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Creativity in fashion design in Slovakia: the case study of Bratislava region

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Creativity in fashion design in Slovakia: the case study of the Bratislava region

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Abstract

This paper is focused on creativity in fashion design in Slovakia. The fashion design in Bratislava region was selected as one of the creative industry for our research. The aim of the paper is to analyze creativity and innovation activities between Slovak fashion designers.

In the paper will be presented results from research carried out between Slovak fashion designers located in the Bratislava region. The empirical work that provides the basis for this case study used a case study approach and qualitative methodology to discuss development of fashion design in Slovakia and determinants in terms of creativity and innovation activities between Slovak fashion designers.

Slovakia has long tradition in the clothing industry. The continuity in the clothing production was interrupted, with the closure of former state clothing factories. Also fashion design in Slovakia has overcome interesting development together with economic and social transformation in the 1990s. We will draw our attention also to history of fashion design in Slovakia. More in detail we analyze the value added chain of Slovak fashion producers, cooperation between fashion designers in the Bratislava region, relationship with their main suppliers and customers, markets etc. The paper examines also recent state of the impact of global economic crisis on the fashion industry in Slovakia.

Creative industries generally and fashion design as well has clear tendency to localize in the big or capital cities – “fashion centres” or “fashion cities”. Bratislava as the most important Slovak fashion centre has also attracted the famous fashion designers from other Slovak regions. These fashion designers are leaders on the Slovak fashion scene and they have succeeded with their own original fashion collection regularly presented on the fashion shows in Bratislava.

JEL code: L67, Z10

Key words: creative industry, fashion, fashion design

1. Introduction: fashion and fashion design

Fashion acts as a cultural phenomenon, as a very complex industry which reflects the social, economic, sexual and political attitudes of its time. Steadily forwards, driver of fashion is not a necessity, but very complex and deeply entrenched system in which changes are enforced by social differences, innovations in tailoring and economic considerations. Fashion is not limited only to the world of “haute couture”, designer brands, leading fashion magazines and social elite. Difficult economic and cultural issues affect with production and consumption of fashion all sectors of society. Progress in the production of apparel technologies has been the catalyst for mass industrialization, urbanization and globalization, which define the present of fashion design [3].

Global distribution and branding have grown; manufacturing is changing rapidly, with more companies sourcing their suppliers where labour is cheaper. Value for money and credibility are major considerations for any designer today and the fashion-buying customer is better informed than at any other time in history [2].

The economic context of fashion is no longer a local or national issue. Fashion is a global enterprise and an international semiotic language that crosses ethnic and class boundaries. International apparel conglomerates have the financial clout to buy raw materials and ship them to be manufactured at the lowest cost and risk. Manufacturers no longer have massive centralized production lines; manufacturing is now spread out over many locations where labour, skills and warehousing costs are cheap and abundant, and regulations less stringent. The fashion conglomerates buy up labels and businesses from across the globe that fit their “portfolio [1].

Fashion in its highest form is derived from inspiration and creativity. Creativity is a very emotive term in fashion and fashion design and fashion designers differ on its definition. Important role play fashion designers themselves, their imagination and fantasy, their view on society and human history and behavior [5].

In recent years, however, the study of fashion has been revolutionized, as scholars from other disciplines began exploring the intersections between dress, body, and the cultural construction of identity. Awareness began to spread in the academic world that clothing is not only a part of daily life, but that the ways people choose, acquire, wear, and vary their dress can say a great deal about such issues as class, gender, sexual preference, ethnicity, group identity and behavior, and aesthetics [6].

Looking on the demand side, for fashion goods, creativity is actually the core of the production chain of value. The convention of originality – i.e. the quest for novelty which characterizes this sector's dynamic – implies the formation of a sense of social belonging: people like a particular piece of apparel which is original and allows them to develop a sense of distinction, but at the same time, also allows them to develop a sense of social belonging. [5].

Another context that is one of the most powerful forces at work in fashion is time. For the fashion designer, the key difference between the products is speed to market and shelf life. Fashion has built-in obsolescence. We all require clothing suitable for different seasons, specific events and even different time of day. Commerce has capitalized on clothing's obsolescence, and there is an unwritten expectation that we renew our wardrobes, at least partially, in spring and autumn. Fashion is so certain moves in waves. In order to supply new clothing when there was a demand, fashion shops traditionally budgeted for two seasons a year: spring/summer and fall/winter. Fashion designers at the upper end of the market would deliver new collections to the stores and boutiques in January and August. There was often a further delivery of evening wear for the winter party season in November. Every fashion company has its own *fashion cycle* – the calendar by which it plans its ranges, selling, production and delivery set against the demands of the seasons and waxing and waning of the popularity of designers. The fashion cycle is a complex interlocking of the wheels of the textile and fashion trades [1].

