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**MASTER'S THESIS (PROJECT)**

**«Creating effective digital promotion and sales channels in online education: case of  
preparation for Unified National Testing in Kazakhstan (B2C)»**

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## **Creating effective digital promotion and sales channels in online education: case of preparation for Unified National Testing in Kazakhstan (B2C)**

### **I. Abstract of research**

Open education platforms have found their popularity in European countries since about 2012. The first open education systems began to function on the basis of global platforms such as Coursera, OpenEdx, etc. A distinctive feature of open systems was the ability to study for free at any time and from any place. This study includes methods of using effective channels of promotion and sales in the market of Kazakhstan.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, literature review, data analysis and conclusion. The work includes 2 tables and 5 diagrams.

**Definition of the key terms:** Online learning. Online learning this is an education that takes place over the Internet. It is also referred to as "e-learning". (Carter et al., 2020)

Sales channel. Sales channel it is a way in which companies sells, it starting from business-to-business (B2B) sales, either directly or indirectly, to sell their goods or services to end customers. (Jovanovic et al., 2020)

Digital promotion. Digital promotion is targeted and interactive marketing of goods and services that uses digital technologies to attract potential customers. (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021)

Online shopping. Online shopping is a form of e-commerce that allows consumers to directly purchase products from a seller over the Internet using a web browser or mobile app. (Eneizan et al., 2020)

Online education platforms. Online learning platform is an integrated set of interactive online services that provide teachers, students, and others involved in education with information, tools, and resources to support and improve the delivery and management of education. (Wen et al., 2020)

## II. Introduction

The current trend of education is increasingly shifting towards online education due to the recent events of the coronavirus pandemic and the significant development of information technology. This study is aimed at the concept of creating an effective digital channel for promotion and sales in online education in Kazakhstan with examples of sales from the business to customers. Therefore, this study will include the study of the online education market in Kazakhstan, the platform of online courses, promotion channels and factors influencing the success of online sales.

**Research questions:** What digital marketing channels should a company use to attract new customers?

**Hypothesis:** The company aims to use multiple digital marketing channels to increase the reach of the target audience.

**Research Methods:** For this study, the development of qualitative and quantitative research methods will be adopted. In-depth interviews and surveys were chosen as the research method.

### **III. A Literature Review**

#### **A. Distance learning in Kazakhstan**

The coronavirus pandemic has dramatically changed the way we approach learning around the world. Absolutely all educational institutions were closed, because of COVID-19. Countries have been forced to switch their education systems, public or private, to distance and online learning in record time. This also affected Kazakhstan. In March 2020, the Government of Kazakhstan decided to switch educational system to online learning. Across the country, 131 universities, 801 colleges and 7,398 schools have switched to distance learning. (Primeminister.kz, 2020)

Digitalization played a significant role in all areas of human life during the pandemic. Everything became digitized and because of this people started buying online more. The strong demand for online sales has driven the development of digital marketing in the country. (Grabozdin, 2021) Businesses have started to adapt and move to online and use all digital channels to attract customers. Because of this, there is a lot of competition in digital marketing for the attention of a person. Therefore, it is important to run effective advertising in the Internet. (Chen et al., 2020)

#### **B. Digital marketing channels**

Nowadays most businesses prefer to use digital marketing instead of traditional marketing because in digital marketing it is easier and more effective to get and communicate with the target audience. Also, digital marketing has a number of types of online advertising, which have their own characteristics, implementation mechanisms and areas of application: context, target, display, advertising in social networks, search engine optimization and press releases. (Peter & Dalla Vecchia, 2021)

The great demand for online shopping has developed online education and most offline educational centers have started teaching online. In order to increase the number of students and the company's revenue, it is important to use digital marketing tools. For example, advertising on social networks. This method of advertising is currently developing rapidly. Advertising in social media marketing can be organized in several ways. First, by placing banner and contextual ads on user pages. In this case, the payment is made only for the number of ad impressions or for the number of clicks on it. Second, by creating thematic communities with active involvement of subscribers, that is, an interested public of potential consumers. (Li et al., 2021)

Today to launch a successful online business, it is not enough for standard website. It is important for companies to establish additional channels of communication between the seller and the consumer. (Aiolfi et al., 2021)

Obviously, there are lots of advertising channels on the Internet, and it is impossible to say exactly which one is the most effective since everything depends on business niche. But the main channels for promoting products and services online, include: "search engine optimization (SEO)", "social media marketing (SMM)", "contextual advertising", "targeted advertising", "Email-marketing", "messenger marketing", "content marketing", "public relations (PR)". (Gordon et al., 2021). Using all the promotion channels at once, as well as focusing on one, is inefficient. It is important to use channels in which the target audience of the business will be present. An integrated approach in the selection of promotion channels will create a structure that will bring constant traffic, including those channels that work for the future. The main thing is to understand the specifics of the effective promotion of each channel in marketing. (Alamsyah et al., 2021)

The strategy of promoting online education is largely based on advertising on social networks, while most of the information is posted on a website that is not used to promote educational

services. A website is a business card of an organization, where the main goal is to build the client's trust in the service offered. The marketing strategy of website promotion includes the use of a combination of the following tools to increase targeted traffic: SEO promotion, contextual search and display advertising, social media advertising. SEO promotion is a set of measures aimed at external and internal optimization of the site, the main purpose of which is to increase the position of this site in search engines for selling queries. Users who are interested in a certain product or service enter a corresponding query in the search bar, for example, "take marketing courses" and go to sites that offer them search results. Search engine optimization is based on the semantic core – a list of the most effective queries that potential customers use.

Taking into account the features of additional online education, the following vectors become priority in SEO promotion of the educational services website:

- Development of the content on the site and constant work with the semantic core, where the content of the educational courses site should take into account the user's intent, be as natural as possible and not contain spam.
- Improvement of commercial and usability factors affecting customer confidence: selling design, easy navigation, plausible reviews, the ability to clarify a question in real time.
- Reputation management and work with reviews. In the educational sphere, word of mouth plays a very important role, where negative reviews in the search can reduce site traffic, so it is important to monitor the reputation of the organization and prevent negativity in time.

