

The Experience–Loyalty Nexus: A Comprehensive Review of User Experience as a Driver of Brand Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

In today's digital economy, cultivating brand loyalty has become increasingly complex as consumer interactions shift toward technology-driven platforms. Traditional approaches to loyalty are no longer sufficient, as consumers demand personalized, immersive, and engaging experiences. This study addresses the problem of understanding how digital strategies shape brand loyalty in evolving technological contexts. The primary aim is to examine emerging patterns in the literature and identify consistent, rising, and novel themes that explain the mechanisms through which digital innovation influences loyalty. To achieve this, the study employs a qualitative synthesis of scholarly works, drawing insights from expert contributions, conceptual mapping, and thematic analysis to capture both established and emerging perspectives. The findings reveal three levels of themes. First, social media marketing remains a consistent driver of loyalty, as user-generated content and brand communities foster trust and long-term engagement. Second, rising themes such as gamification and user experience (UX) highlight the growing importance of interactive, seamless, and personalized digital interactions in strengthening loyalty outcomes. Finally, novel themes—including the metaverse and artificial intelligence (AI)—demonstrate how immersive virtual environments and AI-driven personalization are redefining consumer-brand relationships in unprecedented ways. The study contributes theoretically by framing brand loyalty as a dynamic construct shaped by evolving digital landscapes, extending existing loyalty models to incorporate emerging technological drivers. Practically, the research provides managers with strategic guidance on leveraging social media, gamification, UX, and cutting-edge technologies to sustain consumer commitment. Future studies are encouraged to empirically test these themes across cultural contexts and assess ethical implications associated with advanced digital innovations.

Keywords: User Experience (UX), Brand Loyalty, Social Media Marketing, Gamification, Digital Innovation

INTRODUCTION

In today's highly competitive marketplace, brands increasingly recognize that user experience (UX) plays a central role in shaping long-term consumer relationships. As consumers interact with brands across multiple touchpoints—digital platforms, physical products, and service environments—the quality of these experiences significantly influences how they perceive, engage with, and remain committed to a brand. While traditional marketing once emphasized product quality and price as loyalty drivers, contemporary research highlights UX as a critical determinant of brand preference and repeat patronage (Wang et al., 2024; Zheng & Kim, 2022).

The focus on UX has grown as organizations face the challenge of sustaining consumer loyalty in crowded markets where switching costs are low, and alternatives are abundant. Brand loyalty, defined as the tendency of consumers to consistently choose the same brand over competitors, is not merely a behavioral outcome but also

an attitudinal and emotional bond rooted in trust and positive experiences (Sarmad et al., 2024; Lacap & Tungcab, 2020). However, the relationship between UX and brand loyalty is multifaceted, involving mediating factors such as customer satisfaction, affective commitment, and trust, as well as moderating influences like brand image and personality (Iglesias et al., 2011; Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014).

Although numerous empirical studies have examined how UX contributes to loyalty in industries such as mobile telecommunications (Sumirat & Mohaidin, 2017), e-commerce (Magdalena et al., 2024), hospitality (Olaoke et al., 2021), and mobile applications (Zheng & Kim, 2022), findings remain fragmented and sector specific. Moreover, emerging research suggests nonlinear dynamics, where excessive focus on UX may yield diminishing returns in loyalty outcomes (Olaoke et al., 2021). This indicates the need for a holistic synthesis of prior studies to clarify the mechanisms through which UX drives loyalty and to identify boundary conditions where its influence is stronger or weaker.

To date, no comprehensive review has systematically mapped the interplay between UX and brand loyalty across industries, leaving a gap in understanding the integrative framework of concepts, mediators, and sectoral variations. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the research landscape on UX and brand loyalty by synthesizing prior findings, constructing a concept map, and identifying emerging themes in this growing domain. Drawing upon topic experts' contributions, this review seeks to clarify how UX serves as a driver of loyalty and to highlight the mediating and moderating factors that shape this relationship.

