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## **The Role of User Interface Design in Digital Strategies of Educational Online Platforms**

**Научный руководитель – Алканова Ольга Николаевна**

***Харламова Юлия Леонидовна***

*Postgraduate*

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет, Институт "Высшая школа менеджмента Санкт-Петербург, Россия

*E-mail: st043591@student.spbu.ru*

This paper investigates the role of User Experience (UX) design in shaping the marketing strategies of educational online platforms. It uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative in-depth interviews with quantitative online questionnaires and structural equation modeling. The goal is to understand how UX design impacts user loyalty, particularly within the context of educational platforms. Key words: UX design, Digital Marketing, Brand Loyalty, Educational Platforms, EdTech

### **Introduction**

Digitalization is transforming education, with MOOCs and LMSs becoming crucial tools. These platforms are not only educational resources but also marketing tools for universities. Effective UX design is essential for attracting potential students and differentiating a platform from competitors. A user-friendly interface fosters trust and reinforces the university's brand. This interdisciplinary study focuses on students of the OpenEdu platform (ages 18-25) to understand the role of UX design in digital marketing strategies.

### **Literature Review**

Early educational marketing theories focused on the ethical dimensions of promoting educational services. Later, the field evolved to encompass the management of educational offerings, responding to labor market demands. User Interface (UI) design, including graphic elements, typography, and color palettes, enhances user communication with digital products. Effective UX/UI design can address customer pain points and influence user behavior, contributing to a company's profitability and customer satisfaction.

### **Methods**

The research employed in-depth interviews to gather perspectives on the OpenEdu platform's design. These insights were used to develop buyer personas, empathy maps, and Customer Journey Maps (CJMs). Subsequently, a survey was conducted with approximately 300 participants to gather quantitative data. Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the relationships between platform usage, design elements, student internal conditions, and user loyalty.

### **Results**

The study found that student loyalty is based on platform usage frequency, system design elements, and students' internal conditions. Different strategies are needed for mobile and non-mobile platform users, with a focus on mobile optimization.

- Non-mobile users: Loyalty is linked to study motivation and consideration of mobile optimization features, customization, and personalization.
- Mobile users: Loyalty is influenced by enhanced UX design and system features like mobile optimization, customization, consistency, simplicity, and personalization.

Frequency of usage significantly impacts student loyalty in both groups.

Theoretical contribution and practical implications

The study provides insights into user perceptions of the online educational platform's user interface design and overall user experience. It identifies internal factors linked to student loyalty and differentiates between the needs of mobile and non-mobile users.

When developing digital marketing strategies, it is important to prioritize the requirements and needs of the users of the mobile version of the online educational platform. The study underscores the importance of mobile optimization and continuous user feedback in fostering student loyalty.

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