

The Evolution and Future Prospects of BLIK: A Case Study

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Abstract

Aim: This paper aims to outline the development prospects of BLIK, examining the key factors influencing its growth. By analysing the drivers of BLIK's expansion, the paper highlights its rise as a major player in the payment sector.

Methodology: A thematic literature review and secondary data analysis, including data from the National Bank of Poland [Narodowy Bank Polski] and findings from scientific studies and industry reports, were utilised to fulfill the research aim. The discussion of BLIK's advantages was structured using a functional model of payment execution.

Findings: BLIK's effective marketing strategy and robust informational-promotional efforts have propelled its expansion within the Polish payment market. The primary limitation for BLIK users is the requirement for a smartphone and digital proficiency, presenting a barrier for digitally excluded individuals. Nonetheless, analysis suggests BLIK's position in Poland will continue to strengthen, with expansion into foreign markets evidenced by the adaptation of select international terminals to accept BLIK payments.

Implications: BLIK's increasing popularity is reshaping consumer payment preferences, helping businesses attract Polish customers, and prompting financial institutions to adapt their services and infrastructure to meet evolving market demands.

Originality/value: This paper's unique contribution is its analysis of the key factors behind BLIK's rise, underscoring its significant impact on the payment sector.

Keywords: BLIK, PayTech, payment innovation, payment scheme, payment system

1. Introduction

The late 20th century witnessed substantial civilisational advancements, primarily due to the rapid progress in technology, particularly within information and communication technology. This technological evolution prompted the emergence of modern financial solutions, significantly reshaping the financial landscape (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020). During this period, financial institutions shifted their business models from a business- and banking-oriented focus to a more customer-centred approach (Alt et al., 2018). Moving into the 21st century, financial institutions – both traditional banks and new market entrants – prioritise customer needs, offering convenient, technology-driven services.

Newly founded financial service providers emphasise two main strategies from inception: a strong customer orientation and the integration of modern technologies. Known as FinTechs, these institutions include entirely new entities and also traditional financial organizations adopting advanced technologies. FinTech can be defined in two ways (Harasim & Mitreęa-Niestrój, 2018):

- a narrow view, focusing on entities outside traditional financial services that leverage innovative technologies to deliver financial services more efficiently and create new product offer, thereby adding value for customers;
- a broad view, encompassing any organization using innovative technologies to enhance financial service efficiency and develop new solutions, leading to added customer value.

The emergence of new financial institutions and the growth of the FinTech sector have intensified competition in the financial market by providing alternatives to traditional services. Digitalisation, coupled with generational shifts, presents an opportunity for the FinTech industry, as younger generations, familiar with technology from an early age, tend to have higher digital proficiency in adulthood (Bieleń & Kubiczek, 2020). Consequently, digital exclusion is notably less common among younger populations, which facilitates the adoption of modern financial solutions (Widawski & Brakoniecki, 2016).

A subset of FinTech solutions focuses on payment systems and schemes that enable efficient transactions (Kaczmarek, 2023). PayTechs, a type of FinTech, have applied technology to streamline the electronic transfer of value, providing solutions that process payments in both digital and physical spaces (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020). In Poland, the BLIK payment scheme stands out as the most popular modern payment solution. Since its launch in February 2015, BLIK has experienced rapid growth in both its user base and the number of accepting merchants, solidifying its position in the market and opening further development opportunities (Błach & Klimontowicz, 2021). Research indicates that shifts in Polish consumer payment habits, particularly those influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, have significantly fueled BLIK's expansion (Kubiczek, 2022). Studies from 2022 revealed that Polish consumers have maintained their preference for innovative payment methods, rather than reverting to traditional banking practices and payment methods (Czarkowska & Bagniewski, 2022). This sustained trend highlights BLIK's strong potential for continued growth in the Polish payment landscape.

The aim of the article was to outline the development prospects of BLIK, examining the key factors influencing its growth. To achieve the set goal, the following research questions were posed: what value does the BLIK system bring? What distinguishes it from other payment methods available in Poland? What influenced the pace of its development? What are the prospects and conditions for its further development? By analysing the drivers of BLIK's expansion, the paper outlines its rise as a major player in the payment sector, delves into the historical context and initial market entry strategies that laid the foundation for BLIK's success. Furthermore, the paper explores BLIK's innovative features and evaluates its potential for future development, considering both domestic growth and expansion into international markets.

The structure of this paper is as follows: Section 2 provides a literature review, discussing payment schemes and systems in Poland and the BLIK payment method. Section 3 describes the research approach and data sources used for the analysis. Section 4 focuses on the analysis results, specifically comparing BLIK with other payment methods, examining the pace of BLIK's growth, comparing BLIK's growth to other payment methods, and assessing the potential for further growth of BLIK. Section 5 concludes the study, summarising the findings, practical implications, limitations, and proposed directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Payment Schemes and Systems in Poland

In Poland, the payment scheme is regulated and defined in the Act of 19 August 2011 on payment services (Ustawa z dnia 19 sierpnia 2011...) as "a set of rules for conducting payment transactions, issuing and accepting payment instruments by payment service providers, and processing payment transactions made using payment instruments and card payment systems." There are two types of payment schemes:

- four-party schemes,
- three-party schemes.

