

Changes in buying behavior of customers in shipping services during Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

Within the framework of this article the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on purchasing behavior to transport and forwarding companies is examined and discussed. The choice of the topic of work is not accidental as it concerns my family business. The aim of the research was to check which marketing tools work best in the new reality, which transport and forwarding companies had to face. The conclusions from the research were to help verify which purchasing strategies are worth changing, leading or replacing. The aim of the study was to analyse the changes in purchasing behavior of consumers in the transport and shipping services market in the face of a pandemic. It turned out that enterprises that implemented adaptive purchasing methods prospered in a completely different way and had a better chance of surviving on the market in this difficult period. The methodology used in the study is a diagnostic survey. Thanks to the data collected in the interview, using the questionnaire, it was possible to determine the scope and intensity of a given phenomenon, and then to determine the best solutions. The conclusions from the research showed that transport and forwarding companies that want to survive on the market should update their consumer purchasing methods. Together with the pandemic, new consumer behavior has emerged. Consumers are now more deliberate in their decision-making and are at a great time using technology when making purchasing decisions. The interest of social media in selecting and defining a potential service provider has definitely increased. Nevertheless, the quality and price of the services provided are still important, which must not be forgotten by transport companies.

Key words

purchasing behavior, customer, pandemic, transport, shipping market

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic affected the economy of both the world and individual countries, including the transport and shipping market. Enterprises wishing to survive on the market in unstable and uncertain circumstances were forced to review and update their existing strategies. The existence of enterprises is ensured by a satisfied customer who, more than usual, needed special attention, instilling trust, and a sense of security. Proper recognition of purchasing behaviours through the identification of their needs and values was a key factor in survival in the new pandemic reality.

The aim of the presented article is to assess the impact of the socio-economic crisis resulting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic on the purchasing behavior of individual customers of transport and forwarding companies involved in the transport of goods. The first part of the article presents the theoretical context of the presented issue concerning the analysed transport and forwarding market and the most important aspects of consumers' purchasing behavior. The changes in business management in the transport industry resulting from the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic were also noted.

The research method used in the study is a diagnostic survey, while the research tool used for this purpose was a questionnaire. The study was to examine the opinions of individual customers of a small shipping company regarding its marketing activities during the pandemic. Based on the research, it was indicated which elements of marketing strategies turned out to be key in the face of the new reality.

1. Literature review

In the face of increasing competition and fluctuating market conditions, companies should closely monitor the behaviour and values they offer to their customers. At the beginning, however, it is worth answering the question: "Who is the customer and what role does he play for the organisation?". An interesting proposal to include the importance of the client in the organization was proposed by P.F. Drucker [1976, p. 32]: "the customer is the foundation of business, and it is he who ensures his existence". The author also emphasizes that the goal of business is to create a clientele and create such conditions that a specific entity becomes a client through the created offer and information about it. Both the offer and the information about it constitute a value for which the customer is willing to pay the corresponding price. The significant role of the consumer in business is beyond doubt. The ability to identify and

segment different types of customers is necessary to better understand consumer behavior and allocate resources appropriately. The study focused primarily on individual customers who are the final recipients of goods and services.

Customer orientation means managing the enterprise and adapting the activities of the organization to its needs. Feeling a need is a kind of discomfort related to the lack of satisfaction caused by not having the intangible or tangible assets necessary in a given situation. The emergence of a need is triggered by measures to satisfy those needs. Consumer needs are exploited by companies through marketing tools [Biesok and Wyród-Wróbel, 2016, pp.11-12]. The factors that influence the company's long-term success will be particularly impressed by the buyer, who is sure to make the right purchase decision among the options available on the market. A satisfied customer will generate positive information about the company, make more frequent purchases of the product or use the service more willingly. Information provided by a satisfied customer is a reliable source of information, which arouses interest among potential consumers.

According to the definition of R.K. Mishra [2017, p.16] "consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioral responses that precede or follow these activities". Consumer behavior is conditioned by many factors related to the external environment and internal determinants of decision making. The changes in today's markets are radical and often irreversible. External economic, socio-cultural and technological conditions are changing, bringing with them new consumer needs and new ways of meeting those needs. Currently, consumer behavior is influenced by the pandemic factor, which has turned out to be a big challenge for many companies, economies and countries. The effects of the pandemic translated into changes in consumer behavior, and thus into market strategies and marketing activities of enterprises. Each of these factors entails major changes which, in their scale and nature, determine the direction of consumption development and create new patterns of consumer behaviour.

Understanding consumer behavior is in the best interest of a given enterprise. For this purpose, marketing is used, which assumes that companies exist to meet the needs of consumers [Solomon et al., 2006, pp. 8]. According to the definition, marketing is the attempt of an organization to meet the needs of consumers through a set of coordinated activities that also allow to achieve the goals of the organization [Felix and Lao, 2001, pp. 8]. Marketing has a strong influence on purchasing decisions. Thanks to the tools used by marketing, it is possible to shape attitudes towards specific products or services. Marketing instruments and activities are related to the

most popular composition, which includes: product, price, distribution, promotion. The promotion allows buyers to draw attention to a product or service and to learn about the benefits of buying. Advertising is a tool aimed at the mass public and has an effective impact on consumer opinion and opinion-forming through the mass media. One of the marketing factors that determine consumer behaviour is, of course, price. Price still plays an important role in the final decision [Szpilko et al., 2021; Szydło et al, 2022]. The pricing strategies pursued by businesses should be based on the identification of consumers' price perceptions and their sensitivity to price changes. Companies that want to create value for the customer must take their perspective, which means that they treat them as partners in the marketing process [Vargo and Roger, 2004, pp. 1-17].

