Fashion Week is a large-scale event held regularly in the fashion industry for the fashion brands worldwide to inform the media and the buyers of their latest fashion products for a certain period of time. World's leading fashion cities cooperate in the Fashion Week through fashion collection and various fashion events [Table 1]. The most major event of the Fashion Week is the Fashion Fair, also known as the head of fashion business. World's leading fashion fairs usually open within the weeks of the Fashion Week, but some fairs open by themselves regardless the official opening dates of the Fashion Week.



[Table 1] Properties of the Fashion Week

The largest and the most influential are the four major Fashion Weeks held in the four leading fashion cities, New York, Paris, Milan, and London. The schedules of the events are adjusted according to the consultation of the cities, but mainly, the F/W collection starts in the United States on February and ends in Paris on March, and the S/S collection starts in the United States on September and ends in Paris on October.

Fashion Week events are held twice a year and are six months ahead in season. In other words, the F/W collection are presented from January to April, and the S/S collection are presented from September to November. Through these events, fashion industries analyze the trends for the upcoming season, while buyers formulate budget plans based on the analyzed trends and respond by purchasing forthcoming seasonal products in advance.

### 2-2. Purpose of the fashion week

After making an early realization that fashion industries have a big ripple effect against other industries and that it will have influential job creation effects in the future, developed fashion countries have continued to strategically promote its nations' fashion industries. Like this, the Fashion Week could be seen as 'the flower' of the fashion industries. Fashion Week in the modern days go beyond the role as a

promoter and act as a bridgehead that builds the country's image as an advanced nation of high-fashion culture development.

### **3. Current status analysis and development methods of the Seoul Fashion Week**

Seoul Fashion Week was first established in the year 2000, and the repetition of integration and separation between the three main domestic designers associations(KFDA, SFAA, New Wave in Seoul) and individual designers have been continuing in the last few periods, while collections from the integration of middle-grade and new designers are gaining more attention in the modern days. Though short in history, Seoul Fashion Week is slowly shifting its direction from quantitative development to qualitative development, showing development possibilities with its various attempts.

#### **3-1. Organization & operation system**

The Seoul Fashion Week is sponsored by Seoul Metropolitan Government and Ministry of Knowledge Economy and organized by Seoul Business Agency(Seoul Fashion Center) and the organization committee of the event.

In the case of the top four Fashion Weeks, – Paris, Milan, New York, London –the events receive active sponsorship from each of its own cities, but fashion professionals carry out the fashion week events as the leader of the fashion culture and business without any political pressure, attracting major industries as its sponsors.

On the other hand, business problems caused by the unification of organizing bodies of Seoul Fashion Week such as Seoul Metropolitan Government and other variety of institutions have been constantly pointed out. Especially, because the position towards Seoul Fashion Week changes as the power of the city change, there have been limitations in the consistency of the policy. Thus, recently, the association of Seoul Fashion Week has been criticized and receiving suspicions for using the tax of the country for the production of the event.

Especially, in recent years, the policy of the fashion industries were put on brake due to confusion and conflict of the operation system between the city of Seoul and its affiliated firm, SBA(Seoul Fashion Center). Eventually, in December 2011, Seoul Metropolitan Government stopped all the operations of Seoul Fashion Week, and in March 2012, Seoul Fashion Week was quickly reorganized with new events. Hence, fashion designers concerned about the future direction of Seoul Fashion Week gathered to establish the 'Korean Fashion Designers Association', creating opportunities for designers and organizers to review the problems of Seoul Fashion Week and to build cohesion amongst Korean fashion designers and to create improvement plans for Korean fashion designer brands.

For the past 3 years, from the year 2008 to year 2011, since the participants of the Seoul Fashion Week have been concerned about 'the authoritative consciousness of the administration officials(survey target: collection, fair participants)', 'the trade misunderstandings of the administration officials(survey

target: fair participants)<sup>1</sup>, the separation of Seoul Fashion Week and the political administration has been desperately needed.

The company to act as a service agency for the actual proceeding of the events of Seoul Fashion Week has been selecting and operating multiple institutions for the past 19 years to compete, balance, and develop in fashion show productions. However, since the year 2009, such companies have been selecting and operating only one institution through an annual bidding process. Hence, major companies such as MEGA Communications in the year 2009, Daehong Communications in 2010, and Cheil Worldwide in 2011, are acting as agencies of Seoul Fashion Week.

