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Digital customer experience as a means to enhance brand passion: An analytical study of a sample of customers and employees at Asiacell and Zain Iraq

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Abstract
The current research aims to highlight the role of digital customer experience, with its dimensions (website design, reliability, responsiveness, security, privacy, personalization, information, and ease of use), in enhancing brand passion with its dimensions (brand commitment, willingness to pay a higher price, and positive word-of-mouth [electronic word-of-mouth]), through an analytical study of a sample of customers and employees at Asiacell and Zain Iraq. The main hypothesis of the research assumes a statistically significant impact of the dimensions of digital customer experience on the dimensions of brand passion. The research problem was formulated through the main question: *What is the level of impact of digital customer experience on brand passion at Asiacell and Zain Iraq?* In order to achieve the research objectives, the analytical descriptive method was adopted, and the questionnaire was used to collect data related to the research variables. The study reached a set of findings, most notably the existence of a correlation and an impact between digital customer experience and brand passion.

Keywords: Digital customer experience, brand passion

Introduction
The digital customer experience is considered one of the most critical factors influencing the success of organizations in the era of digital transformation, as traditional methods are no longer sufficient to meet customer aspirations and needs. The shift to digital channels and the provision of user-friendly and accessible services enhances customer satisfaction and loyalty and contributes to building a positive image of the organization. The importance of the digital customer experience is manifested in providing an interactive and personalized environment that meets customer expectations, whether through applications, websites, or social media platforms. By studying this experience, organizations can identify strengths and weaknesses and develop innovative strategies to enhance engagement and improve services.
Brand passion is one of the key factors that distinguish successful organizations, as it reflects customers' deep attachment to the concept and values represented by the brand. This passion is not merely a fleeting connection, but rather an internal feeling that drives consumers to engage positively, recommend the brand, and contribute to its organic dissemination. Building this kind of passion is difficult without offering an exceptional experience, values aligned with audience expectations, and continuous innovation that reflects the brand's spirit and purpose. By studying this concept, organizations can understand how to strengthen relationships with their customers and guide their strategies toward building a strong and sustainable connection that translates into deep loyalty. Brand passion is the key to creating a community of engaged customers who feel pride and belonging toward the brand they follow.
From this standpoint, the present research aims to shed light on the nature of the relationship between digital customer experience and brand passion. The study is structured into five sections: the first section presents the methodological framework of the research; the second addresses the theoretical framework of the digital customer experience; the third is dedicated to the theoretical framework of brand passion; the fourth discusses the applied aspect of the research; and the fifth presents the main conclusions and recommendations derived from the study.

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Section One: Methodological Framework of the Research
First: Research Problem
There is a noticeable disparity in the ability of organizations to create digital customer experiences that evoke genuine passion and lead to strong brand loyalty. Many companies invest in digital marketing technologies yet struggle to achieve tangible results in strengthening emotional connections with customers. This highlights the need to understand the actual role that digital customer experience plays in stimulating passion. Through interactions with companies and customers, it becomes evident that some organizations fail to transform the digital experience into a unique and engaging one that fosters a sense of belonging, while others succeed in doing so. This increases the need to understand the influencing factors. Therefore, the field problem revolves around determining the extent of the impact of digital customer experience on brand passion. From this, several sub-questions emerge:
1. Is there a correlation between digital customer experience and brand passion?
2. What is the level of impact of digital customer experience on brand passion from the perspective of the research community?

Second: Importance of the Research:
The current research derives its importance from the following:
1. It contributes to enriching academic knowledge about the relationship between digital experience and brand passion, offering practical guidelines for marketers and researchers to develop appropriate strategies for achieving loyalty and emotional attachment to the brand in an evolving digital environment.
2. Understanding the impact of digital customer experience on building emotional relationships and brand loyalty in an advanced digital environment.
3. Providing strategic insights for organizations to improve their interaction with customers and strengthen the bonds of trust and belonging.
4. Assisting marketers and decision-makers in designing

effective strategies that enhance the distinctiveness of the digital experience and stimulate positive emotions and passion among customers.
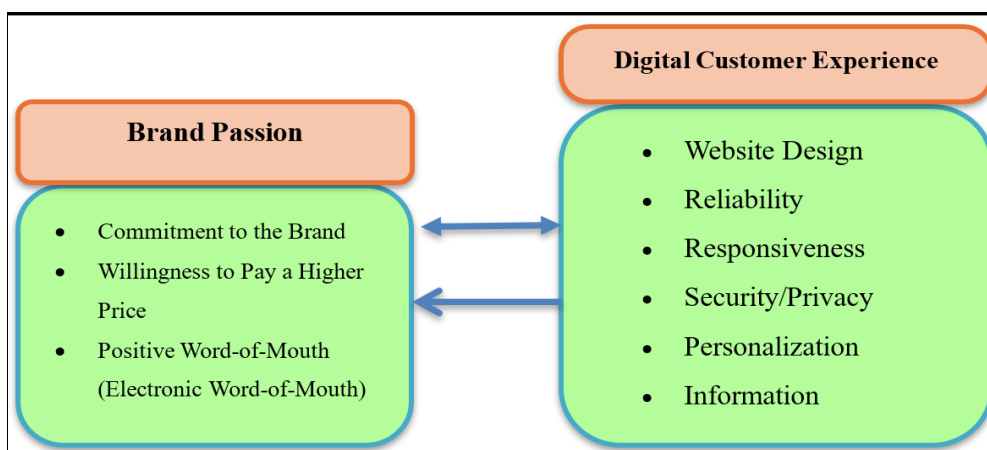
Third: Research Objectives
The current research primarily aims to achieve a set of intellectual and practical objectives that are expected to contribute to strengthening the theoretical and applied aspects of the research variables. These objectives can be outlined as follows:
1. To determine the correlation between digital customer experience and brand passion.
2. To identify the level of impact of digital customer experience on brand passion from the perspective of the research community.
3. The research aims to develop a theoretical framework that enables organizations to measure the impact of digital customer experience on passion.
4. The research seeks to provide practical and actionable recommendations to help companies build a digital customer experience that evokes passion and loyalty, thereby enhancing their competitive ability in the dynamic digital market.

