

# Research on Chinese Modern Textile Academic Journals

Bochong Zhao<sup>1</sup> & Kehui Deng<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> College of Humanities, Donghua University, Shanghai, China

Correspondence: Bochong Zhao, College of Humanities, Donghua University, Shanghai, 200051, China. Tel: 86-137-6153-5413. E-mail: zbc\_zhao@163.com

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## Abstract

Chinese modern textile academic journals play an important role in promoting modern textile industry. It is helpful to expand the research field of modern Textile history of China. Through the method of historical philology, this paper takes Chinese modern textile academic journals as the research object, sorts out their historical background, investigates the causes of their founding, and probes into their influence for modern textile industry. It is concluded that modern textile academic journals have remarkable effects in spreading technology and promoting the progress of textile industry, and its rise mainly stems from the increasing demand for textile technology in modern textile industry.

**Keywords:** Chinese modern textile academic journals, textile industry

## 1. Historical Background

Chinese modern textile academic journals rise with the development of textile industry, its rise and development process has its particularity. Since modern times, China's national capitalism has developed rapidly, and light industry represented by textile has received full attention. With the establishment of factories and the introduction of western advanced textile technology and other activities, the textile industry became a relatively rapid and large-scale national industry at that time. The prosperity of textile industry leads to the increasing demand for textile technology. At the same time, the modern news industry developed rapidly, all kinds of newspapers, books, periodicals countless. In the upsurge of "saving the country by industry", people of insight in China's textile industry focus on the news media, set off the upsurge of founding textile academic journals, seeking ways to improve the textile industry from technology, science, education and other angles, and advocating for the great cause of saving the country with their own strength.

After the outbreak of the First World War, China's national capitalism made great progress, especially in light textile industry such as cotton yarn and flour. In modern times, the textile industry ushered in a development peak and became the largest industrial category in China. According to the statistics of *Nankai Weekly Statistical service*, the largest industry in China was cotton textile industry, with 119 cotton textile factories as of 1929 (Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Nankai University, 1929).

At the same time, the newspaper industry developed rapidly in this period, all kinds of newspapers and periodicals were launched, and the number of industrial newspapers and periodicals publishing all kinds of industrial information and technology also increased significantly. At present, there is a lack of accurate statistics of national data, but we can get a general glimpse of the scale of industrial newspapers and periodicals in China by investigating the modern news center Shanghai newspapers and periodicals. According to the statistics made by Hu Daojing, then a staff member of Shanghai Center of Local History in 1935, there were 103 kinds of periodical trade publications in modern Shanghai, among which 19 were industrial-related, accounting for 18.4% of the total number of trade newspapers and periodicals (Hu, 1935).

The common development of textile industry and news industry has bred a large number of textile academic periodicals such as *Textile Friends*, *Textile Weekly* and *Textile Annual*. A large number of textile academic journals rely on peer organizations, academic societies and textile colleges to complete the publication and distribution. The rise of such organizations stems from the desire of different textile practitioners for advanced textile technology and textile experience. Technical backbone and industrialists of various textile enterprises have established trade organizations such as Chinese Textile Mills Association, Tianjin Cotton Industry Association and Guangxi Cotton Industry Promotion Association. Textile researchers and educators have also

established academic organizations such as The China Textile Institute, China Dyeing-chemical Engineering Society and China Raw Cotton Research Society. These textile industry organizations carry out technical learning and experience exchange by publishing academic journals, popularize the latest textile science and technology and promote the development of textile discipline by using the dissemination function of journals.

## 2. Founding Reasons

In March 1917, Zhu Lanfang, Rong Zongjing and Liu Baisen, the owners of cotton mills, initiated the establishment of The Chinese Textile Manufacturers Association in order to collectively respond to Japan's proposal of duty-free conditions for cotton (The Sixth District Machinery Cotton Textile Industry Association, 1917, 1918). In 1919, The Chinese Textile Manufacturers Association published *China Cotton Journal*, which mainly published articles on textile current affairs and technical monographs, becoming the earliest textile periodical published. On April 16, 1923, *Textile News* was founded by The Chinese Textile Manufacturers Association. It was published on Mondays and Thursdays with timely and comprehensive contents (Qian, 1932a). *Textile News* is the first textile industry newspaper with relatively comprehensive coverage in modern China.

