

ZN WSH Zarządzanie 2020 (numer specjalny), s. 215-229

Oryginalny artykuł naukowy
Original Article

Data wpływu/Received: 21.09.2020

Data recenzji/Accepted: 16.10.2020/30.11.2020

Data publikacji/Published: 31.12.2020

Źródła finansowania publikacji: środki Akademii WSB

DOI: 10.5604/01.3001.0014.8091

Authors' Contribution:

(A) Study Design (projekt badania)

(B) Data Collection (zbieranie danych)

(C) Statistical Analysis (analiza statystyczna)

(D) Data Interpretation (interpretacja danych)

(E) Manuscript Preparation (redagowanie opracowania)

(F) Literature Search (badania literaturowe)

mgr Justyna Szymczyk^{ABCDEF}

WSB University

ORCID 0000-0002-9287-6506

**CHANGES IN MARKETING STRATEGIES
IN THE FASHION SECTOR CAUSED BY THE COVID-19
PANDEMIC**

**ZMIANY STRATEGII MARKETINGOWYCH
W SEKTORZE MODY SPOWODOWANE PANDEMIĄ
COVID-19**

Abstract: The announcement of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic by the World Health Organization WHO has caused changes in all areas of life. The closure of workplaces, shops and shopping centers as well as the omnipresent fear of disease influenced consumer behaviour. Companies representing the fashion sector were forced to immediately change their marketing

strategies. In the first days of the pandemic marketing campaigns were discontinued, followed by a time of increased activity of fashion brands that used this time to improve their image. Sewing masks and coveralls has become a symbol of the fight against the COVID-19 virus. The next step was to activate sales through discount campaigns that were transferred to the Internet. Marketing activities were direct in form and popularized the "hashtag stay at home" movement. However, marketers quickly verified that the above actions do not increase sales. The apparel sector returned to stationary sales in the third month of the pandemic. Experiences from the quarantine period made companies notice global changes in customer behaviour. For that reason the concepts that most customers had heard about before COVID-19, such as *slow fashion* and *sustainable fashion*, were begun to be used in marketing strategies. Production in the spirit of less waste has become a major foundation for the strategy. What will these changes result in? Will the pandemic stop the *fast fashion* trend? What marketing strategies will work in the future? In her article, the author looks for answers to the above questions by analyzing selected marketing strategies of companies in the fashion sector. The subject of the research will be a critical analysis of industry literature and a query of scientific literature covering the above publications on a global scale. The research tool used will be analysis and diagnosis.

Keywords: fashion sector, COVID-19 pandemic, marketing strategies, slow fashion, sustainable fashion

Streszczenie: Ogłoszenie przez Światową Organizację Zdrowia WHO pandemii koronawirusa SARS-CoV-2 spowodowało zmiany we wszystkich dziedzinach życia. Zamknięcie zakładów pracy, sklepów i centrów handlowych oraz wszechobecny strach przed chorobą wpłynęły na zachowania konsumenckie.

Przedsiębiorstwa reprezentujące sektor modowy zostały zmuszone do natychmiastowej zmiany strategii marketingowych. W pierwszych dniach pandemii zaprzestano akcji marketingowych, kolejno można było zaobserwować czas wzmożonej aktywności marek modowych, które wykorzystywały ten czas, aby poprawić swój wizerunek. Szycie maseczek i kombinizonów stały się symbolem walki z wirusem COVID-19.

Następnym etapem było aktywizowanie sprzedaży poprzez akcje rabatowe, które zostały przeniesione do Internetu. Działania marketingowe charakteryzowały się bezpośrednią formą i popularyzowały ruch „hashtag zostań w domu”. Marketingowcy szybko jednak zweryfikowali, że powyższe działania nie podnoszą sprzedaży.

W trzecim miesiącu od ogłoszenia pandemii sektor odzieżowy wrócił do sprzedaży stacjonarnej. Doświadczenia z okresu kwarantanny spowodowały, że firmy dostrzegły globalne zmiany w zachowaniach klientów. Dlatego w strategiach marketingowych zaczęto wykorzystywać pojęcia, o których większość klientów słyszała już przed COVID-19: *slow fashion* i *sustainable fashion*. Produkcja w duchu *waste less* stała się głównym założeniem dla strategii.

Czym będą skutkować te zmiany? Czy pandemia zatrzyma nurt *fast fashion*? Jakie strategie marketingowe sprawdzą się w przyszłości? Autorka w swoim artykule szuka odpowiedzi na powyższe pytania, analizując wybrane strategie marketingowe przedsiębiorstw sektora modowego.