Fourth: Hypothetical Framework of the Research
Based on the theoretical and philosophical frameworks of the research variables (digital customer experience and brand passion), and relying on the research problem and its questions, and in alignment with the research objectives, the hypothetical framework of the research was formulated, as illustrated in Figure (1)
1. **Independent Variable:** Digital Customer Experience, which includes seven dimensions: (website design, reliability, responsiveness, security/privacy, personalization, information, and ease of use). This was measured using the scale of (Villani, 2018, 201 [58]).
2. **Dependent Variable:** Brand Passion, which includes three dimensions: (brand commitment, willingness to pay a higher price, and positive word-of-mouth [electronic word-of-mouth]). This was measured using the scale of (Ghorbanzadeh *et al*., 2020) [59].

Source: Prepared by the Researchers

Fig 1: The Hypothetical Framework of the Research

Fifth: Research Hypotheses
After addressing the research problem, its importance, and defining the objectives to be achieved in order to attain the intended purpose of the study through hypothesis testing, the research hypotheses can be formulated as follows:

1. **Main Hypothesis 1:** There is a statistically significant correlation between digital customer experience (in its dimensions) and brand passion (in its dimensions), at both the overall and sub-dimensional levels.
2. **Main Hypothesis 2:** There is a statistically significant

impact of digital customer experience (in its dimensions) on brand passion (in its dimensions), at both the overall and sub-dimensional levels.

Sixth: Research Methodology and Sample
To achieve the research objectives, the descriptive analytical method was adopted. The questionnaire was used as the primary tool for data collection. It was distributed to a sample of customers and employees at Zain Iraq and Asiacell for mobile communications in Iraq. The total number included (290) employees across various levels and functional specializations, and (290) customers. A random sampling method was adopted to collect the necessary data. Table () illustrates the number of distributed questionnaires in each.

Section Two: Digital Customer Experience
First: The Concept of Digital Customer Experience
Customer experience arises when the organization and the customer interact with one another. The digital customer experience may begin with the organization's website or include mobile applications, chatbots, social media, or any other channel that provides a virtual touchpoint. (Van Thiel, 2017: 71) [44] Referred to digital customer experience as the sum of encounters, impressions, and emotions formed by the customer regarding the organization's operations through websites. It may emerge when a customer uses any station or interface through which the service is digitally delivered, allowing them to carry out the required transaction or part of it. (Nguyen & Le, 2020: 596) [49] Added that any customer interaction with the brand via the internet is considered a digital experience. This includes the use of online platforms via mobile and desktop devices, as well as digital experiences such as proprietary applications and social media content. It also extends to digitally connected environments such as the Internet of Things and voice-activated devices.

Digital customer experience focuses on the new digital interfaces people use to interact with organizations. These include front-end services and the enhancement of back-office processes that ultimately benefit the customer. It encompasses everything from websites to mobile applications, from social media to email, and any other channels where the point of contact is digital. It is the interaction and experience that customers have with an organization's products or services through digital media (Rahayu & Faulina, 2022: 2) [50]. This includes designing user-friendly interfaces and offering a seamless experience for customers to easily interact and complete tasks, using data analytics to understand customer behavior and preferences to provide personalized and targeted experiences and the ability to respond quickly to customer needs and inquiries via phone, email, or social media. It also involves delivering a consistent and coordinated experience across various digital channels to maintain brand consistency and enhance customer trust and loyalty (Ab Aziz & Woods, 2023: 2) [51].

Based on the above, digital customer experience can be defined as: The sum of all online interactions a customer has with a brand, which may begin with the organization's website, but may also include mobile applications, chatbots, social media platforms, and any other channels where the point of contact is virtual.

Second: The Importance of Digital Customer Experience
Digital customer experience has become an integral part of marketing strategies, as organizations move into the virtual world not only for advertising but also for e-commerce and relationship building (Mbama *et al*., 2018: 433) [32]. (Mbama & Ezepue, 2018: 231) [32] Pointed out that 70% of customers worldwide use multiple channels to complete a transaction, making the quality of their digital interactions with the brand more important than ever before. In the digital space, where transactions occur rapidly and competitors are only a few clicks away, offering a first-class digital customer experience can make the difference between making a sale or losing a potential customer for life. Therefore, digital customer experience should be a top priority for organizations.

The study by (Rahayu & Faulina, 2022: 4) [50] indicated that digital customer experience has a positive impact on customer satisfaction and loyalty. Building a good experience for customers leads to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and greater brand promotion. A successfully created digital customer experience can reduce churn (unsubscribing) and encourage repeat visits. However, if the customer journey is poorly designed, customers may stop subscribing or cancel their purchases. Digital customer experience is critical to any modern marketing strategy. By utilizing web and mobile channels to communicate and build relationships with customers, organizations can enhance brand perception and guide customers toward conversion (Ab Aziz & Woods, 2023: 2) [51].

Based on the above, the researchers indicate that the importance of digital customer experience lies in the following

1. Digital customer experience provides value to the organization by attracting customers who appreciate such experiences and are willing to pay more to use the organization's websites and product offer platforms.
2. Digital customer experience helps the organization guide the customer within the store using augmented reality or smart screens. It is a prerequisite for competitiveness, especially as retail evolves rapidly due to changes in consumer behavior.

