

ZED JELLCOE

Head of UX Research & Product Strategy | Behavioral Insights · AI · MENA | PMP® | IBM AI PM
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PERSONAL DETAILS

Date of Birth: 16 September 1992

Visa Status: UAE Golden Visa Holder

Languages: English (Bilingual) · Arabic (Native) · French (Intermediate)

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Senior **user experience research** and product strategy leader with 15+ years building research programs that drive product decisions across MENA's most competitive sectors - entertainment streaming, AI consumer products, fintech, telecom, and government. Currently leading UX research across **five products in 10 markets** at Yango Group, with end-to-end ownership of qualitative and quantitative research, usability testing, behavioral analytics, and AI-assisted synthesis. PMP® certified and IBM AI Product Manager, with academic grounding in cognitive psychology, research methods, and human-computer interaction (HCI) from Brunel University London. Bilingual English / Arabic, with deep cultural fluency across the GCC, Levant, North Africa, and South Asia. UAE Golden Visa holder.

SELECTED IMPACT

- **Built and currently lead the UX research function across five products and 10 MENA markets** at Yango Group, managing a \$100K-\$300K annual research budget.
- Research insights contributed to Yango Play growth from launch to **1.3M subscribers and ~600K weekly active users** across MENA.
- Reduced post-onboarding drop-off by ~23% via behavioral research, A/B testing, and content discovery redesigns.
- **Saved ~\$5M annually at ADSS** by restructuring the usability testing framework across four fintech products.
- Drove a 30% NPS uplift at du through research-led redesign of postpaid customer journeys.
- Pioneered the GCC's first Arabic Amazon Alexa skill at DEWA - the region's first bilingual APL implementation.

EXPERIENCE

Head of UX Research, MENA

Yango Group - Yango Play, Yango Music, Yasmina, Yango Plus, Yango Taxi

Global tech ecosystem (formerly Yandex international) operating ride-hailing, delivery, e-grocery, music, and entertainment services across 30+ countries

Dec 2023 - Present | Dubai, UAE

- Lead UX research across Yango's MENA entertainment and AI ecosystem; scope progressively expanded from Yango Play at hire to five products today: streaming (Play), music (Music), AI smart speakers (Yasmina), the Yango Plus master subscription, and Yango Taxi.
- Run mixed-methods research across 10 markets - UAE, KSA, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Pakistan - using cohort segmentation, persona development, and culturally localized qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Manage an annual UX research budget fluctuating between \$100K-\$300K within a 10x larger research function; allocate across qualitative, quantitative, AI tooling, and research operations.
- Deliver 40-50 research projects per year - user interviews, diary studies, contextual home visits, usability testing, surveys, A/B testing, and behavioral analytics - reaching tens of thousands of users.
- Insights contributed to growth from launch to 1.3M subscribers and ~600K weekly active users; A/B-tested onboarding and content discovery redesigns reduced post-onboarding drop-off by ~23%.
- Built persona and cohort-segmentation system informing onboarding, paywall, and recommendation flows across all markets; embedded behavioral and emotional design principles into mobile-first experiences.
- Established AI-augmented research workflow leveraging Claude, ChatGPT, Maze, and automated transcription tools to accelerate qualitative synthesis and increase research throughput across the function.

Head of User Experience (Research & Product Design)

ADSS - Trading Platforms & New Initiatives

ADQ-owned financial services firm offering institutional, private, and retail trading platforms across regulated MENA markets

Oct 2022 - Dec 2023 | Abu Dhabi, UAE

- Reporting directly to the CPO, led user research and product design across four fintech products serving institutional, private, and retail clients.
- Restructured the usability testing framework, cutting project costs by ~20% and saving the firm ~\$5M annually.
- Managed 30+ UX research studies and design sprints; integrated customer journey mapping and JTBD frameworks that achieved ~35% faster time-to-market for new features.
- Co-moderated executive strategy workshops shaping a 10x strategic vision for regulated TAM expansion; partnered with KPMG, Adaptive, and Turing on platform technology integrations.

Senior UX & Product Design Lead, Sales Segment

du (Emirates Integrated Telecommunications Company)

One of the UAE's two main telecom operators; serves postpaid, prepaid, and digital services to millions of customers nationwide

Nov 2021 - Oct 2022 | Dubai, UAE

- Led UX research and product design strategy for postpaid and prepaid sales segments, driving a 30% NPS increase and steady digital sales growth.
- Launched 16 new mobile plans; ran A/B testing program that reduced user drop-off by ~40% across the customer acquisition funnel.
- Coordinated 50+ usability studies informing high-impact design decisions; collaborated with cross-functional product, marketing, and engineering teams.

