THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE CONSUMER GOODS MARKET IN DIFFERENT REGIONS: GLOBAL CHANGES IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGIES

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The article examines the peculiarities of the development of consumer goods markets in Ukraine, the USA, Germany and China under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. It analyses how social media and book communities promote products in the book market. The paper highlights the main interaction formats and approaches that publishers and authors can use to attract readers and increase book sales. Among them, the authors draw attention to video content, community activity in social networks, adaptive technologies to attract new users and retain existing ones. The authors summarise the specifics of working with the BookTok community. From a practical point of view, the authors argue that book publishers and authors who want to remain competitive need to adapt to the new realities and use the power of social media to promote their products.

Keywords: coronavirus pandemic influence, digital marketing, social networks, globalisation, content.

JEL Classification: D22, I12, M31

Statement of the problem. As a result of the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economic system has undergone significant changes, which in turn have led to a rethinking of marketing approaches in various sectors. Both in Ukraine and globally, the publishing industry faced new challenges with the introduction of quarantine restrictions. To cope with this crisis, publishing industry representatives had to adapt their marketing strategies to attract stakeholders and ensure the continuity of their activities. The results differed: some organisations successfully adapted to the new conditions, while others failed to withstand the pressure and ceased operations.

This situation highlights the importance of identifying the key points in the marketing strategies implemented by book publishers during the crisis. Such an analysis is vital for developing successful strategies in future crises and understanding marketing trends driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Analysis of recent research and publications.

Exploring changes in the marketing approaches of participants in the global book publishing market is essential as the book publishing sector is undergoing significant changes due to various factors, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic, technological changes and new consumer trends. Exploring this topic will allow for a better understanding of how publishers and other book market participants are adapting to new conditions and changing their marketing strategies to ensure success and competitiveness. The theme of changing marketing approaches by participants in the global book market has been explored in the work of many researchers.

The pandemic has significantly changed consumer behaviour and required book market participants to respond quickly to new conditions. A study of the adaptation of publishers in Germany, France, China, North America, and Ukraine reveals general trends and regional peculiarities in this context [1]. Research conducted in different countries allows to identify general trends and differences in marketing strategies depending on the cultural, economic and social characteristics of each country affected by the same global problem. The transformation of the Chinese book market under the influence of the pandemic is examined by Dianshun Ren and Zishuang Kang [2] and by C. Zegeng [3], and the situation in the North American

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The changes in the Ukrainian market are highlighted in [6]. The researchers also drew attention to general changes and the emergence of new trends in the book publishing market, which are typical for most countries.

New technologies and platforms are influencing marketing strategies. For example, a study of the use of the social media platform TikTok to promote book products shows the growing importance of digital media and social platforms in attracting young readers. Trends in the use of the social media platform TikTok by representatives of the book publishing business to promote book products during and after the pandemic are described in [8]. The peculiarities of promoting different products with the help of digital marketing tools from different aspects of interaction are studied in a number of works of different scientific schools [9–16].

**Formation of the objectives of the article (task statement).** The study aims to identify trends in marketing activities in the book publishing market that have emerged or significantly transformed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Achieving this goal is possible only if the following tasks are fulfilled:

- To study the impact of the pandemic on the book publishing markets of different countries (USA, Germany, China);
- to highlight the main changes in the marketing activities of Ukrainian book publishing enterprises;
- to consider the BookTok trend and explore how its development has affected the global and Ukrainian book market.

**Summary of the main research material.** Book publishing is a key component in the economic structure of various countries and in shaping the cultural and educational environment. The creation and distribution of books directly affect the academic level and cultural enrichment of citizens, contributing significantly to overall social development and well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly the biggest crisis the global book publishing market has faced in decades. This crisis has required new approaches and adaptability, which has led to different implementation options in other countries depending on the local context. Consider how book publishers in the US, Germany, France and China have changed their marketing activities to meet the challenges of today.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the US book publishing industry has significantly changed its marketing approach. Physical retail stores have faced significant challenges due to the impact of the pandemic, while online retailers such as Amazon, eBay, Walmart, and Target have reported record sales. Independent physical bookstores were the hardest hit [17].