Third: Dimensions of Digital Customer Experience
Pitkänen (2020) [34] identified seven dimensions through which the digital customer experience can be measured, based on the characteristics inherent in digital experiences. These include: website design, reliability, responsiveness, security/privacy, personalization, information, and ease of use. These dimensions have been adopted in this study as they align with the research setting and its strategic orientation, as follows:

1. Website Design
Design is a concept that reflects the boundaries of human cognition and the extent of truths a person gradually extracts from chaos. As knowledge increases, chaos is replaced with structured systems. Therefore, artists are expected to have an intuitive understanding of others in terms of perceiving shapes and the meanings they convey. Website design is a significant dimension that influences the perceptions of purchasing customers. (Ighomereho *et al*., 2022: 6) [52] Defined website design as the provision of information to customers in an engaging manner, where the website design

is unique and visually attractive.

Website design encompasses the site's appearance and visual layout. It is characterized by aesthetic attributes, content, and features (Zavareh *et al*., 2012: 443) [47]. To evaluate the aesthetic criteria of a website, one must consider elements such as font types, sizes, text clarity, image clarity and quality, and the use of appropriate visual imagery on the website (Al Balushi & Ali, 2016: 342) [53].

Design has been defined in many ways, all revolving around the concept of a plan that encompasses various aspects of a subject and organizes multiple elements from different domains into a unified and harmonious whole to achieve a specific goal. The topic of defining design is a complex one, as interpretations vary depending on the subject to which it is applied. This variation arises from the difficulty of transforming abstract definitions into measurable and assessable concepts. The most appropriate way to express any concept or term is to translate it into a set of observable or measurable procedures, steps, or operations.

2. Reliability

Certain aspects of the reliability factor relate to fulfilling promises within the agreed timeframe. While many organizations assume that the main reason customers shop online is lower prices, many customers actually shop online for convenience (Mohammed *et al*., 2016: 23) [33]. If customers cannot trust an organization to fulfill their requests, they will be dissatisfied (Pitkänen, 2020: 8) [34]. Reliability is the primary determinant of customer satisfaction and the second most important factor influencing customer loyalty to a website (Agrawal *et al*., 2018: 259) [2]. (Andi, 2019: 201) [54] Defined reliability as the service's ability to provide customers with trust and high accuracy.

To achieve reliability, organizations must deliver services as promised and in a dependable manner (Rita *et al*., 2019: 14) [39]. Reliability includes proper technical implementation of the website, accuracy in commitments and service promises (such as customer order fulfillment, delivery times, advertising, and product information), accurate order completion, direct delivery, and truthful advertising (Al-Nuaimi, 2013: 188) [55].

3. Responsiveness

One aspect of responsiveness is the provision of prompt service. Responsiveness can also be defined as the effective handling of problems and returns via the website (Mohammed *et al*., 2016: 23) [33]. It measures an organization's ability to provide appropriate information to solve customer issues, establish mechanisms to handle returns, and offer online warranties (Agrawal *et al*., 2018: 259) [2]. When a customer encounters a problem, contacting a customer service agent becomes essential (Andi, 2019: 201) [54]. (Rita *et al*., 2019: 14) [39] Noted that negative attitudes toward a website can result from delayed or unexpected responses to customer inquiries.

(Al-Nuaimi, 2013: 188) [55] Defined responsiveness as the extent to which the organization's website is helpful and free from unnecessary delays in responding to customers. Responsiveness may also refer to how quickly a user can find the required information on the website, how promptly live chat responds, and how efficiently forms available on the site function (Pitkänen, 2020: 9) [34].

4. Security / Privacy

Privacy refers to the degree of security provided by a website and the protection of customer information. This dimension holds significant importance in electronic services, as customers perceive substantial risks in the virtual environment due to the potential misuse of their financial and personal data. (Iliachenko, 2006: 26) [56] Defined privacy as the organization's willingness and ability to maintain the integrity of customer data by protecting personal information, avoiding the sharing of collected data with other websites, and ensuring identity protection.

Since customers cannot interact directly with personnel or the physical premises of an organization online, trust must be established through other means. One of the most notable barriers to the rapid development of e-commerce is the lack of trust and perceived insecurity when making or receiving payments online. Security represents a form of assurance-relating to the service provider's knowledge, courtesy, and ability to inspire trust and confidence (Al-Balushi & Ali, 2016: 342) [53]. It refers to the brand's attributes of knowledge, capability, and trust in delivering services. Evaluation criteria for digital customer experience under this dimension include the organization's reputation and status, the distinct knowledge and skills of its staff, and their personal characteristics.

5. Personalization

Personalization serves as a valuable proposition for organizations aiming to deliver a high-quality customer experience and is essential for maintaining competitiveness. Consumers now expect fully personalized experiences when engaging with brands; if they do not receive such experiences, they are increasingly likely to take their business elsewhere. Personalization refers to the organization's ability to deliver services that meet the diverse needs of specific customer segments (Al-Nuaimi, 2013: 188) [55].

Personalized service is positively associated with customer loyalty and satisfaction (Rita *et al*., 2019: 14) [39]. Personalization is an interesting dimension as it determines whether user needs are met through the services provided (Pitkänen, 2020: 9) [34]. (Andi, 2019: 201) [54] Defined personalization as the ease with which a website can be tailored to suit individual customer preferences, history, and shopping behavior. (Parise *et al*., 2016: 413) [57] Noted that personalization is one of the most influential factors affecting customer experience, particularly in relation to sellers, as their communication and activities at different touchpoints significantly impact purchasing decisions.