The dynamic changes in the business environment have shaped the image of a new consumer. Consumers in the 21st century are increasingly critical and demanding of business marketing. It is becoming more and more difficult to satisfy a consumer who has well-defined expectations. Potential consumers have a great deal of access to information and use the Internet to compare the company's offer with their competitors. The development of the Internet has had a major impact on consumers' purchasing behaviour, in particular on the way they search for information and how they shop [Vinerean et al., 2013, pp. 66]. The increasing complexity of the environment and the increasing demands of consumers are steering companies towards adaptation processes. Some of these changes occur naturally, are a response to the development of technology, the level of wealth of the society or international conditions. Sometimes, however, there are spontaneous changes (such as the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic) that were difficult to predict and have caused a large change in customer purchasing behavior [Andújar Trabazos et al, 2021].

The problem of the studied phenomenon relates to the logistics industry, and more precisely to the international carriage of goods in road transport. According to the definition of T. Szczepaniak [2002, pp. 16], "transport is a production process through which people, in conditions of limited resources, move people, things and energy in space in order to satisfy their various needs and desires". In economic terms, transport is an activity that consists in the paid (or free) provision of services, the effect of which is the movement of people and goods from the point of dispatch to the point of collection and the provision of related ancillary services [Stajniak et al., 2008, pp. 9]. Particularly noteworthy is the definition of the transport function proposed by Kappauf [2011, p. 255]; "transport logistics, in the cross-sectional function, is responsible for accounting, transport planning and the transport itself, and at the end of the procedure an invoice should be issued for the customer". What's

more, the author emphasizes that the key goal of transport is to deliver a specific product to the right place, at the right time and with the lowest possible cost.

The development and demand for transport services are influenced by many factors. The development of the transport market in the last two decades was accelerated mainly by the development of new technologies, globalization, global trade and trade liberalization. The transport market is highly dependent on changes in the environment, but at the same time there is no possibility of economic development without transport. It is worth noting that the producer's market changes into the consumer market. This means paying more attention to customer service and the flow of products and information along the logistics chain, rather than focusing on the product itself.

The transport services market is prone to multi-layered divisions, which is why it shapes the increasing specialization of work at a higher quality level. There is a distinction between what transport, logistics and shipping. Nevertheless, there are very close relations between these areas, and they all belong to the TSL industry. The most extensive interdisciplinary field is logistics, which includes both transport and forwarding. Freight forwarding is an activity consisting in organizing the movement of cargo for the client and performing related activities, except for the transport itself and additional activities [Stajniak et al., 2008, pp. 16].

There are two groups of participants: shipping companies providing services and service recipients who report a need for shipping services. It is worth noting that shipping companies can be both a recipient and a service provider [Drljača, 2019, pp. 1030-1036]. A forwarding service is a commercial transaction the purpose of which is the paid delivery of goods or the paid provision of services if the parties to this contract conclude it in connection with their business or professional activity. The scope of a specific forwarding service is included in a specific civil law contract concluded between the parties.

In turn, the forwarder is a legal or natural person who professionally organizes the movement of cargo, providing its own services or on behalf of the principal [Rydzkowski and Wojewódzki-Król, 2006, pp. 250]. The concept of movement should be understood as such activities as: transport, reloading, storage and other physical manipulations with the shipment during the transport process. The freight forwarder can therefore be called a "transport architect" because his main task is to design the transport process and its supervision during implementation by other specialized entities.

The essence of forwarding is therefore to act for the benefit of customers who entrust them with their cargo in order to organize their transfer from the place of dispatch to the place of receipt. Proper customer service must take into account all

the diverse needs of customers, which may change depending on the market segment, the type of goods and services provided, the scale of the delivery organization system or the intensification of competition. Customer expectations towards shippers most often relate to such elements as: time, cost, certainty, reliability, flexibility, availability [Wasiolewska-Marszałkowska, 2014, pp. 81; Szpilko et al., 2021]. The essence of these requirements is to deliver the goods as quickly as possible, at the lowest possible price and in a reliable manner.

The freight forwarding service may be carried out as part of international transport. International transport facilitates the exchange of goods and industrial cooperation between producers, exporters and importers of different countries. In this way, the goods transported can gain added value when there is no demand at the place of production, while they may be of interest at the place of destination in another country. It can therefore be concluded that transport is a key element integrating the domestic economy with the international market. International trade is the exchange of goods, services or intangible goods against payment between parties whose headquarters are in other countries. The activity of international forwarding companies consists in intermediation between the exporter / importer and intermediaries acting on their own behalf or on behalf of the customer as a party to the concluded contracts [Stajniak et al., 2008, s. 204].

The success of a forwarding and transport company depends on the achievement of strategic objectives, which in most cases are linked to marketing objectives. In the process of acquiring customers, the company must initially prepare an offer addressed to a specific recipient. The offer must be complementary and arouse interest. All social engineering aspects tailored to the needs of a specific customer must be taken into account. Separating them helps enterprises to better adjust marketing activities, select the right tools influencing the behavior of buyers, thanks to which they will gain their favor and persuade them to buy.