The contribution of this review lies in consolidating fragmented evidence into a coherent framework that not only enhances theoretical understanding but also provides practical insights for brand managers and UX designers. By mapping out key constructs such as satisfaction, trust, affective commitment, and brand image, this study informs strategies for creating authentic, engaging, and loyalty-enhancing user experiences. The paper proceeds as follows: Section 2 outlines the methodology for the review process, including database selection and criteria for article inclusion. Section 3 presents the conceptual foundations of UX and brand loyalty, emerging themes, topic experts and research gaps. Finally, Section 4 discusses managerial implications and concludes with recommendations for future research and practice.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a systematic review approach using Scopus AI to examine the relationship between user experience (UX) and brand loyalty. The review was conducted on 1 October 2025, ensuring that the most recent and relevant publications were included. The aim was to analyze the research landscape by synthesizing prior findings, constructing a concept map, and identifying emerging themes in this growing domain.

To capture relevant studies, a comprehensive search string was formulated as follows: ("user experience" OR "ux" OR "customer experience" OR "interaction design") AND ("brand loyalty" OR "customer loyalty" OR "brand commitment" OR "brand attachment") AND ("satisfaction" OR "engagement" OR "perception" OR "trust") AND ("design" OR "interface" OR "usability" OR "feedback"). This string was designed to include variations of the key constructs and mediating factors, ensuring wide coverage of studies across different sectors such as e-commerce, telecommunications, hospitality, and mobile applications.

Scopus AI outputs were analyzed across multiple dimensions: summary, expanded summary, concept map, topic experts, and emerging themes (refer to Figure 1). The Scopus AI Summary function provided an aggregated synthesis of the search results, offering an overview of the dominant relationships between UX and loyalty, particularly highlighting mediating variables such as satisfaction, trust, and affective commitment (Wang et al., 2024; Sarmad et al., 2024).

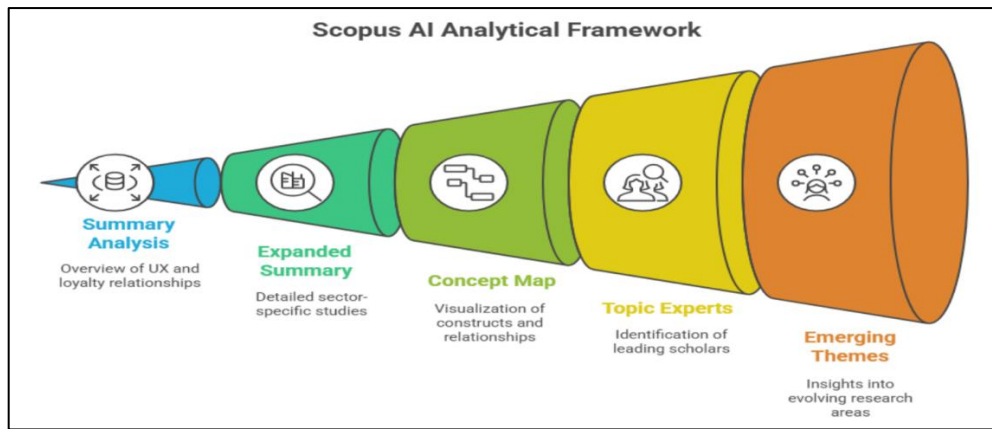


Figure 1: Five core elements of Scopus AI

The Expanded Summary was then consulted to gain a more detailed analysis of sector-specific studies, which illustrated differences across industries, including the strong role of interface design in e-commerce (Magdalena et al., 2024) and the moderating influence of brand personality in mobile applications (Zheng & Kim, 2022).

To better visualize the field, a Concept Map was generated through Scopus AI, connecting constructs such as UX, satisfaction, trust, affective commitment, and loyalty. The map highlighted both direct and indirect relationships and identified nonlinear dynamics, such as diminishing returns from excessive UX optimization (Olaoke et al., 2021). This visualization informed the thematic structure of the review, providing a framework for clustering findings into mediators, moderators, and sectoral applications.

The Topic Experts feature in Scopus AI was also consulted, which identified leading scholars contributing to the field, including Iglesias, Singh, and Batista-Foguet (2011) on affective commitment, and Ramaseshan and Stein (2014) on brand personality. Their foundational work established key theoretical underpinnings for subsequent empirical studies, serving as anchor points in the review.

