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Market Research of Developing Crafts Based on the Example of Services Provided by Chinese Shoemakers and Tailors

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The article focuses on the presentation and comparison of two Chinese crafts – shoemaking and tailoring from the point of view of the service sector market.

Research Design & Methods: The paper presents an analysis of documents indexed in the Web of Science and Scopus databases and not indexed – published on the Internet in Chinese, including materials based on interviews with Chinese craftsmen and industry reports.

Findings: The development trajectory of shoemaker services remains uncertain, but their evolution is closely tied to stages in the footwear industry. Chinese tailoring has grown by targeting international markets, leveraging e-commerce, emphasising cultural heritage, and focusing on prestigious clientele, thereby fostering the creation of Chinese brands. Sustainable practices in the craft emphasise environmental responsibility and preserving cultural heritage to ensure its promotion and continuation.

Implications/Recommendations: The shift toward service-oriented, quality- and brand-focused activities implies that stakeholders should support skill development, digitalisation, and branding while balancing commercialisation with the preservation of cultural heritage and environmental responsibility.

Contribution: Due to the inconsiderable representation of the chosen topic in scientific databases, the article aims to fill the research gap and contribute to the promotion and sustainability of craftsmanship.

Article type: original article.

Keywords: Chinese craft, service sector, development of crafts, sustainable development, economic culture.

JEL Classification: L84, N75, O14, Z10.

1. Introduction

Among the three sectors of the national economy: agriculture, industry and services, the second was treated for many years as a priority in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The average growth rate of services in this country from 1952 to 1978 was significantly lower than that of industry and construction. During this period, it was the lowest in the years 1958–1962 (−0.7%), and at the highest in the period of 1963–1965 (15.5%) (Cieślak, 2017). After the introduction of reforms and China's opening up to the world, the economic growth model introduced focused on exports, which was supported primarily by the manufacturing sector, but with weak employment growth. Over time, the decision to change from capital-intensive to labour-intensive production and focus on service activities was made. The more intensive development of the Chinese service sector was coupled with China's involvement in the World Trade Organization (WTO). In 2001, the PRC committed to the WTO to open up its services sector (Saxena & Sharma, 2017). In 2007, the third sector of the economy accounted for 39.1% of the net material product (PWN, 2024), and in 2015, the share of the service sector had already exceeded 50% of China's gross domestic product (GDP) (Ministerstwo Rozwoju, 2020). The introduced change in the structure of national income towards increasing the share of domestic consumption and the service sector is treated as a Chinese strategic goal (Halizak, 2015/2016). This priority aims to make China independent of exports from highly developed countries. The development of services took into account various socio-demographic changes, emphasising the need to offer benefits for the elderly and the society becoming richer – a population which is interested in tourism, public and financial services (Sulmicka, 2015). The services were also unavailable to foreign investors for a number of years. This took place, due to the applicable legislation and state monopoly in such areas as: telecommunications, railways, finance, health care and education (Ostrowska, 2015). In 2017, China exported and imported services worth about USD 700bn (Ministerstwo Rozwoju, 2020). After the period

related to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher economic growth was driven mainly by the service sector (CEO, 2023).

The contribution of crafts in individual sectors is very difficult to assess. Craftsmanship is defined as a non-agricultural economic activity. In addition, as the earliest form of manufacturing activity related to specialised production aimed at sales and carried out from start to finish by one person, with no environmental and social nuisance typical of industrial activity (Kaliński, 2024). Due to this, it is combined with the industrial sector and employs almost 18% of China's workforce (Kowalczyk, 2023), while generating about 1/3 of the input from this sector. However, craftsmanship is not only an activity related to industry. It is also closely related to the area of service activity related to meeting people's needs – generating a "useful material product" (Ilnicki, 2009). Therefore, it is a socially useful activity aimed at generating profit and related to the repair of household appliances, alteration or modification of existing products and specialist services. According to Pewiński (2019), the industrialisation of production processes and services has caused craftsmanship to be "in retreat." Despite this, some craft professions, such as shoemakers and barbers, are currently experiencing a renaissance (Pewiński, 2019). Representatives of specialist services include shoemakers and tailors, who deal with crafts which the literature on the subject does not devote too much attention to.

