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The importance of large enterprises for the development of the furniture industry in the selected EU countries

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Abstract: *The importance of large enterprises for the development of the furniture industry in the selected EU countries.* In theoretical and empirical research, the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in the economic development of the country is usually explicitly emphasized, highlighting their importance for innovation and competitiveness of the economy. However, despite the small percentage of companies employing over 249 persons in most industries, these enterprises generate a significant value of industrial production and to a large extent create jobs. The main purpose of the research was to assess the importance of large companies for the development of the furniture industry in the selected EU countries. Five European Community countries were selected for the research, which are among the largest furniture manufacturers (Italy, Germany, Poland, Great Britain and France). A comparative analysis was carried out against all Member States of the Community, and the time range of the research covered the years 2010-2017. The analysis shows that overall, the importance of large enterprises for the development of the EU furniture industry has increased, although these trends were varied in analysed countries. The countries selected for the analysis play a significant role in creating value in production and jobs in the EU furniture industry. Enterprises with the highest level of employment are of great importance for the increase in production and the development of the labour market in this industry. These economic entities constituted less than 1% of the total functioning enterprises. The added value per employee in enterprises employing over 249 persons in the EU was clearly higher than the average for business entities in general.

Keywords: EU countries, furniture industry, economic development, large enterprises

INTRODUCTION

Numerous empirical studies have emphasized that small and medium-sized enterprises play a large role in the economy, affecting economic growth, as well as employment growth. Small and medium-sized enterprises are therefore one of the main factors of socio-economic growth of each country. They are a kind of stimulator of economic development (Huczek 2008). However, it should be emphasized that there are also research results clearly indicating the importance of large enterprises for economic development (Sutherland 2003). Some authors emphasize that large companies grow faster compared to small ones and are less responsive to recession and expansion in the economy (Moscarini, Postel-Vinay 2012). The criterion for assessing the size of an enterprise most often assumed in the theoretical and empirical research is the number of employees (Nassar et al. 2014), although other criteria for the division of economic entities should be taken into account, namely – the net asset value (Fotopoulus, Giotopoulus 2010; Mateev, Anastasov 2010) and the revenues (Del Monte, Pagani 2003; Morone, Testa 2008).

The furniture industry is an important element of the EU economy, and some Member States of the Community are among the top furniture manufacturers and exporters, although it should be noted that the Chinese furniture industry has been playing a leading role in this area for years. As indicated by Barney (1991) and Johnson et al. (2003), it is thanks to the skillful use of strategic resources (i.e. valuable, rare and difficult to imitate) that you can achieve lasting competitive advantage in the markets. However, one should be aware that the current sources of these advantages for the furniture industry in the EU may in the future prove to be inadequate to maintain the current growth rate of furniture manufacture and export value.

Research on the selected aspects of the development of the wood and furniture industry was conducted by, among others, Ratajczak (1996), Ratajczak (2003), Smardzewski (2009), Barcić et al. (2011), Ratajczak (2013), Popyk et al. (2014), Druzic et al. (2015), Grzegorzewska, Więckowska (2016), Grzegorzewska (2018) or Mydlarz (2019). An indispensable factor in the development and competitiveness of enterprises is the ability to innovate (Biernacka et. al 2018). Development of the furniture industry depends on the level of plant technical equipment, the technologies applied, production innovativeness (Smardzewski 2009) and the employees qualification level (Hitka, Sirotiakovà 2011).

Most of the studies presented here was carried out in individual countries, usually on the basis of all enterprises, omitting the criterion of the size of the economic entity. In turn, usually the focus was not on the importance of large enterprises for the development of furniture manufacture in terms of value or quantity.

In the face of the dynamically changing environment, including the progressing processes of globalization of economies and the growing degree of internationalization, especially of the largest enterprises, development of the furniture industry remains relevant. Therefore, there is a need for further research in this area.