Contextual search and display ads are created based on the Yandex advertising network or the Google display network. Contextual advertising is advertising that the user sees in a search engine or in special blocks on the site. In this case, the ad is shown when:

- The user entered a thematic search query;

- The user searches for something on the Internet for some time through search and on the websites of online stores, reads reviews, studies information about the product;
- The subject of the site corresponds to the subject of the ad – for example, advertising an educational course to prepare for the IELTS exam (Fig 1.)

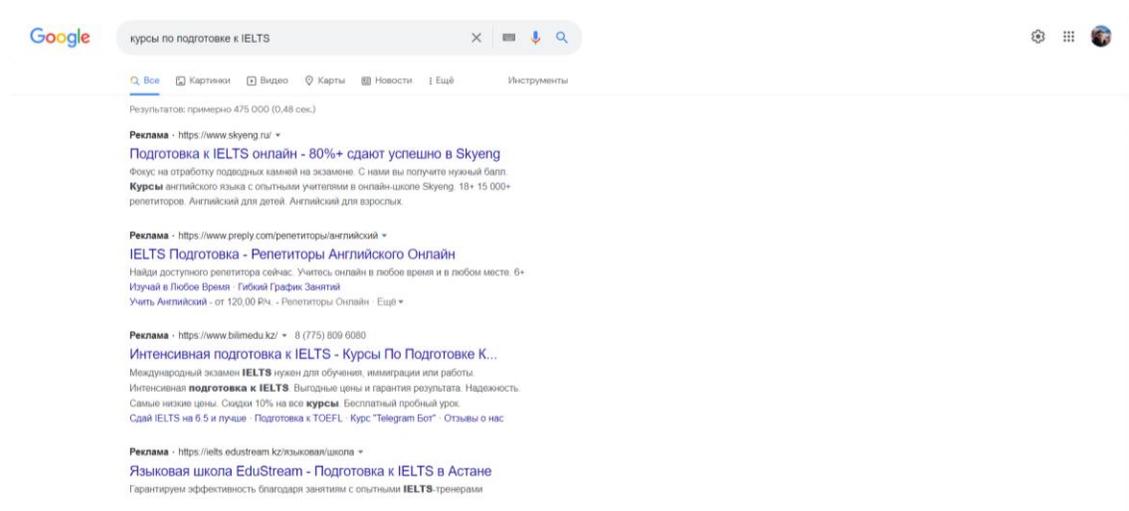


Figure 1 - Example of contextual search advertising in the Google search engine.

The display of advertisements includes segmentation of the target audience by various parameters: country, gender, age, interests, visited Internet resources, etc. To configure contextual advertising, key queries are collected for which the user will be shown ads. After that, ads are made for requests and an advertising campaign is launched.

Banner advertising – banners placed on target resources in the network to attract visitors at a certain price for a specific period. Each banner is a unique advertising message that can look like an animation or a static image. By clicking on it, the user gets to the advertiser's website. An indicator such as CTR (click-through ratio) – the coefficient of clicks allows to evaluate the effectiveness. CTR clearly demonstrates the ratio of clicks to the total number of impressions.

The higher this value, the more effective banner advertising works. In general, the optimal ratio of the indicator should be less than 0.3-0.5%.

It is worth noting that in order to ensure the effectiveness of the promotion of online services in the field of additional education, it is necessary to use marketing tools in a complex as a single information channel to find target customers, as well as to conduct a detailed analysis of the indicators of each method used in order to ensure competitiveness among educational organizations providing online banking services and budget savings for advertising activities.

### **C. Online education**

New technologies are increasingly entering all areas of our lives. The education system has not been left without attention. The widespread development of the Internet has made it possible to gain knowledge using remote access. Such an online school provides wide opportunities. Initially, online courses were placed on platforms to achieve the social goal of providing free access to high-quality higher education, as well as to solve the internal problems of the educational institution. At the beginning of 2014, a request was received for the creation of introductory online programs. In addition, the placement of international platforms is becoming a way to popularize the culture of different countries and a tool to improve the status of national higher education systems in the world. A number of countries, primarily Asian — China, South Korea, Malaysia, today put forward the creation of online courses, as well as their placement and promotion on foreign online platforms as one of the main strategic tasks at the state level, hoping in the future to create a higher education system highly appreciated by society. a global community and able to compete with the world's leading educational systems.

Online platforms, such as Coursera, edX, together with teachers of various fields offer additional paid certification services, as well as the help of a personal assistant in completing an online course. Educational organizations are trying not only to recoup the costs of their creation, which can reach 150 thousand dollars for an online course, but also to make a profit. Gradually, new monetization models are being created and the existing ones are being improved. In addition, in conditions of high competition between educational organizations and universities in the world, they have become a new tool for promoting the educational brand of universities among potential applicants (including foreign students), as well as a platform for selling certificates not only for individuals, but also for corporate clients who can order the creation of a series of online courses to develop the necessary competencies of their employees.

The main advantage of the training provided by the online school is the complete assimilation of knowledge in all subjects provided by the education system. Being at home, child can study all disciplines at a high level at a pace convenient for him. This approach eliminates the need to stay in the same city all the time, training is not interrupted even with frequent moves. Only Internet connection are required.

There are situations when a child is unable to attend an educational institution due to a long-term illness, disability, or physical defects. It is quite difficult for such children to get used to the team, they acquire complexes, suffer psychologically. All this disrupts the normal learning process, forcing children to spend time on self-affirmation instead of acquiring knowledge. In these cases, an online school will become indispensable. If in traditional studies requires to buy an office, a school uniform, textbooks, workbooks, flowers for teachers, a satchel and, in addition, regularly discount the needs of the class and the parent committee, then e-learning does not provide for any of these expenses. All textbooks and manuals are digital.

