

# Digital transformation: A comparative study of the impact of digital fashion shows on traditional fashion shows

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**Abstract.** This paper explores the transformative impact of digital fashion shows on the traditional landscape of fashion presentations and the market positioning within the fashion industry. The advent of digital fashion shows introduces new dimensions to the showcase of fashion, challenging conventional concepts of fashion and presentation. This study examines the expression of creativity and craftsmanship by designers in traditional fashion shows, delving into the dynamics of audience interaction and experience, and analyzing business models and brand strategies that are crucial for industry success. The integration of new technologies with digital fashion shows has revolutionized the modalities of fashion presentations and audience engagement, offering innovative ways for a global audience to participate in fashion events. This paper also discusses the potential for market expansion and sustainability within digital fashion shows, emphasizing their role in shaping the future of the industry. A comparative analysis highlights the advantages and limitations of both traditional and digital fashion shows, examining their impacts on the fashion market and cultural landscapes. Furthermore, the paper provides insights into future trends and developments, forecasting the potential convergence of these two formats in driving the evolution of the fashion industry.

## 1 Introduction

The fashion industry, traditionally rooted in physical runway shows and tactile experiences, is undergoing a profound transformation in the digital age. Historically, fashion shows have been pivotal in presenting new collections and engaging audiences through in-person events that emphasize sensory interactions. However, the advent of digital technologies has revolutionized this practice, ushering in a new era of fashion presentation and experience.

This paper delves into the transformative impact of digital fashion shows on the conventional paradigms of runway shows and their market positioning. We explore the deep and multifaceted influence of digitalization on key elements of the fashion industry, including venue setup, visual interaction, conceptual presentation, and business collaboration models. The evolution of fashion shows can be traced back to the early 20th century with small-scale presentations in Paris. A significant milestone in this evolution was the establishment of the

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"Press Week" by Eleanor Lambert in the United States, marking the transition towards more structured fashion events that have since become the cornerstone of fashion trends.

The "Big Four" fashion weeks – Paris, Milan, London, and New York – each possess distinct characteristics that define their identity in the global fashion landscape. Paris is renowned for its romance and elegance, Milan for its innovation and luxury, London for its avant-garde designs and New York for its commercial integrity and inclusiveness. The emergence of digital fashion shows has radically altered how fashion is showcased and perceived. The integration of technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and 3D printing has introduced new dimensions to fashion presentations, challenging traditional notions of fashion and display.

Digital fashion encompasses various forms, including smart clothing, wearable devices, intelligent fabrics, and virtual garments that exist solely in the digital realm. These innovations pose significant challenges to conventional fashion concepts and the ways in which they are presented. This paper investigates how designers express their creativity and craftsmanship through traditional fashion shows and contrasts this with the digital realm, examining how new technologies influence audience interaction and experience. The integration of these technologies has redefined the performance and engagement of fashion shows, offering innovative ways for global audiences to participate in fashion events.

This study explores the market expansion and sustainability potential of digital fashion shows, highlighting their role in shaping the future of the industry. We conduct a comparative analysis of the advantages and limitations of both traditional and digital fashion shows, assessing their impact on the fashion market and culture. We also provide predictions on future trends and potential integration of these formats.

## **2 Literature review**

Fashion shows are not only an important showcase for the fashion industry, but also a key means for fashion brands to deliver their creativity, drive trends and achieve their business goals.

### **2.1 The relationship between the fashion industry and fashion shows**

The fashion industry includes a complete chain from design, manufacturing, and sales to marketing, covering a wide range of areas such as clothing, accessories and footwear. It is not only a huge commercial industry, but also encompasses multiple cultural and social dimensions [1]. Fashion Week is a series of high-profile fashion show events, usually held in major fashion cities around the world (e.g., Paris, Milan, London, and New York). Fashion weeks are not only an opportunity to showcase new season designs, but also provide an international platform for brands to reach a wide audience including fashion buyers, retailers and the media. Fashion week is an important moment in the fashion industry and is a key point for brands to strategize for the upcoming season and expand their markets [2]. The centerpiece of every fashion week is a series of fashion shows that showcase the latest collections of designers and brands. This not only provides exposure for brands, but also offers buyers and the media the opportunity to preview the new season's fashions in advance, thus influencing upcoming fashion trends [3]. Fashion shows are a key component of the fashion industry and an important platform for brands to showcase their latest designs and innovative ideas. Through fashion shows, designers can visualize their ideas and attract the attention of buyers, the media and the public, which is crucial for the brand's market positioning and product sales [4].

## **2.2 History of fashion shows**

The origins of the fashion show can be traced back to the mid-19th century, when the French court began to use "fashion dolls" to display fashions. Subsequently, British designer Charles Frederick Worth introduced the concept of live models presenting fashions, and the format evolved into the modern fashion show [5]. However, the concept of the "fashion show" originated in Paris [6], where haute couture shows have been held since 1945 [7]. Paris Fashion Week was first organized in 1973 under the auspices of the French Fashion Federation [8]. Milan Fashion Week was created by the Italian Chamber of Commerce in 1958 and London Fashion Week was created by the British Fashion Council in 1984 [9, 10]. The Council of Fashion Designers of America created the modern concept of a centralized "New York Fashion Week" in 1993, although since the 1980s, cities such as London have used their city names in conjunction with the term "Fashion Week" [11]. Globalization and advances in digital technology have led to the diversification of fashion shows from high-end stage shows to street performances to today's digital fashion shows. The rise of the internet and social media platforms has greatly expanded the audience for fashion shows, breaking the boundaries of time and space [1].