Przedmiotem badań będzie krytyczna analiza literatury branżowej oraz kwerenda literatury naukowej obejmująca publikacje w skali globalnej. Wykorzystanym narzędziem badawczym będzie analiza i diagnoza

Słowa kluczowe: sektor mody, pandemia COVID-19, strategie marketingowe, slow fashion, sustainable fashion

Introduction

The fashion industry is a global business worth 1.5 trillion euros annually¹, employing over 300 million people worldwide² and is part of the economic strength and a significant driver of global GDP³. The industry operates in a very competitive market dominated by global brands⁴. Therefore, fashion marketing is very demanding and is characterized by a strong sensitivity to trends and socio-economic situations. The economic and climate crisis made marketing strategies for 2020 fundamentally different from those of previous years. The key element that should have been included in the strategies were actions to improve the climate, and as part of this implementation of the provisions resulting from the Fashion Pact⁵ (G7 from France) and the Fashion Industry Charter⁶ (COP24 from Poland). The fashion industry was on alert in 2019, fearing the economic crisis. However, such a major humanitarian and financial crisis caused by a global pandemic was not expected. In light of these events, marketing strategies have become redundant⁷.

The announcement by the World Health Organization of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic (or COVID-19) has caused global paralysis in every area of life. Unprecedented global travel restrictions, closures of workplaces, shops and shopping centers, and the pervasive fear of disease have influenced consumer behaviour. World and domestic economies have not been in such a difficult position since World War II.

The crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemic has hit every industry, but the fashion sector is especially affected by this crisis. This sector has multi-faceted internal and external links: fabric producers, manufacturers of clothes and accessories, retailers, shopping centres, advertising, marketing, logistics and transport. Moreover, marketing agencies, the media, fashion week organizers, production agencies and many other entities have been left without any cash inflows from this sector,

¹ Data included in the Preamble to the Fashion Pact concluded at the G7 summit in France.

² BOF & McKinsey, *The State of Fashion Report 2019*, industry report in: <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/intelligence/the-state-of-fashion-2019> [accessed: 26.02.2020].

³ BCG, *Luxury Market Trends—Digital & Experiential Luxury 2019*, industry report in: <http://media-publications.bcg.com/france/True-Luxury%20Global%20Consumer%20Insight%202019%20-%20Plenary%20-%20vMedia.pdf> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

⁴ P.Gazzola, E. Pavione, R. Pezzetti, D. Grechi, *Trends in the Fashion Industry. The Perception of Sustainability and Circular Economy: A Gender/Generation Quantitative Approach*, *Sustainability* 2020, 12, 2809, p. 1.

⁵ *Fashion Pact*, concluded at the G7 summit in France on August 24, 2019. This document is an initiative for the environment and climate. French President Emmanuel Macron, accompanied by the Minister of Economy and Finance Bruno Le Maire, Minister of Labor and Deputy Minister of Ecological Change, met with representatives of 32 fashion and textile companies. These companies decided to sign the *Fashion Pact*, a package of commitments on climate, biodiversity and the oceans.

⁶ *Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action* is a document signed on December 10, 2018, at COP24 in Katowice. The fashion sector, represented by 43 leaders, adopted the Charter with sixteen points detailing the list of actions for the environment and climate improvement.

⁷ *Report: It's time to rewire the fashion system: State of Fashion coronavirus update*, industry report in: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/its-time-to-rewire-the-fashion-system-state-of-fashion-coronavirus-update> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

which results in serious financial problems and many personal tragedies of people working in or cooperating with the industry.

The pandemic (COVID-19) is challenging the fashion world and especially those active in the areas of marketing. The aim of this article is to show how big is the need to:

1. challenge the linear economy model (therefore, the need to move to the circular economy model)⁸;
2. change the way fashion marketing works (including: updating to implement new or renewed digital and multi-channel distribution solutions as well as advanced methods and data analysis tools⁹);
3. flexibly adjust marketing strategies to the concept of sustainable development.

The subject of the research will be a critical analysis of industry literature and a query of scientific literature covering the above publications on a global scale. The research tool used will be analysis and diagnosis as the basic comprehensive research processes (M. Lisiński, 2016). The attempt to solve the above-mentioned issues is important from the cognitive point of view as well as it is important for the further development of research in this field. A critical review of practices in marketing strategies leads to a link between the proposals and directions for further research and recommendations for practitioners.

