

THE ROLE OF E-COMMERCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEXTILE COMPANY – A CASE STUDY

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Purpose: The aim of the article is to show how the implementation of e-commerce affects the development of a textile company and which areas of activity are subject to the greatest changes.

Design/methodology/approach: The study was based on a qualitative approach, using an in-depth interview conducted in 2025 with a Steven executive.

Findings: The results indicate that e-commerce significantly strengthens the company's development, especially in the area of sales, marketing, customer relations and organization of internal processes.

Research limitations/implications: A limitation is the analysis of a single case, which limits the possibility of generalizing the results and indicates the need for further comparative research.

Practical implications: The results obtained can be a guideline for managers planning to develop their online business and incorporate e-commerce tools into their corporate strategy.

Social implications: The study shows that the development of e-commerce is conducive to increasing the availability of products and strengthens interactions between the company and customers.

Originality/value: The value of the article results from the combination of a theoretical approach with an analysis of the real case of the company, allowing to show the practical effects of the digital transformation of the company.

Keywords: e-commerce, companies from the textile sector, qualitative interview.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

The development of digital technologies and the growing importance of online sales make e-commerce one of the key factors that affect the functioning of a modern enterprise. Changing consumer behaviour, the need to react faster to market expectations and growing competition

are even forcing them to adapt their own business models to the realities of the digital economy. For this reason, the analysis of the role of e-commerce in the development of enterprises, especially those with a long tradition, becomes a particularly important issue. It allows us to better understand the mechanisms of transformation and the factors that strengthen and govern their market position.

This article outlines the impact of e-commerce on the development of a company in the textile sector. A literature review, a description of the test method used and the results of a qualitative interview conducted at Steven are presented. This the analysis made it possible to identify how the introduction of online sales affects areas of the organization's operations, such as marketing, logistics, customer relations or internal structure management.

The aim of the article was to indicate the role of e-commerce as a development factor and to identify the areas that are subject to the most pronounced changes in the digitization process. The contribution of the work and its added value can be considered the combination of a theoretical approach with the analysis of a specific case. This makes it possible to capture the practical consequences of digital implementations. This, in turn, is a reference point for companies planning to develop their online business.

The originality of the undertaken subject matter stems from the combination of a theoretical approach with an analysis of a real-life case of a company operating in the textile sector, functioning under conditions of dynamic technological change and increasing competitive pressure. The literature is dominated by studies addressing general determinants of e-commerce development or sectoral analyses covering broad groups of enterprises. However, there is a lack of studies focused on an in-depth case analysis of a long-established company undergoing a process of digital transformation. The research gap particularly concerns the limited number of publications describing how the implementation of e-commerce tools affects specific areas of textile companies' operations, especially the organization of internal processes, the building of customer relationships, and the shaping of development strategies. This gap can be addressed by analysing the experience of the company Steven, which illustrates the mechanisms through which a traditional enterprise adapts to the requirements of the digital economy. It also makes it possible to capture the practical consequences of implementing e-commerce solutions in the context of the Polish market.

1.1. Determinants of the development of companies in the textile sector

A review of the literature suggests that the development of companies in the textile sector is determined by a multidimensional system of factors. These determinants include both internal conditions and economic context. Research on the competitiveness and efficiency of textile companies points to the need for access to modern technologies, cost management skills and the quality of human capital. These factors directly translate into the performance and market position of companies (Akhund, Abbas, 2023; De Jorge-Moreno, Rojas Carrasco, 2015;

Shafaei, 2009). The ability to adapt production processes to changing market standards also plays a special role. This fact has been highlighted in analyses of Spain and China, where the development of companies depended on the level of technical efficiency and integration into global value chains (De Jorge-Moreno, Rojas Carrasco, 2015; Lau et al., 2009).

Financial determinants can also be considered an important area that requires exploration. They include both the capital structure and the macroeconomic factors affecting the stability and profitability of companies. Analyses conducted in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Turkey indicate that the development of textile companies remains strongly dependent on financing decisions, debt levels and economic conditions. They affect the ability of companies to invest in modernization and expansion (Ullah et al., 2017; Chhapra, Asim, 2012; Ul Haq, 2012; Ullah et al., 2020). The results of the research confirm that a properly selected financial structure allows companies to maintain liquidity and resilience to market volatility. These factors lead to their long-term stability and ability to grow (Ahmad et al., 2015; Bashir, 2013). In the literature on Polish and the European Union, attention is drawn to an additional financial dimension, which is the importance of economic policies and regional forms of support conducive to the development of textile clusters (Jabłońska et al., 2020; Gajdová, 2024).