In the four-party scheme, the payment organization does not handle settlement activities directly but delegates these to other payment service providers. Operating such a scheme requires authorisation from the President of the National Bank of Poland (NBP). In contrast, a three-party scheme does not require NBP authorisation if the payment organization acts as the sole issuer of payment instruments and the sole entity ensuring acceptance of these instruments by traders (Kokkola, 2010, p. 56).

The payment system is an integral part of the financial system, tightly integrated with the banking sector, providing savings and credit services. This system enables the flow of financial resources in the economy. It is defined as a collection of instruments, procedures, and systems that allow the circulation of money within a country (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2019b). The evolution of the term "payment system" over recent years has been influenced by two types of factors:

- market-related factors, mainly stemming from technological progress and increased needs for electronic forms of information recording and transmission from consumers,
- legal and regulatory factors.

The overall structure of the payment system is presented in Figure 1.

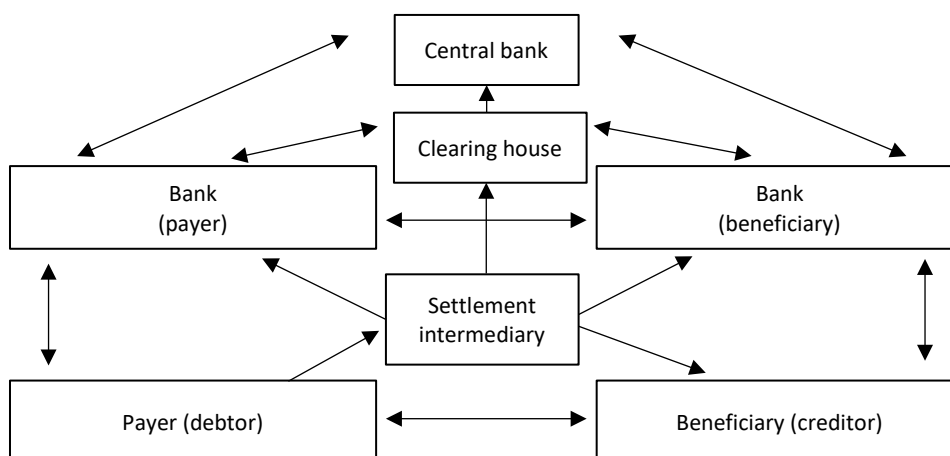


Fig. 1. Payment system in Poland

Source: own study based on (Maciejewski, 2013, p. 59).

In the payment system, key stakeholders include central banks, the government and parliament, supervisory authorities, associations of payment service providers, issuers of payment instruments, payment organizations, and various other institutions (Tochmański, 2013). Participants of the payment system are divided into several groups (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2019b, p. 16). Consumers and businesses constitute the first level. The second level participants are payment service providers, i.e. entities that are involved in handling transactions between the first level participants, for example, banks and payment institutions. Entities intermediating in settling transactions between second level participants, for example, the National Clearing House [KIR, Krajowa Izba Rozliczeniowa], are the third level participants. The last group consists of entities that store financial resources of payment service providers such as the National Bank of Poland.

2.2. BLIK Payment Method

BLIK as a payment innovation is characterised by its tremendous impact and the ability to shape the payment market, as it is not only a payment scheme but also a completely separate payment system. This dual role involves a variety of entities, including banks and other financial institutions, which collaborate within the BLIK system. As a payment scheme, BLIK enables mobile phone-based transactions, allowing users to make payments in diverse settings: at physical Point of Sale (POS) terminals, online, at ATMs for cash withdrawals, and for mobile peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020).

BLIK is based on a six-digit, unique code that is generated by a mobile payment app and displayed on the user’s phone screen, which the user inputs to complete most transactions. However, for contactless payments, transactions are processed through the Express Elixir instant payment system, eliminating the need for the six-digit code.

The PayTech industry is influenced by a range of internal and external factors, including technological advancements, regulatory frameworks, and market dynamics. Discussing the value BLIK brings to users is possible by defining the conditions of its advantages as a payment solution, using a functional model of payment execution based on indicating the value delivered at three levels (layers): transactional, enabling, and supporting functions. These three layers are components of the functional model of payment execution as illustrated in Figure 2.

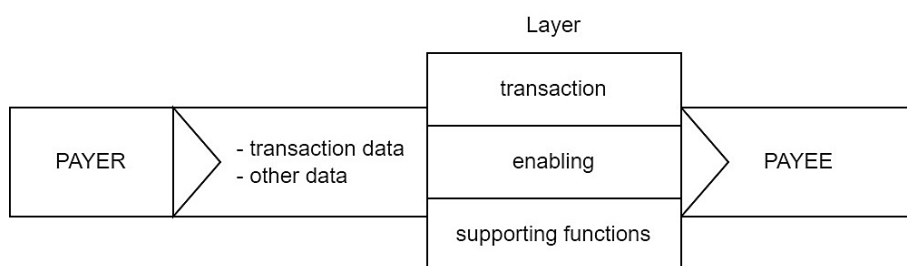


Fig. 2. Functional payment processing model

Source: own study based on (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020).

In the context of data usage by the payer, there is substantial growth potential driven by the expanding e-commerce sector and the increasing trust in non-bank payment institutions. Within the functional model of payment execution, the most commonly utilized features by users include transparent processes, high levels of automation, ease of application use, and affordability. Accessibility, ongoing technological advances, and the widespread adoption of mobile devices enable the model to function across several distinct layers.

