

Hooked on Shopping: User Attachment in E-Commerce



Abstract

This thesis examines how e-commerce platforms foster user attachment and raise switching costs through UX, personalization, and marketing strategies. It investigates both business tactics and user behaviors, focusing on Zalando, Wildberries, and Uzum.

A mixed-methods approach—including literature review, platform analysis, interviews, and surveys—was used to explore:

- How platforms encourage repeated use and loyalty
- Why users become emotionally and habitually attached
- The role of dark patterns in driving compulsive shopping

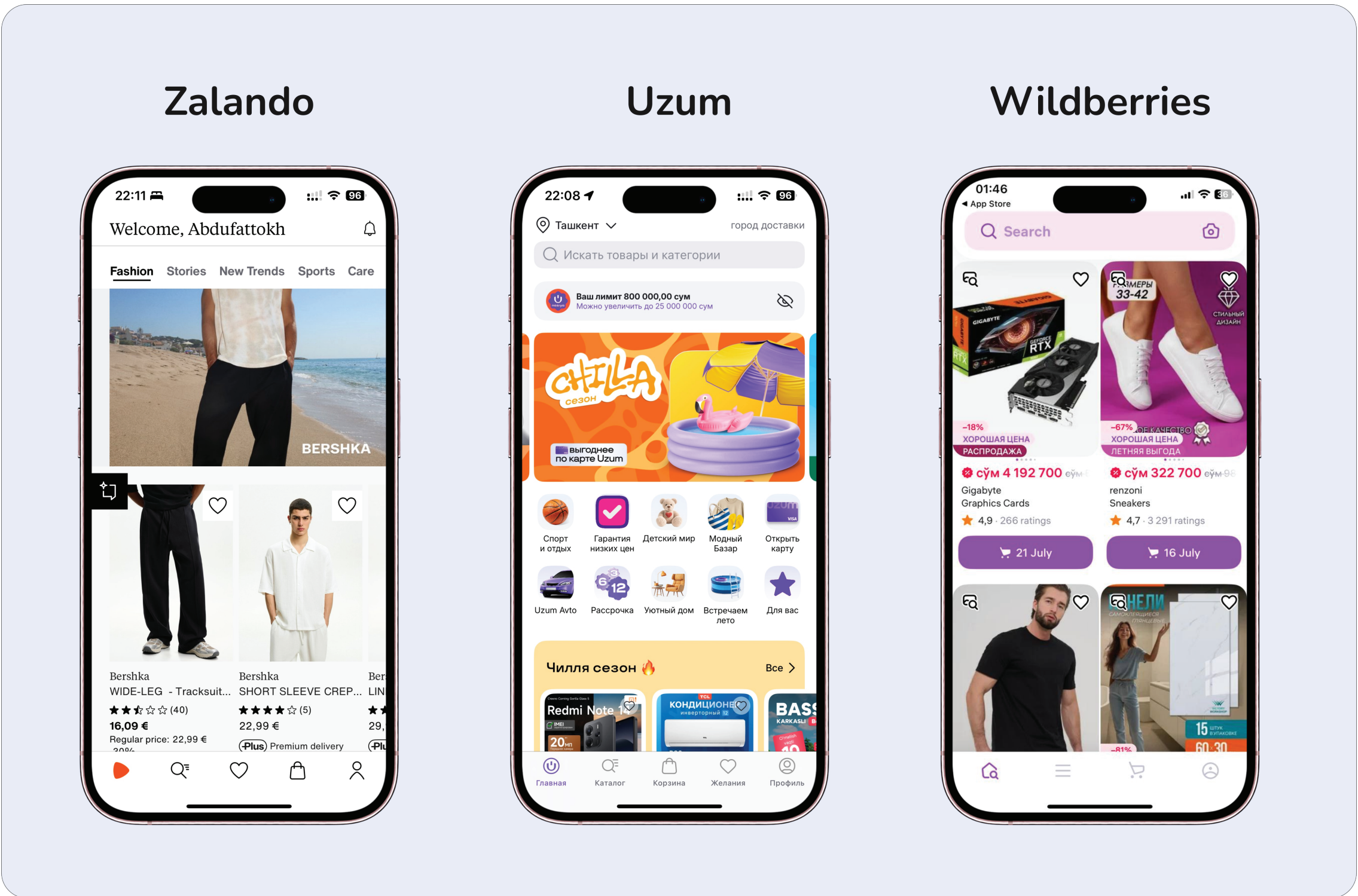
The study highlights the need for **ethical retention strategies and increased user awareness** to promote healthier digital shopping habits.