Due to the existing gap devoted to Chinese shoemakers and tailors, this article aims to extend this literature with information related to the market of both crafts within the context of their development. The above is aimed at specifying the direction of development of Chinese crafts in the context of contemporary economic and cultural challenges. The texts of Chinese journalists were analysed based on interviews with Chinese craftsmen in the service sector and industry reports.

2. Literature Review

As part of the WoS and Scopus databases, only 13 texts on Chinese shoemaking and two texts on Chinese tailors can be found. No publications were found in both databases with the entries "Chinese shoemaker" and "Chinese tailoring." These texts appeared in print during the years 1993–2022 ("Chinese shoemakers") and 2007–2022 ("Chinese tailors"). They represent different subject areas, whereas only one text is assigned to the economic sciences.

Out of three texts thematically related to economic sciences, two concern shoe-making and one tailoring. The first of them, by Dai and Li (2010), focuses on the reasons for the low level of development of small footwear enterprises. The second text, written by Liang (2007), presents an analysis of the history (including three phases of migration) and experiences of the Chinese community in Calcutta, among which representatives of the shoemaking industry can be mentioned (Liang, 2007).

The last of the texts by Lee (2023) shows two different ways of integration with the local population of Hong Kong tailors who emigrated from Shanghai and Guangzhou after World War II. Figure 1 presents the cloud of words that most often appear in the titles and abstracts of indexed materials.



Fig. 1. Clouds of Words Appearing in the Texts

Source: own study.

Texts not indexed in these databases focus primarily on craft-related issues, which are mainly devoted to tailoring and include the Chinese fashion history. In 1980, the first Chinese fashion magazine *Shi Zhuang* was founded, the purpose of which, in addition to showing trends, was also to educate people on how to adapt fashionable clothes (Xu & Ge, 2016). In the book by Finnane (2008), information that hand sewing has long been the basis of Chinese tailoring, both in domestic and commercial contexts, can be found. To this day, some craftsmen still sew by hand, e.g., *qipao/cheongsam* – a traditional Chinese garment for women (Finnane, 2008). A tailor-made *qipao* requires 24 measurements, at least some hand-made and the use of a special pressing technique that gives a three-dimensional form. So it is not just a “cutting and sewing process” but a process of creating a work of Chinese art (Yang, 2007). Due to the above, a *qipao* has a high price. However, they are worn in China mainly during traditional weddings, as part of the uniforms in restaurants and hotels, and by more affluent people, including celebrities (Huang, 2011). Therefore, nowadays *qipao* are becoming more popular among foreigners

than among the Chinese (Von Pezold, 2019). By contrast, dress changes in China, as in politics, progressed at a rate of two steps forward and one step back (Finnane, 2008). The second theme is related to the Chinese diaspora, built by craftsmen (also tailors) who immigrated from China (Itchikawa, 2006).

The third strand of issues concerns the latest trends, focuses on innovation and sustainable development, and is associated with reducing the amount of waste. Despite China's long tradition of tailoring services, over the past 20 years, altering and modifying clothes has become less and less popular in the PRC. Currently, there is a renewed trend combined with the Internet and digital technology – the creation of websites such as “eTailor,” providing door-to-door services, and taking into account the limits of generated waste (CNTAC, 2020). Also in the design area, the direction of thoughtful, sustainable design and combining it with craftsmanship related to high-quality materials is chosen (Lindgren, 2013).

