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Change Dynamics in the Process of Internationalisation of Clothing and Textile Enterprises

Abstract
This article looks at the issues of initiating restructuring changes in clothing and textile enterprises. Changes in such enterprises are initiated and implemented in two directions: On the one hand, they occur at the macro-strategic level as an intentionally planned project of activitie, and on the other, with reference to evolutionary process models [1], they are micro-activities, which may be studied in the context of the notion of routine [2], micro-actions and micro-practices [3,4], i.e. in the context of theoretical categories containing an element of internal dynamics. Clothing and textile enterprises function in a seasonal cycle, which constitutes an important element in the dynamisation of specific changes in this sector. The process of the social diffusion and internationalisation of enterprises in this context represents factors which strengthen their structural changeability. The aim of this article is to analyse the structure of the change process initiated by the internationalisation of enterprises, with special emphasis on the factors dynamising the restructuring.

Key words: *small-sized enterprises, medium-sized enterprises, initiating changes, restructuring changes, practice.*

■ Introduction

The activity of clothing and textile enterprises requires that a range of related dynamic and creative actions in the field of product development and collection planning must be implemented. As a result, however, creativity collides with the necessity of keeping specific time limits.

Internationalisation is the factor that dynamises both specific changes in this sector as well as internal ones in the field of planning and organisation. The internationalisation process may involve the necessity for planned and unplanned activities, restructuring [5], implementation of innovation and acceleration of technological changes [6 - 8].

Analysis of these issues requires examination of the change process in an organisation in the context of its routines, micro-processes and daily activities [1, 4]. An approach oriented towards process analysis facilitates identification of the factors that maintain the dynamics and continuity of the organisation and is justified in the context of the contemporary functioning of enterprises (turbulent environment, globalisation and technological development), where they undergo continuous adaptive and developmental restructuring processes in dynamically changing sectors.

■ Conceptual framework

Characteristics of fashion-related changes in the clothing and textile sector

Fashion is ranked very highly in contemporary society. It is a tool of social communication and an *independent cultural entity with a unique structure and (…) purpose* [9]. According to the Foreign Terms Dictionary, fashion is *a generally approved habit, concerning the way people dress in particular, which undergoes changes* [10]. According to Barthes [10], Richardson and Kroeber [11], fashion is unpredictable, but is however still characterised by a regularity of a certain nature. The nature of changes in fashion allows to distinguish two opposite perspectives of its lifecycle: the historical, identified by changes in body proportions, which throughout the decades have been determined by a specific type of clothes, and the *recallable* – interconnected with seasonality and determined by the fuzzy limits of human memory. These two perspectives represent two different points of view: one concerns regularity and assumes research of the rhythm and cyclical nature of fashion, while the other presupposes the limited predictability of changes in fashion based on seasonality and differentiation. However, early theories very clearly limited this type of differentiation to identifying changes occurring in a dominant type of apparel [12, 13]. The contemporary basis of seasonality is rooted in the social and cultural differentiation as well as mobility of people and artefacts, while fashion itself may be understood as a dynamic

social phenomenon based on the concept of human activity.

Anna Hollander, an art historian, defines fashion from the action-related perspective, which addresses its lifecycle and changeability of forms, and particularly the culturally-determined fashion entity. Fashion is *what people wear every day (...) and which has assumed various forms in Western culture for some seven hundred years* [14]. In this meaning, fashion covers many functional areas of apparel and is formed by clothes created by designers, sold by high street stores and outlets, and even includes army and police uniforms, etc. [15]. Solomon (2006) defines fashion as a kind of social diffusion, i.e. a process of infiltration of cultural elements, during which a new style is formed and embedded within the limits of the culturally approved code [16]. In this sense fashion is a specific tool of adaptation and a specific type of social isolation which facilitates identification with a specific social group. Thus fashion may be understood as a phenomenon which defines the contemporaneity and modernity of a culture as well as being a tool of social communication.

Perceiving apparel and fabrics through the fragmented cultural perspective of rising trends may blur the picture of tangible apparel products as an active element of social [17] and technological change, which impacts the process of social and economic development. Innovative technological solutions and corresponding consumer needs affect the development of trends in terms of the function and form of apparel as well as the process of differentiation of products considered currently fashionable. But apart from reflecting contemporary aesthetics, apparel and fabrics provide a tool facilitating social and economic change at both the global and local level.

