

Mass open online course as an element of benchmarking in educational activities

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Abstract. The article considers such an element of a marketing management tool as benchmarking in relation to educational institutions. The relevance of this issue is undeniable, since the use of this element in educational activities, of course, should lead to an effective organization of educational activities, attract students, including foreign ones, and contribute to improving the competitiveness of an educational institution. The article focuses on such an element as a mass open online course, examines the positive and negative aspects of its use, and analyzes online educational platforms.

Keywords: benchmarking, benchmarking in educational activities, a massive open online course.

Introduction

Benchmarking is an innovative element of a marketing management tool that contributes to improving the competitiveness of an organization [1]. Despite some differences in the interpretation of benchmarking, its purpose is to try to identify the experience of the best practices of such organizations and implement this experience in their activities. Educational institutions are no exception and also use the element of benchmarking in their activities. This is especially true for universities that have international educational programs, as it is based on the desire to attract foreign students and present these programs on the international market.

Purpose of the study – to establish the importance of benchmarking in the activities of educational institutions, in particular, higher education institutions, as well as to evaluate and analyze online educational platforms and identify their role in improving the competitiveness of an educational institution, promoting the brand of an educational institution.

Materials and methods

The study and analysis of the literature sources allows us to conclude that today there are different definitions and interpretations of benchmarking by theorists and practitioners. Some authors consider benchmarking a simple comparative analysis, while others, for example, the chairman of the international organization "Global Benchmarking Network" R. Mann, consider " ... benchmarking is much more than the usual reference comparison. Benchmarking focuses on "learning from the experience of others" and is defined as "identifying, adapting, and implementing

methods that produce better results" [2, p. 791]. A. G. Ketz, Managing Partner of KPI International Management Consultants, noted in the results of his research that " ... benchmarking is the process of separating, defining and using the best practical examples and knowledge» [2, p.793].

Results and discussion

As already mentioned, the use of benchmarking elements in the activity is of great importance for educational institutions. If we interpret this concept in this area, then benchmarking is an effective process of organizing educational activities aimed at success. In this regard, it is worth noting the important role of mass open online courses in the modern educational environment. A massive open online course (MOOC) is a form of distance education, a model for providing educational content to anyone who wants to take the course. In addition, the online course can promote the brand of the university, increase the competitiveness of the educational institution by creating and using scientific and technical innovations. The first MOOC was launched in 2008, but this form of training became particularly popular in 2012, when projects that are now widely known, such as Udacity, Udemy, and Coursera, began to attract the first investments. To date, the work on the creation of MOOCs is carried out within the framework of international cooperation of educational institutions with the world's leading universities.

The purpose of the MOOC is to promote the "opening up" of education, to enable more students from different countries to get higher education. The MOOC development concept is based on the idea that the desire to learn should be realized without any economic, demographic or geographical restrictions, knowledge should be freely transferred from person to person, which is especially important in connection with the appearance of the COVID-19 virus in China at the end of 2019, which spread around the world in 2020.

The main distinguishing features of MOOCs are:

- 1) scale (a large number of people can participate in the training);
- 2) open access (anyone has the opportunity to participate in an online educational course).

According to a study published by East-West Digital News, people choose online education most often because of a lack of time at a basic level of education. In addition, 23% of businessmen and self-employed and 19% of managers of all respondents note the great popularity of online training. 86% of the participants expressed their positive attitude to online courses [3].

It is necessary to analyze the positive and negative aspects of MOOCs. The analysis is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Positive and negative aspects of using MOOCs

	Positive aspects of MOOCs	Negative aspects of MOOCs
From the point of view of an educational institution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attracting new entrants 2. The ability to conduct training for a very large number of people 3. Reducing the financial costs of teaching 4. Improving the interaction of regional universities with leading Russian universities 5. Generating revenue for an educational institution by increasing the number of paid students and paid online courses 6. Ability to collect data on student success 7. Improving the effectiveness of the educational process and its individualization 8. Filling the shortage of teachers in narrow-profile disciplines 	<p>A small percentage of students completing the course compared to the number of enrolled students.</p>
From the student's point of view	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Save time 2. The possibility of obtaining a certificate of completion of the course 3. The opportunity to take the course for free 4. Availability of open access to course materials 5. Variety of topics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of live communication with the teacher 2. The presence of a language barrier in some courses 3. Limited time for some courses

The analysis of online educational platforms allowed us to identify the most well-known online platforms in recent years, such as Udacity, Coursera, and hf. Among Russian educational platforms, the Lectorium can be cited as an example. This is a resource that provides an opportunity not only to create and post MOOCs, but also contains about 4,000 video lectures in its media library. This resource has more than 20 partners, about 150,000 visitors per month.

According to the study, according to data for 2020 from the online platforms Universality, Open Education, Coursera, Universarium, Uniweb, Lectorium, the leaders in the number of courses posted are: Open Education (31%), Coursera (23%), Universarium (19%). The results of the study are shown in Figure 1

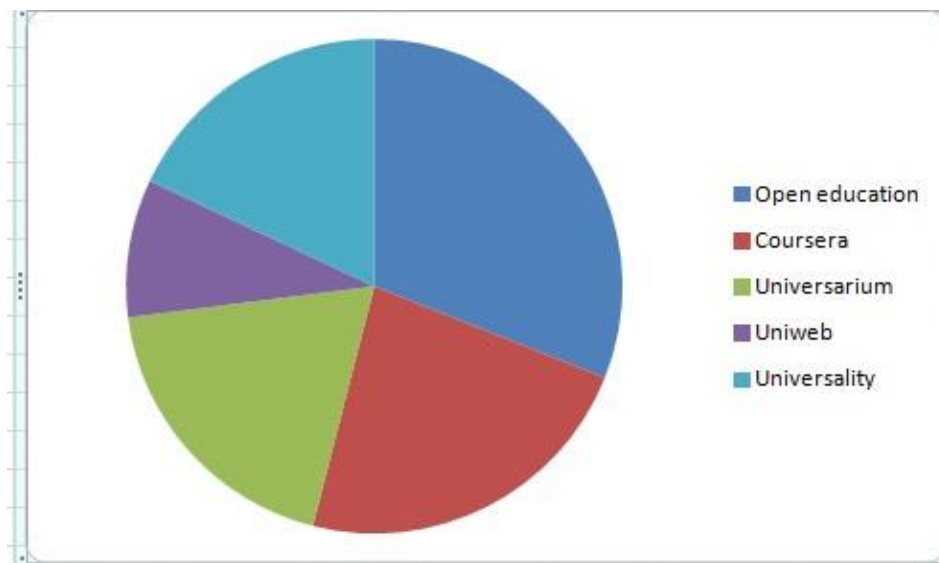


Figure 1. Comparison of the number of courses posted on domestic platforms in 2020

One of the main reasons for the success of the Open Education project is that this project brought together the best Russian universities, giving them their own ready-made platform and a constant flow of students.

Conclusion

The use of benchmarking in the educational environment, in fact, the search for best practices, standards, undoubtedly leads to a more effective process of organizing educational activities, studying, finding and achieving the best educational results. It is worth noting the vastness and relevance of this issue at the present time. The article focuses on the introduction of mass open online courses in educational activities, along with traditional forms of education. The creation of MOOCs, of course, not only contributes to the "opening" of education, but also is one of the best approaches that ultimately lead to an increase in the competitiveness of an educational institution, the popularization of educational programs, including on the international market, and the attraction of foreign students.

References

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