1. Identifying the fashion sector during COVID-19

The financial losses of COVID-19 to the fashion industry are enormous. Boston Consulting Group¹⁰, in published industry reports, showed that industry revenues could decline by more than a third this year, equivalent to up to \$640 billion in lost sales¹¹. According to BGC¹² and other research¹³ 81% of US consumers believe the pandemic will lead to a recession¹⁴. More than half of the surveyed residents of the United States declare that they do not plan fashion shopping because they are concerned about their financial situation¹⁵. More than four out of ten consumers in the

⁸ The linear model of the economy is based on the assumption that the manufactured goods usually end up with one customer who uses the product for some time and then throws it to a landfill. The circular / closed economy assumes that clothing purchased by one customer ends up in other hands. The development of the Internet and two-way communication favors such a model. The development of a circular economy can be supported by innovative forms of communication, such as social media or event marketing. It is thanks to these two-way tools that it is possible to promote modern types of consumption, such as: sharing economy (loans, exchanges), reuse and upcycling (new life of old clothes), recycling.

⁹ *Fashion marketing after Covid-19*, industry article in: <https://www.doxee.com/blog/digital-marketing/fashion-marketing-after-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

¹⁰ *Fashion's Big Reset*, industry article and report: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/fashion-industry-reset-covid> [accessed: 1.06.2020].

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Boston Consulting Group.

¹³ Ibidem.

¹⁴ Ibidem

¹⁵ Ibidem.

US stated in the above research that they expect discounts or other promotions after opening stores.

The situation in Europe is also critical. More than 40% of the world's luxury goods production takes place in Italy, where all factories have been closed for many months¹⁶. According to IlSole24Ore in Italy, the loss of sales could reduce as much as 30% of annual revenues, and this will affect the sector's results in 2020 and 2021. Assirm¹⁷, which brings together the largest Italian market research companies, conducted a survey on the fashion industry, identifying some particularly relevant behaviors at the moment:

- 45% of Italian consumers buy clothes, accessories and shoes mainly out of necessity, and only 17% buy for entertainment reasons;
- 38% of the sample admit that they decide to buy because of a sale or special offer;
- 20% of respondents say they are fully satisfied with e-commerce services, compared to 34% who complain about timing.
- Concern for health is shared by 1 in 3 consumers: consumers expect brands to clean and sanitize their surroundings, for example by installing hand sanitizers at store entrances and ensuring that customer behavior complies with hygiene regulations¹⁸.

McKinsey and Global Fashion Index (MGFI) analysis shows that many global fashion companies will go bankrupt in the next 12-18 months¹⁹. Moreover, analysts pointed out that in countries where many companies still outsource clothing production, such as Bangladesh, India, Cambodia, Honduras and Ethiopia, longer periods of unemployment will cause hunger and disease. Similar conclusions can be found in another industry article. Experts point out that China and Bangladesh are the two garment producing countries which will be the most affected²⁰.

It can be said without hesitation that „the recent outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has exposed the fragility of the clothing supply chain operating in South Asian countries”²¹. Millions of employees lost their jobs overnight. These people were left without work and no social benefits, the reason being that their employment was usually illegal²².

¹⁶ *Fashion marketing after Covid-19*, industry article in: <https://www.doxee.com/blog/digital-marketing/fashion-marketing-after-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

¹⁷ <https://www.assirm.it/>.

¹⁸ *Fashion Marketing after Covid*, industry article in: <https://www.doxee.com/blog/digital-marketing/fashion-marketing-after-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

¹⁹ It's time to rewire the fashion system: State of Fashion coronavirus update, industry article and reporty in: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/its-time-to-rewire-the-fashion-system-state-of-fashion-coronavirus-update> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

²⁰ *COVID-19: Have Fashion Brands Modified Their Strategy?*, industry article in: <https://retviews.com/blog/industry/coronavirus/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

²¹ A. Majumdar, M. Shaw, S. Kumar Sinha, *Covid-19 debunks the myth of socially sustainable supply chain: A case of the clothing industry in South Asian countries*, [in:] Sustainable Production and Consumption, Volume 24, October 2020, Pages 150-155, [accessed: 9.09.2020 in <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352550920304139>].

²² Ibidem.

From the above data it can be concluded that the current situation is very bad, but the worst in the industry is still ahead of us. What does the fashion sector look like in Poland?

The Polish fashion industry ranks eighth in Europe in terms of turnover, and sixth in capital expenditure²³. In our country there are over 2,000 clothing companies, 85% of which are small businesses with less than 50 employees²⁴.

The conclusions of the report of PwC and the Association of Trade and Service Employers ZPPHiU (Table 1) show the impact of the fashion sector on the Polish economy. One of the key factors is that the fashion sector accounts for as much as PLN 70 billion in revenue.