Fashion design as one of the creative industries is characterized by cyclical (seasonal) processes of continuous innovation, avoiding standardization of products and with the importance of knowledge, expertise, skills and talents of individuals. The structure of the industry is characterized by a large number of small firms, which are mainly concentrated in four major fashion capitals, supplying the global market: in Paris, London, Milan and New York [8].

The internet may make shopping easier and manufacturing may be moving offshore, but fashion design originates in cities, where 80-85 % of designers work. Each city has its own “design identity”, or characteristics. Not only are cities a source of inspiration by night and day, buyers and sales people prefer them for convenience and distribution. All suitably sized companies have showrooms in the major cities, and within each city there are one or two specific fashion and garment districts [1].

The aim of the paper is to analyze creativity and innovations between Slovak fashion designers in the Bratislava region. Slovak fashion designers located in Bratislava, offered their production for customers mostly in Slovakia, especially for the clients in Bratislava.

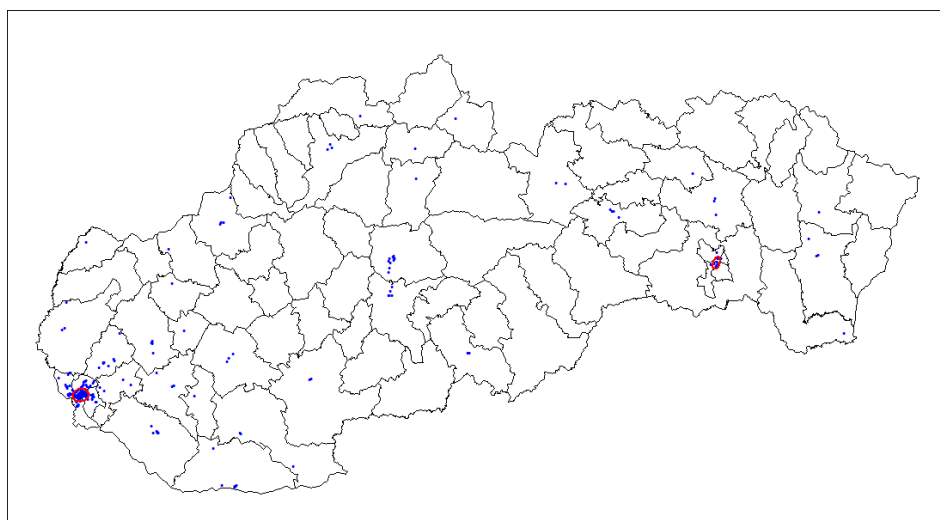
The rest of the paper is organized as follows. In Section 2 we have analyzed the fashion design in the Bratislava region, concentration of companies, education in fashion design and described the methodology and reasons for selecting this sector and region. In the Section 3 is presented fashion design in Slovakia, particularly history before 1989 and recent situation as results from the case study of fashion design in the Bratislava region. In the section 4 we have summarized results from our research into conclusions.

2. Fashion design in the Bratislava region and the main characteristics of the interviewed sample

2.1 Concentration of fashion design in the Bratislava region

In frame of Slovakia in the Bratislava region was identified cluster of creative industries (figure 1). The main location for Slovak fashion designers is Bratislava. Based on interviews with Slovak fashion designers, the attractiveness of the region for location their business in the city was based on a number of factors, such as above-average purchasing power of the population, the quality of life in the city, the presence of companies and government institutions (major clientele of fashion designers), proximity to Vienna and other centres (for purchase of fabrics and materials), presence of university for graduates studied fashion design in Bratislava, etc.

