

On the Academic Value of "The Textile Weekly"

Wang Qin¹ & Yang Xiaoming²

¹ School of Textile, Donghua University, Shanghai, China

² School of Arts, Donghua University, Shanghai, China

Correspondence: Wang Qin, Associate Professor and Doctoral candidate, School of Textile, Donghua University, Shanghai, China, 2999 North Renmin Rd, Songjiang, Shanghai, 201620, China. Tel: 86-138-1774-0777. E-mail: wangqin@sues.com

Received: December 14, 2020

Accepted: January 12, 2021

Online Published: January 31, 2021

doi:10.5539/ass.v17n2p113

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v17n2p113>

Abstract

"The Textile Weekly", as an academic witness of Chinese textile industry throughout the 20th century, is a significant legacy recording the development of China's domestic textile industry. Under the contemporary context of high-tech industrialization and "Belt and Road" Initiative, the study on "The Textile Weekly", is of great referential significance for learning today's industry policies and market status. Therefore, this paper, based on multiple literature reviews and substantial textual analysis, has built up the argument that "The Textile Weekly" mainly sheds light on social policy construction, establishing the foundation for comparative academic research, contemporary textile talent development, as well as the improvement on the overall R&D ability of China's domestic industry. Studying "The Textile Weekly", from both academic and practical point of view, will help us better understand how the domestic textile industry had been developed with the challenge and opportunities imposed by the increase of technological input into global textile production.

Keywords: historical journal, textile industry development, policies, "Belt and Road" Initiative

1. Introduction

The textile industry as a light industry is a typical representative of Chinese industry development. Studies on Chinese textile industry would help better understand the development process of Chinese industry, while academic journals, as a significant carrier of information and knowledge, archives valuable records on human politics, economic, cultural and technological development. They have become an extremely significant intelligence for scientific research, economic development, and education. In terms of the textile journals, they also play an important role in disseminating textile knowledge, exchanging textile technology, and promoting the development of textile science and textile industry (Chen, 1993). It not only disseminates textile-related knowledge such as textile talent training and textile factory production management experience, but also serves as an important part of the industry communication between China and foreign countries, providing a platform for textile technology exchange, and in this way, promote development of Chinese textile industry. At the same time, textile journals have also become important historical materials for scholars to study the development process of Chinese textile industry and the development process of the China's domestic industry on a macro scale, since they record the development status of the textile industry in a particular historical period, and the domestic and international marketing environment at that time. Therefore, such journals undoubtedly have great value as reference for both academia and industry practice.

"The Textile Weekly" (referred as "the journal" hereinafter), founded by Chinese Textile Engineering Society (referred as CTES) in 1931 (the 19th year of the Republic of China), is a comprehensive publication focused on both of textile industry development and textile production technology. As a platform for communication over highly relevant industry topics, "The Textile Weekly" also provides an industry news digest. Publications in "The Textile Weekly" covers as wide a range as including marketing blurbs, monographs, academic research, domestic and international industry information, contacts and addresses, weekly forum, CTES digest, as well as industry news. At the same time, the journal carries a lifestyle column, covering life of textile workers and factory news, academic paper, and readers' letters (Chen, 1989). Considering the extensive content and practical value embedded "The Textile Weekly", it is believed that academic studies on the journal would help establish a more constructive knowledge system on Chinese textile industry in the Republic of China, contributions from patriotic

capitalists and professionals to the industry at the volatile time in history. Furthermore, looking into the influence of the journal can help find evidence in the historical communication between China and the international community. Professional insights on such experience would provide resourceful reference for today's scholars to learn about the construction of the "Belt and Road" initiative.

2. Contributing to Social Development

"The Textile Weekly" was founded in April, 1931, focused on the major issues of the textile industry. The journal covered textile industry information news and reports in time. At the same time of adhering to the mission and vision, it also played a significant role in government decision making consultancy.

2.1 Realizing the Vision

In the debut issue of "The Textile Weekly", the foreword went "The purpose of "The Textile Weekly" is to facilitate the industry development by stimulating communication, providing research materials and enhancing public awareness" (Qian, 1931). The journal was designed to publish textual materials from CTES and become an essential industry manual and communication center. With dedication and support from academics and industry titans, "The Textile Weekly" soon became one of the most popular and influential textile journals at the time (Chen, 1989).

Affected by the War, "The Textile Weekly" was closed in 1937, and resumed in 1946 after hardships of the wartime. In the foreword of the restart edition, it has been declared that "The textile industry is a cause of the nation, a foundation for our national prosperity and strength." (Qian, 1946). The journal carried more responsibilities in social propaganda, aiming at making the textile industry thriving and the nation prosperous through grand unification.