Characteristics of the operations of clothing and textile enterprises in the seasonal cycle

Seasonal division is a basic element impacting the specificity of specific changes in the sector, which also necessitates the huge scope of product changes necessary to maintain process continuity in clothing and textile enterprises. The traditional calendar of product development is subdivided into two seasons: spring/summer and fall/winter, and covers 10 - 12 months [18]. Simplifying this

system, it may be assumed that January is the month when the sale of the spring and summer collection, which was designed and ordered 6 months earlier, commences. In June, clearance sales of spring and summer products are introduced. At the same time the fall/winter collection is introduced, and its prices are reduced after six months. However, the biweekly product development cycle promoted by Zara questions the rules of operation of clothing and textile enterprises by globally imposing shorter seasons. Masoud Golsorkhi, the editor of *Tank*, a London culture and fashion magazine, is often quoted as saying: *When you went to Gucci or Chanel in October, you knew the chances were good that clothes would still be there in February. With Zara, you know that if you don't buy it, right then and there, within 11 days the entire stock will change. You buy it now or never. And because the prices are so low, you buy it now (...). They broke up a century-old biannual cycle of fashion. (...) Now, pretty much half of the high-end fashion companies — Prada ... for example — make four to six collections instead of two each year. That's absolutely because of Zara* [19]. In this way, the modern product development calendar is cut short, and at such corporations as JC Penney, it covers 35 weeks for basic products and 15 weeks for trend products [18]. Thus it may be assumed that cutting the seasonal cycle short is a process of business innovation diffusion, which gradually spreads throughout the industry.

Practice of planning in the apparel product development process

The organisational structure and style of management of a clothing and textile company are functionally linked to seasonality. The planning process in clothing and textile enterprises takes place on several levels simultaneously and involves a range of actions covered by consistent logics in the field of appropriate matching of assortment, textiles, aesthetics/style, price and time. According to Grace Kunz and Myrna Garner, merchandising is broadly understood as the *planning, development and appropriate presentation of the product* [20], which goes considerably beyond the narrowly defined function of *visual merchandising* and is a key function in the planning process. Collection planning involves the division of products into style-based groups and often corresponding categories of fabrics/ materials used in their

manufacture. This division determines the price range and the way prices are differentiated in homogeneous groups of products, and is also related to planned assortment volumes (number of pieces in a given size), anticipated dynamics of sale, and clearance sale periods. This type of planning is a process based on available knowledge of the past, current and future trends, customer profiles and their attitude towards fashion. Thus it may be an intuitive process to a certain extent, occurring through an *analogy* [21], or based on skills acquired and routines. The product development stage, which according to Grace Kunz is a creative phase, covers the work of designers and is based on their knowledge of colours, silhouettes, patterns, social trends and lifestyles [20]. Hence the technological context is an important element which must adequately address price and customer profiles, as well as the planned construction and manufacture of the product. At the same time, collection planning and product development must address the strategy for fabric and material supplies, which involves major risk in the case of new and unproven suppliers. Product development and collection building in the clothing and textile sector are based on a process of design and sewing performed by enterprises themselves, as well as on the outsourcing of parts, or even the whole, of the collection. The share of enterprises' original products as well as those purchased from external companies in the structure of the seasonal collection differs depending on the profile of a specific enterprise and target group. Finally the product is sold in the right place and in the right way, which in the case of an ideal model of the enterprise, takes place according to a thoroughly considered *visual merchandising* plan.

Factors that initiate restructuring changes and transform the structure of the organisation may be analysed in terms of microactions [1, 22], routines [2], and practices [3]; although such a narrow perception of the management and operations of an enterprise may contribute to obtaining a binary knowledge of restructuring changes, which will be focused on dynamics i.e. *a concern with what people do in relation to the strategy and how this is influenced by and influences their organisational and institutional context* [23, 24]. This is why an analysis based on the *managerial praxis* is required. The specificity of the operations of a clothing and textile enter-

prise is determined by different levels of planning in the apparel product development process, and by the corresponding method of operation, types of activities and operations-routines:

1. Strategic planning, based on the key objectives of the enterprise and expressed in the form of a mission, vision and core values. It is also worth referring to the enactment concept promoted by Karl Weick, which indicates the specific naivety of the assumptions of a strategy's pre-formulation. Thus objectives are formed in the course of activities: *when people act they unrandomize variables, insert vestiges of orderliness, and literally create their own constraints* [25]. According to this concept, the strategy is often formulated *post factum,* and the corporate mission and vision express a historically and institutionally developed corporate identity.

2. Apparel product planning, which covers collection merchandising planning (planning of the collection in terms of its selling price, merchantable assortment, management of delivery of materials, fabrics, accessories and finished products), collection design (trend analysis, preliminary and final concept of the collection), technical planning (approval of the collection in terms of the construction of the models, technical plans concerning the consumption of materials, fabrics, accessories, layout of the sections, etc.), and production planning (particularly in larger companies where production is outsourced, price negotiations in contracts, ensuring deadlines are met, product quality) [18].