The participations of the advertising agencies are frequently pointed out as issues when viewing Seoul Fashion Week in a long-term perspective. Fashion industries are skeptical about the role of advertising agencies, being concerned with what they could do now and in the future for the development of the fashion industries. Especially, the biggest problem that is being presented for house agencies<sup>2</sup> is that they lack the need to contribute to the development of the fashion industry<sup>3</sup>. Also, since they are not professionals who do not fully understand fashion, they are not able to come up with differentiated images that are suitable for the Korean culture when it comes to producing fashion events.

When studying the fashion fairs of the world's top four Fashion Weeks, each exhibition booths remain coherent to the fairs' production purposes and concepts. Also, the materials used during the installation of the booths are cleaned and collected to be recycled for the next season.

On the other hand, many consignment businesses that change annually plan a great portion of events without receiving proper transitions of the events from the previous years, thus creating the tendency to waste budget and manpower, and to lose the consistency of Seoul Fashion Week's concept. For example, in fashion fairs, the concepts for the exhibitions change every year, and the booths with new concepts using new materials appear frequently [Table 2]. Since such booths do not consider the characteristics and the purpose of the fashion fair as a place where 'clothes' must be the main of the exhibition, and the center of the consultations between the exhibitors and the buyers must take place, the objective analysis and evaluation of the event must be taken into consideration.

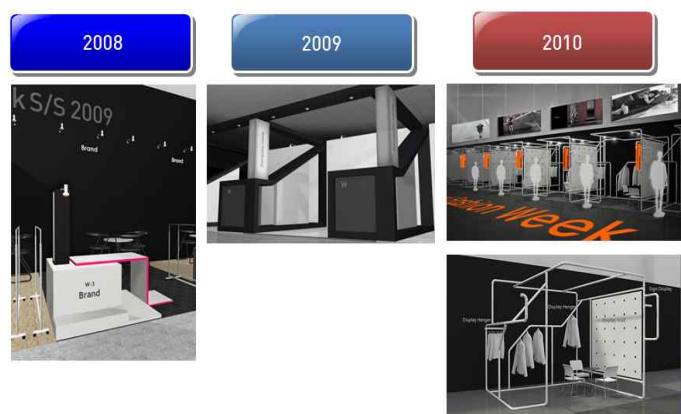
Meanwhile, secondary operation personnel of Seoul Fashion Week are recruited and mobilized as volunteers of the related fields through seasonal announcements without additional budget plans.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, since the year 2009, Seoul Fashion Week required all fair exhibitors to attach price tags on all items exhibition items, but such action is against the business sense of the trading market regarding the prices that fluctuate according to the minimum ordering values of buyers and other trading conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Advertising agencies are divided into two groups. Agencies containing parent companies are called 'house agencies' while agencies without any supporting companies are called 'independent agencies'. In the case of Korea, most large companies support advertising agencies as interrelated enterprises and give all of the companies' advertising businesses. [Fashion Journal & Textile Life]

<sup>3</sup> Kang, Doo-suk(2010), Fashion Journal Editor's Column – Concerns of Advertising Agencies on the Advance to Fashion Collection



[Table 2] Seoul Fashion Week’s annual exhibition booths

### 3-2. Composition and execution strategy

Seoul Fashion Week is held twice a year, in the end of March and October, for about six to seven days. It is composed mainly of the collection, fair, and other cultural and minor events [Table 3]. The detailed forms of these three events are modified every season.

	Event	# of participating companies (2011 F/W standard)
Collection	Seoul Collection	26
	Fashion Take Off	9
	Generation Next	9
	Presentation Show	12
Fair	Seoul Fashion Fair	69
Minor	Fashion Blossom in Seoul (College Fashion Week)	About 8 Colleges

[Table 3] Composition of Seoul Fashion Week

#### 3-2-1. Collection

Currently, Seoul Fashion Week is divided into four different names. Seoul Collection is the showcasing of high-quality designs of high-leveled domestic designers, and the Fashion Take Off is the runway show of young designers who have the potential to lead the future of Seoul Fashion Week, whereas Generation Next is the showcasing of new faces in the fashion world. Lastly, Presentation Show is a short, mini runway show for small collections such as capsule collections.