The growth of textile companies also remains shaped by the ability to compete in international markets. This relationship can be the result of both production efficiency and export opportunities. Research conducted in India, Ethiopia and Pakistan indicates that exports are a key factor in the development of the sector, and their level depends on product quality, innovation, labour costs and the ability to cooperate with global partners (Bhavani, Tendulkar, 2001; Desta, 2021; Javaid, Afridi, 2015). The difference in the level of competitiveness between companies results from the different ability to adapt to the requirements of international markets. This is indicated by analyses covering India and Turkey, which emphasize the role of subcontracting, local development policies and access to productive resources (Taymaz, Kiliçaslan, 2005; Dhiman et al., 2020; Narayanan, 2003). A combination of these studies leads to the conclusion that the development of textile companies remains a process dependent on the simultaneous interaction of financial, technological, organizational and market factors, as well as on their ability to function in a volatile, global economic environment.

Other research also highlights the importance of financial factors in guiding the ability of textile companies to maintain stability and further growth. It can be pointed out that the economic performance of companies depends on the capital structure, debt level and operational efficiency (which has been confirmed in analyses conducted in Bangladesh and Pakistan) (Mitra, Adhikary, 2017; Abbas et al., 2013). This approach closes the set of determinants, showing that the development of organizations in the textile sector is inextricably linked to their financial condition and ability to adapt to changing market conditions.

1.2. The role of e-commerce in the development of a company

The growth of businesses increasingly depends on the ability to use digital technologies. On the other hand, e-commerce is currently one of the most important tools to strengthen their market position. The literature emphasizes that e-commerce enables companies to increase their reach, automate processes and reach customers more effectively. This supports their development and competitiveness (Gupta, 2014; Jain et al., 2021; Rakhim et al., 2021). Its importance is emphasized in both developed and developing economies. This indicates the universal nature of this tool (Kedah, 2023).

E-commerce is also becoming a stimulator of innovation. Research shows that the implementation of digital solutions is conducive to the modernization of enterprises, increasing efficiency and the development of new forms of business. This is particularly evident in the context of European integration and global digitalization (Verbivska et al., 2023; Albăstroiu, 2007). The development of e-commerce also leads to organizational flexibility, streamlining management processes. This role is particularly prominent in companies active in international markets (Taranenko et al., 2021; Mardhiyah, 2022).

In addition, the implementation of e-commerce improves the economic results of enterprises. Companies using digital channels achieve better cost efficiency, increase the scale of their operations and strengthen their competitive position. This is particularly important for the SME sector (Andonov et al., 2021; Yacob et al., 2021). At the same time, the evolution of e-commerce indicates that its role, driven by the development of new technologies, the growing popularity of sales platforms, and the integration of artificial intelligence in business processes, will continue to grow (Ntumba et al., 2023).

The literature review provides a basis for clearly linking the concepts discussed with the constructs used in the study. The significance of e-commerce for sales, customer relations and the modernisation of internal processes, as highlighted in the sources, directly corresponds to the areas examined in the in-depth interview. As a result, the theoretical assumptions remain consistent with the adopted methodology and serve as a reference point for the interpretation of the obtained results.

2. Methods

The aim of the research was to determine how the implementation of e-commerce affects the development of a company in the textile sector and which areas of the organization's functioning are subject to the most significant changes as a result of digital transformation. It was assumed that e-commerce plays the role of an important development factor, strengthening both the company's market position and the effectiveness of its internal processes.

A conditional hypothesis was adopted in the study, assuming that the impact of e-commerce implementation on the development of a textile company is positive provided that the organisation has adequate internal resources, technological competencies, and is not significantly constrained by infrastructural or market barriers. This approach makes it possible to consider both the potential benefits and the limitations associated with the process of digital transformation.