According to Global Market Insights, Inc., the global online education market was \$190 billion in 2018, with projected growth to \$300 billion by 2025. About \$20 billion was invested in online education by venture funds alone. For comparison, in Russia in 2018, the capacity of the online education market amounted to \$27.5 million. Kazakhstan currently cannot boast of even such modest figures in comparison with the world market. (Forbes, 2019) The USA, the countries of the Asia-Pacific region (APAC) and Latin America have the strongest and most advantageous positions in the global EdTech industry. In 2020, APAC is expected to account for 54% of the entire international online education market. According to experts, in the period 2019-2024, the Asia-Pacific region will also be the leader in terms of average annual growth in online education: +19.40% vs. +10.26% CAGR on average worldwide. It should be noted that the increase in the region's share of the total market size occurred systematically throughout the 2010s. If in 2016 the US share of the entire market was 50-55% (with 23-24% for APAC), then in 2017 it decreased to 43%, and by the end of 2018 it decreased to 40%. The reason is the slowdown in the growth of the North American EdTech market as the most mature among the world.

As the most developed on a global scale, the American market, if it has not reached saturation, has at least stabilized. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, the competition is more acute than ever (there are over 2 thousand in the USA). EdTech products), which forces companies to reduce prices. Secondly, an important factor in the growth of the market is the penetration of online business into the territory of formal education, which is associated with difficulties in monetizing educational products and services. Thirdly, in mature markets, growth always comes at a higher price, as it requires innovation and large investments.

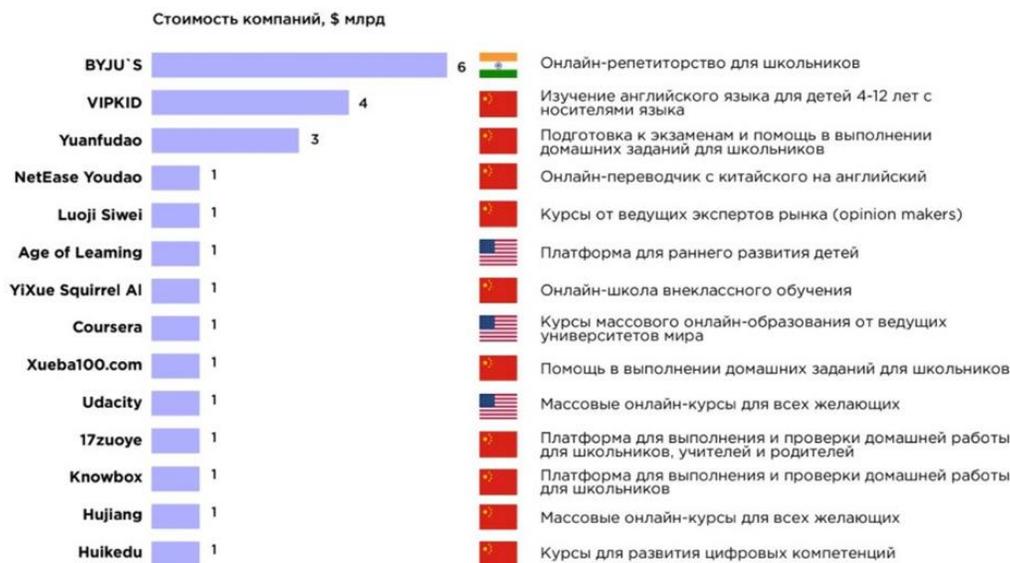


Figure 2 – The largest EdTech companies in the world

Among the most notable players on an international scale today we note: Age of Learning, BlackBoard Learn, Byju's, ClassDojo, Classteacher Learning Systems, Coursera, Docebo. The largest centers of attraction stand out in the global online education industry. By mid-2018, the top 6 main locations for the market looked as follows (the list in descending order of "industry weight"): Beijing, the San Francisco Bay Area, New York, Boston, London, Shanghai.

The total volume of the online education market in Kazakhstan includes segments of additional education for adults and children of school and preschool age, commercial online technologies of support and content for the educational process for secondary general and higher education programs.

In online education, businesses should start from the needs of people, and then develop a product for them. Demand creates supply. Therefore, we first identify and analyze the target audience and then create an educational course for it. Today, to analyze target audience almost any digital advertising tool contains statistics and analytics. There are advertising channels that

offer to select the target audience automatically, according to certain parameters: age, interests, location, etc. Often targeted advertising has a high degree of personalization of advertising that provides: direct impact on the audience interested in the product. (Chen et al., 2020)

Target advertising is adjusted to certain parameters: age, interests, location, etc. In addition, target advertising has a high degree of personalization of advertising that provides direct impact on the audience interested in the product or service, to the stream of buyers ready to make a purchase and cost reduction on advertising due to precise settings.

#### **D. Sales channels**

A sales channel is a way of getting customers into a company that has certain characteristics. In many cases, the company has two channels for receiving customers: incoming and outgoing. The incoming channel may include applications from the website, affiliate programs, word of mouth, correspondingly, incoming channel is the traffic that enters the company. The two main advantages of incoming sales are: easy measurability of the effect and fast results. However, the disadvantages are the cost often not justified and not paid for; high competition – if there are a lot of advertisers in a niche, then the higher the competition for consumer attention. The division and classification will depend on the specifics of business, and perhaps even the company. While outgoing traffic is a direct interaction with the client. The advantages of this channel are: purposefulness – we call a potential customer who can become a buyer; economy – costs only for the sales manager, there are no advertising costs; While the disadvantages are: the difficulty of implementation – outgoing channel is effective only if the sales structure is constructed; investing in training – without working out scenarios and a comprehensive training system, it can be very difficult to find employees. (Bongers et al., 2021)

Sales management is the process of transferring the status of a buyer from a "potential" to a "buyer who paid money". If the definition of an equilibrium market price is based on the concept of finding a balance between the interests of conflicting parties, then the funnel, as an analysis tool, can also be used not only in the field of sales. This process consists of a number of steps that can be graphically represented in the form of an inverted pyramid, with a wide edge at the top, where the potential buyer of interest is represented, and a narrow neck at the bottom, where the number of purchases of the proposed product is shown. The customer is passed through the sales funnel from familiarization with the product to its purchase. The result of passing one or another level of the funnel, the transformation (conversion) of visitors into buyers, etc., is expressed through conversion rate. An analogue of conversion in traditional approaches to evaluating production efficiency is the efficiency coefficient.

