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AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITHUANIAN FASHION DESIGNERS' USE OF MARKETING IN THEIR SUCCESS

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A dissertation submitted to the University of Huddersfield for the degree of Master of Arts by Research in the School of Art, Design and Architecture

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to provide young fashion designers in Lithuania with information on how to become recognised and successful. There is an increased interest and demand for fashion within Lithuania but limited literature regarding this developing industry, therefore comparators are drawn from available literature about the more established British fashion industry. A principal objective to this enquiry was to investigate how the Lithuanian fashion houses used marketing tools to achieve popularity and fame.

Qualitative, in-depth and semi-structured interviews with three Lithuanian designers at their studios in Lithuania were conducted about how they became established and the roles of marketing, branding and PR, creativity and talent, consumer's trust and reliance and finances. Results indicate the following helped the designer entering the industry: identifying a niche market, combining talent and creativity with business knowledge, a good preparation for the industry, finance management, appropriate funding, business partner and networking, the importance of branding, and the implications with the consumers' addiction to famous brands.

This research contributes to the existing literature on the Lithuanian fashion industry and the general scholarly debate on the importance of marketing and branding in the fashion industry. The study identifies prospects for and opportunities to improve the Lithuanian fashion industry and concludes with recommendations for the designer's preparation for the industry, and identifies issues for further research such as: individual clients versus collections, the right time to start, consumerism, or fashion in the future.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1 introduces the initial idea of the research and its context. It identifies the need for this research and the importance of its results which could contribute to existing knowledge. Definitions of the terms 'fashion, 'fashion industry' and 'success' are outlined, and the philosophical approach of fashion significance is discussed. This chapter also presents the thesis structure, research aims, objectives, and questions to be analysed.

1.1. RESEARCH CONTEXT

Fashion is one of the biggest topicalities of the 21st century, and therefore research examining various aspects of this topic have been pursued. As business has become an inevitable part of the fashion world, research is taking place about business related issues and management (Burke, 2008; White & Griffiths, 2004; Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011), selling (Sherman & Perlman, 2007), marketing (Bickle, 2009; Easey, 2009; Hines & Bruce, 2012), branding (Hameide, 2011; Holt, 2004; Okonkwo, 2007), and the shift in promotion with the emergence of the Internet, social media and blogs (Moore, 2012; Flynn, 2006). Fashion phenomenon and its understanding have changed over the years, therefore social and cultural aspects of fashion have also been widely investigated: scholars examine fashion today as part of consumerism (Halpern, 2007; Agins, 2010), popular culture (Manlow, 2007; Hancock, Woods & Karaminas, 2013) and mass production (Manlow, 2007; Barnes & Lea-Greenwood, 2006). It has also led to discussing environmental issues, sustainable fashion (Fletcher, 2008), supply chain issues and manufacturer working conditions (Wong & Guo, 2014; Leeman, 2010). Technological developments, computerised systems and the world of the Internet have encouraged technological research: computerised design and manufacture (Seymour, 2012; Walter, Kartsounis & Carosio, 2009), fast-paced production, shopping and technologies enabling easier route between consumer and product (Pundir, 2007; Moore, 2012; Hameide, 2011).

The Lithuanian fashion industry, young designers' issues and their rise to success have been the central concerns of the research. This particular fashion industry is of primary interest to the researcher due to the researcher's nationality, career objectives in the fashion field in Lithuania,

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willingness to help young designers and aspirations of improvements in this fashion industry. Due to the country's historical, geographical, political, economic and cultural issues and aspects, Lithuania lacks the reputation of a strong fashion industry. When free and independent countries had opportunities to develop their fashion industries, Lithuania was prevented from developing, improving and making a name in the world's fashion scene (Lithuanian fashion history is discussed in more detail in section 2.2). In the Western world, Baltic countries, including Lithuania, are known for their crafts, however they have not been famous for their strong fashion creators or features, distinguishing them from other countries' fashion industries.

However, since Lithuania regained its independence, the industry has started developing. As the country still has economic issues, the fashion industry is presently small, but is continually growing industry which has all its elements (they are discussed in more detail in section 2.3). As there are growing numbers of Lithuanian designers who face competition, it raises many issues for young designers and encourages looking for possible ways to succeed. While the UK fashion industry offers better opportunities and support for their young start-ups, concerns about young Lithuanian designers are increasing.

In addition to possessing talent and having exceptional ideas, fashion designers in today's industry must also have a business savvy mind and attitude. It has become challenging for young designers to break into the industry as they need to be multi-skilled and understand many new dimensions which are not included in a designer's training. The lack of knowledge in certain aspects can prevent designers from trying and succeeding in the fashion world. The research raises questions about what marketing strategies could help young Lithuanian designers to promote themselves, how they can achieve success with limited budgets, build trust and reliance for consumers, and what role talent and creativity play in becoming recognised.

1.2. THE RESEARCH NEED

The literature reviewed has evidence to show that fashion scholars in the UK and USA provide a sufficient amount of information about fashion business marketing, branding and promotion (Bickle, 2009; Easey, 2009; Hines & Bruce, 2012; Hameide, 2011; Holt, 2004; Moore, 2012; Flynn, 2006), however many of them are not always applicable for designers in smaller countries

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with less income to start a business. Even though the quantity of literature in the UK and USA, where fashion industries are widely developed, are growing, there are limited investigations into the cheaper ways of marketing, financial help and finance management for young designers. Furthermore, the investigation of small countries', such as Lithuania, fashion industries, the opportunities for Lithuanian fashion designers, ways to succeed and prepare for the industry, has been very limited. There is limited literature to provide young designers with advice and guidance. Therefore this research aims to contribute to current knowledge and understanding of young designers' issues, help with marketing and branding, ways to succeed in the Lithuanian fashion industry and provide suggestions and recommendations for where improvements can be made in the Lithuanian fashion industry and young designers' careers.

1.3. DEFINING THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Probably everyone could agree that they understand what the term fashion means, but it is quite difficult to define it and its true meaning. There are different understandings of 'fashion' between fashion consumers and scholars. They range from fashion as a means of social regulation due to people's division in different social classes, to the direct reflection of hierarchy due to the comprehensive power of fashion to control consumers' wishes and shopping habits. By some, fashion has been described as an irrational conception which is ever-changing, does not have any content and is just an outside decoration lacking intellectual elements. It has been called a part of a popular/mass culture (Hancock, no date), 'modern manifestation of clothing' (Saviolo & Testa, 2002, p. 6) or 'clothing…related closely to the short-term dictates of the market (Breward, 1995, p. 5).

Others see the positive concept of fashion as it cannot be attributed as simply a clothing industry. Fashion clothing has gained special attention for design and creativity, and often is regarded as a type of art (Getszy & Karaminas, 2012), created by talented fashion designers (Wilson, 2003). Originally fashion has not been about consumerism – design, an expression of creativity, is the driving force behind fashion. Fashion is formed by a person's imagination and expectations (Kawamura, 2011) and has advantages as a medium to send messages, educate, inform, and entertain. Even though it is just a work based on a sketch or drawing which is translated into a garment on a model, 'the original quality and coherence of the formal features of the work and

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the way it positioned itself within a recognised tradition of fashion design', makes simple clothes 'fashion' (McRobbie, 1998, p. 29).

However, the term industry added to 'fashion' completely changes its initial meaning. Industry, described by Porter (1985) is a 'a group of companies offering products or services that are close substitutes for each other, that is, products or services that satisfy the same basic customers' needs' which emphasises the industry's role as a supplier of goods for consumers. Therefore fashion industry may be defined as the industry aiming to produce clothes and receive profit. According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2014), it is a 'multibillion-dollar global enterprise devoted to the business of making and selling clothes'. This definition truly reflects 'fashion' today, which transformed from a type of art to a global business industry aimed to sell and gain profit. The fashion industry 'encompasses the design, manufacturing, machinery, textiles producers, warehouses, distribution, marketing, retailing, advertising and promotion of all types of apparel from the most rarefied and expensive haute couture and designer fashions to ordinary everyday clothing'. It can also include the manufacturers of the machinery, the textiles producers, warehouses and more.

1.4. DEFINING SUCCESS

The meaning of 'success' must also be acknowledged. According to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, success is achieving wealth, respect or fame and the desired result of an attempt. It is a 'peace of mind…self-satisfaction in knowing you did your best to become the best you are capable of becoming (Wooden in Baer, 2014), or 'continued expansion of happiness and the progressive realisation of worthy goals' (Chopra in Baer, 2014). Everyone has their own individual definition of success as it might mean different things to each individual: to some being a successful designer is having one boutique or being known locally, to others it is worldwide success, collections in fashion weeks, the leading brand and millions of customers. This study interprets success as the satisfaction of an individual designer who has achieved his/her goals – he/she is established, well-known to some extent, has built trust and reliance from consumers, has a wide customer circle, financial stability and a profitable business.

1.5. PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH. SIGNIFICANCE OF FASHION

Together with time, fashion in people's lives became more and more important. In early history, people wore clothes just to cover their bodies from the cold, but the concept of beauty itself and its importance for people was seen in the first civilisations. Even at that time people started paying attention not only to the clothing itself, but also accessories which became an important part of luxury outfits and dressing up. After a few centuries fashion became an inevitable part of people's lives, and today it is one of the most important daily topicalities.

Throughout history, the understanding of 'being fashionable' had a deeper meaning. Clothing not only made people look nice, it also distinguished wealthy from poor, created a base of the seasonal fashion emergence, and emphasised femininity (Okonkwo, 2007). Even then, fashion strengthened social differentiation which could be felt more or less throughout history and has never fully disappeared. People used clothes to demonstrate their status, class, gender, party and show individuality: 'structures of people seeking to exercise social and political power or influence…The task of the fashion system was to provide clothing that was to be used to make distinctions between people on economic, cultural, aesthetic, and political levels. People who could wear more expensive clothes…could dominate those who wore more ordinary clothes' (Manlow, 2007, p. 5).

However the whole understanding of fashion at that time was quite primitive as people did not have as much freedom of choice since better quality clothing was a luxury product often only afforded by wealthy society members. With these growing needs, true fashion as a phenomenon, not a clothing supply, and the profession of being a fashion designer was born. It started developing only in the beginning of the 19th century, when the idea of high quality clothing, their presentation at collections and the experts in the fashion world emerged.

Today we see clothing stores full of fashionable clothing, celebrities wearing world famous designer dresses, magazines filled with information about fashion, its trends and styles, which are very popular discussion topics with friends or at work. Therefore many could agree that they dedicate a big portion of time and thought to fashion. The fashion industry contributed to democratisation as fashion became available to the masses. In the past people could only prove

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their identities by the state, traditions or authorities, however today it is possible to prove that with the help of fashion. The industry's role became to 'create signs of distinction', 'define their identities and to mark boundaries between themselves and others' (Manlow, 2007, p. 78).

Clothing is part of our lives; we cannot imagine our daily routines without them. People use clothing for different reasons: to feel comfortable, to adjust to varying weather conditions, to be satisfied with their appearance, to help body movement and to represent their personalities (Manlow, 2007). Fashion is a means of communication which allows people to express and represent themselves, their individuality, thoughts and ideas through the clothes they wear. White & Griffits call it a language: 'Its vocabulary changes or evolves, and can express different meanings at different times according to the wearer and the observer…' (2004, p. 93).

The importance of clothing has changed, as today it can represent and communicate many different things. Periods of history, events, and changes in social life have different styles and clothes which represent that period and are only worn in a particular context. Stone (1960: 5) says that clothing is a medium in social relations. It is through one's use of clothing that 'social identities, value, attitudes', are established (Stone, 1960, p. 5 in Manlow, 2007, p. 77). Particular clothing can help achieve goals, feel more self-confident, gain respect and fit into a social group (Shields, 2011). It is common in our society that in order to express happiness (i.e. when celebrating) people wear beautiful clothes and spend extra attention on the outfit and their looks, however, when they are depressed or in a bad mood, people tend to wear simple ordinary clothes.

Manlow argues that if fashion were just superficial as many could think, it would not have played an important role in history and people's social lives. She gives a list of five main ways that fashion has been approached in society: 'fashion as an instrument for creating and maintaining boundaries in society, fashion in the interactional process, fashion as a semiotic system, fashion as a capitalist tool, and fashion as a postmodern condition' (Malow, 2007, p. 9). Fashion is a part of our culture; it plays a major role in every movement, whether it is politics, social interest, and is recognised as the art movement in the life changes (McRobbie, 1998).

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As history shifted, changed and the quality of life improved, so did the clothing. In the past fashion was dictated by those in power and people did not have much freedom in choosing their own styles and creating individual outfits (Manlow, 2007, p. 25). However in our modern society, buying fashionable clothes is a form of entertainment. We live in a society where beauty standards are very high, therefore people aim to look good, and clothing is one of the tools to achieve this goal. Consumers today possess the urge to have something new to wear or ultimate dreams to own a piece of a known designer's apparel (Shields, 2011). Shopping has become a usual weekend routine; consumers shop on sales even if there is no necessity to buy something new, they 'treat' themselves to some fashionable pieces when they are stressed or happy. It is the entertainment of being able to 'play' with clothes and accessories in order to create a unique style or a playful character, stand out from the crowd, be better than others, or attract a person you like.

1.6. THE RESEARCH

1.6.1. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research is to investigate how young designers become well-known, and the role of branding and marketing in developing a fashion designer's public profile and success. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Conduct a review to examine the current literature about the fashion industry, well-known designers' careers, the business environment and the role of branding and marketing. The literature available about the Lithuanian fashion industry is limited so to gain insights and identify relevant issues, the review takes into account literature about the UK fashion industry.

2. Conduct interviews with Lithuanian fashion designers to investigate how they see the role of the following in establishing successful careers:
   i. talent;
   ii. marketing and what marketing communication tools have helped the most;
   iii. finances for marketing;
   iv. trust and reliance from consumers.

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3. Analyse and compare the interviews with literature review to examine the relationship between marketing, branding, public relations, and designer's success.

4. Identify implications about what marketing and branding strategies can help new designers and new design companies become successful, as well as indicate the gaps in the literature for possible further research.

1.6.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Below are the detailed research questions arising from initial research aims and objectives. These questions will be analysed and discussed in the research.

1. What are the issues facing new designers who want to pursue a career in fashion?
2. What are the ways to make a successful start in the Lithuanian fashion industry?
3. Where does the trust and reliance from customers come from?
4. How can an unknown designer make his/her name popular?
5. Does designer's talent play a major role in pursuing a successful career in fashion?
6. What is the role of marketing, branding and PR in raising awareness of the fashion brand and becoming well-known? Can marketing, branding and PR help designers achieve success?
7. If marketing can really help, why is it so important, if the original aim of the designer is to focus on creativity and be an artist?
8. What tools of marketing, branding and PR can help the most?
9. What role do finances play in becoming successful designer? How can a young designer get enough income at the start of their career?
10. What are the differences between Lithuanian and British fashion industries?
11. What can the Lithuanian fashion industry and Lithuanian designers learn from successful British designers and their fashion industry model?
12. What are the tips and advice for young designers that could help them to achieve success?

1.7. THESIS STRUCTURE

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter two presents the background of the fashion industry; it reviews the literature about history and development of the fashion industry, looks at the industry's structure, its elements, sizes, offerings and measures in the UK and Lithuania. It identifies the importance of the industry: its development, economic significance, management issues in Lithuanian and UK fashion industries. It compares both countries' industries, their growth, development and issues, and concludes with questions arising regarding the role of fashion designers within the industry, the management issues and the possibilities of Lithuanian industry to improve.

Chapter three looks at the business environment and issues for a fashion designer, reviews career opportunities in the industry and the designer's role. It emphasises business knowledge essential for designer today; analyses the supply chain, product selling, cash flow and issues concerned, as well as branding, marketing, promotion, public relations, their importance and various tools. It compares the usage of branding in Lithuanian and the UK fashion industries and concludes with questions arising regarding the difficulties for a young designer to be knowledgeable in all facets, combining business, art and finances for marketing.

Chapter four reviews the research methodology: it discusses various research methods, types of data and data collection methods, their advantages and disadvantages. It also looks at the process of data collection, research design, and tests of validity and reliability. This chapter presents research aims and objectives, the most suitable methods for the research and the whole process of data collection.

Chapter five provides results of the data collected. It introduces the interviewees and data collected in the same structure discussed in methodology, it analyses interviews individually and focuses on the important issues, insights and experiences of each designer. It discusses the issues that emerged from data collection according to each individual case, compares the interviewees' answers and remarks and provides conclusions about the questions answered. This chapter concludes with the questions arising from the interviews which led to the discussion.

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Chapter six presents the discussion and analysis of the research findings. It compares and contrasts significant issues within the literature reviewed and interviews collected. It identifies conclusions about what marketing and branding strategies are the most useful, and discusses the most important issues and topics regarding the young designer's success that emerged in the study. Chapter six concludes with recommendations for the industry and opportunities for further research.

1.8. CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the initial idea of the research, its structure, context, the need for this particular research and the importance of its results which could contribute to existing literature. It defined the terms 'fashion', 'fashion industry' and 'success', discussed the philosophical approach of fashion significance and concluded with the research aims, objectives, questions to be analysed and thesis structure.

CHAPTER 2. SECTOR BACKGROUND

Chapter two essentially aims to locate the role of the fashion design process in its business environment. Section 2.1 describes the sector background: its history, product offerings, measures, size and structure. Section 2.6 gives an account of the sector environment: the dynamics influencing the sector, market sectors, competitive forces, barriers and strategies, and section 2.7. compares Lithuanian and British fashion industry sectors.

2.1. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Fashion originated in the 14th century (Breward, 1995; Hollander, 1993, Lipovetsky, 1994, Laver, 2002). Its beginnings can be found in the Renaissance period in Italy. The famous quote of Federico in 1516 saying that 'a man's attire is no slight index of the wearer's fancy, although sometimes it can be misleading; and not only that, but ways and manners, as well as deeds and words, are all an indication of the qualities of the man in whom they are seen' (Castiglione in Manlow, 2007, p. 7) shows that clothes became not only a sign of a status or profit, but also as a sign of individuality and expression. Fashion started developing with the emergence of modern cities and culture expansion (Manlow, 2007).

The necessity to demonstrate the status and make good impression contributed to the fashion being treated as important to achieve. The upper-class was able to demonstrate their wealth, power and status when wearing flamboyant clothes; however the rest of the society wore either handmade gowns or second hand clothes (Manlow, 2007).

Technological improvements had a huge impact on fashion industry development, such as the expansion of the railroad system, the invention of sewing machine, motorized cutting knives, pressing equipment and paper patterns, telegraph and postal services (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). With these improvements clothing stores began to emerge in the quickly developing urban cities in the 19th century and developed into mass retailing, department, chain stores and clothing companies which started competing between each other (Manlow, 2007; Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011).

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In the early 1800s ready-to-wear clothing emerged with uniforms made for sailors. Merchants thought it would be easier and faster for sailors to have ready-made trousers and shirts available as they only have a few days in port (Horn and Gurel, 1981 in Manlow, 2007). At the similar time sewing machine was invented, therefore dressmakers started producing ready-to-wear clothing such as blouses for working women, e.g. teachers and stenographers, clothing for slaves, labourers, miners, and soon it was possible to produce clothing available for a wider audience (Manlow, 2007).

World War I brought the need to mass-produce military uniforms; this helped to improve production methods (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). 'Textile production was the first sector to undergo industrialization which began in England' and developed in other countries (Dickerson 1995: 23, 26, 28 in Manlow, 2007, p. 35).

The demand for fashionable clothes made by skilled dressmakers grew with years. 'The expansion of the middle-class consumers wanting good-quality apparel but not the high prices associated with custom-made clothing' (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). Sewing machines became mass-produced and available to more people in the end of the 19th century, therefore middle-class women could sew clothing at home (Manlow, 2007).

In the 20th century ready-to-wear production became intensive. Production of clothing took place either at homes of immigrants or in sewing factories which had poor working conditions and were often called 'sweatshops' (McRobbie, 1998). The number of stores and companies grew every day as it was easy to start a business (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). Both women making clothing for their families at home and sewers in factories sew traditional clothes by the rules adopted and did not create any individual designs and styling (Manlow, 2007). As mass-production increased, it became possible to copy and reproduce designer fashions. Ready-to-wear clothing reached its peak in 1960s and 1970s, but haute couture declined (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011).

The great depression in the USA influenced the decline of the fashion industry; however it rose again after the World War II. Clothing imports increased and stimulated competition between countries and companies (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). As clothing was made from wool,

cotton and silk, which were expensive and had limited supply, synthetic fabrics were developed at the beginning of the 20th century (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). New synthetic fibers such as nylon were invented and clothing was produced mostly in modern factories (Burns, Mullet & Bryant). In the 1970s the industry saw the computer technology: the invention of washing machines and cheap synthetic fibers. Clothing such as leggings and swimming suits were easier produced with new fibers like lycra (Drew, 1992).

Today fashion has expanded worldwide and is available for everyone. All this fast development including technology, new inventions, cheap new fabrics, emergence of the Internet and a widespread mass culture led fashion to develop into a big global industry serving everyone's needs according to the individual taste, style or price limits. Today's fashion, its structure and offerings are discussed in detail in further sections.

2.2. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF FASHION INDUSTRY IN LITHUANIA

As discussed before, fashion is as a very broad concept with many different associations and understandings. Fashion, as a concept, has been known for centuries, even millenniums, therefore we could say that Lithuanian fashion began in early Neolite when people wore amber and paid special attention to unique accessories made from gold and silver. However fashion as a creation of costume design or designer's fashion, is a different phenomenon. It is a creative activity which has a lot of requirements and most importantly it requires a designer – an individual, who has distinctive style, talent, and whose name would be a guarantor of uniqueness and quality (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). Therefore a true Lithuanian *designer's* fashion started only a few decades ago. Due to the country's historical matters, fashion has not had a chance to fully develop together with other European countries and has not yet gained a name of a powerful and important part of people's lives.

Lithuania went from 'one hands to another's' during the history: first it was united with Poland and took its heritage, then it was occupied by Soviet Union, so long-term clothing and fashion traditions could not remain (Vasiliev in Statkevicius, 2006). Soviet revolution destroyed the natural Lithuania's development process when in 1940 Soviet Union occupied the country.

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Soviet Union changed Lithuanian culture forever, affecting its industries, education, art, literature, and of course, fashion (Kazanaviciute, 2013).

Before occupation, a strong femininity and luxury was felt in Lithuanian women's fashion, however all the political restrictions made it harder to achieve: 'Lithuanian elite ladies could not shop in Western countries so they had to find alternatives in Soviet bloc countries where news about fashion tendencies were restricted due to political matters. Government's fear that the fashion culture from West will affect society's thinking and attitude towards the system was felt throughout all sovietisation' (Kazanaviciute, 2013). Thankfully, as technologies developed, some fashion news reached Lithuania and people aimed to be at least a little bit like Europeans who live in free independent countries.

Tendencies from the West reached Lithuania in 1960s and 1970s. Jeans became popular in Europe, whereas in Lithuania it was a deficit product, costing from 100 to 150 rubles which at that time equalled to a monthly worker's wage. During that period floral patterns, midi, maxi skirts, krimplin dresses, costumes, coats, platform shoes and make up brightened the Soviet Union greyness (Kazanaviciute, 2013). However the situation in the countryside was worse. People did not have any chance to buy essential products, not to mention clothes, therefore they were often re-made several times. Even when clothes became available to buy, Lithuanian women did not retrieve the femininity they had before the occupation. Soviet Union formed the image of an active woman without any romantic details in her looks. The usual look of the Soviet lady was a sharp costume, midi skirt, elegant blouse with a ribbon, a few inch heeled shoes and a briefcase instead of a handbag (Kazanaviciute, 2013).

Vilnius Institute of Art, the only place which prepared clothing design specialists in Lithuania, had clothing modelling courses however designers were controlled and did not have enough creative freedom (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). Important change was in 1954 when *Vilnius Model House* was established. It was described as a 'designers' mecca' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). *Vilnius Model House* 'worked for the good of Lithuanian fashion industry and quietly built basis for the nation's fashion culture' (Kazanaviciute, 2013).

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Unfortunately at that time women could only dream about designer clothing, even if they could afford it. 'Government was furious about having a private business. And in the fashion lexicon there was no such word as ''designer'' ' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). *Vilnius Model House* had some secret clients but no one could find out about them. Their main work was clothing and footwear samples for mass production and the design of individual clothes for Lithuanian elite. In 1962 the *Model House* started publishing fashion magazine *Banga* which provided Lithuanian fashion admirers with the information about fashion tendencies and photographs from fashion shows in Social bloc countries. The magazine was strictly controlled by the government, therefore fashion tendencies and information from free developed countries could not reach Lithuania (Kazanaviciue, 2013).

Just before Lithuania regained its independence, designers and fashion lovers could feel that the bad times were coming to an end and the country would soon be independent, therefore positive moods brought many significant changes in the country's fashion industry. In 1988 *Salon 7* opened in Vilnius. Even though for many foreigners Vilnius looked grey after occupation, for Lithuanian designer Serge Ganzumian it looked like an interesting place: 'I started studying in *Vilnius Academy of Art* and I found myself in the process of the Lithuanian fashion beginning – it was new and interesting for me, I felt like a Lithuanian fashion pioneer'. Ganzumian and his colleagues were the first ones who created the basis of the Lithuanian fashion industry (Bulbenkaite, 2013). *Salon 7* was a symbol of a new era. 'Most famous designers gathered to a group 7+ whose aim was to have a fashion week in Lithuania. Straukaite, Statkevicius, Zileniene, Ganzumianas, Simanaviciute, Pogrebnojus, Urbonaviciute were the first 7+ members' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010).

Since the time Lithuania gained its independence and its status as a free sovereign country everything changed, and fashion started developing quicker than ever. It was a promising situation for Lithuanian designers. They could do whatever they want as they knew that no one would come to judge them for not following the rules. Everyone wanted to create avant-garde fashion which gave an opportunity to express designer's ego with cheap tools. Young designers grew surprisingly fast. After two seasons the so-called anarchists became respectable designers who could clearly show their esthetics and ideas (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010).

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One of Lithuanian designers Gustiene started organising *Vilnius Fashion Days* and it developed to the idea of *In Vogue* festival in 1991. 'High fashion festival impressed society and people watched fashion shows as special performances, they valued them as art' (Kazanaviciute, 2013). In 1994 first *Vilnius Fashion Week* took place. 'The event looked perfect: seven collections and one guest from the Netherlands show, cosy atmosphere, great mood' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). The event's aim was to introduce society with new fashion tendencies and provide young designers with the opportunity to present their work to the audiences.

In 1990 for the first time in the Eastern Europe the international contest *Forum XXI* took place. Young Lithuanian designers won first places year after year. 'The status of the designer began to change. The only problem was that victories stimulated them to improve but designers struggled because of the lack of finances' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010).

In 1999 designers launched the most popular fashion event today *Fashion Infection*. Its aim is not to follow fashion trends but find freedom and different ideas in designers' work, find new talents who can break the fashion stereotypes (Kazanaviciute, 2013). *Fashion infection* is the biggest fashion event in Lithuania which provides the best way to see the picture of our country's costume design. Lithuanian fashion students here have their first public debuts together with guest designers from abroad which encourages communication between other countries (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010).

2.2.1. LITHUANIANS' UNDERSTANDING OF FASHION

When discussing fashion, it is important to know what factors shaped the people's lifestyle. Religion is one of them, especially in the Baltic countries, where it played a crucial part in the nation's consciousness and dictated a view to particular things and matters (Vasiliev in Statkevicius, 2006). Lithuanian religion is Christianity, which is a stable religion. Before Christianity, Lithuanians were Pagans for many years. This explains a lot about today's Lithuanians taste. Also the place and surroundings affect the style as well. 'The crucial factor when forming the taste was love for nature and quite grey, green, brown shades, which are

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typical for Lithuania, whose name came from the word 'rain' (similarity between Lithuanian words *lietus - Lietuva*). Therefore when buying clothes Lithuanians firstly pay attention to their warmth, colour – it has to be quiet, and material – it has to be waterproof' (Vasiliev in Statkevicius, 2006).

Being stylish and fashionable is not the biggest priority in Lithuania. By observing Lithuanian style for years the researcher could state that many Lithuanians are afraid to stand out and have an individual style. They choose 'safe' dark colours and simple clothes such as jeans and jumpers which do not stand out and do not catch attention. Therefore there are still people who shop in markets where clothes are imported from Belarus or Poland, they are all the same: 'Lithuanian markets have their own ''pret-a-porter''. Their production is very popular amongst Lithuanians. Lithuanian markets sell low quality clothes from synthetic materials' (Sidaras in Statkevicius, 2006). In the streets we can see many people wearing the same clothing from these places.

This issue comes from the past: 'Our clothing industry was coordinated so that clothing practical value would over upstage esthetical value…People called different things as a style or fashion: particular social, guild workers, age groups 'band instinct', a will to have exactly the same as my neighbour has' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). 'Lithuanians – are modest people. We will never be eccentric and too much restraint creates grey crowds in the cities' (Seviakovaite in Kupriscenkaite, 2011). Situation in men's fashion is worse. There are less stylish men than women in Lithuania (Kupriscenkaite, 2011).

The Soviet repression brought some negative aspects to the Lithuanians style as well, bringing the slavian image in the streets: sexy outfits, high heels, blond hair, a lot of make-up. Designer I.Seviakovaite agrees that slavian image understanding is difficult to dispose: 'Of course we can find similar styles in Paris as well, but way less than in Easter Europe countries. Luckily, we can see less and less of this tendency today' (Seviakovaite in Kupriscenkaite, 2011).

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2.2.2. A POSITIVE VIEW

'Lithuania discovers fashion and fashion discovers Lithuania – there are more and more people wanting to study fashion design, more talented fashion designers and new fashion publications in the country' (Bulbenkaite, 2013). Fashion now is accessible to everyone – internet opportunities and often organised fashion events allow people to find out about fashion news, know industry better and become a part of it. We can often see foreign designers collections in Lithuanian fashion events, and fashion schools abroad are learning how to pronounce Lithuanian students surnames (Bulbenkaite, 2013).

Designer S.Ganzumian says that *Vilnius College of Design* studies are oriented to art and creativity but Lithuanian academics are starting to understand the importance to teach about fashion business and marketing for young designers. Therefore he teaches students about commercial image and business, and he is happy o see the potential of younger generation (Ganzumian in Kondratajevas, 2011). *Vilnius Academy of Art* Costume Design Cathedral Professor J.Vazalinskiene agrees: 'Designer has to feel the needs of the industry, know the right prices to merchandise, sell and present designs. (Vazalinskiene in Kondratajevas, 2011).

A demand to learn about fashion in the country can be felt, especially from younger people. Lithuania has a quality international fashion magazine *L'officiel* which is being published in Lithuania since 2010. It provides fashion lovers with best news from the fashion world, it aims to educate people about the fashion industry. The popularity of the magazine and other fashion publications only proves that Lithuanians welcome fashion to their world. In 2012 magazine *L'officiel* opened its *Fashion Academy*. Lithuanian and other countries professionals encourage designers, businessmen and people from fashion world to collaborate. It aims to educate fashion and art professionals, encourage society to be interested in fashion as part of culture and art, and develop their own styles.

Even though elderly people still think that they need to invest a lot to be stylish, young generation is completely different – they find ways how to become stylish even if they lack finances, for example shop in second hand or vintage stores. The understanding of fashion is changing: the label is no longer important, but individuality is (Kupriscenkaite, 2011). Also there

are more and more clothing stores opening in Lithuania. With this new generation of young people, situation is getting better, there are more people who invest in their looks and the number of creative, stylish people in the country slowly grows (Kupriscenkaite, 2011).

The reason why Lithuania does not have a strong fashion industry is because of the suppression of political regime it had for many years. There is not a lot of information and samples left about the fashion history in Lithuania as because during the occupation there was no chance to open fashion museum or university where people could gather information and investigate fashion history (Vasiliev in Statkevicius, 2006). At the end of the 20th century it was strongly felt that Lithuanian fashion is awakening. Designers started participating in fashion contests and often received a special attention for their designs (Vasiliev in Statkevicus, 2006). After the country gained its independence, the crucial changes began in the industry: 'Things that were prohibited became available and fashion took place in people's lives as part of art, which people gladly accepted' (Kazanaviciute, 2013). Lithuanians did not 'rock' world fashion industry but they proved to have distinctive and cosmopolite ideas (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2010). Today Lithuanian fashion is not as strong as it could be – there are many issues industry and young designers face which prevent them from establishing Lithuania as a fashion country. However there is hope that Lithuanian fashion is improving – the country has a number of talented designers and consumers who are learning step by step about fashion and style. 'Now it is the time to reach European level in fashion world as well, to read world fashion magazines…learn languages, establish fashion museum and fashion university' (Vasiliev in Statkevicius, 2006).

2.3. INDUSTRY'S STRUCTURE

There are many different industries, various operations and organisations that fashion industry uses in order to produce fashion products (Bohdanowicz & Clamp, 1994). The same fashion industry structure discussed in this chapter applies to both Lithuania and United Kingdom, however it must be noted that Lithuania adopts a much smaller and simpler model of the production of clothing as it is not as developed as in the UK. Manufacturing is one of the most important processes in fashion production which encompasses a big chain of events from fibre production to retail, which usually takes 6-18 months (Carr & Pomeroy, 1992).

Clothing industry, similarly to other industries have group of firms that produce products with the same aim to reach and satisfy the consumer by knowing what consumers wants (Baynes, 1990). Figure below illustrates various groups of the fashion industry from material suppliers to promoters and how they work together (Sorenson in Easey, 1995, p. 17). This figure shows the British fashion industry's elements, but the same elements apply to the Lithuanian fashion industry, however there are no fashion forecasting agencies in Lithuania.

Figure 1: Sorenson's fashion flow chart
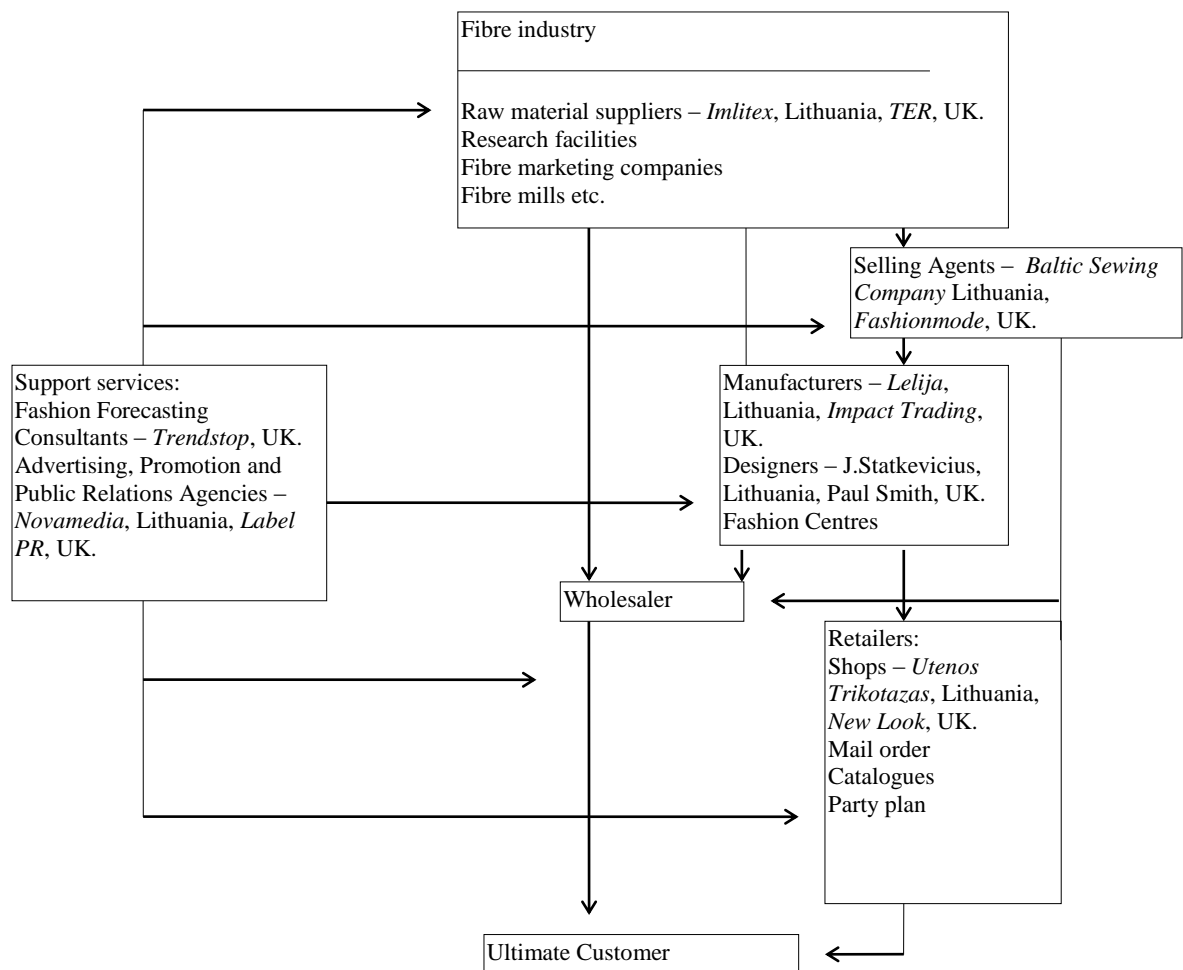
The fashion industry works with many businesses and professionals in order to produce fashions (Drew, 1992). The most important people involved in the manufacture process are designers, merchandisers, industrial buyers, sellers and customers. Today production has become global and it is easier to choose products and professionals who could help achieve the best results for a

particular brand. 'The company they choose to get their materials from or to do their construction must suit their budget, produce the amount they believe they can sell, and deliver it on time and at the quality level their customer demands' (Shields, 2011, xx).

Design concept and production process is very important as it affects the features of the wearable item. There are intrinsic attributes which include colour, texture of fabric, design, style and fit, and extrinsic attributes such as how a person feels when wearing a garment, how the figure looks and what image it creates. All of these influence the satisfaction of the customer with the garment, therefore it is essential to pay extra attention to the production process (Shields, 2011, xvii).

It is a challenge for a fashion designer to find reliable professionals who could guarantee the quality and good timing of production in affordable costs, and establish good work relationships with them. It is always a risk designers must take as the production might not always satisfy them as CMT (cut, make and trim) producers have many orders at the same time (McRobbie, 1998).

Fashion production starts from sketching and drawing designs, selecting swatches, fabrics, fibers and all necessary material which will affect the quality and performance of the finished product (Shields, 2011). Fabrics may be knitted, woven, or combined in another manner. It follows with the fabric dyeing, printing and cutting. Materials are then passed to a machinist for construction and making up to create a wearable shape and add specialised functions, such as attaching a pocket or a button. When samples are prepared, they are shown to the buyer, selector or design director and then analysed and positioned. They then consider the methods of manufacturing and discuss all costs, depending on competition and quality which allows the retailer to make a profit high enough to keep the business afloat. When all alterations of samples are made until they are perfect, the quality is assessed with the designer and technologist, orders are then placed (Drew, 1992, Shields, 2011).

The production of the garment is passed to the factory and then CMT process starts. Pattern making, grading, producing patterns for different sizes, laying, cutting, batching and arranging in

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the order in which they will be sewn are done in the factory. Then garment is made up by the machinist, finished and dispatched, the quality of the garment is checked and the costing is calculated (Drew, 1992).

- **Merchandisers**

Merchandisers create a plan or calendar which helps them to manage many tasks necessary to complete a fashion line and then they can decide how much time they need to produce the line. They direct creating, producing and delivering functions, ensure that all members of the process do their duties efficiently and that the line is produced on time. They look at the sales figures and fashion trends in order to find out which ones are best accepted by the customers, and also analyse the retailer's brand features to make sure that the clothes produced represent the brand well. 'Designers and merchandisers can directly affect the brand image…by the decisions they make about construction issues in each product (Shields, 2011, p. XX).

It is quite difficult to produce wholesale products in Lithuania. 'Since the start of creating a line, you have to think a lot where to get materials and other necessary things in order to create fashionable clothes in a good price...It is hard to find necessary things' (Sidaras in Statkevicius, 2006). However the UK's situation is much better with bigger availability of quality materials and professionals in the sphere.

- **Buyers**

Buyers work together with merchandisers and aim to achieve profits and satisfy customers (Drew, 1992, p. 49). Buyers are the decision makers regarding which styles will be retailed. They work closely with the merchandisers who organise the selling side and they all stay close to their ledgers and computer terminals, straying only to oversee production or delivery. They make sure that garments are in a good quality and right quantity, style of the store and how it will affect the retailer's brand image (Shields, 2011).

- **Sellers**

There are different types of sellers: independent retailers, multiples, department stores, independents stores, superstores, discount stores and online stores which choose and buy the products (Drew, 1992).

The shortest route from manufacturer to the consumer, as can be seen in figure 2, is route 1, direct from manufacturer to the consumer. Routes 2, 3 and 4 are the next direct to consumers while routes 5 and 6 are more involved. Agents and wholesalers are the 'middle-men' of distribution; the small retailers tend to use the service of wholesalers and agents, while the large retailers tend to deal directly with the manufacturer. Today there are also Internet retailers, route 7, that are one of the shortest routes to the consumer with the help of the postal delivery services.

Figure 2: methods of distribution from the manufacturer to consumer
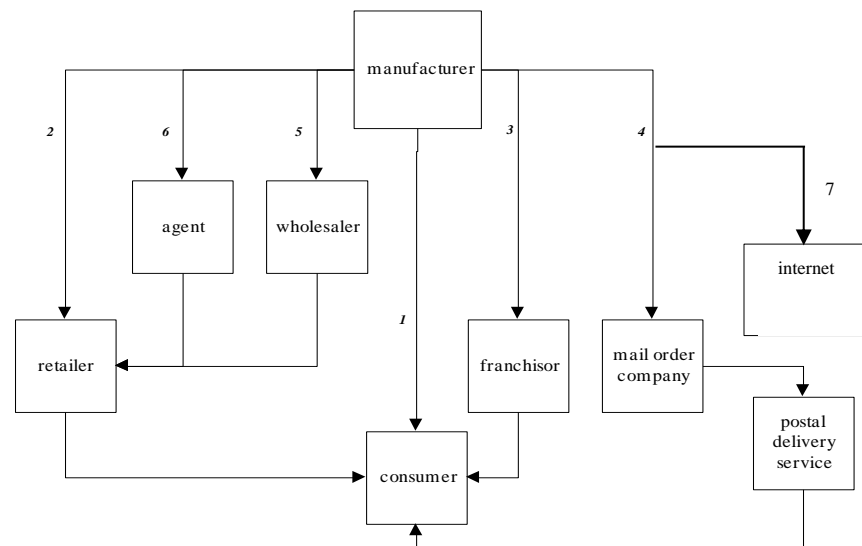
- **Wholesalers and agents**

Wholesalers sell products in smaller quantities for small retailers, they might also manufacture or import. It is a declining industry in the UK as many retailers now buy goods directly from manufacturers, however it is still a popular and useful industry in Lithuania as there are not many clothing manufacturers in the country therefore it is easier for the retailers to work with wholesalers as a medium. Agents have similar role as wholesalers, however they operate with different stock levels and a wider variety of manufacturers. They usually take orders for production by inviting retail buyers to visit their showrooms or by travelling to retailers. They can also help retailers by reducing their expenses in research and buying trips for import (Willans in Easey, 1995).

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- **Retailers**

There are many different methods of retailing according to the price range, product range and how the profits are divided (Easy, 1995, Drew, 1992). Figure below illustrates various methods of retailing both in Lithuanian and British fashion industries, and where these different methods interact.

SUPPORTING NETWORK

There is also a supporting network of the fashion industry which is significant to help the industry operate. As shown in the Sorenson's diagram (figure 2), these are prediction agencies, publicity and promotional mix.

- **Predictions agencies**

Prediction experts working in the agencies predict fashion trends in colours, fabrics and various styling elements. There are no prediction agencies in Lithuania, however it is quite a popular part of the industry in the UK.

- **Promotional mix and publicity**

Promotional mix might include advertising, marketing, branding, public relations, selling and publicity. Promotion is inevitable part of any fashion business and has a huge influence on the fashion brand's success. Various promotional tools and their importance are described in more detail in Chapter three, section 3.4. Supporting Network.

Figure 3. Types of retail outlets
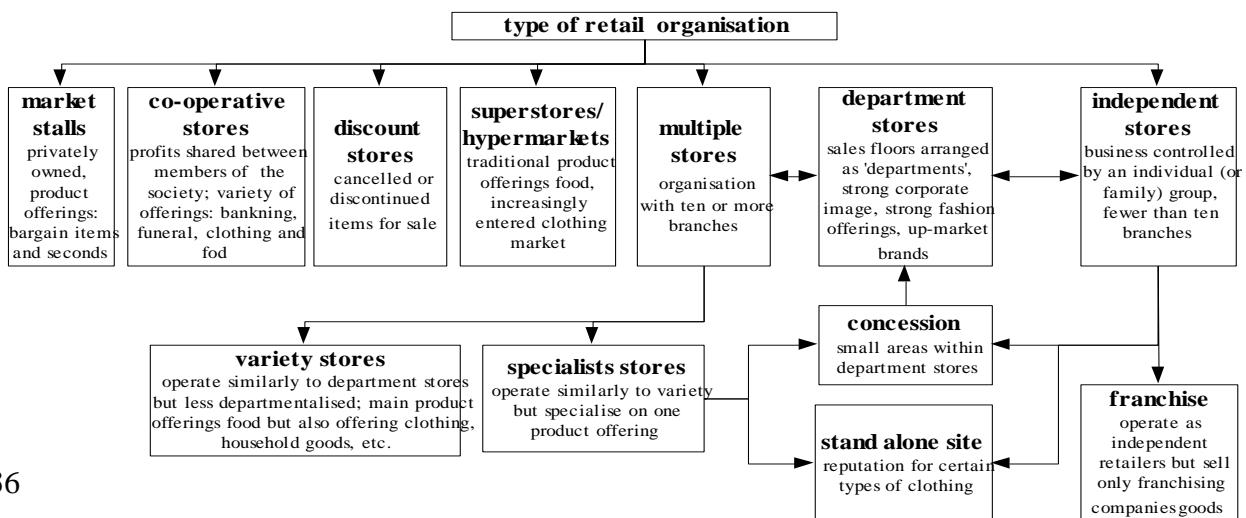
2.4. INDUSTRY SIZES

There is a difference between industry sizes in Lithuania and the UK. It must be noted that in this research when discussing two different countries' fashion industries, similar structures usually apply for both of them, however Lithuanian industry scale is much smaller than the UK's. There is a tendency with any business that it is more difficult to establish and expand a big company in a small country. Lithuania is a smaller country with less people, customers, average income, unstable and constantly changing economic situation, and less needs for fashion, therefore the industry is less developed with smaller companies than in the UK. Designers do not have big companies in Lithuania, they usually work for small companies with fewer employees and small teams, and there are no big expanded companies of the established fashion brands. Designers do not invest in creating big companies as there are not that many customers and needs to serve which brings less risk of bankruptcy and business failure, therefore small businesses pay off much better in Lithuania. There are only a few big companies of clothing production such as *Audimas* and *Utenos Trikotazas* but they are not designer-based, they work with mass production and concentrate on export. Also there are not many designer clothing brands, especially luxury brands, exporting to Lithuania. 'We can only dream about *Chanel*, *Christian Dior* or *Valentino* fashions in Vinius' (Sidaras in Statkevicius, 2006). In contrast to the UK, where there are much more consumers, industrial manufacturers and industry players, the industry is better developed with bigger fashion companies of all kinds and world-famous luxury brands exporting their products to the country.

2.5. INDUSTRY OFFERINGS

Fashion clothing industry provides consumers with a wide variety of products for men, women, children and infants. In the UK and Lithuania clothing products are categorised in specific industry structures explained in the section 2.5.1.

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2.5.1. INDUSTRY MEASURES

2.5.1.1. UK STRUCTURE

The UK economy is categorised according to the businesses structure of divisions which are subdivided into smaller industry sectors which define their production activities. Table 1 illustrates the UK clothing industries products that are classified in the range of the *SIC* codes. They indicate a product's name, its features, age group, gender, function and code used for import and export (No author, 2012). The codes are not fully comprehensive as some of the products could be placed under two-three headings.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects statistical data for the government available in HMSO publications such as *Monthly Digest Statistics*, *Annual Abstract of Statistics* and *PRODCOM*. *British Apparel and Textile Confederation* (BATC) and other retail and industrial organisations monitor markets and their consumer activities and prepare marketing reports with their results.

Table 1. UK Clothing industry's product classification SIC codes

Item	Heading Code
Men's or boys' overcoats, car coats, capes, cloaks, anoraks (including ski jackets), windcheaters, wind jackets and similar articles other than those of heading code 6103 or 6203:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6101
- Not knitted or crocheted	6201
Women's or girls' overcoats, car coats, capes, cloaks, anoraks (including ski jackets), windcheaters, wind jackets and similar articles other than those of heading code 6104 or 6204:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6102
- Not knitted or crocheted	6202
Men's or boys' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches and shorts (other than swimwear):	
- Knitted or crocheted	6103
- Not knitted or crocheted	6203

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Item	Heading Code
Women's or girls' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, dresses, skirts, divided skirts, trousers, bib and brace overalls, breeches and shorts (other than swimwear):	
- Knitted or crocheted	6104
- Not knitted or crocheted	6204
Men's or boys' shirts:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6105
- Not knitted or crocheted	6205
Women's or girls' blouses, shirts and shirt-blouses:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6106
- Not knitted or crocheted	6206
Men's or boys' underpants, briefs, nightshirts, pyjamas, bathrobes, dressing gowns and similar articles:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6107
Men's or boys' singlets and other vests, underpants, briefs, nightshirts, pyjamas, bathrobes, dressing gowns and similar articles:	
- Not knitted or crocheted	6207
Women's or girls' slips, petticoats, briefs, panties, nightdresses, pyjamas, negligés, bathrobes, dressing gowns and similar articles:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6108
- Not knitted or crocheted	6208
T-shirts, singlets and other vests:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6109
Jerseys, pullovers, cardigans, waistcoats and similar articles:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6110
Waistcoats:	
- Not knitted or crocheted	6211
Babies' garments and clothing accessories:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6111
- Not knitted or crocheted	6209
Track suits, ski suits and swimwear:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6112
- Not knitted or crocheted	6211

Item	Heading Code
Panty hose, tights, stockings, socks and other hosiery, including graduated compression hosiery (for example stockings for varicose veins) and footwear without applied soles, knitted or crocheted	6115
Gloves, mittens and mitts:	
- Knitted or crocheted	6116
- Not knitted or crocheted	6216
Other made up clothing accessories, knitted or crocheted; knitted or crocheted parts of garments or of clothing accessories	6117
Other made up clothing accessories or parts of garments:	

2.5.1.2. LITHUANIAN STRUCTURE

Lthuanian economy is categorised by the similar structure of divisions and industry structure that define the type of production and industry's activities. Table 2 illustrates the Lithuanian clothing industry products classification. The clothing and footwear industry is part of the textiles and leather manufacturing industry in both countries' industries.

Lithuanian Statistics Department collects data for the government and public concern. It classifies all industries products, collects and measures data for statistics. Lithuanian clothing industry is classified by the type and specifics of products, but does not have special code as the UK's example (No author, 2014). Table below illustrates the production of the main commodities of clothing industry in 2014 in Lithuania.

Table 2. Production of the main commodities, Lithuanian clothing industry
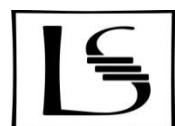
LIETUVOS STATISTIKOS
DEPARTAMENTAS

(Lithuanian Statistics Department)

Production of main commodities	2014-01	2014-02	2014-03	2014-04	2014-05	2014-06	2014-07
Manufacture of textiles							
Flax-type fibres, thous. T	0.334	0.334	0.478	0.603	0.611	0.563	0.671
Synthetic yarn and thread for knitwear, thous. t	0.338	0.386	0.326	0.324	0.352	0.287	0.169

Fabrics, mill. m^2	2.783	2.363	2.834	3.495	3.53	3.392	2.649
Cotton	0.023	0.021	0.034	0.031	0.022	0.012	0.022
Woollen	0.22	0.204	0.213	0.229	0.281	0.222	0.194
Linen	0.383	0.319	0.324	0.356	0.423	0.387	0.23
fabrics of artificial and synthetic fibre and filaments	2.156	1.819	2.263	2.88	2.805	2.771	2.204
Carpets and carpet products, thous. m^2	1.693	2.915	4.665	5.219	3.541	2.347	2.499
Manufacture of wearing apparel							
Coats and jackets, thous.	34.693	27.853	16.19	10.316	34.401	32.604	46.591
Suits and ensembles, thous.	33.509	23.409	20.634	24.427	19.005	17.293	14.909
Jackets and blazers, thous.	122.938	77.975	80.346	64.425	91.167	79.465	105.712
Trousers, overalls, breeches and shorts, thous.	258.099	239.025	199.018	181.878	227.736	202.25	245.049
Shirts (boy's incl.), thous.	73.147	73.65	65.47	63.896	67.455	69.783	74.495
Dresses, thous.	197.167	149.24	160.526	157.036	107.725	123.331	136.566
Skirts and divided skirts, thous.	36.53	39.448	46.323	40.564	47.016	39.825	51.335
Women's and girls blouses, thous.	162.051	188.396	167.357	162.344	158.617	125.334	114.088
Brassieres, corsets and similar articles, thous.	51.164	65.34	41.379	44.662	47.351	35.907	32.76
Knitwear articles, mill.	1.868	1.703	1.67	1.659	1.665	1.914	1.645
knitted underwear	0.612	0.488	0.501	0.514	0.503	0.636	0.541
knitwear outerwear	1.256	1.214	1.169	1.145	1.162	1.277	1.104
Gloves, mittens and mitts of leather and bonded leather, thous. Pairs	0	0.001	0	0	0	0	0
Coats of natural fur, thous.	0.243	0.145	0.086	0.092	0.062	0.056	0.042
Panties, mill.	0.311	0.32	0.081	0.15	0.33	0.425	0.143
Socks and stockings, mill. pairs	5.037	1.929	2.517	2.957	5.201	3.359	2.914
Manufacture of leather and related products							
Footwear, mill. Pairs	0.14	0.103	0.087	0.103	0.074	0.07	0.104
Handbags, thous.	5.155	5.778	9.203	8.528	5.529	7.046	5.622

Clothing can be classified on the basis of the age, size (missy, petite, plus size), financial status (price), season, style, and occasion. The definition 'apparel' has some complexities as it includes a wide variety of clothing and different understandings of it. As discussed in the previous section there are *SIC*'s assessed products categorised by the way they were processed (knitted or crocheted), or *Lithuanian Statistics Department* assessed products by their name used generally such as shirts, dresses, skirts. There are also more common clothing categories such as social

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apparel, suits, outerwear, sport wear, active wear, casual/day wear, street wear, party wear, swimwear and lingerie. Fashion collections are created for different seasons such as Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter. There are also special categories such as bridal gowns, maternity clothing, junior clothing and accessories.

There is a disjointed perspective between classifications such as the *SIC* and the way the items are retailed as when referring to the market, three most important categories of fashion are haute couture, ready-to-wear and mass market clothing, which are different than the ones in the *SIC* classification. Haute couture is high-quality unique apparel created by the couturier for the particular person only. It is expensive clothing not affordable to everyone (Drew, 1992; Shields, 2011). There is just one Lithuanian designer, Juozas Statkevicius who created haute-couture in his career, however British designers, such as John Galliano, Vivienne Westwood, or Paul Smith create haute-couture more often. Differing from haute couture, ready-to-wear fashion is available to a wider audience and has tighter cost restrains. It is still high-fashion clothing created by designers but made for mass-production, popular both in Lithuania and the UK. 'Such clothes have the leading edge in quality and can be clearly identified as coming from a particular house (Drew, 1992, p. 19). There are also less expensive, diffusion lines designers in the UK create (not in Lithuania) as alternative clothing with more affordable prices, such as Vivienne Westwood's *Anglomania,* Alexander McQueen's *McQ*, or Agent Provocateur's *L'Agent.* Mass market clothing, which is the most expanded and developed these days, caters for a wide range of customers, and produce clothing in larger quantities and cheaper prices.

UK has the London Fashion Week where designers collections are being presented twice a year, however Lithuania does not have its own fashion week, the most important fashion event is *Fashion Infection* festival which takes place once a year and gives an opportunity for both young and already established designers to present their collections but Lithuanian designers usually organise their own individual fashion events.

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2.6. INDUSTRY DYNAMICS. IMPORTANCE OF THE INDUSTRY

2.6.1. INDUSTRY'S DEVELOPMENT

Fashion has expanded internationally, it is available not only in the major cities, it now reaches a broad audience (Manlow, 2007). Its expansion led to creating millions of companies worldwide, fashion houses and mass-market retailers. 'Today's ready-to-wear and mass-produced fashions require a complex network of organisations traversing national boundaries sometimes for its design and increasingly for its production and dissemination – the latter being both actual (sales) and symbolic (media)' (Manlow, 2007, p. 91). It shows how flexible and innovative fashion industry is and how much demand it has nowadays with a growing consumer market.

Fashion, as a lifestyle choice, also includes accessories, shoes, cosmetics, cars, computers, electronics, music, etc. Consumerism and increasing people's demand to buy these products, has led to the growth in economy. 'Without consumerism, the rational for continuous capitalist accumulation dissolves' and, 'capitalism depends on both the reality and the illusion of choice' (Sklair, 1991: 82, 86 in Manlow, 2007). It is the 'motivating force behind global capitalism as well as its manifestation' (Lipovestky in Manlow, 2007, p. 78).

The luxury sector plays a major role in the global economy. There are many powerful international companies which provide luxury products and receive huge profits (Manlow, 2007). As the firms become larger and more powerful, they are able to place larger orders, work on their own terms and demand higher prices (Manlow, 2007). Competition between fashion houses and companies require them to look for new strategies on how to become more successful than others, this competition and the unstoppable improvements help to drive the economy.

As the world of fashion has experienced globalisation, supply chain management has improved as well. Consumers demand high-quality fashionable products - fast fashion so companies expand the business internationally (Burns, Mullet, & Bryant, 2011). In 1995, the *World Trade Organisation* was created to help enhance international trade within the countries. It brought

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different changes to the fashion world as every country had to find a niche in the 'market' on how to contribute in the international trade and maximise the advantages for the global economy.

2.6.2. ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

Economy plays a major role in influencing our attitude towards fashion. It is believed that when the economy's level is high, people spend more money on fashion products, and during the downturn they cut down on their clothing budget (Drew, 1992). However, whether the economy is rising, declining or somewhere in between, clothing is always in demand, therefore fashion is a dominant industry in every country's economy (Vogt, 2007).

As there have been many technological changes in the twentieth century, with a lot of investment in fashion production and industry as a whole, this followed with the stronger economy today. International trade is much easier today and as the demand for fashion is very strong in the world, now people can access it easier and faster with more and more products emerging in the market (Drew, 1992). Fashion industry has adapted to the new changes and trade among countries which contributed to globalisation, this gave more opportunities for employment and economic growth. 'Regulation of international trade has evolved over the centuries, with countries setting up trade incentives and barriers as mechanisms for improving their economies or protecting domestic industries' (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011, p. 34).

2.6.2.1.ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE IN THE UK

The fashion industry has faced problems five years ago such as the collapse of the credit markets in 2008 which led to the decrease in economy and unemployment (*Clothing Retailing Market Research Report*, 2014). However today situation has changed, and the industry is growing. Figures of the *British Fashion Council* show substantial growth in the UK fashion industry over the past five years. The council values the fashion industry's contribution to the UK economy at £26 billion. It has increased by 22 % from £21 billion in 2009 (Pithers, 2014). The quantity bought in the retail industry continues to grow; in February 2014 it increased by 3.7 % compared with February 2013. This shows a continued growth for the twelfth consecutive period increasing

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by 1.6 % which has been the longest period of sustained growth since 2007. The industry's total contribution to the economy via both indirect support for supply chain industries and induced spending of employee's wage income has risen to over £46 billion which is an increase of 23% since 2009 (*Oxford Economics*, 2014).

London, South East and North West regions are the most important for the industry, accounting for over 40% of industry establishments. London which is the main shopping centre for designer brands, represents16.8% of establishments (*Clothing Retailing Market Research Report*, 2014).

UK's fashion industry supports 797,000 jobs, the number of people working in fashion decreased 2.3 % from 2010 but it still makes the United Kingdom the third-largest fashion employer in the EU-27 surpassed only by Italy and Germany (*Oxford Economics*, 2014). The contribution to the economy proves there is a higher productivity in the industry.

In February 2014, the amount spent in the retail industry increased by 3.5% compared with February 2013. Britons spent £6.6 billion in the retail industry in February 2014, whereas in 2013 they spent £6.3. The amount spent online also increased by 12.4% in February 2014 (No author, 2014)

2.6.2.2. ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE IN LITHUANIA

Lithuanian textiles and apparel sector, which includes sewing, textiles, fur, leather and footwear industry has a big importance and influence to Lithuania's economy. This industry is important to the country, it creates workplaces and contributes to the country's budget. Lithuania exports more than 85% of all the apparel and textiles production to foreign marketplaces. In 2013, 2,27 milliard Litas value of textiles and apparel products was exported, and just in the first quarter of 2014 Lithuanian apparel and textiles industry companies income has increased 0,5 % comparing to 2013 first quarter's results in foreign marketplace.

The popularity of Lithuanian textiles and apparel brands in foreign markets is often dependant of international collaboration. Today many famous fashion brands collaborate with Lithuanian textiles and apparel producers. A lot of attention is paid to the creation of Lithuanian brands and more than 70 Lithuanian apparel producers have already got their brands.

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In 2014 Lithuanian textiles, leather and apparel export, comparing to the same time last year, grew almost 8 per cent and Lithuania is a first in the export increase between Baltic countries (Anilionyte, 2014). 2013 has been successful for textiles industry as well; the export comparing to 2012 has increased from 182, 7 million to 2, 27 milliard litas. Only a few years ago textiles and apparel industry was very weak due to the economic crisis and had to compete with new arisen economic industries, struggled because of the emigration. Today the situation has changed a lot. In 2013 *Trade Awards* many successful awarded businessmen were from the textiles industry. It is believed that as the economics is recovering from crisis, sales will increase even more (Anilionyte, 2014). The majority of textiles companies export almost all of their production and Lithuanian market is too small, therefore they concentrate to the foreign market. Western companies know Lithuanian sewers and manufacturers who adapt to foreign clients demand and do a quality job in a timely manner.

2.6.3. INDUSTRY'S MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Fashion industry has always faced many problems such as low wages, difficulty to break into the industry, bankrupted companies, changes in consumer culture, consumer habits and a feeling of instability. It has always required a lot of hard work to create fashion. 'The designers find themselves in sharp competition with much more powerful sectors of the fashion industry, in particular the fashion retail chains which are in an infinitely stronger position to implement the strategies…to bring higher quality, more differentiated fashion ranges to the customers' (McRobbie, 1998, p. 132).

The number of new fashion brands grows daily and there is a huge competition in the industry so it is difficult to keep the customers excited by the new brands (McRobbie, 1998). There is also a competition between different industries such as retail and new technologies. Statistics show that customers are more and more interested in new electronic devices and this is a major competitor for retail: 'Let's face it, it is hard for a sweater to compete with a tablet. But…the message seems clear that apparel retailers need to focus on creating excitement for the customer' (Hughes in Barrie, 2014).

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There is also a controversy between high fashion designer brands and mass fashion retailers. 'A political economy of fashion design suggests that it is within these informal micro-economies that the experimental groundwork is done at little or no cost to the bigger companies, for whom the bankruptcies and business failures of these small fish are of no concern' (McRobbie, 1998, p. 184). There are many fashion lovers who seek for inspiration and ideas in the designers work, but instead of buying designer pieces, they choose easier and cheaper option of mass market which often copies designer work and creates similar clothes in more affordable prices. Agins believes that we face the end of fashion: 'all the old rules, that clothes were supposed to go out of style, the planned obsolescence, that people were supposed to go out of style, the class people would have to wait for the trends to trickle down…all that's over now. You can go to *H & M* and stores like *Target* and, you know, fashion is now affordable and available to everybody, all at the same time' (2006 in Manlow, 2007, p. 55).

It is quite difficult for new designer brands to find a place in the UK and Lithuanian industry as consumer society and mass fashion dominates in the countries (Manlow, 2007). Popular brands such as *Zara*, *H & M*, and *Marks & Spencer* dominate in the high street fashion scene and provide customers with the cheaper and more affordable versions of fashion clothing. Also, UK and Lithuanian consumers are less interested in designer clothing than other countries in Europe and USA – Britons and Lithuanians spend less on fashion, want cheaper clothes, even if they are lower quality (McRobbie, 1998; Kupriscenkaite, 2011). Lithuanian designers G.Paulauskas and A.Krasuckaite say that only a few people in Lithuania understand that when they buy clothes from designers, they get unique clothing: 'Many think that designer clothing is too expensive, but do not realise that if they bought a pair of jeans from the designer they would not see anyone wearing the same jeans in streets. They should know there will be thousands of people wearing the same pair of mass brand's jeans in the world' (Krasuckaite in Sergijenko, 2009). There are many of those who read fashion magazines, find some great ideas which do not necessarily guarantee sales, they 'might be enjoyed by readers without ever encouraging them to purchase a single item' (McRobbie, 1998, p. 131).

To keep themselves in the fashion scene, designers today create partnerships with popular mass market brands. It helps companies and designers, having different target customers, to achieve

their goals (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). It benefits both designers, brand and customers: designers are treated as open to new ideas, innovation and partnership, able to share their exclusive designs with other brands and customers, mass companies attract more customers and achieve more popularity when using a name of a successful designer, and customers are able to buy a fashion created by designer but with affordable price.

Lithuanian and British fashion industries raise many issues such as distribution, cash flow, late payments, late deliveries, designers' debts and issues with banks and borrowing (McRobbie, 1998). The fashion industry in these countries needs a better understanding and support. It is a chaotic sector which needs more planning, organisation and management in order to not become a 'rag trade'. The solution would be better support from the government, help with funding and financial issues of the designers, and creating a more socialised and united area to be able to work on all stages of producing fashion.

2.7. COMPARISON OF LITHUANIAN AND UK FASHION INDUSTRIES

2.7.1. INDUSTRIES' DEVELOPMENT

Lithuania and UK are two completely different countries with their different concepts of the fashion industries. Before comparing Lithuanian and UK fashion industries it is important to know significant differences between these two countries.

- **Size**

Lithuania is nearly four times smaller country than the Great Britain (Lithuania's area is 65 300 km2, Great Britain's – 243 610 km2). Lithuania's population is 2 944 459 whereas UK's – 64 100 1000 which means that there are 21 times more people living in the UK than in Lithuania. The numbers show huge size differences between two countries which affect both countries' fashion industries.

- **History and development**

Lithuanian fashion industry, as well as its culture, education, economics, and other industries were affected by its historical situation. Lithuania was a developed country before it was occupied by the Soviet Union at 1940, and the occupation lasted until 1991. The country was

suppressed by political regime it had for many years, there were many restrictions which affected country's natural development.

The UK, in contrast to Lithuania, has always been a big, free, independent and significant country, which easily developed and grew by years with no restrictions. It did not have major issues or historical situations similar to Lithuania's. Its fashion industry developed together with other free countries' fashion industries, therefore it became one of the most important fashion countries in the world – it has many world famous designers and London is a third leading fashion capital in the world after New York and Paris.

- **Culture and education**

Due to Lithuania's suppressed development, culture and education did not progress as well. There are not many high-quality universities and colleges in Lithuania, especially those that could prepare good fashion specialists. There are 22 universities in Lithuania and just one of them, called *Vilnius Academy of Art*, has Fashion Design and Costume Design specialties. In contrast to Lithuania, in the UK there are 109 higher education institutions and almost all of them are able to prepare fashion students. UK is famous for its *St Martin's College of Art* in London which prepared many fashion designers well-known in the world.

There is also a difference between the culture in these two countries as Lithuania does not have that many museums, events, places to visit and educate fashion lovers, however the UK is the country known for its developed fashion culture, many fashion museums events, exhibitions taking place very often and a better government's support for fashion culture in the country.

- **Economic situation**

Today Lithuania is still facing some economic issues: it is still recovering from economic crisis, therefore the country is run by the low budget and the government cut prices as much as they can; the wages are low, the country is facing emigration issues and adapts to the recent currency change. There is a presumption that all these factors affect the fashion industry and prevent her from developing quicker - helping new designers to start the business, or launching Lithuanian fashion week. Lithuanian fashion is improving and developing slowly, and people step by step are starting to learn about its importance.

The UK does not have major economic issues. The country has a major influence on the world's fashion and international fashion trends, and generates significant economic output. The UK is a cosmopolitan and multicultural country, it is the world's country – its fashion industry operates in the whole world. There is a bigger demand for fashion products which brings vast amounts of money to the country's budget so government is in favour to help new designers with various availabilities to get funding or find financial backers.

COMPARISON OF:
2.7.2. ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

Both Lithuanian and UK textiles and apparel sector has a big importance and influence to the countries' economy and contribute a lot to the countries' budget. Recent numbers show that both countries' clothing and apparel industry export in growing year by year, however the UK's numbers are much bigger due to its bigger size and bigger amount of people living in the country.

In both countries there are well qualified workers and manufacturers who use advanced technologies. The popularity of Lithuanian textiles and apparel brands in foreign markets is often dependant of international collaboration. The situation is becoming better and there are more successful business players in this industry than there were a few decades ago, as many world famous fashion brands collaborate with Lithuanian apparel producers, however not many Lithuanian fashion brands work abroad. Just 70 Lithuanian apparel producers have got their brands. In contrast to the UK, where big amounts of the country's brands work abroad and there are thousands fashion brands already established in the country and more fashion designers than in Lithuania. Those brands work not only in the UK but in the whole world, it has a better economic situation and bigger demand for fashion in the country.

The UK has many technological advantages, a lot of investment in fashion production, and a strong economy which continues to grow. The demand for fashion is very strong , which leads to many job opportunities and big international trade. Apparel industry in Lithuania has an important meaning in the job market as well, and is in the fourth place for the value-added

growth in all industries' sectors. However there are 26 times more people working in fashion industry in the UK than in Lithuania, which makes the UK the third largest fashion employer in the EU.

There are many issues the Lithuanian fashion industry faces such as weak investing in foreign markets, producing mass production, weak management, organisational, strategic and innovation weaknesses. The big issue for manufacturers and designers is the lack of competent workers. The UK's fashion is expanded internationally, it is available in many cities and countries, and the luxury sector, in contrast to Lithuania, plays a major role in the country's economy. However it still has issues such as competition between designers and brands, issues between mass production brands and designer fashion, supply chain, distribution and cash flow.

2.7.3. COMPARISON OF INDUSTRY OFFERINGS

The prices in both countries differ and cheaper clothing can be found in the UK, and there are constant sales. Mass fashion is expensive in Lithuania and even on sales the prices are quite high so fashion lovers struggle to find affordable products. For example winter shoes in mass production store in Lithuania cost 200-300 litas (the minimum monthly wage is 1000 Litas), where in the UK - £30-50 (the minimum monthly wage is £800 - £1000). Therefore there is a demand for cheaper clothing stores such as *Primark* in Lithuania.

There is a bigger variety of designer clothing in the UK than in Lithuania. There are many new and established world designer brand boutiques available in almost every city in the UK, however in Lithuania the numbers are not that big, and designer boutiques usually take place only in three biggest cities in the country. There are not many Lithuanian designers' boutiques in Lithuania as they usually work and sell clothing in their studios. There are no designers who create haute-couture in Lithuania, they usually create pret-a-porter and sell them in online stores, studios, boutiques or multi-branded stores. In the UK there is a bigger demand of designer clothing as people have higher incomes and more interest in fashion, resulting in more British designer boutiques available.

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Both countries have similar shopping places such as shopping centres for mass production fashion stores and city centres for designer boutiques and more expensive clothing stores. Markets are still popular in Lithuania for buying clothes imported from Poland or Belarus which are cheaper but the quality is not as good as in stores, this is not popular in the UK.

There are also charity shops which are popular in both countries. However in Lithuania they are called 'second hand shops' and they are profitable stores, unlike those in the UK where second hand clothing stores usually work for charitable not-for-profit organisations. Vintage shops are also popular in the UK as stylish people often choose vintage for their interesting, unique features. There are just a few vintage shops in Lithuania as they are not so popular, many people treat vintage as old-fashioned clothes. Vintage clothes can be found in second hand stores in Lithuania, and in cheaper prices than in the UK. The prices differ as the UK sellers understand the popularity and authenticity of it so they put higher prices whereas in Lithuania sellers do not value vintage clothing, so they are cheaper.

2.7.4. IMPORTANCE OF THE FASHION INDUSTRY AND CUSTOMERS' HABBITS

As the industry in Lithuania is only starting to develop, not every Lithuanian understands fashion and feels that it is necessary. Fashion items play a secondary role in Lithuania and majority of Lithuanians do not feel that fashion is essential, they do not treat fashion as art. However with more accessible information, better education and economics, the situation is getting better and Lithuanians, especially the younger generation are starting to understand its values. In the UK fashion is a necessity for the majority of people, it is a norm to follow fashion trends. People in the UK spend more time on shopping and treat it as a relaxation and usual weekend's activity, whereas people in Lithuania usually shop when they need to buy a new item. This happens because fashion is cheaper in the UK so customers do not need to worry and make complex decisions whether to buy an item, whereas in Lithuania people have to 'invest' in clothing with less income and four times lower wages. However young people who understand fashion find ways how to become fashionable in a cheaper way – shop in charity shops, exchange clothing websites or sew clothes themselves.

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Britons spend more on fashion than Lithuanians as fashion is more accessible and cheaper in the UK, and there are more people following fashion trends there. Even though Britons value designer fashion more than Lithuanians, there is a tendency in both countries that designer fashion is not valued as it could be as cheaper products are available.

There is a presumption that there are more stylish people in the UK than in Lithuania as Lithuanians prefer modest, classical styles and Britons are more open to distinctive styles. In the UK people are used to different styles and looks, they are not afraid to be eccentric as the country is home for different nationalities, races, beliefs, where expressing themselves through clothing is the norm. Lithuanians' thinking is affected by Soviet repression and the country has just started to recover from it a few decades ago.

Positively, Lithuania is changing and people, especially those who were born in free Lithuania, who are interested in what is happening in other countries, read books, news, travel, have access to new technologies and information online, have a different understanding and realise that having a style is a positive thing which allows to express individuality, beliefs and thinking. There are more and more stylish people in the streets, especially in the bigger cities where culture, information and inspiration for style is more accessible. Therefore Lithuanians are starting to take care of their looks and step by step moving forward to the UK's type of thinking where style is inevitable part of everyone's lives.

2.7.5. INDUSTRIES' ISSUES

The fashion education is better in the UK than in Lithuania. In Lithuania fashion studies still have a lot of theory and less practice, and there is limited information about fashion business, marketing and branding for students.

Talking about the demand for fashion, there is a controversial situation comparing two countries. There is not a big demand for fashion in Lithuania, however there are many unused opportunities and niches for new designers to use them and start with new and different ideas. In the UK,

however, there is a big demand for fashion products, but all niches are full and it is quite difficult to find a new idea that is innovative and has not yet surfaced.

The number of new fashion designers and brands grows every day both in the UK and Lithuania so it is difficult for all of them to compete and stay in the market. Designers need to find ways how to keep customers interested and it is becoming more difficult to do that as there is a wide variety of products already in the market. Also there is not a keen interest in Lithuanian designers as their names are mostly 'unknown' comparing to world famous designers' names. Many people who are interested in designer fashion, feel a belonging to some brands which are well-known in the world, the name means a lot for them so they rather invest to a popular designer's product with a famous name on a label, than support an unknown designer.

Both countries have weak opportunities for young designers to start careers. In the UK it is difficult because of the competition and in Lithuania mostly because of the lower interest in fashion and demand for cheaper clothing. Nevertheless, it is easier to break into the fashion industry in the UK as it is a bigger country with bigger number of people so it is easier to find the audience interested in particular designer's products, whereas Lithuania is a small country with a small amount of people. Also, there are more opportunities for new designers to get financial help from banks or government in the UK which are more interested in funding new businesses, or find financial backers as designer fashion is very important for the country. There are also more buyers in the UK looking for new talents with creative ideas for fashion stores. In Lithuania there are less investors interested in fashion industry and very limited opportunities for government support.

Cergelyte, a Lithuanian designer who has been studying fashion in London, says that own individual style is causing designers to struggle to become established in Lithuania: 'Britons' attitude to fashion is more natural than Lithuanians; here fashion is just a simple part of life and Lithuanians still relate fashion with luxury' (Cergelyte in Bulbenkaite, 2013). She chose studies abroad due to the lack of experience and opportunities in Lithuania: 'Its not surprise that *London College of Fashion* is one of the most valued London fashion schools. Foreign schools, conversely than small countries' schools, work more on students creativity and give them more

creative challenges' (Bulbenkaite, 2013). Designer thinks that Lithuanian educational institutions make it difficult for a young person to develop as professionally as they give too many unnecessary tasks, aim to form designer's world-view according to particular norms and do not give space for ideas: 'In London tutors pay more attention for the future of fashion, not the past. I like that I have so much creative freedom and immense opportunities' (Cergelyte in Bulbenkaite, 2013). E.Cekanaviciute, the designer who works in Paris for *Dior* says that there are no opportunities in Lithuania for her as a fashion designer: 'When there is no demand, you can create for your own enjoyment, but you still need to earn some money, so I understand why so many young people leave the country (Kupriscenkaite, 2011).

It is also difficult for both countries' designers to become successful and establish themselves as there are many cheap mass brands which dominate in the fashion scene. Customers choose these brands as clothes are cheaper and they copy designers' fashion so many products both in designers' stores and popular stores look similar at the first sight, so they create an impression for a consumer that it is 'designers' fashion' and brings psychological benefits for consumer to feel that he/she wears designers' clothes. It is difficult to produce cheap designer clothing in both countries as fabrics and work required to create high quality unique designer item need high investment.

Young designers in both countries lack the knowledge in fashion business, industry's issues, branding and marketing, so it is more difficult for them to start their careers and become successful. In Lithuania, business as professional fashion management is only establishing. 'It is the major designers' problem as for a long time fashion design used to be only a luxury matter, not cosumerism' (Kondratajevas, 2011). It is understandable because new designers, the same as new specialists in every other industry, need a lot of experience and knowledge which develops with time, but designers also need to understand that fashion is no longer only art specialty, and they need to prepare themselves for fashion business as early as possible. UK fashion schools prepare students and educate them about the fashion business more than in Lithuania. However the issue is in both countries as fashion design is still being treated as an art subject therefore designers do not invest enough in branding and marketing which would help them to achieve better results.

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2.8. QUESTIONS ARISING

1. What is the role of a designer in the process of fashion production?

2. How difficult is it for designer to work within a big structure of fashion industry?

3. How could Lithuania improve and have bigger and better developed industry sizes and structures?

4. How could the fashion industry's economical and management issues, such as competition with mass market, competition between the brands, consumerism and financial difficulties be solved?

2.9. CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined how history, technology and society have shaped the development of the fashion industry. The fashion industry measures and distinctions between Lithuania and the UK were described, and the importance of the market to this system was also highlighted. The chapter concludes with the issues in which the fashion industry faces, the comparison of Lithuanian and British fashion industries and questions arising after discussing these matters.

CHAPTER 3. ISSUES FOR THE FASHION DESIGNER

Chapter three looks at the environment and issues for the fashion designer, reviews career opportunities in the industry and the designer's role. It emphasises on the business knowledge essential for the designer today; it discusses supply chain, product selling, cash flow, and issues concerned, as well as branding, marketing, promotion, public relations, their importance and various tools. It compares the usage of marketing and branding in Lithuanian and the UK fashion industries.

3.1. CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

When celebrities such as Victoria Beckham or Jennifer Lopez decided to become designers, they emerged into the industry with no struggles as they were already well-known. Being famous and recognisable is crucial these days – you can successfully become who you want, sometimes without even having a talent. It is much more difficult for those who are excited about becoming designers but they appear to be unknown in the public eye. However, whether the economy is declining or floundering, people always need clothes as it is part of their life. Economic figures show that the retail sector continues to become popular and profitable, as people spend more and more money on clothing. Unfortunately, career opportunities in this industry are fairly limited (Vogt, 2007), therefore designers have to work much harder to pursue a career in fashion.

Designer salaries range from £18,000 to £200,000+ per year depending on how successful the brand is (Vogt, 2007). Even though it might sound like a good salary, it is hard to achieve it. Most fashion designers remain unknown when working for other brands, and creating clothes for consumers who do not even know that the clothes were created by them. The number of designers who become trusted in the industry is small: 'the *Princeton Review Online* estimates the odds of becoming an ''internationally famous designer'' as being about 160,000 to 1' (Vogt, 2007, p. 39). There are more aspiring fashion designers than there are available jobs in the industry. Young entrepreneurs who are brave enough, and combine creativity and marketing, are going for self-employment or freelancing as they do not want to work for someone else (Vogt, 2007). However, advancement for new designers comes very slowly.

The biggest problem for new designers is often money. Designer Ralph Rucci suggests not to enter the industry without having two years' worth of money in the bank (Springsteel, 2013) which is rarely possible. Designer Anna Sui always had to do extra design jobs to keep her business for the first ten years: 'I reinvested every penny I made back into the business. There were times after I paid my employees that I didn't even have enough money for a subway token…In those early years, I was often offered magazine-editing positions, but I had to remain steadfast about being a fashion designer. I wanted my own thing, and I resisted anything that would take me off that path' (Springsteel, 2013, p. 25). Designers need to be patient while waiting for profit, even though it means long years working in a different area.

Even though some world-famous designers do not have a degree in fashion, good education is still very important and strongly preferred by employers (Vogt, 2007). The most successful designers in the world came from the three world famous fashion schools: *Parsons School of Design* in New York, *Central Saint Martin's College* in London and *Fashion Institute of Technology* in New York (Iverson, 2010). Experience as an intern/trainee, design assistant or junior designer before they start working on their own is very useful (Vogt, 2007). Diane Furstenberg believes that internship is the most fantastic opportunity young designers should possess as it can help learn a lot about the industry and gain useful experience (Iverson, 2010).

Young designers must take up all the opportunities to show their work such as events and design competitions as it is a great way to be seen. Winners usually get an opportunity to display or sell the designs in some famous fashion stores which is a good start in gaining popularity (Iverson, 2012). For example, *Vogue* every year organises *Young Designers Competition* and *Teen Vogue Student Design Competition*, and in Lithuania there is the *Fashion Infection* event.

It is not easy to succeed in the fashion business as you can put a lot of effort in your work and be criticised or not accepted for a long time. Fern Mallis, creator of New York Fashion week suggests: 'Fashion editors and retailers will seek you out and find you if the talent is there, but you must create the vision, follow through and work hard' (Springsteel, 2013, p. 254). It is unrealistic to become famous overnight; it takes time and hard work: 'You get zero sleep during fashion week. You work during the night, and you are on the phone with media even when you

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are at home. If you are going for the glamour of it, you are not going to make it' (Rolland in Springsteel, 2013, p. 94). Galliano in the beginning of his career had no money and used to sleep on his friends' floors, often worked for no money or asked his friends to help him do collections: 'I've nowhere to work and no money to buy fabrics, but the good thing is that the shops want my clothes'. He was persistent and found financial backers, made useful contacts which helped him to break into the industry (Galliano in McDowell, 1997, p. 91). It is an extremely hard profession with many challenges, therefore designer needs to have a thick skin to survive.

3.2. FASHION DESIGNER'S ROLE

The fashion designer plays a major role within the fashion industry. In the past a designer was seen simply as a dressmaker, an anonymous person who worked behind the scenes and did not receive any personal credit for his/her creations. However, today designers are regarded as creative artists, craftsmen who are the most important people in the fashion world and who, if successful enough, receive public attention and become celebrities: 'No longer seen as involved in peripheral activities, the fashion designer has the opportunity of achieving recognition and becoming a cultural arbiter' (Manlow, 2007, p. 93).

Manlow describes this role as the 'agent of social control' (2007, p. 110). Clothing represents the person's gender, social position, economic situation and aesthetic understanding. Fashion helps increase self-esteem for people; if you are satisfied with your outfit, you are more confident and happy. 'Clothing…is a visual form of 'cultural capital' (Bordieu, 1984). Clothing acts as a barometer of sorts. It provides others with relevant information and speaks to one's own self-concept (Manlow, 2007, p. 110).

Designers are the 'cultural arbiters', who are leaders, capable to convey their vision of fashion to consumers and persuade people to wear their creations. Designers have a lot of 'power', as they create trends and decide what is fashionable and the whole of society follows these trends (Manlow, 2007, p. 116). It is very easy for them to 'take advantage' of their power and use fashion to send important messages, which can contribute to society's understanding and awareness.

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Fashion designers' profession may sound glamorous to many, but designers' duties go far beyond dreaming up and sketching new ideas. What we see in fashion shows is just the results of a hard work that goes into the long process of creating fashion. Designer's work requires '1 per cent inspiration, 99 per cent perspiration' (Drew, 1992, p. 37). Designers need to work long hours, keep up with fashion trends and always look for inspiration and new ideas. They need to have persistence, ability to deal with ambiguity and the lack of 'normal' daily routine, have knowledge of fashion trends and forecasts, ability to deal with pressure and deadlines and to network with other specialists in the industry (Vogt, 2007). Generally, the duties of a fashion designer include 'conceptualising, producing and promoting new clothing and accessory designs, for apparel manufacturers, specialty and retail stores, or individual clients (Vogt, 2007, p. 40). Fashion designers participate in the development of the clothing production from the beginning to the end of the process. It is not just about sketching and looking for inspiration at the theatres, museums and events. Designers work long hours in order to achieve recognition and public acceptance (Vogt, 2007).

Vogt points out the skills essential for a successful designer; firstly, creative ones such as 'drawing and sketching, creativity and artistic ability'; technical skills such as sewing and computer skills, and personal skills: 'persistence, the ability to deal with ambiguity and the lack of a 'normal' day routine, current knowledge of fashion trends and forecasts, knowledge of manufacturing processes, ability to deal with pressure, stress, and deadlines, willingness to consider profitability issues in concert with proposed designs; outgoing personality and the ability to network with others in the industry; ability to work effectively alone and in teams' (2007, p. 40). McRobbie adds that designers need to be multi-skilled, and be in possession of imagination (1998).

Becker defines artist as the one who makes unique objects, that are not necessarily useful, and craftsman is the one who produces objects that are useful. Artist-craftsman is able to combine both: beauty and advantage of the product. (Becker, 1984 in Manlow, 2007). Fashion can be art and craft, or a combination of both, and it is a choice of a designer to decide to which he/she belongs.

Within all that creative process, there are much more responsibilities to take on for a fashion designer. As today fashion industry is so broad, competitive and complicated, fashion designer is not only the creator any more. Designer who wants to stay in the fashion business needs to achieve a balance of art and commerce (Iverson, 2010; Vogt, 2007). 'I was always aware that I was not an artist, because I was creating something that was made to be sold, used, and ultimately discarded', - says Tom Ford (Bickle, 2009, p. 69). It is not only about what designers want to create, but more importantly - what sells best.

A designer has to be knowledgeable in other different areas such as participating in the production process, dealing with manufacturers, retailers, buyers: 'Successful, independent designers possess a level of mastery with machines, tools, and construction techniques that allows them to move beyond concerns or thoughts about those tools and techniques to expressing their fashion voice' (Shields, 2011, p. xiii); working on a business side and maintaining the brand, working on marketing and promotions, dealing with the media and public attention, solving financial issues, understanding costs of production and analysing fashion trends in order to be sure that the brand is 'safe' within the fashion world and trusted by its customers (McRobbie, 1998; Vogt, 2007). Galliano's strong business mind combined with exceptional creativity, helped him to become the head designer of *Christian Dior* fashion house just at the age of 36.

Designers today need to know how to 'create a buzz' around their fashions and themselves to receive the media attention. Even though they have a limited budget in the beginning, they still have to find ways to maximize their publicity and promotion opportunities (Kralova in Springsteel, 2013). 'A designer's smartly cultivated reputation can make a significant difference in sales, and spark financial backing should she or he decide to start an independent fashion house' (Vogt, 2007, p. 39). Photographs of a suit designed by Paul Smith which appeared in the press in his early career helped him to gain popularity when he did not have budget for marketing or advertising (Smith, 2013). He started building a positive reputation which helped increase sales and become financially stable. This is a lot to take in within one role of a single person therefore designers who can afford it usually have a team of professionals who help them with the business side of industry.

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3.3. BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

3.3.1. SUPPLY CHAIN

Every item in the store has its own chain of supply which requires hard work and accuracy. According to *Investopedia*, supply chain is 'the network created amongst different companies producing, handling and/or distributing a specific product' (2014). Supply chain management covers everything from product stock, supply, sales prediction to deliveries from factories to the stores. It aims to maximise the customer value and achieve competitive advantages (Handfield, 2011).

Today supply chain is one of the topics that young designers need to learn about as the fashion industry. It often requires resilience, being able to respond quickly to unexpected changes, be flexible to customise products, and able to serve global markets (Harrington in Gilbert, 2013). There are many changes of consumer shopping: the Internet, improved technologies and growing consumer spending created the environment of 'light speed changes' which makes volatility and complexity the norm in the fashion industry (Gilbert, 2013). Therefore designers are often forced to rethink and restructure their supply chains, and respond to changing customers' demands.

Gilbert (2013) suggests that in order to drive leaner supply chain designers need to communicate with their customers and gather their opinions regarding their products. They can do so with the help of marketing and PR tools, such as social media. McQueen was forward thinker and was always familiar with all types of marketing. When social media emerged, he joined the most popular networks straight away and communicated with his customers regularly (Knox, 2010). In that way designer can use information to predict supply, adjust inventory and understand which products will sell quicker than others.

Supply chain in the fashion industry is an 'invisible' process for simple fashion consumers. Poor working conditions and long work hours are the common phenomena in the production process. In 2014 in Bangladesh, Rana Plaza factory collapsed and killed more than 1,100 staff (North, 2013). *The Centre for American Progress* found out that the majority of factory workers in the world earn only subsistence wages for 14 hours shifts, they are unable to get fixed wages because the prices for buyers are not fixed and cannot be changed (Brenner, 2014). Therefore

designers today also need to face the supply chain issues and engage with the factory workers who are anonymous but an important part of the industry. It is essential to avoid ethical issues for those who produce fashion clothing, make sure they have good working conditions, fair wages, health and safety standards and opportunities to progress.

Supply chain also affects environment. Unethical supply chain mostly take place in poorer countries where factories do not discharge of chemicals and waste footprint and labour conditions are not supervised (Brenner, 2013). However it sometimes happens in developed countries such as China where half the world's clothes are made – the industry waste there has huge negative effects on water, soil and air quality (Degun, 2013).

Consumerism and mass production are the main reasons why it is so difficult to produce sustainable fashion. Fast fashion brands such as *H & M* and *Zara* encourage consumerism and make a demand for more products in a faster way. Fashion brands need to react to this issue and rethink their business strategies: 'The solution is to come up with a different business model. Instead of producing 60 collections a year, [brands should] show us that you could slow down the number of collections, because who needs a new item of clothing once a week' (Firth in Brenner, 2014). Consumerism and sustainability should balance together, where it is possible at the same time to take care of the customers, the environment and the workers.

Material health and reutilisation, water stewardship, social fairness, renewable energy and carbon management can help produce sustainable fashion (Brenner, 2014). Due to these issues, *Berlin Fashion Week 2014* focused on green and ethical fashion with the belief in changes in clothing production regarding environmental and social issues. The main events in the fashion week are the Green Showroom and the Ethical Runway where designers who produce socially and environmentally friendly products will present their collections (Brenner, 2014). Some brands such as *Nike* and *Adidas* are promising to make sure their supply chain will minimize harmful impact on the environment (Brenner, 2014).

The best way to make changes in the industry' supply chain is for the companies to provide people with the right to know about production process. Even *H & M* who is producing fast fashion, and some other brands such as *Kering* provide the information about their products'

production process to prove their sustainable and ethical supply chain (Brenner, 2014). The industry players can also use systems such as *ERP* or *Higg* to manage their supply chain (Brenner, 2014).

3.3.2. PRODUCT SELLING

Selling is an inevitable part of fashion industry. Without sufficient sales, manufacturers and distributors would lack financial resources to produce new lines. Sales are what enable a business to exchange its products with society for money so it can pay its bills and salaries, fund research and product development, and distribute dividends to shareholders (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). In such an ever changing and volatile fashion industry with all technology improvements, young designers must think about actually selling the product as a key contributor to becoming successful in the industry. Galliano understands that fashion is a selling business: 'At the end of the day, there has to be a collection and it has to be sold. We have to seduce women into buying it. That's our role....We have to keep the shops stocked, looking fresh and seductive' (Galliano in McDowell, 1997, p. 59).

It is not that easy to sell fashion products - young designers need to be skilled and knowledgeable about the basics of selling, market and its needs (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). There are many different sales strategies that different companies formulate but all of them involve 'communication, observation, presentation, persuasion, and negotiation' (Sherman & Perlman, 2007, p. 2). Sales people must be competent, compassionate, have a drive for success, be honest, confident, and show assertiveness, integrity, leadership and emotional maturity to make sure potential customers will not lose interest to other stores and will come back (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). It is important for sales people to know how to approach the customer which can be key when forming a relationship with the customer, salesperson and the brand. Salespeople must also know everything about the products and present them in a positive way in order to be able to provide customers with essential information and recommendation about the products.

There are no sales without customers; they are the most important in the product selling: 'It is absolutely impossible for people in retail to succeed if they don't understand their customers' needs. If they aren't familiar with the products they sell, and don't care enough to help their customers feel confident about the purchases they make' (Sherman & Perlman, 2007, p. 41).

Product selling promotes the fashion brand and sales people can contribute to this promotion by positively representing the brand. They are the ones who communicate the culture and personality of the store, present it in front of the customers. Sales people must constantly remind customers the brand's name and the advantages of the products: 'The two Rs of fashion selling – relationship and retention – are vital to the health of any retail business' (Sherman & Perlman, 2007, p. 46). The behaviour with customers can determine the success or failure of the brand which will remain in customers' mind.

There are two different types of sales relationship in the fashion industry: business to business (B2B), when the stores get their products from certain businesses; and business to consumers, (B2C) when businesses sell merchandise directly to consumers. Many fashion designers sell their clothing directly to stores and boutiques, the majority of them have sales forces to do so (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). The key players in fashion selling are manufacturers, their representatives, resellers, outside contractors and wholesalers, who are discussed in section 2.3. in more detail.

As the fashion industry has become fast-paced and global with the possibilities of Internet shopping, expansion in foreign countries, and fast shipping, sellers face new challenges to effectively sell fashion items. They need to adjust to new possibilities of shopping online and when expanding to new markets, they need to learn about different sales and business processes in that country (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). As the global fashion market operates in many different countries, they need to be conscious about cultural differences between salespeople and buyers (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). Paul Smith carefully targets his collections to particular customers in global markets. Smith is especially popular in Japan, Australia, USA, and Thailand. He moved from menswear to also designing women's clothes, later on children's clothes,

fragrances, luggage, shoes, also working with the companies outside fashion such as designing cars, watches or cycles (Smith, 2013).

Salespeople must also adjust to the changes in the fashion industry as they can affect sales. There might be many market shifts including the product-oriented ones as changes in styles, colours or features of the fashion items. People-oriented shifts such as changes in demographics or psychographics, or structure-oriented shifts such as changes in the structure of the industry – product design, manufacture or distribution which might affect sales (Sherman & Perlman, 2007). It is important to have reliable information sources to be able to alert the market shifts, to realise when they take place and come up with a strategy to adapt to them.

3.3.3. CASH FLOW

It is very expensive for new designers to create a fashion collection and it often requires a high investment. Even if they start their career successfully, there are very long periods during seasons when the brand does not receive any money; designers usually wait up to six months after paying the costs of producing the line before they are paid the money which is owed to them by stores that have placed orders (Amed, 2013).

'Cash is the oxygen that enables a business to survive and prosper and is the primary indicator of business health' (No author, 2009). Even though fashion businesses tend to grow very quickly, if the cash flows are not managed well, designers can go bankrupt (Amed, 2013). Designer Mary Katranzou (2014) admitted that her biggest challenge was managing the cash flow, being able to sustain a rapid grow without secure capital and have a realistic budget therefore cash flow management is essential to learn for a young designer.

One of the biggest problems is that even the most prestigious retailers fail to pay designers on time (Amed, 2013). It is a big risk for new designers who are not financially stable as they cannot take late payments with not having a secure income. Also, retailers squeeze designers on payment terms, for example ask them to pay on 'net 60 days' terms or ask to sell to them on consignment which means designers do not get paid anything up front and only receive payment

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after the clothes have sold, so they risk that items might remain unsold at the end of the season. Lemos (in Amed, 2013) suggests that young designers lack experience therefore often accept the risky terms, whereas it is always better not to take an order than to take a risky one.

Young designers and retailers often struggle to negotiate the terms of agreement. But if designers are confident with their products, they should not let their hard work be undervalued. They should make sure the stores will present the products properly and be able to negotiate the terms of payments (Demure in Amed, 2013). However, it is usual that buyers take some bullying tactics and threaten unexperienced designers to drop the collection unless they continue to work with the store. Therefore the UK *British Fashion Council* acknowledged the problem and aim to develop guidelines for payment terms to ensure the 'wholesale orders make, not break small businesses' (Amed, 2013).

Buyers often complain about designers and they say they take a risk as well. Retailers sometimes get low quality and late orders which do not match the samples. Therefore designers also need to respect the agreement, delivery dates and ensure the quality of the product (Amed, 2013). Both sides could agree that defining very clear payment terms and ensuring the communication is clear will help build productive commercial relationship.

New designers must carefully think about how long it might take for the business to break-even – this is when a brand makes no profit or no loss, so that costs and sales equal one another (No author, 2014). This might take three or more years at which designers might face cash flow problems. Monitoring the cash flow monthly can help prevent problems especially when a new season is coming. Shortfalls might be covered by overdrafts, additional borrowings or the help from investors (No author, 2014). If the brand has an up-to-date cash flow, it shows to the bank that designer manages the cash correctly and plans the business in a structured way.

Having more money flowing in than flowing out will allow the business to build up cash balances to plug cashflow gaps and reassure the bank and investors that the business is safe. (No author, 2009). In order to improve cashflow designers need to make sure customers pay on time – define credit policies on payment terms such as offering dicounts for prompt, and penalties for

late payments. Also, chase debts promptly, ask for extended credit terms with suppliers, order stock more often but less quantity. Designers must ask for clear payment terms and up-front deposits from retailers to make sure they have enough money at least to pay the bills and wages (Amed, 2013).

Cashflow forecasting helps to plan the finances and tells how much money the business will have over a certain period. 'The cashflow forecast identifies the sources and amounts of cash coming into your business and the destinations and amounts of cash going out over a given period' (No author, 2009). It can help spot problems and be able to sort them out in advance, have enough time to take action when identifying cash shortfalls, ensure that you avoid overtrading and know when the brand has enough finances to consolidate or expand (No author, 2009).

3.4. SUPPORTING NETWORK

Fashion magazines became popular in the 20th century. They informed fashion admirers about new trends and fashions available and contributed to promoting the clothing industry (Burns, Mullet & Bryant, 2011). The names of high-fashion designers such as Patou, Vionnet, Shiaparelli and Chanel emerged with the help of the first promotional elements such as word of mouth, magazines, and posters. Fashion magazines including *Vogue*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *The Queen* have become a must-have for women these days (Manlow, 2007). Throughout the years a so-called supporting network of the fashion industry has developed which now brings significant results and helps the industry operate.

Scholars say that the effective promotional mix (advertising, public relations, selling and publicity) might be as important and influential as the product itself in order to become successful (McRobbie, 1998, Easey, 1995). 'Any product/literature/advertising is acting as a silent salesman 24/7 selling your product or service – which, if working correctly will help you to see a return on your investment' (No author, 2014). The role of the promotion is to inform and convince the consumer to buy the product, as well as to appeal to the consumer's psychology, feelings and mind to remember the brand so the customer is keen to come back (Kotler & Armstrong, 1990).

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Promoters work for various types of the media and promote the fashion products. Drew describes their task: to 'inform their readership and to educate and lead them towards adopting new ideas' (Drew, 1992, p. 69). Public relations, branding, marketing and various promotional tools and their importance are described in more detail in further sections.

3.4.1. BRANDING

There are various definitions of 'brand' and 'branding'. Ostrow and Smith describe brand as a 'particular product or line of products, offered for sale by a single producer or manufacturer and made easily distinguishable from other similar products by a unique identifiable name and/or symbol' (1988, p. 26). Hameide claims that 'a brand is an entity with a distinctive idea expressed in a set of functional and experiential features with a promise of a value reward relevant to its end user, and an economic return to its producers. A successful brand has a strong identity, is innovative, consistent, competitively positioned, and holds a matching positive image in the consumer's mind' (2011, p. 6). *Burberry* is known for its British style and mackintosh fabric. When *Burberry* faced the decline, they used branding to 'confront the global marketplace'. They changed the brand logo to a more appropriate one, launched a strong advertising campaign and developed a new label *Prorsum* which helped the *Burberry* brand maintain its strong identity (McDermott, 2002, p. 90).

Brand is all about the reputation in the customers' minds. According to Warren Buffett, it takes twenty years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it (Buffet in Bickle, 2009). Branding 'is the corporate science of adding value' (Holt, 2004, p. 53). It relies on making the customer emotionally committed to the company and believe that no other company can provide the same quality products (Holt, 2004). 'Brands should be the result of the needs of the target market, not the result of what the company decides it wants to market' (Bickle, 2009, p. 213). Briefly, the brand should reflect entity, distinctive features, idea, promise of value, return, equity, relevance, identity, positioning, innovation, consistency and image.

3.4.1.1. IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING

Today brands are more important than in the past as markets are growing so fast and they are so competitive. Branding can often help 'break through people's wall of indifference to create brand heat and product lust' (Goodson, 2009). There are fewer and fewer brand names to choose from for new ones, therefore existing brands become more valuable, and new brands need good strategies to survive. During the economic challenges, brands survive much better than unbranded products. 'People don't have relationships with products, they are loyal to brands… Brands can activate a passionate group of people to do something like changing the world. Products can't really do that' (Goodson, 2009).

Fashion is a very competitive industry therefore it is essential to have a good brand which makes it stand out from the crowd (Dolak, 2012). Many new designers fail to become well known only because they fail to put enough effort in branding: 'Branding needs to be about fashioning an emotional experience for your target audience. Great branding offers acceptance, provides a sense of comfort, and yet challenges a customer' (Wu, 2013). Well-known worldwide fashion brands such as *Chanel*, *Dior* or *Prada* convey their message about their unique style, different ideas and quality of the products through their branding.

Branding is strongly tied up with the relationship with customers, as, if the company wants to create a successful brand it should know everything about the needs and requirements of the customer (Lake, no date). When the company shows that they care about their customers, they will build trust which is the most important aim of successful branding. Brands help customers to make better choices promised by the brand and provide a certain emotional or rational value (Hameide, 2011). The customer determines true brand's positioning: brands propose a position and design a strategy to achieve that position, hoping the users will see the brand in a way the company intended. However, how the end user understands and interprets that message and actually sees the brand can be totally different (Hameide, 2011, p. 45). The way in which a customer sees the brand determines whether the brand is successful, whether it can improve and grow.

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Branding can help increase fashion sales. If the branding is good, and the company has the trust of the customer, they will accept changes in the company, for example, the increase of prices (Dolak, 2012). A good branding creates the image that the products and services a company provides are the best and are unique. Goodson (2009) gives an example about the dollar which is a 'world brand'. It is just a piece of paper but it is so valuable because of the branding and marketing tools. Of course the company has to be careful as they have to prove that what their branding says is true and fulfils all promises, otherwise they will lose customers. Customers are also more likely to trust products and services of the brands with good branding strategies: 'if you do experience a one-off issue with a product or service, your customers would be more likely to understand, if your brand ethos proves that you'll do what it takes to resolve the problem' (No author, 2014).

3.4.1.2. CREATING THE BRAND

There are various types and levels of brands including corporate, independent, national, private, mass-market, luxury, premium, or private label brands (Hameide, 2011). To create one, the designer firstly needs to have a clear vision and the need for the brand to satisfy consumers, also have potentially profitable aspirations and financial capabilities to exist (Hameide, 2011). Designers need to come up with clear brand values which reflect what the company's aims are and what they do, which they communicate clearly to the customers. 'Your brand is your businesses promise to your clients and prospective clients' (No author, 2014). It is also essential to think about the company's USP – Unique Selling Point which identifies what makes the company better than its competitors, why it is unique and why it benefits the customers (Dolak, 2012). This has to be used in all branding features and often becomes a motto or a catch-phrase for a firm.

Since fashion is all about being distinct, branding is an excellent way to differentiate yourself (Springsteel, 2013). In order to develop a unique brand, designers must conduct a market research to find the gap in the market, find out what consumers are buying, what their needs are, and what they think about that idea (Moore, 2012). SWOT analysis – analysing brand's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can be useful. Brand ethos, identity, the market,

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competitors and consumers must be analysed and incorporated into the brands concept (Moore, 2012). Designers can also research other industries for inspiration. It is also possible to use trend forecasting experts who could help make predictions about the needs and gaps in the fashion industry (Moore, 2012).

Brand strategy is 'the plan employed to create, introduce, and promote a particular brand'. This includes brand decision, product mix, positioning the product in the market, distribution, communication, consumer experience, evaluation and growth (Ostrow & Smith, 1988). Positioning is a strategy which briefly explains the benefit, value of the brand, target market, and its competitors (Hameide, 2011). Brands can be positioned on the basis of product mix when product features differentiate the brand from others, or on the basis of brand identity, when branding itself and its identity differentiates the product from others and establishes an emotional relationship with consumers (Hameide, 2011). The idea of the brand is transformed into a product which is the core of the brand: 'The product's designer…has the job of creating a product that captures the spirit of the brand, translates the concept in a way that makes sense to the consumer, and satisfies a need' (Hameide, 2011, p. 49). Positioning affects what image consumers create in their minds about the brand which may or may not succeed as how the company plans to position the brand can be different from how the consumer sees it.

Brand strength empowers the product, the brand's name and the company (Bedbury & Fenichell, 2003). That strength increases the brand's value in consumers' minds. A brand is strong when marketers identify clear brand's strengths and highlight them, however when the brand's characteristics are diluted, or not focused to specific markets, branding becomes ineffective (Bickle, 2009).

Brands have their life cycles, when they grow, expand and face challenges, such as losing an interest, or turning into generics. For example *Xerox* name overshadowed the product and the brand, and polyester became a generic name (Hameide, 2011). As brands get older, they can lose relevance, fail to deliver innovation or new differentiators - *Burberry* lost its relevance due to over licensing the brand before its repositioning (Hameide, 2011). Therefore strategic thinking and forecasting market needs might help avoid challenges for the brand.

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3.4.1.3. BRAND IDENTITY

A common belief that a brand is just a logo of the product is untrue; however visual image is crucial in the fashion field as it will be remembered in consumers' minds. Brand identity is a brand's personality expressed in their visual attributes such as logos, symbols, colours, designs, which communicate the personality of the brand (Hameide, 2011). Brand identity should be built around the reasons why the brand was developed, what the target audience is looking for, and what the brand wants to be famous for: 'It allows you to present a clear idea of what you are selling, the concept and ethos behind it, the underlying principles of the brand and the way in which it is sold' (Moore, 2012, p. 10). A strong identity makes the brand different from competitors, memorable for consumers and easier to sell in sales.

As fashion companies operate globally, they rely on simple logos which would be understandable and memorable, such as the interlinked Cs of *Chanel* or the *Nike* swoosh (Easey, 2009). Fashion brands rely on simple symbols and minimalism, strong image and brand name only, and instead of a lot of text on their adverts, they simply provide their email address which is understandable in all languages (Easey, 2009). Since the 20th century marketers understand the importance of placing a designer's name on store brands which increases the merchandise turnover and sales: 'Store brands that feature a designer's name add prestige to the fashion and the store and stimulate the consumer's desire to purchase in multiple quantities' (Bickle, 2009, p. 225). Designer Stella McCartney put a lot of effort in creating the logo of her brand: 'I want my logo to be timeless and tasteful and slick and charming and individual and vintage-y and not really over-the-top industrial, and I want it to have some little element that's cool….I think it would be nice to take an old font, something very beautiful and amazing, and then make it new and modern…It has to be something that will work on labels and bags and storefronts and everything else, and it has to make sense in different cultures, and it can't be too feminine, because I may want to do men's clothes someday….The logo just has to echo me. The whole thing about my line is mixing and matching, not dictating to people, not being oppressive…' (Aldridge, 2011, p. 40).

In the fashion industry, consumers often pay for the price and the brand's image – if it has identified logo, symbol, or name, consumers will want to buy it. A brand must identify, understand and implement the desired image which must affect all areas in the company and be consistent with the company's aims and objectives as any deviations might confuse consumers: 'This continuity provides a sense of security to the target market. When they see the familiar logo, they know that the name represents luxury and quality' (Bickle, 2009, p. 214). A successful identity can result in customer loyalty, positive word-of-mouth, increased sales, customer traffic and positive relationship between the brand and consumer (Hart, 2005; Bickle 2009). The image influences how consumers view the products, for example *Tiffany & Co* has a blue box image more than 170 years and when anyone sees that blue box, they immediately recognise this brand.

3.4.1.4. PROTECTING THE BRAND

In fashion industry brand owners do everything to protect their intellectual property - their names and ideas from others. The company is the legal owner of the brand and its copyrightable elements such as the logo and name (Hameide, 2011). If there was an issue with brands 'stealing' other brand's ideas and image, this might risk losing the values of the original brand and failure to be unique in front of the customers (*Centre for Fashion Enterprise*, 2012).

'It's easy to see why a 'brand' is perhaps the single most valuable asset of a fashion firm – and one that successful firms are quick to protect!' (Batty, 2009). For example, shoe designer Jimmy Choo attempted to stop a New Zealand gift seller from using the brand *Kuchychoo* as both brand names have a lot of similarity (Slade, 2008). Also, designer Trelise Cooper had the issue of the new trade mark *Tamsin Cooper* which sounds too similar and it also have the similarities in their logos (Gully, 2007). It can be a 'valuable investment in protecting against free riders and in enhancing future recognition and value in a brand' (Batty, 2009). Designers should make sure that their brand is safe and registered as a trade mark which protects it from other brands wanting to use the same name.

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3.4.1.5. COMPARISON OF BRANDING IN THE UK AND LITHUANIA

There is a presumption that the UK designers invest more on branding than Lithuanian designers as the UK designers are better prepared for the industry, they gain a better education so they have better knowledge about the importance of branding. Designers have a better understanding and better opportunities to develop branding as there are many branding specialists in the country and information available.

Also UK designers invest more on branding as there is a huge competition between fashion designers and brands in the country. Designers understand that without strong branding and brand image, they will not stand out from other brands and will not become successful. In the UK branding is as important as the product itself. Successful designers usually work with a team of branding specialists who help create a strong brand with a message about the products which is unique and better than competitors'. Successful UK brands constantly work on branding in order to remind customers about the benefits of their brand.

In Lithuania the fashion market is not that big and it does not require such strong investment in branding. There are not many fashion designers in the country, especially those who have strong brands so in order to be successful, minimal efforts for branding is enough in Lithuania. Designers in Lithuania usually have a vision of their customers and what their products and brand are about and hire graphic design specialists to create the brand image which would reflect their ideas. This is enough to be in the fashion market as it is not so demanding.

3.4.2. MARKETING

Marketing is not defined as advertising, selling or public relations, it consists of activities which bring products to the market (Bickle, 2009). Kotler & Armstrong describe marketing as 'managing markets to bring about exchanges and relationships for the purpose of creating values and satisfying needs and wants' (2001, p.13). Its purpose is to successfully exchange products between the vendor and the customer.

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Fashion marketing embraces the positive aspects of fashion design, enhances the creative process and responds to customer requirements (Easey, 2009). Bickle claims that the widespread success of the fashion brand depends on marketing efforts, as even bad fashions can be sold if marketing efforts are good and the failure of good fashions can be the result of poor marketing (2009). Marketing specialists are responsible for building a positive and confident image about the fashion brand (Bickle, 2009). 'Successful marketing efforts result in strong, loyal consumer purchasing behavior, not just positive attitudes toward the marketing efforts...They also result in convincing consumers who traditionally purchased from the competition to become loyal purchasing consumers' (Bickle, 2009, p. 232).

The effectiveness of the marketing can help decide whether the company can grow and be successful in the future. Bickle says it is not enough to make an excellent product which consumers want, it is important to express the message the fashion brand wants to send and make it heard. The message has to be 'believable, clear, understandable, memorable, and related to the needs and wants of the customers (2009, p. 32). She compares fashion marketers as a hybrid of pit bull and angel. The pit bull side protects the brand, promotes fashions and never lets down the brand, and the angel side presents the positive image of the company and improves the target market's life through its adoption of the brand (2009).

There are classic 4Ps of marketing developed in 1960s: product – which is in a product life cycle and needs help from other Ps to compete: price – a rotating target based on a competition, place – distribution and where the products are sold, and promotion (Kachadoorian, 2011). There are additional Ps for promotion – permission, partnerships and personalization, and also five new Ps - purpose – knowing the reason why you promote the product, people – who will like and use the product; processes – include necessary marketing strategies and plans, philosophy behind the product such as packaging the product (Kachadoorian, 2011).

The most important aspect of fashion marketing is the understanding of the consumers and making sure they know all the benefits of the product (Easey, 2009). According to Springsteel, building trust and credibility are the keys to success for fashion designers, as it is a huge benefit to be known as an expert and valued professional (2013). As the fashion industry is highly

competitive, marketing communications make sure consumer chooses your product over other similar products. Consumers have become more cautious about buying luxury fashion therefore they seek similar benefits from alternative/cheaper fashions (Bickle, 2009). Brands are looking for various ways how to impress consumers, by not only informing them, but also entertaining (Easey, 2009).

3.4.3. PROMOTION

If no one knows about the creations of the designer, even the most talented designers can fail to succeed. Even though fashion can be seen as art, this industry is nothing without selling products to consumers who can only know about them with the help of communication channels (Bickle, 2009). Promotions of products are seen all times throughout the history, only its expressions differ. In the past, a town crier called out in the streets about the products and services available, there was also word-of-mouth or hand-made posters. Now with all technology improvements it developed into the massive area called marketing communications which is inevitable part of successful fashion business. 'The industry has changed enormously in recent years, and so the luxury of just being a designer has long gone…You will be asked to do interviews and communicate with the public on the Internet, on *Twitter*, and on *Facebook*' (Smith, 2013, p. 106).

The relationship between branding and marketing is strong and essential: 'Marketing supports the development of brands in all of its stages; it plays an integral role in the creation of the emotional value through the shaping of the brand personality and then communicating it to the outside world through its various communication channels' (Hameide, 2011, p. 42).

Marketing promotional mix traditionally includes research before, during, and after campaign, advertising, sales promotion, public relations and selling (Easey, 2009). It is beneficial to promote the brand using various different channels as it gives customers the opportunity to become familiar with the brand in different ways (Moore, 2012). Successful marketing strategy has got creative treatment which uses visuals, music, etc.; media strategy, which uses appropriate communication channels, and evaluation – customer feedback, which measures success of the

strategy (Easey, 2009). It is worth asking customers' opinions, show them adverts and ask whether they recognise them, ask when they last visited the store, how they would describe its style, and whether they can recall logos and styles.

With global expansion, market conditions, digital communication channels available and a more demanding customer it is increasingly difficult for fashion brands to compete. Unique selling points are becoming harder to define as there are so many brands to fulfil everyone's demand (Moore, 2012). 'Given our hyper-competitive, 24/7 world, where everyone is vying for attention, it can be argued that the proverbial 15 minutes of fame has been reduced to 15 seconds, which leaves precious little time to make the right impression' (Springsteel, 2013, p. 154). However, with many different communication channels it is still possible to create strong brands appealing to modern consumers. Tom Ford clearly knows how to promote his brand - he occasionally visits his stores, meets with customers and signs autographs which have a huge impact on his promotional effort (Bickle, 2009).

3.4.3.1 PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public relations (PR) is a very effective method of promoting fashion products, it aims to build a positive reputation of the brand, enhance its image and gain publicity: 'PR, if used effectively, can be seen as the guardian of the corporate reputation' (Easey, 2009, p. 226). 'The right public relations strategy can propel your emerging brand into the spotlight and transform it to a top tier label' (Springsteel, 2013, p. 248). PR tools include press releases, magazine/newspaper articles, special events, speeches, product launches, coupons, free samples, etc. Event management is important in the fashion PR as public relations specialists are the ones who organise fashion shows, events and sponsorship deals, make sure they achieve good publicity and manage the crisis during events (Easey, 2009). It can also include working with buyers to encourage them to view and buy collections and building relationships with collaborators from the fashion industry (Moore, 2012).

Designers can do PR on their own, employ in-house staff or work with external PR agency. It is advantageous to work with an agency as they will have already built their media contacts

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whereas new PR staff need to build up their own (Moore, 2012). Stella McCartney has her own publicist who deals with the media when there are special events in her life. When her first child was born, everyone was worried that she would not finish the collection on time, so her publicist explained that the situation was under control and she finished the collection just before the birth (Aldridge, 2011). However new designers can hardly afford agencies or hire publicists, therefore they have to work on their own or find cheaper ways to do it.

With all possibilities online, designers themselves can research influential online magazines, blogs, social media commentators and writers and start building relationships with them. It is therefore possible to do some PR individually (Moore, 2012). 'Building connections with the media takes time, commitments and a clear understanding of the readership of each publication you approach' (Moore, 2012, p. 77). Those relationships can help promote and sell designs (Springsteel, 2013). Alexander McQueen had an exceptional talent – all of his pieces were bought straight after his graduation show, however he struggled to start a career as a designer as he did not have enough knowledge about the fashion business and PR. Former fashion editor of *Vogue* Isabella Blow discovered his talent, explained to him everything about the industry and did PR for him. She advised him to choose his middle name for the brand name, promoted him on the media and introduced him to key industry players (Knox, 2010).

The media has a huge effect on the promotion of fashion designers and their products as a means of self-identification for the fashion consumers (Wilson, 1987, Kaiser, 1997, McRobbie, 1998). Kaiser proposed that the fashion media had an immeasurable influence on the consumer's sense of identity and community and the consumer's behaviour in the market-place (1997). 'As people pull out, as people get scared, you have to look strong… And if you don't say anything, then you are obsolete. Our goal is to constantly have a strong message that reinvents itself and feels fresh… We show them hope and get them excited' (Karimzadeh, 2008, p. 14 in Easey, 2009). PR specialists make sure that magazines have designs to feature in photo-shoots and editorials. Magazine editors usually take information for press releases for their articles which looks very credible as an endorsement by influential fashion journalists, and readers do not know that this is a PR specialists' role (Easey, 2009). Obviously the brand risks their product as it can be either criticised or complimented in the editorial piece, dependent on journalists' opinion and

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comparison with other products (Easey, 2009). Therefore it is essential to maintain good relationships between magazine journalists and the brands as they affect the brand's reputation.

Publicity in magazines is one of the most powerful promotional tools in the fashion industry as they are popular amongst fashion lovers and can often encourage sales: 'They provide visual and tangible opportunities for consumers to evaluate, compare, and even obsess about product offerings (Bickle, 2009, p. 108). It is a great channel to showcase new designs using advertising and influence readers through visuals and editorial. Magazines are specialized, they have a good print quality, and people tend to keep magazines for a longer time rather than newspapers, so this increases the chances to view promotions (Hameide, 2011). Anna Wintour discovered Galliano's talent and helped him to break into the industry: she introduced him to influential people who helped him to run his show in Paris, attended television programme about Galliano and devoted many *Vogue* pages to his fashions (McDowell, 1997). After his first collection for *Dior*, he achieved the media attention which helped him to become popular. *Women's Wear Daily* reported that after his first show Dior's salons were filled with customers; *The New York Times* called him a 'stand out'. His clothes were featured on the front covers of the most famous fashion magazines (McDowel, 2007).

Newspapers are also used to promote fashion, however as they are published more often than magazines, they are more suitable for announcing more frequent events, such as sales or other special events, and distributing coupons or promotion offers (Hameide, 2011).

According to Moore, press days are a key activity in the fashion industry (2012). They give the opportunity for both buyers and the media to see collections and decide whether to feature them and place orders. However as the industry is so competitive and so many brands are organising press days it is difficult for journalists to attend all of them and see all designers' work (Moore, 2012).

Important job for designer is to be at the right time in the right place – attend events and competitions where they could become visible and get publicity (Springsteel, 2013). Specific events and fashion shows can also successfully market designer's fashions for their audience.

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Fashion shows are the key showpiece of the fashion brands which provide the 'most tangible depiction of what the brand offers' (Moore, 2012, p. 57). They help build recognition and make industry contacts. Alexander McQueen was famous for his marvelous fashion shows. He understood that it is a very effective marketing tool to inform society about his creations. Fashion shows gave McQueen enormous platform to express himself as an artist and spread messages (Bolton, 2011).

'What you send out will come back tenfold if there is continuity in the messaging'… PR 'can transform and transport your brand message so that the image in the press reflects who you are and what your clothes look like, to attract and keep your customers…A profile in WWD is the pinnacle of trade coverage that will attract the manufacturing and retail worlds' (Springsteel, 2013, p. 251).

3.4.3.2. VISUALS

There is a belief that we retain 70% of what we see and only 30% what we hear, so visual symbols are an integral part of marketing communications (Easey, 2009). In the past tailors used visuals to distinguish their shops from others, for example, an image of a needle and thread above the tailor shop. Today we live in the age of information and fast-paced society when people do not have time to read everything, many prefer images which do not require spending much time on them but have a strong impact on people's minds. 'Today's consumer is constantly bombarded by visual stimuli in the form of advertising, logos, junk mail, celebrity gossip magazines, internet pop ups…' (Easey, 2009). Therefore brands have to compete between each other to stand out from the crowd as it has become hard for consumer to choose from so many.

New technologies invented digital changing rooms and virtual stores, however there is still a demand to see and feel the products in the real world (Moore, 2012). Visual merchandising and store design are also important marketing tools as they differentiate fashion store amongst other stores. Store designers now can incorporate various promotional elements in the store design such as in-store graphics, wrapping materials, carrier bags or T-shirts (Easey, 2009). Pleasing store environment, music, fragrance and colours can encourage customers to stay longer and

spend more money. Store windows' design can successfully attract customers and carry particular messages for them which can help decide to visit the store (Easey, 2009). It can also send messages that might discourage customers: 'stores who do not put the prices of garments in the window suggest high prices. Closed, heavy doors, buzzer entry systems, small windows (like *Tiffany* jewelers) and uniformed 'greeters' are all visual cues to some people to stay away (Easey, 2009, p. 232). Designers must make sure that store visuals are attractive for the right audience.

3.4.3.3. ADVERTISING

Advertising is one of the most effective, although very expensive marketing tools. Fashion stores advertise in order to stand out from similar stores having similar merchandise, and luxury brands are reliant on advertising to maintain the success of their brand (Easey, 2009). Advertising creates something about the product that benefits and encourages purchasing it (Springsteel, 2013). It delivers a focused message about the fashion product and promotes the brand at the same time. Mass-market brands focus their adverts on competitive advantages such as price, location or functionality, whereas luxury brands have less cluttered messages and highlight 'strong visual and emotional message about the brand's personality and lifestyle' (Hameide, 2011, p. 79). Ralph Lauren is an expert in advertising and says that even during weak economic times, designers should continue to advertise (Lauren in Bickle, 2009). His adverts allow consumers to see themselves living the life in the advert, and the message is consistent and clearly reaches the customer (Springsteel, 2013). However, even though specialists advice designers to use advertising as a powerful tool, it is often too expensive for new designers to use it.

Advertising agencies recognise that fashion requires a different approach and more special attention than other industries therefore they launched fashion only subdivisions, for example *J.Walter Thompson* has launched fashion advertising subdivision *Label@JWT* (Easey, 2009).

- **Television advertising** is the most expensive advertising method as it reaches the maximum number of people. Its capabilities make it an extremely beneficial tool for fashion marketing

(Bickle, 2009). Both audio and video are important components, as with the help of audio and video the viewer can understand the concept of commercial, enjoys it and wants to participate in it (Duncan, 2008). However, it is not always effective as the target market may not see the advert, it might be lost amongst other non-fashion adverts and a short advert may not always show all items available (Hameide, 2011). But television advertising successfully markets the brand's image. TV advertising messages are heartfelt, easily recognizable therefore stimulates people to purchase the item immediately (Springsteel, 2013).

- **Outdoor advertising** is relatively inexpensive using adverts on billboards, the Underground, streets, taxis, etc. It targets the transport users within the fashion store area however people will have a moment to glance at it therefore the ad must be focused and cannot give a lot of information (Easey, 2009).

- **Magazine advertising** is the most effective advertising as it is targeted to the particular readers of the magazine (Easey, 2009).

- **Radio advertising** is not very common in the fashion industry, except the times when it is used to inform people about sales or special offers.

- **Mobile advertising** is popular today, even though it often consists only of text, more people are likely to read mobile adverts as they access their mobile phones very often (Moore, 2012).

- **Product placement** when products are used in films and television programs and visually seen by the customers, is also popular and useful marketing tool.

- **Infomercials** – 30-60 minute programmed commercials, when price, attributes and benefits of the products are discussed – are also effective because product looks reliable, and they are often promoted by celebrities who are able to build a loyal connection with the brand (Hetsroni & Asya, 2002).

- As magazine circulation declines and Internet presence is growing, **online advertising** is a good option to promote the brand (Moore, 2012). It allows consumer to decide whether they want to see the advert, so it is cost effective when wanting to connect with the target market.

3.4.3.4. INTERNET

Online business has become inevitable for fashion brands today. E-commerce emerged in the mid-1990s and brought more opportunities to sell fashions and become more accessible to customers. Today online retailing is a convenient, easy and fast way for fashion lovers to shop. 'Consumers expect true multichannel retailing that seamlessly integrates brick-and-mortar and online operations so that they can…check merchandise availability on mobile devices while sitting in the parking lot of the retailer' (E-commerce, 2010). As digital platform has become a part of the fashion brand's strategy and essential tool, it is predicted that web sales will overtake traditional retail in 2017 (Bergeret in Favre, 2013). Fashion stores offer 24 hours or even same-day delivery, they provide access to stock from small boutiques around the world; give information about celebrity styles and where to find cheaper/similar fashions. Now designers can create their own online presence with even more ways to engage with customers, stream their fashion shows online, and communicate with their customers at the same time (Moore, 2012). For example, Marc Jacobs introduced a plus size line after the social media feedback about its demand.

As the information bombards consumers in every turn, the availability of information through Internet channels allows choosing what to read/watch and share, which means consumers no longer believe in everything a brand tells them. 'The fashion industry is built on mass communication – with a high turnover of new ideas and information, commercial exchange, visual stimulation and the development of brands and labels' (Moore, 2012, p. 124). Information travels very quickly which means consumers no longer rely only on newspapers or magazines, and often hear the news first online before they officially released. 'The fast-moving fashion industry, with its need to share ideas and imagery, engages with the customer on an emotional level, and to keep ahead of new trends, has embraced this new age of communication with enthusiasm' (Moore, 2012, p. 16).

The internet has significant numbers of consumers accessing websites every day. McQueen was the first one who streamed his show live from Fashion Week on the Internet in 2010 which was a positive promotion for his brand and received a lot of attention. Other designers followed his

idea and started broadcasting their shows live (Knox, 2010). It does not only raise awareness of the brand with the interactive adverts, but also encourages people to purchase the items which they can do online very quickly (Bickle, 2009). Electronic technologies have improved marketing availabilities and the Internet continues to establish new business and marketing strategies (Hameide, 2011). Internet differs from other communication channels as it is not so controlled and it has more of an open environment with its virtual communities. Even buyers today trust feedback and opinions of fashion lovers online more than experts in a 'real world' (Hameide, 2011).

3.4.3.5. SOCIAL MARKETING

Social marketing allows consumers to interact with the brand, provide feedback about products, give advice and feel more connected to the company (Bickle, 2009). It has benefits of immediate access, short messages and reminders which do not require much time to read but have significant effects on selling. Social media promotes the brand, generates sales and allows connecting directly with customers on a global level (Springsteel, 2013). Social media channels such as *Facebook* or *Twitter* are inexpensive and targeted to a specific market. Designer Anabelle LaRoque achieved her success through *Facebook* as she talks with her customers about fashions through *Facebook* every day: '*Facebook* is 'amazing for my business. I change my profile picture every day. My picture is always one of my garments. I always tell people what I am doing at the store. *Facebook* provides a social relationship with my customers' (Laroque in Bickle, 2009, p. 87). It is all about being social as those who show commercialism instead of honest communication on social media rarely succeed (Moore, 2012).

3.4.3.6. BLOGS

Blogs are also successfully used to target certain market segments and bring to life discussions with consumers about the brand and its activities. Consumers can post any type of information and feel important (Flynn, 2006). Fashion blogs, such as *Face hunter* are very popular, and a good tool to promote a fashion brand: 'Consumers are able to feel part of the company, fashion team, and fashion industry…Information regarding the newest products and upcoming sales and

promotions can be provided to the consumers' (Bickle, 2009, p. 91). Through blogs consumers can see other fashion lovers' style and share their own style, and communicate with each other. 'Individuals are given a voice, sometimes on a global scale. Ultimately; if they are successful, it gives them an opportunity to be respected, and have a positive influence within the fashion industry' (Moore, 2012, p. 26). Therefore blogs are influential on what consumers want to wear; they set trends, inspire people and form opinions.

3.4.4. COMPARISON OF MARKETING IN THE UK AND LITHUANIA

A few decades ago in Lithuania the biggest marketing designers used was word of mouth or a few articles in magazines as no one realised the importance of high recognition. There was no such thing as a fashion industry, it was only sewers who worked with individual clients and created clothing for them. Now both Lithuanian and UK designers understand the importance of marketing, but Lithuanians are just starting to learn about marketing as it is a new subject in the country.

There is a presumption that today, when the numbers of designers are growing every day, there is a bigger demand for using various marketing and promotional tools for designers in Lithuania. Many designers no longer create only for the Lithuanian industry; they are trying to expand abroad, therefore developing and working on their marketing techniques. However Lithuanian designers do not need as much marketing in Lithuania as designers abroad; very expensive tools such as TV campaigns or billboards are not necessary. Lithuanian designers do not have their own marketing teams; usually a designer's assistant is responsible for marketing.

In the UK competition is more intense and the industry is much more developed so designers invest more on marketing. To stand out from other brands, designers are looking for more interesting marketing tools and are ready to invest to attract people as there are so many brands to choose from in the country. Usually UK designer brands have their own marketing team responsible for constantly promoting the brand, as the companies are bigger.

3.4.4. OTHER WAYS OF PROMOTION

3.4.4.1. NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Today, young designers belong to the generation Y which means they have a deep understanding and importance of new communication channels, and strive to compete and share ideas in various ways (Moore, 2012). Designers use portfolio websites such as *Viewbook* or *Pixpa*, social media channels and blogs to create their own presence and promote their designs. There are many new technologies such as *RFID* – a digital tag reader, *Beaming* – technology which allows to find out about the stores and products from billboards and displays, or audio targeting – a technology directing sound messages to different people passing the store (Hameide, 2011).

3.4.4.2. CO-BRANDING

Co-branding uses multiple brand names together on a single product which rewards all participating brands (Hameide, 2011). For example, designer Stella McCartney has designed the lines for *Adidas* and *H & M*, McQueen designed for *Puma* and *Target*, Paul Smith collaborates with *Mini*, *Burton Snowboards*, *Manchester United Football Club*, and *Evian*. This gives the designer credit and publicity, and the mass brand gets opportunities to expose to a wider market, while both of them benefit from increased sales and promotion.

3.4.4.3. BRAND EXTENSION

Brand extension is increasing the product lines which did not exist before for the brand.

3.4.4.4. INTERACTIVE BRANDING

Interactive branding is when customers are able to directly interact in the process of developing the brand. Mass customisation allows consumers to customise products' features according their needs within particular platform for particular price, such as customising your own computer, or

a novel with your own characters. Fashion brands such as *Adidas*, *Intellift* or *Ollyfit* adopted a model of customer integration (Hameide, 2011).

3.4.4.5. CELEBRITIES

We live in a celebrity based culture and well-known people can help promote the brand. Bickle says celebrities 'have the power to increase sales of the fashions they are wearing simply by their status' (2009, p. 110). Celebrities can have different roles to promote the brand including endorsement – using their name and face for the advertising, testimonials – when a celebrity supports a particular product, or a spokesperson – when a celebrity is a face of the brand (Hameide, 2011). The famous last name and the fact that her father is the member of *The Beatles*, helped Stella McCartney break into the industry faster. McCartney also had many supermodel friends, such as Naomi Campbell, who modelled for her at her graduation show, which achieved huge media attention, and Paul and Linda McCartney participated in the show as well (Aldridge, 2011).

A person, who has a popular and positive image and wears designer's fashions in public, especially repeatedly, makes the impact and acts as a message which says that the person is loyal to the product and likes the company. When Princess Diana carried a *Lady Dior* handbag in 1995, she generated a positive promotion for the brand and by 1997; over 100,000 handbags (each costs $1,200) were sold (Agins, 1999 in Bickle, 2009).

Movies, award shows, soap operas, reality shows, biographies and books, are all also important in promoting fashion. 'The fashion marketing efforts clearly make the entertainers a significant amount of money and provides continual name recognition to the target market' (Bickle, 2009, p. 105). We could relate the trickle-down theory here. This theory shows that fashions are worn by the upper class – celebrities, well-known people - are adopted by the middle and lower classes, which means that wealth and status set the fashion trends to consumers. For example TV series *Sex and the city* are known for constant promotion of *Manolo Blahnik* shoes which brought attention to the brand.

The belongingness theory says that people need social acceptance and those who follow celebrity fashions feel a sense of belonging through a 'parasocial relationship' (Halpern, 2007, 121). Therefore consumers feel belonged when they adopt or copy celebrity fashions, they then feel a connection to celebrities' life. Fashion magazines provide pictures of celebrities with certain fashion products and then give readers the information of where to purchase similar products and how to get celebrity looks at the same price or for less (Bickle, 2009). This is good both for celebrities and brands as it provides both of them with recognition and promotion.

3.5. QUESTIONS ARISING

1. How can designer be knowledgeable in all these areas discussed at the beginning of the career?
2. How can designer combine business and art?
3. Where can young designer get enough finances for branding, marketing, promotion, advertising?
4. Where can designers get a financial help?
5. How can young designers, with little finances prioritise where to invest? Which tools are the most important?
6. Is it possible to promote a designer in a cheaper way? What are the tools that do not cost?
7. Is it still possible to become a successful designer today when you have to multi-task and be knowledgeable in so many areas?

3.6. CONCLUSION

The chapter reviewed issues fashion designers face today and the fashion industry business environment designers have to be knowledgeable about. It discussed career opportunities for new designers and explained essential areas for a fashion designer today such as supply chain, selling, cash flow, marketing, branding, public relations, promotion, relationships with the media, celebrities and other ways of promotion. The chapter concluded with questions arising regarding the difficulties for a young designer to be knowledgeable in all areas, combining business and art, and finances for marketing.

CHAPTER 4. METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses various research methods, types of data and data collection methods, their advantages and disadvantages. It also looks at the process of data collection, research design, and tests of validity and reliability. The research aims and objectives are discussed, the most suitable methods are applied and the whole process of data collection is reviewed.

4.1. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY

Research is a detailed investigation of the particular question or issue which is less understood. It involves adding knowledge, understanding and providing an explanation why the issue exists (Oliver, 2010). Research helps to answer questions, understand issues and usually involves finding out something new by collecting and examining information (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The aim of this research is to investigate how young Lithuanian designers become well-known, and the role of marketing in developing a fashion designer's public profile and success. The aim of this chapter is to identify and analyse potential research methods and approaches and indicate the most suitable methodology for this study.

4.2. RESEARCH PARADIGMS
4.2.1. ONTOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

Research methodology relies on ontology and epistemology (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). Ontology and epistemology refer to theories about the nature of reality and knowledge. They inform the methodology what can and cannot count as meaningful knowledge (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

Ontology specifies the relationship between the world and human practices on whether reality can or cannot be separated from human practices (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It is a theory of 'what exists and how it exists' (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007, p. 33). This knowledge will reflect the perspective we choose in our research.

Epistemology determines 'how reality can be known, the relationship between the knower and what is known, the characteristics, the principles, the assumptions that guide the process of knowing and the achievement of findings, and the possibility of that process being shared and repeated by others in order to assess the quality of the research and the reliability of those findings' (Gialdino, 1992, p. 17).

Particular epistemological reflections are approached from empirical research practice and they are closely linked with the paradigms in the production of every discipline. Those paradigms are 'theoretical-methodological framework used by researchers to interpret social phenomena in the context of a given society' (Gialdino, 1992, p. 17).

The most important types of paradigms are positivist and interpretivist paradigms. They have different epistemological, ontological and methodological assumptions and are used to describe social reality (Gialdino, 2009).

4.2.2. POSITIVIST PARADIGM

Positivist paradigm uses a straightforward relationship between the world and how we perceive it. It uses 'positive' verification of experiences instead of intuition or introspection (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Positivist believes that there is an objective reality and symbols can explain it. It believes in general patterns that can predict and control over the natural phenomenon. Its aim is to discover these patterns and prove that 'we can rely on our perceptions of the world to provide us with accurate data' (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

Positivist approach uses experimental and manipulative methods which ensure the distance between the subjective bias of the researcher and the objective reality being studied through the use of objective (unbiased) data. Usually it uses scientific methods, hypothesis generation, scientific testing and proving and quantitative methods (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006).

4.2.3. INTERPRETIVIST PARADIGM

Interpretivist paradigm assumes that reality is constructed through the subject and 'through the

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meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially' (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007, p. 33). It believes that the reality cannot be separate from the researcher's knowledge of it, and the researcher's values and understandings are inevitable value of the research process (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007).

Interpretivists believe in finding out the truth through the dialogue between members of the research who provide a well-informed understanding of the world. They usually use qualitative methods such as interviews or observations. Interpretivists make all interpretations based in particular context, situation and time (Clough & Nutbrown, 2007). They believe that reality is socially constructed and fluid, and our knowledge depends on societies, cultures, settings and relationships. Therefore validity of the results is often subjective and cannot be applied to wider audiences.

4.3. RESEARCH METHODS

There are two main research approaches to gather data: qualitative and quantitative. The decision which approach to choose should be determined primarily by the features of the field and issue of the study than by prior methodological preferences (Flick, 2011; Matthews & Ross, 2010). The researcher also needs to think about the possibilities to access the data and whether it will be able to cover the research issue (Flick, 2011). The method should be applied regarding the research question and the type of data that is the most applicable for the research so the data collected would be able to help answer research questions.

4.3.1. QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

Quantitative approach works with numerical and structured data which can be counted and statistically analysed. It is usually used when a positivist epistemological approach is taken (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Kromrey (2006, p. 34) defines the quantitative research as 'a strictly goal-oriented procedure, which aims for the 'objectivity' of its results by a standardisation of all steps as far as possible and which postulates intersubjective verifiability as the central norm for quality assurance'.

Quantitative researchers usually work with testable hypotheses and usually know what findings they are looking for (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Quantitative approach looks at causalities situations, when the influences of other circumstances can be excluded as soon as possible. The quantitative data analyses the consistency of the measurements and aims to achieve generalisable results (Flick, 2011). The research usually looks at a big number of participants, who belong to the specific group, selected randomly.

4.3.1.1. ADVANTAGES OF QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

- Helps to identify small groups of people who have different and interesting experiences for further analysis in more depth.
- Can be structured by the researcher who decides the type of questions for participants and answers which can be given.
- Allows analysing a large number of cases for certain aspects in a short time.
- Results are objective, have a 'high degree of generalizability' (Flick, 2011, p. 14), can be applied to masses.

4.3.1.2. DISADVANTAGES OF QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

- The aspects studied are not always the relevant aspects for participants and 'the context of the meanings linked to what is studied cannot be sufficiently taken into account' (Flick, 2011, p. 14).

4.3.2. QUALITATIVE APPROACH

Qualitative research approach gathers and works with subjective opinions and understandings. It is usually used when an interpretivist epistemological approach is taken (Matthews & Ross, 2010). It selects 'participants purposively and integrates small numbers of cases according to their relevance' (Flick, 2011, p. 12). This method looks at the participants as individuals who contribute their opinions about the particular situation often in a dialogue way, which helps to find answers and new aspects of the research topic.

Qualitative researchers often have a general idea of the study in the beginning and develop concrete questions during the study. They can be answered by describing events and gathering participants' opinions and understandings (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

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4.3.2.1. ADVANTAGES OF QUALITATIVE APPROACH

- It helps analyse issues in more depth as the research participants can easily and openly express their opinions.

- The researcher interprets and structures the data.

- The researcher is involved in the data collection process; which allows him/her to observe the situation.

- Data collection is more open with a greater use of open questions, spontaneous answers and conversations (Flick, 2011).

- The research situation is as open as possible: analysing personal stories, issues and opinions of participants helps gain more useful information for the research. Participants have more freedom to determine what is important for them (Flick, 2011).

- Research looks at fewer cases but analyses them in more detail (Flick, 2011).

- It usually aims to discover new aspects of the situation and develop new hypotheses (Flick, 2011).

4.3.2.2. DISADVANTAGES OF QUALITATIVE APPROACH

- Research participant constructs and shapes the data in a way that is not necessarily meant by the researcher primarily.

- The meaning of issues is very subjective.

- The detailed analysis requires a lot of time.

- It is not modeled on measurement or standardising the research situation, therefore it is rarely possible to generalise results to the masses (Flick, 2011).

4.3.3. COMPARISON

4.3.3.1. Common aspects of qualitative and quantitative approaches:

- Use empirical methods.
- Have particular research questions and the data collection methods selected.
- Use a planned and systematic procedure to answer the research questions.
- Have to check ethical concerns within the study.

- Aim at generalising the findings.
- Have to make the research process transparent in presenting the results (Flick, 2011).

4.3.3.2. Different aspects of qualitative and quantitative approaches
are listed in the table below:

Table 3. Differences between quantitative and qualitative research (Flick, 2011, p. 13):

	Quantitative research	**Qualitative research**
Theory	As a starting point to be tested	As an end point to be developed
Case selection	Oriented on (statistical) representativity, ideally random sampling	Purposive according to the theoretical fruitfulness of the case
Data collection	Standardised	Open
Analysis of data	Statistical	Interpretative
Generalisation	In a statistical sense to the population	In a theoretical sense

4.3.3.3. MIXED METHODS

If it is beneficial for a specific project, both qualitative and quantitative methods can be mixed and used together.

4.3.4. QUANTITATIVE APPROACH DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

- Questionnaires
- Content analysis;
- Case records/formats with ready structured information;

4.3.5. QUALITATIVE APPROACH DATA COLLECTION METHODS:

- Structured/Semi-structured/Unstructured interviews
- Focus groups
- Documentation
- Archival records
- Narrative data

- Participant/non-participant observation

The methods are discussed in more detail in section 'Data collection methods'.

4.4. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research is to investigate how young designers become well-known, and the role of branding and marketing in developing a fashion designer's public profile and success. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Conduct a review to examine the current literature about the fashion industry, well-known designers' careers, the business environment and the role of branding and marketing. The literature available about the Lithuanian fashion industry is limited so to gain insights and identify relevant issues, the review takes into account literature about the UK fashion industry.

2. Conduct interviews with Lithuanian fashion designers to investigate how they see the role of the following in establishing successful careers:

    i.   talent;
    ii. marketing and what marketing communication tools have helped the most;
    iii. finances for marketing;
    iv. trust and reliance from consumers.

3. Analyse and compare the interviews with literature review to examine the relationship between marketing, branding, public relations, and designer's success.

4. Identify implications about what marketing and branding strategies can help new designers and new design companies become successful, as well as indicate the gaps in the literature for possible further research.

4.5. TYPES OF DATA

4.5.1. SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data is the data which has already been produced by others and useful for particular study. It includes public records, official statistics, company data, newspapers, magazines, leaflets, textbooks, advertisements, online information, etc. Secondary data is useful to explore

the social and cultural meanings of particular topic, how they work and the effects they have (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

4.5.1.1. ADVANTAGES

- Data is often well-organised and easily searchable.
- It can be a very cheap.
- It can be used to supplement the research or provide the researcher with information that already exists about topic.
- It is possible to combine various previous studies to produce new results.

4.5.1.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Records are not always accurate, well-kept, or up-to-date, therefore may not be understood or wrongly-understood by the researcher.
- The researcher cannot control the accuracy or the quality of the records and difficulties to assess it.
- Definitions used may not be explicit enough or appropriate for the study.
- 'It is vitally important to know the reasons that the records are kept and the context in which the information is gathered' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 286-287).

4.5.1.3. DOCUMENTATION

Documentation can take many forms and is usually relevant to every research topic. It can support and corroborate any research evidence from other sources and provide useful background information, such as government statistics (Yin, 2003) and directly reveal various aspects of individual cases (Oliver, 2010). However documentation sometimes may be not accurate, may not be lacking bias, and may not be reliable as it might be written for different purposes and audiences (Yin, 2003).

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4.5.1.4. ARCHIVAL RECORDS

Archival records as well as documentation can be used together with other sources. They might include service records, organisational charts, budgets, maps, geographical characteristics, list of names, survey data and personal records (Yin, 2003). The researcher must ascertain the accuracy and the relevance of documentations for particular study as archival records are usually produced for specific purpose and audience which might not match the research purpose and audience.

4.5.2. PRIMARY DATA

Primary data is any type of data useful for particular study that the researcher collects from primary sources which cannot be found anywhere else. Primary sources are the witnesses or recorders who provide direct evidence concerning the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2013). It includes surveys, interviews, observations, and ethnographic research.

4.5.2.1. ADVANTAGES

- Data is collected by the researcher for specific reason and specific research question.
- Data is collected by the particular researcher only, so it is secured as no one can access it.
- It is collected from known sources.
- It is up-to date.

4.5.2.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Time consuming.
- Can be expensive as travelling often necessary for collecting data (e.g. interviews).

4.5.3. COMBINING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA

Researcher can combine primary and secondary data to gain more depth and insight for the research topic. It can assure the validity and credibility of results as more than one source proves the same findings. It can prove that results are well-grounded, defensible, coherent, appropriate and 'worthy of recognition' (Simons, 2009, p. 127).

Secondary data can also contribute to the research by providing the background information and contextual data as it shows which has already been done relating to the research topic and can show how the research area has changed (Matthew and Ross, 2010). It is important that the secondary data and its samples are compatible with the research undertaken when combining both primary and secondary sources in order to generalise from the results.

4.6. DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Oliver (2010) suggests that the way researchers collect data is connected to their views of the nature of reality and what they think should count as a valid knowledge. However, the subject of the research can also determine the choice of data collection method.

4.6.1. VERBAL DATA

4.6.1.1. NARRATIVE DATA

Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 265) describe narrative data as 'the depiction of a sequence of past events as they appear in present time to the narrator, after they have been processed, analysed and constructed into stories. Narrative data represents events, but does not record them. It is the collecting the way in which participants organise information into a story which is the main data. Narrative interviews help discover the subjective views of interviewees. Instead of asking structured questions, participants are encouraged to tell longer descriptive stories in the form of narrative (Flick, 2011). The interviewer aims to encourage participants to tell the story relevant to the research question and cover the relevant events for the research in the story.

4.6.1.1.1. ADVANTAGES

- Story/narrator is the most important for the research.
- Gives opportunity for the participant to tell the story.
- Narrator chooses what to tell.
- Accesses to information that may not be available elsewhere.
- Accesses to sensitive and 'unknown' information (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Very suitable for exploratory study.
- Does not require understanding the issues primarily (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Collects a lot of wide range data.

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4.6.1.1.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Requires the willingness of participant to tell the story (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

- Narrators expose themselves.

- Participants lose their ownership.

- Might need to consider some ethical issues.

- Narratives are difficult to analyse (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

- Choice – selecting for analysis.

- 'Difficulties of shared understanding' (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

- Large amounts of data produced, takes a lot of time to organise and analyse data.

- May have irrelevant information.

4.6.1.2. INTERVIEWS

Interviews enable to gather feelings, opinions, experiences and characteristics from interviewees using interactive direct communication between two people (Matthews & Ross, 2010). This data collection method benefits from realities that are clearly defined and expressed when answering the questions. As the most studies are about human affairs (Yin, 2003), interviews are very useful type of data collection because they give direct access to experiences (Silverman, 2013), allow to report, interpret those affairs through the eyes of well-informed respondents. However, as the interviews are very individual and subjective, it is difficult to report the minority's viewpoint and adapt results of the interview data gathered to masses (Oliver, 2010).

Interviews might give the insights into certain situations which may be useful for further research. Interviewers can even suggest other people to interview and useful corroboratory sources, which can contribute to the success of the research (Yin, 2003).

4.6.1.2.1. STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Structured interviews follow the same questions in exactly the same way, using the same structure for each interview and present the answers to choose from (Matthews & Ross, 2010). They do not enable participants to have that much freedom when answering the questions, so participants can rarely define their concerns which they feel are important to the area (Oliver, 2010).

4.6.1.2.2. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews allow answering questions openly and extensively. They aim to obtain individual opinions of the issue and initiate a dialogue between interviewer and interviewee (Flick, 2011). They are the most appropriate when the researcher is interested in the participants' experiences and understandings of the issue and also how they talk about those experiences (especially in exploratory research) (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

There are no expected answers of the questions and interviewees answer the questions freely and extensively with the possibility for interviewer to probe further if the answers are not rich enough (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The number of questions is prepared so that the answers could cover the scope of the interview. There is not necessarily the same sequence and formulation for all interviewees.

4.6.1.2.2.1. ADVANTAGES

- Does not require a lot of previous research.
- Allow for unanticipated explanations to emerge (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Informal discussion type of interview allows talking in-depth about experiences.
- Interviewees have flexibility to talk in their own way.
- 'Face-to face interviews enabled the interviewer to be sensitive to the needs of the participant in talking about potentially distressing subjects' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 224).
- Particularly useful for exploratory research.
- Researcher is in direct contact with interviewees.
- Interviews still have some structure which ensures that all areas are covered (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Can be combined with other methods.

4.6.1.2.2.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Time consuming.
- Requires good interviewing skills.
- Might cause ethical issues (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Large amounts of data.

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- 'Participants may focus on issues that are not of interest to the researcher' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 233).

4.6.1.2.3. UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

Oliver (2010) describes unstructured interviews as events and issues seen through the eyes of respondent. They provide the possibility of a broad discussion and encourage the interviewer to talk about the research topic in their own way (Matthews & Ross, 2010). The interviewer only determines the nature of the subject discussed and the interviewee's minds and ideas shape the whole process, sometimes encouraging new concerns of the research (that the researcher is unaware) to emerge.

4.6.1.2.4. EPISODIC INTERVIEWS

Episodic interview combines both narratives and interrogation methods. It aims to gather participants' experiences about the research issue in the forms of 'narrative-episodic and semantic knowledge' (Flick, 2011, p. 115). It can present stories in the form of narratives and other forms of presentation: 'at the same time, narratives can elucidate more about processes of constructing realities on the part of the interviewees than other approaches that focus on more abstract concepts and answers' (Flick, 2011, p. 115).

4.6.1.3. FOCUS GROUPS

Focus groups are the type of a group interview used to gather data generated in a discussion between the several participants. It is best for studies that require in-depth rich qualitative data, usually for social research (Matthews & Ross, 2010). It is more difficult to receive more detailed answers to questions than with one-to-one interviews, however respondents have the opportunity to discuss and raise issues important for them together instead of relying on the interviewer to raise issues, react to each other's sayings and come up with interesting conclusions (Oliver, 2010). Flick (2011) suggests using focus groups only if the researcher has good reasons regarding the research question, and not only if the researcher wants to save some time when interviewing participants.

4.6.1.3.1. ADVANTAGES

- Good for exploratory research and generating the research idea.

- Participants tend to 'express more and go further in their statements' than in interviews (Flick, 2011, p. 118).

- Allows the researcher both observe and interview.

- Allows research in a relaxed and safe environment which enhances group members to be more open.

- Inexpensive and saves time as a lot of information generated at one time.

- Can be easily combined with other methods.

- Allows researcher to observe how people make decisions/choices (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

- Consensus or disagreement can be quickly ascertained (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

4.6.1.3.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Success depends a lot on the initiative of facilitator.

- Requires organisational efforts (Flick, 2011).

- Researcher may not always control the data generated.

- 'Failure to consider the relative power, social positions, cultural issues, etc., of group members can affect results' (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 251).

- An artificial setting may be uncomfortable for participants.

- Data is difficult to record.

- Opinions might be different between the group members.

- Researcher might only have time to ask a few questions and deal with a few topics.

- It is not always confidential.

- Data is rarely applied to masses (Matthews & Ross, 2010).

4.6.1.4. QUESTIONNAIRES

A questionnaire is a set of structured questions given to the participants to answer in written form, face-to-face or online. It is usually used for the quantitative data because responses can be counted and structured. Usually questionnaires are designed to gather the data which is already

structured as they include the answers for the respondents to choose from, or sometimes they have a few open questions (Matthews & Ross, 2010). Flick says questionnaires are the most appropriate for research when either the knowledge about the problem allows formulating a number of questions in an unambiguous way or when a large number of participants will be involved (Flick, 2011).

4.6.1.4.1. ADVANTAGES

- It can gather data from a large number of respondents and cases.
- Data is gathered in the same way for all respondents (Flick, 2011).
- Respondents can be geographically-dispersed (Oliver, 2010).
- It is an inexpensive way of collecting data.
- The researcher determines the questions and possible answers.
- Data is ready for analysis (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Can be analysed in automated computer systems which reduce the work of researcher (Oliver, 2010).
- The findings may be generalisable to the masses.

4.6.1.4.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Questionnaire design must be controlled so the data is 'valid, reliable and useful' (Oliver, 2010, p. 110).
- Questions might not always be well-understood (Oliver, 2010).
- Respondents might be sensitive about providing their personal information (Oliver, 2010).
- Questions might not be appropriate to all respondents therefore some of them might decide not to answer them (Oliver, 2010).
- It has only limited access to participants' experiences (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- It has limited opportunities for respondents to answer the questions in their own way (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- 'Low response rates may result in a biased sample' therefore most effective with a large sample (Matthews & Ross, 2010, p. 217).
- As recipients are asked to send the answered questionnaires within a certain time, this can cause problems with the response rate (Flick, 2011).

4.6.1.5. OBSERVATION

According to Matthews and Ross (2010, p. 155), observation is 'the collection of data through the use of human senses'. It is basically watching various phenomena in the real world and recording them. There are two types of observations: direct and participant observations.

4.6.1.5.1. DIRECT OBSERVATION

Direct observation is the type of observation when the researcher is not involved in the process, he/she just observes from the distance. It occurs when the researcher measures the incidence of behaviours in the field (Yin, 2003). It is used when the aim of the research is to evaluate an ongoing behaviour process, and when physical outcomes of participants are readily seen (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

4.6.1.5.2. PARTICIPANT-OBSERVATION

It is the type of observation when the researcher is the participant of the natural events being studied. It gives access for the researcher to events and groups investigated as he/she engages with the situation together with other participants (Oliver, 2010). It gives the 'ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone 'inside' the case study rather than external to it' (Yin, 2003, p. 94). It helps to produce the accurate portrayal of the issues. However, the investigator has to take some roles such as advocacy or support instead of simply being just external observer. This role requires a lot of attention however the participant-observer might struggle to find time to take notes (Yin, 2003).

4.6.1.5.2.1. ADVANTAGES

- Provides detailed, visual information about the issue.
- Can provide additional information about the topic when using observation method together with other data collection methods (Yin, 2003).
- Reliable and highly valuable data (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Large amounts of information.
- Researcher is in the process of data collection.

- The technique does not rely on the use of participants' words and therefore it does not matter if the participants are articulate.

4.6.1.5.2.2. DISADVANTAGES

- Difficult to decide what to observe.
- Time-consuming.
- Researchers might lose objectivity (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- 'The challenge of trying to ''observe everything'' can be daunting and lead to loss of motivation' (Matthews & Ross, 2010).
- Researcher might face some ethical issues, especially about the role of the researchers (Oliver, 2010).
- Observers have to accept that they are a part of the situation which is not always easy (Oliver, 2010).

Table 4. Six Sources of Evidence: Strengths and Weaknesses (Yin, 2003, p. 86).

Source of evidence	Strengths	Weaknesses
Documentation	• Stable - can be reviewed repeatedly • Unobtrusive – not created as a result of the case study • Exact - contains exact names, references and details of an event • Broad coverage – long span of time, many events, and many settings	• Retrievability – can be low biased selectivity, if collection is incomplete • Reporting bias – reflects (unknown) bias of author • Access – may be deliberately blocked
Archival records	• (same as above for documentation) • Precise and quantitative	• (Same as above for documentation) • Accessibility due to privacy reasons
Interviews	• Targeted – focuses directly on case study topic • Insightful – provides perceived causal inferences	• Bias due to poorly constructed questions • Response bias • Inaccuracies due to poor recall • Reflexivity – interviewee gives what interviewer wants to hear
Direct observations	• Reality – covers events in real time • Contextual – covers context of event	• Time-consuming • Selectivity – unless broad coverage • Reflexivity – event may proceed differently because it is being observed • Cost - hours needed by human observers
Participant-	• (Same as above for direct	• (Same as above for direct

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observation		
	• Insightful into interpersonal behavior and motives	• Bias due to investigator's manipulation of events
Physical artifacts	• Insightful into cultural features • Insightful into technical operations	• Selectivity • Availability

4.6.1.6. CASE STUDY

The case study is an inquiry when specific cases are investigated in order to develop a full understanding of the case itself rather than generalise to wider audiences (Simons, 2009). It investigates 'a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident' (Yin, 1994, p. 13). When using case studies, the researcher identifies persons, organisations or communities as the subject of a case analysis and aims to identify a case which would be significant for the research question (Flick, 2011).

Case studies are appropriate data collection method when 'how' and 'why' questions are being posed, the investigator has little control over events and when the focus is on contemporary phenomenon, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not evident (Yin, 2003). It helps to find out more about characteristics of various phenomena such as 'individual life cycles, organisational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries' (Yin, 2003, p. 2).

4.6.1.6.1. TYPES OF CASE STUDIES

- Intrinsic case study does not have attempt to generalise beyond the single case or build theories.
- Instrumental case study aims to provide insight into an issue or revise a generalization.
- Collective case study aims to investigate some general phenomenon as a number of cases are studied (Silverman, 2013).
- Comparative case studies observe multiple cases and focus on particular common aspects. Retrospective studies focus on biographical investigations to examine particular issues (Flick, 2011).

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4.6.1.6.2. ADVANTAGES

- Enables to study the experience and complexity of the case in depth.
- It 'can document multiple perspectives, explore contested viewpoints, demonstrate the influence of key actors and interactions between them in telling a story'.
- It can explain how and why things happened.
- Useful for exploring the changes in the processes.
- Flexible, does not depend on time or specific method, can be written in different forms and lengths.
- Can engage participants in the research process (Simons, 2009, p. 23).

4.6.1.6.3. DISADVANTAGES

- Data might be difficult to process, reports might be too long and detailed to read.
- Force intervention of the lives of other people.
- It might give the distorted picture of the way things are.
- Only appropriate for the certain period of time.
- Concerns on the personal involvement and/or subjectivity of the researcher.
- Concerns oh how the inferences are drawn from the single case and' the validity and usefulness of the findings to inform policy' (Simons, 2009, p. 24).

4.7. RESEARCH DESIGN: ADOPTED RESEARCH METHOD

The main aim of this research is to investigate how young designers become well-known, and the role of branding and marketing in developing a fashion designer's public profile and success. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Conduct a review to examine the current literature about the fashion industry, well-known designers' careers, the business environment and the role of branding and marketing. The literature available about the Lithuanian fashion industry is limited so to gain insights and identify relevant issues, the review takes into account literature about the UK fashion industry.

2. Conduct interviews with Lithuanian fashion designers to investigate how they see the role of the following in establishing successful careers:

    i.   talent;

    ii.   marketing and what marketing communication tools have helped the most;

    iii.   finances for marketing;

    iv.   trust and reliance from consumers.

3. Analyse and compare the interviews with literature review to examine the relationship between marketing, branding, public relations, and designer's success.

4. Identify implications about what marketing and branding strategies can help new designers and new design companies to become successful, as well as indicate the gaps in the literature for the possible further research.

Therefore the study uses in-depth semi-structured direct interviews as the data collection method because it enables to receive primary information from the designers about the issues concerned. The study also uses literature review where secondary data – theoretical information are used in order to gain more knowledge and supplement the research with strong background information about the fashion industry, marketing, branding, public relations and creativity, the significance of these factors within the industry and the issues in the relationship with young designers.

The study looks at the Lithuanian fashion industry and the issues designers face, however as there is limited literature of Lithuanian fashion industry, the research also looks into the British literature and British fashion industry model which is considered more established. It reviews the literature about fashion industry, fashion business, marketing, branding, promotion, fashion designers' issues and provides examples from well-known British fashion designers' careers to build background knowledge about the issues discussed in the research and apply those issues to Lithuanian designers. Online information from the websites and social media of the designers are also reviewed in order to have an insight of the amount and types of marketing designers use.

In-depth semi-structured interview is the most suitable type of data collection for this study as it will allow obtaining individual designers' opinions, experiences and understandings about the issue of becoming successful designer in the competitive fashion industry and the role of marketing, branding and promotion. When using this method designers will be able to talk freely

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and extensively about the research topic and the discussion between the researcher and interviewees will give the opportunity to probe further and possibly come up with new and interesting conclusions. As the interviews will still have some structure, it will enable to make sure all areas of the research are covered and all interviewers answer the same questions which will then be possible to compare and contrast.

The interviewers will have the opportunity to talk about their careers, the issues they faced in the beginning of their careers and how they dealt with them, also what marketing and branding tools they use and whether they think these tools gave positive results. This will help the researcher to understand how designers achieve success in their careers when they start with limited budgets, how marketing, branding and public relations can help and what strategies and tools may be applied for new designers. It is essential for the researcher to understand the fashion industry and the business environment for a young designer therefore clear questions covering all research areas and interaction between the researcher and interviewees will give the possibility to gather open, in-depth answers which will be valuable to meet the research aims and objectives.

The research aims to interview Lithuanian designers, the interviews will help to look at Lithuanian designers and fashion industry, compare and contrast designers' views and the issues they face regarding the research question. Lithuanian designers were chosen to interview because of the researcher's relations to the country and interest in the opportunities and development of Lithuania as a better place for fashion designers. The research will allow comparing and contrasting Lithuania and United Kingdom designers and fashion industries, the issues regarding the research question and possible recommendations for Lithuanian fashion industry to improve. The researcher will interview three designers due to the limited time for the research and the need of travelling abroad. The research essentially aims to gather the quality data, therefore these three interviews will be in-depth with as many details as possible to answer the main research question. The research will look at designers with different career levels and success models – one of the most successful designer in the country, talented designer who works for other company, and beginner designer who has only started establishing herself. The researcher will take one month to search the possible fashion designers interviewees. Designers will be contacted firstly via email and then followed by the phone calls in order to arrange the

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interviews. Interviewees will be informed about the nature of the research and how the data will be used.

Yin (2003) suggests that interviews should be gathered verbally only in order to avoid problems of 'bias, poor recall and poor inaccurate articulation'. Therefore direct one-to-one interviews will be arranged; this type of interview will allow the researcher to have direct conversations with the interviewees and avoid technical issues that might occur when interviewing via telephone or the Internet. As the interviews take place in Lithuania, the process of the data collection might take one-two months depending on the designers' availability. The interviews will be arranged to take place in October, 2014 at designers' studios for approximately 1-1,5 hour length, however the whole interview process will take half day or longer as the researcher will need to travel. They will be recorded, transcribed and translated from Lithuanian to English. As the semi-structured method is used, questions may be altered and the structure of the interview may be changed during its process depending on the interviewees' responses, however the same topics and issues will be discussed with all interviewees with the aim to compare and contrast their answers when analysing data.

4.7.1. INTERVIEW PROCESS PLAN

1. Search potential designers in Lithuania.
2. Identify the most appropriate designer interviewees.
3. Contact the interviewees via email and follow up with a phone call.
4. Arrange interviews with designers at the time and date which is convenient for them and the researcher.
5. Gather the basic information about designers and their company and form the questions for each interviewee individually, but make sure they all cover the same topics and issues.
6. Send the confirmation email, research aims and interview questions for the interviewees to familiarise with them before the interview.

4.7.2. PILOT STUDY

Designing the series of questions that will guide the conversation with participants is very important. It will help to build trust of participants so they are comfortable disclosing personal

information, and are able to generate rich and detailed answers (Braun & Clarke, 2013). Therefore the researcher spent time on producing a schedule of questions beforehand and spent time refining the interview guide. This helped to consider all difficulties in terms of question wording or sensitive areas so that during the interview process the researcher can concentrate more thoroughly on what the respondent is saying (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

A pilot study is a preliminary study conducted in order to evaluate time, effect and appropriateness of the interview questions and improve the interview design before the performance of interviews. It helps identify design issues and prove that the structure and questions of the interview are adequate and have potential to achieve positive results before the main research is done (Lancaster, Dodd & Williamson, 2004). If interview questions or structure need altering, it can be adjusted and improved.

The study needs to be carried out on members of the relevant population, but not on those who will participate in the main research as it might influence their behaviour regarding the research topic (Ruxton & Collegrave, 2006). Therefore a pilot study has been carried out before the main data collection with the fashion student and aspiring fashion designer Viktorija Lasaite (who is not involved in the main research). As the participant is not working as established designer yet, she was not able to answer some questions, therefore the aim of this process was to discuss the research questions, structure, and the interview process. The following questions have been given to the participant:

1. How did you start your career as a designer?
2. When did you start receiving recognition?
3. Was there something special that you did that contributed to the attention you started receiving?
4. Did you find it difficult to break into the industry? When did you realise it is difficult and were you prepared for that?
5. Did you take any actions in order to gain popularity?
6. How did you attract your first clients?
7. Did you face any financial difficulties when starting career and how did you cope with them?

8. What challenges have you faced when starting your career?

9. Did you face the competition when started career and do you face it now?

10. What kind of role do you think PR and marketing play in the popularity of your brand? Do you think that they give results?

11. Do you think the designer can be popular without any marketing strategies? Is talent enough to be successful designer?

12. Were you aware of business/marketing side of things in the beginning of your career?

13. What kind of PR and Marketing tools do you use?

14. Do you have your PR/Marketing team?

15. Do you have any special PR/Marketing strategies for your brand? Which strategies have helped the most?

16. Do you have any celebrity clients? What role do you think celebrities play in promoting the brand?

17. Do you think that it is the country's issue that designers face so many difficulties? What do you think about the situation in this country as a place for designers? (Government support, Customer habits, etc.)

18. What would you do differently in the beginning of your career?

19. Is it possible to gain successful career in fashion today?

20. Where do you think the trust/reliance for famous brands come from? How did you gain that and why so many talented designers struggle to be recognised?

21. What advice would you give to young designers who want to become popular?

Below are the comments and concerns of the pilot study participant and the researcher after conducting a pilot study.

Question 2. Another sub-question is added here: 'How long did you have to wait for this attention?'

As the circumstances of 'how' designer started to receive recognition are also important for us, the question should be changed to 'What factors do you feel encouraged your recognition? Was there anything you did that helped you to receive your first recognition in the beginning of your career?'

Question 5. As every designer is different and not all of them aim to become popular on a large scale (e.g. small local brands), we change the question to: 'Did you aim to become popular on a large scale since the very beginning of your careers?'

The next question added, regarding the interviewer's answer, is: 'How did you plan to become popular? Did you have any thoughts, plans, and strategies since the beginning?'

Question 6 is not very clear, therefore we change it to 'How did your first clients find out about you?'

Question 7. As the financial issues are very important to the study, this question needs to be more expanded: 'Did you face any financial difficulties when starting career and how did you cope with them? What kind of financial difficulties did you face? (Was you wage high enough? Did you struggle to buy design material? Did you face any cash flow problems?)'.

Question 8 needs to be changed to: 'What other challenges (besides financial difficulties, if any) did you face when starting your career?'

It is also very important how designers evaluate their struggles/success themselves, therefore we add the question: 'How would you evaluate your start as a designer: was it very difficult to break into the industry and what was the most difficult to accomplish?'

Question 9 needs more clarification: 'Did you face any competition between you and other designers? How big it was and how did you deal with it? Do you face it now and how do you deal with it?'

Questions 13-15 only mention PR and marketing, therefore term 'branding' needs to be mentioned as well.

Question 14. It is also important to ask: 'Do you see any benefits of having a marketing team?' If designer does not have a marketing team, the question would be: 'Are you planning to have your marketing team in the future and why?'

After the pilot study the researcher decided to add a few questions which appeared to be important: 'What do you think is the most influential factor in the success of your brand (eg money, your talent, exceptional ideas, marketing?)', 'How do you link your creative ideas to clients' wishes? Is it difficult to combine them?'

Also, the pilot study helped to notice that the questionnaire is quite long where both the researcher and interviewee might be lost during the interview process, and the length of the

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questionnaire might discourage the interviewee from participating and answering questions in-detail due to the time it might take. In order to have an easier structure which will allow not mixing topics and better concentration for the interviewee, the questions were structured to separate topics: 1) Beginnings of career, 2) Establishing a reputation, 3) Marketing and PR strategies, 4) Reflections on career to date.

4.7.3. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Below are the interview questions after the pilot study and alterations made:

1) Beginnings of career

1. How did you start your career as a designer?
2. Did you find it difficult to break into the industry? When did you realise it was difficult and were you prepared for that?
3. Did you face any financial difficulties when starting career and how did you cope with them? What kind of financial difficulties did you face? (Was you wage high enough? Did you struggle to buy design material? Did you face any cash flow problems?)
4. How would you evaluate your start as a designer: was it very difficult to break into the industry and what was the most difficult to accomplish?

2) Establishing a reputation

1. When did you start receiving recognition? How long did you have to wait for this attention?
2. How did your first clients find out about you?
3. What factors do you feel encouraged your recognition? Was there anything you did that helped you to receive your first recognition in the beginning of your career? Was there something special that you did that contributed to the attention you started receiving?
4. Where do you think the trust/reliance for famous brands come from? How did you gain that and why so many talented designers struggle to be recognised?

3) Marketing and PR strategies

1. Did you aim to become popular on a large scale since the very beginning of your careers?
2. How did you plan to become popular? Did you have any thoughts, plans, and strategies since the beginning?

3. What kind of role do you think PR, marketing and branding play in the popularity of your brand? Do you think that they give results?

4. Do you think designer can be popular without any marketing or branding strategies? Is talent enough to be a successful designer?

5. Did you have any knowledge about business/marketing in the beginning of your career?

6. What kind of PR, marketing, branding tools do you use?

7. How do you link your creative ideas to clients' wishes? Is it difficult to combine them?

8. Do you have any special marketing strategies for your brand? Which strategies have helped the most?

9. Do you have your marketing team? Do you see any benefits of having a marketing team? If you do not have a marketing team, are you planning to have it in the future and why?

4) Reflections on career to date

1. What other challenges (besides financial difficulties, if any) did you face when starting your career?

2. Did you face any competition between you and other designers? How big it was and how did you deal with it? Do you face the competition now and how you deal with it?

3. Do you have any celebrity clients? What role do you think celebrities play in promoting the brand?

4. Do you think that it is the Lithuania's issue that designers face so many difficulties? What do you think about the situation in this country as a place for designers? E.g. government support, Customer habits, etc.

5. What would you do differently in the beginning of your career?

6. Is it possible to gain a career in fashion today?

7. What do you think is the most influential factor in the success of your brand (e.g. money, talent, exceptional ideas, marketing?)

8. What advice would you give to young designers who want to become popular?

4.8. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Scholars suggest that it is rarely possible to be fully objective and achieve results which could be truthful, generalisable and widely applicable. As the studies take place in real world and can

have consequences in people's lives (Miles, Hubberman & Saldana, 2014), researchers should constantly judge the quality of their research. To do so, four tests need to be assessed and enhanced: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability (Yin, 1998). They have to be considered throughout all stages of the research – design, composition, reporting, data collection and analysis. If comprehensively considered and applied, these tactics will 'increase the quality of your case study tremendously, and overcome traditional criticisms of the weakness of case study research (Yin, 1998, p. 242).

Table below shows the validity and reliability enhancing tactics according to Yin (1998) and Miles, Hubberman and Saldana (2014).

Table 5. Validity and reliability tactics available

Tests	Tactics available	Research stage for using the tactic
Construct validity	Multiple sources of evidence	Data collection
	A chain of evidence	Data collection
	Key informants reviewing the research draft	Composition
Internal validity	Rich descriptions	Data analysis
	Pattern matching	Data analysis
	Explanation building	Data analysis
	Time series analysis	Data analysis
	Logic models	Data analysis
	Confirmation procedures	Data analysis
	Areas of uncertainty	Data analysis
External validity	Usage of rival explanations	Research design
	Settling the research questions	Research design
	Usage of replication logic in multiple-case studies	Research design
	Limits and generalisation	Data analysis
	Rich findings	Data analysis

	Congruent findings	Data analysis
	Researcher's role	Research design
	Appropriateness	Data collection
Reliability	Usage of case study protocol	Data collection
	Development of case study database	Data collection
	Research review	Composition
	Specification of paradigms and analytic constructs	Data analysis
	Quality checks, multiple observers	Data collection

4.9. CONTENT ANALYSIS

The data analysis can often achieve the objectives of the research. It can compare the data collected with other data which was already produced about the subjects, identify the most important themes of the data and help make general statements which have wider applicability. Analysis can help make conclusions about underlying trends, start making predictions and developing theories which explain the research problem (Oliver, 2010).

Content analysis is an empirical method of analysing collected material in a systematic, transparent and subjective way (Fruh, 1991 in Flick, 2011). The researcher applies categories derived from theory to texts instead of developing texts from material itself. Content analysis allows classifying the content to systematic categories (Flick, 2011).

4.9.1. QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The process of the qualitative analysis starts with identifying themes and concepts emerged from the data and examining them. This allows identifying strategies for further data collection: 'The cycle then continues, with a progressive attempt to either identify new themes or amend existing ones…fit these together and develop more coherence and clarity…at each stage this developing theory will be used as the basis for determining the direction of the sampling strategy. In other words, the process of theorizing is inextricably linked to that of sampling' (Oliver, 2010, p. 118).

When analysing data, Flick (2011) suggests defining the relevant material which would allow answering the research question, analysing the situation and circumstances of material generated and people involved, then characterising material and defining the direction for interpretation for the study. The researcher needs to transform data collected into a form which it can be analysed, for example interviews need transcribing and after that identifying significant material for the study from large amounts of data. The next stage is to group similar themes together, identify the number of different times those concepts are used, and explore the relationships between these concepts. It 'can reveal the extent to which the respondent or writer is relying upon a particular concept in transmitting ideas (Oliver, 2010, p. 119).

Various analysis theories allow to further define the research question. The researcher needs to choose the analytic technique and define the units of the smallest and largest elements of material to be analysed one after another. The researcher conducts the analyses, then interprets the final results with respect to the research question and finally considers validity.

Figure 4. General content analytic process model (Mayring, 1973, p. 49 in Flick, 2011, p. 138):

Definition of the material

↓

Analysing the situation in which it was produced

↓

Formal classification of the material

↓

Direction of the analysis

↓

Theoretical differentiation of the research questions

↓

Definition of the analytical technique(s) and of the concrete process model

↓

Definition of the analytical units

↓

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Analytical steps with the category system

Summary   Explication   Structuration

Reassess the category system against theory and material

Interpretation of the results according to the main research questions

Application of the content analytic quality criteria

4.10.   CONCLUSION

Considering the research aims and objectives the qualitative approach is the most suitable research method. The main primary data collection method – in-depth semi-structured interviews are the most appropriate data collection method to answer the main research question. Secondary data – case studies of famous fashion designers and theoretical information about fashion marketing, branding and promotion are also to be used to gain better knowledge of the topics and issues already examined by scholars. The process of the research data collection and analysis was designed and discussed.

CHAPTER 5. RESULTS

Chapter 5 provides results of the data collected. Section 5.1 introduces the interviewees and data collected, analyses interviews individually and focuses on the important issues, insights and experiences of each designer. Section 5.2 discusses the issues that emerged from data collection according to each individual case. Section 5.3 compares the interviewees' answers and remarks and provides conclusions about the questions answered.

5.1. INTERVIEW ANALYSES

The transcripts of the interviews can be found in the Appendices. The interviews with designers Ramune Piekautaite, Egidijus Sidaras and Kristina Kruopienyte took place on 3rd and 6th of October, 2014, in Vilnius, Lithuania, at the designers' fashion houses and studios. The aim of the interviews was to gain information about the designers' beginning of career, establishing themselves as designers, what marketing, branding and promotion strategies they use for their fashion houses, the designers' views on whether these strategies can determine or help a young designer to break into the fashion industry and what strategies and tools can help become a successful designer. The interviews were structured into four separate sections according to the format discussed in the methodology:

1. **Background and beginning of careers**. This section presents the interviewees' background, facts about the beginning of career, details about starting the business and career as a designer.
2. **Establishing a reputation.** This section discusses how designers established themselves in the fashion industry, gained attention from the first clients, broadened the clients' circle, built trust, reliance and reputation from customers.
3. **Marketing and PR.** This section discusses designers' business environment and marketing, branding and promotion tools they use for their fashion houses, and the results these tools give.

4. **Reflections on career to date.** This section discusses other questions related to the interviewees' career and its important facts which could help get the insights of the issues designers face when starting and developing career.

5.1.1. INTERVIEW 1. RAMUNE PIEKAUTAITE

5.1.1.1. BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING OF CAREERS

Name: Ramune Piekautaite

Company's name: Ramune Piekautaite Fashion House

Company's address: Vingriu 6, Vilnius, Lithuania, LT-01141

Year established: 1997

Designer's background

Designer Ramune Piekautaite. *www.visitlithuania.com picture*

Ramune Piekautaite graduated with BA in Fashion Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. While she was a student, she worked as a model and participated in various fashion competitions as a designer, such as *InVogue* and *Fashion Days*. At that time Ramune did not have her own studio and worked from home, she hired 3-4 sewers who also sewed at home: 'In the very beginning when I was only working with individual clients, I received some money in advance from them and used this money to buy fabrics, I paid the sewers after the client paid for the whole product. I was lucky that I found people who had their work appliances and place to work, and I worked at home myself, so everything went pretty much easily' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. II). As there was just one fashion house called *Vilnius Model House* at that time in Lithuania, Ramune thought she would work there after finishing her studies. However, the Soviet Union collapsed and situation changed - she noticed that more individual clients started emerging and opened her fashion house in 1997. Ramune has never worked in any other fashion house but her own.

Reasons for becoming a fashion designer

Ramune has always been a creative person and fashion design was very important for her. It was her dream to create fashion and she never looked at it as business: 'I looked at my work as my whole life, I was more creative person than the businessman. When I started working in fashion, my aim was to create a space where I want to do what I love…. I remember once I was still a student I had so many dreams, I dreamt about my fashion house…I wanted all this. And I remember I ran from my lectures to fittings as I worked as a model at that time, this fitting was for fashion magazine *Banga* cover, which was amazing for me, and I thought ''well, this is really cool - I won this competition with my designs, now they hired me as a model for this cover…''. And I always remember this moment when I was so happy' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VII).

Opening a fashion house

Ramune opened her fashion house in 1997, just a few years after the Soviet Union collapsed when Lithuania became a free country and economic situation was in favour for new businesses to start. Designer's husband, who is a famous businessman in the country, helped her financially to open the fashion house, hire the premises, and buy materials. There was a lot of interest in her fashions and she easily gathered the client circle.

Designer R.Piekautaite in her boutique. *www.15min.lt picture*

The entrance to the fashion house. *www.veidas.lt picture*

Designer started with just one little store located in the first floor of the famous department store: '…My first store was in Vilnius (the capital of Lithuania) Mindaugas street where the first giant supermarket *Maxima* took place. My friend said: ''come on, try open the store here, I have small premises at the first floor in *Maxima*''. And *Maxima* these days was something wooow… it was just *MAXIMA*! (laughing). And we did this small store which was very successful and we worked there for a couple of years, and after that we just found premises at the Rotuses square (city centre of Vilnius)' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. V-VI).

Now she has boutiques in the biggest and most business-friendly cities in Lithuania: Kaunas, Vilnius, Klaipeda, Druskininkai. Designer has finished the expansion in Lithuania and now is planning to expand her business abroad either in neighbour countries such as Latvia or Poland, or in France.

Ramune Piekautaite's boutique in Klaipeda city. *www.delfi.lt picture*

Product offerings and market placement

Designer creates for women only, her client is a high class financially free business woman who is strong, feminine, sophisticated, but subtly sexy and sensitive at the same time. Designer describes her customer as a 'rich, free from any stereotypes, creative, looking for new ideas and strong, as she doesn't need that famous brand would emphasise her status, she is strong enough herself to carry my brand (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VI)'.

Throughout the years Ramune has developed her style which is often described as romantic, lyrical, elegant and luxurious, fashion which is easy to understand and apply, inspired by the lifestyle of the everyday woman: 'The main inspiration for the designer is the woman herself – a stranger in the street, a close friend or a loyal customer. All of them are strong personalities, united by their emotionality and sensuality, proud and appreciative of their greatest treasure – femininity' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2004).

Ramune was the first Lithuanian designer to feature designs for the fashionable city woman who could easily apply her designs in her busy everyday life: a high quality sweater, sculpted pants, stretch dress or jumpsuit for work, flowing dress for evening, simple but luxurious coat, fashionable and comfy shoes with matching bag and unique accessories. Her fashion house also has a VIP section where designer's team forms the style and outfits for the whole season for business women who do not have time for shopping.

Designer uses impressionistic colours, shades and flowing tones borrowed from Lithuanian countryside for her designs and loves matching contrasting textures – she combines strong shapes together with flowing folds, heavy details with light, classic with modernity, Lithuanian modesty with 'Lithuanian expressiveness'. Ramune often uses wood, silk, satin, tencel, linen, cashmere, wool, taffeta (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2014).

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5.1.1.2. ESTABLISHING A REPUTATION

Difficulties when starting career

Designer did not face many difficulties when starting her career; there was a lot of interest in her designs and fashion as a whole at the time she started. She did not face financial difficulties as well as her father funded her first collection, she found financial backers to fund her collection for *InVogue* festival, and her husband helped her financially with opening the fashion house. Designer used the money received in advance from clients to buy fabrics, she paid sewers after the clients paid for the whole product. Designer says that as well as many other designers, she faces the difficulties such as cash flow, but these problems are not as big as they could be (Piekautaite, 2014).

Receiving recognition and first clients

Designer received recognition very easily by the time she started. People were interested in fashion as a new phenomenon in Lithuania; there were just a few fashion designers so people and the media were interested in her as a new designer in the country. Ramune started gathering her clients after her first collections presented in the competitions, also friends, relatives asked her to design as well, and 'word of mouth' helped: 'My friend's friend's friend is already an unknown person for me. So this circle expanded very quickly, maybe in 6 months' time since I started' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III).

5.1.1.3. MARKETING AND PR

The role of marketing and PR and tools she uses

Ramune understands the importance of marketing for fashion house and thinks it gives 50% or even 70% of the success: 'If you create a fashion business model, it is inevitable without marketing, and marketing strategies affect business' success' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII). However, she points out that the product has to be very good, unique and accepted by public as well.

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Designer organises fashion events and collections twice a year as her best marketing tool. She also thinks *Facebook* and *Google* advertising give very good results. Designer also communicates with the media, constantly sends press releases to online news websites and magazines which help to promote her fashions. However she never buys advertising in the magazines and never pays for articles. Designer uses online website as well, however it is not as effective as social media. She also has online store but notices that people do not buy a lot online.

The cover of the international fashion magazine *L'officiel* in Lithuania. *www.lofficielmada.com* picture

Branding

Designer did not invest a lot in branding of her fashion house as she feels it is not necessary. When talking about branding, she mentions her brand's logo: 'We didn't analyse branding too much and didn't think about it a lot. We have the same logo for many years which we change slightly year to year but the whole brand developed naturally' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII).

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The logo of the fashion house. *www.ramunepiekautaite.com picture*

Personal events and celebrities promotion

Designer agrees that personal events can positively affect the popularity of the fashion house as recently she got married and her wedding dress was advertised in many online websites and magazines therefore designer thinks there will be much more wedding dress orders next season.

However designer has a skeptical opinion about celebrities' promotion as it is very important what that celebrity does and if she/he satisfies the vision of the fashion house so that promotion could be positive: 'When I show up with my designed clothes, the clients see me and want to buy these clothes as well. But if the clothes are worn by a person who has a negative reputation in the country or the clients don't like that person, they won't buy it (Piekautaite, 2014, p. X)'.

5.1.1.4. REFLECTIONS ON CAREER TO DATE

Competition between designers

Designer agrees that the biggest competition in the country is between her and designer Juozas Statkevicius who both are entitled as the best designers in the country. However they both have different fields of work and styles, but Ramune agrees that they compete in individual orders and attracting the clients. Nevertheless designer does not do anything on purpose to compete with others as 'this is not a contest'; she does not feel the lack of clients, conversely, sometimes she even needs more time to serve all of them (Piekautaite, 2014, p. X).

Designer's views on country's issues and customers

Ramune thinks that fashion situation in the country is getting better and people are able to buy designer clothes and support them very well, even though the prices are much higher than in the clothing stores: 'There are more specialists, we now receive information from the whole world and those who understand the situation, don't call themselves Lithuanian designers, they create for the world' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XI).

Designer thinks that it is possible to become successful designer in Lithuania and there are no more problems for new designers here than in other countries: 'Do you think it is easy for a new designer in Paris? I think it is even worse out there, maybe it is even better here' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. X).

Communication with clients

Ramune treats the work with clients as a hard work which requires a lot of time as it is different than just going to the shop and buying an item – the client visits the fashion house 4-6 times, designer has to communicate with clients, find out what they want, their vision and style, and make them satisfied with the item (Piekautaite, 2014).

Talking about combining her creative ideas with client's ideas, she says that designer has to control creativity, consider demand and what sells best: 'If you create something too much creative that no one will understand, you will then keep it to yourself. The clothes are meant to be worn, and if you want to survive, you have to sell them' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII). However her ideas and client's wishes often match so she does not have many problems with communication with clients. Very often her creative freedom designs sell very well and sometimes when she thinks that the product will be unsuccessful and she should remove it from the line, someone buys it.

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5.1.2. INTERVIEW 2. EGIDIJUS SIDARAS

5.1.2.1. BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING OF CAREERS

Name: Egidijus Sidaras

Company's name: *Cantas* fashion house

Company's address: T.Kosciuskos st. 24-18, Vilnius, Lithuania, LT-0110.

Year established: 2006

Designer's background

Designer E.Sidaras. *www.delfi.lt picture* **picture**

Egidijus Sidaras firstly studied Interior Design before he realised he wanted to learn fashion. He graduated the Tailor's specialty at Proftechnical School, then he went to the *Higher Arts School* to learn Clothing Design and then he graduated with BA and MA in Costume Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. While he was a student he worked as a stylist in television and at the famous Lithuanian mass production classical clothing brand *Lelija* as a men's designer. At *Lelija* he learnt a lot about the high quality clothing design, fabrics and classical clothing. After work in *Lelija* Egidijus was offered to work at one of the most famous Lithuanian designer's Juozas Statkevicius fashion house. He worked there as an assistant and learnt about working with clients, creating collections and designer's creativity. After 2,5 years of work at Statkevicius' fashion house he was offered a job at the fashion house *Cantas* where he continues to work today as a designer-in-chief.

Today Egidijus is a well-known designer in Lithuania. He is known for his distinctive and original style, appreciated by the fashion industry players in the country as he often works at various fashion events and is one of the members of the jury panel at the popular fashion event in Lithuania *Fashion Injection* where he and his fellow colleagues decide which young fashion designers will be presenting their collections in the *Fashion Infection*, where designer himself presents his individual collections annually as well.

Reasons for not opening the fashion house

Egidijus has never had a chance to open his own fashion house even though he always wanted to. He understands that it would require a massive investment, financial freedom and a lot of work. As designer has a huge experience in the fashion industry he now understands how much hard work and efforts opening the fashion house requires: 'I would like to, but now I know a lot about fashion business and I don't have this youthful enthusiasm to start everything from nothing' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIII).

Egidijus admits that he does not have that much income to start his own business and understands that the majority of designers in Lithuania who are now successfully working in their fashion house had enough income or financial investors in the beginning of their careers, however his current work does not provide enough income to open the fashion house.

Product offerings and market placement of fashion house *Cantas*

Fashion house *Cantas,* whose name originates from the Lithuanian word *kantas* which means a crease in trousers, originally began from making classic men's suits and took over the niche in the country's marketplace as one of the best brands for men's classical clothing, also creating classical accessories such as belts, handbags, cufflinks, suspenders, ties folded using the origami technique, brooches, handkerchiefs, and necklaces. Today the fashion house expanded and creates women's, men's and children's clothing, as well as wedding, special occasions clothing, and staff uniforms for a variety of companies. It also works with non-standard figures and sizes. The main fashion house focus remains on the wedding and men's classical clothing and there has always been demand for these type of clothes in the country: 'Our concept – modern classics, moderately expressive and noticeably exciting. Elegance inherent in classics is combined with unconventional solutions' (www.cantas.lt).

Designer Egidijus Sidaras is known for his long experience in combining work in high fashion and individual clients. He is known for minimalistic designs and the rule 'less is more', original

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forms and innovative designs. 'He prefers expressive designs, unexpected colours, texture and fabric combinations, paying less attention to decorative elements' (Albrechtaite-Lingiene,2006). There is just one fashion house *Cantas* studio where the team works, meets with clients and sells clothing – they do not have any other stores and position themselves more as designers working with individual clients.

5.1.2.2. ESTABLISHING A REPUTATION

Difficulties when starting a career

Designer is not the owner of the fashion house where he works, but as far as he knows, there are no financial issues in *Cantas*: 'We buy what we need and we live quite good lives with good working conditions. Our machines, equipment are good and new, we don't have such problems and we don't have any debts' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIV).

When designer finished his studies, he found a job straight away so he did not face any issues when starting his career which developed fairly easily: 'I worked, I started doing my Master's, then Juozas Statkevicius fashion house appeared in my horizon and every new experience followed another, because I worked hard' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVII). He says that such famous fashion designer as J.Statkevicius would not have offered him a job if he did not see a talent in him (Sidaras, 2014). There was just one time when he was unemployed and looking for a job, when he found out that some clothing store was looking for an assistant, but luckily he decided not to work there and concentrate on the work as a designer.

Receiving a recognition and first clients

It was not difficult for the fashion house *Cantas* to achieve recognition and first clients as they had their own niche of men's classical and occasional clothing, which had a big demand. He says they did not need to work on marketing a lot as the best PR is 'word of mouth' (Sidaras, 2014, XV). Designer was struggling to explain more how the first clients found out about *Cantas*, as it is difficult to find that out, however he is pleased with the amount of clients they have, especially in the Spring/Summer season when there are many weddings and special occasions: 'We

sometimes don't have enough time to serve all of them, so we have to even say no to someone. We are not like a wedding boutique as we can't make a big number of wedding clothes a season as they cost a lot and need investment' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XV).

5.1.2.3. MARKETING AND PR

The role of marketing and tools he uses

Designer agrees that marketing is very important in promoting a fashion brand or designer, especially in the very beginning when you have to establish yourself. Designer supports positive ways of promotion, such as working sincerely with clients, communicating with them, presenting the work instead of being scandalous and focusing on your personal life and gossip (Sidaras, 2014).

Designer believes that collections and fashion events are the best marketing tools. Every year he presents his individual and *Cantas'* collections at the most famous fashion event in the country *Fashion Infection*. The team also does visual adverts, photoshoots and constantly buys advertising in the magazines to promote themselves. However Egidijus admits that it is hard to measure whether bought advertising is a successful tool as they do not do analysis but he understands that advertising is essential.

Designer agrees that press and communication with journalists is very important when promoting themselves as well. They always send press releases about their projects, shows, collections to famous online news and fashion websites, newspapers and magazines. Egidijus thinks that online tools are very important as well. He emphasises online website, *Facebook*, information websites, and *Google* advertising.

Branding

Designer does not talk a lot about branding, explains that he was not involved in the branding process of *Cantas*. He says that the managing director worked quite a lot on branding, she aimed to create a distinctive, unique brand name and developed the whole concept what the brand is

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about: 'When they launched a website, they were looking for ideas and wanted the website to reflect the image and branding of the fashion house' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XX). However, designer agrees that they do not need to work a lot on branding as it is not necessary, and even if he had some branding ideas, it does not mean that they will be turned into reality as he is not the head of the fashion house: 'We are too small to do 'serious' branding as the market is not that big so we did what was enough for Lithuania. You have to work single-mindedly, but again, the director is the head of all this…I can suggest something but it doesn't mean that she will like that idea and she will do it' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI).

Personal events and celebrities promotion

Egidijus agrees that personal events can help become popular, however these events and news have to be about his work, not personal life, as he does not believe in scandalous way of promoting himself. 'I did a men's clothing collection recently and *People* (*Zmones* - Lithuanian) magazine interviewed me and it ended up with 2-3 pages article in this popular magazine which everybody reads. You become more popular after that, especially if the article is about what you did, not about your personal life or lifestyle' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI).

Designer is not sure whether celebrity clients bring more popularity to their brand as they do not analyse that. Fashion house *Cantas* have many clients who are well-known in the country and designer briefly says that it brings additional value to their brand, but does not analyse the question more.

5.1.2.4. REFLECTIONS ON CAREER TO DATE

Competition between designers

Egidijus is honest and agrees that he feels competition between him and other designers, as well as in any other business. However he does not compete with other designers and does not do anything on purpose to become better than they. Interestingly, many Lithuanian clients tend not to be loyal to one brand, they try many different designers so they shop at many different boutiques, he says. However those who understand their quality and have long been in partnership together with *Cantas*, always come back.

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Designer's views on country's issues and customers

Designer has quite a skeptical opinion about the Lithuanian fashion industry and talks about the disadvantages of fashion in the country. He says that this industry is very small and completely different to French or English fashion industries, and most importantly it does not have its own fashion week. Lithuania is a small country with small number of people: 'There are not many people in Lithuania, but there are many designers. In foreign countries there are bigger masses of people so there is a bigger chance that someone from this mass will like your individual designs' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIV).

There are no buyers, and there are not many people interested in buying designer clothes as well. He says that fashion is not art in Lithuania, it is more an entertainment to watch, but unfortunately, very few can afford it: 'In Lithuania you come to fashion event, pay for the ticket – even designers sell tickets for their collections, it is nothing like that abroad where only buyers, clients and the media attend collections…It is hard to get the invitation….Everyone comes there to see something interesting, but when you ask what they want to buy from what they saw – nobody wants anything. At this point fashion in Lithuania ends. You can create, make very artistic fashionable products, but nobody needs them' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIII).

Communication with clients

Designer is very disappointed about the public who does not appreciate and does not understand fashion. Therefore it is not possible to make massive production designer fashion because no one needs it and it is expensive. People want cheap clothes but it is impossible to make designer clothes cheap as it is a massive investment in work and materials. However there are cheaper mass clothing stores available and Lithuanians prefer shopping there as they can afford it: 'In foreign countries after collection there is a queue of buyers waiting to order so many models. But here no one needs it and you just pray that someone would buy at least one model from collection' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIV).

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Designer says he tries to communicate effectively with his clients, find the common decision and make the client's wish come true, so if the client has an idea, he tries to adapt: 'I am flexible enough and can adjust to what clients want so that they are happy and I am pleased with my work' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI). He agrees that he is happier when the client likes designer's ideas so he then has his creative freedom and does not need to work in a different style.

5.1.3. INTERVIEW 3. KRISTINA KRUOPIENYTE

5.1.3.1. BACKGROUND AND BEGINNING OF CAREERS

Name: Kristina Kruopienyte
Company's name: Kristina Kruopienyte Fashion Studio
Company's address: Zukausko st. 33, Vilnius, Lithuania
Year established: 2009

Designer's background

At the start of her career, designer Kristina Kruopienyte found herself in between two fashion generations in Lithuania – the older and the younger, and always tried to belong to the older, more mature fashion designers' generation. She was a perspective student; Kristina graduated *Kaunas Higher Art School*, and received BA and MA diplomas in Fashion Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. As an active student Kristina participated in fashion events together with professional designers. Also she worked in a clothing factory as a student which helped her learn how industrial fashion design works. While still being a student she worked for three companies and created collections for them, also worked in various clothing shops, helped them with strategies, product positioning, and worked as a stylist. After experience in working at fashion house *Cantas*, designer decided to open her own fashion studio, where she works today.
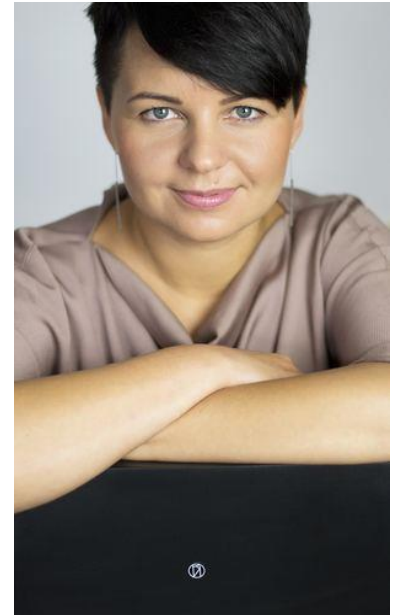
Designer Kristina Kruopienyte. *www. 15min.lt picture*

Opening a fashion studio

Designer decided to open a fashion studio five years ago, when she realised that her and the fashion house's *Cantas*, where she worked at that time, ideas did not match, she struggled to work for others and wanted to have her own studio. 'Now I am one of those who are just starting everything, I am in the crossroad' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIV). Kristina is just starting her career as a designer in her own fashion house, therefore she currently has just a studio which as she says 'should be a showroom but looks more like a warehouse' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIV). Designer works with individual clients and collections.

Kristina has many plans to expand her business and invest abroad. She invests everything that she earns in order to create a mass fashion production collection which would be suitable for the foreign market, and open her own boutique.

One of the boutiques selling Kristina's designs 'The Garden'. *www.facebook.com picture*

Product offerings and market placement

Kristina is often entitled as one of the strongest, most mature young designers in Lithuania. Kristina's major work is individual clients, but 1,5 years ago she started working on production

lines and collections. She creates limited edition clothing and accessories collections and works with work clothing design for her partners as well.

Designer admires avant-garde style, and the most important feature of her style is construction and its opportunities. Constructivism, minimalism, temperate colours, unusual forms, but comfort and practicality at the same time, are the features that make Kristina's fashion unique. Designer's style is full of high-quality, flexible and stiff fabrics which allow constructing interesting silhouettes, find unique forms and reliefs. When designer creates, she looks at mathematical logic, strict formulas of proportions, colours and accents. Kristina is a minimalistic fashion ambassador in Lithuania; she does not aim to shock, provoke or rebel with her fashion, contrarily, she aims to educate and develop people's fashion taste. Her client is mature, sophisticated, elegant person who does not want to intrigue or please someone, but rather have distinctive style and be confident (Albrechtaite-Lingiene, 2006).

5.1.3.2. ESTABLISHING A REPUTATION

Difficulties when starting a career

Kristina is happy that she graduated the best university for fashion specialty in the country – *Vilnius Academy of Art*, which prepared her well, so it was easier for her to start a career. Designer never wondered what she should do, as she always had a lot of work and activities. However, the start as in every other business was not easy: 'We all fighted for our place, we waited for the clients, wondered when they will call' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV). New designers can never know what the day will bring, they face different situations every day and fear that there will not be many clients interested: 'It was hard in the beginning, one month you have a lot of work, and another month just nothing, but after every year of work there were more and more clients, now I don't have such problems' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVII).

Designer says she did not face many difficulties when starting her career because she started working with individual clients which does not require massive investment, in contrast to fashion collections. She did not have major financial issues or similar problems as it was just a matter of

hiring premises, sewing machines and all these small bits that do not require vast amounts of money (Kruopienyte, 2014).

Receiving recognition and first clients

Designer says she started building recognition and reliance from consumers at various competitions and collections shows while she was a student. The media observed all this and individual clients started emerging one after another. Many first clients were also from her friend's or family's circle. Many of them appeared after the biggest fashion event in Lithuania – *Fashion Infection*; designer noticed more clients after her third appearance in that event. 'With the help of these shows my admirers' circle formed. They liked my style and the happiest thing is that they find me even when I am not trying to put myself in all the magazines and advertise' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVII). Kristina is happy that she found great clients who have always been loyal to her style and did not leave her throughout all her career stages.

5.1.3.3. MARKETING AND PR

The role of marketing and tools she uses

Kristina agrees that marketing is very important, however it is her weakness as she does not have a lot of knowledge about it. She learnt about the importance of marketing, branding and PR just from experience and mistakes. Kristina does not have a marketing specialist but would like to find one as she feels a big demand.

Kristina uses social media and says that *Facebook* is very important. Designer also uses her online website that professionals created for her. She is now working on its relaunch and renewal as it is vital to have a high-quality website today (Kruopienyte, 2014).

Advert of designer's accessories online. *www.facebook.com picture*

Designer constantly communicates with the media and sends press releases about her new collections. As she has been in the fashion business for many years, she gathered a long list of the media contacts and majority of journalists and magazine editors know her, they always ask for pictures or interviews.

Kristina also thinks that events, such as *Fashion Infection* are very good tool of promotion. She noticed that many new clients emerge every time she shows her collections at this event therefore she feels a need to participate every year.

Designer's collection at *Fashion Infection* **event.** *www.delfi.lt picture*

Branding

Designer does not talk a lot about branding, she just briefly says that she did not do any special branding and did not think about it a lot when establishing her brand. Her brand's name is her name and a surname and she created a logo while she was a student when the tutor asked to create a logo for her design, as part of an assignment.

Logo of the fashion house. *www.kristinakruopienyte.com picture*

Personal events and celebrities promotion

Kristina has a strong opinion about using personal events in order to gain more popularity. She never speaks about her personal life with journalists and she is more likely to earn the media attention with her work: 'For me it's not acceptable. I don't like to boast about myself, I like when someone writes about me because I deserved it, they write about my work, collections, exhibitions, presentations, any other events related to what I do. Journalists very often ask about my personal life but I never answer that because I don't like it and I don't think it would be a positive promotion' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXI).

Designer has a lot of well-known clients, but is very strict and does not use them as a way of promotion. Designer says her clients are intelligent and often ask for anonymity when buying her clothes because they do not want everyone to know that they wear designer clothes, and do not want publicity (Kruopienyte, 2014).

5.1.3.4. REFLECTIONS ON CAREER TO DATE

Competition between designers

Designer says competition between designers is 'a healthy thing' and it is always beneficial to know what others are doing, compare with yourself and measure which one is better. Kristina always checks her colleague's work and if they do something great she feels that she has to do something good or even better, it is 'a good push for me to move forward' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXII). However designer tries to have good relationship between her and her colleagues and do not harm other designers in order to be better than they.

K.Kruopienyte with a fellow designer E.Sidaras. *www.15min.lt picture*

Designer's views on country as a place for fashion

As Kristina's style is distinctive and brave, some Lithuanians do not understand her fashions or treat them as 'weird'. Designer is disappointed that people do not appreciate designers' fashion in Lithuania. There are many controversial fashion problems in the country according designer:

- It is difficult to create massive production in Lithuania as demand is very small.
- People want similar and 'boring' products, they do not want interesting ideas, therefore designers have to control their creativity.

- Those who are not afraid and want unique clothing very often cannot afford designer fashions as they cost a lot, and it is impossible to produce designer clothing in a cheap way.

- Those who can afford it, do not understand the value of designers' fashion and think it is not worth paying that much, therefore they go shopping to clothing shops instead of supporting local designers (Kruopienyte, 2014).

Communication with clients

As Kristina has a lot of experience of working with individual clients, she clearly understands the difficulties and problems of this communication. She is happy that her clients are understanding and nice to her, as she knows how her colleague designers struggle to communicate with their clients who often are too demanding and intractable. Kristina does not struggle even when she has to work in a different style and turn into reality the clients' ideas which are different than hers: 'It is useful for designer to find something else, you won't distance from yourself anyway. They come and say ''you know, I like this Coco Chanel jacket.'' Well, I am completely not Coco Chanel so I say ok, I will research it. So I research it, what fabrics they use, what seams, and do some sort of my suggestion' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVIII). Designer says it is always interesting and useful to try something else, and her clients inspire her to do that: 'It is even more interesting for me to adapt to the client, they give me some different ideas, I add my own creativity and we combine them together (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVIII).

5.2. THEMES EMERGING

This section lists the important themes that emerged from the interviews with designers. These themes are significant to note when analysing the research question - they show how designers coped with the issues young designers face and reflect their opinions, insights and views on developing their careers to become successful.

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5.2.1. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH RAMUNE PIEKAUTAITE

Beginning at the right time

Ramune Piekautaite, one of the most famous and successful designers in Lithuania has started her career fairly easily, in comparison to other young designers, and did not struggle to become popular and successful. She says that there was no such thing as fashion industry in Lithuania by the time she started and only her and a few colleagues started developing the idea of the fashion industry in the country (Piekautaite, 2014). Designer talks about the days when she started studying fashion and created her first collections - Lithuania still belonged to USSR and the whole fashion idea in the country was suppressed. There were no designers, just tailors, no boutiques, very little products on offer and just one fashion house called *Vilnius Model House* which also worked according to USSR commands. There were many industry factories that produced good clothing but they were not creative, they had to apply to the Soviet Union rules. There was just one university, *Vilnius Academy of Art*, which prepared 'as many specialists as there was a demand' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. I).

Ramune thought that the situation will always be the same and did not realise how it could change and what true fashion could mean. When Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the situation in the country transformed as people became free and wanted to quickly overtake all new things missed for all these years that all free countries in the world had – art, music, technologies, events, and fashion. This was a good time for Ramune to start and open her fashion house.

Designer was lucky to start her career at such a good time so she did not face the same problems as young designers face nowadays. In contrast to other young designers who start today, the start was nice and easy for her: 'At that time I just lived and enjoyed my life, created collections and models…I was very busy… Everything seemed fun... I had exactly what I wanted to have at that moment: I had a great life, I felt great and I enjoyed creating fashion, it was something interesting and very exciting that I wanted to learn' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III).

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There was no competition, all fashion niches were empty and people were striving for new ideas. 'People didn't have what to buy! At that moment the marketplace was absolutely empty. There weren't any products that you could find and buy in stores. I think this influenced my successful start' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III-IV). However she understands that situation today is different: 'Now when you want to keep existing clients and attract the new ones you have to work very hard and seriously' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. IV). This shows how Ramune's situation differs from other young designers' situation and how important it is to start at the right time: 'There was a lot of interest; it was something new in Lithuania. At the time when I started, people became interested in fashion, everyone was talking about fashion, beauty, how we were behind of everything and how we lacked a lot of things. At that time in our only Fashion Design group at the *Academy of Art* there were many talented students and fashion emerged as a phenomenon which received a lot of attention…they became interested in me because overall there was a big demand for designers clothing as there weren't many clothes shops and my prices weren't very high' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. II). Therefore the main factor that encouraged the designer's success is good historical, economic and political situation for a new business model to form and find its place.

For the same reason, it was easy for Ramune to gather clients and become established and recognised. She says that her client circle expanded very quickly, in 6 months' time since she started. There was a lot of initiative from outside – people and the media were interested in Ramune's fashion so she had to put little effort to become popular. Very quickly she had so many clients she could not work with individual orders only, so she changed her work sphere: 'I started opening my boutiques, created small edition collections which was a bit easier. Now my assistants work with the clients and I just control the process' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III).

Financial freedom

Other reason we could emphasise why Ramune became successful designer is that she did not face major financial issues which young designers face in the beginning of their careers. Her father funded her first collection which attracted the first clients. 'Later on, as fashion was a completely new phenomenon in Lithuania which began to become very popular and companies

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started earning money very easily, it was easier to find financial backers. When I did collection for *InVogue* festival, my friend helped me to find financial backers who funded me' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. II). After that she worked with individual clients at home and had a team of sewers who had their appliances and worked at home as well, so this did not required a lot of finances: 'I received some money in advance from them and used this money to buy fabrics, I paid the sewers after the client paid for the whole product' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. II).

When she was about to open her fashion house, she met her future husband, a businessman Kestutis Verslovas, who offered her to do business together, became her business partner and helped her financially to open the fashion house – hired the premises, appliances, bought materials, believed in her creative ideas and helped to turn them into reality. Ramune did not realise then that she started building a successful business unit because she had two important sides to achieve success – she was an artist responsible for creative ideas and her husband was a businessman responsible for a business side.

Therefore we could say that fashion designer's success is very dependent on finances and financial freedom which helped Ramune achieve what she wanted. She could spend more time and energy on materialising her artistic ideas and not worrying whether they would become successful or not, because even if some ideas did not bring success, she would still be financially stable and able to start again. Therefore Ramune's answers differ a lot from other designers who did not start the same way she did – she is more positive about the fashion industry's issues in the country, designer's opportunities and she believes that everyone can achieve what she did. However it is more difficult for those who do not have enough finances and have to find other ways how to get enough money for first collections which can often prevent young talents from becoming well-known and successful.

Different generations, different time

At that time when Ramune started, designers thought that being fashion designer is just about working with clients and creating clothes, being an artist. However they thought very little about how to attract more clients, how to increase sales and how marketing and business strategies

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could help to do that. They concentrated on creativity and design, rather than business: 'I looked at my work as my whole life, I was more creative person than the businessman. When I started working in fashion, my aim was to create a space where I want to do what I love. There wasn't any business model I used, I just found people who could help make my dream come true. When the first clients emerged, I found people who could turn my creative ideas into reality…I can't assess myself as a careerist, I didn't think about that' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III).

At that time the situation in the country was different and the world was not as developed as it is now. In Lithuania there was no such thing as marketing, branding, promotions and designers did not have any knowledge about it. 'My pathway was very long and just now after almost 20 years this company starts working as a business unit…When I opened my fashion house there weren't any specialists in this field. I didn't know anything about the titles that you now mention, I was never aware of them. Of course there were newspapers, you could send them some press releases, but there were just bits, one or another. There were no marketing specialists. We learnt as we worked. We didn't know anything about marketing and there was no such thing…' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. IV).

Designer is happy that she did not need all this knowledge to become successful as beginning at the right time was the major factor which determined her success. She understands that today the situation is different and talks about her daughter as an example: she '…is now 14 years old and she is already planning her business. She looks at her career in a completely different way. She is planning to work in fashion, but more with the fashion business. So she is already thinking about strategies, looking for ideas, creating some kind of a business model, and I didn't do anything like that. Maybe because I am 'a product' of USSR, maybe it affected me' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. III). This shows how today's generation people are thinking in a different way, they understand that fashion is also a business which is based on selling the products, and designer has to look for all possible ways that could help sell products.

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Product is as important as marketing

Ramune points out that designer's product has to be very good, unique, and accepted by public. She believes that customers will sooner or later understand whether designer is worth their attention and money, as there are so many fashion brands to choose from that you have to stand out with your good quality product (2014).

She also understands the importance of marketing and PR when promoting the fashion brand, however talent is nothing without hard work and promotion: 'If you create a fashion business model, it is inevitable without marketing, and marketing strategies affect business' success' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII). Designer agrees that there are so many collections presented by not so talented designers who only know how to successfully market them, who created a strong brand, work together in a strong team and know very well how to sell it. This shows that designer understands how much effect marketing can give, when even a weak product can be sold with the help of marketing. Overall, designer believes that marketing is as important as product and they both give 50% of success (Piekautaite, 2014).

Positive view on the country and opportunities in fashion

Designer is positive about the fashion situation in the country and does not see many problems for new designers to break into the industry: 'Do you think it is easy for a new designer in Paris? I think it is even worse out there, maybe it is even better here' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. X-XI). She believes there are more unused niches and less competition here and the persistence, a lot of aspiration, energy, talent and a strong team can help achieve all that (Piekautaite, 2014).

 As Ramune is already popular and has many clients she believes that people are able to buy designer clothes and support designers: '…It would be much easier for them to go to the store and buy something, but they still come to designers. I think they understand and appreciate that, as the designer clothes prices are much higher than the clothes from stores, of course these products are unique, interesting' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XI).

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However we could say that designer is positive because she did not need to start today: 'Thank god I am in a different place now and I don't need to think about that' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XI). Therefore her point of view is different than other young designers as she does not see the same problems as they do.

What tools help the most

Designer thinks that one of the best marketing tools are fashion events and collections which give the opportunity for designer to present your fashions and remind about yourself: 'So we organised opening events for every boutique's opening, invited famous people and they helped spread that message' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VII). She feels that sales increase a lot after the fashion events which, she agrees, cannot be organised without promotion: 'Of course I don't believe that any boutique opening would be successful without any marketing, of course you need people who are the experts in this sphere and can attract customers' (Piekautaite, 2014, VII).

Designer has never had problems or worrying that no one will come to her events, very often there are not enough places to invite everyone who would like to come. Even when Ramune organised her own showroom in Paris last year, she had this fear that people might not turn up, but many clients from different countries came to see her work. Designer thinks that it is better to try and do it than not do it with a fear that people will not turn up. 'Well if no one comes, then what can you do? I will lose a couple of thousands of litas but this is not the amount of money to lose to bankrupt' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VII). Again this shows the financial freedom of the designer who can experiment, organise events and use all opportunities available. Ramune believes in the old verified 'marketing' tool – direct communication with clients which helps to know them better, as well as tell your story, collection's and product's story in events, fashion shows and fittings (Piekautaite, 2014).

She also uses online tools such as *Facebook* and *Google advertising* which positively affect sales. She never buys advertising in magazines and never pays for articles as it does not give positive results on sales, unless consumers would see a lot of that kind of coverage and very

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often so it would stay in their minds, however designer understands that this tool might strengthen the brand (Piekautaite, 2014).

Designer prefers press releases which she sends regularly about new collections and events to popular online websites, magazines and posts it on social media. Designer uses online website as well, however she noticed that *Facebook* is much more effective than the website as she posts exactly the same things on both of them and the traffic to *Facebook* is bigger. She also has online store which people visit very often every day, but notices that people do not buy a lot online comparing to boutiques.

Even though Ramune is an established and successful designer, she does not have her marketing team and does all the work herself with the help of assistants: she writes press releases, attends photoshoots, chooses the right material, spreads messages to the media, organises events. She does not feel a demand to hire marketing specialist as it is a small country with smaller fashion industry: 'Only a very strong company can have a marketing specialist and here we all share this position. Of course you can have various dreams, ideas but you need a lot of money. If someone launches a new company and gathers a team, then they choose representatives from different areas. But when I create this structure around myself, I take only those people that I can't live and work without' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. IX). Ramune has all the contacts and can do the PR and marketing job and even gives an example when sometimes it is not worth hiring a specialist: 'I hired a scenographer for one photoshoot and I regret it as I spent 5 000 litas for nothing as I could have done that job myself, I knew how to do everything' (2014, p. IX).

Lack of branding in Lithuania

Designer talks very little about branding and says that she did not work a lot on branding for her fashion label. When asking about branding, designer just mentions logo: 'We have the same logo for many years which we change slightly year to year but the whole brand developed naturally' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII) - logo is the first thing that she associates the branding with. This shows how even experienced designers lack knowledge about branding and do not treat it as important and necessary for the fashion house.

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However her further answers prove that designer created a vision of her client and what her fashion house is about: 'Our client is not the highest class A level client, well maybe sometimes she is, as she is rich, free from any stereotypes, creative, looking for new ideas and strong, as she doesn't need that the famous brand would emphasise her status, she is strong enough herself to carry my brand. So these are our clients in Lithuania. Strong women who combine my clothes with luxurious accessories' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VI). Ramune has developed her style which she does not change and people can recognise and have formed the image of her style in their minds, which is also a positive branding feature.

Ramune thinks that it is not necessary to invest in branding in Lithuania, only little effort is enough to be successful, however she understands that she needs more investment in branding when expanding the business and working abroad: 'If I had to start the same thing today, I, as a businessman would invest money and find an Italian or French specialist who has done all this and helped many companies…If you aim to work for Lithuanian marketplace, it is enough to find a young person who studied this subject. If you want to work for foreign marketplace, you have to definitely find a person who has experience in that, or maybe the whole team. I definitely wouldn't do what we did in the beginning. We didn't have such understanding and such money to hire the specialist. We all worked from the future profit' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. IV). This shows how Lithuanian designers differ from foreign designers who invest more in branding.

How can designers become successful?

Designer says that it takes time to become accepted by the public and become well-known, and we cannot compare young designers with world designers known for hundred years: 'How many years does *Chanel* fashion house exist? 100. Firstly it is time, quality proved by work, people got used to such brands, there are huge investments to advertising, there are constant collections being created and everything is done as it has to be. Young designer will never be able to do that, it is the same as to compare apple with Earth' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. IV-V). She understands that young designers today face some issues, even if a new designer wanted to promote

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himself/herself and sent a press release, it is not likely that they printed it as designer is not known.

However Ramune is still positive about the idea of becoming successful designer today in Lithuania. She understands that it requires hard work, but it is possible: 'If you can't do it, then don't do it, choose other profession. But if you feel you have to be designer and can't be anyone else, then do it' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XI). Designer advices to think about it as a business model rather than just 'art' since the early start. She understands the importance of business, marketing and good teamwork: 'If I had to start today, I would probably find a friend who is studying finances, the other one who is studying marketing, and I would try to attract experienced constructors and sewers because those sewers who just start, have to learn for a very long time until they do that right. I would gather a team who would have the same idea… I would try to connect production, financial and marketing specialists and combine them together as you won't be able to do that on your own. I would choose really good specialists in my team, not just friends…Then you can do all this quickly and effectively' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XII).

Designer thinks that a new designer must be able to adapt to the current market and situation as she did in her beginning. She advices to be cosmopolitan and look at the fashion industry as the whole world's industry: 'I wouldn't definitely work only for Lithuania's market…If I had to start working now and I was a young designer I wouldn't call myself a Lithuanian designer; if you start doing fashion, you need to be cosmopolitan, world's citizen, and create for world's market. You can have a creative studio in Lithuania and maybe earn good money, but if you think about the fashion industry, you have to think about the world's fashion industry straight away and just decide which business model is better for you: whether it is Germany, France, England, USA or Japan…' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. XI). She also emphasises that it is important to choose your own niche, accept first failures and participate in many competitions, show your work everywhere and be able to adapt to the current market and situation (Piekautaite, 2014).

Designer thinks that if the person wants to do it, everything is possible. But the person has to be very talented and work hard. She encourages young designers to think about all the opportunities available today which were impossible to pursue at the time she started: world's best fashion

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colleges are open today, many fashion competitions, exhibitions abroad, a lot of information available (Piekautaite, 2014).

However, we must accept the fact that designer did not face big financial issues so it is difficult for her to understand how much money the fashion process requires and how hard it is to get them. Ramune distinguishes two options for new designers: they either have to find money somehow, or create a unique product, which is also difficult to do as so many niches are occupied and so many products are being created every day. We could say that because she did not experience these problems, she is positive about this matter: '…[they can borrow] from clients, from dad, mum, uncle, cousins… Who can support you? Either your family, friends or you have to create a unique product which will help you convince someone to invest in you…You can borrow. If you have so much energy and passion for what you do, you will prove to your family that it is worth it, or you will borrow from someone and give back later on' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. V). Ramune advices to look for alternatives, extra work in theatres, attend competitions and events: '…maybe someone will notice you and will want to invest in you, or some company will want to hire you' (2014, p. V).

5.2.2. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH EGIDIJUS SIDARAS

Having your own niche

Egidijus points out that having a niche, which no one has in the country's fashion industry, can help become successful designer (Sidaras, 2014). For example *Cantas* fashion house are mainly working with men's classical clothing where Egidijus mostly specialises at, as well as wedding and special occasion clothing. They are known in the country as good specialists in this niche since *Cantas* established therefore they have gathered many clients.

It is also important to know the demand – what people want and have the unique idea that no one has ever tried. Egidijus thinks that before *Cantas* there were not many good men's classic clothing designers who could work with non-standard figures clients, so they met that demand: 'There has always been a demand for men's clothing, men have always wanted to buy individual

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costumes as there are many non-standard figures…people who can't find clothes anywhere else, then they come to us. They can pay more as they can't find their sizes in the stores. Another category is occasional clothing – wedding dresses where women also want individuality, uniqueness, higher level of quality. It is a rare case that a client would come and ask for a simple blouse or a cardigan, they can find them in stores. This is our niche…maybe that's why they still need us' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XV).

Regret for not opening a fashion house

Throughout the whole interview Egidijus comes back to the topic about not opening his fashion house several times. It feels that he needs and wants to explain why he does not have his fashion house and feels guilty about it. Designer does not feel happy and regrets that he did not open his fashion house, comparing to some of his colleagues who successfully work with their own brands. Egidijus thinks that people treat fashion houses and fashion designers differently and keep reminding him that he is working for someone else: '…There is a distinction and delicacy that I work in the fashion house with a different name, so everyone thinks ''haha, *Cantas*, it's not one designer's fashion house, he works for someone else'', so everyone thinks that I want to promote myself, not a fashion house, so there is a tendency that people treat differently fashion houses of an individual designer, and someone's or a team's fashion houses. It would be easier for me to promote myself if I had my own fashion house' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX).

It was felt from the conversation that designer is not pleased with working for others, adapting to other people's ideas, styles and design concepts. This is a common phenomenon today when so many people who have a big talent such as Egidijus, have to work for other companies and miss the opportunities of having their own label. There are many reasons for that.

In order to develop a business model and establish your own label designer needs a lot of time, therefore designer has to start working on it since the beginning of career. Egidijus did not do that and worked for many different companies throughout his career. When asking what he would have done differently in his career, he says: 'I would probably start working on my own fashion house since the beginning, I would try my best since I have this youthful optimism. Now

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it is a bit complicated to do that with the experience I have, with my knowledge, it is scary because I know that everything can quickly come to an end' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXII). Now, designer would have needed a long time to start from the bottom.

Egidijus says that Lithuania is not the best place to start a fashion business as the fashion industry is not very well developed and there is not a big demand for fashion in the country. Also, there are many designers so the competition is big and many niches are already occupied, but there are not many people who are interested in designer's fashion.

Most importantly, Egidijus understands how much money and investment opening a fashion label requires. He does not have that much income and financial supporters who could help him. He once opened a boutique together with three fellow designers and it was not very successful, maybe it puts him off from trying again: 'I am thinking about that but I just feel I don't have enough money and youthful courage that ''oh I will open and I will see how it goes''. I and my colleagues have tried four designers' boutique, but I don't know, maybe the place was not successful, then the crisis came to the country. It was a good idea but it's always like that regarding the stores, when you open it, everyone is interested for about three, maybe six months, and after that you have to work on advertising and PR if you want to remain popular. In the beginning everyone is interested, they come to see, to check and then they stop' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX - XX).

Difficulties to work and expand in Lithuania

Egidijus says that there is a big difference between Lithuania and foreign countries' fashion. He can see so many examples and experience other designers in Lithuania face that it is very hard to do the fashion business in Lithuania, the boutiques open and close very quickly (Sidaras, 2014). However it is different in other countries where brands are 'very well marketed and promoted'. 'It is outrageous prices, but it is also a vast long years' work to that brand... This is marketing and money' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVI). He says that designers abroad just work on creative ideas however in Lithuania designers do everything from a to z.

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Egidijus, who is also a lecturer, says that there are many young people willing to work in fashion and become designers, however there are very few opportunities for them in Lithuania: 'There are about 60 fashion design students graduating every year. What do they do? I don't know. People want to do fashion, but they don't have jobs. There are so many people I know who finish studies and just can't find a job' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVI). It is very difficult for them to establish themselves as even the media is not interested in new designers: 'While you are unknown, no one needs you....if you send a press release to the media channels and they don't know who you are, I doubt they will print your message unless you did something impressive which could attract attention' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI).

The same as in every other country, today designer's job is not only creative, so Egidijus says designers have too many responsibilities today when looking after the whole business and sales. Then they miss their original job of being an artist. 'Now the designer has to think about money even if his original speciality is art' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVII). Furthermore, there are just a few specialists understanding about the fashion market, commercial relationships and fashion business in the country as there was't demand for them. 'Usually designers in Lithuania just have a good administrator...' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVII).

Financial issues

Designer mentions the financial issue as one of the most important reasons for young designers struggling to become successful. When having your own fashion line designer has to constantly invest money to develop the brand further. He says there are just a few designers in Lithuania capable of working in serious fashion business, and due to the fact that they have investors helping them financially: 'In the beginning investment is a very important thing, you can only break into the industry if you have a base. A fashion business is something different, you can't only create as you have to keep investing all the time. And the profit doesn't come straight away, it comes maybe after 10 years of hard work' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVI). Designer thinks that unfortunately no one from Lithuanian designers would be able to open their own boutique abroad.

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In order to get some financial help young designers have to find people who could believe in them which is difficult if designer does not know them personally: 'If you have good contacts, the people who believe in you can help you but if you are talking about the businessmen who don't know that designer, then no, no one is interested in young designers as they don't bring profit in Lithuania' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVII- XVIII). He says that success does not come very quickly so just small fashion businesses which could help make for living are able to maintain in Lithuania.

Individual clients versus collections

Another issue emerged from the interview with Egidijus is the difference between working with individual clients and working as a designer who creates constant collections. Working with individual clients only is a different concept which is easier than creating collections and investing in them. It is an easier way as designer just works with clients who come and ask what they want, in other words, designer helps to turn the client's wishes into reality, but then he/she works more as a tailor than designer, because he/she does not develop his/her own ideas and does not spend that much time on creativity. It is easier and it does not require that much investment in promotion and marketing as designer does not need to worry about the sales in stores, organising collection shows or thinking whether designs will be accepted by clients.

However work with collections allows more creative freedom and realisation of designer's ideas where designer decides what he/she wants to create every season and then the customer chooses what to buy, not the other way round. Working with collections allows designer to express himself/herself as an artist and present the ideas and thoughts through designs.

However it is very expensive to create collections because every design requires a lot of investment, high quality fabrics, materials, good specialists, in order to produce it, then present it to consumers and hope they will buy it. Therefore in Lithuania there is a tendency of designers who work with individual clients and present one collection every two years just to remind about themselves. Collections in Lithuania rarely pay off, just a few designers who have their name very well established, receive some profit from them and are able to present collections every season (Sidaras, 2014). They cost a lot, and Egidijus understands how difficult for young

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designers it is to create collections: 'It is vast expenditure: lighting, premises, voice equipment, models, make-ups, hairstyles, catwalk, equipment, chairs, you also have to provide some drinks for guests, make invitations, all this organisational things are vast amounts of money and you can't organise everything on your own, you have to hire someone to help you' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XX). Majority of Lithuanian designers present collections once a year for Spring/Summer season as clothing needs less materials, fabrics are cheaper and it is easier to sell clothing in summer (Sidaras, 2014).

Egidijus and fashion house *Cantas* work more with individual clients as it is too expensive to create collections every season. He feels this is enough in Lithuania: 'Our marketplace is full…we don't have so many clients willing to buy…And doing a collection line again is very difficult as working power is not big – you have to do everything very cheap, limited, and this cheap and limited somehow still becomes very expensive. There are not many people willing to buy expensive clothing, and designer's clothing is still expensive because if I want to make a good product, it becomes expensive as I have to invest in it. In fabric, in work' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIII). Designer adds that it is also hard to compete with mass production stores and if they did constant collections it would be difficult to compete with them as their prices are much lower.

Lack of good specialists

Egidijus thinks that one of the major problems that prevent designers from success in the lack of good specialist tailors who know how to sew the high-quality clothing (Sidaras, 2014). There is a tendency in the country that young people are not willing to become tailors, it is not popular profession so designers are struggling to find good specialists. The fashion house *Cantas* has only a few good specialists therefore they cannot expand and produce more clothing than they do now: 'It is a tragedy…We have tried so many tailors and became disappointed as they don't do as good as we need. Our sewing prices are high so we really need the proper quality. I think we could expand our business if we had more and better craftsmen' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIV). It is a country's problem therefore the government should consider this issue and help develop the professional specialists' centres and encourage young people to learn sewing.

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Importance of marketing

Designer agrees that marketing is very important in promoting a fashion brand or designer, especially in the very beginning when you have to establish yourself. 'If no one knows about you, you can just 'bury' your talent' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVIII). Designer supports positive ways of promotion, such as working sincerely with clients, communicating with them, presenting the work instead of being scandalous or focusing on your personal life and gossip: 'It is better when clients value your work, I have always said that you have to work on collections and invite people to see them. Then they are more willing to buy one or another product. People also have to know that this collection will actually happen, so you have to spread the message about it, promotion is essential' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVIII).

Egidijus was not aware of marketing and fashion business in the beginning of his career, as no one taught him about them in the university, so the knowledge came with experience: 'While working you realise what you need, you try everything yourself. Of course it is always better to know everything before the start' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVIII). Egidijus says that Lithuanian designers do very little marketing as they cannot afford it; he gives example of the launch of online website which costs about 6 000 – 7 000 litas so you need to serve many clients for it to pay off (Sidaras, 2014).

Cantas does not have the marketing team so the managing director and Egidijus do all marketing together. However designer understands how much it would help to have a marketing specialist, but it requires a lot of money: 'It would be useful to have a person responsible for marketing but he/she needs to get paid', says designer and also agrees that marketing can help expand the business, but then they would not be able to do that much work: 'Marketing can bring very good results and then we would not have enough time to do all the job then we would need to expand the business, find new premises, hire more staff, etc' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI). This quote proves that marketing could even help expand the business.

Designer believes that collections and fashion events are the best marketing tool. Every year he presents his individual and *Cantas'* collections at the most famous fashion event in the country *Fashion Infection*. There are many designers presenting their collections in this event therefore

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Egidijus agrees that you receive less attention than doing an individual show, however individual collections require a lot of money, so they managed to do one individual collection which was very expensive but proved to bring a lot of attention: '…We invested a lot of money but it paid off. Of course you can't measure the prestige that you earned from the event but there were definitely more clients interested in us after the show. You have to present yourself and remind about yourself even to existing clients' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX). Even though collections cost a lot, but they promote the brand in a positive way: '…[if you did collection between many others] maybe you would have one photo and your name mentioned above all of the participants but if you did your own show, you would have the whole article about it, a big message for the audience. However we can't do that kind of collections very often because it is very expensive, you start counting everything and you realise that to make it happen you need sponsors' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX-XX).

For fashion house *Cantas* the team does visual adverts, photoshoots and constantly buys advertising in the magazines to promote themselves. However Egidijus admits that it is hard to measure whether bought advertising is a successful tool as they do not do analysis but he understands that advertising is essential (Sidaras, 2014).

'Every year in the magazines there used to be a presentation of Lithuanian designers' fashion, so we used to show ourselves there which reminded about us. It is very good when some magazine which is widely read, such as *People*, writes an article about us', says Sidaras and agrees that press and communication with journalists is very important when promoting themselves as well (2014, p. XIX). They always send press releases about their projects, shows, collections to famous online news and fashion websites, newspapers and magazines: 'When I started working here in *Cantas* there was quite a lot of PR about me, there were articles in the magazines that I start working here, this really helped' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVIII). However he understands that it is not easy to be noticed by the media while you are still unknown: 'Of course you have to wait for your moment, become well-known so they would write about you, but this promotion is very healthy' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX).

Designer thinks that online tools are very important as well. He talks about online website, *Facebook*, information websites, and *Google* advertising: 'All this costs, but it brings good results, popularity, and people find us then' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XIX).

Marketing is nothing without talent

Even though Egidijus agrees how marketing can affect the fashion designer's success, he is sure that designer will not become successful without talent. Throughout his career he has seen many designers who started their careers very 'loudly' and finished very quickly because they were not talented enough. He gives an example of a country's designer Robert Kalinkin who came into the country's fashion industry a few years ago and caused a lot of turmoil. Egidijus and his fellow colleagues think that his designs and collections are very weak and he is not talented enough to be designer. However he is a very good businessman who understands about marketing and PR therefore he promotes himself a lot, and he is well-known in the country, but the attention is rather negative. 'He did a lot of advertising but he doesn't have talent so this is a proof that this combination isn't successful either. He is a very commercial person but he doesn't have enough talent. What kind of fashion is it? What is it for? You need to have some sort of uniqueness, individuality, look for your own style, find it, you are looking for it for for all your life. If you do collection, you have to do it qualitatively as there are hundreds of people coming to see your designs, you can't do it from poliester, sinthetical organza – it's a tragedy. After his first collection there was a big turmoil – everybody saw it but were afraid to criticise...but after the second one everyone was out of patience that there is nothing special that received so much agiotage' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXIII). Robert Kalinkin had two stores and one of it has already closed, it was not able to maintain in the market. This shows how talent is inevitable without marketing and marketing is inevitable without talent. An example given proves that even though designers can do a lot of marketing and advertise themselves a lot, but if they lack talent to create high-quality fashion, they will not be able to become successful.

Advice for young designers

Egidijus says that talent, a lot of hard work and money are the most important in achieving success: 'Talented people will be noticed but they just have to put a lot of work in it, and money is definitely needed as well. But you can earn those money by honestly working and giving all yourself' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXII). Designer says you have to give your whole life to work, become careerist and know business very well, and agrees that maybe the reason why he does not have his own fashion label today is that he was never a businessman or careerist (Sidaras, 2014). 'I worked single-mindedly and sistematically, I wanted it and I tried my best to reach my goals. I'd rather do quietly what I want, I am not a scandalist. I know that I could reach my aims with hard work and I think this hard work sooner or later pays off, it gives results, if you do it honestly. Maybe the results don't show up straight away but you have to believe in what you do' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXII).

Designer agrees that it is more problematic for young designers today as the situation is different than it was a few decades ago: 'You have to work. You just have to do it on your own. It is a big competition especially between young designers, it is very hard for them. My generation is now calmer as there weren't so many of us, we all were very strong, talented, there were only 12 of us and half of us now work in fashion' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXIII).

Designer says that today fashion students are different - they do not participate in events, competitions, do not work hard, they just want to achieve everything very easily. Egidijus explains that working in fashion requires a lot of hard work, so students have to show their hard work since the very beginning and gives an example: 'They can apply for *Fashion Infection* event, maybe they won't succeed first, second year, but at the third year someone will notice them. On the other hand, if they don't invite you, you will realise what you do wrong, what mistakes you do. But if you just sit and wait for someone to invite you, this won't happen' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXIII).

Designer says that the right contacts are very important in the fashion world, young designer has to go to fashion events, communicate with other people from the fashion world, participate in

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competitions, start showing the work and do all that as early as possible. Egidijus advices that it is very important to try become known in the country as quickly as possible so that people know who you are: 'You won't become commercially successful without being well-known, so of course you need to achieve this, I wanted to be well-known. If you want to work in fashion business, to achieve something, you have to show yourself everywhere, remind about yourself from time to time, do projects, collections so that your name and a photo would be seen everywhere in the media, this is very important' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XVII).

5.2.3. THEMES EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEW WITH KRISTINA KRUOPIENYTE

Work with individual clients

Designer admits that there are many problems when working with individual clients. Firstly, designer does not have enough time to serve all clients as every order is time consuming. It is very difficult for her to design for all clients, and then find time for collections, maintain her business and other designer's duties (Kruopienyte, 2014).

Also, when designers work only for individual clients, many feel that they do not fully pursue their role as creators. Working with individual orders is more a tailor's job, as clients come and ask to design and sew a particular clothing, they have their ideas and designers have to do their best to make that idea come true, often it means working in a different style, designing the things that they do not like or even borrowing ideas from others if the clients asked. However, Kristina, defending this role says that it is interesting for her to work in a different style and analyse clients' ideas, but she agrees that when she worked only with individual orders, she could feel the distance from her original work and felt she needed to work on collections which allows to show her own creative ideas, style and talent (Kruopienyte, 2014).

The major reason why Kristina stepped aside from working only with individual clients is because she always felt that clients do not appreciate her work as they should. Clients are usually very demanding: they want high-quality fabrics, unique designs, but all at the low price. Kristina

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admits that working with clients requires a lot of effort as she needs to communicate with them for a long time, meet for fittings, analyse and research ideas, choose the right fabrics and materials, and try to make the client satisfied. 'We wheel around here with our ''red carpets on'' and the client expects that he will get good the quality highest class unique design product in a low price. This can't happen' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIV). All this requires a lot of financial investment in each client, and Kristina feels the work of designer is not fully appreciated because often clients push her and ask for lower prices, thinking that designer's work should not cost that much: 'The clients push me to this position, they say ''I need five dresses but knowing the price of one dress, I would like them cheaper... ''' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV).

Kristina thinks that many designers face the same issue – firstly they start their careers as working with individual clients only, then they feel they cannot do only this anymore: 'I am in the crossroad that many designers face, the same happened to Julia Janus, Ramune Piekautaite' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV). Therefore even though she loves most of her clients, designer tries to focus on collections and put the work with clients at the second place.

Working for other companies

Another issue designer faced in the beginning of her career is the issue many prospective designers encounter – she could not work for others. In the beginning Kristina was very interested in every new experience and she thought that working for a fashion house *Cantas* will be very exciting. Especially because this was a new sphere for her – men's classical clothing which she never tried before: 'I was very interested in all these new things, everything was very new for me, men's fashion, I said ''I can!'' to everything' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIV). However, later on the situation changed.

Kristina says that many things changed in that fashion house – management, different rules, and also the fact that she had to do the majority of work. Most importantly she started feeling the same as many designers feel when they work in other companies – they are not able to pursue their creative ideas and develop their unique style because they have to obey to different design's ideas and different style of that fashion house. Fashion house *Cantas*' clientele was middle-aged people from USSR times, many old people and well-known elderly celebrities. 'It was a big age

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difference between me and them. I was with my own different attitude, with different stylistical decisions. I was always interested in technologies, new ideas, I suffered with those clients. I didn't have any joy... I really wanted to create for celebrities at my age or perspective today's well-known people, not the old-fashioned ones' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV).

However, Kristina managed to find a few loyal clients who appreciated her own style and loved her designs. They saw how she was struggling in *Cantas* and encouraged her to leave saying that they will still work with her. Her clients said: '...There is no difference for us, we will go to you wherever you will be, we always come here for you, not for someone else'. So my real clients whom I met at *Cantas* stayed with me even after I left. They followed my creations for 10 years and perfectly knew me...' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV).

Kristina says that she is one of those designers who have always dreamt of her own fashion house, and did not want to work for someone else for all her life. Therefore the work in *Cantas* would have been ended sooner or later anyway (2014). Having her own fashion studio allows the designer to fully enjoy her work and have the creative freedom with no restrictions. It is only five years since she opened her fashion studio but it allowed to move forward faster in her fashion career: 'My studio will be 5 years old this March. It is not a lot, but we really did a lot comparing to what I could have done if I was somewhere else. I started more serious stuff than just working with a few clients' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXV).

Art versus business

Throughout the whole interview with Kristina it could be felt that she is a true arts person. She is not one of those business people who strategise the business since the very beginning – she is a creator more than a businessman. Therefore Kristina admits that she is just starting to learn about marketing and business; she is very hard-working, so she learns about business as much as she can. However, in her interview designer emphasises the issue of combining art and business.

It is difficult for Kristina to be a businessman, as she never thought about business success, money or popularity: 'I didn't think anything about that, I was just happy about what I did, I honestly worked and I didn't have a plan to be a famous designer in Lithuania' (Kruopienyte,

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2014, p. XXIX). Only her hard work and creativity helped her to become successful. Therefore the question 'what would you different in the beginning of your career?' designer answers saying that she would find someone to help her with business: 'I would look for a colleague who would agree to do business together with me as it is impossible to do everything on your own. There has to be one person responsible for creativity and design ideas and another one – for business side of things. Then we could divide all tasks and easier accomplish them' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXIII).

However, Kristina says that all this necessity to think about business and strategies stop her from being an artist: 'It was so interesting, I had a lot of passion, even now I dream about these dresses, how I will do them, how I want to do them...These organisational things, these strategies, meetings, decisions disturb me, and then you think that you can't just dream about this creativity and art world' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIX). Designer thinks about creativity a lot and tries to find ways how to realise herself as an artist more, which is very difficult in today's fashion world: '...I didn't want to alienate from creation, I refused all the outside work only because I could express myself as an artist, I even did my own painting exhibition, I found myself in this sphere and I was very successful. It happened that in order to stay together with creativity, I refused lecturing, painting, and started working on fashion even more' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIX).

People addicted to brands

Kristina talks about the issue of addiction to brands and because of it many young designers struggle to become successful and well-known. Many people in the world are addicted to brands which allow them to demonstrante their status and luxury (Kruopienyte, 2014). Many of them in Lithuania feel a belonging to well-known brands in the world, therefore they do not support young designers, whose creations can be as good as well-known designers'. People do not understand the importance of supporting young designers therefore developing a famous brand could take a long time and investment for a young start-up: 'I have seen how the clients who buy famous brands products talk between each other ''you know, I bought a *Chanel* handbag'' but they will never say that ''you know, I bought a Lithuanian designer's product'' ' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVIII).

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However, Kristina is happy that she can sometimes feel a tendency of promoting Lithuanian fashion brands between fashion lovers in Lithuania. There are various projects which promote Lithuanian brands and explain that those brands are as good as foreign. She is happy that some of those promoters are her clients: '...My clients are usually self-confident, they travel abroad with my clothes and when they come back, they say: ''you know I got so many compliments, I went to the boutiques and everyone asked who designed my clothes''. Of course my name doesn't say anything abroad but they still say that it is Lithuanian designer's...' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVIII).

Difficulties for young designers

Designer says that it is very difficult for young designers to start careers, and being a lecturer herself, she can see the fashion graduates' problems. They struggle to find a job therefore they are forced to work in clothing shops or other designers' assistants, helpers which do not allow them to gain much experience in fashion design itself (Kruopienyte, 2014). As she understands their problems, designer employed two students in her studio and one student in her and her colleague's store.

Opportunities of fashion in Lithuania and financial difficulties

Designer points out that the reason of those difficulties are lack of finances in the beginning of career. She says that Lithuania is different that other countries – people do not have money here and do not want to invest in fashion, whereas it is different situation abroad where young creators feel a big support and have better opportunities: 'Abroad they just see a successful artist, and then ok, let's do business together, they invest in that person, they don't do everything from their own money, they have investors, patrons' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVIII). If Kristina had to start her career now, she admits she would not know what to do and asks rhetorical question: 'What kind of investor can invest to something unknown, vague?' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIX). However designer is happy that there are some projects emerging in Lithuania as well where young people can win sponsorship, start business or participate in exhibitions.

Designer says that fashion does not play a major role in Lithuania: 'Here the necessity products are at the first place for people, and art and culture are at the second... Europe is Europe, world is world, and Lithuania is different', says Kristina (2014, p. XXVIII). She thinks the country does not have a big fashion market, Lithuanians do not appreciate designer's fashion and do not understand it, they are afraid of unique, interesting clothes: 'As I have some sort of distinctive style for braver clients, my designs look weird for many people. I feel that not many people appreciate the designer's fashion in Lithuania and probably every designer face that problem that it is difficult to create for masses who want something similar and boring and control your creativity, your interesting ideas because people are afraid of interesting clothing' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXIII).

Weaknesses in marketing and its importance

Kristina agrees that marketing is very important, and it is impossible to become successful designer without it: '...The presentation of yourself in front of the audience is crucial. It is not enough just to be talented to become successful, you have to create, do collections and show your work' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXII). However Kristina is self-critical and says that marketing is her weakness as she does not have a lot of knowledge about it. Tutors did not teach her about marketing at the university and she realised the importance of marketing, branding and PR just from experience and mistakes. She does not have a marketing specialist but would like to find one as she feels a big demand. 'It is important for me that the jobs such as advertising campaigns, branding would be done by a good contact, by a person whom I believe and I believe his/her job' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIX).

Designer says that when she worked with individual clients only, she did not feel a big demand for a lot of marketing, whereas when she started working with collections she understood how important it is to constantly communicate messages about her work to potential clients (Kruopienyte, 2014).

However designer agrees that the best promotion for her are the clothes themselves, when people see someone wearing the clothes, compliment them, and find the designer themselves, without any special promotion: 'It is always fun when you make a clothing, you let someone go to

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wedding with your dress or some other celebration and at the same day they call you or text you saying ''oh, everybody says the dress is amazing, everything is so great''…I am fairly pleased that people find me themselves, they believe in me and in what I do, so I don't need to prove them how much I can do' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVI).

Designer is now learning about marketing and business strategies as she is planning to expand her business. She is doing a market research and proves she understands more about marketing: 'Marketing strategies depend on what public and what generation the products are for, in other words, marketing must be applied to a certain audience' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXI). Talking about the best marketing tools, designer distinguishes online website, social media and the press. However she says that the promotion has to be constant: '…The most useful is to promote yourself constantly as if you start doing that, you can't stop after one article or one message as it won't give any results. It is important to constantly dominate in the magazines, at least have one page every month, remind people about yourself' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXI).

What tools help the most

Kristina uses social media and says that *Facebook* is very important. Designer also uses her online website that professionals created for her. She is now working on its relaunch and renewal as it is very important to have a high-quality website today. 'Of course I can see the good results of using the Internet. Nowadays every designer must invest in the Internet…Social media is very necessary, I feel I have to create *Twitter* as well' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXI).

Designer also constantly communicates with the media and sends press releases about her new products and collections, but she never buys paid content or advertising. As she has been in the fashion business for many years, she gathered a long list of the media contacts and majority of journalists and magazine editors know her, they always ask for pictures or interviews. 'I have friendly relationships with them, especially I have a close relationship with *L'officiel* magazine' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXX). She says it is easy to receive journalists' attention in Lithuania as there are not many designers and not many things to write about, so if you are at least a little bit known in public, they will find you: 'The attention appears very quickly as everyone needs

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something to write about…' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXX). However she never does rash things or spread gossip about herself in order to get the media attention. Designer does not agree to work with everyone, she chooses those promotional tools that are suitable for her reputation and positive image: 'One online shop asked for my products and said that they would make their website very beautiful and I looked at their lever which didn't please me and said ''I'm sorry I can't help you'', I can't be at the lower level than I am' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXX).

Fashion events are important as well and designer admits that the famous fashion event in the country *Fashion Infection* helped her become well-known. She feels that there are more clients interested in her designs after collections at *Fashion Infection* and she feels the importance in participating in it every year: 'This is the type of event that you participate in because you are in the fashion context, in the current Lithuanian fashion, so you have to participate' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXI).

Lack of branding in Lithuania

Kristina does not talk a lot about branding. She discusses her brand name's issue, saying it is unsuccessful and that it was a bad strategy to call her fashion studio with her name and surname which sound very Lithuanian: 'I have already done a mistake, for 10 years I had been investing to my name which doesn't attract investors, they need a 'brand' to invest. 'Brands' attract them more, but when there is just a designer it is hard to say, because he won't break into the industry without a brand...it is not as attractive, what does my name mean abroad?' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXIX). Designer means that her name is difficult to pronounce and understand for foreign people which makes it difficult to promote herself abroad. It would be easier to have a better sounding, interesting and attractive brand name. She gives examples of famous Lithuanian fashion designers who changed their band names for foreign markets: Juozas Statkevicius changed to Josef Statkus, Julija Zileniene changed to Julia Janus, which helped them to expand their work abroad (Kruopienyte, 2014).

Designer says she did not invest in branding and did not think about it a lot. She created a logo when she was still a student twenty years ago when the tutor at the lecture asked students to

create their logos for an assignment, and she is still keeping that logo. Kristina did not do anything else regarding branding which shows the lack of understanding about it and designer's weakness in it.

Importance of being prepared

Kristina emphasises the importance of being prepared for the fashion industry in advance and knowing its concept. She started in a different time and unfortunately no one taught her about the fashion industry and fashion business and she did not think about that therefore it took her many years to develop her unique style and find out what exactly she wants to do: 'I never thought which way to go. After many years I realised that I can't leave this work and I really need to have a strategy as I had been just working with no strategies for 10 years' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVI).

As Kristina is a lecturer as well, she always explains her students about the fashion world and the importance of being prepared for it. Especially it is essential to find out what area and style designer wants to work at so that he/she could start working in that area as early as possible: 'When I lectured for my students I kept reminding them that if you choose a placement – choose it reasonably, where you want to work? What attracts you more? Sport clothing? Choose *Audimas* (famous sport clothing brand in Lithuania). If you like fashion house atmosphere more, if you dream about your own studio – go to the fashion house. If you are interested in the industry design, look for a placement in the factory' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVI). Designer says that because of the lack of knowledge about the industry young designers do not know what to do and give up their fashion careers after university.

How can designers become successful?

Kristina says one of the most important things is to find your own niche, purify your individual style and what exactly you do – whom you create, who your client is, what your designs are about. Designer advices for students to think about it as early as possible as her example proves that she needed long time to define all this: 'I have just recently considered and decided what

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makes me stand out from others, what makes me unique and what my style really is, I did some market research and found an empty niche which coincide with my style, there is nothing else like that. I considered what others do and found my own place' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXII). Kristina says that the reason why she became successful is knowing exactly what she does which is different than others': 'I had been forming my style for a long time, I was looking for myself in different forms, constructions, styles. Probably knowing what I have to do and being not like everyone else [helped me to achieve success]. It's wrong to do something what's already there especially in Lithuania where market is so small' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXII).

Kristina emphasises the importance of hard work as no designer achieved success without it: '...I worked so honestly, I remember that when I was a student everyone was sitting in the bars and spent their money there, and I and my colleagues spent all the money on our collections. It was really a lot of sincere work, and I think from all of those who are well-known today, no one became successful without a reason, they didn't flow so easily with a cocktail in a hand, they all worked really hard' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXVI).

Kristina also advices to work sincerely and not to give up: '...you just don't have to give up, try your best, express your ideas in a different way than others, look at situations in a creative way. If you can't do a lot, do less. It is better to do less rather than not do it at all....understand that a lot of hard work is waiting for you and love what you do. If you don't have any other way of realising your potential, find yourself, understand what you do, what it is that no one else is doing, look for it, establish yourself. And money will come together with the hard work' (Kruopienyte, 2014, XXXIII).

5.3. COMPARISON OF THE INTERVIEWS
DESIGNER'S BACKGROUND

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Graduated with BA in Fashion Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. • Was an active student, worked as a model, participated in fashion competitions. • Never worked for other fashion houses. Started working as a designer at home, had a few tailors who worked at home. • Thought that she will work at *Vilnius Model House* but after the collapse

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	of the Soviet Union found a favourable situation to open a fashion house. • One of the best known fashion designers in Lithuania.
E.Sidaras	• Gained Tailor's specialtly at Proftechnical School, studied Clothing Design at the *Higher Art School* and has BA & MA in Costume Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. • Was an active student, worked as a stylist in the television and mass production classical clothing brand *Lelija* factory as a men's designer. • Worked as an assistant at the famous Lithuanian designer's Juozas Statkevicius fashion house. • Currently works at *Cantas* fashion house as a designer-in-chief. • Well-known designer in Lithuania specialising in men's clothing; participates in the famous country's fashion events, works as a lecturer for Image Design students.
K.Kruopienyte	• Graduated *Kaunas Higher Art School*, received BA and MA in Fashion Design at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. • Was an active student, participated in fashion events. Worked in a clothing factory. Worked for three companies and created collections for them, also in various clothing shops, worked as a stylist. • After studies worked in the fashion house *Cantas*. • Today she is a well-known designer in Lithuania, recently opened her own fashion studio and just starts to work for her own label.

CONCLUSIONS

• All designers studied fashion before the start of their careers and all of them graduated *Vilnius Academy of Art* which is known for best preparation of fashion designers in the country.

• All designers were active students who participated in various fashion events and showed their work since the early career days.

• R.Piekautaite is the only designer who did not work for other companies and designers, and started to work for her own label straight away, whereas E.Sidaras and K.Kruopienyte worked for other companies and tried themselves in different fashion environments.

• Three different career and success levels: R.Piekautaite is entitled as one of the best designers in the country who has her own successful label known not only in Lithuania. E.Sidaras is an experienced designer well-known in the country for the work he does for *Cantas*. K.Kruopienyte is a young designer who has a lot of experience of work in various fashion environments, and she is just starting to establish herself as an individual designer with her own label.

OPENING A FASHION HOUSE

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Opened her fashion house in 1997. • Designer's husband helped her financially to open the fashion house. • There was a lot of interest in her fashions and she easily gathered the client circle. • Started with a small store located in the famous supermarket. Now has boutiques in the biggest and most business-friendly cities in Lithuania. • Finished the expansion in Lithuania and now planning to expand the business abroad.
E.Sidaras	• Always wanted to open his own fashion house but never had a chance –it would require massive investment, financial freedom and a lot of work. • His work as a designer does not provide him with enough income to start his own business. Thinks that designers who have their fashion houses in Lithuania had financial freedom or investors to help them. • There is just one fashion house *Cantas* studio, they do not have any other stores and position themselves more as working with individual clients.
K.Kruopienyte	• Opened a fashion studio five years ago, when realised that she can no longer work for others and wanted to have her own studio. • Just starting her career as a designer in her own fashion house, has just a studio. • Has many plans to expand her business and invest abroad, invests everything she earns in order to create a mass fashion production collection which would be suitable for the foreign market, and open her own boutique.

CONCLUSIONS

• Three different career levels:

R. Piekautaite has her own successful fashion house;

E.Sidaras is a well-known designer but does not have his own fashion house – he is at the stage of the career when it would be the right time to open his fashion house however he is not capable to do that.

K.Kruopienyte is a young designer who has just opened her fashion studio and working on expanding it and making her label famous.

• R.Piekautaite had a financial investor who helped her financially to open her fashion house.

E.Sidaras does not have enough income to open the fashion house even if he wanted to.

- K.Kruopienyte managed to open her fashion studio but invests all her income to the studio and its expansion.

PRODUCT OFFERINGS AND MARKET PLACEMENT

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Designer's client is a high class financially free business woman who is strong, feminine, sophisticated, but subtly sexy and sensitive at the same time. Her customers are rich, free from stereotypes, creative, strong, who do not need famous brands to prove their status. • Romantic, lyrical, elegant and luxurious style, fashion is easy to understand and apply, inspired by the lifestyle of the everyday woman. • First Lithuanian designer to feature designs for the fashionable city woman. • Has a VIP section where designer's team forms the whole style and outfits for the whole season for business women.
E.Sidaras	• The main fashion house *Cantas* is men's classical clothing and special occasions, particularly wedding clothing. • Also creates women's, men's and children's clothing, and staff uniforms for companies, works with non-standard figures and sizes customers. • Designer is experienced in combining high fashion and work with individual clients. He is known for minimalistic designs and the rule 'less is more', original forms and innovative designs, works with expressive styles, unexpected colours and combinations, paying less attention for the decorative elements.
K.Kruopienyte	• One of the strongest, most mature young designers in Lithuania. Works with individual clients, production lines and collections, also designs work clothing for her partners. • Constructivism, minimalism, temperate colours, unusual forms, but comfort and practicality at the same time, are the features of designer's style. • Uses high-quality flexible and stiff fabrics which allow constructing interesting, unique forms and reliefs. Does not aim to shock, provoke or rebel - aims to educate and develop people's fashion taste. • Her client is mature, sophisticated, elegant person who does not want to intrigue or please someone, but rather have distinctive style and be confident.

CONCLUSIONS

- Designers position themselves in three different niches in the fashion marketplace:

  R.Piekautaite's niche is high class fashionable business and city woman

  E.Sidaras at *Cantas* niche is men's classical clothing and special occasion, particularly wedding clothing.

- K.Kruopienyte's niche is unusual, constructive, minimalistic clothing for both men and women who have distinctive style and aim for something different.

INDIVIDUAL CLIENTS VERSUS COLLECTIONS

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	Worked with individual clients at the beginning of career but now her aim is collections and she has a separate team of staff that look after the clients as she would not have time for all of this.
E.Sidaras	- Work with individual clients is easier than creating constant collections, as when working with clients who ask what they want, designer works more as a tailor, does not develop his own ideas, there is less creativity. - It does not require that much investment in promotion and marketing. - Work with collections allows more creative freedom and realisation of ideas, expression for an artist. Designer creates – customers choose. - However collections are much more expensive. - Lithuanian designers work with individual clients and present one collection every two years just to remind about themselves. Collections here rarely pay off and require vast amounts of money, or - Present collections once a year for Spring/Summer season as it is cheaper and easier to sell them in summer. - Egidijus and *Cantas* work more with individual clients as it is too expensive to create collections every season, it is enough to present collections once a year in Lithuania. - If they did constant collections it would be difficult to compete with mass production stores as their prices are lower.
K.Kruopienyte	- Problems of work with individual clients: not enough time to serve them all – time consuming, then no time for collections and business duties. - It is more a tailor's job, clients ask to design and sew a particular clothing of their ideas, designers often have to work in different style than theirs, design things that they do not like or borrow ideas from others. - For Kristina it sometimes might be interesting to work in different style and cooperate with clients but agrees that she distanced from her original work and felt she needed to work on collections which allows to show her own creative ideas, style and talent.

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	• Stepped aside from work with clients and now focuses on collections as clients did not appreciate their work enough. They are very demanding – want high-quality unique designs but at the low price.
	• It requires a lot of effort – long communication, meetings, analysing, researching ideas, choosing fabrics, making them satisfied.
	• It also requires financial investment in each client but clients ask for lower prices and think that designers' work should not be that expensive.

CONCLUSIONS

- Issues of work with individual clients that two designers Kristina and Egidijus agree on:

- It is very time consuming, always not enough time to serve them all.

- Designers do not pursue their role as artists.

- Clients do not fully appreciate designers' work.

- It is very expensive but clients ask for cheap prices.

- However it is easier than working with collections as it does not require that much business and marketing investment.

- Collections allow creativity and self-expression where designer creates and clients choose.

- However they are very expensive to produce and rarely pay off in Lithuania therefore designers tend to produce one collection every few years just to remind about themselves, usually in Spring/Summer season when it is cheaper to produce and easier to sell.

- R.Piekautaite agrees that it is not possible to work with all the clients and it is time-consuming, she has separate team working with individual clients.

DIFFICULTIES WHEN STARTING CAREER

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Did not face many difficulties when starting career, there was a lot of interest in her designs and fashion as a whole at the time she started. • Did not face financial difficulties, always found financial backers or family members to fund collections, her husband contributed financially with the opening of fashion house. • As every other designer she faces some small problems such as cash flow but these problems are not as big as they could be.
E.Sidaras	• There are no major financial issues in *Cantas*, they are very well equipped and have good working conditions. • When designer finished his studies, he found a job straight away so he did

	not face any issues when starting his career which developed fairly easily, every new experience followed another.
	• However financial difficulties did not allow him to open his fashion house.
K.Kruopienyte	• Always had enough work and did not face difficulties to find a job in fashion after studies.
	• The start as a designer was not easy as she had to gather her own clients and make herself well-known.
	• There were many fears and different situations every day, there were periods with no clients and with a lot of clients so you never know what will happen when you start, she says.
	• Did not face many difficulties when starting her career as individual clients do not require massive investment, in contrast with fashion collections.

CONCLUSIONS

- R.Piekautaite found it easy to start a career and open a fashion house as she was financially stable and it was the right time to do that.

- E.Sidaras easily found jobs in other companies however financial difficulties did not allow him to open his own fashion house.

- K.Kruopienyte easily found jobs in other companies however it was not easy to start and gather her clients, make herself known. It was not that hard for her to open her fashion studio and establish her own label because she started working with individual clients which did not require a lot of income to start and built up from there.

RECEIVING RECOGNITION

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Received the first recognition very easily – people were interested in fashion as a new phenomenon in Lithuania; there were just a few fashion designers so she received a lot of recognition from people and the media as a new designer in the country.
	• Started gathering her clients after first collections, competitions, also friends, relatives asked her to design, and 'word of mouth' helped. The client circle expanded very quickly, in 6 months' time.
E.Sidaras	• It was not difficult for *Cantas* to achieve recognition and first clients as they had their own niche of men's classical and occasional clothing, which had a big demand. They did not need to work on marketing a lot and word of mouth helped.
	• Pleased with a number of clients today, especially in Spring/Summer

	season.
K.Kruopienyte	• Started building recognition while participating in competitions and showing her collections while was a student. The media observed all this and individual clients started emerging one after another. • Many first clients were from her friend's or family's circle. • Many clients emerged after the *Fashion Infection* events.

CONCLUSIONS

• It was not difficult for all designers to receive first clients and recognition.

• Especially it was easy for R.Piekautaite as when she started, fashion was a new phenomenon, everyone was interested in it and there were just a few designers in the country.

• *Cantas* gathered their clients easily because they owned a niche of classical men's clothing and occasional clothing which always has a big demand, especially in Spring/Summer season.

• K.Kruopienyte received her first recognition and clients with the help of fashion events, competitions, where she actively participated; *Fashion Infection* event especially contributed to her success.

TRUST/RELIANCE FOR FAMOUS DESIGNERS

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Thinks that successful brands earnt their trust and reliance from time invested in their work – all of the world famous brands have been known for a long time. • Their work is of exceptional quality. • People got used to such brands as there are huge investments to advertising, there are constant collections being created, and everything is done as it has to be. • Young designer will never be able to do anything similar, only with a long time, effort and hard work it would become possible to achieve.
E.Sidaras	• Thinks that those famous brands are very well marketed, promoted and people got used to paying for the brand, not for the clothing. • They worked long years to create the brand that everyone recognises. • Celebrities, well-known in the world, such as Lagerfeld work for them. • Marketing and money are most important in creating such strong brands.
K.Kruopienyte	• Thinks that people nowadays are addicted to famous brands, therefore they are so popular. • Brands allow people to demonstrante their status and luxury.

	• This problem prevents young designers from becoming successful as no one is interested in new talents. • People do not understand the importance of supporting young designers therefore developing a famous brand could take a long time and investment for a young designer.

CONCLUSIONS

- It takes long years to create successful world-known brands.

- Exceptional quality of work.

- Marketing, branding and advertising strategies.

- Money and a lot of investment make these brands popular.

- People today are addicted to famous brands therefore they always maintain popular and new brands struggle to compete with them as people are not interested in new designers. Therefore young designers need a long time and investment to create something similar.

FINANCES

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Did not face financial issues which young designers face in the beginning. • Father funded her first collection, found other financial backers to fund collection for *InFashion* event. • Her husband-to-be, offered her to do business together, became her business partner and helped her financially to open the fashion house. • Had two important elements of success – she was an artist responsible for the creative ideas and her husband was a businessman responsible for business structure, ideas and support.
E.Sidaras	• Financial issues prevent young designers from success, as in fashion you always have to invest and the profit does not come straight away. • There are just a few designers in Lithuania capable of working in serious fashion business, because they have investors. • Difficult to find investors who could believe in young talent. • Young designers do not bring profit in Lithuania, and just small fashion businesses can maintain here. • Regrets not opening his own fashion house - was not financially capable to do that. He thinks that people treat designers who work for other companies differently and differentiate him only because he works for someone else. Could not launch his brand today as it requires a lot of time, money and Lithuania is not the best place to successfully achieve it.
K.Kruopienyte	• Says that it is very difficult for young designers to start careers, they

	struggle to find a job therefore they are forced to work in clothing shops or other designers' assistants or helpers.
	• Lack of finances is the major issue. Also Lithuania is different country than others, people do not invest in fashion here whereas abroad fashion is much better supported, designers have better opportunities.
	• If she had to start her career today she would not know what to do.
	• Happy that some projects are emerging where people can win sponsorship, start business or participate in exhibitions.

CONCLUSIONS

- Designer's success is very dependent on finances and financial freedom which helped R.Piekautaite achieve what she wanted. Her opinions differ from other designers' – she is more positive about the country's issues, designers' opportunities and she believes that everyone can achieve what she did.

- However it is more difficult for those who do not have enough finances and have to find other ways how to get money for first collections which can often prevent young talents from becoming well-known and successful, for example E.Sidaras struggled and could not open his own fashion house, K.Kruopienyte also understands these problems and says it would be difficult to start everything today.

IMPORTANCE OF PRODUCT, TALENT, ART

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Product has to be very good, unique, and accepted by public. Customers will sooner or later understand whether designer is worth their attention and money, as there are so many fashion brands to choose from that you have to stand out with your good quality product.
	• Marketing and PR is as important as product.
	• But talent is nothing without hard work, promotion and marketing.
	• Many not so talented designers successfully work with collections only because they know how to market them, they have a strong brand and know how to sell it.
	• Even a weak product can be sold with the help of marketing but as the fashion marketplace is full, designer has to stand out with good products.
E.Sidaras	• Designer will not become successful without talent. Many examples how designers start and end very quickly because they are not talented enough.
	• Example – country's designer R.Kalinkin who Egidijus thinks is not talented but is a good businessman and does a lot of PR therefore he is

	known in the country. However as he started 'loud' he is already closing the stores as people do not buy his fashions.
	• Talent is inevitable without marketing and marketing is inevitable without talent.
K.Kruopienyte	• This designer is an artist rather than a businessman.
	• It is difficult for her to be a businessman in this sphere as fashion is more about creativity for her, she never thought about business success, money, popularity.
	• If she had to start all over again she would look for a person who could help with business side so that she could focus on art and creativity as now business side stop her from fully being an artist.
	• Thinks about creativity a lot and tries to find ways how to realise her potential as an artist more, which is very difficult in today's fashion world.

CONCLUSIONS

- Product, talent and art/creativity are very important.

- Product is as important as marketing

- Talent is as important as marketing

- Creativity/art is as important as marketing.

THE ROLE OF MARKETING AND TOOLS DESIGNERS USE

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Understands the importance of marketing for fashion house and thinks it gives 50% or even 70% of the success, fashion business is inevitable without marketing strategies.
	• Did not know anything about marketing before started working in fashion.
	• Product has to be very good, unique and accepted by public as well.
	• Uses fashion events and collections twice a year as a best marketing tool.
	• *Facebook* and *Google* advertising give very good results.
	• Communication with the media, press releases to online websites and magazines.
	• Never buys advertising in magazines.
	• Uses online website but noticed that it is not as effective as the social media.
	• Uses online store but notices that people buy more at the boutiques.
	• Very popular events – she never has to worry about lack of guests. Financial freedom allows her to experiment, organise events and use all opportunities available.
	• Believes in direct communication with the client which helps to know the

	client better, as well as tell collection's and brand's story.
	• Does not have her marketing team and does all the work herself with the help of assistants – no demand for marketing specialist as it is a small country with not as big fashion industry.
E.Sidaras	• Understands the importance of marketing and PR in promoting a fashion brand, especially in the very beginning.
	• Supports positive ways of promotion, such as working sincerely with clients, communicating with them, presenting the work instead of focusing on personal life and gossip.
	• Collections and fashion events are the best marketing tool.
	• Visual adverts, photoshoots and advertising in the magazines.
	• Press and communication with journalists is very important – sends press releases about events, collections to websites, newspapers and magazines.
	• Online tools are very important: website, *Facebook*, information websites, and *Google* advertising.
	• Did not know anything about marketing before started working in fashion.
	• Says that Lithuanian designers do very little marketing as they cannot afford it.
	• *Cantas* does not have the marketing team, but designer understands how much it would help to have a marketing specialist, but it requires a lot of money to pay for him. Also marketing could bring too big results which would cause the need for expansion which they are not planning.
K.Kruopienyte	• Understands the importance of marketing and PR in promoting the brand.
	• Admits that it is her weakness, did not have knowledge about marketing and learnt about that from her experience and mistakes. Designer would like to hire a marketing specialist as she feels a big demand.
	• Uses social media, *Facebook* is very important.
	• Uses online website created by professionals, works on the relaunch of if.
	• Communication with the media – press releases about collections, has many media contacts and communicates with journalists who always ask her for material.
	• Events such as *Fashion Infection* are very important and many new clients emerge after them.
	• Work with individual clients does not demand a lot of marketing however collections do.
	• Learning about marketing and business strategies as planning to expand business. Doing a market research to find out whether there is a demand for her certain style of clothing and how to reach customers.
	• The best marketing tools are online website, social media and the press. However promotion has to be constant.

CONCLUSIONS

- All designers understand the importance of marketing and PR in promoting a fashion brand.
- All of them learnt about marketing with the experience in fashion as they did not know anything about it before.
- Online tools such as website, social media, press and events are the best tools to promote fashion brand according to all designers.
- All three designers do not have their own marketing team as it does not often necessary in Lithuania, however some of them feel a demand of it as marketing becomes more and more important.

BRANDING

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	- Did not invest a lot in branding of her fashion house as she feels it is not necessary. The brand developed naturally without any big investment. - Mentions logo, which consists of her initials and is the same for many years. - Some features of branding: created a vision of her client and what her fashion house is about, developed her style which she does not change and people can recognise it. - Thinks that it is not necessary to invest a lot in branding in Lithuania, only little effort is enough to be successful, however she understands that she needs more investment in branding when expanding the business and working abroad.
E.Sidaras	- Was not involved in the branding process of *Cantas* as the managing director worked a lot on branding, she created a unique brand name and developed the concept on what the brand is about. - Branding is not that necessary in Lithuania, just small investment is enough for this market.
K.Kruopienyte	- Did not invest a lot in branding and did not think about it when establishing her brand. - Mentions logo which consists of her initials which she created while she was a student. - Discusses her brand name's issue, saying it is unsuccessful and that it was a bad strategy to call her fashion studio with her name and surname which sound very Lithuanian: it is difficult to pronounce and understand for foreigners.

CONCLUSIONS

- Lithuanian designers differ from foreign designers who invest in branding more and understand its importance.
- Even experienced designers lack knowledge about the branding and do not treat it as important and necessary thing for the fashion house.
- Lithuanian fashion industry does not need a lot of investment in branding, however if designers want to work abroad, strong branding is essential.

PERSONAL EVENTS AND CELEBRITIES PROMOTION

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• Agrees that personal events can positively affect the popularity of the fashion house as she recently got married and her wedding dress brought a lot of attention and increased sales. • Has a skeptical opinion about celebrities' promotion as it is very important what that celebrity does and if she/he satisfies the vision of the fashion house so that promotion could be positive.
E.Sidaras	• Agrees that personal events can help bring more popularity, however these events and news have to be about his work, not personal life, as he does not believe in scandalous way of promotion. • Not sure whether celebrity clients bring more popularity to their brand as they do not analyse that. *Cantas* have many clients who are well-known in the country which brings additional value to their brand.
K.Kruopienyte	• Never talks about her personal life with journalists and she is more likely to deserve the media attention with her work. • Has a lot of well-known clients, but is very strict and does not use them as a way of promotion. Her clients ask for anonymity when buying her clothes because they do not want publicity about them.

CONCLUSIONS

- R.Piekautaite thinks that personal events can help promote the brand such as her wedding, however E.Sidaras and K.Kruopienyte never talk about their personal life and prefer to achieve the media attention with their work.
- All three designers have many celebrity clients but not all of them can bring positive promotion, for example celebrities who have negative reputation.

- Many celebrity clients want to be anonymous about their choice of clothes and do not want publicity, therefore designers do not use them as a way of promotion.

COMPETITION BETWEEN DESIGNERS

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• The biggest competition in the country is between her and designer Juozas Statkevicius who both are entitled as the best designers in the country. However they both have different fields of work and styles, but still compete in individual orders and attracting the clients. • Does not do anything on purpose to compete with others as does not feel the lack of clients, sometimes she even needs more time to work with all of them.
E.Sidaras	• Feels competition between him and other designers, as well as in every other business. • Does not compete with other designers and does not do anything on purpose to become better than they. Many Lithuanian clients tend not to be loyal to one brand, they try many different designers so they shop at many different boutiques.
K.Kruopienyte	• Thinks that competition between designers is 'a healthy thing' and it is always good to know what others are doing, compare with yourself and measure which one is better. • Always checks her colleague's work and if they do something great she feels that she has to do something good or even better. Tries to have good relationship between her and her colleagues and do not harm other designers in order to be better than they.

CONCLUSIONS

- Designers do not tend to compete between each other and do not do anything on purpose to become successful than others.
- However it is a healthy thing to check what others are doing and if fellow designers do some good job it is a good push for them to improve.

COUNTRY'S ISSUES AND CUSTOMERS

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	• The fashion situation in the country is getting better and people are able to buy designer clothes and support them very well, even though the prices

	are much higher than in the clothing stores.
	• It is possible to become successful designer in Lithuania and there are no more problems for new designers here than in other countries. She is positive about the fashion situation in the country and does not see many problems for new designers.
E.Sidaras	• Lithuanian fashion industry is very small and different than French or English fashion industries, it does not have Fashion Week.
	• Lithuania is a small country with small number of people, but many designers, so there are less chances to gather many clients.
	• There are no buyers, and there are not many people interested in buying designer clothes.
	• Fashion is not art in Lithuania, it is more of an entertainment to watch, but very few can afford it. Designers can create, make very artistic fashionable products, but nobody needs them.
	• It is hard to do the fashion business in Lithuania, boutiques open and close very quickly.
	• Many young people are willing to work in fashion and become designers, however there are very few opportunities for them in Lithuania.
	• Today designer's job is not only creative, designers have too many responsibilities today when looking after the whole business and sales. Then they miss their artistic duties.
	• There are just a few specialists understanding about the fashion market, commercial relationships and fashion business in the country.
K.Kruopienyte	• Has a distinctive style so many Lithuanians do not understand her fashions or treat them as 'weird'.
	• Fashion does not play a major role in Lithuania – it is not a necessity product.
	• People do not appreciate designers' fashion in Lithuania.
	• It is difficult to create massive production in Lithuania as demand is very small.
	• People want similar and 'boring' things, therefore designers have to control their creativity.
	• Those who are not afraid and want unique clothing very often cannot afford designer fashions as they cost a lot, and it is impossible to produce designer clothing in a cheap way.
	• Those who can afford it do not understand the value of designers' fashion and think it is not worth paying that much, therefore they go and buy in clothing shops instead of supporting local designers.
	• The reason of those difficulties are lack of finances in the beginning of career. Lithuanians do not have money and do not want to invest in fashion.

CONCLUSIONS

- R.Piekautaite's opinion differs from other two designers. She thinks that the fashion situation in the country is positive and getting better, there are many people who support fashion and buy designer clothing. As she is already popular and has many clients she believes that people are able to buy designer clothes and support designers. However we could say that designer is positive because she did not need to start in the situation today and she had better opportunities at the time she started – better financial situation and better time to start.

- Other two designers list many problems the country has regarding fashion – Lithuanian fashion industry is very small, there are not enough people interested in fashion, very few people can afford it, young designers struggle to start their careers even though there are many of them who would like to work in fashion. People do not understand designer fashion, think that it should be cheaper and prefer buying cheaper mass production clothing in store. Some of them, who understand and admire designer fashion, cannot afford it so it is a big circle of problems.

COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS

DESIGNER	REMARKS
R.Piekautaite	- It is a hard work which requires a lot of time - client visits the fashion house 4-6 times, designer has to communicate with client, find out what they want, their vision and style, and make them satisfied. - Designer has to control creativity, consider demand and what sells best as clothes are meant to be worn and sold. - Her and clients' ideas often match so she does not have many problems with communication. - Very often her creative freedom designs sell very well even if she might think it will be unsuccessful product.
E.Sidaras	- Very disappointed about clients who are not appreciative enough. It is very expensive to produce high class designer clothes however people want cheap clothes but it is impossible to make designer clothes cheap as it is a massive investment in work and materials. - Lithuanians prefer shopping in massive production stores as they can afford it. - Tries to communicate effectively with his clients, find the common decision and turn the client's wishes into reality, so if the client has the idea, he tries to adapt. He is happier when the client likes designer's ideas so he can then use his creative freedom and does not need to work in a

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	different style.
K.Kruopienyte	• Many difficulties and problems of communication with clients. She is pleased that her clients are understanding and nice to her, as she hears many complaints from her colleague designers' demanding clients. • Does not struggle even when she has to work in a different style when clients' ideas are different than hers; it is interesting and useful to try something else, and her clients inspire her to do that.

CONCLUSIONS

• All designers agree that the relationship with clients is rather complicated as it requires a lot of time, effort and investment, unfortunately it is rarely appreciated. Therefore many designers in Lithuania after experiencing this issue switch from work with individual clients to work with collections.

• Designers do not emphasise the issue about controlling the creativity when they work with clients, R.Piekautaite says that you have to control your creativity and think about clothing as a product to be worn and sold. However it shows how designer's role is not fully creative as they cannot realise themselves as artists nowadays.

• K.Kruopienyte says it is interesting for her to try different styles and ideas and learn something new, but again even though designer is positive about it, this proves that she does not fully pursue her role as an individual artist.

• All designers are most satisfied when their and the clients' ideas are similar so they do not have to work in different styles and they can fully work in their creative freedom.

5.4. DESIGNERS' INDIVIDUAL ADVICE

Ramune Piekautaite:

• Be patient because it takes time to become accepted by public.

• If you feel that you truly want to be a designer, not anyone else, then aim for it.

• Think about it as a business model, rather just 'art' since the early start.

• Choose the right team: someone responsible for finances, marketing, craftsmanship, production specialists who could work quickly and effectively. The team has to work together and aim the same.

• Adapt to the current market and situation before the start.

- Be cosmopolitan and look at yourself not only as a Lithuanian designer, but rather world's designer who creates for the world's market.

- Study different countries' fashion business models and choose the one that is best for you: whether it is Germany, France, UK, USA or Japan.

- Have your own niche which is unique and not occupied yet.

- Participate in every competition and show your work as often as you can.

- Accept the failures and do not be put off by the first mistakes.

- If you want to do it, everything is possible. But only very talented and hard-working designers succeed.

- Think about all the opportunities available and use them: choose the best colleges and universities, look for courses available, participate in the competitions, travel abroad to exhibitions, look for information available.

- Create a unique product which would convince someone to invest in you.

- If you struggle with finances, borrow from your family, friends, convince them that you will succeed and you need their support.

- If you are struggling to work on your own, look for alternatives – work in theatres, competitions, events, gain as much experience as you can in fashion. Maybe someone will notice you and will propose you a work or investment opportunity.

Egidijus Sidaras:
- You have to be talented.

- You have to work very hard.

- You have to have enough income in order to succeed. However when honestly working and giving all yourself step by step it is possible to earn the money.

- Prepare to be a careerist and a businessman, give your whole life to work if you want to succeed.

- Work single-mindedly and systematically, do your best to reach your goals. The hard work sooner or later pays off and gives results, if you do it honestly. Maybe you will not see the results straight away, but be patient and always believe in what you do.

- Today fashion students are not active enough and they want to achieve everything very easily, so be different, stand out – participate in events, competitions, show your efforts

and hard work. For example, apply for *Fashion Infection* which if you are successful gives you an opportunity to show your work in front of the most important fashion people and the audience in the country – if you do not succeed first, second time, do not give up, try again next year, someone will notice you.

- Accept the critique and learn from mistakes, think about what you do wrong, ask people for feedback and improve.

- Start gathering useful contacts since the very beginning. Go to fashion events, do projects with other people, communicate with people from the fashion world, go everywhere related with fashion, show yourself and remind about yourself as often as you can. Try to become known in the country as quickly as possible so that people recognise you and your work.

Kristina Kruopienyte:

- The most important thing is to find your own niche, purify your individual style and focus on what exactly you do, differently than others. What makes you to stand out from others? What makes you unique? Why would people want to buy your designs? Fashion market is too small to do something that has already been done by others. If you do something different than others and find a niche, you will be successful.

- Analyse your work and very early start thinking about whom you create for, who your client is, what your fashion is about.

- Work very hard– no designer achieved success without it. Work honestly, think about your work as the most important thing to you and put as much efforts as you can.

- Do not give up – if you did not succeed, think about the situations in a creative way. If you are not capable of doing a lot, do less, it is better to do less than not do it at all. If you are sure that fashion is the only way of realising your potenial and you truly love what you do, you will find a way how to go through all this. And the money will come eventually.

5.5. QUESTIONS ARISING

1. How can designer find the right time to start?

2. How can designer cope with the country's issues and weak opportunities in fashion?

3. How can designer invest in marketing, PR and branding?

4. How can designer cope with the issues awaiting?

5. How can designer gain enough finances?

6. Should designer work with individual clients or with collections?

7. How can designer find good specialists?

8. How can designer know if she/he has a talent?

9. Should designer work for other companies?

10. What is more important – art or business?

11. How will people become interested in young designer's brand if they prefer buying famous brands' products?

5.6. CONCLUSION

Chapter 5 provided results of the data collected, discussed and analysed the data regarding the individual issues designers faced, their experiences and insights from their careers. The interviews were compared and conclusions for each individual question were provided. The most important themes that emerged from the interviews, such as difficulties for young designers, financial issues, the most appropriate marketing tools, and the role of talent and creativity, were discussed and questions raised in this analysis will be examined in the chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter examines the relationship between marketing, branding, promotion, and the Lithuanian designers' success, posits some tentative conclusions about what marketing and branding strategies are the most useful, and discusses the most important issues and topics regarding the young designer's success that emerged in the study. This chapter concludes with indicating the gaps in literature for possible further research.

6.1. RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of this research is to investigate how young designers become well-known, and the role of branding and marketing in developing a fashion designer's public profile and success. The objectives of this research are to:

1. Conduct a review to examine the current literature about the fashion industry, well-known designers' careers, the business environment and the role of branding and marketing. The literature available about the Lithuanian fashion industry is limited so to gain insights and identify relevant issues, the review takes into account literature about the UK fashion industry.

2. Conduct interviews with Lithuanian fashion designers to investigate how they see the role of the following in establishing successful careers:

   i.   talent;
   ii. marketing and what marketing communication tools have helped the most;
   iii. finances for marketing;
   iv. trust and reliance from consumers.

3. Analyse and compare the interviews with literature review to examine the relationship between marketing, branding, public relations, and designer's success.

4. Identify implications about what marketing and branding strategies can help new designers and new design companies become successful, as well as indicate the gaps in the literature for possible further research.

6.2. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Chapter four discussed the different research methods available and the reasons for selection of in-depth interviews as a research method for this study. Although this approach had its limitations, some insights were gained about the Lithuanian fashion industry, the business environment, Lithuanian fashion designers' experiences in establishing themselves and their approaches to branding, PR and marketing.

6.2.1. ISSUES RELATED TO THE FASHION INDUSTRY (UK AND LITHUANIA)

Chapters one, two and three discussed the concept of the fashion industry which is a combination of both a creative activity by talented designers, and commerce, which provides products, aims to sell and satisfy the customer. The literature review noted that fashion is significant and an inevitable part of today's world with different purposes throughout history. The review noted that today fashion is important because of its democratisation of clothing – it is available to the masses, it entertains, proves identities, creates signs of distinction, communicates, represents individuality, establishes social identities, helps achieve goals and feel more confident.

With regards to the Lithuanian fashion industry, chapter two noted that the industry's development was suppressed by the political regime between the years 1940 to 1990. Section 2.3 discussed how and why Lithuanians have a weaker understanding of fashion and style, but it sees the emergence of new designers and a generation of young people who care about fashion which has had positive repercussions for the industry. Lithuania's development in the face of global expansion of fashion was also examined and it was noted that technological improvements, mass culture, fast-paced society and changes in people's understanding contributed to their access of fashion in a fast and easy way.

Chapter two also noted that the fashion industry is of economic significance to both the UK and Lithuanian economies: it brings funds, creates workplaces, encourages business growth, export and import, and collaboration with other countries. Although the UK fashion industry is bigger and better developed with more opportunities than the Lithuanian fashion industry, which only

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recently started to develop, both have similar problems, such as obstacles facing young designers, competition, people's addiction to famous brands, popularity of mass-fashion, and the lack of designers' knowledge in the fashion business. However, Lithuania can learn many things from the British fashion industry model, which has a better education, government support for young entrepreneurs, better understanding of fashion business and preparation for the industry, better economic situation and favourable customers' habits such as willingness to invest more in fashion products and better support for 'designer fashion'.

Regarding career opportunities for fashion designers, chapter three noted that the following issues can be problematic for the fashion designer: competition, knowledge about marketing and business, and skills necessary. The literature reviewed also noted that a designer's success today depends on their knowledge and usage of marketing, branding, public relations, promotion, advertising, visuals, internet, social media and other promotion tools. Talent and the designer's exceptional ideas were identified as not being enough to achieve success as without communication tools customers will not be aware of them. It is essential to have financial capability or backing to use marketing and branding to shape a positive image of the brand, which is unique and stands out from the competition. This image is remembered by consumers and works as a means of communication.

6.2.2. THE LITHUANIAN DESIGNERS' THOUGHTS ABOUT THE ROLES OF TALENT, MARKETING, FINANCE AND DEVELOPING TRUST AND RELIANCE WITH CUSTOMERS

6.2.2.1. Talent or promotion. All designers agree that both elements – talent and promotion are equally important in becoming successful. R.Piekautaite stresses out the product – it has to be very good, unique, and accepted by public. E.Sidaras emphasises talent – designers will not become successful without it. K.Kruopienyte thinks that being an artist is very important – creativity is the original designer's activity and an inevitable part of success. Generally, they talk about the initial designer's activity – creating a product, expressing the talent, being an artist. Designers think that it is not possible to be successful without it. However, they all stress marketing as the second, essential part of success.

R.Piekautaite says that marketing efforts bring 50% of success, the same as the product, or sometimes even more. K.Kruopienyte is learning about marketing and looking for a specialist to hire as she understands the importance of it, however, it is difficult for her to express her creativity as an artist as her roles as a businesswoman preoccupy most of her time. According to the opinion of designers, we could conclude that talent and marketing go hand in hand – they both are equally important and essential, but this all proves that fashion today is not only art, it is business too.

6.2.2.2. Marketing and what marketing communication tools have been the most helpful.

All designers understand the importance of marketing, branding and promotion in raising the profile of the fashion brand and designer's success. They all agree that fashion business is inevitable without marketing strategies. All designers have learnt about marketing with the experience in fashion as they did not have an opportunity to learn about it in university or prepare before entering the industry. All three designers do not have their own marketing team as they think they can do the work themselves or it is too expensive to hire a specialist, however some of them feel the demands of marketing as it becomes more and more important.

Online tools such as website, social media, especially *Facebook*, the media – communication with journalists and constant messages in magazines, and events, especially constant collections where designers remind customers about themselves and present new products - are considered to be the most useful tools, and have helped designers the most in promoting their fashion brands. R.Piekautaite emphasises fashion events which are very popular and she never has to worry about the lack of guests attending. This designer did a showroom event in Paris which brought many new foreign clients to her circle. E.Sidaras and K.Kruopienyte constantly present their collections at *Fashion Infection* event which contributed to their popularity. All designers agree that direct communication and sincerely working with clients is valuable, as it helps to know the client better, as well as tell the collection's and brand's story. K.Kruopienyte states that work with individual clients does not require a lot of marketing however when working with collections, designer constantly

needs to promote herself. Designers agree that when wanting to expand the business or work abroad, marketing is essential, therefore, for example, K.Kruopienyte has recently done market research which helped her find out that there is a demand for her style of clothing.

The interviews did not collect a lot of information about branding, because Lithuanian designers do not invest in branding and have a lack of knowledge on this subject. Even experienced designers, such as R.Piekautaite lack knowledge about the branding and do not treat it as an important and necessary element for the fashion house in Lithuania where even small branding efforts are enough. Interviewees claim that the industry is small with few clients, however those designers who plan to work abroad, such as K.Kruopienyte or R.Piekautaite, understand that strong branding is essential there. When discussing branding all designers associate it with logos, which demonstrates limited understanding in the area. Positively, interviewees worked on their brands' vision and they all have clear perception on what their fashion brand, style and customers are. K.Kruopienyte understands the importance of the brand's name and says her brand's name is disadvantageous – it includes her name and a surname which sound Lithuanian and make it difficult to promote her brand abroad.

6.2.2.3. Finances for marketing. A designer's success is highly dependent on finances and financial freedom which helped R.Piekautaite achieve her goals. Her opinions differ from other designers' – she is more positive about the country's issues, designer's opportunities and she believes that everyone can achieve what she did. However it is more difficult for those who do not have the finances and have to find other ways how to get an income for first collections which can often prevent young talents from becoming well-known and successful. For example E.Sidaras faced difficulties and could not open his own fashion house, K.Kruopienyte also struggles and invests everything she earns in her label, and says it would be complicated to start a business today. K.Kruopienyte and E.Sidaras do not know where a young designer could get enough finances to launch a label: 'What kind of investor can invest into something unknown, vague?', rhetorically asks K.Kruopienyte (2014, p. XXIX). E.Sidaras is sure that Lithuanian businessmen are not interested in

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supporting young designers as they do not bring profit in Lithuania. Only good contacts or people who believe in that person can help. R.Piekautaite advices: 'Who can support you? Either your family, friends or you have to create a unique product which will help you convince someone to invest in you' (2014, p. V).

6.2.2.4. Trust and reliance from consumers. It takes years to create successful world-known brands. According to the interviewees, the main reason why fashion consumers trust and rely on globally recognised brands is the effort placed into establishing the brand, exceptional quality of work, effective marketing, branding and advertising strategies, money and a lot of investment that make these brands so popular. People today are addicted to famous brands which can demonstrate their status or luxurious lifestyle, therefore they always maintain so popular and new brands struggle to become well-known as consumers are not interested in new designers. Therefore young designers need a long time and investment to create something similar.

6.2.3. The designers' thoughts on ISSUES THAT STOP DESIGNERS FROM BECOMING SUCCESSFUL

- **Different generations, different time.** About 30 years ago the fashion industry in Lithuania began developing, which allowed new designers to establish themselves with less competition and bigger consumers' interest in fashion. Also designers did not need to focus as much on business, marketing and branding as they do nowadays.

- **Country's issues and weak opportunities in fashion.** There are many different issues in the Lithuanian fashion industry as it is a small country which is just starting to develop the fashion industry as a phenomenon. There are less people interested in fashion, as it is not a household necessity, less people are financially able to support designer's fashion as the economic situation in Lithuania is worse than in other countries.

- **Weak investment in branding, PR and marketing.** Talent, creativity and art is not enough to become successful today; if no one knows about the designer's work, then it is not worth pursuing it. Fashion is aimed to sell, therefore designers need to present and promote their work in order to inform, entertain and interest the public.

- **Difficulties for young designers.** There are many difficulties for young designers, such as the lack of knowledge in the industry, lack of knowledge in branding, marketing, fashion business, and lack of courage to start from zero. The fact that they are unknown in the country so they need time to prove their work, lack of work available for young designers, lack of support from the government and other institutions, and most importantly, the lack of finances to start working on their own.

- **Financial issues.** When launching a new fashion label, young designers need capital for everything, starting from materials, garments, to hiring premises, staff, and marketing. Many designers face financial issues at the start of their careers as there are limited ways to get an income if you are not financially stable.

- **Individual clients versus collections.** There are many issues when working with individual clients. It is time consuming – designers do not have enough time to please them all, clients are often not appreciative enough, they expect lower prices, but it is impossible to produce cheap designer's fashion. Designers feel they do not pursue their real work where they could fully express themselves. However, the majority of designers start their careers from working with individual clients as it does not require a lot of income to start with, whereas collections allow designers to express their creativity and work in their own style, but it requires a lot of investment to create, which is difficult if you are a start-up.

- **Lack of good specialists.** There is a big problem, especially in Lithuania, with the low numbers of craftsmen and tailors as it is not a popular specialty and there are small numbers of people wanting to work in this area. Designers are struggling to find good specialists who could please their expectations in producing high-quality designs.

- **Talent and creativity.** Talent and creativity are one of the most important elements of success according to the interviewees. If a designer is talented and creative, he/she is more likely to succeed with making exceptional, unique clothing.

- **Work for other companies.** Designers have to follow the company's 'rules', so they cannot work in their own style and struggle to express themselves as creators. However work for other companies can be an option in the beginning of career to learn more about the industry and gain experience.

- **Art versus business.** There is the issue of business being as important as art today in the fashion industry because fashion has become a business area aimed to sell clothes and adapt to customers' expectations. Today, fashion is not only about creativity, art and expression of designer's ideas, but also about selling, business, management, and marketing.

- **People addicted to brands.** There is the issue of consumers addicted to established brands which are globally popular. Those famous brands have become the part of the luxurious life and owning their products today means satisfaction for customers. It is more difficult for young designers to establish themselves as people prefer the famous brands than the new ones.

6.2.4. The Lithuanian fashion designers' thoughts on FACTORS THAT HELPED DESIGNERS TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS

- **Beginning at the right time.** Designers interviewed are in a different situation compared to young designers today. They started their careers 15-20 years ago when the Lithuanian fashion industry began, therefore it was much easier for them to become well-known. Knowing the right time to start might contribute a lot to the success – whether it is a good economic situation, the time when society's major interest is fashion, or when there is less competition. However, it is difficult to find the right time today as the fashion industry is only getting bigger with more designers and fashion brands emerging every day.

- **Financial freedom.** Having enough finances will allow experimenting in producing fashion products in various styles and areas, and 'testing' whether people are interested in them. It will also allow to fully promoting the products, market them, use various tools, organise events, hire professionals, and establish the brand. Therefore those who start the fashion business with a secure income are more likely to succeed. This rarely happens, however there are many examples when, for example a celebrity who is already famous, launched a successful fashion brand as she/he had financial freedom to pursue this idea.

- **Good product and investing in marketing 50/50.** Interviews gathered state that success relies equally on product and on marketing, therefore equal efforts should be put forth on

both fronts. If a designer is talented and creates unique clothing, but is bad at marketing, or if he/she is not talented and creates bad quality clothing, but is good at marketing - they will not be successful. So designers should measure their strengths and if they are capable of covering only one side, they should find alternatives that could help them with another one.

- **Using the most appropriate marketing tools.** The constant usage of various marketing tools can bring success to a fashion brand. The most appropriate ones according to the interviewees are online tools – websites, social media (most importantly – *Facebook*), PR in magazines and events.

- **Your own niche.** This is one of the most important factors in achieving success according to the interviewees. As there is a lot of competition and it is getting more difficult to 'surprise' consumers with new fashion products, young designers have to think of ways how to stand out from others, be unique and create something novel.

- **Being prepared.** Being well prepared prior to entering this complicated fashion industry can help. Interviewees' examples show that being prepared is very important as it will take less time to make mistakes and learn from them later on. For example, all interviewed designers did not learn about marketing, branding and fashion business while studying fashion, therefore they had to learn it while working, which caused mistakes such as quickly closing new brands, or thinking what their brand is about and doing market research after 10 years of work.

6.2.5. THE ROLE OF MARKETING, BRANDING, PROMOTION IN RELATION TO DESIGNER'S SUCCESS

This study confirms the importance of the role of marketing, branding, and promotion in relation to designer's success. Marketing communication tools are essential to reach the customer, inform, entertain, influence and communicate with them in order to establish loyalty, trust and reliance for a certain designer, brand or product. This study has demonstrated, through interviews with Lithuanian fashion designers and literature reviewed, that marketing, branding and promotion can positively affect young designer's career, reputation and stimulate success.

When comparing literature review with interviews, there is an argument about the usage and the amount of marketing, branding and promotion used, which requires further enquiry. The literature states that a young designer should be knowledgeable in these areas and business environment of the fashion industry at the very beginning and use as much marketing, branding and promotion as possible in order to achieve success. However, reality in Lithuanian fashion industry is different. According to the interviews, the amount of marketing they use is not as big as it could be, for a variety of reasons:

- lack of knowledge (they did not have opportunities to learn about fashion business before the start of careers),
- they started at a time when marketing was just beginning to emerge in the Lithuanian fashion industry,
- lack of real necessity – the interviewees considered themselves already established and well-known with enough clients,
- being in a small country with a small fashion industry they felt they did not necessarily require vast marketing efforts,
- the lack of income – interviewees said that some of the marketing tools are expensive and they cannot afford them.
- interviewees have limited knowledge on this topic and use very limited branding efforts as a lot of branding is not necessary in small Lithuanian fashion market – their clients already know them.

Designers interviewed were already popular, they all started when the fashion industry in Lithuania had just been established, it was a new and interesting phenomenon for Lithuanians and competition between designers was not so big. It is a different situation for the young designers today – all interviewees agree that they would not know what to do if they had to start today. They all agreed that young designers need to successfully use a lot of branding and marketing as in the present day's fashion industry with not only established popular brands, but the new ones emerging every day, it is much more challenging to stand out and become well-known. Therefore designers themselves are improving their knowledge about marketing, they are learning about market research and the use of various tools. Designers

claim that online website presence, social media, coverage in magazines and events, are the most useful and inevitable to remain in business. The literature agrees with that – young designers have to put big branding and marketing efforts as these tools can help them to appear in the fashion world. The question which remains unanswered is, however, is whether these young designers know how to use them, where and how to start, and how to find enough income for marketing and branding.

As the interviewees said they do not invest in big branding efforts, it was essential to look deeper in the literature to make it clear whether it is worth for young designers investing in branding. However, the literature indicates that branding is inevitable and powerful in today's fashion industry:

'*The power of a brand transforms something as simple as grabbing a cup of coffee into a cultural experience. The power of a brand makes us rush to open a Fedex box while our regular mail can sit unopened for weeks. The power of a brand is why women walk a little bit prouder when the bag they are carrying is Louis Vuitton. The brand is the image, the promise, the dream' (Harvey & Pretl, 2011, p. 35).*

There is a misconception in the fashion industry that great fashion speaks for itself. However, it requires more efforts as it is not that easy. We live in a world full of brands where it is difficult to gain loyalty for a particular brand as new ones come out all the time, and exceptional brand can help do that (Harvey & Pretl, 2011, p. 38). It is recognised that even when a designer makes a mistake, the loyalty of consumers to the brand gives the second chance. 'Never forget that brands speak louder than fashion. Make yours one worth listening to' (Harvey & Pretl, 2011, p. 39). A brand which is distinctive, attractive, consistent, which conveys a message, proves quality and loyalty (Burke, 2008), attracts not only customers but the media which makes the process of spreading information easy.

6.2.6. WHAT MARKETING AND BRANDING STRATEGIES CAN HELP NEW DESIGNERS TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL?

Both the literature reviewed and interviewees agree that the tools below are considered most useful and important in raising awareness of the designer or a fashion brand and achieving success:

- **Online tools**, i.e. online website, blog, *Google* advertising, or online shop.
- **Social marketing**, i.e. *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Instagram* or *Youtube*.
- **PR and the media**, i.e. press releases, feature articles, information about events and news, or promotional material.
- **Branding**, distinctive, consistent, attractive, sending a message, convincing, encouraging loyalty and quality.
- **Events**, i.e. individual fashion shows, collection presentations, showrooms, or boutique openings.

6.3. EMERGING ISSUES

The literature reviewed emphasises the importance of marketing, business and promotion, however it rarely explains how young designers can get financial help, how they can launch businesses and invest in marketing with a lack of income, experience, and knowledge. The literature reviewed strong, confident designers who are financially able to start the business, however there appears to be a lack of information on those unsure and inexperienced, particularly who are planning to base their careers in smaller countries.

Below are the issues/themes that emerge from the research, which are examined further to provide possible recommendations for young designers at the start of their careers and how to achieve success.

6.3.1. NICHE MARKET

One of the most important subjects that emerged from the research, which could help young designers achieve success, is finding or developing a niche market: 'Knowing what I have to do

and being not like everyone else [helped me to achieve success]. It's wrong to do something what's already there especially in Lithuania where market is so small' (Kruopienyte, 2014, p. XXXIII). A niche market is a narrow, but not necessarily small market segment with its distinctive benefits for consumers who have a need for it as it is not being supplied by other providers: 'Intuitive fashion entrepreneurs are instinctively seeking out these opportunities and gaps in the market and exploiting them by using their expert skills to start their own business' (Burke, 2008, p. 19). The most unique ideas in the world are the most successful ideas, for example in the beginning of 20th century no one would have imagined that skirts can be short or women can wear trousers – these were the ideas of Mary Quant and Paul Poiret which made them popular and changed the fashion world - unique idea might turn into the fashion trend and style. Therefore young designers who come up with a unique idea, create something unusual and exciting, have bigger chances to become successful.

As there are so many fashion brands already created, in order to know what is already in the market and what is missing, designers need to conduct market research. This is a process of analysing the market of the product and finding out whether it is worth pursuing, whether people will buy the product and whether there is a potential growth. Its results will allow designer to 'tailor the products to appeal to the greatest demand' (Burke, 2008, p. 73). Designers should clearly think about their product's unique selling point – as the product's unique features are essential in achieving success.

Designers should think about their customers, and whether this idea would work for them (Harvey & Pretl, 2011). Young entrepreneurs are often sure that their idea will work and they know what customers want, however designers might differ from their aimed customers – many young talents do not buy designer clothes, they might be from different backgrounds and have different needs. Designers 'often make assumptions about the people they hope to sell to, and their product often fails to meet the needs of the consumer' (Meadows, 2009, p. 93). The best way is for designers to imagine themselves as their aimed customer, in the customer's everyday life and environment to find out whether he/she would be pleased with the designer's ideas. It is important to think about all aspects of the customer's life – country, needs, finances, environment, style, body type, what motivates and demotivates them to buy. 'Statistically we buy products because we need or want them. In today's consumer market the want is usually

bigger than the need but it is important to appreciate the difference between the two' (Burke, 2008, p. 76).

If designers really want to create a simple line of clothing, with the same idea which thousands of brands already do, it will lessen the chances of success as customers will not be attracted. Many might think that all possible ideas have already been discovered in the fashion world and there are no empty niches left. However, even a small distinction in a simple product would attract customers' attention: The designer denim company *J Brand* differentiates itself in a sea of intricate back-pocket designs by having no back-pocket design at all, or baby T-shirts company *C & C California* stands out by cutting their fabrics on the bias to create a signature slenderised T-shirt (Harvey & Pretl, 2011).

Designers who came up with a distinctive idea and have a plan to make money from it, should protect their ideas and keep them secret so that competitors would not have chances to steal it. The best way to save good idea is to patent it in the *Intellectual Property Office* (UK) or the *National Patent Bureau* (Lithuania) to make sure no one else has the same ideas and will not be able to legally copy it.

6.3.2. TALENT AND CREATIVITY

The importance of talent and creativity emerged after collecting and analysing the research data. It seems that the literature reviewed emphasises the importance of the business side of the industry, and the interviewees agree with that. Therefore it led to the discussion of the role that talent and creativity play in designer's success and whether it is still an important element in designers' careers today.

We could state that the creative process is the main activity of the designer's work. According to Jennings (2011), creativity is the 'backbone of fashion design. Its elusive, yet intriguing, characteristics make it a natural component of the enigmatic world of fashion, and the malleable and adaptive nature of the concept makes it uniquely applicable to the ever-changing apparel field'. Novelty, effectiveness, elegance, communication, emotion, surprise and ethicality are the key aspects of creativity. It is innovative and original, and without it fashion lovers would not see different collections four times a year. It is a challenge for designers to develop new collections two-three times a year, therefore 'one can never rest on the laurels of the previous season…

''you are only as good as your next collection'' ' (Jennings, 2011, p. 2). The creativity inspires designers to move forward and create innovative designs.

Young start-ups might consider whether they are creative and talented. Jennings draws a clear line between talent and creativity. She states that not everyone has a talent for designing fashion as we consider talented the ones who have specific aptitudes which others do not have. However she claims that all human beings are creative by putting the heart and soul into their work (2011). Cropley (2001, p. 11) describes creativity as a 'normally distributed trait that is found in everybody although to differing degrees in different people, highly in some, less in others, and somewhere in between for yet others. It is impossible to have zero creativity just as it is impossible to have zero intelligence'. Therefore young designers need only the willingness to develop and maximize the potential of creativity.

Today creativity has to share designer's time with business elements as fashion products are not only art, but also merchandise:

'You must make something that is both creative and sellable, as unless you are simply creating clothing for your own personal enjoyment, this will be the source of your livelihood. If you want to run successful clothing label, the trick is to create fashion that gets the cameras flashing and gets your column inches, but which at the same time also keeps the tills busy. To achieve this, your collection needs to be commercially viable, particularly in this day and age where consumers are really seeking to justify their purchases' (Angel, 2013, p. 98).

Designers interviewed claim that in order to achieve success, designer's talent, creativity and artistry are inevitable: 'It is possible [to become successful] if you are talented. Talented people will be noticed but they just have to put a lot of work (Sidaras, 2014)'. However they also say that even not so talented products can be sold today with the help of marketing and promotion: 'When you look at the collections in *www.style.com* and other websites, they are not very big masterpieces, it is just a matter of successful team which created a good strong brand working together and knowing very well how to sell that product' (Piekautaite, 2014, p. VIII). This concurs with Meadows (2009) who stated that successful fashion label requires 90 % business acumen and only 10% artistic ability.

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The issue for designers nowadays, appeared from the interviews gathered, is that they often have to consider the client's ideas and do their best to turn these ideas into reality, which often means working in a different style or designing things that they do not like (Kruopienyte, 2014, Piekautaite, 2014). They have to control their creativity to satisfy the clients' needs or commercialism – the product has to be commercial so that people will want to buy it, and follow particular fashion trends. The question is how designers can pursue creativity as they cannot be fully creative. 'Designers are no longer needed to dictate an entire look…Today's designer is important in another way…The designer is the visionary who creates the fantasy that the consumer wants to buy into…It is important for designers to recognise what people want from their clothes' (Jennings, 2011, p. 237).

We could come to the conclusion that talent is a beneficial feature of designer aiming to become successful, but not necessarily needed to achieve it. However it is clear that creativity and business knowledge are essential, inevitable and equal parts of a success model of a fashion designer. The question remains, whether designers, while controlling their creativity, do not lose their aim to create unique products which are pieces of art. Also, it raises the questions of whether the role of creativity will lose its importance in the future, with the business side occupying the fashion industry, or whether bigger competition between fashion brands will necessitate greater creativity.

6.3.3. BEING PREPARED

The essential point emerging from the research analysis is that those who are better prepared for the industry before their actual start have higher chances of becoming successful. A fashion entrepreneur is anyone who has innovative fashion venture plan, combines creativity and business mind. 'Every fashion designer should aim to have a basic understanding of business. The ability to micro and macro manage key business elements is a valuable skill to possess' (Angel, 2013, p. 100). Young aspiring designers should be innovative and plan their careers in advance so that they are ready when the time comes – they do not feel lost, there are less unanswered questions and fewer things to learn.

There is a set of skills necessary for fashion designer to develop, have knowledge in various aspects of the industry and creating a career plan, which would prepare designer for the industry. Harvey and Pretl (2011, p. 11-12) are positive about finding success in the fashion industry which is not about 'having a certain background or an Italian last name. It's simply about being savyy and resourceful enough to make it happen….so yes it will take money, yes it will take time and, more than anything, a truckload of determination. But, if you are willing to put in the work, the best part is, yes, it can happen'.

Burke (2008, p. 29) identifies the key traits that young designers should possess: 'natural and intrinsic ways of doing things', 'intuitive, streetwise approaches to solving problems', 'enthusiastic, passionate and instinctive ways of always searching for innovative and creative ideas, and opportunities', 'keenness to make decisions and accept the associated responsibilities and risks', 'ability to communicate and network to make useful circles of contacts', 'ability to co-ordinate their resources, implement their business plans, along with their determination and persistence to 'make it happen'.

Designers who are thinking of becoming entrepreneurs, should plan their careers; every step of how and when they will work – think about universities, courses, placements, and work experience available. They should collect information about the fashion industry, learn about business, marketing, branding and promotion. Designers should also start working on their portfolio, gather their work and find ways on how to present it on paper and online (Angel, 2013). It is useful to look for a job in fashion, a placement, internship or even volunteering job to gain experience in the industry.

Then young start-ups can think about their ideas, and start developing a business plan as early as possible which will help them organise the business better 'before you're moving so fast you can't stop – and end up crashing into a brick wall', and 'help uncover different scenarios you may encounter and prepare for them' (Harvey & Pretl, 2011, p. 12). The business plan should clearly explain the type of business, investment and how the designer will meet business goals, also analysis of competition and identified niches in the market (Meadows, 2009).

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6.3.4. FINANCIAL ISSUES

In order to launch a successful fashion brand, a designer needs money. There are many designers who have great ideas, talent and a lot of willingness to work, however they cannot do anything because of their lack of finances. Even though fashion designers are five times more willing to start their business in comparison with other professions (Burke, 2008), these aspirations might fail due to poor business management skills. This research identified that a lack of finances often prevents young designers from becoming successful, and looking for other options such as working for other companies or choosing another career. Therefore it was noted that financial issues are the topic necessary to be analysed in more depth with the aim to provide young designers with useful recommendations.

6.3.4.1. BUSINESS PARTNER

As discussed eariler, creativity and business are often difficult to combine, so the best solution would be to find a business partner who could be responsible for the business side of things. 'No one is going to invest in the success of a company like another owner. A strong business partner can strengthen your weaknesses and help elevate your company to the next level' (Harvey & Pretl, 2011, p. 16).

This would be a business opportunity for two people where partners could put their capitals together and divide the profit. Also, it is a good solution for those who do not have strong knowledge in business and marketing to find someone who has relevant skills, understands the industry and what kind of investment the business needs (Angel, 2013). Two partners would share the tasks and responsibilities, giving more time for both partners to focus on what they are best at instead of trying to manage all responsibilities. Designers such as Jacobs, Ford or Cavalli started with the business partners who helped them achieve success.

6.3.4.2. NETWORKING

Networking helps find business partners, alliances and colleagues who could support and help designer, share ideas and information. It is important for many reasons: 'building a support system, getting advice and information, exchanging ideas, and building up confidence by taking yourself out of your comfort zone' (Angel, 2013, p. 86). Burke treats networking as one of the

most important traits for entrepreneurs as they can help start and develop the business: 'People, naturally, prefer to do business with people they know and like' (2008, p. 37).

There are many fashion network organisations that are not-for-profit and aim to help young designers, some of them even provide financial support, opportunities to acquire resources for free or at reduced rates (Jennings, 2011, Burke, 2008). Some of the networking examples are the *industrylondon.com*, *fashion 2.0* in the UK or *Fashion Academy*, *LATIA* in Lithuania.

6.3.4.3. FINANCIAL HELP

Designers need money for a start-up capital (set up, development and production), stocking capital (building the product stock), and working capital (running and daily costs) (Burke, 2008). Even if a designer starts a business with a fixed income, cash flow problems will require more income to produce the next season's line until the money comes in. A review of information about finance management identified various routes of raising finance or access to funding for designers; table 6 illustrates approximately how much finances young designers may raise through various routes (Crowdcube, Burke, 2008, p. 109).

- Designers could firstly try to contact their **family and friends** asking if they could borrow from them. It is sometimes worth borrowing smaller amounts of money from more than one person to collect the whole amount. It should also be worth asking whether they have and could lend equipment (e.g. sewing machines, computers), which will lessen a designer's expenditure as well.

- Another solution is to **borrow a loan from banks** or business societies. Designers should prepare a business plan, the proof that they will be ready to pay back the loan and a guarantor who could repay the loan if the borrower is unable to do so (Goworek, 2006). It is worth considering the number of years of repayment, its terms and payment rates, all the details and conditions (Keech, 2012). It is not always easy to borrow from bank: designers' 'assets are harder to tangibly define, sales are tricky to predict with any degree of certainty and intellectual property is difficult to protect and uniquely own' (Angel, 2013, p. 107). Start-up designers can check their eligibility for loans in the *Fashion Retail Academy*, *British Fashion Council*, *Newgen*, *Fashion Forward* websites (Angel, 2013).

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- There are opportunities for **grants** (which do not need to repay or give up shares of business) available from government or organisations such as *The Prince's Trust* charity in the UK (Goworek, 2006), *Business Encouragement Fund* in Lithuania, or *European Social Fund* supporting young people with business ideas.

- Designers should look for fashion competitions where they could participate and win **sponsorships**, such as *Texprint*, *River Island* graduate competition, *Fashion Fringe* in the UK or *Young Designer Prize*, *Fashion Injection* in Lithuania which offer various financial prizes and opportunities to display their work (Goworek, 2006).

- **Second source of income** or simply, another job could help prevent cash flow problems or unpredictable expenses (Goworek, 2006).

- **Factoring** is an asset financing – once a designer is ready to produce the products and sold them, a factor buys invoices which costs about 20 % of the invoice, so factoring company will handle the payment collection until the stores will pay (Harvey & Pretl, 2011).

- Another option would be to look for **investors**, however it is quite hard to find them as they consider fashion a risky business dependent on 'too many variables' which might often fail (Angel, 2013, p. 105). However if there is an opportunity, designers should be confident to 'sell' the idea to the investor and prove it will work. 'An investor wants a reassurance that you will be able to pay them back' (Angel, 2013, p. 105).

- **Equity investors** provide designers with funding in return for a business share. The investor does not require collateral or interest payments from the entrepreneur, but does require a share of the profit and will accept a share of the loss – this is done on a pro rata basis (Burke, 2008). This option limits the risks, but designers will have to share the profits.

- **Business angels** invest their own funds in entrepreneurs in exchange for 'convertible debt or ownership equity' (Angel, 2013, p. 107). They are looking for profitable investments and often help start-ups with business management to make sure their investment will succeed (Meadows, 2009).

- **Venture capitalists** fund young high-risk but high-potential designers and help expand the business in exchange for owning equity (Angel, 2013). However Meadows (2009) claims that fashion industry is a bad risk for venture capitalists as it usually has slow returns.

- **Crowd funding** is the 'collective cooperation, attention and trust by people who network and pool their money and other resources together, usually via the Internet, to support efforts initiated by other people or organisations' (Angel, 2013, p. 108).

- **Fashion clusters** are companies who work together to provide fashion products: 'sufficient work for freelancers and contractors to be fully employed in their specialist fields; a pool of fashion industry talent; and a fertile environment encouraging innovation, creativity and competition' (Burke, 2008, p. 40).

- **Fashion incubator** is a 'science park concept' which supports small business entrepreneurs, help them solve problems in the beginning of their careers (Burke, 2008, p. 41).

- **Mentors** are experienced business people who help fashion start-ups and offer business advice (Burke, 2008, p. 41).

Table 6. Potential funds from sources (Crowdcube in Burke, 2008, p. 109).

Banks	£10,000 – £25,000
Business angels	£25,000 – £500,000
Crowd funding	£10,000 – £150,000
Grants	£500 – £100,000
Venture capital	Over £250,000

6.3.4.4. FINANCIAL ADVICE

It usually takes three to five years for a fashion business to break even (Angel, 2013), therefore business scholars advise designers to plan their finances, constantly project their income, sales and costs, think ahead and budget very carefully (Meadows, 2009; Keech, 2012; Harvey & Pretl, 2011; Angel, 2013). Young designers usually lack knowledge about finance and business management, so it is very important for them to get the accurate information. This section provides advice on finance management for young designers.

It is important to always save money for tax and make sure a designer has enough to cover daily living costs. It is essential not to spend the money a designer does not have. Harvey and Pretl (2011) suggest avoiding extending credits even if it means losing the order as it is not a good

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option for a starting business. The option might be to choose a bank account which allows controlling the income, expenditure and loan. Keech advises to pay off loans as early as possible, and save for the future expenditure if the designer started earning enough money (2012).

Others suggest to work from home, which allows saving the rent and travel money (Meadows, 2009). Also, designers can start with creating smaller collections which will reduce production costs, as it is always better to do less, than not do it at all. 'It is very exciting if you have three department stores knocking on your door to stock your brand, but if you do not have the finance to deliver them, one way of managing is to prioritise your orders and say yes only to the best option' (Angel, 2013, p. 104). It is worth buying large amounts of fabric, which the designer uses very often, such as lining or muslin, as in bulk they will cost less (Angel, 2013). Designers should also negotiate everywhere, ask for discounts, help colleagues in exchange for something useful, look for volunteers or graduates who could help with photo-shoots, make-up, photography, in exchange of a useful experience and recommendation.

There are many organisations which advise young designers setting up fashion businesses. *The Designer Forum*, *Portobello Business Centre*, *Nottingham Designer Forum* in the UK or *Textiles and Apparel Companies Association* in Lithuania. *The British Fashion Council* has also published *Designer Fact File* and *Designer Manufacturing Handbook* which are full of useful advice for fashion start-ups (Goworek, 2006).

6.3.4.5. CHEAPER WAYS OF MARKETING

Research identified that marketing positively affects the fashion business' success: 'a great product that no one knows about will not sell – your potential customers will live in ignorance and you will soon go out of business – it's crucial to get your message across' (Burke, 2008, p. 86), therefore the aim was to look deeper into the literature and find low-cost and useful ways for young designers to market their products.

A product that is special and strong will be easier to sell and therefore it is worth exploring what makes a product unique, better than competitors', and what message, and direction it reflects: 'If you can create a collection that has an immediate message and attitude, and that resonates with

your buyer instantly, you have a good chance of selling your product' (Meadows, 2009, p. 94). All the marketing materials should reflect the message of that product.

Fashion specialists suggest investing finances on the most important marketing tools for a particular designer as designers appeal to different audiences (Harvey & Pretl, 2011). Designers should promote themselves everywhere: talk about their products with friends, family, constantly wear their clothes, talk about the brand live and on the social media which does not cost but helps start building the customers' circle. It is essential to think which media your customers use and the best tools and places to grab their attention (Meadows, 2009).

Every prospective designer should prepare line sheets, look books, catalogues and business cards which represent collections to press and industry players. Meadows (2009) suggests that printing will cost less with fewer but stronger images being selected for the look books and the rest of the images can be shown on the website.

Research identified online tools as one of the most important tools for a young designer, plus they are very cheap, for example social media does not cost at all. It allows participation and building relationships with consumers and fashion communities (Meadows, 2009). It is quite expensive to launch a website but designers could find someone, for example a friend studying computing or a student looking for experience, who could help launch the website and explain how to run it. Designers can easily promote themselves with no help online by posting on social media and their website, writing a blog and building relationships with other fashion bloggers. It is worth contacting popular bloggers and suggesting promoting their brand as they can agree to write about designer for free, or in exchange for products.

Research has also acknowledged that the media and public relations have a positive effect on a young designer's promotion. It is better than paid advertising because designers can do PR themselves – send press releases, communicate with journalists and build relationships with them. PR has a greater credibility than advertising because it is presented as an editorial or news item (Burke, 2008). It is important to try and get the most popular magazines, newspapers, online websites' attention by approaching them, having a press pack with all information necessary and interesting story to tell which would catch the reader's eye. Once a designer receives positive

attention, other publications and customers will catch it too, and they will be more willing to learn more about designer and see his/her work. Then it is likely that other publications and media channels such as television or radio will also be interested in promoting the brand.

Events, press days, exhibitions and viewings are also positive way of promotion. They give 'an opportunity to view, buy or order products' (Harvey & Pretl, 2011), get to know the customers, receive feedback and tell the brand's story. Unfortunately events are expensive, however young start-ups can contribute to bigger events and presentations where many designers present their work instead of organising their own, this way saving money and still having a chance to promote their brand.

Celebrity promotion is also very useful and might be a cheap marketing tool. It has become very popular and effective to promote various brands via celebrities' *Facebook* accounts, where famous people can post information about the brand or product in exchange for free goodie, or, for example a dress borrowed for event. This works very well as we live in a celebrity culture and the followers of celebrities are often encouraged to buy the suggested product. However it is important to find the right celebrity which would reflect the brand's image and values: 'The message you send is irretrievably linked with the message the celebrity sends out' (Meadows, 2009, p. 154).

6.3.5. ADDICTION TO FAMOUS BRANDS

The issue of addiction to famous brands was identified in the beginning of the research and analysed to a certain extent after the interview process. It was one of the research questions to examine where the trust and reliance from consumers comes from, as the research about designer's success originally asks a question how the famous designers achieved this status. Interviewees discussed this issue and said that these brands became famous with time, proved quality, huge investments in marketing, money and the fact that people got used to these brands, which is difficult for young designer to pursue (Piekautaite, Sidaras, Kruopienyte, 2014). After analysing how famous brands became successful, there is another issue coming out of it – even though it is so advantageous for the famous brands and it keeps them well-known, a big interest in famous brands discourages consumers from buying young, unknown designers' products. The need for world-famous designer clothing also leads to the issue of copying designer clothes.

It is believed that people tend to buy famous brands' products sometimes only because of a name and the associated label, not necessarily because they like the product or its features. It often does not matter to consumers if the product goes with anything, if the brand is popular and has a positive image, it creates a will for consumers to buy that brand's products (Bickle, 2009). For example, everyone is familiar with the *Burberry* mackintosh or *Chanel* handbag. In that way people are able to display and accentuate their luxury with the help of a well-known brand's products. No wonder famous brands such as *Gucci* or *Dolce Gabbana* started displaying their brand names on easily visible areas which would encourage people to buy the product so that everyone around would know what label they wear. Even today many brands such as *Nike*, *Tommy Hilfiger* or even *Chanel* have their brand names, little signs or logos displayed in a visible area which make the consumer want to buy that product sometimes without even thinking about it, as this makes them feel wearing a unique piece of clothing (even if the only thing which differentiates the product from other cheaper ones is a little logo on it), which even might add additional value to their self-esteem.

The popularity of famous brands, even if it is well deserved, discourages consumers from paying attention to the new brands which may be well worth the attention. Designers interviewed agreed that no one is interested in young designers in the country: 'If you send a press release to the media channels and they don't know who you are, I doubt they will print your message unless you did something impressive which could attract attention' (Sidaras, 2014, p. XXI). Many might think that young designers might lack experience and their garments might not be high-quality but they should understand that young designers need better support in order to become as famous as these globally recognised brands.

The government could support young designers and encourage entrepreneurship with better opportunities to information, funding, and promotion. The fashion community should promote young designers' work – present it to consumers, write about it, organise events, projects, such as *Buy Lithuanian Product* (*Pirk Preke Lietuviska* – in Lithuanian) or *YBD* (*Young British Designers* UK). We need a better fashion community, not only several empires that lead in the fashion world. Fashion brands should support each other, especially support those who are struggling to become successful. Famous designers should contribute to helping young ones to

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achieve success – they could encourage consumers to pay attention to young designers, celebrities could promote young designers on their social media and red carpets, and show the benefits of young designers' work - it can also be great and unique, and it is often cheaper.

6.3.6. LITHUANIAN FASHION INDUSTRY'S PROSPECTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As the research is looking at the Lithuanian fashion industry, it is essential to come to conclusions regarding the countries' issues and weak opportunities in fashion. As there is no literature regarding this narrow subject, we could only use the interviewees' highlights and researcher's recommendations which could help strengthen the industry.

The most important issue is that fashion is not given an important role in this country, which leads to a weak fashion industry, low interest in fashion and low opportunities for fashion designers. Therefore we need to promote fashion as an important element to the country which aims to improve, evolve and reach the level of the leading fashion countries.

The Lithuanian government needs to take fashion into account, support and fund young designers, new and existing brands, as research has identified that fashion contributes greatly to the country's economy. Government should seek an example of other countries such as the UK, where funding for young start-ups is available and they have more opportunities to pursue a fashion career. The industry players should also take into account that Lithuania needs more diverse fashion brands, for example more affordable ones as there is a big demand for clothing that is accessible to everyone.

Fashion needs to be better promoted in the country to encourage an interest in this field with its many benefits. This could be done with the help of fashion events, exhibitions and meetings. We need to strengthen fashion education and establish more courses for fashion designers. There are positive changes already - there is a *L'officiel Fashion Academy* with various courses for the industry players and a new university in the country established – *K.Simonavicius University* with the great specialty to study – Fashion Industry, and even a television show *I am a stylist!* (in

Lithuanian: *As – Stilistas!*) which encourages people to care about style. These and further improvements would help change the long-term attitude in the country that it is impossible to pursue a career in fashion.

There is also a need for more fashion publications in the country as the sales of the famous *L'officiel* fashion magazine demonstrate that people read about fashion. Lithuania could follow other countries' examples and establish Lithuanian version of well-known titles such as *Elle*, *Harper's Bazaar*, or even *Vogue*. Today where everyone is online and using social media, we also need more fashion bloggers, as the numbers of Lithuanian style icons followers show that Lithuanians are monitoring other people's styles, looking for ideas and inspiration. The country finally needs to develop the idea of a Fashion Week, as it could encourage the greater interest in fashion not only for Lithuanians, but foreign countries too.

There is a feeling that the fashion industry does not have a strong community in this country, therefore fashion groups are essential. There should be social groups for fashion lovers and network groups for fashion designers where they could meet, communicate, discuss fashion news, organise events, share ideas, motivate and support each other. Also, designers should not focus solely on Lithuanian customers – they need to show that they are the world's designers – travel abroad, show their work, communicate and collaborate with fellow foreign designers, look for countries which would be interested in their work and expand.

6.4. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Section 4.9 in chapter 4 discussed the importance of validity and reliability and tactics available. The researcher used various tactics in order to enhance validity and reliability of the study. Table below demonstrates the practice of these tactics in this research:

Table 7. Validity and reliability tactics available and usage in the research (Miles, Hubberman & Saldana, 2014, Yin, 1998)

Tests	Tactics available	Research stage for using the tactic	Tactics used in this research
Construct validity	Multiple sources of evidence	Data collection	Usage of three different interviews; Complimenting the data with secondary sources: literature reviewed
	A chain of evidence	Data collection	Meetings with interviewees occurred, interviews collected, data and notes written, recorded and transcribed in a real time; evidence gathered into the database
	Key informants reviewing the research draft	Composition	Thesis reviewed by key informants before publication
Internal validity	Rich descriptions	Data analysis	Context-rich and meaningful descriptions which are convincing and make sense, and clear conclusions related to the topic were made
	Pattern matching	Data analysis	Patterns identified and matched
	Explanation building	Data analysis	Some causal links identified
	Time series analysis	Data analysis	Not used in this research due to the time constraints and extent of one study, but consideration as a possibility for follow-up work
	Logic models	Data analysis	Not used as it requires time series data
	Confirmation procedures	Data analysis	Confirmation procedures for primary propositions are described
	Areas of uncertainty	Data analysis	Areas of uncertainty identified
External validity	Usage of rival explanations	Research design	Rival explanations related to the topic were used and considered partially because of the lack of existing theory for a particular case
	Settling the research questions	Research design	The research questions considered, formed and settled
	Usage of replication logic in multiple-case studies	Research design	Multiple cases investigated using replication logic
	Limits and generalisation	Data analysis	Limits on sample selection their ability to generalise to other contexts critically examined, suggestions for further tests made
	Rich findings	Data analysis	Rich, descriptive and theoretically diverse findings were made for readers to assess appropriateness and encourage broader applicability
	Congruent findings	Data analysis	Congruent findings connected to prior theory were made
Reliability	Researcher's role	Research design	Researcher's role and status considered and described
	Appropriateness	Data collection	Data collected by the appropriate respondents in appropriate settings and

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			times suggested by the research questions
	Usage of case study protocol	Data collection	Same data collection procedure used for each interviewee; consistent interview questions and structure formed used for each interview
	Development of case study database	Data collection	Interview transcripts, notes, online material and examples gathered into the database
	Research review	Composition	Research was reviewed by fellow colleagues
	Specification of paradigms and analytic constructs	Data analysis	Paradigms and analytic constructs were clearly specified
	Quality checks, multiple observers	Data collection	Not used in the research due to the time constraints

6.5. LIMITS AND GENERALISATION

There is the question whether the research has been designed, conducted, analysed and interpreted in a way which produces results generalisable for wider audience. Scholars argue that it is not possible to fully produce generalisable results in qualitative research, because generalisation perspectives 'are strongly influenced by epistemological and ontological orientation' (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls & Ormston, 2014, p. 364). This study, as well as the majority of qualitative studies, is based on small databases, therefore a few cases do not guarantee generalisable conclusions (Silverman, 2004). More cases analysed would have increased the chances of wider applicability, however this was not possible to accomplish due to the time constraints and extent of one study. Situational and descriptive aspects, rather than the quantity, participants' backgrounds, or similar characteristics, were the most important in this qualitative research.

There are no agreed conditions under which qualitative research findings can be generalisable. However, readers might consider the way the research was designed and conducted, how data were interpreted and the evidence provided (Silverman, 2004). Generalisations can be drawn for a parent population, similar settings and conditions to the original research (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls & Ormston, 2014).

Validity and reliability tactics, described in section 6.4., were used in this research and helped increase generalisation. The most important aspects that help enhance wider inferences, according to the qualitative research scholars, and used in this research are:

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- The research was carried out comprehensively incorporating all cases into the analysis;
- Interpretations were well-supported by the data;
- Themes and issues reflecting the participants' opinions and experiences have been identified and described;
- Findings show how interpretations have been developed;
- Findings have been corroborated by other sources (literature reviewed);
- Interpretations are analytical and provide the 'nature and diversity of the evidence' (Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton-Nicholls & Ormston, 2014, p. 361).

This research focused on young Lithuanian designers, their issues when starting career and the ways to success. Therefore we could say that the results of this research may be applicable to the young designers in smaller countries which have similar fashion industries to Lithuania and similar issues related with the beginning of career (such as financial issues, good preparation, cheaper ways of marketing) which were discussed in this research; however the decision, interpretation and the limits of the generalisation remains to the reader.

6.6. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This research raises a number of other questions which cannot be fully analysed within the extent and narrow time frame of one study, therefore further research is encouraged. This research believes that young designers still lack information on the successful start and preparation for the industry, especially for those in smaller countries, and there are probably many designers who after reviewing literature, still have this question in their heads: 'How can I do this?' Therefore it would be beneficial to have more 'how' information - more advice and guidance that actually explains how young designers can cope with their issues, use various tools and strategies, and how they can gain support and financial help. Financial issues, especially in small countries, remain one of the most important avenues preventing young talents from benefiting to the fashion world. Therefore information on financial support and usage of marketing, branding, business in a tight budget might be useful too.

There are also a number of questions that emerged from this study, which were not fully analysed or lacked more information, or were noticed but were not discussed due to the different topic than the initial research question. Some of them are:

- How can a designer find the right time to start?

- Individual clients versus collections – what should a designer be focused on?

- How can a designer find good specialists (tailors, craftsmen, merchandisers) and establish good business relationships?

- Should a designer work for other companies or aim to create his/her own business from the beginning?

- What is more important for a fashion designer – art or business?

- What is the relationship between fashion and consumerism?

- Fashion in the future – what awaits us? Will it be easier or more difficult for young designers to establish in the future?

These questions would encourage further research and scholarly debate in order to get a better understanding of the complicated, overwhelmingly diverse but everyone's much enjoyed phenomenon - fashion industry.

6.7. CONCLUSION

This chapter answered the research questions and accomplished the research aims and objectives by conducting the literature review and interviews, and describing and analysing conclusions from them. It compared the literature review with interviews and examined the relationship between marketing, branding, and promotion and young designer's success. It identified conclusions about what marketing and branding strategies are most useful, and discussed important issues and topics regarding a young designer's success that emerged in the study and needed more information and discussion. This chapter concluded by indicating gaps in the literature and suggestions for further study.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. TRANSCRIPTS OF THE INTERVIEWS

1.1. INTERVIEW WITH RAMUNE PIEKAUTAITE at Ramune Piekautaite Fashion House, Vingriu st. 6, Vilnius, Lithuania; 3rd October, 2014, 12.00.

VB: How did you start your career as a designer?

RP: I started working while I still was studying at *Vilnius Academy of Art*, I started participating in various fashion competitions, I won a couple of them and after those competitions individual clients emerged, and I started designing for them. That's how I started. I always worked for myself; I never worked for someone else or somewhere else.

VB: Did you find it difficult to break into the industry? When did you realise it was difficult and were you prepared for that?

RP: I looked at my work as my whole life, I was more creative person than the businessman. When I started working in fashion, my aim was to create a space where I want to do what I love. There wasn't any business model I used, I just found people who could help make my dream come true. When the first clients emerged, I found people who could turn my creative ideas into reality. I didn't sew or construct myself, I did sketches, I looked for fabrics, supplements. There wasn't such thing as breaking into the fashion industry. At that time when I started working, there was no such thing as fashion industry in Lithuania either. There was production of clothes which was not bad, and there were quite a lot of industry factories which successfully worked and provided the whole USSR with clothes. There was just one fashion house called *Vilius Model House* which created clothes by receiving orders from 'above' (Moscow, Leningrade, from stronger USSR fashion houses). *Vilnius Model House* collaborated with them and that's what we called fashion these days. There were some collections, mostly productional, but fashion houses could only create a couple of show collections, exhibition collections, which they would take to USSR countries, USA, Canada, and exhibit there. When I started doing fashion, it seemed that it would never change. When I was a student, I though I will work at *Vilnius Model House* because the university only prepared as many specialists as there was a demand. Later on the USSR collapsed and I realised that the economical situation was in favour for me to start working for myself, and I started. At that time I just lived and enjoyed my life, created collections and models.

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VB: When did you start receiving recognition? How did your first clients find out abut you?

RP: I participated in various fashion competitions, *Fashion days* in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and when I won *InVogue* contest (this was already after the revolution), first clients saw my designs. I sewed clothes for myself and my friends saw what I wore, and they always asked me to design something for them and the geometrical progression worked well, the 'word of mouth'.

VB: Have you ever felt that it was difficult and that you don't have enough clients?

RP: How many clients can one designer serve during one day? Very few. I was very busy, I did not have much time to do everything as I had just 3-4 sewers who sewed at home, I opened my fashion house just in 1997.

VB: Did you not feel that the beginning of the career was difficult?

RP: Contrarily, there was a lot of interest; it was something new in Lithuania. There was a lot of interest; it was something new in Lithuania. At the time when I started, people became interested in fashion, everyone was talking about fashion, beauty, how we were behind of everything and how we lacked a lot of things. At that time in our only Fashion Design group at the *Academy of Art* there were many talented students and fashion emerged as a phenomenon which received a lot of attention. There were just six of us in the whole country. Later on other colleges began to prepare fashion design students.

VB: Did you face any financial difficulties when starting career and how did you cope with them?

RP: In the very beginning when I was only working with individual clients, I received some money in advance from them and used this money to buy fabrics, I paid the sewers after the client paid for the whole product. I was lucky that I found people who had their work appliences and place to work, and I worked at home myself, so everything went pretty much easily. At that time my wage was bigger than when I established the fashion house, as here I have to pay the rent, wages, etc.

VB: Did you achieve everything yourself?

RP: Well, of course not. If you want to do a collection, you have to find money somehow; you won't do collection from nothing. My dad funded my first collection. Later on, as fashion was a completely new phenomenon in Lithuania which began to become very popular and companies started earning money very easily, it was easier to find financial backers. When I did collection for *InVogue* festival, my friend helped me to find financial backers who funded me. Later on I established my fashion house together with Kestas (husband) in 1997. Talking about young designers, I doubt that any bank

or company would give the money for such a young creator. Even when you try to get the funding from European Union or various institutions, you still have to put a lot of money into that in order to get the support from them.

VB: Did you face any difficulties when buying fabrics, design material, hiring staff, paying wages, etc?
RP: I still face these difficulties today as well as back then. Maybe I do something wrong, I don't know. I think that it is the same as in any other business, only a few become very successful and manage to do something very big and meaningful.

VB: How would you evaluate your start as a designer: was it very difficult to break into the industry and what was the most difficult to accomplish?
RP: In the beginning I didn't feel many difficulties, you just go with the flow and don't really understand the situation, and everything seems fun. You just think that maybe next season, maybe next year everything will be better, we will earn our first million. In the beginning everything seems fun. I can't assess myself as a careerist, I didn't think about that. I had exactly what I wanted to have at that moment: I had a great life, I felt great and I enjoyed creating fashion, it was something interesting and very exciting that I wanted to learn. Every new pair of trousers designed, new different construction, the jacket which looked good on the client, seemed like such a big achievement, it was just fun!

VB: Did you not have any business plans or strategies?
RP: I didn't. My daughter is now 14 years old and she is already planning her business. She looks at her career in a completely different way. She is planning to work in fashion, but more with the fashion business. So she is already thinking about strategies, looking for ideas, creating some kind of a business model, and I didn't do anything like that. Maybe because I am 'a product' of USSR, maybe it affected me, maybe it affected me. However I am glad that I have been successful at what I do for so many years, that I have my great team that didn't leave me for all these years and we all survive these difficult moments and periods together.

VB: When and how did those 'unknown' clients find out about you?
RP: My friend's friend's friend is already an unknown person for me. So this circle expanded very quickly, maybe in 6 months' time since I started. The work with clients requires a special strength, energy and creative ideas, of course every client wants that the clothing would be unique, different. So after a couple of years I decided to change my work slightly, I started opening my boutiques,

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created small edition collections which was a bit easier. Now my assistants work with the clients and I just control the process.

VB: Did you not do anything on purpose so that new clients would find out about you?

RP: Of course there were some articles, writings, but it wasn't my initiative, it was from the outside, the media was interested in me. We do very little of direct advertising. We have Lithuanian and English *Facebook* pages, there is 18 000 followers in one, and 10 000 in another.

VB: What factors did encourage your recognition? Was there anything you did that helped you to receive this recognition?

RP: People didn't have what to buy! (laughing) At that moment the marketplace was absolutely empty. There weren't any products that you could find and buy in stores. I think this influenced my successful start. Now when you want to keep existing clients and attract the new ones you have to work very hard and seriously. There is a big competition, all 'horisontally and vertically', there are many foreign companies selling their products in Lithuania. But we are not only in Lithuanian market. I think they became interested in me because overall there was a big demand for designers clothing as there weren't many clothes shops, and my prices weren't very high. Of course now when I work in the fashion house as an official company, the prices go up.

VB: Where do you think the trust and reliance for famous brands comes from? Why do so many talented designers struggle to be recognised?

RP: I wouldn't say so. If that designer sits in his studio and waits when someone will come to him, then of course he won't become successful. You have to participate in exhibitions, organise events, go further. My pathway was very long and just now after almost 20 years this company starts working as a business unit. We calmly, step after step grew up together. When I opened my fashion house there weren't any specialists in this field. I didn't know anything about the titles that you now mention, I was never aware of them. Of course there were newspapers, you could send them some press releases, but there were just bits, one or another. There were no marketing specialists. We learnt as we worked. We didn't know anything about marketing and there was no such thing, maybe there was no courage as well. If I had to start the same thing today, I, as a businessman would invest money and find an Italian or French specialist who has done all this and helped many companies. It depends what you aim to. If you aim to work for Lithuanian marketplace, it is enough to find a young person who studied this subject. If you want to work for foreign marketplace, you have to definitely find a person who has experience in that, or maybe the whole team. I definitely wouldn't do what we did in

the beginning. We didn't have such understanding and such money to hire the specialist. We all worked from the future profit.

VB: So why are some brands so well-known in the world?

RP: How many years does *Chanel* fashion house exist? 100. Firstly it is time, quality proved by work, people got used to such brands, there are huge investments to advertising, there are constant collections being created and everything is done as it has to be. Young designer will never be able to do that, it is the same as to compare apple with Earth. The team has to work on all this. How can one designer work as I do? Maybe they should look for alternatives, create costumes for theatre, work extra somewhere else. But if you go to the fashion industry, the only thing you can do is to work from the clients' money and create clothes with minimum expenses. You can hire constructor, three sewers, buy two sewing machines, of course you need an iron, and dubbing machine for the quality, and another machine for finish, and, and and...but you can somehow find some money for that. You can borrow. If you have so much energy and passion for what you do, you will prove your family that it is worth it, or you will borrow from someone and give back later on. You have to participate in competitions, maybe someone will notice you and will want to invest in you, or some company will want to hire you.

VB: Do you think that there are so many unknown young designers only because they don't know what to do and they don't try hard enough?

RP: Maybe they are not talented enough, maybe they don't work hard enough or just don't know how to do it. Today all the best colleges in the world are open. However in Lithuania I've heard that the studying level is not that high enough. One designer from Canada visited *Vilnius Academy of Art* and told students straight away that they have to work in teams with businessmen because designer won't do anything without the businessman.

VB: And where can a young designer get the money for all that?

RP: From clients, from dad, mum, uncle, cousins… Who can support you? Either your family, friends or you have to create a unique product which will help you convince someone to invest in you. In the beginning I got the money from my parents and then my current husband invested in me. He observed me for many years, and only after five years watching how I work helped me to open my fashion house. And he didn't exactly give me money in the beginning, it was more of an encouragement – he rented premises, work appliances, sewing machines. We rented everything, we didn't buy anything in the beginning. And after several years he started investing to new boutiques which I think we could have done in the very beginning.

In the beginning I didn't worry that no one would buy my clothes. When you create pret-a-porter collections, you feel this all the time, but my start was work with clients and it was somehow successful. At that time the marketplace was not completed, it was absolutely empty, for that reason I had enough clients as they couldn't buy clothes in stores, they went to sewers and designers to do that. And our prices were fairly normal, it wasn't really expensive as we didn't pay any tax. It is a miracle that they still buy designer clothes today with way higher prices, and we even find clients when we participate in exhibitions abroad.

VB: Do you feel you have enough clients?

RP: How much is enough? I remember our first business meeting which now makes me laugh, as we aimed at 20 000 litas profit a month and it seemed that when we reach it we will be so rich, we will be very happy. Today our profit is 200 000 litas and more a month and it is still not enough (laughing).

VB: Have you got any plans to expand your business?

RP: We finished our expansion in Lithuania and now we plan to work more actively with an online store. We don't plan to open any more boutiques this year, we aim to sort out what we've got so far, and later on we will see. Whether it will be Riga, Poland, or maybe Paris. When you want to open a new store you always think about a special place, for example my first store was in Vilnius (the capital of Lithuania) Mindaugas street where the first giant supermarket *Maxima* (big supermarket as *Tesco* in the UK) took place. My friend said: 'come on, try open the store here, I have small premises at the first floor in *Maxima*'. And *Maxima* at these days was something wooow… it was just *MAXIMA*! (laughing). And we did this small store which was very successful and we worked there for a couple of years, and after that we just found premises at Rotuses square (city centre of Vilnius). The right place is the most important thing when opening the boutique. When we found that place, we took it straight away. We also thought whether to open boutique in Klaipeda (third biggest city in Lithuania), and somehow we found the premises for it. We wanted to open it next to the other clothing stores, so that it's the 'beaten path' – you always have to think about this strategy. After that we started thinking about Druskinkai which is a fastly growing tourist town. We had small stores in sanatoriums there and noticed that it is quite successful. Of course this war with Ukraine interrupted everything but I hope it will get better. We looked for premises for several years in Kaunas (second biggest city in Lithuania), Laisves avenue (the city centre) was really dead at one time, but we have a strategy not to go to shopping centres and open our stores in the city centre next to the strong brands, so we found premises there, and we opened it. So it seems that I have some sort of strategies.

VB: How are you planning to start working abroad and attracting clients there?

RP: I thought about it, we have to open a boutique in a very good place in between the other stores so that some of the clients who just walk past are directed to us. Of course when you start working abroad you need to invest a lot. And you need to be very well prepared, because if you want to put one advert even in *Vogue*, it costs a lot of money. Maybe we would do something similar as in Lithuania, without very big strategies. Maybe we wouldn't do the direct advertising, maybe we would work on social media, 'advertise' through clients, through events, we would invite nice talented people to our openings, would think who could be interested in us from the fashion world, fashion bloggers. Because our client is not the highest class A level client, well maybe sometimes she is, as she is rich, free from any stereotypes, creative, looking for new ideas and strong, as she doesn't need that famous brand would emphasise her status, she is strong enough herself to carry my brand. So these are our clients in Lithuania. Strong women who combine my clothes with luxurious accessories, and even not necessarily luxurious.

So we organised opening events for every boutique's opening, invited famous people and they helped spread that message. In Klaipeda (third biggest city in Lithuania) we did a massive billboard advert in the street for our opening. But I think the most useful marketing is the direct communication with the client. You invite people, communicate with them, present them your product, tell your story, collection's story, product's story, and this works the best.

VB: Have you ever had a fear that no one will come to your openings?

RP: Well you can't just be scared and do nothing (laughing). People now are sad when I don't invite them as everyone wants to come, I remember the boutique in Kaunas even hasn't been opened when my clients came to me and said: 'when is the opening???!!' and I said: 'not yet, not yet, wait a little bit!'.

VB: Did you have this fear in the beginning of career?

RP: I was young and stupid, and wasn't afraid of anything. To be serious, I am not afraid anymore now, well if they don't come, then they don't come, I will drink champagne with my closest friends. We went to Paris recently and did our own showroom separately from anyone, not in some exhibition, it was just our own, so there was this anxiety 'what if no one comes?' Well if no one comes, then what can you do? I will lose a couple of thousands of litas but this is not the amount of money to lose to bankrupt. Of course I don't believe that any boutique opening would be successful without any marketing, of course you need people who are the experts in this sphere and can attract customers, but I was really surprised that so many clients came to our Paris showroom, this was a miracle. There were Japanese, Australian, German, American, Arabic people.

VB: Did you aim to become popular on a large scale since the very beginning of your careers?

RP: I wanted to be popular in Lithuania. In the very beginning when you are young it is very important to be accepted and recognised and that someone appreciates what you do. But I didn't have such feeling that I want to be popular myself, as this happened very quickly I didn't have time to dream about it. I remember once I was still a student I had so many dreams, I dreamt about my fashion house, etc, and as designer's sales are inevitable without popularity, I wanted all this. And I remember I ran from my lectures to fittings as I worked as a model at that time, this fitting was for fashion magazine *Banga* cover, which was amazing for me, and I thought 'well, this is really cool - I won this competition with my designs, now they hired me as a model for this cover'. And after that everything changed very quickly, I had to work a lot and this fun period ended very quickly as when you need to pay the rent every month, pay wages, and all other things, it is hard. I didn't have any strategies; this was more of a natural process which was very fast for me, probably because I was at the right place at the right time.

VB: What role do you think PR, marketing and branding play in the popularity of your brand? Do you think they give results?

RP: I think it is very important, it gives you half of success as a minimum, probably 70% of success. But you have to make a very good product as well, be established and accepted by public. When you look at the collections in style.com and other websites, they are not very big masterpieces, it is just a matter of successful team which created a good strong brand working together and knowing very well how to sell that product.

VB: Do you feel the results of marketing for your fashion house?

RP: I feel that sales increase a lot after our events – whether it is small or big event in the boutiques for clients or collections. I feel zero effect after the direct advertising in magazines. Maybe it gives some kind of strengthening the brand benefits but it doesn't affect sales at all. *Facebook*, *Google* advertising affect sales very well as well, especially if we have sales and post about it on *Facebook*, it gives good results. All this glance, bought material in press - not really.

VB: Do you do press releases for the media before your collections?

RP: Yes, we do press releases regularly when we have new collections or events but messages in *Facebook* and online news websites, such as *Delfi* (the most popular news website in Lithuania) gives much better results than big articles or direct adverts in magazines. Or you have to see loads of this advertising so you can't miss it. I never do paid advertising and press releases don't cost anything, we distribute them ourselves. We have online website but *Facebook* works much more effectively than

the website. I can see it from results, we post exactly the same news both in *Facebook* and on the website, and the website's results are not that good. We also have online store and many people visit it every day, they look at things, however they don't buy a lot online comparing to boutiques.

VB: Did you invest a lot in developing your brand and brand image?
RP: We didn't analyse branding too much and didn't think about it a lot. We have the same logo for many years which we change slightly year to year but the whole brand developed naturally.

VB: Do you think designer can be popular without any marketing strategies? Is talent enough to become successful designer?
RP: It's not enough to be just talented, you have to work hard. It won't work if you are talented and don't do anything. If you create a fashion business model, it is inevitable without marketing, and marketing strategies affect business' success.

VB: How do you link your design ideas to the clients' ideas?
RP: You still have to control your creativity. You have to consider demand, as if you create something too much creative that no one will understand, you will then keep it to yourself. The clothes are meant to be worn, and if you want to survive, you have to sell them. In every collection there has to be 10% of creative freedom when designer does what he wants. Sometimes I sell these designs very successfully, but I always have to consider what sells the best. I am glad that my ideas and clients' wishes are often match. How can you know what will sell the best? You can never know, you just learn that from your experience what the most popular is. In the beginning our catch was wide trousers, then we finished with them, then we started dresses, then coats… I sometimes think that this product is unsuccessful and I should remove it from the line, but someone orders it so sometimes clients think it's successful when I think it's not.

VB: Are Lithuanian and foreign customers' requirements different? Are Lithuanians shyer, more modest?
RP: I wouldn't say so. As we work with our boutiques in Lithuania, I can see that our clients are more open to new ideas, experiments, new fabrics, and I can experiment as a designer as well. And foreign clients – buyers – strictly choose those products which they are sure will sell well. But when talking about individual clients, foreign clients very often buy the most interesting products from the collection.

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VB: Do you have your marketing team?

RP: We do everything ourselves, my assistants help me with that. In Lithuania I don't feel a demand to have a marketing specialist, I write press releases myself, attend photoshoots, choose the righ material, spread the messages to the media channels, I have all the contacts, I organise events myself etc etc. There is administrator who also does that kind of job. Only a very strong company can have a marketing specialist and here we all share this position. Of course you can have various dreams, ideas but you need a lot of money. If someone launches a new company and gathers a team, then they choose representatives from different spheres. But when I create this structure around myself, I take only those people that I can't live and work without. For example I hired a scenographer for one photoshoot and I regret it as I spent 5 000 litas for nothing as I could have done that job myself, I knew how to do everything.

VB: What other challenges did you face when starting your career?

RP: (talking about young designers) It is the whole big challenge. Everything was difficult: to attract finances, to attract the media and journalists as you are new. If a new designer sent a press release to journalists today, I doubt they printed it. Of course you can hire PR or marketing agency who already have the relevant contacts of the clients and the media and they will persuade the media to print this press release, but all this costs. It is difficult even to attract people to come to your collection opening as in the beginning there are various doubts that they won't come.

VB: Can personal events be a type of marketing and bring good results? For example you had a wedding recently, do you feel that it will affect your sales?

RP: I think that we will have way more wedding dresses orders the next season as my wedding dress achieved a lot of positive attention.

VB: Do you face any competition between you and other designers? For example you and Juozas Statkevicius are entitled as the most famous fashion designers in Lithuania. Do you feel this competition, how big is it and how do you deal with it?

RP: Talking about me and Juozas, we work in slightly different categories, he creates costumes for the theatre and works with individual clients and my main job is pret-a-porter. He doesn't do pret-a-porter, I don't do theatre. Maybe we compete a little bit in individual orders and attracting the clients, but our styles are different. For example there are so many brides, and designer can only do 12-16 dresses per season which is a lot so one designer can only work with a small number of clients. I think he doesn't feel the lack of the clients and I don't feel that either.

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VB: Have you ever aimed to be better, more popular than other designers?

RP: This is not a contest, and it is hard to measure it, how will you assess who is better? Of course we always make sure that when we do fashion shows there is no other fashion show at that day, no theatre shows, premieres, big presentations, events, etc, we try to adjust to that. But there is no such a big competition between us.

VB: What role do you think celebrity clients play in promoting your brand?

RP: Surprisingly this type of promotion is very effective abroad but in our country it does a contrare reaction. When I show up with my designed clothes, the clients see me and want to buy these clothes as well. But if the clothes are worn by a person who has a negative reputation in the country or the clients don't like that person, they won't buy it. It is very important what that celebrity does and if she or he satisfies our fashion house client's vision, so you have to be careful with that kind of promotion. Even in photoshoots you have to think what can wear your designs.

VB: What do you think about Lithuania and situation in the country as a place for new designers? Do you think that it is the Lithuania's issue that designers face so many difficulties?

RP: The situation is getting better and there is me and designer Julia Janus who does so called fashion industry, and all other designers are only creative people working in their studios, atelliers…I don't think it is a problem. Do you think it is easy for a new designer in Paris? I think it is even worse out there, maybe it is even better here. Well it depends how you think. Thank god I am in a different place now and I don't need to think about that. But if I wanted to start working abroad I would have the same zero start as a new designer, well of course I have more experience than a new designer. I think that the success lies in the designer's and his team's ability to adapt to the current market and current situation. If I had to start working now and I was a young designer I wouldn't call myself as a Lithuanian designer, if you start doing fashion, you need to be cosmopolitic, world's citizen, and create for world's market. You can have a creative studio in Lithuania and maybe earn good money, but if you think about the fashion industry, you have to think about the world's fashion industry straight away and just decide which business model is better for you: whether it is Germany, France, England, USA or Japan…

VB: What can you say about the Lithuanian clients' habits? How do people here see the designers' fashion, do they support young designers?

RP: If people are able to buy designer clothes, I think it means they support them very well. As it is a hard job to work together with designer, it requires a lot of time, the client has to come to the fashion

house at least 4-6 times for meetings, fittings and it would be much easier for them to go to the store and buy something, but they still come to designers. I think they understand and appreciate that, as the designer clothes prices are much higher than the clothes from stores, of course these products are unique, interesting. We have a lot of clients in our VIP section where we form the whole image and style for the clients straight away, they come here and we form their outfits for the whole season. It is usually business women who don't have time for shopping and time to look for matching shoes to matching dress in hundreds of stores, so they find everything here or even bring their own clothes bought abroad and we form outfits for them. This is a huge help for the client. But I think the fashion situation is getting better in Lithuania as there are more specialists, we now receive information from the whole world and those who understand the situation, don't call themselves Lithuanian designers, they create for the world.

VB: Do you think it is possible to become successful designer in Lithuania?
RP: It depends on the persistence, how much you want it, on the energy, good health, abilities, talent and strong team. My success was all these things combined together.

VB: What advice would you give for young designers who want to become well-known?
RP: If you can't do it, then don't do it, choose other profession. But if you feel you have to be designer and can't be anyone else, then do it. If I had to start today, I would probably find a friend who is studying finances, the other one who is studying marketing, and I would try to attract experienced constructors and sewers because those sewers who just start have to learn for a very long time until they do that right. I would gather a team who would have the same idea. For example the model of *Defect* fashion house, they started exactly like that, their success was based on many talented people together with a big experience. Of course they were lucky because they got financial backing from one company. Then you can do all this quickly and effectively. And I wouldn't definitely work only for Lithuania's market, and I wouldn't work with individual clients as you can 'drown' in it. I would try to connect production, financial and marketing specialists and combine them together as you won't be able to do that on your own. I would choose really good specialists in my team, not just friends. And you have to realise that there will be first failures, as you will become successful from third or sixth time. And you have to choose your niche very thoroughly. And it's good to have an opportunity to attend exhibitions abroad, to look what your clients like, where they go, but of course exhibitions require a lot of money…

1.2. INTERVIEW WITH EGIDIJUS SIDARAS at *Cantas* Fashion House, T.Kosciuskos st. 24-18, Vilnius, Lithuania, 3ʳᵈ October, 2014, 16.00.

VB: How did you start your career as a designer?

ES: I started studying Interior Design and later realised that I want to learn fashion. I started from the bottom: from Proftechnical School where I was learning sewing, then Higher Art School where I was learning Clothing Design, and after that in *Vilnius Academy of Art* I got Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Costume Design. But while I still was in the third year of my studies I started working everything related to my studies. At that time there were no such specialists as stylists so we designers worked as stylists as well. I started working in television where I was looking after the show people's outfits and style. At that time there wasn't that big demand for stylists as it is now. At the third year I started working in *Lelija* factory as a men's designer. I was working with men's classical clothing which was a very useful experience for me and a 'cold shower' when you have a degree in art and come to work after studies in a complete classic, where no arts needed. Then I got an understanding what the high quality of clothing is, what the good fabric is. In women's clothing they ordered cheaper fabrics as women are not tend to invest to clothing so the prices are cheaper, and when men buy a costume, they can pay 200-300 litas more expecting the good quality. Then I could choose to create higher categories clothing, I designed for foreign companies such as *Hugo Boss*. After work in *Lelija* I started working as an assistant in Juozas Statkevicius fashion house where I worked about 2, 5 years. I worked alongside designer and I saw a completely different area – the work with clients, very limited edition collections, and higher category of creativity. My work wasn't creative, I was just an assistant. The same as all foreign designers start from selecting the buttons, counting the needles and cutting the mould, I did the same. I am happy that throughout my whole career I've seen so many areas - I was introduced with massive production, with high quality individual orders at high level professional creative designer, I've seen how the things are in television's show business, how everyone needs to look good there but the quality isn't necessary**.**

VB: Have you ever had your own fashion house?

ES: No, I haven't had the chance to open my own fashion house yet. And I'm not sure if I ever will have that chance. You have to invest massively if you want to work for yourself. After work at Statkevicius I came to work here in fashion house *Cantas*. My colleague designer used to work there with whom we got on very well and did collections together, and I got the place here only because of her. After some time she left and opened her own studio and I stayed, so I took the main designer position here.

VB: Would you like to open your own fashion house?

ES: I would like to, but now I know a lot about fashion business and I don't have this youthful enthusiasm to start everything from nothing and I definitely won't sew myself. Actually it is very difficult with craftsmen, there are just very few good craftsmen and it is hard to find them. Another thing, our marketplace is full, I talk about individual orders especially – we don't have so many clients willing to buy in order to open a new fashion house. And doing a collection line again is very difficult as working power is not big – you have to do everything very cheap, limited, and this cheap and limited somehow still becomes very expensive. There are not many people willing to buy expensive clothing, and designer's clothing is still expensive because if I want to make a good product, it becomes expensive as I have to invest in it. In fabric, in work. There are full stores of branded clothing such as *H&M*, *Zara*, where everything is made to produce massively and it is hard to compete with them with our higher prices.

VB: Did you find it difficult to break into the fashion industry in Lithuania? When did you realise it was difficult and were you prepared for that?

ES: This fashion industry in Lithuania is nothing like French or England fashion industries, we don't have our fashion week and designers only do individual shows. We have a *Fashion Infection* (the biggest fashion event in Lithuania) but it is a different concept, this is a festival, a non-profit event. We don't have buyers. I say this to everyone, in Lithuania you come to fashion event, pay for the ticket – even designers sell tickets for their collections, it is nothing like that abroad – there only buyers, clients and the media attend the collections. That's it, no more tickets, it is hard to get the invitation. Another thing, *Fashion Infection* is all about the new things, new ideas, and collections there should have some unique concept. Everyone comes there to see something interesting, but when you ask what they want to buy from what they saw – nobody wants anything. At this point fashion in Lithuania ends. You can create, make very artistic fashionable products but nobody needs them.

VB: But why does this happen? Is it a country's problem?

ES: Our public is spoiled, they want a spectacle, 'oh I liked this collection so much'. And what will you buy from it? 'oh, nothing, I can't afford it'. In our country fashion and commerce don't come together, no one makes massive production fashion. In foreign countries after collection there is a queue of buyers waiting to order so many models. But here no one needs it and you just pray that someone would buy at least one model from collection. It is a problem that we do collections on model's figures so they are small sizes as they look the best on a catwalk but the clients come, they

like it, but they can't fit in it. So we have to re-make it, do it again, but very often we even don't have enough fabrics, we buy them from abroad and we can't buy big amounts as they cost a fortune.

VB: Why is the situation better in other countries?

ES: Our market is very small. In foreign countries you can find way more people willing to wear the particular clothing than in Lithuania. There are not many people in Lithuania, but there are many designers. In foreign countries there are bigger masses of people so there is a bigger chance that someone from this mass will like your individual designs.

VB: Was it difficult for you to start your careers, for example find a job at Juozas Statkevicius fashion house?

ES: I wasn't really looking for a job, I wasn't the one who comes to every designer and begs for a job. In my life I always ended up at the right place at the right time and I just somehow got the necessary contacts… In Lithuania I think you have to start working as early as possible. You have to work on your portfolio, gather your work because no one is interested in your diploma, for example I have a Master's diploma but I have never had a chance to show it to someone, because they want to see your work, what you've done, what experience you've got, the pictures, sketches, designs, then someone will want you. But diploma doesn't mean anything.

VB: Did *Cantas* face any financial difficulties when starting career and how did you cope with them?

ES: I haven't been at *Cantas* where they just started, I know that in the beginning they worked with men's clothing only, then they saw the demand of women's clothing as well. Now we have a contrary situation, we create more women's clothing as there is a bigger demand. We can't do more men's clothing than we do now as we don't have enough craftsmen. It is a tragedy. It is so hard to find good sewers in Lithuania, we do high quality, luxurious clothing. We have tried so many tailors and became disappointed as they don't do as good as we need. Our sewing prices are high so we really need the proper quality. I think we could expand our business if we had more and better craftsmen. Now there is no space to expand in this studio, but we feel a big demand for men's clothing. As far as I know there are no financial issues here. We buy what we need and we live quite good lifes with good working conditions. Our machines, equipment are good and new, we don't have such problems and we don't have any debts.

VB: How did the first clients find out about *Cantas* since you opened?

ES: There were different owners in the beginning who contributed to successful beginning of this business. There has always been a demand for men's clothing, men have always wanted to buy individual costumes as there are many non-standard figures…people who can't find clothes anywhere else, then they come to us. They can pay more as they can't find their sizes in the stores. Another category is occasional clothing – wedding dresses where women also want individuality, uniqueness, higher level of quality. It is a rare case that a client would come and ask for a simple blouse or a cardigan, they can find them in stores. This is our niche and many designers work similarly, with non-standard figures and occasional clothing, maybe that's why they still need us.

VB: How did your first clients find our about you?

ES: In Lithuania the best PR definitely is word of mouth. Of course, there is some PR in the press as well. But you can't measure the results it brings to you, and can't count how many clients come after reading the article or seeing the picture in the press. No one says how they found us. Also it is very important to show people collections from time to time. You have to remind them about yourself. As we occupy some sort of men's clothing niche, we have many clients and in summer we work hard with weddings, as many grooms need costumes so we sometimes don't have enough time to serve all of them, so we have to even say no to someone. We are not like a wedding boutique as we can't make a big number of wedding clothes a season as they cost a lot and need investment.

VB: Is *Cantas* a popular fashion house in Lithuania?

ES: Talking about fashion it is hard to measure this popularity, as there are those designers who are more popular, more expensive and there is a middle class where prices are not super high, like us. And of course there is a category which does something a little bit for unclear reason, and my experience shows that they end work very quickly as there is just one or another who is able to stay in this industry. They have huge mark-ups, the clothes become very expensive and it is hard to maintain in the market. We work in our studio only and we basically don't work anywhere else. We sell everything that's left from collections here. We do everything here and we don't position ourselves as a store, we work more with individual clients. We adapt to Lithuanian market, the situation is like that and that's what we have to do.

VB: Do you have plans to expand your business?

ES: It is very hard to do that, we have always had a plan to open a boutique but you can see from others' experience that they open the store and close it very quickly. It is probably only Ramune Piekautaite who works very single-mindedly, who does way bigger amounts and shows her designs at the exhibitions abroad, and we are very small. She started earlier than us, and, let's face it, she has an

investor. In the beginning investment is a very important thing, you can only break into the industry if you have a base. A fashion business is something different, you can't only create as you have to keep investing all the time. And the profit doesn't come straight away, it comes maybe after 10 years of a hard work.

VB: Where do you think the trust and reliance for famous brands come from?

ES: Those famous brands are very well marketed, promoted and you basically pay for the brand, not for the clothing. It is outrageous prices, but it is also a vast long years' work to that brand. And absolute celebrities work for them. For example Lagerfeld, he is definitely not selecting the buttons, he probably just chooses the right sketches and that's it, and in Lithuania we designers do everything we need, from a to z. This is marketing and money. In the beginning they need massive investiment and it is especially difficult to break from Lithuania to foreign market, only a few designers manage to do that. Ramune Piekautaite still just works with orders for other boutiques, multi-branded stores, she doesn't have her own boutique abroad. And I don't think that someone from Lithuania would be able to open their own store abroad.

VB: Why do so many talented designers struggle to be recognised? What can a young designer do to start a career in fashion?

ES: I don't know, this question is always in my head. I lecture for Image Design students, there are 10-20 of them graduating every year, and there are about 60 fashion design students graduating every year. What do they do? I don't know. People want to do fashion, but they don't have jobs. There are so many people I know who finish studies and just can't find a job. There are so many people I know who finish studies and just can't find a job. It is always very important to start as soon as you can, and to know this situation. It is also important to have the right contacts, it is important that people would know you, you have to introduce yourself and communicate with others. Because for example the buyer firstly checks who you are, and very often looks for the reliable designers. It is very important to start participating in competitions early, I participated a lot, we started from avant garde, from festivals, we went to Ukraine, Holland, because we had to show ourselves. When you get older you start thinking whether to be just a creator or start your own business, be the owner, as there are so many responsibilities on your shoulders: staff, and the whole business. You then miss your direct job – being an artist, especially in the very beginning, and in Lithuania this is very difficult. Generally there are just a very few specialists who understand the fashion market, commercial relationships and fashion business as no one prepares them because there wasn't a demand for them, and now there is

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this demand. Usually designers in Lithuania just have a good administrator... Now the designer has to think about money even if his original speciality is art.

VB: Do you think that the fashion situation in Lithuania is getting better?

ES: I really hope that it's getting better. There are so many students who come to us and ask for a placement, ask to work for free but we don't have space and work for them. As when you have an extra person it becomes a bit more complicated for me too as I have many staff already, I have to tell them what to do, what I want, agree with them, etc etc. And imagine one more person whom I need to find a job. That's great if he is receptive, but if not, if he just sits and waits thinking 'what should I do now?'. And then you think 'really, what could he do now? '. On the other hand you can't ask a new person to choose fabrics straight away, he needs to build confidence and proof his hard work.

VB: Did you aim to become popular on a large scale since the very beginning of your career?

ES: You won't become commercially successful without being well-known, so of course you need to achieve this, I wanted to be well-known. If you want to work in fashion business, to achieve something, you have to show yourself everywhere, remind about yourself from time to time, do projects, collections so that your name and a photo would be seen everywhere in the media, this is very important. After those four years at the university students leave and have just their first graduation collection, and that's it, no one needs anything, there are not even good factories in Lithuania which could give them a job.

VB: Did you have a plan what you would do when you finish your studies?

ES: I started working in *Lelija* factory straight after I finished my studies, I didn't have such a problem 'what should I do now?' I worked, I started doing my Master's, then Juozas Statkevicius fashion house appeared in my horizon and every new experience followed another, because I worked hard. Juozas wouldn't have taken random student, he was pleased with my experience, someone recommended me to him. There was just one moment when I was unemployed and I was looking at the work advertisements and there was nothing I would want to do. Then I found an advert that someone was looking for a person to work in a clothing store, to pick clothes, hang them, sort them out. I sent my CV, went to the interview and they said that my qualification is way higher than this job requires, and asked if I really will want to work there. 'Maybe you will decide that this is completely not for you? ' And then I thought so, and didn't go to work there. But students now choose even that kind of job because they can't find anything better, and they have to make a living.

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VB: What if they tried to find financial backers? Would there be someone in Lithuania interested to help young designers?

ES: If you have good contacts, the people who believe in you can help you but if you are talking about the businessmen who don't know that designer, then no, no one is interested in young designers as they don't bring profit in Lithuania. You can make for living, move forward, maybe in some years it will become profitable but it won't happen very quickly and financial investors want a fast buy off. There are many cases when someone has rich relatives or husband who can help. Those who start doing this, understand that it is not easy. While you are young, you have this optimism and there are so many designers who create collections, have interesting ideas, there are so many boutiques, but they also don't do a good quality, they don't have good fabrics, but this is just a beginning. There is also a category of designers without education which seems horrible for me, and it is not fair comparing to us, designers with education. But they don't have a lot of knowledge about the industry, they are brave, persistent, so somehow they break into. And we don't have so much courage as we know too much. The more you know, the more you don't know. I have no idea how they get the money, maybe they find some backers for the first collection, but they won't back you for nothing, you have to work off your name. Of course there is a success factor as well – some of us are more successful than others, also the personal features, someone is more bold, others are more reserved. I would go to that category of more reserved ones, maybe if I was more bold I would have had my fashion house by now.

VB: What role do you think PR, marketing and branding play in the popularity of the fashion brand?

ES: I think marketing is very important. Especially in the very beginning you have to promote yourself in this market. There are different ways to do that, you can be scandallous about yourself but this is not a good way of promotion. Everyone will know you but I doubt that the clients will come to you. It is better when clients value your work, I have always said that you have to work on collections and invite people to see them. Then they are more willing to buy one or another product. People also have to know that this collection will actually happen, so you have to spread the message about it, promotion is essential.

VB: Do you think that designer can be popular without any marketing strategies?

ES: No. It is very important. If no one knows about you, you can just 'bury' your talent.

VB: Were you aware of business/marketing side of things in the beginning of your career? Did someone teach you about that?

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ES: No, we didn't have marketing as a subject at the university. Now they teach a little bit. All this knowledge comes while working, you understand that people have to know about you. While working you realise what you need, you try everything yourself. Of course it is always better to know everything before the start. When I started working here in *Cantas* there was quite a lot of PR about me, there were articles in the magazines that I start working here, this really helped. Also new collections, our shows in *Fashion Infection* helped a lot. *Fashion Infection's* audience is not exactly our aimed audience but it is very important to show yourself, it is a good marketing strategy. We have done one massive individual collection show, we invested a lot of money but it paid off. Of course you can't measure the prestige that you earned from the event but there were definitely more clients interested in us after the show. You have to present yourself and remind about yourself even to existing clients.

VB: What marketing tools do you use for *Cantas* fashion house?

ES: We use visual adverts, we do photoshoots and buy advertising in the magazines from time to time. It is hard to measure the results of it as we don't do analyses, but we understand that we have to advertise ourselves. Every year in the magazines there used to be a presentation of Lithuanian designers' fashion, so we used to show ourselves there which reminded about us. It is very good when some magazine which is widely read, such as *People*, writes an article about us. Of course you have to wait for your moment, become well-known so they would write about you, but this promotion is very healthy. We send press releases once we do some new projects or shows, we send them to online news and fashion wesbites, newspapers, magazines, they catch it, print it, sometimes not. On the other side there is a distinction and delicacy that I work in the fashion house with a different name, so everyone thinks thinks ''haha, *Cantas*, it's not one designer's fashion house, he works for someone else'', so everyone thinks that I want to promote myself, not a fashion house, so there is a tendency that people treat differently fashion houses of an individual designer, and someone's or a team's fashion houses. It would be easier for me to promote myself if I had my own fashion house. I am thinking about that but I just feel I don't have enough money and youthful courage that 'oh I will open and I will see how it goes'.I and my colleagues have tried four designers' boutique, but I don't know, maybe the place was not successful, then the crisis came to the country. It was a good idea but it's always like that regarding the stores, when you open it, everyone is interested for about three, maybe six months, and after that you have to work on advertising and PR if you want to remain popular. In the beginning everyone is interested, they come to see, to check and then they stop. You can't just think that people will find you. Online website is important as well, you have to spread the information in information pages, *Facebook*, companies catalogues, *Google* advertising so that when someone looks for men's clothing our page would appear first. All this cost, but it brings good results,

popularity, and people find us then. Presentations and shows are a very good marketing. In *Fashion Infection* you receive less attention than if you did your individual show, maybe you would have one photo and your name mentioned above all of the participants but if you did your own show, you would have the whole article about it, a big message for the audience. However we can't do that kind of collections very often because it is very expensive, you start counting everything and you realise that to make it happen you need sponsors.

VB: Are you not afraid that people won't come to your shows?

ES: *Fashion Infection* is a popular event, it is not a massive event, premises are not as big so there are always enough people coming.

VB: Do you feel that you receive more attention after collections?

ES: It is hard to say, there is always more people wanting to get something for free, to borrow for advert, photoshoot or television shows. Of course we always lend clothing for magazine photoshoots as it is a good marketing, important and essential and we are happy when magazines come to use. But if television borrows our clothes for TV shows, they ask for more interesting costumes and when they give them back, we have to clean those clothes. That's why I left a job at the television as they don't have the money and have to ask everything for free, they have to get something from nothing.

VB: What do you think are the best marketing strategies that help the most?

ES: Internet website of your own fashion house, *Facebook* page, google advertising and then communication with the media and journalists – press releases about collections, and the collections themselves are very important, maybe you don't need to do very big collections as in Lithuania it requires a lot of investment, but you still have to do them. They rarely pay off, it is hard to find backers, for example Statkevicius finds financial backers but only because he has already established his name so his collections pay off and he receives some profit. But for unknown designers it is hard to find them or do everything from their own money. It is vast expenditure: lighting, premises, voice equipment, models, make-ups, hairstyles, catwalk, equipment, chairs, you also have to provide some drinks for guests, make invitations, all this organisational things are vast amounts of money and you can't organise everything on your own, you have to hire someone to help you. It is complicated to present collections twice a year in Lithuania, usually designers do just one collection a year, for Spring/Summer season as it is cheaper to do that, fabrics are cheaper and there are not so many layers in clothing, summer clothing is cheaper. It is easier to sell the collection in summer. In Lithuania designers do very little marketing, even not all of them can afford online website which costs a lot – 6

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000-7 000 litas to create it, so how many clients do you need to have and how many clothes to sell for this to pay off?

VB: How did the branding of *Cantas* develop?

ES: They worked quite a lot in terms of design, I am not involved in branding but I know that the name is saved under the copyrights as there was a question of uniqueness arised once. When they launched a website, they were looking for ideas and wanted the website to reflect the image and branding of the fashion house. We are too small to do 'serious' branding as the market is not that big so we did what was enough for Lithuania. You have to work single-mindedly, but again, the director is the head of all this, I am responsible of the art and creative ideas, I can suggest something but it doesn't mean that she will like that idea and she will do it.

VB: How do you link your design ideas to the clients' ideas? Is it not hard to do that?

ES: That's how majority of designers work, no one wants to expel the client. Of course there were a few clients whom I didn't understand and didn't agree to work for them but usually I am flexible enough and can adjust to what clients want so that they are happy and I am pleased with my work. I always try to sugest my ideas and those permanent clients already know my style and I know what they like, then this communication is easier as they know who I am.

VB: Do you have your marketing team?

ES: We do all marketing together - managing director and I, but it depends on the director how much money we can spend on certain things. It would be useful to have a person responsible for marketing but he/she needs to get paid. On the other hand marketing can bring very good results and then we would not have enough time to do all the job then we would need to expand the business, find new premises, hire more staff, etc.

VB: What other challenges did you face in the beginning of your career?

ES: While you are unknown, no one needs you. Even for the media, if you send a press release to the media channels and they don't know who you are, I doubt they will print your message unless you did something impressive which could attract attention. But if you are unknown and you did something, presented a collection, maybe some 15th of the most important website would print your message, but definitely not www.delfi.lt or www.lrytas.lt (which are the most popular in Lithuania).

VB: Can personal events in your life be a good promotion for a designer?

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ES: Yes, if there is an event related with you, it brings you more popularity. I did a men's clothing collection recently and *People* (*Zmones* - Lithuanian) magazine interviewed me and it ended up with 2-3 pages article in this popular magazine which everybody reads. You become more popular after that, especially if the article is about what you did, not about your personal life or lifestyle because they don't write about everyone, you can't come and ask the journalist to write about you, you have to be talented and do something if you want this attention.

VB: What role do you think celebrity clients play in promoting *Cantas*?

ES: Maybe they do some promotion, it is hard to measure that as we don't analyse that. We have many well-known people clients, we design for their weddings, etc, and not only celebrities but also culture level well-known people. This brings additional value to our brand.

VB: Do you face competition between you and other designers? How big it is and how do you deal with it?

ES: I can feel the competition the same as in every other business. We don't take any actions to become better than someone else, to compete with them. Lithuanian clients go to different designers, they try others and us at the same time. Those young students who create collections for an idea, have less income, rarely attract clients with big incomes as their quality of designs and fabrics are cheaper, so maybe young people, their friends want those clothes, maybe they buy them and wear them but those people who earn good money don't need this cheap clothing.

VB: What would you do differently in the beginning of your career?

ES: I would probably start working on my own fashion house since the beginning, I would try my best since I have this youthful optimism. Now it is a bit complicated to do that with the experience I have, with my knowledge, it is scary because I know that everything can quickly come to an end.

VB: Is it possible to become a successful designer in Lithuania?

ES: It is possible if you are talented. Talented people will be noticed but they just have to put a lot of work in it, and money is definitely needed as well. But you can earn those money by honestly working and giving all yourself. When you work as a designer very often you just don't have your personal life, you give everything to work. Maybe I don't have my own thing because I am not a careerist. I want to have a pleasure from my work, I want to create, realise my ideas.

VB: What is the most influential factor in the success of you as a designer?

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ES: I worked single-mindedly and sistematically, I wanted it and I tried my best to reach my goals. I'd rather do quietly what I want, I am not a scandalist. I know that I could reach my aims with hard work and I think this hard work sooner or later pays off, it gives results, if you do it honestly. Maybe the results don't show up straight away but you have to believe in what you do.

VB: What advice you would give to young designers?

ES: Work, work and work. Today students come and want to get everything on a plate. It is a completely different generation, they don't want to participate in competitions. For example they can apply for *Fashion Infection* event, maybe they won't succeed first, second year, but at the third year someone will notice them. On the other hand, if they don't invite you, you will realise what you do wrong, what mistakes you do. But if you just sit and wait for someone to invite you, this won't happen. It is always a matter of success, maybe you will be at the right place at the right time, will meet someone who could help you, but this rarely happens. You have to work. You just have to do it on your own. It is a big competition especially between young designers, it is very hard for them. My generation is now calmer as there weren't so many of us, we all were very strong, talented, there were only 12 of us and half of us now work in fashion. There are some courses where only a few people work in fashion, the rest of them emmigrated. Those who break into successfully usually do that with the help of parents, husbands. But many of them open very loudly and close very quickly. For example Robert Kalinkin – a person who appeared from nowhere, did a lot of PR for himself, well he still has one store open, the other one at the city centre closed. We designers think that he did a lot of PR but his collections are horrible - fabrics, creativity, the understanding of style. I remember he applied to *Fashion Infection* but he wasn't successful, I was sitting at the panel and we judges solidly decided that this person is far away from the real design. He did a lot of advertising but he doesn't have talent so this is a proof that this combination isn't successful either. He is a very commercial person but he doesn't have enough talent. What kind of fashion is it? What is it for? You need to have some sort of uniqueness, individuality, look for your own style, find it, you are looking for it for for all your life. If you do collection, you have to do it qualitatively as there are hundreds of people coming to see your designs, you can't do from poliester, sinthetical organza – it's a tragedy. After his first collection there was a big turmoil – everybody saw it but were afraid to criticise...but after the second one everyone was out of patience that there is nothing special that received so much agiotage. I studied for so many years to become who I am today and here he came from nowhere...

1.3. INTERVIEW WITH KRISTINA KRUOPIENYTE at Kristina Kruopienyte Fashion Studio, Zukausko st. 33, Vilnius, Lithuania, 6th October, 2014, 14.00.

VB: How did you start your career as a designer?

KK: While I was a student we all students were fairly active and we already participated in fashion events. We participated at the same events as professionals such as Julia Janus. I was just a student but not knowing that myself, I was already investing to my name. There were no studies about fashion business so no one explained us when that business starts. We all were only interested in collections, creation. I coherently participated in fashion events. The media observed all this, and while I was still a student one or another individual client emerged, maybe from my friend's or family's circle. I think everyone starts similarly. Also while I still was a student I started working in the factory, this was a good start to get to know all the system of how industrial fashion design works. It is completely different to fashion house design or working with individual clients. As a student I worked a lot - I worked for three companies and created collections for them. Now I am one of those who are just starting everything, I am in the crossroad. Talking about the beginning, this was a very good experience, I was introduced to the whole fashion system since the idea to the product realisation and product selling. I also worked at the clothing shops, created strategies for them. There was no training (I am talking about 15-16 years ago), there were no stylists as a separate speciality so I had to style the window-cases, thought about the products' positioning and the majority of things came without any learning, just from the experience, from sellers, manufacturers, their findings, so this was my persuasion to learn from mistakes. After working in the industry for a while I felt that I miss something as I am young, so I opened my small studio but I was too young, it was so much work, I couldn't do everything on my own and then just got an offer to work at the fashion house *Cantas*. Then they just opened. They had an idea to be a unique men's fashion house. I worked at that team but later the manager decided to work on his own and left, and offered his place for me. I was very interested in all these new things, everything was very new for me, men's fashion, I said 'I can' to everything and I started my career in this fashion house. At the beginning we created only men's classical costumes, classical clothing which was a new sphere for me. Little by little fashion house expanded, the owners changed and we decided that we need to start working with women as well. It happened that the system in this fashion house became unacceptable for me, I think that the majority of designers dream of having something of their own, go their own way and not to work for someone else. My and *Cantas*' future vision separated and I just knew I won't have what I want if I stay with them. This encouraged me to leave and open my own fashion studio, I don't call it fashion house because you can see what happens here (laughing). It should be a showroom but it looks more like a

warehouse, but we work here and my major work is individual clients, men and women but I try to distance from it as 1,5 years ago I started developing product lines and realised that I should work more on collections. Then I started working on limited edition collections. I started from little things such as accessories, gloves, then leather products, handbags, and now we are step by step working on expanding these collection products. I can't bravely say that I will refuse individual clients as I like most of them but there is no time to create for all of them and our individual creations are not as appreciated as they should be. We wheel around here with our 'red carpets on' and the client expects that he will get good quality highest class unique design product in a low price. This can't happen. That's why we are pushed in the corner and decided to change. The other part of my work is the work clothing design. I have partners who organise all this work and I am responsible for design.

VB: Do you want to work less with individual clients?

KK: It comes naturally that the clients push me to this position, they say 'I need five dresses but knowing the price of one dress, I would like them cheaper...' so it seems that we have to do small editions. I am in the crossroad that many designers face, the same happened to Julia Janus, Ramune Piekautaite.

VB: Why were you chosen to work as a designer in *Cantas*?

KK: Someone recommended me and they chose according to style, the work done. I and the main designer G.Paulauskas were always close to each other, at the competitions we always shared first and second places together and he probably chose the right person for his position.

VB: And then you felt that it is hard to adapt to the fashion house's ideas?

KK: It happened that I realised that I am the only person who does the majority of work and the whole managing. Generally the opinions disagreed, if there was a project, I really wanted to create for celebrities at my age or perspective today's well-known people, not the old-fashioned ones. As *Cantas* director came from *Vilnius Model House* and they had some sort of clientelle, this fashion house was very popular at the USSR, it was the highest class. So the clients were also middle-aged from the USSR times and they came to *Cantas*, it was a big age difference between me and them. I was with my own different attitude, with different stylistical decisions. I was always interested in technologies, new ideas, I suffered with those clients. I didn't have any joy. And when I decided to leave, my clients encouraged me and said 'there is no difference for us, we will go to you wherever you will be, we always come here for you, not for someone else'. So my real clients whom I met at *Cantas* stayed with me even after I left. They followed my creations for 10 years and perfectly knew me, I had already had my name established at that time, I thought about this situation and left. I didn't

lose anything, I think one way or another this would have been ended after year or two at the same situation as today, I am just that kind of person, I want my own thing. My studio will be 5 years old this March. It is not a lot, but we really did a lot comparing to what I could have done if I was somewhere else. I started more serious stuff than just working with a few clients.

VB: Did you find it difficult to break into the fashion industry in Lithuania?

KK: Now it is extremely hard, as at that time as I started, *Vilnius Academy of Art* distinguished as one place which seriously prepared good designers. Before Academy I graduated from the Art School, when you graduate it you are neither artist nor sewer but when you additionally finish university you become a real professional. Our all well-known designers graduated this academy. For me it wasn't really like 'what should I do now? '. Well it was hard, as we all fighted for our place, we waited for the clients, wondered when they will call, at the beginning it was really interesting especially when a 'cool' client came to se me, it was such a happiness, and now, even if the most 'coolest' client comes, it doesn't make me happy as my job is not appreciated enough. Anyway it is always fun when you make a clothing, you let someone go to weddings with your dress or some other celebration and at the same day they call you or text you saying 'oh, everybody says the dress is amazing, everything is so great'. For now I don't do a lot of PR and I am fairly pleased that people find me themselves, they believe in me and in what I do, so I don't need to prove them how much I can do, so this is really great that I don't need to 'jump around'. I have enough clients, I just need more free time and more rest (laughing).

VB: Were you prepared for beginning your career? Did you have any strategies what you will do when you finish studies?

KK: There were different times. When I lectured for my students I kept reminding them that if you choose a placement – choose it reasonably, where you want to work? What attracts you more? Sport clothing? Choose *Audimas*. If you like fashion house atmosphere more, if you dream about your own studio – go to the fashion house. If you are interested in the industry design, look for a placement in the factory. So I try to direct them to the right lace so they could integrate and understand this situation earlier as students graduate and they are lost, they don't know what to do, they give up , I explained them all this. And in Lithuania new brands emerge every day. I don't know how many of them finished fashion studies. Because that brand emerges when some young mum doesn't know what to do at home or is looking for a hobby. And thanks god, those first designers in Lithuania who worked seriously now have great businesses, and today every day there is something new. Now it is very difficult for new designers as they realise that the situation is like that – if you want to do it, you

have to invest it and we didn't think about it. I never thought which way to go. After many years I realised that I can't leave this work and I really need to have a strategy as I had been just working with no strategies for 10 years, after that there was a crisis in the country. I just went with the flow but I worked so honestly, I remember that when I was a student everyone was sitting in the bars and spent their money there, and I and my colleagues spent all the money on our collections. It was really a lot of sincere work, and I think from all of those who are well-known today, no one became successful without a reason, they didn't flow so easily with a cocktail in a hand, they all worked really hard. All my coursemates are real hard-workers.

VB: Did you face any financial difficulties when starting your careers and how did you cope with them?

KK: At that time you didn't need to have vast amounts of money to start your own business. As we invested to some promotion with our collection, the name was established and known so I could start my business with less expenditures, that's what I did. Individual client doesn't require a lot of primary investment. Of course you have to buy sewing machines etc etc. But for example buying of the premises wasn't a hard thing to do, it was a natural process. Now I am in that stage when I invest a lot, it is not like I have a bag full of money, now I invest to the future. I can't say that I can easily go on holiday, travel the world...Only because various works are taking place and basically I invest everything I earn.

VB: Are you planning to expand?

KK: Yes, I have big plans. I am planning to open a boutique, as this situation doesn't please me and I always think I found a right partner who will help me to open the store and some conditions do not please me and this doesn't happen. So that's what I aim to do. For now I don't have a clear vision where that boutique will take place. Currently I am doing a research and analysing all this.

VB: Did your first clients find out about you while you still was a student?

KK: Yes, while I was a student, those clients who were loyal, grew up with me, developed and now they have good positions. Many of them left from my early years, but probably the most loyal customers settled from the time when I could work with them individually, when I started participating in the *Fashion Infection*, just after my third time there I was really noticed there, they asked me to buy my clothes, they wanted me to design for them, etc...

VB: How long did you have to wait for them?

KK: It was hard in the beginning, one month you have a lot of work, and another month just nothing, but after every year of work there were more and more clients, now I don't have such problems. Now

it is hard to strategise everything, manage my time and do everything on time, because at the fashion business there are deadlines and stress all the time, I wish I could work with no stress but it is impossible.

VB: Did *Fashion Infection* encourage your popularity?

KK: Basically yes it really helped, as we designers helped *Fashion Infection* to develop as an event as well. With the help of these shows my admirers' circle formed. They liked my style and the happiest thing is that they find me even when I am not trying to put myself in all the magazines and advertise. They come and say 'I saw your collection there and I liked this and that' and they clearly say what they are interested in, and I understand that they are just like me talking about the style and I don't need to do anything special and prove that oh this is the product which is very good, they just come and say 'I need this and that from this collection, I need this size, this fabric, and that's it', and we do that. Of course individual service and the clothing designed invidividually for the client is completely different, you can't just give the dress from the catwalk to that client. I do' 't struggle, when I talk to my colleagues what requirements they get from their clients... There is sometimes one from ten clients who came, didn't understand where he is and wanted something impossible. I also try to work in some different style and I think it is useful for designer to find something else, you won't distance from yourself anyway. They come and say 'you know, I like this Coco Chanel jacket.' Well, I am completely not Coco Chanel so I say ok, I will research it. So I research it, what fabrics they use, what seams, and do some sort of my suggestion.

VB: How do you link your design ideas to the clients' ideas? Is it not hard to do that?

KK: I usually have a system when the client comes and tells everything what he would like, he talks, I analyse him, and then I do my homework, sketch ideas, for example three versions, we discuss the details, I choose a few versions and suggest them for the client, he says which one he likes the most. Usually they like one of those three and I do it. It is even more interesting for me to adapt to the client, they give me some different ideas, I add my own creativity and we combine them together.

VB: Where do you think the trust and reliance for famous brands come from? Why are there so many talented designers who struggle to be recognised?

KK: Those well-known fashion brands in the world are the matter of luxury and people follow those brands and want these products to demonstrate their status. I have seen how the clients who buy famous brands products talk between each other 'you know, I bought a *Chanel* handbag' but they will never say that 'you know, I bought a Lithuanian designer product'. There is now some sort of a tendency to buy Lithuanian products explaining that you can get a good product from Lithuanian designers as well. My clients are usually self-confident, they travel abroad with my clothes and when

they come back, they say: ''you know I got so many compliments, I went to the boutiques and everyone asked who designed my clothes''. Of course my name doesn't say anything abroad but they still say that it is Lithuanian designer's. It's been about 5 years since there are Lithuanian fashion lovers in the country. There are many people who are proud, show their status, display themselves etc. But I know a variety of people. Talking about those designers abroad, for example *Prada* had successful goings, her husband is a businessman, he started from market level, sold handbags, they both met and became a successful couple where marketing and design went together. Eventually there is a lot of investment, they have different traditions, different money than us. In Lithuania those designers who are well-known and successful, had big investments. This is completely a matter of money. I think it is completely different in Lithuania. Abroad they just see a successful artist, and then ok, let's do business together, they invest in that person, they don't do everything from their own money, they have investors, patrons. Here the necessity products are at the first place for people, and art and culture are at second. Only now there are projects where you can participate and win a sponsorship, start business or participate in the exhibitions. Europe is Europe, world is world, and Lithuania is different.

VB: Do you think it is a country's problem?

KK: Yes, there is no market here, I am happy about my sales but we are probably the first designers who took over all the niches in Lithuanian market and the new ones struggle more to find their place. Statkevicius is also hard working, but he has a lot of connections and backers.

VB: Would young designers find financial backers in Lithuania?

KK:I wouldn't know what to do myself if I had to start now. What kind of investor can invest into something unknown, vague? I have already done a mistake, for 10 years I had been investing to my name which doesn't attract investors, they need a brand to invest. Brands attract them more, but when there is just a designer it is hard to say, because he won't break into the industry without a brand.

VB: But your name is your brand...

KK: Well yes, but it is not as attractive, what is my name abroad? When you do a brand, big marketing or some sort of advertising campaign, it easier to break into. It is very bad that my name and surname are very Lithuanian. Julija Zileniene changed her name to Julia Janus exactly for this reason.

VB: Are you planning to expand abroad?

KK: I have ideas about the market abroad. It will happen in five years' time. Firstly I have to do a collection from a to z which could be massively produced. Now you can't come to the shop and buy

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outfits for five days. Everyone thinks that you just do it very quickly – no way, you would like to do it, you dream about it, close your eyes and see you the clients coming in your dreams, everything is so easy but you understand that it is not like that.

VB: Did you aim to become popular on a large scale since the very beginning of your career?

KK: I didn't think anything about that, I was just happy about what I did, I honestly worked and I didn't have a plan to be a famous designer in Lithuania. This hard honest work helped me to become successful. It was so interesting, I had a lot of passion, even now I dream about these dresses, how I will do them, how I want to do them. Of course these organisational things, these strategies, meetings, decisions disturb me, and then you think that you can just dream about this creativity and art world. Mostly above all I didn't want to alienate from creation, I refused all the outside work only because I could express myself as an artist, I even did my own painting exhibition, I found myself in this sphere and I was very successful. It happened that in order to stay together with creativity, I refused lecturing, painting, and started working on fashion even more.

VB: What role do you think marketing, PR and branding play in the popularity of the fashion brand? Do you think they give results?

KK: Very important. Marketing is unfortunately one of my weaknesses. In my team there is no marketing specialist but I can feel a demand for it. There is me and a couple of people who contribute a little bit to working on marketing. I am looking for a person who could help me with marketing but the worst is that I believe in people who somehow appear in my life and I believe that they come to my life for the reason and every contact is useful, I am not looking for the contacts in the adverts, I am looking for them in every person I meet. It is important for me that the jobs such as advertising campaigns, branding would be done by a good contact, by a person whom I believe and I believe his/her job. Marketing is my big weakness.

VB: So you basically don't do any marketing?

KK: When you work with individual clients there is not a big necessity to do a lot of marketing but when I now decided to concentrate more on collections, I really need to promote my work and I need a person who could control marketing and all the information. Currently I do social promotion on *Facebook*, I send press releases about new products, collections constantly to magazines. I never buy pages.

VB: Do you receive a lot of journalist attention?

KK: Yes, I usually receive more of it when I present collection, organise event or do something, say something in public. The attention appears very quickly as everyone needs something to write about

and there are not so many designers in Lithuania to write about. I don't do 'circus' so they could write some nonsences about me, many people wait for you to do something, to announce something. There are some magazines who say that they are happy to get material about me as my work makes their pages beautiful. One online shop asked for my products and said that they would make their website very beautiful and I looked at their level which didn't please me and said 'I'm sorry I can't help you', I can't be at the lower level than I am. As I am in this business for many years, I know fashion editors of the magazines, stylists, so all of them ask me for photos or material. I have friendly relationships with them, especially I have a close relationship with *L'officiel* magazine, I lecture in their established *Fashion Academy* Fashion Illustration subject. There is a big difference between mature people who voluntarily come to study at the *Fashion Academy* and the students at *Vilnius Academy of Art*. Those students completely don't appreciate what you give to them, at that time you give all your knowledge and everything to them so that it's better for them, and after 6 months they don't achieve such results as the women who come and clearly know what they want to learn, what's in in for them.

VB: Do you know what Lithuanian fashion students do when they finish their studies?

KK: Majority of them integrate to work at the established designers' fashion houses as assistants, helpers, work other jobs which unfortunately don't have a lot of responsibility and don't work a lot with the design itself as it is very difficult. Of course those who were very active students after studies didn't disappear either, they work, they do project. As I understand how hard it is for them to break into, I gave an opportunity and employed two students at my studio. I and my colleague have a store at the shopping centre *Europe* where we sell my and other designers clothes, so one of my students work there. The clients of the shopping centres are completely different than the boutiques, there is a different contingent. However we notice that there are much better sales results in the boutiques rather than the shopping centres so you always have to consider the place for the boutique. I and three colleagues of mine used to have our own boutique, it was quite successful until the economic crisis came to the country, and at the same time *Marks & Spencer* opened the store here, so that was enough for us to fail.

VB: Do you have the online store?

KK: I don't and I don't plan to launch my own, but there are some other multi-branded online stores who sell my designs. I have my own online website but I didn't create it myself, I hired professionals to help create it. Now I am investing to its relaunch and renewal as I feel a big importance of it. Of course I can see the good results of using the Internet. Nowadays every designer must invest in the

Internet. I have *Facebook* as well which is also very useful, I control it myself, I like it a lot. Social media is very necessary, I feel I have to create *Twitter* as well.

VB: What are the most useful marketing tools?

KK: Marketing strategies depend on what public and what generation the products are for, in other words, marketing must be applied to a certain audience. Of course internet is probably the most important today. I would say that the online website, social media and the press are the most important. I feel that after articles in the magazines there is a flurry, I feel results. I think the most useful is to promote yourself constantly as if you start doing that, you can't stop after one article or one message as it won't give any results. It is important to constantly dominate in the magazines, at least have one page every month, remind people about yourself. I don't believe in a bought advertising as you have to invest a lot in it and it won't help if you do it just once, you have to do it constantly.

VB: Do you think that personal events can be a good advertising?

KK: For me it's not acceptable. I don't like to boast about myself, I like when someone writes about me because I deserved it, they write about my work, collections, exhibitions, presentations, any other events related to what I do. Journalists very often ask about my personal life but I never answer that because I don't like it and I don't think it would be a positive promotion.

VB: How does the *Fashion Infection* influences your popularity?

KK: Well I can feel that after this event there are more clients coming, even though my permanent clients don't really go to *Fashion Infection*, but some new ones come. This is the type of event that you participate in because you are in the fashion context, in the current Lithuanian fashion, so you have to participate. If there are collectons not aimed at that audience, you better don't participate then. Many people come there just to show off, they don't understand the importance of this event.

VB: Do you find many new clients?

KK: New clients come constantly, I feel that they follow me, they come and say that they've heard about me. If one client wore my clothes, someone asked what he's wearing, they found out about me – so this direct advertising works best for me.

VB: Do you think desugner can be popular without any marketing or branding strategies? Is talent enough to be successful?

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KK: It's impossible, the presentation of yourself in front of the audience is crucial. It is not enough just to be talented to become successful, you have to create, do collections and show your work.

VB: Were you aware of business/marketing side of things in the beginning of your career?

KK: I didn't, there was no such thing as marketing, tutors always emphasised creativity and none of them explained us about the business side of things. I am glad that today all these things are more taken into account and students are introduced to fashion business, they talk about the beginning of careers, how and what to do.

VB: What branding did you do for your studio?

KK:I didn't do anything special and I didn't think about branding too much. The name of the studio is just my name and surname and the logo was born while I still was a student, 20 years ago when the tutor asked to create a logo and I created it last minute, it stuck with me until today.

VB: What other challenges did you face in the beginning of your career?

KK: It was very difficult to find my own place, the niche in the market, to purify my own style and define what exactly I do – what age category I apply for, what my style is, what my client is. Now I have to also think about the strategies, business, have at least basic business knowleadge. I have just recently considered and decided what makes me stand out from others, what makes me unique and what my style really is, I did some market research and found an empty niche which coincide with my style, there is nothing else like that. I considered what others do and found my own place.

VB: Do you face any competition between you and other designers? How big it is and how do you deal with it?

KK: Competition is a healthy thing. I always check what others do and if they do something great it is always a good push for me to move forward. Generally I don't try to compete a lot, I don't harm others and I don't tell my clients not to go to other designers, but me.

VB: What role do you think celebrity clients play in promoting your brand?

KK: I have quite a lot of clients who are famous people, who have high-statuses, but they are very intelligent and don't talk about those kind of things. I usually design their every day clothing. They don't need to promote themselves and they don't want to boast where they bought this or that. Some of them come anonymously and ask not to tell anyone that they come here.

VB: How do Lithuanians see designers' fashion?

KK: As I have some sort of distinctive style for braver clients, my designs look weird for many people. I feel that not many people appreciate the designer's fashion in Lithuania and probably every designer face that problem that it is difficult to create for masses who want something similar and boring and control your creativity, your interesting ideas because people are afraid of interesting clothing. There are some of them who want to be unique but those unique clothes cost more, so they can't afford it. Others could afford it but they don't understand what the designer fashion is and how much it's worth, it is always better to have one good than five bad clothes. Not all of them understand that.

VB: What would you do differently in the beginning of your career?

KK: I would look for a colleague who would agree to do business together with me as it is impossible to do everything on your own. There has to be one person responsible for creativity and design ideas and another one – for business side of things. Then we could divide all tasks and easier accomplish them.

VB: It is possible to become successful designer today?

KK: It is, but you just don't have to give up, try your best, express your ideas in a different way than others, look at situations in a creative way. If you can't do a lot, do less. It is better to do less rather than not do it at all.

VB: What is the most influential factor in the success of your brand and you as a designer?

KK: A lot of work. I had been forming my style for a long time, I was looking for myself in different forms, constructions, styles. Probably knowing what I have to do and being not like everyone else. It's wrong to do something what's already there especially in Lithuania where market is so small.

VB: What advice would you give to young designers?

KK: Don't give up, understand that a lot of hard work is waiting for you and love what you do. If you don't have any other way of realising yourself, find yourself, understand what you do, what it is that no one else is doing, look for it, establish yourself. And money will come together with the hard work.

Risk assessments have been conducted before the interviews and ethical issues have been considered for each individual case. Signed documents are available on request.

APPENDIX 2. SAMPLES OF MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL

2.1. RAMUNE PIEKAUTAITE

Facebook page

Online website

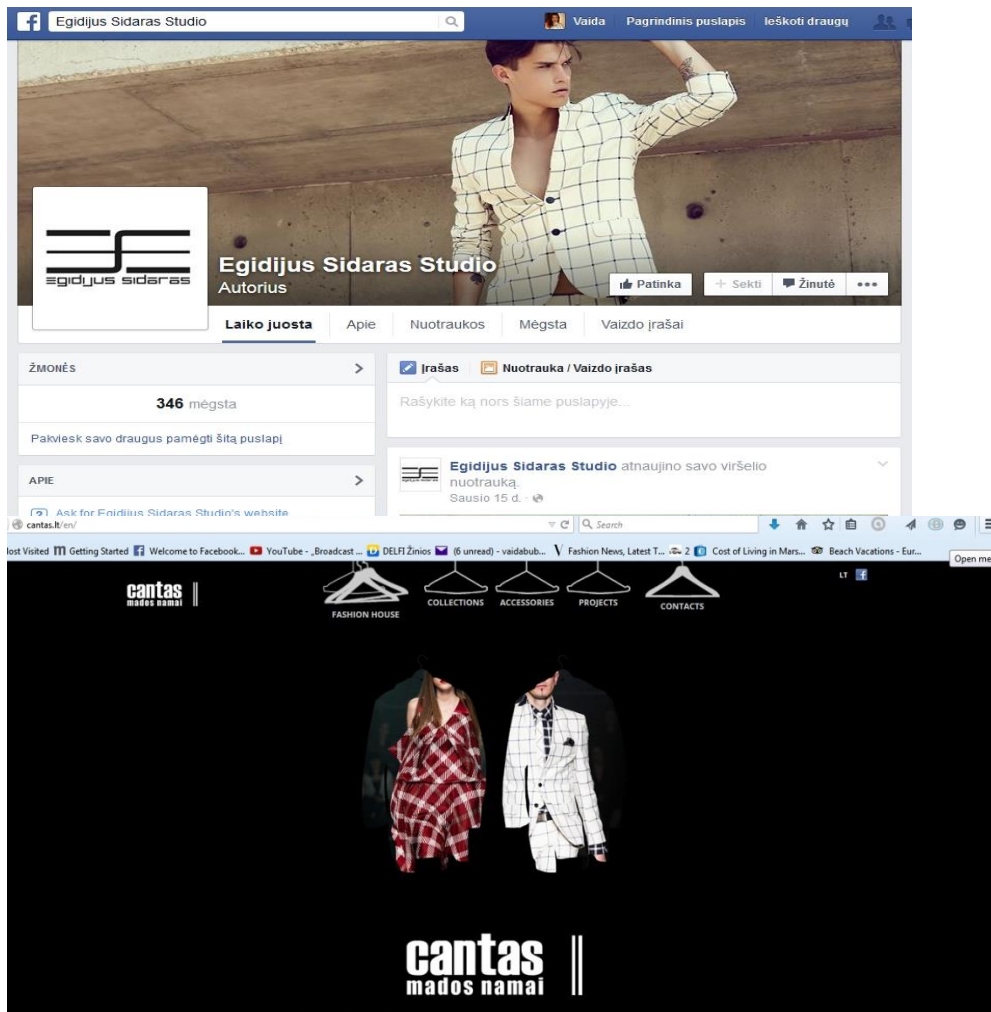**Magazine article**

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Press releases and articles

2.2. EGIDIJUS SIDARAS (FASHION HOUSE *CANTAS*)

Facebook page

Online website

Interview on *Youtube*

XL

cantas
mados namai

FASHION HOUSE

COLLECTIONS ACCESSORIES PROJECTS CONTACTS

LT

ABOUT US
CUSTOM ORDERS
IMAGE BUILDING

ABOUT US

Fashion House CANTAS was established in 2006. The name originates from the Lithuanian word *kantas* for a crease in trousers, since the company's activity began from making classic men's suits. Over the past few years CANTAS has significantly expanded its range of products. The fashion house creates business, occasional and casual clothing for men, women and children as well as staff uniforms for a variety of companies. Original accessories of Fashion House CANTAS include belts, handbags, cufflinks, suspenders, ties folded using the origami technique, brooches, handkerchiefs, necklaces, etc. These accessories and unique jewellery made by designer Sonata Bylaitė will fine-tune your image and add splendour to your attire.

Our Concept – modern classics, moderately expressive and noticeably exciting. Elegance inherent in classics is combined with unconventional solutions. Our goal is to achieve unity between a person's image, style, and proportions as well as the design and fabric of the clothes. We care for our garments' smartness and versatility.

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NEWS STYLE / SEP 1, 2014

Egidijus Sidaras Tailored Suiting Collection

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RUNWAY

KAROLIS INOKAITIS MODELS TRIM TAILORED SUITING FROM EGIDIJUS SIDARAS

AUGUST 29, 2014

EDITORIALS

SUITS

Articles in foreign online websites

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2.3. KRISTINA KRUOPIENYTE

Facebook page

Online website

Online boutique

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Collection video online

Articles and press releases

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APPENDIX 3. EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE

3.1. RAMUNE PIEKAUTAITE

● Prašymas dėl interviu(2)   People

On 2014.07.10 13:22, Vaida Bubnyt wrote:

Laba diena,

Esu Vaida Bubnytė, Mados Marketingo ir Komunikacijų Magistro studentė Huddersfieldo universitete, Didžiojoje Britanijoje. Rašau Jums, nes esu labai susidomėjusi Jūsų kaip mados dizainerės karjera ir Jūsų nuomonė bei mintys būtų labai vertingos mano tiriamajam darbui.

Savo projekte tiriu kaip pripažinti dizaineriai, turintys savo mados namus pasiekė sėkmę – ypatingai domiuosi tuo, kaip jie įgijo klientų pasitikėjimą, tapo žinomi, susilaukė žiniasklaidos dėmesio, taip pat, kaip marketingas bei viešosios komunikacijos gali padėti tapti sėkmingu dizaineriu.

Labai norėčiau paimti iš Jūsų interviu, tad norėjau paklausti, ar būtų galima susitarti su Jumis susitikti ir padiskutuoti mano tyrimo temą. Jūsų mintys ne tik būtų naudingos mano projektui, tačiau taip pat prisidėtų prie literatūros apie mados industriją papildymo ir labai tikiuosi, jog padėtų naujiems dizaineriams lengviau pradėti karjerą.

Suprantu, kad esate labai užsiėmusi, bet galiu užtikrinti, kad interviu atimtų tik 30 minučių Jūsų laiko. Kadangi turėčiau keliauti iš Didžiosios Britanijos, tad jeigu įmanoma, idealiausia būtų susitikti rugpjūčio pabaigoje. Būčiau labai dėkinga už Jūsų pagalbą ir nekantriai lauksiu Jūsų atsakymo.

Pagarbiai,
Vaida Bubnytė

● Rp(4)   People   ☆

● **Ramune Piekautaite**   Jul 11, 2014   ☆
  To me

  Laba diena Vaida, atostogausiu iki rugpjucio 10d.
  Pagarbiai
  Ramune Piekautaite

Reply, **Reply All** or **Forward** | **More**

● **me**   Jul 11, 2014   ☆
  To Ramune Piekautaite

  Laba diena,

  Supratau, ar galėčiau su Jumis susisiekti (kaip Jums patogiau - telefonu, ar elektroniniu paštu) po rugpjūčio 10d. ir susitarti dėl interviu?

  Pagarbiai,
  Vaida Bubnytė

  ⟩ Show message history

Reply, **Reply All** or **Forward** | **More**

Ramune Piekautaite   Jul 16, 2014

To me

Laba diena, susisiekiam emailu
Pagarbiai
Ramune

> Show message history

me   Aug 25, 2014

To Ramune Piekautaite

Laba diena,

Buvau rašiusi Jums dėl interviu apie tai, kaip dizaineriai, turintys savo mados namus pasiekė sėkmę, ir kaip marketingas bei viešosios komunikacijos gali padėti tapti sėkmingu dizaineriu.

Norėjau paklausti, ar būtų galima susitarti su Jumis susitikti ir padiskutuoti šia tema? Mano kelionę į Lietuvą teko atidėti, planuoju grįžti antroje rugsėjo pusėje. Gal galite pranešti, kokia diena Jums tiktų, ir aš tuomet prisitaikysiu savo kelionės datą.

Pagarbiai,
Vaida Bubnytė

> Show message history

Prašymas dėl interviu(2)   [People]

On Tuesday, September 2, 2014 9:53 AM, Svetlana | RP mados namai <svetlana@ramunepiekautaite.com> wrote:

Laba diena, p. Vaida,

Ramunė mielai sutiko su Jumis pabendrauti spalio 3 d.
Pagarbiai

Svetlana Samončik
Biuro vadybininkė –
Atstovė ryšiams su visuomene

mob. +370 616 85204
el.p. svetlana@ramunepiekautaite.com

UAB "Mados aikštė"
RAMUNĖS PIEKAUTAITĖS MADOS NAMAI
Vingrių g. 6
LT-01141 Vilnius

On 2014.09.02 11:57, Vaida Bubnyt wrote:

Laba diena, Svetlana,

Labai dėkoju Jums už atsakymą. Gal galite pasakyti, kelintą valandą ir kur man atvykti?

Pagarbiai,
Vaida Bubnytė

XLVI

On Tuesday, September 2, 2014 10:31 AM, Svetlana | RP mados namai <svetlana@ramunepiekautaite.com> wrote:

Ar būtų patogu 12 val. Vingrių g. 6?
Pagarbiai

Svetlana Samončik
Biuro vadybininkė –
Atstovė ryšiams su visuomene

○ Prašymas dėl interviu(2)   [People]   ☆

○ **me**   Sep 2, 2014   ☆
   To svetlana@ramunepiekautaite.com

   Taip, spalio 3d. 12val Vingrių g. 6 man puikiai tinka.

   Labai Jums ačiū ir nekantriai lauksiu susitikimo su p. Ramune.

   Pagarbiai
   Vaida

   › Show message history

○ **Svetlana | RP mados namai**   Sep 2, 2014   ☆
   To me

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   o.k. Iki malonaus!
   Pagarbiai

   Svetlana Samončik
   Biuro vadybininkė –
   Atstovė ryšiams su visuomene

   mob.Ⓢ +370 616 85204
   el.p. svetlana@ramunepiekautaite.com

   UAB "Mados aikštė"
   RAMUNĖS PIEKAUTAITĖS MADOS NAMAI
   Vingrių g. 6
   LT-01141 Vilnius
   tel./faks. +370 52791874

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3.2. EGIDIJUS SIDARAS

Prašymas dėl interviu People ★

me Sep 20, 2014 ★
To info@cantas.lt

Laba diena, p. Egidijau,

Esu Vaida Bubnytė, Mados Marketingo ir Komunikacijų Magistro studentė Huddersfieldo universitete, Didžiojoje Britanijoje. Rašau Jums, nes esu labai susidomėjusi Jūsų kaip mados dizainerio karjera ir Jūsų nuomonė bei mintys būtų labai vertingos mano tiriamajam darbui.

Savo projekte tiriu kaip pripažinti dizaineriai, turintys savo mados namus pasiekė sėkmę – ypatingai domiuosi tuo, kaip jie įgijo klientų pasitikėjimą, tapo žinomi, susilaukė žiniasklaidos dėmesio, taip pat, kaip marketingas bei viešosios komunikacijos gali padėti tapti sėkmingu dizaineriu.

Labai norėčiau paimti iš Jūsų interviu, tad norėjau paklausti, ar būtų galima susitarti su Jumis susitikti ir padiskutuoti mano tyrimo temą. Jūsų mintys ne tik būtų naudingos mano projektui, tačiau taip pat prisidėtų prie literatūros apie mados industriją papildymo ir labai tikiuosi, jog padėtų naujiems dizaineriams lengviau pradėti karjerą.

Suprantu, kad esate labai užsiėmęs, bet galiu užtikrinti, kad interviu atimtų tik 30 minučių Jūsų laiko. Kadangi į Lietuvą dėl interviu su dizaineriais grįžtu spalio 1d. - spalio 6d., jeigu Jums tiktų, susitikti idealiausia būtų šiomis dienomis. Būčiau labai dėkinga už Jūsų pagalbą ir nekantriai lauksiu Jūsų atsakymo.

Pagarbiai,
Vaida Bubnytė

Egidijus Sidaras Sep 22, 2014
To me

Sveika, Vaida,
direktore persiunte tavo laiska.

na jei tau tinka tokia situacija - as neesu mados namu savininkas - esu samdomas dizaineris.

jei tinka - rasyk, koks laikas tau patogus (spalio 1-3 d.d.) man butu turbut patogiausia spalio 3 d., spalio 2 d. ryte - uzsiemes.

Iki malonaus,
Egidijus Sidaras
Mados namų "Cantas" dizaineris
www.cantas.lt
tel. 🅢 +370 650 39266

XLVIII

Sveiki, Egidijau,

Labai ačiū už atsakymą, džiaugiuosi, jog galite padėti. Spalio 3 diena man puikiai tinka, ar galėtume susitikti 16 val.? Jei Jums tinka, parašykite kur man atvykti.

Vaida

Egidijus Sidaras

Sep 22, 2014

To me

Tinka. Tai ateik į "Canta" .
http://cantas.lt/kontaktai/
Lauksiu penktadieni. 16 val. Gali ir anksciau but. Jei spesi. Ta prasme nelauk 16 val. jei galesi ateit anksciau.
2014 rugs. 22 23:32 "Vaida Bubnyt" <vaidabubnyte@yahoo.com> rašė:

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XLIX

3.3. KRISTINA KRUOPIENYTE

me   Sep 20, 2014 ★
To kristinakruopienyte@yahoo.com

Laba diena, p. Kristina,

Esu Vaida Bubnytė, Mados Marketingo ir Komunikacijų Magistro studentė Huddersfieldo universitete, Didžiojoje Britanijoje. Rašau Jums, nes esu labai susidomėjusi Jūsų kaip mados dizainerės karjera ir Jūsų nuomonė bei mintys būtų labai vertingos mano tiriamajam darbui.

Savo projekte tiriu kaip pripažinti dizaineriai, turintys savo mados namus pasiekė sėkmę – ypatingai domiuosi tuo, kaip jie įgijo klientų pasitikėjimą, tapo žinomi, susilaukė žiniasklaidos dėmesio, taip pat, kaip marketingas bei viešosios komunikacijos gali padėti tapti sėkmingu dizaineriu.

Labai norėčiau paimti iš Jūsų interviu, tad norėjau paklausti, ar būtų galima susitarti su Jumis susitikti ir padiskutuoti mano tyrimo tema. Jūsų mintys ne tik būtų naudingos mano projektui, tačiau taip pat prisidėtų prie literatūros apie mados industriją papildymo ir labai tikiuosi, jog padėtų naujiems dizaineriams lengviau pradėti karjerą.

Suprantu, kad esate labai užsiėmusi, bet galiu užtikrinti, kad interviu atimtų tik 30 minučių Jūsų laiko. Kadangi į Lietuvą dėl interviu su dizaineriais grįžtu spalio 1d. - spalio 6d., jeigu Jums tiktų, susitikti idealiausia būtų šiomis dienomis. Būčiau labai dėkinga už Jūsų pagalbą ir nekantriai lauksiu Jūsų atsakymo.

Pagarbiai,
Vaida Bubnytė

Kristina   Sep 22, 2014 ★
To me

Sveiki,
galime susitikti.
Mano tel. 868802100
Kai busite Lietuvoje , skambinkite.

Kristina Kruopienyte

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me   Sep 22, 2014 ★
To Kristina

Sveiki, Kristina,

Labai Jums ačiū! Būtinai Jums paskambinsiu spalio 1 dieną.

Geros dienos.

Vaida Bubnytė

L