Overall, the book publishing sector recorded strong sales figures, with an increase of 7.5% in 2020 compared to the previous year. Sales of fiction and non-fiction books for teenagers and young adults increased significantly, while sales of books for adults increased less, by 5-6%. Hardback and paperback books were the most popular, but sales of mass market books fell [5].

During the pandemic, the shift to online shopping accelerated in the United States: at the end of the third quarter of 2020, e-commerce accounted for 13.5% of retail sales, up 36.7% year-on-year [5]. This growth in online commerce is attributed to the COVID-19 crisis, which has forced consumers to rely more on digital platforms to meet their shopping needs [18]. Sales of e-books, which had previously been in decline, rose sharply again during the pandemic, while growth in audiobook sales, on the other hand, slowed significantly. Publishers made special efforts to expand their customer base and shifted to digital activities. There was also a tendency for publishers to abandon standard advertising methods or create cheaper advertising materials [19].

Consequently, marketing approaches to book publishing in the US have shifted towards digital platforms as physical retail stores have faced difficulties. The industry demonstrated strong sales, especially in certain categories, and managed to cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic. The Association of American Publishers provided advice on supporting the book publishing business during the COVID-19 pandemic and presented the results of its research to the US Congress, protecting the interests of book publishers at the level of interaction with the authorities [20].

The German book market faced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and quarantine measures had a significant impact on the dynamics of the book industry. Beginning in March 2020, German publishers struggled with the consequences of implementing quarantine measures. According to a report published by the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, the trade association of the German publishing industry, the number of buyers in Germany before the COVID-19 pandemic increased by around 300,000, the highest number since 2012 [21].

However, in 2020, the market situation deteriorated significantly due to the devastating effects of COVID-19. Between 23 March and 19 April 2020, when bookshops in all German states except Berlin and Saxony-Anhalt were closed, sales plummeted by 65.7% compared to the same period last year. A cumulative 46% decline was seen in diversified sales channels, such as small shops outside bookstores and online sales platforms, during this period. The impact of these adverse circumstances was felt even more acutely when more than 50% of publishers responding to the survey were forced to postpone the release of new books until the following year. Some 36% reported that they were unable to carry out certain planned releases, which had a significant impact on lesser-known or unknown authors. Publishers tried to launch books with high expectations of popularity [22].

The problems were compounded by the cancellation of thematic events, such as the Leipzig Book Fair and the Cologne Literary Week, which are landmark events known for bringing together various publishers and authors. Book
publishers and their stakeholders can network during the presentations of dozens of new literary works, which are attended by representatives of both the German market and foreign publishers. The cancellation of these events was a significant loss for many book market participants. The Frankfurt Book Festival, which took place in autumn, managed to adapt to the new conditions, and while the spring events were cancelled, the Frankfurt Book Festival was held online, presenting a digital programme [23].

The problems were compounded by the cancellation of thematic events, such as the Leipzig Book Fair and the Cologne Literary Week, which are landmark events known for bringing together various publishers and authors and presenting dozens of new literary works. There is an interaction between book publishers and their stakeholders, and not only representatives of the German market, but also foreign representatives take part in them [24]. The cancellation of these events was a significant loss for many book market participants. The Frankfurt Book Festival, which was held in autumn, managed to adapt to the new conditions and, although the spring events were cancelled, the Frankfurt Book Festival was held online, presenting a digital programme [25].

In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, German publishers have changed their strategies to focus on e-book formats, which have often outpaced physical print copies. It is worth noting that some book projects have bypassed traditional media platforms, choosing to distribute only through digital channels.

Due to the closure of borders, sales of travel books, guidebooks and other literature for travellers fell the most. On the contrary, non-fiction about medicine or history saw an increase in sales during these periods, especially books that covered the topic of COVID-19. As for fiction, the sales were influenced by the phenomenon of escapism, as many people wanted to immerse themselves in other fictional worlds to escape from the stressful events of reality – both contemporary and classic works of fiction were popular [1]. Sales of books in the children's and teenage literature segment grew as parents looked for alternative ways to fill their children's leisure time when quarantine measures in Germany forced everyone to stay at home.