All consumers in the transport and forwarding market display individual needs. Buyers in this industry attach particular importance to the value of services, price, market communication and the conditions for their implementation. Their satisfaction is closely related to the quality of the service received. Expecting the highest possible benefits and satisfaction, customers verify the quality, manufacturer's brand, service availability, service quality and employee competences. Recommendations referring to a specific contractor are also more and more important. A high level of customer satisfaction builds loyalty to proven service providers, which is related to lower sensitivity to price changes.

The main idea of the marketing strategy is to adapt to the changing circumstances and market conditions that influence the market of transport and forwarding

customers. The implementation of the marketing concept requires constant analysis of the environment (closer and further) and undertaking adaptation processes at the right time. Shaping consumer behavior through marketing is also intended to transform potential customers into loyal buyers. The use of marketing instruments helps to improve market relationships, effectively create, build and strengthen a competitive advantage, achieve market goals and multiply value. Acting in accordance with the concept of marketing is to put the consumer in the center of attention. Each consumer shows specific needs, preferences, behaviors and attitudes that are a signpost for shaping a marketing strategy. Shaping a marketing strategy for transport and forwarding companies is primarily to determine the needs and expectations of customers. Creating marketing programs must be addressed to a specific group of buyers. It is also necessary to determine the market conditions in which the company operates and to adapt the offer to the changing environment under various factors.

In 2020, the situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic affected the entire economy of the country, including the TSL industry. In the period before the pandemic, there was a clear growth and importance of the TSL industry. Problems with the functioning of the transport sector in the circumstances of the pandemic were caused by the need for increased health protection and the emergence of many restrictions related to it. There were difficulties in crossing borders, which created many complications for international transport companies. In addition, some countries have introduced curfews, which resulted in delays and disruptions in the liquidity of transport. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, transport companies had great freedom to transport goods belonging to the Member States of the European Union or the Schengen area, whereas in reality the pandemic reintroduced border controls. The work of the drivers was also disorganized by the quarantine in the event of a virus infection. This led to undesirable downtime for small transport companies that did not have many drivers.

Transport as a mediator is in the middle of the cause-effect chain. The outbreak of the pandemic resulted in slowing down and even stopping the activity of many sectors of the economy. In turn, the inhibition of various sectors resulted in a reduced need for transport and a decrease in transported loads. Due to the negative contribution of transport to ecology, it is logical that when there is a reduction in transport, the environment improves. Transport can also act as a moderator. This means that shipping activities had a direct impact on the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The moderator effect relates to a greater extent to passenger transport, which is why governments have imposed many restrictions on it [Loske, 2020].

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic means not only economic turbulence, numerous restrictions, but also many new opportunities and a great impulse to introduce innovative solutions. Within a very short period of time, the interest of customers and companies in online channels has greatly increased. The rapid development of e-commerce has led to a significant increase in online orders, generating profits for logistics companies in particular courier services. The pandemic has led to increased participation in retail and distance shopping, adding extra work for courier and general cargo companies. Restrictions on movement and brick-and-mortar purchases have prompted consumers to replace their traditional purchases with e-commerce. Moreover, some stores themselves have begun to see the many benefits of switching to online sales. Above all, operating costs like rent, depreciation and other physical store expenses are much lower in e-commerce [Dholakia, 2002, pp. 45-60]. This resulted in a need for more freight deliveries. Online shopping customers expect the ordered product to be delivered quickly on time and safely. It turns out that these criteria are more important than the price itself. For this reason, investments in streamlining processes and digitization are necessary. Transport companies that want to remain competitive in this area should implement real-time cargo monitoring systems.

The Covid-19 pandemic has contributed to a number of radical changes in the industry. The strong emphasis on implementing technological innovations affecting the speed and security of supply, changing strategic business models or seeking new green solutions are just some examples of these changes. The transport industry, which is dependent on the supply of production companies and the demand on the market, had to face many challenges and focus on market segments where transport activity was still necessary. The most difficult period was the beginning of the pandemic, especially for international transport companies, as there were many difficulties when moving borders and transport costs increased. The pandemic was a kind of lesson for transport companies, which some companies learned when drawing specific conclusions, so they are able to continue their activities. Unfortunately, some transport companies did not cope with the new reality and the consequence was that their activities had to be suspended or collapsed.

2. Research methodology

The Covid-19 pandemic has triggered a series of changes in the purchasing behavior of consumers around the world. Earlier ways of acquiring customers very often did not work in the new reality, so it was important to verify the marketing activities that worked in these circumstances. This is a consequence of various types

of restrictions introduced in many countries. They also affected the entire logistics industry, including small transport and forwarding companies. The aim of the study was to investigate the evaluation of changes occurring due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the purchasing behavior of customers of transport and shipping companies. The conducted analysis allows to determine which of the marketing activities of transport and forwarding companies changed during the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as which of them were the most effective.

For the purposes of this work, the survey method was chosen. The technique turned out to be a questionnaire, consisting in marking the answer chosen by the respondent or several answers in the case of multiple-choice questions. The interview was conducted in the home of respondents, after which the answers were recorded in paper form.

The structure of the research tool consisted of two parts: the respondent's record and the questions relevant to the research issues undertaken. The survey was conducted in May 2022. They were individual, anonymous, and voluntary. Each of the respondents voluntarily participated in the study and was able to withdraw at any time. The participants were presented with the instructions and the subject of the study. The survey was conducted among Polish respondents. The study concerned individual clients of a small transport and forwarding company.