In the context of shoemaking, information can be found mainly relating to industrial production and trends in footwear production. In 2004, China was responsible for the production of almost 58% of the world's footwear, from among others, the provinces of Guangdong, Fujian and Zhejiang (Clothier, 2005). An analysis of the international competitiveness of the Chinese footwear industry shows the changes taking place within this manufacturing sector, mainly due to the economic crisis, the revaluation of the renminbi (RMB – the official currency of the People's Republic of China), and the rising prices of raw materials and labour. In 2009, China had four main shoe bases in Guangzhou, Wenzhou, Quanzhou and Chengdu employing more than 4 million workers and connecting 30 thousand shoe manufacturers. This included the production of rubber, canvas, leather, and plastic shoes. In 2005, China exported 6.9bn pairs (export value was then USD 18.4bn). In 2006 – 7.6bn pairs (USD 21m), in 2007 – 8.17bn pairs (USD 24.14bn), and in 2008 – 8.53bn pairs (export volume USD 29.66bn). Changes noted included an increase in the prices of rubber, used as the sole material, and bovine, sheep and pigskin leather. The number of people employed in the footwear and hat industry was then estimated at a total of about 2 million people. Chinese footwear was also directed to the domestic market, which in 2008 absorbed 2.5bn pairs. The number of enterprises in the industry was described as large. Within the Chinese footwear industry, the strategy of low-price competition was implemented (Li, 2009). In contrast, in the luxury footwear industry, it is very important to apply innovation in craftsmanship and to use digital tools to attract both new and loyal customers (Wimmer, 2020). However, the key to balancing tradition and innovation is, for crafts in general, to make many small changes instead of a few big ones (Shafi *et al.*, 2022).

3. Methodology

The study focuses on the analysis of materials by Chinese journalists available on the Internet. Two main research objectives were set:

RO1: Determining whether Chinese shoemaking and tailoring can be defined as developing crafts.

RO2: An indication of the elements showing the activities aimed at sustainable development in the area of these crafts.

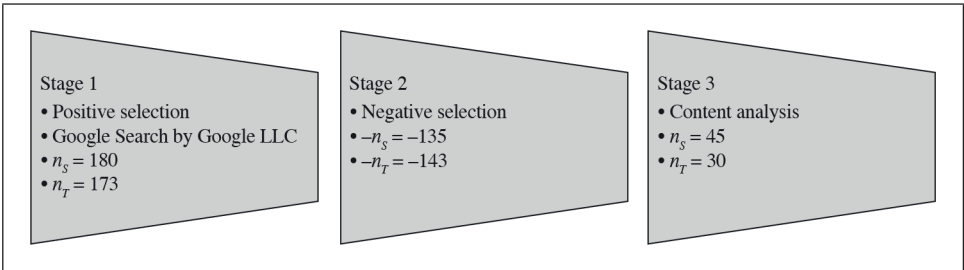


Fig. 2. Research Process

Source: own study.

The first stage of the research process took place in July 2023 using the Google search engine. It focused on finding texts that Google identified as the most relevant for Chinese shoemaking/Chinese shoemaker and Chinese tailoring/Chinese tailor. As part of Google’s algorithms, the results of texts identified as similar were omitted. As a consequence, 180 results for shoemaking (n_s) and 173 materials for tailoring (n_t) were identified. The next stage focused on negative selection, the rejection of texts that did not concern the subject under study, with 278 materials being rejected this way. They concerned the following issues: films dedicated to children, stories unrelated to crafts, photo essays of workshops, advertisements, articles on equipment, texts about non-Chinese crafts, sewing tools, analyses of global industries, and inactive websites. As part of the texts which qualified for the study, the content of 75 materials was analysed. Figure 2 shows the research process, which resulted in the analysis of 45 materials on Chinese shoemakers (S) and 30 materials on Chinese tailors (T).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Shoemakers

The publications devoted to the industrial production of footwear began in 2003, however, the text devoted to shoemaking was published in 2016. Within all

the analysed texts, only four were directly related to the craft, and the names of craftsmen appeared in their content – Y. J. Zhou and Y. Wang. Two articles were related to the Chinese-American-Malaysian shoemaker and designer of women's shoes, J. Choo. The next two texts are devoted to the former skater of the Chinese national team, who, due to injuries, retrained and started the production of ice skates. He established Changchun Bainingdun Sports Equipment Co., Ltd., which supplies its products to Chinese Olympic athletes. These texts did not focus on economic activity, but only presented the profiles of craftsmen recognised in the media. Other materials were devoted to the Chinese footwear industry, so they contained information on the area of economic sciences and allowed to outline the situation and background of professionally active shoemakers.