The German book industry has demonstrated resilience and endurance in the face of obstacles that hinder sales of printed literature. There has been an intensification of the creative approach in the marketing activities of book market participants. Firstly, bookstores and publishers have refocused on delivering goods in various ways, both with the participation of postal operators and, for example, delivery by cyclists. Second, online events have proved to be one of the options for adaptation measures, which demonstrates their versatility in times of crisis. Finally, German bookstores and publishing houses have remained reliable suppliers of literary works thanks to their well-developed online infrastructure.

Acknowledging the key social role of the book industry, Alexander Skipis, CEO of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels, expressed his gratitude for the government's support. The prompt provision of significant emergency financial assistance, the rapid reopening of bookstores and the implementation of a comprehensive cultural sponsorship programme have played an important role in mitigating the difficulties faced by the book industry. The author emphasised the significant social contribution of publishing houses and bookstores, especially during emergencies, noting the tangible surge in public respect for literary works in difficult times [21].

The Chinese book market, shaped by the demands of the country's large population, demonstrated an expansion similar to that of the US or Germany by the beginning of 2020.

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been reflected in China's book industry, as evidenced by the 2020 China Retail Book Market Report from OpenBook, the leading national statistical authority on book retail. The report indicates a 5.08% decrease in the volume of the Chinese retail book market in 2020 compared to the previous year and a 3% decrease in the number of new publications [25].

Private book market players switched to online sales when physical channels were closed. While the overall market indicators declined, children's books, on the contrary, became a commodity whose sales grew by 1.96% in 2020 [26]. In particular, platforms such as TikTok and Kwai contributed to the development of online sales channels for children's books by 15.64% compared to the previous year. Chinese publishing houses and bookstores have introduced discounts and promotions in their strategies to regulate demand for books, especially for children's literature.

Based on global experience, the impact of the pandemic was felt most acutely by offline retailers in China. However, online sales were also significantly affected by logistical problems that prevented timely and successful delivery. The shift to electronic and audio books has gained momentum in China since 2020, driven by long periods of strict isolation. Adapting to the circumstances, readers are increasingly using audio content and digital books, encouraging publishers to meet this demand with special editions in these formats.

The trend towards digitisation has spread to educational literature and textbooks, as demand for both digital and traditional formats has increased with the rapid spread of online learning. Copyright holders of such literature have created textbooks suitable for digital use, thus contributing to the development of the concept of a dual format for books.

In addition, Chinese publishers actively participated in the information campaign to reduce the panic associated with COVID-19 by publishing materials explaining the nuances of disease progression and suggesting preventive measures. Chinese publishers such as the People's Medical Publishing House and the Chinese Traditional Medicine Publishing House played an important role in disseminating reliable information [3].

The marketing activities of Chinese book publishers mirror those of their foreign counterparts, including...
holding events in an online format, increasing interaction with readers on social networks, ensuring compliance with cleanliness and hygiene rules in physical sales outlets after their opening, improving the delivery system for online orders, and generally developing book promotion through digital channels. This adaptability highlights the adaptability and dynamism of the Chinese book market in the face of global challenges and in an environment where the pro-Chinese government has not provided additional support to publishers [27].

As for Ukraine, in 2020, the book publishing industry faced a significant decline: 343 publishing houses and 48 bookstores closed [28]. This wave of closures has had serious consequences, leading to a significant reduction in the availability of books, especially in niche genres. The challenges posed by the pandemic have led to a marked drop in sales, affecting both e-book and physical book sales. Despite the fact that people are spending more time at home, the reading habit has not revived, and preferences have shifted towards alternative content, such as video.

According to the Association of Publishers and Book Distributors, the Ukrainian book publishing industry suffered a significant decline in 2020. The number of books published decreased by 23.3%, and the total circulation of books decreased by 34.3% compared to the previous year [29]. Offline events traditionally held by Ukrainian publishing houses in spring and summer, including the Book Arsenal, were cancelled, which is a common experience for Ukraine and other countries with events of this format [30].