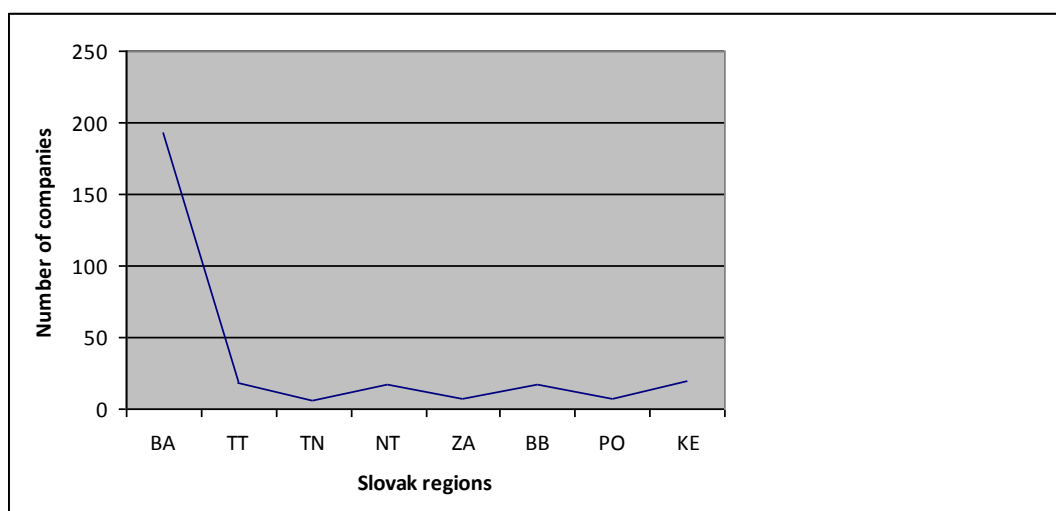
Figure 1 Clusters of creative industries in Slovakia – fashion design



Source: [4].

Fashion design is a key creative industry in the Bratislava region in comparison to other Slovak regions (figure 2). Overall, we register in the Bratislava region 193 companies of creative industry (Specialised design activities), representing 67.7% share in Slovakia.

Figure 2 Number of companies of creative industry – specialized design activities

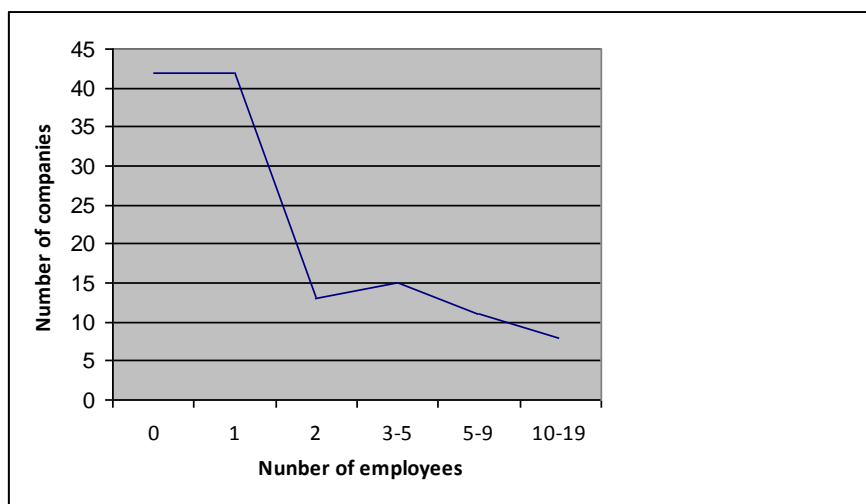


Source: own elaboration based on based on the data from Statistical Office of SR

In terms of number of employees in the creative industry (Specialised design activities) in the Bratislava region (figure 3), majority of companies are micro-companies with one employee

(42 companies), 13 firms have registered at least two employees, 15 companies belonging to the group of 3-4 employees and 11 companies in the group 5-9 employees.

Figure 3 Number of employees in companies – specialized design activities in the BA region



Source: own elaboration based on based on the data from Statistical Office of SR

In case of education in the fashion design, before 1989 there was no university in Slovakia with special focus on the fashion design, just textile design. Recently fashion design in Slovakia is possible to study in several fields of study at secondary schools. Graduates in field of study *31 Textiles and clothing industry* can be employed in a variety of occupations in textile and clothing industry, also in services with guidance character, styling, modeling, designers, middle management positions, positions in hand craftsmanship of textiles, clothing, technical textiles etc.¹

Graduates in the field of study *32 Workmanship of leather, fur and shoe production* obtain during the study knowledge and competencies to perform professional activities in leather, plastic, shoe and fancy goods production.²

Specialization fashion design can student choose within field of study *82 Art, commercial art and hand craftsmanship*. Study is focused on development of creative thinking of students resulting in the creation of clothing or three-dimensional object. Students learn how to

¹ Ministry of education science, research and sport of SR

² Ministry of education science, research and sport of SR

conceptually manage process from inspiration to creating real piece, they also have to make photo documentation and presentation of their final work in fashion show. Attention is paid to the development of creativity and originality.

Slovak secondary schools offer also post-graduate study in the field of business trade and services with specialization on clothing industry.