A typical website has many conversion points: from tags and subscription widgets to pop-up and chat bots. Measuring the number of visitors at each level of the funnel allows to track analytical tools such as: Yandex.Metrica, Google Analytics, MixPanel, etc. Google Analytics and Google Adwords resources track conversions in the contextual advertising system itself. Statistics of requests and requests received by mail, calls are also collected. Continuous analysis of the funnel gives a clear idea of the weaknesses and strengths of doing business.

The purpose of building a funnel is to give an idea of the correctness of the chosen strategy for the main tasks: to attract, retain and grow physical channels. Let's emphasize how the funnel and its analysis are useful:

- the funnel makes it possible to evaluate the behavior of the target audience;
- allows to competently build the entire process of interaction with a potential buyer;
- makes it possible to present for analysis the conversion of both a certain level and in general;

- allows to identify the "weak link" in the sales chain;
- helps to model various sales strategies and predict the overall business performance.

The limitation for companies is the volume of sales. If the bottleneck of the sales funnel turned out to be low rates of attraction to the site, conversion at its upper level, the reasons may be in the low activation of buyers' attention on the product, in the activities of marketers and incorrectly formulated advertising placed in the wrong place, in its poor virality. Virality is the ability of content to be distributed independently, without the participation of webmasters and optimizers, when buyers themselves spread the information they are interested in through word of mouth. The opportunities of PR campaigns to attract the flow of visitors and expand the boundaries of the funnel. "Click –Requests" are selected triggers that can be represented on the site by customer reviews, product quality certificates, product maintenance guarantees, promotions, countdown counters or the number of purchases already made, favorably influencing the decision-making by a potential buyer who visited the company's page. The site must first of all meet the required conversion goals. From the first pages, a unique trade offer (USP, or value proposition) and the benefits that can be obtained in cooperation with this particular company should be reported. SEO site optimization is one of the main conversion management tools at this level. Interest should be supported by content (text, images, 3D models of products, videos, etc.). There are ways to personalize the site for dynamic display of content and offers that are interesting to a particular visitor. Convenient and competent site navigation usability, accessibility and simplicity of buttons that prompt action will reduce barriers to conversion. Improving the user experience on the site will also change the situation. It is especially important to eliminate cases when dissatisfied users did not reach the purchase page due to the inconvenience of the interface of the site page or the complexity of payment (loss of the "order registration" level).

## IV. Theoretical approaches to creating an effective digital promotion and sales channels

### A. Market size

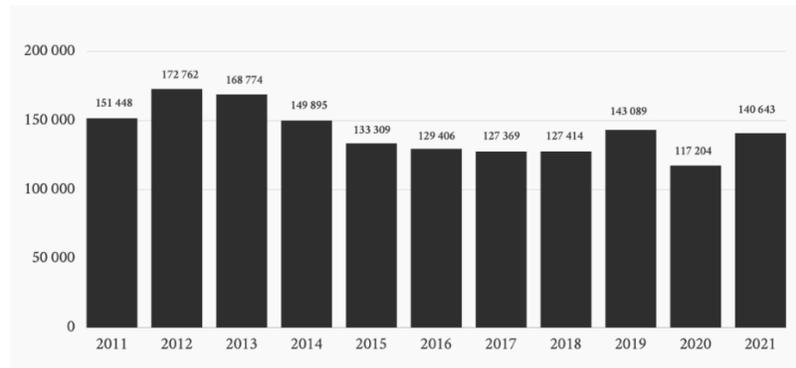


Figure 3 – Number of school graduates in Kazakhstan in the last 10 years

Based-on data from the Statistics Committee, there were 140,643 school graduates in Kazakhstan in 2021. And based on Figure 3, we can see that the average number of students in Kazakhstan remains unchanged, ranging from 117,000 students in 2020 and 172,000 students in 2012. Which means a lot of potential in this sphere, because every student is required to pass a national exam, to be able to apply for a state grant. One of the main factors of the growth of this market segment is the dynamics of the number of students. In 2016-2018, the number of students of educational institutions in Kazakhstan increased by 8.5% and in 2018 amounted to 5.3 million people. In 2019-2023, the number of students in Kazakhstan is projected to grow by 1.8%-3.2% per year.

### B. Unified State Exam: the procedure for conducting

An important stage of completing school education is passing the unified state exam. One of the methods of preparation is online courses. Their goal is to help the graduate remember the studied

material of the school curriculum on the subject and practice solving tasks. Unfortunately, in accordance with the curriculum of basic education, only two hours a week are allocated for the study of subjects in the final grade, which does not allow solving a large number of tasks. In addition, the wording of exam questions often differs from the tasks solved in the lesson from traditional problem books. The use of online courses helps students to remember theoretical material, to work out the solution of typical tasks from an open task bank. The Unified State Exam is conducted in five subjects which are indicated in Table 1. Testing will be conducted in five subjects: three compulsory and two specialized. Number of test tasks 120.

List of subjects of Unified State Exam		
Type of subject	Subject	Number of test tasks
Main	History of Kazakhstan	15
Main	Mathematical literacy	15
Main	Reading literacy	20
Profile subjects	Mathematics	35
Profile subjects	Physics	35
Profile subjects	Geography	35
Profile subjects	Biology	35
Profile subjects	Chemistry	35
Profile subjects	Geography	35
Profile subjects	Foreign language	35
Profile subjects	World history	35

Table 1 – Subjects for Unified State Exam

The test activities are designed to not only reproduce the learned information, but also to apply it to new settings and conditions, such as the application of rules, methods, concepts, laws, principles, and theories. The question database is updated by at least 30% per year. Context-based test tasks were included to the profile subjects test in 2021. Assessment for task execution: 1 point for choosing one accurate answer out of five proposed, 2 points for choosing one or more correct answers from a set of proposed responses, 1 point for context-based test tasks. The profile subjects will include 20 questions with a single correct response from five options, 10 tasks with multiple correct answers from a variety of options, and 5 context-based questions. Several answers in specialized subject exams allow to assess how well applicants understand a certain topic. Testing with multiple choice answers also eliminates the need for memorization and guesswork. The duration of the test is 4 hours or 240 minutes. Changes are currently being made to regulatory legal acts based on the passing score. At the same time, at least 5 points are required for each topic on the Unified State Exam.

### **C. Target audience**

The success of preparation for the Unified State Exam in mathematics largely depends on the organization of the educational material. The course is designed for online learning. It is necessary to take into account the interaction of the teacher and the student.