Ukrainian book publishers have responded to these challenges by adopting adaptive strategies similar to those of their foreign counterparts. Diversification of distribution channels has become a significant focus, with an emphasis on meeting the growing demand for online content. Cooperation with postal operators has expanded delivery options, ensuring that books continue to reach readers despite logistical constraints. Publishers have also turned to online events as an alternative to traditional meetings, using digital platforms for book launches, author discussions and promotions.

Despite all this, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has cut spending on the cultural sector, and book publishing representatives have not received additional support from the state [27]. This differs from the position of governments in European countries such as Germany and is a negative example of how book publishers were forced to cope with the consequences of the pandemic on their own.

The global and Ukrainian book publishing markets are dominated by the trend towards the significant integration of social media, in particular the short video platform TikTok, into the marketing strategies of the book business. Of particular note is the rapid growth in the app’s popularity since the start of the pandemic, as evidenced by 2020 data from App Annie. This digital market analysis company claims that TikTok is the most downloaded app of the year, ahead of Facebook Messenger (Figure 1).

Central to TikTok’s appeal is its algorithmic framework, which offers users content that is tailored to their interests. The consequences of the pandemic, such as forced isolation and the shift of many areas of life to the virtual space, contributed to the growth of TikTok’s popularity in 2020, which led to a corresponding progress in its development trajectory.

In a short time, the TikTok platform has developed notable trends in interests, including BookTok, an online

![Figure 1 – Rating of the most popular apps among Android and iOS users in 2020 compared to 2019](source:[31])
community focused on discussing books and literature. Functioning as an online community, BookTok brings together video content creators and consumers through discourse, recommendations, reviews, and discussion of literary works. It is noticeable that its demographic group consists mainly of teenagers and young people who create emotionally charged content, often with elements of humour or, conversely, melancholy.

Although the dominant genres on the platform are fantasy, romance, science fiction, and graphic novels, it is important to note that this list of genres is not exhaustive and that videos about literature such as horror, thrillers, mythology, short fiction, cookbooks, etc. can also be found on the platform (Figure 2, Figure 3).

Despite the youth of its content creators, BookTok has been driving the transformation of the book publishing

![Figure 2 – Types of fiction genre tags in the English and Ukrainian parts of BookTok](source: compiled by the authors on the basis of data collected through a social network)
business since 2020. Currently, the #BookTok tag boasts an impressive 201 billion views [32], and its Ukrainian counterpart #UkrBukTok has 460 million views [33].

In 2020, book market participants, including publishers, bookstores, and authors, were heavily influenced by BookTok. The community’s video content and subsequent discussions helped to revive interest in books published decades ago, which helped them regain high positions in the bestseller lists in the summer and autumn of 2020. In particular, this happened with the books The Song of Achilles by Madeleine Miller, They Both Die at the End by Adam Silver, and We Were Liars by Emily Lockhart, which were mentioned in a video by BookTok blogger Selene Velez titled “Books that will make you cry” and which received 6.5 million views [34]. For example, after the publication of this video, sales of The Song of Achilles in the first quarter of 2021 increased tenfold year-on-year, and We Were Liars regained its bestseller status almost a decade after its first publication.

While in 2020 the prospects for using BookTok’s capabilities to promote books were vague, over the past 3 years, the BookTok community has evolved into...
Today, most well-known publishing houses use the TikTok platform, actively participating in the BookTok community to interact with their audience. For example, Barnes & Noble, the most famous American bookstore chain, has a TikTok account with 208 thousand subscribers [35], using various video content to strategically promote its literary novelties. Similarly, authors use the BookTok environment as a direct channel of interaction with their regular readership, using TikTok's algorithmic capabilities to attract new readers by sharing engaging videos about their fictional universes, characters, or upcoming literary works. This dynamic is underlined by NPD BookScan, which tracks print copies of books sold in most US bookstores, according to which 4 out of 10 best-selling titles are by Colin Hoover, who once became a BookTok sensation [36]. Hoover's popularity on BookTok, as evidenced by his 1.4 million subscribers, confirms the platform's powerful influence on the author's popularity and, as a result, on sales figures [37].

