

THE MODEL AS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY PROFESSIONAL: THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE PODIUM, THE CAMERA AND THE STAGE

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Abstract. *The relevance of the study is due to the transformation of the modeling profession in the context of digitalization, mediatization of the fashion industry and the growth of requirements for multidisciplinary competencies. The purpose of the article is a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of professional requirements for a model and the identification of key competencies that shape its competitiveness in modern catwalk, chamber and digital environments. The methodological basis was a historical and cultural analysis, a structural and functional approach, a content analysis of current scientific sources for 2020-2025, as well as a comparative analysis of the transformation of professional standards in the fashion industry. As a result of the study, it was found that the professional profile of the model has evolved from the role of a “visual carrier of clothing” to the status of a media creator and a multidisciplinary participant in creative processes. A new set of competencies has been identified – acting, performativity, camera technique, digital creativity, communication skills and self-branding ability – which ensure the effective work of a model in physical and digital formats of fashion communication. The study also revealed systemic gaps in the training of models, associated with the lack of interdisciplinary training programs, lack of psychological support and the lack of formation of a modern professional standard. The practical significance lies in the possibility of using the results to develop updated educational programs, form competency standards for training models and optimize personnel strategies of agencies and fashion institutions.*

Keywords: *fashion industry, body representations, visual communications, acting, psychological resilience, media literacy.*

Introduction.

The modern fashion industry is undergoing a transformation in which the modeling profession ceases to be highly specialized and acquires multidisciplinary features. Global changes in the media ecosystem, the rapid development of digital platforms, the rethinking of body representation, and the growing role of visual communications have led to the emergence of a new type of model – a specialist who combines the skills of catwalk plastic, acting, performative practices, and work in front of the camera. Despite the obvious relevance of this process, scientific research on the model as a complex creative unit remains isolated and fragmented.

The problem is that the academic discourse is still dominated by the idea of a model primarily as a "performer of appearance", while modern professional



requirements include psychological resilience , media literacy , acting techniques , the ability to work with different communication formats , as well as an understanding of directorial logic and creative processes in photography , video and performance . The lack of systematic research prevents the formation of a holistic theoretical basis for describing the modeling profession in the 21st century, and also hinders the development of educational programs that would take into account the real needs of the industry.

An additional problem is the blurred line between podium, camera, and stage. Models play the roles of actresses in advertising campaigns, become participants in performative shows, work in mixed formats of fashion films and digital avatars, which requires them to acquire new competencies. However, the mechanisms of integration of these skills, the features of professional adaptation and the impact of multidisciplinary on the career trajectories of models remain insufficiently studied.

Analysis of scientific sources shows that the problem of the evolution of professional requirements for a model and the formation of multidisciplinary competence attracts increasing attention of sociologists, cultural scientists and researchers of the fashion industry. One of the key directions of modern studies has become the understanding of how models perform the so-called "aesthetic work" – the intense activity of constructing their own appearance, emotionality and visibility, which largely determines their professional status.

One of the fundamental works in this area is the research of J. Entwistle and E. Wissinger. [1], who demonstrated that the aesthetic work of the model is structural in nature and includes the constant reproduction of bodily discipline, maintaining a certain emotional tone and adapting to the expectations of agencies and brands. The authors established that the model does not simply demonstrate clothes, but is in a mode of continuous self-regulation, where her body becomes an instrument of professional activity and at the same time an object of strict control. Other c the totality of knowledge is offered by A. Mears [2], who revealed the mechanisms of social stratification in the modeling industry and showed that the professional success of a model is determined not only by external parameters, but also by inclusion in global



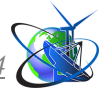
networks of prestige. The author concluded that the fashion industry functions as a system of status exchanges, where beauty, social capital, visibility and access to the "right" contexts are interconnected. Significant empirical results are presented in the work of S. Goly [3], which revealed the psychological and emotional dimensions of modeling work. The author found that models experience constant pressure to conform to the ideal, which leads to an ambivalent experience: on the one hand, they feel pride in the opportunity to embody aesthetic standards, and on the other – are faced with a sense of depersonalization and instability. An important result of the study was the discovery that the modeling profession forms a specific "performance identity", where appearance becomes a central element of self-perception and a mechanism for professional survival. A valuable theoretical contribution was made by P. Volonte. [4], who emphasized the inertia of body ideals in the fashion system. The researcher found that even despite the industry's declared inclusiveness, body standards change extremely slowly, maintaining strict requirements for proportions and types. Volonte argues that the institutional structures of fashion have a much longer duration than cultural trends, and therefore innovations in the representation of corporeality are implemented fragmentarily. The editorial team under the leadership of K. Goltzhej [5] proposed a conceptually new view of modeling as a dynamic practice that includes the interaction of the body, technology and cultural scenarios. The collection emphasizes that the process of "creating" a model and its simultaneous "destruction" is associated with constant changes in professional requirements, the emergence of new work formats and the digitalization of fashion communication.

A significant contribution to understanding the role of the media was made by A. Rocamora [6], who showed that the mediatization of fashion has caused a shift in emphasis from clothing to the model herself as a communicative unit. The author found that digital platforms transform the model into a constantly visible subject, maintaining her own presence in the media space and thereby influencing the rhythms and structures of the fashion industry. The study emphasizes that the model becomes an active participant in media production, and not just an object of the filming process. In turn, K. de Pertuis and R. Findlay [7] proved that in the Instagram era, the transmission



of fashion ideals acquires a network character: models and influencers create fashion meanings through visual narratives, and not through traditional catwalk demonstrations. The authors identified mechanisms of circulation of ideals of appearance and established that digital images become more important than “real” ones, since they are the ones that shape the expectations of audiences. A separate dimension of modern research is presented in the work of I. Zahra and G. Aljukhmani [8], who established that influencer models form audience loyalty through active involvement and personalized communication. The researchers showed that digital tools allow models to act simultaneously as promoters of trends, as subjects of branding, and as active creators of content. As a result, modeling activity goes beyond the classical professional field and moves into the sphere of marketing, digital communication, and creative industries. A synthesis of existing research indicates the presence of several gaps. First, the question of how exactly the transformation of professional requirements shapes the multidisciplinary nature of the model remains insufficiently developed. Second, despite the considerable attention paid to aesthetic work and digital visibility, there is a lack of research that systematically describes the complex of competencies of the 21st century model. Third, there is almost no work that examines the relationship between professional training of models, digital creativity and new formats of stagecraft in the fashion industry. It is these gaps that highlight the need for this study, aimed at understanding the model as a multidisciplinary professional capable of operating between the podium, the camera and the stage in the conditions of the digital fashion ecosystem.

The aim of the article was to substantiate the transformation of the modeling profession in the context of media and cultural dynamics. To achieve the goal, the following research tasks were set: to analyze the evolution of professional requirements for a model in the context of changes in the field of fashion , advertising , photography and digital content; to characterize the key competencies that models need to work effectively in catwalk , chamber and stage formats; to investigate the impact of multidisciplinary on career trajectories, professional development and competitiveness of models in the creative industries market.



Research Results.

The evolution of professional requirements for a model is associated with the transformations of the fashion industry, the advertising market and media culture. In the early history of fashion the model was perceived mainly as a "living mannequin" designed to demonstrate the silhouette and fit of clothes, then from the second half of the twentieth century its status has changed: the model turns into a cultural icon, a bearer of a certain lifestyle and the personification of the ideals of beauty, youth, success. Modern studies of aesthetic work and corporeality in the fashion industry emphasize that the model is not a passive object of display. She performs the work of constructing an image, managing the body and emotions, which reflects the broader social and economic contexts of fashion culture [1]. At the same time, the history of modeling demonstrates a consistent layering of meanings: from an anonymous figure, which must only meet the standards of height and proportions, to a recognizable personality with its own "self" and media capital. Cultural – historical works devoted to models as carriers of normative identity show that not only fashion as such is changing, but also the way society interprets the female body, work, beauty, and visibility in public space [2].

In the early stages of the fashion industry, the professional profile of the model remained narrow. The main requirements were focused on external parameters: compliance with the given standards, "correct" proportions, a type that is well "read" from the hall during the show, and later – on the pages of printed magazines. During this period, the model literally acted as a "visual carrier of clothes": her task was to ensure the perfect fit of a dress or suit, demonstrate the shoulder line, the movement of the fabric, but not to create her own plot or emotional story. That is why early descriptions of fashion shows most often focus on things, and not on the personalities of the models, who remain an anonymous background to the couturier's work [3].

The formats of the model's work were also clearly defined: catwalk defiles in fashion houses and demonstration shows for buyers, private clients, as well as studio photo shoots for catalogs and print advertising. In such conditions, the model did not need developed acting, communication or media competencies: it was enough to have



basic catwalk plasticity, be able to hold a posture, control one's step and maintain a neutral, almost emotionless facial expression. Modern studies of aesthetic work in modeling, which analyze the experiences of models retrospectively, show that the industry has long built the image of the model as a "clothes hanger" or "body - product", separated from individuality and voice [4]. This approach formed a specific professional socialization: the model learned to subordinate her own body to external standards, and not to reveal it as a tool for creative self-presentation. The body was standardized, and the subjectivity of the model was reduced to the ability to seamlessly "fit" into the technical requirements of the brand or agency. Theorists of aesthetic labor today describe this as an early, "objectifying" stage, when the model's labor was almost invisible, and her corporeality was seen as a natural resource, rather than the result of constant work on herself. [5]

The situation began to change radically in the 1980s, when fashion entered a phase of intensive commercialization and global mediatization. Television, music videos, color glossy magazines, broadcasts of shows and advertising campaigns of international brands created a new type of public visibility, within which the model turned into a recognizable media figure. It was during this period that the concept of a "supermodel" was established – a model who is known by one name, has world recognition, becomes the face of advertising brands and is actually equated with movie or pop stars. Studies of fashion history emphasize that the 1990s were the peak moment of this phenomenon: models like Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Linda Evangelista, Christy Turlington, Kate Moss did not simply show collections, but embodied certain archetypes of femininity, sexuality and success, which were actively exploited by the advertising industry. In the chronicles of fashion, their appearance on the catwalk is described as an event that can overshadow the clothes themselves, which indicates a shift in emphasis from the thing to the personality of the model [6].

As a result, professional requirements are changing significantly. Charisma, the ability to work with the public and the camera, and the ability to maintain a holistic personal brand are added to the classic criteria (height, proportions, type). A model must not only walk the catwalk perfectly, but also look organic in a TV commercial,



music video, interview, or talk show. A demand is being formed for basic acting skills: mastery of facial expressions, the ability to convey emotional states in a static frame and in motion, and switching between different images depending on the director's or photographer's intention [7]. At the same time, media studies and studies of fashion culture record that the images of models are becoming central markers of style and trends: the media do not simply broadcast fashion, but construct certain consumption scenarios, gender roles, ideas about the "ideal" body, and success through the figures of supermodels. This means that the model becomes an active communicator of the brand's style and image, and her professional role goes far beyond quietly and anonymously "wearing" clothes on the catwalk. Thus, the transition from the traditional model to the supermodel in the 1980s - 2000s marks a qualitative change in professional requirements: from an emphasis on standardized physicality to a combination of external parameters, media recognition, acting expressiveness and the ability to embody complex visual narratives in advertising and fashion photography. This stage lays the foundation for the further multidisciplinary nature of the profession, when the model can no longer be just a "body in the frame", but must function as a full-fledged creative unit between the catwalk, the camera and the stage.

Throughout the 2010s and up to the present day, the modeling profession has undergone further transformation under the influence of digitalization and the development of social media. It is no longer enough to simply walk the catwalk or appear in print advertising - the modern model is forced to be visible, interactive, able to manage her own image, content and interaction with the audience. In the realm of social platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube), models acquire the status of not only a "screen" body, but also an author, brand and media persona. This process gives rise to a new paradigm - "model as content creator" - and at the same time increases the requirements for her skills, including media literacy, creation of visual and video content, storytelling, audience interaction and personal brand. Scientific research confirms that a model's participation in digital communication processes directly correlates with her influence on the target audience, as well as her ability to generate advertising contracts and create significant brand equity [8].



One of the primary changes is the need to maintain a personal brand and work with the audience. To be successful, you need skills in creating and promoting content, understanding platform algorithms, and adapting content to different formats (stories, reels, livestreams, TikTok videos). Research shows that age, number of followers, audience engagement, and level of interaction significantly affect the success of influencer models. [9] Media literacy – the ability to critically evaluate media content, manage one’s image, and understand the representation and algorithmic mechanisms of social media – has become an important competency. For example, adolescent audiences are particularly sensitive to forms of media influence, which places additional demands on models as educators or style manifestors [10]. In this context, the model increasingly acts as a content creator: she creates photos, videos, conducts storytelling, masters TikTok formats, works in the format of livestream or YouTube channel. The video format is gaining increasing importance in the fashion industry as a way to present collections, create advertising content and directly communicate with the audience. At the same time, the model no longer just “poses” – she interactively engages, creates backstage footage, shows her everyday life, interacts with fans, which increases her recognition and commercial value. Studies confirm that social media influencers have a much greater impact on audience engagement compared to regular brand publications [11].