2.2 Supporting Government Policy-Making

In "The Textile Weekly" Volume 2 Issue 49, the commentary "Is the Government willing to take up responsibilities on protecting our domestic textile industry?" argued whether the Government had a powerful say in imposing anti-dumping duty on imported goods, and increasing taxation on cotton yarn from foreign factories. This article ended with the conclusion that the key of Chinese government protecting the domestic industry is to "have some guts" (Qian, 1932). Strong opinions as such undoubtedly offered important consultancy for policy-making at the time. Volume 2 Issue 50 published the motion from Wu Tiecheng at the Third Plenary Session on "Domestic Cotton Industry Protection Plan". This proposal firstly pointed out the difficulties in running domestic cotton mills by comparing outputs of Chinese and Japanese cotton mills, textile import and export, and then attributed such dilemma to the relatively low tariff on foreign textiles. According to the Plan, the settlement of tariffs at the time was a collective consequence resulting from unequal treaties, and the Sino-Japan reciprocal agreement which seemed mutually beneficial, yet was in nature insidious and actually beneficial to Japan. Besides, *Treaty of Shimonoseki* allowed foreigners to set up factors in China, which greatly challenged domestic manufacturing given their advanced technologies, strong financial supports, support from foreign governments, low-coast costs on labor and raw materials. Considering such intense international situation and competition, the Third Plenary Session of the Central Committee proposed to cancel unequal tariffs, increase import tariffs, completely cancel this disguised unequal agreement upon expiration of the Sino-Japan reciprocity agreement, and increase import tariffs, to curb and ban investment in China. In the case that the unequal treaties had not yet been eliminated, it was proposed that Chinese and foreign cotton mills should be taxed equally. In the spirit of the meeting, the government was believed to have responsibilities on financially supporting the domestic textile industry (Wu, 1932).

As history always rhymes, the prosperity of the Silk Road 2100 years ago promoted economic, trade and cultural exchanges between China and Eurasian countries, and promoted the development of the national economy. Today, China's "Belt and Road" initiative is also set with the aim of promoting trade relationships between countries along the route, enhancing cultural exchange, and bringing broader development room for China and countries and regions along the route. Looking into "The Textile Weekly" will be valuable for as a reference for the government's decision-making, serving the "Belt and Road" initiative, and providing experience for the development of China's textile industry abroad. Textile and garment enterprises should actively implement the "Belt and Road" initiative, actively take the initiative to deploy in the countries along the route, strategically leverage local infrastructure, take advantage of local raw material, low labor costs, tax incentives, and actively invest in the textile industry. In this way, the domestic textile industry could be development following a healthy and sustainable path, which leads to reaching a global scale.

3. Providing Platform for Academic Communication

"The Textile Weekly" pays special attention to academic research works. The second volume of the journal has published 50 issues, and almost every issue involves academic research works. This journal provides an ideal platform for technical comparative research and academic exchanges between China and foreign countries, and provides a rich experience for the development of the textile industry.

3.1 Comparative Research on Different Imported Technologies

According to the technology gap theory, countries that have completed technological innovation have not only achieved technological advantages, but also achieved a monopoly in production of a certain product within a certain period of time by virtue of their technological advantages. In this way, such nations have gained a widened technological gap compared to other countries, which eventually leads to the international trade of this technological product (Wang, 1999).

At the time the major progress of textile machinery is mainly manifested in the single system of blower, and such technology had been the production norm for manufacturers in Western Europe. In Volume 2 Issue 20, the article "Experiment on the Unitary System of Blower" analyzed the data results of this technology. The comparative study of the maximum weight per yard, the lowest weight, the average weight per yard, the highest and the lowest lap weight per yard of the cotton lap in the two tests of "the width of the lap with Moco cotton"(Wang, 1999), was carried out in order to seek the most suitable technology for domestic textile factories.

3.2 Data Analysis of the Latest Imported Technology

"The Textile Weekly" Volume 2 Issue 20, published "Comparison of Various Automatic Looms". This article was in nature a study on the production cost and work efficiency of automatic looming machines in March edition of the journal from The Textile Institute in UK. The article mainly introduced Northrop tube replacement, Toyota shuttle changer, Falkstafoe shuttle, Wedekai tube changer and ordinary force looms. The research looked into the number of beats per minute and output per week of these five types of looms, generating a comparison between the cost of one piece of cloth and the percentage of waste weft yarn per machine (Qian, 1932). Through the comparison of different looms, this article has been helpful for the domestic textile factories to absorb advanced foreign technology, and initiating academic exchanges between China and the West.

In summary, "The Textile Weekly" archives a large number of articles on textile technology and related research results, which to a certain extent provides a certain degree of academic value for the development of China's modern textile industry, and also provides academic exchanges between China and foreign countries. Such a platform can provide a historical reference for future research, offer a broadened perspective for future technological advances. The academic and practical value of the journal is immeasurable.

