

## **Chosen marketing and public relations techniques used by Ewa Chodakowska in promoting a healthy lifestyle - study on opinions of respondents on the Ewa Chodakowska method**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** To assess the opinions of people, using, or familiar with Chodakowska's method, on her marketing strategy and public relations.

**Materials and methods:** The research was conducted between the 31st of March and the 4th of April 2014. A questionnaire, consisting of 31 questions was created and uploaded at website. All internet users, interested in Chodakowska's method, were able to take part in the research. The study group consisted of 1005 respondents.

**Results;** The vast majority of respondents familiar in any way with Chodakowska used her workout programs. The Chi-squared test indicated statistically significant dependency between the place of residence and using Chodakowska's workout programs. Among the ways of getting to know Chodakowska's workout programs, friends proved to be the most common and the official Facebook fan page took second place. Among all

respondents, who use the workout programs have never used any program, before they learned about Chodakowska and her method. The majority of respondents declare that the popularity of Chodakowska is due to the free of charge YouTube movies, then the regularly updated Facebook fan page, building a community of physically active people.

**Conclusions:** The results of the study it is possible to state that using a customized approach and creating a positive image in relations with society can be adopted in promoting physical activity and a healthy diet. In addition, one can state that when developing future obesity prevention campaigns, the achievements and experience of Chodakowska should be taken into account.

**Key words:** Marketing, social marketing, health promotion, social media

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## INTRODUCTION

In a relatively short time, Ewa Chodakowska has become recognised and admired by women in Poland, because of promoting physical activity and a healthy diet. Her methods and ways of building relations was met with a mixed response. Nevertheless, Chodakowska is nowadays one of the most famous people promoting a healthy lifestyle in Poland. Her first training plan appeared in 2012 in one of the woman's magazines and became an instant bestseller. Since then, she has released three books and other promotional materials. Chodakowska has created an image for herself, one that is optimistic, kind and motivating. By encouraging people to undertake physical exercise, she highlights the physical benefits, such as a healthy look and slim body, but also the mental ones, such as gaining a positive attitude and energy from the physical exercise. It may seem that by using the elements of PR in building her relations, especially in social media, and by using various marketing concepts, she has indeed become „The Coach of Polish women”. The aim of this paper is to assess the opinions of people, using, or familiar with Chodakowska's method, on her marketing strategy and public relations (PR). That study can be important, because it may help to look for ways and means of introducing new techniques and methods to reach the high-risk group.

In her work, Chodakowska uses three types of marketing: content, viral, and social media. Content marketing is a strategy aimed at attracting clients by publishing attractive and useful materials aimed at a specific target market. It is based upon the concept of building long term relations with the recipient by mutual interaction. The word content refers to any materials published or posted on-line. In a broader context, content marketing encapsulates materials published in theme related periodicals, leaflets, fliers, catalogues, guidebooks and books [1].

Viral marketing stands for all activities raising awareness of a brand and encouraging recipients to voluntarily spread the word on a given brand or company, the products or services on offer among other potential recipients, most of all among friends. This provides an opportunity to create a snowball effect and to gain widespread acknowledgment of the brand. The most popular channels of communication are social media services such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube etc., and theme related blogs which allow a quick spread of marketing content [2]. In turn, social media marketing is a phenomenon based on gaining recognisability and generating internet traffic using social networking sites. Social media marketing uses the clients' activity on on-line

portals with regard to a promoted brand or product. The main aim of this type of marketing is building brand-recognition. The materials are created not only to draw the clients' attention but also to encourage sharing among friends. The main channels of communication include fan pages, games, blogs and films [3].