Moreover, personalization fosters trust by demonstrating attentiveness to the customer, making them more likely to rely on the brand to meet their needs. Repeated and targeted personalization is a quick and effective method to build trust and brand loyalty.

6. Information

This dimension consists of the information provided by the organization, often through its website (Alanezi *et al*., 2010: 12) [3]. The information must be up-to-date, accurate, and easy to understand. Information plays a vital role in how online users make decisions (Van der, 2010: 2) [43]. Poor information management leads to customer service fatigue, which negatively affects service quality across other

dimensions as well (Zavareh *et al*., 2012: 443) [47].

(Büyüközkan *et al*., 2020: 15) [13] Noted that information has a significant impact on the digital experience, as it enhances the quality of information, systems, and services, resulting in increased user interest and satisfaction. Additionally, information improves employee performance, including effectiveness, efficiency, authority, responsibility, discipline, and initiative, which in turn positively influences the delivered service (Herhausen *et al*., 2020: 919) [24].

Information also plays a critical role in supply chain innovation and logistics service quality, acting as a mediator between innovation capacity and service quality (Purwanto, 2022: 53) [37]. Moreover, digital information systems supported by IT contribute to the quality of public services and to fulfilling customer expectations and desires (Setia *et al*., 2013: 569) [40]. In general, information enables organizations to enhance the customer experience by improving various aspects such as content, system performance, employee efficiency, innovation, and logistics (Rita *et al*., 2019: 14) [39].

7. Ease of Use

Ease of use is somewhat related to the website design dimension and refers to how easy it is to utilize digital services (Agrawal *et al*., 2018: 259) [2]. Ease of use is one of the most important metrics affecting customer satisfaction (Andi, 2019: 201) [54].

Ease of use can also extend beyond the website to other aspects of electronic services. This dimension reveals whether users feel frustrated while using the service (Pitkänen, 2020: 9) [34]. The ease of using a website is one of the key elements that encourage customers to return to the site (Van der, 2010: 2) [43]. It can be defined as the user's expectation that minimal effort will be required to use the system (Alanezi *et al*., 2010: 12) [3].

Ease of use consists of various factors such as: website structure, navigation simplicity, command clarity, process steps, facility access with inquiries, and customer satisfaction with how inquiries can be modified (Mohammed *et al*., 2016: 23) [33]. It is also associated with the memorability of the website address. The website should be simple, well-organized, and easy to navigate, enabling customers to find what they need effortlessly. A good search engine facilitates fast and easy navigation between pages (Zavareh *et al*., 2012: 443) [47].

Section Three: Brand Passion
First: The Concept of Brand Passion

The concept of brand passion provides a strong bond with brands that customers consider central to their identity. Thus, it encompasses the cognitive, emotional, and evaluative aspects of the customer's relationship with the brand (Bauer *et al*., 2007: 3) [9]. When customers are passionate about a brand, they develop a deep emotional connection with it and may feel its absence or a sense of loss when it is unavailable (Füller *et al*., 2008: 610) [19].

The relationship between the brand and the customer has become a crucial topic in brand management. However, it still poses a challenge for many marketers in terms of how to effectively manage this task (Astakhova *et al*., 2017: 4) [8]. Researchers emphasize the importance of emotional aspects, such as brand passion, in developing strong relationships between customers and their preferred brands (Zeeshan *et al*., 2019: 2) [48]. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on fostering passion toward the brand, as it can have a

positive impact on customer behavior, such as the willingness to pay more and spread positive word-of-mouth. Although customers naturally encounter and interact with a vast number of products, emotional attachment typically forms with only a few (Widodo, 2024: 5275) [46]. Many researchers have explored the reasons why consumers develop interest or disinterest toward various brands in recent years. These studies have revealed higher levels of emotional engagement with certain brands, with the peak of this relationship represented by brand passion (Al-Mukbaty & Saleh, 2023: 173) [1].

Brand passion consists of two elements: the presence of the brand in the customer's mind and the idealization of the brand. Therefore, brand passion is a psychological construct composed of excitement, affection, and obsession with a brand (Gilal *et al*., 2023: 83) [20]. It is a highly positive emotional state toward a brand that leads to emotional attachment and influences behavioral factors (Arayesh *et al*., 2020: 2889) [6]. It represents a type of relationship between the customer and the brand in which customers exhibit high levels of enthusiasm and desire (Chen *et al*., 2022: 3) [15]. It is an emotional and positive attitude toward a unique brand that affects related behavioral factors (Jin *et al*., 2023: 2) [26]. Brand passion also serves as a mechanism for developing new products and services that meet customer needs and enhance their passion (Guerola-Navarro *et al*., 2024: 508) [22].

Based on the concepts presented above, the researchers define brand passion as: Intense and exciting positive feelings toward the brand, where the passionate customer becomes emotionally engaged in a relationship with the brand, criticizing its absence and, in the context of consumption, expressing enthusiasm in their relationship with the brand. It reflects strong positive emotions toward the brand, as the emotionally involved customer forms a deep emotional bond and misses the brand when it is unavailable.

Second: The Importance of Brand Passion

Brand passion is a highly emotional construct experienced by satisfied customers (Swimberghe *et al*., 2014: 2658) [42]. It represents a crucial element that signifies an emotional bond between customers and the brand, thereby contributing to the development of loyalty (Pourazad *et al*., 2015: 548) [35]. The findings of (Bauer *et al*., 2007: 3) [9] indicated that brand passion motivates customers to purchase products of passionate brands at higher prices.