## **2.3 Trends in fashion shows**

COVID-19 The pandemic has driven a digital shift to virtual dimensions in the fashion industry and promises to enhance innovation and sustainability at all stages of the system [12]. Digital technology could have a significant impact as it offers the opportunity to dematerialize resource-intensive practices in traditional fashion supply chains and co-create value across different dimensions of sustainability.

Digital fashion shows break geographical constraints and enable brands to reach a global audience. This geographically unrestricted presentation expands the market reach of brands and opens up new business opportunities for the fashion industry [13]. Digital fashion shows offer a wider range of creative space than traditional shows. Designers can create visual effects that cannot be realized in reality through animation, special effects and digitized scenes, making fashion shows more expressive and attractive [14]. Through real-time streaming and interactive platforms, viewers can interact with the content of the fashion show, and this interaction is not only limited to viewing, but can also include experiences such as commenting, purchasing, and even virtual try-on [15]. With the growth of digital fashion shows, fashion brands are increasingly relying on e-commerce platforms for sales and promotion. Digital marketing strategies are becoming crucial in attracting and retaining customers, and through social media and other digital platforms, brands can interact with consumers more directly and effectively [16]. In addition, the concept of digital apparel is emerging, which exists only in virtual space and is used in social media and avatars. By selling digital garments, brands can break away from the limitations of traditional physical garments and offer unlimited design possibilities and personalization options [17]. Digital technology enables fashion brands to provide consumers with a highly personalized shopping experience. By analyzing consumer data and behavior, brands can create individually tailored recommendations and product portfolios that enhance customer shopping experience and satisfaction [18].

## **3 Traditional fashion show**

Traditional fashion shows are characterized by three elements: design and creative expression, audience interaction and experience, and fashion show business models and branding activities. Traditional fashion shows provide a highly staged platform for designers to

artistically present their designs through a variety of elements. The design and creative expression of the designers, the models and the dynamics of the show and the runway form occupy an important position.

### **3.1 Showcase format**

Deeply rooted in fashion culture, traditional fashion shows have an important symbolic meaning and sense of ceremony, preserving the history and classic style of the brand, providing a unique live atmosphere where the audience can feel the details, texture and movement of the garments up close and personal, enjoying an all-round sensory experience. Designers artistically present their clothing designs through a variety of creative elements. These elements include tailoring and craftsmanship, materials and textures, colors and themes, overall styling and accessories, show design and atmosphere creation. Exquisite tailoring and handcraftsmanship are the core of fashion design; fabric selection and treatment is an important means for designers to convey their creativity; color and theme are the key elements of the fashion show, which help designers to convey deep emotions and brand concepts; and accessories and overall styling are the extensions of the fashion design, which enhances the expressiveness of the fashion show and facilitates the potential opportunities for business cooperation. The layout and atmosphere of the show venue are crucial to the effect of the clothing display. In addition, a fashion show is not just a static display, but a dynamic form of expression that brings out the essence of clothing design. The dynamic performance of the models and the form of the show, such as the route, the rhythm and the form of performance, are important means used by designers to convey the brand's story and emotions. For example, Thom Browne had models perform on a huge ice stage during a fashion show, which added drama and a sense of storytelling to the entire show.

### **3.2 Audience engagement**

Traditional fashion shows are not only a visual feast for attendees, but also an interactive experience between the audience and the designer's creative world, which resonates with the audience's emotions through the visual presentation, thus realizing more commercial value as well as visual communication. Traditional fashion shows attract a large number of media and social celebrities, increase brand exposure and social influence, and have a significant impact on the formation of fashion industry topics, which is an important social event in the fashion circle. In addition, traditional fashion shows represent the classic and historical legacy of fashion culture, preserve the traditional values and design philosophy of the brand, and provide a platform for communication and interaction with the industry and beyond, promoting the dissemination and exchange of fashion culture.

### **3.3 Market impact**

The fashion industry is not a single-selling fashion industry. Traditional fashion shows are key platforms for high-end fashion brands to showcase their luxury image and superior craftsmanship, reinforcing the brands' high-end market positioning. Traditional fashion shows attract a large number of buyers and wholesalers who place orders and make purchases directly after the show, boosting the commercial development of the brands and enabling them to access more direct business opportunities.

## **4 Digital fashion show**

The integration of digital technology has dramatically changed the way fashion shows are presented and the audience's participation experience. Through technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), 3D printing, holographic projection, etc., the concept of the digital fashion show has emerged as it provides designers, brands, and audiences with new ways of interacting and experiencing the show. This shift has not only changed the way fashion is presented, but has also expanded the market's ability to reach a global audience. The live streaming capabilities of social media and online platforms allow a global audience to watch fashion shows in real time, breaking down geographic constraints, expanding the audience base, and demonstrating a huge potential in terms of sustainability.

