The Development Strategy of Silk Garments from the Perspective of "Silk Road Economic Belt"——A Case Study of Nanchong City

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Abstract: Based on the current situation of Nanchong silk garments, this paper analyzes the advantages of developing the silk apparel in Nanchong, and puts forward the countermeasures in order to solve the problems such as the weak brand awareness, the lack of design talent and the single product style in the development of silk clothing.

Key words: Nanchong silk; Silk garments; Brand; Development strategy

1. Introduction

On the morning of September 7, 2013, President Xi Jinping made an important speech at the Nazarbayev University of Kazakhstan and proposed to build the "Silk Road Economic Belt" together. As the starting point of the Southern Silk Road, Nanchong has a long history and splendid silk culture. May 11, 2015, China International Silk Fair foundation stone laying ceremony was held in Dujing town of Nanchong, which is the city of silk in China and the first town for silk. Silk is the card of Nanchong, and Nanchong is famous for silk. Facing with the opportunities and challenges of the “Belt and Road” and the “Moving East Mulberry to West” projects. Nanchong silk garments industry should promote upgrading the file, to make it become an important industry which has a complete production chain and an outstanding advantage in basic production [1].

2. The development status of silk garments in Nanchong

Nanchong silk has a long history and brilliant prospects and also has an important position in the history of China silk. As the starting point of the "Southern Silk Road", Sichuan is also the home of Shu Brocade and Shu Embroidery. Although Sichuan has been known as its abundant silk resources and long-standing silk culture, compare with the area of Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, there is a certain gap in equipment, technology, finishing and brand building. The disadvantage of standing at the end of this industry, limiting the visibility of silk products and the growth of value added, making the overall competitiveness of the slow increase cannot effectively feed upstream industry.

As a traditional advantageous industry in Nanchong, the silk garments industry has a good development conditions, and is in a rare period of development opportunities. However, the current silk garments are focusing on the production of pajamas and home clothes, which has a low level in product and design. Most clothing enterprises are stay in the simple process to produce, and they don’t have their own brand, or special design team. This industry still has many disadvantages, including single clothing style, insufficiency of new
product development, the unobvious brand superiority and the lack of market competitiveness. Nanchong has abundant resources of silk materials, but there is no mature finishing technology, leading to it relies on raw material export and still as a role of original equipment manufacturer, and what’s more, its high value-added apparel terminal products did not win the market share. Nanchong silk garments doesn't achieve its economic value, compared with other domestic famous silk brand, there is a certain gap, mainly because of the lack of active brand building and brand management.

3. Advantages of Nanchong silk garments development.

3.1 The long historical and cultural background

Nanchong is one of the four major silk production bases and one of the 15 export bases in China. It has a history of more than 3,000 years in silk production. The silk used to be the royal tribute, which has exported to Japan and other overseas countries. Nanchong is known for silk. In 80s of last century, Nanchong silk industry ushered in its heyday, and silk products were presented as a country gift of China for many times, at that time, silk had become a bridge between the Chinese civilization and the world culture. Nanchong silk industry has influenced generations of people. Both officials and common people show a marked preference for silk, that’s why Nanchong silk industry is an enduring industry after having experienced all kinds of hardships, also the inner motivation of its development.

3.2 Policy support for pillar industries

As one of the four pillar industries in Nanchong, both Sichuan provincial government and Nanchong municipal government placed great emphasis on the development of silk garments industry. In 2006, in response to the Ministry of Commerce "Moving East Mulberry to west" policy, Nanchong launched the "double million project" [5]. They have enlarged the mulberry planting area and promoted the quality, all of this have laid a good foundation for silk industry. The next five years, Nanchong will build "the World Silk Museum" and "the Silk Road Source Museum", at the same time, improving and perfecting the silk culture-related projects, such as “the Nanchong silk Boutique Museum” and “the Silk Theme Park”, etc. Around these constructions, Nanchong municipal government plans to develop the silk culture tourism and sericulture sightseeing industry. Taking the silk culture as the carrier, vigorously develop tourism resources products, and actively promote the construction of the silk culture industry.