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

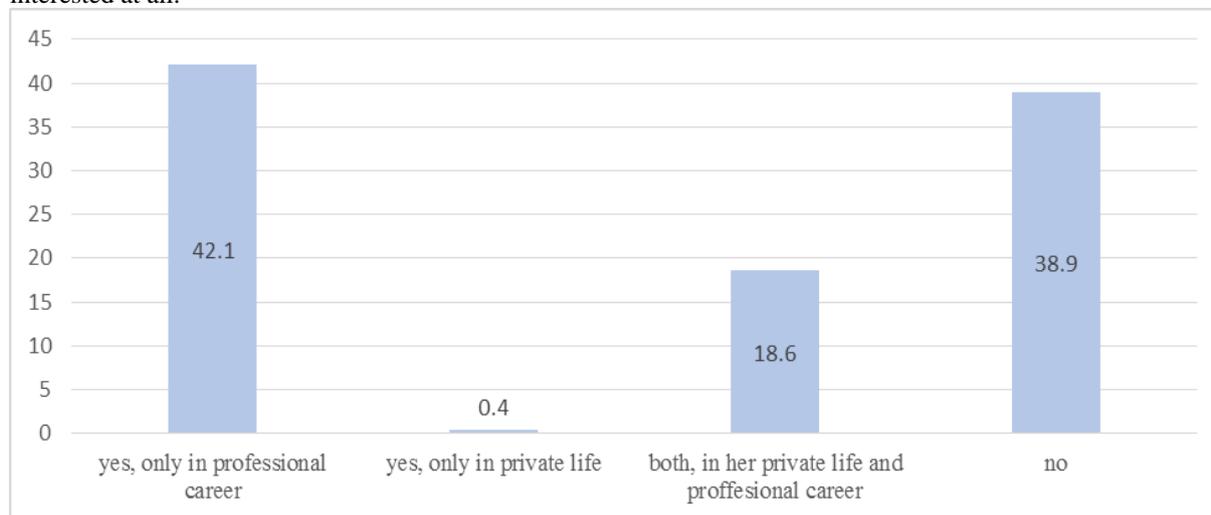
The study was conducted to answer the question which marketing and PR techniques used by Ewa Chodakowska in promoting a healthy lifestyle are most effective. The research was conducted between the 31st of March and the 4th of April 2014. A questionnaire, consisting of 31 questions, divided into 4 parts (the respondents' opinions on Ewa Chodakowska, her methods, the extent of using her method, and the scope of using promotional materials) was created. The poll was standardised with regard to socio-demographic data. The questionnaire was uploaded on [www.mojeankiety.pl](http://www.mojeankiety.pl) and all internet users, interested in Chodakowska's method, were able to take part in the research. A link to the research questionnaire was placed on the selected web portals related to healthy lifestyle, Ewa Chodakowska herself, physical exercise, and diets. What is more, the respondents were asked to pass the questionnaire on, thus achieving the 'snowball effect'. The research sample was limited to Internet users, nevertheless this limitation is justified as some of the questions were specifically related to using media and internet resources in shaping attitudes promoting healthy lifestyle. The data were analyzed using SPSS 17.0. statistical software.

The research group consisted of 1005 respondents, the average age was 23.91, the youngest respondent was 13 years old, the oldest was 51 years old. The mean age was 23.88 and 24.91 for women and men respectively. An over-representation of women was observed (96.7% of all respondents) which was most likely connected with the theme of the research. Of all the respondents, 52.4% were actively working (75.8% of men and 51.6% of women). Childless respondents made up 85.5%, with 12.1% of men and 14.6% of women having children. In total, over half of respondents (54.1%) reside in cities above 100,000 inhabitants: 63.6% of men and 53.8% of women. Higher education was declared by 54.4% of the respondents (66.7% of men and 54% of women), whereas secondary education was declared by 41.5% of the respondents (20% of men and 42.3% of women).

The prevailing number of households consisted of 4 people (28.3%), 3 people (24.7%) and 2 people (20.8%).

## RESULTS

Of all respondents, 42.1% are interested in the life and doings of Ewa Chodakowska from the professional point of view, whereas 38,9% are not interested at all.



**Figure 1.** Respondents' interest in the life and doings of Ewa Chodakowska (%)

The respondents interested both in the professional career and private life of Ewa Chodakowska. The vast majority (97.9%) use social media to obtain relevant information. Further sources of information include gossip web portals (30.5%), TV (15.5%), newspapers (13.4%) and friends (12.3%). Respondents could choose a maximum of 5 answers for this question.