Finally, Scopus AI's Emerging Themes analysis revealed growing scholarly attention to three domains: (1) digital platforms, especially mobile apps and e-commerce interfaces, where UX directly impacts retention and advocacy (Zheng & Kim, 2022; Magdalena et al., 2024); (2) trust-building mechanisms, where experiential design elements foster credibility and long-term loyalty (Sarmad et al., 2024); and (3) feedback-driven UX adaptation, emphasizing continuous user input as a driver for product and service innovation (Bertram et al., 2025). These themes illustrate the evolving trajectory of the field and provide future research directions for bridging theory and practice.

Overall, this methodological approach ensured that the study systematically synthesized diverse findings, identified conceptual linkages, and mapped out the intellectual structure of the field. By leveraging Scopus AI's analytical functions, the review was able to move beyond descriptive synthesis to uncover structural relationships and emergent patterns in the literature, thereby addressing the research aim of analyzing the UX–loyalty nexus comprehensively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this review are presented by synthesizing insights from Scopus AI outputs, including the summary and expanded summary, the concept map, the identification of topic experts, and the extraction of emerging themes. Together, these outputs provide a multi-layered understanding of the experience–loyalty nexus, highlighting both established knowledge and underexplored dimensions that warrant scholarly attention.

Summary and Expanded Summary

The synthesis of findings from both the summary and expanded summary underscores the central role of user experience (UX) in cultivating brand loyalty. Across industries, UX consistently emerges as a multidimensional construct encompassing sensory, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions, each shaping brand image

and strengthening customer-brand relationships (Wang et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2018). These experiences not only affect brand perception but also build pathways to trust, satisfaction, and affective commitment, which function as key mediators in the experience–loyalty nexus (Sun et al., 2016; Iglesias et al., 2011). Satisfaction derived from positive UX stands out as the strongest predictor of loyalty, ensuring that customer experiences translate into repeat purchases and enduring brand attachment (Liang, 2022; Lacap & Tungcab, 2020).

Emotional factors play an equally prominent role, as evidenced by studies emphasizing the importance of affective commitment and emotional branding. Emotional engagement, whether derived from storytelling, design symbolism, or emotion-driven interaction design, significantly enhances both brand trust and loyalty (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Guo et al., 2025). These findings highlight the dual functional and emotional pathways by which UX translates into loyalty: functional quality drives satisfaction and reliability, while emotional dimensions foster deeper affective bonds (Nguyen, 2025). Importantly, the nonlinear nature of UX–loyalty relationships suggests that while improvements in brand experience initially boost loyalty, there are diminishing returns when experiences exceed customer expectations, stressing the need for balanced UX strategies (Olaoke et al., 2021).

Emerging insights also emphasize the moderating role of contextual factors such as brand personality and customer demographics. Evidence suggests that demographic variables, including age and education, shape how customers perceive and react to UX, pointing to the necessity of personalization (Kamath et al., 2020). Similarly, industry-specific differences reveal that while social media engagement strengthens brand identification and loyalty in consumer-facing sectors (Munnukka et al., 2017), AI-driven personalization plays a stronger role in e-commerce platforms where customization and information provision are essential to sustaining customer trust and repeat patronage (Tran et al., 2025). In B2B contexts, brand image and trust operate differently, often relying more heavily on rational evaluations but increasingly integrating emotional branding strategies to strengthen long-term partnerships (Nguyen, 2025).

Overall, the results demonstrate that UX is not only a direct driver of loyalty but also a catalyst for relational outcomes when mediated through trust, satisfaction, and emotional commitment. The discussion further reveals that while UX strategies must address universal dimensions of sensory, cognitive, and emotional engagement, successful loyalty cultivation requires adapting these strategies to customer demographics, industry contexts, and emerging technological tools. These findings reaffirm the critical importance of strategic UX design, continuous monitoring, and personalization in sustaining long-term customer loyalty in an increasingly digital marketplace.

Concept Map

The graph presents a conceptual framework generated through Scopus AI (1 October 2025) that visually illustrates the interconnected dimensions of user experience and brand loyalty (as shown in Figure 2). At the core, user experience is shown to influence brand loyalty through three major pathways: consumer behavior, brand loyalty types, and user experience components.

