

Transformable Clothing in Children's Fashion

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Abstract

Modern children's clothing is characterised not only by the diversity of forms and rich ornamentation but also, primarily, by the specificity of these clothing products that guarantees their safety of use, functionality and shaping of the personality characteristics of the child. The world of children's fashion takes into account current trends, paying particular attention to its practical aspects. An important role in the design of children's clothing can be played by transformable clothing, which supports the child in its normal psychophysical development, as well as parents in economic terms. Surveys carried out show the opinions of children and parents regarding transformable clothing.

Key words: children's clothing, clothing design, transformable clothing, surveys.

Introduction

At each stage of fashion history, up to today, innovative technologies have been sought that allow the transformation of a clothing product so as to turn one design into another. Fashion designers are obliged to look for new innovative solutions, thanks to which it will be possible to use clothing in a rational way, allowing at the same time to express their creativity and identity. Such clothes can be transformed by adapting to the user's figure and obtaining a specific style, which reduces the need to buy new clothing products. Transformability in clothing is also important due to the extension of the life cycle of such a product, which is important for buyers in the aspect of economics, and also supports environmental protection.

Therefore, transformable clothing is characterised by the fact that one clothing product can be obtained differently depending on the specific situation in which the user is located. It can also be used in children's fashion. Converting one clothing product into different styles of wearing or other clothing models is possible in several ways. The oldest method is the reversibility of clothing, in which the inner and outer surface is finished identically, but has a different construction, pattern or colour, so that the garment will have a different look, no matter what side will be worn. Another variant is clothing that can be folded or tied to obtain a specific appearance.

Changing the appearance of a given garment is also possible through the use of various types of fastenings, such as zip fasteners, snaps, buttons and hooks. Gums and drawstrings are also of significance here. The use of these tailoring ac-

cessories enables the product to be transformed by disconnecting the elements of a given garment and correspondingly attaching or giving a specific shape [1-4]. Therefore, it can be a suitable alternative in the design of children's clothing due to the rapid physical and mental development and active lifestyle of children. A questionnaire survey carried out on the subject of a complete set of transformable clothing for children which consists of a jacket and bib pants gives the answer whether truly transformable clothes have a chance to meet the expectations of children and parents and can find application in fashion for the youngest users.

In the context of the assumptions above, the following research hypothesis was put forward: Transformable children's clothing ensures the functionality and psychophysical development of the child. Implementation of the tasks above allowed for empirical verification of the research hypothesis by:

- gathering the opinions of children and parents on the subject of children's convertible clothing,
- assessing the significance of convertible clothing in children's fashion from the point of view of the child and parent,
- assessing the chances of using transformable clothing in children's fashion design.

Principles of transformable clothing design for children

Transformable clothing for children, due to the specificity of its users, must meet a number of requirements in terms of safety, functionality and aesthetics.

The design of clothing for children provides designers with a number of specific

requirements that must be met. When designing a transformable dress for children, knowledge of the child's psychophysical development is very important. The structure and proportions of the child's figure change depending on the phase of its development, and the shape of a toddler's body is different in infancy than at the pre-school or school age. Transformable clothing is characterised by an interesting cut. The design and modeling depend on the age of the child, as well as on the type of material and products to be made of them. When constructing moulds, structural allowances should be taken into account to ensure freedom of movement and ease of breathing. Ease of inserting and removing clothes is also very important, and the fasteners must be located in easily accessible places, which do not cause a pressure. However, in the case of material selection, geometrical, flower and colourful patterns are most desirable for patterned designs. Different combinations of materials are very often used, which allows for the widening or lengthening of "grown up" clothes. It should also be added that there is no longer an iron rule of combining smooth and patterned materials. You can, for example, combine materials with floral motifs and materials made into strips or with striped bars, whilst remembering that it must be done in a thoughtful and not accidental way. An effective addition to transformable children's clothing can be risers, trimmings and stitches made in a contrasting colour, or yokes, pockets, and straps made of different materials. Decorative elements may also be fasteners, i.e. zips, press studs, eyelets and ligaments in various contrasting colors, which play an important role in transforming one product into another. Decorative accents can also refer to the world of fairy tales and

children's fantasies. When designing, one should also take into account the rapid physical development of the child, which is why the clothing product should be designed so that it can be used to the maximum before the child grows out of it. It should also be remembered that the design of children's clothing must take into account the physical development of the child, allowing free movement and mental development with appropriate aesthetic features [5].