#### **4.1 Showcase format**

Through a variety of digital technologies, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), 3D printing, holographic projection, etc., as well as the implementation of artificial intelligence, big data, digital people and other digital means, digital fashion shows open up a global marketplace for brands, breaking through geographical and temporal constraints and enabling them to reach a wider audience and potential customers. Virtual Reality (VR) technology allows viewers to watch a fashion show in a fully immersive virtual environment through a virtual reality headset. This experience allows viewers to feel as if they are in the show, regardless of where they actually are. Brands can create a virtual show where the viewer can see the details of each garment in 360 degrees, and even "step inside" the garment to learn about the design process; Dior utilized VR technology for its Spring/Summer 2021 Haute Couture show to give the viewer a surreal journey through the world of fashion. In addition, digital people and virtual models are fully computer-generated, lifelike characters that can replace live models in virtual fashion shows. These digital people can be programmed to look like anything and walk in any environment. Virtual models and digital people will become the norm, offering a more flexible presentation than traditional fashion shows. Brands will have the freedom to create and manipulate these digital characters in a virtual environment, showcasing unlimited creative possibilities!

#### **4.2 Audience engagement**

Digital fashion shows can be streamed globally via the Internet, allowing viewers around the world to watch simultaneously. Burberry has expanded its market reach by streaming its shows live on multiple online platforms, attracting viewers from all over the world. Moreover, the digital platforms can easily provide multi-language support, enabling the brand to reach audiences of different languages and cultural backgrounds. This global approach to presentation helps the brand gain greater awareness and acceptance in the international marketplace. Louis Vuitton provides multilingual narration and subtitles during its digital fashion shows to ensure that audiences from different countries can understand and appreciate its presentations.

Smart clothing and wearables combine fashion and technology to provide richer ways of displaying and interacting. These garments can interact with the audience and even adjust their appearance and functionality in real time. ralph Lauren introduced smart sweatshirts with built-in sensors that monitor the wearer's heart rate and exercise status and display their dynamic data during the fashion show. Virtual clothing that exists only in a digital environment and fashion shows that incorporate digital technology provides a new experience for the audience. Viewers can try on and customize these garments in a virtual environment, enjoying a completely personalized fashion experience. the Fabricant is a company that specializes in virtual fashion, and their digital garments exist only in the virtual world, providing a platform for brands to showcase their creativity without physical

limitations. Digital fashion shows can incorporate a variety of new technologies such as holographic projection, 3D animation and interactive media to create a futuristic viewing experience for the audience. These innovations break the boundaries of traditional presentations, and Balmain's holographic projection technology allows virtual models to walk the runway alongside real models, creating an exciting combination of reality and reality.

### **4.3 Market impact**

Digital fashion shows reach a global audience through the Internet, expanding brands' market reach, especially to international audiences who are unable to attend traditional fashion shows in person. Viewers can participate directly in the show through interactive platforms, such as voting, commenting and trying on virtual clothes, and this enhanced sense of engagement helps to increase brand loyalty and consumer stickiness. See-and-buy functionality allows viewers to immediately purchase the products on display while watching the show, driving online sales and instant consumption, which is extremely friendly to fast-fashion consumers and emerging brands. In addition, digital fashion shows represent a close integration of fashion and technology, driving digital transformation and innovation in the fashion industry and influencing the way fashion is presented in the future. Promoting the development of virtual culture, the application of virtual models and digital people has changed people's traditional perception of fashion presentation and promoted the rise of virtual fashion. In addition, the low resource consumption and environmentally friendly display methods of digital fashion shows are in line with modern society's pursuit of sustainable development, promoting the green transformation of the fashion industry.

## **5 Conclusion**

The digital revolution in the fashion industry has ushered in an era of change, challenging and expanding the traditional paradigm of the fashion show. This paper delves into the far-reaching impact of digital fashion shows on the evolution of the fashion market, focusing on the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and 3-D printing. Through digital innovation, the historical significance of Paris, Milan, London and New York Fashion Weeks has been redefined, and these cities continue to shape the global fashion narrative with their distinctive characteristics.

The study shows that digital and traditional fashion shows each have their own strengths and limitations, but they demonstrate their unique value in terms of presentation format, market impact and cultural influence. In the future, as technology continues to advance and audience needs change, the two formats may merge further to create even more innovative and diverse fashion presentations. Digital fashion shows will continue to drive the digitization and sustainability of the fashion industry, while traditional fashion shows will maintain their important position in the high-end fashion market through enhanced experiences and interaction. While both digital and traditional fashion shows have grown significantly over the past few years, and each has demonstrated unique strengths and influence, there are still many under-researched and unexplored areas of convergence between them. For example, how virtual fashion goods are perceived and consumed by consumers, and how the valuation and market behavior of these goods differ from that of traditional physical fashion goods are still questions that need to be addressed.

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