

Research on the Influence of the Collaboration between Fashion Brands and Artists on Consumer Needs - Centered on the Collaboration Series between Uniqlo and KAWS -

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ABSTRACT

Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, this research only employs whether to meet consumer needs as a measure, and focuses on the Collaboration Series between Uniqlo and KAWS to discuss the influence of the collaboration between fashion brands and artists on consumer needs. What's more, this paper also proposes whether the collaboration with artists as brands can meet the higher needs of consumers and influence new consumer groups. Finally, it is concluded that the collaboration between fashion brands and artists plays an active role in meeting the higher needs of consumers and can expand new consumer groups, which will provide reference and theoretical basis for enterprises to conduct collaboration with art, incorporate the needs of consumers into the scope of planning, and consider the collaboration with artists more comprehensively.

Key words: Fashion Brands, Artist, Consumer Needs, Uniqlo, KAWS

1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional design in marketing has received much attention over the recent years, because emotion is an indispensable part of life, affecting how we feel, behave and think, therefore, it has gained considerable attention in product design [1]. Research has found that fashion brands are increasingly willing to associate themselves with well-known artists to show their avant-garde and elite brand images [2]. With the rise of artists themselves as brands, they also cooperate with fashion brands. This cooperation mode both expands the range of influence of artists, but also enhances the personality of cooperative fashion brands [3]. This marketing model transforms the needs into emotional products that can meet personal emotional needs, rather than products that

emphasize practicality and functionality, and these changes are the result of global cultural sharing and information exchange[4], However, most of the literature focuses on the related research on the co-operation between luxury goods and art, and there is a lack of related research on the collaboration between fashion brands and artists. Fashion brands, unlike luxury goods, are easily purchased and accepted by the public, and collaboration with artists is also a favorite and popular mode of cooperation among younger generation of consumers, Values are thought to be relatively stable for adults and can activate human behaviors [5], so it is necessary to employ whether to meet the needs of consumers as a measure. This paper targets the research object at young people with the ages of 20 to 50 with certain income ability, and conducts targeted research on their needs.

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This paper focuses on the collaboration series of fashion brands Uniqlo and New York artist KAWS officially released on June 3, 2019. KAWS is an American graffiti artist and designer known for toys, paintings and prints, Born on November 4, 1974 in Jersey City, NJ. Formerly known as Brian Donnelly, KAWS graduated from the School of Visual Arts in New York as a Bachelor of Arts, and later worked in animation industry. Having started as a graffiti artist in New York in the early 1990s, KAWS began to recreate advertisements in his distinctive style, gaining both street recognition and a recent gallery exhibition. His work can be found from the collections of the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, and the Rosenblum Museum in Paris. From Fig. 1 the UNIQLO annual operating financial statements broken line chart, we can see that the net sales, customer numbers and average purchase of June 2019 are the annual peaks, compared with June 2018, the year-on-year growth rate of Net Sales was 127.3%, the growth rate of Customer Numbers was 125.6%, and the Average Purchase growth rate was 101.4%.

At the same time, from the release date of June 3th till June 5th, the Weibo topic of #All KAWS# reached 440 million views and 81,000 discussions,

and Weibo topic of #The Collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS Sold Out Quickly# reached 470 million views and 55,000 discussions. From these data, we can see the huge market potential brought by the collaboration of brand and artist, and consumers' attention to the brand and artist.

In this paper, a total of 208 valid questionnaires were collected and sorted out in the form of social questionnaires, and SPSS were used to further systematically analyze the respondents with different genders, ages, occupations and incomes in order to deeply explore the influence of the collaboration between artists and fashion brands on consumer needs.

2. THEORY

2.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory was proposed by Abraham Maslow in 1943 and is one of the famous human motivation theories [6]. He divided human needs from low to high into five hierarchies: Physiological needs, Security needs, Social needs, Esteem needs and Self-actualization needs.