4. Facilitating Talent Development

The textile industry is as a part of light industry, which is an effective demonstration of a nation's level of development. The textile industry can be an indicator of the strength and weakness of the country's production capacity (Zhang, 1948) While human capital is a core element of industry development, the cultivation of talents plays an important role in the development of the industry. "The Textile Weekly" published numerous articles about the training of technical personnel and practical experience of factory management, sorted out the requirements of technical personnel, and also promoted the concept of system management in textile factories.

4.1 Sorting out Technical Talent Standards

The third issue of Volume 9 of "The Textile Weekly" published a speech by Zhang Fangzuo in Department of Textile Engineering, Shanghai Jiaotong University, named "How to be an Excellent Technician". The speech pointed out the importance of the textile industry, by drawing relevance with chemical, machinery, electrical machinery, and agriculture. Zhang also asserted that the development of the textile industry could not be separated from the training of technical personnel, and the most important issue for the training of technical personnel was to ensure the positive working attitude. In addition, the article also sorted out the four stages of technician training: getting started, encountering challenges, research, and proficiency. Zhang argued that industry practitioners should not set the career goal as a factory manager; instead, they should put efforts in development skills and becoming professionals. According to Zhang, striving for excellence was the ultimate key to become an industry professional, so that the highly skilled talents could take up responsibility for the textile industry (Zhang, 1948).

4.2 Promotion of System Management Concepts

"The Textile Weekly" Vol. 2, No. 48, published the article "Textile Mills Must Be Standardized and

Systematized", which stated that "Organization management, employment, operation, production, and all other matters must follow certain standards and systems. Standards and systems as a practical methodical guide, must be strictly applied in order to raise production effectiveness and efficiency" (Zhang, 1948). The article emphasized on the importance of standards, the correspondence of decision making power and responsibility, appointing people on their merits, abandoning flattery at the workplace, and eliminating biased and corruptive behavior in the work environment. These viewpoints, to some extent, had effectively promoted the concept of systematic management in the textile industry, which later had been promoted into various fields of national industry. The article "Organization System of the Textile Workshop" put forward that "the affairs of the textile workshop are so complicated it also resembles a small scale nation. Organizational practice often fails in close organizing, professional responsibility distribution, and sufficient workplace communication. Such flaws in management can be so fatal that they would eventually lead to a failure in China's national fortifications in the battlefield of modern industry development" (Zhang, 1948). The author therefore, set apart the textile factory headquarters and divided the sub-factory headquarters into three departments, namely, textiles, daily errands, and machinery, each performing its own duties. This provided great reference value for the major textile factories to improve their own organizational systems.

In summary, as an important driving force for the development of the textile industry and the progress of textile technology, the training and management of textile talents are related to the development prospects of the industry. Textile journals record a large number of practical cases on the training of textile talents and textile factory management, providing a standardized system for the management of textile factories at that time, and also put forward a valuable development idea for the training of textile talents, and also provides experience and reference for personnel training and management practices in the future.

5. Improving R & D Ability

To discover articles and materials about the contribution of Chinese people in the development of modern science and technology, textile journals are an important source. "The Textile Weekly" has published a considerable volume of important articles and articles on corporate management and textile industry development strategies, which can be used as a reference for modern managers in the textile industry, and also have important reference value for the study of modern textile history in China (Chen, 1993).

5.1 Research on Management Practice of Textile Industry

"The Textile Weekly" Volume 2, Issue 49, published an article "A Little Contribution to the Management of Yarn Rolling Section", and put forward some tips on Yarn Management: clearing the fiber for five minutes four times per day for five minutes, improving downtime groom skills, checking yarn machinery by section, setting up reflect spot (Minfeng, 1932). Studying the textile industry management practices and research findings, and applying literature study in practical experience, will help with improvement on both research capacity and industry performance in the textile industry.

Cotton is an important source of raw materials for the textile industry. The production of cotton is mostly concentrated in the Yellow River Basin and the Yangtze River Basin. However, due to the destruction of the war, the Southeast and North China cotton planting and production areas have fallen one after another, leaving only Central Shaanxi and Western Hubei, Sichuan, Yunnan remain. "The Textile Weekly" Volume 8, No. 15, published the article "Discussion on the Production and Marketing of Shaanxi Cotton", which discussed the situation of cotton production and sales, the wartime damage to the production, and its difficult development in the Republic of China for 35 years. In this article, the low price of Shaanxi cotton was attributed to poor transportation capacity, high costs in transportation costs and the imbalance between supply and demand. Since suppliers lacking operational capital usually failed to meet the demand in cotton transactions which were usually bulk load transactions and were not able to participate in spot trading, the order-booking approach came along. However, this approach became non-feasible in the time of currency devaluation. The author therefore suggested that, lower interests offered by corporate finance to stimulate cash flows; setting up public warehouses in major distribution centers and using mortgage; establishing a notarization guarantee system in order to protect interests of both buyers and sellers and reduce unnecessary disputes. In addition, the article also made recommendations to the Textile Industry Mediation Committee to build public warehouses, implement a grading system, apply for mortgage loans, coordinate the number of purchases by manufacturers, and coordinate supply and demand. Through the discussion of the production and marketing of Shaanxi cotton, the article aimed to establish a comprehensive trading system and seek a reasonable delivery method for suppliers and consumers (Chang, 1947). From such article, there can be noted traces of today's commodity trading system, which echoes with the necessity of studying "The Textile Weekly".

