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USER EXPERIENCE JOURNEY MAP: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS

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Abstract. Recently, due to rapid technological development, the user experience journey has become an essential factor in creating commercially successful products and services. The impact of user experience on overall satisfaction level depends on how individuals interact with and provide digital platforms, applications, and websites. Therefore, the user experience journey map helps understand and predict users' primary needs, behaviour, and motivation to create seamless, intuitive, and enjoyable experiences. A well-designed user experience journey map drives satisfaction and significantly impacts the user's intentions, influencing their decisions, loyalty, and overall engagement. The article analyses the process of creating the user experience journey map and provides practical analyses of implemented user experience journey maps.

Keywords: user experience; user experience journey; user experience journey map; marketing

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JEL Classifications: M30, M31

Additional disciplines: psychology

1. Introduction

User experience design is a dynamic and iterative process used by design teams to carefully design experiences for users. It is a comprehensive approach that covers the entire consumer journey from the initial interaction with the product to the seamless product integration into their lives. The multifaceted nature of user experience design includes elements of branding, aesthetics, usability, and functionality that work harmoniously to create a cohesive and impactful user experience. User experience design focuses on more than just creating user-friendly software interfaces. Designers are also delving into orchestrating various additional experiences associated with the product. This includes engaging marketing campaigns that focus on the target audience, conceptualisation and design, creating visually appealing packaging that conveys the essence of the product, and supporting exceptional after-sales to enhance the overall consumer journey.

Most importantly, user experience design is focused on the main problem – how to provide solutions that directly help solve issues and user needs. It's not just about ease of use; it‘s about overcoming key user challenges. A well-done user experience design ensures that software is easy to navigate and extends its reach to positively impact the broader ecosystem surrounding the product.

The research objectives are to provide a theoretical overview of the user experience concept, user experience journey, and user experience journey map; perform a case study analysis of implemented user experience mapping techniques; evaluate main user experience mapping results and discuss them.

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2. User experience: theoretical aspects

2.1. User experience concept

Rapidly changing consumer needs encourage companies to look for new ways to engage and retain customers more effectively. In recent decades, special attention has been paid to user experience as one of the strategic elements of marketing management. Today, user experience is viewed as a complex, multidimensional phenomenon encompassing technical or functional, emotional, cognitive and social aspects of user interaction with a brand. The concept of user experience is gaining increasing importance in today's context, as consumers tend to value their overall relationship with an organisation. New technologies, a wide range of communication channels, and individualised marketing strategies create opportunities for a unique, personalised, and seamless user experience. The latter becomes a means of retaining customers and a potential competitive advantage. Organisations that systematically analyse, evaluate and improve user experience have better opportunities to form greater customer satisfaction and promote loyalty and positive recommendations to other consumers.

Berni et al. (2021) mention that the term "user experience" was suggested by Donald Norman. According to the scientists, user experience design is about experience. Later, amendments expanded this definition and included affective and behavioural factors embedded in "joy of use" and "joy of possession". Therefore, human-product interaction was exciting until "user experience" was born.

Hussain et al. (2022) state that UX (hereafter referred to as user experience) is broadly defined as users' sentiments about a product, system or service. The authors think that many factors influence UX. Luther et al. (2020) highlight that it is essential for companies to adopt customer experience when their activity is related to digital products and depends on customer loyalty. According to Merritt et al. (2021), a better understanding of the user allows one to justify creativity and increase the potential of innovation. Finally, the UX is the most critical element of the innovation process, as unsatisfied customers are unlikely to use the product.

Ntoa et al. (2021) consider that the customer experience dominates the concept of usability. Valencia et al. (2021) state that the main UX component is usability. Marques et al. (2021) mention that the UX is a *qualitative dimension* considering emotions. Additionally, Feng et al. (2019) state that a good UX is desirable for both consumers and businesses. Feng et al. (2019) conclude that providing a positive UX increases consumer satisfaction and loyalty, thus promoting the company's commercial success. For products that cannot offer a good user experience, the authors suggest applying a UX measurement system, which should help solve the problems and improve the experience and the overall product perception.

Musulin et al. (2023) see the UX as a result of individual interaction, even with digitised products and services, increas*ing customer* value. In other words, every company must have an accurate strategy for its operation to establish itself. This is one of the essential techniques that can help you clarify your company's strategy and unique features and, ultimately, show your customers why they should choose you. Koonsanit et al. (2022) are critical for evaluating a product and deciding whether to continue using a product or service or even to recommend it to others. Corrales-Paredes et al. (2023) mention that the UX is central in designing applications. For example, Dirin et al. (2018) have described the UX as the user's emotions based on experiences while using a service, product or application. According to Dirin et al. (2018), negative emotions can make a huge difference. The authors investigate the case of Pokémon Go, where the game's artificial reality features drain batteries and slow down smartphones.