Fashion brands use the artists' personal charm to expand their brand personality. Consumers will benefit from using the brand for self-expression

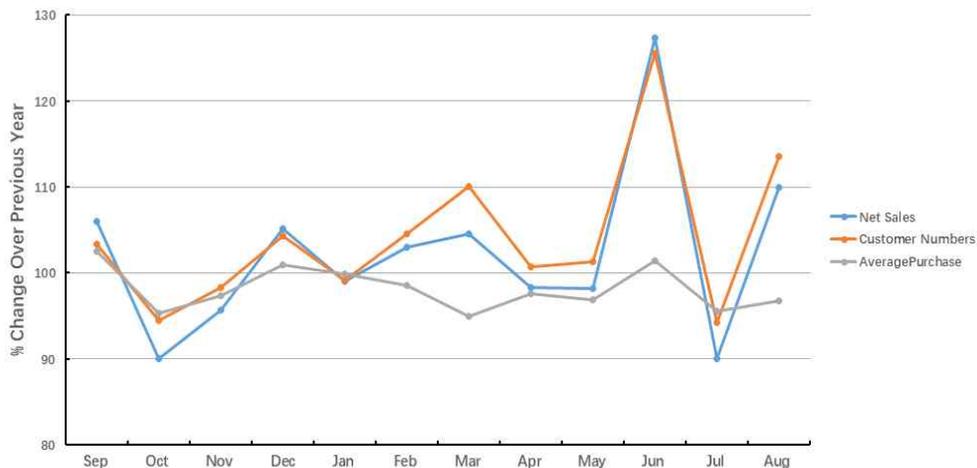


Fig. 1, the UNIQLO annual operating financial statements broken line chart, Data source: UNIQLO's annual operating financial statements (from September 1, 2018 to August 31, 2019).

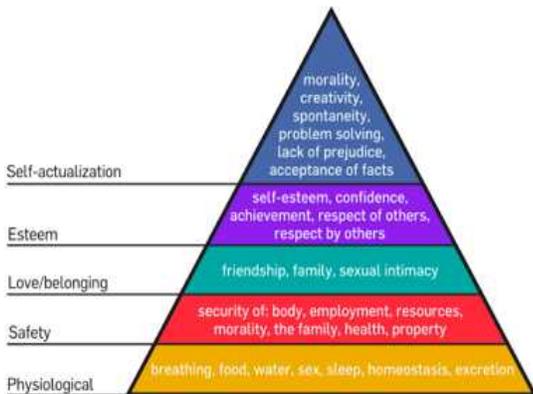


Fig. 2. Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

when they think the brand has aspecial personality (Belk, 1988), thereby strong buying demands will be generated. The value provided by art exceeds the objective needs of consumers and brings power, esteem and social differences. Sheth believed that brands could obtain emotional value through art to increase consumers' attachment and loyalty to the brand. Only when brands and artists interconnect or complement each other, can they meet the needs of consumers and finally achieve a win-win cooperation [7].

2.2 Classic cases of the collaboration between other brands and artists

Collaboration is usually a cross-border cooperation between two cross-domain brands. The different attributes of the two parties can trigger consumer' perception of the brand at different levels. Different positive emotions have distinct functions and therefore have different influences on consumer behaviors [8]. Given that the artists represent a unique brand, they can vividly convey the personality of brand through art [9]. Brands take the advantages of each other, work together under the premise of finding mutually beneficial value points, which can add up to double attention and meet the higher psychological needs of consumers. For example, ZARA paid tribute to the deceased artist Jean-Michel Basquia in 2019, and released the

Basquiat autumn and winter series of jackets. In order to maintain sales and attention, the fashion brand H&M will cooperate with artists to design its "Hot Sale" every year. Nowadays, more and more classic cooperation cases show that fashion brands are more and more willing to connect themselves with artists, and show their avant-garde and trendy images through collaboration clothing, peripheral products to obtain good economic benefits, which has become a new and effective marketing model. The artist participates in the brand design directly or indirectly, creates artistic products, endows the products with artistic attributes to create fashion brands with artistic characteristics. Such products can stimulate the emotional resonance of consumers, meet the psychological needs of consumers, make art a natural extension of the basic attributes of the brand, This shows that the participation of the spectator is also an important part of the creation of artistic works[10]. and at the same time can promote the new collaboration products to potential new customer groups.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND HYPOTHESES

3.1 Experimental tools

The questionnaire was designed according to the measurement tool developed by Kim Do hee in 2019 based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory [11]. The scale used SPSS and AMOS programs to analyze the reliability and validity of scale factors. The Cronbach Alpha is from 0.778 to 0.904, indicating that the reliability is sufficient and the measurement tools developed in this research have no difficulty in measuring the degrees of satisfaction of each requirement. In data analysis, the physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs under the collaboration series of clothing between UNIQLO and KAWS are abbreviated as KPN, KSeN, KSoN, KEN, KSAN, respectively, and the physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs

and self-actualization needs under common clothing of Uniqlo are abbreviated as UPN, USEN, USoN, UEN, and USAN respectively.