The BookTok phenomenon confirms the growing importance of influencer marketing in book publishing and distribution. This concept, traditionally used in industries such as beauty and fashion, has gained popularity in the literary sphere thanks to BookTok trends. Observing the tangible impact of TikTok posts on book sales, publishers have started to cooperate with literary bloggers by launching joint initiatives. Such partnerships involve free copies of books in exchange for sincere video reviews posted on bloggers' pages, sometimes with additional financial rewards for their efforts.

It's worth noting that BookTok influencers have taken on the role of emotional critics, not just endorsing literary works but amplifying the voices of underrepresented communities. In this way, they help raise awareness of books that delve into acute social issues and offer new perspectives in different genres, so it has become easier for publishers to promote books by lesser-known authors, because they know what BookTok will talk about if they direct the promotion of the book correctly.

BookTok's focus on community building and reader engagement has ushered in a transformative era of customer engagement in the publishing industry. In addition to increasing the number of followers, authors and publishers are actively using the platform strategically to build a community of true fans and activists. This involves using TikTok to connect with passionate book fans and build anticipation and excitement for future titles in the early stages of development. This evolution marks a shift away from traditional reader passivity to fostering an active audience, demonstrating the multifaceted approach that characterises the BookTok community.

Since 2020, Ukrainian publishers, like their foreign counterparts, have integrated into the TikTok platform, using the multifaceted capabilities of the BookTok community to increase sales of their publications. Well-known Ukrainian publishers have a relatively large number of followers on TikTok. As of January 2024, the leader is the Family Leisure Club publishing house with a total of 26,000 subscribers (Fig. 4). The video content covers a variety of topics, including announcements of new books [38], thematic book collections [39], information about promotions and discounts [40], book draws [41], etc. The most common video formats are informational videos from publishers' representatives, humorous publications with funny videos or images, and reportage videos.

A noteworthy aspect of this trend is the joint platform initiatives between publishers and book bloggers. Publishers support the enthusiasm of book bloggers for certain literary works by providing them with personal discounts or entering into special barter deals. Mutually beneficial relationships between publishers and BookTok representatives help to increase awareness and sales, and serve as a channel for attracting new readers who usually visit publishers' profiles on other social networks or websites.

Ukrainian authors claim that BookTok offers new ways to promote various literary publications, from large collector's editions to smaller pocket-sized books. The platform is particularly beneficial for authors who work independently of traditional publishing houses and self-publish. The accessibility and reach of TikTok eliminates the need for additional financial investment in promotional activities, allowing authors with limited financial resources to increase their visibility and book sales. Well-known Ukrainian authors such as Anastasia Nikulina and Andriy Lyubka, who work with publishing houses, also state the critical role of the BookTok community in establishing communication with readers and that BookTok significantly affects the number of sales of their literary works [42].

It is also worth noting that the Ukrainian BookTok is an integral part of the global BookTok community, so the trends of the foreign community influence Ukrainian book lovers. Publishers have recorded cases when books became popular in foreign BookToks and demand for them grew in Ukraine, so in 2021–2023, publishers had to reprint additional copies of such works as It Ends With Us Colleen Hoover (first published in Ukrainian in 2016) and A Little Life by Hanya Yanagihara (first published in Ukrainian in 2017) to meet the reading needs of Ukrainians. This is another confirmation of the integrity and dynamism of the BookTok community, which does not depend on the geographical location of readers. The exception is China, where, due to limited access to various international platforms, including TikTok, there are local analogues of most apps. For example, in the Chinese domestic market, the Douyin app, which works on the same principle of short videos, is actively used instead of TikTok.
Thus, the BookTok community formed under the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the trends emerging within this online community directly affect the book market in Ukraine and other countries and the marketing approaches used by business representatives.