Verhoef et al. (2009) argue that using a product or service – it encompasses every touchpoint, including encountering a company's advertising, visiting a website, the purchasing process, receiving products, and post-purchase service. It combines the consumer's expectations, perceptions, and emotions that they experience throughout their interaction with a company.

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Bellos et al. (2025) stated that User experience focuses on engaging individuals. Analysing the relationships between customer experience, satisfaction, and intention helps us better understand the factors and conditions that most strongly influence customer attitudes and actions. This knowledge is valuable in developing customer-centric strategies, enabling us to effectively meet customer needs and foster loyalty. A thorough understanding of these concepts and their interrelationships contributes to a company's competitive advantage and long-term growth by helping to create emotionally engaging and memorable customer experiences. User experience benefit is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. User experience benefit concept

Author	**Highlights**
Chiossi et al. (2022)	Social virtual reality requires interaction concepts that consider human social capabilities to provide a satisfying user experience.
Lee et al. (2022)	Users can experience high ease of use and satisfaction with the rapidly developing metaverse platform
Li et al. (2022)	Cognition and emotion play an essential role in the user experience.
Shourmasti et al. (2021)	Beneficial to the process, as changes can be made immediately, moving to alternative designs, thus saving time and costs.
Díaz-Oreiro et al. (2019)	User experience is also a consequence of brand.
Berdasco et al. (2019)	The accuracy of their responses.
Bascur et al. (2020)	User experience is essential in maintaining a company.
Pardini et al. (2022)	User experience and ease of use are vital to understanding and improving the implementation of hardware components and virtual setting designs in future VR-based digital interventions.
Giannakoulopoulos et al. (2024)	Artificial intelligence functions are implemented.
Zardari et al.	Key factors in the adoption of e-learning.
Takano et al. (2023)	Verifying user identities.
Xu et al. (2023)	helps promote sustainable AI development in various fields to improve the user experience
Cheng et al. (2024)	the quality of user experience often directly affects their perceptions and attitudes toward a particular product or environment.
Mehta et al. (2018)	People communicate socially using emotions, which are considered a universal language, and emotions transcend cultural diversity and ethnicity.

Summary of the model benefits of user experience presented in Table 1, it can be stated that user experience improves the implementation of hardware components and virtual settings in future VR, artificial intelligence functions implemented to improve the user experience, help promote the sustainable development of artificial intelligence in various fields. Users experience benefit model is presented below in Figure 1.