An online school is a type of scientific and educational resources, which is a set of online courses, video tutorials, audio lectures and other educational materials corresponding to a certain topic, posted on websites, Internet platforms, in communities, etc.

MegaMath Online is an online school for preparing for the Unified State Exam in social studies, established in 2016. In addition to the basic courses, mathematics and physics are taught, as well as a psychologist who helps teenagers cope with psychological difficulties. The main competitors

of MegaMath Online are such online schools as "UBT Academies", "Sabaq.Online" and "Damu". Each of the schools is actively engaged in SMM promotion, both schools as a whole and teachers separately. After analyzing the consumers of MegaMath Online services and competing schools, a list of target segments of consumers of online school services was formed, portrait of the consumer:

- High school students who are not going to go abroad and will apply for a state grant.
- Age from 16 - 18 years.
- School students of the physics-math direction.
- Geolocation in urban areas and adjacent areas.
- Open to high costs of preparation, mayan factor is the result.
- Fears: disappoint parents, to be worse than peers, not to apply for a grant and become a burden for their parents.
- Active users of social networks: Tik-tok, Instagram and Youtube.
- The level of family wealth is up to 580,000 tenge.
- Hobby: Additional sections inside the school.
- Irresponsible. They often postpone tasks for later.
- Digital Natives generation: the main problem is absent-mindedness, because of this they need to conduct short and engaging video lessons. Interested in gamification within classes.
- Children of this generation are more likely to suffer from insomnia and lack of sleep, due to the long time spent online due to high levels of anxiety and stress.

As already mentioned, the online education market is expanding quite rapidly, and the field of preparation for the Unified State Exam is no exception. For residents of the CIS, there are many

platforms and companies offering training in online and offline format through various websites and applications, which can be divided into 3 types:

- Tutors who use methods of conducting individual classes on platforms like Skype. The student performs tasks and gets acquainted with the material under the full control of the teacher. This form of the learning process is very similar to regular classes with an offline tutor, only digital technologies are used in the process instead of textbooks;
- Services offering completely independent study of educational material through video lessons, test tasks and a wide variety of classes. There is no qualitative feedback in this case. An example of such a platform is Yandex Tutor. The site provides detailed video reviews of topics and numerous tests to control knowledge.
- Online schools and courses that combine independent learning and the development of educational material through group classes with a teacher both online and in a mixed format. For example, in offline schools, lectures can be held in an online format.

Schools using a mixed format of education, as a rule, are interested in reducing the burden on the teaching staff in theoretical classes that are of a lecture nature. This approach allows to increase the number of students in online classes without resorting to the use of labor resources, as well as reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus infection. While practical classes should provide an opportunity for students to work out and consolidate specific practical skills, therefore, as a rule, offline schools continue to conduct such classes in small groups.

To highlight the advantages, it is necessary to compare analog products presented on the market – services that combine independent learning and working out of educational material through group classes with a teacher. Services that provide services of private tutors, such as Tutor and so on, and services that provide the opportunity for independent learning, will not be considered in this work.

Online schools specializing in group classes through webinars have proven to be quite effective, so there are a large number of such organizations on the market. They are presented on various platforms, websites and social networks; many of them have constructive reviews. For comparison with analog teaching methods, a pair of classical online schools is enough (learning processes on such platforms, promotion methods are almost the same), therefore, an analysis of competitors of online schools with group classes was carried out.

#### **D. Promotion strategy**

To promote the online school, a marketing strategy of market specialization was chosen, which allows to cover all the needs of graduates: from preparation for the Unified State Exam in all selected subjects in one school to assistance in career guidance and psychological support. Market specialization is the concentration of all efforts on a certain group of consumers, which makes it possible to create high loyalty to the product by satisfying every single need of the target group. The strategy of market specialization allows to achieve a high level of loyalty of the target market and take a stable position in the industry. This strategy does not require high costs and focuses on increasing the frequency and volume of purchases of the target market. But in case of a decrease in the total number of consumers (for example, a demographic decline) or a decrease in the solvency of the target group of consumers, the company risks losing all its income. Constant work in social networks and their proper promotion can be an advantage of an online school, it will help to find new customers, increase the loyalty of existing ones, make the brand more profitable and well-known. The use of SMM is possible in a variety of types of online schools. In this article, online schools for preparing for the Unified State Exam are taken for research. SMM (social media marketing) implies a whole range of measures aimed at promoting and maintaining pages in various social networks. Social media marketing is one of the main

types of Internet marketing; it is the use of social networks to connect with the audience, to create brand, as well as increase sales. The audience of social networks is very different, therefore, with proper search and analysis, it is quite easy to find the target consumers to the product.

SMM has a large variety of tools, and their number is steadily growing. This is due to many factors, for example, the emergence of new promotion platforms, with a decrease in the effect of the use of certain tools due to the habituation of consumers to them, etc. Monitoring the work of online schools in social networks showed the most used promotion tools, shown in Table 2.

Effective tools in SMM	
Type of promotion	Promotion Description
Content marketing	The main tool, it is with him that the work of promotion begins. The quality of the content determines the work and effectiveness of the other SMM tools. Its function is to create various types of content, such as text and visual, entertainment and marketing
Community management	Communication with users: timely answers to consumer questions, handling objections, providing complete and truthful information on requests
Working with bloggers and advertising in reputable communities	Working with bloggers consists in creating advertising campaigns, during which bloggers share their opinions about

	the product with their audience, which this product may be interested in
Targeted advertising	It consists in a directed impact on the target audience through complex methods and setting up the search for the target audience in accordance with the specified parameters, characteristics and interests relevant to the advertised goods or services
Giveaway	They are able to interest a large number of people, and they do not require a large number of resources from the company. Properly selected giveaway can reach a large number of target audience
Viral marketing	Creating and publishing content that users actively share with each other. They broadcast messages containing the necessary information voluntarily, because they are interested in it

Table 2 – Subjects for Unified State Exam

After analyzing and understanding who will need the products of an online school to prepare for the Unified State Exam, mastering various sites and planning SMM promotion. In this study considered the experience of SMM promotion of the online school MegaMath Online.