Special Focus

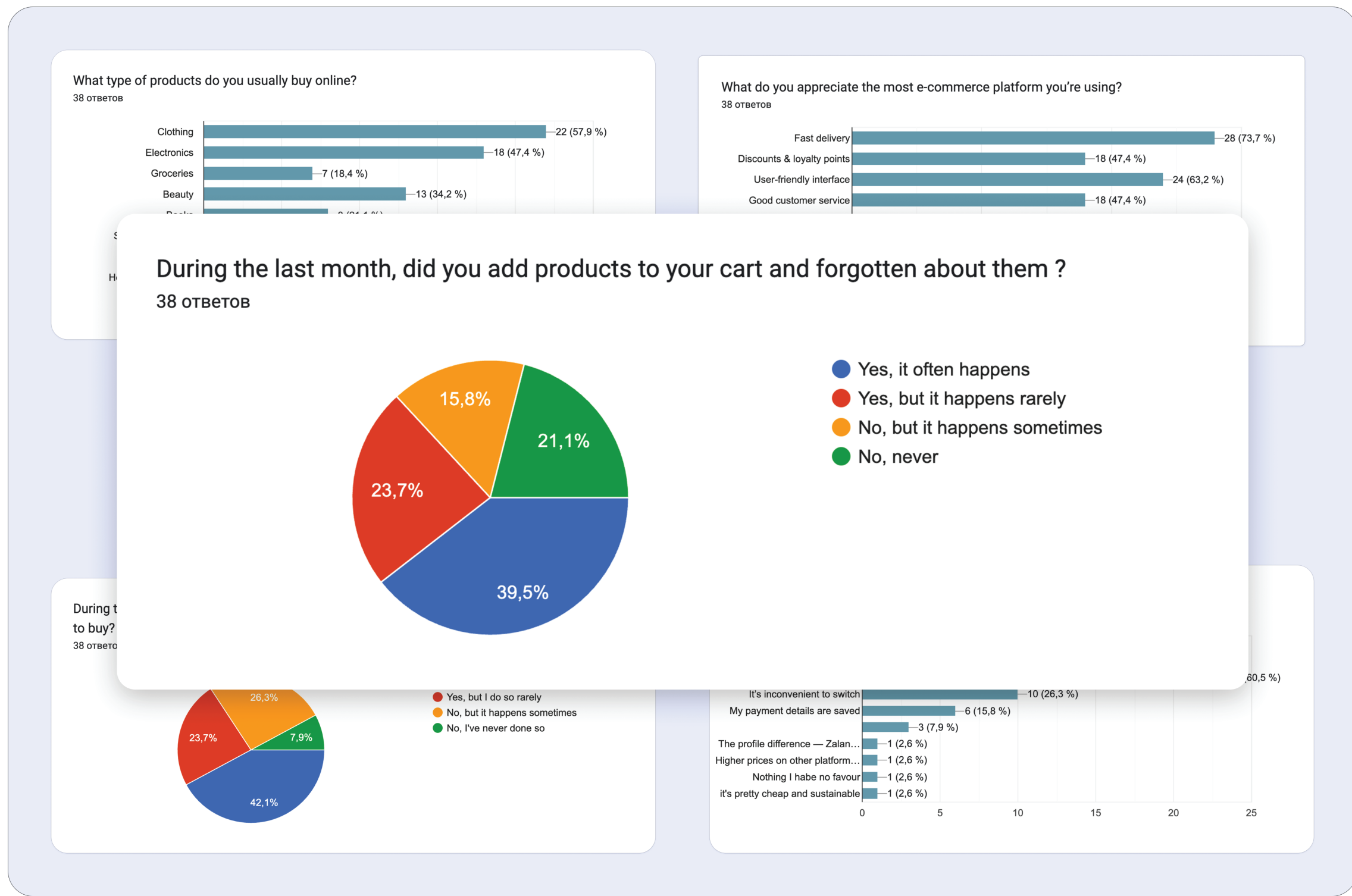
Three major platforms were studied to understand user attachment and retention strategies:

- **Uzum** (Uzbekistan): Fast-growing local leader with strong emotional branding, fast delivery, and localized UX.
- **Wildberries** (Russia & Central Asia): Largest regional player, using smart personalization and deal-driven loyalty.
- **Zalando** (Europe): Fashion leader with sleek UX, loyalty programs, and strong brand trust.

Insight: Despite regional differences, all three use UX, personalization, and trust, not recognized in using dark patterns or any unethical business strategies to build long-term retention. Switching happens mainly due to product unavailability, not dissatisfaction.



The screenshots from the application main pages



User survey results in graphs

Result and Future Work

Key Insights

- Personalization keeps users loyal — 89% value platforms that “know them,” creating reliance and reducing switching.
- Switching costs matter — habit, convenience, and emotional connection make users stay, even when better options exist.
- Scarcity & FOMO tactics drive impulse buys — users act on emotion, not need, especially during sales.
- Compulsive patterns emerge — many browse “just for fun” or to relieve stress, leading to regret and emotional dependency.
- Dark patterns (e.g., fake urgency) by platforms like Temu contribute to unhealthy shopping behavior.

Future Work

- Study cultural impacts on shopping attachment.
- Track long-term user detachment from platforms.
- Explore how AI and voice tech shape future shopping habits

Contact

malikov.create@gmail.com

Supervisor

Prof. KP Ludwig John