3.2 Research method and hypotheses

Through a summary analysis of the existing relevant literature based on the literature review method, we found that people at the bottom of the pyramid (BOP) who are defined as the income population with a daily income of \$2 to \$8, and their annual income does not exceed \$3000. However, the research found that these people were more eager for luxury goods despite poverty, they still hope to use the same products as the upper middle class in society. Such consumer groups are defined as ideal consumer groups that aim to enhance or express self-esteem and social status and achieve self-realization by purchasing luxury goods. BOP consumer groups expect to buy luxury goods or products with the same attributes as luxury goods to reflect their social class and social status. Due to the structural closeness between brands and artists [12], the poor have a low literacy rate and therefore low resistance to attractive marketing practices. This indicates the market potential for high-quality products in BOP markets [13]. As a top trending IP with commercial value, KAWS itself has become a luxury brand in the art world. Moreover, this UT series is the last cooperation between KAWS and Uniqlo, which creates scarcity for the brand, and this kind of hunger marketing method and the artistic value brought by the collaboration have aroused consumers' desire to consume. This paper explores the influence of collaboration between brands and artists on consumers' psychological needs from the perspectives of consumer needs and whether consumer groups have been expanded. Based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, this paper conducts a comparative analysis from five aspects: physiological needs, security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs, and puts forward the fol-

lowing hypotheses:

H1: The collaboration clothing between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can better meet consumers' physiological needs than the common clothing of Uniqlo.

H2: The collaboration clothing between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can better meet consumers' security needs than the common clothing of Uniqlo.

H3: The collaboration clothing between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can better meet consumers' social needs than the common clothing of Uniqlo.

H4: The collaboration clothing between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can better meet consumers' esteem needs than the common clothing of Uniqlo.

H5: The collaboration clothing between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can better meet consumers' self-actualization needs than the common clothing of Uniqlo.

H6: The UT series in the collaboration between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can expand new consumer groups

In order to verify the hypotheses, a survey for about two months from May 3, 2020 to July 1, 2020 had been conducted. Through quantitative research of 220 consumers, we distributed a total of 220 questionnaires and recalled 208 valid questionnaires, with an effective rate of 94.5%. The questionnaire was made in the form of a Likert five-point scale, completely dissatisfied: 1 point; dissatisfied: 2 points; average: 3 points; satisfied: 4 points; very satisfied: 5 points. Besides, SPSS and Cronbach Alpha were used to indicate reliability, exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factors were used to analyze and explore the validity. The numerical variables were described in the form of mean \pm standard deviation, and the paired t-test was used to compare the needs in the collaboration between the artist and Uniqlo. Two in-

dependent sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance were adopted to compare the differences between different groups. Two independent sample t-tests and one-way analysis of variance were adopted to compare the differences among the factors of gender, age, income and so on in different groups.

4. EXPERIMENTAL RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Variable Description and Reliability and Validity Analysis

Cronbach’s Alpha of each dimension was greater than 0.7, indicating that the reliability of the questionnaire was good. CR (Construct Reliability) reflects whether all the topics in each latent variable explain the latent variable in a consistent manner, CR higher than 0.70 indicates that the latent

variable has good construct reliability. AVE (Average Variance Extracted) reflects how much of the variation explained by each latent variable comes from all topics in the latent variable, and AVE greater than 0.50 indicates that the latent variable has better convergence validity.