Promotion in social network VKontakte. The main platform for promoting the online school is VKontakte, it is there that a group has been created, joining which users can receive educational materials. The group contains information about paid and free courses in which users of the social network can participate. To add an entry about the start of the course, the "promote" function is used, which allows to select the necessary characteristics of the audience that will receive an entry in their news feed. Thus, a larger number of participants are attracted to the course, who also often become community members and potential consumers of future courses. The number of sites for SMM promotion is growing rapidly, as the number of social networks, blogs is constantly increasing, as well as the number of active users consuming content and making online purchases is growing. The most popular sites in Kazakhstan are VKontakte, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. There are other sites that are somewhat less common in Kazakhstan, but can also give excellent results if the work with them correctly, should look for sites based on the specifics of the product, brand or company.

The experience of SMM promotion of the online school MegaMath Online. The main platform for promoting the online school is VKontakte, it is there that a group has been created, joining which users can receive educational materials. The group contains information about paid and free courses in which users of the social network can participate. To add an entry about the start of the course, the "promote" function is used, which allows to select the necessary characteristics of the audience that will receive an entry in their news feed. Thus, a larger number of participants are attracted to the course, who also often become community members and potential consumers of future courses. Advertising in communities has become the most effective way to promote here. The first was in a group with an audience of more than two million people. This group was chosen because its audience is schoolchildren aged 16 to 23, and very active in terms of interacting with the group's content. The result of the advertising was a fairly large increase in

subscribers – the group's audience increased more than three times. The second advertisement was in a group dedicated to self–development, its audience is boys and girls aged 14-18, studying and interested in various online courses. It has become less effective, if we compare it with the first one, the audience growth occurred by about 10%, but it was the audience of this group that was the most active, so this advertising can be considered effective. The second advertisement was active in Jan 20. The feedback (activity) statistics are shown in Figure 4.

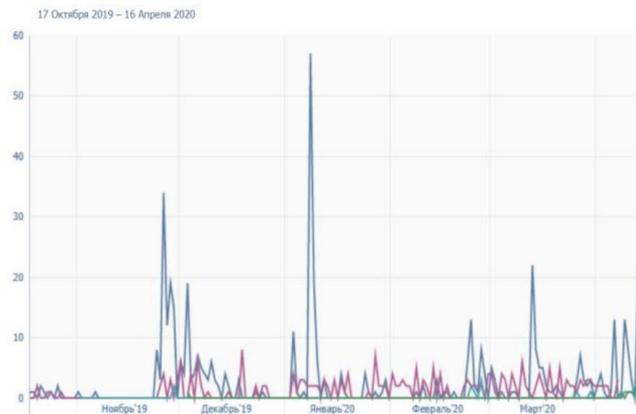


Figure 4 – Feedback statistics

The most effective in the experience of MegaMath Online is targeted community advertising, the average subscription cost was around 24 tenge per student figure 5.

Объявление	Статус	Дл. кам.	СРМ	Ограничения цены	Общ. кам.	Потрачено	Показы	Переходы	CTR	eCPC
УБТ-2020 MegaMath Online   Матем...	II	Не задан	30.00 P	Не задано	Не задан	0.00 P	0	0	0.000 %	0.00 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	II	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	1.000 P	997.47 P	33.253	463	1.392 %	2.15 P
Марго видео	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	Не задан	268.23 P	8.951	138	1.542 %	1.94 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	500 P	316.62 P	10.566	174	1.647 %	1.81 P
Уральск ТОК УЭК	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	500 P	154.20 P	5.156	39	0.756 %	3.95 P
Қызы 2020 УБТ-да қолпен нұсқалар...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	2.500 P	2.284.48 P	75.081	2.776	3.697 %	0.81 P
Қызы 2020 УБТ-да қолпен нұсқалар	II	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	1.500 P	1.497.63 P	49.939	1.080	2.163 %	1.38 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	100 P	100.00 P	3.545	17	0.480 %	5.88 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	200 P	93.71 P	3.576	35	0.979 %	2.67 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	300 P	300.00 P	10.141	155	1.528 %	1.93 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	100 P	100.00 P	3.449	38	1.102 %	2.63 P
УБТ-2020 физика   Математика   Ме...	III	100 P	30.00 P	Не задано	100 P	100.00 P	3.412	56	1.641 %	1.78 P
<b>Всего 15 объявлений</b>						<b>8.698.63 P</b>	<b>290.670</b>	<b>6.346</b>	<b>2.183 %</b>	<b>1.37 P</b>

Figure 5 – Feedback statistics

Advertising was launched throughout Kazakhstan, where the main cities are Almaty 27.3%, Shymkent 16.8%, Nur-Sultan 10%, Aktobe 4.8% as shown in Figure 6

РАСПРЕДЕЛЕНИЕ ПО ГОРОДАМ ПРОФИЛЯ

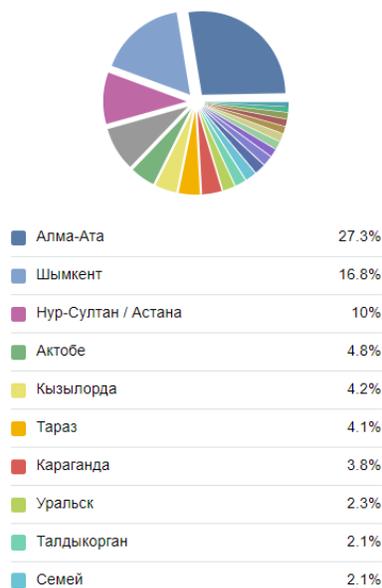


Figure 6 – Demographics of targeted advertising

A big role in the promotion is played by the content of the group. Examples of visual content are shown in figure 6. Visual content is developed separately for each category together with the designer. The texts are written by almost all team members who have previously studied copywriting courses. High-quality content plays a significant role in promotion, it affects the loyalty and trust of the audience to the project and its creators

