

Reflecting Customer - Brand Identification on Customer's Brand Passion: An Applied Study of Smartphone Brands in Iraq

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Abstract

The main objective of the current study is to verify the role of customer-brand similarity in the brand passion for some brands of smartphones, as the sample study consisted of 296 customers, and therefore the problem of the study was formulated with regard to the relationship between the study variables, as a result of which the objectives of the study were defined. The study hypothesis chart crystallized the formulation of the special hypotheses tested in the statistical package to model structural equations in the least squares method (AMOS.V.25) and to analyze what the study tool provided, a set of statistical methods were used: The deterministic factor analysis, the alpha Kronbach coefficient, the determination coefficient (R²), and the normal distribution of data. The results of the study showed a clear and important perception of the relationship between customer-brand similarity and brand passion, and perhaps the most important results of the study are reflected in a positive statistical correlation and impact between customer-brand affinity and brand passion. Customers are familiar with their brand, which means a repeat purchase and a pride in keeping with it despite the presence of other brands. In the light of these findings, the study presented a series of recommendations, the most important of which is (strengthening the relationship between preferred brands and their customers by ensuring the strength and stability of the relationship between them in the light of ongoing marketing research).

Keywords: Customer-brand Identification, Brand Passion.

Introduction

Today, in the business world, where there are many rapid fluctuations as a result of the development of communications technology and the intense competition that has affected production processes, many organizations have looked for modern practices and methods that suit customers' requirements, so the brand is the only salvation to overcome rapid environmental changes. Many of these organizations have developed a client-to-brand perception, with benefits and benefits in providing and supporting customer acumen to brand passion, which in turn contributes to brand passion. Customer identification toward the brand has become a must as a marketing approach that helps increase customer attention to different requirements, thereby achieving customer satisfaction and Customer.

Customer-brand commonality also contributes to the organization's ability to invest in customer relationships with a view to making customer-beneficial investments, which motivates the customer to match the brand's passion. The building of brand symmetry contributes to the improvement of the organization's performance by developing its ability to satisfy their needs and desires, leading to customer sacrifice for the brand, which in turn leads to Customer toward it, and the current study highlights the importance of studying the impact of customer-brand similarity in the passion for the brand.

Part One: Study Methodology

First: The Problem of Study

Brand symmetry is a key indicator of brand sustainability, and loyal customers are unlikely to become competitive brands, generating stable revenue that is not affected by negative advertising. The cost of maintaining is much lower than the cost of attracting new customers and they are more willing to pay higher prices and make more frequent purchases than unloyal customers. "Loyal customers also claim that they frequently buy other services and products from Brands they feel loyal to compared to those to which they have little Customer," says Mitchell & Debra, 2019.

In order for organizations to build a lasting relationship with the customer, they are seeking higher levels of satisfaction through psychological, emotional or emotional bonds that connect the customer to match the brand personality and are ready to show brand passion by being ready to use their discretionary resources (such as money, time and energy). To the brand, and to convince others to buy it or use it. When a customer is similar to a brand, they will build a psychological relationship with it, by showing their brand preference, encouraging the brand to look for and benefit from it, and engaging in a higher level of management information sharing such as recommendations, suggestions and verbal communication words.

However, although there is a theoretical agreement among researchers that the perceived quality, value, and satisfaction give the best assessment of brand passion (Debra & kin, 2019), the limitations of these dimensions in the interpretation and expectation of the brand's existing brand are widely recognized in marketing thought.

However, while researchers have made great efforts to enhance our understanding of the role of brands in the smartphone industry by studying issues such as brand personality, co-brand, online brand communities, and brand extensions, Little attention has been paid to explicitly investigating the role of brand variables in identifying brand love in the smartphone industry.

Because individuals have a strong desire to maintain the relationship with the Brand when they like it (Ahearne & Gruen, 2005). Applying brand passion to the brand context can make a Brandificant contribution to our understanding of the marketing relationship and how brand Customer and passion are achieved. It is striking that the concept of love is not receiving more attention than marketing academics (Albert, 2008).

The current study seeks to verify a key question: "**Can the relationship between customer-brand similarity and brand passion be strengthened?**" This question can be elaborated into sub-questions as follows:

- a) How similar is the customer to the Brand for the smartphones they consume?
- b) What level of passion does the brand of smartphones consume?
- c) Does customer-brand symmetry have an impact on brand passion?