Design of a transformable set of children's clothing

The principles of designing transformable children's clothing were taken into account in the design and implementation of a complete set of children's clothing which consists of a jacket and bib shorts. The clothes were made of denim using different types of fasteners, such as zips in aquamarine, press studs, buttons and cords. Using these solutions you can get a vest and coat, and additionally the hood can be transformed into a sailor-type collar or sack.

With bib trousers, you can get a dress, skirt, short trousers and a backpack with a bib (*Table 1*).

The aim of the solution presented is to increase the functionality of children's clothing whilst taking into account the physical development of the child to allow free movement and psychological development that shape appropriate personality traits and a sense of artistic taste. The clothing model presented was the subject of a questionnaire survey conducted among children and their parents.

A set of transformable children's clothing in the light of surveys

The surveys conducted among children and parents were aimed at getting their opinion on convertible clothing products. The survey checked the preferences of young people in the use of this type of clothing, and in the case of parents it illustrated their attitude to such clothing in the aspect of the psychophysical development of the child and in economic terms.

Description of the research method and characteristics of respondents

Assessment of the importance of convertible clothing in children's fashion

Table 1. Complete set of children's clothing subjected to a questionnaire survey

<p>Set of transformed clothing (jacket and pants)</p>	<p>Jacket transformed into a coat</p>
<p>Jacket transformed into a vest, hood into a sack, and gardener's trousers into shorts</p>	<p>Bib pants transformed into a dress</p>
<p>Bib trousers transformed into a skirt and backpack</p>	<p>Bib pants transformed into shorts, or even a backpack</p>

was carried out among children and parents. A study of the impact of this type of clothing product in terms of its functionality and ergonomics was conducted using a direct research method. After deeper analysis of various research methods and techniques, it was decided to ap-

ply the most commonly used method of gathering information i.e. a survey. "It is a set of standardised research techniques, by means of which the researcher receives information in the process of mutual communication with other persons, who answer in writing his questions" [7].

Table 2. Comparison of the characteristics of selected types of surveys [7].

Features	Types of surveys		
	Mailbox	Auditorium	Mailbox
Amount of information (number of questions)	average	average	little
Control of the selection of test units	little	average	little
Agility	medium or small	big	little
Supervision of the survey	lack	big	lack
Time (speed of implementation)	slow	fast	slow
Cost of carrying out the survey	medium or small	little	medium or small

Table 3. Characteristics of the children surveyed.

Characteristics of the population of children studied	
Gender	Percentage, %
Girl	14.7
Boy	85.3
Age (years)	
10-12	11.8
13-15	39.2
>16	49
Place of residence	
City	35.3
Village	64.7
Siblings	
Sister	58.8
Brother	40.2
None	1

Table 4. Characteristics of parents surveyed.

Characteristics of the population of parents studied	
Gender	Percentage, %
Woman	78.4
Man	21.6
Age (years)	
18-25	0
26-30	6.8
31-35	11.4
36-40	30.7
41-45	22.7
>45	28.4
Place of residence	
City	53.4
Village	46.6
Education	
Professional	4.5
Average	36.4
Higher	59.1
Number of children in the household	
0-1	51.2
2-5	47.7
>6	1.1
The child attends	
Nursery	5.7
Before school	28.4
Primary school	46.6
Junior high school	14.8
He/she stays at home under the care of a family/nanny	4.5

As one of the types of direct research, a questionnaire is distinguished by the following:

- postal, that is, sent by mail with the expectation of its return to the interviewer,
- auditorium, i.e. distributed on various occasions and collected in person or sent by post,
- press, that is, published in the press and returned by post. Their characteristics are presented in **Table 2**.