MATERIALS

The main objective of the research was to assess the importance of large enterprises, i.e. employing over 249 persons, for the development of the furniture industry in the selected EU countries. Five European Community countries were selected for research, which in 2017 had the largest share in creating the value of furniture sold production from all EU countries. This group includes: Italy, Germany, Poland, Great Britain and France. The comparative analysis was carried out against all EU Member States (EU28). The research material was obtained from the EUROSTAT database (Report – Annual detailed enterprise statistics for industry; NACE Rev. 2). The study was conducted on the basis of the NACE Rev. 2, according to which the data in the EUROSTAT are presented. In classification NACE Rev. 2 furniture manufacture (section 31, class 31.0) are composed of the following classes: 31.01 - Manufacture of office and shop furniture, 31.02 - Manufacture of kitchen furniture, 31.03 - Manufacture of mattresses and 31.04 - Manufacture of other furniture (Grzegorzewska 2017). Because complete and reliable statistics were obtained for 2010-2017 this time range of the research was adopted. During the research, a horizontal analysis was carried out, allowing the determination of the dynamics of the selected economic and financial categories. The research was supplemented by vertical analysis, determining the importance of enterprises with an employment level of over 249 persons in creating individual economic and production categories that could have an impact on the development of the furniture industry in the analysed countries. In order to determine the relative level of diversity of the examined features, the coefficient of variation was used, which is the relation between the standard deviation and the average value of a given feature taking into account the entire period covered by the study.

RESULTS

The Eurostat data shows that in 2010, the sold production of the furniture industry in EU28 was at the level of EUR 91.6 billion, of which as much as 67.4% was generated in the Member States covered by the analysis (table 1). This confirms the dominant importance of these countries in the creation of the furniture sold production. Among the analysed countries, Italy was the largest furniture manufacturer. In 2010, the country produced furniture for an amount of EUR 21.3 billion, which was 23.3% of the production value of this industry generated by all EU 28 countries. Germany was next among the manufacturers of the furniture industry, where the value of manufactured industry in 2010 amounted to EUR 19.1

billion, which constituted 20.8% of the production of this industry generated by all EU Member States in terms of value. Great Britain ranged next in the EU ranking of furniture manufacturers (EUR 8.0 billion), followed by France (EUR 6.9 billion) and Poland (EUR 6.4 billion). The share of these countries in creating the value of furniture industry production was at the level of: 8.7, 7.5, 7.0%.

Table 1. Sold production and number of enterprises in the furniture industry in the selected EU countries in the years 2010-2017

Itemisation		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017/ 2010	V*
Production value [billion euro]											
UE-28	Total	91.6	90.5	89.4	87.7	92.1	96.7	99.9	99.4	108.5	5.0
	LC	23.9	25.8	25.2	26.1	28.0	30.3	31.4	33.6	140.6	12.1
Italy	Total	21.3	20.2	19.5	19.5	20.1	21.0	22.0	22.5	105.6	5.1
	LC	3.6	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.4	5.3	146.8	13.6
Germany	Total	19.1	19.6	20.5	19.2	19.7	20.7	22.6	22.1	115.8	7.7
	LC	7.5	8.2	8.4	8.3	8.4	9.1	9.6	9.8	129.6	8.7
Poland	Total	6.4	7.1	6.6	7.3	8.3	9.0	9.4	10.1	158.9	17.5
	LC	3.9	4.4	3.9	4.3	5.1	5.5	5.8	6.3	162.7	18.8
UK	Total	8.0	7.0	7.7	7.7	8.9	10.4	9.5	9.1	113.6	13.7
	LC	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.8	2.4	3.0	2.8	2.8	173.5	26.9
France	Total	6.9	7.0	6.6	6.7	7.1	7.0	6.6	7.1	103.3	3.1
	LC	2.2	2.3	1.8	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.1	3.2	145.7	18.0
Number of enterprises											
UE-28	Total	130 000	126 887	124 362	120 761	120 945	120 000	121 169	120 646	92.8	3.0
	LC	430	421	415	410	404	422	433	435	101.2	2.6
Italy	Total	20 567	18 883	19 332	18 773	18 130	18 108	18 615	18 200	88.5	4.4
	LC	33	35	33	31	29	26	29	33	100.0	9.5
Germany	Total	9 126	9 070	9 316	8 905	11 053	10 475	10 275	9 615	105.4	8.0
	LC	78	81	77	76	72	73	75	75	96.2	3.8
Poland	Total	14 336	14 421	14 295	14 390	14 802	16 105	17 137	17 631	123.0	8.9
	LC	112	103	100	98	104	110	119	115	102.7	7.0
UK	Total	6 207	6 130	6 130	6 019	5 937	5 998	6 222	6 265	100.9	1.9
	LC	34	33	36	35	38	44	42	42	123.5	11.0
France	Total	12 592	12 052	12 288	12 424	9 223	9 252	8 513	9 356	74.3	16.5
	LC	22	24	17	16	8	11	8	13	59.1	40.4