Second: The Importance of the Study

The current study stems from its attempts to introduce a new conceptual model in marketing thinking by reviewing the applications of social identity theory to the nature of the relationship between the customer and the passion for the brand. In light of this, it can be said that the importance of the study is based on the following:

- a) To invite marketing researchers to check the best appreciation of brand passion away from perceived quality, value, and satisfaction to learn the emotional elements and dimensions of customers and to predict how they will affect the strength and consistency of the customer's relationship with the brand they consume to the state of passion and intimacy.
- b) However, although the above variables are of great importance, they are still largely unexplored in the smartphone industry, and investigating these installations is crucial. Looking at the relationships between these structures and how they drive brand passion in the smartphone industry will be very useful for brands as it can help them develop more relevant and competitive marketing strategies to attract new customers and retain existing ones.
- c) To fill this gap, the current study is trying to identify and define the role of customer-brand identification in promoting brand passion as a critical variable in contemporary marketing thinking related to customer relations, by applying modern theories such as social exchange theory, social identity theory, in interpreting the relationship between these variables.

Third: Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the current study is **to try to verify the impact of customer-brand commonality on the brand passion of smartphone brand customers in Iraq**. A set of sub-objectives follows from the above purpose:

1. Evaluate the level of customer similarity with the brand for the smartphones they consume.
2. Learn about the level of passion for the brand of smartphones they consume.
3. Diagnosis of correlation effect of customer-brand symmetry on brand passion.
4. Provide a practical model that draws the key features of direct impact relationships between study variables in order to prepare for further studies in the extent to which this model is applicable in other sectors.

Fourth: The Hypotheses of the Study and its Hypothetical Scheme

Marketing research and studies in the context of a brand call for making sure that brands can overcome their satisfaction, which has a certain relationship age that drives the customer to turn into another brand, whatever the satisfaction, to determine the psychological and emotional path of the customer to explain the state of attachment and association with the brand away from false Customer. It is a good way to make sure that you can best evaluate the passion for the brand and predict its impact on the strength of the emotional and emotional elements of the customer's relationship with the brand. Therefore, the current study attempts to model those relationships by creating a hypothonal diagram according to the researcher's perceptions in light of the problem and objectives of the research and as shown in Figure 1.

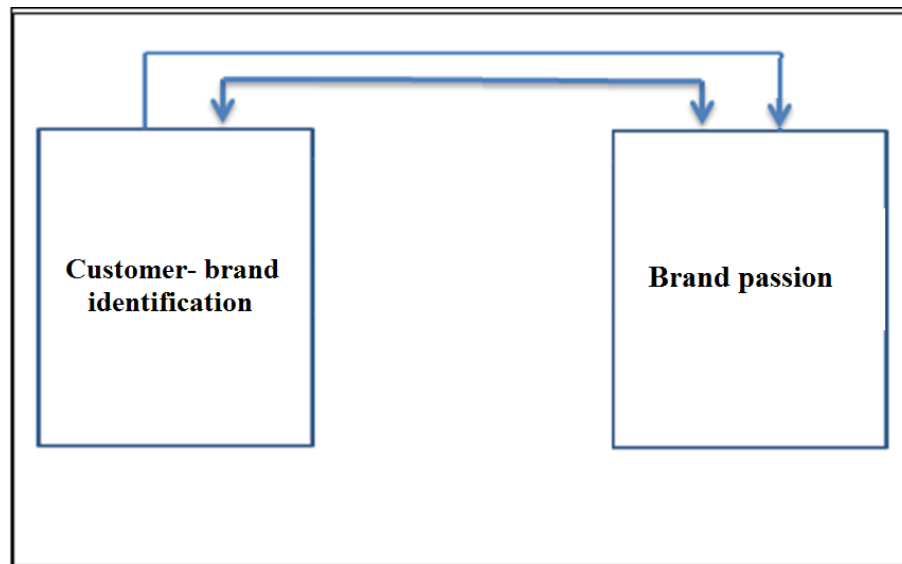


Figure 1: Study Hypothesis Chart

Source: Prepared by the Researcher

Therefore, the current study, in light of the previous hypothesis scheme, tries to verify the main hypotheses, which are as follows:

a) Hypothesis of Correlation between Study Variables

1. There is a Brandificant direct correlation between (customer-brand identification) and brand passion.

b) Effect Path Hypotheses

1. There is a Brandificant direct effect of customer-brand symmetry in the brand passion.

Fifth: Methods of Collecting Data and Information

This paragraph focuses on the tools that have been placed on the field side to collect the specific data in the sample studied, in addition to this, the current study used the resolution measurement tool to reveal the considered sample's views and collect the necessary data and information. The resolution included two axes that can be indicated in table (1), which describes the components of the measurement tool, the number of paragraphs of each variable and the sources quoted from them as mentioned in the resolution, after amending some paragraphs and reformulating them according to the opinions of the arbitrators in a way that suits the purpose of the study, the culture and the particular of the study, and the resolution became its final form before distribution. The five-way Likert has been adopted and is one of the most widely used methods in administrative and social sciences.