The transactional layer is particularly responsible for processing transactions made using the BLIK payment system, within which information related to individual transactions (amount, date, time, or service) is collected. Then, the transactional layer is responsible for redirecting transaction-related data to the appropriate financial institutions for settlement (Jagodzińska-Komar, 2018). The transactional layer encompasses 18 categories of entities, including Accounting & Finance, Credit Card, and E-Commerce providers (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020).

The enabling layer of the BLIK system is responsible for authenticating users and authorising individual transactions. This layer also provides secure access to the BLIK system via multiple channels, including mobile apps, online banking, and payment terminals. This concerns three main categories of entities: AI & Development, API, and ID Verification & Fraud Prevention (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020).

The supporting functions layer comprises 14 categories of entities (e.g. Credit Scoring, Cybersecurity, Data Analytics, Loyalty & Rewards, Personal Finance Management, Rate Shopping, and Risk Management) that deliver auxiliary functions to enhance the BLIK system's operation (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2020). These include user and card management, transaction monitoring, reporting, and technical support for financial institutions and payment operators.

Together, these layers form a cohesive BLIK payment scheme designed to offer fast, convenient, and innovative payment execution via mobile devices (Szmydt & Abramowicz, 2018). As an integrated payment solution, BLIK combines the convenience of mobile banking with the efficiency of rapid transactions, providing users with a secure and streamlined payment experience.

3. Methodology

To provide a comprehensive context for exploring BLIK's development prospects and the factors influencing it, this study conducted extensive analyses based on secondary data and a thematic literature review, establishing a robust foundation for the research. Primary data sources included the National Bank of Poland, alongside reports from other financial institutions and findings from various scientific studies. The study focused on data up to 2022 to better capture the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which BLIK grew rapidly due to a favourable environment for cashless payments.

Firstly, BLIK was evaluated against other payment methods using the functional model of payment execution. This comparison examined the advantages and disadvantages of each method, highlighting both shared and unique features. The analysis provided insights into BLIK's distinct position in the payment landscape.

Secondly, data from the National Bank of Poland was utilised to illustrate BLIK's growth in terms of the number and value of payments. This section detailed the quarterly dynamics, offering a comprehensive view of how BLIK has evolved over time. Additionally, a comparison was made between payments made online and at Points of Sale (POS), shedding light on consumer behaviour and preferences in different contexts.

Thirdly, the payment habits of Poles were examined, comparing their preference for BLIK payments with other methods. To assess these payment habits, the regular BlueMedia study conducted in 2022 on a nationwide sample of 1,059 respondents via the CAWI method was utilised, alongside similar studies from previous years (starting in 2017). This approach provided a clear picture of the current trends and consumer inclinations in the Polish market, offering valuable insights into the reasons why BLIK has become a preferred choice for many.

Fourthly, based on the comprehensive findings, conclusions were drawn regarding BLIK's potential trajectory. Key drivers supporting BLIK's continued growth were identified, as well as potential barriers that could pose challenges. This overview provides a balanced perspective on BLIK's outlook, identifying areas of potential expansion as well as challenges to address for sustained progress.

4. Results

4.1. BLIK vs. Other Payment Methods

Consumer payment habits, along with the existing technological infrastructure, create both opportunities and limitations for the development of PayTech solutions (Esselink & Hernández, 2017). Standard payment methods, such as cash, credit cards, and bank transfers, are widely accepted and frequently used in transactions. For PayTechs to compete effectively, they must go beyond traditional transaction standards and deliver enhanced utility to consumers. BLIK, available as a payment option in online stores and at physical payment terminals in retail outlets, restaurants, and service locations, has gained widespread acceptance. Its immediate transaction settlement positions BLIK as a serious competitor to established payment methods (Świder, 2021).

Among the advantages of BLIK one can also find security and convenience of transaction use, which can be linked to its functionality. While cash payments also offer immediate settlement, they require caution in handling, including counting and securing funds. High-value cash transactions involve the risk of loss due to the physical transportation of large sums. In contrast, credit cards mitigate many of these disadvantages with their convenience and compact form. Card transactions are generally safe, as transactions over 100 PLN require PIN entry or a signature. While the consumer can leave the store with purchases immediately after successful transaction authorisation at the terminal, the actual payment settlement is not yet completed as the continuation of settlements between banks, the clearing agent, and the payment organization is still ongoing.

Card payments at retail and service points are made using payment terminals. For BLIK payments, the same latest-generation devices are used. BLIK payments require a smartphone with a banking app and an associated phone number, which adds considerable value for the modern consumer. BLIK also supports contactless (NFC) payments and bank transfers, minimising the need for a wallet and increasing the security of stored funds. Wallet use does not adequately protect against the physical removal of cash by unauthorised persons, and credit cards with the contactless function allow them to be used without transaction authorization, such as a PIN code for amounts up to 100 PLN. Furthermore, there is a risk of credit card skimming. On the other hand, access to a banking app on a mobile phone is secured by the necessity of logging in, for example, through biometrics or a PIN code, as two-factor verification is a legal requirement (except when adding a device to the 'trusted' ones).