*V – Coefficient of variation
**LC – Large companies
Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat [sbs_na_ind_r2].

Considering the role of large enterprises in creating the value of furniture production in countries belonging to the largest producers of these products, it should be noted that the largest share in this respect was achieved by enterprises in Poland. At the beginning of the analysed period, entities employing over 249 persons manufactured products for the amount of EUR 3.9 billion, i.e. 60.7% of furniture production. It is worth noting that this indicator for the Community Member States was on average at the level of 26.1%. A relatively high share of large enterprises in creating production value was also recorded in Germany, where products for the amount of EUR 7.5 billion were manufactured, which constituted 39.5% of the furniture industry production. France and Great Britain came next. The discussed indicator for these countries was at the level of 31.3 and 20.3%, respectively. A clearly smaller role of large enterprises in this area was observed in the Italian furniture industry, where the indicator under consideration was 17.0%.

In 2010-2017, the value of sold production in the furniture industry in the Community countries increased by 8.5% and amounted to EUR 99.4 billion at the end of the analysed period. Such a slight increase over seven years is mainly due to a decrease in the dynamics of the phenomenon under consideration in 2011-2013. In 2013, the value of sold production was nearly 5% lower than at the beginning of the period under analysis. The reasons for this situation can be sought, among others, in the negative and long-term effects of the global economic crisis that began in the United States, but as a result of globalization processes it also reached the EU and covered most sectors of the national economies of the Member States of the Community. In 2017, the value of the furniture sold production generated in the analysed countries amounted to EUR 70.9 billion, which accounted for 71.3% of furniture production in EU28 Member States, i.e. by 3.9 p.p. higher than at the beginning of the analysed period. This situation resulted from a higher growth rate of the value of furniture production sold by the group of the largest manufacturers than the average in EU28.

The largest increase in the value of the furniture industry was obtained in Poland – by 58.9% to the amount of EUR 10.1 billion, which resulted in a promotion from the fifth to third place in the ranking of the EU furniture manufacturers. The favourable economic situation in this country, combined with the use of the growing production potential of Polish furniture factories, has caused an increase in importance in creating the values of furniture production in the EU (from 7.0 to 10.2%). However, Italy and Germany were still among the top furniture manufacturers. The share of these countries in the creation of EU28 production value was at the level of 22.6 and 22.2%, respectively, although it should be emphasized that the difference in the value of furniture sold production between these countries has clearly narrowed. This is due to the greater dynamics of furniture industry production growth in Germany (115.8 against 105.6%).

Great Britain was next in terms of the value of furniture production from among the analysed group of countries, which recorded a slight increase in this indicator (by 13.8%), followed by France, where the value of furniture industry production increased by 3.3%. This situation resulted in maintaining the share of these countries in creating the sold production value of the furniture industry in the EU. The highest level of the variation coefficient of this indicator, which informs about the relative differentiation of this feature, was observed for the Polish furniture industry (17.5%), and the lowest for France (3.1%).