Table 1: Main Variables and Sub-dimensions Contained in Resolution

Key variables	Sub-dimensions	Number of paragraphs	Source
Customer- brand identification	One dimensional	10	(Alnawas & Altarifi,2016)
Brand passion	One dimensional	8	(Akin, 2017)

Part Two: Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

First: Customer-brand Identification

1. The Concept of Customer - Brand Identification

Marketers have identified the importance of developing a long-term, highly profitable and sustainable relationship, based on the similarity between the customer's identity and the brand's identity through the customer's knowledge of the overlap between their self-image and the brand image (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Ahearne et al., 2005). In addition, the study has been conducted by the University of the United States, which has been working on the development of the University of Washington, where the University of Washington has been working on the development of the University of Washington, where the University of Washington has been working on the development of the University of Washington Not only does it have a high commitment to the mark, but it becomes supportive of, defends, and defends the mark with which it is similar in several situations (Bhathacharya & Sen, 2003).

There is a common definition of brand-symmetry as the feeling of a customer's brand. In addition, some modern concepts of symmetry are becoming the theory of social identity. In particular, Mael & Ashforth, (1992) focuses on exclusive cognitive elements, but (Tajfel, 1979) refers to the emotional value and importance of belonging to social identity. This is likely to be characterized by cognitive and emotional components, cognitive symmetry refers to the extent to which people see themselves as belonging to an organization, emotional symmetry is instead the extent to which people have positive feelings about being part of an organization, where cognitive symmetry precedes emotional symmetry (Piehler et al., 2016).

2. The Importance of Customer - Brand Identification

Customers choose products and brands not only for their utilitarian values but also for their symbolic benefits, because brands have deep meaning and build the self-perception or customer identities, customers use trademarks to build themselves, introduce themselves to others or achieve their identity goals. Therefore, the concept of brand identification is based on the theory of social identity, which has been widely applied in other disciplines, where similarity based on the theory of social identity is in fact the conception of belonging to a group of people. So marketing researchers argue that brand similarity meets the need for social identity and self-definition (Salam, 2015). As a result of the decline in traditional media promotion activities and severe economic crises around the world, customer-to-brand similarity has become more important than ever in terms of brand management. Also, this structure allows a long-term relationship between business and consumer/client. Because for customers, there are many brands that offer symbolic, functional and experimental advan Brandes that meet their requirements and needs, and that establishing strong brand identification can generate high income as a result of a long-term

relationship. A high level of customer similarity with the brand is useful in creating and maintaining long-term sustainable customer behavior büyükdağ & Kitapci, 2021).

Second: Brand Passion

1. The Concept of Brand Passion

Since its introduction by (Shimp & Madden, 1988) brand passion has gained increasing interest among brand researchers, and according to this view, customers can see the brand as an individual, so they can love it as they love someone (Sallam, 2015).

(Albert et al., 2009) and Ahuvia, 2006)) defined brand passion as the degree of deep emotional engagement of a customer who is a business-name-aware customer. (Malik and Guptha, 2013) brand passion was defined as "the sense of community as a race in brand passion". (Akin, 2017) defined brand passion as a "strong emotional relationship between brand and customer".

Batra et al., 2012)) clearly introduced brand passion as a kind of customer-generated relationship with brands, which includes "multiple, interconnected cognitive, emotional and behavioral elements, rather than a specific and transient love passion," with the following characteristics (Bairrada et al., 2018):

Part Three: The Practical Aspect

First: The Stability of the Measuring Tool

We note from Table 2 that the values of the alpha chromabach coefficient of the main study variables and their sub-dimensions ranged from (0.83-0.95). The results of the study were the most accurate, stable, and highly accurate, the study tool and its measures were valid for final application.