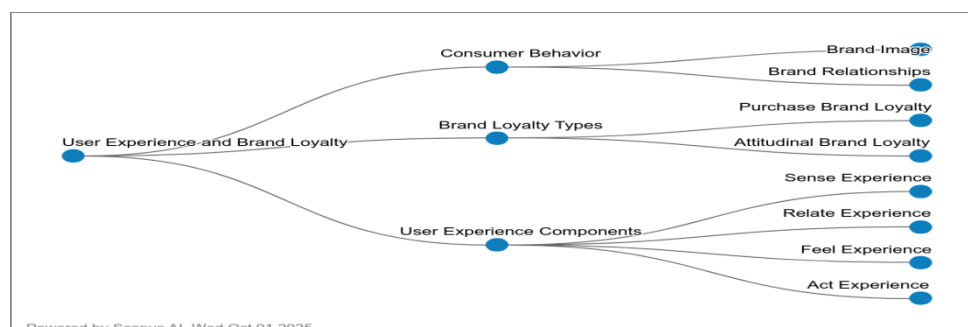


Figure 2: Concept map of user experience and brand loyalty

First, the link between user experience and consumer behavior emphasizes the importance of brand image and brand relationships. These elements shape how consumers perceive and interact with a brand, ultimately

strengthening loyalty. Second, the framework highlights brand loyalty types, which include purchase brand loyalty and attitudinal brand loyalty. These categories suggest that loyalty can manifest both behaviorally, through repeated purchases, and attitudinally, through psychological commitment and trust in the brand.

Finally, user experience components—comprising sense experience, relate experience, feel experience, and act experience—demonstrate the multidimensional nature of brand interactions. These components show that sensory stimulation, emotional connection, relational value, and behavioral engagement all play vital roles in driving loyalty outcomes. Overall, the graph underscores the multifaceted relationship between user experience and brand loyalty, suggesting that loyalty is not shaped by a single factor but rather through a dynamic interplay of consumer perceptions, behavioral responses, and experiential dimensions.

A review of user experience and brand loyalty

Research consistently demonstrates that user experience (UX) is a critical determinant of brand loyalty across both product and service contexts. The transition into the experience economy has elevated the importance of sensory, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive experiences, all of which significantly influence brand image and strengthen consumer trust (Wang et al., 2024; Moreira et al., 2017; Han & Li, 2012). Positive UX shapes favorable perceptions of a brand, which in turn fosters customer retention and long-term commitment. For example, empirical studies in sectors ranging from dairy products to telecommunications confirm that enriched brand experiences improve customer satisfaction and directly enhance brand loyalty (Sun et al., 2016; Nysveen et al., 2013). These findings underscore that UX functions not merely as a touchpoint interaction but as a holistic driver of enduring consumer-brand relationships.

Finally, the relationship between UX and loyalty is shaped by moderating and contextual factors, including brand personality, industry context, and digital engagement mechanisms. For instance, Khan et al. (2020) show that in online services, brand engagement through digital touchpoints directly affects trust and commitment, reinforcing loyalty. Meanwhile, brand personality enhances or diminishes the effect of UX on loyalty, suggesting that the alignment between a customer's self-concept and brand identity influences experiential outcomes (Zheng & Kim, 2022). Service brand studies further reveal that the interplay between UX and loyalty is not uniform across industries; instead, it varies in intensity depending on sector-specific demands and consumer expectations (Mishra, 2014; Nysveen et al., 2013). These insights collectively demonstrate that while UX is a strong predictor of brand loyalty, its effects are dynamic, contingent on satisfaction, mediated by trust and commitment, and moderated by brand identity and service context.

User experience-brand loyalty and consumer behaviour

The review of prior studies highlights that user experience (UX) is a central determinant of brand loyalty, shaping how consumers perceive and engage with brands. Research indicates that sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects of UX significantly enhance brand image, which in turn strengthens trust and loyalty (Wang et al., 2024). These findings suggest that loyalty is not simply a transactional outcome, but a psychological and affective response rooted in the quality of the experience's consumers have with a brand. In this sense, UX acts as a foundation for developing deeper consumer-brand bonds, which sustain loyalty even in competitive markets.

The connection between consumer behavior and brand loyalty further demonstrates how habitual purchasing patterns and decision-making are influenced by prior experiences with a brand. Studies show that loyalty emerges when consumers consistently perceive value in product features, image, quality, and price, leading to repeated purchases (Dhanalakshmi & Ganesan, 2015). Importantly, consumer behavior reflects not only rational evaluations but also emotional associations, reinforcing the idea that loyalty is an outcome of both experiential and behavioral drivers. This suggests that brands aiming to foster loyalty must manage both the tangible attributes of products and the experiential dimensions of consumer interaction.

