



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



## Adaptation of the fashion business to force majeure circumstances

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### Abstract

This article explores the issues of adapting fashion businesses to force majeure circumstances. The fashion industry currently operates under conditions of high uncertainty, making it particularly vulnerable to factors beyond control, such as economic crises, disruptions in supply chains, changes in consumer behavior, and technological shifts. Although individual studies exist on topics like digitalization, sustainable business models, and strategic management, there remains a lack of a comprehensive, unified approach to addressing this issue. Existing contradictions concern the assessment of the significance of online commerce, the role of outsourcing, diversification, and the impact of innovative business models on economic resilience. The goal of this study is to systematize mechanisms for adapting fashion businesses to force majeure circumstances, considering the multifactorial nature of these conditions. The paper discusses production optimization, flexibility potential, reinvestment, outsourcing, logistics adjustments, and other strategies. It identifies that key resilience strategies include a multi-dimensional approach to development, integration of digital and offline sales channels, and dynamic management of resources. The author's contribution lies in substantiating the necessity of applying complex strategic approaches within fashion businesses, thus helping minimize risks and transform crisis periods into opportunities for growth. Specific examples of combinations of strategic actions are provided. The materials presented in the article will be useful for entrepreneurs, fashion brand managers, industry researchers, and strategic management specialists.

**Keywords:** Outsourcing; Business models; Diversification; Logistics; Marketplaces; Production; Reinvestment; Strategic management; Fashion business; Digitalization

### 1. Introduction

The fashion sector is a dynamic industry with significant economic influence globally. According to statistical reports, in 2025 the market size is estimated at 1.84 trillion USD, accounting for approximately 1.63% of global GDP. The industry's compound annual growth rate (CAGR) is projected to be 4.1% until 2030. Notably, out of the global workforce comprising 3.62 billion people, 430 million are employed in fashion and textile production [1].

Today's fashion industry faces numerous challenges driven primarily by instability in global and local markets, shifts in consumer preferences, and unforeseen external factors. A prominent example is the downturn triggered by COVID-19; however, significant transformations have occurred since then.

Considering the above, force majeure events—whether economic crises, pandemics, or political upheavals—compel industry representatives to seek new and often radical ways to restructure existing business models.

The research problem consists in identifying and analyzing comprehensive strategies that enable organizations under current conditions not only to neutralize or significantly mitigate the negative impacts of crises but also to leverage these periods as powerful catalysts for transformational changes in production, marketing, and logistics.

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## 2. Materials and Methods

A literature review on the topic reveals diverse approaches to investigating resilience, transformation, and growth strategies within the fashion industry.

A number of studies focus on describing digital platforms and online practices. For instance, E. Arrigo [3] examines digital solutions in the clothing rental segment, analyzing various business models and their influence on the development of the fashion industry. T.Sh. Zhen and S.H. Hassan [10] explore the relationship between companies' online capabilities and their performance outcomes. W. Ningsih [6] emphasizes marketplaces as instruments for sustainable development among small and medium-sized enterprises in this field, highlighting their role in increasing product accessibility and expanding the customer base. Online materials also provide informative statistical summaries reflecting recent industry trends [1].

Another group of publications addresses strategic management aspects during crises, substantial shifts in market conditions, and disruptions from force majeure events. M. Arribas-Ibar, P.A. Nylund, and A. Brem [2] investigate circular business models within luxury fashion, proposing an ecosystem-based approach to sustainable industry development. A.I. Nurmahmudiyah, R.A. Rahadi, and A. Irawan [7] analyze the role of financial planning in the plus-size fashion segment, identifying strategic adaptation mechanisms. R. Sabira and A. Hartono [8] detail the nuances involved in developing and implementing a business plan for a new fashion brand, with a focus on practical aspects of launching and scaling operations.

Global and cross-cultural operational characteristics of the analyzed industry within transforming realities are highlighted by R. Dsouza and M. Aubry [4], emphasizing the importance of socio-cultural context in managing international fashion brands. In turn, A. Kothari [5] explores successful business cases, identifying key factors that ensured their resilience and prosperity.

Educational context and specialist training in response to industry transformation are central to the research by R. Thind and H. Yakavenka [9]. These authors suggest revising UK business school curricula to better align with emerging challenges and industry demands.