Each participant completed a questionnaire containing one metric and other questions. The questions were designed so that they were unambiguous, and it was not a problem to answer them.

The survey involved 100 respondents: 32% were women and 68% were men. There was no person under the age of 18, between the age of 18 and 26 there were 27% of the respondents, between 27 and 35 years old - 36%, between 36 and 50 years old - 25%, and over 50 years old - 12%. The vast majority of respondents had secondary education - 63%, higher education 29% and vocational education. Most of the respondents (56%) live in a city with more than 150,000 inhabitants, while 17% live in a city with 51,000 to 150,000 inhabitants, then 16% a city with up to 20,000 inhabitants, 6% a city with 21,000 to 50,000 inhabitants, and villages 5% of the respondents. Employed under a contract of employment for an indefinite period of time accounted for almost half of the respondents - 44%, the number of employees under a mandate or work contract was 38%, employed under a fixed-term employment contract - 18% and students 3%. Most respondents reported income in the range of PLN 2,000 to 4,000 - 86%, then 8 people reported earnings from PLN 4,000 to 6,000, and 6% less than PLN 2,000. The household size among the respondents is as follows: 4 people - 38%, 3 people - 35%, 2 people - 18%, 5 and more people - 6% and one person - 3%.

3. Research results

To the first question, to what extent has your use of transport and forwarding services changed in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic, i.e., in the period 03.2020-05.2022 compared to the period before the outbreak of the pandemic?, almost half of the respondents declared an increase in use - 48% , unchanged -23%, a significant increase - 15%, and a decrease of 14%. Figure 1 shows the answers.

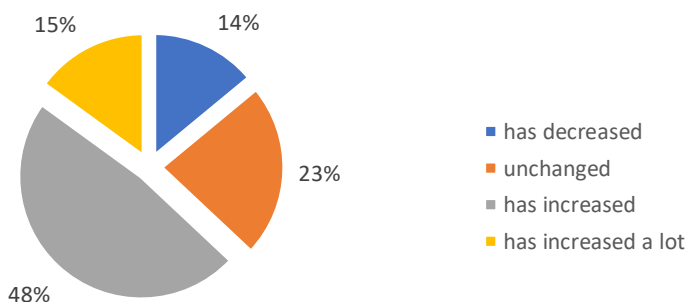


Fig. 1. Change in the use of transport and forwarding services in connection with the Covid-19 pandemic

Source: own study.

In the second question, How often do you use transport and forwarding services in general ?, the answers were more divided (Figure 2). 36 people (36%) declared once every three months or less, 28 people used it once every two months (28%), once a month 24 people (24%), 3 to 4 times a month 12 people (12%) and at least 5 to 8 times a month - 4 people (4%).

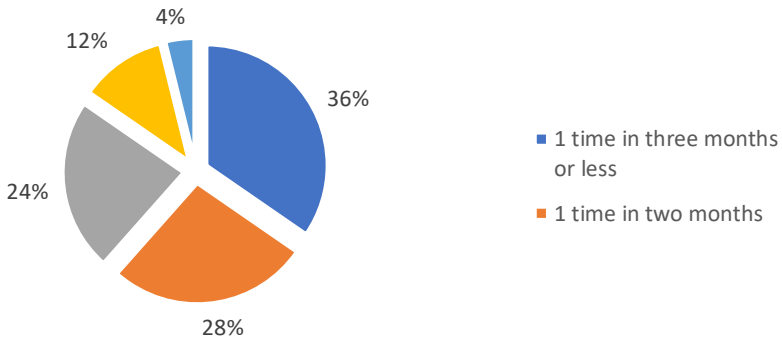


Fig. 2. The frequency of using transport and forwarding services

Source: own study.

In the next question, the respondents were asked about the services of which transport and forwarding company they used most often. DHL turned out to be the most popular - 32%, followed by DPD - 29%, other - 25%, UPC - 9%, Fedex - 3%, GLS - 2%.

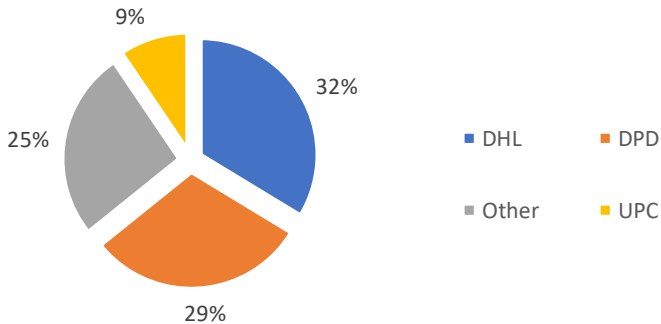


Fig. 3. The most frequently chosen transport and forwarding companies

Source: own study.

Then respondents were asked to rate the presented features of the transport service before and after the outbreak of the pandemic on a scale of 1 to 5. On the scale

adopted, 1 meant the most important and 5 the least important. 7 features were specified: service availability, service reliability, transport flexibility, transport time, comprehensive service, transport safety and the company's reputation.

The first feature - service availability, was assessed as more important after the outbreak of the pandemic, as shown in Figure 4. As many as 64% of respondents gave a rating of 2 and a rating of 3% to 1, where compared to the period before the pandemic, 21% chose a rating of 2 and no one gave the highest rating.