For the amateur designers participating in Generation Next, the show acts as a gateway to becoming a designer of the fashion market since all the expenses needed for show productions are supported; however, the one-time support for the participating designer is an issue that needs to be pointed out.

Presentation Show is much smaller in scale when compared to Seoul Collection; oddly however, this smaller-sized showcase is starting to receive more attention as a presentation method than the collection.

### 3-2-2. Fashion Fair

The fair of the Seoul Fashion Week is called the Seoul Fashion Fair and is considered to be the exhibition intended for business purposes. During the fashion week, companies that participate in the collection are required to participate in the fashion fair, whereas companies that do not participate in the collection are only allowed to participate in the fashion fair.

In the case of world's famous fashion fairs, the rental fee of a booth per square mile is very highly priced, and the events are usually run by profits from different rental fees and sponsorship of major institutions. The composition of the fashion fair are organized through a strict evaluation process of participating companies and later divided into sections or zones according to the quality or the mood of the collections. In comparison to the international fashion fairs, the rental and entry fees in Seoul Fashion Fair are free in charge, and since the booths of each participating companies are similar in size and shape, the differentiating of the companies' images and concepts are much more complicated. To improve such issues in a long-term perspective, strengthening the services of participating companies, public relations, and considering fair admission for the future is required. In other words, not only relying on the government's budget plans for support but building productivity through self-reliance for better and more productive event executions.

Global fashion fairs are held from three to four days including the weekends. However, since Seoul Fashion Week is very small-scaled and the collections and fairs are opened at the same place in the same time, the fairs are also held for seven days according to the schedule of the collections. The excessively long schedules of the fashion fair are one of the most common problems pointed out by foreign officials. Since there are not much buyer visitors during this time period, most company representatives leave their exhibition space. At this time, when the city's senior officials visit the fair for promotion purposes, the secondary operating personnel act as the company's representative, lowering the company's image as a whole; therefore, independent operating system of collections and fairs are desperately needed.

For a better and a more effective operating system, Seoul Fashion Week newly introduced the 'tablet order' system in the year 2009. The tablet order system<sup>4</sup> is an interactive digital information sharing system that allows participating brands and buyers to share brand and product details in real time through wireless broadband internet terminals. This system, in a form of e-catalogue, provides domestic and international buyers with details of brand information, design concepts, images, product prices and quantities, allowing its connection to actual business. Since the 2011 F/W Seoul Fashion Week, such system was introduced to the buyers with the support of Samsung's 'Galaxy Tab'. Such high-tech system development and integration trials suited for technologically-advanced status of Korea cannot be found in any place else. However, the export prices that need to be differentiated according to the buyers' current status of country, business, number of purchases, export conditions, etc., are currently being presented equally to the buyers. Such disadvantage is a task that needs to be settled in the future.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://tabletorder.seoulfashionweek.org>

### **3-2-3. Subsidiary events**

Compared to previous fashion weeks, various attempts of subsidiary events are being held along with Seoul Fashion Week in the current times.

Temporary fashion culture exhibitions and overseas fashion exchange programs are being conducted intermittently, and in October 2011, an event in connection with Seoul Fashion Week called 'Fashion Blossom in Seoul' was newly organized with global fashion contests, best graduation works from fashion design schools, fashion expert seminars, and other programs. Furthermore, beauty brands cooperated with designers of Seoul Fashion Week to participate in backstage make-ups and also presenting make-up and hair shows.

However, since other related events and cultural events representing Seoul Fashion Week are in an absent state, the creation of intimate connection effect from such compensation is needed.

### **3-3. Geographical environment analysis**

Seoul Fashion Week from year 2000 to April 2004 was held in COEX Convention Hall, while the events after November 2004 were held in Seoul Trade Exhibition & Convention(SETEC) located in Hagnyeoul Station. Recently as the types of collections have been sectionalized, the opening locations of Generation Next have been also divided. Most recently after Seoul Fashion Week faced many administration problems in March 2012, the events were held inside a tent in the Olympic Park at Jamsil.