User experience-brand loyalty and brand loyalty types

The findings from the reviewed literature demonstrate that user experience (UX) is a critical determinant of brand loyalty, shaping how different loyalty types emerge across consumer contexts. Studies indicate that

behavioral loyalty, which refers to repeated purchasing and habitual brand preference, is strongly influenced by sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences (Wang et al., 2024; Ong et al., 2018). These experiential dimensions reinforce consumer trust and satisfaction, making customers more likely to maintain consistent buying behaviors. For example, a well-designed product package or intuitive service interface enhances consumer perception, thereby encouraging repeated purchases and supporting the development of behavioral loyalty.

Beyond behavioral aspects, attitudinal loyalty reflects a deeper emotional and psychological bond between consumers and brands. Research highlights that trust, satisfaction, and brand love play mediating roles in developing attitudinal loyalty, with positive brand experiences serving as the foundation for these relationships (Huang, 2017; Khan et al., 2020). Unlike behavioral loyalty, attitudinal loyalty signifies a conscious commitment, where consumers not only prefer the brand but also advocate for it, defending their choice even in the face of alternatives. This type of loyalty underscores the importance of designing user experiences that go beyond functionality to create emotional resonance and brand attachment. The literature further suggests that purchase brand loyalty, which encompasses long-term intentions and consumer commitment, is influenced by brand personality, attachment, and commitment, all of which are strengthened by positive UX (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Collectively, these insights suggest that UX not only drives brand loyalty broadly but also differentiates how behavioral, attitudinal, and purchase brand loyalty manifest in various consumer contexts.

User experience-brand loyalty and user experience components

The findings from the literature highlight that user experience (UX) components such as sensory, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive (thinking) experiences are central to shaping brand loyalty. Wang et al. (2024) emphasize that these experiential dimensions directly impact brand image, which in turn influences brand trust and loyalty. For instance, sensory experiences like product packaging or interface design can generate favorable impressions, while emotional experiences strengthen attachment to the brand. Similarly, behavioral and thinking experiences guide consumers' active engagement and perceptions of brand value, creating stronger pathways to loyalty. Collectively, these components form the foundation of a positive UX that translates into sustained consumer commitment.

Furthermore, different dimensions of customer experience which includes physical, human, and digital interactions are differently affect brand loyalty. Choudhary and Chauhan (2023) found that human interaction is the most impactful component, particularly in service industries like hospitality, underscoring the importance of personalized engagement. In digital contexts, Hsu and Chen (2018) demonstrated that UX mediates the relationship between features such as mobility, utilitarian and hedonic value, and brand equity, which then leads to loyalty. This indicates that UX functions as both a direct influencer and a mediator, adapting its role depending on industry and interaction type. Overall, the evidence suggests that UX components do not act in isolation but interact dynamically to build strong consumer-brand relationships that ultimately sustain brand loyalty.

Topic Expert

Insights from topic experts highlight the crucial role of user experience as a mediator between digital systems and customer loyalty. Pushpender Kumar's work emphasizes how electronic customer relationship management (E-CRM) systems strengthen loyalty by enhancing customer experiences and satisfaction. His research suggests that E-CRM acts as a technological enabler that facilitates personalized interactions, effective communication, and convenience, all of which improve user experience and subsequently influence loyalty outcomes (Kumar, 2022). This aligns with the experience–loyalty nexus, where the quality of technological engagement translates into stronger emotional and behavioral commitment from customers.

Similarly, Anupreet Kaur Mokha expands on this connection by demonstrating that customer experience and satisfaction serve as key mediators between E-CRM and customer loyalty. Mokha's studies reveal that E-CRM systems alone do not guarantee loyalty; instead, the value customers perceive through improved experiences such as responsiveness, seamless interactions, and problem resolution determines whether loyalty is sustained (Mokha, 2021). This reinforces the idea that user experience is not a peripheral factor but a central mechanism driving long-term brand-customer relationships. In this sense, Mokha's contribution underscores the importance

of adopting a customer-centric approach in leveraging digital technologies for loyalty enhancement.