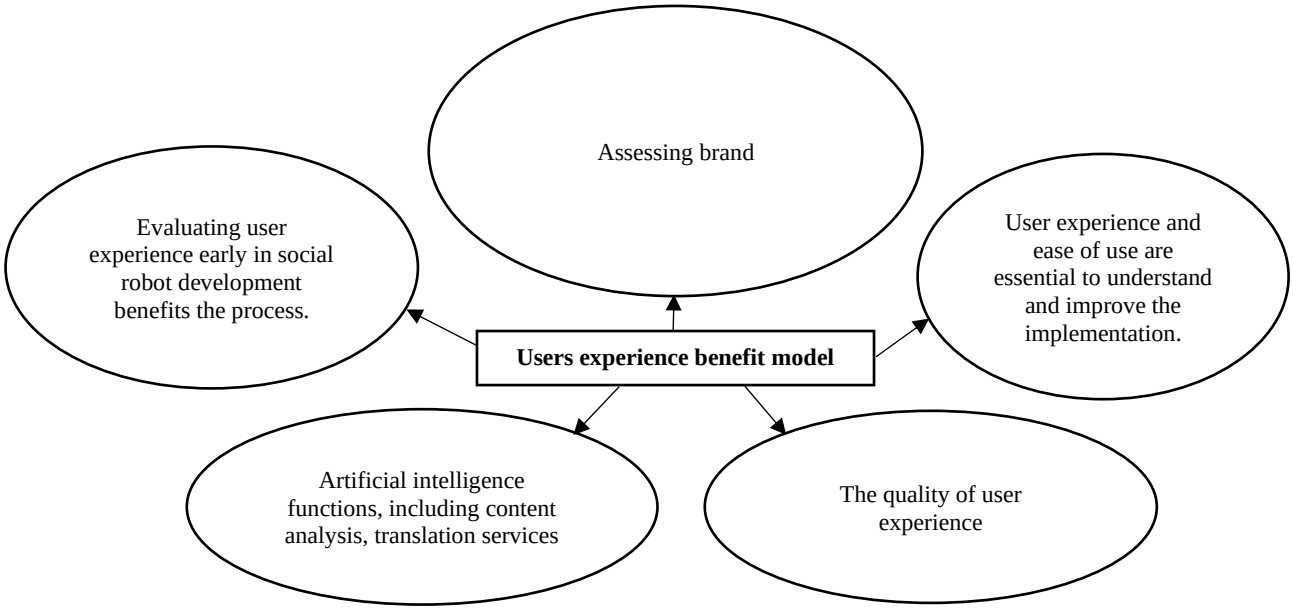

Figure 1. Users experience benefit model
Source: the authors

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The concept of the UX and the whole user experience design is a series of processes to create products that satisfy users by providing relevant experiences based on existing knowledge. In other words, it is making products to fulfil consumer needs. Many technologically advanced products, such as mobile phones, smartphones, smart speakers, etc., are designed in cooperation with users and keep their needs in mind.

2.2. User experience journey

In the 21st century, the user experience journey has become one of the main fields of investigation for researchers and practitioners around the world, and although the term UX is mainly associated with technology, examples of its application can be found in other areas. According to Pellas et al. (2021), designing and developing digital gaming interventions would improve learners' cognitive and practical skills through problem-solving activities. Corrales-Paredes et al. (2023) think that the likes and dislikes of human-robot interactions have become more meaningful to users, where the experience of use and interaction provides the main guidelines that mark the design process.

Falconnet et al. (2023) state that as the amount of available data has increased dramatically in recent years, many methods and technologies have emerged to help companies, employees and customers process such data more efficiently. Various recommendation systems (RS) have been developed since the mid-1990s, and many of these systems have been adapted to perform multiple tasks.

Finally, Vinney (2022) considers these elements of UX journey: 1. Strategy; 2. Scope; 3. Structure; 4. Skeletons. After deciding what the structure of the product will be, its frame can be designed. This means that each page has to determine where the previous plane navigations and functional elements will be. 5. Surface.

To summarise, the user experience journey is a central object in modern research and is considered a key factor in achieving competitive advantage, satisfied consumers, and consumer loyalty. As the experience is related to the perceived value of all involved people, the user experience depends on what the user can and wants to do and how much the organisation allows them to do. The user experience journey evaluates the solution's convenience, intuitiveness, and ease of use, focusing on clarity and eliminating distractions and obstacles. The user experience journey is based on the principles of psychology, neuroscience, and sociology, so details such as how bright the text should be compared to the background to avoid straining the eyes when reading becomes essential. The concept of the user experience journey is undoubtedly responsible for ensuring that a company‘s products or services meet users' needs and provide what they expect.

2.3. User experience journey map

Alvarez et al. (2020) think the user journey map allows the designer to have a single visualisation tool. Pantouvakis et al. (2022) add that the user journey map shows multiple possible responses, and each answer shapes the experience. Ai et al. (2020) agree that although many visual user experience design tools were developed and widely used, the most famous is still the user experience journey map. As the primary matrix, Ai et al. (2020) recommend that the user journey experience map, which was first developed, consists of the client's behavioural process.

Kokins et al. (2021) show how different user experience journey map elements are interrelated, explicitly focusing on the main touchpoints of journeys. The author thinks avoiding further escalation of a gap in client-centred research approaches is necessary before exploring innovation opportunities. Similarly, Lee et al. (2023) have analysed the use of the patient journey map method and indicated its effectiveness in understanding user experience journeys and facilitating stakeholder communication. Investigated patient journey map is mainly used to assist medical personnel and related parties in making medical decisions; therefore, establishing a patient-centred user experience journey map as a means of communication between patients. Cateriano-Arévalo et al.'s (2021) study explores the potential of a user experience journey map to understand better self-related issues and behaviour performed during chores. They investigated the activities women would perform to prepare the lunch. Bradley et al. (2021) try to justify the possible trade-offs for individual consumers from railway companies. Their research uses user experience journey maps and personalities to create a more unified and systematic model of optimal user experience journey in the railway transport system.

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A user experience journey map visually represents a user‘s experience with your product or brand. It simply means that its visualisation tells the story of how a particular user acts at each point of interaction and experiences each area. It‘s also essential to include touch points and what‘s real. The user experience journey exists and is not created. Still, focused and conscious creation is vital for a business to grow and operate profitably, creating more excellent value and emotions for the user and a closer connection with him. Evaluating and creating customer experiences is essential for the company, allowing it to predict business prospects and realise the advantages of the services or products.