The earliest texts (from 2003–2007) focus on emphasising the implementation of the cost-leader strategy and the lack of a brand strategy oriented towards the European market, as well as the importance of focusing on design, and research and development (Xie & Wan, 2005), and thus, the transition from “made in China” to “created in China.” Within the labour-intensive footwear industry, production capacity is migrating to regions/countries with low labour costs. This shows the following direction: Italy, Spain → Japan, Taiwan, South Korea (1980s) → China (1990s), Vietnam, India, and Pakistan. Between 1985 and 1995, the Chinese footwear industry experienced rapid development and, consequently, an increase in Chinese exports. In 2006, China was the main footwear hub, producing 60% of the world's footwear – 6bn pairs a year, with 20 thousand stores of Chinese leather enterprises and 1.6 million employees. The combined factories created leather, rubber, canvas and plastic shoes, which were 85% low and medium class. The greatest purchasing power for footwear products was shown by the inhabitants of Beijing, Shanghai and cities of the south-eastern coast. Four main bases of the shoe industry were established. The base in Guangdong (Guangzhou and Dongwan) produced shoes for the middle and high classes. The Zhejiang (Wenzhou and Tazhou) base mainly produced low- and middle-class shoes. In the western base (Chongqing and Chengdu) – women's shoes were made, while in the Fujian base (Quanzhou and Jinjiang), sports shoes were made (Lián shāng wǎng, 2006). This period is also associated with observations related to the need to introduce changes – preparation of a new global image strategy.

The second thematic thread concerns the dissatisfaction of Chinese producers of leather footwear related to the introduction of anti-dumping measures in the European Union. The texts indicate the possibility of looking for markets other than the EU or filing lawsuits with the European Court of Justice. In 2006, Chinese products accounted for around 35% of the EU leather footwear market. The average price of Chinese leather shoes was EUR 8 per pair. After the introduction of anti-dumping duties, the price of imported shoes should have increased by

more than 1 euro. Anti-dumping measures will affect employment opportunities for 70 thousand Chinese workers (Cheng, 2006), including shoemakers. The EU has undertaken to test nine footwear companies in China in the context of the European Commission's anti-dumping investigation of footwear products originating in China (*Ōuméng jiāng...*, 2005), while Aokang Group on the Chinese side filed an anti-dumping lawsuit (The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, 2006).

The years 2008–2011 are associated with the publication of texts devoted to the crisis in the footwear industry related to the closing of over a thousand shoe companies per year, and looking for a solution, a way out of the crisis. They emphasised the hitherto contribution of the footwear industry to the income obtained from exports and the expected difficulties in the next few years (*Héběi 3554 xiéyè*, 2010). In 2010, the annual production of shoes in China amounted to 13bn pairs, and the labour cost was USD 1.3–1.5 per hour (*Nánfāng rìbào*, 2011).

In the following years (2013–2015), there was a further migration of production capacity, this time to Africa (among others, to Ethiopia). This was associated with further attempts to return to the world market as a footwear powerhouse. The impediments included: the development of emerging economies, rising labour prices, scarcity of labour resources, rising prices of raw materials and land resources, appreciation of the RMB, and international trade barriers. The articles contained further analyses of the market situation and development plans for the promotion of the footwear industry, which were described. Other solutions for a company with a high innovative capacity and strong standardisation were also indicated, taking the direction of modernisation and industrial transformation. In Dongguan, an international base for processing high-end footwear was established, similarly in Heshan, for men's shoes, and in Chaozhou and Jieyang, which is a base for processing and exporting craft shoes. The new suggestions included: those related to directing production to the increasingly absorptive domestic market and the development of marketing channels.