Helen Goworek, who studies UK high street stores such as River Island, has observed that clothing product development consists of seven inter-related stages:
1. Trend research,
2. Comparative shopping (in order to recognise competitive products),
3. Textile, yarn and component sourcing and development,
4. Garment design and development,
5. Garment design presentation,
6. Sourcing garment suppliers (in large companies where production is outsourced),
7. Setting retail prices and/or ordering garments [26].

These studies describe the complexity and flexibility of activity-based relations between the textile designer, fashion designer and buyer in the apparel product development process.

The process of internationalising clothing and textile enterprises

The Uppsala model of internationalisation for companies, popularised at the end of the 1970s, assumes a step-by-step and sequential process of internationalisation. It remains a fundamental point of reference for numerous works dealing with the issue of internationalisation, both in the context of its criticism and the modern adaptation of the model. The most significant influences of critical thought on the internationalisation theory include models describing the process of internationalisation of both born-global companies and new international ventures, assuming a thesis of skipping stages (the so-called 'leap-frogging' process), as well as intense activity on an international scale from the very moment an enterprise is set up.

Influenced by critical currents, the authors of the Uppsala model carried out conceptual self-criticism of the stage model and located its modern version in the context of network and inter-organisational relationships between enterprises functioning under global conditions [29, 30]. In order to describe managerial processes within a global value chain, they introduced *a globalisation process model.* Formal power and classical organisational structures were supplanted by the mechanisms of the control of skills and resources in an inter-organisational network of relationships. The organisational system gains macrostructural significance and fragmentary elements which tie enterprises within an international value chain. In this sense, internationalisation becomes a necessary and obvious context for managerial processes, and not an element requiring explanation. It can be assumed that the specificity of the clothing and textile industry is part of the new model by Uppsala's authors, which is confirmed by the subject of research by Viktoria Sundquist focusing on the role of intermediation in business networks in the clothing and textile industry [31]. This is further confirmed by the works of J. Flecker and U. Holtgrewe, which present different types of enterprises focused on the performance of different functions within a global value chain. Moreover this research is characterised by a similar understanding of the specificity of clothing and textile enterprises

to that assumed in this study, which is based on the functional division of work in clothing companies:
1. *Planning and development of collections,*
2. *Design and prototyping of models,*
3. *Production design, planning, monitoring;*
4. *Manufacture and assembly of garments,*
5. *Marketing,*
6. *Distribution, logistics,*
7. *POS Marketing;*
8. *Sales* [32, 33].

Flecker and Holtgrewe focus on the description of specialised enterprises within a value chain, while in this study the micro-process approach has been adopted, focusing on the explanation of restructuring changes initiated in the process of internationalisation. Restructuring changes are described as partial activities and processes within the functioning of clothing and textile enterprises. As a result of the research, it has been possible to identify categories of functions which include partial activities and processes, and correspond to the specificity of the functioning of clothing and textile enterprises.

■ Methodology and results

Sample

The key selection criteria included businesses in the sector (clothing and textile), the location of their premises (Lodz and Masovia Provinces), and the type of business conducted (production or services). Company owners and employees of clothing and textile enterprises took part in the survey. In the first stage of the survey, the Kompass database (880 records) and the database of the Polish Textile Association (above 120 records) were used. Interviewers contacted the companies by telephone to plan a meeting, during which a questionnaire was completed, or alternatively, left the questionnaire with the companies for collection at a later date. Some of the companies registered in the database had ceased to operate or had changed their type of business. In order to increase the sample size, in the second stage another sampling frame was used, based on the database of enterprises of one of educational institution from Łódź. This database includes employees and owners of clothing and textile enterprises. The survey was conducted between April and July 2013. A survey was

conducted on a sample of 337 small and medium-sized enterprises.

The survey results cover Polish enterprises. The clothing and textile industry, however, is strongly entangled in the context of fashion and technological changes. It is an industry characterised by a global diffusion of trends and the existence of relationships between enterprises within a global value chain. The shortening of the product development cycle, seasons and modern technologies are global, not local, phenomena. Thus, in this sense, enterprises that manufacture fashion products function in similar conditions. In this context, the results of research into Polish enterprises can also be used by foreign enterprises in the clothing and textile industry.