Each BLIK transaction requires entry of a six-digit code and often also additional confirmation via SMS or app PIN, providing an extra layer of security against unauthorised use. Moreover, BLIK allows users to 'remember' specific stores, streamlining the payment process. When a customer adds a store as a trusted entity in their app, future payments to that store can proceed without entering the BLIK code, provided the store has a high percentage of returning customers. In such cases, payments are made directly on the store's website or app without redirection to an external payment gateway, enhancing user convenience.

Compared to traditional bank transfers, BLIK's advantages are additionally evident. The speed of a bank transfer depends on various factors, such as transaction type (domestic vs. international, intra-bank vs. interbank) and bank-specific procedures, which can lead to delays ranging from minutes to several days. While transfers provide a level of convenience, they require the recipient's twenty-six-digit bank account number and personal data, which takes significantly more time than entering a six-digit BLIK code and confirming it.

In summary, BLIK offers an optimisation of the payment process due to its universality, which is a highly desirable feature from a consumer perspective (a comparison is presented in Table 1). By combining modern technology with an innovative payment model and secure mobile apps and integrated systems, BLIK delivers significant value to its users. Its broad availability in most Polish banks, convenience, speed, and wide acceptance at various points of sale contribute to its attractiveness.

Table 1. BLIK's advantages and disadvantages

| Aspect | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Acceptance | Widely accepted in online stores, retail outlets, restaurants, and service locations. | Limited to markets and locations where BLIK is supported, predominantly within Poland. |
| Transaction speed | Instant transaction settlement, making it competitive with other payment methods like cash, credit cards, and bank transfers. | - |
| Security | Enhanced security features: requires a six-digit code and/or SMS/PIN confirmation for each transaction; app access secured by biometrics or a PIN (two-factor verification). | Potential inconvenience if mobile device or app access is compromised; relies on mobile network and device functionality. |
| Convenience | Can replace carrying a wallet; smartphone app allows NFC payments and transfers, reducing the need to carry cash or cards. | Dependent on smartphone availability and app functionality; requires users to ensure device security. |

Source: own study.

As shown in Table 1, BLIK's continuous development as a payment method is driven by these features, which encourage frequent use and solidify payment habits among consumers. Its widespread usage also means that BLIK increasingly serves as a substitute for traditional payment methods.

4.2. BLIK's Growth

Since its establishment in February 2015, BLIK has rapidly gained popularity, becoming one of Poland's most frequently chosen payment methods. This success is attributed not only to the unique value BLIK offers but also to its strategic partnership with MasterCard, initiated in 2018 (BLIK, 2018, 2020). Through this collaboration, BLIK leverages its mobile and online payment platform, while MasterCard contributes its advanced payment technology, reputable brand, and extensive global acceptance network. This partnership has enabled contactless payments, enhancing the convenience of BLIK usage at payment terminals.

By 2019, BLIK transactions conducted online by Poles had already surpassed the number of transactions made with traditional payment cards (Narodowy Bank Polski, 2019a). As of 2023, the number of active BLIK users exceeded 14 million (BLIK, 2023). In 2022 alone, BLIK facilitated 1.2 billion transactions with a total transaction value of 164 billion PLN, marking a substantial year-over-year increase of 61.90% in transaction volume and 58.68% in transaction value. Figure 3 illustrates the share of various transaction types by number and value in 2022, providing a detailed overview of BLIK's diverse usage in the Polish payment landscape.

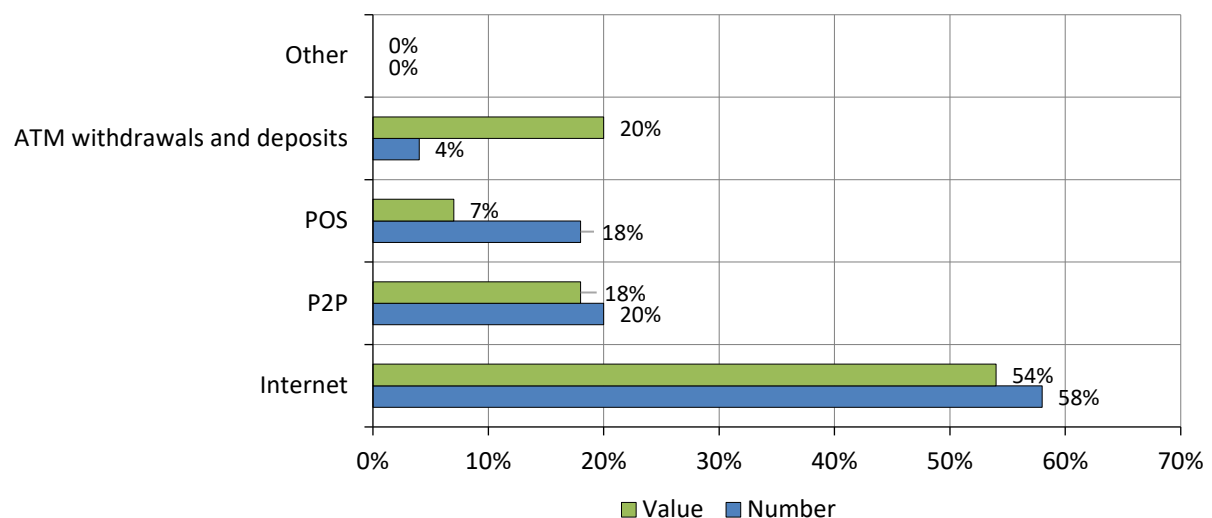
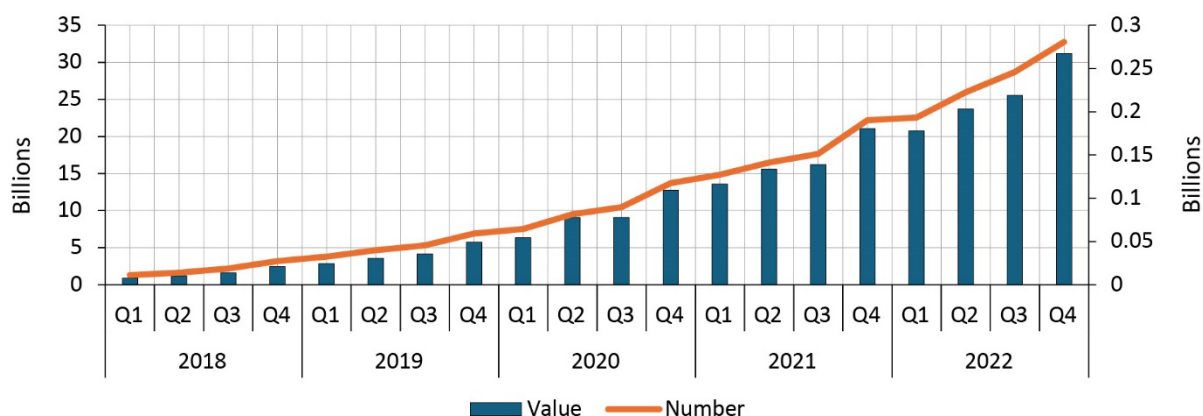