The collected research material was subjected to a qualitative content analysis, which involved multiple readings of the interview transcript and the identification of recurring thematic categories related to the ways in which e-commerce is used in the company's operations. The analysis had an inductive character. It made it possible to identify the main areas of organizational, technological, and market changes resulting from the implementation of digital tools. The interview was conducted in the form of an individual, in-depth interview with a member of the management staff and lasted approximately 60 minutes. During the conversation, it was possible to obtain detailed information on the processes of digital transformation and the practical aspects of the functioning of the analysed enterprise.

In order to verify this hypothesis, research questions were asked about the way the company uses e-commerce in its operations, the areas that have benefited the most from the introduction of digital channels, and the challenges and benefits of online sales. The study was qualitative, and the research method used was with an executive of Steven conducted with the company's managing director Steven in 2025. The obtained research material made it possible to identify the key directions of changes related to the development of e-commerce, as well as to assess its importance for the functioning of the analyzed enterprise.

3. Results

In 2025, a qualitative interview was conducted with the managing person of Steven. The company presented operates in the textile sector and specializes in the production of high-quality socks (see Table 1). The aim of the study was to learn about the importance of the e-commerce channel in the development of a company and the impact of digital transformation on its strategy and customer relations. The conversation began with a discussion of the beginnings of the business and the decision to implement online sales. The manager indicated that this was a natural response to changing consumer behavior. The growing popularity of online shopping, especially among younger customers, prompted the company to expand its distribution to include the digital channel. The launch of the online store allowed us to reach new customers and become independent of fluctuations in demand in traditional trade.

Later in the conversation, it was pointed out that e-commerce is currently one of the main pillars of the company's development strategy. It has become an effective sales tool and, above all, a space for communication with customers and a way to build a brand image. The online platform allows the presentation of the values that are the foundation of the business and the quality, craftsmanship tradition and Polish origin of products. Technological issues were also discussed. The manager emphasized that the company regularly invests in modern IT systems. They allow for the automation of sales processes, the integration of inventory and the analysis of customer data. Thanks to this, it is possible to shorten the time of order processing and better adjust the offer to the individual needs of recipients.

The development of online sales has also affected the organizational structure of the company. There are new features related to online store support and digital marketing. Decision-making processes, on the other hand, have become more flexible and data-driven. The method of internal communication has also been changed. This contributed to increasing the efficiency of operational activities. The issue of building relationships with customers in the digital space has also become an important topic. Steven focuses on personalization of the offer, a high level of service and an intuitive store interface. It was emphasized that customer loyalty is built through the authenticity of the message and care for the shopping experience.

The importance of family tradition in online activities was also highlighted. Despite the digital nature of sales, the company consistently emphasizes its roots and values. It gradually builds trust, trying to stand out from the competition. In a world dominated by brand anonymity, history and credibility are becoming an essential element of competitive advantage. In the context of the challenges, the growing competition, the need for constant investment in marketing and technology, and the importance of logistics in maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction were pointed out. At the same time, the development of e-commerce is perceived as an irreversible direction that brings greater flexibility and resilience to market changes to the company.

In conclusion, it can be said that the interview revealed the fact that e-commerce has become both a sales channel and an integral part of Steven's growth strategy. The digitization of processes, combined with the cultivation of traditions and family values, has contributed to the strengthening of the market position. The result was the creation of a modern business model based on quality, relationships and innovation.

Table 1.

Issues of qualitative interview topics

| Review question | Synthetic response (sentence equivalents) |
|--|--|
| Motives for implementing e-commerce in a company | Responding to changing consumer behavior; the need to reach younger customers; expansion of the market. |
| The importance of e-commerce in a company's strategy | A key pillar of development; a tool for building a brand and customer relationship; an element of image and communication of values. |
| The impact of e-commerce on sales effectiveness | Increase reach; increase in the number of customers; independence from traditional sales. |

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|---|---|
| Technologies that support online business | Process automation; integration of warehouse systems; Analysis of customer data. |
| Organizational changes after the implementation of e-commerce | New features in the structure; greater decision-making flexibility; development of digital competences. |
| Building relationships with customers online | Personalization of the offer; care for UX; fast and friendly service; authentic brand message. |
| The role of family tradition in online business | Maintaining the authenticity and identity of the brand; building trust; communication of local values. |
| Challenges and directions of further development | Increasing competition; investments in marketing and logistics; development of social commerce and foreign expansion. |

Source: In-house studies.