3.3 Advantages of complete industrial chain

Nanchong has a complete industrial chain, such as mulberry, silkworm, cocoon, silk, chiffon, tulle, painting, knitting, clothing, carpet, silk quilt, silk textile, silk art object, silk machinery, scientific research, teaching, testing, silk museum, silk town, sericulture tourism, comprehensive exploitation and utilization of sericulture, etc. Nanchong is the largest silk producing area in southwest China, is also one of the biggest manufacturing bases of pure silk, and its total production of silks rank first in Sichuan province [5].

4. The development strategies of Nanchong silk garments.

Facts have proven that Nanchong silk has a large richly endowed by nature resources and a complete industrial chain. Nanchong silk garments is facing a good opportunity to make great progress under the condition of “the Belt and Road” project.
4.1 Establish a complete brand system

There are not many famous brands for silk garments throughout the country, while foreign brands occupy the quality position in the market place. Investigate its reason mainly is lack of the brand features. Brand sharpening is the key to solve the surviving and developmental issues of enterprises, in order to improve the market competitiveness. Thus it can be seen that the brand image design is an urgent task of the moment. Brand shaping is a huge project, which include brand-positioning, brand image design, brand-application, and brand-construction, etc [2]. Transforming the abstract brand concept into the strong brand identity among the target consumers is a key link of the brand shaping [4]. Nanchong has a lot of silk enterprises, like the group of Liuhe, Meiya silk and Ai Erfu and so on. These enterprises are focus on the production of silk fabric, while few silk clothing brands built the integrated system of brand management. Nanchong must build its own silk clothing brands to carry forward this traditional superior industry. It’s not only good for silk enterprises, but also good for the increasing of the content of Nanchong, which is known as the silk capital of China.

4.2 Update the technical equipment

In order to promote the silk garment products upgrading, and produce the high-class clothing, Nanchong silk enterprises must continually introduce advanced technological equipment, and send people to learn the advanced technology at home and abroad. There are many aspects should be perfected to solve the problem of color yield and color fastness. They must integrate advanced technology into production, and improve the performance of silk fabrics, then focus on the study of final finishing. To make the silk fabrics show a more plentiful and fashionable effect in visual, they must focus on the development of special varieties, such as blended with other fibers, mixed with synthetics to make a sparkling fabrics, local hollow and stereo jacquard and so on.

4.3 The introduction of high-quality design professionals

As a second-tier city in western China, Nanchong doesn’t have more resources than the eastern region of China, the lack of design talent is also a difficult problem in the development of Nanchong silk industry. The government should implement more preferential policies to attract excellent design professionals contribute their own strength to the development of Nanchong silk garments. For example, they can bring in quality entrepreneurs through investment attraction; attract young designers and the clothing majors into the production of Nanchong silk garments through the silk clothing design contest; establish the school-enterprise cooperation and design studio to provide motivity and guarantee for the development of silk garments.

4.4 Diversification of product development

Nanchong is focus on the production of home clothes at present, which has single material and old fashion that doesn’t live up to the needs of the market. The diversity of product development can be reflected from the following aspects: First of all, pay attention to the diverse mix of fabric components, such as the exploitation and application of silk-cotton and silk-ramie, that’s also has the convenience for garment washing and maintenance, as well as for younger style design in designing products. Secondly, the product design should pay attention to the diversification of the material combination, that will make the silk garments show a more rich performance, especially under the trend of popularity of different material fabric stitching technique,
silk clothing designers should use the new design concept to reflect the product sense of fashion [3]. In addition, the diversity of categories is also an important means of enriching silk clothing products. Moreover, expand the style and categories of the clothing except silk fabrics, such as cotton shirts and bamboo pulp fiber pants, to match the silk clothing, and give the overall feeling of the brand [6].

4.5 Strengthen the marketing ability

In order to occupy a space in the fierce competition in the silk market, and truly reflect the advantage of "Silk City", Nanchong silk clothing should keep up with the international trade situation and the development trend of e-commerce, then develop a high quality marketing troop which have a keen sense of the business opportunities. Also the enterprises should use website and We Chat promotion platform, to combine network sales and physical sales, and keep pace with international market.

5. Conclusion

Nanchong should make full use of its rich resources, and explore its abundant cultural heritage. Only in this way can they gain the market share and break the inherent pattern in the fierce competition. Through the upgrading of technology and equipment, the introduction of high-quality design talent, the establishment of a complete brand system, the reasonable product structure, to gradually enhance the product added value, and then form some competitive apparel brands.

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7. References: