

INNOVATION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF COLD-PROOF CLOTHING FOR THE ELDERLY

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Abstract

With the intensification of global climate change and population aging, the need for cold protection for the elderly has become increasingly prominent, and the impact of cold weather on the health of the elderly cannot be ignored. This study aims to explore the innovative development strategy of cold-proof clothing for the elderly to improve the quality of life and safety of the elderly. First, this paper analyzes the market status and development trend of cold-proof clothing for the elderly in China; secondly, it proposes innovative development strategies from the aspects of design innovation, technological innovation and evaluation innovation; finally, it puts forward relevant suggestions to promote the innovative development of the cold-proof clothing industry for the elderly. This can not only meet the basic needs of the elderly, but also help promote local economic development and social harmony. This study provides a theoretical basis and practical guidance for the innovation of cold-proof clothing for the elderly, and looks forward to contributing to the further development of related industries.

Keywords: Innovation development; Strategy cold-proof clothing; Elderly

Introduction

The elderly refers to the population that exceeds the elderly limit. In demography, it reflects the difference between a specific age group and other age groups. It is a social group and an integral part of the population. Regarding the definition of the elderly, there are different opinions in the academic field at

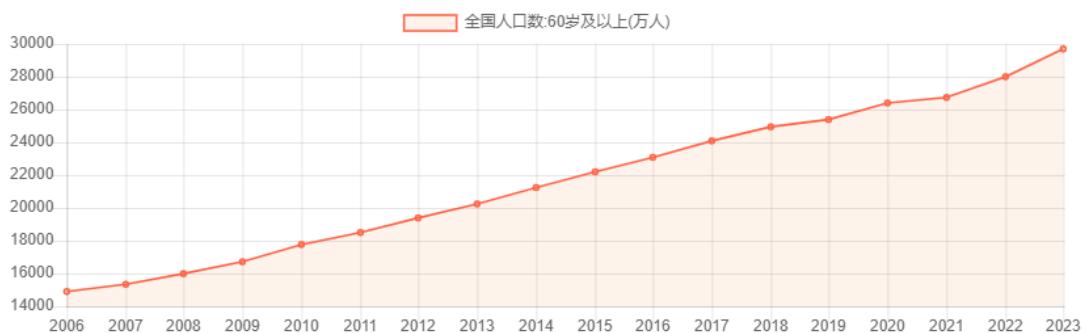


Figure 1: China's elderly population trend chart (aggregate data, 2024).

different times. The World Health Organization (WHO) has re-established the standard for dividing the boundaries of the elderly (GBD: THE BURDEN OF DISEASE) based on the physical and mental health status of modern people: those under 44 are young people; 45 to 59 years old are middle-aged people; 60 to 74 years old are the young old; 75 to 89 years old are the old; and over 90 years old are the old or the old. China's "Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly" stipulates that the starting age of the elderly is 60 years old (Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, 1996). Due to my country's special historical reasons, my country will enter a period of rapid growth of the elderly population from 2001 to 2100.

The aging of the population has had a profound impact on economic, social, political and cultural development, especially in terms of health, comfort and safety. In response to this challenge, the national and local governments have introduced a series of policies to improve the living conditions and quality of life of the elderly, and to promote the development of special products for the elderly and the development of related industries. At the same time, with the

increase of China's elderly population and the improvement of living standards, the elderly's demand for clothing and consumption concepts have also changed significantly: from the initial necessity type to the functional type, and from the survival type to the development type. This change requires the design and service of elderly clothing to develop in a multi-level and diversified direction.

Analysis on the Current Situation of Cold-Proof Clothing for the Elderly in China

Elderly winter clothing refers to elderly clothing with multiple functions such as down, cotton, and chemical fiber cotton as inner filling, which has multiple functions such as windproof, cold protection, and warmth preservation. It can also be called winter coat or warm outerwear. With the continuous improvement of China's national strength, China has become a world clothing power. At the same time, clothing production technology and materials have been continuously improved, my country's winter clothing industry has developed rapidly, the market space and scale have been continuously expanded, and the categories of winter clothing have been continuously enriched and improved.

China's winter clothing market size: According to statistics from relevant departments, the total market value of China's winter clothing in 2019 was about 30 billion yuan, and the compound growth rate of the total market value of winter clothing by 2023 was 7.5%, with a total value of more than 40 billion yuan. The main reasons for the continuous growth of my country's winter clothing are: 1. Abnormal global climate change, warmer summers, colder winters and longer duration; 2. People's living standards are constantly improving, and the demand for winter clothing is developing towards high quality, high performance and excellent services. At the same time, people's lifestyles pursue a healthy life and their outdoor activities are constantly increasing. 3. The development of science and technology has not only brought personalized needs for winter clothing, but also improved the technology, warmth, durability and comfort of winter clothing, and optimized the marketing methods of winter clothing.

Product structure of winter clothing in China: According to the statistics of the trend website of Diexun (Diexun, 2018), the winter clothing market in China is dominated by down-filled winter clothing. From the

statistical data of the structure of the winter clothing market in China in 2023: down-filled winter clothing accounts for 47.3%, with an average price of 656 yuan, of which high-end products above 2,000 yuan account for about 70%; cotton-filled winter clothing accounts for 28.5%, with an average price of 452 yuan, of which low-end products below 1,000 yuan account for about 80, chemical fiber-filled winter clothing accounts for 6.2%, and other fiber-filled winter clothing accounts for 18%. From the perspective of the market structure of winter clothing in 2018, women's winter clothing accounts for 40%, men's winter clothing accounts for 23%, sports winter clothing accounts for 18%, children's winter clothing accounts for 11%, and elderly and other winter clothing accounts for 8%.



Figure 2: China's winter clothing structure and type share in 2018 and 2023
(Author, 2025)

Development trend of winter clothing for the elderly: Based on the analysis of the current status of China's winter clothing market and the forecast of the future market, the future development trend of my country's winter clothing industry for the elderly is as follows:

(1) China's winter clothing market will continue to grow, but the growth rate will slow down. The temperature regulation ability of the elderly population continues to decline. Winter clothing is a necessity for elderly clothing in low temperature seasons. With the continuous intensification of China's population aging and urbanization, and the continuous increase in income, the market

demand for winter clothing in my country will continue to expand. However, due to the influence of market saturation, competition, consumer attitudes, etc., the growth rate of the market will slow down, and the structure of the market will develop towards diversified sub-sectors.

(2) The categories and brands of winter clothing for the elderly will be more abundant, and the product structure will be further optimized. With the further development of the market, winter clothing for the elderly will develop from low quality to high quality, high performance, and high added value; at the same time, the product categories will be richer, the industry concentration will be further improved, the number of brands will continue to increase, and the brand influence will continue to increase.

(3) The innovation ability in the field of winter clothing for the elderly will continue to increase, and products will continue to achieve differentiation. With the continuous use of emerging scientific technologies, materials, and sales methods in the field of cold-proof clothing and the increasing demands of consumers for functionality, personalization, fashion, environmental protection, and health, the innovation capacity in the field of cold-proof clothing for the elderly will continue to improve and the degree of product differentiation will continue to increase.

Analysis and Construction of the Innovative Development System of Cold-Proof Clothing for the Elderly

Definition of innovative development: Joseph A. Schumpeter, a famous Austrian-American economist, first proposed the "Innovation Theory" in his German version of "Theory of Economic Development". Schumpeter believed that "innovation" is the activity and process of introducing a "new combination" of "production factors and production conditions" that has never existed before into the production system to obtain potential profits through the market. Its new combination includes five types of innovation: new products, new processes, new markets, new materials or new sources of semi-finished products, and new management.

Different countries and different periods have different understandings of continuous innovation. In the mid-1980s, foreign scholars proposed innovation in their research on Japanese corporate innovation, namely continuous

improvement CI (Continuous Improvement). The "21st Century Continuous Technology Innovation Policy Research" project (POSTI, 1999-2001) proposed two new definitions in 1999: "Continuous innovation is innovation with a sustainable goal in the innovation process or output and continuous innovation is innovation with a goal of improving environmental quality in the innovation process or output".

In China, there are definitions of sustainable innovation development: Professor Xiang Gang of Yunnan University of Technology (1995), Zheng Qinpu of Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences (2001), Professor Wang Yingluo of Xi'an Jiaotong University (2002), Wang Yingluo (2004), Lu Qi'an (2004), Wang Wenliang and Feng Junzheng (2006), etc. The representative one is Xiang Gang and Wang Yingluo (2004), who proposed that sustainable innovation is the ability to continuously launch and implement new innovation projects (including products, processes, raw materials, markets, organizations, management, and systems) within a certain period of time and continuously achieve innovative economic performance based on the research of the theoretical basis of sustainable innovation (Wu Kun, Wu Songqiang, Zheng Chuiyong, 2009).

Analysis of the innovation and development system of elderly cold-proof clothing: The main goal of building an innovation and development ecosystem for elderly cold-proof clothing is to promote the solution to the contradiction between the inefficient and slow development of the production factors of the elderly cold-proof clothing industry and the growing demand for cold-proof clothing among the elderly. Therefore, the model design of the innovation and development of elderly cold-proof clothing should expand the depth and breadth of the innovation and development of the elderly cold-proof clothing industry on the premise of meeting the needs of the elderly for cold-proof clothing consumption, and realize the innovation and development of elderly cold-proof clothing.

Literature research shows that innovation plays a very important role in responding to sustainable development challenges (Cordova, Celone, 2019, Park, 2021). Therefore, the innovation and development of elderly cold-proof clothing also takes innovation as the core driving force. The innovation and development of the textile and clothing industry is generally analyzed from three

aspects: product innovation, technological innovation, and evaluation system innovation.

(1) Design innovation 1) functional innovation, Functionality is the core of elderly cold-proof clothing, and it can provide multi-faceted needs for the elderly and help solve problems (Wang Wenjuan, 2015). While ensuring basic conventional functions such as waterproofness, wind-proofness, warmth retention, breathability, and lightness, elderly cold-proof clothing should also be designed and studied in combination with the specific psychological and physiological needs of the elderly population, including safety functions, health care functions, and easy-to-wear and portable functions. The design of safety functions mainly considers the safety needs of the elderly, and adds safety elements to the design, such as anti-slip function design, fall monitoring function, warning function design, reflective function design, living environment monitoring, GPS positioning, emergency call button, etc. to reduce the risk of accidental injury to the elderly population; the health care function is mainly reflected in the elderly's heart rate, blood lipids, blood pressure, blood sugar, blood oxygen saturation, activity, sleep quality, and mental health monitoring functions. The easy-to-wear and portable functions take into account the inconvenience of the elderly's activities, mainly from the detachable design of the liner, sleeves, hem, placket, back piece, etc., and adopt easy zippers, Velcro and other designs to facilitate wearing and taking off, and convenient cleaning. Combined with the living needs of the elderly, the multi-pocket design is convenient for carrying items. At the same time, considering the convenience of the elderly's daily life, design easy-to-care clothing, such as washable, easy to iron, and wrinkle-resistant, to facilitate the elderly's daily cleaning and maintenance. Improve the safety and comfort of the elderly to meet the different needs of the elderly.

(2) Design innovation: The innovation of style and appearance design also helps to achieve the innovative development of clothing elderly cold-proof clothing, and better meet the needs and expectations of elderly consumers for cold-proof clothing, including comfort, functionality and fashion.

The design of cold-proof clothing for the elderly should be based on the physical characteristics of the elderly, ensure the appropriate version and cutting to ensure comfortable wearing, and take into account the possible changes in body shape of the elderly. At the same time, combined with the health status and

activity characteristics of the elderly, as well as the physiological characteristics of different cultural backgrounds, aesthetic hobbies, psychology and gender, emphasize humanization for innovative design, focus on incorporating fashion elements into the design, and make the appearance fashionable. Beautify and correct the human body through version, style and color, so that the elderly can feel comfortable when wearing, show personality and taste, and meet various daily needs.



Figure 3: Design of multifunctional cold-proof clothing for semi-disabled and fully disabled elderly women with wheelchairs (Author, 2025)

(3) Planning innovation: In order to highlight the uniqueness of elderly cold-proof clothing in the fierce market competition and enhance the added value and influence, and at the same time meet the elderly consumers' demand for clothing from quantity to quality and psychological needs (Cheng Yiqun, 2011), design planning innovation has become a key strategy. The first thing is to accurately divide the target group positioning to meet the functional needs and preferences of the elderly and guide the direction of product research and development. The construction of design concepts focuses on the values and lifestyles of the target group, condenses the design keywords, emphasizes the elements of function, care, comfort, health, culture, etc., and clarifies the design purpose. Highlight the uniqueness and core value of the product, especially the advantages of multi-function, warmth, and comfort. Through design planning, a unique design image of elderly cold-proof clothing is constructed, which enhances brand competitiveness and market share.

The design of multi-functional cold clothing for the elderly in Jiangxi Province, starting from the life needs of the elderly in Jiangxi Province, through the application and design of electronic sensors and scientific and technological accessories, to achieve the functions of first aid, warmth, calling, GPS positioning, convenient disassembly, electronic heating, breathable, safe fixation and humanistic care for the elderly.



Figure 4: Jiangxi elderly cold-proof clothing functional design planning board
(Author, 2025)

(1) Molding technology innovation: As the core driving force for the innovative development of the cold-proof clothing industry, the production molding technology innovation is committed to developing new products, expanding new services and improving product quality by introducing new technologies, new processes and new production methods to win market share and realize commodity value (Lin Yun, Liu Wei, Li Suicheng, 2011). In this innovation process, several key aspects are covered: first, sewing process innovation. Second, processing technology innovation. Finally, thermal insulation material processing technology. The innovative application of these technologies makes the manufacturing of cold-proof clothing for the elderly more professional and sophisticated, improves quality and performance, and provides the elderly with better warmth and comfort experience.

(2) Green environmental protection: Green environmental protection is to meet consumers' needs for health, environmental protection and sustainability, enhance the social responsibility and sustainable development strategy of enterprises, win consumer trust and market competitive advantage. At the same time, by advocating green and environmentally friendly production, it can promote the upgrading of industrial structure, promote technological

innovation and the development of environmental protection industry, and achieve the unity of economic benefits, social benefits and environmental benefits. The sustainable development of the clothing industry is a major topic that runs through every link of the clothing industry (Xiao Xinrui, Sun Liping, 2022). Therefore, the green environmental protection of elderly cold-proof clothing covers several key aspects. First, in terms of material selection, materials that meet environmental protection standards should be given priority to reduce environmental pollution and resource consumption. Secondly, the application of environmentally friendly production processes can effectively reduce chemical emissions and energy consumption, thereby reducing adverse effects on the environment. At the same time, we advocate the resource utilization of waste, consider the recyclability of materials in the design stage, extend the service life of clothing, reduce the amount of waste, and reduce resource consumption.

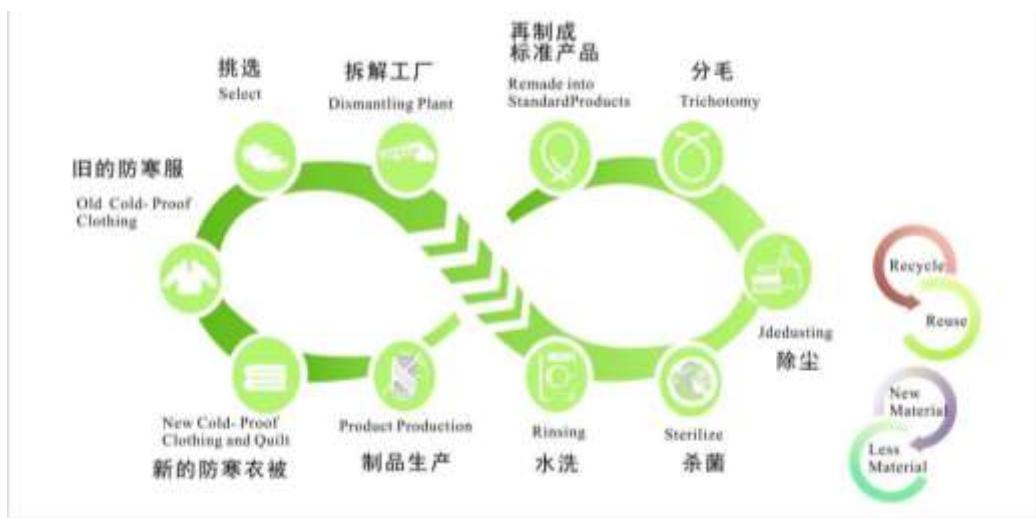


Figure 5: Sustainable innovation structure model diagram of elderly cold-proof clothing (Author, 2025)

(3) Pattern Verification Innovation: With the continuous development of science and technology, 3D virtual technology has been widely used in the links of clothing design and production, especially the verification and correction of clothing patterns. 3D virtual technology has significant advantages in clothing pattern verification, mainly reflected in improving efficiency, reducing costs and enhancing accuracy. By quickly performing multiple design iterations, 3D virtual technology can reduce the number of actual sample production, speed up

the design process, reduce fabric and labor costs, and thus avoid unnecessary sample production and material waste. At the same time, 3D modeling accurately reflects the structure and details of clothing, allowing designers to better evaluate the fit and comfort of clothing in a virtual environment. In addition, 3D software provides high-quality visualization effects, which makes it easy for designers and customers to intuitively see the appearance of clothing, provide feedback and make adjustments. Designers can also perform virtual fittings on different 3D human models to verify the suitability of clothing for various body shapes and sizes, and ensure the inclusiveness of the product. Dynamic simulation technology allows designers to observe the performance of clothing in different movements and postures to ensure comfort and functionality. At the same time, 3D models are easy to share, promote team collaboration, and ensure consistent design goals. Reducing sample production and material waste is also in line with the concept of sustainable development and improves environmental friendliness. By quickly verifying and adjusting designs, brands can better respond to changes in market demand, shorten time to market, and improve competitiveness. In addition, designers can make more scientific and data-driven decisions by analyzing virtual fitting and simulation results.

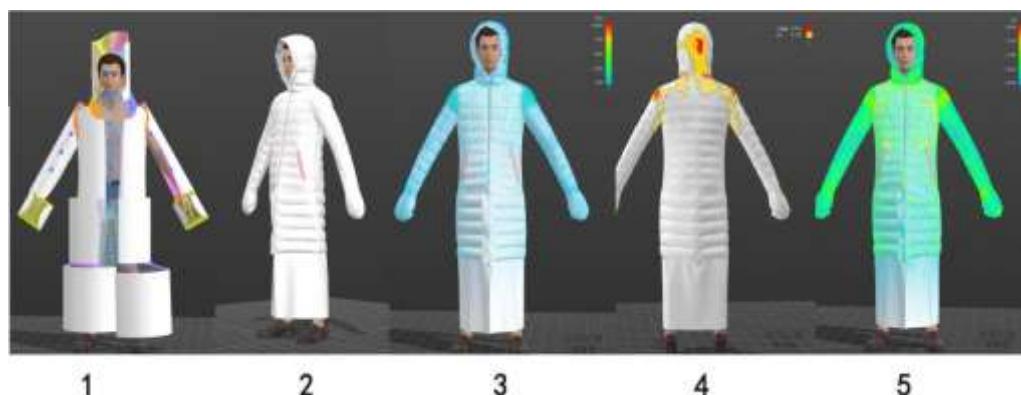


Figure 6: Elderly winter clothing 3D molding and pattern stress, fitting, and strain inspection (Author, 2025).

(3) Evaluation system innovation: The innovation of the evaluation system plays an important role in many aspects. First, it can improve the quality of decision-making and help decision makers make scientific and reasonable choices by providing more accurate and comprehensive data analysis. Second, the innovative evaluation system promotes organizational development. Through the evaluation and feedback mechanism, it helps organizations identify their own strengths and weaknesses, thereby formulating more effective development strategies. In addition, a good evaluation system can motivate employees' enthusiasm and creativity, promote teamwork, and improve work efficiency and morale. In a rapidly changing environment, traditional evaluation systems may not be able to meet new needs, while innovative evaluation systems have the ability to flexibly adapt to new challenges and opportunities. The innovation of the evaluation system is not only related to the effectiveness of the organization's internal management, but also affects its external competitiveness and sustainable development capabilities. The innovation of the evaluation system of elderly cold-proof clothing is mainly reflected in the innovation of the evaluation system and the construction of the service system.

(1) Evaluation system innovation: The evaluation system is mainly constructed using subjective evaluation method, passive evaluation method and comprehensive evaluation method. The subjective evaluation method focuses on the subjective evaluation of cold-proof clothing design products, including the evaluation of ease of wearing and taking off, comfort and functionality; the passive evaluation method evaluates and compares innovative products with traditional products by visiting the elderly audience, family members and medical staff; the comprehensive evaluation method combines digital means to evaluate the warmth coefficient of clothing, while considering multiple factors such as market feedback to obtain the best solution. The main evaluation indicators involve: functional evaluation, comfort evaluation, safety evaluation, environmental evaluation, durability evaluation, design innovation evaluation, user experience evaluation, marketability evaluation, etc.

(2) Service system construction: From the current elderly clothing industry, high-quality clothing after-sales service has become an important factor affecting the purchase decision of elderly consumers. Elderly customers are a special customer group, and we should be patient, reassuring and considerate when treating elderly customers (Wang Donghong, Liu Xiao, 2009).

For winter clothing for the elderly, the service system includes pre-sales consulting services, providing detailed product information and purchase suggestions; after-sales services, including gift packaging, return and exchange policies, etc.; product warranty services to ensure repairs and replacements within the warranty period; user feedback mechanisms to continuously improve product and service quality; publicity and promotion services to increase brand exposure; and membership system construction to encourage user consumption and improve user loyalty and repurchase rates. Special attention should be paid to services for assisting and caring for the elderly. These service links together build a complete service system, enhance brand image, customer loyalty, and promote sales growth. They are an indispensable and important part of brand development and are beneficial to the innovative development of winter clothing for the elderly.

Suggestions for the Innovative Development of Cold-Proof Clothing for the Elderly

In order to achieve innovative development of elderly cold-proof clothing, the author puts forward the following suggestions from the dimensions of policy formulation, social awareness, industry cooperation, practical application, and persistence in development:

1. Policy formulation suggestions

(1) Formulate targeted and powerful policies for attracting investment in elderly cold-proof clothing to create a business environment conducive to attracting investment and production of elderly cold-proof clothing. Formulate relevant policies to encourage elderly clothing enterprises, strengthen policy publicity, and coordinate the implementation of policies such as industry, finance, taxation, financing, and factor guarantee. It is also recommended that all regions and departments formulate targeted policies and measures to help enterprises and alleviate difficulties in the areas of "recruitment, talent training, scientific and technological innovation, financial support, organization of exhibitions, and financial subsidies" for elderly cold-proof clothing based on actual conditions.

(2) Establish a special economic research institution and product R&D institution for the elderly clothing industry, continuously deepen the research on

the development trend and development dynamics of the elderly clothing industry in the world, the country, and key regions, and formulate an industrial development plan for the elderly cold-proof clothing industry in combination with the development characteristics of the cold-proof clothing industry and the industrial environment ecology, and continuously adjust and optimize it according to changes in the industrial development situation.

(3) It is recommended to strengthen the talent introduction and cultivation mechanism and focus on the cultivation of high-quality skilled talents. First, support the connection between textile and clothing colleges and the cold-proof clothing industry, improve the innovation ability of the elderly cold-proof clothing industry through special consultation, dual employment and joint scientific research, and quickly meet the talent needs of enterprises. Secondly, rely on professional colleges and universities, focus on backbone enterprises, and cultivate "great country craftsmen" and "innovative figures". Finally, strengthen the introduction of high-level talents, clarify the needs of high-end and scarce talents in the industry, establish a talent think tank, and adopt various methods to introduce high-level talents.

2. Social awareness suggestions

Through a comprehensive publicity campaign, improve the society's attitude towards the elderly, especially their views on their participation in social activities. Emphasize the aging trend and the development achievements and social contributions of the elderly clothing industry, highlight its "technology, fashion, and green" attributes, and guide the public to re-recognize the elderly clothing industry. It is necessary to improve the society's awareness of the needs of the elderly, focus on social needs, development trends, economic benefits and humanistic care, carry out multi-angle publicity and promotion, enhance the status of the elderly cold-proof clothing industry, and create a good social atmosphere conducive to the healthy and sustainable development of the elderly clothing industry.

3. Industry cooperation suggestions

Establish a special elderly cold-proof clothing sub-industry organization, improve its construction and give play to the role of industry organizations. Regularly survey and visit elderly clothing companies, elderly communities and

nursing homes to understand industry development and social needs in real time, and monitor clothing market trends for consumers. Such measures will promote companies to respond quickly to market demand and improve their adaptability. In addition, it is necessary to continue to conduct research on the development of the local elderly cold-proof clothing industry to support the long-term development of the industry.

4. Practical application suggestions

(1) Encourage scientific and technological innovation and strengthen functional research and development. Through scientific and technological innovation, continuously improve the design and performance of elderly cold-proof clothing. Strengthen functional research and development for elderly people with different health types based on humanized design principles, overcome key technical bottlenecks, and realize the industrialization of scientific and technological achievements. Improve the level of intelligence and technology, thereby improving the safety and health management of the elderly and enhancing their independence.

(2) Create a product development process and mechanism driven by real-time feedback, improve the service mechanism, and timely understand market demand and user expectations. Accurately grasp the changes in user needs. Establish a cross-departmental collaboration mechanism to ensure information flow between product development, marketing and customer service teams, and achieve rapid iteration and continuous innovation.

(3) Create a dedicated brand and expand the brand market to enhance brand recognition and market influence. Enhance the market influence and product premium ability of the elderly cold-proof clothing brand. Expand brand awareness and influence through newspapers, television, the Internet, publications, new media, industry events and exhibitions.

5. Adhere to sustainable development

In the research and development and promotion of cold-proof clothing for the elderly, adhere to the promotion of green and low-carbon process technology and sustainable raw materials. Encourage enterprises to use natural textile fabrics and fillers, use waterless or low-water processing technology, and support technological transformation, including raw material reuse, energy

conservation and emission reduction, clean production, and waste resource utilization, and propose corresponding enterprise support policies. Achieve long-term sustainable development of the clothing industry while meeting consumer demand for quality and functionality.

New Knowledges

To achieve the innovative development of cold-proof clothing for the elderly, we can start from three aspects: product innovation, technological innovation and evaluation system innovation. In addition, in the process of promoting the innovative development of cold-proof clothing for the elderly, we need to emphasize the coordinated participation of multiple links and multiple subjects of the government, industry and industry, which can not only meet the basic needs of the elderly, but also promote local economic development and social harmony.

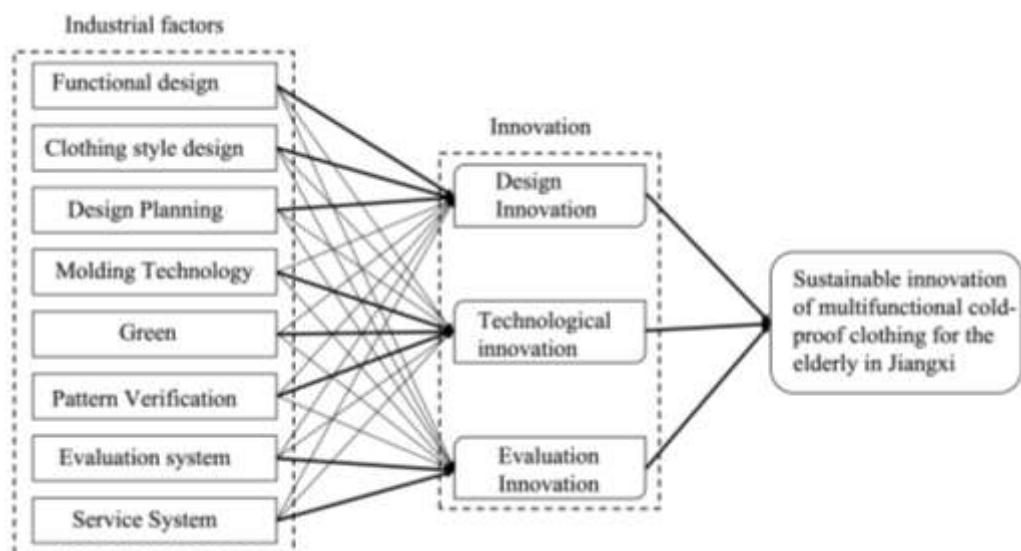


Figure 7: Structural model diagram of innovation and development of cold-proof clothing for the elderly (Author, 2025).

Conclusions

In the construction of the innovation and development system of cold-proof clothing for the elderly, multiple dimensions such as design planning, appearance design, functional design, product molding technology, green

environmental protection, pattern verification, evaluation system and service system play a key role. The comprehensive innovation of these dimensions will help to form a systematic and sustainable cold-proof clothing industry for the elderly, which can not only meet the growing needs of the elderly, but also significantly improve their quality of life and safety.

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