Table 1. The impact of the fashion sector on the Polish economy - the conclusions from the report of PwC and the Association of Trade and Service Employers ZPPHiU

Tabela 1. Wpływ branży modowej na polską gospodarkę – wnioski z raportu PwC i Związku Polskich Pracodawców Handlu i Usług

The influence of the fashion industry on the Polish economy	
The most important conclusions	Numbers
The fashion sector in Poland generates revenues of PLN70 billion	The companies of domestic entrepreneurs account for 73% of this amount, which corresponds to PLN 51.8 billion
Poles buy more fashion products than those related to health	7% of Poles' income is dedicated to fashion shopping
Poles like to visit shopping centers to make fashion purchases	81% of Poles declare such motivation for their actions
The fashion sector in Poland is an active tenant of space in shopping centers	The Polish fashion sector spends PLN 6.1 billion annually on renting space in shopping centers
The fashion sector is one of the largest in terms of employees	The fashion sector employs 308,000 people
The fashion sector participates in payments to the state budget due to various public and legal obligations	From 13 to 16 billion zlotys a year flow into the state budget
The fashion sector is an active customer of logistics services	The fashion sector spends PLN 1.5 billion on services in the logistics industry

Source: Report „Polish Fashion Sector on the edge. The impact of COVID-19”: <https://www.pwc.pl/pl/pdf-nf/2020/polski-sektor-modowy-wplyw-covid19.pdf> [access: 12.09.2020].

²³ „Rynek mody w Polsce, Wyzwania”, KPMG Report, November 2019, p. 47.

²⁴ „Branża producentów mody polskiej, Informacja dotycząca obrazu branży w Polsce, jej mocnych stron, wyzwań, szans i kierunków eksportu”, Raport Ministerstwa Przedsiębiorczości i Technologii, Warszawa, January 2019.

PwC analysts²⁵ have attempted to estimate three possible variants of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on entrepreneurs in the fashion sector in Poland.

The first is a moderate decline scenario, where, according to analysts, the cash gap in the industry will amount to PLN 10.9 billion. Subsequently, they pointed to the possibility of an average decline scenario, in which the cash gap in the entire industry will amount to PLN 16.1 billion. The pessimistic vision shown by PwC analysts is a PLN 32 billion cash gap for the fashion sector²⁶. It is worth noting here that each of the above scenarios takes into account the aid package declared by the public administration in the so-called „anti-crisis shield”²⁷.

Table 2. List of cash gaps with the assumed value of support under the anti-crisis shield

Tabela 2. Zestawienie luk gotówkowych wraz z zakładaną wartością wsparcia w ramach tarczy antykryzysowej

List of cash gaps with the assumed value of support under the anti-crisis shield			
Scenario	Gap (PLN billion) ²⁸	Value of support under the shield (PLN billion)	Annual Lfl ²⁹
Moderate decline	10,9	0,4	-32
Medium decline	16,1	1,1	-52
Big decline	32,0	2,3	-79

Source: Report: Polish sector on the edge. The impact of COVID-19”: <https://www.pwc.pl/pl/pdf-nf/2020/polski-sektor-modowy-wplyw-covid19.pdf>, p. 19 [access: 12.09.2020].

It should be noted that the first scenario assumed a month-long isolation that was supposed to end after Easter 2020 (mid-April). The average decline scenario, i.e. the second scenario assumes isolation lasting two months and its end in mid-May 2020, while the third scenario assumes isolation lasting until mid-May 2020 and, moreover, this scenario assumes the re-introduction of isolation in October and November 2020 and in March and April 2021³⁰.

As noted in the report cited above, each of the scenarios for a liquidity collapse consists of three effects:

²⁵ PwC Advisory sp. z o.o. sp.k. (former PwC Polska Sp. z o.o.).

²⁶ PwC report „Polski sektor modowy na krawędzi, Wpływ COVID-19”, report published 30 March 2020. Accessed 9.09.2020, <https://www.pwc.pl/pl/pdf-nf/2020/polski-sektor-modowy-wplyw-covid19.pdf>

²⁷ PwC analysts, referring to the provisions of the projects and laws in force as of March 30, 2020, estimate the total value of support in the range of PLN 0.4-2.3 billion, depending on the scenario.

²⁸ Cash gap - the difference between the level of cash available to companies in simulated scenarios and the normal level that would be available in conditions without the COVID-19 epidemic.

²⁹ Lfl (*like for like*), sales in the same stores in a comparable period in the past.