Based on the table above, showing the advantages and disadvantages of selected types of questionnaires, it was decided to use the auditorium survey in the research process [6].

The study presented was based on the questionnaire method. For the analysis, research tools in the form of a direct questionnaire were used. The use of this method enabled respondents to adequately address specific questions and ensure a comparability of results. The survey was anonymous, which resulted in honest answers. The information obtained was kept secret and used to make statistical statements and for their analysis. It was implemented in January and February 2018 among respondents from the territory of the Lesser Poland Voivodeship. The selection of respondents was random. The survey included photos of the set of children's clothing with a description (**Table 1**) [6].

The children's questionnaire consisted of an information sheet containing general information, such as the age, gender, place of residence and siblings, and the main part, in which there were two closed and two semi-closed questions. In the questionnaire, young respondents were asked to have a look at the photographs and their description (**Table 1**) and answer the following questions:

- Do you like such a set of clothes, if so, why?
- Do you want to wear such clothing?
- Where do you wear such clothing?

They concerned the subjective assessment of convertible clothing for children by their users.

The parent survey form, on the other hand, consisted of a reference sheet with general information, such as the age, sex, place of residence, education, number of children in the household, household income, whether the child attends an educational facility, and if so which, and the main parts, in which there were three closed and four semi-closed one-choice questions. After perusing pictures of the sets of children's clothing attached to the questionnaire (**Table 1**), respondents answered the following questions:

- Have you met with the changeable clothing, and if so, where?
- Would you put your child in such clothing?
- Do you think that the replacement of clothes meets functional requirements, and if so, why?
- Does children's clothing develop the child's creative thinking, and if so, why?
- Is it thought that transformable clothing is economical, and if so, why?
- Would you buy such clothing?

Characteristics of respondents

102 young people took part in a questionnaire survey on children's interchangeable clothes. Characteristics of the young respondents are presented in **Table 3**.

A survey on interchangeable children's clothing was taken by 88 parents. Characteristics of the parents surveyed are shown in **Table 4**.

Results of the study conducted among children and discussion thereof

This research was to show whether the convertible clothing corresponds to the children's expectations and whether it would be attractive for them in use in various everyday life situations. The results obtained (**Figure 1**) indicate that the majority of young respondents positively assessed such clothing.

Analysis of the questionnaire surveys shows that the vast majority of young people like such a set of transformable clothing, and the same number would like to use it. However, among boys aged 13-15 years, the studies showed a negative attitude to this type of clothing, and found that they just do not like it. Arguments in favour of choosing such a clothing product are presented in **Figure 2**.

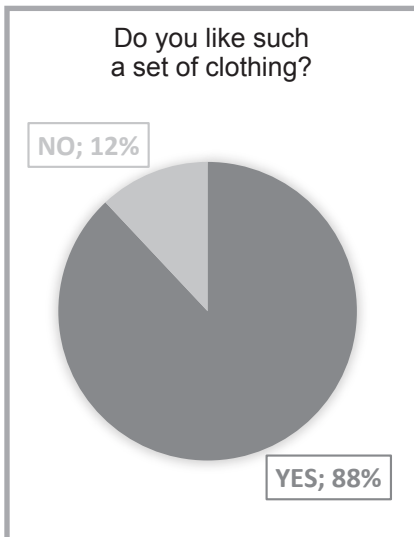


Figure 1. Assessment of a set of transformable clothing by children.