In order for a fashion week to emerge as a global issue and attract buyers, it must be held in an appropriate place where its identity could be emphasized. Magic shows in Las Vegas and events like Bread & Butter in Spain are based on the country's vacation spot. Atmosphere, a fair of high-quality clothes in Paris, mainly takes places located near the District 1, also known as the center of fashion in Paris, and held in Jardin des Tuileries, a public garden surrounded with French history and art.

For big-scaled fashion fairs such as Hong Kong Fashion Week or Prêt à Porter Paris, Who's Next Paris, and Coterie New York, it might be necessary for the trade shows to be held in buildings built exclusively for the fairs, but it is unnecessary for small-scaled events such as Seoul Fashion Week to be opened in big places like SETEC. Instead, creating traditional and historical environments by setting up tents or old buildings, or even in hot places like fashion streets, offer more abundant sights, delivering a more solid image of the fashion week.

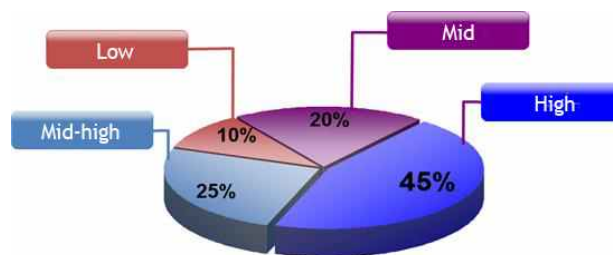
Also, the participating designers of Seoul Fashion Week are all provided with Hall 1, Hall 2, or the Presentation room, but these similar places give designers a sense of dullness and limitation in presenting and executing the designers' own styles. In addition, since the fairs in the SETEC are held at the same time of the collections, the places of the fairs are always crowded, and the resting place for the buyers is reviewed as somewhat confined and formal.

### **3-4. Exhibitor Analysis**



According to the analysis of the price TAG<sup>5</sup>(FOB price standard) attached to the items of the participating companies in the Seoul Fashion Week, the brand products seemed to be mixed into high, middle, and low cost products without any attributes.

When a product is exported, the duty and shipping charges, as well as maintenance fees and showroom costs add up, being sold to the consumers for at least 2-3 times higher than the original price entered by the local importers in Seoul. Shown below[Table 4] is the ratios of high, mid-high, mid-, and low-cost products of the participating brands of Seoul Fashion Week given the terms above.



[Table 4] Price ratios for products of participating brands of Seoul Fashion Week

In this case, there is much confusion when establishing a specific image for the fashion week, and it starts to lose its purposes of invitation and budgets when trying to select guest buyers.

Like this, every exhibitor in the Seoul Fashion Week have their own variety of purposes of participation.

Industrial designers, unlike designers with exporting goals, usually participate in the fair for brand image management and promotion purposes; therefore, they tend to present items that are unsuitable for the fashion market or even fix inappropriate exporting prices on their items, and usually gain resentment from the buyers because of the miscommunications between the buyers and the designers.

As for global designers, there are many designers who participate in the fashion week to receive funding for the participation in collection overseas<sup>6</sup>. These people tend to present collections shown in the previous seasons, and in the case of fashion industries, they do not usually exhibit their items where they are supposed to, lowering the image of Seoul Fashion Week as a whole. The biggest problem, however, is that the launch of collections overseas for such designers do not link to the country's image enhancement nor increase the exporting numbers of the fashion market.

### 3-5. Buyer analysis

For foreign buyers who visit Seoul Fashion Week in the city of Seoul, they are provided with a

<sup>5</sup> FOB(Free On Board) is when the seller(exporter) is obligated to deliver the goods on board a vessel specified by the buyer, meaning that the buyer is responsible for all costs and risks of loss of or damage to the goods from the point. Thus, 'FOB Price' is the price that includes the shipment of the goods or the service cost of loading those goods onto a specified vessel.

<sup>6</sup> Support to participate in the world's top four Fashion Week: 『Seoul's Top-Class Designer Funding Business』  
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round-trip plane ticket for two, a private limousine, meals, parties, hotel accommodations, personal translators, receptions, city touring, and many other high-quality support for the guest members. Since the participation of powerful buyers are low in Seoul due to the lack of international awareness, overseas promotion, and marketing activities, Seoul Metropolitan Government use the system of self-inviting the buyers and reporters. Hence, a big part of the budget (almost 30% of the whole) for Seoul Fashion Week is used just for the inviting of the guest buyers.