Statistical methods

Two-dimensional and multidimensional methods were used to analyse empirical data. Partial measurements of dynamic changes provided an empirical indicator for measurement of the level of change intensity. To simplify the process, it was assumed that each change had an identical weight ('the dynamic change indicator'). The correctness of this indicator was verified using such measures as the correlation coefficient between individual composite variables and the indicator (value above 0.3). The first stage involved an analysis of variances, specifically a method to *determine the occurrence of differences between the averages* [34] in the various groups of enterprises. A regression equation was then derived to identify the factors that had the greatest impact on dynamic aspects of the changes.

Construction of the dynamic change indicator

The dynamic change indicator is an index of the intensity of restructuring changes initiated as a result of the internationalisation of clothing and textile enterprises, expressed in terms of quantity. The process of constructing this variable consisted in three basic stages. In the first, a substantive analysis was performed and questions for the questionnaire chosen, being a one-dimensional conceptualisation of the notion of restructuring changes initiated as a result of the internationalisation of companies. Restructuring changes covered seven areas of the functioning of enterprises, and were designed to define the holistic dimension of restructuring (see *Table 1*). With the micro-process cognitive perspective assumed, restructuring changes were expressed as fragmentary processes and activities that can be undertaken as a result of internationalisation, described as being dichotomous categories (present/not present). After the measurement (a survey), based on the total number of answers, the number of points for each of the 45 types of changes covered by the dynamic change indicator was determined, and an interval scale was created to describe the intensity of the occurrence of restructuring changes for the given enterprise, with some simplification, assuming that intervals between individual types of changes are equal. Thus a variable with a distribution close to normal was arrived at, with a range of variability of 0 - 34 points.

The dependent variable and measurement of factors dynamising restructuring changes

The analysis was based on variables and the synthetic construct of specific groups of variables which had not been sufficiently explored in empirical studies in terms of the aspects of change management and internationalisation of enterprises in particular.

The dynamic change indicator, which facilitates synthetic measurement of change intensity in terms of the internationalisation of clothing and textile enterprises, represents the dependent variable in this study. This composite indicator contains 45 changes possible for implementation and evaluates them in terms of at least seven levels of dynamics related to the specificity of the enterprises' operations, also taking into account changes specific to the clothing and textile sector.

Qualitative composite indicators covering the following areas of the enterprises' operations were used to measure the changes, presented in *Table 1*.

The multi-dimensional concept of changes in the context of the internationalisation of clothing and textile enterprises is a dependent variable in this study. The changes are expressed as various types of key actions and processes performed to maintain the continuity of enterprises operating in seasonal cycles and dealing with the global diffusion of trends.

*Table 1. Areas of enterprises' operations and composite indicators of changes initiated by internationalisation. **Source**: Author's own.*

Area of enterprises' operations	Examples of composite indicators
Process and level of internationalisation	■ Forms of internationalisation (sewing/finishing services for foreign companies, export, commercial undertaking with a foreign company, enterprise's own sales office abroad, manufacturing undertakings abroad etc.) ■ The type and level of engagement in operations abroad (commencing export, regular cooperation, starting-up a business with a foreign partner, growth/decline in sales abroad)
Trend research	Using trend research services in the product development process, such as WGSN, Peclers Paris, etc. taking part in such fairs as Premiere Vision and Fashion Week, comparative shopping
Textile, yarn and component sourcing and development, product design and development, production	Initiated by internationalisation: increase/decrease in the average product production cost, increase/decrease in the number of models/colours/pieces under a given model, introducing technologically advanced products to the offer, strengthening internal quality control
Marketing strategy elements: setting retail prices and line presentation	Price differentiation under homogenous groups of products initiated by internationalisation, visual merchandising, intensifying outdoor advertising, advertisements in glossy magazines, working with models, photographers, using social media.
Delivery and allocation	Shorter delivery time initiated by internationalisation, strengthening internal quality control and outsourced services such as packing, opening enterprise's own stores abroad, building distribution channels abroad.
Investments	Opening of stores initiated by internationalisation, development of cutting and sewing rooms, investments in modern mannequins, furnishing and store lighting.
Investments in new technologies	Making investments as a result of internationalisation, introducing technologically advanced products.

Table 2. Factors demonstrating the dynamisation of restructuring changes in the process of industrialisation of clothing and textile enterprises based on the results of linear regression analysis. Source: Author's own compilation.

	Partial correlations	p-value
Differentiation of fashion and basic products	0.371	0.001
Internet sites (distribution)	0.359	0.001
Changes in profit	0.297	0.001
Origin of non-standard orders in foreign countries	0.296	0.001
Company size	0.246	0.001
More complex construction of models	0.232	0.012
Differences in the entries in the season	0.176	0.001
Financial profitability of non-standard orders	0.161	0.006
R²	0.588	
F	42.588	0.001

Maintaining organisational continuity in a sector that undergoes dynamic, cyclical changes is an element of adaptive and developmental restructuring (a definition of restructuring is presented in [35]).