In parallel, new types of models have appeared in the fashion arena: influencers, digital models, CGI characters. Influencer models combine traditional activities (catwalk, advertising) with an active presence in social networks, creating content outside of classic formats. CGI models (virtual avatars) and digital “model images” are becoming part of the industry, actively attracting brands and playing a media role in campaigns. Digitalization is also accompanied by a blurring of the boundaries between a professional model, blogger and actress. The modern model functions at the intersection of several professional spaces – catwalk, camera and stage, which requires a much wider range of skills than traditional appearance parameters or basic catwalk techniques. The transformation of the fashion industry, driven by digital technologies, the development of the media market and the increasing role of visual communication,



has changed the very nature of the model's professional activity: from an exclusively demonstrative function, she has moved to the role of an active interpreter of images, a participant in creative processes and a media personality. In this regard, a new set of competencies has been formed that ensure the effective participation of the model in various formats – from the traditional catwalk to video performances, commercials, digital catwalks and content- oriented platforms (Table 1). In particular, modern research emphasizes that the model must have acting, communication, digital and performative skills that allow her to create complex narratives, work with emotional states, adapt to technologically saturated conditions of the filming process and maintain a recognizable personal brand in digital media environments [12].

Table 1 – Modern requirements for professional competence of the model

Competence	Description
Acting skills	The ability to convey an image, emotion, switch between roles, work with the camera and the audience
Performativity	Possession of body plasticity, movement in space, interactive interaction (on the podium , in video , in live format)
Camera equipment	Ability to work in front of the lens: gestures, facial expressions, contact with the camera, understanding of directorial logic, ability to "read" the frame
Communication skills and soft skills	Ability to communicate with the audience, partners, manage social networks, adapt to teamwork, be media literate
Digital creativity	Content creation (photo, video, storytelling), understanding of trends, social media algorithms , ability to generate ideas for digital formats

Source: author's own development

The analysis of the presented competencies shows that the profession of a model in the 21st century has turned into a complex form of creative and communicative activity, within which the model acts not only as a physical representative of fashion, but also as an active participant in the processes of media production. Acting skills and performativity ensure the model's ability to work with image and emotion, adapt to various directorial tasks and create convincing stage or video images. Camera equipment allows to effectively interact with the lens, understand the peculiarities of the filming process and influence the viewer's perception. Communication skills and



soft skills form the model's ability to work in team environments, manage her own public presence and interact with the audience. Digital creativity, in turn, expands the model's professional capabilities, allowing her to act not only as the face of the brand, but also as a content creator who is able to independently produce digital narratives. Ultimately, these competencies define the model as a multidisciplinary professional who works simultaneously in physical and digital spaces, combines creativity with technical literacy, and shapes a new standard of professionalism in the fashion industry.

In the context of the rapid transformation of the fashion industry, one of the key problems is the inconsistency of the model training system with the competencies that are actually required by the labor market. Most training programs, both in private modeling schools and in short-term courses, are mainly focused on practicing the catwalk, basic poses for photography, and compliance with appearance standards. Instead, components such as acting, working with emotions, performativity, media literacy, digital creativity, and personal brand management remain secondary or are ignored altogether. Modern research emphasizes that models perform complex “aesthetic work”, which includes not only bodily, but also emotional, digital, and communication resources, but there are practically no institutional formats for systematic training for such multidimensional work.

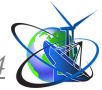
One of the most significant challenges is the lag of educational content from digital realities. In most modeling schools, almost no attention is paid to creating content for social networks, analyzing media trends, understanding platform algorithms, working with the audience and digital reputation risks. Instead, models are forced to master these skills independently, through trial and error, which increases the risks of professional burnout, reputational crises and unequal opportunities (those who already have digital capital or agency support are given an advantage). The second set of problems concerns the lack of interdisciplinarity in training. Despite the fact that a modern model works simultaneously in catwalk, chamber and stage formats, interacting with photographers, directors, stylists, marketers, her training rarely integrates elements of acting, performative practices, stage movement or the basics of directing. This creates a gap between the expectations of the industry (the requirement



of a “live”, emotional, actor-trained model) and the real level of readiness of graduates of modeling schools. Studies of the mediatization of fashion and the theatricalization of shows emphasize that the show has long become a type of performance, but models most often do not have the appropriate performative education and are forced to improvise without methodological support [13].