5.2 Research Involving the Formulation of Industry Standards

"The Textile Weekly" Volume 2, Issue 49, published the article "Discussion on Yarn Number Restructuring", which recorded the different yarn numbering systems in different countries due to regional differences and different textile materials. There were 17 numbering systems based on weight and 6 systems based on length. China's numbering system at the time, due to the overall faulty business environment domestically, basically followed the systems applied in the Western countries, leading to confusion in the yarn numbering system. Under this circumstance, practitioners in the textile industry began to explore the use of the metric system, and finally determined the gK universal yarn numbering system (Lou, 1948). The textual archive of such industry progress reflects Chinese patriotic capitalists and practitioners' exploration, and their contribution into the domestic industry.

From the historical perspective, looking at the development of China's industrial history, the textile industry has always been a barometer of a nation's industrial development, reflecting the development status of China's domestic industry, and playing an important role in facilitating current development of the domestic industry. The "Silk Road" 2100 ago has become an important bridge connecting China and the West. In today's modern industry development, with the acceleration of China's reform and opening-up process, the textile industry is facing a total transformation and upgrading. The "Belt and Road" initiative has provided strategic and policy support for the textile industry to "go global". For the textile industry, there are undoubtedly new development opportunities in the new era. From the perspective of periodical research, textile journals record a large amount of information about the development of the textile industry, including production management experience, textile technology exchange and introduction, textile talent training and management, textile industry development related policies and the formulation of textile industry standards. It carries important reference value for today's readers and scholars to understand the development history of the textile industry, the development status of the textile technology, and the management of textile talents. It ensures the continuity of the development history of the industry, while at the same time, contributes to the future development and management practice. This is exactly the value of studying on textile journals.

In conclusion, as an important part of China's industry, the textile industry plays an important supporting role in the development of China's national economy. Research on textile journals can help understand the development process of the textile industry and the entire national industry in a specific period, and provide historical reference for the further development of the domestic industry.

References

- Chang, P. Q. (1947). A discussion on the marketing of Shaanxi cotton. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 8(15), 441-452.
- Chen, Y. T. (1989). A preliminary analysis of the characteristics of "Textile Weekly". *Zhongguo Fang Zhi Da Xue Xue Bao*, 15(3), 91-94.
- Chen, Y. T. (1993). Analysis of domestic textile journals in the 1930s and 1940s. *Zhongguo Fang Zhi Da Xue Xue Bao*, 13(4), 92-94.
- Hua, S. S. (1932). Textiles Workshop Organization System. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(48), 1349.
- Lou, Z. Z. (1948). A discussion on yarn number reformation. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 9(3), 7-9.
- Min, F., & Zhang, Y. D. (1932). A little contribution to the management of the Shaking Section. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(49), 1397-1398.
- Qian, G. Y. (1931). Publication Remarks. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 1(1), 10.
- Qian, G. Y. (1932). Comparison of various automatic cloth machines. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(20), 508-511.
- Qian, G. Y. (1932). Does the government have the courage to protect the cotton textile industry? *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(49), 1347-1379.
- Qian, G. Y. (1946). Publication Resume Remarks. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 7(1).
- Shan, F. (1932). Textile mills must be standardized and systematized. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(48), 1349.
- Su, X., & Yang, X. M. (2014). On the historical significance of "Friends of Textiles". *Si Chou*, 51(12), 64-71.
- Tang, M. X. (1932). The test of the unitary system of flower cleaning machine. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(22), 565-566.
- Wang, X. M. (1999). *Ji Shu Yin Jin: Li Lun, Zhan Lue, Ji Zhi*. [Technology Introduction: Theory, Strategy and Mechanism]. China Renmin University Press.

- Wu, T. C. (1932). Appeal of the protection of the domestic textile industry. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(50), 1414-1417.
- Zhang, F. Z. (1948). A guide on how to be a good technician. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 9(3), 5-9.
- Zhao, K. (1932). Research on the American pulley-type warp winder forming motion transform gear. *Fang Zhi Zhou Kan*, 2(19), 484-485.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).