We have summarized learning opportunities on public, private, church and artistic secondary schools in Slovak regions in fields of study oriented on textiles, clothing industry, workmanship of leather and fur, shoe production and design. Such fields of study are offered by 92 secondary schools, from which 21 secondary schools in Slovakia offer study in the fields specialized exclusively on fashion design. The majority of secondary schools oriented on textiles and clothing industry have been mostly localized in the Slovak centres of clothing industry in former Czechoslovakia (e.g. Prešov, Trenčín, Púchov). The national Slovak garment companies (OZKN Prešov, Ozeta Trenčín, Makyta Púchov) have created regular high demand for new employees, as the clothing sector before 1989 was one of the most important industries in Slovakia, especially in the mentioned centres.

Fashion design in Slovakia can be studied at 2 universities – the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava – division of Fashion Design and at Trenčín University of Alexander Dubček in Trenčín, the Department of Industrial Design in Ružomberok, which offers specialization on textile technology and design.

2.2 The methodology and the characteristics of the interviewed sample

The empirical work that provides the basis for this research used a case study approach and qualitative methodology to discuss industrial development and determinants in terms of creativity and innovation of fashion design in the Bratislava region.

Two main data collection strategies have been followed:

- Primary research – analysis of primary information and data on the qualitative aspects of the creativity and innovation in the fashion design through interviews with key fashion designers in the region. Data were collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews with Slovak fashion designers, owners of modeling agencies etc.

- Secondary research – analysis of existing regional data obtained from Regional Statistical Office Database³ and Institute of Informatics and Statistics (Infostat)⁴. Other sources used for sector analysis are Slovak economic journals and economic daily news.

Table 1 summarizes key information about the interviewed Slovak fashion designers. The sample of respondents for interviews was extracted according to several criteria. We have focused on fashion designers with many years experience, designers of middle aged generation as well as young talented fashion designers. Majority of Slovak fashion designers are regularly presenting their original fashion collection on various Slovak fashion events (fashion shows) in Bratislava, e.g. “Bratislava Fashion Days”, “Bratislava Fashion Week”, “Fashion Weekend”, or abroad in London, “Slovak Fashion Night” in New York, etc.

The selected respondents are considered as experienced fashion designers, people who have worked for many years in the fashion design. These designers have started their career in fashion business already in the beginning or middle of 1990s. They belong to elite between Slovak fashion designers with exclusive fashion collection. They dispose already many years with their own original fashion brand - Lydia Eckhardt Exclusive, Mikloško Fashion Design. They are also regularly presenting their own fashion collection (2 per year - spring/summer and fall/winter) on the fashion shows in Bratislava. Except the clothes collection, these fashion designers have more diversified fashion business, e.g. beauty salon or they produce also own brand fashion accessories, e.g. jewellery, sunglasses, handbags, shoes. The lost in one kind of fashion production could be then substituted by another one. The second group of Slovak fashion designers in Bratislava is represented by middle aged fashion designers. These fashion designers have studied fashion design in Bratislava. After study they have established their fashion ateliers and showrooms in Bratislava and they have regularly presented their original fashion collection on the fashion shows in Bratislava, as well abroad. They belong already to designers with high reputation on the Slovak fashion scene. The last one and newly formed group represented young talented fashion designers. These fashion designers have also studied fashion design at the university in Bratislava and they have started their career as fashion designer with “Fashion talent” competitions.

³ <http://portal.statistics.sk>, 22.6.2012

⁴ <http://www.infostat.sk>, 20.6.2012

Table 1 Summary key information of the interviewed fashion designers in Bratislava

Fashion designer	Year of appearance	Nr. of employees	Fashion atelier/showroom in Bratislava	Regular presentation of own original fashion collection
Lýdia Eckhardt	1991	8 +10	yes/yes	Own fashion shows, BFD*, BFW*, abroad (Prague)
Fero Mikloško	1997	2+7	yes/yes	Own fashion shows, BFD, BFW, abroad (Vienna, Prague, Warsaw)
Veronika Hložníková	2000	1+2	yes/yes	Own fashion shows, BFD, Orange Fashion Show, abroad (London)
Dana Kleinert	2005	1+ 4+2	yes/yes	BFW, abroad (Vienna Fashion Week, London)
Boris Hanečka	2008	1+3	yes/yes	BFD, BFW, Orange Fashion Show
Hana Převrátilová	1999	1+3	yes/no	BFD, Orange Fashion Show
Róbert Bartolen	2008	1+4+2	no-in Nitra	BFD, BFW, abroad (New York)
Marcel Holubec	2007	1+3	yes/yes	BFD, BFW, Orange Fashion Show, abroad
Zlatica Hujbertová	2011	1+1+1	yes/no	BFD, Fashion Night
Martin Hrča	2011	1+2	no/yes	BFD, abroad