Similarly, the respondents who show interest only in Chodakowska's professional career use social media to obtain information about her (95.5%), with 15.6% using gossip web portals, 13.9% TV, 11.8% newspapers, and 11.8% friends. Respondents who are interested only in Chodakowska's private life use social media to obtain relevant information (75%), and newspapers (25%).

The vast majority of respondents familiar in any way with Chodakowska (84.6%) used her workout programs (86% of women, 45% of men).

The most frequent users of workout programs are country dwellers (90%), and inhabitants of towns (up to 50,000) and large towns (50,000 – 100,000) – 89%, whereas 85% of cities (over 100,000). The Chi-square test indicated statistically significant dependency ( $df=3$ ;  $p=0.003$ ) between the place of residence and using Chodakowska's workout programs (Table 1).

The percentage of respondents using Chodakowska's workout programs is higher among childless respondents (86%) than parents (77%).

Only 0.4% are interested in Chodakowska's private life, with 18.6 % of respondents being interested both in her private life and professional career (Figure 1).

The majority of the working population (81%) uses the workout programs, compared with only 8.5% of the non-working population.

The most typical respondent using Chodakowska's workout programs is a childless, non-working woman living in the country or in a town smaller than 50,000 inhabitants.

Among the ways of getting to know Chodakowska's workout programs, friends proved to be the most common (37.3%), and the official Facebook fan page (25.7%) took second place.

Whereas in the case of people who learned about Chodakowska's method from friends, it is possible to pinpoint the viral marketing channel of communication; however with regard to Facebook: social media marketing and content marketing, (Figure 2).

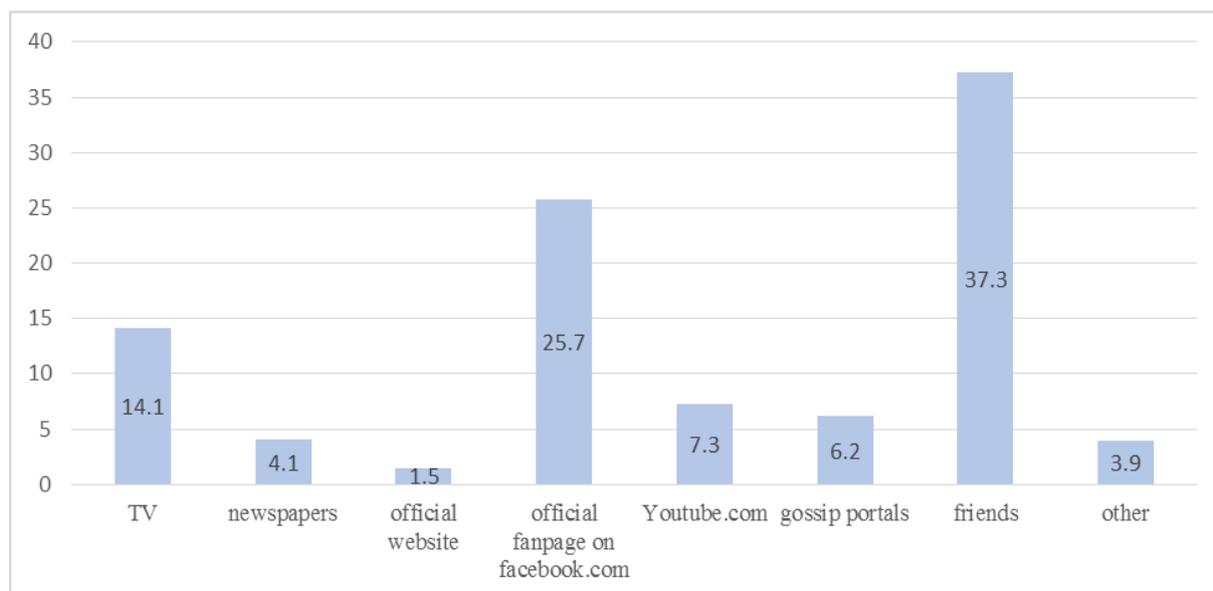
Among the range of tools offered by Chodakowska, the respondents most often chose free of charge YouTube movies and training plans in written form (67,9%), the CD's found in newspapers (25.4%), books (16.4%), programmes available on CD's at BeBio- BeBio is an on-line shop run by Chodakowska's fitness club (13.4%), marketing materials such as calendars, magnets (2.1%) and other materials (1.5%).

Of the respondents, 22% do not use any materials provided by Chodakowska. Almost half of the respondents (46.7%) use the workout programs admit that they made their decision

because the materials were available free of charge on-line.

**Table 1.** The correlation between the place of residence and using Chodakowska’s workout programs (Chi-square test)

| Place of residence                            | Have you used Chodakowska’s training programs? |                          | Total                    |
|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|   | No   | Yes                      |                          |
| Countryside                                   | 14 respondents<br>9.8%                         | 129 respondents<br>90.2% | 143 respondents<br>100%  |
| Towns<br>(up to 50.000 inhabitants)           | 20 respondents<br>11.4%                        | 156 respondents<br>88.6% | 176 respondents<br>100%  |
| Large towns<br>(50.000 – 100.000 inhabitants) | 16 respondents<br>11.3%                        | 126 respondents<br>88.7% | 142 respondents<br>100%  |
| Cities<br>(over 100.000 inhabitants)          | 105 respondents<br>19.3%                       | 439 respondents<br>80.7% | 544 respondents<br>100%  |
| Total   | 155 respondents<br>15.4%                       | 850 respondents<br>84.5% | 1005 respondents<br>100% |



**Figure 2.** Channels of communication used for learning about Chodakowska’s method (%)

The second most popular reason was the popularity of these programs (28.6%), customisation (27.1%) and the fact that the programs are user-friendly (25.8%). Only 16.6% of the respondents highlighted Chodakowska’s personality as the key factor for using the programs.

However, it is worth mentioning that the respondents could only choose two answers for this question. Respondents, who use Chodakowska’s workout programs undertake physical activity, in the form suggested by Chodakowska, 2 – 4 times a week on average (36%) (Figure 3).

Among all respondents, 47,8% who use the workout programs have never used any

program, before they learned about Chodakowska and her method.

The majority of respondents declare that the popularity of Chodakowska is due to the free of charge YouTube movies (50.1%), then the regularly updated Facebook fan page (37.7%), building a community of physically active people (22.5% of respondents), Chodakowska’s presence in the media as a celebrity (21%), and promotional materials such as books, CD’s, calendars, posters, magnets (16.2%). The less influential forms of raising popularity were meetings with Chodakowska (13.6%), where people could work

out together with her, advertising well-known brands (8.8%) and other (3%).

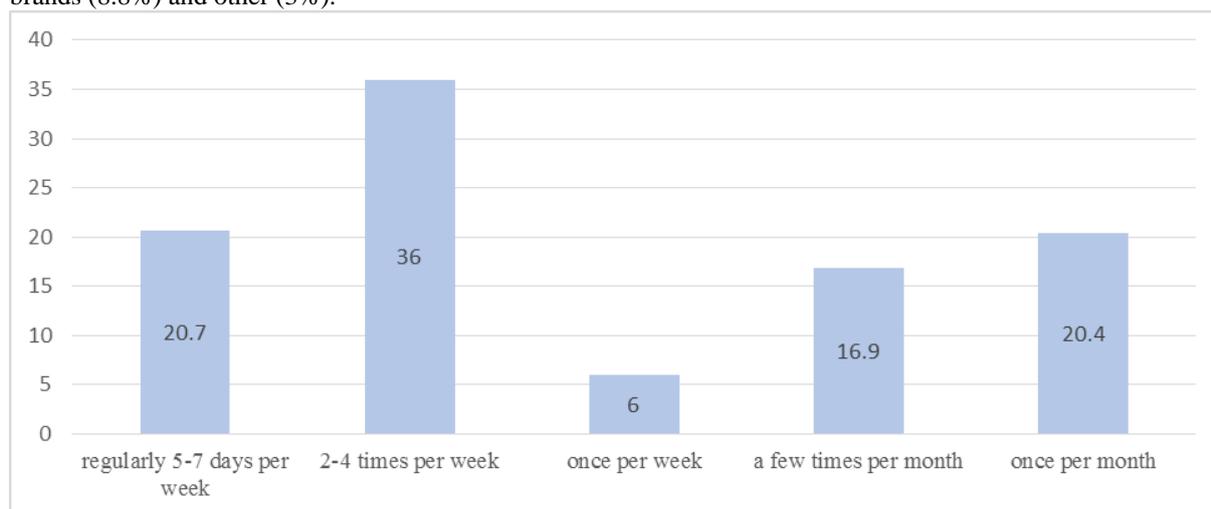


Figure 3. Frequency of using Chodakowska's training plans by respondents (%)

A maximum of two answers was allowed for this question as well.

Almost a quarter of respondents (22.9%) declare visiting Chodakowska's fan page at least once a day, whereas 21.6% several times a day. The respondents with primary education visit the fan page most often (100% - probably the youngest respondents), on the other hand, people with higher education visit the fan page least often (65%).

Respondents, who declared visiting Chodakowska's fan page, highlighted the user-friendliness, simplicity, the ability to communicate the content, as the most positive features (45.9% of respondents), a belief that all the content is posted

by Chodakowska herself, which generates trust (41%), a belief that the content is addressed directly at them (26.8%), and that the content carries about itself a certain dose of emotions, which can move the readers (23.2%), then writing the posts in a familiar style, specific for Chodakowska (23%). The least influential, positive features of Chodakowska's fan page were: providing the information in a meaningful and concise way (13.1% respondents), professionalism: 'Ewa knows what she is talking about' (9.9%) and the element of surprise in the posts (3.3%) (Figure 4).

A maximum of three answers was allowed for this question.

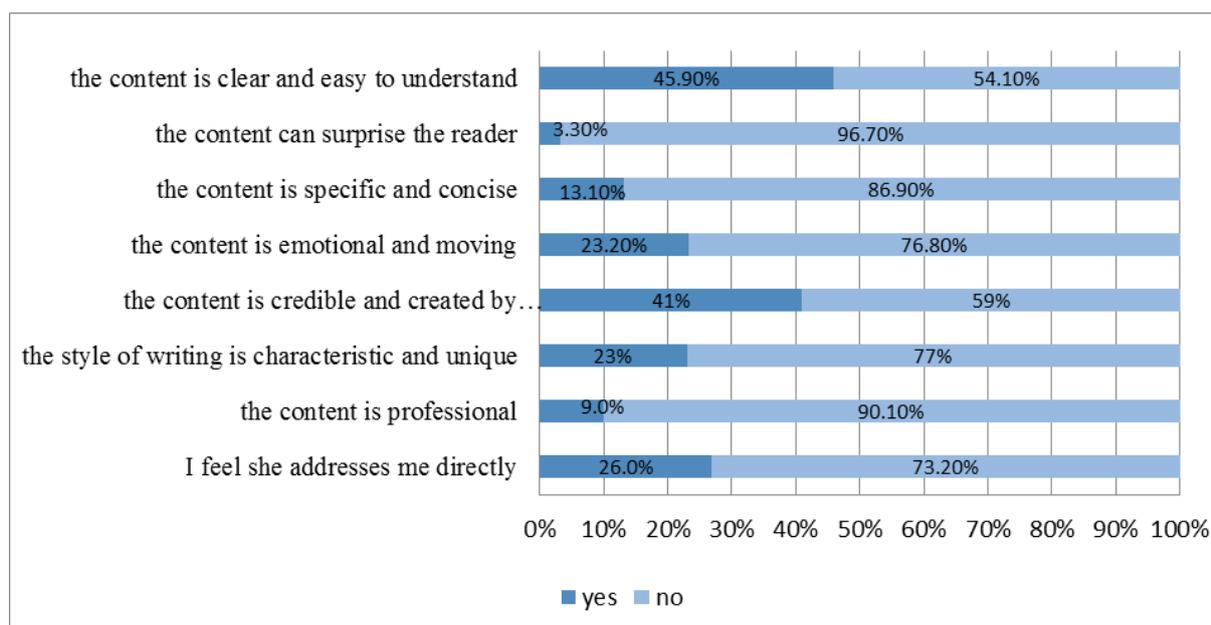


Figure 4. The positive features of Chodakowska's fan page based on respondents' opinion (%)

Among the most significant negative features of the fan page, the respondents highlighted the vague content, overusing the written texts (13.7%), creating content in an unprofessional way (12.8%), providing the readers with encyclopaedic definitions (8.5%), lack of own style in running the fan page (7.1%), an impression that

the materials are not created by Chodakowska herself (5.3%) posting content which is not drawing the attention of the readers and is overly general (3.8%), and finally posting complicated and incomprehensible content (0.3%) (Figure 5). A maximum of three answers was allowed for this question.

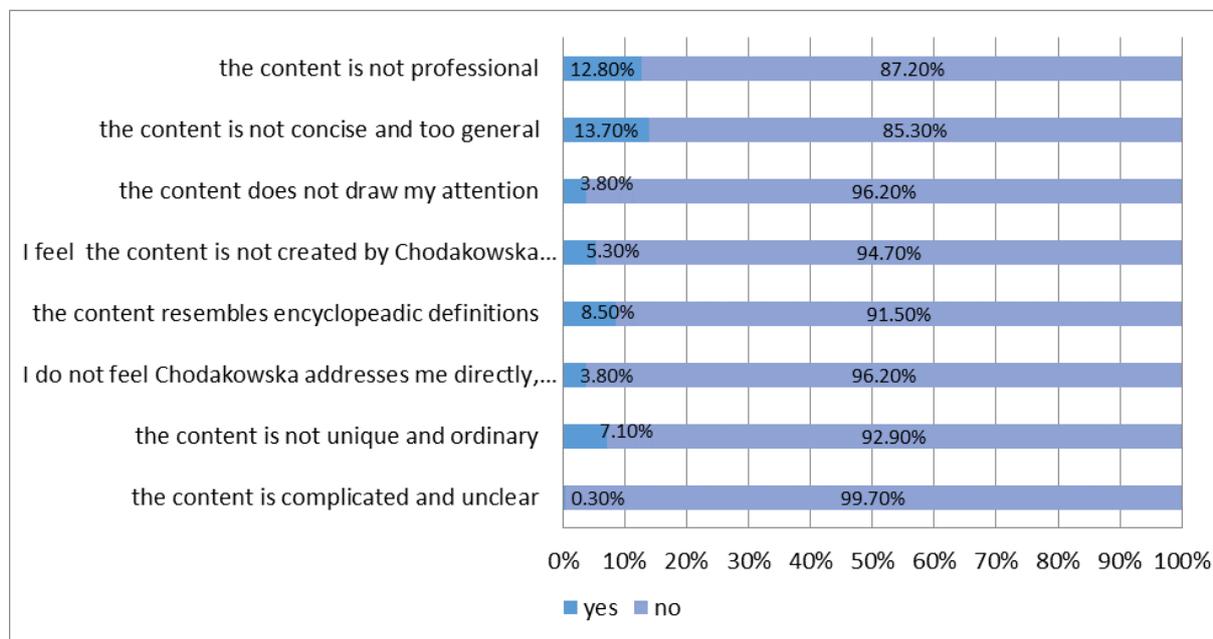


Figure 5. The negative features of Chodakowska’s fan page in the opinion of respondents (%)

## DISCUSSION

The research indicates that the Polish society suffers from the lack of information on the negative effects of unhealthy behaviour [4]. On this basis, a necessity for intensified educational campaigns is raised, the purpose of which is to promote and create a healthy lifestyle. It is therefore suggested that the campaigns be supported by other highly effective measures. A key priority is, hence, raising awareness of the health related education, through and in co-operation with the National Health Program. Nowadays, with universal access to the Internet, people prefer seeking information on health related topics using this medium [5].

The channel and style of communication used by professionals is often incomprehensible for the public. The use of technical vocabulary (including medical terms) in order to provide information on the health-seeking behaviour is sometimes discouraging the readers from gaining valuable knowledge [6]. It is therefore justified to get the message across using reliable, yet enjoyable means [7]. According to the concept of empowerment knowledge itself is not the factor facilitating the change. An outside motivation is required as well as support from the society and the

leaders. Both of these elements are visible with regard to Chodakowska’s methods.

Firstly, according to the research conducted by IR Center, 48% of people leading a healthy lifestyle, use Facebook on a daily basis, and 26% use YouTube, which can be seen as the creation and participation of an alternative and developing on-line community, whose influence is still growing. Creating virtual communities enables the strengthening of positive behaviours and maintaining motivation through constant contact with other users.

Secondly, highlighting the leading role of a personality promoting a healthy lifestyle, contributes to the fact that Internet users seek valuable information, and the leaders themselves. It is also worth mentioning that the preferable way of obtaining information is through entertainment [8]. The leader, in this case, is not a professional, using a paternalistic and encyclopaedic method, but a coach, whose direct, easy-to-use approach and on-line interaction with the recipients promotes a specific model of behaviour. The coach suggests solutions in the healthy lifestyle area, without using the paternalistic approach, rather referring to, more or less anonymous, groups of professionals, thus formulating ‘recommendations’. There is no information about the negative effects, but a strong

emphasis of the positive aspects of a healthy lifestyle.

Such is the case with Chodakowska and her attitude towards promoting a healthy lifestyle and direct contact with the people using her method. After all, one of the features of the modern society is the need to customise all areas of life and services [9].

It is of course another issue whether this customisation is authentic and to what extent it is possible to pinpoint the level of individuality, taking into account the popularity and universality provided by the Internet. When analysing the efficiency of health education, one cannot omit the crucial role of the Internet. On-line education (according to LEECH research 2009 – 2010 [10] is most effective among people with higher education. Only 37% of people with primary education use this form of gaining information. An interesting fact remains that with regard to Chodakowska's method, the Polish Internet users most often seek information on symptoms of illnesses (60%), types of medicine (40%), and physical activity and a healthy lifestyle is the area of interest of only 20% and 15% of users respectively [11]. Nevertheless, it seems justified to assume that the popularity of Chodakowska is to do with an additional factor: her as a person.

## CONCLUSION

Having analysed the results of the study it is possible to state that using a customised approach and creating a positive image in relations with society can be adopted in promoting physical activity and a healthy diet. It is especially crucial nowadays, since a growing number of people is becoming overweight and obese, and whose level of physical activity is not sufficient, or who are leading a sedentary life. In addition, one can state that when developing future obesity prevention campaigns, the achievements and experience of Chodakowska should be taken into account. By using the tools, unpopular up to now, in the area of health and physical activity, she achieved a spectacular and widely discussed effect. It is vital to highlight that the marketing techniques used so far in sales, such as content marketing, viral marketing and social media marketing could be effectively used in the area of health, physical activity and diet. Furthermore, the public relations based on creating a positive image allows to get results in a non-commercial area. The analysed case should draw attention to using social media. At a time when the Internet is booming and the changes in patterns of social behaviour reflect this process, it is easier to achieve the marketing goals by means of social media. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that the techniques and methods of promoting physical

activity used by Chodakowska are particularly effective when it comes to women with primary education living in the countryside or in small towns. It is undoubtedly a valuable clue for planning future preventive and health promoting campaigns. Until recently, women having a low socio-economic status have been a relatively difficult group to address the preventive campaigns. After all, a low socio-economic status is one of the risk factors in civilization diseases. The results of that study can be important, because it may help to look for ways and means of introducing new techniques and methods to reach the high-risk group.

## Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are not any commercial, financial, or other associations that could pose a conflict of interest in connection with article.

## Financial disclosure/funding

The authors declare that there are not any funding sources related to the study and to the article preparation.

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