Like this, some buyers invited to Seoul Fashion Week are those invited from the participating companies of Seoul Fashion Week, but the source of the other portion of buyers is unknown. Currently the most serious issue of Seoul Fashion Week is deceiving the security system by abusing the overseas guest invitation system. There have been many cases where overseas Koreans or undocumented English teachers were invited as guests and cases where unqualified strangers faked their identification for other purposes. Recently, a 17-year-old teenager was officially invited as a guest by faking their identity as a journalist and enjoyed a free trip to Korea, and a person acted as a one of the hotel guests after heavy drinking but was eventually caught when forging the signature of a credit card. In order to prevent such mishaps, identification check like the Pusan International Film Festival prior to registration and establishment of security systems and the disclosure of the guests' selection process and the nominators are necessary.

Meanwhile, Seoul Fashion Week demanded their invited buyers more buying than the substantial amount, resulting in negative effects. According to on-site interviews with Seoul Fashion Fair exhibitors, some buyers who have participated in the fashion fair have asked the company representatives to 'report to Seoul Metropolitan Government that they have ordered the company's items'(Kim, Byung-soo, personal interview, Dec.8,2011). This is a typical example where there is a confrontation between policy and fashion business.

Among the invited buyers of Seoul Fashion Week, there are some of those who run a select shop and buy a large quantity of one item, but usually most buyers do not purchase the items just because they have watched the collections. They sound out their intention to make exporting deals after a long time of watching the designer's collections and clearly understanding the designer's style, potentials, and consistency in their collections. Inviting such buyers to Seoul Fashion Week and immediately demanding for buying at a substantial price is a roadblock in overseas expansion. On the contrary, if mid-priced buyers who are able to export large quantities of goods at low costs like Dongdaemun or low-priced wholesale buyers have visited Seoul Fashion Week, the minimum order price during the first visit should be specified, and the conditions and the standards of the minimum order price should be constantly changing according to the buyer's nature of the industry, the country, and the prices.

### **3-6. Audience analysis**

Seoul Fashion Week's main audiences consist mostly of students from fashion-related departments rather than buyers with the ability to purchase.

World's top collections, on the other hand, mostly invite guest members, and some famous designers

present their collections very privately under heavy security. The members allowed in such collections are buyers, the press, designers, VIP, and top-class celebrities.<sup>7</sup> Since global fashion fairs are no exceptions, the fashion fair that allows the entrance of the general public may only exist in Seoul Fashion Week.

By being open to the public, the Seoul Fashion Week might be able to gain both the interest of fashion experts and the public interests, leading a potentiality in an explosive growth. Through the good use of Korean Wave and the synergy effects caused by various marketing and promotion strategies, Seoul Fashion Week might have the chance to progress as Asia's top Fashion Week like the Pusan International Film Festival [Table 5].



[Table 5] Seoul Fashion Week four-step progress

However, instead of focusing more on planning celebrity events or other events to get the public's attention, it is more important to play a role as a real business by paying more attention to the participation of foreign buyers and excavations of new designers.

As Seoul Fashion Week is currently accessible to the public, the decrease in scarcity along with professionalism as a fashion event and the crowded, unorganized atmosphere of the venue remains one of the most urgent assignments to be completed for the better future of Seoul Fashion Week. In particular, while the buyers and company representatives are in the midst of export counseling, the action of visitors taking pictures or touching the displayed clothes or even creating disturbances are the basic business environments that need to be improved. For the better quality and environment of Seoul Fashion Week, the collections should be open to the public and the fairs only open to the buyers, the press, and fashion experts.