Source: based on interviews

*BFD - Bratislava Fashion Days, *BFW- Bratislava Fashion Week

3. Case study of the fashion design in Slovakia

3.1 Fashion design in Slovakia before 1989

The development of fashion design in Slovakia has roots already in former Czechoslovakia before 1989. During the 1980s there was no university in Slovakia with special focus on fashion design, the wearing of clothes was unified, with using materials of lower quality, e.g. from East Germany.⁵ During this time fashion was largely influenced by character of society, fashion was also centrally controlled as other parts of economy and trade. National garment enterprises produced a relatively large amount of clothing, while a large quantity of goods was exported mainly to the former socialist countries. National clothing companies have responded slowly to fashion trends, fashion news or fashion trends from abroad came to us

⁵ Interview, Bratislava, 15.1.2013

usually with some delay. Limited factor during this period was also availability and accessibility of high-quality materials and fabrics. Despite these negative effects already before 1989 Slovak fashion designers have worked for the largest garment factories (e.g. OZKN Prešov, Makyta Púchov, Ozeta Trenčín). Designers had not easy position during this time, as their creative ideas were difficult to enforced and realized in the real production.

The typical features of the fashion during past time, was uniformity of clothing and home knitting and sewing. The season for that we can find in the lack and availability of qualitative materials and clothes (except former TUZEX stores specialized for foreign goods from western countries).

It is necessary to mention that there was no Slovak specialized fashion magazines, fashion columns appeared only occasionally in daily newspapers and in some magazines. Foreign magazines and their fashion trends usage was natural (Šídlíková, 2011). The contact with world fashion trends was sustained through domestic fashion magazines (e.g. Dorka, etc.), but also through available foreign fashion magazines (it was the time of so called “Burda fashion” – from popular German Burda magazine). Lack of quality clothing in this period (e.g. sweaters, hats, scarves) caused excessive knitting at home, while women have often founded their inspiration right in fashion magazines.

Range of garments for sale before 1989 depended primarily on the size of the city. Some garments were sold in former specializing stores (Luxus). To the biggest Slovak clothing manufacturers in that time belonged, e.g. OZKN Prešov, Ozeta Trenčín, Makyta Púchov, Tatrasvit Zornica Bánovce nad Bebravou, etc.

3.2 Fashion design in the Bratislava region – case study

Before 1989 there was no Slovak fashion designer in Bratislava with own fashion brand at all. The real start of Slovak fashion scene is dated to the beginning of 1990s. These years during the 1990s were very difficult for Slovak fashion designers from point of business start, in case of business environment, availability of bank credits etc. Slovak fashion designers are mostly focused on women's collection, production of men's collection is more unique.

The value added chain of fashion production in the Bratislava region (figure 4) has developed during the time. In the meantime fashion designers are using more qualitative materials as the customers are much more demanding as before. Main suppliers of Slovak fashion designers

are mostly coming from abroad, especially because of good price level and quality of materials. The main European suppliers are from Italy, France (Paris), Spain, as well as near localities, e.g. Austria (Vienna), Czech Republic (Brno and Prague). Some of the suppliers are also from Asia (India, UAE-Dubai). Slovak suppliers we can mention Boritex⁶ (sale of clothing fabrics in Bratislava) and Koloria.⁷

According to sale of fashion production, the elite of Slovak fashion designers used their showrooms also as sale places. They prefer personal contacts with their customers and they make profit from the long-term exceptional position on the Slovak fashion scene. Some of the fashion designers had own boutiques in the city centre in the past or some of fashion designers, e.g. Fero Mikloško, Boris Hanečka, Jana Gavalcová, Marcel Holubec, have used the possibility to sale their own original collection through other fashion boutiques in Bratislava like in M.ONA fashion gallery⁸. Another developed canal for the sale of fashion production is internet, preferred mainly by younger generation of fashion designers. Generally fashion designers does not prefer this channel, especially by the sale of evening dresses or wedding dresses, as there is requested more fitting and personal contact with customer. The exception, when fashion designers are more using sale on the internet, is the sale of accessories, e.g. jewellery, sunglasses, handbags, shoes⁹.