Table 2: The Structural Truthfulness and Stability Parameters of the Study Variables and Dimensions

Variable	Alpha Cronbach coefficient	structural validity coefficient
Customer- brand identification	0.83	0.91
Brand passion	0.87	0.93

Second: Description of the Sample Study

1. Describe and Diagnose the Customer-Brand Identification Variable

The description and diagnosis of the customer identification variable—the marker and the description of the paragraphs of this variable are detailed as the results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the customer identification variable—the marker measured in ten paragraphs (**ID1-ID10**), where the total arithmetic mean of this dimension (**3.6005**), the standard deviation (**1.8953**), and the relative Brandifance (72%); This indicates that the sample members agreed on the sections of this dimension, which confirms that there is a good similarity between customers and their brands, as they care about what others see toward their brands, and the fourth paragraph of its content has been obtained (I always feel that the successes of my favorite marks are a success of my choices.) at the top of my score, at (**3.9**), at a standard deviation of (**0.86**), and with relative importance (79%), this indicates that the level of answers was high on this paragraph, while the third paragraph that contained it was (When I talk about my favorite Brand, I usually say we rather than saying it.) At least the mean of the calculation was **3.1** with a standard deviation of **1.07** and a relative Brandifance of 64%, this indicates that the level of answers was also moderate for this paragraph.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

No.	mean	Standard deviation	Answer level	%	Order of paragraphs
When I talk about my favorite Brand, I usually say we instead of saying it.	3.1	1.07	Moderate	0.64	7
I always feel that the successes of my favorite Brand are a success of my choice.	3.9	0.86	High	0.79	1
I think my favorite Brand matches my own characteristics.	3.6	0.87	High	0.73	4
There is something "lovely" that governs my relationship with my favorite brand.	3.7	0.84	High	0.75	3
I always feel that I have an emotional relationship with my favorite Brand.	3.3	0.97	Moderate	0.67	6
I am very happy with my favorite brand.	3.7	0.81	High	0.76	2
I feel giving for my favorite badge.	3.5	0.81	High	0.70	5
The rate of the variable	3.6	1.89	High	0.72	

2. Describe and Diagnose the Variable Brand Passion

The results of the descriptive statistical analysis of the eight-paragraph dimension of passion for the mark (PA1-PA8) are shown in Table 4, with the total arithmetic mean of this dimension (3.3), the standard deviation (1.95), and the relative importance (68%). This indicates that the sample members agreed on the sections of this dimension, which confirms that there is a high interest among customers in their brands in relation to their brands.

The seventh paragraph of its content has been obtained (I enjoy the esthetic appeal of this Brand.) The number of people who have been in the United States has increased by more than one year since the end of the year, and by more than one year, the number of people who have been in the United States has increased by more than one year.

And the second paragraph in which I had it (I feel unable to control my thoughts; Due to a Hindu and a solar with my favorite Brands.) At least the mean of the calculation was (2.6) with a standard deviation of (0.99) and a relative Brandificance of (52%), this indicates that the level of answers was also high for this paragraph.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for the Variable Brand Passion

No.	mean	Standard deviation	Answer level	%	Order of paragraphs
If my favorite brand is not available on the market, I feel very upset.	3.4	1.00	High	0.69	5
I feel unable to control my ideas; Because of a Hindu and a solar with my favorite Brands.	2.6	0.99	Moderate	0.52	8
I find myself thinking about my favorite Brand often whenever I mention smartphones in front of me.	3.3	1.06	Moderate	0.67	6
I feel unhappy, buying from another brand.	2.8	1.01	Moderate	0.57	7
I love this brand.	3.7	0.90	High	0.74	2
My favorite badge makes me very happy.	3.6	0.80	High	0.73	4
I enjoy the esthetic appeal of this landmark.	3.7	0.93	High	0.75	1
Just seeing my favorite badge is exciting to me.	3.6	0.90	High	0.74	3
The rate for the dimension	3.3833	1.9539	Moderate	0.68	

Third: Test Study Hypotheses

Table 5 and Figure 2 show the set of results relating to the direct impact test between customer-brand similarity and brand passion. The value of the determination (interpretation) coefficient (R²) (0.83), This indicates that customer-brand similarity explains (83%) changes in brand passion and the remaining 17% is due to the impact of other variables not considered in the study's statistical model, while the tested effect is ($\beta = 0.907$, $p < .01$) A value that indicates that the threshold slope coefficient indicates a positive direct relationship between the client-brand variable and the brand's passion variable, and these values are Brandificant because (C R critical value). I got more than (1.96), which is Brandificant at ($P < .001$) and the content of this result indicates a growing customer-brand similarity that will be reflected positively in improving brand passion.