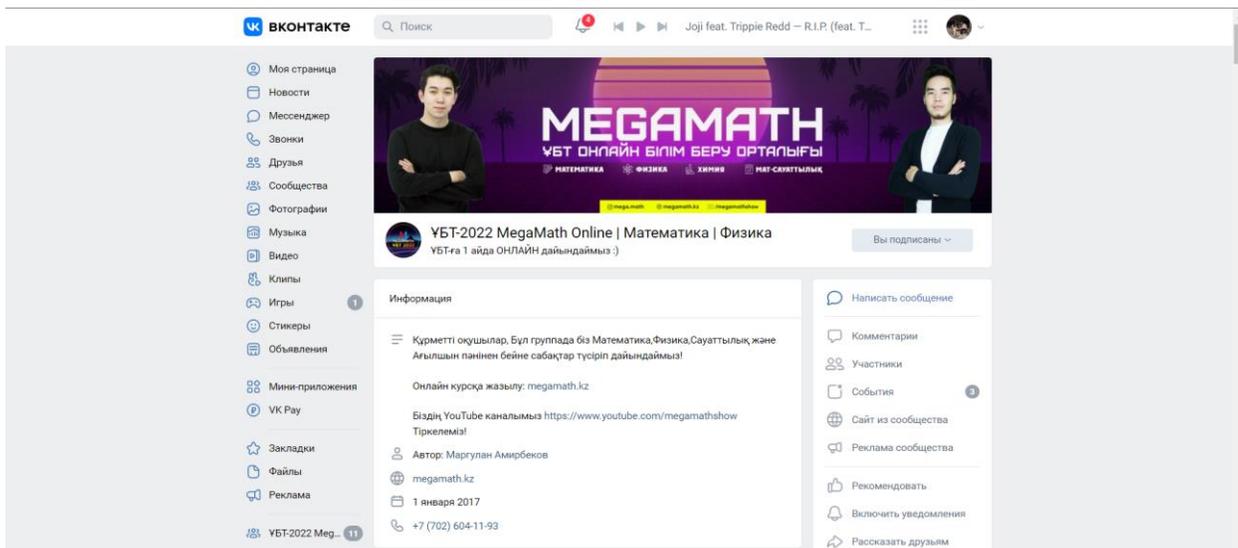


Figure 7 – Visual content of the VKontakte group

A great tool for engaging the audience and attracting their attention to paid courses were free courses-games, the winner of which received real prizes. Statistics on the coverage of the game recording (targeted advertising was active) and the regular recording are shown in figure 7. Consumers had the opportunity to try out the school's products for free, to make sure of their quality, the competence of the organizers, and the discount motivated them to continue working on their knowledge in MegaMath Online. VKontakte supports the ability to create newsletters and chatbots using certain services. Studium uses the Senler service. Often, sales through personalized mailings are stimulated by discounts that are available only to subscribers.

Therefore, mailing lists are another great tool for increasing audience loyalty to products, as well as increasing sales. Thus, the tools for promoting VKontakte are high-quality and regular content, advertising in communities, targeted advertising, mailing lists and free courses that precede paid ones.

### **E. Trust-based marketing**

Social networks are an online platform that have been developed to create communication between people with the same interests. With the increasing number of people using social networks, these platforms provide an ability to advertise their services or products on online platform. The main purpose of using social networks by business is to increase trust and loyalty to the brand, so that potential consumers become regular customers and keep interest to the product or service for a long time. (Appel et al., 2020)

Advantages of social media marketing. One of the main positives of SMM is providing an opportunity for lots of promotion activities for the company, from the ability to post photos of products to conduct contests, and prize drawing. Turning to the other side of the argument, to catch up attention of the target audience business need visually and meaningfully interesting content. A formulaic approach devoid of any creativity, like a dry story about brand news, is unlikely to find a response from the audience. It is better to state the strengths in an original form. (Appel et al., 2020)

Without any doubt, companies have a traditional strong marketing tool for business promotion – “word of mouth”, which is used as a recommendation from the previous successful experience of the client. To use digital advertising effectively, it is not enough to use only social networks, the company should be integrated with other marketing tools. (Kotler, 2012)

Comments and expert opinion in specialized journals or media create a positive vision of the company in digital. As well as media publications increase the reach of the target audience and bring traffic in the long term, and it could a free promotion channel. However, in order to appear in the media free of charge, need to interesting content and well-structured communication with journalists. (Alamsyah et al., 2021)

Useful and unique materials significantly increase the awareness and expertise of the company, turning content marketing into an effective channel for promoting goods and services. Therefore, while developing a content marketing strategy, company should not limit on promoting a corporate website or a social network account. Publications with the public relations plays no less reputational importance. (Kotler, 2012)

#### **F. Cross-channel marketing**

The modern consumer moves freely across a variety of digital platforms, from the mailbox to social networks, and easily switches from one device to another. Using multiple digital marketing channels means interacting with current or potential customers across all digital channels and on any devices. However, in this case, all these channels must be connected to each other. This makes it easier and more convenient for customers to switch from one channel to another. Different channels collect information about customers and exchange it with each other, which allows to track the customer's path from beginning to end. The more channels, the more data. In addition, the more channels, the more attention will be paid to company, brand, services, and products. One channel can even increase interest in another. Example shown in figure 8, educational video on YouTube increase traffic to other social network and increase awareness of an education course.