The similar situation can also be seen in the birth process of textile newspapers such as *The Textile Review Weekly Journal* and *Hengfeng Weekly Journal*. *The Textile Review Weekly Journal* lays emphasis on practical textile technology and exchanges textile related technical knowledge. The journal was founded by Shanghai machinery dyeing and weaving industry association. Shanghai Machine Dyeing and Weaving Industry Association is a textile industry organization, founded in April 1932, formerly known as the branch of merchants association, chaired by Cui Fuzhuang, founder of Dafeng dyeing and weaving factory (Anonymous, 1937). The aim of the council is to unite the trade and improve the standard of textile trade (Zhu, 1935). *Hengfeng Weekly Journal* studies and improves cotton spinning technology, formulates working laws of various departments, discusses mill management, workers training and production process improvement, etc. Founded in November 1924, it was edited and published by Hengfeng New Textile Bureau with the purpose of exchanging knowledge, enhancing the spirit of service and improving the industry fundamentally (Qian, 1920). Hengfeng Textile New Bureau was originally the Huaxin Textile New Bureau jointly established by the government and business at the end of Qing Dynasty, and later owned by Nie Yuntai, a modern industrial magnate. Only the initial staff has reached more than 1,000 people, but the production efficiency is low. In order to improve the efficiency of the factory, Nie Yuntai founded Hengfeng Weekly Journal, appointed Zhu Xianfang as the director of the editorial department, and Nie Yuntai himself as the editor, and hoped that the magazine would be educational if done well (Nie, 1924). As representatives of national industry, industrialists in the process of developing textile industry have all noticed the important effect of newspapers and periodicals on spreading technology and exchanging experience. Therefore, textile newspapers and periodicals set up by him also have an educational effect for the audience.

At the same time, in order to cope with the talent gap brought by the demand of the textile industry, various textile schools have been set up to train textile technical experts and carry out scientific research in dyeing and weaving. A group of academic publishing groups composed of textile schools and textile experts was born. Take Nantong University as an example. It is the most influential textile college in modern China, and has published more than 7 kinds of textile academic journals. The Textile Department of Nantong University alone has published important modern textile academic journals such as "Textile Industry", "Classmates of Textile", "Dyeing Monthly" and "Textile Echo".

Take *Textile Echo* as an example. In 1932, the Textile Science Students' Autonomous Association of Nantong University decided to publish a publication to connect students' feelings and exchange textile technology. This news came out immediately by the urging and encouragement of alumni around. In that year, the Textile Alumni Association of Nantong University formally established the Publishing Committee of *Textile Echo* (Chen, 1944). At that time, during the Anti-Japanese War, Nantong was captured. The students and teachers of textile science in Nantong University are all in different parts of the country except a few of them move to Shanghai with the university. Facing the severe external environment, *Textile Echo* was initially planned to be published every semester. However, due to various reasons such as the current situation and the war, the publication often delayed its publication, and even experienced the dilemma of suspending and resuming publication for many times. *Textile Echo* mainly discusses all kinds of production process and technology in the field of textile, printing and dyeing, including woven, cotton, hemp, silk research, the structure of the artificial dyes, textile machinery and daily maintenance and repair, etc., is a school of Nantong textile division in the school student discussions or important platform of academic communication, also attracted a lot of the textile industry to participate in the discussion.

Like *Textile Industry*, textile graduates of Nantong University established the Textile Alumni Association of Nantong University to edit and issue the academic journal *Textile Industry* in 1931. For the purpose of textile academic research, the journal teaches the improvement of textile, printing and dyeing process and mechanical equipment to professionals, and introduces the advanced management experience and rules and regulations of foreign textile mills, which plays a positive role in the development of textile industry.

Attention to textile technology not only falls on industrialists and universities, but also on scientists. From the Westernization Movement to the New Deal in the late Qing Dynasty, China gradually dispatched overseas students and formed a system. In 1915, Ren Hongjun, a student studying in the United States, initiated the idea of "saving the country through science" and organized the establishment of the Chinese Science Society (Yang, 2019). This appeal has also resonated in the textile industry. Many textile technologists and engineers have formed scientific groups, such as The China Textile Institute and the Textile Dyeing Engineering Research Institute, to explore jointly textile technology. The establishment of textile newspapers by scientific organizations can be seen in *Textile Annual* and *Spinning Weaving & Dyeing Engineering Monthly*.