³⁰ These scenarios were prepared based on the predictions of the Oxford University virologist Emilia Skirmuntt, based on the article: <https://www.dlapiper.com/en/europe/insights/publications/2020/03/coronavirus-pandemic-when-will-it-end/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

1. collapse of sales; which is due to a reduced level of cash inflows, during the closing of stores as well as after their opening;
2. current capital; the need to pay for goods, which results in too high inventory compared to the forecast sales;
3. price reduction; the need to reduce the prices of the above goods, which, when it is possible to sell it, will be a product from the previous collection³¹.

In summary, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the fashion sector to collapse around the world. Many people have lost their jobs and many still will, but fashion marketing needs to be effective and efficient. Are the changing marketing strategies of the fashion sector a chance to save this business? How were lock down strategies changed and what main recommendations could be made to business practitioners?

2. Fashion marketing in the time of the COVID-19 coronavirus

The COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic has changed the fashion sector (possibly) forever. Customer expectations and their way of thinking led to the introduction of new action strategies. The ending third quarter provides a basis for assessing the changes introduced by marketing specialists in this sector.

In the first days of the pandemic, marketing campaigns were discontinued, followed by a time of increased activity of fashion brands that used this time to take care of their image. Sewing masks and coveralls have become a symbol of the fight against the COVID-19 virus.

In the third month after the pandemic was announced, the apparel sector returned to stationary sales. Experiences from the quarantine period made companies notice global changes in customer behavior. That is why marketing strategies began to use concepts that most customers had heard about before COVID-19: *slow fashion*³² and *sustainable fashion*³³. The COVID-19 crisis has made people more aware of sustainability and the environment, and has sparked interest in spending on health and wellness and essentials such as casual clothing, skincare and home products³⁴.

In order to look at the problem of the sector wider, it is worth looking at the most important observations of people managing this sector. The research company McKinsey on June 8 this year published an interview with directors of the fashion industry

³¹ PwC report..., p. 11.

³² *Slow fashion* draws inspiration from the slow food movement founded by Carlo Petrini in Italy in 1986, which combined the pleasure of eating with the awareness and responsible nature of food production (Cimatii, Campana and Carlucio, 2017; K. Fletcher, *Slow fashion: An Invitation for System Change*, "Fashion Practice" 2010, Vol. 2, No 2; M. Kowalski, R. Salerno-Kochan, *Spółeczno-ekonomiczne aspekty rozwoju produktów zrównoważonych branży tekstylno-odzieżowej*, "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie" 2018, 5(977).

³³ Sustainable fashion is guided by the philosophy of sustainable development and social responsibility (CSR) in its main assumptions.

³⁴ *Fashion's Big Reset*, industry article in BCG, <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/fashion-in-dustry-reset-covid> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

on its website³⁵. All discussion participants agreed that consumers are now looking for purpose and sustainable development, and the company's mission is more important than ever before. The main conclusions are presented in the table (No. 3) below.

Table 3. Main conclusions of fashion directors in light of the COVID-19 crisis
Tabela 3. Główne wnioski dyrektorów mody w świetle kryzysu COVID-19

Main conclusions of fashion directors in light of the COVID-19 crisis	
Directors of selected brands from the fashion sector	Conclusions
Stephanie Phair, Farfetch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable development, no more overproduction; changing the way you think about fundamental issues in the fashion ecosystem • the first decisions of luxury brands to appear on online platforms, e.g. in Farfetch from February 22 this year, the Harrods Farfetch Platform Solutions brand began to be sold • the demand for innovative start-ups, especially in the field of 3D design or digital showrooms • genuine communication desired; people want to buy from companies with a mission • marketing messages should be based on: storytelling, meaning and purpose
Boris Ewenstein, Zalando	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the goal is to support sales: inventory levels with online help (various events are launched on the platform for this purpose) • resignation from commission from platform partners - until May 31 this year, <i>Connect Retail</i> partners could sell via Zalando commission-free • special programs for connecting offline stores to the platform • due to the growing demand for sportswear, the <i>#TogetherIAmStrong</i> marketing campaign was launched; the campaign was to inspire activity at home
Albert Serrano, Veepee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how discounts are sold is more important than the discounts themselves • strong exposure of the company's main goal • many small fashion brands won't survive