The importance of enterprises employing over 249 persons in creating furniture production value in the EU countries increased in the analysed period – on average by 7.7 p.p. to 33.8%. Again, large furniture factories in Poland came first in this respect, which share in the value creation increased by 1.5 p.p. to 62.2%. Particularly noteworthy is the significant increase in the role of large business entities in France in generating furniture production value (by 12.9 p.p. to 44.2%). In other countries covered by the analysis, similar trends were observed, although the scale of this phenomenon was clearly smaller.

From the perspective of the development of the furniture industry, the number of enterprises that manufacture furniture is also important. As table 1 shows, in 2010 in the EU countries, the economic activity was conducted by 130.000 entities, of which nearly half in countries classified as the largest furniture manufacturers. Italy ranked first in this respect, where there were nearly 20.6000 business entities (15.8%). Poland and France came next in the presented ranking. In these countries, furniture production was carried out by 14.300 and 12.600 factories, respectively, which accounted for 11.0 and 9.7%. Of the largest analysed furniture manufacturers, the least enterprises in the furniture industry operated in Great Britain.

In the analysed period, Italy (18.000) and Poland (17.600) were again the leaders in terms of the number of business entities producing furniture. It should be emphasized that in the case of the Polish furniture industry, the dynamics of this phenomenon was clearly higher (123.0 against 88.5%), which resulted in a narrowing of the differences between these countries. In turn, in Germany, the number of furniture factories increased in the analysed period from 9.100 to 9.600, i.e. by 5.4%. The significant reduction in the number of companies operating in the furniture industry in France also deserves to be emphasized. In the case of this country, relatively significant changes were observed in this phenomenon, which confirms the highest variation coefficient among the indicators obtained by the group of analysed countries, at the level of 16.5%. In turn, Great Britain was characterized by the smallest diversity of this feature, for which the variation coefficient was 1.9%. It is also worth emphasizing that in the analysed period, the percentage of enterprises employing over 249 persons in all countries covered by the analysis was at a similar level and usually did not exceed 1%. It is even more important to emphasize the special role of this category of business entities in creating the value of furniture production in all countries included in the largest furniture manufacturers, in particular in Poland, Germany and France.

The development of the furniture industry in individual countries is also affected by human resources, and in particular the number of employees, as well as the level of their knowledge and employee competences. In 2010, according to the data in table 2, 1.040,000 employees were employed in the furniture industry in the EU28 countries, of which 599.600 of persons in group of the largest furniture producers, which represented 57.7% of the total employed in this industry in the Member States of the Community. Again, Italy was the first among the analysed countries, where 163.700 persons were employed in furniture factories, which represented 15.7% of those employed in the EU. A relatively high level of employment was also recorded in Poland, where the number of employees was at the level of 158.800 persons, as well as in Germany, where 147,000 persons were employed in the furniture industry, which represented 15.3 and 14.1%, respectively, of the total employment in the EU. Among the analysed countries, a significantly lower level of employment was observed in Great Britain and France. The number of employees there was at the level of 67.900 and 62.200 persons, and the share of these countries in creating jobs in the EU furniture industry was at the level of 6.5 and 6.0%, respectively.

Given the importance of large enterprises in creating jobs in the furniture industry in the countries belonging to the largest furniture manufacturers, the situation varied. In 2010, as much as 44.5% of persons working in the Polish industry were employed in large enterprises. In turn, in Germany this indicator was at the level of 28.5%. On the other hand, in France and Great Britain, similarly to the average in the EU, every fifth person employed in the furniture industry found employment in a large enterprise, and in Italy only every tenth person.