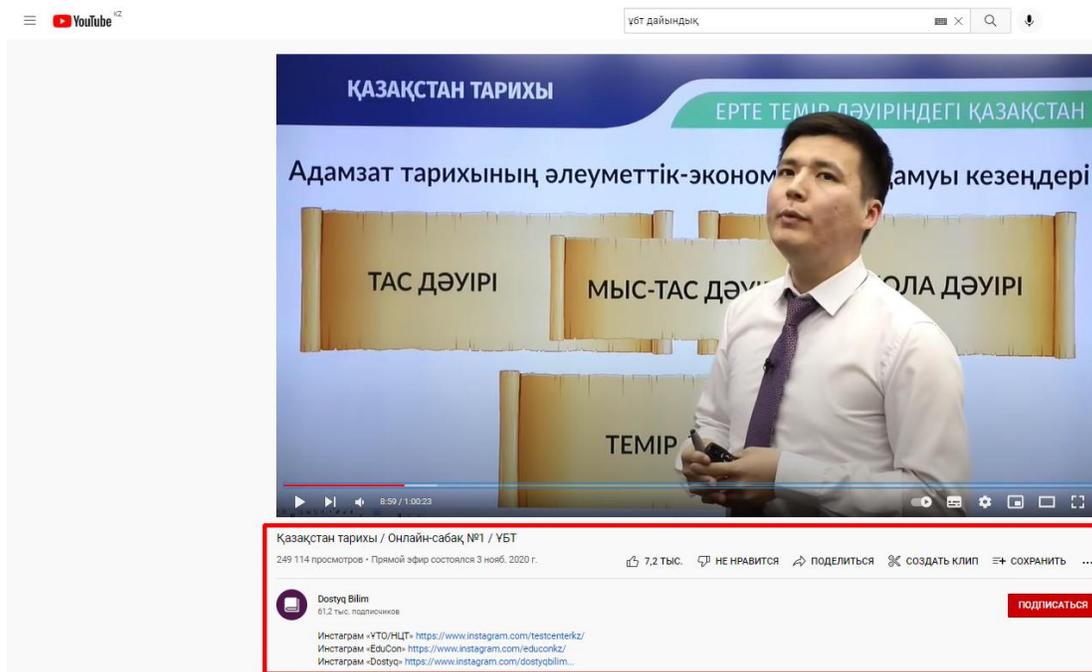


Figure 8 – Increase brand awareness by using multiple digital marketing channels

Cross-channel marketing allows to reach more people and build stronger relationships with them.

In addition, it allows collect more statistics on customers thanks to the built-in analytics tools.

Therefore, the hypothesis on the use of multiple promotion channels is confirmed.

### **G. Analysis of students' preferences regarding online educational courses in preparation for the Unified State Exam**

During the use, a survey of 120 school students was conducted, where the main questions were aimed at determining the interests of learning: 31.8% students have chosen an online learning format shown in figure 9.

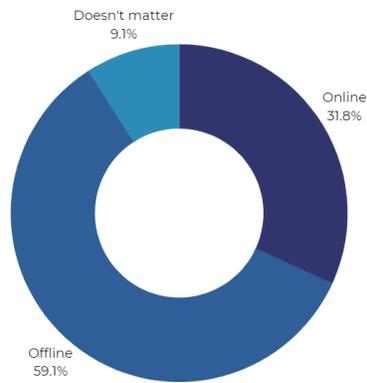


Figure 9 – Preferred education format based on students responses

As shown in Figure 10, most respondents said that it was important for them that the company had accounts in the social network Instagram.



Figure 10 – The importance of having an Instagram account for companies

Figures 11 and 12 show that it is not so important for students to use the Kaspi marketplace to purchase a course, but it is important that the company has the opportunity to purchase the course in installments

Онлайн курс каспий магазинде болуы сатып алу шешімге әсер ете ме?

120 ответов

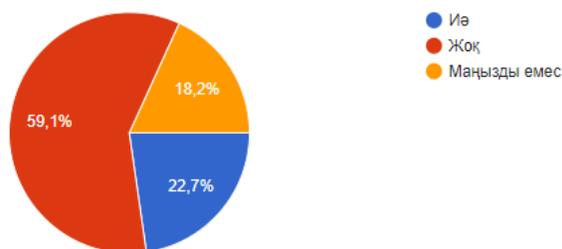


Figure 11 – The value for companies to use the Kaspi marketplace to sell online courses

Онлайн-курсты бөліп-бөліп сатып алу мүмкіндігі шешімге әсер ете ме?

120 ответов

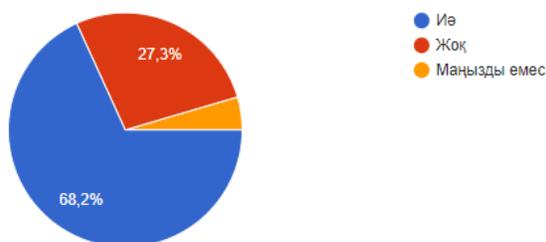


Figure 12 – Influence on the decision to purchase the online course if there is an opportunity to purchase in installments

On average, a student prepares 4.95 hours a week, 40.9% of respondents chose self-education, the remaining 36.4% prefer study with a tutor. Half of our respondents (60%) choose 2-3 classes a week. 20% prefer to study from 4 to 7 times, and for the rest it does not matter, The average amount is 32 125 tenge that respondents are willing to spend on preparing to prepare for the Unified State Exam.

## Conclusion

In this work, the goal was set – to identify the effective promotion channel and sales channels in online education in case of preparation for the Unified National Testing, based on the specifics of the Kazakhstan market. As part of the implementation of the goal, the following tasks were solved:

- The analysis of the current state and prospects for the development of the industry has been carried out, the volume and capacity of the market have been determined;
- A segmental analysis of the consumer market of online learning of the Unified State Exam was carried out;
- A marketing strategy for promoting an online school has been developed.

The results of the study of various sources and current trends in the development of the market of preparation for the Unified State Exam indicate that at the moment there is a trend of digitalization of education and a change of approaches in training due to the epidemiological situation associated with the spread of coronavirus infection.

The current information space contributes to the fact that new technologies have penetrated into all spheres of human life, and education is no exception. It is noted that the classical education system today does not keep up with the transformations taking place in society and is not able to provide a demanded and timely educational product. And it is online education and its tools that are the means that will allow to forget about the boundaries of geography and get quick access to the necessary knowledge.

The main criterion in favor of choosing an online format remains convenience and reduced cost, and the main consumer is in the age category from 16 to 18 years old, with basic computer and smartphone skills. Based on the results of the analysis of the current state of the online education industry, it can be concluded that this industry is developing rapidly, despite the presence of certain problems.

The analysis of the target audience allowed us to identify segments of the consumer market of online preparation for the Unified State Exam, which is necessary for a more effective advertising campaign and setting up targeted advertising in social networks. The main criterion of the target audience in favor of choosing an online format remains convenience and reduced cost, and the main consumer is in the age category from 16 to 18 years old, with advanced computer and smartphone skills.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide high-quality educational program. Positive results of students are the foundation of a successful online course;
- Make the course payment convenient for the student;
- Reach customers through multiple digital communication channels, to increase the target audience;

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