In April 1930, Qian Guanyi, editor of *Textile News*, called for the establishment of a national textile research organization, and the most influential textile academic group in China, The China Textile Institute, was established in response to the call of scientists in the textile industry (The China Textile Institute, 1930a). The aim was to connect people with the same way, seek academic research, and promote China's textile industry (The China Textile Institute, 1930b). In September of the same year, The China Textile institute decided to establish the *Textile Annual*, which discussed the contents and decided to publish textile related academic papers, application technologies and investigation reports. It was officially published in 1931 (The China Textile Institute, 1930c).

In 1938, textile expert Huang Xige, in order to improve the technical level of textile workers, set up a Chinese textile dyeing industry cram school to train workers for textile enterprises (Textile Review Weekly Committee, 1939). In 1939, Huang Xige set up textile and dyeing Engineering Research Institute on the basis of the cram school as a research platform for fellow students. At the beginning, due to the lack of academic ability and talent, had to start in the form of a periodical, *Spinning Weaving & Dyeing Engineering Monthly* thus born (Huang, 1939). The columns of this magazine are mainly divided into spinning, weaving, dyeing and finishing, etc. It also publishes the observations and comments of famous textile experts on China's textile industry, reprints monographs on spinning, weaving and dyeing at home and abroad, and introduces the production process and progress of advanced textile monographs in the world, which plays a role in promoting the development of textile education.

China's modern textile academic publications also include official or private textile publications. For example, *Tianjin Cotton Guide*. Department of Tianjin Commodity Inspection Bureau of Commerce Ministry founded Tianjin Cotton Inspection, *Textile World* founded by Textile technology expert Wang Yiming, and *The Textile Weekly* founded by Qian Guanyi, who is enthusiastic about textile industry.

In 1930, the cotton inspection department of Tianjin Commodity Inspection Bureau of Commerce Ministry founded *Tianjin Cotton Certification*. The journal mainly deals with cotton industry issues, including theoretical research on cotton industry technology, cotton business situation in various regions, cotton inspection methods, cotton industry reports and statistics of textile factories in the United States, Japan and other places.

*Textile World* aims to study the practical technology of textile industry, the production process of cotton, wool, silk and hemp. The magazine was founded by Wang Yiming, who was a long time working as the examination director of Shenxin NO.7 Factory and a member of The China Textile Institute (Textile Annual Committee, 1931). In 1936, Wang Yiming founded *Textile World* after seeing the decline of China's textile industry (Wang, 1936). The journal takes the revival of national textile industry as its own responsibility, and carries relevant research on textile economy, textile academic, scientific common sense and practical problems.

*The Textile Weekly* takes textile academic discussion as its main content and represents the practitioners of modern textile technology. Founded by Qian Guanyi and later taken over by The China Textile Institute, the journal mainly published technical papers and reviews, such as Nie Green's Cotton Spinning Method, On Improving the Efficiency of Ordinary Looms, Examples of China's Textile Mills not on track, etc., and became an influential textile academic publication in modern times. Qian worked as an intern in the editorial department of Zhonghua Book Company in his early years. In 1917, he joined the Federation of Chinese Textile Manufacturers to edit *Textile News*. Qian founded *The Textile Weekly* in 1931, calling for planting good cotton, running schools and valuing talents. The reason why Qian Guanyi started the textile newspaper business is that he thinks it is "close to his nature", that is, he always cares about the future of China's textile industry (Qian,

1932b).

According to the author's statistics, there are 191 kinds of textile academic journals published in modern times. The prosperity of modern Textile academic journals in China has proved the strong technical demand of textile industry, which has promoted the evolution of modern textile academic from translation to creation. In this process, academic groups and trade organizations have become an important thrust for the development of textile academic. Textile practitioners and textile technologists alike regard academic publications as a way to improve textile technology and promote textile education. They voluntarily form groups to carry out publishing activities, exchange academic knowledge and share experience, which reflects people's eager expectation for the development of textile industry.

### 3. The Influence of Modern Textile Academic Journals on Modern Textile Industry

Throughout the history of China's modern economic development, textile as the representative of the basic industry has been paid attention to and attention to late. In modern times, the West opened its door with strong guns and urged China to take the lead in the development of military industry. At the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, the national bourgeoisie advocated industry to save the country, and then set off the textile industry boom. The development of the textile industry needs technology and talents. And the lack of a large number of scientific research personnel and technical personnel leads to the slow development of textile industry. *The Textile Weekly* once published textile expert Wang's article "Textile Talent Issues", which directly pointed out the problems and challenges faced by China's textile talent training, called on textile workers to strengthen their study and learn technology. It said: "Although I dare not say how advanced the textile theory is, it is not easy to give full play to its efficiency in mechanical application"(Wang, 1931).