**Conclusions.** The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the book publishing market worldwide. Quarantine restrictions have led to the closure of bookstores, a decline in demand for paper books and an increase in the popularity of e-books. In this environment, publishers have had to adapt their marketing strategies to effectively meet consumer needs and ensure business continuity. An analysis of the marketing strategies of book publishers in the US, Germany, France and China showed that they focused on the following key points: diversification of distribution channels, the growing role of digital marketing and a focus on creating valuable and relevant book content.

In Ukraine, the pandemic has led to a significant decline in the book publishing industry. In 2020, 343 publishing houses and 48 bookstores closed. The number of books published decreased by 23.3%, and the total circulation of books decreased by 34.3%. Publishers switched to online events as an alternative to traditional meetings and diversified distribution channels, focusing on meeting the growing demand for online content.

In general, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the digitalisation of the book publishing industry, including the use of social media platforms such as TikTok. TikTok is a powerful tool for book publishers to connect with young audiences and promote their books using the BookTok book community that has formed on this platform. The BookTok phenomenon is an important driver of change in the book publishing industry, and publishers must be able to adapt to such changes. To make the most of TikTok, publishers need to create high-quality video content, interact with readers, and collaborate with influencers. Based on this analysis, it can be said that BookTok continues to evolve, and its impact on the publishing industry will only grow.

**Prospects for further research.** Conducting a thorough study of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the global book market is critical to developing effective business strategies and promoting the development of book publishing. Diverse country experiences provide valuable insights that allow industry stakeholders to learn from successful approaches and better prepare for future crises.
Of particular interest is the phenomenon of promoting book products through TikTok and the evolution of online book communities that have emerged during the pandemic, including BookTok. The study of these trends provides an opportunity to understand changes in consumer behaviour and preferences, which is the basis for developing individual strategies that meet the dynamism of the digital readership.

Thus, further research is needed to develop sustainable strategies in the face of the crisis and to use new ways of promotion that will ensure the continued growth and adaptability of the global and Ukrainian book industry.

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ВПЛИВ ПАНДЕМІЇ COVID-19 НА РИНОК СПОЖИВЧИХ ТОВАРІВ У РІЗНИХ РЕГІОНАХ: ГЛОБАЛЬНІ ЗМІНИ МАРКЕТИНГОВИХ СТРАТЕГІЙ У СОЦІАЛЬНИХ МЕРЕЖАХ

Наталія Євгенівна Летуновська1, Карина Олександрівна Храмова2, Адам Ясніковскі3

Стаття присвячена дослідженню впливу пандемії COVID-19 на ринки книговидання України та інших країн, а також аналізу основних тенденцій в маркетинговій діяльності книговидавців з використанням цифровізованих каналів комунікації. Актуальність дослідження обумовлена необхідністю визначення дієвих стратегій для роботи книговидавців у кризових умовах, зокрема умовам, що створюють негативні фактори глобального здоров'я, на основі набутого досвіду для забезпечення стабільної роботи у разі виникнення подібних ситуацій у майбутньому. На прикладі соціальної мережі TikTok, зокрема спільноти любителів книг BookTok, здійснено дослідження змін у суспільних трендах у 2020–2022 рр. та у післяпандемічний період. Визначено, що ця соціальна мережа має значний вплив на книговидавничу галузь різних країн. Платформа сприяє зростанню обізнаності про книги та авторів, допомагає залучати нову аудиторію до читання, позитивно впливає на продажі книг. Взаємодія зі спільнотою читачів на платформі TikTok дозволяє авторам та видавцям налаштовуватися на використання різних маркетингових інструментів для просування книжкової продукції. Усі перелічені вище істотно допомагають авторам та видавцям знайти свою аудиторію та залучити нову аудиторію до читання, позитивно впливає на продажі книг. У статті в першу чергу описані сучасні можливості платформи TikTok для просування книг на українському ринку, особливості залучення аудиторії, як використовувати різні маркетингові інструменти для просування книжкової продукції. Усі перелічені вище істотно допомагають авторам та видавцям знайти свою аудиторію та залучити нову аудиторію до читання.

Ключові слова: вплив пандемії коронавірусу, диджитал-маркетинг, соціальні мережі, глобалізація, контент.

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