³⁵ The participants of the *A perfect storm for fashion marketplace* interview were: Maximilian Bittner, technology entrepreneur and CEO of Vestiaire Collective, a leading global social platform for coveted, popular fashion. Stefan Edl serving fashion and retail companies as head of Transformational Retail & Fashion DACH on Facebook. Boris Ewenstein, Zalando's vice president of procurement and a member of the Zalando management team. Stephanie Phair, Farfetch's Customer Director and current Chair of the British Fashion Council. Ibert Serrano, CEO of Veepee (formerly vente-privee) in Spain, Europe's largest shopping club offering cheaper shopping, interviewed by the McKinsey team consisting of Achim Berg, Karl-Hendrik Magnus, Antonio Gonzalo, Miriam Lobis and Hanna Grabenhofer. The interview was prepared in the form of an online discussion panel and covered the most important topics for the fashion sector. All the virtual roundtable panelists agreed that the crisis accelerated the use of digital technology. That this fact is of great importance to the industry as it allows companies to interact with the customer a lot. It was noticed that for companies the new quality in the areas of: communication, engaging and interacting with customers is the basis for a paradigm shift.

Maximilian Bittner, Vestiaire Collective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launching a special sale campaign: charity with famous people to raise money to fight the virus, incl. Kate Moss • company mission and interaction with the client
Stefan Edl, Facebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it's time to get into your brand and, above all, e-commerce marketing • people have adapted quickly to working from home • the time spent on Instagram has increased, the number of reviews has increased • brands are innovative, e.g. a frequently proposed <i>concierge</i> service
McKinsey main conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from April to September, analysis shows that 35 to 40 percent of all sales will be online • focus on the company's mission and re-emphasize it • fast digital changes needed • it is important for producers to use the value of their products and to reuse them: upcycling • it is important to verify the fashion life cycle and change the situation for the better (changing the economic model) • sustainability should be the goal of any fashion company, as consumers have developed a sense of environmental goals during the crisis

Source: own study based on: A perfect storm for fashion marketplace, industry interview at McKinsey.com, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/a-perfect-storm-for-fashion-marketplaces> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

The above data is a set of some recommendations for representatives of this industry. On the other hand, what measures to combat the crisis could consumers themselves observe? The global pandemic has caused a significant increase in consumer activity on the Internet. In this space, there was a growing demand for entertainment, information, building and maintaining relationships (social media) as well as culture and art. This fact is not surprising, since the entire life of society has moved to these realities. The leading analytical platform, Heuritech, showed that as of April 14 this year, time spent on the Internet increased by 70%. Social media platforms have seen 61% greater engagement since isolation. Facebook, analysts indicate, saw a 70% increase in the time spent on its apps, and the number of views on Instagram and Facebook live doubled in the week following the isolation announcement³⁶.

As Heuritech published, following a study by Kantar, 77% of consumers believe that companies should focus on how to communicate their usefulness in the current situation (useful in people's new, everyday lives). Brands should express themselves with optimism and solidarity, as many as 70% of consumers indicated that they expect

³⁶ M. Mollard, *How fashion brands can market and communicate during COVID-19*, industry article in: <https://www.heuritech.com/blog/articles/how-fashion-brands-can-market-and-communicate-during-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

a „reassuring tone” from companies³⁷. The changed campaigns and good marketing practices have been noticed by both consumers and research companies around the world. The Nike company is an example of such activities. WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, while Nike announced on March 15 that all stores in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand would be closed for a minimum of two weeks. Successively, the management of this brand communicated to the media that employees would receive their salary and that their goal was the health of their team. Moreover, the company avoided traditional marketing and encouraged people to stay at home. Andy Campion, Nike brand's CFO, said in interviews that by March 26, online sales had tripled³⁸.

During this period, companies also noticed that people confined to their homes need entertainment and are more likely to reach for video files. Among the active ones there were: streetwear label John Elliot, which decided to publish playlists on the platform, Stradivarius broadcast live actress and singer Danna Poala, the action was marked with the hashtag #musictostayhome. The more demanding projects include computer games, cultural projects and virtual exhibitions. It is worth mentioning here examples of brands such as Burberry or Moschino. Burberry's idea to connect with customers might have been a big surprise. The brand has released a computer game called „B Bounce” to promote monograms. Moschino, on the other hand, decided to cooperate with the popular computer game „The Sims”³⁹.

Many brands have decided to make donations to hospitals in the form of money or products (sewing masks or coveralls for medical workers). The brands that are active in this field include: LVMH, Kering, Giorgio Armani, Versace, Gucci, Saint Laurent, Balenciaga, Moncler, Etam, Ralph Lauren and many others. Among other things, Chanel is one of the many brands that produce masks for healthcare workers, LVMH transformed its cosmetics factories into hand sanitizer factories, and Moncler donated 100,000. euro to hospitals in Italy⁴⁰.