Fig. 3. BLIK transaction types in 2022

Source: own study based on NBP data.

According to 2022 data from the National Bank of Poland, over half of BLIK payments were Internet transactions, both in terms of their volume and value. Peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions comprised 20% of total transactions, representing 18% of the total transaction value. Transactions at POS terminals accounted for 18% of all BLIK transactions, though their value was only 7%. In contrast, ATM transactions (withdrawals or deposits) made up just 4% of transactions by number but contributed to 20% of the total transaction value, highlighting the larger average value associated with these types of transactions. Other transaction types made up less than 1% of the total. The average transaction values in 2022 were as follows: 125 PLN for Internet transactions, 58 PLN at POS terminals with a code, 40 PLN for contactless payments, 666 PLN at ATMs, and 122 PLN for P2P transactions.

BLIK’s growth rate has been exponential, reflecting its rapid development. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated its usage, particularly for online and POS transactions. The combined number and value of these transactions from 2018 to 2022, presented by quarters, is shown in Figure 4, illustrating the sustained growth in both domains over this period.



*From Q3 2021 – contactless POS payments.

Fig. 4. BLIK payments: number of transactions vs. transaction value

Source: own study based on NBP data.

When analysing the aggregated number and value of BLIK transactions at POS terminals and on the Internet, it is evident that the COVID-19 pandemic did not significantly impact BLIK’s development rate. However, a seasonal trend is apparent across individual quarters, particularly in the final three months of each year, where growth tends to accelerate. This recurring year-end increase suggests a seasonal pattern, making quarterly comparisons particularly relevant. Figure 5 provides a detailed view of these quarterly dynamics, offering insights into BLIK’s growth trajectory within each period.

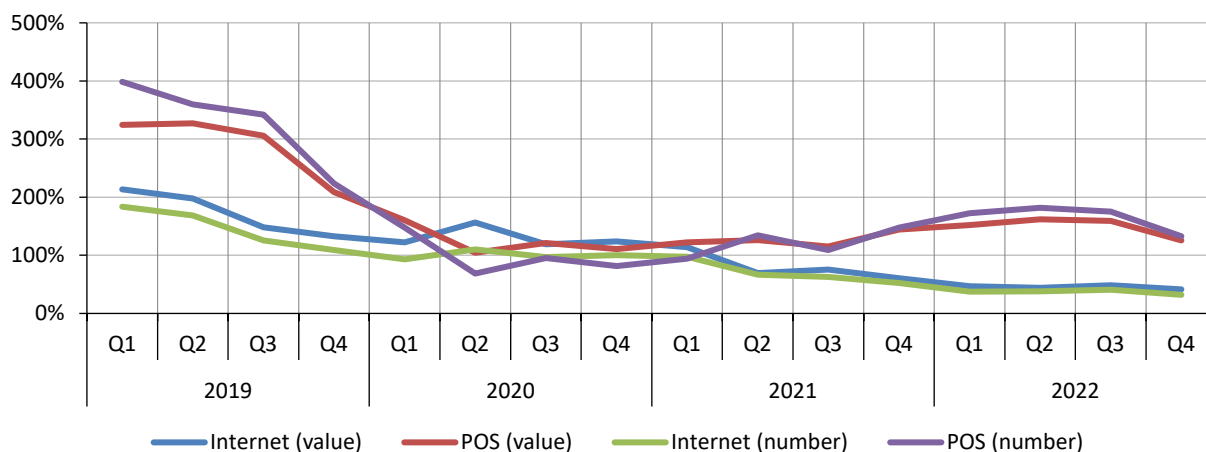


Fig. 5. Dynamics of BLIK payments: number of transactions vs. transaction value for Internet and POS channels