Moreover, passionate customers contribute to the development of brand communities and assist brands in product development activities (Füller *et al*., 2008: 610) [19]. Brand passion is characterized by deeper and more distinct levels of brand attachment, driven by consumers' desire for the prestige, identity, uniqueness, and pleasurable benefits of the brand (Mahmood *et al*., 2019: 42) [31]. Passion for a brand tends to be stronger when the relationship between the brand and the consumer is in its early development stage. The concept of brand passion is rooted in psychological research on passion, which refers to a strong desire in personal relationships (Das *et al*., 2019: 480) [17].

Marketing researchers have emphasized that brand passion plays a vital role in enhancing word-of-mouth promotion (Gilal *et al*., 2018: 3) [21], increasing willingness to pay a premium price (Loureiro *et al*., 2017: 469) [30], and strengthening brand loyalty, advocacy, community engagement, social media support, price insensitivity, and

purchase intention (Pourazad & Pare, 2015: 19) [35].

Brand passion also influences customers' desire to express both their internal and social selves, as passionate customers seek self-verification and self-enhancement (Wang *et al*., 2021: 431) [45].

Based on the above, the researchers conclude that the importance of brand passion can be summarized as follows:

It is a driving force in the relationship between the customer and the brand, where emotion plays a central role. When customers are passionate about a brand, they develop a deep emotional connection with it and may feel its absence or experience a sense of loss if the brand becomes unavailable.

Third: Dimensions of Brand Passion

Brand passion can be measured through three dimensions: brand commitment, willingness to pay a higher price, and positive word-of-mouth, as defined by the model of (Swimberghe *et al*., 2014) [42], which is considered most suitable for the research context, as follows

1.   Brand Commitment

Brand commitment represents the strength of the relationship between the customer and the brand. It is defined as a lasting desire to maintain a valuable relationship (Chokenukul *et al*., 2018: 1) [16]. Commitment lies at the core of brand-customer relationships, grounded in identification, attachment, and shared values. This construct emerges from a holistic judgment and does not rely directly on brand evaluations (Albert *et al*., 2013: 2) [4].

(Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002: 38) [14] Defined brand commitment as the customer's long-term orientation, behavioral tendencies, and attitudes toward the relational brand. Sung & Campbell (2007: 99) [41] described brand commitment as an emotional or psychological attachment to a brand within a product category. Similarly, (Erkmen & Hancer, 2014: 3) [18] viewed brand commitment as the psychological connection between customers and the brand.

Brand commitment reflects the degree of customers' psychological attachment to the brand, which influences their willingness to make extra efforts to maintain a valuable relationship with the brand and to advocate for it (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005: 301) [11]. It involves the customer's readiness to make sacrifices to gain long-term relationship benefits, revealing the individual's bond with the brand. This bond makes them more tolerant when facing brand-related issues and less sensitive to competitors' marketing activities.

2.   Willingness to Pay a Higher Price

Brand passion increases customers' willingness to pay premium prices, as it strengthens emotional bonds, which in turn enhance commitment and loyalty prompting customers to accept higher prices in exchange for the perceived value associated with the brand (Anselmsson *et al*., 2014: 93) [5]. Numerous studies highlight that stronger emotional attachment is linked to a greater willingness to pay more than the market average for products from such brands (Kucher *et al*., 2019: 863) [29].

(Gumber & Rana, 2017: 2) [23] Noted that by fostering emotional bonds and loyalty through engagement strategies, brands can not only strengthen their market position but also deepen customer relationships, thus justifying premium pricing. Understanding this dynamic helps organizations design their marketing strategies to leverage the powerful impact of brand passion (Ashraf & Mehmood, 2017: 622)

[7].

Emotional connections with brands such as aspirations associated with the brand can increase consumers' willingness to pay more. A strong attachment leads to higher purchase intentions, as customers perceive brands that resonate with their identity or aspirations as worthy of higher prices (Huang, 2021: 6) [25]. Customers are also more inclined to pay a premium for brands they trust, especially those promoting safe and healthy attributes (Kiatkawsin & Han, 2019: 211) [28].

3.   Positive   Word-of-Mouth   (Electronic   Word-of-Mouth)

Customers are constantly exposed to powerful influences that shape their behavior and purchasing decisions especially in light of technological advancements and the openness to diverse knowledge sources (Swimberghe *et al*., 2014: 2659) [42]. Organizations have utilized every available communication tool personal or impersonal to build a positive image of themselves and their brands (Pourazad *et al*., 2015: 550) [35].

Among these channels is word-of-mouth communication, considered one of the most credible personal communication tools. It includes recommendation, advice, or knowledge-sharing (Füller *et al*., 2008: 611) [19]. Positive word-of-mouth refers to customers speaking favorably about a particular product or brand, which increases purchase intentions (Bazi *et al*., 2020: 225) [10] and reduces the organization's general promotional costs.

Therefore, marketing managers must create a favorable environment for the development and spread of positive word-of-mouth. They must also understand how to disseminate it among customers and manage this process effectively in the market (Pourazad *et al*., 2020: 549) [36]. It is defined as a strategy where satisfied customers share their positive experiences with others, often resulting in promotion of a brand, product, or service (Relling *et al*., 2016: 44) [38].

This includes discussing company offerings with friends, family, and acquaintances, thereby increasing trust in the brand (Karjaluoto *et al*., 2016: 528) [25]. This form of marketing is highly effective studies show that 92% of customers trust recommendations from people they know more than any other form of advertising (Burnham & Leary, 2018: 389) [12].