#### 4. Mid- and long-term development of Seoul Fashion Week

<sup>7</sup> Joo, Bo-rim. (2009). "Research on Korean Collection as High Added Value Fashion Industry -By Comparison of Status and Characteristics of Domestic and International Collections." The Korean Society of Design Culture(KSDC). P523-308

#### **4-1. Separation and independence of sponsoring institutions**

As seen earlier, since a policy regime that changes according to an administration is the element that causes the change of budget and the concept, Seoul Fashion Week has an illness of being unable to grow as a business with substantial competitiveness in an international fashion competition market. The pre-researching period done for conducting this research paper and during the three years of the writing period, the policies and criteria of Seoul Fashion Week have been changing every time the events have been held, so it was impossible to figure out the exact numbers through statistical analysis.

In March 2012, Seoul Metropolitan Government replaced all the fashion businesses organized by the Seoul Fashion Center with new representatives to conduct Seoul Collection. After Seoul Fashion Center closed in December 2011, during the three-month preparation period, there were too many constraints in terms of budget and time when considering the selection of new social welfare and recruitment of participating designers, which eventually led to the dilemma of Seoul Collection<sup>8</sup>. Under the opaque fog of fashion policy, Seoul Fashion Week will only have to walk in place. In addition, the promotional one-time events will degenerate and self-admire itself in promotional news articles, losing its sense of purpose and the core of the event.

Post-event reviews also attempt to objectively analyze the results of the fashion week through credible institutions that are able to maintain its independence and through private enterprise overseas and promote the communications and the union of the members.

Thus, it is necessary to consider the reality of Seoul Fashion Week and to objectively look back at the urgent problems and to evenly recruit 'skilled fashion workers' of overseas markets, locating them in the right position of the field. Also, the opinions of the companies who have steadily participated in the collections and fairs overseas and a systemized management system reflecting the on-site administration experiences are required.

#### **4-2. Planning and concept reorganization**

In order for Seoul Fashion Week to leap as one of the world's top fashion weeks, it must contain long-term definite concept and target. For example, New York collection is known for its practical and sophisticated, industrial city image while Milano collection made a big success through its attentions in details and superiority in fabrics based on creativity and practicality. Paris collection is based on the creativity of haute couture outfits, inspiring many designs worldwide while London collection mostly consists of young designers who are not afraid of new challenges. In Japan, the unique characteristics of their street styles and fashion cultures are reflected in the collections.<sup>9</sup> Thus, a country's policy, economy, culture, society, and various industry and fashion share the same base and are developing under the long-term symbiosis.

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<sup>8</sup> Seoul Metropolitan Government, SBA, part of the Seoul Fashion Center lockout measure, Fashion Journal & Textile Lifestyle (©Global Textile) (Research date: Jan.3, 2012)

<sup>9</sup> Lee, Yun-kyung. (2008). Study on Mid- and Long-Term Development Plans of Korean Fashion. Korea Culture & Tourism Institute. P.94

Like this, it is necessary for the city of Seoul to thoroughly review ‘SWOT of Korean Fashion’ that was analyzed from various political, economical, cultural, and social views. Under the foundation of such characteristics, the planning objectives and concepts of Seoul Fashion Week should be reorganized. Up to this point, since Seoul Fashion Week’s establishment 11 years ago, the reorganizing of plan objectives and concepts imply the meaning of gradually improving and eventually being newly born.

In addition, representative fashion designers and specific design identities and marketing strategies(emblem, logotype, signature, etc.) that could easily identify Seoul Fashion Week should be introduced.

Also, companies and target buyers that are suitable to Seoul Fashion Week’s plan concepts should be selectively chosen. Especially the establishment in the styles and the prices of goods are one of the most urgent problems that need to be solved. Thus, it is necessary to thoroughly analyze the business types and the characteristics of the buyers with purchasing powers from all the visited buyers, and through deep review of Korean fashion, to decide whether the new trading nation will focus on differentiating itself from other Asian regions by creating high-quality couture clothes or rather pay attention on manufacturing practical prêt-a-porter clothes based on the textile industries of Daegu, or even throw challenges in the fast-producing market of Dongdaemun.

#### **4-3. Promotion and marketing specialization**

Promotion and marketing is probably the weakest point of Seoul Fashion Week. Therefore, it is necessary to select different channels that are suitable to the concept and the purpose once it has been clearly established.