In 2010-2017, employment in enterprises producing furniture in the EU28 decreased by 4.2% and at the end of the analysed period it was at the level of 996.600 persons. Of this, 507.200 persons (i.e. 50.9%) were employed in factories located in the countries included among the largest furniture manufacturers. Among the analysed countries, only in Poland and Great Britain an increase in the number of employees was observed by 19.6 and 32.9%, respectively, to the level of 189.900 and 90.200 persons. This has contributed to increasing the role of these countries in creating jobs in the furniture industry. In the other analysed countries, the employment level in the furniture industry decreased by 2.6% in Germany, 17.4% in Italy and as much as 25.3% in France. However, it should be emphasized that in the first two countries listed above, employment in furniture industry was still relatively high compared to other EU Member States. In turn, in France, the reduction in the number of employees was associated with a clear decrease in the number of enterprises operating in the furniture industry (by 25.3% compared to the base year). The highest level of the variation coefficient in the number of employees, which determines the relative diversity of characteristics was observed for the French furniture industry (16.6%), while the lowest for Germany (1.5%).

Table 2. Employment and gross value added per person employed in the furniture industry in selected EU countries in the years 2010-2017

Itemisation		2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2017/ 2010	V*
Number of persons employed [thousand]											
UE-28	Total	1 040.0	1 036.6	1 000.0	972.6	958.1	970.6	1 002.0	996.6	95.8	3.0
	LC	227.2	230.5	228.0	230.3	235.8	250.4	265.3	279.7	123.1	8.1
Italy	Total	163.7	149.8	147.2	142.6	136.2	132.1	134.3	135.2	82.6	7.5
	LC	15.5	16.3	15.6	15.5	14.8	14.0	15.1	18.9	121.8	9.2
Germany	Total	147.0	142.0	142.4	144.1	142.7	142.0	147.0	143.1	97.4	1.5
	LC	41.9	44.1	43.3	42.0	40.8	41.6	42.6	43.9	104.6	2.7
Poland	Total	158.8	155.0	151.7	150.7	161.2	173.8	182.4	189.9	119.6	8.9
	LC	72.2	70.3	67.0	67.4	76.4	82.8	88.8	92.5	128.1	12.7
UK	Total	67.9	81.3	86.4	83.4	70.9	80.0	88.6	90.2	132.9	9.9
	LC	14.8	14.6	15.6	18.4	16.3	19.6	25.0	25.0	168.2	22.8
France	Total	62.2	71.3	56.9	54.6	50.0	47.1	45.5	46.5	74.7	16.6
	LC	13.6	12.7	11.5	11.0	10.3	10.5	9.7	15.9	117.2	17.3
Gross value added per person employed [thousand euro]											
UE-28	Total	27.0	26.0	26.9	27.5	29.0	29.5	30.7	28.6	105.9	5.6
	LC	36.2	33.3	33.1	36.8	40.4	41.1	41.3	38.5	106.3	8.8
Italy	Total	30.7	35.5	33.5	35.8	38.8	42.6	44.9	45.9	149.5	14.4
	LC	59.4	53.6	51.5	53.1	57.1	64.3	69.8	66.6	112.1	11.5
Germany	Total	45.9	46.1	48.9	46.2	47.9	49.9	50.9	52.5	114.4	5.0
	LC	59.8	58.7	59.4	60.7	63.2	67.6	70.8	70.1	117.2	7.8
Poland	Total	12.6	13.1	11.9	13.9	14.8	15.1	15.4	15.7	124.6	10.0
	LC	17.3	17.4	16.0	18.4	19.4	19.4	19.5	19.6	113.3	7.3
UK	Total	47.9	35.8	37.3	38.7	48.6	53.2	45.4	44.2	92.3	14.0
	LC	35.8	33.8	38.9	32.6	50.2	54.8	41.5	42.0	117.3	19.0
France	Total	38.8	32.5	39.7	39.8	42.7	46.8	45.1	49.5	127.6	12.8
	LC	51.6	54.3	45.4	59.2	53.8	60.4	65.6	59.4	115.1	11.1

*V – Coefficient of variation**LC – Large companies

Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat [sbs_na_ind_r2].