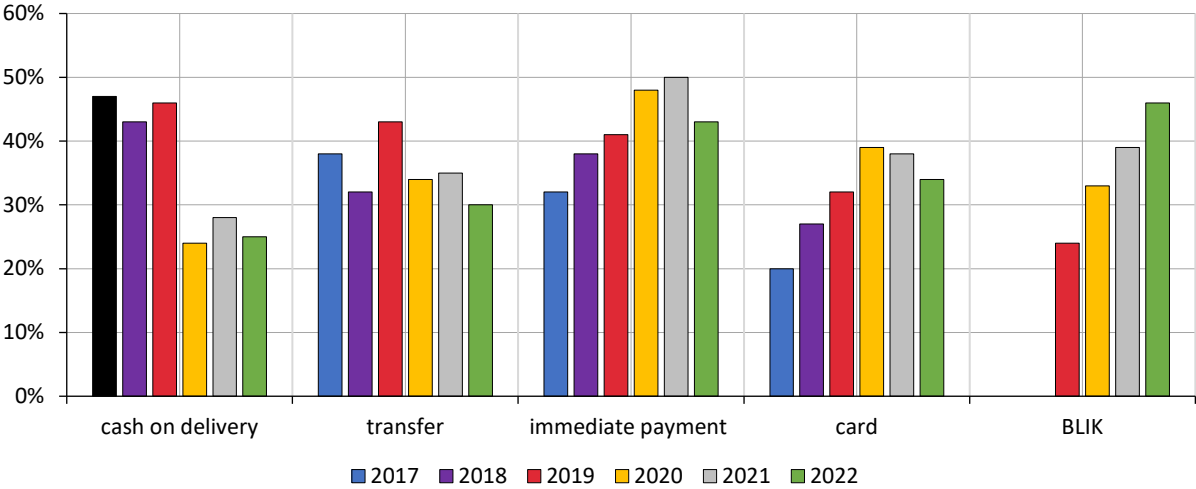
Source: own study based on NBP data.

Between 2018 and 2022, BLIK recorded significant quarter-to-quarter growth in both POS terminal and Internet payments. A closer look at these dynamics reveals that POS terminal transactions saw the most remarkable increase, with transaction numbers surging by nearly 400% in the first quarter of 2019 and transaction value rising by over 300% within the first three quarters of the same year. Internet payments through BLIK also grew significantly, although their quarter-to-quarter growth rate gradually slowed.

In the second quarter of 2020, coinciding with the implementation of pandemic restrictions, growth in both the number and value of POS terminal transactions slowed, while online transactions experienced a slight uptick. From this point onward, POS terminal transactions resumed a steady upward trajectory in both number and value, while online transactions showed a decelerating growth trend. However, this deceleration does not indicate a halt in BLIK’s development, but rather it suggests a stabilisation phase, reflecting BLIK’s solidified position as a regularly used payment option among consumers.

4.3. BLIK’s Growth Compared to Other Payment Methods

The rapid growth of BLIK, reflected in both the number of payments and transaction values, has positioned it as one of the most frequently used payment methods in Poland. Given the shift in consumer behaviour due to the COVID-19 pandemic, comparisons of payment methods in recent years should primarily focus on online purchases, as restrictions on in-store shopping led to a substantial increase in demand for e-commerce. Figure 6 illustrates the adoption of various payment methods for online purchases from 2017 to 2022, highlighting the evolving preferences among consumers during this period.



* card – card used for payment (without specifying the type, i.e. debit or credit).

Fig. 6. Preferred payment methods for online purchases

Source: own study based on (Blue Media, 2022).

Since BLIK was first included in the Blue Media research in 2019, there has been a consistent rise in its adoption, with the percentage of users nearly doubling by 2022. In that year, BLIK became the preferred payment method for almost 50% of respondents – a level of growth unmatched by any other payment method surveyed. Concurrently, there was a noticeable decline in the use of cash-on-delivery, likely influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated desire to reduce physical contact.

Research by Ślażyńska-Kluczek and Gawryszewska (2022) underscored that cash and payment cards remain the primary methods for in-store POS transactions, while BLIK has emerged as the leading choice for online payments. Notably, as the share of people using BLIK for online transactions grew,

the usage of other non-cash methods, including quick payments and credit cards, declined. Figure 7 presents a comparison of the most popular payment methods used by Poles for online purchases, showcasing the shifting preferences over recent years.