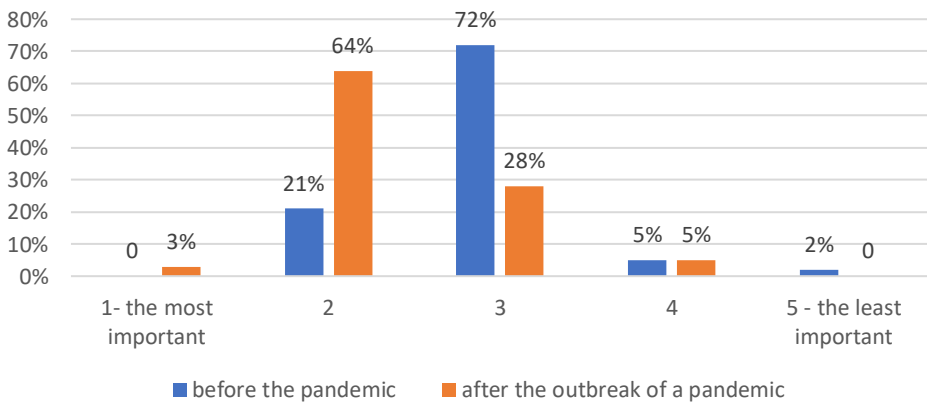


Fig. 4. Assessment of the availability of services according to respondents before and after the outbreak of the pandemic

Source: own study.

The second feature - service reliability, was assessed similarly to the first one, as shown in Figure 5. Also, after the outbreak of the pandemic, this feature gained importance, which is indicated by as many as 11% of respondents who rated it as 1. This is 9% more than in the period before the pandemic.

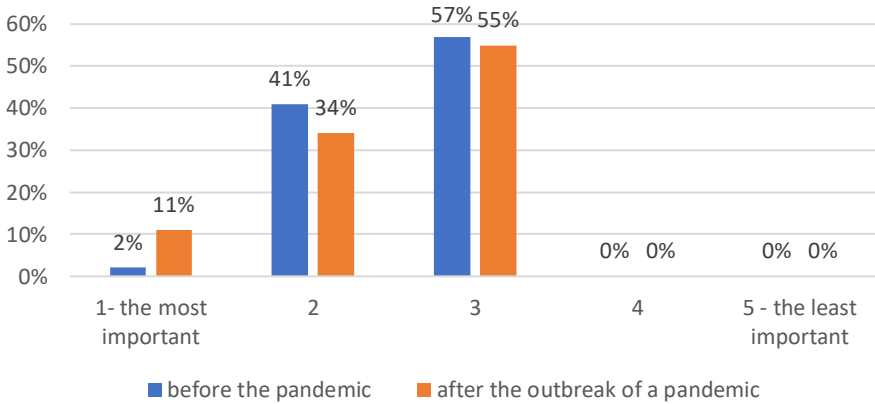


Fig. 5. Assessment of the reliability of services according to respondents before and after the outbreak of the pandemic

Source: own study.

The flexibility of transport and the comprehensiveness of services were similarly assessed both before and after the outbreak of the pandemic (Figure 6).

These features are quite neutral for the respondents, where the vast majority gave a grade of 3.

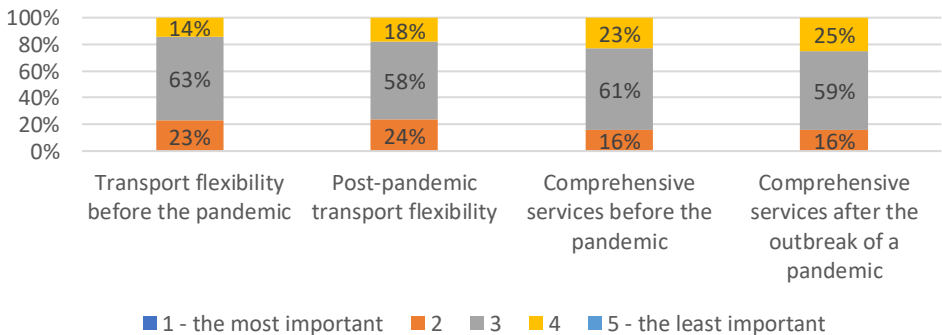


Fig. 6. Assessment of the flexibility of transport and the comprehensiveness of services according to the respondents before and after the outbreak of the pandemic

Source: own study.

Transport time and security of transport have similarly gained importance after the outbreak of the pandemic. Both of these features are very important for the respondents, as shown in Figure 7. Reliability of transportation became especially important after the outbreak of the pandemic.

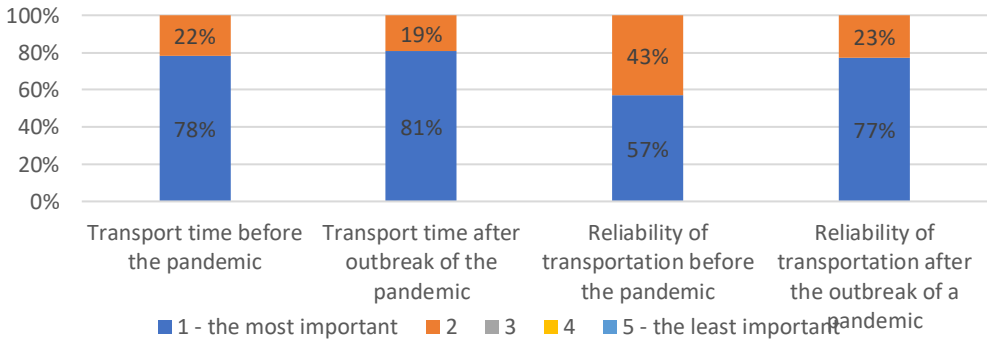


Fig. 7. Assessment of transport time and reliability of transport according to the respondents before and after the outbreak of the pandemic

Source: own study.