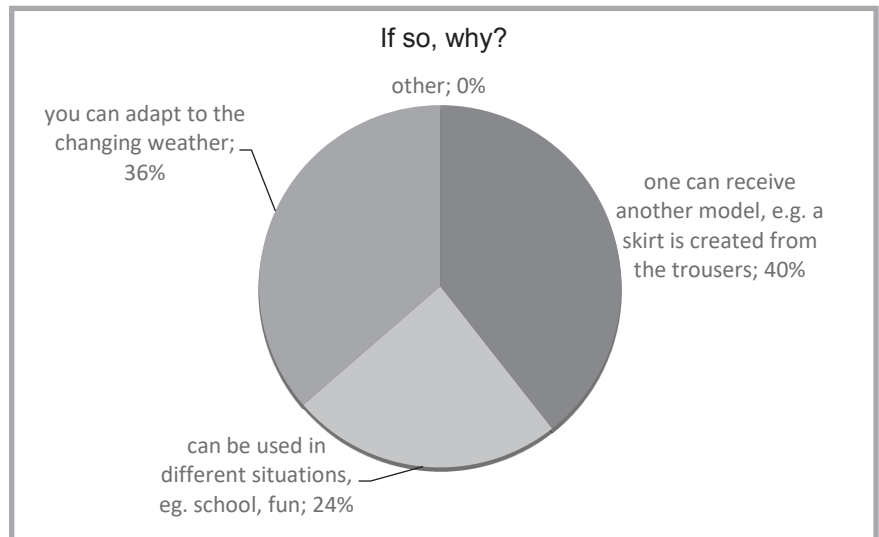


Figure 2. Positive arguments for clothing that is transformable in the opinion of young respondents.

Analysis of the statement above shows that the universality of clothing plays an important role for children. Most of the young respondents, both girls and boys, regardless of age and place of residence, answered that one model can have different variants, e.g. a trouser skirt, and not much fewer appreciate the fact that it can be adapted to changing situations. However, when asked if it is possible to use such a set in the various circumstances of everyday life, for example at school or in games, the fewest respondents were in favor. Research also shows that young people would like very much to put on such a set of transformable clothing and in what situation, presented in **Figure 3**.

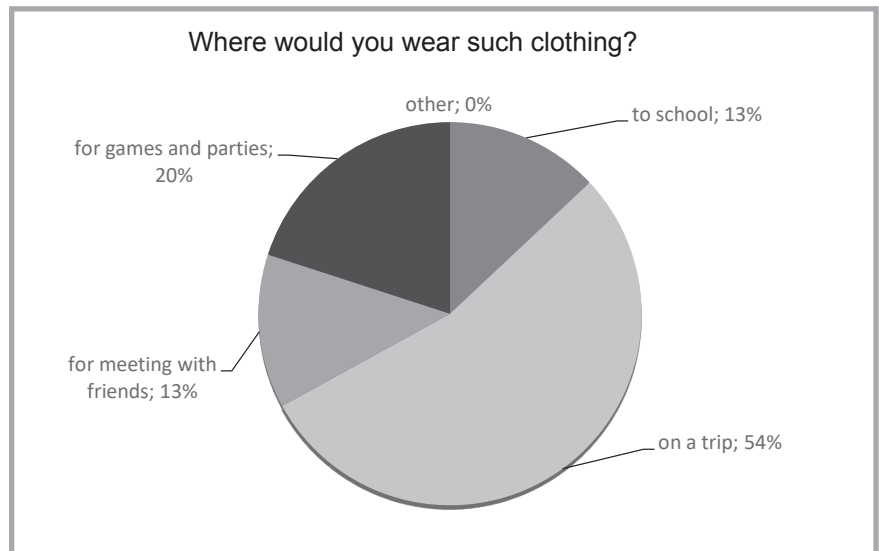


Figure 3. Situations in which children would like to dress in transformable clothing.

The results above indicate that the majority of respondents, both girls and boys over 13 years, would use such clothing for tourism purposes, i.e., a trip. Far fewer children would wear this set for fun and events, while for school and meetings with friends, the fewest respondents accept it.

Results of the surveys conducted among children show that young people are open to new and interesting solutions in clothing with a special focus on its practical aspect.