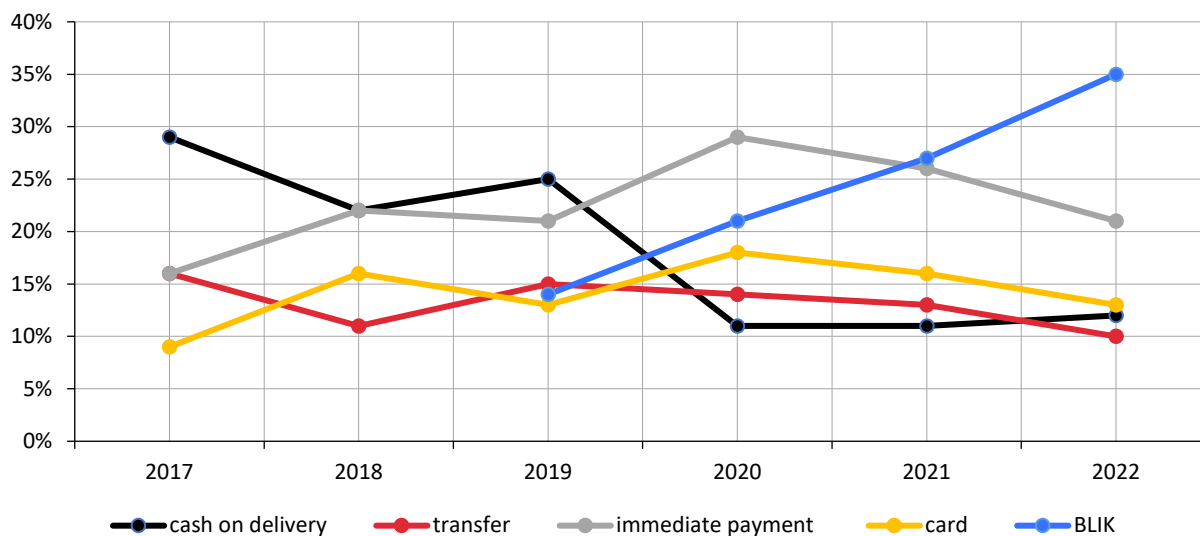


Fig. 7. Preferred payment methods among Polish consumers

Source: own study based on (Blue Media, 2022).

The increase in BLIK usage is driven by its growing popularity, particularly as a preferred payment method for online transactions. In 2022, BLIK became the first choice for 35% of respondents. This rising preference reflects the recognised value that BLIK delivers – speed, ease of use, and security. Notably, BLIK quickly outpaced traditional payment methods such as credit cards, a shift made possible not only by its expanding acceptance across various sectors but also through targeted marketing efforts. These efforts included informational campaigns and promotions, such as discounts and lotteries, that increased user engagement.

A prominent example was the sixth edition of BLIKOMANIA, a popular lottery organized by the Polish Payment Standard, which ran from June 1 to August 30, 2022. Supported by 18 banks that offer BLIK among their apps, the campaign provided significant incentives: participants had a chance to win one of nine annual salaries valued at 84,000 PLN each, additional BLIK checks worth 100 PLN, and bonuses for contactless payments via BLIK and purchases on Allegro.pl (BLIK, 2022). These promotional activities reinforced BLIK's position in the market, helping it become a trusted and frequently used payment option.

4.4. The Future of BLIK's Further Growth

The introduction of the BLIK scheme, supported by a dedicated payment system and marked by dynamic growth, has profoundly influenced the Polish payment market, as evidenced by the rising volume and value of transactions (Błach & Klimontowicz, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift to cashless payments due to increased online shopping, solidifying lasting changes in consumer habits (Kubiczek, 2022). In addition, generational shifts and the rising importance of modern technology suggest continued growth for BLIK and similar mobile banking services.

The ongoing expansion of both payment cards and mobile payment options like BLIK, with their high acceptance, may result from their advantages over cash transactions, including greater convenience (portability) and security. The development of BLIK is currently moving towards introducing functions that do not require the use of a traditional six-digit code (Kaczmarek, 2023). Examples of such innovations include contactless payments and the ability to mark an online store as trusted during

payment. Additionally, recurring payments have been introduced, allowing for the automatization of periodic payment, such as subscription, electricity, and phone bills, without the need to confirm them in the banking app. BLIK's reach has also expanded internationally, leveraging Mastercard's contactless technology to facilitate payments outside Poland.

However, BLIK's growth faces challenges. One commonly noted obstacle is the limited availability of BLIK-compatible payment terminals (Ślażyńska-Kluczek & Gawryszewska, 2022), although businesses often offer phone-based BLIK payment options to circumvent this issue. Additionally, service availability is limited to Polish customers with specific banking apps which constrains a broader adoption. The most significant barriers are user habits, digital literacy gaps, and resistance to new technologies. These challenges include limited financial knowledge and a preference for traditional payment methods among some users (Kaczmarek, 2023).

Some smaller banks also lack BLIK integration, presenting another barrier. While BLIK is generally secure, like other digital payment methods, it remains susceptible to hacker threats, although banks implement safeguards to protect users. Additionally, reliance on Internet access can hinder BLIK's usability in areas with weak connectivity.

Despite these obstacles, BLIK's rapid development indicates that these barriers are unlikely to impede its expansion significantly. BLIK's future trajectory, summarised in Table 2, highlights its strengths and limitations.