The last features - the company's reputation, remained unchanged (Figure 8). This shows that the pandemic did not have any impact on the significance of its level and, according to the majority of respondents, it is moderately significant.

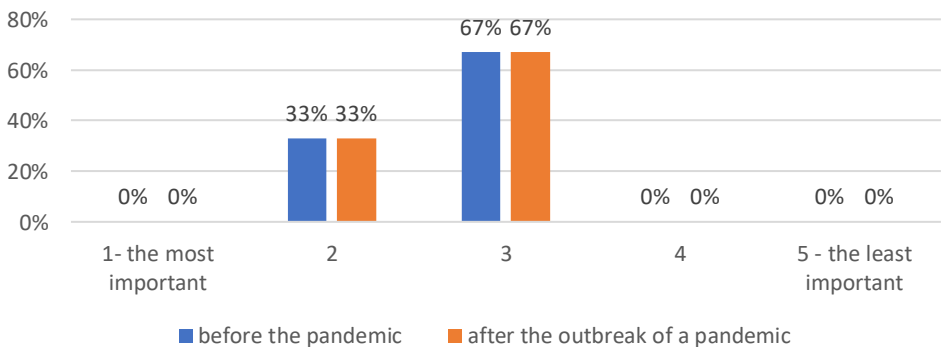


Fig. 8. Assessment of the company's reputation according to the respondents before and after the outbreak of the pandemic

Source: own study.

In the next question, the respondent was asked to indicate which communication channels used by transport and forwarding companies were encountered most often in the time of the pandemic, i.e., in the period 03.2020-05.2022. The respondent could choose a maximum of 3 answers. All respondents indicated a phone call, 89% - SMS / text messaging, 87% e-mail and 24% the company's Facebook page (Figure 9).

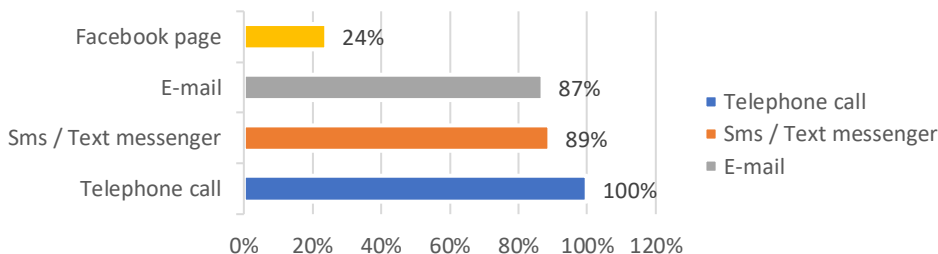


Fig. 9. The most common communication channels of transport and forwarding companies according to the respondents

Source: own study.

The following two questions were related to the forms of marketing communication of transport and forwarding companies before the outbreak of the pandemic (before 03.2020) and during the pandemic (03.2020-05.2022), which were most relevant to the respondents. The answers are shown in Figure 10. Only two responses, social media and newsletters, differed slightly, and the rest of the responses are the same.

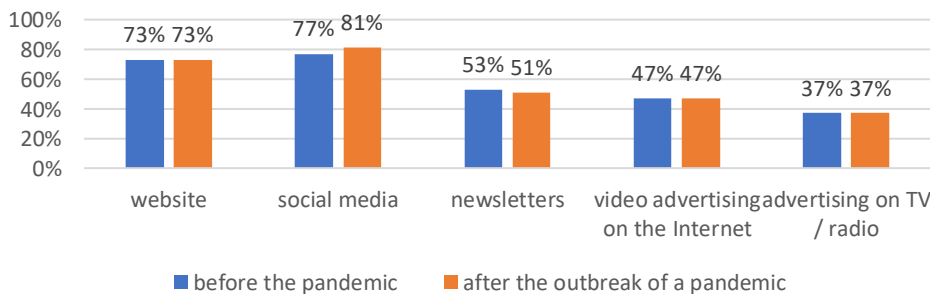


Fig. 10. Preferred forms of marketing communication for transport and shipping companies before and during the pandemic

Source: own study.

In the last question of the survey, they were asked to evaluate the characteristics of the services of shipping and transport companies that had the greatest impact on the purchasing decision of the transport and forwarding service before the pandemic (before 03.2020) and during the pandemic (03.2020-05.2022)? This question was a scale question and the respondent assessed it by awarding points from 1 to 5, where: 1 was the most important feature, and 5 - the least important. The question asked about the following six characteristics: quality of the service offered, price, promotional activities, qualifications of the seller, availability of information about the company and quality of customer service. The highest scores were given to the quality of the service offered and the price - Figure 11. Both of these features gained importance after the outbreak of the pandemic.