4.2 Comparison of the Needs between the Collaboration Series of Uniqlo and KAWS and the Common Clothing of Uniqlo

The paired t-test was used to compare the physiological needs(PN) between the collaboration series of Uniqlo and KAWS and the common clothing of Uniqlo, (P stands for probability, it’s also called significance, $P \leq 0.05$ indicates that the difference is of statistical significance, otherwise it is not of statistical significance), $P = 0.002 < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant. It is considered

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and reliability and validity

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Cronbach Alpha	CR	AVE
KPN	2.000	5.000	4.295	0.685	0.778	0.784	0.551
KSeN	2.000	5.000	4.327	0.611	0.826	0.826	0.487
KSoN	2.000	5.000	4.243	0.664	0.858	0.858	0.549
KEN	1.286	5.000	4.133	0.685	0.895	0.896	0.551
KSAN	1.250	5.000	4.046	0.740	0.903	0.903	0.538
UPN	1.667	5.000	4.103	0.736	0.799	0.798	0.568
USEN	1.600	5.000	4.007	0.748	0.876	0.877	0.587
USoN	1.400	5.000	3.478	0.876	0.868	0.868	0.569
UEN	1.143	5.000	3.418	0.898	0.904	0.905	0.576
USAN	1.250	4.750	3.319	0.921	0.895	0.895	0.516

Table 2. Comparison of needs between the collaboration series of Uniqlo and KAWS and the common clothing of Uniqlo

Pair	Variable	U+K	U	t	P
Pair 1	PN	4.29±0.69	4.10±0.74	3.183	0.002
Pair 2	SeN	4.33±0.61	4.01±0.75	5.938	0.000
Pair 3	SoN	4.24±0.66	3.48±0.88	10.429	0.000
Pair 4	EN	4.13±0.68	3.42±0.90	10.146	0.000
Pair 5	SAN	4.05±0.74	3.32±0.92	9.572	0.000
Pair 6	N	4.21±0.52	3.66±0.62	11.238	0.000

that the collaboration series can better meet the physiological needs of consumers than the common clothing, therefore the H1 hypothesis is valid. The paired t-test was used to compare the security needs (SeN) between the collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS and the common clothing of Uniqlo, $P < 0.001$, the difference was statistically significant. It is considered that the collaboration series can better meet the security needs of consumers than the common clothing, therefore the H2 hypothesis is valid. The paired t-test was used to compare the social needs (SoN) between the collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS and the common clothing of Uniqlo, $P < 0.001$, the difference was statistically significant. It is considered that the collaboration type can better meet the social needs of consumers than the common clothing, therefore the H3 hypothesis is valid. Similarly, the collaboration series can better meet the esteem needs and self-actualization needs of consumers than the common clothing, therefore H4 and H5 hypotheses are valid. A one-sample t-test was used to compare KPI with 3, $P < 0.001$, the difference was statistically significant, $M = 4.14$, indicating that KPI was higher than 3. It is considered that the UT series in the

collaboration between fashion brand Uniqlo and artist KAWS can expand new consumer groups, therefore the H6 hypothesis is valid.

4.3 Comparison of Needs between Genders

The Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the sample shows that there are 99 males, accounting for 47.6%, and 109 females, accounting for 52.4%, so it can be considered that the male and female samples are almost the same. The two independent samples t-test was used to compare the physiological needs (PN) between genders under the collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS, $P = 0.476 > 0.05$. It is considered that there is no difference in KPN between male and female. Similarly, as for KSeN, $P = 0.023 < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant, therefore it is considered that the collaboration series can better meet the SeN of females. As for PI, $P = 0.003 < 0.05$, it is considered that females have stronger PI, and there is no difference for the rest.

Two independent samples t-test was used to compare the KPN between students and non-students, $P = 0.054 > 0.05$, the difference was not statistically significant, therefore it is considered that

Table 3. Comparison about whether consumers are students

Variable	Student (n=65)	Not Student (n=143)	t	P
KPN	4.43±0.60	4.23±0.72	1.941	0.054
KSeN	4.52±0.51	4.24±0.64	3.136	0.002
KSoN	4.43±0.51	4.16±0.71	2.839	0.005
KEN	4.27±0.51	4.07±0.74	1.929	0.055
KSAN	4.15±0.62	4.00±0.79	1.400	0.163
KN	4.36±0.40	4.14±0.55	2.917	0.004
UPN	4.31±0.65	4.01±0.75	2.825	0.005
USeN	4.20±0.67	3.92±0.77	2.504	0.013
USoN	3.84±0.77	3.31±0.88	4.137	0.000
UEN	3.70±0.77	3.29±0.92	3.102	0.002
USAN	3.68±0.66	3.16±0.98	3.907	0.000
UN	3.94±0.48	3.54±0.63	4.632	0.000
PI	4.25±0.63	4.02±0.69	2.270	0.024
KPI	4.34±0.89	4.06±1.01	1.936	0.054