3. User experience journey map cases: research methodology and analysis

3.1. The research methodology

According to Česynienė et al. (2010), case analysis is a research method focused on applying various approaches based on general knowledge by properly evaluating “know what”. The article examines user experience journey maps of brands such as “Michelin“, "Amadeus ePower“ and "Starbucks“ using a comparative case study method.

Mačėnaitė (2018) stated that a case study is a research method that focuses on a person's abilities in real life apply a variety of knowledge to the situation. According to Mačėnaitė (2018), cases are classified in different ways: by thematics, goals, volume, and complexity. Case studies can be focused on collecting both quantitative data and qualitative data. To investigate a particular chosen problem, the researcher may examine a specific single problem (case) or several such cases and may also seek to select instances representing the boundaries of the problem being studied or the topic being examined.

A comparative analysis of a case study involves systematically comparing multiple case studies to identify numerous perspectives (King, Fortune, Byrne & Brophy, 2021). According to Krehl & Weck (2020), comparative case study analysis methodology should ensure transparency and consistency. Finally, many authors (Harder et al., 2016; Charlton, Redmond & Cooney, 2021) indicate that challenge, solution, and result are the main elements of the comparative case study analysis methodology. In short, case studies need to be tested (Harder et al., 2016) by discussing *challenges* and describing leading *solutions* (Charlton, Redmond & Cooney, 2021).

3.2. Case study analysis

“Michelin” case study. According to Levdikova (2020), international tyre manufacturing corporation “Michelin” products are delivered to more than 170 countries worldwide. The company shares and “Bridgestone” are first in tyre production volumes globally. “Michelin” offers exclusive and technologically advanced solutions that fully meet the customer‘s expectations. The best evidence of “Michelin” competence is the continuous improvement of its innovations in close cooperation with the most prestigious car manufacturers and its dedication to motorsport and its results.

Challenge. According to Levdikova (2020), “Michelin” faced specific challenges when implementing regional projects. Given these challenges, the tyre manufacturer has chosen a go-to-market strategy that addresses cultural differences.

***The solution*.** Levdikova (2020) states that the CX team tested several tools and discovered UXPressia, which was easy to use and rich in features, sharing options, and visual capabilities.

The result. Levdikova (2020) states that “Michelin” continues to follow a “go to market” strategy that has helped it launch many successful projects in the region.

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"Amadeus ePower" case study. "Amadeus ePower" is a customised online booking engine that travel agents and travellers use.

Challenge. Customer journey mapping and persona development projects were two phases of the more exhaustive work.

Customer journey map. The client's travel planning work was completed.

Advantages. The "Amadeus ePower" team has created powerful customer experience journey maps for two main user groups – travel agents and travellers.

Starbucks Case Study. "Starbucks" is one of the largest coffee chains in the world, selling coffee and snacks. It started in Seattle, Washington, when the founders came up with the idea of selling high-quality coffee beans and roasting equipment. The company aims to have the best coffee in the world, maintaining its unwavering principles as it grows.

Customer Journey Mapping Strategy. The company involved teams from various departments, such as marketing, store operations, and product development, to comprehensively understand the customer journey. Understanding the customer journey. "Starbucks" conducted extensive research to understand how customers interact with the brand online and offline. The company collected data through customer interviews, surveys, observations, digital analytics, and transactional data. Identifying pain points and opportunities. Customer journey maps revealed several areas where "Starbucks" could improve its customer experience, such as long wait times, inconsistent product quality, and challenges with its rewards program. The company also identified opportunities to improve the store experience, such as incorporating digital technologies and personalising customer interactions. According to Krause (2023), "Starbucks" was able to simplify and adapt its customer journey maps, which helped them find the intersection of convenience and connectivity in improving customer experiences in retail and digital commerce, which satisfies customers wherever they are and extends the third-party impressions in the physical store. "Starbucks" invests in its partners, creating personalised customer experiences and improving its digital and retail strategy.

4. Discussion

User experience (UX) is critical to business success across industries. Case studies have shown that user experience journey mapping is essential to create an attractive, enjoyable environment for product or service users. This comparative analysis examines how "Michelin", "Amadeus ePower", and "Starbucks" have leveraged customer journey mapping and persona development. Each company faced distinct challenges, developed strategic solutions, and achieved significant results through customer-centric approaches.