A serious gap is also the lack of psychological and pedagogical support and development of resilience. The work of a model is associated with constant evaluation of appearance, criticism, competition, high workloads and unstable employment. In the digital age, this is compounded by hateful comments, cyberbullying, the pressure of metrics (likes, followers) and the need to constantly maintain an “ideal” image. However, training programs rarely include modules on psychological literacy, self-regulation, working with anxiety, building healthy boundaries and a conscious attitude towards one’s own body. Sociological studies show that young people are particularly vulnerable, entering the industry without sufficient support and understanding of the risks, which contributes to the formation of destructive eating practices, body shame and emotional exhaustion [14]. A separate problem is the inertia of standards and biased educational practices that do not keep up with the demand for inclusivity and diversity. Although the fashion industry declares the expansion of types (plus-size, different age categories, models with disabilities, various ethnic and gender identities), many educational programs continue to focus on a single “classical” ideal. This not only narrows the circle of potential models, but also reproduces discriminatory practices in selection and training. Studies of the representation of corporeality and female subjectivity in the media demonstrate that the industry is still in tension between old ideals and new demands for inclusivity; however, the educational block rarely becomes a space for critical reflection on these contradictions.

Finally, an important challenge is the lack of a coordinated modern professional standard in the training of models, which would formalize the list of competencies required for work in a multidisciplinary field. The vast majority of courses and schools operate on a commercial basis, are not integrated into the formal education system, and therefore do not fall under the requirements of educational standards and do not have



clear quality criteria. This leads to fragmentation of training: one school emphasizes the podium, another - on photography, a third - on basic digital presence, but a holistic model of the competence profile of a 21st century model has not yet been developed. As a result, the responsibility for “acquiring” the necessary skills is shifted to the model herself, and the industry receives unevenly trained professionals. In summary, it can be argued that the key challenges and gaps in model training are related to three dimensions: content (the lag of educational content from real market demands), structural the lack of unified professional standards and interdisciplinary integration), and socio-psychological (the lack of support, reflection on inclusivity and sustainability). Overcoming these gaps requires a review of educational programs taking into account acting, performative, digital, communication and psychological components, as well as the development of an updated competency standard for a model as a multidisciplinary professional capable of working effectively between the podium, the camera and the stage.

Conclusions.

The evolution of professional requirements for a model is analyzed in connection with changes in the field of fashion, advertising, photography and digital content. It is established that the profession of a model has gone from an anonymous clothes demonstrator to an influential media figure capable of shaping the aesthetics of a brand and personifying cultural ideals. Research has shown that the traditional model was limited by rigid external parameters and minimal participation in creative processes, while the digital era has formed a new type of subjectivity – model – interpreter, model – brand and model – content – creator. These transformations are due to the commercialization of fashion in the 1980-2000, the emergence of supermodels as media personalities and the further strengthening of digital and social media, which have changed the forms of professional presence of models.

The key competencies required for a model to work in catwalk, camera and stage formats are described. A modern model must possess not only physical plasticity and catwalk technique, but also acting skills, performativity, camera technique, communication skills, digital creativity and the ability to self-brand. It is these



competencies that provide the model with the opportunity to effectively perform various media functions – from participating in fashion shows to creating digital content, working in fashion video formats, livestream, commercials and hybrid digital projects.

The impact of multidisciplinary skills on the professional trajectories and competitiveness of models has been studied. It has been found that the ability to combine catwalk, acting, media and digital skills significantly affects the success of a model, expands the range of her professional roles and increases her value in the creative industries market. Multidisciplinary skills become a determining factor not only for employment, but also for the sustainability of a model in a highly competitive market, where interaction with the audience, media visibility and the ability to maintain one's own brand become strategic resources. It has been established that models who possess acting and digital competencies demonstrate faster adaptation to new formats (VR platforms, CGI modeling, fashion videos), receive wider employment opportunities and have a higher level of media autonomy.

Current challenges and gaps in the training of models that hinder the formation of a modern professional standard have been identified. It has been established that training programs for the most part do not meet the real requirements of the industry, as they focus on traditional parameters (gait, photo poses, standardized appearance) and do not cover such key components as acting skills, performative techniques, digital creativity, media literacy, working with the audience, psychological resilience and self-branding. The gap between the expectations of the industry and the capabilities of educational institutions is deepening due to the lack of a single competency standard for training models, low integration of interdisciplinary forms of training and insufficient level of psychological support.

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