Table 2. Strengths and weaknesses in BLIK's future trajectory

| Dimension | Aspect | Description |
|------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Strengths | Technological advancements | Innovations such as contactless payments, trusted online store marking, and recurring payment options indicate BLIK's adaptability to consumer needs, enhancing convenience and user experience. |
| | Expansion beyond Poland | BLIK's international reach is expanding through partnerships like Mastercard for contactless payments abroad, increasing its global accessibility. |
| | Consumer adoption trends | Shifts in payment habits post-COVID-19 and generational change support ongoing growth, with mobile and cashless payments becoming more popular. |
| | Security and reliability | BLIK's strong security features, along with bank-backed measures, ensure consumer trust and reliability, which are critical for sustaining its growth. |
| Weaknesses | Terminal availability | Limited access to BLIK-compatible terminals restricts wider adoption, although mobile alternatives partially mitigate this challenge. |
| | Consumer familiarity & skills | Traditional payment habits and limited digital skills among certain user groups slow BLIK's adoption and expansion. |
| | Dependence on internet access | BLIK requires internet connectivity for most functions, which can limit its use in areas with poor network access, impacting overall accessibility. |
| | Service access limitations | BLIK's availability is currently restricted to Polish customers with participating bank apps, with limited support in some smaller banks, presenting a barrier to reaching a broader user base. |

Source: own study.

To sum up, despite its challenges, BLIK's established position in the Polish payment market underlines its transformative impact and strong potential for continued growth.

5. Conclusion

The advancement of modern technology and the digitalisation of nearly all facets of daily life have reshaped societal conditions, with generational shifts helping to reduce digital exclusion. Consequently, smartphone ownership and usage are now widespread, establishing the groundwork for new payment methods like BLIK. The emergence and rapid growth of BLIK were facilitated by the collaboration of numerous banks, both commercial and cooperative, leading to its broad availability as a payment option.

The success achieved by BLIK is a consequence of its value (utility) as a payment method. Through the lens of the functional model of payment execution, BLIK provides value across all three layers: transactional, enabling, and supporting functions. Transactions using BLIK are secure and are settled instantly. Its marketing strategy, supported by an informational and promotional campaign, attracted new users who quickly recognised these benefits, making BLIK the most frequently used online payment method in Poland in 2022.

The pace of BLIK's growth suggests it will continue to solidify its position in the Polish payment market, with potential expansion into international markets. The adaptation of some foreign terminals to accept BLIK payments supports this possibility, highlighting substantial development prospects.

This study provides several practical implications. For consumers, BLIK is becoming an increasingly attractive and versatile payment option, likely influencing shopping behaviour and preferences for payment methods. For entrepreneurs, particularly those operating internationally, integrating BLIK could be key to attracting Polish customers and fostering brand trust. For financial institutions and payment operators, BLIK's growing popularity may necessitate adjustments in product offer and technological infrastructure to align with market trends and meet evolving customer expectations.

The findings of this study are subject to certain limitations. Although it examined BLIK adoption at a macro level, it did not consider the individual characteristics of the respondents, which could be more accurately understood through micro-level analysis. Additionally, the study did not distinguish between specific social groups, such as early adopters of BLIK versus those who have yet to adopt it. The research timeframe, ending in 2022, was selected to capture BLIK's notable growth during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period that significantly accelerated digital payment adoption.

The ongoing development of BLIK, as indicated by the increasing number of users and the rising volume and value of transactions, stresses its relevance and highlights the need for further research. Future studies should consider a comprehensive comparison of BLIK with other payment methods, with particular attention to the factors influencing consumers' choice of payment methods. An insightful direction for future research could involve analysing BLIK's growth through Rogers' model of diffusion of innovation, alongside a comparative analysis with payment cards, to better understand the adoption dynamics and unique influencing factors associated with each payment option.

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Ewolucja i przyszłość BLIK-a: studium przypadku

Streszczenie

Cel: Niniejszy artykuł ma na celu określenie perspektyw rozwoju BLIK-a, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem czynników kształtujących jego wzrost. Poprzez analizę czynników napędzających rozwój BLIK-a, artykuł ukazuje, jak BLIK stał się głównym graczem w sektorze płatności w Polsce.

Metodyka: Do realizacji celu zastosowano tematyczny przegląd literatury oraz analizę danych wtórnych, w tym danych Narodowego Banku Polskiego oraz wyników innych badań naukowych i raportów branżowych. Dyskusję na temat zalet BLIK-a oparto na funkcjonalnym modelu realizacji płatności.

Wyniki: Efektywna strategia marketingowa oraz kampanie informacyjno-promocyjne przyczyniły się do dynamicznego rozwoju BLIK-a na polskim rynku płatności. Główne ograniczenie w korzystaniu z BLIK-a stanowi konieczność posiadania smartfona oraz odpowiednich umiejętności, co stanowi barierę dla osób wykluczonych cyfrowo. Niemniej, analizy wskazują na dalsze umacnianie się pozycji BLIK-a w Polsce oraz jego ekspansję na rynki zagraniczne, czego dowodem jest przystosowanie części zagranicznych terminali płatniczych do akceptacji płatności BLIK-iem.

Implikacje: Wzrost popularności BLIK-a wpływa na preferencje płatnicze konsumentów, wspiera przedsiębiorców w przyciąganiu polskich klientów oraz wymaga od instytucji finansowych dostosowania oferty i infrastruktury do zmieniających się oczekiwań rynkowych.

Oryginalność/wartość: Wartość artykułu polega na analizie kluczowych czynników wpływających na wzrost popularności BLIK-a, która podkreśla jego istotny wpływ na sektor płatności.

Słowa kluczowe: BLIK, PayTech, innowacje płatnicze, schemat płatniczy, system płatności