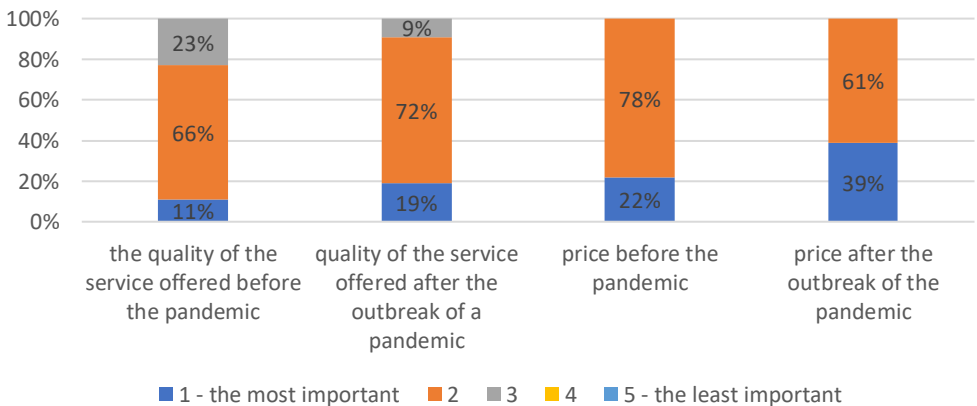


Fig. 11. Assessment of the impact of the quality of the service offered and the price on purchasing decisions of the transport and forwarding service before the pandemic and during the pandemic

Source: own study.

The next two features - promotional activities and the qualifications of the seller, obtained the same or similar values before the pandemic and after the outbreak of the pandemic (Figure 12).

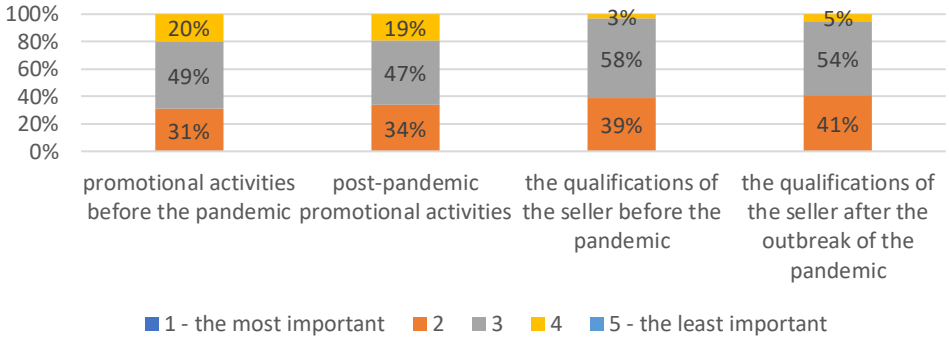


Fig. 12. Assessment of the impact of promotional activities and the qualifications of the seller on purchasing decisions of transport and forwarding services before and during a pandemic

Source: own study.

The availability of information about the company slightly increased after the outbreak of the pandemic, and the quality of customer service both before and after the outbreak of the pandemic was assessed similarly (Figure 13).

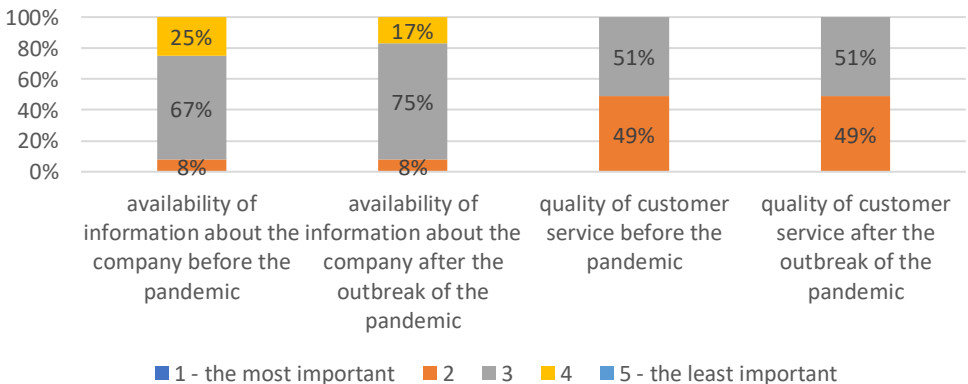


Fig. 13. Assessment of the impact of the availability of information about the company and the quality of customer service on purchasing decisions of transport and forwarding services before a pandemic and during a pandemic

Source: own study.

4. Discussion

At the beginning of the pandemic, in March 2020, transport and shipping companies encountered many difficulties. Sanitary restrictions were introduced, such as: keeping distance, disinfecting, wearing protective masks, which also influenced additional costs for entrepreneurs. Moreover, the rapidly spreading number of infected people or in contact with the infected resulted in forced quarantines and staff shortages. The initial panic among the population resulted in the excessive purchase of basic food and sanitary products, causing shortages in shops. Due to the closure of the borders and the introduction of additional control elements, huge queues were created at the borders, the entire transport process was extended, which contributed to problems with deliveries. Despite numerous difficulties, the situation was brought under control after a few weeks. This forced entrepreneurs from the TFL industry to reorganize, change the functioning of their companies and the way of management.

The demand for transport and forwarding services during the pandemic increased, which was influenced by many factors. The first was the closure of many areas of the national economy, such as shopping malls, restaurants, and tourism. Various types of restrictions also contributed to this, such as the limits of served people, social distance. Consumers' fear of leaving the house as well as the deterioration of their health. At that time, the e-commerce market developed drastically. Part of the activity was transferred to the Internet, resulting in an increase in the supply of transport.