Results of survey conducted among parents

Questionnaire surveys conducted among parents were aimed at learning their preferences with regard to clothing that is transformable at the level of functionality, supporting the creative thinking of the child, and economics. Out of the parents

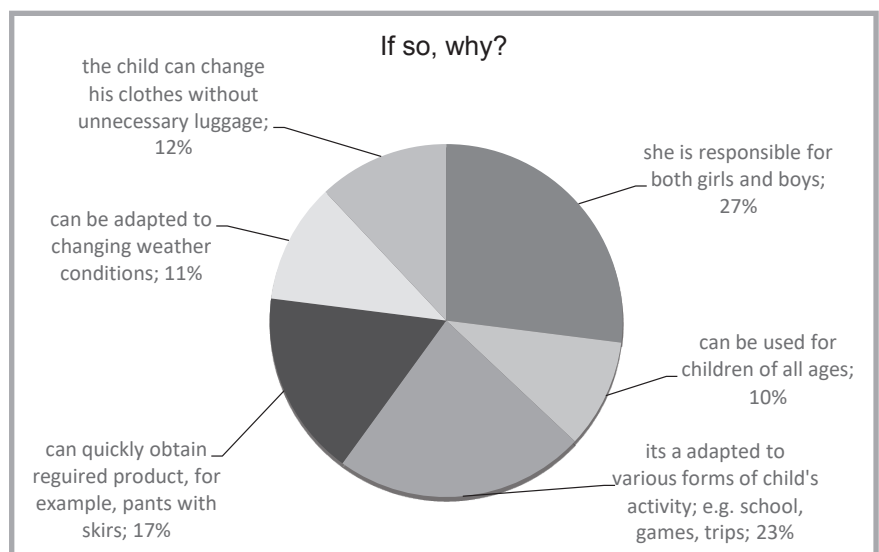


Figure 4. Evaluation of the functionality of convertible clothing for children.

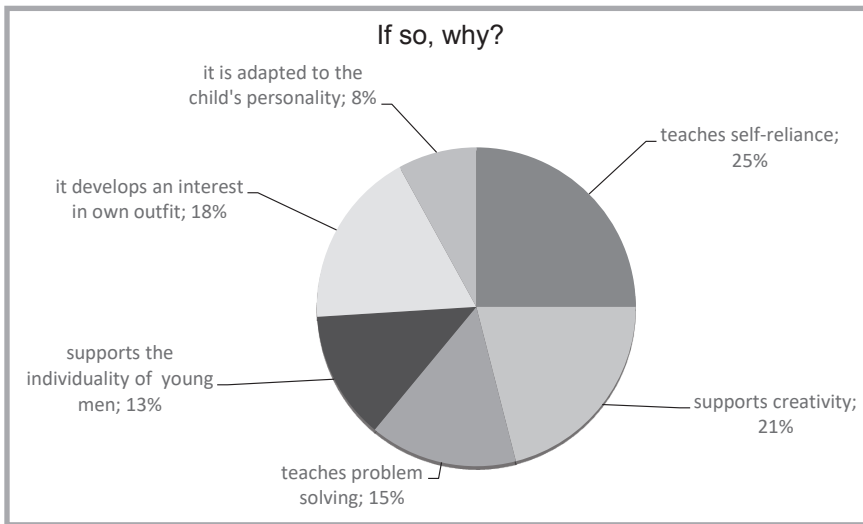


Figure 5. Influence of children's clothing on the development of creative thinking in the opinion of parents.

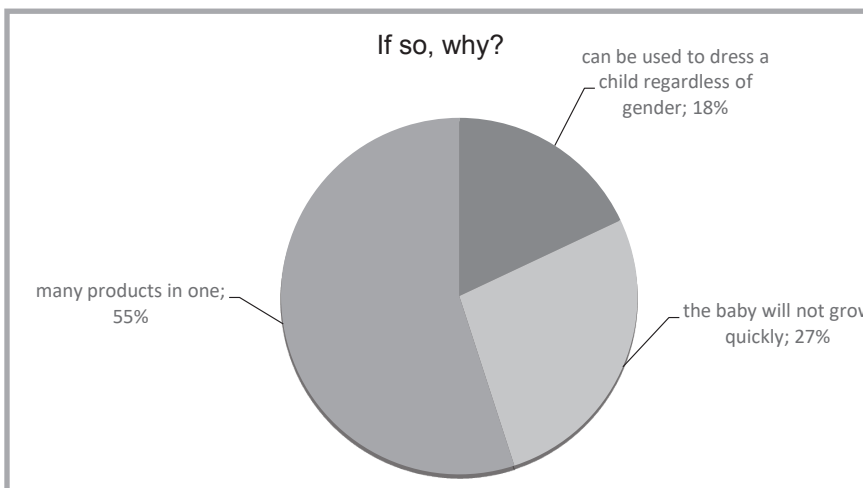


Figure 6. Economic aspect of convertible children's clothing as assessed by parents.