Among the activities for culture and art, it is worth noting such activities: „Metropolitan Museum of Art opened free online access to over 1,600 art books. Nikon made its 10 classes of online photography free until the end of April. Gucci teamed up with Yuko Higuchi and released a free-to-download digital sketchbook that includes coloring pages, games, and more. The Museum of Modern Art launched a series of free online courses on fashion and design.”⁴¹

Summarizing the marketing activities of companies in the fashion sector, it can be noted that the managers of this industry quickly read the changing consumer

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Ibidem.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ I. Nesterenko, *Marketing During the COVID-19 Crisis: Cases, Strategies, Examples*, article in: <https://esputnik.com/en/blog/marketing-during-covid-19-crisis-cases-strategies-examples> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

mood. The marketing message from the beginning of the declaration of a global pandemic and isolation is empathetic. Brands eagerly engage in activities supporting medical services and recommend hygiene. Physical and mental health has become a priority for both consumers and retailers. Following consumers, most fashion brands appreciated the environmental aspect. The crisis was a catalyst that shook the industry and caused changes that everyone had to get used to quickly.

Summary

The pandemic revealed problems in many areas, especially the fragility of supply chains, production and logistics management, and finally the unpreparedness of many entities to transfer their sales to the Internet.

COVID-19 has caused supply and demand disruptions that have a resonant impact on supply chain operations and management, it has identified the need to build flexibility to mitigate epidemic and demand risks⁴².

Unauthorized subcontracting of clothing production in low-cost countries has become a source of problems for both producers and consumers. Bad business practices at this particular time were stigmatized. The research question that the author raises in the introduction to the article, what will the effect of the changes caused by COVID-19 be, finds its answer in the customers' approach to shopping. Consumers expect genuine brand relationships, genuine dialogue, concern for mental and physical health, and evidence that companies are also responsible for the planet. There have never been so many voices regarding changing the economic model. People all over the world see the need for change. Therefore, it seems that this global epidemiological and economic catastrophe has become a hope for a change in our attitudes and decisions. Certainly, the pandemic and its consequences will revise the approach of producers, sellers and customers to the fast fashion trend. This is a good time to challenge the linear economy model and move to the circular one. Wise shopping and caring for the planet are becoming fashionable and supported by all parties. Thus, the answer to the question whether the pandemic will stop the fast fashion trend is not unequivocal, but it is strongly marked with positive feedback from all interested parties.

What marketing strategies will work in the future? Customers seem to be more sensitive. Caring for physical and mental health has become a priority, which is why, according to the author, the responsibility of companies and their empathy will be key in communication with consumers.

⁴² A. Majumdar, M. Shaw, S. Kumar Sinha, *Covid-19 debunks the myth of socially sustainable supply chain: A case of the clothing industry in South Asian countries*, [in:] *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, Volume 24, October 2020, Pages 150-155 [accessed: 9.09.2020, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352550920304139>].

The recommendations for practitioners contained in this paper should be further developed. There is a need for further research in this area. Due to the volume limitations of this work, many questions remain unanswered. The quoted conclusions can be used by scientists and practitioners to further explore the above problems.

Bibliography

Cimatti B., Campana G., Garluccio L., *Eco Design and Sustainable Manufacturing in Fashion: A Case Study in the Luxury Personal Accessories Industry*, "Procedia Manufacturing" 2017, Vol. 8.

Fletcher K., *Slow fashion: An Invitation for System Change*, "Fashion Practice" 2010, Vol. 2, No 2.

Gazzola P., Pavione E., Pezzetti R., Grechi D., *Trends in the Fashion Industry. The Perception of Sustainability and Circular Economy: A Gender/Generation Quantitative Approach*, Sustainability 2020, 12, 2809.

Kowalski M., Salerno-Kochan R., *Społeczno-ekonomiczne aspekty rozwoju produktów zrównoważonych branży tekstylno-odzieżowej*, „Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie” 2018, 5(977).

Lisiński M., *Metodologia pragmatyczna nauk o zarządzaniu*, Zarządzanie i Finanse, „Journal of Management and Finance” 2016, Vol. 14, No 2/1/16.

Majumdar A., Shaw M., Kumar Sinha S., *Covid-19 debunks the myth of socially sustainable supply chain: A case of the clothing industry in South Asian countries*, [in:] Sustainable Production and Consumption, Volume 24, October 2020, Pages 150-155 [accessed: 9.09.2020 in <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352550920304139>].