Since now, Seoul Fashion Week has not formed expert workforces on promotion and marketing of the event due to the lack of budgets, but as of promotion overseas, there have been more online-based promotions than paper-based promotions. At the fashion week event, booklets were published in the same design and size of the ones published in famous fashion fairs overseas, and online promotions were made by personally asking power bloggers and famous global press to post articles online; however, a better and more various promotion channels are required for the promotion of Seoul Fashion Week [Table 6].

First, through the use of the quickest and the most cost-efficient information-spreading system, SNS(Social Networking Service), and other digital devices to present Seoul Fashion Week’s promotion videos and the city’s culture, and by frequently uploading various cultural news updates and fashion information linked to the Korean Wave, the E-news letter published on a regular basis will lead to a lasting worldwide interest.

In addition, the Korean culture and Seoul Fashion Week should be introduced more creatively and effectively in ongoing issues of catalogs, and one-on-one personal services for providing information to the overseas buyers are issues that should be done on a regular basis.



[Table 6] Variety of marketing channels for the promotion of Seoul Fashion Week

Next, in order to take advantage of the IT technologies in Korea, it is necessary to enhance marketing activities by integrating fashion with IT technologies. Thus, not settling on the tablet order system, but further developing the system as a website for export purposes and trying to figure out various ways to activate the technological system.

To become a global fashion brand, long-term, steady fashion show and fair participation overseas or contact with the press is essential. Such challenge takes up a lot of marketing costs, professional marketers with much trading experiences, showrooms in different countries for global buyers to enjoy real-time outfits, the outfit samples displayed in each showroom, and other countless elements such as capital, manpower, space, and time.

Therefore, such series of steps can be manualized and programmed based on the virtual world and online by applying the basic technological skills of Korea, the advanced country of IT technology, and through the collaboration of Fashion + Technology + Graphic design starting from design planning to promoting, and even through exporting.

In other words, introduce the system through the use of virtual fashion show, user-solution linkage system, sub-costs payment system, air-bill linkage system, cooperation of related organization, e-B/; and e-Nego system upgrades, establishment of global security/authentication system, and provide the global electronic payment system.

In a virtual fashion show system, since the size of virtual male and female avatars are each created differently according to the standard size of different countries, companies will be able to consult with their buyers without size as being one of the biggest obstacles in their business.

Especially, Middle Eastern buyers who treat only high-valued products usually order items in different colors, sizes, and in a custom basis to suit their tastes, and if such virtual fashion show system is introduced at the time of customer consultation, it will definitely bring a greater synergy effect.

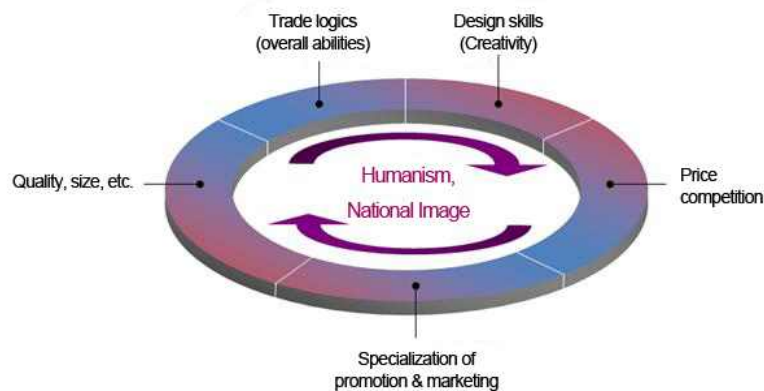
#### 4-4. Systemization of overseas market support and development of high-skilled specialists

Over the past ten or so years, Fashion Center and Fashion Associations have had key specialists who have had hands-on experiences accumulated through on-site detached duties for the support of overseas market establishment companies. These specialists are sent on duty when Seoul Fashion Week is held; however, as the administrative characteristics started to deepen in the events and the workforce changed to perform simpler exercises, Seoul Fashion Week is no-longer making good use of their know-hows. If such specialists are placed and needed as event planners, recruiting of highly-skilled overseas workers and infrastructures that can support these workforces systematically are necessary.

If foreign experts are to be introduced, aside from the connection between domestic agencies and organizations, it would be a great chance to view Korean fashion market more objectively and to pull Seoul Fashion Week to the top in a short period of time due to a high understanding of the global market.