surveyed, 74% declared that they had not met with such clothing products before, while 24% of respondents, most of whom were men aged 30-40, living in both the country and cities, said they had seen it on the street, in a shop and on the internet. As a result, 90% of them would dress their child in such clothing. The parents surveyed who showed a negative attitude towards transformable clothing, are women over 36 years of age, with secondary education, irrespective of their place of residence.

During the questionnaire survey, parents commented on the importance of transformable clothing for children. Their views on the functionality of this type of product are presented in **Figure 4**.

For the parents surveyed, in terms of functionality, the most important thing is that you can dress your child in such

clothing regardless of gender and use it in various forms of its activity, and that one form can be made from one product in a short time, obtaining other variants. At a comparable but lower level, there are opinions such as the change of clothing without unnecessary luggage, adjustment to weather conditions and use at different ages. These features of transformable clothing are especially important for parents with more than one child.

Another area studied was the impact of transformable children's clothing on developing a child's creative thinking. 91% of respondents, positively referred to this statement, while only 9% had no opinion, which are men aged 26 to 35 with vocational and secondary education and one child, regardless of where they live. Parents' opinions regarding support for the creative thinking of young men are presented in **Figure 5**.

Results of the survey analysis show that the most important for parents supporting the shaping of the individuality of young people is to teach independence and inventiveness, and then to develop an interest in their own clothes as well as learn to overcome difficulties and develop personality traits. Analysis of the results of the survey shows that 97% of respondents, irrespective of sex, age, education, place of residence and the number of children they have, think that transformable clothing products for children are economical. Positive arguments for the profitability of this type of clothing according to those surveyed are presented in **Figure 6**.

The parents surveyed, similar to children, think that the universality of clothing is the most important, i.e. that a different clothing product can be obtained depending on the need. However, it is less important that the child will not grow quickly and that the product can be adapted to gender.

Due to the wide range of functional properties of transformable clothing for children, evaluation of the results of the survey shows that 97.7% of parents would buy such clothing for their children, while 2.3%, men over 45 years old, living in a city, said they did not know. Openness to the acquisition of this type of clothing is important due to the efficiency of use depending on the needs and expectations of consumers.

■ Summary

The questionnaire survey carried out among children and parents showed a positive attitude towards the set of transformable clothing proposed, as evidenced by the fact that about 90% of the respondents said they liked the type of clothing and would buy it. It can also be pointed out that such transformable clothing is not yet widely used, because only about 20% of the respondents said that they had already met with it. They also replied that this type of clothing is attractive to young people and their carers because it is very practical, which is especially important for them during trips. Therefore, it can be widely used as tourist or sports clothing. Moreover, the universality of transformable attire is also of significance for the children and parents surveyed, which not only supports the child's normal psychophysical development, but also stimulates its creativity.

The results of the research show that respondents pay attention to the functionality of convertible clothing, that is, to whether it is suitable for the child, regardless of gender, and whether it can be appropriately adapted to the various activities of the child. It is also important that the transformable clothing supports shaping the child's mental development by developing creative thinking, with particular emphasis on supporting independence, coping with difficulties and sensitising to beauty and aesthetics in fashion.

Due to the appropriate constructional solutions and the tendencies of young people to search for modern and interesting ideas, there is a good chance that convertible clothing will be a suitable alternative in the design of children's clothing. There is a good possibility that clothing that can be transformed into children's fashion will find application, satisfy the tastes of young users, and meet the expectations of their parents. Therefore, transformable children's clothing must be carefully thought out, taking into account appropriate construction and aesthetic solutions, so that the clothing is not accidental and fulfills certain functions.

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