The literature review identifies several controversial and debated issues. Firstly, there are differing assessments regarding the significance of digital technologies: some researchers highlight their critical role in overcoming crises, while others view online sales merely as supplementary tools. Secondly, business resilience is either associated with innovative models (such as circular economy and platform-based solutions) or with traditional strategies (financial planning and diversification). Issues related to logistics during force majeure events, consumer preference dynamics, and mechanisms for public-private partnerships remain insufficiently explored in depth and detail.

The methods utilized in this article include systematization, conceptual modeling, content analysis of contemporary publications and statistical summaries, and comparative analysis of various strategic approaches.

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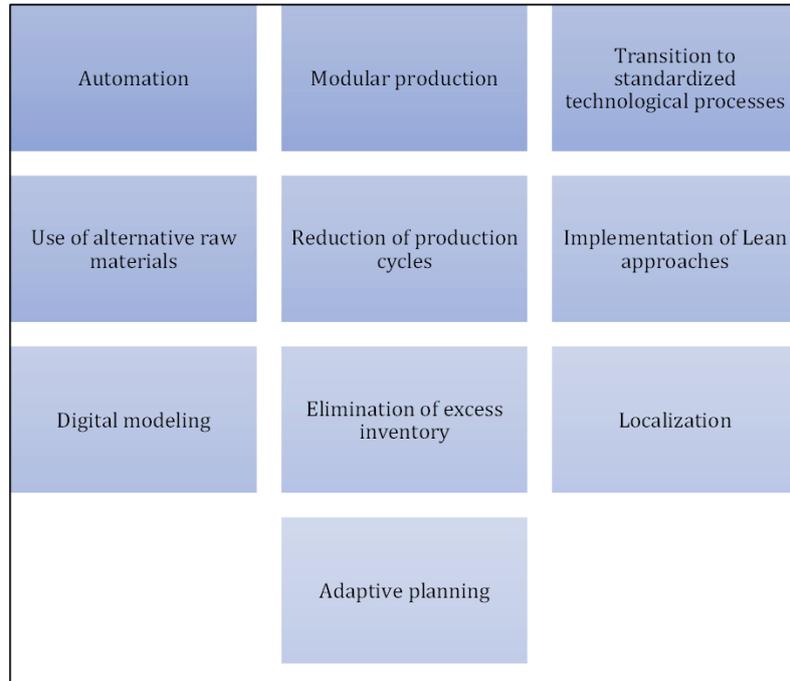
## 3. Results and Discussion

The adaptability of an organization under force majeure conditions is defined not only by the ability to rapidly respond to changes and disruptions but also by the capability to anticipate the most probable scenarios. In line with this, contemporary researchers consider methodologies for restructuring business processes oriented towards:

- Deep optimization of production;
- Resource redistribution;
- Marketing paradigms with a focus on digitalization;
- Adjustment of distribution channels [2, 9].

This conceptual framework relies on theories of dynamic resilience and strategic flexibility, enabling a crisis to be viewed as a driver of innovation rather than exclusively as a threat to business survival.

One of the primary strategies in force majeure circumstances is the rationalization of production processes (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1** Identification of key options for optimizing production and redistributing resources (compiled by the author based on [2-4, 8, 10])

Thus, revising technological chains helps reduce production costs and ensures timely redistribution of internal resources. This is achieved through the implementation of modular management systems, automation of operations, and the adoption of standardized production modules. A comprehensive analysis of existing capacities, followed by their adaptation to evolving market requirements in the fashion industry, becomes the foundation for creating a more flexible production platform.

Unstable economic conditions often serve as a significant impetus for rethinking pricing policies and product positioning. The possibility of shifting from premium segments to mass-market products—or, conversely, focusing efforts on niche segments—demonstrates how crisis periods can become a starting point for innovative growth. In the context of reduced demand for traditional collections, reorienting towards more affordable product lines provides opportunities both to maintain turnover and attract new audiences, thus increasing market share and strengthening competitive advantages.