Since 2016, texts by Chinese journalists have been presenting the effects of earlier plans, e.g., focus on the brand, the global environment and the production of high-end footwear. This coverage by the media has improved the competitiveness of the Chinese footwear industry and pointed to the need for further technological transformation and implementation of smart production.

In 2019, 13.5bn pairs of shoes were produced in China (*Zhì xié zàixiàn*, 2021). In 2020, the footwear industry in China entered a new phase, and the footwear that was produced was defined as more valuable (China Trade Remedies Information, 2020). In 2021, there were over 4 thousand footwear manufacturing companies (*Zhì yán zīxún*, 2022) and gradually, the benefits of the industrial cluster effect began to be felt – namely, shoe bases. The total profit of the Chinese footwear

industry was RMB 37.5tn (Sohu, 2023). The annual consumption of shoes in the home market was 1.7 pairs per person. Forecasts, however, indicate an increasing trend towards 3–4 pairs per person (Zhōnghuá wǎng, 2021). Moreover, the Chinese shoe and clothing industry became increasingly aware of the importance of craftsmanship.

As well as following established trends, craftsmen, as W. K. Cai emphasises, have focused on the importance of following new trends, such as creating footwear for younger customers adorned with, among others, the image of Hello Kitty and Angry Birds (Kuweit Times, 2018).

The texts created in the last of the analysed periods (2022–2023) emphasise, among others, the continued need to invest in scientific and technological innovations (mainly regarding equipment for the production of footwear). The Dongguan base has been called the “factory of the world” with 1,150 footwear companies located there (with a production of over 600m pairs per year and a workplace for 2 million production workers) (Shi, 2022). Wenzhou, on the other hand, has been hailed as the “Chinese capital of footwear,” which has focused on building a national brand by obtaining the highest honour in footwear. Chengdu, on the other hand, has been associated with shoemaker’s workshops located on Jiangxi Street for over a century, and currently produces 100 million pairs of leather shoes a year (production value over RMB 7bn). The Jinjiang footwear industry continues to focus on the production of sports shoes, bringing together over 3,000 footwear companies and employing over 500 thousand employees (WWTQ, 2021). The major listed companies in the footwear industry include Aokang International, Anta Sports, Li Ning, and Red Dragonfly (Zhou, 2022). The production of shoes for foreign markets involves the production of shoes in larger sizes (including women’s shoes above number 40). However, the leading companies are moving their production to Vietnam (Wang, 2022). The decline in exports is also underlined (China Council for the Promotion of International Trade, Zhejiang Provincial Committee, 2022). This takes place due to trade frictions between China and the US and the increasing minimum wage in the cities (2001 – RMB 380; 2022 – RMB 2,300) (Chen, 2022; Liánhé zǎobào, 2022). The 14th Five-year Plan for 2021–2025 (national governmental programme) specifies long-term goals for 2035 and takes into account the transformation and modernisation of traditional industries, high-quality products and an emphasis on environmental protection and emission reduction (Zhōngguó xié dǒu, 2023).

An interesting topic was also the topic of the footwear industry entering the “era of culture” following the “era of quantity” – quantitative expansion and the “era of quality” associated with the intensive management improvement of quality. Product competition has been replaced by brand competition whose “soul is culture.” The above is also related to the publication of the Dictionary of Chinese Footwear

Culture (Zhōngguó xié wǎng, 2023) and the organisation of International Shoe Culture Week in Wenzhou.