Table 4. Comparison between different ages

Variable	20-29(n=115)	30-39(n=59)	≥40(n=34)	F	P
KPN	4.44±0.58	4.19±0.71	3.99±0.83	7.090	0.001
KSeN	4.43±0.54	4.37±0.54	3.91±0.78	10.417	0.000
KSoN	4.39±0.59	4.15±0.60	3.89±0.84	9.070	0.000
KEN	4.27±0.63	4.05±0.58	3.82±0.91	6.352	0.002
KSAN	4.23±0.6	3.98±0.60	3.55±1.08	12.627	0.000
KN	4.35±0.42	4.15±0.41	3.83±0.74	15.774	0.000
UPN	4.10±0.71	4.25±0.66	3.86±0.89	3.029	0.051
UseN	4.12±0.69	4.06±0.68	3.52±0.86	9.328	0.000
USoN	3.47±0.89	3.63±0.76	3.25±0.99	2.150	0.119
UEN	3.48±0.9	3.50±0.71	3.08±1.11	3.032	0.050
USAN	3.36±0.89	3.46±0.81	2.93±1.12	4.026	0.019
UN	3.71±0.55	3.78±0.53	3.33±0.83	6.772	0.001
PI	4.11±0.71	4.07±0.62	4.05±0.68	0.126	0.882
KPI	4.08±1.04	4.27±0.87	4.15±0.96	0.751	0.473

there is no difference in KPN between students and non-students. As for KseN, $P=0.002 < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that the collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS can better satisfy the PN of students. As for KsoN, $P=0.005 < 0.05$, it is considered that compared with non-students, the collaboration of Uniqlo and KAWS can better satisfy the KsoN of students. Similarly, there is no difference in KEN and KSAN between students and non-students, while the UPN, UseN, UsoN, UEN, USAN and UN of students are higher.

One Way ANOVA was used to compare the KPN between different ages, $P=0.001 < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that there are differences in KPN between different age groups, the KPN of ages between 20 and 29 is higher. Similarly, the KseN, KsoN, KEN, KSAN and KN of ages between 20 and 29 are higher. For the needs of common clothing of Uniqlo, there is no difference in UPN, UseN and UEN in different age groups, there are differences in UseN, USAN and UN in different age groups, and the age group above 40 are relatively lower.

For the comparison of needs between different

educational levels, there is no difference in KPN, KsoN, KEN, KN, UPN and UsoN ($P > 0.05$), and the consumers with educational level of high school or less are relatively lower in KseN, KSAN, UseN, UEN, USAN and UN ($P < 0.05$).

4.4 Correlation Analysis of Collaboration

Correlation coefficient: < 0.4 , weak correlation; $0.4-0.7$ medium correlation, > 0.7 high correlation; > 0 , positive correlation; < 0 , negative correlation.

For the correlation analysis between KPN and KSeN, the correlation coefficient is 0.494, $P < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that the KPN and KSeN are of medium positive correlation. For the correlation analysis between KPN and KSoN, the correlation coefficient is 0.564, $P < 0.05$, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that the KPN and KSoN are of medium positive correlation. The correlation of each need for collaboration is weak/medium positive correlation.