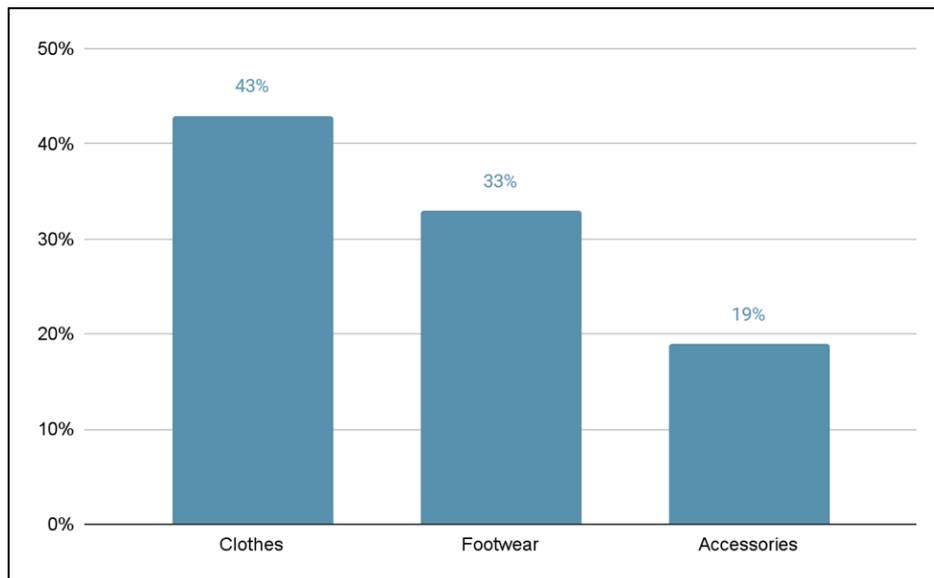
Redistribution of functions through outsourcing becomes a crucial strategic decision for fashion companies aiming to concentrate on core competencies. In uncertain environments, involving external specialists to perform secondary tasks significantly reduces fixed costs and enhances responsiveness to market shifts. Business-process outsourcing (specifically IT support, accounting, marketing research, etc.) opens additional opportunities for leveraging external expertise and flexible resource management, which is particularly important for adaptation under force majeure conditions.

The contemporary dynamics of consumer preferences require fashion businesses not only to continuously refresh their product ranges but also to reconsider distribution channels (Table 1). Given this context, the integration of online platforms, marketplaces, and proprietary digital services enables businesses in the fashion industry to ensure sales continuity and substantially expand geographical presence [6]. Emerging entrepreneurial models based on hybrid sales strategies, the integration of offline and online segments, and the use of analytical tools for demand forecasting contribute to developing a sustainable revenue structure during external disruptions.

**Table 1** Shares of online and offline sales in various regions of the world in the field of fashion retail (compiled by the author based on [1])

Region	Share of offline sales (%)	Share of online sales (%)
Global average	79.1%	20.9%
Asia	76%	24%
Americas	79.3%	20.7%
Australia and Oceania	81.2%	18.8%
Europe	81.1%	18.9%
Africa	95.8%	4.2%

China is the world's leading exporter of textiles and clothing, while the EU is the largest importer of these products. The three most popular product categories purchased by online shoppers are clothing, footwear, and accessories [1] (Fig. 2).



**Figure 2** The most popular fashion products, most often purchased online (compiled by the author based on [1])

In turn, effective logistics management is also an essential element of an adaptive fashion business strategy. Under force majeure conditions, traditional supply chains frequently experience disruptions, necessitating intensive restructuring of routes along with the implementation of modern monitoring systems. Analyzing bottlenecks, integrating digital platforms for cargo tracking, and dynamically planning warehouse operations help minimize delays and reduce costs. Thus, logistics optimization becomes a strategic instrument that ensures a prompt response to force majeure situations.

It should be considered that crisis periods represent unique opportunities to implement reinvestment programs. Directing saved resources into innovative projects, modernization of production facilities, or new marketing initiatives positively impacts not only the recovery of previously lost positions (if such loss occurred) but also lays a foundation for sustained future prosperity. Reinvesting in employee educational programs and developing IT infrastructure enables fashion companies to outpace competitors, creating additional potential for long-term adaptation.

To successfully overcome force majeure circumstances, it is critically important to have several parallel development strategies (Table 2). Comprehensive application of various approaches—from optimizing internal processes to actively introducing innovations—allows organizations to quickly shift between alternative scenarios depending on emerging conditions. Such diversification of strategic plans helps reduce risks and improve the resilience of business structures since the organization can swiftly reallocate resources toward the most promising directions, adapting to changing market conditions.