In the analysed period, the importance of enterprises employing over 249 persons in creating jobs in the EU countries increased – on average by 6.3 p.p. to the level of 28.1%. Again, large furniture factories in Poland came first in this respect. The percentage of persons employed in these business entities increased by 3.2 p.p. to 48.7%. Particularly noteworthy is the significant increase in the role of large business entities in France in creating jobs (by 12.4 p.p. to 34.2%). Similar trends were observed in other analysed countries, although the scale of this phenomenon was clearly smaller, especially in the case of Germany, where the indicator in question increased by only 2.2%.

The development of the employment analysis in the furniture industry can be a study of the degree of effectiveness of the use of labour resources. In the face of economic changes taking place, including systematic increase in employees' wages, this is of great importance for the development of activities in this sector of the economy and the increase in competitiveness of individual countries on the international market. One of the basic measures of labour productivity is the gross value added per employee. As it results from the data presented in table 2, at the beginning of the analysed period, it amounted to EUR 27,000 in the EU countries, while in the analysed countries, except for Poland, it was higher than the EU average. The highest values of the discussed indicator, informing about the effectiveness of the use of human resources were recorded in Great Britain (EUR 47.900) and in Germany (EUR 45.900). In turn, in Italy and France, the gross value added per employee was over EUR 30,000, while in Poland it was clearly lower and amounted to EUR 12.600. This proves that labor productivity in the Polish furniture industry is definitely lower than in other countries classified as the largest furniture manufacturers. This may be due to the difference in capital expenditure by enterprises, especially in terms of investments in machinery and equipment. Polish furniture companies show less investment activity than their foreign competitors. Despite significant investments made in the Polish furniture industry over the last twenty years, the level of automation of Polish enterprises still clearly differs from the countries that are at the forefront of manufacturers. The lower level of technology may be of importance, as well as the growing problem of qualified personnel shortage. Although as emphasized by Biernacka et al. 2018 due to a more stable financial situation, large furniture enterprises employing 250 or more people make greater use of funds for innovative activities and become more competitive. This view is also confirmed by Grzegorzewska and Więckowska (2016), who indicate that innovation activity in large companies is, as a rule, greater than in small and micro-sized enterprises.

In the analysed period, the largest increase in labour productivity was observed in Italy (by 49.5%) and in France (by 27.6%). Polish furniture enterprises also recorded a significant increase in gross value added per employee, however, this indicator was still almost twice lower than the average in the EU countries. Despite positive trends in this area, Poland was still far behind the countries included in the leading furniture manufacturers. At the end of the analysed period, Germany again showed the highest labour productivity measured by the gross value added per employee (EUR 52.500, i.e. by 14.4% more compared to the base year).

In 2010-2017, the gross value added per employee in enterprises employing over 249 persons in the EU was clearly higher than the average for business entities. This trend was noticeable throughout the whole analysed period. At the beginning of the analysed period, among the countries classified as the largest furniture manufacturers, the highest performance indicator for large enterprises was observed in Germany (EUR 59.800 against EUR 45.900 for all enterprises) and in Italy (EUR 59.400 against EUR 30.700 for all enterprises). Large furniture enterprises in Poland had a clearly lower gross value added per employee (EUR 17.300). Over the analysed period, there was an increase of a dozen or so percentage by the discussed indicator in large furniture factories in all countries covered by the analysis. Again, the highest level of use of labour resources in economic entities employing over 249 persons, measured by the gross value added per employee, was characteristic for Germany (EUR 70.100) and Italy (EUR 66.600). Poland still showed the lowest efficiency in this respect. This clearly confirms the lower efficiency of the use of labour resources in this country, and this situation applies to both all economic entities and enterprises with the highest level of employment.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted studies allow to draw the following conclusions:

1. The countries selected for the analysis play a significant role in creating the production value and creating jobs in the EU furniture industry. From among this group of countries, the largest increase in the value of the furniture industry in 2010-2017 was

observed in Poland, which resulted in a promotion from the fifth to third place in the ranking of the EU furniture manufacturers. However, Italy and Germany were still among the top furniture manufacturers. In 2017, the share of these countries in creating the EU28 production value fluctuated around 22%. During the analysed period, the difference in the value of furniture production sold between these countries clearly decreased. This was due to the greater dynamics of production growth in the German furniture industry in terms of value.
2. In the analysed countries, enterprises with the highest employment level, i.e. over 249 persons, are of great importance in creating the furniture production value and the development of the labour market in this industry. It should be emphasized that these economic entities constituted less than 1% of the total number of enterprises operating in the furniture industry. In addition, the role of large enterprises in creating the production value of furniture industry in the EU countries increased over the period under consideration. The reasons for this situation can be realized5 in the greater level of innovation of these producers or the possession of significant capital resources. Undoubtedly, the experience and competences of both the managerial staff and all employees can be significant.
3. Over 50% of persons were employed in factories located in countries classified as the largest furniture manufacturers. From among the analysed countries, only in Poland and Great Britain, which resulted in the increase in the role of these countries in creating jobs in the EU furniture industry. In Poland, nearly half of people found employment in large furniture companies.
4. The gross value added per employee in enterprises employing over 249 persons in the EU was clearly higher than the average for business entities. From among the surveyed countries, large furniture enterprises in Poland had clearly lower gross value added per employee. This confirms the clearly lower efficiency of the use of labour resources in this country, and this situation applies to both all economic entities and enterprises with the highest level of employment. The reason for this situation may be differences in investment outlays in machinery and equipment. Polish furniture companies show less investment activity than their foreign competitors. Additionally, the lower level of technology may be of importance, as well as the growing problem of qualified personnel shortage.

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Streszczenie: *Znaczenie dużych przedsiębiorstw dla rozwoju branży meblarskiej w wybranych krajach UE.* W badaniach teoretyczno-empirycznych zazwyczaj wyraźnie akcentuje się rolę małych i średnich przedsiębiorstw w rozwoju gospodarczym kraju, podkreślając ich znaczenie dla innowacyjności i konkurencyjności gospodarki. Jednak, pomimo niewielkiego odsetka firm zatrudniających powyżej 249 osób w większości gałęzi przemysłu, przedsiębiorstwa te generują znaczną wartość produkcji przemysłowej i w dużym stopniu kreują miejsca pracy Głównym celem prowadzonych badań było przeprowadzenie oceny znaczenia dużych firm dla rozwoju branży meblarskiej wybranych krajów UE. Do badań wybrano pięć krajów Wspólnoty Europejskiej zaliczanych do największych producentów mebli (Włochy, Niemcy, Polskę, Wielką Brytanię i Francję). Analizę porównawczą przeprowadzono na tle wszystkich państw członkowskich Wspólnoty, a zakres czasowy badań przyjęto na lata 2010-2017. Z przeprowadzonej analizy wynika, że tendencje te można zaobserwować w przemyśle meblarskim, chociaż wpływ dużych przedsiębiorstw na rozwój tej branży był zróżnicowany. Wybrane do analizy kraje odgrywają znaczącą rolę w tworzeniu wartości produkcji i kreowaniu miejsc pracy w przemyśle meblarskim UE. Duże znaczenie dla wzrostu produkcji i rozwoju rynku pracy w tej branży mają przedsiębiorstwa o największym poziomie zatrudnienia. Te podmioty gospodarcze stanowiły mniej niż 1% ogółu funkcjonujących przedsiębiorstw. Wartość dodana w przeliczeniu na zatrudnionego w przedsiębiorstwach zatrudniających powyżej 249 osób w UE była wyraźnie wyższa niż średnio w podmiotach gospodarczych.

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