Section Four: The Field Framework of the Research

This section presents the translation of the theoretical and conceptual results originally derived from the literature review and theoretically confirmed into practical outcomes within the studied organization. This is achieved by relying on the hypotheses drawn from the theoretical framework and attempting to verify them using statistical tools and methods.

First: Presentation of the Means, Standard Deviations, and Coefficients of Variation for the Research Variables
1. Description of the Digital Customer Experience Variable

It is observed from the results of Table () that the overall mean for the digital customer experience variable reached **3.73**, with a standard deviation of 0.595 and a coefficient of variation of 15.95%, reflecting a relative importance of 75%. This indicates that employees at Asiacell and Zain Iraq place significant emphasis on this variable.

The importance of this variable appears to stem from the personalization dimension, which includes providing a suitable work environment for delivering services to customers, offering accurate information, and responding to customer inquiries. This dimension recorded a mean of 3.76, a standard deviation of 0.571, and a coefficient of variation of 15.18%. In contrast, the responsiveness dimension ranked last. It involves the features available on the organization's website that allow customers to fully benefit from the provided services, as per the organization's planned approach, in addition to responding to all customer questions submitted through the website, delivering services promptly, and instilling confidence in customers to interact with the organization. Illustrates the distribution of the importance ranking based on the coefficient of variation for the digital customer experience variable.

Table 1: Statistical Description of the Digital Customer Experience Variable

Dimensions	Mean	Response Direction	Response Level	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation%	Relative Importance%	Availability Level	Importance Rank
Website Design	3.73	Agree	High	0.606	16.23	75%	Good	3
Reliability	3.69	Agree	High	0.729	19.74	74%	Good	7
Responsiveness	3.74	Agree	High	0.687	18.39	75%	Good	6
Security / Privacy	3.78	Agree	High	0.643	17.00	76%	Good	4
Personalization	3.76	Agree	High	0.571	15.18	75%	Good	1
Information	3.66	Agree	High	0.589	16.09	73%	Good	2
Ease of Use	3.76	Agree	High	0.649	17.27	75%	Good	5
Digital Customer Experience Variable								
Overall Mean					3.73			
Standard Deviation					0.595			
Coefficient of Variation					15.95			
Relative Importance					75%			

3. Description of the Brand Passion Variable

It is observed from the results of Table (1) that the overall mean for the brand passion variable reached 3.69, with a standard deviation of 0.624 and a coefficient of variation of 16.89%, resulting in a relative importance of 74%. This indicates that employees at Asiacell and Zain Iraq place significant emphasis on this variable. The importance of this variable appears to be attributed to the willingness to pay a higher price dimension, which reflects the emotional attachment that motivates customers to pay more to purchase and retain the brand. This dimension recorded a mean of 3.75, a standard deviation of 0.326, and a coefficient of variation of 8.69%. On the other hand, the positive word-of-mouth (electronic word-of-mouth) dimension ranked last. It refers to the pleasant, warm, and comfortable feelings that customers have toward the brand, which enhance its ability to generate positive responses from customers upon purchase. Consequently, they tend to build long-term relationships with the brand and speak positively about it to others, persuading new customers to try it illustrates the ranking distribution based on the coefficient of variation for the brand passion variable.

Table 2: Statistical Description Results for the Brand Passion Variable

Dimensions	Mean	Response Direction	Response Level	Standard Deviation	Coefficient of Variation%	Relative Importance%	Availability Level	Importance Rank
Brand Commitment	3.75	Agree	High	0.649	17.31	75%	Good	2
Willingness to Pay a Higher Price	3.75	Agree	High	0.326	8.69	75%	Good	1
Positive Word-of-Mouth (Electronic Word-of-Mouth)	3.59	Agree	High	0.839	23.40	72%	Good	3
Brand Passion Variable								
Overall Mean					3.69			
Standard Deviation					0.624			
Coefficient of Variation					16.89			
Relative Importance					74%			

Second: Hypothesis Testing
First: Correlation Hypothesis

When measuring the correlation between the research variables, two key indicators must be considered. The first indicator is that any correlation coefficient value between two variables that exceeds 0.90 suggests that the two variables are essentially representing a single construct. In such cases, they should be merged into one variable this condition is known as multicollinearity, as recommended by Pallant (2001) [60]. Therefore, the strength of the relationship between the variables under investigation should be less than 0.90, indicating that each variable maintains its distinct identity. The second indicator lies in assessing the strength and direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. For this purpose, the scale is employed to interpret the strength and direction of the correlation, as shown in the table below.

Table 3: Strength and Direction of the Relationship between Research Variables

Strength of Relationship						
	Type of Relationship					
			Indicators			
0.10 - less than 0.29	Direct	Positive	Weak	Negative	inverse	From (0.10) - less than (0.29)
0.30 - less than 0.49	Direct	Positive	Moderate	Negative	inverse	From (0.30) - less than (0.49)
0.50 - less than 1.0	Direct	Positive	Strong	Negative	inverse	From (0.50) - less than (1.0)

Source: Cohen, J., Cohen, P., West, S. G., & Aiken, L. S. (1983), *Applied Multiple Regression/Correlation Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences*, 3rd Edition, Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p.2.

Accordingly, the correlation both in terms of internal consistency and the relationships between variables can be summarized in the cross-correlation matrix for a sample size of (290), at a significance level less than 0.01, as shown in Table (3).