Table 1. The case studies: comparative analysis

User experience journey map	**"Michelin"**	**"Amadeus ePower"**	**"Starbucks"**
Year	2020	2023	2023
Target market	Wider society	Wider society	Wider society
Challenge	The tyre manufacturer "Michelin" has chosen a go-to-market strategy.	"Amadeus ePower" strived to ensure product development focused on the user experience and, most importantly, understanding the customer journey.	"Starbucks" launched a comprehensive customer journey planning.
Solution	"Michelin" created user profiles.	The client journey planning work was completed in 5 weeks.	Customer journey maps revealed several areas
Benefit	"Michelin" continues to follow the "go to market" strategy.	The "Amadeus ePower" team has created powerful customer journey maps	"Starbucks" created a customer experience plan.

Source: created by the authors

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Challenges. The primary challenge for "Michelin" was addressing cultural differences in regional markets while implementing projects. The company sought to optimise communication channels to enhance customer interactions and satisfaction. The travel technology company "Amadeus ePower" faced the challenge of understanding travel agents' and travellers' direct customer journeys. The objective was to identify unmet needs and improve the overall user experience.

Solution. "Michelin" developed customer profiles using UXPressia, a tool allowing detailed personal creation and identification of the most effective communication channels. This approach helped "Michelin" tailor interactions for different markets and enhance regional engagement. "Amadeus ePower" undertook a structured customer journey mapping project, including remote interviews, workshops, and visual design work. This methodology enabled the company to create journey maps for two key user groups - travel agents and travellers, ensuring a more refined product development process. "Starbucks" conducted extensive research through surveys, customer interviews, digital analytics, and observations. By mapping customer journeys, the company identified bottlenecks in service delivery and devised strategies to enhance convenience and personalisation.

Benefit. "Michelin" successfully improved regional project execution, enhanced communication strategies, and increased customer satisfaction by ensuring interactions were tailored to specific markets. "Amadeus ePower" strengthened collaboration among its teams, leading to a more customer-focused product development approach and improved user experience for travel agents and travellers. "Starbucks" leveraged its customer journey maps to refine its digital commerce strategy, improve service efficiency, and create personalised customer interactions, ultimately increasing customer engagement and loyalty.

Table 2. The case studies: solutions and implementations

Company	Solution Implemented	Key Tools Used
"Michelin"	Created customer personas and optimised communication channels	UXPressia
"Amadeus ePower"	Conducted workshops, interviews, and visual journey mapping	Customer Journey Maps
"Starbucks"	Analysed customer interactions across touchpoints and optimised digital and in-store experiences	Digital analytics, Surveys

Source: created by the authors

All three companies strongly emphasised understanding customer behaviours and needs through journey mapping and persona development, known as *the user-centric approach* (see Table 2). Some of them relied heavily on technology utilisation: "Michelin" and "Amadeus ePower" relied on specialised tools (UXPressia, journey mapping software), whereas "Starbucks" used a broader mix of digital analytics and in-store observations. As a result, the strategic impact is different – while "Michelin" focused on optimising communication channels, "Amadeus ePower" sought to enhance product development, and "Starbucks" aimed to refine both digital and physical customer experiences.

Case studies have shown that the user experience must be *user-centric*, helping to understand consumers' needs, wants and habits. Several rules need to be kept in mind:

- Design and use should be as simple and understandable as possible.
- Users should not face complicated or unnecessary steps to achieve their goals.
- Ongoing feedback and product or service development is a crucial aspect.
- Monitoring user behaviour, collecting feedback and continuously improving the product or service based on this data is essential.
- The user experience must be accessible to all, including people with disabilities or diverse needs.
- Accessibility includes ease of use, readability, and understanding, which can help ensure that all users can use products or services.
- The product or service's response time and speed of use should be as fast as possible.
- Users often rate experience based on how quickly they can achieve their goals.

The case studies illustrate how companies across industries can leverage customer journey mapping and persona development to address unique challenges.

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Conclusions

We agree with the opinion of Jain et al. (2017), who think that the principles of user experience management include a comprehensive approach to the entire user journey, from the stage before the purchase of a product or service to the stage of the purchase of the service and the stage after. This requires recognising and responding to the various cues consumers experience throughout the purchasing process. Ultimately, combining these cues creates a deep-seated preference for a particular experience.

User experience professionals use various user experience maps to identify the factors influencing user experience. These factors are then used to develop a user experience management strategy. Practitioners must use these techniques to build awareness, willingness, knowledge, and ability and keep the user engaged in the experience for as long as possible. Continuous monitoring and evaluation are performed to ensure a positive user experience.

Case studies have shown that positive user experience interactions can increase user satisfaction by creating positive emotional and functional impressions.

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