Shopping portal “Fashion Days” is platform supporting Slovak fashion designers. Through this internet portal designers have possibility to sale their collection.¹⁰

The main customers of Slovak fashion designers are mostly coming from Bratislava, some of them also from other regions. The prototype of typical customer of fashion designer is person with above average income (entrepreneurs, politicians, celebrities, etc.). These customers are usually more interested in fashion and they have intention to wear original fashion collection from Slovak fashion designer - evening dresses, wedding dresses, ball dresses, etc.). Some of the young Slovak fashion designers, except local regional customers, have customers also from abroad, e.g. Germany, Sri Lanka, especially through direct marketing.¹¹

⁶ <http://www.boritex.sk>, 15.2.2013

⁷ <http://www.koloria.sk>, 15.2.2013

⁸ This concept store offers to customers fashion collection from Czech and Slovak fashion designers, <http://monafashion.sk>, 8.3.2013

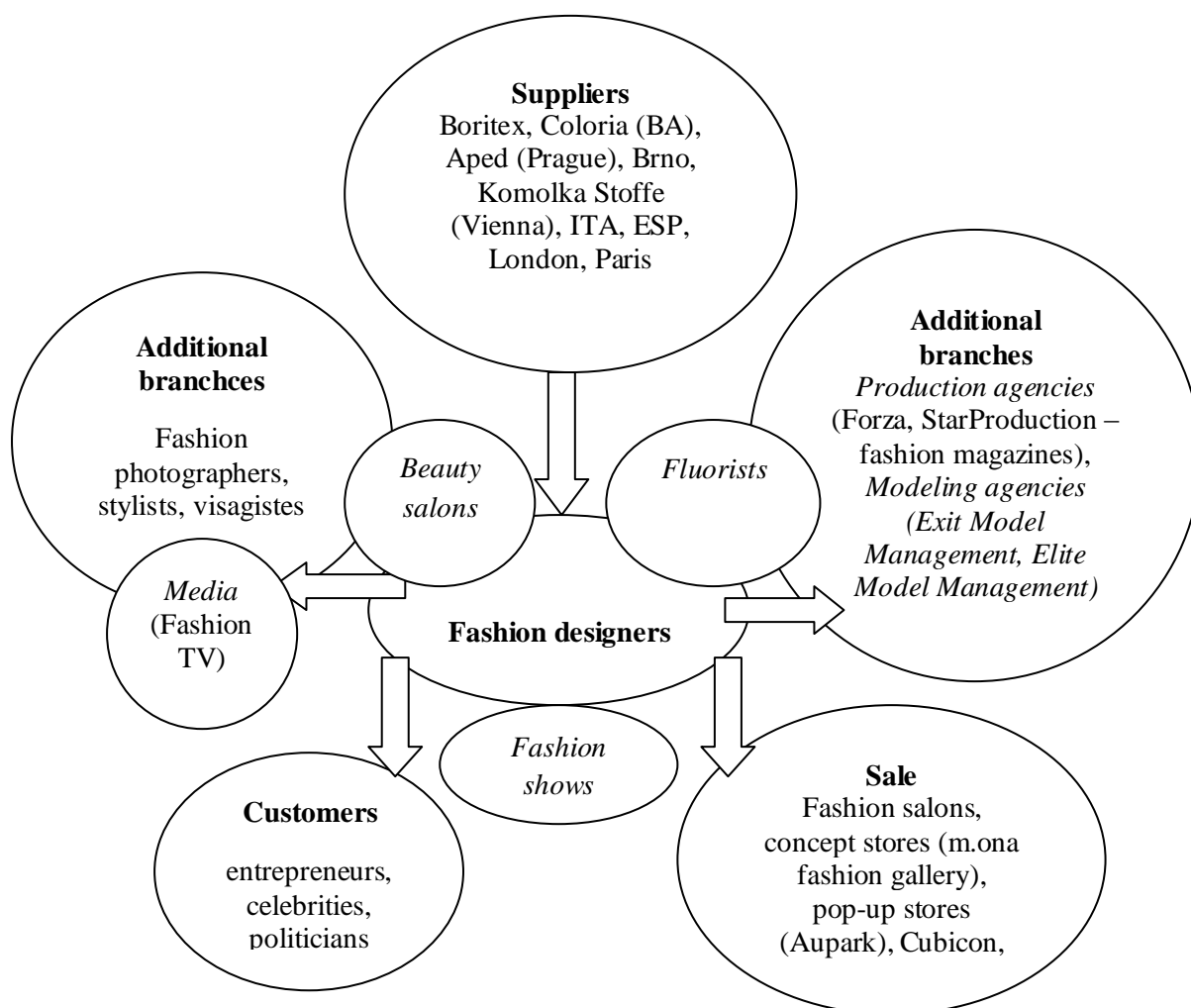
⁹ Interview, Bratislava, 7.3.2013

¹⁰ Fashion Days, www.fashiondays.sk, 15.2.2013

¹¹ Interview, Bratislava, 20.2.2013

Slovak Fashion designers used services of other related fashion industries, e.g. production companies, model agencies, fashion visagistes, stylists, fashion photographers, etc. From production companies the most elite and preferred ones between fashion designers in Bratislava are Forza and Elite Model Management. Usually the services of production companies are offered for big fashion events, e.g. “Bratislava Fashion Days”. Some of young Slovak fashion designers used services of related branches also through barter¹².

Figure 4 Value chain of fashion design in the Bratislava region



Source: own elaboration based on interviews

Cooperation between Slovak fashion designers is based on the personal contacts. Some of fashion designers cooperates, e.g. through borrowing of tailors during the ball season etc. The fashion designers that have close cooperation usually understand each other or have the same

¹² Interview, Bratislava, 6.3.2013

fashion design philosophy. The more closely cooperation is not often even because no long history of alive association supporting fashion designers. So there is mostly formal cooperation.

From innovations between fashion designers we can mention process innovation, e.g. using of new printing methods or smart tailoring processes. Also online shopping tools or direct marketing is used by accessing new fashion customers. The lack of product innovation is influenced by the fact, that there is much of handwork in the process of fashion creation (e.g. clothing sewing etc.) and it could be substitute just partially. From other product innovations, in the meantime there is move in direction of using more qualitative materials, as well as new fabrics, also more naturalness of components used in production process.¹³