Main Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant correlation between digital customer experience (in its dimensions) and brand passion (in its dimensions). The

results presented in Table () indicate the presence of a statistically significant positive correlation between digital customer experience and brand passion, with a correlation coefficient of (0.872) at a significance level of (0.01). This implies that implementing a strong digital customer experience is positively associated with enhancing brand passion, highlighting the importance of digital customer experience in strengthening the brand.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix between Digital Customer Experience Dimensions and Brand Passion Dimensions

	Website Design	Reliability	Responsiveness	Security / Privacy	Personalization	Information	Ease of Use	Digital Customer Experience
	Brand Commitment							
R	.933**	.890**	.879**	.887**	.835**	.832**	.873**	.941**
	Willingness to Pay a Higher Price							
R	.799**	.733**	.670**	.779**	.536**	.648**	.757**	.758**
	Positive Word-of-Mouth (Electronic Word-of-Mouth)							
R	.500**	.590**	.639**	.470**	.451**	.542**	.488**	.569**
	Brand Passion							
R	.853**	.854**	.848**	.817**	.698**	.780**	.812**	.872**

Accordingly, the first main hypothesis can be accepted, which states that: "There is a statistically significant correlation between digital customer experience (in its dimensions) and brand passion (in its dimensions), at both the overall and sub-dimensional levels."

Main Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant impact of digital customer experience (in its dimensions) on brand passion (in its dimensions). The results of Table () and the data presented in Figure (2) show that there is no

statistically significant impact of digital customer experience (in its dimensions) on brand passion. Although an increase in digital customer experience by one unit leads to an improvement in brand passion, the effect was limited. The standardized weight was (0.285), with a standard error of (0.088) and a critical value of (3.239). This suggests that while a positive relationship exists, the effect size is weak, and the statistical significance may not be strong enough to confirm a meaningful impact across all dimensions.
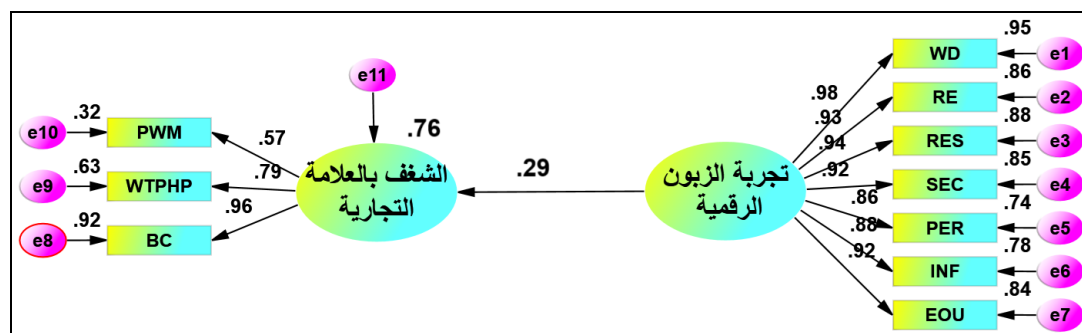
Figure 2: The Standard Model of the Impact of Digital Customer Experience Dimensions on Brand Passion

Dimensions

The digital customer experience contributed to explaining 76.0% ($R^2 = 0.760$) of the variance in brand passion. The remaining proportion of variance lies outside the scope of the study. This result was accompanied by a computed F-

value of (909.598), which exceeds the critical table value. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 can be accepted, indicating the presence of a statistically significant effect of digital customer experience (in its dimensions) on brand passion (in its dimensions).

Table 5: Outputs of the Standard Model for the Effect of Digital Customer Experience Dimensions on Brand Passion Dimensions

Path			Standardized Weight	Standard Error	Critical Value	Coefficient of Determination (R²)	F Value	Significance
Digital Customer Experience	---<	Brand Passion	0.285	0.088	3.239	0.760	909.598	0.001

Accordingly, the following can be concluded

1. There is a statistically significant impact of the Website Design dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions (Brand Commitment, Willingness to Pay a Higher Price, Positive Word-of-Mouth). Results from Table () show a significant impact, as a one-unit increase in website design leads to an improvement in brand passion by 0.223, with a standard error of 0.092 and a critical value of 2.424. This indicates that enhancing website design has a positive and significant effect on brand passion. Thus, investing in web design technologies can help boost customer loyalty and strengthen their attachment to the brand.

2. There is a statistically significant impact of the Reliability dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. The results from Table () show that a one-unit increase in reliability leads to an improvement in brand passion by 0.369, with a standard error of 0.056 and a critical value of 6.589. This confirms the positive and significant effect of reliability on brand passion. Therefore, investing in reliability mechanisms can enhance customer experience and deepen emotional connection with the brand.

3. There is a statistically significant impact of the Responsiveness dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. According to Table (), a one-unit increase in responsiveness results in an improvement in brand passion by 0.449, with a standard error of 0.068 and a critical value of 6.603. This demonstrates that improving responsiveness has a positive and significant influence on brand passion. Thus, investing in responsiveness technologies can enhance customer experience and emotional attachment to the brand.

4. There is a statistically significant impact of the Security/Privacy dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. Table () shows that a one-unit increase in security/privacy results in an improvement in brand passion by 0.225, with a standard error of 0.066 and a critical value of 3.409. This indicates that enhancing security and privacy practices has a positive and significant effect on brand passion. Investing in these technologies can improve customer trust and loyalty.

5. There is a statistically significant impact of the Personalization dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. The results show that a one-unit increase in personalization leads to an improvement in brand passion by 0.494, with a standard error of 0.068 and a critical value of 7.265. This suggests that improving personalization significantly boosts customer loyalty and emotional connection with the brand.

6. There is a statistically significant impact of the Information dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. Table () reveals that a one-unit increase in information quality improves brand passion by 0.179, with a standard error of 0.061 and a critical value of 2.934. This means that enhancing information systems can positively influence brand passion. Investing in such tools helps improve customer experience and brand engagement.

