COVID-19 impact on Apparel (DE)

March 31, 2020
Consumers are currently forced to spend time at home and might even be affected by reduced work hours and financial losses

**HYPOTHESIS**

People will still need clothing and continue to explore apparel sites for seasonal items, from summer fashion to swimwear and running shoes.

Retailers with uninterrupted supply chains and the ability to fulfill shipments will see increased interest in their online stores while brick-and-mortar stores are temporarily closed.
COVID-19 has led to click volume decline, but there has been a positive trend seen in last week’s data.

Weekly click growth is still trending negative year over year (YoY), but the week-over-week (WoW) view shows an increase in the last week of March. It is too early to say, though, if that positive trend will continue.
Brand searches increased after brick-and-mortar stores closed down

Searches for apparel brands trended below last year’s volume, but there has been a constant increase after March 16.

Interestingly, the typical Saturday gap—when search volume is low—did not appear on March 21 and was also much smaller on March 28 compared to last year. This indicates a slight shift in search behavior as the traditional work week model is interrupted.

Source: Internal Data, Retail / Apparel, Top 100 Brand Queries; O&O, all devices, Germany; Mar 1-28 2020 vs. March 3–30 2019
Brand searches account for 2/3 of all Apparel clicks

Apparel clicks are highly driven by brand affiliation, either through pure brand or brand combination keywords.

Source: Internal Data, Retail / Apparel, Sample base of 10,000 keywords; Germany: Feb 29 2020 - March 20 2019
Generic product searches declined in the second half of March.

Except for Wäsche (which includes underwear, lingerie, pyjamas, socks, etc.), all apparel and accessories categories were in decline the second half of March. This trend was seen last year as well, however much less pronounced, except for Schuhe.
Until mid-March, Bademoden was the fastest growing product group.

Growing products (median WoW growth)

- Turn-, Sport- and Laufschuhe
- Ball- und Partykleider
- Ranked also high in the list of most clicked products with median weekly growth rates of 20% or more

Source: Internal Data, Retail / Apparel, Retail / Apparel, Sample base of 10,000 keywords, Germany; Mar 1-28 2020 vs. March 3–30 2019
Mobile clicks are growing year over year

YoY, there has been a strong increase in mobile clicks, largely driven by syndicated partners.

Desktop PC clicks in March still comprised 81% of all Apparel clicks; mobile 14% and tablet 5%.
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Source: Internal Data, Retail / Apparel Vertical, Top Keywords by Clicks, Germany, Feb 29 – Mar 20 2020
Apparel searches are highly brand-driven; consumers have a clear preference.

The impact of COVID-19 is difficult to predict but, as brick-and-mortar stores are being closed, increases in online activities and sales are expected. The week of March 21 was the first to show WoW growth.

There has been an increase in mobile Apparel clicks, although desktop PCs still account for 80% of all clicks.

Seasonality has not changed; With spring approaching, Bademoden and Laufschuhe were amongst the fastest growing product categories.