In contrast, Anil Bilgihan brings a broader perspective by exploring the integration of emotional and cognitive aspects of user experience with technological innovation. His work in hospitality research shows that emotional satisfaction, trust, and engagement derived from positive user experiences are critical in cultivating loyalty (Bilgihan, 2016). Moreover, his studies on artificial intelligence and customer loyalty reveal that emerging technologies can enhance personalization and efficiency, amplifying the emotional and cognitive connections that drive loyalty in digital environments. Together, these experts provide complementary insights: while Kumar and Mokha emphasize the mediating role of user experience in E-CRM-driven loyalty, Bilgihan highlights the emotional, cognitive, and technological dimensions that reinforce loyalty in broader service contexts.

Emerging Themes

Consistent Themes

A consistent theme in the literature is the role of social media marketing in enhancing brand loyalty. Social media platforms have become indispensable tools for fostering consumer-brand interactions, enabling both firm-generated and user-generated content to strengthen consumer engagement. Studies indicate that user-generated content, such as reviews, testimonials, and shared experiences, exerts a stronger influence on brand loyalty compared to brand-directed communication because of its perceived authenticity (Bilgin, 2018). Social media also provides opportunities for building brand communities that nurture trust, encourage co-creation of value, and sustain long-term consumer relationships (Rather, 2021). This enduring theme highlights the central role of social media in the digital brand loyalty ecosystem.

Rising Theme

Two rising themes are increasingly prominent in the brand loyalty literature. The first is gamification as a tool for brand loyalty, where interactive elements such as challenges, badges, and reward systems are integrated into digital platforms to boost engagement. Research shows that gamification significantly enhances consumer enjoyment and satisfaction, translating into stronger loyalty outcomes (Hsu & Chen, 2018). The second rising theme emphasizes the impact of user experience (UX) on brand loyalty in digital platforms. Seamless navigation, personalization, and app quality are key factors that elevate satisfaction and strengthen loyalty (Bilgihan, 2016). Choudhary and Chauhan (2023) further note that human interaction remains a dominant UX component in service industries, demonstrating that both digital and interpersonal experiences play critical roles in cultivating loyalty. These rising themes reflect the growing need for immersive and user-centered brand strategies.

Novel Theme

Recent scholarship introduces novel themes that explore cutting-edge digital contexts for brand loyalty. The metaverse has emerged as a new digital frontier where immersive virtual experiences, branded environments, and NFTs create unique opportunities for cultivating loyalty through community-driven engagement (Dwivedi et al., 2022). Similarly, artificial intelligence (AI) and voice assistants are transforming the ways consumers interact with brands. Personalized and interactive AI-driven experiences enhance both convenience and emotional attachment, leading to stronger loyalty outcomes (Prentice et al., 2019). These novel themes illustrate how technology is reshaping loyalty by offering innovative, immersive, and intelligent interactions that extend beyond traditional brand-consumer relationships.

CONCLUSION

This review highlights the significant influence of user experience (UX) on brand loyalty, emphasizing that an engaging, seamless, and emotionally resonant experience serves as a key driver of consumer attachment and retention. Synthesizing findings from Scopus-indexed studies up to October 2025, the analysis reveals that UX not only affects satisfaction and trust but also strengthens affective commitment, ultimately fostering sustained brand loyalty. The evidence underscores that UX acts as both a functional and emotional bridge between users and brands, shaping perceptions that extend beyond transactional interactions.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the understanding of experiential marketing and brand relationship theory by integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of UX. The review identifies consistent themes of engagement and satisfaction, rising themes such as gamification and AI personalization, and novel themes including immersive digital design and multisensory experiences. These dimensions collectively illustrate how evolving technologies redefine user–brand interactions and reshape loyalty formation processes.

Practically, the findings suggest that brands must design user-centric strategies that prioritize intuitive design, emotional engagement, and value co-creation to build lasting loyalty. However, the review is limited by its focus on Scopus-indexed, English-language publications and AI-based clustering, which may omit contextual nuances. Future research should adopt longitudinal and cross-cultural approaches, leveraging emerging tools such as neuro-marketing and big data analytics to deepen insights into UX–loyalty dynamics in the digital age.

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