Fashion Image Expression on Non-face-to-face Screen Platform

-Korean Female Office Worker in Their 20S-30S

Sujin Lim

Seoul National University, Korea

Introduction

The past three years, coupled with viruses, have demonstrated shifts of daily life from offline to online and this non-face-to-faced trend has been prolonged until present days without significant virus threats. In particular, the working styles of employees have transformed into remote work, emerging as a new lifestyle of online non-face-to-face interactions. In other words, with the ability to perform majority of tasks through online communication, non-face-to-face interactions have become a mainstream of communication. As much of daily communication has been converted to online, individuals' online self-image management has become just as important as offline interactions for engaging in social activities conducted in a non-face-to-face manner. The focus of this study is on the changes and trends that have emerged in terms of self-image management in response to the societal shift and demands towards non-face-to-face interactions. Among working women in their 20s and 30s in Korea, we focused on methods they adopt and use to improve and strengthen their external image. In addition to the use of various digital devices, details of direction factor and fashion images used to maximize external self-expression on non-face-to-face screens was investigated.

Literature Review

The term "pursuit image" refers to the impression one creates about oneself in relation to others. For instance, when encountering a person for the first time, we form a specific impression based on visual and linguistic cues they possess. This impression becomes ingrained in our minds and plays a significant role in judging that person (Ryu, 2016). In social interactions, everyone desires to convey their own unique pursuit image (No, Koh, & Jung, 2005). The pursuit image can be defined as the self-image one wants to show to others in specific situations. In other words, the pursuit image points to the desired direction or identity an individual wishes to achieve, and to maintain this desired image, individuals tend to align their current selves with their ideal selves. They may also use possessions to achieve this purpose. This means that individuals express their desired image through their clothing, accessories, hairstyle, and makeup choices (Kim, 2009). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the fashion items one wears to understand their personal pursuit image. Through these fashion items, one can observe how their desired image is expressed and to what extent. The pursuit image can be considered as the starting point for the formation and development of one's self-image (Lee, 2022).

Research Method

A combination of survey and in-depth interview was conducted for this study. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 subjects selected by the snow balling method. The data analysis was carried out using Giorgi's phenomenological research methodology (Giorgi, 1994) and Strauss & Corbin's grounded theory research methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). First, the data were analyzed using Giorgi's phenomenological research methodology, starting with open coding, and then identifying causal relationships. Subsequently, in addition to Giorgi's methodology, axial coding, which is one of the research methods in Strauss & Corbin's grounded theory, was applied.

Results & Discussion

Subjects who participated in this study freely directed their images to maintain or change their images in non-face-to-face situations. The image they pursue was largely derived from three distinct categories or images: an authoritative professional image, a modern and clean image, and a natural image. The overall results of study suggest that each participant pursued and expressed their desired image based on app functionalities and personal presentation elements in non-face-to-face presentation. Additionally, it was found that the presentation elements could vary depending on the areas or values that the subjects deemed important, considering their individual characteristics. The images that working women, in their 20s and 30s, intend to show through non-face-to-face screens were either independently distinct or combination of two or more images depending on circumstances. Although the images they pursue appear in various aspects depending on their circumstances, personal characteristics, appearance, and occupation, these are formed under individuals' consciousness of others. In other words, it is suggested that non-face-to-face screens are being used as a channel of image expression. In addition, the outfits between contact and non-face-to-face situations appear to be fundamentally similar, the image is grasped through non-face-to-face screen is limited due to the nature of the screen being projected from the center of top attire only. Thus, full image was not reflected. Based on the above research results, it is suggested that strategies for recognition and directing fashion images are demanded for of individual pursuit image on non-face-to-face screens.

Conclusion

This study conducted qualitative research to examine the characteristics of fashion image representation and pursued images of women in the workplace in non-face-to-face settings. It is considered academically significant as the results provide useful information for effective image consulting for women and fundamental data for fashion presentation in non-face-to-face settings. Furthermore, it is deemed industrially meaningful as it offers practical insights for the satisfaction and development of more effective services on the non-face-to-face communication platform (such as Zoom) in the future. However, it is important to note that the study could not eliminate limitations including the subjectivity of researchers and faced challenges in generalizing the research findings. Expanding the scope of the study to non-face-to-face communication platforms (video calls, zoom etc.) is recommended for future research.

References

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