In order to improve the technical level of textile practitioners, practical textile technology was published in many modern textile academic journals, and the work experience of textile predecessors was summarized.

For example, *Hengfeng Weekly* is contributed by technicians of Hengfeng textile factory, and its main audience is technicians and technical experts of major textile factories in China. Therefore, the magazine is committed to dealing with the relevant operating experience of textile factories, including technology, management, reform, raw materials and other aspects. Published articles such as "Fire Protection Law of textile Factory", "Thoughts on the reform of our factory", "Relationship among textile Factory production and raw materials and management technology", "Research on sheepskin suitable for textile factory", etc. The Association of Chinese Textile Mills once published an article praising the magazine, which believed that the lack of technicians in the textile industry resulted in no guidance for those who wanted to study technology, which restricted the progress and development of the textile industry. And Hengfeng gauze factory is one of the earliest domestic textile factories. Others as difficult, Hengfeng has been in the plan, he had not dreamed, Hengfeng also carefully study, not behind. When all the technicians of Hengfeng were free, their knowledge and novel experiences were published in weekly magazines and published to the world, revealing the key to the development of the textile industry and opening a new era for the textile industry in China (Qian, 1920). It can be seen that the establishment of *Hengfeng Weekly* to a certain extent alleviates the dilemma of yarn factory workers' lack of professional education.

Such as *Textile News*, the main of the paper will mainly cotton and textile industry practitioners, devoted to the textile industry related information, including domestic and international advanced textile management experience, such as "work experience: machine preservation", "work experience: I have seen of card sliver defect", "work experience: research of cotton yarn evenness", etc. The paper also has a special section to introduce, summarize or comment on the latest books and magazines published in the textile industry, so that textile practitioners can quickly browse and refer to them (Textile News Committee, 1926). Such as "Zhu Xianfang textile Rationalization Work Published volume 1" and "China Cotton Production Improvement Association publications two kinds", etc. In May 1931, "Textile Annual" and "Textile Industry" were founded at the beginning, the newspaper highly praised, and made special, in-depth introduction and commentary (Textile News Committee, 1931). The newspaper also paid attention to enhancing the interaction and communication among agriculture, industry and business. In 1928, it wrote an article about the Agriculture, Industry and Business Weekly, founded and issued by the Special Agriculture, Industry and Business Bureau of Shanghai, in the hope that people in the textile industry would not be closed to the outside world (Textile News Committee, 1928).

Discussions of practical textile techniques and industry experience also exist in privately funded academic publications such as *The Textile Weekly* and *Textile World*. *The Textile Weekly* has published articles such as "A Few points to note on the efficiency of Cotton carding work" and "The reason of yarn breakage and its

responsibility", which mainly recorded the operating experience and academic experience of the textile industry. *Textile World*, also privately founded, also takes popularization of practical techniques in the textile industry as its top priority, publishing articles such as "How to Improve looms", "Research on Spinning Yarn Breakage" and "Research on Fabric Machine Repair and Improvement", which have played a certain role in popularizing practical techniques.

Modern textile academic journals are an important way for textile practitioners to learn from previous experience and improve their technical level. They have educational functions, alleviate the shortage of textile talents to a certain extent, and are an important supplement to textile education.

#### 4. The Conclusion

As a cultural phenomenon, the emergence of modern textile academic journals is the common result of social needs and the development of textile industry. Especially when Chinese industry is faced with complex and changeable international and domestic environment, it is urgent to create a medium to spread textile technology and improve the level of textile industry.

Looking back on the history, the development of information technology plays a significant role in the spread of textile technology. At the end of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, China's modern media industry and postal industry rose, which was the prerequisite for the dissemination of modern textile academic journals. In the 1920s and 1930s, industrial organizations, academic organizations and people with lofty ideals established a number of modern textile academic journals, providing professional media tools for the dissemination of textile technology. However, affected by the war, the change of the current situation and the difficulties in the operation of professional newspapers and periodicals, China's modern textile academic journals were not published for a long time. Most of them stopped publication during the Japanese war of aggression against China in the 1930s, and a few of them lasted until the founding of New China. In spite of this, we cannot ignore the important role they play in promoting the development of textile industry and spreading textile technology.

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