**Table 2** Examples of combining strategies for the development of fashion business in conditions of force majeure (compiled by the author)

Nº	Strategy 1	Strategy 2	Strategy 3	Possible combined effects
1	Production optimization	Flexibility of sales channels	Reinvestment	Cost reduction, increased sales through new channels, enhanced competitiveness
2	Transition to mass market	Outsourcing of business processes	Online sales development	Expansion of customer base, reduced operational costs, increased digital revenue
3	Localization of production	Logistics optimization	Automation	Minimization of supply disruptions, lower production costs, faster output
4	Product assortment diversification	Use of marketplaces	Resource redistribution	Flexibility under changing market conditions, risk reduction
5	Strengthening premium segment	Customer experience personalization	Implementation of AI analytics	Increased profitability, enhanced customer loyalty

Thus, selecting strategic combinations is determined by the need to simultaneously address several key tasks:

- Risk reduction;
- Adaptation to new economic conditions;
- Ensuring growth even during crisis periods.

For instance, combining production optimization, flexible sales channels, and reinvestment not only reduces costs but also enhances opportunities for entering new markets. A transition to the mass market, supported by outsourcing and digital sales, reduces expenses and secures sustainable revenue through increased sales volumes. Localization of production combined with logistics optimization and automation positively impacts the reduction of dependence on unstable external supplies, making processes more predictable. Meanwhile, product assortment diversification alongside marketplaces and resource redistribution enables rapid responses to changing consumer demands. Strengthening the premium segment through customer personalization and AI analytics allows companies to boost profitability and create competitive advantages by gaining deeper insights into customer needs.

Thus, a multi-directional approach to managing fashion businesses increases resilience amid force majeure conditions, contributing both to preserving existing positions and strengthening them.

The constraints on implementing fashion business development strategies under force majeure conditions affect both operational and strategic aspects of company activities. The uncertainty caused by crisis situations demands flexibility and rapid adaptation; however, several factors significantly complicate this process.

Firstly, disruptions in global supply chains become one of the key obstacles, particularly for the fashion industry, which relies on international supplies of fabrics, accessories, and finished products. Logistical failures, border closures, sanctions, or production halts lead to delays and an increase in product costs. Under force majeure conditions, demand forecasting and timely inventory replenishment become challenging, negatively impacting assortment policy and customer satisfaction levels.

Secondly, significant financial risks limit investment opportunities. Crisis situations—such as economic sanctions, pandemics, or geopolitical instability—result in decreased consumer activity, shifts in demand structure, and lower sales volumes. Businesses are forced to reallocate budgets in favor of crisis management measures, often at the expense of long-term innovation projects, including digitalization and the development of omnichannel sales strategies.

A third critical factor is the shift in consumer behavior. In times of crisis, purchasing power declines, consumers become more cautious with their spending, and preferences shift toward more practical and cost-effective choices. Fashion brands must adapt their strategies by adjusting pricing policies and implementing new sales models, such as clothing rental or second-hand segments. However, such transformations require a thorough restructuring of business models, which is particularly challenging under force majeure conditions.

Additionally, regulatory constraints must be considered. Government-imposed regulatory measures in response to crises often affect production, export and import operations, and overall business conditions. Compliance with new legal requirements can create additional challenges for fashion companies.

Finally, the psychological factor plays a crucial role. Crisis situations induce stress among both consumers and company employees, often leading to decreased productivity and difficulties in personnel management.

Thus, the strategic development of the fashion business under force majeure conditions faces multiple constraints, including supply chain disruptions, financial risks, changing consumer behavior, regulatory barriers, and human factors. Overcoming these challenges requires flexibility, swift decision-making, and a willingness to adapt business models in response to evolving circumstances.

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#### 4. Conclusions

The adaptation of fashion businesses to force majeure circumstances requires thorough analysis of existing processes and a readiness for radical changes.

Integrating production optimization, strategic outsourcing, flexibility of business models, logistics modernization, and targeted reinvestment forms a set of measures that promote not only survival but also prosperity during crisis conditions.

A multi-strategic approach, enabling rapid switching between different developmental pathways, is considered essential for successful transformation and sustainable prosperity in a dynamically changing world.

The central resulting idea is that a crisis can serve not only as a challenge but also as a powerful impetus for renewing traditional business models, ultimately opening new opportunities for fashion industry growth.

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