4.2. Tailors

Texts devoted to Chinese tailoring were published between 2005 and 2023. Most of the materials contain the personal details of well-known tailors in the media, including: Mr. Lin, a Hong Kong-based tailor specialising in tailoring suits and emphasising that Chinese craftsmanship rivals that of Italian suit shops; X. D. Shao and H. R. Wang, educated outside the PRC by Italian tailors; C. J. Zhou, a tailor from Zhejiang province, president of Shanghai Meters/Bonwe Co., Ltd., highlighting his transformation from “Chinese tailor” to “world tailor” (Zhou, 2010); H. L. Di, a tailor in the city of Yinchuan in the autonomous region Ningxia; T. J. Jin and Q. Ye, representatives of the “old” and “new” generation of Shanghai tailors (Teng, 2017); T. Wang, a tailor and designer with international experience, creator of the Taoray Wang brand; Y. M. Quan, a Chinese-Korean dressmaker from the province of Heilongjiang, working in London at Welsh & Jefferies, creating, among others, custom school uniforms, military uniforms for the British royal family, and high-end bespoke clothing for China; J. P. Bi, the winner of the Italian tailoring competition Forbici D’ORO Italian “Golden Scissors” Tailor Grand Prix, a tailor from Shaanxi Province, and owner of a personalisation workshop – making tailor-made suits in Chengdu; G. Y. Yi, a craftsman offering professional tailoring services in Shanghai’s exclusive shopping malls; S. Y. Zhang, one of the first Chinese tailors who immigrated from Ningbo to Japan; Y. Zhang, the founder of the Sancun Shengjing brand; H. Y. Song, a tailor from Ningbo, who runs a workshop in Shanghai, producing, among others, Chinese tunics, suits and jackets, *qipaos* and coats.

Some texts show the development of tailoring in China since the Qing dynasty (1644–1912). At that time, many Western traders flocked to China, some of whom were involved in the production of clothing. They employed Chinese tailors whom they trained in advanced Western tailoring techniques. Chinese tailors, over time, were divided into two cliques: “origin” – *ben bang* and “red clique” tailors – *hongbang caifeng*. The first group consisted of traditional craftsmen, creating in the Chinese style for native customers. The second group provided services to foreigners, then associated with red hair. In 1949, the word “tailor” was used more often than the word “designer.” Earlier consumer demands focused mainly on the functionality of clothing, and professional tailoring services were used, among others, in the context of weddings and funerals, and tailors provided primarily services aimed at the imperial court. The first generation of tailor-fashion designers was formed in the city of immigrants – Shanghai, which attracted tailors from Ningbo, Yangzhou and Suzhou (Teng, 2017). Shanghai’s fashion industry marked

an important step in China's industrialisation, where modern fashion is a mix of Chinese and foreign styles, as well as the ability to be both distinctive and repeatable (Brasó-Broggi, 2015). Until the 1980s, most Chinese relied on local tailors. *Hongbang* suit shops and boutiques have become important intermediaries in introducing Chinese clothing into the international fashion system. They are divided according to the price of the products and services offered, location and consumer groups, distinguishing wealthy businessmen and the working-economic class, as well as domestic and foreign clients (Liu, 2008).

Hongbang tailors came mainly from Ningbo, which in the late 1990s obtained the title "hometown of Chinese clothes." Other well-known tailor cities with this title include Qianjiang, where it was decided to develop clusters of the textile and clothing industry, thus associating 200 companies in this industry (Gōngyè yòng shì wǎng, 2023).

Along with the enrichment of the Chinese moderate wealth class (middle class), the preferences of the recipients of this craft have changed – a group of stylish customers interested in the created brands has developed. Well-known Chinese fashion brands include: Shanghai Tang, Ochirly, Meters/Bonwe, Bosideng, Septwolves, Gujin, Zhou Shande, Mystyle, and Li-Ning. Changes in the preferences of the demand side include a greater focus on the consumption of sportswear intended for running, cycling, yoga, golfing and horseback riding. The boundaries between professional and recreational sports and fashion-related sports has started to blur, constituting the direction for the tailoring industry, however, this aspect is associated with the need to invest in the field of research and development.

The path of development of Chinese tailoring is associated with opportunities and emerging threats. The opportunities are related to the development of marketing tools and employing slogan specialists. An example is the company C. J. Zhou, which bet on the slogan "Confidence is strength" in 1995, and in 2001 on the slogan "Do not follow the usual path" (Zhou, 2010). As well as the creation of the Meters/Bonwe name, in which the character's beauty, uniqueness, country and prestige appear. In addition, with the development of the e-commerce platform Banggou.com (Lu, 2021), all of which are just a few examples of the development of marketing in Chinese footwear. The topic of prestige and marketing is also related to the strategy of G. Y. Yi, who moved his factory initially to office buildings and then to exclusive shopping centres in order to make convenient and professional tailoring services, heritage and tailoring ingenuity available to more consumers.