7. There is a statistically significant impact of the Ease of Use dimension on Brand Passion and its dimensions. According to the data, a one-unit increase in ease of use results in an improvement in brand passion by 0.189, with a standard error of 0.073 and a critical value of 2.589. This confirms that ease of use has a positive and significant effect on brand passion. Thus, improving user-friendliness can enhance customer experience and emotional engagement with the brand.
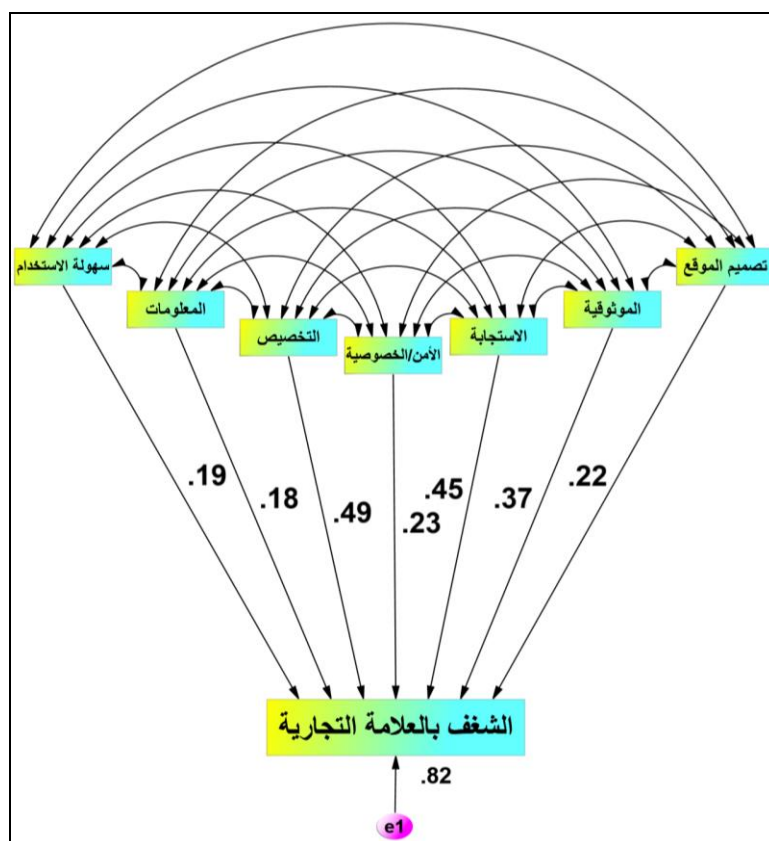
Fig 3: The Standard Model for the Effect of Digital Customer Experience Dimensions on Brand Passion

Dimensions

The dimensions of digital customer experience contributed to explaining 81.9% of the variance in brand passion ($R^2 = 0.819$). The remaining proportion lies outside the scope of the current research. This result was accompanied by a calculated F-value of (182.681), which is greater than the critical table value. Accordingly, Hypothesis 7 can be accepted, confirming that there is a statistically significant effect of the dimensions of digital customer experience on the dimensions of brand passion.

Table 6: Outputs of the Standard Model for the Effect of Digital Customer Experience Dimensions on Brand Passion Dimensions

Path			Standardized Weight	Standard Error	Critical Value	Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	F Value	Significance
Website Design	---<		0.223	0.092	2.424			0.016
Reliability			0.369	0.056	6.589			0.000
Responsiveness			0.449	0.068	6.603			0.000
Security / Privacy		Brand Passion	0.225	0.066	3.409	0.819	182.681	0.001
Personalization	---<		0.494	0.068	7.265			0.000
Information	---<		0.179	0.061	2.934			0.004
Ease of Use	---<		0.189	0.073	2.589			0.010

Section Five: Conclusions and Recommendations

First: Conclusions

1. The research results indicate that customer responsiveness to digital services enhances their loyalty to the brands, especially when they experience ease of access and fast service.
2. The findings suggest that digital technologies enabling direct and personalized interaction contribute to increasing customers' sense of belonging and emotional attachment to the brand.
3. The results show that a seamless user experience enhances positive perception; ease of use of digital applications and services strengthens the brand's favorable mental image.
4. The study finds that the digital experience of employees impacts service quality, as employees using advanced digital tools are more capable of providing better service, thus enhancing customer satisfaction and loyalty.
5. The results point to trust and security in digital interactions as essential elements for boosting brand passion, particularly when policies are transparent, responses are prompt, and data is secure.
6. An outstanding digital experience characterized by usability and interactivity enhances positive emotions and increases brand passion, as users develop strong emotional ties based on exceptional experiences.
7. Personalized interaction and customization within the digital experience deepen customer engagement with the brand, thereby fostering passion and generating lasting loyalty.

Second: Recommendations

1. Companies should regularly update and improve their digital applications and internet services to ensure ease of use, high performance, and minimal obstacles that could negatively affect the customer experience.
2. Collaborating with influencers to create creative content that reflects brand values and encourages engagement particularly on social media platforms is essential for building deeper relationships with customers.
3. Companies should rely on visual and storytelling-based media to communicate positive customer experiences and create emotional bonds that go beyond basic service delivery.
4. There is a need to increase clear communication with customers about privacy policies, data security, and response speed, as these elements build trust and increase passion for the brand.
5. Companies should adopt tools to measure digital experience performance and assess levels of brand passion in order to improve creative strategies and continuously meet customer expectations.
6. Establishing direct communication channels such as live chat, forums, and surveys can help improve services quickly and strengthen the relationship with customers.
7. It is essential to provide educational, entertaining, and motivational content that enhances relationship value and encourages ongoing participation and interaction with the brand.

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