The frequency of purchases has decreased. Most consumers were shopping more and less frequently. Their requirements have also changed. After the outbreak of the pandemic, respondents placed more emphasis on accessibility, reliability, transport times and transport safety.

People taking part in the survey indicated that before the pandemic, the price of the service, the form of settlement and the payment date were rather good, and most of them indicated the average assessment of the speed of providing the rate for transport and the possibility of negotiating prices. However, in the face of the pandemic, the price of the service significantly deteriorated, which is understandable due to the increased costs for the entrepreneur in this situation. Also, the speed of submitting the rate for transport and the possibility of negotiating prices slightly deteriorated.

Referring to the research carried out by KPMG, new shopping habits of consumers in the world were identified. According to these studies, the most important factor is value for money. Consumers are more concerned with their safety and health; they make less impulsive choices and think more about their decisions. The study also

drew attention to the convenience of shopping, trust in the brand and personal safety [Karasek et al., 2020, p. 6]. The research largely coincides with the research carried out for this article, and similar conclusions are drawn. The pandemic has spawned a new way of gaining consumers. Companies, including transport and forwarding companies, must gain consumer confidence by providing them with good quality service and ease of communication. Transport companies should also pay attention to their image on the Internet, because, as research shows, consumers are paying more and more attention to it.

The research carried out confirms the changes taking place in the purchasing behavior of customers and as indicated in the literature on the subject, the emergence of a new type of consumers. During the pandemic, the utility of digital services was pointed out, as they make transport services more accessible to users at the point of need. During the pandemic, respondents began to attach more value to the security of their decisions, so it is important to have visibility and prior verification of their service provider, which is most often verified by internet portals.

Conclusions

The article presents issues related to changes in the purchasing behavior of consumers of shipping companies. In particular attention was paid to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the attitudes, preferences and needs of consumers and the adaptation of transport companies to these changes. The provision of transport services is a wide-ranging topic and differs in terms of the segments served. As part of this work, only selected aspects of companies transporting goods in road transport during the Covid-19 pandemic have been presented.

Shaping the right marketing strategies for transport and forwarding companies is crucial in the face of a rapidly changing environment. The adopted assumptions emphasize the importance of customer service, adapting to his individual needs and creating efficient communication. Creating a distinctive marketing strategy in a highly competitive environment of shipping companies is a difficult task, but it is a key factor in determining the market position of a given company. In the era of a pandemic, it is very important to shape the image of a socially responsible company that cares about the health and safety of customers and employees.

The challenges faced by transport companies related to the increased competition on the market as well as problems resulting from the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic were presented. Radical changes in customer purchasing methods are required, as well as building strong ties with existing customers. One of the ways to

meet the expectations of consumers is to use innovative solutions that contribute to increasing transport efficiency.

The research carried out for the purposes of this work shows certain changes in the purchasing behavior of customers of transport companies. The importance of communication methods and reliable information in the process of purchasing transport services are even more important than before. Customers want to verify the quality of a given service before purchasing it, for which they use the opinions of other users and the company's image on the Internet. Enterprises that will not create their brand on the Internet may reckon with the fact that they will be omitted in the choice of consumers. Considering the conducted research, it can be concluded that in the face of the pandemic, consumers highly appreciated solutions using modern technologies, as they guaranteed speed, quality, and reliability of the transport service.

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Zmiany zachowań nabywczych klientów w zakresie usług spedycyjnych w czasie pandemii Covid-19

Streszczenie

W ramach niniejszego artykułu zbadano i omówiono wpływ pandemii Covid-19 na zachowania nabywcze klientów przedsiębiorstw transportowo-spedycyjnych. Wybór tematu nie jest przypadkowy, gdyż dotyczy funkcjonowania w trudnym okresie rodzinnej firmy autorki. Celem badań było sprawdzenie, jakie narzędzia marketingowe najlepiej sprawdzają się w nowej rzeczywistości, z którą musiały zmierzyć się firmy transportowo-spedycyjne. Wnioski z badań miały pomóc w weryfikacji, które strategie zakupowe warto zmienić, prowadzić lub zastąpić. Celem badania była analiza zmian w zachowaniach zakupowych konsumentów na rynku usług transportowo-spedycyjnych w obliczu pandemii. Okazało się, że przedsiębiorstwa, które wdrożyły adaptacyjne metody zakupowe prosperowały zupełnie inaczej i miały większe szanse na przetrwanie na rynku w tym trudnym okresie. Technika zastosowana w badaniu to sondaż diagnostyczny. Dzięki danym zebranych w wywiadzie, za pomocą

kwestionariusza, możliwe było określenie zakresu i natężenia danego zjawiska, a następnie ustalenie najlepszych rozwiązań. Wnioski z badań pokazały, że firmy transportowo-spedycyjne, które chcą przetrwać na rynku, powinny zaktualizować metody zakupów konsumentskich. Wraz z pandemią pojawiły się nowe zachowania konsumentckie. Konsumentci są teraz bardziej świadomi i w dużym stopniu korzystają z technologii przy podejmowaniu decyzji zakupowych. Zdecydowanie wzrosło zainteresowanie mediów społecznościowych przy wyborze i określaniu potencjalnego dostawcy usług. Niemniej jednak, jakość i cena świadczoonych usług są nadal ważne, o czym firmy transportowe nie mogą zapominać.

Słowa kluczowe

zachowania nabywcze, klient, pandemia, transport, rynek transportowo-spedycyjny