Slovak fashion designers have established their ateliers and showrooms in Bratislava. They usually have studied fashion design in Bratislava, so the stay in the region was logical, especially because of proximity to Slovak customers (business clients, politicians, celebrities). Designers the make profit form agglomerations effects and city advantages (above average price level, cultural and commercial events (balls, theatre, musical events, etc.). All these factors have positively affected the development of clientele for every fashion designer in Bratislava.

During the years the level of presentation of Slovak fashion designers on the fashion shows has reached standards of others European “fashion cities”. Original collection of fashion designers is regularly presented on the own fashion shows and other fashion shows on Bratislava

Global economic crisis has reached Slovak fashion designers after 2008 as well. They have felt the crisis in decreasing demand for fashion shows supported and sponsored by private companies. Some of designers have recorded decrease in demand of women collection, e.g. especially by ball clothes. One of the successful measures against the economic crisis is diversified portfolio of fashion products, e.g. fashion accessories (Eckhardt or Mikloško).

¹³ Interview, Bratislava, 20.2.2013

3.3 Platforms and supporting initiatives

Despite this, there is still potential to be more known on the European fashion scene also for Slovak fashion designers, through more presentations abroad. Fashion industry is more globalised as ever, from this point of view maybe it will be also for Bratislava possible to join once time largest media events, e.g. Mercedes Fashion Week.¹⁴

Bratislava has no parameters to be fashion centre in term of influence on international fashion trends or as key centre of European or world fashion industry. We can't speak about fashion industry, as there is no long history of fashion in Slovakia at all.¹⁵

Generally fashion design is localized mostly in Bratislava because of urbanization, people are more stylized and selected. Society is forcing people with higher income to wear original fashion collections.¹⁶

Another reason for localization of fashion design in Bratislava is presence of schools and university with focus on fashion design. After finishing of university, fashion designers started own business in Bratislava.

In case of concentration of fashion designers in Bratislava, after 1990 the number of Slovak fashion designers has gradually increased. This increase was interconnected with increasing of economic performance of the country, raising purchasing power and living standard of the population. It was created a new generation of creative Slovak fashion designers who located themselves mainly in Bratislava. This group of fashion designers have established and further developed their fashion ateliers located in Bratislava, primarily because of the greatest demand for high quality fashion garments. Slovak fashion designers created their own original fashion brand, they presented their fashion collection on the regular fashion shows, e.g. "Bratislava Fashion Days", "Fashion Weeks" as well as various commercial fashion events, e.g. "Orange Fashion Show", etc.