Figure 1 provides a synthetic assessment of the impact of e-commerce on Steven's key business areas. The analysis of Figure 1 shows that the highest level of impact was recorded in the areas of sales, marketing, customer relations, brand and image. It can be noted that these results confirm the findings of the interview, in which it was emphasized that the online channel has become the main tool for reaching recipients, building recognition and communicating the company's values.

A slightly lower importance of e-commerce is visible in logistics, technology and organizational structure. Changes in these areas result from the need to automate processes, integrate systems and adapt the management method to the specifics of online sales.

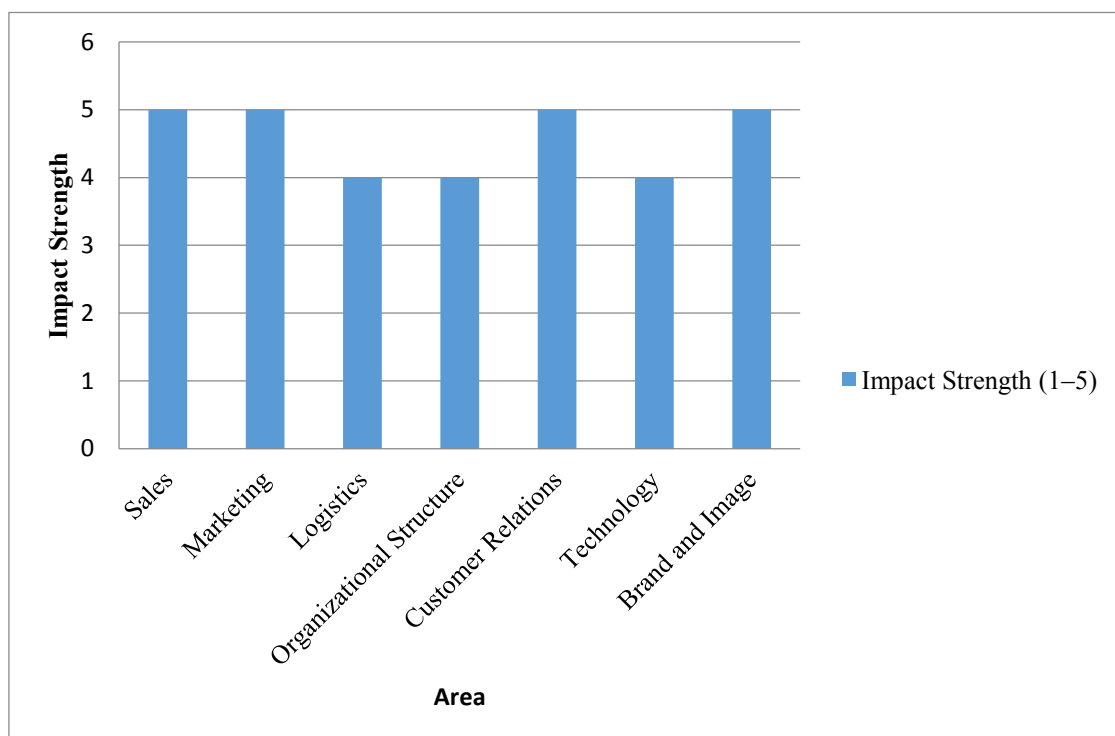


Figure 1. The impact of e-commerce on the company's areas of activity.

Source: In-house studies.

The analysis of Figure 1 shows that e-commerce can be considered a key factor in the development of Steven, having the strongest impact on the market and service sphere, and to a lesser extent - on the internal aspects of the organization.

4. Discussion

The conducted research allows us to conclude that e-commerce has become a key factor in Steven's development, which determines its development and market position. The analysis of the data obtained indicates that online sales are no longer limited to the role of only a supplementary distribution channel. Instead, it becomes the foundation of the modern business model of the company. Areas related to sales, marketing and customer relations turned out to be particularly important. It is in them that the highest level of impact has been recorded. The change in the way of communicating with recipients, the increase in the importance of personalization and the ability to present brand values in the digital space have created favorable conditions for more effective competition in the textile market.