Senior UX Lead - Smart Platforms

DEWA (Dubai Electricity & Water Authority)

Dubai's second-largest publicly traded company and the UAE's primary energy, water, and smart-city utility

Dec 2020 - Nov 2021 | Dubai, UAE

- Led three government innovation projects with combined budgets exceeding \$2M, reporting to senior leadership across DEWA's Smart Platforms unit.
- Owned UX for Dubai's first public EV charging network (Green Charger, 400 chargers at the time) - the region's first public EV charging infrastructure.
- Developed DEWA's first-in-region Amazon Alexa skill with Arabic NLP - the GCC's first bilingual APL implementation, pioneering voice UI in the region.

Head of UX & Product Design - Dubai Software Branch

Business Trading Company (BTC)

International retail management group headquartered in Doha, with operations across UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UK

Jan 2020 - Dec 2020 | Dubai, UAE

- Established and led BTC's Dubai software development branch; managed a 20-person cross-functional team of designers, PMs, and developers.
- Redesigned AskVider's e-commerce platform achieving a 300% increase in Daily Active Users (DAU).
- Conducted UX research and testing for Villaggio Mall's digital channels, lifting on-site retention 20% and online retention 30%; secured four new projects during COVID-19.

Senior UX Consultant - Chatbot & Mashreq Neo

Mashreq Bank

One of the UAE's largest private banks; Mashreq Neo is its pioneering digital banking arm

Feb 2019 - Jan 2020 | Dubai, UAE

- Led development of Mashreq Neo Connect - the UAE's first transactional digital banking chatbot - driving a 20% engagement increase.
- Designed conversational flows across six banking verticals, achieving a 30% reduction in direct call durations.
- Conducted 100+ hours of user research with bankers and customers to align fintech products with real user needs.

Earlier Career

Agency & Startups | 2011 - 2019

Senior UX & Product Consultant - Omni Classifieds (Beirut, 2017-2019): Led UX strategy driving 30% engagement and 40% conversion uplift for a Levant-market e-commerce platform. UX Research & Design Leadership - Arkium Design Studio (2011-2017): Progressive roles culminating in Head of UX & Design Strategy; led research and design for 10+ web and mobile applications across regional clients.

EDUCATION

MSc Psychological Sciences (Coursework completed) - Brunel University London

Cognitive Psychology · Research Methods · Human Factors · Human-Computer Interaction (HCI)

BE, Architectural Design - Tishreen University, Faculty of Architectural Engineering

Semiotics · Design Research · Urban Sociology · Strategic Planning

CERTIFICATIONS & AFFILIATIONS

PMP® (PMI, 2023) · IBM AI Product Manager Professional Certificate (2025) · AI Product Management Specialization (Duke University, 2023) · Google Project Management Certificate (2022) · Enterprise Design Thinking Creator (IBM, 2022) · Member, British Psychological Society (BPS, 2024)

CORE SKILLS

UX Research Methods: UX Research · Mixed-Methods · Usability Testing · A/B & Multivariate Testing · Interviews · Diary Studies · Contextual Inquiry · Ethnography · Heuristic Evaluation · Card Sorting · Tree Testing · Surveys · Personas · Cohort Segmentation · JTBD · Journey Mapping · Behavioral Analytics · Cognitive Psychology · HCI · Behavioral Science

Product & UX Design: UX Design · Product Strategy · Information Architecture · Interaction Design · Design System Handling · Design Sprints · Wireframing · Prototyping · WCAG Accessibility · Conversational AI · Generative AI UX · AI Product Management

AI in Research & Product: AI-Assisted Synthesis · LLM Analysis · Automated Transcription · Sentiment & Theme Detection · Research Ops Automation · AI Prototyping · Generative AI Strategy · AI Roadmapping · Prompt Engineering

Research & Analytics Tools: UserTesting · Maze · Lookback · Qualtrics · Hotjar · Google Analytics · Power BI · Tableau · Excel

Design & Collaboration Tools: Figma · FigJam · Figma Make · Miro · Jira · Notion

AI Stack: Claude (incl. Claude Code & Claude Design) · ChatGPT · Codex · Cursor · Perplexity

Leadership & Business: Cross-Functional Leadership · Stakeholder Management · Vendor Management · Research Budget Ownership · Executive Communication · Change Management · Cultural Usability (MENA) · Regulatory & Risk Awareness · Mentoring · Workshops · PMP®