One-factor ANOVA (analysis of variances) was applied for testing differences between average values of the dependent variable (dynamic change indicator) in individual subgroups formed for the purpose of the value of the independent variable. For all the independent variables selected for this analysis, the significance level for the F test was assumed at a value below 0.05 ($p < 0.05$), which indicated that the differences were statistically significant. Thus the zero hypothesis was rejected, assuming that the average values of the dependent variable for the categories of the independent variables describing the enterprises studied did not differ. Therefore the analysis used variables for which the dynamic change indicator was differentiated in a way that was statistically significant under the average values of the independent variable. A post-hoc Duncan test was then performed, demonstrating which groups were significantly different and whether there were any homogenous groups without any statistically significant differences. This enabled determination of which values of the independent variable were characterised by a greater or smaller degree of dynamic changes, and facilitated the dichotomisation of the independent variables, which assumed the following values:

1. Enterprise size (0 = micro and small-sized enterprises; 1 = medium-sized enterprises)
2. Differentiation of the number of entries of the collection in a season (1 = yes; 0 = no entries)
3. Financial profitability being the main reason for delivering non-standard orders (1 = yes; 0 = no)
4. Addressing the demand of foreign customers, the enterprise makes decisions on changing the profile and production, which involves the introduction of designs with the most difficult construction (1 = yes; 0 = no)
5. Internet sites as a preferred form of distribution (1 = yes; 0 = no)
6. Changes in profit observed in the course of running activities abroad within the past two years (1 = increase; 0 = decrease, no considerable changes in profit)
7. Splitting into fashion and basic products is more visible as a result of taking part in export and activity abroad (1 = yes; 0 = no)
8. Origin of the majority of non-standard orders (0 = Poland; 1 = abroad).

■ Results

Table 2 presents factors demonstrating the dynamisation of restructuring changes in the process of industrialisation of clothing and textile enterprises. The significance level for the F test reaches < 0.001, which indicates that the whole estimate of the equation is statistically significant. In this model, the independent variables demonstrate 59% variances of the dependent variable (R² reaches 0.58).

Analysis of the partial correlation coefficients clearly indicates that the following factors have the greatest impact on the intensity of restructuring changes: differentiation of fashion and basic products and internet sites (distribution). A slightly weaker impact is caused by the follow-ing factors: changes in profit, origin of non-standard orders, and company size. The following factors generate the weakest impact on the intensity of dynamic changes (although they are statistically significant): differentiation of entries in a season and financial profitability of non-standard orders.

■ Conclusions

The analysis demonstrated the key factors responsible for initiating restructuring changes in the internationalisation of clothing and textile enterprises. The efficiency of the management methods and tools used, the way of responding to changes in the external environment, activities routinely performed in the apparel product development process, or even the specificity of internal changes in the sector all provide the structural and institutional framework of the company. In theory, the more efficient the company is, the more difficult it is for it to change its business profile, processes and organisational resources. This study indicates that internationalisation is one of the most important factors in the dynamisation of changes in clothing and textile enterprises.

The adjustment to sector-specific changes is a significant element in dynamising restructuring changes in the process of internationalisation. It is an exogenous factor, dynamising changes in a global context. The survey discussed in this paper was conducted on the basis of Polish enterprises. However, fashion and technological changes are global, not local, phenomena. They include clothing and textile enterprises that operate in an international context, which is why such survey results can also be seen as exemplifying the experiences of enterprises from other countries. What is more, lack of adaptation on the sector-specific change level can lead to organisational inertia, which is well described by the organisational ecology approach [36]. Apparel and fabrics, as carriers of the diffusion of trends and interpersonal communication, require adaptation in the context of technology and information flow. Therefore, the use of Internet tools is an important factor dynamising changes. In the context of the analysis of research results, the most interesting and perhaps the most worthy of exploration as part of a purely qualitative approach is the identification of factors

related to the delivery of non-standard orders. The way a company responds to non-standard orders is connected with the necessity to undertake activities breaking with routine functioning in the industry, which is very strongly defined by seasonality and cyclicality. From this perspective, the delivery of non-standard orders can be understood as a spontaneous factor which initiates relatively more permanent changes. While spontaneous activities can give rise to the introduction of models that are new in terms of design and technology, such as in finishing and dying, etc., they can also be important elements dynamising in-depth changes in the enterprise. This seems to be of importance in the context of the functioning of all enterprises in an industry with developed inter-organisational and international relationships, such as the clothing and textile industry.

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