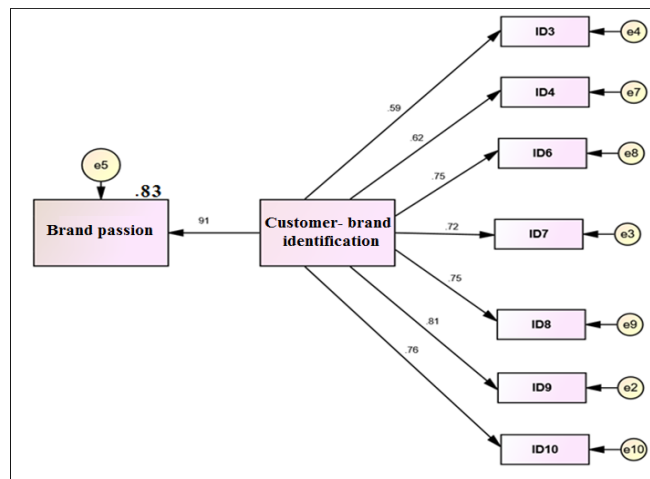


Figure 2: Test the Direct Effect of the Main Effect Hypothesis

Table 5: Downward Weights to Test Direct Effect Hypotheses between Customer-brand Similarity and Brand Passion

Variable and Dimensions	Path	Variables	S.R.W	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
Customer- brand identification	<---	Brand passion	0.907	0.939	0.042	22.215	***

Research IV: Conclusions and Recommendations

First: Conclusions

1. The sample expressed their emotional feeling of passion for the brand that customers are dealing with through their positive feelings, affection, and positive evaluation of the brand through their direct statement of brand passion, which was reflected in his image:
 - a. They are passionate about the Brand in light of their strong tendency to the Brand, their enthusiasm for it, their strong positive feelings and their desire to deal with the Brand with great yearning.
 - b. They express psychological closeness to the marker in light of the depth of knowledge, psychological understanding of the marker, and interactions with the marker by sharing physical and non-physical experiences with the marker and deep awareness of the self-feeling when dealing with the marker.
The sample expressed its commitment to the brand by wanting to maintain the relationship with the brand in the light of the shared values supported by emotional and emotional engagement with the brand.
2. The sample expressed the feelings of love for the brands you deal with through their passion for the brand, their affection for it and their commitment to that brand, which carries with it honesty and joy, their trust and their suitability for the customer's emotional needs, which confirms the Customer of the sample in light of the following:-
 - a. A sample's passion for the attraction of the brand, the timery and its prestige also means a conscious decision to engage in a conscious partnership with the brand and a strong tendency to invest time and effort in it based on trust and belief in the brand.
 - b. A feeling of psychological closeness toward the Brand in light of the depth of knowledge and awareness of the mark, creating familiarity and affection with the Brand, and the presence of behaviors and feelings that express trust, commitment and commitment to the mark.
3. The customer's mania, their favorite brand's emotion, and their satisfaction with acquiring the brand can make them maintain a relationship with them and trust the products that carry it.

Second: Recommendations

1. Strengthen the relationship between preferred brands and their customers by ensuring that the relationship between them is strong and stable in the light of ongoing marketing research as this requires.
 - a. The allocation of special relationship programs through which the benefits of a relationship can be invested in more value than the value of time interaction or extensive consumption.
 - b. Ensure continuous fit between brand and customers to achieve complete reliability and efficiency satisfaction.
 - c. Build on the results of the ongoing assessment of the customer's mental state around the image of that brand based on specific actions to gain Customer in the light of an innovative marketing mix that targets the positive orientation of the customer's behavioral intentions toward the brand offering to achieve a continuous and lasting relationship.
 - d. Brands must achieve relationship credibility and maintain a sense of uniformity and Customer by making constant efforts to meet the biased or unique needs of customers.
2. Take advantage of the brand's customers' positive feelings, mental affection and strong relationship to communicate positive and emotional ideas to other customers by influencing their consumption pattern over time to achieve addiction and prevent brand conversion.
3. To employ brand customers' willingness and readiness to bear more costs, make more sacrifices, and maintain brand relationships by focusing on customer relationship activities and activating Customer programs that increase brand customers' feelings of engagement and create an emotional attachment based on real, not false, Customer.
4. Customer relationships invest in the brand based on love and psychological attachment by developing lifelong relationships with the customer by offering products that evolve with the customer's needs by continuously conducting surveys of future customers' needs and desires, conducting studies about them,

listening to their complaints, and responding to them, and introducing their successful experiences to speak about them to customers Others.

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