The tailors emphasise the importance of craftsmen opening up to the world, gaining international experience and broader publicity for Chinese craftsmanship. For example, the masters of Beijing tailoring from the Yaxiu market in Sanlitun provided services in hotels where the American Dream Team 8 players stayed, thus showing the world Chinese craftsmanship (Tan, 2008). Other examples involve

building an international career, such as dressmaker-designer T. Wang, founder of Taoray Wang brand and Y. Zhang, described as a tailor-designer disseminating intangible cultural heritage in the national style by using Chinese stories as the core of their designs and disseminating Chinese aesthetics by creating fashionable postures and silhouettes.

The concerns of craftsmen, the heroes of the analysed texts, are related to the dark side of modernisation that could engulf traditional handicrafts. It is observed that the declining demand for tailoring services appears in opinions such as: "It's not like before. Fewer and fewer people come to tailors to order clothes." The reforms introduced in China, which were conducive to an opening up to the world and the development of a market economy, contributed to the development of the clothing industry, where cost leadership strategies forced some tailors to retrain or work in clothing factories. As part of this trend, the problem of handicraft inheritance was shown in times when few young people want to learn this craft because they prefer to become factory workers doing simple and relatively repetitive work. Learning the highly skilled craft of hand-making *qipao* can be a lifelong learning experience. *Qipao*-making is about preserving elements of the intangible cultural heritage of China, where the value of tailoring is measured by the cultivation of culture.

5. Conclusions

Nowadays, craftsmanship has been transformed in terms of technology into a service sector of small and medium-sized industries (Noworol, Bondyra & Dziekanowska, 2021). In particular, the topic of the industry is visible in the search results for topics devoted to shoemaking and in the concerns of tailors about their prospects and the future of traditional Chinese crafts.

The article enriches the literature with information related to the Chinese shoe-making and tailoring market, however, based on the conducted research, it is impossible to determine the path of development of the market of services offered by shoemakers. However, it is possible to indicate the previous stages within the footwear industry, with which these craftsmen are strongly associated. These include: the implementation of the cost leader strategy; migration of production capacity to countries with relatively low labour costs; focus on the export of footwear; creating a database of the footwear industry; developing a global image strategy; increase in labour costs in China, followed by migration of production capacity to countries with relatively low labour costs (outside China); choosing a strategy focused on quality and branding; technological transformation; concentration on the domestic market; emphasis on environmental protection, including emission reduction.

As part of the topic of Chinese tailoring, the services provided by craftsmen were accompanied by: directing their services to foreigners; gaining international

experience; discovering the power of marketing; using e-commerce platforms; focusing on “prestigious” services, and using the elements of cultural heritage.

The last of these components is directly related to Chinese culture – the carriers of traditions and customs, with the rich heritage of previous generations of Chinese tailors. On the one hand, these activities are undertaken to develop the business and generate profit, but on the other hand, they contribute to the preservation of this legacy and the promotion of Chinese crafts.

Based on the analysis of the selected articles by Chinese journalists, Chinese tailoring can be defined as a craft developing towards services addressed to prestigious clients, including the creation of Chinese brands. On the other hand, activities aimed at the sustainable development of crafts include: strengthening environmental responsibility in industrial production and the use of elements of cultural heritage for the purpose of its preservation and further promotion.

One of the significant limitations of this article is the subjective choice of keywords. For this reason, it is advisable to conduct research in the future, by using synonyms of the words “shoemaker” and “craftsman,” such as, e.g., *ben bang* or red clique/*hongbang*. Another limitation is focusing on one Google search engine, whose matching algorithms may differ from those used by Chinese search engines, and can significantly expand the researched area.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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