Bratislava has with "Bratislava Fashion Days (BFD)" already 7 years platform where the current original collections of Slovak fashion designers are presented. BFD are organized by Ms Mária Reháková, general director of STAR Production. At the beginning once a year,

¹⁴ <http://www.mbfashionweek.com>, 8.3.2013

¹⁵ Interview, Bratislava, 7.3.2013

¹⁶ Interview, Bratislava, 5.2.2013

since the third year it has been organized twice a year – spring/summer collection in April and fall/winter collection in October.¹⁷

There is also opportunity to present Slovak fashion abroad opened for our fashion designers. Thanks to the platform of BFD, Slovak fashion designers had opportunity to be presented in New York, London with ambitions to visit other world capitals in the future. During “Bratislava Fashion Days” a project of seeking young talents “New Faces of Bratislava Fashion Days” was implemented, which is opportunity for fashion designers to present their work abroad.

The New York Manhattan is already seventh year hosting Slovakian fashion show called “Slovak Fashion Night”. “Project Czech.Slovak”¹⁸ supports talented designers with promotion and sales. The project allows fashion designers to attend fashion shows, exhibitions, lectures, workshops and other activities in the USA (New York, Binghamton), Spain (Barcelona), Czech Republic (Prague, Karlovy Vary, Brno, Ostrava), and Slovakia (Bratislava).

Last recent initiative on the Slovak fashion scene was established in 2011 as “Slovak Fashion Council”. The aim of this initiative was to support Slovak professional fashion and textile designers, and firms in entering the local and especially the foreign market. Despite short history and just individual initiative of one fashion designer, it was important step in case of presentation Slovak fashion more abroad as before. According to Ms. Dana Kleinert, fashion designer and founder of the initiative “Slovak Fashion Council”, there was no platform in Slovakia like this, Slovak fashion designers have not communicated between each other. The institution wants to connect fashion designers, manufacturers in Slovakia and sale. In addition to this initiative there was an interactive internet portal developed, which will provide all practical information, guidance and should also be a gateway for foreign investors interested in Slovak fashion design and designers.¹⁹

Event supporting talented students of fashion design in Slovakia is contest “Schwarzkopf Fashion Talent.” It is competition of best talented young fashion designers in Slovakia. The winners of this competition received starting capital for their first fashion collection.²⁰

¹⁷ http://zenskyweb.sk/kategoria/bmd_sk, <http://www.agentura-promotion.sk>, 10.2.2013

¹⁸ Project Czech.Slovak. www.projectczechslovak.com, 10.2.2013

¹⁹ Interview, Bratislava, 28.2.2013, <http://www.kleinert.sk>, 1.3.2013

²⁰ <http://www.schwarzkopffashiontalent.sk>, 10.2.2013, interview, Bratislava, 7.3.2013

In case of plans for the future of fashion designers in Bratislava, there is precondition that internet sale of fashion accessories could increase. In case of expansion of Slovak fashion designers, e.g. to Vienna or Prague, they are limited by the fact, that they are not known on the Austrian or Czech market at all. There is some possible partial expansion of Slovak fashion designers abroad in case of cooperation through initiative "Slovak Fashion Council", to move Slovak fashion more worldwide, e.g. in direction to Slovak communities in USA etc.

4. Conclusions

Slovak clothing sector has lost strong position that had before 1989, with closure of big national clothing enterprises. With this closure we have recorded decrease of crafts in clothing industry, e.g. tailors. Recently already fashion designers feel this as real threat also for fashion design. Despite this disadvantage and the fact that in the country has no tradition of fashion industry, fashion design has naturally developed since beginning of 1990s and is even much more differentiated, in case of suppliers and customers.

The short inquiry into fashion design issues in Slovakia has allowed us to make a certain number of first observations concerning both market supply and demand.

Firstly the Slovak fashion market and demand as well is too small in comparison to European or world fashion centres such as Paris, Milan, London or New York. As demand for original products of Slovak fashion designers has grown, also the market of suppliers has changed in the meantime, from local Slovak suppliers or near localities such as Vienna and Prague, toward to territories like Asia etc. Fashion designers preferred materials from abroad, especially because of good price/quality ratio. There is accent between fashion designers on sensitive high-tech material selection, quality development of handwork, more attention on detail as well as individual approach to customer's needs.

In case of customers, they become also much more demanding, as they are looking more on quality and composition of materials, with accent on nature materials. Customers became more informed as accessibility and availability of information in the global fashion industry increase.

Generally demand for fashion products in Slovakia was influenced by economic factors, e.g. income. With increasing of income and living standards of population, to have fashion clothes, garments, accessories became more often trend in the big cities

In case of the competition, despite that world fashion market become more and more competitive, Slovak fashion designers in Bratislava region have not feel real competition between each other, as every fashion designer has own original style and attitude in creativity and innovation in the fashion design.

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