In fact, in fashion markets overseas, the successes of the events are often determined by the ability of the event planners and their infrastructures. For example, as the producers of Prêt à Porter Paris, the world's largest fashion fair for the last few decades, moved to Who's Next Paris, Prêt à Porter Paris has winched compared to its former glory with a rapid decrease in the number of buyers while Who's Next Paris is emerging as a top event.

Also, if professional consultants for trading businesses are placed during Seoul Fashion Week, it will give practical help to the exhibitors who lack experience in dealing with global markets. Therefore, basic education such as identifying practical issues of export process through on-site duties during the event and operating trade education programs customized for fashion industries and distributing specialists who understands the basics of trade operations such as order sheet or invoice writings and trading conditions after the event is necessary.



[Table 7] Basic knowledge for trade consulting

In addition, it will be more practical if information such as ‘world’s size list’, ‘the change in the living conditions of global consumers and trend information based on emotional tendencies’, etc., in connection to professional and reputable institutions that are able to provide size information of different countries in different regions were provided to organizations.

## 5. Conclusion

It has not yet been ten years since the fashion industries of the world have opened its doors to the unlimited world of competition after the advent of national boundaries' disappearance in the global environment, but due to the global financial crisis, the fashion markets of the world are currently suffering and are looking back on themselves. In this situation, leaping ourselves as the 'World's Top 5 Fashion Weeks' or the 'Fashion Hub of Asia' without even considering the quality and the level of our collection is maybe an incoherent goal. The globalization of fashion is not achieved only by chanting. Many conditions have to be met, and many changes have to be overcome. In some cases, it might be a work where constant national support is necessary. Designers must develop their capabilities along with the growth of various fashion fields. Of course, the most important field is the designer's creative collections, but this is not enough to solve every problems.

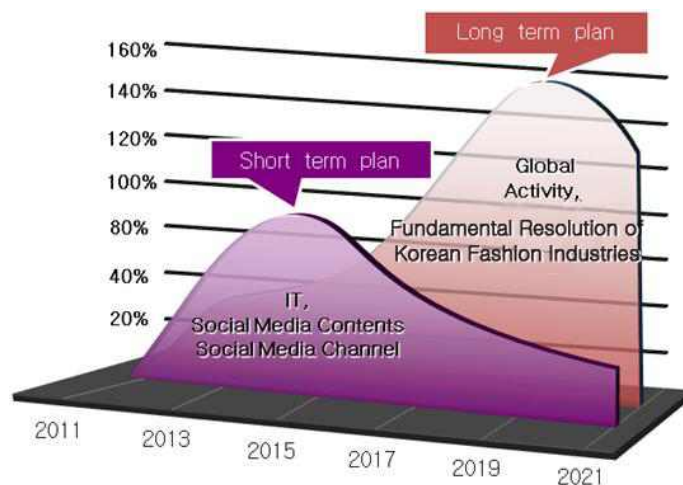
The artistic characteristic held within fashion states that it is not only the designer's creativity that completes the art. The elements that surround fashion much have its each of its own creativity according to its placement and positions. This is the main reason why fashion in Korea cannot develop and advance.<sup>10</sup>

As the result of the study, in order to mid- and long-term develop Seoul Fashion Week, first, unnecessary disputes during domestic collections should be avoided, and organizing associations should separate itself from administrative controls to establish long-term, clear goals for the development of fashion in Korea and for the promoting of events and activities. Second, the event will last as a cultural event that will be able to represent the city of Seoul through the planning and reorganizing of the concept. Third are the specialization and the development of promotion and marketing. It is necessary to vitalize an aggressive short-term marketing strategy that combines fashion and IT technology and process target goals of overseas markets through the fundamental resolution of Korean fashion industries[Table 8]. Fourth, in order to organize support for overseas market, skilled workers must be trained and placed in appropriate places. Under the base, Korean fashion brands will grow more competitively in the global markets, complete systemized programs of Seoul Fashion Week in the long run, which not only helps to establish the national collection's identity, but also hope to create a new chapter in the fashion industry of Asia.

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<sup>10</sup> Kang, Doo-suk(2009), Fashion Journal Editor's Column – [Seoul Fashion Week], Okay The Way It Is?





[Table 8] Short- and Long-term Target Plan

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