4.5 Correlation analysis of the need of Uniqlo

For the correlation analysis between UPN and

Table 5. Comparison between different educational levels

Variable	High school or less (n=25)	University (n=157)	Master or above (n=26)	F	P
KPN	4.29±0.77	4.29±0.69	4.33±0.60	0.047	0.954
KSeN	4.00±0.83	4.39±0.57	4.28±0.52	4.518	0.012
KSoN	4.16±0.76	4.25±0.67	4.28±0.51	0.253	0.777
KEN	3.84±0.96	4.17±0.64	4.22±0.59	2.722	0.068
KSAN	3.60±1.20	4.11±0.63	4.07±0.69	5.543	0.005
KN	3.98±0.79	4.24±0.47	4.24±0.40	2.899	0.057
UPN	3.84±0.82	4.15±0.72	4.08±0.70	1.933	0.147
USeN	3.54±0.98	4.06±0.70	4.12±0.64	5.976	0.003
USoN	3.26±1.03	3.52±0.85	3.43±0.85	0.962	0.384
UEN	2.93±1.12	3.50±0.86	3.41±0.77	4.526	0.012
USAN	2.78±1.13	3.43±0.86	3.16±0.89	6.205	0.002
UN	3.27±0.85	3.73±0.56	3.64±0.54	6.478	0.002
PI	4.05±0.77	4.07±0.68	4.26±0.54	0.892	0.411
KPI	4.00±0.96	4.14±0.98	4.31±1.01	0.629	0.534

Table 6. Correlation Analysis of Each Need for Collaboration

Variable	KPN	KSeN	KSoN	KEN	KSAN	KN
KPN	1					
KSeN	.494**	1				
KSoN	.564**	.466**	1			
KEN	.470**	.470**	.488**	1		
KSAN	.353**	.450**	.416**	.601**	1	
KN	.753**	.741**	.766**	.799**	.753**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 7. Correlation analysis of the need of Uniqlo

Variable	UPN	USeN	USoN	UEN	USAN	UN
UPN	1					
USeN	.607**	1				
USoN	.416**	.341**	1			
UEN	.327**	.327**	.465**	1		
USAN	.402**	.353**	.532**	.482**	1	
UN	.721**	.686**	.762**	.726**	.774**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

USeN, the correlation coefficient is 0.607, P<0.05, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that the UPN and UseN are of medium positive correlation. For the correlation analysis between KPN and KSeN, the correlation coefficient

is 0.416, P<0.05, the difference was statistically significant, it is considered that the KPN and KSeN are of medium positive correlation. The correlation of the needs of Uniqlo is weak/medium positive correlation.

5. CONCLUSION

The research results show that the collaboration between fashion brands and artists has a positive effect on meeting the higher-level needs of consumers and can expand new consumer groups. Cooperation with artists can improve the brand image through the reputation of artists, and can also meet the higher level of consumer needs. The result of data analysis shows that the collaboration between brands and artists has a significant effect on meeting the security needs of female consumers. In terms of physiological needs, social needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs, males and females are almost the same, all of which have improved significantly compared with the data prior to the collaboration. The sample occupations were divided into two parts: students and non-students. The results indicated that for the collaboration between fashion brands and artists, there was no difference between students and non-students in social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs, both were significantly higher than before and had a higher influence on student groups. Through the comparative analysis of the consumers from different age groups, it can be concluded that the collaboration has a higher influence on consumer groups aged between 20 and 29 at the five levels of needs, while has an influence on consumer groups aged over 40, but the influence was relatively low. Through the comparison of the needs of consumers with different income, the results show that there is no significant difference ($P>0.05$). Fashion brands can enhance their brand image by collaborating with artists. Through the correlation analysis of the needs of consumers before and after the collaboration, we can see that the products before and after the collaboration can both meet the physiological needs and security needs of consumers, while the products after the collaboration can significantly better meet the security needs, social needs, esteem needs and self-actualization needs of consumers. This paper also

has limitations, for example, the samples of the investigation and data analysis were only for Chinese consumers. Due to the different artistic environments and aesthetic needs of various countries, it can't cover all countries and regions. This paper only conducted a comprehensive analysis of Chinese consumers. In the future, it is possible to divide the population according to the country to analyze the differences in the needs of consumers in various countries, and to conduct a more comprehensive market analysis for enterprises for more accurate and planned marketing. This research is of strategic significance for the collaboration between fashion brands and artists. It is suggested that the target consumer group of the collaboration between fashion brands and artists should be focused on young people aged from 20 to 40, and fashion brands should make rational use of the value of artists, incorporate the satisfaction of consumer needs into the scope of planning, and consider the collaboration with artists in a more comprehensive way.

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