Mollard M., *How fashion brands can market and communicate during COVID-19*, industry article in: <https://www.heuritech.com/blog/articles/how-fashion-brands-can-market-and-communicate-during-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

Nesterenko I., *Marketing During the COVID-19 Crisis: Cases, Strategies, Examples*, article in: <https://esputnik.com/en/blog/marketing-during-covid-19-crisis-cases-strategies-examples> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

Internet sources:

BCG, *Fashion's Big Reset*, industry article and report in: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/fashion-industry-reset-covid> [accessed: 1.06.2020].

BCG, *Fashion's Big Reset*, industry article and report in: <https://www.bcg.com/publications/2020/fashion-industry-reset-covid> [accessed: 1.06.2020].

BCG, *Luxury Market Trends—Digital & Experiential Luxury 2019*, industry report in: <http://media-publications.bcg.com/france/True-Luxury%20Global%20Consumer%20Insight%202019%20-%20Plenary%20-%20vMedia.pdf> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

BOF & McKinsey, *The State of Fashion Report 2019*, industry report in: <https://www.businessoffashion.com/articles/intelligence/the-state-of-fashion-2019> [accessed: 26.02.2020].

DOXEE, *Fashion marketing after Covid-19*, industry article in: <https://www.doxee.com/blog/digital-marketing/fashion-marketing-after-covid-19/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

KPMG, „Rynek mody w Polsce, Wyzwania”, KPMG Report, November 2019.

McKinsey, *A perfect storm for fashion marketplace*, industry interview in McKinsey.com, <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/a-perfect-storm-for-fashion-marketplaces>, [accessed: 9.09.2020].

McKinsey, *It's time to rewire the fashion system: State of Fashion coronavirus update*, industry report in: <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/its-time-to-rewire-the-fashion-system-state-of-fashion-coronavirus-update> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

PwC, „Polski sektor modowy na krawędzi. Wpływ COVID-19”: <https://www.pwc.pl/pl/pdf-nf/2020/polski-sektor-modowy-wplyw-covid19.pdf> [accessed: 12.09.2020].

RETIEWS, *COVID-19: Have Fashion Brands Modified Their Strategy?*, industry article in: <https://retviews.com/blog/industry/coronavirus/> [accessed: 9.09.2020].

Author's resume:

Justyna Szymczyk, PhD student of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Studies at the WSB Academy, Faculty of Applied Sciences, Department of Management. Since 2013, she has been working as an academic teacher at the Department of Design at the Higher Technical School (Wyższa Szkoła Techniczna) in Katowice. In autumn 2019, she joined the group of lecturers at the WSB Academy in Dąbrowa Górnicza. Marketing and sales practitioner since 1998. She worked as sales director and regional sales director in Grupa Radiowa Agora, with which she was associated for 10 years. Since 2008, she has been running the JC Academy Integrated Marketing Agency, specializing in events. She cooperated with Nokia, Sony, ING Bank Śląski, Volvo. Her portfolio also includes her own cyclical event: Silesia Fashion Day (twelve editions of the event). Her scientific and didactic interests include: event marketing, the concept of value in marketing, sales promotion, marketing communication, with particular emphasis on integrated marketing communication.

Nota o Autorze:

Justyna Szymczyk – doktorantka Interdyscyplinarnych Studiów Doktoranckich w Akademii WSB, Wydział Nauk Stosowanych, Katedra Zarządzania. Od 2013 roku pracuje jako nauczyciel akademicki w Katedrze Wzornictwa Wyższej Szkoły Technicznej w Katowicach. Jesienią 2019 roku dołączyła do grona wykładowców Akademii WSB w Dąbrowie Górniczej. Praktyk marketingu i sprzedaży od 1998 roku. Pracowała na stanowiskach dyrektora sprzedaży i regionalnego dyrektora sprzedaży w Grupie Radiowej Agory, z którą związana była przez 10 lat. Od 2008 roku prowadzi Agencję Marketingu Zintegrowanego JC Academy specjalizującą się w eventach. Współpracowała z Nokia, Sony, ING Bank Śląski, Volvo. W swoim portfolio posiada również cykliczny event własny: Silesia Fashion Day (zrealizowanych dwanaście edycji wydarzenia). Jej zainteresowania naukowe i dydaktyczne obejmują: event marketing, pojęcie wartości w marketingu, promocję sprzedaży, komunikację marketingową, ze szczególnym wyróżnieniem zintegrowanej komunikacji marketingowej.

Contact/Kontakt:

Justyna Szymczyk

e-mail: jszymczyk@wsb.edu.pl