The obtained results are consistent with the observations presented in the literature, which emphasise the growing role of e-commerce in enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises. Gupta (2014) indicates that the implementation of digital solutions enables companies to expand their market reach and improve the effectiveness of marketing activities, which is also confirmed in the analysed case. Similarly, Verbivska et al. (2023) demonstrate that the development of e-commerce fosters technological modernisation and the reorganisation of internal processes. The results of the study confirm these tendencies, while also showing that in a company with a strong tradition the transformation process requires balancing innovation with the preservation of the authentic character of the brand.

Relating the results to international studies on competitiveness and the financial conditions of the textile sector makes it possible to situate the case of the Steven company more firmly within the theoretical framework. The findings of Lau et al. (2009) and Ullah et al. (2020), which highlight the importance of technological modernisation and the strengthening of operational efficiency, are reflected in Steven's actions associated with the implementation of e-commerce, thereby increasing the coherence of the case analysis with the literature.

In addition, the implementation of the e-commerce model has resulted in noticeable transformations within the organization. The company was forced to develop its technological facilities, automate key operational processes and introduce new competencies into the organizational structure. The presented changes were not revolutionary, but their consistent implementation led to increased operational flexibility and better adaptation of the company to the requirements of the modern market. The rise of digital technologies has not been associated with a violation of the organisation's core identity, which is still based on craftsmanship and quality of workmanship.

The collected data confirms that success in the field of digital transformation becomes the result of a skilful combination of modern technological solutions with brand authenticity and customer care. In the case of Steven, the development of e-commerce has increased the scale of its operations and strengthened the company's image as a manufacturer consciously shaping

its presence in the digital space. The results of the research indicate that the further development of the company will depend on maintaining a balance between tradition and innovation, and on continuing to invest in tools supporting customer service and process integration.

Considering the findings from a counterfactual perspective expands the strategic depth of the analysis. Reflecting on how the company's development might have unfolded without the implementation of e-commerce indicates that relying solely on traditional sales channels would have limited opportunities for scaling the business, reduced resilience to demand fluctuations, and weakened the competitive position in an increasingly digital market environment. This perspective highlights that the observed effects of digital transformation would not have been achievable without consistent online expansion, reinforcing the interpretation of e-commerce as a conditionally effective factor rather than an unequivocally positive one.

The conducted research encountered some limitations. They resulted primarily from the use of the qualitative interview method, based on the perspective of one person managing the company. This fact certainly limits the possibility of a full generalization of the results. The analysis was based on respondents' declarations, which may not reflect all the nuances of internal processes. In addition, the study also did not include hard sales data or comparisons with other companies in the industry, so the conclusions focus on the interpretation of the experience of a particular company, rather than on a broad sector analysis.

5. Conclusions

The results of the research indicate the need to further strengthen the company's presence in the digital space. It is necessary to develop tools that support the personalization of the offer and deepen relationships with customers. Therefore, it is recommended to focus on the development of analytical systems that will allow for a better understanding of the behavior of recipients and on this basis to adjust both communication and assortment. It also seems justified to increase investment in digital marketing, including in channels of growing importance, such as social media or social commerce. It is justified by the fact that it is there that consumers most often interact with brands from the textile sector. Strengthening activity in these areas can contribute to expanding the group of recipients and increasing brand recognition.

In terms of internal processes, it is recommended to continue activities focused on technology integration and further automation of logistics and order handling. Increasing consistency between warehouse, sales and marketing systems can improve operational efficiency and reduce lead times, which translates directly into customer satisfaction. You may also want to consider developing your employees' competencies in digital channel management to ensure that your organization is prepared for further technological changes. The interconnection of technological, marketing and logistics processes will allow Steven to

maintain a competitive advantage, consolidate its market position and effectively respond to the growing demands of the e-commerce market.

Future research directions may focus on extending the analysis to include comparisons between textile companies of different sizes. This will allow for a better assessment of the impact of e-commerce on the entire sector. It is also worth taking into account quantitative data on sales, process efficiency and customer behavior in the future to complement the results of qualitative research. An important direction will also be the analysis of the long-term effects of digitization, including both organizational transformation and changes in the business models of family businesses.

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